



**DISABILITY  
RESOURCE  
DIGEST**

**Volume 5 Issue 3 March 2005**

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The Disability Resource Digest (DRD) is a special project of SMD Alliance. SMD Alliance is based in Manitoba, Canada and provides strategic vision and policy direction to five SMD corporations: SMD Clearinghouse; SMD Foundation; SMD Ventures; SMD AbiTech; and SMD Services.

The vision shared among the corporations is of a "community that supports the independence, participation, and empowerment of persons of all abilities." Each SMD corporation pursues a different but complementary mandate in working toward this vision.

The DRD is prepared primarily as an informational resource for consumers, professionals and publics interested in remaining current in disability related issues. An archive of past editions of the DRD is maintained on SMD's web site (<http://www.smd-services.com/>).

Published monthly (with a single summer edition for July and August), the DRD presents summaries of, and URL addresses for, notable disability-related content on the world-wide web (WWW). The DRD focuses on recently posted content but also includes coverage other web pages of interest. The URL addresses cited in the DRD are current at the time of publication. But as those posting content on the web often revise URL addresses, the addresses in the DRD may not remain current.

The DRD is prepared for SMD Alliance by The Project Group (TPG) Consulting Cooperative Ltd., a Winnipeg-based consulting firm. Neither SMD nor TPG are responsible for the accuracy or reliability of the content cited in the DRD.

Readers interested in learning more about SMD Alliance are invited to visit: <http://www.smd-services.com/> or to contact the agency by e-mail at [info@smd.mb.ca](mailto:info@smd.mb.ca). Readers are also invited to send comments and suggestions regarding the DRD to this same e-mail address.

## ACCESSIBILITY AND TECHNOLOGY

### ACCESSIBILITY

**Access 2 Entertainment Card** - "The Motion Picture Theatre Associations of Canada and the National Advisory Council of Disability Organizations have developed a program that will provide discounted admission to the support person accompanying a person with a disability to member movie theatres across Canada."  
[http://www.access2.ca/english\\_default.html](http://www.access2.ca/english_default.html)

**Airlines wary over disability law** - by Geoff Adams-Spink (*BBC News*). "New EU legislation which will put the onus on airports to help disabled passengers could lead to increased costs, airlines say. The proposals, to be set out on Wednesday, are the first European laws on disability rights."  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4265353.stm>

**Canadian Children's Museum exhibit: access/Ability** - "A disability-awareness exhibition which focuses on human stories and personalities, presenting people with disabilities in everyday environments and activities familiar to children. It is aimed at helping visitors gain a better understanding and appreciation for the similarities and differences of people with disabilities."  
<http://canparaplegic.org/national/level2.tpl?var1=story&var2=20050128110556>

**CMS Proposes New Coverage Criteria For Wheelchairs, Scooters Announces New, More Specific Codes For Wheelchairs** - "In its continuing effort to improve Medicare coverage and payment for power wheelchairs and scooters, while protecting the Medicare program and taxpayers from abuse, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today released draft coverage criteria for these devices, as well as new codes to ensure proper payment."  
<http://www.aapd.com/News/medicare/CMScodes.html>

**Medicare Policy's Impact on Power Wheelchairs** - "Motorized wheelchairs, which once seemed destined to become as common among older adults as snapshots of grandchildren, have hit a rut. After sales tripled over five years, orders are off 40 percent in the last year. Larger suppliers have laid off workers, while smaller ones have left the business."  
<http://www.aapd.com/News/medicare/medicareimpactWC.html>

**Film industry must roll with audio description** - "A leading film-maker has criticised his industry for failing to meet the needs of blind and visually impaired people. Speaking at a ten-year celebration of audio description, organised by the RNIB, Lord David Puttnam expressed particular concern that people were not able to enjoy audio-described films from the comfort of their own home."  
[http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/news/news\\_mar\\_007.htm](http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/news/news_mar_007.htm)

**The Friendly Skies, Amended** - by Stephen Kuusisto (*Ragged Edge*). "I have just returned to Columbus, Ohio from a trip that took me to many cities. I was in Chicago, New York, New Orleans, and then New York again. I must tell you up front that I am not a man -- not

exclusively. One might think of me as a six-legged creature -- something for which the Germans likely have a single un-hyphenated word -- for I am both a man and a dog. But of course that's not exactly right. I'm a blind man who travels everywhere with a trained dog guide. Now that I am home again and catching up with my mail I've discovered news that puts my freedom to travel at risk. Every disabled American who travels with a trained service dog is right now in danger of losing the right to travel safely and independently on our nation's commercial airlines. It appears that the Department of Transportation is seeking to change federal regulations regarding the seating of passengers with dog guides or other trained assistance dogs."

<http://www.raggededgemagazine.com/focus/friendlyskieskuusisto0205.html>

**Human Rights Commission reaches accessibility settlement with Mattamy Homes** - "The Commission today announced that a settlement has been reached between a home buyer and Mattamy Homes, a major home builder in Ontario. The home buyer, who uses a wheelchair, was purchasing a new home from the builder, but required a number of alterations to the standard design in order to make the premises accessible. There was an issue as to whether the builder's policies and procedures appropriately considered accessibility changes upfront either in the contract of purchase and sale, or in the floor plan drawings. This would mean that a home buyer would have to first purchase the standard home, and then meet with a design consultant to discuss potential alterations, with no assurances that the home could be made accessible. The complaint was neither investigated nor referred to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal for a hearing. Rather, Mattamy Homes decided to resolve the issue in a direct and positive manner."

[http://www.ohrc.on.ca/english/news/e\\_pr\\_mattamy\\_settlement.shtml](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/english/news/e_pr_mattamy_settlement.shtml)

**One Million in Federal Funding Goes to Combating Technology and Access Barriers for People who are Blind or Visually Impaired** - "The American Foundation for the Blind, Technology and Employment Center at Huntington (AFB TECH) recently received \$1 million in federal funding to address technology and access barriers faced by blind or visually impaired people. The funding, awarded by the Department of Labor in December, was made possible by West Virginia Senator Robert C. Byrd who secured Congressional approval for the grant in early 2004."

<http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=47>

**Quadriplegic Taken off TIA Flight** - by Steve Huettel (*Times Staff Writer*). "The trip began like perhaps 20 others Phil Barrett says he had flown on US Airways. Barrett and his nurse checked in three hours early at Tampa International Airport. A quadriplegic, Barrett told ticket agents he was traveling with a ventilator, he says, and they put a sticker on his shirt to make sure he was seated ahead of the crowd. But before his flight left the gate Saturday, airline personnel said Barrett had to be carried off the plane. The airline decided that because his ventilator was a life-support device, it was too risky for him to fly."

<http://www.spinalcord.org/news.php?dep=1&page=0&list=349>

**Web Accessibility for All** - The Scout Report (<http://scout.wisc.edu>) notes that "Web developers may find this website from the Center on Education and Work (CEW) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison helpful. In collaboration with the university's McBurney Disability Resource Center, the Center has created this website to provide 'an array of

resources, links, and tutorials designed to help individuals and organizations create and maintain accessible web content.' Among the resources are a free accessibility checker, a slide show tutorial on the HiSoftware Web accessibility suite (available for purchase separately), and a video presentation and related information on Web Standards techniques used to make Web pages more accessible, faster, smaller, easier to maintain, ranked higher in search engines, and compatible with other devices such as PDAs. The Center has also developed the Aquatic Arts Learn by Example website, which addresses 'the most prevalent problems that commonly inhibit access' and provides examples of both inaccessible and accessible pages, along with explanations of the problems exemplified. Note that some services and support offered on the website are available only for employees of the University of Wisconsin system."

<http://www.cew.wisc.edu/accessibility/>

<http://scout.wisc.edu/Reports/NSDL/MET/2005/met-050211-research.php#3>

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## TECHNOLOGY

**Ariane 5 Technology Turns The Lights On** - "Soon we may be able to fill the bath, turn the lights on and play our favourite CD without moving from our chair or pressing a button. Technology, developed by ESA for European spacecraft, is now being used to create small sensors that can make any flat surface – walls, windows or tables – interactive."

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/02/050223165053.htm>

**Brain-controlled 'robo-arm' hope** - by Michelle Roberts (*BBC News*). "Scientists in the US have created a robotic arm that can be controlled by thought alone. Developed at the University of Pittsburgh, it has a fully mobile shoulder and elbow and a gripper that works like a hand."

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4275245.stm>

**Handheld Individual Captioning System, I-Caption(R) Makes All Performances of 'Wicked' Accessible to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** - (*PRNewswire*). "Until now the ability to attend live theatre with family and friends or to see a Broadway show on the spur of the moment has been a challenge for the deaf and hard of hearing who require special signed performances or specific seats for complete enjoyment. I-Caption(R), the new individual captioning system from Sound Associates, Inc., allows deaf patrons to be as spontaneous as anyone else attending live theatre."

[http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/050201/nytufns1\\_1.html](http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/050201/nytufns1_1.html)

**Six-Month Results of Cyberkinetics' BrainGate Neural Interface System Pilot Study Presented at AAP Meeting** - (*BUSINESS WIRE*). "Interim results of the clinical study of the BrainGate(TM) Neural Interface System will be presented today at the annual meeting of the Association of Academic Physiatrists in Tucson, Arizona. The BrainGate System is being developed by Cyberkinetics Neurotechnology Systems, Inc. (Cyberkinetics) (OTCBB: CYKN) and is the subject of an ongoing pilot study under an Investigational Device Exemption from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The ultimate goal of the BrainGate development program is to create a safe, effective and unobtrusive universal operating

system which will allow physically disabled people to quickly and reliably control a wide range of devices using their thoughts, including computers, assistive technologies and medical devices."

[http://home.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/index.jsp?ndmViewId=news\\_view&newsId=20050224005164&newsLang=en](http://home.businesswire.com/portal/site/google/index.jsp?ndmViewId=news_view&newsId=20050224005164&newsLang=en)

**Successful vision - ViewPlus sees big potential in adding ink to embosser that prints for the blind** - by Bennett Hall (*Gazette-Times*). "Incorporated in 1999, the Corvallis company makes a line of computer printers for blind people. Like other printers for the visually impaired, the ViewPlus Embosser prints text in Braille characters using raised dots. Unlike most, however, it can also produce tactile versions of graphic images, from maps to diagrams to drawings that mimic visual shading with seven levels of depth."

<http://www.gazettetimes.com/articles/2005/02/22/news/business/monbiz01.txt>

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## ADVOCACY

**Disability Activists Call for Moratorium on Starvation and Dehydration** - (*PRWEB*). "How much more evidence do we need? Disability Activists Call for Moratorium on Starvation and Dehydration. Disability activists have called for a nationwide moratorium on the dehydration and starvation of people alleged to be in 'persistent vegetative state.' This would apply to individuals who do not have an advance directive or durable power of attorney. The call for a moratorium is a reaction to the newly-published report indicating high levels of brain activity in people thought to be in 'minimally conscious state (MCS).' The study, published in the February issue of *Neurology*, discovered evidence that these individuals may hear and understand much of what is going on around them, but are unable to respond."

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2005/2/prweb208826.htm>

**Disability Matters** - (*CBC News Viewpoint*). "This column will feature three writers, each with a different disability. They all have something to say about living with a disability and how they view awareness and attitudes toward disabilities in Canada. The column will deal with the rights of people with disabilities, eliminating inequality and discrimination, and issues of self-help and consumer advocacy. Our plan is to rotate among our columnists to have a new column each month."

[http://www.cbc.ca/news/viewpoint/vp\\_disabilitymatters/index.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/viewpoint/vp_disabilitymatters/index.html)

**The Paul G. Hearne Award for Disability Rights** - "The American Bar Association Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law, in conjunction with the National Organization on Disability, is pleased to announce that nominations for the sixth annual Paul G. Hearne Award for Disability Rights are now being accepted. Each year a \$1000 cash award and a commemorative plaque is presented to an individual or an organization that has performed exemplary service in furthering the rights, dignity, and access to justice for people with disabilities."

[http://www.dpi.org/en/resources/current\\_news/01-28-05\\_hearne.htm](http://www.dpi.org/en/resources/current_news/01-28-05_hearne.htm)

**News from the Disability Rights Commission** - by John Perry. "The Disability Discrimination Bill is awaiting its third reading in the House of Lords, on the 28th February, following major

gains for the DRC and the Disability Lobby at report stage. The Bill fulfils a key Government manifesto commitment to create comprehensive rights for disabled people. It will give new rights of access to public transport and private clubs, give disabled tenants rights to reasonable adjustments from their landlords and extend the definition of disability to cover more mental health service users and people with HIV, cancer and MS."

<http://www.disabilities.afreepress.com/articles/index.cfm?artOID=282874&cp=309459>

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## EMPLOYMENT

**Employment Equity in the Federal Public Service 2003-04** - "The Public Service Modernization Act, which received Royal Assent in November 2003, promises fundamental changes to how employees are managed, supported and led. With it comes the prospect of transforming employment systems and achieving employment equity in the Public Service. On December 12, 2003, the government announced the creation of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada (PSHRMAC) to ensure that the government's agenda for renewal of human resources management throughout the Public Service is carried out. This modernization agenda is about equipping the Public Service of Canada to respond more efficiently and effectively to the evolving needs of Canadians and their diversity."

[http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/reports-rapports/ee-04-2\\_e.asp#05](http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/reports-rapports/ee-04-2_e.asp#05)

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## ENVIRONMENT

**Perchlorate found in breast milk across US** - by Maggie McKee (NewScientist). "A chemical associated with rocket fuel has turned up in most samples of breast milk and store-bought cow's milk from 23 US states, a new study reveals. The chemical may disrupt metabolism in adults and lead to mental retardation in children. Perchlorate is a component of fuel for rockets and missiles and also appears to be made naturally in the atmosphere and stored in the soil. It is widely found in the US water supply and has previously been detected in samples of dairy milk and lettuce."

<http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn7057>

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## ETHICS

**Dolly expert is to clone embryos** - "The creator of Dolly the sheep has been granted a licence to clone human embryos for medical research. Professor Ian Wilmut and Kings College London scientists will clone early stage embryos to study motor neurone disease (MND). This is the second time the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has given such permission."

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4245267.stm>

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## GENERAL INTEREST

**A genius explains** - by Richard Johnson (*The Guardian*). "Daniel Tammet is an autistic savant. He can perform mind-boggling mathematical calculations at breakneck speeds. But unlike other savants, who can perform similar feats, Tammet can describe how he does it. He speaks seven languages and is even devising his own language. Now scientists are asking whether his exceptional abilities are the key to unlock the secrets of autism."  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/weekend/story/0,,1409903,00.html>

**Access all areas** - by Mary O'Hara (*The Guardian*). "Swapping homes with like-minded people rather than staying in hotels has become the holiday choice of many a frazzled family eager to stay somewhere equipped for their needs. And now a new website is bringing a similar service to disabled people. The holiday house swapping site ([www.matchinghouses.com](http://www.matchinghouses.com)) aims to tackle one of the most frustrating problems faced by people with a disability when they travel: accessibility."  
<http://society.guardian.co.uk/societyguardian/story/0,,1415025,00.html>

**After 20 years, injured woman talks again** - (AP). "A woman unable to talk since she was hit by a drunken driver 20 years ago has begun to regain her memory and form words, sending her father 'from despair to joy.' Sarah Scantlin's family and friends plan to celebrate the development on Saturday at the health care center where she lives. 'She's 100 percent Sarah again. The family is back together, and it's just simply a joyous situation,' her father, Jim Scantlin, told CNN. Scantlin was 18 when she was struck while walking to her car in 1984. She had been aware of her surroundings but unable to make any sounds other than loud crying until a month ago, when she told staff members, 'OK, OK.'"  
<http://cnnstudentnews.cnn.com/2005/US/02/11/recovering.woman.ap/>

**Arthur and Daniel** - by Michael Bailey (*Ragged Edge*). "When the celebrated American playwright Arthur Miller died last week he left behind a body of thought-provoking work. In an outpouring of tributes, Miller has been eulogized as a genius, a prophet and a champion of the weak. The syndicated columnist E. J. Dionne, Jr. wrote that 'Miller's understanding of human frailty created one of the great ethical imperatives of his work: the demand that respect be offered to other human beings despite their shortcomings.' Overlooked in all the tributes (an exception being the obituary that appeared in the Los Angeles Times on Sunday, February 13) is the fact that in 1962 Miller and his wife Inge Morath had a son named Daniel. Daniel was born with Down syndrome and was immediately removed from his family and 'placed' in the Southbery Training School in Connecticut. Miller seldom or never visited his son and did not mention him in his autobiography or ever acknowledge him in any way."  
<http://www.raggededgemagazine.com/mediacircus/arthurmiller.html>

**Athletes with disabilities encouraged to register for 2005 World Masters Games** - "The Edmonton 2005 World Masters Games is the largest international multi-sport event, attracting 16,000 elite and recreational athletes who will compete in 27 sporting events and 41 different disciplines. This event offers sport enthusiasts 25 years and older a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate at an international level with other masters athletes from as many as 100 different countries over 10 competition days. The Games will be as inclusive

as possible for all competitors regardless of ability. There are sports with events specifically for athletes with disabilities within Athletics, Rowing, Shooting, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, and Triathlon. As well, athletes with disabilities can compete in any individual or team sport as per age and grade categories."

<http://canparaplegic.org/national/level2.tpl?var1=story&var2=20050215133229>

**CSI's' Hall Takes Issue With Two Oscar Nominees** - by Beck/Smith (*Hollywood Exclusive*).

"CSI: Crime Scene Investigation's' Robert David Hall celebrates his personal 100th episode Feb. 24 -- not bad, considering the actor known as Doc Robbins came in initially for a one-shot guesting. There was a time he couldn't have imagined such success on a huge international hit series. (Spoiler alert: the following addresses a plot element of 'Million Dollar Baby' that moviegoers who've yet to see the film may wish to avoid.) Some 26 years ago, the one-time track and field athlete was nearly killed when an 18-wheel truck crashed through a freeway center divider and hit his small foreign car."

<http://www.spinalcord.org/news.php?dep=1&page=0&list=279>

**Dyslexia slows drivers' reactions** - (*New Scientist*). "Dyslexia can impair a driver's reactions as much as a moderate drinking session. That is the conclusion of a small study which compared how quickly dyslexic and non-dyslexic drivers react to traffic signs. Those with dyslexia, which is characterised by difficulties with reading and writing, took on average 30% longer to react. The controversial finding will raise questions about whether people with dyslexia should have extra tests before being allowed behind the wheel. Drivers just over the UK's alcohol limit, which can be exceeded by drinking two pints of beer, are typically 10% slower than normal to react."

<http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn6951>

**Eye on Education: Teaching Students with Disabilities: Applying and Learning Scientific Habits of Mind** - by Susan Musante.

"Jay Hatch, associate professor of biological sciences at the University of Minnesota (UMN) and associate curator of fishes at the Bell Museum of Natural History in Minneapolis, has been a scientist for over 25 years. During his career, he has applied innovative thinking and persistence in tackling myriad scientific challenges. When Kate Jirik, a student with severe physical disabilities, enrolled in his introductory biology course, Hatch was suddenly faced with a new set of challenges."

[http://www.aibs.org/eye-on-education/eye\\_on\\_education\\_2005\\_01.html](http://www.aibs.org/eye-on-education/eye_on_education_2005_01.html)

**Meet the real Rain Man** - by Joanna Walters (*TimesOnline*). "Kim Peek bowls into the B&B and, with a slightly sidelong gait, heads straight for the small kitchen, where he tilts his brow quizzically and regards the chef with a beady eye. Peek's father, Fran, who has rushed through the hall to catch up with his son, says to the chef: 'Give him your birth date.' 'December 12, 1972,' says a bemused John Davis, as Kim crinkles up his eyes behind thick glasses and cracks a gleeful grin. 'You were born on a Tuesday, this year it's a Monday, you will retire in 2037 on a Saturday,' Kim says. He then rattles off the teams, scores and home-run details of the 1972 baseball World Series and, when Davis names his hometown in Oregon, Kim lists all the postcodes, utility-company addresses, roads and TV stations that he has memorised from local directories and atlases. He can repeat this exercise for anywhere in the United States."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-7-1488077,00.html>

**Meet the Sexperts** - "Who are these sexual know-it-alls? 'Love Bites' columnists Mitch Tepper and Lizzi McNeff may look like the people next door, but they're also qualified sex counselors and researchers--and wheelchair users--whose skills and personal experience have informed NM readers for nearly a decade."

[http://www.newmobility.com/review\\_article.cfm?id=968&action=browse](http://www.newmobility.com/review_article.cfm?id=968&action=browse)

**Two faculty members honoured for community leadership** - "A biologist who helps build devices for the disabled and a social work professor who has contributed to a broader understanding of poverty and inequality are this year's winners of University of Victoria Community Leadership Awards."

<http://ring.uvic.ca/05feb03/news/leadership.html>

**Utah Selected to Host 2007 Deaflympic Winter Games** - (*BUSINESS WIRE*). "Utah Governor Jon M. Huntsman Jr. today announced Utah has been chosen as the site of the 2007 Deaflympic Winter Games. The athletic and cultural events will draw more than 400 deaf athletes and 4,000 fans from at least 24 countries to Salt Lake City and Park City."

[http://www.deaftoday.com/v3/archives/2005/02/utah\\_selected\\_t.html](http://www.deaftoday.com/v3/archives/2005/02/utah_selected_t.html)

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## Government

### CANADA

**Canadians with Disabilities Once Again Left Without Supports** - "Today's federal Budget improves tax fairness for Canadians with disabilities but does nothing to improve the situation of those most in need," said Marie White Chairperson of CCD. 'The improved tax measures are a positive step in the right direction in addressing the need for investment in supports, BUT, they are of no benefit to the vast majority of Canadians with disabilities who live in poverty and have no taxable income,' said White."

<http://www.ccdonline.ca/publications/media-releases/budget022305.htm>

### UNITED STATES

**AAHomecare Will Ask Congress, Administration to Focus on Homecare as a Solution to the Growing Healthcare Crisis in the US** - "As the President's 2006 budget and Congressional debates focus on healthcare costs for seniors and the disabled, the American Association for Homecare (AAHomecare) will ask the administration and new Congress to support homecare as a patient-preferred and cost-effective solution to the nation's growing healthcare crisis."

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=19800>

**Bush mum on future of disability benefits** - "Anthony Williams is a Social Security recipient. He isn't elderly; he's 44. He isn't retired; he's a quadriplegic, crippled when an armed robber shot him 17 years ago. And he's worried. He wonders how any overhaul of Social Security would affect his monthly check — and those going to the millions of other disabled Americans who rely on the system. 'I've been upset ever since President Bush started talking about this,' said Williams, who lives in an apartment in Philadelphia. 'If it's going to



























