

VOLUME XXVII

# THE VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGEVIEW ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION STEERING COMMITTEE

## MOMENTS THAT MATTER

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THE  
RIDGEVIEW  
ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION  
3995 SOUTH  
COBB DRIVE  
SMYRNA GA  
30080

*Memories* that Endure  
are **MOMENTS** that **MATTER!**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENT	TIME	DATE	LOCATION
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	April 3, 2015	Ridgeview – Day Hospital
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	May 1, 2015	Ridgeview – Day Hospital
Marietta Round-Up		Friday, May 1, 2015	Double Tree Atlanta NW
Spring Fling	6:30pm/8:00pm 10:00am 12:00pm	Friday, May 15, 2015 Saturday, May 16, 2015 Sunday, May 17, 2015	Day Hospital; Ala-non & AA Speaker Meeting Tennis Courts/Pool Area; Set-Up Tennis Courts/Pool Area; Set-Up
AA Int'l. Volunteer Orient. & Training	2:00pm	Sunday, May 17, 2015	Georgia World Congress Center; Georgia Ball-room
Sam Anders Serenity Scramble Golf Tournament	8:00am	Monday, June 1, 2015	Towne Lake Hills Golf Club
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	June 5, 2015	Ridgeview – Day Hospital
GCYPAA		Friday, June 5, 2015	Alpharetta, GA
AA International Convention		July 2 – 5, 2015	Georgia World Congress Center
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	July 10, 2015	Ridgeview – Day Hospital
White Water Rafting (Half Day)	8:00am	Sunday, July 19, 2015	Meet at Pro-North
Atlanta Round-Up		Thursday, July 31, 2015	Atlanta Perimeter North
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	August 7, 2015	Ridgeview – Day Hospital
Steering Comm. Summer Retreat	4:00pm	Friday, August 2015	Camp Donny Brown – Date TBD
Alatoona Round-Up		Friday, August 14, 2015	Hilton Garden Inn – Cartersville
White Water Rafting (Full Day)	8:00am	Sunday, August 23, 2015	Meet at Pro-North
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	September 4, 2015	Ridgeview – Day Hospital
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	October 2, 2015	Ridgeview – Day Hospital
Steering Comm. Dinner	5:00pm	Thursday, October x, 2015	Pro North Auditorium – Date TBD
Georgia Pre-Paid Conference		Thursday, October x, 2015	Date – TBD
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	November 6, 2015	Ridgeview – Day Hospital
Bowl-A-Thon	10:00am	Saturday, November x, 2015	Place & Date – TBD
Softball Game	1:00pm	Sunday, November x, 2015	Place & Date – TBD
Gratitude Dinner	5:00pm	Sunday, November 22, 2015	Ridgeview – Gym (Set-up: 3:00pm) Dinner – 5:00pm Meeting – 6:30pm
1st Friday Speaker Meeting	7:45pm	December 4, 2015	Ridgeview – Day Hospital
New Year's Eve Dance	8:00pm	December 31, 2015	Ridgeview Gym

This issue, as well as archival copies, are available on our website at [www.ridgeviewalumni.com](http://www.ridgeviewalumni.com). The Newsletter will be in an Adobe PDF format, our website will link to download the FREE Adobe Reader, allowing you to read and print the Newsletter at your leisure. If you would like to be notified by e-mail when a new Newsletter is placed on the site, E-mail us at [steering@bellsouth.net](mailto:steering@bellsouth.net) or contact us thru the Website. Please put "newsletter" in the subject line.

**Thank you to those who submitted articles for this edition of the Newsletter, if we have learned anything in Recovery it is that  
We cannot keep what we have if we do not give it away!**

If you would like to submit an article for the next Newsletter, please email it to  
Warren T. at [wbt4326@gmail.com](mailto:wbt4326@gmail.com), or Dawn L. at [dbliistro@bellsouth.net](mailto:dbliistro@bellsouth.net) using "Newsletter" in the subject line.

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# TAKING THE TIME

SUBMITTED BY: MEREDITH B.

There are many special moments throughout my journey into recovery, but there is one moment in particular, without which I may have never gotten sober.

I went to several years of college and finally got my Bachelor's Degree in Nursing in 2010 from the Medical College of GA in Augusta, GA. I

worked for 2 years in a Level 1 Trauma/Emergency Department in Augusta straight out of school, until I was "let go" for coming into work and being questioned for being "under the influence" of something. I was absolutely devastated, but continued using painkillers and Xanax to take the edge

***I was found passed out asleep in my car, across the street in a parking lot with a needle in my arm.***

off life and the difficulties and stressors that came along with it.

It wasn't long until I decided I was too good for the hospital in Augusta and should try my luck as a travel nurse in Las Vegas, NV. They paid travelling expenses, lodging, gas, food, as well as paid significantly better money than anywhere on the East Coast. Not only was I making more money than ever before, I worked in multiple ER's that I could divert narcotics from. I also still had prescriptions coming in from my Primary doctor in Augusta. Finally, the hospitals I worked for caught on to my game. I was told by my company they had no more work for me there, and that there had been multiple complaints of me being impaired at every hospital I worked.

I came back to the East Coast and began living in an extended stay hotel in Atlanta. After a month in the 1st job, I was found passed out asleep in my car, across the street in a parking lot with a needle in my arm. That company let me go and I found another

who sent me to work at a rehab facility called Ridgeview Institute. I worked at RVI for about 2 months in Cottage A as a nurse. That was until I was accused of stealing Ativan from one of the patients. Surprisingly enough I had my own prescription, I didn't need to steal the patients. However, when I was drug tested, my system came back with a positive result for marijuana.

After being let go again from another travel company, I tried my luck in a permanent ER nursing position at Piedmont Hospital with a \$10,000 sign-on bonus. I had detoxed myself off opiates, but on my 2nd day there, couldn't resist temptation and stole more narcotics. After I began nodding off at the

computer, my new boss called me into his office and subsequently fired me from that great opportunity.

After losing countless jobs, and waitressing in between, I was hired into the ER at Kennestone Hospital. Shortly after, I began stealing narcotics and shooting up in the bathroom at work in the middle of my shifts. I would also take 10-12 Xanax before work to try and get as high as possible. Finally getting to the end of my rope, several events happened that

led me to an ultimately suicidal point in my life. All I did was work so that I could get my drugs to stay high and function. I would go home, use, pass out, and wake up to continue the vicious cycle all over again. No one ever before took the time to ask me if I needed help or wanted to go to rehab to find a different way of life.

Finally, one day at work, my charge RN approached me and asked

if he could talk with me. He brought me into the security office and asked me very kindly if I needed help to get off drugs. He said he recognized something in me that he had seen before in himself. He related to me and told me his story of how he used to steal drugs while working and get high in the bathroom. I was floored and couldn't believe it. He told me there was another way to live and I didn't have to live like that anymore. I eventually burst into tears and told him my complete sob story. How I was addicted to many things and couldn't stop. He offered right then and there to take me to RVI to get sober and hopefully help save my nursing license. He said they gave him a second chance and I deserved one too.

***Out of the numerous jobs I had in the past, and were fired from for diverting narcotics, no one had ever taken a second to offer me a helping hand.***

Out of the numerous jobs I had in the past, and were fired from for diverting narcotics, no one had ever taken a second to offer me a helping hand. This nurse was the first person to show any kindness, compassion, or understanding for me and my disease and offered me hope in the darkest time of my life. I will forever be grateful to him for saving my life and showing me another way to live, sober, without drugs or alcohol. I have

been sober for 11 months now and am coming up on my year in a few weeks. I will forever be grateful to this man and remember that moment he changed my life. Now I can only pass this message onto the next person suffering in hopes to help someone else as much as he helped me. If that's not a moment that matters, I don't know what is!

## HEBLO

SUBMITTED BY: BILL D.

There I sat, all duded up, at a small bar in Orlando Florida.

I knew I looked so damn good that no woman in their right mind could refuse my attention.

I was very drunk.

I had ended up at this bar in Orlando by way of accepting a new job. My previous employment was for a local recovery residence company, remodeling some of their properties. I wasn't making much money, but I was surrounded by folks in recovery; I felt very safe but also extremely ungrateful that I was making so little money. My ego was firmly in control.

My sponsor at the time was notified of my job change, yet I had failed to tell him that I was going to Florida for training. I "failed" to mention this to him in my conversations leading up to my departure to Orlando. It must have slipped my mind.

I had been in and out of treatment centers and AA meetings for over 9 years, never piecing together over a few days of clean time. I was becoming more restless, irritable and discontented than I ever had. This sense of dread and failure had led me to RVI for a 35 day inpatient stay, where I "graduated" and then upon leaving the grounds went straight to the liquor store. I soon

returned to RVI for another 10 days of treatment.

I had 65 days clean time when I hopped in the car with my new boss, headed to Florida for training.

I had my Big Book packed, along with my 24 Hours a Day booklet. I was safe!

A few days into my training, my new employer gave me a short day, advising me to "sit around the pool and relax". Within an hour of returning to the hotel, I had a 12 pack next to me at the pool.

I drank my fill, and then some, and did not call my sponsor that night. The next day work kept me busy, and hung over, until around 6 PM. As soon as I returned to the hotel, I showered and then "duded" up and walked across the parking lot to the small bar I had noticed upon arriving in Orlando.

Now, here I was sitting at the bar, looking damn good, and drinking hard. A couple hours into my debauch, 2 lovely ladies walked in and sat down next to me. Obviously, they had scoped out the bar room and had decided that I was the best looking thing there, and were now going to "pick me up" for a private party of three.

I provided them a few minutes to work up their courage, and then, becoming impatient, I decided to take matters into my own hands. I knew that just

a few smooth words to these fine ladies would have us running, nay sprinting, to my hotel room, their every fantasy to be fulfilled. After deciding what line to use, I turned to the ladies and said "heblo". "Heblo." "Heblo!!!"

The ladies began to laugh. And then laugh some more. They thought I was hysterical. I couldn't talk; at best I was a slurring, drooling fool.

Defeated, I threw some money on the bar and teetered back to my hotel room. After all of the wreckage I had caused my family, my friends, past employer and myself, a failed suicide attempt, loss of all personal possessions and a brief stint of homelessness, I finally knew pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. I had beaten myself into a state of reasonableness.

My last drink was May 11, 1999. By working the 12 steps of AA with a sponsor, thousands of meetings, service work and the RVI Alumni, I have not had to pick up another drink. Aha!

*I had been in and out of treatment centers and AA meetings for over 9 years, never piecing together over a few days of clean time.*

## GOODBYE LETTER TO ALCOHOL

SUBMITTED BY: MELODY D.

Goodbye Alcohol, my old friend, I never wish to see you again, you were a nightmare softly creeping, you left your seeds while I was sleeping, and the misery you left planted in my brain drove me insane and put me in the sound of silence.

In restless times I walked alone, hoping you would help me hang on, I turned my collar to the cold and damp,

neath the halo of a street lamp, at last my eyes were opened by the flash of a neon light, that split the night, and you and I were locked within the sound of silence.

"Fool" I screamed! You know, you know! Addiction like a cancer grows!

Now I bow my head and pray to my

"Higher Power" each day. I listen to other's words so that they might teach me, I share my story that I might reach.

And the sign's say the words of the Big Book; are written on the walls and hall's .... So Alcohol ... you are now nothing to me, you are back where you belong, locked in the sound of silence.

TESTING THE WATERS

SUBMITTED BY: JONATHAN G.

The first time I walked in a meeting was probably during a time when I needed it the most. Yet, it was not the first time I chose the rooms to be a part of my life. I was only sixteen and was invited to come along with my mother’s boyfriend at the time. I was a regular to alcohol and drugs, mostly marijuana, so stepping into the rooms was a little like stepping into cold water. It wakes you up as you immediately recoil at the sudden change in temperature to a limb that is not otherwise accustomed to the unpleasant experience. I promptly walked out on both my first and second AA meetings.

*I knew in the back of my mind I could not find an easier, softer way and that I would try to hold on to my old ideas even when the results were nil.*

About Nine years later I walked back into the rooms only to again recoil at the change in the mood, the open air of grievances from alcoholics, and the unusual state of acceptance and openness that you can’t find in public. I wanted to jump, I wanted to get back to shore where I was comfortable and balked at the twelve steps. But, I knew in the back of my mind I could not find an easier, softer way and that I would try to hold on to my old ideas even when the results were nil. I did not let go absolutely. I was not fearless and thorough from the very start and for the next 30 days I suffered quietly.

I came to the rooms as a requirement handed to me from the Federal Aviation Administration. Every pilot has to be medically certified to fly and these requirements are strict. Naturally, alcoholism or sub-

stance abuse is not a quality that is honored by the FAA. In fact these are disqualifying factors. Many medical examiners do not have the authority to decide if a pilot candidate can be accepted with an addictive condition. That is why it took me the course of several years to find the right doctor for the job. The soft-spoken, astute physician had me take an outpatient treatment program in a classroom setting for 17 weeks. Afterwards he asked what my plans for recovery were;

Me; “Recovery?”  
 Doc; “Yes, you need to show the FAA that you are continuing to maintain your sobriety and intend to recover from your addiction.”  
 I was beside myself, I was a full time worker and student, I was mentoring and volunteering for kids, and I was getting urine tested. What do the FAA people want from me? There are very few ways to show “recovery” to the government except for AA. To make my dream of becoming a pilot true I had to show them I was serious about being sober.

For a year into my treatment I remained sober, for the most part. Recovery means a lot of different things to a lot of people. The same can be said for sobriety. Walking into those rooms I found it unreasonable that I had to “waste my time with these crazies” to become a pilot. After all, I had a life to keep up with and ambition to chase. But for the year it took me to finally enter the rooms I was miserable, like a wet

dog, I was not “sober” or “recovered” by any means. I just wanted to fly and angry that I could not.

By day 30 I was still in the woods, but seeing daylight. I went to my first speaker meeting on Saturday night with nowhere to go. That is when I heard from my soon-to-be sponsor. My first moment of clarity occurred when I realized that he was not some crazy alcoholic, AA was not some weird religious cult, and the water wasn’t actually cold after all. As it turns out, AA was a community of individuals plagued by their addiction, haunted by their past, and doing a service to themselves and loved ones to maintain a spiritual foundation of hope, strength, and serenity.

Since that day I had many more moments like that. AA has provided me a sense of stability I never knew was possible. I understand now what normal people are supposed to be like and the view of the outside from inside the rooms is quite opposite of what it was before. I realized, in my own agnosticism, that a belief in god was not mandatory. Funny thing is, nothing is mandatory and everything is unconditional. Of course it’s important to give back; whether to serve, donate, or simply share. However, it is most important to listen and learn. My higher power is more forgiving than I could ever imagine. As it turns out, those moments of clarity are when the universe speaks to me and it is up to me to pay close attention. This program has shown me that, in the end, the water was never cold but, quite the opposite: it is warm and nice. I encourage everyone to jump right in!

## MOMENTS THAT MATTER

SUBMITTED BY: RAY D.

I had known that I was an alcoholic for a long time. I also had severe depression and anxiety. I had accepted the alcoholism as a problem, but alcohol was the only thing that worked to camp the fire in my brain on a daily basis. Over the last year, I had become unemployed and was about to lose my house. All of a sudden, the things that had kept me holding on from ending it all seemed not to matter, and the reasons for ending it all seemed to make more and more sense every day.

The last straw came when my wife took the kids and left. I was at a crossroads. I knew that if I didn't change that I would, in no uncertain terms, be dead within a year. That didn't sound so bad. The problem was that if I kept going the way I was going and for some reason didn't die, I would be condemned to live a life alone and the only people I cared about would hate me. I knew

that I would deserve that. It was either get help or die.

I came to Ridgeview through cottage C on a Friday night. It was one of the longest weekends of my life. On Monday, I was sitting in one of the lectures, and the instructor was sharing his story. Listening to his story of addiction, depression and despair, I immediately connected with his story. When he spoke of what it was like now, a thought struck me. His life was as bad as mine, and now he is happier than I have ever been. Although I didn't know it at the time, this was my first real connection with "wanting what you have" and the seeds were planted "to go to any lengths to get there".

About a week later, I was sitting in the auditorium in the day hospital and Sam Anders said

that we have a 95% success rate if you can do 5 things after treatment: Go to aftercare, go to meetings, get a sponsor, work the steps, and become active with the alumni. I thought to myself, "I can't do much, but I can sure as heck do these five things."

It's now been five months since I came to Ridgeview. Although nothing is perfect, I can honestly say that I am happier than I have ever been. I am sober, and my anxiety and depression is extremely low. I have a sponsor, I'm working the steps, I go to meetings, aftercare, and I'm active in the Alumni Association. Everything that they

told me to do at Ridgeview was right on. Now it's up to me to make sure that I do those five simple things every day.

*I knew that if I didn't change that I would, in no uncertain terms, be dead within a year.*

## LOOKING FOR THE MAGIC

SUBMITTED BY: TOM S.

After going to meetings for a couple of years and without realizing it I had been looking for the magic solution to staying sober like the other members of the group had done for so long. Even though I said the words, showed up at meetings, did the work of the 12 steps, I still, deep inside thought there was some secret that I wasn't being told.

As time went on and I kept doing the things my sponsor suggested, kept going to meetings, kept doing the simple things the program

says to do I kept sober, day after day; not only not drinking, but actually enjoying life again after so many years of not caring about anything, but my booze.

One of my greatest 'Ah Ha' moments in recovery, and there have been several, was when I discovered that there was no hidden magic in the process of recovery. No one was hiding anything from me; no secret handshake to get me into the back room where the old timers went, no certain length of time or special colored poker chip to earn before I got

to know "what THEY knew"; just repeating the actions of those that went before me is what works and it works well.

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**SOMETIMES you will never know the true value of A MOMENT until it becomes A MEMORY!**

# THE GIFT OF RELATING IN COTTAGE C

SUBMITTED BY: BLESSING D.

Just over 90 days ago I checked into Cottage C at Ridgeview. Once again I'd hit a new, lower bottom; this time with prescription pills instead of alcohol. I'd never been locked up in a treatment center before, and I was terrified. However, I knew I needed help – not just safely detoxing, but more importantly, finding some higher power that could scrape me off the cold, hospital floors and carry me back to the solution held in the rooms of AA.

Although I had been in and out of AA rooms for 12 years, I could never be brutally honest with myself or others. My shame, guilt and fear led me to believe I wasn't truly deserving of the gifts our program promises. Self-destructive behavior and thoughts wreaked havoc on my insides, even when I presented a shiny shell to those around me. My dad's death in October gave me the perfect excuse to self-medicate, and I did – with a vengeance. My sponsor and my husband saved my life when they brought me to Ridgeview, but I was too scared to realize it then. As I sobered up, reality sank in. I could embrace this fear and walk through it, or give up and let my disease win. It was time to “Get busy living or get busy dying,” as quoted in the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*. I could relate. Ironically, now I was also locked up and had that same choice to make. I was finally at my bottom. I was tired of digging.

Today I take every suggestion and opportunity Ridgeview, my sponsor and AA offers. I give freely what was given to me. Eddie in Cottage C took time from his busy shift

to have a one-on-one meeting with me when I was crawling out of my skin and needed someone to talk to. Sean brought me the best mustard salad I'd ever had and, in turn, brought laughter when I needed it most. Sam spoke my language and taught me more about my disease. Joe and Sarah were the first friendly faces from the outside to bring a meeting to Cottage C. By relating to all these wonderful people, I began to feel something I hadn't felt in a very long time – hope.

My insides finally match my outsides. My smiles, laughter and gratitude are genuine, as well as my humility. When I go back to chair meetings in Cottage C, I relate to the patients because I genuinely know how they feel. I see in their faces and hear in their voices the fear, shame and sadness that I

felt just three short months ago. I am no better or worse than anyone in the room, I am just fortunate enough to be able to go home at night. Each meeting is a spiritual experience because my higher power helps me

**Self-destructive behavior and thoughts wreaked havoc on my insides, even when I presented a shiny shell to those around me.**

show them they are not alone through my experience, strength and hope. There is no greater gift than when a patient comes up to me at the end of a meeting and thanks me for telling their story. They help me more than I could ever help them. I never want to forget how raw my emotions were then, and relating to the newcomers

keeps me in today. I know I am truly one drink or drug away from landing back in hell. However today, thanks to Ridgeview, Alumni and AA, I never have to go there again.

**TREAT YOURSELF**  
Broaden your horizons.

**LIFE IS WORTH SAVORING**  
*You don't have to be rich to be an everyday epicure. It's never too late to do the things you want to do.*

Today is a special occasion. Celebrate today.

**BE IN THE MOMENT**

Ditch the guilt  
*Raise your standards.*

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## MY MOMENT THAT MATTERED

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.

There is little doubt in my mind when it comes to pinpointing the actual moment that changed my life regarding alcohol and drugs. I had been on another binge of booze and cocaine... nothing new there. My usual scenario was to drink myself stupid for as long as I could. Once I started drinking, I needed something to keep me awake and keep the party going for a couple of days. An expensive, soul-destroying white powder was the remedy. I knew the remorse and desperation that I would feel when a binge ended, so I tried my best to delay that sad reality for as long as I could.

Each drunken debacle followed the same pattern. I would always run out of the "white stuff" before the liquor ran dry. This enabled

me to eventually (and mercifully) pass out from drinking. However, on this particular night I ended up at a place with no booze and only a baggie of cocaine to help me cope. As I lay on a cold leather couch, with my heart pounding out of my chest, I came face to face with the lonely, desperate person I had become. I was slowly sobering up and my mind and pulse were racing out of control. I knew the lifestyle I had been living for years would kill me eventually, but what the hell was taking so long!

Emotionally and physically sick, I turned to an entity I hadn't acknowledged in decades. I begged, "God, please help me?"

*Emotionally and physically sick, I turned to an entity I hadn't acknowledged in decades.*

That was My Moment That Mattered because a few tortuous hours later I knew that the simple prayer had been answered. Somehow, through Divine intervention, I finally summoned the will to give up the deadly notion that I could stop the insanity on my own...and I asked for help. I called a friend who had been through Ridgeview a year earlier and asked what I needed to do. Before I had a chance to change my mind, I quickly told my girlfriend, family, and a few close friends that I was entering the hospital. A life beyond my wildest dreams had begun on February 1, 1999!

## PEOPLE DO THE BEST WITH WHAT THEY HAVE

SUBMITTED BY: KELLY B.

When we come in to recovery, we hear so many phrases and slogans. When I came in these phrases and slogans held no meaning or sometimes a wrong meaning for me.

There is one sentence that really stopped me as such a true statement. When it was said to me, I knew this statement would be a very important and helpful one. It would be one of the first things that I should put into this "tool-box" that I had heard about. This toolbox

*It would be one of the first things that I should put into this "tool-box" that I had heard about.*

of which I had no understanding. It was during my first meeting with my sponsor. By way of introduction, we were telling each other about ourselves. My story included many critical or blaming remarks about many people. People that, I either lived with, worked with, worked for, was friends with, barely knew or didn't know at all. After I finished my rambling story, she said to me "You know.....people do the best with what they have." Right at that moment,

that sentence hit me as something that would ALWAYS be true. I could say it about anybody in any situation. It continues to help me to forgive and to understand and to empathize with everyone.

I do not however, get to determine what "the best" is or what "they have" (or don't have). Remembering this (and I forget sometimes) helps me tremendously.

It is also helpful to remember that this statement applies to me as well. Whatever the outcome or process; I do the best with what I have. As do we all.



# THE LAST TIME

SUBMITTED BY: TERESA P.

"That's the last time." The door closed behind him as I struggled to comprehend the words he said before those and I struggled even more to speak. I passed out. Again.

After my husband of 18 years died of alcoholism in 2008, my drinking escalated. The wine that had helped me escape from his drinking was needed even more to cope with the divorce, which I was certain would make him stop drinking and come back to me. That didn't happen and he died two years later. I got the boys through college, continued working and started dating. Wine helped with all of that. Thank goodness I could handle my alcohol, I told myself. Three failed relationships and six years later, I wasn't moving forward at all; although my drinking was.

I needed a change of scenery. Getting out of suburbia hell and moving to VaHi would do the trick. The self-destructive behaviors and binges leading to blackouts became more frequent. The commute, among other things, almost killed me and I found myself moving to another location in less than a year. New bars, new faces, same story.

I met someone in April and was sure it would be different this time. I really liked him and really tried to control my drinking, but it would get the best of me from time to time and began to interfere with my relationship, again. I had even been in jail for a DUI, but drank right through that. I told him I wouldn't drink Char-

donnay and I'd see a counselor to fix whatever issue or issues were causing me to drink. On the third session the counselor asked me if I was afraid I could not stop drinking. I didn't want to answer that because I knew the answer. I didn't go back.

I managed to string together enough days and weeks to keep him

around until this past November. I started sneaking and lying because I was miserable without Chardonnay. I was just miserable. That night I lied about where I was going. I would just have one drink and be home before he came over. Three hours and an un-

known amount of wine

later, I don't even remember driving home.

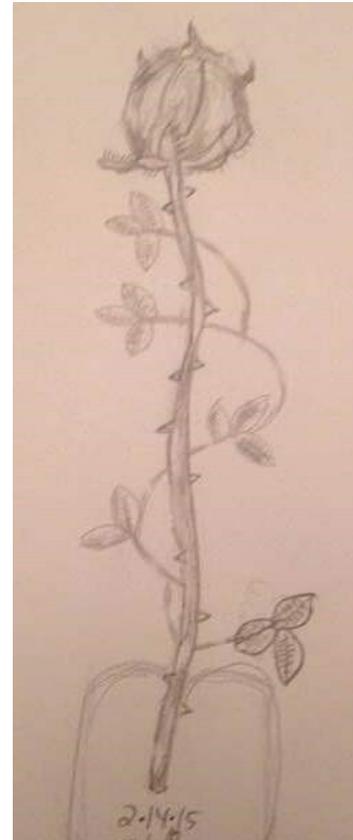
"That's the last time." When I woke up, I remembered the words he had said. I was truly scared for my life and was afraid I wouldn't live to see my 49th birthday. I spent the next three days drowning my sorrows. Then I talked to my friends, researched my options and made phone calls. I drove myself to the Access Center and began IOP 2 days later. That was over three months ago and I am so grateful to be sober and free!! I am looking forward to turning 49 in a few months!

*On the third session the counselor asked me if I was afraid I could not stop drinking. I didn't want to answer that because I knew the answer.*

**PRACTICE AN  
ATTITUDE OF  
GRATITUDE!**

# THE ROSE

DRAWN BY: MICHELLE L.



I chose this rose that I drew because this rose represents my recovery in the beginning of the budding stages. I have 135 days sober which has been challenging but also full of blessings. The thorns on the stem represent several things that may try to hinder my recovery. The vine surrounding the stem twirled around, is my recovery support network wrapping around and protecting me....representing AA, alumni, sponsor, the steps and my AA and EA network. I work my program one petal at a time and remove one thorn at a time—*One day at a time.*

OVERHEARD

SUBMITTED BY: DOUGLAS COOPER-FLEMING

One of the big problems that I had when I came to Ridgeview and into the beginning of my recovery was this notion of God. God? You mean that mean old dude whose goal it is to smite you should you have some Jimmy Dean's pork sausage? All I had was the image that God wanted to punish me and was never there to help me when I was in crisis which was often.

I went to the mandatory Sunday spiritual meetings while I was at Ridgeview and really did not listen. I sat there because I was required to do so. However, there was something about

Father Noll that struck me so I went back each Sunday after I left Ridgeview to hear him speak.

Now Father Noll is a retired Catholic priest and at the time had been serving Ridgeview for many years. He often said the same things over and over. He kind of rocked back and forth and often folks would mimic his behavior when talking about him. I was sitting there listening to him one Sunday and he said the most profound thing I had heard in my recovery so far. Now, he may have said it before, perhaps a dozen times, but this time I heard it.

*I was sitting there listening to him one Sunday and he said the most profound thing I had heard in my recovery so far. ..., but this time I heard it.*

“God does not want you holy, he wants you healed.”

In my head a light went on. All this time I had been viewing God by other people's perception and definition of what God is. That deeply held belief kept me from seeing a God of my understanding. A God that I now have in my life.

We often go to meetings when we do not want to. We sit and the shares seem to go right through us and often do not grab hold, but know this; we never really know when that one share will set off the light. That one phrase that just might change your outlook and how you will approach the problems in your life.

That phrase is out there, but this being an action program, you are going to have to go and overhear it.



EYES—THE WINDOW TO THE SOUL

DRAWN BY: MICHELLE L.

I chose this drawing I drew because I believe that the eyes are the window to the soul. And that what you see and acknowledge is all about perception. It's all about how you perceive everything in life. My recovery represents this. All the paths coming out from the eye represents my challenges and my obstacles.

## MUSIC MATTERS

SUBMITTED BY: JEFF W.

From the song "Wise Up" by Aimee Mann

It's not what you thought  
When you first began it.  
You got, what you want  
You can hardly stand it

though

By now you know

It's not going to stop  
It's not going to stop  
It's not going to stop  
Till you wise up.

You're sure there's a cure  
And you have finally found it.  
You think, one drink  
Will sink you till you're under-

ground

And living down

But it's not going to stop  
It's not going to stop  
It's not going to stop  
Till you wise up....

From the soundtrack of the movie *Magnolia* (1999) the music is gentle piano and strings and Mann's voice is soft and melodic. The lyrics though are anything but, positive and uplifting.

*Wise Up* is about a reality check. Recognizing the facts and accepting reality. Hearing this song early in sobriety was a beautiful smack in the face. Music has long been a motivational, cathartic, sometimes out of body force for me. A soft ballad or a hard driving rhythm that

begs the volume to be turned up to 11. The story or the message of a song might not always be clear or obvious to me but, *Wise Up* was a moment that mattered. I heard it so loudly and so clearly I cried.

I was not drinking anymore, yet I had so far to go. I heard it so loudly I cried.

I was not using any more, yet I had so much more to let go of. I heard it so clearly I cried.

I realized I was crying so hard at times I laughed/cried.

*And then I hit the replay button again.*

## MY "AH-HA" MOMENT

SUBMITTED BY: ANDREA B.

I remember sitting in the office of a psychologist for Cobb County employees. As I took a series of clinical tests and evaluation's, I began to break down. It was difficult to ever concentrate. I felt as if I had really screwed everything up. I could barely focus, but I knew I truly needed help. I was having my "ah-ha" moment.

Days earlier, my brother had flown down from Minnesota to see me. He could tell I was in distress. I told him I had been abusing opiates and I was suicidal. My depression and addiction had a hold of me so bad I could no longer control my life. I was about to lose custody of my only child. Things were so bad that I really felt the only way out was to take my own life.

My brother told me he loved me for the first time, hugged me, and called me his sister. He said that I should get help immediately. So

there I was, in that office, emotions running wild. I was scared, but hopeful that help would soon be close at hand.

I scored off the charges for suicidal thoughts and depression – just as I suspected. The scores were so high I was brought in the next day for further testing. It was the psychologist who told me I could not return to work unless treatment was sought and my scores improved.

Thankfully, the same psychologist pointed me in the direction of Ridgeview Institute.

It was only days later when I found myself in Cottage C receiving treatment and detoxing from the diseases that had drained me emotionally and separated me from my family. My journey of recovery was just beginning.

Ridgeview has taught me coping skills and tools to manage my depression and I am living and laugh-

ing again for the first time in years. I have made great friends with whom I can share my fears and struggles. I attend the meetings and aftercare groups with people who do not judge me and who are sympathetic to my story. It has truly saved my life.

I am so thankful I had that moment of clarity in that scary office. It started me on a path filled with happiness and peace every step of the way. I may have had to struggle to get here, but I would change where I am at for anything!

### Double Puzzle Answers

*Fire, Water, Dance, Bell, List*

*"Friend of Bill W."*

# WE KNOW; HONEY, WE'VE BEEN PRAYING FOR YOU

SUBMITTED BY: GEORGE M.

In the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, Dr. Silkworth describes the essential psychic change needed to cure alcoholism is something more than human power. Alcoholics need some "power" greater than themselves to recover. In the following story, the distinction between "spiritual experience" and "insanity" validated a practice of prayer leading to a spiritual experience.

When I left Ridgeview, no half-way house would have me because I was too sick and a "bad risk." I was "yellow" with cirrhotic jaundice, on a liver transplant list, and had untreated congestive heart disease. My mother said I could live with her on "certain conditions." One of the conditions for living with my 73 year old mother was getting our picture taken for the church directory. The pastor asked me why I did not attend church. "Because it's full of hypocrites," I said. He laughed, and said, "There's always room for one more, George." Several months later, we're walking past two elderly church members, sitting on a bench in the church parlor, outside the photographer's waiting room. One lady asks, "How are you feeling today, Honey?" I reply, "Much better. The doctors say I don't have cirrhosis anymore." "We know Honey, we've been praying for you at our women's circles every Saturday," the other lady replied.

I had been medically disabled, retired from the government job after 23 years, received multiple transfusions, paracentesis, all for cirrhosis (liver disease) and ascites (fluid on my abdomen). The doctors at the prestig-

ious university hospitals said I needed long-term psychiatric and medical treatment. What happened to me is alluded to in the books by Bill Wilson and William James. (Varieties of Religious Experiences)

*When I left Ridgeview, no half-way house would have me because I was too sick and a "bad risk."*

Prayer, taken as an inward communication or conversation with a higher power, is seen as the defining characteristic of religious experience. The belief that something is actually transacted, some mutual exchange occurs, is at the core of the experience. There is some power greater than the conscious self. Union with this higher power can lead to peace and serenity.

Emotion is a central feature in religious experience. There is something MORE than the conscious self that can give an individual power, transformational strength, reassurance, and equanimity. Whether the subconscious MORE is in any way connected to some larger MORE in the universe, some supernatural MORE, is unclear. We can experience union with SOMETHING larger than ourselves and in that union we find our greatest peace."

The belief that beyond each man and in a fashion continuous with him there exists a larger power which is friendly to him and to his ideals. All that the facts require is that the power should be other and larger than our conscious selves. Anything larger will do, if only it be large enough to trust for the next step. The

*The doctors say I don't have cirrhosis anymore." "We know Honey, we've been praying for you at our women's circles every Saturday," the other lady replied.*

belief that reality is confined to what we experience, James is famous for pragmatism (which he sometimes felt he should have called humanism.

His book The Will to Believe was about the right to believe, and his Varieties of Religious Experience made religion possible for many educated modern generations (baby boomers, millenials) who are uncomfortable with the authority of churches and dogmas. These experiences, called religious experiences by James, are what members of A.A. would call "spiritual experiences": personal, subjective, emotionally profound encounters with what we view as the "spiritual." Interestingly, the most numerous examples observed, James says, are of "reformed drunkards." It is also worth noting that most members of A.A. do not have the type of dramatic experience described by Bill.

Prayer is my SELF-TALK-mind-cure and emphasizes a subconscious "inner child" person that is god-like or perhaps in some interpretations a part of God. When the individual recognizes and identifies with their inner self by letting go of conscious striving, relaxing the conscious self or ego, the subconscious mind gives the individual the gift of great power. Mind-cure has practical consequences for the individual, even if it is only a change in attitude. For many it is much more. And to repeat, mind-cure has very practical consequences. Just ask the ladies of my church who prayed for me.



Presents

The Sixth Annual

# “SAM ANDERS SERENITY SCRAMBLE”

Monday, June 1, 2015

Towne Lake Hills Golf Club—Woodstock, GA

9:00 A.M. Registration \* 10:00 A.M. Shotgun Start

Registration fees are \$360 per team or \$90 per person (tax-deductible).

Includes round, cart, range balls, light breakfast, snacks, soft drinks and water.

Philly Connection lunch.

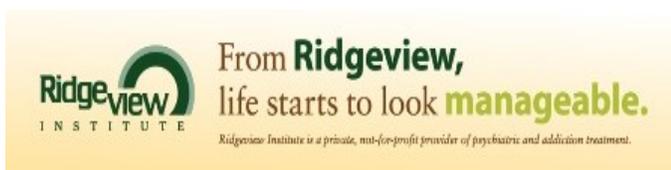
Advertise your company! Hole Sponsorship \$250, (tax-deductible).

Prizes awarded to top three teams, closest to pin and long drive. Hole-in-one prizes.

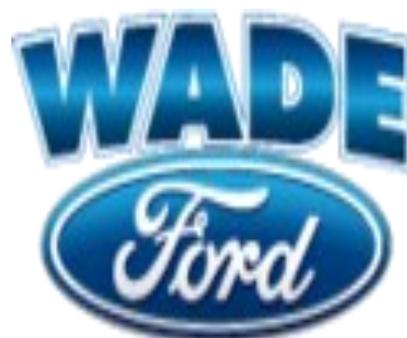
Corporate packages available, call for details.

To register or if you have questions call:

Chuck Tucker— 678-447-2946



Safety Net Recovery



Remember hitting your bottom? Do you remember that moment when you first began to feel some hope? Looking back, can you remember those angels who appeared at that precise moment when you needed help the most? I can.

I can also remember the abject fear of, "How am I going to pay for this?" No insurance, no real savings, no trust fund, no golden benefactor. Scared, having hit my bottom, finally able to ask for help. I was in a safe place. The rest would just have to take care of itself.

Treatment costs money, real money. Programs, therapies, prescriptions, food, housing and all the while life continues to go on outside with-out us. As active members of the Ridgeview Alumni Association our fund raising goal is an endowment fund that will one day be able to help financially that person currently in treatment. Whether it's more time in treatment, another couple of days in a halfway house, medications, daycare so the patient can make it to the program that week, the needs can be overwhelming at times. We all know how powerful a helping hand at that critical moment can make or break a spirit.

Our goal for the Endowment Fund has to be set high if we are to be able to generate any kind of meaningful income. To date we have raised \$90,000. towards our first \$500,000. Every single dollar raised goes into an asset management account over which the Alumni Steering Committee has sole control.

When the day comes, and it will, that we are in a financial position to begin offering grants to patients, a review committee will be established. This group will be comprised of active Steering Committee members who have demonstrated a record of service, and a representative from the hospital. The committee will review the requests and make grants based on need, the patient's participation in their own recovery, and the patient's treatment team's input.

Obviously we are a ways down the road from making any grants. The next several years are about increasing awareness of our project, raising and investing the donations that come our way. Today, you can make a difference in the life of that person who is still out there.

Won't you make a commitment to be someone's angel, just for today? We have.

Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund Campaign

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

YES, I want to contribute to the Alumni Endowment Fund. I've been in Recovery \_\_\_\_\_ years and would like to give back \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

YES, I am not an Alumni; however, I wish to contribute to the Endowment Fund. As a family member, friend, business owner or corporate representative/sponsor. Here is my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

The Ridgeview Alumni Association is a non-profit organization and all contributions are tax deductible.

Make checks payable to: Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund

Mail to: Ridgeview Alumni Steering Committee, 3995 South Cobb Drive, Smyrna, GA 30080-6397

Serenity Garden—Memorial Brick Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Message to be engraved on brick: (2 Lines/14 characters per line) Cost \$30.00

(Line 1) \_\_\_\_\_

(Line 2) \_\_\_\_\_

\* Please fill out name and contact number, even if you wish this to be an anonymous contribution, so we may contact you in case any questions arise about the inscription.

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# THE VIEW

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## IT'S HARD—SO WHAT

SUBMITTED BY: JANE S.

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I spend a lot of time volunteering in Cottage C. I'm supposed to be using my recovery story to help people see a way forward. I sit in groups, talk to people in the atrium, sometimes I lead groups and I've lead Emotions Anonymous meetings for over 5 years.

I know that what has worked for me might not be what works for someone else. When I was in very early recovery I thought it was hard. I was working to reverse lifelong hab-

its. And I'd want to take some time off and just chill for a while. Sometimes I would take an afternoon off from doing all the new stuff. But my experience with depression just before I went to RVI was horrible. I never wanted to go through it again and I'm also pretty stubborn, but it was hard.

Now a week doesn't go by that something I say isn't met by someone saying "that sounds easier said than done" or "that sounds really

hard."

And I say of course it's easier said than done. Yes, it is hard; so what. Nothing anyone in Cottage C has to do is easy. I know that. But it doesn't matter. Change is hard, but it's possible and necessary. It doesn't have to be easy.

Everyone in the alumni does hard stuff. I am always telling everyone, it's hard, but it is so worth it. And they look at me again thoughtfully and nod.