

VOLUME XXXIV

THE VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGEVIEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STEERING COMMITTEE

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VIGILANCE



THE
 RIDGEVIEW
 ALUMNI
 ASSOCIATION
 3995 SOUTH
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 SMYRNA GA
 30080



UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENT	TIME	DATE	LOCATION
First Friday	7:45 PM	Friday, April 5, 2019	Day Hospital
Garden Work Party	9:00 AM	Saturday, April 13, 2019	Serenity Garden
Good Friday		Friday, April 19, 2019	
Women's Spring Workshop		April 26, 2019	Rock Eagle
First Friday	7:45 PM	May 3, 2019	Day Hospital
Garden Work Party	9:00 AM	Saturday, May 11, 2019	Serenity Garden
Mother's Day		Sunday, May 12, 2019	
GSSA		Friday, May 17, 2019	Macon
Memorial Day		Monday, May 27, 2019	
Golf Tournament	9:00 AM	End of May/First of June 2019	Bentwater Golf Club
Garden Work Party	9:00 AM	Saturday, June 1, 2019	Serenity Garden
First Friday / Spring Fling AA Speaker	7:45 PM	Friday, June 7, 2019	Day Hospital
Spring Fling Set-up	10:00 AM	Saturday, June 8, 2019	Tennis Courts
Spring Fling Picnic /Raffle	12:00 PM	Sunday, June 9, 2019	(Set-up 9 AM) Tennis Courts
First Friday	7:45 PM	Friday, July 13, 2019	Day Hospital
Garden Work Party	9:00 AM	Saturday, July 14, 2019	Serenity Garden
White Water Rafting (half day)	8:00 AM	Sunday, July X, 2019	Meet @ Pro North—Half Day
Atlanta Round-Up		Thursday, August 1, 2019	Westin Perimeter North
First Friday	7:45 PM	Friday, August 2, 2019	Day Hospital
Alatoona Round Up	8:00 PM	Friday, August 16, 2019	Hilton Garden Inn—Cartersville
Garden Work Party	9:00 AM	Saturday, August 17, 2019	Serenity Garden
Summer Retreat (Alumni Steering)	4:00 PM	Friday, August 2019	Lake Alatoona
White Water Rafting (full day)	7:00 AM	Sunday, August X, 2019	Meet @ Pro North—Full Day

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 Dawn L. at dawnliistro@gmail.com using "Newsletter" in the subject line.

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VIGILANCE

SUBMITTED BY: SEAN C.

There is an old saying in Alcoholics Anonymous that explains how to attain long-term sobriety: "Don't drink and don't die!" With that being said, I have a friend who just celebrated 52 years of sobriety on August 9th. His take on the matter is more serious and pragmatic. My friend's name is Tom K., and he likes to say, "The secret to staying sober for a long time is to keep doing all the things that you learned in your first 60 to 90 days in AA, and you will stay sober!" The important part of Tom's message is "keep doing."

Since this edition of the Ridgeview Alumni newsletter is about vigilance, I thought I would look up the word in the dictionary. Being vigilant

means to be keenly alert and ready to detect any danger. It means to be on your guard and ever awake.

Alcohol is cunning, baffling and powerful. Although it's in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, no one had to tell me that. It's been my experience. What I found astonishing was that sobriety is also cunning, baffling and powerful, if I let it. Each day is an unmerited gift, and I have to stay on top of my program if I want to keep it.

For ten years, I would get sober for a while and then go back out. Sometimes I would attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings to save a job or my marriage. Ultimately, I would pick

up again, and it would be like a runaway train. Toward the end of this ten-year period, I became serious and really wanted to stop. I found out I couldn't get sober on my own. Through a series of events, I somehow arrived at Ridgeview Institute. Although I didn't know it at the time, my journey had begun.

Upon discharge, I went straight to an AA meeting and met up with a group of people who seemed to have an answer to my drinking problem. My sponsor assigned him-

self to me, and we started on an adventure of working the steps. In the course of the following days, I would always wonder when the other shoe was going to drop. I wondered

how long this "sobriety thing" was going to last. In the meantime, I would go to my meetings, talk to my sponsor and do whatever he assigned me to do. At one point, he told me to clean the ashtrays. I explained to him that I have never smoked (cigarettes). His comeback was, "I don't care. Cleaning ashtrays helped me to get sober." Well, I couldn't argue with that, so I started cleaning the ashtrays. I heard AA members read, "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path." From that point on, I was all in. During this time, I joined the Ridgeview Alumni Association. We started building a Serenity Garden in September

1999 and didn't finish until the spring of 2001. Over the years, we've added on to it. I had sworn when I moved from Boston to Atlanta that I would never pick up a shovel again. WRONG!

What happened in a few months was that the obsession to drink was lifted. I started to sense a Higher Power working in my life, because there were too many coincidences for such a Power not to exist. The biggest surprise of all was the joy I felt in my heart. Where did that come from?

The bottom line is that I don't ever want to go through the process of getting sober again. I know that I can be drunk in less than an hour from now. A lot of people that relapse, and I was one of them, say that they stopped going to meetings. They stopped calling their sponsor. Their priorities shifted, and they were getting more hours at work. The spouse wanted them to stay home and spend more time with the family. All of those excuses seem to be justified, and I know I would use any one of those rationalizations if I wanted to drink again. I need to be vigilant.

The Big Book states that "It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels." My sponsor made me look up the word "laurels." It means past accom-

I simply had to follow directions like I would follow a GPS... I had never fully done that before and that's what keeps the cycle of relapse ...

CON'T FROM PAGE 2 – VIGILANCE

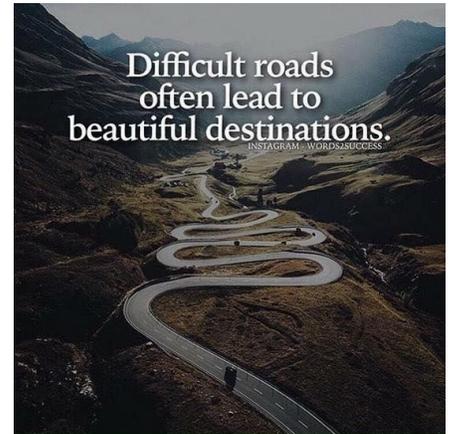
SEAN C.

plishments and achievements. If I ever forget that God gave me this gift of sobriety, you might as well save me a seat down at Dropkick Murphy's. The book explains, "What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition."

Bottom line: I must stay vigilant to stay sober. I'm not strong enough to think I've got this. As of this writing, I have been sober for 6,965 days.

(AA Big Book Sobriety app.; it's free.) I'm afraid to stop doing the things that I had to do to get sober and to stay sober. The laughter in the rooms is contagious. I love to cut up and act the fool. By following some simple rules which I thought were stupid, I've found a fellowship, a program of recovery that has made my life worth living. However, I know it could all go away if I stop doing the things I did in my first three months in Alcoholics Anonymous.

So, let us trudge the road together.



THE PRICE OF SOBRIETY

SUBMITTED BY: RAY W.

This vigilance stuff is serious business. "I am not playing a game in which a loss is a temporary setback," wrote a contributor to Daily Reflections (p. 276). "I am dealing with my disease, for which there is no cure, only daily acceptance and vigilance." Reminds me of those famous words of Thomas Jefferson about our American founding: "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Or, as we could say in AA: "Daily vigilance is the price of sobriety."

But how to maintain vigilance? For me at first, it was mainly a fear-driven, frequent reminder to myself of the danger I faced from letting down my guard in a situation of potential temptation – anywhere or at any time. Fear still serves at times

as an aid, especially in those instances of out-of-the-blue assaults from our "cunning, baffling, powerful" enemy. I've come to see, though, that I don't just wait to be vigilant when I first feel a possible danger to my sobriety; rather, I must start off each day with a fresh and full acceptance of my disease and with a prayerful commitment of that day to God, a day I can stay sober with His help.

That is, vigilance flows from this acceptance and action, this daily reminder that we all have "a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition." I will not have to keep myself in an alarmed state all the time, but with seeking to regularly improve my conscious contact with God, with

working the whole of the program, I'll know that the alarms are set to go off when they really need to. Vigilance, then, will not be something that keeps me awake at night, but rather it will turn each evening into a peaceful vigil for the next day, one day at a time.

No, we are "not playing a game in which a loss is a temporary setback." Far more importantly, we are learning to really live, coming to know "a new freedom and a new happiness." This is sobriety, the price of which is "daily acceptance and vigilance." I won't say this is a small price to pay in and of itself; but when I experience the result, I know it's so very much worth it!

YOU ARE THE MIRACLE

SUBMITTED BY: SEAN C.

It was explained to me that the theme of the Ridgeview Fall Newsletter is “Your Own Miracle.” That’s a nice, catchy title but I have to respectfully disagree. The real miracle is the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am fortunate just to be a part of it. If you study the history of how AA was established, you’ll realize that its birth came about through a sequence of events. No one could have planned it in the way that it happened. From an outsider’s point of view, you would think these occurrences were coincidental. A lot of people believe Alcoholics Anonymous was born through divine providence. I am one of those people. My sponsor back home used to say, “There are no coincidences in AA; they’re just God’s way of remaining anonymous.”

However, to play along with the topic, I can cite a few mini-miracles that have occurred in my life since I’ve been sober. I also believe I was blessed while I was still out there getting into trouble. I had to struggle through many failures and heartaches so that once I had some time in the program, I could pass on my experience to the new person just coming in. Of course, I didn’t know that at the time.

From November of 1989, God had been asking me to come to Alcoholics Anonymous and stay. I couldn’t stay sober. Sometimes I tried; other times I only came in to let the dust settle. A number of times I came in to save my marriage. My job was also on the line, so I’d go hide out in the rooms. For ten years, this cycle kept recurring like “Groundhog Day.”

In 1991, we had someone transfer into our office named Paul. I had been

going through the Employee Assistance Program to get sober but mostly to save my career. The EAP person referred me to Paul. He was my age, had long hair, had a sick sense of humor, and it was all a great fit. In fact, he’s still my “Boston” sponsor today. Paul took me through what I call “AA Orientation.” All this was great except for my reluctance to work the 12 steps.

When I transferred to Georgia in 1998, I had 18 months of sobriety, but I decided to drink on the ride to Norcross. My plan was to stay drunk for a few weeks and then find the meetings and get sober all over again. Thirteen months later, I was desperate once more and willing to do anything. I entered Ridgeview Institute and stayed sober for five months. I got a home group and a sponsor. I got up to Step 5 but relapsed by not listening to suggestions. I stayed drunk for *only* 20 days, but it was defeating.

I came back into Ridgeview, and the first night there, the Alumni came in to put on a meeting for us. Someone said, “Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.” Another person said it a different way: “Thoroughly have we seen a person fail who has rarely followed our path.” Boy, did that make sense! It was at that moment I felt an overwhelming sense of hope.

Upon leaving Ridgeview, I didn’t go home. I went straight to my home group. Since my “Georgia” sponsor had fired me, I had to get a new one. Have you read in the Big Book about the people who normally would-

n’t mix? Well, my new sponsor found me. A good ‘ole boy from Henry county who was 14 years younger than I but had two years of sobriety. Needless to say, we could hardly understand each other. His name was Wes. He explained to me his name’s proper pronunciation: Weigh’-ess. Wes told me he would take me through the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, we would do the steps, *and* he would teach me all about Georgia Bulldogs football. It was explained that AA was a spiritual program and that the Steps as well as the Dawgs were both spiritual. For the first year, I wasn’t in any mood to laugh, but with Wes, I couldn’t help it. That was the miracle of it.

My Higher Power has bestowed many blessings upon me over the years. In 2013, I joined the Ridgeview staff as a clinical assistant. I met my wife through a series of coincidences. Currently, I go to a Sunday morning meeting that is attended by six other Bostonians. One of the miracles that I am aware of as I write this is that it’s a Friday night, and I should be down at the Shamrock Pub in South Boston getting shat-tered. Instead, I’m writing about recovery.

If you pay attention throughout the day, I guarantee you’ll catch God loving you. That’s been my experience along with countless others.

HOW I AM LEARNING TO SPOT FEAR

SUBMITTED BY: ANTHONY R.

I, like so many of us in recovery, upon writing out my fourth step, found fear to be my most prevalent cause of character defects. It had been my fears that I had been trying to mask with most of my insane behaviors. This should not have been a surprise; as it says in the Big Book: “[We are] driven by a hundred forms of fear,” and “fear is the corrosive thread that runs through our lives.” After really getting honest, I was finally able to identify it. Many of us come to find out that we are fear-based people.

Some time ago, a friend of mine asked me a very interesting question: “What would your life look like if it were not for fear?” I was dumbfounded. The query was simply to overarching to comprehend. But I

kept hearing the question reverberating over and over in my head. Then a change began to occur. At first, it came slowly. I would occasionally catch glimpses of an outcome that would be contingent on making a fearless decision. I would not, of course, always make the fearless decision; but none the less, I could at least preview the outcome. Then, ever so slightly, and after much prayer, I started to make choices without the fear factor. Over time, this kind of action has become easier.

The effect that this has had on my life has been profound. I have found a new freedom and a new happiness (fear is a cruel master). I no long-

er get anxious about giving money or committing time to things, when before I felt as though I had neither. Without fear, I can ask for guidance on matters that were once to shameful to broach. For a long time, fear has been blocking me from God, other people, and my own freedom. Just for today, I will recognize a decision I have allowed fear to make, and I will make another choice.

Then, ever so slightly, and after much prayer, I started to make choices without the fear factor.



GUARDING PRIORITIES

SUBMITTED BY: KELLY W.

One step forward,
two steps back,
trying to follow doctor's orders,
struggling to pick up the slack.
Three months in,
four enemies down,
overcoming my sins,
fighting to stay off the ground.

Five AM coffee,
six pages read;
this is the beginning of the new me
before I end up hospitalized or dead.

Seven amends to make,
eight letters to write,
hoping I don't break
clinging on to life.
Nine dollars to my name,
ten bills to pay,
trying to stay sane,
trying to make it through another day.
Eleven hours left to go,
twelve steps to complete,
making room to grow;
God, please, heal what's left of me.

RECOVERY FIRST

SUBMITTED BY: DONNA J.

The topic seemed as if it would be very easy to write about regarding choices leading up to our fateful decision to enter the world of Recovery. However, after weeks of mulling over the topic, my alcoholic brain has now gone into full overload!

I've recognized a lot of "firsts" that are good, which I think make us better people just by walking in awareness of the symbolism of any "first": first flowers in bloom; first kiss; first date; the first time my dog performed a command based on my action, not my words; the first time I didn't dread getting up early to work out; the first time someone said "I love you."

There are also many firsts which are bittersweet - those that make us stronger for acknowledging them: the first 365 days after losing someone you love (that first Christmas, birthday, anniversary, etc.); the first time you choose not to reply to someone who is toxic to you and your sobriety; the first time you find words

to express to someone that you do not agree with them, state the reasons why, and are completely OK in doing so; the first time you truly listen to someone who is venting/crying/upset, and you don't try to solve the situation for them. You just listen.

For me the true definition of the phrase "First Things First" is best said by Covey in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective*

People: "Putting first things first means doing the most important things in life. It means being clear about your priorities and acting on them." With this in mind, I offer you the following thoughts from me:

◆ *Anything I choose to put ahead of my sobriety is just not worth it. Sobriety is the key for me to be my best Self. This involves a cohesive balance of meetings, reading, giving, action, and spiritual prayer. With dedication to recovery, my relationships are healing as well.*

◆ *The moment I began seeing each*

day as a Blessing, I began to feel like a Blessing. Ask yourself daily if what you're doing and how you're living are getting you closer to where you want to be tomorrow. If not: stop, reassess, prioritize, and start over.

◆ *When you put your Higher Power and recovery first, you will never be last. Believe in something bigger than yourself.*

◆ *Have hope every day.*

◆ *The first secret to true happiness is for you to fall in love with yourself. Be kind to yourself; be kind to others; eat your veggies...and then dessert; be honest; be loyal; be trusting; be trustworthy; maintain integrity. Be able to look at yourself in the mirror each day and love who you see looking back.*

◆ *Don't just seem to be better. Be better.*

In recognizing these many forms of "firsts," I am ever hopeful, believing there are new "firsts" to experience every day through a sober heart, mind, and eyes. While living in recovery first, everything else will fall into place.

When you put your Higher Power and recovery first, you will never be last.

RECOVERY VIGILANCE

SUBMITTED BY: TOM S.

I have been diligent in working the program of Alcoholic Anonymous, or so I thought until I read the meaning of diligent: "Marked by persevering, painstaking effort." Well, I don't know about that! I guess in the beginning it took a lot more effort to do the work because I had so much work to do, so

much to change.

My sponsor and I made the changes gradually, in the order suggested by the 12 steps, and over time what I used to consider "work" became a natural part of living. Going to meetings, reading the Big Book and the Twelve & Twelve,

calling other people both in and out of the fellowship, and helping by sponsoring others - all these are things I do now without really thinking about it.

As a friend once said, "It's what we do when we become who we are."

IN THESE ROOMS

SUBMITTED BY: ELAINE C.

Coffee stains blend into the Berber carpet, adding more brown blotches with each passing year. Yellow paint chips break away from the walls that once held them, leaving behind blank shapes that morph into imaginary things.

The lucky ones who enter these rooms don't notice the cosmetic imperfections, because what happens here is more powerful than any of us can describe.

Ego defenses melt away, remaining outside of these walls.

Anger has a right to express itself; the emotion isn't shamed or tucked away to fester.

Salty tears can be shed without being silenced.

In these rooms, people don't run.

In these rooms, people don't judge.

In these rooms, people are accepted.

We enter as strangers, but come away as friends.

We share overwhelming emotions, giving our spirits a place to breathe.

We come together when we relapse, giving our spirits a place to heal.

In these rooms, we learn wisdom and mindfulness.

In these rooms, we learn how to recognize erroneous beliefs.

In these rooms, recovery bonds us.

In these rooms, something delightful happens.

In these rooms, we create sheer magic by being together.

ANOTHER CHANCE

SUBMITTED BY: DON W.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines vigilance as "a state of being vigilant." It defines vigilant as "alertly watchful, especially to avoid danger." And for me, failure to be vigilant about sobriety is very dangerous. For me to let down my guard and allow my spirituality to wane is to risk losing everything, including my life. I must be forever vigilant about engaging in the work that maintains my peace and serenity.

The "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous states on page 85, "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." And it says, "Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities." I have found through my experiences that, for me, this is abso-

lutely true. I find that when I let up on the basic actions that have resulted in my recovery – and it does happen – I become discontented and begin to again experience those thoughts and feelings that I once used alcohol to try to overcome.

It is so easy for me to begin missing a meeting here and a meeting there because I am tired or have something else I need to do. Or to slack up on calling my sponsor because I don't feel there is really anything I need to talk to him about. I can easily skip my morning or evening prayer because I am too busy, meanwhile telling myself it is not a big deal to occasionally miss. The problem is that as I allow myself to skip doing these things, it becomes easier to justify not doing them. Perhaps any of these activities, when taken singu-

larly, might not have a significant effect. However, the same state of mind that results in letting up in one area will cause me to slack in other activities. And it is this aggregation of these neglects that will eventually result in a dangerous state of mind.

Early in my sobriety, my sponsor told me many times, "It ain't the sharks that are gonna get you; it's the guppies." It was a while before I really understood exactly what he meant. But experience has shown that as long as I keep spiritually fit, I can face major challenges without fear and without even a thought of turning to alcohol. But if I allow the little things that chip away at my spirituality to invade my serenity, then sooner or later I will be in great danger of losing my sobriety. I must be constantly vigilant about the work that protects and enhances my spirituality.

RECOVERY PRIORITIES

SUBMITTED BY: ELAINE C.

When I first volunteered to write this article and heard the theme, I had a loud belly laugh with my Higher Power. See, my HP has a hysterical sense of humor. It's required in order to deal with someone like me on a daily basis!

Putting first things first (recovery), while navigating through close relationships, has been my primary struggle since finishing treatment at Ridgeview. It's been a major topic of discussion with my oh-so-patient therapist. So, something tells me that my HP arranged for me to volunteer to write an article for this particular theme of "first things first."

How do we manage both recovery and those murky, close relationships that affect our recovery? How do I let go of the need for others' approval while trying to approve of myself for the first time? And didn't my HP and the wise folks at Ridgeview understand that I was born and bred in the South? We're taught from Day One to put others first, suppressing our own needs so we wouldn't get labeled as "selfish." We never learned to love, much less accept, ourselves in a healthy way.

That's where first-things-first comes in. What I've discovered as I travel this labyrinth of recovery is that our wellness, our recovery, must come first. If we get distracted and

put others' needs or situations first, then we are doomed to relapse.

That's a very difficult truth to accept, particularly in mid-life. We've spent years getting ourselves into an unhealthy, self-loathing state of being. Now we must practice a different way to get better.

As much as I grow weary of hearing the term "practice," the word does reflect exactly what recovery is about. It's why we take life one day at a time. Doctors practice medicine, taking action and learning daily.

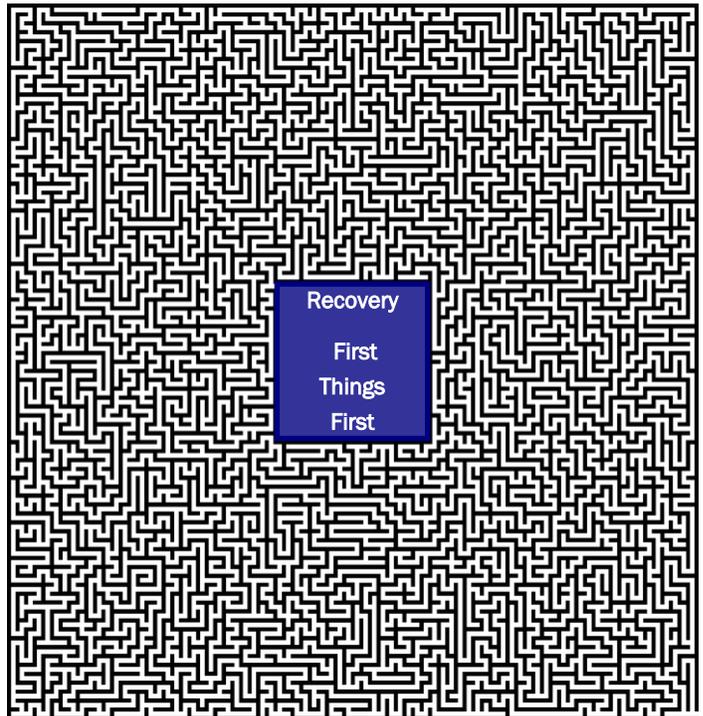
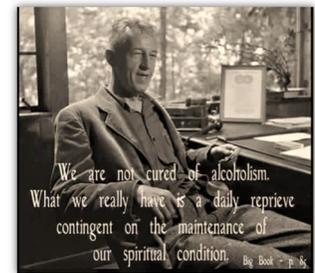
We must practice new ways of thinking, new ways of behaving, in order to move forward. By keeping first things first and our recovery top priority, we can grow to accept ourselves and therefore be of more service to others. Step 12 allows us to do this in a healthy way, one that will not compromise our recovery.

We are not responsible for other adults' emotions, even those of our loved

ones who are closest to us. I have found that by explaining to loved ones why I need to put first things first helps them feel secure. I can explain how prioritizing my recovery, even over their hurt feelings, can help the relationships in the long run.

Nobody said recovery would be easy, but by keeping first things first, we practice self-care and care toward others.

What I've discovered as I travel this labyrinth of recovery is that our wellness, our recovery, must come first. If we get distracted and put others' needs or situations first, then we are doomed to relapse.



THE RIPPLE EFFECT

SUBMITTED BY: BLESSING D.

Four years ago I checked into Ridgeview. I wanted to convince myself it was voluntary, but I had completely run out of options. My husband had left me, my daughter wanted nothing to do with me, and honestly, I was taking so many pills that my body was shutting down. I was physically, emotionally and spiritually bankrupt. I was dying. Ridgeview was the last stop on a 20-year journey of abusing alcohol and prescription pills. Ridgeview helped save my life.

My husband is an amazing man. He stood by me and watched me slowly spiral downward into addiction, always providing for our family and being an incredible father. His fierce loyalty and love were something I took advantage of. We were sick co-dependents, and the stress and worry I caused him is unimaginable. I don't know how he found the strength to leave me, but he finally did. It helped save my life.

I have two amazing children. I love them fiercely, and I would do anything for them. Anything that is, except stop drinking and drugging. It is unfathomable to me the strength addiction holds. Nothing is stronger than a mother's love they say, but that's not true. Our disease is stronger. My addiction lied to me and told me I needed opiates and benzodiazepines in order to be a

good mother, in order to function. In turn, my 14-year old son was constantly worried about me, and by the time my daughter left for college, she wanted nothing to do with me. She stopped taking my calls and cut off all contact. Al-anons call it, "Detaching with love". Wise beyond her years, it helped save me life.

When I was sick in my disease, I kept those around me sick with worry, guilt, and distrust. One of my favorite meditations in [Keep it Simple](#), by Hazelden Meditations, states, "Addiction is not a spectator sport, eventually the whole family gets to play". How true that is! Fortunately, the same is true of recovery. As I slowly started getting better, one day at a time, with the help of Ridgeview, my sponsor, working the steps, meetings, volunteer work, the Alumni Association, and my Higher Power, the most amazing change was happening to those around me. They began to heal, too.

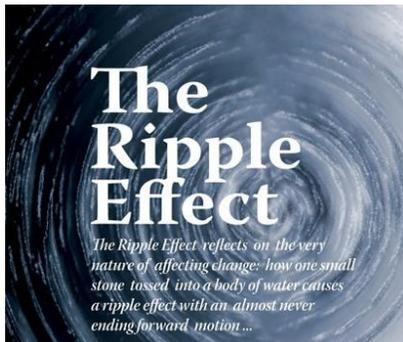
I love this time of year. I have the opportunity to reflect on how I almost lost everything. I was so close to dying but was given a second chance at life. [The Ripple Effect](#), by Fred H., is a beautiful book that looks at how staying sober (by working the steps) not only improves our lives, but the lives of those around us. By surrendering and admitting defeat, I

was able to start living differently. I started becoming honest, dependable and compassionate. I began working with other women and seeing how my experience really could benefit others. The promises were coming true in my life and causing a healing ripple effect in those around me.

It has only been 4 years since I first entered Ridgeview, but it seems like a lifetime ago. I have a new freedom and a new happiness, and so does my family. This year my husband and I will celebrate 25 years of marriage - a marriage now based on trust and friendship. My son is thriving as a college freshman, and prides himself on helping others, being a positive role-model (and a designated driver). My daughter is in graduate school to become a Clinical Mental Health Counselor, specializing in addiction; a path she chose to take because of her own experience, strength and hope. She is passionate about addiction education and health reform and wants to turn our previous mess into a positive message.

And so, the ripple effect of recovery continues to grow, and hope and healing spreads. It all began when I admitted defeat, asked for help, and became willing and honest. It wasn't easy, but it was simple - and as long as I don't take a drink or a drug today, I get the opportunity to be a better wife, mother and friend tomorrow.

Forever dripping in gratitude,



RECOVERY WORD SEARCH—VIGILANCE

This recovery word search can be a valuable tool to remember sobriety vigilance. By completing this word search, addicts can remind themselves the importance of guarding their recovery.

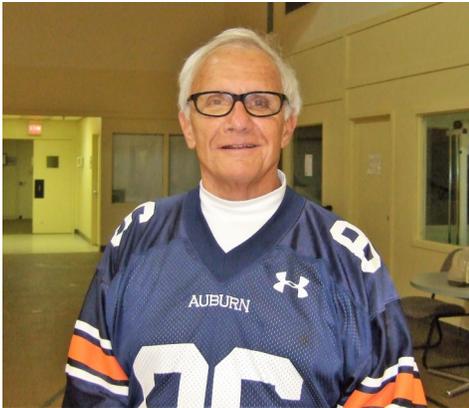
DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM +

Answers on page 15

S	O	B	D	Y	E	Y	A	R	P	E	E	T	V	U	K	H	J	S	O	B	N	R	Y	T
W	F	V	R	U	F	A	A	L	E	A	L	T	I	Y	T	I	L	A	E	R	U	S	Y	D
T	E	T	I	G	G	S	M	I	N	D	F	U	L	N	E	S	S	L	T	O	E	D	A	W
I	R	A	L	G	E	G	N	H	E	A	L	Y	A	I	L	S	A	T	A	W	A	W	A	A
K	R	M	B	E	I	P	O	E	S	G	Y	C	N	N	U	R	P	O	P	N	T	A	P	A
M	A	E	K	S	F	L	K	N	M	N	C	P	E	R	S	E	V	E	R	A	N	C	E	D
O	Y	D	L	O	E	S	A	J	R	I	Y	M	A	S	B	C	V	E	L	E	A	L	R	R
Y	Y	I	S	G	N	G	S	N	E	N	C	N	M	U	A	O	B	D	T	U	L	T	E	D
T	B	T	W	O	Y	S	S	I	C	A	C	F	F	E	P	V	N	W	L	E	R	Y	Y	S
V	E	A	E	A	N	G	E	R	Z	E	A	S	S	I	N	E	H	A	T	V	A	S	C	S
A	R	T	J	G	I	V	R	P	X	M	T	C	O	E	Y	R	F	O	Y	R	N	E	T	Y
P	G	I	K	Y	R	S	T	R	E	N	G	T	H	G	S	Y	R	E	P	N	I	E	H	U
M	H	O	I	M	O	R	I	E	A	L	A	S	S	U	R	F	E	A	R	O	E	S	F	E
P	J	N	E	B	T	Y	V	P	S	U	H	A	P	P	I	N	E	S	S	G	L	R	Y	V
P	I	A	E	R	S	A	E	G	C	E	A	T	L	O	E	S	D	A	S	S	U	E	C	B
N	P	R	S	V	N	N	N	B	U	V	A	Y	S	U	T	T	O	Y	T	E	E	D	U	N
Y	L	A	F	E	R	I	E	S	E	L	O	T	A	F	T	I	M	C	I	H	T	E	A	G
C	D	Y	A	S	D	O	S	R	Y	Y	Y	R	A	G	P	R	H	E	A	L	O	M	A	M
U	W	I	A	R	F	G	S	L	T	V	E	I	I	R	R	T	I	A	S	S	U	P	N	G
A	A	I	A	I	N	G	I	I	V	I	T	G	T	R	I	A	N	G	T	Y	A	T	E	T
A	L	U	S	I	L	K	N	A	I	H	R	E	A	L	O	M	G	O	G	C	P	I	U	P
C	G	I	T	D	K	E	R	T	P	Z	N	R	S	S	R	M	V	O	Y	E	E	O	A	O
Z	V	E	S	E	R	F	D	D	O	Y	I	Y	O	A	I	O	E	S	H	X	R	N	A	J
D	E	C	S	E	Y	E	E	W	H	L	I	F	E	E	T	L	N	S	P	O	N	S	O	R
M	G	U	S	R	D	I	R	A	D	A	O	E	S	Y	Y	A	S	S	U	R	T	Y	E	F

ASSERTIVENESS	GUARDING	MEDITATION	PRIORITY	SOBER
ASSURANCE	HAPPINESS	MEETINGS	REALITY	SPONSOR
FAITH	HOPE	MINDFULNESS	RECOVERY	STRENGTH
FEAR	LIFE	PERSEVERANCE	REDEMPTION	TRIGGERS
FREEDOM	MEANING	PRAYER	SERENITY	VIGILANCE

THURSDAYS WITH SAM



At the three or four month mark in recovery, I reached out to Sam Anders and asked if he could meet with me and share some advice on something. He agreed and we met before alumni one night. He showed me into one of the smaller private rooms in Pro North, the same room where I'd opened up my heart and soul during Emotions Anonymous (EA) meetings.

SAM: "So what's on your mind?"

ME: "My family doesn't understand any of what I'm going through. They don't understand Ridgeview, what it meant to me, or—"

SAM: "Of course they don't. Why would they?"

ME: "Um..." (trying to understand, not sure what to say next)

SAM: "They may love you, but they aren't in your brain. They didn't go through Ridgeview every day. You did. They may support us, love us, but they will never fully understand us."

That was a wakeup call for me. I so desperately wanted my family and closest friends to understand, but they couldn't. Many of them, in my case, couldn't even come close to understanding or even empathizing. It hurt me that they couldn't understand, but I was adding misery to my day by not remembering the Serenity Prayer. I was upset about something I could not change.

To Sam, that point was so obvious, and his blunt answer reminded me. Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change...

Thanks Sam, and War Eagle! I miss the Auburn-fan camaraderie!

Submitted by: Elaine C.

I had been sober for about 5 1/2 years when my brother passed away. Even though it was expected, his death devastated me. While I never thought about drinking or using, the emotional pain made my heart hurt. Shortly before his death, my company

let everyone in my office go except for me. So, I was alone all day at work and to make myself feel better I turned to food. I put on a tremendous amount of weight.

Sam approached me one day before alumni and suggested I go into a program for eating disorders. While I know he was coming from a loving place, I felt he stepped over a boundary and was furious. How dare he—I nearly quit attending alumni over this, but after a few days I concluded that I wasn't going to let it interfere with that part of my recovery I really loved.

Fast forward a few months when I picked up my 6 year chip, I thanked Sam for reminding me that regardless of how much time a person has, it is vital to remain teachable.

So, some years later, Sammy you are missed and I will always love you for always having my best at heart!

Submitted by: Anonymous



2019 SPRING FLING – JUNE 7– 9, 2019



Don't forget about the Annual Sam Anders Serenity Scramble Golf Tournament. For more information, please contact Chip Bunn at 678-504-5595.

KID'S AREA



FOOD—BURGERS & HOT



VENDORS



FELLOWSHIP



FUN / POOLSIDE MEETING

R A F F L E



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 Steering Committee 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 \$111,000 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, includes spaces) Cost \$30.00

(Line 1) _____

(Line 2) _____

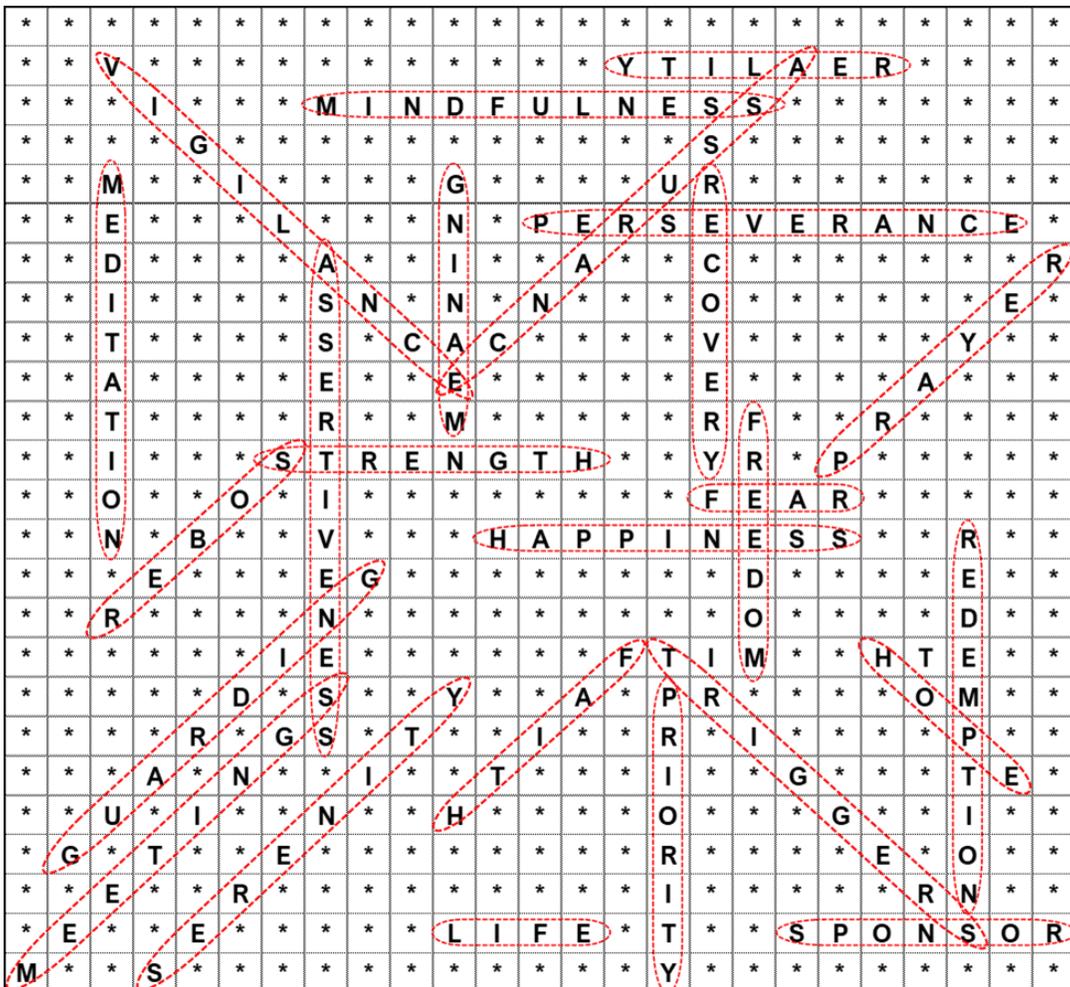
* Please fill out name and contact number, even if you wish this to be an anonymous contribution, so we may contact you in case any questions arise about the inscription.

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

WORD SEARCH ANSWERS



THE VIEW

VIGILANCE

3995 SOUTH COBB DRIVE
SMYRNA, GA 30080

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SMYRNA, GA
PERMIT NO. 118

ANNOUNCEMENT:

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter in printed form, please send an email to sysadmin@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

