

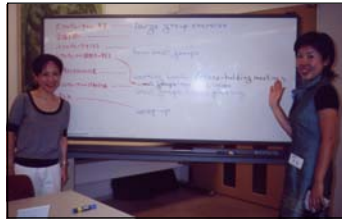
WV Leadership Academy: Taught in Japan

The exemplary Leadership Academy has graduates in Japan! Lorie Roberts (WVMHCA), Jack Stringfellow (Hu-Tech), and Renee Stringfellow (WVSCTC) traveled to Japan to provide this recognized leadership skills development workshop. The training was a great success. As a result, Japan will be sending representatives to WV this spring to learn more about WVMHCA and mental health initiatives. Photos below highlight the Japan Leadership Academies.

Berkley County Resource/Drop In - Shalom Center

By: Nancy Allison Schmitt

Coming soon, is a new center located in Berkley County, in Martinsburg. This is a collaborative project with the Martinsburg Berkley County Coalition for the Homeless and WVMHCA. The Berkley Co. Resource & Drop In - Shalom Center will be providing services such as peer support, education, social activities, WRAP, Advocacy, community linking and referral, and employment opportunities. Located at 412 Winchester Ave, call Nancy Allison Schmitt at 304-676-8053 for more information.



PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS HIRED

Thanks to community and state support, along with the collaboration of Prester and WVMHCA, Peer Support Specialists are being trained and hired to fill unique positions in the behavioral health field. With the current emphasis on transforming the mental health system to a recovery focus, Peer Support Specialists have been trained to use their personal life experience and peer support skills to inspire hope and promote wellness and recovery. Paradigm shifters, such as Renee Stringfellow and Mark Davis of West Virginia State Community and Tech-

nical College have been key players in development of this workforce effort. If desired, students can opt to receive college credits and receive a Skills Set Certificate as a Peer Support Specialist. Coursework can also serve as electives toward advanced degrees.

Kathy Muscari, instructor, champions the Peer Support Specialist role and has worked with other states in developing the WV program. This includes consultation with META Services in Arizona, and the Certified Peer Specialist Project in Georgia.

New York has created a civil service definition for peer specialists as an "entry-level paraprofessional; non-supervisory; provides services which empower individuals receiving mental health services; empathizes with the experiences of recipients and can understand the factors which promote recovery."

Prester, Roark Sullivan, WVMHCA, and others have employed Peer Support Specialists. WV DRS has shown interest in working with this exciting program. It is offered through Recovery Education of WVMHCA. Call 304-345-7312 for info.

Coalition Specialists David Boothe (Peer Recovery Network) and Jessica Stewart (MH Consumer Network) attended an exciting curriculum training on facilitating peer support groups for recovery-focused management of life domains. Author Paul Abrams reflects his interest in behaviorism in group workbook. Contact Dee Halbert, Coordinator, for more information about **VOYAGE TO WELLNESS**



Tenth Leadership Academy: Statewide Conference

By: Kelly Lane
Leadership Academy Coordinator



Kelly Lane presents conference keynote speaker, Jim Womeldorff, with Appreciation Award



Jackie Chellev brings WVDHHR greetings to event.



Exciting presentations and workshops were offered.



The West Virginia Mental Health Consumers' Association-Technical Assistance Center held its 10th Annual Leadership Academy Conference "*Spreading Our Wings: Peer Support & Leadership*" Friday December 2nd through Sunday December 4, 2005; at the Ramada Inn Conference Center in Morgantown, WV.

This Year's conference was a great success. There were over sixty people attending from around accros our state. During the 2 ½ day conference there were twenty six workshops available, including *WRAP for Work, Stress Reduction, Creating Effective Action Plans, Peer Support Specialist* and many more.

On Saturday December 3rd there was a Keynote Luncheon with Jim Womeldorff from Morgantown, WV. Mr. Womeldorff discussed the importance of **Skills + Supports = Success and Satisfaction**. Learning the skills of leadership and finding support among our peers and the community helps us to spread our wings and succeed. During this year's conference Brenda Bailey wrote a poem about "*Spreading Our Wings: Peer Support & Leadership*" We look forward to many more successful conferences.

A MESSAGE FROM WVMHCA's EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lorie Roberts, Ex. Dir.

Its a busy time of the year for staff and volunteers of WVMHCA. We are working hard to provide opportunities and encourage our peers to get involved in their communities through housing, education, jobs, and other recovery-focused activities.

As a nonprofit, WVMHCA is funded mainly through grants and donations. It's time for us to review our current goals and objectives and to make certain we are fulfilling our promises to our community and our peers.

What are you doing on your watch? This common saying inspires each of us at WVMHCA to personally reflect. Am I contributing to others? Is what I am doing making a positive difference? Are peoples' lives improving? Am I following through with the mission and vision of my organization?

As Ex. Dir. of WVMHCA, I am pleased to be part of an organization that truly cares.

JENTA: Service Dog, Loving Friend & Companion, Ambassadog Extraordinaire

Our beloved "Jenta" was no ordinary dog. She loved everyone unconditionally. She never judged our limitations or imperfections. She just loved and was loved. In mid-October, "Jenta" was diagnosed with cancer. On November 8, 2005, our beloved "Jenta" crossed that Rainbow Bridge into eternity the dignity and grace she lived with for 15 years and five months. "Jenta" was more than a service dog or pet to Linda Tuncsiper. For over years they were an exemplary example of what ADA is all about. Thanks to "Jenta", Linda's life flourished and touched many other lives. I felt blessed by knowing them together and individually. They show everyone that being a person living with a mental and/or physical disability need not be a liability. They proved there could be a happy and productive life after diagnosis. On behalf of everyone who knew and loved her I say, "Farewell to our beloved "Jenta", thank you for all your years of love and service. Rest well. You will never be forgotten. You'll remain forever in our hearts. By: Brenda Bailey

TAKING ACTION

Piloted in Three States-



Steve Pocklington - Copeland Center; Kathy Muscari - CONTAC; Ray Guevara - STAR Center promote Taking Action.

WV Sites In Beckley & Charleston

*Tammy Lemon - WV
Coordinator*

WVMCHA is proud to announce their involvement with national pilot project "Taking Action". The curriculum was developed by Mary Ellen Copeland, founder of WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan). The pilot project will be held at Raleigh County Resource and Drop-In Center, and at the Peer Recovery Network office in Kanawha County. Participants will meet one time per week for up to six months. "Taking Action" will be evaluated by Priscilla Ridgway, Ph.D. of Yale University in connection with the federal Center for Mental Health Services, Copeland Center, CONTAC, and STAR Center of NAMI.

"This is an exciting project for West Virginia! Only three states were selected for this pilot- West Virginia, Connecticut, and Texas. This tells me that people believe in the consumer movement in West Virginia and are happy with the results that WVMCHA has been producing." states Tammy Lemon, coordinator of the project. CONTAC,

NAMI Star, and CMHS of SAMSHA hosted a five day training event in Charleston on December 4-8, 2005. All three states were on hand for the training. Connecticut will be conducting meetings in a state psychiatric hospital and one of their forensic wards. Texas will use their program in a mental health community provider system working with Hispanic and Native American populations. WV will be testing the program in a drop-in and co-occurring residential focus. "We have a very excited group of trainers that attended this meeting. I believe Jesi Stewart, Dave Boothe, Joyce Winter and I will be excellent trainers and will carry this project forward and offer hope and recovery skills to any individual who is interested in participating."

Any one who is interested in participating in this project and resides in Charleston or Beckley may do so. In Beckley contact Jesi or Dave at the Raleigh County Resource Center (304)-929-2314 or in Charleston, Joyce Winter at 800-598-8847.



**Wellness Recover
Action Planning
Training of
Facilitators
January 06**



WVMHCA WRAP Facilitators



Master WRAP Trainers discuss values and ethics fundamental in M.E. Copeland's WRAP materials



WRAP participants learn about recovery topics and wellness tools promoting self-maintenance and recovery

Cultural Diversity Advisory Council Member Gives Alternatives 2005 Keynote

By Carolyn Stuart

Mr. Gayle brings an extraordinary amount of knowledge and expertise to Contac's Cultural Diversity Advisory Council. Linford Gayle, Consumer Affairs Coordinator for San Mateo County, CA Dept. of Mental Health provides supports for consumers of services to navigate the system. He has served as co-chair of Consumer Council and Wellness Recovery Task Force in San Francisco. He assisted with development of Peer Internship Program and served as committee lead on African American IMD Projects' mental health treatment program aimed at reducing recidivism for African Americans in locked facilities. He is a WRAP facilitator. In his keynote address titled *Using Wellness and Resilience to Help Transform our Systems of Care into Caring Systems*, Mr. Gayle talked about his struggles as an African American gay male. He told of struggles to recover from mental health issues and addiction before becoming involved in the consumer movement. This included his ongoing efforts and resilience in continuing his recovery path. He provided a message of hope to newcomers while reigniting hope for those involved for some time. He also conducted a workshop titled *Culturally Sensitive Services for Consumers of Color* addressing ways to identify culturally sensitivity.

In each issue of Consumer Voice, Dave Sanders, Consumer Affairs Executive Assistant, will highlight an available community resource. First in this series is the Medicaid Work Incentive (M-WIN) Program offered by the WV Department of Health and Human Services (DHHR). Dave serves on the M-WIN Management Team, and encourages anyone interested in the program to contact the program staff (noted below) or their local DHHR office.

Medicaid Work Incentive (M-WIN) Program

The Medicaid Work Incentive (M-WIN) Program allows a employed individual with a disability to pay premiums in order to obtain or maintain healthcare coverage through Medicaid. M-WIN participants are allowed to earn more money than generally allowed for Medicaid beneficiaries, and allowed to save their earnings in retirement and/or independence accounts. It is different from other Medicaid programs because a person must be employed, have a disability as defined by the Social Security Administration (SSA), and pay an enrollment fee and monthly premiums to participate in this voluntary program. Medicaid coverage for MWIN is for persons that are currently employed. The person is eligible for all services covered by Medicaid, including pharmacy and personal care, both at home and at work. You can apply for this program through your local office of the Department of Health and Human Services. For more information in northern WV call Jack Stewart or Sally Burchfiel at (304) 293-4692, or in southern WV call Angela Vaught at (304) 720-3200, ext. 203.

View From The Top Of A Different Kind Of Mountain

By: Brenda S. Bailey

The mountains of West Virginia look mighty and grand, but they look strangely, possibly even more beautiful, through the streaks from icy water, as it splashes up on the windshield from the hood of a '93 Ford Escort wagon. Driven, confidently and carefully, by my sister, Linda, on the way home to Beckley from Morgantown, after a week of hard work, tears, laughter, knowledge, pain, surprises and an over-indulgent amount of food. We've been away for five days and nights, learned a lot of new things, met a lot of interesting, new people and even made a new friend or two.

I lead my very first workshop at the Tenth Annual Leadership Academy Conference, which is part of tWVMHCA. It's a wonderful, diverse group of people who have been there and done that. And now, after seeing things done wrongly for so many years, we are working, peer to peer, to transform the mental health system, through an ongoing fight for equality, education and the rights of people everywhere, to be treated as the valuable treasures we are.

Not to label us or hide us away in some dark and forgotten place, away from people who do care and want to help us to help ourselves to lead the best lives we possibly can. For some that may mean finding our own home,, a job helping others or simply living our lives on our own terms. It's not being drugged into oblivion or locked away from the world's view, but happy, productive or at least free to choose the path to follow. As for me, I'm living proof, that age, appearance, ethnicity, financial or social status, can never and should never, stop anyone living with either a mental and/or a physical health issue, from living their dreams. Even if the only dream is writing poetry or painting a picture. We have the right to try, to fail or succeed. We have the right!



SPREADING OUR WINGS

By: Brenda S. Bailey

Dec. 2, 2005

*Spreading our wings,
Learning to fly.
Aiming for dreams,
Reaching so high.*

*Taking small steps,
Making great strides.
Taking new friends
and old,
Along for the ride.*

*We have been given
the tools,
Taught by words
and deeds.*

*Now, it is up to us,
To meet those unmet needs.*

*We have overcome
obstacles,
We have all had to face.
Now we are the leaders,
In this ongoing race.*

Leadership Academy Graduates Extend Thanks

By Kelly Lane-WVLA Coordinator

The West Virginia Mental Health Consumers' Association, Technical Assistance Center, held its 25th Leadership Academy at the Ramada Inn Conference Center in Morgantown, November 29th through December 2, 2005. There were twenty one participants in this exciting four day training. Everyone was very eager to learn about the Leadership Academy. Learning how to monitor events, identify issues and develop action plans was very helpful information. On the last day, participants presented this letter to the trainers:

"We the Students of the 25th Leadership Academy would like to thank you for the opportunity to attend your class. We have met many new people and have acquired new and useful information. We, as a group, felt positive that when we leave here we will be able to make a difference in helping our peers as well as ourselves. We greatly appreciate your time and efforts. Again Many Thanks"

*The Students of the 25th Leadership Academy,
Joseph, Roxanna, Rick, Joan, Pam ...*

This training was a wonderful experience for me as the Coordinator because I watch people grow while they are there. It is so heart warming to know that people can make a change in their lives just by attending the Leadership Academy!



Larry Rogers of Mental Health Network joins others at *Voyage to Wellness* training. Impressed with the recovery and empowerment message, Larry promises to promote course at Drop-Ins.

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY TRAINING OF TRAINERS HOSTED

By Kelly Lane

The West Virginia Leadership Academy held its seventh Train-the-Trainers training; in Morgantown, November 30th through December 2, 2005. The Train-the-Trainers consisted of 14 participants and two Lead Trainers: Jack Stringfellow and Jackie Chellew. Through the two day training, participants learned different teaching techniques and methods for facilitating lessons of the Leadership Academy.

Everyone was very enthusiastic about the training. Participants are eager to start co-facilitating the Leadership Academy. Linda Edwards a recent graduate of the Leadership Academy Train-the-Trainers states, *"This is the best training that I have ever been too; I learned a lot from Jack and Jackie!"*

National Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery

Recovery is cited, within Transforming Mental Health Care in America, Federal Action Agenda: First Steps, as the “single most important goal” for the mental health service delivery system. To clearly define recovery, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Interagency Committee on Disability Research in partnership with six other Federal agencies convened the National Consensus Conference on Mental Health Recovery and Mental Health Systems Transformation on December 16-17, 2004. The following consensus statement was derived from over 110 expert panelist deliberations on the findings.

Mental health recovery is a journey of healing and transformation enabling a person with a mental health problem to live a meaningful life in a community of his or her choice while striving to achieve his or her full potential.

www.samhsa.gov

10 Fundamental Components of Recovery

Self-Direction: Consumers lead, control, exercise choice over, and determine their own path of recovery by optimizing autonomy, independence, and control of resources to achieve a self-determined life. By definition, the recovery process must be self-directed by the individual, who defines his or her own life goals and designs a unique path towards those goals.

Individualized and Person-Centered: There are multiple pathways to recovery based on an individual’s unique strengths and resiliencies as well as his or her needs, preferences, experiences (including past trauma), and cultural background in all of its diverse representations. Individuals also identify recovery as being an ongoing journey and an end result as well as an overall paradigm for achieving wellness and optimal mental health.

Empowerment: Consumers have the authority to choose from a range of options and to participate in all decisions—including the allocation of resources—that will affect their lives, and are educated and supported in so doing. They have the ability to join with other consumers to collectively and effectively speak for themselves about their needs, wants, desires, and aspirations. Through empowerment, an individual gains control of his or her own destiny and influences the organizational and societal structures in his or her life.

Holistic: Recovery encompasses an individual’s whole life, including mind, body, spirit, and community. Recovery embraces all aspects of life, including housing, employment, education, mental health and healthcare treatment and services, complementary and naturalistic services, addictions treatment, spirituality, creativity, social networks, community participation, and family supports as determined by the person. Families, providers, organizations, systems, communities, and society play crucial roles in creating and maintaining meaningful opportunities for consumer access to these supports.

Non-Linear: Recovery is not a step-by-step process but one based on continual growth, occasional setbacks, and learning from experience. Recovery begins with an initial stage of awareness in which a person recognizes that positive change is possible. This awareness enables the consumer to move on to fully engage in the work of recovery.

Strengths-Based: Recovery focuses on valuing and building on the multiple capacities, resiliencies, talents, coping abilities, and inherent worth of individuals. By building on these strengths, consumers leave stymied life roles behind and engage in new life roles (e.g., partner, caregiver, friend, student, employee). The process of recovery moves forward through interaction with others in supportive, trust-based relationships.

Peer Support: Mutual support—including the sharing of experiential knowledge and skills and social learning—plays an invaluable role in recovery. Consumers encourage and engage other consumers in recovery and provide each other with a sense of belonging, supportive relationships, valued roles, and community.

Respect: Community, systems, and societal acceptance and appreciation of consumers—including protecting their rights and eliminating discrimination and stigma—are crucial in achieving recovery. Self-acceptance and regaining belief in one’s self are particularly vital. Respect ensures the inclusion and full participation of consumers in all aspects of their lives.

Responsibility: Consumers have a personal responsibility for their own self-care and journeys of recovery. Taking steps towards their goals may require great courage. Consumers must strive to understand and give meaning to their experiences and identify coping strategies and healing processes to promote their own wellness.

Hope: Recovery provides the essential and motivating message of a better future—that people can and do overcome the barriers and obstacles that confront them. Hope is internalized; but can be fostered by peers, families, friends, providers, and others. Hope is the catalyst of the recovery process. Mental health recovery not only benefits individuals with mental health disabilities by focusing on their abilities to live, work, learn, and fully participate in our society, but also enriches the texture of American community life. America reaps the benefits of the contributions individuals with mental disabilities can make, ultimately becoming a stronger and healthier Nation.

CONSUMER VOICE

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Brandon Lane
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RALEIGH CO. RESOURCE & DROP IN CENTER

From the Raleigh Count Staff

Raleigh County Resource and Drop-In Center celebrated its one year anniversary in July of last summer. Since it opened, there been many achievements to be proud of, such as four WRAP facilitators, 14 WRAP graduates, two participants in the WRAP Correspondence Course, six Leadership Academy facilitators, two Peer Support Specialist Trainers, nine Leadership Academy graduates, one new volunteer, two volunteers of the year presented to Brenda Bailey (2005) and Linda Tuncsiper (2004), and three "Taking Action" facilitators. We are very excited about our new educational component to the resource and drop-in center, the upcoming "Taking Action" pilot project, funded in part by state block grant monies. This curriculum was developed by Mary Ellen Copeland. We are also looking forward to our WRAP Groups starting in February 2006. The center has been actively involved in the "Transforming the Mental Health System" grant, networking with people in the community about the services we provide. We have provided assistance and support to permanent housing, located directly above the drop-in center, where we have several wonderful residents. We've had very successful social events including our Fall Festival and we ended the year with a Winter Celebration. It was fun baking goodies, eating a meal, watching movies, and just being together. After all that's what it is all about.

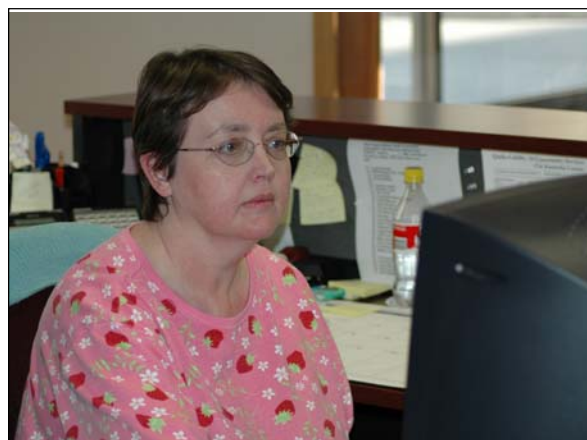
Activities Held in Clay County Resource Drop-In Center

By Chris Gray

Greetings from the Clay County Resource Drop in Center. We thought it might be nice to share with everyone some of the great things we've been up to here at our center. Its been pretty busy around here for the past several months. Along with our regularly scheduled group meetings, and skills classes, we have had many social events and educational trainings. Several staff, volunteers, and consumers have enjoyed opportunity to take part in the Leadership Academy and also Peer Support Specialist Training I. Skills learned at these various trainings sure have been paying off.

Back in October we held a successful "Spooky Tales" Halloween Party. Guests enjoyed themselves while playing games, checking out different costumes and ,of course, by getting a little chill from the "Red Ghost Stories of V". In November our biggest project was a food drive. With the help of community and local business owners, we provided for over twenty five families by picking up and delivering donations to help others. During December, we prepared for Saint Nicholas with a free Hot Coco and Christmas Carol program . Everyone was envited to enjoy live musical guests and refreshments.

We are located at 163 ½ Main Street, in Clay County, in the former workshop of the Prestera Building. Come visit us!



MARY CUMMINGS

PROVIDES HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR EDUCATION & TRAINING PROJECTS

Hi! I'm Mary Cummings and I'm a receptionist for the Technical Assistance Center of the WV Mental Health Consumers' Association. I answer the phone, make copies, send out mass mailings, tabulate and type evaluations, etc. At home, I enjoy reading mysteries, novels, and inspirational works. I like spending time with my cats, Tiger and Dora.

Located at 912 Quarrier Street in Charleston, WVMHCA's Technical Assistance Center (TAC) houses many projects. Mary Cummings works as receptionist/clerk for the TAC and assists visitors who are interested in education and training. She is especially involved with the Peer Support Specialist initiative of the TAC's Recovery Education project.

STEPS PROGRAM BEGINS THREE WEEK JOB-RELATED GROUPS

Are you ready to start working, return to work, work more hours or change jobs? If so, you may want to develop a special **Wellness Recovery Action Plan** to address these issues. **WRAP for Work** classes are currently being offered by the Supports Toward Employing Peer Specialists "STEPS" Program of the West Virginia Mental Health Consumers' Association's Technical Assistance Center!

WRAP for Work is a component of Mary Ellen Copeland's Wellness Recovery Action Plan. Participants learn wellness & recovery tools that aid in maintaining employment. Classes are held twice a week for 3 weeks. Participation is currently limited to four counties: Kanawha, Cabell, Clay and Boone. Kudos to Kanawha and Cabell County Drop-In Centers who hosted the first ever classes! For information please contact Vince Thomas, STEPS Coordinator at 304-345-7312 ext. 26. Patience Deweese can assist as well.

MAIL TO:

CONSUMER VOICE

Winter 2006

A Dog's Eye View of Leadership Academy by Bear Pauley



Mom is putting clothes in that big black box again. That means she won't be coming home tonight. I am sad. Mom comes home from work early and puts the black box in the car. She takes down my harness and leash. I must be going to the kennel again. I am very sad. I am whining, crying as we drive toward town... Hey! We passed the turn to the kennel. Where are we going? I don't know this road. We've been driving for a long time. I may start crying again. Wait. We stopped. This doesn't look like home. What is going on? Mom opens the car door. I jump out. Boy, it is cold here. I like that. Maybe we can play outside a while. The back of the car comes open. Mom takes out the black box. We're going into a big building. I wish we would stay outside. Maybe this place isn't so bad.

There are people here. I will just sit down and smile. Yes, that did the trick.

That lady behind the desk is asking my name. I wish she would come over and pet me. Maybe I should lie down. No, that didn't work. We take the black box and go into a tiny room. The door closes. I feel something strange. The door opens. Where did the people go? The next morning we go back to where the people are. What is this? Tables, but no food. I think I would rather go outside and play. I sit down next to Mom. There is a man walking around in the front of the room. He is saying something about good news and bad news. Good and bad I know. It is all the words in between I can't figure out. Maybe if I lie down and concentrate, I can figure this out..... What! I wasn't asleep. It wasn't me snoring. It was this guy sitting next to me. All the people are getting up. Mom heads to the door going outside. Yes! It is snowing. I think I will just lie down and enjoy this. No, I don't want to go back inside. That guy next to me keeps snoring and waking me up. Let's move everything out here. We can all eat some snow. We go back into the big building and sit by the fire.

Mom tells me to lie down. I don't have time. It's my job to sit and smile at people. This is a nice group. Some sit on the floor with me. I think I would like working here. I wonder if they have a spot for a great looking dog. I could make a sign: "Will work for food". Oops, forgot I can't write. Finally people put on their coats and get their boxes and start to go. Every one is saying goodbye and hugging. Some stop and give me a pat. I wish I could ask them all to come home with me. That'd be great. Mom puts the black box and me in the car. Off we go. She says we are going home. I will miss my new friends. I wonder why they got together here? They seemed to like each other. Hope we can do this again, but I think I need to lie down and take a nap. All that smiling is hard work.