



# NAMI Blue Ridge Family Alliance Newsletter September 2004

## Upcoming Meetings

### Informal Support Group Meetings

*First Thursdays from 5:30pm – 6:30pm*  
**October 7, November 4, and December 2**

### Speaker Meetings:

#### **September 16: Psychiatric Crisis Care Continuum**

Dr. Ed Kantor is Assistant Professor in the University of Virginia Department of Psychiatric Medicine, with a special interest in emergency and community psychiatry. Dr. Kantor will lead a discussion of the psychiatric crisis care continuum: both what is available today in our area and also what we may be able to add in the future.

#### **October 21:**

To be announced, due to cancellation.

#### **November 18: Region Ten's New Executive Director**

Philip Campbell is the new Executive Director of Region Ten. He comes to Region Ten with an extensive background in social services agencies working with the mentally ill in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. He will give us an update on Region Ten and share his perspective on how mental health services in Charlottesville compare with other areas of the country.

#### **December 16: Family Members Helping Themselves and Each Other**

Dr. Peter Sheras is a practicing clinical psychologist. He also teaches a course at the University of Virginia. He will speak to our group about the various ways that family members who are caregivers for a mentally ill person can help take care of themselves and the other family members affected by the mentally ill member of the family.

**Meetings are held in the Board Room of the  
Region Ten Building, 800 Preston Avenue.  
Visitors are welcome.**

## President's Message

In June, the BRFA had a wonderful response to our picnic, and we missed those of you who were unable to join us. Everyone brought delicious food to share, and the Blue Ridge Clubhouse was the perfect location for our gathering. Hopefully, we will be able to reschedule it again in June '05, so watch the Newsletter for notices, and we will hope to see you there!

The Support Group meetings on the first Thursday of the month continued throughout the summer and have been well attended by "old" members and newer members. Now that September is here, we will resume Speaker Meetings on the third Thursday of the month. Thanks to Mike Kelley for scheduling interesting programs for us throughout the fall. As a reminder, if we have debatable weather conditions we will cancel our meetings as per the public school system, and their cancellations and closings are announced on the radio.

As I am sure you have heard by now, the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) will be holding its 25th annual conference in Washington, DC September 8 - 12. I have also received notice of the NAMI/VA 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention October 14 – 16, which will be held in Richmond at the Wyndham Hotel. The theme this year will be "Honoring our Past and Building our Future." As before, there will be many workshops at the convention including "Ask the Doctor" and "Ask the Attorney" sessions.

As this Newsletter goes to press, I have also just received word from the NAMI/VA office in Richmond. Due to Gaston's heavy rains last week, the office has sustained serious damage, as ceilings caved in on about 40% of their office space. Obviously computers have also been damaged, so it will be a while before they are up and running smoothly again. Val Marsh, Executive Director, will keep us informed.

I would also like to add a note of thanks to Pat Passalacqua, our Editor, who puts together this very interesting and informative Newsletter four times a year. Anyone wishing to contribute can get in touch with me or Pat.

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings.

**Sally Rinehart**

# NAMI-Blue Ridge Family Alliance

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## OFFICERS

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MICHAEL KELLEY  
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Treasurer Jim Scott's new address is:  
250 Pantops Mountain Rd. Apt. 5323  
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## BOARD MEMBERS

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## NEWSLETTER

Editor: Pat Passalacqua  
Circulation: James and Shelah Scott

**Newsletter Information:**  
This newsletter is published quarterly.  
Persons wishing to contribute an original  
article are asked to contact the editor.

## WORLD WIDE WEB

Monticello Avenue site  
<http://avenue.org/brfa>

Charlottesville Community Calendar  
[www.chvillecalendar.com](http://www.chvillecalendar.com)



## Have you read?

**Acquainted with the Night  
(A Parent's Quest to Understand  
Depression and Bipolar Disorder  
in His Children)**

**By Paul Raeburn  
Broadway Books, \$24.95**

This is a harrowing description of what happened in a family when two of the teen-aged children were diagnosed with a serious mental illness. The resulting chaos is worsened by problems the parents encounter with insurance companies and the mental health system

**Skywriting: A Life Out of  
the Blue**

**By Jane Pauley  
Random House, \$25.95**

This new memoir by the popular TV reporter and commentator includes a description of her personal struggle with bipolar disorder.



## On the Web

[www.mental-health-matters.com](http://www.mental-health-matters.com)

The site provides a structured source of information about mental health issues. *Mental Health Matters* will offer detailed technical briefs on disorders, symptoms, treatment modes, and in time, a "comparison engine" that allows users to compare different aspects of disorders.

**MESA (Mutual Education,  
Support and Advocacy)  
group meetings will resume  
in the spring of 2005.**

## Region Ten Has a New Executive Director

The members of the Region Ten Community Services Board are pleased to announce that Philip Campbell has accepted the position of Executive Director. He will begin his employment in early September. Region Ten provides mental health, mental retardation and substance addictions disorder services to the City of Charlottesville, and counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson. Region Ten's 2004/05 operating budget is 23 million.

Philip Campbell comes to Region Ten after twenty-seven years of management positions and service in the field of mental health, mental retardation, drug and alcohol prevention programs, and children's services. His experience is wide and varied, and includes six years as Commissioner of Mental Retardation for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Region Ten's executive director, Jim Peterson, will retire from the agency on September 30. Before that he will spend some time with the new director, who will hold a press conference in the early days following his appointment.

## Virginia Budget Update

In a dramatic breakthrough at the end of April, the Republican-controlled General Assembly approved more than \$1 billion in new taxes - signaling the end of Virginia's historic budget impasse.

The bundle of higher taxes on sales, tobacco and real estate deeds - coupled with anticipated savings from a freeze on the popular car tax rollback - is expected to generate roughly \$1.6 billion over the next two years. It will be the first general tax increase since 1986 and is meant to shore up funding for core services, such as education, health care and law enforcement.



## Other Voices: Treating mental illness in jail

*By Paul F. Aravich*

*(from the National Low Income Housing Coalition Newsletter, June 11, 2004, also posted on the NAMI Virginia website)*

The Daily Press published "Inmates claim inadequate care" on June 20 regarding the care and treatment of people with mental illness in our jails. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, more than 16 percent of adults and 20 percent of youths in the criminal justice system are mentally ill; many of them are co-morbid with chemical dependency.

A new congressional investigation prepared for Rep. Henry Waxman, D-California, and Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, documents the "widespread and serious national problem" of mentally ill youth who are inappropriately incarcerated because of limited treatment options in our communities. The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill calls this an outrageous "widespread warehousing of children with mental illness." The data shows that appropriate treatment, rehabilitation and support services improve recovery and reduce recidivism.

While the criminal justice system is the most costly, least effective way to treat people with mental illness and chemical dependency, the Los Angeles County Jail and New York's Rikers Island are the largest inpatient psychiatric facilities in America, according to the nonprofit Treatment Advocacy Center. Testimony last month by the Director of the MacArthur Research Network on Mandated Community Treatment to the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security states that "...only one-third of men and one-quarter of women with a mental illness in jail report receiving any treatment..." It further states that 14 percent of those who receive no treatment after release from jail go on to commit violent crimes while only 3 percent do so when appropriate treatment is provided.

Important new legislation called "The Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act of 2003" was passed by the Senate and is now before the House of Representatives (H.R. 2387). It would grant \$100 million to states and localities to develop novel, region-specific programs that, for example, more effectively divert appropriate people with mental illnesses to community-based mental health programs, provide better treatment programs within the criminal justice system, and promote mental health courts for misdemeanor defendants similar to drug courts.

Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson notes that without more effective diversion programs, people will continue to recycle through the criminal justice system at great personal and societal cost.

Stigma is the major barrier to mental illness in America. The proposed legislation addresses the problem of mental illness and the criminal justice system in a progressive, evidenced-based manner.

Progressive-minded conservatives and liberals should celebrate this legislation not only for the sake of the mentally ill, but also for the sake of their communities.

Progressive-minded people should also celebrate the pending Keeping Families Together Act (S.1704/H.R.3243) (for more services for children), the Family Opportunity Act (for families with serious disabilities), and the Mental Health Equitable Treatment Act (to prohibit discriminatory limits on mental health coverage by private insurers).

And progressive-minded people should advocate for more research, prevention and treatment programs since, according to data from the National Institutes of Health, mental illness and chemical dependency combine to form the most costly health care problem in America.

**Aravich, associate professor of pathology and anatomy at Eastern Virginia Medical School, is a member of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Virginia and the Congressional Liaison Committee of the Joint Steering Committee for Public Policy.**

## NAMI Virginia Membership Application Form

I (We) wish to join \_\_\_\_ or renew membership \_\_\_\_:

- \_\_\_\_ Individual/Family           \$35
- \_\_\_\_ Professional               \$35
- \_\_\_\_ Open Door Members (for persons with limited income)       \$3
- \_\_\_\_ Church/Synagogue/Civic Group           \$50

I wish to support NAMI's work to improve the quality of life for people with serious mental illnesses.  
I have enclosed my tax-deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Total dues and contribution: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_ City\_\_\_\_\_ ST\_\_\_\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (optional)\_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to NAMI-VA and mail to P.O. Box 1903, Richmond, VA 23218.

A portion of your dues will be forwarded to NAMI and to the local affiliate nearest your address.

## CROSSING CREEKS

### Recognizing the healing power of community

*Crossing Creeks seeks to be a supportive, therapeutic community where persons with persistent mental illnesses can live and work with others for the mutual benefit of all. Crossing Creeks seeks to nurture a sense of engagement, belonging, and hope and to facilitate practical life skills for meaningful integration into the larger society.*

Crossing Creeks, a new therapeutic community located near New Market, Virginia, is searching for the first resident renters to begin the process of building the community that will, in the near future, welcome the first resident clients. Resident renters will pay \$500 per month for room and board and will reside in a large home, along with a resident manager family and volunteers. Individuals selected will move into Crossing Creeks on-or-about September 1. Applicants must:

- be at least 18 years of age
- have a history/diagnosis of mental illness but be stable enough to live independently and to manage their psychiatric symptoms and medications
- be willing to live in community and have a desire to work with others to make Crossing Creeks a place of love and care
- be willing to contribute their share to the work of the house and farm (doing things such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, animal care, mowing, giving tours to visitors, etc.)
- be willing to sign a 6-month contract with us during this initial start-up phase

*For additional information, and/or to request an application, please contact:*

*Sam Nickels, Executive Director*

540-476-0938

[crossingcreeks@yahoo.com](mailto:crossingcreeks@yahoo.com)

[www.crossingcreeks.org](http://www.crossingcreeks.org)