

TRANSITION



SPRING
SUMMER
2017

Section 1 CMHA SK Pages

News and Views from friends, members and staff of CMHA in SK including

Page 5
Spotlight on CMHA Prince Albert Branch

Section 2 TRANSITION Pages

Page 17
Check out Zoe Barclay-Wright's story "Dining in the dark"

Section 3 WFYL Pages

Page 39
Offerings from the Writing For Your Life groups

Enjoy!



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Saskatchewan
Mental health for all

TRANSITION

PUBLISHER:

Phyllis O'Connor, Executive Director
Canadian Mental Health Association
(Saskatchewan Division) Inc.

EDITOR: Ted Dyck

MANAGING EDITOR: Lynn Hill

Our Mission:

Founded in 1950, The Canadian Mental Health Association (Saskatchewan Division) Inc. is a volunteer-based organization which supports and promotes the rights of persons with mental illness to maximize their full potential; and promotes and enhances the mental health and well-being of all members of the community.

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Call 306-525-5601 or toll-free 1-800-461-5483 (in SK)

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1. Send original and unpublished articles, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and visual art that represent current mental health issues and reflect on their impact on individuals.
2. Maximum manuscript lengths: prose – 10 ms pages; poetry – 10 poems or 5 ms pages, whichever is less; visual art – 5 pieces.
3. Reprints and simultaneous submissions (to several magazines) are not considered.
4. Turnaround time is normally one issue or up to 4 months: do not send a second submission before the first has been reviewed.
5. Payment is \$50.00 per printed page (\$25/half page); \$40.00 per published visual art work; and \$200.00 for cover art. Cap on contributions: \$200/author
6. Only electronic submissions including full contact information and a brief bio are accepted.
7. Submit manuscripts in MS Word format (12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, normal margins) as e-mail attachment to contactus@cmhask.com; or directly to the Editor at tdyck@sasktel.net.
8. Surface mail should be sent to:

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Kyle Moffatt and daughter Bailey dressed up for the Wade Moffatt Memorial Gala held May 5, 2017 at the Conexus Arts Centre in Regina

Special acknowledgement is given to the
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the United Way for financial support



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EDITORIAL

New format increases magazine's appeal

TED DYCK

TRANSITION hasn't wasted much time establishing its "new" shape.

For example, the CMHASK section has naturally turned out to be a lively and informative part of each issue. Besides this issue's Division and Branch updates and news – worthy exercises in innovation, all – a motif of giving occurs in no less than three articles or pieces in its pages. A basic aspect of giving is of course all our monthly monetary support of the initiatives of CMHASK. But I was struck by two other articles that discussed the mental health of caregivers themselves. A nationally released "Mental Health Caregiver Guide" addresses the mental health of caregivers of persons who have a mental illness. Rackow's article on "Caregiver Affected Recovery Education" describes the beginnings of a

local initiative to maintain the mental health of caregivers of all kinds. The latter might be helpful also for writing facilitators, who function as "caregivers" of a sort to persons who have relatively manageable mental health issues. In all three instances, I felt the motif alerted me to an under-recognized role of giving in relation to mental health.

The TRANSITION section, with its decreased size, has an opportunity to elevate the writing quality of the content it publishes. Good writing isn't the primary motive of writing for wellness; it is, however, a natural measure of the effectiveness of

such writing. I have spoken of this elsewhere, but it bears repeating. In my experience, working with writers for wellness takes a fairly consistent arc. First, there is an expressing stage where the writer finally speaks the pain or anger or joy or ... in her/his own words. Second is a sharing stage where the writer can choose to share both pain and writing in a confidential and supportive environment. Third is a revising stage in which the writer herself initiates that most writerly of questions – Do you get what I'm saying? Am I making my point clear? And that's when you know that a small healing has taken place, when the writer's attention moves beyond the immediate self to the self as it is represented to an audience, when the gaze moves from one's own navel to the way that navel appears to an Other.

The WFYL section, dedicated to members of the Write For Your Life groups situated in various branches of the Division, has been featuring a popular writing contest in each issue. A notable aspect of these contests is that they are to date voluntarily supported, designed, and judged by facilitators of the WFYL groups. Perhaps it's time to extend this dedication: anyone interested in the exhilarating experience of supporting/designing/judging a writing contest may apply directly to me in a brief letter stating their reasons and qualifications for doing so! More seriously, I've recently received queries from contributors in Alberta and Manitoba about becoming facilitators of WFYL groups in their provinces. Now that would be a real extension of our dedication.

Finally, I and all our contributors are keenly aware of the support of the publisher of TRANSITION, namely, CMHA(SK). I know of only one other such magazine in Canada (Open Minds Quarterly). Take a bow.



TED DYCK
EDITOR



Reaper by Rolli

A full year ahead for CMHA in SK

PHYLLIS O'CONNOR

The year 2016 is now behind us and we are entering a new year of activity here at CMHA Saskatchewan Division. Our Board and staff wish everyone all the very best in 2017.

This year is going to prove to be a year of planning as 2018 is the 100th Anniversary of the Canadian Mental Health Association. National Office, CMHA Division and Branches are all planning special events to commemorate this important milestone in our history. CMHA National Office announced a "CMHA 100" logo competition. This new logo will act as the centrepiece of branding for the centennial year. The winning logo will be unveiled at the upcoming Mental Health For All Conference, September 18-20, 2017 in Toronto. The winner will receive an award and a complimentary registration (\$625 value) for the Conference. In addition, the logo creator will be recognized in a feature profile on the National CMHA website (www.cmha.ca). We're excited to see what our many creative people come up with.

Our 2017 Provincial Conference and AGM will be held on June 2 at the Heritage Inn, Moose Jaw. Many thanks to our Moose Jaw Branch for hosting this event. The theme will be "Moving Forward: Leaving Trauma Behind – A Mental Health Workshop."

The keynote speaker will be Stéphane Grenier. A Lieutenant-Colonel (retired), Stéphane Grenier knows the toll mental health issues can take on individuals through his first-hand experience. Also speaking will be Priscilla Lalond, a trainer with the Centre for Suicide Prevention in Calgary. Full details can be found by contacting mjprofessionaldevelopment@sasktel.net

On November 16, 2016 a meeting was held with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to request an investigation into systemic discrimination of mental health and addictions in our province. Since that meeting, Rebecca Rackow has been hired as a consultant to work collaboratively with an investigator to be assigned by the Human Rights Commission to research and investigate

further the assertion that the mental health and addictions system has been discriminated against in relation to physical health. She will also be tasked with setting up a committee to further the public awareness and pressure on government regarding this issue.

Rebecca Rackow has also been contracted by CMHA Saskatchewan Division to develop and implement a Caregiver Affected Recovery Education (C.A.R.E.) Program. Details about this new program are included in Rebecca's report.

In the wake of announcements regarding the changes to the Regional Health Authorities, Sharon Lyons has been contracted by CMHA Saskatchewan Division to establish communication/rapport to discuss issues around positive changes those in leadership of the Regional Health Authorities in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and North Battleford would like to see or already have underway in their respective regions. This will also provide a forum for discussion of possible issues with regard to the consolidation of the Regional Health Authorities. Small family/consumer committees will be set up to attend meetings in each of the above regions to give community feedback into these changes. We are unsure of how this move to consolidate Health Regions will play out but CMHA Saskatchewan Division is working to ensure that consumer input is not overlooked when these changes take place.

The week around Bell Let's Talk Day (January 25) was very busy for CMHA Saskatchewan Division staff. We had an opportunity for radio and television interviews on a variety of mental health topics during the week. We had a real opportunity to speak about how we would like to see the additional funding targeted for mental health from the federal government used to implement recommendations from the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan. It was a great opportunity to get our message out.

Our Cash Calendar campaign was a success again this year as we met our goal. For the 2018 Cash Calendar we are changing the format and marketing approach. The theme for the 2018 Cash Calendar will be "100 Years of Supporting Mental Health." We are inviting submissions of artwork, photography and poetry from consumers as well as the general public. Submissions are to include a quote reflecting on "How does your artwork, photo or poem support YOUR mental health?" Winning selections will be featured in the 2018 Cash Calendar but the winners and other selected submissions will also appear from time to time throughout the year on our website and social media. We are also adding a 50/50 ticket component to the next campaign – 15,000 50/50 tickets will be available for sale and winners will get one-half the proceeds from this raffle. We hope to make the 2018 Cash Calendar one to remember.

I want to take a moment to thank all of our dedicated staff and volunteers. Their hard work is what makes all of our programs and initiatives possible. We also wish to express our gratitude to all of our loyal donors who support the work that we do. *We couldn't do it without you.*



PHYLLIS O'CONNOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NEWS AND VIEWS
from friends,
members and
staff of the
Canadian Mental
Health Association
in Saskatchewan



Canadian
Mental Health
Association
Saskatchewan
Division Inc.

Push for more and better services continues

DAVE NELSON

Some Transition reports can tend to be rather bland and even boring, but this is definitely not one of them.

What a busy and largely positive last several months we have had!

Changes announced removing some benefits to the SAID program recipients led to a great deal of time and effort to reverse that decision. Along with many other partners in the community, positive discussions with staff and the Minister of Social Services resulted in a much more reasonable compromise being found.

As well, a great deal of effort by our Division, our National CMHA Office and other community partners at the National level led to positive news regarding Federal money targeted at mental health, addictions and home care for our Province. We continue to advocate for the best community-based use of these monies in funding priorities set by the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan recommendations.

A presentation made by our Association to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission on November 16, 2016 regarding the systemic discrimination we believe has been done to the mental health system is being followed

up on and we hope will result in positive changes being made to funding of the mental health system in our Province.

As we look towards spring, our focus continues to be identifying the best priorities to advocate for and to assist persons with mental health and addictions issues in our Province to have better services and ultimately better lives.



DAVE NELSON
ASSOCIATE
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR



Attending the second annual Wade Moffatt Memorial Gala on Friday, May 5 were: Lieutenant Governor Vaughn Solomon Schofield (left), Lieutenant Commander Clark Northey, Kyle Moffatt, and Danelle Moffatt.

This year the theme of the masquerade event was 1920s Hollywood (Great Gatsby). Wade Moffatt was known for his energy, compassion, and genuine nature, but also for his care and efforts within our community. After a long battle with untreated bipolar disorder and alcoholism, Wade took his own life. Wade's family and a few close friends have worked in collaboration with the Canadian Mental Health Association (Saskatchewan Division) to create an event that would honour Wade for his contributions in our community while creating awareness for mental health.

SPOTLIGHT ON CMHA PRINCE ALBERT

Branch active in community

**PRESIDENT
CMHA PRINCE ALBERT BRANCH
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015/2016**

SHAYNE LAZAROWICH

CMHA PA Branch provides programming and services to our members living with mental illnesses. Our branch is very active within the Prince Albert community and has a direct impact through Educational Workshops provided to the Prince Albert community, as well as surrounding communities. We have been successful in providing learning opportunities for practicum students and, of course, through direct services provided for people living with mental illness, such as our

vocational programming, education and recreation opportunities, and our lunch program. I am proud of the positive impact we have on our community.

The branch staff continues to represent our values and pursue our goals in the community and within our programs. The enthusiasm our social committee shows towards fundraising BBQs is a testament to their dedication and commitment to our organization.

We are about to complete a new eight-unit apartment project, which will provide eight new apartments to the housing stock in Prince Albert. These units will be dedicated to people living with long term effects of mental illnesses. I am also very proud of the work our staff have done to achieve this milestone.

CMHA continues to support positive mental health in the community and I thank you all for the support you provide.



**SHAYNE
LAZAROWICH**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT 2015/2016

Second apartment ready for tenants

DOUG KINAR

This has been another great year at CMHA PA Branch. It was also a year of changes including welcoming a new liaison with the PAPHR.

The CMHA PA Branch staff decertified their connection with the SGEU. This in turn created a need for a new health insurance provider.

We received funding from the Community Initiatives Fund to provide MHFA workshops. This kept us very busy providing over 16 MHFA workshops throughout Saskatchewan.

We also received confirmation of a grant from Sask Housing Corporation to build another eight unit apartment complex for people living with mental illnesses. The new apartment was ready for the new year.

Our Social Committee has worked hard at fundraising through BBQ season and providing our participants with a variety of activities within the drop in centre.

We have added a new program, the photography club, in addition to our

Writing For Your Life group and art program.

We have hosted several practicum students from First Nations University, SK Polytechnic and U of S Nursing. In fact, our participants have had a large impact on educating the practicum students in their career path.

We also initiated an annual walk during Mental Health Week to #Get Loud about Mental Health.

I am very proud of our participants as they continue their journey on a path of recovery. I look forward to another year of innovative changes, growth, and programs development.



DOUG KINAR
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
CMHA PRINCE
ALBERT



Canadian
Mental Health
Association
Prince Albert



*Our goal - to provide
Advocacy, Education, Programs and Services
in the community of Prince Albert.*

Advocate and educate

We have combined Advocacy and Education because CMHA PA continues to create opportunities to Get Loud about Mental Health through Life Skill presentations and workshops such as Mental Health First Aide and ASIST. Our community partnerships are crucial for our organization.

The CMHA PA Branch Pamphlets are updated and available in the store and in branch. They are also included with appropriate correspondence as it provides an opportunity to highlight a snapshot of our branch. Students often use our pamphlets as a resource tool.

Our voice is also heard through participation on a variety of committees in the Prince Albert community.

PARTNERS & FUNDERS

PAPHR
CANSASK
UNITED WAY
FNU
SK POLYTECHNIQ
CIF
FOOD BANK
JUSTICE (Fine Options)
P.A ART CENTRE

COMMITTEES

Prince Albert Multi Cultural Council
Citizens Advisory Committee
Community Networking Coalition

WORKING TOWARDS RECOVERY

Recovery is not an event, not a destination, it is a "process," that values doing ones' best with their knowledge, skills and understandings available in the present moment, celebrating every success even while an individual and supporters work as partners to increase awareness and abilities for healthier living.

Recovery builds on the person's own priorities and interests which is another way of saying "person centred care."

Programs and services

VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS:

Kitchen,
As Good As New,
Homestead Quilting, and
Janitorial

SERVICES:

Drop In Centre and
Lunch

Those participating in these programs are learning skills that are transferable in the community where they reside as their journey to recovery continues.

Their participation reflects the same expectations (with considerations), as an employer might have: commitment to a schedule, phone in when sick, requesting vacations.

Participants are learning valuable skills such as time management, task management, co-operation, communication and decision-making. They receive an honorarium for their efforts.

Vocational programs

AS GOOD AS NEW STORE

continues to play an important role in the downtown community. We offer consignment and donation opportunities as well as liquidation clothing to the Prince Albert consumers. Participants are learning organizational skills, time management, social skills, co-operation, task management, as well as team work.

HOMESTEAD QUILTING PROGRAM

works hard designing and sewing many quilts throughout the year. These quilts can be purchased from the PA branch. They produce beautiful patchwork quilts of various sizes and themes. Sports team logos or a team jersey can be incorporated into the quilt design. Memory quilts are created when a loved one's clothes are carefully transformed into a beautiful quilt for family members to enjoy for many years. Our Quilting program participates in the Riverside Craft Show and the PA Exhibition Focus on Christmas trade show.

KITCHEN PROGRAM

works hard planning, slicing, dicing, and preparing nutritious and well-balanced meals for our Lunch program. Management of time, tasks, inventory, menu planning, participants, food quality, cleanliness, groceries, bulk storage, are just a few skills people will learn as they participate in this program.

BBQ PROGRAM

is an extension of the Kitchen program and was created to accommodate the growing interest in the program itself and to provide a STRENGTH BASED opportunity of empowerment for the Social committee to take responsibility for fundraising to supplement bingo prizes, canteen and extra activities that may not otherwise be accessible due to budget pressures. This program operates from May until September. The participants learn the responsibilities of time and task management, social skills, team cooperation, BBQ cooking skills, and money handling. They are responsible for set-up, takedown, clean up and inventory control (propane, buns, burgers, wieners and condiments).

JANITORIAL PROGRAM

learn skills needed to assist in keeping the inside and outside of the building clean and organized such as sweep; mop; wash; dust; vacuum; disinfect door knobs, stairwell rails and pertinent surfaces; pick up and empty trash containers; wash windows and walls; clean bathroom and kitchen fixtures and stock inventory control.

Services - in branch

LUNCH PROGRAM

is the result of the Kitchen participants who chop, slice and dice, cook and bake nutritious well-balanced meals, served Monday to Friday, from 12:00pm to 12:30pm. Participants pay \$2.00 per meal or they may purchase a monthly meal ticket for \$32.00. We received a grant from United Way and the Prince Albert and Area Community Foundation to assist with the food budget.

NEST DROP IN CENTRE

operates Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. The purpose of the drop-in centre is to give participants a safe place to gather and socialize with peers. There are a variety of events that happen on a weekly basis and participation is voluntary. Coffee to date is free and served from 8:30 am to 11:30 am and continues after lunch from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Participants can relax, have coffee, read a book, watch TV or play video games, have a friendly game of pool or play their favourite tunes on the stereo. The peer operated Social committee enthusiastically plans a variety of activities such as bingo, monthly birthdays, pool and card tournaments,



Executive Director Doug Kinar, takes a turn in the kitchen

Support worker

HOUSING PROGRAM

Housing for people with mental illnesses can assist in rebuilding and maintaining independence, day-to-day routines, confidence and social networks. People who live where they want to are more likely to have a job, social supports and are part of a path to safety, security, connectedness and acceptance.

The successes of CMHA HOUSING PROJECTS are achieved through strength-based approaches that focus on choice, stability, affordability and support. Affordability and having a choice of where you want to live is one of the most important factors in housing. Stability may mean that you live independently but with supports tied to the housing; it means building strong routines and networks. Foundation skills such as basic budgeting, hygiene, grocery shopping, balanced meal planning, cooking and housekeeping are re-enforced. Personal growth and goal setting such as commitment to medication management and appointments, time and task management, accountability and responsibility are honoured as personal achievements and goals are reached.

The Support Worker will assist the individual to navigate through challenges and obstacles as they journey to recovery. Case management is

strength-based and focuses on the needs and personal goals of the individual. The individuals can thrive as they successfully pursue life on their own.

We are in the process of building another 8-unit apartment block. The same referral process and expectations for the individuals will apply. Rent is tied to affordable housing rates.

MAPLERIDGE APARTMENTS



Mapleridge Apartments



Community Kitchen continues to thrive! Cooking and baking supports our mental well-being and is said to be meditative. It stimulates the senses and nourishing activities make people feel good. It is creative and, of course, eating a dish you have prepared always makes people happy! This program is part of the Housing program and is a requirement for all individuals to participate. They will learn basic menu planning, menu reading, basic meal preparation, and plate service, time and task management and just as importantly cleanup. Their social skills, communication, organizational and creative skills are also supported. All meals prepared in the kitchen are meals that can be cooked at home. Menu ideas are created from what is in our cupboards today, what can we create from ingredients available.

Prince Albert Parkland Health Region sees the value in this program by referring people they feel could live on their own someday once skills have developed. These people will have a greater chance for success as they effectively develop skills at their own pace and will be strong future considerations for our Housing program as space becomes available.

Mental well-being means feeling good – about yourself and the world around you – and being able to get on with life in the way you want. Learning can boost self-confidence and self-esteem. This helps to build a sense of purpose, and helps us connect with others.

Research shows that learning throughout life is associated with greater satisfaction and optimism, and improved ability to get the most from life.

Setting targets and hitting them can create positive feelings of achievement. Learning often involves interacting with other people. This can also increase our well-being by helping us build and strengthen social networks.

MOODZONE

Education programs

PHOTOGRAPHY
ART

WRITING FOR YOUR LIFE (WFYL)
POSITIVE COPING

Participation in these programs is voluntarily. These programs are available for anyone wishing to participate in something without a long-term commitment; there is no

participation fee. The opportunity to learn new skills or enhance old skills will open up pathways of healing that supports the individual as they continue their journey to recovery. These programs are optional but considering the ongoing support by the participants it is quite clear they are necessary, valued and appreciated.

PRINCE ALBERT WRITING FOR YOUR LIFE GROUP REPORT 2015 - 2016

Group's book goes to second printing

LYNDA MONAHAN
FACILITATOR

The Prince Albert Writing For Your Life group is one of several creative writing groups associated with CMHA across the province initiated by Ted Dyck, editor of Transition and the Writing For Your Life newsletter. The Prince Albert group has been meeting every second Wednesday for the past three and a half years at The Nest, the local CMHA drop in center. We write about all kinds of things – about something that happened recently, about the seasons, about life and love and memories and so much more. The group is made up of approximately 12 to 14 regular members along with others who join us sporadically. We occasionally go on field trips to the museum for a tour and then we write out on the balcony overlooking the river.

With financial support made available through Common Weal Community Arts the Prince Albert Writing For Your Life group published a collection of poems and stories titled *With Just One Reach of Hands*. The collection went into a second printing and our group had a public book launch and gave a number of readings at the library, for Christmas events and at a CMHA convention in Regina, which had a Writing For Your Life group component.

Since that time everyone has been working very hard on their writing. A number of writers in the group had written enough to put together their own small individual collections and there was a high degree of interest in having these collections published in book form. We also have in our group a songwriter, Holly Knife, who very much wanted to see her original songs recorded. We were fortunate to obtain a Sask Lotteries grant through Common Weal Community Arts which allowed the project to go ahead.

Then the work started! The writers were involved in the process every step of the way, from writing and compiling the work they wanted in their book, to choosing cover images and titles and writing their acknowledgements.

Once the material was ready, the file went to Pasquia Publishing in Tisdale to be printed up in eight small books, forty pages in length with a print run of fifty copies each. A talented local musician, Lilian Donahue, set two of group member Holly Knife's original song lyrics to music and recorded them on a beautiful youtube video. As well, we had

the two songs burned to a CD and we released one hundred copies of Holly's songs titled "To The End and Back."

We scheduled a gala book and CD launch at the Grace Campbell Gallery in Prince Albert for invited friends and family and advertised to the general public. The evening was a great success! The writers read short selections from their books, we played Holly's CD and had an all around great time.

We have other members of the Writing For Your Life group who are still working toward their own collections and we will be making those books a reality in the near future. Everyone gets the opportunity and no one will be left out.

Writers sell their own books, which we priced at ten dollars apiece, as was the CD. Each person is able to keep the money from their book sales for themselves and sales have been so brisk we ordered a second print run.

Some people have been real entrepreneurs. Ian McIntyre has occasionally had a table set up outside of Coles bookstore on Saturdays where he has his books for sale. Randy Cochrane has sold many copies, as has Dot Settee who was invited to read at the Indian Metis Friendship Centre. Sandra Greenwood arranged for a public reading of her book at the library and many in the group came to hear her read. Others have chosen to give most of their books away to family and friends. The books are theirs to do with as they please, as Holly's CD is for her.

The opportunity to write and publish their work has been an enormously positive experience, which has encouraged the writers, building confidence and a sense of pride in their accomplishment.

A project like Writing For Your Life takes a village and we are very fortunate to have that village! Huge thanks to Doug Kinar and Anna Marie Huybrecht with the Prince Albert branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, for their constant support and encouragement, to Judy McNaughton and Common Weal Community Arts for the support of our various projects. Thanks also to Ted Dyck for consistently publishing the work of the various Writing For Your Life groups and for all he has done and still does to keep the concept of Writing For Your Life alive and growing. I am privileged to work with such an incredible group of people, to help give a voice through writing to those who so often are not heard and to share the poems and stories of the Prince Albert Writing For Your Life group.

CMHA PRINCE ALBERT

CMHA Photography Club Report 2015-2016

**KYLE ANDERSON
FACILITATOR**

The Photography Club is a peer led group that meets for two hours once per week typically on a Tuesday morning. To date we have focused on learning various basic aspects of composition, lighting and editing as we go, and progress with the emphasis on self-determined participation and expression as well as being democratic in what we do for and with our art. We often go on outings such as museums, a simple walk through downtown Prince Albert, Kinsmen Park, Little Red Park and even an abandoned cemetery. Our goal is to promote artistic expression and allow participants to find a new visual voice for themselves.

I became involved with CMHA as a member of the photography collective Broken Light and National Geographic Magazine, with work published in Your Shot. CMHA saw the value in running an active and ongoing photography program and asked me to facilitate it. All of our CMHA Photography Club members have now become members of the Broken Light Collective and are looking to foster a partnership with Broken light and increase exposure and inclusion for our program members.



RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Social Committee is peer supported and consists of approximately ten members from the Nest and Vocational programs. They are very active throughout the year as they plan the internal and external Nest activities. Internal events may include bingos twice per week, pool and card tournaments, dances, karaoke, movie and popcorn afternoons, and guest speakers. Special events they organize are Valentine's Day, Halloween and Christmas celebrations. Examples of external events may include trips to the lake, picnics in the park, horseback and wagon rides, football and hockey games and gatherings with participants from Nipawin, Melfort, and Tisdale. Some events might even include trips to Regina and Saskatoon.

ART GROUP Report

**ALAN RUDER
FACILITATOR**

A qualified Visual Arts instructor offers a year round multi-media art program to clients at the Nest. These diverse art activities provide opportunities for participants to explore meaningful artistic experiences using a variety of two and three-dimensional mediums that promote participation, discussion, and creativity.

The diversity of the art experiences challenges the participants to explore new ideas and work collaboratively in a group setting. The success of the program is evident by the consistent participation of a core group of students, as well as the many people who attend the class occasionally.

The participants' artwork is always on display at the Nest in the common area and in other meeting rooms at the Nest.

The Annual Spring Art Gala held at the Prince Albert Arts Centre includes several original works of art created by participants from the Nest. Various dignitaries from the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region, Canadian Mental Health Association, Prince Albert City Council, and several other community organizations from Prince Albert and the surrounding area attend the Gala Opening.

Many benefits are revealed through the Art program including increased communication skills, increased self-respect and self esteem, improved skills and a sense of achievement, and a safe outlet for feelings of fear, guilt, pain and anger. This year the Visual Arts program at the Nest continues to enrich the lives of many Prince Albert residents.

POSITIVE COPING Report

Positive Coping Group meets every Tuesday at 1:30 from September to June with a break during the summer months, and reconvenes in September. They learn skills connected to communication, relaxation, and stress management. A Prince Albert Parkland Health Region (PAPHR) Community Psychiatric Nurse facilitates this group.

The CMHA Prince Albert
2015/2016 Branch report
was submitted by
Anne Marie Huybrecht,
Executive Secretary,
Program Director

CARE FOR THE CAREGIVERS

Mental Health Caregiver Guide

While at the CMHA National Conference in Toronto, September 2016, we had the opportunity to attend a presentation releasing a new “Mental Health Caregiver Guide.”

The guide was the result of a collaboration between Ottawa Public Health, Military Family Services, the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch, CMHA National Office and the Mental Illness Caregivers Association.

The guide was created out of a need identified by a caregiver of a person living with severe mental illness and the President of the Mental Illness Caregivers Association. A partnership was formed to develop a national resource for Canadian caregivers of children, youth, adults and older adults fac-

ing these issues.

The guide is divided into two main sections: Caring for YOU and Caring for the Individual. It is further divided into Child, Youth, Adult and Older Adult sections to reflect caring for individuals across the lifespan and the responsibilities associated with caregiving.

The purpose is to provide the caregiver with helpful tips, tools and information. It contains activities designed to help you think about what you are learning in greater depth and to put some tools in place to help with your learning. The information is based on things you CAN control, and things that you CAN do to complement a treatment plan, promote recovery or while waiting for services.

If you would like either a digital or print copy of the guide, please contact phylliso@cmhask.com or call 306-525-5601 or 1-800-461-5483.



Mental illness affects us all ... you can make a difference

Through the years, the Canadian Mental Health Association (Saskatchewan Division) Inc. has helped thousands of people living with mental illness and their families. Our success is due to our committed staff and volunteers, government and business support, financial help from community agencies and, most importantly, the support and generosity of our donors.

Through monthly giving our donors can demonstrate a strong commitment to the work of CMHA Saskatchewan Division while providing a predictable and stable source of funding to support our many programs and services.

WE INVITE YOU TO MAKE YOUR MARK.

Monthly donations are easy! Regular donations can be made in affordable monthly payments.

Giving options include: Pre-authorized chequing (PAC) or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), credit card transactions,

or post-dated cheques. Donors can save postage and time with automatic transactions.

Monthly donations are flexible. Donors can easily increase, decrease, pause or stop their gift at any time.

A cumulative tax receipt is issued annually.

So much has been achieved... so much yet to be done

By donating to the Canadian Mental Health Association (Saskatchewan Division) Inc. you will be promoting mental health and supporting the resilience and recovery of people with mental illness. One in five Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their life through a family member, friend, colleague or themselves. People with mental illness often need support throughout their lives – support from people like you. With your help we can help others to live with hope.

To get more information or to set up your monthly donation, please call (306) 525-5601, Extension 227 (Don Powers, Director of Finance) or 1-800-461-5483. You can also email us at contactus@cmhask.com

Thank you so much for your generous support! We couldn't do it without you.



Canadian
Mental Health
Association
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Beginnings . . .

Caregiver Affected Recovery Education (C.A.R.E.)

REBECCA RACKOW, CONSULTANT

This past month, I have been working on developing a program that includes creating materials, slides, and a workbook for a program to help people who care for others maintain their mental health. This program is largely educational, helping people learn to prevent such things as Compassion Fatigue, Vicarious Trauma, and burnout and to recognize these things before they severely affect their mental health and the ability to provide adequate care for others.

For any of us that have travelled by plane, we can remember that at the beginning of the flight, a representative of the airline gets up and directs the passengers towards the emergency exits and all of the safety precautions in case the plane has some sort of problem. One thing that stands out is that parents are advised to put their own oxygen mask on before ensuring that their children have theirs on. I have heard people laugh about that, and tease about how selfish that is but the rationale is that you can't make other people breathe if you are not breathing yourself.

The C.A.R.E. program is like that representative who is educating the travellers. It reminds people that we cannot take care of others at our own expense, and that self-care does not mean the same thing as selfishness. Although this seems to be sensible, the prevalent culture in care-based workplaces is that caregivers taking measures to maintain their own mental health is a sign of weakness. The same rationale applies here as in the airplane: you can't take care of the wellbeing of other people if you are not taking care of your own well being first.

Although this applies to caregivers of all kinds, it is easy to see the importance of this issue through the history of mental health facilities and institutions. There is a sordid history of experimental, untested treatments and mistreatment even in the Weyburn

Mental Hospital, close to home. It can be difficult to understand how such things could possibly take place, and how local people, who were interested in being a care professional, could allow themselves to participate in these exploits. It would be easy to dismiss them as "monsters," but they went into those situations as people and came out "monsters." This is not just phenomena of the past, these things continue today in senior care homes, daycares, and youth residential facilities as well as within the walls of a family's own home when care is being provided without tending to the mental health needs of the caregiver.

In 1971, Phillip Zimbardo conducted an experiment that made international news: the Stanford Prison Experiment. This experiment took twenty-four volunteers, divided them into categories of "Prisoner" and "Guard" and, over six days, saw the social interaction that developed. This involved many forms of abuse and terror.



REBECCA RACKOW

The thing that is perhaps the most shocking about this experiment is that all of the participants were given a battery of psychological tests that ensured they all started with a clean bill of mental health. Each participant was aware of the experimental nature of this study. This is an indication that all people, even people who are mentally healthy, are susceptible to lapses in mental health when in situations of care/power and under certain social conditions. These lapses in mental health can result in disastrous, even criminal, behaviour. No one is immune to these effects, because it is a condition of being human, so the best thing to do is educate people to stave off the conditions that create this and identify when this is happening so that they can access help early.

There are many contributing factors such as work environment, breach in labour standards, being overworked, or simply tending to other peoples' needs. The C.A.R.E. program is still in its early stages of development, but it will address all of these contributing factors and resulting symptoms in order to place these issues firmly in the forefront of caregivers' minds and allow them to be more aware of their own mental health and how to maintain it.



Baggage handler by Henry Peters

Call to transformation

Notes on a talk by Dr. Patrick Smith, CMHA National

JAYNE MELVILLE WHYTE

Dr. Patrick Smith, General Director for CMHA National, made a presentation to the CMHA Saskatchewan staff and in the afternoon to the Saskatchewan Mental Health Coalition in Regina on November 23, 2016. Dave Nelson, Associate Director of CMHA Saskatchewan, introduced Patrick (as he asked to be called) to the Coalition. He started with National in April, 2016. His recent job had been CEO of Renascent, a provider of abstinence-based, residential addictions care. Previously he worked with government Addictions Services in B.C. and prior to that with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and the Addiction Psychiatry Division at U of Toronto. Patrick has a PhD in Psychology from University of Nebraska with drug abuse studies from the Yale University School of Medicine and a Fullbright Scholarship at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand (<http://www.cmha.ca/about-cmha/board-of-directors/dr-patrick-smith/#.WJ9GhX9LT6M>).

Patrick was visiting CMHA Divisions across Canada. To his knowledge, Saskatchewan is the only province with a Mental Health Coalition that regularly seeks to bring together agencies and individuals concerned about mental health and mental illness. At the National level, CMHA is highlighting “Flagship” programs to meet specific needs and to reach out to build partnerships across the country to leverage change in mental health policies and practices.

CMHA Present, Past, and Future

The 100th Anniversary of the Canadian Mental Health Association is 2018, while 2017 is the 150th Birthday for Canada. These celebrations offer opportunities to raise public awareness of mental health in the hearts and minds of Canadians. From its beginning in 1918, the National Committee for Mental Hygiene (now CMHA) worked to reduce stigma and insist on better and more humane care for people with mental illness. Presently CMHA has 10,000 staff and volunteers in 120 communities across Canada. Its history and experience can leverage the process of partnerships to support individual consumers, families, care providers and community involvement.

Patrick admitted that CMHA has made mistakes during its history. For example, Clarence Hincks, a founding leader had supported a movement to “sterilize the defectives” during the 1950s. The recent Truth and Reconciliation report reminded all Canadians that history did not start 150 years ago; Both indigenous and settler peoples carry trauma from the colonization experience. CMHA has a commitment to build partnerships through listening and working with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

CMHA is most proud that in the past and present, it has focused on awareness, advocacy and research, continuity and

grassroots involvement to push the mental health agenda by recognizing the diversity of citizens, and calling on the voices of volunteers including persons with lived experience. CMHA was a leader in calling for a Recovery-based approach that focuses on the strengths and abilities of people with emotional distress while providing the support needed to allow them to live with meaning, purpose and fulfillment.



JAYNE MELVILLE
WHYTE

In the future, CMHA could establish a Centre of Excellence for the treatment and support of veterans, emergency workers, and others who experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) also called Occupational Stress Injury (OSI). This group includes older Aboriginal veterans. Such a centre could develop evidence-based treatments and validate alternative approaches to prevent suicides and improve quality of life, then share traditional and innovative practices to benefit other populations through education for professionals and professors who specialize in mental health and indigenous healing. Patrick is working on a national committee to further this area of research and service.

Participant Interactions

A participant pointed out that another group that has been under-served are people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Trans-sexual, and Queer (LGBTQ). In a recent survey of the LGBTQ community, only two people viewed CMHA as a resource for mental health. Although the potential for suicide is higher, this population lacks accessible, aware professionals. To date, insufficient research in needs and suitable responses sets a gap for people in transition and distress.

Another speaker emphasized that “upstream” activities, such as awareness of and prevention for Early Adverse Childhood Experiences, could reduce mental illness and addictions in the long run, noting too, that appropriate treatment of the trauma in children and adults is badly needed.

Two themes from the floor – “people falling between cracks” and “lack of focus, trying to do too many things at once” – showed the complexity of saying what CMHA stands for. Topics raised included stigma, housing, rural services, children’s health, intercultural concerns, and the list goes on.

Consultations on the Federal Health Accord

On behalf of CMHA National, Patrick attended a November federal consultation about the Health Accord. Minister of Health, Jane Philpott, compared mental health coverage to a

Continued . . .

... the Federal Health Accord

school that offers grades 3, 5, and 9 instead of a full continuum of options and stages to create a basic mental health “system.” For example, Medicare coverage favours the medical model where only doctors can bill for services. This leaves out a wide range of alternatives including personal and family counseling, addiction programs, peer support and self-help. The Canada Health Act enshrined discrimination by funding the hospital system (just before large asylums became obsolete) without recognizing the full potential of other workers and community programs.

The 2016-2017 negotiations around the Canada Health Accord allows the federal government an opportunity to target funding towards building local initiatives that directly address the mental health and addiction continuum in a community. Block funding to provinces does not ensure that extra funding goes toward specific objectives.

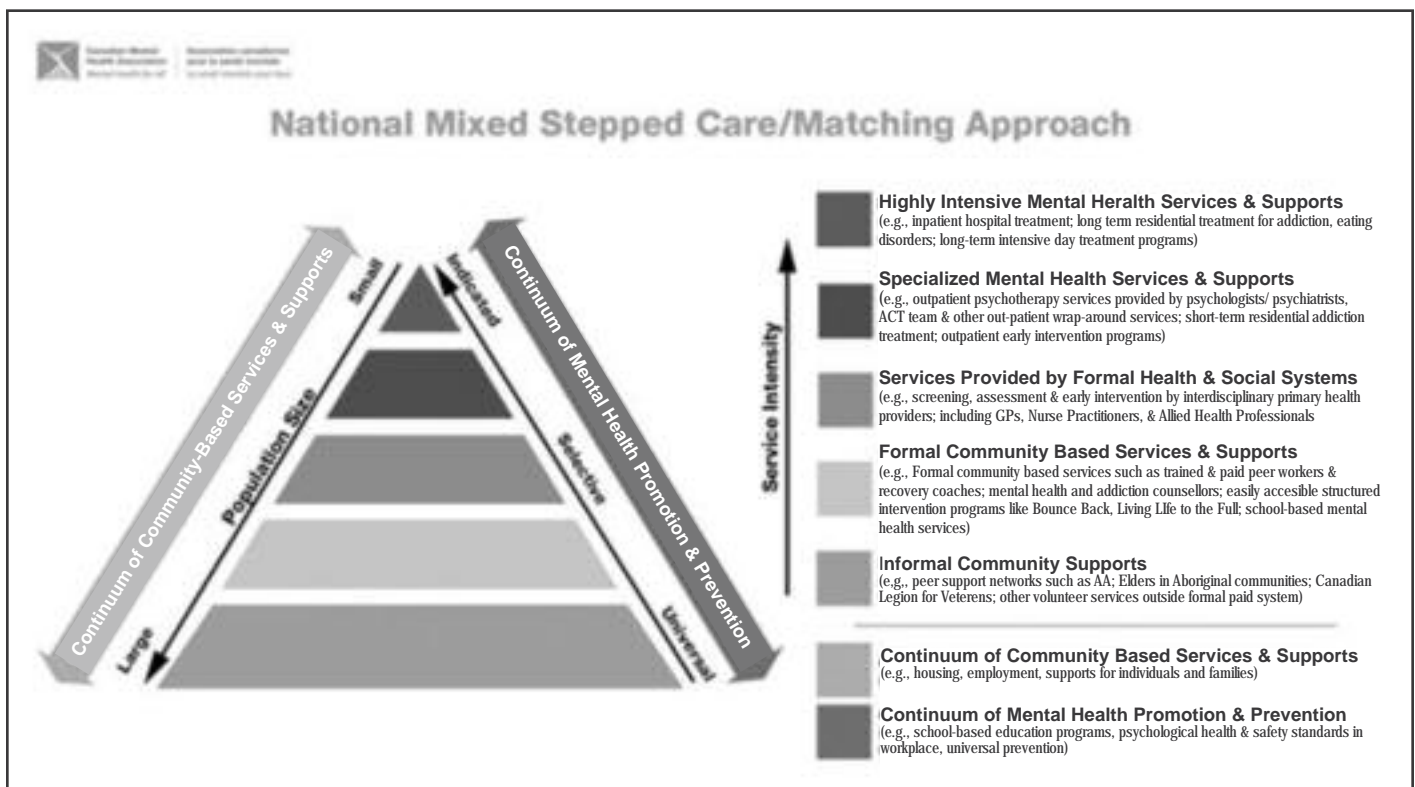
Some private health insurers recognize the value of alternative therapies; for example the Starbucks coffee chain has raised its coverage from \$400 to \$5,000 for its employees’ mental health.

Patrick suggested it was very unCanadian for our country to be so far behind in providing a full range of resources. Other countries use a model of shared care where general practitioners and nurse practitioners provide front line care consulting with a psychiatric specialist as needed. Presently, psychologists are not built into universal mental coverage; for example, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and Mindful-

ness Training can be very effective but not paid for in the public system. Peer supporters who bring lived experience and training could be supervised and supported by a clinical psychiatrist or psychologist through phone and computer contact, but peer supports and self-help are not built into the existing programs. Given a chance and the necessary funding and mandate, community programs are willing and able to be part of the solution.

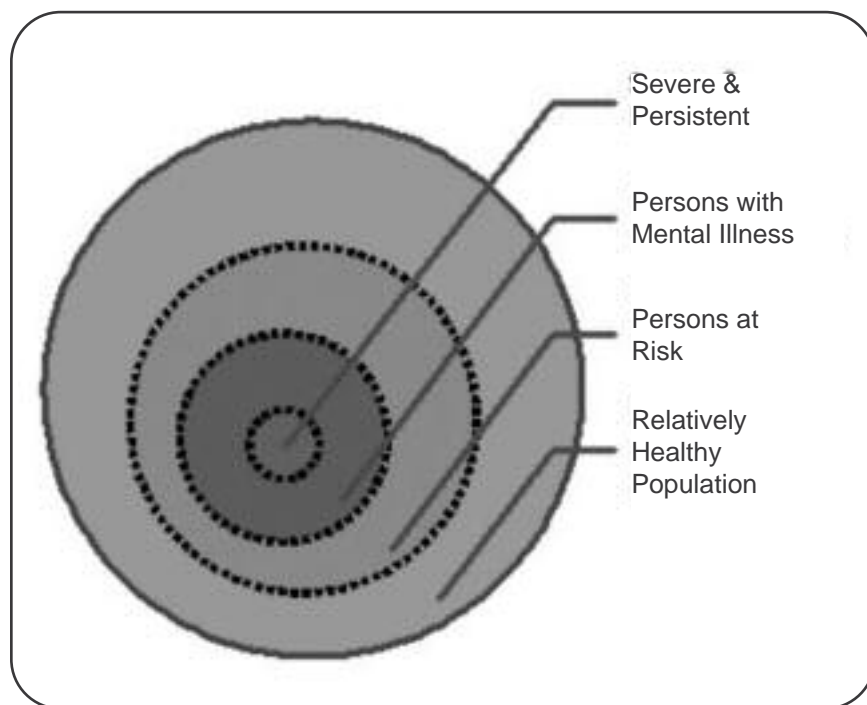
Proposed Mental Health Transformation Fund

CMHA is proposing a Mental Health Transformation Fund earmarked to invest in building the full continuum of support and care for a truly comprehensive and accessible “system.” Investments at the lower tiers (the Informal Community Supports and the Formal Community Based Services Support in the diagram below), including community services provided through CMHA, would reduce the demand for higher tier costs and services including doctors, specialists and hospitals. Now is the time for CMHA to leverage their input to keep mental health on the radar when health dollars are assigned. Saskatchewan spends about 5% of its health budget on mental health while the national average is 7% and the Mental Health Commission recommends that 9% of a health budget be dedicated to mental health. Canada lags behind other G-9 countries; for example, the United Kingdom allocates 13% to mental health services.



A National Mixed Step Care / Matching Approach to Mental Health

Patrick projected National Mixed Step Care/Matching Approach model for mental health services. The continuum included community initiatives in healthy living and prevention of mental illness, to layers of more formal systems, recognizing that always a few people need intensive care in hospital or long-term facilities (diagram below).



This circle diagram is like a drone’s eye view of the pyramid Stepped Care model.

CMHA and most mental health providers endorse the concepts of “least restrictive alternative” and “least intrusive intervention.”

The largest outside circle includes people who for the most part are relatively healthy and don’t require ongoing treatments for mental illness but benefit from informal social supports, friendships, activities. All citizens benefit from healthy private and public services including health services, education, income, employment and unemployment insurance, housing, recreation, and the interactions of living in the community.

The next circle represents people who are at risk because of physical, emotional, social and related stresses; they could gain from interactions benefitting their mental health but may or may not require help from the formal services tiers. They may access income assistance, disability resources, housing subsidies, and social, recreational and employment programs in the community with links as needed with self-help, community mental health, addictions counseling, and peer support workers.

Most of the people who are considered “mentally ill” can utilize community-based services on an out-patient basis, ideally with a frequency and style of contact that supports them to live with a good quality of life, personal fulfillment and opportunities for meaningful activities. Some people will require more specialized services, including psychiatrists and psychologists, for complex needs.

The smallest inner circle represents people with severe and persistent mental illness, including schizophrenia and dementia, and acute episodes that require intensive supervision and services including residential care and hospitalization.

People can move from one level of need and services to another depending on their health and circumstances. Appropriate resources must be available at all levels, in line with the recovery concept of promoting the highest level of functioning and quality of life within the limits of the disability. Investment in the community frees the formal system for people who need professional, specialty interventions. Building blocks include school-based mental health and workplace mental health. Although substance abuse has often been separated from mental health coverage, in fact, addictions and mental illness are often co-existing and related. Of the 6.7 million Canadians who experience mental illness, an estimated two million are also affected by addictions and a comprehensive continuum recognizes and addresses all the factors that affect mental health.

A true continuum for mental health would require substantial investments in strengthening and developing community-based informal networks and agencies. Consultation and ongoing communication among professionals and agencies could redefine the concept of “primary care” to employ a range of care providers from self-help to psychiatrists. As well, on-the-ground education would familiarize health providers and community agencies with the scope and availability of community resources and alternatives that complement the formal treatment and/or open professional time for consultation and direct service to people who require their expertise.

Examples of formal and informal models working together exist. Immigration Services receive funding from federal and provincial governments, while partnering with not-for-profit organizations to share responsibilities for on-the-ground services and supports. The Veterans Affairs model recognizes the federal responsibility for veterans, and funds Operations Stress Injury (OSI) clinics that are integrated with provincial health and addictions services.

A mental health continuum involves more than medical services. Patrick named education and employment, housing, and family support as basic necessities. Bad experiences in those essentials can precipitate and increase trauma and thus

Continued . . .

... matching approach to mental health

the need for mental health services, or in some cases, police and justice interventions.

Patrick visited Saskatchewan on his way to a conference in British Columbia, “Before Stage 4.” We don’t wait until people are in stage 4 cancer to begin treatment, but too many people in emotional distress are being told to “come back when it gets worse” instead of getting support, stress reduction, interventions, and suitable help at early stages. When he worked in Vancouver, Patrick emphasized that a continuum of services requires resources in every community; for example, you can’t say “We only treat cancer in downtown eastside.” To illustrate, Patrick asked the BC cabinet, “How many people that you love experience mental illness or addictions?” and followed up with “How many of them live in downtown eastside Vancouver?” People should not be obliged to live in the right (or wrong) neighbourhood and demonstrate re-

peated failures to be eligible to be assessed and offered appropriate services. The goal would be to ensure the appropriate level of effective responses are accessible when the person is ready and asking for help through words or actions.

Our mental health infrastructure has had too many years of “deferred maintenance” like a building without regular repairs until the gaps widen and crumble. Recent teen suicides have signaled the priority of needs in indigenous communities. The answer is an adequate continuum with secure funding rather than temporary patching after a crisis. It’s time to invest in the continuum of care to truly put “Patients first.” Stepped Care celebrating the strengths of people with lived experience, community-based organizations, peer support, formal health systems and specialized personnel and facilities offers a model to meet complex needs in the least restrictive and most effective continuum.

Adequate funding needed for Mental Health Services

A Case for an Investigation by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (SHRC) into Systemic Discrimination of the Mental Health System in Saskatchewan

On November 16, 2016 a document was provided to the Commissioner of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission requesting an investigation into systemic discrimination of the mental health system in Saskatchewan.

Authored by David Nelson, Associate Executive Director of CMHA (Saskatchewan Division) and Rebecca Rackow, BA (Hons.), Social Work Practicum Student “A Case for an Investigation by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission into Systemic Discrimination of the Mental Health System in Saskatchewan,” illustrated that there has been a long history of ignoring and underfunding mental health and wellness in Saskatchewan.

In 1966, the Director of Psychiatric Services outlined a Saskatchewan Plan that highlighted eight issues that required attention for mental health and wellness. In 1967, it was noted that there had been financial pressure to disregard mental health issues (The Forgotten Constituent, 1983).

In 1983, the Task Force Report was a milestone document that provided an up-to-date review of the mental health system and relevant impinging human systems that provide services to individuals with mental health problems and mental disorders. Seven years later, in 1990, the government still presented no identified plan of attack publicly to the constituencies interested in mental health (DOMHS Report, 1990).

Today, the government’s spending on mental health in Saskatchewan is approximately 5% of the total health budget, while the national average is 7%, and the recommendation of

the Mental Health Commission of Canada is 9%. Being 2% down on average compared to other provinces, we are \$108 million dollars short per year on average expenditures. The 10-year plan would mean a targeted, planned amount of \$10.8 million dollars more, accumulated annually until Saskatchewan meets the National average. Working Together for Change: The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, created in 2014, is a ten-year plan which outlines seven recommendations as system goals to improve mental health and addictions services in Saskatchewan.

Other recent action plans and initiatives to provide health improvements have been granted funding (as much as \$60 million) in a timely way (as short as three months) with pride. The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, however; has seen no funding over the past two years and would have cost less over these last two years than these other plans (Ministry of Health Annual Reports). This is much needed funding to accomplish an adequate level of mental health services.

CMHA (Saskatchewan Division) respectfully asked the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to initiate an investigation into systemic discrimination against mental health service consumers in Saskatchewan. Consumers do not need plans to be made and then forgotten. They need the plans to come to fruition so that there can be recovery, healing and mental wellness.

For a full copy of the Case for Investigation contact CMHA (Saskatchewan Division) at contactus@cmhask.com or call us at 306-525-5601 or 1-800-461-5483.



Dining in the dark

ZOE BARCLAY-WRIGHT

Recently, I had the privilege of going to a Dining in the Dark restaurant in Vancouver. The restaurant is pitch black and the waiters are blind. I went with my father and the protocol was to choose a meal from the menu before you go in, and once in you put yourself in complete trust of a blind waiter. I decided to order the surprise of the day from the menu. Before we went inside we met our blind waiter, Bobby, who had me put my hands on his shoulders and my father put his hands on my shoulders to form a Congo line in order to get to our table in the dark. I felt good energy from Bobby, and even though I didn't know him, it felt right to trust him. Bobby explained to us that it was dangerous to leave our seats because we were not accustomed to the space, and if we needed to get up to just call bobbybobbybobby and he would come and help us.

When the food came it was weird because I had no idea what was in front of me or if it was safe to eat. I had a natural instinct to use my hands, to feel it before I tasted it, so I had a sense of what I was eating. I picked up on how I made myself feel comfortable in a way, which is an extremely normal instinct, and that it was cool because I had never thought of that before.

I thought of times in my life when I was so stressed out I had to remind myself to eat. Then, I would eat and not taste anything. This time I was eating something so delicious I didn't really care what it was. I thought it was salmon, but I actually didn't care. It made me think about how so many people are ashamed of eating in front of others, which is what I see a lot of even in a developed country like Canada; it should never be that way because people should always find pride in the way they take care of themselves.

For a few minutes, when my father left the table, I was left alone, and I had a strong feeling that there was a presence in front of me even though no one was there. I started to panic because I was scared. I immediately picked up on the fact that it wasn't a larger-than-life fear because it was something I immediately related to as a person who has almost

perfect vision.

Now about our waiter, Bobby. When he first led us to our table he guided my hand to my chair, and I had a hard time figuring out the object in the space and where it was. He guided my hand over the chair so I could understand where it was. When he left I realized that was interesting, that someone who also couldn't see the chair was helping me understand it in space. I couldn't see anything, not even the shape of my hand right in front of my face, but I was well aware of where walls were in the room. Because I am blessed with a good education I could understand that it all could be explained by the term echolocation because I could hear other people in the restaurant.

I was amazed that Bobby could not only confidently walk through the room, and my guess was that he had mastered the art of echolocation, but he also had some vision that enabled him to make out defined shapes in a hallway. When I asked him about it, he said, "Kind of, but I actually have prosthetic eyes."

At the end of the meal we engaged in a conversation where he asked me where I was from, it was not one of those "where are you from" questions, I could tell he was genuinely interested. He told me he plays guitar in a band and sings. When it was time for me to leave he asked me if I wanted his CD, and when he gave it to me I said, "What can I give you for it?" He said, "Don't worry about it." When my father and I left and got into the car I said, "We need to listen to this." At that point I didn't even care if it would be good or not, but we actually started to laugh because the music was so good.

I had expected to experience something very unique, but it was very clear to me right away that it was not like that at all, and I was now reminded of a very simple message about humanity. I thought about how in Canada in 2016 it is politically correct in most contexts to refer to a blind person as someone who has a disability, but after having a down-to-earth, human connection with Bobby I will never think of the term "disability" in the same way again. I was now in touch with my other senses so well I realized that if I had walked out of the restaurant with no eyesight I would not be at all broken as a human being; I would naturally find ways to accommodate living like that. When I walk into a room I don't think it registers with people that I am someone with a disability, but in many ways I feel as if I do have a disability because of mental health issues I have had in the past that I have learned to control. I now really regret that I have distanced myself from people who have seemed different in every sense of the word; I missed out on normal, down-to-earth connections like the one I had with Bobby.

In the same way that a child is less aware of people's differences than adults are, Bobby was unaware of differences. He didn't know the colour of my skin, or that I was wearing Pokémon Go earrings that I really like. There is a beauty in that, but when I think about it I realize there is no complicated message that is hard to explain, that it is usually natural for humans to love and respect each other despite how they look or feel, and that ignorance is always taught.



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A therapeutic look at camping

JACEK GRABOWSKI

You would probably wonder what good camping can do for you. We did too until last week (Friday, May 20th). Our trip began when Neysa, our landlady, asked if we would like to go camping with her family: husband Scott and two daughters, Abigail and Katie. Neysa and Scott's son Ben, who is a true gentleman, could not come with us this time. There was also Melissa, who lives with us too. We left on Friday, did some shopping, and headed north from Saskatoon. It was a good trip. We had a good time. It took 1.5 hours to get to the camp grounds. The view was fascinating: grass, meadows surrounded by forest. For this occasion Neysa bought the tent for us. The first night was unreal because it was just 150 km from Saskatoon.

Imagination can take you wherever you would want to be.

What we rediscovered was that you can make stronger and deeper relationships with friends by the campfire. Neysa, with the help of her family, was working hard so everyone was filled with good feelings of mental, spiritual, and emotional health. There were so many thoughts running through my head; they will never be forgotten, just like pictures from a camera. You know, sometimes you look at something and there is no doubt that it will stay in your memory forever.

You are probably wondering what God has to do with therapy, but spending time camping was truly a blessing.

The discovery was made after a while, especially in the tent between day and night. It was moving. The silence left us

healed.

We heard the blood running in our brains, but there were no verbal or visual hallucinations. Here we came to the conclusion that perhaps the silence and its healing influence are not noticed enough by professionals.

Before the camping trip, my wife, Betty, was suffering from strong verbal hallucinations. They were gone in the camping tents and camping grounds.

It was a surprise to realize that Betty was able to control her problems and everything made sense to her. It was a great pleasure for us to stay with Neysa and her family and also Melissa, who is talented too.

And Betty and I found each other again.

I will never forget this specific time when Abigail would read out loud an excerpt from a book. In this place and time it was the best book ever written. Scott and I found a common hobby, which is music. Katie is a gifted artist. Scott and Neysa could be role models for husbands and wives of every family. Sometimes we talked about a dream to build a house there for people with mental or emotional issues. We could go there for a week or two and get better instead of going to the hospital, which is more expensive. It seems that it is a far-fetched idea, but there are so many ideas that have a far-fetched name.

It is amazing how a few days camping can change your mental health.

We were coming back in the rain, thinking about the sounds from the tent. We will never forget this experience thanks to Neysa and her family and friends.

(As perceived by Jacek and Betty Grabowski)

Touché

KAY PARLEY

When I was under treatment for MDP (bipolar) in the winter of 1948-49, the psychologist who led our psychotherapy group gave us an excellent piece of advice. He said, "Never keep the fact you've been in mental hospital secret, or you'll spend your life worrying that somebody may find out." I took his advice to heart and never looked back.

The lesson was of tremendous value, but one incident stands out. It's safe to share it now because it happened in 1951. Anyone who might be upset by the story will be dead. Or too old to care. When I attended Regina College in 1945-46 I dated a young man I should have married. In fact I was engaged to him briefly, but my emotions were so volatile and my insight nil at that time, so it broke up. I really should say I blew it up. A very self-assured and ambitious young woman hastened to take advantage of the breakup. He eventually married her and was sorry -- he told me so. But it was over and I just had to live with that.

I was back in Regina in 1952, working for the Saskatchewan Arts Board and very involved with Little Theatre. I had designed the set for a play we were staging at Darke Hall and I was alone in the audience, engaged in self-criticism. At in-

termission I decided to go out to the lobby to eavesdrop a little and I ran right into a confrontation. Not only was my ex-boyfriend there with his (pregnant) wife, but so were three or four of the fellows we'd known at college. They all looked slightly embarrassed, knowing this wasn't going to be easy.

My "rival" had a cutting voice that could ooze sarcasm. She greeted my appearance loudly with, "Well: Kay Parley! We thought *you* were in the mental hospital."

That's when I blessed the psychologist who had prepared me so well. I grinned a friendly grin and replied, "I was! And it was a *marvelous* experience. Want to hear about it?"

She was stunned for a moment and then she sneered, "Not *really*," and hastened to return to the auditorium.

Her husband patted my shoulder and followed her. I knew there was no hope he'd end that marriage, not with the baby on the way, but I also knew he wanted to. And he wasn't alone. As the other boys we knew joined the queue, there was an atmosphere of embarrassment at her behaviour. One of the group murmured one word as he passed, and that one word said it all. It said, "Nice work Kay! You really put her in her place."

The word he used was "Touché!"

Evidence

COLLEEN ANDERSON

One must be a detective
to find the traces of father
among blue and gold china vases
and softly curled cats in light
the watchful greenery of plants

There is evidence:
the rusty metal stool
a functional, hard, unlovely thing
the rough-edged laundry box
snagged clothes on their descent
the chipped wooden desk
splinters that pierce the unwary

He has been removed
like out of fashion clothes
folded away as far as possible
but a detective would note the telling
absence, the need to hide

There is evidence
although his touches left no mark
hidden in the planes
and curves of my face
within my frown
obvious lines
carved from my past

Bone people

COLLEEN ANDERSON

So long hidden in the closet
no one sees them for the dust
the rattling empty hangers
the bones that lie in rows

I trace the keyhole in my heart
find no way to unlock its secrets

When they gather two and three deep
spring cleaning my excuse
to reach in and pull out old jeans,
too-short skirts and shrunken tops

I try to dislodge the bones that gather
where we've always dropped our skins

Camouflage clothing hangs still on the bones
intents and dreams that went awry
I take a hanger, pick the lock open
remove skeletons to make room for new bones

PHLIP ARIMA

Bondage

The stench of foul sweat
on haggard skin, face the colour
of a thundering sky, small teeth falling
from a shattered mouth.

When it was only angry words
forgiveness was simple, the promise
believed, a ritual
born.

Then, just as the steady shuffle
of the devout will wear down
the stone steps to an altar
habit replaced faith,
resignation
living.

The teeth only bounce once
when they hit the floor.

Lonely shadows

There's a blue plastic bottle half buried in the garden
outside my favourite restaurant. When the sun shines
hot moisture steams its inner surface. At night
it becomes a disappearing shadow.

Sometimes I talk to it, tell it who is going to smile,
who will look away, who will curse, and
who will be kind and
give me some
change.

Steps

There was a time when you would creep
down the steps holding your breath
afraid each creak and sigh they made
would wake your mother,
get you caught.

Then one night you tripped and stumbled
and, crying out as you fell, learned
that all the noise you could ever make
would not pull her from her stupor.

Now your nightly duty
to lift the glass from her hand
and turn the television off
is a simple task.

worse things

SHARON BIRD

one raw day
when you walked miles and miles
hand wrapped in a torn t-shirt
already missing three fingers
once strong for trapping and skinning
refusing to be soft
you walked the gravel
road hoping to reach
the highway before dark
believing someone
would come

do you remember that day
as you curse those who now
ignore your calls
dismiss your needs
do you bless those who listen
who lift you
pretend it's the first
comfort you with their words

in the room of white sameness
no trees to shade
no sky lighting and darkening
no measure of who you are
you shift forwards and backwards
sometimes settling into now so clearly
its edges embrace you

there are worse things
than those spaces in your hand
worse things
than a gun that fires pain
quick and sure
would you pay another three fingers
to be walking that road again
waiting for a ride
you knew would come



Art by James Skelton

Flowers or Forlorn

APRIL BULMER

Now Gal sleeps well and her handsome looks have mostly returned. Cause her momma came with frying pans and husks of yellow corn. They live in a blue clapboard house. Momma drinks lots of milky steep and Gal, sort of pretty now, makes lots of dreams. She writes them in a little bound book, a photo of Daddy B. pasted in. He wore a toque and his trousers too high, but she misses him cause he died. They put him in a pecan box. It cost lots. But he does not come at night or in the moments before sleep. Perhaps his soul, she thinks, rests in peace.

Her little dog barks when Jesus stops by: the risen Christ, all cloak and king. He brings her flowers for she was born a little sick; her mind like a moon, waxing and waning. Momma offers tablets from a glass jar. They are pink. Gal takes a fistful when it rains.



Why I like death metal, and why you can too

GORD BRAUN

I'm a little too old to be listening to the basketball dribble sound of the double-kick drum, the demonic cookie-monster scream of the vocalist, or the fat overdriven grinding growl of the guitars that together represent the mighty circular saw from Hell.

I'm also too old for most of the sentiments expressed in the lyrics, that speak of doom and demons, desolation, vows of destruction, and despair at not being heard.

I laugh at most death metal, though it's not meant to be laughed at. The people who make this stuff, and listen to it.. most of them are dead serious, no pun meant.

The first time I ever heard dm (or thrash or speed metal . . . see how much I know about it??), I laughed myself sick. It was a Mortal Kombat soundtrack. Naturally, it was supposed to be absorbed from a standpoint of murderous grimness, of a pokerfaced will to destroy, and loud satanic promises to impale the defeated enemy . . . slowly.

In front of it all, is the vocalist. He (usually it's a he) is Cookie Monster, only bitter and willing to eat kids if they get in his way.

I think that's where it falls down into laughter and lightness in my case. Death metal's most avid creators and listeners want several things. They want to shock, overpower the ears, to offend, to frighten, but most of all, to state their case – in no subtle terms.

Death metal's biggest fans, I am guessing, are male and preteen to mid 20s. As I said, they're dead serious, and they mean to be taken dead seriously, and music is by far the best vehicle they have to express their rage and rejection of the wussy world around them. In a world of noise, they must respond with decibels of their own, the more the better, even at the risk of their longterm hearing and relationships. They must strike revulsion and fear in their elders, their peers . . . they must outrage and offend, for to offend is to be acknowledged.

As I see it, their message isn't directed at me personally. I'm too tired for much railing against the world, but I'm not too tired to laugh, or to have a grindy bassy soundtrack menacing in the background where it can do no harm, and maybe some good.

To be too old for death metal, is to be better off. When I was in my teens and 20s, I was always fierce about things, presuming of the world, angry at it, for every misstep it made, or every one that *I* made, and thus got my ass kicked in some way or other.

[STANZA BREAK]

At no time is living without struggle. Growing and growing up are not easy, adjusting to the world, forgiving it, longing at some point to be forgiven and taken back in.

Ideally, the goal is to look back on something and laugh and be amazed that you took x or y so dead seriously. And while you're doing that, nudge the bass up higher, and the volume, so as to remind yourself that you have destructive power at your fingertips and can loose it upon the neighbors at any time, though you won't . . . coz you're older. :)

Where is hell

SALVATORE DIFALCO

Child eyes, boy in blue and white stripes,
penetrating green surround,
giant distant trees and beyond them
rising stacks of smoke and yellow fire.

Fighting with plastic swords, the boy
and his mates grow bored and flee
to the green grounds, leaving their toys,
not letting their hatreds malign them.

Time will twist all that makes them
lithe and pliable, no way around it.
For now the giant trees command their
aspirations, and they monkey up to them.

They see the world from another
bough or branch, and feel the birdsong
in their bones, with their mouths open,
clutching leaf, twig and stem, hovering

over the green expanse of parkland.
Never failing to come down in one piece,
or if failing living to receive signatures
in plaster, love songs:

they thrive, notwithstanding the flames
and smoke obscuring the other world,
the darker realm that teems and roars
beyond their pale green reckoning.



Fence-line Pheasant by Joyce Kirby

What do the sad look like?

EMILY GRIEVE

A heavy desperation
Hangs on hopeful lives,
So watch for signs and symptoms:
What do the sad look like?

Perhaps they wear a sweater
When the evening's cool;
They may like tea with sugar,
Or not drink tea at all.

Last week I think I saw one,
Waiting for the bus,
In line behind me at the bank--
The trainee or the boss.

Be wary of this warning:
The sad may write with pens,
To loop blue words with sorrow
Between the dotted lines;

And they might like to chat,
Though some of them are shy;
Their hair is blonde, or black, or green;
And most of them are kind.

Like me, most long for peaceful,
Quiet hours to think,
Staring out the window
Above the kitchen sink,

Across dark lanes of traffic
Glow a bedroom light,
And I wonder without thinking
If everything's alright--

I wish that I could tell them
As the night grows cold,
And I huddle in my sweater,
That they are not alone.

the timid samurai

IAN MCINTYRE

the timid samurai
no need for courage
if the world doesn't turn
careful what you lay before my feet
for there is a dark side to all living things
wait and watch, then watch and wait
only fools don't know their very own fate
dress for war but don't fight with a sword
this world of ours is hard
even guilt builds an army of one
pray to be victorious once again
victorious once again

where I am right now

LYNDA MONAHAN

in the middle of a mess papers everywhere
strewn on the bed the floor the countertops
piles of books heaped on my dining room chairs
then there are the dishes overflowing the sink
climbing in and out of the dishwasher
in an endless procession of plates
and milk scummed cups

and let's not forget the laundry
heaped like a small unscalable mountain
an anarchy of wet towels and dirty shirts
wending its way toward the washer
leaving behind a trail of mismatched socks
laundry on that list of things I'll never be done
dust speckling the top of the piano the china cabinet
moving in and taking over like an unwanted relative
like your mother-in-law come to stay

all the places I need to be
and will need to be the appointments
and commitments crowding my calendar
all screaming at me from the tangled web of words
all scribbled into one small square

where I am right now is in the middle of a mess
my whole insides wired and tight
tears leaping behind my eyes
heart whamming wildly in the middle of the night
worry like a small india rubber ball
bouncing in my head the back and forth
toss and turn in the heaving ship
of our bed sleep like a distant dream
of a far off island rest magical
as a destination wedding that golden shore

Design

SUSIE NIXON

If we were
threads
in an elaborately sewn
design
then I would
imagine myself
as a cheery yellow
colour and you
as a delicate light blue.
I think that
to separate us now
would destroy
a creation of
great beauty.

Motorcycle

SUSIE NIXON

Anticipation
heartbeat accelerates
thunder pounding in your eardrums
heightened senses
try to catch
your breath
sunshine caresses you
kissed by the wind
taking control
while you are utterly
vulnerable
almost
making love
to a machine



Portrait by Henry Peters

Hawk and I

BELLE SCHMIDT

A hawk perched in a tree,
cocked its head—
studied me.

I looked up at him,
with tilted chin—
regarded Hawk my kin.

Coloring therapy

BELLE SCHMIDT

Which of my pencils shall I use,
pink or chartreuse,
to color hearts
and petal parts

of flowers outlined in my book?
While in my writing nook
I color circles, purple turtles,

butterflies, neon orange and blue,
stalks of bamboo,
and daffodils
with lacy frills.

Frieda's evening

LIZ BETZ

Frieda peers beyond the campfire to find her Smitty. He left to fetch a beer, but now he's joined a conversation with another man by the cooler. In the twilight she can see the marijuana logo on his t-shirt as a darkness on his white belly but she can't tell if he's seen her distress. She takes a deep breath and then struggles with her smile, her appearance of enjoyment; all designed and practiced to keep her anxiety in camouflage.

One of the hamlet's dozen streetlights flickers on at the edge of the street. People move between groups and conversations in this backyard celebration as Frieda listens at the edge of things. The 50 year old birthday gal dons the coconut shell bra and grass skirt over her clothes and pictures are taken. Frieda can see the jerky digital focus in someone's tablet, and then a camera's flash. Happy birthday is sung. Another woman who is a stranger to the group but a friend of the birthday celebrant launches into a joke that has people laughing before the punch line.

Another 20 minutes and they can go home. Smitty is right; they are expected to show up but it is something he does easier than she. Even his t-shirt, a gag gift from his own surprise party shows his ease in the community. Worth copying, Frieda has always thought. She realizes it's time to chuckle. The stranger has finished her joke.

There is a silence. No one seems to know another funny story so camping plans are discussed and the grain crop's progress. Frieda can think of nothing to contribute. Her silence is unnoted and no-one includes her.

The joke telling woman comes to stand beside Frieda.

"I'm Jen. You're the only one here that really looks warm."

Frieda's mind stammers with responses. She's been dressed like this all evening and it is only in the last half hour that the air has gained enough chill for her velvet hooded and quilted vest to make sense. All of her wardrobe is brushed or quilted or bubbled to add contours and substance, or she looks like a praying mantis. And as her anxiety rises, the layers add up.

"She's always cold." One of the neighborhood women states offhandedly on her behalf then turns away. Frieda can only shrug in agreement.

"Funny how people have different metabolisms. But likely you burn up calories that others wear around their waist." Jen pinches her own fat roll and adds,

"Damn corn on the cob."

No-one's garden has corn yet, so Frieda knows that the evening's corn came from a store, but there is plenty. One of the seven picnic tables that the hamlet somehow produced still has corn on top, should someone be tempted to eat more.

"It's okay. Nothing like home-grown though. I have to water my corn soon, if it doesn't rain." Frieda knows there are no clouds on the horizon.

"How much of a job is that. Do you have a big garden?"

This startles Frieda for a moment; everyone already knows the size of her garden, but not this stranger, of course.

"It's big enough. My father used to teach people how to grow corn," Frieda says, her eyes on the bonfire as if the flames have reminded her of the past. "Dad knew a lot. He had his first garden at four, then he gardened for the next seventy years. He talked with people about their corn, potatoes, whatever they were having problems with. He knew his garden but he knew corn best."

Frieda closes her mouth, she's already said too much. She's boring Jen, but Jen is smiling warmly. She seems interested.

"Dad died last year." Frieda has to clear her throat, "The last thing he said to Mom concerned the corn."

Jen's hand is on Frieda's arm as she murmurs a condolence.

"Mom followed him to the grave within two months. But that wasn't a surprise, she doted on him. She would warm his dinner plate; she even ironed his work clothes. From the minute he woke, she tended to his needs. He was her world." Frieda stops. Why on earth did she say all this? She pulls the collar of her vest up towards her ears. Frieda's parents were the odd ones. And now a familiar embarrassment spreads her tongue with glue.

This woman will make some excuse to move on to people who are better company. And Frieda wouldn't blame her if she did.

"You know, your parents' life was beautiful. They enjoyed the pleasures of simple things. And your mother loved her husband. That's a really beautiful and really rare dedication."

Frieda stares at Jen. All she's ever heard is how her mother must have been subservient. Controlled. Such an unhealthy role model, with the unspoken afterthought of 'no wonder you're so weird.' "People don't get it. Quiet people have good lives too," Jen said.

The campfire sends up a spark spray from fresh added logs. Smitty has come up beside her unnoticed. "Is it time to go home?" Frieda shakes her head no. Not now; she is truly awake now. Tears well in Frieda's eyes as Smitty's hand slips into hers and squeezes. He is helping her to hold on to this moment. Her parents honored.

The twilight disappears and the porch light becomes brighter. A lantern is lit, while a voice rises out of the conversations to say 'this has been nice.' Some people leave, their voices call out with goodbye and thanks. Others open fresh drinks. Jen tells Frieda that she is glad to have talked with her and then she leaves to speak with the hosts. Frieda and Smitty slip through the patterns of light and shadows of the party and join the exodus. As they reach their vehicle Frieda thinks that she only has to look up to find the North Star. It's a simple skill. It's been a good evening.

Schmidt's smiles

SHIRLEY CALLAGHAN

Schmidt made his entrance in grand style. He shook hands, approached everyone with a wide grin, joked, reassured each worker of her worth, and left all the women feeling indispensable. It was clear to most of the group that he was their dream leader.

Unknown to the workers or the CEO, Schmidt had a colorful past. Since he had covered his tracks well, he was untarnished here and off to a new start in a small town. To the casual observer he was simply a pleasant, tall, thin man in his late thirties who was balding, but, to others, his vivid crystal-blue eyes suggested a fine intellect. His stance with his hands in his pockets and legs apart suggested a composed speaker as he entertained the staff with his sharp wit and unusual stories. Yes, he would bring life to the dull days at the conference table.

"Did you meet the new worker, Schmidt?" said Moira. "He is so charming he almost knocks me off my feet. Certainly, he's not like the run of the mill men we have here in Downsville. What a great addition to the department! I'll look forward to coming to work now!"

"I don't know," said Sheila, the assistant manager. "He is coming on too strong and that puts my antennae up."

"You haven't trusted anyone since Jack ran off on you, Sheila," said Moira. "Get on with life!"

Schmidt entered the coffee room with aplomb. These women would be easy—so gullible—so needy: they were in the palm of his hand. He challenged Sheila to a debate on gambling, putting forth all the merits of keeping men faithful to their wives in their spare time, while having a little excitement on the side. What a unique counselor he would be to the wayward men they were advising.

"You are an egomaniac Schmidt, one with bad judgment and self aggrandizement," said Sheila sensing that she wanted nothing to do with this man. Smiling at her and amused at her chagrin he patted her on the shoulder. The others on break were impressed with his debating ability: he could take either side and still win the argument. Just how smart was he?

Schmidt's office had an enviable river view, but he was not to be in it very often. He would work enough to satisfy Sheila and the supervisor, but he had other interests to pursue. Moira knocked on his door. She was tanned with a curvaceous figure, a pixie haircut and sensuous lips.

"Can I bother you?" Moira began. "Is there anything I can do to help you? Except for Sheila we all think you are great. I

think you look like a poet." Schmidt smiled at her and took in her figure while wetting his lips.

Cross, the supervisor, was short and demanding. He explained the rules and routines to Schmidt and said he had high expectations from his performance. They shook hands and he disappeared into the woodwork. Sheila heard this exchange and erupted. "I'm betting you don't do a tap around here, Schmidt! Being a rooster in a henhouse may have its reward but watch out for the farmer."

Schmidt gave a crooked smile. He dismissed her disapproval and thought of the secretary in his last job—the night out on the boat—it was a dream come true even if it cost him a cut lip, black eye and his job. When Sheila left, he pulled a flask out of his bottom drawer and guzzled the whisky—it tasted good! He hoped that disgruntled divorcee didn't come snooping around: she was trouble.

Moira worked late on Tuesday. Schmidt just arrived from a gambling table happy that the past month had netted him fifteen hundred dollars. He was on a roll! Such a bunch of dummies those guys were! He reached for the whisky in his bottom drawer and took a gulp before heading to Moira's office.

"Are you working late too, Schmidt? I told them you would be an asset!" she crooned. Schmidt took her hand and lifted her from her chair. She didn't seem to mind the alcohol on his breath and soon they were on the couch in the coffee room. "I really like you, Schmidt," she said touching his leg. He smiled.

The supervisor had heard rumblings of Schmidt's drinking and gambling. He had seen him exit from the back door once and knew he was leaving work that way often, maybe each day during the last three months. Regrettably, he hadn't done a closer character check, but the file had gone missing at Schmidt's last placement.

"I'm telling you," said Sheila to Mr. Cross. "That man is trouble. Moira has been late every morning and as far as I know she is not dating anyone. Also, if he has done more than four hours work a day these three months, I will be surprised. We have to be vigilant."

Cross began watching Schmidt like a hawk. He caught him sneaking out one afternoon and began questioning him. At his apartment, Schmidt had another drink, picked up the phone and called Cross at home charging him with paranoia, jealousy and intrusiveness. He said he was a fat, inept dictator of the first degree. Cross waited for a minute then told Schmidt to meet him in his office the next morning at 9:00 a.m. sharp.

Sheila was standing beside Cross as he handed Schmidt his cardboard box of desk contents complete with a half empty flask of whisky and a box of chips. No-one shook hands and the only smile came from Sheila as Schmidt backed out the glass door.

*These women
would be
easy – so
gullible –
needy: they
were in the
palm of his
hand.*

Sour and crisp

VERYL COGHILL

The end. This is not like last night when I read *Green Eggs and Ham* to the kids and said The End when I was finished. It is not like *Go Dog Go* by P.D. Eastman where she asks him again if he likes her party hat and finally he does. It's not like the dead end sign on our street by the river and you choose which way to go.

Not like the end of the recipe and you put the crisp in the oven to bake. The kids and I put together an apple crisp right after the supper dishes were cleared. My wife, Sarah, seemed a little preoccupied so I decided to busy the kids. It's something I've done for years -- helps me relax. It's really the only thing my Granny taught me how to bake. Anyway that's another story.

Hmmm . . . and out, what about out. "Go Dogs Go" talks about one little dog going in and three big dogs going out. They are entering and exiting a maze. Perhaps that story is more like this one than I thought. But you have to be in to go out. Knock out, down for the count. Over and out, there is nothing to say, over, under, water under the bridge. Sarah wants out of our marriage.

"I want out of our marriage" she said about ten minutes ago. The watch on my wrist says so.

She tells me when I am under the kitchen sink while the wrench cinches the bolt back in place. I rescued Sammy's red truck. "Twuck," he says, the Donald duck phase that Julie has



Meeting by Irene Demas

been out of for at least three years. I want to say what the fuck but Julie walks into the room, from this angle I see her thigh and upper part of her six-year-old calf.

She removes a few rocks from her pocket, rolls them in her hand in front of the open cupboard. "See, this is the one I told you about, it's got a big crack in it." Sarah cracks up then, I hear thick sobs. Julie turns and leaves. Probably back to the dining room table where she and Sammy have been painting pet rocks since we put the crisp in the oven. Her mom sobbing doesn't seem to faze her.

I can't say a thing. I just lie there, my head looks up at the elbow joint, my elbow bent up and frozen with a choke hold on the damn plastic pipe, like I could ring its neck. She told me last year she wanted to leave but decided to stay, because I had changed after I almost fell off the steel girder at the mill site, a two hundred foot drop. I could have been gone in one slip. I had the harness on, but realized later it wasn't actually hooked up to the trolley. Nothing was saving me when my boot caught on a metal seam and my legs teetered, fell without me and my body leaned to catch up. I twisted my back around, grabbed the box of the lift, and pulled myself in.

When I recounted the event to Sarah she decided I had been saved. She said God was telling us we need to make this work. She started going to church, gave money to the needy and every day at supper she listed what she was thankful for. At every meal, every morning out of bed, every time I looked at her, she thanked the Lord for saving me. I thought it was sweet at first. Seems she was the one who changed.

I kept working ten-hour days, fishing two Saturdays a month. I left my clothes lying around; and my papers, bills and receipts, like I always did. I swept through our house like a cyclone she called it. I left bits of my days, my life, on the couch, in the crack of the La-Z-Boy chair and under coats. I also tossed things over the top of trays of colored stones and dried flowers. "Décor," Sarah called them. A year into our marriage when she hadn't changed me she got tired of nagging. She designated a full three-shelf cupboard and two drawers to dump my stuff in. She hid it away from herself. She didn't want to see that part of me. I went with it, felt out of place, but I rooted through and found my stuff. The past year she has been leaving it all out in the open.

I don't say a word.

"I'm leaving tonight with Marlin Hallmin-Butch, from your work."

I still have the wrench clenched in one hand as both hands press and choke. I didn't even know she knew him. How can she leave with him? She wants out of our marriage as if she walked in the door marked "in" and now she can just go to the door marked "out." It sounded as easy as putting the dog out to pee or getting out the prize trapped in the bottom of the cereal box.

I can hear Julie yell at Sammy. "I need the purple paint now. Give it to me. You don't even know that blue and red makes purple. You don't even know that, so give it to me."

Continued . . .

. . . sour and crisp

“You’re stupid and a dum dum,” Sammy says.

I am out of place again; Sarah has told me over and over through the years. Out of place, I was out of place, everything I did, our whole marriage and now she is opting out. I thought this would include scenes from a sappy drama that carried on for two hours with choked voices, tears and throwing things as we discussed our feelings, our problems, and came up with options to resolve again and again. But not in this take; in this take Marlin is in the right place.

Marlin whose wife cheated on him over and over and when she left she told him she couldn’t face him because he didn’t stand up and fight for her. He told us that on a coffee break a couple of years ago when he came to work. He drank a can of Red Bull every two hours, and popped Tylenol Cold and Sinus, didn’t sleep for a month. Sleeping pills didn’t even calm him.

Last year, the day I almost fell, at the end of the shift, he says, “I saw you from my lift, watched you slip. It seemed like just a slip, and back up, like on an ice patch in the driveway, you recover before you hit the pavement. But all day I’ve been thinking it was a near death thing. You were hanging on for your wife and kids – they need you.” It seemed weird at the

time. He’d never really said much to me before, more just out loud to all of us at coffee.

I shrug myself forward with my shoulders, ease my way out, sit up, rise and place the wrench to my right on the middle of the stove. My eyes meet Sarah’s, as I lean against the stove. I think of all her prayers. I can smell the apples and oatmeal baking. I used only green apples to make the crisp. The only kind of apple Sammy eats, sour and crisp. This moment feels baked into me, the thick cracks of oatmeal and brown sugar.

“We had an affair for over a year, then after your slip at the mill, we stopped,” Sarah says.

I don’t know what story I could ever read the kids tonight when their mom has to leave and their dad can’t say a word. What could I possibly say that would be right?

“It’s just too much and not ever enough,” she says and walks out the door.

Let’s drink to that. I take a sip from my glass of milk. You can think she’s a bad mother or think I should have fought with her, or for her, or at least said something. At least said go or stay or what the fuck. But what difference does it make?

When I place the warm crisp on the counter, we eat it until it’s gone.



Moose in hayfield by Joyce Kirby

Doctor's office

SHANE FRASER

I had a doctor's appointment. Just a check-up. It had been six years since my last one, so I was clearly due.

I walked into the office and told the receptionist my name and she told me to take a seat, so I entered the waiting room. As I walked I noticed the room was pretty bare. It was 2:30 on a Tuesday so I shouldn't have been surprised. I approached the aisle that separated the two parallel rows of seats. There was a family of three seated to my right, so I turned towards the left side. Alyssa Draper was sitting there. She looked up and saw me. She smiled and said, Oh hey. I said, hey, back. She looked back down at her phone.

There were seats all around Alyssa Draper. She was an island unto herself. She sat in the middle of the far row with her back to the wall, and the row that faced her was empty. The family sat in the wall-facing row but on the other side of the room. There were seven seats in each row segment, for 28 seats in total. The family occupied the middle three seats on the first segment, the segment across from them was empty, the segment to the left contained Alyssa Draper, with three seats on her left and three on her right, and across from her the segment was empty. Two parallel lines, broken in the middle, with Alyssa and the family diagonally opposite.

Alyssa Draper and I hadn't seen each other since high school. I was surprised she recognized me, to be honest, and had she not, this problem would have been avoided. That doesn't mean we were close when we knew each other, because we weren't. I mean we were friendly to each other. We might have considered each other friends but on the most basic level. We didn't hang out outside of school, never had much in common, and had no deep heart to heart conversations that I could remember. We had mutual friends and swam in the same circles, but that never translated into us becoming close. We were the hi-in-the-halls type of friends.

Her reaction wasn't warm. Had it been warm, I could have gauged the situation better. Perhaps she would have stood up and hugged me, and then I would have known what to do. Or if she had given me her full attention as we greeted. Instead, as I stood, she had her head down and was texting.

Maybe I just needed to give it more time. Maybe she was just finishing a text and would stop, pocket her phone, and regard me with enthusiasm. But I didn't have that time; I couldn't stand forever. That would be weird. I had to decide immediately.

The first thing I thought of was sitting beside her. Directly beside her. That would be the place a friend would sit. But we weren't friends. At least not current friends. But the need to catch up might supersede the time gap and make the close-sitting permissible. That was supposing she wanted to catch up. But we would be very close. Maybe too close for the situation and the parameters of a time-dulled acquaintanceship. She might be uncomfortable. It might be awkward. It would be overwhelmingly awkward if she doesn't want to talk, especially if I'm so close that I can read her texts as she's

typing them and trying to ignore me. And the seats are right against each other. There's no gap. We'd be inches apart as we talked. But at least we could look forward and not have to make uncomfortable eye contact, which would be the case if I sat in front of her.

If I sat in the chair across from her, we'd be separated but not too separated. The intention would be to converse, but it wouldn't be forced upon her like it would be when sitting beside her. But, conversely, imagine a friend seeing you in a public place and sitting across from you. In a distant, small-talkish, airport terminal kind of way. You would be offended; you would question the relationship; you would question this person's regard for you. You'd be deeply insulted as a friend. If she viewed me as a friend, if she was actually excited to see me despite the last-minute texting, this move would not be flattering. She might wonder what's wrong with me for being so aloof, or what's wrong with her for inspiring this aloofness. Rejecting intimacy, but without the presumption of intimacy.

I thought about sitting one seat away from her. Still

Continued . . .



Art by Kim Trautman

... doctor's office

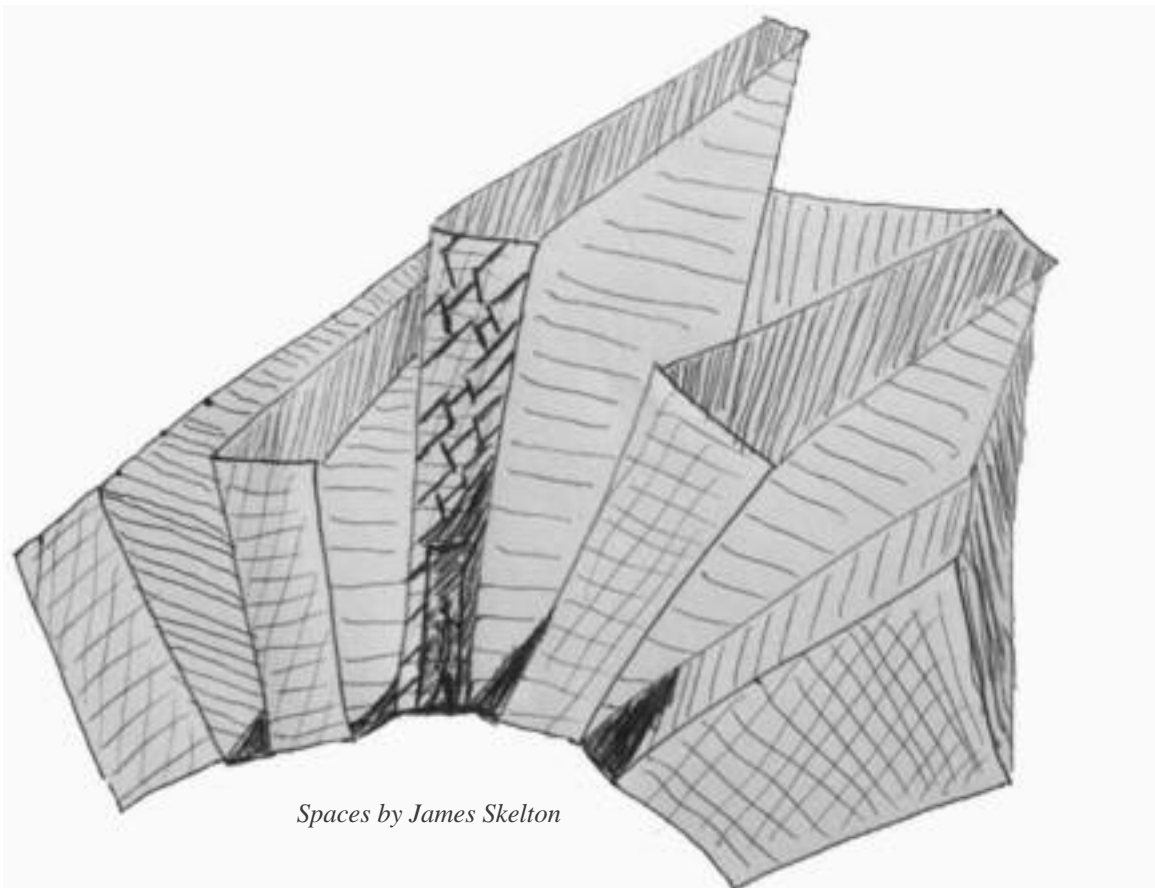
beside her but with a seat between us. Acting as a buffer. A buffer might be needed in this situation. It could absolve the awkwardness while still keeping us conversing. Or it might be the cause of the awkwardness. Putting a seat between me and her is intentionally distant, incredibly distant, and this can be interpreted in only one way for her: that he's uncomfortable sitting beside me. It's the seating equivalent of a hover-hand. I couldn't have that. For sure: sitting a seat away from her would be appropriate if we both wanted space but still wanted to talk, but the hover-hand implication would wreck me. I couldn't be passively aloof; I had to either go all in or not in at all. To at least have the air of decisiveness.

Why not sit by myself, I thought. Ignore the entirety of our nuanced relationship. Pretend it never existed; pretend she existed only as the wallpaper on this brief set of time. Continue walking like we never met and sit down at the end of the aisle. Or go into the family's section and sit there. I was at the crossroads of the aisle and had not made a turning commitment yet. That would have been the easiest thing to do. Maybe she didn't even remember who I was. Maybe she only recognized my face and had no reference for who I was. Maybe she didn't recognize me at all; maybe it was just a polite hello to a stranger. People still do that. Especially if there aren't others around. Social constraints are loosened with fewer people, or in strange places—like a desert island. No-

body cares where you sit on a desert island. But, alas, I was playing mental roulette in a sterile cage, and there seemed to be six bullets. Under different circumstances, Alyssa Draper, this could have been easy. It was easy from the beginning, but rust coats forgotten time, and blood cakes the abandoned. Imagine me being a stranger and sitting right next to her, or trying to talk to her obnoxiously without her having any idea who I was. Imagine me trying to awkwardly explain who I was to a person who once knew me, and shared many moments with me. The embarrassment would be unbearable, and my confidence would be shattered.

But I could have been overreacting. From the initial response she had to have known who I was. She said hey first. And she said, Oh hey, not just hey. The Oh indicates recognition. She instigated without any prompting. But I did stop weirdly; I did attract her attention. That's how she knew to look up. While pondering this cosmic stalemate, I watched for any signal from her but she offered none. I was at a five-way intersection with no signs. I stood amongst avenues of uncertainty.

So I smiled politely and walked past her to the far end of the room. I sat down and read a magazine while she texted on her phone. She was called away, and I was called five minutes later. When I emerged, she was gone, and I was as relieved as I was empty.



Spaces by James Skelton

Understanding the semicolon

RACHEL LAVERDIERE

“A semicolon?” Nathan’s eyebrows shoot up. “Sure. Why not?” My hand quivers a bit as I force the key into the ignition. “Well, it’s not what I was expecting, but it’s your choice.” He shrugs his shoulders. “I’m sure you have your reasons.” I jiggle the key and turn over the engine. Betsy sputters to life. “Good girl,” I whisper tenderly and stroke old Chevette’s dash. “Maybe you could get Betsy tattooed on your ass instead,” Nathan snickers. He winks at me and runs his fingers through his thick chestnut waves in a futile attempt to keep it from falling over his amber eyes that glow orange in the sunlight. “It’s just that I wasn’t thinking of this as a grammatical exercise.”

“And, what about you? What are you thinking of getting?” I fidget with the faded fuzzy dice swinging from the rear-view mirror. Betsy needs a minute or so to warm up so she won’t stall. And I need to fill the space of silence with sound and movement. I hear the wheels turning in Nathan’s mind and understand he needs to fill the emptiness with his wit.

“I was thinking of an exclamation mark!” Nathan exclaims. I punch his shoulder hard. He rubs the opposite shoulder, yelps, “Ouch! —exclamation mark!” and grins from ear to ear as he swipes at his hair again.

I pop in one of my dad’s old mixed tapes, put the rusty jalopy into reverse and back down the narrow driveway. The jar of nuthatches in the neighbour’s cedar bushes pops out to flit farewell as The Lovin’ Spoonfuls start singing about day-dreams. A slow smile spreads across my face. Apart from a heap of dirty snow melting on the north side of the front steps, the backdrop has finally changed to spring.

Nathan’s fingers become drumsticks on Betsy’s dash. I roll down the window. I inhale the smell of spring flooding over us, and Nathan’s hair whips around to the wild beat of his exuberant drumming. I’ve missed him. I want to put my arms around him, but I’m not quite ready for that yet.

There is no way to explain to Nathan what’s been going on in my mind for the past two months. How I’ve felt the swell of water beneath the frozen river reaching up to engulf me. How I’ve stumbled upon sharp knives grazing my wrists. How an entire bottle of sleeping pills, prescribed by my doctor for insomnia, has frothed at my lips and how I vomited them back up into a foamy puddle. Why I have kept myself shut away from the world. But this morning, the darkness was gone and, as the sunlight filtered in through my window, I’d believed the birds would keep singing and the seasons would keep changing. That life would continue to throw obstacles onto the tidy path I’d planned out, but that I’d be able to find my way around them.

There is no way to tell Nathan how I’ve decided on the semicolon. Because, if I tell him all of this, I will also have to tell him what started the chain reaction. And if he knows the

cause, he will never forgive himself. Then I would never forgive myself, and maybe he wouldn’t forgive me either.

“Think of it as a permanent winky face then,” is what I end up saying instead.

Or a tiny embryo, all curled up, my mind screams, but it’s safer to leave the event trapped in his subconscious. After all, we were so drunk that night. I’d rather start from scratch some day, when we are both ready.

Nathan winks at me and we both grin. “It’s good to have you back,” he says, awkwardly putting his arm around my shoulder, “I was about to file a missing person’s report.” He relaxes and pushes back his waves when I don’t shrug him off.

Yesterday, Professor Al-Hamdani had asked me to join him in his office after class. I knew he’d be curious about the hastily thrown together, ill-structured paper on the role of women in the main branches and traditions of Islam. My writing, which is usually fluid, had refused not to remain disjointed. I’d given up and handed in the shoddy paper without asking for an extension.

“Do you realize I’ve counted a dozen or so semicolons in the first half of your essay?” Professor Al-Hamdani had tapped my paper with his green felt-tipped pen. His eyebrows had raised and united into a fuzzy, Bert-like unibrow.

Professor Al-Hadmani’s brown eyes had registered concern as I visibly crumpled into the chair across from his paper-strewn desk piled high with books. I opened my mouth to speak, but my voice faltered. He had pushed my essay

Continued . . .



The sad mask by Rolli

... the semicolon

across his desk, knocking a wobbly stack of books to the floor. The boom had helped me focus. Al-Hamdani had given me the weekend to regroup my thoughts and resubmit my essay.

"It will give me an excuse to take Farrah to the Nowruz Celebration after all. She will be delighted. It will give us the chance to celebrate the coming of spring and our fifth child. Thank you for the overabundance of semicolons, Maya. Now I must reorganize these books onto the shelves."

Al-Hamdani's sonorous laughter had made the corners of my chapped lips itch. He'd ushered me out the door so he could get to the burgeoning shelves behind me, but his throaty hum had followed me down the corridor.

I'd gone directly to the bus stop, too tired to keep trudging home through the muddy slush along the sidewalk. The little semicolons scattered throughout the pages had winked at me and softly twinkled as I waited and waited for the bus



Hugs by Henry Peters

to come. I'd counted 34 winky faces in total. They'd seemed friendly. They'd made the wait bearable.

Later, I'd Googled the proper use of semicolons: they are used at a juncture where the sentence could either end or continue. It made sense. My multitude of semicolons had beamed up at me. My highlighters had helped the little guys pop out of the page.

Ever since, my brood of semicolons had been winking and reminding me that I had choices to make.

"I think I'll get a stallion tattooed just below my navel, to warn the ladies," Nathan jests as he makes a thrusting motion with his hips. The tattoo artist rolls his eyes a little as he looks Nathan over. Nathan sucks in his belly until it is concave and then waggles his bony hips at me. A dry laugh escapes, but a tsunami hits the walls of my stomach. It's clear he doesn't recall anything.

"Whatever you want, Nathan. Just realize that you will end up with a deformed and bloated quadruped hanging off your beer gut someday." He feigns shock and the artist chuckles. Round bellies, semicolons, lives... all are a matter of the choices we make. I imagine the little semicolon that was curled up in my flat abdomen. The one I deleted. The knot tightens in my stomach.

"Maybe you kids should come back when you've given this more thought."

More thought. Yes. That is something we should practice.

"I know I want a semicolon. On my wrist," I say, my voice sounding weaker than I'd hoped.

"Good choice," the man smiles sympathetically and nods. "But I don't think the raging stallion is ready to take the step today." He hands Nathan a tattoo magazine. "Take this home and have a look-see. I'll book ya both Saturday at noon. No alcohol beforehand; it thins the blood...and results in unwise decisions, like purple stallions on a scrawny guy's belly."

"I don't get it. I know you are a grammar geek, but why tell the whole world?" Nathan's question makes me smile. I imagine his eyebrows as they shoot up, some day in the future, when I am ready to show him Al-Hamdani's essay papering the ceiling above my bed. I've finished highlighting the semicolons and drawn hearts around each one. They've become my personal neon constellation.

"It's not about grammar, silly. It's about life." It's about how I've chosen to continue living rather than end my life.

"Dude...Is it some—"

"—I'm fine Nathan. I've got a paper to rewrite, so you get to make me dinner." I give him an exaggerated wink.

Nathan beams from ear to ear as he rummages through the bags of groceries we've just hauled in. I get a hair elastic from the bathroom and bunch his hair up on top of his head. He looks completely ridiculous but as happy as a troll under a bridge full of goats.

"Hey, Stallion, I've missed you too," I say, "And I'm starving."

The red ribbon

KATERINA NAKUTNY

My father told me in war men die quickly, men bleed, and men fight back. But they didn't shed any blood. A long, bloodless war. The worst kind of death. I still remember the hunger, ravenous all the time. My stomach tight like someone squeezing it, not letting go, sharp poles sticking through it, bugs crawling inside. The soldiers ate their lunch in front of us; the smell of bread and meat. I watched them throw a tiny morsel onto the dry, dusty road, laughing as boys fought each other for it.

After a while, you don't even want food, you're just tired all the time. Mother forced us to eat, kept us alive. The Soviet soldiers came often and raided our home: poking their bayonets into the ceiling, banging on the floor boards, ripping through our empty cupboards, and turning over every meagre piece of furniture. But Mama managed to bury some cornmeal and wheat chaff in the yard. She mixed it with nettle and any weeds we were able to forage in barren woods. Then she added water and made a kind of patty that she'd bake in the oven, spreading candle wax onto the pan so they wouldn't stick. My sister and I hid in the bushes next to the road as the Soviet trucks trundled by hauling every last morsel of wheat from our village. A little grain spilled as they drove and we ran into the road once they were out of sight and collected the precious pearls.

I was eleven years old when the famine began. It was the first time I saw a dead body. I was walking home from playing with Orest. Mrs. Bilyk was just lying there. Fresh snowflakes on her lifeless body. She was an old lady, so I didn't think too seriously about it. But then I looked closer, saw the emaciated figure, purple and swollen, the bulbous head covered with a black khustka. It scared me and I ran down the white road, sticky snow heavy on my boots. I didn't understand death then, but I soon would.

I sometimes think about those early days growing up in Zelena Dibrova and long for such simplicity and innocence. Most of us farmers, we loved the rich, black Ukrainian soil and took pride in working it, in making things grow. My family had a small, comfortable home and a yard with livestock and plenty of food. Orest was my best friend. We played together by the river every day: tossing stones into water, fishing, pretending we were Kozaky. We ran through the forest chasing each other with sticks, brandishing our swords as we rode on invisible horses, protecting our people. Anya and Oksana often walked along the river too, picking berries and playing the games that girls play. Anya wore two red ribbons in her long, blonde hair, woven through two braids and tied in a bow at each end. I'd pull on one of Anya's braids and she'd shriek. The girls would turn around, slapping at us as we ran away laughing.

One late summer's day, I was alone, walking through the woods along the river, the tall, spindly trees reaching high into the sky. I had a stick in my hand and was running it along the ground, trying to find a mushroom perhaps, maybe

some hidden berries, picturing how happy my family would be when I found some precious food and brought it home, a hero. Father would be especially proud. Lately, he was so tired, so weak.

Anya was sitting on a rock, her back towards me, head in her hands. I moved closer. Her body was heaving up and down, the red ribbons moving with her. I was scared to approach her, but put my arm on her shoulder. She jumped and turned around, her face tear streaked.

"Slavko," she said, "It's getting worse." Her eyes, once sparkling and full of life, were dull. She was pale and gaunt. "The soldiers hauled more bodies away on their truck today. I'm scared, Slavko," she said, leaning into me. I put my arms around her small frame, her long braids dangled at her back. I loved her. Her hair smelled like summer: grass and air.

I went home with a lucky handful of wild raspberries, Anya's tears wet on my shoulder. At home, mother was crying, all control lost. Father was gone. They'd taken his body on their truck, didn't let Mother bury him. My poor father, forced with the other men in our village, to continue working, despite his starving, malnourished state. Mother wailed and wailed, my sister holding her. I wanted to be useful, so I crushed the few raspberries and added them to a little water. My great find didn't matter any more. Nothing mattered. My father was gone.

My father and the men used to whisper late at night. They said they wanted to take our farms from us, make us serfs again. We wanted freedom so they punished us, and hurt us, and broke us. First, they deported some of our farmers. Kurkuls they called us. They sent them on a train to Siberia. Father said they were sent there to die. Then they arrested our priests, our teachers, writers and scientists. If you spoke against the Soviets, you ended up in the salt mines of Siberia, or with a bullet in the back of the head. Gone.

It was after that that they took our food. The hunger drove some people crazy, desperation making them do the unthinkable. Stalin, they'd said. The devil himself.

The soldiers continued to come and we continued to starve, every day weaker. The air was getting cooler and everyone was scared of what winter would bring. There were no more animals left in the forest, everything eerily quiet. I saw something on the ground, bright and gleaming. A red ribbon. Anya.

I walked home, clutching the ribbon in my hand, praying. Mama was coming down the street. She could barely walk, her feet so swollen. It was then we heard it. Chug, chug, chug. A train. I couldn't remember the last time a train had come through our village. Father told us that the Soviets didn't want people to know what was really happening, told people from other lands, that nothing was wrong. Father quoted an old Ukrainian proverb. "There are many lies, but only one truth."

"Oh, God. It's going west. The train is going west. Run,

Continued . . .

. . . red ribbon

Slavko,” Mama told me. “Run to the train. Escape.”

I couldn’t leave her behind. I couldn’t leave Halya and Orest and . . . and Anya. I couldn’t. I just couldn’t. Mama started to cry, clutched my hands as tightly as she could, hers weathered and bony. Her eyes were cloudy, her cheeks hollow, sunken. I wanted her to come with me.

“Please, my Slavko, please. I can barely walk. I must stay here, with Halya. Go . . . live. Promise me. Survive.” And so I promised her and I ran.

I ran as fast as my fragile legs would take me. The train was getting closer, but I managed to slip over the tracks unnoticed and conceal myself among the trees. I waited. I could hear the shouts as the train grew nearer. I watched as people ran toward it. Then I heard the shots. The soldiers shot them down. I closed my eyes tight. What if they found me? Part of me wanted nothing more than the sweet surrender of a bullet. Nothingness. It seemed better.

I lay flat in my hiding spot, watching the soldier’s boots under the train, trying to build the strength to stand. I still had Anya’s ribbon in my hand. I stood. I ran alongside the train. I was weak, but I thought of the pleading in Mother’s eyes and I picked up speed. I tried to grab on a few times, but I had little strength and couldn’t get a good grip. It was a cargo train and at last I saw the door to one of the train cars slightly ajar. With all my strength, I stretched one scraggy arm and grabbed onto a metal bar. I flung myself around, grabbing onto the train with my other hand and hoisting myself upwards. I was so thin that I was able to wedge myself through the small opening in the door and into the train car.

It was dark. I was jostled into a pile of crates, too scared to peer out the other door. Scared to see the soldiers, scared to see the village, and scared to see my mother. All I wanted to do was run into her arms, have her hold me. I crawled behind the crates and into the darkness. I let it wrap around me and hold me instead. Then, at last, I cried and cried and cried until I passed out into the blackness, troubled dreams and hallucinations taking over my mind.

When I awoke, I had no sense of time or place, but the constant chug beneath me. I wondered how far the famine reached, and how far the train would take me. Father once told me that there were Ukrainians living in Halychyna. Others called it Galicia. Our people were split in two: the Russian Empire and Poland. Maybe I’d find someone who would help me. Maybe the train would keep going west, over the border. But I wasn’t so sure.

I needed food and water. What was in the crates surrounding me? I tried to pry one open, but they were nailed shut. I was so weak, but I persisted. No luck. I searched the car and found burlap sacks in one corner: apples, potatoes, carrots, beets. My eyes grew big and ravenous. I hadn’t seen so much food in so long that I just stared at it awhile and cried. I cried for the constant, twisting pain in my stomach and for not being able to share such abundance with the people I loved. How could I feast in the middle of a famine? But I promised Mother.

And so I ate. But I had to be smart in case the cars were searched, in case the cars were unloaded. I took only a little food, as many apples, carrots and beets as I could carry. One potato. I stole back to my hiding spot. Now I had food, but no water.

I had been on the train for two days and would often watch from the crack in the door as the forest rushed by me, looking for water. I found an old, metal bucket in the car. If the train stopped near some water, maybe I could sneak out and fill the bucket without being seen.

On the third day, the train was following a river. The train didn’t stop often, but I prayed. The river was close and the train stopped. I slid from one side to the other peering out the cracks to see where the soldiers were. They milled about on one side of the train. The river was on the other. I squeezed through the opening, licking my dry lips at the sight of the river, but the bucket got stuck. I wrenched and wrenched. Nothing. Finally, I pulled back the door as hard as I could. It made a horrible screeching sound and the bucket was freed.

I heard voices approaching. I ran to the river and slid into it, pulling the bucket under with me. I found thick reeds near the bank and hid among them. I saw soldiers inspecting the train. One had an apple core in his hand and another was peering into the train car. My train car. He hoisted himself inside. I held my breath, though my head was above the water.

“Nothing here,” I heard the man call from the train car. “You, go that way. You, that way. Search along the tracks.”

The water was cold and the early autumn breeze stung. I had to jam my teeth together, tightening my jaw so they wouldn’t chatter, ignoring the pain of tooth decay. I heard the crunch of fallen leaves. And then a pair of black leather boots at the edge of the river. Closer. Closer. Closer.

I wondered what they’d do to me. Would they lock me away with no food, no water? Send me to work in Siberia? Would they beat me, torture me? Or would they just shoot me? I could just give up now. Please, just shoot me. Please. Then it would all be over and I could see Father again. I wouldn’t hurt anymore. I wouldn’t be alone. But I’d promised Mother.

Now, the boots stood right above me on the edge of the river. I looked up. Blue eyes. I could see the river reflecting in his eyes as he stared into mine. My throat was tight. I closed my eyes.

“Nothing here,” the boots above me said.

Too scared to move, I stayed in the cold river and listened as the train departed. Chug, chug, chug. Gone. I crawled from the river and pulled myself onto its bank. My muscles like ice, I lay on the grass. The soldier had seen me, and he had spared me. That gave me hope. The sun was warm and I let it dry me. I was still in the open on the edge of the river near the tracks, so I fled into the safety of the woods. Where was I? Had I crossed into Galicia, Halychyna, the west part of Ukraine? The forest was denser, different from the gangly pines of Zelena Dibrova that grew so tall I couldn’t see

where they ended.

Each day I walked. Each day I was alone, drinking from the river, eating weeds, leaves, worms and bugs. On the fifth day, I saw soldiers patrolling. The border.

My heart thumped against my hollow chest. If I could somehow get passed them, I might be safe. I was small, a wisp skulking through the forest, staying low to see how far the soldiers patrolled. It was far. They stood strong with neatly pressed uniforms and large guns. Passing through the woods was not an option. Nor was passing through open fields. No, I must go through the river.

I sat by the river's edge for a long time, letting the cool autumn breeze numb me. I looked up at the moon, watched the moonlight bathe the field and shine across the river. I closed my eyes and thought of my parents, my sister, my friends and Anya. I reached into my pocket and drew out the red ribbon. It shimmered in the soft light of the moon. The river was still and seemed to drop from the earth as it flowed along toward Halychyna. Clutters of reeds along the edges reminded me of the soldier who'd taken pity on me.

What if I could swim far enough to hide within the patches of reeds, breathe, and swim to the next? If I could slip into the middle of the river where the bushes were thickest along its bank, and swim deep enough to be hidden, perhaps, I could swim into the reeds and hide, then swim to the next patch and the next, past the border where the river curved.

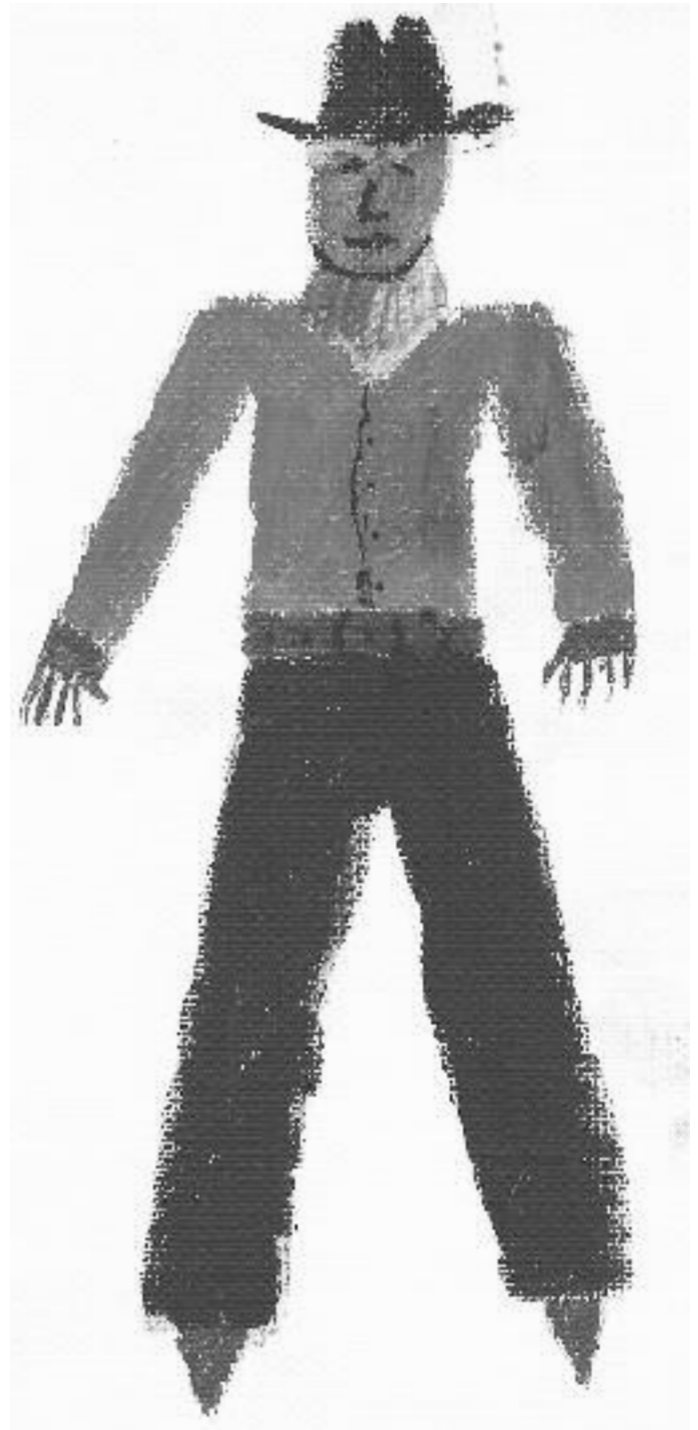
The next day, I waited until the sun was low, shining in the soldiers' eyes. Then I slipped into the river's cool grip and let it surround me. I took a deep breath and went under. I was weak, my body already devouring my small muscles. But I swam as quickly as I could, pushing the water behind me with my arms, in smooth, full motions. My lungs ached. I felt reeds brush against my face and turned left, slowly so as not to divert attention to the swaying reeds of the river and pulled myself up. I breathed. I couldn't see anything but reeds, water and sky, the water's chill already working its way to my bones.

Another deep breath and I was under again, pulling myself through the river's depths, my muscles seizing with cold. This time, I turned to the right, slipping among the reeds, wanting nothing more than to burst from the water and gulp the air greedily, but I slowly pressed my face to the surface and let it emerge, swallowing fresh, river air. I saw familiar black boots beyond the river and a glint of metal. I grit my brittle teeth and pushed under once again. I swam and swam and swam, my muscles shrieking, lungs feeling as though someone was stepping on them, pushing harder and harder. But I kept swimming until at long last, slippery reeds brushed against my skin. I emerged, gasping, gasping, gasping. The sun poured down, blurring my vision, tears filling my eyes and dripping into the river. And I stayed within the reeds, the cold overtaking me. Just let me die. Just let me die. But I'd promised Mother.

So I dove back within the river's alluring depths. They called to me, wanting me to stay in the dark river forever, but

I pushed on and on and on through the water, my arms and legs no longer feeling attached to my body until the river curved and I could no longer see the soldiers. With what little strength I had, I pulled myself onto the river's bank.

I should have died. But, as the sun rose the next day, so did I. I'd kept my promise to Mother.



Man standing by Cole Hansen

Seascape

TARA SAUNDERS

The waves lapped powerlessly against a broken stone shore. Today the sea was an old man, grey-topped and querulous, dreaming of glories owned only through the forgiving eye of memory. Pearl's mood followed him to quiescence, her breath breaking free in short huffs of release. Her hopeless flight slowed to an old man's shuffle and she traced the shoreline in booted feet. All would pass, the sea promised. Today's troubles would mean nothing through the telescopic eye of old age. Pearl listened and was comforted.

Foam froze into brittle dandelion puffs of emptiness, strong and beautiful to the eye but yielding without a struggle to the intrusion of a glove or foot. White-tipped waves whispered of barrenness and death, of opportunities missed and chances that would not come again. Time, the sea mourned. Time passed and wasted, its fruit no more than pretty pictures fixed in the moment of death. Has your time faded and gone, the sea asked. Pearl heard but had no answer.

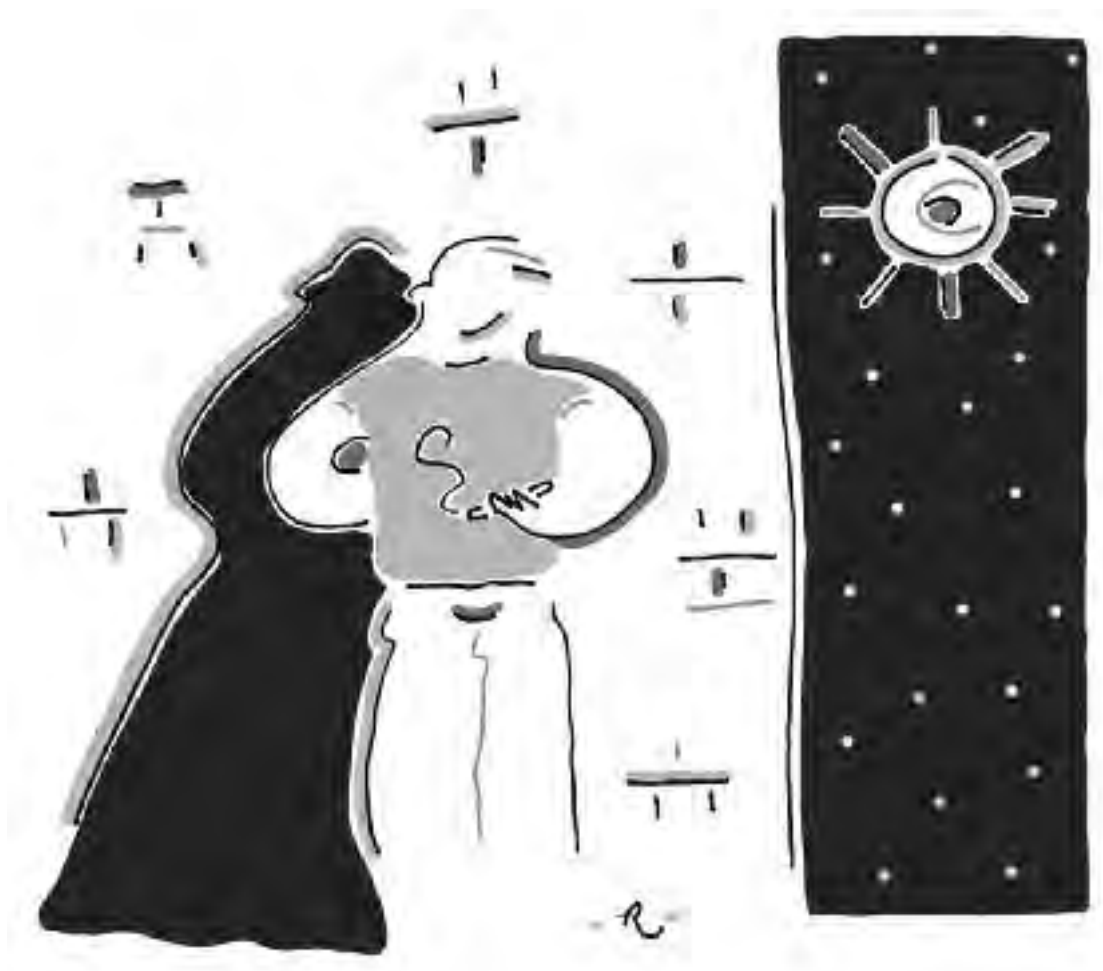
Gulls wheeled and screeched above leaping waves: tumbling,

chasing, fighting, living. The sea pressed curious fingers into the shoreline, delving into every secret, hidden place. Pearl laughed as those joyful fingers burst across her path, tickling across the canvas of her shoes, tempting her with gurgling pleas and gentle pressure. Not today, she answered, shaking free of the coruscating droplets. Today the mindless routine of her path was lost in sea-fingers, never resting, never still. Today she the sea forced her to abandon the safety of the familiar and find a new way across the shifting sands.

Sunlight sparkled onto faceted blue and reflected back into a sky just three tones lighter. The horizon was an idea, nothing more than a fading thought of otherness. Today the waves rippled only because they must, a never-ceasing symphony of calm. Today Pearl spoke instead of listening. She shared secrets made meaningless by the act of speaking, feet planted wide, the still centre of an ever-moving world. I will not come again, she told the tide. Her course was set, her rudder fixed, her compass pointing due north. Pearl turned her back to the sea and walked into the rising sun. She did not look back.

The End

3 AM by Rolli



Loehr has a true adventure

KEITH FOSTER

Brent Loehr. *The Global Baseball Classroom: Reflections Beyond Home*. Summer Game Books, 2015. 182 pages. \$19.31

[Full disclosure: The Editor worked with the Author on a preliminary draft of the book here reviewed.]

As if baseball isn't exciting enough, Brent Loehr takes readers on a worldwide expedition, sharing his expertise with those who have never experienced the excitement of the game. His far-flung travels take him to the Czech Republic, Germany, Sweden, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. *The Global Baseball Classroom: Reflections Beyond Home* leaves readers wondering what near-calamity might befall him next.

Born in Muenster, Saskatchewan, Loehr studied at St. Peter's College. He later revisits his hometown to view the Holy Grail of baseball, a ball autographed by Babe Ruth and the 1929 New York Yankees team.

Tasked by Major League Baseball International with spreading the game overseas, as a former catcher himself, Loehr comes well-prepared, though maybe not so well-prepared for the dangers and discomforts he'd have to face.

In the Czech Republic, Loehr is impressed with a boy who, missing his left hand, could throw and catch seamlessly with his other hand. Loehr tells the lad the inspiring story of Jim Abbott who, also missing one hand, became an impressive pitcher and hitter in the Major Leagues. Loehr apparently believes all things are possible for those who try.

In Sweden, Loehr is ecstatic to meet Lars Backman, on whom Muppet creator Jim Henson based his Swedish Cook character. Loehr practises saying "Swedish Cook" in Swedish, but mispronounces it and accidentally calls him something less flattering.

Loehr learns that Swedish coffee packs a powerful punch. "The coffee jumped up, strangled, and then beat you with its jet-black strength," he warns. "I forced down each sip. Chewed coffee beans would have tasted weaker." (162)

While in Germany, he visits a concentration camp. The torture and brutality he describes are too gruesome to reveal here.

In Uganda, dangers are omnipresent. "AK 47s were everywhere," Loehr notes. (98) He was "bitten by a bee the size of a sparrow, with a stinger that pulled out like a wooden sliver." (98) He picks up some of the local customs, like how to "respectfully" eat a banana.

Catchers often play barefoot. Many players have no idea how to use the equipment. Loehr notes that "a student putting a glove on his head was not uncommon." (96)

Not only was equipment in very short supply, what there was left much to be desired. Loehr describes one catcher's mask that was so decrepit most North American kids would toss it in the dumpster: "The foam pieces looked like a cat had nibbled on them. The flimsy chest protector offered little more protection than a sweatshirt." (87 and 100) According to Loehr, one catcher's glove "had as much padding as about three pieces of paper." (107)

Loehr is impressed with the resiliency of the African children. By providing an enjoyable distraction from their daily misery, baseball helps them cope. Reading this book, one feels grateful for the benefits we have in Canada.

Loehr isn't shy about using self-deprecating humour. In the hot Uganda sun, he sometimes removes his hat so the rays wouldn't "etch a tan line of 'ring around the skull.'" Pointing to his shaved head, Loehr says his name "rhymes with no hair." (160)

One night in Zimbabwe, Loehr's coaching partner awakens, furiously scratching his head, convinced he has lice. A search reveals an army of tiny bugs by Rusty's pillow. "Rusty was relieved he didn't have lice," Loehr notes, "and I, for once, was happy I didn't have any hair." (130)

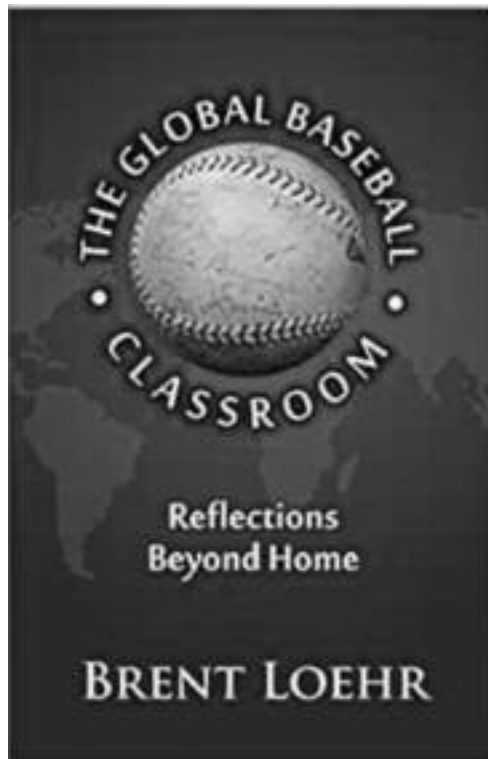
Promoting a positive message, Loehr inserts an inspirational quotation at the beginning of each chapter. In addition, one of the high points is his interview with W.P. Kinsella, author of the novel *Shoeless Joe*, on which the movie *Field of Dreams* was based.

Perhaps the most inspirational comment comes when Loehr asks Kinsella if he ever thought of quitting writing.

He replies: "No. I always knew I was good. It was the editors who didn't know what they were doing. (laughs). You have to believe that what you are doing is good even if it isn't." (174)

The Global Baseball Classroom is supplemented with thirty-seven black and white photos. One especially fascinating photo shows monkeys in the trees in Uganda observing ball players at practice, using a cricket field as their playing ground.

The Global Baseball Classroom: Reflections Beyond Home, with its delightfully descriptive prose, is an easy and enjoyable read. When you can combine three of your favourite passions – baseball, travel, and writing – and earn a living from them, life doesn't get any better than this.



Never underestimate a cave girl

CAITLIN ARNAL

Rolli, *Kabungo*. Toronto: Groundwood Books/House of Ansaï Press, 2016. 176 pages. \$14.95

Kabungo and Belly (Beverley) play together; that would be the adult description of what they do. Actually sometimes they hang out in a Kabungo's house: the cave. Or Belly chases Kabungo around Star City, trying to keep her from doing crazy things like wrestling a raccoon or stealing Uncle George's false teeth or "toofs" from his nightstand at the nursing home. This is Rolli's first novel for children and he gives them what they want, the opposite of "boredom: when everything turns out like you expected" (Rolli 56).

Rolli turns the everyday of an ordinary landlocked town into the kind of adventure most children daydream about. By following Kabungo one day, Beverley finds herself in a cabin with Kabungo's dutch-speaking grandpa and a pet mountain lion curled up in a basket. Beverley can be reluctant to partake in these adventures, just like Kabungo who refuses to say hippopotamus ("humplemoose") when Belly is teaching her to read. When Beverley is nervous she compares the feeling to "a large spider in [her] stomach that's trying hard to climb out" (55). Not only is Beverley nervous about her whereabouts, but she is also embarrassed that Kabungo will do something "uncivilized" or unexpected.

As if the main characters weren't wild enough, Rolli's fun

secondary characters, such as Grandpa, Uncle George, and Miss VeDore, romp through the pages and further his main theme of the unexpected. Rolli, in line with his darker spookier imagery, picks the holiday of Halloween to entice and frighten his young readers. Miss VeDore "jam" packs her yard with "hundreds of [jack o lanterns]" every year and everyone is a little bit afraid of her. What is odd about pumpkins at Halloween? It would be Grandpa in the airplane flying through the typical scene of trick-or-treaters.

Since there are no parents in this novel, unless tree branches count, it might be expected that a character like Miss VeDore would represent fear; however, it is the unexpected that the characters fear the most. Rolli perfectly controls this fear by balancing it with the familiar to keep the readers feeling safe: Bun the kitten, Halloween (the holiday and a raccoon), learning to read, old people, and garbage that adults don't want.

Kids will further feel at home, though tested, in this novel because the main characters fight but make up. They do the wrong things at times, and both need to hear about life's lessons. Rolli articulates one such teaching perfectly when he compares an apology to a boulder: "it's hard work pushing [one]. A lot of people give up halfway and lose a friend forever" (85).

This novel is a perfect place for a child to come and curl up and read at home or in the classroom during independent reading or Read to Self. A parent or teacher will also enjoy reading this book aloud for its delightful break from the "expected."



Attendees at the second annual Wade Moffatt Memorial Gala, held May 5 at the Conexus Arts Centre

Judge's comments

LINDA BIASOTTO

It was both a privilege and a pleasure to read all the submitted works. I found something admirable in each piece, whether it was a line, phrase or idea. All the works moved me. Interestingly, there were repetitive themes, such as darkness leading to light. But the prevailing theme, which was mentioned over and over, was that of hope.

A runner-up prize of \$25 goes to James Skelton of Saskatoon for his poem, Beginning. This poem seems to sum up the general themes expressed by

all the authors. I liked the poem's repetition and how it ends ambiguously with a question. The second line blew me away.

Another runner-up prize of \$25 goes to Muriel Paynter of Saskatoon for her non-fiction piece, Beginnings. I appreciated the positive philosophies the author expressed and her proposals for moving forward in one's life. The interesting phrase "begin the ending" stayed with me.

A first prize of \$50 goes to Anthea Loran of Swift Current for her poem, Compost. Although the poem speaks to hope, rebirth, continuity and change, the personification of trees in the poem is striking. The dark truth that we all age and eventually become compost is contrasted by the poem's vivid and often lovely imagery.

Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all those who entered the contest. Keep writing!

Fall WFYL Contest theme: "Home"
 Sponsors/Judges: Jeff Park and Sam Robinson,
 Saskatoon WFYL Group. Contact facilitators for details.



TED DYCK
 WFYL
 DIRECTOR



*Wagon Leader by
 Henry Peters*

WFYL PRINCE ALBERT
 FACILITATOR: LYNDA MONAHAN



Canadian
 Mental Health
 Association
 Saskatchewan
 Division Inc.

One day at at time

ANDREA ANDERSON

I have been struggling with anxiety and depression for many years. I've been trying to beat this mental illness alone. It has been a dark and trying time. So a new beginning for me is to not struggle alone any more and get the help I know I need. I have

started to go to the mental health drop in centre more often and I found out I am not alone. I have been going for counselling and taking my meds every day. So my new beginning is going well so far. Making new friends and not feeling alone anymore makes me feel like I can face this mental illness one day at a time.

Where my story begins

BASIL BALLANTYNE

My story begins when I was a kid. I grew up in so many ways. I was moved from one foster home to the next. I found out that all places were not good for me. All I can remember is that one night it was raining and thundering. I was told to keep down from looking out the window. I got so scared when the lightning hit the TV because it also hit me. I blacked out. I was in a coma for eight months.

When I went to school, kids used to laugh at me and throw things at me. I was having trouble doing the school work. I had to look closer at the work than they did to be able to see it. I felt afraid and lonely. I never seemed to get the help I needed. I found I had friends but others were not so friendly. I used to go to my friend's house on the other side of the school. I was asked to stay for supper and it was a good meal and they were good company. We went to the park and

played hide and seek. I enjoyed myself until it got dark. They walked me home to make sure I got home safely. I was so tired and had to rest often. I still tire quite easily.

The unfriendly ones thought I wasn't as normal as them. I was different than others. I felt self conscious about my appearance. I was good in sports though. I came in first in running. Others were surprised I could run so well, even though I had trouble walking. After grade twelve I kept on having epileptic seizures. I knew when one was coming on because my eyes would not see, even with my glasses. I was always bumping into things and was having trouble walking. If I crossed the street I was always careful to look both ways to be sure a car wasn't coming.

I was abused when I was a kid. I didn't know what this person was going to do to me. He drove me to a house where he shouldn't have taken me. This person shouldn't have hurt me. I thought I was just going for a ride. I was so scared. This only happened once but I've never forgotten. The place I lived was not good to me either. They locked me in a basement room in what I called the 'dark room.' They unscrewed the lightbulb. No sunlight, no light, no company. Then I was moved from that house to a better house and finally I moved into a house where it was good.

I'm happier here because the people are friendly. They ask me to do things for myself and I've come to depend on myself more. Someone helped me to spend time at The Nest drop in center. Here I met new friends. I enjoy writing at The Nest since I have come here. Coming to The Nest has been good for me. I am enjoying myself. Here I am writing my story with my friend, Jack. It's a story from hardship to happiness.

One

DEBBIE COCHRANE

"One is the loneliest number
That I ever did see
Two can be as bad as one
But the loneliest number is the number one"
This song sticks in my mind a lot lately
But just why?
Is six afraid that seven ate nine?
Writing things down seems to help a lot
You see things more clearly
Like 2017
You can look at it this way
 $2+1+7=10$ drop the zero
You have one
Which is the beginning of a new year too
So Happy New Year
January 2017

A new leaf

ELLY DYCK

I turned over a new leaf
I started anew
New faces, same places
Budding friendships grew
Coming from somewhere dark
The Nest has given me a fresh start
I now have a beautiful home
When I'm here I'm never alone

A new beginning

SHERRY FAVREAU

A moment of sadness, you were there
and now you're gone, a new beginning
and the sun has shone
The chemical imbalance in my brain
was what caused all that pain

A new beginning, like a breath
of fresh air, after all that despair
A zest for life, every taste, every smell
Seeing everything like it was new,
As before it cut like a knife

A new beginning, I am living
with mental illness with gratitude.
I am blessed with a healthy life again.
I accept the things I cannot change,
I believe this creates a new beginning.
I believe this to be true.

A fortune devine

AYAMI GREENWOOD

At one time, while still a tot
My dad would skate the River Reine.
This is before his family immigrated
From Holland to Canada, land of promise.

At one time, while in his prime,
my dad boxed professionally.
This is before he had his own family,
before I was born.

At one time, before I was born,
my dad fought in the second world war.
When he came back home, he married my mom.
Soon after I was born.

These glorious stories of my dad
adorn my treasured memories
and make me so very proud.
These glorious stories are my fate.

These glorious stories of my dad
have brought me a fortune,
a fortune divine.
In my treasured memories, dad shines.

Empty room

IAN MCINTYRE

Dig a hole to plant your shrubs
Later in spring things grow once again
But in an empty room there is more to achieve
What once seemed too lofty I see magic in front of me
Later crossing grounds on a higher plateau
Without trees eroding land a catastrophic destruction
The fall of our coat of arms and everything we stand for
So watch the prairie under the Canadian horizon
Things will change I believe all beauty was meant to be
A part of me still swoons to the hope of a seed
One day will be a potential tree who knows how high
It will climb up the Canadian sky
Dancing with the northern lights as mortal men play God
Yet we learn and science moves ahead the plan set forth

Just another song

PAIGE PEEKEEKOOT

No place to call mine
People just waste my time
She'll never be back, no
He'll be where she will go

To sing where I don't belong
And you're just another song
Damned to never see
To see how heaven will be

I don't know about Santa Claus

HOLLY KNIFE

Well I don't know about Santa Claus
Big white beard and big black boots
The many that take his place at shopping malls
No I don't know about Santa Claus
The elves and reindeer
One with a shiny red nose
And elves in panty hose and why
Didn't they make some proper shoes
Or is it because they have pointed toes

Well when I was young I learned of Christmas
As Jesus' birthday the newborn king
And that's why I don't know about Santa Claus
Big white beard and big black boots
The many that take his place at shopping malls
No I don't know about Santa Claus
Because you see no one could take the place
Of my sweet Jesus the newborn king
No I don't know about Santa Claus

A seed

DOT SETTEE

Look for a good spot for a spruce tree seed. In spring it is growing. A few more springs and summers it will stand four feet tall. Standing so proudly, wanting to be a Christmas tree. That's what he has been hearing all his life, hoping he is the one. The lights go on first and then the garland. Put a few more decorations. Standing tall. Oh joy for the Christmas tree. There are many colorful wrapped gifts under his boughs. He sees happy faces which makes him happy too. He falls asleep, having dreams of his wonderful new life, from seed to Christmas tree.

My sister in heaven

TANYA ROBERTS

A beautiful angel
Smiling down on us
Making sure we are okay
Making sure we're strong
She will be dearly missed
But she would want us to begin again, go on
I miss her laugh and smile
She really cared so much
She walked around for miles
She had a gentle touch
Florence was her name
She loved to read and write
She loved doing puzzles
Prayed every day and night
I think about her all the time
All the stories she would tell
I'll never forget the sound of her voice
I miss going over for coffee
I need to pay a visit soon
And bring her some flowers
She really loved the color blue
I'll sit with her for hours
I hope she visits me in dreams
And tells me how she's doing
I hope the pain and tears are gone
I wonder what she's viewing

REGINA WFYL

FACILITATOR: LINDA BIASOTTO

A love as big as the sea

DARCY FRIESEN

A cure for the boredom
I gave you a call
You were surprised to hear from me
I said, I missed you, that's all.

Chorus:

If we were meant to be
Why was there so much adversity
We lost track of each other
With love as big as the sea.

We arranged to meet
Somewhere beyond time
If you still felt the same
Everything would work out fine.

Chorus:

If we were meant to be
Why was there so much adversity
We lost track of each other
With love as big as the sea.

What happens next
One can only guess
You make me happy
The Angels would be impressed.

The Ward

JACK PHALEN

What will happen to me? I, the fallen, wheeled down the hall toward the ward.
I'm not alone – others have found their way to the ward. Why?
I don't know yet. Will the ward help restore the old me?
Have I destroyed so much of the old me that it can't be retrieved?
When and how did this destruction start? Does it really matter?
Do the staff really care? What good, for my healing, does my past play?
I've so many questions with seemingly few answers -so far.
Maybe, with the staff's help, the old Celtic warrior in me will fight
my enemy- Depression and win. I look around for other warriors
to join my fight. Some look blank, unable or unwilling to help themselves
let alone me. The staff is kind. I'm given the sustenance of life.
Maybe rest and drugs and sleep will help. I've had so many sleepless nights.
I feel dreadful about hurting and embarrassing my family. They remain supportive,
explaining that depression, being a mental condition, can be helped and perhaps,
in time, cured. I hope they're right. I pray they're right. O Lord why have you forsaken me?
The routine on the ward is simple and I learn it quickly. Some patients shuffle around like
ghostly apparitions. Others can be engaged in a good, informative, meaningful conversation.
Some even laugh and joke. These I seek out for they offer hope and companionship during
this long lonely journey here on the ward. My family conversations are around life outside the ward.
How can I explain what I don't really understand myself? I'm told my brain requires the
jump start of electro-convulsive therapy (times three) to aid my recovery. It works.
Along with drugs, I slowly regain the old me. I begin my life again. I leave the ward and rejoin
my family. Thanks to the staff of the ward, my family and my God, I'm me again.

Beginnings

COUNCE BRAMPTON

A constituent of a half-animate endeavor
ephemeral in its essentials but
transcendent in its effect

A transcendent boast of a tailored minutia
coming forth to independence of guild

December 1, 2016

Beginnings

ROBERT GAIRDNER

Every beginning has an end!
Every end has a beginning.
Therefore, the space in between
Has a duration of reality
Where life is, what happens
While making plans for the future

December 15, 2016

Lilacs ovulating

YANNICK GODIN

Valorous spores of
Roots milking like
shadows as
fetuses tracing a matrix.

The victorious sympathy
Of births forming
The parents' gems
The shards of
Freedom -- of essence --.

Culminating fury and
Movement like a
Breath, energy. First
Symptoms of immaculate,

The times of encounters,
In between spaces,
Words or affection.

The colours and the
leaves.

Continuity and
Suddenly
Marching, beats and
Seismic discovery.

Fresh air
Water
Soil and precious fire.

The elements of
Creation
Beginning...
Catalyst of animal,
Complying of vitals.

Beginnings

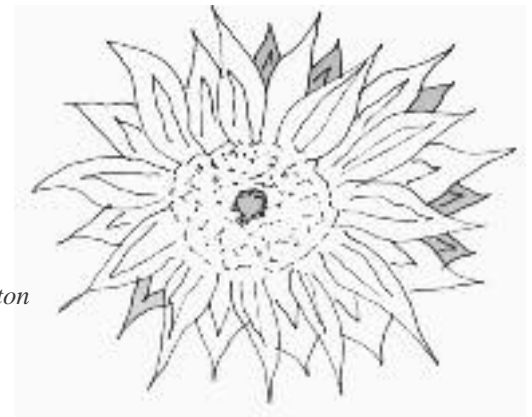
STEPHEN DUNSTEN

Beginnings. Where to begin. Everything has a start. The Big Bang, for instance. The very beginning when God Himself or Herself deemed creation into existence. Seasons begin when another ends. Winter into spring. Spring into summer. Summer into fall. And we're back again at winter.

Each day begins when the dawn breaks in the east. It's winter here in Saskatchewan, and by the time those first streaks of red show across the horizon, the day has already begun for many working people. Kids, too.

Beginning takes many forms. Tonight is my beginning in a new class. Starting new work. Meeting new people. Let's begin.

January 5, 2017



Art by
James Skelton

Were the tribal dreams
Of tables and dry cry

And so does the enemy
Of origins!
In fantasy of shares
Where dimensions

Of Darkness
delusional Light
Calling the bones' serum
To identify experience.

The beheading of traitors
Was the calm of forces
Was the trees and flowers

When birds
sang
Introductions

As of lecturing monuments.

The moon was
Bleeding. Rivers

The temples like times
Were the future of
The freezing present
Evolving in Eternity

The fictions that followed
Kept in their hearts
The prime Aleph

The primary sacrifice
Occurring on the beast
The feast of Universe

December 1, 2016

Beginnings

KEN IRVINE

The big bang theory
 Beginning of the universe
 Galaxies disperse
 Infinite space
 Black as a hearse
 Beginning of the race
 The nearest star
 More than a light year far
 Away
 Maybe we will visit someday
 Beginning new technology
 On Earth, we must stay
 You and me
 Till that day
 Life on Earth
 Maybe Mars
 In our colony ships
 We'll make the trips
 Beginning with our sports space cars

December 15, 2016

Horses

DONALD OLIVER

My grandfather was a young settler in North Dakota. He told a story of when the land was young and still unsettled. In the outback, there were herds of horses running wild.

Some horse hunters had seen a great stallion and they wanted him. They chased after him relentlessly for a couple years.

They finally caught him. They put him in a corral, and over night he rammed his head into the corral post, over and over until he broke his neck and died. If he could not live wild and free, he did not want to live.

December 1, 2016



*Anguish
 by Rolli*

Beginnings

BRYAN KING

Some easier than others.

Picture and become.

An exist to start – become not to refresh an obstacle. To what and beginnings.
 For starters and second to third spoken word flourish. To begin a writing, or speak
 turmoil of questions to mention – what – where.

A good start.

Answers to mention,
 unknown to be struck – thought up.

An encounter of the past reflected

Dialogue – or to mention when and reflect past
 Different to many but brings influence
 to those who discover it.

Second, but a clause of diverse causes
 in how the beginning first reflects:

without answers – know the outcome – question mark what to become of – and worth evoke from.

September 15, 2016

Beginnings

MURIEL PAYNTER

All beginnings start with an ending. We evaluate our circumstances and find the negatives that we feel must end. We delve deeply and recognize the part of our lives that isn't working for us, and why. We come to terms with the health or poisonous circumstances that are ruinous, and decide to end them. Some-times endings do not happen abruptly, and we need to plan a change -- be it days, weeks or months, we must begin the ending.

With new change, we must have the need or desire to leave our old ways and start on a new path. We need a plan. We need a timeline. We need positive thoughts and actions. We need consultation, discussion with others on the same path, and mentors or a buddy. Beginnings are best when we

have a positive framework: waking up with a positive attitude and prayer, getting through day by day in our changed circumstances, and each night having gratitude for a small step forward and asking forgiveness if it all didn't go as planned- and asking courage for the morrow.

When we can look back on our lives and see we have left old hindrances and moved over to a new condition, we must be grateful. We must give thanks and we must take a minute to appreciate our changed condition. For, with each new beginning, we need a new plan to keep the forward motion, for challenges are almost immediate with success. We know the only constant in our lives is change.

December 12, 2016

The beginning of the end

STEVE POOLE

Sooner or later a tired tomato and stupid water. Ever seen a banana spit: or an orange peel itself? Or how about an apple turn over in front of you? How about butter fly? Ever seen a tuna fish? I can tune a piano, and you're from Ituna. Two weeks the brightest day begins crocus hocus pocus snuffalafagus force. I'm an expert on Dragon's Den. Bare naked ladies or ladies Blane. Monsoon season. Bababolon Poo Inc. Take your eyes care eyes off the computer every 120 minutes for at least twenty seconds. Mad cow disease. Shoot now. Ask questions later.

December 16, 2016

Beginning a rhyme or reason

JAMES SNYDER

As I tie together a thought
Cause what I choose, I caught
The message of what I brought
To mind. I squeeze a lot
Of meaning out of what I fought
My entire life of strife and plot
For my teachers ultimately taught
Me to be the new beginning of me, as I ought

December 15, 2016



Beginnings

JAMES SKELTON

Dark night of the soul
Embracing the shadow of self
As much as I'm in the middle of and ending
I am beginning
Beginning a new changed life
Looking beyond my diagnosis
Beyond the hospital
Beyond solemn despair
Beginning to grasp the intangible
Beginning to shed these dark shadows that have haunted me
Beginning and emerging into light which
I am beginning to see
Beyond hopelessness and the deep, dark place
That has pulled me under in times past
Beginning to live again
As much as I am nearing the end of my story I am
only beginning this story
What will be?

December 1, 2016

Beginnings

RADEK STRNAD

Is it fair to say that when we are born, we begin from a blank slate? This may or may not be true. We are born into a family. We are born into a community. Living with a mental illness, I ponder where the mental illness began. Twenty years after I was diagnosed with bipolar, I still wonder where my disability began. Perhaps I should view my BPAD more as a gift than a disability.

Writing brings me new beginnings. It is not glory most times, however. Often, I am self-critical of my writing. When my writing doesn't appeal to my standards, my new beginning is fleeting. When my writing does please me, the new beginning permeates my being.

Life is full of beginnings and endings. From some frame of mind, we can see that an ending is usually followed by a new beginning.

The ultimate beginning is birth. The ultimate ending is death. Death is also an ultimate mystery. Many religions claim that death is the beginning of something greater. I can only hope for that. I'll know when I die if death truly is a greater beginning.

December 8, 2016

In the beginning

KIRK TAYLOR

In the beginning, a long, long time ago, there was space, the final frontier, where Captain Kirk was the leader of the starship Enterprise. He had fought a lot of battles in space. He had a crew that backed him up.

As we look into space, we stop and think, "Do aliens really exist? What is it really like up there?"

We all think and wonder when our time is up here on earth. What will it be like up there in a new beginning of life? I am thinking it is peaceful and we will all meet each other in a new beginning of life after death. May God bless us all as we all start a new beginning of life.

Peace.

December 22, 2016

SWIFT CURRENT

FACILITATOR: SARAH LAYBOURNE

Sacred trust

DEREK KENDALL

I will never be an animal . . . again
 Then I'll rely on the many other
 Heartbeats
 Rather than my time on the streets
 Gone astray
 May strike me an hour a day
 But things are as sacred as trust
 Thinking of drinking to wash out the dust
 That bellows from my clothes
 So much water. I'll be king
 For a lakes worth
 There is such a thing
 Every day since birth
 For hot colder, and colder hot
 You caught me at a bad time
 5 to 10 for one moon phase
 And I cannot say
 The light of day will ever go away . . . again
 But for the night I'll stay
 Till I can have grandeur
 In my own special way

Compost

ANTHEA LORAN

The year is growing old as I grow old
 The green of summer turns to gold
 Soon come the winter winds of change
 To buffet the trees which bend and sway
 Till their finery of colours blows away

Leaves spiral skywards, swirl around
 Then sink in clusters on the ground
 Their once cheerful faces that shone with light
 Now brown and wrinkled, no longer bright
 Soon quilted over with snowy white

The brittle branches of the trees are lashed by snow and rain
 Their knobby, twisted twigs reflect their pain
 Frosted over with silver hair they kneel as if in prayer
 Bent in supplication to the earth till they can rise again

Under their comforter of snow the leaves will turn to mould
 Nourishing the soil beneath as they are growing old
 For they still play their part and are not spurned
 When the wheel of seasons spins and spring returns
 With the woods' first flowers and waving ferns
 For the discarded leaves display their worth by engendering new birth
 With fresh canopies above and floors of green beneath
 Once more the joyful miracle of life unfolds

Winter's meltdown

KEVIN BELLEMARE-PROKOPETZ

Geese, birds of all kinds
return home,
BBQ smells, flowers, leaves,
all return,
Special season where newborns appear,
homecoming from winter vacation,
season greetings,
spring is here!

Sunrise

TIM MISSAL

Early morning alarm,
Internal eyes respond.
Mix and match
From the clothing rack.
Now the curtains go up,
The sun shines bright,
Up we look, what a sight.
Early morning sunrise,
A glimpse of kindness.
Horizons, scramble for their best.
Make way,
It softens the day.

Universal question

JEFF MITCHELL

In the beginning there was no ending,
toward the ending there's always a beginning.
God created the Heavens and the Earth.
But where did he get the raw material?
Did he create with a big bang,
or did it slowly form from nothing?
Maybe the beginning was the ending
of something else. And since then
has been ever expanding. So in
the ending will it all begin again?
And what from will it take next
time around? And who of us will be
around to witness it? Beginning
without end, and end with only
new beginnings like a never ending
cycle where time is irrelevant
not that time exists anyway.

The new home

NINA SHAD

If I could write my own new beginning my home
would have four master bedrooms, three bathrooms,
six regular rooms, kids play room, three floors, and
an elevator. In reality I do have a new home on the
horizon, just not one as extravagant.

BARRY STYRE

In the beginning

In the Beginning
I began to begin
What I had begun
it turned out to be quite a lot of fun
I once had a record called
"Return to Forever"
Elvis had a song called
"It's Now or Never"

True story

My first day of school for grade one when I was six years old.
There was a boys and girls entrance. The other kids found
their assigned home rooms. I wandered around the empty
halls not knowing where my home room was. I felt like a
dope. Thoroughly discouraged I went home which was only a
few blocks away. I told my mother, "I'm never going to school
again." She said, "You go on back to school." Which I did. Such
was my dubious beginning on the first day of school.

With every move there is a new beginning

My parents were divorced when I was eight years old and we
had our first new beginning by moving from Weyburn to
Swift Current. Three years later we moved back to Weyburn
to a house on 11th Street.

Our third new beginning happened when we moved to
farm a couple years later, we lived on that farm for four years
before moving back to Weyburn.

My fifth new beginning was a big move to Vancouver
where I bummed around for ten and a half months, then it
was back to Weyburn for about 2 years.

My dad took me to Medicine Hat after that, I lived and
worked there for twelve and a half years, this was followed up
with another move in 1985 to Estevan, I lived and worked in
Estevan for about 4 months.

My ninth and final move saw me back in Weyburn in
1986, this is where I've lived ever since.

Notes on contributors

ARTISTS

HANSEN, COLE Saskatoon SK artist

PETERS, HENRY Winnipeg MB artist
Long time contributor to TRANSITION

ROLLI Regina writer, cartoonist and illustrator.
Widely published. <<https://rollistuff.com>>

SKELTON, JAMES
Saskatoon artist and poet.

SALKELD, SHIRLEY DAWN First appearance in
TRANSITION for this Rosetown Artist

AUTHORS

ANDERSON, COLLEEN
Very widely published Vancouver writer and editor. Has
a fondness for sci-fi/fantasy and is an Aurora Award
finalist.

ARIMA, PHLIP
Toronto performance poet, author of five books and an
audio CD. Directs, organizes, and/or hosts sundry
literary series. Details at <www.phliparima.com>.

BARCLAY-WRIGHT, ZOE
Third year drama student at Queens University. Special
interest in playwriting. Writes short stories and poems
in spare time. Interested in Arts Management after
graduation.

BETZ, LIZ
Retired Alberta writer and frequent contributor to
TRANSITION. Nonfiction pdf, "Lymphedema Logbook"
(2016), available at <<http://lymphedemalogbook.blogspot.ca>>.

BIRD, SHARON
Retired teacher living in the forest near Christopher
Lake SK. Love of reading, mentorship of writing
teachers, and support of poetry groups taught her
what words can do.

BRAUN, GORD
Yorkton poet and satirist. Regular contributor to
TRANSITION.

BULMER, APRIL
Cambridge ON writer and author of *And With Thy Spirit*
(Hidden Brook Press, 2016). Her *Creeds and Remedies: The Feminine and Religion in Waterloo Region*. Released
Spring 2017.

CALLAGHAN, SHIRLEY
Regular contributor from PEI.

COGHILL, VERYL
Writes at the edge of the northern forest in Prince
Albert SK. Creative writing certificate with distinction
from the Humber School for Writers. *Make Me* (poetry)
published by Thistledown Press.

DIFALCO, SALVATORE
Toronto writer previously published in TRANSITION.
Author of novel *Mean Season* (Mansfield Press, 2015).

FRASER, SHANE
Regina writer of fiction published in *Beyond Imagination Literary Magazine*, *The Literary Hatchet*, *The Flash Fiction Press*, and forthcoming in *Helios Quarterly Magazine*.

TRAUTMAN, KIM
Saskatoon SK artist

Members of CMHA Estevan Arts program
DEMAS, IRENE
KIRBY, JOYCE

Our apologies to IRENE DEMAS, who in the
Winter 2016/2017 issue of TRANSITION,
page 31 and in the Notes on contributors,
was incorrectly identified as Lee Demas

GRABOWSKI, JACEK
Contributor to TRANSITION since 1991 (poetry, short
stories, art). First submission after a fifteen-year writer's
block. Lives in Saskatoon with his wife, Betty.

GRIEVE, EMILY
Edmonton pianist, accompanist, and teacher who
enjoys reading and writing poetry. A proud member of
Edmonton Stroll of Poets.

LAVERDIERE, RACHEL
Well-published writer and teacher currently working in
Saskatoon SK. Flash fiction shortlisted for the *Geist* 2015
Short Long-Distance Writing Contest.

MCINTYRE, IAN
Member of Prince Albert WFYL Group. Previously
published in TRANSITION and in the anthology *With
Just One Reach of Hands*. Author of a chapbook of
poems, *Primary Colors*.

MONAHAN, LYNDA
Facilitator, Prince Albert WFYL Group. Author of three
collections of poetry, most recently, *Verge* (Guernica
Editions, 2015). Active editor, mentor, and writer-in-
residence (Victoria Hospital, Prince Albert SK).

NAKUTNY, KATERINA
Lives in Regina SK with her husband and two children.
Teaches high-school English as an Additional
Language M. Ed., specializing in second language
instruction.

NIXON, SUSIE
Prairie writer recently returned home from global
hospitality employment in forty-plus countries.
Currently completing M.Ed. degree.

PARLEY, KAY
Regular nonregian contributor from Regina. Author of
Inside the Mental (University of Regina Press 2016), re-
viewed in TRANSITION W17.

SAUNDERS, TARA
Lives in a little house at the edge of a deep, dark wood
where stories whisper at night and dance away when
pursued. Has far too many dogs and cats, just the right
number of children. www.tarasaunders.com.

SCHMIDT, BELLE
Well-published Colorado USA writer born and raised in
Saskatchewan. Author with Irene Grobowsky of *In Our
Bones* (2015).

WRITING FOR YOUR LIFE (WFYL)

LINDA BIASOTTO
Judge's comments

PRINCE ALBERT
Facilitator:
Lynda Monahan
ANDREA ANDERSON
BASIL BALLANTYNE
DEBBIE COCHRANE
ELLY DYCK
SHERRY FAVREAU
AYAMI GREENWOOD
HOLLY KNIFE
IAN MCINTYRE
PAIGE PEEKEEKOOT
JACK PHALEN
TANYA ROBERTS
DOT SETTEE

REGINA
Facilitator:
Linda Biasotto
DARCY FRIESEN

SASKATOON
Facilitator: Jeff Park
COUNCE BRAMPTON
STEPHEN DUNSTEN
ROBERT GAIRDNER
YANNICK GODIN
KEN IRVINE
BRYAN KING
DONALD OLIVER
MURIEL PAYNTER
STEVE POOLE
JAMES SKELTON
JAMES SNYDER
RADEK STRNAD
KIRK TAYLOR

SWIFT CURRENT
Facilitator:
Sarah Laybourne
DEREK KENDALL
ANTHEA LORAN

WEYBURN
Facilitator:
Bernadette Green
KEVIN BELLEMARE-
PROKOPETZ
TIM MISSAL
JEFF MITCHELL
NINA SHAD
BARRY STYRE



FRIENDS FOR LIFE

PRESENTATIONS and WORKSHOPS

Suicide

- 🌀 **Speaking of Suicide** - an introduction to the topic of suicide awareness
- 🌀 **safeTALK** - Suicide Alertness for Everyone
A half-day (3.5 hour) workshop
- 🌀 **ASIST** - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills - 2-day skills-building training to provide suicide first aid interventions
- 🌀 **Empowering Teens** to prevent suicide
- 🌀 **Tattered Teddies** - a workshop about suicide in children

Mental Health

- Balancing Work and Family
- Seniors and Mental Health
- Mental Illness (General Overview)
- Depression * Depression and Physical Health
- Depression in the Workplace * Work Life Conflict
- Schizophrenia * Bi-polar * Anxiety
- Borderline Personality Disorders
- Seasonal Affective Disorder * Grief and Grieving
- Laughter in Healing * Loneliness and Isolation
- Stress Can be Fun * and many more . . .



RESOURCE CENTRE

Hundreds of books, articles, videos, games and programs are available for loan from the Friends for Life Resource Centre. Topics range from Anger Management to Suicide Prevention

All materials are available only in person or via telephone inquiry 306-525-5601 ext 223 or toll free anywhere in Saskatchewan at

1-800-461-5483.

You can also visit the Resource Centre during regular office hours at 2702 12th Ave., Regina, SK.



Canadian Mental Health Association
Saskatchewan
Mental health for all



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DIVISION OFFICE

2702 12th Avenue, Regina, SK S4T 1J2
Phone 1-800-461-5483 (SK) or
306 525-5601 (Regina)
FAX 306 569-3788
email contactus@cmhask.com
Web Site: sk.cmha.ca

CMHA Branches

BATTLEFORDS
1011 - 103rd Street
North Battleford, SK S9A 1K3
306 446-7177 • Fax 306 445-7050
jane.cmhanb@sasktel.net

ESTEVAN
1201 - 2nd Street
Estevan, SK S4A 0M1
306 634-6428 • Fax 306 634-8535

KINDERSLEY
Box 244 (113 - 2nd Avenue East)
Kindersley, SK S0L 1S0
306 463-8052 • Fax 306 463-5506
a.w@sasktel.net

MELVILLE
Box 3625
Melville, SK S0A 2P0

MOOSE JAW
Rm 324 - 650 Coteau Street West
Moose Jaw, SK S6H 5E6
306 692-4240
donna.cmha@sasktel.net

PRINCE ALBERT
1322 Central Avenue
Prince Albert, SK S6V 4W3
306 763-7747 • Fax 306 763-7717
pacmha@sasktel.net

REGINA
1810 Albert Street
Regina, SK S4P 2S8
306 525-9543 • Fax 306 525-9579
Members' Phone 525-8433
info@cmharegina.com

SASKATOON
1301 Avenue P North
Saskatoon, SK S7L 2X1
306 384-9333 • Fax 306 978-5777
info@cmhasaskatoon.ca

SWIFT CURRENT
176 - 4th Avenue NW
Swift Current, SK S9H 0T6
306 778-2440 • Fax 306 773-0766
director@sccmha.ca

WEYBURN BRANCH
404 Ashford Street
Weyburn, SK S4H 1K1
306 842-7959 • Fax 306 842-3096
cmhawey@sasktel.net

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Canadian Mental Health Association Saskatchewan Division