

IAPSRS: A participant's opinion

By Bruce Saunders

In the usual Monday Movie low-cost but effective manner, your protagonist did his first international conference. Ingrid and I found great (separate) accommodation at the International Hostel. It was a welcome walk from the conference hubbub and maddening elevator waits and also an intriguing atmosphere with world maps everywhere and exotic language notes and conversations all around. A fine way to be comfy in Vancouver!

Good ol' Norm Ellis was, as usual, most helpful getting us, all our stuff, camera gear, art work, bundles of handouts, and the Movie Monday tri-fold to the site. He picked us up Wednesday morning at 7:30 - what a guy!

I managed to nab a free spot for my display on a table marked, "miscellaneous pamphlets" (exhibitors had been offered the "hot" price of \$480 for table space) so upwards of 1,200 delegates from the U.S.A., Britain, Italy, New Zealand and the rest of Canada were exposed to the MM propaganda machine.

I attended seven workshops, besides our own, all on consumer-recovery issues. They were:

- ◆ **Leadership Empowerment** - an activist group from Eugene, Ore., kicking a little establishment butt.
- ◆ **Consumer/Survivor Initiatives in Ontario.** Given by a pair of able consumers who have their fingers on a purse of 3.5 million bucks. One of the presenters went home with an MM shirt and a promise to send me a packet of helpful stuff for my endeavors.
- ◆ **Overcoming Discrimination.** Given by an educator from London, England, the theme was devoted, as I am, to changing attitudes through the media, public education and grassroots activism.
- ◆ **Widening the Circle of Support: A Step-By-Step Life-Coach Training Program,** given by a panel from Long Beach, Calif.. In a program called "The Village",

B r u c e Saunders of Victoria attended the IAPSRS Conference, and with Ingrid Olson-Mercer, also of Victoria, presented one of the 144 workshops given at the annual event. In this article, Bruce comments on the conference and other workshops he attended.



they employ consumers to use their skills and experience to help others in custom in-home support. Very empowering, innovative, humane,

and even surprisingly, cost-effective.

◆ **Wellness Skills** given by a panel from Vancouver about a course in their community college.

◆ **We Are People Too** featured a panel of artists in recovery (including Carma Rogers whose video I've featured at MM) and their therapist which is doing a couple of innovative projects in Vancouver. I'm swapping a copy of the Open Door's book, "Out in the Open", for their similar new publication of photos and writing. You'll see it at MM soon! Great networking in a topic that fascinates me.

◆ **Empowerment.** A powerhouse presentation by a woman who has worked through years of turmoil with manic-depression, to be billed here as Director of Consumer Relations, Michigan Department of Community Health. She's using her experience and excellent communication skills in inspired talks like this everywhere.

◆ Our workshop, **Being Out About It,** went well. One of our Victoria delegates gave us an enthusiastic 98 per cent!

In other workshops people talked about the challenge of getting positive press. We could smugly report that we had a reporter from CBC Radio attending our workshop. When our performance was over Carma Livingstone took us to the CBC studio and interviewed us for an hour. We had the heady experience on the Friday afternoon of hearing ourselves talking B.C.-wide about our topic with Carma and Katherine Gretzinger, as we drove off the home-bound ferry.

As an update, I would like to thank all Movie Monday fans and supporters, especially those who donated specifically to my participation at IAPSRS.