

May 5 -9, 2003

How I Spent My Spring Vacation

At the invitation of Horst Peters I visited Winnipeg to show some films Movie Monday style and introduce the MM model there. Horst is the one-man powerhouse behind Partnership For Consumer Empowerment in Manitoba. He was hauling not one but three bags of golf clubs in his trunk the whole time he was chauffeuring me from gig to gig. As far as I could see they're just for traction as we had no time for golf. It was working breakfasts at 7:30 and full tilt till sundown.

During the 3 days I was there we did 6 events, 5 of them film/discussions: Stuart Saves His Family at a clubhouse after joining about 40 members for lunch, About A Boy with about 60 in the Grace Hospital's psych ward, and 2 events, W47th Street and My Name Is Walter Cross at the Man. Schizophrenia Society office.

Finally we screened the doc Completely Cuckoo, in the PsychHealth building theatre at the Health Science Centre. What an amazing building! Seemed to me the West Edmonton Mall of psych hospitals with fabulous dramatic architecture that dwarfs it's function.

I was given a brief tour by Dr Michael Eleff who made the theatre available and joined us for a discussion after the film. Turns out Walter's filmmaker Dr David Dawson is well known at the centre as he's taught there, but they don't know his films. Plans are cooking now to make it Walter part of Grand Rounds in the Fall. I'm quite sure the MM model will stick here.

A real highlight was a special event by the Mood Disorders of Manitoba to present stories of recovery to a throng of about 150 on the Tuesday evening. Six truly remarkable, inspirational stories of recovery from life-long struggles with depression and manic depression (including mine, I'm still amazed to be in their company).

Following me the comedian featured in Standup Samurais, one of the films I featured at my recent fest, was Big Daddy Tazz!. He's doing great. Like all of us, he had tips to impart from his hard-won struggles. He's looking svelt, a new exercise and med program, and has been honored this Mental Health Week as a "Hero" for his involvement in the community. His comedy will be the draw at a Mother's Day Mental Health Week event on Sunday. The whole presentation was bagged on video and came home in my luggage.



It was excellent to hang out 3 full days with Horst, sharing ideas, finding we're in touch with so many people in the recovery movement. I was treated like a star, chauffeured about from gig to gig, able to chat with people who were interested in details about MM or to finish my meals, while Horst did all the technical and logistical stuff (usually I'm the guy desperately trying to keep ahead of my elaborate schemes).

Nice hotel, good paying gig organized by one of my peers, leisurely flights to and fro (snow both ways in Calgary), and back to my blossom-strewn lawns and gardens in sweet, lush Victoria. What could be nicer!

Bruce

*As printed on back
of MM programs
June/03*