



GOOD NEWS:

WORKPLACE INJURY INSPIRES H & S CAREER

“Green” is not one of the first words to come to mind when describing WorkSafeNB, but that is how one client, Darren Shaw, sees the organization.

“WorkSafeNB’s a firm believer in recycling,” Shaw said. “They think green; they recycled me,” he joked.

Shaw is referring to his experience since injuring his shoulder at a construction site in March 2010, a journey that has taken him from a career in construction to one in the health and safety field.



Darren Shaw

When he headed out the morning of March 1 on the 60-minute drive from his home in McAdam to the work site in Fredericton, the icy roads were a worry. Little did he know that it was not a highway accident that would change his life forever that day, but a workplace one.

Shaw, a seasoned construction worker with 24 years experience, was doing drywall in a building

in Fredericton, working with 12-foot sheets of drywall, 5/8” thick.

“I can remember like yesterday, the crew and I headed up the stairs to the third and fourth floors with our tools and power cords,” Shaw said. Once ready to begin work, Shaw reminded his co-worker to be more careful: “Last week you dropped four sheets on me and you could have hurt yourself even worse,” he told him.

But Shaw’s reminder was in vain. On their third sheet of drywall, Shaw’s co-worker dropped his end of a sheet on the floor while reaching for a tool. When the sheet hit the floor, it jerked the end that Shaw was holding back, snapping his right arm behind him. “I hoped the snap was the drywall, but unfortunately, it wasn’t. I stood there helpless while looking at my dangling arm. I didn’t have any strength in my arm to move it - all I could feel was the pain,” he said. Fashioning a makeshift sling with the arm of his jacket, Shaw was taken to the Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital, where he was seen by a doctor and sent home.

His journey on the road to rehab began shortly later when he met with WorkSafeNB case manager, Katherine Cole, and they discussed his treatment plan. Shaw was admitted to the rehabilitation centre in Grand Bay-Westfield on March 29, where physiotherapist Gail Brown worked with him to improve his shoulder mobility. Shaw attended pain management classes and received nutrition counselling.

“Being poor is part of being an injured worker. People don’t understand – you only get a certain percentage of your pre-injury earnings. You get behind in your bills, and at the rehab centre

you’re away from your family. It’s tough! Some days I was just so discouraged, but the counselling helped me regain my self-confidence. I also learned to eat healthier and I walk two to three miles a day. I’ve lost 40 pounds.”

Shaw made the best of his time at the rehab centre. In the daytime he worked hard to heal, and in the evenings, this self-described “good old country boy” organized outings and social events for the other clients. He became the go-to person for clients who needed someone to talk to or a shoulder to cry on.

His rehab was progressing well, but in the last week of July, the week he was slated to be released, Shaw suffered a setback when his arm “gave out.”

After a three-month break he returned to the rehab centre and was re-evaluated – it was determined that he could not continue in construction. He met with Richard Grasse, a vocational rehabilitation specialist at WorkSafeNB, and after several interviews and testing, the team identified that Shaw had an aptitude for the health and safety field.

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Save the date!

**WorkSafeNB’s 32nd Annual
Health & Safety Conference**
September 26-28, 2012
Saint John Trade & Convention
Centre, Saint John, N.B.
Registration opens June 15!

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE



Gerard Adams

For most people, moving to a new city to take on a demanding job in an industry in which you have no experience may be extremely daunting. But for Gerard Adams, the biggest challenge in moving to Saint John to begin his new job as WorkSafeNB's president and chief executive officer may just be in having to switch allegiance from the Moncton Wildcats to their rivals, the Saint John Sea Dogs.

That's because Adams is confident that his experience and skills will help him easily adapt to the world of occupational health and safety and workers compensation. And it

helps that "WorkSafeNB is obviously a well-run organization," he said.

Adams began his term as president and CEO on February 27. Before joining WorkSafeNB, he lived in Moncton, where he served as president and CEO of Credit Union Central of New Brunswick for two terms, most recently from 2005-2011. While there, Adams was instrumental in creating Atlantic Central, which saw the merger of the three Maritime Credit Union Centrals into one service entity.

"My work at Credit Union Central was winding down, and I was looking for the next challenge. I saw a link between my skills and what this job demanded – experience working with boards and multi-stakeholder groups, government relations and policy development."

Adams also has significant experience is legislation, important since WorkSafeNB administers four acts. As president of Newfoundland Liquor Corporation, Adams helped affect sweeping changes to the *Liquor Control Act*.

As president, Adams said his focus is "preserving a system that appears to be working very well by maintaining that balance between affordable assessments for employers and acceptable levels of compensation for workers.

"To do this, we must ensure that however workplaces and the environmental landscape change that we're [WorkSafeNB] in a position to react to those changes."

While he admits getting brought up to speed over the first few weeks was somewhat overwhelming and the learning curve for the industry is a big challenge, Adams is appreciative of the support he's received from the staff. And he's committed to maintaining that support, he said.

"As I guide the organization through the next five years, I want to ensure that WorkSafeNB continues to be an enjoyable place to work and that the employees know and feel they are contributing to its success – that they know what their roles are and understand how important their jobs are, because all their jobs are important. When people like their jobs and the environment in which they work, then everyone benefits."

"Good communication" is how he plans to maintain employee support, and earn that of all of New Brunswick's workers and employers. "Communication builds trust, and I will be as open and honest as can be."

Born in Newfoundland, Adams has lived in each of the Atlantic provinces, with the exception of Prince Edward Island. He and his wife Joan have been married for 32 years, and have two grown children and an 8-month-old grandson.

His other loves include music and sports. A classic rock fan, over the last few years Adams has traveled to see U2, Elton John, Paul Simon and Tom Petty, to name a few. And like most Canadians, he is an avid hockey fan. A new Saint John Sea Dogs fan, he is also a Chicago Blackhawks fan. But we'll forgive him for that. •

CELEBRATE SAFETY – CELEBRATE NAOSH WEEK!



North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week highlights the importance of increasing understanding, raising awareness and preventing injuries and illness in the workplace, at home and in the community.

NAOSH was conceived when labour representatives from Canada, Mexico and the United States met during the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) talks in the mid 90s. The Canadian

Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE) was asked to expand its Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Week into a North American initiative and the logistics for NAOSH Week were laid out between 1997 and 2000. The three countries continue to celebrate NAOSH Week, which is led in Canada by the CSSE, in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) and Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC), in concert

with North American partners. This year's theme is *A Commitment for Life! Making It Work*.

New Brunswick began celebrating the safety week in 1990. NAOSH Week activities this year include a series of seven breakfasts featuring health and safety discussions for JHSC members across the province, sponsored by the New Brunswick chapter of CSSE, HRSDC and WorkSafeNB. •

FOR MORE ON NAOSH WEEK, VISIT: www.naosh.org/

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING



The Allain sisters laid a wreath April 28, 2011 in memory of their father, Omer Allain, at the unveiling of a monument honouring workers killed, injured or who became ill on the job. Pictured in front of the monument at Lily Lake in Saint John are, from left to right, Julie, Josée and Martine Allain.

To his employer, Omer Allain was a hard worker and a “joy to have around.”

To his co-workers, he was a mentor and the “go to” guy.

And to the townspeople of Bouctouche, he was a hockey hero.

But to Martine, Julie and Josée Allain, he was just Dad. And not just any Dad. “As a father, he was the best,” Martine Allain said.

Omer Allain died on January 30, 2008, after falling 35 metres from a work platform at the Canaport LNG terminal. He was 44 years old.

Four years later, his friends and co-workers still mourn his loss.

“We were very sad to have lost him,” said Styve Dumouchel, who was the project manager at Lorneville Mechanical Contractors, Allain’s employer at the time of his death. “He was a

happy person, always in a good mood, energetic, and the guy you went to when you needed things done. He was one of our top workers, and very conscientious. But he also liked to have fun, telling jokes and kidding around a lot.”

Dumouchel said Allain’s death was a terrific blow to the company. “It was very emotional for everyone. He had a lot of cousins working alongside him. Everyone felt his loss. And in addition to the emotional impact, there was a considerable financial impact as well,” he said.

Dumouchel, who considered Allain a close friend, said he was personally affected. “I went through a three-month depression following his death. I have his photo in my truck and am reminded of him every day.”

Martine, now 27, and the eldest of Allain’s daughters, fondly recalls how her father would drive home to Bouctouche every weekend, and make them a big breakfast on Sunday. “He was the cook of the family. Our favourite was French toast,” she said.

“He was a people person, very social, a hard worker, but above all, a good husband, and Dad. He loved sports and the outdoors, and would take us for long walks in the woods or to the rink to practise hockey. He came to every one of our games, and was very supportive and encouraging.”

Hockey was his great passion, although it never came before his family or work, Martine explained. At the age of 8, Omer Allain became obsessed with Jacques Lemaire of the Montreal Canadiens, who wore #25. A gifted hockey player like his idol, he wore Lemaire’s number throughout his playing career – from minor hockey through high school and on to senior league. As captain, he led the Clément-Cormier High School hockey team to its first provincial championship in 1981-82, and ever since, as homage to Omer, captains at Clément-Cormier have worn #25. The town of Bouctouche also honours Omer, with #25 seen on many license plates.

What is usually one of the happiest days in a person’s life, their wedding day, will be bittersweet for both Martine and Julie, 25, as both girls will walk down the aisle this year without their father at her side. Julie, an MBA graduate, lives in Red Deer.

“He saw us all graduate from high school, but has missed our graduations from university. And he will miss our weddings,” Martine said tearfully, adding that he would have been so proud to see his youngest daughter Josée, 23, training to become a boilermaker, like her father, her grandfather and uncles.

“It’s sad for us, and overcoming his death is a challenge, but unfortunately it happens,” she said.

But it doesn’t have to. As a physiotherapist, Martine sees a lot of injuries that could be prevented. “It’s important to get the word out about the importance of safety at work and for workers to know they have the right to be and feel safe at work. Nobody wakes up in the morning thinking that today I will get killed at work. My father had been doing his job since he was 18, and was used to working in heights. Some workers after so many years of working in high-risk jobs feel comfortable and start skipping safety steps, thinking ‘nothing will happen, I have been doing this for 25 years.’ I also think for males, there is more peer pressure at work sites. It is ‘Who is wearing their protective mask? Who is wearing their harness for low heights? And they may get teased for it.’”

April 28 is the National Day of Mourning, a time to remember those workers who have been injured, become ill or lost their lives on the job. But to the Allains, their family, friends and co-workers, every day is a Day of Mourning. So as we remember workers such as Omer Allain on April 28, remember also to ensure that every day you, your workers and co-workers work safely. Because one shortcut can result in a lifetime of sorrow. •

FOR A LIST OF DAY OF MOURNING CEREMONIES, CONTACT THE NEW BRUNSWICK FEDERATION OF LABOUR OFFICE AT 506 857-2125.

OROMOCTO MAN LIVES DISABILITY AWARENESS WEEK SLOGAN

READY AND ABLE TO WORK!

FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS



Greg Legere

Sharpening knives was not the career Greg Legere had originally planned. If you had asked the Oromocto businessman that question 33 years ago, his answer would have been short.

“An oil burner mechanic.”

But today, those old aspirations are a distant memory. Seated in a wheelchair behind the cash register at the Knife & Key Corner, a business he’s owned and operated for 30 years, a 54-year-old Legere sometimes drifts back to his younger days.

In February 1979, Legere was a fresh-faced 21-year-old, recently married with a baby on the way. He enjoyed his job as an oil burner mechanic, earning competitive wages and working with his hands. But a car accident one Sunday afternoon took it all away.

“It left me with a broken neck and paralysis from the arm pits down. Luckily I still had the use of my arms.”

In addition to the shock of being told he’d never walk again, he soon realized that his job was also lost.

“You won’t find too many residential building projects with wheelchair access,” he said. “It was a tough pill to swallow.”

After his son was born in April, just months after the accident, there was little question Legere would need to rethink his career plan. He started by earning his GED, and then enrolled at UNB in Fredericton.

“That was a bit of a nightmare,” he said, reflecting on the experience. “I was newly married, a new father, juggling classes, it was very difficult. And if you’ve ever been on campus, it’s basically just a big hill. In the winter, getting between classes in different buildings was next to impossible.”

So, with his GED in hand, Legere took a chance on a sales position with Knife & Key Corner in January 1981. His experience working with his hands proved invaluable as he quickly learned the arts of engraving and blade sharpening. His customer service skills came naturally. After a few short months, Legere bought the owner out and never looked back.

“That was April 1, 1981. I couldn’t imagine at the time that I’d still be at it more than 30 years later. But here I am.”

Today, Legere’s store is a familiar sight to locals, having held the same commercial space in the Oromocto Mall since its inception. Known for his precision and attention to detail, Legere has two part-time employees who help ensure the operation runs smoothly.

“It’s nice to have reliable help. It lets me enjoy my time off, knowing things are being looked after here.”

Legere said the changes he’s witnessed since his accident are almost immeasurable.

“Society has come a long way because we didn’t even have curb cuts back then, no city did. I had to learn to jump curbs with my chair, something that people don’t need to do much these days.”

Because of these hurdles, it was often easier for a wheelchair user to simply stay at home. But thanks to improvements with technology and legislation, Legere said that’s no longer the case.

“Now someone in a wheelchair doesn’t get a second look.”

While Legere notes society is more inclusive and accessible than it once was, there are still situations he encounters that most people might not think of.

“If I need to get a product off a top shelf at the department store, I still need someone to help me. But that pales in comparison to the way it was in the early 1980s.”

To celebrate Legere’s achievements and those of the other 118,000 New Brunswickers with physical challenges, 2012 will mark the 25th consecutive annual Disability Awareness Week. The slogan for the week, which runs from May 27-June 2, is *Disability Awareness Week – Ready and Able to Work!* It’s a slogan Greg Legere has lived for more than 30 years now. •

FOR MORE ON DISABILITY AWARENESS WEEK VISIT:
www.gnb.ca/0048/DAW2012/IndexDAW2012-e.asp

ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

POSITIVE RESULTS

One of the lowest injury frequency rates in the country, reduced claim durations, and a funding status of 116.9% are some of the highlights featured in WorkSafeNB's *2011 Annual Report*, released recently.

The report includes WorkSafeNB's financial statements, as well as goals and targets, set by the board of directors, and performance measurements.

In 2011, WorkSafeNB met the targets for safety, return to work, balance and staff satisfaction and engagement. Injury frequency decreased by 1%, with New Brunswick recording one of the lowest injury frequency rates in the country. Claim duration decreased by 1.2%.

"Because injuries and claim duration drive our costs, this is good news for everyone," said Sharon

Tucker, chair of WorkSafeNB's board of directors. "I'm proud of these results. They tell me that, more and more, workers and employers are viewing these injuries as unacceptable, rather than inevitable. And while, most importantly, it means a reduction in the physical and emotional toll of occupational injuries and disease, it also means a reduction in costs," she said.

As a result of lower than budgeted claims and administration costs, WorkSafeNB recorded an operating surplus of \$55 million, resulting in a funded position of 116.9%.

The strong funding position has allowed for a decrease in the provisional average assessment, from \$2.08 in 2010 to \$2.00 in 2011, and to \$1.70 for 2012. New Brunswick's assessment rate continues to remain the lowest in Atlantic Canada.

"Maintaining a fully funded position benefits both employers and workers," said Gerard Adams, WorkSafeNB's president and chief executive officer. "Full funding contributes to rate stability by reducing the impact of year-to-year fluctuations, disasters and other unexpected events. And it means secured benefit payments for our injured workers," he said.

"I congratulate the workers and employers of New Brunswick who helped us achieve these results by reducing injuries and lost-time claims and claim durations. And I thank WorkSafeNB's board of directors, its management and staff for their continued commitment and hard work toward our vision of healthy and safe workplaces in New Brunswick."

The *2011 Annual Report* is available online at www.worksafenb.ca. •

GOOD NEWS: *Continued from page 1*

With no computer skills, Shaw was sent for computer training. From there, he was enrolled in the Health, Safety and Environmental Processes Program, in conjunction with Don Sayers & Associates, at the University of Fredericton. He recently completed the program, and was one of only a handful whose pass "exceeded standards." This was supplemented with courses through the New Brunswick Construction Safety Association.

The health and safety field seems to be exactly where Shaw belongs. "I'm very excited about my new career. I have a passion for health and safety," he said. "With 24 years in construction, I've seen lots of tricks that workers pull. I also know that many of them don't know their three rights and are afraid of reporting injuries. I have a lot of insight into what goes on."

Shaw's passion is evident. He excelled in his courses, finishing them well ahead of time. His lowest mark was an 82, with most in the 90s. He has received certification as a safety

co-ordinator from the New Brunswick Safety Construction Association, and is currently working on a guided practicum with Eastern Safety Services at the potash mine in Sussex.

Shaw, who spent 8 ½ years as a volunteer EMT said he likes to help people. "My end goal is to be a compliance officer. I got hurt and I don't want anyone to go through what I did."

Shaw has high praise for his team at WorkSafeNB. "My case worker, Katherine Cole, works so hard for her clients. Her professionalism is second to none. And Richard Grasse, who I call the 'prince of kindness,' always offered encouragement and support. He goes the extra mile to make sure his clients are getting the best chance of a career. Gail Brown, my physiotherapist, got me up and going again with her remarkable abilities. Her kind words of wisdom and guidance are greatly appreciated. And Monica Brown was the greatest support clerk that any department could ever have."

"I am thankful for WorkSafeNB's mentorship and guidance," he said. "They got me from my worst to my best and saw me at both. But at the same time, they don't make you anything – you make yourself."

The praise is reciprocated. "Darren is such a positive client to work with and put so much effort into his retraining program. From the start, he maintained a strong interest in health and safety, hoping to work in an area where he could contribute to accident prevention and the safety of others," Richard Grasse said.

"He is very appreciative of the help he has received and expresses this whenever you speak with him, which is typical of Darren. But as I often remind him, the staff at WorkSafeNB can only offer help and support, he's the one doing the work. It has been a pleasure working with Darren and I'm confident he will make a positive contribution (or as he says 'pay it forward') in a new career in occupational health and safety." •

IN THE COURTS



BLANCHARD READY MIX LTD., pleaded guilty March 3 to an offence under paragraph 9(1)(c) of the *OHS Act* for a serious accident that occurred at its quarry in Belledune. On November 4, 2010, an employee of a trucking company was delivering cement powder to the quarry. As he was standing on the steps of his truck's cab, putting on his safety footwear, an unattended off-road dump truck on a ramp near the crusher started to roll. Due to loud

noises in the quarry, no one was able to warn the truck driver that the dump truck was rolling towards him. The dump truck struck the driver's truck, crushing him between. Blanchard Ready Mix Ltd., was charged with failing to ensure an employee (the driver of the unattended off-road dump truck) complied with the requirements for powered mobile equipment operators when leaving that equipment unattended. The Blanchard employee failed to park the truck on level ground and remove the key. Blanchard was fined \$25,000.

WALMART pleaded guilty March 20 to three offences under subsection 47(1) of the *OHS Act*,

after an accident on January 5, 2011 resulted in the death of 17-year-old Patrick Desjardins. **DENIS MORIN**, a supervisor at Walmart, pleaded guilty to two offences, also under subsection 47(1).

Desjardins was electrocuted while using a floor polisher on a wet garage floor at the Walmart auto repair shop in Grand Falls. All the charges related to failure to inspect, maintain and ensure proper use of the polisher and a faulty extension cord, and for allowing an employee to use the faulty equipment.

Walmart was fined \$100,000, plus a \$20,000 victim services surcharge, and Morin was fined \$880, plus a victim services surcharge of \$176, for a total of \$1,056.

PILOT PROGRAM PROVIDES INJURED WORKERS WITH NEW SHOULDERS TO LEAN ON

When a 2005 injury review showed that clients with soft tissue shoulder injuries were taking longer than other diagnostic groups to get back to work, WorkSafeNB took a closer look.

Pam Wasson, the rehabilitation program analyst for physiotherapy with the Program Development and Evaluation Department, was tasked with studying how these claims were managed and resolved.

"Shoulder injuries had become what lower back injuries were in the early 80s," Wasson said, noting that even before the review there was a general feeling among WorkSafeNB case management staff that clients with shoulder injuries weren't doing as well as they could be.

"We found that a lot of time was spent waiting for specialists and tests that did not result in necessary surgery or orthopedic procedures, so we needed to determine if there was a better way of triaging clients."

Wasson studied the 2005 claims and identified an opportunity to improve access to the appropriate medical and rehabilitation. Dr. Doug Margison,

WorkSafeNB's chief medical officer, established a joint committee between the New Brunswick Medical Society and WorkSafeNB committee to establish care maps for best practice management of shoulder injuries. As a result, a shoulder care map pilot program was rolled out in the province's southwest region between October 2009 and October 2010, bringing orthopedic surgeons, specially selected physiotherapists and case management teams together.

"The idea was to implement a more streamlined care model so that injured workers received or benefited from the appropriate care more quickly, to accelerate access for those that need to see a surgeon, and ensure that those with non-surgical conditions receive the best, evidence-based rehabilitation."

Through a request for proposals in the southwest region, WorkSafeNB selected seven physiotherapists with interest, experience and expertise in treating shoulder injuries. They assessed the clients' injuries to determine which clients should be fast-tracked to the surgeons, and which need a

good rehabilitation program.

With a 91% return-to-work rate, the pilot program proved successful. The average claim length was reduced by 55%, with the workers spending on average 18.5 weeks on a claim, down from 41 weeks in 2005. As a result, the program expanded to the southeast and northeast regions in July 2011.

Wasson said the project has been well received by the injured workers and surgeons, as well as other health care professionals.

"This is a new model of collaboration between orthopedic surgeons and physiotherapists. The surgeons appreciate the assessment and recommendations from the physiotherapists, as it enables them to prioritize the clients who most require their services," adding that Dr. Margison was instrumental in securing the support of the orthopedic surgeons.

Because the initiative produced such a sharp reduction in claim durations, a similar project for lower back injuries is scheduled for April. •