

Circle of Support

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Boulder County, Colorado

Issue No. 197

- For all those touched by mental illness -

December 2008

Beat the Holiday Blues and Minimize Stress

For many people, the holiday season is a joyful time, filled with parties, gift exchanges and family gatherings. But for many others, the holidays are a time of loneliness, reflections on past failures and anxiety about the future.

To complicate matters, as many as 10 to 20 percent of the population of the United States may experience seasonal affective disorder (SAD). With SAD, the season's short days and long nights may trigger feelings of depression, lethargy, fatigue and other problems -- all of which can severely impair your ability to function.

For whatever reason, many people have a hard time around the holidays, but the "holiday blues" are typically shorter and less severe than a full-fledged depression or SAD. Following a few common-sense guidelines can make it easier to manage your holiday blues:

If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by feelings of sadness or if your unhappiness interferes with your ability to work, study, eat, sleep, and have fun, be sure to reach out to someone you trust for help.

Holiday "DO" list

- * Do take care of yourself:
 - Eat healthy foods
 - Get plenty of rest
 - Exercise regularly, even if it is only a walk around the block
 - Spend at least a half hour every day doing something that nourishes your soul: meditating, reading, taking a hot bath, spending time with a friend
- * Do set realistic goals:
 - Organize your time, prioritize, make lists
 - Make a budget and follow it
- * Do consider new or different ways to celebrate – be flexible. Consider shifting your celebration to a different month if you are not feeling up to a festive holiday.
- * Do focus on the blessings in your life instead of dwelling on what's missing
- * Do allow yourself to feel sad, lonely or melancholy -- these are normal feelings, particularly during the holidays
- * Do something for someone else
- * Do keep it simple
- * Do consider shopping and shipping online instead of fighting the holiday crowds – or skip gift-giving altogether. Spend time with people you care about instead.

Holiday "DON'T" list

- * Don't overindulge in alcohol or holiday foods, especially those that are high in sugar and fat
- * Don't have unrealistic expectations of yourself or others
- * Don't dwell on the past
- * Don't spend money you don't have

NAMI BOULDER COUNTY

1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder
303-443-4591
www.namibouldercounty.org

~

Board of Directors

President, Alan Kelly
Vice-President, Nancy Coleman
Secretary, Linda Davis
Treasurer, Diana Moore
Sharon Bowyer, Greg Coleman,
Valine Demos, Susan Gallagher,
Bob and Laura Hadaway,
Joanne Kelly, Keith Matney,
Bev Melius, Bob Moore
Phoebe Norton
Reg Saner, Anne Weiher

~

Friends of NAMI

We are most thankful for your past and continuing friendship, but our list has grown too large for this small space. Please know how much you mean to NAMI Boulder County.

~

Office Manager: Sharon Bowyer
Outreach Coordinator: Barbara Connors

Newsletter: Joanne Kelly, Reg Saner
Contributing writers for December:
Alan Kelly, Barbara Connors, Bev Melius, Valine Demos, Anne Weiher

Upcoming events

December 16 - NAMI Boulder County Board Holiday Potluck
6:00 p.m. Call Sharon at 303-447-1232 if you would like to attend.

January 20 - NAMI Boulder County Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m. at San Lazaro Clubhouse.

January 22 - Interfaith Network on Mental Illness meeting - See page 5 for details.

February 17 NAMI Boulder County Board Meeting 6:30 p.m. at San Lazaro Clubhouse.

February 26 - Hope Coalition: Annual Gatekeepers Event - See page 7 for details.

President's Corner

Some days it's hard to tell what good news is.

I heard a report the other day that the Veterans Administration is better prepared to treat veterans who have mental illness than at any time in its history. WOW! It sounds like they finally get it. Today's vets are getting better help with their mental health problems than the vets from past conflicts. That truly is good news, as far as it goes.

The rest of the story is that there are more reported cases of mental illness in war veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan than from any previous wars. Depending on which set of statistics you believe, 19 to 31 percent of returning veterans reported symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or major depression. But our veterans still have to jump through bureaucratic hoops to get help, which may be why only slightly more than half of them seek treatment.

Let's see. If we've deployed 1.5 million soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan, and 25 percent of them come home with PTSD or depression, that's 375,000 returning vets with mental illnesses. The Veterans Administration hasn't yet been able to ramp up for the large number of returning vets with brain disorders coming out of these wars. And the numbers are likely to get worse. PTSD is a serious and long-lasting illness that sometimes doesn't become evident for many months or years.

As someone stated the other day, it can't be good for the development of our youth to train them to kill and put them in the field of battle just 6 months after their senior prom.

One jaw-dropping statistic from the military is that 40 percent of women in the military report being sexually assaulted. 40%! Two out of five women! On page 6 of the newsletter, you can read a first-hand account of a woman's rape in the military, and it may help you understand the deep and lasting scars it leaves.

So where's the silver lining? Maybe the Veteran's Administration will rise to the challenge and lead the way to find new, effective treatments. Maybe all the media attention to returning vets with mental health issues will help reduce the stigma for all people who deal with these disorders.

NAMI Colorado and NAMI Boulder County will be honoring returning vets with mental illnesses on Armed Forces Day, May 16, 2009 at our first official NAMI Walk. See the article on page 3 to learn more. And please consider joining us for the walk.

In the meantime, the next time you exercise your freedom of speech, thank a vet. They have paid for our freedoms in ways most of us can't even imagine.

Alan Kelly

NAMI Colorado to hold first walk as part of nationwide “NAMI Walks” program

Confucius said “A journey of thousand miles begins with a single step.” The nationwide NAMI Walk program began with that first step in 2003 and has become one of the fastest-growing walks in the country. This year, NAMI Colorado will join with this exciting movement for its first official NAMI Walk. It will be held on Saturday, May 16, 2009 at Cheesman Park in Denver. That day is Armed Forces Day, and we will be honoring our returning vets who have mental illnesses.

Our goal is a lofty one. We need to raise \$100,000 and recruit more than 1,000 walkers. To reach this goal we need your help. We need sponsors—both large and small, we need teams and team captains, so recruit your family, friends, co-workers, and anyone you know to join us in not only raising money and awareness, but also in reducing the stigma of mental illness.

Mental illness pervades every facet of our lives and we all know someone touched by a brain disorder, whether we know it or not. It is not easy to ask others for support and money in these difficult times, but now more than ever we need to think of helping to raise our voices and move our feet in support of this more-than-worthy

cause. It costs nothing to walk, but the donations you raise will not only help the state fulfill its mission of bringing quality programs such as Family-to-Family and Colorado Visions to our community, but will also continue the mission of NAMI Boulder County (also serving Broomfield County) since half the money stays here.

I know it seems early to start thinking about a walk in May, but we hope to have a big volunteer recruitment meeting in January and we need 30-50 people from our affiliate to come out and join this event. We need you to think about who might be able to sponsor the event at \$250 or more in order to help us reach our goal. We are looking for contacts in areas outside of the mental health community (and within as well) who have been touched by mental illness. As you send holiday cards, think about who might be willing to put together a team for the walk or who might be willing to donate money to this worthy cause.

The NAMI Walk model has been extremely successful, raising more than \$7,000,000 since its inception in 2003. In a typical walk, about 30 percent of the money comes from sponsors, but the bulk of the money comes from donations raised by teams. Each

team is encouraged to have a captain who will rally its members to raise more money. Teams can come from churches, service clubs, school groups, departments within your company, and competition is definitely encouraged to help raise more money. Teams have also come from Family-to-Family classes. One Family-to-Family teacher challenged her team to raise \$8,000. They not only raised that money but surpassed that goal. They were motivated to do so by being in competition with another Family-to-Family class.

We all know that almost every weekend there is a walk for some cause in our area. However, in talking with walk managers across the country, I’ve found that despite these challenges when we all come together we can have highly successful walks. I have no doubt that NAMI Colorado and its metro affiliates can reach this goal.

Greg Coleman and I are co-chairs for this walk and Alan Kelly is the chair for the Boulder affiliate. Greg and I are here to help you in any way we can, so please let us hear from you about potential sponsors, volunteers, and any questions you may have about the walk.

Anne Weiher



National Alliance on Mental Illness

Employers needed for local supported employment programs

Chinook Clubhouse and Windhorse Community Services offer supported employment programs for individuals whose lives have been dramatically interrupted by mental illness. Both programs are currently looking for additional employers in Boulder and Broomfield counties.

While both organizations' programs help participants assess their career goals, prepare resumes, practice interviewing, and organize their job searches, the services don't end when a client finds a job. Program staff work directly with the client and the employer when the job starts, often providing on-the-job training, coaching, and other services that help individuals thrive in the workplace.

From a client's perspective, the desire to work is a powerful force. Supported employment programs help clients obtain and keep meaningful jobs that give them a sense of purpose and personal fulfillment. Clients typically enjoy improved self-esteem and an improved quality of life that enhances their relationships with family, friends and others.

From an employer's perspective, supported employment programs offer a variety of benefits, as well. Benefits include:

- Immediate access to skilled labor pool
- Savings in recruiting, hiring and training staff
- Reduction in costly job turnover
- Availability of ongoing support
- Promotion of an inclusive work environment
- Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC)
- On-the-job training (OJT) funding of wages

"We are generally looking for entry-level part-time positions with less social interaction and a consistent routine, that are not too physically demanding," said Ruth Arnold, director of Chinook Clubhouse. Many clients tend to work in the service and retail sector, entry level clerical, light custodial, manufacturing, and stocking. "We have a wide variety of members looking for work, some with good skills, but many just starting out after a long hiatus from working. Our clients are usually very eager to work, only want part-time work (as opposed to those job-seekers who will take part-time but really want to move up or out quickly) and can afford to work without health insurance, because they usually have disability benefits and government health coverage already."

While the Windhorse program also looks for similar types of low-stress jobs, staff work one-on-one with clients to find employment opportunities that match their specific skills. "We pay close attention to our clients' skill levels and interests," said JoAnn Dorio Burton, Windhorse supported employment coordinator. "If our clients express interest in working with animals or working in a book store, for example, we do our best to help them find jobs that align with the direction they want to head."

JoAnn and her team are working with employers such as Safeway, the Boulder Public Library, Sunflower Market, All Tune-up, Borders Book Store, Jamba Juice, Petco, Manor Care, Bellevue Animal Hospital, and Naropa.

"We especially love employers who provide a supportive family-type work environment and who

take a real interest in their employees' welfare," said Ruth. "We treasure our long-term relationships with those employers who have worked with Chinook Clubhouse for many years, like Bonded Business Services, Boulder/Denver Couriers, Liquor Mart, and CU Boulder."

Ideal job sites are on a bus line so clients without cars can get to and from work easily. Generally, day-time hours work best, because buses run most frequently during the day.

Chinook and Windhorse both provide employers with support to help make the placement successful for all parties. Both programs also offer employer references from some of their partners, so new employers can hear from their peers about the program's advantages.

Windhorse and Chinook have a similar supported employment mission and philosophy, yet differ in their program focus and funding sources. Chinook is a program of the Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties with a primary emphasis on current clients of that agency, while Windhorse is a private organization that offers tailored services to anyone in the Boulder community. For more information about service offerings of either program, contact the people below.

If you are an employer or know someone in a hiring position who might be interested in employing a client of one of these programs, please contact:

JoAnn Dorio Burton
Windhorse Community Services
303-877-3891

Hank Martin
Chinook Clubhouse, 303-440-4842

Interfaith Network on Mental Illness: Craig Rennebohm Presents Inspiring and Instructive Weekend

Craig Rennebohm offered an abundance of insight, encouragement, information, training, support, education, and inspiration during a busy weekend in Boulder County, Saturday, Oct. 11 through Monday, Oct. 13. His visit was timed to highlight National Mental Illness Awareness Week.

Craig is the founder of the Mental Health Chaplaincy in Seattle and has worked in the streets of Seattle for 21 years offering hope to homeless people who are affected by mental illness. He also works in hospitals and congregations, engaging congregations around mental illness. His book, *Souls in the Hands of a Tender God*, tells of his experiences on the streets and offers guidance to those who are ministering to people who are affected by mental illness.

During the weekend, Craig led a spiritual support group and then helped us reflect about how those of us in congregations can offer this support. On Sunday, Craig gave a sermon at First Congregational Church and told stories of how he became a companion with those who are living with a mental illness and shared his own journey in recovery from major depression. In the afternoon, he offered a 3-hour Companionship Training focused on hospitality, a side-by-side ministry of presence, listening and accompanying. Craig assured us that we had all the necessary abilities to do this companionship. While many of us want to fix things, the real healing comes in the presence that we offer to each other.

On Monday, NAMI Boulder County sponsored an informal breakfast to give Craig a chance to meet with area clergy and religious leaders. Craig presented a framework for on-going conversations around ministry with persons who are affected by mental illness.

The next Interfaith Network on Mental Illness gathering will be on January 22, 2009, at Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Lafayette from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. A panel of consumers and clergy will present their thoughts on "Surviving Troubling Times: Hope, Social Support and Resources." For more information, please contact Alan Johnson, via e-mail at revalan2004@comcast.net, or call him at 720-304-6918.

Interfaith Network on Mental Illness

Free panel discussion

"Surviving Troubling Times: Hope, Social Support and Resources"

January 22, 2009

9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Boulder Valley Unitarian
Universalist Fellowship in
Lafayette

To reserve a seat, contact
Alan Johnson,
revalan2004@comcast.net
720-304-6918



Craig Rennebohm answered questions from area clergy and lay leaders at a NAMI-sponsored breakfast on Oct. 13.

Sexual Assault and PTSD: One Woman's Story

By Valine Demos
NAMI Boulder County
Board Member

On a Friday night in November 1974, I was abducted, held against my will and raped. My life was threatened during the rape and afterwards. As a result of the assault, I developed post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and began self-medicating with alcohol to deal with my pain.

At the time, I was in training to become a medical corpsman at the Academy of Health Sciences, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. That evening, I was on my way to the NCO club about 7:00 p.m. with two other military women. We were walking to the club when a large car with three soldiers in it drove up beside us. One of the men was a boyfriend of one of our peers, so we felt comfortable accepting the ride they offered us. I did not know the other two men.

Our acquaintance asked if we would mind riding back to the women's barracks to get his girlfriend, and he promised they would give us a ride to the NCO club afterwards. We had the extra time, so we agreed. The three of us got into the back seat and they drove us to the barracks. My bunkmate got out with the man who wanted to get his girlfriend. The driver yelled out, "We are going to pick up some alcohol, and we'll be right back!"

My friend and I went with the two soldiers to the post liquor store. The men bought beer and liquor. We were talking in the back seat when I noticed we were no longer going back to the barracks. We demanded they take us back. They ignored us. I started to panic.

*“ I didn't have
any counseling.
No one suggested
I seek help. ”*

They took us to an apartment building and ordered us out of the car at gunpoint. I hoped my bunkmate, who had gotten out of the car at the barracks, would come looking for us. The soldiers grabbed us and pushed us up the stairs. They shoved us into an apartment and bolted the door.

The taller guy grabbed a chair and sat down, pulling my friend onto his lap. The other fellow had very dark skin and was built like a football player. This guy pulled me onto the couch and forced me to drink some liquor. He turned on the music and picked me up, forc-

ing me to dance. At times, my feet were not touching the floor.

Before long, the man with the football-player build pulled me into the bedroom. He hit me and pushed me around, then flung me onto the bed. I kicked him. He waved his gun and told me I was going to die. It was dark except for light coming from the bathroom. I had on a peach muslin blouse with buttons and snaps. He ripped it off. He pinned me down because I was kicking and pushing him. He knelt on my chest. I pleaded with him. I asked him "Why? Why? What have I ever done to you?" He pinned my legs down and raped me repeatedly. He had his hand over my mouth. He was huge and I felt like I was suffocating. I remember how it hurt until I left my body (disassociated). I looked down at my naked body on the end of the bed. Returning, I asked permission to put my clothes on. I went into the bathroom and he told me not to shut the door. He watched me go to the bathroom and get dressed.

When we returned to the living room my friend was crying hysterically. She was then dragged into the bedroom. I tried to help her, but one of the men held a gun to my head. Even today I can remember her screams while she was raped over and over.

continued on next page

The man who raped me kept saying, "Shut up" and pointing the gun at me. He said, "I'm going to have to kill you. You hate me." I felt I had to calm this unstable man. I said, "Its okay, you must have been very angry to do what you did. I know you weren't angry at me." He said, "You hate me, you'll turn me in, I can't let you do that." I replied, "I don't hate you." I began to talk quietly to him. I even told him maybe we could go out again. I told him I just wanted to be his friend. Eventually I convinced him to take us to the club.

They escorted us to the car at gunpoint. It was 4:30 a.m., and the club was closed, so they took us to the barracks. As my friend hurried out of the car, my assailant grabbed me and insisted on a kiss. I walked like a zombie to the barracks. I thought I'd never make it to the door.

I was bleeding and bruised. My friend was in shock, shaking, crying holding tightly onto her bedpost. We reported the rapes to the people on guard duty and the officer on duty. He asked us if we wanted to go to the hospital. My friend refused. I said, "I just want to get clean." I took a shower. I just couldn't get clean enough. I was sore. I didn't sleep.

The next day, we were interviewed by the commanding officer, administration, the JAG officers and mil-

itary police. I didn't have any counseling. No one suggested I seek help. I did seek medical care because I was torn inside and bleeding. The assault left me with a vaginal infection and a pregnancy I did not want. They did something to my cervix. It hurt, and I left my body again. They told me I would bleed for a few days and to take these pills.

One of the rapists kept coming to the barracks asking for me. He began stalking me. It seemed like he was everywhere. I would not go out anywhere to eat, afraid he would be there.

I called my dad and he called the Red Cross and managed to get me out of there on emergency leave of absence.

I found out these men had lengthy criminal records and would receive little punishment for the assaults on us.

I shut away my emotions. I tried to forget. I condemned God. I would drink myself to sleep. I became an alcoholic. I had difficulty getting too close to men from then on. I would end our relationship if we got too close. I was numb and didn't feel physical pain.

My PTSD erupted in full force in 1991, a full 17 years after the rape. I felt the pain. At times, I felt I was suffocating, especially if a guy

held me too tight. I was terrified that the violence would occur again. Trust seemed to have left my vocabulary. I had flashbacks about the rape. I also had trouble sleeping at night.

Sexual abuse can permeate everything: your sense of self, your intimate relationships, your sexuality, your parenting, your work life, even your sanity. All areas of my life were impacted: physical, social and psychological/emotional.

Today I have learned new coping skills, and I recognize the PTSD and the effects it has on my life. Most days are okay. But just when you don't expect it, that dark cloud appears and it feels as though it is happening to you today. It helps to reassure myself and talk to a therapist who specializes in helping female veterans who suffer from PTSD.

We learn how to take care of ourselves during these times. Healing is a very painful process. I know now there is permanent damage physically and psychologically. I accept this and have learned to live the best I know how.

NAMI has been a great resource and support system as well as an avenue to educate myself and others about mental illness. NAMI has empowered me to get involved again and make a difference.

Volunteer Corner



*Barbara Connor,
NAMI Boulder
County Outreach
Coordinator*

The summer ended with NAMI's information booth at the Boulder Farmers' Market on September 20th and 27th. Many thanks to Ruth Beard, Laura DeToia, Alan Johnson, Carolyn Kruger, Jim Maguire, Bev Melius, Reg Saner, Claire Sidell, and Cathy Stiers for staffing the booth and to Nancy Coleman for managing it. We reached out to many people who needed information about NAMI.

Sandwiched between the two Farmers' Market dates, we hosted a candidates' night -- in conjunc-

tion with the Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties -- for all of the people seeking local office in Boulder County. We invited 23 candidates for the state legislature and the county commission and 19 candidates attended (Patrick Brophy, Cindy Domenico, Dan Gibbs, Rollie Heath, Robert Houdeshall, Dickey Lee Hullinghorst, Catherine Jarrett, Nick Kliebenstein, Claire Levy, Randy Luallin, Dan Lucas, Dorothy Marshall, Ben Pearlman, Dianne Primavera, Bo Shaffer, Brandon Shaffer, Ralph Shnelvar, Will Toor, and Katie Witt) and gave their views on mental and public health issues. We appreciate their participation.

A we head into the holiday season, we are starting prepara-

tions for NAMI Colorado's Walk in mid-May. This is the major fund-raising event for the state organization and affiliates like NAMI Boulder County. We need volunteers to serve on state-wide subcommittees that contact potential sponsors and facilitate team-building among participants. We also need as many people as possible to start teams and get friends and family to walk and/or sponsor a team of walkers. Please contact me if you want to volunteer for this crucial event, crucial because it helps us continue the work of education, advocacy, and support. You can call me at 303-710-0701 or email me at blconnors@comcast.net.

I wish everyone a happy and fulfilling holiday season.

Hope Coalition: ANNUAL GATEKEEPERS EVENT

Thursday, February 26, 2009

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

The First Congregational Church, 1128 Pine Street, Boulder

FREE half day training session on depression awareness and suicide prevention!
Keynote talk by Dr. Jon Richard, noted licensed psychologist with extensive experience in suicide risk assessment, intervention, and prevention training across all ages.

- * Continental breakfast
- * Networking
- * Interactive discussion
- * Panel of experts for high risk groups
- * Action planning
- * Resources

Please register on line at: www.hopecoalitionboulder.org Click on the EVENTS tab. For more information, contact Kathy Valentine: valstone2@hotmail.com

Crisis as Opportunity

*By Beverly Melius
NAMI Boulder County
Board Member*

I just finished reading “Renewal in the Wilderness” by John Lionberger. He quotes JFK as saying (in a 1959 speech), “When written in Chinese, the word crisis is composed of two characters – one represents danger and the other opportunity.”

I thought, “Aha!” I can weave this quote into an article on mental illness for the NAMI newsletter because many of us are so often in crisis. Wouldn’t it be great to have a positive perspective on which to focus? Yet, for me, it is only when the crisis has passed and my terror abated that I am able to find any equanimity.

Even so I can think of opportunities that have presented themselves. One time when my son was checking his meds for a week, the MHC called the police to take him to the hospital. He was not a threat to himself or anyone else but he was in the throes of psychosis. Two officers arrived, and when my son refused to go with them, one officer tripped him so he fell flat on his face on the ground. The officer then pressed my son’s neck into the ground with his arm while kneeling on my son’s back and then handcuffed one of his hands. When my son refused to give the officer his

危机

other hand, the officer, instead of asking his deputy for assistance, tasered my son.

My opportunity came when I was asked as a NAMI board member to participate in the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. It proved to be an invaluable healing experience, helping me to get beyond the fear and horror of what the police had done and by helping them to put a face on mental illness. Every trainee is my hope for the future and for compassionate treatment for those with mental illness.

As I continued to think of other opportunities, it occurred to me that I had better double check the validity of the quote before I write an article on it. Besides I wanted to see what the Chinese characters looked like and I thought you might too. So I did what everyone does these days, I Googled it.

Wikipedia says it is all a misconception on the part of westerners. Furthermore, it reports Chinese scholars as saying there is no connection between the characters. The Wikipedia entry adds that it has been used so widely, i.e. by

Nixon, business consultants, motivational speakers, by Condoleeza Rice in the Middle East talks, and by Al Gore in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, that it has come to be thought fact.

I was deflated. This was not exactly a crisis but I had to rethink my premise. Where was my opportunity?

In citing this quote as if it were valid, even all those aforementioned experts don’t make it so. I think the same holds true for much of the rhetoric we hear from political and professional pundits including those in the mental health field. And therein resides my opportunity and possibly yours. I think it is incumbent upon all of us who advocate for our family members and loved ones to help educate the mental health professionals as much as they are trying to educate us.

After all it is not, as Rumi would say, “borrowed knowledge,” but learned from real first hand life experiences that we deal with every day. It’s our deeply felt intuitive knowledge about their illness, about what is best for them, and about what will work for them. Although the quote is based on a misconception, I like its positive bent because sometimes we all need a little bending in that direction.



A couple of years ago I wrote about Philippe Pinel, an eighteenth-century

physician at France's "lunatic asylums" called Bicêtre and Salpêtrière, places where many inmates had for years been physically "restrained" by iron chains. This enlightened precursor of Dr. Phil was so appalled he issued an order which has become historic: "Unchain them!" France being France, there is even a painting dramatizing the very moment in 1795 when he supervised the unfastening of a young and comely "madwoman."

But all men are mortal, and Pinel hadn't been dead many years before French treatment of the mentally ill relapsed. Fortunately the good doctor had a pupil, one

Those Backward and Barbarous French

by Reg Saner, Board Member

Jean Esquirol, who in 1817 spoke out on the state of the mentally ill in France and all Europe.

"These unfortunate people," he assured his Paris audiences, "are treated worse than criminals. . . . I have seen them naked, or covered with rags, and having only straw to protect them against the cold moisture and the hard stones they lie upon. . . . I have seen them in their narrow and filthy cells, without light and air, fastened with chains in these dens in which one would not keep wild beasts. This I have seen in France, and *the insane are everywhere in Europe treated in the same way.*"

Shocked by his disclosures, the French government appointed a commission of inquiry.

So much for the dusty, musty past. We of the twenty-first century, living amid all manner of social and scientific advances, deplore the abysmal ignorance implied by

those conditions Esquirol described. "What? Chains again?" we may boggle. "How utterly backward and barbarous!"

Any such righteous harrumphing, however, must overlook the sad state of affairs in our own nation.

Recently the American Psychiatric Association summed up the situation thus: "It is a national tragedy that jails and prisons have become the primary mental health care facilities in the United States today." And lest we think the APA guilty of overstatement, new federal stats from the Bureau of Justice dis-abuse us. They reveal that in the past ten years the number of mentally ill in U.S. jails and prisons has quadrupled. That's right, *quadrupled*.

How backward and barbarous is that?

Upcoming class:

Family-to-Family Class

A free, 12-week class for family members of people with brain disorders (mental illnesses)

New class starts in January 2009

To register, call the NAMI Boulder County office at 303-443-4591.

Learn more about these classes at www.namibouldercounty.org

NAMI Support Group

For all those touched by mental illness (consumers and family members)

**First and third
Monday evenings**

7:00-8:30

**Boulder Medical Pavilion
(Alpine and Broadway, Homer Ball Room)**

Call Anne Weiher at 303-442-9209
or 720-839-4139 for details.

Education and Support Groups

NAMI CLASSES IN BOULDER COUNTY

Ongoing free education and support classes offering information on brain disorders, how to cope, and how to advocate. We keep an ongoing list for these classes. For information or to reserve a place, call us at 303-443-4591.

- ▶ **Family-to-Family Class** – A free 12-week program for family members, friends or caregivers who have a loved one with a brain disorder. Next class starts January 2009. Call now to reserve a seat.

Colorado Visions (formerly Visions for

- ▶ Tomorrow) – A free multi-week program consisting of workshops for caregivers of children and adolescents with brain disorders.

NAMI FAMILY SUPPORT

- ▶ **Support group for anyone touched by mental illness** (family members and consumers) - First and third Monday nights, 7-8:30 at Boulder Medical Pavilion on Broadway and Alpine (Homer Ball Room). Call AnneWeiher at 303-442-9209.

DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR DISORDER

- ▶ **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Longmont**
Mondays, 7:00-9:00 p.m., at Longmont United Hospital, Chagall/Rueben's Room
Contact Marc Rope at 970-482-2605
Email: twinpeaksdbsa@hotmail.com
- ▶ **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) Boulder**
Two peer-only meetings a month and one friends and family meeting per month. Contact Lauren at (303) 641-6333 or email (preferred) boulderdbsa@gmail.com.
- ▶ **CareTogether Support Group** for spouses and partners of people with bipolar disorder and depression, third Wednesdays, 7-8:30, Lafayette library, upstairs. 303-507-8533, caretogether@gmail.com
- ▶ **The Robert D. Sutherland Center for the Evaluation and Treatment of Bipolar Disorder**
Visit rdsfoundation.org or call Dr. Brosse (303/492-5680) for information about the Sutherland Seminar Series. The 12-week educational series on bipolar disorder is offered twice yearly on Thursday evenings. Attend just 1 session or all 12. No pre-registration required.

Many of these support groups/classes/resources are sponsored by groups other than NAMI Boulder County. Please use your own best judgement as to whether they are suitable for you.

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Parents Experiencing Challenging Kids Support Group (PECK) - Meets second Sunday of each month at the Huckleberry in Louisville, 9:00 a.m. Contact Harriet Austin at 303-284-9863 or austinhb@hotmail.com

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

Support group for people with OCD, their families and friends. First and third Wednesdays, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Mental Health Center, Norton Room, 1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder. Contact Brent, 303-422-9704 or Ilene, 303-938-1360.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE ANONYMOUS

(www.ocdcolorado.com) and **SOCIAL PHOBICS ANONYMOUS** (www.healsocialanxiety.com). For further information on both groups, call John at 303-325-3143

SCHIZOPHRENIA & Related Disorders Support

Groups (people with other mental illness diagnoses also welcome) Call Patrick, 303 413-6233, for details.

1. Tuesdays, 7:00-8:00 p.m. sharp, Mental Health Center, 1333 Iris Ave, Norton Room, entrance on southeast.
2. Wednesdays, 10:30-11:15 a.m., Maslin House. 1036 University Ave.

CHINOOK CLUBHOUSE, BOULDER

Chinook Clubhouse provides opportunities for members to live, work, learn, and socialize while contributing their talents in a community of mutual support. Chinook Clubhouse offers transitional employment opportunities. Call 303-440-4842 for information (www.chinookclubhouse.org).

"SOFT VOICES" DROP-IN CENTER, LONGMONT

Resource and friendship center for adults with mental illness. Tuesdays, 10:00-noon; Thursdays and Fridays, 1:00-3:00. 5th & Kimbark, downstairs. For more information, contact Gil at 303-776-0410.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Visit the NAMI (national) Web site at www.nami.org
Visit the NAMI Boulder County Web site at www.namibouldercounty.org

If you need help finding information online, contact the sources below. Service is confidential and available for free.

Consumer Health Resource Library

Located at Longmont Hospital, 1950 West Mountain View Avenue, Main Entrance. Call 303-651-5112 for hours.

Grillo Health Care Information Center

Located at Boulder Public Library, 11th and Arapahoe, Main Branch, 2nd floor. Call 303-441-4174 for hours.

Join the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Your dues include membership in NAMI National, NAMI Colorado and NAMI Boulder County. You will get the newsletters published by NAMI National and NAMI Boulder County.

- \$35 per year individual/family membership
- \$3 per year for people with a limited income
- I want to support NAMI Boulder County with a tax-deductible gift of \$ _____

Your membership dues and gifts will help provide support, education and advocacy for Boulder County individuals and families who are coping with serious mental illness.

Does your employer have a matching gifts program?

I am interested in:

- Learning about volunteer opportunities, either ongoing or one-time only
- Arranging for speaker or presentations on mental illness for my club, church, work or other group
- Helping with advocacy efforts by writing letters/making phone calls to my elected representatives

Name _____ Email address _____

Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Home phone _____ Alternate phone _____

**Mail this form with your check to: NAMI Boulder County
1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder, CO 80304**
