

Acting Editor\*: Cynthia Seacord Send address changes, requests to discontinue and comments to: [namischenectady@gmail.com](mailto:namischenectady@gmail.com)  
or contact temporary acting editor at 518-374-8071 (home #)

at: [namischenectady@gmail.com](mailto:namischenectady@gmail.com)

### **Support Group Meetings**

**Ellis Family Support Group** – Ellis Hospital's Mental Health Department offers a meeting on Wednesday nights in Classroom B-3 (B-wing, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor) at 6 pm for friends and families of adults living with serious mental illness. Use parking garage, or the Rosa Road Radiation Lot; press button to get buzzed in, and follow signs to B wing; take elevator to 3<sup>rd</sup> floor classroom B-3. To verify the meeting is still on call the Ellis Psychiatry Department, (518-243-4000) or Joel Haynes at 518-605-6537.

**CDPC Family Support Group** – Family Resource Room at the Capital District Psychiatric Center, 75 NAMI Capital Region trained facilitators will lead the meetings on Tuesdays at 5 pm.

*NOTE: Your family member does not have to be in treatment at either facility in order for you to attend either one of these support groups.*

### **NAMI SCHENECTADY WANT ADS**

- Write for this newsletter and website. Review a book or movie, advocate, or share recovery and wellness-related tips.
- We have a webmaster willing to train two people to take over management of our site, [namischenectady.org](http://namischenectady.org). Do you know HTML? Put your technology know-how to work today.
- Someone to partner with a volunteer, willing to create and maintain our Facebook account.
- People to serve on the board and other committees (examples: nominating, planning and finance committees).
- Drivers for events, especially peer activities.
- Persons interested in teaching NAMI signature programs like Peer to Peer. (Ask us how!)

**MEMBERS: Please volunteer! To apply** write to us

### **Got the "Summer-time Blues?" We've got some "cures" for you below & on Page 2**

**Wednesday, JULY 24:** Supper at Jumpin' Jacks, Scotia, followed by a free rain-or-shine rock concert at Scotia Freedom Park starting at 7 pm, featuring area band, The Refrigerators.

NAMI Schenectady will cover \$10 towards dinner for the first 20 to 25 people who sign up, including staff members who transport and accompany recovering people to the event.



**HOW THIS WORKS:** Call ahead to either Art Collins at 518-372-0960 or Roy Neville at 518 377-2619 to reserve a spot; we'll need your name, phone number and whether you need a ride (some may prefer to drive separately). Riders meet up with us at the downtown library parking lot on Clinton Street no later than 4:40 pm. departure time. Once at Jumpin' Jacks we'll get tables where we can eat together under the umbrellas. Jumpin' Jack's tasty food aims to please on a hot summer's evening. We will do our best to accommodate those persons who may not want to stay on for the concert. We encourage you to stay for the music. The concert runs for about 1.5 hours. Bring a blanket, cushion or folding chair for the lawn. When it's over we've always been able to take everyone home in need of a ride.

**BUT WAIT!!! A Second Jumpin' Jacks  
Dinner and Freedom Park Concert? YES!**

**Wednesday, AUGUST 21** – We hope those of you unable to make it on July 24<sup>th</sup> will be able to come out on August 21 to Jumpin' Jacks and a free Freedom Park concert. Make your reservation with either Art or Roy. We'll drive people needing a ride over to Scotia from the Clinton Street Schenectady library lot, leaving no later than 4:40 pm. NAMI Schenectady will cover \$10 towards a meal for the first 15-20 persons in recovery who sign up. The band that night is Grand Central Station.



**NYS legislative wrap-up--Isn't There Anyone Up There Who Can See Our Position and Help Us?**

*By Roy Neville*

(The title is from Susan Sheehan's 1982 classic about a woman who struggled all her life without success to find treatment for the ravages of her mental illness. The author described in painful detail the frustrations of a woman, Sylvia Frumkin, to find a home, a job and peace in the world that never came. Her book was famously titled: "Isn't There Any Place on Earth for Me?")

The same forlorn wail might have been heard from mental health advocates at the State Capitol in Albany in the final hours of the session that ended June 19. It would have resulted from weeks of frustration, and finally, defeat over the futility to get either of two major bills that should have made it but didn't, passed and signed into law. One bill would have greatly shored up the finances of the non-profit mental health housing providers and the other would cut back on the solitary confinement

***(Legislative wrap-up is continued on page 3)***

**NAMI Schenectady**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
Invites One and All to our Annual Fund-raising Picnic at  
**Niskayuna Community Center Park, 2682 Aqueduct Road**

Affiliated with the National Alliance on Mental Illness, we strive to provide support, education, and advocacy, and to raise our community's awareness about those living with mental illness.

**Annual Summer Picnic**

A delicious dinner of BBQ chicken (alternative is veggie burger), salads, beverages & dessert will be served at 5:30, catered by Pie in the Sky Bakery of Albany

- DJ with Karaoke
- Bingo, horseshoes, Bocci ball, balloon toss, and more.
- 50-50 raffle
- Door prizes

**August 9, 2019**  
Friday from 4-8 PM (rain or shine)

Cost is \$20 (\$10 for clients). Donations are also accepted. Make your check payable to NAMI Schenectady, PO Box 974, Schenectady NY 12301.

PLEASE make your reservations in advance **no later than 8/5**. If you miss that deadline, please call Cynthia Seacord at 518-374-8071 or Cindy Spod at 518-371-8279.

Return with check payable to NAMI Schenectady  
**no later than 8/5** to PO Box 974, Schenectady 12301

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of meals \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20 = \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of client meals \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10 = \_\_\_\_\_  
For our caterer, please indicate:  
# chicken \_\_\_\_\_ # veggie burger \_\_\_\_\_  
I/we want to carpool to picnic as a rider \_\_\_ driver \_\_\_  
Picnic Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## A Suggestion for Summer Reading

*Did you know that NAMI Schenectady has a lending library with several books related to mental health topics? See our website! Below is a review of one of those books by Cindy Sood. Opinions expressed in this review are solely those of the reviewer.*

Book review of: *Never Leave Your Dead: A True Story of War Trauma, Murder, and Madness* (Cameron, Diane 2016, Las Vegas: Central Recovery Press).

Diane Cameron's *Never Leave Your Dead* is a powerful and thought-provoking book that leads you through one woman's search to understand how her stepfather's experiences as a Marine in Southern China during the years right before World War II resulted in the trauma that would affect him for the rest of his life. Along the way, she uncovers the history of how public perceptions and medical treatment of soldiers suffering trauma as the result of their experiences has changed over time. She also develops a deeper understanding of her own childhood trauma and its effects on her life that are both positive and negative.

Told as a story of her interactions with her mother, stepfather (Donald) and the people she talked to in her quest for understanding, it is an easy read that grabs and holds your attention. From the remaining China Marines to the lawyers and mental health professionals interviewed, you gain different perspectives and a deeper understanding of trauma and its causes and consequences that are not limited to those in the military. Narratives of what Donald may have been experiencing and thinking at pivotal points in his life are interspersed throughout the book to provide insight into the level of trauma he experienced and how this could have shaped his actions.

If you would like to read a good book that may help you understand someone with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), I highly recommend *Never Leave Your Dead*. It may challenge some of your assumptions about mental illness and how person experiencing it should be treated.

*(Legislative wrap-up continued)* rules for prisoners, nearly eliminating it for someone with serious mental illness or related disability.

The advocates thought they had it all. This was the NEW New York State Senate and Assembly, with their liberal Democrat majorities who could get it done. But they didn't. They let down a large contingent of housing advocates joined in the Bring It Home Campaign more than once. Activists on a wide front couldn't wrangle a cost of living increase for workers, not only in mental health, but in all the human services fields. The lawmakers were indifferent to the appeals for pay raises plus more staff to operate group homes and apartment programs facing severe shortages of personnel and high turnover.

Big housing providers like Rehabilitation Support Services (RSS) in our area couldn't fill beds as a result, and vacancies rose. The campaign called for \$170 million more while the governor's budget provided just \$10 million, a drop in the bucket for those who ran the homes and had seen conditions spiral downward for years. But no one moved on this—a terrible defeat. Only the hope of a late coming reform gesture coming out of the Legislature to have a study commission look into the chronic funding and staffing shortfalls could soften the blow (more on this below).

Meanwhile, backers of the long fought over HALT bill (Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement Act) had their own rallies almost in tandem with the housing supporters. Led by the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC), this group of survivors, family members, faith-based groups and legal rights and mental health advocates worked tirelessly for the bill's passage. Some of that group even went on a hunger strike, fasting on only liquids for the final 10 days of the session.

HALT nearly made it, but the Governor and Legislature couldn't reach agreement on how to include and implement the HALT provisions, so the bill died in the final hours of the session. It was an *(Legislative wrap-up story concluded on page 4)*

**(Legislative wrap-up concluded)** unbelievable failure of government to act, and a sad setback for those who regard solitary confinement as torture.

Could the hunger strike have made more of a difference if extended longer? Back in the early days of the AIDS epidemic, AIDS demonstrators invaded the Assembly and handcuffed themselves to the members' armchairs. Then in 2002, demonstrators led by the group Act Up blocked the doors to the Capitol in an obvious act of civil disobedience to demand state funding for better treatment of HIV-AIDS victims. They too were repulsed but the impact of direct action wouldn't be forgotten; eventually state and federal funding grew immensely to rescue AIDS and HIV sufferers.

This time there are glimmers of hope for both causes that all is not lost for the activists who worked so hard. In late June New York's lawmakers passed a bill that would force a commission to investigate the funding shortfalls across mental health programs. The bill, sponsored by Democrats Sen. David Carlucci and Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther, would establish a commission to examine the issue and make funding recommendations that could be considered in the context of next year's budget. The legislation calls for nine members to be appointed by a commission which would look into adequate funding levels, adequate direct care staff, the need for more professional employees on staff and the ability of current programs to meet residents' needs.

The coalition urges NAMI members and others to e-mail the governor to sign the bill immediately so that the commission can compile a report in time to guide next year's budget process. "We hope the governor does the right thing and signs the bill," says Bill DeVita, executive director of RSS.

As for HALT, a compromise has been reached with the governor. He and legislative leaders have agreed "to overhaul solitary confinement policies." However, this lacks accountability and oversight that comes with a law, advocates point out.

The compromise would reduce the time limit to 30 days in a solitary cell by April 2022, while HALT

requires that no one would be placed in solitary for more than 15 consecutive days. Beyond that, more time in the box is considered torture, by the United Nations. There's no timetable for creating secure residential rehabilitation units which are part of the HALT bill. The population to be excluded from solitary would be adolescents, pregnant women and likely those individuals with mental, physical or medical disabilities who can't take care of themselves in those facilities, according to the governor's Criminal Justice Reform Policy.

Another positive provision is to make clear that solitary confinement will be a reserved punishment for serious conduct that creates significant risk to the safety and security of the facilities. CAIC leaders said their work will continue until their goals are met.



Anyone can experience the challenges of mental illness regardless of their background. However, background and identity can make access to mental health treatment much more difficult. National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month was established in July of 2008 to start changing this.

NAMI has many resources you can use to learn about specific issues on mental health in multicultural communities as well as tips on how to most effectively spread the word about these issues. As one excellent example, go to <https://www.nami.org/strengthoversilence> for linkage to NAMI's docuseries, *Strength Over Silence: Stories of Courage, Culture and Community*. This series explores unique perspectives on mental health from the African-American and Latino communities. Through candid and courageous stories of lived experience, these mental health champions share their journeys of resiliency and recovery.

**JOIN NAMI SCHENECTADY**

Membership in NAMI Schenectady also makes you a member in  
NAMI New York State and national NAMI

To join choose your annual membership dues type(x) below and  
complete form to accompany your check: \_\_\_\_ individual \$40  
\_\_\_\_ Household \$60 \_\_\_\_ Open Door \$5 (limited  
income)

\$ \_\_\_\_ Additional Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed

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Name(s)

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Street Address or PO Box

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City, State & Zip

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Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

*NAMI Schenectady is a 501(c)3 organization.*

**Make your check payable to: NAMI Schenectady,  
PO Box 974, Schenectady, New York 12301**

***SEE INSIDE – Summer Events & Reminder  
About our Summer Picnic***

**NAMI Schenectady**

**PO Box 974**

**Schenectady, New York 12301**