



MEN TALK

THE MEN'S CENTER NEWS

April/May 2007 VOL. 31 #2

Preparation for the Aftermath:

Learning from a year as a volunteer at the Men's Center

— © 2007 BY RAY CLARE

Suppose that you bought your home in a neighborhood where you knew for certain that considerably more than half the homes would burn to the ground in the next five to ten years. You couldn't tell which ones, but you know they will burn. Now, how could you justify to yourself that you never bought fire insurance, or took any action at all to protect your home and family? Could you rationalize that degree of irresponsibility? I don't personally know anyone that could. But, in the last year, I have met dozens who have put themselves at far greater risk, and with even less attention to that possibility. They all tell me, "I never believed it would happen to me!" Try this on for size:

"I am being divorced" or "She won't give me custody, or visitation" or "She took all the money out of our bank account" or "I am locked out and can't go back to my own house. I need a place to stay, and a lawyer that will work for free" or "She's taking the kids to Mexico, can I stop her?" or "I've just been served with papers at work, I can't go home!"

We usually get the call shortly after the initial shock hits a man. It's the surprise in the caller's voice when I speak with them that always gets me. "How can she do this to me?" "I never believed she'd do this!"

Here's what it comes to. "The risk was real, great, and undeniable. I ignored it completely, and I got caught. Now I need someone to work like heck to bail me out, and to do it for free." It sometimes seems the delusions never end. "Lawyers that work for free!" I love that one. Yes, there really are such things, but they are not waiting around for you to need them. They're buried already. Let's face it, how hard would you work to bail out that guy whose home burned down in that neighborhood we described above? How hard would you work for that, and for free?

Day after day, these calls come in, and I take some when Randy's away. I want to fix it for you, but only the two of you can do that. Once it comes to a battle, it's gory!

As the story unfolds, I learn some of the background ideas that have brought the caller to this moment. Here is what some have told me.

- I can stay out late, and not call.
- I can come in drunk or high, and smelling of another person.
- I can shout at the kids and punish them for little to no reason, or outright abuse them.
- I never had to pay any consequences for all this!

- I am actually a candidate for sainthood!
- I still don't believe they would ever do this to me.

No, they didn't use those words, but that is what they told me. So, of course, they are totally unprepared. Well, here is the sad, hard truth that my year at the Men's Center has taught me.

- Free lawyers are about as available as free Cadillacs. It happens, but seldom!
- Getting full custody, if you are a male, is about as likely, or maybe less so.
- The truth is, you are heading into a long, expensive, ugly, difficult, and losing battle.
- Battles that will likely continue till all the children are emancipated.
- Yes, sometimes it doesn't work that way. But that's not because you have a better lawyer, or more money.
- In fact, the more net worth you have now, the more it will cost you to separate.
- The only easy way out is not to make her angry.
- I don't think there is a cheap way out.

I have never thought much of prenuptial agreements, because I see them as planning the divorce. Frankly, with divorce so ubiquitous, they are starting to make good sense to me. There is a group doing amicable divorces, Collaborative Divorce, that stay clear of the courts, and oh yes, you want that! But we don't plan it, instead we lie to ourselves that we can do as we please indefinitely, and they'll just take it!

I sometimes think it might be a great idea if the back of the marriage license included the divorce agreement, and the license wouldn't be issued without it. Now, that wouldn't stop them all. There are men who think they can live with a partner, possibly have children, and walk away totally free any time they want to. Those days are long gone, and the long arm of the county can even reach out of the country. "Uncoupling", apart from the high emotional cost, is rapidly becoming a huge monetary obligation as well. I guess our society is tired of paying for the wreckage we leave behind. You need "fire" insurance!

As far as I know, you can't inexpensively buy divorce insurance, but you can plan. It sounds awful, doesn't it? Still, there goes another house, right next door. It never will be yours, will it?

For the majority of us, it is not going to work out as we plan while

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Library Corner

– *RAY CLARE, LIBRARIAN*



We are pleased to offer our members a unique and extensive collection of quality reading on men's topics.

New offerings include:

No More Mr. Nice Guy, by Dr. Robert A. Glover, *Sober for Good*, by Anne M. Fletcher, *Many Roads, One Journey*, *Moving beyond the 12-steps* by Charlotte Davis Kasl Ph.D., *Addiction, Change and Choice*, *The new view of alcoholism* by Vince Fox, *The Truth about Addiction and Recovery* by Stanton Peele, Ph.D. and Archie Brodsky, *Rational Recovery*, *The new cure for substance addiction* by Jack Trimpey, *The small book, A revolutionary alternative for overcoming alcohol and drug dependence* by Jack Trimpey, and *A Million Little Pieces* by James Frey

And while you are enjoying our many book resources, consider a browsing our large and growing selection of periodicals.

Book Returns Needed:

Some of these books have become so important in our members' lives that they seem to have been out since I had hair. While we have no specific time limit, please consider if you are still using any Men's Center books you now have, and return them to availability.

Address Change Notifications

from the post office cost the Men's Center \$1.14 each.

Please let us know in advance of mailings! Thanks!

Men Talk is a bi-monthly publication of the Twin Cities Men's Center, a non-profit organization. Call 612-822-5892 for subscriptions, or e-mail us at tcmc@tcmc.org

Editor

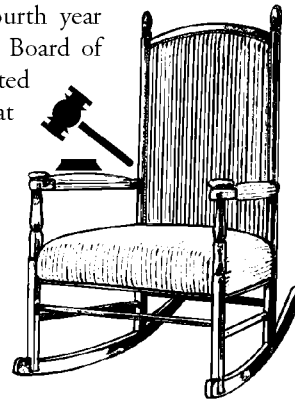
Bill Dobbs

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Greetings from the Chair

Greetings to all men and women who have been active in using and providing services at the Men's Center. I am now in my fourth year of being on the Men's Center Board of Directors. Recently, I was elected to be the Chair of this Board at the January monthly meeting. I personally noted that my election to this office came within a few days of the sixth anniversary of the worst day of my life.



I believe that the Men's Center continues to function after over thirty years as a reflection of the needs of men to have a safe, supportive environment. I am proud to serve in this important organization.

During 2007, I have plans within my capacity as the Board Chair to accomplish some ambitious tasks. I intend to work toward a sizable increase in the number of men who are willing to make a nominal contribution to the Men's Center in the form of an annual membership. I look forward to the continu-

ation of the currently viable and diverse support groups and to promote expansion into additional groups when we see the need. I want to increase our commitment to publicizing the availability of our very successful anger management program.

None of these plans will be accomplished alone by my work, the Board of Directors, or a handful of active volunteers. We need you. What do you see yourself doing at the Men's Center? What gives you passion and personal satisfaction about working with other men? I have no doubt that you have something to share with other men that is of tremendous value. The work that is done at the Men's Center is very important to me and I trust that it is for you. We never know when the next man will call, walk into our offices or come to a scheduled support group in the days following the worst day of his life.

**BOBBY SCHAUERHAMER,
BOARD CHAIR**

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we hold our person of choice in our arms. For this large group of us, prudence at least would suggest that some planning for the afterward is in order. For instance, you will need at least \$10,000 for a relatively simple divorce. And no matter how carefully you squirrel it away, half of it belongs to your partner, so maybe you need twenty grand. And if they can get their hands on it before you do, you can kiss it all goodbye. It's the beauty of a joint account, you see. I know there are exceptions, and that same-sex marriages are treated differently NOW, but that is not what you are pushing for, is it?!

I suppose this sounds very cynical. And yes, I am divorced. In my own case I lost it all, but I had it coming! I got just what I deserved. Even so, I don't think it hurt any less for that. And I know it cost more! Along the way I have found three "laws of living" in my time on this earth. And this article is not about the afterlife, just the aftermath.

1. There is no happily ever after!
2. Nothing is forever!
3. We are NOT condemned to repeat the past; and still we do!

I am not going to tell you how to plan. I am not saying your union will fail. I do know I don't want to be talking to you next. But, if I were to take any union at random and bet on it surviving even another ten years, I would want four to one odds. What odds would you want? Think about it!

Ray Clare is a volunteer working in the Men's Center Office.

Pride Volunteers Needed!

Hello, I'm John Ruud, the new Pride Coordinator for the Men's Center. Anyone who wishes to volunteer at the Men's Center Pride booth at Loring Park, please call me at 651-808-0291. Also call if you'd like to help out with the Monster Truck in the parade.

JOHN RUUD

- 2007 MEN'S CENTER PRIDE COORDINATOR

Here and There

– Edited by Andy Mickel

Upcoming Monthly Men's Sunday Brunches (bring something to share/cook up): **Sunday, May 20th** at Rick Gravrok's, 2925 Monterey Ave S, St. Louis Park, 55416 952-926-6655. (on the west side of Lake Calhoun, off Lake St.), and **Sunday, June 17th (Father's Day – children welcome)** at Jim Lovestar's backyard picnic table, 2629 Upton Ave N, Minneapolis (1 block east of Theodore Wirth Parkway and near the Broadway/Lowry Jct), 612-588-8984. 13 attended the February brunch at Stephen Fullers's and 14 attended the brunch at Eric Mann's. - Andy Mickel, 2007-03-04.

"I have only been to a few center meetings/presentations in my many years as a Men's Center member, but I feel safer knowing you are there if I need you." - John H. 2007-01-09.

"Two continents hear fine comments about TCMC. Your bi-monthly newsletter & schedule of events I find keeps me knowing what is taking place. Thanks to all who assist in creating the fine programming and great spirit." - Pat Reisinger, 2007-01-01.

Andrew Weil, M.D. (Healthy Aging), **Robert Bly** (Evening of Poetry), **Jim Mitchell**, chairman of **ManKind Project Int'l** (Creating Leadership with Passion Power & Presence using Archetypal Energies), **John Lee** (Courting Your Own and Your Lover's Soul: Deepening Intimacy, Connection & Conversation) and **Christopher Kennedy Lawford**, (Men in Recovery: The Process of Surrendering) all keynote sessions in a 4-day Conference for men and "the women who work with them": **A Healthy Spirit: Healing the Bodies and Minds of Men.** The participant will have the opportunity to learn in-depth information about topics related to Men's health and well-being. A wide range of topics will be presented, including physical health issues, emotional growth, relationships, spirituality, addiction, anger management, depression and issues related to childhood growth and father and son relationships. April 22-25, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. \$479. Register online: <<http://www.dualdiagnosis.org/>>, or 1-877-345-3274. FFI: <karen@cmehelp.com>. - 2007-02-01

National Men's Health Week is June 11-17. <<http://www.menshealthweek.org/>> FFI: Men's Health Network, P.O. Box 75972, Washington, DC 20013 <info@menshealthweek.org> 202-543-6461 x101 - 2007-02-23.

The **Man-Making** book by Earl Hipp was officially launched and now in its 2nd printing. The Ancient Call: For thousands of years, in cultures around the world, when the time was right the men of the village came for the adolescent boys. Guiding young males toward a solid and responsible manhood was men's sacred work. Today, too many men are not answering this man-making call. The result is an epidemic of lost, damaged, and under-male-nourished boys. Man-Making is a practical and inspirational guidebook for men, showing them how to awaken and apply their instinctive man-making skills. Every man, regardless of his level of commitment to this work, will find something he can do to support a boy or boys on the journey to manhood. The website <<http://www.man-making.com/>> has references to books, films, and men's responses to the research questions I asked while writing the book. Those questions and men's responses will take any man back to his adolescence and his first steps on his journey to manhood. Two articles are available on the website resources page: **Why Men Don't Mentor Boys**, and a "home spun" rite-of-passage ceremony created for a boy's launch off to college.

- Earl Hipp, 2007-02-14

Judson Family Center in Minneapolis hosts free Educational Events every 2nd Thursday, 7-8:30pm. On May 10, Janet Putnam will present "Demystifying Therapy" at Lake Harriet Christian Church, 5009 Beard Ave S. - Judson Family Center, 101 Harriet Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55409, 612-827-2631 - 2006-10-01.

The next **ManKind Project-Minnesota New Warrior Training Adventure** will be held April 13-15, 2007 at Eagle Lake Camp near Brainerd, MN. The cost is \$650, with many payment plans available. To learn more, attend an Open Circle event: Observe, Ask Questions (or Participate if

you like) in a safe container with a group of men who are practicing authenticity and connection to feeling at **Open Circle of Warriors** events at the Men's Center every 2nd Wednesday, 7-9 p.m. Contact **Andy Mickel** with any questions 612-279-6416 or see: <<http://minnesota.mkp.org/>> for Open I-Group dates/times. Register online at <http://minnesota.mkp.org>. - Andy Mickel, 2007-03-04.

From the book jacket of John Eldridge's book, **Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul** 2001, 223pp, ISBN-10: 0785268839: "A Battle to fight. An Adventure to live. A Beauty to rescue. This is what a man longs for. This is what makes him come alive. Look at the films men love. For that matter, look at the dreams of little boys, the games they play. There is something fierce, passionate, and wild in the heart of every man. That is how he bears the image of God. And the reason that most men "live lives of quiet desperation" is because men have been told that the reason God put them on earth is to be a good boy. To be nice. God designed men to be dangerous. Simply look at the dreams and desires written in the heart of every boy: To be a hero, to be a warrior, to live a life of adventure and risk. Sadly, most men abandon those dreams and desires — aided by a Christianity that feels like nothing more than pressure to be a nice guy. It is no wonder that many men avoid church, and those who go are often passive and bored to death." - Jim Lovestar, 2007-02-28.

The **Men's Leadership Alliance** has created programs in the **Art of Leadership** for 20 years. July 13-20 at the Traditional Wilderness Camp and September 16-22 at a comfortable New England Lodge. Also available in 2007 are Colorado **Men's Spirit Camps**, **Vision Fast for Men**, Boys Wilderness Trip, Elder Retreat, and Men's Leadership Alliance. FFI: Men's Leadership Alliance, 2115 Poplar Ave, Boulder, CO 80304, 303-444-9066, <<http://www.mensleadershipalliance.org/>> - 2007-02-02

Bill Dobbs and I will be updating our website, <<http://www.tcmc.org/>> this summer allowing you to bookmark interior pages. - Andy Mickel. - 2007-03-04.

The Men's Center ALL-PURPOSE FORM

Clip this form and mail to The Men's Center. A regular annual membership at The Twin Cities Men's Center is \$20. With that you get access to the extensive reference library on Men's Issues, receive the Men Talk newsletter, participation in the annual meeting, and enjoy reduced fees to Men's Center sponsored events. If you are able to afford a membership at the Patron (\$40) level, you get free admission to all Wednesday workshops in addition to all the regular membership benefits.

- I want to sustain the activities of The Men's Center by becoming a "20 x 12 Honor Roll Member."
- Please ENTER/RENEW my membership at The Men's Center for the next 12 months:
Enclosed please find \$_____ \$20 (Regular) \$40 (Patron).
- I want to make an additional, tax-deductible gift of \$_____. Thanks much.
- My new/correct address/phone is printed below.
- Please remove me from The Men's Center mailing list; the pre-addressed gummed mailing label is attached.
(You won't receive Men Talk if this box is checked.)

I have these feelings, thoughts, opinions, ideas, news items for The Men's Center:

Date _____ FROM: name _____

_____ Mailing address _____

_____ Home phone _____

_____ Work/other telephone _____

Anger Management Program

The focus of the twelve week anger management class is both education and support. Through class interaction, experiential exercises, lecture, and homework assignments, men will develop new ways to manage their feelings of anger. Following completion of the class, participants can join an ongoing support group to reinforce their new skills. These ongoing support groups will also be facilitated by the trained volunteer facilitators.

Length of Class:

12 consecutive weeks

Number of Participants:

Space is limited to 12 participants with 2 facilitators per class

Cost:

\$215 for Men Center Members (\$225 for Non-Members)

Starting Dates:

Classes are filled on a first come, first served basis. Please call TMC at 612-822-5892 to be placed on the waiting list. State name, address, telephone, preferred starting class. Or if you need further details, call our Anger Management coordinator, John Hesch, on the Anger Management phone 612-229-3102.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

25 years exp. as director of U. of M. employee assistance program and private practice. Individual, couples, issues of depression, identity, coming out, CD.

Fees based on ability to pay.

David W. Johnson, MA 612-721-8048
dwjohn@umn.edu

THANK YOU!



The Men's Center receives generous donations of baked goods from Wuollet's and Breadsmith Bakeries.

**You can find them at 25th and Hennepin or 50th and France or online at:
www.wuollet.com
www.breadsmith.com**

MEN TALK ADVERTISING RATE SCHEDULE

Full Page	7 1/2" x 10"	\$200
1/2 Page	7 1/2" x 4 7/8"	\$125
1/4 Page	3 5/8" x 4 7/8"	\$65
Biz Card	2" x 3 1/2"	\$25

TMC Office Hours: M, Tu, Th, F ;1-4:30pm. Our telephone (612) 822-5892 is answered 24-hours per day by US West voicemail, and an attempt is made to return calls within 1 or 2 days. Our FAX number is (612) 821-6424.

TMC is in the lower level of "Uptown Office Park," a brick office building on the Northeast corner of West 33rd Street and Hennepin Avenue in south Minneapolis, Enter through the door on the north (3249) end of the building (it has 2 numbers: 3249 and 3255!), immediately turn left and descend the stairway through the fire door to Suite 55. (Formerly) handicapped access is easiest through a side door on West 33rd Street.

Check out our web site: www.tcmc.org or correspond at our e-mail address: tcmc@tcmc.org

The Men's Center
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MEN TALK

The Men's Center News

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The World

*It can be hard work making the world.
It would be much easier to – what?*

*Hieronymous Bosch saw what people
could do to each other.*

*The suicide learned to do it
to himself.*

*We were born to ignorant people
who taught us what they knew.*

*When the child comes seeking a
word or a smile – what do I do?*

*Everything made seems to
come from mud.*

*Let Vermeer's tender girl melt my heart?
Admire the ardent young man?*

*They may need to know they have this
power to make the world.*

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