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SPRINGFIELD, Missouri – Cliff Cerce of the Cerces was recently hospitalized for a spider bite last July. He has since recovered well. Below is his story of the incident.

It all started when The Cerces were contacted by the Country Gospel Music Association which had become aware of the group. The next thing they knew, The Cerces received a membership certificate for the wall and a letter welcoming them to the association in the mail. A little confused, group manager Cliff Cerce called them to learn what fees were involved - only to learn that they were being extended a membership, with fees waived, to this association which boasts 4200 world-wide

members.

The Cerces were invited to the Central Division's annual convention, which was held in Watertown, Wisconsin this past July. The group, which had just gone full-time on July 1st, sang night after night in the convention and also each night at the jam sessions. The group was surprised to learn that, regardless of the Association's name, the artists sang a mixture of traditional Southern Gospel, Inspirational, and Contemporary music, as well as Country Gospel.

Members there voted for the recipients for their annual rewards at the end of the week, and two big surprises came Saturday the final night. The Cerces' lead singer, Andy Fauth, received the highest reward given by the Association to a male - the "2006 Full-Time Male Vocalist" Award. And, for the second surprise, Cliff noticed that his right leg was painful and red, swelling quickly and hot to the touch from the ankle to the knee.

Someone there knowledgeable about spider bites saw the clearly identifiable two marks left by the bite, right at the base of the swelling and redness. A nurse that was there recommended some over the counter medicines they could get at WalMart that could possibly help the situation, and The Cerces left the convention at 11:30 pm Saturday night, bound for their Sunday morning concert in Illinois 400 miles away.

Sometime after the morning concert, on the group's way back to their headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, Cliff's temperature rose, and he began to become delirious. He was taken to the hospital after they arrived in Springfield with a 105.8 degree fever and blood pressure dangerous low, with a 36 reading on the bottom. Blood poisoning had already set in, and he spent two days in ICU, finally leaving the hospital after four days. Cliff had received cellulitis (a staph infection, also known as the "flesh-eating bacteria") from a cut he got on a canoe trip over a dozen years ago, which was then cleared up with a few weeks of antibiotics. However, the spider venom re-energized the old dormant cellulitis in his system (it always remains) - and he had a double-whammy of the spider poison and the staph infection.

Cerce spent the next four weeks in bed, sneaking out of bed to do 9 concerts - 4 of them in Iowa.

Finally, the leg healed in the fourth week, and the group was off to Alabama for a great weekend without incident. The fifth week included four concerts within a hundred mile radius of their home base, but Cliff noticed that his right lower leg had become discolored and was appearing purplish. After the Saturday night concert, a nine hour return trip to the hospital confirmed that the cellulitis and staph infection had returned, so he was released now on a double-course of antibiotics for the next 20 days to make sure that this adventure is finally set to rest.

Still, The Cerces met every concert obligation during this ordeal without a hitch, and Cliff is almost 100% - and raring to go. Since Anita, Cliff's wife, was initially told by the hospital staff that he might not make it, the group is thankful to God for His mercy to them and for what appears to be a soon complete recovery.

Prayers are appreciated for Cliff as he makes a full recovery.

For more information on The Cerces, please visit <http://thecerces.com>.

About The Cerces

The Cerces are based out of Springfield, Missouri. The group is composed of Cliff Cerce, his wife Anita, and newest member Andy Fauth. They will travel 50,000 to 60,000 miles a year all over the United States.

Reader Comments

WOW!!! Glad to hear that God was with you through this entire ordeal. We (HEARTS OF FAITH) just joined the CGMA in July and attended the Eastern USA Conference in Maryland the week of August 21. We were honored to receive "Acapella Artist of the Year" and "Duo of the Year". So we'll be attending the International Convention in Branson this October. Sure hope to see you there! It'll be good to catch up with you again.

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