



# CONTACT

## GOOD NEWS:

# INJURED WORKER FINDS GREENER PASTURES

It just takes a split second to change a life forever. Some might regard that statement as a tired cliché, but for Steve Morris it's not a cliché – it's his reality.

The split second that drastically changed his life occurred on November 18, 2008, when he fell more than 18 feet from a building he was working on to the frozen ground below.

A roofer for more than 30 years, Morris was following all the proper safety procedures the day



Steve Morris

of his accident. He was wearing his fall arrest, and was standing on scaffolding before getting on the roof, where he would hook up his fall restraint, when a board at the back of the scaffolding let go.

Morris suffered extensive trauma – he sustained severe head and neck injuries, including a closed traumatic brain injury, bilateral rib fractures and bilateral pulmonary contusions. His injuries were

so severe in fact, that Dr. Eric McCartney, a surgical consultant for WorkSafeNB and former trauma surgeon said in a follow-up report: "I found it simply amazing that he was still alive. The list of injuries and complications that he withstood was just overwhelming!"

Morris stayed in the intensive care unit at the Saint John Regional Hospital until he was transferred to the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation on January 6, 2009, from where he was discharged on February 20, 2009, after what Dr. C O'Connell of the SCCR described as "an impressive recovery."

"I just wanted to get home," Morris said.

In April 2010, less than two years after an accident that many thought a miracle he survived, Morris was attempting a return to work. However, it was not an easy road. His former roofing employer was willing to accommodate him, but it didn't work out.

Following that, through vocational planning activities, Morris and the rehabilitation specialist identified potential occupations in the furniture refinishing and cabinetry fields. On-the-job assessments, supervised by a WorkSafeNB occupational therapist, were arranged with potential employers. Despite Morris's best efforts, neither of these opportunities worked out.

It was determined that Morris needed cognitive and physical rehabilitation and, in December 2009, Morris was admitted to WorkSafeNB's rehabilitation centre in Grand Bay-Westfield, for a six-week period.

Despite the challenges he faced as a result of his severe injuries, Morris wasn't about to give up

on his search for employment. In July 2010, with the help of a Neil Squire Society job search consultant, an opportunity was identified with Carman Creek Golf Course for a maintenance worker/groundskeeper position. Not one to let an opportunity slip by, Morris contacted the owner, Terry Avery. "I always had an interest in landscaping, and figured why not?"

Avery interviewed Morris, who disclosed his accident history and its continuing complications, including his short-term memory problems and occasional seizures. "He took a chance on me," Morris said.

A WorkSafeNB On-the-Job Training Program was implemented to provide training support for both Morris and his new employer. In addition, Colleen Kinch, a WorkSafeNB occupational therapist, completed on-site visits to review Morris's job duties and offer ergonomic strategies.

Follow-up with Morris and his employer during the On-the-Job Training Program confirmed Morris's continued positive attitude and his focus on rehabilitation. Morris continues to enjoy his work at Carman Creek, and notes it is a "good fit". "I'm quite happy here. And I'm only five minutes away from home!"

One reason why it was a good fit was Avery's support of people with physical challenges.

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WorkSafeNB wishes you a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

# BOARD MEMBER PROFILE



Maureen Wallace

As a mother of four, safety was always paramount to Maureen Wallace. As a worker, she's been an advocate for nurses across the province, having served on the New Brunswick Nurses Union's Executive Council from 1979 to 1990, before serving a four-year term as vice-president. She's also the chairperson for the province's Pension Committee for Part-Time and Seasonal Employees.

So when the New Brunswick Nurses' Union asked to nominate Wallace to WorkSafeNB's board of directors as a worker representative, she said she jumped at the chance.

"I've always had a keen interest in safety," Wallace said. "I believe it is inbred in mothers. I was very vigilant about safety while raising my kids. My son used to complain about having 'Safety Bear' for a mother."

Though her children are grown now (between the ages of 20-30), they still call her 'Safety Bear'. That's because her interest in health and safety hasn't waned. Since joining the Moncton Hospital in 1978, Wallace has lent her expertise to the hospital's Back Injury Steering Committee and Joint Health and Safety Committee. She currently works in palliative care and in rehab as the discharge planning co-ordinator, a position she's held since 1999,

where she helps set up care for patients when they leave the hospital.

Wallace notes that a common misconception about the board is that it is comprised of two opposing groups – worker representatives and employer representatives. "I don't see us as two opposing groups at all," she said. "It may seem that way on the surface, but when you scratch below the surface we share a lot of common ground. Our interests are mutual, because what's good for workers is good for the employers. A safer workplace means happier, more productive workers and reduced accident frequency, which in turn means lower rates and a better bottom line for employers, not to mention the emotional benefits. Also, with the competition for good workers growing, if employers prove commitment to the safety and well-being of their workers, it provides them with a competitive edge in recruiting."

Wallace said when she joined the board she was aware of the board's role in governance and policy setting, but was unaware "of the complexity of the organization."

"It has been fascinating to learn how the various departments of WorkSafeNB play their role and how the components all fit together like gear cogs. For example, decisions made by the case worker impact the injured worker's return to work which, in turn, impacts the financial picture."

She was also "impressed with the level of financial stewardship at the board level," and is very proud of the financial position in which WorkSafeNB, under the board's stewardship, finds itself. (Because of its strong funded position, WorkSafeNB just announced a reduction in the average assessment rate for 2013.)

"We [the board] take great pride in the disciplined approach the organization takes. I feel strongly that you must be disciplined and not just jump into the 'hot sexy topic' of the moment, but use statistical data to base your priorities."

She said she's also proud to see the overall injury frequency moving downward. "But we cannot become complacent," she said. "In fact, I believe we have to redouble our efforts to maintain this downward trend. We must continue working very, very hard at changing the culture that still persists that workplace accidents are bound to happen – we must instill in the public that accidents are not bound to happen. One of the biggest challenges before us is getting the public to accept zero tolerance."

Another significant challenge before the board is "the incidence and severity of injuries in the health care industry. We really need to work hard at addressing this, and we are. We have made nursing homes a focus firm. The fact that some employers in health care, such as nursing homes are with the assessed rate-payers and others, such as hospitals, are self-insured poses yet another set of challenges."

With the many demands of a very rewarding but stressful nursing career and those she faces as a board member, Wallace knows too well the importance of work-life balance. When she is not working at the hospital or fulfilling her duties as a WorkSafeNB board member, she can be found working in her large garden. She also loves hiking and "plodding", her term for the pace of running she does. In the winter, Wallace has "tons of fun" playing hockey and serving as captain of a local women's hockey team. Maureen and her husband, Bob, reside in Riverview. •

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Avery, who has been awarded the Randy Dickinson Inclusion Award, focuses on the worker's abilities rather than their disability.

"When I met Steve, he seemed like a pretty good guy, and he was keen to learn. We started him off picking up balls, but now he has the most important job on the course – mowing the

greens. He does a wonderful job and is one of my best employees," Avery said.

Katherine Cole, Morris's case worker at WorkSafeNB, also praised Morris's efforts. "He's very reasonable, a wonderful guy and very motivated. He wanted to get back to work, and despite all the odds against him, he did. He is

independent again," she said.

Morris advises other injured workers facing a similar situation to never give up. "Where there's a will, there's a way." He said even though there were times he felt like giving up, thinking about his family always made him persevere. •

# COMPANIES RECOGNIZED AT 32<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCE

On September 27, at its Company Recognition Awards Breakfast, WorkSafeNB recognized Xstrata Zinc and Air Liquide Canada for their impressive efforts in improving workplace health and safety. The breakfast was part of WorkSafeNB's 32nd Annual Health and Safety Conference, held September 26-28.

Located 20 kilometres southwest of Bathurst, Xstrata Zinc's Brunswick Mine has been a major employer in the region since 1964. Although metal mining is an important but inherently dangerous industry, Xstrata Zinc has reduced lost-time claims to well below the industry average. Kicked off in 2010, their *Zero Harm: Our Commitment* campaign was instrumental in helping Brunswick Mine enjoy a renewed safety culture and win the John T. Ryan National Safety Trophy for being the safest metal mine in Canada in 2011, a year that saw its all-time lowest lost-time and incident frequency levels.

Air Liquide, a world leader in gases for industry, health and the environment, has provided oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, helium, hydrogen and other gases to industrial and medical clients throughout the Atlantic region since 1934.

Despite the risks associated with handling and transporting highly pressurized gas cylinders, Air Liquide has kept its employees and the communities in which it operates healthy and safe. From 1987 to 2008, Air Liquide's New Brunswick operations did not record a single lost-time incident, one of the reasons the company enjoys assessment rates below the industry average.

"I'm extremely proud to recognize two New Brunswick companies who exemplify our goal for



Xstrata Zinc was presented with a plaque and certificate at WorkSafeNB's Annual Health and Safety Conference. Pictured, from left to right, are JHSC co-chairs Marc Gionet and Fernand Landry.

all New Brunswick companies – safe work," said Shelly Dauphinee, vice-president of WorkSafeNB's WorkSafe Services Division. "These employees and employers both have demonstrated an outstanding commitment and continuity to a safe workplace. They have shown exceptional leadership and innovation in promoting a safety culture, and, in doing so, they've not only significantly reduced injuries but they've decreased their premiums and improved their bottom line." •



Adam Peters, Air Liquide Canada president and CEO, and Shelly Lovett, regional manager for health, safety and environment.

## 2013 ASSESSMENT RATES ANNOUNCED

WorkSafeNB recently announced a 15% decrease in the average assessment rate. A strong funded position and decreasing claims costs warranted an average rate reduction of \$0.26, from \$1.70 per \$100 of payroll in 2012, to \$1.44. The minimum assessment rate remains at \$0.28 per \$100 of payroll. The rates, effective January 1, 2013, continue to be the lowest in Atlantic Canada.

The rate reduction will see assessed premiums for approximately 13,500 employer operations either drop or remain stable in 2013.

"By attaining a fully-funded position, WorkSafeNB has assured rate stabilization for employers and the continuing security of benefits for our injured workers," said Sharon Tucker, chair of WorkSafeNB's board of directors.

"But, more importantly, since accident costs are key to determining assessment rates, this rate decrease signifies healthier and safer workplaces for all New Brunswickers," she said.

In 2011 WorkSafeNB met its targets for both duration and frequency of lost-time claims. "We want to thank workers, employers and stakeholders for helping make this happen." •

# IN THE COURTS



**SWP INDUSTRIES**, of St. Stephen, pleaded guilty to charges under the *OHS Act* for failing to provide adequate safeguards, as the result of a workplace accident on December 26, 2010. The accident resulted in a worker losing a finger and 17 months of work. The employee was operating a moulder machine and became distracted as he reached in to alter a feed wheel. His hand became caught in the feed wheel, and he had to have his middle finger amputated. (The moulder was an older model and did not have the proper safeguards.)

The company was fined \$7,500, plus a victim surcharge.

**DAIRYTOWN PRODUCTS LTD.**, pleaded guilty August 29, 2012 to a charge under the *OHS Act* for allowing an unauthorized employee to work

on electrical equipment. The charge was laid following an accident July 26, 2011 at the food production plant that resulted in a worker suffering third-degree burns to his hand and arm.

Dairytown Products was fined \$5,000.

**PARTS FOR TRUCKS, INC.**, pleaded guilty on August 21, 2012, to a count of breaching the confined space entry regulations. The charges were laid after an accident in October 2010, when a worker who was cutting inside a truck-mounted tank became trapped and another outside the tank was injured when the plasma cutter caused an explosion.

The company was fined \$5,000, plus a victim surcharge.

**TWIN RIVERS PAPER COMPANY** pleaded guilty April 26, 2012, to an offence under the *OHS Act* for failing to establish a written lock out procedure for a machine and ensure that an employee who may have to lock out a machine was adequately trained to do so. A worker was hospitalized after his hand was crushed when it became jammed between a strapper and a metal post. The company was fined \$6,000, plus a \$1,200 victim surcharge. The company will also make a \$1,800 charitable donation.

**DOMINION REFUSE**, and its owners **TWOEX CAPITAL INC.** and **MAR MOR ENTERPRISES INC.**, pleaded guilty April 17 to failing to provide adequate supervision and training to ensure the health and safety of its employees, as the result of a fatal workplace accident. The charges were laid following the death of 25-year-old Adam Wade Harris, who died December 2, 2010, when he was struck by a large dumpster bin that came loose from a truck as it was being emptied.

The three companies were fined \$35,000.

**CLAIR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD.** was found guilty June 7, 2012, to a charge under subsection 242(5) of *General Regulation 91-191* of the *OHS Act*. On May 21, 2010, a worker was hospitalized after his finger was lacerated when he tried to dislodge a piece of wood that was stuck in a planer. He had failed to de-energize the machinery and the blade was not properly guarded. The company was found guilty for failing to ensure the machine was modified to protect employees from the hazards associated with the lack of an adequate safeguard. It was fined \$2,000, plus a \$400 victim surcharge.

## 32<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

Atlantic Canada's largest and longest running health and safety conference continues to grow, with 678 participants assembling in Saint John, September 26-28. In addition to the high numbers, the event was well received. Of those delegates who responded to a general evaluation survey, 81.7% rated overall satisfaction with the conference as excellent or very good.

Conference highlights included a chowder and chili opening night mixer, a trade show, and two plenary sessions featuring national radio host Shelagh Rogers and Dr. Luis Sanchez.

Following the Company Recognition Awards Breakfast, Rogers, a passionate advocate for mental health issues, spoke with both candour and humour about her long battle with depression.

Her frank storytelling resonated with the audience, with one delegate describing the session as an eye opener. "It was a wonderful session. Mental health should definitely be included in health and safety issues."

"Great speaker! Funny, entertaining, lots of information," said another.

Sanchez's presentation drew on his experiences in changing attitudes and behaviours around the world, from front line workers to high-ranking executives. While he has helped reshape the safety cultures of several global clients over the past 10 years, his influence has also touched much closer to home. Sanchez served as the principal consultant in bringing the *Zero Harm: Our Commitment* campaign to Xstrata Zinc's Brunswick Mine, a

co-winner at this year's Awards Breakfast.

"It was an excellent presentation," wrote one delegate. "Dr. Sanchez has a great ability to make a difficult topic interesting."

"I absolutely loved it," said another. "His presentation style exudes compassion and passion."

In addition to the plenary sessions, 32 workshops offered a variety of topics with 90% of survey respondents rating the workshops as very good or excellent.

WorkSafeNB thanks all those who attended, proving their commitment to workplace health and safety. We hope to see you at next year's conference, November 6-8, in Fredericton. •