
BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS

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BSTTW REBUILDING LIVES

Coming Home: BSTTW Support Team

By: Michael Appleman, CEO

Each day over 3000 individuals from around the world suffer a burn injury. Many of these individuals do not have the finances and/or the medical insurance needed to receive medical treatment and recover from the severe injury. As a burn survivor I can say that most burn survivors who suffered a severe burn injury can understand the emotional and physical trauma involved with coming home after a long term hospital stay, burn unit, nursing home and rehabilitation. For an extended period of time I did not get the support I needed. I did not know any other burn survivors in the area I was living. This caused me to feel alone, Family members of a burn survivor also suffer emotional trauma due to the emotional and physical pain their loved one suffers. **Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc. (BSTTW)**, founded in August 2001, has a support team that offers the information, friendship and support needed to help both burn survivors and family members work through the emotional issues due to the burn injury and reentering a community that does not always understand.

BSTTW is constantly raising the funding needed to continue the **BSTTW Support Team (BST)**. The **BSTTW Support Team Fund** is hoping to raise \$100,000 during

2008-2009. **BSTTW** is currently in need of at least one car, preferably an SUV or Van and automobile insurance. The funds raised from the 2008-2009 season will also be used to purchase a care and automobile insurance, if they have not been donated, allow the **BST** to travel around the USA and at times the world to offer one on one support to both burn survivors and family members and offer funding to pay for medical expenses. When a burn survivor is in need he/she can always contact the **BST** by telephone, at 936-647-2256 or by email at www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/supportemail.html, meet with in a private internet chat room and when the funds are raised a **BST** member will come to your home.

To learn more about the **BSTTW** **CONTINUED On Page 2 "SUPPORT"**



A FAMILY AROUND THE WORLD



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 Support Team Fund (BSTF) go to
www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/bstfund.html.
 Mail your donations to the **BSTF** to:

Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc.
 BST Fund
 16193 Lone Star Ranch Drive #102
 Conroe, Texas 77302

You can learn more about **BSTTW** by going to
www.burnsurvivorsttw.org. If you would like to
 become a **BSTTW** Volunteer you can learn
 more at
www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/volunteer/volunteer.html.
 To contact a **BSTTW Support Team**
Member you should go to
www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/supportemail.html
 or call us at 936-647-2256.

'Miracle Marine' Dies After Beating Odds

(CNN) -- A Marine who survived being burned over more than 95 percent of his body in Iraq and established a charity to help burned children has died, the military has announced.

Marine Sgt. Merlin German, seen in May 2007, died last month of complications after surgery.

Sgt. Merlin German was 22.

He was severely wounded February 21, 2005, en route to Camp Ramadi when his Humvee hit a roadside bomb.

He was not expected to survive, but he was transported to Germany



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and then to Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas, which has the U.S. military's top burns unit.

He spent nine months in intensive care and underwent more than 100 operations.

German moved out of the hospital into his own home after 17 months of treatment.

He founded Merlin's Miracles, a charity that aims "to assist burned children and their families to take vacations, trips, outings or anything the families needed to make life a little easier," according to its Web site.

German died April 11 at Brooke Army Medical Center of complications after surgery. Don't Miss Merlin's Miracles Web site, at <http://www.merlinsmiracles.com>. "He beat all odds and then on top of that continued to serve



as an inspiration and motivator for others," said Dr. Evan Renz, a critical-care surgeon who treated German.

"It is very difficult to

describe the sense of loss. He endeared himself to all he came in contact with. It's really impossible to describe, except to say: Imagine the loss of dear family or friend."

Renz remembers being impressed with German from the start.

"This young man was clearly showing us signs he was going to fight through this from the very first minute," he said.

"There was consensus he was going to be a someone who would probably break some of the previous expectations about survivability. If someone was going to survive, he was going to

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be that individual."

CNN's Barbara Starr and Larry Shaugnessy contributed to this report.

Selecting a Plastic Surgeon

By: Dr. James Romano, M.D.

No discussion of plastic surgery should begin without mention of physician selection. Selecting the surgeon has to be the single most important factor in the success of your plastic surgery. Equally, if not of greater significance than the rapidly escalating numbers of patients seeking plastic surgery, is the explosion in the ranks of physicians not trained as plastic surgeons performing these procedures. Lawmakers in several states are taking aim at this. The growth is fueled in large part by physicians from many different specialties trying to escape some of the insurance reimbursement limits imposed by managed care on their practices; they seek higher fee-generating procedures such as liposuction, which is not regulated by insurance companies. Despite this, don't rule out that there are still many qualified physicians in different specialties performing very good plastic surgery and your search should not be limited to one specialty or board certification category.

The message here is simply that patients should seek to establish a professional relationship with a physician who offers the procedure you are interested in, and to seek qualified physicians well-trained in this procedure.

Be aware of:

Credentials

- Just as important as where your surgeon went to school

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is the specific type of plastic surgery training he or she received. Has your surgeon completed an accredited residency program specifically in plastic surgery? Such a program includes an intensive two to three years in the full spectrum of reconstructive and cosmetic surgical procedures. Was the plastic surgery training a shorter "fellowship" and was this only in a specific area?

Specific board certification. Be perceptive about this. Understand that the American Society of Medical Specialists (ASMS) recognizes only one board of plastic surgery. This is the American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS) and patients are encouraged to consider a doctor certified by the ABPS. This certification guarantees that the doctor has graduated from an accredited medical school and completed at least three to five years of general surgery and two years of plastic surgery. To be certified by the ABPS, a doctor must also practice plastic surgery for two years and pass comprehensive written and oral examinations. The other groups formed their own board. There are some "certifications" that are not boards at all and do not require any testing or peer review. Also, be aware that some references and internet sites list board certified doctors only if they pay to advertise. So don't rule out that your doctor may still be certified, just not listed. Many doctors have board certification in more than one specialty, so ask about this also.

Local and state medical societies and memberships. Check your doctor's membership and make sure no grievances or complaints have been filed against him or her.

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CONTINUED From Page 3 "SURGERY"**Experience and Background**

- The number of specific procedures performed.
- The length of time performing that specific procedure.
- Ask the doctor about the number of complications and lawsuits either filed, pending, or settled. All of this information is now available to the public through many state licensing boards, so don't be shy about asking this.

Hospital Affiliations

- Inquire about hospital admitting and surgical privileges. This is important because occasionally doctors that operate only in their office do so because they may not have hospital admitting privileges. Also, make sure the doctor has surgical privileges, especially in the procedure you are choosing.
- Call a respected hospital in your community and ask for the names of board-certified plastic surgeons on staff. Be sure to ask for the names of doctors who have privileges to do the particular procedure you are interested in. See if your doctor is on the list.

Office Facilities and Policies

- Anyone can set aside a room and call it an operating suite. This has only recently begun to fall under government regulation.
- Make sure the operating suite and facility is accredited and by what agency.

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- If you are planning surgery in the office, ask what happens or where you go if there is a problem.
- Have a clear understanding about the policy for complications and revisions.

References

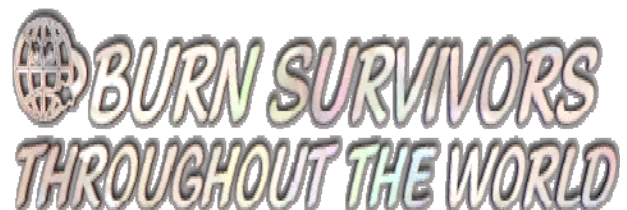
- Don't merely rely on word-of-mouth.
- Ask the plastic surgeon for references and a list of his or her patients. Call these references and talk to them.
- Ask to see some of the photographs of patients who underwent similar procedures. Make sure these are his or her patients and not models.
- Doctors and nurses. Your family doctor or an operating room nurse may be able to recommend a surgeon.

Your Consultation

Make sure your doctor will answer all your questions thoroughly in an understandable way.

- Make sure you spend ample time with your doctor and not just his nurse or counselor.
- Discuss your motivations and expectations.
- Make sure the doctor welcomes questions especially about

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- qualifications, experience, qualifications, experience, costs, payments and complications.
- Make sure the doctor offers alternatives or even other doctors' names and a second opinion without pressuring you to book surgery. You should discuss with your surgeon your expectations, and any related matter that may affect your recovery like the nature of your job, smoking or drinking habits, other diseases or medications you are using, and any related personal matters.

Paid Advertising

- You can find plenty of physicians' names in the yellow pages and in other advertising sources. Keep in mind that that doctors can list themselves under any specialty heading they like, and can advertise any services they want to sell, regardless of their training and credentials.

Artistic Perspective

- Very important. Make sure your doctor sees what you see and knows what you want and will provide the sort of result that you both focus on.

BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS**Burn Injury Claims**

By: Robert Brenner

A catastrophic injury such as a burn injury claim is part of the general principles applied to assessing damages for personal injuries. There are however differences that must be identified and addressed which move this type of a claim from the ordinary personal injury claim to a much involved type of claim which most lawyers may only encounter infrequently.

Pain, Suffering and Other Losses:

Generally speaking there are two separate categories of losses those being economic losses, which are identified as actual quantifiable and identifiable losses such as past and future medical expenses and past and future loss of income as well as other actual out of pocket expenses incurred or to be incurred. Those type of losses will be discussed in an upcoming issue and for this issue we will be focusing on what is commonly referred to as general damages or pain and suffering. Pain and suffering type of damages are much more difficult to quantify and assess and are basically an art form.

With respect to an catastrophic burn injury claim a large component of the claim is objectively determined social and psychological suffering and social disability which a claimant with a severe burn injury will endure for the remainder of their life. There are often psychiatric disorders including depression and behavioral dysfunction.

Age is important as an older person has less time to suffer but the remainder of the

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unimpaired life is more precious because it is a scarce resource to the impairment. The pain and suffering that follows the initial injury and any surgeries or treatment give rise to a claim for damages.

Physical and emotional pain, are common problems following a burn injury and generally speaking juries can award significant amounts for the general damage claim.

Life expectancy is a contingency, which must be reflected in the calculation of many calculations for loss of future economic damages. Generally speaking the courts in most jurisdictions provide tables to calculate present values of future losses and costs. These are generally referred to as life expectancy tables.

Some catastrophically injured claimants have their life expectancy discounted to reflect any loss causing by accident related injuries however many catastrophically injured claimants have gone on life expectancy.

Generally speaking, a burn survivor's life expectancy is usually the normal expectancy except where there is some preexisting condition such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, etc.

In a catastrophic burn injury case, the general damages portion of the claim may often be the largest component of the claim because how jurors relate to the claimant with respect to the psychological component of the claim. Additionally, the loss of function from a burn injury may be significant as well and again can result in reduced function of limbs, which tend to have a devastating effect on the day-to-day activities of normal living. Again because generally speaking it is easier for a jury to identify with the claimant who has been catastrophically burned jurors tend to be more generous in their awards.

In the next article we will address the more specific and identifiable types of damage claims associated with a catastrophically injured

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claimant such as employment/employability past and future medical care and other types of damages associated with these types of claims.

About the Author:

Robert A. Brenner, Esquire limits his practice to the representation of persons who are catastrophically injured. Mr. Brenner tries to restore economic dignity to people who have had their lives yanked out from under them. Mr. Brenner received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1968 from the University of Southern California and his Juris Doctor degree from Whittier College, Beverly School of Law in 1975. Mr. Brenner is a member of the American Trial Layers Association, the Consumer Attorneys Association of California and the Million Dollar Advocates Forum, as well as Super Layers for the years 2006 and 2007. “The Burn Injury Law Group of Robert A. Brenner” provides legal representation to accident victims who have suffered serious burn injuries.

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Could An “Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter” Have Prevented This Fire?

By: Delores Lekowski

National statistics compiled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission show that more than 40,000 fires are caused annually by problems with home wiring. For the last decade, electrical wiring systems have been one of the leading causes of fire deaths, claiming 350 lives per year and costing more than \$650 million in damage.

The owner of this home had a power tool plugged in to charge the battery, and this is where they believe the fire originated. It was just before bedtime, and the residents were getting ready for bed when they noticed smoke coming from the garage. They were able to get out safely, but had this fire started after they had fallen asleep, they may not have been able to escape. As you can see, their home was destroyed, and the home next door was also damaged.

An Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI) might have prevented this house fire. Let me go into more detail on how an AFCI works. An arc is a discharge of electric current across a gap. Normal arcing can occur when we pull a plug from an outlet or when a switch is turned on. An “arc fault,” or a hazardous arc, can occur in exposed wires but more commonly in the wiring hidden behind wall surfaces and cords that are damaged or deteriorating. Such conditions can result in a flow of electric current that is erratic, which can cause temperatures to exceed 10,000 degrees F. Such extreme temperatures will not only burn away the insulation on a wire, but it also will solder wires together. AFCI electronically sense arcing and can tell the difference between a normal arc and an unwanted arc. AFCI can detect unwanted arcs in a home’s wiring system all the way up to the appliance that is plugged into an outlet, and will “trip” (shut down) a circuit when it detects the problem, thus stopping a potential fire before it has a chance to start.

AFCI can be installed as a replacement for most conventional circuit breakers in panel boxes and will provide all the protection that

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conventional circuit breakers provide, in addition to protecting against arc faults. They do NOT replace Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI), which protect people against the risk of electrocution and are required by code to be installed on outlets near water, such as in kitchens and bathrooms. Both AFCI and GFCI are needed to provide both kinds of protection

If it was an unwanted arc that caused the house fire pictured above, an AFCI would have detected it and shut down the circuit before a fire had a chance to start. This house was an older home, built in the 1960s with older wiring – a perfect reason for installing this technology. But even new houses will become old someday, and electrical wires can be damaged by nails and screws that are concealed inside walls and ceilings in all homes, both old and new. So all residences can benefit from this technology.



As of January 2002, AFCI became a requirement in the bedroom circuits of new homes being built according to the National Electrical Code® (NEC), which is a model code. Once a safety measure is in the model code, the battle is only half-won, however: it still needs to be adopted by state and local jurisdictions. But while fire safety advocates have been trying to expand newer editions of the NEC to require AFCI for all the circuits in a home, they have also been fighting homebuilders to keep the AFCI requirement

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from being removed from the state and local codes.

Back in 2002, I traveled around the country in defense of AFCI, and the battle to keep this important fire prevention technology in state codes is ongoing. Why? The homebuilders don't want to put them into the homes they build, because they say that the technology is too costly. It is true that AFCI cost more than conventional circuit breakers – but to my thinking, an electrical fire in your home is even costlier! (Note that back when smoke alarms first came out, the homebuilders fought them, too - and look at the lives smoke alarms have saved!)

Another point to keep in mind is that codes provide a minimum level of safety, and individual homeowners can make the choice to exceed the code if they so choose. If a homeowner can afford to install AFCI in all of a home's 15- and 20-amp circuits, then the greater protection may someday save lives and property.

Information for this article was obtained from State Farm Insurance, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association. To learn more about AFCI technology, visit the following websites:

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/afci.html> ,
<http://www.afcisafety.org/>.



Proud participant in the Combined Federal Campaign





BSTTW POEMS

I began writing poems during my recovery in order to not only help himself, but to offer support and positive thoughts to all burn survivors and family member who are going through a rough time. I ask you all to never give up and continue to do what I and so many others have done during and after recovery...find the support needed to work through the rough time and continue moving forward in your life.

If you would like to submit a poem or story to **BSTTW** you can do so by email at poems@burnsurvivorsttw.org or stories@burnsurvivorsttw.org. **BSTTW** also has a program on our internet site that allows you to submit your stories and poems electronically. You can submit the full story at www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/stories/storymaker.html and your full poem at www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/poems/poemmaker.html

Michael Appleman, CEO

Delivery

By: Michael Appleman

Fire and destruction is the worst part of life
A burn injury cuts you like a knife

The burn unit is a place we never wanted to say
The doctors had the call on our treatment every day

Fighting to live was the emotional call
Every day I felt like I was going to fall

The scars we all have are a reminder of that day
The difficult time that changed us each and every
way

Moving forward is the power for all
Up and down is what happens each time we fall

Michael Appleman

You can contact **BSTTW Support Team** by using our internet site at <http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/supportemail.html> or by telephone 936-647-2256 or toll free at 866-712-6164

BSTTW CONTACT INFORMATION

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

BSTTW has a support team that is on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week to help a burn survivor, family member or firefighter deal with a burn injury and fire related emergency. You can contact **BSTTW** on the internet or by telephone. On the internet go to the **BSTTW Emergency Email E-Form** at www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/emergemail.html or the **BSTTW Support Team E-Form** at www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/supportemail.html

To contact **BSTTW** by telephone by dialing 936-647-2256 or toll free at 866-712-6164. If we are not in the office or it is after hours, you can leave us an emergency message in our voice box 44 and a support team member will respond to you within 24 hours.

BSTTW Directors

Michael Appleman: **Executive Director**
michael@burnsurvivorsttw.org

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tran@burnsurvivorsttw.org

Ariel Gonzalez: **Director- Mexico**
ariel@burnsurvivorsttw.org

DONATIONS

As a 501 (c)(3) Non Profit Organization, **BSTTW** depends on donations from corporations, organizations, families and individuals. All donations, big or small are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the United States government tax laws. **BSTTW** has several different funds that you can donate to. The **BSTTW** general fund, the **Bishop Peter Nguyen Van Nho World Wide Burned Children's Fund**, the **"Dwight Lunkley Racing To Victory" fund**, **USA & Asian Burn Camp funds**, **BSTTW Healing Weekend Fund**, and the **World Burn Congress Fund**.

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Your donations will help **BSTTW** to do what is needed to help a burn survivor, family members rebuild their lives. It will also be used for public awareness on fire safety and how the community can help a burn survivor reenter their community.

BSTTW also offers people that donate \$25.00 or higher to a free copy of the **BSTTW Music CD**. To learn more about this you should go to www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donatecd.html or www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html

Remember your donations can be money, clothes, a used bicycle etc.. All will help burn survivors and their family. Many families loose their homes and property. Please personally think about and talk to your family and friends about donating to **BSTTW**.

MAKE DONATIONS PAYABLE TO & MAIL TO:

Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc.
16193 Lone Star Ranch Drive #102
Conroe, Texas 77302

DONATE ON LINE

To learn more about donating on line go to: www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html

If you have any questions call us at 936-647-2256, toll free at 866-712-6164 or by email at: donations@burnsurvivorsttw.org

VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME

There are many children, adults and families around the world that need support and other help. You do not have to be a burn survivor or family member to become a **BSTTW Volunteer**. All you need to do is become a **BSTTW** member and then apply to become a **BSTTW Volunteer**. If you are a burn survivor or family member, in order to become a **BSTTW Member**, fill out the **BSTTW Membership & Profile Registration E-Form** at: www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/membership/memform.html,

Next fill out the **BSTTW Volunteer E-Form** at: www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/volunteer/volunteer.html

If you are not a burn survivor or family member you can skip the **BSTTW Membership & Profile Registration E-Form** and go directly to the **BSTTW Volunteer E-Form**.

By volunteering with **BSTTW**, you will be taking part in rebuilding lives and helping burn survivors reenter their community.

If you have any questions, you should first review the **BSTTW Volunteer E-Form**, after that if your questions have not been answered, you can contact **BSTTW** by email at volunteers@burnsurvivorsttw.org, and by telephone at 936-647-2256 or toll free at 866-712-6164.

PURCHASES

BSTTW has an online store where you can purchase Skin Care Products, Books and Video Tapes. To learn more go to:
www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/sales/sales.html

BSTTW also offers a free copy of the **BSTTW Music CD** to people who donate \$25.00 or higher to **BSTTW**. To learn more about this you should go to

www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donatecd.html

or

www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html

BSTTW ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBERS:

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16193 Lone Star Ranch Drive #102
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Toll Free: 866-712-6164
Fax: (319) 856-5359

Feel free to contact **BSTTW** if you have any questions and/or comments by using the **BSTTW Comment & Question E-Form** at:
www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/emailform.html