

PAGE 1

IN A NUTSHELL

Nov 8th, 1971

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MPA NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL:

At the general meeting of Oct 22nd, it was decided to expand the size of the Newsletter. It is hoped that people of the M.P.A. will contribute their time and talents, in working towards a successful publication. We intend to publish once a month on a regular basis. Needed are, Reporters, writers, illustrators, (line drawings at present) and a steady flow of letters to the editors, classified ads, poetry, etc. Two of the top priorities are: letters expressing views good or bad, on the M.P.A. and articles on the mental health field.

COMING EVENTS:

Ladies Coffee Party Sat, Nov. 13th 2-4 p.m.

Our first real social event will take place on Sat, Nov. 13th at St. James Church (10th & Truich). It will be a Ladies Coffee Party between 2-4 p.m. Invitations are being sent out but if we miss you, please come anyway. Children are welcome and we are planning door prizes and music. Let's get to know each other. If this is a success, we will plan others.

Thurs. Nov. 11 at 8 p.m. Research Committee Meeting

Fri. Nov. 12 at 8 p.m. General Meeting

Wed. Nov. 17 Central Committee Meeting

Mon. Nov. 22 Crisis Volunteers Meeting

M.P.A. ELECTION

At the General Meeting of October 1st, an election was held to fill three salaried positions with M.P.A. The Company of Young Canadians, who have been supplying salaries to Barry Coull and Lanny Beckman, announced that they would put two additional people on salary. Janet Allen and Gerry Walker were elected to

fill these positions. Lloyd Howarth was elected to receive a salary paid out of M.P.A. funds to manage the farm.

We now have five people on salary--our humble contribution to solving the unemployment crisis.

Your Foreign Reporter
Sir Figby Snort

After picking up my counterfeit money and passport from the M.P.A. house. I had a great feeling of exhilaration as I set off to roam the world in search of newsworthy items of a foreign nature to send back to the In A Nutshell newsletter.

As my first assignment was London England, and because of the bulkiness of such a large amount of money, Janet Allen had cleverly sewn large denomination bills together into a complete wardrobe for me. My overcoat, suit, shirt, tie shorts, and socks were all made of hand stitched money. Even the soles of my shoes were made of laminated one hundred dollar bills. The idea behind this was that if I needed to purchase anything I could just tear off a bill from any part of my clothing. They figured that it would take me roughly two months to reach London as I was told to hitch hike across Canada. By starting with my overcoat and so on, by the time I arrived I would be down to my shorts and shoes which would be perfect attire for the English weather conditions.

After spending the overcoat, the suit jacket, and the pants and shirt, I arrived at Buckingham Palace wearing my shorts, socks, shoes, and tie and was given room 316 in the motel complex run by Queen Elizabeth and Phil. They did not invite me into the Palace itself, but after finding out I was from the M.P.A. they showed me a picture of a crazy man that had tried to climb on the back of Queen Elizabeth's horse while she was on parade for the changing of the guard. I was quite relieved to find that he was not one of ours. Philip was kind enough to give me an original Rembrandt painting as a welcoming gift. I shall always treasure it because it is worth about two million dollars.

After a shave and a shower I went in search of the London M.P.A. It was situated near Kings' Cross Station and occupied a ten story building. The members appeared to be quite happy, but seemed to be having a hard time speaking without an English accent. I expressed my thanks by throwing a tantrum and smashing a few windows which made me acceptable to them all, and I left them with promise to return sometime and smash some more windows. And so on to Scotland next month.

Sir Figby Snort

A Memory From Aboard the S. S. Waitomo 1946

On one September morning in 1946, the crew came up on deck from the foc'sle, after two and half weeks at sea across the Pacific to look at a mountainous island of beautiful deep green. Thirty minutes later we were entering the harbour of Papeete, Tahiti. As we looked over the side of the ship through the water of the prettiest blue colour you could choose to fancy, fishes swimming and thirty feet to sand of purest white. As the freighter inched closer to the dock, the people of Papeete could be seen gathered on the pier to greet us.

The men in their bare Polynesian skin standing strongly. The women were of such extraordinary beauty that I would never have imagined I would see person to person.

The crew tied up the ship and rigged the cargo gear with great haste, needless to say in a great hurry to get ashore. By one o'clock in the afternoon, draws (money) had been given out and the gangplank was receiving full use with the love-starved (sex) and thirsty seamen rushing toward whatever excitement there was to offer.

By two thirty Quinn's Bar and Coral Blue were swinging and jumping with the Waitomo crew and the native girls getting it on. I might mention here that there was no such thing as prostitution in Tahiti, the natives believed in free love and were very generous.

Tahiti had at that time one movie house which everyone in the town travelled to by bicycle. Tahiti was the only island that I can think of that had never been infiltrated during the second world war by the big rich Americans and the spirit therefore was of a happy natural, generous nature.

Some of the crew, returning to the ship in the morning after sleeping with women, were greeted by the native menfolk, who climb up a palm tree to get them an offering of breakfast.

On the second afternoon a group of us went to an inland swimming pool for a swim which was really tremendously refreshing and beautiful.

That night the one that had the strength and the money left made a repeat of the night before.

Next morning we pulled in the lines and left Tahiti tremendously tired, but fruitfully happy. We had found a seamen's paradise.

Tom Pollock

THE CO-OP REPORT

This experiment in communal living has been a major step on the road to alternate living for ex mental patients. This beginning has been successful insofar as out of a total of nine people who have recently come together, there has been a solid core of four people remaining. Good enough average for communal existence. New faces and total personalities have inherent difficulties. Computability is difficult to achieve among this number of people.

With luck and a bit of serious thought the house should remain the first successful experiment in co-operative living for ex-mental patients.

FARM REPORT

Hurrah! The farm is ready and rareing to go. People are now starting to come out. We've got the farm house looking pretty good. All we need now are a few cooking utensils, lamps, blanket, a mattress and fridge.

The place feels pretty good now after cleaning the floors from the cattle stampede thru the house. Henry says he's still missing a calf and we're checking the closets but we think he's caught in the attic. They say the stampede started when Sabre, one of the houses' cats was trying to bronc one of the steers.

Thats all for now and we hope people feel good for the month they are here. Peace! Lloyd.

GET WELL

If you are hospitalised or know anyone who is hospitalised, please notify Gerry Walker at 738-1422 or 738-5177.

The following is a list of M.P.A. people in hospital. Cards, letters, visits and comfort would be most welcome.

Crease Clinic, Essondale, B.C. :- Maureen Badgley,
Colin Le Brooy, Jean Tkachuk

Vancouver Gen. Hosp. Psychiatric Ward:- Tom Dadson

PAT FISHER COLUMN

My name is Patricia Fisher, I am 29 years old. I have been a heroin addict for 10 years. I have been in prisons and hospitals many, many times. I have gone to many organizations and societies for help. I tried the methadone treatment four different times. I was never able to kick the heroin habit or stay away from it completely. I have now gone four months without touching heroin. I have done it completely on my own without the help of another drug. This is how.

To begin with I did not realize what I was getting myself into or just how serious it was. For years I was so deeply hooked and had become so hard that I never really thought of how to overcome the habit. Eventually, after so many prison bits and overdoses, I started to wonder where it would all end, and could I get myself out of this awful mess. After so many attempts of trying to kick with professional help and failing everytime, I thought maybe if I did want to kick I could do it on my own.

I had reached a point in my life where my body and soul was plain sick and tired of the whole mess. Luckily for me my mind was still together enough to be able to think for myself and so I made a big move. Still wired, I packed my bags and moved to a town where I knew that I couldn't get any stuff. I suffered cold turkey for about three weeks, BUT I was determined that this time I was going to make it. When I felt I was over the worst part I moved back to the city and got involved with an entirely different group of people - The M.P.A. It was very hard for a long time. But now I have even lost the desire. I can't say I will never touch heroin again as I don't know the future, but I know in my heart that I'm sure going to try and make it. I realise now that I was only hurting myself and the ones that loved me. I now live for today and not yesterday or tomorrow. For once in my life I am at complete peace. I no longer have to worry about the law, overdoses, or where my next fix will come from. Now I realize that I have so much to live for, "myself".

Pat Fisher.

SHORT PEOM

The Blind Bastard Reflects in old age.

his eyes have been worn down by : faces in anthracite
the invariability of
their descendants
the mineral bonds
that link them to their self
same image.

Elaine Bougie

'a poem'

trees, yes
we have trees
and multiple-jointed earthworms
and a butterfly

or two

boats, yes
we have boats
and twine-enraveled fishnets
and a lobster pot

or two

tar paper, yes
we have tar paper
and catipillar-enhanced chunks of wood
and a steel nail

or two

flowers, yes
we have flowers
and saucy-suttled weeds
and a dandelion green

or two

houses, yes
we have houses
and single-shingled boozeries
and an outhouse

or two

cattle, yes
we have cattle
and vapour-nostrilled horses
and a chicken

or two

beaches, yes
we have beaches
and circle-round perriwinkles
and a skate's egg case

or two

neighbours, yes
we have neighbours
and dirt-absorbed puppy dogs
and a naughty child

or two

THE PSYCHIATRIST'S HANDY GLOSSARY OF PATIENT TERMINOLOGY

Any professional group develops specialized concepts and terms to aid communication among its members. However, technical jargon often hinders understanding between different professions. Such is the case with psychiatrists and patients.

Owing to the wide publicity given to the psychiatric profession, patients have no difficulty understanding their therapists. Psychiatrists on the other hand are often bewildered by the complex terminology of the professional patients. In the interests of mental health, the following glossary of patient terms is humbly presented to help the psychiatrist achieve a greater understanding of his client.

1. Bad - a condition of depressed mood or affect. Not good.
2. Not bad - a common reply to the question "How are you?"
Usually a lie.
3. Hung-up - a fixation or overinvestment of libido in a particular object relationship. Usually followed by "on".
(No relationship to telephones)
Proper usage: I am hung-up on my dog.
Improper usage: If my patients insist on calling me at 3 in the morning, they can expect to get hung-up on at.
4. Up-tight, - generally designates an anxiety reaction.
Many psychiatrists express difficulty with the "up" in up-tight and hung-up, and erroneously say "up-hung" or "tight-up." This usage tends not to enhance rapport between the parties.
5. Flipped out - may refer to a manic state, a panic state or a manic panic state. Not related to male exhibitionism.
6. Freak out - acute anxiety state often accompanied by thought disorientation and loss of ego boundaries.
Improper usage: What a relief when the hour is up to get that freak out of the office.
7. FUNNI FARM - The M.P.A Farm Branch. The initials stand for the "Foundation for the Understanding of Nervous and Neurotic Illness."

"when the bright of the white settles
upon the dullness of the grey."

white snow falling on the old dull grey barn,
as though it were something of its own,
cruel winds pounding versions of its sleet,
as though each grit were a pound of stone.
the tree hides the sparrows from the fullness of the breeze
while the barn door keeps us from the starkness of the cold,
and as you and i stare, i'm glad we're both here,
to see the heavy winds make the silent snow fold.
eye, the pounding winds and the curling snow,
they might well make a dandelion freeze,
but while the silly petal takes its needed sleep
the raccoon makes a few attempts at play
when,
the brightness of the white settles upon the
dullness of the grey.

eric gary bond

Clamped?

My mind travels to places,
I haven't seen;
And I realize one more time,
It's part of an endless dream.

Myriad faces flit past,
Bringing back the patterns;
Of men in the downtown,
Digging for what matters.

They're all in the plan,
Of relentless disdain;
And all you hear,
Is the monotonous refrain.

But, why do they,
Who work for you;
Abhor the opportunity,
To start anew.

Darryl Rempel

Don't Give Up

Twixt failure and success the point's so fine
men sometime know not when they touch the line,
just when the pearl was waiting one more plunge,
how many a struggler has thrown up the sponge!
Then take this honey from the bitterest cup:
"There is no failure save giving up!"

NIGHT

Elaine Bougie

Katherine is standing against a lamppost, in the rain. She is watching the rain in the gutter. She has been standing and watching for so long that she has forgotten what she is waiting for. She looks up from the gutter, and the rain falls in her eyes. She finds it pleasant, to blink rain from her eyes like a cat, unworried.

The streetlamp flickers, and goes out. Katherine is standing in a pool of shadow, the rain turns purple. Katherine imagines her eyes to be turning yellow. She steps into the gutter and stands with the water running over her feet and her ankles. All along the street, the lamps are going out, the air is turning purple.

She wonders how it is that the rain and the gutterstream are so warm. She would like to lie down and bathe in it, it is so pleasant. She leans over to dip her hand in the water. Someone's hands touch her head. She stands up. It is a woman in a nightgown. She continues to touch Katherine, while she stands still, not knowing what to do. The woman's hands are like the rain, warm and light. After a while, she seems satisfied that what she is looking for is not to be found here and she turns and goes away. Katherine wonders if she should follow the woman and make sure that she comes to no harm with her eyes closed. The gutterstream draws her attention again, and she forgets.

Now she sits in the gutter. She rests her head against the lamppost and spreads her legs out before her into the street. She notices that not only is the water warm, but the pavement is soft. It seems to adjust itself to her body contours. She rocks slightly, to see if it will rock with her. Yes. The rain increases.

Katherine closes her eyes, and imagines the water flowing over her to be small grey serpents. She feels them curling over her thighs, climbing her belly, slipping away. The water is streaming down her head. She feels them sliding down over her eyes, down her breasts, slipping away.

She opens her eyes.

There is a pool of water on her coat between her legs. There is a grey snake curled in it. She touches it. It twines around her hands. She raises it to her lips and kisses it. It uncoils itself and slips away in the stream. She closes her eyes again, and sees what she saw when they were open. The rain is washing her completely. She stops feeling the warmth, and becomes it. The warmth has become the world. There is a quickening in her body, as it prepares to take its first breath.

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- Wanted: shorthand typist - contact Molly 733-7891
 - Wanted: rms, suites and lge houses for ex-patients. Call Gerry at MPA.
 - Wanted: Illustrators, writers, reporters, typists etc. to work on In a Nutshell. Contact Stan at MPA.
 - Wanted: Bakers for MPA functions. Call Molly 733-7891
 - Wanted: Crisis Volunteers to answer phones. Call Cathy Batten at MPA.

THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT: INSTALMENT ONE

The Mental Health Act of 1964 is a piece of Provincial Government legislation that affects the lives of all patients during their stay in hospital. Most patients, however, are completely unaware of the contents and even of the existence of the Act. This is regrettable for a number of reasons, a primary one being that patients are thus unable to exercise their legal rights.

It is said that ignorance of the law excuses no one who breaks the law. And it is everyone's responsibility to familiarize himself with the law not just to know what he must not do, but also to know what he can do to protect his own rights.

Something MPA can and should do is to make the Mental Health Act available to patients and to help patients to understand it and to use it to their advantage. Copies of the Act can be obtained from MPA or by sending 22¢ to Queen's Printer, Parliament Buildings, Victoria.

This is the first in a series of articles in which we will analyse the contents of the Act and raise suggestions about how it should be changed and what related services should be offered to further patients' rights. Also, we will discuss how procedures in practice differ from procedures required by law.

It is important to bear in mind that laws are not God-given, but are man-and-woman-made, and hence can be changed by men and women. Specifically, laws are changed by MLA's who sit in the legislature in Victoria. Citizen's groups can lobby MLA's for legislative change. MPA, as a group that represents patients and ex-patients, should do this lobbying, after we have fully discussed and democratically decided what changes we support.

We are currently in contact with some people in the Law Faculty at UBC who will help us in preparing and presenting our Brief to the Legislature.

The Act makes it clear that hospitalized patients have few rights. For the most part, patients are regarded as incompetents or as children who need to be cared for, against their will, since they do not realize what is in their best interests. While this attitude parades as helpfulness toward the "confused" patient, it usually serves to abridge his or her liberty. Further, it encourages feelings of incompetency and irresponsibility. Whereas the law ought to protect and expand the realm of freedom the Mental Health Act serves mainly to restrict it.

Before we examine the Act itself, consider the following quote based on the Act, but stated in layman's language in the Riverview Hospital Information Handbook:

"Under certain conditions a patient, because of his illness, may not appreciate that he needs care, and in that case may be admitted under an involuntary procedure after being examined by two physicians who certify that he is mentally ill and requires care."

Stating that this happens "under certain conditions" is--to say the least--misleading. In fact the great majority of admissions to Riverview (almost 70%) are involuntary, and thus the institution restricts the liberty of most of the patients it seeks to "treat." More than 95% of involuntarily admitted patients have not broken any law, have not been charged with any criminal offense and yet are being incarcerated against their will. But the fact is that