



GOOD NEWS: DEFYING DEATH

On a sunny Thursday afternoon, natural gas pipeline supervisor Bill Rodgeron jumped into a freshly-dug trench in Saint John's industrial east side, as he'd done many times before. After more than 30 years of work in the industry, this was just another day, just another job.

He had no way of knowing he was moments away from touching a buried live wire that would send 7,800 volts pulsing through his body, stopping his heart. What happened next is a hazy recollection, supplemented by witness accounts and crime scene photos.



Team members, from left to right, Trisha FitzGerald, Krista Hartery, Alex Corbin and Renée Cyr reunite with Bill at the WRC on April 29, 2013.

"I saw a huge flash of light and that was it. I couldn't be helped. Nobody could touch me without endangering themselves," Rodgeron said.

Believing they'd been summoned to a workplace fatality, police began photographing the scene, with Rodgeron's motionless body serving as exhibit A. After 15 minutes, Saint John Energy pulled the plug, enabling paramedics to pull him out of the trench. To their surprise, Rodgeron

gasped and pleaded for help as they strapped him to a stretcher.

As he was rushed to the Saint John Regional Hospital ICU, he remembers an ambulance attendant screaming his name over and over. Then his heart stopped again.

Like many electric shock victims, his initial prognosis was bleak. He had suffered third-degree burns to his hands, legs and torso. His left leg was so badly burned that a significant chunk of his left quadriceps had to be surgically removed. There was serious concern about his brain function and doctors thought he might lose his kidneys and right index finger. Under the supervision of Dr. Geoff Cook, he began three long months of recovery that included eight skin grafts to his chest, legs and finger.

By the time he was discharged and sent to WorkSafeNB's rehab centre in Grand Bay-Westfield, getting back to work wasn't top priority. Krista Hartery, a physiotherapist with WorkSafeNB's Work Recovery Program, remembers the day Rodgeron was assigned to her in October 2012.

"Bill had no movement at all in his left knee. I gave him a cane as his balance was poor and we were afraid he would fall," Hartery said.

Initially reluctant to accept the cane, Rodgeron decided he would do everything in his power to regain full use of his legs. With patience, not only was he eventually able to hang up the cane, he was running laps around the centre before his treatment day even began.

"I would smile when I pulled in for work and see Bill jogging around the building," Hartery said. "In terms of physical progress and getting him back to work, we didn't have the highest of expectations

because of the severity of his injuries and lack of muscle tissue in his left knee. I never dreamed that we would get full movement and strength back."

While his injuries were among the worst Hartery had seen in her 20-year career, it was ultimately Rodgeron's attitude that made him so unforgettable.

"Dr. Cook told me to push him," something she said she had reservations about. "But now I know why."

After being referred for a multi-disciplinary assessment, physiotherapy was recommended as the first step for Rodgeron. Grimacing through pain and discomfort due to daily mobilizations of his knee, he made a point of never complaining.

"Complaining usually doesn't solve much," Rodgeron said, noting his father raised him to deal with life on life's terms. "You set goals, you move on."

Little by little, he pushed himself to go just a bit further than he had the day before. Before long he was upgraded to the full-day Work Hardening Program and started functional restoration with WorkSafeNB occupational therapist Alexandra Corbin.

"During his treatment program, Bill exceeded every functional goal I set for him, every time," Corbin recalled. "This was a result of hard work and determination day after day, despite the constant pain. Some people would have thrown in the towel, but not Bill Rodgeron."

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

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE



Michael Allen

Don't let his jovial nature fool you – behind Michael Allen's smile is a man who is serious about workplace health and safety. And with close to 20 years of hands-on health and safety experience, he's come to live by a certain belief.

"Do I strongly believe all accidents are preventable? Yes I do. But it can only happen if we all work together," Allen said.

And he should know. A retired member of the Hampton Volunteer Fire and Ambulance Department with more than 15 years as an emergency medical technician to

his credit, Allen has seen his share of accidents. In fact, if Allen had his way, they wouldn't be called "accidents" at all.

His past involvement with Saint John Ambulance prompted a change in his way of thinking. "Rather than serve in a reactive role, I thought how it would be so much better if we could prevent the injuries from happening in the first place."

Preventive action is a value that has followed Allen throughout his career, from the bottling line at Moosehead Breweries to the boardroom at WorkSafeNB. Appointed to the board of directors to represent workers in June 2011, Allen is known

for his diplomacy, dedication, and above all else, his passion for safety.

With all that, it might come as a surprise to some to learn that a health and safety career wasn't a boyhood dream. Allen got involved in the industry in the summer of 1987. Having just graduated from high school, he was simply looking to make a few dollars when he was hired by Moosehead Breweries.

"I'm from the West Side (of Saint John) originally and the brewery is located there; it just seemed like a good fit."

More than 25 years later, it seems that it was indeed a very good fit. Hired as a production operator, he began training in emergency services in 1988 and in 1994 joined the company's joint health and safety committee (JHSC). Allen was promoted to the company's health and safety co-ordinator in 2000, the same year he joined the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE), where he worked tirelessly to promote North American Occupational Safety and Health week. It was through the CSSE that Allen came to serve on the advisory committee for WorkSafeNB's Annual Health and Safety Conference.

"I have seen a lot of positive change over the years to say the least. Much of this goes back to more education, better communication and reaching kids before they start working." Allen cited the recent partnership between

WorkSafeNB, the Department of Early Childhood Development and the Department of Post-Secondary Education, of Training and Labour that aims to create a culture of safety within schools and society as a perfect example.

For Allen and his wife of 20 years, Leigh-Ann, young worker safety now hits close to home. As the parents of two teenagers, son Austin and daughter Becka, the Allens are now even more in tune with the importance of developing safe work habits at an early age.

"Not only are we concerned about our own children, we're concerned about every child. Our co-workers' children, the neighbours' children – our children are our future, so we owe it to them to keep them safe."

Since joining the board, Allen said he is impressed with the organization's fiscal accountability and the professionalism he sees around the table. And while Allen agrees that New Brunswick's low accident frequency is a step in the right direction, he doesn't feel that comparing it to other jurisdictions is the best way of gauging success.

"I don't want to be in the business of using other provinces as a measuring stick. The fact is fatalities still occur. One fatality is too many. I don't want to see anyone die. When everyone comes home safe and sound, then we can rest. In the meantime, we can't become complacent." •

JOIN THE LEADING INDICATORS PROJECT!

Complete the Institute for Work and Health's survey to find out how your organization performs on leading indicators of occupational health and safety. The deadline is January 31, 2014 to receive your benchmarking report next spring. •



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: www.iwh.on.ca/olip

CALLING ALL BACK PROTECTION AGENTS!

When it comes to workplace injuries in New Brunswick, back injuries lead the way. In 2011, these injuries caused more than 1,500 New Brunswickers to miss time at work.

That's a big number. It's also the reason we've launched our *Protecting Backs at Work* social marketing campaign, with the goal of recruiting Back Protection Agents in New Brunswick workplaces.

WorkSafeNB president and CEO Gerard Adams revealed the campaign at WorkSafeNB's Annual Health and Safety Conference on November 7.

"The thing about back injuries is that they're entirely preventable, and we believe that with everyone's buy-in we can put a serious dent in the number of

these injuries we see each year. Anyone can become a Back Protection Agent – all it takes is a watchful eye and a commitment to looking out for your own safety, and that of your co-workers."

You can get involved by visiting the Protecting Backs at Work webpage. The page has a video tutorial and industry-specific resources and suggestions for any New Brunswick workplace. After signing up, you are sent a call to action in the form of an email questionnaire. Once you submit the questionnaire, we will recognize your achievement by sending you a T-shirt, pin and a certificate. After completing the process you will be entered into a draw for a free registration to the 2014 Health and Safety Conference in Saint John. We will also shine the spotlight on agents who share their stories by featuring them in future issues of *E-News*.

"The campaign's success depends on you," Adams said. "We'll provide you with the resources but think of us only as guides. The rest is up to you!"

To learn more about the campaign and to become a Back Protection Agent, visit *Protecting Backs at Work* today. We look forward to hearing how you protect backs in your workplace! •



STUDENTS HEAR INSPIRATIONAL WORKPLACE SAFETY MESSAGE

If Candace Carnahan had known more about workplace safety as a youth, she may still have both of her legs. That was the message she shared with students during a recent WorkSafeNB-sponsored tour of Anglophone New Brunswick high schools.

"I know first-hand what can happen if you are unaware of the risks and hazards of going to work and what can happen to parents who don't really know their kids are being put at risk when they are going out," she told a capacity crowd at Carleton North High School on October 28, one of several stops along the way.

As a 21-year-old, Carnahan was working at a mill in Miramichi when unsafe work conditions led to an incident where she lost her left leg.

"It was a matter of the exact wrong place at the exact wrong time, which is often the case when something goes wrong."

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More than 6,000 New Brunswick students heard Candace Carnahan's workplace safety message this fall.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE, VISIT: YouthSafeNB.ca

TWO COMPANIES APPLAUDED FOR IMPRESSIVE WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES

MQM Quality Manufacturing Ltd. and Pine Grove Nursing Home were recently recognized by WorkSafeNB for their impressive efforts in workplace health and safety.

“We’re extremely proud to recognize these companies, both of which have demonstrated an outstanding commitment and continuity to safe work practices and to a safe workplace. These two companies have shown exceptional leadership and innovation, and, in doing so, they’ve not only significantly reduced injuries but they’ve decreased their premiums and improved their bottom line,” said Gerard Adams, president and CEO of WorkSafeNB.

MQM Quality Manufacturing Ltd., a steel manufacturer based in Tracadie-Sheila, was acknowledged for their low accident frequency and commitment to ensuring its workers are happy and safe.

The company has only seen three lost-time claims since 2008, an accomplishment for which they have been rewarded with assessment rates 30% below the industry average.

“We try to make safety a value in all aspects of life – not just work,” said senior project manager Serge Thériault. “If our workers are healthy and happy, they’re more productive. It’s a win-win for all involved.”

Pine Grove Nursing Home is a non-profit, 70 bed long-term care facility in Fredericton. The nursing home was applauded for being proactive and for introducing initiatives like WorkSafeNB’s Back in Form body mechanics program, and wellness programs that support mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

“These programs encompass not only employees and residents, but family and community. We look at health and safety as a way of life,” said Cheryl Wiggins, Pine Grove administrator.

“WorkSafeNB provides services and resources to help employers and workers all over New Brunswick build a workplace safety culture in their organizations,” said Shelly Dauphinee, vice-president of WorkSafeNB’s WorkSafe Services Division. “We are especially proud when companies as diverse as Pine Grove Nursing Home and MQM Quality Manufacturing share a mutual goal of occupational health and safety excellence, and achieve such positive results. By the demonstrated commitment of their management and staff to a WorkSafe culture, these companies are models of healthy and safe workplaces in New Brunswick.”

The Company Recognition Awards Breakfast was part of WorkSafeNB’s 33rd Annual Health and Safety Conference, held at the Fredericton Trade and Convention Centre November 6-8. More than 500 delegates were on hand to take in 27 workshops covering a variety of topics. •

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The tour, aptly named *See Something. Say Something.*, reminded students of their right to speak up if they feel unsafe on the job. During the seven-week tour, Carnahan shared her story with more than 6,000 students from 14 schools across the province.

WorkSafeNB youth programs co-ordinator, Jessica Brodie, accompanied Carnahan on the tour. She said it’s important to reach out to youth in ways that will make them take notice.

“We wanted to deliver workplace health and safety messages in such a way that not only raises awareness, but also inspires youth to take charge of their own and others’ health

and safety. Candace’s presentation did just that,” Brodie said.

And although WorkSafeNB continues to provide workplace health and safety information through traditional methods such as classroom resources, Brodie said youth tours offer something pamphlets and books can’t match.

“The tour allowed us to connect with youth in ways that wouldn’t be possible if we stuck with just the traditional methods of disseminating information. Judging from student feedback, it’s safe to say Candace really struck a chord.”

Youth tours have become a popular way to

reach New Brunswick’s students over the years. Tours generally feature a young worker under the age of 30 who has been seriously injured on the job. Past speakers have included Nick Perry of British Columbia and Jonathan Plante of Quebec. Both men broke their backs while working on construction sites in their respective provinces.

“We are very pleased to sponsor speakers who can make such an instant and personal connection with New Brunswick youth,” said WorkSafeNB president and CEO Gerard Adams. “Their stories are gripping, emotional and serve as excellent reminders for students who might be starting their first job.” •

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND WORKSAFENB TEAM UP TO ENHANCE SAFETY PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

A new partnership among WorkSafeNB, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour has been developed to ensure New Brunswick schools have the safest possible learning environment.

The collaborative effort is underway as a result of a Memorandum of Understanding, which was signed Nov. 7 by Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Marie-Claude Blais, Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour Minister Jody Carr and WorkSafeNB president and chief executive officer Gerard Adams.

“All young New Brunswickers must be able to learn in positive, inclusive environments at safe and healthy schools,” Blais said. “Through this partnership, we will be able to enhance safety practices at schools for the benefit of all students.”



A new partnership among WorkSafeNB, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour has been developed to ensure New Brunswick schools have the safest possible learning environment. From front left: Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Marie-Claude Blais; WorkSafeNB president and chief executive officer Gerard Adams; and Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour Minister Jody Carr. From rear left: WorkSafeNB client consulting & education services manager Perley Brewer and WorkSafeNB operational effectiveness director Andy Rauska.

The initiative stems from research that shows that initiating safety awareness with students in the education system helps them develop safe attitudes and habits as adults.

“Not only is our government working to improve student safety at schools, we are also helping to prepare them for tomorrow’s work environments by instilling in them these important practices today,” Carr said. “By working together we can, and will, improve safety for everyone, whether it’s at school or in the workplace.”

The focus of the memorandum is to use the expertise of the three parties to create a safety culture within schools and society.

Under the agreement WorkSafeNB will:

- Participate in the development of safety resources to address several learning outcomes within curricular areas.
- Collaborate with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to ensure vocational classrooms are safe by assisting teachers and schools to develop and sustain safe procedures to follow when operating equipment and storing materials.
- Provide professional learning in subject areas such as physical education, skilled trades, co-op education, and science to enhance safety practices in schools and work-related placements.
- Partner with the New Brunswick Construction Safety Association to provide online learning opportunities, such as Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System and Orientation to Safety, to be used by teachers and students.

- Work with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, schools districts and high schools across New Brunswick to provide safety presentations.

Under the agreement, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will:

- Provide WorkSafeNB with curriculum and teaching expertise in the development of safety resources.
- Reference WorkSafeNB resources in curricula where appropriate.
- Collaborate with WorkSafeNB to organize professional learning sessions.

“Studies show that young workers are at greater risk of injury than their more senior colleagues,” Adams said. “Reaching students at an early age can ingrain safety behaviours that will promote a stronger workplace culture for future generations. We are proud to be a part of this important partnership that will not only benefit our children, but all New Brunswickers.”

Under an agreement with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the New Brunswick Construction Safety Association currently makes two online courses on health and safety, each of which normally costs \$35, available to any student or instructor free of charge.

“I commend and thank the New Brunswick Construction Safety Association for its generosity and its willingness to partner with the department, developing and providing online learning resources for the benefit of students and staff,” Blais said. “The association’s contribution is greatly appreciated.” •

IN THE COURTS



AV NACKAWIC INC., pleaded guilty April 10, 2013 to two charges under the *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act*; the first under paragraph 9(2)(a) for failing to ensure the safe working condition of its equipment and the second under paragraph 9(2)(c) for failing to provide proper training and supervision to its employees.

On June 30, 2011, a maintenance crew attempted to cool a partially plugged and overheating line containing a liquid by-product created in the pulp process by adding an auxiliary line to the system's cooler unit. In doing so, they modified fittings and used coupling mechanisms not according to industry standards. When the crew charged the line, pressure forced the hose to come off the modified fitting and a worker sustained burns from the liquid.

Each charge resulted in a \$5,000 fine with an additional \$1,000 victim surcharge each for a total fine of \$12,000.

EDMOND GAGNON LTD., pleaded guilty April 26, 2013 to a charge under paragraph 9(2)(a) of the *OHS Act* for failing to provide information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety of employees.

On April 22, 2012, workers were unloading crab from a truck trailer to a loading bay. The trailer shifted, creating a gap between it and the loading bay, so a worker asked the driver to reposition the truck. When he pulled forward to adjust, it caused a platform and an employee to fall more than four feet to the ground. Unaware his co-worker was behind the trailer, the driver backed up and pinned him, resulting in fractured ribs and a punctured lung.

The seafood plant was fined \$4,000.

J.D. IRVING LIMITED (Scierie Grande Rivière) pleaded guilty July 23, 2013 to a charge under *General Regulation 91-191* subsection 239(4) of the *OHS Act* for failing to ensure that no employee works on a machine until it is in a zero-energy state and locked out by a competent person.

On December 15, 2011 an employee and supervisor discussed a way to release a stuck bin on a lumber sorting line. The employee locked out every part of the machine except the hydraulics controlling the movement of the bin, thinking it would help him release the stuck bin.

The employee entered the stuck bin, and hit it with a sledgehammer to release it from the frame. As he hit it, the bin released causing it to move upward. The employee's hand got caught between

the moving bin and the frame as he tried to secure himself, causing serious injury.

The company was fined \$10,000, plus a \$2,000 surcharge.

Two companies have been fined in Campbellton provincial court in relation to a workplace incident that claimed the life of a New Brunswick worker more than two years ago.

AV CELL INC., pleaded guilty October 9, 2013 under paragraph 11(b) of the *OHS Act* for failing to take every reasonable precaution to ensure the health and safety of workers in its place of employment.

VAL LANDRY & SON (ROOFING AND SHEET METAL WORKING) LTD. pleaded guilty October 16, 2013 to a charge under paragraph 9(1)(c) of the *OHS Act* for failing to ensure that its employees complied with fall protection requirements, as established under subsection 49(1) of *General Regulation 91-191*.

On September 29, 2011, Maurice Roussel, 60, a co-owner of Val Landry & Son Ltd., and the on-site supervisor, was one of three workers hired to do repair work at the AV Cell mill in Atholville. The workers fell about 35 feet to a concrete floor when a wooden catwalk they were using to reach part of a ceiling gave way. The other two workers were badly injured.

AV Cell Inc., was fined \$60,000 plus a victim surcharge of \$9,000. Val Landry & Son Ltd. was fined \$5,000, plus a victim surcharge of \$1,000.

DEFYING DEATH: *Continued from page 1*

Today, the 55-year-old Rodgerson is back to work, this time as a business agent with his union, the Labourers International Union of North America (LIUNA) Local 900. They made him an offer during his treatment and he was discharged a week early to take advantage. He is very happy with the way things worked out and isn't shy about telling his story.

"Life goes on. The world keeps turning. Things don't always go according to plan — you just have to make the most of every situation."

It's that positive outlook that seems to inspire people wherever he goes. As he discusses his accident and recovery in the rehabilitation centre's

green space, WorkSafeNB employees he met during his journey of recovery come out, eager to see him again.

In all his years of practising medicine, Dr. Jose Ledezma, the WorkSafeNB physician who oversaw much of Rodgerson's rehab, couldn't remember ever meeting someone as mentally tough.

"Bill is a survivor of what could have easily been a fatal accident. He chose tenacity and determination. He's always in a good mood and I, like many others, have a high level of personal respect for him," Ledezma said.

Always one to see the positive, Rodgerson notes that he's lost 40 pounds since the incident.

"Though I'd probably recommend other ways of losing weight," he said with a chuckle.

To mark the first anniversary of the accident that almost claimed his life, Rodgerson jogged five kilometres with those who helped him along the way.

"Everything's worked out perfectly," he said. "You play with the hand you're dealt. This place and these people have helped me so much. Every day is a good day." •