

JOE ALBRECHT



"This has been a manic-depressive year. We are still doing with very little training, except our own experience, the same work we did when we first arrived. When the problem of training has been mentioned, we have been told it is impossible to do anything about it because of the shortage of help which has been growing more serious due to war conditions, and an authoritarian method of dealing with people. However, there have been some worthwhile factors that should not be forgotten. The F.O.R. group here in town, the fine friendships developed with C.P.S'ers and local folks, and, most of all, the chance to play even a small part in a rather big task of helping the mentally ill."

BILL FOYE



"Time flies at this place. Just why it does I am not sure, unless it does because one is constantly struggling to accomplish the essentials of living. I have wondered whether I am learning more from the association with patients or with members of the C.P.S. Unit. The value of a mental hospital as a training ground for people who wish to understand human beings has been recognized - for instance, some theological students take clinical training at such institutions. As yet I have not heard of a Clinical Training Unit to study C.O's."

HENRY ORMSBY



After four months at the Retreat I feel that the work is worthwhile and there is a definite service to be filled. I have enjoyed my work, it is not strenuous, though it is tiring to be all day on a noisy ward. It is much harder to be patient at the end of a long day. Wouldn't it be better for the patients as well as the attendants if the working day were only eight hours? Industrial plants have recognized the fact that they get the best grade of work in the first eight hours, so let us hope shorter hours may be possible when help is more plentiful.

ERNIE HIXSON

Work here is far more significant than chopping wood in a C.P.S. camp. Mental patients are far more responsive than trees. It is satisfying to see men stop cringing at the approach of an attendant and it is thrilling to have a patient voluntarily speak to you, the first time he has thus spoken in several years. To see another man grope for his life after attempting to take it, is heartening; to see a patient discharged after six weeks when the first two were spent in constant restraint is gratifying.

Institutional life and proximity to town make possible the understanding by others of the C.O. and his way of life. One negative factor is the hospital caste system. For example, attendants must use the basement or back entrances to buildings since the front entrances are reserved for doctors, secretaries, and others of similar stature.

BOB FLEISCHER



- The pacifist approach, in fact any approach, to the work in a mental hospital has its effects on the attendant as well as the patient.

In camp we often worked at manicuring the forests a bit lackadaisically, while we considered and debated the relative national importance of the job. One of the first aspects that struck me of the work at the Retreat was that this question never arises.

Then an incontinent wets his bed it seems proper to put dry sheets on it without reckoning the social significance of that act or whether it constitutes work of national importance.

Talkative patients give one an insight into the workings of the human mind, its possibilities and limitations. A man who repeats words again and again in a stream of consciousness gives some sense of the processes incident to learning. A number of young patients who "cracked" while at school and who are still affected by their classroom worries are of prime interest to one who expects to teach. One can gain an understanding of student problems and possible methods of meeting them.

Patience is an absolute essential to success in this work; it is a difficult thing to acquire. Then instructions are disregarded for the thousandth time, when problems, accusations, and allegations unfounded in fact are pressed, then that patience is valuable. The constant necessity to let others have their say, no matter how wrong they may appear to be, gives one practice for meeting similarly difficult people in daily life.

BEN CATES - I well remember that first day over on Ward 5. One of the other employees met me and escorted me to the ward. There he showed me some of my duties, making beds, serving meals, and caring for the patients. Of course I was nervous and didn't know quite how to act, but as I became acquainted with the patients and interested in them I actually began to enjoy the work.



A ward in one of these buildings is pretty much a world in itself for some of the patients, and a lot depends on the attendants as to what kind of a world it is. After all, they are human beings, and, outside of a few mental quirks, they react about the same as normal beings. They need friendship and understanding, and it is quite a challenge to us to supply a little of it.

UNIT BABY - March 1st should witness arrival of the first "Unit baby" - to Bee and Bob Wehmeyer. When Bob left Gorham to join the Unit last March, Bee left her nursing job in New York for one at the Retreat; remained until approaching motherhood made it advisable to employ her training nearer the "home front". She's housekeeping with Mrs. Ben Pierce in Brattleboro and just, well.....waiting. Note to C.P.S. mothers: AFSC offers the latest word in layettes. Come see for yourselves.)

