

IN A NUTSHELL

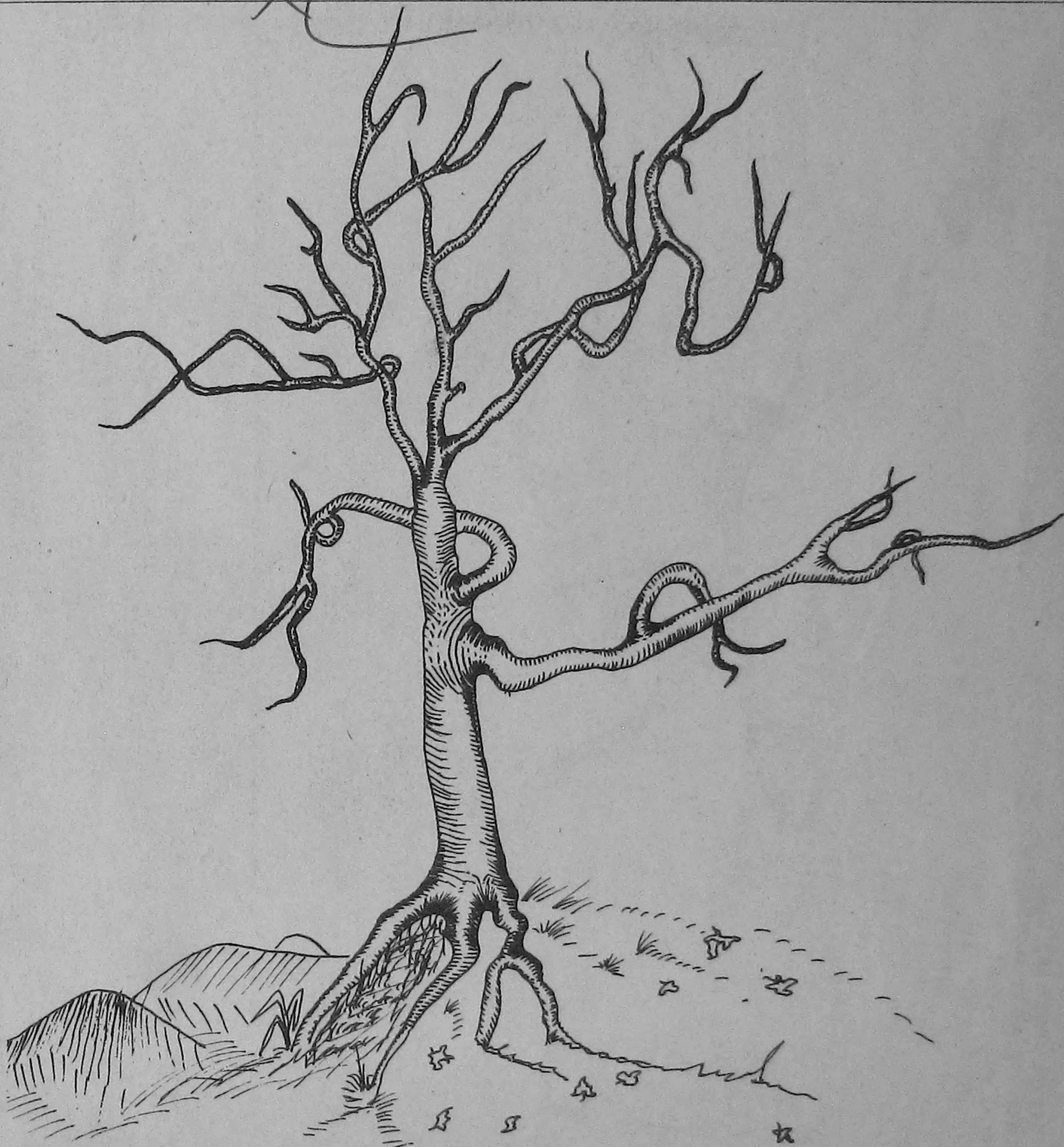
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MENTAL PATIENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

JULY 1976



Mental Patients Association Newsletter
2146 Yew St., Vancouver, B.C. 738-5177

CITIZEN ADVOCACY AND MPA

The report of a Task Committee of the Section of Psychiatry, B.C. Medical Association, February, 1973, pointed out the need for a spectrum of resources for the mentally ill. One of this spectrum was the need for Citizen Advocacy Services to be "available to (these) individuals to look after individual's rights, etc."

Three years later the need still exists and we're as far from citizen advocacy for mental patients as we ever were, barring the patient advocates who represent a small number of involuntary patients at 30 day Review Panels.

The provincial government has promised to bring in legislation establishing the office of Ombudsman to investigate the rights of individuals in their dealings with bureaucracy. Similarly a person or agency should be available to investigate the rights and privileges of those incarcerated through no fault of their own in mental hospitals and by reason of their incarceration unable to deal with bureaucracy or anything else.

Over the past 2 years MPA members have been comparing our antiquated Mental Health Act and Patients Estate Act to less punitive legislation in other parts of North America. The Arizona Act and

the Michigan Act devote many pages to specifying the rights of mental patients: to receive and send correspondence freely, to have access to legal counsel, access to their own physician, access to visitors at all reasonable times, the right to toilet facilities every hour when in solitary confinement and so on. None of these rights is spelled out in B.C. mental health legislation. Standard practice permits many privileges to which people confined in B.C. mental hospitals can make a just claim, but standard practice does not guarantee these privileges. All the more reason why an "ombudsperson" or citizen advocate should have access to all wards, particularly locked wards, and solitary seclusion rooms (if their existence is justified at all) so that people confined therein have the opportunity to confide in - and complain if need be - to someone not locked into the institutional system.

The general public assumes that every member of the population shares the same freedoms, except those imprisoned for breaking the law, thereby losing many or all of their rights. This is not so in mental hospitals. Notwithstanding the generally humane treatment most patients receive, doctors,

and nurses hold awesome power over a hospitalized person's life, especially if that person has been declared legally and personally incapable of managing his own affairs.

MPA has heard of a Legal Aid lawyer who could not contact his client by phone; and of the deprivation of a voluntary patient who was refused visits from his family and friends for six weeks. Since no reason was given, and no "patient advocate" or "ombudsperson" available to seek out a reasonable explanation, the family and friends suffered a great deal of anguish as a result.

A March 24th account in the Vancouver Sun detailed an incident in which a hospital patient, Alec Tysko was struck by a nurse. A Legal Aid lawyer was refused access to Tysko because he had not requested the lawyer's visit. An MPA member who tried to visit Tysko was told he was out "on grounds".

These incidents are not set down provocatively to insinuate that mistreatment or "cover-ups" are rife in the mental hospital system. They are spelled out to show the urgent need for an ombudsperson, citizen advocate Legal Aid lawyer, or some other person employed independently of government or the hospital who is available

able to all patients within the system and to Significant Others outside the system who want reasonable answers to their questions.

In the face of the lack of a charter of mental patients' rights (advocated by a previous Attorney General's Department but never acted upon) some form of citizen advocacy or an ombudsperson would provide at least a temporary solution to the long-standing problem.

MPA had hoped to fill a local advocacy role, particularly with the establishment of our office/drop-in centre at Riverview Hospital but MPA visitors have found that they are not free to visit wards unless either staff or patients have requested the visit earlier.

MPA member Patty Servant recently returned from a CMHA conference in Oshawa during which the ombudsman of an Ontario mental hospital reported to the gathering. She describes elsewhere how patients "do feel he really is an advocate and not just another staff member".

We can only hope that the recommendation of a Task Force of B.C. psychiatrists for advocacy services to ensure the rights of the individual will be acted upon without further delay.

Jackie.

MPA

CONSTITUTION

AT LAST, the M.P.A. constitution and by-laws have been officially amended to conform to the practise of a society which is based on power reversal and self-help.

At a memorable Extraordinary General Meeting called on April 21st, 1976, the membership voted the Board of Directors out of existence and legally became the governing body of M.P.A.

M.P.A. may be the only non-profit society whose members have complete control of all society business, based on the concept of one voice-one vote.

Borrowed from the Canadian Psychiatric Association Jl. March 1976.

"...further investigation of ECT is necessary. Indeed it may be queried how ethical it is to use a therapy on any but an experimental basis when so many questions about it still remain unanswered."

C.G. Costello, Prof. Dept. of Psychology. University of Calgary

"We shall have to learn to refrain from doing things merely because we know how to do them".

Sir Theodore Fox

IN

MEMORIAM

We offer our sympathy and condolences to the families and friends of two people whose faces we miss around the Drop-In Centre, Lynne Rothery and Bruce McLean. Prescribed drugs were always too easy for them to obtain. We tried very hard to help them, and to convince them that life was worthwhile and that the pain they felt would eventually pass. We cared a lot. They didn't care enough. Now it's too late, and all we can do is regret their leaving us.



FUNDING PROBLEMS

To all friends of MPA:
THANK YOU for taking the time to write to the provincial government regarding MPA's funding problems.

Thanks to the support of Burrard M.L.A.'s Rosemary Brown and Norm Levi, and to Dr. Scott Wallace, who spoke in the House on our behalf, and to our many friends, we have been assured of partial funding for operating expenses and necessary renovations till April 1, 1977.

This funding has been supplied by the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Resources Board, a Dept. of Human Resources Activity Centre grant, and a Vancouver Foundation grant. In addition we have been able to hire four young people to staff our Riverview office for the summer months through a Dept. of Labour Project grant.

We're still pursuing federal funding on a permanent basis so that we can run our self-help program independent of restrictive regulations. We're also keeping track of the proposed federal Social Service Act and Regulations, which, when finalized, will probably have much broader application than the present Canada Assistance Plan and will hopefully permit our complete drop-in centre/residence program to be funded outright on a federal-provincial cost-shareable basis.

In the meantime we face a cut-back of 4 drop-in centre and office staff and certain activities but will try to attract enough volunteers so that our diminished staff can cope with the same amount of work as usual.

Although our 5 residences are almost self-supporting we have not been able to secure outright funding for 10 residence coordinators' salaries. We have learned through 5 years of experience that halfway housing for emotionally uneasy people will not work without resource staff who not only handle crises but also mediate "family" differences, which is why we must employ 2 resource people for each house.

The residents of our houses originally unanimously rejected Personal Care Home funding through the Dept. of Human Resources because this type of funding appeared to place severe restrictions on length of stay in the homes, took away work incentive, reduced independence, and took away money management from the residents.

However, rather than close down the houses, the residents have now voted to accept per diem funding until the day when we can obtain money for salaries with no strings attached.

You have probably heard from the Hon. Bill Vander Zalm that "representatives of M.P.A." did not find his department's approach to our funding satisfactory. We would like to point out that the residents of the houses themselves made the decision to reject per diem funding because it smacked of institution-like boarding home care complete with a \$25 comforts allowance just like in hospital. Because no alternate funding was available, the residents were forced to reconsider. As a result several working people plan to leave the houses

because they feel that they should not have to bear the high monthly costs of the program after an initial 6 month period. We need them, for the example they provide to non-working residents hesitant to take the big step out into employment; however we sympathize with their position: they cannot be expected to pay 4 times the amount they paid for room and board under L.E.A.P. funding. Residence coordinators are concerned, though, that the separation of these people from the emotional support of their MPA homes may be so stressful as to cost them their jobs.

What will this type of funding mean to the residents who remain? It will force MPA to adopt a number of the policies of psychiatric boarding homes. Problems cannot be pinpointed this early in the new program, but perhaps Mo Murphy can best explain the difference between MPA houses and psych boarding homes since she has lived in both. Her story illustrates why we must continue to work hard to obtain outright funding, which has suited the philosophy of our residence program so well for the past 5 years.

I dislike the housing in a boarding home compared to an MPA home. It is too undemocratic in a boarding home. You have no say in what happens in a boarding home. But in an MPA home the residents run the house. I feel that you are placed in a boarding home, and that's that. But in an MPA residence you are voted in by residents of the house whether you stay or not. I like the MPA system.

You have restricted entertainment in a boarding home. It is simply that they want to supervise your outings. You must be in by 11 p.m. no yesses, no's, or maybes. You just be there. But in MPA you are put in a situation that you must socialize. It is this that I think is good. And there is no curfew.

I dislike the food system in a boarding home. You are herded like cattle for meals. Meals are always the same time every day. It gets very boring. If you don't sign the sheet for being out for meals you simply don't get any. In MPA you are not restricted for meals at all. You don't sign a blasted sheet for meals. You eat when you want to eat, and that's that.

The supervisor must know when visitors are coming. Visitors can stay for only a short time because the supervisor wants you to talk to other clients in the boarding home. But in an MPA residence you can have visitors whenever you want as long as they don't bother other people in the house. There is no time span. I feel this is a good system because it's like a real home.

In an MPA home you have complete control of your money. You even get a chance to open a bank account. But in a boarding home someone dishes out some of your \$25 comfort allowance money every day, and I think this is terrible.

Mo Murphy.

LETTERS

Dear friends at M.P.A.:

I am enjoying your paper and have enclosed a cheque for \$5.00 toward your costs. It's a small contribution considering all you do - I loved the article on fund-raising schemes. I hope your funding from the provincial government gets

straightened out and I hope you can get the money without being subverted.

Somebody did some fine research on Shock Treatment, (vol. 4, no. 2). I'm glad to see an article that includes a list of references. If I read an article that says research shows permanent memory loss, I like to have the ammunition at hand to quote to colleagues who might question the sources, (Reader's Digest? MAD Magazine?). Articles about personal outrage and frustration with an inhumane system

are important and articles giving research data and background information can also have strong impact. Being able to take an informed stand is very effective.

Also I was impressed by Len Lorimer's "Useful Art". I especially like the sculptural qualities of 003-76. I wonder whether he is interested in marketing plans or finished pieces. (I do hope he looked after patents if that's important to him). I don't have access to tools but maybe someday I could afford to buy one. I bet

there are many people who would be interested.

In Victoria there's a group connected with CMHA who are building "Nomadic" furniture, (their store is called NOMAD). I have a desk and chair made by them - great stuff in this mobile age. If Len has a chance to write, I would like to hear from him about the cost of 003-76 or plans for same or ideas in that direction.

Sincerely,
Kay Leonard.

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ANGER

The following submission is adapted from a real life happening at an esteemed mental institution in British Columbia.

"WE'RE ONLY TRYING TO HELP YOU."

"Gentlemen, I have asked Miss Smith here today for therapeutic purposes. Miss Smith - this is Dr. Donothing, Dr. Alwaysright, Dr. Kissmytoe, Dr. Humane, and I am Dr. Superior. Now, Miss Smith, could you tell us something about yourself?"

"Well, I..."

"Thank you, Miss Smith. Now gentlemen, I would like each of you to tell the group

what kind of a wife you think patient Smith would be. Dr. Donothing?"

"Well, that's quite a question. I won't expound, but I do think the patient shows signs of suppressed paranoia. I get the impression she would question everything I did, I mean she probably doesn't have the trust and openness necessary to make a constructive, wholesome marriage..."

"Thank you, Dr. Donothing. Dr. Alwaysright could I have your opinion please?"

"Of course! Patient Smith has regressed into symptoms of schizophrenia which could become catatonic. I recom-

mend shock treatment. That is my professional diagnosis."

"Thank you for your astute observation, Dr. Alwaysright. Dr. Kissmytoe, may I hear from you?"

"Oh, I agree, I agree, I certainly do agree."

"That will be fine, Dr. Kissmytoe. Dr. Humane?"

"I have no comment."

"I see. Well now, I will give you my impression of you as a possible wife, Patient Smith. I suspect you would criticize everything I did. No doubt if I brought you a dozen long stemmed roses you would complain

that they weren't short-stemmed."

Upon saying this two tears slid out of Dr. Superior's eyes. Then he gathered himself together and turning to Miss Smith he said, "Do you have anything to say?"

"But, I..." Miss Smith stammered.

"Typical symptomatic response," uttered Dr. Superior. "Shock treatment will be scheduled for Wednesday. Thank you gentlemen for giving this case your precious time. Group session dismissed."

Petra Graves.



Some things in life are beautiful.

Evangeline's ice-cream-soaked face.
Flora's mouth and breasts.
My autumn painting
My death stance sliding back after some sleep.
C K L G at 2:30 a.m.
But, most of all,
Eight hours sleep.

Donald Steele. June 1, '76.

A SATIRE ON LENGTHY INTRODUCTIONS:

Among those without whose counsel and inspiration this work would not have materialized was Madame M. Dexall. While this effort may appear revolutionary, the established mores need not be considered under definite attack. Although recently censorship has been somewhat relaxed, it is true that the spirit of the work may incur the wrath and indignation of certain (although it may be of subconscious origin) highly placed individuals who enjoy the final sanction of social authority.

The message or theme of the work is one which I have sincerely tried to construe and develop in my mind. Lastly, I should like to introduce it with special thanks to certain in-depth researchers, (U.B.C., S.F.U. and B.C.I.T.) and certain ethnical theorists and involved pursuers of the ultimate (in other words, the endless efforts of all pursuing the substance reality). Then, without any more ado, my work:

"HI MOM."

(unfin.)

LOVE DAN.

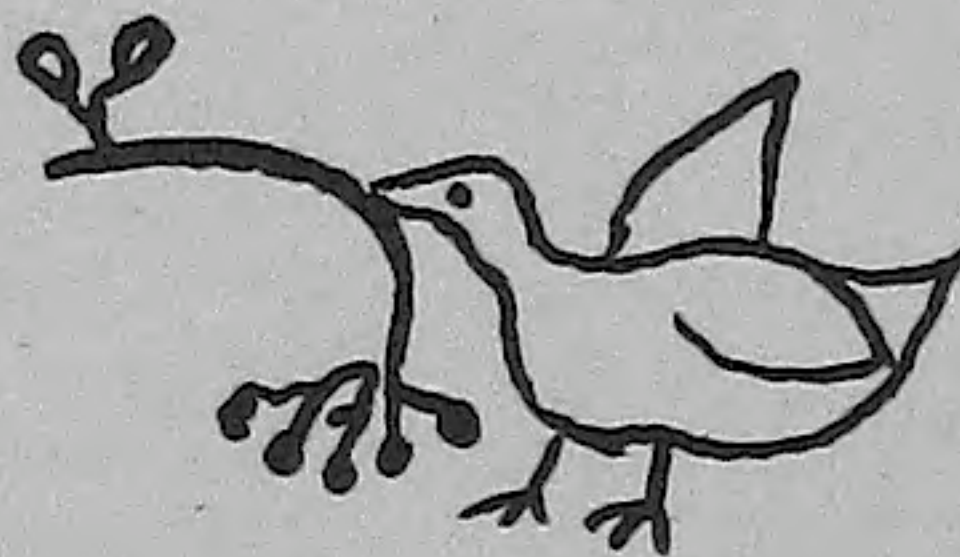
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POETRY

FREEDOM BUZZIN'

Middle of workday
Blues;
you got the red necks
bull-dozin,
and the execs
speedin;
Workin' off the late night's
booze.
Vroom, Screech, Boom,
The air breathes doom,
And progress marches
on.
And the counter-culture's
joining too.
It's a wave of static rage.
Everyone wants so bad
to turn this dirty page.....
of mankind's history.
To depart from ego's race
and embrace nature's harmony.

Skree.



To the Three-Person'd God: a Defiance for M.A.

No. I will not address you.
Go away, stop bothering me, you
Who may not exist.

Human voices call me, hands
reach out. It's enough... it's enough.

I shall walk reasonably under the real sky,
but about me men that as trees might walk,
and Perchance at my heels.

Will Maybe reach down from that sky
and brush me with fire?

Cathy Batten



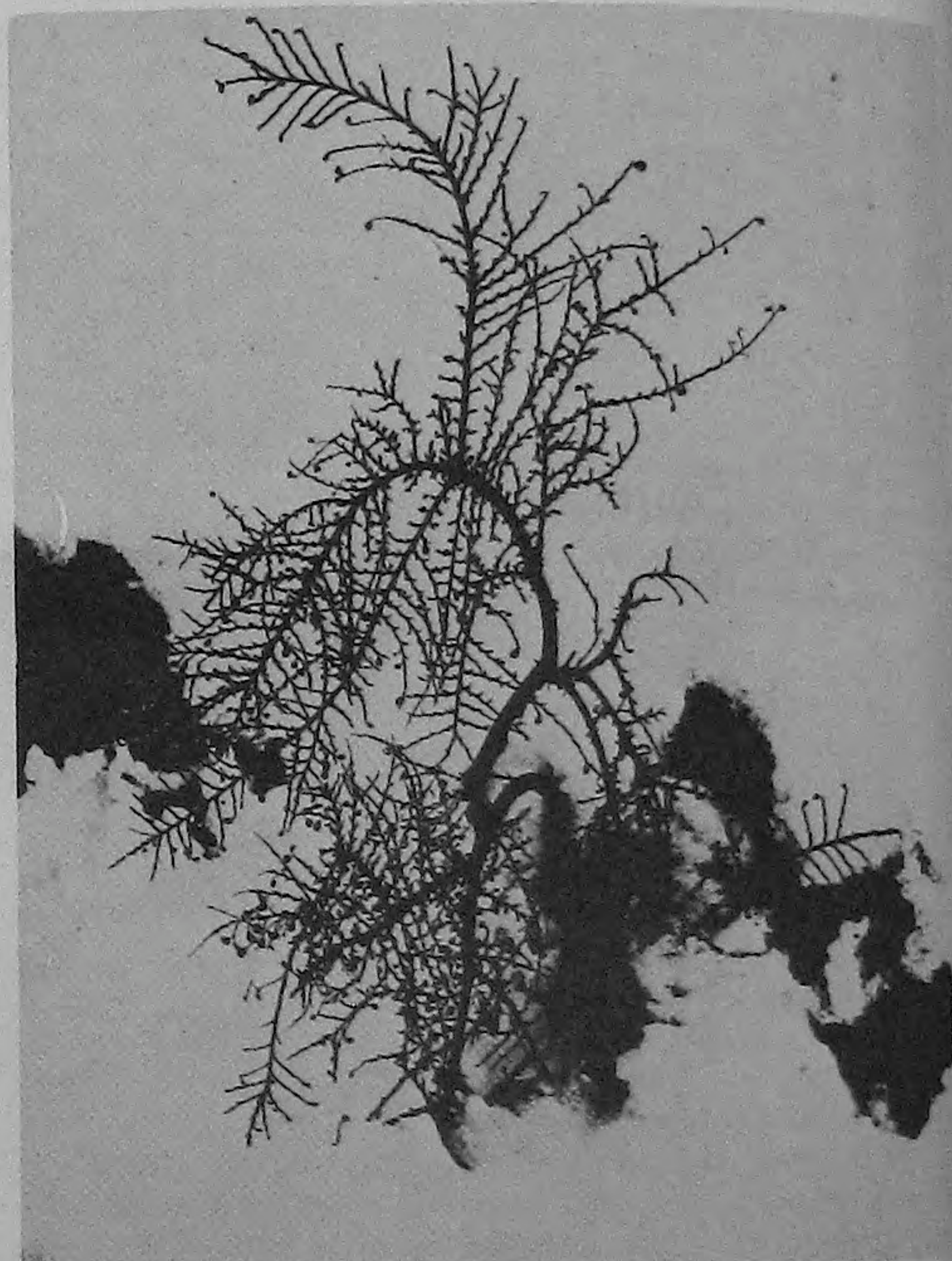
PATTY CAKE POLKA

Other than blarney, we
Sang of Cork, and danced
A jig, and fell together
In a heap of giggles.

Saint Patrick's Day never
Saw a Shamrock of this
Proportion. All singing
Together, with only thoughts
Of Dublin's green.

The Irish never had Patrick's Days
Like these: memories of
Yesterday's years scene.
Today we laugh together, each
With his or her secret
Dream. As well, Corner
House listens to all
Who care to happen there.

Marion.



TO BRUCE MACLEAN IN MEMORIAM

The oceans
Are tears
Of loneliness
And grief

Molly Dexall

Student psychiatrist running
to brother student psychia-
trist:

"Quick! Tell me! What's
two plus two?"

"Two!"
"Ah! Thank God! I gave him
the right answer!"

Molly Dexall.

JENNY'S WEDDING PARTY



Two weeks ago Jenny approached the Business Meeting and asked the group if she could have a party at the Drop-In Centre on July 3rd to honour her and Glenn's wedding. It was immediately moved, seconded and passed unanimously that we have a wedding reception at the Drop-In for Jenny and Glenn.

An exhausted committee got together. We organized a plan, which I think got lost. There was a special effort by Flora and Dave Martin, who baked five salmon, and even had some trout which I understand Dave caught himself.

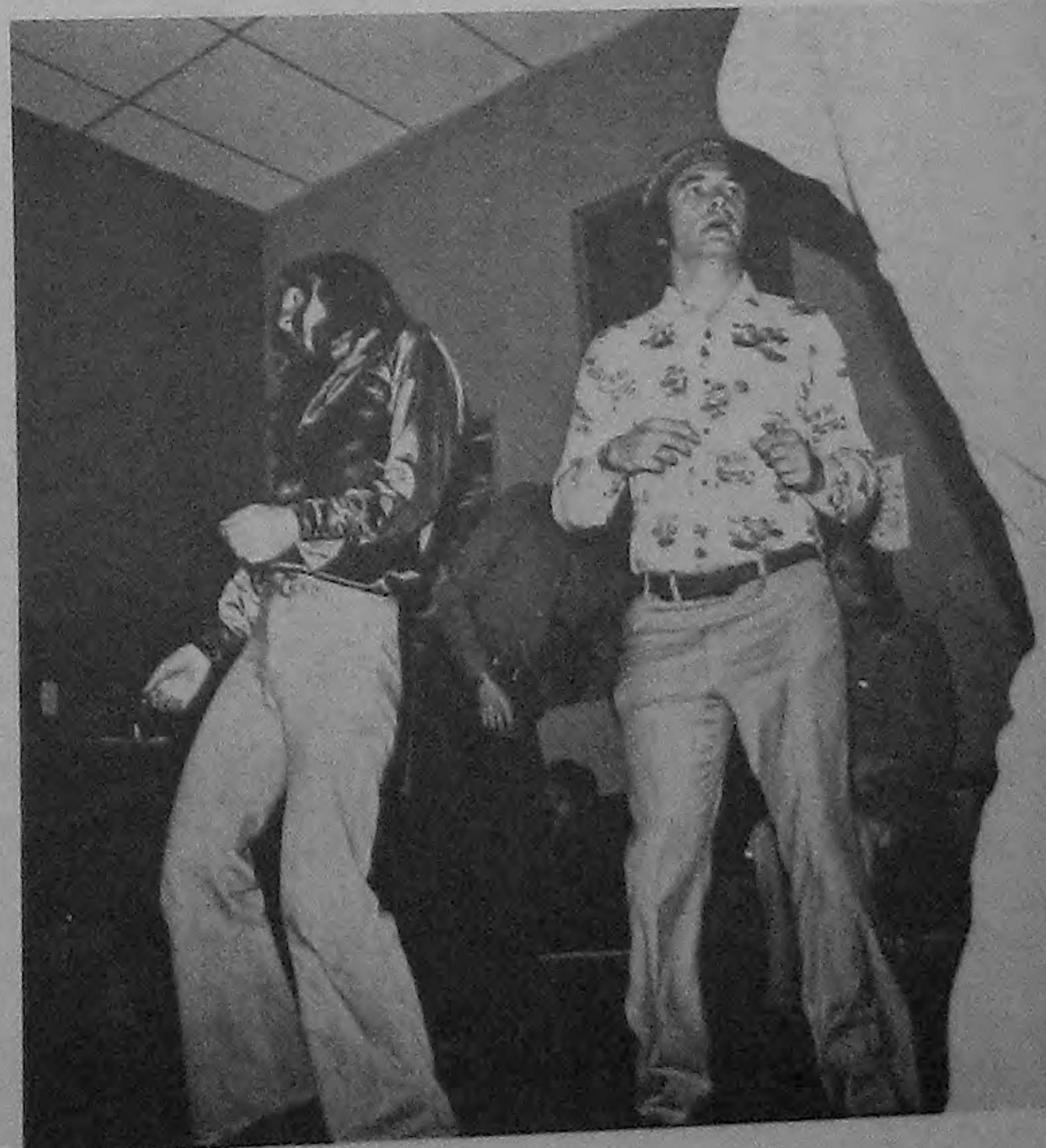
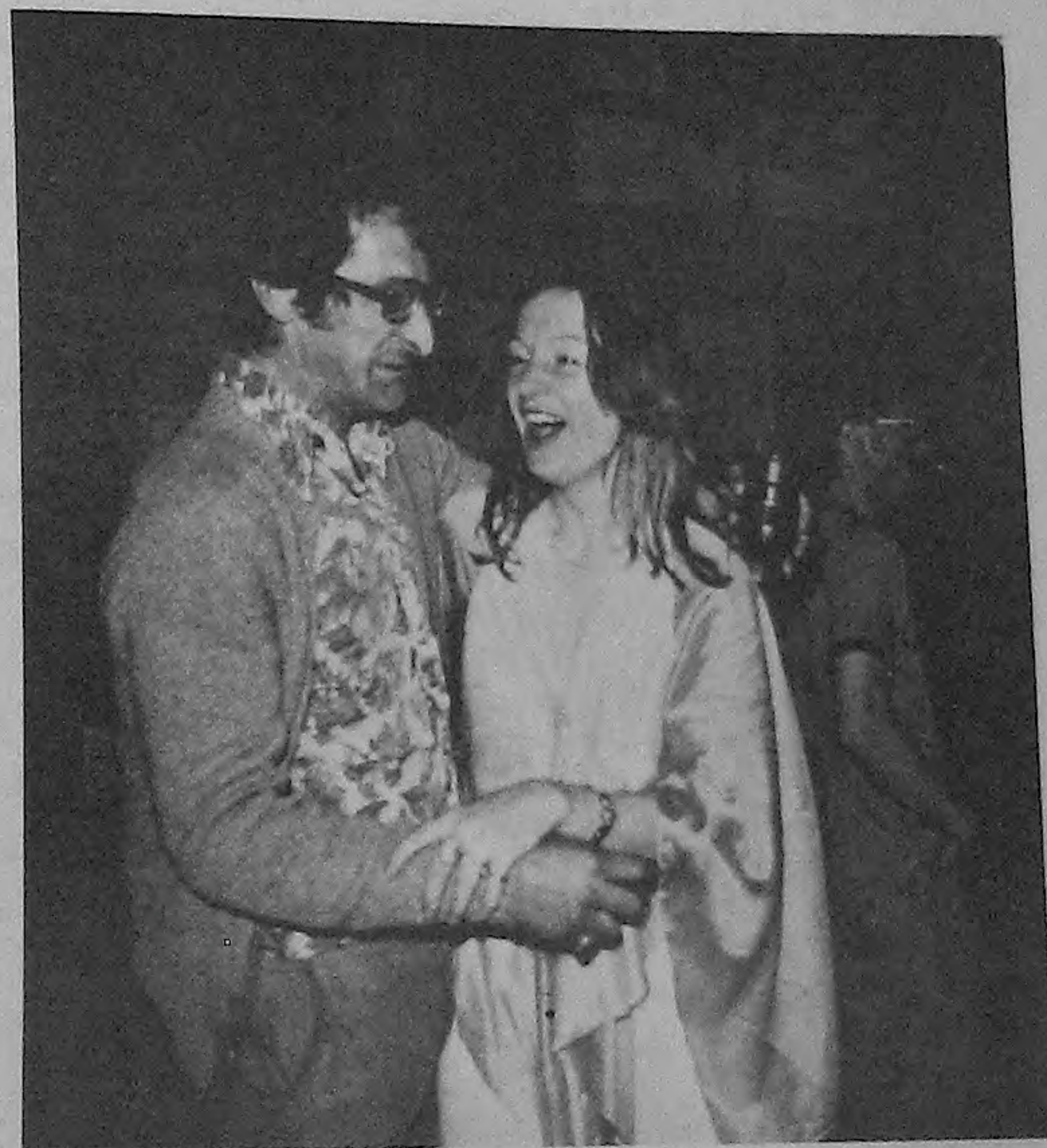
The wedding was very nice. You see Jenny is a very special person. She spent an extensive part of her life in Woodlands School and a wedding for her was a nearly impossible dream coming true.

Glenn looked fine in his sport jacket and tie. Did I notice a little nervousness in him when we hugged afterwards?

A toast to the bride was proposed by Gerry who truly expressed the feelings of everyone in M.P.A., wishing Jenny a happy marriage, and she and Glenn a long life together.

Good luck Jenny and Glenn.

SPRING DANCE



bonny talks back

I'd like to refer to a motion passed at the Business Meeting of June 29th:

It was the motion that cut me off the Lens and Shutter account.

Now I don't want to dispute the motion. That's of little concern. What does bother me was the way in which it was done. That is, in my absence, without anyone even trying to contact me. There was a time when most of the people in MPA were concerned about other people and discussing someone at a meeting without them being present was a big no no. Now you're like the Socreds. "Let's push the legislation through; we don't care if the opposition is here or not."

You're like a judge and jury convicting me and I didn't even get a summons.

Many of you are very much into give and take. You take everything you can, and give a lot of shit.

Not only did no-one try to contact me when I came up as an issue at a meeting, but no-one tried to see what had happened to me when I hadn't been seen for awhile. I'm not just speaking for myself when I say this. There are a lot of people who have left these not so hallowed halls, and months later you just give a shrug of the shoulder when you hear that they are in jail, or the hospital, or even dead.

Where is Wendy, where is Lanny, where is Carla, where is John, where is Clyde, Dave, Doug, Al, Ann-Marie? Who cares?

Bonnie Ramsay.

TONY REFLECTS ON FILMING

WE'RE IN

Tony Westman, a professional cinematographer and Rick Patton, a professional sound man came to MPA in May to do a film about us for the National Film Board. They filmed at different locations and times to try and get all of MPA. They shot at the MPA Riverview Drop-In the Drop-In Centre on Yew, the West 11th Ave. residence, the Theatre Group in a warehouse at False Creek, a baseball game in the park, and a picnic on the beach.

They covered D.I.C. meetings, Business meetings, Residence Council meetings and a spontaneous meeting to deal with a member's upsetting behaviour. They became full voting members of MPA. They lived, worked, filmed and played at West 11th for a week - recording the highs and lows of house living. They flew to Oshawa, Ontario with a duly elected member of MPA to film MPA's presentation at a Canadian Mental Health Association conference.

In all, over thirty hours of film were shot. The film has now gone through the first edit and is now 4½ hours long. It will go through at least one more full edit and end up probably between ½ to 1 hour long, in glorious colour.

The following are Tony's reflections on the MPA film, now that all the work is done and he's had a chance to digest it all.

"Rick got connected to MPA as an interesting idea and was given the idea by the National Film Board, saying, check this out, do some research...

He did some research and he found that he had reasonably good empathy for the rather complex subject of mental health. Rick is a very amazing, wonderful guy and he's one of the few Zen Buddhist film makers I ever met, and he has an amazing consciousness about reality, about environment, about himself, and about those people he comes in contact with. As a result of his perspective he's a very profoundly human and aware person, and if anything, those requirements allowed him to be receptive and very open to the kind of complexities and pressures of what MPA is

doing, why they are trying to do it, and the importance of what they are trying to do. He was really excited about the possibility of a film. The Film Board wasn't sure. They didn't want any part of it because the whole thing was kind of weird and kinky, and they didn't know what mental health was or how to handle it or what to look for. They were generally too intimidated, so they were very happy that Rick would take it on.

I was really excited

He did a pilot video-tape and it was after that that I was brought into it. He asked me if I would like to shoot it and I was really excited. I come from a dif-

So experientially I had a lot of contact with the whole process and the real trauma it exerts upon one's sensitivity, what a person thinks about himself, other people and the larger world in terms of its humanness or lack of humanness. It was really an intense time for me. It put me onto a whole level of exploration in terms of mental health and in terms of realizing where it comes from and where it goes and whose responsibility it is and what can be done.

It's not all our inner space

In my own life in the last couple of years I have been very concerned with

to take that responsibility for themselves.

I really looked forward to doing the film in terms of a chance to participate in a project that would be a very good showplace for what is going on. Because it is officially sanctioned by the Film Board it will have guaranteed distribution, it will have a proper budget so that no compromises will be made in terms of production value. It will allow us a maximum amount of freedom. There is also a consideration of control by the Film Board.

The film will be distributed to schools, to libraries, to television. It'll be distributed all around the world. Professional groups that are concerned with mental health - people who say, okay, what information is available on mental health - what kind of alternatives are there - they'll be able to get it. The Film Board is very complete in their distribution system. They have offices in Europe, in the States, and all across Canada, and they have travelling film services.

I've taken a look at the films that the Film Board has on mental health as a sort of research thing before this film and none of them were terribly good. They were pretty well antiquated in terms of attitude and their ability to really comprehend the issues. We saw the R.D. Laing film and we saw a couple of others from England and we realize that what we've done in the MPA film is something very new. MPA is very new. It's a totally new sensibility. It's much more grass roots-oriented where you don't have a key psychiatrist to be the ice-breaker. You've got a lot of people who are learning the ropes themselves and are beginning to pull themselves up by their bootstraps which is totally new under the sun. The attitude that we took was also new.

We each have our own lifestyles. Rick has a wife and a couple of kids. I have my own lifestyle and the areas that I work in are not tied down to a community in a small sense. I know the whole country. I'm from the United States so I know



**TONY and RICK
Doing the M.P.A. film**

ferent direction as to my awareness of where mental health is and what is being done about it. I was living with a woman for about 3½ years who was an extremely talented painter, a very sterling human being but she had, for whatever reasons, some real deep seated problems that caused her to short circuit periodically and really go through very hard times. She had a brother who was in and out of mental hospitals like a yoyo and I personally was involved in putting him into mental hospitals and trying to handle him when he was out and not knowing what to do with himself.

those kinds of sensibilities. It is not all our inner space, our heads that cause the problem. It is distinctly reflected within the larger world wherever you go whether it's in a Texaco sign, or whether it's in a graveyard. We can perceive our environment in a way that makes us realize that whether we like it or not we are connected to the environment, connected to other human beings and that we must take responsibility for those kinds of connections. The more energy and skill applied to those connections the more the world will be a better place, with more and more people trying

THE MOVIES

that country. I'm really tuned in to a lot of levels and so the community I deal with is further ranging. Within all that there's an immediate media arrogance.

We're dealing with a moment

Well we're conscious of that sort of a background just as you're conscious of your background, so what we do to create a new kind of film is to say what we're dealing with is a moment - a real moment, here, that is very alive and very interesting. What our job is, as film makers is to fit into that moment and to become as much a part of that whole situation as we possibly can.

It's like instantly becoming a mental case; instantly beginning to think and feel and perceive the world in those terms. All of a sudden we became very emotional about what MPA was doing, about who the people were in MPA, about who was doing it to MPA and what MPA was trying to do. It became a whole kind of emotional gestalt between Rick and me and the whole thing we were trying to do with the film project. As a result we had real problems. Rick and his wife went through many trips in terms of his change. Reality is this bizarre thin thread that's like a rubber band - you can take any part

of it and bend it and go anywhere with it. Well that's what was happening.

I would go out for a beer after shooting, at 10 or 11 o'clock at night, sit down with friends and go at them in terms of where I was and there was this whole kind of pool of alienation that Rick and I were creating for ourselves. All of a sudden we did not fit from where we came. People did not know how to deal with this. In that 3 weeks shoot we became different people in terms of who we were before.

Mental illness is catching. It's contagious but it is not necessarily negative. There's no permanent damage done in terms of where we were and where we are now. What it does do is imply that by immersing ourselves within the system we became part of that system, we reflected the prejudices, the urgencies, the necessities, all these things. But we do have a lifestyle and a home to go to. I live alone, and Rick lives with a wife with whom he has another reality. We each have our own kind of personal lives which we have problems with. We're experimenting with our heads trying to transcend all that and become something else.

As a process we did evolve an interesting kind of film that's never been done before. It's going to be a



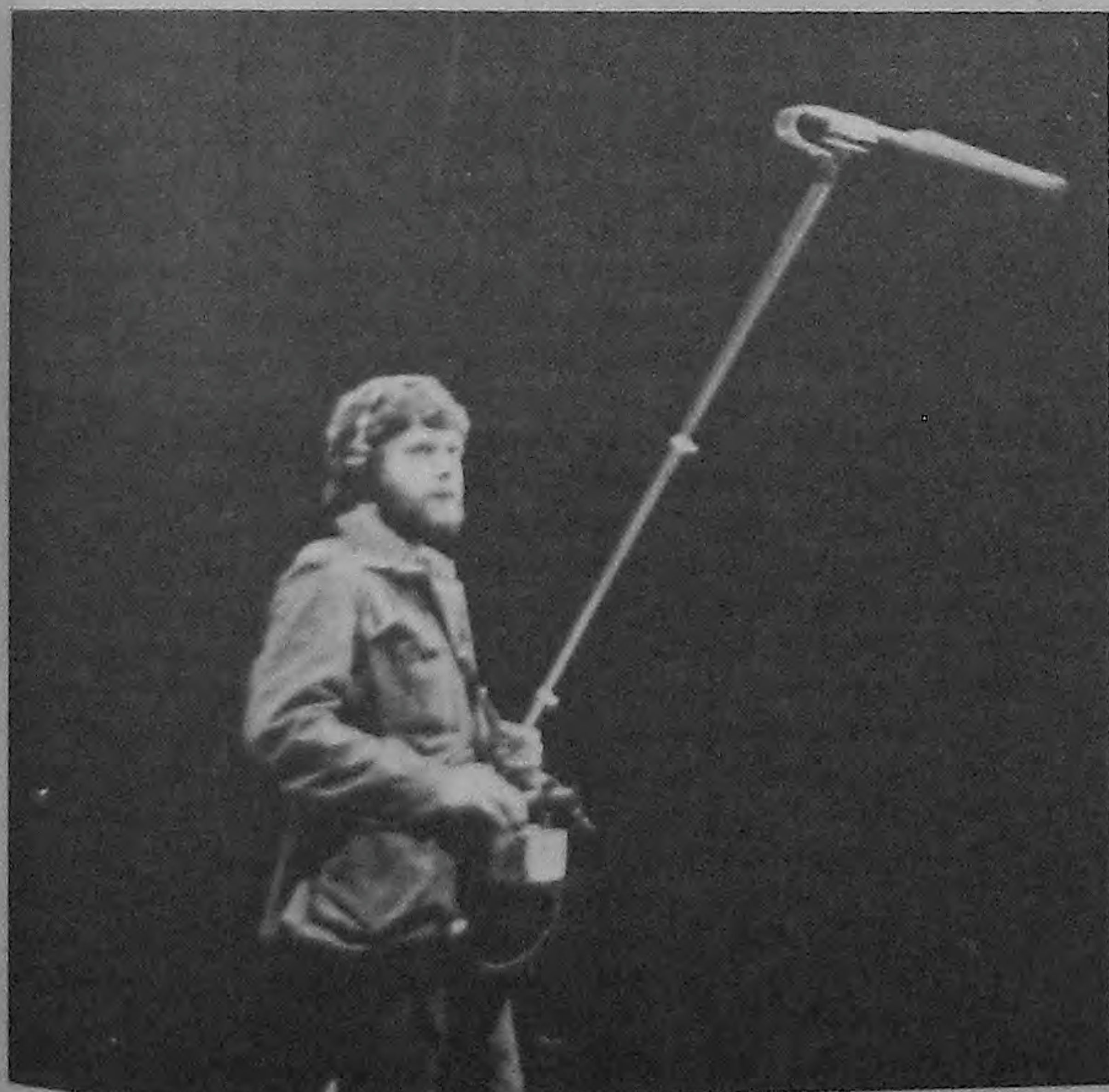
THE CAMERA

very experiential film because it will distinctly reflect our involvement within that situation. As a result of that kind of labour what you're going to get as a product is something that's going to communicate all that to an audience who is ignorant. What we're doing is telling them what the experience is, what the experience means, and where that experience leads in terms of what is being done about it by a group of people who are no more insane than I am or anybody else is. Their requirement of reality, their requirements of responsibility, are perhaps more arduous than other people's. It becomes a really interesting lifestyle which does not have any firm answers - nor does it have any firm solutions. It's not as though a psychiatrist or anybody else can come in and say okay here's how to solve all the problems. An answer doesn't exist so what we're down to is the day-to-day operation of life - trying to make it as rational and as complete as possible. In other words, rational means things that follow other things. It is a rational thing to get up in the morning and try to function in a meaningful way so you have something to show for your own involvement with life. You can actually achieve something whether that be cooking a meal or going out and getting a job or flying

to the moon, it doesn't matter, it's just that each level is one more step towards the ability to be responsible for oneself in whatever reality one wants to live within. It's a matter of having all kinds of sensibilities that we have to go through, not only having to live in an MPA house but also having to know what we were doing every moment of the time. We had to say okay where do we go from here, not only as human beings but as film makers - saying we've got to make a film, that is a priority. How do we make a film so complete that it's going to tie together a thread so poetic and so strong and so significant that it's not going to allow anybody to look at it and cop out, and say, well, I don't know about mental health, or, I don't know what to do about mental health. We were trying to resolve a particular statement that's going to require people to take some kind of action. We're not going to give them any kind of alternative to cop out. That was the intention of making the film.

What it is to be incapable of living within a very complex society and begin to plot a road, as MPA is doing whereby you can begin to deal with a very complex world - the more that that can be communicated to the

(continued on Page 8)
(Tony Tells All)



an anonymous assistant

TONY

TATTLED

(continued from page 7)

larger world the better off not only mental patients will be but also other groups of people distinctly at a loss in terms of their ability to survive.

The residence was our first really involved period with MPA. We were living up on the top floor of the West 11th house and trying to be part of it. Rick and I fixed a meal, which was quite successful and we brought some wine illegally into the house, and had a great time. It was like the days when we were hanging out and living communally. There's a kind of normal chaos that you have when you have more than one person inhabiting one space. It doesn't really belong to anybody but it does in fact belong to everybody so there's this curious nether world of responsibility or rather lack of responsibility. What was observable was the fact that here was a group of people that were distinctly trying to survive together which was really exciting.

On the other hand you've got a group of people who a lot of the time didn't want to be with themselves or anybody else and so you have this amazing kind of accordion effect of retreat and advance that is constantly happening.

We found that the only time people got together in any meaningful way was at the house meeting and periodically at dinner. Dinners were kind of strange because nobody was ever in one place. They would kind of grab their meal and then go off in a corner and eat. There was no real confrontation because they felt so afraid of what was going on inside. To get together and have two things going on at once was too much inflow, there was too much happening. There was this constant isolation within the whole which I found very awkward. It can't go anywhere and the only time when things would really happen was at the house meeting. There's this whole kind of gestalt of energy going. In about 4 hours everybody would get rid of all their hatred and all their love and all the communication they'd saved up for the whole week. It was like you pull the cork and everybody just kind of

drains away at the end of the meeting. There was never any close to the meeting, the end would be mutually decided. It was an amazing kind of unknown language. All of a sudden, bang - the meeting was over and everybody would simply disappear and that was it for that week.

It's not as though one wants to create a therapy session, but would rather take more care with each person realizing that their responsibility for living is to live with themselves and be able to feel good, certainly, but also be able to share. This does not mean share simply the responsibilities of living such as cleaning house, cooking, and going to meetings but rather to share some kind of interests in terms of activities.

We went to the beach which was really a great time but that was our input. There seemed to be no organic input in terms of the house creating a sense of family and sense of communication. There is very little communication. A stable relationship requires communication which connects people like little terminals. You've got this common reality where you share some-

that they're assholes. The world tells them they're assholes so immediately they are assholes to themselves. That was the real problem in terms of people's own estimation and it's a decision you make somewhere back even when you're 2 years old. If you make a decision that you're an asshole or ugly you will hate yourself. The key factor in terms of people beginning to like themselves a bit better is that they can begin to share their lovingness, their likingness for themselves with the other individuals within the house. By doing that you'll immediately get a stronger sense of reality, a stronger sense of communication and the house will be that much stronger as a unit or as a force.

So the film should be about an hour long when it's finished. At some point when it's nearing its completed editing, Rick will bring it to MPA to show it to people in order to get some response and input as to what's right and what's wrong with it. Any necessary changes can accommodate those suggestions. When that is finished then the film will be done, hopefully in the next 3 or 4 months.



thing, in this case you share a house. You share your background of being involved with other mental patients and institutions, and you've got a kind of common affinity. Affinity is positive/negative. You can either love somebody or hate somebody. There's a low personal affinity. People don't like themselves very well because they think

I must also admit that everybody that we've shown it to, including the rush syncher who is low man on the totem pole, the assistant editor who arranged it, the producer, the executive producer, all these people have just looked at it and shaken their heads in wonderment, saying it's really an exciting film.

Rick Patton, Tony Westman from the National Film Board and myself met at the Vancouver International Airport to catch the midnight plane to Toronto. My assignment was to enlighten Oshawa's Canadian Mental Health Association to the marvellous merits of self-help and participatory democracy in general and M.P.A. in particular.

A host of well-wishers gathered in the airport lounge to toast the departure and inevitable success of the mission. Tony and Rick were coming to record the whole thing for the National Film Board film on M.P.A. (that is a whole separate story). I stayed awake for the entire flight in case the pilot needed any help. Tony and Rick fell asleep somewhere over Lethbridge and slept right through the turbulence over Winnipeg. We landed in Toronto at 8 a.m. which was really 5 a.m. Tony rented a car and we loaded up and drove into Toronto for breakfast and then went to check into our hotel - the Windsor Arms near Yonge and Bloor. It's a lovely old hotel - very elegant and antique, covered on the outside with ivy. After checking out our rooms we decided to check out Toronto. We had the whole day to explore before the conference began the next morning. Rick opted for a nap and Tony and I explored Yonge Street boutiques and restaurants. On the way back to the hotel I had my first subway ride. We picked up Rick and drove to the waterfront and went to Kensington to the outdoor market. It was quite incredible - all kinds of fish, vegetables, clothes and live chickens. The old brick houses all ran into each other with old folks sitting on porches and kids playing in small front yards. The bustle was constant - a real carnival atmosphere.

By this time we were hungry again so we indulged in Chinese food and went back to the hotel for a drink and wound up with chocolate mousse and cappacino in the hotel restaurant.

At 6 a.m. the phone woke me and I had a quick shower and met Rick and Tony downstairs for breakfast, and then drove to Oshawa. I was getting nervous about the panel: how many people, how it would go off, etc. We met Steve Laurie, Head of Durham C.M.H.A. and he showed us to the Lecture Theatre so Tony and Rick could get their camera equipment set up.

The initial address was by Thomas Page, author of "Mental patients and the law". He said he used to be

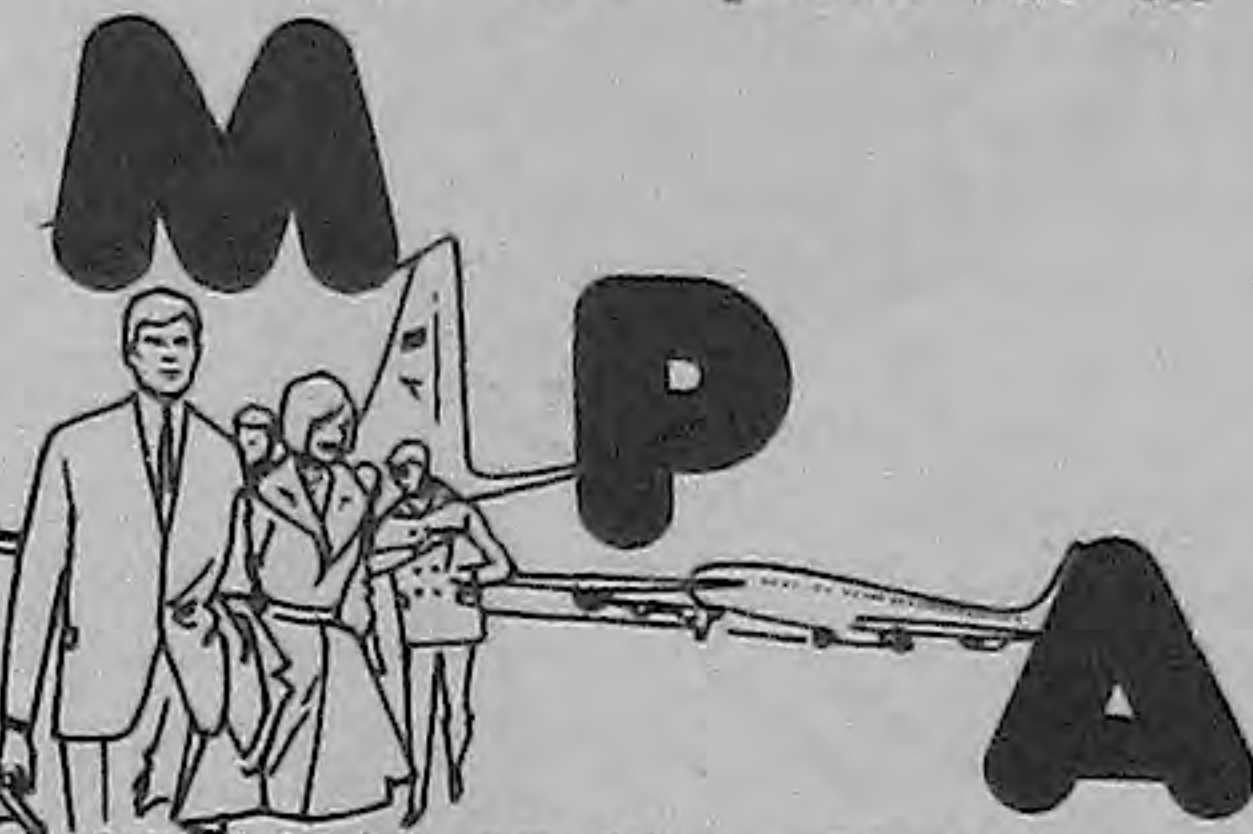
a foaming mouth radical but was now a little left of centre. He talked of Szasz but seemed confused. After his speech I traded him a copy of our Anti-Psychiatry Bibliography for a copy of his book - which he kept apologizing for. (He wrote it when his ideas were different, and it's now being published in a revised edition).

After a coffee break the panel was on. There was Dr. John Deadman, Head of Whitby Psychiatric Hospital, two other panelists and myself. The subject of the panel was expectations of treatment. In the information I received before the conference there were questions to address myself to such as "Do patients have any choice of treatment?" The answer? "No". I personally found the subject of expectations hard to deal with. As a person who was "committed" I never considered myself "insane" so how could I have any expectations of a "cure"? I took the question to members of the West 11th House and other M.P.A. meetings. Some of the responses I got were "initial expecta-

We went to lunch in the cafeteria - fish and chips, and coffee in styrofoam cups - where I got into a conversation with a psychiatrist who maintained that doctors had to maintain an "aura" of mystique so patients would have confidence in them. I asked if he didn't think patients would appreciate honesty and doctors could say "I don't know" sometimes, because people find out that they don't. If someone is diagnosed five different ways he knows that someone doesn't know. The doctor's answer was that doctors have to protect themselves. If a doctor says "I don't know" too often, people would get the idea that he was incompetent so I replied that if a doctor said "I don't know" too many times he was incompetent.

After lunch there were a number of workshops so I jumped around some and tried to get as much information as possible. There was an ombudsman who worked in the hospital although not employed by the hospital, which

to Toronto where I called up Dick Woodsworth and DeeDee Smith who used to work at M.P.A., and they came over to the hotel. Late that night Rick and Tony came back with people from the Bear Theatre Company and we all went to the restaurant for chocolate mousses, apricot ices and drinks. Another late night followed by another early morning drive to Oshawa and another panel. This time the panel was on



patients in the community. I explained in detail how M.P.A. houses work and in the middle of the panel Dick Woodsworth showed up and was invited to join the panel. In the audience was an ex-patient from Toronto, Don Weitz. Don heard of M.P.A. a few years ago and was interested in setting up some-

a park or such to stop at. We found a small river (or a large creek) with trees, etc., and we lay down on the bank and had a snooze. We were awakened by motorcycles - apparently the dirt trails drew large numbers of trail bikes. Rick woke up with a little frog sitting on his foot. We still had time to kill so we went looking for the fanciest restaurant in Oshawa. Some locals directed us to a hotel apparently known for its food. We went in and ordered a drink. When the waitress didn't know what kalua was I had my doubts, and when she served it on ice with two plastic containers of coffee cream I knew we should go. So we drove to the next town to a steak and lobster house advertising live lobsters. We decided that because it's so far from Oshawa to the ocean that they must keep a few lobsters out in the front. When someone picks one they want it is carried into the back, placed in a second tank, and a frozen lobster is cooked up. Anyway it was delicious.

IN OSHAWA



tions are for a cure, and faith in psychiatry". "Both are disillusioning - especially on subsequent visits". Some expectations are fearful, e.g. shock treatments.

I spoke for ten minutes as did the other panelists



and then we had a question period. The questions were routine and boring.

After the panel Rick and Tony got into heated discussions calling members of the audience "grey jellyfish". Rick said he had M.P.A. on film being very alive and vibrant and then he had the professionals at the conference sitting there with blank expressionless faces. It was his contention that he would be accused of being biased because the professionals looked so bad compared to M.P.A. but that they were, in fact, "grey jellyfish".

was important, so that patients do feel he really is an advocate and not just another staff member.

The other workshop I found fascinating was orthomolecular psychiatry. They talked of brain chemistry, blood sugar levels and diet. One woman said that by looking at patients' tests (blood, etc.), she could describe the person's physical traits as well as symptoms. She claimed psychotic behaviour could be altered in minutes. The workshop talked of medication, hypoglycemia, euthenasia and patients rights. It was discussed whether suicide is a right. Someone suggested a lethal pill be made available to people who are suffering, upon request. This would include physical and mental pain. It was objected to on the grounds that the decision would be irrevocable but it was pointed out that so is abortion, and society allows that.

After the workshops Steve drove Tony and Rick to his hotel room at the Oshawa Holiday Inn so they could get some sleep. Sleep is one thing we got very little of on the whole trip so we grabbed it when we could. They wanted to stay in Oshawa for the play "Ward 6" so they could pick good scenes to film the following night, so I took the GO train back

thing similar in the east. He came to Vancouver and at one time lived in one of our houses. He brought a few of the group in Toronto to the conference. The group is small but committed to political action. In the question period Don made an angry speech which was good. Some of the people needed a jolt or two. A woman psychiatrist was put off by our criticism of professionals and said "As a psychiatrist I would like to help you people, but I would find it hard because of your attitude towards doctors". Dick answered that her attitude was wrong, beginning with her statement "As a psychiatrist". And they got a pretty fair argument going. After coffee we put on the M.P.A. workshop, starting with our videotape. We moved the discussion out to the lawn and kept it informal, which made it nice. Dick kept trying to pin people down to firm commitments. The Head of C.M.H.A. in Ontario said that he supported what we were doing so Dick asked if he would be willing to lobby on our behalf.

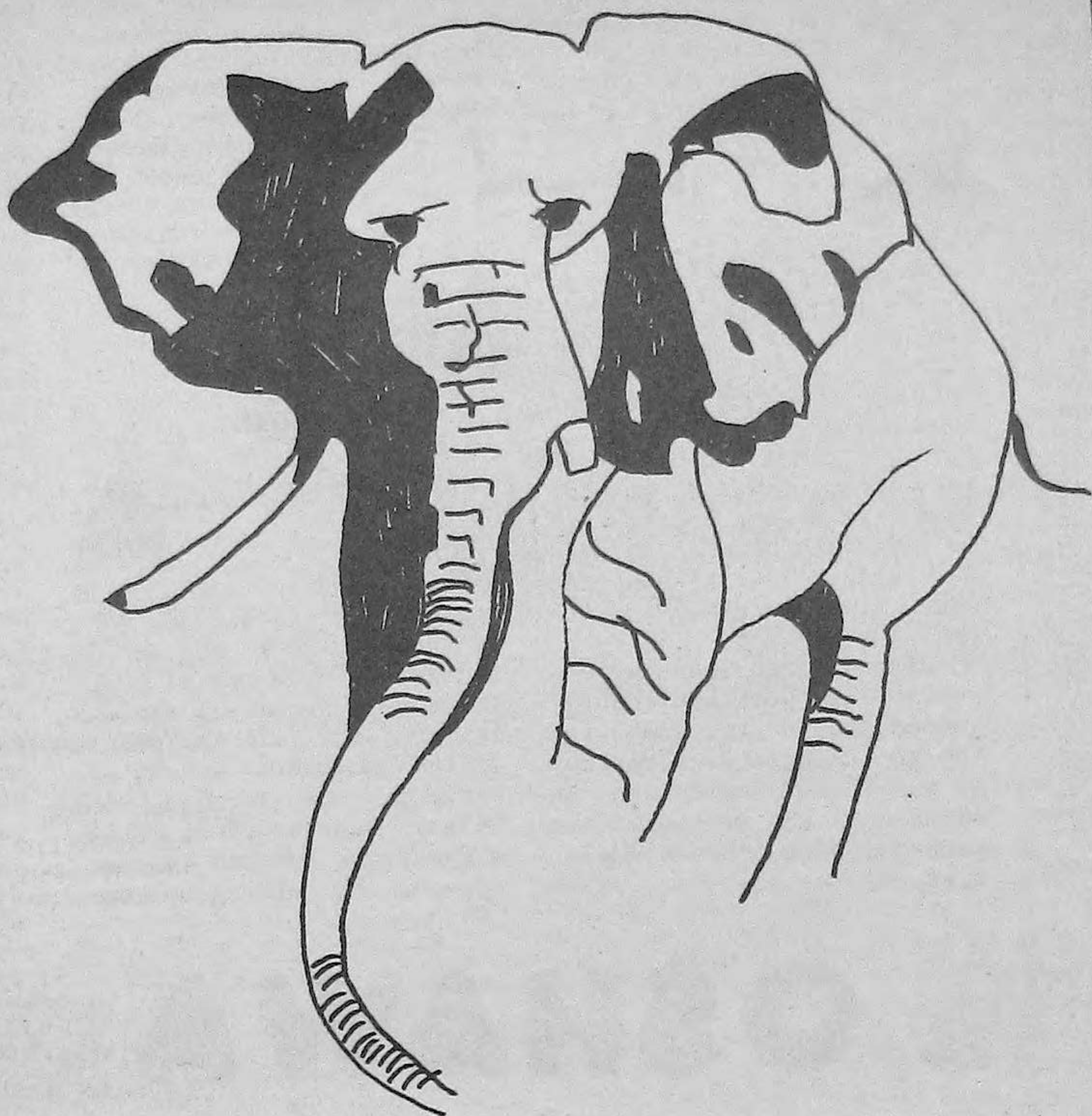
The conference was over, to my relief, but we had six hours to kill before the play, which was not really worth going all the way into Toronto and back to see, so we drove around looking for

The play Ward 6 was very impressive. It takes place in a mental hospital in Russia but is too complex to go into here. After the play the audience and the actors had a discussion about the play and mental hospitals. We got back to Toronto late, had a few drinks and called it a day.

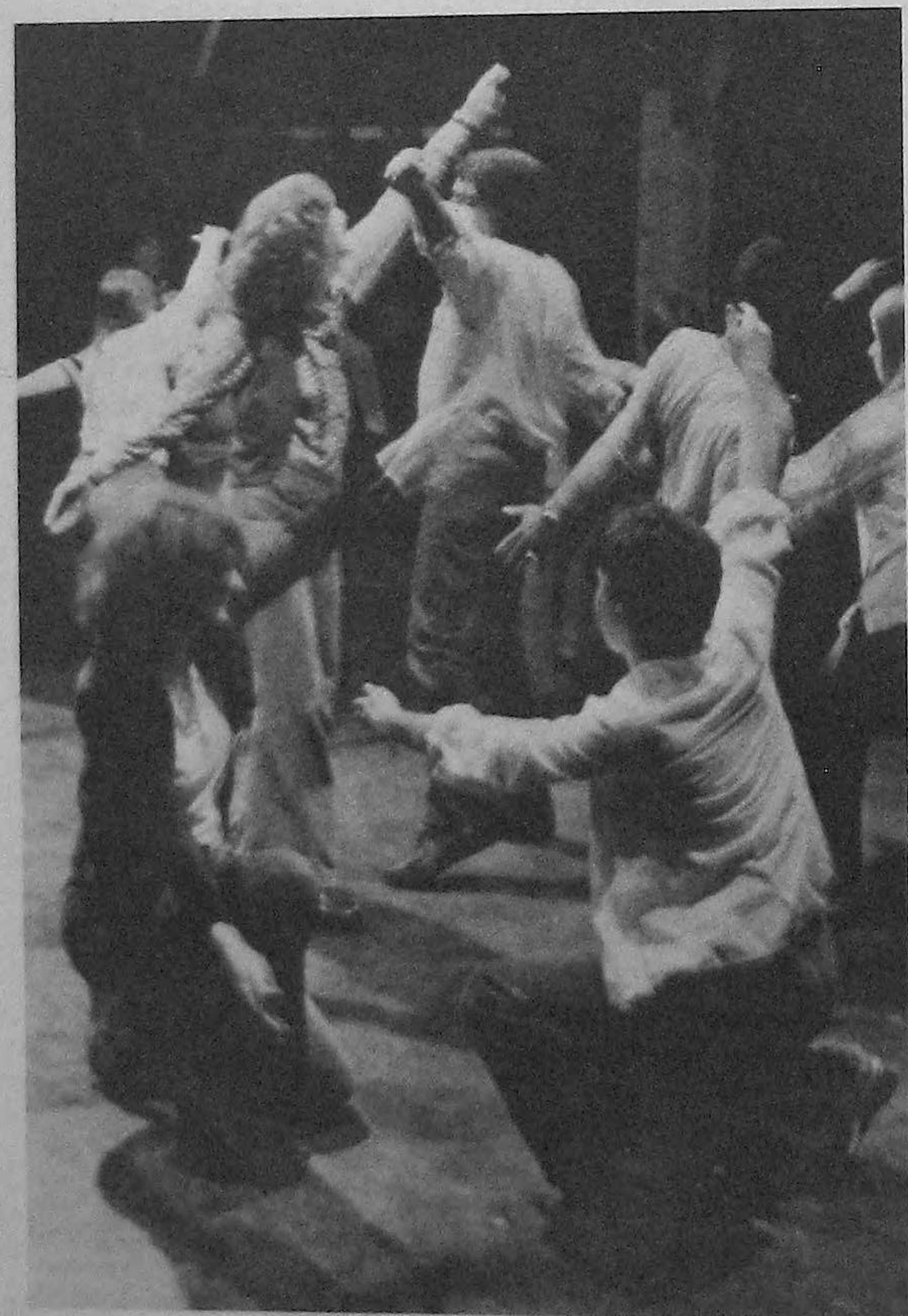
The next morning Rick, Tony and I parted ways but first had a delicious breakfast at Toby's. They walked me to the subway. I met Dick and DeeDee and we drove to their home in London and Dick took me to WOTCH which is a community for ex-patients. They are trying to get a housing component but they are trying to start out legally which is a mistake. It's better to set up a house and fight zoning, health inspectors, etc., when you become visible. If M.P.A. had tried to get a licence to operate before we started we wouldn't be here now. We existed a few years before we became visible, and in those years became strong enough and learned enough in order to take on bureaucracy.

I stayed a few days in London. The first night I slept 14 hours. I was really exhausted. And that my friends, is my report on the conference.

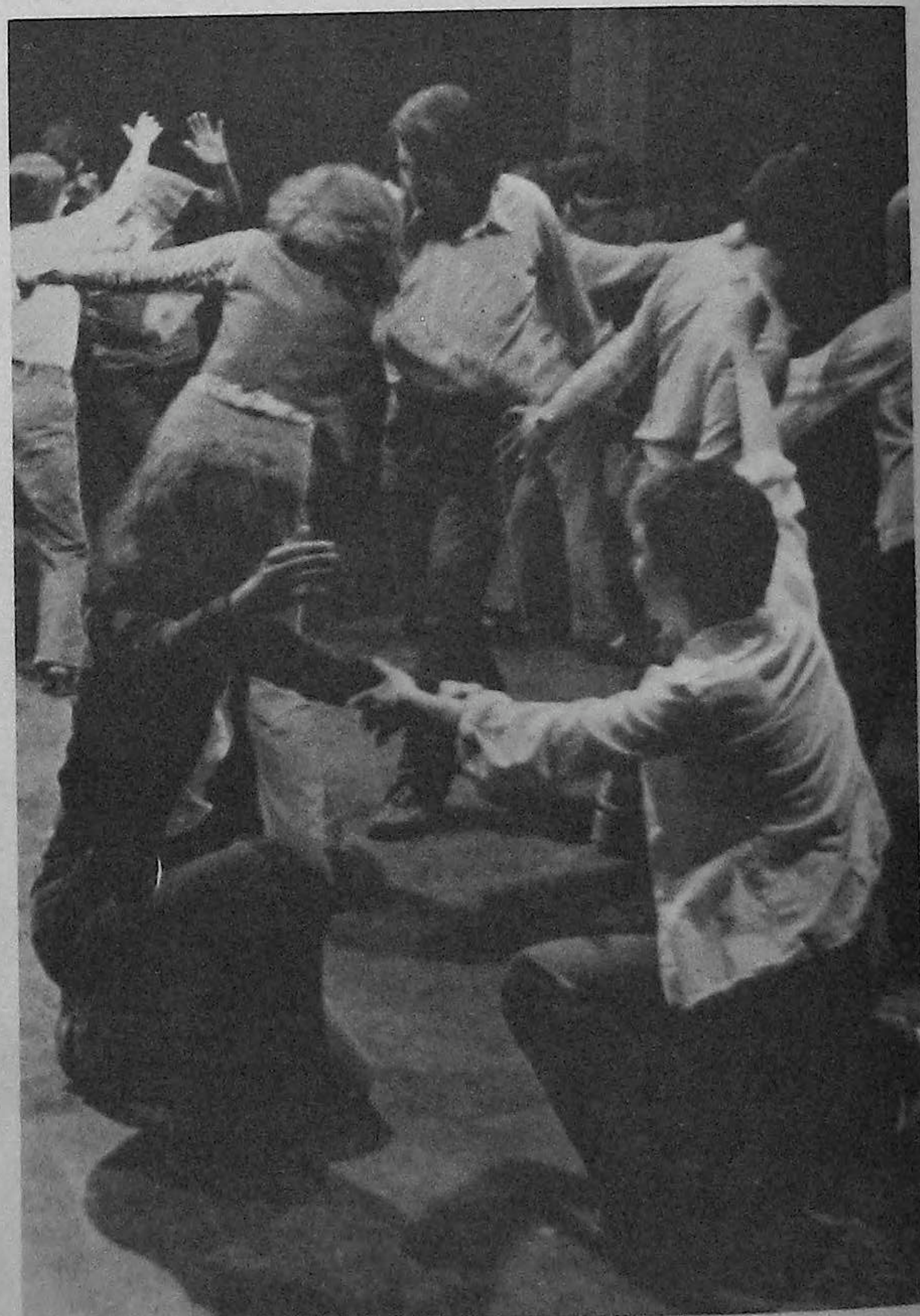
Patty Servant.



ELEPHANT-TAMERS ALEX AND BONNIE



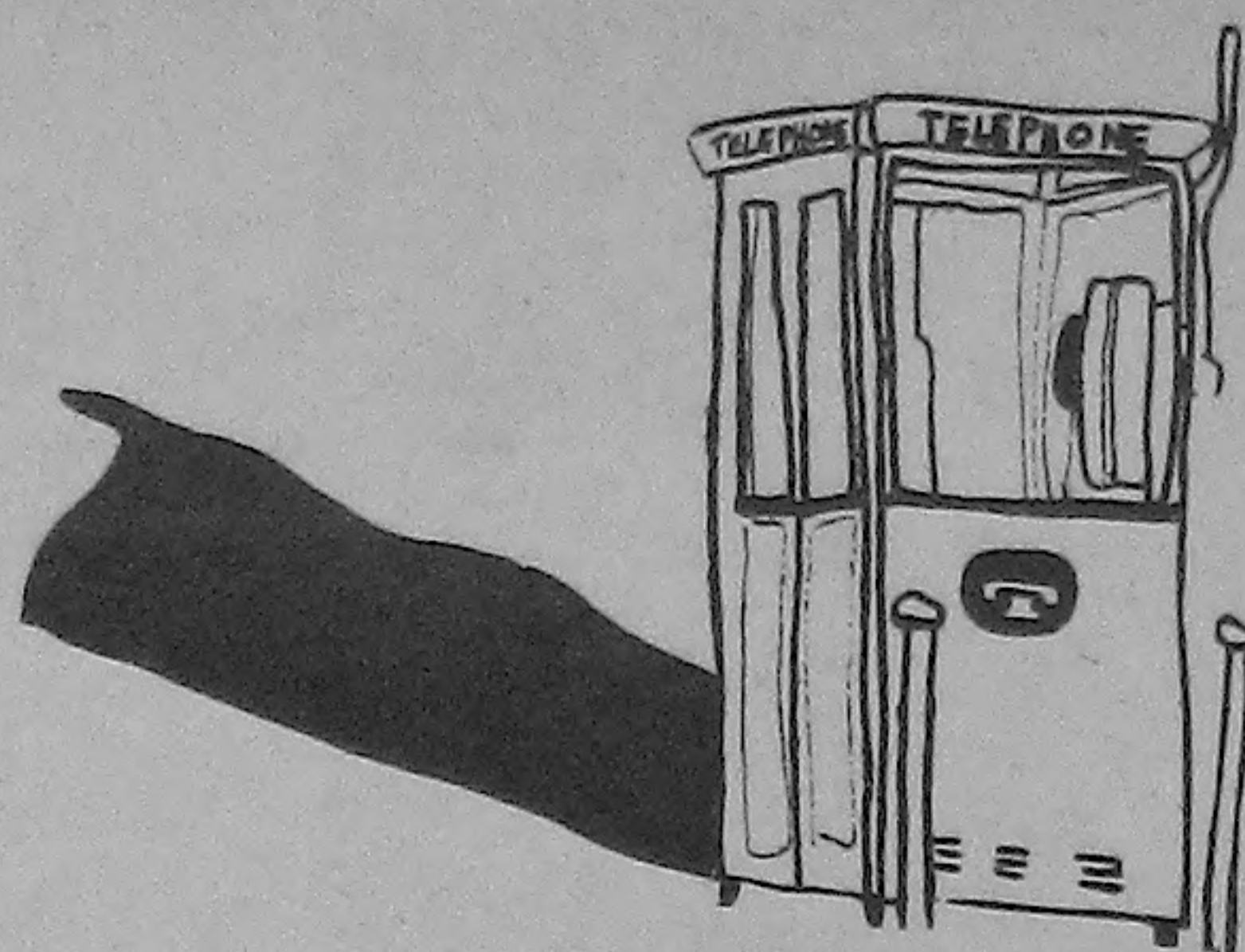
M.P.A. THEATRE GROUP



M.P.A. THEATRE GROUP

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

IN A NUTSHELL page 11



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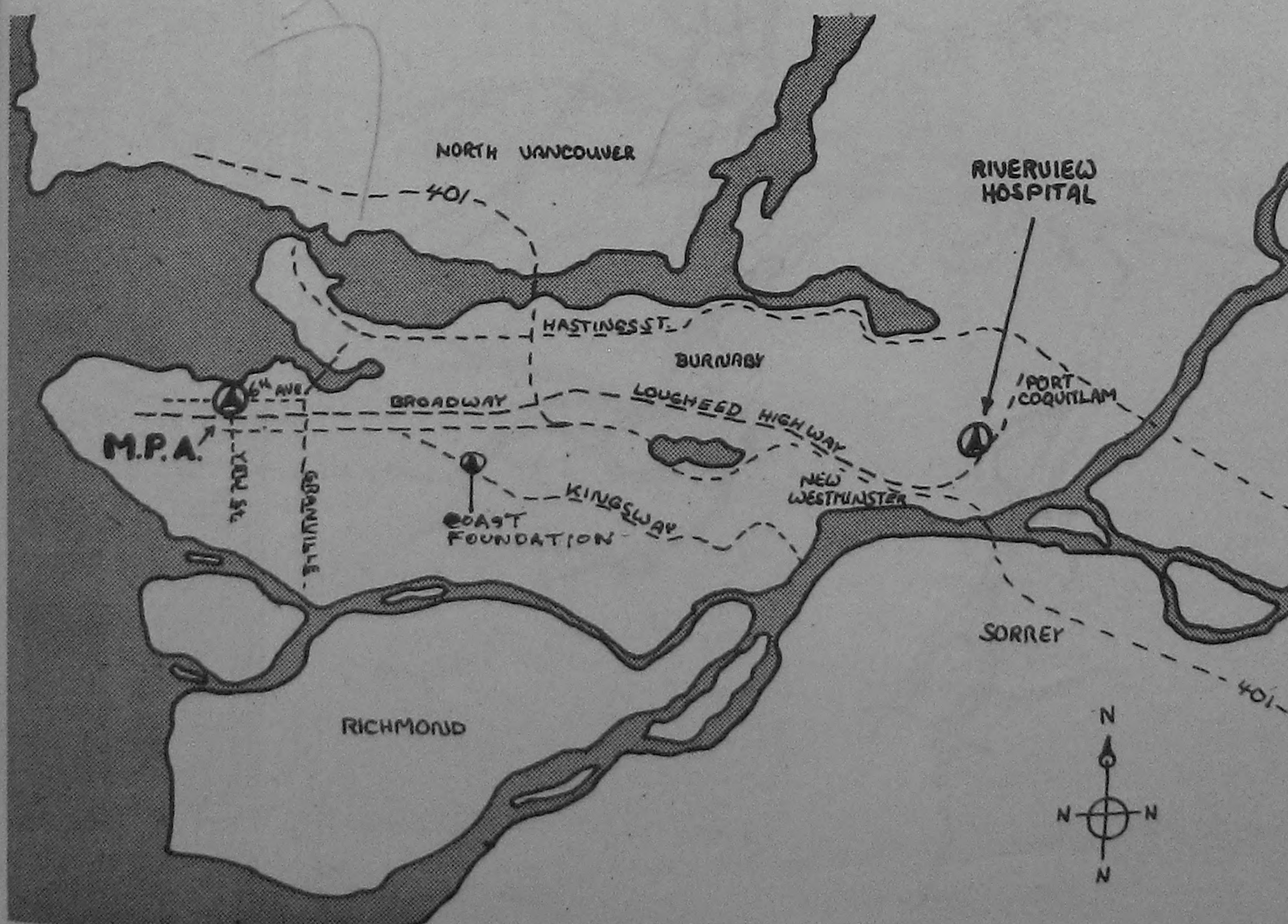
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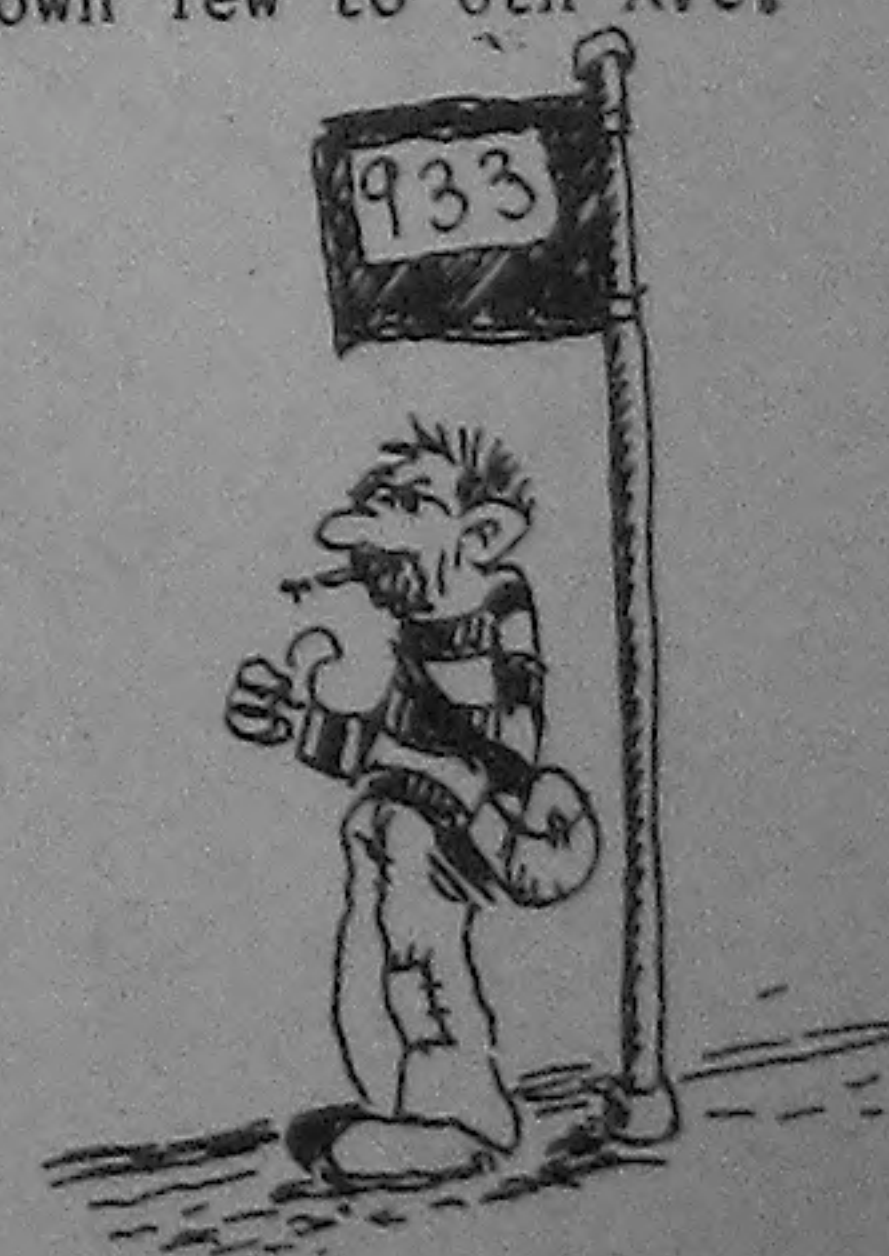
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Buy a 50¢ bus pass on Sunday and you can travel on it all day. At other times fare is 25¢ from 10-3 every day and after 7 every night. It's 40¢ other times.

MENTAL PATIENTS ASSOCIATION



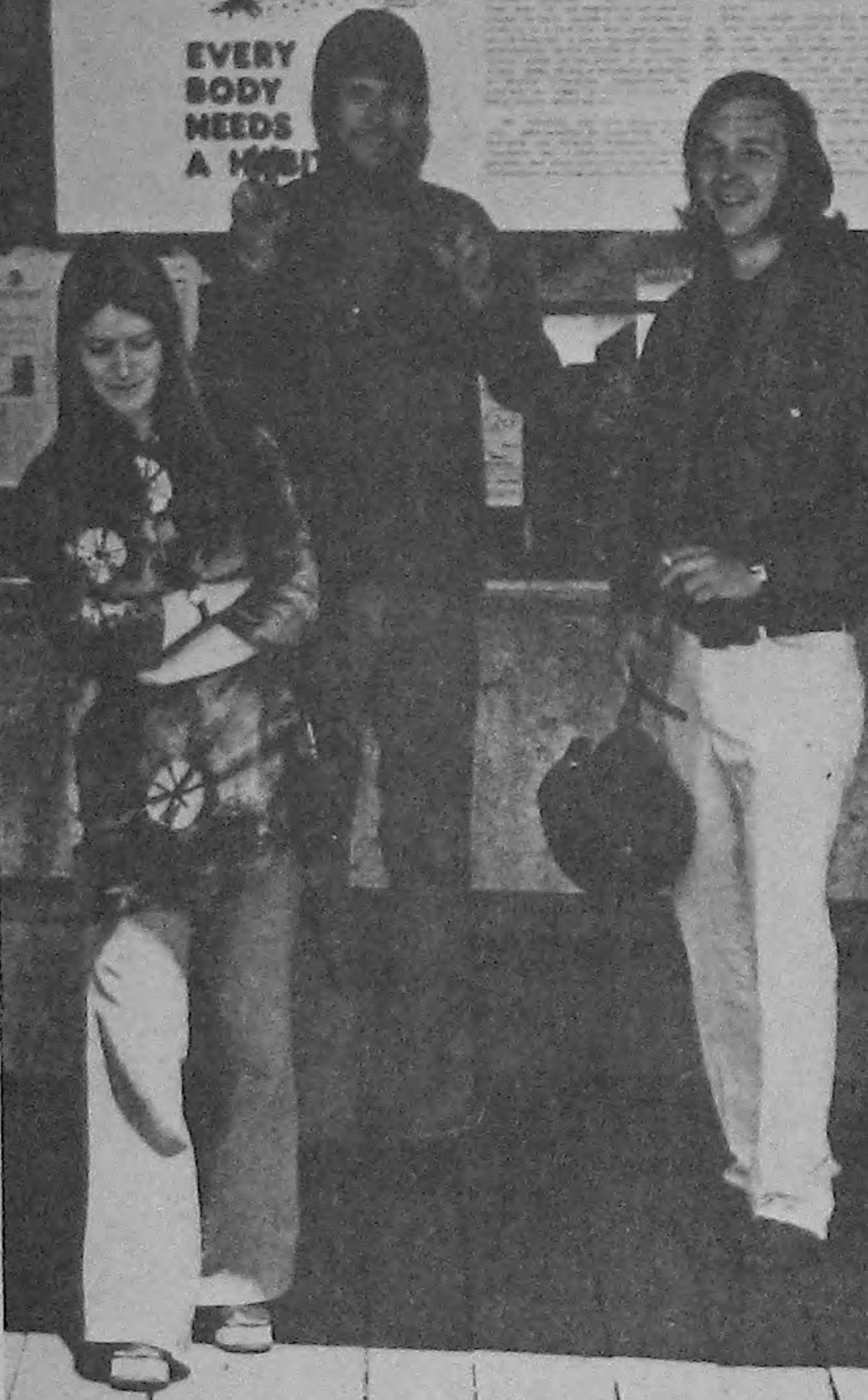
EVERY
BODY
NEEDS
A MIND

The Mental Patients Association is a non-profit organization that provides support and resources for people with mental health issues. We are committed to helping individuals live their lives to the fullest and to promoting mental health awareness in the community.

Our programs include:

- Individual counseling and support groups
- Outpatient and inpatient services
- Emergency crisis intervention
- Case management and advocacy
- Community referrals and resources

For more information, please contact us at [phone number] or visit our website at [website address].



M.P.A. participated in the U.N. Habitat Forum from a central location at Jericho where members talked to people, handed out "Nutshells", and showed the M.P.A. videotape.