

Book of the Month by Barb Bartell

Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl :
The true story of Renee. Forward by
Frank Conroy. New York, Meridian,
1951. ****

This remarkable book is an essential read if you want to understand schizophrenia from the sufferers point-of-view. Renee is a French girl who lived in the early part of the twentieth century. At this time there were no anti-psychotic drugs. The treatments available then were hospitalization, sedation, and Freudian psychoanalysis. Mme. Secheyay, the psychoanalyst, quickly realizes that her patient is made more anxious by intellectual analysis. She develops a modified treatment that she calls "symbolic realization." The goal of this therapy is to provide comfort, nurturance and safety to the patient and to try to break through her terrifying wall of isolation. In Renee's own words: " In the midst of desolation, in indescribable distress, in absolute solitude, I am terrifyingly alone; no one comes to help me."

Renee's ability to remember and describe her world when she was in the throes of her illness is both poetic and crystalline clear. To give you a sense of her writing, I will quote a particularly memorable passage:

"For me madness was definitely not a condition of illness; I did not believe that I was ill. It was rather a country opposed to reality, where reigned an implacable light, blinding, leaving no space for shadow, an immense space without boundary, limitless, flat; a mineral, lunar country, cold as the wastes of the North Pole. In the stretching emptiness, all is unchangeable, immobile, congealed, crystallized. Objects are stage trappings, placed here and there, geometric cubes without meaning.

People turn weirdly about, they make gestures, movements without sense; they are phantoms whirling on an infinite plain, crushed by the pitiless electric light. And I am lost within it, isolated, cold, stripped, purposeless under the light, A wall of brass separates me from everybody and everything," (p. 44, ASG).

The genius of this book lies in Renee's ability to describe the sensations and perceptions of a mind possessed by schizophrenia so clearly and accurately. She is able to give you a sense of what schizophrenia is like from the inside out. Renee's treatment is lengthy and fraught with terrifying setbacks, but Mme. Secheyay's loving perseverance as well as her uncanny insight allow Renee to heal. The psychoanalytic treatment of severe mental illness has long since been abandoned: but, sometimes the skill of the therapist can transcend the use of an ineffective method.

Available at Barnes & Noble

The genius of this book lies in the author's ability to describe the sensations and perceptions of a mind possessed by Schizophrenia so clearly and accurately from the inside out.

Board of Directors:

Carrie Beaver President, Ken Werner Vice President, Carol Scholing Secretary, Deanna Prida Treasurer, Kay Brown, Carolyn Christianer, Shannon Marcus, Sherry Matheson, Grace Miles, Barb Bartell Past President, Jeffrey Brown State Board Representative.

NAMI Flagstaff 928-214- 2218

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A great big

Thank You!

**To Barb Bartell for
her contributions to
the Newsletter and
for covering the
cost of postage in
February and April.**

Where It All Began In 2001

By Phyllis Levendusky

Family Support Group

The Family Support Groups is where it all began. In 2001 a small group of ladies realized that they had a lot in common and wanted a place where they could talk about their concerns, share information, and not feel *so alone* in dealing with their loved ones mental illness. That spark lead to the formation of the NAMI Flagstaff affiliate, which now offers Family 2 Family and Peer 2 Peer classes plus Family and Peer Support Groups. All of this is funded by donations from our membership, grants, special gifts, plus the generous donation of time from all of our dedicated volunteers, most of which also serve on NAMI's Board of Directors.

Family Support Group - meeting the first and third Wednesday of each month, 6:30 to 8:00 at St. Pius Church.

NAMI Connections Group meets every Thursday at 5:30 to 7:00 at St. Pius Church.

These are drop in meetings, come when you can.

Our Clay Classes are the Happening!!!

Bowls and bunnies, masks, bugs and Martians, all being created with clay, paints and glazes by folks enjoying the Clay Class offered by NAMI Flagstaff. The class is being held the first three weeks in April as part of NAMI Flagstaff's plan to provide a wide variety of services to aid in recovery for people with serious mental illness.

The art program has been doing it's thing since 2005, mostly through grants. Some quotes from recent participants:

"It's hard for me to get out of my house sometimes because of my mental illness. Going to these art classes are a motivating way to do this and a way of expressing myself through art. I am grateful for the clay class and others like it."

"I find the time spent here in class to be invigorating and an outlet for creativity. I am often relaxed and stress free while creating. It washes the stress of the day away."

"Better than any prescriptions!!!"

**Your financial
support allows
us to offer these
Art Classes ,
Educational
Courses & other
Support Groups.**

Research findings on TMS Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation

There is a new non-invasive and painless procedure called transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) which has just been approved by the FDA for use in the treatment of depression and memory problems in people who have failed to respond to most antidepressant medications. TMS involves positioning plastic-encased coils of wire next to the skull to generate a magnetic field that passes through skin and bone and penetrates around three centimeters into the brain, where its weak electric currents activate nearby neurons (brain cells). TMS may also be beneficial for the treatment of other disorders affecting the brain: stroke, vascular disease in the brain, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, migraine, tinnitus, bulimia, and chronic pain. Several types of TMS devices are available, although only one has FDA approval. Since the treatments are costly-as much as \$500 a session-it may be helpful to locate a clinical trial if you think TMS might offer benefits for you or your loved one.

(Massachusetts General Hospital Mind, Mood & Memory, Vol. 7, No. 2, Feb. 2011.)

Don't Call Me Crazy! By Grace Miles

I close my eyes and there it is again. Money. Counting money.... It just pops right back in my head. Racing thoughts. Can't stop them. Thought of no one caring, trying too hard, of not being loved, never succeeding. Will it ever end? No. I have a bipolar disorder. It is something I live with every minute of every hour of every day.

If I do crazy things, act crazy ways, people tell me that I am not "normal". I have been told it's all my fault for everything I do.... But, as a matter of fact, I **am** normal for Grace. I have lived like this all my life. My least favorite saying is 'Get over it'...like I can just wake up one morning and tell myself "*I am not going to have bipolar disorder anymore*". How I wish.

No one knows, unless they are there, what it's like. Anxiety, depression, and ooh the mania-that's when I could build Flagstaff it's own Empire State building ...maybe two or three. Wouldn't that shock our lovely little city? Or hey, rewrite all the city laws! Free parking every day all day long. I could paint like Michelangelo or write a book like "War and Peace". Oh, and teach... Could I teach! I could be another Socrates. *I could teach anything and everything anyone would want to know.*

Then the curtain of depression falls. My limbs turn to lead. I am lucky to leave my house, get in my car and drive to work. *Hard. Hard...Oh, so hard.* But I do it. I also try to find time for a kind word for almost everyone who speaks to me. I understand what it is to suffer.

Say what you want to about me, but give me a chance. Don't call me or what I do 'crazy' and don't judge me until you have walked just 10 minutes in my shoes. Not one hour, just ten-minutes will do.

The Value of Peer Support Services (from Lori Ashcraft and William Anthony)

* Peers (including family members) can reach out and engage people unwilling to use behavioral health services. This is especially important because only 15% of people with serious mental illnesses are estimated to receive minimally adequate treatment (note: this is for the general population)

* Peers who work alongside professional staff provide living proof that recovery is possible. This can raise morale by providing evidence to service providers that people can and do recover.

* Peers provide a living example of hope for others with mental illnesses. The "if I can do it, you can do it" message doesn't even have to be spoken—it's right before their eyes. This often allows peers to engage and bond with people who otherwise would be reluctant to trust and use clinical services.

How You Can Help Us Help Them

We continually strive for excellence in our support groups, educational programs, and advocacy throughout the year in an effort to break down the barriers that continue to prevent the mentally ill and their family members from getting the care that they need. This all takes generous contributions of volunteer time and money to support our programs. We hope that **you** will find it in your heart to remember those forgotten ones who suffer from brain disorders through your contributions and continued NAMI Membership.

To renew your NAMI Membership and support our efforts please check your contribution box below and mail your tax-deductible contribution to:

_____ \$35.00 Individual/Family (One Vote)

_____ \$60.00 Family (Two Votes)

_____ \$3.00 Mental Health Consumer

_____ Contributions in excess of the Membership Fee

**NAMI Flagstaff
P.O Box 30673
Flagstaff, AZ 86003-0673**

NAMI Flagstaff.



Northern Arizona's Voice on Mental Illness

NAMI Flagstaff
PO Box 30673
Flagstaff, AZ 86003

May	June	July
Azpire Recovery House Monday - Friday 10am-4pm	Azpire Recovery House Monday - Friday 10am-4pm	Azpire Recovery House Monday - Friday 10am-4pm
Family Support Group Wednesday 2nd & 16th 6:30-8:30	Family Support Group Wednesday 6th & 20th 6:30-8:30	Family Support Group Wednesday 4th & 18th 6:30-8:30
NAMI Connections Peer Support Every Thursday 5:30-7:00pm	NAMI Connections Peer Support Every Thursday 5:30-7:00pm	NAMI Connections Peer Support Every Thursday 5:30-7:00pm
<i>Family and Peer Support Groups meet at St. Pius Church , 2257 East Cedar Avenue Flagstaff, AZ 86004-1918</i>		

Please Note—Our Family to Family and Peer to Peer Education classes are currently full. For information regarding these classes and/or enrollment dates please contact us at admin@nami-flagstaff.org or by calling Barb at 928-606-8328.

Save The Date:

October 6th- Buffalo Park- “Overcoming Obstacles”- NAMI Fundraiser
WE NEED VOLUNTEERS, To sign up contact Carrie Beaver 928-606-4859

At Azpire we welcome the opportunity to assist those willing to Participate in their recovery. Come by and see the wide variety of programs we offer. Where fun and seriousness are available to all!
2201 N. Vickey Street “Old Chanel 2 Building” 928-213-0742