Strategic Direction and Renewal for NAMI Texas—No Easy Victories

Mark Hardwick, NAMI Texas President

We have had a difficult year of transition and challenge for our organization. During this transition period, the support from the staff and volunteers continues to be extraordinary. Thanks to all who have helped. In my view there is a lot going on that are real pluses for our organization – after an exhaustive search Dianne Bisig, a new and energetic Executive Director joined NAMI and has provided stability and positive direction for the staff and the organization. On the Consumer Council front Janet Paleo and her team received a National NAMI consumer award and continue to come up with many creative and needed services. Joe Lovelace was named public policy consultant and, with Jackie Shannon and the Public Policy Committee, is leading us forward on many complex and controversial public policy issues. We have a nationally recognized Visions For Tomorrow education program thanks to Linda Zweifel and many other dedicated volunteers and supporters. We need to celebrate and build on these successes and the many small and large strides NAMI has made in the past year.

Given the lack of funding and the state of Texas being in the bottom 25% for services; ironically, we are seen as one of the stronger state organizations within the NAMI family. It says a lot about the personal dedication and tenacity of many individuals. But, paraphrasing Robert Frost, “We have miles to go before we sleep.”

I am delighted to report that the Board of Directors is reconstituted and re-energized. At the June meeting the Board encouraged me to start the difficult process of creating a “Statement of Strategic Direction” for NAMI Texas. This action responds to a need to re-examine the NAMI Texas vision, mission, goals, direction and organizational structure in light of a decade of minimal growth in membership and lack of improvement of services and the potential criminalization of mental illness, as well as dramatic changes unfolding in the fields of mental health, brain research and recovery education. I view this as a “Statement of Strategic Direction” rather than as a “Strategic Plan.” The word “plan” appears to be too presumptuous for an association such as ours that only moves forward through the voluntary actions and initiatives of its grassroots organizations and members – WE are an elected Board serving at the will and reflecting the needs and direction of our collective members. I am recommending that development of this “Strategic Direction” process begin immediately with a comprehensive survey and needs assessment of our membership. This fall, I will be seeking approval that we review the needs assessment input by convening a two day Strategic Direction Summit for all Board members, Regional Directors and Committee chairs. After the Summit, we then

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Board & Staff Listing

NAMI TEXAS
611 South Congress, Suite 430
Austin, TX 78704

Board Of Directors:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
President Mark Hardwick, Ph.D.
Vice President Ed Kuny
2nd Vice President Open
Secretary Elvia Ruelas
Treasurer Doug Elbert
Consumer Representative Janet Paleo

DIRECTORS:
Region 1 Greta Byars
Region 2 Linda Groom, Mike Katz, Jean Puckett,
Region 3 Leo DiValentino
Region 4 Jackie Shannon
Region 5 Evelyn Burgar, Mary Gibson
Region 6 Lorraine Deaneer
Region 7 Pat Adams, Lupe Morin
Region 8 Sundar Balakrishnan, Judy Biggs, Mary Robins
Region 9 Tom Jackson

NOMINATING COMMITTEE DIRECTOR:
Greta Byars

Staff:
Executive Director Dianne Bisig
Executive Assistant Marie Alkis
Director of Education Linda Zweifel
South Texas Regional Coordinator Sylvia DeLeon
Advocacy Coordinator Diana Kern
Outreach Support Specialist Lee Eddy
Accounts Rec./Pay.: Mandie Mantos
Receptionist Rachael Martinez

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MAIL TO:
NAMI Texas Gear
611 South Congress Ave.,
Suite 430,
Austin, TX 78704

NAMI Texas hosts Tiawanese delegation! See story, page 4.
The world of education is spinning with excitement through the collaborative efforts of our volunteers throughout the state. In review of the past year, NAMI Texas has experienced tremendous growth in our educational opportunities and received local and national recognition.

Moving forward with great energy and enthusiasm, NAMI Texas will focus much effort toward outreach and education to the rural communities and underserved population as well as the Asian, African American and Hispanic families. Because we are such a diverse state, flexibility with outreach and educational efforts will be considered and necessary as we fill the gaps in our communities and serve all populations.

Consumer education is broadening and there are trained teachers, presenters and support group facilitators in each region. Please join our efforts to establish a list of consumer volunteers who will join our collaborative focus of outreach to this population. With the enhancement of local and state efforts, national recognition for NAMI Texas’ consumers and more activities available throughout the state, many consumers will be involved with leadership roles, assisted by family, friends and professionals to broaden the horizon of consumer education and outreach.

NAMI national announced that NAMI Texas’ educational curriculum, Visions for Tomorrow, has been recognized in the top six education curricula. What an honor for NAMI Texas! From the collaborative efforts of volunteers, this recognition has been possible. If you would like a copy of the profile information, please contact the NAMI Texas office.

As we approach the beginning of another year of education, NAMI Texas is moving forward in filling the gaps and building communities of hope to our diverse population throughout Texas. The continued effort to enhance regional and community efforts through education and support will be our focus. We hope each of you will join our efforts – the best is yet to be!

Convention Education Meeting

There will be a Pre-Convention Education meeting scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on Friday, September 6, 2002. Please be sure to attend and hear first-hand the exciting news about NAMI Texas’ education, support groups and presentations for this next year. It will be very important for all presidents to attend and receive these materials for your local affiliate. The Education Committee has been working diligently to meet the needs as requested by the local affiliates. See you there!

Tips for Article Submissions

NAMI Texas welcomes articles of general interest submitted by consumers and regular contributors. Following are some suggestions that, when followed, will help us to format and incorporate your submitted materials quickly and accurately.

Planning your article
• Supply your article with an interesting title and catchy sub-head.
• Break your article up with sub-heads every few paragraphs. This keeps the reader from being overwhelmed with a page of solid text.
• Keep paragraphs a manageable length.
• Review your article for spelling and grammar, and revise any sentences that, on second reading, seem wordy.

Preparing your text file
Above all, learn to use the features of your word processor that will create a “bullet proof” text file, in particular: the tab ruler, the paragraph break and the line break. (If you’re an advanced user applying a stylesheet, you can use “Body text” and “sub 1” – we’ll override any others.)
What exciting and challenging times NAMI Texas is experiencing! No sooner than we moved our offices to a new location, did we host an open-house at our new home, have a board meeting and serve as host to members from NAMI Taiwan.

Our guests arrived compliments of NAMI National in collaboration with NAMI’s International Partnership Organization. They were able to visit Austin State Hospital and the Austin/Travis County MHMR Center. They also enjoyed a luncheon with members of the board of directors, members from NAMI Austin, with a view high a top of one of the tallest buildings in Austin. They also enjoyed real Texas Bar-B-Q at the Iron Works in Austin and an all American dinner of hot dogs and hamburgers in my back yard.

The very next week we were all attending the NAMI convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. The day before the conference began we attended the Latino Symposium. NAMI Texas had the most members attending this Symposium. NAMI’s across the country will be seeing and hearing a lot more from this group of dedicated individuals as we all become more sensitive to the different cultures we have in this great country and organization. What an experience!

It was a very busy and enjoyable week. There were so many people to meet and network with, so much to absorb in the many sessions offered: special entertainment to be a part of, enjoying an evening on the B&B River-Boat Cruise on the Ohio River, and attending the evening festivities at a special performance dance. A very special highlight for the Texas participants was the award presented to NAMI Texas and the NAMI Texas Consumer Council during the Consumer Council Luncheon and Awards Program for “Exemplary Achievement in Promoting Consumer Inclusion as a State NAMI Organization.”

I also had the opportunity to be a part of the NAMI Texas Executive Director group and our very own Janet Paleo, NAMI Texas Consumer Council Chair, was elected to serve as the NAMI National Consumer Council Chair.

Everyone from Texas returned re-energized and re-committed to making NAMI Texas one of the “Movers and Shakers” as an even stronger voice for individuals with mental illnesses.

NOW, it’s time to really buckle down and make final arrangements for our own Convention. If you have not already registered, please get your forms (and money) in as soon as you can. The committee has been working very hard to provide a convention filled with wonderful speakers, great learning opportunities, networking, entertainment and lots of fun.

This is my first NAMI Texas convention and I am looking forward to meeting and getting to know the NAMI Texas family.
National recognition for NAMI Texas and Consumer Council

Texas delegation to Latino Symposium

Honorary Texans!

Dinner cruise on Ohio River

Taiwan guests learn to grill
The State of the State

Where do we stand as a society and a state regarding mental health services and policies? What are the issues we face regarding resources and priorities? Don Gilbert, Commissioner of Texas Health and Human Services will open the convention with a review of the mental health resources in Texas. Jackie Shannon, Chair of the Texas Public Policy Council, will provide information and insight about the mental health issues coming up in the upcoming legislative session. Joe Lovelace and Bill Rago will get into the particulars of services when they provide an overview of the recommendation to TDHMHMR on the model by which TDHMHMR will purchase community mental health services in Texas. Sam Shore of TDHMHMR will describe an effort to redesign the way public mental health services are delivered, and Carole Matayas of ValueOptions will discuss a model for managed care for behavioral health: NorthSTAR. Carol Schaper and Sharon DeBlanc will make it all personal with their discussion on how to negotiate the system to obtain and maintain SSI/SSDI benefits.

Justice and Other Legalities

Whether the legislation that governs our society begins or ends in the courts is debatable, but the importance of the judicial system to mental health issues is not. Capacity for Justice Executive Director Genevieve Hearon has pulled together a “not to be missed” panel to discuss the issues involved in death penalty law and mental illnesses: Carlos Garcia, Attorney for Melvin Hale; George Parnham, Attorney for Andrea Pia Yates; Greg Wierchichocz, Attorney for Monty Allen Delk; and John Niland. This panel is one good reason to register early – seating for this luncheon event will be limited to 600!

Further dialogue on other legal issues will include “An Informed Debate about Assisted Outpatient Treatment” (Kendra’s Law) by Anna H. Gray and Jeannie Morris. The facts and fictions regarding prescription privileges for psychologists will be discussed by psychologists Amos Wolf and Joseph McCoy and physicians Joe Cunningham and Martha Leatherman. Vicki Spiggs, Dee Kifowit and Bonita White will provide a look at the progress of the Special Needs Offender Project for juveniles and adults, which focuses on the collaboration and cooperation of criminal justice system agencies and services. Renee Lovelace and Clyde Farrell will talk about how to plan for the future through Special Needs Trusts.

Chris Carson, M.D. crosses the barrier between legal and treatment issues when he discusses issues of restraint, seclusion and management of a psychiatric crisis.

Treatment and Recovery

When all is said, it is the personal dialogue that is most important to most of us. The dialogue with friends, therapists, and doctors during treatment and recovery: What does it all mean? What’s available – now and in the future? Dr. Steven Pliszka, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio will share new information about the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD. Sub-
Legislative Training With the Pros

AOT Summit

Fort Worth considers issues

Board members at work

NAMI members deep in thought
Consumer Council Update

By Janet Paleo

Your NAMI Texas Consumer Council (NAMITXCC) has been very active and has many activities scheduled in the coming months. The NAMITXCC represented our state well at the National NAMI Convention. Three members of the NAMITXCC put on a presentation on how we started our Consumer Council. The presentation was well received with many folks asking questions and some consumers indicating that they want to move to Texas, as we were so progressive. NAMI Texas also won the National NAMI Consumer Council award for their inclusion of consumers within their state. In large part, this was due to our Consumer Council.

We finished our Operating Procedures, which were approved by the NAMI Texas Board Executive Committee. In this, the methodology changed of how the Consumer Council Director’s position on the NAMI Texas Board of Directors is nominated. In order to have Directors who have an understanding of the time commitment and ongoing issues, nominations must come from within the members of the NAMITXCC for the Consumer Council Director’s position on the NAMI Texas Board of Directors.

As for the nine regional consumer positions on the NAMITXCC, consumers in that region who submit an application to the NAMITXCC Nominating Committee will fill these. Three regions each year will elect NAMITXCC Representatives. In the year 2002, regions 1, 4 and 7 will have elections, in the year 2003, regions 2, 5, and 8 will have elections and in 2004, regions 3, 6, and 9 will have elections. This rotation will then repeat beginning in 2005. The entire NAMITXCC Operating Procedures will be posted soon to the NAMI Texas website on the consumers page.

Additionally, the NAMI Texas Consumer Council will be bringing the NAMI Consumer Signature Program “In Our Own Voices” to Texas. This consumer-led program helps eliminate the stigma and stereotyping of consumers while promoting the idea of recovery. The consumer-led training will be in August and trained consumer presenters receive money to do presentations. Additionally, the intensive two-day training will teach consumers how to facilitate the program to a variety of audiences. This audience would include consumers, family members, professionals or other groups. A presentation of this program will occur at the NAMI Texas Convention on Friday night for all who are interested. The Council has applied for a $2,000 grant to pay the initial fees of the presenters.

The next NAMITXCC meeting will be before the convention. All NAMITXCC Representatives will attend the State convention to ensure that consumers from each of the regions can meet their representatives and learn how to get more involved in the consumer movement in Texas. The Council will also set up a booth for the convention.

On a sad note, Melanie Ortloff, our Junior Consumer Council Director, has resigned because of personal reasons. Reginald Thurman from Region 2 will fill her seat on the Board of Directors. He will move up to Senior Consumer Director on the Board on January 1, 2003 as I finish my term of office. I will remain as the Past Chair to help assist in whatever way I am able.

The Consumer Council is starting to effect change in our state and in the lives of people with mental illness. NAMI Texas has started to develop the leadership of consumers and given consumers a voice within this organization. The growth of the Council will bring many good opportunities to consumers and promote recovery throughout our state. I am proud of all the members of our Council and of all they are accomplishing. We thank the members of NAMI Texas for giving us the opportunity to make a difference in not only our lives, but also the lives of others. What a great organization!

In Memory of Kathy Akin

NAMI Bastrop was saddened by the death of former NAMI Bastrop president Kathy Akin on July 8, 2002. Kathy was a caring, dedicated person who could “talk” mental illness to anyone who would listen. She served as President of NAMI Bastrop from 1999 to 2000. She was trained as a facilitator for support groups and spent countless hours on the phone talking and supporting families. Kathy loved her family, and her grandson was her pride and joy. She knew about and loved computers and sewing. Kathy will be remembered for her sense of humor and as her husband described her, “Kathy had a heart as big as the outdoors.” Kathy will be missed and we at NAMI Bastrop offer our support, condolences, thoughts and prayers to the Akin family during this sad and difficult time.

Norma G. Bangs
President, NAMI Bastrop
South Texas Report

By Sylvia De Leon, South Texas Regional Coordinator

Texas’ growing population and skyrocketing health care costs continue to negatively impact families and individuals with severe mental illness. The start of NAMI Texas’ outreach efforts in the Rio Grande Valley last year have served as a vital learning experience for all those involved. With new-found leadership in Dianne Bisig, Executive Director, who recognizes that organizational culture is just as important as a clear understanding of the cultural competence necessary to work towards better meeting the needs of minority and underserved populations, I think great positive growth is forthcoming for NAMI Texas.

Region 9 is inclusive of 11 vast counties, three of which alone (Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy) have a combined census (U.S. Census, 2000) of 924,772 (this figure is currently being challenged in court proceedings). It is estimated that this figure is actually 10% higher, which makes these three counties home to more than 1,084,709 Texas residents. If one takes into consideration the U.S. Surgeon General’s landmark study on mental illness, 1 out of 5 individuals suffers from a mental illness during his or her lifetime. This reality easily translates into approximately 216,942 people who will suffer from mental illness during their lifetime in these three Rio Grande Valley counties alone. Though not exempt from impacting factors such as poverty, unemployment, crime, juvenile delinquency, truancy, drug abuse, homelessness, and racial discrimination as one might find in other parts of Texas as well, this border region is unique with such an influx in migrating population from Mexico’s border that extends from Laredo to Brownsville. According to year 2000 statistics, 6 of these border counties, the majority of which are in Region 9, reflect a population of 89.1% Hispanics. The barriers to accessing mental health services are further complicated by language and so tailoring outreach for this vast underserved region is an overwhelming challenge. The translation of Journey of Hope and Visions for Tomorrow into Spanish has provided NAMI Texas another venue in reaching out to families in this area.

I have made a concerted effort this past year to personally educate myself about culture, cultural competence, diversity, and culturally sensitive approaches in order to gain a better understanding of the differences in ethnic and non-ethnic groups and their belief systems, cultural factors, behaviors, communication skills, and learning my community makeup.

A clear understanding of the words bilingual and bicultural have provided me some insight in effectively reaching our Hispanic families in this area. Being Hispanic, I thought that by mastering the linguistics, my job would be made easier but I have gained a greater appreciation for the cultural knowledge necessary to appropriately address NAMI Texas’ objective of increasing the understanding of mental illness in South Texas. My personal life growth experiences in reaching out to folks as it relates to mental illness have made it evident to me that “acceptance and respect for difference, continuing self assessment regarding culture, attention to the dynamics of difference, ongoing development of cultural knowledge and resources and flexibility within service models to works towards better meeting the needs of minority populations” (Cross et al., 1989) are invaluable to effective outreach.

One thing is abundantly clear: as a grassroots organization we have our work cut out for us in South Texas. It is for this reason that I was elated to have had the opportunity to attend NAMI’s National Convention recently in Cincinnati, Ohio for the first time with a personal commitment of gaining some knowledge to continue being a part of “Building Communities of Hope” for our South Texas area. The valuable information presented, networking and sharing of ideas of other Latino outreach efforts was exciting.

I am encouraged that we have planted many seeds of possible growth during this short period of time with the help of so many people. Our NAMI South Texas affiliate has good leadership under Stephanie Contreras who works tirelessly to help individuals and families, supportive and dedicated members who have come together in such a short period of time and as a struggling affiliate has more than doubled its membership from a year ago. NAMI Corpus Christi continues to remain strong and viable in education and support for the families and consumers with the unflinching efforts of Regional Director, Tom Jackson and his dedicated members who have an awesome NAMI presence in their community. Our other affiliate, NAMI Laredo under the longtime leadership of Elvia Ruelas, with assistance of dedicated members and leaders like Janice McFarland, Santa Gutierrez, Trini Salinas, and countless others continue their efforts in the west part of Region 9. Bridging of the vast territory gaps between these established affiliates and areas in between continues to be a challenge. There was no established framework

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Following are nominees for positions up for election on the NAMI Texas Executive Board and Consumer Council.

Region 1 Consumer Council: Monte Anderwald

To all who live with, have a family member, or work with person’s living with a Brain Disorder, I would like to thank you for the chance I’ve had the last year an a half, representing you as a voice in Region 1 as a Texas NAMI Consumer Council Representative. I was very honored to be asked by Janet Paleo, who has been the lone ranger for over three years. I can truly say at first I wasn’t sure what the Consumer Council was. I just knew consumers, and family members, as well as others with all types of mental illness, from all levels needed more of a voice! For me the last few jobs I’ve had in the past 10 plus years, have had fake or slow outcomes working with the mentally ill. I see NAMI National working down the through each level (State, Local affiliates, and satellites), having a stronger unity and upward backing, and a willingness to work with an open mind. To be just a piece of the puzzle that fits with the other organizations to make the wheels turn to get things accomplished for persons with a brain disorder. NAMI tries to take action on uses and policies in a timely manner, as well as respond responsible with our financing, and that’s exciting. I have also learned a lot this past few years working together with the other eight regional reps and have more to take in as I continue to grow with in myself and the council expands.

I’m a forty-one-year old Christian man who lives each day with Diabetes and it’s complications, and a brain disorder.

Region 4 Consumer Council: Andrew David “Andy” Gibson

Age: 20
Running for: Consumer Council Representative – Region IV
Diagnosis: Type II Bi-Polar Disorder

Howdy,

My name is Andy Gibson and I am running for the Region 4 seat on the NAMI Texas Consumer Council. I am new to the Region 4 area, but I bring a lot of experience to my new home. While being involved in NAMI Lubbock, I served as the Consumer Support Group Facilitator for my affiliate as well as devised a NAMI pilot support group called “Coping with Bi-Polar.” It has most certainly been rewarding to see those groups (we now have three of them) flourish like they have. I also was very active on the state level. Monte Anderwald, who has been somewhat of a mentor to me, took me under his wing and showed me the ropes of everything I needed to know while serving as both an affiliate representative for Region 1 while also being Mr. Anderwald’s alternate at the state level. It was while doing these things that I was able to get my foot in the door on the state level and help out the best I could on establishing a solid Consumer Council.

Over the past few months, I have been able to get involved with the NAMI Texas Consumer Council and I must say that it has been a very rewarding experience. The current council is a model of

Region 7 Consumer Council: Martha Ortegon

My name is Martha Ortegon and I am running for the NAMI Texas Consumer Council Representative for Region 7. I have been a member of NAMI since 1999. I want Representative of Region 7 because as a native San Antonion and a consumer of mental health services I understand the need to improve the quality of services that consumers receive. The only way to improve these services is by ensuring that the voice of the consumer is heard. I am the right candidate for the job that because I speak up and fight for the right of representation at all levels of the system.

I would like to educate consumers to be advocates; because only by being advocates can we truly have a voice in systems that pertain to us. To this end, I have been instrumental in writing a Community Action Grant for a Leadership Academy for consumers by consumers in South Texas. I also teach “Team Solutions” to empower consumers to take control over their illness. My input was crucial in the development of the Deputy Mobilization Outreach Team, which is San Antonio’s jail diversion for consumers. Currently, I serve as the Vice-President for NAMI San Antonio South and soon will be the President of this affiliate. Other roles that I have filled include Secretary, Treasurer and Co-facilitator of a monthly support group meeting. Additionally, I sit on the Planning Advisory Committee and the Quality Assurance Committee for the Center for Health Care Services.

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Junior Consumer Director: Donna Durbin

Donna is originally from San Diego, California. Her zest for life and need to help others is evident in everything she does. Donna is a full-time wife and mother of two, has worked tirelessly as a Domestic Engineer, as well as running her own business from her home for several years. She is currently working to help support her family. She is active in her Community Church, NAMI Concho Valley Organization, and her own children’s school and activities. Donna is a Mental Health Consumer dedicated to the recovery process in the lives of other consumers. She is presently serving as the Consumer Regional Representative for Region 4 and facilitates a Consumer Support group. Her desire is to continue this effort, as it has been very beneficial. Donna’s desire is to serve on a State level to fill the position of Jr. Consumer Director. Her dream is to continue Education for herself as well as others in all forms of Mental Health Issues and to be another VOICE heard in honor of all people suffering from Serious Mental Illness.

Nominating Committee: Bette Cox

Bette Cox, current Treasurer of NAMI Tarrant County, is running for the Nominating Committee. Bette has held the position of Treasurer for the past 6 years. She believes her current employment, Regional Credit Assistant, has prepared her for the nominating position. Bette says laughing, “I can use my same persuasive skills in collecting outstanding accounts as we start to collect nominees.” Bette is a family member that faithfully serves NAMI Tarrant County not only as Treasurer, but has put together many newsletters, serves dinner each month at the regular meeting, teaches Journey of Hope, co-leads a support group, plays a major role in all special events, including annual Christmas Party, annual Celebration of Champions, multiple parking lot sales, two trips to the Austin Rallies, and has attended each State Convention since becoming a board member. Her goal is to be inclusive of all.

President: Linda Groom

Linda Groom, current President of NAMI Tarrant County, is a candidate for NAMI Texas President. At this time, Linda is on the NAMI Texas Board as a representative of Region 2 and is the current Education Committee Chair. Linda’s involvement with NAMI began after being a co-recipient of NAMI Tarrant County’s Community Service Award in recognition of her dedication to consumers and families in her day-to-day employment as a property manager. She recalls not knowing if she and her co-worker had done anything noteworthy which would qualify them for this award. However, a NAMI family member whose son lived on her property assured her that her thoughtfulness and consideration helped to make a difference in the lives of the residents affected by mental retardation and mental illness. Since 1993, Linda has served on the NAMI Tarrant County Board, beginning with Board Member-at-Large, Vice President, and now President. Additionally, she serves on various committees in Tarrant County such as Paradise Center Resource Board, Mental Health Advisory Committee for Peter Smith Health Network, and Death Review Committee for MHMRTC. Linda is a Journey of Hope teacher and support group facilitator, who contributes to various other projects such as Habitat for Humanity in Tarrant County, who built the first house specifi-

Secretary: Judy Biggs

Judy Biggs lives in Galveston and has been a member of NAMI Gulf Coast since 1991. She was vice President for six years, co-chaired the fund raising galas

Please acquaint yourself with these nominees as you will have a chance to vote for our 2003 leadership at the upcoming state convention.

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disorders. Just a side note, I feel the type II Diabetes came about through my sedentary life style while in my depressions, which caused over eating and other negative behaviors. As of today, I know of no one in my family who has diabetes. I was diagnosed in 1986 at Baylor Hospital in Dallas with a three-month commitment. I didn’t really take control of my illness and start truly living again until I moved to Lubbock, Texas, (which I think is one of the only reasons I moved here). When I stared learning more about my illness and moving on the knowledge I’ve received, that’s when my recovery took place. To me, recovery is not a cure, but a life long effort that we continue to manage, has we become ready.

Here are some credits to my name that would show you the ways I have prepared to help others with brain disorders as your Region 1 Representative for the Texas Consumer Council. I’ve had several types of leadership training’s, which I feel is a course that needs to be taken often. I’ve gone though the Texas Medication Implementation Algorithm (TMA) weekend workshops and worked in Lubbock with the training program, as well as the pilot site. I’ve taken the Peer-to-Peer support classes, Grant Writing, Conflict resolution course though Texas Mental Heath Consumers (TMHC) and South Plains College. I take an active part in Sunday Morning services at Metropolitan Community Church as well as been in a Chair- person on several committees. I also from time to time volunteer for Contact Lubbock, a suicide hot line and referral center. I’m certified as a Special Education Teacher and have taught in Ft. Worth and Lubbock. Therefore, at this time I really feel I am willing to make the commitment to continue my recovery, to take chance, make changes in my life as well, so that I can better sever my peers with brain disorders.

I have many goals for Region 1, as well as for Texas, but here are the most important at this time to me.
1. To give persons living with a Brain Disorder more hope and empowerment.
   a. Through TIMA, Team Solution, and other courses like this.
   b. Through support groups, such as: Peer-to Peer, Bi-Polar,
   c. Through multi-media such as Living with Schizophrenia, In Our Own Voices, and others.
2. To get a program started to bridge the gap for those who want to cross over from institutional ways of life, and get back into the work force (what ever that space and place may be)
   a. Through the Fountain House model sometimes called the Club House.
3. To continue to Eliminate Stigma within NAMI and in our communities
   a. Though educational programs.
   b. Though workshops
   c. Though Panel Groups for Health Professionals, Community Leaders, Local MHMR’S, Our Local NAMI’S and Affiliates.
4. To get more of our NAMI consumers more actively involved Locally and State wide
5. Our own State Convention.
   a. To show the benefits of meeting with others across the state that have a brain disorders.
   b. To get people more enthusiastic, by showing the fun one could have at our State Conference.
   c. To get more consumers to speak at the conferences.
   d. To get more funding for conferences, by way of grants, private donation, pharmaceutical co. and other, new fund-raisers.

Last but not least, anyone who as the desire to work, and become a voice for others, could be a part of this exciting new Consumer Council Team or Affiliate Rep. for Region 1 or your own local region. At this time I’m still willing to serve for the next term. I want to continue to help set up more of the foundation of this position, for the Next Group of New Consumer Council Representatives.

Remember all voting will take place in Austin this year, during the NAMI State Convention.

WILL I SEE YOU?

Always keep in mind, All things are Possible if you first Try and then Ask for Help and Support!

P. S. Feel free to contact me at anytime if any questions.
My e-mail: speetalk62@hotmail.com or At my home: (806) 793-7906

Sincerely,
Monte Anderwald
Texas Region 1, Consumer Council Representative

Martha Ortegon,
continued from page 10

I am continually seeking opportunities to speak out for the rights of consumers. I am presenting at the NAMI National Conference in Ohio on the “Building of a Consumer Council”. If elected to continue representing Region 7, I promise to be available to help further the consumer movement in Region 7. The only way to stop the stigma and discrimination is to speak out and educate those who do not understand. I am equal to this task. Thank you for your vote.
Proposed NAMI Texas By-Laws Amendments

The following proposed NAMI Texas by-law amendments will be on the 2002 Convention Ballot as RESOLUTIONS. They will NOT be considered as actual changes and/or amendments for this election.

1. “To ensure effective representation of all the members, NAMI Texas will conduct statewide elections by mail ballots. The ballots will be distributed after the nominees for each position have been introduced by means of the newsletter, including those persons running for Consumer Director positions.”

2. “To ensure the voice of the Texas Consumers, NAMI Texas shall uphold and financially support a standing Consumer Council as an integral part of its grassroots organization.”

3. “In accordance with the NAMI National Bylaws recommendations, that one-third, 1/3 of the Board of Directors by NAMI Families or Affiliates. That Associate members be individuals or representatives of Corporate or Organizations that support the purposes of NAMI National and NAMI Texas. They will be requested to pay memberships to NAMI Texas and shall be invited to all privileges of membership including voting and holding office.”

Each of the above proposed amendments and will be further studied by the NAMI Texas By-laws committee, and submitted to the NAMI Texas Board of Directors for their review for inclusion within the appropriate location in the current NAMI Texas By-laws. Any additions and/or changes will then be presented to the Membership to be voted on at the 2003 Convention.

Please accept our apologies and thanks to all the individuals who worked on the above proposed changes or additions to the current By-laws. It was after careful review and consideration that it was determined that each of the proposed amendments should have further study and that they should be presented for vote this year as resolutions. We appreciate your understanding as we move forward in addressing these issues.

The following By-Laws Amendment WILL be voted on at the 2002 Convention:

Article VIII
Fiscal Year:

Changes are in italics and bolded

The fiscal year of NAMI Texas shall begin on the first day of January (September) and end on the last day of December (August) of each year.

This change will provide more consistent management as it places NAMI Texas on the same fiscal year as the Texas Department of MHMR.
and his colleagues from UT-Health Science Center/San Antonio, and Dr. Richard Wilcox from the College of Pharmacy at UT Austin. Through these presentations drug abuse and co-occurring mental disorders will address the latest project research, the neurobiology of addictions, and psychosocial aspects of managing the problem. Dr. Andrew Harper and Dr. Sonja Randle, child and adolescent psychiatrists from the University of Texas Medical School at Houston, will tackle the question of whether we should medicate our children and address the issue of multiple medications, discuss the differences in prescribing for children and adults, explain what drugs can and cannot achieve, and explain how caregivers can become better informed about medications taken to help advocate for their child. On the other end of the spectrum, Dr. Robert Jimenez will discuss “Mental Health Issues in the Geriatric Population” and “Social Phobia, Panic Attacks and Other Anxiety Disorders.” Schizophrenia will be the topic for Kale Jordon and Lisa Carillo of ACT Services of Texas – and their clients who will discuss their experiences. Mark Hardwick, President of NAMI Texas will moderate a panel of experts on Medications, providing the opportunity for us to review what’s news, what’s old, and what’s on the horizon.

Dr. Xavier Amador, Saturday’s luncheon speaker, addresses the first step to recovery in his book “I Am not Sick, I Don’t need Help—A Practical Guide for Families and Therapists.” Dr. Amador is now a member of the NAMI National Education staff working on programs to help consumers and families deal with chronic and persistent mental illness. NAMI advocates Doug Elbert and Linda Zweifel will discuss a self-help program for recovery, presenting techniques to supplement medications. Barbara Roos of Harris County MHMRA will address a comprehensive treatment plan for psychosocial rehabilitation. Sherron Lee Cantu’s personal story of recovery will highlight the spiritual aspects of hope, faith and strength.

Multicultural Sensitivity and Stigma

What does it mean to be sensitive to another’s culture? Rick Ybarra puts it well when he asks, “How Can You Help Me If You Don’t Understand My Culture?” Dr. Rhan Bailey from The University of Texas Medical School in Houston also examines cultural issues involved in the diagnosis and treatment of brain disorders. NAMI’s commitment to cultural sensitivity is evident in the translations offered at the convention. Father Gus Scicard and Roger Morin will be assisting in the translation of selected workshops from English to Spanish.

Support, Fun, and Relaxation

Some heavy stuff huh? Where are we going to put all these ideas to words and formulate our opinions – where are we going to dialogue with friends? The Friday night reception will provide time to relax, eat, and visit with friends. A hospitality suite for consumers will offer a place to relax, enjoy drinks and snacks and meet new people. Exhibitor booths are gathering places for participants to exchange ideas while getting information on the latest treatment and support systems. Saturday night will provide an opportunity to enjoy the amenities of the hotel while eating hamburgers by the pool and listening to the bluegrass band “We Sorta Tried.”

During the convention, Louis Baudoux of Austin State Hospital will discuss coping strategies available through music therapy, and Ruth Jansa will provide direction on how to use “Yoga on the Go” as a way to de-stress.

Doing It All!

While the variety and number of workshops mean choice – there is a way to take home a piece of it all. Tapes will be available for selected workshops for $10.00 each.

PLEASE CHECK THE NAMI WEBSITE (http://texas.nami.org) for program updates, registration materials, and other information about the convention.

Submission Tips, continued from page 3

• Don’t use spacebar spaces as a formatting device—we have to remove them. Instead, use your word processor’s tab ruler in conjunction with paragraph returns and line breaks.

• No need to put two spaces between sentences. In typeset material, one space is all you need for visual separation.

• Learn the difference between a line break and a paragraph break—and use them appropriately.

• Paragraph indents will be created when the article is typeset—don’t insert a tab or spacebar spaces at the beginning of every paragraph.

• Don’t insert extra paragraph returns between paragraphs—just use one return to start a new paragraph.

• Use tabs to set off bullet list items. Also use tabs to create any tabular item such as a table. Don’t use multiple tabs to move text across a line— instead use one tab and set a position on your word processor’s tab ruler.

• Use bolding and italics for emphasis, but use underlining only sparingly, if at all. Note that type set in ALL CAPS is very hard to read—so try to avoid.

Graphics and Images

Supply digital images as 300 PPI greyscale TIFF files. Other art should be in EPS format. Check with Lee Eddy for additional help in sizing submitted art.

If you adhere to these practices, you’ll be helping us to present your information in an attractive and readable format.
Congratulations to NAMI Texas for receiving the National NAMI Consumer Council Award given to the state that exemplifies consumer inclusion. I will be presenting the award to the Board at the next Board meeting. There were two of the NAMI Texas Consumer Council (NAMITXCC) members present along with Linda Zweifel, Silvia DeLeon and Dianne Bisig. I am grateful for the support of everyone who helped start this reality of ensuring that consumers have an active voice in this organization. I especially thank Tom Hamilton and Lynn Lasky who helped start this work. I also want to thank Joe Lovelace for encouraging me to run for the Consumer Director’s position four years ago. Also, thanks to the many members who gave me the support and courage to go on—especially Leo DiValentino, Hal Whitfield and Bonnie Bowman. These people were instrumental in having the voice of the consumers heard in NAMI Texas.

I wish all of you could have heard the presentation done by the members of the NAMITXCC. It was outstanding. To see the personal growth of the members because of being on the council, and to see the leadership ability displayed was awesome. Kudos to all the members of the consumer council for all the work and leadership that they have shown. Thank you to the members from the NAMI Texas organization that showed up to support our NAMITXCC at their presentation.

So many of the consumers from other states were aching to find out how to find acceptance as we have here in Texas. One even told me that she is thinking of moving to Texas as she has family here. That is membership growth, when people want to move to your state because you are showing acceptance of them and their illness. NAMI Texas you have much to be proud of, not only the award, but the movement you have made to eliminating the stigma by listening, accepting, and encouraging the people that this organization is all about. Thank you personally for myself, as I too, have grown immensely because of this organization. In fact, I was elected to be the chair of the National NAMI Consumer Council. This would not have been possible just six years ago. By your inclusion of me, I have grown into a leadership position and have found that life is possible after diagnosis. I now thank you for giving others the opportunity you gave me. Congratulations and thank you again.

Judy’s favorite activity is Celebration of Champions that recognizes the “true champions” in the battle against mental illness. As a family member, Linda firmly believes that support and involvement of consumers must always be a priority in the NAMI Texas organization. If elected President, Linda would like to focus on additional support from the state level for all local affiliates, providing resources that would enhance their abilities to reach out in the communities through education, support and advocacy efforts.

The NAMI Texas E-Group is a wonderful resource tool for any individual wanting to keep abreast of news and issues related to mental health. Presently the group has close to 200 members exchanging ideas, information, stigma alerts, as well as medical breakthroughs and legislative topics dealing with mental health service funding and individual’s rights to mental health care. The service is provided to you via e-mail and is free of charge. If you are interested in joining the NAMI Texas E-Group, please e-mail Lee Eddy, NAMI Texas Outreach Support Specialist, at lee@texami.org with the subject line of “NAMI TEXAS E-Group-Subscribe” and you’ll be added to our informative online community.
AOT Summit Results

On July 25 and 26, representatives of the NAMI Texas Public Policy Committee along with some invited participants, held a summit to determine an official policy position on the issue of Assisted Outpatient Treatment.

A special thanks goes to Eli Lilly and Jack Jones who underwrote the cost of the Summit, with no expectations other than it would facilitate a democratic process.

NAMI Texas could not have managed to hold or conduct the meeting to the desired level of quality without the participation of each of the invited presenters: Jonathan Stanley, from the Treatment Advocacy Center; Judge Guy Herman, Probate Judge in Travis County; Beth Mitchell, Advocacy, Inc.; Kim McPherson, the Mental Health Association in Texas; Dr. Joel Feiner, psychiatrist from Dallas, TX; and Lynn Rutland, Executive Director of the MHMR Services of the Concho Valley.

The goal of the summit was to have a full and fair deliberation on the merits of Assisted Outpatient Treatment before arriving at a decision. The two questions we had to answer:

a. Should Texas amend its involuntary outpatient treatment law to provide for Assisted Outpatient Treatment, i.e. Kendra’s Law?
b. Should NAMI Texas lead in the process?

Unanimous responses were given to both questions after a long afternoon’s deliberation.

We concluded that the present Texas involuntary outpatient commitment law is adequate and need not be amended; however, we agreed that it should be used more frequently.

We identified the barriers to usage of the current law:
1. A deep and wide lack of understanding of the mechanics of the law by the Judiciary, Law Enforcement, Mental Health Providers, Consumers and Families;
2. A lack of community collaboration between the groups mentioned in #1, along with other community stakeholders, to put in place mechanisms for implementation, use and oversight of Involuntary Outpatient Treatment;
3. A lack of a defined set of services, based upon best practices, that would be delivered under a court order in return for the patient’s surrender of his individual autonomy; and
4. A lack of sufficient funds to insure the delivery of the outpatient treatment ordered.

The group recommended that NAMI Texas submit a written report to the Senate Health & Human Services Committee and the House Public Health Committee outlining our conclusions and our intent to lead in the process.

The group also endorsed NAMI Texas full pursuit, in this next Legislative session, of the funding for the Adult “At Risk” Legislative Appropriations Request by TDMHMR.

However, NAMI Texas will propose this funding NOT be allocated across the state in the traditional manner. Instead, we will encourage the Legislature and TDMHMR to structure the funding to motivate programmatic and behavioral change.

Pilot funding would be allocated to those communities who put forth a response to a request for a proposal that eliminates and overcomes the barriers to effective treatment in the community of the “At Risk” Adult population, including the use, where appropriate, of Involuntary Outpatient Commitment rather than Involuntary Inpatient Commitment.

Joe Lovelace and I have been charged to prepare a preliminary report for our Public Policy Committee, which we will review and act upon prior to the annual NAMI Texas meeting in September. This policy position will then need to be ratified by the full NAMI Texas Board of Directors at their meeting immediately following the convention.

In the meantime, the ripples from this effort will continue to be felt across this state as our interested groups continue to work together to improve services for our fellow Texans who live with serious mental illness.

Board Meeting

The next NAMI Texas board meeting will be held on Sunday, September 8 from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM. This will occur at the close of the 18th Annual Convention at the Omni Southpark Hotel in Austin.
will conduct focus groups in each region to get input from the community and grassroots membership. This process will be different from past attempts at planning because never before have so many members been given the chance to be directly involved in developing the mission and strategic direction for NAMI Texas.

Based on these extensive process and member inputs, I will propose a guiding set of principles, structures and systems for the BOD approval. It is my hope that these principles will point us in a unified and collective direction and still leave considerable room for the grassroots to build upon over the years with new initiatives and specific action steps. The “statement of strategic direction” needs to be a “living document” subject to change as we go forward.

At John Gardner once noted, there are “No Easy Victories” in the public policy arena. As we start to develop our strategic direction, we need to assess our priorities and get input from the grassroots on the direction for NAMI Texas. Our point of view needs to be ground in the central idea that we are asking for things that are an entitled human right not favors or handouts when the state feels they can afford it.

It is time for all NAMI members to realize that although we have come a long way; our persistence and steadfast tweaking of the system have at times fallen on deaf ears. Ignorance, fear and money are no longer acceptable excuses for inaction. America has the resources to solve the mental health problems in our communities and we must renew our commitment to reach out and educate and stop taking no for an answer when it comes to affordable services and support.

What public policy leaders are lacking is the will to do something about neurological brain disorders that strike six out of ten families in America. The death and devastation in the mental health arena may not be as dramatic as September 11th but the slow death and loss of loved ones’ lives is an invisible daily happening in each of our communities.

In NAMI, we have worked hard to educate ourselves about mental illness and its devastating impact on consumers and families. At times it is frustrating to keep the struggle going, but we must never forget our vision to create opportunities for a quality of life for consumers and eventually eradicate stigma and the negative effects of neurological brain disorders. We are learning that to get help from under funded and overworked systems we must educate the public, which ignores or does not see severe and chronic mental illness as a priority social issue.

Now it is up to each and every one of us to realize that individual initiative is unstoppable and that a more forceful approach to change is ennobling. We must continue our efforts to improve affordable housing, insurance parity, Social Security responsiveness, more effective outpatient treatment options, prison reform and education/support of families and consumers among many others.

My call to action is simple and straight. It is a process with four initiatives creating a renewed and revitalized “social movement” for NAMI Texas:

1. Changing the culture of NAMI. Develop a new “Strategic Direction” for NAMI Texas. Reorganization of NAMI into strong regional and local grassroots change advocates. The state office and staff will provide the best practices models and technical assistance to make this a reality.

2. We must reach out beyond the mental health communities to create awareness and a desire for change in the public. The public must start to hear and feel the inhumane way many of our loved ones are being treated.

3. Increase and expand membership. Within three years, let us celebrate that we have increased our membership by 100%. Each of us needs to reach out and bring in one new member to the NAMI Texas family every year for the next three years. The population to select from is over 2 million and we have less than 10,000 members.

4. Continue to strengthen the State office infrastructure (management process, budgeting, staffing and systems) and develop responsive program and technical assistance for our grassroots organizations.

In conclusion, I want to remind us all that we can make a difference and that this strategic direction process will provide us an opportunity as individuals and as a community to learn, share and set our agenda for the future. As Margaret Mead, the famous anthropologist said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful and concerned citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

South Texas Report, continued from page 9

simply a vision of closing those gaps together so that we could share with others NAMI’s vision and mission of hope through education, support, and advocacy.

NAMI Texas is very excited about our continued outreach endeavors specific to South Texas in the coming year with new ideas, new energy, and the new leadership brought by Dianne to our organization. As Regional Coordinator, I can certainly coordinate efforts of networking, partnerships, and community development, but it will take coming together as a NAMI family to “Build our Communities of Hope.” I am convinced that objectivity and focus can and will strengthen our cause and together we can make a difference because of the dedication and perseverance of so many folks who care.
represents every consumer in our great state as well as reminds me that mental illness does not discriminate. It crosses over every social, cultural, and ethnic background.

There are several things that I hope to address, if elected to represent Region 4. Education is a big part of my platform. A vote for me is a guarantee that all six affiliates in the Region 4 area will see the training and implementation of the consumer education program “Team Solutions.” I believe that knowledge is power and that, without these certain programs in place, we will not be able to move forward together, in order to better support and advocate for ourselves as well as be proactive when it concerns our own individual treatment.

As you might have already been able to see, I believe in networking with other affiliates. Therefore, I promise to work closely with every affiliate in my region and will do my best to help meet the needs that their consumers face, especially when it comes to education and support. I care about those, who are like myself and I want y’all to know that I am very easily accessible and am willing to help you out to the best of my abilities.

Finally, I promise to never make a decision without first asking how my region feels about it. When you are a representative, you go to session every quarter and sometimes will have to vote on certain issues that are very important. Because I represent you, the consumer who resides in the Region IV area, I need to know how you feel about the topics that are being discussed and voted upon and how they might affect you in the long run. That's why you should elect me. I will represent you, regardless of my thoughts or beliefs, come voting time. Isn’t that the kind person you want to represent your region?

So, when it comes time to vote, do not settle for anything but the best.

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Andy Gibson, continued from page 10

Conquering mental illness and destroying the stigma/discrimination takes work every day of the year.

Help NAMI Texas to shape a better future for those with brain disorders by joining our COMMUNITY OF OPEN MINDS: Individual donors whose ongoing contributions help Texans every day!

I want to join NAMI Texas’ Community of Open Minds! Please select by checking one of the following levels:

- Donor          Up to $99
- Friend         $100 to $499
- Special Friend $500 to $999
- Sponsor        $1,000 to $2,999
- Patron         $3,000 to $4999
- Benefactor     $5000 and above

Open Your Mind

I will send my contribution (please check one)  
- monthly  
- quarterly  
- annually

Name:  
Address:  
City:  State:  ZIP:  E-mail:  FAX:  Telephone:

Please cut along dotted line and remit with check or money order payable to NAMI Texas, 611 South Congress Avenue, Suite 430, Austin, TX 78704

NAMI Texas is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization and all donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Contributors at all Community of Open Minds levels will receive the NAMI Texas News and will be recognized in future issues.
Board members Visit New NAMI Texas Offices
Join Us!

Working together we can improve the quality of life for persons with mental illness.

NAMI Texas Membership Application Form

Please clip and mail to: NAMI Texas, 611 South Congress, Suite 430, Austin, TX 78704

NOTE: This form is NOT for renewing a current or expired membership. Contact your local affiliate to find out how to renew your membership.

Name: ______________________________________________________________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip: _______________________________________________________________________________

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☐ I wish to make a tax-deductible contribution to help NAMI Texas to improve the quality of life for persons with serious mental illnesses. Please accept my donation of $ ______