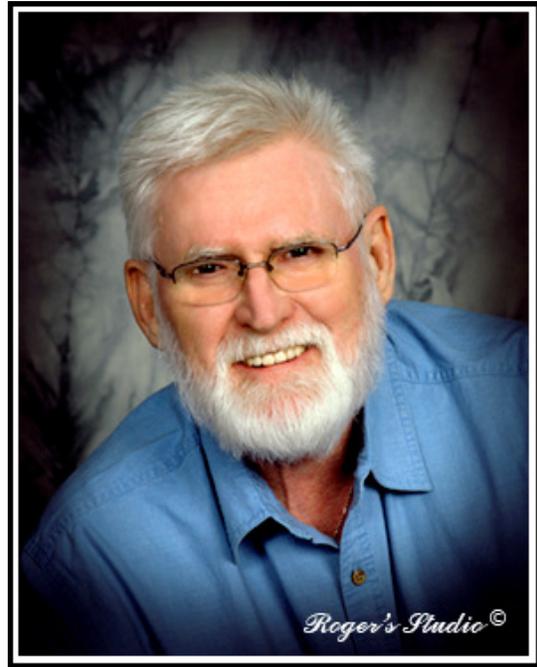


A Survivor

As a youth I was always the slowest to finish the physical activities that took place during or after school. No one considered I might have a problem, I was just a slow kid or so was the thinking of the day. As it was never considered serious it was never discussed with a doctor. Today I realize it could well have been an undiagnosed asthmatic condition.

I continued through life and after quitting school in 1955 managed to find work in the plumbing and heating field, then in 1957 started a six year apprenticeship as a Linotype Mechanic at the Sudbury Star. One of the daily duties of this job was steel brushing lead from plungers over open lead pots for about twenty machines; this meant I was breathing in lead dust. No one in the 1950/60s seemed concerned about the dangers associated with breathing lead dust. In 1963 I moved on and began what turned out to be a 35 year career as a police officer.

My career as a Police Officer and life as I knew it came to an abrupt stop on Friday, May 13th, 1988. While crossing Paris Street on my way to work I was hit by pick up truck at the intersection of Brady and Paris Street. The accident left me without vitals for sometime and unconscious for a much longer period. As a result I lost blocks of my memory. My injuries from the accident for the most part are hidden but it has been a struggle for me to overcome and teach myself the best way(s) to handle the various effects of my brain injury. The injury left me without the



ability to taste or smell; therefore I am unable to detect any noxious odours. For example I would not be able to detect the smoke from a fire. I am also unable to detect when certain foods are unsafe and should not be consumed; unlike the majority of the population who can smell or taste if a product is off. The inability to smell has become a more pronounced problem since I have been diagnosed with Asthma and recently with Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease. It is very difficult not only for me but also for the medical professionals, to determine the triggers of my Asthma.

It was in 1995 that I began having noticeable difficulties with my breathing and spoke to my doctor about them. My family doctor diagnosed me with Asthma and prescribed a Ventolin puffer. On Thanksgiving Day of 2000 I was expected for a family dinner at my daughter's home.

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After getting ready and before leaving I sat down in my chair to watch a bit of television when I was suddenly unable to breathe. I grabbed my Ventolin, then the phone opened the kitchen window and struggled to try to get a breath and with each meagre inhale I took a puff of Ventolin. This procedure took twenty five minutes before I was strong enough to make a call to my daughter. I started to say I would not be able to make it for supper but was cut off by my daughter who recognized the distress in my voice, and told me to hang up, that the ambulance was on its way.

I spent three days in the hospital as a result of this attack. After my release from the hospital I was sent to the Asthma Clinic at the General Hospital. I was hospitalized twice more over the next few years and my diagnosis was upgraded to COPD. So now I have Chronic Bronchitis and Asthma to deal with.

In the past 7 years I have had many exacerbations or to use the new buzz word "Lung Attacks" and have been referred to the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program. It seems that each time I graduate from the programme having built up my exercise endurance enough to move on I have an exacerbation start on a treatment of antibiotics and prednisone and usually have to start Pulmonary Rehab all over again, its like having a starring role in Bill Murray's movie Groundhog Day. However, I have accepted that this is the way it will be from now on and if I want to have any quality of life then I have to keep

attending rehab and continue to do what I can always trying to push that little bit when necessary.

I am the President of ONT X a Motorcycle club for Retired and Active Law Enforcement Officers, Chair of the Rally for Dad a motorcycle ride to raise funds and awareness of Prostate Cancer for the Northern Cancer Centre, and a committee member on the Sudbury Toy Run a motorcycle ride held every fall to collect toys for the underprivileged children. I sit on the Board of Delegates of the Northern Credit Union Long Lake Branch. I was one of the founding members of BIASD (Brain Injury Association Sudbury & District) a support group for those who have sustained a brain injury which I attend monthly. I recently became one of the Ontario Lung Associations TeamCOPD Ambassadors in the Greater City of Sudbury and I have been Vice President of the Lung Disease Support Group Inc for the past 5 years a group that I am proud to say I helped create. It has helped me to no end to be with people who understand what its like to have COPD or on of the many lung diseases. These volunteer positions enable me to play a vital role in my community and give me a reason to continue. I spend as much time as I can on the motorcycle in the summer months and hope to do so for many more years.

I did not let a brain injury stop my zest for living and have no intention of letting Lung Disease halt me either but I will admit it has slowed me down some but I will survive.

by Bruce Eyre