

RANDOM ACT BY A PEER SPECIALIST - Part 1

by HOWARD DIAMOND

THE INITIAL CONTACT

On the night of February 9, several years ago, it was one of those biting cold, sub-zero evenings when thirty-one-year-old Holly Stephens prepared to leave her job as a Peer Specialist for the Wellness Academy in the small village, Lake Town. The time was shortly before 8pm and she was preparing to leave after a long and exhausting day. Looking through a window, Holly could see that it was dark, and she heard the howling of the wind banging against the lit lamp posts. Also, she noticed the snow was falling heavily plus blowing in a sideways direction as if all the elements of the weather were moving and defying gravity.

As she grabbed her heavy jacket and her two sets of keys, Holly thought she perceived some noise down the corridor and thought she saw someone entering the front door of the building. Holly was right! In the lobby, there was a security officer with a young lady who stood shivering and shaking, while blowing on her hands that were frozen from the cold and wind. She was also pregnant. Never one to ignore someone in need, Holly started the conversation by introducing herself to the woman who said her name was Ruth and admitted being with child. At this moment, Holly got two chairs from the security guard. Ruth agreed to sit down and talk. Then, Holly practiced relaxation exercises with Ruth to try to calm her down and give Ruth some peace of mind as she was getting away from the inclement weather outside.

GENERATIONS LODGE

Now, Holly wondered how this happened? Ruth explained that she had turned twenty-six, was over seven months pregnant, homeless and the unborn child's father had abandoned her a few months prior. Earlier in the day, her landlady threw her into the cold as Ruth had not paid rent for two months. After walking the streets for what felt like hours, she had stopped inside to take a load off her feet and warm up. Once again, Holly thought out loud, how could anyone do this to another person, especially to someone with all these needs, including having little money, with a child and having nowhere to go? Then, Ruth softly said she was used to this as she had been in and out of housing for five years.

According to Holly's thinking, no one needs to get accustomed to what Ruth was currently going through. As a Peer Specialist, Holly had many resources at her disposal. With Ruth's consent, she texted her Peer Supervisor, Steffie Green for advice. Then, Holly and Ruth looked through Holly's laptop and figured out what might be best for her. There were local hotels and motels, but they were either expensive or rundown and in sleazy areas of downtown. Finally, Holly thought a respite might be a possible viable option.

When Steffie returned the call, Holly informed her of Ruth's issues. Steffie agreed to phone local respites and see which ones were available. While they were waiting, Holly and Ruth continued to talk. Ruth said she had two older siblings who both overdosed from drugs. Neither of them had any children. Furthermore, her father died when she was three and her mom passed around eighteen months prior.

A little time later, Steffie called back and informed Holly that there was an opening for Ruth at Generations Lodge. All the details were set up and good news it was about half a mile up the road. It was about 9:15PM so before leaving the building, Holly assisted Ruth in making an intake appointment at Laketown Mental Health Clinic which is located conveniently across the street from Generations. An intake for Ruth was scheduled for 9:30AM the following morning.

Then Holly drove Ruth to Generations and made sure she registered, got settled and was somewhat comfortable. Senior Staff Member Marty Sinclair was there and welcomed them to Generations. Marty gave them a tour of the house. Fortunately, none of the other residents were asleep. Along the way, Ruth met each of the residents as they walked with Marty back to the staff office for necessary paperwork. Ruth was given a new set of clothes, toiletries, and a package that included a comb and brush. There was a small smile on Ruth's face, and she thanked Marty for his help. A meeting was arranged at 11:30 AM the next day so Holly could assist Ruth with other services. At around 10:00 PM, Holly left Ruth in the good hands of the workers at Generations.

THE CONNECTION CONTINUES

The next morning, Holly drove to Generations Lodge and spoke with Marty who said that Ruth was very nervous last night. However, in the morning before going to her intake appointment, Ruth mentioned to the other staff that she was doing okay. Ruth walked in and said she was uneasy because of being in different surroundings. Her intake appointment was superb, and she talked with her new therapist, Jane Frederick. Plans were made for four weeks where Ruth agreed to see Jane twice weekly and further visits would be determined. Also, Steffie called Marty and they decided that Holly would see Ruth an additional three more times during her stay at the respite. Both Ruth and Holly were very happy with these arrangements.

It was a nice day about 40 degrees and there was about three inches of snow. For today's plan was to take Ruth to the local pantry and then Holly would help Ruth decide on what services could be available to her. Holly proceeded to go with Ruth to the pantry where Ruth picked up some food and toiletries. In addition, she picked out an assortment of clothes plus they found a couple of maternity outfits and two pairs of shoes. Then, Holly returned Ruth back to Generations. Upon getting back to the respite, the two ladies finished the Peer Specialist forms. Another meeting was scheduled for next week on

Wednesday February 17 at 10:00am.

At their February 17 meeting, Ruth stated she was settling in and being more assertive with her needs at Generations Lodge. When they called Social Security, they were able to stop Ruth's check and have it sent to her temporary address and as of March, her check will automatically be deposited into her new bank account. Next week, Ruth has an appointment with her GYN and someone from her respite will travel with her. Also, she has a follow up with her psychiatrist. Holly had Ruth sign a form and they made a new visit for March 1 at 11:00am.

During February, with the help of Jane, Ruth was becoming more talkative and starting the first week in March she will be attending a weekly Pregnant Without Partners Support Group. Also, during their March 1st meeting, Ruth informed Holly that her GYN said she was relatively healthy plus her baby inside was doing well and still ready for birth on or around April 18.

During their last probable visit on March 16, Holly and Ruth completed paperwork. While working on the documents needed, the ladies began to cry. Although both were in tears, Ruth was able to tell Holly how she felt. She spoke about how she enjoyed her talks with Holly and how she was able to express her feelings to her. This is something Ruth had not done with anyone for many years. Before Holly left, Ruth thanked her for being an understanding Peer Specialist and a great person. When Holly reached the front door, Ruth walked over to her and began to hug her, and they cried together for maybe the last time.

RUTH DISAPPEARS

Almost two weeks later on March 29, as Holly arrived inside at the Wellness Academy, Steffie left a message that asked her to come to her office at 11:00am. Holly confirmed the meeting. When Holly knocked on Steffie's door, Steffie asked Holly to close the door and sit down. Both ladies were drinking tea. As Holly was getting comfortable, she saw that Steffie looked sad and concerned. Earlier today, Steffie received a phone call from Marty from Generations. He explained that Ruth had apparently packed a bag with some food and clothes plus she apparently left Generations Lodge for parts unknown.

Both Steffie and Holly were upset and got depressed by these new developments. Several minutes later, Steffie and Holly composed themselves. Also, Steffie tried to assure Holly that she did nothing wrong and was a big help to Ruth and her unborn child. For a moment, Holly felt like she was going to cry, but she did not. They ended their meeting with the hope from the popular idiom, "To leave no stone unturned".

RANDOM ACT BY A PEER SPECIALIST - Part 2

by HOWARD DIAMOND

HOLLY SEARCHING FOR RUTH

Part One ended with Holly Stephens, Peer Specialist and her Peer Supervisor, Steffie Green, concerned about one of the individuals they were working with. Her name is Ruth and is eight months pregnant. She was staying at a respite, named Generations Lodge Respite managed by Marty Sinclair. Inexplicably on March 29 Ruth left Generations and now two weeks later, April 12 no one has heard anything.

Although Steffie and Holly were not directly working with Ruth, her case was miraculously still open. Miracles do happen! Therefore, Holly gained the opportunities to use work time to assist in the search for Ruth. Each day Holly spent at least one hour in search mode. With the assistance of Generations and her contacts, Holly has made numerous phone calls and met with people to discuss finding Ruth. To this point there are no leads and if like magic, Ruth disappeared.

Although Holly tried to stay safe, she went to places that often had a history of bad instances. Steffie gave the okay to Holly to explore certain areas to look for Ruth. On April 14, Holly went to a neighborhood known for drugs and alcohol, a place where she ventured before. This time was different. Holly's antenna and radar were in full force as she walked around the back streets, but no sign of Ruth.

ACKNOWLEDGED BY HER DIRECTOR

Around two weeks later, on April 27, Steffie received an email from Marty concerning Ruth. Before reading the entire message, she printed it and wanted the ability to share it with others, especially Holly. Steffie went down the hall and read and discussed the email with Holly. Steffie read the email aloud which included that on April 24, Ruth gave birth to a son, named Gabriel, five pounds, five ounces and were both in good health. Also, they were pushed ahead on the Lake Town County's wait list for a low-income housing unit.

When and if they return, Marty stated that they probably will be able to return to Generations, pending new physicals. Everyone was still troubled by it, whether they are safe where they are currently residing. In the email, there was no mention of where Ruth gave birth or where they were. A few days after, Ms. Carlson invited Holly and Steffie to the next Board Meeting scheduled for May 12 and they will be sitting at the dais table. Gladly, both the ladies confirmed with an enthusiastically dramatic, YES!!

BOARD MEETING WITH A SURPRISE

This week, Steffie had her weekly supervision with Holly on May 10. No word was heard from Ruth and they both were very concerned. An update was given by Holly stating that she rechecked the hospitals, various shelters and a wide assortment of other places, without any success. Also, the Board Meeting was two days away and Holly mentioned that she apprehensive because she never attended such a gathering.

During the board meeting, Michele Carlson stood up and before the members of the board and other distinguished guests talked about a brave young lady who went out of her way to help someone else. Her name is Holly Stephens, Certified Peer Specialist from the Wellness Academy. On February 9, she saved a life and possibly two because the woman was pregnant. Then, Ms. Carlson reached in the drawer of the podium, pulled out a plaque and asked Holly to come to the stand. At that moment, Michele presented Holly with the plaque for her work as a Peer Specialist. Holly is a dedicated and strong advocate for others in need and more importantly a fine lady. She is the embodiment of what a Peer Specialist giving peer support is meant to be.

Moments later, it was Holly's turn to speak. She said she was very nervous and very uncomfortable. After some encouraging words from her supervisor, Steffie, Holly began speaking. Initially, she thanked the Board, Ms. Carlson, Supervisor Steffie and her peers at the Academy. Then, she made a small joke about winning the Oscar (Academy Award) but tried to remain focused on her brief speech. Holly concluded, by blurting out in her typical humble flair, that I was only doing my job. Finally, Ms. Carlson remarked, and what a great job it was.

Before ending the Board Meeting, Ms. Carlson had a special surprise for Steffie and Holly. In the rear of the room, there was lot of stirring around with plenty of commotion. Due to the fact the Board and Ms. Carlson were getting perturbed, they wanted to investigate. With no warning and the help of two other Peer Specialists, the back doors were flung open. Beyond those doors were a mystery lady slowly meandering to the podium.

She was dressed magnificently and had a pair of black gloves covering her hands. In addition, she had a long flowing dark veil and a mask over her entire face. Several minutes passed as she stood silently in front of Holly. Little by little, she removed her veil. In an instant, Holly was in shock as she realized it was Ruth behind the veil and the mask. Upon finishing, Ruth began to thank Holly for what the two of them accomplished during this past winter. She kept the talk brief as both ladies began to cry. Furthermore, there was one more item. Beyond the front of stage was her infant boy named Gabriel and Ruth brought him to the stand. As Ruth held him, there were three crying individuals. Shortly afterwards, the Board ended the meeting.

NEW CELEBRITY HOLLY

After receiving the plaque from the board, Holly became sort of a celebrity as she was interviewed and pictures were taken by the local newspaper. Initially, Ruth declined being cross examined or having to take any pictures. Afterwards, Holly said she was uneasy with her newfound notoriety. Later on, Ruth had reconsidered, and she reluctantly agreed to talk to the reporter. Over the next several weeks, Holly began to relax some, but her newfound fame did not come naturally for her. As for Ruth and Gabriel, they made a good impression on the guests, and definitely on the board. Many of them said that they will help by joining the committee in finding Ruth and Gabriel an adequate and safe place to live.

During that summer, Holly appeared to be noticed almost everywhere she went in town. At the bank, the manager was enthralled with Holly and wanted to showcase her with the article and photo posted on the wall near the teller station and in the branch manager's office.

Another day at the local supermarket, she was embarrassed when she gave her signature to a special needs child. Reluctantly, she accepted and made the kid smile from ear to ear and made the child extremely happy. At the neighborhood picnic, Holly was introduced to the gathering crowd. Then the

mayor asked her to speak. About thirty minutes passed, and she began to tell everyone attending, what it means to be a Peer Specialist.

Being resilient made it easier for Holly to cope with her fame and her work as a Peer Specialist. There were feelings of despair and plenty of joyous times for Holly, but every time she bounced back, so she decided to stay at the picnic. An hour or so later, there was a raffle drawing and Holly was asked to pick out the winning ticket. Naturally, she accepted. More pictures were taken for the newspaper and to promote the community of Lake Town. Slowly, Holly was adjusting to her celebrity status, but she remained somewhat awkward.

HOLLY BEING RESILIENT

September rolled in and during the next board meeting, everything changed and it wasn't good. Ms. Carlson delivered the news to the staff of the Wellness Academy. Despite the recognition of the exemplary Academy that saved a life, the board of directors in a majority vote approved the complete defunding of the Wellness Academy leaving everyone including Holly without a job at the end of the fiscal year, October 31. Also, the Lake Town county committee agreed unanimously. All funding cuts or closures were programs with little or no proven existing record. One life is not sufficient enough for any agencies' programs.

Several weeks later, on October 20, the Wellness Academy was honored by a notable guest. It was Holly who went down the hall and was shocked to see Ruth and Gabriel. Now six months, Gabriel was very fidgety, but he was quite fit. Everyone went back to the office where Ruth informed Holly and Steffie, who just came by, and with a big wide smile that she had received a voucher for housing. Not only did she get a voucher, but she found a place to live. This house was an upstairs in a two-family home halfway between Generations and Wellness Academy. Naturally, Holly was ecstatic for Ruth, but Holly told her the bad news of the closing of the Academy. In a few minutes, Ruth and Gabriel left the building.

By the end of October, it was getting harder for Holly, but her resiliency would help her get through. After the dust settled in a couple of weeks, Holly was looking again for a new position as a Peer Specialist. Ms. Carlson made time to give Holly good wishes and a bright future. By the end of the year, Holly was hired again as a Peer Specialist and became an integral part of promoting Peer Services around her county of Lake Town. Within six months, Holly was promoted to a higher position with her new agency. Once again this proves the accuracy of the often-used statement, "**No good deed goes unpunished**".

Although this story is fiction, it was an example of what Peer Specialists can accomplish given the right opportunity and resources. Stay tuned for Part 3.

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RANDOM ACT BY A PEER SPECIALIST- Part 3

by HOWARD DIAMOND

HOLLY'S FAMILY AND A NEW MYSTERY CASE

Everybody tends to follow the Holidays distinctly. Why is this any different for Holly? This day Holly Stephens, Peer Specialist is meandering through the aisles in the local department store and deciding what to buy for others. She has a short list of six, which does not include her mom and dad plus her older brother, Andrew. Her mom and dad live down south and her brother's place of residency is unknown. In most years, her brother was probably galivanting somewhere in the European Countryside. Holiday time is separate for Holly and Andrew. Wherever he is, he will connect with his sister.

For Thanksgiving day and weekend, Holly spent time relaxing at home, listening to music, without her phone or watching TV. On Sunday night, she realized there was a message. It was her Director, Taylor Thompson, who left a message to call him back even if it is Sunday night. The weekend was officially over. When she phoned him, she was informed that one of their client's was raped and her young son was killed. No names were given yet. The police department have been investigating since around 6 pm. Taylor also said he would meet her at 9:30 AM at the Hunter Mental Health Center where they both work.

That night Holly tossed and turned trying to figure out who this was. HMHC has many clients that fit this, but without more information, she cannot come up with an answer. Finally, she fell asleep after 3am and woke up around 7am to begin her new day. She showered to feel better for her day ahead. As scheduled she met with Taylor and they discussed what transpired last night. Taylor is 6 feet 4 inches, about 220 lbs., short wavy light brown hair with a few gray ones for good measure and often tanned but is naturally olive skinned and is out in the sun when he can.

Around 10am, Taylor got buzzed by his secretary, Steve Washington, who is 6 foot 2 inches with matching dark brown hair and eyes and stated there was a call from the police. Senior Officer Alex Grey informed Taylor that the victim has two business cards from both Taylor and Holly. In addition, she has a concussion and barely remembers what happened or her name. Currently, she is sedated and is in Room 303 at the Lake Town Community Hospital. Holly phoned the hospital and found out that the visiting hours are from 10am to 12pm and 3pm to 5pm. Chimes in the hallway signified it was 11:00am and Taylor and Holly proceeded to the hospital.

MYSTERY SOLVED, WITH MORE QUESTIONS

Taylor and Holly arrived at the hospital and met with Senior Officer Gray who said that he will escort them to Room 303. At the elevator, Nurse Kim Randall stated that Room 303 has police protection, so the visitors had to provide IDs and had to be fingerprinted. Nurse Kim walked with everyone to Room 303. On the way she stated the patient does not know who she is or what actually happened or that her son is dead.

Slowly, Taylor and Holly walked into Room 303. The person in the bed was heavily bandaged, so it was

hard to see who it was. Nurse Kim entered the room and mentioned that the doctor will be removing some of the face covering this afternoon. The lady in the bed began to speak. She said that her pain is slightly better and she was happy to hear that will be less bandages on her body. She went on to say that she knows she is in the hospital Room 303, the Nurses are Kim and Amy. I want to get better and her doctor said that I might go home soon, wherever that is.

By the time Taylor and Holly came back, Nurse Amy stated most of the bandages were removed from her face. Everyone entered the room and the visitors reintroduced themselves. The woman said she remembered each and was glad they came back. Despite some facial scarring, she said she was in less pain. Suddenly, Holly thought she knew who the person in the bed was. Holly blurted out the name, RUTH HAINES!

Ruth Haines was put in the hospital computer. Lots of information was there, so copies for all to share. Eighteen pages came through and the doctors tried to see if that was indeed Ruth Haines. Two days later, it was determined that Ruth Haines was the lady in Room 303, however she did not know this herself. Today is December 4. With the help of various staff members, she began to recover from her physical wounds, but her recall is not where it needs to be and she is not almost ready to be discharged.

A new unit in the hospital was found and she can move on December 9. This unit is on the fourth floor specializing in trauma and memory work and seen by a therapist twice weekly and see a psychiatrist as needed. Over the next few days later, Ruth started to remember pieces of her life. One session she said her name to her Nurse Kim. On the 5th, she had an appointment with her therapist who coincidentally happens to be Jane Frederick who Ruth was seeing at Lake Town Mental Health Clinic, but she does not remember any of those encounters yet.

MORE QUESTIONS FOR HOLLY, NEW BEGINNINGS FOR RUTH

December 6 and the 7th, she recalled some of her recent past. On the 7th, Ruth mentioned to Nurse Kim that she was walking aimlessly throughout Lake Town, one cold night and arrived at a clinic. But that is where this recall stops. A couple of days later, Ruth was in the new unit, Room 415. Ruth was delighted with her visitor on the 10th. Of course, it was Holly! That day Ruth had a major breakthrough. Ruth recalled that she had someone named Holly helping her, but she does not recollect much more. Holly was going on vacation to see her folks from December 17 and returning on January 2nd or 3rd.

During the next few weeks, Ruth and Jane met every other day and gradually her memories were coming back. Holly made Ruth aware of the good opportunity for her to take days away. It was the thirteenth and Holly, after work, went to the local department store to pick up a gift for Ruth. She bought an item that Ruth had at Generations Respite. The following day, Holly brought this to the hospital for Ruth.

Upon arrival, Holly ran into Officer Grey, who had just left Ruth's room. He was there to ask more questions of Ruth about the day of the rape, but she stated very little. Also, Officer Grey was no closer to finding out who raped her. When Holly proceeded to Room 415, Ruth was not there. One of the unit

nurses told Holly that Ruth was getting another MRI of her head to see if there were any changes. After the MRI, Ruth will be taken to see, Jane her therapist and will not return for two hours. Then Holly left the gift on the night table beside the bed and left the hospital for home.

Not seeing Ruth gave Holly an opportunity to return to the hospital. It was around eight o'clock, after regular visiting time, Holly walked into Room 415 and started talking with Ruth. Before anything else, Ruth thanked Holly for the gift and the two hugged. They talked for almost an hour. Ruth was getting cold and asked Holly to close the window on the other side of her room. When Holly walked back to Ruth, she was shivering. A few minutes later, Ruth began bursting out with lots of information about her life. Suddenly, she recapped the night she was last this cold. It was a new beginning for Ruth and many more questions for Holly.

Sessions with Jane became more productive plus exceedingly beneficial as Ruth was recollecting items of her past. However, she still did not relive the night she was raped, ever being pregnant or giving birth. Patience was going to be needed, but Ruth thought it was a new beginning.

Over the next few weeks, Holly went to see her parents where there was a nice surprise waiting for her. It was her brother, Andrew. They spent lots of time together. One night, Andrew informed everyone that he will be staying near his parents for the following year. Also, he will make plans to see Holly much more often. Everyone appeared to be happy, but in Holly 's mind there were more questions.

This was an awkward year with plenty of ups and downs. Ruth was starting to remember her life, but it was a new beginning. Holly, Senior Peer Specialist, was still working with her Director, Taylor Thompson and Officer Alex Grey to unravel the mystery of who raped Ruth and killed her son, Gabriel. "Mystery creates wonder and wonder is the basis of man's desire to understand."

Stay tuned for Part 4.

Random Act By a Peer Specialist: Part 4

A NEW YEAR DAWNING

Holly Stephens, a Peer Specialist from Hunter Mental Health Center (HMHC) and her supervisor, Taylor Thompson are determined to help Officer Alex Grey in finding out who raped a young mother and her baby. Unfortunately, this rape happened to one of Holly's previous consumers, Ruth Haines and her less than twelve-month year young child, Gabriel.

As the year began, Holly had returned from spending time with her parents somewhere in the South. In addition, she was surprised by her brother, Andrew, who said he would be around for their parents. On the flight back to Lake Town, Andrew decided to accompany Holly for two weeks to check out her town. Since Andrew had never been to her part of the world, he thought this would be an opportune time. Of course, Holly jubilantly agreed. After the two weeks, he would hang out with their folks and get settled with his new job.

Those two weeks were great. Most days it was in the 30s and 40s during daylight plus low 30s and 20s at night. When Holly was not working, they went skating in the park, saw a couple of movies, ate a couple of expensive meals and most importantly enjoyed each other's company. Is this a new dawning in their familiar relationship? Hey, anything is possible, maybe even probable.

BACK TO WORK, BACK TO PAPERWORK, BACK TO MEETINGS

Vacation time is over and it is time to get back to work. Mondays after time away are extremely difficult. Mounds of paper skew the desk, plethora of phone calls, texts and emails to respond. What is Holly going to do? First, breathing properly would be prudent. Breathe in, hold for five seconds, and slowly breathe out. Before Holly attempted this again, Secretary Steve Washington and supervisor Taylor rang the intercom. Steve typed out the majority of her schedule for Monday and Tuesday.

MONDAY

11 AM WITH TAYLOR

12:15 PM LUNCH

1:30 PM TEAM MEETING

3 PM WITH RUTH

TUESDAY

9:15 AM MEET AT OFFICE WITH TAYLOR

10 AM AT POLICE STATION. 1 WITH MEDIA

11 AM AT POLICE STATION. 2 WITH OFFICER GREY

? LUNCH WITH TAYLOR

2:15 PM MEETING WITH RC

3:15 PM AT 23 CHESTNUT ST MEETING WITH KB

4:15 PM AT CL MOM PLACE 335 SQUIRE BLVD

Peer Specialists like Holly often have schedules looking like this, especially when being away for two weeks. Naturally, Holly has other consumers, but Taylor made Ruth as a number one priority. Why is this any different since Ruth's rape? While Holly was on vacation, Steve Washington took over Ruth's information and visits were done exclusively by Taylor.

Before meeting with Taylor, Holly caught up on reading notes and going through the paperwork from some of her other clients. Sitting at the next cubicle was Steve typing with extreme tension. Upon completion, he got up and walked over to a startled Holly. Mr. Washington almost six feet tall around 200 lbs., good build, a trimmed brown beard to match his long hair along with deep brown eyes. Steve is also a Peer Specialist, but he mostly is assigned to desk duty due to his issues walking. Also, he often uses braces on his left leg.

Since Holly was waiting for Taylor, with the assistance of Steve, they sifted through the papers that were piled on her desk. Before the meeting, Assistant Director Karen Greene walked into Taylor's office. She wanted to listen to an update on Ms. Haines, of course he agreed. Karen Greene was about 5 foot five 5 inches, 130 lbs., medium length strawberry blonde hair and piercing blue eyes behind wire framed eyeglasses.

Promptly at 11 Taylor called Holly into his office. Cases were updated for Holly and a series of messages were handed to her for response. Lastly, they discussed Ruth. Although she is still in the hospital, she will soon be discharged back to Generations Lodge. Marty Sinclair said that there might be a bed available by the end of the month. Slowly Ruth memories are being restored and she still will be seeing Jane twice a week. Currently, she is Room 419, not 415. Taylor had a lunch meeting at noon and had to run. Ms. Greene attended the entire time; however, she did not utter a single word.

MEETING WITH RUTH AND JANE

On this cold, windy afternoon in Lake Town, Holly arrived at the hospital and took the glass elevator to the fourth floor. Before visiting Ruth, her therapist Jane wanted to discuss something with Holly. Jane found a vacant office and they met. First, Jane informed Holly that Ruth is about to have a major breakthrough about the night the two of you met. Also, Ruth describes a newborn with blonde hair and freckles, but she does not make the connection with her own infant son, Gabriel.

Jane and Holly proceeded down the hallway to Room 419. Upon arrival, Jane rapped on the door and told Ruth that she had a visitor. On the television was a soap opera, but Ruth turned it off when Jane entered her room. Becoming more anxious, Ruth wanted to know who the visitor was. Slowly Holly walked in the room. Then, Ruth excitedly stated that you are the Peer Specialist Holly and you are helping me find a new place to live. My therapist mentioned that you have good connections.

Jane excused herself because she had someone else to see. Explaining stuff with Holly, Ruth said that she might be leaving here soon and heading to a place called Generations Lodge. Last week, I was talking

with a nice guy named Marty who looked familiar but could not figure out why. He asked me lots of questions and Jane was seated next to me for support. Both you and Jane are calm, quiet plus very helpful. When I leave here, will you come visit me, Holly? Not sure, Ruth, but I will think about it. At that point, Holly left Ruth.

While they were talking, Holly and Jane noticed there was a sort of twinkle in Ruth's eyes. Neither of them were sure what this meant, or had any significance, but they will check again. Holly went to her next consumer and finished her first day at work of the new year. She was tired, but she got home safe and sound.

Arriving at home, Andrew greeted Holly with a big smile and a huge hug. The siblings exchanged pleasantries and talked about their respective days. While Andrew spent the morning surfing the internet and the afternoon in the local library, Holly had a particularly busy day at work. Tomorrow is scheduled to be even more challenging but due to certain confidentiality agreements, Holly could not be specific. Andrew said he understood.

Tonight, Andrew was going to cook Chicken Carbonara with heavy garlic, salad and fresh garlic knots. Dinner will be ready at 7, so Holly had an hour and fifteen to shower and change into some comfortable clothes. Like most evenings at home, Andrew wanted to know more about some of the people Holly works with. Being a Peer Specialist and State Regulations, she cannot discuss anyone. In a generalized fashion she talked about experiences with Ruth. Over the next couple of hours, they talked about Andrew's plans for going skating in the park. Around 9:30 pm, Holly vegged in her bedroom, put on some music and tried to relax.

MORNING WITH THE POLICE, AFTERNOON WITH OTHERS

Monday turned into Tuesday as Holly was awakened by alarms at 6am. Regularly, this hour is when Holly gets up. After her morning routine, she grabbed a Boston Creme Donut and left for work. It is around 8:30 at the office, but Taylor has not arrived yet. This gave Holly the opportunity to confirm her appointments for later in the day. Her 2:30 and 3:30 confirmed, but her 4:15 is probably traveling to his place of employment, so Holly left a message.

Shortly after, Steve walked into the office and began talking with Holly. Also, he gave her a few messages, which included one from her 4pm appointment. It stated that he would rather be visited at 4:30pm. Holly thanked Steve and put the papers in her bag to call later.

As usual at 9 Taylor arrived right on time at the office. Taylor was glad that Holly was there before him. Before leaving for the police station, he had to make some administrative phone calls. With traffic, it would take about twenty minutes to drive there, so he had some time. During one of the conversations, he found out that one of the Assistant Peer Supervisors is leaving around later in the year and they are starting a search for a replacement.

While Holly was in the bathroom, Taylor screamed that we are leaving in exactly two minutes. She got her tablet and her notepad and they proceeded to the police station to meet with Officer Grey. On route, Taylor reminded Holly that was an update of their investigation of the rape and murder of an infant. Also in attendance will be the mayor and other local officials plus newspaper reporters, TV and radio personalities, so the conference room will be packed.

Last minute, the venue was changed. Everyone now gathered in the larger auditorium looking room, which was still crowded, which was equipped with closed circuit cameras and several microphones. There are aqua colored walls that match one of the colors of the police cars and uniforms. Officer Grey officially began the meeting at 10:15 am. This get-together is an update about the rape of Ruth Haines and the murder of her infant son Gabriel.

After introducing the local assembly member and senator, the mayor, and an assortment of other dignitaries, Office Grey started. To everyone present, the police department is doing what it can to bring justice to Ruth Haines and her infant son. Due to the broken glass all over the apartment, the unknown attacker probably has cuts and visible scars on various places throughout his body. She was confused by what was. From the corner of her eye, Holly noticed Marty, manager of Generations Lodge Respite. Marty told Holly that Ruth had been accepted back to the Generations Lodge Community Residence, which is a block from the Respite. In addition, Holly found out Marty is the House Manager of both the respite and the community residence. Ruth's tentative date to start is next Tuesday, but she will not be informed until Monday. So, Holly questioned Marty why and he explained that Jane will tell Ruth in my presence and we wanted to see her reaction. Holly and Marty separated and Holly met with Officer Grey and Taylor.

Also in the crowd, there was a mysterious looking woman. She was wearing a long brown raincoat, with a matching hat, which covered part of her face. Beneath the hat, she had mid-level brown hair. In addition, she apparently had a worried look about her as she quickly paced back and forth. When she sat, her legs kept switching positions and her hands were trembling fiercely. Actually, it was Ruth. It was good that no one recognized her, as she blended in with the mob at the police audience. Ruth was confused and she will discuss this with Jane on Friday.

Officer Grey said the police are getting close to finding out the real suspect. It was my Captain's opinion that the media is not informed. We hope to bring another suspect next week when we verify some address information. Also, a lineup was requested, but since Ruth does not have full memories, this will not be required, at least for the present time. There were no fingerprints on any blunt instrument, but one shows a small indentation that has not been identified. Everyone agreed to meet at 10am Friday at the Mental Health Clinic.

After it was time for lunch, but Taylor had to cancel because of a staff meeting amongst all the Assistant Supervisors and Supervisors of Peer Specialists. Holly got a sub from one of the chain shops and spent the afternoon with her scheduled consumers. It was a good day and her three pm clients are doing well. Her main concern is still Ruth and the police that are searching for Ruth's rapist. At that moment, Holly recalled what her dad frequently said, "Patience is a Virtue".

Random Act By a Peer Specialist: Part 5

One Year Less One Day

It is February 8 and a few updates have occurred since last written and documented by Jane Frederick, therapist for Ruth Haines. Ruth and Jane have been working together for almost a year due to Ruth being raped and her infant son Gabriel was beaten to death. However, Ruth does not remember much from that time period.

Also, Holly Stephens, Peer Specialist and her supervisor, Taylor Thompson are working with Police Officer Alex Grey to discuss ideas to find Ruth's attacker. Always vigilant, Holly while assisting others, her main focus was Ruth. Over the past year, Holly has visited Ruth in various locations, including the hospital plus Generations Lodge Respite and Generations Community Residence where Ruth resides presently.

Today Holly scheduled a mental health day because she is emotionally drained from all that has transpired for this year. Although, she had taken four weeks in last year, this was the first day this year. She is very aware what tomorrow is, February 9, the night she met Ruth. During the day, Holly did fun things. During the afternoon, she went ice skating in the park, indulged with some ice cream, went to see a comedy movie and brought pizza home for dinner. For Ruth it was a day like most days. In the morning, she watched old TV game shows, and did a group exercise with members of her community residence. After lunch she decided to take a walk to relax some and put on her headphones and listen to music till dinner. Unfortunately, Ruth does have many recollections of what happened a year ago. Tomorrow she has an appointment with Jane and a separate visit with Holly.

February 9, One Year Later

As usual Holly was out of bed by 6:30 am. She took a hot shower because a long, draining day was ahead for her. By 9:00, Holly met two of clients and respective lawyers at the Lake Town County Court Building. One person was accused of throwing a rock through a sporting goods store window and taking money from the cash register. He is claiming innocent and knows who actually committed the crime. His case is scheduled for 9:30. The second case refers to a woman fighting back against her rapist and stabbing him. Time for her preliminary hearing is 11:30. Ironically the two have the same case manager who is on vacation; therefore, Holly was selected.

In the afternoon, Holly had two house visits at 200 and 330. At 5pm, she has a meeting with Ruth. After a minor snow event of about an inch or two over this morning, it has turned cold and windy. Holly was taking Ruth to an appointment with a lawyer in the building where Holly used to work. When Ruth went to the fourth floor, Holly decided to go to the second floor and surprise her former supervisor, Steffie Green. Since the end of October, Steffie has been a Supervisor for Broadview Health Services. The two talked for a few minutes and arranged a lunch meeting for the 17th.

Things changed drastically when Holly walked down the corridor. At the door was shaking Ruth. Holly got a couple of chairs and Ruth began to spout out what occurred a year ago. All her memories of that day were beginning to crystallize. Furthermore, Ruth stated that was Holly who made the calls so I could get into Generations Lodge the first time. Yes, Ruth I was there to assist. Also, you spoke with the clinic to get me an intake for the following morning. Ten minutes later, Ruth said she was exhausted and

wanted to go back to her place. On route, Holly suggested she bring these thoughts to Jane in therapy. Ruth said she will.

More Memories For One, More Information For The Other

A few weeks later, Holly continues to work hard with a very busy work schedule assisting individuals on the road to recovery. According to her supervisor Taylor, she has a male friend that occasionally comes in the office to take her home. To this point, the two men have not met.

Ruth is still seeing Jane for therapy to put her life back together. There has been some additional memories, but none of Gabriel or the night she was attacked. February has turned into March and today on the 20th, spring begins. Doing part of her daily routine, Ruth takes a walk from her community residence into the village. Some of the store windows are reflecting the change in season. One place is scraping off the paint from the glass of snow scenes and the holidays of winter plus the manager stated there will be new paintings that will adorn them by April 1st.

In the corner of Ruth's eyes she saw a suspicious man lurking across the street. She dipped into the diner to avoid him. It did not appear that he saw her. Tomorrow, Ruth goes to a mental health program and she will talk about this. Also, Marty house manager of Generations Lodge is scheduled and she will tell him. Although Ruth was scared inside, she was able to make it back home.

About an hour later, Marty arrived at Generations and Ruth talked about the incident. She stated that he appeared to be short or tall, very heavy with darkish hair. At every corner he stopped, held on to the edge of the store, squatted slightly and looked around up, down several times as if he were expecting something to fall from the sky. When Ruth was finished, Marty asked if he could phone Officer Alex Grey or Jane, or Holly, but Ruth declined. She agreed that they be informed, but I am too tired tonight to see any of them.

Dinner tonight is at six and Ruth is scheduled to set the table for seven residents and three staff. Although, it is only a little past four, she set the table anyway. She did not want to talk about it earlier and was glad that there will be people around. When Ruth finished, she retired to her bedroom and rested till dinner.

Two days later, Ruth went into the village and ordered an extra cheese and mushroom slice at the pizza place. She faced toward the window and gazed outside. As she was finishing, she saw that man again, this time he was on the same side of the street coming toward the pizza restaurant, but at least three blocks back. Ruth slowly left the restaurant and headed toward home.

That man is still beyond Ruth and basically do the same movements as the other day. Fortunately, she bumped into off-duty Officer Grey who took down her information and accompanied her a few blocks. No longer did she the man following her, so she was able to return to Generations safely. She thanked Officer Grey and smiled at him intensely.

New Memories and a New Breakthrough

On the following day, Ruth spoke to both Jane and Holly. A meeting was set amongst the three for 2pm, Monday. During the session Jane tried to get Ruth to think about who she saw. Her eyes were closed so

Jane had Ruth dig deep in her mind. It did not help much, at least for this time. When her experience was over, Ruth said she would do this again.

Then, Jane brought Holly in the room and discussed (of course generally) how Ruth is progressing in therapy. Ruth said that Jane is still assisting with a variety of techniques to help me remember more and more. Added by Jane that Ruth has continued to make it easier for me. She is open to suggestions and ideas to help her. Holly was satisfied and left to see other consumers. Jane called for an insurance paid taxi to take Ruth home.

While Holly was Ruth, Taylor and Assistant Director, Karen Collins met the first candidate for the open Supervisor position. Her name was Anna Mancini, around 5 feet tall, with high heels and quite heavy. She had an olive complexion with dark brown eyes and grayish dark wavy hair. Anna had ten years' experience in the field, three of which Supervisor for a children's program in a neighboring town. Although Anna had not worked with Peers before, she talked a good game and was informed that there will be a second, if not a third interview.

A few days later, Officer Grey phoned Taylor wanting to talk with him. So, Taylor walked over to his secretary, Steve Washington, to clear the rest of his schedule. Also, please try to get in touch with Holly and have her meet me at the Police station in an hour. Let me know what she said. Steve finished the letter he was working on, and then phoned Holly. She picked up and informed Steve that she will do her best. To complete everything, Steve phoned Taylor and informed him about Holly.

Waiting for Taylor to arrive, Officer Grey made room in his office. Fifteen minutes later Taylor was at the police station, and they began to talk not knowing if Holly was coming. Yesterday, a new witness named Bill Reynolds was interviewed and thinks he saw what transpired that night.

Minutes later Holly came into the office. Officer Grey continued. When Bill was asked why he did not come forward in almost a year. The witness claimed he was out the country and did not know that there was a rape and a murder. Last week, Bill returned to Lake Town and saw the notice in the newspaper and the local blog.

With that information, Office Grey and staff checked out some of what Bill said. So far, what he stated were accurate and that he was indeed out of the country for the entire year. As far as what Ruth has been telling me; however, we are still checking it out. ALSO, we have talked to some of the shop employees and many have collaborated. No one had gotten a good look or spoken with the mystery man. **Let the memory live again.**

Stay tuned for part 6

Random Act By a Peer Specialist: Part 6

by Howard Diamond

Mystery Man Appears Again

On a warm 60-degree end of March day in Lake Town, Ruth decided to take a walk into town. She waved at the grocery store manager, Ted while he was painting his window, Sal and Tony, the guys at the pizza place and others. Also, she walked into the diner to ask about the open part time position. At this juncture, Ruth left her resume and filled out an application. In the distance, she thought she saw the mystery man.

At around 8pm, Ruth receives a phone call. Several minutes later, another phone call and no one there and again a third, a fourth and at about 9:45pm a fifth. Each one was similar, Ruth picked up the receiver, said hello, but no one was at the other end of the line, and eventually replaced the receiver. At around 10:30, Ruth tried to fall asleep. Generally, Ruth turns off or buzzer mode on her cell phone. Overnight, she receives six text messages from an unknown account, which Ruth believes is from the same person.

When Ruth wakes up she calls Holly and lets her know what happened. A suggestion Holly offered to tell Officer Grey. Reluctantly Ruth agreed. Ruth proceeded to phone the police and tell Officer Grey what occurred. He said he would write a report, but nothing else can be done because it was only one night. Two nights later, the calls and the texts returned with a message..." YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!"

The next morning Ruth called and made an appointment for the same day. Before that Ruth phoned Officer Grey who said he will meet with Ruth and Holly. Everyone met at Holly's office at 3pm the same day. At around 2pm, Ruth received another text message stating, "BEWARE THE STREETS". A scared Ruth arrived at Holly's office but had to wait. Secretary Steve greeted Ruth and tried different techniques to get her to calm down. By the time Holly was ready was better and Officer Grey was standing by Ruth's side and escorted her to Holly's station.

Since Taylor was out of the office, the three met inside his room for privacy. There Ruth informed them of the prank call earlier in the afternoon. After she was done, Officer Grey asked for Ruth's cell phone. While he was inspecting her phone, Holly told Ruth that she made a visit for her with Jane at 5pm, she will drop her off and give her exact money to get her home. Upon finishing with Ruth's phone, Officer Grey filled out and completed more police work that Ruth signed.

Before ending the meeting, Officer Grey wanted to say that there were more things that he wanted to clarify and give the women information. Although all phone numbers were anonymous, he said that they came from the same person. Officer Grey continued, actually there were more than two texts, probably over twenty, with a couple of common themes. Most glaring was spelling mistakes, phrases and questions that were commonly incorrectly stated. This news startled Ruth, but she did not understand why. It was almost 4:30pm when Officer Grey left with Steve and asked him a few questions. Shortly thereafter, Holly and Ruth proceeded to Jane's building.

PIECES TOGETHER, PIECES BROKEN, MORE PIECES

During the next couple of weeks, Ruth walked into town as usual, no sign of the mystery man and no threatening text messages. Everything seemed to take a lull and that suited Ruth well. Weather outside Lake Town was getting warmer, flowers were blooming, and vegetables were growing. One day last week, friends of Ruth had a picnic in the park.

For Holly things were getting better. Stress levels were manageable and her anxiety was under control. Her brother Andrew called and said was coming to visit the last week in April for a few days. At work Holly's consumers were doing okay and putting the pieces of the lives together. Taylor, her supervisor met with Assistant Director, Karen Collins on a couple of occasions regarding the vacant Assistant Supervisor position. All Holly knew that there were five candidates remaining. One was Anna Mancini. At the police station, Officer Grey had no news.

April 15, things changed. That day Ruth started her day around 6am and an hour later, she receives another unusual text message. This read, "BEWARE THE STREETS! I WILL BE THERE! I KNOW HOW TO FIND YOU. I KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE! BEWARE THE STREETS! Immediately she proceeded to the police station to report to Officer Grey. He will be in at 10:30 about 45 minutes from now. Alright, I will come back then. My name is Ruth Haines, please tell him that I was here and want to speak to him.

Halfway between the police station and the center of town, is a coffee shop so Ruth decided to have breakfast. Ironically, Taylor and Holly chose the same place and walked in around 8:10 and the three ate together. At the table Ruth began to inform the two of what transpired earlier. Both went through her text messages and were upset by what they saw. After the meal, Taylor offered to drive Ruth back to the police station. Taylor said no problem, Holly and I have other cases to go over.

Upon arrival, there was a disturbance outside the station. Someone put a large rock through a window, shattered glass everywhere, nearly hitting Officer Grey in the head. This incident terrified Ruth again and suddenly she received a ding from her phone. Some rocks had attached messages including, **BEWARE THE STREETS, "WE KNOW YOU ARE CLOSE" and "WE WILL GET YOU."**

About ninety minutes later. a new text appeared on Ruth's phone. It read, "**BEWARE THE STREETS! I WILL FIND YOU! I KNOW WHAT YOU THINK! LOOK LEFT, LOOK RIGHT! I KNOW HOW TO FIND YOU! BEWARE THE STREETS! BEWARE THE STREETS!"** She saw Officer Grey coming toward them. He took down the latest information and he said he will call Ruth soon. Right now, he had to stay here.

NIGHTMARES, A NEW ENCOUNTER, HOLLY LEAVES EARLY

A few days later after the window through the police station, things were getting worse for Ruth again. She was receiving additional texts and phone calls plus these were getting more vulgar. One day when she was leaving therapy, she saw a strange man at the other side of the building. Ruth noticed that he had a cap on backwards and slowly put his hands together. In addition, she heard him whistling, "Take me out to the ballgame". Although Ruth was not followed home, she arrived safely, but was still shaking.

That evening Ruth had sleep issues. Most of the night she was awoken by the sounds of, "Take me ..." and the visuals of that man. Each time she got up, her dreams were getting increasingly clearer. Finally at 9AM, she decided to stay up and start. Tomorrow Ruth has an appointment with Jane, but she will phone her later. Also, she will let Holly know, also.

Upon getting to work, Steve noticed that there was a man making a weird noise at the corner of the building. The man had a hat on and looked disheveled and he appeared to be in need of new clothes. As Steve was opening the office at about 8:30am, he figured out that he might be the mystery man. Like most times, Taylor walked in at exactly 9:00am. Shortly after, Steve wanted to tell Taylor what occurred, but said he had calls to make. Also, Holly was not in yet, so put on both schedules for 10am.

By the time Holly strolled in at 9:26, the office was bustling with plenty of workers, phone ringing and the clatter of desks being moved. Just a common occurrence in the office between 8:30am to 10am. On Holly's way, she received a message from Ruth. When she returned the call, Ruth did not pick up. At 10:00am, the chimes outside Taylor's office and the meeting began. Steve had the floor and told the entire team what had transpired earlier. Various participants expressed and showed concern. After the short fifteen-minute meeting, Taylor said he will phone Officer Grey later this morning.

Except for Steve, no one else knew that Taylor had a meeting with Karen Collins regarding the vacancy of Assistant Supervisor. The two of them discussed three possibilities with r other Supervisors. Two were already for the agency and the third was working for an agency twenty miles from here, but in Garland County like us, working as a Case Manager for the Mental Health Court. Ms. Collins ended the discussion by stating she will start meeting with the participants next week and hopes to make a decision soon. Clear schedules, please.

All morning Holly and Ruth did not connect, and albeit that Holly worked only till 12:30, they will talk tomorrow. She reminded Steve about her day, and he said he knew and already told Taylor again. Her afternoon was to pick up her brother, Andrew, at the train depot and spend the rest of the day with him. At around 11:30, Taylor spoke with Officer Grey and said he would be in the office around 2:30 and he would speak with Steve.

ANDREW VISITS, A THIRD MEETING, A PLEASANT WEEKEND

Although Andrew's train arrived 45 minutes late, Holly didn't mind much This is because she will spend this Wednesday through Monday with her big brother Andrew. Both were hungry so they went to a local Chinese takeout, had an eggroll, and shared boneless spareribs. one was off to a great start, and both hope that this will continue. Additionally, Holly was scheduled to take off Friday afternoon and Monday to be with Andrew and bring him to the depot on Tuesday morning. Friday morning rolled and Andrew made his younger sister toast and tea, but she ran late and grabbed a half slice of toast before she flew out the door. She had to be in court promptly at 9. Then she needed to be at hospital at 10:30 for a case conference at 11, then go to the office to speak with Steve, sign out and proceeded home. Another half day in the life of a Peer Specialist.

Shortly past five, Steve saw a man lurking around outside the building. It looked like the same man as last time. He motioned he wanted cigarettes, but he said nothing and everything was covered except

his eyes and nose. Since Steve did not smoke, he could not provide any. Under the cape, Steve saw him get upset, growl a couple and walk away...or did he? As usual, Steve took his familiar route to his bus stop. A block down, he heard the man right behind him, growl and then run away. 10am, Ruth replacing Office Grey and Taylor plus assorted other staff to give small messages and Steve a weekly update. Things have been relatively quiet since Tuesday, she said. Also, she went to nearby mall and the local shopping center without incident. When Ruth was asked about her sleep, she said it was better and had only a few nightmares about the mystery man and "Take me out ...". Then, Ruth wanted to ask Holly a couple of questions. Steve informed Holly was not here this afternoon. Oh Yes, I now recall she will not be here Monday also. Steve said she was correct.

Holly and Andrew spent a good weekend together. They took walks in the two parks in Lake Town, had pizza one night, Andrew cooked another, and had an expensive five course Italian meal. Sunday morning Andrew made an exquisite brunch platter for two. Around Three pm and the two went to a local area production of "Les Misérables". Each day the weather was in the 60s by day and 50s by night, with blue sunny days and clear starry nights. Little or no wind accompanied low humidity made the days and nights spectacular.

Tuesday the 29th, the wind has changed direction and speed. It started well when Holly dropped Andrew at the bus depot and she proceeded to work. As soon she arrived, there were two messages from Ruth. At approximately 10:15 am, she spoke to Steve and when Holly was ready, he transferred the call and Ruth explained that she had little or no sleep, had many prank calls and frequent horrible text messages. Also, she mentioned she scheduled a 4:30 appointment with Jane. Holly had a busy day ahead but thought she can cancel her last appointment and meet Ruth at the clinic. Later, Steve received a call from Holly's consumer, who said he cannot make and the 4:00, so Steve phoned Holly to let her know the details. This meant that Holly was free and she let Steve inform Ruth today to meet her. "Beware the Winds of Change."

Stay tuned for Part 7

RANDOM ACT BY A PEER SPECIALIST - Part 7

By Howard Diamond

MAY RAINS MAY LEAD TO MAY RESULTS

This day is a rainy one, where umbrellas dominate the streets of Lake Town, but stubborn Taylor Thompson felt it was not convenient. By the time he reached the office, on May 13, he was soaked from head to toe. His trusted secretary, Steve Washington was busy typing away, while Holly was at the courthouse. She was not scheduled to be in the office until the next day for a meeting with Taylor. Promptly at 11, Taylor and Assistant Director, Karen Collins are to interview Anna Mancini for the second time.

At 4:30, Ruth had her scheduled appointment with Jane. At court, Holly met with her consumer, but there was little progress with his case. Then she saw two ladies in different parts of the hospital. During lunch, she bumped into Ms. Collins who told her to call her secretary, by the end of the week to make an appointment to meet. Although Holly was curious she did not ask any questions of Ms. Collins and proceeded to her other visits.

One of these visits is with Officer Grey, but not concerning Ruth. Meanwhile, Ruth spent her day, relaxing until 3pm, when she was to be picked up for her visit with Jane. Both Ruth and Jane were distracted by something going on right outside Jane's office. Loud noises interfered with the session. At one point, Jane recognized the voice as another of her fellow clients and she excused herself from Ruth and diffused the situation. When everything was calm, Ruth stated she could not finish and went to the waiting room and sat until her 5:30 pick up. Moments later, Jane came to Ruth and rescheduled for Friday at 3pm.

Friday comes and so comes the rain again. Fortunately, Holly has scheduled this morning to do her progress notes and catch up with an assortment of return phone calls. In addition, Steve gave her a couple more, plus a reminder note for her appointment with Assistant Director Collins at 11am. Taylor had a meeting at 930 with Marty from Generations and other respite Directors to discuss ways to improve resources in the community.

At 10:45, a few of the other Supervisors went into the conference room. Each of the Supervisors had a notebook, a pen, and a cup of coffee or tea. Several minutes later, Taylor dropped his wet jacket in his office and proceeded to the conference room, with his notebook and pen in tow. As Taylor entered, Steve buzzed Holly that Ms. Collins was ready. Nervous Holly walked into the office, Ms. Collins greeted her at the door and the two took a stroll around the interior of the building.

Fifteen or so minutes later, Ms. Collins and Holly entered the conference room with the Supervisors patiently waiting. Taylor stated to Holly it was okay to have a seat. Karen opened the meeting by saying everyone needs to be on a first name basis, and this includes Holly. This moment Taylor took over and informed everyone that the purpose of this meeting is to interview Holly for the Assistant Supervisor opening.

Surprised Holly went through the interview process without any problems. The second question asked of she can handle the position by losing most if not all of her caseload. Holly answered that she would

transition each person by mentioning part of recovery is change and this one of many. As Supervisor, I am not going away and communication will continue, but less often. Almost everyone in the room nodded their heads.

A few moments later, Holly was done with the interview, went to lunch and finished her week. Steve let Holly know that Ruth called that her appointment was canceled until Tuesday at 430, her regular visit. Meanwhile, the selection committee discussed Holly's interview and agreed to have her come back for a second interview.

NEW WEEK, NEW REVELATION, NEW CONFRONTATION

Most Monday morning meetings are at 10am. Today is no different, but this the morning had a special guest, Officer Grey. At this meeting, Officer Grey let everyone know that there was a break in the Ruth Haines case. Recently, on the streets downtown two people were attacked in separate incidents. Both of the people were apparently ambushed by the same individual. In addition, the rape of Ruth was perpetuated by him or her. She will be called in later in the week for further questioning.

When people left the conference room, Karen, Taylor and Steve talked with Officer Grey. They discussed safety matters that can be used to prevent occurrences in the office. Karen suggested a new improved security system while Taylor thought ID badges could be used again. All good possibilities, but they have to be discussed at other meetings. Officer Grey left and the rest went on their way.

As usual, Ruth took a walk downtown. She strolled in the women's section of one store, the detergents in another and lastly the freezer section of the supermarket. After every stop, Ruth was suspicious of a man who was following her. It definitely appeared to be the same person as before. While she was walking back to Generations, Marty received a mystery letter that read similarly to the texts that Ruth was getting a few weeks prior. In the letter it stated,

**"BEWARE THE STREETS!
I WILL BE HERE!
I KNOW HOW TO FIND YOU.
I KNOW WHERE YOU WORK!
BEWARE THE STREETS!"**

Marty informed Officer Grey. At the advice of Officer Grey, when Ruth returned he showed her the letter and then she ran to her bedroom crying. One of the staff at Generations calmed Ruth down and brought her in the dining room in time for the evening meal. Afterwards, Marty had a chat with Ruth about the strange letter. She was sorry that she got Marty involved and asked if he can bring the letter to therapy tomorrow. It was okay by Marty and he said he will give it to her at breakfast.

MONDAY TURNS INTO TUESDAY, TUESDAY TURNS INTO DOOMSDAY

That night, Ruth received at least a dozen texts from the same caller, one more disturbing than the next. For Ruth, her appointment today with Jane could not come soon enough. Being followed and all the texts made this a difficult overnight for Ruth, so she decided to all walk the streets near the Community Residence and prepare to go to Jane's visit.

This Tuesday Holly worked 11am to 7pm, where most of the early part of her shift was uneventful. All that was going to be drastically different starting at 4pm, when Holly received an anonymous phone call. It was placed by a woman who stated she was being followed by another lady for the past couple of weeks. So Holly pulled over to get more details, but the phone call ended. At the office, Steve said Holly had no messages, but he did say someone kept calling, say a sentence or two and proceeded to hang up. Almost every time, she said, "Help", but never explained further. In an hour, Steve said he was going home.

At promptly 4:30, Jane directed Ruth to her office. Right away Ruth began talking about last night and was getting more and more agitated. Jane noticed that Ruth clothes and hair were messy and she appeared extremely tired. Suddenly, Ruth became enraged and started screaming at Jane for no apparent reason. The more Jane tried to take control, Ruth got louder. Also, she yelled the name Dion to stop hitting Gabriel.

Outside the office, Steve was walking on his customary route to the bus stop, when he was pushed from behind to the nearby wall. While being hit in the back and stomach by an unknown object, he was wrestled to the ground. Steve could not tell how many guys were there, but in unison they repeatedly chanted these words,

**"YOU WERE WARNED!
BEWARE THE STREETS!
WE WILL RETURN!"**

Many times, Steve was struck by the same equipment, while they laughed in a continuous manner. Also, the attackers took Steve's leg braces and hit him a few additional times, leaving him bloody and almost unconscious. Finally, they dumped Steve's body in a vacant alley covered in black garbage bags.

Throughout the entire day, Holly received the same call from the same lady. Each time, the woman said a little more. It was often unclear and the majority of the words did not connect with each other. At around 9pm, Holly arrived home, but the calls persisted. Around 11:30 pm, this time there was a recording that basically said,

**"YOU WERE WARNED!
NEXT TIME IT WILL BE WORSE!
WE KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE!
WE KNOW WHERE YOU WORK!
YOU WERE WARNED!
BEWARE THE STREETS!
BEWARE! BEWARE! BEWARE!"**

Quickly thereafter Holly hung up the phone, went to bed and thought to herself, **"Sorry, wrong number"**.

To be continued...

Howard Diamond is a Certified Peer Specialist from Long Island.

Random Acts By a Peer Specialist Part 8 **by HOWARD DIAMOND**

Three's a Crowd, Three Strikes You're Out, Three Incidents in Three Paragraphs Too Many Threes

Tuesday May 21 was not a good day for several people in Lake Town. Ruth Haines received two prank calls. Basically the message was the same and she was upset. These calls have been angering Ruth for several months and is often a topic of conversation in her therapy sessions with Jane Frederick. For fifteen months Ruth has been getting therapy from Jane. It all started that cold February day after he was referred to by Peer Specialist Holly Stephens.

Also, Holly's Supervisor Taylor Thompson was almost in a horrific car accident on the way home from work. Timing is everything, as Taylor past Greene Avenue, then passing Wicks Road, Clark Street, Elm Street and Front Street. Suddenly, an auto speeding on Wicks Road turned onto Clark and plowed into another vehicle which was a third and a fourth. Fortunately, Taylor was two blocks ahead of the accident, but he was shaken, nevertheless.

Thirdly, after work there was a police report filed on Tuesday at about 6:30 pm. A person was found, bloody and semiconscious. The man looked familiar to a witness who identified him as Steve Washington and phoned the police plus an ambulance to take Steve to the hospital. After the cops arrived, she said she was up the block and saw most of what transpired. Since the couple of attackers were wearing masks, no one was able to name either one. Unfortunately, Officer Grey was off this week and won't return until after Memorial Day. The next day, both Taylor and Holly visited Steve in the hospital. His right arm and hand were broken, plus he was black and blue almost everywhere. In addition, he was conscious and pretty much awake plus talking up a storm.

Summer is around the corner, fall is not far behind

When Officer Grey returned to work, he re-interviewed Steve several times over the next week. Steve tried to give a description of his assailants, but his information was not the same. This is probably due to his concussion and the hope is his symptoms will lessen and his recall will return. Holly was informed by Steve's issues and followed up, when necessary and along with a new temporary assistant secretary, named Mary Blackman.

Mary was taken from the local temp agency, but she did not look the part. Her blond hair was long and stringy. Her blue dress had a slight tear around her left shoulder and her shoes were not polished. In addition, Mary had not worked in over eight months, but her office skills were superb, except for filing. She was five foot and maybe 100 pounds, but what a loud, dirty mouth, heard emanating everywhere around the office, including the bathrooms. After her first day, Taylor gave Mary instructions to cut her hair, wear no holy dresses, polish her shoes and to stop yelling profanities.

June brought summer for Lake Town. After a month, Steve was released from the hospital, but had a nurse and a physical therapist come to his four room apartment four days a week. Even though Steve did not like the arrangement, he enjoyed the extra attention. On alternate days, Holly would visit Steve and bring what he needed to recover. Also, some of Steve's bruises and his bloody face are healing, but too slowly for Steve. However, his right arm will still be in a cast for three to four weeks and then his doctors will decide what to do next.

Ruth and Jane are still doing therapy once weekly. Although Ruth has steadily progressed, she has no memories of having a child or being raped. Jane is saying that there is no way to tell when her memories will return. According to Ruth's plan, she might be working two days a week shortly after Labor Day in the Cafe in town. Near the end of August, Holly will help Ruth figure out a budget, so she does lose her disability benefits (SSDI) or her medical insurance (MEDICARE AND MEDICAID).

JULY 4TH COMES IN LIKE A BANG AND ENDS WITH A BANG

Downtown Lake Town was getting ready for a parade. The committee had many volunteers, including Ruth, Holly, Taylor and Steve. Each lamppost was adorned with red, white and blue balloons, with Taylor helping to hang them. Along the parade route, Ruth plastered signs everywhere possible. At the end of the way, Holly assisted in decorating the waterfront area with red, white and blue streamers. While Steve ordered food and drinks from an assortment of local delis, cafes and restaurants plus purchasing water from the supermarkets.

Also, Marty from Generations booked the entertainment. Meanwhile, on the downtown streets, there was a group of suspicious characters looming in the shadows, especially the Mystery Man, who was spotted twice. Most evenings the vagrants would remove signs, take balloons off the lampposts and do other nefarious activities. These nights Officer Grey and the police staff had their collective hands full. Unfortunately the cops could not catch anyone.

It was a glorious day on July 4 with clear blue skies, temperature around 80 and little or no wind. At around 4pm, the parade began with crowds estimated at about 6,000 men, women and children. A group under the bandshell by the waterfront was playing 60s and 70s plus a selection of patriotic songs for people waiting there for the parade. When the parade arrived, Holly and Steve were handing out free water bottles to everyone. As people entered the waterfront area, volunteers including Ruth and Taylor handed out programs for the evening festivities that was scheduled to begin at 7pm and to end with fireworks at 9pm over the lake.

In the crowd were Marty from Generations and Ruth 's therapist, Jane Frederick. Promptly at 7pm, the program started with Lake Town Mayor welcoming everyone and introducing the emcee for the evening. Then, the people stood for the National Anthem and the slate continued. There was a magic show, a comedienne, a few musical acts. At 8:45 everything ended, the fireworks were still fifteen minutes away, so the crowd rested.

At 9:05pm, the emcee introduced the fireworks with a couple of bad jokes. The lights were turned down and the fireworks started over the lake. About halfway through the presentation at 9:15 bangs were heard in the crowd. Gunshots were heard everywhere and when the lights were in effect, sixteen people were hurt, three were sent to the hospital. One was Ruth. A message was left on Officer Grey's at 5pm phone stating, "**BEWARE THE STREETS, YOU'VE BEEN WARNED, BEWARE THE STREETS**".

At the hospital, it was determined that Ruth had a gunshot lodged in her leg and lost some blood. Emergency surgery was necessary. Taylor was notified, he informed Holly and they agreed to meet at the hospital. At the Lake, Officer Grey and the police staff had many things to do. They had to disperse the crowd and try to investigate the gunshots. Two hours later, it just hit midnight, Ruth was still in surgery, Holly and Taylor were waiting for results. Shortly afterwards Marty arrived to lend his support.

Eventually at around 4am a doctor came by the sleeping trio. Dr. Rich Sanders, neurologist, gently woke them and informed them that Ruth had gone through several hours of successful surgery of her right leg where part of a bullet was removed along with several other fragments. The bullet parts are now bagged for safekeeping until an officer can pick them up. Also, a piece was removed from her head. Currently, she is sedated and asleep. No visitors are allowed until 9am in the neurosurgical unit. Her healing will take a few weeks, but her discharge will possibly be several days from now. The trio all decided to leave. For Ruth she was at, "**the wrong place at the wrong time**".

The mysteries will continue in Part Nine of **Random Act of a Peer Specialist** in about a month from now. Can hardly wait. What about everyone else?

See you in the NewsBlogs and Newsletters.

Howard Diamond is a Certified Peer Specialist from Long Island.

Random Act By a Peer Specialist: Part 9

by Howard Diamond

When Is Progress Is Not Fast Enough

A few weeks later, towards the end of July, it was the third consecutive 90 degree day in Lake Town and the natives were restless. This is especially true for Ruth. Little by little, she has been taking off her heavy pain and other medications, but the effects of the bullet pieces are apparent. Although this incident was about three weeks prior, on occasion she has problems putting thoughts together, but she is trying very hard to improve.

Good news was that Ruth is presently able to walk with only a small limp and most days without a cane with four prongs to get around. During the last few nights, she has become exceedingly fidgety and at times, she starts to mumble, but they are not words, just sounds. She continued seeing her therapist, Jane, weekly which still helps her. Bad news, Ruth began getting lots of prank phone calls while the mystery man repeated obsessively over and over again, **"BEWARE THE STREETS! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED ONCE MORE! REMEMBER, I STILL KNOW WHERE YOU LIVE. BEWARE THE STREETS"**.

Lake Town has recovered sufficiently enough to have their Labor Day Waterfront Barbeque sponsored by the office of the Mayor. All food, non-alcoholic drinks are provided free of charge for everyone. Music will be filling the air while playing from 5pm to 8:30pm, stopping twice for fifteen minutes and at 8:30pm the mayor will give a few announcements. Also, Officer Grey can give updates on the July 4th shootings along with other items on the police blotter. With fireworks and music of the summer, the festivities will conclude.

Meanwhile the dog days of August were hot enough to fry an egg on the Lake Town sidewalks. For three mornings weekly, Steve goes to physical therapy to continue to improve his range of motion, becoming adequate enough so he can return to work part-time in November. Although Steve sees minimal progress he is actually ahead of schedule. Although badly bruised, he is able to use his left arm to move things around, but not to carry or lift. In time, this will happen, too. However, he is eager to go back to Hunter, sooner rather than waiting.

As for Peer Specialist Holly, she had a rough summer. Earlier in August, twice she had brought her car into the shop totaling over two grand, costing her money for a decent vacation in the mountains. Now that it is sufficiently repaired (she hopes), she can be with her brother, Andrew, somewhere for a few days. In addition, she received money from him to quell her money issues. Actually, Holly planned to see her parents, but they are going to Ireland for twelve days during the middle to end of this month.

Fall has many meanings, but so does Autumn

Autumn has other things that are upsetting to Holly. This certainly concluded the end of summer with the shortening of daylight. Not that seasonal affective disorder has any influence on Holly, but for some that means something extra special. Cycle of life swirls around and around as months come and months go; therefore, seasons come and seasons go much too quickly. Her birthday is September 12, but she does not celebrate. Each person has to adapt to change in the best way possible. This is both in negative situations and most importantly in positive ones.

Back at the Hunter office, Mary still spoke loudly, except on the phone. Her secretarial skills are almost impeccable, but her voice and manners still annoys Taylor. Every time Taylor has dictated a letter to Mary, everything comes out perfectly. In fact today one such letter did occur. It was written to Steve, requesting information about his health and when his approximate date of return will happen. This letter upset Mary very greatly, but she saw the writing on the wall, as it meant that her temporary assignment probably would be over. Her professional approach shaped her time ahead which made it easier for her.

Quite the contrary did occur soon after for Mary. Officer Grey asked Taylor and Assistant Director, Karen Collins to interview her because Office Grey's secretary is retiring soon and he will need a replacement. In his response, Steve mentioned that he will be ready to return to work on or around November 1st, pending a new physical exam and his doctor's approval. During his time away, Steve had lost about thirty pounds and his body appeared to be fit.

For Ruth had still been getting migraines and flashbacks of her last twenty months and continues with her professional relationship with Jane. They have been trying diligently to figure what Ruth's flashbacks mean and to put her life in some assemblage of order. Two major events happened and Ruth wanted answers for both of them. Winter two years ago, she was raped by an unknown assailant in addition to losing her son, Gabriel, which she still has no memories of. Also, on July 4th, she was shot on the side of her head. Still no arrests or suspects were ever charged by Officer Grey and the Lake Town Police Department.

During October both Steve Washington and Ruth Haines had fallen in the street, but were both examined and deemed sufficiently okay. Also, Officer Grey had interviewed Mary twice. Waiting for a background check and physical testing to be completed on Mary was stressful for her. When results are finalized, Officer Grey will contact Mary about future interviews.

Another year ended and other events concluded

As the last two months got underway, Holly and Andrew were planning to spend the week of Thanksgiving together near their parents. In addition, Andrew will be with Holly in Lake Town for new year's eve and day. Being a freelance photographer, Andrew has the opportunity to be employed for two separate shooting engagements early next year. On January 3rd, he leaves on a cruise from Miami for ten days, and during the rest of January, he is on a working vacation to some of the islands in the Caribbean. Holly says Andrew is so fortunate for these opportunities.

Pleasant news happened for a few. Mary stated Officer Grey received her background check and she was interviewed twice more in November and once in the beginning of December. As for Steve, his doctors cleared him to go back to work the week after Thanksgiving. Until a decision was made about Mary, Taylor had two secretaries. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays were Steve's part time days, while Mary continued full time.

For Ruth, she had a relaxing Thanksgiving spending time with friends away from Generations Community Residence. However, she spent most of Sunday in bed with severe migraines and returned to Lake Town on Monday instead. On Wednesday, she had an appointment with Jane and they explored her past during the end of November and the first weeks of December. Also, on December 15, Marty Sinclair from Generations was taking a leave of absence for personal reasons. Hopefully, Marty would return in the spring.

Officially, Mary Blackman was hired by the Lake Town Police Department beginning the first Monday in January. This was also good for Steve and Taylor also. Coincidentally, Steve's Doctors said he could return to full-time work in January. Also, Holly was delighted to have Steve is back on a five day work schedule. In mid-December, Taylor took eighteen days vacation returning on Monday January 11.

Karen Collins, with help from Holly, ran this division of the Peer Program of Hunter Case Management. For now, Karen and Holly had ten Peer Specialists that needed to be supervised. Naturally all ten were also familiar with Holly as they had been colleagues for months. Upon Steve's return, he cleaned and organized to his liking. In addition, he purchased planners for each of the Peer Specialists. He felt that the planners were needed to keep everyone on time and on schedule. Yes, he bought one for Taylor and another one for himself.

Beginning on January 11, when Taylor resumes his position, there will be three to five new Peer Specialists (two full time, two part time) that will be trained to help the organization grow to new heights. It seemed to others around Hunter that Holly looked comfortable handling the added responsibilities. Also, beginning on the first Monday in January, the two competing for the Assistant Supervisor opening will begin their evaluation process. All that is known about the other candidate is that he presently works as a Peer Specialist in another section of Hunter.

Was Holly being groomed for the newly vacant Assistant Supervisor Peer Specialist position? Who is the other candidate? Will Ruth's migraines improve and possibly lead to memories? Will Steve figure out who jumped him? Will Taylor be happier with Steve? Will Officer Grey survive Mary's antics?

Don't just wish for a great year.

Stay tuned for updates in **Random Act By a Peer Specialist: Part 10**

Howard Diamond is a Certified Peer Specialist from Long Island, New York

RANDOM ACT BY A PEER SPECIALIST:PART 10

by Howard Diamond

New Year, New Peer Specialist Responsibilities, New Roles for Some?

As the New Year began, there was murmuring and buzzing around the water cooler and vending machines at Hunter Case Management led by the returning Steve Washington. By his facial expressions, it was apparent to all that he was delighted to be back full-time and had the dubious task of reorganizing the paperwork that Mary left. Not that she was messy, but Steve had his own method of doing office routines. Within three days he will have the office in ship-shape. Moreover, once the commotion subsides, and the loud whispering lessens he could concentrate on his tasks.

At 10am, a week from now, an entire staff meeting will be held and Steve will be prepared and ready. Currently, Taylor Thompson is on his extended vacation and Holly has been assisting Assistant Director Karen Collins. In his absence, she was given added work plus more duties and responsibilities by Karen to see what she could handle effectively. When asked, Holly stated that she did her best and tried to do what was needed. Overall, her dedication, perseverance and knowledge definitely got noticed. Other Supervisors around the agency went to Karen to extend some praise for Holly and what she has achieved. Most importantly, Karen saw this firsthand and her efforts will not be forgotten.

Holly could not wait for the weekend. Her entire body ached from the extra work and its inherent stressors. Due to this, she was able to give reasons to pamper herself. From getting a cut and styling session to go to a spa, she did everything to unwind. At the spa, Holly was put in a hot bath with oils and fragrances to open her pores and her sinuses. Additionally, she allowed herself to get two forty five massages to knock out more tension.

By the time Monday actually rolled around, Steve arrived by 8:30 to make sure everything was ready for the 10am entire staff meeting. Par normal, Taylor strolled in at exactly 9:00 plus Holly and Karen were shortly behind in the next elevator. Was this a coincidence or a planned event? At 9:45, staff began throughout the large conference room and by 10:00, Karen tried to get the staff seated and quiet.

Karen began the meeting by thanking everyone for being here today plus she asked all to stand and applaud one another for a good year and for a productive twelve months to come. When the staff got resettled, Karen with the assistance from a few of the Supervisors plus a short PowerPoint did a year in review. Three gift certificates of \$50 from the local Walmart were given to worthy individuals.

In addition, a \$100 and a small plaque was presented to Secretary Steve Washington for his heroism in the line of duty because he saved two teenagers from further injuries while getting a broken arm himself. Coincidentally last week he returned to Hunter full time and we wish him

well and continued success. Oh yes, Karen added that Steve was promoted from Secretary to Office Manager effective January 4. Finally, the Assistant Supervisor position Section One of the Peer Specialist Unit has been narrowed to two fine candidates, Frank Ford and Holly Stephens. For the people who do not know them, stand up and be recognized. A nice ovation of approximately three minutes ensued, which caused embarrassment for both.

For the rest of the month, Taylor will be aiding in the training of a new Supervisor in a different unit. Meanwhile Frank will be assisting Karen, much like Holly did at the end of the year. At the start, Frank seemed personable and willing to offer his hand. By his second week, he was becoming quite inflexible and too stern for his own good.

Frank, five foot ten and 185 lbs., now 48, soon to be another year older, brown eyes, grayish hair with scruffy sideburns and eyebrows. He rarely smiled. His no nonsense way of handling people and situations turned off many and his unapproachable aura mainly caused delays in making appointments and scheduling contacts with coworkers and clients. Recently divorced for the third time about four months ago, Frank has two daughters, twenty-five and twenty-two. None of his ex-wives nor his children are in contact with him, which according to Frank is fine. Each of his alimony checks are sent by a money order to his exes PO Box so there is no communication amongst anyone.

After the meeting, Frank was formally introduced to the immediate staff of Section One by Steve except for Holly who had to run to a court appearance with a consumer. Visibly a non-happy Frank informed Steve that Peer Specialists do not belong in the courtroom testifying. It was mentioned that Frank is also a Peer Specialist. However, Steve explained that Holly will not make any statements, she is mostly there for moral support. Also, Holly knows plus understands the policy plus has worked with this person for over a year and has appeared with him in court several times.

A Fresh New Office and a Surprise For Someone

Crosstown at the Pollock Therapy Group, Jane Frederick was on vacation from December 23 through the end of the year and the first week or so of this one. While she was away, her office Room 314 was painted and new furniture was ordered to spruce up her room. As Jane opened the door to her supposedly redesigned room, she found only a broken cabinet, plus an unfinished desk and chair. Also, the walls still smelled from a fresh coat of paint plus it had a host of other unpleasant scents. No way Jane can stay in this room, plus it would be hard for her to run therapy sessions from this messy room.

Good thing that Jane had no appointments until that afternoon. Suddenly, one of her colleagues, Ed Hall and new office manager, Claire Jenkins poked their respective heads through the ajar door and Ed began speaking about some of the changes at Pollock Therapy Group. In addition, Jane, after looking around noticed that her phone was neither in working condition nor connected to any wall. Plus, she realized that her computer and printer and files were nowhere to be found.

At that moment, Jane wanted an explanation and she was about to get one. Walking slowly while being escorted by Ed and Claire, Jane tried to extract information from either, but was unsuccessful. The trio continued down the hallway to Room 310, a bigger office that has been vacant for over an extended period, probably six months or more. All room numbers on the third floor will be altered and the phone system will be updated effective Saturday January 9.

Claire started about two weeks ago, after the previous office manager retired. Her slim figure and being, 38 was enhanced by her 5 foot 7 inches, long lanky tanned legs and pinned up curly blonde hair accompanied by bright bulging green eyes covered by an assortment of multi-colored plastic framed eyeglasses. Also, she had some freckles on her bronze face, legs and arms. Previously, she worked six years for another Mental Health Clinic and before that three years a private Psychiatrist.

During the rest of the morning, new furniture and other items were placed into several offices in Jane's section of the third floor. Her area and parts of the floor above were almost completely renovated with the hope it would be finished by the weekend and said it was wishful thinking plus nonrealistic. All of the therapists handled phone calls from the smaller meeting room located on the third floor and sessions will be held in vacant rooms on both floors. Included was room 330, a vacant room with a desk and chair plus limited furnishings. It will have to do until all is finished on Jane's office and both floors.

Over exuberant Claire bolted through the corridors. She stated that there will be a brief staff meeting at twelvish on the fourth floor in the bigger conference room. Being so excited, Claire almost spilled the beans about what was going to happen at the meeting. Lyle and Ed slowed her down in the corridor. Eventually Claire regained her composure and this day continued without any more extreme outbursts.

Around noon, Jane and a few coworkers decided to walk up the flight of stairs to the conference room. Ed had a few questions for Jane, which she figured was a stall tactic. However, Jane did not quite understand what was occurring. At about ten past noon, Jane flung the doors open to a great surprise. There were tables of catered food aligning the room, pictures of Jane on the walls celebrating Jane's decade of service for Pollock Therapy Group. There must have been around an eighty to hundred people walking in and out of the conference room that were acknowledging Jane and her dedication.

At this juncture, Jane was overwhelmed and did not know what to say. So Ed brought Jane and Claire to their respective seats at the main table directly across from the door where Lyle Sargeant plus The Executive Directors, husband and wife, Morris and Elizabeth (Beth) Pollock were seated. Lyle, 55, is five foot eight inches, beer belly about 190 lbs. with balding gray hair plus a salt and pepper bushy goatee.

At approximately 1pm, Morris began speaking about Jane Frederick and her many accomplishments and Lyle took over and made an eloquent speech, while pointing to pictures on the walls. When he was finished, Lyle stated to the sixty people remaining in the cramped

space that Jane was promoted to Supervisor of new therapists with a big pay raise. Also, being Lead Therapist and head of this committee stated that Jane will have no sessions until Monday, causing utter confusion for her. She was informed that Claire canceled her entire schedule and appointments for the next two days, except for her hospital visits tomorrow. Through the entire proceedings, Jane continually cried tears of happiness which created a fictionalized pond in front of her.

There were more festivities to come. Without anyone noticing, Claire excused herself from the party. Shortly afterwards, she returned wheeling in a cake and other desserts plus tea and coffee to further commemorate this day. During the dessert time, Morris Pollock stood up while he offered his praise of Jane plus gave a pin signifying her decade of service. Beth got up and presented her with a gift certificate from a local department store. During the completion of the gathering, staff continued to send best wishes to congratulate Jane.

On Friday the eighth, Jane did not meet with anyone at the office plus her furniture was incorrect another time, with the wrong wood, all of her wall decorations were not what was ordered and her room needed to be repainted with an additional coat. Also, Lyle informed Jane that her room would not be ready for at least ten days or two to three weeks, so her sessions for the foreseeable future would be down the hall in Room 330. Most of her clients will have to adapt all right. But will Jane?

**New Year Changes At The Police Station, Too.
Coming Soon In Random Act By A Peer Specialist: PART 11**

Howard Diamond is a Certified Peer Specialist from Long Island

Random Act By a Peer Specialist: Part 11

by Howard Diamond

For one, Ruth had not many changes, due to being similar

Basically Ruth's subtle change into a new twelve month cycle seemed similarly eerie to the way her previous twelve had concluded. Although she has a different phone number and new type of answering machine, the mystery man found a way to still make prank calls and texts to Ruth. Each call is practically like the last one, which causes Ruth much discomfort and too much unnecessary stress. On Tuesday the twelfth of January, a few days from now, Ruth has her initial visit for the year with Jane, her therapist.

Back at the diner, Ruth continues to work about three days weekly, twelve to sixteen hours and more when she can. Over the months, she has developed and maintained a few friends plus she has several regular patrons that generally ask only for her. Often she walks up and down the blocks near the diner and beyond. Other times, especially days when not at the diner, she sits in the park or by the lakefront watching various fowl wade in the lake or birds flying around overhead. Apparently, Ruth does relaxation techniques, assorted exercises plus reads short books and magazines in an attempt to keep her calm most of the day.

In addition, Ruth has made connections with some of the people also living in Generations Housing. Occasionally, they get together outside of the residences, which included spending almost six days over Thanksgiving in a cabin at Pine Woods Lodge, which is approximately fifty miles away from Lake Town. Four young ladies just enjoying relaxing and recreation while being one with nature and animals. They sang along with the folk music and live performances, plus they hiked on various guided wilderness excursions. Two extra special events were the Thanksgiving Feast when they served mounds of turkey with a plethora of sides and desserts. At Saturday Night Barbecue, food included delicacies like hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, corn, nut roasting and smores. All was elegantly prepared by the Pine Woods Lodge staff and everyone ate like there was no tomorrow. One big rule was posted everywhere plus was strictly enforced by all: *No alcohol or smoking was allowed on or in the vicinity of the lodge.*

Besides going to the lodge, when funds were available, Ruth and friends would go for a cheap lunch or dinner, in or near Lake Town. One favorite of the group was the Asian Buffet, which had Chinese, Japanese and other Asian Delights for eight dollars for lunch plus ten dollars for dinner. Friday and Saturday nights were a dollar more. Other haunts were the two Italian Restaurants, Vinny's Pizzeria, Pasta and More plus Mama Rinaldi. Also there is a good Mediterranean fair called Halal Palace which offers very spicy to extremely bland Islamic and Israeli delicacies from different cultures. Let's not forget the two diners including the one where Ruth is employed.

December through April, there was free entertainment at the library, three days a week sponsored by Town Hall. Once or twice a month, there will be live music performed at the one

hundred seat theater. Most of these events were free plus no cost transportation was provided door to door from Generations. From May 1 to Thanksgiving, weather permitting, various extravaganzas were held in the park or by the amphitheater by the lakefront.

The Police Station With Officer Grey, Mary Blackman and Others

Mary Blackman started working at the Police Department when this year got underway and Officer Alex Grey's day was handled quite efficiently, but the Station was always very busy. This got exceedingly worse with Mary aboard. She meant no harm, but it seemed like Mary questioned almost everything the officers and squad did or said. She tried to assist the Narcotics Unit, but broke the flow of data collected because she thought she knew more than head secretary, Cindy Bradford and Unit Senior Officer Scott Davidson. Naturally, this mostly irritated Officer Grey who had less and less patience for her shenanigans in and around the precinct. Although Mary's office skills were impeccable, her mannerisms had much to be desired.

Scott Davidson, a twenty eight year veteran and eight year head of the Narcotics Unit of Lake Town Police Department. He is 52, 6 foot about 190 lbs. of solid muscle with short graying strawberry blonde hair and green eyes. Four years prior, Scott's life changed abruptly when he became a widower when his wife died of secondhand throat cancer and pneumonia. Although she never smoked, her father consumed about seventy cigarettes daily.

Officer Davidson is left with identical twin boys, born Christmas Eve Jason and Lance, 20. They are built like their dad, with darker brown hair and brown eyes. The biggest noticeable difference is that Lance has a full brown beard with longish brown hair while Jason has short, cropped hair and sported a reddish mustache. Currently, Jason is away at Stanford studying criminal law and Lance is studying to be a forensic cop at the local community College in nearby Paramount. His plans for the fall are finishing his undergraduate studies at either New York University in NYC or Duke University in North Carolina. Since being in high school, both of them spent a lot of summer days poking around the police station helping everyone they can.

Cindy Bradford 23, five foot five inches, athletic build, maybe 110 lbs. with longish blonde hair, blue eyes and a nose trained so that it can sniff out illegal drugs anywhere. Not really, but it has been very accurate in detecting drugs and other narcotics plus being quite proficient in her office procedures. Also, bolstering her credentials, she graduated from Indiana University last year with a perfect 4.0 in Criminal Justice. Hopefully, in a year or two, she will be attending Law School, and as of this time has applied to approximately a dozen, including Harvard, Columbia and Stanford.

Generally, most people do not mess with Cindy because of her boyfriend. Chris Reubens, 21, is six foot two inch, 190 lb. brown hair, brown eyed, with broad shoulders and tree trunks for legs. In addition Chris is a two-time college wrestling second place All-American Scholar Athlete. Since his main competitor graduated in December he is positioned to be first place in his weight

class. Also in the fall, Chris is scheduled to become the starting half back for his college varsity football team.

Mondays were usually the most hectic days for all the office managers at the Police Station. Mary and Cindy were no different as they had to catch up with the files from the weekend and since it was February 1, all active files needed to be updated and organized according to proper Police procedure. Cindy often helped Mary, and Mary helped Cindy, but each constantly found plenty of ways to complain mightily about the other and the ways situations are handled. Resisting change was never easy for Mary, so frequently she did enough to work with Cindy effectively. Over time all hoped that all will adapt, became more congenial, and would turn slightly calmer at the Police Station. Also, the two attempted to be more friendly, both at work and at play. Both Officer Grey and Officer Davidson can begin noticing the more relaxing environment. At least between the two ladies.

Towards the end of January at Hunter, Holly met with Taylor and discussed preparations for Ruth on Monday and Tuesday, February 8 and 9, because it will be two years since her attack. Taylor suggested that she talk this over with Ruth, but plan to go to her clinic appointment with her therapist, (Jane). By Friday, Holly did connect with Ruth. They agreed to get together on Tuesday February 9 at 4:45 pm, at the Pollock Mental Health Clinic. Then, Ruth called Jane to let her know and Holly found time to do the same.

Several times during this month, Officer Grey and Mary disagreed loudly because each thought they knew best. Neither gave much room for changing their steadfast opinions or perspectives on matters. As Office Manager, Mary knew plenty about the running of those functions, while Officer Grey understood police procedure and all of its nuances. Each time the participants would stand their ground and in the majority of the situations, they agreed to disagree. By month's end, there was a tiny hint of some compromises in the air, but remained there. Maybe, someday these items will be settled, but no one knows when or how. Both agreed that this was highly critical for the continuity of all the departments.

Various officers and visitors regularly went into Officer Grey's room to lodge complaints about Mary. His hope was that in the near future Mary could adapt to the rules and decorum of The Police Department. There is always hope. Other than her office proficiency, Mary's best attribute was relating to the possible criminals plus individuals entering and walking up to her window at the station. Somehow her often loud and her vulgar mouth often found a way to keep the people at ease as she appeared to speak their language. "**Knowledge of languages is the doorway to wisdom**".

Possible Developments Coming, Random Act By a Peer Specialist: **PART 12** is arriving here soon. **Howard Diamond is a Certified Peer Specialist from Long Island, New York**