



# THE SHARING TREE

*For men and women living with mental illness*

“Recovery is the awakening of hopes and dreams. The recovery process involves gaining the knowledge to reclaim one’s power and achieve one’s desires by learning to make choices that bring strength rather than harm. Recovery involves living a meaningful life with the capacity to love and be loved.”-Telecare Corp

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Editor: Jo-Ann Paley

The New Newsletter is available on the MSS Website at [www.mss.mb.ca](http://www.mss.mb.ca)

## A Reason to Hope, the Means To Cope

### The Second Story

By Danny Van Koughnet



I write a little more of a story says Danny Van Koughnet. I worked on road repair work in Kentucky driving mules in the summer and fall. I worked with a team of mules pulling a wagon full of dirt. I drove the mules pulling a wagon on a cotton farm in Georgia. I went to Canada and Ontario in 1982 and moved into the wilderness and became a backwoods trapper.

I built a lean to log cabin - like a log shack 20 feet long 12 feet wide and 12 feet high with 8 glass windows with screens on the windows. I made a floor from small logs about 4 inches thick by making them flat on four sides with the axe making a square post and laying the logs side by side. I made the roof the same way and made some shingles from cedar logs I split with an axe and nailed the shingles on the logs with some old nails. I had 3 doors I made myself and a wood burning cook stove inside the cabin. I made a table, chair, bed, one shelf, and built a dresser from old boxes. I had one tin plate, cup, a knife, fork, spoon,

....*The Second Story continued on page 2*

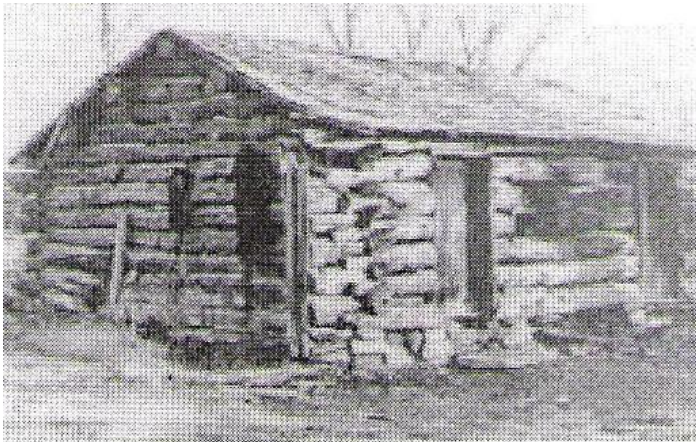
Congratulations in advance to the people who are going to share their personal stories, or whatever, in our newsletter. You are a part of the change in making mental illness become more widely accepted everywhere. If you need help in making this decision whether to contribute or not, just think about these thoughts.

I've learned that if you can change people's hearts, they can change how they think and feel about themselves. They will become motivated and take pride in their work. The results will be that you will have begun to change the world. Real change has to come from within first, before it can produce positive results on the outside.

Hopefully the new direction of *The Sharing Tree* newsletter will lend itself to this gigantic purpose and begin to roll the small snowball of faith into a giant ball of a shared vision and an encouraging direction. Perhaps peace will begin as we become more aware of our gifts of sharing; those gifts that were meant to be shared with all.

*The Second Story continued from page 1....*

butcher knife, cast iron frying pan, light tin frying pan, two tin pots, some billy cans and a roasting pan. Also I had a cross cut saw, a few axes, buck saw, hammers and a few other tools. And I had hundreds of traps, several guns, a few clothes, some snares, a boat, canoe, other things like snowshoes, knives, food and plenty of dry stove wood all cut up in stove wood length and split so it would fit in the wood stove and all the wood was piled in the wood shed to keep dry. I lived in that shack for years trapping around that shack and selling hides to fur buyers. I never got rich or made that much money but I practiced good money management and was able to get by and save some money. I grew a big garden and learned to can food up in quart sealer jars, shot wildgame in the forest and canned up the meat in quart sealer jars. In summer I worked in my garden and sat in my shack. Sometimes I repaired chain saws for people or sewed soles on men's work boots and tacked them down but I was not a shoe repair man or a mechanic. Other times I just sat in my shack in silence and looked out the window.



Sometimes, most of the time, I spent the whole winter alone in the woods and never talked to anyone until I came out of the woods in spring. I became a real hermit and lived a real hermit existence in the woods, but I liked it and had no complaints. I found it was a real challenge to spend a whole winter alone in the woods, something many people cannot do or want to do. It took some kind of a person to look after yourself all winter with no help and operate a trap line all winter by yourself. A few things I found: you had to have enough food to last all winter and you had to cut

enough wood to last all winter to burn in your stove to keep warm and you had to work at trapping. You could not just sit around all winter and do nothing. Other men worked a little bit in the summer and collected unemployment insurance checks all winter, sat on their ass in the house and called

...**The Second Story** continued on page 3

themselves a man but they did not want to go trapping. Different men around town said he's on unemployment insurance and that was accepted but what I did was no good. I worked damn hard all winter at trapping and in summer worked with a mule and people called me down but they sat on their ass and talked big and made no effort to do a thing. Sometimes I worked hard on road repair work in summer driving mules and put in some real hot days but I finally stopped that because it was too far from home and I just went back to my house in the woods. I was there until 2008 then the Natural Resources forced me to leave but I harmed no one back in the woods. But I was talking to myself very loudly and it got to where I couldn't take it anymore being alone so long. I was starting to go bonkers in the head. I moved to Dryden and built a house. Then the town wanted the property and forced me out so I moved to the apartment block in 2009 and fell on government assistance. I was never on welfare before. I have a mental illness but I was able to look after myself for years. I was not able to do many different types of work or jobs because of my illness. But I did live in the bush.

*This story is written by Danny Van Koughnet of Dryden, Ontario*

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### Mental Hell

Time is flying.  
Let me harness time,  
that I may use it well.

Picture and verse  
Poetry is my emotional expression.  
It lets out frustration of abuse,  
Rage, jealousy and anger from my past.

When I get angry – the ink flows,  
Black, always black,  
like the colour of my lungs.

Photography and art.  
I did that too.  
I have piles of photographs,

and piles of drawings.  
I have a filing cabinet full of my writing.

Who will listen to my poems?  
I've given up on trying to get published,  
except in journals for mental patients.

With one in five people needing  
psychiatric care now,  
maybe I can help these people  
get through the mental health machine  
better than I did.

“God bless us everyone”.  
- By Margaret K. Schroeder, 2006

### Peace Pilgrim

My journey towards becoming a well-integrated and happy person includes learning to handle my anger in a healthy manner. Peace Pilgrim, a woman I greatly admire and who found inner peace, gave some helpful tips:

“Tremendous energy comes with anger...Do not suppress it: that would hurt you inside. Do not express it: this would not only hurt you inside, it would cause ripples in your surroundings. What you do is transform it. You somehow use that tremendous energy constructively on a task that needs to be done, or in a beneficial form of exercise.... For instance, one woman washed all the windows in the house, another woman vacuumed the house whether it needed it or not, and another baked bread – nice, whole grain bread. And another one sat down and played the piano: wild marches at first, then she'd cool down and play gentle things like hymns and lullabies, and then I knew she was all right.” (Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Work in Her Own Words)

*A free copy of this book can be had by phoning 1-203-926-1581*

Submitted by Debora Haliburton

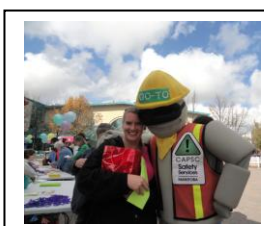


## Journey of Hope Walk for Schizophrenia

September 17, 2011  
At The Forks canopy Plaza

Call 786-1616 or email [info@mss.mb.ca](mailto:info@mss.mb.ca)  
Downloadable pledge forms available at  
[www.mss.mb.ca](http://www.mss.mb.ca)

**Come for the Fun!**



*Like The Journey of  
Hope  
Walk for Schizophrenia  
on Facebook*

## NAME THAT FEELING



**A support group for children who have a family member with a mental illness.**

The Mental Health Education Resource Centre is now open. The Mental Health Education Resource Centre contains a large lending library with many reading materials, videos, training kits, newsletters, brochures and fact sheets on mental health and related issues. Two research computers are available for searching the MHERC library and internet. Donna Hornick is the new coordinator. Stop by and see Donna at 4 Fort Street on the corner of Fort and Assiniboine Avenue. The phone number is 204-942-6568

### **PEER SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND WORKING ADULTS**

Are you a **working or career professional** looking for a safe place to discuss the implications of **living with schizophrenia**? Come join us! Meet new people and share your experiences. **Receive support from those who understand.**

Next Meeting: September 27<sup>th</sup> at 7pm  
Venue: FACES, 4 Fort Street, Winnipeg (ROOM A)  
Contact at **204-786-1616** for more information.

**Manitoba Schizophrenia Society**  
4 Fort Street  
Winnipeg, MB  
Phone: 786-1616  
Peer Support Group Schedule  
September October 2011  
Meeting Time: Wednesday, 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM

(Occasionally group start time may vary according to the program of the day.)

“Need to talk to someone about your life with schizophrenia, or schizoaffective disorder?”

Then consider attending the

**MSS PEER SUPPORT GROUP**

**Date**

**Activity**

**September**

7	Planning and Discussion
14	NO GROUP – MSS OFFICES CLOSED
21	Movie Day
28	Speaker – Dave Colvin – Alcohol Foundation of Manitoba

**October**

5	Symptom Control
12	Learning to Tell Your Recovery Story
19	Movie Day
26	Hallowe'en Day

# Womens' Program Schedule September/October 2011

*Meetings are held on Thursday afternoon from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM at 4 Fort Street (FACES) although sometimes we go on outings. Any women living with a mental illness are welcome to attend. Occasionally we are out of the office for an activity so please call to confirm your attendance at 786-1616.*

## September

- 1**                    **Writers' Group - Come and share your writing with others and do some fun writing exercises. Learn to write your story.**
- 8**                    **Sharing and Planning**
- 15**                   **NO GROUP – MSS WILL BE CLOSED FOR THIS WEEK ONLY**
- 22**                   **Movie Day at FACES – Group starts at 1:00 PM to allow time to see the whole movie.**
- 29**                   **Yoga**



## October

- 6**                    **Writers' Group – Call Karen at 786-1616 for information and to register for upcoming Writers' Workshop with guest speaker**
- 13**                   **Bowling – Call Karen to Register at 786-1616**
- 20**                   **Hallowe'en Party Celebration**
- 27**                   **Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre Speaker**



Funded by:

A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE.  
MANITOBA SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY  
SOCIÉTÉ MANITOBAINE DE LA SCHIZOPHRÉNIE  
UNE SOURCE D'ESPOIR, DE SOUTIEN ET D'ENTRAIDE