

2033 Chaucer Street
Victoria B C V8R 1H6
595-5977
July 2, 1998

Dr. Don Milliken
Chief of Psychiatry, E.M.P.
Dear Dr. Milliken,

I'm writing you to offer condolences over the beating you're taking in some media stories lately. I know the frustrations of being misrepresented in the media from my own modest experience, and I see through the nonsense in some recent stories.

I have displayed some of the articles at Movie Monday but wish not to be construed as taking an "anti-psychiatric" attitude. I've put the articles forward as a debate that's going on in the media, with a note: "What do you think, write in!" I think it's helpful not to become too complacent and it is "empowering" to give people the feeling that their opinion and experience is valuable.

From my experience and that of many of my friends, as well as people in the MDA support group, the hospital has been very helpful. Part of my goal with MM is to help people to expect help from the medical system.

Some people haven't done so well or been treated as well and I accept that not everyone is best served - for whatever reason - in hospital, and not every form of illness with medication.

Demonizing a whole science and profession is not helpful. I respect good psychiatry and I feel that most professionals are working with the best intentions. I realize hospital space is always limited, as are budgets, so people are not admitted lightly. Some of us are difficult to treat and you are working

with many of the most difficult. I have the utmost sympathy for those trying to make the system work, and I am generally supportive.

I do, however, have deep concerns about the Dr. Johnson situation as described in the Monday Magazine, and I would like to be sure I have a good understanding of the facts. It is a huge responsibility to treat people who are as completely vulnerable as those undergoing psychiatric crises. It seems bizarre, if the background is true, that this man is practicing here.

I have been on a steep learning curve over the last five years. In my own travails and those of my friends and acquaintances, through MDA support group, committee work, contact with the institutions, videotaping educational presentations, and through my Movie Monday program, I have shared the dilemmas, realized the limitations and budgetary restraints, and observed the pros and cons of patient rights and self determination . . . and the paradoxes still flummox me. I can only look after my corner of my world and my people, and approach it from my experience.

I greatly appreciated your contribution to our discussion of **Awakenings** and I hope we can still find a date for you to join a Movie Monday audience for **As Good As It Gets**. I've tried to approach Dr. Connolly as you requested to ask if she would try to find a date when you could both attend, but I haven't heard back. Have you? Any Monday (but Labour Day) in August or September would be great. It would be a fine event; I'm looking forward to a better scope on O.C.D. and it would be an opportunity to present a positive "partnership" approach to the community.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce Saunders