

MindFreedom^{journal}

Spring 2008

www.MindFreedom.org

Join a nonviolent revolution in mental health



photo by James Becker

Members of the MindFreedom Youth Committee. From left: Ishi, Lotus, MindFreedom's new Youth Coordinator Martin Rafferty, Iana, and Skye. Martin's story is on page 3.

**Support Youth
Survivors of
Mental Health
Human Rights
Violations!**

Mad Pride!

**Humane
Alternatives to
the Mental Health
System!**

**How Psychiatric
Drug Money
Dominates the
Media!**



**Much More News:
www.mindfreedom.org**

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Published by MFI

MFI Wins Campaigns for Human Rights and Alternatives in Mental Health

MindFreedom International unites thousands of individual members. The majority of MindFreedom's membership, board, and staff are psychiatric survivors. However, membership is open to everyone who supports our human rights goals. Advocates, mental health professionals, family members, and the general public are all valued members and leaders in the MindFreedom community.

MindFreedom International (MFI) unites 100 grassroots organizations. Each Sponsor Group or Affiliate has a liaison on the MFI Support Coalition Advisory Council.

MFI is rooted in a global movement to change the mental health system. MFI is one of the few groups in the mental health field that is independent with no funding from or links to governments, mental health providers, drug companies, religious organizations, etc. Funding is entirely from members like you, and a very few foundations.

MFI's mission: "In a spirit of mutual

cooperation, MindFreedom International leads a nonviolent revolution of freedom, equality, truth, and human rights that unites people affected by the mental health system with movements for justice everywhere."

If you are not yet a member, become a member or donate, now! If you are already a member, consider an early renewal donation. MindFreedom is a non-profit organization under IRS 501(c)(3) and your donation is tax-deductible. (To join or donate, see www.MindFreedom.org.)



You are also encouraged to check out our Mad Market of books and products at www.MadMarket.org. Proceeds support this human rights work.

You can now also download a free copy of our MindFreedom brochure! You can then print it out and distribute it to inform people about MFI campaigns for human rights and humane alternatives in the mental health system. It is available at: www.mindfreedom.org/brochure.

MFI Welcomes Martin Rafferty and Jeremy Bensman

There were two new additions to the MindFreedom office in 2007. Martin Rafferty joined the team in January and is currently both MindFreedom's Office Manager and Youth Coordinator. A psychiatric survivor – see this issue's cover story! – Martin writes: "I am passionate about change, and passionate about including youth in that change... I am excited about taking a strong stance against the abuse that is happening in our mental health care system. Taking that stance is important work, even though so much more must be done." And in September Jeremy Bensman became the new Director of Member Services. Jeremy recently obtained an M.A. in philosophy from the University of Oregon, where he studied social justice issues and the work of Michel Foucault. He writes: "It has been exciting to be able to meet and correspond with so many talented people working with so much heart for human rights in mental health. The world needs more independent voices like these! If you're interested in finding out how to become more active in MindFreedom, let us know at office@mindfreedom.org."



*Director of Member Services
Jeremy Bensman*

MindFreedom
Human Rights in Mental Health www.mindfreedom.org

Please join!

**www.MindFreedom.org
office@MindFreedom.org**

MindFreedom International
454 Willamette, Suite 216
P.O. Box 11284
Eugene, OR 97440-3484 U.S.A.
phone: (541) 345-9106
toll free in USA: 1-877-MAD-PRIDE
fax: (541) 345-3737

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Board: Celia Brown (President), Ted Chabasinski, Judi Chamberlin, Krista Erickson, Janet Foner, Al Galves, Mary Maddock, Matt Morrissey.

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Desktop publishing: mckenzieprintersguild@yahoo.com

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Youth Voices For Choices

BY MARTIN RAFFERTY

At the time MindFreedom launched its youth campaign, Youth Voices For Choices, I was twenty years old. As a youth, I myself experienced forced drugging. A nurse actually shoved a stick in my mouth to make sure I swallowed my pills. My voice as a youth was not heard. I said no, they said yes. Eventually, when they gave me water to take the pills with, I started taping the pills under the paper cup. I had no idea that there was an organization like MindFreedom fighting for my right to choose.

Most people don't believe that youth talk seriously about this issue, or think that if they did the discussions

would be very shallow. Assumptions like these reflect the oppression of youth in our culture. The Youth Voices For Choices campaign is countering this oppression by offering new and exciting ways for youth to use their voice.

Our international efforts will involve creating a more vibrant online community. Sites like YouTube and MySpace are very popular in the youth culture. MindFreedom has taken advantage of this by inspiring youth to create content around voice. You can already see some examples of this on our website. Humorous skits and serious stories are given, as well as a complete conversation with a group of seven youth with very diverse backgrounds. This is just part of our plan to create a presence for youth in our movement!

This year our youth campaign is also addressing mental health screening in public school systems. We will release a Teen Screen Manual to educate students, teachers, and parents about a system designed to put millions of children on dangerous drugs.

Mental Health Legal Advocacy & Activism Task Force Warns Forcing Psychiatric Drugs Can Increase Violence

Promising to fight what they call pervasive and harmful violations of mental health clients who are involuntarily drugged and electroshocked in the United States, the Law Project for Psychiatric Rights (PsychRights) and the MindFreedom Shield Campaign announced a joint Task Force on Mental Health Legal Advocacy & Activism. The new partnership of law and nonviolent direct action has an initial focus in California, Massachusetts, and New York.

PsychRights' President Jim Gottstein declared, "People's rights in forced drugging proceedings are ignored as a matter of course, resulting in great harm to them and decreased public safety." David Oaks, Director of MindFreedom International, noted, "Violence by a few individuals labeled 'mentally ill' has led to a backlash calling for a massive increase in forced psychiatric drugging."

Mr. Gottstein added, "Contrary to public perception, forcing people to take psychiatric drugs can

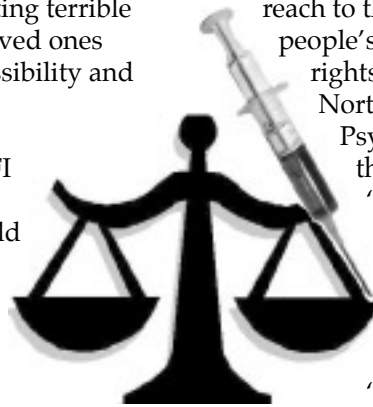
often increase violence, rather than decrease it. If people were warned that both taking and withdrawing from these drugs can at times contribute to committing terrible acts, they and their loved ones can be alert to the possibility and tragedies averted."

Krista Erickson, MFI board member and Chair of the MFI Shield Campaign, said, "I'm excited about MFI and PsychRights expanding our partnership and focusing the combined power of legal advocacy and activism on specific cases." The MFI Shield Campaign supports the wishes of a member to be free of involuntary mental health intervention with an international "Solidarity Network" of advocates. The new Task Force plans to use both the court of law and the court of public opinion.

Task Force organizers say the combination of PsychRights'

expertise for strategic litigation and the "people power" of MindFreedom activists around the country will bring a synergy and geographic reach to their demands for people's legal and human rights. Daniel Hazen, Northeast Coordinator with PsychRights, added, "In the United States the 'mental health' industry is a labeling system that often dismisses self-determination, legal capacity, and alternatives. 'Treatment' can be forced through the court systems. People ought to have their day in court but this is often far from what actually occurs."

The Law Project for Psychiatric Rights is a public interest law firm devoted to the defense of people facing the "horrors of unwarranted forced psychiatric drugging and other forced psychiatric procedures." Find out more about PsychRights at www.psychrights.org.



MAD PRIDE

MindFreedom welcomes Ruth of The Friendly Spike Theatre and John McCarthy of MindFreedom Ireland, as the new co-chairs of the Mad Pride 2008 campaign!

Here are just a few highlights from Mad Pride events in 2007. More information about Mad Pride can be found online at: www.mindfreedom.org/campaign/madpride/.

South Africa

For the first time this year, a Mad Pride event was held in Capetown, South Africa. A small crowd gathered to celebrate near District Six, a site of forced removals during the apartheid era. Members of the Cape Consumer Advocacy Body (CCAB), World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP), and IAACM convened. Good weather and an excellent sunrise helped to keep us all in good spirits before marching to Parliament and staging a vigil and picket for the victims of coercive psychiatric abuse. A memorandum is on its way to parliamentarians. Read more at: southafrica.indymedia.org/news/2007/07/12612.php.



MindFreedom Ghana celebrates Mad Pride

The Great Escape Bed Push

On Saturday, July 14, activists in Canada and England participated in a bed push, simulating an escape from forced treatment. A bed push was also held by the Freedom Center in Northampton, Massachusetts, on Sunday, July 29. This was the third Bed Push in England but the first in Canada and the US. For more details see: www.bedpush.com.

Ghana

For the second year, Mad Pride was celebrated in Ghana. Activists held a 260 person strong, 5 kilometer March for Dignity and Human Rights in Psychiatry, marching

through the center Accra amid music and dancing. We printed and distributed T-shirts and caps to the marchers, and printed 3,000 fliers that were distributed to people along the way. A petition was delivered to the Minister of Health before the march concluded with a cultural event in Independence Square.

Ireland

MindFreedom Ireland member John McCarthy celebrated Mad Pride by standing in the general election, the first ex-user of the system to do so in Ireland. John writes, "I like to think we won the campaign and lost the election... The function now is to keep that debate ongoing."

MindFreedom's Truth in Media Campaign

BY JOHN M. RYAN,
CHAIR, MFI MEDIA COMMITTEE

The purpose of the MFI Media Committee is to serve as a "watchdog" for articles or material put out by TV, magazines, or newspaper columnists that are at variance with the principles of MindFreedom. When I encounter such an article, I write the author or the network, or someone associated with the article, and state my objections to the assertions in the article.

You have all seen them: Articles stating that depression is due to a

"chemical imbalance in the brain"; articles favoring forced drugging, or forced psychiatric incarceration, or forced outpatient treatment; articles giving false praise to psychiatric drugs.

I could use some assistance, either in spotting offenders, writing the retorts, or both. I can't see everything. If you are content to just spot offenders, send me the article or a link to the article. If you want to write a retort yourself, by all means do so, subject only to MindFreedom's general guidelines -- keep it civil, keep it on the issue, keep it short. One ordinary page or less should suffice.

Often the writers of these articles know little about science or medicine and uncritically just repeat what some psychiatrist, doctor, or other health care professional tells them regarding the subject. My belief is that authors are largely unaware that there is any opposition to the opinion(s) stated by the "professional." If no one voices any objections, they will continue to parrot whatever is told them by "professionals." But if they are made aware that there is opposition to the assertions in their articles, they may in the future write more balanced articles on these topics.

Anyone desiring to help should email me at: media@mindfreedom.org.

MindFreedom Begins Affiliate Drive

MindFreedom has launched a campaign to start 20 new affiliates in 2008. What is an affiliate? It's simple! An affiliate uses the "MindFreedom" name, and is similar to a chapter. An affiliate is based on local geography. For instance, there is a MindFreedom Maine and a MindFreedom Ghana.

You don't need a large number of people or resources to begin. Mary Maddock of MindFreedom Ireland writes, "All you need to form an affiliate are a few good, hardworking people you can trust... You should try to have as little bureaucracy as possible with the emphasis on working together and respecting each other's opinions."

And if you have questions - whether it's wondering what's next after a great success or what to do when you've come up against unexpected

obstacles, MindFreedom is here to help. Our new MF-Grassroots email list makes it easy for our affiliates, whether just starting out or engaged in moving to the next level, to communicate with one another and share ideas. As Frank Blankenship, the chair of the new MFI Affiliate Support Committee writes, "Networking with other members of MindFreedom International who are working on forming affiliates can help us to circumvent, and to deal with, some of the obstacles that are sure to crop up in the course of building affiliates. There is no need to isolate oneself from others in our movement when a connection with a colleague is as close as the keyboard of a computer."

Starting an affiliate can be a rewarding experience. As Mary Maddock writes, "I have found becoming an affiliate of MindFreedom International



New MFI board member Mary Maddock and MFI UN representative John McCarthy attend a protest with MindFreedom Ireland in Cork, Ireland.

very empowering and supportive. It has helped me in my recovery from psychiatric abuse and it has also given me the strength to encourage and support other psychiatric survivors both nationally and internationally."

If you would like to learn more, please visit the affiliate and sponsor page on our website at: www.mindfreedom.org/as.



Janet Foner, Will Brady, and Jim Maddock speak at the MindFreedom Wisdom House Conference

BY JANET FONER, CHAIR, MFI CHOICE COMMITTEE

The MindFreedom Conference was held in July 2007 at Wisdom House, a beautiful retreat center in rural Connecticut. It was a gathering of people from many countries, mostly new to each other and to MindFreedom, who had a lot to share about alternative recovery processes and places.

The MindFreedom Wisdom House Conference

An important goal that emerged from the conference was the creation of an on-line directory of agencies and groups that provide alternatives to mainstream mental health care. This network will include MindFreedom sponsors, and will also welcome other organizations that offer these services.

Virtually all of the participants were very satisfied with the conference, and at least ten or more people said that this was the best they had ever attended. The organizers functioned

like a well-oiled machine, although definitely human! Celia Brown, as Conference Coordinator, was well supported by Matt Morrissey and Florence Brown. The MindFreedom office staff and volunteers, including David Oaks, Martin Rafferty, and Violet Oaks, are also deeply appreciated. Additionally, MFI Board members Judi Chamberlin and Al Galves, as well as many volunteers at the conference, pitched in to make sure things went well. Thank you!



When Alternatives 2007 conference was held in St. Louis, a number of MindFreedom members held a "Normality Screening." No normality was found!

Our Poetry Stirs - Poetic Justice

BY BONNIE SCHELL

Definitions: Different, Discounted, and Diminished
People who are different enough to make a unique contribution to society are told that they suffer discrimination and are stigmatized. These poets challenge the language we have all bought that we are less than... Our poetry stirs.



Poetry Editor Bonnie Schell

HAROLD A. MAIO

Diminishment

"The truth is at my core I do not truly believe
I am fully human." – Ed Cooper

People walked to the front of the bus,
Literally and figuratively,
Mindlessly accepting status
Mindlessly denying that status to others.
I raise my Voice to address Word that hurts,
Knowing in my lifetime I will never defeat it
As it was by women and African Americans.
At the end of each day
When depression rules my mind,
I know I have lost.
Each morning when it is again light,
I sit at the computer, search the web news
For diminishment and address it. Like the Black Press before me,
Fighting oppression and segregation
In a land dedicated to equality,
I have little effect upon the diminishment,
But one day, who knows?
Society has changed before,
Influenced by Voice, society
Has altered, reformed itself.
Maybe again.

TOM GREENING

Mental Illness (Sic)

There is one thing that I abhor:
a badly misused metaphor
Thus I have really had my fill
of being told my mind is "ill."
Do not tell me that my brain
is *ganz vermischt* and quite insane....
I get violent perforce
if you mix levels of discourse.
Please use our language as permitted
or I'll have miscreants committed.
(c) Tom Greening 2007

MAMA JOY

Words about Us

Psychologically speaking,
we're all quite insane.
Financially speaking,
we're a taxpayer's drain.
Medically speaking,
we all should be drugged
Politically speaking,
they want us all bugged.
Anthropologically speaking,
we've always been around.
Legally speaking,
we all should be found.
Individually speaking,
we're not the ones to fear.
But, popularly speaking,
they wish we'd disappear.
(c) Mama Joy 2005



Fundraising in 2008

BY AL GALVES, CHAIR,
MFI DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

We've got a big job ahead. We've committed ourselves to working for a non-violent revolution in the mental health system. How are we going to do that?

We're going to encourage, support, illuminate, and help build alternate ways of helping people who are experiencing spiritual emergencies, emotional crises, difficult life dilemmas, frustration, and hard times.

We're going to help people whose human rights are being threatened by the mental health system. We do that by maintaining the MindFreedom Shield, a solidarity network of people with advanced directives against forced treatment who are committed to help each other avoid such maltreatment. We do that by helping individuals whose right to informed consent is being violated.

We're going to put pressure on governments to use the money they spend on mental health in ways that are safe, humane, and effective rather than harmful, oppressive, and ineffective.

We've got a lot on our plate and our plate isn't nearly big enough to hold it all. So the Development Committee is raising additional funds for MindFreedom. We're applying to foundations, contacting members whose memberships have lapsed, building a cadre of potential major donors, and developing ongoing relationships with them.

Thankfully, a group of members have agreed to help. They include: Krista Erickson, Mary Ellen Gottlieb, Chaya Grossberg, Chris Hansen, Tom Hughes, Harry Lichtenstein, Cathy Seitz and Vonne Worth.

Together we're going to get this job done.

We Welcome a Diversity of Members

BY DAVID OAKS, DIRECTOR,
MINDFREEDOM INTERNATIONAL

Because MindFreedom chooses to be independent from funding or control from corporations, drug companies, the mental health industry, or government, MFI relies on members, members, members. Mutual support between our members and coalition organizations is MFI's engine.

I want to emphasize that the MFI community invites and welcomes all kinds of members. This diversity is more than a good idea, it's a necessity.

• Time

If you are so busy with your life at the moment that the most you can do is donate annually and perhaps participate in the occasional e-mail alert campaign, you are welcome. Or if you would like to become very active on a particular campaign committee, or form an affiliate, you are also welcome.

• Belief

We are united in our support for human rights, but our diversity is our strength. If you believe in counseling, or do not believe in it... If you take vitamins for your recovery, or you do not... If you use spirituality for your well being, or you do not... You are welcome. If your personal health care decision is to take prescribed psychiatric drugs each day, or if you swear you will never take psychiatric drugs the rest of your life, you are welcome.

• Identity

Yes, a majority of our members, according to a survey, identify as psychiatric survivors. But if you are a psychiatrist or attorney or family member or just an interested member of the public, you are welcome.

• Geography

While we started in the USA, we

have leaders and organizations and members all over the world. We encourage involvement from outside the USA.

• Persistence

I'm asked what sustains my own personal efforts. For one thing, over the years I keep going back to core values. For example, I keep returning to excerpts from Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s sermons. Lately I've been studying what MLK called the "transformed nonconformist." Clearly, our organization's interest in freedom of mind means that we support nonconformity. But MLK called for us nonconformists to go further.

Simple nonconformity can lead to bitterness, alienation, hopelessness, and anger about our greater world and society. MLK warned that this kind of nonconformity can lead us to "speaking irresponsible words which estrange without reconciling and from making hasty judgments which are blind to the necessity of social process." A transformed nonconformist seeks to transcend this automatic impulse to division and isolation.

MLK said, "This hour in history needs a dedicated circle of transformed nonconformists."

As many of you know, MindFreedom



MindFreedom Director
David Oaks

has helped launch a dream that MLK referred to in many speeches and essays. He said the world is

in dire need of a new organization, the International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment, or IAACM. While the IAACM is a concept, it also needs to be a true reality. MFI's support of Mad Pride campaigns is one way for us all to support a global nonviolent revolution for human rights, empowerment and self-determination.

If you are considering whether or not to join MindFreedom, please know you are welcome. If you are already a member, please know your leadership at whatever level you seek is encouraged. If you have tried before, but due to MFI's grassroots nature this was challenging, don't give up. Keep trying. Please know we welcome all transformed nonconformists for creative maladjustment!

BIOELECTRICHEALTH.ORG
Where the Knowledge Meets the Node
Please RUB* Here



To learn how to use
Readily obtained nutritional substances
To naturally, continuously recharge
The bioelectric power supplies
OF Organic Shoulder Top Computers
To help maximize and maintain
Their ability to perform optimally.
*Rub like a Disc!

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MindFreedom International New MadMarket Website!

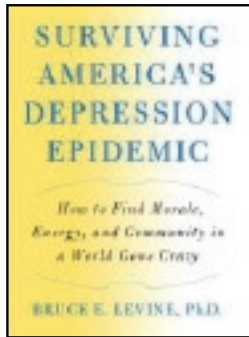
From rubber chickens and normality screening kits to the best new books on alternatives and human rights in mental health, the MadMarket has everything you need to stay informed, to work for change, and to just have fun.

All proceeds from the MadMarket benefit MindFreedom's campaigns for human rights.



Alternatives Beyond Psychiatry
Edited by Peter Stastny and Peter Lehmann

Sixty-one (ex-)users and survivors of psychiatry, therapists, psychiatrists, lawyers, social scientists and relatives from all continents report about their alternative work, their objectives and successes, their individual and collective experiences.



Surviving America's Depression Epidemic
By Bruce E. Levine, Ph.D.

The rate of depression in the U.S. has increased more than tenfold in the last fifty years. The good news is that age-old wisdom and legitimate science - uncorrupted by the profit-margin pressures of pharmaceutical and insurance corporations - have much to inform us about revitalizing depressed people and a depressing culture.

www.madmarket.org

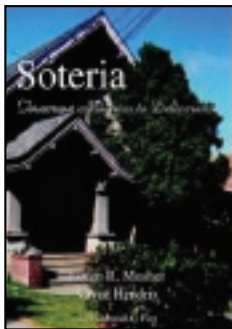


A Fight to Be
By Ronald Bassman, Ph.D.

A story of courage, determination, hope and possibility, Dr Bassman's unique insight from both sides of the locked door challenges readers to open their minds and their hearts, reexamine assumptions,

discard limitations and embrace possibilities.

www.madmarket.org



Soteria: Through Madness to Deliverance
By Loren R. Mosher and Voyce Hendrix

This book recounts a noble experiment to alleviate oppression and suffering without destroying their victims. An experiment that was shut down by drug companies based purely on its success. This is an immensely impressive and moving book, full of vivid clinical and personal detail, a book which inspires and reminds us all of what can be achieved in the treatment of mental illness.

Your support funds MindFreedom campaigns for human rights and humane alternatives in mental health care

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\$20 (recommended low-income minimum) other: \$ _____

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You may also donate on-line at any time using the secure form at www.MindFreedom.org.