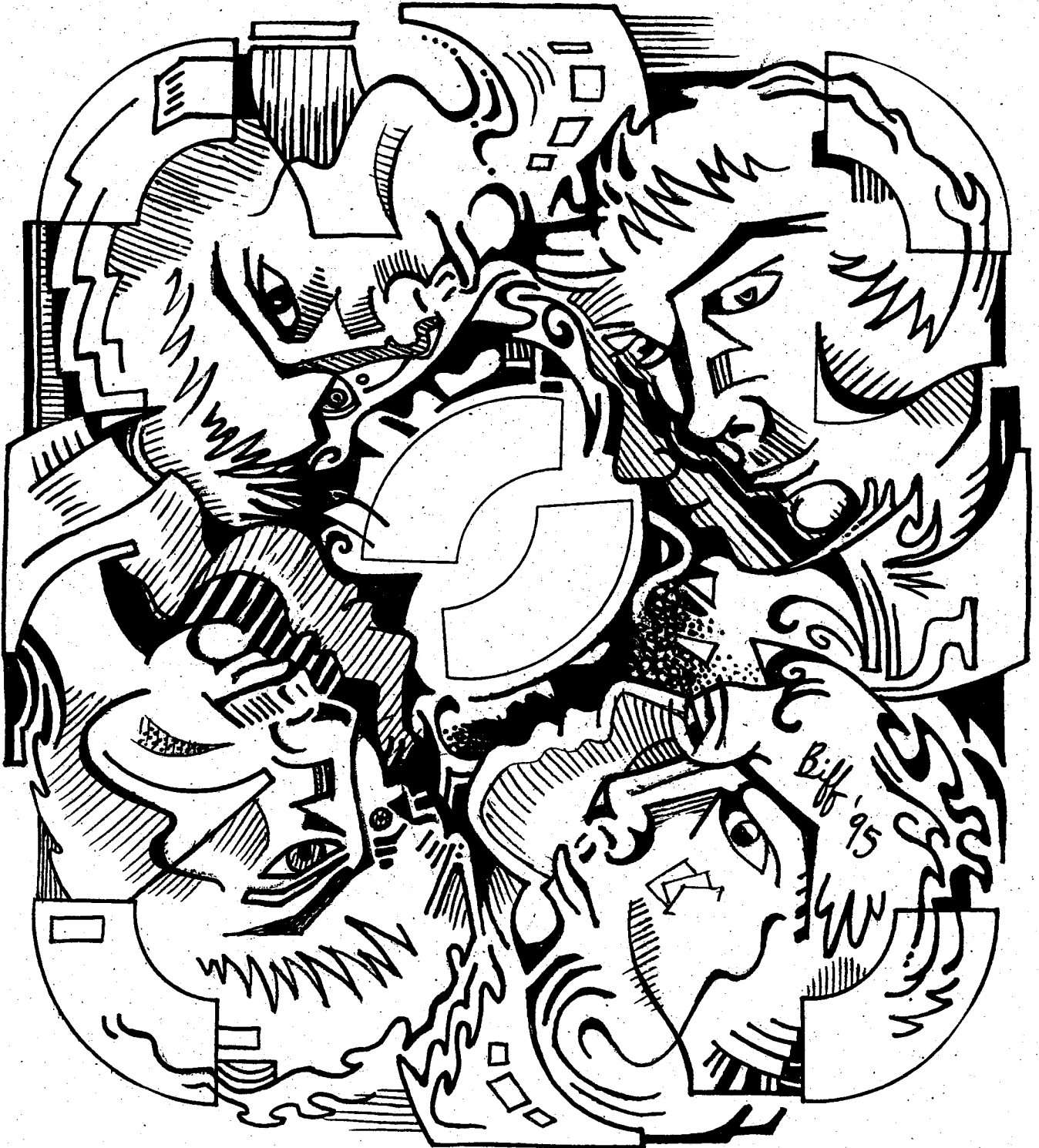


Summer-Fall, 1995

In A NutShell

A Publication of the MENTAL PATIENTS' ASSOCIATION



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'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 of the above programs or housing waiting lists, please phone the office at 738-2811.

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Page Layout by Dennis Strashok on PageMaker Software

The opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the individual writers and not necessarily those of the MPA. Donations toward the cost of 'In a Nutshell' will be graciously accepted by MPA.

The 1995 Annual Picnic and Harry Cragg Memorial by Sharon Matsubara

I closed my eyes and envisioned the picnic. How I wanted it to turn out well. It is easy to control events in our own mind. The problem is how well they turn out in reality. Despite the fact that I was new at the MPA, I appreciated the feeling that everybody had a mutual goal; to make it better for the members. The picnic was one way to do it and I had no doubt that everyone would pitch in to ensure its success.

It was picnic time. I stood under blue sky. The weather had cooperated despite the dreary

forecasts. I looked around, Braum was busy at the barbecue. Emily manned the food table which consisted of great salads that the staff from the residences brought. J.C. and Dan were everywhere. It was great to see the staff from the residences all getting involved in helping with the food and the games. Most exciting, however, was to see the members at the picnic tables, lying on the grass, playing games and playing baseball. It was a wholesome feeling.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for all their help, without whose help this

picnic would not have been a success. I'd like to thank the staff that brought the salads, pies, cookies, melons and the drink. I'd like to express special thanks to the members at the CRC that helped load and unload the van and a very special thanks to Frank who was at the park from the start, helping set everything and then staying at the wheel of prizes throughout the whole picnic.

It was the end of the day. I was sitting at home closing my eyes, visualizing how the picnic went. It couldn't have been better and it is all because of YOU! To all members and staff of MPA, I thank you all.



Once again, over 100 MPA members enjoyed the Annual Picnic and Harry Cragg Memorial Softball Tournament. Here, Jan Reich tries his fortune at the basketball hoop.

Maurizo Baldini's Story

by Maurizo Baldini

© Dr. Philip Long (Internet Mental Health)

I have been living with schizophrenia for the past 18 years. I first became ill when I was attending university in Vancouver when I was 22 years old. At that time I was enrolled in my second year at law school in UBC, University of British Columbia, having already completed a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Victoria the previous year. I was enjoying myself and taking part in many activities. Socially, I had quite a few friends and acquaintances, athletically, I was jogging five miles four times a week, I played tennis and soccer, bicycled, skied, went scuba diving, mountain climbing and hiking. During my first year at law school my grades were in the top quarter of my class and I had no problems handling the stresses of university life.

Within a few days in October 1976 all of this came to a crashing halt as I suddenly experienced my first psychosis. I can still remember those experiences even now 18 years later. At first I thought I was coming down with the flu since the abnormal mental state I was experiencing was similar to the viral delirium of influenza but as I stayed in bed for a day my symptoms got even worse. I began to have delusions about the state of the world around me.

Suddenly the noises made by cars and planes going by outside my house took on secret and deliberate meanings. I became convinced that I was involved in the start of a nuclear war and the only way for me to survive was to find the answer to a difficult riddle. During this first episode of psychosis I fluctuated between wild delusions of grandeur to deep depressions about my future. I thought I would become the next prime minister of Canada and rule by divine right over a new world order for our citizens. I was also visited by demonic voices. These grotesque distortions tormented me day and night until I could no longer distinguish between reality and nightmares.

In hindsight, one of my most dangerous delusions was probably the belief that I could fly, for if I had found a tall building, I might have easily climbed to the top and tried to jump off to test it out.

During the second day of my psychosis I began to wander in the streets of Vancouver following my disrupted thoughts and hoping to find the answer to all of life's problems. After a few hours I ended up in someone's backyard. I had another delusion that I had been magically transported 20 years into the future and owned

a mansion I had at random found. Sitting there was almost blissful, the delusion at that point was even enjoyable; however, within a few minutes a police car arrived on the scene and asked me what I was doing there. I thought that they were part of the conspiracy to have me made the next prime minister so I was quite friendly towards them as if I had been expecting them to arrive. After a few minutes they made some enquiries over the radio telephone and called for an ambulance. The attendants arrived and took me to the emergency room at the nearest hospital.

When I got to the hospital, I got even more paranoid. I thought the nurses and doctors were plotting to kill me. I had a wild delusion similar to a horror movie plot that hospitals were not places where people go to get better but rather where people go to get killed and then were chopped up into processed food and fed to everyone. I was placed in the psychiatric observation unit for 24 hours. My symptoms got worse. I began to hallucinate more intensely and the constant delusions continued. Eventually the medical staff got in touch with a friend of mine who was a second year medical student at the time. He came to see me the next day and brought a psychiatrist with him who I agreed to see. Even with all my delusions and paranoia I guess I still had enough trust in my friend and agreed to do

(Continued on page 10)

Profile of Sherri by Carol Swan

Eight years ago, Sherri Sims got into her car and drove. Someone was after her, but she didn't know who. Maybe the police, old friends, or strangers she saw on the street. After driving from her home in Kelowna to Alberta, she turned back and didn't stop until she reached a hospital in Clearbrook.

"I'm scared," she told the staff on duty. "Something's wrong but I don't know what."

The diagnosis was schizophrenia. This illness may make people hear voices, can disorganize their thoughts or make them believe strange things. An estimated 1 in 100 people in B.C. have schizophrenia.

With the help of medication and strong support from her family and friends, Sims, now 40, can cope with her illness.

She gave up her job as a government payroll clerk, but started working part-time as a hotel chambermaid last year. She cares for the home she shares with her husband Gord, and visits schools and community organizations to help educate people about mental illness.

"I lost my career, I lost my self-confidence and my self-esteem," says Sims. "I was like a child looking up a flight of stairs and not knowing how to get to the top. Gradually, I've been going up those stairs again."

Having a wife with schizophrenia has also been tough, says Gord Sims. "It was a struggle at first, and sometimes it still is, but you deal with it. It's part of life now for us."

Because of her illness, Sherri takes medication every day and finds she tires easily. Although she likes her new job, she makes less money than she used to. She fears she may get sick again.

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, about a third of people with schizophrenia recover after only a few schizophrenic episodes. Another third have recurring episodes throughout their lives, but have good periods in between. The rest have chronic schizophrenia.

Sherri and Gord learned a lot about schizophrenia from their local chapter of the B.C. Schizophrenia Society. One of the 23 member organizations of the B.C. Mental Health Communications Council, the Schizophrenia Society helps families cope with having a relative with schizophrenia.

Sherri and Gord went to their first Schizophrenia Society meeting soon after she checked into hospital. Since then, they have become active members.

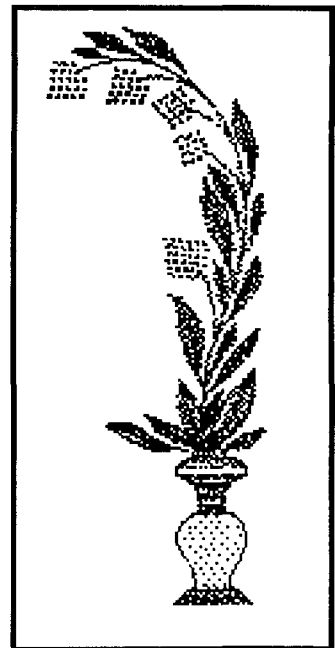
Sherri helped start a local Partnership Program in Kelowna to bring information about schizophrenia into schools and the work-

place. Both have given presentations about their experiences. Neither knew anything about schizophrenia before Sherri became ill.

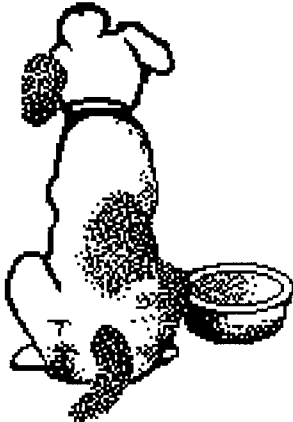
"I was like everybody else - out of sight, out of mind," says Gord Sims. "But now I've done a 360 degree turn. It has to be brought out in the open and it has to be accepted."

Even in the last eight years, the Sims' see changes in people's attitudes.

"We've noticed a big difference. There isn't that deadly silence anymore," says Sherri. "Schizophrenia is a word like any other and we've educated people until it's a household word. It's not something that has to be said in hushed tones."



UnderDog by Jim Gifford



For over six years, from October '87 to February '94, the MPA's Resource Centre was my main haunt. The characters and circumstances encountered there taught me a great deal about people and life.

Those who collect there each day and evening are society's street people; the malcontents; the poor; the homeless; the majority with the common diagnosis of mental illness.

Behaviour patterns are as numerous as the individuals who spend time at The Centre. Some are withdrawn; others flamboyant and talkative; the religious and free-thinker mingle; and most are on the emotional edge. The honesty of feelings is overwhelming. You always know where you stand with anyone.

I found the countless vibrational levels of those gathered

to be both an intoxicant and an irritant. One moment you'd be riding high, joking and laughing, and suddenly someone would cross your path and you'd be shouting. But, at least you'd be living in the moment.

As one writer noted, street people are driven into the present. Past pain and future futility has led them to this space. At such times, they are truly the sanest souls to be found.

Many are lost however. They are seekers, endeavoring to catch a glimpse of paradise, of 'peace beyond understanding'. Like saints and sages, monks and mystics, down through eternity, these 'least of men', pass through the heart of darkness in search of 'The Light'. As did Jesus, they often have 'no place to lay their heads'. Each has a cross to bear, namely rejection and impoverishment for the 'societal sacrilege' of disease and unproductivity and they see the sham and pretense of our civilization.

These, the downtrodden, have been my cohorts in life experience. Thus, I give thanks for the pain and trials of my afflicted years. For it has brought these invaluable people into my world.

Like all humankind, my fellow comrades are 'struggling between the two immensities of

birth and death'. They have stumbled and fallen. Yet, in their lowliness, they attain the secret of experiencing life's immediacy.

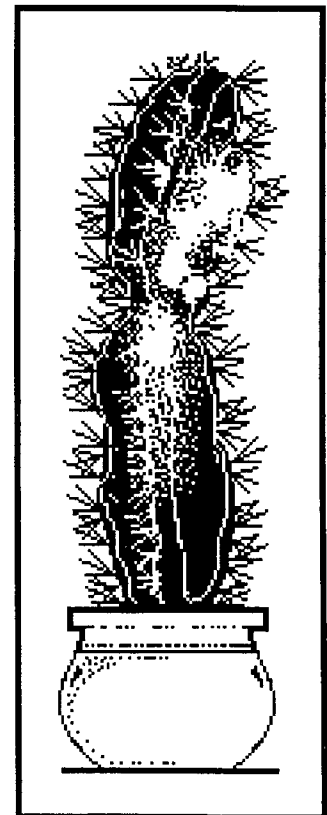
'In weakness, strength'.



Communication

Accustom thyself to attend carefully to what is said by another and, as much as it is possible, be in the speaker's mind.

Marcus Aurelius



Minute Particulars

by Andrew Feldmar

In The Tempest we read, "In one voyage / Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis, / And Ferdinand her brother found a wife / Where he himself was lost; Prospero his dukedom / In a poor isle; and all of us ourselves / When no man was his own." How do I find myself? One of the most cherished discourses of the Buddhist Canon, the Diamond Sutra, warns over and over again to give up the illusion of the idea of an ego-identity, a personality, a being, or a separated individuality. "I am my own man": worthwhile goal or mistaken illusion?

The writer, Isaak Babel, always wanted to know what other people were thinking. There was the legend in his native Odessa that he would treat people to a meal or a book in return for the story of their first love. Had he asked me, I might have told him about Olga. I was 15, living in Budapest with my mother. Olga was 16, and we met at a dance. The experience of falling in love was overwhelming, incomparable to any previous event. I knew enough to try and hide it all from my mother, but soon she knew and found out who the girl was I was so smitten with. And then she told me that Olga was ugly, stu-

pid, a whore, from a socially unacceptable family, and that I couldn't really be in love with her, because no son of hers could be that much of an idiot. I could see clearly the bind I was in; either I trusted my experience, in which case I had to deal with the very unpleasant reality of seeing my mother as a malicious, jealous, possessive, crazy-making enemy, or I trusted my mother, in which case I would have had to give up right there and then to navigate via my experience, give up considering myself sane and hang on to her as my only guide in a dangerous world. The cost of the first alternative was losing my mother, the cost of the second avenue was losing myself, my sovereignty.

I decided to save myself and when an opportunity presented itself in the guise of the Hungarian Revolution (1956), I left my native country, fleeing from my mother who undermined my fledgling attempts to take my experience seriously. For what else can one go on? If I follow my desire I may make mistakes, but at least I can learn from them, calibrating, so to speak, the interpretation of my own experiences. If I follow what I take to be some-

one else's desire, I begin to live in a world of imagination, illusion, or what's even worse, a world of slavery.

The conclusion of very recent scientific research was that the urge to find affiliation, our need to belong, is as imperative as our hunger, thirst, sleep and sex drives. It is a tragedy that so often the price of affiliation is the abdication of one's sovereignty. We are each of us a singular minority and the majority excludes everybody.

The invitation we are all waiting for is "Come as you are!". We all yearn to meet Zarathustra who asks, "This is my way: where is yours?" The Hungarians who in 1956 fought against the Soviets were called "freedom-fighters". Freedom and liberation are an unending task. I, in my way, also was — and am — a freedom fighter. I fight for the freedom to speak and live from my experience. I fight against any kind of fascism, for which disagreement is treason.

The seeming contradiction between the urge to "find myself" and the Buddha's warning that there is no separate self, evaporates when one realizes that mindfulness, Buddhist meditation, is a very efficient method to get in touch with and learn to take seriously one's own experience. It may be true that you and I are really one. But if I take your word for it, I'll be your slave and you'll be my master, and that sort of affiliation is deadly.



Branches Over the Wall: Grace vs. Vainglory

by Dennis Strashok

In the realm of spiritual truth, there are those things which are revealed to those who believe and trust in God, either through their personal communion with Him, or through a diligent reading and study of His Word, the Bible.

As we grow on in God, we realize that there are spiritual battles to be fought and territory to be gained in the spiritual realm. The Bible says that our salvation is "by grace through faith". Grace has often been defined as the unmerited favor of God, His loving-kindness that is bestowed upon us because we have placed our trust in His Son Jesus Christ. But grace is much more than that too. It is an energizing force and power in our lives allowing us to live a life that pleases God, loving Him and our neighbours as well. Therefore grace has a content and depth of experience that is transmitted to us in the spiritual realm. It reaches into that hidden person of our heart and touches us most deeply in the core of our being, yet it is not easily identified externally or is not easily outwardly evident.

We find that in spiritual truth, for every positive good spiritual reality that God has for us, the devil has a counterfeit that tries to distract us from the reality. The

devil's counterfeit of grace is vainglory. If grace glows, then vainglory glitters. Vainglory is an outward show, a sheen, a veneer, that promises so much and yet delivers so little. While grace is power in truth, vainglory is a giving up or losing of power.

In the modern world, we are bombarded with so many images and words every day. So many of these images are based on vainglory. They present an overblown Hollywood lifestyle promising fame, fortune and glory to those who pursue it, yet they really deliver so little. Instead of pursuing a lifestyle of helping others and service to others, vainglory cause us to pursue a life in competition with others, seeking to outdo them in wealth or status.

Then, after we have spent our whole life pursuing the dreams of vainglory, we end up empty and spent with no real joy or love to show for all our endeavors.

If we seek the grace of God through Jesus Christ, our lives will have content, meaning and purpose, as well as that inward strengthening and comfort by His Spirit. If we spend our lives being distracted into pursuing vainglory, we will be robbed of every good thing that our lives could have been. Truly the choice is ours, for as Jesus said "What does it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his eternal soul or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"



Laughs with Lewry

That doctor is so expensive, for \$75 all a patient gets is a get-well card.



Early Childhood Education At My Old Mission Church by Sam Roddan

Today I groan at the outrages committed in the name of religious instruction in the Sunday School of my boyhood in the East End of Vancouver. I shudder at the miseries inflicted on the teachers, the pranks and disorder in the assemblies, the patient despair of the Church Elders.

The elastic band, the wad of paper, the dart, the surreptitious kick under the pew, the quick punch and jab were all part of the ammo necessary to survive the incredible boredom of the lessons. And always twinges of guilt from our carefully crafted fibs to cover the sudden "loss" of our Sunday School collection.

One day, all was change.

We got a new teacher, Mr. Quigley, full of wit and good sense. His prayers were short and crisp. He rallied our faith, introduced us to the power of the miracle, the magical suspension of disbelief, the inventions of an untroubled imagination. Best of all, he answered our questions.

"You wonder about the angels?" he would ask. "How they fly, make their way through the firmament?" simple lads. Very simple. Angels' wings are set well forward on their shoulder to compensate for the gravitational pull of the moon... Next!"

"What about the feeding of those five thousand?" Bill Pauche would shout. Bill was tough, street-wise, sometimes washed dishes at the White Lunch

on Saturdays.

"That's a good one, Bill" Mr Quigley would say. "Just remember how the White Lunch divies out their hand-outs to the Hunger Marchers coming up Hastings?... Easy, lad. They've got a system. Scraps, more scraps and food stamps:Next."

"What about those Isrealites who got away from the Egyptians crossing the Red Sea?" This one was by Alex Korchinski whose Dad was a deck hand on the Sea Lion.

"It was all based on Tide Tables, Spiritual Tables, Alex," Mr. Quigley said. "The Egyptians were good in number work and pyramids but they knew nothing about tides and slack water. And the pull of the moon... Whose next?"

And so it went. Week after week. And tough ones like Lazarus raised from the Dead and Jonah and the Whale, never bothered Mr. Quigley. He told us about a famous magician and escape artist, Harry Houdini... and giant whales 50 feet long called Leviathans that had huge stomachs, special blow holes for air, big throats that could swallow a donkey.

Years passed. Sunday School teachers came and went... Hunger Marchers still straggled up Hastings to the Mission Church... Gerry McGeer read the Riot Act... Along the way King Edward VIII threw in the towel... Pier D disappeared in smoke and

flame... Hitler went on a terrible rampage... It was fight for sure and many of us signed up and went to War... In Holland I got news Mr. Quigley had been promoted to glory.

More long years slipped by... Bill Pauche lost a leg at the battle of Caen... Alex Korchinski was "lost at sea"... I was shipped out of Nijmegen, near Arnhem, as "unfit" for further military service.

Months later, I was back from the War, and shortly after D-Day, I bumped into Bill Pauche hobbling out of the Carnegie Library. Bill was pale and drawn, but still had lots of the old fire. We adjourned to the Rainier on Carrall.

Memory can be fragile and brittle but through the smoke and fumes of the Rainier, Bill and I drifted off the accustomed course, leap-frogged years, then plunged back into a Housman land of "lost content".

Soon we forgot our personal demons, scabs, infected wounds, and in the bright sunlight of reverie tossed the old ball around the Powell Street grounds, checked into Sam Barrett's corner store, kicked the can in the lanes behind Pender. Suddenly, out of our trance-like thoughts, the old mission church at Gore and Hastings loomed in our sight.

And it was then, clear as a silver bell, we heard the voice of Mr. Quigley answering our questions, pointing the way, cheering us on, rallying our faith, offering fresh words to forgotten prayers.



A Day in a Half-life, Half-lived

by Gethsemane Swann

I wish the phone would stop ringing — it's not even daylight yet and the fucken phone is — no, what was that — the alarm? — No, I never set the alarm — there's nothing to get up for — nothing to go to bed for — turn on the T.V. and see what time it is — O.J. again — what the hell is he doing — oh, it's 8 in the evening and it's a replay of what I saw earlier today — that means I haven't been out of bed today — so what's new?

Jerry Lewis says his near-death experience was like someone shutting off a television forever — is that the final disappointment — dissolving into a white dot on a box forever —

6,000,000. No I just can't imagine — is it rats or butterflies?

The clock's tick sounds like somebody having a heart attack — mocking me — either they don't know or they're evil — what is evil? I asked a priest — they can't answer that, can they — is it like someone shutting off a television forever?

**A Day in a Half-life, Half-lived
(Continued)
by Gethsemane Swann**

6,000,000. No, no, I can't fathom it. But suppose 12 people from around the world, were chosen to know the truth but never tell anyone because no one else could understand — that must be it — and then the 6,000,000 were killed so the 12 chosen could survive and rule the world. And Jesus would rise from the dead — and he and the 12 start a new universe based on truth. I am one of the 12 — I had no choice — and now what I know is killing me — look out the window — they're laughing at me. What was Jesus' near death experience? Don't bother coming back, Jesus — things got worse the last time you came here.

Maybe I should try the meditation they have at group meeting — breathe in - he loves me; breathe out - he loves me not — breathe in - yes, breathe out - no — don't bother coming back, Jesus, unless you spare the thief who believed in you.

Maurizo Baldini's Story

(Continued from page 2)

as he suggested. From there I was transferred to another psychiatric ward and started on a large dosage of haloperidol to control my symptoms. At first I had some severe side-effects from the medication. My muscles became rigid, my vision blurred and I slept about 20 hours a day; however, within two weeks my symptoms had remitted and I was able to be discharged from hospital. When I say my symptoms had remitted, I should point out that I am referring to the positive symptoms of schizophrenia, that is delusions, the hallucinations and the thought disorder. The so-called negative symptoms such as lack of motivation and depression actually got worse and were made more severe by medication.

Upon discharge I returned to my studies at law school, however, trying to cope with university after such an episode of schizophrenia was extremely difficult. I was unable to concentrate and therefore my reading ability was almost zero. I had trouble remembering things and was still sleeping about 18 hours a day. With all this it was no wonder that I was failing my courses. Luckily, I got my exams postponed that year and was able to write them a few months later.

An interesting note about the stigma of mental illness and the legal profession at the time.

My psychiatrist had to write a letter for me to the Dean of the law school in order for me to postpone my exams. He decided not to write the word "schizophrenia" as my illness but rather that I suffered from "emotional illness". My doctor said that if the Law Society should one day find out I had schizophrenia, I would be disqualified from practicing law. However, the strategy almost backfired when the Dean at first would not postpone my exams because an emotional illness was not serious enough, he thought. Eventually, I did get my exams deferred and was able to write them later as I said.

Over the course of the next several months to several years my medication levels were reduced allowing me greater freedom from the horrible side-effects. As I practiced studying my academic skills returned to a point where I was able to pass my exams, although now I was at the bottom of my class instead of at the top. The following year I was placed on an antidepressant medication to assist me in functioning a little bit better. It didn't seem to help that much and I just learned to live with the depression and the lack of motivation associated with the illness. Another of the side-effects of the medication for me was gaining weight. Within

six months from first starting the treatment I had gained about 40 or 50 pounds. This only added to my depression and my poor self-esteem.

Over the next few years I got progressively better and was able to finish law school, find an articling position and become a practicing lawyer. However, I found that I had trouble competing with my peers, my stamina and motivation levels were quite low. I still had trouble interacting with others in relationships and tended to be more withdrawn than I had been before my illness. After about three years of being treated with medications my doctor decided to take me off all of them to see if I could function without them. I did very well for a number of years after that. I opened a law practice, I got married and moved into a new house. I certainly did not miss the side-effects of the haloperidol. I now had a greater range of emotions. My weight dropped to normal and I needed only 8 or 9 hours per night of sleep instead of the usual 12 or more that I was getting while on medications. I did not have any symptoms of my illness during this period.

Unfortunately, in 1986 I had a sudden relapse of my illness. I became acutely psychotic while mountain climbing alone in a wilderness park here in British Columbia. Fortunately, I was able

(Continued next page)

Maurizo Baldini's Story

(Continued from previous page)

to return home without assistance from anyone. It was during this psychosis, however, that I believed aliens from outer space were communicating with me and that a fire was started in my house that set the house on fire and caused me to end up in court as a result. Within a few days of the fire I had signed myself into the local psychiatric hospital and was again placed on large doses of antipsychotic medication. I spent two months in hospital this time and upon discharge it was very difficult for me to function again. I had to give up practicing law because of the side-effects of the

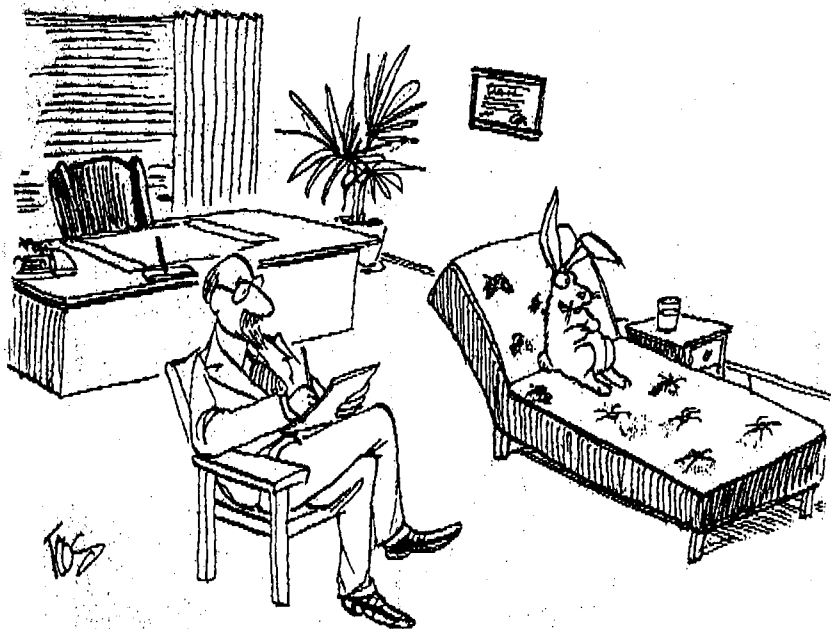
medication and the lack of motivation and inability to concentrate on my work. I slowly relearned most of the life skills necessary to find employment and function independently outside of hospitals. I worked at the drop-in centre working with people with schizophrenia and reconnected with many friends in the community.

In 1989 I began a relationship with a woman that continues today. She has been a tremendous support and encouragement to me over these past five years. I feel that successful relationships are a key factor in overcoming serious illnesses such as schizophrenia.

The other person acts as a sounding board and gives feedback on a day-to-day basis and helps one grow and gain insight.

Since October of 1992 I have been working with three other people, two consumers of mental health services and one family member, in a partnership education program through the Schizophrenia Society and with the Ministry of Health. We work at educating various groups about serious mental illness using our partnership talks. In them we describe our personal experiences with mental illness and how it has affected our lives. This has proven to be a very powerful and successful way of teaching many people about mental illness. It has also become a way of breaking down the barriers between families, consumers of mental health services and professionals and allowing them an opportunity to work together to further the cause of mental health.

In conclusion, my experiences with schizophrenia were initially very devastating, derailing my career and almost destroying my future. Since those difficult times, I now use my experiences as a positive way to educate others and advocate for better services for all consumers of mental health services.



"It goes back to being yanked out of the hat."



The Isolated Man

by Terry Levesque

It was the dead of night. A man walked quietly along a deserted street in the middle of town. He was totally alone, separated, cut-off, isolated. He was a man who came from I know not where. He had no past and no future. He was of medium build with dark hair. He had no outstanding features. As he walked along the deserted street, he glanced in the shop windows. No one could tell what was on his mind or what he was thinking. He was just a man alone, walking in the dark. Would this man enter into the living community of people or would he forever remain as he was, isolated, cut-off, and alone?

The morning light slowly dawned and the man had had no sleep. He was still up and awake. Since he had no car, he decided to take the bus downtown. It was early morning with a clear sky overhead. What would he do downtown, where would he go? Was he going to meet someone? Was it perhaps a woman? He boarded the bus on the corner, paid his fare, and found a seat.

He sat quietly looking straight ahead with his hands folded in his lap. More people began to board the bus. Soon all the seats were filled and many people were standing. The bus was soon filled to overflowing. The man was crowded in, surrounded by

other people. It made him feel uncomfortable and ill at ease. He did not like crowds of people. Yet he also felt slightly relieved, because with all the people surrounding him, he was not alone. He apparently came upon his destination, he got off the bus and was once again on the street.

He must have waited on the street for some time before a woman who seemed to know him met him there. After a short conversation, they headed up the street together in the direction of the restaurant. Upon reaching the restaurant, they entered and quickly found a seat. As they waited to order something to eat, more people came into the restaurant. And as they chatted over coffee, all the seats in the restaurant began to be filled. Soon the restaurant was filled to capacity with much loud conversation taking place.

Once again, the man felt ill at ease. Once again, he was in a large crowd of people. Strangely, he again felt slightly relieved, because he was not alone. After finishing their meal, the man and the woman left the restaurant and upon reaching the street, they parted company. At this point, the man decided to return to his dwelling. He boarded the bus and headed home.

When he finally arrived at

the place where he lived, he shut the door, took off his coat and turned the radio on. He retired to a chair and took out a cigarette. He sat back, quietly listening to the radio and smoking a cigarette. He was once again alone. But it was not the same. He had been among the crowd of people. He was not isolated, cut-off and alone. The man with no past and no future was living in the present and had something to look forward to. The man who was isolated, cut-off and alone had inadvertently decided to enter upon the living community of people. And this, more than anything, was a decision that this man would not regret.



The Good Life

The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.

Bertrand Russell

The Tragic Myth of Schizophrenia

by Bonnie Burstow and Don Weitz

Dr. Burstow, a feminist therapist, and Mr. Weitz, a Toronto freelance writer once diagnosed as schizophrenic, are the editors of Shrink Resistant: The

Struggle Against Psychiatry in Canada (New Star Books, 1988).

Schizophrenia is the most controversial and harmful diagnostic label in psychiatry. The

medical establishment says it refers to a disease, but Thomas Szasz, a dissident psychiatrist and the author of The Myth of Mental Illness and Schizophrenia: The Sacred Symbol of Psychiatry, says the term really means. "human garbage... get him out of my sight."

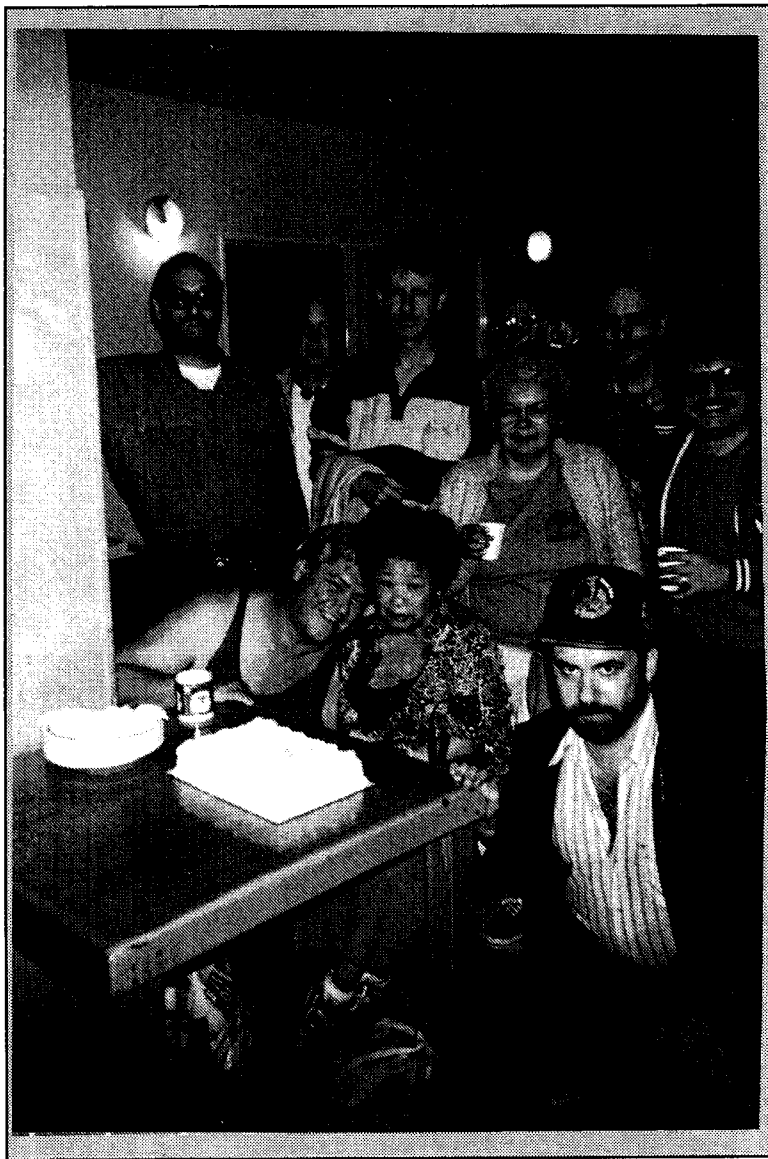
Schizophrenia is not a disease but a pseudo-medical term invented by psychiatrists to control people by labeling their non-conformity. Granted, people termed schizophrenic frequently have serious problems in dealing with crises in their lives, but calling them "diseased" is quite a different matter.

So far, there has been no credible scientific evidence to support the traditional psychiatric claim that schizophrenia is a disease, a brain disorder or a mental illness. Eugen Bleuler, the Swiss psychiatrist who coined the term in 1911, applied it to people whose thinking seemed unrealistic or illogical, who had unusual or strange perceptual experiences, or whose behaviour appeared weird or non-conformist,

Less than a decade later, he publicly reversed himself, concluding there was no such disease and severely criticizing his psychiatric colleagues for uncritically applying the word to psychological and social problems. They chose to ignore him.

With the arrival of neuroleptics (major tranquillizers)

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This year, MPA recognized long-time volunteer, Mae Cho, for her 11 continuous years of service to MPA. Mae is seen here at the celebration with members and staff.

Bookworm:

Beyond Conflict

by Peter Breggin, M.D.

St. Martin's Press, 1992

Reviewed by Andrew Feldmar

"You might call me a conservative revolutionary", said R.D. Laing in a conversation, using a phrase of Ronald Reagan of all people! Reagan meant a revolution that brings in the old values. Laing also referred to himself as a radical psychiatrist, meaning the same thing, since radical comes from the word radix, a root. The intent is to go back, back to fundamentals, back to what has been forgotten. The subject of psychiatry is disturbances in living, manifested in disturbances in interpersonal relationships; the subject of neurology is pathological lesions of the central nervous system. The two have been mixed together and because neurology has grown and

expanded with the advancement of science and technology, it overshadowed the original concern of psychiatry with interpersonal relationships. There is no current discipline of the neurophysiology of interpersonal relationships. There is no research on what medication the husband should be put on in order for his wife to feel better.

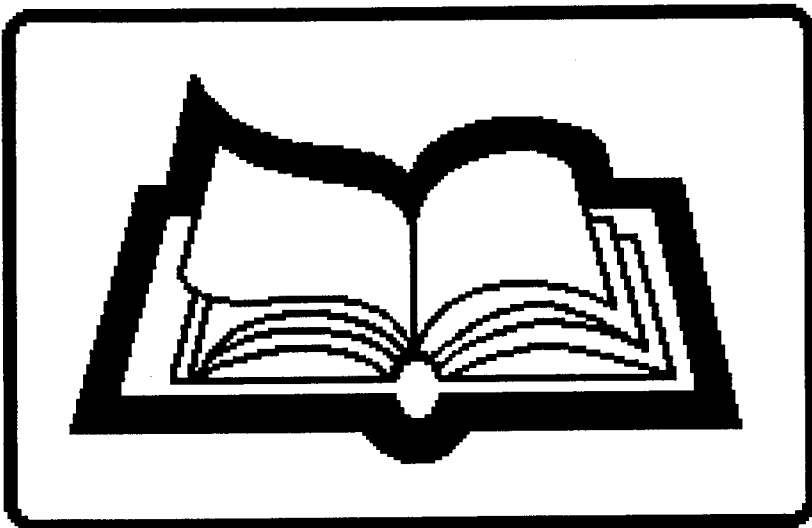
Breggin is a conservative revolutionary, a radical psychiatrist, in the tradition of R.D. Laing, Thomas Szasz, Harry Stack Sullivan, Maxwell Jones, David Cooper, Scott Peck, to name a few. Beyond Conflict is the most positive, hopeful, future-oriented of his books. He is also the author of

Talking Back to Prozac and of Toxic Psychiatry. The latter is a sweeping criticism of modern biologically-oriented psychiatry and its drift can be gleaned from the subtitle; "Why therapy, empathy and love must replace the drugs, electroshock and biochemical theories of the new psychiatry".

Breggin writes in Beyond Conflict, "Love is a powerful idea; but so many forces in life, and too many within ourselves, act to discourage it. This book is a hymn to... love." A touchy topic, never included in many curricula of either psychologists or psychiatrists. Breggin is not in the least sentimental but lucidly practical. He believes in the healing power of human caring and proposes that "love must become the guiding principle of human relationships in general, as well as the ultimate solution to the most severe personal, societal, and political conflicts.

Commenting on the Diamond Sutra, one of the Sacred Books of the Buddhist Canon, A.F. Price notes that "Love is the highest law. Assistance is an expression of the love of the part for the whole: and courtesy is the splendour of charity". Breggin's book guides us to ancient and perennial wisdom. There is no progress possible in this realm, only unfortunately, forgetting. Love, the highest principle of life, is characterized by an abhorrence of force. The use of force for self-

(Continued on next page)



The Tragic Myth of Schizophrenia

(Continued from page 13)

in the fifties, psychiatrists discovered that these "antipsychotic" drugs block the production of dopamine - a brain chemical necessary in transmitting nerve impulses. Since these drugs controlled or immobilized many of their so-called schizophrenic patients, psychiatrists erroneously concluded that schizophrenia must be a disease caused by an excess of dopamine, even though there has been no credible scientific evidence to show this is true.

They also ignored the fact that schizophrenics treated with these powerful drugs soon began to develop serious symptoms of brain damage - Parkinson's Disease, a brain disorder caused by insufficient dopamine, and tardive

dyskinesia, a common, grotesque and generally permanent neurological disorder.

Now the cause of schizophrenia is said to be hereditary. For example, some researchers claim to have discovered genetic abnormalities on the chromosome. This genetic link is based on the fact that members of a few families were diagnosed schizophrenic and appear to share these abnormalities. However, a rigorous study, published in the November, 1988 issue of the scientific journal Nature, found no such link.

Even though the scientific jury is still out on the hereditary factor, psychiatrists and their supporters, such as the Canadian Friends of Schizophrenics (CFS),

insist that schizophrenia is a disease. They support a "mental health" resolution passed in the Ontario Legislature last June that, if proclaimed into law, will mean involuntary outpatient commitment for thousands of schizophrenics and other psychiatrically labeled people in the province.



Bookworm

(Continued from previous page)

defence only, characterizes liberty, the principle that prepares the ground for the possibility of love. What we are mired in most of the time is the destructive principle of life, coercion, advocating the arbitrary and unlimited use of force, control and violence.

How to progress from coercion through liberty to love is the central theme of this book.

Breggin studies Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer and Martin Luther King, Jr. to see how to implement love on a societal level. He looks at international conflict (the Middle East), societal conflict (Eastern Europe in transition, poverty, hunger, redistributive justice, and the environment), and conflict within business corporations. I appreciate most his thoughts on

interpersonal conflict, especially within the family. My initial role as a therapist can be seen as helping partners, family members to stop abusing each other. Breggin has given me both theoretical and practical help in this book, and I am grateful to him.



Bulletin Board

Primal Activities

Primal Mental Health Productions Association (PMHPA) is a non-profit society specializing in the arts, including writing, drama, and music for members of the mental health community. The association sponsors a Writer's Workshop every Monday night at 7:30; an Actor's Workshop every Tuesday night at 7:30; an Artwork and Painting Workshop every Thursday night at 7:30; and a Coffee House every Last Friday of the month at 7:30. All activities take place at St. James Community Square at 10th Ave. and Trutch in Kitsilano. The Workshops take place in the Primal Office or Sanctuary Office on the main floor, while the Coffee House takes place in the small community room downstairs. For further information, call the Primal Office at 730-8309.

"Moments"

"Moments", recently published, is a collection of stories by consumers in British Columbia about special experiences in their life journey while working towards mental health.

It is available through the Canadian Mental Health Association, B.C. Division, 405 - 611 Alexander St., Vancouver, B.C., V6A 1E1, phone (604) 254-3211.

Mental Health Information Line

For free, 24-hour, confidential information on mental illnesses contact the Mental Health Information Line at 1-800-661-2121. In the Lower Mainland, dial 669-7600.

Freebies:

For those in need: Free clothing; Dishes

Choose from a variety of donations

At Community Resource Centre, 1731 W. 4th Ave., Monday to Friday,
9 am to 9 pm on request.



