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(F)18

# Recovery—for many way to mental health

By MARGARET MILLER

They gather in small groups, maybe once a week, maybe irregularly.

They come from varied professions and stations in life. They talk about spotting problems, and moving muscles and endorsing and sabotaging and average reactions and trivial events.

What really concerns them is mental health — their own. And they seek to preserve it through a non-profit organization known as Recovery Inc.

"People do not do things to upset us — they do things THAT upset us," said Priscilla Murdock, Livonia mother of six who has been attending Recovery meetings for eight years and leading a group in Farmington for half of that time.

She said the groups discuss initial reactions to life's vexations and then how those among them have responded.

One who has been hospitalized for depression, Mrs. Murdock said she had found help through the discussions with "other ordinary people like myself" and the self-help methods outlined by the group's founder, the late Dr. Abraham A. Low, in his book "Mental Health through Will Training."

"I keep coming," Mrs. Murdock added, "because I feel mental health isn't something you can set aside. I need to work at it daily."

RECOVERY INC. had its beginnings in 1937 because Dr. Low was seeking a way to avoid relapse among those who had been treated for mental illness.

Since 1952 the group has been managed by its members. There is no charge for meetings, but a collection is taken to defray expenses and contributions are happily accepted.

"Doctors, psychologists, teachers and clergy cannot be group leaders or participate except as patients," said Mrs. Murdock. "And the group is non-sectarian, though supported by Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religions. Religion cannot be discussed at the meetings."

Anyone who is under the care of a doctor must have his approval to attend Recovery meetings, this leader said, but it's not necessary that those attending be under treatment. Although the book is available at local libraries, she emphasized that it is reading it and studying it in combination with interaction with others that forms the basis of the Recovery method.

"Our leaders are trained carefully so we all use the same method," she added.

Terminology too provides those in Recovery with a basis of understanding when discussing their problems. They mention "spitting" the problem that is bothering them, their "distressing but not dangerous" symptoms, keeping going in times of distress by "moving the muscles," and "endorsing" themselves when they react without "working it up."

They also seek to define as "trivial" the incidents they want to keep that way, and they describe as "average" that which has been experienced by one other person.

"It's average, not different," said Mrs. Murdock. "Some people might say normal. We say average."

PRISCILLA MURDOCK said her own experience with Re-

covery began after hospitalization for depression and later a setback.

A young son had died just three days after contracting meningitis, she said, and her symptoms surfaced after that. "I felt helpless," she said. "I was sure I could not do a good enough job as a wife and mother. At the same time I was sure I was the only one who felt that way. I was crying all the time."

She said she also became obsessed with the matter of contamination. "I would try to keep my other children from germs by keeping them in the house," she remembers, "and then I got so I didn't want any of us to go anywhere."

In such situations, most people are aware of such symptoms but ignore them, said Mrs. Murdock. "Nervous patients wall themselves up," she added.

She said she was "uncomfortable enough" to pay some attention when a neighbor told her about Recovery meetings.

"I was afraid to go at first," she said. "Many feel that way. I thought I would see a lot of sick people. Then I found a lot of ordinary people like me."

Her own doctor, Mrs. Murdock said, didn't give any enthusiastic endorsement to the Recovery program. "He said he thought I could use my time better," she recalled. "But I decided he was not telling me NOT to go — I found a loophole."

RECOVERY MEETINGS provided no instant cure-all for this member.

"I was hospitalized two more times," she said, "and I developed some very distressing physical symptoms, including dizziness all the time."

That was when she put to work the methods she had learned.

"I moved my muscles," she recounted. "I told myself I knew how to do dishes and wash clothes, and I learned to do it in spite of the discomfort."

"And I endorsed myself — gave myself a pat on the back for each dish put away, each piece of clothing folded."

The problem lasted almost a year and for a while Mrs. Murdock wondered if she ever would function without feeling dizzy. At last it diminished and then went away.

"We learn that no matter how uncomfortable we feel, our muscles will pull us through," she said.

Mrs. Murdock said her work with Recovery now is mainly leading the once-a-week sessions at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 12 Mile east of Farmington Road in Farmington Hills.

OCCASIONALLY, when feeling low for any reason, she may attend one of the four groups that function in Livonia for a session or so. Altogether Recovery Inc. has about 1,000 groups meeting in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Those interested in the program may call the local Recovery Inc. office at 961-9095, to learn where a convenient group may be found.

"I get a great deal of satisfaction from helping myself and helping others," Mrs. Murdock said. "And that is what Recovery is all about."

*'I feel mental health isn't something you can set aside. I need to work at it daily.'*  
— Recovery leader Priscilla Murdock



Priscilla Murdock tells how Recovery has made a difference in her life. (Staff photo by Bill Bresler)

## Training into action

A perceived telephone snub, an everything-goes-wrong day at work, an unnecessary wait. All can rub raw the steadiest of nerves.

Three Recovery, Inc., patients who have had to learn the steady process explained during a recent meeting at Schoolcraft College how they handled such situations.

Experiences are shared and then discussed at Recovery meetings, said Priscilla Murdock, Farmington group leader.

ANNA FOUND herself getting hot and bothered over a telephone call.

"I had made the call," she related, "and my friend seemed to be enjoying talking to me. Then suddenly she ended the conversation very abruptly."

"I felt myself getting very upset. Then I decided to spot the trouble. I realized I was upset because I initiated the call and she ended it."

"Then I decided there might have been several reasons for her to end the conversation. I listed some of them in my mind."

"I thought I might tell my husband about it but decided it was trivial. I could handle it myself. I endorsed myself for that decision."

BILL'S DAY at work would have caused him real problems before Recovery, he told the session.

"I didn't have the stock built up," he said, "and then I started an angry temper against the person who had worked the job the day before. Then came a fearful temper that I wouldn't be able to catch up."

(Angry tempers, Recovery folks explain, blame others for circumstances; fearful tempers blame oneself.)

Bill said he stopped and looked at his situation as average, not different from the one faced by others. Then he noted his predecessor's failure as a triviality and proceeded to do what he could to improve the stock inventory.

"Before Recovery," he said, "I would have found some excuse to go home early, or if I had stayed, I would have been very irritable."

## Chef MacKinnon hosts Chaine des Rotisseurs

By LORRAINE MCCLISH

Tom MacKinnon, executive chef for Holly Hotel, gave what he called "the best party yet" for Chaine des Rotisseurs of Michigan.

The chef who started his career in the culinary arts by cooking for the nuns in Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church when he was a teen-ager, was chosen by the gourmands to plan their July dinner meeting.

"This is a great honor," MacKinnon said, who grew up in Farmington Hills and is known here now for the gourmet lunches, dinners and how-to sessions he has given as benefits for Farmington Community Center.

Chaine des Rotisseurs is literally translated as "all the meat has to be roasted," but members call themselves a brotherhood of those who enjoy good food.

"When we meet we eat" is the way one member described the chaine which was started in France several centuries ago. The Michigan chaine has 100 members who choose their chefs by committee.

MEMBERS were greeted in Holly with wine and smoked oysters dispensed by waiters in tuxedos from an old peanut wagon on Battle Alley in front of the historic hotel.

Strolling violin players roamed throughout the hotel and its accompanying Battle Alley Arcade of unique shops, while guests picked up hors d'oeuvres along the way and learned of legends left by Carrie Nation and Barnum and Bailey.

Carrie Nation, who led the Women's Christian Temperance Union, left a

smashed bar when she hit that town in the early 1900s, which already had gained a reputation for rowdiness left by circus performers.

The circus owners who gave the world "the greatest show on earth" chose Holly as their one-time headquarters, chiefly because of its many railroads that gave access across the nation for their circus trains.

A re-enactment of Carrie Nation's visit to the city is staged every September with an accompanying festival.

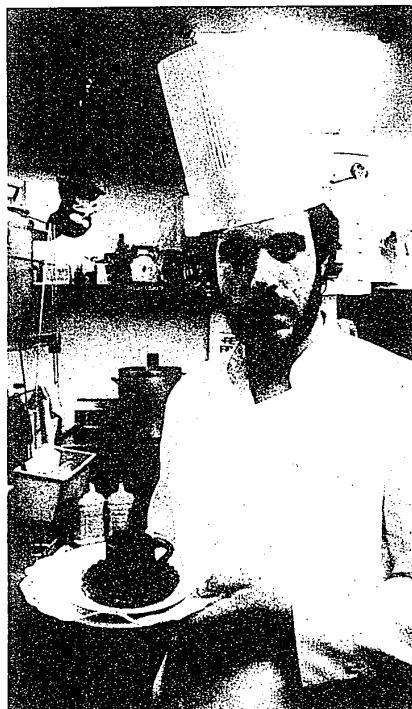
MacKINNON's gourmet dinner was seven courses and two hours long, in keeping with Chaine des Rotisseurs tradition. With an ice sculpture in the hotel bar and pastry sculptures in the hotel lobby, the dinner took about a week to prepare with MacKinnon holding full say on the menu.

The sculptured pastry was a gift to the chef for the occasion from his mentor, Henri Wiltamer of Patisserie Wiltamer in Brussels.

MacKinnon apprenticed under the chef, renowned as the best glacier in the world, and during this time wrote a column on gourmet cooking for the Farmington Observer.

"He's only going to be in the states for a short time," MacKinnon said of his teacher, "so I put him to work. For all we needed to do I needed all the help I could get."

Members of the chaine were chauffeured by members of the Rolls Royce Club of Michigan to the grounds of a private home in Holly for the party's grand finale when truffles were served from the basket of a hot air balloon.



The coffee cup and saucer held by executive chef Tom MacKinnon is entirely edible, molded to hold mocha ice cream. The dessert was designed for gourmet members of Chaine des Rotisseurs of Michigan.

*Autumnal  
Ziegler and Red  
Tas piece dressed  
with Patisserie Scary*

*from Eva  
for Robert James*

*Supp 8-14  
\$136.*

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**Walton-Pierce**  
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### Menu

#### Chaine des Rotisseurs

- Smoked oysters
- Shrimp-stuffed mushrooms
- Parli of duck
- Escargo on Phyllo
- Galentine of duck, jeal, truffle
- Morel mushroom soup
- Julienne vegetable salad
- Loster sausage with gazifette potatoes
- Pineapple sherbet with fraise de bois liqueur
- Roast pheasant with green peppercorn sauce
- Brie cheese with saute almonds
- Moke tass