

## **Mark's Story** **Recovering from Manic-Depression and Alcoholism**

[www.mentalhealth.com/story](http://www.mentalhealth.com/story)

Thirteen years ago, at the age of 24, I was diagnosed with manic-depression. Learning to live with this mental illness has been extremely difficult especially during the last 6 years. In 1989 I had my second manic episode and I was treated at the Clarke Institute in Toronto. Since then and up to August 1994 I have been in hospitals in many different cities: Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, White Rock, Vancouver (UBC and St. Paul's). After suffering an episode and a lengthy stay of up to two months in hospital, I would attempt to recover but within 3-6 months I wound up in hospital once again.

I never really had a fair chance of recovering from my mood disorder because I suffer from another mental illness called alcoholism. It wasn't being treated. After being discharged from hospital I would resume drinking and then within a couple of months I would be back in hospital having suffered from another manic episode.

It was strongly suggested to me in 1984 when I was first diagnosed as manic depressive that I should stop drinking. My only response was to say, "Surely that can't mean beer". My drinking escalated from 1989 until August 1993 when I first joined the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. During these years I was in complete denial of what alcohol was doing to the chemical makeup of my body. I drank in order to suppress the negative feelings of mania and depression. The more I drank the sicker I became, yet I would not address my alcohol problem because alcohol had become my best friend. Denial runs deep! It took a family crisis where my family told me they would no longer support me emotionally or financially if I ended up in hospital and alcohol was involved. This scared me to the point where I called Alcoholics Anonymous and began attending AA meetings. It takes time but AA seems to be working for me. I have arrested my drinking problem by total abstinence. Now the medication that I take has a chance to work the way it is intended.

Stopping drinking is only part of the solution. For me, working with doctors who understood mood disorders and getting the proper medication is the key to a successful recovery. Now that I don't drink I am in touch with my true feelings and this has helped me identify which medications work for me. When I was drinking it was next to impossible to tell if a medications was working or not.

Since August 1994 I have not had to enter a hospital for treatment of manic behaviour. Not drinking, one day at a time, is having a tremendously positive impact on my mental health.

If you think you may have a drinking problem, and can't seem to stop, get help. Total abstinence and the right medications are improving my chance of living a normal life style away from mood swings.

Mark F.

### **Volunteer of the Month Award Winners** **For January, February & March 2004**

**"Volunteers of the Month"** at P.A.C.E. receive a certificate, \$5.00 in cash and mention in the newsletter.

**January 2004:** Mr. Lawrence Pelletier was named Volunteer of the Month for helping Inez in the kitchen on the second floor.

**February 2004:** Mr. Marcel Dionne won this award for his hard work on the Advocacy Committee, cleaning out the basement, helping out over Christmas and many other volunteering opportunities around P.A.C.E.

**March, 2004:** Ms. Betty McDonald has joined P.A.C.E. fairly recently and already is busy volunteering her time on committees and around the house. She has also joined the Newsletter Committee and is a great proof reader.

**Volunteering is a great opportunity to give back some of the time and help that we have been given. It's a chance to learn, grow and gain valuable experience, and to be part of an exciting team that helps to make a difference in people's lives.**

**P.A.C.E. offers volunteer opportunities in many different areas. If you'd like to help out at P.A.C.E., ask the staff for our list of volunteer areas.**

Inez May, BA., H.B.S.W., Membership Development Worker

## **HOW TO STAY YOUNG**

1. Throw out non-essential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctor worry about them. That is why you pay him/her.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." And the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, often and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it is family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish you health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Do not take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mail, to the next county, to a foreign country, but NOT to where the guilt is.
10. Tell the people you love that you love them at every opportunity.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER:

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

**Author:** George Carlin

**Submitted by:** Sue M.

## **PERSONAL BILL OF RIGHTS**

(Adapted by Mary Ellen Copeland from *Anxiety and Phobia Workbook*, Edmund J. Bourne, PhD., 1990, New Harbinger Publications, Oakland, CA.)

1. I have the right to ask for what I want.
2. I have the right to say *no* to requests or demands I can't meet.
3. I have the right to change my mind.
4. I have the right to make mistakes and not have to be perfect.
5. I have the right to follow my own values and standards.
6. I have the right to express all of my feelings, both positive or negative, in a manner that will not harm others.
7. I have the right to say no to anything when I feel I am not ready, it is unsafe, or it violates my values.

8. I have the right to determine my own priorities.
9. I have the right not to be responsible for others' behaviours, actions, feelings or problems.
10. I have the right to expect honesty from others.
11. I have the right to feel angry at someone I love and to express this in a responsible manner.
12. I have the right to be uniquely myself.
13. I have the right to feel scared and say "I'm afraid."
14. I have the right to say "I don't know."
15. I have the right to make decisions based on my feelings, beliefs and values.
16. I have the right to my own reality.
17. I have the right to my own needs for personal space and time.
18. I have the right to be playful and frivolous.
19. I have the right to be healthy.
20. I have the right to be in a non-abusive environment.
21. I have the right to make friends and be comfortable around people.
22. I have the right to change and grow.
23. I have the right to have my needs and wants respected by others.
24. I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
25. I have the right to grieve.
26. I have the right to a fulfilling sex life.
27. I have the right to be happy.

### **Dual Recovery Anonymous**

The most common cause of psychiatric relapse today is the use of alcohol or drugs.

A person who had both a mental illness and a substance abuse problem is referred to as **dually diagnosed**.

Dual Recovery Anonymous (DRA) is an independent, non-professional, twelve step, self-help fellowship organization for people with a dual diagnosis. Our goal is to help men and women who experiences a dual diagnosis. Both "no-fault" illnesses affect us in all areas of our lives: physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually.

Thunder Bay now has a "Second Chance" group of DRA holding closed meetings on Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. at 329 Waverly Street. Information and pamphlets are available at a number of places around town including P.A.C.E.

### **Some Thoughts**

#### **POSITIVE QUOTE:**

"The common denominator of success lies in the fact that each person formed the habit of doing things that failures do not like to do."

#### **DAILY MOTIVATION:**

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We have learned how to make a living, but not a life. We have added years to life not life to years. We have been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbour. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We have done larger things, but not better things.

We have cleaned up the air but polluted the soul. We have conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We have learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stock room. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete [on your computer]

Remember, spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever. Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side. Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it does not cost a cent.

Remember, to say, "I love you" to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside you. Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not there again. Give time to love, give time to speak, and give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind.

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

**Author:** George Carlin

**Submitted by:** Sue M.

## **Thank you!**

**P.A.C.E. would like to thank Norlink for their kind donation of Magnus Theatre tickets to see the play, "Proof".**

**Thanks to their generosity, David Wilson and Jim Gillespie were able to see the play.**

### **Do you need a Medic Alert Bracelet?**

The legislation has passed new rules, whereby the Medic Alert Foundation will provide a stainless steel Medic Alert Bracelet free of charge to anyone who is on ODSP benefits. You must provide the Foundation with a note from your doctor and your most recent cheque stub or a letter from ODSP confirming that you are collecting benefits. The Foundation also requires you to join as a Member, but the fee will be waived. For more information, call:

**1-800-668-1507.** *Sylvia Helfrich-Storozuk*  
System Advocate

## **Staff Reports**

### **Economic Development Worker**

We are now nearing the end of the first year of my contract through ODSP Innovative Funds. Back in mid May of 2003, we had no focus groups but started out first in mid June. The first was the cleaning focus group now referred to as Mop & Go. To date, we have five focus groups based on common interests and one general focus group. Folks, there is room for lots more.

In the folder I put in my binder you will see the story of "Fresh Start", a Toronto-based Alternative Business. It started in 1989 and now employs 100 people and has sales over \$500,000 per year. Yes, if they can do it, we can do it. That is, we can be successful too.

Here in Thunder Bay, we have the following focus groups: 1) Publishing 2) Arts and Crafts 3) Mop & Go and 4) Manufacturing. Geraldton has one coffee shop and Marathon has one general focus group.

The five focus groups are well into their feasibility studies and some will be done soon.

It would be terrific to see all five groups open their doors this fall. Although this is NOT IMPOSSIBLE, there is still much to be done in the way of business plans and presentations to potential funders such as ODSP-ES.

The members doing the studies are working very hard and could very much use help to complete their tasks and create Alternative Businesses.

Just think! You could get in on the ground floor by creating the business and being part of the operation.

If you are wanting to help or know someone who would help, please contact me. If you wish to know more about a particular focus group, contact me and I will put you in touch with the person involved with it.

Kathryn Mayer is the Chairperson on the Economic Development Committee.

*Don Upton* CDW/PACE/MISN Economic Development Worker

### **Public Education Report**

I continue to have the video afternoons on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month. These opportunities to view the educational videos, I believe, can help us in some way in our recovery. We try to pick a topic that would be interesting to members as well as invite any member's request to view an educational video. I hope that those that have not yet had a chance to come to a video afternoon plan to do so.

Another group that I am very excited about and enjoy running is the group that meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month. Through a healthy lunch we discuss different topics around the concept of RECOVERY. I find that the discussions and ideas that members share are fantastic. It's open to PACE members. I just ask that you contact me, or sign up for the lunch so that I have a count of how many will be attending. Hope to see some new faces.

As a follow up to the Recovery Conference from May 2003, on February 20th there was a one day teleconference held at LPH and throughout the region including as far west as Kenora. Consumer/survivors and families interested in this free opportunity heard Mary Anne Farcus speak again on Recovery. This event was very exciting as it was the first of its kind to connect North-western Ontario consumers/survivors at one time to share concerns.

In March I made a presentation to the Schizophrenic Society. I attended a Workshop on Diversity Training through CAMH. The day was very informative, and left the participants with a sense of where there needs to be work done in the Thunder Bay area on diversity training.

I have also been busy with Chantal, student from LU on Fridays, with preparing for the **Stigma Workshop, which was held on Friday March 26, 2004 at 2 p.m.** The Theatre Group met and discussed some ideas as to how to go about working with CMHA on an Arts Group. Unfortunately, CMHA has not been able to pursue this and partner with PACE but has wished us good luck with the project. I was invited to attend a film and book release at the Finlandia Club Friday March 12, 2004 from 7-10 pm. The community is very interested in what PACE is about. I view this as a positive. This will offer an increase of opportunities for members to tell to their stories, reduce the stigma of mental illness and educate and help change attitudes toward people with mental illness.

*Kathleen Morrison*, Public Education Worker

### **System Advocate Report**

In January P.A.C.E. held a Grocery Bingo that was organized and facilitated by the Advocacy and Social Rec. committees. We had a good turnout.

In February, the Advocacy Committee brought in Marilyn Adderly from Shopper's Drug Mart to present on Over-the-Counter drugs and their side effects. This was an informative presentation. Also in February I gave a presentation on German Culture and people seemed to enjoy both the presentation and the food.

I ordered the applications for the Medic Alert Bracelets and they have already arrived. They are located near the library area. Remember, they are free of charge to people on ODSP.

On March 15th, I held a workshop on "Accessing Justice through Small Claims". Four members and our student, Heather attended. If you ask any of them, they will tell you that the Small Claims system really is short and simple. In fact, we had allocated 3.5 hours to conduct this workshop and, with the trip to the Courthouse, we were actually finished in 1.5 hours, AND, everyone understood the process at the end. Also, the evaluations indicated that everyone thought the workshop was interesting and felt they had received information that they could actually use.

I'd also like to remind the members to keep checking the Self-Advocacy Binder in the dining room because we are always adding new, upcoming events. Our next event will be a presentation on Holistic Healing, which will be held on April 14th. We expect to get some good information that day, that has something for everyone.

Until next month, I hope everyone enjoys the warmer weather and has a great Easter!

Video afternoons are still held on the first and third Wednesday of each month The Advocacy Committee has finally set regular meeting dates which are the first Tuesday of each month at 10:30 a.m.. And, with all of the projects we're doing, we always welcome new members.

Your Advocate Worker,

*Sylvia Helffrich-Storozuk*, System Advocate

### **Membership Development Worker**

In January, there was a Cultural Forum held here at P.A.C.E. The cultures that were presented were the Italian and Finnish Cultures.

In February we held a Volunteer Appreciation Night. Everyone who attended were very helpful in the cleaning up after the meal.

I would like to tell you about a Scholarship Opportunity for our members. If you fit the criteria, I ask that you to fill out an application. Who knows? It could be what some of you are looking for and it is always better to increase our knowledge base in areas of interest to ourselves. If you are interested, please contact me.

Our fiscal year (April 2003—March 21, 2004) has finally reared it's head so it is a busy time for staff. So please, have patience with us and we will return to normal after we complete the year-end operating plan.

I will be going to Toronto for a Round Table Discussion in early May. This has to do with “Return to Work”, “Return to Function”, for psychiatric consumers in what the government sees as a timely fashion. What does this mean? I will report to you in the next issue of Thunder Struck.

Spring is here! Let’s hope for warm weather and remain happy, healthy and safe.  
Until next issue ~

Respectfully submitted:

*Inez May*, BA., H.B.S.W.

Membership Development Worker

### **Advocate's Advice**

Vulnerable people who live with mental illness are not some mysterious special interest group with peculiar demands. They’re people’s brothers, sisters, parents and friends. Ultimately, they’re all of us. We will all get old or sick, at some point. What could happen next is that people may stop listening to you and start making your choices for you. You might not like their choices much and you might not think there is anything you can do about it.

Government support of advocacy makes a difference. If it’s gone, something has to take its place. Advocacy can thrive without legislation, as long as people know what it is and what a difference it can make in their life and the lives of their loved ones.

With this in mind, P.A.C.E. encourages members to participate in the Self-Advocacy workshops, attend Video Afternoons and take free training that is offered at P.A.C.E. and intended to help people learn to advocate for themselves.

*Sylvia Helfrich-Storozuk* System Advocate

### **LAW VS POLICY**

**LAW:** Is enacted through the courts and government legislation and enforced by the federal and provincial governments.

**POLICY:** A course or method of action designed to guide and determine present and future decisions.

Policies are rules that organizations create for themselves. They are not written in stone and, unlike the Law, exceptions to policy can be made. For example, we have all dealt with stores and companies where we tried to return an item or change something. How many times have you heard, “I’m sorry, that’s against our store policy”? If you strongly believe that your request is fair and reasonable, then remind the person that their policy is not a law and ask the person to make an exception. If a request is fair and reasonable, an exception will often be made.

*Sylvia Helfrich-Storozuk* System Advocate

### **Thought for the Day**

*We do not have to get caught in the middle of other people's issues.*  
-- *Melody Beattie*

Learning to respect boundaries, our own and other people's, eliminates much of the stress that hinders relationships. Accepting the behaviour and the opinions of our friends as legitimate for them allows our relationships to teach us tolerance and

patience and love. Our journey on this planet is not about "fixing" or controlling others, but about loving them wholly, just as we want to be loved.

We need other people. Our humanity is enhanced by our mutual experiences. But we also need to let others learn from their mistakes and their own experiences, rather than to help them avoid what they need for their growth. We hate to see our friends in pain. Our compassion is triggered when trouble trips them. But their journey must be inviolate. We'll only prolong their struggle by intervening where we aren't needed.

*It's hard to back away when a friend is in trouble. But telling her I love and support her may give her the strength she needs.*

**Source:** "A Woman's Spirit" by Karen Casey

### **Editorial Policy**

Thunder Struck is a quarterly publication of People Advocating for Change through Empowerment Inc. We welcome all submissions that relate to the P.A.C.E. Mission Statement.

**Note:** The opinions expressed herein are those of respective authors and not necessarily those of the committee of Thunder Struck or PACE. The committee reserves the right to edit articles by content, length and style.

All submissions to be addressed to:

**c/o Newsletter @ People Advocating for Change through Empowerment 329  
Waverly St. Thunder Bay ON P7B 1B6**

**Email: [pacepew@shaw.ca](mailto:pacepew@shaw.ca)**

**Fax: (807) 344-8147** or put directly into the newsletter box in the office.

### **Mission Statement**

PACE is a mental health consumer/survivor organization run for consumer/survivors that provides the following services upon membership: advocacy, education, reduction of social isolation, promotion of partnerships, research, and improvement of quality of life and provision of employment opportunities.