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## Pittsfield man beats odds after coma

By Trevor Jones, Berkshire Eagle Staff

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PITTSFIELD -- Nearly 28 years after waking from a two-month coma and having to relearn the most basic of skills, this local man is being recognized for his contributions to others in need.

Jeff Robinson, 50, of Pittsfield, has been awarded the Power of One -- Western Office Volunteer of the Year Award by the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, a nonprofit organization which works with brain injury survivors and their families. Robinson was recognized for his work at the Pittsfield office helping others brain injury survivors and assisting with office tasks.

"He's an exceptional person, in that he's been able to manage his brain injury in a positive manner and give back to the community in a myriad of ways," said Suzanne D. K. Doswell, western regional manager for the BIA-MA.

Robinson was in a car accident on Columbus Day 1981 and has no memories between then and Christmas of that year. He spent the next 21 2 years relearning skills like how to speak, tie his shoes and feed himself.

"It's not like breaking a leg," said Robinson. "It's not just going to heal. You have to retrain the brain.

Robinson, who's background is in environmental science, said he has enjoyed the nearly three years he has spent at the BIA-MA office, as it has furthered his recovery of cognitive skills.

Doswell said Robinson works on the computer and organizes much of the office's files, as well as keeping everyone's

spirits up with his sense of humor.

"She can put anything in my hands and she knows it can be taken care of," he said.

Robinson deals with issues related to his accident, including short-term memory loss, limited use of his left arm, and loss of vision in one eye and limited use of the other.

And his presence has served as an example of improvement for others who come into the office.

"I can tell them that it's not a death sentence," he said. "There is a light at the end of the tunnel."

But in spite of the recognition of his volunteer work, Robinson was reticent to speak about the accolades, saying he is only doing his job.


"I don't like to pat myself on the back," Robinson said. "I like to come in, because I like to come in and help.

To reach Trevor Jones: [tjones@berkshireeagle.com](mailto:tjones@berkshireeagle.com) or

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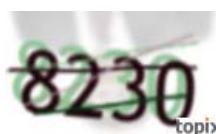
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