"YOU DECIDE WHO DECIDES – YEAH RIGHT!"

A paper presented to the 9th International Conference of the International Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology, October 7th, 2006 by Anne Marsden based on

"Sixty Years After the Sacrifices"

A short biography of a resident of Canada

Eva Bourgoin

You Decide Who Decides – Yeah Right!

By Anne Marsden
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There is no doubt that I am a psychiatric survivor. It really is not too much claim to fame as everyone else in the world we live in can probably boast the same title. We all have situations in our lives that produce DSM criteria. The permanence of the psychiatric symptoms is, in my experience, associated with how we and those close to us react to the particular situation. And, of course, the ability of those we seek help from to support us until time and common sense heals. Those registered for a conference put on by "the conscience of psychiatry" have to know there are two ends to the measure of any such assistance – the quacks and the Peter Breggins. Let's hope that if you have not yet met your situation that when it does happen, as it definitely will, you can establish assistance from the middle of the measure up. Anything less can be very destructive.

I became a psychiatric survivor at different times in my life and because of several very different situations in my life. Many would think suddenly becoming seriously disabled at four years old – the "experts" advised mam and dad to put me in an institution as they said I would never be self-supporting – would lead to the first such occasion, but it did not. As an aside, my parents have always blamed the vaccination I received shortly before it became very evident that something was wrong, for my disability. My very limited research shows there were many others who had the same theory at this time.

My first challenge to overcome psychiatric issues was because of my mother witnessing the rape of her sister and then spending six years alone with a new baby in an intense bombing zone in World War II. These experiences earned mam the title of "the mad woman of Pent land", 119 Pentland Avenue, Billingham, Co. Durham, England being my street address from birth to my gaining the title of Mrs. David Marsden, which was my correct title commencing March 5, 1966. There was no medical help for me to deal with the fear and depression that would hit me, as a child and teen, but given my mother's "treatment" (over 100 shock treatments and I do not know how many insulin induced comas before the era of neurolyptic drugs) and the large numbers of prescription drug fatalities and suicides these days, perhaps that was a good thing.

It was much, much later in life when I got hit with the repercussions of doing a terrific job in the Canadian health care system, when really a terrific job was not what was wanted, that my world fell apart and it was duly noted in my medical chart that I had made the DSM criteria scale. Coping with panic attacks and depression from this scenario and then trying to stop those whose claim to fame is “we protect children” from severing our parental supervision rights for “our three miracle kids” took me down to the very bottom of what seemed like a venomous snake filled pit from which there could never be an escape.

The political nature of the child protector’s actions and the incestuous relationship of the bureaucrats of the Ontario health care, education and child protection system is now obvious to me, but not at that time. Thinking was reserved for such mundane tasks as left shoe on left foot, right shoe on right foot and then one foot in front of the other, one step at a time. I kid you not, even figuring out how to iron or do a load of wash was a major undertaking. My husband Dave will tell you this appears to have been a permanent non-curable symptom!

Walking became extremely difficult, and there were many days when I could not move. It was later that I understood the energy I needed to get my limbs to work, and my brain to think was more than the average and that energy was being sucked out of its storage banks by a very powerful suction pump – stress. But thanks be to a God who always provides and the creativity that comes from dealing with barriers for daily living all my live I found myself able to continue to participate in activities of daily living from a motorized scooter made for those whose walking is limited. A hoist to put the scooter in the back of my Ford Econoline van were my other tools for the independence I have never been prepared to give up without a major fight.

I used the term “miracle kids” for the three sons whose births we were blessed with between November, 1978 and June, 1982. The reason for this title being it took us thirteen years to find the magic formula, without medical assistance to be so blessed, and we had oft times been told by the experts of the day that we would never have children. Mind you, as I am sure most of you will understand we had lots of fun practising and even more fun planning the birth months of our second two kids, after personally seeing for ourselves the perfect product of such fun. Given our first son was born November 5th, a month after Canadian Thanksgiving, this time of the year always reminds me of the pride I felt as I waddled around at McMaster University Medical Centre where both Dave and I worked and where I gave birth to a nine and a half pound miracle. In the next three and a half years we learnt he was a clone of his two brothers that followed, in terms of looks and weight as a baby and the source of pride they all are as the young adults they have turned out to be.

Hopefully, I have set the stage for you to understand that I am conducting this workshop today, rather than suffering from a chemical lobotomy as is the fate of so many who have faced similar traumatic situations, only by the grace of God and the understanding and availability of Dr. Ruth St. Amand, a family physician who specialises in psychological counselling. Since January, 1990, there is no doubt in my mind that I have needed both her understanding and her availability to survive. Both Dave and I are very grateful to the McMaster University occupational health specialist, Dr. John Chong who made the referral. I now smile, as you probably will too, when I remember his words addressed to a `Mrs.` title demander that he was referring me to Dr. Ruth St Amand, because at that time he believed I needed a counsellor who was a feminist such as he knew her to be.

Before I was referred to Dr. St Amand I had run the gamut and flushed drug after drug – now I know that is not what you do with them you take them back to the drug store for disposal but, at that time, I was ignorant of the impact these drugs can have on others by being flushed. The first was flushed after I saw little green men running up the wall. It was another doctor, one I sought help from very briefly, who put me on Xanax without realising that I had low blood pressure, he simply failed to check. The first time I blacked out I was behind the wheel of my Ford Econoline van. I was driving 50 miles each way to pick up my son, take him to a family counselling session and returning him the next day to an abode designated by ``the child protectors``. Thank God I did have a little forewarning, everything was spinning. I pulled over to the side of the road and woke up wondering what on earth was going on. It took two days of such episodes, before I got to the drug store and looked up the side effects of this medication. I had gone to a new family doctor on this medication, the doctor I still have – Dr Brodie. Immediately upon learning what was happening he began to slowly wean me off the Xanax and the black outs stopped.

Whenever I hear of fatal car accidents involving a single vehicle I remember my experience and wonder.

My realization that Elijah had a nervous breakdown after ticking off the bureaucrats of the day, Gideon suffered from panic attacks but ended up as a general of a victorious army and support of family and friends left me convinced that I was not doomed to follow in my mam's footsteps in terms of her madness that was such a significant part of her life and, healing was possible. The support of Dr. Ruth St. Amand and her encouragement that my reasoning in this regard was appropriate are clearly the reasons I can stand before you today and talk about the painful horror stories of my past without breaking down, or at least I hope I can, one never knows when the tears will flow.

I still need to constantly remind myself that I am simply dealing with triggers when I start sweating and want to run away as I did so often in the past. Once I ran to a shelter for abused women thinking through the blur of the entire trauma I was experiencing that my dear Dave was the abuser. Learning about the triggers of post-traumatic stress was a life saver alone given I had been told by a well meaning father that my mother's madness was hereditary.

Pretending I was a little bird and was peeking out at the storm that was raging from underneath mama bird's wings – visualization – was just one of the things Dr Ruth taught me as a survival technique. It was difficult at first for me to put my heart and soul into visualization because of my involvement in de-sensitization for my fear of flying. It was 1972 and Dave and I had decided our initial plans of going to Canada for just a two year working holiday were canned because of the once in a life time career opportunity presented to him by McMaster University Medical Centre. I was scheduled to go home and sell our home and possessions but I had no idea how I was going to get on the plane given my fear of heights and flying.

I was in such a de-sensitization program in the Department of Psychology at McMaster with my family physician at the time, Dr. Ross Parker. The Family Practice Clinic I attended was a resident based program and Dr. Parker was learning about de-sensitization as much as I was so he could then supervise his residents as they helped others deal with their fears in the exemplary style the McMaster Residency Program was noted for at that time. Sadly our audits show that things have changed. Our eldest son Dale, who presently is an Honours Economics student at McMaster, and I began a series of meetings this past week which we hope will lead to the pendulum swinging back.

The de-sensitization program Dr. Parker and I participated in, really did work; there is no doubt about it. I had a fabulous flight on St. Patrick's Day, 1972 and called Dave, hoarse from all the singing I had done. I had a blast and never would I be afraid to get on a plane again, was the gist of our conversation – I was cured forever, or so I thought.

Going back to Canada on Donaldson's Airline, for the sake of your health remember that name, the plane depressurized at 32,000 feet, the oxygen masks fell and we dive bombed down to a safe level, there were those who suffered heart attacks in the process. Worse still the alcohol had all been smashed and with all the oxygen supply in the cabin, the no smoking sign was up for those of us who at that time were oblivious to the need to quit. We immediately turned around and had to dump our fuel over the English Channel so we could safely land. I was sat next to the window where the engine was and had the pleasure of an attendant almost on my knee, ensuring the motors did not catch fire. The wheels had frozen on our dive bomb descent and we were preparing to do a landing on the belly of the plane given we were wheel less until at last minute they were freed.

We took off the next day, in the second of the two planes owned by this airline, under black, menacing cloudy skies. After hearing a very loud bang, which in fact was more like an explosion, we saw sparks fly from the control panel, the cockpit door was open to give us a better view. I seriously believed I would never see the doctor who taught me not to fear flying ever again. The captain calmly, a little too calmly for my liking, told us we had been struck by lightning but assured us the airplane was safe to cross the Atlantic and get us back home. Yeah right! went through my head for the first of what would be many, many times in the following years. A visit to my professor in the school of desensitization because of the pain in my ears was my first priority on my return. They had haemorrhaged. Dr. Parker cracked up as he heard my tale; I really did not find it funny. Until we parted ways in 1985 he consistently assured me I was his best cocktail party story ever.

Needles to say I wondered what was in store for me if I used similar techniques under Dr. Ruth's supervision involving birds, storms and trees as

I had used to deal with my fear of flying. But I did work at it after discovering the scripture I will shelter you under my wings and my trauma bashed brain eventually accepted that one could find refuge in a storm regardless of the hurricane strength of the winds. Now when thunder crashes and lightning flashes in the skies of the real world I have an uncanny sense of peace that descends upon me.

I must admit that in those days I did wave my fist at my God and argued with Him in terms of His understanding and mine of what was too much to handle. Never, ever did I believe for one moment that the very situations that caused me so much pain, fear and depression would see me acting as a combination of my mentor Dr. Ruth St Amand and a modern day prophet in the lives of those whose situations put them on a DSM criteria list? More to the point never ever did I believe that I would one day be sharing these experiences with lawyers, psychiatrists and psychologists at the International Centre for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology? The daughter of "the mad woman of Pentland" who was doomed to share almost the same title is here to day to promote the power of encouraging words and the giving of hope. My Burlington Christian and Missionary Alliance Pastor put it very succinctly in one of his sermons quoting I do not know who: *Twinkie bars and hope are far better survival tools than broccoli and despair*. I like my broccoli and combined with my Hope even this world's fire breathing dragons cannot hold me back.

The Auditors, The Canadian Family Watchdog was the last of many names of the organization Dave and I co-founded that has unpaid advocacy for any member of a Canadian family at its root. The Advocates, People against Injustice or the P.A.I.N. were just a couple of the names we started off with. The P.A.I.N. was a very visual name of our intent to be more than a thorn in the side of those who have no respect for senior, adult, child and parent rights bought by so many sacrifices with the bill still being paid today. We do not accept donations and do not charge for our services regardless of the financial status of those seeking our help. Our mandate is to stop the hard earned dollars that are garnished from our family budgets being used for anything but the best interests of Canadian families. Three decades of audits in our files have shown that presently there are billions of dollars in Canada being spent to achieve anything but and the bureaucrats involved do not give a fig, except for their own rear ends in case, God forbid, they should actually be held accountable.

Child protection, health care, education, the pharmaceutical industry, courts of justice of all types and levels administered in Canada's case in the name of the Queen, elections, pension administration, hydro thefts et al have all seen our auditors, the families of Canada, shining a light into these very, very dark domains.

Several audits commencing back in August 2004 of the Brantford, Ontario Court of Justice have produced audit results that clearly show the involvement of many highly paid officials in the denial of children and parents rights and the compromising of children's best interests and well being outside the rules of the court and provincial and federal legislation. My efforts to bring these audit results to the attention of those charged with overseeing a fair hearing that depends on the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth has lead to an intense, on the record, attack on my character and credibility. So what else is new?

One such official who sits in the most important seat in the court room claims I have a conflict of interest in supporting parents ensure the best interests and well-being of their children. Regardless of the fact that we, meaning Dave and I, do not recover the expenses of our advocacy work, according to a CAS of Brantford lawyer my name and address on a business card means I am operating a business and, I am taking advantage of the plight of child deprived parents to drum up business in court waiting rooms – duh! Thus far since Easter I have put at least 700 pro bono hours into this particular audit and it has probably cost Dave, he is the one that works, a minimum of $2,000 for fees and printing etc. not to mention the gas for my car. If I take on any more "business" it would have to be done during the night time hours, it has been so time consuming.

Where does this all fit into the title of the presentation YOU DECIDE WHO DECIDES – YEAH RIGHT! - Its coming.

"Sixty Years after the Sacrifices" is the title of the biography written and made available to you today in your folder and available free from watching@cogeco.ca . It is this biography that lead to my workshop title. We brought mam to Canada in 1979 after the birth of our first miracle kid and after another episode of madness lead to her second divorce and she became financially dependent on us. A decade later mam, at 70 years of age, had decided to get married again (the third time) while in a home which as far as the family and she were concerned was the best treatment programme she had ever had for her diagnosis by the “experts” as a paranoid schizophrenic. There are just as many experts by the way who agree with us that mam suffered from post-traumatic stress, not paranoid schizophrenia and, unfortunately, was not given the skills to deal with it.

The home in Milton, Ontario was recommended after a six month stay on the psychiatric ward at McMaster University Medical Centre in 1985 under the watchful eye of my family practice team headed by Dr. Parker and the team’s truly wonderful nurse-practitioner Dorothy Ann Mills. Yes, the same team that had worked with me on curing my fear of flying and saw Dr. Parker cracking up at the outcome. Mam’s hospitalization at McMaster was at a time of my life when I worked very closely with the senior medical staff and administration of the hospital and the University and was well respected by all for the job that I did. I believed mam was in good hands at MUMC and appreciated that those I worked alongside were often being very flexible to ensure mam was properly placed in a home where she could enjoy an appropriate quality of life, be free from the demons that at times seemed to possess her and still be a significant part of the family that loved her very much but found it very, very difficult to live with her. The difficulties were exaggerated no doubt at that time by the triggers from my childhood coming into play that I had not yet learned to handle and our need to bear in mind the welfare of our three miracle kids.

Mam loved her life at Halton Centennial Manor, later known as Allendale located in Milton and, lead a very high quality of life, rewarded with volunteer plaques, being chosen to stand by dignitaries such as the Ontario Premier in 1993 to represent the residents at the opening ceremony of the new building, enjoying holidays at Sparrow Lake and the ultimate honour brought about by one of the residents, Benoit Bourgoin asking Dave and I for her hand in marriage.

The wedding made the local papers; it was such a beautiful story, love in the old age home. They honeymooned at Niagara Falls, mam surely being the envy of brides throughout the world, and, as we thought began to finally live a story that was set to end *and they lived happily ever after* - but it did not happen. Within a year mam had to go back into her own quarters, the most independent section of the home and Ben was placed in the continuing care section where residents who required the highest level of care resided.

From this time forth we witnessed all kinds of unnecessary, degrading and debilitating tragedies in this very dear lady's life. Thirty-five minutes seems like a long time for this presentation but considering what has had to go before I cannot even skim the surface to set the stage for my closing remarks and the reason for the title of this workshop. Mam's biography "Sixty Years after the Sacrifices" will, I am told, put you back on the map if I have not done the job I intended to do. Suffice to say that mam while deemed capable to make her own health care decisions appointed Dave and I as her joint and several powers of attorney She, quite rightly, based on her experiences, trusted no one else to make her personal, health care and financial decisions for her when she was deemed incapable of doing so. The forms screamed at her in big, bold print **YOU DECIDE WHO DECIDES.** Dave, I and mam took this to be a commitment from the Government of Ontario to ensure **YOU DECIDE WHO DECIDES.** They were after all, official Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General Power of Attorney Forms created by the Ontario Government after long hours of debate in the Ontario Legislature at Queens Park, Toronto, formalized by the signature of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario who represents none other than our Head of State, the Queen.

However, from the moment the forms were signed until this very day our efforts to ensure such words spoke the truth have been doomed to failure. The failures saw several near death experiences for mam. She was turned into a zombie, evicted from her treatment program, suffered debilitating and embarrassing side effects – there is no doubt my mother earned her title of Lady E given to her by her second husband – robbed of her inheritance and her ability to find where her husband was buried, deemed divorced when she wasn't, and denied her British, US and UK benefits that included two widows pensions being spent how she would want them to be spent, to name just a few of the consequences of believing the Ontario Governments big bold commitment **YOU DECIDE WHO DECIDES.**

August 2004 saw me become incapable of walking, even with my cane, or staff as a lot call it because of my modern day prophet's role. I was unable at that time to care of my own personal needs and the doctors and specialists were seemingly at a loss to understand why my legs were stiff like pokers, I had lost the ability to walk, I could no longer sleep in our marriage bed because it shook like crazy all night from the spasms I was suffering and many other equally distressing symptoms. That was the beginning of the end for mam of such a brief time span in her life May, 2000 to August 2004 of a superb quality of life for her, where she was allowed to be the very special mam and grandma she was while she lived in our home on Ghent Avenue in Burlington. We had taken her to visit and say goodbye to her many dear friends and relatives in both England and Australia in 2000 and she had not had to visit an Emergency Room or take up a hospital bed once during this time frame. August, 2004, however, was the beginning of an energy renewed battle for Dave and I to enforce the Ontario government and its Canadian kissing cousins (the Feds) commitment YOU DECIDE WHO DECIDES.

July 26, 2005 saw mam admitted to a home next door to where we lived, Brantwood Lifecare Centre. The intention was - when I got better, as I knew I would, ("Hebrews 11 vs. 1 Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen" is mounted over our apartment door) - that she could walk the same path she had walked almost daily while living with us. Only this time it would lead to her family home rather than to the end of the street. The plans were all set but we had failed to reckon on the enemies of **YOU DECIDE WHO DECIDES**.

The administration of Brantwood Lifecare Centre chose not to honour mam's powers of attorney and refused to follow the plan of care that saw us as her powers of attorney who needed to consent to treatment and ensure she did not receive medications that we knew were harmful to her, such as ground up enteric coated aspirin.

Mam died April 9, 2006 after being evicted from her home, yet again, when Dave and I had been very clear that there was no consent for any hospital stay of more than a day or so as it would in all likelihood lead to her death. The Brantwood Life care Centre Administrator acknowledged that mam had a right to expect her powers of attorney, myself and Dave, to give consent for all her personal care and financial decisions but it did not stop her writing in the chart in the late hours of April 3, 2006, when she was normally home with her kids, the statement that saw mam evicted from her home and treatment program, yet again, but this time with fatal consequences.

We had brought mam home for a visit with a private support worker, April 3, 2006 and had to call in a doctor who had been tending to the needs of mam that were not being met by Brantford Lifecare Centre. Dr. Hamboyan, a treasure of a doctor in our minds, who operates House Calls MD and is we believe one of the founders of the future of good health care service in our community. He confirmed he also believed mam had CHF and pneumonia again and advised us to call 911 and get her to the emergency room at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital for confirming blood work and x-ray. We received the confirmation in the Emergency Room and believed it was in mam's best interests for her to stay in the emergency room overnight.

Before Dave and I left around 9:00 p.m. on that last Monday evening mam and I would spend together, at least on this earth, I had prayed while holding her hand that the Lord would grant her peace and asked Him to seriously consider whether mam had done more than her share as a mole in the health care system of Ontario. We left at around 9:00 pm and received a call from the emergency room at 9:30 pm advising that Brantwood Lifecare Centre, despite mam having the right to a 21 day medical leave, had discharged her and would not take her back. She died just six days later, on a Sunday evening after we were told she had contracted Norwalk virus symptoms that were in the hospital at that time.

Her body, which we believe is her legacy to the families of Canada, and perhaps the world, was sent to the Ontario Chief Coroner's Forensic Laboratory. The past Ontario Chief Coroner, Dr. James Young who set the process in place for us and the present Chief Coroner, Dr. Barry McLennan both know that we want an inquest given the evidence forever etched in our minds and contained in our files that leads us to believe mam's death was a homicide. We were expecting the post-mortem report to be available about three months after her death, but my expectations in terms of the delivery of reports others have to write have been known to be too high many times in the past.

We are also still waiting for the reserved judgment of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice with regard to our appeal of the decision of the Ontario Consent and Capacity Board that over-ruled mam's right boldly written on the power of attorney she had so trustingly and capably completed YOU DECIDE WHO DECIDES.

I hope I have been able to accomplish one of the goals of this workshop today and to have you understand that encouragement and support is a psychiatric survival tool that should not be put in place when all else fails. Rather it should be the first problem solving technique instituted to remove those who come to you as a DSM criteria statistic from the seemingly endless list it has become. I know my theory is not new and is shared by many especially in this type of environment but for many others in the world we live in, it is an unknown concept and is often times laughed off as the optimistic dream world so many with psychiatric problems seem to live in.

Mam's dear friends and ours Fred and Barbara Jones were the hosts for our visit to England together in 2000. Fred wrote the following poem as a tribute to mam. Whenever you see daffodils we hope you will remember our dear mam, Eva Bourgoin, and pray for our success in our continuing and now international efforts to ensure everyone's right to DECIDE WHO DECIDES.

EVA

Heaven needed someone
To lighten up the way
So Angels called for Eva
And spirited her away

The sky is now much brighter
Just raise your eyes above
Some would say the answer
Is because of Eva's love

It may feel sad to lose her
But the angels know just why
It is wrong to try and hold her
We must learn to say goodbye

Her inner soul and laughter
Strengthened every day
As she shared her life amongst us
And watched the children play

Now daffodils at springtime
Will never be the same
As each new bulb that opens
Will flower in her name

Eva was a friend of ours
She holds a special place
We will keep her love in memory
Of gentleness and grace
Fred and Barbara
xx

Anne Marsden (Mrs.)
October 7, 2006