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June, 1991

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# In A NutShell

A Publication of the MENTAL PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers and not necessarily those of the MPA.

Donations toward the cost of "In A NutShell" will be graciously accepted by the MPA.

## Mental Health Act Review

by O. Wirsching

An invitational education workshop was held at Riverview Hospital on April 15, 1991. Concerned family members, users of services, professionals, and front-line staff attended. A panel of academics and experts from the community were on hand to provide information and answer questions. The purpose was to obtain feedback on issues in revising the principles in modern mental health legislation, and a brief comparison between the current B.C. Act and the model Uniform Mental Health act. Although a lack of space prevents an exploration of issues at length, recent developments may be of general interest.

Many health care workers and professionals agree that a review of the B.C. Mental Health Act is long overdue. While other provinces have made changes to their legislation, B.C. has adopted a cautious approach to reform. Current trends have seen a steady increase in the number of cases before the courts. This is because much of the legislation is vulnerable to challenge under the Charter of Rights. More often than not, judges are taking a dim view of broadly worded and vague criteria contained within the legislation.

In order for legislation to conform to the Charter and withstand litigation, it must meet certain standards. One of these is the

need for clear and precise language that narrowly defines the terms and conditions under which a person is detained in a mental health facility. The other involves extensive revisions and modifications based on guiding principles developed over the years by the patients' rights movement, concerned families of patients, the Law Reform Commission of Canada, and The Uniform Law Conference.

The Uniform Law Conference developed and adopted the Uniform Mental Health Act in 1987. This Act is not law, but a model for reform. Promising to be more than a whirligig or primitive flying machine, the U.M.H.A. has managed to tackle difficult issues. It has also generated skepticism among its critics. With the extremely controversial issue of consent to treatment, the U.M.H.A.

suggests that if a patient is declared incapable, he is entitled to have the physician's opinion reviewed by an independent board. Some advocates will be critical of how mental incapacity is determined. In the absence of adequate statutory standards here in B.C., there is little help to guide those who have the authority to declare others mentally incapable.

The U.M.H.A. has a competency model that was adopted in Ontario and Alberta. It says that a person must understand the subject matter and appreciate the consequences of making treatment decisions. One wonders how this legislation can be applied since most patients are deemed to be in need of treatment, to be restored to their senses, so to speak, before being able to make informed decisions. Since competence is a social or political decision, can consent be voluntary under these circumstances? At best, the legislation may only be workable for

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## Fenton Denied Minimum Wage

An issue that made front page news a year ago was reduced to a few words buried in the back pages of a local newspaper. On June 5, 1991, the B.C. Court of Appeal ruled that patients at Forensic in Coquitlam are not entitled to minimum wage. The de-

cision rested on the fact that the Institute did not gain financially from the work programs. Lawyers for Bruce Fenton say they will appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.



## **Gastown Vocational Services**

### **Open House**

#### **Innovative Programs and Old World Charm**

by Barry Hames

The new Gastown Vocational Services held its official opening on May 9th, 1991. Located as it is at #200-12 Water Street, G.V.S. is a very inviting place to visit. Surrounded by old red Gastown bricks and enclosed in a very charming and friendly Victorian mall, it is definitely not your typical hospital-green social services office. G.V.S.'s choice of quarters is in fact inspired, much like the program it offers.

What G.V.S. plans to provide is a long-term, supportive service which is designed to put mental health clients into the workplace, doing jobs that are both appropriate and fulfilling to them. This will be done through a three phase program, Phase 1 of which consists of a vocational assessment, assertiveness and communication skills training and confidence building, all done in small group settings. As participant Chris Fiegel told me, Phase 1 has helped her in more ways than vocationally: "I've been able to use these skills in my personal life, too. I have a lot more self-confidence and I look forward to each day I'm here." Considering the fact that she must commute from Richmond each day, Chris is rendering high praise, indeed.

While Phase 1 at G.V.S. is

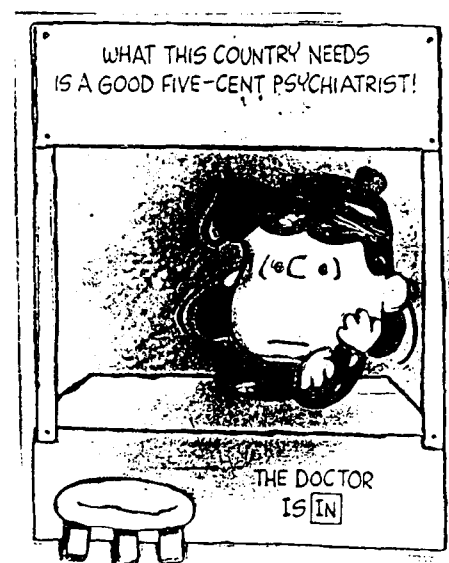
a 12 week process, Phase 2 lasts from 2 to 5 months and involves placement in a local business so that participants can gain first-hand work experience. As Dr. Debbie Samson, the staff psychologist, has told me, this part of their program is one of its unique features. Participants can also look forward, she says, to ongoing support from G.V.S. as they are out testing the waters of the often stressful, day-to-day working world.

The final phase of the Gastown Vocational Services employment seeking process will assist participants in finding not only steady employment, but job re-training and other relevant educational programs as well. Dr. Samson also assures me that if, at this point, a participant is still unsure or unsuccessful in the job market, they may be allowed to repeat Phase 1 again. It is this long-term, comprehensive approach to gaining employment, she adds, that makes Gastown Vocational Services different from the more usual job search clubs and programs that mental health clients are probably more familiar with.

G.V.S. has presently four people on staff; a psychologist, two occupational therapists, and a part-time receptionist, under the direction of project manager, Mariella Bozzer. There are now two groups going through their program, which began taking in participants on April 2nd of this year, with funding for it provided jointly by the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, training and Technology and the B.C. Ministry of Health.

People who are interested in attending Gastown Vocational Services' program must first be referred by either a Vancouver-based Mental Health Care Team or through any Vocational Rehabilitation Services office located in their area. V.R.S. offices can be found in the blue pages of the

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## UnderDog

by Jim Gifford



One aspect of the ancient Chinese religious philosophy of Taoism is the exalted nature of lowliness. In 'going with the flow', water streams down from mountain peaks, descending into the Oneness of the ocean. The apparent softness of water overcomes the hardness of rock, wearing it smooth. Weakness is strength.

At the bottom, we need not ambitiously compete nor feel the pressure to strive and achieve. As true Taoists, many ex-mental patients have learned, by osmosis coming from struggle, the wisdom of action through non-action. To the Western-minded doer, this is utter nonsense. Yet it is one of the most profound wisdoms of the East. It is the flowing surrender found in the Taoist martial art of Tai Chi Chuan. As the title of Barry Stevens' book says, like water 'Don't Push The River.'

This is the unfolding reality of our organs and our breath: Don't do it; let it happen. Doers

and activists could learn much from these poor persons who realize the solution is in the problem and turn a lemon into lemonade. They dwell and actually thrive in their lot.

The great American philosopher, Henry David Thoreau, understood the virtues of voluntary poverty. Succinctly, he stated 'Simplify!' An essential facet of 'hippydom' was this precept. It still thrives amid the consumer-greedy culture and will be a vital part of the emerging steady-state economy of conscious resource conservation.

Ex-mental patients and other poor are, whether they like it or not, the vanguard of the quantum mental leap to frugality. Of course, no one likes subsistence

living. It is an unjust burden. Perhaps, as this grossly over-consumptive Western civilization is educated and learns to live more richly with less, there will be more material goods for the poor.

Thoreau wrote about the primary needs: food, shelter, clothing. He practiced what he preached. For two years, he lived outside Concord, Massachusetts with a simplicity immortalized in his classic work 'Walden Pond'.

We, the underdogs, hold an ace up our sleeves. As George MacDonald said 'To have what we want is riches, but to be able to do without is power.'



## Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmar

I've been told that "the meek shall inherit the earth" in Psalms (37:11) is a mistaken translation from the Hebrew. Instead of meek, read wrathful. Wrath implies rage or indignation over a grievance, and a desire to revenge or punish in return. Meek implies patience and long-suffering, enduring injury without resentment. Meek is submissive and tame. Wrath is wild and revolutionary. Meek is domesticated, oppressed and castrated. Were the translators

consciously or unconsciously putting the lid on anger? What is not allowed is forbidden. Do we have to become homogenized creatures whose outrage at injustice, oppression, exploitation and abuse will be tranquillized or lobotomized?

R.D. Laing referred a woman to a psychiatrist, and encouraged her to make her own judgement as to whether this would

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## On the Road to the MPA

By D.Strashok

Two mental patients (who were hoping to be ex-mental patients), Normal Norman and Abnormal Abner, were walking down the street together, headed towards the drop-in on a cloudy Vancouver afternoon.

Norman looked over at Abner and declared, "Abner, I'm worried about you, these days. I think you're getting sick again. You could be headed for another nervous breakdown."

Abner mumbled under his breath, "Nervous breakdown, well call it a nervous breakdown. What you going to do about it, that's what I want to know." He knew that Norman couldn't hear him, but he had learned from life and experience not to respond too quickly or emotionally to these kinds of queries.

"Sorry, I didn't catch that." Norman said, then he continued, "No, I do think something is wrong. I mean, you've taken to wearing this Indian Chieftain's headdress on the streets and I know, that every time you start wearing hats again, you're getting sick."

Abner laughed to himself and mumbled, "Mad as a hatter," then he marshalled his resources and prepared for a response. He knew it was time to respond and besides Norman looked so clean and 'real' in his sportsjacket and well-pressed slacks. He deserved a response.

"Norman", he said, the sound of his own voice helping him to get control over that "threatened" feeling, "I'm just expressing what's inside of me. Don't you know clothes are supposed to be an expression of what's inside of you?" He stopped, feeling slightly satisfied that he had turned the question back to him.

"Well," said Norman, "I don't know about that. I mean I buy whatever is clean and good-looking and what I can afford, but we weren't talking about that. I mean you've been doing strange things lately. Like yesterday, I heard you calling your Datsun 'Cochise' and then you tied it to the railing outside your apartment with a leather thong. That's strange behaviour. I think you're getting sick."

Now Abner was feeling exasperated, knowing that this shuttle was not going to get off the ground without a little extra "boost". He raised his voice slightly, the exasperation evident in the tone of his words.

"Norman, I'm trying to tell you something. Now if you're looking for an explanation, I can give you one. Sometimes, I wonder why people need explanations, but I know that if I can give you one that makes sense to me, that should prove to you and myself that I am not getting sick. It's all

sound and logical to me, and I know myself well enough that I know that if I'm still bothering to give explanations, then I'm not getting sick."

Norman pondered that for a moment and related it to his own experience. When it finally made sense to him he said, "Okay, shoot, what's the explanation?"

Abner laughed to himself slightly, then became very serious, "Well," he replied, "it's like this. I've been thinking lately about the native culture, you know, with all this hype in the media about the native land claims settlements. As a matter of fact, it seems to be happening all over the world. Maybe, it's an idea whose time has come. Anyway, after thinking about it, I've decided to expand my personal horizons by becoming a native. It's a wonderful culture." He left it there, for now.

Norman looked a little shocked and mystified. He spilled over in response. "What do you mean 'expand your personal horizons' and you're not a native anyway, I mean you have to be born into the native community to be a native, you don't have the heritage or background."

Abner laughed again, then blurted out, "Maybe, I'm a born-again native. After another laugh, he settled into a more serious vein. "I think it's all about the land. I don't know, it may be a lot bigger than me, but on a personal level, I think personal responsibility re-

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## Pastoral Reflections

by Pastor John Ballard

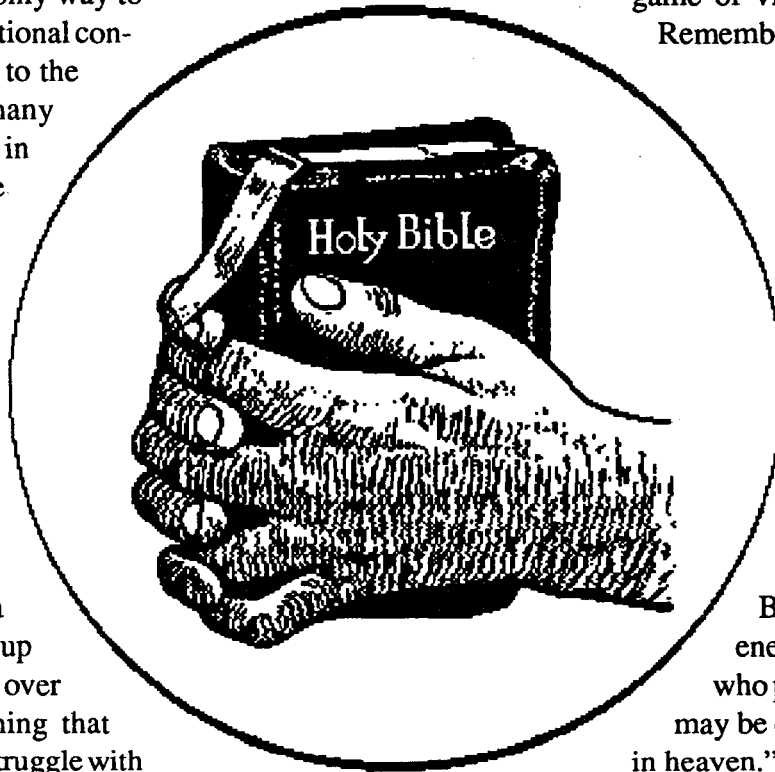
### "Bitter or Better"

Throughout life we are constantly in need of the principle of forgiveness. It is the most practiced principle in the Counselling office. Often, it is the only way to unlock the door of emotional confusion. By holding on to the hurts of the past, many people think that they in some way will be able to correct the mistakes and sins of the past. Rather than getting better, they end up getting bitter. The only solution is to accept the past and what has occurred. Stop struggling and fighting the past. Consider the animal kingdom; a panther doesn't wake up in the morning and mullover yesterday and everything that happened. He doesn't struggle with how he is going to survive today. He just goes out confident that the Great Spirit will provide what he needs for his survival. Though he will exert effort, he doesn't struggle through the day.

Likewise, we need to learn to accept each new day and go with the flow. God is not overly impressed with the way we despairingly or complainingly struggle and sweat either today's or especially yesterday's problems.

The truth is many people

refuse to forgive as an escape from facing life's responsibilities and realities. The sad fact is that our legal establishments have made it



big business to be a victim. After all, victim's can't be blamed and should be duly compensated. Listen to teenagers talk and you'll realize the great goal for many is to be in an accident where they can sue and make their personal fortune. Hopefully, they'll suffer a miraculous recovery once the settlement rolls in. When we assume the victim stance, we don't need to take any responsibility for what has occurred. When people

overly react to the hurts of the past with anger and hatred, many times they are playing a game of hide-and-seek. In this game they always get to play the hunted one, never the hunter. In all our lives, each of us, at times have acted cruelly and hurtfully when our egos have been threatened. Let's own up to it and stop playing this futile game of victim. Don't struggle! Remember the panther.

Your problem is,  
You don't want to  
forgive

You'd  
rather blame  
and play  
the escaping game.

Jesus put it this way, "You have heard it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your father in heaven." (Matthew 5:43,44)

Your friend,

Pastor John Ballard  
Kitsilano Bible Church  
1415 Maple Street  
732-0613



## MPA Volunteer Dinner Held Recently

The Century Plaza Hotel was the location for a dinner on Friday, April 26th, held by the MPA to honour its volunteers.

An intimate gathering mingled over drinks, then had a prime rib supper with trimmings. Afterwards, Barry Niles, the Executive Director, was the head speaker.

Barry commented on the different people who give of their time, talents, and effort to see that things happen at the MPA. Some ex-patients are on TVP and EIHP jobs, receiving modest but greatly appreciated incomes. Others contributing to the ongoing operation of the Association are the Coordinator Assistants, Casino volunteers, and the staff, who often freely offer their services.

Niles mentioned 'the MPA is important to lots of people', the volunteers get 'a feeling of self-worth and rewards for helping others'. The Executive Director called the participation 'commendable'. Marybelle Campbell was singled out for her efforts, travelling out to New Westminster regularly for bingo night. Rod Marson was acknowledged for the 'incredible transformation' that has taken place, lately. Starting by sweeping the sidewalks, Rod successfully contacted several of those in attendance at the dinner.

Al Markley becomes the first recipient of 'The MPA Vol-

unteer Of The Month'. Al has been answering phones for more than a decade. Barry Niles noted 'he is always there, friendly, happy'.

Barry stated 'I appreciate the fact everyone tries to help. I regret we can't pay more... mental services are underfunded. But there are things happening... special events'. In closing, he remarked, 'everyone needs to give themselves a hand'.

Gloria Scribner, Community Resource Centre Chief, spoke briefly. She commented, 'I really deeply appreciate the work you're doing because, if you didn't, my job would be impossible. It's your services and your Centre'.

Brian Anderson reflected on the importance of being an active and supportive member of the MPA and the Community Resource Centre. He and Kathy regularly come in from Surrey. 'We did have a drop-in in Surrey, Our Place. We took it for granted. One day it was out of business. I real-

ized the MPA is there and I'd taken it for granted'. Talking about the unsure longevity of such drop-in facilities, he said, 'I found it out the hard way'.

Fred Fisher, an initial member of the MPA, was introduced by Barry Niles. 'Fred has been around since 1971'. To the point and, with feeling, Fred pointed out 'It really pays to be a member of the MPA. We must make it more cheerful to get others to come'.

Nutshell Editor Jim Gifford thanked the MPA for an opportunity to express long dormant skills. A few new faces enthusiastically expressed an interest in volunteering.

With much laughter and good spirits, those in attendance slowly drifted out after an enjoyable evening of tributes and acknowledgements. The sense prevailed of the importance of the Mental Patients' Association in our day-to-day lives.

Thanks MPA.



Q: Why did one book hide behind the other book?

A: Because he had a poor "shelf-image".

Q: What's the difference between a psychiatrist and a shoemaker?

A: A shoemaker can always fix your shoes.



# Non-Prescriptive Medications for Heart and Soul

by Sam Roddan

An ailing young lad in the early '30s in Vancouver's East End didn't have much access to drug store medications. The major treatments I ever received were pep talks, pats on the back, and heavy doses of the Bible, Sunday School lessons, prayers, and sermons.

I was also lucky to belong to a Boy's Club at First United Church at the corner of Gore and Hastings. Our leader was Andy Turner. Everyone in the East End knew Andy. He believed the Bible, prayers, push-ups, and pep talks could clear up most ailments, keep a young lad on the straight and narrow.

Andy also believed in the power of example.

At our club meetings, he brought in role models. Mostly great athletes like Percy Williams, high jumpers like Dunc McNaughten and Charlie Andren. Best of all, Jimmy McLarnin, world welterweight boxing champion of the world, who was an honorary member of the club.

Who could ever forget Jimmy McLarnin and the night he arrived, straight from Madison Square Gardens, with blood red bruises still on his cheeks from

knocking out Young Kid Corbett in the second? In our meeting room, 15 of us sat under my Dad's painting of The Old Rugged Cross and



listened to Jimmy telling us how to keep in training for our own Big Fights and how he did it with a One, two, and a Right straight to the jaw.

"Remember," Jimmy said, "Don't smoke. Don't drink. And don't go around with girls. Keep off the streets. Don't hang around the pool hall. Get lots of sleep. Read the Bible in your spare time."

Later, we lined up to shake hands. The welterweight champion of the world took off his gloves

and clamped his fingers around our puny fingers like a steel vise. We winced. We grinned. One poor guy broke down and cried.

After the meeting, we rushed outside. Behind the church, we gave the boot to the canned heat tins of the rubby-dubs. Then we clenched our fists and, in the murky darkness, shadow-boxed like unbeatable champions with cheers from the rubby-dubs egg-ing us on.

Hero worship kept me on the straight and narrow for a long time. Then, life being what it is, I began to sow a few wild oats, neglect my spiritual medications. Soon a string of innocent capers did me in: a puff on a Sweet Caporal behind the Empress Theater, a sip of wine in Angelo Poletti's basement, a hug from Angelo's beautiful sister. Gradually, I lost faith in the old remedies, forgot to pray and read the Bible in my spare time.

Once or twice, I bumped into Andy Turner. He shook his head. I knew I was a great disappointment to him. "If and when you feel ready," he said, "the club doors will always be open". I wanted to say thanks, but Andy hurried away.

As I watched Andy heading up Gore to the church, I felt lost and very alone. But I knew I would never be "ready" as Andy wanted. I knew now, in my very bones, my time had come to throw away the crutches, get my shoulders back, keep my eyes peeled for sun and blue sky.



## A Tribute to My First Love

by Tom Ban



Statues of dust  
Is all that's left of our  
Lost Love.

We cry because we must,  
Why is only known to God  
Above.

When will we kiss the lips  
Of the past,  
Will it be when the devil  
Breathes his last?

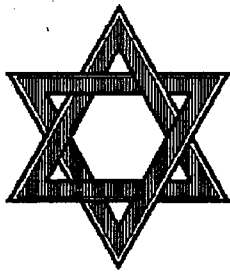
Heaven grant me the Peace  
Of Mind,  
I once had when you were  
Mine.

## How Appealing!

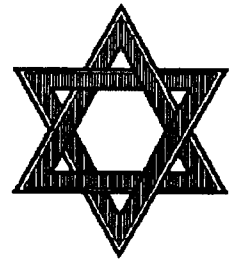
by Ian Anderson

*Composed at 10th Street and 5th Avenue  
during John and Our apartment stay, New  
Westminster, 1985*

Much mustered majesty is required  
regardless of persecution or pride,  
Calm courage, sober scruples help  
structures' pluck, natures' confide  
Arms armoured protects and pairs prosperous  
subjects to summon purposeful peace  
Arms demoured deters distress so  
that support in strolls  
did of morale that shall never cease  
Such solid cause of noble novices  
to gain rapport and recognition,  
resolving unintelligible issues  
Certain vision places power in palms  
of perpetrators, grasping  
spacial spoils, not the proverbial  
soils, nerves and tissues  
When more men destined bend send for eggs,  
coins, pregnant pens.



**Excerpts  
from  
A SONG OF  
DAVID**  
by Christopher Smart  
(1722 - 1771)



*Christopher Smart distinguished himself as a classical scholar at Cambridge. His first collection of verse was published in 1752.*

*Four years later, he was admitted to an insane asylum and for the next seven years, was under care. His derangement took the form of a compulsion to public prayer.*

*Upon his release, he published his best known poem, 'A Song of David'.*

II

To bless each valley, grove and coast,  
And charm the cherubs to the post  
Of gratitude in throngs;  
To keep the days on Zion's mount,  
And send the year to his account,  
With dances and with songs:

IV

Great, valiant, pious, good, and clean,  
Sublime, contemplative, serene,  
Strong, constant, pleasant, wise!  
Bright effluence of exceeding grace;  
Best man! - the swiftness and the race,  
The peril, and the prize!

XII

Serene - to sow the seeds of peace,  
Rememb'ring when he watch'd the fleece,  
How sweetly Kidron purl'd -  
To further knowledge, silence vice,  
And plant perpetual paradise  
When God had calm'd the world.



## MPA Adopts Child

At a recent weekly meet-



ing of MPA members at the Community Resource Centre, a young Costa Rican girl was adopted through World Vision.

Ana was born on May 27, 1984 and lives with her parents in an urban area. Her father is employed but at such a low wage, it is hardly enough to provide for his family. Her mother stays at home caring for her family. Ana is in good health, her chore is washing dishes, and her favorite game is playing 'house'.

The sponsorship of Ana is an important and continuing part of assistance to help this girl and her family attain self-reliance.

As Christ said 'anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name is welcoming me'.



## M.H.A. Review

*Continued from pg. 1*

those patients to whom the law of averages does not apply.

With respect to mental illness, there is a trend to make the definition related to how a person functions in their environment. Other contemporary issues include examination and psychiatric assessment, the role of a substitute decision-maker, patient access to records, and review panel hearings. Lawyers involved with mental health issues will want to add procedural fairness and due process rights to the wish-list of changes that are no being contemplated. What is hopeful here, is that the community is also being consulted and asked to help rewrite the script. There may come an opportunity to challenge or modify provisions in the U.M.H.A. that will eventually find their way into the revised B.C. Act.



## G.V.S. Open House

*Continued from pg.2*

phone book under B.C. Government, Ministry of Advance Education, Training and Technology.

Rose Magnuson and Sandra Bowell of the Burnaby V.R.S. office have assured me that the referral process is simple and painless. Interested people may refer themselves to V.R.S. or go through their doctor, psychiatrist, or other care provider. Not all people who wish to apply to G.V.S. may be appropriate, but Rose and Sandra have assured me that there may be other ways that their offices can help (a great untapped resource here, perhaps?)

I should warn you, in conclusion, that Gastown Vocational

Services is not for the cynical. Both staff and participants frankly enjoy what they are doing, a fact that came through clearly at their upbeat and very pleasant opening. G.V.S. is truly a precise and very elegant match of people, place, and program and interested mental health clients should probably apply quickly before a long waiting list forms.

If anyone wishes further information, Gastown Vocational Services can be contacted at: #200-12 Water Street, Vancouver, B.C., V6B 1A5 or by phoning (604)683-6047 or fax 683-5099.

## Minute Particulars

*Continued from pg. 3*

be the man she would want to work with. "You can trust your intuition" Laing told her, "you'll know in the first 10 seconds whether he'll help you or not". A few days later, she came back and told Laing, "He never stopped screaming!" Actually, the psychiatrist never raised his voice, yet one need not be thrown by this: screaming can be silent. She might have felt relieved if he indeed had raised his voice. De-animated, camouflaged anger is much more crazy-making than animated open rage.

I had a meeting with a psychiatrist at UBC some years ago. He treated me condescendingly, patronizing me with supercilious pronouncements. He addressed me as Mate! When I got angry with him, he declared that since he was calm and I was angry, it was plain to see that there was something the matter with me. Phyllis Chesler in *Women & Madness* points out that the institutions of middle-class psychotherapy and marriage both encourage women to talk — often endlessly — rather than act. "Open expressions of rage are too dangerous and too ineffective for the isolated and economically dependant". I wonder how many people have been declared mad (crazy, insane) because they were mad (angry, outraged) but too powerless to be effective. I think anger is not a symptom, a sin, or an aberration. It is a means to, and the necessary result of intimacy. Without anger there is only mealy-mouthed, fake attempts at passionless relating. If you trespass after I warned you of my boundaries, you deserve my anger! If you don't take me seriously, if you don't respect me, the heat of my anger, my outrage, might wake you up!

Alice Miller in *Banished*

Knowledge accuses therapists of identifying with abusive parents when they urge their patients to forgive their once-tormenting parents, since they "meant well" and they "did their best". She points out that most therapists become therapists because of their own difficult childhoods. So if they themselves haven't connected up with the child, innocent victim, they once were, how can they help their patients? When we are abused, one way to escape pain and suffering is to split off from the experiencing ourselves as victims and identify with our abusers.

Miller suggest that healing occurs if and only if, we rage against those who abused us, re-connect ourselves as we once were, innocent victims, and then mourn and grieve what happened.

I don't believe in "pent-up" anger or in old pools of primal rage. I think anger is always generated fresh and it is always a response to personal offense. It's just that some of us are allergic to the most tiny particle of injustice, which acts as a reminder of all injustices ever suffered. Anger is listed as one of the seven deadly sins in Christian mythology. I think that is a mistake. And that makes me angry!



## Laughs with Lewry

by Dave Lewry



What do psychiatrists have for people who are going to commit suicide?

A waiting list.

## On the Road to the MPA

*Continued from pg. 4*

quires that now, at the age of 40, I get interested in real estate." Then he added, "why do they call it real estate, anyway. What's so real about it?"

Norman ignored the question and thought for a minute. Then he said "Real estate? If you're interested in real estate you should get a job as a salesman. You could make a bundle in the market. There's other ways, too. Have you ever seen these real estate guys on TV. Maybe you should check that out."

"Yeh", said Abner, "I went to one of the seminars and saw a guy talk about it. Actually, he wasn't too bad, talking about making millions. The Hype wasn't so bad and I thought I might get into it, but later on, I came home and thought about it and realized that I'd just seen the "poor little rich man". His inner poverty made me feel sorry for him. Anyway, I don't think that that approach is for me. The native thing, that's the way. Easy, simple and I get a piece of the pie, too. The only thing that bothers me is that I have to go for the Manhood Initiation Ceremony at the Sweatlodge next week and I'm thinking of taking a double hit of chlorpromazine before I go in there." Abner stopped talking, wondering to himself if there had ever been any psychiatric studies done on Manhood Initiation and Chlorpromazine. Then the weight of it was so immense that he im-

mediately dismissed it in his mind.

"Anyway," he continued, "the native thing, that's the way. And I'll have the media on my side for a change. They'll be pushing it in everybody's faces. I can't lose."

"I see," replied Norman, "so what you're really telling me is that you're becoming a native so that you can get a personal piece of the action. Very noble sentiments. I don't know about this whole native thing anyway. I mean I don't know how valid their approach is. Haven't we brought them culture and education and training that they are now using to come against us? I mean where would the natives be if the white man had never come to their land. They would still be in the stone age. Tribal wars and all that. We brought the only stability they know. When I see one of their spokesmen up there using University training, brought by the white man, I have to laugh."

"Ugh," Abner interjected, "be careful, you're speaking about my brother. White man speak with forked tongue."

"Now, now," Norman replied, "don't get partisan with me. And I don't think it is a forked tongue. It makes sense to me."

There was a pause in the conversation as the emotional contact was lost, but they continued to stroll together down the street.

A block later, Abner resumed speaking, not feeling quite as defensive now, willing to vol-

unteer some of his revelations.

"You know what our real problem is. I mean the modern problem. It's rootlessness. People have no roots. Our modern cosmopolitan North American lifestyle has severed us from our roots. We have to rediscover our roots, the land and all that stuff. And for me that means becoming a native. For me it's an act of faith."

"Faith, shmaith," said Norman, feeling confident now, that he had the upper hand, knowing that he had been wrongly accused. "Sure it's a good thing to have roots. I agree with you, modern rootlessness is a problem. But you're not a native, you're Yugoslavian, aren't you, Abner?"

"Yugoslavian-Canadian," Abner said. Then he added as an afterthought, "whatever that is."

"In that case, you should be marching on Ottawa or something shouldn't you? I'm not really that in touch, but I caught some media thing about the Croats or something, if I remember right."

"No, no," Abner retorted, "that's small potatoes. Why should I fight some foreign battle for the sake of two cows and a chicken when I can become a native and inherit the whole farm. Besides my forefathers came to Canada to get away from all that. You know, the Promised Land."

"But Abner, what's your psychiatrist going to say when you show up for your regular appoint-

*Continued next page*

ment wearing a Chieftain's head-dress? He'll ship you out to some shit-ward at Riverview for a couple of months and you'll have to start all over again. You don't want that, do you?"

Abner chuckled to himself and responded, "Maybe I'll wear my helicopter beanie instead." Then he added, "and he'll wear his Darth Vader outfit as usual."

"Aw, comeon," Norman immediately countered, "they're not all that bad. There are some good ones. I've been reading this book on schizophrenia by R. Fuller Torrey. It's interesting, well-balanced, and I think that I'm getting some insight through it. Have you ever heard of him?"

"R. Fuller Torrey," Abner mused, "oh yeh, I remember him. I read that book. All I remember about it is the cover picture of him. As soon as I saw the glint of cold, hard steel in his eyes I knew he was the kind of man I could trust."

"Geez, Abner," said Norman, "Don't be such a cynic. I'm just trying to be practical with you. Practically speaking, you know what happens if your shrink sends you to Riverview again. It's back to square one."

Abner settled into silence. They walked along together down 4th avenue towards the drop-in.

*This is the end of part 1 of a series that will be continued in the next issue.*



## Art Show and Barbeque Success

A gathering of MPA members and workers attended an art show and barbeque on a lovely afternoon, Tuesday, May 14th, at the West 11th house.

The showing of paintings, drawings, sculpture, carvings, and jewelry was an unqualified success. Gary Pollock won wide praise for his prints. There were several sold, including 'Carnival Graveyard', bought by Olaf Wirsching, 'Bill Plays Dead', 'Split Second on Venus', and an untitled work, bought by West 10th house.

Gary studied at Vancouver Art School in the late Sixties. He commented that he was 'distracted for twenty years'. He is a 'night painter' and likes 'to work from photos'. He is a student of other artists and one senses the influence of the Cubists and American painter Frank Stella.

MPA Housing Coordinator, Stephen Scott, purchased a nude pastel by Debbie Martin. She had several charcoal nudes on display. Debbie's large painting of abstract flowers revealed her feeling for simple and natural elegance.

Julie Mayo's graphic of a skeleton dangling on swinging hooks was a surreal work of black humour. George Rubbin's bust of a man was strong and revealed character.

Dale Kuster, well-known

around the MPA for his past leadership in promoting art among the members, showed a large painting depicting the fishing fleet at sunrise, heading out of Uclulet. It was done in powerful and intense purple, red, orange, and yellow. A large carving, in Canadian woods, consisted of the stairs to the front of his bed. It was exquisite.

Dea Scranstad displayed her 'Merry Widow' earrings, made with patience and talent from crystal or glass beads and fishing wires. Judy Rainey's cube of the Tan Square was a true challenge for any aspiring abstract mind. A wooden block cut in various angles and sizes, it is an ancient Chinese precursor to the Rubik's Cube. Yours truly left it in a heap... an artistic heap said Judy.

Those in attendance also enjoyed a barbeque and the sunny weather made for a great outing. There were hot dogs, hamburgers, vege-patties, and tofu weiners along with plenty of coffee, punch, and goodies. Donna and Sue were hardworking as cooks. Thanks also to Jirina, Lynn, Barbara and all the residents of West 11th for a successful afternoon.

'Til we do it again!'



## BookWorm

A Book Review by Bruce Wilson

For anyone acquainted with psychosis, *The Seduction of Madness* is quite possibly the most remarkable book to be written on the subject in the past decade.

Beautifully written by psychiatrist Edward Podvoll, the reader is treated to a mind that possesses deep insight into the complex world of psychosis as well as a rare understanding of the process of recovery.

Writing from his many years of experience as founder and medical director of the Windhorse Project, an experimental and highly lauded therapeutic community in Boulder, Colorado, Podvoll views mental illness more as one of the unfortunate permutations and conditions of being human rather than a true biomedical illness.

As he writes in the Introduction, "Believing that psychosis begins and ends with idiosyncrasies of the brain nullifies it as a human tragedy, and contributes to the steadily deteriorating conditions of care that today face almost all of the chronic mentally ill."

He stands opposed to the current medical consensus that sees psychosis as a chronic, deteriorating and permanent condition. In his experience, most psychotics can recover fully if provided with the proper environment and personal interactions:

"First and foremost... authentic recovery from psychosis is possible.

Moments of natural recovery, "islands of clarity" as I have come to call them, happen all the time within the experience of psychosis; not only can these be recognized and acknowledged, they need to be protected. Ultimately this book is about perceiving and nurturing islands of clarity, for in this way full recovery from psychosis has been accomplished and will continue to occur without aggressive or physically intrusive methods of treatment."

The first half of the book is a presentation of four case portraits of those who have undergone the psychotic experience and provides a descriptive account of the subjective nature of the ordeal.

Chapter One provides an account of the heroic and difficult journey through madness by John Thomas Percival, a Victorian nobleman who was confined to an

insane asylum against his will at age 29. (Percival's writings were discovered by Gregory Bateson who analyzed his experience in his own book, *Percival's narrative: A Patient's Account of His Psychosis*.)

Percival was a gifted writer and his personal accounts of madness are articulate and penetrating. This chapter's greatest value is in its account of Percival's recovery, written in his own words. Despite the direst of circumstances, John Percival was able to retain health through his immense courage, tenacity and effort.

In Percival's account, to grab hold of the "islands of clarity" and recognize them as brief windows to sanity and not just as temporary remissions amid an ocean of delusion is of utmost importance.

Using Percival's narrative, Podvoll identifies distinct stages on the path to psychosis and recovery, and discusses them with

*Continued next page*

Q: How many psychiatrists does it take to change a lightbulb?



A: It takes four, but the lightbulb must want to change.



his ever-brilliant powers of observation.

The following chapters lead the reader through equally lucid accounts of mania, megalomania and an hallucinogenically-induced psychosis.

No matter the genesis of the psychosis, the experiencer enters a condition that Podvoll calls "The Second State," a sort of "shock zone" wherein the nervous system cannot account for anything that is about to happen. The mind-body has entered a state of fluctuating chaos much like the perturbations within a hurricane. Through the skillful process of basic attendance, the person attending the psychotic person can help him find and grasp the islands of clarity within.

Podvoll devotes the last third of the book to the process of recovery, the nature of basic attendance, and provides a detailed guide to the setting-up of a therapeutic community within the home.

In these sections, he provides us with an interesting discussion on why society has constantly treated the mentally ill with disdain or outright contempt.

"Even in the most benevolent institutions," Podvoll writes, "we seem to be inescapably drawn to re-create conditions of treatment that are bound to make it difficult, if not impossible, to recover from psychosis."

He attributes this to something he calls asylum mentality: a mind of exerting power over others, in this case, "therapeutic power." Asylum mentality is based

on our incorrect understanding of psychosis, that is, as an illness that must be subdued by active intervention.

The most subtle and insidious form of asylum mentality is "the silence that humiliates, a studied interpersonal rift between doctor and patient." It is that very separation that isolates the patient within a wall of loneliness and isolation wherein he is left to reflect on madness and to intensify it.

The cure for asylum mentality is learning the art of basic attendance: an attitude of "being-with" as opposed to "doing-to." This is synonymous with Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing's state of "co-presence."

Podvoll's training in neurobiology and psychopharmacology lends a unique and fascinating point of view to his discussions on the role of medication. He is particularly adept at moving between discussions of neurotransmitters and behavioural states and correlating the two, very much in the style of neurologist Oliver Sacks, whom he refers to repeatedly.

Podvoll's stance on medication is that "less is more." Medication is to be administered in the minimum dose and removed at the soonest possible time.

I was also pleased to see that Podvoll recognizes the role that diet play in recovery. Removal of junk food and food allergens is standard practice at Windhorse. Throughout his discussions of the physical aspects of psychosis, Podvoll stress that it is the *felt experience* of the patient that is most crucial to recovery and that biological aspects are always treated within that context.

It is hard to find fault with this book. Podvoll is influenced by the late Buddhist teacher, Chogyam Trungpa, and some readers may have difficulty with concepts imported from the spiritual tradition, non-dogmatic and simple as they are presented.

I feel that the book should be required reading for every psychiatrist, psychologist, and social worker working today. His book is not to be missed.



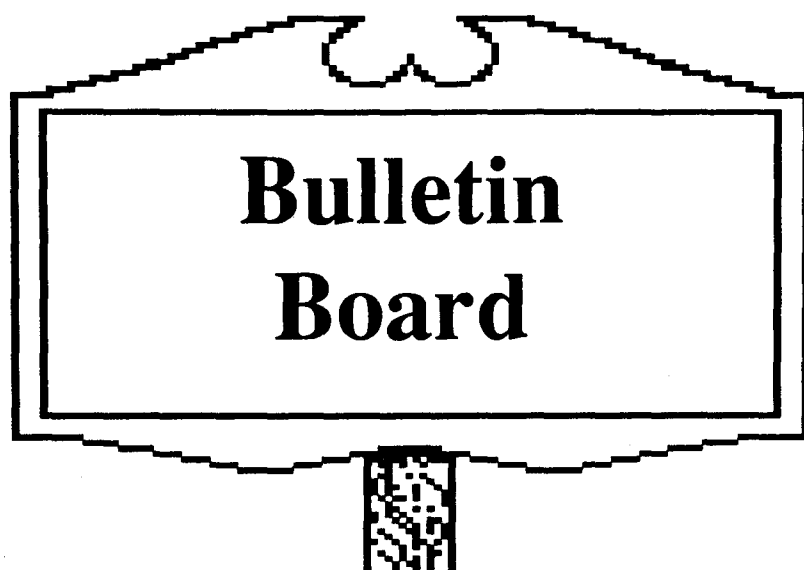
### Laughs with the Lightbulb

Q: How many psychiatrists does it take to change the lightbulb that doesn't want to change?

A: Only one, but it takes four attendants.

Q: How did the psychiatrist help the lightbulb get insight into his problem?

A: He 'upped' the voltage.



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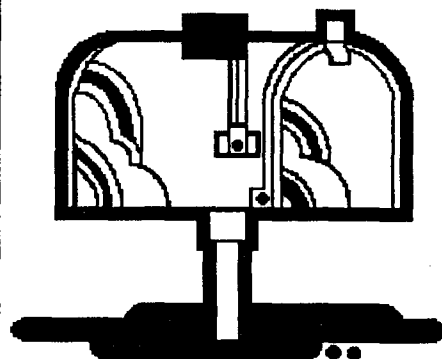
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738-2811 ask for Gloria or Barry  
738-1422 or 738-5177 ask for Susan**

**TUESDAYS FROM 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
SATURDAYS FROM 6:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.**

**INVITE YOUR GIRL FRIENDS, TOO!**

**FREE COFFEE!**

## Letters



## to the Editor

We have received a few letters to the Editor. We encourage you to keep sending them in and hope to print some samples in the next issue of "NutShell". In the meantime, so long for now, and remember, you aren't out of the forest just 'cause you walked past one tree.





