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Thursday, April 19, 2012

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\$500,000 facelift for fountain  
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Musical talent on display at JRMA  
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Globetrotters keep 'em smiling  
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Mitch Brogan was paralyzed after getting hit on his bike by a drunk driver nearly six years ago

## RoboBrogan: London's bionic man

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Last week, Mitch Brogan attended a friend's wedding in St. Louis.

While other attendees, without a second thought, rose to their feet any time the emcee asked, Brogan was hoping it would be the last wedding he'd ever attend where he couldn't stand with his friends and family. "It'd be nice to have a real dance, to stand up when everybody else does, to sit when

they do, to look eye-to-eye when they're talking to you."

A pair of bionic legs coming from the other side of the world this week will make that hope a reality for Brogan.

The 31 year old hasn't walked since the early morning hours of Sept. 16, 2006.

A resident of Ottawa at the time, Brogan was just passing through London with his brother and promoting his belief in biofuels at a local forum.

He had been playing chess late into the night with a friend and had decided to ride his bike to Tim Hortons for a coffee.

At 2:45 a.m., near the intersection of Dundas Street and Oakland Avenue, a drunk driver travelling at 72 kilometres per hour struck Brogan from behind.

His back ended up going through the vehicle's windshield and his head struck the car so hard it left a five-centimetre dent in the roof.

“The helmet was found 200 feet away if that gives you any bearing on the impact.”  
Mitch Brogan  
Drunk driver survivor

He credits the helmet he was wearing for saving his life.

"The helmet was found 200 feet away if that gives you any bearing on the impact."

The first person to come to his side was the woman driving the vehicle, to whom he uttered one sentence before falling unconscious.

"I said, 'I forgive you'."

When he emerged from a coma three days later, he was unaware of his condition and couldn't talk.

It was while a nurse was caring for him that his powers of speech returned and he asked her why he wasn't brushing his own teeth.

"She held my hands, looked me in the eyes and told me everything that was going on," Brogan said. "We both cried together."

He learned he had a spinal cord injury and doctors told him he had a one per cent chance of ever using his arms or legs again.

"I had no belief I would ever walk again."

Despite this crushing news, Brogan remained positive.

"There's always parts of you that think you can beat the odds."

Within seven months of the crash, he was able to get his arms moving again and on his birthday in 2007, Brogan's friends sent him a link to a website for an Israeli company that develops exoskeleton legs for people with mobility challenges.

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## Councillors choose public engagement over censorship

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Council's procedural bylaw may see a little tweaking, but the public will be allowed to continue bringing signs into the city hall gallery.

And depending on recommendations that come back from administration, those same people may be able to get themselves a sandwich while they are there.

During the Finance and Administrative

Services Committee meeting on Monday (April 16), councillors addressed a staff report that called for several changes to council's procedural bylaws.

Many of those recommendations, including how councillors apply reconsideration of a vote, the scheduling of Investment and Economic Prosperity Committee meetings and the appointment of chairs to standing committees, were passed with little debate. The committee did support a recommendation to make

sure reconsiderations happen in a timely manner.

The most controversial point in the recommendations dealt with the conduct of the public at meetings. After considerable debate — and several presentations from the public — the committee voted to do away with almost all the staff recommendations surrounding decorum. These recommendations included a prohibition on

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