

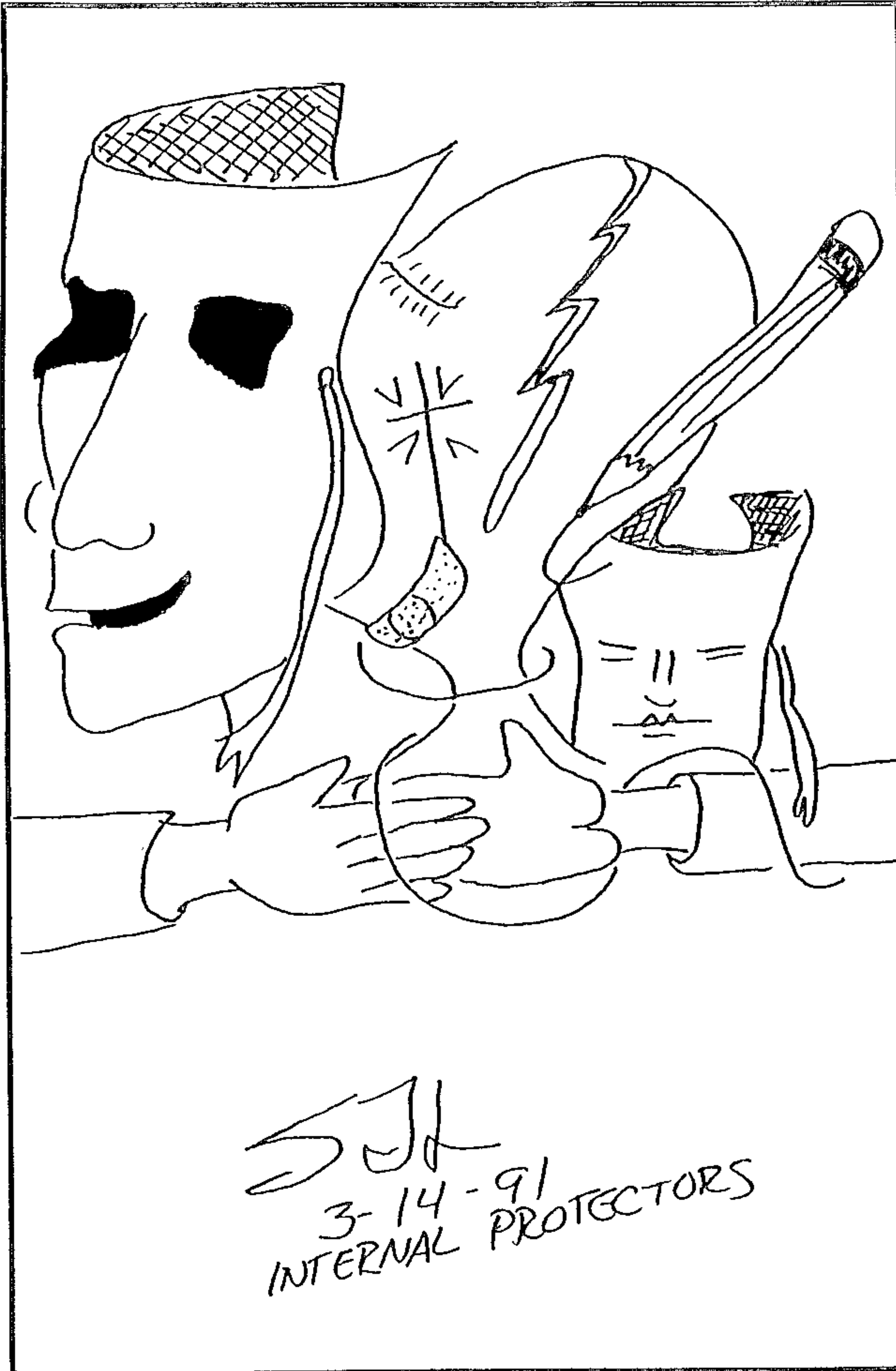
MANY VOICES

WORDS OF HOPE FOR CLIENTS WITH MPD AND DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

Vol. III, No. 3

June 1991

ISSN1042-2277



This issue, MV tries to offer help for the most troubled parts of all of us. We had excellent response from our readers, and though we didn't have room for all of your comments and suggestions, I think we have some very useful information. THANKS FOR SHARING!

I wish, though, that I had not used the term "Dark Side." in our theme-description. Several readers pointed out, appropriately, that the use of "dark" as a negative term is prejudicial. I agree with them, and if MV offended anyone by this use, I apologize for the distress. Using generalized symbols such as Light and Dark as a metaphor for Good and Evil is "too easy" I think. Anyone who personally visualizes their experience in such terms has a perfect right to do so, of course. The problem comes when an image such as "Dark Side" is used to describe troubling experiences en masse. I've attempted to correct my error via judicious editing and attention to headlines, etc. I hope you all accept this (belated) decision on my part.

More improvements: on page 3 you will note a small ad from the National Center for the Treatment of Dissociative Disorders. You will also note that this issue has 14 pages, not 12 as in the past. The first subject is the reason for the second, and we'll keep running 14 pages as long as it seems feasible. Thanks, Dr. Young!

— LW

Dear Light

By Mary C.C.

Dear Light beyond me

There is a distance from you
an unknown that I cannot reach —
I do not know you, hear you, or feel you
I do not trust that you even exist

My world feels like nothingness —
no reality to my day,
no rest to my night,
no nourishment to my body,
no comfort to my heart and soul.

There are children in me who were never loved,
never read bedtime stories,
never kissed, never held,
never looked in the eye with a compassionate smile,
never told that there would be a happy ending.

There are children in me who have no sense of identity,
no sense of belonging —
no concept of truth —
or of a heaven and hell.

My world is timeless —
it rushes with the wind,
it rages when it storms,
and is silent and forgotten,
when all is still

My cries were innocent
and sincere,
and in need of someone to hold me.
Today they are lost because
no one ever heard them.
Today they are demons that torment my heart,
my soul and my very existence

And it is today that my demons
are screaming . . .
they are rageful, confused, and lost
in hell
that binds my children in a relentless
fury or pain and agony and tremendous suffering.

There is much confusion, bodies trembling
in the night,
they are fighting for their lives, they are
killing one another.

There is no end to the beginning,
no sense to why we must exist.
Our worlds are forever in constant motion
no time to wonder,
feel, or question.

We lash out to you in anger.
We are weary and tired in our world of hate and fury.
We are dying of our own nonexistence
non-being and non-nothingness.

Where are you, Light beyond me
that must hear our cries
the echoes in the night
deep inside me
lost forever?

We are not peaceful angels,
but,
warriors with spears and arrows.
We do not trust or feel your presence —
we mask our loneliness and desperation.

The mask, our masks we must disguise.
Your light is bright, our eyes are burning.
We fear your power —
We turn away in pain —
We feel threatened in our childlike bodies.

All is separate.
None are one.
There are many of us.
There is much of nothing.

Outside myself —
outside my many parts,
I fly, I run, I split, I wish.
One child, she wonders as she hides in the forest
she sees the moon in the sky
cast its light on all of her world
cast its light and shadows appear.

It's dark and cold
but she is hidden and protected.
She sings her songs to the moon,
to the stars, to the light.

She is alone and no one hears
her gentle lullaby to the moon.
She is alone while she pretends
that her moon will come and rescue her.

It is only for a moment that she dreams
that her moon will love her.
It is only one moment beyond many other moments
but there is home in her aloneness.

She dances in the moonlight
so carefree yet with sadness.
She draws pictures of clouds and magic.
She waits to hear the moon applaud.

(cont'd on page 3)

(Light cont'd)

All is silent
there is no sound of recognition,
only light
that patiently waits for her heartfelt sadness.

The light becomes her enemy
it has no voice to comfort her
no voice that she needs so desperately to hear, to
understand.
to hold her.

She lets go of her dream of the love moon,
there is sadness for she is alone again.

My world is timeless —
it rushes with the wind.
it rages when it storms,
and is silent and forgotten
when all is still.

It is the moon that all is still —
my children may be silent,
but hopes and dreams
they may not be forgotten...
but hopes and dreams
that their voices will be heard and loved...
even for a moment.

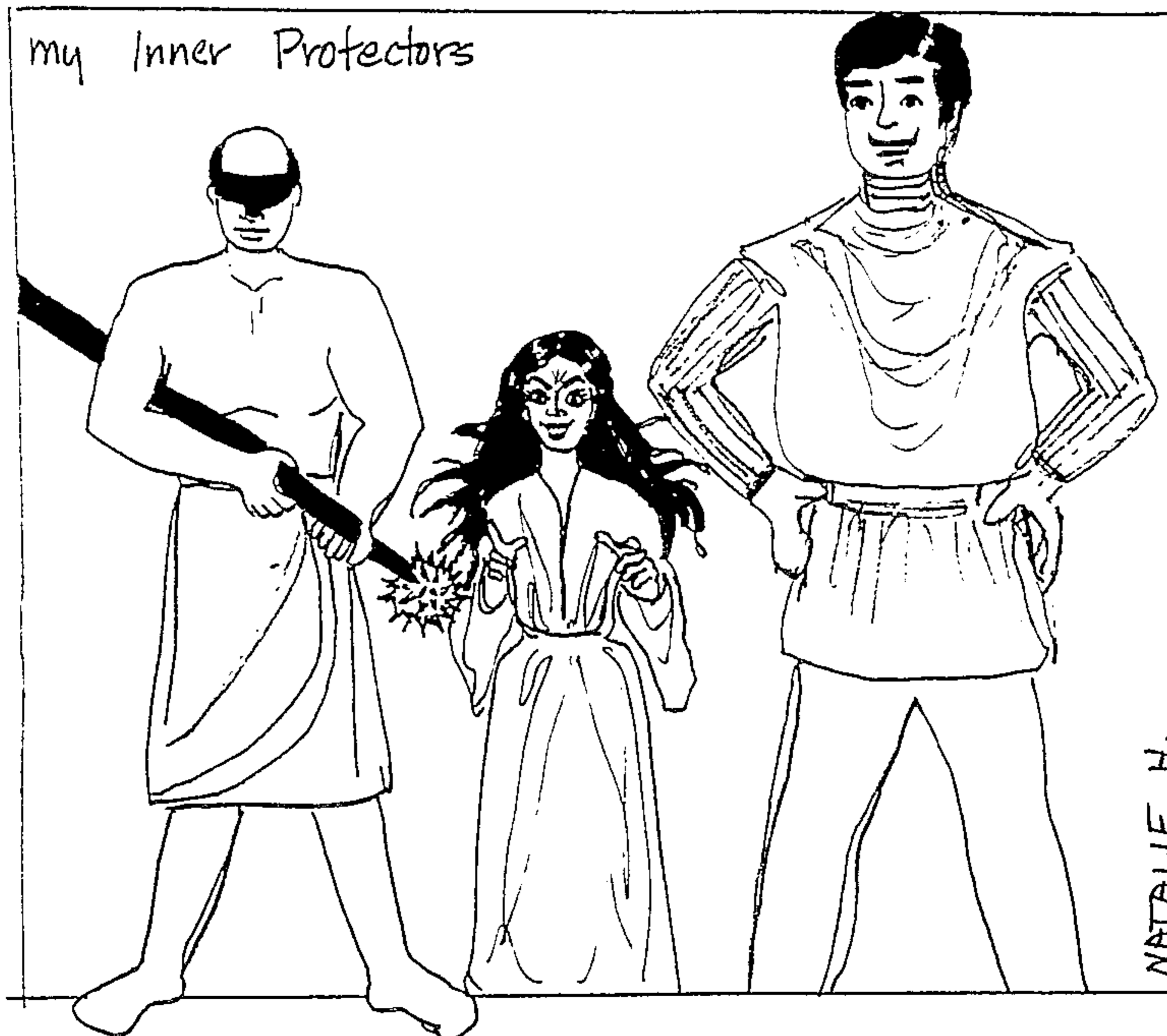
This issue is made possible in part by
a contribution from:

**The National Center for
the Treatment of
Dissociative Disorders**
4495 Hale Parkway #180
Denver, CO 80220-6204
(303) 370-6227
Walter C. Young, M.D.;
Clinical Director

The National Center is not affiliated with nor
does it have input to or control over the contents
of this publication

Contributors to this issue
deserve a special "Thank You." But
to those who could not contribute:
readers are also important. We are
all in different stages. Some feel
like communicating with the world.
Others are busy learning to
communicate with our therapists
or our selves. Everything we do to
help ourselves will help the world
around us. The healthier we
become, the more we can do for
ourselves and others.

— LW



Rita M., a practicing counselor and recovering MPD client, intended the following piece as her column in our last issue, but it was a little too long. Rather than shorten it, we've decided to use it as a Therapist's Page. Rita's column will appear again in our August 1991 issue. — LW

Therapists' Page

By Rita M.

In theory, stopping the cycle of child abuse is quite simple. *Love your children unconditionally.* Actually, doing this is far more complicated. Many of us simply don't have any idea of what "unconditional love" is. Why? We never got it. You can't give away what you don't have... or can you???

I never thought I wanted to have children, even before I remembered the trauma. After I began to remember, then I was really sure I could never have kids. I feared I would do to my own child what my mother did to me. Since most of the abuse was at the infant/toddler level (a real stressful period for all parents), I didn't think I could cope. What I came to learn through resolving those traumas was that once they were faced, the power they had over me evaporated. I learned how to be a good parent by learning to take care of myself... and by experiencing the unconditional love/positive regard I received from my therapist and recovering friends (both MPD and non-MPD.)

I had a client who was not MPD but had grown up in a violent alcoholic home where both parents drank, were physically and emotionally abusive. While he himself was not beaten, he was an unwilling witness to his older brother's brutal beatings. He grew up, went to college, married and had three children. I'll never forget his comment in group one day. He was talking about trying to be a parent in the absence of any positive role model. "I finally decided that when a crisis came up and I didn't know what to do, I just did the *opposite* of what my parents would have done." This might sound simple, but this guy has three great kids. Keeping it simple *works*

Another thing that stands out in my mind is *child development*. I had a client (again, not MPD but highly dissociative) with two small children. She came in with the following crisis: her husband left, she had to get a full time job, and was also dealing with much verbal and emotional abuse/manipulation from her husband. Of course, the chaos sent the children into all kinds of acting-out. Despite the fact that she was highly educated and worked in a skilled profession, she had no concept of what sort of behavior was normal for her children to be exhibiting, based on their ages.

Is this unusual? Not at all! Most people have no idea about the development stages of children. This can lead to great conflicts between parent and child. Solution: READ. Get yourself some education about the different stages, what the tasks of each stage are, and what ways you can help your child(ren) in successfully accomplishing these critical tasks in a way that also helps you to heal yourself.

I can recommend several good books: **Growing up Again: Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children**, authors Clarke & Dawson, is superb, easy to read, and concrete. I love this book and have encouraged all my clients to read it. I found it profoundly helpful for myself, and in my work with clients. The book finally brought together a lot of my ideas and presented them in a meaningful, easily digestible manner. Without a doubt, this would be the best \$11 you will spend. (Published by Hazelden, 1-800-328-9000... or check your local bookstore.) Also from Hazelden: **Boundaries for Codependents**, a pamphlet by Rokelle Lerner. This takes a look

at the effect of abuse on young children and what decisions they then make about themselves and the world that affect how they relate as adults.

The Magic Years... a best seller since the 1950s by Selma Fraiberg. In a recent reread of this book, I noticed some things I didn't quite agree with... but understand that this book was written almost 40 years ago. It is a must. The case examples are excellent and illustrate her points clearly. This is available in paperback.

Infants and Mothers; On Becoming a Family; What Every Baby Knows: The First Three Years... all books by T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. Dr. Brazelton is a well-known pediatrician from the Boston area who has contributed greatly to our knowledge about infant development, bonding, etc. He also has a half-hour show on the Lifetime channel (for those of you who have cable TV) based on **What Every Baby Knows**. It's a good show to watch, as he examines all sorts of issues related to having kids, including single parenting, sibling rivalry, conflicts with the children, etc. These are available in paperback.

There's a lot of information out there that can help. Information gives you *choices*. Information helps you understand that often your feelings are quite normal. Hey, you're not alone! Every parent gets frustrated with a baby that keeps crying no matter what you do to "help". Every parent gets to the point of wanting to explode when, for the umpteenth time it's time to get ready to go somewhere and the kid is running in the other direction with the cutest "come-n-get-me" grin on his face.

(cont'd on page 5)

(Therapist's Page cont'd)

For me, learning to tolerate my own sense of helplessness was very important, especially early-on. It's important not to personalize what the baby or child does. The child is not capable of "doing this on purpose." When a baby or a child cries... especially in the first year... something is wrong. Crying is the only way for the baby to express himself. When my child had severe colic 24 hours a day, people said "Leave him and go in the other room." Yes, it was stressful. It was AWFUL. But he needed me. I held him, so he knew I was there for him. That's important. Let that child know you love him or her. Be there for that child. Hold that child in a way that is safe, close, and loving. Make eye contact with that child. Talk to him or her. Tell that child you are glad he or she is here, that you care for him or her willingly... that his or her needs are important to you. Try to adjust yourself to the child's timing. Don't force the child to adjust to yours. Even as an infant, we all have a sense of rhythm. Our parents didn't honor our rhythms or needs... and it made a difference for us.

From a very early age, in the first months of life, we all begin to separate and assert ourselves.

Gradually as the child grows, he or she will begin to become contrary, defiant (the "terrible two's") and begin to drive the most sane parent nuts! BUT, this is normal behavior. I think that children who have gotten consistent, loving parenting have less a need to engage in confrontational sorts of behaviors. Again, if you know this is a normal stage, then you're less likely to personalize the behavior. You're also less likely to get into power struggles with the child (and you're *not* going to win!)

Again, knowing what is reasonable to expect is important. For example, if you have a 2-year-old child, that child is not likely to sit quiet and still for long periods of time. Expecting that age child to behave this way will lead to a disaster. Then both child and parent end up angry, frustrated, confused and hurt.

I imagine that many of you are saying, "I wasn't a good parent when my kids were little..." and are wondering if it's too late. It's never too late to change. It's never too late to give your kids love. Someone once said to me that it's important to admit you made a mistake and apologize if you hurt someone. With a couple of my clients who have been in therapy a long time, their recovery has

"rubbed off" on their parents. This is not to say that everything worked out great, but I've seen some parents seek help and an improvement in the parent-adult child relationship in those cases.

Most of all... realize that if you weren't a perfect parent (no one is) that you did the best you could, given what you were taught as a child. You *do* have a choice. You *do not* have to pass on the abuse to your children. My experience is that it's a whole lot easier to give them love and be there for them... the rewards are *huge*. That first real hug, that first "mama"... the big smile and twinkle in the eye when you walk into the room. You get back what you give, ten times over.

In A.A. there's a saying, "In order to keep it, you've got to give it away." Paradoxical, but so true. Good parenting is all about giving your kids lots of love, acceptance, respect, and healthy boundaries. You *can* do it. The best part of parenting is that as you give love to your child, you can give it to yourself at the same time. Parenting can be one of the best ways of healing. There's always enough love to go around.

MV

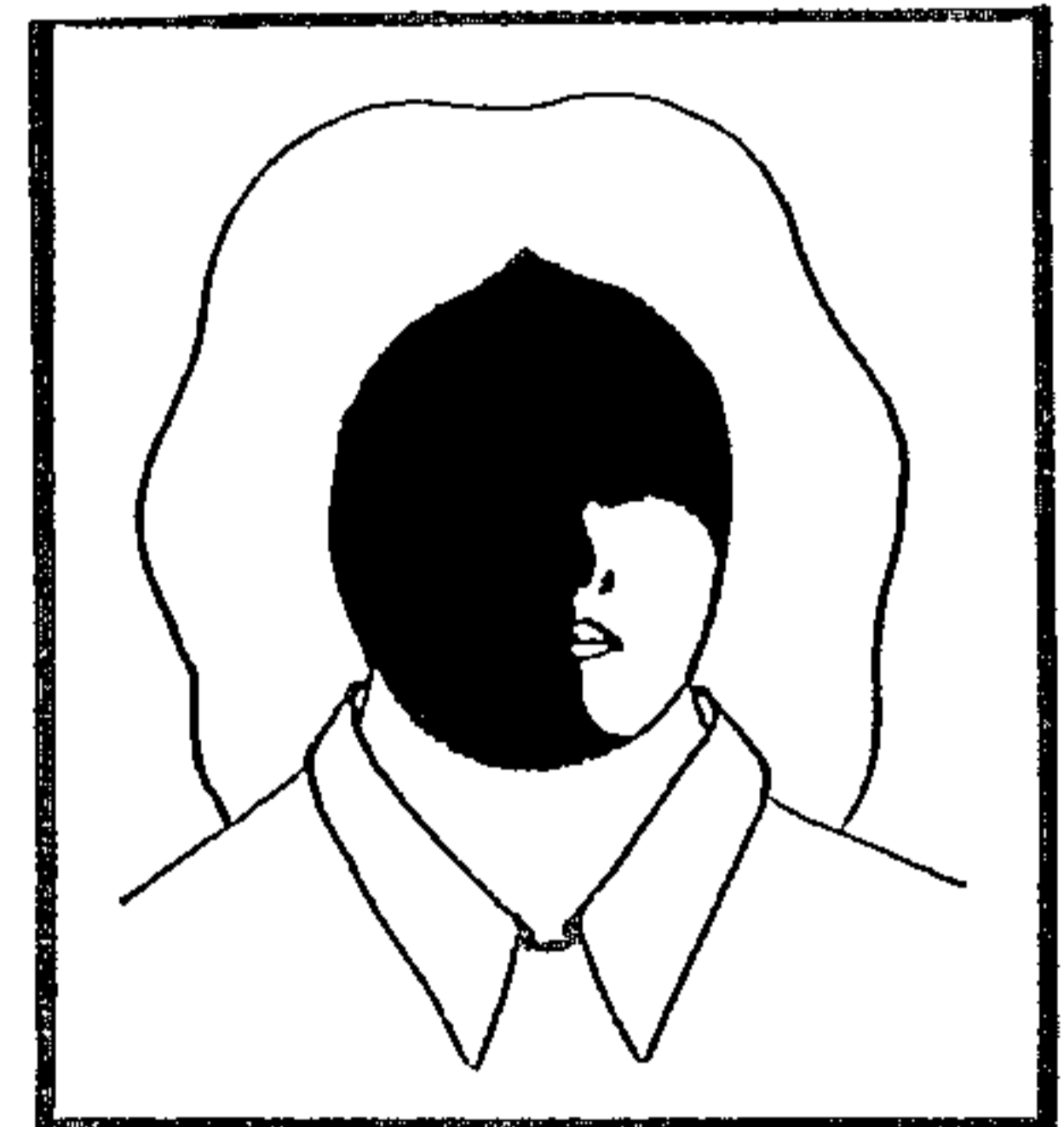
Anger

That was my name. They also call me Lydia, or "part of Kim's mind". I used to hate the world and everything in it. I didn't care what I said or did to anybody. "Feelings?" Oh, you mean people have feelings? And you can hurt them if you say bad things to them? What a concept! That must mean that somewhere I have them too! Why didn't anybody ever tell me I was allowed to have them?

Guess what. About six months ago somebody told me I could feel. At first I couldn't even stay around to hear them. Then something happened. I'm still not sure exactly what, but I think that I started to believe that I could be more than Anger. I began to feel them, one by one, slowly at first, but then they hit me like a brick. Trust. Comfort. Caring. Fear. Loneliness. Sadness. Love.

Wow! Who ever knew the world could be like this! I've begun to like some of the feelings. Most of them I hate, maybe because they feel so strange. Sometimes I want to go back... but that path is already overgrown.

I guess the only way to go is ahead. But what will become of me? I miss you, Anger... but I have places to go.



TWO FEATHERS

By Lydia

The Angry One

Working with Troubled Ones...

How did we keep our angry side from feeling betrayed? Our angry side happens to be a protector part. In order to work out the rage in a nonviolent way, the rest of us did many things. One of the milder things was to purchase old dishes from Good Will or Salvation Army. We have an unfinished basement (a garage will work) and she was able to throw them into the corners. Ice cubes also work because they shatter. When she needed to see her abuser, we put pictures or drew pictures on an old tire that was covered with a scatter rug. She was able to beat it with a baseball bat and scream, again, in the basement. Perhaps screaming into a blanket will work. Do not use a pillow if your abuser smothered you.

Our protector part was so full of rage that we ended up putting up a punching bag and buying her gloves. This action also brought out rage in another protector part and she, too, was able to use the punching bag. One last tip which helped us: we bought a bale of hay and let the protector part go at it with a large screwdriver.

Meanwhile, the protector parts were working out the rage in therapy; and it became less and less, and the items mentioned were used less and less.

By Gayle R.



After six years of therapy, we are starting to feel our rage. For years, we did everything we could to not feel our rage: this included not only switching but also drug/alcohol addiction, eating disorders, and smoking. In order to get to the rage, the first thing we had to do was to stop all of our addictions. This hasn't been easy especially since we knew that as we gave up our defenses against feelings, the feelings would have to be felt. It is a constant struggle since we don't want to feel but we have to feel to recover.

We do not consider our rage to be a part of some "dark side". As a ritual abuse survivor, expressions such as "dark side" have connotations of having to do with evil or the cult. We are not part of a cult and we are not evil. Our rage does not make us bad or evil. Just the opposite is true: our rage at the atrocities the cult inflicted upon innocent people is what separates us from the cult.

However, the rage has been extremely difficult for us to accept or to feel. When we were being abused, the cult used our rage against us. The cult would direct our rage at the cult to innocent people and on several occasions we hurt those innocent people. This isn't easy to admit and it makes dealing with the rage inside almost impossible. Today we have a tremendous fear that if we let the rage out we will hurt somebody.

Today we are trying to unlearn the lessons we were taught by the cult. Today we are trying to trust and learn that no one in our life is going to trick us and use our feelings against us. We are also trying to learn that we are not a monster and that our rage is not a monster.

Some of the ways we have been trying to let the rage out are:

- Tear up newspapers.
- Break glass bottles at the recycle center. (This is really good since we can destroy something and be environmentally responsible at the same time.)
- Throw magazines onto the floor.
- Punch our punching bag.
- Talk about the rage a little at a time.
- Write about our feelings.
- Play fetch with our puppy. We get to throw the ball as hard and as far as we want and she chases it. (She likes the game too.)

By Annette & Co.



We have been in therapy for two and a half years. The first year was nothing short of hell. It was one great big crisis after another as we struggled through the nightmares and memories that seemingly never ended. Most of the time, the very best that I could do was just to "hang on", and as I look back, I think my therapist and friends must have literally carried me through those difficult times.

I am a survivor of childhood sexual and ritual abuse and although we have not always felt like a survivor, we have been "willing", as my therapist says, to continue our recovery process. It is a hard road and even though we did survive the horrors of our childhood, there have been too many times that we were not sure we would survive our recovery. We keep going on, day by day, sometimes hour by hour. But we keep going.

There has been a lot of craziness in my life and although I was somewhat aware of the others that share my head, I was not about to tell anyone else for the fear that they too would say I was crazy. So when we started to work with the aspect of multiplicity, it was difficult to accept that I was a "package deal", even though it seemed to fit. With help from our therapist, we have gained a better understanding of how we came to be and are learning to work with the different parts of ourself. All except the "Angry One" as we have come to know him. He is the suppressed anger and rage of forty years, a side that none care to confront, at least not at this time.

As a child, we were never allowed to be angry and yet we watched as adults lashed out at us, so we learned to fear anger. But our therapist is now teaching us what healthy anger is and has validated our right to be angry for the things done to us as a child. We are learning appropriate boundaries for anger, by being allowed to be angry. There have

(cont'd on page 7)

...and Working...

been times that we were upset with our therapist and dared to voice our discontent. Sometimes our anger was 'transferred' anger, because she was someone safe to hear our anger. Other times, we were angry because she is a human and makes human mistakes too. (Much to our surprise) it was good to see that we could be angry and not get hurt by our anger or by our therapist's response to it. In this way, a small ray of light has been let into an otherwise dark world, and allowed us to start to see ourself in a new way.

So while we are not ready to take on forty years of festered rage, we are chipping at the sides little by little, until we are ready to come to face ourself. Fortunately, it does not have to all be done today, and we have a good, solid role model. So we keep going on, day by day or hour by hour. But we keep going.

By Two-Feathers



During an interview with a therapist, a question was asked and before I could stop the words — poof! They were out.

The question was: "In a dark theater you notice smoke. What is the most appropriate thing to do?"

One of my kids responded: "Sneak out the back and let everyone else burn to death."

Obviously this alter was angry and wanted to hurt someone. He took control and verbalized his desires. My first reaction was to laugh at his absurd answer, but as I thought about it later I realized that my 'dark side' people really needed some kind of *safe* outlet. Tearing magazines is not our style. Nor is ranting and raving or punching pillows. So how, I wondered, can I give "venting time" to those of me who need it?

The answer became clear a few days later after a few more spontaneous sentences leaped

from my lips. Let them talk about how they feel! I posed the idea to the angry ones and they responded right away. I realized that they had taken my suggestion as permission to declare open season upon whoever they chose to dislike. After some discussion, it was agreed that any negative comments would be uttered well outside the hearing range of any "outside people".

For instance, when my father calls I am polite, but when I hang up I let my angry alters say whatever they really think of him. They get to say it and feel it with no rebuttal that could cause them to retreat — only to become angrier. I act as the therapist, not to probe into all the whys of their feelings, but to listen, accept and sometimes laugh. I don't laugh at them and I've had to clarify this on a few occasions. I'm laughing because some of the things they come up with are really insightful. They say things that I only wish I could say.

This method may not work for everyone but I've found that for us it offers a profound relief. Best of all, no one gets hurt and I don't have to explain anything to anyone. Hopefully as I heal, I'll learn how to verbalize our anger in an appropriate and assertive manner, but for now this works.

By Wendy



One thing we try to do to help my alters not feel left out is to do "Mouseketeer Roll Call" every week, just to see that everyone is OK and what problems need to be dealt with first. This, of course, would be hard to do with high numbers of alters or for multiples without a lot of co-consciousness. I put all my alters' names on computer and just fill in whatever comment they want to say each week.

By the Reporter, for Regina A.

Mostly the people inside deal with our angers over the past with art and poetry. We all try to work together to help the ones who are really hurt and angry, because what affects them also affects the rest of the people in us. Everyone is allowed to vent anything safely on paper, then give it to our therapist. From the youngest to the oldest, we use a natural talent to help in the healing process.

By Stacy



The "dark side" of this system comes in all shapes and sizes. There are those who self-mutilate, those with suicidal ideation, and others with anger as the core of any acting-out. I, as ISH, working with our doctor, have been able to control these behaviors most of the time, with fairly good results.

There is one area that was "put on the back burner" by our doctor and myself until more pressing matters could be settled. But, unfortunately, it has put the entire system in jeopardy. This past week we were picked up for shoplifting. Many times we would come home with items in our purse for which we could not account. The times I was aware of what was going on in the store, I would put the items back. But I was not always aware, and could not put a finger on who was responsible.

Now, in retrospect, it is easy to see that this was a passive way for an alter to act out and get the system in trouble. We will have to work out in therapy if this was memory-based, resistance or something else, but most important is discovering who did it, in order to stop it.

Chaos is system-wide. Some alters, young and old, came out during the nine-hour wait to make bail. All were triggered by being locked in the holding cell, being handcuffed, having pictures made,

(cont'd on page 8)

...and Working!

and reacted as each would in their own private memory. As you can imagine, there was a lot of guilt, self-hatred, and fear involved. Being in jail is much worse than being in a locked hospital. Trust in everyone and everything now is extremely low.

It may be that an alter needed to be heard, and nobody listened, even though all the signs were there. Possibly, the violent acting-out was stopped, so the alter found another way. If so, we just did not recognize it as such. We did not condone the shoplifting, but at the time it was less important than suicide. Who would guess that getting caught would lead back to the old feelings of suicide, self-mutilation, guilt, shame, responsibility and fear, among others.

We do not know what would have worked better therapeutically, but would advise you to look at any acting-out behaviors and consider the consequences.

By An Anonymous ISH



Our angry one was wanting to do lots of violent things, like throwing chairs around, turning over tables and throwing things at people. She even had a knife one time before I stopped her and told her she'd have to go to jail if she used it. We'd tried walking and exercise. It helped some, but it

never seemed to be enough. If we didn't let her get mad at the people around us, she'd get mad at us and hurt the kids inside.

So one day I gave her my rubber ball that I used for strengthening my grip. I told her she could squeeze it, poke at it, pick at it, and rip it into pieces. She could even throw it at a wall as long as she didn't throw it at any people.

The first ball only lasted a little over a week. We carried it everywhere and others could see when she was getting angry. At the same time, everybody inside tried to tell people outside us when something bothered us, so she wouldn't have to take all our anger, too.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of people out there in the world who don't like anger. But that's their problem and not our fault. The goal is to make us happy first, without hurting anybody else.

The ball seems to be socially acceptable and some people even want to borrow it. The kids can play with it sometimes, when the angry one isn't using it. It hasn't kept us from getting mad but it gives the angry one an acceptable way to release some of her stuff without ending up in trouble. Soft rubber balls, pink or rainbow colored, can be found with the toys in many stores, and are usually under a dollar. We've had several.

By Duncan
MV



DUNCAN

This is Duncan. He protects us from people outside and from the inside too. He can keep the angry one from hurting other people. He listens to her and tells her that she's really mad at Mommy and that she can get mad at her instead of at us. He tells her what's right and wrong. He's nice to us. Takes good care of us. He says that what Mommy did was wrong. Some people don't like him just because he was a cop, but he's a good cop and does what's right.

By Little Heather

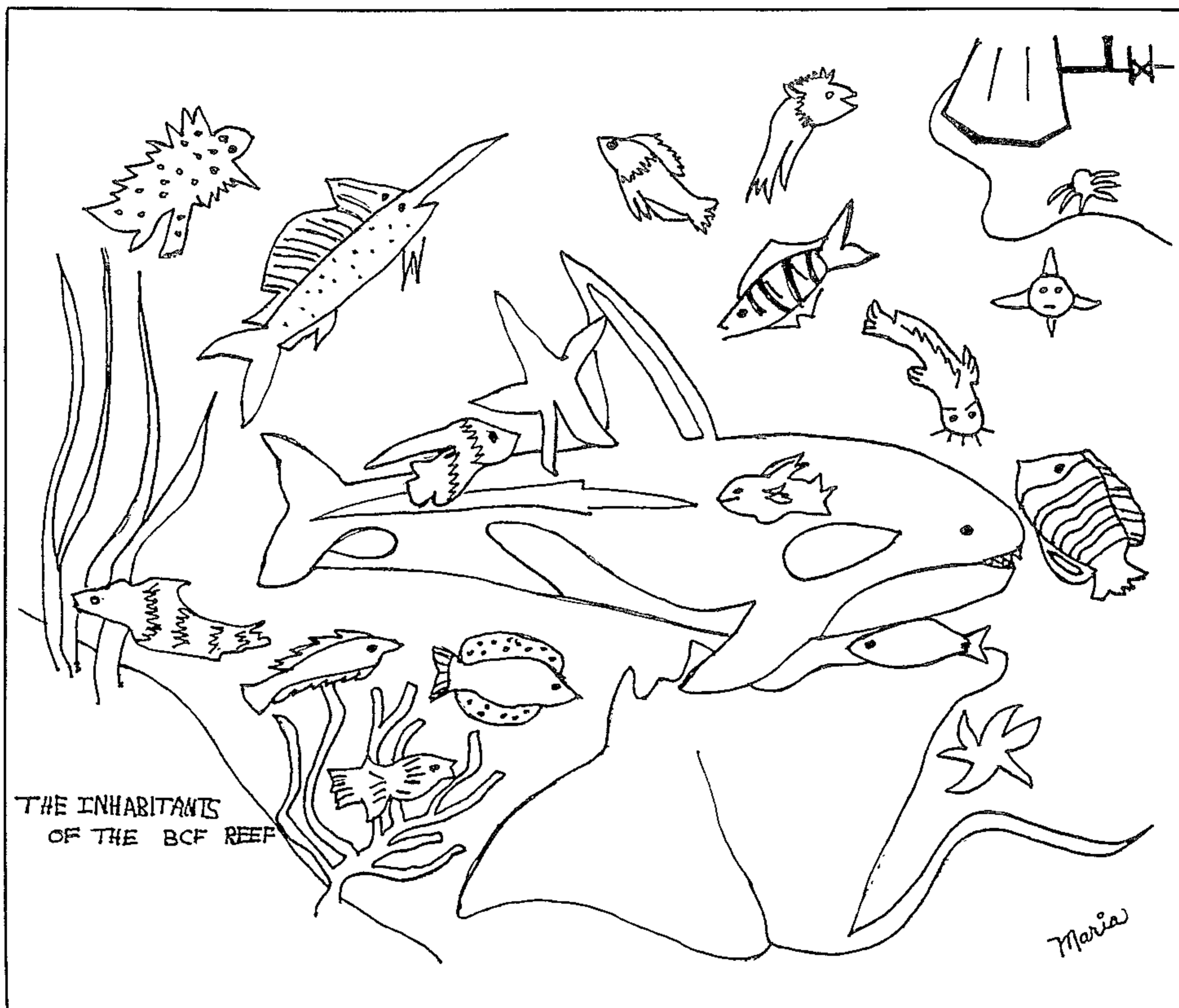
Resources

A categorized bibliography of research papers pertaining to MPD, dissociation, and trauma-related disorders has been prepared by Moshe S. Torem, M.D. and his staff at Akron General Medical Center in Akron, Ohio. Each listing is keyed with a symbol to help readers easily locate particular references. It is available to all at an exceptionally low price — \$4 — from Akron General Medical Center, Dept. of Psychiatry, 400 Wabash Ave., Akron, OH 44307.

Clinicians may be interested in a new publication for those who work in the field of sexual abuse survivorship. *Treating Abuse Today* hopes to establish a comprehensive list of meeting and conference information, training events, current publications, and other news. Brief listings in the Networking and Resources Column are free to organizations in the therapeutic community. For subscription info write to Michael Phillips, P.O. Box 150217, Denver, CO 80215, or call (303) 985-3522.

Listings and other editorial materials should be sent to David L. Calof, 2722 Eastlake Ave. E., Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98102.

Want to know the differences between Witchcraft, Satanism, and Occult Crime? An interesting booklet on the subject is available for \$4 each from Green Egg, Box 1542, Ukiah, CA 95482.



Meet the BCF Reefers:

We are presently in battle with our dark side. They have very frightening memories, but we are learning how to live together — all kinds of independent fish are living together — even a little sand crab and a hermit crab too, because they were afraid of deep water.

Our strongest physical protector is Shamu, our killer whale. He helps our light side and even at this entry two from our dark side are safely inside him waiting for the right time to do more in therapy. Cookie is our golden-barred jack fish, and he is capable of protecting and physically helping us. The most recent thing he did for us was "drink charcoal" after Lynne took too many pills. Our sworded sailfish is Nia Lounella. Her sword is useful when we need to get our point across and she can tell us how to adjust our sails to be able to flow with the changing tides. And Nella, our purple star, is our ISH who always tries to protect us. She is a starfish. Did you know that a starfish can wrap its arms around a clam and open it up? Nella is gently opening up our dark side. We love her. Many of us protect at times, but we proudly present Nella, Nia Lounella, Cookie, and Shamu. Shamu kept us alive all night long in a sea of fear. We wouldn't be without him.

Post-Integration

By Abigail Collins

© 1991

Having entered therapy for what I had thought was a one-time issue of rape, only to discover I was ritual abuse MPD with 21 alters and 12 fragments, I immediately clung to the hope my therapist offered me for a whole new life.

However, my vision of whole new life was quite different from my therapist's interpretation.

I held the unrealistic expectation that with my final integration I would "arrive" with instant healing, instant health and after a couple of weeks of recovery, all further emotional work would be "gravy". Thus I would blissfully walk into this whole new life, where there would be an absence of my painful past with instant knowledge and success at my fingertips.

Instead, post-integration brought massive physical and psychological adjustments, with severe depression. I had graduated from the diverse age of multiplicity into the hotflashes of menopause, bringing additional moodswings, crying spells, and extreme nervousness. I also became aware of permanent (physical) damage requiring a sensitive and accomplished gynecologist to forge the unknown medical frontiers with me. Overnight I had to learn the normal functions of bladder and bowel control, for my ISH had left me unprepared in taking on full responsibility of those tasks.

Feeling alone and frightened in the devastating pain of past trauma, with thousands of questions concerning the present (all of which I was too embarrassed to ask) I felt caught in both worlds with no escape. There wasn't anyone to take over the burdens.

My isolation deepened as I gained increased awareness of the numerous skills I lacked and what appeared to be an endless road of relearning. I felt shipwrecked on a desert island called "normal" with foreigners who spoke a new and different emotional language alien to my previous life of separation.

Overwhelmed by the intense stresses, I tried to dissociate, only to discover my ship of multiplicity had abandoned me, leaving me no choice but to socialize and adapt to what I perceived as new customs of the "natives".

My therapist's insistence for antidepressants further compounded my fears and anger, for I viewed taking "those kinds of Pills" as weakness rather than strength, and I didn't need any more reminders that I was losing ground in my lonely state of self-awareness.

When my expectations of wholeness failed to play out in my fairytale dream, I felt betrayed by my therapist for not preparing me for the storms of post-integration. I felt so hopelessly trapped in my inability to function on any level that I attempted suicide only to have my children keep me safe and provide a reason to live. There was no one to assure me of better days ahead, or to tell me that these overwhelming trials were all a normal process of recovery.

Accepting and adjusting to permanent physical limitations shattered additional layers of denial. It brought new levels of reality to my rage and pain. To improve this situation, we supplemented talking therapy with body movement.

Body movement became a rich blessing. I found it was another way to channel the rage and pain, bringing immeasurable releases on

all levels. With my movement therapist I began to learn how I functioned as one, whole person. I learned to be in touch with all parts of myself flowing together as one core, while making the distinction between "separate" and "whole".

In the process of learning new body movements and self-defense, new memory was realized and integrated on the gut level. There, ingrained programming could be broken and overcome. I was free to react in normal, healthy responses.

In retrospect, I found post-integration to be a period of transition, accompanied by depression, with new levels of adjustment and fundamental learning. Full integration was not the "cure-all, quick-fix" I had wanted it to be; rather, it was a gradual process of new steps into health and a letting-go of past patterns. The coping skills I learned and developed throughout my journey were an essential lifeline that served as a foundation for learning new survival skills.

My past history hasn't magically disappeared, nor has the pain mysteriously evaporated into thin air. But the past no longer enslaves me as it once did. Instead, I dominate it by embracing and letting it go.

The health and wholeness I enjoy today gives me confidence in my ability to meet the daily challenges of a well-adjusted life. I am free to be joyful and lighthearted in life's circumstances — no longer shackled by the chains of the past. That alone makes it all worthwhile!

MV

Help MV Help You!

It's time (AGAIN) for you to send suggestions for themes. We'll print our 1992 calendar in August, so please let me know what subjects MV should feature — ASAP. Thanks!

—LW

My Violent People

By B.A.D.

I do not have one dark side; I have four — so it is almost impossible to keep each and every one from feeling forgotten when acting-out is not allowed.

Sarah likes to burn herself with oven cleaner, since she feels no pain. She says this is a reminder to the rest of us that she is there and a real part of the system. She takes over when she does not get to act out and puts everyone else in the background. She is one of the most powerful ones in the system. We try very hard to let Sarah have her time in therapy to work things out, but there never seems to be enough time.

Joyce has picked up a bad habit from our father, in that she gets her feelings hurt easily and takes to the wine bottle. She never brings up anything to the system or in therapy, so she creates her own betrayed feelings. Last January we almost died because Joyce had taken medicine and 2 liters of wine and tried to kill us. It is hard to know Joyce since she does not communicate with the system. She is like the left-out child who has never had anyone to trust.

Therefore, as an adult she does not trust.

With Joyce, I try to set aside at least a half-hour a day to let her do whatever she wants to do. Some days she uses clay to work out her anger, and other days she just stays in bed listening to music. Everyone in the system realizes that Joyce needs this time so she will feel important and not drink.

Now Rage is another problem. She has a lot of trouble controlling herself when out. She wants to come out but does not know how to handle being out. When she first came out she pulled the hair out and scratched our arms so bad we still have scars. Rage now can stay out for as long as fifteen minutes, with the whole system's help. When she wants to come out we turn off the phone, and make sure the door is locked. Then we draw a circle in the middle of the floor. She is allowed to do anything as long as she does not leave the circle. At first we started with a very small circle and have slowly increased its size. Now we are able to put papers and clay and a doll in the circle without her throwing

them out. We feel this is real progress. She feels safe in the circle and does not destroy anything. Some days she does not come out because she is afraid she does not have the control she needs.

Black is another violent person who acts out. We can not figure how to handle Black. She can come out and act very normal and calm, but in a split second she can turn against anyone in the room and attack them. She is never called out in therapy because they are afraid of what she might do. The only time the doctor calls her out is in the hospital where there are a lot of staff to keep her from hurting herself.

In the beginning all the violent people were out of control, but with very hard work over the past three years, each one is getting better. I don't think I would want to give up any of the violent people because they helped me so much when I was a child in trouble. They are the courage I needed to survive in an impossible world.

MV

Rageaerobics: A Way to Honor Anger

By Elizabeth Sky

As a survivor in therapy for the last three years, I need appropriate outlets for expressing rage. To find a creative solution, a fellow survivor and I put our MPD heads together. The result? The development of an exercise we fondly refer to as Rageaerobics.

We begin the workout by picking up a load of recycled glass from a grocery or thrift store — usually enough glass to fill five or six grocery bags. Then we drive to a deserted vacant lot. The site, which we selected after much careful investigation, lies far out on the Colorado plains.

An endless prairie of brown grass and infinite blue sky serves as the backdrop for Rageaerobics. With the protection of safety goggles and plastic gloves, we take turns smashing all the glass. Relying on might from years of pent-up rage, we hurl bottles, jars, cups, and plates through the air

and watch them shatter with a satisfying crash. Cries, screams, and obscenities resound as we confront the perpetrators in our pasts.

After all the glass lies in fragments on the cement, we catch our breath. Then we say a prayer and read a forgiveness meditation from Stephen Levine's book **Healing into Life and Death**. We lift our faces to the sky and ask the universe to remove our self-hatred. We look to the ground and release the hatred we have for our perpetrators to Mother Earth. Finally, we stand in silence in the wind . . . remembering the children who died.

Afterward, with the help of a janitorial broom and dust pan, we sweep up all the glass. This part of Rageaerobics is critical, because it reminds us about the importance of taking responsibility for our anger.

Initially, we both had to work with our alters to make Rageaerobics safe

To quell the children's fear of cuts and scratches, we agreed to wear protective gear on our eyes and hands. We set limits on glass throwing for the angry alters. For example, the glass must be thrown to a specified spot — at least five feet away. Only one piece of glass can be released at a time. Only a broom can be used to sweep up the broken glass; it cannot be picked up by hand.

Rageaerobics is an empowering exercise for each of us. Our inner children have realized that anger can be expressed without hurting someone. The angry alters have learned to channel their rage in a constructive manner. By facilitating the release of deeply buried hatred, Rageaerobics has helped us break free from the vice of shame, secrecy, and fear that trapped us for so long.

MV

Coping With Rage

By Kimberly, The Cast and The Dark Ones

There was a time the only "dark" alter I knew in myself was one I called Witch. She and I had an intense dislike for each other, as she considered me a wimpy pansy, and I resented and feared her constant criticism of me and frequent biting remarks. She was hostile and abusive toward the inside children, and finally took control of the body one day and tried to force an overdose. She refused to acknowledge that she was in the same body with me and the others.

Help came when I had the honor of seeing Dr. Colin Ross for a one-time session as part of a study he was conducting. He spoke directly to Witch, asked for her opinions and thoughts, and showed respect but no fear. He asked if she would like a more respectful name, and before the end of the session Witch found herself chuckling over Ross' clever logic, which forced her to see she was indeed in the same body with the rest of us. Ross then pointed out to her that she seemed to enjoy an exchange of wit, and had a sense of humor. This was her first indication from anyone that she was more than raw rage and hatred, that she had value, and a positive quality. After the session she changed her name to something as bold and strong as she is — Raging Woman.

Back home our therapist followed up on Ross' work, and made Raging Woman "lead alter" in charge of protection and matters concerning our recovery. He asked for her help and advice. At first she was belligerent and difficult. Her advice consisted of things like "Let's dump those brats" when asked how to take care of the inside children. But after many weeks she seemed to learn that lending her considerable creativity and courage to the recovery was rewarding. More so than being hateful and disliked. She is still full of rage, but this is now directed toward the abusers. I too have become less judgemental

and afraid of her, recognizing her power and bravery. I go to the local gym and she comes out. While riding the bike or lifting weights Raging Woman thinks about what she'd like to do to our perpetrators. I used to fear this violent fantasy, but I've learned it is of no harm to anyone, and is a natural response to being so demonically hurt by others. I let her imagine whatever she wants.

Appropriate Rage.

I am aware that I have a second layer of alters, who live on the Dark Side. On the Dark Side there was only desolate desert, silence, and darkness caused by a heavy shadow that fell over the land. All of the first layer alters, except Raging Woman, are afraid to go over there. A thick wall of stone separates the Dark Ones from everyone else. Much of our programming, chanting, specific memories, and the Evil Ones are all on the Dark Side. We've been hospitalized several times in recent months because of the Death threats and calls to return to the cult that come from the Dark Side.

One day, though, while locked up in the back unit of the hospital, a doctor well known and well liked came in. Upon hearing our fears of programmed Death Dates, he pronounced this "hocus pocus" and "embellishment." We were so enraged a Dark One took the body and told the doctor, in no uncertain terms, that he was ill-informed.

The Dark One, named Blood, was out for probably 20 minutes, and to my surprise, was not abusive, did not name-call or get violent, did not threaten or intend to frighten the doctor. I learned that while the Dark Ones are filled with fear and rage, they are not out of control. I am sure this comes from months of work we did in the hospital and one-to-one, so slowly making small attempts

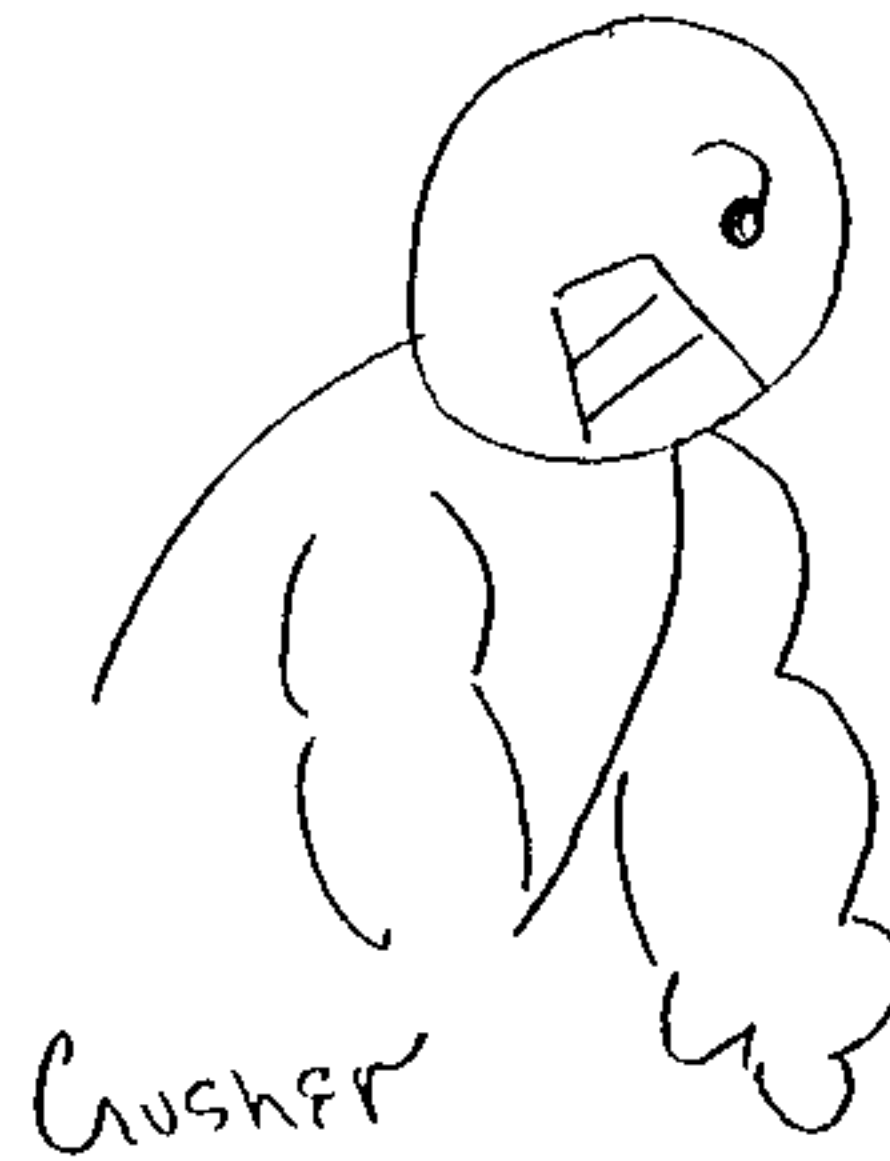
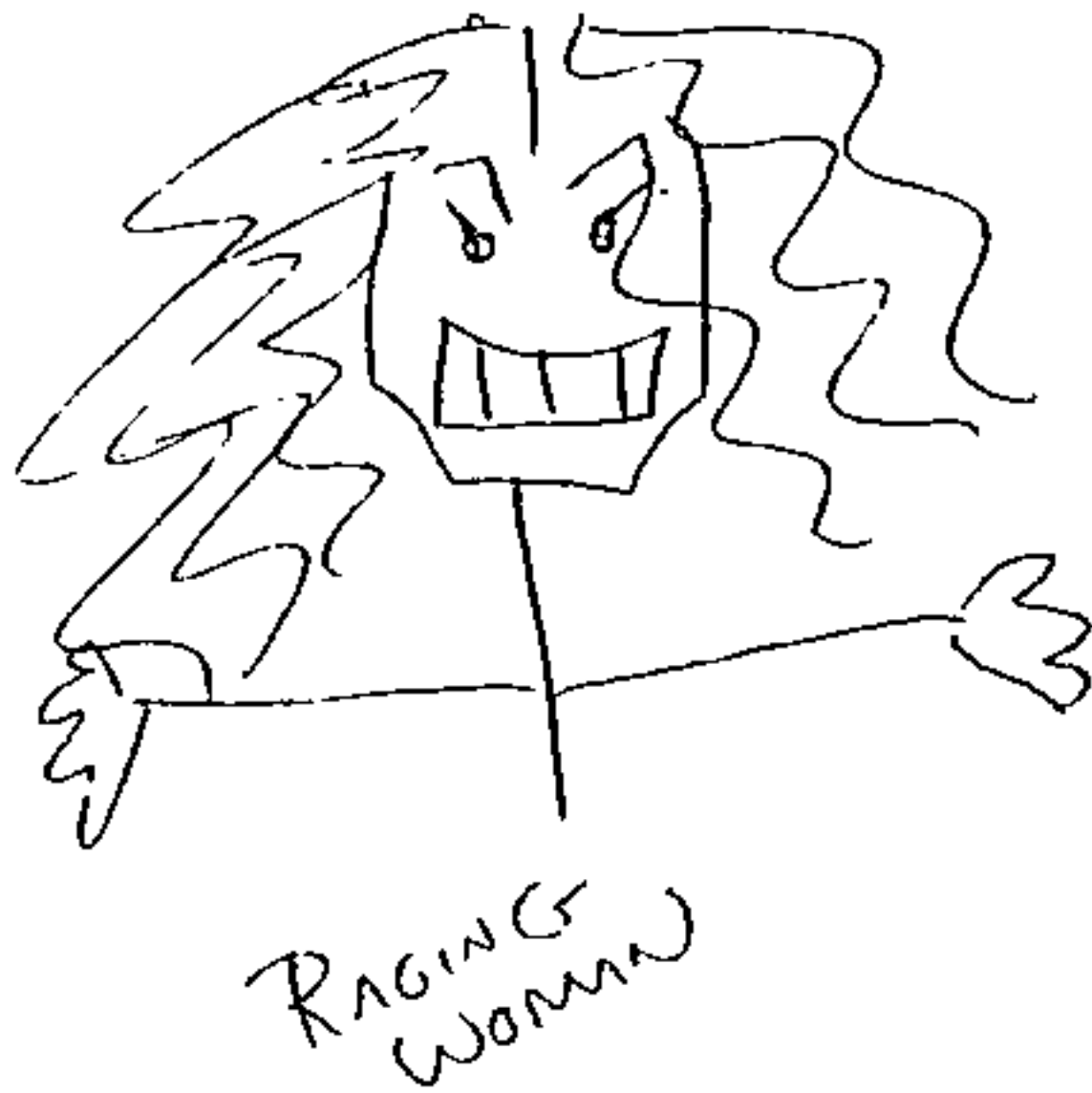
to communicate with the Dark Ones. So slowly teaching them that they can be safe in the light now, that they do not have to go back, that they have choices besides the job the cult taught them. We've even very cautiously sent soft music, running water, and a thin mist of rain over the wall to the Dark Side.

I am still very respectful of the dark feelings and horrible memories the Dark Ones hold, but as long as I continue to ask them to write or verbally express their feelings and thoughts, as long as I let them have time, and don't try to ignore or repress them, they have contracted to channel their rage and terror appropriately. We make month-long, no-self-harm, no-harming-others, no-contact-with-family-or-with-cult contracts, and these are renewed each time we see our psychiatrist. One time it got down to the final hour, and the Dark Ones refused to sign.

"You'll sign," my doctor said, "or you won't be working with me anymore."

To my surprise, this bullish tactic worked, because most of us deeply value our doctor and our relationship with him. However, this wouldn't work twice.

It is from Raging Woman and the Dark Ones I will learn about my history, about courage, strength, self-confidence, justified anger and personal power. Raging Woman is correct that I have been passive and unable to protect myself even as an adult. She and the Dark Ones are teaching me what they are all so good at — facing reality head-on, assessing character and possible danger, and taking swift self-protective action. When any of the Dark Ones are in the body we have a strong back, solid arms, and erect posture. (We also have clenched jaw and teeth, but we're working on that.) We are all learning together what is so essential to our recovery: coping with intense rage.



Books

Multiple Personality Disorder: Diagnosis, Clinical Features & Treatment

1989 by Colin A. Ross, M.D., 389 pgs. Published by John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York. \$45 hardback.

"What is MPD? MPD is a little girl imagining that the abuse is happening to someone else. This is the core of the disorder, to which all other features are secondary. The imagining is so intense, subjectively compelling, and adaptive, that the abused child experiences dissociated aspects of herself as other people. It is this core characteristic of MPD that makes it a treatable disorder, because the imagining can be unlearned, and the past confronted and mastered."

In this way, Colin Ross defines MPD, in his excellent contribution to the literature. Dr. Ross is both a therapist and a researcher. He has developed and tested *The Dissociative Disorders Interview Schedule* as a diagnostic tool.

This book gives an interesting, detailed, but not excessive history of MPD, followed by sections on Diagnosis & Clinical Features of MPD and Treatment of MPD. Many of the statistics he quotes are his own. When he discusses techniques and cases they are from his experience.

There is much to like in this book. I find the author to be open-minded about different points of view. He is also skilled at

explaining opposing attitudes that exist to support the various points of view. Woven through Dr. Ross' writing is a delightful sense of humor. Dissociation is not limited to multiples. We read about dissociation (of unbearable childhood stories) by Freud, by modern Christianity, by moviegoers, and even by Wayne Gretsky!

In discussing treatment, Ross lists integration as the treatment goal, but then points out that this may just be feeling like one person. "It isn't necessary to advocate a mythic unity of self never attained by non-MPD people."

He also has concluded that the basis of therapy with MPD patients is *not* the gimmicks. "The more MPD therapy I do, the less gimmicky I become. . . . Special techniques are important, but not as important as general ones. Indeed, 'techniques' can get in the way if they detract from the core reality, which is two human beings in conversation. The therapeutic conversation has a context, rules and rituals that I will describe. So does talking with a bank teller. . . ."

I feel that this is a most important book; anyone interested in treating, or being treated for, MPD will want to read it. The good news is that Colin Ross' style is highly readable.

— Alycat

I Can't Talk About It: A Child's Book About Sexual Abuse

By Doris Sanford. Pictures by Graci Evans. 1986. 32 pgs. Published by Multnomah Press, Portland, OR \$8.95. (Also cassette *I Can't Talk About It, A Musical Therapy*, \$8.95 by Steve Siler and Stephen Breithaupt.)

I am Amy, a little person of Lynn D. She says I can write about this. Annie is the girl in the book. She is keeping a secret like we did, but hers is about her daddy and not a cult. In the book she tells a dove ("Love"). On the tape, Love sings. ("Love Listens", "Innocent Child", "Tell Someone" and "Learn to Trust Again.")

Annie did try to tell her Mom, but she wouldn't hear. Annie is a lot like us. She says it's her fault, she's a *bad* girl and she *made* her daddy do those things. She feels *dirty*.

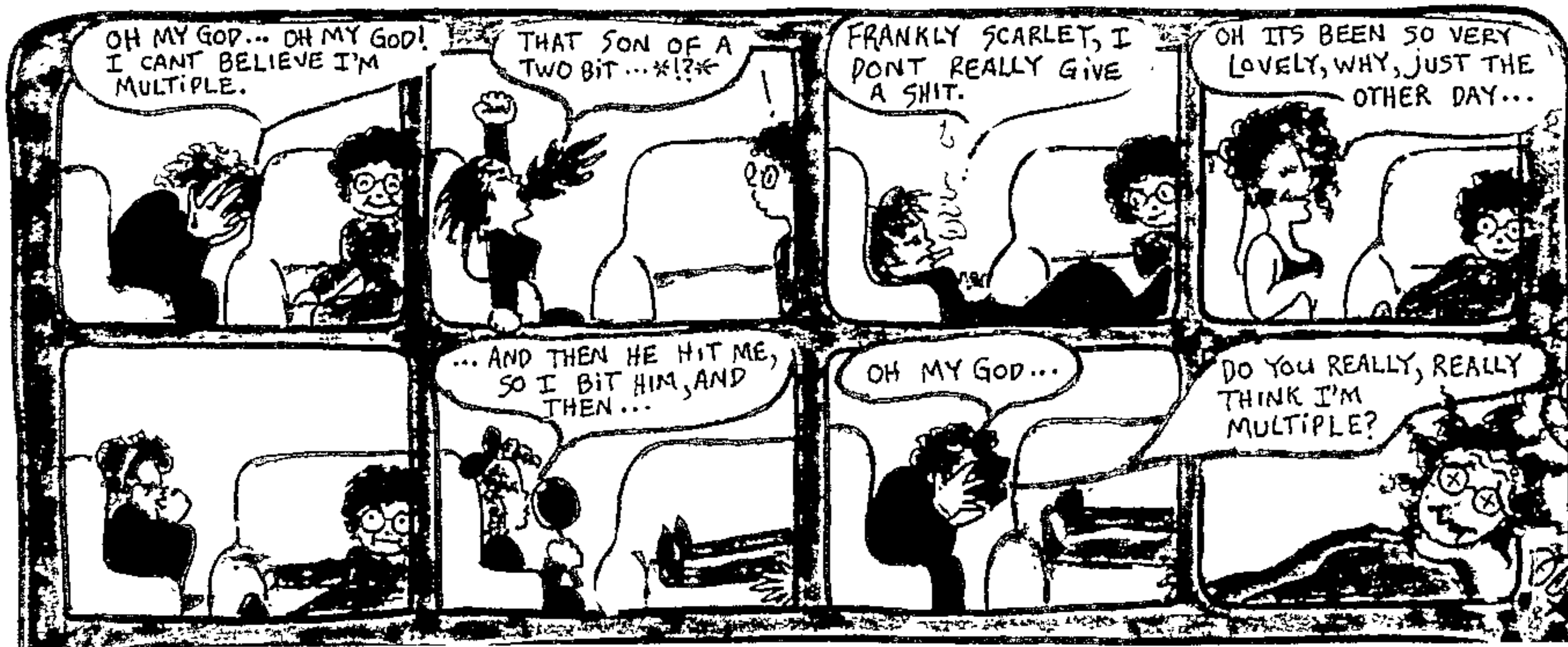
Annie's Mom says Daddy should find a job but don't tell him or he will get mad and go away. Annie thinks if she tells then *she* will *make* Daddy go away.

In the end, Annie tells! And her mom listens!

This book is full of beautiful drawings! We like the songs!

To get the book and tape (or just 1) call Steve and Steve Productions. (818) 841-3775.

Love, Amy



WELCOME TO A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A
MULTIPLE
 TO JUDIE FROM ESTELLE

Coming Up!

August 1991

It's easy to talk about the little kids inside but what about the teens and adults? How do you balance their needs? What are their skills and responsibilities? Their problems? ART Draw an inner adult helping an inner child DEADLINE for submissions June 1 1991

October 1991

The stages of therapy you have experienced What you see as progress What is your most stubborn problem How you are working on it in therapy. ART Draw your special comforts DEADLINE for submissions August 1, 1991.

December 1991

Transforming holidays into happy (or at least tolerable) days What you do to protect yourself from memory triggers on special days. New 'traditions' created for healing ART Draw a picture of you and your best friend. DEADLINE for submissions: October 1, 1991

Share with us!

Prose, poetry, and art are accepted on upcoming issue themes, (and even on NON-themes, if it's really great.) DO send humor, cartoons, good ideas, and whatever is useful to you. Please limit prose to about 4 typed double-spaced pages. Line drawings (black on white) are best. We can't possibly print everything. Some pieces will be condensed, but we'll print as much as we can. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of your originals and a note giving us permission to publish and/or edit or excerpt your work.

Subscriptions for a year (six issues) of *MANY VOICES* are \$30 in the U.S., \$36 elsewhere. Please enclose the form below (or a copy) with your check, and mail to *MANY VOICES*, P.O. Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201-2639.

MANY VOICES

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Please check one:

I am a client Professional/therapist Relative/friend

Subscription type: New Renewal Gift

Please start subscription with Feb '89 ___ Feb '90 ___ Feb '91 ___ Other _____

1 year: \$30 in U.S.; Elsewhere, \$36 in U.S. currency.

Make check payable and send with this form to *MANY VOICES*
 P.O. Box 2639, Cincinnati, OH 45201-2639.