



NAMI Contra Costa

National Alliance On Mental Illness

Contra Costa's Voice on Mental Illness June, 2008

The NAMI Contra Costa Newsletter is available on the website: www.namicontracosta.org
E mail: xnamicc@aol.com

HOSPITAL COMMITTEE ADDRESSES QUESTIONS

A new forum has been organized to make information about the psychiatric services at the Regional Medical Center easily available. It meets the second Monday of each month (July 9) at 2500 Alhambra Avenue, 4E.

The meeting's facilitator is Miles Kramer, Director of Psychiatry and Detention Health.

NAMI is calling it the Hospital Committee and it will be following the daily operations and the future developments, such as the construction of a new facility to house psychiatric services that would not be part of the hospital.

(Continued on Page 5)

FREE CLASSES

Family to Family classes on mental illness begin soon in Pleasant Hill.

Contact: Marie Overby
xnamicc@aol.com
925- 284 5240

Mental Health Commission

LEADERSHIP RESIGNS

The leadership of the Mental Health Commission resigned at the May 22 Commission meeting. The two current co-chairs along with the co-chairs from 2007 (Kathi McLaughlin, Karen Sloma, Judy McCahon and Scott Singley) resigned, using one letter to make the announcement.

The headline in the article (June 5, 2008) in the Contra Costa Times proclaimed "Mental Health Panel In Turmoil."

Five months ago the headline in this newsletter (January, 2008, Still on the website) made the same point. The front page headline read "Mental Health Commission In Turmoil."

The resignations bring the number of commissioners to seven. The mandated number of

(Continued on page 4)

General Meeting

JUNE

Thursday, June 19

7:00 pm

Speaker

Cassandra Kolto

Patient Financial Service Specialist
Supervisor
Mental Health Administration

Topic

Disability Benefits

Cassandra will present the "nuts and bolts" Information, such as filing procedures, interview process, appeal process, and linkages with SSDI, SSI, Medi-Cal, Medicare Drug Plan and much more.

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

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

Toscana's Ristorante

There will be a drawing at the June 19 General Meeting for a FREE dinner and a FREE lunch at Toscana's Ristorante on Todas Santos Square in Concord. You must be present to win.

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 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.

NAMI Tri-Valley

2nd Monday of each Month: 7:15—9:00 pm Livermore Public Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore.

Contact support facilitator Marsha McInnis, marsha@nami-trivalley.org or 925- 980 5331

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

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

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

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

NEW HOPE BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUP

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

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

www.newhopesupportgroup.com

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

H.E.L.P.

Hope, Encouragement, Love and Prayer

Support group for those coping with a mental illness and/or their families and friends.

Time: Last Monday of each month 7:00—9:00 pm

Where: Christ the King Church, Parish Hall

199 Brandon Road, Pleasant Hill

Contact Joe or Pam Appel 925-947 0269

Richmond Support Group

Richmond Health Center 100 38th St. Room 2400

2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Matthew Luu, LCSW 510- 374 7500

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 on Mental Illness

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E mail: xnamicc@aol.org
Website: namicontracosta.com
Phone: 925- 465 3864

Newsletter Deadline: 20th of Each Month

**PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN**

By Al Farmer

We are very pleased to announce that Dr. Mujahidun Sun-chai will be giving the very first Family to Family Program in West Contra Costa County beginning in early September of 2008. Dr. Sun-chai is a professor at Laney College and a counselor at Bissel House for the Rubicon Program. Thank you very much, Dr. Sun-chai. NAMI appreciates your significant contribution to West County and to the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP).

NAMI would also like to express our very sincere thanks to Phillip Lolonis for organizing a wine tasting fundraiser at Massimo Restaurant in Walnut Creek on May 22, 2008. All of the proceeds from this delightful event will go directly to NAMI. Our hearty thanks to Phillip and to the other wineries participating in this fundraiser for their generous contribution to NAMI.

Another bit of good news. Donna Souza has agreed to become the volunteer Coordinator for NAMI Contra Costa. In addition to being our volunteer coordinator, Donna has agreed to be responsible for the e-script Program which will provide a significant source of funds for NAMI. Thanks, Donna!

Just a few years ago, five of the fifteen members of the Mental Health Commission were also members of NAMI-CC. I am pleased to announce that Art Honegger has been appointed to the Commission, from District V, bringing our representation up to three. The other two are Teresa Pasquini and Dave Kahler. Congratulations Art!

GENERAL MEETINGS

Thursday, July 19, 2008,

Dr. Manasi Rana

Pediatric Bipolar Disorder Symptoms of childhood bipolar disorder and a discussion of the current research.

Thursday, August 21, 2008,

Contra Costa County Behavioral Health Court: Successes & Updates, What to do when your loved one is jailed. Martha Wilson, Ph.D., Forensics Community Liaison; Lt. Mitch LeMay, Contra Costa County Sheriff's Dept.

Thursday, September 20

The Laws and Mental Illness

Carla Jacobs a scholar and advocate for the mentally ill.

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

**NAMI CALIFORNIA
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

"Celebrating Recovery"

August 22 & 23, 2008

San Francisco
Airport Marriott Hotel
1800 Old Bayshore Highway
Burlingame, CA. 94010
620-692 9100

NAMI California
1010 Hurley Way, Suite 195
Sacramento, CA 95825

Mental Health Commission
LEADERSHIP
RESIGNS

(Continued from Page 1, column 2)

commissioners is fifteen. In November, 2007, the number reached a new low of nine. Two of the resigning commissioners explained “I can’t take it any more.” They were referring to what they felt was the lack of leadership and lack of any meaningful or significant accomplishments by the Commission in a mental health system that is in shambles.

The article in the Times said “The resignations highlight a philosophical split on the commission, which is mandated by state law to advise county supervisors about mental health issues.”



Kathi McLaughlin
 Co-chair 2007
 Mental Health
 Commission

That philosophical split was characterized by the leaderships’ style of elaborate bureaucratic and parliamentary rules that frustrated the members who wanted to get the message to the Supervisors that the system is failing the mentally ill. One member described it as “doing nothing, exquisitely.”

The Commission is supposed to operate under the Welfare and Institutions Code. In Section 6404.2 (a) it states that the local mental health board shall (among other things) advise the governing body (Board of Supervisors) . . .

The commission is supposed to be the eyes and ears of the Board of Supervisors in the Mental Health field.

The leadership never put a system in place that would bring

information to the supervisors that they would be unlikely to get from the employees in the system or the media.

The Supervisors have many demands on their attention and the Commission is intended to offer current information about the problems in the mental health system.

The philosophical split was the difference between dealing with the particulars or simply

NOTE: *This is the third paragraph of the letter of resignation, unedited.*

We understood the Commission to be composed of dedicated and enthusiastic individuals who understood the nature of commission work and the guidelines, policies and procedures under which it operated. We also understood that the Boards representative to the Mental Health Commission would be responsive to our concerns and supportive in our efforts to maintain the quality of participation required of members of this Commission. Unfortunately, over the past year and a half, neither of these understandings has been supported.

declaring that the mental health system is and has been in *systemic crisis!*

A reader of the Times over the last two years would come to that conclusion. The articles chronicle the closing of Ward D, the loss of the Chief psychiatrist, the loss of the lead psychiatrist on what was then the Psychiatric Emergency Unit. (He came to the commission with a 22 slide presentation describing the enormity of the problems. The Commission listened and made not even the pretense of getting the information to the supervisors.)

NOTE: *All of the NAMI newsletters going back to 2004 are available on the website:*

www.namicontracosta.org

This newsletter’s February issue, 2008, took page 5 to tell the story of the turmoil in Contra Costa’s mental health system. The front page of the March issue did the same with headlines from the Times.

One of the most contentious issues was the criticism of the list of *accomplishments* which is sent each year to the Supervisors.

In the last three years a sampling would include:

- Presented various certificates of Recognitions to people working in the field.
- Submitted to the BOS requests to proclaim “May is Mental Health” month.
- Presented the 5th Annual Mental Health commission awards.
- Forwarded a proclamation to the Supervisors.
- Revised the Bylaws.

The Commission could be a mighty voice to improve the systemic problems in the field. *It could and must be* a bully pulpit.

HOSPITAL COMMITTEE

(Continued from page 1)

Kramer said his goals for the forum were to increase community dialogue, increase involvement with the Hospital Administration and the Psychiatry Leadership Team.

Some of the many questions dealt with were:

- What is the status of Ward D? *It is slated for conversion to Medical, Surgical, services.*
- Would it be possible to get a waiver to operate under title 9 instead of title 22? *Answer: No!*
- If the new facility is built, will the current mental health services be continued until the new operation was running? *Yes, the emergency and acute inpatient services are mandatory and no matter what, the county would make arrangements to provide them.*
- Is contracting out services simply a way to terminate the relationship with the union employees. *You have to ask the Supervisors that!*

HEATHER QUISENBERRY LED A TEAM OF 34 AT THE NAMI WALK 2008

Heather Quisenberry put together a Walk team of 34, one of the largest at this year's walk. They donned special yellow T shirts with the name of the Team emblazoned on the front "If My Heart Were A Place."

After the Walk, they gathered at the NAMI Contra Costa picnic area for refreshments and picture taking.

Heather tells us that seven of the team members were recruited from her place of employment, Chevron in Richmond.

Five of the members (34%) have lost their loved one to suicide. That would be comparable to the national average of suicide in the mental health community.



Some of those at the Hospital Committee May Meeting
 From the left: Miles Kramer, Director of Psychiatry, Al Farmer, President NAMI-CC,
 Teresa Pasquini, NAMI Board member and Dr. Floyd Overby, NAMI Board member

17th Annual Summer Picnic

Friday, June 20

11:00 am to
 2:00 pm

Free!

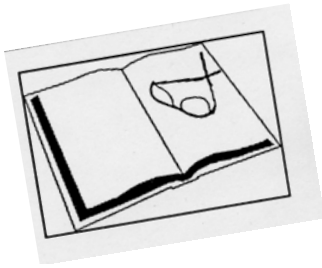
- Hot Dogs
- Hamburgers
- Bar B Q chicken

And All the Trimmings!

*Where: Pleasant Hill Park
 147 Gregory Lane*

For the 17th year, MHCC, Crestwood, Anka and NAMI Contra Costa are coming together for a summer celebration. The event is always attended by over 200 consumers and family members. All the food, beverages and games are entirely FREE!.

BOOK REVIEW



Comfortably Numb, How Psychiatry is Medicating A Nation, by Charles Barber, Pantheon Books, Published 2008, 280 pages, \$30.00.

Since the introduction of the first psychiatric medications in the mid 1950's the public has become much more sophisticated. Unfortunately they have a long way to go.

In 2006, 227 million anti-depressant prescriptions were consumed in the United States. That makes it the largest category of medication prescribed. This county alone used 66 percent of the all antidepressants sold around the world.

The book describes the pressure Americans are under to medicate themselves. This is the age of "fast temporary relief."

He makes the point that without an industry to promote them, non-pharmaceutical approaches that could have the potential to be of great help, are neglected.



Comfortably Numb, discusses some of the problems:

- The recent direct-to-consumer advertising
- Fewer non-drug therapeutic options
- The promise of the quick fix
- The blurring of the distinction between mental illness and everyday problems.
- In the 1970's and 1980's, the profitability of the Fortune 500 drug companies was double the median for all industries (pg. 30) That is certainly not a reason not to take medications but it is a fact that should part of the process.

A person considering taking a medication should become a scholar on the subject of medications and know more than the care giver about the medication. It is possible and necessary.



2nd Annual Conference on Suicide

Pictured above, from the left are: Erica Barrow, Susan Moore, Chair of the event, Jan Gordon and Shirley McGuff. With John Allen, they were the driving force behind the conference at which there was standing room only(370 attended). It was held at Diablo Valley College. The "seed" money for this series of conferences was made possible by Assemblyman Mark DeSaulnier, who was at the conference.

NEWSLETTER MEETING

There will be a meeting of interested parties to discuss the monthly newsletter and set strategies and policies for the coming months.

There will be a slide presentation showing the background and the history of the newsletter.

The meeting will be at the NAMI Room at Crestwood in Pleasant Hill on Wednesday, June 11, 2008 at 7:00 am.

NOTE: Seating is limited so RSVP is absolutely necessary.

For further information: xnamicc@aol.com or 925- 465 3864—676 5771.

The deadline for the newsletter is always the 20th of each month.

**LETTERS TO THE
EDITOR**

JUNE DONATIONS

Donations

Editor:

Lisa Bruce is a person of excellence! She gives so much of herself and she is so inspiring to all the people.

Karen Bolstad, our daughter, has gained much from Lisa's teaching.

Betty Bolstad

Stephannie Hiatt

Richard and Yvonne DeAndre

Lareen Z. Fender

Betty Bolstad

Editor:

I am writing to thank NAMI for the help I got when I needed it so badly.

Our son had his first bipolar break at his place of work. The police were called to the restaurant where he violently resisted the officers. So they took him to jail instead of the hospital. There he go into a fight with two of the other inmates.

A friend told us we might get information from the NAMI website. We did and the NAMI volunteer met with the Public Defender. A strategy was devised to approach the Judge.

As a result, my son is now back at work. Equally important is the support of the probation officer and the probation instructions.

Brenda Myers

Sandra Duncan
%PG & E Corporation
Campaign for the Community

John A. Williamson
Susan P. Daniels
George Snow
%AT & T United Way
Employee Giving Campaign

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.

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**

Use Donation For:

- Peer to Peer Program
- NAMI-CC General Fund
- Family to Family
- K.I.D.S. Program
- Housing
- IOOV (In Our Own Voice)

Name

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

First Tuesday
 Support Group
 One on One support
 An introduction to the Family to Family Program
 Page 2 for Details

Stamp

17th Annual Summer Picnic

Friday, June 20, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
 Pleasant Hill Park, Pleasant Hill
 See page 5 for the details on this FREE event.

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

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