



NAMI Contra Costa

The Family's Voice On Mental Illness

SEPTEMBER, 2004

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

SEPTEMBER

General Meeting

Thursday, September 16, 2004
7:00 pm

GUEST SPEAKERS

Dr. Ramon Garcia

Schizophrenia:
Medications and Treatments

Terry Leach

Legislative Assistant to
Senator Tom Torlakson

Where:

Mt Diablo Medical Center
(Go to website for map)
2540 East Street, Concord
925-682 8200

DR. GARCIA TO BE THE SEPTEMBER SPEAKER

Dr. Ramon Garcia, MD will present a very special program at the NAMI-CC General Meeting, Thursday, September 16.

Dr. Garcia has spoken to the NAMI-CC membership many times through the years. His specialty is the treatment of schizophrenia and his practice is located in Sacramento.

Dr. Garcia pioneered the use of Clozaril along with other medications and treatments.

NAMI-CC knows Dr. Garcia to be a truly outstanding psychiatrist and his lectures are always important sources of information and direction.

PROPOSITION #63

**COULD ADD AS MUCH
AS ONE BILLION TO
THE MENTAL HEALTH
SYSTEM**

Most of the literature and many of the news reports quote figures from 600 to 700 million dollars that would be added to the mental health system's budget. Actually, with the matching federal funds that occur, the figure would pass the one billion mark. It would be the difference between the under funded, understaffed and over-worked current system and a well equipped, well trained, state of the art system that would finally bring some hope to the mentally ill.

IN THIS ISSUE

Support Groups	2
October Speakers	3
Carl Drake and William Shryer	
Family to Family Program	3
FREE 12 Week Course	
Proposition 1A	4
Tourette Syndrome	4
NAMI California Conference ...	4
Invitation to the 26th	
Anniversary Celebration	5
Sunday, October 10, 2004	
Jane Pauley	7

TORLAKSON HOLDS HEARING ON ANTIDEPRESSANTS AND SUICIDE

In an effort to get some definitive answers in the SSRI debate, Senator Tom Torlakson held a hearing on August 4, 2004 at the State Capitol.

Some of the authorities on the subject made presentations, showed their slides and aired their opinions. It was clear that the final answers are further down this road.

Terry Leach, Senator Torlakson's Legislative Assistant and the watchdog on this subject will be the speaker in the first hour at the September 16, General Meeting. She has made the point from the beginning that until final answers have been obtained, abandoning treatment could have a

(Continued on page 4, column 3)

NOVEMBER MEETING DATE CHANGED

Due to a scheduling conflict at the Mt. Diablo Hospital, the November meeting will be the 2nd Thursday of the month, November 11.

NAMI-CC Care and Support Groups

Central Contra Costa County

1st Tuesday of each month, 7:30-9:00 p.m., Hillcrest Congregational Church, 404 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill.

Contact Dave Kahler 925- 676-5771 or e mail: dk122932@aol.com

3rd Monday of each month, 7:15-9:00 p.m., John Muir Hospital, Downstairs. The meeting has been moved from the Aspen Room to the Sterns Conference Room. Mary Olowin, MD and Gloria Hill. Contact Gloria Hill 925- 957-5146.

West Contra Costa County

4th Monday of each month, 7:00 p.m., 10203 San Pablo Ave (Idaho Apts.), Conference Room, El Cerrito (across from Black Oak Motors). Contact Gloria Hill 925-957-5146.

East Alameda County

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

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

CONSUMER RUN BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUP

Where: 1420 Willow Pass Road, Concord. 2nd floor

When: Every Monday, 7:00 pm to 8:30 + pm

Contact: Colette O'Keeffe 925-646 5624-925-646 5788

TRI-VALLEY BIPOLAR (Consumer Run)

Manic Depression Support Group

Wednesdays, 7:15 pm to 9:00 pm

St. Claire's Episcopal Church, Pleasanton

Krista Radojevich 925-462 1248

SELF-INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

(Consumer)

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

CALL: Veronica 925-676 5313

BIPOLAR CHILL (Client Run)

Manic Depression Support Group

Wednesday, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

710 Broadway #3G, Walnut Creek Contact Lisa

or Scott- 925-743 1160

NAPA STATE HOSPITAL SUPPORT GROUP (NSHSG)

Meets the 2nd Saturday of each month, 9:30-11:30 am.

WHERE: Hospital's Volunteer Center Conference Room

For Information: Gene Schulting 925-933 1151

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

RECOVERY, INC. (Self Help Mental Health)

Mondays, 7:30 p.m. Kaiser, Walnut Creek

Saturdays, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Lilac Building, Room 2

Contact: Iris Richards, 510-482 5808

NEW HOPE

SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS OF
ADOLESCENT CHILDREN

When: The 2nd Monday of every month at 7:00 pm

Where: Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, Rm. #4

E mail: newhopelopc@hotmail.com or 925-934 1216 (Nancy)

FAMILY ADVOCATE HOURS

Gloria Hill, Contra Costa County Mental Health Advocate hours are:

Mondays 12:30- 3:30 at 957 5146. Tuesdays all day at 957 5146. Thursday morning at 957 5146.

After 1:30 on Thursdays at 646 5844 or 646 5480 which is not a voice mail number. The best way to reach Gloria is to page 925-476 2618 any day of the week or leave a message on the voice mail. Gloria requests that she not be called at home unless it is an emergency and all other numbers and the pager have been called.

NAMI-Contra Costa
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

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namicalifornia.org
nami.org

**PRESIDENT'S
COLUMN**

David Kahler

Dr. Ramon Garcia will be the featured speaker at the September 16 General Meeting. Come early! Dr. Garcia is an enormous draw. We welcome him back.

**

Terry Leach, Legislative Assistant to Senator Torlakson will have some very important words to say on the dilemma surrounding the use of SSRI's. Terry will be the speaker in the first hour.

**

Our Webmaster, Michael Cohen, reports that the site is now attracting over 4000 hits monthly. The monthly newsletter goes up on the site on the first of each month. You will also find eleven of the most recent newsletters there.

**

Linda Lofus-Smith has stepped down from the Mental Health commission and Scott Singly has become the new chairman. We welcome him. NAMI-CC always has two or more members on the Commission.

**

The NEW HOPE program which will help families with a mentally ill youngster is now being developed. Some of the top people in Children's Mental Health are contributing their views and expertise as the program takes shape.

The program will consist of a series of three classes given one night each week the last three weeks of each month. They will provide the basic information a family needs to cope with a serious mental illness and will show them where they can find the resources to treat their loved one.

NEW HOPE will be an entirely new program that will fill the gap left by the current budget crisis. We thank the Intero Foundation for their generous support.

**

Reserve early for the 26th Anniversary Celebration October 10th.

**OCTOBER SPEAKERS
CARL DRAKE, MD
WILLIAM
SHRYER, LCSW**

Carl Drake and William Shryer will present a unique program at the October 21 General Meeting.

They will show how a more client centered approach can and does work. There will be a discussion of weight gain, diabetes and other health related issues that can be avoided, or at least dealt with from the beginning with informed consent.

The still poorly understood diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder and other diagnostic categories will be examined.

Dr. Drake is a Consulting Psychiatrist in Danville and Mr. Shryer is the Director of three clinics in Danville,

**FREE CLASSES ON
MENTAL ILLNESS**

If you want to learn more about mental illnesses, you would do well to enroll in the Free NAMI Family-to-Family program. It is a 12-week class that will provide you with the information you need.

Antioch	Wednesday	Sept 1
Livermore	Thursday	Sept 2
Lafayette	Monday	Sept 13

To sign up call Doris Watson at 925-682 7195 or E mail: F2Fmom@aol.com.

The first family education program, developed by Dr. Joyce Burland, was brought to California by NAMI in the early 1990's. In the mid 1990's the State Department of Mental Health (DMH) picked up Family-to-Family as one of the non-profit agency programs they fund to aid the mentally ill under the provisions of AB-1278.

NAMI has graduated over 80,000 from this program. In California alone, there were 154 12 week classes that graduated 2309 family members last year.

**MILLIE GREENBERG
TALKS ABOUT
PROPOSITION
1A**

Millie Greenberg, Supervisor of the Third District, called attention to the proposition that would protect local taxpayers and vital local services, when she spoke at the August General Meeting.

Proposition 1A is a historic bipartisan agreement between Governor Schwarzenegger, local governments, legislators, public safety officials, healthcare advocates, taxpayers and community leaders.

It will prevent the State Legislature from taking and using local government funds. It restricts the State Legislature's ability to raid local government funding, including local government's share of existing sales taxes and VLF revenues.

1A will protect funding for local services like fire and paramedic response, law enforcement, emergency and trauma care, parks, roads, libraries and transportation.

It requires the State to provide funding for any program or service which the State forces local governments to provide. If the State fails to provide funding, the Legislature must repeal these state mandates.

This proposition does not raise taxes. It helps ensure local governments don't have to raise taxes in the future to make up for revenues raided by the State Legislature. It does not reduce funding for schools or any other state programs or services.

It does not prevent the state from borrowing local funds in times of fiscal emergency.

**PROPOSITION
#63**

(Continued from page 1, column 3)

It is very important that everyone with an interest in the mental health field work effectively to get this proposition passed. A good source of information is the website shown below.

(Go to website: yeson63.org)

The polls show an early lead but the opposition will not make their best effort until October.

Assemblyman Darrell Steinberg has been the point man in this effort as shown by the stirring speech he made at the NAMI Califor-

**TOURETTE
SYNDROME**

Tourette Syndrome (TS) is an inherited, neurological disorder characterized by repeated involuntary movements and uncontrollable vocal (phonic) sounds called tics. In a few cases, such tics can include inappropriate words and phrases.

The disorder is named for Dr. Georges Gilles de la Tourette, the pioneering French neurologist who first identified the disorder.

The symptoms of TS generally appear before the individual is 18 years old. TS affects people of all ethnic groups; males are affected 3 to 4 times more often than females. It is estimated that 100,000 Americans have full-blown TS and perhaps as many as 1 in 200 show a partial expression of the disorder, such as chronic multiple tics or transient childhood tics.

People with TS sometimes suppress their tics for a short time, but the effort is similar to holding back a sneeze. Eventually tension mounts to the point where the tic escapes.

The cause of TS is unknown although it is thought to be an abnormality in the gene (s).

**NAMI CALIFORNIA
CONFERENCE
HUGE SUCCESS**

Grace McAndrews, Executive Director of NAMI California, reports that a record breaking 672 persons attended the annual NAMI California at the Airport Marriott Hotel in Burlingame. Over 100 persons of that number were consumers.

The speakers included Stephen W. Mayberg, Director, California Department of Mental Health and several of the leading psychiatrists.

One of the outstanding presentations was given by Miles Kramer, Director of Health, Contra Costa Detention Facilities. He was joined by Joel Fay and Judge Verna Adams from Marin County. Joel Fay was instrumental in the creation of the Forensic-Multi-disciplinary Committee.

NAMI Contra Costa gave the workshop on how to produce an outstanding newsletter and combine it with a well designed website to better attract and inform the public.

**TORLAKSON
HOLDS HEARING**

(Continued from page 1, column 3)

worse effect than the medication.

Terry Leach is a health care attorney and consultant on the staff of State Senator Tom Torlakson (D-Antioch).

Terry started her career as a registered nurse at John Muir Medical Center. Later she became a public health nurse in central Contra Costa County and then a school nurse in Nevada County.

Terry then elected to attend law school and focus on policy that would emphasize prevention in health care practice. She commuted to the Boalt Hall School of Law in Berkeley and focused on health care law. She now specializes in drafting health care legislation for Senator Torlakson. She is happily married with three children.

**MACY'S NOW TAKES
SCRIP**

The SCRIP program announced that MACY'S is now one of the retailers on their growing list.

NAMI Contra Costa's 26th Anniversary Celebration

Twenty-six years ago, a few families gathered together in Walnut Creek to see if they could help each other. Each of the families had a loved one that had been diagnosed with a serious mental illness. From that inauspicious beginning, NAMI Contra Costa has grown to be one of the largest and most effective mental health support organizations in the country.

Sunday, October 10, 2004 we will get together and celebrate the achievements and the companionship over those many years. For more information about this event: E mail: xnamicc@aol.com or 925-465 3864

www.namicontracosta.org

R.S.V.P. To: NAMI Treasurer, P.O. Box 21247, Concord, California, 94520

Please note your dinner selection on your check.

Act now as seating is somewhat limited.



Rosemary Chicken \$30.

Boneless Chicken Breast marinated with Rosemary, Balsamic Vinegar and Madeira Wine, pan seared and served with a Shallot Glaze complemented with Apricot Rice Pilaf.

ROASTED PRIME RIB OF BEEF \$40.

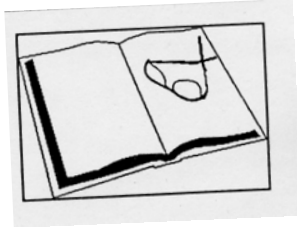
Certified Angus Beef rubbed with Herbs and Spices and slow roasted to medium rare for tenderness served with Shallot Au Jus and Horseradish to complement, accompanied with a Baked Potato with Sour Cream and Chives.

Vegetarian Wellington \$30.

Puffed Pastry with Grilled Vegetables with Smoked Mozzarella Cheese on a bed of roasted Tomato sauce. This is their own award winning dish.

Please note your dinner selection on your check.

BOOK REVIEW



Mae Bragen, Librarian

From The Library
Mae Bragen

Recovering Sanity, A Compassionate Approach to Understanding and Treating Psychoses, by Edward M. Podvoll, M.D.

This book was originally published as *The Seduction of Madness*, in 1990 so I began reading it with considerable skepticism. But then I was intrigued by the book's purpose which is to promote healing in a home setting. The author and his colleagues have established The Windhorse Project of Boulder, Colorado. This is a model that can be adapted to any illness or disability where the person can stay at home with the help of his treatment team or family.

Basic to his theory is a blending of eastern and western psychology and the practice of meditation. This book also describes a spiritual journey of this doctor to find "liberation from suffering." His approach is that psychosis is part of the human condition and not an unnatural state and that anyone can experience it at different times in their lives.

He gives examples of individuals throughout history who have found their way out of psychosis to an awakening. Moments of clarity occur during the psychotic episode which can be supported by the environment. For example, some individuals have had the power to resist the hallucinations. Also, he describes the many insights people gain through mania or depression.

Recovery involves a self absorption, an intimate acknowledgement of what insanity is. There are many kinds of psychotic states; some of short duration and some for longer periods of

time. He provides elaborate descriptions of psychotic episodes of four unusual, unique individuals. But the basic flaw in the book, I believe, is that he is steeped in very unscientific, unproven territory if he generalizes from the experiences of the few to relate to the many. While his ideas about recovery are interesting and provocative he can't prove them.

The second part of the book provides a vision of recovery that can apply to others. Recovery starts with recognizing moments free of delusion, "islands of clarity". His teaching at this point moves to a discussion of healing environments and this is where he may have something relevant to offer. This involves the joining of heaven and earth. Many primitive societies have found that their ceremonies bring the message of a balanced life.

He does not entirely avoid the use of medication in treatment but uses it judiciously. The essence of treatment is a therapeutic environment; a treatment team oriented in the Buddhist tradition of meditation practice. He calls his facility Windhorse in the Shambhala tradition of the mythic horse, the symbol of man's "energy to uplift himself". The treatment team is highly structured and provides a tight network surrounding the patient. He describes the ideal household as a healing circle and elaborates on the necessary elements.

While I don't agree with a lot of his theory, it is a beautifully written book which gives us a different perspective.

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The number of members volunteering for the various projects and programs has increased. We need a member who could keep the volunteer information on a computer and coordinate their efforts.

It would be interesting and you would meet some really dynamic people while you help some folks that really need it. Just call Kay:
925-933 4012 or E mail:
Vder123@aol.com

BITS AND PIECES

. . . . 50 percent drop in money spent on mental health between 1988 and 1998 with mental health care comprising only 3.2 percent of total health-care spending by 1998. As a result many inpatient wards for the mentally ill have been shut down and people have trouble obtaining care and have long waits for evaluations.

(David Wenner, Patriot News)

The reason we treat the mentally ill so badly is that we have never understood them. The human race has never had a clue as to why those with a disorder act the way they do and why they persistent in self destructive behavior. Only in recent years have we begun to see real evidence of chemical imbalances in the brain that begin to explain these mysteries. In the meantime our government fails to furnish even minimal treatment to these unfortunates.

The safety of a drug is indicated by warnings in the Physicians Desk Reference (PDR). The safest drugs just have a plain little black text. The next level of safety is indicated by bold black text, and the most serious warning is shown by bold black text in a big black box.

DONATE A CAR

Get the generous tax deduction and help the mentally ill. NAMI will handle the smog, the DMV and the classified ad hassle. One call does it all! xnamicc@aol.com or 925-676 5771 or 925-567 6109.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I am so grateful for the help NAMI Contra Costa extended to our son who recently was arrested and put in the county jail.

We were unaware that he was mentally ill, so we had no knowledge of mental illness. We also had no knowledge of the legal system.

My husband went to the NAMI website and located the local NAMI chapter. We called their number and a volunteer put us in touch with the person who handles the legal problems. Through him we got the fax number for the jail's psychiatric ward. My son would not put us on the list to visit, so the worker arranged a visit.

The worker took the time to discuss the possibility that our son's problem might be a mental illness. Later the psychiatrist confirmed that was the case.

When his case went to court the NAMI volunteer stood up and explained to the Judge that our son was mentally ill and really needed immediate psychiatric attention. The Judge agreed to release him with the stipulation that he cooperate with the treatment.

I am so thankful that we got the information and help when we needed it.

Charlotte and Bob Williams

COMMENTS

Comments for the newsletter should be sent to:

E mail: x nami@aol.com
 Fax: 925-476 1444 or mail to
 P.O. Box 21247
 Concord, CA., 94521

All letters are subject to abridgment and those unpublished can be neither acknowledged nor returned.

JANE PAULEY'S MIDLIFE ROLLER COASTER

By Marilyn Elias

Compared with many adults who develop bipolar disorder, TV personality, Jane Pauley got off lightly with a rare midlife diagnosis and rapid symptom relief after three weeks in a top-notch hospital, say experts reacting to Pauley's disclosure of the illness in her autobiography

The respected TV news personality was diagnosed at age 50 in March 2001, according to the book, *Skywriting: A Life Out of the Blue*, an account of her ordeal with bipolar disorder (manic-depression). The diagnosis came less than a year after steroid treatment for hives had set off a cascade of mood changes.

The disease usually surfaces in the late teens or 20s, but about 10% have a first episode in their 50s, says psychiatrist Lori Altshuler, director of the Mood Disorders Clinic at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute.

Pauley, 53, says the steroids cured her hives but "revved" her up. After she stopped taking the medication, the hives recurred. When a second course of steroids left her depressed, doctors put her on an antidepressant.

But that triggered mania that led to her hospitalization. Pauley's doctor said she had an unsuspected vulnerability to bipolar disorder, and antidepressants can "unmask" the disease in people that are at high risk..

Pauley says lithium has stabilized her moods and that she will need medication for the rest of her life. About 15% to 19% of manic-depressives kill themselves, "usually because they're not in treatment," Keck says. "That's akin to the death rate from many forms of cancer."



SEPTEMBER DONATIONS

In Memory of

Matt Buscemi

From:

**Mary and Robert Shearer
(Housing)
Dave and Fran Traverso
Bob and Betty Lee**

To The General Fund

**Dorothy F. Healy
Phil and Robin Zimmerman
Fanny Dole
William Dover
Pat and Susan Kelly
Walter S. Cannon**

DONATION FORM

Make check payable to NAMI-CC
 Mail to: Treasurer, NAMI-CC
 P.O. Box 21247, Concord, CA., 94521

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E Mail _____

Use Donation For:

- NAMI-CC General Fund
- NAMI-CC Housing fund
- Family to Family Program
- NARSAD (Research)
- Other _____

In Honor Of: _____

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

NOVEMBER MEETING
Date changed from the regular third Thursday
to the second Thursday, November 11, 2004,
due to a scheduling conflict at the hospital.

Stamp

26th Anniversary Celebration
Sunday, October 10, 2004, 5:00 pm
Concord Hilton

NAMI Contra Costa

Our purpose is to support families, to educate ourselves and the public, to advocate for better treatment, and to support legislation which helps those with neurobiological brain disorders.

General membership in NAMI-CC is \$40 per calendar year. Dues paid from January to October provide membership for the current year. Dues paid in October, November and December provide membership for the following year.

Your dues support our affiliate, and should be mailed to our P.O. Box 21247, Concord, CA., 94521. Dues also include your membership in NAMI California and NAMI National.

Your dues entitle you to receive the NAMI Contra Costa newsletter, the NAMI-California publication "The Connection," and the NAMI National publication, "The Advocate." You are a member of each of the three organizations for the one membership fee. If you are solicited for membership or special gifts from the State or National organization, give generously if you can, but all gifts are voluntary and do not entitle you to membership in NAMI Contra Costa.

To continue to receive the newsletter after the first two complimentary copies, please return an application for membership with your check. You will be most welcome at the monthly General Meeting and all the support meetings throughout the month.

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

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

My membership is: New A Renewal

- Mental Health Client \$ 20.00
- General Membership \$ 40.00
- Professional Member \$ 50.00
- Century Club \$100.00
- Lifetime \$500.00

NOTE: You can also pay by credit card.
E mail: xnamicc@aol.com for instructions