



MBRLC
Newsletter
Holidays 2020



Hilary K. and Idony Lisle, Editors

www.mbrlc.org



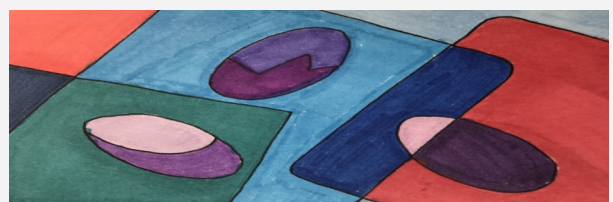
Welcome to the MBRLC Newsletter! We hope it will bring a little light into the shorter days of winter. We must remember that since the solstice on December 21st, the days are getting longer, with a few more seconds of light each morning.

It's true that our days remain challenging in these times of seemingly endless quarantine. That's where peer support comes in—yes, we're still here, just on Zoom! Please visit our individual websites; our links are the first thing on <https://www.mbrlc.org/>

Meanwhile, here are a few articles by members of the community. We encourage you to consider submitting some-

thing for our future issues. Our main criterion is that it be created by you originally. We'd love to see what you can contribute.

Being creative is an important part of recovery for many people; even if you feel shy about the newsletter idea (don't!) please consider picking up a pen and just doodling, singing along with your favorite songs out loud and strong, or doing the classic thing and starting to jot down some of your thoughts in a New Year's journal. The sky's the limit!





has been attending church as much as she can.

Sam has had the opportunity to spend some quality time with his son.

Idony has been trying to work on her writing and her art.

Yuka is reading and spending time with Ichiro.

We will keep you updated...

So, How Have You Been?

by Hilary K.

The BRC peers have all been busy doing their own things for the past 6 months. Here is a snapshot of how a few of the staff have kept busy:

Michael S. has gotten back into skateboarding when the weather and his joints allow it.

Hilary has been watching live historical walking tours of Boston via Zoom.

Sheila has been seeking a more spiritual community and



Developing Old Values Amidst the Pandemic

by Jon Gottlieb

It's time to look yourself in the mirror and take stock. You don't have to rush around needlessly for the time being. Stop and smell the roses. A lack of motion and emotion make for an easy going life and pace.

Walk, don't run. Sit on your stairs instead of running down past them. Go out in nasty weather and get wet while enjoying the experience. Enjoy the various smells, sights, and the people that surround you.

Quit your job and replace it with a better one. Maybe your conscience will be happier. Forget monetary gains. Instead, look for inner and outer peace that result in riches. Call your friends just to say hello. Write emails. Show people that you care and that you are thinking of them. Keep doing these things regularly. Maybe the time spent by yourself will make your existence happier, wealthier and wiser.



Bay Cove's REAL Program Offers Peer Specialist Training

by Chris Laureano, REAL Program Director

The Recovery Education and Learning (REAL) Program supports individuals with lived experience who are interested in becoming Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) or Mental Health Providers by providing the Pre-Certified Peer Specialist (Pre-CPS) & Pre-Employment Training, as well as offering opportunities to put these new skills into practical use through paid internships.

The Pre-CPS & Pre-Employment Training is the first component of the REAL Program, where participants will learn about what goes into working in a Peer Support Role and a Mental Health Provider Role, while learning about the employment skills needed to prepare for work in human services. Upon graduation from the Pre-CPS & Pre-Employment Training, participants will have an opportuni-

ty to do a paid internship in a Peer Support Role or Mental Health Provider Role, where they will have a chance to practice what they learned in the training, while also inspiring themselves to achieve their life goals.

The mission of the REAL Program is to give people receiving services an opportunity to learn about themselves and their own life journeys, to create the self-determined life that they desire and inspire others to do the same, to create effective change in the mental health system, and to be prepared for the workplace.

If you know an individual who might be interested in becoming a peer specialist, and you'd like more information about the program, please visit www.baycovehumanservices.org/real-program to view a series of informational videos about the REAL Program, or contact me at (617) 379-5275 or by e-mail at clau-reano@baycove.org to learn more.

Social Anxiety

by Hilary K.

We all have moments when we have to be somewhere we don't want to be. Here are a few tips for dealing with social anxiety. Ask people questions if you can think of nothing to say. Give a compliment if you are struggling for conversation.

Bring a piece of paper with personal affirmations on it. Look at it in the bathroom to remind yourself of who you are. If you're nervous you won't have stuff to talk about, write down conversation starters and duck into a bathroom for a reminder. Take 5 minutes in the bathroom as a mini vacation.

Set a time limit in your mind beforehand, so you know you will be finished in a certain amount of hours. An end point to even the most dreadful situation makes for a happier time.

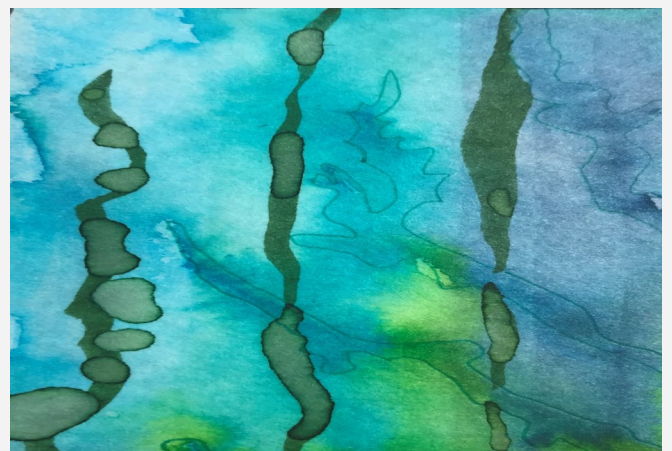
You can show up early - get a good place to sit, and meet people one by one as

they arrive. That avoids meeting a big mass of people at once. You can also scope out an easy exit or a bathroom that you can duck into if necessary.

This seems obvious--but a quick tip for joining a group of people in conversation is to listen first and then make a comment about what they are already talking about. For example, "Are you talking about the _____?"

I couldn't believe it either." It's a formula for conversation. If you think of it as a formula and a game with checkboxes to make the process more painless maybe it will be easier.

If all else fails, everything ends sooner or later!



Polypharmacy Coping Tips

by Idony Lisle

Polypharmacy. You may have heard this word, but what exactly does it mean? According to Wikipedia at 7 am on 11/22/20 (meaning YMMV), “Five or more concurrent regular medications appears to be the most common definition.” People argue whether it means taking more meds than is necessary, or simply taking a lot of medication. I say it means what you need it to mean, and for me it means that my meds can be a bit overwhelming sometimes.

I’m a heart patient with fibromyalgia and bipolar disorder, which means I’m on a bunch of meds every single day of my life, plus vitamins, of which I have a fistful because I had bariatric surgery a few years ago. And then there are what are called PRNs—PRN stands for “pro re nata,” which is Latin for “take as needed.” I viciously interrogate every additional guest to this party: Do I need it? Does it add to the quality of my life?



Some of my meds are what I think of as “silent:” My cardiac meds, for example; but some of them jump up and down and scream if I don’t take them—I’m looking at you, fibromyalgia aids! I have ADHD (hi, Ritalin!) and keeping track of all these pill bottles nearly drove me nuts. (I have meds for that too.) So here are my coping tips, all learned through experience, sigh.

1 Don’t self-blame. You’re probably taking meds because of life events you could not control. If you’re like me, you snarl every time you take that Internet aging test (who thinks of these things?) and get a high score because of

your med list. Well, trust me—our test scores might be worse if we weren’t taking the meds we need!

Similarly, don’t let other people criticize your decision to be on whatever meds you

and your provider team have decided on. To be blunt, it’s none of their business.



2 Color coding can be key. I use different colors of washi tape, and for the must-takes (like the med I’m on three times a day) I put an initial on

their cap with nail polish or Sharpie.

3 Turn off auto-refill if you’re feeling at all overwhelmed by the number of

bottles accumulating . . .

4 . . . But many people find auto-refill and delivery services from their pharmacy to be game-savers.

5 I have a central location where all my meds belong. It's an organizing cube about a foot in all dimensions. I toss them in there—not perfect, but at least they're not cluttering every available surface, and I know where to look.

6 When in doubt, ask your pharmacist. Use only one pharmacy if at all possible!!

7 Use weekly/monthly pill caddies. Play your favorite music during the sometimes tedious refill process.

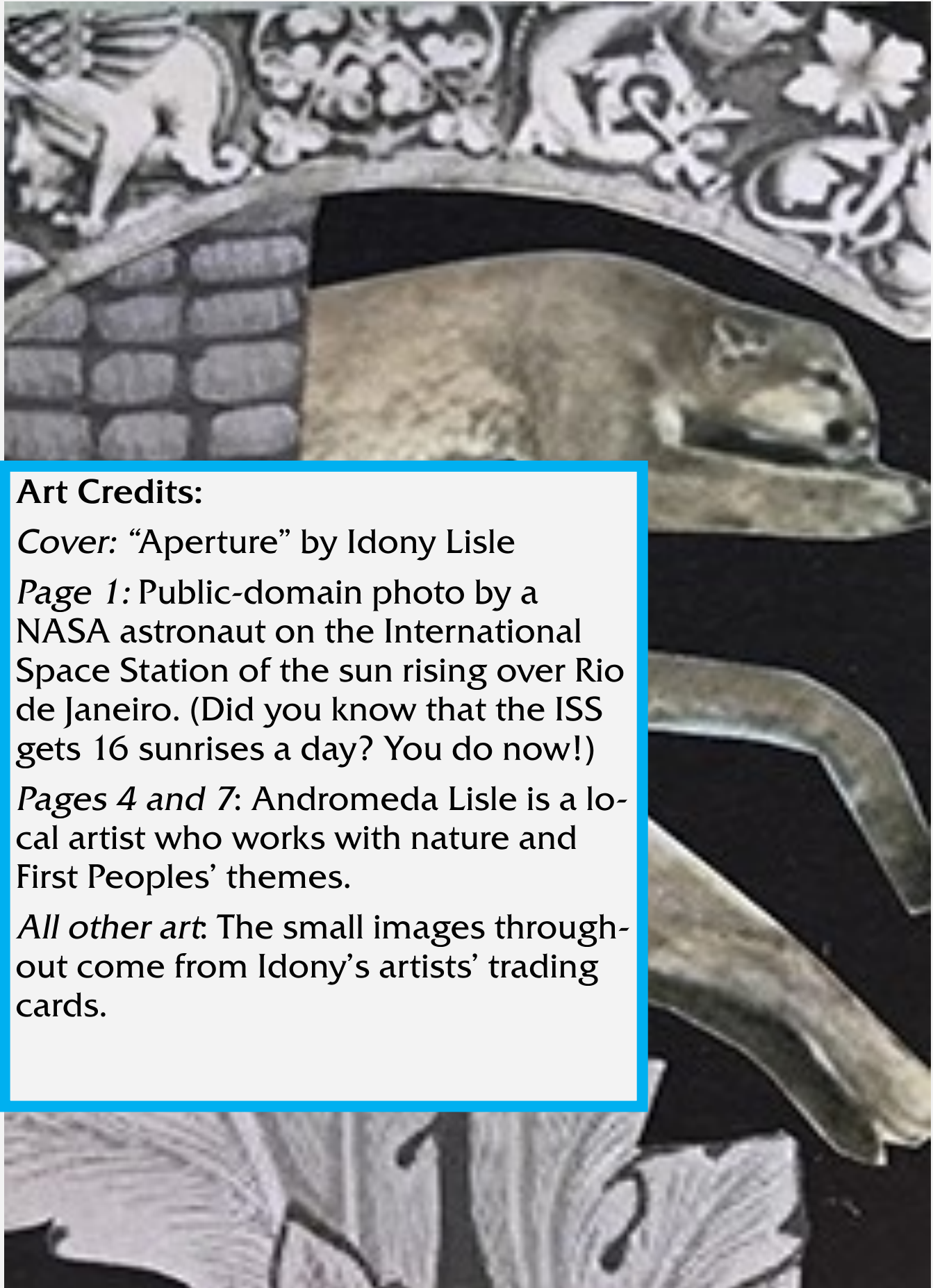
8 Memorize your med list. Know what you're on, if

possible the dosage, and why you take it. (Imagine being in an accident and admitted to a strange hospital where they don't have your records but must somehow keep up your meds all the same.) Even in non-emergency situations, this info is priceless when talking to your primary care team, especially if your meds come from different doctors.

9 There are a number of great, free apps which will help you do this—input your meds once, and you'll have built-in reminders and trackers at your fingertips.

Good luck, and stay positive!





Art Credits:

Cover: “Aperture” by Idony Lisle

Page 1: Public-domain photo by a NASA astronaut on the International Space Station of the sun rising over Rio de Janeiro. (Did you know that the ISS gets 16 sunrises a day? You do now!)

Pages 4 and 7: Andromeda Lisle is a local artist who works with nature and First Peoples’ themes.

All other art: The small images throughout come from Idony’s artists’ trading cards.