

Circle of Support

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Boulder County, Colorado

Issue No. 198

- For all those touched by mental illness -

March 2009

Join us for the Colorado-wide NAMI Walk on May 16

Less than 80 days until the May 16th NAMI CO Walk at Chessman Park! We are well on our way to a successful Walk. We have close to \$20,000 in sponsorships, not far from our goal of \$25,000. It is not too late to add sponsors, so talk to folks in your life who provide ongoing service to you: your dentist, your doctor, auto mechanic (I have mine on speed dial), or the local bank you use. There are many folks who want to support a worthy cause, and certainly in these troubled times, NAMI becomes even more important as people lose jobs, and seek support for themselves and their loved ones. Think of what NAMI has meant to you as you approach these people and remind them how it changed your life. NAMI does not charge for its programs, so these funds are essential to keeping the doors open.

At the end of March, we will hold our kick-off luncheon and invite potential volunteers, team captains, and sponsors. It will build enthusiasm for the Walk with a carefully planned 90-minute program designed to tell folks about NAMI, explain its mission, and give team captains a good idea of how they can build successful teams. We are looking for names



for this luncheon. Consider being a team captain and build a family, neighborhood, church (or some other group) team. We have one team registered who get together to play Bunko. Your neighbor may belong to Rotary or Kiwanis and they may get together a team. The ultimate success of the Walk depends largely on the teams we build. Each team's goal is to raise \$1,000. This may seem daunting, but if you have 10 team members, they each need to raise just \$100. They can do this by asking friends,

neighbors, co-workers, and family members to donate \$5 or \$10.

As you consider building a team and becoming a team captain, think of all the times you have supported your neighbors when they asked for contributions or sold popcorn or cookies for the Boy Scouts or Girl Scout. If you don't want to be a team captain, consider joining another team or walking as an individual. There are two teams registered from Boulder and either one would welcome your participation.

There is no fee to Walk with us on May 16th. While one of the goals of the Walk is to raise much needed money for NAMI, the other is to bring awareness about mental illness and help erase some of the stigma that still surrounds these brain disorders. If you can't walk, consider volunteering the day of the event by helping count pledges, passing out water or doing other tasks necessary to make the event a huge success. I am truly convinced that with this Walk we can make a huge difference in the public's understanding of mental illness.

See page 8 to find out how to participate as a team captain, walker, donor or volunteer.

NAMI BOULDER COUNTY

1333 Iris Avenue, Boulder
303-443-4591

www.namibouldercounty.org

~

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~

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, Sharon Bowyer,
Anne Weiher, Alan Johnson

Upcoming events

March 4 - NAMI Boulder County Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m. at San Lazaro Clubhouse.

April 1- NAMI Boulder County Board Meeting 6:30 p.m. at San Lazaro Clubhouse.

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

May 16 - NAMI Walk - See pages 1 and 8 for details.

May 27 - Interfaith Network on Mental Illness workshop - See page 4 for details.

President's Corner

In case you haven't been paying attention, let me share the news: the economy is struggling right now. Jobs are being slashed at a rapid pace and businesses and individuals are having a difficult time making ends meet. Some say it is a tough time to raise funds for non-profits. I read an article the other day about several non-profits filing for bankruptcy.

When the economy is weak, people with mental illness and their families need more support. The additional stress and uncertainty can play havoc with those who are struggling.

NAMI provides many important services that will be needed more this year than before. NAMI does not charge for any of its services, but we still have to pay the costs involved. Last year alone, NAMI Boulder County provided Family-to-Family training to more than 60 individuals, trained 20 people through our Colorado Visions program, provided support groups that served more than 100, answered numerous inquiries on our help line, supported the Interfaith Network on Mental Illness, assisted with the Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for law enforcement personnel, and lobbied at the state capital and in Washington for rights and services for the mentally ill and their families. Now more than ever we need your support, both financial and volunteer hours, to help us continue to provide these services.

NAMI Colorado is having its first official NAMI Walks for the Mind of America this May, a signature NAMI event that draws thousands of concerned citizens every year who walk together in over sixty communities across the nation to raise money and awareness about mental illness. The goal of the walk is twofold: to reduce stigma surrounding mental illness and to raise money to allow NAMI to continue to grow and to continue to provide the important programs and services we have provided in the past and to support our new programs.

I expect the walk to be a tremendous success. Just the act of asking for donations starts the conversation and gets mental illness out of the closet. We will be asking each of you to help with the walk in any way you can. Please join us on the walk and help us reduce stigma and raise the funds needed to continue our work.

Together, we can make a difference.

Alan Kelly

NAMI's "Grading the States" report to be published March 11

On Wednesday, March 11, NAMI will publish *Grading the States 2009: A Report on America's Health Care System for Adults with Serious Mental Illness* (GTS '09). The report provides the only comprehensive, ongoing assessment of the nation's public mental health care system for adults.

Colorado was one of two states that did not participate in NAMI's previous GTS study, which was conducted in 2006. In that study, the 48 participating states received an average grade of D, and only five states received Bs. Governors, legislators, state agencies, mental health professionals, consumer and family advocates, the news media, and taxpayers all sat up and took notice. GTS '06 provided guidance and momentum for reform in many states.

Colorado is included in the 2009 GTS report. "We don't know our grade yet, but we expect this report to be an eye opener for our legislators," said Lacey Berumen, NAMI Colorado executive director. "I hope it will help us convince the governor and legislators that mental health funding in Colorado cannot afford to take any more cuts."

In 2003, the presidential "New Freedom" Commission on Mental Health condemned the nation's mental health care system as outmoded, fragmented, and often ineffective and called for "fundamental transformation." One key to transformation is transparency and accountability, which this report provides.

In 2006, NAMI published its first Grading the States report (GTS '06), the first comprehensive survey of state mental health care systems in more than 15 years. It provided a common baseline against which progress can be measured over periods of years.

The new report is the first report card since the initial measurement in 2006—in which GTS '09 will help determine whether or not states have improved or lost ground in the past three years; whether the national average has increased, decreased, or stayed the same; and what strengths, innovative trends, or urgent needs can be identified in each state and nationally. GTS '09 will be an installment in continuing public dialogue about what is working or not working in America as we seek to build a mental health care system that is evidence-based, recovery-focused, and consumer- and family-driven.

Information Sources

The primary source of data for GTS '09 was a survey of state mental health agencies (SMHAs). Additional information was collected through secondary sources, including but not limited to:

- A Web-based survey of consumer and family experiences with state mental health services conducted in September 2008.
- A "Consumer and Family Test Drive" of state Web site and telephone information sources conducted by NAMI volunteers.

- Public information such as state community mental health services block grant applications, agency and academic reports, newspaper articles, and other sources.
- Secondary data sources including: the number of adults living with serious mental illnesses, mental health workforce shortages, and hospital-based inpatient psychiatric bed capacity.

Grading Methodology

The information was scored and weighted in four broad categories:

- Health Promotion and Measurement
- Financing and Core Treatment/Recovery Services
- Consumer and Family Empowerment
- Community Integration and Social Inclusion

Sixty-five criteria were used in the grading process. Each one was weighted to reflect its relative importance. State grades—both overall and for each of the four categories—are based on these weighted scores. The nation's grade was calculated by averaging the weighted state scores.

The report is scheduled to be released at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, March 11, 2009. NAMI Colorado will hold a press conference in Denver the same day. The report will be available at www.nami.org/grades09 or in printed report form from the NAMI store at www.nami.org/store.

Interfaith Network on Mental Illness offers advice and resources for surviving troubling times

By Alan Johnson, NAMI member and INMI leader

The Interfaith Network on Mental Illness (INMI) continues to offer provocative and stimulating programs for clergy and lay leaders in Boulder and Broomfield counties. INMI's mission includes helping faith communities create a supportive community for persons dealing with issues relating to mental illness (brain disorders) and their families and friends.

The INMI program on Thursday, January 22 was entitled "Surviving Troubling Times: Hope, Social Support and Resources." The title reflects the stresses faced by many people in this time of economic turmoil that adds to the burdens of people who are living with brain disorders.

The program included a panel of four speakers who have intimate knowledge and experience in these areas:

- JoAnn Dorio Burton is the Wellness and Recovery Educator with the Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties. JoAnn engaged participants in a recovery exercise by inviting us to think about a situation in our lives from which we had to recover. She challenged us to recall what helped us get through this event and what lessons and insights we gained as a result. She reminded us that everyone faces difficult times and finds ways to learn and grow from the experience.
- Mimi Farrelly Hansen is an art therapist who staffs the "Soft Voices" program, which was

started by the First Congregational Church of Longmont. It is a drop-in center that provides a safe haven for people with a mental illness and their friends. The Friday Art Program engages people in self-expression and creativity to foster healing.

- The Rev. Martie McMane, senior minister of the First Congregational Church of Boulder shared several of her experiences over 27 years in ministry with parishioners who suffered from brain disorders or who had a family member who did. Being informed about mental illnesses and their treatments and being aware of the different disorders and their characteristics and challenges are vital. Along with other insights, Martie said, "From the spiritual perspective, I have experienced a power greater than myself that is able to be trusted to give comfort, guidance, support, strength, and courage for facing life's difficulties."
- Linda Runyan spoke about her journey into recovery. She has been involved in Chinook Clubhouse and has found meaning and purpose through the social support, activities, and work programs there. When asked about how to find a faith community that is truly welcoming to those who are living with brain disorders, she said that when she visits one there is just that feeling, that inner experience that tells her whether or not she would be welcome.

Interfaith Network on Mental Illness

Presents a free half-day workshop
for clergy and lay leaders
featuring

Rev. Susan Gregg-Schroeder

**"A Spiritual Journey with Mental Illness:
The Role of Caring Congregations"**

**May 27, 2009
8:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.**

First Congregational Church, Boulder

Light refreshments will be served
To reserve a seat, contact Alan Johnson,
revalan2004@comcast.net
720-304-6918

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SHOCK: The Healing Power of Electroconvulsive Therapy

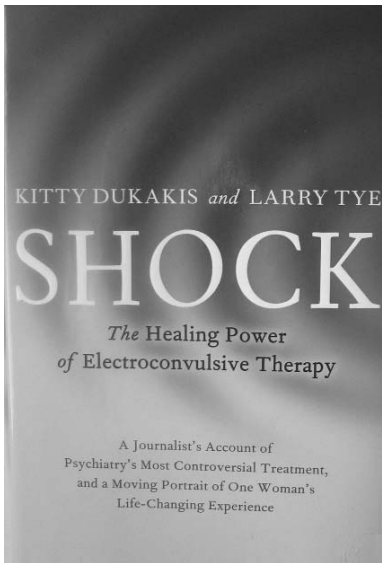
A book review by Sharon Bowyer, NAMI Boulder County board member

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) remains very controversial as a treatment for depression, bipolar disorder, and sometimes schizophrenia. I knew I was unduly influenced by *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* as well as all the bad publicity ECT has gathered over the decades, so I thought it was time to see what the current thinking is on ECT. Glad I did.

SHOCK: The Healing Power of Electroconvulsive Therapy, by Kitty Dukakis and Larry Tye, is written from two perspectives. Every other chapter is written by Kitty. She tells about her long battle with depression, alcohol and drug addictions, medications, therapy, self-destructive behavior, and finally her new life with ECT.

The other chapters are written by Larry, a medical journalist who thoroughly covers the medical, scientific, and social history of ECT.

This is not a one-sided book. It is an in-depth (but very easy to read) look at all aspects of ECT—the good and the bad. Kitty tells her story, but Larry also includes findings from the 100 interviews he



did with other people who have used ECT. You learn about the entire ECT process and its side effects.

I recommend this book for two reasons: 1) it might help people who have not found relief in any other treatment, and 2) all of us who are involved in the world of mental health need to understand ECT before we speak out for or against it. Kitty knows her story is different from everyone else, but she would like there to be open

discussions about ECT with all the facts on the table. She says “we have to face up to ECT’s risks and try to reduce them, but also acknowledge its potential benefits.”

If you are interested in buying this book, consider buying it through NAMI’s link to Amazon.com. For books you purchase this way, NAMI will automatically receive a percentage of the total sale (5 to 8 percent, on average).

You’ll get the convenience of shopping online with one of the Web’s biggest retailers, and at the same time, you will be helping NAMI help others, all at absolutely no extra cost to you. Just go to www.nami.org and click on the link to the NAMI Store. Click the link to Amazon.com and select the books you want to purchase.

Have you read a good book on mental illness or mental health lately? Would you be willing to write a book review for the newsletter? If so, contact Joanne Kelly at jkelly@sizzlemarcom.com.

Interfaith Network on Mental Illness

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After the panel discussion, participants broke into small groups to reflect and formulate suggestions. Here are a few they offered:

- More faith communities need to offer mental health support groups;
- Provide access to nature through walking, hiking and gardening;
- Develop a retreat center as an alternative to hospitalization;
- Use inclusive and welcoming language about disenfranchised groups, including people with brain disorders, in prayers, sermons, rituals, and announcements.
- Create safe places and times when people with mental illnesses can tell their stories of pain and loss as well as hope and recovery

The next INMI gathering will be held May 27 (see announcement on previous page). If you want more information about this newly formed organization, please contact Alan Johnson at revalan2004@comcast.net or 720-304-6918.

Beyond Blue: Breakfast with Terry Wise

by Reg Saner, Board Member

“Do I really want depression for breakfast?” I asked myself, “and pay thirty-five bucks for it?” On the other hand, word person that I am, I quite liked the sound of “Beyond Blue,” the breakfast’s thematic phrase. Then, too, the event’s being sponsored by Access Counseling and the Mental Health Center of Boulder and Broomfield counties augured well. So I sent off my check and looked forward.

Come the sunny morning of January 28, no sooner had I entered the Stadium Club at Folsom Field than I smiled to see place settings with blue napkins and large blue envelopes, echoed by blue neckties on all the waiters. Amid the expectantly conversational buzz, it seemed that all the area’s leaders in mental health were either bustling about or seated at one or another of the many tables. What’s more, not only was Colorado’s First Lady, Jeannie Ritter, on the program, Judge Roxanne Bailin was to receive the John F. Truhlar Champion of Mental Health Award.

Billed as “victim and advocate,” Terry Wise – the featured speaker – explained that her deep depression had stemmed from a convergence of factors. These ranged from having been sexually abused as a child to the stress of caring for a young but dying husband, stricken by Lou Gehrig’s disease. That gloomy ordeal, plus much else, produced the unbearable despair which had led Wise to take, on Christmas morning no less, 50 doses of morphine, plus 200 tabs of Percocet washed down

with stupefying quantities of gin.

“I didn’t just attempt suicide,” she writes in her book *Waking Up: Climbing through the Darkness*, “I killed myself.”

Her physical waking took place in a hospital whose medical personnel were asking, “Why hadn’t this woman died? Why hadn’t such a witches’ brew destroyed her liver?” Yet “waking up” in a psy-

“...for a depressed person, just looking into the eyes of someone who cares and understands can be wonderfully helpful.”

chological sense took Wise far longer. “I wasn’t happy to have survived,” she said, and admitted to needing months of therapy, followed by years of delving into the convergence of causes underlying her own near-lethal desperation, as well as making a study of suicide in general.

“Convergence,” as it happens, is the right word.

Although the home care required by her increasingly helpless mate right up to his death at

age thirty-five had indeed been a factor, that sexual abuse in her childhood had triggered suicidal thoughts in Terry Wise as early as age ten. Her innate shyness had kept her from revealing to others her tensions and dark thoughts. Being a private person by nature, she admits that even today the work of giving some thirty seminars a year to mental health professionals across the country exacts a toll.

Friends, of course, had asked why she tried to kill herself. They also wanted to know what they might have done to prevent it. “But,” said Wise, “I had hit bottom. Nothing anyone said would have stopped me, or so I thought. Now I’m not so sure. What I do know is that there are steps we can take to prevent suicides, and chief among them would be prevention of child abuse.”

Other steps include access to mental health resources, educating teachers and the community. Too, we can lessen stigma by emphasizing that to ask for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. We can teach coping skills, especially in dealing with bereavement. Above all, however, we should learn the value of talking with others.

“The most common malaise I see in my travels,” said Wise, “is loneliness.”

After her release from the hospital, friends continued to ask, “Why on earth didn’t you tell anyone how depressed you were?” She had supposed that keeping her death wish to herself would spare

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Coming soon to Broomfield: NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group

NAMI Connection is a weekly recovery support group for people living with mental illness in which people learn from each others' experiences, share coping strategies, and offer each other encouragement and understanding.

NAMI Connection groups are expanding in communities throughout Colorado and throughout the country. And soon, we'll have a NAMI Connection group meeting weekly in Broomfield. Watch the NAMI Boulder County Web site (www.namibouldercounty.org) for an announcement of the date, time and location.

The groups are led by trained individuals who are in recovery themselves. They understand your daily challenges and can offer you encouragement and support.

NAMI Connection groups offer a casual, relaxed approach to sharing the challenges and successes of coping with mental illness.

Each group:

- Meets weekly for 90 minutes
- Is offered free of charge
- Follows a flexible structure without an educational format
- Does not recommend or endorse any medications or other medical therapies

All groups are confidential—you can share as much or as little personal information as you wish.

A training for NAMI Connection facilitators will be held April 24-26 in Denver. If you are a consumer and would like to be trained to lead a NAMI Connection group, please contact Alan Kelly at 303-641-4504.

Attend the NAMI National Convention July 6-9 in San Francisco

If you've never attended a NAMI National Convention you don't know what you're missing. You'll meet lots of dedicated, passionate people. You'll gain insight into the most current research, legislation and treatments for mental illnesses.

You'll hear inspiring speakers and find out what other NAMI affiliates across the country are doing.

The NAMI 2009 National Convention will be held July 6-9 at the San Francisco Hilton, just two blocks from Union Square.

The theme of this year's convention is "Creating a Healthy Future For Us All."

To learn more, go to www.nami.org. You'll find a link to convention information in the left column.

Beyond Blue

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them from feeling guilt.

Subsequent research, however, taught her that suicide inflicts on family and friends a lifetime of guilt. She also learned that her self-justifying assumption, "They'll be better off without me," was equally mistaken.

Addressing that topic of loneliness, Wise warned against allowing potential suicide risks to dis-

tance themselves. Instead, we should take pains to make them aware how important they are to us. "Also," she said emphatically, "guilt works. Don't think it doesn't. Make a potential suicide aware that such a death would devastate persons near and dear."

In concluding, Wise said, "Lots of people have asked me, 'What was the single most important

component of your therapy and recovery?' I always answer with a single word: Compassion. Believe me, for a depressed person, just looking into the eyes of someone who cares and understands can be wonderfully helpful. So keep compassion in mind. And remember that in preventing a suicide you're saving more than one life."

Volunteer Corner



*Barbara Connors,
NAMI Boulder
County Outreach
Coordinator*

As you have already seen elsewhere in the newsletter, NAMI Boulder County will be a part of Colorado's NAMIWalks on May 16, Armed Forces Day, at Chessman Park. We are hoping that all members of NAMI Boulder County will contribute in some manner to this event. We need team leaders, people to organize a group of their friends, associates, and acquaintances who will then find sponsors for their participation in the walk. If you don't want to organize a team, you can walk as an individual. We need people to volunteer the day of the walk to help set up, register walkers, serve refreshments, and clean up after the event. Maybe you know someone

who could donate food and refreshments for the walk or sponsor another walker. This is the major fund raising event for NAMI Colorado and for Boulder County. Our participation will provide more visibility and funds to continue our educational and outreach work. I will be contacting members and potential volunteers in the near future to see what role you would like to play in this important event.

We are also continuing our presence at the 9Health Fairs in Boulder and Broomfield Counties in April. We staff tables at several sites where people attending the fairs come for information and assistance. In the years we have been participating in this event, we have reached out to hundreds of people who are confronting mental illness, either themselves or with a family member, and have given them information

about the resources NAMI and other organizations provide. It is a very important part of our community outreach. We ask volunteers to take a 2-hour shift of staffing the table, handing out printed material, and answering questions when they can. We try to pair a board member or other experienced volunteer with a newcomer. If you have never staffed an information table before, try it this year! Of course, we always welcome back volunteers who have staffed these tables before.

If you want to volunteer for either of these events, or if you have any questions about them, please contact me at 303-710-0701 or blconnors@comcast.net. We all need to work together to promote understanding and respect for those who live with mental illness and to provide necessary information to them and their families.

How to participate in the May 16 NAMIWalk

Make a difference in the lives of people with mental illness! The money and awareness you raise through NAMIWALKS will support mental illness advocacy, research, education and support programs locally, at the state level and nationally.

To become a team captain: Go to www.nami.org/walks and click on Colorado in the map

To join an existing team: Same as above

To walk as an individual: Same as above

To support a walker: Same as above

To become a business sponsor: Contact Alan Kelly at handymankelly@comcast.net

To volunteer on May 16: Contact Barbara Connors at blconnors@comcast.net.

Questions? Call Alan Kelly at 303-641-4505

Believe

By Beverly Melius
NAMI Boulder County
Board Member

Three years ago I discovered JoAnn's Fabrics when my 4-year-old granddaughter came to visit. She wanted to learn to sew, to make costumes for herself and her dolls. Up and down the aisles we went, collecting, discarding, deciding. In between the purples and pinks, the tulles and the satins, the sequins and bows, we came upon the garden aisle. It had tacky faux rocks, gray with words carved into them. "Believe" was written on one. It was the one that jumped off the shelf and into the cart, nestling itself into the soon-to-be-wardrobe of make believe.

When we got home, I put the rock in the corner of the garden by the front door. At the time, my son was in the psychiatric unit at Fort Logan. I've looked at that rock every time I've gone in or out of the house, many times a day for the last three years. That rock took root, grew and became a cornerstone of my life. My son has now completed his GED and is going to classes at Front Range Community College. He wants to open a mechanic shop.

I've also rediscovered the public library. I typed "schizophrenia" in the library's Web search box and up popped sixteen pages of infor-

mation, all neatly categorized into books, ebooks, video tapes and audio CDs. I promptly typed in my library card number and reserved the books I'd been wanting to read. A few days later I received an email saying the books were in and ready to be picked up at the Boulder branch. They would be on the hold shelves just beyond the main desk. It took all of about five minutes from parking to check out to have the books in hand.

One of the books was *My Stroke of Insight* by Jill Bolte Taylor, a Harvard-trained neuroanatomist drawn to brain research because of her brother's schizophrenia diagnosis. The book is about a stroke she herself suffered and her long, hard years of recovery, of teaching her brain how to function again, how to walk, talk and remember again. "Believe" must have been a cornerstone in her recovery as well, because recover she did. A most uplifting read.

The Hour I First Believed by Wally Lamb, another great read, is not about mental illness per se, unlike his other book, *This Much I Know is True*, which is about twins, one with schizophrenia and one without it. But on the last page of the book, after Columbine and 9-11, after Katrina and Iraq, after generations of skeletons in closets, literal and figurative, gender politics and political activism, after abolitionists and women's

prisons, and after post-traumatic stress syndrome, bouts of depression and mania, after child molestation, after the maze of human rights and human wrongs, after love overcoming hatred, after all that, imagine my surprise when on page 739 he lists under charitable donations (in case any of his readers are so inclined) number 1 of 3:

NAMI, National Alliance of
Mental Illness
www.nami.org/veterans
toll free: (800) 950-nami
infor@nami.org

plus a paragraph that goes on to describe the mental health issues of veterans and the help available to them.

I agree with Mr. Lamb that "it is not the if or who or what but the how." It is how we face our struggles every day and how we believe in our loved ones and their journey to recovery, be it for a day or a lifetime. So whether it be actual or make-believe, whether it sparkles like sequins or the edge of a knife, whether it be myth, magic or miracle, I choose to believe. How can I not?



Ages ago a student named Brett used to visit my university office

as a sort of haven. He was a good kid, I liked him a lot. But for no reason he or I understood, his voice would falter and his eyes suddenly fill with tears. Back then, neither of us had ever heard of bipolar disorder. Yet I did my ignorant best to draw him out, listen, console.

Twenty-eight years later, during halftime at a CU basketball game, a young man tapped me on the shoulder.

It was, of course, Brett. From across the Coors Event Center he'd spotting me seated there in the bleachers; a white-haired old guy by then, reveling in the peppy din of a thirty-seven piece brass band, and delighted that Ceal Barry's team, the Lady Buffs, were beating the shorts off their Big Twelve opponent, Iowa State.

Almost comically, however, Brett and I chatted at cross purposes. Whereas he kept thanking me "for all the support you gave me back then," I kept apologizing. "Brett," I told him, "you don't know how often I've kicked myself for not being more use to you." As players began returning

to the floor, he rose to go, then said, "Thirty years! That's how long I fought it before I learned what the trouble was. I'm on medication now, and doing great."

Thanks to my years in NAMI, last week's email from another former student, Maureen, found me somewhat better informed.

She had been bright, impulsive, and a writer with real talent. From time to time she had emailed me dispatches on the weirdness of teaching English in an underfunded North African university. Soon her infatuation with the exotic led to an African male, which in turn led to marriage. Then to a child, another child and the emails stopped.

Then, just last week, an email from her broke that silence. Now in New York with no money, three children, and a husband who was no help at all, she claimed to be "unrecognizably obese and hopeless forever, no way out." It was, as the French say, un cri du coeur, a call for help, if ever I heard one. What to do?

On the principle that something's better than nothing, my emailed response passed along much of Terry Wise's advice on dealing with depression (detailed elsewhere in this newsletter), and

emphasized that Maureen's hopelessness may be a phase but needn't be a fate.

I've yet to hear back, so who knows?

Well, you can't lose 'em all. Last night the surprise knock on our door turned out to be the brisk, upbeat, and middle-aged Brett, manuscript in hand, wanting my take on something he'd written.

"I didn't do it for publication," he said, "just wanted to better understand my story by telling it as a novel." Not for publication? Unheard of.

"That alone," I told him, "should make you an overnight celeb."

Inasmuch as I've yet to read the novel's first page, I can't say whether Oprah will be calling. Still, to have begun, persisted in, and finished a novel certainly confirms Brett's parting remark at that basketball game: "I'm on medication now, and doing great."

It won't happen, I know, but can't help imagining that on some fine evening the hand knocking at our door might be that of a middle-aged Maureen with her three happy children . . . and a manuscript.

Up Also Happens

by Reg Saner, Board Member

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

NAMI SUPPORT GROUPS

- ▶ **Support group for anyone touched by mental illness** (family members and consumers) - First and third Monday nights, 7-8:30 at the Boulder Mental Health Center (1333 Iris) in the Norton Room. Call AnneWeiher at 303-442-9209.
- ▶ **NAMI Connection support group**, starting soon in Broomfield. See article on page 7.

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/partners of people with bipolar disorder and depression, 2nd and 4th Mondays, 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 303/492-5680 for information about the Sutherland Seminar Series. The 12-week educational series on bipolar disorder is offered twice yearly. Attend 1 session or all 12.

SUICIDE SURVIVORS

- ▶ Free support group for family and friends of someone who has died from suicide. Longmont United Hospital, 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 5:30-7:00 p.m. Contact sherri@mctherapy.com, (303) 532-7904

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 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.

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.

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. If it is more convenient for you, you can join online at www.nami.org using a credit card.

- \$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**
