

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF "STUMPS `R US"

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Column One: ARLINDO NAVARRO: A Truly Inspirational Story of Flight

Spotlight: Michelle Gomez

I recently happened upon Michelle Gomez (age 30) on Castro Street in San Francisco, where she was desperately seeking a slice of pizza. She was terribly hungry, but I did manage to get in a few brief questions:

Q: So you like pizza, huh?

A: "Like" isn't the word.

Q: Let's talk about your residual limb... or your petite jambe right?

A: Yes. That means "little leg" in French. I call it my "PJ" for short. Get it, for short!

Q: How did you lose your leg?

A: I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Cameroon, Central Africa, and was a passenger on a motorcycle when we were hit by a car. I was medically evacuated to a hospital in Germany where I stayed for three months before returning to the United States.

Q: Is that when you met Wayne Koniuk, your prosthetist extraordinaire?

A: Yes. He helped me to return to Cameroon one year later and complete my two years of Peace Corps Service.

Q: Isn't Wayne's assistant, Julie Chandler, just super?

A: You betcha!

Q: What's the craziest thing

Please see Gomez, page 4.

By Arlindo Navarro

I was born in Michaoacan, Mexico 31 years ago. When I was around nine years old my parents along with my brothers, sisters and myself emigrated to California. California greeted us with open arms, but unfortunately moving to California for me came with a price tag. Twenty-four days after arriving here in California I was involved in a tractor accident and lost my right leg.

To recover from my accident I had to spend eight months in the hospital. That was a unique experience for me because of the fact that I did not speak a single word of English and the nurses did not speak Spanish. I therefore had to learn English really fast in order to be able to communicate with the nurses.

Sometime later, after returning home from the hospital, I also returned to school. I attended an elementary school that had physically challenged students integrated along with the nonphysically challenged students. The three years that I spent there were very pleasant. The staff and most importantly my fellow students were very good to me. They made me feel right at home and treated me

just like any other student.

Later down the road I continued with my education by attending Junior High and later High School. This was my first contact with the real world. In both schools I was one of a handful of physically challenged students. This made it very rough for me, I stood out like a sore thumb. I met some very cruel people who enjoyed making fun of me because of my amputation. Because of that I turned into a "loner" and did not make any friends. Sometimes I wonder how I ever made it through those years without dropping out of school.

Attending the University of Stanislaus, Turlock was a new world. People there were much

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Special Events and Notices

The National Amputee Fund

~Because no one should have to go without
a prosthesis for financial reasons...

With the impressive prosthetic technology available today, it would be wonderful if everyone who needs it could benefit from it. The NAF, through donative support and generous contributions, makes quality prosthetic care available to those who otherwise couldn't afford it. Your support means equal access for all amputees and the establishment of a new funding source for the prosthetic industry. For more information or to make a contribution of either money or a prosthetic device please contact **The NAF, 6161 El Cajon Blvd. #449, San Diego, CA 92115, (800) 770-5090.**

Trauma and Injury Support Groups

San Francisco General Hospital (SFGH) Trauma/Injury Support Group.

SFGH group meetings are twice a month on the first and third Wednesday afternoons from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. Meetings are held at SFGH, in the medical library -- Building, 30, Room 3101. The group will be facilitated by Yigal Ben-Haim, Ph.D., and Laurie Barkin, R.N.

Alta Bates -- Herrick Hospital Survivors of Burn, Trauma, and Injury Support Group

Group Meetings are every month on the second and fourth Thursdays, 7:30 to 8:45 p.m. To be on the mailing list, please call Dr. Ben Haim, (415) 753-1000, or Sally at (510) 582-8581. Most of these meetings will be in Conference Room 1 (next to the cafeteria). The group will be facilitated by Dr. Yigal Ben-Haim, Ph.D., a Therapist who specializes in the field of post traumatic stress and recovery, and Sally Brandoff, Therapist and Burn Survivor.

These Support Groups provide information about care at home after being in the hospital. The groups also provides a useful opportunity for members to talk with other survivors and get emotional support towards healing and full recovery.

For more information and exact dates, please call Dr. Yigal Ben-Haim, (415) 753-1000 (10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.).

Navarro, continued from page 1.

friendlier and less critical of my physical appearance. There I was able to make some friends. Friends who did not care what I looked like physically, but who liked me because of who I was. After five long years of working for my degree at CSUS, I finally received my Bachelor of Science in the Spring of 1990.

After College I went to work for Avis Rent a Car at the Stockton Airport as an Assistant Manager. There I rediscovered my love for flying. Enthusiastically I started to query all the local flight schools regarding their prices and requirements to obtain my private pilot's license. Unfortunately I kept running into one roadblock after another. Everyone kept telling me that I could not operate a plane with one leg. "Planes are equipped with two pedals to operate the brakes and rudders and therefore you need two legs to fly the plane," I kept

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GIMPY

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SORKIN'S CORNER

By Dan Sorkin*

"Stumps" Founder and President

The writer of this article was pushed into a die-casting machine, at his place of business on May 10, 1990. After a stop at Marin General Hospital, he was transferred to R.K. Davies Medical Center where he met Dr. Alphonso Oliva, a devoted plastic and hand surgeon. Assured that he would do his best to save as much of the arm as possible he trusted Dr. Oliva. However, due to the nature and extent of the injury Dr. Oliva had no choice but to amputate an inch and half below the elbow. Operating room notes show that the other 6 members of the team suggested amputation above the elbow so they could go home. Dr. Oliva's word and assurances to him were kept.

What was not kept, was enough of a stump to support a prosthesis, or at least one that could be held on the stump. A lengthening procedure was performed and he now had about eight inches of well protected stump. Phantom pain is constant and at a relatively high level. However, two prothesis have been supplied -- a mechanical one used in sports swimming, golf and ball catching devices along with hooks for work. Mechanical devices are the only ones, which can take shock and hard use and water applications. Additionally, a myoelectric prosthesis was also supplied. Interestingly, the weight of the device publicized in prosthetic catalogs and magazines as of August 1990 weighed nine point six pounds. It had only a crude hook and looked, well, lousy. A pass on this unit was taken.

Currently, he is using his fifth myoelectric arm. It is a beta tester supplied by Motion Control. He still has and uses a Bock arm, which as far as he understands, is the very latest which the German firm makes. Motion Control, located in Salt Lake City, used to use many Bock components but

Please see Sorkin, page 6.

THE LIFE AND HAPPINESS

OF AN OLDER DOUBLE AMPUTEE

*Plus an invitation to play golf:

By Waymon M. Todd

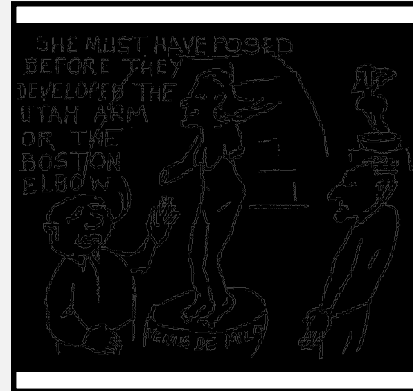
It is a privilege for me to write this article for *GIMPY*. I hope this story will encourage others to become successful regardless of what cards they are dealt. While there were many difficult times, the good times outweigh the bad.

I joined the United States Navy in January, 1941, not far from where I was raised just outside of Dallas, Texas. Enlisting in the Navy when I was just 18 allowed me to make changes in my life I felt were necessary. Outside of being assigned to the USS Nashville and the USS Long Island for a short period of time, I spent the rest of my military career on island-base duty. My 21st birthday was spent on Guadalcanal as a radio press operator. I copied the news every morning at 1:00 a.m. for the navy on the island.

After being transferred home, I spent 30 days in Abilene, Texas where I learned to fly small planes.

Please see Todd, page 6.

The Lighter Side...



By "The Gimpster"

Dave Spencer graciously offers his palatial hillsborough estate once a year to host a spectacular "Stumps `R Us" pool party and barbecue catered with excellent food, live music and exquisite surroundings. We at the lighter side feel that the best way to repay him for his hospitality and good nature is by taking a few moments to ridicule and poke fun at him...



Pool party host Dave Spencer takes a break with our Stumps President Dan Sorkin who explains, "You need to open up the tunnel and the train goes chu chu!!!"

"Oh Dave go on, you are such a jokester... And, no, I don't feel you've been distant lately."



Gomez, continued from page 1.

you've ever done as an amputee?

A: Skydiving! Or maybe belly-dancing... or maybe it was getting in a speed boat with Laurence N. Kaldor.

Q: What are you doing now?

A: I'm a second year medical student at the University of California at San Francisco, and am now taking some time out to practice being on my feet for long periods of time to get ready for the long hours during my clinical years. I'm

also trying to form a network for disabled medical students.

Q: Looks like your pizza is ready. It was good talking with you.

A: Mmph-mmph, yum-yum!

Western Amputee Golf association

The WAGA, established in 1968, helps amputees and other physically challenged people build a sense of personal pride and confidence. Tournaments held year round for players of every skill level. For more information please contact Jim Stein at (415) 898-1202. Participate today!!!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Is *GIMPY*'s Title Offensive?

Dear Stumps' Members,

I was recently introduced to the *GIMPY* newsletter by my most wonderful prosthetist, Wayne Koniuk. Upon reading the bold headline titled "*GIMPY*," I knew that this was going to be something that I would inevitably have some reactions to. Having been an arm amputee from birth, I am one of those folks that has developed in life embracing my "difference" with as much dignity and honor as I could possibly muster. Often times, in the face of ignorance and even adversity.

To me, the title of "*GIMPY*" does not give the deserved acknowledgment to people who are managing a significant disability with courage and grace. I realize that the title is offered in jest and fun, and I am not opposed to humor as a method of coping, releasing and healing. I just wondered how other amputees felt about this being the title of our communication vehicle. Which I might add is much welcomed by me, having had aspirations many times to create something that would give an opportunity for amputees to share experiences, resources and

dialogues around this issue. Which I think is important, because it represents more than just a title of our newsletter. You can e-mail me your thoughts at lewasser@sfsu.edu.

~Troubled By Title

Should *GIMPY* get Personal?

Dear Stumps' Members,

I was curious to know if there is any interest for a "personal ad" section to be possibly added to this newsletter. Do you feel, as I do, that there is a great need for a diplomatic avenue to meet fellow gimps for friendship, sharing, and possible relationships? If so, what parameters should be included in our method of search? Gender, age, locality, nature of disability, level of ability and activity, etc.? Please contact me with any comments or suggestions on the internet at DAY23@aol.com, or, at (408) 462-4402. This issue will be discussed at the September Board meeting, and I will be sure to forward all of your ideas to them. Thanks.

~Dan Adragna

Navarro, continued from Page 2.

hearing from one instructor after another. There and then I decided to give up my life dream of flying.

A couple of years later while working as a Computer Instructor, I was pleasantly surprised to hear that a paraplegic had earned his private pilot's license with the use of a hand control to control the pedals. I instantly started my search for that magical hand control. This time I decided to not only check with local flight schools, but also with the not so local ones. That's when I got in touch with Oakland Flyers and they in turn put me touch with Dan Sorkin, an amputee pilot

and President of Stumps of `R Us. Dan pointed me in the right direction and eighty flight hours later I am one Check-ride away from fulfilling one of my life long dreams.

Being able to fly has had a positive affect on my life. It helped me regain much of my self esteem which had been lost back in my teen years. In turn I was then able to participate in sports like snow and water skiing. I have even decided to start wearing a prosthesis after twenty years of not wearing one.

Where do I envision myself in the coming years? I see myself flying for a living, captain of my own plane.

Sorkin's, continued from page 3.

Bock has been integrating devices forcing Motion Control and others to make more of their own components.

The arm weighs about four point seven pounds and has both opening and closing ability, as well as wrist rotation in either direction. The latest device measures the strength of the electric signal emitted by the muscles each time the device "goes to sleep" which is after two minutes or so of nonuse. This is a major advancement and beneficial progress.

The way a myoelectric works is quite simple, yet equally amazing. The stump fits snugly in a sleeve and a number of smooth electrodes are pressed against the flesh. When you think "open your hand" or "close it" the nerves that are still in the stump still get signals from the brain. These are magnified and feed into a computer, which sends a signal to servomotors. As the day wears on, the signals tend to get weaker, so traditionally the patient had to settle for the "average" signal, which is hardly a satisfactory way of living. The new Motion Control device provides a constant powerful signal throughout the day, giving the user maximum response.

The cost of such a device is not cheap at a number in excess of thirty thousand dollars, which Medicare covers as well as

many major supplemental carriers. Demonstrations or conversations about all of these types of devices can be arranged with David E. Kurland at 44 Mirabel Avenue, Mill Valley, California 94941, or, (415) 388-6070, or e-mail Bird56@aol.com, or through the Stumps `R Us Organization.

**Made possible by contributing members of "Stumps"*

Todd, continued from page 3.

When my leave was up I was transferred to the Naval Air Station in Seattle, Washington. Most of my flying was from Boeing Field. While in Washington, I decided to fly to Oregon to visit some friends I missed.

After checking the weather conditions and being given clearance to fly, I took off from Washington. By the time I reached Mount Rainer the weather had changed and was so terrible, I was flying by instruments only. During my attempt to turn around and fly back, I crashed into the side of a mountain. Five days later a logging company found me and brought me to safety. I was taken to a hospital in Vail, Washington, then to

Seattle. Eventually I was transported to Mare Island Naval Hospital. It was there the decision was made to amputate my legs below the knees due to frostbite, on March 26, 1946. Even though I loved the Navy, it was clear my military career was over.

After spending a year in the hospital confined to a wheelchair, I decided it was best for me to return to school and get an education that did not require a lot of physical activity. I went to Armstrong College in Berkeley and earned a degree in accounting, then proceeded to earn my real estate license. At age 75, which I turned this past January, I retired fully from real estate.

My wife and I raised two wonderful daughters and enjoyed a life full of fun and adventure. Even with my limitations we felt we managed to live "the normal life." My wife passed away in 1993. That was the hardest thing for me to adjust to after 45 years of marriage.

Naturally, over the years I have had to take care of my

Please See Todd, page 7.

Sports * Sports * Sports

Attention amputees of all ages and genders interested in exploring their full athletic potential: If you are interested in learning how to participate in ANY type of athletic activity such -- snow skiing, water skiing, rollerblading, tennis, racquetball, canoeing, kayaking, golf, etc... please contact Laurence N. Kaldor at (415) 665-8658 and we look forward to seeing you out there !!!

Todd , *continued from page 6.*

legs, which are the one part of your body, as an amputee, that you do not want to overdo, resulting in reliance on a wheelchair. Over the years I have come to refer to my amputation as nothing more than a detour in my life. I have owned three businesses, did a lot of traveling, and have developed a passion for the game of golf.

I have enjoyed playing golf for the past twenty-five years, and believe me I have won most of my matches with a thirteen NCGA Handicap. With those days behind me, and the realization that I must slow down, I am however, currently searching for three more double amputees to join me in a foursome. I have been assured wide ranging media coverage and exposure which would advertise to the amputee community as well as the rest of the general public that regardless of the extent of their loss, life does not end with their disability.

The success rate of amputees has been tremendous. Of the thirty-five hundred marine and naval amputees that were fitted and discharged from Mare Island after World War II, over ninety-five percent of them went to school and got an education. I encourage all of you to learn your limitations and live a full life within those limitations. If I can be of any assistance to you, if you are interested in joining the foursome, or if you just want information on how to play golf as an amputee, please do not hesitate to contact me, Waymon M. Todd, at 1241 Via El Monte, San Lorenzo, California 94580, (510) 278-0615.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

About this newsletter . . .

It has been my intention from the beginning, as editor, to create and provide a vehicle by which members can be contacted and informed of upcoming events and news from the handicapped community. Thus far the support we have experienced has been tremendous. Furthermore, this newsletter (through internet exposure, handouts, circulars and mailers) has acted as a medium by which we have been able to reach out beyond our fast growing membership to others who may need us, but are, as of yet, unaware of our existence.

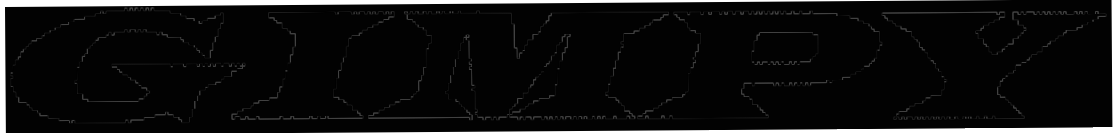
Additionally, I would like to personally thank all of those members who have contributed articles and their time making this ongoing project a success, without whose efforts this newsletter would not be possible. Furthermore, I encourage all of you to continue contributing articles of your own personal experiences and achievements plus any information you feel is relevant to the handicapped community (e.g. helpful tips, hints, anecdotes, prosthetic advancements, etc.). Additionally, any comments, inquiries, criticisms or letters to the editor will be published upon request.

All correspondence should be sent to . . .

Laurence N. Kaldor, *GIMPY* Editor, 1340 38th Avenue, San Francisco, California 94122. Or by, e-mail at Phenix7@MSN.COM. Or by, fax at (415) 681-4855. Or by, phone at (415) 665-8658. In order for *GIMPY* to flourish it depends on the support of all of you, our "Stumps" members. Thank you for your ongoing support & enjoy!

--Laurence N. Kaldor,
Gimpy Editor-in-Chief

Deadline for submission of articles for publication in the Winter 1998 edition of *GIMPY*: December 1, 1997, 5:00 p.m. Late submissions can not be guaranteed!!!



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF “STUMPS `R US”

*“A nonprofit corporation dedicated to aiding and uniting
slightly inconvenienced people around the world”*

STUMPS `R US, CORPORATION

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