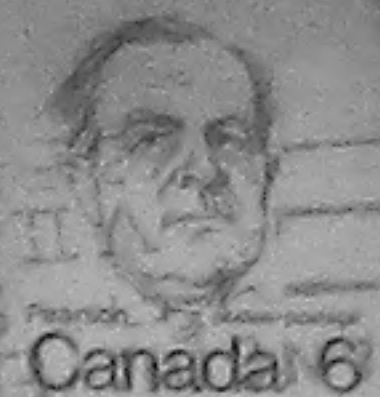


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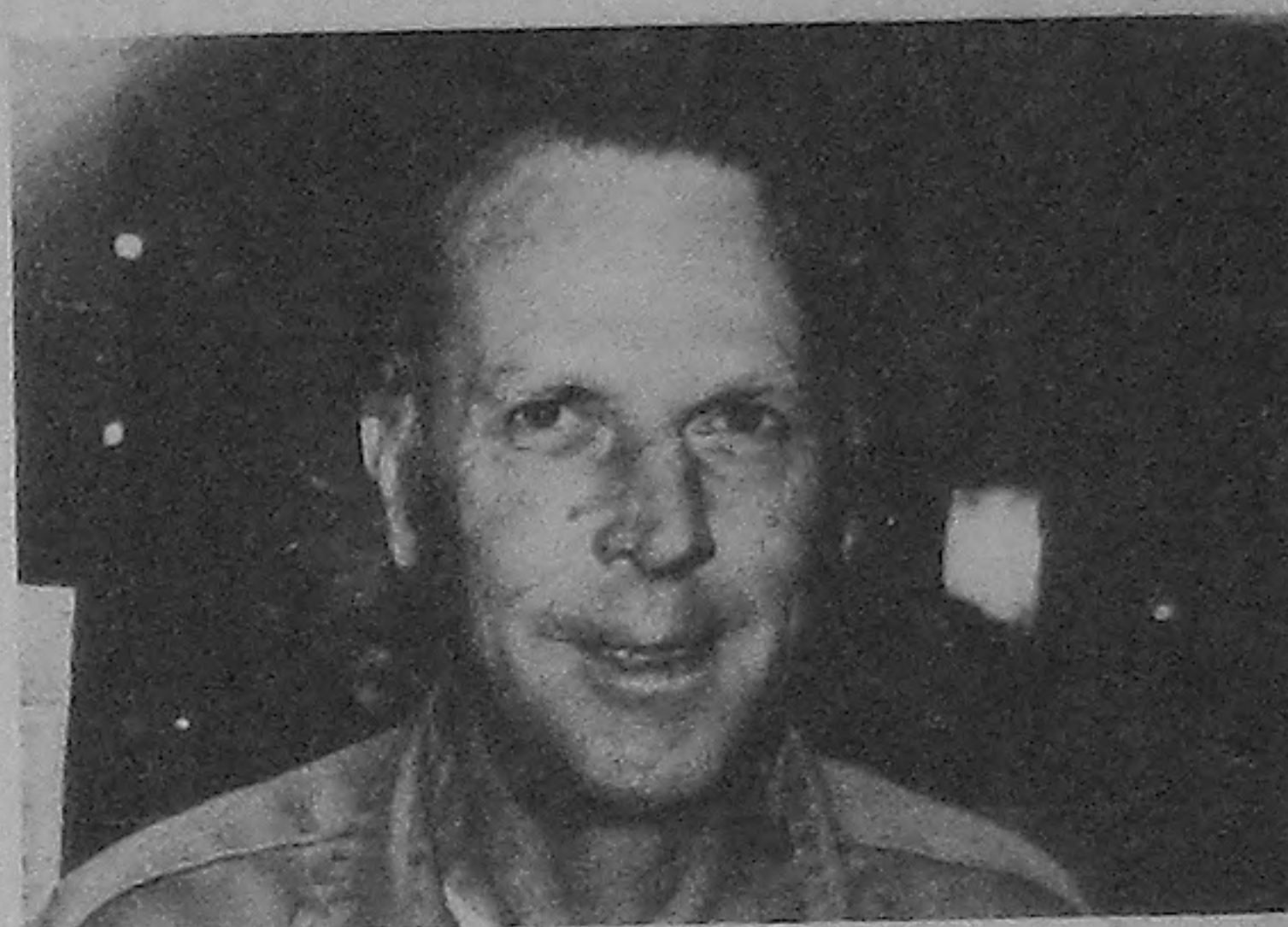


IN A NUTSHELL

VOL. 3, No. 9

MENTAL PATIENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

July 1975



Election: Wednesday, August 6th, 7:30 p.m. for 1 residence coordinator (Women's Residence); 1 transportation coordinator (Class 4 licence required); 1 job coordinator; 1 part-time workshop resource person. For further information contact 2146 Yew St., phone 738-5177.

in a nutshell

The following is a transcript of a tape-recorded conversation with myself. Are people who talk to themselves through machines more or less crazy than people who simply talk to themselves?

I first started thinking about writing this article during the Christmas break when I was attending classes at Langara. I'd received my grades and done better than I could have hoped and I thought back over how things had been in the not-too-distant past.

I recalled a conversation I'd had with Fran Phillips a couple of years prior to that time. I was working as one of the two Drop-In Centre coordinators at Trutch and finally the 6th Avenue Drop-In centres. I found myself working with people who were very much draining of my energy and who seemed to be accomplishing very little for themselves. I was fairly depressed and shaky myself. I asked Fran did people ever get it together at MPA because it often didn't look that way. I would see the same people coming in and out of the Drop-In, seemingly repeating the same kinds of behaviour that wasn't doing them much good.

She said that small changes like decision-making in minor matters take weeks and months to occur, while major changes like going back to work or school take much longer. Also that a lot of people did, indeed, go on to other things.

How that relates to me going to Langara and this article is that I feel in the last 4 years or so, I've really made some gains in my own life in terms of finding out what my problems were, doing something about them, setting out in some sort of positive direction to do something with my life. I feel that in a large way MPA contributed to that, so what this article is about is sort of a bit of my life history and the place that MPA had in it. MPA wasn't the only factor in working things out, of course, but it played a big part.

When I went into the larger community to attend classes at Langara, I was told by a chap in my class that he felt that the Mental Patients Association should be investigated in some way and that something should be done about it because people weren't getting any help there and he had some other vague kinds of criticism.



You CAN get there from here

I guess what he, and I pointed it out to him, failed to recognize and probably what other people fail to recognize also, is that the greatest majority of us who come to MPA have been through various kinds of professional, establishment mental health experiences and have just not been helped all that much or have not been helped enough. It can't be expected that MPA, which is basically a group of some very concerned, some less concerned, expatients and others, is going to solve all the mental health and other problems of the people who come to us.

I think what MPA does provide is friendship for some, probably for a majority of people; housing for some people; a place to go;

somewhere to get help, with almost anything there's some one at MPA who will try to help and if they don't they can find out.

That's a hell of a lot more than lots of other places offer. You don't need an appointment, we don't adhere to office hours, the people who work here and the members aren't on a professional-client basis, they're your friends, they're your enemies, whatever, but they are people.

I think that is quite a bit. A lady said to me about 2 weeks ago in Riverview that weekends in the city are pretty unhappy times if you don't know anyone, especially Sundays. They're lonely, dull, very limited if you're on a limited income. Very much like the

hospital. MPA, to some extent, meets that kind of need.

When I came to MPA almost 3½ years ago, I was newly discharged from hospital, had gotten a little room in the West End, not a very satisfactory place, a house-keeping room and the kind you can't really make an impression on, a very drab and dreary kind of place. I had no friends, was separated, and on the way to a divorce from my wife.

I had heard from her about MPA and I went there. I remember Glenn Underwood being the first person to talk to me and ask me who I was and just sort of chatting. At that time I found it difficult to stay in one place for any length of time because of the medication I

DAVE BEAMISH

"MPA IS A BIG PART OF MY LIFE"

was taking. It was kind of amusing, the way MPA works. Not too long thereafter, I met a girl at the Drop-In who was displaying very similar symptoms to my own and sure enough she was on a medication that didn't allow her to sit still very long either and so we used to go for walks around the neighbourhood, both of us, attempting to walk off the artificial physical anxiety produced by the various drugs that we were taking. That is sort of what MPA is about.

It has provided me with employment several times, opportunities to test myself. It's given me some really good, close friends, several of whom are no longer connected with MPA. It gave me a place to live where there were no or minimal demands on me, where people were supportive, where there was help if I needed it. I'm grateful for that.

There were long periods in the last few years that I spent holed up in my room in the West End and elsewhere. People would come down and try to visit me, some wrote letters, one guy even climbed in the window. People encouraged me to come back. When, later, I got into a manic episode and was threatening people and had a lot of people frightened and was causing a lot of noise and disturbance, MPA got me committed to the hospital which was the best thing that could happen. Happily, this time I was put on a medication that's done me some good, has enabled me to work out some of my problems, to be more stable, less depressed and generally to function pretty well.

When I came to MPA I had no idea what I was going to do with my life. All I thought about steadily for a good year or so was suicide. Every day when I woke up that's what I thought of and I spent most of my days sleeping, eating, reading, contemplating suicide. That was it.

Now I've completed the program at Langara which qualifies me to work with pre-school age children, which I'll be doing in the fall. I'm working as a Drop-In Centre coordinator right now at MPA. I've taken on various personal projects, to get myself into better physical condition, to learn a musical instrument, improve my living space, to do a few other things, and all these things are happening.

Interestingly enough, my plans as I've made them have come to fruition. I've been able to follow through on things and to me, that's something miraculous. I've never had that in my life before.

It was certainly a combination of chance and circumstance, good fortune oftentimes that helped me but it was also, I think, having around me a lot of people who, even if they didn't care, were there. They were somebody that I knew. When I went into the Drop-In they recognized me, they said, Hi Dave. That's a hell of a lot better than sitting in the middle of nowhere in Vancouver.

Now there are community mental health teams. When you come out of hospital there is some follow-up. When I came out of hospital 3 years ago or so, there was bugger-all follow-up. I saw a social worker once a week for 2 weeks and that was it. She brought me Ladies' Home Journals and I saw someone at the Out-Patients' Clinic who was absolutely useless to me. At that time, I had a psychiatrist who was not only little good to me but did me some harm in terms of his advice. It was through the MPA atmosphere and some of the opinions and ideas of people at MPA that I was able to recognize the psychiatrist had really done me harm and that I didn't have to feel guilty about my "failure", that actually his advice had been very poor.

That's something I likely couldn't have gotten anywhere else. There's quite a span of opinion and ideology in MPA, from the very extreme to the very conservative, and I think that's a healthy thing. Doubtless it has led us into error at times but the exposure to ideas about mental health and psychiatry has been of use to our members and to other people. There are people I've had contact with in the community who have been able to benefit, perhaps, from some of the things I've learned through MPA.

When I applied for the program at Langara there were some 250 applicants for 20-odd seats. Knowing they would be strong on emotional stability as a criterion for working with young children, when I came to the application question, "Have you ever received psychiatric treatment" I lied, of course and said, "no, not me, not ever".

However, once I got into the program, in conversation with one of the instructors, I told her about my background. Eventually the whole class found out at a time when Fran Phillips came out to speak to our psychology class. I found, generally, that no-one's attitude changed very much toward me from what it had been, just because they found out I'd been in hospital. Some people were somewhat interested, some couldn't have cared less. Also, in that class there were some people who weren't too together in some ways themselves.

I guess that I'm saying that in terms of my own personal experience, in the distant past and recently, yeah, there's a stigma to having been in mental hospital but if people are given a chance to know you as a person before knowing you as an ex-patient, that they're able to put that into perspective somehow.

That even applies to welfare. I remember, a long time ago, starting work at a place after having been on welfare for a time. In those days I was married and I felt guilty about being on the dole. We were working overtime one day and I came into this cafeteria setting and here was this fellow expounding to others the wastefulness of welfare and the fact, according to him that most people on welfare were not deserving of it.

So I told him that I had just come off welfare, that in fact people on welfare were not making great bundles of money and I told him what some of the rates were. He shut up pretty quickly and said, "Well, you know, I wasn't talking about people like you." And he probably meant that because, somehow, he didn't see me as

fitting that stereotype. That would probably apply to almost anyone. No doubt there's still prejudice in the community but I believe most people, given half a chance, don't treat you all that badly.

Another practical way in which MPA was helpful to me was when I applied to Langara. I needed letters of reference of course. There was a big hole in my working life at that time, of several years or so. Between my V.O.P. experiences and 2 brief episodes as Drop-In Centre coordinator, I

SPEAKS OUT

was able to get Dick Betts to write up a letter of reference. I remember during the group interviews we had as candidates for the program, the instructor interviewing me was more interested in my MPA experience than anything else.

What I'd like to say to those people within MPA who spend a lot of time criticizing it is that certainly MPA is far from perfect but it's structured in such a way that if you have legitimate complaints you can at least bring them to the attention of other people in a formal way at a meeting. If you're not able to function well in meetings then you can talk to someone who is, enlist their support and get them to bring up your complaint at a meeting. Or at least go and talk to people directly and to hell with the meetings and see what comes of it.

If you're using MPA a fair amount, think of this: where the hell would you be if MPA didn't exist? It would leave a gap in my social and emotional life if MPA wasn't here.

To people who are not active in MPA but feel negatively toward the organization I would ask you to spend some real time around the place over a period of weeks or months and just see what goes on. Whether anything is done for anyone, whether people ever do help themselves or others.

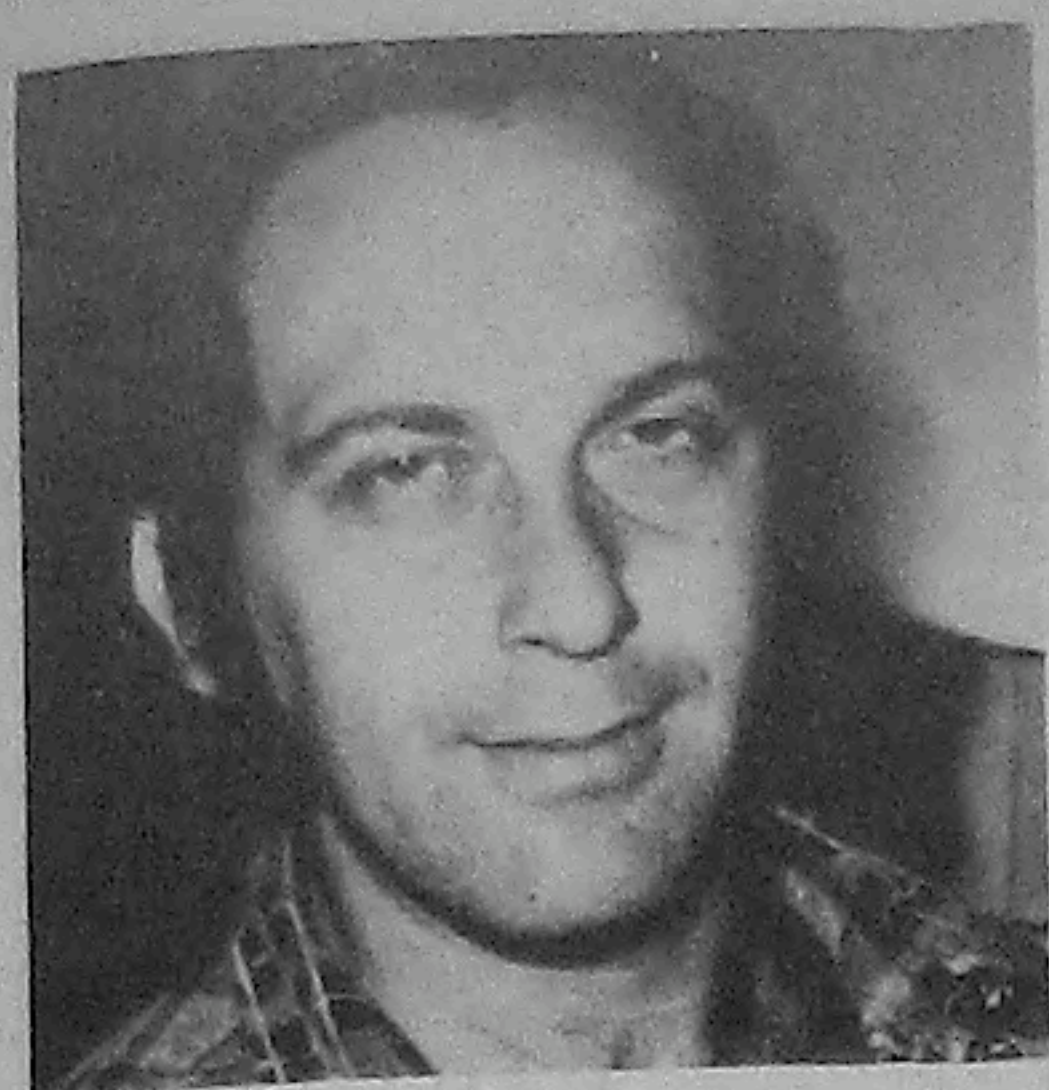
Apart from that, I'd like to encourage anyone who's going back to school or trying to reestablish themselves through work or anything else in the community, to go ahead and do that.

There may be times you'll wish you hadn't. If you haven't done anything like that for a while, don't be really upset or bummed out if it doesn't work right off. If it doesn't work the first time you can still give it another crack. It doesn't come that easily.

If you are successful it really pays off in a big way. It does a hell of a lot for your self-esteem. It makes you feel worthwhile.

For the longest time I spent day in and day out sitting around the Drop-In Centre, going out for coffee with someone, going for a beer the odd time and really feeling like I was wasting

continued on p. 11



THINKING OF US

Believe it or not, what MPA says and does makes ripples beyond the Drop-In Centre.

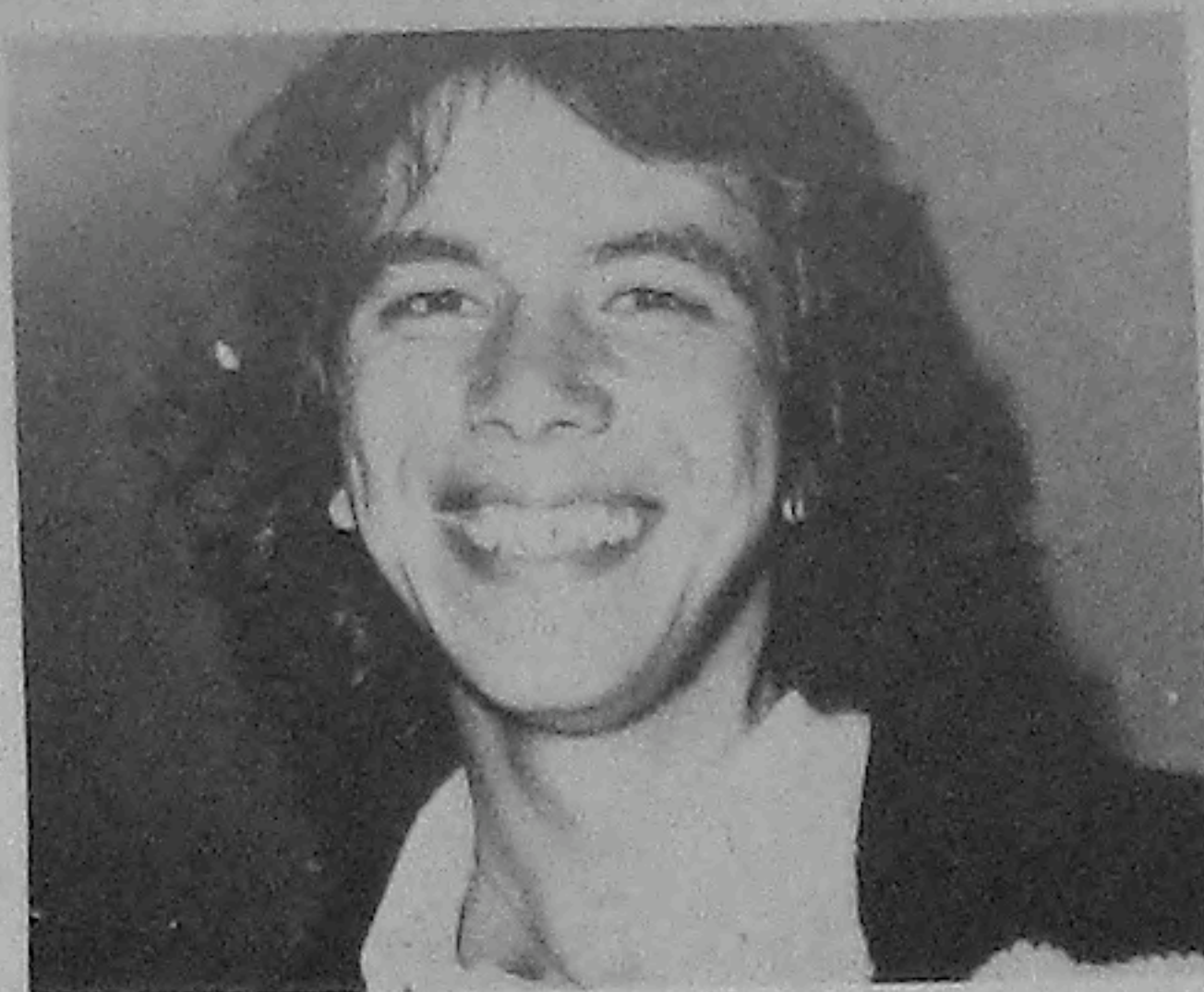
For example, in the March 1975 issue of Canada's Mental Health (published by the federal Department of Health and Welfare), Anne Crichton's article, "Mental Health and Social Policies: an Overview", says, "The planning of resource development is not easy, because it has been made very clear THAT SOME GROUPS WITHIN CANADIAN SOCIETY ARE NO LONGER SATISFIED with traditional medical models; others have made it clear that they dislike "paternalistic controls".

And guess which group it is that has made it very clear they're no longer satisfied?

According to Crichton, it's MPA. "The Mental Patients Association of B.C. for example, sees its main role to be that of advocate on behalf of some of its members who have suffered under the present laws and regulations," she writes.

Crichton says that governments are more interested in peace than in social progress. "Development of policies for support - increasing social services - may be more important than those of control, but societies are often more concerned about law and order than they are about the need to provide support."

Stan Persky.



sexual communication

K: Morris, I think you exploit women.

M: What do you mean?

K: You manipulate women who are attracted to you. You sleep with any woman you choose indiscriminately. Don't you think you're using women?

M: No, when I sleep with a woman, we are together openly and freely and perhaps most honestly. And we are also communicating our need for each other. That is also a part of love.

K: But what about when one person's need is stronger?

M: Being hurt circumstantially is part of life. If my love is pure and unpossessive I should

let her go her own way, and be happy with someone else, rather than miserable with me, and vice versa. The tracks run both ways.

K: But sexual relationships aren't that simple. Making love is obviously much more intimate than shaking hands.

M: Every person will tell you that - sex is more than what it is. I don't know why you say that. Look within yourself. It's like sex is a psychological game that we play - saying that sex is so great with me. People just don't deal with the reality that sex is very basic, and very beautiful,

and very simple, just like shaking hands. The rationale of our society is that sex is deep and meaningful and heavy. People believe it is so deep and private - we can't even talk about it.

A lot of people grow up with incredible pie-in-the-sky expectations and they can't deal with sex when the sky doesn't light up. People get hung up, thinking there is something wrong with them when they don't experience ecstasy. If two people would deal with the simple reality of sex between them it would grow into a meaningful thing.

WOMEN'S HOUSE



Members of MPA were saddened to hear of the death on June 26th, of Marion Martin. Marion joined MPA soon after it was founded in February, 1971, and was an active member of one of our support groups in 1973. Though very quiet and unassuming, Marion was always willing to give help to other people. We extend our sympathy to her husband and son, and our thanks for the donations given to MPA in her name, by a group of her friends.

After a number of rather hectic months the WOMEN'S RESIDENCE have decided that they would like to reaffirm an original aim of the house which was to provide a supportive communal environment for women only.

The house will continue to deal not only with women coming from hospital, but also with those needing legal assistance and those who need to work out emotional problems without the added dimension of men.

Along with affirmation of the above came a suggestion to provide a space for the other women of MPA to meet and discuss a wide variety of related subjects - legal rights, medication, the medical model, sexuality, diet, medical problems, wherever the sessions lead us.

The surge of energy is positive, exciting, electric. The possibilities are endless.

THE WOMEN'S RESIDENCE OF MPA HAS ROOM FOR SEVERAL WOMEN WHO WISH TO LIVE IN A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT WHICH OFFERS ALTERNATIVES TO THEIR PROBLEMS. CONTACT THE WOMEN'S RESIDENCE: 2756 West 10th Ave. Phone 738-7421.

Child Welfare League of America Meets in Vancouver

On June 9th I attended the Child Welfare League of America Conference as an MPA delegate.

The League is a powerful association of agencies, similar to a union in that it sets minimum standards for member agencies. It publishes a newsletter and keeps members informed about important issues in social services.

Of the great variety of workshops offered to delegates to the conference the one I found the most interesting was called "Are social workers irrelevant?" Margaret Mitchell of the Vancouver Opportunities Program led the discussion, and Michael Audain of the provincial Dept. of Housing was also present. Attendance at this workshop was poor, pos-

sibly reflecting the fact that social workers do not wish to consider themselves irrelevant. One young American worker stated that in the U.S. social work has been splintered into so many categories that the result is more confusion than help, and that this state of affairs is frustrating in the extreme for sincere social workers who are trying to get a job done. As the moderator of the panel pointed out, social work as a profession grew out of the ideas of social reformers. From this high minded beginning social work has become shackled with red tape. Many of the social workers in the workshop agreed that change was needed but the American attitude that welfare is unnecessary has inhibited

reform and shifted social services to a low priority in government spending.

I was also interested in the session on the Seeborn Report. This report was used as a model to reform social services in B.C. and was the inspiration behind the formation of community resource boards. Its underlying principle is "welfare available to all" with no means test. Speaker Dr. Robin Hughes-Jones pointed out that the main thrust of the report is the encouragement of local participation; uniformity of service cannot be legislated, but minimum standards can be set. How the minimum standards of service could be enforced was not mentioned. If staff are unsympathetic the delivery of the services will

suffer.

Premier Barrett wound up the conference by stating that social service should be ever mindful of its crusader roots, and he urged citizens to get involved in politics. I pointed out during the question period that if F.A.P.G. (citizens candidates) were to run successfully for civic office that they would have to have funds to compete against groups like NPA and TEAM.

I found the conference very educational, but very frustrating because of the bureaucratic establishment in which our social services operate. We all realize the problems, but where to start to rectify them is the hard part.

Elsie Ostermeier.

dear mr. levi...

Reprinted from F.A.P.G.
B.C. Newsletter.

Dear Mr. Levi:

It looks as though the Department of Human Resources is reverting to the same system as prevailed under Wesley Black and Dan Campbell when it was designated as "Welfare", also under Phil Gagliardi when it was known as "Rehabilitation and Social Improvement."

Unless the Department of Human Resources is willing to give a substantial increase to Social Assistance recipients, and not candy cover the pill by changing the name thereof, we feel the Incentive Program must be implemented to its fullest capacity without the strings attached.

Question: What happened to the therapeutic value theory that had been loudly proclaimed in 1972 by all the citizens groups using Incentive Workers? You, Mr. Levi, already have our feelings on the 6 months curtailment which was argued by the groups and incorporated in our answer to your GREEN PAPER. We cannot stress too strongly how the constant threat of being cut off the Incentive Program interferes with any therapeutic value it may have had.

In our opinion, the full time gainful employment of even one out of ten Incentive Workers would be suffic-

ient justification for the implementation of this program.

We trust that we may hear from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,
(signed)
Susan Talbot,
Director.

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At the May 24th meeting of the Federated Anti-Poverty Groups of Vancouver (F.A.P.G.), Val Shackleton, Job Coordinator of MPA was elected Chairperson. Val is one of two voting delegates which MPA is allowed to send to F.A.P.G. meetings. Other members include tenants and consumer groups and welfare rights organizations.

At the present time, F.A.P.G.'s main concerns are acting to aid communication between member groups, and to give support to member groups. Housing remains a priority issue with F.A.P.G. and the Federation supports construction of more low income housing.

The Federation is closely examining Social Assistance regulations and making recommendations concerning these regulations to the government. The Federation held a workshop on these regulations June 18th at Abbotsford. An MPA representative attended the meeting.

## HUMAN RIGHTS



## PSYCHIATRIC OPPRESSION

coming in next month's Nutshell

# Freddy

It's been ten years since Freddy died and yet I often mourn his passing. Freddy was a fly, an ordinary house fly by outward appearances but certainly something special by any standards. I first noticed Freddy one hot summer day. I was eating a lunch of boiled ham and potatoes, when a fly alighted on the edge of my plate. I was about to shoo him away but stopped when I noticed that he was sitting on his haunches in a begging position just like a dog would do. I was fascinated and kept perfectly still. The fly then ran across the plate to the food, turned around and raced back to the edge of the plate and resumed his begging position.

Was I seeing things? Could this be real? These thoughts raced through my mind. But when the fly repeated the performance of running to the food and back to the begging position, I knew that he was very unusual. High moral standards are rare in human beings let alone house flies. I pushed some food over to him and enjoyed watching him eat. He was obviously very hungry. He gulped the food down at first, then settled into a pattern of nibbling, wiping his mouth with his front legs, then nibbling again. After he had his fill, he blew me a kiss, rolled over on his back and promptly went to sleep.

I carefully removed him without waking him up and placed him on my dresser table in my bedroom. It was then that I decided to call him Freddy because he reminded me of Freddy the Free-loader. He and I became good friends and constant companions. I kept him in a little box in my vest pocket when I went out and made sure he had a place of honour on my plate whenever I had a meal. He was completely housebroken and would use the bathroom only. He had a great desire to listen to classical music and would sit for hours listening to it. His favourite tune was The Flight of the Bumblebee. He would entertain me by making loop the loops, barrel rolls, and other difficult manoeuvres, then land on my nose to take a bow.

Freddy and I went through a beautiful experience of mutual friendship and understanding for about three months. As I recall things deteriorated the day I brought home a bottle of rum to feed to the neighbour's cat that looked as though it needed a drink. I spilled some on the kitchen sink as I was pouring it into the

cat's dish. Freddy slurped up some of it and became intoxicated. He became very violent and beat up a beetle that was wandering innocently across the floor. He suffered from a hangover for over two days then came back to his lovable self again. Things were rosy for a while until I had to leave town for a few days. I left Freddy at home as a watch dog. I returned to the house late at night and planned to sleep on the chesterfield so as not to disturb Freddy who I thought was fast asleep in the bedroom.

I was dozing off when I realized that there was a loud buzzing noise coming from the kitchen. I got up to investigate and upon entering the kitchen came upon a scene so disgusting and morally corrupt that I hesitate to put it down on paper. Evidently Freddy had invited some friends over, not one or two, oh no, he had invited every damned fly in the neighbourhood. There must have been at least five hundred of them. Somehow they had managed to knock over and break a full bottle of rum onto the kitchen floor. They were all in a drunken stupor, some flying in circles, others crashing into the walls, and a whole group of them playing soccer with a grain of salt. In a case like that you don't call the police, so I got out a can of fly spray and waved it around in a threatening manner. That did it. They all took off in a swarm out the kitchen window, leaving poor Freddy to take the brunt of my wrath.

First of all I got down and licked up the rum off the kitchen floor so Freddy couldn't drink any more; then locked him in the closet to sober up. When he sobered up he was very repentant, but I knew in my heart that I had a hopeless alcoholic on my hands. I tried to keep him sober. Oh my God I tried, but to no avail. The neighbours complained that he was showing up at their cocktail parties slurping away and leaving fly specks on their best china.

I tried to humour him by fitting tiny plastic water skis on his feet and pulling him back and forth across the bathtub on the end of a piece of thread. I glued a little plastic saddle onto a cockroach's back so Freddy could go horseback riding. I tried many things to take his mind off drinking. I spent many a sleepless night watching him constantly to make sure he didn't drink. I even bored a hole through

the bathroom wall so I could peek at him when he went to relieve himself. I was afraid he might get into the medicine cabinet and drink my rubbing alcohol.

All this was to no avail because he somehow managed to get a supply. The climax came one night when I had invited three V.I.P.'s for dinner. I locked Freddy in the basement and proceeded to prepare a lavish dinner. I made a punch out of two bottles of 1840 brandy, a bottle of root beer, a slice of orange and a gallon of lemon extract. I had placed the punch bowl on the living room coffee table and was preparing bologna sandwiches when I happened to glance into the living room. There was Freddy. Somehow he had found a way out of the basement and was climbing into the punch bowl. I went completely berserk and grabbing the bologna sausage ran into the room and clouted the little bastard with it.

That was the end of Freddy. I made sure that Freddy had a good funeral. I buried him in a manure pile and it's amazing how many flies were there. Even though he had been a drunk he obviously had made many friends.

Sir Figby Snort.

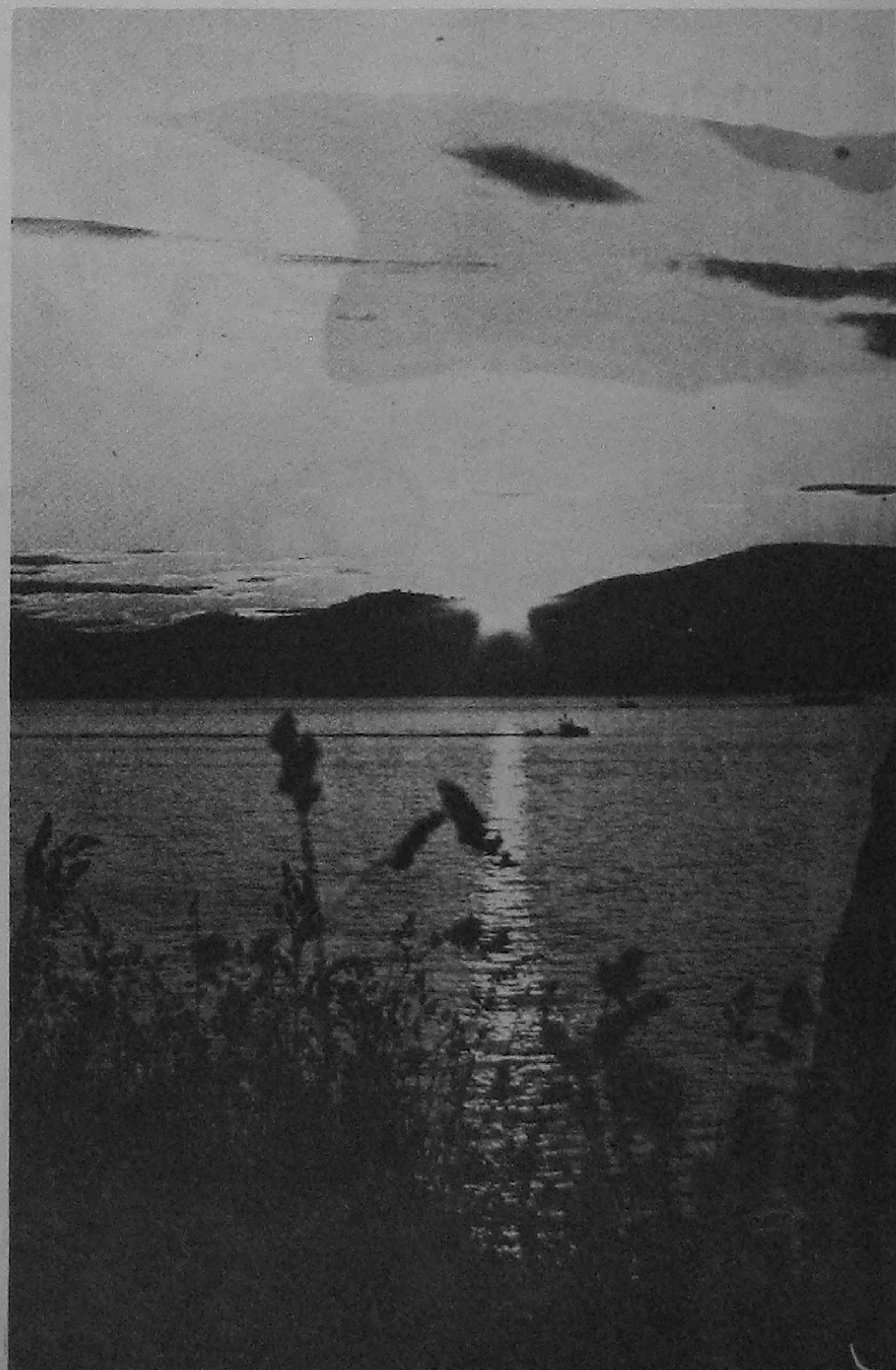
# SPRAY?

A very interesting project has started on the beaches of Vancouver. The idea came from the practice of banding birds so as to follow their movements as they migrate to various countries. This project's aim is to spray as many people as possible for the same purpose. The project workers are supplied with a can of long lasting purple dye spray, and a sock full of wet sand.

In practice the worker sneaks up on a sunbather and sprays him or her as the case may be from head to foot with the spray. Most people don't mind at all, as the dye will wear off in about six month's time. However, should the worker come across a hothead, for his own safety, the worker will clout the culprit behind the ear with the sock full of wet sand. This stuns the person long enough for the worker to finish his important work. There has been some complaints received, but they are a small minority and who wants to listen to purple people.

The public is urged to support this project and as it is being carried out by volunteers at some cost federal funding is a must.

Sir Figby Snort



# RIVERVIEW needs VISITORS

In successive meetings the membership of MPA has voiced an interest in making information about MPA and other community resources available to as many patients as possible.

Our regular trip to Riverview every Thursday afternoon gives members an opportunity to meet people, find out their needs, and acquaint them with MPA's drop-in centre and housing resources.

Longtime visitors like Jim James have given their time to this purpose month after month. If more members would take part in the Riverview trip we could visit more people on our long list of member inpatients, and get to know new people and potential members.

Despite the fact that certain government officials seem dedicated to closing Riverview and treating everyone in the community, we've seen and heard of a lot of improvements both in care and facilities lately. In fact we don't hear many complaints these days, except for the perennial favourites - lack of telephones, lack of privacy, and lack of entertainment - especially on long boring weekends.

A few of us visited Riverview Director of Volunteers Sidney Baird recently, to ask if she had any suggestions as to how MPA could help push for improvements

on the wards.

Sidney told us that a new questionnaire designed to sound out patients' feelings about their care and environment is presently in the works. Patient input has been invited in the preparation of the questionnaire. Feedback from patients will influence what the format should be, and at what point during hospitalization a patient should be asked to fill out a questionnaire.

When the information is gathered, those internal issues prompting the greatest number of complaints will be acted upon. However suggestions involving large expenditures probably won't be considered, in light of the freeze on government spending.

The uncertainty of Riverview's future is hard on the staff, particularly those involved in planning long-range programs. Even so, the newly appointed Recreation Therapy director, Ms. Fun, is pulling together a comprehensive R.T. program for the hospital. Bruce Baird, presently attached to the R.T. Department, has been advertising in Vancouver newspapers for dance music or theatre groups to volunteer to entertain patients at Wednesday evening concerts. He's also interested in hearing from individual performers as well, to entertain smaller groups

on the wards.

A few members of MPA's theatre workshop have been playing with the idea of putting together a series of skits which could be performed at Riverview maybe by the autumn.

We asked Sidney why there were so few volunteers working at the Crease Unit, (3 out of more than 200). And why volunteers weren't available in the evening and weekends when their presence would be most welcome.

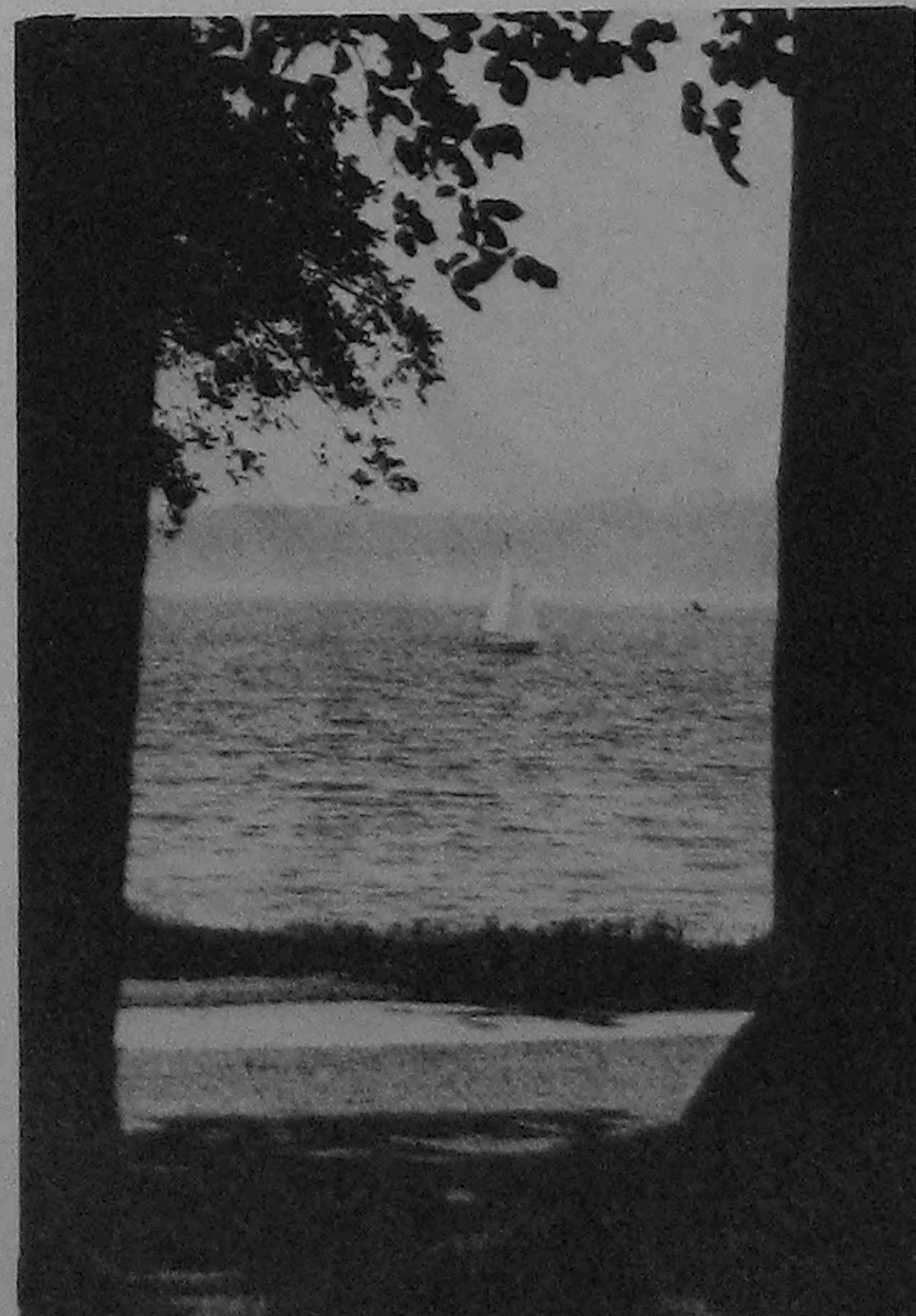
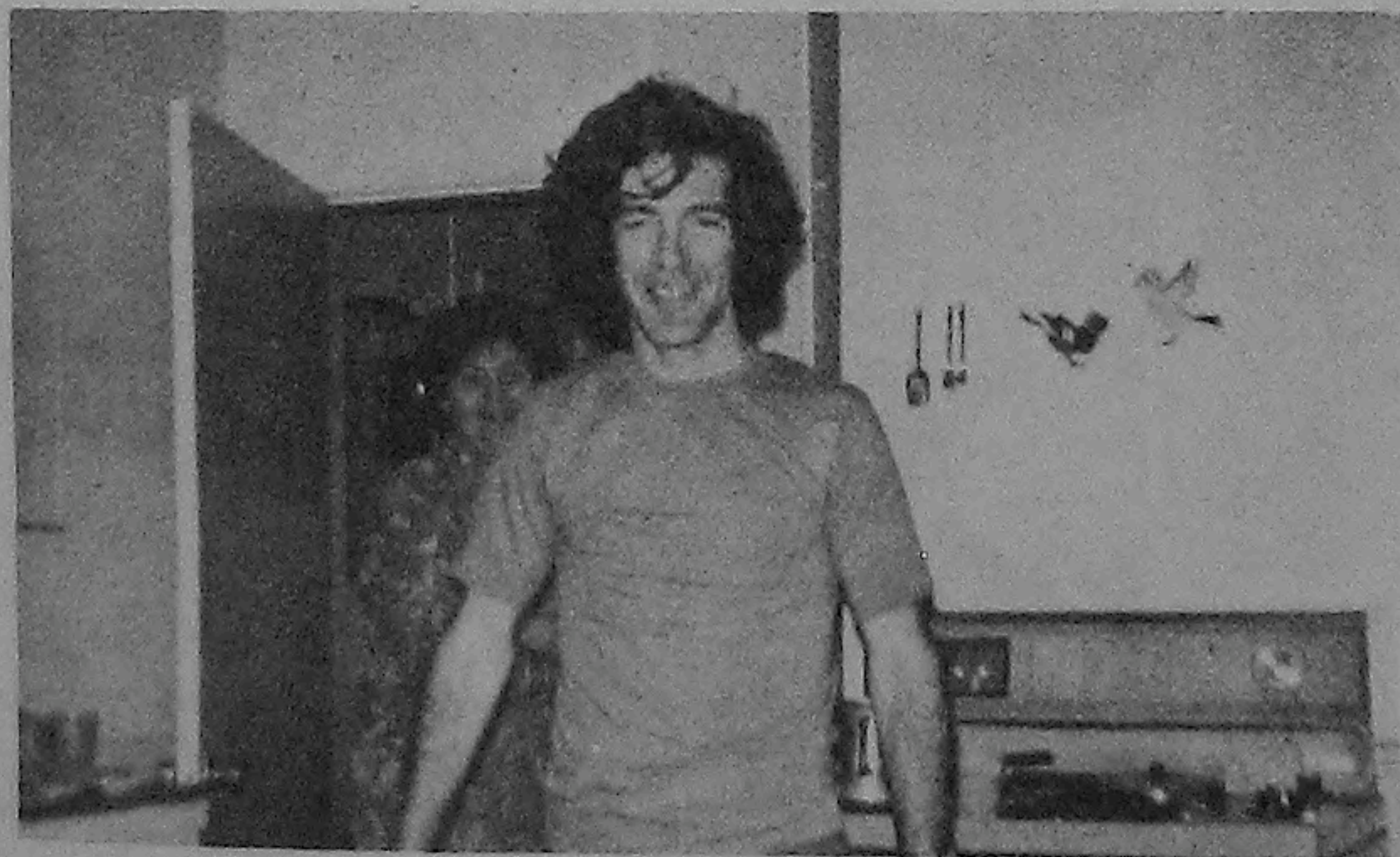
Sidney is a staff of one, however, and cannot supply necessary back-up support for volunteers unless she works evenings and weekends in addition to full days. The hospital cannot afford additional staff in the Volunteer Department; and even if they could, volunteers who are willing to go out in the evening are hard to find.

Because of the shorter stay of Crease patients, volunteers are concentrated in the longer-stay buildings where the staff feels the need is greater. All the more reason why MPA members should devote time and energy to visiting Crease patients whenever they can.

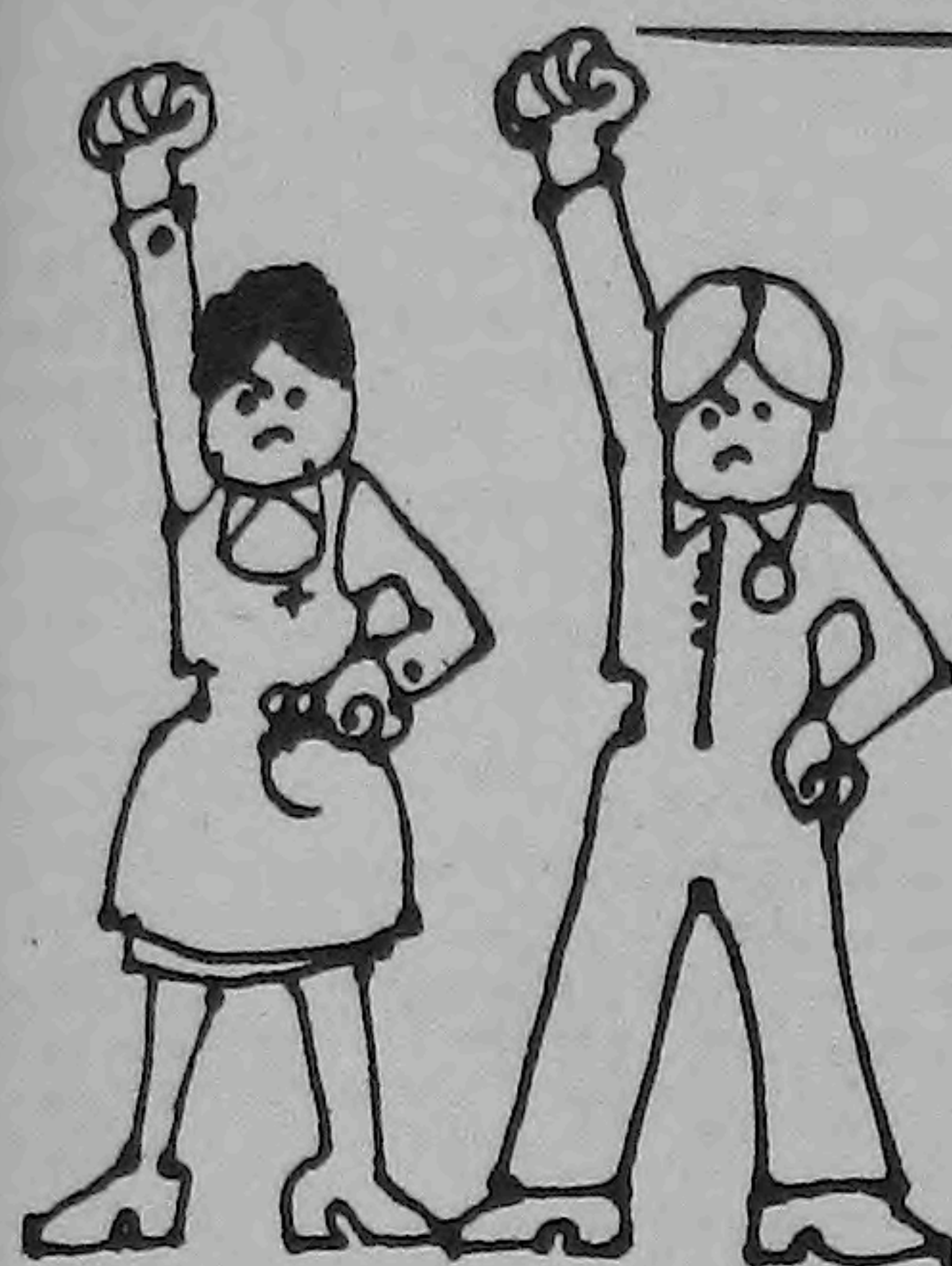
We also asked several staff members how they felt about paying working inpatients minimum wage for work they do in the hospital. Feelings on this subject are mixed. Planning a suitable

work program to help motivate a Crease patient (who might work for no more than a few weeks) is sometimes too costly to involve payment to the patient. One staff member did agree that people who were putting in 5 or more hours a day over a period of months, should receive recompense. However, if the patient were receiving an adequate salary for his labour he could conceivably be charged room and board, since total patient care per capita is approximately \$32 per day in 1975. A compromise on wages looks like the most likely solution, when and if this matter comes under serious consideration. It's something MPA should push for, after we have gathered reliable information as to what numbers are involved, how many hours are worked, whether or not the labour is of a make-work variety, and for how long a period patients usually work at the job.

We feel, understandably, that patients should be paid a fair wage for work performed. But we don't want to threaten the existence of short-term therapeutic work routines set up for individual patients. If such routines were made more costly they'd most likely be discontinued as not financially feasible, to the detriment of the patients concerned.



# THERE IS NO DEMOCRACY WITHOUT COMMUNITY CONTROL:



## THE RESOURCE BOARDS,

## REPRESENTATIVE

## DEMOCRACY

## AND MPA



by Barry Coul1

Norman Levi, the B.C. Minister of Human Resources, wanted to coordinate the mess called a social service system and make it more efficient. He wanted to improve the quality of social services, get them closer to those who needed them and involve ordinary people in the planning, development and administration of these services. People were to become involved in a democratic way. They would be elected as representatives of their neighbourhoods.

So, on January 31, 1974, the first Community Resource Board (C.R.B.) was elected in Vancouver South. For the first time in B.C., lay people were directly involved in running a social service system. However, an examination of the 8 C.R.B.s elected since January reveals certain problems in the system of representative democracy.

Allegedly, representative democracy offers all citizens the opportunity - through their elected representatives - to control their institutions and systems for their own best ends. These institutions and systems are supposed to be controlled in ways which ensure equal opportunity for everyone.

If this is so, then equal opportunity should exist within the electoral system itself and an examination of C.R.B.s should reveal relatively equal representation from the two major classes, the middle class (bourgeoisie) and the working class, in the 8 areas which have elected boards.

When the first 4 C.R.B.s were elected, bourgeois representation was dominant. In Dunbar-West Point Grey, a

middle and upper middle class area, the entire board was bourgeois. Vancouver South, a mixed but predominantly working class area, elected a bank manager, a secondary school administrator and a couple of executives to sit on a completely middle class board. A radical social worker, the only board member with a working class (proletarian) consciousness, soon resigned. Kitsilano, a mixed area with a considerable working class and an individual income lower than the Vancouver average, elected a predominantly bourgeois board. Only the working class area of Hastings - Sunrise chose a proletarian board.

At least 3 of the 4 C.R.B.s elected in June, '75 have far greater worker and client representation than the previous boards. This may be attributed to the following factors.

1. Small bourgeois population in 3 of these areas.
2. Low levels of political participation in all 4 areas.
3. Low voter turnout.
4. Good grass roots election organizing on the part of poor peoples' organizations such as the Downtown Eastside Residents Association and Vancouver Opportunities Program sub groups.

Only 4 C.R.B.s have significant working class representation. However, 6 C.R.B.s have sizeable worker populations. In at least 2 areas, Kitsilano and Vancouver South, worker representation does not correspond to worker population. The way in which proletarian electoral victory has been won is through solid organizing in essentially deprived areas where 8% or fewer of the voters cast a vote.

It seems evident that representative democracy is a particularly middle class system. Since its function is to control systems through elected representatives, those representatives must have planning, organizational and managerial skills in order to perform their elected tasks. You don't acquire those skills on a vocational program or on a green chain in a saw mill. Only the middle class has easy access to the knowledge, experience and social or manipulative expertise which prepares a person for political work. No worker can succeed in representative democracy's election game without these skills. It is only through organizing, campaigning, teaching and combining skills that workers can win any victories in a system which is geared against them.

Unlike representative democracy, MPA's system of participatory democracy doesn't discriminate against a disadvantaged class. Both of the 2 recognized "classes" at MPA, ex-patients and non-patients, are guaranteed representation on our elected work force. No more than 50% of our coordinators may be non-patients.

Although managerial and organizational skills are demanded in certain jobs at MPA, relatively unskilled people are often elected to these positions and encouraged to learn.

No united fronts or organized election campaigns have ever been necessary at MPA, not only because of our small constituency, but also because those least likely to win are encouraged to work voluntarily within

their capacity, to attempt to upgrade their skills and knowledge and to run again. Candidates have been elected on the grounds of their desire to learn, their loyalty and perseverance.

Unlike the Community Resource Boards, which allow for community participation but provide no decision-making power to the community after the election, MPA insists that its electorate be involved in all major decisions. Coordinators are restricted in the amount of power they can exercise and members are urged to become or to remain centrally involved.

If coordinators do not function democratically in accordance with MPA principles, if they exercise power without consulting the membership, they will be warned and possibly fired. On the other hand, certain elected Community Resource Board members have wielded power unjustly, have sat in isolated judgment over their neighbourhoods and have alienated many of their electors who have no power to do anything until the next election in 1977.

When the C.R.B. system of Representative Democracy discriminates against the working class, it's time to demand guaranteed representation for workers and for clients. When the system is used by an elected board to manipulate and exploit the community, it's time to demand removal of that board. When Representative Democracy denies the people any decision-making power, it's time to put an end to such a false form of democracy. When there is no community control over the community's representatives, there is no democracy.

**EMERGENCY**  
Fire and inhalator 34-1234  
Police/Police ambulance 665-2211  
Ambulance 872-5151

**HOSPITALS**  
Vancouver General 876-3211  
St. Pauls 682-2344  
Health Sciences UBC 228-3731  
Riverview 521-1911  
Lions Gate 988-3131  
Burnaby Mental Health Centre 434-4247

**CRISIS LINES**  
Crisis Centre 733-4111  
Now (Youth Line) 733-4115  
Vancouver Emotional Emergency Centre 872-7914  
Chimo (Richmond) 273-8701  
Lifeline (Coquitlam) 526-4444  
MPA 738-5177

**FREE MEDICAL**  
Pine St. Clinic 1985 W. 4th 736-2391  
V.D. Clinic (VGH) 828 W. 10th 874-2331  
Reach 1144 Commercial 254-1354  
Vanc'r Womens Health Collective  
1520 W. 6th 736-6696  
Downtown Community Health Society  
373 E. Cordova 685-2744

**DENTAL CLINICS and EMERGENCY**  
Vancouver General Hospital  
Emergency dental 6:30 - midnight  
(charge) 874-9848  
Reach 1144 Commercial  
Mon. & Thurs. 7-9 p.m. (\$2) 254-1354  
Youth Clinic 1530 W. 8th  
Tues. Thurs. 6:30-9:30 p.m.  
(no charge)  
Gordon House 1068 Davie  
Tues. 7-9 p.m.  
(no charge) 683-2554

**PLACES TO EAT, CHEAP, GOOD FOOD**  
nr. MPA

Gladys Snack Bar 4th nr. Yew St.  
Minnie-Vern W. 10th nr. Yew  
(open 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.)  
Rice Bowl, Chinese food  
Broadway & Main

**OTHER HELPFUL SERVICES**

City Centre Youth Resources  
52 Water 688-2565  
VEEC 220 W. 6th 872-7914  
Kits Information Centre  
2741 W. 4th 736-3431  
The House (soft drug bummers)  
2nd. flr. 820 W. Broadway 732-3301

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MPA Drop-In Centre 2146 Yew St. 738-5177  
738-1422

**MPA Residences:**  
1064 E. 20th Ave. 874-9422  
1754 W. 11th Ave. 732-8222  
1656 E. 4th Ave. 253-6996  
2805 W. 7th Ave. 733-5733  
2756 W. 10th Ave. (Womens) 738-7421

**LEGAL HELP**

Legal Aid Society 687-1831  
Legal Assistance Society 872-0271

**DROP IN CENTRES**

Coast Foundation 876 E. 18th 879-2363  
MPA 2146 Yew St. 738-5177  
Vancouver Activity Centre (CMHA)  
719 E. 30th 876-9511

**CHEAP PLACES TO STAY**

Jericho Youth Hostel (\$10 member-  
ship/ \$2 per night/ 4 night stay)  
ft. Discovery and N.W. Marine 224-3208  
YWCA 580 Burrard \$7.50 683-2531  
YMCA 955 Burrard \$7 681-0221

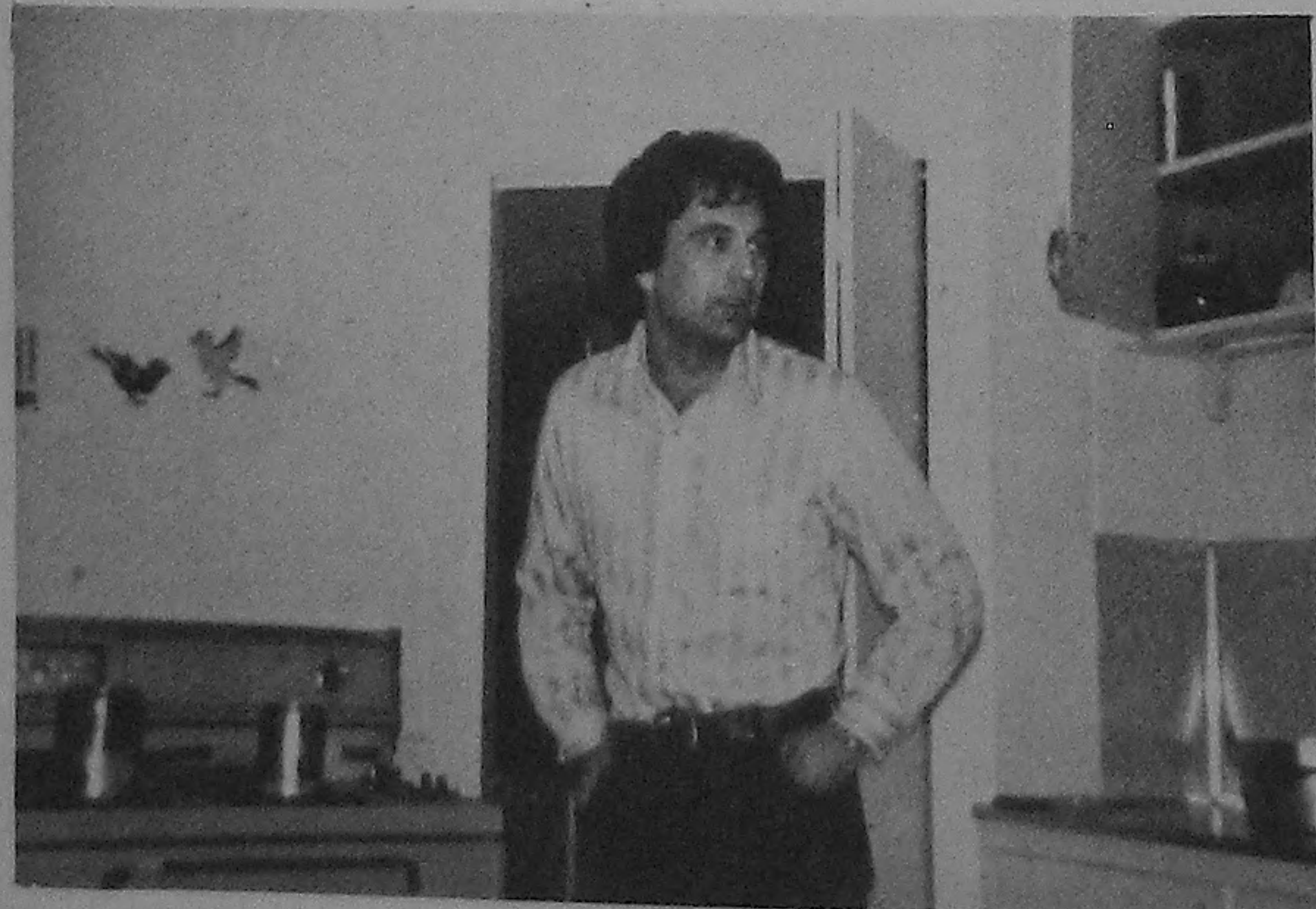
**HOSTEL BEDS (FREE)**

Catholic Charities 150 Robson 683-0281  
Lookout 412 E. Hastings 253-6418  
Central City Mission 233 Abbott 681-3348  
VRB Night Line (when hostels full) 733-8111  
Crisis Centre 1946 W. Broadway  
(in a crisis only) 733-4111  
St. Francis Hotel (women) Cordova  
and Seymour. Days: 681-1920  
Nights: 733-8111  
Catherine Booth Home (women)  
1190 Wolfe 731-7320  
City Centre Youth Resources  
52 Water 688-2565  
Tribal Village (teenagers)  
199 W. 6th 874-9009

**PLACES TO EAT FREE**

Harbour Lights (Salvation Army)  
119 E. Cordova 11:30 a.m./8p.m.  
Downtown Community Health Society  
373 E. Cordova/ soup at noon  
MPA 2146 Yew St. Wed. dinner  
Sat. breakfast  
Kits House 7th & Vine  
Wed. dinner

## INFORMATION



## Dave raps about MPA

away. I don't think that's really true of many people. I think during those long periods of time that you go through where nothing seems to be happening that in fact, often you are dealing with things, you are trying to work things out in your mind, that somehow or other, in the end, you can often accomplish something with yourself.

Not always. I have a strong feeling that maybe some people just don't want enough to change or make any changes. Some people just aren't able, for whatever reason. They feel so badly about themselves or don't have the strength, that they just don't make it, period. Some die.

Just because I've been able to do a few things lately, I'm not trying to tell anyone to "Go and do thou likewise", but I certainly wish anyone the best in efforts to reestablish themselves or give a new direction to their life or whatever euphemism I might use for a tough struggle.

During the time I was going to school I found I had a lot of support from people at MPA. Enquiring as to how I was doing and saying, hey, that's great and some people saying, well, jeez, I didn't think you'd actually do it but you've gone ahead and done it. That helped too.

I guess the reason this has become a testimonial is

that once I finished the course and came back and started working here, I became sensitive to the complaints of people around MPA. Because I feel that oftentimes the criticism is not just and that sometimes our favourite preoccupation is taking a slam at the faults in the Mental Patients Association when in fact once in a while we could give ourselves a pat on the back. When we slam the place we slam ourselves. We are responsible.

MPA is a big part of my life. I'd like to make it a smaller part in the future and have a lot more involvement other places. I think that'll start in September

when I begin working in nursery school but it will be impossible for me to lose touch with the place. I have too many friends here and it's an awfully handy place to go sometimes when there's just nothing else to do.

As I finish this transcription it is 2:30 a.m. here in the Drop-In. Fred Fisher just told me to "put a little loving kindness in" so I will.

Jackie Mason, the comic, has a beautiful line: "I'd like to wish myself the best of luck". You too.

Dave Beamish.

Come to the MPA drop-in centre for the day where you are welcome to sit around and talk to ex-patients, play pool, take part in any activities, drink coffee, use the phone, etc.

MPA co-ordinators will be glad to talk to you about housing in Vancouver, your legal problems, where to find inexpensive restaurants at reasonable prices, places to go for entertainment or dancing, hostels where you can spend the night if you have a weekend pass, and bus tours of the city.

### HOW DO YOU GET HERE?

Catch the 933 Lougheed Pt. Coquitlam bus at the Tuck Shop. Get off at Hastings and Granville Sts. in downtown Vancouver. Transfer to a 10 UBC or a 7 Dunbar bus and get off at Broadway and Yew Sts. Then walk down Yew to 6th Ave.

To return to Riverview: catch a No. 14 Hastings bus at Broadway and Arbutus. Get off at Hastings & Granville. Transfer to the 933 Lougheed - Cedar bus which runs every half hour directly to Riverview.

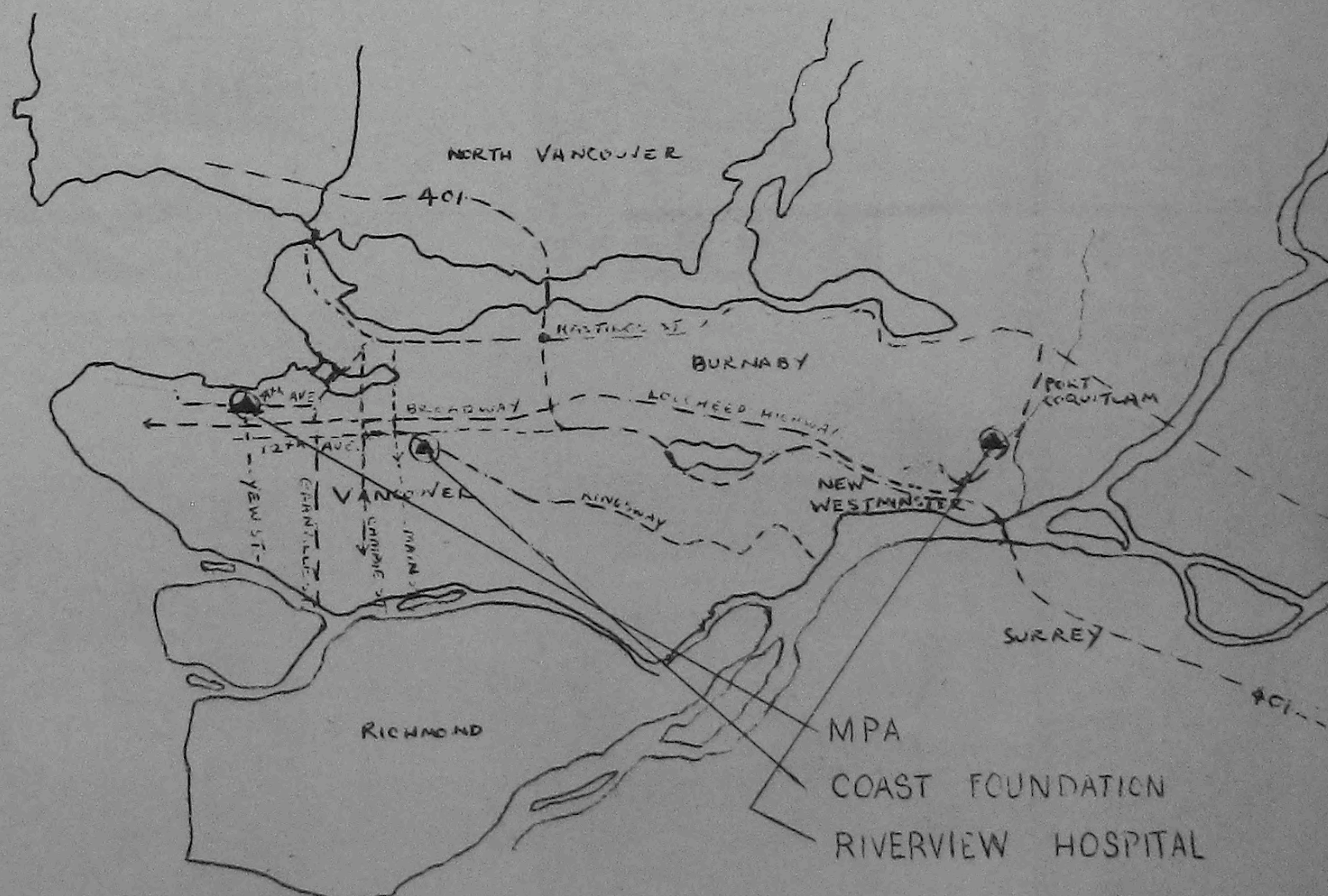
### WHERE ELSE TO GO?

If you'd like to go to the Coast Foundation Drop-in Centre, 876 E. 18th Ave., travel to town the same way but get off the 933 Lougheed bus at Main and Hastings. Walk up to Pender & Main and transfer to 19 Kingsway. Get off at 18th and Kingsway.

### HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Buy a 50¢ bus pass on Sunday and you can travel on it all day. At other times fare is 25¢ from 10-3 every day and after 7 every night. It's 40¢ other times.

got a day pass?  
NOWHERE TO GO?  
come to mpa





Mike relaxing