

Shows determination and courage

Hill makes a comeback

Ed Top

“When I was still in the hospital, I was using a loaner wheelchair and just starting to move around on my own. There was a mailbox beyond the front gate of the hospital and I decided to mail a letter.

I got dressed and headed out. It took me 15 minutes to go 100 yards. There was a little ramp. I sped up to go up the ramp, the footrest hit the curb and I fell out of the chair and onto the road.

I didn't have the strength to sit up by myself. At that moment, it began to rain. I started to laugh. Here I was lying in the middle of the road - in the rain ... you can't get much lower than that.

Three guys stopped and asked how they could help. I asked them to pick me up under my arms and put me back into my wheelchair. Now there's almost nowhere I can't go!”

ON THE MOVE

Over two years after being immobilized in intensive care in a Toronto hospital there's almost nowhere, native Orangeville's son, Robert Hill, Can't go.

It has to do with a determination which radiates from his eyes; it has to do with a confidence that reflects in his voice; it has to do with a zest for living that's grafted in his smile.

What took an instant at a cottage in Beacebridge two summers ago, will always bear a lifetime memory for Rob, his family and friends. Rob was paralyzed below the chest after breaking his neck.

“You never know how you'll react,” said Hill. “You do things you never thought you were capable of.”

Even on the night it happened Mr. Hill was determined not to worry about what he couldn't change. “It would only be a waste of time,” he said.

Presently he is employed with Go Vacations, a recreational vehicle firm in Mississauga.

Recently the firm has expanded into pleasure crafts and hotels in the Caribbean. As a customer service and sales manager, Mr. Hill's days are extremely demanding. As well, he and his brother run a video recording company.

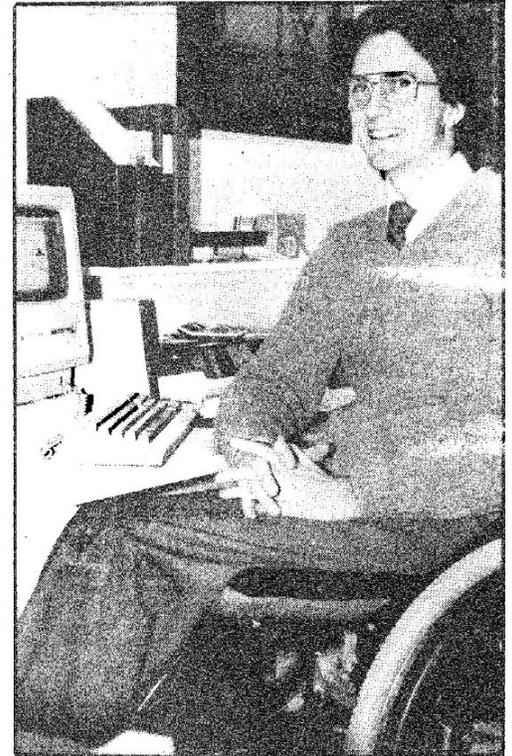
There are two groups of people who come out of this kind of injury; Mr. Hill said; the positive and the negative. “Both groups don't like each other,” he said. Mr. Hill's energy could not accept a negative attitude. Goal setting became extremely important to motivate him. He's determined to live a self-sufficient and normal life.

So far he has managed to do so: He lives by himself. He drives his own vehicle. He's handling business like a pro. He just became engaged.

“He has never, ever said, ‘Why me’, or ‘What if’,” Fred Hill, Robert's father said. “I guess we did ... he's 10 times the man I am.”

“At first it felt like a dream,” Robert's mother told the Citizen last week. “It felt like it wasn't really happening, I've accepted it now, and he's still as goofy as ever. He still does what he wants to.”

Mr. Hill. Does get frustrated from time to time, but the frustration is short-lived. “I took the situation and went with it,” he told the Citizen in an interview riddled with phone calls.



POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Courage and determination go hand-in-hand with Robert Hill. Two years ago he broke his neck in a diving mishap and since then it has been all uphill. Today he is doing what he wants and is very good at it. At Go-Vacations in Mississauga, he successfully manages the financial affairs of some of the wealthiest people in the province.