

In A Nutshell

"...I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space..."

Wm. Shakespeare

Spring 2010

The Long and Winding Road

by Jim Gifford

In 1970, when 'The Beatles', on the verge of breakup, hit the airwaves with the song "The Long and Winding Road", little did I realize how apt that sentiment was to be of my life journey from then to now. Until that point, my academic education had ruled my thinking about progressing through the years, from grade one to my university graduation. Life was linear, a straight line through time from womb to tomb. Then came the month of March, forty years ago.

Two weeks before my 22nd birthday, I was consumed by an extreme manic breakdown, a spiritual energy breakthrough, replete with psychic revelations, delusions and theomania. In this crisis I became ungrounded and otherworldly. When I crashed from this emotional high, a severe depression overwhelmed for months. Nearly a decade of hospitalizations ensued, interspersed with periods of relative stability, even attempts at a modicum of work. My existence was a curse and a blessing.

A saving grace was the accentuation of my brain's right hemisphere. A mystique of emptiness, cyclical thought patterns, and creative potential, were expressed. My intellectual pursuits and well-developed language skills transformed into a love of writing poetry. It became a life-long vocation and form of art therapy.

During the past four decades, countless persons have crossed my path in an almost synchronized manner. They, along with the special attention given by my immediate family, offered me their love, understanding, loyalty, and support.

Communion with them all touched me deeply, sometimes turning me around.

One Spring evening, sitting in my favourite café, I was busily engrossed in working on some presumed epic, today long since forgotten. A friend sat down across from me and simply said "Jim, there's nothing to do and no one to be." Struck dumb, I relaxed and slowly sipped my tea.

Such insights and epiphanies have been key points on my sojourn, twists of thought giving another perspective, opening up 'the doors of perception'. In the knowledge that we are 'spiritual beings having an earthly experience', I embrace and witness the moment. Each day a new

dawn awakens, and I take another step on "The Long and Winding Road."

*"I was consumed
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M.P.A. Society
122 Powell St.
Vancouver, BC,
V6A 1G1
Tel:
604-482-3700
Fax:
604-738-4132
Website:
mpa-society.org

Spring 2010

News Briefs From All Over

Compiled by Scott Dixon

There But For Fortune Go You and I

The battered bodies of Haiti may be mending, but the minds still struggle. As many as one in five Haiti earthquake victims has suffered trauma so great with the multiple shock of lost homes, jobs and loved ones that they won't be able to cope without professional help, doctors say. In a country where mental health services barely existed before the quake, building the required support is a huge challenge. Hugo Emmanuel is one of the untold thousands who doctors say have lost the ability to cope. "Every time I think about losing my family, I lose my mind," he told the *Associated Press*. Port-au-Prince's only psychiatric hospital is barely functioning. All but 11 of its more than 100 pre-quake patients were removed by relatives who feared the building would collapse in another quake.

Woman's Best Friend

Jennifer Francis, a 23-year-old London, Ontario resident, has bipolar Type 2 disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and panic disorder. She also has a fully trained helper at her side 24/7. "I have a disability, and it is chronic," Francis told an audience at the University of Windsor student

centre this week. "For many years to come, I will be healing."

As she spoke at the podium, Francis was accompanied by Spirit, her four-year-old female mental health assistance dog. According to Francis, Spirit has been taught to read her body language and recognize panic attacks. Francis credits Spirit with alerting her mother of her need for immediate help. "I do not, and will not, have to fight this battle alone," Francis said. *The Windsor Star* says Spirit is Southwestern Ontario's first recognized mental health assistance dog, trained by a Hamilton-based organization called Encouraging Paws Service Dogs.

"Vancouver's poverty issue got media interest as part of the Winter Olympics coverage."

To See Ourselves

Vancouver's poverty issues got media interest as part of the Winter Olympics coverage. A sampling:

Los Angeles Times:

Vancouver had little or no homelessness problem 15 years ago. But Canada, like the U.S., moved to deinstitutionalize the mentally ill in the 1980s — and like the U.S., it provided few follow-up assistance programs. At the same time, the federal government got out of the business of building

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Deadline for submissions for the Summer 2010 issue is Friday May, 14, 2010.

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public housing, transferring responsibility to the provinces.

“People are kind of getting used to [homelessness], thinking, well, it’s like prostitution or robbery, we’re never going to be able to solve it,” said Jill Davidson, the city’s assistant housing director. “Well, we can solve it. Because we had it solved only 15 years ago.”

The Christian Science Monitor:

The homeless population in Vancouver has doubled since the city won the bid in 2003, as residents were squeezed out of low-income housing during the Olympic real estate boom and gentrification.

The Miami Herald:

Pledges of urban renewal often go unfulfilled as cost overruns overwhelm government hosts of the Olympics. The Olympic Village in Vancouver was supposed to be converted to low-income housing, but then along came the global recession and the developer went bankrupt. Most of the units will be put up for sale.

Always Look At The Bright Side Of Life

The *Vancouver Sun* reported on the opening day of the Olympics that the Downtown Eastside is NOT the poorest postal code in Canada. With an average income of \$13,600, the DTES comes in as “only” the 8th poorest postal code. Number one of the list was the Burnt Church First Nations reserve in New Brunswick, with an average income of \$9,200.

Laugh Those Blues Away

American stand-up comic Ruby Wax, who has a long history of depression, is trying to help lift the stigma of mental illness by taking her stand-up comedy show on a tour of British psychiatric

hospitals, according to the UK’s *Birmingham Post*.

Live From The Priory deals with her own clinical depression, though she hopes to strike a chord with everyone who has ever felt unable to cope with modern life. Ruby, 56, describes depression as ‘a tsunami of darkness’. “But the show is uplifting and honest, rather painfully so at times. At the end we’ve had people crying because they just get it, but they’re still laughing. “That’s what I am trying to do, to make something serious and funny, which is hard.”

Homeless But Not Forgotten

An Ohio group is suing the state government, claiming mentally ill prison inmates are neglected by the system and are being released into the community without the help they need. WLWT TV news says The Ohio Justice and Policy Center in Cincinnati estimates there could be thousands of mentally ill former inmates walking the streets right now and they could be a threat to themselves and others.

A lawsuit filed by the group alleges that some of the most mentally ill people living on the streets were left there by the Ohio Department of Corrections. The lawsuit claims ex-convicts with mental problems get \$65 to \$75, a bus ticket and two weeks of medication upon their release.

Workers of the World, Unite!

A national survey released by the *American Psychiatric Association* says fears about losing status at work and about confidentiality are among the main reasons that many American workers are more hesitant to seek treatment for mental health issues than for physical health problems. Among employees, 62 percent thought depression would affect their work status..

Quote:

“It is a reproach to religion and government to suffer so much poverty and distress.”

William Penn

The Language of Low

by Michael Crain

I've spent a large part of my life struggling with depression. One of the things that has caused this to be a struggle is the very word 'depression' itself and how this word is used. Depression does not describe all the different ways I feel. Using one all encompassing term does not do justice to the fact that I have faced and still face many different kinds of depression, but also that each of these lacks some kind of language to help define what these different things mean. It also seems that health care providers and clinicians have been unable to acknowledge this idea.

For instance, one of the ways I try to stay well is by keeping track of my mood. If my mood begins to go down, or I feel the onset of some type of depression, I say that I am "going into a funk". To me, a funk means that it's the beginning of something, and my hope is that whatever it is will come and go quickly. This is like stubbing my toe or hitting my funny bone. It's a reaction of pain that I hope will pass quickly.

If depression is becoming a more permanent problem I tell people that "the darkness is becoming quite visible again". I borrowed this one from the title of William Styron's book *Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness*. Styron uses very eloquent language to describe an elongated experience of depression that he went through. When the darkness becomes visible, it means that I am entering into a longer type of depression that may take awhile to get out of. People who I use this expression with know me well enough to know what this means.

If depression has lasted a long time, or if I am trying to explain a long period of depression, I say that I have been in the long dark tea-time of the soul. This one is taken from the title of Douglas Adams book *The Long Dark Tea-Time of the Soul*. This is not only a time of feeling low,

but also of seeing the world and human nature in a very dark 'light' if you will. Cynicism and negativity are a big part of the tea-time.

There are lots of other expressions that I use along the way as well. The bottomless pit, pain behind the brain, feeling like the floor of a taxicab (from the movie *Ghostbusters*) and many, many more help me to explain and express what my experience of depression has been. The thing that seems amazing to me is that this vernacular or

use of language doesn't seem to be something that is applied much. One of my hopes in life is to manage the ways bipolar disorder affects me in the hopes of being as well as possible. This use and development of trying to describe different types of depression has helped me explain and understand what is happening and then cope with what is going on. Yet this doesn't seem to be something that's recognized by many health care providers. It seems that

the all encompassing 'depression' serves the purpose of describing many different things.

I'm not suggesting clinicians start using expressions like 'funk' or 'tea-time' or 'darkness visible'. That's my shtick. But developing beyond one universal term has helped me and I believe might help others who face depression to describe what is happening to them. By doing so, it may help health care providers understand what is happening with an individual more quickly and then try to get that person whatever help they can to maintain or become well.

If depression is something that you struggle with, don't be afraid to develop your own language of low. It may help you to express what you are feeling more easily, rather than just using the all-encompassing word 'depression'. By doing so, it may also help you to become or maintain being well in your journey. It certainly has me.

"...developing beyond one universal term, has helped me and I believe might help others who face depression..."

Tardive Dyskinesia and Stories of Recovery

by Susan Trapp

There have been many stories of recovery told by members of our *Tardive Dyskinesia* (TD) Support Group. Members have shown fortitude and courage in facing some of their daily challenges. TD is a daily challenge.

Our members have faced problems that were not of their own making. They were brought upon them by the mental health system. The medication that was supposed to help was their undoing. Involuntary movements in the face and other parts of their body became a source of anxiety and stigma. Some have lived in denial or unknowing. The members of our TD Support group are gradually coming to terms with their involuntary movements. If one can do that.

One of our members has her jaw that opens just enough to eat but chewing is a limited action. She has had Botox shots to help unlock her jaw but so far it has been unsuccessful. Her problems first began with antipsychotic medication, which helped her mind but gave her those dreadful movements. She complained to her doctor over and over but he wouldn't do anything until it was irreversible. It is hard to know what to do when that happens. The medical community can sometimes be of no help. I realize that this seems like a bleak picture but this story has happened to many of our members. It is reality. So you might ask, where is recovery here?

Some people try alternative therapies such as swimming, Vitamin E, yoga, meditation or praying for symptom relief. People need to know

they are not alone; they need to know it is not their fault; they need to know that support in a group is possible. There is hope. This neurological disorder is not the end.

As a group we try to support each other and keep looking for research information online. We have to keep bringing the medical community's attention towards *Tardive Dyskinesia*. Consumers need to know that there are side effects to the medications that they are taking and the doctors need to educate their clients about what symptoms to watch out for. Doctors have to take a more active role in the monitoring of their clients. Not everyone is fortunate with their doctors. When my doctor noticed involuntary movements in my legs and not being able to sit still or sleep at night he told me he thought I had *Tardive Dyskinesia*. I had never heard of it. He told me he was going to change my medication. I had been on this medication for almost 20 years and it was an injection and he was switching me to pills. So this was going to be a major change. I managed to cope with the change with only a slight tremor, which is handled with a small amount of Benztropine. Not everyone is so fortunate.

I realize some doctors do this but there are others who need to be more vigilant. Hopefully *Tardive Dyskinesia* will be caught by the doctors before it becomes irreversible.

For information on TD Support Group (in Vancouver) contact Project Manager Susan Trapp at PeerNetBC, 604-733-6186. ■

Quote:

“Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well.”

Abraham Lincoln

A Tribute to Judi Chamberlin

by Cassandra Freeman

For the last 40 years, Judi Chamberlin worked ceaselessly for the mental health community around the world. She died in Boston on Nov. 17 at the age of 65.

She was one of the most effective advocates for patients and ex-patients' rights, and continued this struggle though terminally ill, working out of her home-turned-hospice. When able, she traveled to mental health conferences as a much-wanted speaker.

In 1992, Chamberlin was awarded the Distinguished Service Award of the President of the United States by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. She also received the David J. Vail National Advocacy Award and the 1995 Pike Prize, which honours those who have given outstanding service to people with disabilities.

When I interviewed her last time she was in Vancouver. Chamberlin had some very clear ideas and suggestions of how to stop human rights abuses in psychiatry.

"I think that the very first thing that has to happen is that more people have to become aware of this as a human rights issue. Most people think of it as a medical issue. It's not a medical issue to be drugged against your will. It's not a medical issue to be involuntarily hospitalized against your will. These are legal issues... doctors don't have the right to drug... and hospitalize people against their will. As long as people don't frame it as a human rights issue, I don't think we'll get very far."

True to Chamberlin's words, a groundbreaking legal challenge in the U.S. courts recently resulted in a patient choosing guardians who stopped his weekly involuntary electro-shock therapy. Ray Sanford and his successful battle in the courts may well pave the way for the judicial system, not the psychiatric system to make decisions regarding the human rights of patients with mental health issues.

Chamberlin was hospitalized in the sixties for depression, first voluntarily and then involuntarily.

The drugs didn't help her, but another patient did – by telling her not to cry in front of the nurses. She would wait until the lights were out and then cry under the covers.

"I didn't realize until I was in the system how quickly you lose your rights and how quickly it's assumed by the professionals that you don't know what you need."

Chamberlin's book *On Our Own: Patient Controlled Alternatives to the Mental Health System* was published in 1978. It is a clear call for

patients and ex-patients to run their own mental health organizations and look at the power of peer support. Living in Vancouver at the time, she praised MPA as a model of this.

In 1985 she co-founded the Ruby Rogers Advocacy and Drop-In Center in Boston, which today is still run exclusively by people who have been through the system.

She also built alliances with other disadvantaged groups, including people with physical disabilities. She viewed their movement as a model of turning the tables on those

who once viewed them as unable to take care of themselves. In our interview, she challenged mental health patients and ex-patients to make alliances with disability groups and take back their power, just as the disabled have taken back theirs.

"It's all a matter of people deciding this group is inferior, needs to be protected, watched over, taken care of or whatever... every civil rights movement has gone through the very first step which is we are going to define the issues, we are going to frame what the questions are. Until we are consulted about our issues nothing is going to change on a fundamental level."

Chamberlin strongly encouraged consumer/survivors to build alliances with other disadvantaged groups and to lobby legislators and elected officials, rather than struggling to change the system from within. For her, that involved

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“framing the issues differently”: talking about psychiatric abuses “as fundamental violations of people’s right to self-determination” and seeing the very existence of the psychiatric system “as very much a social control issue.”

Today, a lot of what Chamberlin spoke about so passionately has started to happen in a big way, worldwide. David Oaks of MindFreedom International credits her with being largely responsible for the alliance between the disability and psychiatric survivors’ movements. ■

Building Community

by Rose Ananda Heart

Like dolphins swimming with their pod, or wolves within a pack, human beings are communal beings. The health and well being of the individual is connected with his/her sense of belonging to a supportive group. All kinds of illness, isolation and the need to keep busy, are brought about by the loss of connection to others. Traditionally children were raised within a clan or village in which his/her needs are met by the many, thus easing the role a parent plays in the child’s life.

A community is all about being intimately connected to others, a safe haven within which the authentic self is valued. Whatever is felt, experienced, and expressed without harm to another, is O.K. Each person is supported as the creative genius that they truly are. Within a healthy environment individuals would be allowed to follow their heart’s desires and intuitive guidance, thus contributing in their own unique way. A human being would not have to go into hiding to survive.

One of my favourite books is entitled, *The healing wisdom of Africa*, by Melodoma Patrice Some. In this book, the author speaks of the life and wisdom of his people, the Dagara tribes of West Africa. Within this tribal setting it was vital to nurture the gifts and genius of each individual, for without diversity the whole could not be sustained. I found it very interesting that when someone in the Dagara village, experienced a psychological crisis, it was believed that this person had a spiritual gift to offer the community. The entire village would come together to assist this individual in moving through their crisis so that everyone would benefit from the experience.

Unfortunately we in modern society do not see things this way. Because of the way capitalist society is set up, too often we are divided, disconnected, afraid to be known, and terrified of real closeness with others. For transformation to occur we need to be willing to take off our masks, pull down our defences, heal our shame by sharing our true feelings so we can figure out how to work well together. Restoration can only take place within a safe, warm environment of loving individuals who strive to uphold the well being of everyone within the collective.

Modern communities are often established around religion, neighbourhood organizations, places of employment, and schools. Unfortunately many of these organizations demand conformity. Often these organizations become more interested in maintaining their structure than in embracing the individuality of each member. Maintaining public image and preserving their bylaws and the position of those in power often becomes more important than listening and adapting to the needs of each individual.

“People are looking for a place where their individuality will be honoured, where their personal gifts can be freely made available to serve the greater good. Community will always fail those it is supposed to serve, when belonging takes place through maintaining uniformity.” (Some, 296)

When I became a mother, I began to feel more intensely the need for some form of consis-

(continued page over)

tent support network. This continues to be a challenge for me.

I've enjoyed being part of various groups, such as the La Leche League, the Centre for Spiritual Living, the Re-evaluation Counselling Community, and the kids and parents at the school my son attends. For me it is becoming increasingly important to stay connected to those who support who I am and who I am becoming.

To create vital connections we will need to heal the internalized hurts that create patterns of oppression towards self and others. This will take

awareness of how we have been suppressed as well as how we can support and assist each other in becoming free. Learning to listen to each other in a respectful, approving and non-judging way is a great first step. For many years now I have been setting up gatherings with the intention of awakening us all to the divinity within. I have facilitated sharing circles, co-counselling, dancing, singing and drumming. My vision is a world of peace with young and old hanging out together with lots of laughter, playfulness, caring and sharing. ■

Falling Through the Cracks...

by A. Smith

My story starts in Vancouver 1997. I had just graduated from Film School and was working as a Residential Care Giver in a group home while I applied for grants for filmmaking. I also worked as an Art Director for a production company part time. I was a chronic pot smoker and eventually that caught up with me and I was diagnosed with schizophrenia. My family was concerned for my well being and moved me back to Alberta so they could look after me while I stabilized on medication. I went on disability and started to get better.

I lived in Calgary, Alberta and saw a mental health team in the downtown core of the city. I was a good mental health patient: I took my medication, ate properly and got enough sleep. I was doing well and worked part time at the Calgary Schizophrenia Society doing outreach work. It was about 2003 when I started dating a questionable fellow. He was an intravenous drug user and I thought he was fascinating. I thought going out for drinks with him from time to time was no problem. Then during a black out from drinking, I tried cocaine via a needle. I remember very little of this experience because I had been drinking heavily that evening.

Since I am schizophrenic the cocaine activated my symptoms. I remember telling this innocently to my psychiatrist the following week. I was surprised to be told that the doctor did not have time for this and that he had so many clients wanting help and could not deal with my situation. I walked out of his office and never went

back. I still had a prescription for medication and at first it felt like freedom not having to see a nurse or psychiatrist. But this soon led me to falling through the cracks.

Once the initial burn of refusing to be seen by my psychiatrist, because of drug use, I felt freedom. No one was there looking over my shoulder making sure I was on the right track. I was on my own and I had no insight into the dangers of my lifestyle that was soon to come. I decided that I loved this questionable drug user and let him live with me. Soon I was using cocaine with a needle two to four times a week, drinking heavily and not using protection during sex. At the mental health clinic they gave me an injection for contraception and when I left their office I had no idea that I could get pregnant. Six months later, I was addicted to cocaine, crack, oycotin and pregnant. I fell through the cracks of the system and there was no one there to help me. Because of a domestic violence situation with the boyfriend, my parents took me to the hospital. That is when I had to deal with me (and soon a new life) in this world.

I was released from the hospital and fought off my parents guardianship claim by passing an IQ test. I was off to a new life. I didn't think at the time I would keep my baby because I had no home and the symptoms were so severe as well as the fear and paranoia. I had always wanted to live

(continued on pg.17)

The Eyes of the Heart

by D. Paul

Loosing the lines 'cross the fabric of being
The question is now, are we truly seeing?
The answer of course is only in part
Lest we see with the eyes of the heart
'Til we see with the eyes of the heart.

Flowing the words through the filter of soul
The question is now are we completely whole?
The answer of course is of the greater we are only a part
Where we see with the eyes of the heart
Then we'll see with the eyes of the heart.

For all that is around us is only a mirror
So our hearts can be opened, and we see much clearer
Eternity's horizons rise up like the dew
When the sun's full glory breaks through.

You tell me I'm a candle to bear light for my Lord
You tell me even eternity has its reward
But the candle's light of sunshine is truly a part
When we see with the eyes of the heart
As we see with the eyes of the heart.

Now the counsel comes softly in the middle of the night
As darkness descends and we cease from the fight
And sweetly and gently the truth He does impart
For we see with the eyes of the heart
Then we see with the eyes of the heart.

For sometimes the dream's more real than the waking
And the comfort found therein is not of our making
Then we realize the truth was there from the start
When we see with the eyes of the heart
Let us see with the eyes of the heart.

what do old men sing about

by reinhart

so what do old men earnestly desire
what do old men really care to sing about
do they have left any more hopes and dreams
when their loins lose their strength like their bodies, sinew and bone
so what do old men do about lust and the fire
what kind of things do they deny and doubt
exactly what goes through an old man's mind when to him it seems
and when he feels like his body has turned to stone

the solitude of strength
the strength of solitude
the smile on my lips is mostly fake
the goats are asleep
but the sheep are awake

i've heard old men proudly singing gospel classics
but I have to know what they do about the drive for sex
i guess an old man is that much closer to heaven
and when the body fails the attention turn to spirit
and love becomes so much more simple and basic
when the body does no longer bend and flush and flex
and when the bread of life has lost its leaven
and when their love is mostly platonic or near it

the solitude of strength
the strength of solitude
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the goats are asleep
but the sheep are awake

what do we do when the body has lost its beauty
and the flesh sags and wrinkles and hangs
when the strength of youth mostly leaves our limbs
and many tired and weary look forward to resting in peace
they say that with age comes wisdom, knowledge and a sense of duty
like all compatriots the aged congregate in groups and gangs
they feel at home in their favourite church with their favourite hymns
but the joy of life for the most part it indeed does cease

the solitude of strength
the strength of solitude
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the goats are asleep
but the sheep are awake

i guess that old men always have their memories
and i'm sure they relive them by night and by day
and maybe it makes them feel young again
when they fondly remember some lover that now has gone
and maybe they recall the bliss and the ecstasy
that through the years has slowly faded away
but the true and faithful love they felt way back when
until the very bitter end remains just as strong

the solitude of strength
the strength of solitude
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PRAYER: Does—or Can—God Intervene?

by Frank G. Sterle, Jr.

To make my position on the matter clear, I believe in God (though not in a Biblical sense) and that prayer can, and sometimes does, work; prayer is often not for naught. It certainly cannot hurt, as long as one still lives carefully, reasonably and responsibly as 'believers.'

Although scientific study has even proven that prayer can heal, I believe that when prayer does work, it's on a metaphysical level rather than one of the divine.

In one scientific experiment, according to a secular newspaper article I read, an ill though recuperating hospital patient received prayer, from a distance, from a dozen or so people (i.e., test sample), while another such patient did not. Guess who won?

Having said that, however, what bewilders me is the notion that God would allow one praying couple's child to survive an illness while allowing another praying couple's child to perish, and even with great suffering. Furthermore, I cannot but reluctantly find that, for example, by saying grace before a meal—because of the bitter reality of Earthly starvation—we, the well-fed, are in effect assuming/concluding that our Creator has found one portion of this planet's populace worthy of nourishment while allowing another to starve.

I sometimes find myself recalling the days, long ago, during which my Christian beliefs were very strong. In my mind, there definitely was a God, and He answered prayers while blessing any believer who adequately requested His assistance.

Thus, when I was first diagnosed with severe depression after being non-physically forced into Surrey Memorial Hospital's psychiatric ward (in April, 1987, when I was 20), I'd spent the previous three to four months inside our house, listening to the all-Christian radio station (FYI: 550 AM, KARI), while praying to Christ for this or that reason or cause.

Nowadays, however, I believe that if I accomplished anything—and I believe that I, as one praying person, did not—from all of that prayer, it was self-centred and self-beneficial;

however, I did pray for my hospitalized mother (a physical ailment), yet she, I (being housebound) later learned, suffered greatly and consistently, nonetheless. Perhaps not enough prayer from enough sources, or maybe insufficient quality of prayer?

"God answers all prayers, but sometimes His answer is 'no'," one can often hear from many well-meaning members of religious communities. This, to me, however, is too convenient of an explanation as to why, as is often rhetorically asked by skeptics, "God allows bad things to happen to good people?" With all due respect to believers, the answer 'no' (i.e., no action on the part of the Creator to, say, spare a dying child) simply doesn't cut it for me and for many others; people who do not hold faith in the belief that God may bless some folk, all the while, for no apparent reason, not bless other equally-deserving folk—all of whom very likely pray, with great urgency, to their Maker.

"Sometimes God works in mysterious ways," however, is one explanation that does make me think for a proverbial minute: Perhaps God wants the family member(s) of, for example, a murdered child to become loss-motivated advocates or His 'messengers,' and thus He allows the tragic death. There are parents whose prayers were 'answered' because of, as a good example, the U.S.-initiated "amber alert"—an act which involved the abduction, rape and murder of a girl (ironically or divinely?) named Amber; her distraught mother, who did not want her daughter's brutal demise to be in vain, lobbied politicians to establish a nation-wide policing plan, in which the entire country—including all news-media outlets *and* amber-light highway signs—goes on an amber alert and looks out for children once they are reported to police as absent.

Perhaps, one might say, God allows such horrible losses, as that of Amber, for a cause; however, what about the many other parents who lose their child(ren) basically in the same way as Amber and nothing positive at all comes of it?

Indeed, the reverse too often happens, in which the bereaved parents linger in a mental institute until an untimely death (because, say, of a stress-related heart failure) takes them 'home to God.'

Why, I wonder, do so many fortunate people believe that God would bless 'us' while neglecting 'them'?

Nonetheless, I wish to emphasize that, I believe, God does indeed love humanity, even though we too-often hurt and even kill/murder one another.

I spotted in a secular community newspaper photo, with accompanying caption and cut-line, a Christian-school basketball team in group prayer, apparently asking God for a good game (i.e., a win). Even if God can/does hear the players' prayers, why in the world would/should He (I personally believe that God is genderless) care about the outcome of a sporting event? And, as one letter-writer rhetorically asked, would not God, if He hears, have greater tasks or concerns at hand, such as, if He can, aiding starving Africans?

Also, is such prayer for a sporting-event outcome naught but an anomaly. I tend to hope so; for, much more bewildering and concerning for me was a (local, main) news story about a night of brutal "ultimate fighting" at a South Surrey church's community center, which would also be open to prayer.

Often when I say that I, a 'backslidden' Christian, cannot help but feel perplexed at how so large a portion of the populace believes that prayer actually influences God's plans for humanity, my sentiment is misconstrued as a declaration

that God therefore does not love nor really care for His creation of mankind. I find that if a theist objectively observes the surrounding world, the theist will conclude that God has allowed humanity what we desire—*choice* (e.g., Adam and Eve choosing to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil); and we all, including many truly-innocent children, must bear the often-brutal brunt resulting from that collective freedom-of-choice.

What compels me most to write on the topic of prayer, however, is the emotional anguish that all of those poor folk out there who have lost children, must endure when hearing the words from grateful parents (on the news, etc.) whose loved-one was spared death: "Oh, thank God—He has truly blessed us!" Yes, I, one with a sometimes-crippling guilt complex, realize that such 'blessings' may be comforting to countless believers; but I find it (to put it very mildly) odd to actually perceive God as being an entity who actually spares one child from death while allowing another child to die, sometimes in slow agony.

However, I'm compelled to relate my past situation, which leaves my guilt-complex somewhat troubled: the closest I come to believing in usually-prayer-based divine intervention are the half-dozen-or-so times in my life in which I've escaped drug-overdose-based hospitalization or, perhaps, even death. Was it all luck or simply not enough toxicity? Or was it a 'guardian angel'?

I may never know; however, I do not believe that prayer had something to do with those 'close calls.'

'If I'm In Error, Enlighten Me, My Lord, I Pray' by Frank G. Sterle, Jr.

If I be wrong, please correct me, my Lord,
for I don't believe my words go Your way
when I take the time—blessed time—to pray
to You, to request of You something, poured
out of my soul to You, even if I roared
my words out to You; perhaps I'll someday
believe differently and not from 'truth' stray
and not from me deny Your great 'reward.'
Perhaps if I changed, as my spirit soared,
and found promise in prayer, it may pay
out 'dividends,' unlike being ignored,
then I might thus Your commandments obey;
but Dad (rest his soul) would have me implored
to pray all nonetheless—to His 'tune' play.

As Brave As I Was Born To Be

by Oliver Cross

"I believe we can heal through having more calm, assertive moments."

—Cesar Millan, *The Dog Whisperer*

I don't believe I ever wrote you the story of my engagement.

When I was 32, I met the woman I hoped to marry. She was my boss at a local software company, where I worked. It was the first full-time job I had after college. I was a professional teacher who had been substitute teaching for three years, but I couldn't find a permanent position in the Lower Mainland. Substitute teachers are not well paid, so after three years in the profession I was stressed out, getting burned out, improving my education and developing my skills as well as my career—but with student loans and lack of work for a few months every summer, my debt was growing. Essentially, I was transferring my student loan debt to my credit card—not sustainable. I needed a job.

It was tax time, so I went to my accountant and while we were talking, mentioned my predicament. He looked at my resume: "You got skills, why don't you have a job?! You need a job." He sent my resume to some contacts and out of it came a suggestion to attend a hi-tech job fair. I hummed and hawed about it, decided it may be worth it long term to lose a day of pay in order to attend, which I couldn't afford. I went, dropped off two resumes, and one of them became a full-time permanent position I was looking for.

I was there for a few months before I noticed that I worked really well with my boss. She obviously noticed the same thing, because on one occasion after a staff get-together we were waiting in a coffee shop and she told me the same thing.

She was incredibly unhappy in her marriage. She had married young and started a family early.

She was very bright and very aware. It was on that level that we clicked. She'd had less chance than I to explore her spirituality—even though her father was a minister.

When she told her husband she wanted a divorce, he blamed me. I was controlling her, she was only doing what I told her—he blamed me for their unhappy marriage. He went through her purse and found love letters that I wrote, in which I talked about my psychiatric past as well as my

feelings about the way I'd been treated overall. Introduced in court, his lawyer claimed I might be a danger to their children. Anybody would tell you that's the first thing any lawyer would've done. It would have been nice, as "the other man," if I could have stayed out of it.

I really wanted to stay out of it, the divorce was between the two of them, and I really felt that given enough time, the issues would sort themselves out, and I wouldn't have to answer those ridiculous claims against me.

I waited. I waited a long time. I waited for years. Her ex-husband used a tactic in court to delay, delay, challenge everything, introduce new claims when possible, outrageous claims, to which the love of my life had to take the time and make the effort to respond. It was years going back and forth.

To help with the financial side of the divorce, I gave her the name of the accountant who had indirectly helped me find the job where I met her in the first place.

In the meantime, we had our relationship as well as we could. She couldn't introduce me to the children, and while parenting half time we couldn't really get on with our lives. It was probably true that the children didn't need me in their lives to grow up, although it bothered me—and was laughable—that as a school teacher I wasn't allowed around her children. It kind of made me lose my heart for teaching. Teaching was my passion, my training and my practice. I was constantly interested in learning and developing as a teacher, becoming the best I could possibly be to foster children, how to be around them, be able to guide them in a way that's encouraging, allows them to grow and lets them become who they're meant to be. I suppose there's a bigger plan and we have to trust that.

Years went by, and it was starting to become clear that, believe it or not, the issue with the love letters wasn't going to go away by itself. They weren't going to resolve their issues without dragging me into it. To respond in court, I would need to pay thousands of dollars for an independent psychiatric assessment. I would never choose such a thing. I would never contribute to anyone saying I was any less than human, that there was anything wrong with me without any scientific

evidence. That was not coming from me. That was coming from other people. My partner had resigned to asking me to just do it, to submit, like it was some game that we had to play. So we had a bit of a standoff.

The situation was actually further complicated by the fact that I had a good psychiatrist, one who believed I could recover. I could have chosen anyone I wanted to perform a psychiatric assessment, however in court I might have been asked to submit to another psychiatric assessment as well, by a psychiatrist of their choosing. It probably would have worked out alright, although it would have been a long and ugly debate potentially before the judge would make a sensible decision.

Eventually I started to get tired, I couldn't do it anymore. I could no longer be around the pressure against me to compromise my beliefs in order to get what I wanted, to be with the woman I loved. I still loved her, but I made her believe that

I didn't because I knew that I couldn't survive under those conditions anymore. She eventually got to know the accountant better than I did, and started attending parties he threw. She apparently met someone new at one of those parties. I found a new accountant.

By that time, we were both working at a local community college. I left my job. I wanted to get on with my life, which I was finding more difficult with the possibility of bumping into her every day. I ended up with a better opportunity professionally.

Neither of us saw the complexity of those circumstances coming. She could have taken care of all that before pursuing a relationship with me.

I could have followed advice that I got not to send those letters—I would have, the timing was just slightly off...

Save Lives with Simple Remedies

by Bob Krzyzewski

We all survived the supposed swine flu "pandemic", with hardly a scratch, and so more bastions of false belief from our so-called "medical establishment" are ready to come down. Huge innovations in the treatment of chronic illnesses, including chronic fatigue system, it's adjunct, fibromyalgia and cancer are ready to hit the light of day. Two issues ago, I wrote a piece entitled "True Pleasures Open Us to New Possibilities", wherein I referred to the systemic benefits of doing your heart's desire, how it strengthens your electrical system and powerfully enhances your immunity.

Now further pieces of the puzzle are coming together. Many readers will probably recall the "water crystal" experiments of Dr. Emoto, where he demonstrated that positive messages written on the side of water bottles, (as did positive classical and popular music), produced esthetically pleasing symmetrical crystal shapes when photographed with special low temperature equipment.

So the first part of these new healing innovations depends on the human body being nearly 80% water and subject to crystalline effects. Almost any health practitioner will tell you that drinking "purified" water is a big boost to the

body, and "microclustered" water, produced with oxygen enhancing processes is even more of a benefit. Now it doesn't necessarily take a \$4000 water system to do the job, either. You can learn to "run energy" through your own hands and have a beneficial effect on your water. You can also write on your own body, messages of gratitude and compassion and produce effects as well, and you can do this listening to positive music, practicing deep oxygenating breathing and receive the benefits as well.

Research about to be released, shows that water as the liquid medium in our bodies carries signals at the rate of millions per second within our bodies. If our water is murky then signals get distorted and eventually result in cellular mutations. This is not enough to create disease, as the body has the amazing ability to work around many mutations, but if other conditions suppress the immune system the combined synergy can create conditions for serious illness. (See John W. Apsley, *The Regeneration Effect*, Vol. 2)

Primary of these conditions is a mineral depleted internal environment. The old concept

(continued page over)

was equivalent to our body eating food and "absorbing" minerals. The newer paradigm suggests that minerals don't get absorbed as much as remain in a "colloidal suspension" which allows for improved electrical communication within the body systems resulting in a high functioning cellular environment. Unfortunately today's soil is severely mineral depleted. One source showed that a spinach serving in 1962 contained approximately 150 milligrams of iron, whereas today's spinach carries as little as 2 milligrams of iron, leaving the body seriously wanting. Some of this can be compensated by eating organic food (grown under strict soil conditions) and some by taking supplements.

However, the environment of the body is very important, as it's not only what you're taking in, but more so, what your body is capable of absorbing that, determines the benefit of your nutritional intake. This supports the argument strongly that your body benefits from periodic "detoxing cleanses". Many conventional doctors have dis-

counted these cleanses as fads or scams, but you have to read the personal stories of recovery from life threatening illness to put this in proper perspective. Included as a "detoxing regime" is vegetable juicing, although this is a stand-alone practice for "raw food" practitioners as well.

The many "detoxing kits" offered in health stores are an acceptable beginning to this phase of healing. Several herbs are effective as well, dandelion, walnut, and parsley to name a few. But eating large amounts of vegetables, (with no salt i.e. sodium added) can be the foundation of a healing program, and this includes a huge salad everyday.

Two other components that deserve special mention are bicarbonate of soda, or baking soda, and tumeric another fairly common kitchen spice from India. Turmeric seems to reduce internal inflammation effectively, and helps balance blood sugar (as does cinnamon). The first mentioned ingredient, bicarbonate soda, another common kitchen ingredient, is a potent reducer of tumors, although please see the forthcoming book by Dr. John Apsley to get some guidelines for therapeutic use. Meantime try putting it in your bathwater to produce a beneficial and restorative soak for yourself, it can be mixed with bath salts as well.

While I just referred to Dr. Apsley, his work on cancer treatment includes a necessary look at your thyroid, an understated component of balanced health and recovery. This endocrine gland situated in your throat, produces two main hormones simply referred to as "T3" and "T4". When they are in balanced ratios they are most effective, however, an under functioning thyroid can be detected by taking your underarm basal temperature upon arising in the morning with a standard digital thermometer. If your basal temperature is below the standard 98.6 degrees

Fahrenheit, you probably have "hypothyroidism". This condition is characterized by sluggish energy, what you might think of as low motivation in the physical realm, and feeling cold a lot. This condition can be more accurately detected by a blood test, but it must be the "Barnes Test", not a simple blood analysis, to detect the presence of T3 and T4 in the bloodstream. It would be good to consult with a naturopath or holistic dietitian about this point. Several stores offer brief consultations at no

charge, so look into Finlandia, Choices and Capers on this.

Acupuncture which is becoming increasingly available at affordable rates, is also able to effect great changes in the body working through the meridian pathways. Where acupuncture is not desirable, the art of chi kung can be practiced daily as an adjunct to healing. Other energy modalities are useful as well. Many testimonies have been recorded from applying the "Emotional Freedom Technique", various forms of yoga, and energy work like reiki, Quantum Healing Touch, Therapeutic Touch and others.

Finally new innovations in technology utilizing this quantum or now called "zero point energy field" are available for around three hundred dollars. A new device on the market doubles as a water purifier and so is more affordable than ever before and more versatile as well. More information will follow on these devices as well as the research of Dr. John Apsley, whose web site is actually not up yet, but his will be available on Amazon shortly. Till next time, be well everyone by practicing wellness. ■

"Many testimonies have been recorded from applying the 'Emotional Freedom Technique'..."

Falling Through the Cracks...

(continued from pg.8)

in Vancouver since I was a student there in the 90's, so I moved back. Although I was 7 months pregnant and off medication, I took a bus to Vancouver and moved into a homeless shelter.

I still had an outstanding police charge for dining and dashing so I knew I had to go to court eventually. But I didn't care. I eventually flew back to Calgary from this homeless shelter in Vancouver and went to court and had the charges dropped because I was mentally ill.

Lots of trouble ensued because that psychiatrist did not want to see me anymore. At the time they were not treating dual diagnoses patients. To them it was like a smoker going to a lung specialist. It just never made any sense for them. I began making bad choices like drugs, boyfriends and alcohol. The only good thing that came out of this time period was my daughter who I gave up for adoption. She is still in my life and I get to see her twice a year (Christmas eve and her birthday).

I decided adoption was the right choice for me. Her mothers (a lesbian couple) are wonderful parents and they support me too. One mom is a nurse, the other a physical education teacher. They are giving my daughter the life I could not. I sleep well at night with that particular choice.

Now that I have been clean from drugs over five years, I look back at that troubled time as life lessons that were paid in tears. I eventually broke up with the dubious boyfriend and moved back to Vancouver. Here I am attending mental health classes, work part time as a janitor and loving the life I have carved out for myself. I am humbled by the level of care I get from doctors and plan on going back to school to become a mental health worker. I have been there, done that, seen it all. My mother always tells me that now the only thing I can do is help other people recover. My recovery is going strong and I do not know how I survived it all. I am no longer falling through the cracks; I am striving, thriving and growing strong! ■

The Mountains of Morning

by D. Paul

Let all that is within me now rise to the call
of laying down words within this earth's ball
the rhythm, the rhyme now moving again
we're shaking, we're waking for all to begin

and beginnings are good but all in between
we look for the content, the waking dream;
we look for the substance, the matter of craft
to walk in the beauty and bounty at last

for life is woven upon the loom
of beauty and bounty - we all have room
for the harvest is plenty, the labourers few
the harvest is near - that much is true

now look to the blossom, now look to the bud
now look to the seabird, now look to the dove
now look to the water, now look to the fire
now look to the kindling of the heart's desire

now look past the torment and the torture of vainglory
to be found moving and living in the story
of fountains and future birthing out of past
we're moving on the mountains of morning at last. ■

Websites Of Interest To Consumers/Survivors/Ex-Mental Patients

This list is not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive, and has left out many well-known sites that are widely available and easily accessible from local directories.

Organizations (General)

www.mind.org.uk www.power2u.org www.mhselfhelp.org www.wnusp.org www.tao.ca/~pact
www.u-kan.co.uk www.mentalhealth.com www.icspp.org www.oikos.org www.icomm.ca/csinfo
www.aapd-dc.org www.mindfreedom.org www.geocities.com www.mdri.org www.breggin.com
www.cvdinfobase.ca/mh-atlas/ www.szasz.com www.antipsychiatry.org www.peoplewho.org
www.walnet.org/llf www.mentalhealth.org.uk www.fsu.edu/~trauma/ip.html www.radpsynet.org
www.contac.org www.buildfreedom.com/ft/psychiatric_survivors.htm www.samhsa.gov
www.nucknfuts.com/index.php www.cam.org www.lino.com/~raiddat <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipsychiatry> <http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~nstaman/alternatives/OVNVinternational.htm>

Advocacy and Activism

www.mental-health-matters.com/activist.html www.m-power.org www.narpa.org
www.protectionandadvocacy.com www.cchr.org www.popan.org.uk www.advocateweb.com
www.gamian-europe.com www.hri.ca www.hrweb.org www.iahf.com www.benzo.org.uk/prawi.htm
<http://members.aol.com/jimhofw/jimho.htm>

Alternatives

www.talkingcure.com/index.asp www.alternativementalhealth.com www.medsfree.com www.moshersoteria.com www.transtherapy.org www.patchadams.org www.healthfreedommovement.com
www.weglaufhaus.de www.elcollie.com www.stopshrinks.org www.lstpm.org
www.emotiosinbalance.com www.the-bright-side.org/site/thebrightside/ www.doctoryourself.com
www.emotionsanonymous.org www.projectresilience.com www.bu.edu/cpr/rr/alternative/
www.religiousfreedom.org www.wildestcolts.com <http://stopbadtherapy.com> http://nht_amhll.blogspot.com <http://essence-euro.org/jasp/> <http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/erthworks/nonmain.htm>

Drug Information

www.larsmartensson.com www.drugs-and-medications.com www.drugawareness.org
www.outlookcities.com/psych/ www.canadiandimension.mb.ca/v35/v35_5ab.htm#three
www.nmsis.org www.antidepressantsfacts.com www.socialaudit.org.uk/1.4.html
www.chemsense.com www.prozactruth.com www.quitpaxil.org www.talkingcure.com/archive/drugs.htm www.truehope.com www.astrocyte-design.com/pseudoscience/index.html <http://members.fortunecity.com/siriusw/Biochemical-Imbalance.htm> <http://groups.msn.com/SIDEEFFECTS>
www.benzo.org.uk

Children & Youth

www.voice4kids.org www.aspire.us www.hearmyvoice.org www.ritalindeath.com www.p-a-r.org
www.adhdfrac.org

Tardive Dyskinesia/Dystonia

www.power2u.org/selfhep/tardive.html www.wemove.org www.dystonia-support.org www.dystonia-foundation.org www.iatrogenic.org/index.html www.breggin.com/tardivedysk.html
www.caromont.org/16036.cfm www.emedicine.com/neuro/topic362.htm www.drugdigest.org/DD/Articles/News/0.10141.513136.00.html www.psyweb.com/Diction/tardived.html www.thebody.com/pinf/phenos.html www.reglan-lawsuit.com www.ninds.nih.gov/healthandmedical/disorders/tardivedoc.htm www.easyweb.easynet.co.uk/simplpsych/tardive.html

Bulletin Board

The Self-Help Resource Association of BC (SHRA) has changed its name to **PeerNetBC**. They also publish a Directory of Self Help/Support Groups in Greater Vancouver with over 600 listings, many of them dealing with mental health issues. **PeerNetBC** is located at suite 306 - 1212 West Broadway, Van. BC V6H 3V1 Tel. 604-733-6186 Fax. 604-730-1015 e-mail info@peernetbc.com . Website - www.peernetbc.com

West Coast Mental Health Network sponsors many self-help groups. Office at #201 - 1300 Richards Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 3G6 Tel. 604-733-5570 Fax: 604-733-9556 e-mail vrnhn@vcn.bc.ca

Named after Vincent van Gough's homeopathic doctor, Paul Gachet, **Gallery Gachet** works to provide a safe, borderless place of artistic expression. It is located at 88 E. Cordova, Vancouver. Tel. 604-687-2468

Websites Of Interest To Consumers/Survivors/Ex-Mental Patients

(continued from previous page)

Electroshock

www.ect.org www.banshock.org www.idiom.com/~drjohn/review.html <http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/bmj;326/7403/1363>

Forced Treatment

www.freedom-center.org www.namisc.org/newsletters/August01/MindAid.htm www.hri/doccentre/docs/gosden.shtml www.garynull.com/issues/Psych/Index.htm www.psychlaws.org www.kqed.org/w/hope/involuntarytreatment.html

Mental Health Law

www.bazon.org www.ac.wvu.edu/~knecht/law.htm www.psych.org/public_info/insanity.cfm
www.forensic-psych.com/pubs/pubADment.html www.psychlaws.org www.imhl.com www.ialmh.org
www.justiceseekers.com www.safe-trak.com/main/competency1.htm www.abanet.org/disability/sites.html www.experts.com www.expertpages.com/psychiatry-psychology.htm www.psych.org/advocacy-policy/leg_res/apa_testimony/testimonysub-crimeposted91800.cfm www.ilppp.virginia.edu/www.law.cornell.edu/topics/mental_health.html www.helpforparents.net/LegalResources/1LegalResources.htm

History of Mental Health Care

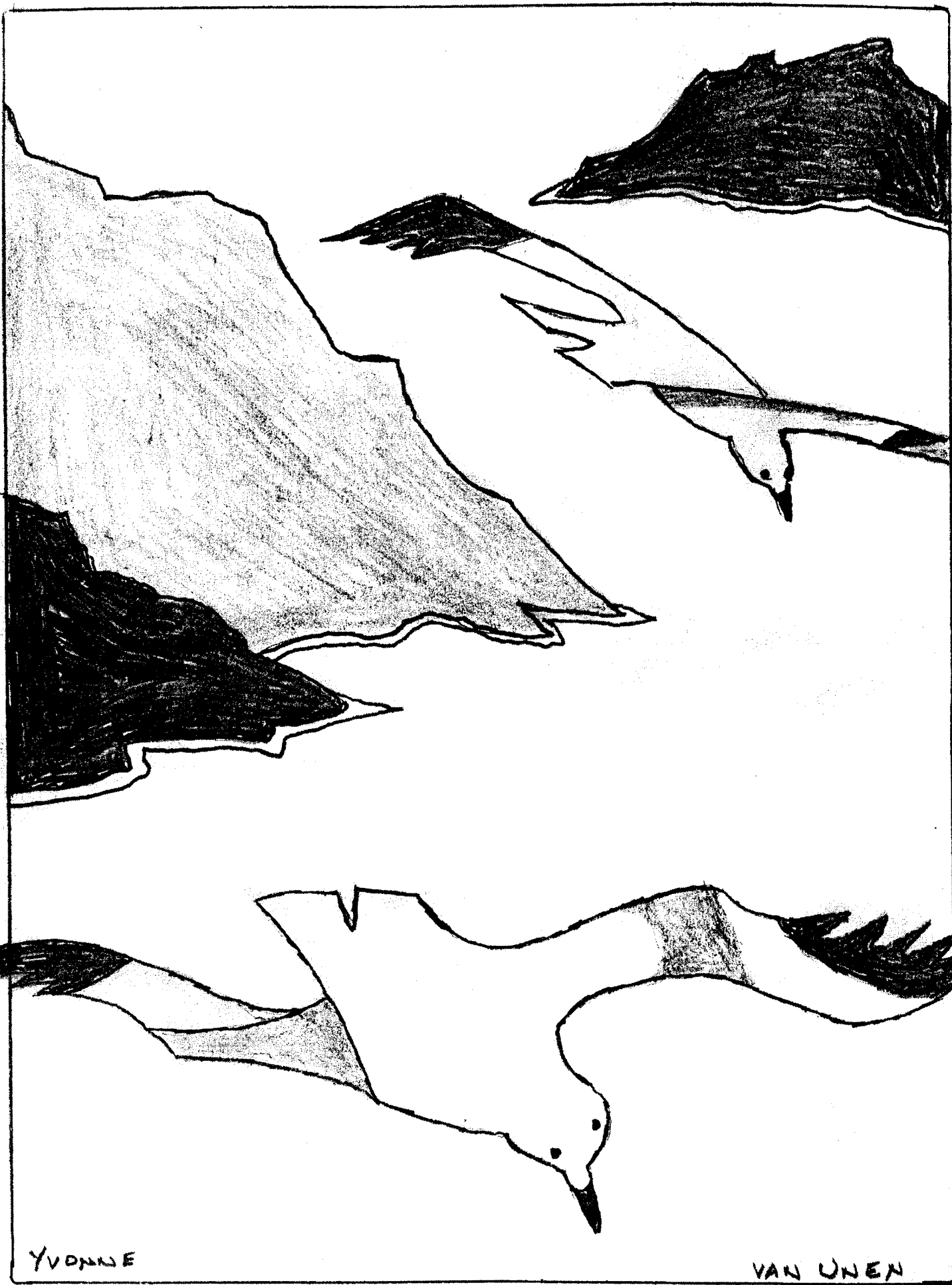
www.psychiatricsurvivorsarchives.com www.webcom.com/thrive/schizo/kdarch.html www.cwu.edu/~warren/addenda.html www.epub.org.br/cm/n02/historia/psicocirg_i.htm

Online Publications

www.mentalmagazine.co.uk <http://members.aol.com/asylumpub> <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~expert/psychnews/>

Orthomolecular Medicine

www.islandnet.com/~hoffer/hofferhp.htm www.islandnet.com/~hoffer/ www.orthomed.org



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