I’d write a vulgar insult against the teacher in my essays; fearing that I’d suddenly jump in front of the subway train as it came into the station. I went through my first severe clinical depression in my second year at the University of Toronto, and another in my final year there. During each of those depressions, I fought suicidal ideation (thoughts of suicide), in tears, I told my family that I “didn’t want to go away,” I was helped through those years by a psychiatrist who specialized in OCD. He put me on Prozac (the first successful SSRI), and I stayed on it for many years afterwards. I’m on it now.

In Sept. 2007, in my second year as a full-time faculty member in the Religion Department at Bishop’s University, I suffered debilitating anxiety for the first time—a feeling of dread that I couldn’t shake, out of all proportion to the actual duties and responsibilities that were on my plate at the time.

In early 2014, during the first month of a half-year sabbatical, I crashed...hard. I felt that crushing anxiety again, and only two days after it struck it was combined with a deep depression. My sabbatical became a sick leave. I had two short recoveries in the late spring and late summer (in between which I crashed again). I began the fall of 2014 teaching three courses, but in mid-October the anxiety and depression returned and I had to withdraw from all of them. Shortly thereafter, experiencing severe suicidal ideation, I was voluntarily hospitalized. But I derived no benefit from my hospitalization and returned home after only about a week. I tried to teach only one course in the winter of 2015, but my depression prevented me from being able to think or concentrate properly, and I was constantly exhausted.

With all of us—I, my wife, the rest of my family—at the end of our ropes with my condition, and having seemingly exhausted all other options, I moved back in with my parents in Toronto and underwent 16 treatments of ECT at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in May and June. Sensitive to the fact that my memory was essential to my career, CAMH gave me the least invasive form of ECT, but even so I had to relearn some everyday tasks when I returned to teaching. With the help of ECT, I regained my confidence, my sense of purpose and my self-esteem.

My self-confidence had been shattered, my self-esteem was at zero. But, as the weeks went on and I looked out into the room and saw that my students actually cared about what I was saying, I began to believe again that I mattered, that I had something to offer. I gradually regained my confidence, my sense of purpose and my self-esteem.

One man’s love for Potton’s round barn

The Scoop

MABLE HASTINGS

For many in Potton, saving Man
tonville’s Round Barn, one of six in the Eastern Townships has been a labour of love and one of extreme pride for a group of dedicated citizens. The plan is for the barn to become a major attraction in the Eastern Townships and one that will complement the area and contribute to its growth.

With three interior levels, the barn will showcase: a permanent exhibition on the history and heritage of the region as well as occasional thematic exhibitions as well as a multi-functional room for conferences, shows and receptions. The grounds will continue to showcase the local quality and quantity of local produce and craftsmanship, an educational garden and children’s activities, outdoor theatre and events, etc... For “Serge,” a member of the