

Summary of CAEST Electroshock Protest Rally at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital 6-28-06

Our second protest event at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital was a rousing success. We doubled our attendance from the April demonstration with over 100 enthusiastic supporters. We stretched out along 38th Street with a variety of signs including ones that read “Electroshock Is a Crime Against Humanity,” and “Stop Electroshock Before Electroshock Stops You!” One sign referring to the Seton Hospital owning group, the Daughters of Charity Health Services of Austin, bore these words, “Shocking Our Daughters Is Not Charity!”

The protesters chanted and passersby responded to the “Honk If You Hate Shock” signs with vigorous honking. The city of Austin received a wakeup call, and many more citizens experienced that strange, disturbing feeling that goes with what we heard so often: “You mean they’re still doing that. I thought that went out with *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*.” We spent 45 minutes on the street, back and forth with print and TV reporters, who interviewed several of us.

Finally we gathered around for a few words on the reality of electroshock—brain damage, memory loss, disability and possible death. We contemplated the horror of people like us being strapped down, anesthetized, and then having their brains hit with 150 volts or more of electricity, resulting in cell death and a host of other brain-damaging effects. We came together for a minute of silence and focused our clear intention that Seton Shoal Creek stop administering electroshock, and our vision of that hospital as a haven offering meaningful and beneficial care for members of the community.

Beth Jezik spoke on behalf of women who receive the brunt of electroshock-induced brain damage; two-thirds of those being electroshocked are women, mostly of perimenopausal age or elderly. She offered us the truth that there are real healing modalities available for people who need help.

John Breeding told the group that creative artists—like Tammy Wynette, Judy Garland, Vivien Leigh, Francis Farmer, and Paul Robeson—all too often get hurt by psychiatric electroshock. Ernest Hemingway complained to his friend that electroshock destroyed his memory, which meant he could no longer write. He killed himself after a second series of shocks at the Mayo Clinic. (See Leonard Roy Frank’s new *Electroshock Quotationary* on our website, www.endofshock.com, for more about this).

John went on to say that two Austin legends, Townes Van Zandt and Roky Erickson, were deeply hurt by electroshock. A highlight of the rally came when Roky’s brother, Sumner Erickson, played his inspiring song, “It Burns My Eyes,” after which the group marched back and forth in front of Seton Shoal Creek Hospital, shouting, “No More Shock!”

WE WILL NOT STOP UNTIL THEY DO.

Local television Channel 7 profiled our protest rally on their 5:00 and 9:00 news shows, presenting the use of controversial electroshock therapy at Seton Shoal Creek Hospital. The University of Texas newspaper, *The Daily Texan*, had a front-page article the next morning with great pictures (<http://tinvurl.com/h6asc>). Our incredible videographer, Mary Luker, has

created another DVD, which aired July 3rd on Community Access television, local channel 16. Her previous piece on our April 24th rally has already aired several times!