



# BESPOKEPLUS



"If your work speaks for itself don't interrupt"

## 6' 4" Heroes I Know



In these pandemic times we slow down a bit and reminisce. We hear talk of heroes, people who impact our lives and I think of many people that have helped me grow and evolve. Today, I am thinking of two people who have always been 6'4" in stature and have had a larger than life impact on me; they come from world of hockey; Rob Rawlake and Fred Sasakamoose.

Rob played defense for the Pierceland Panthers our senior team (I was playing bantam, midget, juvenile, and on our senior team in the late 60's and a different position on each team). When Stan Erickson was not available on our Panthers, I was the goaltender. As a defenseman, Rob would flop in front of every shot with whoever we were playing and took care of most of my job. In one highly anticipated game against Green Lake, the first NHL player who happened to be a treaty Indian was coming to our town. He was one of the hardest shooters of the day (hence the name Thunderstick) and I laid awake many nights before Fred arrived with his team. Everyone seemed much bigger than me, especially Rob (talking to me about the big game) and Fred when he arrived, and I seen him for the first time in warm up.

The game started and Green Lake got possession and came in over the blue line with the puck going to Fred who wound up for a slap shot, billed the hardest shot in the world in our small Saskatchewan town! I was in great position knowing I was the second line of defense because Rob, our Booby Orr, was on the ice (his partner could have been Dwayne, Michael, Bill, I cannot recall but they would flop in front of shots all the time also) but for the first time the defense split and there was nothing between the shot and me. Fred's wind up seemed to take minutes, and although I was watching the blade, I could not ignore his

size (wider than Marcel Dionne, Taller than Moose Vasko, and smoother than Paul Coffey). Fortunately, the shot hit me, and 18,000 people cheered (it may have been less) and I knew I could stop anything that came my way from that time on.

I was at home a while ago and did not even recognize Rob and Fred I never really got to know well (he was honoured with the Order of Canada in the same year as Neuf). These two guys have always been 6'4" to me and bigger than life despite their sub 5' 10" stature!

## COVID-19

In case you missed our postings two and three weeks ago, we have been operating with a skeleton staff continuing with all shipping and receiving.

We are taking every step necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the people we work with, employees, the folks in and around our building, delivery people, etc., and have made the decision to continue to operate this way for the foreseeable future, continuing to analyze the corona virus issue and all the implications that come with being an essential service in the DME business.

We recognize that we may be working with some of the folks most easily affected by Covid-19 and we will limit the visits to our shop to those emergency issues that need to be dealt with right away.

We do not know if this is a short/long-term issue, but we will do our part to make it as painless as possible. We have postponed non-critical meetings and events until further notice, along with non-urgent. So, be prepared for more communication on the telephone, Skype, Facetime, and other online communication tools; and our lines are open.

## ISS-International Seating

The 37th International Seating Symposium (ISS) will be held March 18-20, 2021 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, PA. It will be hosted by

the University of Pittsburgh and here are the important dates to take note of:

1. Exhibit Booth Reservation Opens March 16, 2020 until sold out.
2. Call for Papers Opens May 4 through July 10, 2020.
3. Early bird registration is from November 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021.
4. Housing Block Opens October 1, 2020 until sold out.

There will be 127,000 square feet in the exhibit hall, full and half day preconference workshops on March 16-17, 2021, and over 100 sessions from keynotes, forums, papers, posters, etc.

## Matia Robotics Tek RMD

Stand up and be counted! The Tek RMD from Matia Robotics is designed to easily enable a person to stand and move around. Matia Robotics, a company focused on improving the quality of life for people with disabilities, are inventors and engineers, dedicated to the creation of innovative robotic mobility devices. They got together in 2006 with a goal to develop technology for people with a disability. After years of development, planning, and testing, the Tek RMD was founded and became their first product to market in 2012. The product was well received and after tried and community tested is now being made available to the global marketplace.



Their goal remains to improve the health, wellness, and sense of independence for as many people as they can reach. The majority of people benefiting from this technology are paraplegics and others with lower limb mobility issues. Give us a call to check it out!

## Real Estate & Business

This is a tough time for a lot of businesses with the general economy already stressed and the Covid-19 issue exacerbating the situation. The retail sector is especially at risk unless you are a giant in the industry and can leverage your position in the market area. Naturally, the downturn in the retail sector will impact smaller distributors and manufacturers with the bigger ones having a bit more resistance to the economic fluctuation, but rest assured their position will ultimately impact the average worker in the bigger enterprises and once their investors get nervous, who knows what will happen.

Small business owners are the backbone of the Canadian economy. Approximately 70% of Canadians work in small business in Canada and most of those companies do not have the financial capital to withstand more than a month without regular income. The longer this current situation remains the greater the impact on most workers in the country; that will then impact the whole economy including the bigger businesses that rely on increased earnings quarter after quarter. Those companies are not going to fund a sinking ship and will retract from the sector and become as lean as possible to survive. Unlike the small business who is going to do everything possible to stay alive and meet the needs of all involved, big business will cut and run to the government to bail them out.

As this will impact every aspect of our economy, those renting properties will face challenges, both renters and landlords. Some politicians are calling for relaxed commitments, others are talking about what they will do to force monthly payment of rent or mortgages.

The pros tell us, *“Across most sectors and markets, leasing activity will decline in volume compared with pre-crisis expectations. A heightened sense of uncertainty over the economic and business outlook will cause some deals to be withdrawn. Fewer new transactions will be initiated, and some expansion plans will be put on hold. Clearly the extent of this slowdown will be highly variable across markets and will depend on how the economic impacts of the disease play out. Disruption to supply chains will impact the industrial and warehouse sectors.”*

## Bits and Bytes

- 49 20<sup>th</sup> HHPC Oakville April 15-16 **Cancelled**;
- 49 CSMC 35<sup>th</sup> **Cancelled** May 5-6 Toronto, ON;
- 49 CAOT May 6-9 **Cancelled-Virtual?** Saskatoon, SK;
- 49 NBANH May 13-14 **Cancelled** in Moncton, NB;
- 49 ENABLE/AccessABLE **Cancelled** May 26, Ottawa;
- 49 Abilities Expo August 14-16, 2020 New York, NY;
- 49 Rehab Equip Expo Richmond, BC Sept 15, 2020;
- 49 Access Expo Sept 18-19, 2020 VV, Toronto, ON;
- 49 Rehacare, Dusseldorf, Germany Sept 23-26
- 49 Abilities Expo October 2-4, 2020 Toronto, ON;
- 49 Paralympics **Aug 25–Sept 5, 2021** Tokyo, Japan.

**BESPOKE PLUS** is the newsletter of 49 Bespoke Inc., which markets products from around the world designed to better meet the needs of people with a disability.

We have grown up in sport, have a social service background, and have adopted an advocacy role in our business practice.

**Comments are welcome.**