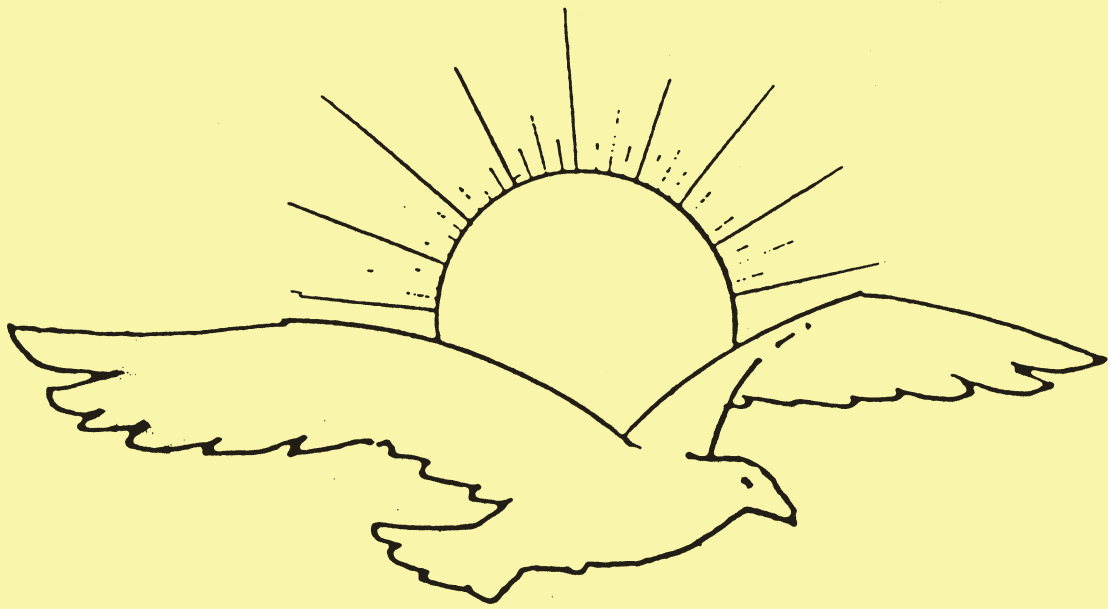


# The Bipolar Guide to the Gift:

*A Guidebook to Leave the Illness Stage*



**Arlen Rundvall**

*Winter 2007*

This accompanying booklet to The Bipolar Guide to the Gift is published by Our Voice / Notre Voix under The Mary Huestis Pengilly Life Story / Activism Scholarship Writing Fund thru the Vocational Self-Help Opportunities Program sponsored by Region 1 of the Mental Health Services Division of New Brunswick. All correspondence or financial contributions may be sent to:

OUR VOICE / NOTRE VOIX; P.O.Box 29004; Moncton, New Brunswick; E1G 4R3; Canada

Email: [ovnvletters@nb.aibn.com](mailto:ovnvletters@nb.aibn.com)

Web Site: [www.ourvoice-notrevoix.com](http://www.ourvoice-notrevoix.com)

Arlen Rundvall © 2007 All Rights Reserved / Typesetting by Eugène LeBlanc

Printed by Staples, Moncton, NB

**WINTER 2007 - CIRCULATION: 515 COPIES**

**FULL TABLE OF CONTENTS TO THE GUIDE:**

- |                                |                                    |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Introduction                | 25. Support Network                |
| 2. Welcome to the Fold         | 26. Pride                          |
| 3. Diagnosis                   | 27. Tapes we Play                  |
| 4. The Good, the Bad Doctor    | 28. Inlets                         |
| 5. Tool Kit of Medication      | 29. Processing                     |
| 6. Exercise                    | 30. Outlets                        |
| 7. Food                        | 31. Music                          |
| 8. Supplements                 | 32. Discipline                     |
| 9. Wacky Ways to Health        | 33. Weather or not Environment     |
| 10. Attitude - The Opportunity | 34. Over the Dose                  |
| 11. Sex                        | 35. Persist the Discipline         |
| 12. Relationships              | 36. Synchronize your Life Watch    |
| 13. Irritable Anger            | 37. Laugh till the Tears Drop      |
| 14. Spirituality               | 38. Ethel's Grace                  |
| 15. Scattered                  | 39. Moving On                      |
| 16. Giving up your Highs       | 40. Wrap the Gift and Tear it Open |
| 17. Giving up your Lows        | 41. Advantages of Bipolar          |
| 18. Self-Medicating            | 42. References                     |
| 19. Self-Aware to Power        | 43. Web Site Promotion             |
| 20. Stigma                     |                                    |
| 21. Poverty and Wealth         |                                    |
| 22. Delusions of Grandeur      |                                    |
| 23. Self-Pity                  |                                    |
| 24. Hope and Suicide           |                                    |

“Through balance flows the gift,  
Madness anoints my hands;  
through ash I see the truth,  
from sky, no limits bind.”



ADDRESS / ADRESSE:  
P.O. Box / CP. 29004;  
Moncton, Nouveau / New Brunswick  
E1G 4R3; CANADA

FAX / TÉLÉCOPIEUR: (506) 854-5532 (24hrs)

EMAIL / COURRIEL: [ovnvletters@nb.aibn.com](mailto:ovnvletters@nb.aibn.com)

WEB SITE WEB: [www.ourvoice-notrevoix.com](http://www.ourvoice-notrevoix.com)

PUBLISHER & EDITOR IN CHIEF  
ÉDITEUR ET RÉDACTEUR EN CHEF:  
Eugène LeBlanc

1

Dear Reader:

**T**he *Bipolar Guide to the Gift* is a must read for anyone struggling with a bipolar manic-depression and wishing to see the opportunistic side of their journey towards recovery. Having read the full contents, I can easily state that it is a forthright, no holds barred account of living with a bipolar condition and it offers straightforward honest talk on ways of handling those dark days. Arlen Rundvall tackles this subject like no other author I have ever read!

*Our Voice / Notre Voix* has a limited supply of the fully bound 124 pages guide. Information on how to order a copy can be found on page 4. We also encourage readers to consult its website at [www.thebipolarguide.com](http://www.thebipolarguide.com).

We wish to note with great importance that all of this is once again undertaken by *The Mary Huestis Pengilly Life Story / Activism Scholarship Writing Fund*. This is the second project under this Fund which we believe is of great value to the mental health community.

We hope that this accompanying booklet with its full listing of contents and introductory message from the author will instill in you the need to know more.

Sincerely

Eugène LeBlanc

**VIEWPOINTS OF THE PSYCHIATRIZED SINCE 1987**  
**POINTS DE VUES DES PSYCHIATRISÉS DEPUIS 1987**

The October 2005 issue of *Atlantic* presents the case that *Lincoln's Great Depression* assisted him in the great deeds he performed for America. Is it true that there are benefits to living through depression? Is a person more realistic about all angles of a problem through the pessimism of depression? I would agree as a depressive veteran that you have a heightened awareness of every detail of what could go wrong with a situation: This ability can be harnessed to make you a more detailed responsible person in approaching problems.

What about mania; are there any traits of bipolar mania that we can harness for good? What about the no limits possibility thinking? Can we hold onto a bit of our grandiose thinking to carry us onward to reach our goals and to stretch ourselves? A friend of mine experienced depression and he believes that depression empowered him to be a better compassionate care aid for seniors.

Is this talk of the good aspects of mental illness a little too much to swallow? When we are challenged to live our days with mental illness, mere survival is enough, how can we talk of the good points? When you are diagnosed with Bipolar Affective Disorder, you could use a coach that's played the sport. It is a serious illness that requires an integrated approach to solving the enigma. I have bled and screamed in pain from bipolar. I have learned to face my illness and lessen its power over my existence - it can become less of an illness and, over time, more of an opportunity.

I have written an informal guide that pulls no punches and talks about everything from sexual promiscuity to manic spending to delusions of grandeur. I strive in this book to take alternative approaches in working through the negative illness traits to plug into the gift side. I have been through the highs and the lows of manic-depression and have embraced the advantages, and continue to live an enhanced life.

You can harness bipolar to serve you: It is a tough break-in of the wild horse, but it is possible. We need to look at bipolar in new ways to get different results. I promote responsibility in this book - there are no excuses, just potential. People need friendly assurance and self-awareness to surmount the challenges of bipolar. A recent test reader, that was in the mire of illness, described the book as a bridge out: she returns to the Bipolar Guide to review the principles that helped her to live.

People with bipolar need all the advantages they can muster. Just having a reassuring friend that's been there makes a difference. I haven't experienced everything you have and I don't want to: just like you don't want to experience everything that I have. I've been tossed around enough and learned to start shoving this bipolar creature back into the corner of my existence.

We are a loose tribe of souls that have been thrown by the winds of madness. I had the good fortune to get my feet back on the ground and would like to help others to do the same. We need to learn to help ourselves: What do you need this moment to steady you? Do you need to learn about good sleep hygiene as well as taking sleeping medication? I teach many basic easy to learn approaches. I was taught few of these principles through the hundreds of thousands of dollars my illness cost the Canadian Taxpayer.

What about addiction issues- have you studied addiction support techniques? If you are on addictive medicines it should be a requirement. Part of getting better is mastery over our addictive tendencies: there will be addiction issues with these medications.

I believe that self-medicating or self-treating is a positive skill that needs to be enhanced - I'm not talking about cocaine when you are depressed or alcohol when you are edgy. What about knowing when you need to exercise and when to stay entirely away from caffeine? Will decreasing your stressors require less anti-anxiety medication?

There are many books about the symptoms and characteristics of bipolar- most take the serious clinical approach of explaining it. Few give any practical methods of living with it, or living to the level of advantages. Drugs and doctors are only part of the great solution. Not enough books exist for the person striving to live with bipolar, and many of the titles allude to the negative alone. Kay Redfield Jamison in, *Touched With Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*, presents the case that manic-depressives have an advantage when it comes to certain writing abilities in particular.

I am excited to continue my relationship with *Our Voice / Notre Voix* and its many readers. I have written in the past under the pen name, Arlen Trent. Eugene LeBlanc and I will be working together to help people gain power in their lives.

Only you know at any given time what you need to live in balance and health- you have to choose to limit your negative stressors and increase your positive choices. Forcing yourself to exercise is important. Too much medication can be just as harmful at times as too little - you must take responsibility with your doctor for your chemistry: our doctors cannot live our lives - they are a tool like the many others that I write about. We must handle our tools as skilled people to build our lives.

If we want different results, we need new approaches to living. Come journey with me to live life the way you need it to be. You are the creator of your existence. Every small step you take today toward balance and health will pay dividends in your tomorrow.

[www.thebipolarguide.com](http://www.thebipolarguide.com) offers the free practical guidebook for living with bipolar. It will help you create your own life guidebook. It will also help with depression, schizophrenia, and anxiety. There are many overlapping areas with mental illness. I have become an expert with bipolar because that is what was throwing me around.

Maybe you are the one to live these principles with your unique challenges and adapt your own guidebook. We can grow this resource to assist future generations of so called mentally ill people to minimize the length of time in their negative illness. The sooner we start thinking and living solutions, the less of an anchor illness will drag through our lives.

Please check out the website and assist others by submitting your unique strategies for living with bipolar. We can eventually enhance it to include other mental health challenge.

**Arlen Rundvall**

**Yes, I want to order the fully bound 124 pages of  
The Bipolar Guide to the Gift at \$22 per copy**

**Send Check, Money Order or Cash (Not responsible for lost cash) to:  
Our Voice / Notre Voix:  
P.O. Box 29004; Moncton, New Brunswick; E1G 4R3; CANADA**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY** \_\_\_\_\_ **PROVINCE / STATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**POSTAL / ZIP CODE** \_\_\_\_\_ **COUNTRY** \_\_\_\_\_

I want to order \_\_\_\_ copie(s) at \$22 each and I'm enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send this original order form, make a photocopy or write down your request.

**[www.thebipolarguide.com](http://www.thebipolarguide.com)**

**THANK YOU!**



## **THE OUR VOICE MARY HUESTIS PENGILLY LIFE STORY / ACTIVISM SCHOLARSHIP WRITING FUND**

**WHO WAS SHE?** *A native of Saint John, Mary Huestis Pengilly was married with 5 sons and one daughter. After the Port city's great fire of 1877, she moved to Massachusetts. While living in the states, she became so engaged in writing a book on the laws of health that she forgot to eat for 8 days. Being worried about her condition, her sons brought her back by train to our Provincial Lunatic Asylum in 1883 where she remained a patient for 6 months. Denying her insanity, she spent her days trying to make life a bit easier for some of the other patients and faithfully recorded the treatment and injustices as well as the conditions she felt they were being exposed to. She died in 1893. In keeping with her attempts to right the wrongs of the mental health system of her era; the purpose of this scholarship is to be remindful of such a task and to pursue it with the same spirit and determination.*

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIAS:** *One must be a resident of New Brunswick for a least 1 year OR non residents must have 3 published articles in Our Voice within the last 5 years.*

**HOW TO APPLY:** *\$10 deposit (non-refundable) with a submission of your life story and/or activist viewpoint relating to mental health or mental illness (Minimum 50 pages {8½" x 11"} - double space type - 1 inch margin - 12 inch font sent with paper copy and disk.)*

### **WHAT WE WILL DO FOR YOU:**

- *Publish in magazine format your story and circulate a minimum of 100 copies from the Our Voice subscription list.*
- *Give you 50 personal copies.*
- *Cover the expenses of a public launching of your story to a maximum of 25 guests of your choice.*

### **WHAT YOU WILL DO FOR US:**

- *Write your story in a manner that will be coherent and not be libel or slanderous.*
- *You may give away or sell the 50 copies provided to you. If you decide to sell them, you promise to return 50% of the sales to Our Voice*
- *You keep the rights to your story; however if you succeed in transforming your story in a book format with a publisher, you agree to give Our Voice 20% of your earnings up to a maximum of \$2000.*

Applications are considered on a ongoing first come with a first served basis. It is understood that a submission does not guarantee an automatic acceptance. All submissions will be examined by the Our Voice consultation committee. Scholarship policies may change without notice. Ce document peut être obtenu en français.

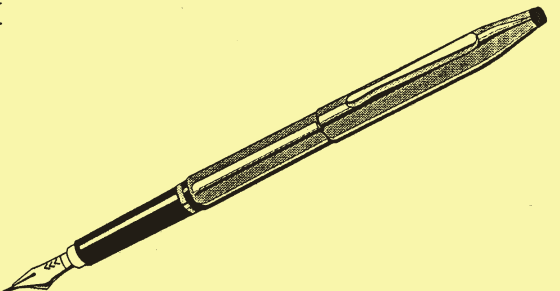
**OUR VOICE / NOTRE VOIX**

**P.O. Box 29004**

**Moncton, NB; E1G 4R3**

*Inquiries:*

**ovnvletters@nb.aibn.com**



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Arlen Rundvall lives with his wife RosaLee and Katie the cat in Parksville, British Columbia. He is a 20 year veteran of bipolar. His involvement in mental health has included being:

- 1989: A founding coordinator at *The Nest* in Prince Albert, SK
- 1990: Provincial networker in Saskatchewan
- 1990: A founding member of the *National Network for Mental Health*
- 1994: Mental health group home support worker in Red Deer, AB
- 1994: Mental Health peer visitation program coordinator in Red Deer, AB.

Arlen has lived with the challenges of bipolar and has learned to leave the illness stage and hospitalizations behind. He has discovered many advantages to having bipolar. The author enjoys the role of coaching and helping people overcome their adversities. In the last few years, he has concentrated on developing his book and screen writing craft. He has written articles for *Our Voice / Notre Voix* and he cherishes reader's feedback. Arlen looks forward to public speaking opportunities through the bipolar guide.