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# BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS

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## BSTTW REBUILDING LIVES

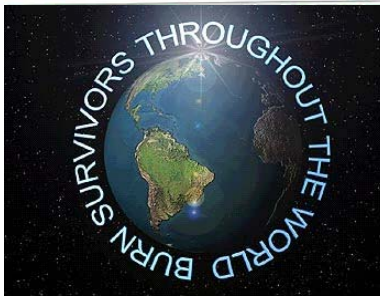
### *Burn Survivor Band Records The BSTTW Songs*

By: Michael Appleman, CEO

After a burn injury, the burn survivors life and their family members lives change forever. The road to recovery for all involved can be very long, hard and painful. With the help of family members, burn unit staff, rehabilitation specialists, **BSTTW** and the burn survivor community a burn survivor and family members can recover and reach goals that will give the burn survivor a new and happy life.

**Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc. (BSTTW)** was started by me, Michael Appleman during my recovery from a burn injury. In May 1998, I was burned due to a cigarette fire in a car. I use to be a cigarette smoker. One night I stopped to take a nap in the car and I needed my usual cigarette before I went to sleep. The cigarette appeared to be out. I put it in the ash tray without any thoughts of a fire, and went to sleep. A short time later, I woke up to a major car fire. The fire was spreading around the car and my legs were in flames. I left the car and then reentered it in order to get a bottle of water that I had between the seats. My face, neck and hand was burned from the heat and flames as I reentered the car. My legs were badly burned. I was able to put the fire out on my legs, but the heat spread to my feet, knees and thighs. I suffered 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th degree burns. I was still able to walk at that time. I walked away from the car and sat on

the ground. I looked up at the sky and I prayed to God and thanked him for allowing me to get out of the fire. As I prayed the fire inside the car, got out of control, and the car windows exploded. Again I thanked God. I asked God what he wanted from me since I was badly burned. The only answer I received at that time, was a man driving into the parking lot and coming to my rescue. He told me that saw the fire, went to the local restaurant, called 911 and then came to the parking lot to help me. I thanked him for coming. He and another man helped me get up and walk over to his truck. The fire fighters and paramedics arrived. By that time I was feeling very ill. The fire, heat and chemicals spread around my body. My feet had 2nd degree burns and the shoes were not burned. That is the cause of the heat that spread around the body. I could not stand or walk. The paramedics did what they could and took me to the hospital.



### A FAMILY AROUND THE

Like many burn survivors, I went through a rough recovery. I was in and out of the hospital. I lived in nursing homes for 8 months. Two of my ankle bones were badly burned. Both of my legs were badly burned and my right knee was in 30% contracture. I had plastic surgery, suffered from emotional issues, **CONTINUED Page 2 "SONGS**

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strokes and heart attacks. I was wheelchair bound and needed someone to help me transfer in and out of the bed, seat and/or wheelchair. Due to the fire, heart attacks and strokes, I was not able to push myself around. I felt that my life was a mess. Emotionally I suffered from post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression. I had to learn how to get myself into the wheelchair and to put my clothes on. This was not what I thought my life was going to be like.



My recovery, like so many other burn survivors, took a long time and was not easy. There was so much that I had to learn, work on and work through. For eight months, I needed help to get into the shower, get dressed, go to the dining room, get in and out of the wheelchair, to get around with the wheelchair, or get outside to smoke a cigarette. I reached out to God in order to find the strength needed to continue this fight and rough road to recovery. During my recovery Marty, a friend, gave me her father's special graduation cross. Marty's Dad was a Catholic Father. I put the cross on my chest and did not take it off. The day before I went back to the hospital for plastic surgery, Marty's Mother asked me to give her the cross back. She then gave me the external cross that her husband would wear when he lead the Mass at church. Both gave me the strength and positive belief during each and every day when even when I was down and out. I always kept the external cross attached to my bed in both the hospital and nursing home. At one point I put it on the wall. I informed all the patients that they can come into my room and pray to God any time they wanted to. Most of the nurses told me that someone was going to steal the cross from me and I should put it away. I told them that it was God's and no one will take it way. Today I have that cross on the wall in my bedroom.

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After 8 months of being in hospitals and nursing homes, I decided to leave the nursing home and return to the people that can help me. I was not getting the rehabilitation needed to push the wheelchair and hopefully walk again. I contacted Marty and asked her to please come and take me to her home. The doctor did not want to release me so I signed all the papers and was allowed to leave. Marty and I went to Church of the Holy Spirit and took part in the healing weekend. After the healing weekend was over, the church staff told me to stay at the healing hotel the church owned and we will work together to find me a place to live. The church made several telephone calls. Within 24 hours after I started staying at the church, I was given an electric wheelchair. The electric wheelchair gave me the freedom I lost since the burn injury. I was able to drive my self around without the help of others. I learned how to transfer from the wheelchair to my bed, toilet, shower and any other place I needed to sit. My life was starting to change. The first night that I had the electric wheelchair, I drove to the outside of the church. I looked at the cross and prayed to God. I thanked God for all the changes in my life and I know that God would show me the way to a happier and healthier life. A short time later the church found an apartment that was available. They talked to the manager and she stated I should come over for an interview. The interview went well, the apartment looked nice and was disabled ready. I signed the lease and had my own home. Soon I would be living on my own and taking another step towards recovery. It was a very beautiful feeling to have your life moving forward after a burn injury. Three days after I moved in, I was in the wheelchair waiting to go across the street. A car hit another car twice and the car came up the sidewalk and hit me. I woke up with many people around me. One of the women reached over to the wheelchair, took my bag and rosary and gave them to me. I help the rosary to my chest and relaxed. From that point on my recovery was more positive.

Within one week, after moving into my own apartment, I found several doctors and rehabilitation specialists that were very interested in helping me recover from the burn injury and car accident. I began going to rehabilitation 3 times a week.

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Slowly I was able to do more. My left side, that was working well due to the strokes, began to return. I was living on my own and even cooking my own meals.

During the summer of 1999, I was lucky enough to attend the World Burn Congress for the first time. That was such a very special time in my life. I finally met other burn survivors. Some recovered and some were still in recovery. There was a very special individual that I met during that WBC. He was a male burn survivor who had 3rd and 4th degree burns. Since I was still unable to use my left side at the time, he came over to me and asked if I needed any help getting my breakfast. I thanked him and said yes I could use your help. He helped me get all the food I wanted and then brought it to the table for me. I looked at his hands and saw that he lost most of his fingers in the fire. Seeing how far he has come gave me extra strength to move forward.

I returned home from the WBC and made many telephone calls in order to get the help I needed to recover from the burn injury. I knew if he was able to reach his goals and recover, I and so many others burn survivors could do the same. I knew that I was still missing something in my life. I wanted to walk again or at least have a chance to try. I prayed to God and asked for help. I told God that if I was given the chance to walk again and I was not able to walk, I would accept that and I would accept being in a wheelchair for life. I also asked God to show me what I was to do with my new life. Months later, I was given special leg braces and a walker. After 5 months of therapy I took my first steps. At that point I was given a computer and went on the internet. I researched a lot and then decided to start an internet support group for burn survivors. Using my Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology, I started helping others in need. In 2001, I attended the WBC for the third time and was able to walk short distances. I spoke to many individuals and companies at the WBC 2001. I was able to get the help from other burn survivors and family members, in order to get **BSTTW** incorporated and have a board of directors in order to be given the 501 (c)(3) Non Profit Organization status. With a lot of hard work by me and many others, **BSTTW** has grown to become one of the top internet sites and an organization that is

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currently working in 12 different countries around the world.

During 2001, I met Lita Duckworth a burn survivor on the **BSTTW** internet site. Lita was going through rough times and need support. She reached out to **BSTTW** and we offered her the help needed. We spoke many times by telephone, emails and the **BSTTW** chat. She learned how to dust herself off after becoming a burn survivor. Lita worked at dealing with the awful changes that would not go away. She wrote several articles and a poem. The poem was a way for Lita to express the pain and suffering she and so many other burn survivors go through after the burn injury and the help **BSTTW** offers to the burn survivor community. **BSTTW** put the poem on the internet for all to see. That poem has been read by hundreds of people world wide.

Over a year ago I began to communicate by email with Ariel Gonzalez. Ariel is a burn survivor, guitar player and founder of Espacio Cuattro. He lives in Saltillo, Coahuila Mexico. Before Ariel was burned he was a member of a local musical band. Then without any warning, Ariel suffered severe burns to his in the hand, arm, chest and face in a home fire. At the time of the accident, Ariel was Catholic, married, had three children and a loving family. He enjoyed writing songs and playing the guitar for a well known band in Mexico. Ariel suffered 2nd and 3rd degree burns to his hands, arms, face and chest. After the fire Ariel did not want to give up hope that he will write music, be in a band and continue playing the lead guitar. Playing the guitar again was not an easy goal to reach. Ariel suffered third degree burns, nerve damage to his left and right arm and hands. He had several surgeries to those areas and wore Jobst Hose for an extended period of time.

The emotional and physical pain that Ariel suffered due to the burn injury was not easy to deal with. Ariel, like many other burn survivors, continually reach out to the most important individual in his life...God. He prays daily asking God to allow him to recover and live a happy and normal life. In time, with his family and friends by his side and after many surgeries and extensive rehabilitation, Ariel was able to reach his goals. Every time Ariel spoke to the band members or looked at his guitar, he

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reached deeper inside to find what was needed to rebuild his life. Part of Ariel's rehabilitation was to exercise the hands by playing the cords on his guitar. After a lot of hard work, Ariel was able to restart his musical work. He rejoined the band and began to show all that the burn did not end his life. Today each and every time Ariel plays the guitar he still suffers a lot of pain in his hands. Both hands still have staples inside of them. That pain and suffering did not stop Ariel from moving forward with his life.

Six months ago, after being in contact with Ariel for over one year, I decided to email Ariel and find out if he and his band would be interested in writing the music and recording songs for several **BSTTW** poems. Ariel read the poems and said that he would like to take part in writing the music and recording the songs. Ariel stated that his band and other musicians in Mexico would like to take part in writing the music and recording the song. The musicians knew that Ariel was a burn survivor and that the song would be the music used by **BSTTW** on the internet, in conferences, radio stations and public events. Ariel and the musicians let me know that they would like to record the song in both English and Spanish. I thought that would be a fantastic idea. After working on the song for several months the musicians got together and recorded the song. They were very happy with the results. On Thursday October 30, 2003 the CD arrived at the **BSTTW** office. It was a fantastic feeling to open up the CD and listen to the music. Ariel and his band did a fantastic job. The love was flowing from the musicians and singers. You can feel that each individual involved in the making of the song and the CD, took a very special part in helping Ariel, **BSTTW** and the burn survivor community. **BSTTW** would like to thank Ariel, his band, the recording company and all others involved for all the work they did. Ariel Gonzalez is an example of a burn survivor that did not allow the burn injury to stop him from reaching his goals and doing the best he can after the accident.

Ariel like so many other burn survivors, learned a lot about life due to the burn injury. He found more strength in God, love for life and the ability to never give up when the chips are down. Today Ariel is the **BSTTW Representative** in Mexico and has started to speak with doctors and nurses in the burn unit about

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the work he and **BSTTW** offers to the burn survivor community and the public. Ariel has also spoken with burn survivors and family members explaining his injury, God's love and strength and his road to recovery. Ariel has helped many burn survivors and the public to understand that a burn injury does not end your life. Ariel is currently opening up doors for our current and future burn survivors in Mexico, the USA and other parts of the world.

The **BSTTW** board of directors, Ariel and his team felt that the song would help other burn survivors, by speaking the love for life, expressing the changes due to a burn injury, opening up doors for **BSTTW**, and helping the public to become more aware of what a burn injury can do to a human being from the day of the accident and their future. I personally felt that I was again reaching another goal for **BSTTW** and in my life. Again I was opening up many more possibilities for **BSTTW**. The words from this song can touch the hearts of many. It may also help our current and future burn survivors and family members to understand that life has changed, but it is not over. They will see that two burn survivors had an important part in the song. During the practice and recording sessions for the **BSTTW** songs, Ariel reached deep inside and found the strength he needed to make the **BSTTW** songs the best they can be. Ariel is a burn survivor who we all can learn from. Ariel Gonzalez never gave up during his recovery and reached goals that many individuals in the burn survivor community and the public thought could never be accomplished.

**BSTTW** is selling the CD for \$10.00 plus shipping and handling. You can learn more about purchasing the CD, read the words to the songs and hear the music at [www.burnsurvivorstw.org/articles/bsttwson.html](http://www.burnsurvivorstw.org/articles/bsttwson.html)

Remember purchasing this CD is a donation to **BSTTW**, showing your support to **BSTTW**, Ariel Gonzalez, his band, the recording companies and Lita Duckworth.



## *Corrective Pigment Camouflage* *Part 2*

By: Susan Church CCPC

This information is part 2 in a 3-part series. The second part of this series will consist of distinguishing skin undertones, patch and sensitivity tests and time frame from application to application.

Natural pigments are classified as melanin's. Melanin is comprised of molecules that are capable of reflecting color. The perceived color of our skin is caused by the reflection of light on our skin known as light refraction. Neuromelanin (brown black), and Phomelanin (yellow red) are two types of melanin. Melanocytes produce melanin which are the main cells responsible for the color of our eyes, hair and skin. These cells are located in the basal layer of the epidermis. They synthesize red, brown and yellow melanin biochromes (melanin) and are the major determinants of skin color. The biochromes (melanin) and are the major determinants of skin color. The biochromes include carotene which incorporates the yellow or yellow-orange color in the skin, oxygenated hemoglobin, which incorporates the red color in the skin and deoxygenated hemoglobin, which incorporates the blue color in the skin. Normal differences in our skin colors are determined by the intensity of the pigmentation, or melanin production.

The basic undertones of our skin does not change. Certain conditions may affect the appearance of a persons skin. Client consultation as well as each application visit should include updated information on recent illness, change in your diet and medication, fatigue, excess smoking and alcohol consumption along with the use of self-tanning creams, tanning beds and natural sun tanning.

In our clinic we use several methods of determining skin undertones. 'Color With Style' by Donna Fujii and an invaluable tool called the 'Color Undertone Chart' from Tri-Lab Products. It has 4- 8x10 pockets of color that represent pink, yellow, olive and blue skin undertones. Actual beads of our pigment color are dropped onto a white sheet of white paper and then laminated. These color charts are then inserted into the cool/warm pockets of simulated skin undertones. This is the best method for determining

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how the color will look once it is implanted and reverted back to its natural state in the skin. The charts are made to slide in and out of the pockets to check on the difference each skin undertone has on the pigment color. These charts will help in determining the underlying harmony existing between the skin eyes and hair. This system is based on 'Munsell Color Theory'. Munsell recognizes that color has three dimensions, Hue, Value and Chroma. A thorough analysis of skin undertones is vital in order to successfully custom blend colors on an individual patient basis. The reference book 'Permanent Cosmetics a to z' defines the proper protocol for CPC procedures in depth with reference to proper utilization of pigment and needle cluster application.

For accurate color results, a patch and sensitivity test is given directly in the procedural area. Using a machine we insert 7-8 implants of iron oxide pigments superficially into the epidermal tissue. To ensue optimal outcome, we perform several different color tests for variegated skin tones and modify our color value as needed. Pigment should be placed into the epidermis (for minimum color retention) that will be sloughed off within 3-8 weeks. We utilize this method of application in case of inappropriate color choices. Even if we know that we have a valid color match for a patient's skin tone, we will still patch test, and let the area heal for 4-8 weeks. Changes or additions in any medications may alter the chemistry of the body rendering our initial patch and sensitivity test inaccurate. Before inserting pigment, it is advisable to take the patient outside into the natural daylight. This will enable your technician to have optimum visual clarity, which is the best perception of the pigment color they have chosen. The next best type of lighting is daylight bulbs, vita-lights or true white lights.

When the patient returns 4 - 8 weeks post consultation, the technician will evaluate the patient's results. Appropriate color choices and necessary changes can now be made.

Patient and technician should thoroughly discuss healed colors from patch and sensitivity testing. Does the color look to ash? too pink? or does it blend into the surrounding tissue. When patient and technician agree on the most flattering skin tones

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with consideration to color chroma, hue and value, application may begin. If you cannot agree on matching tones, the technician should repeat the patch test application again.

After every application the pigment will revert back to its original state, dry. Only then will we have accurate final color results. All permanent cosmetic and CPC procedures are combinations of your pigment color plus the patients skin undertones. These two combinations will equal your final color result.

Scar tissue may be void of pores, hair follicles and glands. This tissue consists mainly of collagen fibers, and can be very difficult to penetrate. Different techniques should be utilized according to tissue density.

Make sure that your technician is using products, including pigments and equipment with high quality. The base ingredient of most pigments is generally the same. We suggest only using cosmetic grade iron oxide pigments or lakes for all CPC procedures.

We ask patients not to wear perfume on application day and to consume a light meal before application especially if they are going to take any pain medication. We always have soft melodic music playing. Andrea Bocelli, Enya and Yanni have great soothing CD's. Patients are given the choice of wearing a disposable gown or they may stay in their street clothes, depending on the procedure area and how extensive our application will be. We diffuse the room with essential oils that will consist of either orange or lavender for relaxation. Other oils that may be used for their sedating properties are sandalwood, chamomile or eucalyptus. These essential oils are absorbed through the lung tissue. We also offer the patient a calming blend of teas. We prefer Valerian Root Tea for its calming effect. Some technician's prefer to give their patients apple juice or have them take a Motrin, or a sublingual of Valerian Root and Kava Kava. (Technicians may not give patients any medication!) We also offer a headset or earplugs. In the cooler months, we wrap our patients in sheets with their feet tucked in. We have had positive feedback from our patients that these small gestures help them to relax and yet feel secure.

Technicians must evaluate each area to be re-pigmented and should discuss the color tones that were applied at the consultation application. They should check the patient's medical file, and refer back to the course of treatment from consultation day. The patient should notify the technician if any information on their Procedure and Consent or Medical Forms has changed since their initial application.

Before application, the technician should check the patient for gradient skin tones and inspect the procedure area to ensure there are no open lesions, rashes or other irregularities. To prepare the skin for application, we cleanse the area to destroy bacteria and also remove any make-up left on the procedural area. We usually wait until the 2nd or 3rd appointment to apply any nuances ie beard simulation, freckles, capillaries.

Post procedure appointments should be scheduled at 4-8 week intervals. The patient may return sooner if the technician is re-pigmenting various areas, but cannot work on the same procedure area until it is completely healed. Touch up appointments are critical for any fine detail work the patient may request or to create any subtle additions or corrections in pigment color.

Informed and educated technicians understand specific needs of the patients.

C.P.C. is an advanced procedure and proper education is essential for satisfactory results.

**How Safe Is Our Clothing?**

By Delores Gempel Lekowski

A beautiful little four year-old girl was proudly wearing a dress that her mother had just finished sewing, having put the finishing touches on it that same morning. The little girl had helped her mother pick out the dark blue material with purple and white flowers, and she was excited to show off the new dress that her mother had so lovingly made for her. The dress was a jumper, and the little girl wore a turtleneck shirt under it. She was dressed to go out

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to dinner and could hardly wait to show off her lovely new dress. While her mother was out of the room, the little girl climbed up on a brick wood-box so she could turn on a light near the mantel. A candle was burning on the wood-box and, as she reached over it to turn on the light, her dress caught fire. The little girl started screaming and running for help, but by the time she reached her mother, she was already completely engulfed in flames. She suffered third degree burns on 90 percent of her body, and only a small piece of the dress and the collar of the turtleneck remained.

I will make the assumption that the majority of the population doesn't consider fire safety when they purchase clothing or fabric. We as consumers have a false sense of security, because we automatically assume that what we buy is safe. In fact, there is a minimum flammability standard that must be met by all general wearing apparel and fabric sold in the United States. However, that standard is 50 years old and grossly inadequate.

The Standard for the Flammability of Clothing Textiles (16 CFR 1610), which is enforced by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), first emerged as the "Flammability of Clothing Textiles, Commercial Standard" in 1953 as a specification of the Flammable Fabrics Act (Pub. L. 83-88, 67 Stat. 111). While standards for children's sleepwear have been made somewhat stricter, the general wearing apparel standard has been largely ignored. This is not because the standard serves safety; in fact when you consider that newspaper and tissue paper will pass, you have to wonder how effective this standard really is. Obviously, it wasn't strict enough to prevent this four year-old little girl from being burned, nor has it prevented countless others from being burned similarly.

In 1951, even before this minimum standard went into effect, the dress I was wearing went up like a torch in seconds when ignited by a spark from a pile of burning trash. I'd like to think that the fabric from which my dress was made couldn't be sold today. However, I have discovered that there are still fabrics on the market that have the same instantaneous flashpoint as the fabric of the dress I was wearing that fateful day. And every day, the very old and the very young, in particular, are in

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danger of becoming human torches if they are unlucky enough to encounter an ignition source.

Even the sleepwear standard has been relaxed. In 1996, the CPSC decided to amend the flammability standards for close-fitting cotton sleepwear for kids. Also, when you think about the children's sleepwear standard, many kids wear t-shirts to bed. T-shirts are not covered under the sleepwear standard, so effectively children are right back where they started, in many cases - unprotected.

When I think about the advancements we have made in other areas of safety and technology over the last 50 years, I find the lack of concern or progress in promoting the safety of clothing fabrics to be a disgrace. Certainly, the textile industry was instrumental in making sure that the standard resulted in the most minimal requirements on their part, and in the past half-century, the industry has done everything possible to prevent the standard from being changed. The CPSC is currently looking at "updating" the general wearing apparel standard (an advance notice of proposed rule was issued in 2002), but the proposed changes are minimal and do not make the standard more rigorous. Individuals and organizations, such as the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM), have enjoined the CPSC to take a strong stand for the safety of the consumers it represents and make some decisive changes to improve the standard. It remains to be seen whether this will happen.

However, a new project involving the CPSC, the American Burn Association, the Shriners Hospital for Children and NASFM gives reason for hope. The National Burn Center Reporting Project will collect data in order to develop a more accurate picture of burns involving children aged 15 and under. The CPSC will work with emergency responders and burn hospitals to retrieve and analyze the clothing worn by burned children to determine what role the fabric may have played in the incidence and severity of the burn injury and to develop a more informed judgment about how the ignition could have been reduced or prevented. This is an important step in the right direction - but I, for one, won't rest until that 50 year-old wearing apparel standard is strengthened.

In the meantime, we all should take the time to **CONTINUED Page 8 "CLOTHING"**

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remind clothing manufacturers and retailers of their moral obligation to keep hazardous products out of the marketplace. Adherence to a minimum standard is no protection against liability, and should never be an excuse to make or sell products that could turn any of us - but particularly the most vulnerable among us, our children and elderly - into human torches.

## Restoration of Brows, Eyeliner and Lips

By: Carol Packman  
Permanent Makeup Artist

Prior to your evaluation, I always take a medical history to determine if there are any contraindications. I always consult with your physician prior to the application of permanent makeup. This helps me to have a full understanding of your medical background.

During the first consultation, we discuss and determine the shape, color, technique and sensitivity relating to pigment and topical anesthetics. In order to make the best determination, I need to have before and after pictures of you. This gives me a guide for our future work.

### Steps To Creating a Brow:

If you have any brow hair at all it will lend dimension to your brow. Do not pluck or shave your brow before I see you. I will draw on the shape so you can approve the design. We will look at several colors that I think will work for you. Once we determine the appropriate color, I will place several hair strokes, or shading, into one brow and let it heal for four to six weeks. This is a very important step. As the tissue heals and the pigment settles into the skin, changes occur. Ultimately you will be looking through the skin at the pigment. Everyone's skin tone is different and in all cases we want to see the healed color. The test result will help us decide if this is the correct color and technique. In some cases a second test may be required. The healed color may vary from one part of the brow to another depending on the scar tissue. The next step is to do the full set of brows. Brows must be healed for at least six weeks. After the six-week healing process is complete, I will review the

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brows and go over any areas that may have faded. In order to achieve a realistic appearance, in particular with hair strokes, it takes 2-3 appointments to give the brow the appearance of dimension. When I see you I will explain how this is achieved. Depending on the scar tissue, results and technique will vary.

### Eyeliner Definition:

I will draw on a sample eyeliner for you to review and for the two of us to discuss. You have the option of having just the upper liner or both the upper and lower liner. I will place a small dot of pigment in the upper lid to test for sensitivity relating to pigment and topical anesthetics. An allergic reaction is rare but it is very important to do the test before the full eyeliner is created. Generally we wait one week after the allergy test before I perform the complete procedure. You will have full approval of the design at the time we do the procedure. We let this heal for at least four to six weeks depending on the scarring, and then do any touch up that might be needed. Once again, depending on scar tissue, results will vary.

### Steps To Defining Your Lips:

I will draw the shape of the upper and lower lips for your approval. If you have ever had herpes or a cold sore on your lips, at any time during your life, you must be on an anti-herpes medication each time I see you. We will discuss color and once we have determined the color that will work for you, I will place a small sample into your lip and let it heal for four to six weeks. This is a very important step. After it heals, we will review the results and decide if we need to make any adjustments or do a second test. Next, I will perform the full lip procedure and let it heal for six weeks. After the lips have healed, there is always a second touch up appointment. Outlining the lip and shading color into the body of the lip always looks best. Again, the results will vary depending on the scar tissue.

You will be given complete instructions on aftercare for each type of procedure.

Permanent makeup is a process, but well worth the time invested. I am committed to restoring and  
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enhancing your features.

You can learn more about and contact Carol Packman by looking her up on the Internet, or sending an email to BSTTW at [bsttw@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:bsttw@burnsurvivorsttw.org).

## Burning In Slovenia

By: Ivanka Zigon

My name is Ivanka.

I was born in July 1954, and married in 1976. Together with my husband I lived on the first floor of the family home together with his parents (which is still quite normal in Slovenia, where the extended family still means more to people, who help each other in this way as there is a housing shortage). Both of my husband's parents were still in good health at that time. They welcomed me warmly and loved me as their own child. This made me feel very grateful to them.

One day, during the early months of my pregnancy, my mother-in-law experienced a dizzy-spell and slipped and fell, breaking her arm and fracturing her pelvis, as a result of which she was bedridden. My father-in-law was still mobile, but the senile dementia (forgetfulness and fits of anger - a throw-back to his harrowing experiences at the Isonzo front during WWI) was rapidly progressing.

Soon after we moved in I gave birth to Petra. Everyone was joyful when my Petra came into the world. My father-in-law, although totally tone-deaf, would sing her lullabies, and my mother-in-law would hug her and chime in. My brother-in-law with his wife and four younger daughters also lived in the same house - on the ground floor of the villa and were also very happy of our new arrival. I soon settled into a routine, which consisted mainly of work and more work - eventhough my sister-in-law shouldered a generous half of the work in caring for Petra's grandma and grandpa. And the workload only increased when I had to resume my job after my maternity leave had expired.

Day after day, I would go to work feeling tired. I would arrive home after work feeling even more so, only to find mountains of unwashed dishes, lunches

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or dinners to cook, the cleaning to do and the nappies to be changed on both my poor bedridden mother-in-law and on my little treasure. At the time, I was working at the Pediatric Surgical Ward of the Ljubljana General Hospital and the head physician of our ward Dr. Pavel Kornhauser had often warned my husband whenever they chanced to meet that I would not be able to manage both my job, as well as looking after a newborn baby AND my bedridden mother-in-law and senile father-in-law, whose health was also rapidly deteriorating, and that sooner or later, I would burn out - both physically and mentally.

But both my husband and his brother were very attached to their mother and would not even hear of arranging for their parents to go to a senior citizens' home or a similar care facility. One of the few - and sometimes the only joy - I had at that time, was watching my little Petra as she chattered on happily, crawling all over the place and exploring every nook and cranny of this strange new world she could get her hands on.

In December, 1980, I was very ill with the flu. Every single muscle and bone in my body ached and I felt very weak. There was no way I could get any housework done and I needed all my strength to take care of myself and my little daughter Petra, who was 9 months old at the time. I asked my husband to help me, but he said his stomach ached and that he would help me when the pain had passed. He was lying in bed and continued to do so way into the evening. Nor did he show any signs of intending to get up and help me then, either. It seemed I had no choice but to get up and go into the kitchen myself. Before I started working, I set about making myself a strong coffee (Turkish, which is cooked in a special coffee pot), as a pick-me-up, so that I could work at all. Even now, I can still see the scene vividly after so many years: I was weak, and the coffee pot kind-of twisted in a strange way and slipped out of my hand, with the boiling hot coffee spilling onto and past the table and towards the floor. I didn't know that at that very moment, my little Petra was crawling around, playing under the table. The coffee splashed onto her just as she emerged, and burned her, and my little girl cried out so loud, that I felt her pain stabbing right to my heart. I experienced such a great shock then, seeing my child's suffering,

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hearing her crying then, seeing my child's suffering, hearing her crying and whimpering, that even now, 23 years later, the pictures are still so vivid in my mind.

Visits were not allowed at the burns ward of the hospital – not even for parents, unless the doctor in charge gave permission, which they rarely ever did - which meant that I could only see my child through a thick glass pane. Several times a day, I would go to the ward and press my face up against the glass, straining to see her. I didn't care how I looked. I just wanted to see her, but because she was so little and the ward was so big, I could hardly discern her sometimes. My heart was screaming with pain and I would wish that I had been the one burnt. Even if that meant accepting burns of the highest degree all over my body, I would gladly have swapped places with my child, just to see her well, and not to have to see and feel her in that state. After holding this agony inside me for three days, I went into the »filter« or decontamination room, put on a set of sterile clothes and simply went in to see my daughter. I didn't care anymore if I would be reprimanded. I just stood there, watching over my daughter lying so helplessly in that cot with bandaged arm and leg. She was sleeping, and I thought with a wrench in my heart that I couldn't even pick her up and cradle her in my arms. I remember the thought echoing repeatedly in my head. »My God, what have I done? Why did this have to happen to me - to us!« I felt as though I was the worst mother in the whole world, I felt like a murderess. »Even an animal knows how to take better care of its young,« I thought, »while I have failed her utterly!« I cried almost non-stop during those days, and just couldn't eat a thing. Nor could I find peace at home. I was always seized with such a strong restlessness that I had to go out. My sister-in-law tried to help me and stand by me as best as she could, going into town with me to divert my attention, in the hopes that I would forget about my pain for a short while, but there it was even worse. I would see all the little children holding their parents' hands in the crowds gathered to watch the big annual »Father Frost« parade that takes place in our country around Christmas, while my little girl was lying in pain in the burns ward. In the midst of that crowd of happy people, the tears simply started streaming down my face and I was helpless to stop them,

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despite the wondering glances people stole at me. My sister-in-law tried to comfort me, and hugged me and spoke to me, regardless of the crowd.

Soon after, I heard from the doctor that the tissue transplant had succeeded and gone without a hitch and Petra was released from hospital. The only thing that they recommended then was »Contratubex« - an ill-smelling ointment with which the burnt and donor areas had to be massaged in order to reduce the scarring. Oh, and she also had to avoid the sunlight for a while and if she did venture into the sun, the burnt areas of her skin had to always be covered and protected with a bandage.

Always and everywhere her burn shadowed her – like some sort of curse. The children at kindergarten ignored her and didn't let her join in their games (which was allowed to go on due to the incompetency of the kindergarten staff in our country at that time). They would say to her that she had a »rotten« or »rotting« arm, and Petra would walk home with bowed head and a heart heavy with sorrow. The same story continued and dragged on throughout primary school (again due to the lack of education of the staff in this area), and the one friend she had found and who had accepted her the way she was moved to another suburb and had to change schools, so that Petra was left alone and without friends in school again. She suffered much because of her loneliness and because of the way she was shunned by the other children, and I felt for her and also suffered with her. I even learned to ski at the »early« age of 35, despite the back pains I had from lifting heavy patients (I weigh around 54kg), just to keep her company on the snow, as she was too small and too young to go on the »anchor-shaped« or »drum-shaped« ski lifts by herself. And this, although I come from a country where skiing is a rarity. But I was (and still am) prepared to go to the ends of the Earth if necessary for her.

About a year after Petra was burnt, my father-in-law was committed to an asylum due to his dementia and soon afterwards died, and two years after Petra was burnt, my brother-in-law emigrated abroad with his family and Petra and I were left even more alone. My mother-in-law died not long after this - within a year of her beloved husband, and Petra lost the affection of her grandmother. I did not realise it yet at the time, but the burns my little daughter had

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suffered had also changed my married life. I felt betrayed and cheated by my husband, because he had not stood by my side when I was feeling at my lowest and had needed his help badly. Yes, he had a heart condition, and possibly the beginnings of the flu – but it was not so bad that he could not get up and help at least a little bit that fateful day when I was feeling so weak and totally run-down. And there were many other days when he had done the same... I kept thinking that maybe Petra would not have got burnt, if he had just made that bit of an effort. Had he done so, my daughter would not have the traumas she has today at the age of 23, which are resultant from her burns. She would have finished her studies (as a child she loved Astronomy and gazing at the stars) and would now have a fulfilling job and a life. But as things were, my marriage started going downhill even more rapidly after my daughter got burnt. A couple of years later, my husband gave in to alcohol, which only made what was by then already a bad marriage much worse. I would watch Petra try to participate in various children's games, but it would always be the same. The children, for lack of counselling and education in our country on accepting differences, would so very often reject her, or at the least, flinch and stare at her first meetings with them, and every rejection that my daughter experienced from the children she wanted to be friends with so desperately only deepened my pain and the resentment I felt towards my husband. Gradually, my husband and I had drifted apart to the extent that we were sleeping in separate bedrooms.

I made efforts to get Petra involved in various children's and later youth activities, but it was always the same story. Because of the rejection she experienced, she lost more and more self-confidence and became increasingly lonely.

I blame myself for her burns and her suffering - even though it was an accident. The memory of that day will never leave my heart – seeing her looking up at me trustingly, and the hot coffee splashing down on her. I will never forget. And the pain of that event will be in my heart for ever.

In 1997, my husband died as a result of heart failure, and Petra was devastated, because she was very attached to her father and he loved her very much. In

this pain, we reached out for help to the only being, it seemed, that could respond: we started going on pilgrimages to holy places. Medjugorje is a place very similar to Lourdes, and we journeyed there together three times. I spent many contemplative hours in prayer on my knees asking God to help her. There I was told that in order to obtain God's mercy I should fast on bread and water and pray. This I did regularly and willingly and also went on pilgrimages to other holy places throughout Slovenia and joined various prayer groups. I prayed and hoped, but the visible results still remained to be seen. Often I asked myself at that time: »Has God forgotten me and my child?« Later, when she enrolled in high school, my daughter also went through a very traumatic time, when she was bullied and attacked by a gang that had tried to establish itself during the three years after our country had gained independence from the Communist former Yugoslavia, when the schools did not yet know how to cope with the growing violence and insurgent new high-school bullies and drug barons. Petra was one of the few brave children who had dared to stand up to one such gang in her class and at her school and was pushed by them through a glass pane. But the school counsellor advised us to encourage her to go on going to school and it was only when she was attacked at night by four of the cowards together, that we realised that the school counsellor and psychologist were clueless, because they were out of their depth and had no idea what they were talking about. After this event, we took Petra out of that school and enrolled her in a Catholic school, hoping that she would feel safer there, but the harm had already been done. Following my husband's death, Petra just gave up and left everything and her traumas only deepened.

My pain, also, is even greater now, as I watch how she is no longer making anything of her life. She doesn't even go out of the house and garden anymore, and I ask myself often with pain and fear what will happen to her if I die? She has no brothers or sisters, nor any relatives living close by except for one of her cousins (the other three live abroad). I worry who would look after her, if I were to die suddenly, as no-one is immune from accidents or chance illnesses... Only God knows how long I shall continue to be able to live and look after her.

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I Then, one day, when I was browsing on the internet, found BSTTW and a ray of hope stirred in my heart. Maybe God had closed a door, but I feel that He had certainly opened a window behind my back (so that it took some time for me to discover it). Could BSTTW be this window? Maybe this organization is a part of God's plan for Petra and me? It probably is, otherwise I would not have been led to find it after all my prayers. Nor would I have met all these wonderful people, and in particular Michael Appleman, who sacrifices himself 24 hours a day for people such as my daughter and me. I feel that I am no longer alone and that I have a new family and new friends. Got bless BSTTW, Mr. Michael Appleman and all who will read this story.

With kind regards,

Ivanka Zigon

## The Burn Recovery

### Part 2

By: Dan Tetric

I was intubated, a million things sticking from my body, but my friends and family came and told me that they loved me not knowing and not caring that I couldn't hear them. People I hadn't heard from in years made an hour trip north to see me in the hospital, just to tell me they were praying for me. I was lost to them. I didn't know what was going on even when my eyes were wide open. I cried and screamed for loved ones that were dead or standing in front of me. Nothing made sense except for the hallucinations.

I don't think I was fully conscious until somewhere around the 20th of December when I was taken for my surgery. I was brought around earlier in the day to the point where I could ask a few questions, and then I was examined by some of the finest doctors I will ever know, though they were my enemies at the time. I was told about my surgery, told about my condition (27% TBSA), told about the condition of my Mom, told about the fatalities at my house. I didn't understand anything; it was all still too much.

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The surgery went off without a hitch, and slowly but surely, I was brought down off the drugs and taught the pain that I was in. Bandages changes were the most painful things I have ever experienced. I would become hysterical just at the mention of them twice daily. I would begin to weep knowing that it was coming again. My family and friends never hesitated at my side. I was fed by them. They read all the cards I got. They told me news from the outside, and they always told me that they loved me. I wanted so badly just to touch them. My exgirlfriend showed up shaking and wailing a few days before Christmas. I wanted so much to comfort her, even though I was the one in pain. Old habits die hard.

Then, Christmas Eve, when my condition was steadily improving, my Mom slipped into a coma. The doctors didn't understand what was happening. After she was extubated, she had trouble breathing, so they tried to intubate her again. She struggled I suppose, but they got her breathing properly again. After that, she wouldn't wake up. On Christmas Day, I was moved from the burn ICU to the actual unit. It was here that I was told my Mom's condition. I had only one or two visitors that lonely Christmas Day to help me deal with this terrible news. I was lying in bed in physical and emotional agony thinking that my Mom was going to die, that I was going to be an orphan. I couldn't handle that. I cried until I couldn't cry anymore. Well, until I was drugged to the point I could only stare at the television and drool. Her condition only got worse.

Around the 28th, I convinced an Occupational Therapist to take me to see my Mom. I told this woman, a woman whose name I can't remember but I will always love, that I had to say good bye if she was going to die. I HAD to. She managed somehow to sneak me out of there and to my Mother's bed. My Mom looked so terrible, but I knew I had to stop myself from crying. I was that little 3 year old boy again sitting in a wheelchair next to her bed, watching her die. I knew I had to be strong.

I can't remember everything I said to her, but I know I told her that I needed her. I told her that if she had

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to go that it was all right, but g-d damnit I wanted her to fight. I told her that I was scared, and that I loved her. And when I looked back around to tell that OT that I wanted to go, she was gone. So I just sat there and stared at my Mom through tears. The OT came back a few minutes later, and I was taken back to my room.

I wish I could tell you that my words brought my Mom back to life. I wish I could tell you that she opened her eyes the second I left and jumped from the bed. Neither one happened.

At least I don't think so. I think the guy I never believed in until I lost almost everything decided to give me something back. I think God might have pulled a string for me, and let my Mom fight some more. And fight she did!

Two days later, my Mom was moved into my room, something which I hear isn't the normal hospital etiquette. We stayed together until we left, and I couldn't have been happier. I had finally been allowed to shave...well be shaved. They took the catheter out one night while I was sleeping. Imagine the bad dreams that gave me for the rest of my stay. Friends were coming out of the wood work. It was getting to the point where our room was too small to house everyone. People had to sit on the edge of the bed to let others in the door.

We had a wall of cards, more cards than I'll ever see again. My Uncle Tim had opened a trust fund for relief, and the news was pretty big around Christmas time. People we had never known opened their hearts to us and donated household goods, money, and prayers. I worked for Walgreens, a pharmacy for those of you that haven't heard of it, at the time and a collection had been started by my store manager, Sandra Carver. Customers who I had talked to, and helped without thinking, donated money and prayers. I never thought or cared if the good things I did for others would ever be recognized, but daily someone was remembering my face and thinking of something I had forgotten. I can still cry about that.

Carver had made some connections at the local blood bank, and the turn out to donate blood to my Mom and I was enormous. I can't remember the

amount of blood they got from that drive, but when I walked into that place a month later they all cheered me. People were tripping over themselves to help, and I will never understand why. Why I was different from so many others out there that get the publicity, but not the help. It's that question too that has changed me deeply.

When we left the hospital on the 3rd of January, I was terrified. We were going to live with my Uncle Tim, but I didn't know if I'd be all right without the nurses and doctors around me constantly. I didn't want to leave, only my Mom did. I would have tried to stay another month or two or three if left to my own devices. We were to have professional nurses drive out to the house daily to check up on us, but my Aunt Donna was a retired nurse and she was to take most of the responsibility on herself.

My Mother and I were taken home in different cars because we couldn't climb in the back seat. I rode with my sister Jamie, and her fiancé Tim. The ride was terrible. Every bump sent pain through me. The hour long trip was a trying experience only compared to the dressing changes. I asked to see the house. They didn't object. I looked at the house that my Uncle and Step-Dad had died in for only a minute or two in that hazy cold gray light that Florida Januaries aren't known for. I looked at it, and only felt contempt.

The weeks that followed our arrival at home were marked in pain and achievement. I recovered at a rate that the doctors and nurses found incredible. I couldn't walk when I left the hospital, but after a few days of being home I was on my feet and the walker they sent home with me was in the corner. I did everything Donna asked of me. I only wanted to get better. I had a few problems, like my idea that I wanted to have a cigarette. I'm not proud to say that I'm back to my old habit. But, if I've learned anything about recovery and the people that help, it's about give and take. I ate every protein shake I was given, then I *walked* outside and had a smoke.

My hands, which had gotten the worst of the burns, were another story all together. I had an OT come to the house every other day to help me get the use of those back. Everything was a fight. One day they would move, the next they would curl up and

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lock. I got discouraged a lot early on. And I know I asked God why he saw fit to make me feel so much pain in my life. Tears were the norm around the house, though I kept mine to myself as well as I could while everyone slept. It was my job to show strength in recovery. It was my job to smile even though it hurt. To crack a joke, even though my heart was broken, was to make Terry and the rest of my family proud by showing strength.

My Mom, on the other hand, was not recovering but steadily getting worse. She was hunkering down into a depression that she is still in today. She stopped eating completely, and lost close to 15 lbs. The doctors were worried about her. I was worried about her, and she was driving all of us insane. Her bouts with anger and sadness were milliseconds apart. She was erratic at best. There was a point where she told me that she didn't like my friends coming over. Then she confessed later that she was jealous. She was increasingly irritable, but constantly seeking pity. I found myself one night telling Donna, "Maybe it would have been better if she died in that fire." I'll never be able to describe the amount of shame I feel about that thought and those words.

My Mom wouldn't accept help from anyone. She stopped having Donna change her dressings, preferring to try to perform the impossible and change the ones on her back herself. This only led to more tension as Donna felt as though she wasn't being appreciated. I can't blame her. I remember clearly my Mom telling her that she hated her and that she should just leave. Donna took so many things in stride, but a human being can only last so long.

The whole time we were at Tim's. My Mom Pushed us all to get a place of our own. Things weren't comfortable with 5 people in my Uncle's little house that he only shared with his daughter. Things couldn't have been comfortable with 5 people all of which were healthy. He got stressed a lot, and there were arguments. He is a private man, and a month and a half of sharing space with two people he loved dearly was still enough to make him edgy.

We moved into our apartment in mid February. I wasn't prepared for the move

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emotionally. Just like the hospital I wasn't convinced that we could do it on our own. The trust fund enabled us to act much faster than I would have liked. I had a hundred arguments with my Mom about the timing, but she wouldn't hear anything about it. She was set upon leaving on her own terms. I consented to this if only to save my sanity and the sanity of the others. I've been in this apartment now for over a year, and I regret leaving my Uncle every time things get rough, but I know that it wouldn't have made a difference.

Things went great for about a month, then my first real fight with depression set in, a fight that I have every day, even now. I didn't know it was depression, and it's never been diagnosed, but I'm smart enough now and willing enough to tell myself that I HAVE been depressed. I stopped sleeping at night. It became a fear of mine to go to sleep and have the same thing happen. So, I became a vampire, sleeping the day away, and prowling at night.

I would drive to my Hand Therapy sessions in the morning, go to work for a few hours, come home and sleep. I'd be awake around 9 pm, and then I would begin to prowl around. I would drive for hours thinking of nothing but the road ahead of me. I would sometimes drive into the next town to see the empty lot where my old house sat, then I would turn around and drive another 60 miles in the other direction before coming back home and going on with my day.

Sometime before March ended, I decided that I was going to kill myself. I had felt too much pain. My childhood had been this massive failure where all I could do was get into trouble and disappoint. My teenage years were marked with gang life, violence, and drug abuse that I could never hope to wash away by any good deeds that I could think of. My body was a disfigured mess that tortured me constantly. My heart was broken because I had lost so many things, including my dreams, goals, hopes, love, family, bearing and determination. I thought that for all intents and purposes I had died in that house already. I was just a shell.

My smiles felt false to me, and my good natured  
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answers to questions posed by friends were only a mask that covered the distrust, hatred, and self inflicted alienation that I felt. I felt guilt for not dying. I felt anger that God or whomever controlled my fate had saw fit to punish me again and again for my sins. It was time to feel peace. It was time to just give up, roll over and die. I had to get out of all of this pain.

I knew I wanted to say goodbye to all of those people that I loved. I wanted to get all of the formalities out of the way, but I think a deep part of me was scared and went looking for hope. The survivor state of mind I suppose. I decided I was going to take a trip to see my family in Detroit. This would be a long drive for the average person. It is a longer for a guy that is by himself, and doesn't have hands that work at 100%.

I drove at night, and I made stops on the way at friends that had moved to different states. I stopped in Ohio, and cried at Terry's gravestone. I let a demon go with it. I forgave him for a lot of the things he did to me, and maybe that was the key. I was gone about a week and a half, but while I was gone I found hope. I found out that it wasn't all about the pain, and I learned that I was still capable of great things. And that made me drive myself harder than I had in years.

My mindset changed from why me to why not me? I looked at the burns with hatred, and hindrance. But they weren't going to beat me. I was going to have the last say in how things worked. I took off my pressure garments, and I promptly lost them. I went out into the sun. I fought the knowledge that anything had changed. I was 18 years old. I was young. I was invincible. Nothing was going to slow me down. Not burns, or bad lungs, or feelings of guilt, or disappointments. I was going to stand.

I stopped seeking professional help. Why has a head doctor when nothing's wrong with your head? And I put myself into the mindset that nothing at all was wrong with me. I was sane, the whole world was crazy. And with a mindset like this, who would have thought that it was the beginning of a downward spiral?

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It didn't take long for me to lose the value of a job. Work cut into sleep time, so I quit without telling anyone. I just stopped going in. I went to the beach if I was going to be up during the day. Why are these people staring at my back? Ahh...well whatever. I stopped seeing even a similarity between me and other survivors. They all followed the rules. They wore their garments and lived in fear, while I superior to all, followed only the limitations I set for myself.

May, and my scheduled surgery to clear my web spaces came up. So, I made the drive to Tampa at 4 am to be there for pre op on time. Then, 4 hours of waiting later, I learned that my insurance hadn't authorized the surgery and it was cancelled. I fought the insurance company until I became disheartened around July, and then I just gave up on all surgeries for good. I don't think I'll ever bother to have another. It's pointless, I've been canceled and I'm sure no one is going to take on this huge pre existing condition.

The attempt at surgery only solidified my distaste for the medical profession. I haven't seen the burn clinic since that day, and I hope I never will. But that distaste, only made me feel all the loftier. Now I wanted to know WHY I HAD to be this way. So, I started digging up all the information on the fire that I could. I got fire reports, medical reports, medical examiner's reports. Pictures of the fire. Pictures of the bodies. Everything. I wanted to be like a God, and figure out the puzzle. All I found were more questions, and lots of pain that I didn't think I would have to feel. I hadn't disassociated myself well enough it seemed. Pride is a terrible thing when used to hold yourself above the rules, and I learned that lesson in the hardest way I know. Seeing those images brought me crashing back to reality.

I bounced, as I tend to do. And by my 19th birthday, in June, I was back to my new tricks. I went wake boarding for my birthday. My doctors would kill me if they knew. I was only 7 months out, and here I am in board shorts out on the Florida water, being pulled by a boat at 15-20 mph. I can't say I was standing while I was being pulled either. I

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paid a price for all of that...my sore shoulders. The grafts held up.

That summer I threw every physical torture I could think of at myself. I wanted to know just how far I could go, and then I wanted to go farther. I spent more time in the sun that summer than I ever had in my previous 18 years here. I ran miles. I partied harder than I care to admit. I started arguments with strange guys to see if I could still throw a good right hook. I smoked a pack a day. I played basketball in the rain. I went out and purposely tried to break my own heart to see just how well I would take it. Not to mention breaking their hearts which I did with a happiness that I can't describe. I was on the edge again, but I wasn't going to let off the throttle.

**BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS****POEMS**

The poem below is written by Eileen Booth the mother of a burn survivor. Eileen expresses her feelings and love for her daughter who suffered a burn injury.

**Vigil**

By: Eileen Booth

You rise up in your bed  
 To escape pain  
 Flee confusion  
 But the flames have followed you  
 They lick the encompassing wounds  
 Pulling you back  
 Into downy darkness

Lost in illusion you wander  
 With vacant eyes  
 Down damp stairwells  
 Witnessing your own entrapment  
 In images of weary doctors  
 Performing crude lobotomies  
 On the sick  
 The forsaken  
 Longing to escape their want

Shaken  
 I kiss your swollen hands  
 Chant poetry  
 Prayers  
 To bring you light  
 To bring you home  
 But dehiscent fear and its escaping apparitions  
 Are stronger  
 They steal you away  
 Abandon you to strange congested streets

In a chaotic city  
 You harbor children in your pocket  
 With sips of canned milk  
 You silence their cries  
 Pass the teeming masses  
 As they rush toward Armageddon  
 Searching for a way  
 Out of the unending torment

I sit in a wooden Chair



I can not enter your skin  
 I can not put out the fire  
 And I can't find you  
 I can only watch your chest as it rises and falls  
 Not with the natural rhythm of life  
 But with the peep and flow of machines  
 That can fail  
 Snap the slender silver thread  
 Holding you to this world

I will stay  
 I will return each day  
 And brush your amber hair  
 My familiar voice will sing a melody  
 Create a path of clear notes  
 Cut through the shadow  
 And give you strength to find me

**BSTTW** is always looking for new poems and stories. Expressing your life, love, recovery, and emotions helps you and others move forward in the recovery process. You can submit a poem or story on line by going to:

Poems:

<http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/poems/poemmaker.html>

Stories:

<http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/stories/storymaker.html>

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### **BSTTW CONTACT INFORMATION**

#### **Emergency Contact**

We have an Emergency Email Form on the Internet. Go to: [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/emergemail.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/emergemail.html)

You, your family and friends can also reach us by phone at 941-364-8457 or 1-800-503-8058. If we are not in the office or it is after hours, leave a message in the emergency mailbox. A support team member will respond to you within 24 hours. **BSTTW** has at least one individual on call 24 hours day/7 days a week.

#### **BSTTW Directors**

Michael Appleman: **Executive Director**  
[michael@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:michael@burnsurvivorsttw.org)

Nguyễn Thi Diêu Trân: **Director- Việt Nam**  
[tran@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:tran@burnsurvivorsttw.org)

#### **DONATIONS**

As a 501 (c)(3) Non Profit Organization, all donations, big or small are tax deductible to the extent of the law. **BSTTW** accepts donations for our General Fund, the "Bishop Peter Nguyen Van Nho World Wide Burned Children's Fund", "Dwight Lunkley Racing To Victory" fund, USA, Asian and Middle East Burn Camp funds, Vietnamese Burned Children Fund, BSTTW Religious Healing Weekend Fund and the World Burn Congress 2003 Fund. Donations from Companies, Churches, Organizations, Communities and individuals will help **BSTTW** to do the work that is needed for all Burn Survivors, family members and educating the public from around the world.

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

#### **Mail your donations to:**

Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc.  
 650 N Beneva Road #305  
 Sarasota, Florida 34232

To Donate on line go to:

[www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations.html)

If you have any questions call us at 941-364-8457, 800-503-8058 or email **BSTTW** at: [donations@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:donations@burnsurvivorsttw.org)

### Volunteering your time to **BSTTW**

We always can use your help. There are many children, adults and families around the world that are in need of support, advocacy, medical supplies and attention, a home, food, clothes, and other help. You can take part in rebuilding the lives and helping people reenter their community. Go to [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/volunteer.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/volunteer.html) in order to learn more about volunteering with **BSTTW** and join the **BSTTW** Volunteer Team. Feel free to contact **BSTTW** by telephone at 941-364-8457, 800-503-8058 or email us at [volunteers@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:volunteers@burnsurvivorsttw.org)

### Purchases

**BSTTW** has an online store where you can purchase Skin Care Products, Books and Video Tapes. Got to: [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/sales.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/sales.html)

You can also purchase Skin Care Products by telephone at 800-503-8058.

### **BSTTW ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBERS:**

Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc.  
650 N Beneva Road #305  
Sarasota, Florida 34232  
Phone: (941) 364-8457, 800-503-8058  
Fax: (941) 364-8457

Feel free to email us if you have any questions and/or comments at: [info@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:info@burnsurvivorsttw.org)