



# NAMI Contra Costa

*Contra Costa's Voice on Mental Illness*      *January, 2008*

The NAMI Contra Costa Newsletter is available on the website: [www.namicontracosta.org](http://www.namicontracosta.org)

## General Meeting

### **JANUARY**

**Thursday**

**January 17, 2008**

7:00pm

#### Speaker

**Dr. Robin Walser**

Psychologist  
Veterans Affairs Administration

#### Topic

**Post Traumatic Stress  
Disorder**

John Muir Medical Center  
Concord Campus  
(Note: Formerly Mt. Diablo  
Medical Center)

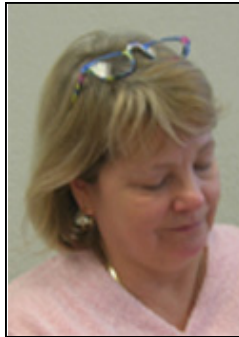
[www.namicontracosta.org](http://www.namicontracosta.org)  
E mail : [xnamicc@aol.com](mailto:xnamicc@aol.com)

2540 East Street, Concord  
925-682 8200

## **MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION IN TURMOIL**

By Richard DeAndre

As reported in the December issue of this newsletter, the November meeting of the Mental Health Commission was canceled with the comment that it would be rescheduled sometime in December.



Kathi McLaughlin  
Co-Chair

The meeting finally took place December 11 in Martinez. It was as contentious as many of the commissioners predicted it would be.

Some of the commissioners pressed the co-chairs for the  
(Continued on page 4)

## **CONSERVATORSHIP GUARDIANSHIP PROGRAM**

In recent years, the staff has gone from 24 to 14. In the same time period the caseload has *doubled*. See article on page 5.

## **Clubhouse Report**

# **\$100,000 AWARDED CLUBHOUSE**

Contra Costa Clubhouse, Inc. has been awarded a grant of \$100,000 from the John Muir Community Health Alliance.

Herb Putnam, founder of the Contra Costa Clubhouse made the announcement at the December 20, NAMI General Meeting.

There will a ribbon cutting ceremony at their temporary quarters at the Crestwood Healing Center in Pleasant Hill on Monday, January 28, 2008, 4:00 to 6:30 pm

## **January Meeting POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER DR. ROBIN WALSER**

“Acceptance & Commitment Therapy” will be emphasized in Dr. Walser’s talk on PTSD. Her expertise in this area is broad and is reflected in her responsibilities as a Palo Alto Veterans Affairs psychologist that includes

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# 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](http://www.newhopesupportgroup.com)

### **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

### **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](mailto:steven.protzel@safeway.com).

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

### **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:**

- Al Farmer, President**  
925- 254 8508  
Fax: 925- 254 5043  
farmerfamily@yahoo.com
- Art Honegger, 1st Vice President**  
925- 754 7216  
SKIIDER@aol.com
- Kay Derrico 2nd Vice President**  
925-933 4012  
kayderrico@comcast.net.
- Bonnie Leys, Secretary**  
925-757 6987
- David Kahler Treasurer**  
925- 676 5771  
Fax: 925-476 1444  
dk122932@aol.com

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- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Marie Overby</b>   | Family to Family   |
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| <b>Craig Fletcher</b> | Data Input         |
| <b>Annette Seelig</b> | New Hope           |
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| <b>Connie Steers</b>  | Consumer Relations |
| <b>Julia Bonicich</b> | K.I.D.S.           |
| <b>Bill Schrader</b>  | Napa Support Group |

**Newsletter Group**

- Bob Newell Caroline Jackson  
Rich and Yvonne DeAndre Fran Martin  
Peggy Luna Dave Kahler Dick Owens  
Dick Hunter Sean Kleen

**PRESIDENT'S  
COLUMN**

By Al Farmer

I am honored to be your new president and look forward to the challenges ahead.

NAMI's Family to Family Class was enormously helpful to my wife Sue and me when we were struggling with our mentally ill son. Thus we look forward to giving back to an organization that served us so well.

I see opportunities to spread the word about Nami throughout the county and I am optimistic that this can be accomplished if we all work together. More families, therapists and businesses should be aware of the critical role NAMI plays in helping families with a mentally ill member.

I would like to welcome our new board members. I look forward to working with you along with our existing board. We are indeed fortunate to have such a strong, dedicated and experienced group of officers and board members.

I have been consistently amazed at the quality of programs that Kay Derrico organizes. If you have not been attending our general meetings, you have been missing an opportunity to grow in your understanding of mental health.

You have seen considerable coverage in the newsletter about the Mental Health commission, with good reason. It is an important component in the mental health system in this county. There are currently four openings, three in District 5 and one in District 3. NAMI-CC has always been well represented on the Commission. It is important that the voice of the 350 NAMI-CC families be heard and the Commission

**Upcoming Lectures  
for NAMI-CC  
Meetings**

Th., Jan. 17, 2008, **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: Acceptance & Commitment Therapy**, Dr. Robyn Walser, Veterans Affairs, Palo Alto

Th., Feb. 21, 2008, **After Suicide: How to Survive the Nightmare**, Susan Moore, MA, FT, Grief Counseling Director, Contra Costa Crisis Center

Th., March 20, **The Mentally Ill and the Criminal Justice System**, Dr. T. Kupers, psychiatrist, Author, *Prison Madness* (See page 6)

Information: (925) 933-4012  
Send questions for presenters to kayderrico@comcast.net

is one outlet for that message  
The Commission meets the last Thursday of each month. The meeting is from 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm at the police building on Galindo in Concord.

NAMI'S next meeting will be on Thursday January 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. Get in the habit of saving the third Thursday of each month so that we can all connect and learn together!

See you on January 17th!

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

# MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION IN TURMOIL

(Continued from Page 1, column 1)

reasons the November meeting was canceled.

The co-chairs elaborated on their original explanation which was that there was a problem getting sufficient members to form a quorum. The Commission had dwindled to just ten members.

However, there were seven members that said they would be there. Their names were available to anyone who wanted to take the trouble to ask.

Neither of the co-chairs, Sloma nor McLaughlin would respond to that point. They did explain that one of the co-chairs would be out of town and the other was feeling a medical condition coming on and a third senior member could not be there. With the three absent, there would still be a quorum. There would not be a "good and sufficient reason" under the by-laws or the Brown Act to cancel the meeting. The co-chairs moved on to other topics leaving the argument unresolved.

The point was made that the major issue to be dealt with at the November meeting was the election of the chair for 2008. According to commissioners and several friends of the commission that NAMI talked with, there were sufficient votes to vote in a new chair if the November 29 meeting had not been canceled. The candidate running against McLaughlin and Sloma is long time NAMI member David Kahler.

The co-chairs then, without ever answering the questions about the quorum, moved on to what they described as a

*possible* violation of the Brown Act. The person they felt might have made the violation is the same David Kahler.

There was no discussion of the obvious conflict of interest involved in the two co-chairs making accusations against the person they were competing with in the election.

Two commissioners have said they will ask for an investigation of the proceedings at the next committee meeting in January.

There was no discussion of the conflict of interest . . .

The Brown Act was passed to make certain that the actions of a commission would be open and available to the public. A group (a majority) of commissioners are not to meet away from the regularly scheduled and advertised meetings. The goal is for the public to be aware of the issues and be able to offer input.

The act specifies that not only should the commissioners not meet as a group, a majority must not be in contact with one another by phone, e mail or fax. To do so would be termed a *serial meeting*. It is permissible for one commissioner to contact another and even a second, but not to then contact another and then another on the same issue in an attempt to build a consensus.

The co-chairs stated that Kahler said that he knew that there were seven commissioners that would attend the November 29 meeting. They maintained that *indicated* that seven phone calls would have had to have been made to obtain such information.

Kahler said that was absolutely not the case. The information came from other sources

outside the commission and at the previous Commission meeting. There are people that have interests in the mental health field and follow the proceedings of the commission closely. Their conversations are not covered by the act in any way.

The spirit and the letter of the Brown Act is transparency and openness. The proceedings and issues of the Commission are intended to be known in detail by the public. So for the friends of the Commission to know the views and intentions of some of the commissioners is a normal and accepted part of the operation.

A member of one of the other commissions NAMI talked with said he was shocked that the leadership of a commission would pursue such an accusation based on suppositions and conjecture. The positions on the Commission are filled by unpaid volunteers. Sometimes it is very difficult to get qualified people to take the responsibility. He commented, "What a failure of leadership."

A member of another commission said that she could not recall infighting between members of a commission rising to the level of being forwarded to the County Council. "This is an incredible misuse of that resource."

Editor's Note: *NAMI representation is very important in the Contra Costa mental health field. Please contact the Mental Health Commission( 925- 957 5149) and the Board of Supervisors who are the appointing body of that Com-*



## Ednah Friedman Reports PUBLIC GUARDENSHIP CONSERVATORSHIP DISASTROUSLY UNDERSTAFFED

After more than three decades, Ednah Beth Friedman has retired from the Mental Health Division.

She appeared before the Mental Health Commission December 11, 2007. Her message was grave. She stated that, "I have for several years regularly communicated verbally and in writing to the Mental Health Administration and occasionally to Dr. Walker that the Conservatorship Program is dangerously understaffed and vital management positions have been eliminated and duties collapsed into remaining positions.

"There seems to be a crippling paralysis within the Division/Department/County Administration and a fundamental lack of imagination when it comes to understanding what it truly takes to keep the Program operational."

"In fiscal year 1996/97 the average monthly case count was 429; in fiscal year 2006/07 the average monthly case count was 765. (78% increase)

In 1991 the Program had twenty-four employees, today there are fourteen employees." (A decrease of 42%)

"The subsequent unrelied work load on the remaining deputy staff, accounting staff, clerical staff and management staff has resulted in an on-going crisis in the Conservatorship Program."

Friedmen handed out a six page written report to the Commission after her verbal report.

The conservatorship program is an absolutely critical component in the mental health field. It is imperative that this crisis be responded to. Inform your Supervisor about how you feel!

## COMMENTS ON FRIEDMAN'S MESSAGE

**Editor's Note:** *The following comments on Ednah Friedman's presentation to the Mental Health Commission are from two persons in the field that asked not to be identified.*

Ednah is very exact. What is hard is that all the personnel working in the field are in similar positions regarding complaints regarding resources and attention to the problems.

East and Central case loads have more than doubled in the last six years, coincident with large cuts to the budget that have not been offset by Prop 63. All of the programs are inadequately resourced to fulfill their mission.

**The case loads have more than doubled . . . With large cuts to the budget.**

Ednah's situation is peculiar due to the legal context and the financial scrutiny her Payee program has to endure. There is no question that she has been short staffed for a long time and that the decisions about reorganization have made matters much more complicated.

The impact of the disorder is felt directly in the other programs as the money management interface and the other aspects of conservatorship are felt throughout the system.

Ednah was probably the most dedicated and conscientious manager that we have known and it is more than painful to see her leave when she does not feel her program is squared away. It is embarrassing for many people that she was so upset.

## Mental Health Services **SUPERVISOR BONILLA SPEAKS OUT**

Editor's Note: The following was taken from the Supervisor's newsletter.

Since I took office in January, I have become aware of a need to improve communication between management, line staff, the Mental Health Commission, the employees' union, mental health consumers, local law enforcement agencies and the public on decisions and the direction the delivery of mental health services in headed in our county.

At my request, the Board of Supervisors is scheduling further updates on mental health care delivery. We are instituting regular reporting on mental health and hospital issues from the Health Services Director to the Board

**Renew Your Membership**  
**NAMI-CC**  
**MEMBERSHIP UP**

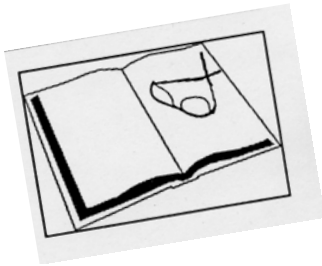
An envelope has been inserted in this newsletter to make it easy to send in your 2008 dues.

There are a great many people that depend on NAMI for your support, education and guidance.

To have your name on the NAMI membership list adds strength to the lobbying efforts to reform the 40 year old LPS laws.

In times of unexpected crisis, NAMI becomes an absolute imperative. Please renew now.

**BOOK REVIEW**

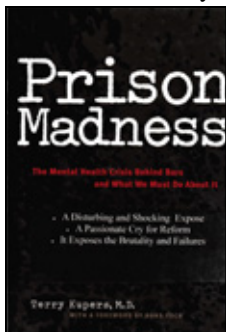


Editor's Note: *Terry Kupers, the author of Prison Madness will be the speaker at the March 20, 2008, General Meeting.*

*Prison Madness*, By Terry Kupers, published by Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1999, 301 pages, \$25.00

Our correctional facilities have become inadequate and ill prepared psychiatric wards– the largest purveyors of mental health services in the United States today.

This country's correctional system houses well over a quarter of a million men and women who require mental health treatment.



Kupers is an expert in the field of forensic psychiatry. In *Prison Madness* he offers a prescription for immediate prison reform. It is a call for action.

The imprisoned mentally ill pose a major hazard, not only to the prison population and their caretakers, but once released, these brutalized and broken individuals constitute a real and documented threat to our communities.

There will be ample time for questions during Mr. Kupers lecture. To ask questions in advance: xnamicc@aol.com

Mental Health Commission

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Editor's Note: *One of the most contentious issues among the Mental Health commissioners has been that the Commission has had very little impact on the field it is charged with overseeing. Each year a list of the accomplishments is published as shown below.*

Accomplishments for 2007

- Endorsed the 2007 National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Walk
- Presented a Certificate of Recognition to John Hollender of the Mental Health Vocation Services, for the supportive employment staff having the highest placement rate in California, and to Assembly member Mark DeSaulnier, thanking him for his efforts on behalf of AB1494
- Submitted to the BOS (Board of Supervisors) requests to proclaim “May as Mental Health Month,” and October 7-13 “Mental Illness Week.”
- Supported AB1494, which would enable Chris Adams Center for Girls to become a licensed group home and SB849, the California Health Insurance Act
- Opposed having Contra Costa Family Court cases handled by Santa Clara County legal aid
- Appealed to Gov. Schwarzenegger to reinstate the MIOCR funds and to the Department of Mental Health to return 75% monies up front for EPSDT funding
- Presented the 5th Annual Mental Health Commission Awards
- Requested that the Employment and Human Services Department find a way to maintain Rose Manning Shelter beds and requested that the BOS rescind their decision to cancel positions at the Crisis Stabilization Unit

Accomplishments for 2006

- Presented the 4th Annual Mental Health Commission Awards to Liz Callahan of Contractor's Alliance, Kathi McLaughlin, MHC Children's Committee Chair, Public defender Jack Funk and District Attorney, Brian Baker, Dr. Nancy Ebbert, Independent Living Resources, Contra Costa County Children's Mental Health Services, Contra Costa Public Health Homeless Program, Lafayette Branch of the Alzheimer's Association. The Spirit of Caring Award was presented to MHC Executive Assistant Karen Schuler.
- Forwarded to the BOS a Proclamation declaring the Month of May, 2006 be declared “Mental Health Awareness Month”
- Forwarded to the BOS to issue a Proclamation declaring the Week of October 1-7 be declared “Mental Illness Awareness Week

(Continued on page 7, column 1)

- Members of the MHC participated as active members on the California Mental Health Planning Council, the California Association of Local Mental Health Boards/Commissions, and the Contra Costa County Mental Health Coalition
- Revised the by-laws to bring them into compliance with the Brown Act and to reflect other procedural changes.

Comment

The above list of accomplishments for the years 2007 and 2006 constitute the essence of the disension on the Mental Health Commission.

NAMI talked with several of the commissioners and they each said that for the expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars and the hundreds of hours of work, the commissioners perform, the accomplishments should be meaningful and of much greater significance.

Family To Family

**FREE CLASSES  
ON MENTAL  
ILLNESS**

This will be the ninth year that NAMI-CC has presented the 12 week class on mental illness and how to best manage the problems it brings.

The course is 2 1/2 hours, one night a week for twelve weeks. Over 1500 have been graduated from these classes.

There is a class scheduled in Antioch which will begin January 28 at 7:00pm.

The Dublin class will begin on Wednesday, February 20, at 6:30 pm. Call Marie Overby: 925- 284 5240 or mfoverby@yahoo.com

**JANUARY DONATIONS**

**DONATION**

Sandra Duncan  
%PG & E Corporation  
Campaign for the Community

**DONATION**

A Very Generous Donation from  
*Lifetime Members*

Richard and Yvonne DeAndre

**DONATION**

Jeremy and Gwen Webster

**DONATION**

Robert Christmas

**January Meeting**

**POST TRAUMATIC  
STRESS DISORDER**

(Continued from page 1)

disseminating treatment interventions across all Veterans Affairs locations; her national and international workshop presentations; the coauthoring of a book on PTSD for professional use; her ongoing research; and her work as a private therapist and consultant.

Dr. Walser's E mail is:  
robyn.walser@comcast.net.

***Research, UC, Berkeley, Research Participants Needed***

**Who:** Ages 11-17, bipolar disorder or ADHD/combined with bipolar

**What:** Non-invasive sleep monitoring

**Contact:** Ben Mullin (510) 643-0373 or bmullin@berkeley.edu

**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

NAMI Contra Costa  
 P.O. Box 21247  
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 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—February 5, 2008, 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

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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