

THE VOICE

July 2007



CONSUMER VOICES ARE BORN
CVAB

Volume 2, Issue 1

A Matter of Time by Laura Van Tosh

*A special to The Voice by Laura Van Tosh,
Director, Consumer Affairs at Western State Hospital*

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The VOICE is a monthly newsletter produced and distributed by CVAB, Inc.

The content of articles are the opinions of the writers and are published in the Voice so they may exercise their right to say something, and for your reading pleasure

CVAB is a consumer-run non-profit organization.

The Voice welcomes all original contributions related to your recovery experience that you may want to share with our community. We'll treat each with respect and we'll try to print them as submitted but may need to edit for space. Our deadline is the 15th of each month. Thank you.

I have talked about submitting an article to *The Voice* for quite some time. But the way I write is to wait and allow an idea to simmer. When cooking, it's always best to let a sauce simmer, rather than bring it to a boil. Time is an essential ingredient.

When thinking about recovery, however, I always thought time was the most important element. Yet recovery is a non-linear process, where time is not a factor at all.

The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines recovery with ten components. Recovery, states SAMHSA, "is not a step-by-step process, but one based on continual growth, occasional setbacks, and learning from experience. Recovery begins with an initial stage of awareness in which a person recognizes that positive change is possible. This awareness enables the consumer to move on to fully engage in the work of recovery."

The work I do at Western State Hospital is more about process than time. The progression towards cul-

ture change at this large state psychiatric hospital is an example of how process guides our success, and where time is mostly in the back-ground. Patients remind me that their recovery journeys are based in fundamental values of empowerment, even if the concept of recovery is new to them. My work is guided by what the patients tell me they need for that journey.

An example of this comes from a conversation I had with a patient, who is about to be discharged.

David (not his real name) wanted to talk about ways to prevent another admission since he has been in and out of the hospital over the past 12 years. He tells me that every 3 months or so he returns to the hospital. David wants to break that cycle and he wanted to talk about how that might look. For David, time is a burden. He worries about another readmission. We talked about whether a pattern could be found, and ways to get help before crisis sets in. We shared ideas about new supports available in the community that could be useful.

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("Time" Continued on page 3)



KESSLER'S KOLUMN

**"I'M SURPRISED WE
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STAYING ON THE ROAD

Those '90s: How about 'em by Nick

Some people claim I was delirious at the time, but I actually enjoyed the 1990s. Media was tamer, people weren't so serious, there weren't nearly as many gas-hogging SUVs on the road, people got along better (or so it seemed); oh, and there was no war going on. Movies stayed in the theaters longer than a month—and they were actually worth seeing! People were less concerned with self-image and status and more content with enjoying themselves.

It's really amazing how much can change in 10 years, and the previous paragraph only touches the tip of the iceberg. The people in the United States are more divided than they have been in a long, long, time. Before it seemed that people belonged in social circles a lot more easily; now it seems that everyone has to isolate and have their own opinion, to a certain extent. With this kind of mentality, I'm sur-

prised we haven't encountered total anarchy yet. I hope people are considering this fact, especially when they do destructive things to other people.

You might think I'm talking about the war. I'm not. I'm talking about rude, angst-ridden, spiteful behavior that we all run into every day given only a moment's notice. No, it's definitely not about the war, although that might be what's driving the opinions of a lot of people. The war is essentially something that is out of our control—instead it is in the control of power-mongers and psychopaths, and I think we all know that at this point we pretty much have to wait until it's over. After coming to all these conclusions about the first decade of the 21st century, I can't help but wonder why people would want to pick on as benign a decade as the 1990s.

Humph. V

On the Road of Recovery by Ted

I was born in May of 1966. Even as a child I knew I was to be there for people. I was sexually and physically molested growing until I was 15. I was very angry and bitter towards my Dad.

I started sniffing glue at the age of 5 until I was 17. I got hooked, then spent 5 months at Western State for attempted suicide. I got out 2 days before my 18th birthday. I was then introduced to other drugs and alcohol. In job corps I was nicknamed Trouble, because of my anger. I didn't have any friends, I was a loner. I didn't believe in Love; I wouldn't even use the word.

In my 20's I started hearing voices to

kill myself. I went to a church in Seattle and was sent to a hospital. I was 22 when I realized I had a problem with alcohol and drugs. I cried out to God to either take my life or take the desire from me. He took the desire. I met a friend that showed me how to get rid of anger and bitterness. I stopped hearing voices. I wanted to live. I went to a class to learn about mental illness. I learned my name is Ted Danneels and not my illness and my medicine. I learned about the price of friendship and saying "I LOVE YOU. GOD LOVES YOU AND SO DO I AND THERE AIN'T NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT. V

Book Review by Nick

Coyote by Allen Steele. Copyright 2002, Ace. 436 pp.

This is a great book. How can I sum up a book just by saying that? Probably because it is very appealing. Don't be put off by the fact that it's science fiction. There is something anyone can identify with in these pages. Even more importantly, it is a story of liberty, hope, survival and determination. All qualities I think we as mental health consumers and providers alike could draw upon. Yes, there are scientific terms in here. Yes, it's about Interstellar Exploration, as the cover indicates. I suppose I should describe the crux of it.

It tells of a near future where the United States has become a single, communist society that treats the majority like slaves.

Abortions are illegal—it's just seen as a new opportunity for a worker in an internment camp when someone is born. Yet somehow (revealed in the book), a group of these "slaves"—all physically capable and highly intelligent people—manage to hijack a spaceship in a very pre-calculated fashion and set off for a planet discovered through research 250 light years away; a planet named Coyote.

The arrival is a success, but then problems start happening; very logistical problems that could've been avoided if given more thought. But the colonists make do with what they have; and somehow survive. As I said, a great book; very inspiring. V



A WORTHY READ

The Masses Have Spoken

Those attending the CVAB Community Gathering in June witnessed the awarding of the CVOE awards to Lloyd and Mychal; offered their definition of recovery; shared what they enjoyed at the WSBC; and voted

on CVAB's big excursion. If you want to know what is going on and have a voice in the process, come the next MAC and Community Gathering. V

Time (continued)

David told me that medication management was important for him and that it was not available when he needed it. We talked about what he likes to do to occupy his time. Our conversation went in different directions - like a brainstorming session - and he was able to identify creative solutions.

I felt like I had been a support to David. I gave him my business card and said he could keep in contact if he wanted to. Later, it became apparent to me that our conversation occurred in a moment of time. He would be discharged, and then mostly on his own to find a path towards recovery. Perhaps he would remember our

conversation, maybe not. But David's awareness of the challenges to start his recovery is clear. He recognizes that change is possible, and he is hopeful.

My hope is that all of us, including consumers, will be there for David and those who come after him. It may be a matter of time, and it is worth the wait. V

Editor's Note: We are grateful that Laura has contributed to *The Voice*. We recognize her as a significant contributor, chronicler, and voice within the consumer movement. CVAB applauds her current work at WSH and is proud she is our friend.

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WORTH THE WAIT

**A PERSON-CENTERED, RECOVERY-ORIENTED,
SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY**

Consumer Voices Are Born
CVAB

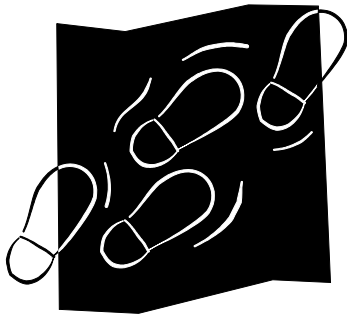
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Executive Direction from Brad Berry

It is that time of year at CVAB when we think about annual contracts, the costs of doing business, what we are doing and what we will do or not do during the next year. Actually, we're always thinking about it but the need is heightened in June as we prepare to sign our annual contract with the Clark County Regional Support Network. *(The RSN is very supportive of CVAB as we receive from them the overwhelming majority of our financial and moral support.)*

Preparing for any contract or grant means reviewing reports and crunching numbers to paint a picture of what is happening at CVAB; evaluating what has gone on is vitally important. Simply looking at the numbers tells us that during the past year we have in-

creased in all categories at the Center by over 30%, on the Warm Line by over 40%, and have done so on budget. Most days have over 30 individuals stopping by (as many as 80 in a day) and there is activity happening in every room throughout the day with an ever growing group of volunteers involved at every level. Amazing things are happening and growth is occurring at CVAB.

I think the most remarkable part is not the numbers but the stories they represent. Each one of those individual visits is a story, an invaluable person living an extraordinary life of recovery and resiliency. We'll try to budget and plan for the next year but no numbers can accurately reflect what we experience everyday at CVAB. **V**

IT'S HAPPENING AT CVAB IN JULY! IT'S HAPPENING AT CVAB IN JULY!

Brown Bag with Brad

Meet for lunch at Esther Short Park to talk about CVAB and other stuff. Then we'll listen to live music. Register at CVAB



Come to CVAB 101 to find...

- ...Who CVAB is
- ...What CVAB is
- ...How you can get involved

Employment Help
Job Ready—Mondays at 11 AM
 A group that helps with resumes, interviewing, searches—whatever you need.

Wednesday @ 2 PM Support Group
 A "drop-in" support group for your journey of recovery. No registration needed. Facilitated by Cathy Bowen.

Games ON Games Of Nick
 Come each week to play a new strategic game. Hosted by Nick

Computers 201—WORD
 Wednesdays @ 9:30 AM
 This class is a self-paced tutorial with staff support. Start when your ready and continue at your own pace.

Computer Labs
 The Computer Lab is open twice weekly for any assistance you may need.
 Tuesday 2-3 PM
 Friday 9-10 AM

CVAB 101 is a 3 hour class and you have 3 opportunities in July. We request you register for CVAB 101 at our office or through emailing info@cvab.org. Thanks!

WRAP GROUP
 WRAP=Wellness Recovery Action Plan
 Learn self-help skills and how to use them more easily to monitor physical and emotional symptoms. This group will help you:

- Develop your own list of activities for your everyday well being.
- Track triggering events and early warning signs.
- Prepare your personal responses if symptoms increase.
- Create a plan for your supporters to care for you if necessary.

Angela Dummann, Facilitator
 Sign up at CVAB. New Groups beginning every 4-6 weeks. Try the three hour WRAP Lite for a taste of WRAP!

MELANIE MAIORINO, ED.D
 CLARK COUNTY OMBUDS
 360-397-8470 OR 1-866-666-5070

OMBUDS IN July
 July 23 @ CVAB
 System Transformation through Voicing Concerns about Quality Improvement

Members Advisory Council July 9

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RELAXATION Group
New Group Meets July 27
Register @ CVAB

Learn the Basics of American Sign Language
 Help CVAB become a welcoming community through sign language. Classes begin at 3 PM on July 3.

HELP PLAN
 THIS YEARS BBQ!
 JULY 9 @ 3PM



CVAB BBQ & Picnic
 August 18
 Noon to 5 PM
 Marshall Center Park

Life After...
 A supportive group for any woman who has experienced trauma or life-altering events. **You are not alone**

Karen Maust Karen is a peer facilitator who has experienced trauma and the benefits of this type of group.

We can share our experiences to help ourselves as well as others.

Thursdays
10 AM-12 PM

WALKING GROUP
 Mon—Wed
 11 AM

Walk for the Health of it. Irma is coordinating this walking group. Meet at CVAB to join the group. Begins July 9

