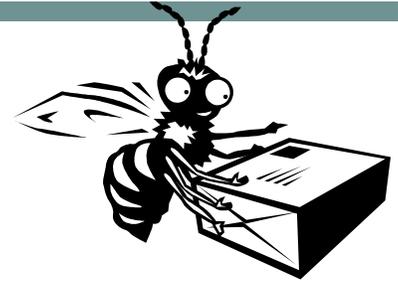


Newsletter Date: February  
12th, 2010

# THE BUZZ



Issue # 4 Volume 1

## Joke of the Quarter:

By : Lori Shapiro

How do you make a Kleenex Dance.

Blow a little a boogie in it.



## Inside this issue:

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## Advocacy in Action: By Mr. James Burney



Advocacy, like anything, is something you have

to practice if you want to get better at it. Realizing this made me think that a great place to practice self-advocacy is during daily transportation.

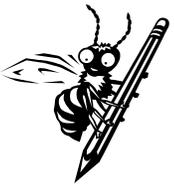
It doesn't matter if you get your ride from Logisticare, Handy Ride, a taxi or even with staff; being in a car can be stressful for people with disabilities. In my case, being visually impaired can add to my stress. Drivers may not realize what it is like to have disabilities and that the way they drive can affect my whole day.

This is why I like to advocate by speaking up for myself. I try to explain how going too

fast or making me wait a long time can make me nervous. I try to be nice when I explain my needs because it makes everyone happier. Here's a list of other issues you may confront with a driver:

- Arrives late
- Drives too fast
- Leaves you in the car too long
- Bad/reckless driving
- Music too loud
- Smoking in car
- Talking on phone while driving
- Driver is rude

I hope you will try self-advocacy or find another way to practice standing up for yourself when one of these issues arises. Let me know how it's going by emailing me at [jamesburney20@yahoo.com](mailto:jamesburney20@yahoo.com)



## Fins, Feathers, and Paws: By Jeremy Norman

Fins, Feathers, and Paws  
By Jeremy Norman



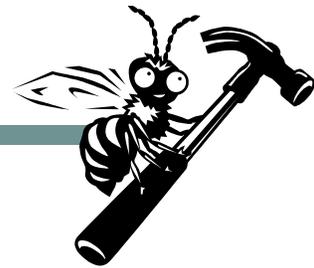
Living in the community with animals is costly and hard but very much worth it. I thought about what can I do to help people who want animals. My life would not be the same if I did not have my animals. My pets make me feel like I am taking care of something except they don't talk back. I always feel amazing when I come home and my animals greet me. I have heard that living in certain services, individuals with disabilities are less likely to have pets and this really upsets me. Many of our staff complain about the mess or the responsi-

bility it puts on them; but they forget the positive feelings they can do for us. Over the past year or so I have had many different pets; from rats, to cats, to guinea pigs, and now a frog. Each time someone complains but each time they all remember that it is my right to have pets. Talking with staff about getting a pet can be difficult, which is why I recommend researching before you even bring it up. Prepare yourself with knowledge about the animal before you even mention the idea to staff. If you need help with finding out about your choice of pet, I am available. E-mail me and I will help you put together some information on the pets. Some of the things you might want to look into finding out are the basic needs of the pet. What it eats,

where it sleeps, what it needs to be comfortable, and a good vet of course. All of this stuff is easy to find, you just have to know where to look. If you feel a little scared of the responsibility try something small first, like a fish or a frog. If you decide this route make sure it is what you want and not what staff want you to do. Lets face it, a fish is no where near the same as a cat. When it comes to exotic animals like rats or spiders it is important to remember that staff may be afraid but they are there to help you. Pets can be your best friends and basically no trouble at all. I have five different pets and love them all.

If you have questions, concerns, or even a cool experience you want to share please e-mail me at

[snowball0758@yahoo.com](mailto:snowball0758@yahoo.com).



## Vote Smart: By Dorothy Clark



I don't vote republican or democrat. I vote on the issue, on

the morals; I vote on what matters to me. My name is Dorothy Clark and I have been a voter for many years. I believe each vote is as important as the first one. I like to vote. I like to vote to let my opinion be heard. As a strong advocate voting is just another route I take to express what matters to me. Voting is equal across the board and is an outlet for everyone.

When I prepare to vote there are a few things I do to make sure my choice is correct. I usually will first pick up a voters guide from my church and read it cover

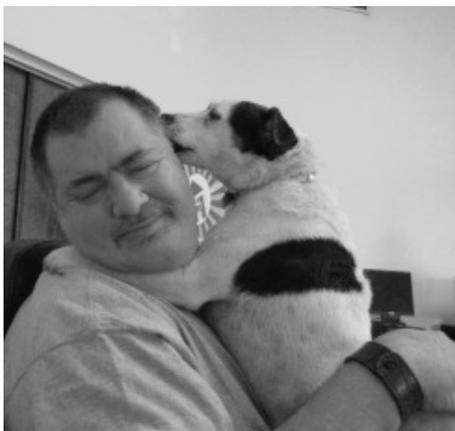
to cover. I then read the pamphlets that come in the mail and watch TV relating to the election. I like to find out what each candidate is for and against. Usually I can measure their beliefs and how they relate to mine. I enjoy listening to the candidates speak. It is important to hear their voice on the issues this way you can really see the sincerity of their position. I also go to the local hearings. This is an outlet to ask questions or clear up your mind on some of the issues you feel strongly about.

Registering to vote is easy. Where I live staff assist with this process. Registering to vote takes place at the DMV. When you move, change voting locations, or just register for the first time you have to go to the DMV. You can also go

to the voting registrars office and the post office and mail your application in. You will need to know your social security number and address. When it is time to vote during the election the best advice I can give you is to not be afraid of your choice. Also, if you do not know how to use the voting machines ask for help. I did and it helped me better understand the process. Voting is not a contest and you have the right to keep your voting choice to your self. Remember to vote for who and what you want. If you feel like you are being pressured into voting for the wrong candidate speak to someone. Look to your local advocacy committee for help. In the upcoming issues of The Buzz I plan on preparing information for the next elections. In the end, remember voting is a freedom people take for granted.



## Dealing with Staff: By Randy Smith



Randy Smith is a guy of middle years. He lives with his dog, Chic, in his own apartment near ODU. Randy uses a motorized scooter to get around in his local community, and boy does he get around! Randy visits ODU, nearby restaurants, the 7-11, and oh yeah, the bank. He's known by many folks in his local community. Randy's not able to use verbal communication; he uses sign, does a variety of charades for those of us who are sign language dummies, and will resort to writing if needed, in order to communicate. In other words, Randy's quite smart and will adapt his

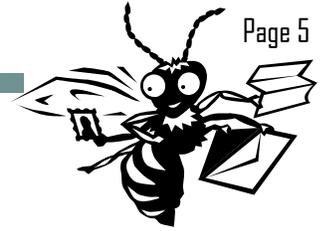
communication to overcome your deficits. He did a lot of that for me, as I took notes for writing his story, including having one of the staff who has worked with him for many years now, help interpret.

Randy's story is about the struggle for greater independence; and how that freedom sometimes must be fought for and won from the very people who care for and about you.

In the spring of 2009, using his motorized scooter, Randy made a trip to the bank. He wrote a check for cash and using his ID, cashed it while there. Not long after successfully mastering this skill on his own, he ordered a debit card, and in doing so disabled the debit card that staff had kept safely locked away so that its use could be

carefully monitored. Not surprisingly, the staff who work with Randy were frustrated and concerned. They had *always* handled Randy's money, ensuring that his bills were paid and carefully budgeting the remainder with him. Surely bad things would happen if Randy were accessing his own money without the oversight that staff had always provided.

Over the next few months Randy had spent all the funds that had accumulated over time due to staff's careful budgeting. Still, the staff working with Randy recognized that only two options existed: to seek payee status so that Randy's access to his funds could be completely restricted, or to help him have the access he desired and be able to budget successfully for himself. A goal was developed to support the freedom Randy clearly wanted.



## Dealing with Staff: By Randy Smith (continued)

Outside of this, Randy was spending quite a bit of money eating out and purchasing coffee at the 7-11 nearby. Keeping track of his own funds using the receipts and the register was difficult. In August there were some significant overdrafts on the account, costing Randy several hundred dollars in bank fees. The bank put a block on the debit card.

Still Randy was not ready to give up. Yes, he had made some mistakes, but didn't most people? And people who don't have a disability don't lose the freedom to continue to manage their own money just because they make mistakes with it.

Randy continued to take his bills to SunTrust, and for a while he received the re-

mainder of his funds in cash. Eventually he began using a SunTrust gift card, with the bank staff loading his card each month with his remaining funds. There were a few more bumps, an overdraft that occurred when he ordered new checks (who knew they cost so much?), another when he wrote a check at ODU instead of using his card. But Randy is doing better each month. It's nearing a year now since Randy first began breaking out of the confines of his perceived support needs. He now gives cash to staff to put away for his groceries throughout the month. He's made sure his bills have been paid every month. Randy's clear that he never wanted to be irresponsible with his money, in fact quite the opposite; he wanted to be nothing

more than *responsible* for his own money, in charge of it, good bad or otherwise, like most people. While some might argue differently, Randy's very clear that even with the mistakes, even with some lean months after having to pay all the bank fees he had incurred early on in his quest for independence, he believes it has all been worth it. His smile, and the pride so clearly spoken in his expression left this writer with no doubt.



## A Quick Look Into Case Management Services:



Receiving Case management services can be beneficial in numerous ways. Below is a quick reference on applying for the services a city case manager can provide in the Hampton Roads area.

Contact the Behavioral Healthcare Services or the Community Services Board of-  
fice for your city.

Portsmouth: 393-8321

Norfolk: 823-1616

Virginia Beach: 385-0600

Western Tidewater: 942-1069

Hampton/Newport News: 788-0300

Chesapeake: 547-9334

In Portsmouth, the receptionist will take your name and address and send you a letter outlining what the steps are to receive waiver services. In other cities you may be transferred to someone who takes your information. You will be sent a letter outlining the process.

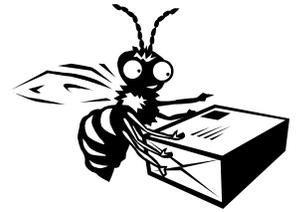
The first step is to get a psychological evaluation. Included in the letter are names of doctors you can use for the evaluation. Once the evaluation is completed, have the doctor's office forward your evaluation back to the behavioral healthcare services office. The price of a Psychological Evaluation if you are looking for services is not covered by Medicaid and can be anywhere from \$200.00 to \$320.00.

Once received, an appointment will be set up with your city's program administrator for an intake interview.

The interview will be conducted.

Next, you will be placed on a waiting list until a waiver slot becomes available. It is important that if you are eligible for these services, you get on the waiting list years in advance. With the new budget in Virginia, case management services will probably face a cut, so getting services as early as possible is probably your best bet.

If you have any comments, opinions, or just want to contribute contact the Hope House Foundation Administrative Offices at 625-6161.



## *HEART TO HART*

*...AN ADVICE COLUMN ON RELATIONSHIPS*



A Hart to Heart Experience....

I have a girlfriend who I am in a monogamous relationship with. We'll call her Lizzie. She and I have been going together for seven years. We are planning on moving in together. I love her so much. We met in high school and went to the prom together. I'm planning on taking her on a cruise soon in D.C.

I have some advice for you if you like someone and want to be in a serious relationship with him or her: get together and find out what you have in common, ask him/her out on a few dates and get to know each other to decide if you like each other's company. Then meet the person's parents to see if you all get along. Finally, decide whether or not you can trust that person and want to go forward in dating them exclusively.

Here are some things to avoid if you want to make your relationship last: don't be intimate until you're both ready, don't rush into marriage (or anything else for that matter), don't have kids until you've both decided your ready for that responsibility, and don't cheat on that person!

Those are some tips that should help with beginning a new relationship and making it last! Remember to celebrate each other and have a Happy Valentines Day.

Once again, if you have question's about love, life, and relationships, send them to me at the Hope House Foundation Administrative Office.

Always on Call,  
Dr. Hart



## This Is What I Think...

### Critique Column by Blake Thomas



Hi my name is Blake Thomas and I Love playing video games. If you want my opinion on games, please continue to read on... If you like movies that have video games to implement them then please continue to read on...

I would like to give you my view on Jak 3. Jak 3 is the video game I play on my Playstation 2. I give this game two thumbs up. It has great sound effects, funny jokes, and best of all it has the destroyer. If you

want to find out what the destroyer is, then I suggest you go out and play it for yourself. My favorite part of the game is the fun fire and the metal heads (they're the bad guys). If you're not into combat scenes then I suggest you don't pick this game because it can get a little too violent.

The next game I chose to give my view on is Lord of the Rings Two Towers. My grandma gave me this game as a gift. I play this game on my Playstation 2 also. If you're not into seeing blood, then this may not be the game for you because it can get pretty scary! I personally give this game two thumbs up. My favorite part of

the game is when they show parts of the movie. It is so cool. You will be playing the game and you get to a certain part and it goes straight to a scene in the movie. It's like playing a movie instead of a video game (ha ha ha)! The part I don't like in the game is when I get attacked by the elves and they make this scary kind of noise that if you want to know what it sounds like, you have to buy or rent the game yourself.

## Events/ Classifieds

Have any events coming up you want to share? Do you have items you just don't need and want to sell? E-mail [buzz.connections@yahoo.com](mailto:buzz.connections@yahoo.com) .



The Afton Team in Portsmouth is looking for items to decorate its new back yard and deck. They plan on planting a garden and making the space more enjoyable. Planters, tools, and garden ornaments welcome. If you have any items please contact Kim at 757-558-2005.

Stephen has a 13" television he is interested in selling for \$20. He also has a VCR he would sell for \$10, and VHS tapes, 3 for \$5 or \$2 each. If interested please e-mail the newsletter.



John Waff is looking for someone to learn to Ballroom Dance with. He is a beginner who has only taken classes a few times, but would like to keep learning. If interested please contact him at 757-622-8595.

“Shamarocken in Ghent”  
March 12th  
6:00-10:00 pm  
Ghent

Free and open to the public for a night of celebration and live music.

“Stockley Gardens Art Festival “  
May 15th and 16th

Free and open to the public for a weekend of art and celebration. Located at Stockley Gardens off Olney Road.

“43rd Annual Norfolk Saint Patrick's Day Parade”  
March 12th  
10 am-12:30 pm  
Open to the public.  
Parade Route is from Granby St. to 4th View St.

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