

The View

Newsletter of the Ridgeview Alumni Association Steering Committee
Spring 2007

Volume XIV

Smyrna, GA



“A New Day”

The Ridgeview Alumni Association
3995 South Cobb Drive – Smyrna, GA 30080

Spring Focus: A New Day

Upcoming Events

1st Friday Speaker Meetings @ 8pm

June 8, 2007

July 6, 2007

August 3, 2007

September 7, 2007

October 5, 2007

November 2, 2007

December 7, 2007

Spring Fling – Alumni Weekend – June 1– 3, 2007

Alumni Summer Retreat – July 13 – 15, 2007

Alumni Fall Retreat – October 12 – 14, 2007

Halloween Dance – TBD

Gratitude Dinner – November 18, 2006

Lighting of Serenity Garden – December 2007

New Years Eve Dance – December 31, 2007

Contact any Alumni Steering Committee Member for more information or join us every Thursday at 5:45pm at Pro North on the Ridgeview Campus.

This issue along with 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 added to our E-mail notification list when a new Newsletter is placed on the site, E-mail us at steering@bellsouth.net or contact us thru the Web site, please put "newsletter" in the subject line.

Thank you to all 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!*

EDITORS:

Dawn B.
Michele S.
Nancy S.

Spring Focus: A New Day

Centering for a New Day Submitted by: George Mize

Instead of beginning a new day abruptly, My New Day starts in centering myself, where I am. For emotional balance, I begin with daily "Quiet Time." We are told to pray for one another, especially our enemies, thinking loving thoughts for prosperity and health (to remove them as resentments). To communicate grace (unconditional love), to give it away, inspires courage, and creates meaning and purpose for my recovery.

During a visit to a local monastery, I learned to sit relaxed and quiet for a few minutes, then move in faith and love to my Higher Power dwelling deep inside. After resting a bit in this Center of my being, I take up a single, simple word, like "Love", let everything else, every thought, go, and turn my full attention on Our Higher Power, who, I know by my faith, to be present in me. I acknowledge This Presence, even though I may not sense it, even though my reason is not able to prove it, and may even challenge the reality of it. I respond to this "Love" as best I can by giving myself – my time, my attention, my love, my very self, as completely as I can for these few minutes.

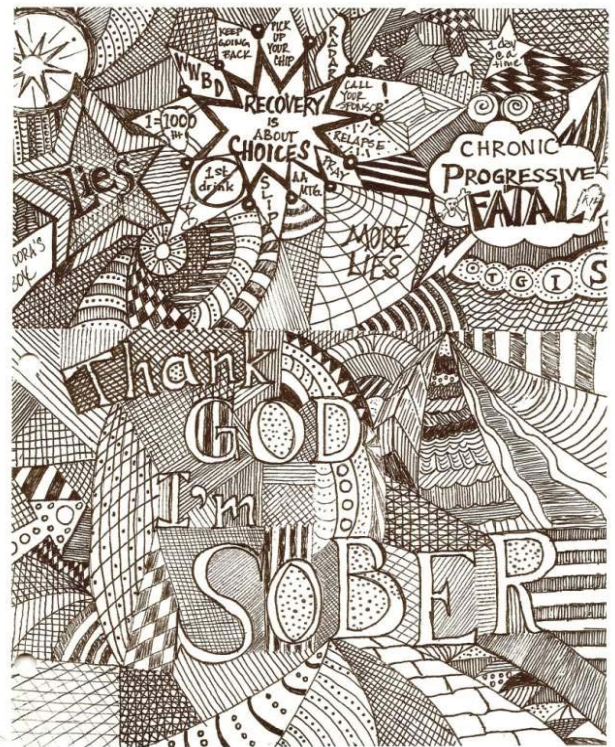
Next, I turn my will and my life over to One Who decides how we all live. That's the whole prayer. Giving myself as completely as I can and letting His Love have me, hold me, love me, is that simple, that total. Imagine the *Third Step Prayer* without the words.

Before I press on with the demands of a new day, I need to open my mind to God. Before I rush off in all directions, while I wait, and before I ask – I praise God – Thank Him – that I am alive – that I am sober – that I am a member of this fellowship of recovery. Often, prayer is like a phone conversation in which I "hang up" before he responds to my needs and questions I have. In Quiet Time, I wait patiently for His listening, guidance, protection and care. I express my excitement to live in each moment: for *Today is the Tomorrow we promised ourselves Yesterday.*

"What's the point, George?" Why do I do this? To be of more value where I am than I want to be. Instead of loving things and using people, I ask for help in keeping my priorities straight, to love people and use things. Forgiving the past to assure the future is letting go of my character shortcomings. Throughout the day, when I pause to ask for help, I rest in His Presence for a few minutes. I take a mini-inventory of my motives, admit my denial, ask for courage, strength, hope, and means to solve problems. The action is often simply acceptance, patience, tolerance and waiting.

Inside me, I strive to accept "all of me, good and bad" (the Beast and the Angel), using the *Seventh Step Prayer*. There is a sense of awe and mystery in the untamed part of me, Beast or Angel, that's needed for zest and vitality. This energy and power fills me with gratitude that I am a spiritual being on a human journey, capable of surrender, humility and

serenity. Taking responsibility for the outcome of my behavior is creating different outcomes by making different choices. "There's no chapter in *The Big Book* called 'Into Thinking.' I cannot think my way into different acting, but I can act my way into different thinking," it's said. And it all begins every day. And, **if you like what you get, when you do what you do**, try "Centering Prayer" for twenty minutes twice a day, I was told. We are not saved to be "channels only," but to be sons and daughters of God. We are not turned into spiritual mediums, but into spiritual messengers; the message must be part of our innermost selves. When my heart is broken by "persuasion, as only the dying can be" and then crumpled into the purpose of Our Higher Power, I become the message: **I don't have to do this anymore; I don't have to be crazy.** One step begins a journey alone, yet mysteriously together. I am learning my Life Experiences are not happenstance, but inextricably intertwined with others, like events woven together, to enlighten yesterday and anticipate tomorrow. But Today is the day of my only concern. All of the opportunity I need is provided right here, right now. Before I gather my material and set it alight when I speak, I pause and "Center," giving myself – my time, my attention, my love, my very self, as completely as I can for these few minutes.



Picture Submitted by: Jane H.

Spring Focus: A New Day

To My Feelings

Submitted by: Jack Dukes

Hello! I've known very few of you for years. Anger, I know you! I've hidden my pain behind you for years. I appreciate your being there for me. Especially in my youth. You have protected me and helped me to survive. As time has passed I've hidden many other feelings behind you as well. So I know you must be tired. Your ability to protect me is not nearly as effective as it used to be. As a matter of fact you've damaged almost all of my relationships over the years. I need you to take a rest. I need to give some of my other feelings an opportunity to grow.

Shame and Guilt - I know you very well too! You are like twins to me. Always just beneath the surface, well disguised and very hard to recognize. I do know that you've been there for a very long time without good reason. Now I need to ask you to leave.

Now I know that there must be many feelings that I've hidden. I need for you to show your beautiful faces.

Love, trust, intimacy, confidence, security, esteem, serenity and optimism. I'm afraid that I don't know you very well but I'm hoping you will give me a chance. It seems that I've ignored you for so long that I've forgotten that you exist. This is not fair to you or myself. For all of my adult life I've used alcohol and drugs to block my feelings of shame and guilt. In the process I've kept you other feelings so numb that I have no real experience of you. Only short glimpses that seemed to fade away as quickly as they appeared.

Well - I'm alive and feeling better these days and I would really like to get to know you. I know I've kept you shut down for many years and I need you now. And, because I know you exist somewhere deep down inside, I want you to come out and radiate my life and the lives of others.

Please.....I beg of you, come see the light of day! It's warm and beautiful out here and I know you're gonna love it! I promise to reflect your warmth and nurture you. So.....I'm looking forward to your presence in my life very, very soon.

G-O-D: Good Orderly Direction

Submitted by: Steven F.

I was standing in a rather long line at the Ridgeview cafeteria when a man walked up and asked me if this was the end of the line. How ironic, I thought. I replied that Ridgeview "WAS" the end of the line when I got here. We both kind of laughed, but the reality is - just how true it really was. I had reached the end of my rope and had very little strength left to hang on.

Spiritually, I was empty. The only time I ever called on a Higher Power was when there were blue lights in my rear view mirror. I prayed that it would be a U.F.O. Of course, it

never was and I continued to pay the consequences.

I decided to take a suggestion from a friend in recovery and got a temporary AA sponsor. He told me that I needed G-O-D: Good Orderly Direction. Something of which I had very little. He also told me about another G-O-D: A Group of Drunks. My sponsor said I could use these drunks as a Higher Power to help restore some sanity in my life. Heaven knows I need some of that. He also told me not to sweat the God thing. My sponsor explained that if I worked the steps honestly, that a Higher Power would become a part of my daily life before Step 12. What a relief! That God thing and organized religion never really inspired or did a lot for me. Perhaps my disease had something to do with that; YA THINK?

I can't thank the staff at Ridgeview enough for the intervention it has played in my life. Yesterday's history, Tomorrow's a mystery, but Today is a new day.

This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream

Submitted by: Taylor Hagin

*This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream
This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream*

I want to feel you

I need your touch

You ease my mind

When I think too much

My world was empty

When she was taken away

I had nothing left

There was nothing I could say

This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream

This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream

So there you found me

Desperate and alone

Praying for Death

Trapped in my own home

You made me happy

You made me feel Alive

You filled that void

In you I could confide

Your comfort is warmth

Burning through my veins

I can't turn back

Things will never be the same

This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream

This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream

For you bring death

to come knocking at my door

You took 7 lives

I can't watch any more

I tried running away

Spring Focus: A New Day

I even tried to hide
 I didn't want you near
 You never left my side
This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream
This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream
 You are all I think about
 You told me not to care
 I believed every word
 You left me lying there
 Naked and on the ground
 Cold Steel pushing into my head
 The pain so intense
 Kill me please, is what I said
This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream
This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream
 You helped me to forget
 The guilt and all my shame
 I learned to make you pure
 We began a brand new game
 The parties and the glamour life
 Stacks of money flowing through the door
 It was time to make the last big deal
 Once again you left me on the floor.
This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream
This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream
 Please – Please don't kill me here
 I do not want to die
 I know that I prayed for this
 But I do not want to die
 Thank God that I'm still here
 All is gone and I start to cry
 My God – They took everything
 Leaving me here to wonder why
This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream
This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream
 As I sit in here all alone
 Hanging on with all my might
 Suddenly the lights came on
 Voices scream hold your hands up high
 Guilty – Guilty the Judge proclaimed
 Lock this man up in a cell
 Six months time to serve
 Maybe this will make you well
This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream
This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream
 Got out of jail and went back home
 My depression grew and grew
 Isolated and Alone
 Wondering what I should do
 What the hell is wrong with me
 Why don't I ever feel right
 Why must I be so scared
 Why can't I put up a fight
 One year passes instantly

Shame and Guilt burning through my mind
 Hatred of Self screaming constantly
 Nowhere to run and there is no place to hid
 So I returned to an unfriendly place
 Great to see you said my long lost friend
 I have been waiting for you patiently
 I'll be with you til the bitter end
 I will never leave you
 like your friends and your wife
 I will give you comfort
 Until you end your life
This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream
This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream
 10 Short days passed
 I was high and well
 Got caught stealing
 Headed off to jail
 I had to call my family
 Didn't know what else to do
 They came and I made bail
 They intervened – straight to Ridgeview
This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream
This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream
 58 days clean as I write these words
 I sit and wonder how I fell
 Cunning, baffling, powerful my disease still fights
 Wanting to take me straight to hell
 To my affliction I cry – No More
 To my addiction I Scream – I don't need your high
 Never again do I need your help
 This program allows me to say goodbye
This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream
This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream
This is my Affliction, Hear me Scream
This is my Addiction, This ain't no Dream



Picture Submitted by: Jane H.

Spring Focus: A New Day

On Thinking Alcoholicly

Submitted by: Mike H.

When I was very young, I burned my sister's Barbie doll at the stake. What? You people were never kids once? Anyway, it was a live re-enactment of Custer's Last Stand. I was still in diapers, in the backyard -- I was wearing my headband with the feather sticking out (I always took the side of the underdog) -- when I was hit by a sudden, blinding revelation.

Needing a virgin sacrifice to evoke the strength of the Gods in battle, I tied Barbie to a stick and jabbed it in the sand. A can of gas near the house came in handy.

Soon Barbie was a puddle of bubbling molten plastic, some hair in the middle, and it was about then that a suddenly ballistic father rushed out the back door to congratulate my hind, lower extremity. Real sweetheart, that guy. But once again, the diaper had saved me. It needed changing, though.

At the time, I saw nothing whatsoever out of context with this behavior. My sister cried for three days. To my young alcoholic mind, any justification would have been a no-brainer, that is, had I known the meaning of the word. After all, I was playing cowboys and Indians. You make an omelet, you break some eggs !

Looking back, I wonder what Barbie'd have said, could she speak. I know what I would say..

"#%&@ *@%\$#@ %&\$& !!"

Later in life when I began to drink alcoholicly, I saw nothing wrong with that behavior either. IMHO, I didn't have a drinking problem. I'd drink, get drunk, fall down -- NO PROBLEM !

But seriously, after four times around the AA block in the past eight years, I've come to another realization -- one that's happened a bit more slowly. I realize now that any help from the Man Upstairs is not holpen by burning Barbies, but rather, a sincere and determined will to change. I had to come to grips with something I had formerly dismissed. I had to surrender. And I knew then that the next right step was a carefully planned sponsor-guided program, put into action. But there is a power in that surrender, all-surpassing, one that sponsors a mantra, easily misunderstood and all-too-often, taken for granted -- 'Let Go, and Let God..' So rest easy, ladies. Your Barbies are safe.

Taking Off The Mask

Submitted by: Sean Mc.

Today I'm taking off the mask
The mask I've worn for many years
No more smiles to hide the pain
And letting go of all the tears.

Today I'm taking off the mask
The mask others have come to know
Dealing with my emotions
And letting all my feelings show.

Today I'm taking off the mask
The mask I've trained myself to wear
Looking deep within myself
Unearthing what is truly there.

Today I'm taking off the mask
The mask I've trained myself to wear
Looking deep within myself
Unearthing what is truly there.

Today I'm taking off the mask
The mask of chemical comfort
No more numbing the sorrow
Leaning more on friends for support.

Today I'm taking off the mask
Now dealing with life day by day
Taking the good with the bad
And no longer hiding away.

The Soul of Recovery

Submitted by: Linda B.

My name is Linda B. I am recovering from depression and anxiety disorder. I admitted myself to the Impaired Professionals Psychiatric Program at Ridgeview Institute in August of 2006. Prior to that day, I had only heard about Alcoholics Anonymous and didn't know what a Twelve Step program was. I wondered why as a patient with depression and anxiety I was scheduled for all of those AA and NA meetings. Living at the Recovery Residence provided "incentive" for me to attend the scheduled meetings even though I wasn't convinced that they were really helpful to me. Over the next several weeks, I noticed that there was a depth and vitality in those meetings that gave me support and encouragement. I wanted what the people in those rooms had; I wanted to emulate their devotion to their recovery and their enthusiasm for "the program". What I learned in the "old fashioned" 12-Step meetings was spiritual and spoke to the part of me that had struggled for over 20 years with depression. Even with my most dedicated efforts to understand and resolve the depression, it would return with increasing severity. The sense of community and spirituality that I felt in the meetings wasn't present in the lectures or the process groups (even though these two activities were also crucial to developing my recovery program). I became good friends with many people in the addiction program and greatly

Spring Focus: A New Day

valued their insight into my issues. They shared with me how their side of the program worked and I was aware that there was quite a bit more discipline and structure to their program than on the psych side. I used their forms and wrote their lists and read the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book.

I "graduated" from the Day Program in late September 2006 with a determination to have a program and work the Twelve Steps. I didn't get 90 meetings in 90 days but I was close. I am happy and honored that two people from the addiction Twelve Step programs were willing to be adopted as my sponsors. They both have years of sobriety and have had many sponsees. I am greatly inspired by their dedication and spirituality. I am incredibly grateful for the insight and wisdom that they have shared with me in meetings and individually.

The Twelve-Step Program has been crucial to my recovery. I am grateful that I had the chance to be in the Recovery Residence where I was required to be enveloped in the Twelve-Step/AA environment. Otherwise, I fear that I would have gone to the lectures and the process groups and missed the crowning jewel of recovery – the meetings – where the soul of recovery is revealed by the people who are working their program and sharing their experience, insight, and hope. I encourage anyone who struggles with psychiatric illness to surround yourself with people at all stages of recovery from alcoholism, drug addition, depression, eating disorders, or other such diseases and learn, really learn the Twelve Steps. Then work, really work the steps. To do this, you will have to stay late and come in on the weekend but the journey will be well worth your effort.

ALOHA – KONA

Submitted by: Allison J.

PULE MALUHIA (Serenity Prayer)

E KA MAKUA ALOHA HA'AWI MAI
IA'U KA MALUHIA
I HIKI IA'U KE AONO NA MEA
AU I HIKI OLE KE HO'OLOLI
A ME KA IKAIKA HO'OLOLI NA MEA
AU I HIKI AI
HA'AWI MAI IA'U KA NA'AUAO'
I IKE AU I KA MEA OKO'A

Grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the
things I can, and the
wisdom to know the difference.

On Living Sober Today

Submitted by: M.E.H.

(04-01-07)

I missed the sixties by ten years. Not that I'm an angel -- I had enough of a hey-day in the seventies and eighties. The proclamation of the era -- Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll. I saw the rock documentary 'Woodstock' and the small part of me that's sane is glad I wasn't there; (by the third day, the place probably smelled of raw sewage). But the guys in Nam would have traded up, I would imagine, given their vantage. It was a time when the mantra was 'If it feels good, Do it!', without even bothering to question whatever 'it' was.

Perhaps we don't realize how strongly those ideas still permeate our thinking today -- that when we grow up, a remnant of those ideals, small, but those most familiar, remain. For many, it is only human nature for us to see the past as the 'Good Ole Days', whether those days were healthy for us or not.

Yet we wonder at a time when our kids glamorize drug use, casual sex -- a world where our sons are educated by an X-Box and our daughters worship Britney Spears, as if she were a God. It's as if society as a whole has gone to sleep, somehow. And we don't realize it until we ourselves sober up, open our eyes. Perhaps they are signs of the times that we saw and recognized before, just 'drinking them down' with our own drug of choice. At nine and a half months, I can finally wrestle with what I don't know, rather than fixating on what I do. Perhaps the feeling that we could not change the world, (though being unwilling to change ourselves -- to show by example) was an underlying feeling of helplessness, (and, for the time, for this author, simply another excuse to drink).

Sex, drugs -- these are the things best left out of the recovery equation. The Rock and Roll...that part can stay.

A Time and Place for Relationships

Submitted by: Anonymous Alcoholic

So, today is a new day. Early sobriety can be difficult at times, but if I tell myself each morning, just for today, I won't drink, then I'm starting off on the right foot.

It was suggested that I not get involved in a personal relationship for the first 6 to 12 months. At first, I didn't understand this. I've learned, (through NOT listening, of course), that a relationship in early recovery can be overwhelmingly distracting. Being addicted to something that makes me feel good, without putting mind-altering substances in my body, seemed like an okay idea to me. After putting off a few one-on-ones with my sponsor, a number of meetings and service work commitments, I realized my focus had taken a new course.

I was in the middle of working my 4th and 5th steps

Spring Focus: A New Day

and had created a whole new resentment with myself. I had been focusing on “external” issues and making excuses for not looking “internally.”

I have a lot of work to do, especially with my sponsor. God bless him, he’s teaching me to love myself again. How can I truly have feelings for someone else if I don’t even like myself sometimes? Rhetorically speaking, I was putting the cart before the horse. Thinking with the mind of a chronic alcoholic, all I could see was that mouth-watering carrot.

Someday in my future, when I feel right with my Higher Power, my sobriety and living the principles behind the 12 steps, then and only then will I be ready to consider another person in a relationship.

May I suggest that when someone asks you to turn out the light, that you be not blinded. Be comfortable with yourself, God and recovery. Today will always be a new day. What I choose to do with it will make all the difference in the world.

The Way I Try To Live My Recovery! (Not Just “Be” In Recovery But “Work” It!)

Submitted by: Rene’ H.
(11-1-96)

Recovery for me has had its ups and downs. My recovery is made of Steel, but it is FRAGILE as a Glass made of Crystal. There are only a million or so “Sayings” in this Program of AA, but here are some that I did not fully understand their TRUE meanings, the first time I heard them.

- ✓ “Work as if you did not need the MONEY”
- ✓ “Dance as if no one was WATCHING”
- ✓ “Love as if you have never been HURT”

“Work as if”.....

These phrases have helped me understand that LIFE is NOT all about ME.

I understand now that at work, every Budget Meeting is not about “how they can withhold my salary increase for this year”. My name probably did not even come up in the discussions. If I “Work it” and use the RIGOROUS HONESTY part of the program

My responsibility will be to show up on time and actually work as hard as I know I should without doing harm to me in some manner. That’s where the honesty of the program helps me know “the Next Right Thing to do”. Now my personal problem with the Next Right Thing to do is I very seldom have it COME to me as my FIRST thought!

I have said many times that I usually do not know the “Next Right Thing to do”, BUT almost 100% of the time I

know the NEXT WRONG THING to do. So if I just do not do the Next Wrong Thing I will have a chance of not messing up that situation.

“Dance as if”.....

This phrase reminds me of “Humility”. We all have been in situations where we wished we could become invisible. The program has taught me to face up to whatever God puts in my path. Another saying that goes hand in hand with Humility is my anger defect. My sponsor tells me that “the only person that can Make Rene’ angry is Rene’..... Go figure, such a simple concept for a complicated person.....Me!

This paragraph is the smallest in this article. “Maybe GOD is telling me that fact, so I will start to work on my Humility more than I have been”! Go Figure?

“Love as if”.....

This phrase is not only directed to my relationship with the people I come in contact with each day but I have to keep working on the fact that I have to love Myself before I can have any success loving others. Making sure I do not “beat myself up” as quick as I did in “Early Recovery” is an important part of the work I put into My Recovery today!

“Love as if you have never been HURT” also helps me with “My people pleaser Character Defect”. I handle things much better, on any given day, if my skin is not real thin. The “thin skin days” are the difficult days. It is like I “set myself up” to be hurt and then I will sometimes go into my VICTIM Mode. That is a warm fuzzy place for me to dwell in, but it is not good for my Recovery and I know that. Now, I define AA as “a bunch of decisions”. Like when I’m in that Victim Mode, I have to make THE DECISION to change my THINKING to get myself out of that bad place where my mind may be currently residing.

I have to be willing to do something for another Alcoholic to help carry the message to those who still suffer, for no reward of any kind. I have to be open and willing to do “the next right thing”, especially when I do not want to do “the next right thing”. At this point, I have to say the second half of the 11th Step. “God, let me know your Will and give me the Power to carry it out.”

That is IT for me, that 11th Step says it all. If I know God’s Will, that tells me all I need to do is to put it into action (Good Orderly Direction). G O D is the “Softer – Easier Way”.

One last thought, “I still do not know when I will be half-way through?” YET, I am still AMAZEDAs they said I would be!

Spring Focus: A New Day

Sponsorship

Submitted By: George Mize

Sponsorship is how our Higher Power works through people in the program. The fear and hesitation that characterize neurotics make interpersonal relationships potentially agonizing. New and strange situations threaten us with anxiety, insecurity, risk and change to create all kinds of inner conflicts. Some are felt, others are acted out perhaps in an aggressive and authoritarian fashion by us. The insecure will naturally tend to prefer a status quo guaranteed by familiar practice, because they depend on knowing what to expect. To point this out is no way of winning over; such people must be won over reasonably and gently, not bullied into complying. When a person is suspicious and hostile because he is ill at ease with other people and would rather die than do something new and strange (like pick up an eight-hundred pound phone) he feels menaced. He is the object of a great, vague, nameless, limitless, unidentifiable threat called a **sponsor**.

He does not know precisely how he is threatened. He does not know the reason for it. He does not know for sure just what will punish him and for what, and still less what he can do to appease. All he knows is because he is shy, scared and insecure there are certain people who disapprove of him. Exaggerated fear of making mistakes on his first Fourth Step moral inventory and Eighth Step list of people he has harmed and his Ninth Step amends-to-be-made are the occasions to do this! He has protected himself and his shyness by a comforting "anonymity" and now his trusted protection is going to be brutally and mercilessly removed. And he has created new problems: finding himself trying to fulfill new obligations which he does not yet properly understand.

In my experience I see and feel I am never at a loss, always in the forefront, always a leader, even if I do not really know what I am leading and where I am going. Just to make sure that no feeling of dissent becomes conscious, I overplay my role, which leads to spiritual paralysis and the end of spontaneous participation. Those of us who have emotional conflicts do best if and when we realize simple and joyous participation is practically the only channel to create the space for our anxieties and ease our pain. By humility, grace, self-forgetfulness and trust we approach our healing in the relaxed atmosphere of love, ideally called **sponsorship**.

"Ideally" because the great problem we face today in sponsorship is the temptation to discouragement and resentment which arises when our ideal is not only promptly realized but not even approximated. "Progressives" push forward blindly and recklessly, defying what seems to sponsor an unfair spirit of resistance and inertia. "Conservatives" are childishly rebellious to change and obstruct even the simplest desirable suggestions. Our task as well-balanced, sincere and naturally open people to demonstrate the fundamentals, with charity and unselfishness, involves painful dialogue between

ideals and realities, intentions and executions, and "thinking versus acting".

We must be content for a while with the imperfect participation we are going to get. We may start out with a generous response to the program and its demands. We may really open up all innocence and trust, forgetting that to be open is to be vulnerable. There is no choice: we cannot get into the real inner meaning of participation unless we let our guard down. **What is to be done about sponsorship problems?** There is no magic answer. Sponsorship demands experimentation. In any case, the ones who benefit from sponsorship are guided by our creativity, and experience and wisdom of the spiritual principles, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsessions and enable the sufferer to be happily and usefully whole.

An Ode to Recovery

Submitted by: M E H 03-04-07

How many graces, these program walls
Old English platitudes, adorn
There must have been drama, inside my Momma
The very first day I was born

First, a stop in the meeting hall
for coffee -- don't want to be late
Where the View is Ridged, a day at a time
and the path, alarmingly straight

There's no time for my therapy,
or any excuse I can find.
Then a perilous push, past the picturesque door
It's a little frustrating
Patiently waiting,
For Amy to make up my mind

Home now, a break in the calamity
I sit and stare out at the rain
Is it insanity,
Or just my vanity,
Why I don't try to be sane

But there's too much rigorous honesty
So many steps to climb
Would it be all the same,
If I went down in a flame
Make it a twist, with lime..
Just a Perrier, this time

Spring Focus: A New Day

A Sponsor's Pledge

Submitted by: Anonymous

Being sponsored requires living sober by listening and learning the truth which corrects all errors in my mind. When truth is given and received, there is no fear, no doubt, and no pain. We keep this truth by giving what we have learned to others as sponsors. When we go to these meetings at Ridgeview, the people who are succeeding are doing what we've learned and has been told us that works. Their stories tell us they are in sobriety, working their recovery programs and they are working them every day. Sobriety works because we go to meetings. Recovery works because we go to meetings. Sobriety works because we do the Steps. Recovery works because we do the Steps. When we go to meetings, we listen to people telling about living their lives, one day at a time. We learn what gets us into trouble and what gets us out of trouble. Here's the clincher: There is no mystery:

Do what Ridgeview says – go to meetings – work the Steps.

"If you are willing to do that - I'll be your sponsor. If not, then you are a drowning person who doesn't want to be saved. I am not going to drown with you. When you are ready to do what Ridgeview says and you need a sponsor, come and see me."

I have a sponsor who tells me **"I've never met anyone too stupid to stay sober, but I've met plenty who are too smart"**. Living sober, I can't change my family, can't change my career or people I work with, and can't change where I live. Instead, I try to change by living The Program. It's a **"we"** program, not a **"me"** program; like a prime number, it's not divisible, it's not changeable, not negotiable – we just do it. We're not caretakers; we take care of ourselves by going to meetings, calling our sponsor and applying the steps to our lives. We stay in the now, we act as-if, we make a gratitude list, we help another person and we find our Higher Power. That spiritual awakening is the result of working the Steps. So, if you want what we have and are ready take the necessary steps, sign here:

I, _____, actively, cognitively, willfully choose to do my 50 %.

A New Day:

Submitted by: Ted M.

Genesis, 1:2 - *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.*

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

1:3 - *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

1:4 - *And God saw the light, that it was good: and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*

My days today are filled with a variety of activities that FOUR years ago would not have been thought of. Like working in our flower garden to make our house look pleasing

as our neighbors walk by. In the past, the yard maybe had been mowed 2-3 times during the year and who cared about the flowerbeds. I did not.

Who would have ever thought that I would be volunteering to help those that need HELP or to groups that need an extra helping hand to get the job done. If I was still doing my OLD Habits (in my later years of my addiction), I would have said "The Hell to with helping out". These past four years have been rewarding to me both mentally and spiritually for my little bit of contribution to help someone else.

However, the above is small potatoes to the major thing that has entered my life today. If I were still out drinking and thinking of only me, I would be hurting the person that is very important in life. That person, being my supportive WIFE.

Last year we made an investment in an RV so that we could start seeing this wonderful country that we live in. Then this super size monkey wrench was thrown at us. She developed a major medical problem that has put our travels on hold. In the past, she had to take care of me on occasion when I was just a little too much. Now, the shoe is on the other foot and now it is my turn to take care of her. However, the thing is, I will probably never be able to do enough for her considering all she did in the past.

Now, we both just take it one day at a time. Our plans are in the hands of a great group of doctors. We are just waiting for the all clear, but right now we have no idea when that day may come. We both want to settle down in the evening in our RV and relax. Then awaken the next dawn and set out on a new adventure on a new day.

Soon, we are hoping that the adventures that we have talked about these last four years will end up being a NEW DAY – EVERY DAY!

With God's direction and our prayer is that NEW DAY will be with us for many years to come.



THE NEW YORKER



"It's Bring Your Personal Demons to Work Day."

Spring Focus: A New Day

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 \$25,000 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

- 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)

(Line 1) _____

(Line 2) _____

\$25.00 per brick

* 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, Bricks

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

Spring Focus: A New Day