Summary of CAEST Electroshock Protest Rally at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital 11-1-06

We held out third protest event in the last six months at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital this morning, sending another strong, clear message to this wayward facility that we mean business and are not going away. Though our numbers were smaller than at our June event, this was more than made up for by the moving testimony of three individuals whose lives had been hurt by electroshock.

We first stood on 38th street once again, transversing the bridge adjacent to Seton, and showed our signs ("Electroshock Is a Crime Against Humanity," and "Stop Electroshock Before Electroshock Stops You," "Shame on Seton Shoal Creek!" etc.) and our presence to the Austin community as citizens drove by on their way to work and school. We had a week of radio (special thanks to Jack Blood, and to Stuart Nelson and the other folks at Radio Free Austin) and a talk at Brave New Books. We have ongoing repeats of our previous rallies and interviews of shock survivors Dianna Loper and Mimi Greenberg on Austin Public Access television. It is clear that the community of Austin is becoming more aware that electroshock is going on in the heart of Austin, and that we are organizing to put a stop to it.

After gathering in a circle, we took a moment of silence to focus our loving on the hospital, and our intention that the shock program will be stopped. In keeping with the date of this rally on All Saints' Day, and the previous "Day of the Dead," John Breeding spoke about ECT and death. He referred to Leonard Frank's piece on electroshock and death (see www.endofshock.com), citing the summary of studies showing death rates ranging from 1 in 4 for the infirm elderly, to the 1 in 10,000 APA task force estimate based on death within 24 hours in a California summary. The average is somewhere in between. John read the following USA TODAY excerpt from the Electroshock Quotationary, also on our website, to emphasize the fact that not only does ECT kill but that people have died as a result of ECT at Seton Shoal Creek.

1995 — [Doctors are expanding ECT's] reach — to high-risk patients, to children, to the elderly — altering the profile of who gets shock therapy so much that the typical patient now is a fully insured, elderly woman treated for depression at a private hospital or medical school.

Someone like Ocie Shirk.

Shirk, a widow coping with recurring depression, already had one heart attack and suffered from atrial fibrillation, a condition that causes rapid heart quivers.

On a Monday at 9:34 am, Oct. 10, 1994, she received shock therapy at Shoal Creek Hospital [now known as Seton Shoal Creek Hospital], a for-profit psychiatric hospital in Austin. She had a heart attack in the recovery room. Four days later, she died of heart failure.

Yet shock therapy isn't mentioned on Shirk's death certificate, despite repeated instructions on the form to include every event that may have played a role in the death....

In addition to Shirk, state records show two other patients died after shock therapy at Shoal Creek. Asked about these deaths, [the hospital's chief executive Gail] Oberta repeats "We could find no correlation between deaths of patients and receiving ECT at this facility."

DENNIS CAUCHON, "Shock Therapy," *UŠA Today*, 6 December 1995.

(www.endofshock.com)

Our movement has become exceedingly more powerful and real as the result of the presence in our group of two recent Seton shock survivors. As John emphasized in our press release, "Our Coalition considers it remarkable that recipients of a reportedly beneficial and benevolent medical 'treatment,'

psychiatric electroshock, afterwards declare that treatment to be harmful and dangerous, and organize as activists determined to abolish the treatment." We have had shock survivors with us all along as the history of electroshock activism is long and intense (again see Leonard's *Electroshock Quotationary* on our website, or his book on *The History of Shock Treatment*). One of these Coalition shock survivors, 79-year-old Mimi Greenberg, read her powerful poem, previously published in the Winter 2002 issue of *Mind Freedom*.

I Can't Close That Door, Yet...

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I can't close that door, yet...
Before I grieve for me,
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I can't close that door yet... Before I remember, Standing in line, Clasping hands with another, In fear, always in fear.

I can't close that door yet...
Before I remember—
That small room, that smelled of death.

I can't close that door, yet... Before I remember, That narrow table, Those reins holding me down.

After Mimi's reading, John made the point that sensitive people, including musicians and artists, often seem to end up on the wrong end of psychiatric assault by electroshock. Two Austin music legends, Roky Erickson and Townes Van Zandt, are examples. As you may know from previous rallies, Roky and his family strongly support our effort to abolish ECT.

Today, Austin musician Don Erickson spoke at our rally. Mr. Erickson received 10 ECT treatments in June and July of 2005 at Seton Shoal Creek. After the last outpatient session, Don's records show that he was so disorganized and suicidally desperate that the hospital admitted him for 10 days. Don stated in our press release, "I was feeling confused and desperate for help. Now that I have some distance, I think of electroshock as rape of the soul, and I want this assault to stop!" Don told the

crowd about his history of arteriovenous malformation, a life threatening congenital brain problem, and how he was so desperate he had hoped ECT might kill him. Fortunately for us all, Don lived. He gave moving personal testimony at the rally, and called wholeheartedly for the energy of love to replace ECT at Seton.

Our final speaker was Kathy Scogin. Kathy is an Austin nurse. Her sister was electroshocked at Seton Shoal Creek between 30 and 50 times between September 2005 and June 2006; as is common, Kathy's sister cannot remember the number of times she received ECT. In our press release, Ms. Scogin said, "As a result of electroshock, my sister is now unable to work and is currently on disability. Seton Shoal Creek Hospital has stolen our lives. They have got to stop using electroshock on people." She read a written statement at the rally called, "Stolen Lives," and moved us to tears.

As a special treat Don Erickson played two of his own songs for the group. The first, "Beautiful," is a melodic declaration of loving care; the second, "Time for Change," is a soulful song of transformation. This last prepared us to commence marching. We loudly and boldly marched up and down Mills Avenue in from of Seton Shoal Creek, demanding, "No More Shock," and "STOP SHOCK NOW!

Kathy Scogin was inspired to write a poem immediately after the rally.

HOPE TREE
Today I stood behind a tree,
whose branches were clinging
to a few last dry leaves.

Each branch connected to the other, all connected to the main trunk, all rooted to the same place.

All around that tree was a circle of people, all clinging on for dear life, for the hope of another day.

All hoping like the tree.

There will be hope for a new life.

So long as that tree stays firmly rooted in <u>The Truth</u>, and all the branches stick together—

I assure you that in the Spring, there will be new leaves, and a chance to begin again.