The ***Brain Injury Connection (BIC)*** started out as a newsletter. The newsletter was initially called the ***East Bay Brain Injury (EBBI) Connection***. *EBBI* Support Group participants contributed ideas for the initial articles, wrote about their personal experiences with brain injury, and provided input for the survivor columns.

Debi Palmer, the editor and publisher, met Dr. Claude Munday , a neuropsychologist, at a brain injury conference in Sacramento in 1995. She was very impressed with Dr. Munday after hearing him speak about working with survivors of traumatic brain injury (TBI). Dr. Munday was the first doctor she heard who could explain the difference between normal forgetfulness and brain injury related forgetfulness.

When the *EBBI* Support Group discussed the idea of a column where a neuropsychologist answers questions from the brain injury community, Debi immediately thought of Dr. Munday and asked him if he would consider writing the "Doctor on Call" column. He agreed and wrote five columns for the newsletter.

The first issue of ***EBBI Connection*** was published in the spring of 1996. Two hundred copies were printed initially, and quite a few more were printed once the word got out. The *Center for Independent Living* in Berkeley was helpful in getting extra copies printed when we ran out.

Another *EBBI* participant introduced Debi to Greg Winslow of the legal firm of *Winslow and Hurtubise* shortly after the first newsletter.

In the summer of 1996, Greg came on board in the second issue as the publication's "Legal Matters" columnist. Their firm, *Winslow and Hurtubise*, was one of many generous contributors to the ***EBBI Connection*** and ***BIC*** newsletter printing and postage costs.

Three more issues followed. By the last issue, our mailing list had grown to at least 2000

recipients.

The last three issues were edited and designed by a talented duo, the professional writer and editor, and graphics designer of Candy and Charles Creative Concepts. Candy and Charles were no longer available to edit, write and design the BIC publication as they had moved on to do their own newsletter, *Emerging Horizons* , an accessible travel newsletter for people with mobility issues.

The demand for the ***BIC*** newsletter was greater than expected and the founder/managing editor had been contemplating forming a nonprofit organization. Consequently, the ***Brain Injury Connection (BIC)*** organization was born in the state of California in May of 1999.

In September of 1999, ***BIC***'s founder caught the house she lived in on fire. After her brain injury, she had almost caught the house on fire at least three times. Luckily, she was in close proximity to the kitchen and only a plastic container or two melted and one dish towel and a pot holder was scorched. There had been several close calls and petrified that she would eventually catch the kitchen on fire, because she was easily distracted and would forget she was cooking, she began wearing a " *Timer on a Rope*." She set it to go off every three to five minutes to remind her to check the stove whenever she was cooking.

The day of the fire, the elderly woman Debi was renting a bath and bedroom from had fallen. She had to call her family and then the fire department to transport her to the hospital. Debi was very stressed and famished by the time they left and proceeded to cook french fries, of all things. The phone rang and she forgot to activate her "Rope on a Timer" and continued talking with her friend oblivious to the fact she had something on the stove.

That day she learned memory devices can't help if you forget to use them.

As you can probably imagine, that was a major distraction to building the ***BIC*** organization. ***BIC*** 's founder often wonders if catching the house on fire had anything to do with the fact the tire of her Schwinn racing bike got caught in a railroad track and she was thrown off, cracking the right side of her helmet when she hit the steel tracks in July of 1998. Two months later, coming from

a friend's house her wheel got caught in something again and she went flying over the handle bars cracking the top of her "new" helmet. Both knocks to the helmet shook her up, but the last one really stunned her; fortunately, a nice lady driving in to Alameda picked her and her bike up from the side of the road and took her to the hospital.

After her first brain injury, ***BIC***'s founder became a helmet evangelist; she is convinced that it's better to have a helmet and not need it, then need it and not have it.

The ***BIC*** applied for 501(c)(3) tax exempt status in order to fund raise, solicit donations and apply for grants and it was approved on February 8, 2005.

One of ***BIC***'s many goals now is to develop an online magazine to help people affected by brain injury and educate the general public.