THE NEW FISCAL YEAR BUDGET DISCOVERED HOW TO SAVE MONEY ON INMATE DENTAL HEALTH ...

Widman/Tangent

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An Irish Blessing

May the road rise
to meet you,
May the wind be
always at your back,
May the sun shine
warm upon your face,
May the rains fall
soft upon your fields,
And, until we meet again,
May God hold you
in the hollow of his hand.

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Cover Story

Tangent's MMA leprechaun asks:
How bad do you really want this gold, bro?

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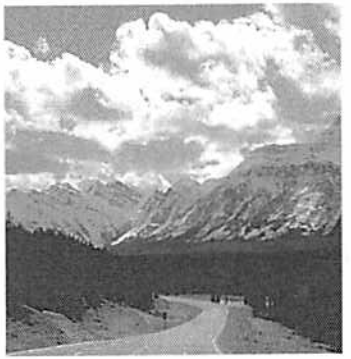
Dear Reader,

This is the sweet one, Pete. So what am I going to rant about this time? I think I will say how there is a good side to everything. And yes I am talking about all the time I have spent in jail. On the good side, I did not end up dead on Hasting Street, overdosing on drugs or alcohol or anything that I could get my hands on that can kill you. Also from in here I have learned about a computer, as well as math and English and letters and books and poetry. So now you know there is a bright side to things. You just have to stop and look over your life.

Sinisterly,

Sweet-Pete-Saul
January 16, 2014



In Memoriam

Peter Saul

January 16, 1964 – February 10, 2019

A SERVICE FOR PETE was held last month in the Chapel. Several were in attendance and some spoke to the kind of friend and person he was. The Pete I knew from working in the Kitchen was easygoing and respectful—his serious skull ink notwithstanding. I remember that he was always quick with a thank-you, like when we managed to tweak out leftover oven-fries. And when I started at the newsletter, Pete's poetry was the first under the door. Recently I came across some more of his writing...

Smelly Skeleton

Spend my life B-P-B servitude
To the glowing TV I'm glued
It's too clear and growing prudent
I'll make it all the way through
Sweet-Pete knows what to do
Bandit tell I'm black and blue
Black-Pine-Bandit bad show
Skeletons all in a bony row
Away feather Bandits blow
Look at all the inmates fall
In the cell and on floor halls
Redness stain the black walls
Out of blackness I was called
Soldiers I go at my good free will
Same as the old burial ground hill

—Sweet-Pete-Saul
August 8, 2011

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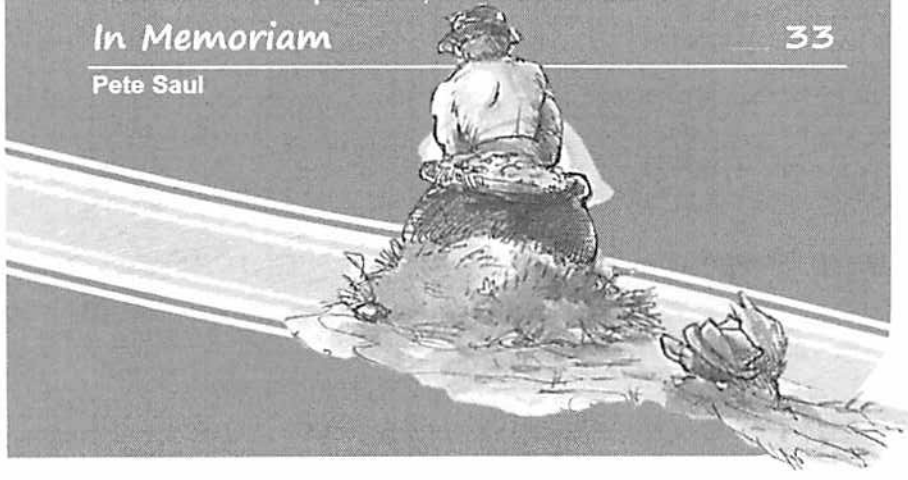
Pete Saul



Editor

HEY GUYS. It's good to see us all out and about again and relatively sniffle-free. I gotta say, wasn't a fan of that flu quarantine last month, especially the cold food a la *cart* for half the joint throughout. I actually missed the soup.

You know what else I miss these days? Less drama in Canadian politics. Looks like our PM bit into quite the sour pickle with the whole SNC-Lavalin thing. And of course the loyal opposition are beating him over the head with it. Oh brother, there's nothing quite like the yellow cloud of indignation that goes up when so many politicians cry foul. Especially when some of them have pissed in the pool themselves a time or two.

Thanks to my boss, SPO Ward, for the lookups, scans, article downloads and all-around support. And as always to our contributors for bringing what it takes to make this happen month in, month out. Everything but green beer.

Jason

Groups

IWC

HELLO, AND WELCOME to another episode of… **What the #8@% is Going On?**

As you know, elections were held for the IWC last month with Dustin Hales as Chairman, and Todd Howley as Secretary/Treasurer. Thanks to everyone who participated. We'd like to take this opportunity to address some of the most frequently asked questions that have come our way lately:

Movie guides - Where they at? IWC received February's from Admin during the January warden's meeting, however they have not yet been able to locate March's. Notices will be posted once they are available.

Photocopier – Not fixed yet?! It's now in the ITF process. IWC is waiting for a technician to come on site. The problem was a "paper jam" with no paper visible. We did what we could but it looks like the malfunction is in the guts of the machine. We'll post notice as soon as it's up and running again.

followed, taking off his own clothes along the way, they pressed together.

"I find nothing clears my mind better than a healthy distraction."

"More distractions," Dale teased. "Do you focus on anything?" Their mouths connected.

They had sex and made love again and again, the tension of the past few days finally subsiding. Then, exhausted, they slept. □

the alarm. Then a panel above the couch dropped silently.

He smiled at her inquisitive eyes, "That's my safety net." A server tower, slaved to two independent drives sat quietly in the secret alcove. "There's no hard drive on this one. The data goes into RAM and once a day the internet and phone disconnect and that boots the system in there. All data's moved over and the system shuts down again. No outside access ever."

They moved to the enclosure behind his couch. One small screen blinked "READY." Dale typed rapidly. The original file winked open as sub directories cascaded across the screen.

Natasha pointed, "What's that one? *Steinman Captures.*"

Dale clicked and nine video screens popped up, each one showing a middle-aged woman moving around a house. He checked the file size and whistled. "There's days and days of stuff here. Who is she?"

Natasha shrugged, "Don't know. What's the other files say?" She was intrigued, sifting and searching data was second only to shooting on her thrill list.

Dale continued scrolling, "No Impact Project - New York, Exon Mobile, Synthetic Biology, BioGen, GRACE Imaging -"

"Hey, I know that one," Natasha said. "That's a water aquifer satellite. William has been funding searches for new water sources in Southern Illinois."

There were hundreds of files: names of people, cities, and countries. He recognized the names of military insurgents, political leaders, more than he could read now.

Natasha settled back in the chair, "Well," she said, "seems we've opened the box. But is it Pandora's or not?" she pulled her phone. "I'll text Merlyn, tell him we made it and the catch is ripe. Then we really should do that shower."

"Yes, um… good," Dale said distracted. He loaded the files onto one of the portable hard drives stacked in the same compartment. "With this we can head back and dig through it all later. Get to the bottom of who's trying to kill me." He closed the system and shut the panel.

"Interesting," she said looking at her phone. "Merlyn wants us to hold for two more days.

Dale flashed his best cheesy smirk, "I *may* be able to find a way of keeping you busy," he said, then lead her out to the master suite.

> "Natasha shrugged, "Don't know. What's the other files say?" She was intrigued, sifting and searching data was second only to shooting on her thrill list."

The room was stunning, like something out of *Architectural Digest*. The whole front was a massive glass wall showcasing the water; miles and miles of ocean from the king sized bed's center view. An open spa-sized tub flanked it, with a huge glassed in shower to one side and a sitting area with open closets on the other.

"Not much for walls, are you?" she teased, stripping as she crossed the floor behind him.

"Occupational hazard," he muttered, turning to enjoy a view of her that rivalled the ocean.

Natasha shook out her long blonde hair and turned back coyly, "Are you just gonna watch …or join me?" Her perky breasts tempted him as she leaned into the shower and turned the taps. He

Toaster ovens – We losing them or what? This was asked at the warden meeting on March 8th. We were told that new Ottawa policy mandates they be removed, but that it occurred without consultation. The warden said emphatically *"do not panic,"* he is looking into what can be done to keep them, and if pizza is going to be sold on the canteen, they need to provide us with something to cook them in. That said, there's a freeze on new oven purchases for the time-being.

Holiday parcel cancelled? – Bah, humbug! NHQ is looking to implement a National POS (Point of Sale) system, but it's unclear when or if it will happen. The Warden said he doesn't want to be the one who "cancels Christmas" at Mission and that there should be a parcel this year at least.

IWC Holiday gift to the Pop - Who ate it? It was supposed to arrive before the Holidays, but one of the items wasn't available and a new order was placed. Once here, Tier Reps will distribute.

What's coming up? The Easter long-weekend tournament package has been submitted and is planned for April 19 - 22. The next family event is for Mother's Day and scheduled for May11th. Anyone wishing to attend must have their forms handed in to IWC by March 23rd. Please note there will be no extensions, and no refunds for this event or those to follow. We are trying to arrange a treat for those not attending the upcoming family event, as well as a little something for Easter.

Also at the March 8th meeting, Admin raised concerns over recent events throughout the institution. Specifically, increased tensions, requests to leave Units or transfer out altogether. We were asked to pass along the following: "Pay your bills, or stop doing drugs." Admin Seg doesn't exist anymore and the only places to transfer to are Matsqui or Kent. All other mediums are full, and there's a wait-list to get in here.

That's it for now. We'll do our best to keep the updates coming. Come see us with any questions or concerns, but unless it's an emergency, not in the Mess Hall please. We're both in Unit 6.

Thanks, and watch for the next episode coming to an office window or newsletter near you.

Cheers,

Your IWC

APOLOGIES TO FRED ABMA for getting his name wrong in February's Contributors list. Not sure why; he definitely doesn't look like Jessica Alba.

Hey, our first retraction. Just like a real paper, say The New York Times or Washington Post, would. Now all we need is a President to call us fake news.

Book Club

IT WAS GOOD TO SEE OUR VOLUNTEER, KATHY, back from her freighter cruise across the North Atlantic (we didn't know they did those either) to take up the two month double-read she left us with: ***Wild*** by Cheryl Strayed, and ***Alias Grace*** by Canadian legend Margaret Atwood.

Our selection for March is ***El Deafo*** by Cece Bell. A humorous graphic Novel memoir about growing up hearing impaired.

Here are some of the picks to come with descriptive captions provided, all free to read and fun to discuss courtesy of the *Book Club for Inmates* Canada-wide organization:

Innocence on Trial by Joan McEwan. A new novel by the local, Vancouver-born author who's planning to come for a meet-and-greet at Mission once we've read her book.

Becoming by Michelle Obama. True-Life Memoir. Although Michelle Obama's memoir gives the reader an inside look at the punishing pace of the campaign trail and the fishbowl existence of life in the White House, it is not a book about politics. It is a story of a young African American girl who grew up in a small apartment in Chicago's South Side.

Conclave by Robert Harris. Suspense thriller. A tale of Vatican intrigue with plenty of plot twists, revelations and high politicking as a conclave of cardinals tries to find a new Pope after the incumbent has died. Follows in the classic British mystery novel tradition.

Finding Gobi - a Little Dog with a very Big Heart by Dion Leonard. True-Life Memoir. The miraculous tale of Dion Leonard, an ultra-marathon runner who crosses paths with a stray dog while competing in a 155 mile race through the Gobi Desert in China.

Hag-Seed: The Tempest Retold by Margaret Atwood. Literary Fiction. Felix is at the top of his game as Artistic Director of the Makeshiweg Theater Festival. He is staging a "tempest" like no other, but after an unforeseen treachery, Felix is living in exile and brewing revenge. After 12 years, that revenge arrives in the form of a prison theater course.

IQ by Joe Ide. Crime. One of the best books of 2017. A resident of one of LA's toughest neighborhoods uses his blistering intellect to solve the crimes the LAPD ignores.

Less by Andrew Sean Greer. Fiction. A struggling novelist travels the world to avoid an awkward wedding in this hilarious Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel full of "arresting lyricism and beauty.

On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft by Stephen King. True-life Memoir. Immensely helpful and illuminating to any aspiring writer, Stephen King's million-copy bestseller shares his experiences, habits, and convictions that helped shape him and his work.

The Quality of Silence *by* Rosamund Lupton. Literary Thriller. This is an intense and moving study of a family that has to go through a harrowing

"No," she said, "it's nice, feels safe somehow."

They talked for a few more hours, sharing stories of different missions, even some of his childhood shit on the streets of Chicago. She matched him with tales of the underground movement, and going up against the Mafia. Natasha was one of those rare souls that really believed in the right of the common people.

"I've been military forever," Dale reflected, "It's trained to the very core to obey and follow. So being on the other side of *right* has got me pretty fucked up." He stared out the window, quiet for a long time. "Hey, listen, I'm done. Next rest stop let's swap and I'll crash."

They drove through the night, the day, and into the next night. Sharing space, they talked about simpler things, movies and life, then jumped right into guns and different ways to kill without being detected. The GPS quietly ticked away, drawing him ever closer to home, or a home, his secret nest egg. It was the escape that he always imagined, but ended up delayed by that one more mission.

Flying along the Oregon-Coast Highway, Natasha drove while Dale pointed out the signs. "Okay," he said, "11 miles. It's coming up on your right." Seeing the turn for Echola State Park, Natasha swung the truck down the narrow winding way. The route dropped quickly to sea level as they burst out of the trees onto the edge of a perfect little community.

"Holy crap," Natasha said, "I can see the draw, this belongs on a postcard."

Dale smiled, "It's one of the reasons I love it. Cannon Beach tries their hardest *not* to be known." He gestured for her to stop in front of a store with a big "BS Creations" on the door.

"Really dude, *Bullshit Creations*, that takes the cake."

> "I've been military forever," Dale reflected, "It's trained to the very core to obey and follow. So being on the other side of right has got me pretty fucked up."

"It's for *Bill and Sandy*," he said grinning. "But they work with bull and snake skins, so that fit's too. I just need to see Bill for a sec." He hopped out and slipped in the front door. Natasha watched people casually walking around, seven of them. Mid-evening town life, *very nice*. 10 minutes later, Dale climbed back into the truck.

"We're good, just a little further and then a right on *Oak*."

Soon after they pulled up to a huge beachfront house, Natasha whistled, "That's not a cabin Dale."

"Well it's *my* cabin. Bill and Sandy live in the smaller house over there by the beach and watch the place for me, but it's all mine." He punched a code on the gate pad to open it and they pulled around the side. Getting out, Dale used a thumbprint scanner to open the back door. "Even during the worst of it, I kept the idea that I'd get out someday, maybe try a family, but you know, things just..."

Natasha came up behind him, gave him a hug. "It's sweet Dale, I could really see a family working out here." Smelling his hair, "Yuk. Buddy first thing you need is a shower."

"No. First thing, I confirm the files are secure," he strode into the house and turned on the lights. He led them into a den and sat at the desk where he entered access codes on the computer and reset

mind, quick to see solutions and that's in short supply." Flipping through reports and tests they talked quietly.

"Okay son, you're really green. SEALS is the best, and you're gonna end up proving yourself time and again against much older, more experienced men. But the Marine Corps needs your mind as well as your body. What do you say?"

It was a no-brainer. Never in his life had Dale felt so right than with the SEALs. At 21 he was one of the youngest Lt-Commanders in Delta Storm, proving himself both strategically and as a top marksman. His sniper skills were becoming legendary in three divisions. A few more years and it was Somalia. Then Bosnia. He was right in the thick of it when he was approached to join the CIA.

They faked his death. Some really snaky shit. Born again as Dale Somers. Then he joined a special *Black Ops* branch of the Agency. They never questioned his commitment. He took every option, risked more and more, and earned himself the nickname "Angel of Death." He never missed. If Dale was there you were already dead. He devoted his life to his country and that had seemed perfect. Till now…

"Hey, lonely boy," Natasha called down a few hours later. "What's with the sombre brooding, no music even, I mean - come on." She swung herself down and dropped into the seat, and then leaned against the door with childlike abandon. "What kind of road trip is this?" She rummaged around and came up with a Led Zeppelin CD. Moments after sliding it into the old stereo, *Whole Lotta Love* came crashing through the cabin.

"Just trying to think through everything," Dale half explained. "But a welcome distraction you are."

"Oh, how Yoda-like," she teased. "Thinkin's good, but so's distraction, you got to *live* to really live, baby."

"That's some deep shit right there," Dale joked back. "So how long you known Merlyn?"

"Forever. He found me as a baby and I've been his ever since." Natasha pealed out of her pants. She was wearing bright-red spandex shorts. She propped a tanned, toned leg up the dash and folded the other beneath her. "I know my story and Merlyn's the only father I need. He raised me to be independent, able to take care of myself. And I'm pretty damn good at it too."

> "He took every option, risked more and more, and earned himself the nickname 'Angel of Death.'"

"Have you always been in Chicago? I started out around here too. It's strange…"

"Naw," she jumped in. "We actually lived up in Canada for a while. First, outside of Vancouver, then the mountains up in Alberta. Wild, crazy country. I was learning survival almost before I could walk."

"I seem to remember a certain Natasha Romanov in a lot of Marvel Comics growing up..."

"What a coincidence." She laughed and winked. "But really, a name's just a comfortable shirt you wear for a while. Once it's worn out there's a new one in every store. By the way, you're one to talk, *Dale Somers* sounds like a NASCAR driver," she punched him in the shoulder. "Should I be watching for you on the *Speed Channel*?"

He smiled "You're right, but it's got that all-American brand I like."

trauma to find each other again in Alaska. A wondrous and atmospheric thriller full of white-knuckle suspense.

The Complete Persepolis by Marjane Satrap. A graphic Novel detailing Satrap's unforgettable childhood and coming of age within a large and loving family in Tehran during the Islamic Revolution.

The group normally meets the first Tuesday of each month beginning at 5pm in the classroom across from the Canteen. If you haven't read the book, there's usually a copy available.

Opinion

Money Matters

ADAM RUSSELL

HELLO, HELLO, IT'S ME AGAIN, firing another pot-shot out to the limits of the galaxy. Through the black hole of CSC; back around the blue-cheese moon; loop-dee-looping through the craters on Uranus; popped out like a Ping-Pong ball at a Montreal strip club; and right back to La Maison du Mission, avec cable.

My two cents this issue is about money.

Credit card debt get you down? Interest killing you? Wolves at the door, all barky-bark and crapping all over your front yard? Well, not to worry—or at least worry less. I'm going to go over some of the do's and definite don'ts of credit management that I think can be helpful in every walk of life.

So you got your shit together. You own a home with a few hundred grand in a mortgage, working 9 – 5, blah, blah, blah. Well then you don't need or want to waste your time on this. But for the rest of us, this is solid math-science kind of shit, and it works!

You get out. You get a job. It's an okay job that you don't mind. Maybe you'll get an apprenticeship out of it (that's another story). Now your P.O.'s not busting balls so much and you've need a bank account. Oh, your credit is bad. Maybe you stole from the bank, wrote bad cheques, whatever. It doesn't matter, just go to a different bank with two pieces of ID (one picture) and your

pay stubs. If you owe ChildMar, CanRev, fines, court judgments, etc., that doesn't stop you from getting an account. But you *will* be found out. Probably not right away, but soon enough. The whole thing might seem like one big *I don't believe my buddy* story. You know, like, *I don't believe my buddy went to open a bank account and got turned down, yak, yak, yak.* But do your own work. Find shit out for yourself. One of the most important lessons in life is learning how to make your own informed decisions.

So now you're working along at getting your debt in order and along comes, tada! **Taxes**. Gotta do 'em, man. And you're good for getting GST back payments for 6 years. Oh, you're worried that you fucked up somewhere and might owe them major $$$? Listen, I know it can feel overwhelming, but it ain't impossible by any stretch. Don't let all those horror stories renting space in your head freak you out. I myself had to pay them back three grand. And I know another small business owner into them for two hundred thou!

I won't claim to be a pro at dealing with CRA, but I've got a few tips. Number one, *call* them! Actually reaching out to sort your shit is the only way it's going to get handled. And no, claiming bankruptcy won't excuse your debt with CRA. They don't forgive and they don't forget. Think *CSC for taxes*. Eh? Now you get the picture. Find more info at the Library, or write: Winnipeg Tax Centre, P.O. Box 14001, Stn. Main, Winnipeg MB R8C 3M3. Of course you might be like the 90% of folks that just go to H&R or Liberty, but you're gonna pay there. You can also do your own while you're inside. Go to the Library, get the forms or order the years from Winn if they're short. JHS Reintegration Services can also help, and their rep usually visits Mission a few times a month. Sign-ups by the gym door. Bring your SIN.

Just remember, any number of government services depend on you having your taxes done or you won't get them. Fun fact: a tax return from the previous year is a 100% legal form of ID that must be accepted. Didn't know that little gem, did'ya?

If you've watched any TV in the last year or so, you've probably come across one of those commercials for credit checking services. I know, the whole concept can seem boring, annoying, or even a scam (some are), but it's one of the steps on the road back to good credit. One service is Equifax, P.O. Box 190, Stn. Jean-Talon, Montreal, QC, H7S 272. Mail them a photocopy of your Prison ID card with a note from your IPO or CX2 verifying your current incarceration. And poof! They'll send you a report. It may look complicated, mine did, but just call your credit counselling centre and make an appointment for help sorting it out. For any claims against you, the slate is wiped clean if your debtor doesn't renew in 6 years. Oh, and make sure whatever service you use is *non-profit* so you don't get charged ridiculous fees. Who knows? Your credit might not be as bad as you thought. There's

Of Blood & Water

BY DEAN ROBERTS

Chapter 6 – Natasha

"SHE'S A SWEET RIDE," Natasha said, getting in the F150's cab. "Head us out of town and I'm gonna crash for a bit." She opened a hatch in the roof of the cab and climbed into the overhead compartment of the camper. Her supple body snaked up as Dale punched in the address on the GPS.

"Damn," Natasha remarked peering down. "That's a good 30 hours. Okay, jump on I-84E and keep it under..."

"It's not my first time maintaining cover in a hostile country," he snapped.

"I know, my bad. Merl's always on me for telling everybody what to do. Okay, honey, just drive, and let me get some beauty sleep. I've been doing night watch since you showed up."

Dale heard her moving around as they pulled onto the main drive. *I've only just met these people,* he thought, wondering how far he could trust them. Growing up, Dale wasn't much of a believer in trust. He'd been hurt too many times before he even hit puberty. Finally, he ran away at 16, where he lived on the streets, breaking into corner stores for coin, and never thinking about what was ahead of him. After one poorly thought out scam, he found himself sitting in front of a circuit judge, his life in the balance.

"I see a lot of myself in you," the judge had said. "I think you've been handed a rotten deal, and want to suggest a different path." He went on to explain a military, cadet-style camp, "It's that or youth detention. You're still a ward of Illinois and the state most often locks you boys up and forgets about you."

Three more fights in the holding cells, and he'd taken the deal. It was a military roughneck camp, hard gruelling work and lots of yelling, but Dale shone. His anger helped, he relished the physical stuff. For the first time, he had felt completely alive in his body's power. He quickly learned to control his strength and Dale *the guy*, the defacto leader the other boys turned to. But Dale wasn't the kind to lord it over them. He focused on mastering himself. He studied religiously, pushed harder, found his boundaries and discovered how to go beyond. He became better. A hard diet and even harder physical routine sculpted him into a lean, tall, powerful man, sure of his strengths and blessed with a sharp mind that rarely missed things.

Dale studied the different guards, befriending those he could, finding balance with others. He was a natural at learning a person's soft-spot, that hidden weakness that everyone has. The art of observation was a survival tool he had picked up young, and it became his most valuable trait. Dale was comfortable in the silent places, waiting and watching. A confiscated dirty magazine for Mr. John Anderson: the next 30 minutes would be free as John huddled over the grimy pages in the staff washroom. Carefully hoarded fruit left out in the fridge on nights Mrs. Salachek worked: the extra sugars made her sleepy and quiet. He quickly learned to rule his environment; he didn't just survive, he thrived.

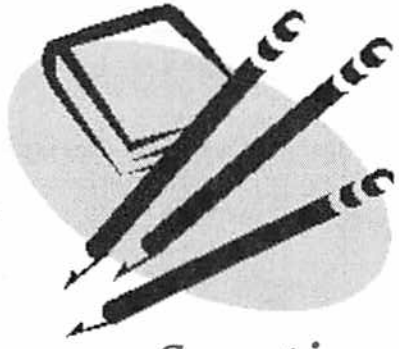
Eighteen months into the program he was approached to sign up for the Marines. Done. It called to something deep inside of him. He'd found his *family*. Within three years, he was top of his squadron. Then the US Navy SEALS approached him. They were a whole different breed.

"Your scores are decent," the two interviewing officers told him, "but it's your mental ability that sets you apart. You have a natural, puzzle-solving

Tali

My thoughts for her
Are like rocks of the earth
Some are shiny, some are clear
She is always here
Striations and discrepancy
Sextillion pebbles
Amplify the treble
Of the trembling heart she holds
Rocks of new, stones of old
Drops of silver dripping gold
The water worn sand
That sneaks onto the land
Out of the sea
Searching for me
So soft on her foot
She burns coal into soot
That I use as my war ink
While I am soaring
In her whispers
Volcanic glass exuding fast
I fly there above
Her Vesuvian love
Carrying me to mountains tall
And hills that are small
That hold uncountable rocks
In them I am locked
Forever with her
In every rock on the earth

—Allan Schalm



Sometimes

Sometimes when you set a goal
Your expectations are too high
But if you choose to brace yourself
Your limits can reach the sky
Sometimes when you think too much
Your brain will overload
So take a minute and just relax
And follow your own road
Because nothing's handed down to you
You need to realize
Just look into the mirror right there
And look into your eyes
You'll understand when you do see
The stress upon your face
One day it will just go away
So go at your own pace
Sometimes you are just going to rush
Into a world unknown
But please, do take a minute or two
And see how you will overlook
The thing's that said or done
But chill, take time and just sit back
And prepare for what will come

—Stephen Paul

almost always a light at the end of that tunnel, bro'.

For any of you reading this and wondering WTF it has to do with me and the price of tea in a tariff war with China, think *Correctional Plan*. It's all about release, my friends. Clearing your debts is a major part of it. I know because I did my back taxes myself from jail, got my credit report and sent it to a non-profit counsellor. Then it got mailed back with advice for my specific situation.

Okay, so now that you've got your taxes current, a bank account to put your hard-earned dinero in, and your credit debt cleared like a bad case of gonorrhea, you're stylin'. That brings us to the next step: find a savings plan.

No matter what stage of employment or life you're at, it's never too late to save for retirement. The earlier the better. One classic way to do it is speak to a financial advisor about your individual retirement needs. What kind of bills you'll have will factor into the type of plan best suited for you. One easy tip to save cash quick every day is to divert a small amount of funds into a savings account where you don't even remember it and it can slowly build up. It's a great way to add to your overall retirement plan. Like a yearly Christmas present fund. There's so many ways to save. And here's the ultimate way to take stress out of your life by easing the pressure externally to save: find employment that offers retirement packages and/or pensions. Most companies large or small in Canada have both benefits and many have RRSP's for their employees. Some have opt-in retirement plans. My personal favourites are the bona-fide pensions provided by many unions and labour organizations. There's good and not-so-much in these, but pound for pound I think they're the way to go with better training, benefits, pensions, etc. My point is, you gotta work anyway, so why not get the maximum benefit while you're at it. After all, if you don't do this for yourself, nobody else will. Old age pension is a joke, and Canada Pension? You only take out what you put in! Think of certified workplace skills as a retirement plan in and of itself. Which brings us to the closer…

"Okay, so now that you've got your taxes current, a bank account … and your credit debt cleared like a bad case of gonorrhea…"

Educated actual certification programs and courses are the best.

So you've got your registration number with a legitimate trade organization. You've got **"tickets"**, the little pieces of paper that certify your course completions. It's a way to get money. More tickets, more moolah. Open sesame. It's a solid fact that people with certified skills get better wages. They're the unsung heroes of our economy, making more and buying more with that income. If you don't have your high school it's not the end of the world, since most trades just need grade 10 math. Even if you're learning disabled, no shame, brother, there's a trade for you too. My advice, find a local union trade you're into and sign up for a better life!

Well, I wish everyone continued prosperity filled with joy and gains,

both material and spiritual. Remember, you can do these things. Find things out for yourself and don't listen to the empty chatter of nay-sayers. Brush your teeth and wash your bird.

Till next time,

Adam

Marching out some thoughts

BRIAN PATRICK

EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS. I find it borders on the absurd how a few inches of snow or some marginal staffing issue can throw this place off kilter. One guy gets a sports injury? Close the yard and A27 for medical escort. The power goes out for a half hour or so? Cancel an event planned for months that some visitors travelled hours to attend. Plus extra staff scheduled, food ordered, all for not. A few inches of snow? Hold the show. Do you think it all grinds to a halt when the white stuff hits the prairies? I was here years ago, pre-cameras, and we all managed. It must be nice to have jobs where you can just go home if it snows. I work construction, where if you don't work, you don't get paid.

It's like over Christmas: no work, and the hobby shop was closed almost the entire break. I get that people take holidays and stuff, but no replacement staffing? Pretty much two weeks of boredom—which by the way is one of the main triggers of relapse. There didn't used to be a hobby officer in the shop; the office was in the gym. Staff have made themselves integral to the operation, and then aren't here for significant chunks of it. It's a good thing CSC isn't in the customer service business.

It might seem to some like I'm splitting hairs, or shrugging off legitimate security and staffing concerns. But I believe things like dependable yard, library, hobby shop, and gym access go a long way towards maintaining our health, wellbeing, and sobriety in here. Your basic *good order of the institution* stuff. You know what they say about idle hands.

Forced Taxation. Lately I've lost track of the number of times I've spun the dial on the TV only to find nothing worth watching. For you youngsters, TVs used to have dials that you had to actually get up and switch channels with. When I was a kid there were only 3 stations. Instead of watching TV we actually did stuff. Maybe because there wasn't much on then either. These days, how many reruns of *Big Bang* can a guy watch? And why do so many of the dramas have to be about cops or court?

Each time I look at my finance printout I see that cable deduction of $8.61. That's 2 weeks of coffee with fixings, and money left over. Or a couple of pizzas. Or things to add to the kitchen stuff to make it more edible. If it were up to me, I'd take the cable money and make the food better. You get the idea: I'd rather have the money than the cable. It's an unreasonable percentage of our already meager wage, with not that much value in the end. Most financial books say that 10% can be budgeted for "entertainment". We're

Creative

Mein lieb chiffre-kooks,

APPARENTLY *MEIN* ABSENCE in *ze* last issue *vas nicht* unnoticed by some among you. If you must know, I *vas* taking a seasonal excursion to *ze* rural countryside of Argentina to visit... relatives. *Zer, mein* talents are truly appreciated.

Zis monz ve vill reveal another layer. *Ze* order of *ze* day for *ze* second layer is *ze* rule of *drei* (**three**). Much in *ze* same *vay* I took a short **hop** to South America, so too shall you do some travelling. But make sure everyone finds their **seat** before take-off. All *zat* **shuffling** about does vex me so, but it is necessary to maintain order! If *ve* do not have **order** *zen ve* are just a pack of *vickid* stupid animals. Of course, some *vill* have to remain in place, or *ze* shuffling *vould* continue endlessly. Perhaps *ze* **middle** seat does have some advantages?

WAYIALSEITLDKHNWOEDIWTEOSTAO
TERBETVIECINWAFENSEOGFNRIIEE

As *ve* move to *ze* final layer, victory still *avaits* the bold. Contact our *vriendlich* editor if you *tink* you have *ze* answer.

Du sollst sterben ehe ich sterbe,

Herr doktor Spektrum

January's Solution
ITOLDYOUHALFOFWH
ATISAYISNONSENSE

federal offenders better access to continuity of care in support of their eventual successful release to the community. This new infrastructure will also provide the hardworking staff with a modern, safe environment to do their important jobs." —The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade and Member of Parliament for Beauséjour. □

Anti-gang program to be rolled out in Vancouver schools

STEPHANIE IP, NATIONAL POST, MARCH 6, 2019

A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL ANTI-GANG PROGRAM will soon be rolled out in Vancouver schools.

Vancouver police and the school board announced Wednesday that the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit of B.C.'s End Gang Life program would be introduced in 18 schools, reaching out to some 4,000 students.

The program includes in-school presentations made by VPD gang-crime officers, followed by a "frank and open" talk by a former gangster to discuss his path in and out of gang crime, his time in jail and the lessons learned.

Two presentations have already taken place and more will be scheduled in the coming months. The program and presentations will be tailored to Vancouver's schools.

Staff Sgt. Lindsey Houghton of the CFSEU, a former VPD officer himself, emphasized that a multi-prong approach is needed to tackle the gang problem in the Lower Mainland.

"I don't think I'm saying anything that people don't already know, but police are not going to arrest our way out of gang problems," he said. "If we're going to be successful in preventing youth and young adults from getting involved with gangs, it's going to take a long-term, co-ordinated, evidence-based strategic approach."

$7.5-million, five year federal program to help Surrey divert youth from gang life

Metro's deadly gang war: Going after a familiar cast plus new players

Houghton created the initiative in 2013. It now includes the in-school presentations, a video series dispelling myths about gang life, eye-catching posters with thought-provoking warnings and educational resources for parents and teachers.

A gang intervention and exiting program also provides assistance and support for those who are actively being recruited or those looking to leave gang activity behind. To date, 109 individuals have made use of the program.

"I can tell you without a doubt, it has saved lives," said Houghton, noting the program has been delivered in 65 schools, reaching more than 30,000 students across B.C. since its launch. □

double that now and climbing each year.

We're easy money for the outside. CSC negotiates on our behalf, some desk jockey who couldn't care less about how anything impacts us. The cable company runs one line to the prison and charges what they want. Grocery stores tack on arbitrary fees when we can barely afford them to begin with. And don't get me started on Prototype (dis)Solutions. Totally unethical. I thought monopolies were illegal in Canada.

Paying us has become almost symbolic. Give them a few more years and they'll figure out a way to get it all. To name some possibilities:

- Program fees
- User fees for health care
- Gym memberships
- Paupers insurance (policies taken out on our lives with CSC as the beneficiary—yeah, I'm talking about you, Wal-Mart)

We should start a pool. My money's on program fees; pay to do them. Think of it as a captive forced market (sort of like Prototype), where you can't take get anywhere else and you can't get out (or buy a TV) without them. They've got us over a barrel, boys, just where they like us.

Being Irish. Last but not least, Jason came to me and said that with a name like mine I'd better get him some cultural content. No problem…

St. Patrick's Day: when we're all Irish, the girls are "lasses" (sorry #metoo), and the beer is green. It's kind of like Halloween, when folks seem a little happier, but with less costumes. How many ways can you dress up like a leprechaun anyway?

As for me, I have deep Irish roots. My mom's family is from the north and my dad's side is from County Cork. They came over generations ago, forced out by unemployment and famine. It was a very different time for my folks back then, with the welcome mat hardly laid out for Irish immigrants in Canada or the U.S. People saw them as lower-class, poor and uneducated, just here to take jobs. (Sound familiar?) At the time of the war with Mexico, the U.S. enlisted Irishmen as cannon fodder with promises of citizenship for their families. Many never returned, and their families went on to live in the slums of America. But they were citizens.

Canada wasn't much better. Being a British colony, the Irish were generally looked down upon with suspicion or outright disdain. There was little love between the Irish and English. Many Irish found themselves working alongside Chinese immigrants building the nation's railways. Long, agonizing, often deadly work with barely any pay and even less respect.

Nowadays we at least get one day a year where it's good to be Irish. It could be worse I suppose; at least we're not Scots ☺

Today the Irish are an essential, productive and valued part of both U.S. and Canadian society. Imbedded, weaved into the fabric. And while we may not currently have someone riling up a rabid political base by making us all out to be job-stealing lesser-thans—you can damn sure learn a lesson from our history. □

The eagle and change

STEPHEN PAUL

THE EAGLE HAS THE LONGEST LIFE-SPAN AMONG BIRDS. It can live up to 70 years, but to reach this age it must make a hard decision.

In its 40s, the eagle's long flexible talons can no longer grab the prey it depends on for food. Its long beak also becomes bent, and its heavy wings, due to their thick feathers, become stuck to its chest making it difficult to fly.

The eagle is left with only two options: die or go through a painful process of change which lasts up to 150 days. This requires it to fly to a mountain top and sit on its nest.

There the eagle knocks its beak against a rock until it falls out, then waits for a new one to grow back

Then it plucks out its talons.

When the talons grow back, it plucks out its old-age feathers.

Finally, after five months, the eagle takes its famous flight of rebirth.

Why is change needed?

Many times in order to survive we have to start process of change, ourselves. We need to get rid of old memories, habits, and other past traditions.

Only when we free ourselves from these burdens, can we truly take advantage of the present. □

A.A.A.D.D.

RECENTLY, I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH A. A. A. D. D. (Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder). This is how it manifested itself:

One day last summer, I decide to water my garden. As I turn on the hose in the driveway, I look over at my car and decide my car needs washing too. As I start toward the garage to get the hose, I notice that there is mail on the porch table that I brought up from the mail box earlier that morning. I decide to go through the mail before I wash the car, so I start to look for my glasses. I lay my car keys down on the table and put the junk mail in the garbage can under the table, when I notice that the can is full. So I decide to put the bills back on the table and take out the garbage first. But then I think, since I'm going to be near the mailbox when I take out the garbage anyway, I may as well pay the bills first. I take my cheque book off the table, and see that there is only one cheque left. My extra checks are in my desk in the office upstairs, so I go up to the office desk where I find

News

CSC 'Health Centre of Excellence'

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES OF CANADA, FEB 11, 2019, 11:14 ET

DORCHESTER, NB, Feb. 11, 2019—Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, the Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, on behalf of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, the Hon. Ralph Goodale, announced that Correctional Service Canada (CSC) is moving forward with plans to build a Health Centre of Excellence at Shepody Healing Centre in Dorchester, New Brunswick.

Last March, Minister LeBlanc announced that a CSC working group would conduct an exploratory study to examine the feasibility of creating a Health Centre of Excellence at Shepody. That study has now resulted in a proposal to build a new facility with 155 health beds, which represents an increase of 87 mental health beds, including 10 new beds for women offenders, and 11 new hospital beds for the Atlantic region. The new facility would enhance public safety by strengthening CSC's capacity to address the mental health needs of federal offenders before their eventual return to the community.

The Health Centre of Excellence would meet all Canadian and United Nations medical standards, and would improve access to interventions and treatment for offenders with mobility issues and those who require 24-hour care.

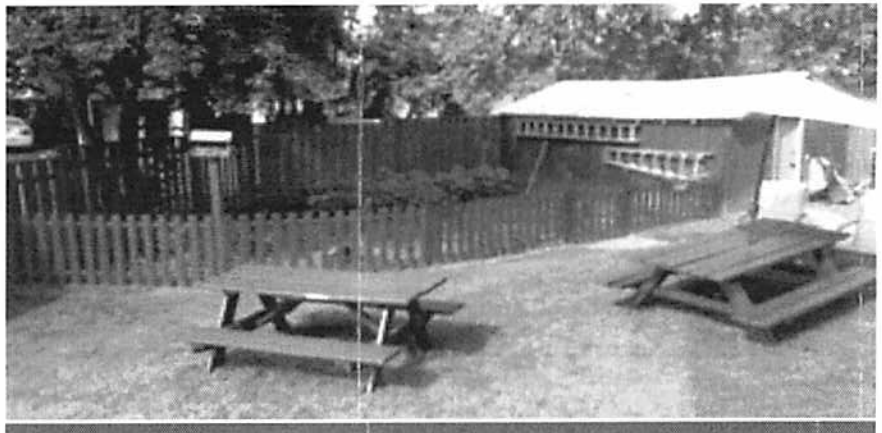
In the coming weeks and months, the working group will meet with local stakeholders, including volunteers, Elders, and members of Dorchester Penitentiary's Citizen Advisory Committee, to further develop plans for the new facility. In addition, a request for proposals for pre-design services will be issued later this year.

The creation of a new Health Centre of Excellence at Shepody is part of the Government's ongoing efforts to improve mental health care in the federal correctional system. The 2017 and 2018 federal budgets included $78.2 million for mental health care in CSC, and the recent Fall Economic Statement included another $448 million for corrections, of which $150 million is specifically devoted to mental health. The remaining $298 million will support the implementation of Bill C-83, legislation that eliminates the practice of administrative segregation and ensures that inmates who need to be separated from the mainstream offender population for safety reasons continue to receive the mental health care and other rehabilitative interventions they require.

The Government will continue working to ensure that the federal correctional system holds offenders accountable, while providing an environment conducive to inmate rehabilitation, staff safety and the protection of the public.

Quote:

"I am thrilled that our government is moving forward with a bilingual Health Centre of Excellence in Dorchester. A mental health care centre of this kind will make communities safer by giving



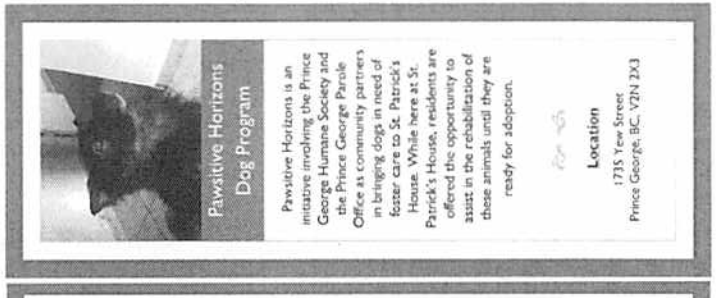
Living in Balance Program

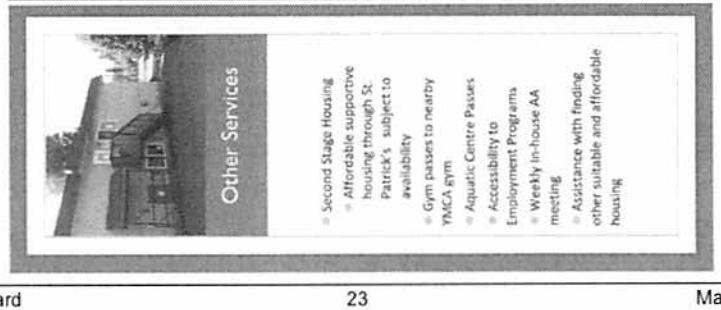
The program we offer is presented in a supportive and structured environment where we work through The Living in Balance Program from The Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation.

The program components address the many aspects of living a balanced lifestyle. We encourage our clients to engage in self-examination through the various program sessions where the Group Facilitator addresses topics such as Stress Management, Problem Solving Skills, and Healthy Relationships.

We promote community wellness, and encourage our clients to engage with other community partners, programs, and support groups.

Our program is 90 days in duration and following its completion we support our clients in areas of further need such as upgrading education, as well as support residents in refining their skills while in the workforce.





the cup of coffee that I had been drinking earlier. I go to look for my cheques, but first I push my coffee aside so I don't accidentally knock it over. I realize the coffee is getting cold and I decide I should put it in the microwave to warm it up. As I head toward the kitchen with my coffee, a vase of flowers on the counter catches my eye—they look like they are dying and they need to be watered. I set the Coffee down on the counter, and low and behold, I discover my glasses that I have been searching for all morning long. I decide I better put them back on my desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers. I set the glasses back down on the counter, fill a container with water and suddenly I spot the TV remote. Someone left it on the kitchen table. I scratch my head and think, *hummmm. I wonder who might have done that?* I realize that tonight when we go to watch the hockey game, I will be looking for the remote, but by that time I won't remember that it was on the kitchen table, so I decide that I should take it and put it on the coffee table in the living room den where it belongs in front of the TV, but first I need to water those darn flowers. I pour some water in the flowers, but some if it spills on the floor. So I set the remote back down on the kitchen table, get some towels and wipe up the spill. Then I head up the stairs trying to remember what I was planning to do…

At the end of the day: The driveway is flooded. The car isn't washed. The bills aren't paid. There is a cold cup of coffee sitting on the counter. There is still only one cheque in my check book. I can't find the remote, my glasses, or car keys.

Then when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all day long and now I am feeling exhausted. But it's my day off. How can this be? I realize this is a serious problem, and I'll try to get some help for it, but first I need to check my face book...

Do me a favor, will you? Forward this to everyone, because I won't remember who I've sent this too later.

Sure, you laugh now, but don't; if this isn't you yet, your day is coming!

—Mission Staff Member

Getting out? Here's your horse and saddle, and your gun...

THE SUBJECT CAME UP IN THE LATE 1980'S OR EARLY 1990'S because some 'jail house' actually PRISON 'lawyer' found something interesting. He was in the States due to get released and he was going to get 'gate money'. Gate money was $40. He wondered why it was that amount and for how long.

Well, when they released inmates from prison way back in the 1800s, to get them a good start, and make sure their hell-raising didn't begin right at the nearest community next to the prison, and they didn't wind up with beggars from the prison in that town's streets, they provided a man what was needed for some travel and a start. A few biscuits and dried fruit in a sack, a day's food didn't cost anything, but he needed a set of clothing, a horse, saddle, and a gun for self defense, if you can imagine that. So cheap used clothing cost almost nothing, an old nag from the prison stables was assessed the standard value for a nearly worn out horse. An old saddle, and an old rifle or revolver, probably something from a generation earlier. The silver and copper change over the costs was to be pocket money and the man was sent on his way.

Well, back to the late 1980's. Our inmate 'lawyer' figured out the law wasn't exactly repealed. Now the gun was omitted not long after it was added, for obvious reasons, and at some point, it became $40 instead of some food, clothing, a horse, saddle and old horse. Then it became simply $40 gate money, the clothing the man was wearing and no sack lunch.

Well, this guy saw he was still entitled to EITHER $40 or a horse and saddle. He was from a rural part of the States and he demanded that he get his entitled horse and saddle. He was already going to get his clothing. The press was there when the inmate came out of prison. He proved to be familiar with horses and he saddled the horse, an old but still steady animal donated by a member of the public, and rode it a short distance to where his father parked a pick-up truck and horse trailer.

The Legislature went on to ensure that the law was changed to it being only $40 gate money, and that opened things up and all inmates developed savings accounts and part of their meager earnings were set aside for their release as it was their responsibility, which seemed fair enough, because most people don't take care of things they were simply given by the state.

Except, for a certain horse.

Word has it that inmate, a quirky, smart ass but a reformed one, put the horse to pasture, literally, on his family's ranch, and took great care of the animal for the rest of its days.

And the convict?

Well, he never went back to prison.

Maybe because he reformed, but probably because they wouldn't give him another horse.

—Anonymous submission

Contacts

St. Patrick's House Society

St.Patrick's House Society
Est. 1978

Program Information

Phone: 250-564-5530
Fax: 250-564-2932

About Us

St. Patrick's House Society is a 19-bed facility located at 1735 Yew Street in Prince George BC.

We are a supportive recovery home offering nine double occupancy rooms and one single occupancy room.

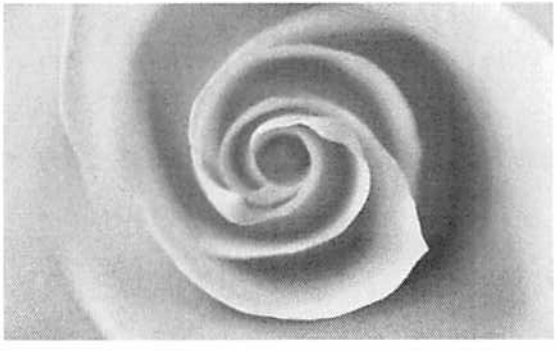
We are dedicated to supporting individuals struggling with substance abuse difficulties to assist them in changing their behaviours, to create healthier individuals, healthier families and healthier communities.

We have been committed to working with men motivated to address their substance abuse issues and to those who wish to live happier and healthier lives since 1978

Butterflies

I marvel in the artistry that made the butterflies I see, and gave them beauty, life and form and hues of rainbows, dusk and dawn. I'm sure that only God could weave such holy art with majesty and give it wings with which to fly, and bless with beauty, earth and sky.

—Rabbi E. Eisenburger, Warkworth Institution, 2007
Submitted by Richard Charrette, Mission Jewish Group

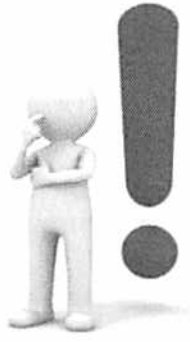


May the sun
bring you new energy by day
May the moon
softly restore you by night
May the rain
wash away your worries
May the breeze
blow new strength into your being
May you walk
Gently through the world and know
its beauty all the days of your life

—Apache prayer
Submitted by Richard Charrette

Health

Measles



Health Service Fact Sheet
February 2015

Are you at risk of getting measles?

You could be at risk of getting measles if:

- You have not been vaccinated against measles (most people received the vaccine when they were a child).

What should you do if you have not been vaccinated or cannot remember?

Please speak with a nurse in Health Services if:

- You have not been vaccinated against measles, or
- You can't remember if you've been vaccinated against measles as a child or as an adult

Can you still be vaccinated?

If you were never vaccinated, you may need to get vaccinated. CSC offers the vaccine. Speak to a nurse in Health Services.

What causes measles?

Measles is caused by a virus. It can spread very easily from person to person. The virus can live in the nose, mouth and eyes.

How does measles spread?

Measles is spread:

- Through the air when a person who has measles coughs or sneezes.
- By sharing objects that have touched mucus (from the nose) or saliva from a person who has measles (like cups, glasses, utensils and tissues).

Measles is most often spread when people first get sick and before they even know they have measles.

What are the symptoms of measles?

At first, symptoms may include:

- fever
- cough
- runny nose
- red and watery eyes
- sleepiness
- irritability (bad mood)

You may also get small white spots inside your mouth and throat. After 3 to 7 days, a **red, patchy rash** will develop on your face and spread

down your body. You can spread the virus from 4 days before the rash starts until 4 days after it appears.

What should you do if you have symptoms of measles?

If you have any of the above symptoms you should **speak with a nurse in Health Services**.

What is the treatment?

There is no specific treatment for measles.

Is measles serious?

Most people fully recover from measles within 2 to 3 weeks. However, measles can be very dangerous for children and people with weak immune systems. □

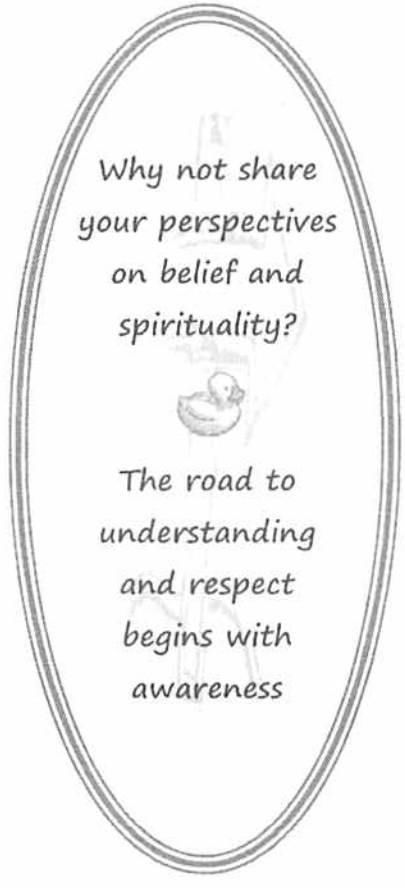
man. He became an extraordinary man as a result of his own human effort to make actual what was potential in himself. So Buddhism recognizes two great categories, the category of the ordinary man and the category of the enlightened man. (One could say Buddha made a whole bunch of choices which brought him to his realizations. What are your realizations?)

The gulf between these two types of men is not unbridgeable, as is the God and man in monotheistic religions, the distance between them is very great and it takes tremendous effort to traverse this gap. Many Buddhists, in fact, believe that this effort has to be maintained through a whole succession of lives, whether here on earth or in higher realms. For this reason, the enlightened man is regarded as constituting an independent category of existence. The enlightened man is regarded as the highest being in the universe. Higher even than Gods. For this reason the enlightened man (Buddha) is venerated out of gratitude for setting an example, for showing the way, for showing us what we to are capable of becoming. Buddha is venerated (not worshipped), not as a God, but as a teacher, as exemplar, as guide, as one who made choices which brought to him realizations of the self (enlightenment).

From all this we can see that the Buddhist conception of the enlightened man represents a category for which we have no equivalent in western religious traditions. He is neither God nor man in the monotheistic sense. He represents a new category, let us think in evolutionary terms, man is an animal but at the same time infinitely more than an animal. In the same way Buddha is a man but infinitely more than a man. Buddha represents a new category of existence: a human being but infinitely more than a human being: an enlightened venerated human being.... A Buddha (enlightened one).

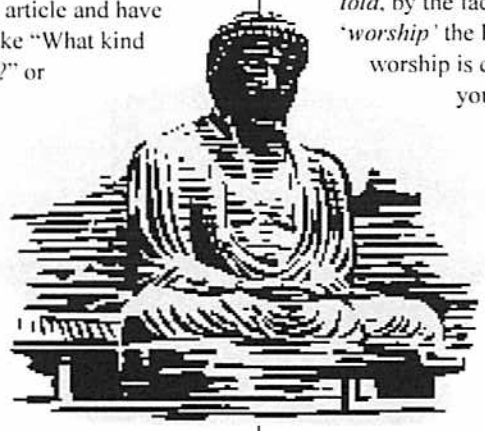
In the dharma,

D.B.



Buddha's note for March

PLEASE UNDERSTAND THIS ARTICLE is not meant in any way to take anything away from an individual's chosen faith practice or belief system or to be disrespectful of their path, I mean only to clarify some misunderstandings that people whom have been reading this monthly Buddhist article and have asked me things like "What kind of God is Buddha?" or "Why do you Buddhists bow in worship to false idols?" and a few other questions with wording I should not print or type.



Misunderstandings of Buddha and Buddhism

There are some misunderstandings of Buddha. Two in particular, firstly that the Buddha was an ordinary man, and secondly that Buddha was a God. Both of these misunderstandings are the result of thinking consciously or unconsciously in theistic (religious) terms. Which is to say in terms of a personal God who has created the universe and governs it by his providence.

For Monotheistic religions, God and man are entirely different beings. God is the creator. Man is the created. Man can never become God: such an idea would be meaningless. Monotheistic religions, therefore, when confronted by the figure of the Buddha, classify him as an ordinary man, essentially just like everyone else, even as a sinful man, albeit perhaps better than most people.

The second misunderstanding arises out of the first. You often read in books, even now, that after Buddha's death his followers 'deified' him or made him into a god. This is indicated, *we are told*, by the fact that Buddhists '*worship*' the Buddha and of course worship is due only to God. If you worship someone or something, a monotheistic religion will inevitably think you are treating it, or him, as a God. "Thou shall not worship false idols" or something along those lines.

Now both of these misunderstandings can be cleared up quite easily. All that we have to do is free ourselves from our monotheistic religious conditioning, which affects, at least unconsciously, even those who no longer think of themselves asmonotheists. We have to stop trying to think of the Buddha in what are really, non-Buddhist terms.

So who or what was the Buddha? In the first place Buddha was a man, a human being. But he was not an ordinary man he was an *enlightened venerable* man, a man who was the living embodiment of perfect knowledge, unbounded love and compassion and inexhaustible energy. Buddha was not born an extraordinary

Faith

An unconventional Journey

DEAN ROBERTS

BACK IN THE SUMMER OF 1997, a friend of mine offered me a joint after some social or other at Mountain. I don't remember a lot of the specifics, except that within five minutes I was high. Punch drunk high, stone drunk, couldn't walk, talk or think kind of high. Eventually my friend got a couple guys to steer me to my room where in all likelihood I should have slept through the night.

Nope. I got a case of the full on head spins, followed by world spins, followed by the mother of *my life is gonna end* dry heaves, and capped with a whole lot of the wet variety. I spent the next 6 hours in a toilet spilling what felt like everything that had ever been inside me, from both ends. Thankfully, the low-medium environment, coupled with a fish-bowl dorm and communal washroom didn't result in too much trouble. I was able to croak out to the hourly guard rounds that it was something I'd eaten at the Social. Then I'd go back to clutching the porcelain throne and begging that if there was a god, something more to existence than the wretched spot I was in, then help me, find me, deliver me from these body-wrenching convulsions of puke and pain and shit.

Somehow I managed to survive the night with the guards thinking I was probably just a sick kid starting a Life bit. When morning came there was a knock at my cell door. A man, let's say 'Jonathan', had come around, said he wanted to talk to me.

Groaning at the unreasonably bright sun, I got dressed and joined Johnathan on a walk-and-talk through the joint as we turned right here, left there, while he told me a story about a dream he had the night before.

Apparently while I was wishing for blissful oblivion from the inglorious confine of a prison toilet stall, Johnathan's long-deceased grandmother was sitting with him on a riverbank and talking about me … (Yeah, that's exactly how I reacted too.) He said that his Grandmother, and I heard him emphasize the capital *G*, asked him to introduce me to someone. Hmmm. Well, we were already walking so I kept pace with him between huts 8 and 9, down under the school, and then up the long steep road to the sacred Sweat Lodge Grounds. There we came upon a short, roundish older man sitting on a log and stripping the bark from a willow. He was laying it out in the sun, inner side up when he spotted us.

"Hey, John," he said, looking over at me with the warmest, happiest eyes I'd seen since my incarceration journey had begun.

"Moshum, Frank," Johnathan answered. "This is a friend of mine. I thought maybe he could spend some time talking with you." *Friend?* I thought. I barely knew Jonathan. We'd sat in on the odd committee meeting, he with Brotherhood and me with Lifers Group, but *friend*?

After the introductions I settled down next to Elder Frank Malloway, and John departed, the obligation to his grandma met.

Now I don't remember much of that first conversation, but something that sticks with me like it was yesterday was Frank's *warmth*. There was a deeply grounded sense of belonging in each word he spoke, each gesture and action. He just seemed to be a part of the world that mattered and to be at peace with it. Strange to me then.

For the rest of the week I went up and sat with him for hours. I talked about my own loss, my pain and anger with family, society, the world in general. And he told me about his daughter and grandchildren. I know, right? A total stranger talking about his most precious relations. Frank had endless stories of his children that were amazing, funny and always full of kindness and a deep respect for life.

The time for a Sweat Lodge ceremony on the Grounds approached and Frank asked me if I was interested in joining one. I should probably mention here that I grew up off-reservation with straight-laced urban yuppie parents, without much interest in anyone's culture, sense of history, nature or belonging; your basic cool, surface level, cookie-cutter religious environment. So I started to turn Frank down in my most respectful tone, but ended up telling him that I couldn't go because they were all, well… *Satan worshipers*. Yep, I inserted that filter-less brain-fart, resplendent in all its square-minded, prejudiced glory.

Frank smiled, picked up a rock and asked me, "What would you call this?"

I looked at him with a puzzled expression. "It's a rock, what do you mean?"

"Well in my language it's called […]." And he said something I didn't understand. "So, Dean, you call this a rock and I say it's a […]. Have either of us changed its reality by using different words?"

"Well obviously, no," I said, still not getting the point.

"So if you and I can call a rock by different names, but don't deny the truth of its existence, then why should it be any different for God?

Oh shit… heavy. I scrambled to think around it but the idea seemed pretty sound, solid actually.

> "The time for a Sweat Lodge ceremony on the Grounds approached and Frank asked me if I was interested in joining one."

"You don't have to commit to changing anything about what you believe," he continued, "but would you like to join us in a ceremony? It might help you find peace, relax and get a better foothold in the world you live in from the safety of Mother Womb." (His name for the Sweat Lodge.) Then with a smile and tone that held no mockery whatsoever he added, "You might even spend some time actually connecting with that God you feel the need to defend."

The next day I showed up, uncertain but willing. Despite my scattershot of accumulated emotional contradictions and confusions, when pushed, fear wasn't one of them and I wanted to keep my word. I had told him I'd go so I did. It was a small crowd at my first Lodge. Looking back I wonder if Elder Frank had something to do with that.

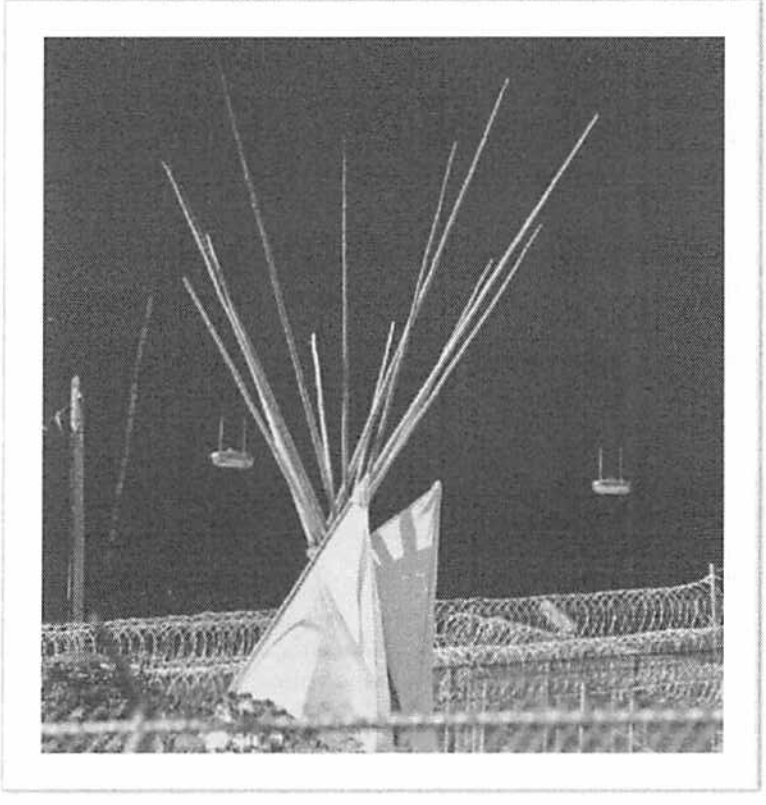
When the fire was done and everyone crawled inside, Frank asked me to sit in the south-east, "where you'll begin to connect with your childhood," he said. *Interesting*. The grandfathers (heated stones) filled the center, and the door was closed.

What followed was darkness … silence … heat … *Holy crap heat!* And then what I can only describe as a feeling of being hugged, like in the loving arms of my grandfather:

Connected.

Home.

Over the next year, Elder Frank liked to tease me that I ever thought God needed defending. He began to use the word "Creator" and shared the significance of the four directions. In turn I experienced how the Lodge helps us to connect with our ancestors, to pray for them, our families, and ourselves.

Over the past 22 years, and many hundreds of ceremonies, I've never looked back. I've embraced deeper and deeper choices and found peace, comfort and happiness. I've learned a lot about my family history, and how to overcome the shame of colonization and indoctrination.

I realize now that I never needed to defend God. My Creator is just fine, thank you. He's always been there, but now I have a better way to connect with Him, and the world around me too. □