

# That Port Alberni Inlet Time of Year

## by Frank G. Sterle, Jr.

During the salmon gillnet fishing seasons of the 1980s—which ran from about the beginning of June until about the end of November—nothing else measured up in the thrill-o-meter for me than the monster-Spring-salmon gillnet fishing in Port

Alberni Inlet with Dad (deceased June 7th, 2002) on Vancouver Island. It usually lasted altogether for about six nights (i.e., usually two nights a week) at the end of August and the beginning of September.

The large spring salmon (a.k.a., 'smiley') made that Port Alberni Inlet time of the year so special for me, and likely some other fishers as well.

The spring salmon, whether large or small, has a scent to it (something like an odorous mixture of ammonia and typical fish slime). The very-distinct odour (albeit unnoticeable to most fishers) of a landed Spring salmon, especially a smiley, made me feel, to say the least, quite excited and got me all ready and very enthusiastic for the Port Alberni Inlet time of the year. Indeed, the slap of a 30-pound smiley landing on the wooden-planked boat's stern gave me a strong sense of—as actor Robert Duvall said it in his best-supporting-actor-winning role in the box-office, block-buster *Apocalypse Now*—

"victory."

However, at the opposite end of the commercial-fishing spectrum is the extremely disappointing snap—my guilt complex hammered my mind every time I heard that horrible, discouraging sound—of a smiley breaking free of the net as it's being rolled up onto the 'drum,' from the massive fish's own dead weight, and falling down back into the water, and sinking to the inlet's floor (about 100 fathoms, or 600 feet, below). As an obsessive person, I, on occasion, would even yell out quite loud at the sound of that snap.

> Openings would go from exactly 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. (though in later years, to only 6 a.m.).

The huge fish would venture near the water's surface only in the dark a time during which sports fishers were not around (FYI: there always was/is an animosity between sports and commercial fishers, for they're competing for the same fish, albeit in differing quantity).

There, it was packed full of gillnet boats, for the fish were so big (usually around 25-35 pounds) and valuable (I

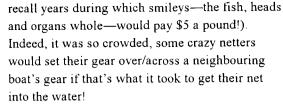
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### In This Issue

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Summer 2010

"As an obsessive person, I, on occasion, would even yell out quite loud at the sound of that snap."



The large and thus powerful fish would entangle themselves well enough to prohibit their escape and drown; ironically, however, they then would gradually loosen up as dead weight, and after a few hours, they'd fall free

from the net's large webbing—a waste and a loss that made me sick, especially as an OCDer.

The two things about which I obsessed in imminent advance of each opening were: 1. would we catch at least an 'average' number of smileys (we fished every year at the same spot, close to a numbered log-boom, and would, in the first and most important set, always

manage to get at least our share, around 90-95 smileys for the night) and 2. when picking up sets, how many precious smileys, from their own weight and seemingly flimsy entanglement, would break free from the net as it came up from the water and over the net rollers and fall back into the water and back down to the inlet floor (albeit, as often as not, Dad managed to gaff them as they slowly drifted towards out-of-reach; but too often for me, he'd fail). I guess it was simply the 'good' coming with the 'bad'—a miserable fact of smiley-gillnetting life, for me.

The very last time I fished in Port Alberni Inlet happened to be the very worst night I'd ever experienced there (probably for Dad, too). For one thing, we got skunked (i.e., no fish) in our first set, at our usually-predictable and profitable location—a fact later attributed, to make a long story short, to the closure of a local, large lumber mill. Then, after having moved down the inlet where we spotted fishers getting their 'fare share,' Dad reset the net, let it sit for about half an hour before picking it up with some smileys to boot. But then Dad, deciding to stop picking up the net to reset (he had his reasons, including the precious darkness), missed some sports fisher's hook entangled in the webbing, which, when dropped

"The two things about which I obsessed in imminemt advance of each opening were:" underner toward night, sh not sit w things in (It's wor Dad's fil wine Da forward night, sh not sit w things in Dad's fil wine Da forward night, sh not sit w things in Dad's fil wine Da forward night, sh

back into the water, went down and underneath our vessel's stern just when Dad put the propeller into forward. Result? That's all for the night, she wrote. It, to this day, does not sit well with me, for I like to end things in my life on a positive note. (It's worth noting that, although Dad's fishing knowledge outshone mine by far, he and I did often disagree on his decisions regarding various fishing matters; for example,

when he, the skipper of the fishing vessel, and I should pick up a net of fish.)

Now, only aboriginal gill-netters and sports anglers get to enjoy the fruits of Port Alberni Inlet. Many aboriginal fishers felt naught but contempt for the white-man fishers; indeed, one aboriginal fisher, perhaps after a bad night's fishing, equated my face with his ass when I asked him for a match with which to light my cigarette.

One particularly memorable year for me perhaps the best of all of the years, there—almost all of the coast's gill-netters stuffed themselves into the Fraser River and its gulf; that year, the Sockeye salmon run was very generous and each pound of whole-round Sockeye paid \$5, while the

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The Editorial Board of **In A Nutshell** welcomes letters, articles, and poetry on mental health issues from you, our readers. Authors of writing that is accepted and published will receive an honourarium - \$50 for articles over 500 wds, \$25 for shorter articles, \$10-\$15 for poetry depending on length.

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# **News Briefs From All Over**

## Compiled by Scott Dixon

### The Price of Progre\$\$

Lan Feng, a psychiatrist with the Tianjin Mental Health Association in China, says adapting to a fast-paced economy was proving too difficult for some citizens.

The pressures of business and getting ahead in the new economy had altered the "balance" in Chinese society, he said. People now need greater access to mental health care, he added.

"Access to mental health services has to be developed more energetically," he told the *Toronto Star.* "Common people don't even know about it . ... and there just aren't enough psychiatrists in China." People have to overcome the "shame" that attaches to anyone in China seeking mental health treatment.

## Knowing the Price of Everything, And the Value of Nothing

The *Herald Sun* newspaper in Australia has called on governments to provide more money for mental health treatment, not less. "By not addressing the problems of the almost six million Australians who directly experience mental illness, and the 12 million others who directly and indirectly care for them, we are creating a problem that will cost Australian taxpayers more in the longer term, a burden at least four times greater than the cost of providing effective services now. These costs will multiply the already huge expenses for hospitals, community health and welfare services, police, ambulance, pensions and sickness benefits, not to mention the effects of family breakdown, social isolation and trauma."

### Must The Show Always Go On?

The National Post has given a mixed review to the Tony-and-Pulitzer winning musical "Next To Normal" - a self-consciously "serious" musical about mental illness. The review reads in part, "A bipolar woman struggles to come to terms with her husband, her daughter, and her son - the last of whom, we discover, died in childhood. The discovery wrecks the show since he hangs around in memory, haranguing everyone. Everyone else screams right back; this is a rock score, virtually devoid of nuance."

#### On The One Hand.....

Bad news, good news in Victoria. Calls for assistance under the Mental Health Act were up 26 per cent last year. But referrals to the Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team rose 64.4 per cent to 490 from 298. A senior officer with the Victoria Police told the *Times-Colonist* newspaper, "This is due to education to our patrol members [about] the resources available when both a mental health worker and a police officer are able to respond to people in mental distress."

## Quote:

"As the free press develops, the paramount point is whether the journalist, like the scientest or scholar, puts truth in the first place or the second."

Walter Lippman

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# Interview with Judge Thomas Gove of the Community Court

## by Jim Gifford

Jim Gifford: What is the goal of the Community Court?

Judge Gove: Our objective is helping people who are involved in criminal activity as a result of their addictions or mental disorders to change the way they are living and to improve their lives.

Jim Gifford: Describe the operations of this court.

Judge Gove: The Community court is the first court for many criminal offences in the Downtown Eastside. First it has to occur within our cachment area – Stanley Park to Clark Drive, North of Great Canada Way to False Creek and English Bay to the harbour. That includes the WestEnd, to Strathcona, Chinatown, the Downtown Eastside to Coal Harbour – quite a diverse community.

If you commit a summary conviction offence or the less serious

indictable offences, you come to the Community Court. That's probably 60 to 70 percent of all crime in downtown Vancouver. When somebody comes here, the first thing that happens is, at seven o'clock, the Triage Team meets to discuss the individual and pulls information together. It's made up of a probations officer, a Vancouver Coastal Health nurse, Forensic Services nurse, assisted by a Vancouver Police Sergeant, Native Court Worker, and a Social Development Worker, formerly called Income Assistance Worker. Before a case gets to court, they're trying to figure out if one of our social systems knows this person. At eight-thirty, there is a meeting between them, along with the Crown Prosecutors and the Defense Lawyers, two of whom work with the Community Court. Upwards of twenty percent of the people are diverted out of the system through alternate measures. The individual has to agree to acknowledge responsibility and to do something. The Crown then stays the charge and there is no conviction. The Crown decides which people

they're prepared to consider alternate measures for, based on the nature of the offence, the absence of a serious record and their particular circumstances. A Defense Lawyer goes and speaks to each of those people when they arrive in court. If they accept responsibility (they are not pleading guilty) and they are prepared to be interviewed for alternate measures and they consent, I adjourn the case. This is for however

> many weeks it takes to allow the individual to do such things as hours of community service, attending sessions on addictions or crime and consequences or perhaps to pay restitution for such things as a broken window. So these people are now off doing what they've agreed to do and when they come back to court, hopefully they've done what they said they would do. The crown stays the charge' they're out of here. So we're getting about twenty percent of the people out right away.

We have a very small version of a mental health court. Someone may have a mental disorder that seems to be connected to the offence they.'ve committed, and there are issues of whether they would be fit to stand trial. After the individual is seen by a psych nurse and sometimes a psychiatrist, the Crown adjourns the case for a longer period of time. This lets the person get stabilized, get serviced in the community, get connected with a care team or whatever they need. The Crown stays the case. In the ordinary criminal courts, they would be sent off for a fitness hearing, committed under the Mental Health Act, kept in hospital or in jail for a period of time. They would be stabilized, then released and found to be fit. Then, if before their next court appearance they broke the law again, they may be back in the same situation. Instead of worrying about the criminal offence, we're trying to get the

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In A Nutshell

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# Building Community and Recovery

## by Susan Trapp

I have acquired knowledge of Tardive Dyskinesia from running a support group over the last few years. I have seen how people have acquired TD, a side effect of medication, and how the peoples relationship with the mental health professional give care has often been strained if not severed. The person feels betrayed by the care-giver. The medication that he trusted was supposed to help has left him with irreversible side effects. The side effects sometimes stayed the same or got worse. He found himself now in a struggle with the mental health system. He not only has mental illness he has unsightly involuntary movements in his face or limbs. He could have hid his mental illness but the movements in his body speak louder than words. You might ask how a person can have a chance for community when the stigma of TD and mental illness is such a part of his life.

Sometimes there still is a glimmer of hope. It is called support. Having experienced some TD symptoms myself I have found the help of a support group comforting. The act of having people who have TD or experienced TD symptoms at one time or other getting together can help rebuild broken relationships caused by TD. As a group we have given a people marginalized by society a chance for some form of recovery.

Education about TD can help. Learning what others go through helps. It has been historically helpful and given meaning to life. Personal stories

have helped us recover; especially having the experience of feeling validated by sharing my story with others. I never knew the similarities that go with having suffered TD. I realized I was not alone with this disorder called Tardive Dyskinesia. Others have had common experiences; even small things such as having been treated with Botox shots to relax the muscles helps. It was also the physical suffering on a daily basis that goes along with having TD. Having to deal with pain and discomfort can be really debilitating. It takes away our will to live. It was also how a person was treated by mental health professionals when he or she developed TD. This was helpful and not so helpful. Talking about our challenges does help.

Sometimes you can't fix a broken record but the power of community has helped. It has empowered us to reach out to others and bring hope. I have found the group has given hope to our participant's lives. It has brought light to the darkness in which so many people who have TD suffer. Even if we can't fix our personal case we have spread the awareness of the importance of catching TD before it becomes irreversible. Sometimes like in my case changing the medication helped. We need to be educated about TD. Sometimes it is up to us. Sometimes community can help.

## Psalm 49:14 – "Dominion in The Morning" by Paul Strashok

Losing myself in the rich treasure-store, a hunger and thirst cries out "More, more". Constrained by compassionate longing of soul and a desire to be centred, complete and whole; I take up my portion, my passion, my craft and long to be part of the healing at last. Looking through eyes of the Maker and Made, knowing that the price was forever, once paid; I think of the Saviour who counted the cost of picking up jacks, ransoming the lost;

of gathering stones out from the mire. He walked in this world through a baptism of fire; and we too must walk, circumspectly towards all laying down stones for the building of the wall of Jerusalem New, God's dwelling amongst men. Its colours still shine in splendour again. When the city is built, then He will appear to ransom all those who count Him dear; to take home a Bride in glorious array. We eagerly await the dawning of that day.

# What's Stopping Recovery?

### by Michael Crain

It seems that in the area of mental health we have entered the era of recovery. The bandwagon has left the station and everyone is jumping on board. Yet if you asked 100 different people what this is or what this means you'll get as many answers. One of the issues that we face in this time of recovery is the lack of a clear-cut definition of what recovery means in mental illness. My hope is that this lack of a definition will not prevent recovery from actually happening.

When it comes to defining recovery, there are several different players on the field. People who do quantitative research, people who do

qualitative research, mental health practitioners, family and friends who are part of a support network for people who have mental illness, and people who have mental illness themselves. Each of these groups defines recovery in a different way and, in some cases, the way that recovery is defined keeps a universal idea of recovery from happening.

Quantitative or hard scientists and researchers are concerned with defining recovery as relates to symptoms in the illness. Recovery is defined as a period of time where no symptoms occur. For this group, it does not seem that recovery is possible for a period of time longer than eight months.

Qualitative or soft scientists are more concerned with quality of life. The research done here deals more with emotional content rather than the hard facts that the previous group deals with. The focus of qualitative research is trying to find ways for a person to handle a chronic illness.

Practitioners seem to have a different approach to recovery. For a long time in the mental health system, doing *for* the patient has been the focus. Now the desire is more to help the patient do for him or her self. The move in recovery by this group focuses around trying to help people with mental illness manage on their own to the best of their ability.

Family, friends and members of the support network of someone with mental illness bring a different point of view to recovery. As a hasty generalization, a lot of what I have observed from this group is concern and fear. I have met several family members who are looking for a quick fix for someone who has mental illness. The desire for this group towards recovery seems to be making the person they know be well and not be ill any more.

Lastly, people with mental illness are often left to their own devices to define recovery. The thing that seems to be preached by people with mental illness is a relativistic approach. People who have a mental illness need to take the time to define what recovery means for them and what impedes the person from having a full and

"Qualitative or soft scientests are more concerned with quality of life." rewarding life. This particular approach is the one that I find the most harmful in trying to define recovery. It prevents the definition of any kind of objective truth, and it does not allow for a universal definition.

Now don't get me wrong, I think this individualistic approach is important in trying to figure out how

a person with mental illness can recover. If, for instance, I experienced a great deal of paranoia and what I believe is important to me in recovery is trying to find healthy ways of dealing with paranoia then that's relevant and very important. However, this cannot be part of an overall definition of what recovery is in mental illness. Instead, part of the definition could be that an individual needs to learn the way mental illness affects them and how to cope or manage this.

My concern here is that there are several different players on the field all with different agendas and concerns around what recovery means to people with mental illness. I've touched on what I believe to be some of the points of view and where they come from. I'm sure there are other groups out there that have other ideas and opinions as well. We need to start working towards speaking the same language so that we know we're moving towards recovery. When we look back historically over eras in mental illness, it's easy to see the positives and negatives of different times in mental health. The institutional era, the pharmacological era, and different types of therapy that have come in vogue

are examples of this. Some time in the future, people will be looking back at the recovery era in the same way and discussing what was positive and negative about what's happening right now. My great fear is that when people look back, a weakness that they see is that there was no universal definition of what recovery is in mental illness and this took away from anything being accomplished. I hope that this does not happen, but rather the different tribes are able to meet and collectively work on figuring out what the heck recovery is. If we don't, how will we ever know if we've achieved it?

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## ABC's of Recovery

## by Bonnie Taylor

A Abstinence - from abuse of any substance, be it alcohol, food, narcotics – sugar can be a particularly deceptive substance – it appears to be so sweet and innocent and yet it can play havoc with our moods.

B Books – reading inspirational literature has carried me through many a rough day. Visit your library. Ask the librarian for help if you can't find the topic you're searching for.

C Community – become involved even if it's an hour of volunteer work a week. Giving back truly is a way to heal yourself.

D Drugs – stay on medications. It is unlikely that you'll be able to live by the ABCs if you need medication and are not taking it.

E Emotions – allow yourself to feel your feelings. Learn to sit with them. Even if they feel just awful, the only way out is through.

F Friendships – cultivate them. Be the friend you want to have.

G Gratitude – adopt an attitude of gratitude – it goes a long way to putting things into perspective.

H Housework – keep your living space clean. If you don't like doing housework, just do 15 minutes a day. You'll feel better for it.

I Internet – there is so much information here – use it as a tool of recovery.

J Join – a support group, either face to face or on-line. Relating to people who have similar stories is invaluable.

K Kindness – be willing to give and receive it. We need to be kinder to each other.

L Love – be open to love. Human beings have it in them to love others, no matter what character flaws the recipient may have. We all have them.

M Mentors – read about and listen to people who inspire you.

N Nature – Be in it; revel in it.

O One day at a time.

P Perseverance - sometimes you may only be able to take one step, pause, and then another. It's okay, just keep on stepping and you'll find you've travelled a long, long way from where you began.

Q Quiet time – we all need time to reflect on our day and to just rest ourselves.

R Rigorous Honesty - Honesty can set you free. No more covering your tracks or hiding who you are. This does not mean telling your friend that you hate her hair.

S Spirit of the universe – get in touch with it/him/her. Prayer, meditation, nature and reading can all help.

T Tolerance – recognize that we are all flawed. It isn't your business what other people do or think. Let it go.

U Unity – never forget that we are all in this together. We share many things with every human on this earth.

V Vulnerability – Open that heart just a little even if you could be hurt. Hurt heals, being all tightly closed up doesn't.

W Wisdom – you have some of this. Share it. And seek it out from others. Elders can be a great source of wisdom.

X Xercise – it really works – decreases anxiety; raises endorphins. Just do 15 minutes a day if that's all you can muster. It will make a difference.

Y Yes - say yes to invitations. If somebody thinks enough of you to invite you, say yes.

Z Zero tolerance for destructive selftalk. Berating yourself doesn't do your Spirit any good. Cogmitive therpy and positive affirmations can help.



## **Tactile Hallucinations**

## by A. Smith

My personal experience with tactile hallucinations came to me in 2002. I had been struggling with severe paranoid schizophrenia for about 5 years and trying to get ahead in life by writing screenplays and working as a waitress, thinking one day I'd become wealthy and successful. I had at the time commanding voices that were always trying to bring me down emotionally and often this involved a tactile hallucination. A tactile hallucination to the best of my knowledge is when you feel something that is not there - part of the 5 senses that can be distorted by hallucinations. Just like auditory hallucinations when you hear things that are not there, I felt things that were not there. In my case it was rape sensation-an unwanted sexual touch that I could feel on my skin when no one was there. I would feel a pinch of my breast when I felt hopeful or a finger up my butt when I was walking across a room carrying food trays when I was waitressing. The level it brought me down I cannot tell you. When I got a tactile hallucination - I felt victimized except there was no one to blame except the voices that ravaged inside my head. I felt trapped in psychological horror and sexual torture. There was no one to comfort me when this took place, I often felt suicidal.

The tactile hallucinations would often come at night just as I was laying my head down. I would sleep with a bible in bed to protect me and cry out to God. Sad to say it never worked, the tactile hallucinations would continue until I fell asleep mimicking a rape scenario. Since the hallucinations were happening in my lower region I found that freezing an ice pack and putting it "down there" would numb that area until I drifted off to sleep. Life was becoming very difficult for me. I asked my doctor for sleeping pills. My goal every evening was to take the sleeping pill and stay up until I was ready to pass out and avoid the nightly rape by my voices. "MIKE" was the name of the voice inside my head who would conduct this nightly torture and unfortunately this voice named "Mike" enraged me to no end. Later on I learned that hearing negative voices that berate you is common in many cases. I became a fighter and would argue with this voice on why he was raping me. The amount of emotional energy I was

putting into this was obscene. I felt so depressed and downtrodden over the nightly scenario that I would end up in hospital. The doctors would always asked questions such as "Have you ever been raped?" - the answer to this would be "No". I had not been raped nor sexually abused in any way and the entire experience was so disturbing not to mention embarrassing. My boyfriend never understood me when I told him. I felt isolated and alone, I had not heard of anyone in my peer group who had schizophrenia who experienced these tactile hallucinations. I had other tactile hallucinations besides the "rape hallucinations" Once a spider crawled across my face. That was creepy! My voices that I heard inside my head- these auditory hallucinations just did not want me to experience any joy, success, love, companionship or any of the good things that life had to offer. They simply wanted me in their hell and to suffer endlessly. Suicide ideation began and by 2005 it was all I could think about. I wanted to die so badly but suicide I tried and failed at. I wanted what I called a "medical release" - a brain tumor, AIDS, anything that would end the suffering I was going through. As this did not happen I simply had to find a way to cope, to find a way through this sensory hell.

I ended up growing strong in dealing with "Mike" and learned that he was a myth. I dispelled him - I don't know how but I did. As the years progressed I learned to deal with tactile hallucinations, I learned that I could defeat them. You see the more attention I gave to them, the more power they had. I started to ignore them and in my mind they'd pass quicker. Mike the voice in my head that would rape me felt defeated when I could ignore them. I often would feel the power he once had over me diminish. Today I can sit through a tactile hallucination and not have it bother me to the extent it used to. I also don't argue or communicate to my voices to the extent I use to. This has helped; I have greater peace of mind now.

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## Krishna's Blues

#### by Satya Devi

Walking, although slightly behind you I remember you, you were brilliant you were dazzling you were the true face behind the Shroud of Turin but laughing at all the Tin-Pan-Alley Gurus then your faculties were taken from you by a strokes cruel severance Then we passed the time then we killed the time then I sat alone in a screeching nothingness But now, through the curtains the sun is high and I remember how, as we walked the high sun marked us as one shadow and now I know neither of us ever has to walk alone.

## blind as a bat

### by reinhart

i was young, i was dumb, i was blind as a bat i kept all of my feelings under my hat i thought the thing to do is always be true and to always speak the truth even to the point of offence and regardless of lack of or proof

small talk and chit-chat I mostly abhorred it left me uninterested and for the most part bored my social skills were almost nil, i was in part civilly retarded i wanted to know what makes the universe tick while all else i discarded

i felt the most beautiful, dutiful thing on this earth was mankind we are charged to tend the garden of eden with all the tools we can find but i was preoccupied, tested and tried, by the life of the man i was oblivious to the flora and fauna and everything offered and provided that nature readily can

all that creepeth, crawleth, runneth and leapeth upon this world of mine to me remained for the most part invisible or else got lost in my life and time all these creatures of amazing, beautiful features played no part in my world although they lived in a cruel and kind harmony like the first love between a boy and a girl

i never noticed, indeed i missed the picturesque beauty that flowers can bring the majesty and heavenly striving of trees to me didn't mean a thing snow-peaked mountains and crystal fountains meant virtually nothing to me raging rivers and babbling brooks, magically made for fishing and wishing passed me by and kept right on flowing free lakes of blue were the thing to do when i wanted to get away from it all i'd jump in a boat and sail the sparkling waters, but I was deaf to the wild's wild call the sun and the moon somewhat dispelled my gloom and helped a bit with my depression but i hardly noticed the glorious, brilliant light, nor its omission

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the ocean tides waxed and waned again and again but i paid almost no attention i was much more captivated by the human and his scientific and philosophical invention the human body yes it oddly seemed the greatest work of art to me when i beheld michelangelo's david I concluded that that's the way a man can be

the female form since the day it was born was meant to be loved and admired and the joining in love of the man and the woman was the pinnacle to be desired but now i'm older and a lot less bolder than i used to be i've learned that the human being is a severely flawed creation as anyone can see

instead of working we are shirking on our duty to establish a paradise on earth we squabble and war over borders, nations, gold, silver and all kinds of things of no worth rich or poor, young or old, we must endure the fickle finger of fate if we're lucky we can say at the bitter end that we've spent more energy on love than hate

we all must die, though we don't know why, such happens to be our future when our last day comes we will be fortunate if, we can say we were a benign part of nature but while we're alive we all should strive to stop and smell the roses let us not ignore or forget the florid beauty that blooms right under our noses

## "Concrete Jungle" (where the living is harder) by Alex Winstanley

Today my friend fell out of the melodious sky. His Jamaican skin shone in the sun as he dove from a 16 story building, unseen. They thought it was a hit and run. Then they found the voices pinned inside his head like mutilated butterflies

or the broken

wings of birds.

Once he danced in midnight rain as opiates sang through his veins.

Once he worked graveyard at 7/11 counting the hours on his ribs like Adam cascading dreads knotted with the halos of the moon until the sun lay dawn's shadows at his doorstep while a panther slept.

His beauty weighed him down metaphors clustering and unbalanced like a ripe banana tree.

He listened to spirits sing

like immaculate grafitti growing up the sides of walls: a suicide note dancing beyond averted eyes. He believed that if he listened hard enough he would feel something like silence inside but instead dark creatures crowded the caverns in his ears, the stone roots beneath bridges.

As he fell wraiths

wrapped their bodies in the strummed chords of his music.

In ancient times

priestly schizophrenics sacrificed loved ones to the sea, that she may open her cresting legs

and give birth to the sun on a new day.

Now we offer

this beautiful man to Moloch--crumpled bones on a concrete altar.

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## **Sacred Journey**

## by Rose Ananda Heart

Shamanism is an ancient healing tradition practiced by many indigenous cultures worldwide. It is about a way of life in harmony with nature, connected with the earth and all of her multiple life forms. To embark on a shamanic journey involves entering a state of trance that allows for communion with the other world, the world of spirit. Many times this journey involves animals that come to relay messages of healing to anyone who is willing to observe their lessons. This essay conveys my personal experience undertaking one such inner voyage, giving me the gift of greater clarity and insight.

One rainy afternoon in late autumn of last year, a friend and I got together to share a sacred odyssey to explore the metaphysical realms. This lovely, dark eyed aboriginal woman is a practiced shaman and she led our ceremony beginning with sweet grass and sage, cleansing the room with its smoke. Her prayer honored the directions and the elements bringing in benevolent assistance from alternate domains of consciousness. I wanted to know what was the most important thing for me to focus on at this time in my life. There always seems to be so many things clamoring for my attention.

I lay down on a comfortable king sized bed, suddenly experiencing a cold chill run through my body causing me to shiver. My companion offered a blanket, lovingly wrapping it around my torso, providing me a place of safety and warmth. She put on some drum music, then reclined along side me, holding my hand. Because I didn't know what to do I told myself to just relax and let everything flow. I allowed myself to shake and discharge the fear I felt, and not long afterwards tears began to flow.

My vision was that of a fire, warm and bright. People were riding around on horses, the animals of power and perseverance. They were my people, the native North Americans. There was a gentle presence of a doe standing in the distant forest, and a strong and grounded bear introspectively wandering further along. Then a gracious raccoon scuttled up to the fire unafraid, offering her friendship. I had a sense of feeling warm, a sense of belonging. A voice in my head said, "Once you were raised among people who honored your power and held deep respect for you as a woman. You can take this power and this love to your current life."

Seconds later the image changed, and I was transformed into a pink soft skinned baby in the arms of a kind native woman. She was holding me, comforting me, sharing her gracious and healing love with me. I had the thought that this aboriginal woman was me from a past life experience, a former self that was assisting me in this present lifetime. She told me, "I am here. You can relax now. You chose this life to heal all the wounds of many life times. That's why it's been so difficult. You had to relive the pain so you could feel it fully in order to re-emerge into complete recovery of what is real. This is the most important work for you to do. Everything else in your life will fall into place in due time."

At this point I became aware of my friend lying beside me, breathing long and deep. I remember thinking, "This sister is a good friend. It is safe for me to get close to her." Allowing my vision to continue I then saw a very large snake with leathery skin and glimmering scales. The snake slithered over to me and then moved up my body, awakening my chakras. I felt peaceful and deeply relaxed, amazed by the things that I'd discovered.

After sharing my insights with my dear companion, she told me what she had seen. There was a black raven, symbol of mystery and the void, poking at my eye. When asked what this meant, my friend told me that the bird wanted to bring it to my attention that my world was now safe for me. I could stop hiding who I really am. After the raven left she saw the two of us join a group of dolphins for a swim in the turquoise blue seas. As she spoke I could feel the presence of this graceful mammal reminding me to relax into the flow of my life's unique path. What a delight! I've always wanted to swim with these playful water creatures, bringers of joy and unconditional love.

This exhilarating experience has given me much to process and integrate. I am grateful for the wisdom of the aboriginal peoples, for the medicine of my animal helpers and for my many friends who are sticking by me as I struggle to reclaim my elegant, vital self.

Summer 2010

# **Still Singin' and Dancing**

## by Cassandra Freeman

#### (for my parents)

The arts have always been a way for me to express the core of who I am, escape depression, relax and improvise my way into people's hearts. Today for me, while acting I can express emotions that are higher and lower than the norm and be received as a good actor – not some freak who is going over the top. And I can say with all sincerity that coming from a long line of drama queens hasn't hurt one bit.

My romance with the stage began at a very early age. My mother was teaching modeling so she brought me along when I was barely 4 years old. Soon I was modeling in my pajamas on stage with my big sister but infinitely more satisfying were the fashion shows I put on at home in front of the family.

I would take my father's overcoat, my mother's shoes, my sister's lipstick and one of my brother's shirts and walk down the imaginary runway in our living room all the while doing a running commentary on what I was wearing. The family would suddenly come together with laughter, encouragement and applause and I ate it up as if it were a full course meal.

My ballet training began at 4 years old as well and ended when I was 19. As a child I remember going on outings to the Japanese gardens in Vancouver, running and leaping above the grass. I can still remember the feeling of complete exhilaration. And of course after watching Gene Kelly in *Singing In The Rain* I absolutely did go out in the rain with my umbrella and dance around the block. My mother tells me that the neighbors would call her and say "your daughter is dancing in the street again!".

Dance, for me, was a prayer, a dream and also a big-time hope that I would one day dance in the National Ballet Company. While that never happened it was the form of expression that I clung to when my life with schoolmates was a tough one. And it usually was. Though I was a good student it generally felt like I was standing inside a glass box, unable to get out. But when I got called ugly at school, later that day I could dance and admire the lines my body was making in the mirror. When I danced I could forget mean people and at the same time get the workout of my life.

I quit dance with five injuries, went to university and soon after discovered improvisation down at the Vancouver Theatresports League. I later continued performing improv when I was in journalism school in Toronto. It was scarey as all hell at first but I soon became good at the games you might have seen on *Whose Line Is It Anyways?* 

Improv –spontaneous group storytelling on stage came with structured rules and a surprising bit of dogma, almost like a religion. It involved losing one's ego, becoming humble and saying "yes and" to the person you were on stage with. It was incredibly healing work that walked off the stage with you and positively influenced interactions with others. I was so impressed with this style of improv that I took 7 years to co-produce a documentary about the man behind the techniques, Canada's Keith Johnstone. You can see a clip of it on www.improvwiz.com. I dare you not to laugh. Improv allows people to be dramatic or silly, and the latter I truly feel is one of the most underestimated acts of human beings.

I have taught improv on and off since I was 30. And now I know what Johnstone has always said: that a warm-hearted teacher who makes mistakes is better than a cold one who teaches perfectly. In fact, I've found that making mistakes while demonstrating techniques is absolutely the best thing to do: because if students see the teacher screwing up it gives them permission to make mistakes too. And making mistakes is a large part of learning to improvise, not to mention living every day.

Today, I help run an Actors Drop In where I can write and perform scripts that are inspiring, shocking, silly and surprising. And when people make mistakes on stage and break up laughing its almost better than if they did the scene well.

The performing arts and writing has always been a loving act of defiance for me against a system that is so lost in boxes and labels. When I come out of my box the labels come off, even the ones I have put on myself. Perhaps that's why I admire the consumer/ survivors' mental health movement - because I see it aiming at the system as defiantly as the arts.

For info about the Actors Drop In call Cassandra at 604-872-4638.

## **Tactile Hallucinations**

### (continued from pg. 8)

Years after my first tactile hallucination, I met another woman who experienced them. She was experiencing rape sensations from her voices as well and she was so glad to find another person who went through thesame hell. We discussed how we dealt with them and I feel we both have grown stronger in that area. Today I no longer have suicide ideation and want to live. I will be turning 40 soon and now I want to make the best of the second part of my life. Finally finishing my degree, becoming a mental health worker - the possibilities are endless. But most of all I want to cherish my life and feel happy. I have become a very strong personal battling these hallucinations alone for many years. I remain hopeful that I can help someone else out there with this problem, to lend a hand to those out there who may be suffering alone. Doctors do not have all the answers and where do we turn when no one can help us out? We have each other! We are not alone!

## Interview with Judge Gove

### (continued from pg. 4)

person into the mental health system where they can get help. Most of the offences are innocuous, not serious, such as causing a disturbance by shouting, mischief by getting angry at their welfare office and smashing a window, punching somebody in the street, a total stranger, where it makes no sense.

Jim Gifford: How do you see the first year since the court opened and what do you see for the future?

Judge Gove: The first year was definitely a startup year. It obviously takes a while to bring together forty different people from fourteen different ministries and agencies, and developing relationships with about twenty-five community agencies. We have a system, working well with a lot of folks.

One of the things that we have here, that is unique are two Case Management Teams, that

carry up to 150 of the most difficult clients who are usually chronic offenders, many who have a dual diagnosis (addictions and mental illness). Many of them have been in and out of jail for their whole lives. Through intensive case management what we are trying to do is to get them connected to the services they need. It's taken a while but it is working smoothly now. I see the changes in people every day.

Where we go in the future is continuing to progress with this case management approach, with the programs we have, to try and get people out of he criminal justice system. The biggest challenge is that I don't have the magic formula as to how to get people that we know we can help to cooperate.

Jim Gifford: I think you're doing a wonderful job. Thank you Judge Gove.

# New Energy Psychology Paradigm

## by Bob Krzyzewski

I've had the same conversation with a number of consumer friends; it goes like this: "Have you heard of a new therapy called Emotional Freedom Technique?" Reply, as they're leaving, "Tried it on YouTube/or at a Workshop, doesn't really work for me; really gotta go, see you"

If the conversation could go on, I wonder if the following factoids would encourage people to be a little more persistent in their research and experimentation. The Canadian health system is under considerable strain; it's rating has sunk down to 25th on a World comparison; waiting lists have increased to almost unreal lengths. For example, a friend has a neurological tremor in his hand, which he is very concerned about, and the earliest appointment is in November! The load on health care practitioners is steadily increasing because the baby-boomer generation is hitting the critical sixty-year age range all at the same time. The allopathic treatments that are all that health care pays for, are increasingly being exposed as toxic to the human body; the most recent example is "stomach antacids"; these popularily prescribed medications have serious side effects and counter indications. (Vancouver Sun, May 13th, 2010)

Maybe it's time to look at the holistic handson, low cost Energy Psychology treatments again, or for the first time, if you've missed them in the past. I'm referring to a plethora of treatments that involve "meridian tapping", the best known of which is The Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), but include a variety of Western and Eastern approaches as well. Of these, breathwork, visualizations, affirmations, and energetic postures or gestures may be included. The common belief is that all illness is an "energy blockage" of some sort, and restoring the underlying energy state in a balanced way will dissolve the illness. Quantum physics supports this "all- is- energy" interpretation, and now some more objectively applied research has been reported on energy psychology and brain wave states: (David Feinstein et al, The Promise of Energy Psychology, (2005).

So let's look at EFT briefly. The client reports a condition that is major or minor, usually chronic. The Practitioner asks the client to rate their "subjective units of distress" (SUDs) level, on a "1 to 10 scale" and create a phrase describing this condition. Now the client is instructed in a series of approximately 10 accupressure points to "tap" with their fingers while repeating a "set up phrase"; so the following would be a typical wording: "I love and accept myself, even though I have this depression/anxiety (etc.)"

If you want to try it yourself, in a trial run, here are the points you would use:

Under Side of The Hands, called "karate chop" point; top of head; top of eyebrows; side of eyes; under the eyes; under the nose; below the lip on chin; below the collar bones, and under the armpits.

Afterwards the client is asked to estimate their "SUDS level and compare it to the first level; generally the level has gone down significantly. This approach can be applied to any problem or condition, and generally produces positive effects. Having made this sweeping statement, it has been applied to many mental health conditions including depression, anxiety, ADHD, but it has limitations.

Let's look at some of these. According to a recent talk posted (www.theefthub.com) by David Rourke EFT Master, "dissociation" is one condition counter indicated for EFT treatment outcomes. If you are not in your body, your body may reject the energy re-organization that EFT is trying to re-program. Another treatment program may be required first. To get back into the "associated state" with your body is addressed comprehensively by Psychologist John Mayer, PhD. in his book Energy Psychology Self-healing Practices for Bodymind Health (2009). This is primarily a "Chi Gong" based approach totally encompassing the meridians and accupoints and has much helpful general commentary. But as he and other Chi Gong practitioners explain, it takes consistent practice and likely good instruction to produce good results

Another limit is widely known as "psychological reversal", whereby kinesiologists observed with muscle testing clients, that some would test negative for such statements as "I deserve the highest and best for myself", or simply "I deserve to be happy" would produce a weak muscular response, instead of strengthening the test muscle. There are various procedures for correcting this energetic imbalance; some involving balanced breathing techniques. You can find these described in the book "Instant Emotional Healing" by George Pratt & Peter Lambrou. Certainly, if you feel this personally applies, you would do well to

have an experienced Practitioner take you through this re-calibration procedure.

The Internet is bursting with websites and You Tubes presenting a broad range of problems cured by EFT practitioners. The biggest one is Gary Craig's <u>www emofree.com</u>, and although an engineer by trade and not a licensed health professional, he is considered the one who popularized EFT, partly because you can download an entire "Beginner's Manual" from his website for free, as well as watch videos and read articles. I invite all you readers to give it a read before you make up your mind about this approach.

Granted, much systematic experimentation along the double blind treatment comparison

remains to be done before we can have statistical proof. Meanwhile, many international healers have endorsed EFT glowingly, among them are Deepak Chopra MD, Norman Shealey MD, and Gabe Merklin MD. Here in Vancouver, two local endorsers of this method are Les Moncrieff Registered Accupuncturist with Vancouver Coastal Health, who calls it a "fantastic all round healing modality", and Chiropractor and visionary inventor Ross Anderson, visiting from Vernon, told me that his instrumentation can measure "subtle energies" accurately, and EFT produces remarkable changes in the human energy field. Happy tapping everyone!

## Port Alberni Time of Year

#### (continued from pg. 2)

smileys offered fishers about only \$1.30. If I recall correctly, for two nights' fishing, we caught a whopping (approximately) 750 springs, mostly smileys. However, the local and foreign demand for Spring salmon, large or small, being so low that year, coupled with the very small fleet at the inlet, resulted in all of the fish buyers there loading to capacity before the night's fishing opening was even over. So, Dad and I traveled about 14 hours-to Ucluelet and back-to sell our (warming) first night's catch of about 500 fish, for \$1.35 a pound whole. Indeed, we'd received such a large share of the inlet's fruit that Dad had to empty out the entire hatch compartment to hold the excess fish (i.e., we were literally filled to capacity with smileys).

With the exception of that said season's veryatypical experience, I'd stay up only until the first set, with its harvest, was picked up and the next set laid out; then it was typically my job to lift the monstrosities from the vessel's stern and throw them into the side fish lockers. I tried my very best to stay awake, but I'd doze off a dozen-or-so times before finally giving up and hitting the bunk bed.

Thus, during the day, as Dad slept, I'd kill time by, once or twice, walking up the very steep hill from the fishing wharf and into town, where I'd window shop or grab

something to eat, all the while pondering over the glorious and disappointing aspects of the previous night's fishing; or I'd climb the fairlynew clock-tower staircase and sit up there a while, with its great view of the inlet. I'd also walk the area around the fishing wharf, including the local launching and landing point for the tourist vessel that takes interested travelers down the canal to Bamfield and back again (about a six hour venture). But when it's said that "it's a small world," it's often quite true: One year on the Port Alberni commercial fishing wharf, I bumped into a former White Rock elementary-schoolmate, who was also there to commercially fish; he was there fishing with his older brother and an unrelated skipper. I was rather amazed at the small size of the rickety boat that they'd piloted from Steveston (Richmond), through Active Pass (with its very strong and awkward currents), around Victoria, up the west coast of Vancouver Island (where it's known to get quite rough during the strong and frequent westerly winds) to Cape Beale, and then (for about six hours) eastward up the Port Alberni canal to the Inlet.

He introduced me to his two fellow fishers while they were busy repairing a shredded parcel of netting that had be chopped by a neighboring vessel during the previous night's opening. When my fellow fishers told me that the vessel's skipper and deckhand were both beginner females something that I'd not heard of before—I'd realized why the two ladies were spared a beating at the hands of these three brawny, tough-minded guys. "Their propeller's got no net guard!" my former schoolmate told me. The incident probably cost the three guys a good buck in lost smileys (they were worth \$5 a pound, whole, that year).

Growing up with Dad's terribly prepared salmon every Friday (as Roman Catholicism dictated back then) made salmon meals for me a culinary ordeal, while, ironically, the non-fishing population found salmon to be a delicacy. However, catching and cashing-in on salmon were/are very different matters to me than actually eating salmon.

## 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.weglauthaus.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.religiousfreedoms.org www.wildestcolts.com http://stopbadtherapy.com http:// nht\_amhll.blogspot.com http://essence-euro.org/iasp/ 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.adhdfraud.org

#### Tardive Dyskinesia/Dystonia

www.power2u.org/selfhep/tardive.html www.wemove.org www.dystonia-support.org www.dystoniafoundation.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-law.suit.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. 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 office@wcmhn.org

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.namisec.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.bazelon.org www.ac.wwu.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/competencyl.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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