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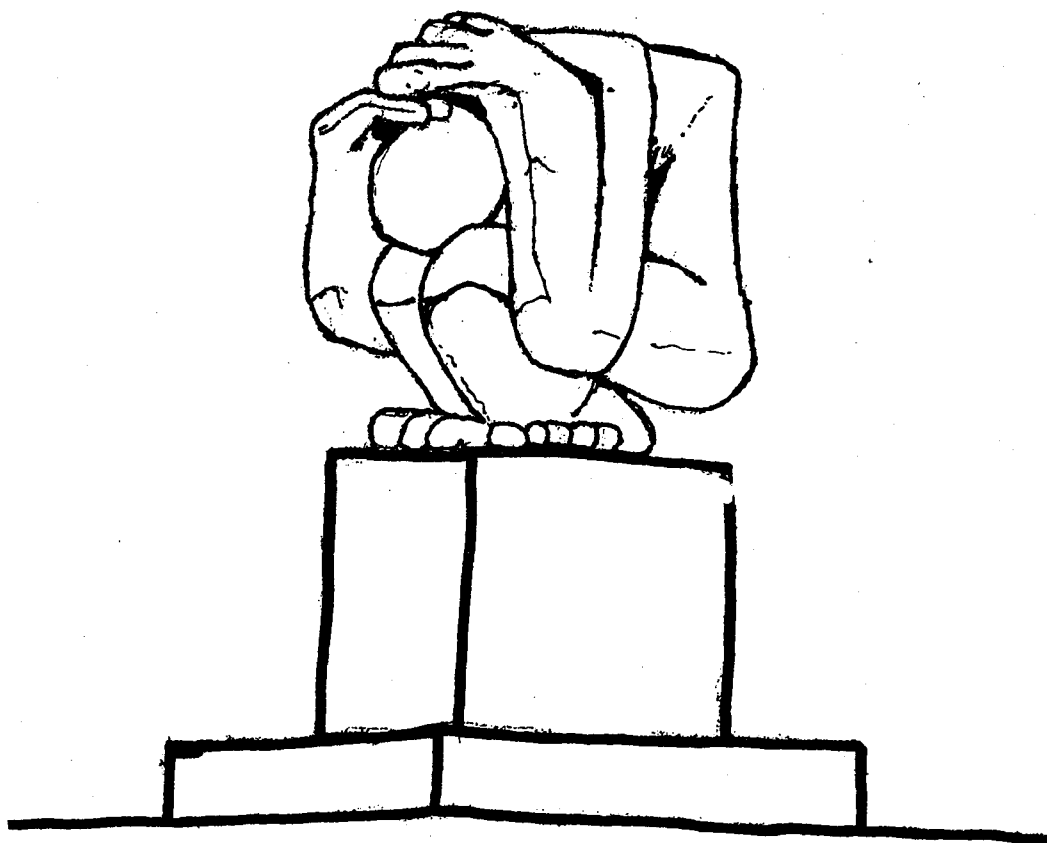
Spring, 1994

# In A NutShell

A Publication of the MENTAL PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION



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**Cover Drawing:** Drawing of statue in Saint Dennis Street, Montreal, by Alberto Garcia

'In A NutShell' is a publication of the Mental Patients' 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 the above programs or housing waiting lists, please phone the office at 738-2811.

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## CRC President Attends Conference

by Dale Kuster

Ted Rowcliffe, Larry Forbes and myself attended the Conference on Psycho-Social Rehabilitation held in Victoria, B.C., on March 1st and 2nd.

The opening speaker was Dr. Gary Bond, a prominent American psychiatrist from Indiana. Bond dealt with advances in the field in major U.S. centres such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Atlanta. While he was informative, citing numerous statistics, we felt that essentially he was condescending; he exuded the attitude that his findings were a *fait-accomplis*.

A confessed 'data junky', he missed important and essential issues of education, good food and discipline as logical prerequisites to any type of rehabilitation or employment of our population sector.

Three lectures I attended during the two day conference stood out as they were both interesting and informative. 'Consumers As Employees' discussed barriers and conflicts to consumer-employee/employer relationships. These are important issues for those of us considering entering the work force.

Hiring practices showed that most of us prefer part-time employment or job sharing. While these practices increase adminis-

trative costs, the increases are offset by lessening ministry and U.I.C. expenditures.

Employees experienced difficulty with prejudices and stereotypes and change to peer status with other staff can be problematic. As well, unions generally attach a stigma to consumer employees, this attitude stemming from societal lack of awareness.

Awareness is a vital issue: our awareness of society in appearance and manner; and, in a reciprocal sense, the impression upon the community-at-large when they see us and deal with us in a normal setting.

Normalcy is the key; being real; eating clean food, keeping clean and looking at the world, not through the rose-tinted lenses of drugs and alcohol, but with the confidence of health and strength. We can return as contributing members of society.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) presented a format entitled 'Putting Principles into Action in Specialized Programmes'. Simply put it assists those of us who may be inter-

ested in small business with expertise, both financial and educational. Elizabeth Mackay, a consumer who, among other things, is a highly skilled motorcycle mechanic, gave a warm and sincere presentation. She talked about the route she had taken, with the help of the CMHA, to found her small business enterprise. For those interested in such an endeavor, it is encouraging to know the opportunity exists.

A presentation was made by representatives of Providence Farm, a horticultural Association of Consumers based on 400 acres, 2 miles east of Duncan on Vancouver Island. Founded 14 years ago, on land leased from The Sisters of St. Anne, the Farm employs 30 consumers.

'Greenways', the horticultural project, produces 25% of its budget from profits made in the sale of plants and produce grown on the Farm. Horticulture is a busi-

*Continued on next page*



George Findlay Schultz and Anit Singh  
sharing a moment

### CRC President Attends Conference

*Continued from previous page*

ness that has practical adaptations to almost every area of urban life. Offices, apartments, boulevards, and gardens all require a plentiful supply of plants. This is a relatively low start-up enterprise, providing overhead (rent, heat, light, etc.) is low. Profits, and thus the ability to hire people and expand overtime, is good. Perhaps we

could take a page from Providence Farms book and try something similar in Urban Horticulture.

'The hand that feeds us' has spent thousands of millions of dollars attempting to restore our health. Perhaps those of us who are capable could help 'the hand that feeds us' by undertaking, in some way, to feed ourselves, for it

is obvious this 'hand' is growing tired. Someday soon we could be feeding ourselves... we'd better be prepared.

Urban Horticulture, utilizing an association format such as MPA, might be the answer.

What is your answer?



### News Briefs

#### Prozac - Curse or Revenge?

In the last issue of Nutshell we mentioned two magazines that recently published negative cover stories about Prozac. Both magazines - Lears and Spy - have since gone out of business. Don't mess with Prozac!

Two recent legal decisions in Quebec say discrimination and exploitation of welfare recipients will cost businesses dearly. One ruling stated financial institutions can't have one set of rules for people on social assistance and another for those who are working. The case was an unusual one; a welfare mother took out a small mortgage; only to have her credit bureau withdraw it's approval when it learned she was on public assistance. The decision, unusual as it is, might make businesses think twice when dealing with the

poor. Who can ever forget those signs outside a Granville street bank in the early '80s; "Regular Customers" and "Welfare Recipients Line Up Here." Or the major bank that refused to open chequing accounts for welfare recipients.

In another case, a job-finding agency was fined \$750,000 which charged the desperately un-

employed from \$79 to \$189 for a list of 'jobs'. Nobody who paid for the list found employment.

Hats off to the CBC Evening News. In a season full of 'welfare fraud' stories, CBC broadcast a powerful story of how a slum landlord kicks out tenants for no reason and the laughs at the Residential Tenancy Branch for rulings that are unenforceable.



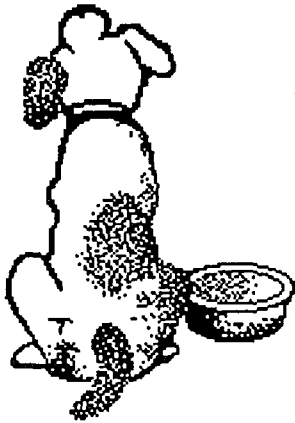
### Letter-from-the-Editor

Apologies for not getting out a winter issue of 'In A Nutshell'. Our staff consists of ex-mental patients and others who volunteer their time and effort. Unfortunately, recently one of our key people was hospitalized. This necessitated taking a hiatus.

Hopefully, we are back on track and will continue to provide a quality magazine of mental health material on a quarterly basis.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

## UnderDog by Jim Gifford



Today I was having a conversation with an old friend who is a psychiatric nurse. She mentioned a comment by a nine year old patient that struck a chord in me. He said, "there are so many things happening, and I have to act upon every one of them."

In the past months, I have reflected on the nature of my "illness": manic depressive psychosis. One of the key factors is lack of focus or concentration regarding sensory input. An overcapacity of peripheral experience thrives, resulting in the "scatterbrain activity" my companion's client simply stated.

I feel that manic-psychosis is scattered psychic energy, the sensitivity to all incoming waves of life-force (both internal and external) so overpowering as to appear to conventional mind-sets as disorienting and, by implication, debilitating. Unlike the

masses who differentiate and select image-patterns according to "survival and interest molds", the manic-psychotic has the mammoth task of assimilating, integrating, and giving meaning to vast impressions of information constantly flooding the brain like a tidal wave. He invariably uses symbols as a unifying tool: telephone poles are sacred crosses; stars are neurons of God's mind; birds are angels.

These metaphors, that make sense of this mind-swamping, also derive from falling into the dark recesses of the mind, often without any guides or maps. The manic-depressive psychotic penetrates the sources of being that have been coated over in mankind's evolutionary history with layer on layer of the "civilizing syndrome". In this dark side of the psyche, they discover many things: terrifying demons; dynamic archetypes of humanity; intuitive magic haunting with its occult power; even God Itself. Psychotic

delusions, voices and hallucinations are the perceived madness that is actually the acting-out, in relationship to daily surroundings, of these newly-discovered beings of the awakened psychological depths. These individuals must go through cycles of expressing these omnipotent images of inner reality until he or she comes to an acceptance and reconciliation of these mystical influences seeking to control and possess him or her. The natural downward cycle of depression is really rest and recuperation from these complex goings-on. The mind's awakened state shuts down in a life-preserving retreat from this double-whammy of internal-external complexity. Sleep is the answer and is excessive in this phase of moodswing. It is a rejuvenating absorption into the ordering of the mind, resulting in quantum leaps of insight.

*Continued on next page*

## Laughs with Lewry

My psychiatrist uses shock treatment...the bill.



## Comes the Dawn

by Brenda Hardy

After a while, you learn the subtle difference between holding a hand and chaining a soul, and you learn that love doesn't mean security. And you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts.

And presents aren't promises, and you begin to accept your defeats with your head up and your

eyes open, with the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child.

And learn to build all your roads today because tomorrows ground is too uncertain for plans, and futures have a way of falling down in mid-flight.

After a while you learn that

even sunshine burns if you get too much.

So you plant your own garden and decorate your own soul, instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers.

And you learn you really can endure; that you really do have worth. And you learn and learn...with every good-bye you learn.



## UnderDog

*Continued from previous page*

An ancient Chinese parable tells of the man who dreams he is a butterfly. Everafter, he is not sure whether he is a man dreaming he is a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he is a man. Perhaps our daily lives are an illusory dreamscape and these deeply-embedded entities are basic reality, emanating from prehistoric times, even to creation of the universe. For the vast majority, these beings are manifested symbolically only in sleep.

Cosmic consciousness is actualized when the subconscious emerges to the surface of the mental iceberg. Like the sun's heat, "The Light" inflames this person. Yet he vacillates from darkness to light until he conquers the forces within and becomes as the poem "Invictus" states: "master of my fate/captain of my soul". In this healing process, the mental icebergs light-and-dark melt back into

the ocean of enlightenment. "Peace of mind beyond understanding of the knowledge of good and evil" prevails. He or she is truly child-like as Jesus commanded we be. Transcendent ignorance is bliss and the true joy of paradise on earth is realized.

The psychiatric profession takes great satisfaction, and a great deal of liberty, in labeling so-called abnormal behavior as manic-depressive, psychotic, schizophrenic. Thus, they take a deeply-felt experience and bastardize it into a disease.

Naturally, there is dis-ease in any major transformation of the psyche. There is bound to be upheaval; a rite of passage is never easy. But are shock treatment, pills, therapy, and hospitals for the benefit of the person undergoing the change or for the express purpose of removing that person from the mainstream of the community, as

he or she is considered a danger to the status quo of a materialistic populace?

Perhaps this majority, who are the accepted norm, ought to be committed to mental hospitals and rigorously monitored due to the prevalent illness of our day...consumer-mania. (It is interesting to note the new jargon for mental patient is "consumer").

The way these people are treated is an indictment of how we look at life in this shallow, conformist "I want" mentality. Let's hope society comes around to allowing and encouraging these unique human beings to grow in the specially gifted ways that are their birthright.

I am reminded of the quote "a mind is a terrible thing to waste". In this new conserver world, we must reveal our humanity by salvaging and redeeming from the psychiatric garbage heap, our fellow man.



## Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

by Brenda Hardy

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry; two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these is Yesterday with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back yesterday. We cannot undo a single act we per-

formed; we cannot erase a single word we said. Yesterday is gone.

The other word we should not worry about is Tomorrow, with its possible adversities, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance. Tomorrow is always beyond our immediate control.

Tomorrow's sunrise is either in splendour or behind a mask of clouds...but it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in tomorrow, for it is as yet...unborn.

This leaves only one day...Today. Anyone can fight the Battles of just one day. It is only when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternities, Yesterday and Tomorrow that we break down.

It is not the experience of today that drives us mad - it is remorse or bitterness for something which happened Yesterday and the dread of what Tomorrow may bring.

Let us, therefore, live but one day at a time!



## In Memory of Marybelle Campbell, 41 Years Old

Marybelle was a true character, a big woman, always colourfully costumed, larger-than-life in so many ways. Her zestful personality, quick wit, robust laughter, and celtic charm entertained her many friends, often over one of her delicious home-cooked meals.

She served the MPA faithfully as Bingo representative.

Marybelle Campbell will be deeply missed by those fortunate enough to be in her midst and who drew sustenance from sharing her life.

Peace Be With You, Marybelle.



## Never Forget by Scott Dixon

Schindler's List, the Oscar winner for best picture, has accomplished what director Steven Spielberg says must be done every generation. The story of the Holocaust has to be told again and again, so we never forget. Six million Jews were murdered not for what they did, but for who they were. Schindler's List contains some of the most difficult to watch scenes ever put on film: A small boy runs for his life, but there's no safe place to hide, not even when he jumps into an out-house toilet hole and sinks up to his neck. Naked women shake with unspeakable terror as they're pushed-forced into a crowded 'shower room'. When the doors lock behind them, the women's primal screams are the screams of persecuted people through all the ages. We must watch these scenes, because we must never forget.

The Holocaust didn't start in Auschwitz or Treblinka. It began in men's minds, and it developed in stages; step by step. The mentally ill were among the earliest victims. We were the guinea pigs for the horror that was to follow. Before the war started in 1939, Hitler decreed that the severely mentally ill- those who couldn't work and produce-were people "unworthy of life". The mentally ill were rounded up from all over Germany and taken to regional killing centres in places

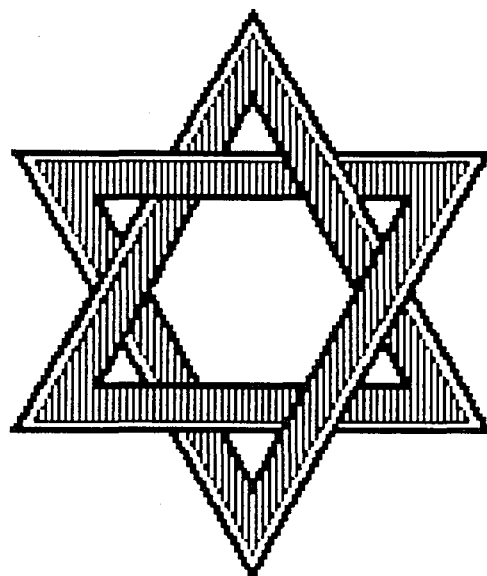
like Hartheim, Sonnerstein, Grafeneck and Hadamar, Names almost forgotten today. But with their fake shower rooms and the calming presence of doctors, the slaughter-houses in these forgotten places were dress-rehearsals for Auschwitz and Treblinka.

As in any new enterprise, there were start-up problems. Injecting patients with cyanide took too long. Some of the mental patients even required two injections before dying slow-deaths in great pain. Such waste was intolerable. Gas was the answer; carbon monoxide could kill dozens of people with no fuss, no mess. High-ranking Nazi's flocked to the killing centres to observe these technical demonstrations of mass murder. What they learned, they took east to places like Auschwitz. There, again, it was doctors who made the selections; doctors who decided which people were to be gassed on arrival and those who were healthy enough to endure a few weeks or months of forced labor before they, too, were gassed. Many of those spared instant death, died of starvation, disease, and hopelessness.

Dr. Viktor Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist who spent three years as a prisoner in

Auschwitz, later wrote in his book *Man's Search for Meaning*: "...man is ultimately self-determining. What he becomes-within the limits of endowment and environment-he has made out of himself. In the concentration camps, for example, in this living laboratory and on this testing ground, we watched and witnessed some of our comrades behave like swine while others behaved like saints. Man has both potentialities within himself; which one is actualized depends on decisions but not on condition. Our generation is realistic, for we have come to know man as he really is. After all, man is that being who has invented the gas chamber; however he is also that being who has entered those gas chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips."

We must  
never forget.





### Art Therapist Interview by Jim Gifford with Linda Shewchuk

*Linda Shewchuk is a certified counsellor/art psychotherapist in the Whiter Rock area. She works with adult males and females, adolescents, and families on an individual or group basis. Her commitment is to the process of awareness of human growth and change. Phone (604) 538-1293*

JG: 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 lives.

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 consis-

tently 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 them 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 I pointed out the problem she was going through, how she had done this one stage, obliterated it and redid 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 might have, 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.

JG: In a book entitled *Moodswing*, Dr. Ronald Fieve disagrees with Freud in the sense that artists are necessarily neurotic. He says manic-depressive artists,

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 they'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 'mentally ill' are beyond that. They are forced to deal with what's going on, the stuff that's bubbling.



## Moby Dick at the 7-11

by Richard Clements

has not The Revelation of the Word  
    in varied arts and tongues foretold  
and Reason's sacred task  
    to unfold the riddle of Nature's mystery  
become but these scornful barracks of the mind  
lettered, labeled row on row  
numbered lists to what purposeless degree of infinity?  
now cast down upon history's sterile shores  
as grotesque barren shadows-  
    still fixed ruins in the present eye  
    reflected monuments to antique realms of possibility  
    electric-charged inviting our complicity...  
and still we wander in that dread life-ocean of uncertainty  
sealed in unrelenting dreams of the I's masked wizardry  
with harpoon in hand  
searching for what some have called 'Reality'  
in the frozen blast of eternity

## A Cymical Marriage

by Gethsemane Swann

Oh, for a gypsy to steal this night  
to bow my cosmic strings with fever  
while the fig-leaf of darkness  
hides my thirst

forty day I've wandered after you  
in my bridal finery  
under dog day stars  
not one vision

and if I could seduce a dream my way  
it might relate that God died  
without a will  
and what morning-after pill  
should be prescribed?

the sun will lift the black silks  
and I, with morning breath  
and thin film in eye corners  
be struck mad and dead with vision  
is that my head across the meadow  
all cross-eyed and idiot-grinned

or would I simply survive  
and have need for wine daily  
and a vow of silence?

or perhaps become a nun  
hiding frump under habit  
while lowering my eyes  
to the young priest's daily wine  
and should I take a vow of silence?

aw man, it's better we should marry  
and walk on something solid

bequeathing quests on reckless children

for I've lain for Cain and Abel  
but you've crawled for an apple

## Bookworm

### What is Found There: Notebooks

#### on Poetry and Politics

by Adrienne Rich

W.W. Norton, 1993

Reviewed by Andrew Feldmar

Rich is a distinguished American poet whose prose meditations on the place of poetry in our lives burn with an inspiring mixture of despair and hope between the covers of this book. Open and read this book at your own peril, for the light and heat its fire may transform you forever. Rich is almost 65, a woman, Jewish, and a lesbian; about as Other as other gets. She encourages openness towards and acknowledgment of others with her being not just with her words.

When in the Preface she writes, "This book is about desire and daily life", she lets me know that my life/work as a psychotherapist and hers as a poet have something in common. For many people, psychotherapy provides the only source of comfort they are likely to find in what is a cruel and confusing world. I provide a modicum of comfort, some encouragement and help in demystification. Rich defines poetry in the same terms.

The context for therapy/poetry is the here and now of both therapist/poet and patient/reader. We are all in the same boat: "an alleged triumph of corporate capitalism in which our experience —

our desire itself — is taken from us, processed and labeled, and sold back to us before we have had a chance to name it for ourselves (what do we really want and fear?) or to dwell in our ambiguities and contradictions". Marx originally used the concept of mystification to describe a kind of power employed by one class of society to subjugate another class. The exploited get mesmerized that they end up feeling grateful for being exploited. Laing studied the interpersonal relations between two or more members of families of schizophrenics, noting that "in the active sense, to mystify is to befuddle, obscure, or mask what is going on between people. In this sense mystification leads to confusion, since the person mystified fails to see what is being done to him, he is unable to distinguish the real issues involved". Poetry demystifies, liberates and although, as Rich states, "a poem can't free us from the struggle for existence, yet it can uncover desires and appetites buried under the accumulating emergencies of our lives, the fabricated wants and needs we have had urged on us, have accepted as our own... After that rearousal of desire, the task of

acting on that truth, or making love, or meeting other needs, is ours".

In A Poet's Advice to Students, e.e.cummings wrote, "To be nobody-but-yourself — in a world which is doing its best, / night and day, to make you everybody else — means to / fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and / never stop fighting". This fight has as much to do with love as it has with politics or sanity. Rich asks, "What would it mean to put love into action in the face of lovelessness, abandonment, or violation?" It would be true political activism.

Adrienne Rich grasps "the deforming power of racism" and sexism, etc., over the imagination. Just as race is a meaningless category, yet "people have defined themselves as white, over and against darkness, with disastrous results for the human community," so is all psychiatric labeling meaningless and alienating. Language is magical: it can degrade, enthrall and objectify, or it can liberate, inspire and connect. Wallace Stevens is quoted to have said, "the real action takes place in the country of metaphor". I am depressed: I am despairing? I suffer from a brain disease? I am oppressed? Pick your own metaphor!

This is a powerful, memorable book. It is a wake-up call to your true desires, summoning a different reality, very encouraging.



## The Mad Genius of Dostoyevsky by David Kahut

Many famous people, people of great accomplishment, like Russian literary genius Fedor Mikhailovitch Dostoyevsky, may have suffered some sort of mental illness, and they (in this case Dostoyevsky) can give some of us who suffer from mental illness, great hope for higher achievement.

One of the greatest novelists of all time, Dostoyevsky, wasn't only a gambling addict, he also spent four years in prison, and

through his writings we find that perhaps he was quite "mad", perhaps even tortured within his own mind.

Dostoyevsky had exceptional insight and writing ability. His main characters, all realized so vividly, led lives of extremes and great intensity. Human concerns, problems of evil, guilt and freedom prevailed throughout. Like many sufferers of mental illness, Dostoyevsky anguished

many questions about God, even past the point of obsession. His characters suffered the conspiracies, committed atrocious crimes, went totally mad (insane) and literally destroyed themselves. The spiritual struggled underlying Dostoyevsky's novels has to be his reality.

I dare say Dostoyevsky paves the way for any writer who has suffered a mental illness. It has been said that he created thought and feeling more perfect than any other literature... certainly something to aspire to!!!



## Minute Particulars by Andrew Feldmar

Many revolutions have been claimed in human history: industrial, scientific, cultural. The therapeutic revolution is only about 50 years old. Penicillin was just being experimented with when I was born in 1940. As a child, I was vulnerable to middle-ear infections. The pain is excruciating but disappears in less than a day if treated with penicillin. This magic bullet was unobtainable in post World War II Hungary, so the infection had to run its course five to seven days, at the end of which, my father sat me in his lap, restrained me with his manly arms, while the doctor pierced my eardrums with a sharp instrument without anaesthetic.

The 1950's produced the first psychotropic medications like chlorpromazine. LSD was discovered in 1943. Current neurology looks to brain function to explain consciousness. We are now fascinated with the incredible power of patterns of atoms controlling the development of the mind and body.

So, why am I more comfortable with the treatment of middle-ear infections with penicillin, than with the treatment of schizophrenia with haloperidol or chlorpromazine? Why would I take my son to the ear-nose-throat specialist with an earache, but protect him from psychiatry were he to hallucinate? Why would I prefer an orthopedic surgeon to at-

tend to his broken arm, rather than apply warm bull's dung to his fracture? And yet, why would I prefer treatment for psychosis in a temple of Asklepios in Attica in 500 B.C., than in UBC's Health Sciences Hospital?

A first-rate scientist recently discovered significant anatomical differences in the brains of 40 male homosexuals. Interpretation: homosexuality can be inherited. So, maybe there is no freedom of choice, no environmental influence. Fortunately, this scientist pointed out that the above interpretation may not be correct: brain changes could come as a result rather than a cause. Ashley Montague found that he could see from the x-rays of children's tibia (bone in the leg) whether they were loved or not.

*Continued on next page*

## Minute Particulars

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The above, fairly random thoughts were triggered by coming across an article in Harper's by Mark Vonnegut (son of Kurt, Jr. and author of The Eden Express), with the intriguing title of Why I Want to Bite R.D. Laing. Around 1970 Mark struggled with madness and at the end of that bout he came to the conclusion that what he had was schizophrenia. "It was probably genetic. It was biochemical. It was curable." Mark wants to bite Laing for suggesting madness might be the only sane response available to some people under some insane circumstances. He prefers to think of schizophrenia

as no more of a social fact or political event than being diabetic or having cancer. His father recommends Mark's book as "An important and perfectly wonderful book".

The therapeutic revolution is young, we have made great advances in saving lives and in mitigating physical suffering. Laing represents the next wave of this revolution. Bio-politics is more complex and more controversial than bio-chemistry. Mental suffering is a function of how we treat each other. Secrets, lies, malice, abuse, neglect are much more difficult to study than MAO inhibi-

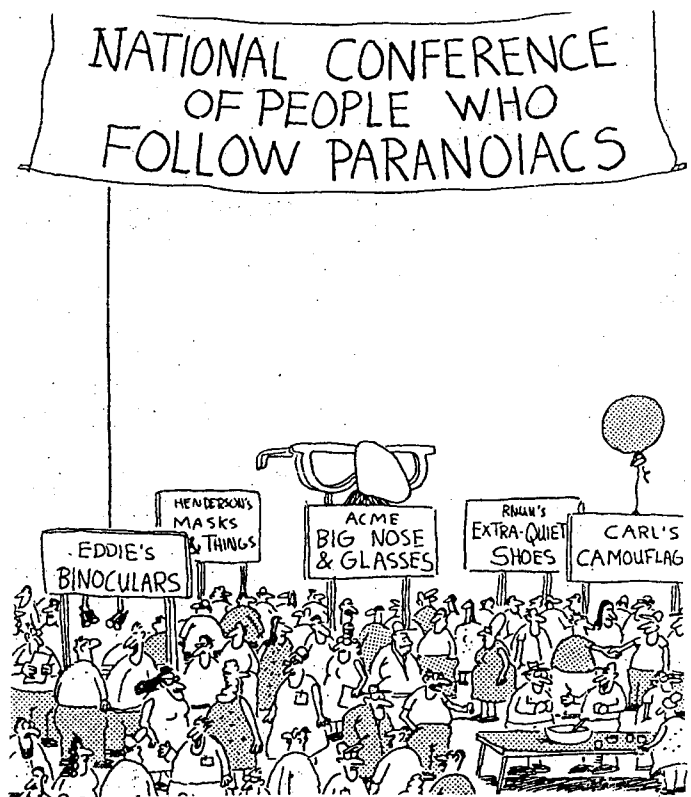
tors, adrenalin and lithium. Near the end of his life, Laing concluded, "In reality, the reasons of the heart and the physiology coexist and must be interdependent.. Many people recognize themselves in Laing's descriptions, but when they feel his constructions are correct it may simply be that they share with him their illusions. Those who disagree with his constructions and do not recognize his descriptions (of psychiatrists and patients, husbands and wives, parents and children, lovers and others) regard his work with reserve and suspicion. There has been a lot of confusion".



## Paranoia

I envy paranoids; they actually feel people are paying attention to them.

Susan Sontag



## Lend Me Your Ears by Sam Roddan

In the '30s, Bob Bouchette was one of Vancouver's best known newspaper men. Everyone read his column, "Lend Me Your Ears", in the SUN where he ran a non-stop crusade for the down-and-outer, men in the Jungles, the lost and homeless at the end of the line.

Bob had a sharp pen. He made words march across the page. He wrote flawless copy even when four sheets to the wind. He didn't waste space on adjectives. He jabbed at the heart, dug for the facts, wrote clean, knew when to put in the "30".

"If you want a better world," Bob wrote, "forget the cuckoo words, soap suds, B.S., and slogans. Do your own thinking."

Sometimes he drifted into my Dad's Mission Church at Gore and Hastings to check on a story. Often he reeked of alcohol and could hardly get up the church steps.

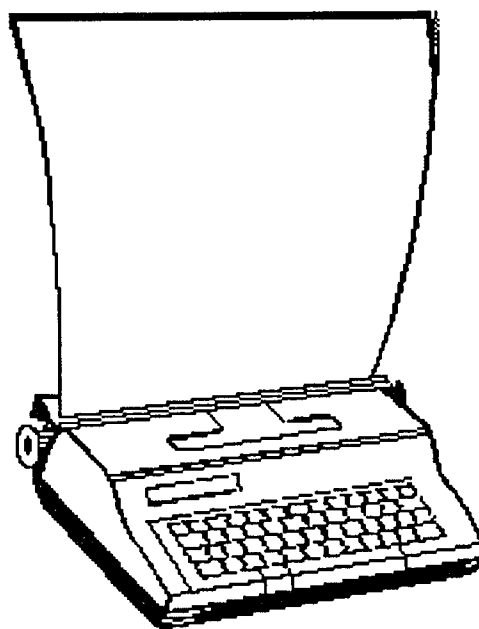
But Bob Bouchette was no ordinary man with a drinking problem. He never gave up the search for ways to defend the outcast. Dad wanted to save souls, make men new, lift them up, put a song in their heart, find work for their hands. Bob thought such old-fashioned idealism was only P.R. for the Man Upstairs.

"The world is full of do-gooders" he said. "Missionaries

who don't want to rub shoulders with the rubby-dubs. Men like you, Andy Roddan, should come with me to the West or the Rainier. Sit down with the gang in the Patricia, or the Broadway or The Anchor. You'd soon get enough texts for a dozen sermons."

But loneliness destroys the spirit, eats out the soul. Bob Bouchette was a loner and suffered because he was always standing in someone else's shoes. Struggling to get the inside story no matter the pain or cost to himself.

In times of distress, Dad fell back on his faith, declaimed his anger, pounded the Bible. Bob fortified his own faith with swigs from his flask, pounded out his rage on the keys of his Underwood.



"We walk around with our eyes shut and hearts cold as ice" Bob wrote once. "We cry over a dead canary but dodge across the street when we see a poor beggar holding out his hand for a dime."

Late in the evening of July 12, 1939, Bob Bouchette walked through the East End then down a shaded trail to Second Beach. The air was cool. The evening star was high in the sky. The light from Point Atkinson flashed across English Bay.

Bob undressed, left his clothing and his watch and wallet in a neat pile on the beach, waded into the water, swam out with the falling tide.

Three days later, on July 15, his body was taken from the waters of Star Boat Cove near the lighthouse at Point Atkinson.

At his Mission Church, on the following Sunday, dad offered a special prayer to the spirit of a man with heart and soul too big for his time. A faithful reporter who met his last deadline with grace and lonely courage.

....30.....



## Nuts for Nutrition

by Jim Gifford with Vesanto Melina

*Nutritionist Vesanto Melina (formerly Crawford) has a currently released book entitled 'Becoming Vegetarian'. For those who are shifting towards plant foods, it is packed with reliable and current information, including recipes and a food guide.*

*Vesanto has appeared on the CBC National News, in Macleans Magazine, and counts rockstar Bryan Adams among her clients.*

*For information about cooking courses or consultation phone (604) 732-6023.*

JG: I was reading page 35 of "Hypoglycemia" by Dr. Paavo Airola and psychiatrist, Dr. Harry Salzer, points out that hypoglycemia can mimic neuropsychiatric disorders and patients with low blood sugar have been diagnosed as schizophrenic, manic-depressive psychotic and as having psychopathic personalities. Would you comment?

Vesanto: Well, I've been working with people who have addictions or the children of people who have addictions because things like blood sugar problems run in families and I would think that many of the mental patients reading this newsletter would be from families where there was alcoholism or other addictions.

It's very important and also wonderful to start understanding how your metabolism works, because we identify with the ways

we feel, as if that was us, when, actually, our body isn't working properly. If we can learn how to operate it better, we can feel a whole lot better, and it's just a fact of the nutrition we put in, the fuel, and how we look after our body. It is very important to understand blood sugar patterns.

A lot of people have not learned how to prepare food and eat in ways that work for them. We can start flying high, then feel really depressed in cycles as the blood sugar goes up and down. Sometimes we take caffeine or sugars to bring our blood level up and then crash afterwards.

JG: In terms of nutrition, what is causing low blood sugar?

Vesanto: It's partly caused by our biochemistry and partly how we treat our bodies. Each of us will inherit a certain physiology in the way our body works. And each person has a 'Achilles' Heel', a part of the body that may suffer from weakness.

In the 'glucose tolerance test', you can look at blood sugar patterns and hypoglycemia. You go into a lab after fasting overnight. You plan to spend the morning. You have a sample of blood taken, then they analyze it for sugar. A person is given a big drink of syrup and, every hour after that (for 3 to 6 hours), a blood sample is taken. You can also watch your reactions. With a normal person,

the blood sugar rises and after about an hour, it will start dropping, staying within the normal range; levels out. With hypoglycemia there is a rise, but it is followed by a drop below the normal range. That blood sugar level drop is quite sharp. When it drops, we really notice it, because our brain is fueled by glucose. The brain starts freaking out: "Get some fuel here!"

JG: You had this problem. How did you cure it through nutrition?

Vesanto: By learning how to eat better in a pattern that works. Eat small, frequent meals. Make sure there is some protein and complex carbohydrates such as a bagel, a pancake (no syrup), a bran muffin, or a cracker. These foods will produce a rise in blood sugar. Another good food that has starch and protein are legumes; things like homous, pea soup, lentil soup or baked beans.

Caffeine and nicotine initially increase your blood sugar because they help to get the reserves of sugar into your body. Then you get a crash.

Sugar and fruit go into your system in 10 to 30 minutes. Starches (whole grain flour, oatmeal, pasta, potatoes) will raise your blood sugar level for a longer period. The reason this works is that complex carbohydrates or starches are long chains of glucose molecules stuck together. In digestion, they are slowly broken down and so you have a slow feeding of fuel into the brain. Whereas,

*Continued on next page*



## Pastoral Reflections by Rev. John Ballard

Why did he do it? Why did he do it? This anguished cry comes from the lips of a sorrowing mother as she bends over the dead body of her teen-age son. He had committed suicide. Why does a young person end up taking their life?

A recent report states suicide among young Americans is increasing by almost epidemic proportions.

The U.S. NEWS AGENCY added that those officially listed as suicide only represented the tip of the iceberg. For every suicide death, it is conservatively estimated that there are approximately 8 to 10 times as many suicide attempts. Ann Landers stated, "If all the facts were known, suicide would probably be in 4th place as the cause of death". Well, why do they do it? The news report gave two reasons:

First, it said the illegal use of drugs is mostly to blame. Secondly, factors such as excessive violence in films and television are also a factor.

However, I believe that the use of drugs and increased violence in films are only symptoms of a much larger disease which plagues many of us. It goes much deeper than drugs and violence in films; it concerns our whole lifestyle. There is a growing despair with living. Young people have been led down the garden

path to believe that pleasure is the cure-all for all their ills. We live in a play-ground world and one must crowd all the pleasures you can into your short life. It's the Hedonistic philosophy of eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die. It's a playboy and playgirl world. But trying to live in a funhouse in order to escape the stark realities of life only works for a short time. There comes with it a growing sense of lostness, futility and despair.

Kurt Corbain of rock music group, Nirvana committed suicide. In an interview just previous to his death, he was asked if money can bring you happiness. His response was that initially it brings a high but then before long the unhappiness sets in again.

Dr. Tom Dooley, who helped the people of Indo-China, was asked why he would spend his life working around the clock mending the bodies of people he hardly knew. His response was

that he was basically a selfish person and in his upbringing there was a lot of prayer. They prayed at the start of the day; mid-day; at the end of the day. His father taught him the rules of happiness. They are called the beatitudes. One beatitude which he took for his life verse is this one - "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted."

When one becomes aware of the suffering in this world and begins to serve others one becomes happy. The key to a long life is finding a need that others have and then meeting that need. True happiness and the desire to live is found in serving God and others.



## Communications

Unfortunately, sometimes people don't hear until you scream.

Stefanie Powers

## Nuts for Nutrition *Continued from previous page*

when you have a quick syrup drink, it goes quickly into your cells.

For breakfast you could have a fruit juice, a bran muffin, and a piece of cheese or glass of milk, or toast with peanut butter. At lunch, you could have a sandwich that has protein with whole grain bread or rice. A lot of people

who have these fluctuations need something around 4 in the afternoon. Then have a nourishing supper of whole foods.



### Bulletin Board

#### Scholarship Fund

In memory of Sheri Mescaniuk, a Scholarship fund in her name has been set up at U.B.C. for students in psychiatry and/or psychiatric care. More information available from the family or MPA.

#### Thanks

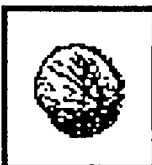
Special Thank you to Marlene Calloway who contributed to the dinner on Easter Monday. Her ham tomato/almond dish, carrot/raisin salad, potato salad and dozens of hard-boiled eggs fed over 30 hungry people. Thanks, Marlene for your much appreciated work.

#### FREEBIES

For those in need: Free clothing;Furniture;Dishes

Choose from a variety of donations

At Community Resource Centre, 1739 W. 4th Ave., Monday to Friday,  
9 am to 11:30 am and 1pm to 3:30pm.



To past supporters of MPA - **THANK YOU!** Your contribution has helped to ensure that quality services are maintained for people with emotional/psychiatric problems.

For those of you who would like to make a donation - it's easy! Just fill out the attached donor card and mail, with your cheque, to:

**THE MENTAL PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION**  
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Vancouver, B.C., V6J 1M2

Please make cheques payable to the Mental Patients' Association



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