

February  
2007

# Prop 63 4 Me News

## Sharon Kuehn Hired as Consumer Empowerment Program Manager

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**B**ased in Santa Barbara, California, Prop 63 4 Me is a consumer advocacy organization. For more information, send e-mail to Bob Quinn, bob.quinn@yahoo.com or call Maureen Mina, 966-9245.



In her full-time position as Consumer Empowerment Program Manager, Sharon Kuehn will be responsible for the leadership, development and overall coordination of initiatives related to mental health consumer advocacy and empowerment in

Santa Barbara County. She will also ensure that consumer concerns are considered in all aspect of ADMHS functioning, including policy-making, planning and service delivery.

Among Ms. Kuehn's responsibilities will be management of the MHSA-funded Partners in Hope program. She will oversee consumer and family member employees and help define a discrete role for them in the service delivery system. She will also train core staff in the integration of consumer and family members and assist in the building of an infrastructure of support to ensure a successful shift in the culture.

### Santa Barbara Consumers Listen, Learn, Renew, Rejoice, and Revitalize at 2006 Alternatives Conference

Sunshine alternating with rain welcomed Santa Barbara County Consumer advocates Patrick B. from Santa Maria, Matt M. from Lompoc, and Chuck Hughes and Maureen Mina from Santa Barbara to the Alternatives '06 Conference. The event was held on October 25, 2006 at the Marriott Waterfront

Hotel in Portland, Oregon. The 21st annual national mental health consumer/survivor meeting was supported by CMHS/SAMHSA and coordinated by the Consumer Organization and Networking Technical Assistance Center.

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## Alternatives Conference 2006

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The theme of Alternatives 2006 — “Blazing the Trail to Recovery Through Transformation” — reflects the report of the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health: *Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America*.

“The report notes that mental health systems must be transformed to promote recovery. Alternatives 2006 will focus on recovery and

systems transformation,” explained Kathy Muscari, Director of the Consumer Organization and Networking Technical Assistance Center (CONTAC), a federally funded, consumer-run national technical assistance center, which organized the conference. “In fact, the Alternatives conference is central to the recovery movement. This conference changes lives,” she added.

Participants at the conference heard from a number of nationally prominent speakers, most of whom have diagnoses of mental illness themselves. Speakers included Dr. Ed Knight, Vice President of Recovery, Rehabilitation and Mutual Support for Value Options, a managed behavioral healthcare organization; Paolo del Vecchio, Associate Director

for Consumer Affairs, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services; nationally known consultants Dr. Priscilla Ridgway, Darby Penny, and Wilma Townsend; advocate Yvonne Smith; and Emi Koyama, Director of a Portland, Oregon-based national advocacy organization.

As they departed the Alternatives '06 Conference, everyone looked forward to the next Alternatives Conference. Check with the National Empowerment Center for more information on the Alternatives Conference to be held in 2007 or visit [www.power2u.org/](http://www.power2u.org/) for updates.

### Monthly Support & Advocacy Meetings

The last Friday of the month at 4:30 pm at the Fellowship Club, 2017 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara.





Sharon Clausen

## Clausen's Corner

### The Beauty Path for Lunatics

We know the medical walk, the institutional walk, the shrink walk and the psychosocial walk - and most certainly, again and again, the social death walk; but talk about walking the beauty path of mental illness, though it happens, happens almost silently, and in soft voices and chuckles, and without a name, and splashed in wordless color and music and unseen and unrecognized by the outsiders, the normies all around us. We hide it with our slave language, our secret looks, words, signs, laughter.

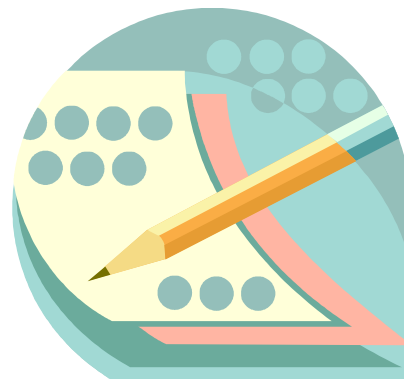
May you live in interesting times - an old Chinese curse, it is said. And we DO live in interesting times. Like it or not, we are all being dragged down a path of chaos, instability, violence and catastrophe - and

we must live our part of it. In beauty we will walk our life path - or not. We don't have a choice about times being interesting, but we do have to choose beauty, or that path may fade. Interesting times, times of challenge and catastrophe, times that require audacity and creativity and grit to survive - this is our fate, how will we face it?

Our political system has a strong incentive to control the way 'madness' is managed "its way," and mighty social forces - including the big pharmaceutical companies - are arrayed to that effect. Maintaining ownership of the social judgment of "who's 'crazy'" is worth providing ready resources and advocacy for those folks who are needful or willing to buy in. Many do, and many are reluctant to, or can ill afford to "take the heat" of marginalization or being labeled "crazy" themselves. What we've outlined here is a path for working past this cooptation process: It is the invite to the 'freedom train' where the "client/survivor" struggle gets to take its rightful place as a partner in the struggle for human rights.

## We'd Like to Hear from You!

You are welcome to submit articles, comments and suggestions about consumer empowerment, the Mental Health Services Act and related concerns. Send e-mail to [chas96099@hotmail.com](mailto:chas96099@hotmail.com) or to Editor, P.O. Box 21511, Santa Barbara, CA 93121.



## Consumer Empowerment Manager

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Ms. Kuehn is exceptionally qualified for the position. She is well-known statewide as consumer advocate and recently served as the Coordinator of the Contra Costa Office of Consumer Empowerment and Secretary of the Executive Committee of the California Network of Mental Health Clients (CNMHC), the leading statewide consumer advocacy

*“I know that we can restore each consumer’s power to live a life of choice & dignity.”*

organization.

Ms. Kuehn is also a wellness recovery educator with extensive experience conducting trainings in Wellness Recovery Action Plan

(WRAP) other topics relevant to consumers.

A former resident of Santa Barbara, recently she made a very well-received presentation to consumers from all regions in the County about consumer empowerment and the workings of the CNMHC.

### Foundations of Recovery

“I hope that the experience I bring from the Office for Consumer Empowerment and the consulting I have done for many counties on implementing wellness recovery and consumer employment will allow me to assist in setting strong foundations for recovery and empowerment practices,” Sharon comments. “I see my role as an educator, change agent and community liaison. My intention is to support the

collaboration between local client leaders and ADMHS staff to develop consumer-driven services and supports.”

### Creating Hope and Tolerance

Although Ms. Kuehn recognizes that much work lies ahead, she has developed a clear approach for advancing consumer empowerment: “I am eager to get to know all of the people and programs that are currently offering support to the clients of Santa Barbara County. We will learn together how to create the best opportunities for people to heal. The main thing I bring is hope. I know that we can restore each consumer’s power to live a life of choice, dignity and possibility, and create a more colorful, tolerant and healthy community for everyone.”

## Consumer Empowerment in Santa Barbara County

*By Sharon Kuehn*

The consumer empowerment movement is clearly underway here in Santa Barbara County. I hope that the experience I bring from the Office for Consumer Empowerment and the consulting I have done for many counties on implementing Wellness

Recovery and consumer employment will allow me to assist in setting strong foundations for recovery and empowerment practices. I see my role as an educator, change agent and community liaison. My intention is to support the collaboration between local client leaders and ADMHS staff to develop consumer-driven services

and supports. With the focus on consumer empowerment, it will be my job to help develop structures that support full client involvement and leadership, so that the administration receives clear messages about what practices maximize wellness recovery and community inclusion.

## *Rotation of Leadership at Prop 63 4 Me*

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### **Maureen Mina Assumes Presidency**

**W**ith Chuck Hughes stepping down as President, Maureen Mina, co-founder, has taken the lead role in Prop 63 4 Me. Bob Quinn will serve as Vice President. The goals of the organization remain consumer advocacy, support, and empowerment.



*Maureen Mina*

“We wish Chuck the best in his future endeavors,” notes Maureen. “We will work closely with him to ensure the continued progress of the consumer movement.” Prop 63 4 Me is always looking for new members. For more information, please call Maureen at 966-9245

### **Moving on.....**

By Chuck Hughes

**O**ver the past nine months, my role as President of Prop 63 4 Me has been both challenging and rewarding. However, with ailing physical health, I feel that it is time to pass the role of President onto Maureen Mina, who was already slated to rotate into this position in March. Assisted by Bob Quinn, I know that the organization is in good hands. This will afford me more time to continue in my preferred role as a consumer advocate with the Mental

Health Services Act (MHSA). As my health permits, I hope to continue to organize open meetings with area consumers and put out a county-wide consumer newsletter to ensure continued communication and

solidarity. So many people have devoted so much time in revitalizing the consumer movement in Santa Barbara County, and I am

***“I am confident that we can keep the momentum going.”***

confident that we can keep the momentum going. Thanks again for everyone who has helped us accomplish so much in a short period of time. I will continue to be available to help the movement reach its goals.

**PROP 63 FOR ME**

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Editor: Chuck Hughes



**We're on the Web!**

See us at:  
<http://groups.msn.com/prop63forme>

*Open Consumer meeting ...*

# AN INVITATION

Monthly Consumer Support  
and Advocacy Meetings  
Last Friday of each Month

4:30 PM

Fellowship Clubhouse  
2017 Chapala Street  
Santa Barbara

Open to all current/former consumers of  
mental health services

P.O. Box 21511  
Santa Barbara  
CA 93121

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