# **EWAITING ROOM**



t takes a lot to impress New Yorkers. But when one Harlem man jumped on to the subway tracks to save a film student who fell while having a seizure, they were stunned by his bravery.

Wesley Autrey, a 50-year-old construction worker and Navy veteran, was waiting for the subway on Jan. 2 with his two young daughters, when Cameron Hollopeter, 20, collapsed. Autrey and two women rushed to help Hollopeter, who managed to get up, but then stumbled to the platform edge and fell to the tracks, just as a train approached the station. In a split second, Autrey leapt on to the track and pressed Hollopeter into a one-foot space between the two rails. Five cars roared overhead, passing inches from Autrey's head, before the train stopped. Both men survived.

Not everyone can jump into the subways tracks, but Harvard Medical School

neurology professor Steven Schachter, M.D., a spokesperson for the American Epilepsy Society, outlined things you should do when you see someone having a seizure:

- Prevent any further injury. If the seizure occurs in the middle of the street, move the person to a different location and move any objects out of the way. But do not forcibly restrain the person.
- Don't put anything in the person's mouth. The person can choke or damage his or her teeth.
- Don't give the person water, pills, or food until he or she is fully alert again.
- Stay with the person until he or she is back to normal or until help arrives.

He also recommends that epilepsy patients talk with their family and friends about what to do when a seizure occurs.

For more tips visit epilepsy.com and click on "Seizure First Aid."

# The Great Walk of China

hen Englishman Gordon
Barnes was diagnosed
with Parkinson's disease
13 years ago he vowed to not let the
disease stop his active lifestyle. His
latest project, however, to walk the
Great Wall of China, has elevated him
to the rank of top-notch adventurer.

Barnes, 53, heads to northern China in May where he will join a group of 40 who will walk six hours a day along a section of the approximately 4,500 miles of the ancient landmark to raise money for the United Kingdom's Parkinson's Disease Society. He's already halfway to his fundraising goal of 3,000 British pounds.

The former soccer player and referee is no stranger to great accomplishments since his diagnosis. He has also seen New York from the top of the Empire State Building, stood on the flight deck of a jumbo jet, and even appeared as a royal prisoner in a production of the opera Aida.

Seeing the glass as half full comes naturally to Barnes. "The illness has never held me back," he says. "I feel that I have experienced much more with my condition than many others have without it."





## A Senator's Brain Attack, A Wake-up Call

s anyone who has experienced a brain injury knows, disaster can strike at any time. Such was the case for South Dakota Senator **Tim Johnson** (Dem.) in December when he inexplicably began slurring his speech during a media interview and was later rushed to the hospital. While initial reports attributed his behavior to a stroke, Johnson was actually experiencing bleeding caused by an abnormal tangle of arteries and veins in the brain known as an arteriovenous malformation (AVM).

Nearly 300,000 Americans have the congenital condition, but only about 36,000 experience symptoms related to the AVM. In fact, many AVMs aren't discovered until they bleed. Some are found incidentally when a person gets an imaging study for something unrelated.

The most common symptoms are seizures and headaches. Also look for muscle weakness, a loss of coordination, dizziness, and difficulty using or understanding language.

The Senator's office reported in January that his recovery is expected to take several months and will include extensive physical therapy and rehabilitation. But the good news is that tests show that the AVM was completely removed, and most recently, Johnson began to speak again.

His recovery will surely be watched closely by politicians and the public alike, especially since it will determine whether the Democrats will keep their one-vote majority in the Senate.

#### **Singing for Stroke**

Ithough the legendary **Luther Vandross** passed away in 2005 at the age of 54 from a diabetes-induced stroke, his music lives on, not only in CDs, but also in a campaign to end stroke.

His 2006 Grammy-nominated tribute album, "Forever, For Always, For Luther," promoted diabetes awareness and now the second volume, released in November, includes information about the warning signs of stroke. Proceeds from album sales will go to the American Stroke

Association's Power to End Stroke campaign targeted to reach African-Americans about studies indicating their increased risk for stroke. "While stroke is the third leading cause of death in the U.S., African-Americans are at greater risk for stroke compared to the general population and almost twice as likely to suffer a stroke compared to white Americans," says American Stroke Association spokesperson Toiya Honore.



Patti Austin, Will Downing, and Norman Brown are just some of the famous artists who lend their voices to this musical collaboration. Stroke awareness never sounded so good.

### The New "Rain Man"

hen as a child **Nicky Gottlieb** could calculate the exact day of the week a person was born and figure prime numbers in the thousands, his family knew there was something different about him. What they couldn't figure out was how he could possess these extraordinary skills yet also be incapable of holding a conversation.

It wasn't until a few years ago that they discovered the reason behind this strange paradox—Nicky was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, a high-functioning form of autism. Now "Today's Man," a new documentary produced by Nicky's sister, Lizzie, is informing the rest of the world about this little-known syndrome.

Lizzie started filming Nicky three years ago, when he was 21 and beginning to struggle with the responsibilities of adulthood. The documentary chronicles his life for the next six years as he tries to find a job, hold down a job, and move out

of his family home.



Asperger's, which is thought to affect two out of every 10,000 children, hasn't stopped Nicky from taking on life's challenges and even doing a little self-promotion. "I imagine a lot of people feel like Asperger's is a real disability," he says. "But at the same time you have some extraordinary abilities—math, foreign languages, dates."

To look up screening dates and purchase the DVD, visit **orchardpictures.com**.