



King County

Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and  
Dependency Services Division

Issue 7

# The Good Newsletter

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## WANTED:

Articles, poetry, stories from readers of the newsletter.

If you have a personal story to tell, helpful information you would like to share or creative expression such as poetry, pictures or art, please mail them to:

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Letters, articles & information submitted may be edited for clarity and content.

Remember this is the good newsletter.

## From the Editor

This newsletter is an effort by the King County Regional Support Network (KCRSN) and the Quality Review Team to document the thoughts of consumers, youth and supporting staff.

The King County Regional Support Network (KCRSN) which funds mental health is responsible for publicly funded mental health services in King County.

## Mission Statement

The knowledge and wisdom that comes from personal experience as a consumer of the mental health system should be shared with all who have an eye and an ear to absorb what is written.

The pen is the excellent communicator. Our commitment is to make the consumer voice heard and acknowledged in King County.

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## Sewing Creates Opportunity to Mend

Ten women embroidering rows of cross stitches. This is more than a diversion from life's chores.

"Sewing helps me fix my brain," says Farmtha Saetern, 51. Pushing and pulling a

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-threaded needle means not thinking about a daughter, now a young single mother with a 5-month-old; not thinking about being a widow;; not worrying that because she doesn't know how to read or write English, people may think about what colors to use, what matches, and how to make it look pretty," Saetern says in her native Mien language as a case manager interprets.

"If I make it pretty, it makes me feel really good," she says. "If someone buys something, it makes me happy."

The women's embroidery – wall hangings, bookmarks, sashes – will go on sale for one afternoon today. It didn't matter, at first whether their crafts would charm the public. Embroidery was their opportunity to mend.

The women are Mien, a tribal group originally from China that was an ally of the United States during the Vietnam War. That role meant persecution by the Laos government and exodus to Thai refugee camps; then resettlement in this country as refugees, beginning in the late 1970s.

There are now some 30,000 Mien living in the U.S. with an estimated 2,000 in the Seattle metropolitan area.

For an array of health – related programs, some local Mien turned to Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS), which serves all groups of Asian – Pacific Americans in King County. An initial support group taught the Mien Basic English and American ways. Counseling addressed depression and post – traumatic stress.

But ACRS officials, sensing there might be another route toward mental-health recovery, last year applied for and secured a one-time, \$3,800 grant from King County.

A pilot Mien embroidery group, housed in an ACRS conference room, started in February.

"We wanted to get them into an activity so they can keep busy and hopefully it would speed up the process for healing," said Chalin Pahn, the project's supervisor.

It appears to be working, ACRS staffers agree.

"They've said it helps take their mind off their depression and

loneliness," says Chio Saetern, who came to the United States at age 8, she's now 24 and an ACRS case manager.

In Mien culture, a woman is not a woman if she can't embroider. So a girl learns the skill from her mother beginning at the age of 6.

In their villages, the Mien women embroidered while sitting on bamboo stools. Now they sit at long tables, their backpacks at their feet, their reading glasses perched on the tips of their noses. Thread gets passed around: so do snapshots of relatives, plastic containers of sliced melon and crinkly bags of pork rinds.

A 40-minute bus trip brings Saetern here each week, away from a household of 11 people, including their grandchildren she must look after while their mothers are at work. "It makes me forget," she says about embroidering. "It makes me happy not to think so much."

The women first held a sale in September to keep the embroidery group going after the grant money had run out. They dressed in traditional Mien clothing: dark embroidered pants and tunics; turbans; fat red ruffled leis.

"They were strutting around like peacocks. It was awesome to see them so happy," Saetern said.

By Florangela Davila  
Seattle Times staff reporter

Reported in the Seattle Times  
November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004

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## Poem from our readers:

## Crescent Angel

*The moon is a letter  
You left on the piano  
On a starry, starry night*

*A moth who left its winged  
shadow  
On your eyes in a porch light  
too bright.*

*Old moon, new moon  
There in the beginning for  
children  
Who seldom see the depth of  
night  
But a world without a moon  
Would make a cobra cry.*

*Cobra, cobra  
Don't cry.*

*Mac Crary  
Emerald House*

## Money Scramble

*Cultivating sophisticated life-  
styles*

*That constantly need refining*

*Requires cash*

*And makes hash*

*Of our best budget inten-  
tions*

*It isn't easy*

*To do without that bright  
and breezy*

*Recreational spending*

*Especially when payday is  
pending*

*However we all know what  
that means:*

*Beans.*

*Again.*

*N.Tuininga*

## Tryst

*Mental health professionals  
are sometimes like moms;*

*They're probably not real  
cons*

*But they're got to get the job  
done*

*And it's not always fun*

*And without the courts*

*They'd be virtually sweeping  
the streets from port to port*

*Trying to get every psychic  
flea to agree*

*To hop away from manic  
heads*

*And it would take ten trillion  
feds*

*To get a consensus like that*

*And in each office an ethical  
acrobat*

*Versed in friendly persuasion*

*Willing to work nineteen days  
a week*

*At turning the other cheek*

*Would be required*

*If people weren't sometimes  
squired*

*Into care facilities*

*To share their troubles*

*And examine their internal*

*Psychic circuses*

*N. Tuininga*



## Don't Let Your Past be an Obstacle

By Steven C. Collins

In our society it can be difficult to secure and maintain quality employment if you have a criminal conviction in your past.

Those of you who run into obstacles in employment because of past criminal convictions should know there are attorneys who will evaluate your circumstances and do a procedure that will vacate your past criminal conviction.

The following information is from Kurt D. Bennett attorney:

Vacation is a legal process by which a person petitions the courts to remove his or her criminal record. The process enables persons convicted of a crime to withdraw their guilty plea or jury verdict, have a plea of "not guilty" entered, and have the case dismissed. This process results in criminal record databases being court ordered to delete those portions of criminal conviction histories that are accessible by the public and prospective employers. Most importantly, this process enables persons to lawfully state on applications and to prospective employers that they have never been convicted of a crime. The following three

attorneys work with clientele to do the vacation of criminal records procedure. Call for free initial consultation to see if you qualify.

Kurt D. Bennett  
1001 Fourth Avenue  
Suite 3200  
Seattle, Washington 98154  
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2001 Western Ave  
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Seattle, Washington 98121  
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Seattle, Washington 98101  
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## Autobiography

The following is an autobiography of one of the contributors of poetry to the Good Newsletter.

Nancy G. Tuininga (pronounced tu ning' ga), was born in Seattle and grew up in Renton, Washington. She studied English and Philosophy at the University of Washington and the University of Puget sound in Tacoma, Washington.

Seeking adventure, she went to work as an airline stewardess for West Coast Airlines based in Seattle and Portland, Oregon.

While married with two children, she suffered a psychotic break in 1966 and was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. She was admitted to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle and later to Western State Hospital in Steilacoom, Washington and a series of other hospitals. On her admittance to Harborview she remembers a deep sense of loneliness. It was winter time, and very dark.

Poetry became a passion for her while she was living at an assisted living center called Century House, in Auburn, Washington. She called herself "Josie," because she

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wanted her poetry to remain under an anonymous name. She was published there in a newsletter called Northwest Views.

Then she suffered additional episodes of mental illness. She was admitted to Eastern State Hospital in Medical Lake, Washington and subsequently moved to Spokane, Washington where she met Jay Tuininga who was a retired 20 year veteran of the Air Force, a Technical Sergeant. They married in 1975, divorced and remarried. Nancy's mental illness caused divorce both times.

Meanwhile, her poetry lay dormant. In 1989 she picked up her work and began editing her poems and submitting them, experiencing rejections. She began handing out poems to numerous friends and members of her family and derived much satisfaction from their encouragement. She is currently living in an assisted living residence for men and women.

The Lilly Moving Lives Forward Reintegration Scholarship 2005-2006

The *Lilly Moving Lives forward Reintegration Scholarship* application is now available. Now in its eighth year, this scholarship is designed to help persons with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and related schizophrenia spectrum disorders acquire the educational and vocational skills necessary to move their lives forward and reintegrate into society.

Log on to [www.reintegration.com](http://www.reintegration.com) for an application or call 1-800-800-8202 for more information.

Downtown Emergency Service Center Computer Lab

In October, 2003, a client at the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) wrote a grant proposal to establish a computer center at the mental health offices of DESC. Her proposal was accepted and DESC was awarded money to establish a client-run and for-client use only computer center. In March 2004, DESC purchased three state of the art flat screen monitors and the necessary hardware to go with them.

As with any new venture, the Computer Lab was not without challenges. The lab monitors found people using the internet and computers for other than intended purposes at times. This was a good opportunity for clients to practice assertive confrontation skills and problem solving. Also, the DESC Computer Lab has recently moved within its 216 James offices. The plan is to reopen it very soon and this will increase the visibility of the lab to more of the DESC clientele. If you are a DESC mental health client, please ask your case manager if you are interested in getting involved in the Computer Lab.

Walter Kopf



## HAVE THE HOLIDAY BLUES?

*By Lenore Meyer*

Information taken from  
Author: Maud Purcell, Psych  
Central, (2003)

There are many reasons why people feel down at holiday time. Here are some causes for the holiday blues:

- **Pressure to feel merry** -- The difference between how you feel and how you think you should feel can cause you to feel guilt and confusion. These feelings can start you off on the wrong foot, even before the festivities begin.
  - **Remembrances of holidays past** -- We all have a mental record of previous holidays. Your mood may be affected by your memory of sad holidays past. If your current life circumstances are unhappy, you may long for past holidays that were happy.
  - **Reminders of loved ones lost** -- Holidays are a time for reflection. Too often our thoughts are turned to loved ones who have passed away. The sense of loss that you are feeling can be particularly painful at this time of year.
  - **Loneliness** -- Holidays can be very lonely if you don't have a significant other. Also, if you are separated from family (emotionally or geographically), it can be very painful at this time of year.
  - **Financial hardship** -- One of the joys of the holiday season is to give to others. If you're financial resources are limited at this time of year you are likely to feel that you are on the outside looking in.
  - **In search of sunlight** -- Many people are adversely impacted by the loss of sunlight at this time of year. This phenomenon even has a name: seasonal affective disorder of SAD. Your holiday blues will only be exacerbated by limited sunshine.
- Do any of these reasons for feeling sound familiar? Don't despair. Here are some ways to beat those holiday blues:
- **It's OK to feel what you feel** -- If you don't feel as happy as you think you should, don't fight it. Forcing feelings that aren't there will only make matters worse.
  - **Seek sunshine and endorphins** -- Try to get at least 20 minutes a day of sunlight each day. This isn't always easy to do when winter weather hits, but do your best. Both sunlight and exercise help to fight any chemical causes for your holiday blues.
  - **Help someone else** -- It's hard to feel down while you are busy helping someone else. Volunteer at a soup kitchen or food bank; spend time with an elderly relative or friend. Instead of feeling blue you'll find yourself experiencing what the holidays are all about. Giving to others.
  - **Create your own traditions** -- Contrary to popular opinion, there are no rules for how you spend your holidays. If old tradi-

tions bring up unhappy memories, start new ones. If you don't have families, share the holiday with good friends. Don't wait for them to include you – make them welcome in your home. If cooking a Christmas dinner feels like too much, do brunch. If going to a church service dampens your spirit, have your own worship service, at home or wherever you wish.

- **Stay busy and avoid unstructured time** -- If you know the holidays are difficult for you, plan ahead to minimize your difficult feelings. Fill your calendar with fun events. Too much time spent alone may bring you to an old, familiar place—down.

Here's the most important thing you can do to beat those blues: No matter what is happening think of the blessings you do have. Taking stock of all of the positives in your life – right here and now – can go a long way to ending your "bah humbug" mood.

With a little bit of planning and forethought, the holidays can be wonderful – and not because they are supposed to be.

## HOLIDAY RECIPES:

### Honey-Pumpkin Dessert Squares (from Betty Crocker Special Edition Fall Baking)

#### Crust:

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup quick cooking oats
- ½ cup butter or margarine
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar

#### Filling:

- 2 cans (15 oz. each) pumpkin (not pumpkin pie mix)
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup half and half
- 1 cup honey
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ teaspoon salt

#### Garnish:

- ½ cup whipping (heavy) cream
- 1 tablespoon powdered sugar

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. In medium bowl, mix all crust ingredients with fork until crumbly. Press in bottom of ungreased 13 x 9 inch pan. Bake 10 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, in large bowl, beat all filling ingredients with wire whisk or electric mixer on medium speed until blended. Pour over partially baked crust.
3. Bake 55 to 60 minutes or until set and knife inserted in

center comes out clean. Cool completely, about 40 minutes.

In chilled small bowl, beat whipping cream and powdered sugar with electric mixer on high speed until soft peaks form. Cut dessert into squares. Serve with whipped cream. Makes 15 servings.

Nutrition Information: 1 serving: 315 calories (100 from fat), cholesterol 80mg; Sodium 150 mg; carbohydrates 50 grams and protein 4 grams. Exchange: 1 starch, 2 other carbohydrates, 1 vegetable, 2 fat. Carbohydrate choices: 3.

### SUGAR FREE holiday cookies (from Diabetic Cooking Secrets of Low-Sugar Baking)

- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup Splenda for baking
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/3 cups all purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Nonstick cooking spray
- Sugar free fruit flavored gelatin, Optional

Beat butter and Splenda in medium bowl with mixer on medium speed until well combined. Mix in egg and

vanilla until blended. Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Stir flour mixture into butter mixture until blended, stopping to scrape bowl twice while mixing.

Spray cookie sheets with non-stick cooking spray. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Drop dough by rounded teaspoonfuls onto cookie sheets. Flatten slightly using a spoon.

Sprinkle with sugar free fruit flavored gelatin, if desired.

Bake cookies 10 to 12 minutes, until light gold. Remove from cookie sheet and cool completely on wire rack. Store in tightly covered container at room temperature.

Variation: For rolled cookies, wrap dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Work with half of the dough at a time; chill remaining dough. Roll on lightly floured surface to ¼ inch thickness. Cut with desired cookie cutters. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 8 to 10 minutes. Frost and decorate as desired. Makes about 3 ½ dozen cookies.

Nutrition information per serving (2 cookies)

95 calories, 1 gram protein, 11 gram carbohydrates, 5 gram fat, 22 mg cholesterol, 81 mg. sodium, 0 gram fiber

Food exchange: ½ starch, 1 fat



## **King County**

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