

SECOND OPINION

Winter 2010

In Memoriam: Peter Krcmar

Peter Krcmar (Kramer) passed away on the morning of January 29, 2009, after a brave struggle with liver cancer. Peter, a longtime member of the SOS Board of Directors and a loyal friend of the organization, was sixty-seven.

Peter was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, midway through World War 2, the eldest of three sons. A free spirit during the years of Soviet domination of Czechoslovakia, he perfected a personal variation of speed-reading, which he called speed-talking during his high school years, the better to slip in his own little digs about Soviet political orthodoxy, over the heads of his teachers. After high school, he put his creativity to use when he was selected to study at film school.

During his years of compulsory service in the Czech Army, he trained as a cook and baker. The disruption of the Prague Spring, its brief flowering of Czech liberalization, and the subsequent Soviet invasion in August 1968, gave him the opportunity and motivation to leave his homeland, never to return.

First settling in Paris, France, he was eventually able to emigrate to Canada, arriving in Montreal in April of 1969.

He ended up in Whitehorse in the early '70s working as a camp cook for various diamond drilling operations, moving on to cooking in the Alberta oil patch and then on to NWT and high Arctic camps through to the late '70s. He then alternated between cooking in Alberta and the Yukon throughout the '80s and into the early '90s.



***Peter On His 66th Birthday
– April 2008***

Peter was a longtime resident of the Shipyards through to the mid '90s, when this close-knit community was bulldozed to make way for what is now Whitehorse's Shipyards Park.

Former Shipyards residents have fond memories of the huge pots of Hungarian goulash Peter would make and serve to them all, and the way his speech itself would become a veritable goulash of English and Czech all mixed together when he became excited.

Peter could be seen frequently around town, greeting friends in his rapid-fire delivery heavy Czech accent, and always had a smile for everyone. He is missed especially by his friends at Second Opinion Society, where he served for many years on the SOS Board of Directors, cooked and presided over the annual Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners.

Former SOS co-coordinator Gisela Sartori expressed Peter's significance to SOS:

“ What stands out for me is how much SOS meant to Peter, how much SOS became his home and family over the years...Peter got so much enjoyment out of contributing to life at SOS, giving back as much as he could.

I think of all the garbage pick-ups, fundraising events, the community garden, all the celebrations we had at SOS over the years.

Peter was always there helping, contributing, entertaining...Peter will forever be part of my memories of my life at SOS and the Yukon, and I will forever appreciate his loving and caring heart.”

Former SOS board member Bruce Whittington also conveyed his appreciation for Peter's role at SOS:

“I'm really sorry to hear that Peter is gone, and I'm also happy to know that he enjoyed so much kindness and support from all of you in these last weeks. It was a pleasure to be part of his life, and his community, and I got a lot out of him being part of mine...

Peter was always a warm, kind, engaged presence at SOS...I'm really glad to hear that he got so much love and care from all of you. I know that all of you were what made that happen, and I also know that Peter's openness, warmth and appreciation were what drew all of us to him.”

Peter was known to so many people in Whitehorse, and although he was well aware of the seriousness of his condition, his cheerful presence and goodwill toward all never flagged. There's no doubt that he will truly be missed by many.

Paxil Makers Face \$1.5-Billion Lawsuit in UK In 2010

-Brian Eaton

Pharmaceutical company Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK), the makers of the antidepressant drug Paxil, are facing starting off the new year with a possible \$1.5-billion class action fine against them in the UK.

It's estimated that the company has already paid out almost \$1-billion to date to settle Paxil lawsuits against it. The total includes \$390 million for suicides or attempts allegedly associated with the drug, another \$200 million to settle cases linked to Paxil addiction and birth defects, and another \$400 million to settle antitrust and fraud actions.

Now, it looks as if Paxil (generic name paroxetine) claims this year could come to at least \$1.5 billion, as the result of a British class action that closed January 15.

In Britain, the drug is known as Seroxat, and it accounted for over \$2.7 billion in sales annually in 2004 and over \$1 billion in 2007 for its UK-based manufacturer Glaxo Smith Kline.

Since the drug was first approved for use by the US Federal Drug Administration in 1992, no less than 5,000 American citizens have sued Glaxo Smith Kline.

The British Medical Journal wrote in 2002, “This drug has been promoted for years as safe and easy to discontinue...The fact that it can cause intolerable withdrawal symptoms of the kind that could lead to dependence is enormously important to patients, doctors, investors and the company.

Glaxo Smith Kline has evaded the issue since it was granted a license for paroxetine over 10 years ago, and the drug has become a blockbuster for them, generating about a tenth of their entire revenue. The company has been promoting paroxetine directly to consumers as ‘non-habit forming’ for far too long.”

EFT: Relief Is Just A Tap Away

A simple yet effective and inexpensive technique is revolutionizing the world of self-care. SOS staffer Susan Gwynne-Timothy is offering free weekly workshops in Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), and she outlined in a recent interview the workings of this method of conquering stress, breaking harmful habits and restoring self-confidence, among other benefits.

EFT works on basically the same principle as acupuncture does.

“Our bodies have energy lines running along them that the Chinese have known about for thousands of years, i.e. the meridians. Energy flows through them, in effect doing loops around our bodies”, says Gwynne-Timothy.

“If something bad happens, like an injury or bad experience, the energy flow gets disrupted, and then either becomes blocked, or you have even no energy at all in that spot, and so the energy flowing through that entire meridian no longer runs smoothly.

With Emotional Freedom Technique, you rebalance and restart the energy flow, just by tapping. You tap the end-points of important meridians, in particular the top of your lip and the bottom of your lip, the junctures of the body’s central meridian, which goes over your head and down your back...If you tap those points, you’ll get the energy moving again and rebalanced, and that’s why acupuncture is so good, because people need to get unblocked and rebalanced.

In addition, EFT combines saying an affirmation with tapping these particular meridian points. You free up the stuck energy, rebalance the flow, and you also supply a new pattern that is more healthy and more positive than the previous one.”

The originator of the EFT technique is a 69-year-old ordained minister and Stanford engineering graduate named Gary Craig, who describes himself in these words:

"I have been intensely interested in personal improvement via psychology since age 13. That was when I recognized that the quality of my thoughts was mirrored in the quality of my life.

Since then I have been self-taught in this field, seeking only those procedures that, in my opinion, produced results. EFT is my latest finding, the core of which I learned from Dr. Roger Callahan.

I also have high regard for Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), in which I am a certified Master Practitioner".

Callahan, Craig's mentor, is a popular author and psychologist with a doctorate in clinical psychology from Syracuse University. His books include Tapping the Healer Within and The Five-Minute Phobia Cure.

To learn more about EFT, plan to attend one of Susan's free introductory workshops, 12:00 pm Tuesday afternoons at SOS.

Advocate Judi Chamberlin Dies

Joseph Shapiro –NPR News



January 19, 2010 - Judi Chamberlin, who died this weekend at age 65, was a civil rights hero from a civil rights movement you may have never heard of.

She took her inspiration from the heroes of other civil rights movements to start something she liked to call Mad Pride — a movement for the rights and dignity of people with mental illness.

It started in 1966, when Chamberlin was 21 years old and seeing her doctor because she was dealing with a deep depression. "After a while, he suggested I sign myself into a hospital because I was just not functioning, I was so depressed. And I just thought, 'Oh a hospital's a place where you get help.' And you know, I'd been in hospitals for surgery and things like that, and didn't think of it as having anything to do with your fundamental rights. So I just said, 'OK, I'll try it.' "

Chamberlin told her story in a 2006 interview with Will Hall, host of Madness Radio, a program by people like Chamberlin who call themselves "psychiatric survivors."

"And very quickly, [I] found out that once you sign papers to go in on a voluntary basis, but then you can't leave when you want to leave, which was absolutely shocking to me," she said.

She got out of that state hospital and moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, where she lived with other people who'd been diagnosed with mental illness but who'd then gotten government money to develop their own treatments. She recovered and eventually moved to Boston, where she started working with other former American patients who wanted to change the system. They called themselves the Mental Patients Liberation Front.

"When I arrived at this storefront in Cambridge, Mass., I was a senior Harvard student, had been locked up five times, so I was referred by Harvard to volunteer there," recalls David Oaks, who came to the group in 1976. "And I walked in, and it was a little radical ragtag group, Mental Patients Liberation Front. And Judi was right in the thick of folks, just really warm, community organizer."

Oaks now runs his own advocacy group, MindFreedom International. Chamberlin was a mentor. "One thing she immediately helped teach a lot of people was basic 101 about mental health liberation: That we're equal; that we have rights."

Chamberlin put that basic thinking into a book called *On Our Own*, which published in 1978. In it, she argued that, as she'd experienced in Canada, just the ability to have some say in your own treatment was a key part of making that treatment work.

Chamberlin's book became a manifesto for other patients. But it influenced lots of people in the mental health establishment, too. Today, notes Oaks, it's common for people with mental illness to have a say. "Most U.S. states now have an office of mental health consumer affairs or something to hear the voice of mental health clients," says Oaks. "And it certainly is people like Judi that did that."

Robert Whitaker, the author of *Mad in America*, a history of the treatment of people with mental illness in America, says Chamberlin was "a seminal figure in the rise of the consumer movement." She was able to get across the patient's

point of view in a way that was strong, but also clear. And that appealed to people in the mental health field who were often the target of her criticism.

"Judi was fierce, incredibly fierce," says Whitaker. "And by that I mean she knew her mind, she spoke her mind, and she didn't worry if she offended people who were listening."

Chamberlin, he says, was irreverent, "brilliant" and "a joy to be around." He also says she was "incredibly brave," because "it obviously takes a lot of bravery to confront a society that's had a different belief before."

Chamberlin told people with mental illness that they were, like everyone else, people with quirks and differences, but with strengths and abilities, too. She wanted people to reclaim the description "mad" as something that was OK.

"She changed it from a word that was a pejorative word," says Whitaker. "That was saying to the world at large: We are worthy individuals, and our minds are worthy, and they're to be respected."

Chamberlin even used "mad pride" as her e-mail address. "And you can see the historical echoes with 'black pride' as well," says Whitaker. "It absolutely followed in the footsteps of the civil rights movement."

Chamberlin traveled the world as an advocate, even in the months before her death. She worked at Boston University on mental health issues and started a center with federal funding to support other psychiatric survivors.

More recently, Judi Chamberlin faced another illness: lung disease. And last year, when her insurance company told her she'd exhausted her hospice benefit, she faced going into a nursing home.

She started a blog she called Life as a Hospice Patient about her fight to die at home. Last Saturday night, she died as she wished: at home, in her favorite chair, surrounded by friends and family.

SOS To Host Self-Care Conference

With the aid of a grant from the Yukon Community Development Fund, Second Opinion Society will host a three-day conference with the theme "Listen to Yourself and Your Body: Self-Care Approaches to Mental Wellness".

The conference takes place the weekend of May 7-9, 2010, and will be held at the Sport Yukon and Golden Age Society building. There's no cost for the conference, and more details will be published in the next issue.

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Judi's Corner

February has been quiet compared with the past month. As many of you know, our precious Peter passed on.

I loved his funeral—not too churchy, lots of passion, just like he had. You knew that he was in attendance to make sure everything went right to his specifications. He was in charge!

It appeared that most if not all his friends were there in attendance to celebrate his life.

We celebrated the Winter Solstice and had our annual Boxing Day dinner on the same week, in which Peter celebrated with us. It was too exhausting for the cooks. This won't happen again.

Healing Circle was put on hold until May 2010. Healing Circle will be on Wednesdays.

Who We Are

It is incumbent upon humanity to accept us, who we are... We are not the dregs of society to be frowned upon... Nay, we are the special gifts from the creator, and even more if you happen to be gay, lesbian and bisexual, then you're doubly blessed. Frowning creates bad energy. We need good energy, please smile and accept our differences, because in the end we're all the same. God Bless You!

-- Judi Johnny

