

From Your (New) President...

This is my debut message as your new NAMI – Finger Lakes president. My central message is to thank all of you for the support that you give the organization. I especially want to thank Carol Booth for her many years of service to NAMI, including as her years as president of the board. Hers are big shoes to fill, but with your help we'll move forward. Carol will continue her work at the hospital and with NAMI NYS, as you'll see in her article below.

Another person I want to recognize, and can never thank enough, is our founding mother, Jean Walters. We would not be here today if not for her efforts over many years. We and our family members owe a great deal to her, and love her dearly for her work and for her big heart.

In January, at our annual meeting, we said good-bye to several board members, including Ann Carter, and welcomed new board members. Our current board is made of Bruce McKee, vice president, Joanne Dennison, treasurer, Sherry Scott, recording secretary, Barbara Anible, corresponding secretary, Linda Duttweiler, Peter Harriott, William Staffeld, and Gail Murphy, also with Compos Mentis. They are a lively and engaged group!

Casey Carr, NAMI Finger Lakes member and Assistant Dean of Students at Cornell University, and advisor to the student group Cornell Minds Matter, <http://mindsmatter.dos.cornell.edu/index.html>, spoke to our annual meeting about the "college scene". As we know, these years are very conducive to the development of mental illness and we also know that many more students are actually coming to college with already diagnosed mental illnesses. She shared a publication on mental illness that she has developed with colleagues for faculty called, *Noticing and Responding to Students in Distress: A Faculty Handbook*.

My first task as the new president was to lead the board through to a decision about the future of our office space. We have been hosted by Jean Walters for many years, in her home, and have grown to associate the organization with that space. Changes in Jean's life as well as financial concerns for NAMI require us to consider alternatives. After a great deal of research and discussion, the board decided that the NAMI – Finger Lakes office will become "virtual" at the end of May, 2010. This decision will reduce our expenses dramatically and we hope will allow us to focus more energy on our support, outreach, and advocacy.

For the time being, Jean will continue to host support group at her home. The board meetings will take place at the TC Action building, at no cost, where we currently are holding Family to Family, and we will continue to consider other space options and where to house our materials and books. We will keep the same schedule of meetings, and will keep you posted about locations.

We will maintain the telephone, the Web site, and our email address. Joanne Denison, our treasurer, has offered her address to be used as our mailing address:

**NAMI Finger Lakes
c/o Joanne Denison
1321 Danby Road
Ithaca NY 14850**

We'll make announcements as we resolve various issues and make decisions. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the decision making and thank you for your patience in this transition.



Jean Walters and NAMI-FL member celebrating friendship, support, and the 2009 Tompkins County Mental Health Services Board award.

This decision was very emotional and a very sad one for all of us. We did not take it lightly, and appreciate Jean for making it as easy as possible. We all will miss meeting at her home, but we will not miss **SPRING, 2010**

Jean, as she will continue to be as involved as ever with NAMI – Finger Lakes.

Deb Grantham, President, NAMI – FL



Carol Booth accepting 2009 Outstanding Service Award on behalf of NAMI – Finger Lakes, from the Tompkins County Mental Health Services Board.

FINANCE

Many thanks to all of you who paid membership dues in 2009 and have already sent them in 2010. We hope that others will follow suit, to help support NAMI — Finger Lakes activities. Part of your annual membership dues are forwarded to NAMI National and NAMI-NYS to pay for your national and state publication subscriptions. We are billed according to our membership roster, so when someone misses paying their dues, we have to absorb the cost of their national and state membership from other revenue sources. If you wish to continue to receive national and state NAMI newsletters, please help us by submitting your membership in a timely way each year. **Our membership year is April 1 – March 30.**

www.namifingerlakes.org/
namifl@lightlink.com

Please forward your payment to:
NAMI Finger Lakes
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Single membership dues \$25
Family membership dues \$35

Our expenses include materials for folders to distribute to families at the hospital; books for the library; printing and mailing of the newsletter; other mailings to the membership; educational events in the community; the telephone/internet access for support calls and email; liability and board insurance (required in order to rent most facilities); and, currently, rent of the office space. We are in the process of applying for insurance from a provider that offers much lower rates.

Thank you,
Joanne Denison, NAMI-FL Treasurer

FUNDRAISING

We continue to seek ways of raising funds for NAMI – Finger Lakes. At our March, 2010 board meeting, George Ferrari, Executive Director of Community Foundation of Tompkins County was our guest speaker. He described how the Foundation works and how we may be able to participate. This may be an option for us in the future.

Community Partnerships:

We are hoping to partner with local businesses who will contribute a percentage of a day's sales to NAMI-FL. If you are willing to recruit a local business with which you have a connection, please

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call or email Deb Grantham (607-277-5148; dgg3@cornell.edu).

Donations via Paypal and Amazon:

Our Paypal Donation Button on the NAMI Finger Lakes Web Page should make it easier for you to make a donation to NAMI (www.namifingerlakes.org). You can access it by clicking the link at the top of the home page, or by clicking “Help Others”.

Either link takes you to the “Help Others” page, which contains a Paypal button. Click this button to donate cash to NAMI via your Paypal account or a credit card. Your contribution appears in the NAMI-FL Paypal account, less a small processing fee (2.2% of the donation + a \$0.30 transaction fee).

The second way to donate electronically is shopping through Amazon (4% of your typical Amazon purchase goes to NAMI). In 2009, we received about \$70 from Amazon as a result of your purchases through this outlet – thanks very much! You **MUST** access Amazon through the Amazon on the NAMI – Finger Lakes Web site (www.namifingerlakes.org) in order for us to benefit from your purchases.

Please contact us with any comments or questions.

Bruce McKee and Joann Dennison,
NAMI-FL members and Board members

Grants:

We are just reaping the rewards of grants written in 2009 by NAMI – Finger Lakes Board members. AutoDesk has awarded us \$1,500 for any of our activities and costs.

www.namifingerlakes.org
namifl@lightlink.com

Other fundraising:

Bruce McKee led the Alternative Gift Fair effort, recruiting local artists to illustrate the gift cards, and raised \$865 for the organization.

Our annual campaign netted about \$3,500, as well. We appreciate the generosity of our members and donors.

NAMI-FL CALENDAR

Support Group: 7-9 PM, First Tuesday of each month, 104 East Lewis Street. Please call first if attending for the first time (607-273-2462).

May

4th – Support Group, Lewis Street
17th – 6 pm, Board meeting, Lewis Street

June

1st – Support Group, Lewis Street

July

6th – Support Group, Lewis Street
31st – Volleyball tournament & summer social

August

3rd – Support Group, Lewis Street
TBA – summer social

September

7th – Support Group
20th – Board meeting

October: Mental Illness Awareness Month

5th – Support Group, Lewis Street
TBA – Garage Sale
TBA – annual educational event

November

2nd – Support Group, Lewis Street

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15th – Board meeting

December

6th – Support Group, Lewis Street
TBA – Holiday celebration

January

3rd – Support Group, Lewis Street
17th – Annual Meeting, all welcome

COMPOS MENTIS VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

Compos Mentis, an Ithaca-based not-for-profit providing farm-based respite for people recovering from mental illness, will be hosting a coed volleyball tournament on July 31 in Stewart Park. The purpose of the tournament is to raise funds for the organization while providing participants with an opportunity to get some exercise and have fun. Teams can select either a competitive or non-competitive track, so the tournament can accommodate teams that have played together for years as well as groups of family and friends who want to form a team specifically for the tournament. **CONTACT NAMIFL@LIGHTLINK.COM IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN A NAMI TEAM!**

Information can be found at <http://composmentisithaca.org/tournament>. Businesses interested in sponsorship should call 607-387-6010. Compos Mentis is located at the farm of the Cayuga Nature Center where individuals engage in growing plants and taking care of animals as they recover from mental illness. Information on Compos Mentis will be available at the tournament.

NAMI SUMMER SOCIAL: JULY 31

Join us at Stewart Park to play or watch volleyball and socialize over a dish to pass summer social. Details to follow.

REGIONAL AFFILIATES MEETING

On Saturday, February 13, 2010, five regional NAMI affiliates came together at our Office here in Ithaca, with Nancy Lamb, our new NAMI-NYS Executive Director. Represented were NAMI-FL, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, and Geneva. The 12 representatives present had a rewarding and pleasant time socializing and learning from each other. Each NAMI had the chance to say a few words about their particular communities and the NAMI programs that are available. One very big challenge seems to be finding new, younger leadership when a President wants and needs to step down. I was happy to have Deb Grantham attend so that the two of us could talk about our process of “changing guard.” Jean Walters, Barbara Anible, and Gail Murphy represented our Affiliate very nicely.

The two major issues discussed were Growing Membership and Marketing/ Fund Raising. We heard some interesting ideas for fund raising, including Coupon Books, Musical Events, and Tea Parties. All find that getting the “NAMI word” out there is an ongoing process and the more inclusive we are in our programming and membership – the more successful we are.

This group – along with Auburn, Oneonta, and Corning – hopes to get together again in May here in Ithaca.

Carol Booth, NAMI-FL member

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TOMPKINS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD 2010 AWARDS

NAMI Finger Lakes members featured in 2010 achievement and service awards distributed in a recognition ceremony on May 25, 2010. Approximately 200 people attended the ceremony in which local service providers were recognized for their contributions to mental health services in our community and consumers were recognized for their courage and achievements as they face mental illness every day. Tom O’Clair, NYS Office of Mental Health, Recipient Affairs, returned to Ithaca as the guest speaker for the event.

We all recognize many of the names but in particular we are proud to report that Jan Lynch received a service award and Josh Eller and Liz Grantham received personal achievement awards. Congratulations to all of them!

FAMILY-TO-FAMILY COURSE

Janet Lynch and Jean Poland lead the 9th Family to Family course from March 4 through May 20, 2010 at TC Action. It was a full classroom!

IN OUR OWN VOICE

Liz Grantham continues to offer her IOOV presentation to local groups. Most recently, she spoke to Compos Mentis board members and friends, in March at the Unitarian Church. She also gave presentations to two classes at Ithaca College.

BREAKING THE SILENCE

[www.namifingerlakes.org/
namifl@lightlink.com](http://www.namifingerlakes.org/namifl@lightlink.com)

Barbara Anible will be undertaking the school program *Breaking the Silence* that Carol Booth launched locally. She is working with Carol to make that transition.

HOSPITAL SUPPORT

Carol Booth and Jean Walters initiated a monthly support visit to the Behavioral Health Unit of Cayuga Medical Center. The hospital provides them some space for 2 hours during visiting hours and family members can stop to talk to Carol and Jean. Hospital folders contain information about our services and about services in the Tompkins County area. Sherry Scott is joining Carol and Jean now and they will be offering a few more support sessions per month.

Please call Jean at 273-2462 or Carol at 272-6573 if interested.

WE ARE SEEKING BOOK AND MOVIE REVIEWS. PLEASE CONTACT DEB GRANTHAM, 607-277-5148 OR DGG3@CORNELL.EDU WITH SUBMISSIONS.

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

Kendra's Law

The NYAPRS/OMH bill to not make any improvements to Kendra's Law and sunset it in 2015, has passed the NYS Assembly Mental Health Committee and the same bill is expected to pass the NYS Senate Mental Health Committee and move to other committees and then to the floor. There has been no action in mental health committees on the AMI bill to improve Kendra's Law and make it permanent.

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The NYS NAMI Web site says: "We urge the legislature to make Kendra's Law permanent. Two studies over ten years have shown that Kendra's Law reduces hospitalization, incarceration, suicide and violence. Consumers who have experienced Kendra's Law report that it has improved their lives; they overwhelmingly support it. Research further shows that Kendra's Law has resulted in improvements to the mental health system and that it saves money by reducing the use of more expensive hospitalization and incarceration services. Permanency will ensure that these gains can become an integral part of the mental health system."

Also see NY Times OpEd by Dr. E. Fuller Torrey, author of *Surviving Schizophrenia*: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/01/opinion/01torrey.html?emc=eta1>

Help make Kendra's Law permanent:

Call the Following Leaders ASAP

**Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver:
518-455-3791
Senate Leader John Sampson:
518-455-2788**

And leave the following message:

"Please make Kendra's Law Permanent or at least include the improvements in A10421 Gunther)/S7596 (Young). The improvements save money, help the mentally ill, keep the public safer and result from research the legislature has funded. Thank you."

Change.org has an online petition that allows you to send an email to all of your legislators in one click:

http://www.change.org/petitions/view/help_the_mentally_ill_in_new_york_make_kendras_law_permanent

Alert: Support 4 Year Extension on Social Worker Licensing Law!

Background

- The current exemption will expire on June 1, 2010
- State & voluntary agencies will be forced to lay-off a large amount of skilled workers
- Disruptions will occur in mental health care services, especially in underserved areas
- Expiration of the exemption will cost not-for-profit providers \$227 million
- The fiscal impact on NYS Agencies = \$62 million

Please take a moment to:

1. Sign a **petition** showing your support by following this link:
<http://www.gopetition.com/online/35182.html>
2. **Contact:**
 - Speaker Sheldon Silver 518-455-3791
 - Assembly Member Gary Pretlow 518-455-5291
 - Assembly Member Deborah Glick 518-455-4841
 - Your local Assembly Member (for help, go to <http://capwiz.com/cvmha/home>).

Please leave the following message:
“I’m a registered voter from (your locality) calling to urge you to uphold the provision in the Executive Budget to SPRING, 2010

extend the exemption of “Social Worker and Other Mental Health Professionals” from the requirements of the license law for 4 years until June 1, 2014.”

COMPOS MENTIS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR SUMMER 2010

Compos Mentis is now accepting Apprentice applications for the upcoming season, which runs from May 3 – October 29, 2010.

Compos Mentis: Working Toward Wellness is a farm-based day program for adults 18 and over who are learning to manage a mental illness.

The program takes place on farmland leased from the Cayuga Nature Center just 5 miles north of Ithaca and runs from 9am-3pm, Monday through Friday. Participants, whom we refer to as "Apprentices", engage in a variety of farm activities during the morning hours, while every afternoon offers a different activity intended to promote well-being. Each day is anchored by a community mid-day meal made with ingredients from the farm.

Compos Mentis may accept applicants with diagnoses such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, autism spectrum disorders, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders. Individuals who are actively using substances or have a history of violence or sexual aggression are not appropriate candidates for Compos Mentis.

If you know someone personally who may benefit from participating in the program at Compos Mentis, please call Shannon Haskins at 229-6392 and/or visit our website at www.composmentisithaca.org.

www.namifingerlakes.org/namifl@lightlink.com