



NORTH AMERICA
EMPLOYEE MAGAZINE

Volume 1, Issue 2 - September 2005

WE LEAD.
WE LEARN.



STOP, look and learn

Working safely is priority number one

Safety is
good business

Coping
with injury

Introductions:
a Unisource story



Donna and Dave Frandsen enjoy a visit from their 11-month-old niece, Kendra.

Story Rebecca Theim **Photography** Jeff Frey and courtesy of the Frandsen family

Former Blandin employee and his family cope after a serious workplace injury

“The biggest adjustment is having someone you depended on become totally dependent on you ...”

Editor’s Note: UPM Blandin Paper Mill First Class Millwright David Frandsen was seriously injured in 2001 as he and a coworker repaired a Cushman cart in the mill’s Maintenance Department.

Although Blandin always had a safety program, about a year before Dave’s injury, the mill began pursuing Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS) 18001 certification, a rigorous designation that requires establishment of comprehensive health and safety management systems. Blandin achieved the certification in 2002 and has been audited and recertified since. Blandin’s overall injury rate has fallen dramatically in recent years. The mill finished July and August 2005 with a year-to-date rate below the national average.

Blandin’s recent impressive safety record aside, Dave’s injury underscores the importance of constant workplace vigilance. If Dave could offer one piece of advice to his former Blandin colleagues, what would it be? “Don’t think it can’t happen to you,” said his wife of 23 years, Donna. “You may do something safely 100 times, but you’ve got to do it safely that 101st time, and all the times after that.”

Donna Frandsen was making her way past the UPM Blandin Paper Mill on a cold but sunny March day in 2001. Fresh from her job at Cohasset Elementary School, she glanced at her watch and realized her husband Dave’s shift had just ended. She spontaneously turned into the parking lot, hoping the couple could drive together to nearby Deer River to look at some furniture they had been thinking about buying.

Instead of shopping for furniture, Donna would spend the next few weeks at hospitals in Duluth, praying that her husband would live until their 19th wedding anniversary 43 days away. They and their family spent the rest of the summer in Duluth’s Polinsky Medical Rehabilitation Center.

“When I pulled into the lot, one of the guys asked me how Dave was,” Donna recalled during a recent conversation in the family’s Cohasset home. “He told me Dave had gotten hurt and had been taken to the hospital. I remember responding jokingly, ‘What did you guys do to him now?’”

‘ When they asked us if Dave was going to be an organ donor, our hearts just sank. ’

“I went over to the hospital, expecting stitches.” Dave’s injury was far more serious. Shortly before Donna arrived at the mill, her husband’s skull had been crushed during an incident in the Maintenance Department, injuring his brain stem. The brain stem is the “stalk” at the base of the brain that connects the brain to the spinal cord. It governs many functions necessary for survival, including breathing and heart rate. It also controls a person’s ability to be awake, to be alert, to swallow and to vocalize thoughts.

Brain injuries run gamut

Of the roughly 2 million people who sustain brain injuries in the United States each

year, about 52,000 die and 100,000 are left with temporary or permanent disabilities. However, classifying such injuries is difficult, said Dr. Matthew Eckman, a physiatrist (a medical doctor specializing in physical medicine and rehabilitation) who has treated Dave at Polinsky since shortly after his injury. “It’s such a broad category,” Dr. Eckman added. “It includes everyone who gets a little ding on the head and is fuzzy for a few minutes to people who die or are in comas for months. It’s difficult to categorize these patients because each injury is so different.”

However, there was little doubt at the time of Dave’s injury that his was serious. “When they asked us if Dave was going to be an organ donor, our hearts just sank,” Dave’s mother, Marie Frandsen, said.

Family’s lives change

Since that spring day in 2001, the lives of the Frandsen family – Donna, her and Dave’s three sons and his parents – have revolved around Dave’s care and

rehabilitation. “For the first few weeks, it was an hour at a time,” Donna remembered. “Now, it’s a day a time.”

On a recent afternoon visit, Dave dozed for most of the time. He has active days, his family said, during which he enjoys games of Yahtzee and blackjack. On this particular afternoon, he was tired from a trip the day before to the family’s cabin on O’Reilly Lake, Donna and Marie explained.

When being introduced to a visitor, he squeezed her hand, and he roused twice more during the three-hour visit: once when the truck his father was driving backfired as he pulled into the yard, and a second time when his 11-month-old niece, Kendra, arrived for a visit.

On most days, Dave uses simple hand signals (one finger means “yes,” two mean “no”) to communicate with his family. And he’s not above giving his father the proverbial finger when Art Frandsen says something he doesn’t agree with.

Although the family holds out hope that Dave will one day regain his ability to speak and walk, they should continue to measure success by each small improvement, Dr. Eckman said.

‘It’s got to be wheel-chair-accessible, whether it’s [over] plywood, [over] logs or [by] manpower.’

“He’s generally aware of what’s going on,” Dr. Eckman said of Dave. “We’re hoping that he will get a little better with his communication.” His family concurs. “Dave does know what we’re talking about,” Marie said. “He just can’t get his answers out.”



Donna and Dave Frandsen at the family’s cabin on O’Reilly Lake in September 2004.

Improving communication

To expand Dave’s ability to communicate, his family is pursuing a medical trial to receive a Dynavox, a small laptop computer-like device that can “speak” responses entered on a keyboard by individuals with severe speech disabilities.

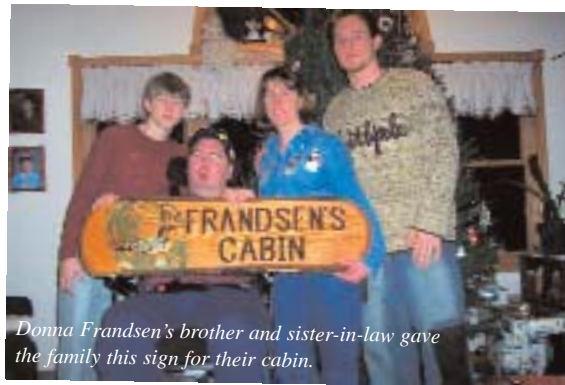
“He’s done a lot – a tremendous amount – but it’s very slow ... baby steps,” Art said about his son’s progress. The family points to measurable progress: Dave’s ability to kick a ball. His improved short-term memory, which is evidenced, they said, by his ability to duplicate gestures he made days earlier in a similar context. Increased agility in his right hand.

“No one wants a tragedy to happen, but we’ve adjusted,” said Marie, a semiretired home health care aide who cares for her son two 10-hour shifts a week. “It’s been a long haul for us, but we’re glad to have him home, where we can take care of him. He’s come a long way.”

Before accident, a normal life

Donna and Dave Frandsen met in 1979 while they were students at Detroit Lakes Vo-Tech, about 130 miles west-southwest of Grand Rapids. “My roommate had a crush on his roommate, and of course, she couldn’t go over there without me going along,” Donna recalled.

Dave and Donna began their relationship as friends, but after six months, a romance developed. They were married three years later. Their first son, D. J., arrived in 1983. A former Blandin intern, D. J. is now stationed with the U.S. Navy in Bethesda, Maryland. He is training to be a corpsman, a career choice his family said was influenced by helping care for his father. The couple have two other sons: Douglas, 20, who was a chef’s assistant at Ruttger’s Sugar Lake



Donna Frandsen’s brother and sister-in-law gave the family this sign for their cabin.

Lodge near Grand Rapids until he recently left for culinary school in Miami, Florida, and Danny, 15, a sophomore at Grand Rapids High School.

A Grand Rapids native, Dave worked in construction before taking a job as a forklift operator for Rajala Timber Co. in Deer River. He joined Blandin in June 1997 as a labor pool employee. About two years later, he transferred to the mill’s Maintenance Department as a First Class Millwright.

Before his injury on March 12, 2001, Dave enjoyed the outdoor pursuits beloved by many Minnesotans: hunting, fishing and trapping. Introduced to stock car racing by close friend Rob Crowe, Dave quickly mastered the sport. His first race, in March 1990, was as a substitute for Rob at the Grand Rapids Speedway. “First time out, he wins,” Art remembered.

Dave also was a “do-it-yourselfer” around the family’s Cohasset home, finishing the basement and tackling various remodeling jobs, Donna said. “One of the hardest things is knowing how active someone has been and knowing that’s been taken away from him,” she added softly.

His family works hard at keeping Dave an active participant in all their activities. When D. J. completed boot camp in 2003, the entire family – including Dave – took the train to the Great Lakes Naval Base near Chicago, Illinois, where D. J. was stationed. During the trip, the family went sightseeing downtown, where Dave made it to the 101st floor of the Sears Tower, the tallest building in North America.

“We don’t hold back,” Marie said. “If we go out to eat, we take him with us, food tube and all. I hope people don’t mind.” “Tough if they do,” Art retorted. “I don’t care.”

Only Dave's wheelchair restricts where he can go, and his family goes to great lengths to ensure that even those restrictions are rare. "It's got to be wheelchair accessible," Marie said, "whether it's [over] plywood, [over] logs or [by] manpower."

Care requires planning

His care demands just as much planning and determination. About two-and-a-half years after the accident, it was determined that Dave had reached his "maximum medical improvement," which qualified him for permanent total disability payments under Minnesota's workers' compensation program. These payments are based on a percentage of his previous wages. Workers' comp also paid about half the cost of renovating the Frandsens' home after the injury. A wide ramp accommodates Dave's wheelchair from the driveway to the front door. A ceiling-mounted track moves him from his bed to an adjoining and expanded bathroom that includes a large, open shower and whirlpool bathtub.

“There was never a question in my mind what I would do for Dave.”

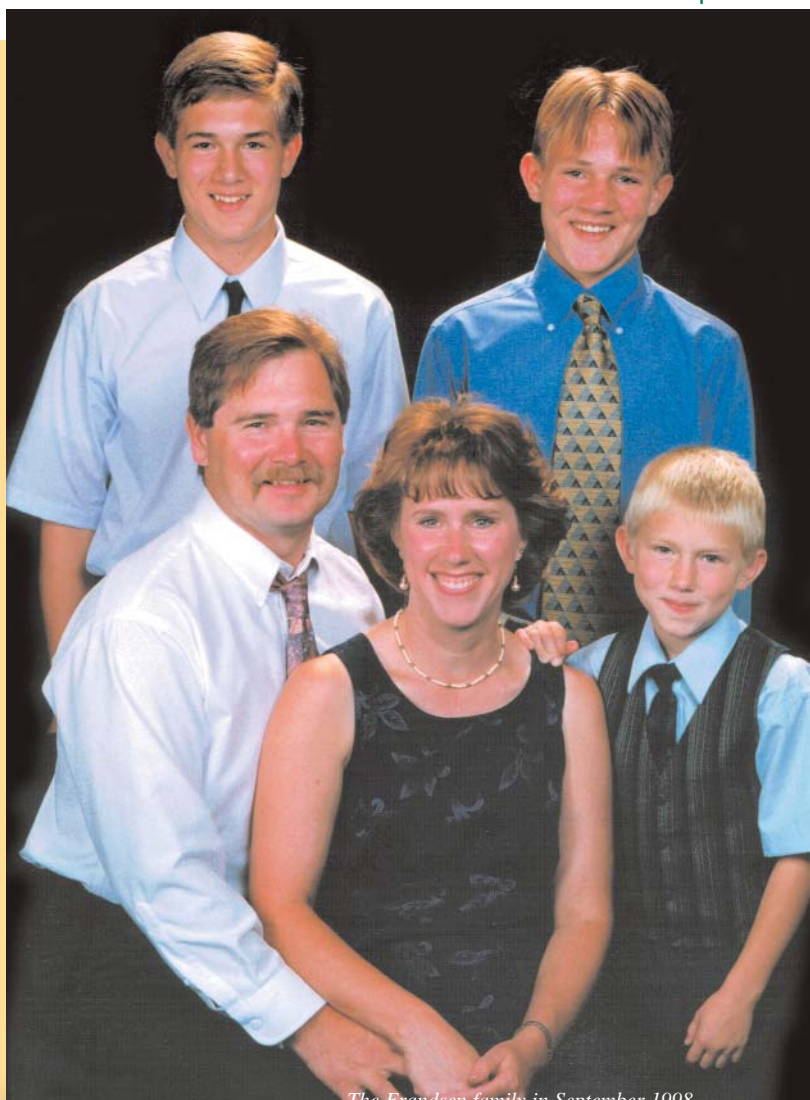
Workers' comp also covers Dave's medical bills and home health care aides who assist Donna Monday through Friday with her husband's round-the-clock care. "He gets water and meds during the night and needs to be repositioned every two hours," Donna wrote in an e-mail sent late in the evening during one of her recent "night duty" shifts. "And because of the compromised swallowing, we need to maintain airways, in case he has congestion issues."

Dave's typical day begins in the morning with measurement of his vital signs, breakfast and medication via his feeding tube, a shower and lung treatments that help keep his airway open. The afternoons consist of television viewing (car racing is still a favorite), exercise and physical therapy, and

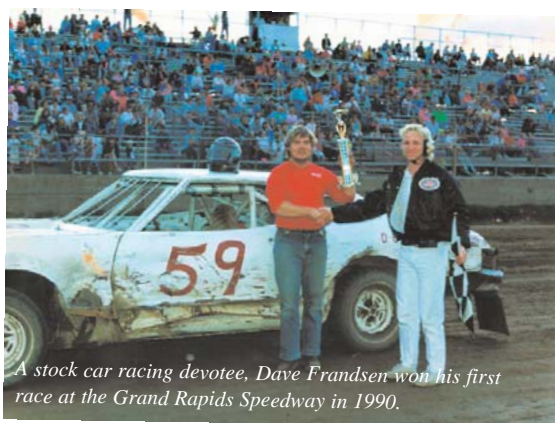
a nap. "It has taken some trial and error to find the right helpers for Dave's care, but we now have a very good crew on board," Donna said. His day ends with dinner and time with his family.

"He's blessed to have such a wonderful, supportive family," Dr. Eckman said. "It's very wearing to do this day after day, week after week and, now, year after year, but they haven't let it destroy them. It's brought them closer in some ways."

Dr. Eckman, along with the family's friends and relatives, single out Donna for her devotion to her



The Frandsen family in September 1998, two-and-one-half years before Dave Frandsen's life-altering injury.



A stock car racing devotee, Dave Frandsen won his first race at the Grand Rapids Speedway in 1990.

husband, but she downplays her contribution. "I do not consider myself to be doing anything heroic," she wrote in another e-mail. "I would like to believe that most people do what is needed to be done and I would not think of it being any other way. There was never a question in my mind

what I would do for Dave."

But adjustments to the family's lives since Dave's injury have been profound. "Nothing can be spontaneous; everything has to be planned down to the smallest detail," she said. And the constant stream of caregivers means the family enjoys little privacy. But the biggest adjustment has been "having someone you depended on becoming totally dependent on you."

Donna, however, said she never thinks of caring for Dave as a burden. "It's a challenge," she said. "Whenever I have a bad day, I realize it's only the tip of the iceberg of what he faces." □



Lawrence Ragan Communications, Inc., presents the

Ragan Recognition Awards

The best in employee publications

The Ragan Recognition Awards Award of Excellence: Feature Article, Magazine

Rebecca Theim
Director, Communications
U Magazine
UPM North America

Dear Rebecca,

Congratulations on a job well done.

Your feature story, “Don’t think it can’t happen to you,” is remarkable on at least two counts. First, it is sensitively and compellingly written. And second, it demonstrates a rare degree of candor and courage on the part of both the writer and the company.

David Frandsen’s story is tragic. You tell it with sympathy but without condescension. It would have been easy, especially in a company publication, to understate the degree of his injuries or to overreach in an effort to make the company look good. You have avoided both temptations.

A good writer knows when the material is so strong that the writing itself must be simple and understated. You have that material, and your writing shows that self-discipline.

As a reporter, you obviously earned the trust of the family. As an employee, you obviously earned the trust of your superiors. This story demonstrates that in both cases the trust was well placed.

You have served your subject, and your readers, well.

Congratulations on your Award of Excellence.

Sincerely,

The Judges

Ragan Recognition Awards

Judges' comments

Name: *Rebecca Theising*
Company: *WMAA Health America*
Category: Feature story
Division: Magazine

I. Overview

Feature stories are meant to entertain as well as inform, but they doesn't mean they should be filled with fluff. The best features tell readers something they didn't know, take them somewhere they haven't been or offer a different perspective on some aspect of their working lives. To do so, feature stories use compelling anecdotes; vivid, descriptive writing throughout and strong, color quotes. Whenever possible, they offer the complete package to help tell the tale: clever and compelling headlines, readouts, sidebars and photos. Features can make us smile or make us think, but they are nearly always a smooth and inviting read. When judging feature stories, we asked ourselves the following questions:

II. Specific comments (1 being the worst, 5 the best)

1. Did the writer craft an enticing lead that pulled readers into the story?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments go here

2. Did the writer use vivid and descriptive writing to keep the story moving and readers engaged?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments go here

3. Did the story offer good anecdotes or interesting people whose quotes were colorful or compelling?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments go here

4. Was the story organized in a way that kept the readers' attention and made it easy for them to follow the main theme?

1

2

3

4

5

Comments go here

5. Was the feature packaged in an inviting way, with headline, sidebars, readouts, photos or other devices that helped to tell the story?

1

2

3

4

5

Comments go here

Total points: 25

Fives across the board for a feature that would stand out in any medium. In a company publication, it speaks well for not only the writer but the company.

Story Maureen Zaleski Photography Jeff Frey

UPM NA employees give high marks to U magazine

Almost three-quarters of respondents to a UPM North America (NA) employee survey marking the first anniversary of *U* magazine said the publication provides information that helps them better understand the Company's goals.

Slightly more than half of employees polled said they read three-quarters or more of each issue.

"I think the magazine has a good mix of personal interest stories and what's happening that affects the mills or sales company," one employee commented. "It's a good form of communication about what's going on that we may hear snips in passing."

“Whenever you can have a success story that is common across mills, it helps bring us together as one company.”

About 27 percent – or 199 employees – of the roughly 750 UPM Blandin Paper Mill, UPM Miramichi salaried and NAC employees invited to take the survey responded March 15–29. It will be administered to Miramichi hourly employees after the May 1 restart of the paper mill. The survey had an overall margin of error of +/- 6 percent for most questions.

Other results showed that:

- 75 percent of respondents said the quarterly magazine helps them to understand UPM NA, including the Company's

operations beyond their personal work locations.

- 78 percent gave it high marks for its photography and design.
- 55 percent said it "provides important information I don't get anywhere else."

Most of the survey's questions were multiple-choice, and responses to those questions were generally positive toward the magazine. However, seven employees – or about 3.5 percent of respondents – offered open-ended comments questioning or criticizing the wisdom of launching and continuing to produce a magazine during such financially challenging times for the Company.

"Instead of spending the money on producing, printing and mailing or distribution of the magazine, use the money to give us a pay increase," one employee commented.

Results to questions regarding the magazine's overall effectiveness and quality were fairly consistent across UPM NA's three locations, although Blandin employees generally gave the magazine lower marks than NAC and Miramichi employees did.

More information about the survey is available on the "Communications" section of NANet. □

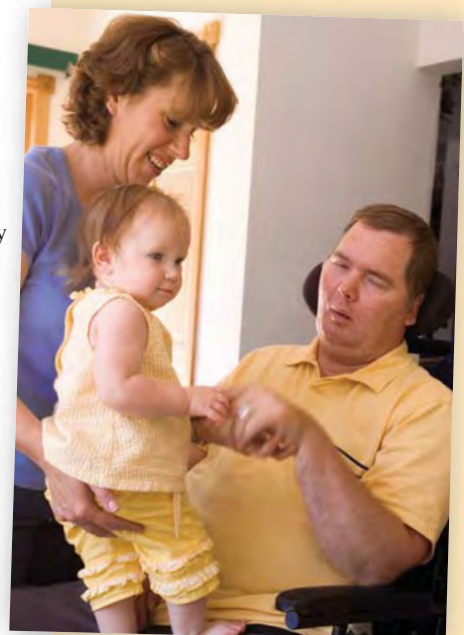
Article about injured Blandin employee wins national award

A story about a former UPM Blandin Paper Mill employee and his family after he sustained a serious workplace injury has been selected by a national corporate communications organization as the top feature article published during 2005 in employee magazines.

The article, by *U* Coeditor **Rebecca Theim**, was selected as best feature article in the annual Ragan Recognition Awards. The story "is remarkable on at least two counts," the judges wrote about the article. "First, it is sensitively and compellingly written. And second, it demonstrates a rare degree of candor and courage on the part of both the writer and the company."

Last year's feature category winner was credit card company American Express.

Chicago-headquartered Lawrence Ragan Communications, sponsor of the annual awards program, is regarded as the nation's leading publisher and producer of corporate communications and communications leadership newsletters and conferences.



Employees who responded to a March 2006 survey about U magazine cited as their "favorite or most memorable" story a feature published in the September 2005 issue about former Blandin employee Dave Frandsen, who was seriously injured in a mill accident in 2001.