



# FAIRWEATHER NEWS

Coalition for  
Community Living

FAIRWEATHER  
LODGES

## Testimonial by Susan A. Maghrak

My journey to recovery started in the summer of 2000. My life was going like a tornado spinning out of control. My problems seem to start out small and ended up in a big mess. I didn't know how to resolve issues in my life or how to stay out of trouble.

It started when I was a child with a Learning Disability and ADHD problems. When I became an adult I was diagnosis with a mental illness, which were, severe Major Depression and Borderline Personality Disorder. With my symptoms from the mental illness it caused me to destroy my families relationships and my life.

Then a miracle happened, it's when Erie's Stairways Behavioral Health opened the first Fairweather Lodge in PA. I was one of the 150 people who applied to the lodge and was one of the first voted into this lodge. It changed my life for the best. I learned so much about my illness, how to deal with people, working skills, life skills, and how to handle my behavior. One reason why this program worked is that it held me to be responsible for my behaviors and I needed support at first to take my medications.

During my stay at the lodge I became a crewmember of a cleaning position at Stairways and worked up the ladder by becoming a crew leader. Then I became one of the first peer specialists for Fairweather Lodge on 18<sup>th</sup> Street in Erie, PA. During this time as crewmember and peer specialist I traveled and talked about the program to people around the state. I became a board member in 2002 for the Coalition for Community Living (CCL) and 2004 became one of the first Executive Council Members for the lodge. This past year 2005-2006 I have been living on my own. I also had obtained two (2) degrees A.S.B degree in Accounting and Marketing and Management. I also volunteer for the SafeNet Program for Domestic Violence as a counselor and advocate. More recently I have been able to purchase a new car, 2006 Focus and accepted a position as a Western Regional Coordinator for Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumer Association (PMHCA) in PA. One other success to this program is my family's trust is starting to build back up, it's been a slow process because of the hurt and pain I gave my family over the many years because of my past behaviors. But, this process is on its way and it's a new beginning

## EATEN BY A BEAR

By John K Trepp

*Lloyd Skelton, 58, of Minneapolis, entered the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, with a 1-day hiking permit, on June 4, 2005, but never came out. His van was found in a parking lot and his un-torn, un-bloodied clothes were found along the trail, but his body was never found. Officials speculate that Skelton's discarding clothing was an example of "paradoxical undressing," common to late-stage hypothermia; and after he died, he was eaten by animals.*

*Poem on pages 3 & 4*

*As read at the conference*



Sue Maghrak at conference handing out souvenirs.



for all of us. It's a process I cannot give up since I will always need the support of my family.

I'm so grateful for the opportunities that the Fairweather Lodge gave me over these past 5-6 years. I want to thank everyone such as my counselors, other consumers, friends and especially my family. They all helped, supported and especially believed in me when I didn't think there would not be any hope for myself. But, most of all to show this appreciation, I feel I need to continue to educate the public, families and legislators on this amazing program. Especially, to educate on the success it is known to present with myself and other consumers who have succeeded and went through this amazing program.

Susan A. Maghrak

Board Member for the Coalition for Community Living since 2002.

### **Apple a day**

*By Michele Colbert  
Wellness Counselor*

The Coalition for Community Living Conference took place September 14-16, 2006 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Tasks Unlimited organized the conference program and entertainment for the attendees. People joined in the conference rooms eager to experience and learn new information to take home and share with their programs. Apple a Day was the conference theme, which ran true in many presentations.

The Blossoming Flowers Tai Chi Group from Tasks encouraged the attendees to stand up and join in two exercises. These exercises were intended to get their circulation moving and opportunity for a mid morning stretch. Just as the saying goes, "an apple a day-keeps the doctors away" the same theory is true for stretching. Stretching daily enables the person to breath deeply and tone muscles for daily healthy lifestyle routine. Next the Tai Chi group preformed a section of the Yang Short Form. The experience of the group ranges from 6 weeks to more than 5 years of studying. Members practice in a group 1 time per week, which is another example of a healthy lifestyle routine. The audience gave the group members a very warm applause at the completion of their presentation. Each group member commented on the smiling faces and eager participation

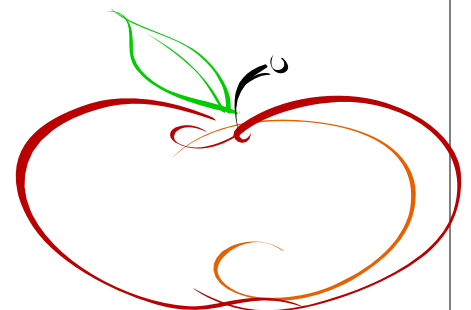
of the audience.

Three Wellness Program clients and the wellness counselor presented to an attentive group on the power of the "apple a day" theme. Each presenter shared with the audience their daily habits and achievements to lead a health lifestyle. Bruce shared his daily routine, which starts with an apple. Morry followed with a recipe for juicing his apple, and John shared his tips for leading a healthier life. Michele wrapped up the presentation on slicing the apple into smaller pieces, and sharing the many varieties of apple products. Planting the seeds of a healthy lifestyle comes in many varieties and it can be easier to consume in smaller bits.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to attend this conference. It provides a time and place for people to learn about healthy community living for persons with mental illness. The conference attracted people from a variety of back rounds the opportunity to come together and learn from each other, an open forum to exchange success stories and challenges. It provides attendees with a wealth of information to take back to their lodges, and work sites to better serve themselves and each other.



Michele Colbert leads the Blossoming Flowers in Tai Chi.





I lost a friend Up North somewhere  
 They say he was eaten by a bear  
 I just don't know  
 They found his stuff in the woods  
 But not a single piece of Lloyd  
 Not even with dogs  
 He must have been confused at the end  
 A common thing they say  
 To take off all his clothes, and leave them here and there  
 Then supper for a bear  
 All so very neat, all so very sweet  
 I don't like their story  
 I wish I had a better one

Some people are artistic  
 They paint, they sculpt, they dance  
 Some will write a poem  
 Trying to express their pain  
 Lloyd danced with pawns, and rooks, and knights  
 Officially a Master, giving pain to others  
 As a mountain climber too  
 They say he was a dancer  
 Expressing his joy on vertical faces  
 The rock his canvas, the sky his muse

Back when we were young, on a Friday afternoon  
 Painting houses, money to buy books  
 University about to start  
 The radio announced a lottery  
 Birthdates to decide who fights in the jungle  
 Lloyd hurried to clean up, much to my surprise  
 It wasn't quitting time  
 "Gotta get to school, gotta cancel classes quick  
 Don't want to wait till Monday, to get my money back  
 That's three days in the woods"

He and Lisa, Tessa and I, used to run the Creek  
 A more challenging course than you might guess

You have to portage Edina Mill, then just down-  
 stream  
 A rapids even the kayakers portage  
 And us four in my Old Town  
 Lloyd would always want to try and I would remind  
 him  
 Of the time we lost our paddles and almost lost the  
 girls  
 Lloyd would grin, "I think we can make it this year"  
 Afterwards, while fishing out daughters, he'd say  
 "Well the brave die young"  
 But he didn't

Where did he go, that boy I knew  
 The one so wild and fearless  
 Lately looking old, and just a bit crazed  
 But when he grinned that grin  
 You could see the boy inside  
 He loved Powderhorn, chess, and even work  
 But the City made him old  
 He belonged to the sea and the mountains  
 And he never seemed to age when he was in the  
 woods  
 Now he never will

Lloyd loved the Boundary Waters, he loved the soli-  
 tude  
 Lots of people do  
 They tell their loved ones, "When I die  
 Scatter my ashes up there"  
 They want to return to nature  
 Some want their soul to rest  
 It's illegal, I hear  
 But loved ones do it anyway  
 I would have taken Lloyd's on a six-mile portage  
 If he had asked me to

We had drifted apart, our busy lives  
 But there was a time I could have, would have,  
 should have



Called him my best friend  
I never did  
Would it have embarrassed him?  
Or caused him to think me pathetic because I might  
not have been his?  
Or would it have made him a little happier?  
Would we have become even better friends?  
I'll never know  
It's not the way guys talk

I lost a friend Up North somewhere  
They say he was eaten by a bear  
I just don't know



**Maurice Swenson and Susan Bloom of Tasks Unlimited greet conference attendees and give them an apple.**

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