

# Muilenburg Prosthetics Inc.

# REVIEW

## Shannon Arens Rights the Big Rigs 'That's what I do & what I enjoy.'

At 6-ft., 3-in., and 230 pounds, Shannon Arens cuts an imposing figure on the job, towing big rigs, righting spilled industrial loads, operating 30 to 50-ton recovery vehicles, and working his way around accident sites in ditches, hillsides, on the interstates and rough country roads. For almost 25 years, Shannon's been involved in the family business, Arens Heavy Duty Towing, which specializes in towing and recovery of commercial vehicles and oversized industrial loads. Shannon, a shorts and t-shirt person, sometimes surprises his customers who don't expect to see a towing operator wearing a prosthetic leg.

"I probably do more than I'm supposed to do as an amputee. But you know, I've got

a business to run with five employees and I'm a single parent to a seven-year-old, so there is no time to slow down," he said. "Recently I worked a truck wreck for 14 hours. The temperature outside was 104 degrees and we were on the freeway. I was out there the entire time. I'm tired and I'm beat, but I don't hurt. The reason why is because of Muilenburg Prosthetics.

Shannon has been a Muilenburg client for 35 years; first as a child through Shriners Hospital and then continuing as an adult. His first prosthetist was Alvin Muilenburg, CPO, founder of MPI. He also has had prostheses fabricated by both Ted Muilenburg, CP, and Andre Martinez, CP.

Happy New Year!  
MPI wishes you  
the very best  
in 2012!

**MPI**

**MUILENBURG  
PROSTHETICS INC.**

*Providing Hope and Quality of Life for Amputees*



**Shannon Arens doesn't shy away from equipment operation and work in the field as the owner of Arens Heavy Duty Towing.**

*continued on next page*

*continued from front page*

"I still have the handcrafted solid wood leg that (Alvin Muilenburg) made for me when I was four years old," he said. Shannon has kept most of his legs and displays them on a wall in his home.

Fortunately, the days of heavy wooden legs and bulky components are long gone.

"Technology is cool but I'm not a bells and whistles kind of guy because I'm just so hard on my prosthesis," he said. "The goal is to have components that won't wear out. I put a lot of miles on the leg and I'm all over my equipment. For me the key to wearing a prosthesis is the fit and that's what MPI has been able to do for me."

The challenge for prosthetist Andre Martinez is finding the components to withstand Shannon's rugged, outdoors' lifestyle, which also includes camping and four-wheeling with his daughter.

"Shannon is capable of testing things to the limit," said Andre. "The average for a person to wear a prosthesis is 8 to 12 hours a day. Shannon wears his from the minute he gets up to the minute he goes to bed."

Because of the workout Shannon puts himself through every day - climbing in and out of his salvage equipment, ascending and descending rough terrain, getting on top of vehicles and jumping down, Andre gave Shannon the Total Knee® 2100. "It is the most heavy-duty knee suited for him," he said. "It's one of the toughest knees out there."

Durability extends to his foot, which is a Freedom Innovations Renegade® Foot. "It fits his profile," said Andre. It's a tough foot, so even if he does break it, it has a good warranty on it so we can get him a new one quickly."

Shannon's upbeat and can-do attitude makes him a good choice for helping Andre at clinic demonstrations and seminars as well as

speaking to new amputees who are struggling with their situation. "If I have a patient who doesn't quite understand the situation or is depressed, Shannon is the guy I can count on to talk to them. He's a free-spirited speaker and he has no trouble talking about his situation and how he got there and what he does now. He pretty much inspires everybody."

Shannon's life experiences weren't always so positive. When he was growing up in a small town, he was an anomaly as an amputee. "Being a kid with an artificial leg, that was the toughest part of my life. Kids made fun of me all the while I was growing up," he said.

A game-changer for him was when he was able to participate in



Texas Lions Camp in Kerrville. "I started at 11 and went every year until I was 16. Then I was a camp counselor. Lions camp had such a big impact on me. I think that's probably the reason I made it through my teenage years, because I was with other kids. I can remember even now what we did every day. It was the greatest experience. I would tell any parent who has a child with a disability to make sure that child has

an opportunity to be with other kids like them so they can see that they are not the only ones," he said. "Spend time with your child, provide confidence, and don't baby them."

"As I got older, I realized I was bullied and teased because the other kids didn't understand and didn't know how to react, so they made fun of me. But I grew from it. Out of my high school class, I think I am probably in the top five of the most successful as a person."

"I'm pretty much not limited by anything, other than getting older and realizing what my body is capable of. I think my amputation happening when I was so young means that it's second nature to me to be an amputee."

Shannon was four years old when he fell off a bush hog (heavy-duty rotary cutting mower) driven by his father. "It's like a big shredder and I went underneath it and it spit me out the back," he said.

Life Flight took Shannon first to Angelton Danbury Medical Center for immediate treatment, and then, because his injuries were so extensive, to Memorial Hermann. Even though his body underwent serious trauma with deep cuts and lacerations, Shannon's leg was not severed by the bush hog; the amputation came three days later when gangrene set in.

"I was in Hermann for 58 days; 18 in intensive care. They saved my life," Shannon said. "Of course I ended up losing my left leg but feel as though I'm a lucky person. I have a positive attitude. I'm not a negative person. Every morning when I wake up the glass is always full. I don't like the word no. If you tell me I can't do it, I'm going to prove you wrong."

One thing you'll never see Shannon do is perch his daughter on any kind of riding mower. "That seat is made for one and one only," he said, noting that he often sees dangerous practices. "I saw one guy riding his lawn mower and he's got a beer in one hand and a baby in diapers in the other. Another time there were three kids standing on the deck of a bush hog while it was in operation. I will pull over and talk to them, show them my leg, and hope they understand the danger involved. I wouldn't want to look at my child every day and see what I had done. As a parent, those are shoes I don't want to walk in."



## Ted Muilenburg Attends AOPA National Assembly

Ted Muilenburg, CP, LP, FAAOP, attended the 2011 American Orthotic & Prosthetic Association (AOPA) National Assembly held in September at the Mirage Resort and Casino in Las Vegas.

During the event, Ted had the opportunity to participate in business and clinical education programs as well as visit exhibitors showcasing the latest technology for the prosthetics and orthotics profession.

The event included the keynote address by Melissa Stockwell, CP, a Paralympic swimmer and former U.S. Army officer. 1st Lt. Stockwell was the first woman soldier to lose a limb when a roadside bomb exploded on a convoy she was leading in Baghdad. She was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart and later became the first Iraq veteran chosen for the Paralympics. She is a certified prosthetist in Chicago and serves as a board member for the Wounded Warrior Project.



**Above: Ted Muilenburg, CP, checks out the displays from Pat Cox (right) of College-Park Industries.**

## Upper Limb Amputees Learn from Skills for Life Workshop

MPI's Ted Muilenburg, CP, and Earl Fogler, CP, along with patient Ronald Hindsman traveled to Denver for the Skills for Life program, held Oct. 12-16 at the Denver Renaissance Hotel.

Skills for Life is a series of workshops and seminars designed for bilateral upper limb loss patients and those involved in their care and rehabilitation. Sessions included occupational therapy and rehabilitation issues and breakout sessions for amputees to come

together and teach each other and learn from each other how they've handled specific activities.

Presentations covered a variety of topics including techniques and activities of daily living, options for body powered and myoelectric prostheses, and emotional adjustments to living with limb loss.

There was also an activity day where attendees could cycle, swim and engage in other fitness activities.

Muilenburg Prosthetics was a sponsor of the event.

**Above: From left, MPI patient Ronnie Hindsman with his prosthetist Ted Muilenburg, CP, at Skills for Life with James Vandersea, CPO, and MacJulian Lang, CPO.**

**Left: An amputee tries cycling as part of activity day.**



## Total Knee® 2100 Handles High Impact Levels, Heavier Loads

Ossur's Total Knee® 2100 with three-phase hydraulic swing control is designed to withstand the rigors of more active amputees. With a 25 percent increased fluid capacity over Model 2000 and cooling fins for greater reliability, the 2100 offers the ultimate in stability, control, efficiency and durability.

Total Knee's features and benefits:

- Polycentric knee designed for multi-speed ambulators, higher impact levels and heavier loads
- Contains 25 percent increased fluid capacity over Model 2000 with cooling fins for greater reliability
- Geometric locking system with three-phase hydraulic swing control
- 30mm pylon adapter
- Adjustable stance flexion
- Adjustable extension promoter
- Supports up to 275 lbs.



## Smooth Gait at Any Speed with the Renegade Foot

Freedom Innovations' Renegade Foot's patented Z-Shock technology is engineered to deliver a smooth gait at any speed, resulting in a comfortable walking foot that can also stand up to high impact forces. The Renegade's design redirects the energy to enhance the foot's heel dynamics and propel the amputee through the gait cycle.

Renegade's features and benefits include:

- Smooth gait at any speed
- Floating heel and Z-Shock technology
- Tremendous energy return
- All-carbon Z-shaped heel is durable and maintenance free
- Less than one-third the weight of traditional shock foot products, reducing socket pistoning and fatigue
- Ideal for active amputees
- Supports weight up to 365 lbs.



Muilenburg Prosthetics, Inc.  
P. O. Box 8313  
Houston, TX 77288-8313

Address Service Requested

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Milwaukee, WI  
Permit No. 3927

**MPI** MUILENBURG  
PROSTHETICS INC.

3900 LaBranch (between the Texas Medical Center Campus and Downtown Houston)

PHONE: 713-524-3949 TOLL FREE: 866-524-3949 • FAX: 713-524-3915

WEB SITE: [www.mpihouston.com](http://www.mpihouston.com)

OFFICE HOURS: 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Thursday • 8 am to Noon, Friday

## MPI Insurance Corner:

### Alert: Medicare Requiring More Information From Your Doctor

Developing a good working relationship with your doctor is more important now than ever. That is because prosthetists are now required by Medicare to obtain your treating physician's notes to justify our services prior to delivery of your new prosthesis. This may also extend to repairs and adjustments.

Besides the signed and dated prescription and/or Certificate of Medical Necessity, documentation from your treating physician will include the following information: (1) your potential functional ability; (2) past history; (3) your current condition including the status of your residual limb; and (4) your desire to ambulate.

With you and your physician's assistance we can meet the requirements needed. Please contact our office; we will be glad to assist in any way we can. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause; MPI is obligated to follow all of the Medicare directives.

## Stay Connected with Our Quarterly E-Newsletter

As part of our educational outreach, we would like to continue to keep you updated on technologies and advances in prosthetics available at Muilenburg Prosthetics.

To help us, won't you take a moment to let us know your e-mail address? You can e-mail, fax, or call our office with the information.

Be assured, we will not be inundating your in box with countless messages - only a quarterly e-newsletter. We also will keep your e-mail private and will not be sharing with any third parties.

To provide your name and e-mail information, phone Mary Torres, (713) 524-3949, ext. 100; e-mail Mary at [mtorres@mpihouston.com](mailto:mtorres@mpihouston.com), or fax us at (713) 524-3915.

Of course, don't hesitate to call if you have any questions or if we can be of service in any way.

We look forward to hearing from you!

