



Marguerite Hardin



Amanda Schell

Public Education Evening Peer Support

Speakers:

Amanda Schell
Consumer Initiatives Support Worker

Marguerite Hardin
NSSS Support Coordinator

Moderator: Cheryl Zipper
Partnership Coordinator

Wednesday, February 29, 7:30 p.m.
Lions Gate Hospital Auditorium
(13th St. Entrance)

Please join us for this free event!

**For background information on the event
and the panel, please see page 6,
“Peer support—not just a nice idea.”**

Family Support Centre

Personal support and information on major mental illnesses— schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety disorders

205-1865 Marine Dr.
West Vancouver BC V7V 1J7

Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
or by appointment

North Shore/Lower Mainland:
604.926.0856
Sea to Sky: 604.849.2252

www.northshoreschizophrenia.org
info@northshoreschizophrenia.org
Twitter: @NSSSoc

Monthly Support Meetings

Come share your questions, concerns, and experiences with family members.

Support group meetings are held each month at the Family Support Centre in West Vancouver, for family members and close friends of people who have serious mental illnesses.

To register, please call the Centre.

Families Helping Families

Thank you to our many friends and supporters. Your donations are appreciated. Tax receipts will be issued for all contributions.

AGM March 29, 2012

The NSSS annual general meeting this year will be held Thursday, March 29, at Lions Gate Hospital. Watch for the March issue of *The Notepad* for details.



NSFOS NOTEPAD

APRIL 1987 No. 1

Letter from the President—History of a Newsletter

With this issue of *The Notepad*, we're expanding and modernizing the format, taking advantage of new publishing software, but the spirit of *The Notepad* won't change. It will always be a way of helping our members and others who read the newsletter keep in touch with each other. It's still a change, though, and I can't help feeling nostalgic about the past as we go through it.

The first issue of *The Notepad* came out in April, 1987, and what a brave and bold step it was. We were the North Shore Chapter of the Friends of Schizophrenics in those days, so the newsletter title, created manually with an alphabet template, was the *NSFOS Notepad*. The entire newsletter was on a single legal-sized sheet of paper, with the copy done on an Olivetti typewriter. In the top left-hand corner was the FOS logo of two hands in a handshake, with a globe of the world behind them.

The editors were Anne Alderton, Marion Harrison, and the late Nora Hutchinson. *The Notepad* wasn't just meant to keep members abreast of what was happening. It was also to act as a forum for members' gripes (but be "constructive please!", the editors pleaded). They wanted input from members at large, too, since two of the three editors were working full-time and couldn't do much digging themselves.

The lead story, a couple of paragraphs long, was about a public meeting at Lions Gate Hospital with elected representatives at all levels. "THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MEETING OF THE YEAR," members were told. "To be credible we need a strong show of support from our membership. We urge ALL members to attend with as many relatives and friends as possible in tow "Let's show them we mean business!"

Other stories had to do with a research lecture in Vancouver, the urgent need for people to stand for the executive, a request for video equipment for educational meetings, an NSFOS raffle (first prize a 9" RCA colour TV, no less), disability assistance, and a miscellany feature entitled *Nora's Coffee Corner*.

The issue ended with a quote from Orison Swett Marden, an American motivational writer from the 19th century: "There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonics so powerful as expectation of something better tomorrow."

That hope of "something better tomorrow" applied in spades. You have to remember the times. Family members, mostly mothers, were as often as not still blamed for causing schizophrenia and other mental illness. Stigma against those with mental illness was thick on the ground. Little information was provided to families. NSFOS itself was just a few years old and struggling to make headway. There was no Internet where you could get information quickly and easily and no email, either. This, however, wasn't going to stop the editors. *NSFOS Notepad* issue No. 1, in its down-home folksy way, resonated with calls to action and a new-found confidence. The editors and others in the young organization knew only too well they had work to do and hills to climb if there was going to be a better day for their loved ones and themselves.

We do indeed owe them a lot.

Herschel Hardin
NSSS President

We'd love to hear your feedback!

Just like issue No. 1 and subsequent issues, the reformatted *Notepad* will continue to highlight our public education meetings at Lions Gate Hospital. We'll also, as always, keep you informed of other events and activities. At the same time we're adding features, like a "Research Briefs" column and first-person stories. Photographs will also play a larger role.

We'd appreciate your feedback on the new format and any ideas you may have for other features. Phone us at 604-926-0856 or email Melanie Scott at melanie@northshoreschizophrenia.org.

Missing issues of the *Notepad*

Some issues of *The Notepad* are still missing from our archives: 3, 7, 9, 10, 23, 31, 39, 78, and 86.

If you have any of these issues or may have them stacked away in an attic or closet, please let us know.



Introducing the *Advocacy Reader*: Learn more about issues and advocacy

If you wanted to follow all of the stories of the seriously mentally ill and the issues that affect them – and the advocacy and debate surrounding those issues – you might spend all of your free time trying to keep up, and probably the rest of your time, too.

The *Advocacy Reader*, however, a new NSSS email service, can save you the time. Every week, NSSS advocacy coordinator Melanie Scott sends subscribers a feature item, choosing from the many such items that come across her desk. You won't get the whole picture, but you will get enough to give you a sense of what's happening, be able to delve into the issues, and gain insight into the advocacy work being done.

Sources include the Treatment Advocacy Centre's "Mental illness in the news," columns in the *Huffington Post* (both Canadian and U.S. editions), feature coverage of media outlets in both countries (including website features and videos), and multiple other sources on the worldwide web.

The *Reader* was begun to provide the trainees for the Advocacy Team with more background, without overloading them and their email inboxes. Since Melanie was already choosing the items for them, it occurred to us to offer the *Reader* to others who might be interested as well.

To subscribe to the *Advocacy Reader*, just send an email to melanie@northshoreschizophrenia.org.

In Memoriam

Wilson Dillon – psychiatrist with a heart

Wilson Dillon, who passed away January 29, was a long-time member of NSSS, which he joined 23 years ago, in 1989, when it was the North Shore Friends of Schizophrenics.

Wilson understood the trauma families go through when someone in their midst falls severely ill. He also understood, and had a feeling for, grassroots organizations struggling to make a better world.

He grew up in Northern Ireland. He began work in Canada at Connaught Laboratories as a biochemist working on insulin extraction. Connaught was the University of Toronto company where insulin was produced after being discovered by Frederick Banting and Charles Best in 1921. He eventually decided he would like to go into medicine, thinking of pursuing research in schizophrenia, which was gaining recognition as a brain illness rather than a product of faulty parenting or psychological trauma.

When he became involved in clinical practice, he found the contact with patients so rewarding that he spent the rest of his career helping them directly.

For years he made a point of showing up at Walk the World for Schizophrenia, if he was at all available. He was unable to participate in the last walk, June 2011, because of shortness of breath, but he came out to John Lawson Park for the occasion anyway to say hello and make a donation.

Only a few months ago, reading a story of a mother having difficulty getting her very ill daughter to hospital, he sent us an email reminding people that if mental health outreach wasn't any help, they could go to provincial court and get a warrant for the person to be taken to hospital for an assessment. He never lost interest in the dilemmas families faced and what we as an organization were trying to do.

He will be missed.

The North Shore Schizophrenia Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Province of British Columbia; City of North Vancouver; District of North Vancouver; District of West Vancouver; Lynn Valley, Ambleside Tiddlycove, Mt. Seymour, and Capilano Lions Clubs; Soroptimist International of North and West Vancouver; West Vancouver Community Foundation; Community Foundation of Whistler; Squamish Community Foundation; HYDRECS, Lynn Valley Legion; North Shore Credit Union; and our many other generous donors.

Research Briefs

New gains in antipsychotic side-effects: Antipsychotic drugs that cause weight gain and diabetes all trigger a protein called SMAD3 on the TGFbeta pathway, which regulates cell growth and insulin signalling, studies reveal. Better understanding of these biochemical changes could eventually lead to new antipsychotic drugs that are therapeutic to the brain without dangerous side effects.

Molecular Psychiatry, January 31, 2012

Pacemaker for the brain: A study published in *Archives of General Psychiatry* reports that 92% of 17 participants who underwent deep brain stimulation (DBS) - where the brain is wired with a tiny pacemaker-like device - found relief from major depression and bipolar disorder. More than half are now in remission without side effects.

Wall Street Journal, January 17, 2012

The nose may know: Stem cell tissue taken from the nasal passages of people who have schizophrenia has been found to look different from tissue removed from people who don't have the illness. Because sensory neurons in the nose are among the few in the body connected directly to the brain, research indicates that the cell cycle of people with schizophrenia is impaired, possibly leading to altered brain development.

www.mentalwellnesstoday.com, February 8, 2012

More knowledge reduces stigma: 3,100 Ontario high school students surveyed revealed that those with a better understanding of schizophrenia are less likely to discriminate against those who have the illness. Just over 70% of adolescents say they wouldn't distance themselves socially from someone with a mental illness. Girls of all ages and Grade 12 students ranked as being more inclusive.

ehealthontario.ca, 2012

Antipsychotics treating bipolar disorder: Antipsychotics are increasingly being prescribed for bipolar disorder over mood stabilizers. Since 2000, Olanzapine use has increased 92%. The drugs are controversial—they are more expensive with side effects such as morbid obesity and diabetes. Further research is needed to prove their effectiveness in treating bipolar disorder.

Psychiatric Services, January 2012



Giving back and helping others

First in a series on bequests

My name is Laara Madsen. About 12 years ago, my son Seann fell ill. He came running upstairs from his suite at my place, frantically searching for bibles to look for answers. I had noticed he was pacing and turning off all the lights. Now it was worse. He was falling apart and scared. He covered up all the mirrors. He took all the wiring apart in the house so we couldn't have light. We were without electricity. We couldn't have people over, either, because he thought people were out to get him.

I didn't know what was wrong with him. I couldn't imagine what it was. Finally I met with Marguerite Hardin [NSSS's support coordinator]. Thank God for Marguerite. I don't know how I learned about her and the Family Support Centre, but I talked to her about him, and we managed to get him into hospital.

She has been helping me ever since, and that's quite a few years now. He had a second break and absolutely became a different person. It was just awful. Somebody at his mental health team decided to change his medication, and it did not work at all. After a premature release by a review panel, there was a third break and another hospitalization. He applied for a review again. Marguerite, at the psychiatrist's invitation, appeared before the

review panel, and this time, thankfully, he was kept in hospital until he was stabilized.

He's doing better now. He lives in his own "semi-independent-living" apartment and with his disability allowance is managing his life, although he still needs help.

The society has been everything. I don't know where I would be or where he would be without them. I don't know. I could phone anytime in the day or night, and at first, when it all happened, I think I did, and even now I still will. I'll call Marguerite when I feel there is something just a little off in his speech or something going on.

I thought of all this when I was making my will. I'm currently fighting cancer and don't know how long I have to live. I've provided for a trust for Seann, but I also wanted to help the society that helped me and helped Seann, too, especially Seann. The best way of doing it, even better than the donations I've been making, was to leave a legacy to the society in my will to help them continue their good work after I've gone. This I have done. I hope everyone will think of helping out in the same way. Wouldn't that be something? They need the help just like we did.

For details on how to arrange in your will for a bequest – which can usually be done with a codicil, without having to call on a lawyer – please contact the Centre at 604-926-0856 and ask for Cheryl.

More on the February 29 panel

Peer support—not just a nice idea

Peer support always makes sense, but when it comes to the mentally ill and their families, it can be critical, especially for family members trying to help ill relatives get back on their feet.

NSSS members will already know this, since family peer support is the very premise on which the Family Support Centre is based. All of the Centre's core services – the support group, one-on-one counseling and crisis support, and the Family-to-Family education course – are provided by trained peer volunteers. This is by design, rather than by accident, and NSSS is going to considerable lengths to make sure this peer-support principle behind its work can be sustained, specifically with the training of Family-to-Family teachers and new Support Team workers.

The rationale for family peer support is obvious, when you think about it. You can't fully understand what family members are going through if you haven't gone through it yourself. Peer support workers and course teachers can offer rare empathy because of their own experience. Family members in turn can feel emotionally safer and be more open when working with peers.

They can also talk more freely about problems they encounter in the mental health system and how to handle them.

A by-product of this peer sharing is that NSSS knows how the mental health system works or doesn't work probably better than anybody else. As an organization of family members, we also can do advocacy independently. Family peer support lies at the heart of this advocacy, too.

Peer support for those with an illness contributes in its own way, with longstanding programs now both in Vancouver and for the North Shore and Sea to Sky. Support by family members, case workers, and physicians plays a vital role in recovery. Peer support workers, however—those with an illness themselves—add a dimension only they can provide, of having struggled to rebuild their lives.

They also provide non-intimidating social contact in the process, which is valuable in its own right – companionship and support rolled into one.

This will be a rare chance to hear the inside story of how peer support works and to exchange your thoughts and ideas with three exceptional people.

The Panelists

Marguerite Hardin

Marguerite is the founder of the Family Support Centre, long-time NSSS president, and a pioneer of one-on-one family peer counseling and crisis support, unique in Canada.

Amanda Schell

Amanda is a consumer initiatives support coordinator with Squamish Mental Health and Addiction Services, serving the Sea to Sky. She herself has schizophrenia and went through nightmarish years of illness when she was younger. She was part of the original group of peer support workers trained on the North Shore and is also the recipient of a Coast Mental Health *Courage to Comeback Award*.

Cheryl Zipper (moderator)

Cheryl is coordinator of the NSSS Partnership Program in the schools and is also a Family-to-Family teacher.

Family Support Centre Library

Selected DVDs

The Broadcast Tapes of Dr. Peter: 20th Anniversary Special Edition/ Welcome to the Dr. Peter Centre

The segment on the Dr. Peter Centre is a moving account of the help provided to those with HIV/AIDS, most of whom, at the Centre, have a mental illness as well. Donated by Maxine Davis, executive director of the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation, Vancouver.

Dr. Torrey's War

From the CBS program *60 Minutes*. Eminent psychiatrist and author E. Fuller Torrey shares his concern about how the seriously ill are neglected, and describes some of his own work at the Stanley Foundation Research Institute. The "indispensable man," a NAMI spokesperson calls him.

The Soloist

Based on the true story of a brilliant young American cellist, Nathaniel Ayers who, hit by schizophrenia and ending up on the streets of Los Angeles, is befriended by an *L.A. Times* reporter. Starring Jamie Foxx and Robert Downey Jr. For a review of *The Soloist*, see the NSSS Advocacy Bulletin, the May 2009 issue, on the NSSS website.

Notes from the Family Support Centre

Family-to-Family: Teacher Cheryl Zipper is going to St. Louis in April for a three-day training course to become a teacher trainer, providing NSSS with a home-based teacher training capacity. The past teacher trainer, Eileen Callanan, from Terrace, has retired.

Winter-spring classes on the North Shore and in Squamish are now underway. The class at the Family Support Centre is at the maximum capacity, with a waiting list for fall. The crowding underscores the need for larger Family Support Centre premises, something that has so far been out of reach because of other revenue demands. Teachers this time are Cheryl Zipper and Halina Haboosheh at the Centre, and Wendy Booth and Herschel Hardin in Squamish.

Schizophrenia misunderstood by media: All too often, schizophrenia is confused with split personality, and the reference is used casually and wrongly. A particularly flagrant example was a recent opinion column in the *Whistler Question* dealing with Whistler's town council. NSSS ED Cheryl Olney took the columnist to task in a letter to the *Question*, published February 2. You can access Cheryl's letter by going to www.whistlerquestion.com and searching for "Mental illness is not a joke."

In the courts: Support coordinator Marguerite Hardin continues to track cases of the mentally ill caught up in the justice system, recently attending the opening days of a North Vancouver provincial court trial where the son of an NSSS member is charged with criminal harassment. Also before the courts, in its pre-trial stages, is the heart-

wrenching case of a young man who killed his father and injured his mother in a paranoid psychotic outburst, in North Vancouver. This is not the first time someone who is ill and not taking their medication has become a prisoner of their psychosis and committed violence. Families and the mentally ill themselves are the likeliest targets when such violence occurs, because they're the ones who are usually closest to the ill person. Proceedings in this latter case are in the B.C. Supreme Court. A plea of Not Criminally Responsible on account of Mental Disorder is expected.

Strategic planning: The NSSS board, together with staff, held its regular strategic planning session in January, reviewing the environment in which the Family Support Centre operates and sorting out priorities. Part of the process is looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the organization, a work-up familiar to anyone who has been involved in strategic planning. The session is held every two years.

Advocacy team update: The fledgling Advocacy Team in training continues to meet monthly, with readings and discussion. Key readings have been *Madness in the Streets*, by Rael Jean Isaac and Virginia Armat, and *The Insanity Offense* by E. Fuller Torrey. The group in training has also had a workshop on research and fact-checking, and is now working its way through back issues of the *NSSS Advocacy Bulletin*. Members of the team are Janelle McLean, Genevieve Smith, Janet Blue, and advocacy coordinator Melanie Scott, together with Herschel Hardin, acting as instructor.

Notes from the Sea to Sky

Assessing services: NSSS has launched a process that will continue to assess which services are most needed to best serve local communities. On January 26, NSSS brought together a variety of service providers and agencies that offer care for those living with and affected by mental illness. Plans are now underway for a second meeting to look at best practices to enhance communication among services in the area.

Suicide awareness and prevention in Whistler and Pemberton: Since last spring, NSSS has focussed on suicide awareness and prevention in these communities, sending letters to all Chamber of Commerce members outlining key

information on suicide for employers. Eleven people participated in a train-the-trainer workshop February 2 designed to help broaden public understanding of the facts, risks, and events that can lead to suicide, where to get help, and what resources are available. The first public presentation is in late February in Pemberton.

Upcoming speaker series in Pemberton: NSSS is partnering with the Pemberton Public Library in an upcoming speaker series that will include topics such as understanding and preventing suicide, dealing with grief and loss, and creating a Registered Disability Savings Plan.

NSSS Celebrates Christmas!



Santa Claus came to town and everyone was in good cheer at the annual NSSS Christmas Party, held Dec. 4, 2011, at St. David's United Church in West Vancouver.

After a warm welcome by NSSS president Herschel Hardin and board member Cheryl Zipper, over 110 guests enjoyed a roast beef buffet with all the trimmings.

The West Vancouver Adult Pops band played holiday favourites to kick off the evening. UBC student soprano Amber Gauthier wowed guests over dessert with her powerful, beautiful voice.

Thanks to all our volunteers—the wrappers, decorators, drivers, servers, and set-up and clean-up crews—with special thanks to Santa and Mrs. Claus for making the long trip from the North Pole to the North Shore.



Above:
Guests enjoy conversation and the post-dinner entertainment

Right:
Emcees Cheryl Zipper and Herschel Hardin welcome partygoers as members of the West Vancouver Adult Pops Band take a well-deserved rest

