

North Soundings

Public Meetings in the North Sound Area, Fall 2003

Meeting/Event	October	November	December*
NSRSN Advisory Board	Tue. 10/7, 1:00 PM	Tue. 11/4, 1:00 PM	Tue. 12/2 1:00 PM
NSRSN Board of Directors	Thur. 10/9 1:30 PM	Thur. 11/13, 1:30 PM	Thur. 12/11 1:30 PM
Island County MH Advisory Board	Mon. 10/27 10 AM	Mon. 11/24, 10 AM*	Mon. 12/22, 10 AM*
San Juan County MH Advisory Board	Mon. 10/20 11:50 AM	Mon. 11/17 11:50 AM	Mon. 12/15, 11:50 AM
Skagit County MH Advisory Board	Mon. 10/6 Noon	Mon. 11/3 Noon	Mon. 12/1 Noon
Snohomish County MH Advisory Board	Mon. 10/13 5:45 PM	Mon. 11/10, 5:45 PM	NO DEC. MEETING
Whatcom County MH Advisory Board	Mon. 10/13 Noon	Mon. 11/10 Noon	Mon. 12/8 Noon
Holidays – NSRSN Office Closed		Veterans Day 11/11 Thanksgiving 11/26 & 27	Christmas Day 12/25

* Due to holidays in November & December, meeting dates may be changed or cancelled. For more information, contact your County Coordinator.

Recovery Around the Sound

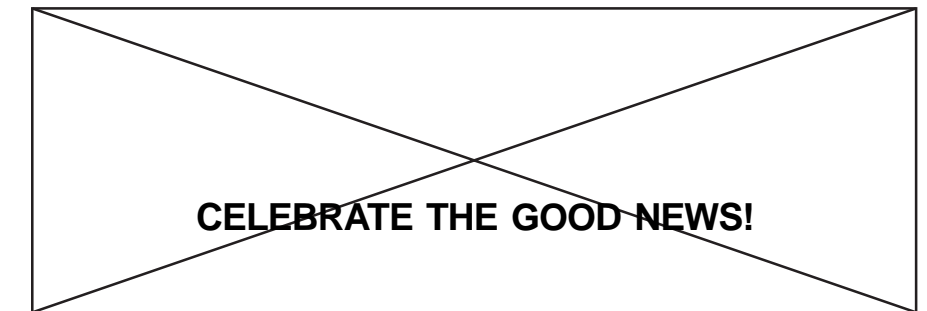
A publication of the North Sound Mental Health Administration
Regional Support Network for Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties

Volume 15 - Fall 2003

ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR - 10AM - 4PM - SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, CARNATION BUILDING, MOUNT VERNON

More than 60 artisans from Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties responded to our call for vendors to mount the historic Arts & Crafts Fair on Saturday, September 20, from 10am to 4pm. Consumers, family and friends, providers and caregivers, and staff from related county, state, and federal agencies will display their stunning creations at the Carnation Building.

"We're really looking forward to it," said Chuck Benjamin, Executive Director of the North Sound Mental Health Administration. "We're very excited about the variety and quality of the vendors' work--everything from Tribal art, basketry and beading to



handspun, handwoven woolens and a demonstration of spinning. We'll have ceramics, needlework of all kinds, handmade jewelry, dolls, toys, clowns, and some wonderful, unique items for the home and garden. I expect to find a great, one-of-a-kind gift for everyone on my Christmas list."

Skagit Children's services is presenting a supervised craft activity for children. "The kids will make their own crafts to take home with them." Superb food is also a feature. "Red Apple will barbeque burgers for the crowd. Kettle Korn will be there because you couldn't have a real fair without it. There will be home-baked goods, sweet, buttery corn on a stick, grown right here in the Skagit Valley, AND," he adds, pausing dramatically, "some authentic, pretty amazing Mexican food, including my personal favorite, tamales--chicken, pork, and green chile!"

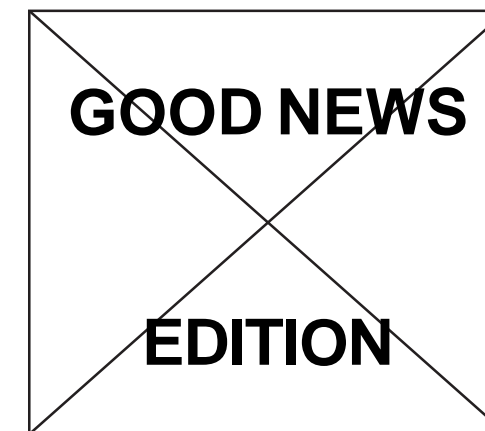
Live music will keep the mood of the Fair hopping. There's something for everybody, from soft guitar, celtic music, rock, women's barbershop, rancho, bluegrass, gospel, and Irish fiddle! "All in all," says Benjamin, "There's something for everyone."

The Arts & Crafts Fair is the brainchild of the North Sound Mental Health Community, composed of consumers, family and friends, caregivers and providers, and all the county, state, and federal agencies that are involved or allied with mental health in Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties. The purpose of the Fair is to fight stigma by:

- publicizing Recovery
- showcasing the skills and talents of our consumers
- educating the public

Another purpose is to give consumers a business opportunity. Says Benjamin, "Many people still believe mental illness is hopeless, that people who have one are dangerous and should be avoided. That can be as debilitating as the illness itself. It isn't yet widely known that today,

Continued on page 5.



IN THIS ISSUE:

Consumer Digest	2
Voice of the Advocate	3
Drum Beats	4
What's Happening	5
Spotlight on Recovery	6
Classified Ads	7
North Soundings	8

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North Sound Mental Health Administration
117 North First Street, Suite 8
Mount Vernon WA 98273

Consumer Digest

FACES OF RECOVERY

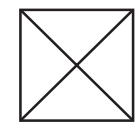
*The recent Poem and Story Contest, conducted by the North Sound Quality Review Team, resulted in sending to press a new publication from the NSMHA called **Faces of Recovery**. In it are poems and stories that share the Recovery experience in unique and wonderful ways.*

Funds were originally budgeted for a 17-page booklet, but North Sound consumers sent in enough great poems and stories for a book 10 times longer. In the end, in the interests of funding, it was necessary to prune the publication significantly. It was with extreme regret that we finally accepted that many, many wonderful entries simply could not be included.

That doesn't mean, however, that you can't read them in other publications, such as here. Here, for example, is one of the favorites of NSMHA staff.

Ten Thirty
© 2002 Bruce Rento

<p><i>I have no:</i> money for gas and oil milk in the fridge, or meat contact with my young children contact with the woman I love camera reading glasses bed in my room money to do laundry this month money in my wallet these last ten days princess friend church with both knowledge and zeal encouragement to face winter alone family at Christmas time feminine consoler to help me face temptations confidante in the flesh housemate (Frank is in a "safe house") one to write to one with whom to share physical love tennis shoes</p> <p><i>I have:</i> a flat herringbone tweed hat one LORD and guide who loves me with the greatest love waterproof hiking boots free food from the food bank free clothes discarded in the laundry room lots of underpants, some too large lots of socks, some too small lots of hope for tomorrow one woman whom I love like a husband and a friend, like she was heaven and earth thirteen children two gone ahead all of whom I love all of whom love me</p>	<p>one son present in the flesh with whom I am bonding in faith sometimes a huge heartache a heart sometimes overwhelmed with joy, alive with thankfulness enough nourishment enough clothing whatever I need for this day contentment a healing spirit constant love for my people one good friend whom I can trust a few good friends a basketball that holds air a bike to loan to Matt a car that smokes a son who smokes a job with fish tomorrow a God I trust with all my heart a God who directs my path a voice and eyes, ears, and an eye</p> <p><i>I am:</i> at peace loved greatly insignificant weak (but He is strong) waiting for Kimberly.</p>
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CLASSIFIED ADS

The Bad News: 1 person in 4 has a mental illness.
The Good News: Today people are RECOVERING!
 For help, call toll-free: 1-888-693-7200.

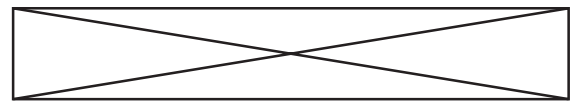
Grand Opening!

Island Crossing
 Counseling Services (ICCS)
 902 East Maple Street, Arlington

Open House
5 - 6:30 PM, Monday, September 22, 2003
 Opiate Replacement Drug Treatment Program
 (commonly known as "Methodone treatment.")

Everyone Welcome!
All Tribes Welcome!

For more information, call:
 Tom Ashley, Director
 360-435-9338, Extension 11



Complaints?
 We're listening!
If you aren't satisfied with the public mental health services you get in Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, or Whatcom County, contact Ombuds today!

North Sound Ombuds
 117 North First Street, Suite 8
 Mount Vernon WA 98273
 Toll-Free 888-336-6164 ❖ Fax 360-416-7020
 TTY 360-419-9008

*We're YOUR Ombuds,
 Free and Confidential,
 and WE'RE LISTENING!*

About Recovery Around the Sound

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To join our distinguished list of subscribers, to request other information about mental health in the North Sound Region, or to submit letters or articles for possible publication in future issues, please write to:

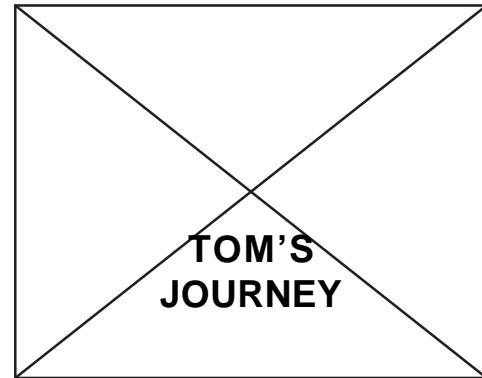
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All letters and articles become the property of Recovery Around the Sound and may be edited.

Issue	Submit by:
January 2	December 5
April 1	March 5
July 1	June 5
October 1	September 5

Spotlight on Recovery

Voice of the Advocate



*Eve Shutt
O'Leary House*

Skills, and participates in a day treatment group with peers from the community. He gets around by bus, accompanied by a respite worker, and every day he buys a treat at a local store. He interacts with his housemates and makes occasional jokes, which are enjoyed by all. Many people may be too busy to notice Tom's contribution. For example, one day he may pick up trash. Another he may open doors for people and wish them "good day."

"Tom was shy and withdrawn when he came here to live," says a staff member. "Today the community is embracing him. At Bank of America where he cashes his check, the tellers know him by name. The owner of the Smoke Shop gets him what he needs before he even asks. The waitresses at Jason's smile at him."

"My coffee habit is bad," he says, "but that's all I keep." He holds the door for elderly ladies, who thank him warmly. When asked how life is different now, Tom says, "It's different in the way people feel (about me). I like it (living at O'Leary House) better. I like the internal relationships. It's a better feeling." He says it's the "quantity/quality" of participation that makes a difference.

Tom has gained a much-needed 12 pounds--10% of his entire body weight, and he now weighs 110 pounds. "The weight gain has been good," he says. "I think I'll add one or two more pounds." He is encouraged to prepare his own meals, but if he declines, nutritious, well balanced meals are provided. "I'm not too much on sirloin as burnt offering steak." He enjoys grocery shopping with staff, and contributes by helping out wherever he can.

Recently Tom saw a dentist for the first time in many years, and is now seen regularly by a physician. "I'm healthy now that I'm out of the hospital. Women, fortified with schedules in the hospital, told me what to do when. The time is mine."

Sometimes Tom's inner world preoccupies him, putting his safety at risk. He might step out in front of cars without looking or stop in the middle of the road to point at an object only he can see. With a quick movement of his fingers, sometimes repeated, whatever distracted him disappears and he continues on his way, oblivious to backed-up traffic. At other times he may wait, unconsciously wringing his hands until drivers come to a complete stop. He politely nods to them as he crosses the street. He enjoys walking but prefers to ride in a car.

Medication and redirection from staff are helping Tom focus better. "My head is not getting better, but my life is." He is comfortable in his daily routine and is working toward new activities. Since he left the state hospital, his quality of life has visibly improved. O'Leary House staff feels privileged to have been able to accompany Tom on his journey.

"I'm home," he says. "The Island is my home."

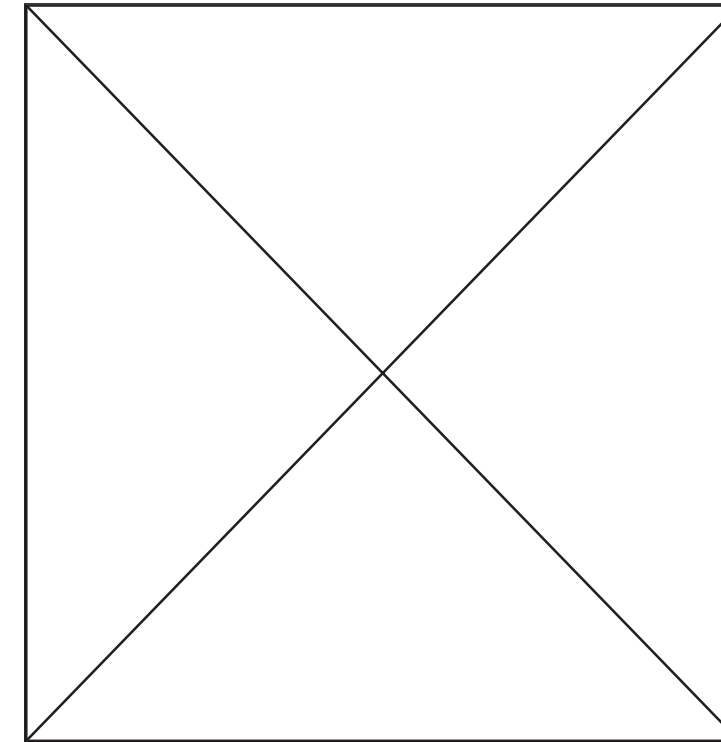
Welcome, Tom. Welcome Home.



Not everybody in a mental health institution needs to be there. Debbie Page and Santiago Iscoa, NSMHA liaisons to Western State Hospital says, "Some of the people there didn't need that level of care any more, but the hospital had nowhere to discharge them to." The Expanded Community Services Program was initiated to find homes in the communities for such people. Debbie and Santiago worked tirelessly to identify accommodations and bring North Sound consumers home.

One of these people is a 57-year-old man we'll call "Tom." Tom has been institutionalized for more than half his life. His illness is such that it's difficult for him to communicate, though his desire to connect with others is strong. "I took all of George Washington. She didn't even know I was there. It's between you and Moses. Boom!"

Tom was discharged from Western State to O'Leary House in Oak Harbor. Professional staff there are available 24 hours a day and committed to helping him in his goal of a more independent life. At O'Leary House Tom works on a daily reality orientation program, Adult Living



THE ROLE OF A RAINBOW

*Diana Ash
Rainbow Center*

Lunch is at noon, and we have the best cook in Whatcom County. You can pay for lunch with \$1 or by doing a chore for Rainbow Center. The philosophy is that when members and staff work together in developing and administering activities, it helps retain self-worth, purpose, and confidence. There are many aspects

of Rainbow Center such as the Peer Support Team, Communications Team, Kitchen Crew and Maintenance Team. These are some of the places where people can get involved.

There are great programs at Rainbow Center, such as the Communications meeting from 11:00 - 12:00 every Monday, and "Movie Monday," from 1:00 - 3:45. On Tuesdays is the Women's Program. It starts at 12:00 with general socialization, with snacks, an official group greeting, and a guest speaker or an activity. At 2:30 we separate into classes. There are three to choose from: Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Journaling, and Medication Management. The Peer Support Class meets

Wednesdays to discuss our experiences through the week. On Thursday is Med Management. Arts and Crafts are on Fridays from 10:00 - 11:30, and the Men's Program, from 2:00 - 4:00.

I can tell you that Rainbow Center has helped me in a lot of ways. I just needed to be myself and Rainbow Center helped with that.

Now I feel a sense of belonging, and I don't need to act like a different person, but just like me.

Thanks Rainbow Center!!!

The mission of Bellingham's Rainbow Center is "To help adults with mental illness gain confidence and skills, both vocational and social, through peer, advocate, staff and community support."

It is a place where the mentally ill can feel welcome and become part of society. The Center is open to any person who has a mental illness or is recovering from mental illness. Rainbow Center is a place where people can come and learn about their mental illness.

We have a wonderful staff that is always willing to help anyone that comes through the door. We also have a strong Peer Support Team that is always ready to help anyone that needs assistance.

The doors of Rainbow Center open at 9:00 am and close at 3:45 pm. Breakfast is served from 9:00 - 11:30.

*"I just
needed to be
myself."*



DRUM BEATS

Excerpted with permission from *A Gathering of Wisdoms: Tribal Mental Health - A Cultural Perspective, Second Edition*

COMMENTS OF CULTURAL CONSULTANT/SWINOMISH ELDER BERTHA DAN

The Tribal Mental Health Program here on this reservation is just like it opened the door to let us see the needs of our people, which maybe they didn't even understand. With our training and with our advisors and supervisors, we've been able to put it in perspective so that we could in turn recognize what sort of help is needed.

We are caught between two cultures, and this causes emotional upsets. I see the needs of the Indian community as kind of falling into two categories:

- Younger people need to learn more about themselves, their cultural traditions and spiritual life. Sometimes this knowledge is lost. Elders need to pass on their knowledge so it won't be lost to the youth.
- Elders generally understand their culture but need reinforcement of their beliefs. Some experiences can be frightening to them and so they need culturally sensitive support. In the process of trying to be helpful to our people, we have had to use the medical doctors, nurses, nutritionists, psychologists and all sorts of other helpers to try and

sort out what's best. Sometimes it's a combination of all. We have also had to use Indian Spiritual doctors. At Swinomish and at some other tribes we have the *Skwedilic* and also the *Tusted* poles. These are used in certain selected cases when this is advised by people with the appropriate cultural knowledge.

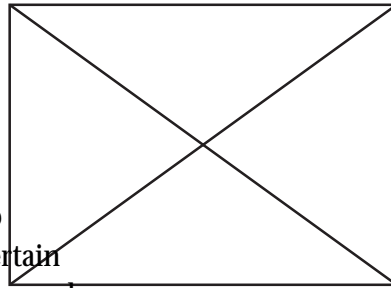
It takes all of us to accomplish something in the line of help. My role as Cultural Consultant is to give advice, support and reinforcement. My role is often to help decide which type of help is needed, traditional or modern day. I also consult with our Program Director and Mental Health Center Psychiatrist about these decisions.

Another thing we do is give comfort to families at the time of death and dying, whether this is from natural causes or from accidents. Families may go into a state of shock and need lots of support. We help the family

take steps to overcome their grief. They need to do something to make a final break, so they won't be thinking all the time of their loss. We often recommend a traditional Burning of the deceased's favorite clothing and possessions. This is our traditional way of giving a final touch to the separation. A Burning lets the family know that that's the end of the mourning period, and that no matter how much it hurts, that life has to go on. And that's part of our work too.

I personally have tended to specialize in working with elders and older adults. The other worker at Swinomish concentrated on work with young people and children. My knowledge of our Indian dialect has been helpful in working with our older people. When it comes down to it, I don't think our upsets are too different from any other race, we just handle it in different ways.

The second edition of A Gathering of Wisdoms, released early this year by the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, is an internationally acclaimed guide for everyone who provides mental health services to Native Americans. To order copies, call 360-466-7218.



WHAT'S HAPPENING

THE STUFF COLLABORATIONS ARE MADE OF

It's generally agreed that this RSN owes its superior performance to the fine art of collaboration and the skill of the many collaborators in the North Sound Region. A pivotal mechanism of collaboration is the Committee Meeting. The North Sound MHA hosts about 35 committee meetings every month, providing for each an orderly meeting place, secretarial support, meeting minutes and agenda, and mailing lists for attendees. Each meeting requires an average of 12 hours of staff time, two pots of coffee (leaded and un-), and one dozen cookies from Cookie Creations, an Island County consumer-owned bakery. Here is an overview of standing and ad hoc collaborative meetings at the NSMHA:

Standing

- Board of Directors and subcommittees
- Advisory Board and subcommittees
- Planning Committee
- Strategic Planning Committee
- Quality Management Oversight Committee
- Medical Directors Committee
- Co-Occurring Disorders Committee
- Community Action Plan Committee
- Critical Incidents Review Committee
- Children's Policy Executive Team
- Regional Quality Management Committee
- Regional Integrated Crisis Review System
- Regional Training Committee
- County Coordinators
- HCS/RSN
- Regional Management Council
- Tribal Committee

- Quality Specialists
- Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgender Committee
- Coordinated Quality Improvement Program
- Ombuds/QRT Liaison
- PTSD Committee
- NSMHA All Staff

Ad Hoc and Other

- Contract Negotiations (annual)
- Grievance Hearings
- Board Retreat (annual)
- Recovery Committee (annual)
- Utilization Management
- Inpatient Committee
- Administrative Audit and Exit Meetings
- NSMHA Management Team (weekly)
- Employee of the Quarter (quarterly)
- Standards of Care

Arts & Crafts Fair, continued from page 1.

thanks to advances in treatment and medications, people are recovering. This doesn't necessarily mean that the illness is 'cured,' but it does mean that people are recovering their hope, pride, self-esteem, joy, and life meaning. Their lives may not be as easy as they would have been, but they can be just as productive and fulfilling as anybody else's life."

Recent statistics indicate that 1 American in 4 has a mental illness, affecting not only those who have one, but also their parents, husbands, wives, children, friends, neighbors, employers, employees, and co-workers. This

suggests that the number of Americans affected by mental illness could be 3 in 4--or even **4 in 4**. Recovery is good news for all Americans.

"We're all stakeholders," says Chuck Benjamin, "and we all have something to celebrate."



Arts & Crafts Fair!

**10 - 4 Saturday, September 20
Carnation Building, Mount Vernon
(at the foot of the Tulip Tower and
beside the bridge to Anacortes)**

You can't miss it!