
September, 1991

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.

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Deputy Minister Meets with Riverview Patients by Ted Rowcliffe

"Nobody listens!"

That's the complaint of most mental patients and former patients.

"Nobody listens, nobody cares...especially the psychiatrists, and the politicians and the government bureaucrats," say those who have been repeatedly frustrated by the Mental Health System over the years.

But listen they did on Friday, August 23rd, in classroom 4, Henry Esson Young Building at Riverview Hospital. About 30 patients and ex-patients gathered to meet with Ms. Krysia

Strawczynski, Deputy Minister of Health for British Columbia, along with Bill Fletcher, the Director of Mental Health Services and President of the Riverview Hospital Board of Directors. From the Hospital, present were President John Yarske and Vice-President Dr. John Higenbottam.

Complaints range from lack of therapeutic programs to the insufficient hours of operation of Penn Hall and The Tuck Shop. One of the favorite topics was the inedible food served since a recent change in the preparation procedures.

Patient Council at Riverview by Ted Rowcliffe

Many positive changes taking place at Riverview Hospital are a result of input by the recently constituted Patients' Council, according to President Rod Louis.

The Council first met March 5 after considerable groundwork by Mr. Louis, Riverview Staff Facilitator Paul Anderson states. He said a Council had existed in the early-to-mid '70s but disbanded. Mr. Anderson suggested the Council failed from lack of continuity as no staff were involved and patient representation con-

stantly changed.

President Rod Louis says he began working on re-activating the Council in 1990 and, while initial reaction from hospital administration was not encouraging, reasonable negotiation resulted in the Council being formed this past Spring.

"I consider getting the Council going to be a major achievement of the patients," said Mr. Louis. "Since then, some of our accomplishments have been the organization of a meeting of

MPA's own Dave Lewry attended with MPA Community Outreach Worker Ted Rowcliffe. Dave was one of the most active participants.

He claimed "there is no such thing as schizophrenia, manic-depression, etc. You can go to ten different psychiatrists and get ten different diagnoses. They made it up...no disease; no psychiatry.

"Many studies actually show mental health deteriorates in mental hospitals. One woman went to her Care Team and was told by a nurse 'mental hospitals are crazy-making places'."

Other MPA members attending were Roderick Louis, Betty Robertson, and Janet Murphy.



patients and the Deputy Minister of Health and gaining access to long-distance phone privileges for patients. Only recently, the Council arranged for about 30 interested patients to meet with Dr. Eduardo Perez of the Canadian Council On Health Facility Accreditation."

Full Council meetings open to all patients and former patients now living in the community are held each month at J3 Conference Room at EastLawn.

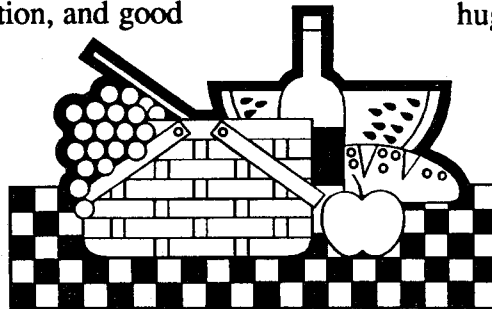
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MPA 20th Anniversary Picnic

About 50 people (members and staff) showed up for the 20th Anniversary MPA Picnic on July 16th at Ceperley Park. It was a slightly overcast day, but the mood of the picnickers was good.

The picnic was scheduled from 11am to 4pm and upon arrival it was nice to see that Brahm already had the burgers and hot dogs on the stove. They were supplemented later by the arrival of different types of salads prepared by the houses and Phoenix. There was plenty of food, helping to make the picnic a success.

Along with the abundance of food, there was live entertainment provided by a guitar and singing duo, The Chicos (Danny and Carlos Rembadi), a lone performer (Leonard Pennyfold), and Klutzy the Clown (Scott Truan). The initial part of the picnic consisted of good food, good conversation, and good



music.

Later on, there was a tug-of-war, punctuated by many groans and shouts of encouragement as east faced west in two fairly evenly matched teams. After a few minutes of tugging back-and-forth the east side won.

BCTV and other media were invited to the gathering, however only one reporter from the Courier newspaper showed up.

All-in-all, I believe everyone who attended would agree that the 20th Anniversary Picnic was a huge success. Thank you MPA.

We're looking forward to the 21st.



MPA Secretary Liz Shekalo with son, Michael and Duo, 'The Chicos' enjoy picnic

UnderDog by Jim Gifford



Brian Shaw is dead. He was shot by a police officer on Tuesday, August 20th at 10th and Commercial while brandishing a steak knife. Brian was panhandling.

By all accounts, he was in a desperate frame of mind. The futility of his life was exasperated by gnawing hunger. And, as any panhandler knows, pickings are usually scarce. The vast majority of 'good' people, employed and preoccupied, won't give the time of day, let alone the 'almighty' dollar. And what do you think Brian craved, anyway? Change for

In Memory

Brian Shaw, 40ish. At well over six feet, he was a man of imposing stature. His great smile brightened many a day and many a 'dark night of the soul'. May Peace Be With You, Brian.

a cup of coffee; perhaps a modest meal; maybe a smoke; even alcohol or illicit drugs to soothe his agony and complement the establishment drugs medical doctors push.

I've been down a similar road and a smile, a friendly gesture, an acknowledgement of your personhood by a passer-by can be the most meaningful action one can make.

But Brian felt rejected and lived on the fringes of life. He was an ex-mental patient, diagnosed as schizophrenic. I never spoke to Brian, although I saw him a few times in recent years at the Mental Patients' Association's Community Resource Centre. Like so many others that go to the Centre as an oasis from an uptight world, he craved fellowship with his own kind, comrades who understood his pain and turmoil and also his simple pleasures. My bet is Brian Shaw was too sensitive and intelligent to survive in a culture that had relegated him to the garbage heap. And why?

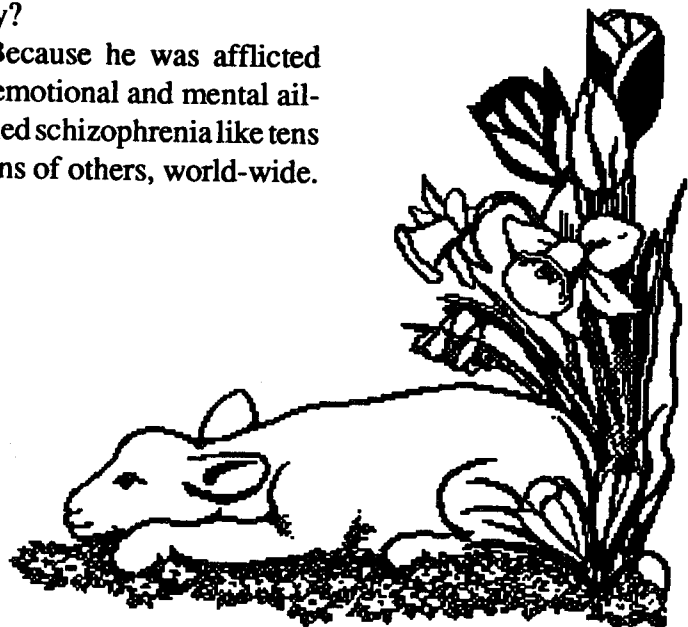
Because he was afflicted with an emotional and mental ailment called schizophrenia like tens of millions of others, world-wide.

In an age where we are obsessed by healthy lifestyles and longevity, what are we to do with the Brians of this world?

Compassion is a start. Humane hospital care, decent housing, a respectable income assistance, and decent meals to sustain body and soul. 'Lawn Order' and the status quo must acquiesce from their antagonistic attitude to those afflicted with mental and emotional disease.

In the April edition of 'In A Nutshell' British Columbia's Ombudsman, Stephen Owen, stated 'our society is impoverished whenever we have a person in clear need of assistance and society doesn't help that person. It lowers the value of society'.

Indeed, society is poorer for the sudden loss of Brian Shaw, an underdog in this dog-eat-dog world.



On the Road to the MPA

By D.Strashok

This is the second and final episode of this story, continued from the June issue of 'In A NutShell'

Abner picked up the stench of carbon monoxide from the cars going by. Immediately, he reached into his pocket and took out a smoke and wafted it, unlit past his nose. The smell of tobacco was a relief. He fingered in his pocket for his cheapo lighter, remembering the Zippo that "She" had given him on his birthday which he had lost only a few days later. "It left a stench of lighter fluid on the cigarettes anyway," he thought to himself. "Butane is much better." He wondered about Zippos and military men and why it had been so important to him. "Conceits", he thought and pondered the various meanings of the word as he lit his cigarette. Then his thoughts turned back to the conversation at hand. What he knew he had to say next came very easily as it had been on his mind for a long time and was very familiar to him.

"Norman," he said, "do you like being motivated by fear. I don't because I don't believe fear is a good motivator. I'd rather be motivated by something more positive, like love. There's the best motivator, yes, love. If the only reason I take medication or see a shrink is because I'm afraid of ending up in hospital, that's not the kind of motivation I want in

my life. Some peoples lives are governed by fear, Norman, and they live their whole lives by fear." He paused for a second to let his words sink in and then he went on. "You know what one of the greatest fears is, Norman?" he asked rhetorically, then answered his own question, "It's the fear of insanity. I've faced it many times and every time I've faced it I've felt challenged to overcome that fear. But it seems the end result has always been Riverview, and as you said, the bottom line is that I never want to end up there again.

I mean, it really gets to me. I even have dreams about it. I dream that I'm back in the hospital being attacked by some goons or walking around the halls speaking two-syllable words after just having had a frontal lobotomy. Then I wake up in a cold sweat and realize that I am at home in my own bed, and I feel so relieved, just to know that I'm not in there."

"Yeh, I know, it's tough," said Norman, "but in this case the bottom line is expediency. Don't worry about your motivation, just know that you have to stay out at all costs. Value your freedom and make some compromises to keep it.

I mean, even when you think about motivation, it's logical. Sometimes you have to be motivated by fear, right?. I mean why do you not touch a hot burn-

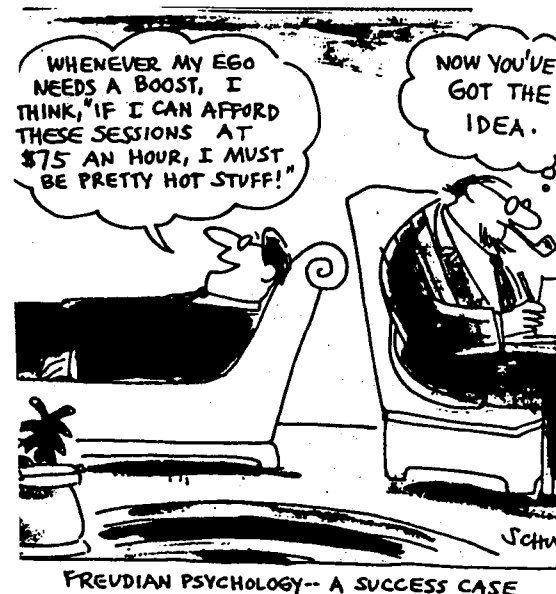
ing stove, because of fear, right? You've learned a lesson about stoves. How does love fit into that? Did you fall out of love with the stove?"

Abner pondered that and switched it about in his mind. "I don't know, maybe it is based on love. Maybe you love your own body enough not to damage it by touching a hot stove."

"Yeh," said Norman, latching on to the insight, "and you've got to learn to love your own mental health enough to not end up in the "place of healing"."

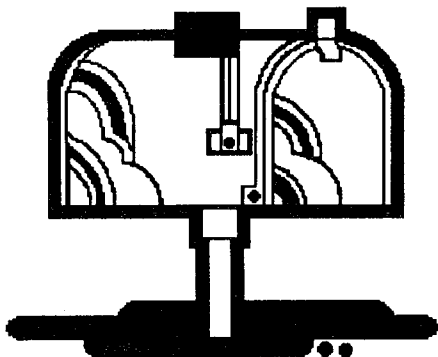
Abner thought about Norman's words. He thought of a few women he had known and wondered if he should write a book titled "Hot Stoves and Love", or "I Didn't Know the Burner was On 'Til My Fingers Were Gone". He chuckled to himself at the title and filed it somewhere in his memory for future reference.

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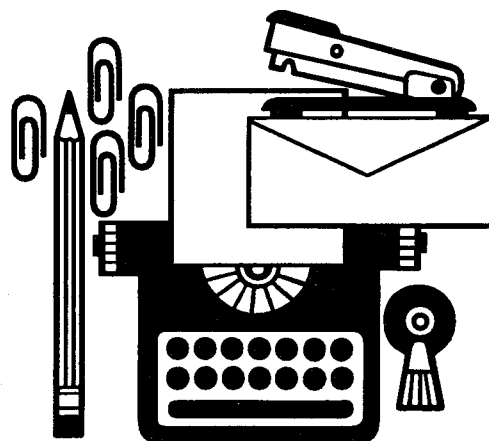
FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGY-- A SUCCESS CASE

Letters



to the Editor

What happens to these people after dark? Where do they sleep? What do they eat? They, of course, have talents unutilized, like everyone. Who is helping them to help themselves? Are there sympathetic government workers in existence? Let's hear from them.



Sincerely
Janet Ginger
June 25, 1991
3521 W39th Ave.
Vancouver B.C.



Minute Particulars by Andrew Feldmar

We have started receiving letters and are glad to include them in the newsletter. All comments are appreciated. When writing, please include your name and address, so that we may add them to your letter.

Dear Mr. Gifford,

I read, with great interest, your April issue of 'In a NutShell'. There are a lot of very good articles.

We see sad looking people sleeping in public places, sometimes in winter parkas in summer. We all look, feel ineffective in helping, or apathetic and quickly look away.

Italo Calvino, one of Italy's greatest writers, wrote this in an essay on literature: "When we become aware of our disease or of our hidden motives, we have already begun to get the better of them. What matters is the way in which we accept our motives and live through the ensuing crisis. This is the only chance we have of becoming different from the way we are — that is, the only way of starting to invent a new way of being". We would all like to feel; innocent. We are afraid to examine our motives, our curiosity is

overshadowed by our fear of guilt and accusation. In order to will to change whole-heartedly and single-mindedly, I have to first admit to myself that I haven't been conducting my affairs optimally, That I have been off the mark, that it is impossible to feel innocent.

In 1976, on a TV show called *Medicine Men*, Leboyer, the obstetrician, was arguing for changing birth practices, aiming to avoid inducing fear or terror in

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Minute Particulars

Continued from previous page

the overwhelmed newborn. He figured that our first encounter with new stimuli might remain significant for life: if my first reaction is "Yes! Beautiful!", my later encounters with novelty are likely to remain open, eager, and positive, anticipating delight; if my first reaction is defensive, "No! Horrible!", I may become closed, fearful of change, dreading the unknown. A panel of three physicians unanimously rejected Leboyer's suggestions. They claimed that there is no harm being done by the current practice, 99% of deliveries are optimal, so why innovate? All these doctors seemed to care about was that both

mother and baby should leave the hospital in good health. They refused to contemplate long-term effects on the psyche, because *realizing* the damage current (violent) practice causes and waking up to the necessity of easing the transition would face each doctor with the pain and suffering s/he caused through unwitting malpractice. Consider the still prevalent fad of circumcising boys. A fine welcome for a new arrival, a great introduction to our world: ritual mutilation, we get you where it hurts and we waste no time! I think we continue because it's unbearable to admit how stupid and insensitive and violent we have been.

Growing up in our culture, we are urged to be proud of what we know and to be ashamed of our ignorance. If only this could be reversed, if children were praised for articulating what they don't know, and ignored for bragging about the bits they think they know, perhaps an epidemic of refreshing curiosity would break out allowing long overdue changes to occur. Psychiatry and psychology could admit that aping the physical sciences has been a dreadful error, and *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association* would become a relic not unlike the witch hunters' *Mal-leus Maleficarum* is today.



Pastoral Reflections

by Pastor John Ballard

One of the greatest challenges we have today is to teach one another how to overcome communication obstacles. So many problems in human relationships are the result of poor communication or no communication at all.

A man was having problems in his office. Other employees had branded him as a turncoat because he was promoted to head of his department which meant he was no longer their representative in the Union. Upper management distrusted him because of his former outspoken views when part of the Union. No one was talking

to him and certainly no one was listening to him. In fact, he was being treated very cruelly by others.

Consider the cruelty of man to God in a story Jesus told, "There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and rented it out to vinegrowers, and went on a journey. And when the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vinegrowers to receive his produce. And the vinegrowers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. Again

he sent another group of slaves larger than the first and they did the same thing to them. But afterward, he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinegrowers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come let us kill him and share his inheritance And they took him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinegrowers? They said to him, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and will rent out the vineyard to other vinegrowers, who will pay him the proceed at the

Continued next page

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proper seasons.' Jesus then responded by saying, 'God will take away the vineyard from cruel people and give it to people who produce the fruit of kindness.' (Matthew 21:33-46)

In the darkness, hatred and prejudice grow. However, in the sunlight, it is hard to walk a distance with a person and still be their enemy at the end of the journey. When we can't or Won't talk to people, we can imagine them to be the way our prejudice dictates. Our imagination runs wild. We see them as pre-human, people to be eliminated. But talk to your enemies and you get to see them in an entirely different light. Sometimes, they become the best of friends.

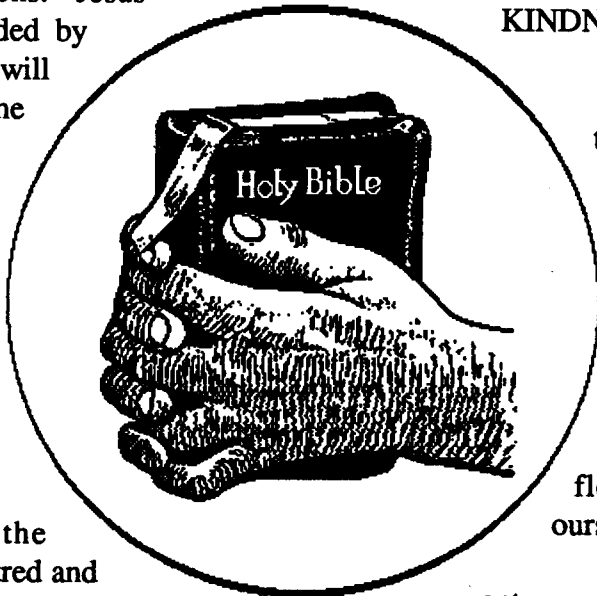
One night I had a dream. In that dream, I was given a formula to explain man's inhumanity to man. Why we hate each other and treat one another cruelly.

The following is my dream formula:

SELF-PRESERVATION + FEAR + MISUNDERSTANDING = CRUELTY

If that formula is true, then the opposite is equally true:

SECURITY + COMMUNICATION + TRUST = KINDNESS



Learn to be kind to one another—

We really love in others, A reflection of ourselves,

We want someone to understand

To love us back to health.

We feel we've lost a part of us

Through hurts that drove us mad.

We want someone to understand

And heal that part that's sad.

The more that we take time to see,

What's really very plain.

The more we will learn to love

And we'll be whole again.

Security is the key,

Trust is the mode,

Begin today to communicate

And Kindness will unfold.

Pastor John Ballard,
Kitsilano Bible Church,
1415 Maple Street



Laughs with Lewry by Dave Lewry



'I must be off to see the psychiatrist.'

'Yes, you certainly must be!'

Positively Negative

**Anonymous (Contributed by Susan
Brownell)**

We drank for happiness and became morose.
We drank for joy and found misery.

We drank for sociability and became argumentive.
We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious.

We drank for friendship and made enemies.
We drank for sleep and wakened without rest.

We drank for strength and became weak.
We drank "medicinally" and became unhealthy.

We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.
We drank for bravery and became afraid.

We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.
We drank for confidence and became faltering.

We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell.
We drank to forget and were forever haunted.

We drank for freedom and became enslaved.
We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply.

We drank to cope with life and...invited death.

The One I Call Love

by Darrell R. Hunter

Little angels fly above:
Look around for the one
 I call Love
And in a puff in the air
They flew, in the forms of doves
Down the hill and through the meadows,
Looking for the one I call Love.

Here I sit so sad and blue
While the angels are looking
 For you.
And then, within my sight,
I see: a group of angels
Strong and free,
With the one I call Love.

Her beauty sparkles
As her voice I hear,
The one I Love
 With the gold in her hair.

The angels,
They deliver her.
Onward they go
 To forwarding passages
As I lay
Beside the one I call Love
 And back to us
 As time passes.

The Servant

by Jim Gifford

he gathers thoughts along the shore
 like others gather shells
and within his heart does store
 ripples waves swells

Remote from mundane minds
 he grows from breeze to gust
free of the doldrum's confines
 harbouring the ocean's lust

he loves the wind's briney taste
 as gliding gulls swerve
but laments the grossest waste
 hoe does he the servant serve

Hang In: Never Say Die

by Sam Roddan

Alex was an old sailor who hung around the White Lunch and the Carnegie library at Main and Hastings. Life had dealt Alex heavy blows, but his spirit was tough, obdurate, unbroken. Scars told their own story.

Thumb twisted off by a hawser and capstan of the deck of the Empress of Japan. Right eye missing from the whiplash of a towing cable off Hecate Strait. Kneecap and ankle smashed by a fall into the hold of a deep sea freighter in Coal Harbor.

In the great sweep of time, Alex had no illusions about his destiny, no question about his right on this earth. His motto was child-like in its simplicity: Hang In, Never Say Die.

The last time I was Alex, he was in hospital in the Old Annex to the V.G.H. He was weak and his face, paper white. For the past year, he'd been through heavy seas.

"It's my water works, this time," Alex whispered. "I got a bad stop in the line. And the feet's swollen up. But no worry. Be damned if I'm dropping anchor. I'll be back in the East End tomorrow."

Alex never made it through the night.

A few days later, we gathered at Armstrong's Funeral Home on Dunlevy for a send-off. Alex rested in a plain pine box set up on

two shaky trestles at the front of the chapel. Alex's box was rough and ready. The lid was full of knots. In depression days undertakers often made their own coffins.

The minister placed his hand on the coffin and, as he ran his fingertips over the knots on the lid,



he spoke about the flaws and imperfection that the flesh is heir to. But now, he said Alex was safe in a Snug Harbor. Home at last:

Here he lies where he longed to be,

Home is the sailor, home

from the sea.

Suddenly, the trestles under the coffin began to wobble and the lid shifted to port. I could swear Alex was moving around inside, getting ready to sit up, wondering what the hell was going on. Mr. Armstrong rushed forward with another trestle, slipped it under the coffin and then quickly tapped a couple of nails into the lid. Everyone sighed. Mr. Armstrong muttered, "No R.I.P. for Alex," and gave a signal for the pallbearers to load up the hearse. In a few moments it was heading up Main and along Fraser to Mountain View.

Strange as it may seem, much can be said for the born-again, recycled resurrections. No surprise, then, after 60 years, that Alex Brown still haunts the streets and alley-ways of the East End. I see him in familiar faces, companions, partners, old comrades. Casualties are heavy in his country, but great spirits live on—tough, obdurate, unbroken. Scars and wounds tell their own stories.



Patient Council at Riverview

Continued from Pg. 1

A steering committee meets weekly at the CentreLawn Recreation Room but these meetings may be moved to the new Patient Council Office on the second floor of Crease Unit. The phone number in the Patient Council Office is 524-7095. The office will eventually be open Monday to Fri-

day from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm. Any ex-patient living in Vancouver and wishing to attend Patient Council meetings can arrange for transportation by calling Ted Rowcliffe at M.P.A., 738-2811.



Art Therapist Interview

by Jim Gifford

Linda Shewchuk is a certified art therapist working out of her residence in the White Rock area. She is committed to the process of awareness of human growth and change.

Editor: From personal experience it strikes me that mental patients have an exceptional inclination and need to express themselves creatively. Would you comment?

Linda: Normal people have it as well, but they're more repressed, more out of touch with their anxiety, they've got it more under intellectual and logical control. They get on with their business or their children or their life.

With the mentally ill, their stuff is closer to the surface, demanding expression and demanding to be dealt with. If they have an outlet like art, I think they can see themselves as dealing with it and helping them structure and organize their inner expression that is coming out anyway. Art would provide them a really positive outlet and what's wonderful is that it gives them a visual story of what they're expressing. They will begin to see patterns, scenes, styles, and colours that they are consistently using. And, sometimes, people don't notice that they are using colours and shapes.

When I worked at the psychiatric ward at Lions Gate Hospital, one girl continually made certain shapes, then she'd paint it over and she'd re-make some of the shapes over the paint. She didn't

realize she had done this and when asked about her work, she had nothing to say. Then, when I pointed out the problem she was going through, how she had done this one stage, obliterated it and re-did some of it, what she was thinking, what was going on for her. It looked like flowers and the problem with some art therapists is they interpret. I was taught never to label. So, when I asked her about the process, she said 'these are the rings of my past, sorespots. I sealed over some of them and broke some through. These ones I've drawn again are ones I still have to work on.' If I'd said 'oh, what lovely flowers' as some people do, I'd have missed the point entirely. If you have a need to express and also a kind of healing process in just the ritual of painting, the inner feeling comes out on paper.

Editor: In a book entitled *Moodswing*, Dr. Ronald Fieve disagrees with Freud in the sense that artists are necessarily neurotic. He says manic-depressive artist, musicians, and writers down through history are only neurotic when not producing. When they are on a creative surge, we call them 'gifted'.

Linda: Yes, I agree with that. Yet that definition doesn't cover the whole story. I feel Freud was missing it by saying artists and creative people are neurotic.

They really are in a state of attunement when they are expressing. If they can't express, they are going to feel frustrated. I think there are people out there who lead a relatively healthy life and don't have too many things they're holding in and keeping a lid on, so their life goes on in a more mellow manner. There are other people who've locked up whole sections of themselves, almost dead and they can maintain that deadness. But, I think people who are mentally ill can't: their stuff doesn't want to stay dead; it keeps wanting to come to life. I don't think that is neurotic. My definition of neurotic is more of a person who is over-anxious, tidying when you're supposed to be having a cup of tea, perfectionists. They are repressed. They've got a lid on things and they don't want to do art, to grow. I really think they're frightened to explore what's going on whereas, I sense those who are, quote, 'mentally ill' are beyond that. They are forced to deal with what's going on, the stuff that's bubbling.



On the Road to the MPA

Continued from pg. 4

"Yeh, I guess your right. Anyway, I don't think I have enough guts or stupidity, whichever it takes, to wear my headdress into his office."

They walked quietly on. Norman picked up a whiff of tobacco from Abner's cigarette. He was a non-smoker, as he had only been in the hospital a few times and had managed to stay away from smoking by drinking lots of free fruit juices and falling in love with psychiatric nurses. (He was too inexperienced to realize how futile that was). Norman coughed at the tobacco smoke and blurted out "Don't you know that cigarette smoking is bad for your health?"

Abner shot back, "Yeh, the Surgeon-General told me that just before he cut out my heart and replaced it with a bottle of tranquilizers."

Norman laughed and patted Abner on the pack, "Well, I guess you'll deal with it someday."

"Yeh," said Abner, "that's what I keep telling myself every time I have to fork over five bucks for a package."

Norman wanted to laugh, then thought better of it and they fell into a brief silence as they continued down 4th towards the drop-in.

"So, you're going to give up this native thing, right?" Norman queried, a little later.

"I don't know," Abner replied, "like I said, it's a matter of faith to me and I don't give up my faith very easily."

"Abner, I'm surprised at you," Norman admonished, "you talk about faith and Indians. You might as well go back to worshipping rocks and stones and birds of the air. Is that what you want?"

"That's good," Abner replied, "coming from a guy that reads his Bible every night till two in the morning and hasn't had a girlfriend in three years."

"Oh, so that's what it's all about. You're looking for one of those pretty Indian maidens, huh."

They laughed, then Abner became more serious. "I used to read the Bible a lot. As a matter of fact, I looked at my chart once and right on the front was the diagnosis "Religious conversion something or other Hystia or hysteria, I don't remember. Anyway, my views on God have changed a lot since then. You're still young. You haven't gone through the Middle-aged Christ and the Middle-aged Crisis. Sometimes I even believe that I've suffered more than Christ. You know, he only had to face His Pontious Pilate once, not every two weeks for the rest of his life. Then after He faced him, He died once and for all time only to receive His full vindication in resurrection, three days later. He didn't have to go through years of hell on psychiatric medications. His death and vindication were all so easy,

complete and simple, but mine is going on all the time. And maybe for a mental patient their is no justice or vindication until it's all over and we move into the next life. And you can't wrap God up in the pages of a book, in the Logos so to speak. For someone who's been in the Bible too much, what he needs is a logotomy, a frontal logotomy. I mean God is everywhere, if you have faith, am I right?"

Norman felt a little offended, but realized that Abner's argument and logic were too much for him to overcome by quoting some Bible verse, so he acquiesced. "I guess so."

Abner had a lot more that he could have said, but he knew enough not to go any further. They walked along the street and pondered their private thoughts as they approached the drop-in.

Abner caught a glimpse of a New-Age bimbo in black leotards clambering on her bike. He allowed his eyes to caress the skin tight fabric of her leotards for a moment, then took a last drag of his smoke and through the butt defiantly in her direction, out in the street. "It's a great day," he thought to himself. "Here it isn't even noon and already we've touched on native rights, media manipulation, the psychology of motivation, the politics of psychiatry, and we even approached the big issues of God and the universe." Even though the sky was gray and foreboding, he was content and happy.

Norman, on the other hand,

was thinking about his job appointment that afternoon. He wasn't sure if it was the kind of job that he would like, but he had decided to give it a shot. "Better than working as a janitor for the care-teams", he thought. His hand unconsciously reached up to straighten his tie as he looked in the appointment 'mirror' in his mind. He looked at the sky and wondered if he should have brought his umbrella.

As they came up the last half-block, Abner turned to Norman and said, "Wanna come in for a coffee?" He fingered the quarters in his pocket to make sure they were still there.

"Sure," said Norman, glancing at his watch "I don't have to be at my appointment for another couple hours and anyway, we can talk some more."

"Great," said Abner, "maybe I'll show you the new game I invented called "Crucifixion Snooker"."

Norman was interested and wanted to ask questions, but as they got to the front door of the drop-in, Dave Lewry, was hanging around, smoking, pacing back and forth. He looked up at them from within his bearded face and said, "What's the difference between God and a psychiatrist?"

"I don't know," they both replied, almost in unison.

Dave chuckled a little and said, "None, according to the psychiatrist."

They all laughed and walked into the drop-in for the best cup of coffee in town.



The Lost Child

by Susan Brownell

Susan Brownell
July 12, 1991

I was born with a loving spirit, and a total faith in life and people.

As I learned to walk and talk, my spirit got wounded from other peoples cruel and thoughtless remarks.

I learned from home and school to hide my thoughts and feeling, and it made me feel like hell.

I was sent to church although my dad doesn't believe in God, maybe my mom influenced him to let us go.

In church, they drilled into my head that I was a sinner from the day I was born and that I was going to hell, and there I would suffer forever in a "Lake of Fire".

By the time I reached 16 years old, I had been abused physically, emotionally, sexually, and spiritually.

My faith in life and people was gone, drugs became a way to forget the pain and emptiness.

I felt no love and therefore I could not give or even accept any love from others.

I was told Jesus was love, but I felt he never showed me any and didn't want me anyway.

I blamed God for taking

away my only hope and dream in life and felt he created me to be barren and childless forever. I thought it was God's way of punishing me.

Two months later, I overdosed: the pain and sadness was too great to bear alone.

In my depression, I thought hell was better than being barren and alone.

I lived. They said it was a "Miracle"; I felt it was a punishment.

I then turned my whole life and will over to the power of drugs, till I had numbed out all feelings I could, but anger and rage.

I was depressed and suicidal all the time, so a psychiatrist put me on heavy tranquilizers, and said if you take these for the rest of your life you will feel fine.

I was in and out of psych hospitals since I was 18 years old and when I was 27, I ended up in Riverview, and I learned what hell was really like.

It was in there that I had hit my bottom and learned that their kind of help I didn't need. That is when I decided to fight.

I still didn't believe in Jesus, but I really believed that God could "restore me to sanity", and went off all pills and booze.

Continued on next page

The Lost Child

Continued from previous page

I still smoked pot for four more months and took a chance and called the "Salvation Army Homestead".

It was hard because last time I was there I was in denial and lying to them and myself and was totally self-obsessed.

They agreed to give me another chance and not hold the past against me. That gave me hope!

I stayed in house treatment for the eight weeks and graduated, and continued to go to their Day Program. It was really hard at times, as I had no drugs to numb out any more.

I learned to face my new feelings and express them in a healthy and safe environment, with people who really cared.

When I couldn't sleep, Gerda or Judy, the night staff, would sit up with me all night if I needed it. Nobody would before.

They encouraged me to talk and I could see they really understood and cared about me. It helped me to trust!

I shared with the girls the fears, pain, and even my most intimate secrets; they felt and shared my pain and sadness right along with me, and we grew closer together.

The other staff and my counsellor heard my pain and negativity and still didn't abandon me: they helped me to feel real love and friendship!

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The Captain and Lieutenant taught me about Jesus and didn't push me. They just let me doubt and ask any questions I needed to and helped me to see Jesus is love and forgiveness, it gave me faith!

All the staff taught me about my drug and other addictions, and how to handle my life without drugs, it gave me knowledge!

I wanted the faith they all had, but I was afraid Jesus would reject me, although I knew God was opening my heart.

I kept hearing all you need is faith as a "Mustard Seed" and one day I knew I had it.

So I asked Jesus in my heart and really believed he would come, and I felt his presence immediately.

Each day I felt stronger, I felt real peace and I knew what Jesus meant when he said, "My peace, I give to you".

I understood the Bible better, it didn't terrify me anymore. I knew it was to help me grow and learn how to live in peace with myself and all people, and to share my faith.

I pray constantly for Jesus to remove the sins I still have and for strength to face the hard times, we all have to face to help us grow stronger.

I know it is an ongoing process of praying and asking for

forgiveness so I can grow stronger in faith and wisdom, daily.

Jesus has worked miracles in my life, even when I didn't believe in him, he knew I would, "See the Light" and I know he will continue to, each and every day.

No power on earth could have removed the insanity, or drugs in my life: only the power of unconditional love and forgiveness through faith in a God who knows what my future holds and knows what is best for me.

I learned that as long as I take care of myself and share the fear and pain of my Inner Child, and ask Jesus daily for faith and courage to share my story, the Child in me will not hide her shame behind the masks of drugs or insanity again.

Sometimes it is hard and overwhelming staying straight, giving up old patterns and friends, but sobriety taught me real friends are the ones who want a life of feeling and sharing their strength, hope and fears with each other.

I'm learning that reaching out to clean and sober friends feels safer and easier each time, and I make more true friends through sharing my pain and shame.

As long as I reach out I'll never lose or abandon the child with-in me, because I found that lost and lonely little girl that I had deserted so long ago, and I rescued her with all her fears, and pain and accepted her as she is—faults, handicaps, and all.....



MPA Computer Users' Group by Allan Richardson

The Computer Users' Group met at Phoenix to discuss what the role of this members committee would be. In attendance were Dennis, Alex, Allan, Olaf, Stephen, and June.

Stephen started the meeting off by giving a history of how MPA came to acquire the computers and the different purchases and upgrades that have been done to date. He then went on to state what he saw as the function of the group.

The group will become responsible for acquiring and administering any funds for computer repairs, upgrades, purchases of software, etc. Computer policies would be set by them (e.g. what software goes on the machines, copying of software, etc.). There would also be a social function (e.g. try to arrange tournaments around certain computer games). The group would also be responsible for an educational component to MPA as a whole (e.g. arrange speakers, arrange workshops or classes, work with the computer volunteer, etc.).

Following this presentation by Stephen, the computer volunteer, Dennis, gave a report on his activities over the past months. It was agreed that the computer volunteer will report and get direction from the users' group at each meeting.

Allan gave a report of his responsibilities to the group (an

active, non-voting member willing to do research and some of the running around, etc.).

The meeting closed with an agreement to arrange for a speaker to come to the CRC and give a talk on computers and employment possibilities (coffee and muffins to be provided). The date of this workshop will be posted when arrangements are finalized.



J. Gifford

Food Problems Being Corrected by Ted Rowcliffe

Patients at Riverview Hospital have recently informed Hospital Administration that changes in the Food Preparation System have resulted in a decline in meal quality.

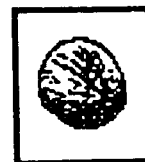
Through the Patient Council, comments have been passed on to those responsible for food at Riverview and the matter is currently under investigation.

Four task groups were formed and a "hot-line" is available to handle complaints at Riverview local 7334. The new system is called "Cook-Chill" where food is cooked, chilled and re-heated.

Among problems being addressed are food too hot, food unevenly heated, lumpy mashed potatoes, and egg consistency too runny/too hard.

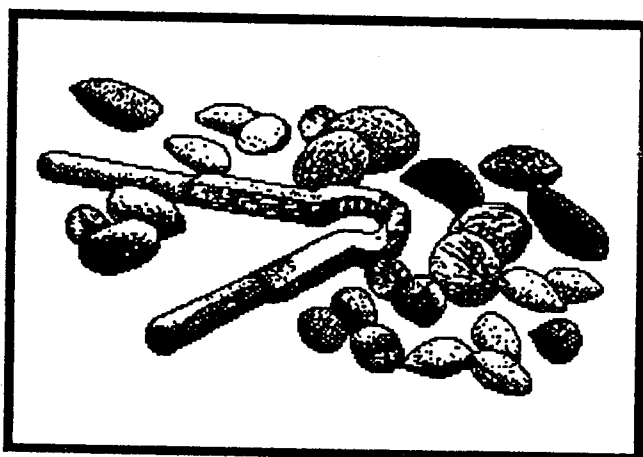
A recent bulletin outlining steps being taken to correct patient complaints has been circulated.

Patient Council President Rod Louis said he was pleased efforts were being made to improve food quality but disappointed there was no patient representation on the four recently formed task groups.



Nuts for Nutrition

by Jim Gifford with Vasanto Crawford



Vasanto Crawford is a registered dietitian and nutritional counsellor in private practice. She has taught a nutrition course at the University of British Columbia.

JG: Would you briefly comment on refined and junk foods and then talk about whole grains?

Vasanto: Refined or junk food provide calories but little else in the way of nutritional value. They are similar to a way of life that nourishes people to stay alive but doesn't nourish the spirit.

When we eat very refined grains rather than whole grains, in the process of producing this grain (which is much like rock polishing where stones are rubbed together and tumbled and the outer layer falls off) the outer layer is removed and leaves a white inner layer. The reason this is done is the white inner layer is so non-nutritious that

it doesn't grow bacteria well and doesn't deteriorate or change with any living processes. So you end up with a product that can stay on the shelf for months and months and even years.

In grains, the very outside is the husk and we can't digest that. The next layer is bran which has gotten a lot of fame as something to add to your diet to give you roughage. Actually, it should have been there, anyway. It's a part of the whole food that we need and it has fibre which is needed to absorb water in the intestine and make everything move through more easily. The fibre also absorbs cholesterol. There are quite a few nutrients in this outer layer. Some, for example, are magnesium and vitamin B6 which are important in helping out nervous system function.

JG: Could you say a person with mood instability would be very wise to eat a lot of bran?

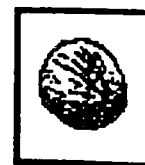
Vasanto: Or whole grains. There are other elements in the germ that are significant. This doesn't mean you have to go out

and get some fancy health food products. Choose a bran muffin instead of something white and starchy. White, starchy and sweet things will give you some instant energy, but they don't provide a lot of the other nutrients that you need to process that energy and they don't help your nervous system functioning.

So, magnesium and vitamin B6 are involved in the processes that keep your moods level. Chromium is important for blood sugar regulation. So there are a number of different vitamins and minerals that aren't so famous, but which we need just as much. Another two that are important for blood functioning are zinc and iron. Both affect energy levels.

Another part of the grain is the germ. And, as you can imagine, the part that is going to be the origin of life has lots of nutrients. That is also taken out when the white flour is produced, because it has a lot of oil and it will go rancid if left on the shelf for months and months. The germ has essential oils such as vitamin E which is an anti-oxidant and protects different parts of your system from going rancid and oxidizing. It's called the anti-aging vitamin.

Remember, when you get a whole grain, you get a whole package of lot of different nutrients that are doing a good job for your whole body, to help keep moods level, your energy up, and give you vitality.



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In A NutShell

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