Greetings!

As we go to press, Spring is only a week away. Winter was relatively kind to us here in Boston this year, and we can expect a lovely New England Spring—that is, if the March winds don’t buffet us to the pavement first!

Daffodils and crocuses are not the only new things appearing right now—we invite you to visit our website, www.mbrlc.org, and check out the schedule of your favorite center—many have new groups listed.

We welcome submissions from anybody in the MBRLC community; all opinions expressed in these articles are those of the creator, and not necessarily of the MBRLC itself. Submissions should be sent via email to idony.lisle@bmc.org; please include a note re which center you consider your home base.

—Your Editors
Introduction to NAMI

by Howard D. Trachtman and Rev. Dr. Norma Heath

NAMI—short for the National Alliance on Mental Illness—is the largest grassroots mental health advocacy organization in the US, founded 40 years ago. Their website is www.nami.org. With 600 local affiliates, NAMI Massachusetts is the state chapter located in Charlestown. Their website is www.namimass.org. NAMI creates signature programs which are then implemented locally.

In 2004, Howard Trachtman and Kim Holt co-founded the NAMI Greater Boston Consumer Advocacy Network, more recently rebranded as the NAMI Greater Boston Peer Support and Advocacy Network. In 2014, Ewa Pytowska became director and continues to hold the position to this day. We have helped NAMI develop various peer programs in Massachusetts: In Our Own Voice speakers bureau, NAMI Connection Support Groups, and PEER to PEER educational classes. NAMI funds are used to support Opening Doors to the Arts, an organization where we get free tickets to concerts and theater. See www.OpeningDoorsToTheArts.org or email us at info@openingdoorstothearts.org.

This program is free to join; however, we suggest you become a NAMI member for $5.00 a year. Members will receive NAMI’s Advocate magazine and be able to vote at NAMI conventions. There is power in numbers so please join us!

A monthly NAMI Greater Boston Support and Advocacy Network business meeting with speakers had been taking place at Center Club monthly before COVID, and has been temporarily replaced with a Zoom Speaker Series on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 6:30pm-7:30pm. See more details at https://www.mbrc.org/zoom-speaker-series. All are invited to attend these meetings.
see our website, www.namiboston.org

NAMI Connection 90 minute support groups are located on Zoom: https://namimass.org/nami-connection-recovery-support-groups/

Note some of these are hosted by the Metro Boston Recovery Learning Community.

If you need help navigating the mental health system or want information and referral, please contact NAMI Massachusetts compass helpline:
compass@namimass.org
(617-704-6264)

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There is a weekly staff/support meeting that takes place on Tuesdays. We have an active Google-group for getting new information on mental health and upcoming classes and events relating to mental health experiences. Contact Howard Trachtman for more information hdt@mbrc.org. Also
Thoughts While Living Through the Pandemic

by Jon Gottlieb

Early to bed and early to rise really doesn't make much difference at times. I feel tired no matter when I arise. I say my prayers just before I retire for the evening. Thank G-d they are always answered in some ways. Knowing that I am not doing any of this life stuff by myself keeps me steady. Although most of the time, I am the only person in the room. I am learning from my Higher Power and think of those good souls who are with Him and are no longer physically with me. They will always exist through me.

Most of my deepest thinking takes place late at night while trying to lull myself to sleep. It isn't easy. I mostly analyze myself with thoughts of the future. I've noticed that at various times of the day noises change at various levels and pitches. The atmosphere outside brings about those quiet times, mostly lying in bed.

I fall asleep quite often during the day, napping in my chair near the tv at odd hours. TV is my sleeping pill. I love it too much to give it up. Sometimes I feel so strapped out that I have to lay down and I lose track of time.

Writing, reading, music and internet research have kept me level headed. Also, getting out of the house on a regular basis helps. I spend a lot of time by myself on my journeys to shop for my guilty pleasures. Or, I just enjoy the sights while walking. This soothes and refreshes every bone in my body. Isn't that what life is all about? Especially now. Making yourself happy comes first before you can concentrate on the welfare of others.

I guess I use my time wisely after all. Get ready for those changes that throw you for that needless loop.
Lilac petals grow
Inside my soul, when with you
Kaleidoscopic

Don't ask for a waltz
Or how one crosses right, left
Look through bamboo, stars

Haiku by Rob Macdonald
DAY 15
by Diana Sabella (Dhyana)

I awake with
Mind clearer
Vision brighter
Body lighter
Day 15
after my 14 day quarantine
Heart pounding
Grab Street clothes
Outdoor shoes
Don’t forget mask
And... Zinc lozenges
Turn the door knob
A Hallway
An elevator
The lobby
Feet hit the ground
My beloved Boston ground
Holding in a scream
Eyes bulging as if
Gaining sight for the first time
Am I Lazarus
healed by Jesus
Walking down Huntington Avenue?
College students and puppies
In socially distanced circles
Young men jogging
Jumping - jacking
Faces, limbs, torsos.
On a bleacher...
I ... break down weeping!
Introduction to Opening Doors To The Arts

by Howard D. Trachtman and Rev. Dr. Norma Heath

Opening Doors To The Arts (ODA) provides members of the mental health recovery community with access to low cost or free arts and entertainment opportunities. We invite our community to experience the healing power of the arts. Due to Covid19 we have been mostly attending online events. We did do a dinner with outside seating in Waltham and saw lights shows at Franklin Park Zoo and Gillette Stadium. We plan to continue going to Covid safe events. After Covid we will continue to watch plays and concerts as a group. We usually have lunch or dinner either before an event or after an event.

We partner with many theaters including Reagle Music Theater, Wheelock Family Theater, SpeakEasy Stage Company, Central Square Theater, Lyric Stage and many more. We attend concerts with Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Philharmonic, Handel and Haydn Society, Berklee School of Music and many more.

ODA has been helping people for over ten years and attend-
In the house

Across
5. We are all experts now
6. Our gateway to the world
9. Home-made, hand-decorated, outfit matching
11. Improve your spirit!
14. Worth their weight in gold
15. You still need this

Down
1. Bored, not hungry
2. Don't overwater
3. We are all feeling this. It's normal right now.
4. Improve your mind!
7. Don't watch too much of this
8. Most effective with a fistpump!
10. The warrior women supplying our needs
12. Are we all potatoes now?
13. Our best supporters

Solution on Page 12
Boston Common Carousel, September 2020

Photo by Hilary K., who says, “It sums up a lot about this Corona time.”

Harvard Square, April 2020

Photo by Andromeda Lisle
Recovery is Real

peer support  creativity  friendship  resilience  
connection  Hope Center  positivity  recovery  
strength  sharing  dreams  groups  
wellness  happiness  Boston  MBRLC  
music  honesty  CSRLC  Zoom  
PSN  humor  hope  BRC
Kimberly Collins. *Tuxedo*. Oil on linen. 36 x 24 in.