

in a **NUTSHELL**

Vol. 2, No. 8

MENTAL PATIENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

December 1973



Merry Xmas From MPA

in a nutshell

Mental Patients Association Newsletter

Mental Patients and the Law

IT'S BETTER TO BE CRIMINAL THAN CRAZY

Part 2

This is the second of a two-part series on legal issues affecting those who may be judged "mentally disordered." It deals with the relationship between the Criminal Code and the Mental Health Act; the topics of sanity/insanity, fitness to stand trial, Order-in-Council, etc. It is based on a number of talks given by lawyer Sid Filkow to MPA members.

If a person is apprehended for a minor offence at which time the police officer noted that the person appeared mentally disordered, he may be taken to jail. Because of notations in the police report about him, or because of "inappropriate" behaviour in his cell, he may be seen by the jail physician (presently Dr. Croft). Usually the jail physician will call upon a psychiatrist to give a second opin-

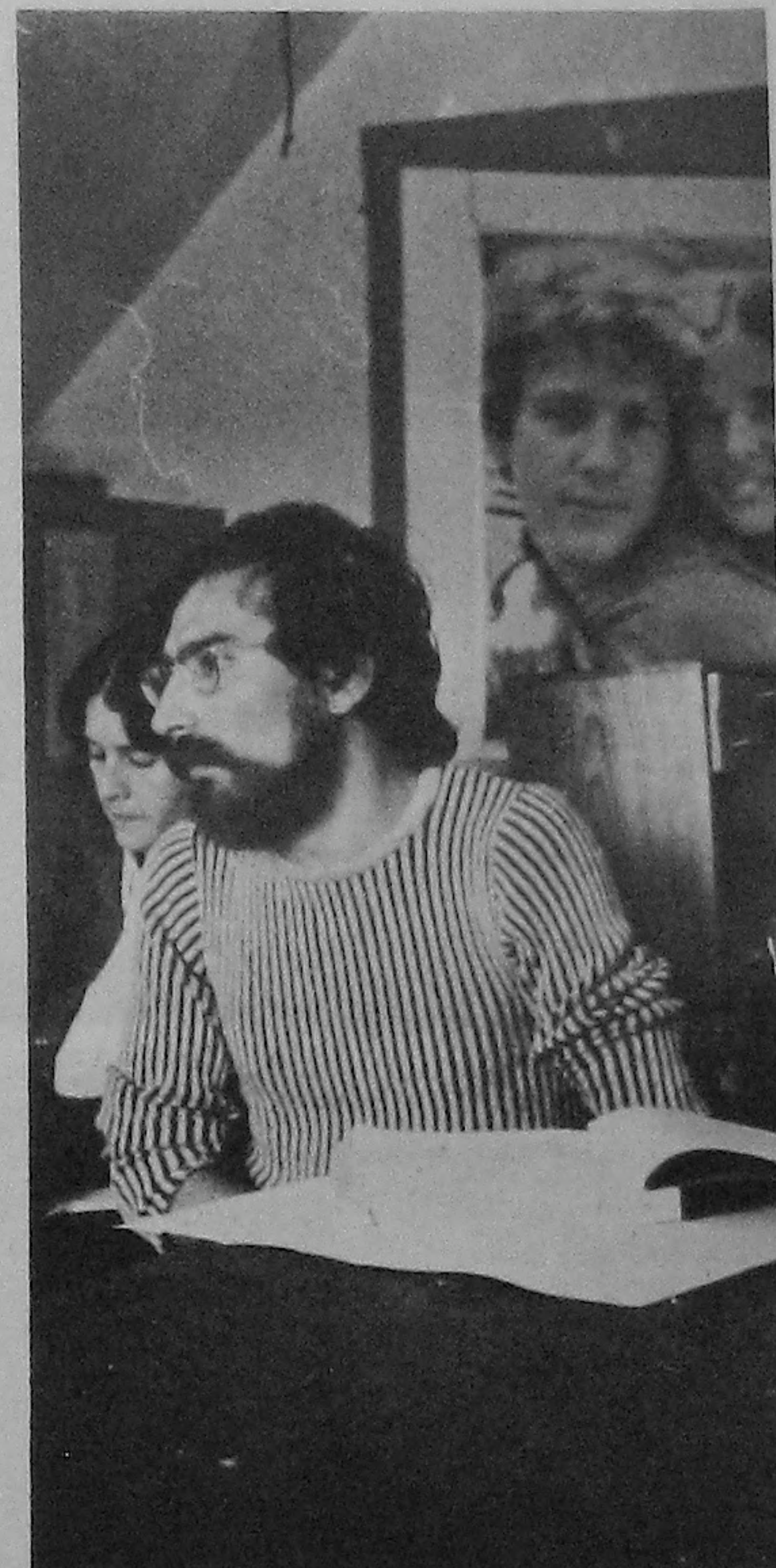
ion on the person's mental condition. (The Prosecutor, on the jail physician's advice, can ask that the person be remanded for up to 30 days, but usually a week, to Oakalla to be seen by a psychiatrist.) This examination may be conducted in the city jail or Oakalla--by Dr. Whitman in Vancouver. If the psychiatrist's opinion is that the person is unfit to stand trial, he may be certified by two certificates and committed to Riverview. Remember that this procedure applies only for a minor offence, i.e., what is termed a Summary Conviction. Because of the two medical certificates the person is involuntarily committed to Riverview WHEN A BED IS AVAILABLE. While he waits for a bed he may have to languish in Oakalla for some time, returning to court every week for a remand, because no one can be held

rings, etc. But they were very kind people and would often let me sleep in the house when it snowed. My parents insisted that a university education was the key to a successful life, and because they couldn't afford the tremendous amount of money involved in sending me to college, they kidnapped a university professor and locked him in our basement. I spent the first 15 years of my life conversing with this brilliant man and gained a fantastic amount of medical intelligence from him before he was finally released by a band of roving gypsies who broke into the cellar to steal pickled plums.

After a year of rest in which I learned how to operate a water tap, my parents booted my ass out of the house to make room for a large hairy baboon who was a good cook. At the age of 17 I stole a car, and after a hectic two-day drive being chased by the police, I arrived in Boston where I got a job as a doctor. I spent two years treating young pregnant women who were not pregnant when they came in. After six years of research, working with Dr. Ianstein trying to find ways to cheat old age pensioners, I set up a large hospital complex with a 50-member concert orchestra in each room to cheer up the patients. By offering \$50.00 per week, I obtained the best doctors in the country to staff the hospital, and it developed into perhaps the most well-known medical center in the world--Flop House Peter's.

So much for my life story. The cure for mental illness is quite simple. I obtained the knowledge some five years ago. But why the hell should I tell you people. I don't know you that well.

incommunicado for more than eight days. Frequently the charges against the person will later be dropped on the advice of a Riverview psychiatrist; and after review by the Prosecutor, he/she will be released when considered fit. Lawyers go out to Riverview every second Tuesday. A patient can ask for legal help, either through his social worker or by seeing Ms. Sidney Baird, Head of Volunteers, at Riverview.



Lawyer Sid Filkow proves it's possible to serve the community without getting rich.

MENTAL ILLNESS: THE CAUSE & CURE

By Sir Figby Snort, M.D.

I suppose that Mental Illness has been with us for some fifty years or more, depending on your age. I will not dwell on the cause except to say that a lack of sanity in the brain will often bring on Mental Illness. The cure is the important aspect of this wonderful book.

Perhaps a short biography would enhance the reader's understanding and open up a beneficial communication link.

I was born in a log cabin in Missouri of poor but honest parents. Not completely honest, because they used to steal my diapers, little booties, teething

Serious Offences

If the offence is of a more serious nature, i.e., an Indictable Offence such as rape, theft, arson, assault, breaking and entering, carrying an offensive weapon, etc., the person--if deemed mentally disturbed--can become an Order-in-Council patient and be conveyed to Riverside. (It is unusual for a person held on a Summary Conviction offence to be Order-in-Councilled.)

In the case of an Indictable Offence, the person will be examined by a psychiatrist; his report will be submitted to the Prosecutor and the Prosecutor will initiate Order-in-Council proceedings through application to the Attorney-General. Or, a psychiatrist can send his certificate to the Attorney-General requesting

see "CRAZY" pg. 2

MENTAL HEALTH NEWS

Foulkes' Report

The long awaited Foulkes Report is out. The report which was commissioned by the Minister of Health Dennis Cocke almost as soon as he took office was compiled by Dr. Richard Foulkes and is three volumes long. The report recommends more clinics in the community and salaries for doctors to offset their gigantic fee scale now in operation. The next sounds you will hear will be screams from the medical profession. Health Minister Cocke is to be congratulated on his department's report. It sounds good and we hope the more progressive suggestions it contains will be acted upon.

Mr. Cocke,

Meet The NDP

Speaking of the provincial government it seems that the 1973 convention of the New Democratic Party passed some resolutions on mental health including full civil liberties for voluntary patients, client control of psych. programs, job retraining programs for ex-patients, the establishment of neighborhood residence programs, and a crisis hostel program. So far there is no word from the cabinet on any of these proposals. We wonder if the honorable ministers forgot about the NDP.

Advertising

makes

it

happen

This little item appeared in the journal of a prominent psychiatric association. "The decision to improve a classic..(say a classic ECT instrument) is difficult to make. But in Medcraft's case the justification came from their ability to design a new classic with:

MORE SAFETY FEATURES: double-line voltage adjustment, in (sic) example, so treatment current levels are better controlled; so they may be duplicated during subsequent treatments, regardless of line voltages fluctuations so common today.

GREATER RELIABILITY: the worth of solid-state electronic components

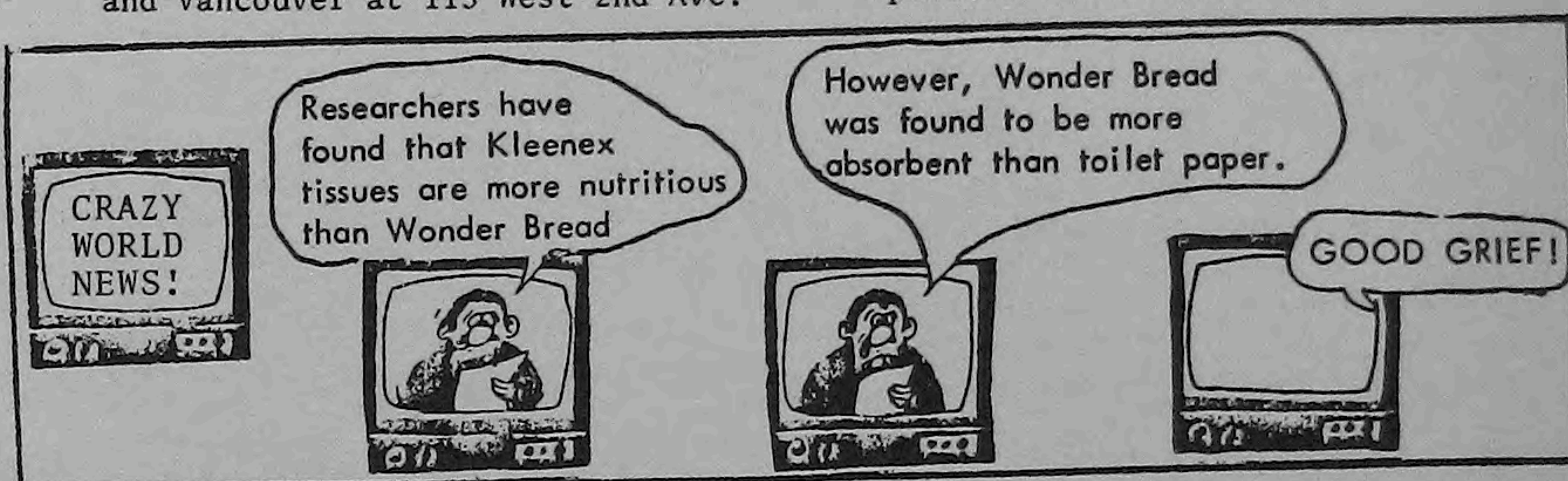
is well known...and the Mark 11 B24 is solid-state to ensure a long, useful life under arduous conditions.

So now, the Mark 11 B24 replaces the clinically accepted B24 ECT instrument. And it offers the physician...the hospital...worthwhile new safety features; better control over the therapeutic procedure, and additional reliability possible by the use of solid-state electronic components...all in addition to those features which made its predecessor a classic.

This gadget is sold by Standard Hospital Supply Ltd. which is owned by Medcraft Inc., a Pennsylvania firm. Canadian offices are located in Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Mississauga, Truro (Nova Scotia) and Vancouver at 115 West 2nd Ave.

You Said It, Not Us

From the Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal, August 1973 "The development of mental health services has been primarily oriented towards the needs of the upper and middle classes, and has appreciably registered its influence on child-rearing practices, education, marriage and many other important facets of human relations. The mental health professions have indeed taken major strides in the evaluation and treatment of the mental health problems of the upper and middle classes in removing psychological disturbances from their traditional place in demonology and in placing them within the model of the observational, empirical and scientific."



Pills for everyone

According to a 1971 study conducted in Toronto the percentage of adults on psychoactive drugs out of a sample population of 1,200 was 23.8%. The numbers of prescriptions per 100 adults in 1971 was 76/100. This figure is low the authors go on to say. In the U.S. it is estimated that the prescription ratio per 100 adults is 133/100 according to a 1969 sample study.

Good News

from 'Psych News'

A major breakthrough for the rights of mental patients in the U.S. came in November when a federal judge in the District of Columbia ruled "that patients in non-federal mental institutions, must be paid the prevailing minimum wage for work they do at the institution even if the work is classified as "therapeutic." We hope that provincial mental health officials take note of this step and extend the same right to people in B.C. institutions.

Four months after the request Dr. Bonham turned in his report. Apparently, something got lost in the translation. Bonham's report is called "Management of the Dangerous Patient." Not a word about crisis houses. After several months of research, Bonham came to the conclusion that "there are insufficient overall resources to cope with the numbers of disturbed and dangerous patients who need immediate custodial care and treatment."

Bonham's solution to crisis situations? A meeting with administrators to beef up security.

MPA's solution was a little more practical. Having learned that waiting for committees to act on ideas often doesn't lead anywhere, MPA got behind Ellen Frank and Tom Sandborn's LIP funded plan to start an Emotional Emergency Center.

The Emotional Emergency Center at 220 W. 6th opened 3 days before Bonham and the administrators sat down to talk.

Practical solution for crisis needs

On August 16, 1973, MPA told Alderman Harry Rankin's Committee on Social Services that there was a desperate need for short-term crisis facilities in Vancouver.

Rankin's committee asked MPA to submit a brief on crisis needs. They also asked Dr. Gerry Bonham, the City's medical health officer, to do likewise.

MPA sent in its report.

EDITORIAL

ON BEHALF OF NON- SPEAKERS

I dare you to print this in the next issue of nutshell.

At MPA, there are the speakers and the so called non speakers, the later half, I believe are considered by the first half as a bunch of mental retards, there is a definite line of non communication between the two parts. When I first came to MPA it was beautiful, people were helping people, it did not seem to matter whether you were a very well educated, vocabulary wise person, or a complete illiterate, everybody treated everybody as an equal and there were no cliques, now it seems that the educated and so called "never have been a mental case" have an air of looking down their noses at the others.

I see it more so at the meetings but also just observing an evening of a room full of people. If a so called Speaker cracks a joke it is simply hilarious, but if a non speaker cracks a joke it is really dumb and we get the raised eyebrows

and the looks of - "just leave them alone, they'll be okay."

You speakers and never been sick people seem to have a very definite opinion that all, no not all, but most of MPA drop-in's and VOP's are all mental cases. I have never heard any of you yet define the difference between an emotionally disturbed person or a mentally sick person and believe me there is a very, very big definite difference. If you do not think I am right consult your local shrink or your books on psychological pattern behavior. I am a non speaker, I never have been able to speak in public and probably never will be able to but I do not envy you so called speakers because I feel, especially at meetings, you are all trying to outspoke each other by which of you can use the most vast term of words mainly to impress each other or to try and make the non speakers feel inferior, but as I stated previously there is a definite clique of co-ordinators that consider the rest of us as mere pawns in a chess game. I also notice that nearing election time you do try to be a bit more lenient with us and tolerant hoping for that extra little vote. But it's too bad that most drop-in's and VOP's do not realize the power of their vote and could, if brought together, conquer that so called clique of co-ordinators that hold themselves in such high esteem. Once again I say not all but only a few, but it is enough to make MPA a very uncomfortable place.

There has been the odd time that I have spoken at a meeting and the words that came out are not the thoughts that are on my mind, then I get the reaction that is to be expected, the looks between two co-ordinators that say "what a blith-

ering idiot." It does not have to be spoken, facial expressions tell an awful lot if you happen to be a perceptive person.

So I ask, when do the fences come down or will they always be there, keeping the bright and the not so bright in two categories. It's a bloody shame that some people working at MPA can be allowed to hold themselves in such high regard that us underlings cannot reach them. You are the ones I feel sorry for, not the mentally ill, because they are honest and open with their feelings and have nothing to hide and are never too busy to speak to you. So stay on your little pedestals and look down upon us as much as you like, because some day your little pedestal will crumble and fall, as they have in the past, and you will pass us going down. "Lots of luck while you're up there." Have your laughs while you can get them. We are very funny from your side of the fence.

Irene



Friends,

We would like to start a subscription to "In A Nutshell" to keep in our waiting room. We have enclosed a cheque for \$5 to help with your expenses.

Clinic Collective is a free social/medical clinic, offering medical care, birth control and V.D. information, counselling, and dental hygiene, in a friendly old house, with friendly young staff. We are open Monday to Friday, noon to 11 p.m. We would very much appreciate it if you could extend our invitation to drop in through Nutshell, to anyone who might be travelling down this way.

Yours,
Ken Wyman,
Clinic Collective,
432 Elizabeth Street,
London, Ontario

Nutshell,

We thoroughly enjoyed the copy of your newspaper. Would you put us on your mailing list please.

What a wonderful policy, for clients to vote on paid help every six months. This could mean an end to entrenched bureaucracy if adopted for all social services. The

most innovative idea we've ever come across. Let's try to extend it!

Sincerely
Therese Spitzer
1911 Knox Road
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Editor,

The MPA Arts and Crafts Department wishes to thank the following for their generous contributions to the arts and crafts program:

Woodward's
Western Collision
Hudson's Bay
Eaton's
Empire Wallpaper

and especially,

Geop Boyko of the National
Film Board of Canada.

The Art Department

The Editors,

Enclosed herewith is your latest copy of your organization's newsletter.

It is being returned because I find the comments appended to the nativity scene offensive, not to mention their being blasphemous and obscene as well as SICK. The sooner such irresponsible members of

LETTERS

society as are to blame for this drivel get off their behinds and stop leaning on "shrinks" and others (often of questionable ethics and motives) and get with-it without necessarily depending on certain LIP grants of questionable value to the general public, we shall all be better off.

In an effort to have my name removed from your mailing list, I have repeatedly returned newsletter copies to you and have telephoned once to that effect. Your secretary however, continues to ignore my requests, therefore I am now asking you to see that my name is removed from any and all mailing lists which you may have. I am sure the 6¢ postage per issue, as well as the paper and talents (?) involved could be put to far better use, as far as I am concerned.

Yours very truly,
Elizabeth A. Milsom
1538 Western Crescent
Vancouver, B.C. V6T1V1

Report To Levi

backs M.P.A.

WELFARE ON DISCHARGE

Way back in August 1973 we met with the Hon. Norman Levi to discuss proposals to help patients coming up for discharge, particularly from Riverview.

We recommended that a discharge plan checklist be part of every patient's treatment program, and that this checklist be completed prior to discharge. Generally speaking, discharge plans are now based on individual needs. Some people are discharged to boarding homes; others to their families. In some cases, however, patients are signed out of Riverview by their doctors without being referred to a social worker for assistance in acquiring welfare, housing, etc.

MPA is particularly concerned with what happens to discharged persons with no income and no place

to live who turn up on MPA's or other agencies doorstep in states of extreme anxiety, hungry, homeless, and without plans made to obtain welfare.

1) We proposed to the Minister that welfare or "case" aides be employed to assist social workers in every psychiatric unit, and each building at Riverview, so that suitable discharge plans for every person who wanted assistance could be formulated before discharge.

2) We suggested that application for welfare should be made before discharge. Case aides could help the patient fill out application forms and set up the date of the welfare payment to coincide with the day of the person's discharge.

3) We asked that the present requirement demanding that a person have a fixed address before being eligible for welfare should be revoked.

4) We suggested that a case aide, in cooperation with the social worker, should become acquainted with patients soon to be discharged and should be responsible for securing necessary day passes for them, and possibly accompany them in locating suitable housing if they so wish. People just out of the supportive atmosphere of a hospital are in poor shape to meet with landlords or cope with interviews at a welfare office on their own. Discharged patients used to receive a gratuity of \$20 upon leaving Riverview. Now that the hospital has discontinued this practice, immediate payment of welfare is more important than ever so that a down-payment can be made on a room, and other immediate needs can be met.

5) Follow-up appointments with an out-patient facility and arrangements concerning medication should be scheduled for each patient prior to discharge and their importance clearly outlined and described to the patient. Case aides could help with these arrangements and make follow-up phone calls to ex-patients to see that discharge plans are working.

6) We suggested that free or reduced-fare bus passes on B.C. Hydro be issued by psychiatric facilities to all indigent patients at the time of discharge, to be valid for at least one month from the date of discharge. Ex-patients who must travel widely to seek accommodation or a job soon exhaust whatever funds they have.

As a result of our meeting with the Minister, he assigned a researcher on his staff, Ms. Ellen Rothstein, to study our proposals, interview social workers and patients, and come up with suitable guidelines. Rothstein drew up a report which closely resembled our suggestions. The report has been submitted to the Minister, but no action has yet been taken.

We feel strongly that the checklist plan should be instituted as soon as possible, particularly in view of the new 30 day Review Panel procedure which became law in the last session of the provincial legislature. Reviews are presumably going to streamline and expedite discharges of patients, but we suspect that the decision of the Review Panel regarding discharge of patients will depend a great deal on whether or not patients have a place to go to and money to pay for necessities.

-Jackie Hooper

TO THE EDITOR

Thank you for "on the death of a dear distant friend - David Berg"... and the excerpts from his book - the page was an unexpected treasure (I have never read a "nutshell" before just think - I might have missed it...) I want to tell you how much I appreciate what you wrote and how it touched me....I feel so awkward. Sometimes I feel so articulate, the words fall magically into place, most times (like now) my words are like huge clumsy things, cumbersome to move around into the right sequences...

I took the paper and found a place alone; I was filled with the thought of David - I wrote him a poem.

Just after David's death, I was filled with words and poems and strange, deep inside sadness - I wanted to write all of it, full of sadness and love, something beautiful - I tried once and it was awful I gave up...

It was wonderful to read about your remembrance of him "saunter-

ing" into the room (that is one of my first images of David - so clear) and the chair. Shit, I could go through your writing bit by bit, what a stupid and absurd activity...(I won't do it.)

I really want to say that I was really relieved to read the details of what you imagined took place - not for the details themselves (I never allowed myself those thoughts even if I had them) but for the fact that you thought them and wrote them - what happened to me was at Marie's house. I had felt drawn to Richard, wanting something from him (not sure what) wanted to ask him why David killed himself and knowing that he didn't know, of course, finally got around to asking him if he had taken pills (Richard had told me a few weeks ago that he had asked for pills) I knew instantly that I had blown it - he closed off and stated he didn't want to talk about it (understandably) and took off - anyway I just tortured myself after that thinking I was some sort of perverse voyeur and that no one who really was close to David etc. would have asked that - so - (perhaps you can imagine my relief to read your des-

cription knowing you were close to David) and to realize I was not uniquely disgusting..(no more stuff).

I feel funny and somewhat (Oh fuck it...)

Claudia MacDonald

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed very much the excerpts you printed by David Berg. Please, please put in a near issue the name of this book and where to get it-- I've had no luck.

Thank you

No Name.

Ed. Note: The original is out of print. We are now seeking funds to print a further edition.

NUTSHELL

IN A NUTSHELL is the official publication of the Mental Patients Association. It is a politically dependent paper, standing for the world-wide spread of insanity-- namely, peace, love and socialism. The paper is distributed free to people who won't pay for it. Secret headquarters are located at 1982 W. 6th Avenue, Vancouver 9, B.C. Tel: 738-5177.

Sorry I Freaked Out Wrong

Mad Mind!

Magic

why?

Does my inarticulate tongue move so fast and--my articulate fingers move so slowly--when--my mad mind flies/flees so fast?

I walked home from Eatons today during rush hour--why--because I thought I couldn't. I'm still shaking. Cars, people, lights--fear, anxiety, cold sweat---just keep putting one foot in front of the other--don't let them know--I'm so frightened. I'm almost dead of fright--it's amazing that legs that are quivering so much can still hold me up.

If I could talk I could get a taxi but my throat is frozen and somebody stole my tongue and put a lump of lead in my mouth in its place. Besides---I have to prove I can do it.

SHAFTED -- I've been tricked. They took my pain and scars and put them in a meeting. USED -- they took the place I'm tender and insecure and WHAM--threw it in the middle of the floor to turn the spotlights on and examine and analyze and justify.

I'm sorry if I freaked out wrong but nobody gave me the rule book. I'm sorry I didn't call some people enough and other people too much. Since I don't know the rules of the game--the support game--maybe I should just drop out. I read somewhere that you can buy a life-size doll that looks exactly like you and program it to be you. Then people could support the doll. And me--I wouldn't be needed anymore.

I hope most of the bitterness has poured out through my pen but I still can't understand. Each of those people supposedly knows me yet I've told every one of them how hard it is for me to relate/reveal in front of even one person. So why did they put me in my most vulnerable position? It was my impression that we were going to talk--what about I'm not sure but something to do with my freak-out sexism. Male-babysitters I believe was the phrase used. So--some phone calls must have been made to invite all the team (rah rah, sis boom bah--let's hear it for our side--the good guys). So they all had some idea of the rules. It was like being in a play in front of an audience of thousands with a major role--except--nobody invited me to rehearsals or gave me a script--except I did feel one person tried to hand me one after the first soliloquy but by that time I was shaken up too bad to accept it.

I just don't understand. Really. Take two giant steps back. Mother may I? You may.

One positive thing though: this is the first time in months I want to be alone. After being alone in a room full of friends, being alone alone is a snap, a cinch, in fact, quite preferable. I even like the silence and the emptiness.

If seeking support puts me in jeopardy of a meeting like that--I don't want support. I'll be the hi guys, there's nothing wrong with me isn't it a helluva day and a gor-

geous world, me. And what I do on my own time is my business. I'm alright, really--believe me--I'm O.K., alright, on top of it, 100%, money back life-time guarantee. I even like the silence and the emptiness.

THE END
anonymous

AN EXPLANATION

You don't understand, do you? It's strange how little even our oldest friends know us. But sit awhile, I'll try to explain.

Tire me? Oh no, I'm comfortable now.

It was really a very ordinary week, much like all the others. That Monday hadn't been too bad a day. I even managed to wake him on time that morning.

You're right, mornings are often difficult!

Breakfast went alright too. Quietly, thank god. At ten though, when he came out of the studio for coffee, (he always comes out at ten), I wasn't there. Hadn't made the coffee either. Nothing!

I should have known better, but it was a beautiful morning for mucking around in the garden. I was squatting between the rows, the sun warm on my back, intent on setting out the tomato plants. Suddenly the back door slammed, and there he was.

Oh yes, he can startle me!

He sauntered across the lawn and asked me with that funny, tight, hard-eyed smile what the hell I was doing out there without my watch on.

Enjoying my garden, that's what! Oh I know his work and time are more important than my "bloody garden," but I do love that garden.

He found it awfully hard to get back into his work when I upset him so.

Tuesday went fairly well. He finally got that big bugger of a plate worked out. The whole thing had taken shape beautifully, except for one figure in the lower right corner. You know the one I mean? He'd worried and shifted it about for three weeks without success. (Those three weeks were rough!) Finally he burnished it down a bit and threw an aquatint around it.

Oh christ, doesn't it just sing now!

He felt so good for the rest of the day, "light and weightless," he said. After supper that night we drank our coffee on the front steps--talked a bit and watched the kids play.

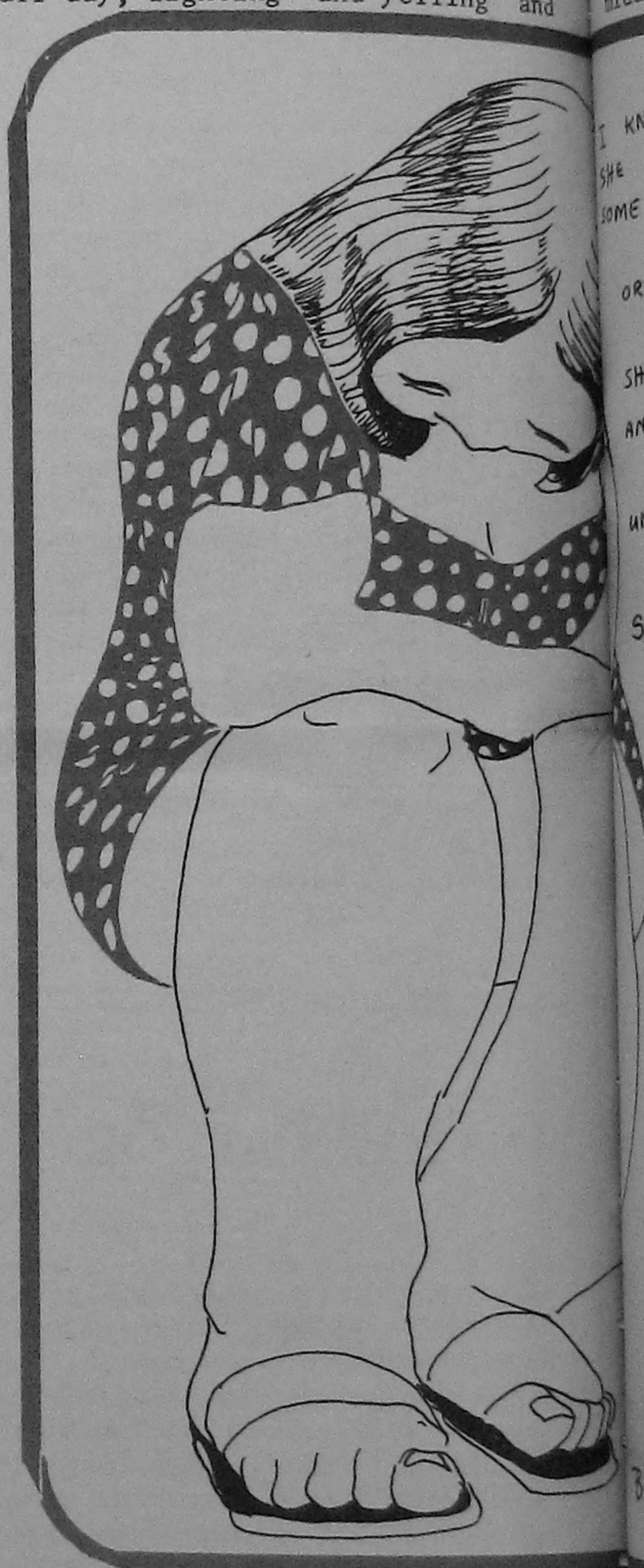
Funny how his voice kept time with the setting sun, getting low, kind of husky and rich at the same time. When the last of the purple light disappeared, it got quite cool - you know how it is at this time of year - and he went back to work.

I couldn't do much that night. I kept seeing the sky change from a golden orange to the final purplish

indigo and felt his voice throughout my body. A miracle of an evening! A precious one.

Wednesday started badly. So badly. I knew he hated that yellow shirt, but that's the one I put out button-down collar and all. He grumbled about it all morning even though I apologized, explained that I simply had not had time to iron the others. Goddammit, what did he think I did all day? The kids need time, what with their constant "he hit me first." and "why?" The house needs time. The garden takes time. They're bloody big! He, of course, insisted I was too disorganized. Bullshit, I just had too much to do.

Yes, that was a pretty bad day but Thursday was awful. It rained and rained. The kids couldn't play outside. They were in the house all day, fighting and yelling and



bugging him. Every time I turned my back on them for a minute, they were at his door. That constant "Daddy, Daddy," through the key hole really got to him.

Then the telephone ..., his boss kept him on it for hours. Trying to convince him of god knows what, apparently priming him for the meeting that night. He said I should have known better than to tell "the bastard" he was at home. Oh what a bother it all was!

I hate being yelled at all the time; but even though he'd told me a thousand times that he's not to be bothered when he's working, I was just too bloody sick of playing dragon at the door. He got ter-

ribly worked up, and finally flung "stoney-eyed bitch" at me and slammed out of the room.

After the meeting that night, he drank with a couple of friends to wash away what he called "that bloody bullshit taste." According to him, his friends have it made; no ties, no back talk and a good time when they want it. He always said this after drinking, always the same thing - I could set it to music by now.

As usual, he got to feeling pretty good, and after a few beer, things didn't look so black. That's what they told me afterwards. In fact, he got so drunk, god knows how he drove home. Felt perfectly grand, larger than life and horny as hell by the time he got home.

He lurched in, swayed into the middle of the room and demanded to

I KNOW A GIRL THAT WENT TO BED
SHE NEVER SEWED, SHE NEVER READ
SOME THOUGHT THAT MAYBE SHE WAS
DEAD

OR THAT THE DOC SHOULD FIX HER
HEAD

SHE DECIDED ONCE NOT TO WED
AND THEN HER BODY SHE FED AND
FED

UNTIL SHE LOOKED LIKE A
HOUSE OF LEAD

SOME DO BELIEVE THAT GIRL
WAS ODD.

(but she wasn't.....

-just a little

depressed sometimes.)

BONNIE BECKMAN 7/73

Seemed to fear it. Didn't like me to look at him straight like that. Said it swallowed his light, devoured him, and everything inside him hated it.

So he blew. He cracked, grabbed me by the shoulders and shook me as though it was the only way to shut out that look. And perhaps if I hadn't screamed, he wouldn't have hit me.

My screams whipped him wide open and he beat me and beat me and beat me, again and again, trying to pound those screams back into me. He was so afraid to hear me.

Don't you see, he was afraid!

After a while I was vaguely conscious of him lurching to bed, muttering at me to get out, fuck right off and get out. I can't really remember anything after that, no sounds, no feeling other than a fluid greyness.

He has work to do, so very much work. I understand that. YET I WANT TO LIVE TOO!

Why did he have to fear my black eyed bitchiness?

Oh God!

Ute Bachinski

the dilemma

I would like to share some thoughts. I have been living with attacks of severe depression and apathy for ten years now and they sometimes have the power to immobilize me. I have analyzed myself until I'm blue in the face. I have read all the books I could find on such things as "How to Find Happiness." I have searched the library for writing by Freud, Adler and Jung. Each one supposedly offers the secret but somehow it fails me.

The other night while lying awake in my bed it suddenly occurred to me that my first suicide attempt occurred after being released from Riverview Hospital. It is true that I was very manic when I was committed and needed help of some kind but it is also true that I did not find it in Riverview--in fact, I was released in worse condition than when I went in.

Their policy seemed to be to park you in a dayroom, feed you pills, take away your matches and wait. With a little bit of luck you saw a doctor for ten minutes every two weeks. When these tactics failed they zapped you with shock treatment. My personal experience was that the shock treatments have left me with a partial amnesia, and recurring fits of depression. I can't help believing that a manic attack is some sort of spiritual happening, for it comes out of your spirit and your mind. I feel there must be some significance to the delusions and feelings that occur during this so-called deranged time. I feel they should be worked out with the patient in therapy.

But what they do is shock your body, rape your mind, although they are not sure of the effects this will have on you, so that hopefully you will fit into a sociable pattern and demonstrate acceptable behavior. They leave you with no resolution or explanation for your manic experience other than the feeling that you have been terribly inadequate because you have not been able to cope with your problems and have therefore "escaped reality."

My family has had a history of mental illness involving two aunts, one who committed suicide in Riverview for lack of adequate care. Several other of my relations were similarly affected. There was always an air of secretiveness about this fact--it was something to hide and be ashamed of. I learned the idea somehow that to be different was sinful. I am asking the question now: Was this strain in our family because all our parents hit us with the potty seat when we were little? It seems incredible to me that this theory could be accepted.

I believe now that it has a physical cause and I believe also that the doctors and nurses, instead of admitting that they really don't know what causes such a state hide their ignorance by insinuating that it is some defect in your personality that you willfully cultivate just to be perverse. They make you feel guilty.

They don't call it crazy any more. In fact, "crazy" is something of a status symbol and something very chic to be. I applied for two separate jobs recently and on each occasion I was told with a grin that a person had to be a little "crazy" to work there. I had a wild feeling that I should convince them I was crazy. Perhaps I should have said, "Oh, I'm crazy. I was admitted to Riverview Hospital nine times, twice for being psychotic and the rest because of suicide attempts and depression. In fact, I'm so crazy that I miss a lot of work because of it, or on second thought would I be crazier if I had a sterling attendance record? Is that crazy enough for you?" But I know I would be defeated because now "crazy" is "cool." The new scientific word for the heavy stuff is "emotionally disturbed."

Even "emotionally disturbed" seems to be relative. Somehow, if you have money and power it is made to appear perfectly normal that a small group of people have attained the power to press a button and destroy humanity, civilization, all life on this planet. If you have power, you can hide in a bunker while sending young men out to kill human beings they don't even know. If you have power you can use people like objects. This is normal.

Yes, "emotionally disturbed" certainly seems very relative. No one seems to be sure what it is except for vague symptoms like being impolite to your host or eating your dessert first at a dinner party.

Well, whatever it is they have certainly succeeded in making me feel guilty about it.

- Petra Graves

New life in crafts program

It's Sunday; people downstairs talking, reading, listening to music, seems pretty quiet. There are five of us in the crafts room now. Doug is putting the finishing touches on the clay pot he made yesterday, Bev is working hard making posters for next week, Francis is getting a design for jewelry together, Rick's comic book is starting to happen and I am struggling with this letter. I'd much rather be sinking my hooks into a lump of clay! The crafts room has been going for about a week now with people coming in to work with whatever materials they found lying around. We've been asked to start a more scheduled program. So starting on January 24th at 6:30 P.M. we are having a Clay Workshop for anyone interested in learning to work with clay. Following sometime in the near future there may be similar things happening with candles, weaving, sewing and kite-making. A lot depends on the support we get in the next few weeks.

As one who has experienced the sterile confinement of a mental institution I have hopes that this room will provide a place for people to rediscover their natural creativity. If you have any ideas or constructive criticism get in touch with either Bev Mennie, Gayle Stephens, or John Kurtz (that's me) in the Arts and Crafts Room at the Drop-In 1982 West Sixth Avenue. See you then.

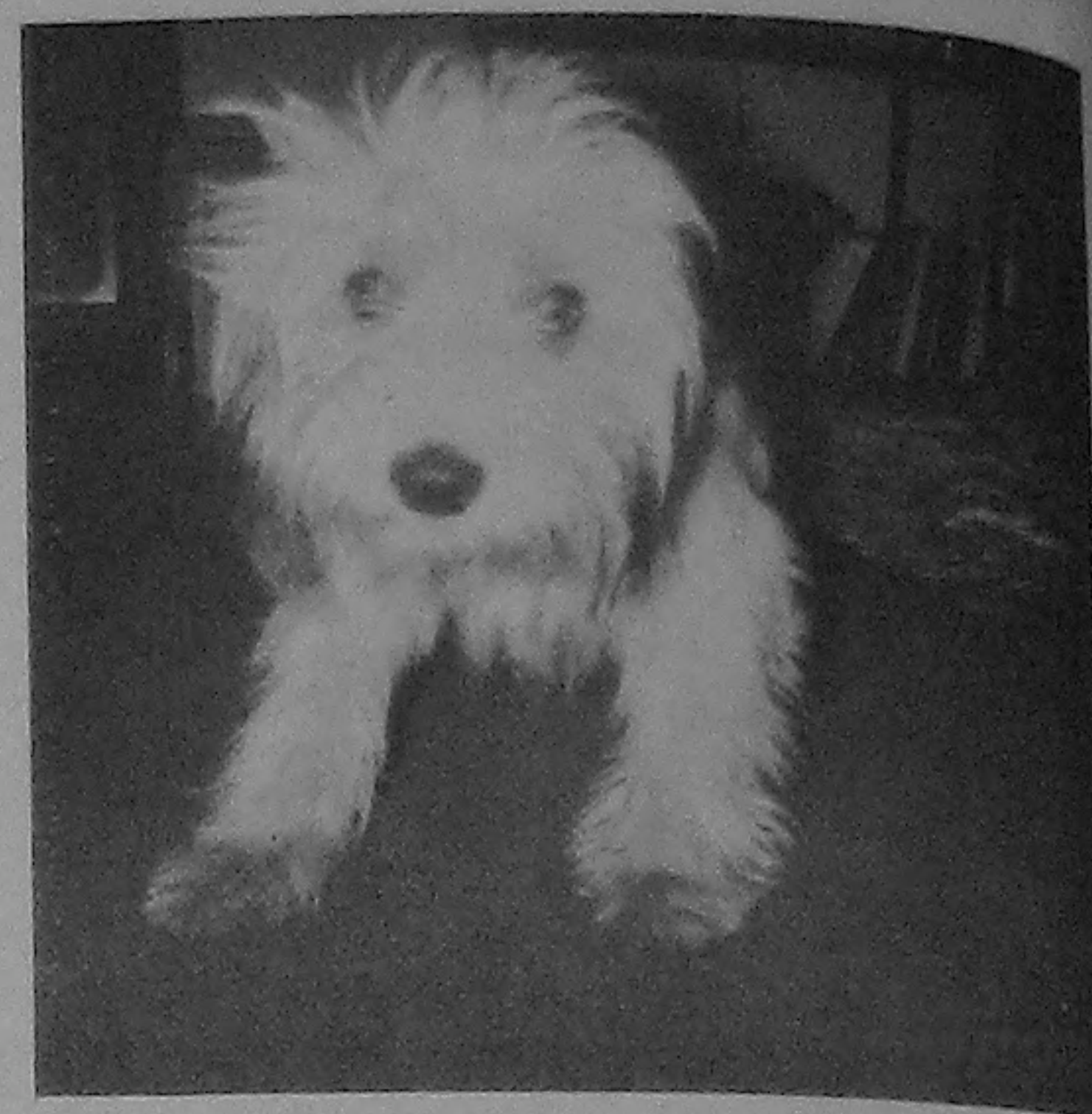
John Kurtz.



RESEARCH READY

MPA's research section has produced a twenty-page paper entitled "On the Political and Economic Implications of Canadian Psychiatry." Copies may be obtained by writing to the NUTSHELL.

It's a dog's life



Portrait of the author

This is the story of my life--me Chicken Heart. I've been a member of MPA for one and a half years but do not feel I am getting the recognition coming to me. I'm not very aggressive, I like everybody and am affectionate to everyone without being a chauvinist - but - my picture has never appeared in the paper and nobody writes about me or even thinks about me much. It's a dog's life. I come to Wednesday night dinners, only you see I have these physical disabilities. I can't talk and my manual dexterity is kind of limited - but does anyone think to dish me up a plate? No. After they're full then they think of me and I can eat the uneaten portion on their plate.

What does anyone even know about me really? I tell ya I'm an interesting guy. I was born in a truck in July at the Colorado Peace Festival, that's almost as good as being born at Woodstock and besides, it makes me a Cancer. Even though I was born in the U.S.A. my mother Mesa and my father Dumpy are both Canadians which makes me a true Canadian.

I am also a surviving member of octuplets (8). I mean how many of you can say you have seven brothers and sisters all with the same birthday. I also have two step-brothers and live with my step-mother but she's not like Cinderella's step-mother. She's kinda groovy, ya know, she looks out for me.

Well I just wanted people to know I'm an authentic member and do give a lot when I'm at MPA. I've never freaked out bad enough to be committed but I'm extremely nervous and neurotic. My only hope in writing this is that I can state my needs. Gosh I give enough, I need something back. All I ask is that you scratch my head and stomach, feed me Wednesday night and for gods sake cheer up. Otherwise, as I've stated before, it's a dog's life.

-Chicken Heart Servant

'howzabout a date?'

It's anyday, anytime at the drop in, and as with any other day, or any other time, the men outnumber the women by about four to one.

Anyman, surely for the umpteenth time announces to nobody in particular, "Jesus, we sure need some women around here." Another murmurs agreement, and adds for good measure "Yeah, all these M.P.A. women are really screwed up."

Meanwhile, Anywoman, new on the scene (a new woman) arrives to check out the drop-in, only go find she is the one to get checked out. She gets approached "hi! I'm Anyman, what's your name...what are you doing tonight....mmmmhhaaaa.... howzabout a date?" After the nth time, this can really get to disturb her peaceful enjoyment of the drop-in especially if Anyman is not interested in taking "NO" for an answer, and she may stop coming around. Or if she sticks around she may just get more uptight about the whole thing, reacting as time goes on in a more and more uptight manner to similar situations.

Since women comprise a larger group in our mental hospitals than men, get readmitted more often, and on the average stay longer on each admission than men, the M.P.A. male

female ratios are certainly not representative of the general mental patient group. Why don't these women come to M.P.A.?????

A large part of the reason seems to be the friction that arises between our men and women because of our conditioned sex roles. The male/female discussion group will be meeting once a week to try to help alleviate this tension through discussing things like our insensitivity to each other's needs, clarification of what, in fact, these needs are, and how we can all more clearly express them and thus clear up some of the present confusions.

We had a good first meeting, while getting into the topic of our needs to be physically affectionate and the hassles that can arise in trying to find someone of the same or opposite sex who will be receptive, we all ended up by giving and receiving some tremendous massages.

You might say we have an action approach in tackling our problems--if you can dig it, come along and join us.

by ANYWOMAN

NEWS

HARRY

I met Harry about one year ago in the West End House. He just got out of the hospital and he looked very out of place because he didn't talk very much in large crowds. But one day he came down with his guitar and we started talking and he played while I sang. He left a journal, there are some quotes from it below.

"Sure I have trouble with communication and I am shy. But what it really is -- I am afraid to get involved."

One thing we talked about was being paranoid. We became good friends but soon after he moved out and went back to his homeland, Holland. He stayed for awhile and then came back to Vancouver and said he just couldn't get along with his parents that well. He moved back into the West House again and we started going to the pubs. Both of us were pretty good drinkers as we soon found out. I drank slow and he drank fast in the beginning. In the end I drank fast and he drank slow.

"I went out drinking with Gary. I enjoyed it but coming home; everything is so lonely. Real loneliness can be very heavy. I only had ten beer and that is supposed to be enough for me to be myself."

Then Harry got tired of sitting around and moved out to go work at Tassis. After he wrote me a letter saying he missed my spanish rice and he missed the pubs. So he came back but he didn't move into our house. He just wanted to live alone for awhile and write and practice his guitar. But I liked him a lot and got him to move back into the West House.

He always phoned me and asked me to go drinking even if I didn't

have any money. I told him I did not want him to treat me all the time. He would say, "oh, that's all right. I got the money so I'm going to spend it."

"I wonder sometimes about giving and taking. I could give certain things, maybe help or whatever; taking not much though."

When I got my check we used to go out and celebrate. After awhile I found out why he used to drink; he was paranoid. I helped him with his problems and would ask him how he was feeling while he told me not to worry.

"I am living in myself you know. The only thing I can come out in is drinking. In this way I am myself, but I know I float back into myself again."

He liked talking to me because he said I had a good personality. We had some good times. Once we jogged to the Centennial. One of my good memories was my birthday when Harry, Lesley, Monty and I went to the pub and really got drunk. After we came home, went to sleep for awhile and then got up and went to a club called the Bodyshop.

The last time we went to the Ritz he wouldn't let me pay for a thing. He bought me lunch and we drank beer. After that we went to the Castle to look for a girlfriend of his but she wasn't there. So we went to the Ambassador and had a few more. Then we went home and I had the feeling we wouldn't ever go to a hotel again because he treated me so special.

To my good, close friend Harry, Gary Barclay

"When I was young if they told me my life would end this way I would have laughed my head off."

Mixing drugs can kill

Generally most people don't know very much about the drugs they take to cure their ills - often not. Drug-swapping is a common practice amongst friends and neighbours. Everyone feels better if they can help someone in distress or pain. When we start mixing drugs we use for emotional upsets, colds, toothache, headache, arthritic pains etc we begin to play pill roulette. Now add to this a national habit of adding alcohol as a cold cure, antidepressant (which it isn't), or a plain social pleasantry to help ease our pains and miseries. The result -- a whopper of a depression.

People are not known to make their best decisions when suffering a double downer. The temptation to take more pills is very great. Even remembering how many pills you've taken becomes difficult and can result in overdose - sometimes because you misjudge and sometimes because you become suicidal.

Good old aspirin is not the safe drug everyone has been led to believe. Mix it with alcohol or anti arthritic drugs and your stomach can become very irritated and painful.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. Penicillin: Ampicillin: Tetracycline and all Antibiotics for infections should always be taken on an empty stomach with water only. Definition: A stomach is empty 1/2 hour before eating or 1 hour after eating.
2. Drugs which irritate the stomach like aspirin, 222's, iron tablets, anti-arthritis drugs etc. should always be taken with lots of milk - preferably after eating.
3. If you are allergic to aspirin or it upsets you try tylenol or tempra (they don't irritate the stomach).

'Twas the night before Christmas,
And all through the jail,
Not a prisoner was stirring,
They were locked into cells.

All the letters were written
To the Attorney General with care,
With hopes of a release
Before Saint Nicholas got there.

And we behind bars
Can now only pray
That we'll be out of jail
By next Christmas day.

Darryl Rempel



ACTIVITIES

MPA descended on the Stardust roller skating rink in the biggest horde ever. Twenty of us piled out of the van and on to skates to roll around in circels (although some of us spent more time going up and down and have the bruises to prove it). It must be pointed out here that we do have some excellent skaters but the majority of us are learners. We knew for sure MPA was there when they announced over the loud speakers "we seem to have a lot of inexperienced skaters here tonight (I wonder why - tee hee) so could everyone be a bit more considerate."

Our thanks go to the coaches at the rink who spent time teaching us how to stand up and move precariously down the rink.

After a few rounds we willed our aching ankles to the coffee shop where we found many of our group nursing bruises over steamy cups of coffee and popcorn.

It was a lot "o" fun but maybe next time we should take pillows and some absorbine junior huh?

As part of the festivities of Christmas MPA went on a hay ride at Richmond. We all jumped into the hay and the horses leaned against their harness and away we went. The air was crisp and the sky was clear as we plodded our way through the country side feeling groovy. We lost a couple of members when they jumped off the wagon in answer to natures call without first informing the horses but the van was dispatched with haste to pick up our stragglers.

Back at the old corral a huge bonfire was burning brightly so we could warm up and the barn was filled with enthusiastic dancers stomping in the straw. As we pulled away we could hear the horses say "crazy, man, crazy."

New Years Eve is traditionally brought in with a party, a few drinks, some dancing, a couple of laughs and a lot of screaming and yelling. Not wanting to defy tradition, we did the same thing.

After hearing the question "why don't we get a stereo?" numerous times, we did. We now have an amplifier, speakers and a record player so bring your records if you want to play them and we will. The set also has an AM/FM radio so if you don't have any records come anyway.

The Christmas dinner was a rousing success and thanks go to the people who worked on it. An indication of how much food there was - that after 50 people were finished garbaging up on turkey and ham there was two plates of turkey left over. Nobody even had enough room to eat ice cream for dessert. The punch was enjoyed by all and disappeared fast but the other punch without the whallop seemed to be around all evening.



Ah, sweet nostalgia

At the end of 1918, the dollar (which had itself suffered a measure of inflation) was worth 10 marks, 20 marks at the end of 1919 and up to 100 marks in 1920, though it fell back provisionally to 40.

It was a short respite; by January 1, 1923, it was worth 192 marks. And that was only the beginning of the madness. On April of that year, the Germans had to pay 20,000 marks for one dollar, 100,000 on June 14, one million on July 20, one thousand billion on November 14, and, as mentioned above, four thousand billion marks a few days later.

Manchester Guardian,
11/24/73

correction corrected

It is embarrassing to have to admit that the correction noted in the last NUTSHELL was itself probably incorrect. The confusion pertains to the article, run several issues ago, entitled "How to Tell Schizophrenia from Normal Behaviour." In the original article, schizophrenic and normal behaviour traits were listed in two parallel columns. The following edition noted that, due to a mistake in layout, the two columns had been inadvertently reversed. We have received many communications advising us that the original was in fact correct and that our subsequent correction was in error. Frankly, we are uncertain at this time as to which listing is right. Our research team is investigating the matter and a definitive statement will be published as soon as their findings are in. In the meantime, we suggest that readers not try to distinguish between schizophrenia and normal behaviour.

THIS PLACE CALLED RIVERVIEW

We all piled into the van and drove from house to house picking up people who wanted to go and visit old friends who were in the hospital or still in the hospital. The drive out there was really nice, along the highway we could see trees and fields and it was a beautiful sunny day, the kind of day that you just want to keep driving till you lose all signs of "civilization."

Turning off the main route onto the hospital road, I could see a couple of older brick buildings with nice windows, the old kind with lots of small panes of glass framed with wood. We let some people off at Pen. Hall and then off to Crease where we were supposed to meet later.

John and I went in search of an old friend of his, Mike. We went to the ward and looked for him and while walking down the hall I discovered that the wood frames on the windows were really strong metal bars painted white. I was beginning to feel the ominousness of this place called Riverview.

We couldn't find Mike so we sat in the entrance to Crease. A young woman came up to us and asked us for 15¢ so she could buy a coffee. She said, "I didn't get my comfort money this week; I need a little comfort too ya know. I didn't get my money because I didn't go to the meeting. It's these shock treatments, they make me afraid, I do not like them. I didn't go to the meeting because they talk about who they're going to punish, I don't like to punish people. Have you got 15¢ so I can buy a coffee, I didn't go to the meeting..."

"Here comes Mike, let's go for a drive around. Here is Valleyview, for people over 70, here is where they rehabilitate you to be a cafeteria slave, there are the houses where the R.C.M.P., the psychology offices etc. are located, and if you look real hard you can even see Riverside over there."

Mike has been talking to John for awhile. I tune in just in time to hear "...the drugs they are giving me really make me irritable, and some of the ward aides try to get at me, they're always needling me so I have to watch myself so I don't get angry and sent to Intensive Care Unit or pumped full of drugs or sent to the shock shop..."

Over at Pen. Hall we stopped in for a coffee, and took in the scenery; a couple of people were playing pool, some were talking over coffee, and others were just there.

We said goodbye to Mike and went to wait for the others to come back. I was reading the newspaper when I walked an old friend. "Hi, how are you?...shock treatments?! I didn't know you were in here...I have to go now, the van is leaving but tell me where I can find you and I'll come out next week and visit you."

- Bonnie Ramsay

lawyer to appeal John Doe case to Supreme Court

A B.C. Supreme Court decision to reserve judgement on people being held in provincial mental institutions on an order-in-council without trial could be appealed in the Court of Canada. Last month Mr. Justice A.A. Mackoff reserved judgement on a "John Doe" application on behalf of an estimated 50 people currently detained in mental institutions who have been incarcerated by a cabinet order without a trial. Cabinet orders or orders-in-council are issued against people suspected of a crime but found "unfit to stand trial" or "apparently suffering from a mental disorder."

Vancouver Lawyer Robert Gardner who filed the application is one of a growing group of lawyers who feel such actions on the part of the government are illegal. In effect, people are locked up without trial in clear violation of the "innocent until proven guilty" standard of Anglo-Saxon law which governs Canadian law. "We're determined to get this issue tried," said Gardner. "It should be tried and we're taking it to the B.C. Court of Appeals and to the Supreme Court of Canada if necessary."

The dispute is over the legality of the John Doe application for writs of habeas corpus on behalf of persons unnamed in places like Riverside. Gardner found a John Doe application necessary when he was denied names by provincial mental health officials of persons held under orders-in-council without trial.

"It's horrific to think that people being held, possibly illegally, can't get the benefit of a John Doe application for a writ of habeas corpus in order to test the legality of their confinement," Gardner said.

The issue before the court of appeals is the legality of the John Doe application itself. "If the application is found to be in order then we get the names of people who are in the situation we're concerned about," said Gardner. A writ of habeas corpus would force the courts to hear the cases of all people ordered-in-council to mental hospitals without trial and end the indeterminate incarceration presently in practice.

Gardner, who is taking the case for free, was originally acting on behalf of Allan Sorenson who was accused of abduction but never tried before order-in-council proceedings had him placed in Riverside. When proceedings began on Sorenson's behalf he was released from the hospital. "The case became academic and the court would not hear an academic case so I attempted to get other names," Gardner explained. "When that failed I went ahead on a John Doe application."



Just between ourselves, your obsession that the rest of society is mad is probably true... but they are in charge.

"The Attorney General (Alex MacDonald) and others feel the case should be heard," said Gardner. "Yet the Crown objected to procedure (the use of a John Doe application). That had to come on instructions, usually from the Attorney Generals office."

"Judge Mackoff stated when he reserved judgement that the Crown should cooperate by giving names for another application. So far nothing has happened."

Success in the case to obtain writs of habeas corpus for persons detained without trial in mental institutions would make any further detention without trial illegal. The people in question would have the right to trial either on the case in court or fitness to stand trial. Any unfavourable ruling could then be contested in court. As it stands now there is no easy way to appeal an order-in-council ruling which can be instigated on the basis of a single doctor's report.



"I came here years ago as a social worker. I liked it so much I've been here ever since."

coming events

REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

MONDAY

Noon: Drop-in center meeting

TUESDAY

Noon: Business meeting

WEDNESDAY

2:00 p.m.: Research meeting

6:00 p.m.: Free pot-luck supper

THURSDAY

1:00 p.m.: Riverview visit (meet at drop-in center)

FRIDAY

11:00 a.m.: MPA Residence Council meeting (held at a different residence each week; phone the drop-in for location)

SATURDAY

11:00 a.m.: Free breakfast

1:00 p.m.: Special outing (each week the MPA van travels to a different spot in the Lower Mainland -- wherever members who join the activity decide; children, especially, find this activity enjoyable.)

REGULAR UNSCHEDULED GROUPS

Women's Committee Rap Group (phone the drop-in for the time of the next meeting)

Men-Women's Discussion Group (usually meets Tuesday night at 7:30 p.m.)

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Tues. Feb. 5: Rollerskating party; meet at the drop-in at 6:00 p.m.

Thurs. Feb. 7: Swimming at Crystal Pool; meet at the drop-in at 7:00 p.m.

Tues. Feb. 12: Folk-song evening at the drop-in.

Wed. Feb. 13: "Lilliam," a play at the Metro Theater; meet at the drop-in at 7:30 p.m.

Wed. Feb. 20: General meeting; 7:30 p.m.

Wed. Feb. 27: Ice-skating party; meet at drop-in at 6:45 p.m.

Thurs. Feb. 28: New Month's Eve Party; at the drop-in from 8:00 p.m. till?

Wed. March 13: General meeting; 7:30 p.m.

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, all activities occur in or start from the drop-in center, 1982 W. 6th Ave. There are many special activities not listed here because most of them are planned only a week in advance at the Monday Drop-in Center meeting. For details, call the drop-in at 738-5177 or 738-1422 anytime, or better still, come to the Monday drop-in meeting at noon and help plan or suggest activities.

Here's Bonnie Ramsay (right center) who snaps at every opportunity ... she takes most of the photos which grace the pages of the NUTSHELL. Counter-clockwise from the top, we feature MPA's first tooth-paste commercial starring Allan Barker and Ann-Marie Linklater. Phil Pelzman pauses long enough to wish all a Happy Chanukah ... while, to end on a cheerful note, we see that things are looking up for Doug Wilson.

