

From Your (*New*) President...

Happy New Year to all of our NAMI Finger Lakes members and friends from the board and from me. All of us are experiencing challenges in many aspects of our lives which can be difficult, but I'm hopeful that 2011 will be a good year. Once again, I thank you for the support that you give the organization.

At our annual meeting in January, we welcomed two new board members, Jean Poland and Mark Lenzenweger. Jean is a long time member of NAMI and a Family to Family instructor. She is preparing for her third Family to Family course with Abby Eller. Mark is a clinical psychologist who holds the title of Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Binghamton University and has a small private practice in the Ithaca area. Our current board is made of Bruce McKee, vice president, Joanne Dennison, treasurer, Sherry Scott, recording secretary, Barbara Anible, corresponding secretary, Peter Harriott, William Staffeld, Jean Poland, Mark Lenzenburg, and Deb Grantham, president. Sherry Scott and I are entering second terms. We thank Linda Duttweiler and Gail Murphy for their service to the organization. They will be missed!

Sherry Scott presented information on HEAP, a heating assistance program for

families or individuals who qualify on the basis of income. Sherry is a customer advocate at NYSEG and in that role works with NYSEG customers to determine qualification and help with heating costs (including for wood heat).

I especially want to thank Barbara Anible, the new editor of this newsletter! Carol Booth established the board position of corresponding secretary and Barbara has been growing the role since the minute she stepped into it. She challenged me to an arm wrestle, but I conceded and passed off my newsletter files, with many thanks. Please welcome her as our new editor.

As I noted a year ago, the board had to work through a decision about office space, as Jean Walters goes through her own changes and decisions. We decided to develop a virtual office, which consists of a cell phone (same NAMI phone number), a Web site, and meeting space at public spaces around Ithaca. Our board meetings have been at TC Action, at no cost. Family to Family will meet there, as they have been for the past some time. Support group has continued at Jean Walters' house, but we will have to make a decision about that at some point, as well.

As a result of this, we pay a reduced rent to Jean, we no longer pay for internet access or a land line (we rely on each board

member's personal access), we piggy back our cell phone on a board member's cell phone service. We also changed banks, eliminating banking fees and gaining some interest. Consequently, our budget is reduced by about 40%.

There will be a few other changes this year, and we will keep you apprised of them. We will keep the same schedule of meetings, and will keep you posted about locations.

Please note our current mailing address:

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

Our telephone number is: (607) 273-2462

Our Web site is:

<http://www.namifingerlakes.org/>

And our email is: namifl@lightlink.com

Turning to 2011 events, look for an In Our Own Voice presentation by Liz Grantham this spring and an October educational event, featuring the film, "Unlisted". We'll have a summer social in July, a winter social in December, and we'll probably hold a garage sale this year again.

Deb Grantham

President, NAMI – FL

Fund Raising News

Garage Sale Report

Saturday, October 9, 2010

Thanks to everyone for a successful garage sale on a beautiful sunny day. In preparation for the sale, Susan Larkin
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notified all our members and people who attend our support group. She also placed it on the Human Services Coalition Listserv. One of my neighbors also listed it on the Fall Creek network. Susan had Andrea Staffeld's posters printed, and many were placed around the city. Trish Englehard was in charge of publicity again this year.

Donations came from our members, my neighbors, and others. Most items were in very good condition. The following items are still available: three pairs of skis (one pair is cross-country with poles and boots and two others are downhill skis). We also have a three piece queen-sized bedroom suite available. Call me at (607)272-6566 if you would be interested in purchasing any of these remaining items.

Special mention must go to Ken and Lois Finkelstein for the donation of the queen-sized bedroom set and a twin bed (that sold).

Carol Booth and a neighbor of mine helped organize the sale items on the tables on Friday before the sale. A friend (Gabe) helped set up the tables. Chris Bobrowich also worked late into the evening setting up and pricing items.

Susan Larkin picked up and delivered items for the sale and helped get rid of a few items after the sale that were not in good enough condition to sell. She also delivered many unsold items to the Salvation Army. I donated the Singer sewing machine to Sew Green and placed a hooded vest on consignment at the Service League Shop.

The day before the sale and the day of the sale Chris Bobrowich, Sherry Scott, Bill and Andrea Staffeld, Deb Grantham, and Mary Kirkpatrick helped wherever they

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were needed while I collected the money. We made over \$700 on this garage sale and some money is still coming in.

The garage sale was a success, thanks to everyone who so willingly participated.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean M. Walters

Alternative Gift Fair December 2010



Norma Helsper and Christine Bobrowich staffing the display at the Alternative Gift Fair held December 4, 2010 at First Baptist and First Presbyterian near DeWitt Park

The gift fair is an annual event to promote a local alternative to consumable holiday gift giving. Over 70 organizations participated this year. NAMI-FL donations were over \$900.

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Donations from Amazon



By using the NAMI-FL website <http://www.namifingerlakes.org> to access the site, Amazon will donate up to 4% of your purchases to us.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Many thanks to all of you who paid membership dues in 2010 and have already sent them in 2011. We hope that others will follow suit, to help support NAMI — Finger Lakes activities. Part of your annual membership dues is forwarded to NAMI National and NAMI-NYS to pay for your national and state publication subscriptions, **IN ADVANCE OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT.** 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.**

Please forward your payment to:

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

Or use the PayPal button on the NAMI-FL website <http://www.namifingerlakes.org>

Single membership dues \$25
Family membership dues \$35

Thank you,
Joanne Denison, NAMI-FL Treasurer

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POINTS OF INTEREST

COMPOS MENTIS

Dear Friends of Compos Mentis,

As we approach the close of our fourth season at the farm, we want to bring you up to date on the state of Compos Mentis and our plans for the future.

As many of you know, not for profit organizations are currently in a very precarious position financially. Government funding has been cut throughout the mental health system. Many private donors find it difficult to maintain their financial support. Costs are rising.

When we planned for this fourth season, the Board was aware that we had only enough money to carry through this year. We did not get 3 grants that we had expected. Surprisingly, we had to delay opening the farm as planned for lack of apprentices. Although we know that there is a need in our community for the type of service we provide so well, for some reason those people were not coming to us.

The Board took the opportunity to discuss our circumstances with several consultants in the community. Though they admired the beautiful facility we had created and the effective program run by our staff and the significant impact it had on apprentices and their families, it was their conclusion that our business model was not sustainable.

Very simply, as a non residential program we could only draw apprentices from a limited area while residential programs had

a national base; as a seasonal program, we had to restart every year from the very beginning rather than being able to build our apprentice population; without a reliable stream of government funding or a large private endowment, it is virtually impossible to raise enough funds annually to meet basic staff costs even when supplemented by a cohort of very devoted volunteers, many of whom have been with the program from the beginning.

Reluctantly, and with great sadness, we have concluded that this will be our final season. We recognize full well that what we have accomplished is remarkable, in no small measure, due to your generous support. The full moon was radiant on the farm at the Harvest Celebration in September, but the stars were not aligned for our extended future.

For the Board

Howard M. Feinstein M.D.
Chairman

Research Alert! **Family-to-Family NIMH Study** **Preliminary Results Support** **Designation as an Evidence-based** **Practice**

Dr. Lisa Dixon reported on the preliminary results of the 4-year study on Family-to-Family to a packed meeting at the June NAMI National convention. At the end of her detailed presentation, it was clear that the results of this large randomized trial confirmed the findings of the two earlier studies of the program.

In the NIMH study, a total of 318 family members were randomized into 2 groups: 160 into F2F and 158 into a control group.

Preliminary results indicated that individuals having received F2F showed significantly greater overall empowerment within their family, the service system and their community. This group had greater knowledge of mental illness; higher ratings of constructive emotion focused coping, higher ratings of personal skills related to family functioning, and lower ratings of anxiety, distress and depression than individuals in the control condition.

Anyone wishing to have a copy of the preliminary results summary, or the updated versions of the study soon to come, can contact Alicia Luckstead 410-706-3244 or aluckstead@psych.umaryland.edu

Local Family to Family classes coming soon

From March 3 through May 12, NAMI Finger Lakes will hold its eleventh Family to Family class. Since the class was first offered in 2003, over 160 people have participated. The most recent class, spring 2010, exceeded the recommended maximum capacity with 25 members.

Without exception participants report increased knowledge of mental illnesses and medications and the accompanying side effects and also greater empathy for their ill relatives. Local participants also develop very strong family support networks.

F2F is designed to be a peer to peer program; trained family members lead the classes. Mental health professionals are invited to participate as panelists during a **SPRING, 2010**

single session. Mental health professionals who have family members may take the course. This is an excerpt from what one participant, a psychiatrist whose mother was diagnosed with mental illness, wrote:

The Family-to-Family Education Program ... spelled out for me what it was like to be a patient with a severe mental illness, and what it was like to be a family member. It ... literally demonstrated for me what it was like to try to listen to someone while having auditory hallucinations. It ... taught me concise, empathetic communication with a patient. It was very useful in helping me deal with my mother who has mental illness. In fact, when I used some of the empathetic listening skills taught in the class with my mother, her joy and relief that someone actually understood how she felt was so overwhelming that it almost reduced me to tears.

The media, which regularly holds up sports heroes and other celebrities as courageous, needs to spend some time in a Family-to-Family course to get a real picture of courage.

The twelve week series of free classes will meet Thursday evenings, from 6:30 to 9 from March 3 through May 12. For more information about the upcoming Family to Family course, call 266-8079 or 273-2462.

Two Magazines to Think About

SZ <http://www.szmagazine.com>

BP <http://www.bphope.com/>

“My son has schizophrenia and I have been subscribing to SZ magazine for several years. The same organization also publishes a magazine for people (and families) who deal with bipolar disorder I confess that I rarely read magazines and the SZ magazine is no different - it often sits on my table for months - unread. But when I do read it, I read it from cover to cover. It is an excellent combination of news about research and suggestions from people who have schizophrenia about dealing with their illness.

The founder of SZ Magazine has schizophrenia and is very open about how he has dealt with his illness.

We don't usually advertise, but I wanted to share this information with people who might find it useful.”

Susan Larkin

Keeper of the list for NAMI-FL

“I read BP magazine on line. Also very helpful for bipolar illness. It, too is for people with the illness and families.”

Abby Eller

“I have been receiving Bipolar Magazine for several years and have left many issues down at Jean's as part of the NAMI-FL Library -- both of these magazines are excellent and I highly recommend subscribing if you like to keep updated.”

Carol Booth

Family and Friends of People with Major Mental Illnesses Support Group Update

November 12, 2010

In addition to our original support group that was formed in 1987, which continues to meet 7 – 9 pm on the 1st Tuesday of each month, we started a second support group in June of 2010. The new group meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 1:30 – 3:30 pm. The reasoning was that the evening support group was often so well attended that participants did not get to speak or interact effectively. With the second group, both generally are well attended and there is more time for each individual.

We have found it most helpful for Susan Larkin (Suzy) to send out email reminders a few days before each support group meeting.

I continue to have occasional individual visits on the telephone with on-going and new family members/relatives/friends and find it most helpful to have them meet with me individually before they join the support group. However, nobody is ever turned away if they arrive at a support group meeting without an initial private meeting.

Suzy and I both agree that the additional support group meeting on the 3rd Thursday of each month has been successful, much needed, additional meeting time as some people can attend an afternoon meeting when they cannot make one on a Tuesday evening, and vice versa. A few have attended both times.

Our support group meetings are a very important, integral part of what NAMI-FL has to offer.

Jean Walters, Susan Larkin

Co-facilitators, NAMI-FL support groups

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a federal grant program that helps eligible households pay for energy costs, repairs and weatherization. Income eligible customers may receive one regular HEAP benefit per season. In addition to regular HEAP, households may also be eligible for emergency HEAP benefits. The number of emergency benefits varies per season depending on the availability of funds. The 2010/2011 HEAP season opens November 1, 2010. Funding is limited, *contact your county's Department of Social Services to apply or visitotda.ny.gov/main/programs/heap*.

With HEAP comes EAP – NYSEG's Energy Assistance Program! **NYSEG's Energy Assistance Program (EAP)** is designed to help eligible customers gain control of their energy bills. The program has **two levels of assistance:** EAP Basic Benefit (monthly bill credit) and EAP Limited Benefit (arrear forgiveness).

OTHER WAYS TO ADVOCATE FOR YOUR FAMILY

Several NAMI-Finger lakes members met with Rich Shaw, the Single Point of Entry Coordinator for the Mental Health Clinic on Green Street. We discussed how the clinic can help family members feel more welcome and informed. Rich has provided several links you might find helpful.

List of programs offered by the Mental Health Department: <http://www.tompkins-co.org/departments/detail.aspx?DeptID=28>

Job descriptions of every county employee: <http://www.tompkins-co.org/personnel/JobDescriptions/ActiveJobDescriptions.html>

[co.org/personnel/JobDescriptions/ActiveJobDescriptions.html](http://www.tompkins-co.org/personnel/JobDescriptions/ActiveJobDescriptions.html)

This is more than we need to know, but it is a way of looking up people who are working with your relative or friend.

A description and assessment of every county agency. All TCMH programs are described. <http://www.tompkins-co.org/pubinfo/progimpact.pdf>
Note: If you download this document, you can find Mental Health in the Table of Contents.

Alcohol and Drug Council release of information form: <http://www.alcoholdrugcouncil.org/docs/NYSconsent4Release.pdf>

If a person is working with the Drug and Alcohol Council, filling out this form will allow the people treating your friend or relative to talk with you. Note, if they won't sign the form, you can still talk to the people providing the treatment, but they can't report back to you.

Family Survival Handbook online. Provides lots of good advice for dealing with a person with mental illness. http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/consumer_affairs/resources/docs/FamilySurvivalHandbook.pdf

From NAMI-Finger Lakes, here is the link to an updated version of our Crisis File: <http://namifingerlakes.org/crisisfile.htm>

Hope this information can be of some help.

If you have any questions, please call or write Carol Booth:
Carol Booth
cabteachworld@hotmail.com
272-6573