

Asleep on the Track

On the afternoon of August 2, 1997, James Aliff, a 39-year-old unemployed construction worker, woke up and found himself in a tough spot: He was lying face down between the rails of a railroad track.

The *Chicago Tribune* news service reported, "Police believe Aliff might have been drinking and passed out on the track. Aliff said he slipped on a rock while walking his dog and was knocked out."

Whatever the cause, when Aliff woke up, he quickly realized he was in a precarious situation. Passing over him was a 109-car freight train.

"I got a headache, let me tell you," he later said from his Oak Hill, Florida, hospital bed. "About every three or four seconds an axle would come along and crack me upside the head. It's a good thing I wasn't on my back, or that train would have torn my face off."

If you are asleep in a dangerous place – literally or figuratively – you never know what can come upon you. The profession we have chosen in Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home demands that we stay alert mentally and prepared physically to keep ourselves – and our residents and fellow associates – out of danger. We must stay focused on our mission of service.

--Beecher Hunter