Reaching Across

with

The Arts

A SELF-HELP MANUAL
FOR MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS

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The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors.

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Throughout this manual, various artworks, poetry and photographs are placed. The works shown are all done by consumers/survivors/ ex-patients. Each piece is identified by title, artist or writer and brief biographical information. The rights to all art, writing and poetry included in this manual remain with the artist.

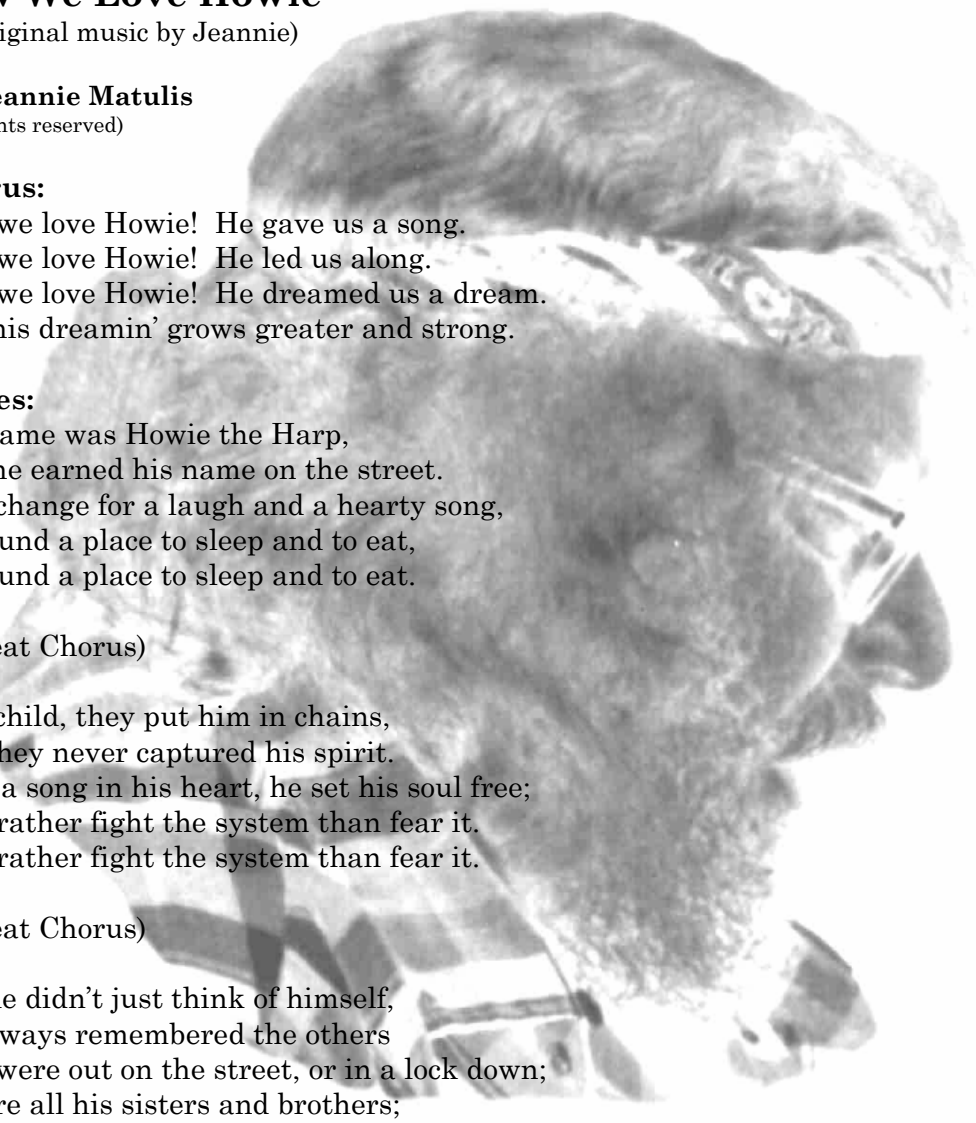
About Ourselves

Gayle Bluebird–Editor, *recipient of the 1998 IAPSRS Consumer Advocate of the Year Award and more recently, the 2006 EPIC (Exceptional People Impacting the Community) in Broward County, Florida, has been involved in the ex-patient/consumer/survivor movement since the early 1970s, but has also worked as a registered nurse in hospital facilities. Her interest in the arts has been primarily as a networker and organizer. She helped to found Altered States of the Arts in 1990, and facilitated a newsletter,* ***The Altered State****, that rotated to different parts of the country. She has been the organizer of talent shows at annual Alternatives Conferences (conferences for mental health consumers), and now creates performances for other national conferences and events. She hopes to travel around the country creating new arts programs, setting up talent shows and art exhibits, and expanding her already growing talent bank of performers with a "social change message." She is a mother of three and grandmother of fifteen children. She has her own self-run business, "Bluebird Consultants" that keeps her traveling across the country conducting seminars, training, speaking and consulting with Mental Health Services staff members and various members connected with the care and advocacy of Mental Health Consumers.*

Bonnie Jo Schell–Co-Editor, Proofreader, *was born in Atlanta, Georgia. She edited her college literary magazine and won Mademoiselle Magazine's one-act play contest at age 19. She continued publishing fiction while raising two daughters and coping with bi-polar disorder. Now living in Northern California, she is Executive Director of the Mental Health Client Action Network, a drop-in center with an emphasis on the arts. Bonnie has edited and published mental health consumer newsletters (****Alternative Report, WE Can Courier, Cal Net Gazette****), and collections of poetry since 1991, and is a member of the National Writer's Union, AFL-CIO. She edits a regular poetry column (Poetic Justice) in the newsletter, Dendron. She has served as the West Coast representative for Altered States of the Arts and did a California issue of the magazine in 1993. She is herself, a published poet (****Coast Lines 1997 and Voices & Visions II 1994****) and has published essays in several magazines. Bonnie has a BA in English Literature, MA in Humanities and 97 hours of graduate work in Creative Writing and Linguistics.*

Ed Pazicky–Artistic Designer & Layout, *a long time consumer/survivor, has immersed himself in consumer oriented projects since his last hospitalization in 1994. Ed is an opera buff and has sung with opera companies in Pennsylvania and Florida. He operated his own computer consulting firm in South Florida, was diagnosed with Bi-Polar Disorder and lost everything after a series of hospitalizations. He has since become a consumer advocate, and is a past-Board Chairman (1997-1999) of the PEER Center, a consumer-run drop-in center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and Executive Director 2001-02. He helped to organize PEER Print, a consumer-operated print shop doing printing for both non-profits and commercial enterprises. He was also instrumental in the development of a consumer computer lab at the PEER Center. Ed is retired and resides in his own home in Port Charlotte, Florida. He keeps busy as a part-time computer consultant and website developer, working at his home computer on various projects and still reaches out to advocate for the mentally ill. He is a graduate of the University of Connecticut (BS/BA) and the University of Pittsburgh (MBA).*

"Reaching Across With the Arts" is dedicated to Howie the Harp (1953-1995), a leader in the consumer/survivor/ex-patient movement, who made peace with music, playing his harmonica everywhere he went. He taught us to be *Crazy and Proud*--on stage our music and drama would help people to understand us; we could even make changes in the mental health system. Howie resides in the *Intergalactic Movement* where his presence continues to guide us.



How We Love Howie

(To original music by Jeannie)

By Jeannie Matulis

Chorus:
How we love Howie! He gave us a song.
How we love Howie! He led us along.
How we love Howie! He dreamed us a dream.
And his dreamin' grows greater and strong.

Verses:
His name was Howie the Harp,
And he earned his name on the street.
In exchange for a laugh and a hearty song,
He found a place to sleep and to eat,
He found a place to sleep and to eat.

(Repeat Chorus)

As a child, they put him in chains,
But they never captured his spirit.
With a song in his heart, he set his soul free;
He'd rather fight the system than fear it.
He'd rather fight the system than fear it.

(Repeat Chorus)

But he didn't just think of himself,
He always remembered the others
Who were out on the street, or in a lock down;
We are all his sisters and brothers;
We are all his sisters and brothers.

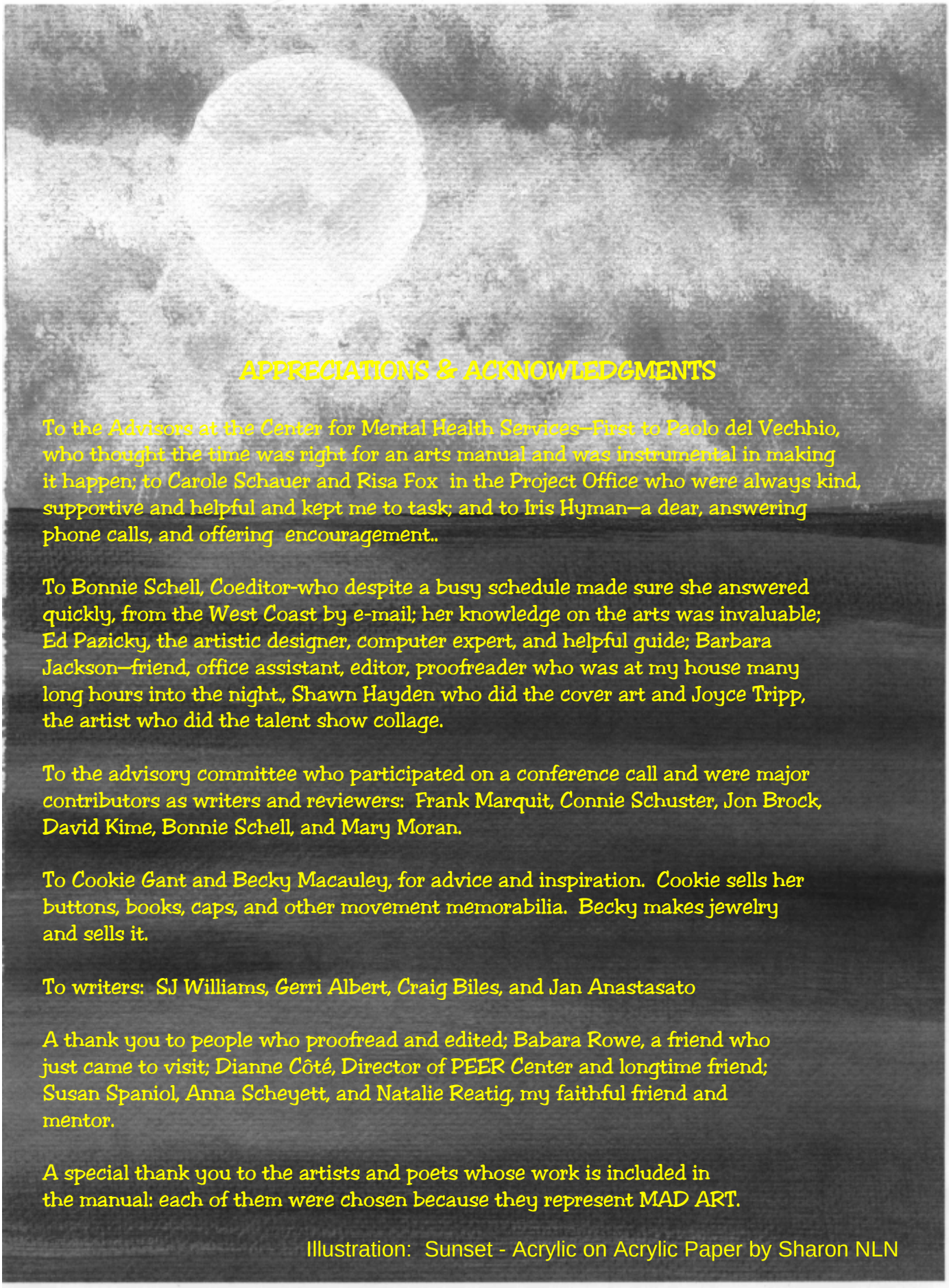
(Repeat Chorus)

Jeannie Matulis*–Locked up for two-and-a-half years as a teenager, she later found people like herself–ex-inmates in California–and became an advocate at Mental Health Consumer Concerns, Inc., a client-run patients' rights organization. As a songwriter and musician, she sang protest songs at many events. She later went to law school and after getting her law degree, worked for Protection and Advocacy, Inc., a federally funded agency, for seven-and-a-half years. Her work has now evolved into the field of forensic mental health. She wrote this song in memory of "Howie the Harp."*

Anthem: Hope of Recovery

This I know:
Through the travails
Of unending sorrow,
Through physical
And mental suffering,
It is possible to return,
To turn one's life
Back towards peace,
An earned acceptance
Of what can be,
That the possibilities for joy
Are endless,
Uncovering each day
Like a golden nugget,
Like a present for a holiday,
Will come to the front
If we have hope,
No matter what happens,
Families feeling so far away,
Pain tearing and reopening wounds,
We must have hope,
That its magic elixir will send
Us into brighter futures,
Knowing it will not be easy,
That there will be many relapses,
Temptations at every turn,
And with all the difficulties
Of our daily activities,
Still we must hold fear at bay,
And looking back
Into a vast mirror
That is our years,
We will behold,
Illuminated by hope's
Brightest burning fires,
A great forest of weathered
But spirited trees strongly rooted
And forever standing tall.

James D. Eret, Writing Director
Creative Arts Consortium
San Diego, California



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To the Advisors at the Center for Mental Health Services–First to Paolo del Vechhio, who thought the time was right for an arts manual and was instrumental in making it happen; to Carole Schauer and Risa Fox in the Project Office who were always kind, supportive and helpful and kept me to task; and to Iris Hyman–a dear, answering phone calls, and offering encouragement..

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To Cookie Gant and Becky Macauley, for advice and inspiration. Cookie sells her buttons, books, caps, and other movement memorabilia. Becky makes jewelry and sells it.

To writers: SJ Williams, Gerri Albert, Craig Biles, and Jan Anastasato

A thank you to people who proofread and edited; Babara Rowe, a friend who just came to visit; Dianne Côté, Director of PEER Center and longtime friend; Susan Spaniol, Anna Scheyett, and Natalie Reatig, my faithful friend and mentor.

A special thank you to the artists and poets whose work is included in the manual: each of them were chosen because they represent MAD ART.

Illustration: Sunset - Acrylic on Acrylic Paper by Sharon NLN

"Sunset," the background painting on the acknowledgments page is done by ***Sharon NLN*** *of Vulcan's Forge, a consumer-run arts organization in Cincinnati, Ohio. Sharon has been part of Vulcan's Forge for three years, and started painting because of Leo, a homeless person who is legally blind in one eye. He showed her good art, and she agreed to do art with him. Sharon states, "We started painting together."*

Vulcan's Forge *is a nonprofit consumer group dedicated to the hopes, inspirations, and the strengths of artful expression. The organization offers the possibility of public display, publication and independent artist transaction. All disciplines are welcome; writers, painters, photographers, crafts persons, sculptors, performing artists... Vulcan's Forge is dedicated to the ART of Healing.*

We found the name "Vulcan's Forge" very interesting and wanted to share the mythology behind the choice of the name.

Vulcan (esoteric) co-ruler with VENUS (exoteric) of TAURUS Mythological Vulcan, unlike the other gods was not physically perfect. He was often ridiculed and humiliated by the other deities. Married to Venus who ruled art and aesthetics, but who hated coarse environments like the battlefields of life, Vulcan worked earnestly and patiently at his forge, rising above his disabilities and the scorn of others to transform base metals into beautiful art forms. Vulcan represents the area in life where physical, psychological and other types of damage have left scars upon the soul. He also represents productivity, the visible fruits of labor, and the work done to justify existence in the 'light'.

Introducing the Manual

Without Art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable.
--George Bernard Shaw

Why An Arts Manual?

Reaching Across with the Arts is a resource guide and manual to be used by mental health consumers to explain how to create self-help arts programs and activities as well as how to use creativity in their everyday lives. The name *Reaching Across* was taken with permission from two manuals (1985,1994) with the same name edited by Sally Zinman and the late Howie the Harp. Both manuals provided knowledge and information on subjects related to the growth of consumer-run organizations and programs.

Like the first *Reaching Across* manuals, this guidebook uses self-help as the model for developing new arts activities and programs. All but one of the writers and contributors to this guidebook are persons with psychiatric disabilities who engage in using art as part of their recovery. Many of them are directors of arts programs.

We celebrate the founders and directors of our existing consumer-run arts programs who tell us how they got started in their own words. We acknowledge them and thank them for being arts pioneers and, for having the courage to persist in presenting art as a legitimate method of healing long before there was support for the idea.

Why is Art Important?

The arts can serve as a vehicle for creative self-expression, social change and personal empowerment. They enable people who have been labeled with a stigmatizing diagnosis to convey their personal experiences of madness and recovery to others. They can be used as a means of self-healing and spiritual growth—for connecting mind, body, and spirit. The ability to experiment and explore one's inner self through a variety of mediums helps to build self-confidence and self-worth. Art provides opportunities to speak out, sing out, and act out the effects of society's treatment of those with psychiatric disabilities. The potential for using art to enter new worlds of imagination is utterly fascinating, the possibilities endless.

New literature abounds with information on how to use the arts for self-discovery and enjoyment. The material is easy to follow and is written by authors who speak to us directly from their own experiences. Books tell us how to write, paint, dance—all with an emphasis on self-healing. In *Life, Paint and Passion*, the authors tell us their book is not a course in creativity, but a catalyst. They state, "It is time to throw off the shackles, to reclaim that which every child knows and is taught to forget: the essential right to create without interference or shame." In the book *Poem Crazy,* we are shown where poems start—with words—everywhere in all kinds of places. Susan Wooldrige, the author, states, "Poems arrive. They hide in feelings and images, in weeds and delivery vans, daring us to notice and give them form with our words."

The mental health system is beginning to recognize the importance of art. Art therapy, a treatment modality that combines therapy and art, has been part of hospital environments, but historically many art therapists have been psychoanalytically-oriented interpreters of art instead of helpful arts instructors. While not all consumers' experiences were negative, many still talk about activities like

the proverbial basket weaving or other proscribed arts activities. Few speak of being encouraged to do work independently or valued for their abilities as artists. Sybil Noble describes an experience with an art therapist in an early issue of *The Altered State*, 1992. Following the suicide of her first husband at age 21, Sybil was admitted to a mental hospital. She found that drawing helped her with thought processes and to deal with her emotions. When asked to show her drawings to her therapist, she relates the following, "Not ten minutes later, there were three aides in my room demanding all my paper and pencils because I was drawing 'morbid pictures.' I was crushed. I was angry."

Times are changing. Art therapy programs in hospitals and rehabilitation settings are expanding to include modalities such as journal writing, poetry, music instruction, alternative healing methods and others. Talented artists are beginning to be taken seriously as artists instead of as persons with mental illness who just happen to have talent. Susan Spaniol, an arts professor at Lesley College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, is a leading advocate for the empowerment of consumer artists and writes extensively on the subject of art therapy. After she helped organize an art exhibit (1989, Boston University), which consumers helped plan, she wrote an article in an art therapy journal encouraging other art therapists to be client advocates. She emphasizes the importance of including artists in every step of the decision making process when organizing an exhibit and concentrating on clients' creative abilities as well as their psychiatric disabilities. "In so doing," she writes, "we will be better able to help the public overcome its biases towards mental illness and assist those with mental illness to acknowledge their value as artists and as human beings."

Why Self-Help?

A self-help approach encourages artists to do their work without being scrutinized for pathology. Artists must feel that anything they create is acceptable. By sharing with each other, artists can give encouragement to each other, talk about feelings, and can incorporate their issues in their artwork.

Some drop-in centers have developed as art centers; others are seeing the need to include arts events and activities as essential parts of their programs. A growing number of cities have consumer-run arts organizations. Some provide studio and gallery space and promote exhibits to showcase key artists. In Albany, NY, National Artists for Mental Health has grown from a small consumer arts organization to having its own professional gallery, to promotion of a national arts project using pillowcases to create art, (The Pillowcase Project), and to hosting an annual national consumer arts conference.

Professional galleries showing *Outsider Art* are proliferating in major cities all over the country as well as overseas. *Outsider Art,* or *Art Brut*, are terms developed to include art done by untrained or primitive artists, and can include artwork created by persons with psychiatric disabilities. Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), a French art collector and himself an artist, became very interested in the work of the insane (term used in the 1940s) and amassed a collection of 5,000 works now housed in Lausanne, Switzerland. While much of the art collection came from insane asylums in France, Dubuffet was opposed to classifying it as psychopathological. He was equally opposed to the segregating of unique people from society and housing them in institutions or labeling them. As an early advocate, his remark still holds truth today. "It is a deplorable fact," he stated, "that once they are declared by the physician to be different from the norm, nothing that they think, say, or produce can any longer be taken seriously. It is against this that we protest!"

Are All Artists Mad?

Many people think madness is inherent in artists. Yet, if we believe this, we must question whether the creative artist is "*mad*" or "*mentally ill*" to begin with, or does a troubled person create in order to heal? Research studies have been conducted, some of them showing a connection between the arts and mental illness. In her book *Touched with Fire,* Kay Jamison found, after studying 47 British artists, that 38 percent of them had manic depression or other mood disorders. Another research study by Ludwig (1995) looked at 1,005 eminent creative people and found that people in the creative arts experience more pathology and enter therapy more often than persons in other professions.

While studies may show a correlation between mental illness and creativity, it seems more important to look at how art may have contributed to keeping a person well despite psychological difficulties. Panter and Virshup suggest, in their anthology *Creativity and Madness,* that artists may have a greater sensitivity to emotional trauma than others, but they do not present them as clinical subjects or make any conclusions about the artists being mentally ill. Instead, they provide us with an understanding of their family and social backgrounds in beautifully written sensitive biographies.

Untitled
by Tanya Temkin

Fifteen famous artists, representing different art forms, include van Gogh, Poe, Wolfe, Plath, and Pollack are represented. One of the more contemporary artists written about in the book, Elizabeth Layton (1909-1993), is my favorite because of her political consciousness confronting women's issues such as homelessness, old age (she started painting in her late 60s), death, and

Tanya Temkin, *California, a former coordinator of* ***Madness Network News****–has developed proposals and publicity for many California and national consumer-run programs. She lives in the "Gourmet Ghetto" of North Berkeley Hills which has the highest concentration of mental health professionals of any place in the country. From being an early protestor/ activist, she is now a researcher at InfoUse, a research firm specializing in developing disability information.*

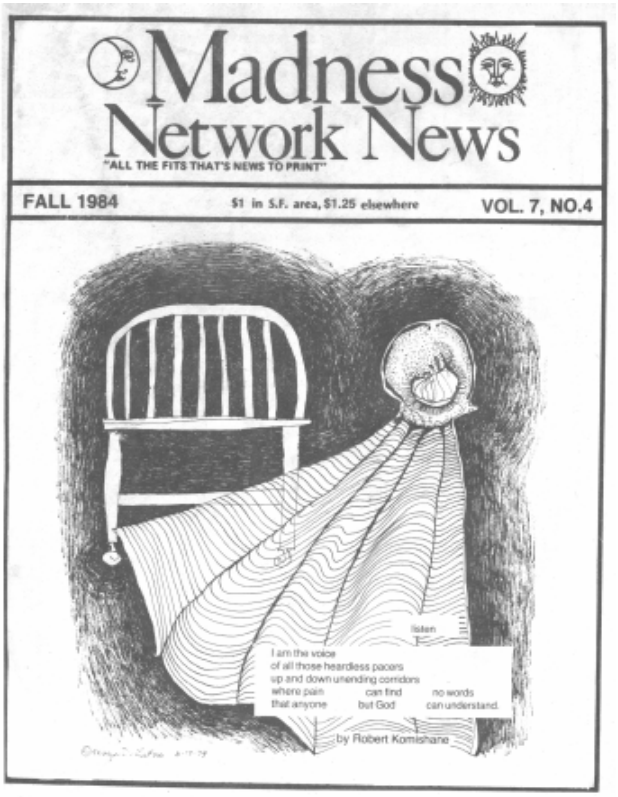
depression. It is sad that she did not know about our ex-patient movement, but fortunately for us her artwork is available for our review. Her early works, exaggerated self-portraits, were painted while she was depressed; later she drew happy scenes of herself engaged in common everyday activities.

Portraits of the Artists: A Qualitative Study of Artists with Mental Illness is a recent study that looks at artists' own perceptions of what motivates them to do art. The study was conducted with nine of thirty-one consumer artists who had participated in a statewide art exhibit (1990) at Boston University. Questions asked included, "What motivates you to create art?" and, "What are your creative processes?" The findings indicated that artists created art because it was healing and brought them closer to wellness. It did not show that mental illness drove artists to do their work, but rather art became a means of communication that gave them a sense of well-being.

These findings also reflect the findings of the *Well Being Survey,* conducted in 1987 by Jean Campbell. In that survey, 500 mental health clients, family members, and mental health professionals were interviewed. Most mental health clients reported that creativity was very important to them: sixty-one percent believed creativity to be essential for them, twenty-three percent identified creativity as the most important factor in their recovery. Family members and professionals did not indicate art as a key factor.

Art as Social Activism

Protest songs written by early activists Jeanne Matulis and Morgan Firestar were a standard tradition at rallies, demonstrations and sit-ins in the seventies. Ex-mental patients in different cities organized to protest what they believed to be human rights violations (e.g. deaths in institutions, exploitation of mental patients for labor, and shock treatment without informed consent.)



A newspaper, *Madness Network News*, published in San Francisco and billed as **"all the fits that's news to print,"** printed the outrage of ex-inmates, as they preferred to be called, and reported their civil rights activities. Many activists were poets and artists who expressed their anger in vivid graphic detail. Some of the published artists moved away or left the ex-patient movement, but their drawings, posters, and poetry are archived from old copies of *Madness Network News.*

In the latter eighties, the majority of the ex-patient movement shifted from militancy to moderation. Large numbers of ex-mental patients became involved in patient advocacy as funds began to flow from federally supported programs. Concerns ranged from housing to jobs to creating consumer-run alternatives. Poets Beth Greenspan of Pennsylvania, and Laura Ziegler and Batya Weinbaum of Vermont published their works in newspapers like *Counterpoint* and in self-published chapbooks.

One director of an early drop-in center, Sally Clay, introduced poetry to members of the Portland Coalition in Maine and together they wrote *Take Horses for Instance*. A review of the book that appeared in the local paper discounted its value, since the "book was done by mental patients." Partly in response, Sally wrote a paper, *Human Handiwork: The Arts as Alternative.* In it, Sally argues that art must be seen as art, not as an alternative therapy, not as a tool for psychiatry's analysis. "To call the arts an alternative to psychiatric treatment," she said, "is like calling the family an alternative to an orphanage."

So you want to be a serious artist?

The serious artist, along with the playful artist, needs nurturing. Famous artists have had encouraging influences that inspired them, often family members or other mentors. Michelangelo grew up with stonecutters. Picasso's father was an artist. Virginia Woolf grew up in a family of writers and scholars. Even with talent, they needed encouragement. Natalie Goldberg says, "The pen must move, the paintbrush needs paint, the dancer's body must be exercised." Franz Kafka said, "The existence of a writer is truly dependent on his desk. If he wants to escape madness, he really never should leave his desk. He must cling to it with his teeth." Serious artists need discipline and a place to work. They also need mentors and role models.

White Light Productions (Paul Engels), also in Vermont, was the first consumer-run video company. By 1990, new original talent appeared at Alternatives conferences: Michael Mundis, Pennsylvania, Nancy Bowker, Maine, Jeff Foss, New Hampshire, Dale Nitzberg, Maryland, and Mark Davis, Pennsylvania, to name a few. David Oaks, Oregon, began publishing *Dendron*, a quarterly newsletter that now features poetry edited by Bonnie Schell. David is also the writer and producer of *Zapwoman,* a series of guerilla theater skits about how survivors of human rights violations in the mental health system can heal by uniting and speaking out. The skits are written and performed by psychiatric survivor members of Support Coalition International. Zapwoman–with her lightning bolt red cape–is played by an electroshock survivor, usually Kris Yates of California.

Experienced artists can offer encouragement to emerging artists. Consumer-run arts programs can offer opportunities, places to work, materials, and arts activities and programs. Finally, June Jordan in *Poetry for the People* makes a vital point about combining poetry, power, and truth. While her book is primarily directed to a multi-cultural audience, it is a sound blueprint for teachers and students of poetry and includes language that is unharnessed and wild. Anyone with a psychiatric diagnosis should read this book because it teaches us to be revolutionary change agents and insists we tell the truth. "You cannot write lies and write good poetry," June writes, "poetry (art) means taking control of the language of your life."

How to Use the Manual:

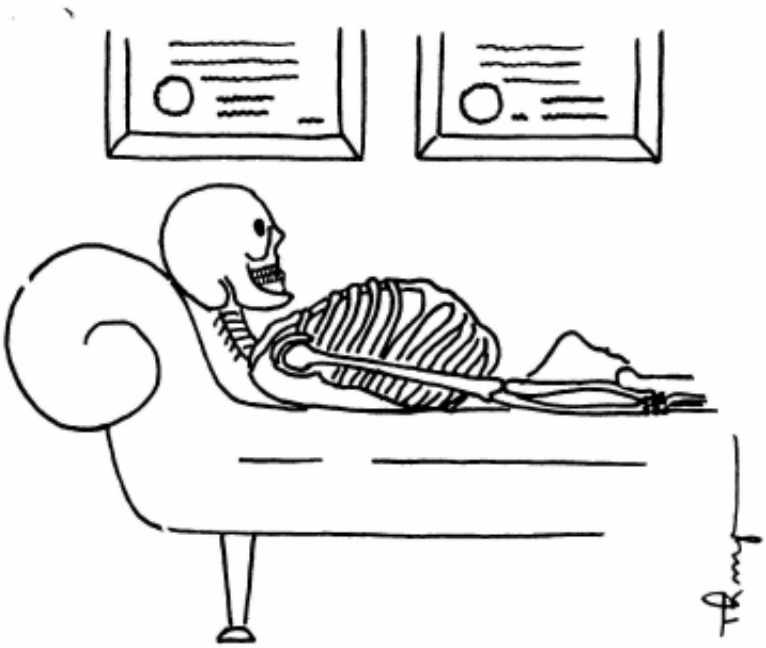
We encourage mental health consumers (and others) to use this manual in any way they choose. For some, it may be to become more appreciative of the arts. For others, it may be to become interested in trying a new experience or to organize an exciting new program. Others may review the bibliography of books, or the resource section of the manual where programs, films, plays, and museums are listed as well as other places to find technical assistance.

The manual is easy to read–the language simple and clear. Visual art from talented artists representing different parts of the country has been added throughout the manual. We also include personal stories, vignettes, and biographical statements to encourage others to try new experiences, to be creative.

Different words are used throughout the manual to describe us. You will see "Consumers/Survivors/Ex-Patients" (C/S/X), or "Persons with Psychiatric Disabilities," "crazy folks," "mad people," and others. These definitions reflect the personal preferences of different writers and often indicate how people feel about themselves in relation to the mental health system. Terms like "crazy folks" have been historically stigmatizing but are now used as personal symbols of power, much like many in the physical disability movement embrace the word "crip." The word consumer is used because it is the term widely accepted by most organizations. Whenever possible, people are referred to as people, or artists, writers, and performers.

We have made a special effort to include persons of differing ethnic backgrounds, geographic locations, ages, cultures, and sexual preferences. Many different kinds of artistic expressions are represented, but there are many more to explore.

This manual can serve as a window to further exploration in the arts. Most contributors can be contacted for additional information and materials. We include their addresses in the resource section. The manual is a means to get you started. There is much more to do. Join us, join our arts' organizations, or start your own. Help us reach others—by ***Reaching Across with the Arts.***



"I said it would take a long time, Henry."

A self-taught artist, ***Jean Thompson*** *has worked in the business world for a publishing company many years. Diagnosed manic-depressive 41 years ago, she feels the system has done more harm than good. She states that cartoons come naturally from being a film buff. She has been published in* ***Dendron, Mouth*** *and* ***Counterpoint****.*

A favorite quote from the Koran sums up her philosophy—"They deserve paradise who make their companions laugh."

Arts Organizations & Programs

Artists for Recovery
A Consumer-Run Arts Organization—Philadelphia, PA

by Connie Schuster

Connie Schuster *is the founder and director of Artists for Recovery. Her encounters with the psychiatric system were voluntary; she narrowly avoided institutionalization, and as an outpatient, she was able to stop taking psychiatric drugs. She found help through a good therapist (who cared enough to see her for free for several years). Later, she found even better emotional resources in the RE-Evaluation Counseling Community. She was unemployed or marginally employed for much of her life, hopeless about being able to do anything meaningful without a degree. When circumstances forced her back into the real work world, she thought she'd help people by working in the mental health system.*

How We Got Started

Our arts program began in 1992 when a friend and peer counselor, Jacqueline Johnson (who now lives in Arkansas), brought together some mutual friends in a support group. All of us had been through the psychiatric system, some of us also worked in the system, and some were still in the system as clients. The purpose of the group was to support one another in starting alternatives to the system, alternatives we knew were desperately needed. Eventually, I went to a large local agency, Resources for Human Development, Inc. (RHD), a diversified nonprofit agency, to find out about their incubator program, New Beginnings. Although all of us knew there were many kinds of alternatives needed, I decided to start with an arts program. Our group members were gifted and prolific artists, but had no resources to support their creativity. We were fortunate that poet and board member Beth Greenspan helped us to approach the Philadelphia Office of Mental Health, and annual funding has been received from many other sources.

Creativity has proved to be an excellent tool for building community in Artists for Recovery, for people who might otherwise be isolated or ostracized. The word "recovery' is sometimes reserved for people with addiction histories (who are also welcome); we believe that people with psychiatric histories are completely capable of recovery, and need resources to assist (not thwart) the healing process. Our regular activities have included open microphone performances, jam sessions, and peer support groups. Transportation is provided to and from events. We have also organized art exhibits and theater activities, and have produced poetry journals. Our performers have been featured at many events sponsored by other organizations, and we have collaborated with many other groups, both within the consumer/survivor/ex-patient movement, other liberation movements, and with other community organizations.

How Others Can Do It

Emotional Support. At every stage of your project, don't try to do it alone. Find people you can trust to work with you, and take time to take turns just listening to each other. When we got started, every group started with each person taking a turn to share his/her feelings; then a second go-round was for sharing thoughts about our project.

Nonprofit Status. Most funding sources require that your group have nonprofit status. The use of a sponsor has provided us with nonprofit status, fiscal management, and technical assis-

tance. At RHD, we also have autonomy; that would not be the case with every umbrella organization, so be careful. Sometimes church groups have incubator programs to help groups get started.

Space. We have not had enough funding to acquire our own space, so we have used donated space. Those spaces have included two theaters, a coffeehouse, rooms at RHD, a YWCA, and a homeless shelter. You can produce performances for other organizations that have space. Poetry readings can be in an intimate space like a restaurant or bookstore.

Funding. Making personal contacts with potential funding agents is most important. You are likely to encounter helpful, friendly staff at funding organizations. Writing proposals is easily learned. If your writing skills are not good, find someone to write, or to edit and proofread for you. You will probably need assistance in developing budgets. Your funding agency can assist with that.

Equipment. If you don't have the expertise needed to purchase art supplies or musical and sound equipment, shop with someone who does. Bring a copy of your sales-tax-exemption form. See if you can negotiate discounts. Some vendors will give donations of art supplies once they get to know you.

Board Members. A board of directors is necessary for an independent nonprofit. If you work under a funding organization, you might have an advisory board instead. Find people to be on your board who have skills that you need and who have contacts that might be helpful. Find people who are supportive of your mission.

Technical Assistance and In-Kind Donations. In-kind donations are nonmonetary gifts of, for instance, computers, volunteer time, space, printing services, art supplies, musical instruments, etc. Write a letter of acknowledgment for all donations. Find out what the law requires that letter to say in your state. If the individual or organization gives an in-kind donation, it is their responsibility (not yours) to set a value on that gift for the IRS. Find sources of technical assistance in your region. Both public and private funding agents are often willing to give technical assistance.

Collaboration. Collaboration can serve more than one purpose, including the following: 1) providing visibility for your artists and organization; 2) raising awareness of mental health issues; and 3) attracting private funding sources who like collaborative efforts. Try writing a proposal in conjunction with a more established organization.

Document Everything. Whenever you get together, make sure everyone signs an attendance book. A separate book for comments is a good idea. Take pictures, videotape, write accounts of what happened to maintain a history of your organization both for funding proposals and for historic celebrations. Keep a notebook of your fliers to refer to when applying for further grants.

Media Attention. Learn how to do press releases. Develop a computerized mailing list of media contacts, especially those interested in arts and mental health.

Outreach and Promotion. Develop a mailing list of other organizations that serve potential participants in your program. This may include mental health agencies, day programs, clubhouses, residential sites, churches, and other community groups. Send flyers of your events for posting or news releases for their newsletters.

Listen to Your Constituency. Giving people the opportunity to speak, to have input, is never a mistake. Develop guidelines, have a grievance procedure, so that any difficulties will be nipped in the bud. Make sure the principle of complete respect for one another is clear.

Starting an Art Center

by Gayle Bluebird

Starting an art center can be an adventure, but it also has to be thought out. In Broward County, FL (1994), an art center was inspired by a phone call to the Consumer Affairs Director from a case manager who was concerned about a client ready for discharge from the State Hospital. The individual was a talented artist and only wanted to do art. The case manager asked, "Can we create a special program for him?"

Meetings were soon initiated with local consumers who were artists or those interested in the arts to solicit their suggestions. One of the wildest ideas (we thought at the time) was to ask for funding for an art center. The request was taken to the Program Supervisor of the Adult Mental Health Office, Kevin Huckshorn, who said it sounded like a good idea. She wanted a written proposal and a budget. A year later (1995) Hot Sketch Studios was a reality!

Acquiring mental health funds for an art center is not impossible, but funding for programs is competitive and resources are limited. Art is not usually a priority.

It is best to start simple, with modest goals. Organizing events such as art exhibits and talent shows are often good ways for consumers to get involved and for the mental health community to become aware and interested. You may want to use free space initially, where people can create art, attend a workshop, or hold a special event.

When you are ready to start a center, you will need to develop a carefully constructed plan for what you want to do, who is needed to do it, and what it will cost. Be able to justify the reasons why an art center is important and what will be the benefits to participants.

Some of the following questions will need to be answered

1. Who Will Attend the Center? Is the program only for consumers in the public mental health system? How do you define "consumers"?

2. When Will the Center be Open? When considering hours, find out when it is convenient for most consumers. If people are in other programs during the day, they will only be able to come in evening hours. On the other hand, many consumers who do not go to programs or who do not have jobs, like to come in the morning when they can concentrate on their work in a peaceful atmosphere.

3. Are There Limitations on How Many People Can Attend? There should be a desired number (or one set by the funding source) of how many people are expected to attend per day. In the beginning, a center will be concerned with not having enough people in attendance, but may later have the opposite problem. One good way to maximize involvement is to hold workshops that can allow larger numbers of participants.

4. **How Will You Inform Consumers About the Project?** You will need a plan for advertising. Making an attractive flier and distributing it to mental health programs is one way; another way is to make presentations at mental health committee meetings and special events. Often the best way to attract people is by word of mouth. If consumers like the program, they will come back and also tell others. Case managers and physicians will also refer clients when they recognize that it is a good program.

You will have many more things to do after answering these questions. Locating and securing a location will be determined by funds, as well as the types of activities and the number of people the center will serve. Do a survey to determine what arts activities are desired before you buy supplies. Check out all of the possibilities for buying discounted art supplies, and don't forget garage sales.

The following is an interview with the Director of 9Muses, Jan Anastasato, who provides information about programming and daily operation. To our knowledge, this is the only consumer-operated art center in the country. The 9 Muses, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory), in Greek mythology are the inspiration of artists and scientists. While 9Muses is not entirely independent, it is an excellent example of a program where art is at the *Center*.

9Muses Art Center

Jan Anastasato, Program Director

Jan Anastasato *is the Consumer Support Projects Director of 9Muses, but also oversees Community Friends and Project Return for the Mental Health Association (MHA) of Broward County. She was hired by MHA in 1993 and compiled a directory of services for consumers coming out of the hospital. With the guidance of her employer and mentor, Anita Godfrey, she has become an advocate and sits on committees and boards of mental health agencies.*

In 1996, the art center Hot Sketch Studios was renamed 9Muses and put under new management by the Mental Health Association of Broward County, Florida. The name, 9Muses, was chosen by the membership because it had a more elegant sound and might receive public recognition more readily.

Jan Anastasato, herself an artist and a consumer, explains that the Center functions with an advisory board made up of its members who report to the MHA Board that has final decision making power and financial oversight. This partnership model has worked very well. Jan states, "It makes sense for the artists so that we are free to focus on the art."

Pat Astoske *of Florida says, "I've been drawing off and on all of my life. In school, when I was listening in class, I doodled all the time." One of her watercolors is shown above. She attends the studio regularly, since the center opened in 1995, and has sold several pieces. She states that her work is an expression of who she is. "If I am not there, I pretend that I am. I feel that it helps to express the anger, but it doesn't solve the problem. I just love doing it until I get tired."*

9Muses has several recognized artists who have had their works exhibited at the Center, as well as in the community. One of them is Pat Astoske, whose works have been compared by some to Grandma Moses. She creates interesting sensitive scenes that involve people in everyday activities.
consent).

Just looking around 9Muses, it is obvious that this is a very special place to be; people are at tables busy working or browsing around the room deciding on what to do. The atmosphere is quiet with its own rhythm and hum. The Center contains a large room with space for working, hanging art, and for the storage of art supplies and materials. There are several small offices and a conference room shared with the MHA that is used for meetings and for periodic art exhibits. People are free to explore and decide what material they wish to use with some limitations according to the expense of the materials and a person's readiness to use them. The

The program is free to mental health consumers, defined as having received mental health services in the past five years, and is funded by the state mental health department with $125,000.

Other monies are received through the MHA by jointly shared projects. Jan, for instance, as project manager, works on other projects for MHA. So does a second coordinator. Two part-time workshop teachers are also paid staff.

I asked Jan how they recruit so many workshop teachers. "Most of the workshop teachers are volunteers who come by word of mouth. Sometimes people stumble on us. Art teachers and pottery teachers seem to find us and that's great. However, it has been difficult to find music teachers."

The Center has some very talented artists who have shown their works at local art exhibits and in museums. However, Jan is quick to point out that the Center is not just for talented people, but also for people who come in not knowing how to draw a straight line and who now paint passable art. Anyone who comes to the Art Center can benefit and be helped in his/her individual recovery process. Other benefits include the possibility of becoming a "stakeholder"— part time stipend position that can be a stepping stone to another part time job. They also have the possibility of selling their work. All artists receive 75 percent of the price put on their work; 25 percent goes back into supplies or into the studio. Usually the ratio in art galleries is 50 percent to each party. When asked what problems to avoid, Jan thinks for a minute. There do not seem to be problems in the workings of the Center or in relationships between people. "One problem," she states, "is transportation. Most consumers come by bus." We supply two bus tickets to those who need them. A proposal is being written to request funding for a van. The other problem (not current) has been the location. 9Muses has had to move three times since 1996. The most recent move had overtones of discrimination from a landlord who raised the rent and requested that they move after pressure from the local business owners in a shopping area. The Adult Mental Health Department monitors and creates performance standards for 9Muses, like all of their other funded programs. This is an important part of the success of a consumer-run art center. It must have expectations. No worry here, consumer satisfaction among members (a reporting requirement) remains very high. "I love my job," Jan states, adding that friendships are important at the Center. "There is lots of bonding going on."

Creative Arts Consortium

San Diego, CA

by Bonnie Schell

The Creative Arts Consortium (CAC) was established in August 1991 to promote the creative abilities of people with mental illness in San Diego County. A consortium is a combination of organizations that join together to carry out a business venture. CAC was an organized effort of a county case manager, Schizophrenics in Transition, the Alliance for the Mentally Ill, a family advocacy group, (SIT-AMI), community sponsors, and consumers interested in promoting the creative talents of mental health clients. The founding committee of health providers, family members and business leaders visited treatment centers to gain information that would help and interest clients. The first Consortium, in April 1992, drew 143 entrees in art and 90 in literature. The exhibit was displayed in the main-floor corridors of the County Administration Building and the Health Services complex.

In 1993 the CAC was awarded a $60,000 grant from the State of California for a consumer-family collaboration to underwrite a studio, a festival of the arts and a drama group. SIT-AMI sponsored the organization, published several books of poetry and spent two years in

people who have personal experience with psychological and emotional problems," and a Valentine's Day talent show. The 1999 Playwriting Contest garnered a play by a homeless lady in which the actors are all in sleeping bags talking about poverty.

Initially CAC rented about 1,000 square feet of studio space but used the equipment and office space and postage permit of SIT-AMI. The Consumer Directors of Art and Writing (John Hood and James Eret), the Performing Arts Director and a grant writer were each budgeted at 39 hours a month and the studio director at 129 hours. The county originally provided in-kind, pro-bono salaries for the Studio Director, Audio/Visual Coordinator, Grant Writer, Job Coach for eight clients and Administrative Support. Client-teachers were hired as contractors which simplified bookkeeping.

One of CAC's planning innovations was to offer the art and writing classes through the Parks and Recreation Department (Disabled Services) free to CAC members and at a small fee to others. Classes in the spring of 1999 were Painting (color and composition), Life Drawing with live models, Pottery for Beginners with an on-site kiln, Mythology in Writing and Expressing Yourself through Creative Writing. CAC writers teach in a lock-down facility, give readings at a local restaurant and offer classes to people in day treatment. Through trial and error, class length is now one-and-a-half hours with a break.

Before their state grant was over, CAC, under the community leadership of Jane Fyer, began to foster friendships and supporters outside the

Poetry

Today before class
I argued with my son,
called him names
not worthy to call a son.
The weather was fine
and the traffic droned on,
and I felt spat upon—
my God, think how many times
we speak before we think,
forget who we love and why,
tumble into a pit of boastful pride
before we admit we were wrong
that my son's intelligence
is as dazzling as the sunlight.
Before I utter another word,
I'll think of a beautiful river running
through the Shenandoah Valley
in moonlight, the birds crying in the twilight
and I rode through without noticing
the stunning images below me.
Next time I travel to that river,
I will stop to praise the river,
for rarely do we get another chance
to atone for our wrongs
I think I'll go home and tell my son
that I was wrong, make peace,
for such is the power of poetry,
in my day to day living,
to change dross into gold.

James D. Eret, *California, is the Writing Director of Creative Arts Consortium. His work has been published in* ***"The Poetry Conspiracy," "Somehow We Survive,"*** *and* ***"Me and My Miracles."*** *He read at Alternatives in 1994 and at Border Voices.*

CAC writers and artists have edited a collection called *Cultural Shadows*, with testimonies from ten cultures, in first person, treated for mental illness. Located near the University of California at San Diego, CAC has access to famous writers who come to read, theater groups and many independent bookstores that will offer poetry chapbooks and anthologies for sale. With 40,000 adult clients in San Diego, CAC has now added people as information contacts for their programs in six geographic areas. James Eret states, "Stigma pertaining to mental illness existed when the CAC was formed, and still exists, but these people and the CAC members, staff, family members, and friends have shown, and will continue to show, that creation can heal and break stigma."

Theater Groups

The Second Step Players, Uncasville, CT

SJ Williams

SJ Williams started to work with the Second Step Players in 1985 after several years in therapy and a fifteen-year history of drug abuse. Working with the Players helped her face her own stigma about persons with psychiatric illnesses as well as identify her own. SJ was director of the troupe from 1994 through 1996 and is currently the executive director of Artreach, Inc., the nonprofit agency set up as a funding entity for the Players and other recreation/artistic programs.

The Second Step Players is a unique group of performers who have been described as "Saturday Night Live" meets "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." The Players perform original comedy, drama and music about the experience of having mental illnesses.

The Second Step Players is a unique group of performers who have been described as "Saturday Night Live" meets "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." The Players perform original comedy, drama and music about the experience of having mental illnesses. Many of the production personnel have been labeled with various diagnoses, ranging from schizophrenia and bipolar illness to milder personality disorders. The troupe started in 1985 with a small talent show and for the first several years, performed generic comedy. For the fourth annual show in 1989, the troupe decided to write original material that spoke to the stigma and negative stereotyping of "crazy people." The material necessitated that members of the troupe "come out of the closet" as mental health consumers and from there, the troupe evolved into the powerful educational and personal empowerment tool that it is today.

The material that is performed comes from real lives and experiences and helps to educate, inform, enlighten and entertain people. The audience ranges from people involved in all levels of the mental health system to the general public. The troupe has performed for high schools, universities, civic groups, churches, conventions, conferences and training sessions. The issues and comedy that are presented are often universal in their appeal.

What began in 1985 as a low-key talent show has now evolved into a nationally recognized entity, with 65 consumers involved in the troupe. The Players have performed extensively throughout the Northeast as far west as Nebraska, and in Austin and San Antonio, Texas. Throughout these many years and travels, the troupe has had opportunities for great successes as well as marvelous mistakes. Many lessons have been learned and special technologies have been developed that work well to accommodate the particular needs of the membership of the troupe.

Support Systems and philosophies have been created to help bring a performer through the rehearsal process to closing night. These support systems do not exist in a typical community theatre.

How to Start a Theater Group

1. Transportation. One of the most vital parts of any project is getting people to and from rehearsals. We found that in order to assure the maximum participation, we had to be committed to do whatever it takes to get the members of the troupe to rehearsal. Borrowing a van from a local mental health agency is an option that has many advantages and a few disadvantages as well. Insurance and other expenses such as maintenance costs are taken care of by the agency that owns the van. However, a major disadvantage came about when there was a problem with the vehicle we had borrowed as to who was responsible for possible costly repairs. We now have our own van, which we purchased in 1990 with funds awarded to us by the U.S. Department of Education. This, of course, is the best way to go. Another option is to use volunteer energy by organizing a network of people with private cars to pick up other members in their area and get them to rehearsals.

2. Brutal Outreach. "Brutal Outreach" is the term we use for getting our members interested and keeping them informed about current projects. This method is depicted as a boxing glove holding a telephone receiver and often the image is right on the money. Communication through the telephone is how we arrange transportation, contact new members, contact old members, as well as a host of other tasks. For example, contacting someone for a rehearsal can go something like this:

> **Round One:** Make initial contact to determine who is interested in being in a show and attending rehearsals.
>
> **Round Two:** After we know who wants in, we call each person and give them their pickup time.
>
> **Round Three:** A third call is made to remind everyone of the rehearsal and pickup times. This is a *very important* part of reaching out to membership, especially when beginning a new project. As we become more involved in the project, we do not need to contact everyone twice before each rehearsal. It is important to be aware that many members of the troupe need extra support in the form of phone call reminders to keep them involved. This extra effort is the basis for the continued success of the Second Step Players and will always be the way the group operates.

3. Brainstorming. Every new skit begins as a collaborative process known as brainstorming. Brainstorming is a way for us to lend ears to all of the voices involved so that we can create the most contemporary scripts possible for the upcoming year.

The first thing to do is get as many people in on the brainstorming as possible. We get together in a space big enough for everybody (the location can range from someone's living room to the food court at a local mall). We gather around, set out a few snacks and begin tossing ideas out. Somebody volunteers to take notes and makes an outline of the ideas that will undoubtedly abound.

It is best to start the dialogue by tossing out issues that people would like to cover. Sometimes these are personal matters or they can be issues that have been presented to us while performing in our region. Here's a typical beginning:

"I think Prozac has been in the media a lot and I think we should do a skit about it."
"Oh, I know. It seems to be the only drug anybody's talking about"

"Last month I had a guy come up to me and ask if we ever do anything about family members..."
"Family members are good, but what about how hard it is to find a job?"

This type of dialogue will go on for a bit longer, perhaps bringing up some more issues. It's time to separate the issues and explore them one at a time.

"The first subject was Prozac. Okay, what do we want to say about it?"
"I think it's being treated like a cure all... you know, the Valium for the nineties."
"As for me, Prozac saved my life."
"I think doctors tend to over-prescribe."

So, we've gotten a bunch of opinions; now comes the big question... How do we make it funny?

"Okay, you're in the psychiatrist's office and the psychiatrist looks like a giant *Pez* dispenser.
"And then we have a guy come in... but what should he do?"
"Maybe he could tell the doctor about an anxiety thing... something outrageous and really funny."
"Like all the food in his refrigerator keeps singing Judy Garland songs and it keeps him awake."

This sort of free association will keep going for a while. Some of it will be silly but there will always be some piece of very useful material that comes out of it.

When ideas have been presented and explored, it is time to read through the notes to decide what is workable. Keep in mind that these are works that will ultimately be performed on a stage with a limited budget, so try to keep the scene changes and sets as minimal as possible. Once the best suited subjects and scenarios are selected, the agenda then turns to who would like to write the various scripts. Several people opt to write scripts that are due back three weeks after the brainstorming. More than once we have had several people opt to take on the same idea from the brainstorming or have two or more people collaborate on the same script

From this point we edit, combine and expand on the points presented. It is important to do as much fine-tuning as possible before getting the cast together for the first read-through,

4. Rehearsals. Rehearsal periods are designed to last from eight to twelve weeks, a longer rehearsal period than most community-based theaters provide. This extended period accommodates the wide range of abilities and functioning levels of the members.

5. Warm Ups. Every rehearsal begins with several warm-up exercises. The exercises cover movement, volume, diction, and trust building. The warm up is conducted in a circle, and all members (including actors, stage crew, directors, sign language interpreters, etc.) are encouraged to participate, or at the very least to join the circle.

6. Checking In. The warm-up time is also used to check in with the Players about anxiety levels, schedules and overall feelings. Many times, as we go around the circle, players will state how they are feeling about the rehearsals and the upcoming show. Some of the actors may also need individual attention to help them focus before beginning a rehearsal.

7. Feedback. We ask preview audiences to attend rehearsals to give feedback. Preview audiences will tell you what they thought was funny, what was clear, if anything was confusing, if the actors were loud enough, if they could they see everybody...and so on. Most important, however, is positive feedback. These rehearsals are a place where **"what needs to be fixed"** is mixed with **"what really works well."**

The flip side of positive feedback is negative feedback or *criticism*. Often in an attempt to be positive, negative aspects are overlooked. It is difficult to tell someone that you think they should change the way they do something in order to be understood on stage. There are many different techniques that will work with various actors. It is up to the director to choose which approach to take. The important thing is to address the issues honestly and in a timely fashion. This will ensure the individual's best possible performance.

The promise that the directors make to the performers is that they are not going to let any actor go out on stage and look dumb. This policy should be stated at the first rehearsal and restated throughout the entire process.

8. Casting. The luxury of choosing a cast without auditioning is not an option. It is possible however, to make the event much less stressful for the actors. The director may opt to see each actor individually. Reading individually, one on one with the director, rather than in front of the entire group, can make a very large difference to someone who is very self-conscious. This method allows a director to give full attention to the actor.

After an audition process, there should be individual debriefings held with the director who addresses in very clear terms why a particular actor was not chosen. Was it a problem with volume? Unclear speech? Not the right time? The director is responsible to give honest, clear, feedback to the actor.

9. Constructive Trauma/Process as Product. The classic idea of theatre and musical events is to present a finished product. The methodology used is to present the process as the product, rather than the show or musical event itself. Audience members can go see actors "act" on many stages, but witnessing the power the performer experiences while overcoming his fear, anxiety and illness is what this theatre is all about.

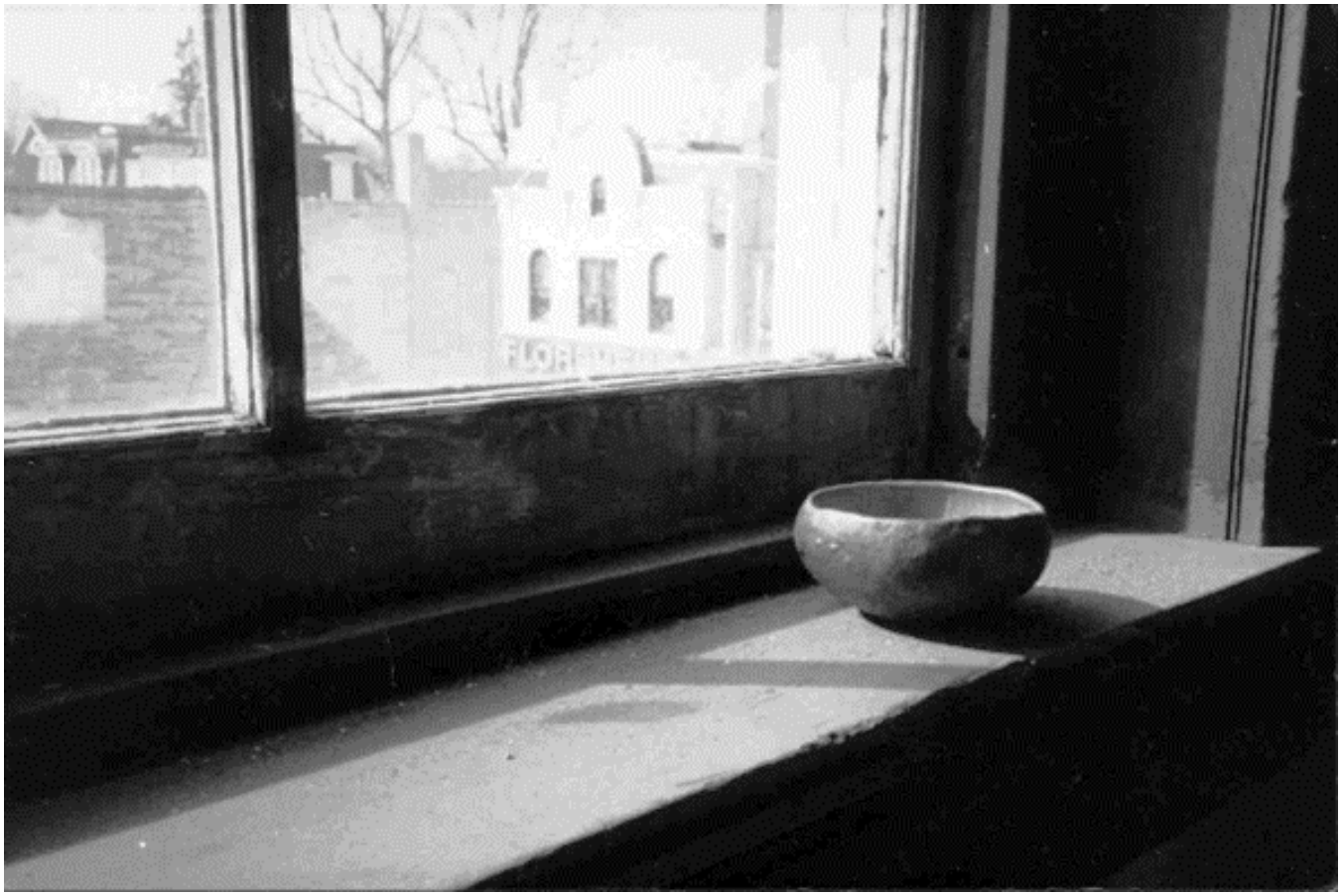
The audience views well-written, entertaining and educational theatre that has been tailored to the performers' abilities and strengths. An actor who has a tremor due to medication or traumatic injury is cast as a character that would have a tremor. An actor who has trouble remembering more than one line at a time will have one very funny or potent line to say. The audience is given a performance and simultaneously views fragile people who open themselves to reveal their spirit.

After the performance, the audience is always invited backstage to mingle with the performers and everyone associated with the event. The lines between those with disabilities and those without become indistinguishable. Everyone involved, from audience members to performers to stagehands, become part of the same circle.

10. The Healing Circle.

We imagine the opportunities that we provide through artistic expression as a healing circle. Who keeps the lights on? Who keeps the theatre going? The answer is the people in the circle. This circle is one of the fundamental philosophies of The Second Step Players and it is a primary reason for the continued success of the organization.

The Healing Circle is a way of looking at our theatre and our work. We envision this work as a giant psychic circle that is laid out somewhere in the universe. We stand inside this circle and with us we have everything that is theatre. Once someone is in this circle with us, they can learn to act or run professional theatrical lighting boards or one of many other technical jobs. Inside the circle it is possible to get applause and use theatrical make-up and travel in a van with our logo on it. We envision the circle filled with possibilities, all the possibilities that make up a theatre group like The Second Step Players. ***It is up to us to keep the circle lit.***



A Pot–My Work
Photograph
by Irene Lynch

Irene Lynch, New Jersey, has been a part of the consumer/survivor movement for about 14 years and believes in listening to all voices in order for us to change our mental health system. Irene is a well-respected painter and master of other arts who accidentally was diagnosed a mental patient, a condition she believes never existed. She has just started painting again, finding that she has not lost her craft, even if it is a bit rusty.

Art Exhibits

National Artists for Mental Health, Albany, NY

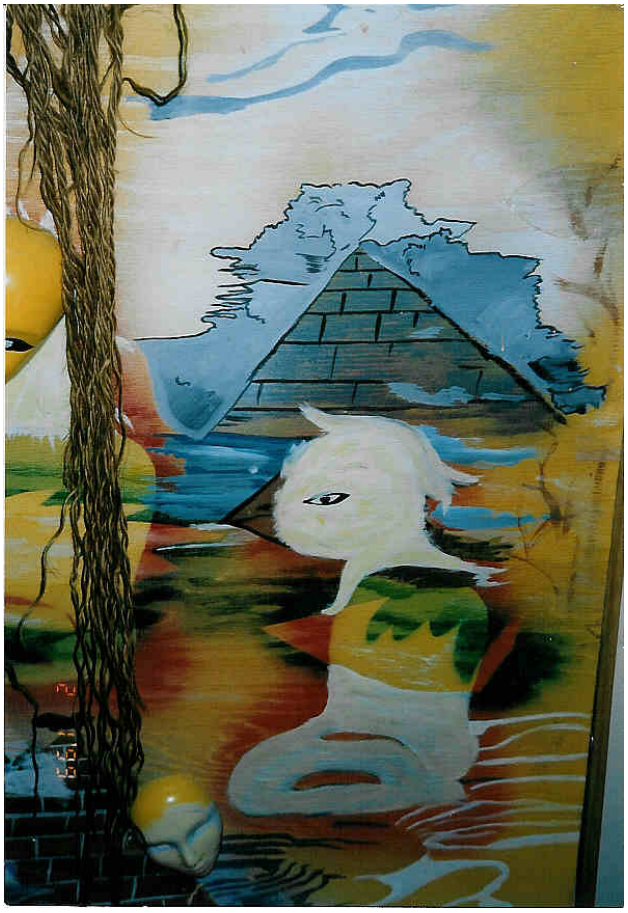
by Frank Marquit

Franklin A. J. Marquit, CEO, is the founder and president of National Artists for Mental Health, Inc., a creative arts, education and advocacy consumer organization. He was the 1994 recipient of the Advocate of the Year Award from the New York State Commission on Quality Care for the Mentally Disabled. Mr. Marquit became an advocate for mental health consumers during the course of his own recovery. He is the creator of the "Pillows of Unrest Project" that has received national recognition and is currently finishing his second masters degree in holistic methods of healing.

The concept for National Artists for Mental Health (NAMH) was developed in 1988, when a small group of people, mostly family members of consumers, got together in a support group. I had been working as a strong mental health advocate during my recovery and wanted to extend the self-help support I had received to other consumers. I had ideas to start a consumer run and staffed mental health agency. I jotted down my ideas on napkins in restaurants, wherever and whenever I could find the extra minutes.

The dream became a reality when a drop-in center opened its doors on October 31, 1991 (Halloween), with just $5,000. Two weeks later, the arts program began and was operated by noted local artist, Ralph L. Ivery, NAMH's Assistant Executive Director and Art Director. With the initial participants, all consumers, enough quality expressive art was created to produce an art show at the local community college, Columbia-Greene.

NAMH has held statewide art exhibitions in the Legislative Office Building in Albany, NY; gallery exhibitions in SoHo, New York City and throughout the State of New York. The quarterly publication, *The North River Journal*, comprised of artwork, poetry, short stories and articles by mental health consumers, has a circulation of 10,000. However, with the addition of its New York City based operation,



Metamorphosis III
Mixed Media

Ralph Ivery, *Cofounder of National Artists for Mental Health, Inc. is an acclaimed artist whose work has been exhibited all over New York State, including several galleries in the SoHo district of Manhattan.*

the circulation is expected to grow to 25,000. NAMH staff travels upon request to give Expressive Art and Recovery workshops. NAMH staff holds these workshops throughout the state and travels to inpatient facilities as well. The "Pillows of Unrest Project" has received national attention and holds a permanent collection of over 1,000 pillowcases with individual artists' expressions on them. May 19th was proclaimed the statewide Anti-Stigma Awareness Day at NAMH's request, and on that day, consumers throughout the state of New York hold their own workshops and art exhibitions to educate the public and bring about awareness of mental health issues.

As a small drop-in center that included an innovative arts program and was a proven success, some state funding was allocated for us, and a grant was written and received from the Van Amerigen Foundation in New York City. NAMH was able to pay staff and purchase a vehicle to do art exhibitions, as well as expand the program, including developing the publication *The North River Journal*. Sound investments, hard work and perseverance have been at the core of NAMH's survival and success.

Pillows of Unrest Project

In desperation, we lie down and rest our weary heads on our pillows. If those pillows could talk, they would talk, they would tell a story of struggle, one that begins within, but is often fed by an environment that lacks understanding. It is our purpose to give voice to these separate and lonely struggles through Pillows of Unrest workshops and by the exhibition of the pillowcases which are an ongoing and permanent collection.

How to Create Pillowcase Art

- *Use a pillowcase as your canvas. White pillowcases work best but you can use whatever color you wish.*
- *Any materials, such as markers or glitter, can be used but should be non-fading and permanent.*
- *You may draw, paint, write poetry, create a slogan, or do a short story on your pillow case.*
- *Try to reflect on personal issues in your recovery and the effects of stigma.*
- *We would also appreciate a brief letter stating your opinion of this project–is it helpful in your recovery? If so, how? This is not required but would be very useful.*
- *Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address below to receive a Pillows of Unrest policy agreement.*
- *Send your completed pillowcase and signed policy agreement to:*

National Artists for Mental Health, Inc.
23 Walker Way
Albany, New York 12205

How to Coordinate an Art Show:

Why an Art Exhibit?

An art exhibit is an inviting way to introduce the public to the talents and abilities of the mental health community, while inspiring public awareness. We have discovered that to keep public interest high, you need to coordinate events that are subtle in their objective to educate. People do not like to be lectured on social issues and more often than not, will lose interest in a presentation that talks down to them about what they should not believe about mental illness. An art

show gives them an opportunity to make discoveries on their own. With a well-timed speaker session that utilizes consumers, and a question and answer period, attendees will be in a much more comfortable position to absorb the presentation. It is also important to remember that art is a celebration of the spirit and the presentation should be positive.

1. Getting Started. The first thing you need to do is organize a planning committee. It is important that all planning participants are involved at the outset, so that work does not overlap. Whether you plan to hold a formal exhibition or a small showcase, an art exhibit is a major undertaking and should not be attempted by one person. You should have a committee that meets weekly to assess progress.

2. Recruiting Your Team. Find other potential team members through affiliations you have with mental health groups or organizations, or ask people you know to refer people to you.

3. Develop Your Team and Your Event. The first meeting is the most important you'll have with your group. This is when you discuss your goals and objectives, the type of event, who your target audience will be, and where the artwork will come from.

4. **Where the Show Will Be held.** Consider location, accessibility, room layout, and cost when determining prospective sites for your event. Cost of an exhibition site can range from free of charge to "I'm sorry… how much did you say?" If you look hard enough, there are sure to be several sites available for little or no charge within the mental health system or community arts programs in your area.

5. Obtaining Artwork for the Show. If you are holding an open show, create a flyer advertising a call for artwork, which you can post or leave in piles at local mental health service

6. Who Will Foot the Bill? This is, by design, your most important question. Even if you are successful in getting a free location, having your supplies donated, etc., you'll probably have to deal with costs somewhere (e.g. paper for flyers, copy costs). Your budget will depend on the size of your art show.

7. Receiving/Logging Procedures. Decide on a method for receiving artwork, by mail, a drop-off location, etc. Make sure you have designated a final date for submission and included your criteria for acceptance of artwork such as medium used, framed, matted, etc. Each piece of artwork must be logged with the artist's name, address, phone number, and include title and medium used. You can use a binder for this purpose. Make sure this information is also secured on the back of the piece. Artwork should be stored in a clean, dry place (away from water pipes, etc.).

8. Artist Contract/Release. You will need a signed statement giving permission from the artist to exhibit his/her work. This should include the criteria for the exhibition, last date for submission, and how artwork is to be returned (as well as who is responsible for shipping costs).

9. Develop a Theme and Logo. Develop a theme and a logo for your art show that will be included on your flyer and promotional material. You may ask an artist to create the logo or have a contest to select the best logo.

10. Publicize Your Event. Take advantage of any and all avenues of free publicity for your event, i.e., local newspapers, and mental health and art organizations' newsletters. You can also contact your local cable television network, as they often advertise community events free of charge. Invitations to key people or organizations in your target audience is also a good idea. Invite the local newspaper or television station to cover the event, as well as the editor(s) of mental health and art organizations' newsletters.

11. The Reception. Decide whether to hold a reception, formal (with speakers) or informal. If you decide to use speakers, be sure to contact a prospective speaker by phone first, and follow up with a letter. The letter should include all information about the event and the approximate time allotted for his/her presentation. A reception should include refreshments, such as coffee, tea, soft drinks and cookies, or they can be more elaborate, depending on your budget and space.

13. The Art Show. During the course of the show, you should arrange for staff or volunteers to remain at the location to ensure that the exhibit remains safe and protected.

Mask
Pastel by Mary Dunn, Massachusetts

Mary Dunn, *an ex-patient and survivor, is a pastel artist, published poet and musician. Her drawings of mandalas and masks are inspired by images of the psyche and the spirit of God.*

This is also important for sales. If you have space in a formal gallery, the gallery will have employees to do this but it is always recommended to have someone on hand who will be able to answer questions about the artwork and your mission.

As a rule, artwork remains on the wall until the end of the show, even if it is sold (these pieces should be marked as such). Each piece of artwork on exhibit should have a number corresponding with an informational sheet for your viewers. The information should include the artist's name (if you have permission to use the name, otherwise, anonymous), title of piece and medium used.

Anchor House, Northampton, MA

Anchor House, founded by Michael Tillyer in 1997–is a studio and gallery that works with its peer artists who have come through the mental health system. The focus of the work of Anchor House is to restore artists to their creative careers–to date, thirty artists have had first shows, three have had opportunities to show with commercial galleries and fifteen have had employment opportunities.

Central to Anchor House's mission is an ongoing effort to bust the social stigma attached to mental illness. Artist-to-artist self-help and active community involvement serve to educate our public.

The Anchor House is committed to reaching out and maintaining connections with homebound or hospitalized member artists.

Silent Cry
Oil on Canvas William Alexander

***William Alexander** has been with Awakenings since 1997. He has had difficulty being shown in traditional galleries because his work has been declared "too anguished." William paints on and off when he gets inspired when he says, he "grabs a canvas and ideas flow out." He has completed a "Mad Man" series of which Silent Cry is a part, but also does sculptures of found objects.*

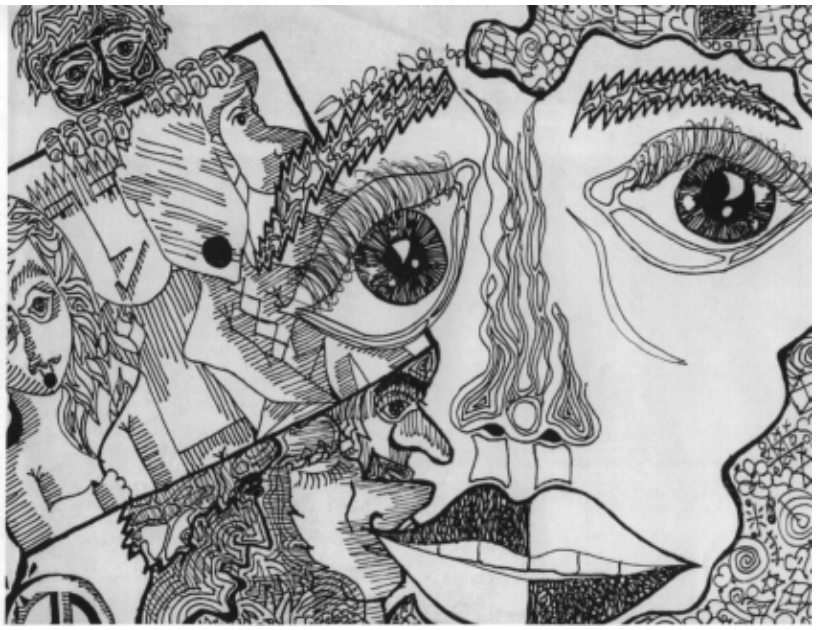
The Awakenings Project, Chicago, IL

The Awakenings Project was the vision of Robert Lundin, and Irene O'Neill-Sam, Co-Directors, who initially wanted to increase the involvement by consumers in the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, (NAMI) Illinois. Bob had been the president of the Consumer Council for the state, but did not see the organization flourish and decided there must be another vehicle to interest consumers. As a free-lance photojournalist for area newspapers, he decided that an art show might be the avenue he was looking for. After putting together a successful art show called "Awakenings" for the 1997 Illinois NAMI Conference, the show served as a springboard for the organization The Awakenings Project. Influenced by the work of Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison, he hoped many consumers would self-identify as artists and creators with Awakenings' help.

The organization's membership has grown. Art exhibits, all hailed as great successes, have been created at the local, state, and national level. The organization now has its own identity and is working to develop a literary magazine, *The Awakenings Review*, scheduled for publication in 1999.

woman watching trash kan fire
Charcoal
by Carla Cubit

Carla Cubit, *New York City, is an African-American psychiatric survivor, performance artist, sculptress, and homeless activist. She has lived in shelters and squats, had her art shown in galleries and in the* ***New York Times Magazine****. Carla states, "I believe in art as a universal means of communication."*



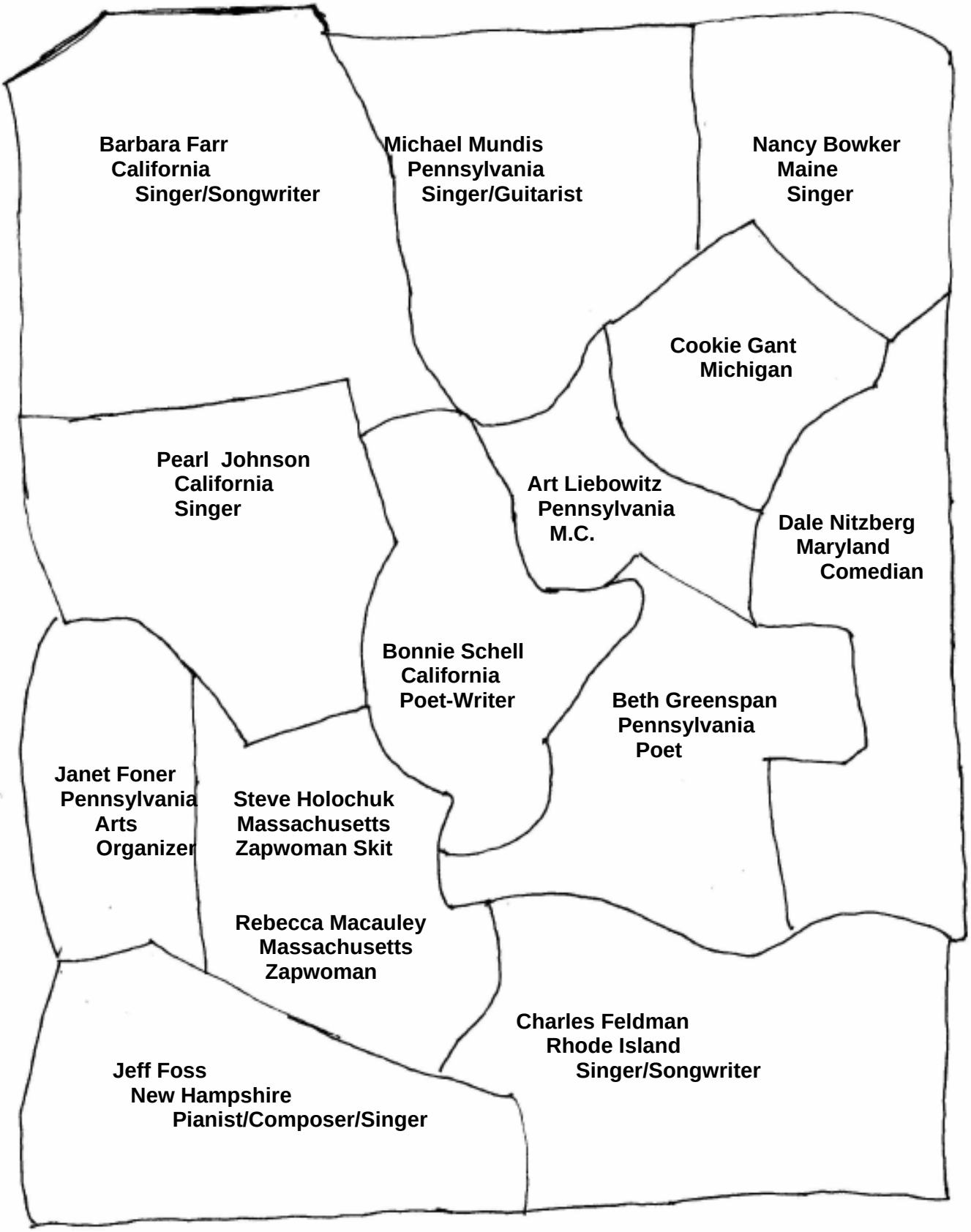
Untitled
Pen and Ink
by Sybil Noble

Sybil Noble, *Missouri, has been an artist for many years and has exhibited her work in Missouri. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia twenty years ago, and is now excited to be the recipient of an Eli Lilly Scholarship to study art therapy at a local private college. She hopes this will afford her the chance to help others while using her favorite means of expression.*

Talent Shows

Talent Shows

PERFORMERS ON TITLE PAGE PHOTO



Altered States of the Arts, Fort Lauderdale, FL

by Gayle Bluebird

i'd rather learn from one bird how to sing than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance....

e e cummings

I never claimed to be an artist, but when I became an "arts organizer," the term fit. I started to organize talent shows at the annual Alternatives Conferences (conferences for mental health consumers) as early as 1986. These spontaneous shows spotlighted many talented individuals who, for the first time, had a microphone, a stage, and an audience. After several years of performing in open talent shows, many entertainers began creating unique performances. Artistic presentations covered a wide range of emotions and expressions through skits, songs, poetry and dance that made you laugh or cry. More importantly, a profound statement was often made about mental health issues whether personal or political.

By 1990, at the Alternatives held in Pittsburgh, Howie the Harp had by now become legendary at talent shows. As emcee, he got up on stage and started to warm up his audience with jokes that everyone knew by heart—

"What am I doing?" he shouted, while raising his walking cane.
"Raising Cane!" the audience shouted back with electrified enthusiasm.

Raising Cane was a metaphor for raising consciousness, a symbol of our being able to control our own lives—a symbol of empowerment. We believed that arts performances could inform and educate an audience, and were as important as the message given by keynote speakers and in workshops. We believed that we should be at the podium and be given equal time. Our performances could be a source of personal empowerment and self-healing, and *a means to change the psychiatric mindset and transform the world.*

The Pittsburgh performance had been a huge success. The day after the performance, four arts advocates, including Howie the Harp, Sally Clay, Dianne Côté, and myself, met to discuss the creation of a national arts organization. Sally came up with the name, "Altered States of the Arts," an organization that would serve as a network for artists, writers, and performers. Our goal was to promote more of our special performances and publish a quarterly journal. The next year, the talent show at Alternatives transformed into a talent showcase where performers were pre-selected by a review committee and presented new original material *with a message.*

Organizing a Talent Show:

You do not need to have a particular talent to create a performance. Many of our talented performers were first introduced at open microphone talent shows. The best acts are ones that come out of your own experiences. It is up to you to choose what type.

Drop-in centers are great places to hold talent shows. Announcements should be made in newsletters and calendars. Do not worry about attracting a large crowd. It is better to keep them small. The purpose of these shows is for encouragement and enjoyment. Having been the organizer and emcee at many of these shows, I can attest to the fact that almost everyone

eventually will tell a story, a joke, or sing a song. (I have even had someone do a headstand!) I have learned that everyone likes a microphone!

1. Schedule at Least a Month in Advance. If possible, plan for an early evening performance. At the Peer Center, a drop-in center in Fort Lauderdale, talent shows are regularly scheduled once a month on Friday evening from 6 to 8. The time frame works well for people who need to catch the last bus, which leaves at eight. Make sure you have a beginning and ending time (no more than two hours) so that people are encouraged to stay for the entire show.

2. Create a Flyer with Date, Time, and Place. Ask an artist to create a captivating design. Mail the flier to the organization's membership and post it on your drop-in center bulletin board, at mental health centers, and local community centers.

3. Do Special Outreach to People Who Are Known to Have Talent. Make phone calls–ask around–find out whether there is someone with talent at local mental health centers. Be sure to invite culturally diverse participants.

4. Plan to Serve Refreshments. Keep them simple, coffee, tea, and pastries. Go to a local bakery and ask for donated baked goods or ask people to bring things from home. It is best to put out the refreshments at the beginning of the show, as eating will help to put people in a comfortable frame of mind.

5. Select an Emcee. The emcee is key to getting people involved and keeping the talent show moving. The trick is getting people up to the microphone. Rarely does anyone want to go first. The emcee should start with introductions and warm-up exercises. Have each person tell a little bit about himself/herself, then ask if anyone knows a good joke or if something unusual happened in the past week. Group songs or stories are great starters. It is important not to get discouraged; individuals need to be coached and inspired to take part. Give them ideas about stories they could tell, or adventures they may have had, a trip they took, or a favorite animal story they recall. After a few shows, people will beg to go first and you will need a sign-up sheet.

6. Create a Stage. A stage can be a raised platform or an area set aside to create the illusion of a stage. Use a microphone for a group of 20 or more. A piano is great if you have one, as there is always someone in the crowd who plays; you will need a podium for poets. The microphone is especially important, not just because you need it for sound, but because performers gain confidence and are more enthusiastic when able to move and gesture while holding a microphone.

7. Decorate the Room. Spread colored or checkered tablecloths on tables. Candles add to the atmosphere but only use them if you have glass containers in order to prevent fires and meet fire safety codes.

8. Ask People to Be Courteous. Set time limits: The emcee will tell the audience, "Everyone has three to five minutes." This means that 12 people can perform with four minutes each and still get on and off stage in an hour show. People can always perform twice if there is enough time.

9. End on a Positive Note. Make sure the talent show ends on time. This will help to make it feel like a real show and not just a happening. Find out what day and time is most suitable to schedule another show and then stick to a regular schedule each month. Ask for volunteers to take responsibility for things like creating a flier, making phone calls, getting the refreshments together, etc.

Special talent shows might feature performance variations such as jam sessions, drumming circles, clowning parties, or sing-alongs. There are books you can purchase with ideas for music or drama workshops, exercises, etc. that may be very useful for creating special events. You may want to have workshops on expressive arts at the drop-in center utilizing community arts instructors, or local entertainers to lead them.

The Talent Showcase:

The Talent Showcase is a sophisticated, professional show that requires more time for organizing. You will use many of the same guidelines as for an open mike talent show, but there is more time required and more steps to follow in order to have a successful event. Briefly, here are the basics:

- Allow three to four months to plan.
- Have one coordinator do most of the planning.
- Know how much money can be spent.
- Determine whether there is a special theme for the performance.
- Consider the need for sound and lighting.
- Decide on a selection process to choose performers.
- Work closely with each person's special needs.
- Consider the needs for performers with physical disabilities, i.e. wheelchair ramps, interpreters for hearing impaired, etc.
- Know microphone and equipment needs.
- Publicize in newspapers, mental health newsletters, through radio spots, etc.
- Design a program with the names of the performers.
- Hold a rehearsal an hour before the show.
- Use professional technicians during the show, not volunteers.
- Use a time prompter if necessary.
- Congratulate, reward (with honorariums whenever possible), and get together with performers after the show.

Tips:

Pay special attention to the time you schedule a Talent Showcase.
We have discovered that a daytime performance works best at consumer conferences because many people are too tired to attend an evening performance after attending workshops all day long. Also make sure that publicity notices in the program are adequate to attract a large audience.

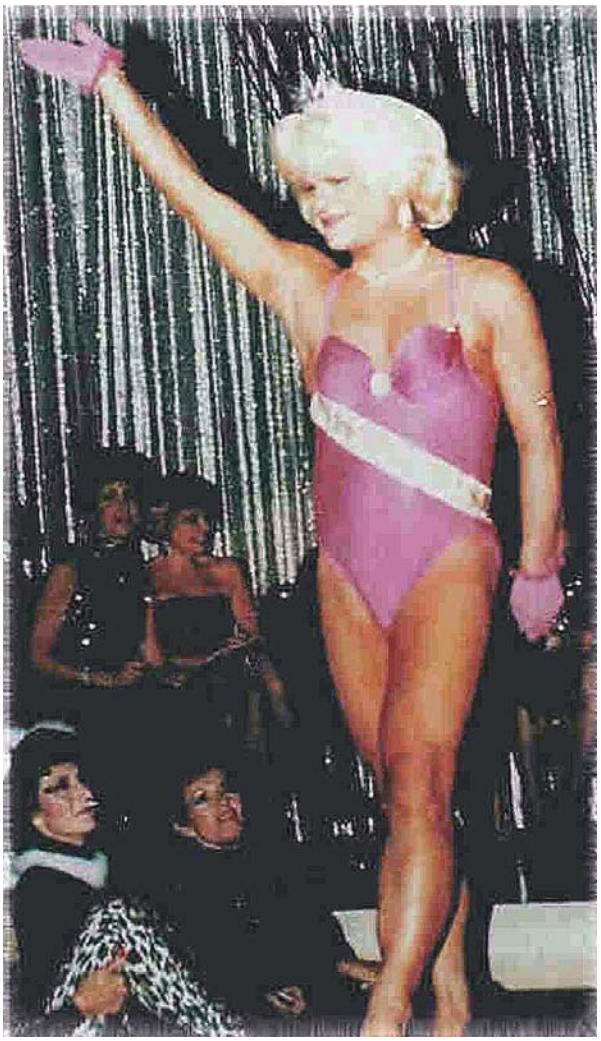
Wambui Bahati performs a One-Woman Musical. Wambui is the 1999 recipient of the Lionel Aldridge Award at the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) Conference in Chicago, Illinois. Her one-woman show *Balancing Act*, at times hilariously funny and always honest, is an intelligent, informative portrayal of bipolar mood disorder and its effect on Wambui's self-esteem, career, relationships and day-to-day coping. From her ordeal, she emerges with hope for her future as she comes to terms with her illness and with herself. Wambui tours the United States, and has a videotape documentary based on an early version of her performance. She lives in Greensboro, North Carolina and is a member of the Greensboro Playwrights Forum, the NC Storytellers and the New York Dramatists Guild.

Mark Davis created an act and has performed it many times. He is an excellent example of an arts activist who has something to say… He calls his act ***Drag With a Tag.***

"Dressing in drag was not one of my top ten goals in life," he relates, "A dare from a friend during Halloween put dressing in drag on top of my list of outrageous things to do." As a dedicated local and state volunteer for Miss America Pageants since the mid-seventies, his idea was to try on a controversial swimsuit. With a hot pink swimsuit, crown, pumps and matching accessories, he needed a banner with an appropriate title. Thus he adopted "Miss Altered States." "This," he says "was a self-appointed national title that represented the dual altered states of my transformed appearance and manic-depressive diagnosis."

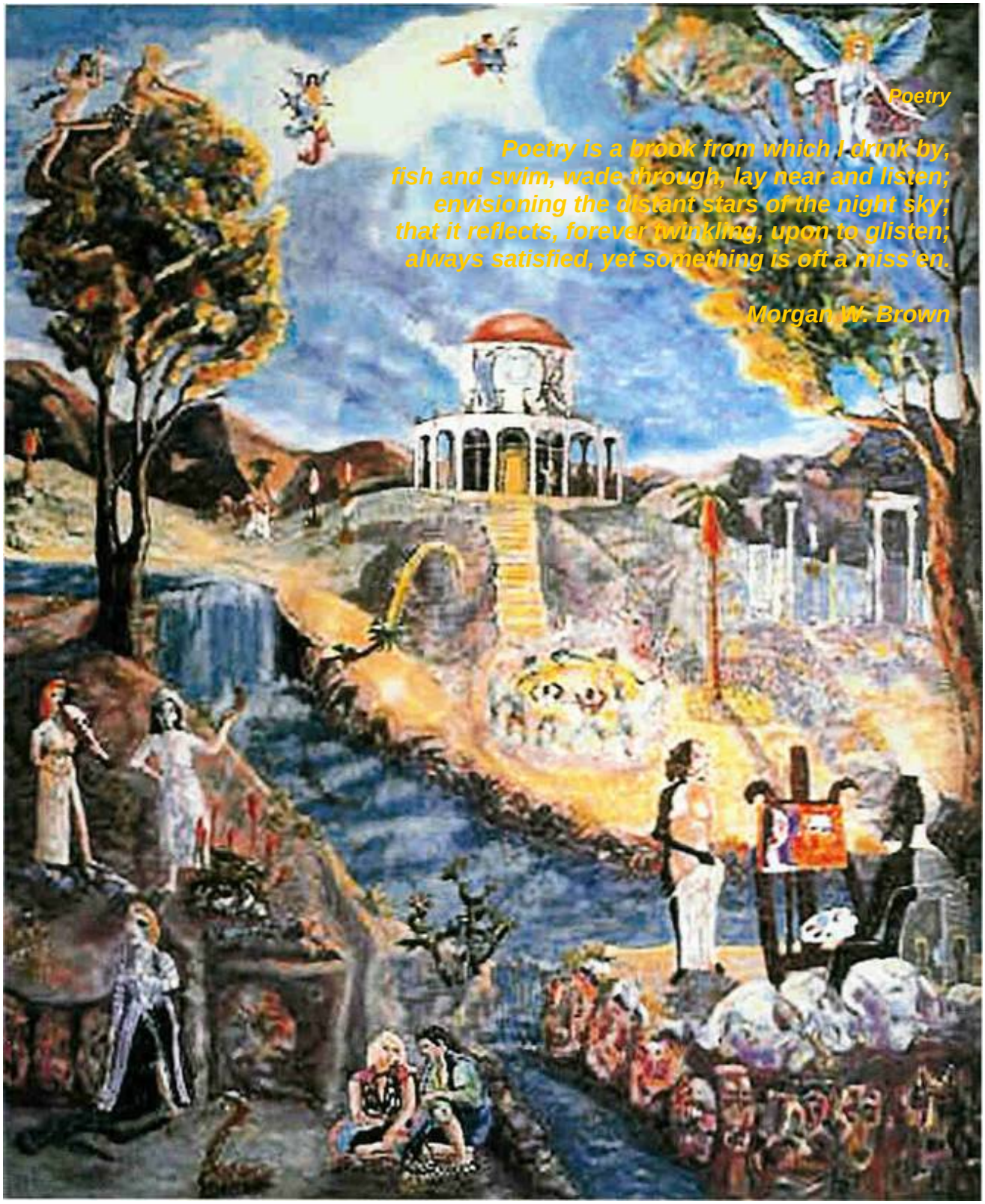
Mark tells us that the overall goals of presenting "Miss Altered States" are to inspire, educate, and entertain while raising awareness and funds. He states "As a gay male, HIV positive, mental health consumer, I have found a way to live for today and integrate the many complex facets of my life into something hopeful. I am still an activist who does that drag thing for fun."

His next challenge was to be part of the Altered States of the Arts Talent Showcase at Alternatives '92 in Philadelphia, PA where he stunned the audience with *Miss Altered States* while transforming from a fun fur to a hot pink suit. Since then he has done the *Drag with a Tag* with the purpose of entertaining and educating an audience about important issues. While people laugh, reflect on a point of view, and take a moment to seriously consider their own prejudice, learning occurs. Important issues such as HIV/AIDS, discrimination of gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people, and stigma of mental illness are addressed.



Mark Davis, Pennsylvania
in
Drag With a Tag

Writing Groups



The Dome
Oil on Canvas by
Alexander Scianna & Jean Campbell

Conducting Writing Groups

Santa Cruz, CA

by Bonnie Schell

"Words! Anything! Never mind whether or not they make sense. Write!…keep it hitched to a pencil, and hold it down to the slow rhythm of writing—the practice may tame her somewhat… Because she is I." Lara Jefferson, ***These Are My Sisters*** *(1948).*

When I was advised by a psychiatrist at age 18 to drop out of school, an independent study in short story and classes that required essays instead of tests, kept me in school. I refused to drop out of school as my doctor suggested, because forcing myself to read and write was the only order I could find in the universe. Years later, when I had another break with reality, I volunteered to type a book for the Resource Center for Nonviolence. I was afraid to leave the house and my hands shook over the keyboard, but I knew that typing sentences and editing was my way back to recovery.

The first grants for our fledgling consumer-run drop-in-center were for Writing Workshops. We contracted with a university-connected writing teacher to do an intense weekend or a six-week class for eight to twelve students. After two of these workshops, we self-published our own collections in 8½ by 5½ inch format. Suddenly, we were known in the community as poets instead of a "chronic" or "revolving door" problem. The virtue of having a professional do a series of classes first, is that it attracts people, sets a tone of seriousness, and gets a group used to a working format. That format for us has proven to be starting with a short exercise of free writing for five to 10 minutes. The free writing can be followed by a mini-lesson on word usage or a poetry form, another assignment, interactive writing back and forth, then voluntary sharing of the writing.

After eight years our drop-in center still offers poetry, art, and guitar classes and provides a computer so people can type their work. We not only have our own newsletter, but we publish the state network's quarterly newsletter, the *Cal Net Gazette,* always including poetry with the news.

If you want to be a serious writer:

- Have a journal or notebook that is near you at all times. Record overheard dialogue on the bus, your dreams.
- Play with words. Learn new words. Look up words in the dictionary. Use them.
- Write without censoring your work. Let judgments go and let words flow!
- Share with others who write and exchange material.
- Read good poetry, prose, and journalism. Get a library card.

There are six essentials to successful writing classes or groups:

1. A Safe Environment. A room with nothing else going on, or people passing by and commenting. No harassment of anyone.

2. Time and Quiet. All exercises are timed, no one talks while others are writing. The leader gives a warning when time is about to be up.

3. Choice. Students can write in the room with others or go elsewhere, they can write in poetry or prose, they can dislike an assignment and refuse to do it as long as they do not disturb others.

4. Clear Directions About Responding to Someone Else's Work. One way to do this is to ask what phrases or details the listeners particularly liked. Another method is to ask the author if there is any certain feedback he or she wants. Few writers want editing of their work even if they appear to ask for it. After a group builds trust in polishing their work and feeling appreciated, members might decide to send their work to a journal or magazine. Carefully following the directions for typing and putting name and address at the top and enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope will get students accustomed to presenting their work to the world with care. Patience is required; it is not unusual to wait six to nine months for a response from "little magazines."

5. Community. Make connections to other writers in the community by going as a group to public readings, bringing in news clippings about contests and requests for submission to poetry publications.

6. Structure. Writing is dangerous. The potential for great beauty and tragedy is always at the end of a pen. Students need to feel that the class time has a plan and order. Writing is hard work; without assignments, students will talk instead.

Word-Salads—Loosening Your Tongue:

Word-salad is a pejorative term used to describe non-ordinary juxtaposition of words and allusions in the speech of people who are considered psychotic or schizophrenic. It is not unusual for people in an acute state to rhyme the end of sentences and words in the middle as in the manner of Edgar Allen Poe. This is not a symptom, but a gift.

Here are some exercises to simply enjoy words and the imagination

1. Cut words or phrases out of a magazine and put them in a bowl. Class members can draw ten and then write a paragraph or poem using the picked words.

2. Another interesting experiment is to write a round-robin prose poem. One person starts a poem on a piece of paper and passes it to the next person who adds a line and passes it to the next person, and so on until the paper comes back. Read it and be surprised at the originality in the room.

3. Take a paragraph in a work of nonfiction and look up each word in the dictionary. Write down a synonym or antonym for every single word. Then re-read the paragraph with the substituted words.

4. Collect old postcards of buildings and outdoor scenes. Give class members one to write about, imagining themselves there.

5. Invest in disposable cameras with the assignment for class members to photograph their world close-up. When the pictures are developed, write accompanying prose descriptions or poetry. Display the writing and pictures together.

Back to the Hospital
by Beth Greenspan

Left my bones tied down
In the waiting area
Of a Philadelphia emergency room.
Left my eyes hiding
Under a bed where I call home.
Left my ears deafened
Under a pillow in the night.
Left my memory
Stuck to the bottom of a pill bottle
Coated in candy blue numbness.
Left my attention
Inside the television
With fragments
Caught in the VCR.
Left my skin
Sticky and flat
On the vinyl seat
Of a West bound train,
Trapped in a tunnel.
Left my brain
Disconnected, overloaded,
And praying
On a pale-green carpet,
By the unbreakable windows,
In the dark, in the back
Of a hospital.
Left it all
Back in the hospital
Fighting off flies.

Beth Greenspan *is a thirty-five year old poet/artist/photographer living in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. She has struggled all her life with a brain disability that allows her to experience the world in unique ways, and this has been the impetus for much of her writing. She has been published in two anthologies and her work has been highly praised in* ***The Bloomsbury***

Reasons for Writing

Journals: A person keeping a journal writes down private thoughts at the end of the day, or keeps track of the activities or accomplishments that were achieved. Journal writing is a catharsis as well as documentation. It is meant to be private, not shared—though some people may later want to publish parts of their journal.

Sharing Your Experience: You may want to write an article for a newsletter on a particular subject, or an autobiographical piece for publication. Some people write back and forth in letters on the internet to maintain communication with others or to record thoughts on a subject. Your personal experience is important to the mental health consumer movement.

Comedy: Jokes, humorous narratives, parodies, and comedy pieces are lots of fun to write. Laughter is healing.

Poetic Expression: Poets may pick their style of writing from a number of recognized styles such as haiku, blank verse, and limerick. The wonderful thing about poetry is that you can create your own style of stanzas and rhyme schemes. You can mix words, place them in an artistic way, use vivid images, or metaphors that state one thing while implying another.

Serious creative writers will find that writing is something they do every day. They work at their craft in the same way that an artist may work to perfect drawing noses. Writers use every opportunity to write—at home, while in a setting that stimulates their fantasies, while in cafés, while watching people.

The Poetry Reading

Writers like to have opportunities to read to others. One of the perfect settings is a poetry reading. An informal poetry reading can be held in someone's home, in a drop-in center, or a community center. The readers will listen to each other and may or may not choose to give feedback in response to the individual's poetry. A more formal reading may be a scheduled event to which the public is invited. Poetry readings are held regularly at local bookstores or coffeehouses. Sometimes stores provide opportunities for organizations to schedule special events, especially

if it exposes the audiences to new books in their bookstore on psychology, creativity or mental health. A formal reading requires time to line

Here are some suggestions for organizing a formal or informal poetry reading:

1. Hold the reading in a place that is quiet, usually in the evening.

2. Decide on how many poems each poet should read or a time limit, such as seven minutes. Decide on the order of readers. You can have one person introduce each reader or have one reader introduce the next with a two-sentence bio.

3. Ask people to be respectful of all readers (If they do not like something they should be respectful and not say anything, and hold applause until the poet has finished all their pieces.)

4. Encourage diverse participation, i.e. persons from different cultures or ethnic groups to share their experience through language.

Jean Campbell *and* ***Alexander Scianna*** *are the couple who painted "The Dome" on the title page of this section. The painting is one of a series of paintings in a collaborative effort between husband and wife and other artists called "The Harmonious Circle."*

Jean is well known for her research activities but also has contributed a great deal to artistic endeavors including directing an Improv Theater Troupe and editing a book called ***People Say I'm Crazy*** *documenting the findings from the Well Being Project with narrative and visual art. She is also an accomplished photographer.*

Morgan W. Brown, *the author of the poem "Poetry" on the title page of this section, is a struggling, but "serious and persistent" writer, poet and activist residing in Montpelier, Vermont. His life experience includes that of psychiatric incarceration and shock treatment (ECT) and also being homeless.*

September Rain
by Katy O'Malley-Hall

As serious as
September rain

madness climbs into the back
seat of my soul–
taunts me into believing
I am no more important
than what I can wear today.

My vitamins are in the basement
of my life–
takes all my strength to
tell myself I am sane today.

I am the thinker
an artist
too excited to pick a medium

Fingerpaint in my mind
the three millionth reason
I decided to breathe
these noxious days away

uninhabited by creativity,
depths of enactedness
crushing my mind to react
to something

something in the air
begging to make me feed it
before the world dies of
the fate it planted in 1963.

As serious as
September–without having
the summer end.

Katy O'Malley-Hall, *California, now 42, was homeless in her twenties and has discovered that everyone has to pull together. Her way has been to write poetry. "We're all on the same planet," she states.*

Shannon Flynn *from Virginia, has been doing art since childhood, but started painting seriously in a psychiatric hospital art therapy class at age 17. Now 32, she has finished graduate school to become an art therapist herself. "I always knew I wanted to do something in mental health," she said, and states she will be able to practice when she completes 1000 hours of supervised practice. (My artwork) "acts as a catharsis for getting out feelings. I can always calm down when I'm upset and I always have gifts available because I give most of my art away."*

Newsletters, Magazines, Zines...

Transcendent Visions, Philadelphia, PA

by David Kime

David A. Kime was born in 1967 and is a sculptor, writer, and activist who would like to see the end of all oppression. He has been in and out of the system since age fifteen and has received many psychiatric labels. Although he takes the medication Clozaril, he finds creativity to be just as vital to the healing process. David's sculptures have been shown at local Philadelphia exhibits. He was also featured in the book ***Different Minds, Different Voices*** *by Virginia Aronson.*

I first began creating in 1989 at age 21 after hearing voices commanding me to write a book. I started creating this horrendous book about human dignity and mental patient liberation, but after a few days I suddenly found myself composing poetry. I felt energized by the words and I wanted to speak out against the oppression we face, through verse. What followed, were years and years of creating and trying to get the voices of ex-mental patients out into society, so that we could be defined as human beings instead of freaks to be humiliated and feared.

It was in 1992 that I started *Transcendent Visions,* a zine, (not a newsletter or a magazine, but a small version of each) focusing on the creative works of ex-patients. A **zine** (pronounced "zeen") is a small, handmade, amateur publication done purely out of passion, rarely making a profit or breaking even. Most zines differ from newsletters in that zines are generally about a topic not an organization. They are quirky, funny, and focus on some bizarre topic that the editor is passionate about. When I started the zine, I wanted it to be a major voice for people who had experienced emotional distress; and I wanted the zine to be successful. The first issue was vile and quite frankly, I was terribly embarrassed by its contents. So much so, that I sent letters to everyone on the mailing list apologizing for the material. While I was in the hospital for depression, I received several letters from people in the movement encouraging me to continue producing my zine. I remember one of them saying, "people need a place to vent about the system."

Transcendent Visions Cover Fall 1998

I am so happy I decided to continue. I feel that through art we can get beyond victimization and make a statement about who we really are, which is human beings who have suffered in the hands of a callous world. Through art we can transcend all the negativity and just create something that shows us to be articulate human beings, who should be respected, not feared.

Although some of the material I publish deals with mental illness, much of it is about to. We need to address our issues, but we also need to show that we are more than an artist first even though he or she

might be very vocal about the oppression he or she has faced as a minority. Art shows us in a different light and by doing so it is very empowering.

David's Pre-hysteric Barbie

Tips for Creating Your Own Zine:

(This information is also applicable to a newsletter, magazine or journal.)

1. **Topic.** A zine can be about anything. I have seen zines about almost every topic imaginable. Explore a topic you are interested in and have fun.

2. **Getting Submissions.** This can be tricky. When I published *Burning Blonde Barbie*, a zine that focused on Barbie dolls**,** I had only one submission after telling all my friends about it. I wanted to do it so badly that I wrote a bunch of stories under pseudonyms.

   a. Always send the people you publish a free copy of the zine. This is standard policy in the zine world as well as for newsletters.
   b. If someone sends you a self-addressed stamped envelope with their submission, please respond, letting them know what you think of their work. If you don't like something but feel feel the person has potential, ask them to submit something that is more in tune with what you are publishing.

3. **Formats.** There are many formats, from mini to oversized. The easiest by far is a standard letter-size (8 1/2x11) format. Another format, that looks better, is the half-legal size (which is basically a zine made up of legal-size pages folded in half with a staple in the middle).

4. **Printing Method.**

   a. Copy Machine–This is the method I use for the zine "Transcendent Visions." It costs from three to five cents each side depending on the amount copied. You can usually get it done for three cents if you are doing over fifty. A more ideal way to get copies made would be through a friend with access to a copy machine, or to use one at an agency.
   b. Offset–This is not cost effective unless you have over 1,000 done. Needless to say, it will loo
   c. more professional. A 32-page **zine** or newsletter will cost a little over a dollar.

5. **Production Method.** The most professional types of zines are ones that are done on computer; but, when I started doing a zine, I used a standard typewriter.

   a. If you are going to include artwork, the easiest way is to leave open spaces for it and paste i n the pictures later. Copy the pictures and make extra copies in case one gets lost during the printing process.
   b. Another way to include artwork is to copy it first and then work the text around it. I often combine both of these methods.

6. **Editing the Finished Product.** Make sure you have proofreaders, as it often takes several sets of eyes to catch errors.

7. **Cutting Costs.**
   a. One way is to sell ads. You may be able to get $10 for a quarter page ad. The only problem is the merchant or organization will want your newsletter to reach his or her consumers.

b. Have the friends you are going to publish design the newsletter with you.
c. Ask an agency to help with the costs.
d. Sell your zine at a price that makes a profit, but don't charge too much. (I usually sell my zine for a dollar and break even.)

8. **Trading.** I usually trade with publications that send me their product first. I have learned that there are people who do not send you their zine in return for yours, so be careful about trading.

9. **Postage and Packaging Your Newsletter.** Postage rates are something you should get to know. Basically, up to one ounce in 1999 is one 33-cent stamp (approximately 5 pages). Usually you can include a standard-size envelope or another half-sheet that includes subscription information. It costs 55 cents for one and one-tenth to two ounces (approximately 10 or 11 pages) and 77 cents for two and one-tenth to three ounces (up to approximately 16 pages). I send my zines out with an address page on the back. Each additional ounce costs 22 cents more.

10. **Time Expected to Complete Your Zine.** This depends on whether or not you write the entire zine. Generally it takes me about 20 hours to type and layout approximately 16 pages, another hour or so to edit the copy, and two or three more hours for packaging and mailing.

Tips:

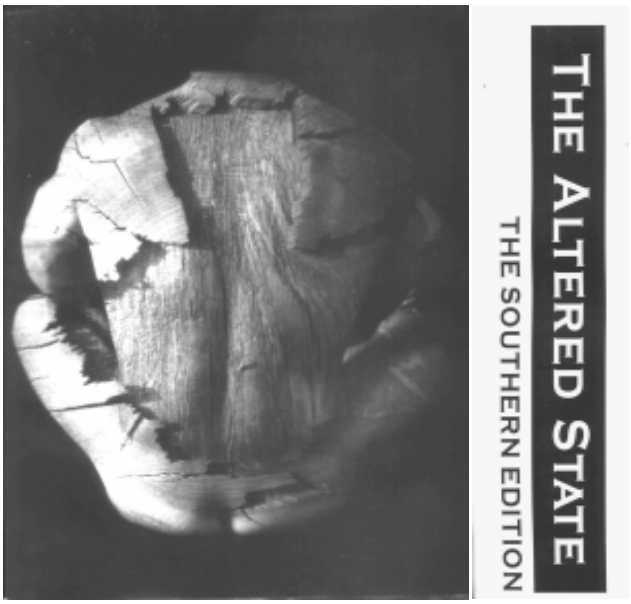
Always send your zine out when someone sends you money or stamps. It is the right thing to do
Don't get discouraged. It takes a while to build up your zine.

Newsletters are an excellent vehicle for publishing the news about the activities of ex-patient organizations. Publishing a newsletter is an arts project in itself. Many newsletters include art and poetry such as *North River Quarterly* (New York), *Counterpoint* (Vermont), and *Dendron* (Oregon). *The Altered State* was a newsletter/ Journal that rotated to different state organizations and published art and poetry from 1992-1996. From 1996-1999, the journal has been published by Jon Brock from Alabama, who writes the second part of this section.

Putting Together A Magazine

The Altered State, Southern Edition, Birmingham, AL

Jon Brock attended the 1993 Alternatives Conference in Columbus, Ohio, where he first learned about the Consumer/Survivor/Ex-Patient (C/S/X) Movement and began to understand why people participated in it. As he talked to one of its leaders, he experienced the C/S/X Movement less as something composed of slogans and attitudes, and more as people determined to lead their lives meaningfully. Jon has been active in Alabama's C/S/X Movement for several years. He is on the Policy Committee of the National Mental Health Association and is in his second year of an MPA graduate program.



*The **Altered State** Cover*
1998 Southern edition

A month or two after the 1993 Alternatives Conference, I received a magazine in the mail, *The Altered State*, a creative arts journal published by the national arts organization, Altered States of the Arts. *The Altered State* was looking for material for its next issue to be published in New York State and, by chance, I had one in hand.

The article I submitted was about Mary Kate Holt Jones, who was committed to Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa, Alabama in 1935 and released in 1972, thirty-seven years later, at the age of 87. After the editor, Sally Clay, published the New York state issue in 1993, I asked about editing an issue that used material from consumers, survivors, and ex-patients from southern states. I was given an immediate go-ahead from Gayle Bluebird, the Altered States of the Arts coordinator. I liked the free and easy style of decision making.

The first issue I edited was clumsy. I made the kinds of mistakes a person usually makes when doing something for the first time. I angered several poets by editing their work. Even though the poems needed editing, I found out that poets do not like being edited and will let you know. You have to work patiently with artists and writers to get what you need for publication. In later issues, I returned some material to writers with comments and suggestions for them to resubmit the same material in a way that worked for the issue.

As we did the second and third issues, I became convinced that the C/S/X Movement needed to publish written and visual material that reached mental health professionals as well as consumers, survivors, and ex-patients–material that expressed our diagnoses less and our humanity more.

The third Southern edition of *The Altered State* is my favorite. The cover by Elizabeth Mansour of Birmingham, Alabama, is a compelling full-page image of a body carved from wood. The issue was 88 pages and had a wide range of material. One article gave a quick course on grants and grant writing. Three longer articles related the lives of three women committed to Bryce Hospital over a 100-year period. They told their stories through letters, scrapbook pictures, diary entries, from their patient files, and by interviews.

To put together a satisfying magazine:

- You need more people than yourself. To do it right, you need more talents than one person has.
- You will need a computer expert, knowledgable in desktop publishing and layout.
- Find people who will help with proofreading, layout, collation and distribution.
- Use the services of a sheltered workshop or clubhouse if there is one in your area, to fold, collate, trim, and bind the magazine.
- Talk to small printers in your area. Many small printers will do work at reduced costs to keep their employees busy at slack times.
- Secure funding or in-kind support.

Cost of producing a magazine

Editing, printing, and distributing a magazine can be costly. It is best to start small and build from there. The suggestions made by David Kime are right on target as a way to start and build a consumer-produced magazine.

Once you do an edition or two, if you want to bump up the quality and quantity of the magazine, then you will need funding and support to cover unavoidable costs and technical support from professionals and organizations.

Funding to cover costs can range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. Ads can be secured but as yet, we have accepted few. You may want to think carefully before accepting ads. Advertisers sometimes want to influence the choice of material you use. As an alternative to product or service ads, you can use informational ads for organizations you are comfortable with. In return for their support, those organizations may receive copies to distribute to their membership. This increases the publication's circulation.

Getting assistance from large mental health organizations can be helpful. The Alabama State Office of Consumer Affairs has helped as well as the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) in Alexandria, Virginia. Several small businesses donated free or low cost work. One paper supply company donated most of the paper used in the second and third editions. The budget of *The Altered State* paid for some of the mailing, printing and distribution costs.

The last Southern Edition of *The Altered State* had 3,700 printed and distributed copies. In return for $2,000 support from National Association State Mental Health Program Directors (NTAC), we mailed out 1,400 copies to NTAC's mailing list. Mailing costs were paid by the Alabama Office of Consumer and Ex-Patient Relations. In the same mailing, about 1,000 copies were sent to consumer/survivor/ex-patient organizations and individuals. The Office of Consumer Relations paid for that and also for distribution of several hundred other copies. The mailing costs were over $2,000. Funding contributed to make the last issue happen had a cash value of perhaps $7,000. Work done by staff was without pay.

All said, the cost of editing, printing, and distributing a magazine can make it impossible to do unless you find professionals who will contribute work or material at no cost or reduced costs.

Final Tip: *You'll learn from your mistakes. Keep at it. Find what works for you. Use material you believe in.*

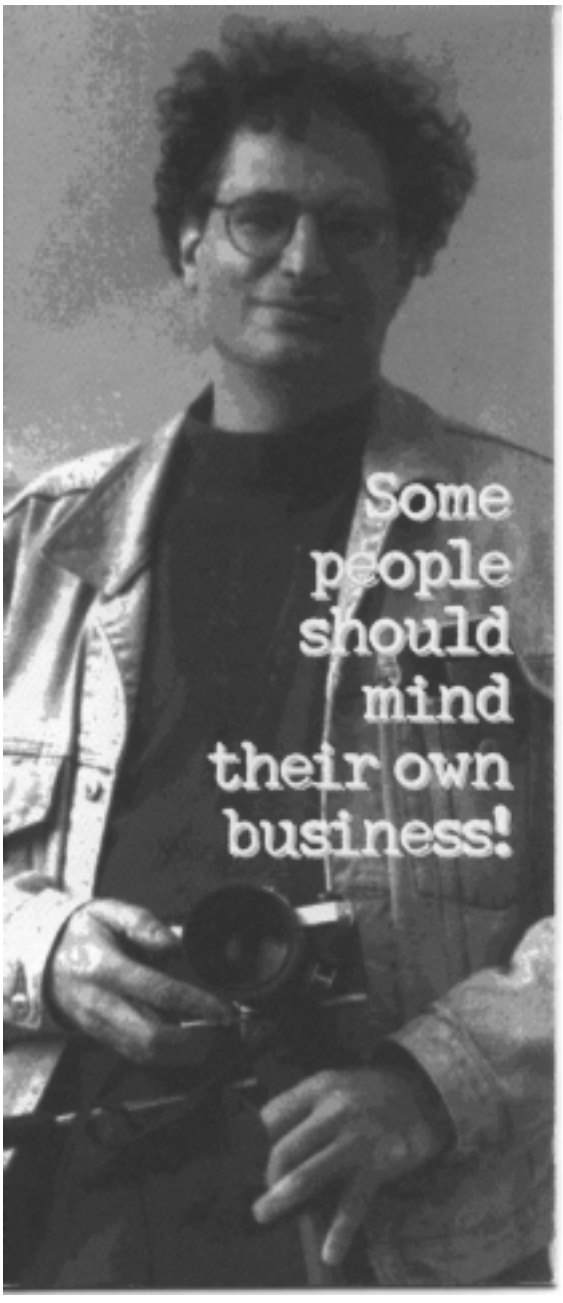
Arts Businesses

How to Create a Business

by Gayle Bluebird

There are two ways to set up a business; as a self-run sole proprietorship or as a business that is conducted within an independent consumer-run program or other nonprofit organization.

Artists frequently fall in the category of people who like to be independent. They do not work well under a formal structure, because many are nonconformists by their very nature. They do not like working under pressure to get things done, and may feel that "big business" discriminates against them.



Creating your own business means you can do it at your own pace and in your own time. You may prefer to stay up all night working, rather than sticking with someone else's schedule. If you like working alone, the sole proprietorship may be best; however, managing your business as a project of an already existing organization has advantages. You can draw on the expertise of the parent organization's board of directors for legal, accounting, and personnel assistance and take advantage of the advertising of the umbrella organization.

If you have an idea for a business, start simple. Do not invest a lot of money in a product or service that you have not tested. Check, also, to make sure your service does not require a license or any regulations that have to be met. For example, anything involving the preparation of food may involve meeting Federal Food and Drug Administration and/or other state and local standards.

Lastly, before you start a business, examine yourself. Starting a business does not suddenly give you a lot of free time; if anything, you may be working more hours. Ask yourself whether you are disciplined enough to achieve the necessary goals. If so, you are off to an exciting and exhilarating adventure to call your own, while enjoying its success and watching it grow!

Every business involves certain steps that need to be followed. Here are some of the basics. You can do additional reading, and explore other avenues such as classes that are held for new business owners.

1. Create a Business Plan. Your business plan is like your road map. You may have a plan for one year, two years, or even five years. Where do you expect to be in the future? How will you get the attention of the audience you are trying to attract. The name should make clear what your product is.

2. Money, Funds, Equipment. The first thing you want to determine is whether you will need additional funds to start your business. Can you start without any financial investment or do you need a certain amount of start-up money? In order to know how much money you will need, determine what equipment or materials are necessary. If you are going to do work at home on the computer, for example, you may need a fax machine and printer, in addition to a computer. You will also need office furniture (almost all of which can be purchased at garage sales or second hand stores).

Determine whether there are loans that can help you get started. Retired business people often have organizations (one example is SCORE) that provide volunteers to help new entrepreneurs. If you are on SSI or SSDI, talk to the Social Security Administration or your local social services department about a PASS Plan that will enable you to make money and set it aside for your business needs.

3. Legal Status. Set up your business as a sole proprietorship in the beginning. Later, you may want to incorporate. Set up a separate bank account for your business so that you keep money earned separate from other income. Often it is helpful to work at another job while getting started, and cultivate your self-owned business on the side.

4. Telephone. You may want to have a business listing so that you can appear in the yellow pages of the telephone book; however, check on the feasibility, as it may be expensive.

5. Business Cards and Stationery. Business cards are an essential selling tool and will be worth the cost. (Compare prices as costs vary.) You can make your own business cards on your computer and save money, but do some design research first. Stationery with a letterhead is useful for writing invoices and for correspondence.

6. Post Office Box. If your address is at home, you may want to think about a post office box. It will save reprinting if you move to another location. It also gives you privacy to keep your business and home separate.

7. Tax Needs. Organize records for taxes from the beginning. If you have employees or are set up to pay yourself, you will need a Federal ID number. If you are paying others, you will need W4 (Withholding Exemption) forms. Call the Internal Revenue Service at 1-800-829-3676 and ask them to send the necessary forms for filing estimated quarterly taxes, the form to request an ID number, and information booklets.

8. Bookkeeping. Set up a simple computerized bookkeeping system and use it from the very beginning of your business. If you are a computer novice, you may have a bookkeeper set up the system for you. The amount of bookkeeping is immense for even one person. Computerized bookkeeping will provide meticulous records your accountant will need for your tax returns. Careful records may reduce your accountant's fee because he or she will not need to spend time reconstructing transactions. Quick Books or Quicken are commonly used software programs.

Graphic Design

by Gerri Albert, Jackson Heights, NY

Born in Vienna, raised in Brooklyn, ***Gerri Albert*** *was a seasoned commercial artist, a loyal wife and loving mother of two fine sons. At age 29, she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder (manic-depression). Despite her illness, which she staunchly denied, she continued working as a senior graphic designer/art director with several leading publishing houses in New York City. That career ended in 1985 after a series of ruinous manic episodes. She lost her posh Upper East Side home and was disowned by her grown sons. Exhausted, she moved into her aging mother's apartment and soon sank into a three-year-long depression. Finally, at the urging of a caring professional, she sought help at a local mental health facility.*

Stabilized with lithium, after three hospitalizations, I had a strong desire to return to work, but found no openings for a 59-year-old designer who lacked computer skills. I enrolled at the School of Visual Arts for an introductory course in desktop publishing. The use of a Macintosh computer was available to me and I worked hard at refining my new skills. Under the guidance of my astute Intensive Case Manager, I learned about Vocational & Educational Services to Individuals with Disabilities (VESID). After a year of interview/evaluations, VESID supplied a computer and I opened my own shop. I also learned about Incube, Inc., an organization that offers technical assistance to persons with psychiatric disabilities. Incube provides a safe, healthy environment to learn skills with which to run a business, legal requirements, accounting procedures, etc.

My personal five year plan is progressing steadily. At present, my office is located in my home, an inviting place to visit and an invigorating space to work. It serves as a viable facility for producing a top-of-the-line professional product. I'm additionally creating a website design business, *lust for logos,* which will be up and running soon.

What you need to do to be a graphic designer

1. First, you need a good design sense in order to achieve some degree of success (beyond designing local ads, menus, business cards, etc.)

2. Take a course at a local art design school or trade school. Before training, a person has to determine his creative abilities (possibly by comparison to other creative work). If he/she and a qualified professional feels that the ability is there, additional training should definitely be considered.

3. Equipment needs are great and can be expensive. What are some of the programs that someone will need to start? The computer of choice for designers is a Macintosh. The most frequently used programs are Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, PageMaker and/or Quark Express. Web designers will need Adobe PageMill or the equivalent. All of these programs are expensive.

4. Work can be priced in a number of ways.

- An hourly rate.
- The client's budget.
- How and where the job will be used. (A job for General Motors would fetch a higher price than for the local bakery, even when they take the same amount of time and effort).

5. Delivery of the product and need for invoice. At the inception, the designer must prepare an accurate estimate for the client and enter into a contract for payment. (This should include payment terms for work that is not accepted by the client, i.e., a rejection fee.)

The designer should have all approved work initialed by the client. Invoices should be sent upon completion of work. The designer should also consider a retainer at the jobs inception.

Framing Business

9Muses Art Center, Fort Lauderdale, FL

by Craig Biles

Craig Biles is a 37-year-old information services employee with a local health care provider in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He ran a retail frame shop located in a mall in Columbia, SC, when he graduated from college and has marketing and graphic design experience. He chairs the 9Muses Advisory Committee and teaches framing, both on a volunteer basis. As the representative of 9Muses he sits on the Board of the Mental Health Association which oversees the Art Center.

I came to 9Muses having run a frame shop for a couple of years after I got out of college 10 years ago. I really felt that properly framing the artists' work would help those who were unsure of themselves see that their work had value and it would help the more professional artists break into the gallery world. It wasn't long until we realized how many people were interested in framing and that it could also be a training program to help some consumers learn a trade.

9Muses is a consumer-run arts drop-in center in Fort Lauderdale. Is a frame shop an important aspect of the art center? Naturally, I think so. If the artist wants his/her work in a gallery, then the center or artist has to go through the expense of paying another gallery to perform that service. Why not keep that revenue in-house while at the same time offering a discount to your members?

At 9Muses we only frame artwork for members of the center. When we frame, we charge wholesale prices. We do not chop or join wooden frames in our shop because we don't have storage space for the moldings and because of safety issues with the saws. If you intend to do these things, you should plan accordingly.

1. Get the right equipment. Find a wholesale frame supply company in your phone book and call or visit them. Tell them what you are doing and that you are interested in a commercial quality mat cutter, all-purpose cutter, and heat press. With these three items you can perform 90 percent of the tasks needed to complete a frame job.

2. Know the payment terms. It is important to know what your supplier's payment terms are, if they extend credit and what their minimum order is for free delivery. You may find a supplier who will donate excess or slightly damaged supplies for tax deductions, but don't count on it. The ideal situation would be to find a grant or an underwriter who will fund this initial purchase because it could easily cost over $5,000.

3. Find the right space. Measure your space and draw a floor plan. Be sure to do it to scale so that you're sure everything will fit before it is delivered. Get an idea of the size of the pieces you will be framing and make sure you leave enough room.

4. Don't forget about storage. You'll be storing eight cases of glass and potentially hundreds of sheets of mat board that are 32"x40". You also need somewhere to store work to be framed and completed pieces. Additionally, you need work space. Where are you going to set that 30"x40" sheet of glass while you're cleaning it?

5. Determine who will do the work. Now the shop is set up. Who is going to use it? I think it is crucial that someone who has framed professionally is there to teach the staff and volunteers how to frame.

6. Start with volunteers. We take volunteers who would like to spend time in the frame shop and give them an overview of the framing process in a one-hour class. If they are still interested after this class, they work with the instructor in the frame shop learning each piece of equipment, practicing on the equipment and then working on an actual frame job. To date, we have found that the toughest things to teach are how to do matting and customer service skills.

7. Look for a good balance of skills for your shop. Make sure everyone learns everything. The salesperson may not ever have to cut a triple mat but he needs to know how to do it so that the estimate and instructions can be written correctly.

8. Now it is time to open. With a small shop with just the basics, you might want to frame only for your members. A little larger and you might want to offer it to the general public but require that they become members to receive the discount. It's best to start small and build to something larger over several years.

Tips:

Whether you decide to be a full retail shop or not, remember that the expectation is the same. People want quality work that will last a long time. Another note to keep in mind is that many times you are working with art and photographs that can never be replaced. One minor mistake and you can be paying top dollar to make amends.

Video Production

MC Video Productions

By Mary Moran

***Mary Moran**, Wisconsin, started video production in 1989 while she was in graduate school. Later she founded M.C. Video Productions, a company run by mental health consumers and psychiatric survivors. While a sophomore in college, she was locked up and heavily medicated in a psychiatric facility. Refusing to believe in the diagnosis she was given, she found the ex-patient movement while in California, by way of a friend. She became an outspoken speaker against the injustice of psychiatry, and recently received her Ph.D. in Education in the spring of 1999 from the University of Wisconsin.*

M.C. Video Productions is a grassroots organization run by mental health consumers and psychiatric survivors. We use media technology as a tool for self-representation and empowerment, education and networking, advocacy and fundamental social change. While we offer a variety of ongoing services, my focus here will be on our production work and other related activities.

Members of our technical crew produce educational and consciousness-raising videos that address mental health/illness issues from the perspectives of consumers and survivors. We also document on video and/or audiotape activities and events organized by past and present mental health consumers, such as conferences, training workshops, protests, marches, speak-outs and vigils, because we believe it is important to document the history of the ex-patient movement.

Several of our video production projects have focused on consumer/survivors who express themselves through the arts.

VIDEO PRODUCTION & THE ARTS

Ways video can be used with other art forms:

- *To document live performances (especially good for dancers, musicians, comedians, theater groups, and poets doing readings of their work).*
- *To provide personal feedback on how you present yourself and your art form to others.*
- *To educate people about mental health issues you might be addressing through your art form.*
- *To create an interarts video, e.g. showing images of visual art with music playing while poetry is read.*
- *To produce a videotaped interview with an artist that showcases a sample of his or her art form.*
- *To supplement a grant application for money needed to support your arts project.*

Since our work involves use of technical equipment, qualified members of our staff provide new volunteers with individualized training on audio-visual production and computer equipment as

well as in the general business procedures of our organization. Like most other grassroots groups, we experience a turnover in volunteers, so training is an ongoing process.

Currently, we are offering a small group of local mental health consumers a yearlong video production-training program that includes opportunities for them to gain hands-on experiences and to further develop their technical skills with videocam operation and videotape editing.

Early on, we began responding to the need expressed by other grassroots groups for access to low-cost production services. Some of the groups we have collaborated with on production projects include Hmong youth, Native Americans, gays and lesbians, the elderly, and people with physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. Our experiences with such diverse groups have been a great way to learn about differences between groups and about common ground issues.

Over the years, we developed an extensive library of video and audiotape programs that focus on the broad spectrum of issues and concerns relating to mental health/illness. Containing over 1,000 titles of AV tape programs, our resource library is one of the largest of its kind in the country today. As our resource library has grown, so have the requests from consumers/survivors, service providers, and others interested in purchasing or renting copies of our tapes.

Another way we do educational outreach is through our speakers bureau, by offering videotape-based presentations and workshops about mental illness/health issues at conferences, in schools, and in various community settings. Typically, we show a few videos that examine a particular topic from different points of view, and then we facilitate group discussion and answer questions. Feedback has been quite good from people who have attended the presentations.

If you are interested in producing video programs, here are some of the nuts and bolts of getting started.

1. The first step is to gain access to production equipment and acquire training. Low-cost suggestions:

- If possible, purchase your own videocam (one that uses standard VHS videotapes) and a tripod. Prices for videocams at discount electronics stores have come down a lot in the past five years. Sometimes used videocams are sold to the public by schools when they buy newer equipment.
- Read the manual that comes with the videocam to understand how to operate it safely and effectively.
- Check with the libraries in your area for books to learn about basic video production.
- Contact the schools where you live to see if they offer any classes in video production.
- If there is a community-access cable TV station in your area, call or visit them. They typically offer video production training in camera operation and video editing on their equipment.
- Look in the yellow pages of your phone book under "video." Call or visit any businesses listed to get information or leads on equipment and training.

2. The next step is to improve your skills through practice. Videotape raw footage in outdoor and indoor settings, under different lighting conditions, with one and multiple voice/sound sources.

Then, view and listen to what you recorded on videotape to learn more about the capabilities and limitations of your videocam as well as to get feedback on your techniques as a videocam operator.

Because producing a quality videotape program typically involves pre-planning, there are a few key questions you need to consider before you start videotaping. What is the identity of the person(s) being videotaped? Who will view the video? What is the main focus/subject matter to be communicated through the video? How will the recording location/setting affect the content and quality of the video? Why is the video being produced (e.g. to document an important event, to educate people about a particular topic, to raise consciousness on an issue, to organize people around a shared concern)?

Before videotaping anyone, it is strongly advised that you get permission – in writing. The only time you don't need written consent is at free, public events (e.g., protests, marches, rallies, etc.). We contacted a lawyer at the Protection and Advocacy office in our state for assistance in creating our standard release form.

You will need to decide how much to charge for the videotaping services you offer to others. Our price list identifies each production service available and the cost per hour. It includes the lower rates available to consumers/survivors.

Video Editing: The process of editing videotape footage into a quality program is an art in itself. It requires knowledge, training, and experience as well as access to video editing equipment. Although the operator's manual with some videocams have instructions for editing, it is recommended that you contact professionals who offer video editing services.

Tape Duplication: Ideally, videotape duplication should be done with professional production equipment. However, you can make copies of videos by connecting the videocam to a VCR or by connecting two VCRs. The operator's manual gives instructions for this procedure.

If you want to make a copy of a video program that was produced by someone else, you must first get permission from the copyright holder. If permission is granted, there may be restrictions on how you may use the copy. There could be additional charges involved as well.

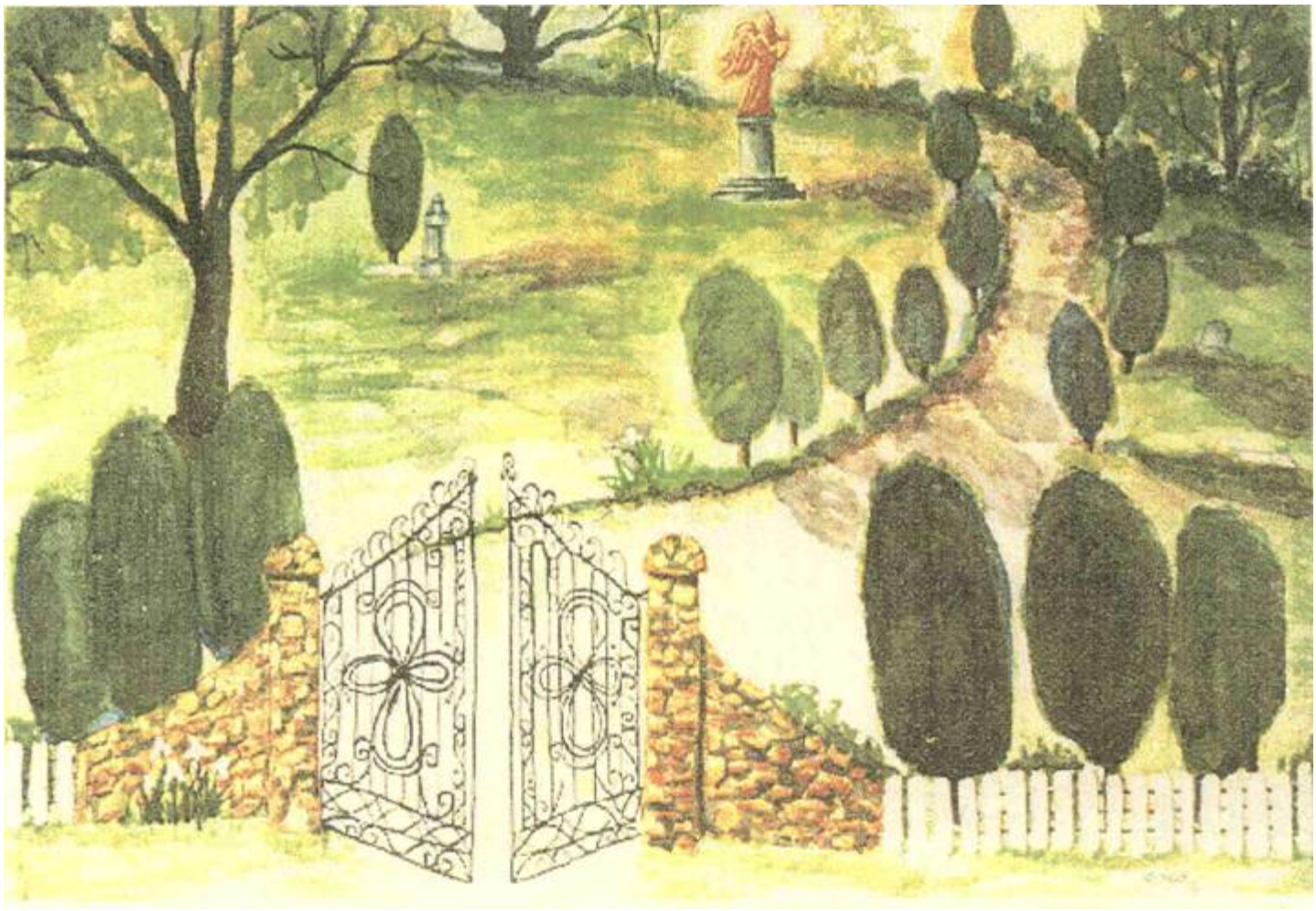
Marketing and Distribution: Although our group has gotten most of its video production contracts through word-of-mouth referrals from satisfied customers, here are a few suggestions of how you might advertise your videotaping service; person-to-person contacts with human service provider agencies and other grassroots groups; announcements in newspapers or on radio stations and direct mail announcements. We have also advertised in newsletters and by distributing brochures at conferences.

Mailing costs vary according to the type of packaging and mailing service used. We usually send out videos in padded envelopes via US Postal Service at the book rate, the least expensive. Our cost is $1.71 because we buy the bubble cushioned mail envelopes in bulk and because we have tax emempt status. Others would pay $2.50 to $3.00 to mail one video tape. These prices do not include the cost of the video cassette or duplication fees, if any.

These past nine-and-a-half years with M.C. Video Productions have been a truly remarkable journey for me. Looking back, I am amazed by how much we have accomplished. Pursuing video production is exciting and rewarding work. Follow your dreams to use the technology within your group, or become an independent video producer. And have fun!

Special Arts Project

The Cemetery Memorial Project, Milledgeville, Georgia



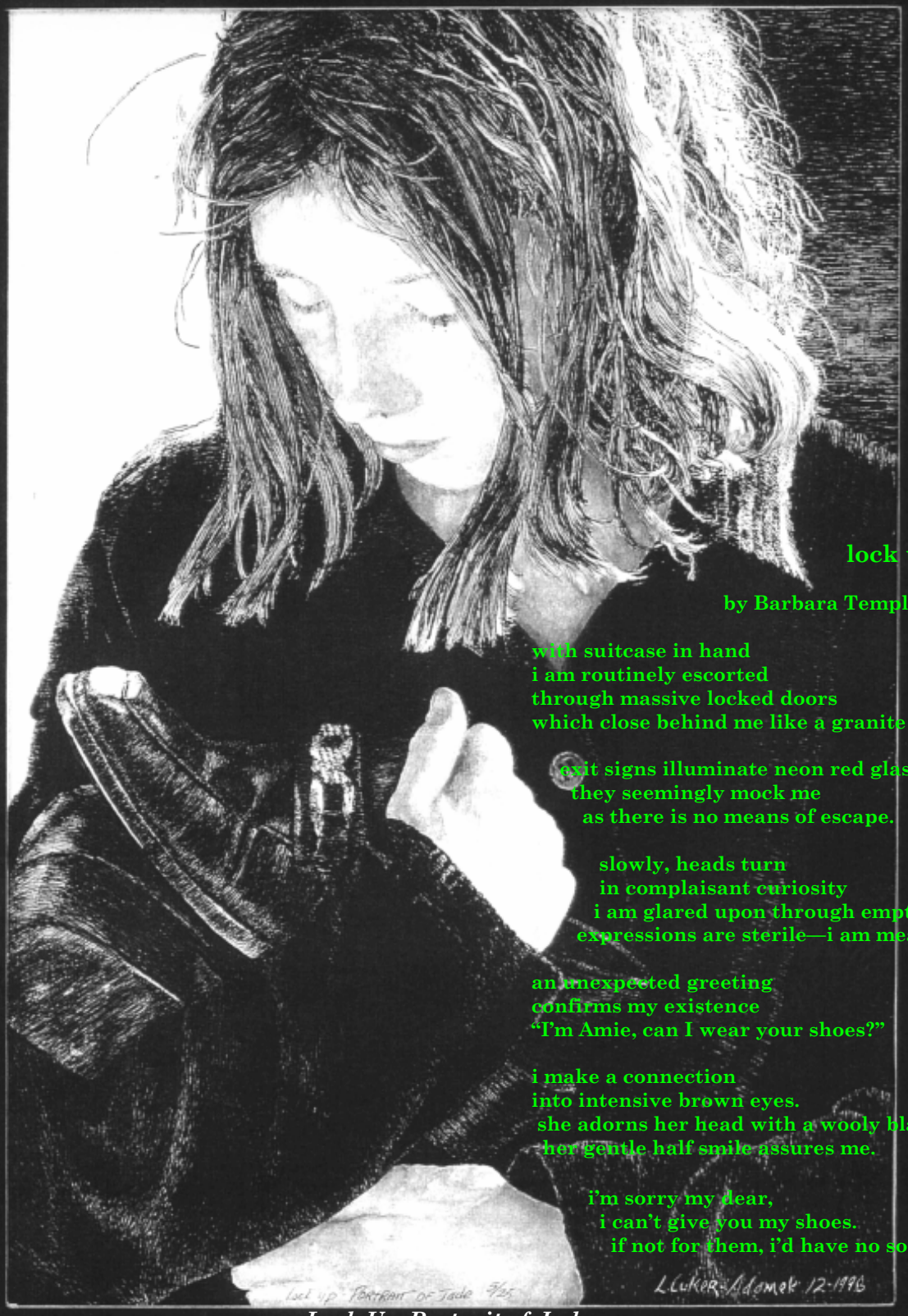
The Cemetery
Watercolor by Doris Hester

Doris Hester, *the painter, is a consumer from Macon, Georgia, who once was a patient at the Hospital.*

The painting above depicts the Georgia Consumer Council's plans to restore one of six client cemeteries at Central State Hospital in Milledgeville. Since the hospital opened in 1842 as the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, some 25,000 patients were buried on the grounds. To maintain patient's confidentiality, their graves were marked by numbered, iron stakes with no names. Over time, many markers have been removed or covered by growth.

The Consumer Council adopted the cemetery memorial project as a tribute to those who faced mental disabilities in a less enlightened time, as an effort to reduce stigma and promote more community awareness and education, and as a symbol of the progress the consumer movement has made.

The ornate iron gate is a replica of the gate that once led into the women's cemetery. It will always be open to visitors. The fence is similar to one that existed around the hospitals first building. This cemetery restoration is an ongoing project of the Georgia Consumer Council, an organization that includes consumers from thirteen Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse (MHMRSA) regional boards from each of the statewide MH, MR, or SA consumer advocacy organizations.



lock up

by Barbara Templin

with suitcase in hand
i am routinely escorted
through massive locked doors
which close behind me like a granite vault.

exit signs illuminate neon red glass.
they seemingly mock me
as there is no means of escape.

slowly, heads turn
in complaisant curiosity
i am glared upon through empty eyes
expressions are sterile—i am meaningless.

an unexpected greeting
confirms my existence
"I'm Amie, can I wear your shoes?"

i make a connection
into intensive brown eyes.
she adorns her head with a wooly black hat.
her gentle half smile assures me.

i'm sorry my dear,
i can't give you my shoes.
if not for them, i'd have no soul left.

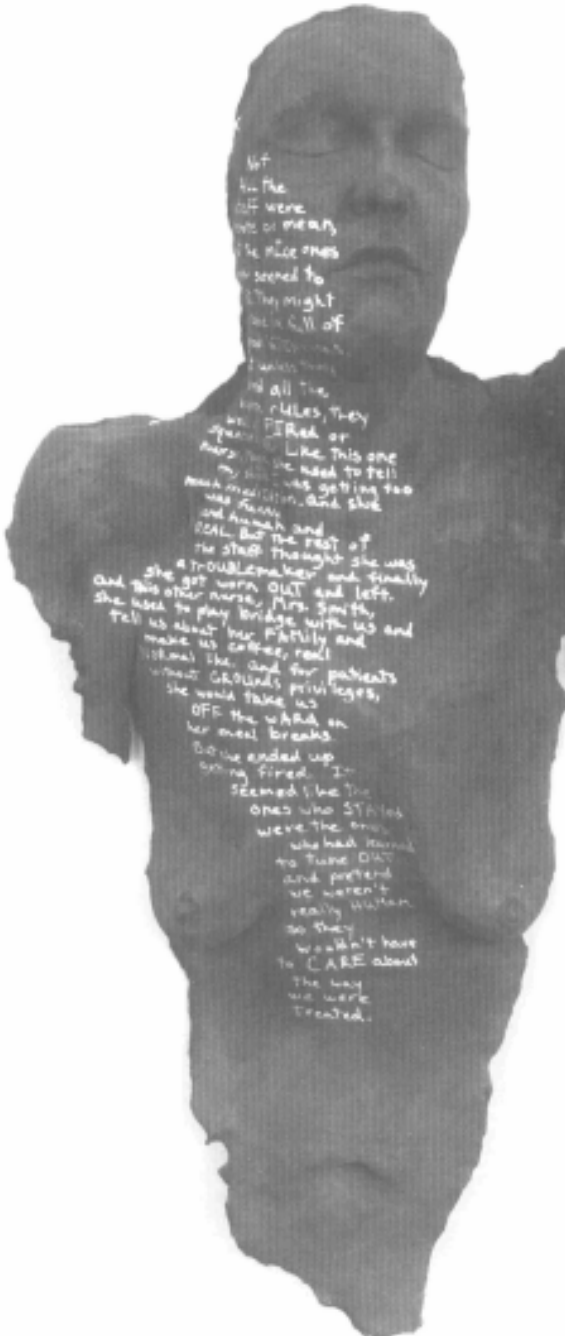
Lock Up–Portrait of Jade
Pen and Ink
by L. Cuker-Adamek

Lori-Cuker Adamek, Michigan, was led back to art after 15 years of "doing nothing" by a therapist who said to her, "The choice becomes simple–depress or express. One is holding back; the other is living." With an earlier degree in art from Eastern Michigan University, she began to use art to facilitate recovery. Her childhood friend Barbara called her several years ago to ask her to illustrate her poetry. Their powerful joint projects are being shown in publications and exhibits.

Barbara Templin, California, was diagnosed with "manic-depression" in 1996. She returned to poetry and journal writing as part of her therapy. She writes, "Amidst the chaos, there exists a reprieve with pen and paper. I don't know if it's a blessing or just dumb luck, but I don't question the source. I only know that it works, and for this I am grateful."

Barbara and **Lori** have collaborated together on several works, including a book "Bouquets of Imperfection." The book combines poetry and art to create a powerful depiction of family, social, and personal experiences. Their combined works were on exhibit at the Kings County Art Center of Hanford, California in the spring of 2000.

Sculpture



Sculpture in Clay, Paint and Silver Ink
by Persimmon Blackridge and Sheila Gilhooly
Vancouver, BC

The Royal Hospital: this one nurse

Not all the staff were remote or mean, but the nice ones never seemed to last. They might come in full of good intentions, but unless they obeyed all the unspoken rules, they would get fired or squeezed out. Like this one nurse, Maggie, she used to tell my shrink I was getting too much medication. And she was funny and human and real. But the rest of the staff thought she was a troublemaker and finally she got worn out and left.

And this other nurse, Mrs. Smith, she used to play bridge with us and tell us about her family and make us coffee, real normal-like. And for patients without ground privileges, she would take us off the ward on her meal breaks. But she ended up getting fired. It seemed like the ones who stayed were the ones who had learned to tune out and pretend we weren't really human so they wouldn't have to care about the way we were treated.

*(Text on Sculpture from **Still Sane**)*

*Authors **Persimmon Blackridge** and **Sheila Gilhooly** describe their sculpture series through writings and pictorials in **Still Sane.** Of their joint work they write: "The overriding theme of **Still Sane** is one of defiance and survival: We can maintain our choices, even in the face of literally mind numbing oppression. This is a crucial message for us to communicate to one another. Any time we experience violence, whether as incest survivors, battered women, prisoners or psychiatric inmates, we are taught to believe it is our own fault and to be ashamed and silent. Speaking out about our experiences is terrifying but necessary, and smashing through the lies that isolate us from one another is exhilarating."*

***Still Sane** is a series of twenty-seven sculptures documenting two women's psychiatric experiences. The narrated sculptures tell the women's stories, but they tell also, the stories of others who will recognize similarities. Equally powerful is the narration of the creative process that was used between the two to create sculptures. Persimmon Blackridge has continued to work as an activist against issues of coercion in psychiatry and has written two books, **Sunnybrook** and **Prozac Highway**, both of which can be ordered through Dendron*

Photography

A photograph by Gilberto Romero

Gilberto Romero, *longtime mental health consumer/survivor, photographer, consultant in public health/mental health, fluent in Spanish and English, lives in New Mexico with his wife and their dog "Spot." Gilberto has volunteered as photographer at the Alternatives Conferences. In addition, he has been a known figure in state and national activities for many years and continues to do a weekly radio show in New Mexico, Informas de Esperanza.*

Conclusion

The following sections of the manual include the names and addresses of individuals who served on the advisory board (most of whom wrote articles in the manual); other writers are also listed. All of these individuals can be contacted for more information about their programs and for technical assistance.

The bibliography section lists books that we have reviewed and recommend, but is by no means a complete list. Several of our listed books have extensive bibliographies. June Jordan's book, *Poetry for the People,* has a large listing of books written by persons with cultural diversities. Another book, *Creativity and Madness,* includes a bibliography on the famous artists written about in the book. There are a growing number of books written by consumers about their experiences in the mental heath system and many other arts related books that we could not begin to list but will add to a website for your reading information.

The Resource Section is divided into different categories including consumer-run arts programs, films and videos, theater groups, journals and newsletters and others. We were not able to list as many as we would have liked, again because of space limitations, but we plan to have these and other listings on several websites at the Knowledge Exchange Network in Rockville, MD. We especially want to note the annual "Art of Healing Conference" that is held in New York State organized by the National Artists for Mental Health. For information about this conference, their address is listed in the Resource section.

We hope that this manual will encourage you to look at the arts in a new way. Art should no longer be looked at as just an add-on to therapy or as only something people do in their spare time. For some people art is their preferred method of healing; art for them is a product of their talent as artists. We hope we have made a beginning step to pave ways for artist's work to be shown, to be considered important, and for artists to network with other artists to create their own alternatives.

Words cannot begin to express the gratitude we feel towards the people who helped to make this manual possible. We again thank each and every person whose hands, hearts, and voices helped to create this manual.

Special Note: The National Artists for Mental Health in Upper New York State is no longer in operation. We are sorry for this inconvenience. (July 12, 2007)

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