

PLUS: The Mitrofanoff Principle

OSTOMYCANADA

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 2

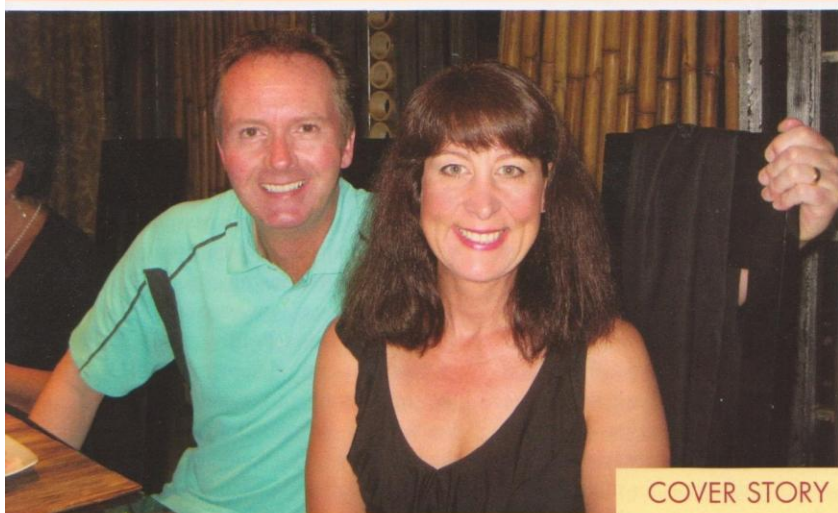
WINTER 2011

LIVING BY EXAMPLE

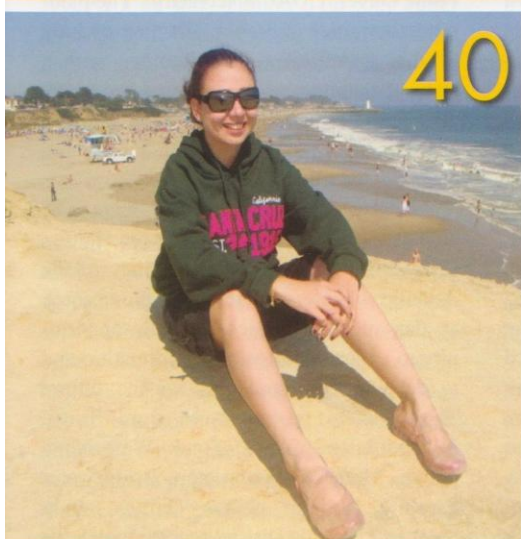
Cancer survivor
Glenn Boswell has a
life-saving message



ISSN 1703-1818
CANADA POST #40038803



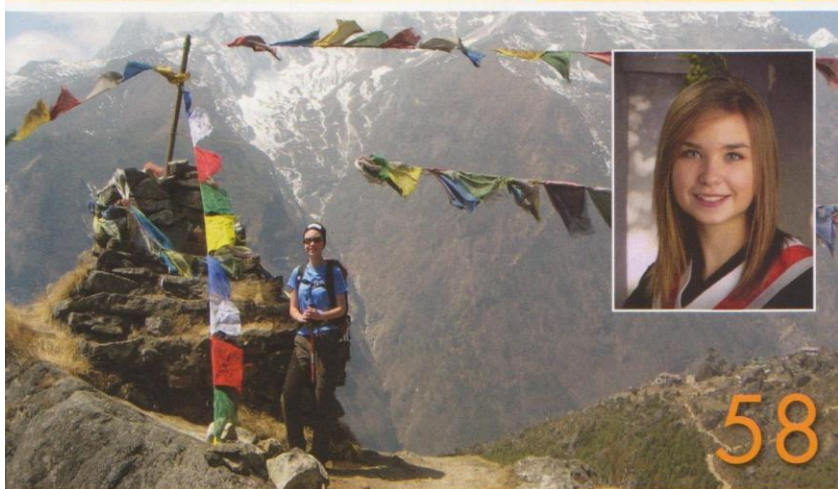
COVER STORY



40



46



58

FEATURES

- 8 | UOAA Reno & You 2011
- 16 | In Memoriam
- 18 | Chapter Information Session Saskatoon
- 20 | Living With An Ostomy
- 24 | UOAC Conference 2012
- 26 | Atlantic Chapter Information Session
- 28 | Life Without Limits
- 30 | Living By Example
- 32 | Fredericton Chapter 25th Anniversary
- 34 | Outdoor Plumbing Installed
- 36 | The Mitrofanoff Principle
- 40 | Meet Misty Blue
- 42 | Oscar Cruises the Netherlands
- 46 | Ostomy Youth Camp 2011
- 51 | UOAC Ottawa 40th Anniversary
- 56 | UOAC Annual General Meeting
- 58 | Renaissance Great Comebacks Awards

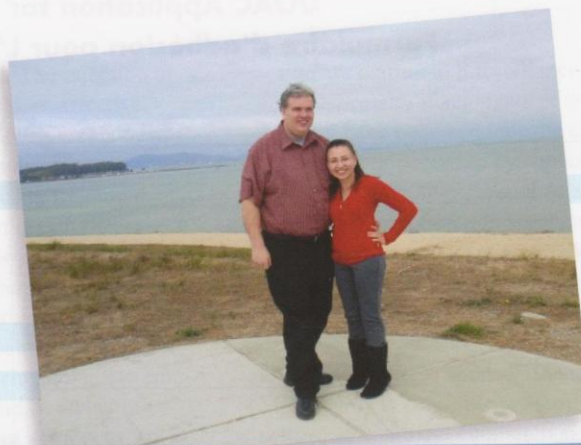
DEPARTMENTS

- 4 | President's Message
- 5 | Message du Président
- 6 | Editor's Greeting
- 6 | Letters
- 54 | Ask the Doctor
- 55 | Demandez au Docteur

18



Printing and mailing of Ostomy Canada is made possible by financial support from **Hollister Limited**
95 Mary Street, Aurora, Ontario, L4G 1G3 Tel: 1-800-263-7400 In Quebec, 1-800-263-3263



Top Left Clockwise: Tom and Misty in England. Misty and Tom in San Mateo. Misty Blue at Santacruz. Misty Blue in San Mateo. Misty Blue and Jerome hanging out. Misty Blue and Jerome at cousins wedding. Misty Blue and Jerome's wedding photo.

Meet Misty Blue

BY JANET PAQUET

*"You can't always control what you are given in life,
but you can control what you do with it"*

– Misty Blue Foster



Misty was born in 1985 with both spina bifida and cloacal exstrophy, a very rare birth defect affecting approximately one in every 250,000 live births. Sadly, these were not the only challenges Misty had to face in her young life.

At age five, Misty's mother died from endocarditis, an infection of the inner lining of the heart caused by long term heroin use, leaving Misty to grow up in the California foster care system.

The living conditions in Misty's foster home were horrific. She had a foster mom who could not cope with a child living with special needs. Misty was not allowed to use the washroom to empty her ostomy pouch but was directed to the porch where she was to empty the pouch into Ziploc bags and deposit directly into the garbage. Her foster mom would also ration the absorbent panties that Misty had to wear, with the assumption that Misty caused her own incontinence. The foster mother also resented the fact that she would have to take time out of her day to take Misty to the Emergency room or hospital appointments. Years of abuse would continue in her foster home.

In high school, Misty was finally able, on the school's computer, to research what her health conditions were. She was fortunate to contact Thomas Exler of the Association of Bladder Exstrophy (ABC). Tom was able to arrange for Misty to attend the UOA Youth Rally in Boulder Colorado,

so that she could meet other teens her age that had ostomies. Misty was surprised to learn that all these teens at the Rally could have a good time and didn't care that they had an ostomy. It wasn't their fault! She then attended the California Bladder Exstrophy Support Team campout where for the first time in her life, she experienced a family like atmosphere.

With no independent living skills, Misty faced an uphill battle after graduating from high school. She had no money and nowhere to go. The only marketable skill she had was being a caregiver. (She had cared for some of the younger children in the foster home) With the help of a friend, Misty was able to get a job working in a care home helping a developmentally disabled adult. Although she liked her job, Misty really coveted a job as a nurse. She was able to find a job as an unlicensed nursing assistant at a convent retirement residence. During this time Misty continued to have health problems ranging from gallstones, kidney and back problems. At one point Misty's scoliosis worsened as her spine continued to grow sideways.

Undeterred by her health, Misty enrolled in a Certified Nursing Assistant program followed by a Licensed Vocational Nurse program maintaining a 4.0 grade point average. She is now working on her Bachelor of Science Nursing Degree. She has had to and will continue to attend school full time and work full time to pay for school and living expenses.

Misty has been blessed to find love in her life. She was introduced by a co-worker to her husband Jerome. Although their first meeting was a disaster, their second was much better and a year later they were engaged. Jerome, a man of few words, did state that the only time it has been difficult for him to cope with Misty's health issues is when she is in pain. He hates to see her uncomfortable. Jerome stays with her when she is in the hospital and said, "she needs me". He also joked that when they went on a tandem bike ride, Misty let him do all the work – so she needed him again.

Opportunities have opened for Misty to speak and share her story and be an inspiration to others. She has been a guest speaker at conferences for people with exstrophy, bowel and bladder diversions, neurological problems and spina bifida. Some of these conferences have taken place in Australia, England and Iceland.

It was my pleasure this past summer to spend an afternoon with both Misty and her husband, Jerome. To meet someone who has overcome such tremendous adversities and still be committed to being the best she can be is truly an inspiration. With Misty, the word 'can't' does not exist; her perseverance and persistence to overcome her struggles can be an encouragement to anyone who has suffered from any health issue. **OC**

*Janet Paquet is a member of the
Hamilton & District Ostomy Association
and Vice President of UOAC*