



# MIND MATTERS

Prevention • Support • Education • Advocacy

## Working Her Way Back: Anita's Story

By Rhonda Howard

**A**NITA KAY WAS on her way to a meeting just outside of Spokane when an automobile crash changed her life. An active, vibrant woman, then 49 years old, Anita held a recent master's degree in applied social research and was employed as a health care policy analyst.

"I awoke in the trauma unit of a Spokane hospital and learned I had multiple pelvic and back fractures and a traumatic brain injury," Anita recalled. "After a week's stay there, I returned to my home in Seattle, in a wheelchair, to care for myself. Occasionally I received help from friends."

As a result of the accident, Anita spent a few months in a wheelchair and a few more on crutches. Severe problems with balance and coordination made walking difficult, especially on uneven ground.

"Any amount of noise or confu-



**Anita Kay**

sion would make me anxious, disoriented and fatigued," Anita explained. "After a year of physical therapy, I regained the ability to walk normally, but many of the cognitive, behavioral and sensory problems I incurred had not resolved. Some even worsened."

Over the next few years, Anita made several attempts to return to work. Each one failed. For the first time in her life, she developed major depression, which led her to be hospitalized in a psychiatric ward due to suicide risk.

Because she was on the job when her brain injury occurred, Anita received state workers compensation. This however, was not the type of support she needed to teach her how to maintain a job post-TBI. It wasn't until she sought help from the state employment division through a Work Source office that she received training that taught her how to look for a job, and then present herself well to employers. Anita feels the job search assistance still did not give her the tools necessary to keep a job after she was hired. She had to work on those skills herself.

"Somehow, with the constant

*continued on page 4*

## BIAWA Strengthens and Expands Its Support Services

An Interview with Executive Director Gene van den Bosch

**Mind Matters:** *We hear that the Brain Injury Association of Washington (BIAWA) is strengthening and expanding its support services. Just what does this mean?*

**van den Bosch:** Thanks to the generosity of several community-minded corporations and the more than 360 people who participated as patrons and donors at our recent Gala Dinner Auction, we're able to combine funds with a contract from the State of Washington to strengthen and expand our support services — especially our statewide 800-number



**Gene van den Bosch**

HelpLine for survivors and family members and for our support groups.

**Mind Matters:** *What does this state contract allow the BIAWA to do?*

**van den Bosch:** We were just awarded a state contract administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to provide at least 40 hours per week of traumatic brain

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## **BIAWA Support Services**

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injury (TBI)-specific information and referral telephone service. We call this our HelpLine project. It will provide a toll-free helpline for survivors and family members located throughout the state of Washington.

**Mind Matters:** *What's different about the new BIAWA HelpLine?*

**van den Bosch:** Up until now, our HelpLine relied on volunteers and part-time contractors working on a shoestring budget to provide about 30 hours of HelpLine service per week. Our new HelpLine will have trained workers answering all incoming calls and use a standard name that identifies the BIAWA as the statewide TBI call center. We're also providing a Ph.D.-level case manager to respond to the more complex calls. In addition, we'll be hiring — as volume requires — master's-level HelpLine operators to provide up to 60 hours of service per week. Of course, there will be a mechanism for callers to leave messages if they call after hours, weekends, or on federal holidays.

**Mind Matters:** *What type of training will your HelpLine staff receive?*

**van den Bosch:** Each of our HelpLine staff — within 30 days of their employment — will receive training from the Crisis Clinic of King County and the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs. And, as soon as possible, they will also receive training as offered by DSHS in order to understand the basic services offered by that state agency.

**Mind Matters:** *What else does this HelpLine project offer?*

**van den Bosch:** Every call received — and every e-mail received — from a survivor or family member

will be recorded in a computer database to track caller information. Of course, this information is confidential and will only be shared as needed amongst the HelpLine staff as they follow-up with pre-arranged appointment calls and mailed information. But the overall numbers — for example, how many calls we received from a particular county or the number of calls received related to a certain issue — will be shared with appropriate state agencies to inform policy decision-makers as our state improves services for survivors and families.

**Mind Matters:** *In what ways will your staff be informed about the current services available for survivors and family members in Washington?*

**van den Bosch:** In addition to their initial training on handling calls related to veterans' issues, crisis situations, and DSHS services, our staff will use directories of services available in the community to provide referrals for survivors and family members. They will work to keep these directories up-to-date in order to provide the appropriate referrals.

**Mind Matters:** *What do you expect these calls that come into the BIAWA to be like?*

**van den Bosch:** Each call will be unique. Some will be routine — for example, a request for a particular pamphlet or a booklet on a TBI-related subject. Some may request a TBI Toolkit, a TBI documentary or a TBI Resource Guide. Other calls will be more complex. Based on our past experience and on the experiences of similar programs in other states, we can predict that many callers will be quite frustrated and perhaps even confused as they attempt to make their way during a life-crisis through a fragmented

system. Sometimes, the callers may not even know what questions to ask. Our case manager is trained to handle such calls in a compassionate manner and in a way that helps the caller manage or resolve his or her issue whenever possible.

**Mind Matters:** *So you are not claiming to manage or resolve every caller's issue?*

**van den Bosch:** No, many callers will need services or connections available in their local or regional community. We will refer them to those services or resources. For example, a caller may be looking for legal advice, or medical services or a support group. We will refer them to the appropriate services nearest them. And, we will always provide at least three referrals for services such as law firms and other for-profit services — along with guidelines on how they can decide which service to use based on their own needs. Of course, emergency calls will be directed to immediately dial 911, and we will follow up to make sure emergency treatment is received.

**Mind Matters:** *Will your 800 number remain the same?*

**van den Bosch:** Yes. And, when a state-funded public awareness campaign is offered early in 2008, a new 800 number will be provided within its advertisements and announcements. That 800 number will also be directed to our HelpLine service. Both 800 numbers will reach the same HelpLine operators.

**Mind Matters:** *Tell us a little bit about your HelpLine staff.*

**van den Bosch:** Our HelpLine staff includes a wonderful support team. Dr. Janet Mott is our HelpLine case manager. Dr. Mott will be managing the more complex calls



**HelpLine staff, left to right: Laura Hankins; Janet Mott, Ph.D.; Doris Andrechak; Jennifer Peloquin, M.A.; Valerie Wootton**



**Laura Hankins**



**Valerie Wootton**



**Shannon Fountain**



**Brian Reynolds**



**Kathy Bell, M.D.**



**Jason Barber, M.S.**

we receive and managing the project. Laura Hankins is our HelpLine manager.

Ms. Hankins will receive most calls and deal with the more routine calls. She will also be responsible for the HelpLine database, its recourse directories, and the ongoing monitoring of our Web site to assure accurate and up-to-

date information is offered our consumers.

Our Support Team also includes Valerie Wootton — our support group coordinator. Jennifer Peloquin will be one of our master’s-level HelpLine operators, and she will be working on an as-needed basis. In addition, Doris Andrechak will be one of our HelpLine operators.

Both Ms. Wootton and Ms. Andrechak will be assisting in the collection of data to keep our resource directories and databases current and accurate. Finally, we hope to employ graduate-school interns for 4 hour shifts. This will be our HelpLine team.

Supporting this team will be Shannon Fountain, our administrative assistant, and Brian Reynolds, our information technology consultant. Kathy Bell, M.D. and Jason Barber, M.S., both of the University of Washington and Harborview Medical Center of Seattle, will be supporting this HelpLine Project as well.

**Mind Matters:** *Final question — what do you need from your members to help you make this service the best it can be?*

**van den Bosch:** Right now, we would benefit from advisory councils comprised of our key consumer groups: brain injury survivors, family members, caregivers, professionals, veterans and Native Americans. We’d like these advisory councils to meet separately or together — at least once a year and ideally twice a year — to provide us with information related to needs and resources as well as an evaluation of our services so that we may improve these services. Anyone living in Washington state interested in serving on one or more of these councils should contact our HelpLine operators and leave their name and contact information. We’d like to get these councils operating as soon as possible.

Thanks for this opportunity to tell our members about our improved HelpLine services. ■

**Anita Kay**

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support of some amazing friends and by taking it one day at a time, things finally started to get better,” said Anita. “About a year and a half ago, I found a job I was able to succeed at, by at first offering to volunteer.”

She held that job for about one year, allowing her to get used to working again. Three months ago, Anita obtained a full-time, regular paying job that is similar to what she did before her accident.

“It’s very challenging and often exhausting, but I’m ecstatic to have an opportunity to once again do meaningful work — and to begin recovering from the personal and financial disaster of the past several years,” she said.

Anita still has some symptoms from brain injury, which she is able to manage with medication, healthy eating, regular sleep, and exercise, and she has slowly begun to put her life back together. She’s regained enough balance and stamina to again go on hiking trips with friends.

When asked what advice she would give to others recovering from traumatic brain injury, Anita answered, “The main thing I would want both survivors and their medical providers to know is how important it is to choose at least one thing you really loved in your ‘before’ life, that you have a realistic chance of getting back ‘after.’ Then get as much support as you need to

achieve or get back that thing, or at least some version of it.

“We now know that the brain can heal and ‘rewire,’” she continued. “In the process of pursuing and achieving even one goal, the brain is stimulated to regain many abilities, which can be used to do many more

things.” Anita believes that this is how she recovered as much as she has — by stubbornly insisting on trying to get back things she loved from “before.”

With a desire to provide hope to other TBI survivors, Anita agreed to tell her story in a documentary produced in 2007 by the University of Washington, BIAWA and the state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS.) It can be seen online at [www.uw.edu/org/programs](http://www.uw.edu/org/programs) by searching for “Living with Traumatic Brain Injury.”

Her wish to help others has also lead Anita and another TBI survivor to develop an online meeting place for brain injury survivors. It will focus on those who have returned to work or who are trying to return to work and allow them to support each other and share tips. BIAWA will share the information when the Web site is launched.

Anita happily told us, “After five years, I’m beginning to get back something like my former life. I am amazed and very thankful. I can now fully appreciate the old saying, ‘Whatever doesn’t kill you makes you stronger,’ in that, in some ways, the new me is better than who I was before my brain injury.” ■



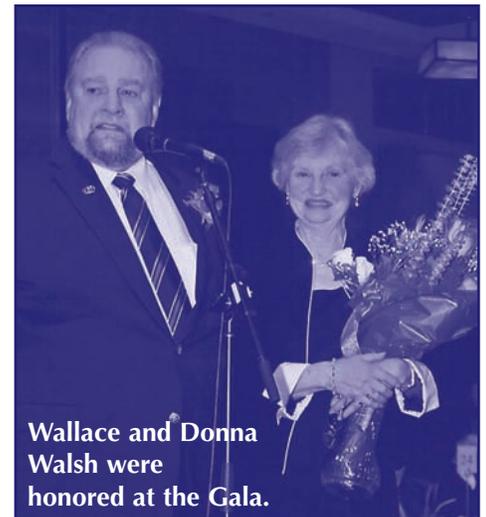
**“It is [important] to choose at least one thing you really loved in your ‘before’ life, that you have a realistic chance of getting back ‘after.’”**

**Gala Profit Surpasses \$100,000 Funds Will Help Support Services**

UNMASKING THE MYTHS OF BRAIN INJURY was the theme for the first Gala Auction to raise funds for the Brain Injury Association of Washington. More than 340 guests attended the event at the Seattle Grand Hyatt Hotel on October 27, 2007. Thanks to the generosity of those guests, more than \$120,000 will benefit programs to create and strengthen support services for survivors and caregivers in Washington.

Television personality Grant Goodeve hosted the elegant event, which featured silent and live auctions. The evening included a video entitled “Living With Brain Injury” prepared by the TBI Model Systems Program with an introduction by BIAWA board member Andrea Okomski. Special guests Wallace and Donna Walsh, founding members of BIAWA, were honored.

“The BIAWA would like to extend deepest thanks to the sponsors of this event. It would not have been possible without your generous



**Wallace and Donna Walsh were honored at the Gala.**

support,” said Gene van den Bosch, BIAWA executive director.

“We would also like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to our Table Hosts, Patrons and Donors,” van den Bosch continued. “Their generous gifts will greatly benefit the support services we provide.”

“Last but not least, our utmost gratitude to the Gala committee. Without

the long hours and hard work of these volunteers, we would not have had such as beautiful and successful event,” said van den Bosch. “They truly deserve our thanks and appreciation for days and days of their time both before and after the event.”

“Thanks also to Event Success for event coordination, to Barokas Public Relations for public relations support

and volunteers Anna Mulloy, Tammy Mitchel and Annalisa Breidenbach. We couldn’t have done it without you,” van den Bosch added.

The BIAWA Executive Board also issues a very sincere thanks to those whose names were accidentally not included. We will strive to list those omitted in future issues as they are made known to us. ■

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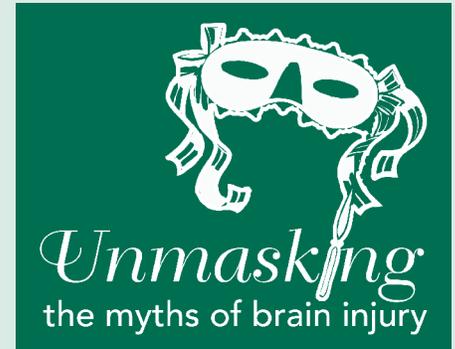
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Patrice Roney

Mari Stobbe

Valerie Wootton

## Gala Lost & Found . . .

### FOUND...

Gray gabardine woman's jacket/  
Lane Bryant

### LOST...

#### Addresses for:

- Alice and Francis Thomson
- Heather Wilson
- Ed and Vienna Lee
- Pete Brown

#### Bidders for Gala Auction Items:

- Item 156: Two Tickets to "Under a Mantle of Stars"
- Item 5020: In-House Concert with Allen and Laura Vizzutti
- Item 5025: Custom Poem

- Item 8024: Lunch at the Pink Door
- Items 221 and 8030: Gift Cards for Tutta Bella
- Item 8021: One-Hour Massage
- Item 8012: Gift Certificate PerchéNo pasta & vino
- Item 8025: Gift Certificate The Wine Shack
- Item 5039: Four Tickets to Riverdance
- Item ??: Gift Certificate for Phoenix Inn/Olympia and Mercato/Ramblin' Jacks

Please contact Shannon at  
253-238-6085 or [admin@biawa.org](mailto:admin@biawa.org)



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Writer: **Rhonda Howard**

Design: **Emily Johnson**

**Hedgehog Graphics**

Printing: **Printing Plus**

Mailing provided by

**Mail 'n Stuff Services**

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## ■ BIAWAA Briefs

### Support Services Team Helps Survivors and Caregivers

By Michael Lough and Dr. Janet Mott

In recent months the Support Services Team of BIAWA has had several opportunities to share information about BIAWA, traumatic brain injury, and resources for survivors and their families/caregivers. These opportunities have included events sponsored by the Veterans Administration programs in Seattle and American Lake, and by Bates College in Tacoma.

Through the process of sharing information, the Support Services Team has demonstrated a level of caring that has benefited survivors including veterans and their families/caregivers. In particular, two veterans who participated in the Disability Awareness events in Tacoma and Seattle were able to access appropriate and necessary healthcare after the events.

By having a team of dedicated volunteers, including BIAWA Board Members, as well as educational materials, we continue to serve survivors and their families/caregivers through sharing and caring. ■

### Focus on Spokane

BIAWA's first regional chapter, located in Spokane, has launched a new Web site, thanks to the efforts of a support group member. It can be seen at [www.biawaspokane.org](http://www.biawaspokane.org).

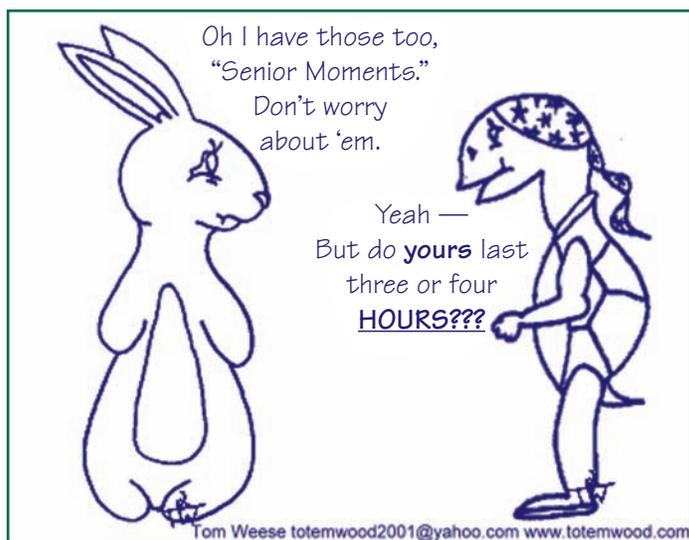
The Spokane chapter office is located at 607 S. Government Way in Spokane and keeps office hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

The support group meets the sec-

ond Wednesday of every month at St. Luke's Rehabilitation Institute. The December meeting included the annual Christmas party featuring a barbershop quartet.

"As we move forward, we continue to grow in numbers, reaching out to the community with our new Web site and our many events and support group," said Gloria Malmoe, at the Spokane office.

More information is available by calling 509-340-0786 and asking for Gloria Malmoe or Craig Sicilia. ■



Cartoon by Survivor TotemWood Tommy (Tommy Weese)

## Support Groups

**Bellevue/Eastside:** Every Monday, 1-3 p.m., St. Louise Catholic Church, Parish Center, located at 141-156th Ave. S.E., Bellevue. Contact: Michael Given 425-614-0843

**Bellingham Day:** Future meeting dates to be announced. For more information, please call Victoria 360-398-9110.

**Bellingham Evening:** 4th Monday of each month, 7-8:30 pm, at St. Joseph Hospital, South Campus Rehab Center Conference Room, Contact: Tom Day 360-733-6714

**Bremerton/Kitsap:** Two meetings: Second Thursday of each month, 3-4:30 pm, Harrison Silverdale Medical Center, 1780 Myhre Road (flagpole entrance), Silverdale (Note that May meeting for the Silverdale location has been canceled.) Fourth Wednesday of each month 4:30-6 p.m., Harrison Green Mountain Rehab Center, 2625 Wheaton Way, Suite A, Bremerton. Contact for both groups: Janice Worman OTR/L 360-475-6480

**Edmonds:** 3rd Thursday of each month, 7-9 p.m., Stevens Hospital, 21601 76th Ave. W., Edmonds. Meeting is at the West side of the cafeteria, 2nd floor of the main hospital building. Contact: Jeff Slater 425-466-0900

**Ellensburg:** 2nd Tuesday of each month, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Central Washington Disability Resource Center, 422 N. Pine St., Ellensburg. Survivors, family, caregivers and professionals welcome. Contact: Misty Fischer 509-962-9620 or 1-800-240-5978 or [misty@cwdrinfo.org](mailto:misty@cwdrinfo.org)

**Lewis County:** 1st Tuesday, 5 p.m., game night; 2nd Tuesday, 5 p.m., social group; 3rd Tuesday, 5 p.m., study group; 4th Tuesday, 5 p.m., social group. All meetings at Providence Chehalis Hospital, 500 S.E. Washington, Chehalis. Contact: Cindy Willett 360-740-7594

**Moses Lake:** Telephone support only, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Contact: Rick 509-765-5435

**Olympia:** 2nd Tuesday of each month, 6-7:30 p.m., Providence St.

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## Support Groups

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Peter Hospital Campus, Emilie Gamelin Pavilion, Third Floor Classroom, 410 Providence Lane, Olympia. Contact: Pat Gabrielse 360-493-4432

**Quad Cities:** Second Saturday, 9 a.m., Tri State Memorial Hospital, 1221 Highland Ave., Clarkston. Contact Deby Smith, 509-758-9661 or [biaqcdeby@earthlink.net](mailto:biaqcdeby@earthlink.net).

**San Juan County:** Telephone support only, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Contact: Andrea Simmons 360-378-9541

**Seattle:** 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, 4-5:30 p.m., 800 Jefferson St., Seattle. Support group meets in main room of Elderhealth. First time visitors, please call Janet at 425-778-3707 or Doris at 206-784-6820 for information on

bus routes, parking and entering the building.

**Seattle/Wallingford:** 3rd Tuesday of each month, 4-5:30 pm, Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside N., Seattle, Room 202. Contact: Janet Novinger 206-547-2526

**Sequim/Port Angeles:** 4th Thursday of each month, 4-5:30 p.m., at the Sequim Library, 630 N. Sequim Ave. Contact: Kurt 360-683-8901

**Skagit Valley:** 2nd Monday of each month, 6:30-8 p.m., Country Meadow Village, 1501 Collins Rd., Sedro Woolley. Contact: Don White 360-293-4197 or email [skagitsupport@comcast.net](mailto:skagitsupport@comcast.net)

**Spokane:** 2nd Wednesday of each month, 7-9 p.m., St. Luke's Rehab Institute, 711 S. Cowley, Spokane, Room 200.

Contact: Gloria 509-340-0786 or [justfomejustice@msn.com](mailto:justfomejustice@msn.com)

**Stanwood-Camano Island-North Snohomish County:** 3rd Monday of each month, 6:30-8 p.m., Stanwood Community and Senior Center, 7430 276th St. N.W., Stanwood. Contact: Karen Furney 425-268-2934

**Tacoma:** 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, 7-9 p.m. at TACID Center, 6315 S. 19th St., Tacoma. Contact: Penny 253-426-5735

**Tri Cities:** 1st Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m., The Neurological Resource Center, 712 Swift Blvd., #1, Richland. Contact: 509-943-8455 or [tnrc@kadlecmed.org](mailto:tnrc@kadlecmed.org)

**Vancouver:** 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, 2 p.m. at Disability Resources of Southwest Washington,

2700 N.E. Andresen, Suite D5, Vancouver. Contact: Charlie Gourde at 360-694-6790 or email: [disabilityresources@darsw.com](mailto:disabilityresources@darsw.com). Web site: [www.darsw.com](http://www.darsw.com). Telephone support only for Vancouver: Contact: Kaycie 360-750-6773

**Whidbey Island-Coupeville:** 1st Monday of each month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Whidbey General Hospital Board Room. Survivors, caregivers, family members and friends welcome. If you plan to attend, call Arlene/Allen House at 360-678-5392 or email [rwriter2000@comcast.net](mailto:rwriter2000@comcast.net).

**Yakima:** 2nd Monday of each month (with the exception of July & August), 1-2 p.m. at the Harmon Center, 101 North 65th Ave., Yakima. Contact: Nancy Dexter 509-573-3535

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