



2012.09.09

The Anxiety Issue

XIII / 123

This is my testimony. For 8 months I have been suffering from acute anxiety. But these are the changes God has brought about in my life.

First of all, I have lost 80 lbs and I remain in the best health I have ever been in. I routinely move furniture for a living and can do it with ease. I can hike any mountain. I have hiked Mount Monadnock three times alone this year.

Second of all, I have saved almost \$1,500. I have \$1,000 in an emergency savings fund to use instead of a credit card when something breaks in my life. There have been points in my life back in 1999 when I lived with no debt, but this is the first time I have ever lived with savings. I have lived within my means since April 2012, after taking Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University Class at both Connecting Point Church and Belmont AME Zion Church. I have a financial mentor who meets with me once a month to review my Spending Plan and suggest ways to improve my financial habits. This same man also is the sole person encouraging me with precise details about how to seek a Graphic Design job. He is just such a blessing in my life in more ways than one.

This is my testimony. This is what Jesus Christ has been doing for me. He has been teaching me to live in His image, and He is self-reliant and independent in a way. I think He expects me, as an adult, to live responsibly and He is teaching me how to do that.

I bought a plane ticket to Greg's wedding in October. This is the first vacation I will take since I was an engineer that I have paid for completely myself. And back when I was an engineer, my vacations were all taken on debt. This one comes from sweat equity.

God has been teaching me the value of work. Previously, because I suffer from depression, I always associated whatever work I did with depression and it would make me highly unlikely to want to do the work. Depression is just awful. But now I find that I must press through the depression. In these past 8 months I have been suffering from a high volume of anxiety. But I find that work is something

that takes my mind off both anxiety and depression. It gives my mind something else to occupy itself with, and at the same time it earns me money, which protects against the catastrophes caused by the ups and downs of bipolar disorder. For the first time ever I have found work fulfilling.

I have been working as a furniture mover with a Charismatic Christian friend. He prays in tongues while we are working. There is practically no job he won't take on and he goes above and beyond for each of his customers. I have seen him haul a box spring up to the third floor balcony by a piece of rope. He has also carried couches through neighbor's yards and thrown them over fences when there was no other way to get them in the house. He pays above market wages and he is always thankful for my work. I have never seen a business more Holy Spirit operated than his. He is a humble man, but one who follows the Lord closely. He may never be rich or famous, but he does the will of God.

Furniture moving is job #32 for me. I started that on May 3rd, 2012. I got a job at "Paperclips" and started on Friday, August 7th, 2012. We'll see how that goes. My newest hobby is making money. I hate being without certain things, but God is teaching me fiscal maturity in that I can not always have what I want, but I can live within my means. This is maturity.

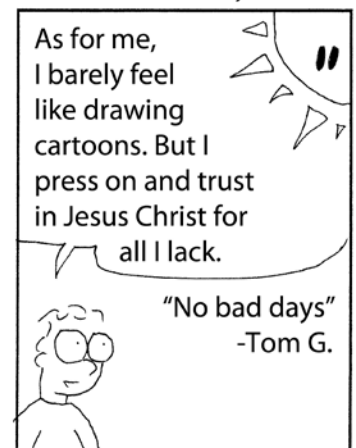
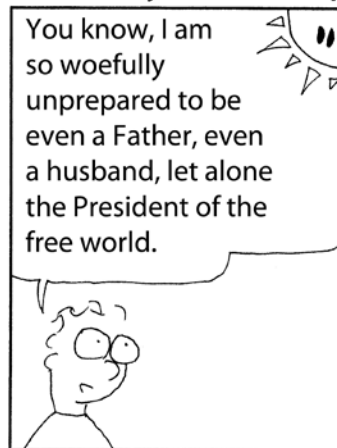
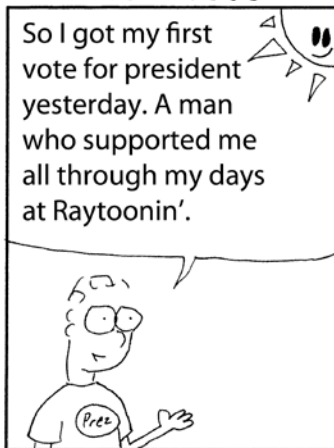
Overall life is not a lot of fun. It is not the worst it has ever been, but I am in a real dry spell. I don't find any satisfaction out of doing anything Graphic Design related nor in drawing cartoons: things that used to give me such joy, and things I labored intensely and suffered to achieve. I don't claim to understand God, nor why He had me go through these things only to lie in my bed on days when I have nothing to do, but this is the way life has been going. Financially and health wise the picture is brighter than ever, but in my heart is an empty vacuum and I don't understand why. This is my testimony. I served God since 2/22/97 and I will continue to serve Him, but there are some things I don't understand because I do not see the bigger picture. I am trying my hardest to follow, and I know better days always follow the bad ones, but right now it is just hard. This is my testimony. This is what Jesus is doing with my life. This is Etooin'.

I include cartoons in every Etoonin' issue so people will read it. It took forever to compile this issue; I felt so down about the subject matter. The first couple cartoons deal with my crazy idea to run for president. Ideas like this will probably stop.

toon in'...

Nobody makes up our minds for us

Feb. 7th, 2012

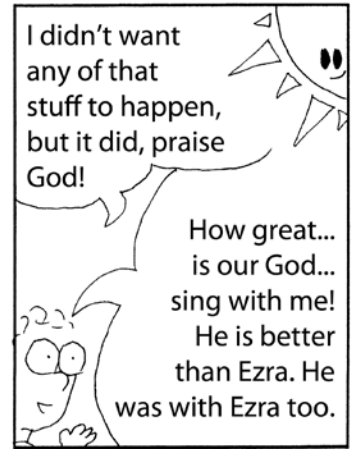
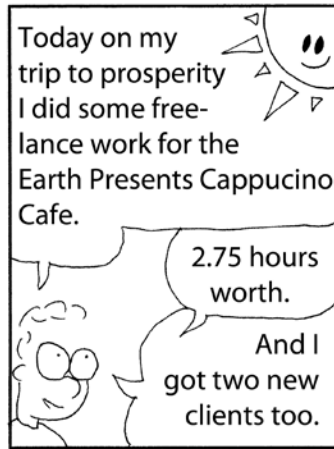
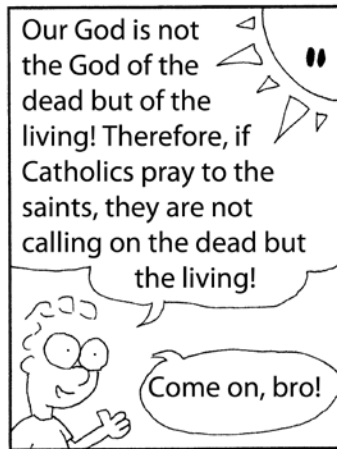


Jesus is Lord - John 3:16

toon in'...

How Great...

Feb. 9th, 2012



www.toonin.com

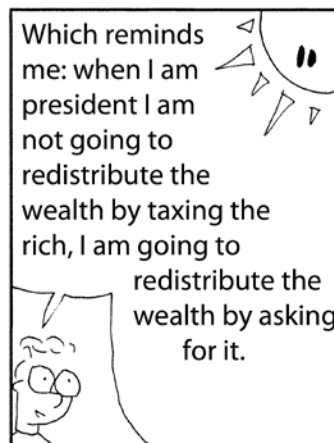
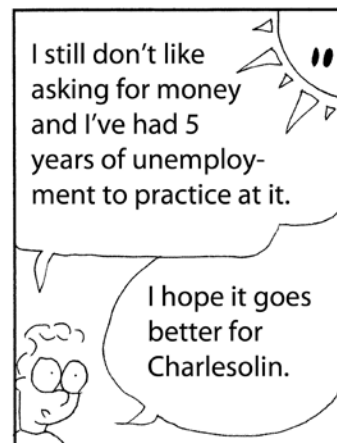
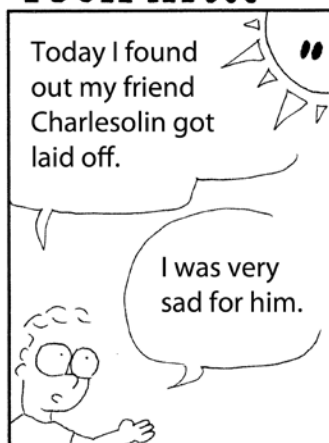
Jesus is Lord - John 3:16

Below I talk about a business contact I made that got laid off. I have nothing to do with him any more, but at the time I sent him a check for \$50 to help with his unemployment. I really pride myself on looking out for people, something that is harder now that I live within my means. But I still look out for people as best I can.

toon in'...

Done.

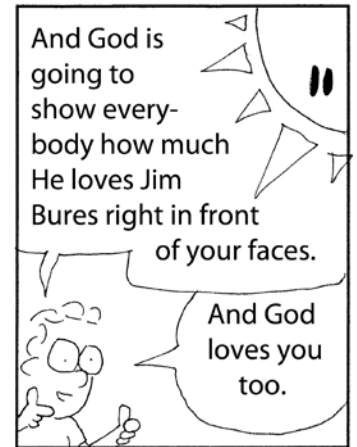
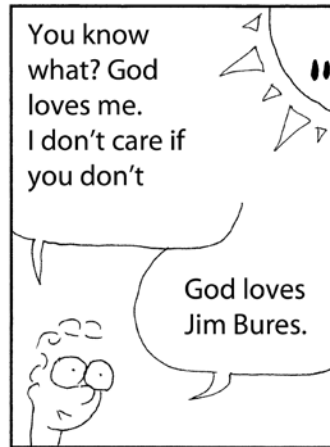
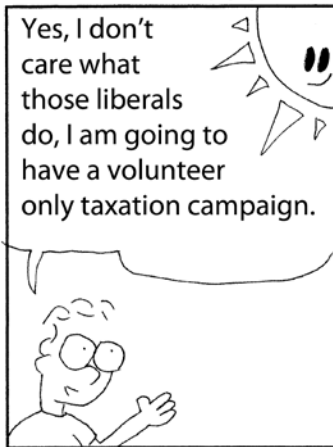
Feb. 9^{1/2}, 2012



toon in'...

On taxation

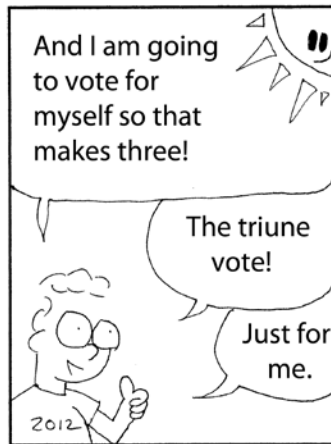
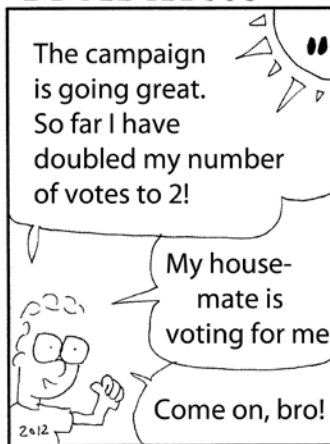
Feb. 9^{2/3}, 2012



toon in'...

The campaign trail...

Feb. 9^{3/4}, 2012

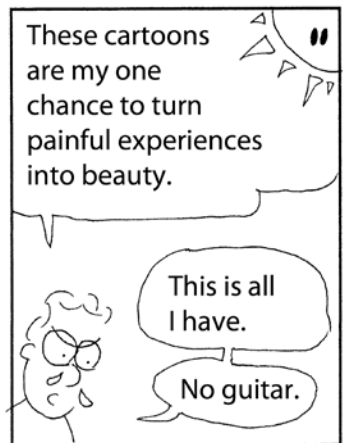


On February 12th, 2012, I went berserk. When I went through Graphic Design school, I dealt with 3 weeks to 3 months of clinical depression each semester. So when I started my own business, I experienced extreme anger every time I sat down to do some work, no matter how simple. It drove me crazy so I called up all my clients and quit my business on Feb. 12th. It caused me to implode and launch a two day long campaign of emails to my blog subscribers about how much I hated myself and how they should hate me too. I sent these emails to 33 people, and 16 wrote me letters of love and support. It was an incredibly hard time which led to a partial hospitalization that lasted 6 weeks. I've lived this part of my life in the wilderness.

toon in'...

Now

Feb 12th, 2012



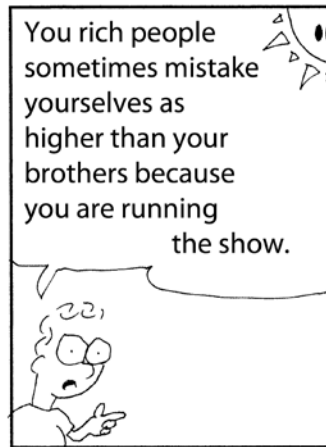
toon in'...



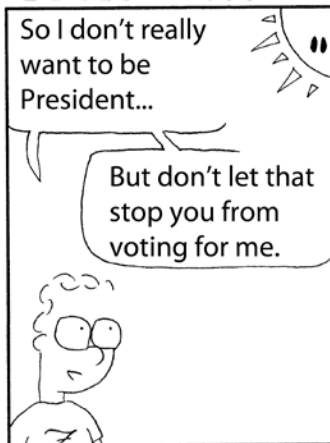
Support...



Feb. 20th, 2012



toon in'...



Karaoke President



Feb. 28th, 2012



toon in'...



Letting love in...



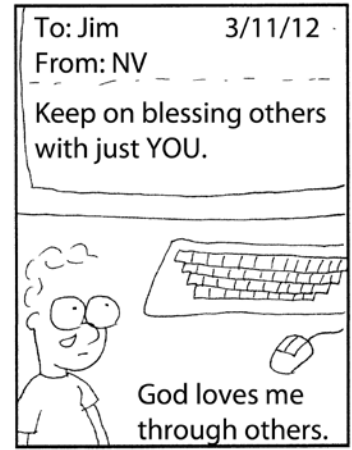
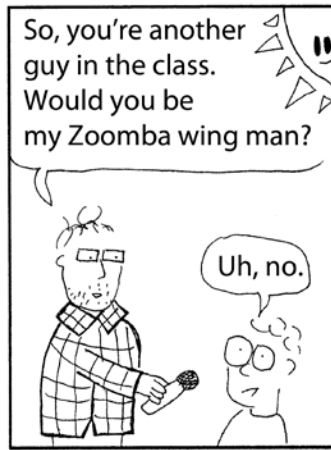
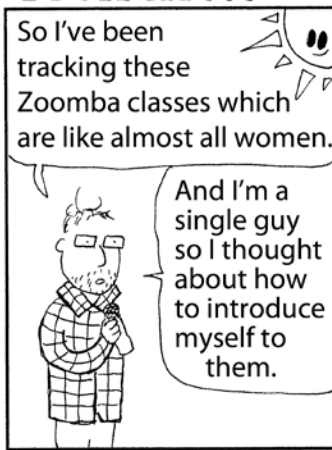
Mar. 11th, 2012



toon in'...

Letting love in...

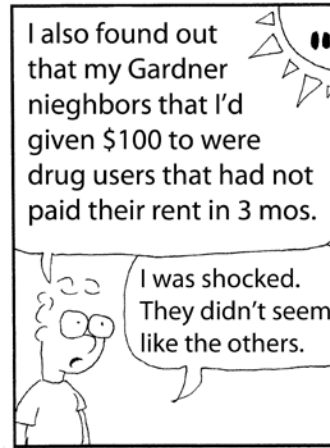
Mar. 11^{1/2}, 2012



toon in'...

Ripped off...

Mar. 12th, 2012

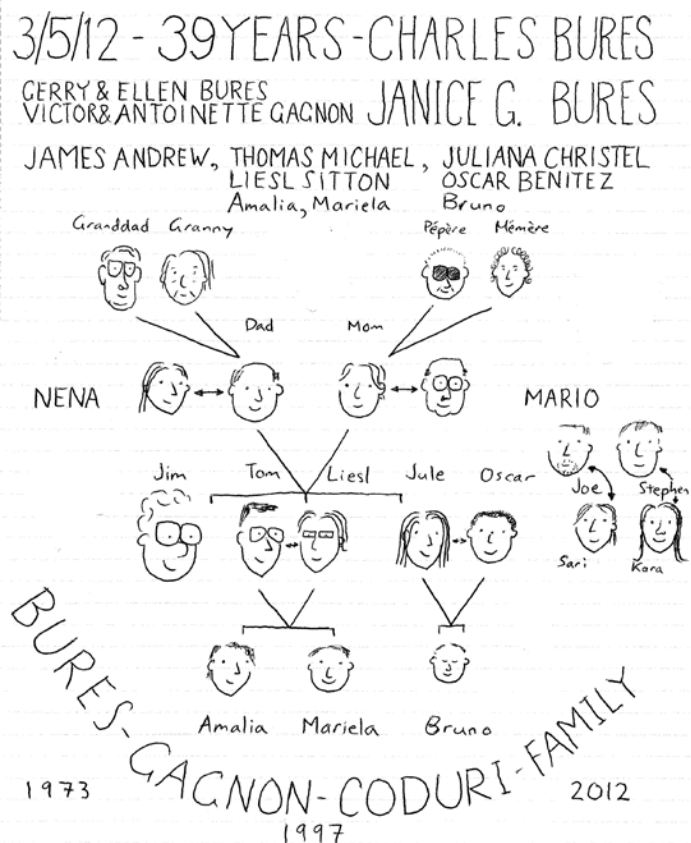
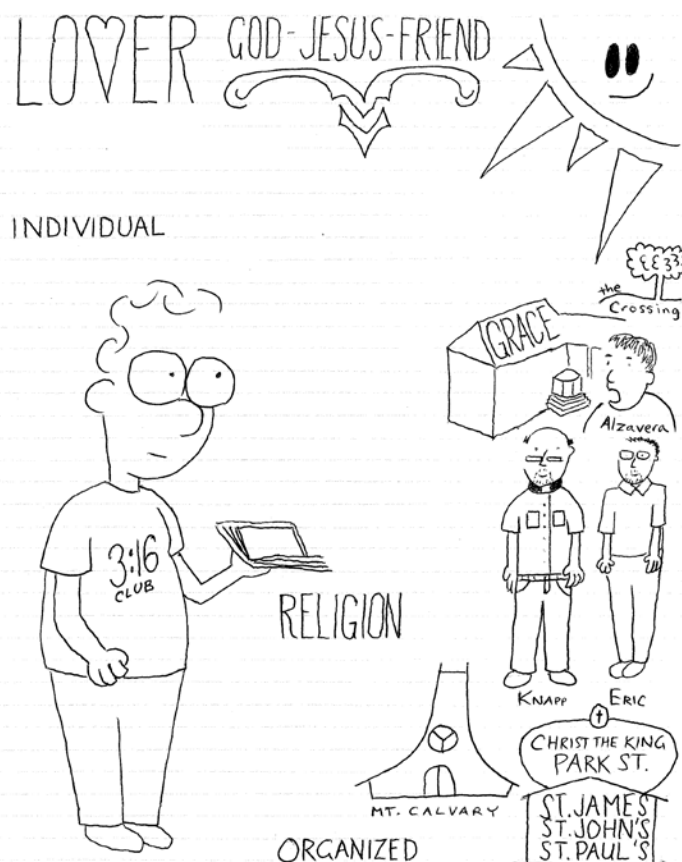


After this explosion, as I mentioned, I went into the partial patient program. There I gave up drawing four panel cartoons and started drawing one panel doodles as I listened to everybody else talk in group therapy. I actually drew a lot of cartoons about the person speaking and receiving therapy, along with the advice their peers gave them. These cartoons were very inspirational to the people I gave them to and usually elicited a hug and sometimes tears. It was perhaps one of the best uses of my cartoonist gift ever. I also spoke about my troubles running a business called "All for the Lord" when I held such bitterness against the Lord for all the depression I go through. In the end I decided to rename my business to JimBures.com.

The first month of the partial patient program was extremely therapeutic. We had a group leader named Asher who expounded upon the value of each person as an individual, and the value of their humanity. It was undoubtedly secular, but very positive for me. I learned Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, which is a way to think more realistically instead of always assuming the negative. Asher took my focus off my problems with God and encouraged me to try and take control of my destiny using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. However, after one month they took me out of Asher's acute program and put me in "maintenance." This was basically like glorified baby sitting with a bunch of people who couldn't seem to handle the most basic chores of life. There were a ton of rules and I found it very demeaning, so I left after two weeks. I tried a few other therapy groups, but didn't find anything that really worked. I was referred to the Genesis Club, which I will talk about later. This is a club that helps the mentally ill find work. I spent some time hanging around this club, but it was too difficult to find community there. I am kind of tired of hanging around other people with mental illnesses. I would much rather hang around well people to have them rub off on me in hopes that I will get better. Anyway, what follows are a lot of the one panel cartoons that I drew during my period in Asher's partial patient group.



Above: after I sent out all the self-hate mail, I drew this cartoon about close friends who continued to care about me. Below: considering my own understanding of religion versus that from all the institutions that had served me.



Above: for the first time ever I drew a family tree of all my extended immediate family. I call it the "Bures-Gagnon-Coduri Family Tree" because my Mom divorced my Dad and married Mario Coduri, an Italian. Because of this, we got a whole additional side added to our family. This tree starts with my Grandparents and goes down four generations to all my nephews and nieces. It is the first time I have drawn some of these people, like my Memere, Antoinette, whom I have only seen photos of because she died of breast cancer before I was born. I have a really good family. God has blessed me.

ELECTION INSPECTOR!



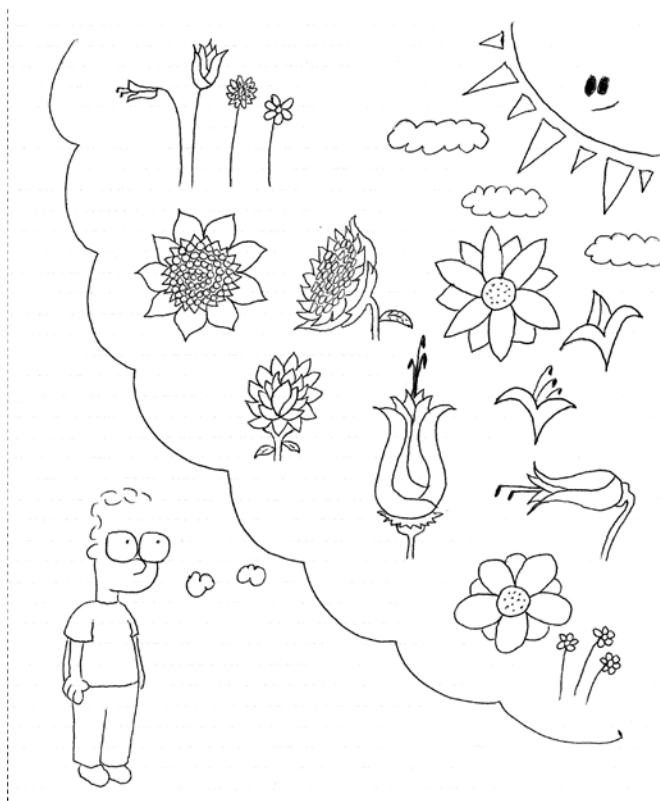
On March 6th, 2012, I started job #31 as an Elections Inspector for the City of Worcester. It lasted from 6 am until 8 pm for the Presidential Primaries. Because the precinct was in a housing project, I assume most people did not bother to vote because Obama ran unopposed. I don't think many were interested in the Republican ballot.



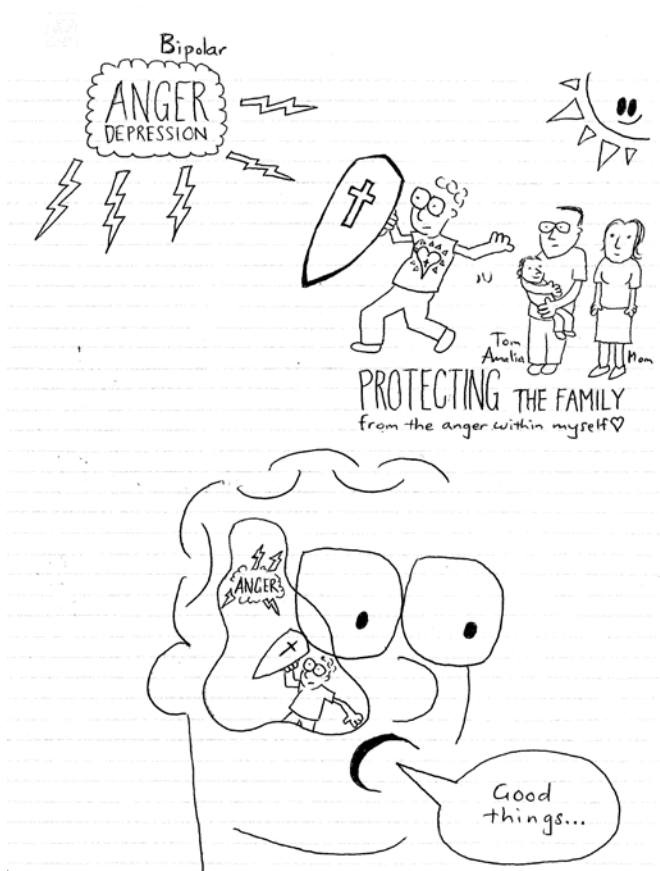
I think we only had 43 voters in 14 hours, so using most of the time I drew cartoons about my mostly Hispanic coworkers. They loved my cartoons. It is such a gift that God has given me. One woman, Luisa, even said she would frame the cartoon I drew about her. I earned \$120. I saw my old boss from T.J. Maxx at the election.

This job even led to another election period coming up Thursday, September 6th for the MA state primaries. Don't forget to go out and vote! I will earn another \$120 for an easy day of hanging around. Money is now the name of my game.

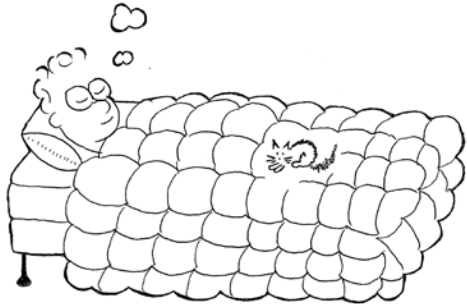
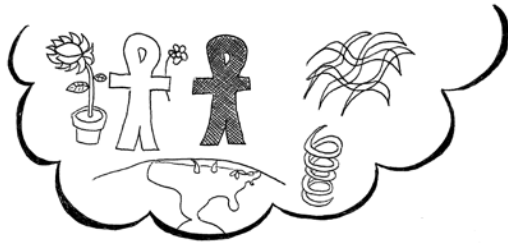
The primaries took place while I was in the partial patient program, so I took a day off from it to serve as the elections inspector. I continued drawing cartoons about people as a way to pass time. The guy running the polling station was a Republican and tried to explain to all the Hispanic Democrats why they should vote Republican. I don't think he convinced anybody. I was really surprised to see my T.J. Maxx boss there because he managed the Acton store and the poll was in Worcester. He gave me his number for job referrals. I was surprised he lived in the project section of Worcester.



As my group therapy progressed, I continued to explore the theme of religion. I also drew pictures of pretty flowers because one night I lay in my bed meditating and all I thought about was flowers. As I reflected upon my illness, Bipolar, I thought about how the phenomenal anger that results from it gets unfairly directed toward my family. I drew a cartoon about how to protect them from the anger and say only good things instead. My family really loves me. I have broadcast all my negative thoughts to them too, and they continue to love me. So now I have let everybody know the worst about me, but they all choose to love me anyway, so I am safe to explore positive thinking. The cartoon below shows my love of sending mail.



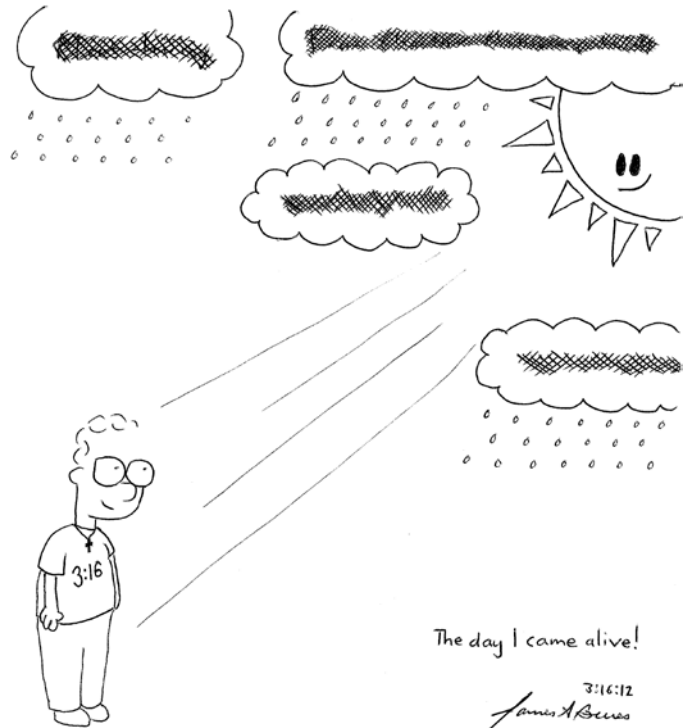
3.16.12



Meditation
while falling asleep

3:16:12

Above is a cartoon inspired by more mediation. To the right shows God's rays of love coming through even in my darkest hours. God really cares for me, and for you too! Be blessed.



The day I came alive!

3:16:12
James A. Bures

DEBT

1. Protect the family - loaning money to a friend/family is not help.
- no loans, just gifts: blood
2. Live lean: like a gazelle
- avoid the cheetah
- run, run, run



Gazelle Intensity



run, run, run
escape!

Look up:

Proverbs 22:7
Proverbs 17:18

Escape
the devil...

run!
narrowly escaping the fire.

Fight back!



dreams:

1. Prosper in Clinton
2. Graphic Design job
3. Emergency savings
4. Part-time job
5. Music

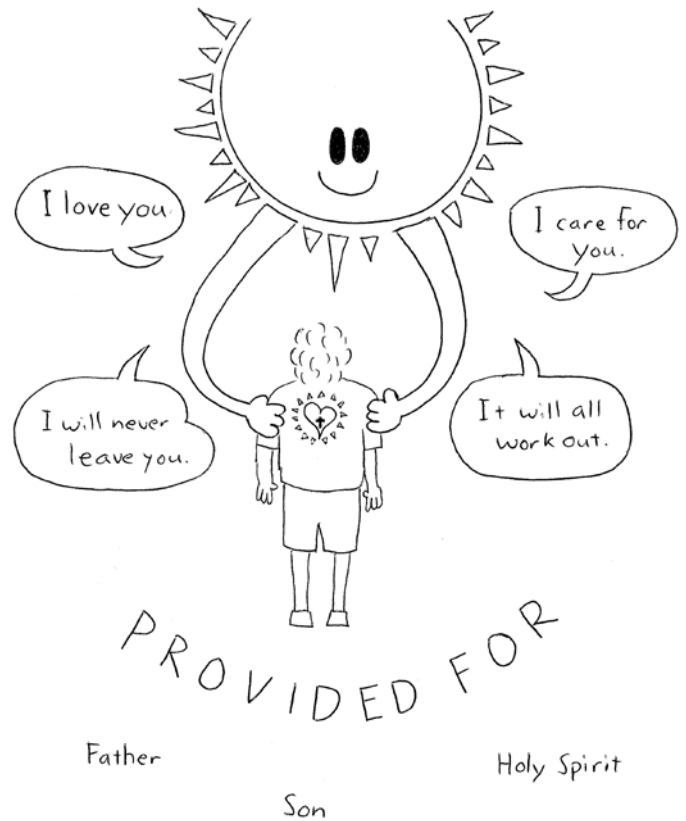
Lord, Please give me the desires
of my heart!!! I want more!

James A. Bures
3:16:12

In January I joined Connecting Point Church's Financial Peace University Class. This is a class developed by a consumer advocate named Dave Ramsey. Dave Ramsey is well known for divorcing people from the practice of using debt. He is a Christian motivational speaker, although religion is not his main focus. His program taught me how to live within my means, something I have been doing since April 2012. The class consisted of watching a series of DVDs that outline 7 baby steps toward financial peace. Baby Step #1 is to save a \$1,000 emergency fund to use instead of credit cards. The videos talked about getting out of debt by employing Gazelle Intensity: the motivation that a gazelle uses to stay alive when hunted by a cheetah. I cried watching this. I was so trapped by poor credit decisions. Video testimonies told of how taking Dave's class allowed them to start dreaming again. This is what I did on 3/16: dreaming of what I would like to do with my future.

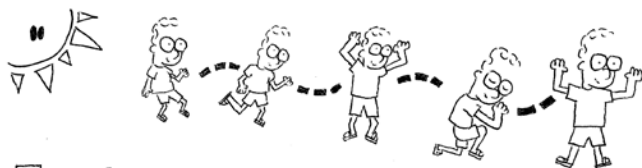


After my email outburst of self-hatred, I wrote my first song. Above I depict myself singing it. I recorded it and shared it with the 16 people who supported me through my pain.



During this time of intensive therapy, my brother treated me to a 5K race in South Boston. He told me that we get along better than we ever have before in our adult lives. He also told me he had seen some major changes in me in the past 6 months. I visit him and his family in South Boston and preach the Gospel to his wife, Liesl. I did keep one client and design a quilt as a graduation gift for their eldest daughter. One patient at the program gave me a Biblical motivation card based on my name.





Joyful!!! Run, jump, skip, have fun!



EVERYBODY'S IS AT WORK
and here I am, for who knows how long

Combat negative thoughts.
Challenge one's self.
Fight depression. Refute
assumptions. Feel valuable.
Identify distorted thinking.



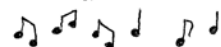
FIRST PUBLIC PERFORMANCE of "Without Love"



You saw me there,
wallowing in despair.
Sorrow my only friend
A heart in need of mend.



I couldn't do it without love
I couldn't do it without love.



Sung live at:
South Bay Mental Health
3/23/12 Worcester, MA

DETAILS:

12 People present
4 or more clapped

I sang my first song to a sold out audience in the partial patient program. Below is an original quote from a patient.

*It is a tedious, painstaking process
to bring your life in order and an
impulsive, split-second decision to
throw it into chaos.*

~Ken W.



©2012 Jim Bures

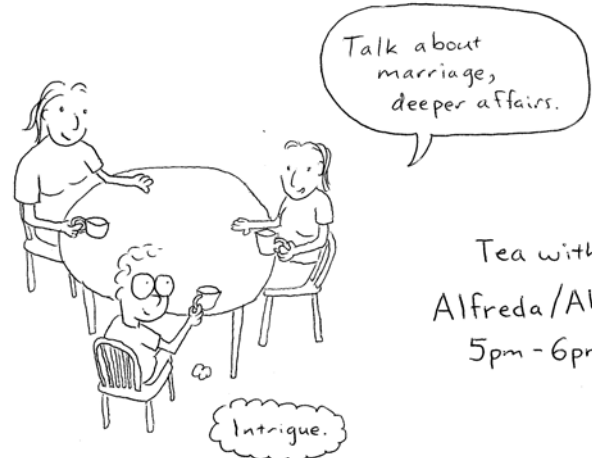
www.jimbures.com

Around this time, someone from Mount Wachusett Community College's newspaper, the Observer, wrote and asked me to draw a cartoon for their newspaper. I drew the cartoon to the left remembering how MWCC is well known for their nursing program. However, the editor did not understand my joke, so it was not published. Phlebotomy is the study of drawing blood. You can see the wind turbines that MWCC installed.

I have hiked Mount Monadnock three times this year and swam across Walden Pond once with the Gregger. Visiting Maine from Denver he drove down to MA for a 9:30 pm flight and we swam across Walden Pond and back in 45 minutes ending at 7:22 pm! It was awesome. I am going to Greg's wedding October 20th and I paid for the flight with money I earned myself. This will be the first vacation I paid for myself in quite some time. Greg is marrying a spectacular woman and I am going to be in the wedding! First time ever being in a wedding for me, I think. Also my step brother Stephen is getting married and my cousin Matty too. Big year for weddings. My nephew Bruno is getting baptised in Puerto Rico on Saturday.



FEELING UNWORTHY



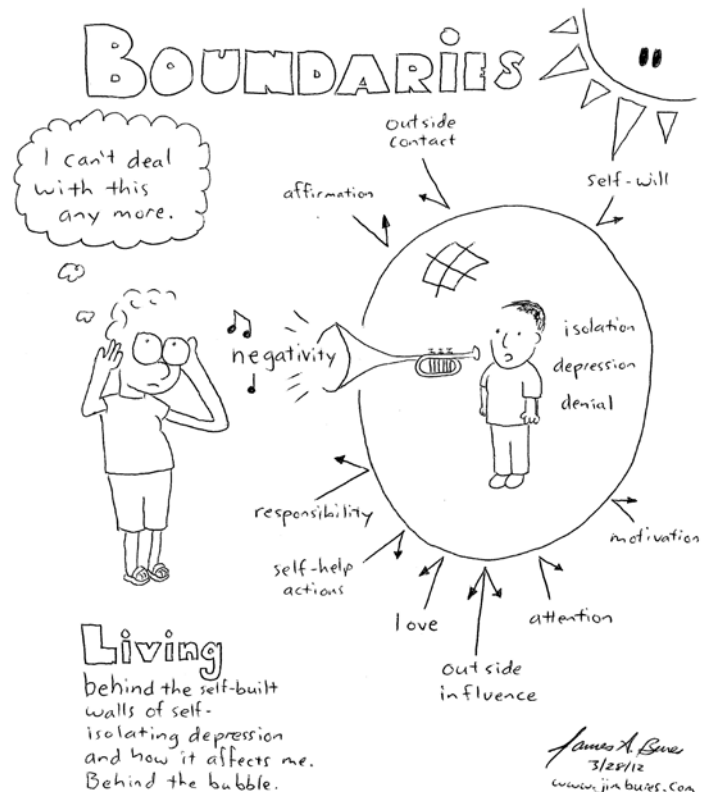
Tea with
Alfreda/Alicia
5pm - 6pm

I have a successful friend from Mt. Calvary named Tom G. One day after listening to the wonderful music at Church, he took me out for a canoe ride on Bear Hill Pond. We paddled to a nearby island and I sang out a hymn as loud as I could. I think everyone on the pond heard me. Tom showed me an app on his cell phone that can identify songs the phone hears on the radio, and it was able to identify "How Great Thou Art" based on our singing it. Tom is my financial adviser and helps me to keep on track with my spending plan. His service to me is amazing because he both counsels me on how to live within my means but is pretty much the single only person encouraging me so closely to keep up with my professional Graphic Design job search. He is a very busy guy, but writes me very detailed emails to keep me on track with my professional goals. I just find his service to me so loving, caring and so valuable. He really helps me through this wicked hard time so much.

To the left is a cartoon I drew for a patient who was so shy he would not even make eye contact with anyone. In over a month at the partial patient program, I was the first person he met.

Your voice is
valuable!

Don't be afraid to talk.



Dear Lord, Thanks for boundaries. Thanks for North Cove Mental Health Community and emotional support: some thing to do during the day and over come depression. Thanks for all the positive financial, healthy and wise choices I've been making lately. Thanks for a closest best friend like The Rambling Man. Thanks for his great new worship song! Thanks for weight loss (2.4lbs this week). Thanks for a job interview this Saturday with Peppercini Hispanic Grill! Thanks for the half price burrito for getting the interview. Thanks for the manager's encouragement to memorize the company products and ingredient health conscious properties. Thanks for encouragement in my life. Thanks for loving me and dying to save me and also provide every thing for me!!

Love, Jim Bures



Dear Lord,
I pray one last time for direct communication as to whether I should name my company, use on my resume and portfolio, the name "All for the Lord". I pray I will meditate on this tonight and listen for Your answer. I have listened for a week and felt encouraged by various things to keep the name, but I also see wisdom in changing the name too. I admit that no matter how much I like the name, and I really do, it will be hard for me to truly operate as "All for the Lord". I pray for Your guidance on the matter and that You would bless me with Your answer.

Thanks, Love, Jim Bures



When expressing boundaries or criticism, focus on "I" Statements, not "You" Statements. I feel... when you... we should... Couch the situation subjectively to disarm or approach it more realistically.

Relationships are manageable. Taking responsibility for yourself while also expressing proper boundaries will give you more control of your relationships. A sense of control empowers you, and helps you make your own destiny.

This is what I learned in group class today.



Jim Bures
4/14/12

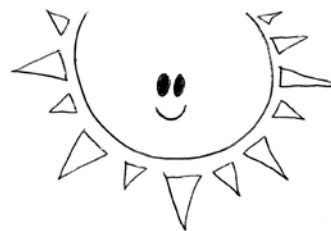
Dear Lord,
There is something to You that I am getting that I've never had before. It somehow goes beyond being self-reliant but does encompass it. I hate to feel alone inside and something tells me that, in You, I need to be satisfied alone. I will always have You to guide me but this new feeling I do not understand. You said he who can be trusted with little can be trusted with much and blessed is he who did not see but still believes. I feel like there is

Some new aspect to this world You are training me on and I've never felt this way before. Instill in me deep knowledge of this subject that I seek. *Love, Jim Bures*

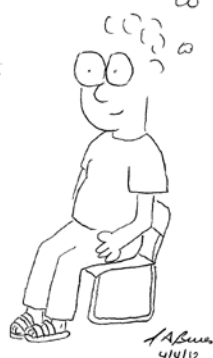


Above are some random prayers I drew while going through the program. As I look back through my cartoons I see so many foolish things I have said and done, and made a spectacle about them by drawing cartoons about them. In this season I am learning some new but hard lessons about being self-reliant as part of being created in God's image, especially with finances.

The past is history,
the future is a mystery,
today is a gift that's
why it is called the Present.



Rock star
wisdom.



Jim Bures
4/14/12

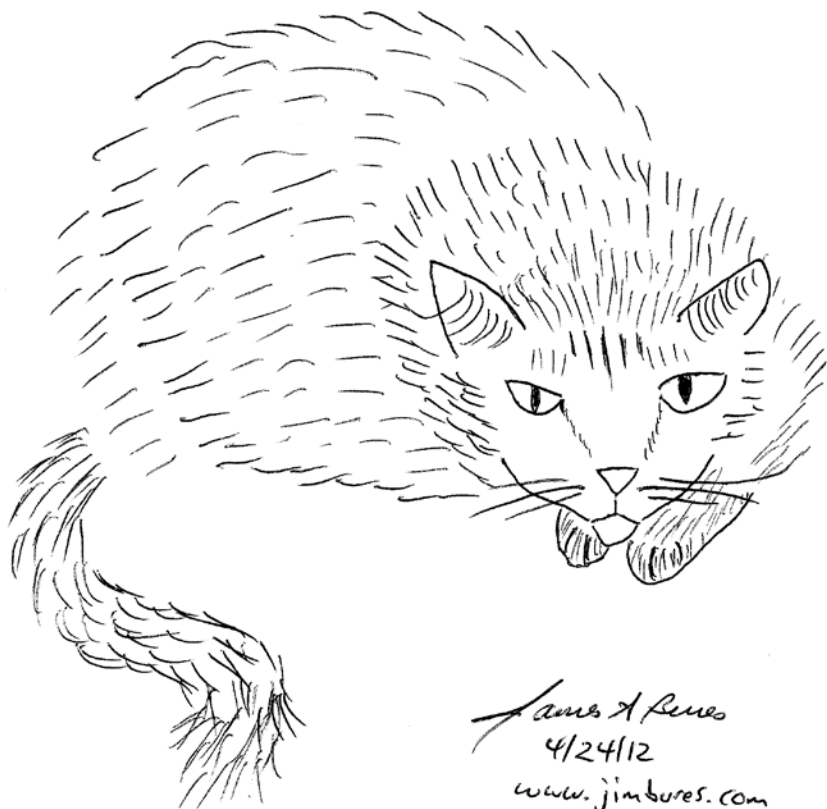
Thank You
for my cat,
Priscilla,
Lord!



I drew a picture of my cat, Priscilla, which was posted on a friend's fridge. My cartoons and art make a difference because they end up all over the place on fridges, cube walls and bulletin boards. I was even published in Mt. Calvary's parishioner written devotional.

I really make a difference in this world but I have such a hard time giving myself credit for it. It is so hard to go through the issues I face. I went from January 6th to May 3rd without a job of any kind. You would not believe the severity of anxiety I experience as a result of things like this.

Anyway, thank you so much for tooning in. I pray you will continue. Please watch out for me. I need your support now more than ever. I pray that God's love is revealed in your life and that God proves Himself to be the continual support you need as we make our ways to Heaven where we will be together with all believers forever and there will be no more problems ever. Keep the faith! Stay tooned. Love, your friend, Jim Bures, 316th regiment.



Jim Bures
4/24/12
www.jimbures.com
"Priscilla"
age 9

The Youngest Etooner



Mariela, age 2