

VOLUME XXXIII

THE VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGEVIEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STEERING COMMITTEE

FIRST THINGS FIRST

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A HOUSE WITHOUT A FOUNDATION FALLS APART

THE
 RIDGEVIEW
 ALUMNI
 ASSOCIATION
 3995 SOUTH
 COBB DRIVE
 SMYRNA GA
 30080

Recovery comes first, as
 the foundation of my life,

1st
 Things
 First

so everything else does not
 fall apart

UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENT	TIME	DATE	LOCATION
Mother's Day	—	Sunday, May 13, 2018	—
GSSA	—	Friday, May 18, 2018	Macon
Memorial Day	—	Monday, May 27, 2018	—
First Friday	7:45 PM	Friday, June 1, 2018	Day Hospital Auditorium
Spring Fling	8:00 PM	Friday, June 8, 2018	Day Hospital Auditorium
	10:00 AM	Saturday, June 9, 2018	Set-up
	12:00 PM	Sunday, June 10, 2018	Set-up at 9 AM
Father's Day	—	Sunday, June 17, 2018	—
First Friday	7:45 PM	Friday, July 7, 2018	Day Hospital Auditorium
Summer Retreat	4:00 PM	Friday, July 15, 2018	Lake Alatoona
White Water Rafting	8:00 AM	Sunday, July 29, 2018	Pro-North Building
Atlanta Round-up	—	Thursday, August 2, 2018	Westin Perimeter
First Friday	7:45 PM	Friday, August 3, 2018	Day Hospital Auditorium
Summer Lake Retreat	3:00 PM	Fri-Sun, August 10-12, 2018	Lake Alatoona
Alatoona Round-up	8:00 PM	Saturday, August 17, 2018	Hilton Garden Inn Cartersville
Work Party	9:00 AM	Saturday, August 17, 2018	Serenity Garden
White Water Rafting	7:00 AM	Sunday, August 26, 2018	Pro-North Building
Golf Tournament	9:00 AM	September 2018	Bentwater Golf Club
First Friday	7:45 PM	Friday, September 7, 2018	Day Hospital Auditorium
GSSA	—	Friday, September 21, 2018	Macon
First Friday	7:45 PM	Friday, October 5, 2018	Day Hospital Auditorium
Women's Fall Workshop	—	Friday, October, 2018	Rock Eagle
Men's Workshop	—	Friday, October 12, 2018	Rock Eagle
Georgia Pre-Paid	—	Thursday, October 26, 2018	The Classic Center, Athens

This issue, as well as archival copies, are available on our website at 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 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 Alex H. at alexhuntebrinker@yahoo.com using "Newsletter" in the subject line.

Alex Huntebrinker, Communications Chair, Editor, Proofreader, Design & Layout
Ray Williams, Co-Editor, Proofreader
Donna, Steering Committee Minutes
Paul S. Liistro, Jr., Alumni Website
Janet Ticconi, Bulletin Boards
Barbara Wheeler, Endowment Fund & Communications

2018 SPRING FLING

Sunday, June 10, 2018

@ 12 noon



**SWIMMING POOL
CHILDREN PLAY AREA**




**HOT DOGS
HAMBURGERS
RAFFLE PRIZES
ARTS AND CRAFT VENDORS**



**VENDORS NEEDED
CALL MEREDITH: 678-650-1621**

**RAFFLE DONATIONS
CALL MEREDITH: 678-650-1621**



SPEAKER MEETING

Spring Fling Speaker Meeting
Friday, June 8, 2018
7:45 PM



RECOVERY MEETING

Pool Side Meeting
SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2018
5:00 PM



MOST IMPORTANT THING

SUBMITTED BY: SEAN C.

The old-timers told me that if I wanted to quit drinking, then I had to put the bottle down. They explained to me that the steps wouldn't work that well if I was drunk. They were fond of saying, "If you want to quit drinking, then you have to quit drinking." Huh? What? If I could stop drinking on my own, why would I ever entertain the thought of going to AA? I suspected that there was something more to this than just being abstinent. Boy, was that an understatement.

The first thing I had to do besides "don't drink" was to identify the problem and accept the fact that I am an alcoholic. I had to realize to my inner core that I had a problem which I couldn't solve by myself. I would need to ask for help and that would probably mean making some major changes. I didn't need to answer the 20 questions in the AA pamphlet to be convinced. On page 44 in *The Big Book* of Alcoholics Anonymous, there are two questions which cut to the chase: "If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when

drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic." An honest assessment of these two propositions revealed to me the obvious answer.

One of the fundamental sayings I've heard over the years is, "Whatever you put in front of your sobriety, you will lose." To further develop the point, the Big Book also states, "It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe."

If Step One points out my problem, then Step Two tells me the solution. I need to find a power greater than myself if I'm going to find contented sobriety. Lack of power was my dilemma. As for the rest of the steps, these are the actions I must take if I want a chance to succeed at this new way of life.

One of the fundamental sayings I've heard over the years is, "Whatever you put in front of your

Sobriety is a wonderful gift, but it is very fragile. It doesn't take much for me to forget what's important...

sobriety, you will lose." To further develop the point, the Big Book also states, "It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe." For 10 years back in the 1980's and 1990's, sobriety and the program of AA took a back seat to my daily agenda. I wasn't very serious about getting sober, and I suffered for it. It never occurred to me that I kept relapsing because I never worked the steps. I treated the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as a social club.



CONT'FROM PG. 4 - MOST IMPORTANT...

Sobriety is a wonderful gift, but it is very fragile. It doesn't take much for me to forget what's important in my journey and to take back my will. To combat my selfish tendencies, I asked someone to be my sponsor. I didn't have to ask what I should do first; he told me! If I'm not sure what's next, I call him, and he'll give me some strong suggestions. We studied The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and followed the steps suggested in its pages. At last, I found a happy way to live without alcohol.

About 15 years ago, my home group had a member whom we fondly called "Tony Five Things." He would always share that when you wake up in the

morning, get on your knees and ask your Higher Power to keep you sober for that day. Meditate. Call your sponsor. Go to a meeting. Lastly, at night you get

By living this way of life, putting sobriety first, I laugh a lot! I've met more knuckleheads, nuts and crazies that are just like me. I'm not unique.

on your knees again and thank Him for another day. Those five things are what I got into the habit of putting first. When our newsletter's topic of "First Things First" was revealed, I immediately thought of "Tony Five Things."

It's quite simple really. When I put my sobriety in the #1 slot every day, I have a good chance to continue to stay sober. The principles of the 12 steps are the way I try to live my life every day. Some days I do better than others. However, no matter what kind of day I'm having, I feel safe when the first thing in my life is Alcoholics Anonymous. Everything else falls into place.

And one last thing. By living this way of life, putting sobriety first, I laugh a lot! I've met more knuckleheads, nuts and crazies that are just like me. I'm not unique. There is a solution! I found it along with many others. If I put AA first, I can stay sober. What a gift!



FIRST THINGS FIRST

SUBMITTED BY: TOM S.

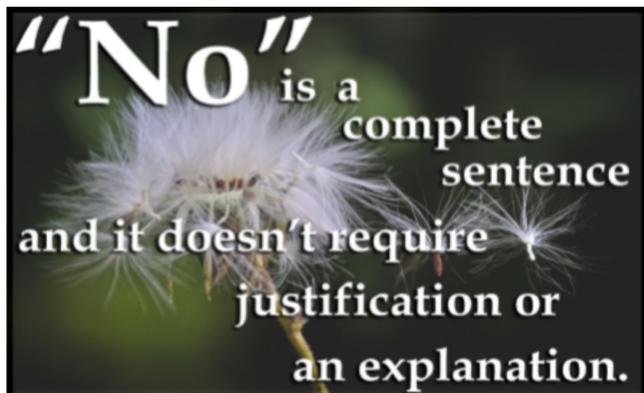
I was never that good at prioritizing things in life. I wanted to do everything first, like the juggler who keeps adding one ball at a time to his original three, not realizing how many there are until it's too late, and they all go crashing to the ground.

In recovery I discovered balance by learning to say "No" once in a while. (It is a complete sentence.) By focusing on my business, not other peoples', and working the first nine steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, I was better able to see for myself what I needed to work on.

I had quit drinking for almost 10 months, so I decided (without asking for help) to quit everything: tobacco, caffeine, sugar, all of it. Fortunately, the after-care leader, Rochelle M., heard me mention my plan to someone, and she intervened: "Take care of your addictions in the order that they will kill you," was her advice. The reason was simple. If I grouped all of my addic-

tions together as one "thing," then if I failed at any one of them, like smoking, my brain would say, "What the hell, you failed. Might as well drink again too." That made perfect sense, and I followed her advice. It was the first time I practiced "first things first". I did quit smoking a couple of years later. The coffee and sugar? Not yet; it's only been 28 years.

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THE MEANING

SUBMITTED BY: RAY W.

What Does “First Things First” Mean in AA?

Triage is the method used in emergency medicine to decide priorities. For individual patients, it comes down to a stepwise assessment and addressing the most important problems before the less important. The basics are: Start the breathing, then stop the bleeding, then protect the wound, then treat for shock. There’s an important sequence. It does little good for instance, to stop the bleeding if the patient isn’t breathing.

For alcoholics the meaning of “first things first” is simply a way to keep sobriety front and center. Without abstinence, all of the other problems can’t be “fixed.” For alcoholics, the “first thing” is not drinking.

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In the Big Book, it is explained this way:

Above all other concerns, we must remember that we cannot

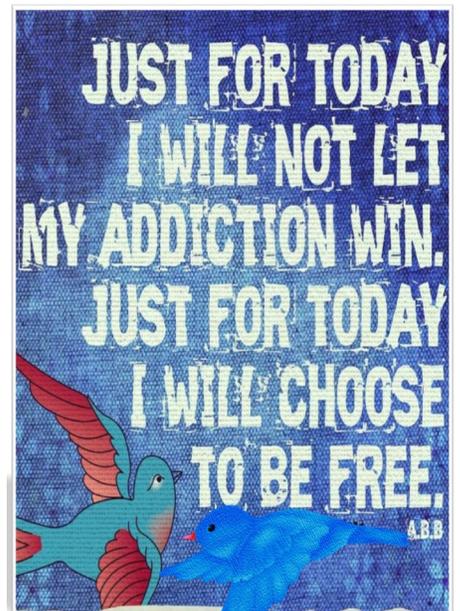
drink. Not drinking is the first order of business for us, anywhere any time, under any circumstances.

Some have asked us, “Does this mean you rank sobriety ahead of family, job, and the opinion of friends?”

When we view alcoholism as the life-or-death matter it is, the answer is plain. If we do not save our health – our lives – then certainly we will have no family, no job, and no friends. If we value family, job, and friends, we must first save our own lives in order to cherish all three.

Does this mean that sobriety alone is a cure-all? No. There will be other problems – most alcoholics have many. The important point is to keep one eye firmly fixed on this first thing – sobriety. Without that, the patient dies. With that, there is hope. Keeping this phrase in mind also helps

fight off a common excuse to go back to the bottle. It’s the pity party and the depression that comes from not being able to repair a relationship or get a job or any of a thousand things that can go wrong in life. Sticking with the “first thing” means that no matter what else is going on I won’t drink. Period. This has to be the most important thing because without it, nothing else will change
12Step.com



THE JAR

SUBMITTED BY: PAUL L.

A teacher walks into a classroom and sets a glass jar on the table. He silently places 2-inch rocks in the jar until no more can fit. He asks the class if the jar is full and they agree it is. He says, "Really," and pulls out a pile of small pebbles, adding them to the jar, shaking it slightly until they fill the spaces between the rocks. He asks again, "Is the jar full?" They agree.

So next, he adds a scoop of sand to the jar, filling the space between the pebbles and asks the question again. This time, the class is divided, some feeling that the jar is obviously full, but others are wary of another trick. So, he grabs a pitcher of water and fills the jar to the

brim, saying, "If this jar is your life, what does this experiment show you?" A bold student replies, "No matter how busy you think you are, you can always take on more." "That is one view," he replies. Then he looks out at the class making eye contact with everyone, "The rocks represent the BIG things in your life – what you will value at the end of your life – your family, your partner, your health, fulfilling your hopes and dreams. The pebbles are the other things in your life that give it meaning, like your job, your house, your hobbies, your

friendships. The sand and water represent the 'small stuff' that fills our time, like watching TV or running errands." Looking out at the class again, he asks, "Can you see what would happen if I started with the sand or the pebbles?"

No matter how many times I hear this popular story, which is widely circulated and told in many ways, I am reminded about what is important in my life and work: if I solve the big issues first, the small ones will fall into place, but the reverse is not the case.

I am reminded about what is important in my life and work: if I solve the big issues first, the small ones will fall into place, but the reverse is not the case.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar.

Of course, the sand filled up everything else.



SOBRIETY FIRST

SUBMITTED BY: RAY W.

Rather early on in life, I got used to the idea of “first things first” – at least to some extent. As a kid on Saturday mornings during the school year, did I want to go outside and play? Well, first I had to straighten up my room. How ‘bout that cheesecake? Great! Help yourself! But first I had to eat a healthy amount of the main meal (or secretly pass it off to the dog begging under the table). Order, discipline, priorities. Some things had to have priority in order for other things to be possible.

I've lost a few "secondary" things after putting them first before sobriety, which was, of course, the first thing I then lost in the process. Sobriety is first because ultimately my life is at stake.

With sobriety that possible thing is life itself. We've all heard the AA saying, “The first thing you put ahead of your sobriety will be the second thing you lose.” My drinking career bears witness to the truth of that statement! I've lost a few “secondary” things after putting them first before sobriety, which was, of course, the first thing I then lost in the process. Sobriety is first because ultimately my life is at stake. Someone once asked me if I put sobriety even before God. It would be, I mused, strange indeed to try to put the will of God – and it is His will that I be sober – before

God. “I put sobriety first,” I answered, “so that I can seek to put God first.” We put sobriety first so that we can stay alive, so that we can then love and be loved, be true to family and friends, honest and hardworking, and, yes, “happy, joyous and free.”

Strange, that during my childhood I slowly learned to like my room to be straightened up, neat and clean; and I began to look forward at mealtime to the taste of that sirloin and salad. Likewise, putting sobriety first no longer feels odd or burdensome. Rather, it feels “normal” as the top priority... at least to someone who wants to live the life I've been given.



Priorities - Best to keep the cart behind the horse.

THE TOP PRIORITY

SUBMITTED BY: KEVIN C.

Three o'clock in the morning was always the worst time for me in my active addiction. I would lie wide-awake, feeling angry at myself, frustrated with myself, lonely and depressed. I wasn't the person I wanted to be, the person knew I should be. Time and time again, I would be ashamed of my actions, disappointed in who I was as a father, brother, son, friend and person. I knew my drinking was a huge problem, and I wanted to quit; I needed to quit, but I couldn't. No matter how much willpower and conviction I had as I lay there, it would vanish at sunrise, and I would drink again and continue the downward spiral of disappointment with who I had become.

Thankfully, I got another chance at becoming the person I want to be. It all started when I put other things aside and checked myself into Ridgeview and began my journey in sobriety.

Thankfully, I got another chance at becoming the person I want to be. It all started when I put other things aside and checked myself into Ridgeview and began my journey in sobriety. This, I began to see, had to be my top priority,

ty. This, I began to see, had to be my top priority, and so I was able to break my drinking cycle and downward spiral one day at a time. But as the Big Book teaches us, drinking is but a symptom. I also began a journey of understanding what created the hole in my gut that I had tried to fix with alcohol. Reconnecting with a power greater than myself, whom I choose to call God, was a critical first step. Then with the help of my sponsor, I have been working the Steps. And the fellowship of AA provides me wisdom and daily support. . . as long as I keep

my sobriety, God, and AA first place in my daily life. All together these components are helping me on my journey. It is hard work, the hardest work I have ever done. But I see progress, and most importantly, with the tools of the program, I make adjustments to my thinking and behavior daily.

Every day when I wake up, I am thankful that I have been given another chance at becoming the person I want to be and know I can be . . . one day at a time, and during each of those days, endeavoring to always keep those first things first.

Recovery is something that you have to work on every single day and it's something that doesn't get a day off.

- Demi Lovato

FIRST THINGS FIRST

SUBMITTED BY: DON W.

From the very beginning of my journey of sobriety, I have been blessed with excellent sponsorship. Early on, my sponsor continually impressed upon me the importance of putting my sobriety ahead of everything else including work and family. My response was that I considered that attitude to be self-serving. How am I being unselfish if I put going to meetings every day ahead of family responsibilities? How is insisting on attending aftercare twice per week and hanging out with my sponsor and other winners being attentive and unselfish to my family? How can setting boundaries which preclude some family and friend activities be considered service to others? He answered by reminding me that unless I maintained a fit spiritual condition, I would not be able to be present for fellowship or service to anyone.

In today's busy world, it would be so easy for me to allow other activities to become distractions from what I must do in order to maintain that spirituality.

In today's busy world, it would be so easy for me to allow other activities to become distractions from what I must do in order to maintain that spirituality. As much as I would enjoy making certain I am present for grandchildren's ball games, dance recitals, birthday parties, etc., I must plan these activities around my meetings, aftercare and service work. I have heard countless stories about individuals who relapsed because they gradually allowed other activities to eat away at their efforts to remain clean and sober. It happens so subtly that they are in trouble long before realizing it: miss a meeting to attend a family function or forget to call a sponsor because of being so busy; not finding time to work with others

I have heard countless stories about individuals who relapsed because they gradually allowed other activities to eat away at their efforts to remain clean and sober.

who might be newly sober and need direction; being unable to serve as trusted servants in group, zone, district or state levels. When viewed singularly, none of these situations seem earth shattering. But if they are combined, they can result in little or none of the work that most of us consider necessary to prevent relapse.

In my family, we participate together in many planned events. But each member knows and understands that there are only a few occasions when my recovery activity schedule can be circumvented. I cannot afford to begin allowing things to interfere with my program. I truly must keep first things first.

RECOVERY IS MY PRIORITY

SUBMITTED BY: ALEX H.

People with long term sobriety often say, “sobriety has to be the top priority in your life” and “whatever you put before your sobriety you will surely lose.” The logic is if we get busy or distracted and lose sight of maintaining our sobriety, we are apt to relapse and lose all the benefits of sobriety. While this sounds simple, in recovery we can lose sight of just how true these sayings are and how important our sobriety is.

When I first got sober, I had ‘the gift of desperation’. I went through so much pain and suffering that I was willing to do almost anything to get sober and feel better. It was clear that returning to using or drinking would land me right back in the dark bottom I so desperately struggled to get out of. Sobriety took a priority in my life.

The dilemma came later into recovery, when I started to feel better and regain some of the things I lost. The human mind is remarkable in its

capacity to forget misery. After years or months of sobriety, it is possible to forget some of the worst hurt and consequences of our drinking. As I began to regain happiness and put my life back in order, I had to be very careful because I knew what could happen if I lost sight

of what was the most important things: sobriety first. I had experienced thru my relapses the same thing: I lost sight of recovery and got busy with family, job, fun, etc. And misery returned.

It is increasingly important to remember the importance of putting sobriety before the other areas of my life. I must stay vigilant and remember that my job, house, relationships are only possible because I am sober. Without sobriety I can kiss all those things goodbye. While this may sound like a dramatization, it is certainly not. I

remember the pain of the last few months of my addiction and the hopelessness that I felt. To avoid returning to such a scenario, I have deliberately continued the behaviors and things that got me sober:

First things first mean that I must place recovery before everything else, so I don't lose everything else again.

12 step meetings, spirituality, therapy, volunteer work, fellowship, and prayer.

I don't want to go back to the pain and misery I experienced in my addictions. I always must remember that when I start putting my recovery on the backburner and minimizing the importance of maintaining sobriety, I am putting myself at risk. First things first mean that I must place recovery before everything else, so I don't lose everything else again.

THE RIDGEVIEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Presents

The Ninth Annual

"SAM ANDERS SERENITY SCRAMBLE"

September 2018

Bentwater Golf Club—Acworth, 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, breakfast, snacks, soft drinks, and water.
Philly Connection lunch.**

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

\$1,000.00 In Raffle prizes

Corporate packages available. Call for details.

To register or if you have questions call:

Chip Bunn: 770-504-557 or Stan Dixon: 404-735-7312

SPONSOR OPORTUNITIES

GOLD—\$1000: Receives tournament entry for 4 person team, a hole sponsorship, and 4 Supertickets. The Supertickets include 4 mulligans, a free hybrid club or wedge, a chance to win 3 day vacation and entry into a drawing for a chance to win a \$25,000 shootout following the tournament. Also receives their company logo on all flyers and tournament documents, recognition in the RVAA publication The View, a verbal recognition during pre-tournament announcements, and a company banner in the clubhouse.

SILVER—\$700: Receives entry for a 4 person team, a hole sponsorship, a company banner for the clubhouse, and verbal recognition.

BRONZE—\$350: Receives a hole sponsorship, a company banner for the clubhouse, and verbal recognition.

INDIVIDUAL HOLE SPONSORSHIP—\$250: Company name and logo will appear on a sign at one of the 18 tee boxes.

Chip Bunn: 770-504-557 or Stan Dixon: 404-735-7312

ENDOWMENT FUND DONATIONS

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 without 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 nearly \$110,000 towards our first \$500,000. Every single dollar raised goes into an asset management account 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.

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 (____) _____

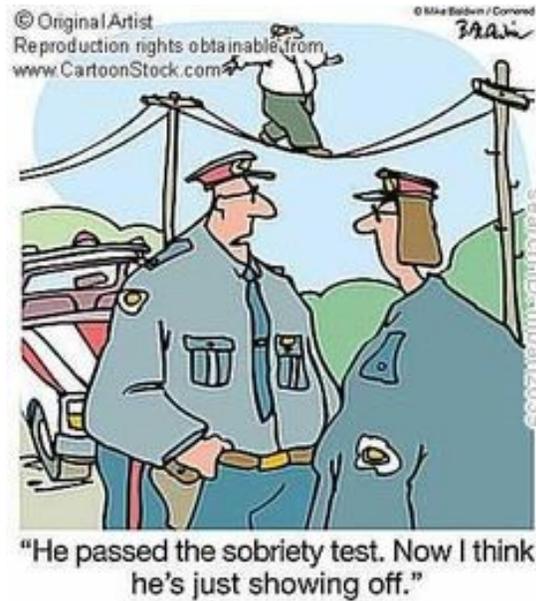
Address _____

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 \$35.00

(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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Make checks payable to: Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund

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

THE VIEW

FIRST THINGS FIRST

3995 SOUTH COBB DRIVE
SMYRNA, GA 30080

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Announcement:

If you would like to continue to receive this newsletter in printed form, please send an email to sysad-min@ridgeviewalumni.com with your name and address. Please put Newsletter in the subject line.

We thank you for taking the time to update us.

Love & Service,
Communications Committee

Alumni Steering
Committee

