



MEN TALK

THE MEN'S CENTER NEWS

June/July 2008 VOL. 32 #3

A Review of Souled Out: A Memoir of War and Inner Peace

— © 2008 BY AMY BLUMENSHINE

As care providers and healing men seek to learn about the spiritual impact of war on soldiers, they would be well-served to read the recent memoir by the Wisconsin veteran Michael Orban. Exquisitely reflective and with well-crafted description, Orban describes his own decades of healing his war-wounded soul. Not yet 20, he had slogged his way through the Vietnamese bush in the infantry, acting with a “Kill or be killed” mentality. He quotes the heretical version of the 23rd Psalm popular with the infantry: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because I am the meanest M..F.er in the valley.” While acting to survive, he witnessed and participated in activity that he describes as stealing his soul.

“Everything spiritual that had formed the foundations of my soul and guidance in life felt like a lie, as did my social teachings. My soul had been scooped and cleaned out just as one scrapes a pumpkin to make a jack-o-lantern. Every seed, every strand of pulp of my beliefs were gone. I was souled out, and the windows to my soul { the thousand yard stare of his eyes} were positive proof.”

Upon returning home, he was eager to resume his life, but was stymied by his post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. He lost his marriage and failed college. Alcohol became his way to cope. His PTSD would not be treated for over two decades. “Nothing gave me pleasure or was of interest. I felt spiritually dead....The enormous volume of unreal experiences seen in war plagued my mind. This confusion and inability to understand myself and what was in my mind added additional fear to the quantity already buried behind the barrier protecting my psyche. I felt that the failure of my belief system left me with no comprehension of whom I was. There is probably no more frightening or dreadful fear than that of losing your mind. Nor is there a greater struggle than to keep that torment hidden. Years later I would find I had no choice, those festering emotions were coming out, like it or not.”

Still desperately trying to maintain a facade of being okay, he fled to Africa, working in the Gabon bush for the Peace Corps and in Cameroun for a nongovernmental organization. “Here before me was God’s cure if I chose to take it.” In Africa, “I would marvel.... at the majesty of life; the realization that life was much bigger than we are; that life is about more than any one of us, and greater than any single person. This realization eventually led me beyond my egocentric concentration on my war experiences, and helped me choose between going inward to my own demons, or moving outwards to experience life as a part, not the center.”

Returning to the states, he writes that but for the “over-generosity” of his many siblings, he would have been homeless due to his alcohol

use and other PTSD symptoms. Eventually, his confrontation with suicide prompted a more productive search for healing. “One aspect of trauma is the fear of what I had experienced in war was too complicated, too overwhelming to face. I was afraid that I could not confront the issues and resolve them; that there would be no answers. And that those issues must be left behind the facade I had created. But this was exactly the thinking that would doom me to a life locked in those same unresolved issues, an eternal circle of my own misery.”

He came to conclude that part of his problem was the societal denial of the harm related to soldiering. “Society seems to have a need to think of its military as this pure clean assembly of men and women who could not possibly hurt or abuse prisoners or others, shoot their own soldiers, or become mentally traumatized. Society needs to feel secure and believe that its military is honorable, courageous, and will fight within the rules set up to appease governmental leaders.... We mask over many truths to have that security, and war veterans are a part of this erroneous thinking. He or she must return heroic and unaffected by the experience. Society needs (and government intends) to see this for the sake of social sanity.”

For Orban, his path to recovery after the confrontation with war required addressing his belief system and the care of his soul. “To rebuild a belief system that makes sense of life is not easy, but this is essential for getting out from behind the facade and facing the truth

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Library Corner

– *RAY CLARE, LIBRARIAN*



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

As a Men's Center member, you are eligible to check out books from our library. And while you are enjoying our many book resources, consider a browsing our large and growing selection of periodicals.

- Men's Health
- Lavender
- Transitions
- Men's Journal
- Voice Male
- Fathering Today

Recently Added to the Library:

Recovering from Boyhood Sexual Abuse, a documentary CD by Ethan Delavan, donated by Dr. Mic Hunter, an educational TV talk show about the GLBT community produced by Kim Pride, and *Love! Valor! Compassion!* Tandem Video. The above are available for check-out in the Men's Center Office.

Address Change Notifications

from the post office cost the Men's Center \$1.14 each. Please let us know in advance of mailings! Thanks!

Men Talk is a bi-monthly publication of the Twin Cities Men's Center. Call 612-822-5892, or e-mail us at tcmc@tcmc.org
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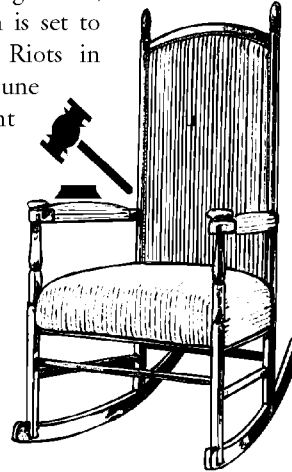
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Greetings from the Chair

The Twin Cities Men's Center will again take part in the annual Pride Celebration in Loring Park, Minneapolis. This celebration is set to commemorate the Stonewall Riots in New York which occurred in June of 1969. This was a pivotal event for rights of GLBT.

One of my fondest memories of service at the TCMC is to greet people at the booth that we have maintained for years at this event. I hope to see many of you there at the Park.

Other moments to celebrate this season at the TCMC include the anniversaries of the beginning of two of



our support groups. The Healthy Sexual Boundaries group which meets on Saturday mornings has been in existence now for over 5 years. We celebrated this event with a brunch at the Center announced to regular attendees. The Tuesday evening support group, Addiction Busters, as facilitated by Tommy Jones has now past 4 years of meeting at TCMC.

My wish is that all of you have a marvelous summer and partake of some of the many events as shown in our schedule.

**BOBBY SCHAUERHAMER,
BOARD CHAIR**

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of the darkness."

Our experience paying attention to the impact of war on veterans is not yet broad enough that we can say that all military involved in war will have problems of the soul as Orban did. Clearly some do, however. May we be prepared to help them in their recovery.

Amy Blumenshine is a peace activist and is involved at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 2315 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis. There she has been working to develop programs for Veterans, especially those returning from recent wars. Her review is of the book, Souled Out: A Memoir of War and Inner Peace, by Michael S. Orban (Candler, NC: Silver Springs Press, 2007) www.michaelorban.com.

Pride Volunteers Needed

Anyone wishing to help out with the Men's Center PRIDE booth at Loring Park or the Men's Center float in the parade on June 28 and 29, 2008, call John Ruud at **651-808-0291**

– Joun Ruud, TCMC Pride Coordinator

Aliveness Project Food Drive

Bring nonperishable food or personal care items to the Pride Festival Saturday or Sunday, June 28-29. Food collection barrels will be at the Aliveness Project booth, and Aliveness volunteers will take the food back to their building at the end of each day.

Men's Retirement Group Schedule Change

The monthly Men's Retirement Support group will meet the 2nd Sundays of June and July, June 8th, and July 13th at 5:30 pm instead of the usual 3rd Sunday meeting time. This group is for men who are thinking about or have retired and want an opportunity to discuss feelings about this major life change. Welcome if this sounds like it might help you.

– Norm Petrik, Group facilitator

The Men's Center ALL-PURPOSE FORM

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

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

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

Date _____ FROM: name _____

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_____ Work/other telephone _____

Anger Management Program

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

- Length of Class:** 12 consecutive weeks
- Number of Participants:** Limited to 12 men per class
- Cost:** \$215 for Men Center Members
(\$225 for Non-Members)

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

WEEKEND CARPENTER
(763) 509-0645



Aaron Huddleston
Cell: 612-670-4626
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THANK YOU!
The Men's Center receives generous donations of baked goods from **Wuollet's** and **Breadsmith Bakeries**. You can find them at 25th and Hennepin or 50th and France or online at:
www.wuollet.com
www.breadsmith.com




UPTOWN AREA SPACE TO RENT
The Men's Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave S
Space Rental Rate Schedule:

	Non-Profit	Profit event
Full Day (8 hrs)	\$50	\$100
Half Day (4 hrs)	\$25	\$50
Hourly	\$7.50	\$15

(612) 822-5892

YOUR AD HERE!
MEN TALK ADVERTISING RATE SCHEDULE

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

E-mail the editor at tcmc@tcmc.org

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

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

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

The Men's Center
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MEN TALK

The Men's Center News

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Family Law Clinic

NEW

Every 1st Wednesday of the month, the Men's Center is proud to present the Family Law Clinic. Targeted to the needs of men or women going through or anticipating divorce or dealing with other family law issues, this Clinic will give you an opportunity to discuss your own questions on such topics as:

- Divorce
- Paternity
- Custody
- Child Support
- Co-habitation
- Separation
- Property Division
- Spousal Maintenance
- Financial Settlements
- Your personal issue

Attorneys will volunteer their time and expertise for the benefit of those who attend. A nominal fee of \$5 is charged for the public. Members of the Men's Center receive a courtesy discount.

Where: The Men's Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave S #55, Minneapolis MN 55408

When: Every 1st Wednesday from 7:00 to 9:00 PM

Just come! No advance registration required!

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