# [***Paraplegic survives road ordeal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:47KF-3P10-01D6-W0B3-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

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**Byline:** Pamela Cowan

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**Body**

REGINA -- His bright blue van precariously gripping the edge of a snow-blocked grid road, Michael Brady, a 40-year-old paraplegic, resolved on New Year's Eve to survive.

Michael was last seen Sunday night. He was bound for Regina after leaving a friend's farm in the Hodgeville area, about 60 kilometres east of Swift Current. Snow was blowing and roads were slick with freezing rain.

Saskatchewan News Network; Regina Leader-Post

He wasn't carrying a ***cellphone*** and was travelling alone, except for his two dogs Cocoa and Willy, a Bouvier and a Portuguese Waterdog.

"As I left Highway 63, I got a wind gust and I missed my turn on the highway and I got out on a grid road," he said in a telephone interview from his Regina home Wednesday. "I didn't realize I was on a grid at the time because snow covered the road."

Confused, he turned left instead of right.

"There was a white-out and I slipped off the road enough that I couldn't move my van anywhere. I sat there for 41 hours and waited."

He got out of the van Sunday night to see how stuck he was and scratched his knee -- his only injury.

"I took a bowl that the dogs food was in and I dug under the tires and I tried to put the floor mats under the tires to see if they would grip so I could pull myself out."

Foiled, he dragged his cold and wet body into the van.

"I had an extra pair of jeans, but it was hard for me to change in the van," he said. "I had an extra sweater and a couple pairs of boxer shorts and that's what I wore on my head to conserve body heat because I just had a baseball hat."

Without food, water or blankets, he started his vehicle every two hours for 15 minutes to keep warm and cuddled his dogs.

While the van was running Tuesday he was relieved to hear about efforts to find him on a radio newscast.

The community of Hodgeville, RCMP and church groups searched from Sunday, through Monday and into Tuesday for Michael. Search efforts were hampered Monday by poor road conditions.

That evening RCMP asked for the public's help in finding Michael. On Tuesday the RCMP co-ordinated an air and ground search of the rolling terrain between Hodgeville and Moose Jaw.

Michael's father, Warren, and others searched around the clock.

Thinking he may not have enough fuel to survive another night, Michael dismantled his wheelchair Tuesday morning, threw it out the driver's door and started his quest for help.

"When I got to the snow drifts on the road I'd get out of my chair and drag it through the drifts and then get back in it. I just wanted to survive -- nothing more. I know that I would have been fairly cold, but I would have made it to the house or close enough to get their attention. It would have taken me awhile because there was a lot of snow between me and them."

Push by push, drift by drift, Michael was half a mile from the van when Larry Menke, an area farmer, found him Tuesday afternoon just east of where he was last seen.

Menke didn't hear that Michael was lost until Tuesday at 1 p.m. Then he got into his four-wheel drive and started searching the hilly back roads.

The 64-year-old was shocked when he found Michael's empty van. He followed wheelchair tracks and found him at 2:30 p.m.

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