CILT's In The Stream

Summer 2002

Feature: *FORMULA ONE AND DISABILITY*

Part I: Le Grand Prix de Montreal -- A Personal Journey

by Vic Willi

There seems to be a deep passion for Formula One amongst a lot of quads and other persons with significant physical disabilities. When I went to Montreal to see my first Grand Prix in 1999 (and later in 2000), I was already hooked. I always watched F1 on television since the 1960's but it never really fascinated me until I begin to follow a Canadian, Jacques Villeneuve. As he came up through the Formula Atlantic and Indy Car (now CART) racing leagues, it slowly became obvious that Villeneuve was that rarest of things: a phenomenon. It's that type of human being that comes along once a million and, like a musical prodigy, has the perfect combination of neurons and genetics to perform one specific thing like few other humans -- driving a F1 car as fast as the laws of physics will allow.

Villeneuve was just like that: he seemed to get more out of a car than the sum of its mechanical parts. He seemed to be able to bend the laws of physics as they apply to things like friction, aerodynamics and reaction time. It soon became obvious he was heading for F1 where his father had been. Gilles Villeneuve was killed driving a Ferrari. Today there is a museum for Gilles in Iverville, Quebec.

Jacques followed his father's tire tracks and was hired by Frank Williams for the 1996 season. In Jacques' first race, he took pole position in Australia. In 1997, he became world champion. I was hooked and still follow Jacques, but he has fallen on hard times with a bad car for four years now. F1 has been a source of joy, strength and occasionally, bitter disappointment ever since.

Getting There by Wheelchair

On a Saturday in June 1999, I found myself in the middle of the Pont des Îles, a bridge that sits about 30 feet above the swift and awesome St. Lawrence River at Montreal. My friend and I were bound for the Qualifying Session. My first time!

Montreal is on an island and the Grand Prix is held on one of two smaller islands: the Pont des Îles goes from Montreal to Île Sainte-Hélène and then to Île Notre-Dame where Expo 67 was held. It was apparently built from the earth removed to create the Montreal Metro subway system! On Île Nôtre-Dame sits le Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve named after Jacques' father who, I heard, won his first race there.

We were caught in a monster traffic jam on our way to the Saturday qualifying rounds of the Montreal Grand Prix on Île Nôtre-Dame. My friend, a recent convert to F1 racing, was directing me as she had once lived in Montreal. We found ourselves confronted with a scene of biblical proportions -- there must have been a 150,000 people trying to go to the same place at the same time.

For F1 aficionados, the 18 or so Grand Prix circuits scattered across the globe are virtually sacred places. They have histories going way back -- some of them to the 1920s! The tracks and the race are a place where the true believers come, year after year, to worship the object of their passion. They call it 'the show that never stops.' meaning the drivers, cars and tracks where almost every corner has a name and a story. Quebeckers are passionate about the Montreal race.

Hell on the St. Lawrence

The temperature had been around 95o F (35o C.) since I left Toronto the day before. "If I don't get on to the island soon," I thought, "I am going to get sick." Heat stroke is deadly for quads. Two hours later we crept up to the final gate; I could see the island! We asked where the handicapped parking was, and an official waved us to the side. He demanded our "special permit." All this was in French, of course, but the look on my traveling companion's face was grim: we were not going anywhere!

"Stationnement réservé? " he demanded again. I stared at him stupidly, barely comprehending the enormity of our predicament. I hadn't been aware that a special parking permit was needed for adapted vans, therefore I hadn't asked for one when I purchased my "handicapped" tickets. Since I had requested wheelchair seating when I had ordered tickets and since I did not specifically request un stationnement réservé, the lady on the phone simply told me nothing.

I was snapped back to reality by a furious exchange in rapid-fire 'jouel' between my friend and a man of obvious authority, judging by the badges hanging around his neck. I could understand a bit but not enough to imagine what possible argument my friend was offering. She started yelling then pleading; he stood like a rock, arms folded. Occasionally he shook his head. "*Non!* " I stared deep into my steering wheel as the utter futility of our situation became evident. The inside of the van was like a steam iron. The heat blasted down relentlessly on my head.

The Two Miracles

Suddenly, after a long, staring silence between locked eyes, the official raised his right arm and curled his fingers in a "follow me" gesture. Incredibly, the gates suddenly swung open, the Mounties horses moved back AND WE WERE IN! I looked at my passenger in awe, stunned by her mysterious power. How had she done it? It seemed like a miracle.

Île Notre-Dame was a magical place, with lush flowerbeds (the current Mayor of Montreal was the official gardener for Expo 67), a beautiful casino (the former American Pavilion) and canals with swimming carp. Everywhere smiling, happy people were walking around, drinking beer, talking and laughing. The air was ripe with the scent of flowers, marijuana and gasoline. We drove over a tiny bridge and parked in the cool of a shade tree. Accessible vans, crips and their attendants everywhere; everyone was friendly. My brain stopped boiling as I sat under the cool greenery and contemplated my last problem -- no permit for tomorrow, Race Day.

Then the second ‘miracle’ happened -- a guy called Denny wheeled up to us with his attendant, Martin. Denny was a good friend of my companion. They started talking away -- all of them were bilingual. Denny had the inside information on everything.

I was introduced and they listened as we explained our adventure; all this in effortlessly mixed French and English. My friend turned to me and said, "Denny has an extra permit. Do you want it?"

Apparently his friend who also had a disability was unable to attend. Martin went and got the extra permit and handed it to me. I mumbled something incomprehensible as I stared at the mythical and powerful piece of paper. It was pink and black with a map on the black showing the Circuit, wheelchair parking and seating.

The spectacle of a Grand Prix

Suddenly, we heard the bark of a V-10, F1 engine firing up. *Rah-Rah-Rah-Rah!* They sound like short hard bursts of a siren as they rev up to 18-20,000 revolutions per minute (rpms). In full song, an F1 engine has been compared to the sound of calico paper being torn. The crowd ran towards the track. Qualifying was starting.

As we went to our ‘handicapped’ seating, I was astonished to see at least 30 people in chairs there, with more coming. We were a colourful crowd: Quebeckers holding rapid-fire and simultaneous bilingual conversations; Americans looking rich and sounding loud. (One American was drinking beer and smoking dope right up there on our viewing stand.) One serious looking fan with a beer belly had a bright red $600.00 Ferrari racing suit on -- the sweat was pouring off his head but he had it zipped right up!

I was wearing my army surplus slouch hat that I had soaked in ice water to keep cool. I wasn’t aware that the ink from a pen had soaked into the hat during the trip. By the end of qualifying my face was dyed blue. No one noticed. Attendants rushed around getting drinks, slapping on lotion and putting up sun umbrellas. Excitement was high.

The qualifying session and the race were simply wonderful! The crowd waved flags of every represented country. Villeneuve made an electrifying start and Schumacher was like a relentless machine being chased by the Finn, Mika Hakkinen, who would go on to be world champion in 1999 but lose it to Schumacher in 2000. Listening to the way that Schumacher carried speed and power through the corner -- the rest just braked and then gunned it -- one could see why he is possibly the greatest driver ever. Of course, it helps to have the best car, a Ferrari. World Champion Michael Schumacher also earns about $75 million US yearly from all sources.

A disability angle?

One of my lasting impressions from the qualifying and the race that followed the next day was that many people with disabilities seem to have a passion for this racing. There is definitely something about these beautiful machines and the people who drive them that is compelling to us. Maybe it is because so many of us have to rely on technology for a daily living and we have developed a love/hate fascination with our machines.

F1 machines are arguably the most beautiful in the world. Italian papers always refer to the new Ferraris in feminine terms. *Corriere dello Sport* and *Gazzetta dello Sport*, referred to the 2002 Ferrari as: "Bellissima". One editor, Italo Cucci, present at the launch, seemed to have fallen in love with the car.

"Yes, it's very beautiful," said Cucci. "And understand why the world falls in love with it. It’s always very beautiful, almost sensual. To paraphrase American jazz legend Duke Ellington’s 'a car is a woman,' this Ferrari is a woman. The F2002 is a superwoman" (www.F1racing.net, Feb 7, 2002).

Like electric wheelchairs, F1 cars are complex, especially the engines. The BMW engine in the FW24 Williams car this year running at 360 km/h and 18,000 rpm means that every second there are 300 engine revolutions, 1,500 ignitions and 9,000 speed measurements. The pistons cover a distance of 25 metres, 450 litres of air are aspirated, 150,000 engine and vehicle data measurements are recorded and processed. The car would cover 100 metres and the wheels would turn 50 times. Of course, like our wheelchairs, they are also temperamental (*Ibid.*, Jan 28, 2002).

Disability in F1

Perhaps the attraction is linked to the relative pervasiveness of disability amongst former drivers; F1 after all is considered a "dangerous" sport although statistically, we face the greatest danger driving ourselves to the race.

But there are drivers who risk becoming disabled. For example, ex-F1 driver Johnny Herbert was quoted in a recent article in F1-Live.com that he is prepared to risk becoming a "cripple" for life when he competes in the next Indianapolis 500. There are some people who believe that Herbert acquired a disability back in 1988, when he shattered both his legs in a Formula 3000 event at Brands Hatch, England. Even though he went on to win three F1 races, Herbert’s doctors and colleagues still warn him that another serous accident could leave him "permanently crippled" (sic). "I know the risks and will be approaching the race cautiously" was Herbert’s response.

Recently, Alex Zanardi, a former F1 driver who lost both legs in a CART race, was wildly cheered as he presented awards at a F1 ceremony, standing in his new prosthesis. Former French F1 driver Phillippe Streiff also got some attention with this rather odd outburst on the Internet: "There are more than six million [disabled] people in France... The State is not fulfilling its role [because] to deny this handicap is to not want to treat it," said the former driver. "I am indignant, I am nauseated; I had the impression that after being congratulated by many ministers, one drops me" (www.dailyf1.com, Jan. 28, 2002).

"When I see that I earn only 400,000 Francs (60,890 Euros) per annum on medical care, I cannot take any more. It was just ten years ago, as a former F1 driver, that I had the means. What one offers me today is nothing. It is unworthy of a person and it is also demoralizing for a person." Streiff went on to threaten to return his Legion of Honour medal over the way France treats people with disabilities. Streiff became a paraplegic after a serious accident in 1989 in Rio de Janeiro.

The link between people and wheelchairs and F1 is admittedly tenuous but there is no use belabouring the point. It’s best to watch it on TSN early Saturday and Sunday mornings. Or better yet, go to a race if you ever have the chance because it is a true world event. Perhaps you will discover something beautiful, compelling and frustrating. Frank Williams did.

Part II: Frank Williams, the Quickest Quad in the World!

by Vic Willi

"*I was as fast as anybody on the straights; it was just those bloody curves*." -- Sir Frank Williams

There are only about 40 people in the world qualified to drive a Formula One car. These cars are the quickest turning, fastest accelerating machines on the face of the earth. They can go from 0 to 100 miles per hour and back to 0 in six seconds! Racing teams spend hundreds of millions of sponsors’ money each year. The top driver is paid $35 million US. For some reason, this sport appears to have a particularly strong hold on wheelchair users. On the other hand, Formula 1 (F1) is the second most watched sport in the world next to the World Cup of soccer, so maybe it is just coincidence that a lot of wheelies like F1. Whatever the case, here is a light-hearted look at “the show that never stops” through the lens of disability.

Currently, only 11 ‘team bosses’ manage all of the intense activity required to put 22 F1 cars on the grid. Frank Williams, a quadriplegic, is one of them. Williams was named by Britain’s *Sunday Times* as one of the highest earning team bosses of 2001. He is currently valued at £155 million, behind team boss Ron Dennis (£180 million). (He also received a knighthood from the Queen in 1999). Coming third in the Constructors Championship last year, after Ferrari and McClaren, is nothing new to Williams; he has won over 100 F1 races and nine World Championships since 1977, the year when Williams founded his racing business WilliamsF1. It has since gone on to win eight Constructors’ Titles, awarded to the car and owner, not the driver.

One of the most baffling things to fellow quads is Williams’ ability to travel: the racing season starts in Australia in March and continues on two weeks later in Brazil; two weeks again finds the whole show racing in Malaysia, followed by 12 races all over Europe before finishing in Japan.

How does he do it? As a quad who has flown internationally, I know that jet lag plus different water and food will wreck havoc with a carefully planned routine, creating a kind of ‘carnival time’ for bowel and bladder.

As a C5-6 quad, Frank Williams has been in a wheelchair since 1986 after crashing his Ford Sierra while driving home from a test session in France. Away from his beloved team for over a year, Williams’ team lost the right to use the winning and powerful Honda engines because Honda thought the team would flounder without Williams. Undaunted, Frank roared back into contention in 1989 using the terrific Renault engines of that year. Williams had the most dominant team of the 1990s, and their biggest star was Canada’s own Jacques Villeneuve.

Who is Frank Williams and how can he accomplish so much in life? He was born April 16, 1942 in South Shields, England. In 2000, he was listed as the 226th highest-earning person in Britain. It seems Frank’s attitude towards life may give us a clue to his success as a person with a disability.

A few years ago, when asked about his favourite part of his job, Williams replied, "The quick answer is coming in every day. Actually being present at a Grand Prix weekend I’ve always considered a privilege, but being among racing and racing cars all day every day is just paradise." (www.autorace.com/news/aug2001 page 10)

So it seems that Williams loves what he does and looks forward to every day.

He also has a great sense of humour. When asked about his previous short-lived career as a racing driver at age 19, he said, "I was as fast as anybody on the straights; it was just those bloody curves."

Above all, Williams is described as having a ferocious desire to win races. As for racing itself, Williams learned early on that his talents lay in management, not driving. For a number of years, he worked for others including Walter Wolf, the Canadian who designed a revolutionary and winning car in the early ‘70s. In 1975, Williams formed his first team, hiring the now-famous designer Patrick Head and took his first team championship in 1980 with the famous American driver, Alan Jones.

Today, he is a happy man who loves his family and work. There is a lesson here for the rest of us that has nothing to do with making money but making success out of life with disability: find something you love, something of your own and can look forward to it each day.

Ed.: Here are three Web sites you can visit to learn more about F1 and to get racing schedules:

Formula1.com (unofficial site)
www.formula1.com

Daily F1
www.dailyF1.com

Planet-F1
www.planet-F1.com

New info line provides gateway to the "myriad" of community resources

by Don Barrie

Imagine that your father has just died, forcing you to become the sole caregiver for your ailing mother. Feeling overwhelmed, you may not know where to turn to for help. Thankfully, however, there is now a community resource where you can begin the search for the services you need.

On Thursday, June 13, 2002, Toronto welcomed a new information service that makes the search for social and community services more "accessible" to consumers with disabilities in the Greater Toronto Area.

211 is a free, confidential, information and referral helpline, operated by United Way Toronto and Community Information Toronto, with support from the

City of Toronto. 211 is staffed by operators in 16 languages, 24-hours a day, seven days a week. It is also available on the Web, at www.211toronto.ca. This companion Web site receives financial support from Human Resources Development Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the City of Toronto and United Way.

"211 expands our existing service," said Allyson Hewitt, Executive Director of Community Information Toronto. "Whether you are a family facing eviction or seeking support for an aging parent, dialing 211 cuts through the confusion and connects people to the services they need."

Media and service agency workers attended the launch of 211 Toronto at its headquarters on 425 Adelaide Street West. The launch provided United Way the opportunity to reach out to the community, by affirming its role in the information age.

"It can be frustrating and tough for people to try and find their way through the myriad of incredible resources that we do have in our community," acknowledged Frances Lankin, President of the United Way of Greater Toronto.

"211 helps individuals find their way to the help they need when they need it."

211, unlike the 411 directory assistance service, concentrates on social, health and government services (e.g. housing, employment, rehabilitation, counselling services and programs for seniors and people with disabilities). It is also not an emergency service like 911, because all calls on the 211 system are confidential and don’t require security measures and caller identification.

"211 is somewhere in-between," Lankin said. "People can now call 211 for help when faced with non-emergency service needs. It is the result of a strong, effective partnership between public, community and private sector funders."

United Way Toronto submitted its application for 211 to the Canadian Radio-and-television Telecommunications Commission in June 2000, in response to the success of a similar service in the United States. It took a year and two months before the application was approved, but UW officials believe that the wait was worth it.

"211 is going to create a new level and dimension of service to Torontonians," said Jennifer Lynn, board chair of the United Way Toronto. "It is going to be easier to access information and resources available to you out in the community, just at the touch of your finger tip."

Toronto is the first city in Canada to host a 211 service. The first 211 service was established in the U.S. by the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia on May 6, 1997. This has led other United Way chapters to implement 211 programs in 14 U.S. states, including Connecticut, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin.

Other cities in Ontario are planning to host 211 services. Some of these cities include Ottawa, Kingston, Windsor, Thunder Bay, York Region and Simcoe Country. Cities outside of Ontario developing 211 projects include Vancouver, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Halifax. The United Way expects to have 211 services nationwide over the next 10 years, according to a CRTC news release from August 9, 2001, the date the application was approved.

"The City of Toronto is proud to be the first location in Canada to have 211 service," said Councillor Brad Duguid, Scarborough City Councillor (Ward 38) and Chair of the City of Toronto’s Community Services Committee. "Now Torontonians can easily access information on a wide range community services by making 211 their first call."

Second International Conference on Parents with Disabilities: A Review

by Ian Parker

When I became a father three years ago, I felt elated that my dream had come true, yet I wondered how I could contribute to the many physical tasks in raising a child. For the first time in many years, I was forced to be conscious of my disability. And, I knew very few other fathers with disabilities. Years before, in rehabilitation hospital, I had learned so much about my new disability from others who had been living it in the community, and similarly, I now wanted to connect with other dads with disabilities to share questions and learn from their experience of parenting.

When the Second International Conference on Parents with Disabilities was announced in Oakland, California, I was immediately intrigued. A colleague had attended the first conference several years ago, and had returned with a positive report. Now that I was a parent too, I was enthusiastic about attending myself.

From May 2-4, 2002, parents and professionals from many parts of the world arrived in the San Francisco area to attend a great lineup of workshops and lectures. The conference was hosted by Through the Looking Glass (TLG), which provides services and supports to families with disabilities. It is also the U.S. National Resource Center (NRC) for Parents with Disabilities.

Workshop topics were tremendously informative and broadening, and included:

Reproduction and Parenting: Ethical Issues for People with Disabilities. This workshop provided an overview of issues regarding reproductive rights. Adrienne Asch, Ph.D., of Massachusetts, said that there were 900 disabilities and illnesses that the medical establishment believes may become possible to test for prenatal. The medical professionals' position is that life has problems, so avoid as many as possible when bringing a child into the world. This is the argument for prenatal testing. However, as Adrienne argued, parents with disabilities believe that we as a society should be looking at children being different from expectations and different from every other child. "You should be appreciating the child that you get and nurturing that child." In fact, most disabilities are not diagnosable as prenatal now anyway.

Adrienne went on to ask, in consideration of special needs, "what are un-special needs? They are only called special because fewer people need them." Ultimately the job of parenting is to appreciate the uniqueness of the child. In addition, and of great interest to me, she mentioned two works, by Irving Zola which I am very keen to read, the first being "And the Children Shall Lead Us," and the second, "It's All Right To Be Sad," about his inability to do some things with his daughter because of his disability.

Another stimulating workshop, entitled *Parents with Disabilities and their Pre-School and School Age Children*, featured three panelists. Firstly, Lisa Cohen, Ph.D., of Nevada, talked about the extra social pressure on parents if they have a disability, giving as an example one blind mother's fears of scrutiny, which caused her to take super care to see that her child was well dressed at all times. In terms of our children learning about disability and its impact, she noted a reassuring study had indicated that children asked disability-related questions as they needed the information, both concerning the functional limitations of the parent, and also about societal values towards us. Now, there's one less thing to worry about: we don't have to get hung up on preemptively teaching our kids about us in order to protect them from societal attitudes since they'll ask when they need to know anyway.

Beth Smith, M.S.S.W., of California speaking in the context of parents with cognitive disabilities, advised that any support provided by professionals must always stay behind the parent and not take over. "It is essential," she said, "for professionals not to undermine the authority of the parent." In describing some of the benefits that children get from having a parent with a disability, she indicated that in seeing their parents fight both physically and socially to achieve their goals, children gain the invaluable gift of great resilience and perseverance never to give up.

The workshops, *Adaptive Parenting Equipment, Part 1 and Part 2,* addressed the impact of such equipment, and practical elements in creating the equipment. In Part 1, Christi Tuleja of TLG reiterated what so many have experienced in general, but here specifically that the environment is not meeting the needs of the parent with a disability. Therefore, there is a big need for individually adapted equipment, and it can bring about significant changes in the family. She said that when you introduce new equipment *to* the family you have to examine what it is doing *in* the family (at a previous session Dr. David Grey of Missouri spoke of a study on factors correlating to happy marriages; it found that the higher the use of technology by the partner with the disability, the happier was the marriage -- hurray for power wheelchairs!). Christi indicated that the adaptive equipment, in addition to allowing the parent to be more involved, could also prevent the parent from having a second injury down the road, from straining to cope.

N.B. If you are interested in getting evaluated by TLG for baby care equipment, you can get yourself videotaped performing a task and send it into them. They can provide suggestions and designs for equipment that does not exist commercially or that needs to be adapted, and you can take these to, for example, a wheelchair or bicycle repair shop, shoemaker, welder or cabinet-maker to get the work done. In Part 2, Judi Rogers of TLG demonstrated many practical devices and emphasized that if a parent cannot transfer the baby to a crib they may not be participating in an important bedtime ritual. This has directly led me to finding a way to get my own daughter in and out of her car seat alone, so we can go some places without assistance and have more one-on-one together time.

The keynote speakers were just as impressive and informative:

Gwynnyth Llewellyn, Ph.D., of Australia talked at a continental breakfast on issues related to sharing the care of children, and mothers with intellectual disabilities. Importantly she noted that there is a lot of literature to show that there is no link between I.Q. and parenting competency. Where there is abuse it is other people in the mother’s relationship and not the mother herself. Yet the courts get expert opinion about the mother’s I.Q. and present this as a major deficit while ignoring poverty, isolation and or mentally ill partners. She indicated that at seven months’ age, a child’s contacts may be around 100 people if the child is in day care. Parenting, she said "should be viewed as shared across many exposures and not as intensive mothering by the mother alone -- mothering is not related to biology." What every child needs is many parenting adults, 'shared parenting,' in their life and a supportive surrounding social group.

Gwynneth also drew on research on parents without disabilities which talked of family work rather than parenting. The overriding issue was found to be who takes responsibility for the tasks rather than who actually does them: "giving away tasks may be O.K. but not giving away responsibility."

Another day, speakers on an international panel allowed us to glimpse what life is like for parents with disabilities in other countries. In their presentation, *The Impact of Ethnicity and Culture on Parenting,* the panel responded to a number of questions. One, for example, was how do non-disabled people react to you as a disabled parent and what would you like to see changed?

Michele Wates of England felt that the public doesn’t see the parent with a disability because they can only see the person with a disability as a care recipient. She said, "you’re non-visible," but that probably 25 per cent of parents face some long-term health considerations. She would like to see changed the automatic questioning of the capacity to parent of persons with disabilities.

Venus Ilagan from the Phillipines said that in her country there was some acceptance in urban areas but that in rural areas there was no acceptance of parenting with a disability at all since there is not even any discussion of sexuality in general. The bottom line is that if you can afford maids then it’s OK to have a child.

Atsuko Kuwana of Washington and Japan, felt that people with disabilities in Japan are not seen as being able to be good parents. Her parents were shocked when she and her husband announced they were going to become parents and asked many questions concerning her potential to handle various tasks. They worried about new things, but once they were accepted the close family system kicked in. So she sees ignorance as the main barrier. Even when she is in the U.S., she notices stereotypical attitudes. For example, strangers presume that her 10 year-old son is a good helper to her, "but in fact he doesn’t help me at all!"

Meliwa Asanova from Uzbekistan related how "disability in her country is seen as illness and unhealthy and that therefore a parent with a disability is viewed as bringing an unhealthy child into society." When she was seven weeks pregnant her doctor said that she would have to end her pregnancy because there was no guarantee that she would have a healthy child. So she took the dramatic step of leaving her country and going to Ukraine to ensure she could have her baby safely. After that story, the moderator of the panel, who is blind, shared her experience of societal attitudes in the USA when she told of getting on a bus with her son and someone said "Oh, a seeing eye kid!" It’s hard to overestimate the callous ignorance of some people!

In her concluding remark, Michele Wates pretty well summed it up when she said, "if someone would sit down with you during pregnancy and say how can we handle and support tasks to make them more successful and rewarding, then that would be most welcome. Unfortunately, the norm is still that assessment of our competency is the big hurdle and, therefore, attention is most unwelcome."

CILT had its own important work to share: representing the Parenting with a Disability Network (PDN), former CILT Project Coordinator Mary Ocampo and Advisory Committee Member Enza Ronaldi presented at a workshop entitled Community Needs and Supports. They described CILT’s latest publication, Nurturing Assistance, which provides a Canadian independent living model of support through nurturing assistance -- the physical assistance that can be provided to parents with young children through the use of attendants. There was much interest in this component of attendant services.

The exchanging of ideas didn't only occur in the lecture halls. Mealtimes and breaks scheduled between workshops provided an excellent opportunity to network with other parents and professionals. I made it my own personal mission to seek out what I don't have a lot of exposure to back home -- other dads with disabilities. I met several fathers with spinal cord injury like me, some with adult children, others with very young kids. I found it really helpful to compare our situations and discuss specific questions. (Also, with my work hat on, I found myself being asked a lot of questions about CILT's Direct Funding program. It seems that there are many gaps and limitations in self-managed attendant service programs in much of the States, and admiration for our Ontario model.)

The resource table set up by TLG offered a wide variety of pamphlets and publications of interest to parents with disabilities and people who work with them. I was able to collect many of these for the CILT resource library.

TLG has now posted follow-up information regarding the conference on its Web site, www.lookingglass.org. Many of us who attended are hoping that a third international conference will be held – we don't know when or where, but the will and need is there!

This is only the feature section of *In The Stream*, our quarterly newsletter. If you would like to read more of our articles, why not become a member? For more information, or to request a membership info pack, please call 416-599-2458 x26, or email info@cilt.ca.