



NAMI Contra Costa

Contra Costa's Voice on Mental Illness *December, 2007*

The NAMI Contra Costa Newsletter is available on the website: www.namicontracosta.org

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING CANCELLED

The regularly scheduled November 29, 2007 Mental Health Commission meeting was canceled. The basis for the cancellation is in sharp dispute.

The co-chairs, Kathi McLaughlin and Karen Sloma, sent an e mail November 20, saying that due to "quorum issues" that the meeting was being canceled. The Commission, which usually has fifteen members was down to only nine members at that time. A tenth member was to be authorized by the Board of Supervisors November 27. That would mean that ten of the fifteen chairs would be active on November 29.

NAMI-CC talked with seven of the members. Each of them said they would be there. That would be the quorum.

When asked how they came to the that conclusion it would be justified and necessary to cancel the scheduled meeting, the co-chairs said in an e mail that "it wasn't necessary to contact everyone to see if they were attending, by counting the confirmed non-attendees and including the probable non-attendee, it was clear that

GENERAL MEETING

ANNUAL REPORT

The December 20 General Meeting will be a panel of people that know the mental health system from the inside.

The panel will deal with many themes and subjects. One of the most important will be why the information that shows the serious problems in the system does not move up the chain of command so that the Supervisors, our representatives in the Assembly and the Senate become aware of the extent of the ongoing problems.

The program has been carefully organized to leave ample time for questions from the families. You can be assured they will be heard by the Mental Health Administration, the union and the staff. You can also e mail questions in advance:

xnamicc@aol.com

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General Meeting

DECEMBER

Thursday

December 20, 2007

7:00pm

Speakers

THE ANNUAL REPORT

This will be a panel of those who know Contra Costa's mental health system best.

A hard-hitting, candid, honest dialog between the Mental Health Administration, the union and the families.

- John Gragnani, President, Local #1
- Teresa Pasquini, Mental Health Commission
- Susan Tavano, Mental Health Division Chief of Clinical Operations
- Connie Steers, Patient's Rights Advocate
- David Kahler, NAMI Contra Costa

Make your voice heard!

John Muir Medical Center
Concord Campus

(Note: Formerly Mt. Diablo Medical Center)

www.namicontracosta.org
E mail : xnamicc@aol.com

2540 East Street, Concord
925-682 8200

FREE CLASSES

For information on free classes on mental illness (Family to Family) contact:

Marie Overby
xnamicc@aol.com

NAMI-CC Care and Support Groups

Central Contra Costa County

1st Tuesday of each month, 7:30-9:00 pm Hillcrest Congregational Church, 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Contact Peggy Luna, Dave Kahler, or Willie Mack 925- 676-5771 or e mail: xnamicc@aol.com

3rd Monday of each month, 7:15-9:15 pm, John Muir Hospital, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek Campus, Downstairs in the Stern Conference Room. The group is facilitated by Dr. Mary Olwin and Gloria Hill. The Consumer Group will not be meeting.
Call: Gloria Hill 925- 957-5146.

East Alameda County

4th Monday of each month, 7:00-8:30 pm., St. Claire's Episcopal Church, 3350 Hopyard Road. Pleasanton.

Contact: Russell or Donna White E mail: russdonnawhite@comcast.net 925-455 6901

BIPOLAR CHILL (CLIENT RUN)

Manic Depression Support Group
Wednesday 7:00—8:30 pm
710 Broadway #3G Walnut Creek
Contact Lisa or Scott 925-743 1160

TRI-VALLEY BIPOLAR (Consumer Run)

Bipolar and Depression Support Group
Wednesdays, 7:15 pm to 8:45 pm
St. Claire's Episcopal Church, Pleasanton
Contact: Bob Hogan: 925-462 5481

SELF-INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

(Consumer Run)

For self-injury sufferers to talk about ways to change these behaviors and resolve feelings brought on by trauma.

Call: Veronica 925-945 7871

NEW HOPE

BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUP

For parents of children and adolescents diagnosed with a mood disorder.

Two Meeting Locations:

Lafayette:

2nd Monday of each month

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church Room #4

Contact: Annette 510-733 0577 or

Joani 925-962 9952

Concord:

Last Monday of each month— 7—8:30 pm

Dr. Philip Shains' Offices-2630 Salvio St. Concord

Contact: Leslie 925— 518 6684

www.newhopesupportgroup.com

NAPA STATE HOSPITAL FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP (NSHFSG)

Meets the 2nd Saturday of each month

Where: Hospital's Volunteer Conference Room

For Information: Bill Schrader 707-433 9250

ALANON SUPPORT GROUP

For those supporting one who is dually diagnosed

Wednesdays 7:30 to 9:00 pm

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church

433 Moraga Way, Orinda

Contact: Kay 925-933 4012

FAMILY ADVOCATE HOURS

Gloria Hill, Contra Costa County Mental Health Advocate

Monday - Friday 9:30 am - 6:00 pm

925-957 5146

NAMI-Contra Costa
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

OFFICERS:

Art Honegger

President

925- 754 7216

Fax: 925- 754 6899

SKIIDER@aol.com

Caroline Jackson,

1st Vice President

925- 687 7052

Caroline.jackson@juno.com

Kay Derrico *2nd Vice President*

925-933 4012

vder123@aol.com

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925-229 3883

j_schoepke@yahoo.com

David Kahler *Treasurer*

925- 676 5771

Fax: 925-476 1444

dk122932@aol.com

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Marilyn Capener

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Peggy Luna Dave Kahler Dick Owens
Dick Hunter Sean Kleen

**PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN**

BY ART HONEGGER

Wow – my last month in this office. It has passed unbelievably fast, and has been a very enriching and rewarding experience. I have had help in abundance from all quarters of NAMI CC.

At the pinnacle of the list is Dave Kahler – more about Dave below.

Many folks have gone the extra mile in service to NAMI CC: Coralie Reed, for tackling the by-laws update and the nomination committee, in addition to her Membership Chair duties; Caroline Jackson for her contributions to the residents at Crestwood; Herb Putnam, for his Clubhouse support and successes, and a most generous contribution to the Clubhouse from him and Bev; Chet Watson for his guidance of the In Our Own Voice program, and of course the Bay Area NAMI Walk; Doris Watson for managing the phone answering crew and supervising the Family to Family program; Lisa Bruce and Lisa Honegger for facilitating three Peer to Peer course series; Veronica Vale for shepherding In Our Own Voice and NARSAD; Sean Kleen for a fantastic job on our web site; Connie Steers for acting as liaison to the Board for consumers in special need; Gloria Hill who was 2nd vice President and in charge of programs for this organization and has been the Family Advocate for the county where she has helped a great many families through the years and Kay Derrico for arranging such terrific programs.

Now about Dave (a life-

time member). His contributions, time and energy to NAMI CC activities are beyond comprehension. He serves as treasurer, newsletter publisher, and until recently, as Program Chair. He represents NAMI CC on the County Mental Health Commission and on the Mental Health Coalition. Dave has taught the Family to Family program several times; He arranged the rental of passenger vans to take participants to the NAMI Walks, and engineered a trip for a group from our county to visit the mental health court in the South Bay.

He organized a luncheon including 15 of the key people in the county that led to the successful launching of the new Behavioral Health Court. He set up the rooms for the board meetings and the monthly meetings, including Power Point programs, and closed up after the meetings.

Dave presented a training program about creating effective newsletters to Bay Area presidents and other representatives, and did the same at the State NAMI Convention. And this represents *maybe* 60% of all he does for NAMI CC. Dave, I salute you!

Best wishes to all for the holidays and for a healthy and prosperous New Year. Thank you for allowing me the great privilege

NAMI Contra Costa
P.O. Box 21247
Concord, California
94521

E mail: xnamicc@aol.com

Websites:

www.namicontracosta.org
www.nami.org.
www.namicalifornia.org

**POST TRAUMATIC
STRESS DISORDER
GAINS PUBLIC
NOTICE**

By Kay Derrico

With a high number of Vets returning with mental health issues, especially post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the public has become alarmed and ready to learn about PTSD. NAMI California reports that of 100,000 Vets seeking services for mental health disorders, 52,000 alone need help for PTSD.

The Mayo Clinic states that “signs and symptoms of PTSD typically begin within three months of a traumatic event.” Symptoms may include: “flashbacks reliving the traumatic event, upsetting dreams about the event, feeling emotionally numb, trouble sleeping, being easily startled or frightened, hearing and seeing things that are not there. These symptoms may come and go.

Like other mental illnesses, Mayo says, PTSD is a complex mix that includes “biology and genetics, life experiences, temperament, and changes in the natural chemicals in your brain.”

Screening and diagnosis, treatment and coping skills are of primary importance. To help with this, NAMI-CC will be contributing its small part by stepping forward with public education during the January General Meeting. Dr. Robyn Walser will be spending that evening discussing PTSD and a therapy termed “Acceptance & Commitment Therapy.”

NAMI-CC
E mail address:
xnamicc@aol.com

**HELP WANTED
CLUBHOUSE HAS
AN OPENING**

The Contra Costa Clubhouse is seeking a staff generalist for the new Clubhouse program in central Contra Costa County. The program will provide support, rehabilitation, and opportunities for members (adults with a persistent mental illness).

A staff generalist works in partnership with the Executive Director and members, helping members help themselves by running the Clubhouse and through participation in vocational programs.

The ideal candidate is a responsible, well-organized, outgoing, caring person who enjoys working with adults with mental illness and who can quickly establish productive relationships with members.

A kind heart and a ready sense of humor are a plus. Required skills and qualifications include a minimum of an Associate’s degree (AA), one year working with adults with mental illness, computer proficiency, valid California driver’s license, and a two year commitment.

This full-time position begins January, 2008. The starting salary will be \$33,000-38,000 annually, depending on qualifications and experience. Three weeks of out-of-town paid training will be required after hire. More information at www.ccclubhouse.org. Please send resume and cover letter by December 15 to:

Yvonne Nair, Executive Director
The Contra Costa Clubhouses, Inc.
550 Patterson Blvd
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
yvonnenair@comcast.net

**Clubhouse
Report**

**Save the Date: January 28!
RIBBON CUTTING
OPEN HOUSE**

Contra Costa Clubhouses, Inc., marks the opening of its first Clubhouse with a Ribbon-Cutting and an Open House on Monday, January 28, 4:00 – 6:30 p.m.

You are cordially invited to join Charter Members, Friends of the Clubhouse, Board Members, and Staff in celebrating the new Clubhouse at 550 Patterson Boulevard in Pleasant Hill.

People living with mental illness deserve a safe and respectable place to regain their self esteem and get their lives back on track. The Contra Costa Clubhouse provides this place!

Contra Costa residents with mental illness are eligible to become members of the Clubhouse. Through the Clubhouse, they can improve their social and job skills and gain access to local employment. The Clubhouse can help them re-integrate and participate productively in communities throughout the county. Participation is voluntary and membership is long-term at no cost to the Members.

Please note: Scrumptious snacks and beverages will be provided. See you at the Clubhouse!

RSVP: Yvonne Nair, Executive Director, Contra Costa Clubhouses, Inc., 550 Patterson Blvd., Pleasant Hill, CA 94523, tel. 925.627.4216,
yvonnenair@comcast.net.

“Our Clubhouse builds strong foundations for life beyond mental illness.”

NAMI CONTRA COSTA ELECTS 2008 BOARD

The NAMI-CC membership elected the Board of Directors and officers for 2008 at the November 15, General Meeting.

President:	Al Farmer
First Vice President:	Art Honegger
Second Vice President:	Kay Derrico
Secretary:	Bonnie Leys
Treasurer:	David Kahler

Board Members

Floyd Overby	Marilyn Capener
Teresa Pasquini	Joanne DeVires
Coralie Reed	Gene Schulting
Barbara Scott	Lisa Hillier

“YOU CAN SALT THE OATS”

Jeff Bell, the afternoon anchor on KCBS San Francisco, was the featured speaker at the November 15 General Meeting.

He proved to be a charismatic and knowledgeable speaker. Knowledgeable to the extent that he has written a fast selling book on the subject of OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder) A disorder he has had for many years.

In his efforts to manage the disorder he worked with Jacqueline Persons who was the speaker at the May 17, General Meeting.

Jeff made the point that “you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink . . . But you can salt the oats.” An alternative approach may work better than a head on collision.

SUICIDE CONFERENCE SCHEDULED

Marsha M. Linehan, Ph.D will present an all-day seminar for clinicians and those who work with at-risk youth. The training is on Suicide in Adolescents/Young Adults on June 2, 2008, and will be held in Pleasant Hill.

Dr. Linehan is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Washington and Director of the Behavioral Research and Therapy Clinics. Her primary research looks at behavioral models effective in treating suicidal behaviors, drug abuse, and borderline personality disorder. More information will be available as the date approaches

E mail: xnamicc@aol.com

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING CANCELLED

(Continued from page 1, column 1)

we would probably not have a quorum.”

The Commission members NAMI-CC talked with said they were outraged that the meeting was canceled without good and substantial reasons. They pointed out that it would require calling only eleven people and confirming their attendance or non-attendance. NAMI-CC did that and found that the required seven members said they would be there.

There was some concern that vote on certain issues would have to be made up of a block of votes that would be greater in number than 50% of the number of active chairs. That, in itself, would not be a problem. If the vote failed to have more than 50% of the members voting for it, it would not pass. That, of course, should be decided by the members voting, not by the guesswork of the co-chairs.

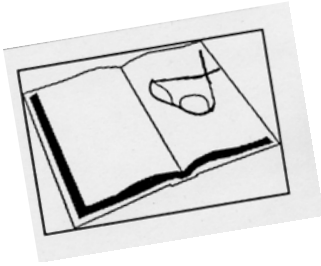
INFORMATION ABOUT MEDS?

Get reliable information from Steven Protzel, a NAMI-CC friend and supporter of the mental health community. Send your questions to:

steven.protzel@safeway.com.

Remember to always check with your doctor about any medication changes.

BOOK REVIEW



Bipolar Children, Cutting-Edge Controversy, Insights and Research, Edited by Sharna Olfman, Praeger Publishers, 164 pages, Published 2007, \$39.95. Available from the NAMI-CC library. (You must be a NAMI-CC member)

You really ought to take lessons in how to dump bath water before you read this important book. Otherwise you might find the skeletal remains of several babies in your back yard.

The layman's interpretation of that comment would be that you are tempted to reject the use of all medications based on some of the bizarre incidents in *Bipolar Children*.

That would be a huge and unnecessary mistake.

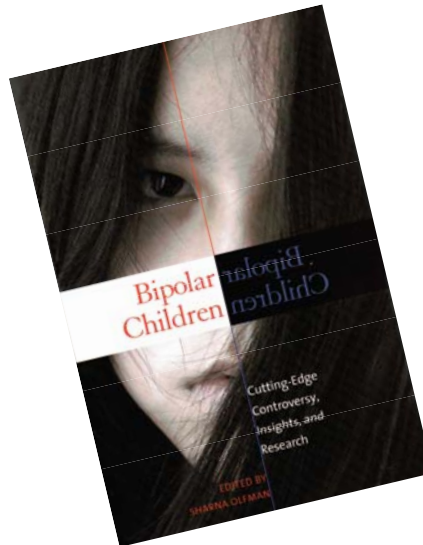
The book shows there has been a fourfold increase in the number of children receiving the bipolar diagnosis. "Whereas ADHD, with its attendant stimulant prescriptions, was the "darling" of child psychiatry in the 1980's, pediatric depression became the 'diagnosis du jour' in the 1990's"

The book was edited by Sharna Olfman and is made up of articles by nine other authors. One of them Lawrence Diller, a Walnut Creek psychiatrist. Diller's book, *Running On Ritalin*, was reviewed in this column in the

the January, 2005 newsletter. You can access it on the NAMI-C website: www.namicontracosta.org.

Bipolar Children attacks the concept of polypharmacy, "In light of the consequences for millions of children affected by irresponsible polypharmacy, these conflicts of interest are more than just misguided-they are completely immoral and should be made illegal."

The reference is to "questionable diagnostic and prescribing practices, fueled in large part by unethical partnerships between the medical profession and



the pharmaceutical industry."

The book makes a strong statement about the many children who have been *labeled* with the bipolar diagnosis. "in the vast majority of cases, they are not suffering from BD."

"According to social constructivism, psychiatric labels are not neutral scientific terms that accurately describe an objectively existing disturbance. The disturbance itself is a social construction. By this account, diagnoses often become self-fulfilling prophecies, actively shaping in adverse ways the life and destiny of those so labeled."

Quotations from **Bipolar Children**

- "Many psychiatrists simply lack the time, training, or practical incentives to complete a thorough psychosocial valuation of each child and family or to provide psychotherapy or family therapy, if these are called for. If psychiatrists are courageous and conscientious enough to go this route, they may court the disapproval and ostracism of their colleagues and forfeit the substantial financial perks that come with prescribing drugs in a routine and injudicious manner."
- The book takes on Demetri Papolos who said "he couldn't recall a child referred to him over the past seven years who didn't have bipolar disorder."
- The AACAP recommendation reads in upper case letters "THE DIAGNOSTIC VALIDITY OF BIPOLAR DISORDER IN YOUNG CHILDREN HAS YET TO BE ESTABLISHED. CAUTION MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE APPLYING THIS DIAGNOSIS IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN."
- "There was a time in the profession of child psychiatry when doctors insisted on hours of evaluation before making a diagnosis or prescribing a medication. Today many of my colleagues in psychiatry make an initial assessment of a child and write a prescription in less than twenty minutes."
- About the DSM-IV "Within 150 years American psychiatry has either discovered or in some sense, manufactured almost 400 categories of mental disorder."

**LETTERS TO THE
EDITOR**

Dear NAMI,

These last three weeks have been quite challenging for my family. We have been living in a crisis mode each and every day. My adult brother, who was diagnosed with schizo-effective disorder several years ago, disappeared for two weeks. He had never done anything like that before, and needless to say, we were all extremely concerned and worried. We had no idea where he was, and since he wasn't returning any of our phone calls, which is unlike him, we didn't know where to turn for help.

After reporting him as a missing person to the police, we didn't know what else to do. and we were all in desperate need of advice. Fortunately, a counselor from the Portia Bell Hume Center suggested that I contact NAMI. I did so immediately.

I wrote a long e mail taking time to explain our situation and it wasn't long before a NAMI volunteer responded by explaining that I could email or call at any time of the *day or night*. It was this open response that

gave us our first moment of relief. Finally, someone was willing to talk with us as a family. The NAMI volunteer was very gracious and came for a visit, listening intently to our whole story. He was compassionate, empathetic, honest and wise.

His presence was a great gift to me and my family. He explained the NAMI "Survival Guide" and helped us to realize some things we could do to help manage our situation in a better light so that we could feel more productive and not so victimized by my brother's illness.

My brother has since returned to the area, but presently he is still very much gone in his mind. We have been able to see him and talk with him for only one day since his return. All of the other days have left us with little or no communication at all. I have no idea how this will all unfold, but I want to thank NAMI and the NAMI volunteer for the tremendous insight and compassion which has been shown our family, including taking a phone call at midnight.

We are all very grateful for the time your volunteer shared with us and the helpful information that has been passed on. As we continue to journey forward during this very difficult time, please know that your organization and your volunteer have helped greatly to give us strength to carry on and find a way to breathe in this time of crisis. For this, we are very grateful.

Sincerely,

KD
Pleasant Hill

**DECEMBER
DONATIONS**

Donations From

Janice G. Khalil
Mona A. Rusk
Through AT & T
Employee Giving Campaign

Alison R. Buckles
Susan Henderson
Mary J. Torrijos
Through Bank of America
United Way Campaign

Jody S. Kruse
Chevron Employees'
"People Making A Difference Campaign"

DONATION FORM

Make check payable to NAMI-CC
Mail to: Treasurer, NAMI-CC
P.O. Box 21247, Concord, CA. 94521
NAMI-CC Tax ID # 68-0209474

Name

Street Address

City State Zip

Phone: _____

Use Donation For:

- Peer to Peer Program
- NAMI-CC General Fund
- Family to Family
- K.I.D.S. Program
- Housing

COMMENTS
Comments for the newsletter should be sent to:
xnamicc@aol.com
Fax: 925-476 1444 or

P.O. Box 21247
Concord, CA., 94521
All letters are subject to abridgment and those unpublished can be neither acknowledged nor returned.

NAMI Contra Costa
 P.O Box 21247
 Concord, CA
 94521

Renew Your Membership
 A pre-addressed envelope has been enclosed in this issue for your Convenience.

Stamp

First Tuesday Support Group
 E mail your questions to: xnamicc@aol.com
 You will be assured of an answer when the group meets
Where: Hillcrest Church, 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill
When: First Tuesday of each month—November 6, 7:30 pm

NAMI Contra Costa

The annual membership dues are \$40. This makes you a member of NAMI National, NAMI California and NAMI Contra Costa. You are automatically a member of all three organizations.

If you are solicited for membership or special donations from the State or National organizations, give generously if you can, but all such donations are voluntary and would be over and above your membership in NAMI Contra Costa.

Dues paid in October, November and December provide membership for the following year.

Send your membership application to:

NAMI Contra Costa
 P.O. Box 21247
 Concord, California
 94521
 E mail: xnamicc@aol.com
 This Monthly Newsletter is Published by: NAMI Contra Costa
 E mail address: xnamicc@aol.com

Affiliated with NAMI National and NAMI California

APPLICATION FOR NAMI-CC MEMBERSHIP
 Make check payable to NAMI Contra Costa
 Complete this information cut-out and return it to:
 Treasurer, NAMI-CC
 P.O. Box 21247, Concord, CA., 94521
 E Mail Address: xnamicc@aol.com

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Phone _____
 E-mail _____

Membership is: New A Renewal

<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Client	\$ 20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Dual Affiliate	20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> General Membership	40.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Membership	50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Century Club	100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime	500.00