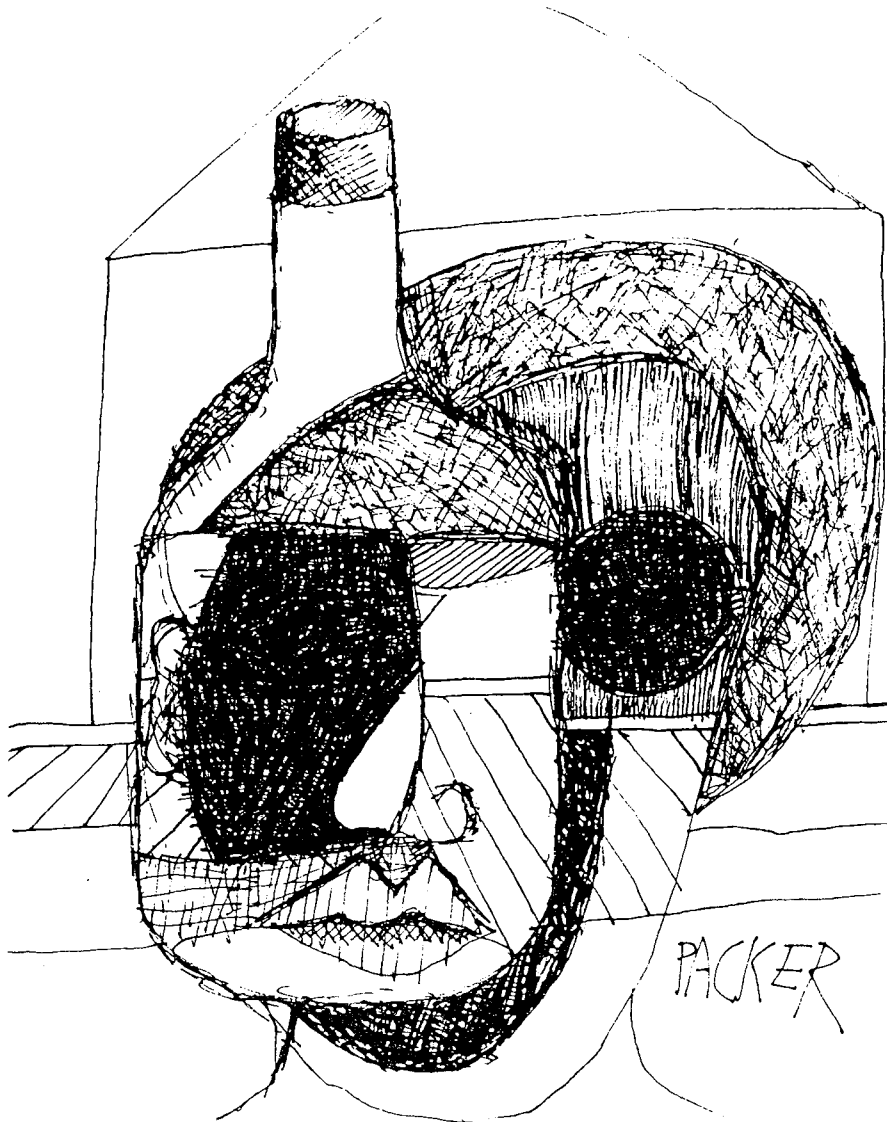


Summer, 1993

In *A NutShell*

A Publication of the MENTAL PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION



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Cover Drawing: by Jim Packer

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Editor: Jim Gifford Co-Editor Dennis Strashok Page Lay-out on PageMaker Software

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Talk to the Kitsilano Neighbourhood Community Network

by Jim Gifford

Many today are caught in the pressure web of an age of disease. The mentally ill are a reflection of society's afflictions.

Manic-depression, the bipolar disorder, is the most obvious. A classic example happened in the winter of my fifteenth year. The shock of President John Kennedy's assassination created a pallor of sadness on the world. We were in a deep state of depression, loss and grief. Yet, within three months, The Beatles appeared on national TV and had us ga-ga with their manic antics.

Our culture also suffers severely from obsessive-compulsive neurosis, indeed psychosis, because of the dictates of conformity and advertising. We are all too familiar with the perfectionism personified by the 'Sports Illustrated' bathing suit model. And our idolatry of professional athletes and movie and rock stars stirs delusions of grandeur. The seriousness of these matters is noted by Catholic humanitarian Jean Vanier in a quote he saw prominently displayed in a school: 'not to excel is a crime'. It is little wonder many of our most sensitive youth succumb to such stress.

Yet, as mental patients, we can teach society what is really important in terms of needs and values. As Henry David Thoreau wrote in 'Walden', the essentials of life are food, clothing and shelter. Through determination and advocacy for justice, these basics

are gradually being met although the struggle is ongoing.

Understandably a vital necessity of those in psychic crisis is medical care. Another is meaningful work. Most do not want hand-outs but rather the opportunity to use their abilities, talents, and gifts productively in the community. Rehabilitation is the key. This involves education of the mental health consumer as to what his/her support system offers. Education also includes the coordinating of goals and methods by those persons providing the services. Networking is the answer. And the public must be made aware we are not murderers, rapists, and welfare bums abusing everyone's time and money. As a friend and former broadcaster, who is plagued with acute depression, wrote in a previous 'NutShell', we must not be made to justify our existence or feel shame with questions from others like 'what do you do all day?'

Respect and compassion are imperatives in the healing process. Mentally and emotionally disturbed persons are on a 'voyage of discovery' through the dark realms of the unconscious and potentially may return as 'wounded healers' with unique insights to offer an afflicted world.

Remember: it can happen to you! I am reminded of a recent tragedy: a young university scholar and athlete fell into depression...and hung himself. So

do not be self-righteous when dealing with mental illness. 'Pride cometh before a fall'.

A painful reality of those institutionalized is the deeply dehumanized and demoralized scars that need healing. In this context, I'd like to close with a passage from 'The Broken Body' by Jean Vanier:

"Do not be surprised at rejection by broken people. They have suffered a great deal at the hands of the knowledgeable and the powerful - doctors, psychologists, sociologists, social workers, politicians, the police and others. They have suffered so much from broken promises, from people wanting to learn from experiments or to write a thesis and then, having gained what they wanted - votes, recognition, an impressive book or article - going away and never coming back.

Rejected people are sick and tired of 'good' and 'generous' people, of people who claim to be Christians, of people who come to them on their pedestals of pride and power to do them good.

No wonder their hearts are closed to new people. They are waiting for someone who really cares and who sees in them the light of love and wisdom, who recognizes their gifts and beauty; someone who will accept them just as they are with no pre-conceived ideas that they should change.

They are waiting for someone who accepts their need to be changed, one who is willing to know the pain of growth and who can become vulnerable enough to love, and so discover the pearl of great price."



CRC Chairman's Report by Dale Kuster

The CRC Membership Executive has a mandate to improve the ambience of the Centre. To this end we are involved in several projects.

We organized a successful Potluck Supper that took place on July 24th. Over forty enthusiastic diners gathered at the CRC for a great meal. Children were playing and members from past years were also in attendance.

A Talent Contest and Coffee House is scheduled for Sunday, August 22nd. Depending on membership involvement, the Ex-

ecutive may provide a monthly function. In addition, we have received tentative affirmation from CRC Manager Ted Rowcliffe that funding may be available to re-decorate the CRC.

We are hoping that membership involvement in the actual work may provide practical experience and lessen the cost to MPA while providing income to members.

We are constantly striving to provide a better atmosphere for our female members by the use of common decency. There will be a

stricter adherence to the CRC rules expected of those few who presently ignore them.

At our September meeting we will have a by-election for the position of vice-chairman. Unfortunately our present vice-chairman is too ill to continue. Although the position is open to any active member, we are hoping an industrious female will seek the position.

The Executive is dedicated to promoting events and environment that enhance life for the membership. But we cannot do it alone. Join us in our efforts here at the Community Resource Centre.



NewsBriefs by Scott Dixon

We are not alone.

The most comprehensive study of mental illness in U.S. history says 52 million American adults - one in four - suffer from a mental disorder at some point during a year. The study, undertaken by the National Institute of Mental Health, involved in-depth interviews with 20,000 men and women selected scientifically to reflect the entire U.S. population.

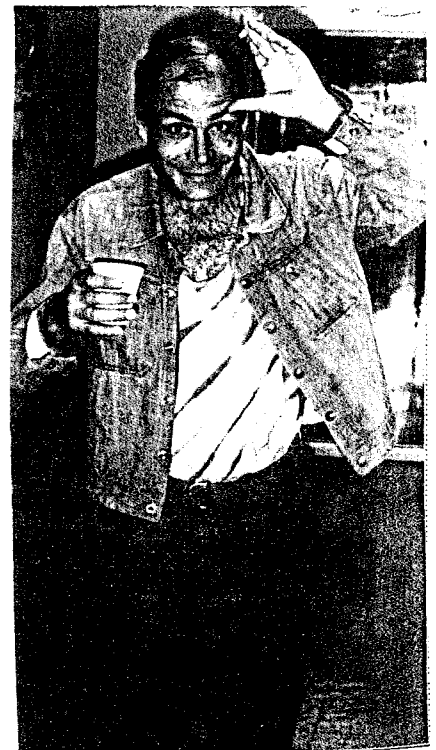
Phobias, depression, manic-depression and alcoholism were the most widely reported illnesses. And the figures could even be under-stated, since no one was

counted as having an illness unless they met the official psychiatric diagnostic criteria for a specific disorder.

The survey means a lot, because the Clinton administration has said it's looking at the possibility of guaranteeing mental health coverage as part of its plan to overhaul the medical insurance industry in the U.S.

Ever wonder what's in your medical file? The Supreme Court of Canada ruled recently

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Curtis Duvall salutes the camera

Branches Over the Wall Pill-grim or Stranger than Strange

by Dennis Strashok

Have you been pill-grim or stranger than strange too long? This is the question I put to you to begin a discussion of the things that become important in a mental patient's life after years of being in and out of hospitals.

It seems that many of us have known the two extremes that pill-grim and stranger than strange represent. Either we are going through an 'episode' where we are 'acting out' and being strange (sometimes just to be different and enjoying that difference) or else we are going through a 'recovery' period when we are on high dosages of medications and knowing what it is to be pill-grim (grim from pills). As we go on in our lives and seek some sort of stability, we begin to realize that neither of these extremes is acceptable. Sooner or later, we have to drop the pathway of continual 'episodes' and 'recoveries' and learn to become grounded and stabilized so that we really can contribute something to those around us in our lives.

As I have mentioned before, in a previous article, one of the most important issues in resolving the dilemma of the two extremes is coming to a healthy, balanced, resolution of the medication problem. Although I do not believe that there are a lot of psychiatrists who have a compassion-

ate approach to the medication problem, I know there are some, as well as GP's, and I know that if you really search for them you can find them. Once you have the proper doctor, then it is a matter of being stabilized on the proper medication. Hopefully, the psychiatrist or doctor will take the time and trouble to find out what your experience of different medications has taught you about the ones that best suit you. The most positive outcome is being on a medication that allows you to think clearly without many bothersome side-effects. I have found from my own experience that I can now even enjoy small 'highs' without worrying about a recurrence of my illness. This is the ideal state, where a mental patient is 'balanced out' and able to live a more stable, more productive life than if he or she were going through the extremes of hospitalization.

Another crucial issue in seeking balance and stability in our lives is housing. Finding affordable, long-term accommodation is essential for anyone who has been through the mental health system. I am thankful that there are agencies like MPA and Coast Foundation that have made this issue one of their priorities. There is nothing more essential to the well-being of mental patients than their housing. I found the group

homes in MPA a pleasant and rewarding experience as well as the satellite housing program that is provided. For anyone who is going through hospitalizations and finding it a problem to get stability in their lives, I highly recommend the housing programs offered through agencies like the MPA and Coast. Nothing (besides medication) has meant more to my mental health and stability than getting involved with the MPA housing programs.

Finally, I would like to say, although there is a 'medical model' of mental illness which denies that a patient is personally responsible for his or her own behaviour, I think that once we have been through the system a number of times, we should have learned from our experience and learn to give up the two extremes of 'pill-grim and stranger than strange'. Sooner or later we must grow into the next phase of a life-long journey and appreciate the stability that can all come to our lives. It is then that the term 'mental health' really starts to mean something.



Stillness

And central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation.

William Wordsworth

Pastoral Reflections

by John Ballard

Question: "I heard a preacher recently who said we should be thankful in any circumstance. How can I be thankful when I just returned from the doctor's office with the news that I'm HIV positive?"

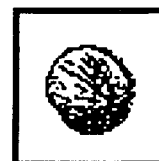
There are some questions you just read and gulp. How can you answer such a question without appearing glib and cliqueish? After all I'm not reeling from the shock of a possible death verdict somewhere down the road. However there is one certain thing about life; none of us get out of it alive. What does the Bible say about the difficulties and crises that enter our lives? Paul, the former antagonist of the Christians, writes after his experience with the resurrected Christ, "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Now his circumstances were less than ideal

when he wrote this.

When he was in prison, chained night and day to a Roman guard, he suffered from beatings and persecution; yet he could write, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." (Philippians 4:4) In the same letter he writes "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

The Bible is quite clear that we are to give thanks when confronted with life's difficulties. James, the brother of our Lord, was an early martyr to the Christian faith. Though he doubted Jesus during his earthly life, he came to believe in Him through a special resurrection appearance. As a result, he became the leader of the Christian church in Jerusalem. He writes, "Count it all joy, when you encounter various difficulties." Now these men knew suffering so we can listen thoughtfully to what they have to say. Surely it's a

paradox, to give thanks in bad news. Now, we don't give thanks for the disease itself but we give thanks for the good that can come out of it. If we react in the right way it can turn out for good. This was especially brought home to me in a recent Oprah Winfrey show; she was interviewing individuals who had tested positive for the HIV virus. One young man stated that it was the best thing that had ever happened to him because it changed his whole way of looking at life. He began to look at what really matters, knowing that he might not have a long time to do that. As my former disc jockey friend, Mike Dodman, used to say about his life previous to the verdict of terminal cancer, "I was headed to Hell in a handbasket." After that verdict, he changed directions and learned what it means to give thanks in everything.



In Memory of Ross Tyler (formerly known as Dennis McInnes)

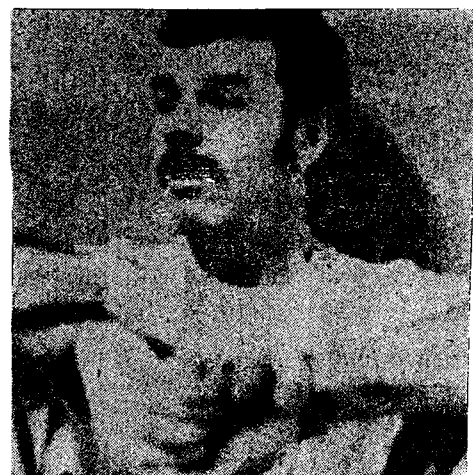
He was a tremendously compassionate person with a forceful yet gentle personality. The enormous amount of energy he put out for people affected everyone he met.

For a long time he worked at the old MPA Drop-in at Yew and 6th, first as a Coordinator and

later as the elected Housing Office Coordinator.

He is fondly remembered by MPA employees J.C. Filion-Terrien, Marilyn Sarti and Betty Senior as well as the many others he touched in his life.

Peace Be With You.



Life and Death of An Old Sea Dog by Sam Roddan

How quickly we write off the nobody, the nonentity, the small potato, the marginal, the guy on the street corner. Yet how little we really know... how flimsy and shallow our judgments.

Take the life and times of Axel Anderson...

Axel was an old sailor, well into his eighties. When I got to know him, he was holed up in a tiny room in the Dodson on Hastings. He cooked his own meals, made his own chaw from plug tobacco soaked in molasses, knitted and darned his own socks and sweaters.

Few knew that Axel was once bosun on the last windjammer out of Coal Harbor, had saved the life of a deck hand swept overboard in a hurricane in the China Sea, was renowned in the Sailors' Home as the best friend of the shipwrecked aground on the shoals and rocks of the waterfront.

Since he had given up life on the sea, Axel had also become an usher in the mission church on Gore avenue. Here he was "spiritual bouncer", guide and counselor to the winos and down-and-outers down to their last drop of hope.

On most Sunday afternoons, Axel rode the North Van Ferries. And as the ferry pulled out

from the slip at the foot of Columbia, Axel settled down with his knitting and log book. "I keep my log book in my head," Axel would say. "If I'm knitting a sock or sweater I just flip a few pages and I'm back on the frigate pulling out of Rangoon with a load of teak and dish-brown mahogany. Or I'm caulking seams at the dock at Akyab or just keeping another sinner from raising hell in the old Mission Church. Or in the Rainier



or Arctic."

I learned much about life from old Axel. Such things as trim your sails when the going gets rough. Stay out of the trough. Keep your bilge dry. Tack to the windward in heavy seas. Batten down in stormy weather. Keep your hand on the tiller. Don't get tangled in the main sheets.

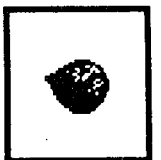
Axel Anderson died in September, 1932. His last request was his ashes be scattered in the Inlet from the stern of the North Van Ferry.

On a Sunday afternoon, a group of us huddled on the lower deck of the ferry. Half way across the Inlet the Minister committed the ashes of Axel Anderson to the care and keeping of the eternal seas. We watched as his ashes came to rest on a white cloud on the shining waters.

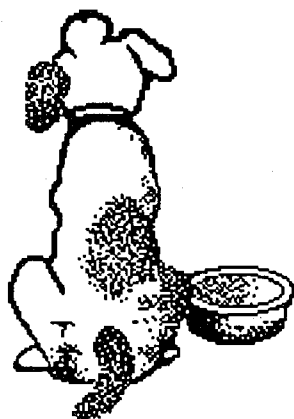
"That's the last of poor old Axel" a dry, shrivelled voice crackled beside me. "Could have done better with his life. Habitue of beer parlors, Patricia, Rainier, that Anchor on Main. Forever talking about the good life. A boozer from a way back."

Done better? The last of Axel?... what the hell goes on! I couldn't believe my ears!... I wanted to shout out:

"How little you know of life. How shallow your concern... Axel's friends were washed up on the shores of the East End, stranded in bars and flop houses. Derelicts, castaways, marooned, swamped by incredible storms, caught in whirlpools, tide rips, undertows. It was Axel who threw out the lifelines, kept heads above water. Rescued the perishing. Oh ye of puny faith! Flabby. Stunted. Wizen. When will the scales drop from your eyes!"



UnderDog by Jim Gifford



Dyslexia is a disability that affects learning. It is seen by experts, family members and society-at-large as a barrier to schooling and advancement in a culture that emphasizes social status and the importance of higher education. But those with this problem may also be considered exceptional.

Both Pablo Picasso and Albert Einstein exhibited behaviour in their younger years that today would be diagnosed as dyslectic. Yet each achieved brilliance and worldwide recognition for their achievements, one in art and the other in theoretical physics.

I empathize with their early dilemma and struggles. I am diagnosed manic-depressive, the politically correct term now being bi-polar affective disorder.

Dropping out of UBC's Law School, I was hospitalized on psychiatric wards several times for my aberrant behaviour: extreme emotional excitability, impetuosity, frenzy of ideas, rambling speech, delusions of grandeur, and 'prophetic' visions; followed by exhaustion and depression where everything would be 'flat'. Such experiences, that often begin manifesting around twenty years of age, are chronic and may be controlled by medication, lifestyle changes, and therapy.

In the midst of the dis-ease, such persons enter the dark psyche of the soul. Weird behaviour is merely the acting out of initiation into those archetypal mysteries of the human unconscious whose origins are steeped in prehistory, perhaps back to creativity's Big Bang. In the weakness of 'conventional' illness, these individuals are empowered by admittance into these mystical realms.

Those who complete this exploratory journey are considered survivors by the general public. In fact, like the aboriginal shaman, who has a similar rite de passage, these people are wounded healers, gifted with unique insights to guide others through the mind-maze and reveal to humanity its holistic nature.

Many with bi-polar affective disorder, in their manic phases, have been dynamic and successful contributors to our ongoing civilization: poet-artist William Blake; writer Victor Hugo; composer Robert Schumann; and statesman

Winston Churchill. Clearly, we must not look on any disease or disability as the end of the road.

After initial growing pains, one's potential may see the beginning of new realizations. We must not give up on our fellow citizens of this noble experience called life.

We must dare... Dare to Be Here Now. This simple phrase states one of the greatest challenges facing each human being aspiring to the art of living. It is the ripe fruit of maturity.

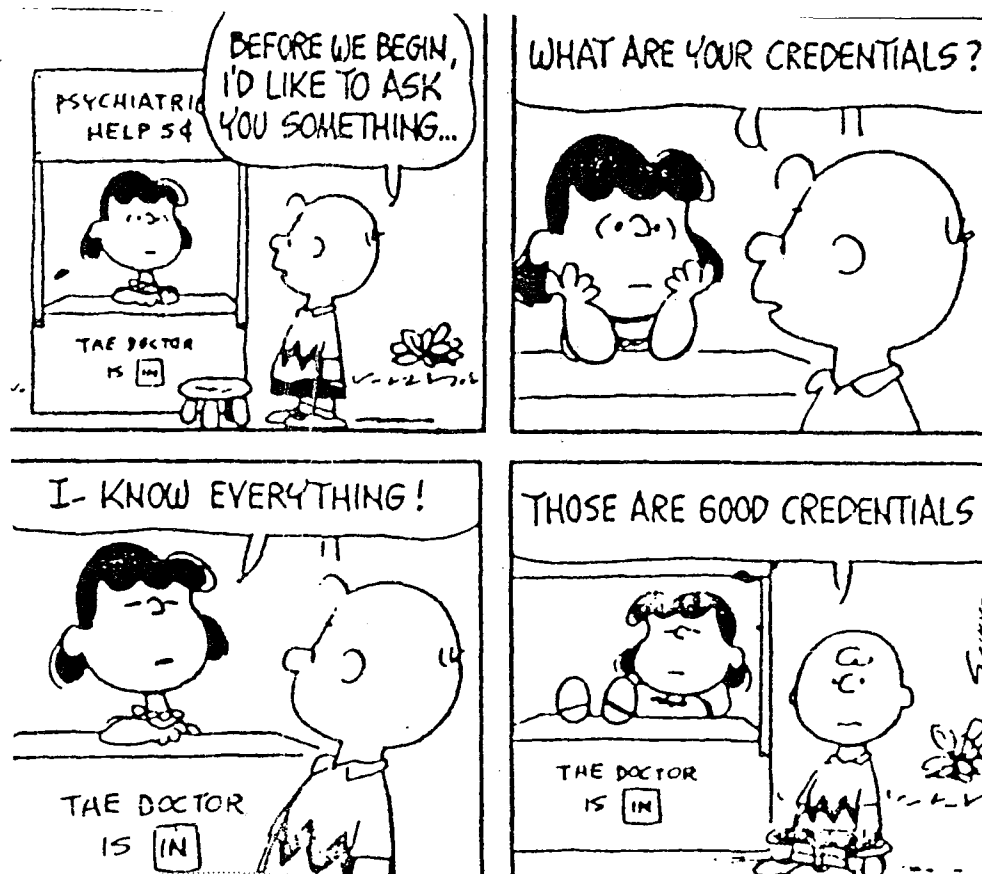
'Sufficient unto the day are the evils thereof' says the Bible. In the Chinese Tao Te Ching is written 'the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step'. Do what is before your nose. That is your Truth.

Several years ago I bought a book of sayings. I clearly remember the title: 'Wisdom Is Knowing What To Do Next'. In the natural flow of things, whether you are in the rush of the stream or in a quiet sidepool, do what is at hand. And when hungry, eat; when tired, sleep.

How often in this busy modern age we set goals then blindly hurry to their completion. We forget the journey. Life is, as The Beatles sang, 'A Long and Winding Road'.

Straight lines are not nature's way. Often in taking steps to our destination, we are struck by the unexpected and must re-evaluate and maneuver. In 'Beautiful

Continued on pg. 12



Three Bi-polar Disorder Composers

by Jim Gifford

Many of the world's great artists have experienced bouts of creativity coinciding with the manic phase of moodswing. Producing at white heat, they are unstoppable.

Handel, notorious for his major moodswings, wrote his oratorio, "The Messiah" in six weeks. And Rossini spun out "The Barber of Seville" in thirteen days. Critics have computed that it would take

almost thirteen days simply to copy the score. After this peak creative period, he then went on a dry spell that lasted fourteen years. During this time he produced nothing.

Robert Schumann's cycles of creativity are well-documented. During 1840 and 1849 he was elated for the entire year, the greatest years of his musical output. In 1844 he remained depressed for the entire year and wrote almost

nothing. In 1854, after his major creative phase, he tried to drown himself, but was rescued, and spent his remaining two years in hospital.

These three musicians experienced periods of staggering productivity and energy and also phases of depression when their work diminished greatly, often to nothing. They are classic manic-depressive personalities who achieved at the highest level of artistic endeavor.



August 6, 1945

by Richard Clements

just as...
just as forever one cannot be
 a rising stallion upon the sea
 or nodding palm in a dream-locked reverie
a common sensibility
 knows the coarse-grained salt
 cruelly packed through the century
conflicts the tongue with wounded memory
 of that brief-sketches shadowed fault
 frozen nerveless in the august wall
 of time's expanding fireball
and how it captures one and all
 in the blind-faced immobility
 of our undetermined destiny.

Come But Nigh

by Karen R.

Cockleshells and midnight bells,
Waiting to see how your fortune tells.
To live or die; come but nigh,
Ending with the relief of a sigh.
For whom it be, unbeknownst to me,
Gives me the guidance to finally see,
The truth behind to realize, that what
Once was fact, has now become lies.
Where did it start, I do not know, I
Just had this feeling, it began with a show.
A test of wills, of powers to be,
All coming full force, from you and me.
Opening eyes to finalize, the deals
That lay behind our hidden cries.
To put an end to this jeopardy
And find our freedom through the open sea,
The open sea...

The Door to Life by Susan Grace Brownell

One icy winter day, a soul was born. Grace is her given name, Grace, like all humans, now has a decision to make. Her decision is to accept the key to eternal life, or to reject it.

Grace learned about Jesus from Christians. She also learned about anger and abuse. Other religions soon introduced her to alternate ways of experiencing peace.

Grace discovered that each religion has a separate door. Some doors revealed evil that she never knew existed. Terrified, she closed those doors immediately.

Grace opened many doors, but her soul was still empty.

Heartbroken and desperate, Grace finally fell on her knees and cried to God saying, "I'm sorry."

The moment she asked for forgiveness, an old familiar door appeared in front of her. Grace remembered the love she felt there. She had turned away years ago because she was angry and scared. Hesitantly, grace knocked on the door.

The door opened and God said, "Grace, welcome home. I am sorry you had to go through all that

searching."

Grace said, "I don't understand. How could I have known that Jesus is the only way to open the door to peace?"

Jesus replied, "I left the way written in my Word. I sent my Holy Spirit to guide you."

Grace, now overcome with tears, couldn't respond.

Jesus prompting her said, "I know you have a Bible from a Sunday school class. Why did you turn away?"

Grace, angry again, said, "Because I learned in church that you were going to send me to Hell...and...I was scared."

God was crying and asked, "Do you really think I find any pleasure in sending any of my creation there. It pains me more than you could ever imagine."

Grace quietly asked, "Then why would you do it?"

Jesus softly answered, "I became a human so I could share your pain, and tell you the Good News of salvation. Living without sin, I then took your sins upon myself and buried them on the

Cross. I left my Holy Spirit to guide you. I did that out of love, so you can live with me in Heaven."

Grace remembering her abuse could understand the agony Jesus had suffered for her. She asked, "Why can't everyone go to Heaven? We all suffer enough on earth, don't we?"

Jesus revealed, "A man found guilty stands before the judge for sentencing. The judge, being compassionate, gives him a choice. The judge says, 'You can go to jail, or promise me you will give up crime.' 'I promise to change,' replied the man. Without divine intervention his chances of changing are slim. When he chooses to continue to abuse his freedom, then what choice does the judge have, except to lock him up. The judge knows jail is not a pleasant place. The Laws are for safety and protection of honest citizens. Everyone has to make a choice, jail or freedom."

Grace understood that Jesus was using a parable to make a point. Grace then responded. "Heaven is for people who obey your Laws. It is for the ones who seek your guidance. Heaven is also for those who learn from their mistakes. I know now why you had to make a separate place. If everyone went to Heaven, it would no longer be a safe, happy place."

Continued next page

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Jesus responded, "Now you understand. I had to create a Heaven and Hell. There has to be a reward and a punishment. I told people how to find peace. I said, 'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and him, with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.'"

"I left Heaven out of love for all mankind. I shared as a human about God's love and forgiveness. Then, I performed miracles only God can do. I bled for their sins. After all this, they still could not accept the truth that I am God," Jesus replied.

Grace said, "I wish I had been alive back then. I would have believed you were God, had I seen you."

Jesus responded. "I am with you each time you pray or read your Bible. I am sharing your wonder with you, when you gaze at the stars, or watch the snow fall. You can see me, when you hear people laughing, or crying. I am there wherever you are in the world. I made it all for your pleasure."

"Why, then did I feel all alone?" Grace asked.

God replied, "My precious

child, do you remember those times when you were little, and crying alone in your room? You were angry and scared because your dad took out his frustrations on you. Do you remember thinking, 'no one cares'?"

Grace, crying again from the painful memories answered, "Yes, but nobody helped me. He hurt me every day."

Jesus responded with tears of love and compassion. "Every night you were crying your heart out, I was crying with you. I felt your pain and anger. It tears me apart to see any child or person suffer. That is why I can't let everyone live with me. Then where would the justice be? The suffering would never end."

Grace asked, "Why do you let people suffer?"

God replied, "It is not my will to allow people to suffer. The suffering angers me as much as it hurts you. I created people different from animals. I breathed my Spirit of life into humans. Therefore, they can choose to be my children and have fellowship and eternal life with me. This, also means they can choose good or evil."

"Why did you give us this choice?" Grace questioned.

God understood her confusion. He asked, "Would you want

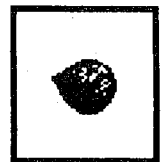
to live with your parents if they always decided for you. If they chose who will be your friends, or whom you should marry? Could you still love and respect them, if they wouldn't let you make your own mistakes?"

Grace now realized, God loves her and wants to share his love with her now and eternally. She knows that she can choose him of her own free will, to be her father.

Jesus replied, "Unconditional Love is allowing the ones you love their freedom, to accept or reject your love. Although it is painful, love is also willing to let them go."

Grace is sure now that God is Love. So she asked Jesus, "What must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus responded, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and, love your neighbour as yourself. Then, I know you will always share my love and peace with others. One day I will say, 'Well done my good and faithful servant: you have been faithful with a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter now into the joy of your Lord.'"



Minute Particulars by Andrew Feldmar

Francis Huxley is son of Julian, nephew of Aldous, an anthropologist, writer, therapist and my friend and teacher. On August 28th this year, he'll be 70 years old. This is what I wrote for an anthology that a friend is putting together to surprise him.

Dear Francis,

My friend, my teacher, my spirit mate! Your 70th birthday gives me the occasion to attempt to express my surprise at your being at all, and my gratitude for the good fortune of personally knowing such a being.

We first met on September 14th, 1974, in London. You were as old then as I am now. I felt downcast because Hugh Crawford had just chided me that if I thought I had anything original to contribute perhaps I was simply naive and ignorant. You eased my mind by saying that perhaps nothing was original, yet one could be original. Mankind had known the same truths for a very long time, yet these needed to be restated for every generation in a novel way. You thought one ought to aim to serve. Through us goes the continuity of life, we are not responsible for its origin, only for maintaining the flow. "Serve with full

attention all your life brings," you advised. Well, life, just then brought me to you, and you have practised what you preached: I thank you for your full attention which you have given me on so many occasions during the past two decades.

Although you considered yourself a second-class shaman (first-class shamans would be more energetic and more direct), I was dazzled by your power and forthrightness. You were to me as one of the elements, and I felt thrilled that you were friendly. Paraphrasing e.e. cummings, you helped to open the eyes of my eyes. Every meeting with you was a gift, as we forged the bond of belonging.

Boy', John Lennon wisely wrote 'life is what happens to you while you're making other plans'. Flexibility is the sign of vitality and youth. Encourage an openness to all possibilities.

As Buckminster Fuller, noted scientist and inventor, knew: the mind is infinite. This gifted abstract thinker, when asked if he was a genius, simply remarked no, he just didn't have any divisions and borders in his head.

Out of the void was aroused

Often when we lived together for brief periods, in Vancouver, on Goat Island, on Cortes Island, in London or Budapest or Littleton, New Hampshire, or Santa Fe, or Berkeley, — you were generous in sharing the mystery of personal life and through that the spirit that moves you. You have enriched my life in a multitude of ways as I watched you skin a beaver, wrestle with a lobster, catch and devour sea urchins, cook, sing, recite, dance, play the piano, etc.

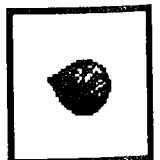
"This fragile life between birth and death can nevertheless be a fulfilment — if it is a dialogue. In our life and experience we are addressed; by thought and speech and action, by producing and by influencing we are able to answer," writes Martin Buber. My

Continued next page

UnderDog *Continued from pg. 6*

an eternal delight for the magic show of the universe. Like Einstein, Fuller knew the paradox of boundless joy and cosmic pain. His creativity was openly receptive.

The secret: simply the grace to Be Here Now.



Minute Particulars

Continued from last page

conversations with you constitute one continuous dialogue that nourishes my soul, heartens my spirit and rejuvenates my mind. Your eloquence has inspired me to be a good listener.

You taught me that the best medicine against taboo is laughter, and it still tickles me when you dissolve into your sonorous, large laugh. It is a form of communion, participation to join you, double over, and hold my sides. I have seen the dragon in your eye, breathing fire, yet it has never as much as

singed my eyebrows.

You have helped me to become a man, to know what honour is, you have encouraged me to consecrate myself: to devote myself to the practice of noticing what I pay attention to, and then paying attention to what I have noticed.

Thank you for loving me and accepting my love.

Happy Birthday!

Andrew



Laughs with Lewry

Shrink: You'll have to pay upfront for a lobotomy.

Patient: I don't mind.



Simplicity

He who knows he has enough is rich.

Tao Te Ching

NewsBriefs

Continued from pg. 2

that medical records belong to physicians, but doctors must give patients full access to their files. Access can only be refused if the information contained in the file could cause harm to either the patient or someone else.

Lisa's smile has been solved, maybe. A British psychologist says Mona Lisa is really a self-portrait of the artist, Leonardo Da Vinci...in drag! (Love to read the psychologist's Rorschach test.)



The mystery of Mona

Book Worm
Compassionate Child-Rearing:
An In-Depth Approach to Optimal Parenting
by Robert W. Firestone
Insight Books, 1990
Reviewed by Andrew Feldmar

There seems to be an epidemic of child abuse, or at least our awareness of emotional mistreatment and its long-term effects has dramatically increased. Why do most parents, in spite of their best intentions, fail to provide their children with a basis upon which to build healthy lives? Firestone, a clinical psychologist in Los Angeles, finds that "parental attitudes towards children are a by-product of parents' fundamental conflicts and ambivalence toward themselves. Only through compassion and insight into oneself can a parent provide the necessary ingredients for the child's emotional development". The essence of the intergenerational transmission of patterns of abuse is simply this: I treat myself the way I have been treated by my nearest and dearest; I treat my nearest and dearest now, as I treat myself now, as I have been treated when I was a child. One way to break out of this vicious cycle is to pay attention to our inner voice, the one that might go like this, "Here you go again. Here you go again, stirring up trouble. Here you go again, bothering people. Just keep your mouth shut! Can't you see you make people feel bad?" This is not my conscience, this is not a positive

guide. This has a persecutory element that doesn't have my best interest at heart. This is the voice of repression, this is my mother's internalized voice, this is oppression, this is abuse. Voice therapy, developed by Firestone, encourages one to stand up to the inner, abusive voice, every time it occurs, and fight it. "Get off my back! I'll say what I want, stop controlling me!" When I will have learned to be gentle, compassionate and loving with myself, then it won't cost me effort to be gentle, compassionate and loving with my children.

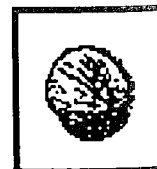
One of the last things R.D. Laing wrote before he died was the foreword to this book. He notes that Firestone "documents here ways in which parents kill and eat their children, not physically, but psychologically. The living ghosts of these dead devoured children grow up to become normal adults and are now, in our generation, continuing to pass on this living death to their offspring. As he says, 'unfortunately.'"

The core conflict in parents is hunger versus love. Many parents confuse intense feelings of need and anxious attachment with feelings of genuine love and affection. These parents tend to make

parents out of their own children. 'Hunger' is another word for 'desire'. Love desires nothing, it takes delight in the other as the other is. Love nurtures and sustains. Love wants to know the other, not shape, direct or control her/him.

These are emotionally charged topics and Firestone manages to explore them with sensitivity and understanding of both parents and children. Still, Firestone's message is going to fall on many dulled and deadened ears. The study of psychological trauma has a rich tradition, yet the insights have been periodically forgotten, repressed. Nagarjuna asked "If the fear comes from the protector, who is there to protect you from this fear?" in the 2nd Century, A.D. Investigators of post-traumatic conditions are often subjected to professional isolation, marginalization. Judith Lewis Herman write in Trauma and Recovery, "When events are natural disasters or 'acts of God', those who bear witness sympathize readily with the victim. But when the traumatic events are of human design, those who bear witness are caught in the conflict between victim and perpetrator". Thus the preference for the disease concept of schizophrenia, hysteria, etc., over the concept of adaptive responding to untenable, stressful environments.

This is an important book, better than Spock by far.



At the Flicks

A Film Review of "Benny and Joon"

by Dennis Strashok

A couple of months ago, I had the privilege of attending a sneak preview of the movie "Benny & Joon". This movie should be of particular interest to anyone who is familiar with the mental health scene as it is the story of a schizophrenic girl, Joon (played by Mary Stuart Masterson) and her brother, Benny (played by Adian Quinn). I found the plot-line interesting and intriguing, not spectacular, but suitably capturing the attention of the audience. A large part of the plot revolves around Joon's struggle for acceptance and identity.

There are very realistic moments portrayed in this film, especially an incident in which Joon is having an episode on a public bus and the 'men in white' come to take her away. The portrayal of the situation rings authentic and true to anyone who has been through anything similar.

Johnny Depp enters the movie part way through as an itinerant, eccentric youth who enjoys doing Buster Keaton imitations and is quite gifted, but handicapped in that he is functionally illiterate. Depp's character is quite off-the-wall and it seems he has been stereotyped into this sort of role in many of his movie appearances. Both his and Masterson's performances are excellent and worthy



Chowtime for campers

of note in the movie, carrying realistic weight and showing us some of the better things that Hollywood is capable of. I found Adian Quinn's performance only passable in comparison, however that does not detract from the enjoyment of the story.

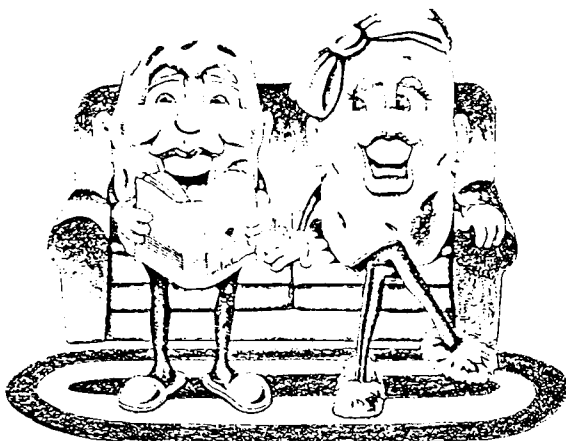
The story revolves around Joon's problems and search for love and a meaningful life apart from the strong influence of her brother. The psychiatrist's involvement is portrayed realistically also, as the role played by Joon's shrink is a bit of a 'heavy'.

Generally, I found the movie, "Benny & Joon", to be a

rewarding motion picture experience. There is some realistic portrayal of the problems surrounding schizophrenia and a satisfying, warm outcome to the story-line. I would recommend it to anyone who is seeking a pleasant movie-going experience.



Bulletin Board



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