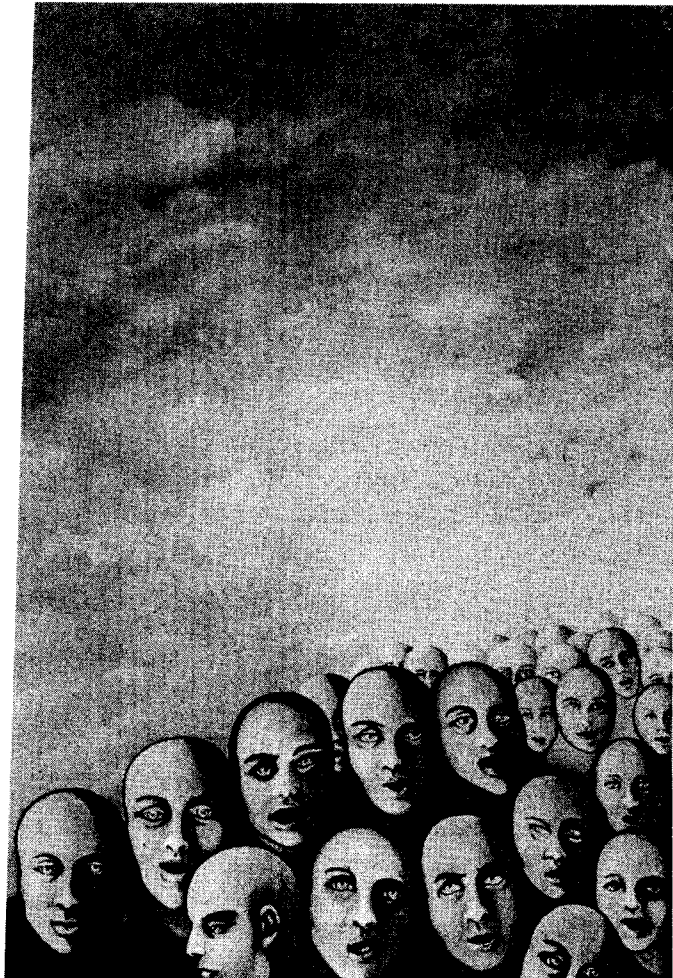


WINTER 1992-93

Winter, 1992-93

# In A NutShell

A Publication of the MENTAL PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION



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**Cover Graphics:** by Galen Y. Beach, a Vancouver painter, presently living and working in the Netherlands.

'In A NutShell' is a publication of the Mental Patient's Association, 1731 W. 4th Ave. Vancouver B.C., V6J 1M2, (604) 738-2811. The MPA is a non-profit organization that offers a variety of programs in HOUSING, VOCATIONAL, RECREATIONAL, and SOCIAL ACTIVITIES for former mental patients. For more information on any of the above programs or housing waiting lists, please phone the office at 738-2811.

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## Cycles by Scott Dixon

A wit once described therapy as the process of gaining salvation by confessing the sins of our parents.

Parents: What would we do without them?

After becoming severely depressed in my mid 30's, I entered therapy and was stunned to realize how strong my feelings were towards my father. After abandoning his children, he destroyed two marriages plus a family business before drinking himself to death at 58.

"I never wanted you to see me like this," my father said with big wet tears rolling down his cheeks the last time I saw him alive, on Christmas Eve of 1968. He was staying in a skid road rooming house and I couldn't wait to leave. The noxious combination of urine and the strong bleach that could never quite get rid of the smell of the piss, was overpowering.

"It's alright," I told my father, "it's not your fault." After giving him two pairs of heavy socks for Christmas, I held his hand for a moment and then left.

That night, getting to sleep wasn't possible so I stayed up, listening to the radio hour after hour. Some astronauts lost radio transmission for a time as their spaceship circled around the far side of the moon. The world held

its breath that Christmas morning, until the astronauts finally emerged from the dark, back into the light.

A few months later, my father died destitute.

We'd never had a real conversation. I knew virtually nothing about him except that he drank. I wanted to know why. Why did he drink? Why did he abandon his children? Why? The question haunted me.

Growing up in Kerrisdale in a home his parents built and lived in for half a century, my father never worked for anyone except his own father, who was a strong man. One of the reasons for the rage I so felt towards my father was that he, more than most men, knew the absolute importance of having a strong, supportive father.

As a kid, I never blamed my father - consciously - for anything. But after starting therapy, I bounced back and forth between rage at my father, rage at the world, and, most of all, rage at myself. I tried escaping from the pain with all the usual suspects:

- Alcohol, a particularly dangerous subject for me. It killed not only

my father but also a brother and half-brother, each of them died before 40;

- Legal and not-so-legal drugs;

- Burying myself in work;

- And even trying to kill myself a couple of times. One of the suicide attempts left me in a coma for a week, but somehow I survived and continue to stumble through life.

My career went down the tubes as my depression deepened and the stays on psychiatric wards were both more frequent and longer. (When you start referring to your prescription drugs as "meds," you know you've become a psych ward vet.)

In therapy, I eventually

*Continued page over*



*Ghoulish Canadien makes appearance at MPA's Halloween Party*

## Cycles

*Continued from previous page*

(why do these insights always take so much time?!) came to the conclusion the reason I had always felt so badly about myself was this: If my own father had abandoned me, then I must have been worthless; indeed, a person truly worth less. Back when I was a kid, this conclusion must have been automatic and unconscious. But it permeated everything. From my earliest years, I went through life feeling different, alone and worthless. Depression was my Long-time Companion.

Fortunately, Prozac came along and helped with whatever bio-chemical disturbances were contributing to my depression. But I still needed to know, why? Why had my father abandoned me? I had to find out. Since he was dead, asking him was out of the question. But my father was still alive, so to speak, in the dusty files stored in the basement of Riverview. I knew he'd been treated there for alcoholism when I was very young. I wrote the hospital asking permission to examine the files as part of the research for my book about depression.

Driving to Riverview (one of the few local hospitals I hadn't been a guest of during my own battles with depression) was terribly scary. I felt as if I was going to meet my father, and in a way, I was.

The myths I carried around

about my father, the ones that allowed me to be so angry at him for so long, vanished in the truth and reality of those old files. I spent two days reading the files, taking notes, and feeling long-forgotten pain.

My father was 41 years old when he was committed to Riverview. (I was 5 years old and in hospital with polio. I always wondered why my father hardly ever came to see me back then. Now, I knew.) His own parents treated him like he was 12 years old. Rejecting him one moment, they'd welcome him the next, if it suited their own purposes.

Breaking down in tears, my father told the Riverview doctors, "My parents always favored my brother." He felt trapped working for his father, but believed no one else would hire him because that was the constant message he got from his parents.

My father had turned to booze to escape the pain of his own childhood. And he passed on to his children exactly what he had learned about love and caring when he was a kid, which was next to nothing.

His parents were no doubt repeating what they had learned as kids. The cycle of abuse and pain and then trying to escape the pain goes on and on, generation after generation, until someone finally says "Stop!"

In the end, what I told my father in that skid road room on a long-ago Christmas Eve was true. It wasn't his fault. He was part of the cycle and I was no more than a bit player in his life.

The fact my father abandoned me was not because I was worthless. He turned to booze to escape his pain and I can't blame him for that any more than I can blame myself (any longer) for being depressed. We were both trying to survive and both of us hurt people other than ourselves.

I still can't forgive my father for everything. But I have demythologized his life and by doing that, I can at last acknowledge (if not accept) everything that happened.

And I don't have to drink, work, or drug myself to death. I can get on with living. I can break the cycle.



## The Poor

To have what we want is riches, but to be able to do without is power.

George Macdonald

# Underdog

by Jim Gifford



Recently, at the Kitsilano Mental Health Team, I experienced a poignant moment. Having received my regular injection of the drug modicate, I sat in the reception area waiting to see my therapist. A well-dressed man with briefcase in hand, entered. He was a drug company representative.

He enquired if there were any psychiatrists available. A doctor was summoned and, in front of me, they compared notes on different medications: appropriate doses; side effects; patients' comments. I listened with a casual yet

attentive ear until called into my session.

Yet, in those brief moments, I'd witnessed a situation central to the disempowerment of mental health consumers: the marriage of psychiatry and pharmaceutical empires in the ongoing control and manipulation of the brain chemistry of countless millions of people.

Presently, I am taking medication. Along with maturity, experience, and lifestyle, I feel it has helped me to attain a balance emotionally and mentally. Unfortunately, like so many others, I have mistakenly been used as a guinea pig, taking inappropriate levels and kinds of meds.

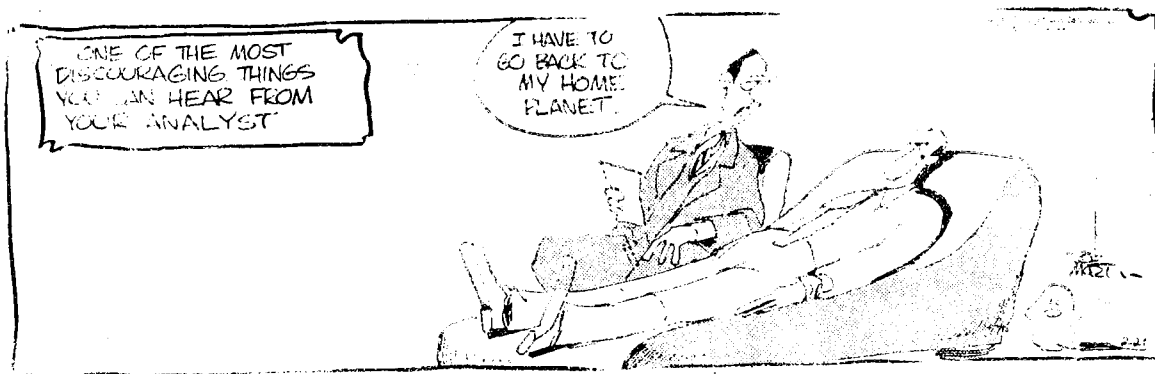
Some of the de-humanizing impairments suffered in this state are grogginess, lethargy, drooling at the mouth, and walking like a robot. And thus it goes on, while drug companies and the psychiatric profession make lucrative incomes from our dilemmas.

And now, in Canada, the federal government is getting into bed with the drugmakers. Legislation is ready that, when passed, will give these corporations patent favours and thus hurt those who offer generic brands of the same products. The result: higher costs. This is a flagrant subjugation of average Canadians under the thumb of big business, elitist medicine, and power-hungry politicians.

Medications at reasonable cost are vital to the well-being of our nation's citizenry. On the positive side, prescription drugs, given with knowledge and understanding, help alleviate many diseases, including those in the throes of psychic change.

This profane trinity of business, medicine, and politics must ease its self-indulgent powertrip over consumers. We, who have suffered mental and emotional duress, must not allow our insights and rights to be relegated to second-class status any longer.

And the hour is late.



# Letters to the Editor

November 4, 1992

## OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS

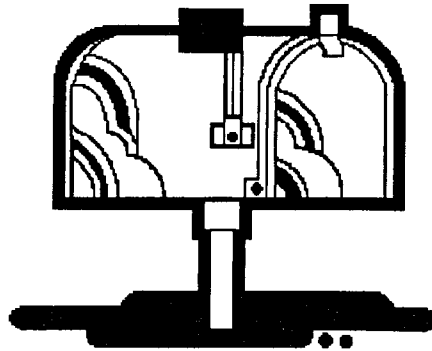
As most of you know, I have resigned my position as Community Resource Centre Manager effective Nov. 30, 1992. This has been one of the hardest decisions I have ever had to make.

I came to MPA in January, 1982, eleven years ago, purely by chance. During the past eleven years, you have become family to me. We have helped each other through times of personal trouble, we have shared money and cigarettes, we have had disagreements and we have had good times.

I will miss MPA, not only as an employer, I will miss you all and the support you've given me over the years. I cannot even begin to list the names of you who through your kindness and generosity have made me a part of your lives.

It is a healthy process in our lives to grow and change, to seek new challenges and experiences, to move to new places, and to make new friends. It was such a need that brought me to MPA and is now the reason I am leaving.

4



Dec., 1992

Dear MPA,

My whole family would like to extend our warmest thanks for the Memorium included in "In A NutShell" in remembrance of my brother, Derek Johnston. I, too, hope that Derek has found peace and comfort wherever he has gone! He is sadly missed, and we really appreciate the MPA's efforts to acknowledge his being!

With warmth,  
Carina (sister) and family.

I am looking forward with excitement to new adventures in my life and at the same time with sadness at leaving behind some of the most wonderful people I will ever know.

I wish you all the best in the future.

Sincerely yours,  
Gloria Scribner  
Manager,  
Community Resource Centre



*Gloria Scribner admires plaque in her honor at Farewell Party*

## Nuts for Nutrition

### Brahm Shenker with Jim Gifford

*Brahm Shenker is the coordinator responsible for the 'Lifeskills Program' at the MPA's Community Resource Centre.*

Editor: Brahm, the 'Lifeskills Program' provides nutritional lunches for MPA members daily during the week. Would you expand?

Brahm: Meals cost \$1.50. Staff can eat as well and pay \$2.00. The meals for this week are: Monday, glazed ham with rice; Tuesday, tuna casserole; Wednesday, pork stew; Thursday, curried chicken; Friday, Chef's Surprise. The meals always include potato, rice, or pasta; vegetables; a bun; and a glass of milk.

Response last week varied for one sitting from a high of 23 to a low of 11. Sometimes we have to

turn away members who do not give advance notice. It's hard to judge how many will show up and we need time to prepare.

Editor: Another facet of the Program is the training of the kitchen staff. What does this include?

Brahm: The course is one month, Monday to Friday, 9 AM to 1 PM. They learn food handling and storage, safety in the kitchen, recognizing quality in foods, budgeting, and complete and effective use of all food purchased. As an example, we even make our own oxo cubes.

Editor: People in the Mental Health field have viewed this project. What is their response?

Brahm: Response from everyone

has been enthusiastic and supportive. We've been getting referrals from Care Teams for people to come down and learn to cook.

Editor: What is the future of the Program?

Brahm: I hope to eventually expand (given the funding) to include meals in the evenings and weekends.

Editor: What has this experience meant to you, personally?

Brahm: It is extremely gratifying. It is one of the most important ways for people to gain equilibrium in their lives.

Anyone interested in either learning to cook or signing up for an inexpensive nutritious meal can call Brahm Shenker at 738-1422.



MPA would like to THANK SAFEWAY (at 4th and Vine) and particularly meat manager Poul Christiansen for goodwill and support for the 'Lifeskills Program'.

SPECIAL THANKS To  
LA BAQUETTE &  
L'ECHALOTTE, 1680 Johnston  
Street (next to the Granville Island  
Market) for your gracious daily  
donation of 2 dozen buns for the  
lunches served up at the MPA.

Truly a wonderful bakery,  
with a feast for eye and palate.

## Branches Over the Wall

by Dennis Strashok

"Joseph is a fruitful bough; even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength," Genesis 49:22-24.

You may recognize this quote from the book of Genesis. It has a word-picture in it that is very meaningful to anyone who has experienced suffering in his or her life. "Branches Over the Wall" is the title of my column as I feel it is a very good picture of what it means to have experienced suffering and to have been enlarged by that suffering.

The story of Joseph in the Bible is merely one example of someone who went through deep suffering and trials in his life, only to have that suffering eventually provide fruit in his ongoing experiences. As mental patients, we have all encountered tough situations in our lives. However, these troubles can and will produce fruit if we allow the experiences of the past to work to our benefit. The most important thing is to have learned something from our experiences and to have been enlarged by them.

In Joseph's life, he spent years in prison before his gift eventually brought him to prominence.

The significant thing, however, was that he was not crushed by his suffering, but instead was enlarged by them. He suffered slander, persecution, and false accusation, but in the end he emerged triumphant.

As mental patients, we can all identify with Joseph's suffering and, in our peculiar situation, sometimes it seems that there is no end to the suffering in sight. However, we can all take heart and comfort from Joseph's story and learn something from it as well. Sometimes the suffering comes for no apparent outward reason, but they can produce fruit in the end. Some of us are meant to be the "wounded healers" that can bring hope and strength to those who are going through tough times right now, because we have been through them ourselves.

A lot depends on our mindset and reaction to suffering. Either we become crushed and bitter through it all, or we turn the past experiences into a learning experience that produces fruit in our lives. Perhaps this column is my way of saying to those who are experiencing suffering, take heart, it is not as hopeless as it seems and soon, if you endure and persevere, you will find the fruit coming out and extend your "branches over the wall".



## An Apology

by D. Strashok

I would like to take this opportunity to apologize to the readers of 'In A NutShell' for an article I wrote in the newsletter over a year ago. It was entitled "On the Road to the MPA" and was a very bitter piece, displaying much venom towards the psychiatric profession, the native peoples, and just about anything else my opinionated mind came across. I now realize that it was a sad attempt at humor.

More specifically, I would like to apologize to E. Fuller Torrey for my remarks about his book, 'Surviving Schizophrenia'. It is certainly true that you can't judge a book by its cover, but that is exactly what I was guilty of doing. After re-reading the Revised Edition of this book, I find it a compassionate, well-researched examination of the problems surrounding mental illness (specifically schizophrenia). I highly recommend it to patients and their families as an excellent resource book to guide them in recovery. The author is well known as an advocate for patients rights and self-help groups in the U.S.A. and has spoken on these topics on T.V.

Once again I apologize and I hope that in future offerings for the 'NutShell', I can bring a more positive note of help and healing for those who are involved in the mental health scene.





**Bookworm**  
**How To Become A Schizophrenic:**  
**The Case Against Biological Psychiatry**  
 by John Modrow  
 Reviewed by Andrew Feldmar

“Like any worthwhile endeavor, becoming a schizophrenic requires a long-time period of rigorous training. My training for this unique calling began in earnest when I was six years old.” So begins John Modrow’s courageous book, which is part autobiography, part scholarly research review. He himself refers to this work as “not a psychological treatise but a polemic.” The dictionary definition of polemic states that it is “a controversial discussion or argument: an aggressive attack on or the refutation of the opinions or principles of another.”

Modrow doesn’t pull his punches when he attacks the pseudo-science of medical psychiatry. He claims that schizophrenia is an emotional disorder with an environmental cause. He refutes psychiatry’s view that schizophrenics are “biologically inferior persons made of intrinsically inferior material: poor brains, bad chemistry, defective genes”.

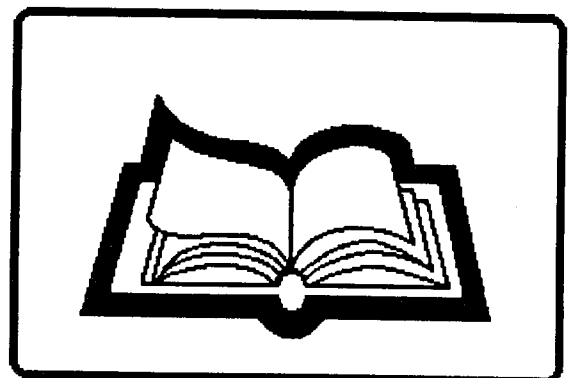
Part I, A Recipe for Madness, speaks of the social and psychological ingredients necessary in order to produce a schizophrenic. He reviews the much neglected work of Harry Stack Sullivan, Theodore Lidz, and Gregory Bateson. Part II, The Making

of a Schizophrenic, is a personal narrative of Modrow’s first sixteen years of life until his breakdown and subsequent recovery. He believes schizophrenia is “the culmination of a series of progressively worsening personality disorders spanning three or four generations”. Joseph Berke and Leon Redler wrote a paper around 1966, On the multi-generational study of the family, in which they conclude, “a person becomes the victim of a complex array of forces operating over many generations which result in the lonely playback, parody, and power struggle recognized clinically as schizophrenia”. Almost thirty years later, Modrow pleads the same case. Will another thirty years pass while biological psychiatry turns a deaf ear and goes on inflicting physical, psychological and social harm on countless innocent victims? In Part III, The Medical Model Reexamined, Modrow refutes many pseudoscientific slanders perpetrated against schizophrenics by members of the psychiatric profession: there is no brain defect, no biochemical defect, and no genetic defect.

Nancy Waxler,

who now works in the Sociology Department of U.B.C., wrote several papers in the 1970s on the effects of social labeling on the outcome of psychiatric illness, depending on societal response in different cultures. She speaks of “culturally-based self-fulfilling prophecies” to explain why schizophrenics have a much better chance of total recovery in peasant societies (e.g. Sri Lanka) than in industrial societies (e.g. Canada). Modrow, without quoting her work, thinks along similar lines. Will another twenty years pass before psychiatry stops putting dehumanizing voodoo curses on already suffering people?

Modrow’s diligent research should earn respect and his book ought to be read by all psychiatrists and patients. It is to schizophrenics that Modrow addresses himself in his conclusion, “but if those people don’t have the presence of mind to reject all the vicious and dehumanizing nonsense coming from the psychiatric community, then they are pitiful persons indeed!”



## An Invocation

by Karen R.

Oh, tainted angel of the morning sun,  
Bear down on us the gifts from  
    Where ye are from.  
And forgive us our indignities  
    For which we have sought,  
Bringing us full circle, lest we  
    Forget not,  
Putting past the trial and error of  
    Our ways.  
To start fresh and new each coming day,  
Making our pathways more full and clear,  
Fulfilling the lives which we hold so dear,  
Finding in the world where we belong,  
    A place,  
For each and every one of us  
    In the human race.

## The Homeless

by I.B. Iskov

(appeared in the CMHA publication 'Network')

Living inside an uncertain world  
Their dreams in a paper bag.  
Sleeping in places you wouldn't dare  
It's the burden of life that they drag.  
Parched veins dry into a complex of cobwebs  
And assimilate to their graves  
Nothing to hold on to - Nothing  
They drown in society's waves.  
The lights of the city shine brightly  
Over the streets of despair.  
Living outside, hungry and sick,  
Winds of apathy blow through the air.  
Their souls huddle in darkened doorways  
The only shelter they find.  
Bodies inflicted with moss-covered pain  
And rejection is locked in their minds.  
In the cold, gray dawn of tomorrow,  
The homeless silently die  
In a world that offers no faith.  
Can anyone please explain why?

## A Seed Was Planted by Susan Brownell

In the beginning a Seed was planted, where it continued to grow inside its shell, protected from the world.

When the time came, it broke out and confronted the world.

Slowly, it adapted to its surroundings. The Seed learned daily how to survive in a hostile world.

The Seed was lonely though as it had no one to explain to it why it was here.

It felt itself growing and changing, but also the Seed felt the Darkness below trying to pull it down.

On the days when the Son was out, the Seed felt so safe and happy. It always wanted the Son to protect it.

Sometimes the Seed succumbed to the Darkness, then the Son disappeared.

When the Seed did give in, it felt such despair and guilt that it wanted the Son back. It couldn't see the Son now, though, through the rain of its tears.

The Seed then reached out of the Pit and cried to the Son saying, "I need your Light to show me the way."

The Son said, "I Love you, and will always shine on you. Please fight the Darkness. When you feel yourself slipping, reach out and I will lift you up."

The Seed said, "I'm sorry. I was easily taken in by the Darkness. Will you please help me fight for life?"

"My Light will always guide your way," said the Son.

"I love you," said the Seed. "I will follow you always."

The Son said, "I've been waiting for this day since I planted my Perfect Seed in you."

"I never realized how safe and protected I would be from the Darkness," thought the Seed.

The Son said, "My only request is that you tell other Seeds about my Love, and love all Seeds as you love me."

"I love you more than life itself. You saved me from the overwhelming Darkness. It would be my privilege to warn every Seed about the Pit of Darkness."

"Now I understand what my Purpose in Life is," said the Seed. "Thank You."

The Son said, "Share the Word, and all I have taught you. Don't worry if some don't believe. I will be with you and guide your way."

Each day the Seed shared its new friend, the Son. The Seed grew stronger and more beautiful.

One unique day, the Seed turned into a Perfect White Rose.

The Rose, overflowing with the love it felt for the Son, shared this love and warmth with the Seeds.

The other Seeds felt the love the Rose shared with them. They wanted it too, and asked, "How can we have it?"

The Rose said, "It's simple. All you have to do is ask the Son to forgive you for giving in to the Darkness. Then follow the Light of the Son."

Some of the Seeds asked, "What if we do follow the Son, but then surrender to the Darkness?"

The Rose said, "The Son loves us. He knows that we're not strong enough alone. That is why we need his help. When you give in to the Darkness, then turn away and reach to the Son, He is always waiting for you, with His love."

One of the Seeds asked, "How can we keep the Darkness away?"

*Continued next page*

## A Seed Was Planted

*Continued from previous page*

The Rose said, "Plant your roots firmly in the ground, and keep yourself reaching day and night to the Son. Also, don't gather with Seeds who are not for the Son, or you will soon get all tangled up with them and follow the Darkness. Then your roots will dry up and wither away."

Soon many Seeds were following the Son, and they changed into Beautiful White Roses, and spread the Word.

The Roses shared their faith, and worshipped the Son for their new life.

The Roses had some hard times, though, when other Seeds tried to turn them away from the Son. The Roses that had their Faith firmly in the Son called on Him. The Son helped them to resist the Darkness, and they gathered with other Roses and grew stronger.

The Roses who only followed when it was convenient for them soon lost faith and fell away from the Son.

Each day, the Roses asked the son to help them lead the lost ones back, and asked for knowledge and courage to carry on.

One day, the first Rose, knowing it was time to die, asked the Son,

"What will happen to the other Roses when I go? Will they turn away from you out of fear of death?"

The Son said to the Rose, "Tell my Roses not to give up. When they die, they will come to live with me forever. Let them know that it is their reward for the suffering they went through for following me."

"You, being my first Rose opened the door for the others. Tell them because of your short death, and new life with me, I will send a Companion. This friend, the Holy Spirit will guide and teach the Roses the way to grow even closer to me," said the Son.

"What is it like where you live?" asked the Rose.

"It's a place where there are no more tears." said the Son. "Nor is there fear, pain, or darkness. It's called Heaven."

When the Rose told the others about Heaven, they were now overflowing with love and joy for the Son. They began to spread the Good News around the world.

The first Rose planted said, "Son, I am ready to leave this world. I'm ready to shine in your Glory."

The Son reached out His hand and

took the Rose up to Heaven. The Rose was genuinely happy, singing beautiful songs of thanks, to the Son.

Every Seed that the Son plants, he plants out of Love. Each Seed is given a choice what it wants; whether to love in Darkness, or to live in the Light.

The Darkness promises: despair, hopelessness and endless suffering.

The Light promises: peace, love and everlasting happiness.

Whether you choose the Light or Darkness is up to you.

I chose to follow the Light. My light shines brighter every day. The Light is waiting for you, too!

Please reach out of the Darkness and grab the Son. He is waiting with open arms!!



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## Homeless

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Matthew 8:20

## Pastoral Reflections

by Rev. John Ballard

In my college days, I visited a woman celebrating her 100th birthday.

When I entered the extended care unit, I spotted, over the reception desk, a motto from the Bible.

It stated in large, bold letters, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

Laughter really is the best medicine. Science tells us that a good belly laugh releases endorphines in the brain. These are natural morphine-like substances that relieve us in dealing with stress.

Science and archaeology are constantly reinforcing biblical truths. Common sense confirms the fact that when we take life less seriously, life release her vise-like grip on our internal workings.

"What is the secret of your long life?" I asked.

"I've learned to live one day at a time," she replied. "With my faith in the good Lord and learning not to take life too seriously, I've learned I can survive nearly anything." Good advice from someone who's lived 100 years.

In fact, when we survey older people, we hear various reasons for the length of their life.

Some say I never drank and I never chew, and I don't go with those that do. Others say, I

had a glass of whiskey a day all my adult life and I attribute my longevity to that source.

About the only thing we find the aged in agreement concerning their long life is their enjoyment of taking a day at a time and a good liberal dose of laughter.

My dear departed friend, Mike Dodman, used to say: "I didn't begin to live until I was told I only had a few weeks to live." Having gone in for a routine medical examination, Mike was confronted with a terminal disease in

its advanced stages. Looking out the hospital window and seeing his corvette—his status symbol, he realized the futility of a self-centred, self-focused life.

That day was the changing point as he began to seek out the Lord of life.

If you asked Mike the secret of his added years of life, I'm sure he'd say put your trust in the good Lord and don't take yourself so seriously.

"Enjoy every sunrise and every sunset. Life is delicious."



## Laughs with Lewry



Did you hear about the psychiatrist who was a cannibal?

He liked his patients cured.

## We Are What We Remember by Sam Roddan

Many good people avoid reading the OBITS. Too depressing, they argue. Too much doom and gloom. Unhealthy. Far better to stick to the "news".

In my case, I have never shied away from reading the OBITS. On planet Earth, old friendships have a way of vanishing, disappearing without a trace. But I have always found the OBITS a restorative, tonic, memory pick-me-up, an aperitif full of surprise. The wonder is I seldom object that OBITS are usually next to the Crossword Puzzles, Classified Advertising Indexes, the Weather Reports for tomorrow.

If you were once a school teacher, you may discover in the OBITS records of attainment of former students impossible to predict on a report card. The class clown of 40 years ago turns out to have pursued an illustrious life in the church. The student you sent repeatedly to the office for smoking in the washroom has had a notable career in school administration. The young lad who knew nothing about punctuality ended up a leading authority in time and motion studies for IBM.

All this evidence goes to prove how little we really know about our fellows. How facile can be our judgements. How easy to pigeon-hole, categorize, label.

In the Vancouver Public

Library, I have often seen grey-haired men and women struggling with the micro-film of the OBIT Pages. An endless search, it seems, for answers to long-lost relatives, family separations, the passing of ancient patriarchs.

If the OBIT pages have no answers, there are always the City Directories. These ponderous volumes record names, addresses, work places. They chart moves, relocations, and, by inference, status and position. Family fortunes can be followed from one generation to the next until, finally, as years pass, tribal lineages fade and disappear.

In Depression Days, many folks could not afford the luxury of an OBIT for a member of their family. And certainly there were

never OBITS for the homeless, the indigent, the impoverished, the down-and-outer of "no fixed address".

But, despite grave historical omissions, an OBIT can revive poignant memories, blossom with hidden poetry... I remember well the notice of the passing of Miss Stevenson, a great teacher of another age... a few words said it all...

EDITH STEVENSON,  
PROMOTED TO  
GLORY:  
JANUARY 19-1929.

I heartily recommend keeping up with the OBITS - salutary reflections on our own mortality, footnotes to our own history, guideposts to Lost Trails, a gentle tolling of words to help us remember.



## In Memorium for Sheri Mescaniuk August 13, 1962 — January 31, 1993

Sheri was born in Lilloett, the younger sister of Randy and Rick and only daughter of Lee and John. Her early childhood was spent in Kelowna and when she was in grade two she moved with the family to Fernie, B.C. where she completed her high school. Sheri was on the Honour Roll of the high school and was the first

recipient of the Kaiser Resources Scholarship Fund set up for the children of Kaiser employees. Sheri enjoyed figure skating, and was an avid reader, coached girls basketball and became a referee, volunteered to tutor her peers in their schoolwork and was a mem-

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## In Memorium

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ber of Brownies and Guides. Sheri was a panellist in Reach for the Top and quite enjoyed the T.V. experience and was pleased to represent her highschool. She graduated from U.B.C. with a degree in Economics and worked for Westar Mining until she was laid off and then taught English and accounting in Japan. She mastered some Japanese and was able to speak the language at a friend's wedding in September, 1992. It was in Japan where Sheri had her first breakdown. She returned to Canada and after recovery time at U.B.C., she was able to return to work at the Hotel Vancouver in the accounting department.

Sheri was full of life, independent but deeply troubled and unhappy with herself. People remember Sheri for the little things she would do. She had a way of finding just the right gift. Her dear



*Sheri and Hans dancing during outing*

friend Brent and companion for many years was a support and guiding spirit for her throughout the years. Sheri worked hard in school and university. She took over as family homemaker for working parents - volunteered this responsibility. She took pride in her work, a super achiever and always expected more from herself. She was a light under a bushel, unable to shine for herself but could be a light for others. Her troubled soul took her to her death. We rejoice in her life. We grieve her death. We pray for her peace.

Scholarship Fund: The Sheri Mescaniuk Fund will be set up at U.B.C. for students in psychiatry and/or psychiatric care. More information available from the family.



## Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmar

"It's a great burden to be alive. A heavy burden, a great big heavy burden. I wish I were safe in Heaven, dead." Said Jack Kerouac, and went on living for twelve more years. Is he just pulling my leg or is he serious? Like a woman I know who went to see a therapist shortly before her 21st birthday, complaining bitterly about the burden of inheriting 20 million dollars upon coming of age. "I didn't ask for it, now I have to deal with it, even if I refused it or gave it all away, I'd still be responsible for the choice!" She droned on filled

with resentment. So, all right, life is extremely dangerous, and death is perfectly safe, and as far as I remember or know, I didn't ask to be born, but now that I find myself here, why not make the best of a bad thing?

This is how I see it. I have some time to live here. I don't know how long. Since sooner or later I'll be gone (in 5 minutes or in 50 years) it doesn't make any sense to do that much for myself. So, why not go all out and work for the

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# Minute Particulars

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Other? R.D. Laing wrote, "The main fact of life for me is love or its absence. This is a generalization for which I can think of no exception. Whether life is worth living depends for me on whether there is love in life. Without a sense of it, or even the memory of a hallucination of it, I think I would lose heart completely."

I am listening to a record of Charles Mingus playing jazz. He is dead now, but I am still enjoying his generosity. It occurs to me that the people who become the best at what they are doing, the ones who become famous, the ones history remembers, are not exceptionally talented, but they are perhaps the best, most dedicated lovers! To get very good at anything you must love doing it, so you want to do it all the time and so practice is not a chore; also you must love the people you are going to share your work with, your audience, your viewers, readers, the

Others. "I love you!" means I want to work for you to enrich your life, to make it a bit easier for you, to enlarge the realm of possibilities for you. Love is giving all and desiring nothing. A harsh discipline. That means self-discipline: what you do is your business. Loving you into loving me is a dubious manipulation, sure to backfire. Al Lingis wrote, "Were we to envisage laws of wealth from the universal point of view, we should discover that the first law of a generalized economy of solar wealth is expenditure without recompense. The sun destines all its forces to annihilation; it is burning itself out as fast as it can. This spectacular consummation of wealth without end, without utility, without recompense and without gratitude is the objective form of glory."

Well, Jack, so we all fell out of mother's vagina and are falling even as I write until we hit

bottom (our personalized, special bottom!). You have already hit yours, I am still falling, but I am having a conversation with you because you have given me something to think about. As we plummet, there is still time to caress, to sing, to dance, and to look into the face, the eyes of Other.

The Other, who is not me, whom I can not really fathom. The Other is a miracle, not a burden! Yet, I know if mother felt me as a burden when I was baby enough to take her for the world, if she was too distracted to delight in me and see me as a miracle, then I may never wake up out of the nightmare she wove around me. Jack's mom, perhaps, was so overburdened when Jack was a baby that she could hardly wait until Jack was safely tucked into bed and fast asleep...

I'll end then with a toast to fresh beginnings! Here is to our freedom to get on with it nevertheless! Let's find each Other and have a ball, all the way to the grave.



## An Evening Lecture with **Andrew Feldmar** "Children and Morality"

It has been suggested by Emmanuel Levinas, a contemporary Jewish moral philosopher, that it isn't enough to be responsible. We are also responsible for the Other's responsibility. What does this mean, and how do we transmit such a sense to our children? Is a sense of morality innate or learned? There will be a time for a discussion of practical issues presented by the audience.

Andrew Feldmar is a Registered Psychologist practicing psychotherapy in Vancouver now for almost 24 years. He works with individuals, couples, families, and groups.

DATE: Tuesday, March 30, 1993

ADMISSION (No Advance Sales)

TIME: 8-10 pm (Seating from 7:30)

\$7 JCC Members, Single  
Parents, Unemployed  
Seniors, Students

PLACE: Jewish Community Centre  
of Greater Vancouver  
950 W. 41st Ave.  
266-9111 Contact Roslyn

\$10 General Admission

## Bulletin Board



*Fundraiser Ina Hupponen hands over the keys to the winner of the Mazda Miata, Bev Nielsen*

Good intentions paid off for this year's winner in the **MAZDA MANIA SWEEPSTAKES DRAW**. Bev Nielsen of West Vancouver picked up first prize; a '92 Mazda Miata - supplied by Richmond Mazda. Proceeds for this event went towards the MPA.

Ms. Nielsen bought the winning ticket because she felt it was a good cause. Her generosity paid off as she rode off with a brand new car.

### FREE BUS SERVICE

Every Wednesday Pick Up/Drop Off between 10am-11am and again between 3pm-4pm.  
MPA - Portland Hotel - Hampton Hotel - LivingRoom - Lookout - Kettle - Coast - MPA  
'Get on and off where you want' (Agencies Activities Provided)

### FREEBIES

For those in need: Free Clothing; Furniture; Dishes  
Choose from a variety of donations.  
1624 West 3rd Ave., Monday to Friday, 1pm to 3:30pm.

