

VOLUME XX

THE VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGEVIEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
STEERING COMMITTEE

F.R.O.G

FULLY RELYING ON GOD

STORIES BY

DAWN L.	C
PAUL L.	2
BRUCE H.	4
CHUCK T.	5
MARCUS W.	6
COREY J.	7
STEVE F.	8
NORMAN H.	9
DAVID M.	10
MAGGIE S.	11
MICHELLE L.	12
SCOOTER.	13
DAVID M	14

THE RIDGEVIEW
ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION
3995 SOUTH
COBB DRIVE
SMYRNA GA
30080

WE CAN'T KEEP WHAT WE HAVE UNLESS WE GIVE IT AWAY

BY DAWN L

I remember sitting in the Ridgeview Access Center waiting for someone to come and get me to "assess" whether or not I needed to be in a hospital for my addictions. For me at that time it was about satisfying my boss so he wouldn't fire me; after all I really didn't have time for this in my life.

After being assessed and told that it was recom-

mended I start the Intensive Out-Patient (IOP) Program the next day, all I thought about was, how in the world was I going to pay for my deductible so they would let me in? I was a fortunate one; I actually had one friend left and she paid for that first week for me until my insurance kicked in.

For me, one of the hardest things I have had to

learn is that I am worth it; I am worth the money it took for me to get sober. I was lucky, I had some help. Once I got past that first week; I only had to pay 10% of the cost. But, what if I didn't have the means to pay for treatment. What if I had to choose between the roof over my head, or food, or my car payment instead of treatment. (continued on page 5)

UP COMING EVENTS

1st Friday Speaker's Meeting

April 2, 2010

May 7, 2010

June 4, 2010

July 2, 2010 (Tentative)

August 6, 2010

September 3, 2010

Spring Fling

May 14-16, 2010



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

This issue, as well as archival copies, is 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

steering@bellsouth.net or dbliistro@bellsouth.net.

Editor: Dawn L.

Design & Layout: Nancy G.

Proof-Readers: Barbara W.

F.R.O.G. – FULLY RELYING ON GOD

BY: PAUL L.

We all know we should and often *need* to rely on God. So many things in our daily lives are simply out of our control. If I try to handle these situations on my own, to fix or control these issues, I can put myself in a dark spiral and only heap on more distress.

One of the major situations that proved this so well to me happened last year. After several doctor visits for what seemed to be a minor issue, I found out I had cancer. The doctors assured me this was a very treatable form of cancer. The doctors said I had a very good chance of full recovery. I'm sorry; but there is no way to think of having cancer without **BOLD CAPITAL** letters in your mind. This was disturbing to me, my wife, friends and family. Surgery was scheduled to be in a couple of weeks.

Every day I said my same prayer to God as I had before, "I thanked him for my life today, I asked for his will to be known so I could follow it and said I would do the best I could with whatever he put in front of me". Many times in my life these were words that I said and meant, but there was little in my daily life to truly apply them too. After 15+ years of applying recovery to my life, there was little controversy or issues that were more than minor inconveniences. I do think that daily prayer helps me keep all those issues in their proper perspective, minor.

We showed up for my surgery with very little concern or anxiety. After

the surgery the doctor let me know that the cancer had spread more than they knew but, they thought they had it all, but could not be sure. They changed by prognosis from "very good chance of a full recovery" to "a good chance of long term survival". That was a big change, a whole new level and perspective for me. The difference of "full recovery" to "survival" is a huge leap. At least that is what it seemed to me. It was so easy to get overwhelmed; this was major change in my life.

As I said my prayers next, still groggy

from the drugs, I was able to have an awakening. Truly, this was only a bump in my life, a hard jarring bump, but only a bump. God had given me so much already. I knew he was there for me at this time. I was able to let go of the worry and settle in to my recovery from the surgery and prepare for the needed follow-ups. As doctors and hospital follow-ups went on for the next few weeks, at times, I let the situation come over me like a dark cloud. At these times it was amazing what God did for me. Angels would appear at the door, bringing me a meeting when I could not travel, carrying me to meetings when I could not drive, just coming by to

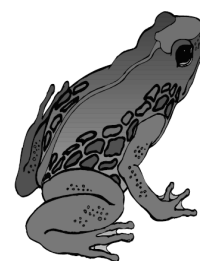
sit with me, taking me to the doctor or hospital and just being friends. My wife and I had over 25 people step up and do for us during this time. I relied on God and he sent Angels to help us. God took care of me when I needed him, I relied on him and he carried me over this bump in my life. God had even sent me Angels before this all happened. Angels that went thru issues even more serious and they

had shown me how to handle life issues with grace, honor and dignity. By watching them rely on God, they showed my how to do it.

I still continue with ongoing tests and treatments. Nothing is for sure, I do what I need

and live my life without anxiety or worry. Today I am happy, joyous and free. Whatever God's will is I can only do my part by walking the path he has set before me. I have to Fully Rely On God, I have to trust him fully. Every time I feel the dark cloud around me, it's a simple prayer or thought that brings me back to reality, God is in Charge, His Will Not Mine. I must FROG!

Truly, this was only a bump in my life, a hard jarring bump, but only a bump. God had given me so much already



OLD DOGS— NEW DOGS

BY: BRUCE H

This is a simple but true story.

Years ago I had a dog that was probably the best dog I have ever had. He was a shelter pup that no one wanted. I adopted him and named him BJ. I spent hours and hours training him. Eventually BJ grew beyond my training and learned to do things that I never taught him. For example, he learned the command 'Wait'. Meaning, if we were out and he was running free, if I said 'Wait', BJ would just sit down and wait until I caught up with him. BJ showed me that he had grown in understanding more than I taught him. So, I learned from him.

Eventually, along comes another rescue pup. I named her Lady. I spent time training Lady but BJ showed Lady the ropes and what to do. So, my job was much easier. Another amazing thing was that the old dog BJ had this renewed sense of life, energy and happiness.

I was thinking about the old timers and newcomers in AA. We are a lot like the old dog and the new dog. We can learn from our dogs. They keep it simple. They stay with what works, show love, help each other, teach each other, don't carry around resentments and always have the compassion to overlook our shortcomings.

I have a friend who got sober 6 days before I did. She lords it over me with a laugh, a giggle and a hug. My response is 'Ms. Smarty, smiling' I hope that you will always

be 6 days ahead of me. Remember, we are the new old timers.

So, I welcome hearing from the new and old. Each has a story to tell.

The number of old timers gets smaller with every passing day and sadly, the number of newcomers grows faster than we lose the old-timers. This disease or addiction if you prefer, kills. I do not mourn those I have lost but remember the grace and dignity with which they conducted their life in recovery.

I can still remember a meeting where a friend, who passed recently, was adamantly making a point about Steps 6 & 7 being the "meat and potatoes" of the program for him. I remember this meeting well, I learned from him and now I am thankful that I can pass it on. I have also learned first hand from a few newcomers recently — "Remember what you were like Bruce?" Never forget lest you fall and go back to where you were.

So, I try to listen, remember, learn, put into practice and

pass in on. I thank God that I will not live forever. I just want to live long enough to help every suffering alcoholic that I can that God puts in front of me. To do that, I must remain vigilant, to stay connected with the old, and new and the in-between like me.

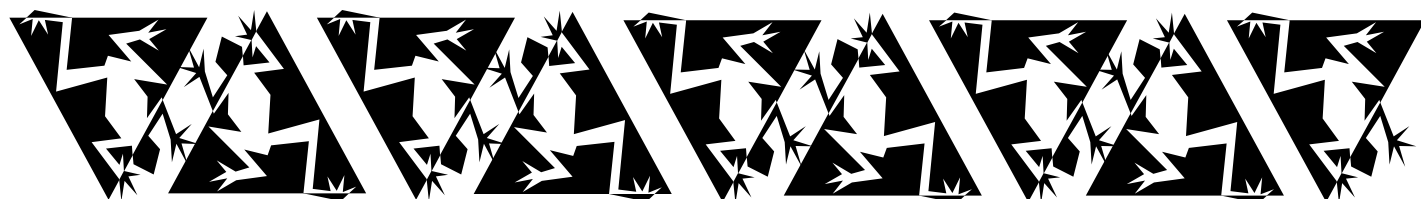
The day I stop learning from the old timers and the newcomers is a day I never want to happen. If it does, either, I will be dead or there is something seriously wrong with my program and spirituality.

So, my hope is to remain teachable, learning from the old and new. Hopefully they will be also able to learn from me. When that happens, we are all winners.

As I said before, 'Each has a story to tell.'

Life's a dance ... Do you hear the music? 🎵

I thank God that I will not live forever. I just want to live long enough to help every suffering alcoholic that I can that God puts in front of me.



FLIP THE SWITCH

BY: CHUCK T.

Fully Reliant On God?

That's a daunting proposition, but probably the most important decision that we make in recovery. Becoming fully dependent on an entity that we can't see or hear is quite difficult to those of us who have been running our lives completely on self-will for a long time.

Step Three calls for us to make a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of God as we understand him. The remaining Steps help us carry out that decision, but, still, how do we put absolute faith in the hands of that power that we can't see or hear?

Let's consider electricity. When I look at a wall, I see a wall. What I don't see is what's behind the wall. Behind the

sheet rock, there are wires running to and fro. I can't see those wires, or what is inside those wires. But I know that there's a current running through those wires that allows me to flip a switch, which in turn, sends the current to a light bulb. Darkness then becomes light. Hmmm.

When I flip that switch, I have complete faith that the light will come on, even though I can't see the wires or the current that moves inside those wires. At night, I'm fully dependent on the light created by flipping the switch. It is the first, and best, option for me to move from the darkness to

the light. I could probably light a candle (half measure), but that candle will not provide the light that is necessary for me to see everything that I need to see.

When I flip that switch, I have complete faith that the light will come on, even though I can't see the wires or the current that moves inside those wires.

Flipping a switch means that I have to take action, otherwise I'm left in the dark. While Step Three asks us to make a decision to turn our will

and our lives over to the care of God as we understand him, it is only by working the remaining Steps that I actually take the actions that allow me to walk in His light. Flip the switch!

WE CAN'T KEEP WHAT WE HAVE UNLESS WE GIVE IT AWAY (Cont.)

ment? Would I have chosen correctly?

You see not everyone can afford to get help.

So, in 2000 the Ridgeview

Alumni Steering Committee started an Endowment Fund. Our goal with this fund is to be able to help those obtain treatment through financial offering for

extended stays in the half-way house, an additional day in detox, medications, daycare or food, to list

a few of those needs among many other treatment costs.

Do you remember what it was like? The fear that sets in when you are not sure how you can afford to get help? This fund helps remove the financial fear and puts faith into the life of the newcomer.

We Alumni's have a tradition; for every year we are sober we contribute \$5.00 to this fund. Today, that is just one cup of coffee from your favorite coffee shop.

Our goal with this fund is to be able to help those obtain treatment

Here's a little exercise – close your eyes and imagine just for a moment, how much that \$5.00 will do for someone who has nothing but hope for a better sober life. Okay, open your eyes and make it a reality, just for today. After all, we can't keep what we have if we don't give it away. Am I worth it, you bet!

HAVE FROG WILL JUMP FORWARD

BY MARCUS W.

I am currently a little over 20 months sober. I would not possess this “clean time” without the program of recovery, which includes working and living the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and conferring and giving back through the Ridgeview Alumni Association. In my opinion, the pivotal and inherent principle in this program of recovery is my personal relationship with a power greater than me, i.e., my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God. God has helped me become a humble person.

My life is busy at the moment. I don't mind - it sure beats those times in the past when life was slow as a turtle! However, now I welcome the busyness and my perspective on it has changed. That busyness is as follows: first, I have been, “sometimes quickly” and “sometimes slowly,” searching for a full-time job since being laid off in April 2008. I have been re-hired by a Company I worked for temporarily last spring 2009. Also, I have had the privilege to experience two rewarding interviews during the past month. Although, the search has been long, it has taught me to be a patient man; second, I have had the opportunity to take four leisure type classes during the past three months. All four classes have helped me to better inter-

act with people, appreciate other people's personalities and vulnerabilities, including my own, express myself, and gain knowledge about our (referring to the Western perspective) religious and spiritual mores and myths. As a result of my on-going appreciation, willingness, and enthusiasm, I plan to continue taking these type classes in April and May; third, my Mother is currently dealing with her sixth bout of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma cancer. This affects me even more directly because I currently live with my parents. Mind

you, differences abound between us, they being in their seventies and me being in my forties, but I am thankful and grateful that I am

able and desirous to be there for both my parents, especially my Mom at present. During the past month, I have been able to share my “experience, strength, and hope” with Mom and give of my time to assist her with her domestications. My giving and assisting have also been extended to my Dad, who has currently been experiencing the ever-present “stress factor” and sometimes protests

the fact that he has begun to slow down with age! Thus, I have grown closer to and more appreciative of my parents, whom I now love more than ever. The four of us – God being

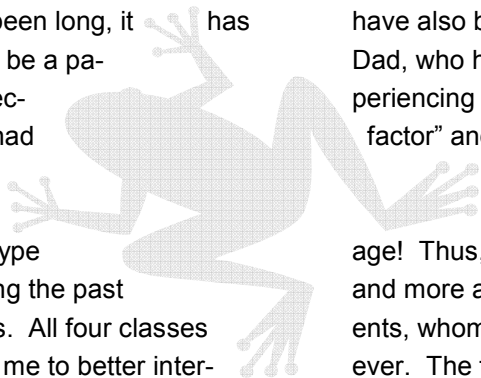
the fourth - including other family and friends, have joined together to “make it through this” no matter what; fourth and final, I continue to work the program of recovery on a daily basis. This includes prayer and meditation to God and for others, meetings, sharing in meetings, conversing with fellow recoverers (a word probably not in Webster's!), conversing with my Sponsor, working the Twelve Steps of A.A., and giving back – the result being sobriety and not depressed; fifth and final, I am FROG: Fully Relying On

God. Without doing this, my sobriety, depression, attitude, motivation, willingness, enthusiasm, love, giving, busyness and sense of humor would have me...

All four classes have helped me to better interact with people, appreciate other people's personalities and vulnerabilities, including my own.....

PRINCE; Principally Relying on Callous Expectations.

I am interpreting and experiencing the above five busyness occurrences in my life as some of the Ninth Step “Promises” (pp. 83-84 of *The Big Book*) bestowed upon me as a result of working and living the principles of recovery and A.A., and FROG. For that, I am humbled, grateful, thankful, and blessed from the depths of my heart and soul. So, for me, have FROG, will jump forward.



FULLY RELYING ON GOD – A TRUE GIFT

BY: COREY J.

Fully relying on God is excruciatingly hard for me to do, but with the help of the twelve steps and my faith in recovery, I am learning.

When I was immersed in my eating disorder, I would obsessively count calories and fat grams in an effort to control my environment. I was relying on myself and I thought that was good enough. Relying on myself though gets me into trouble and eventually into the hospital!

When I rely upon myself, I am miserable and yet it is so hard to give up my perceived notion of control.

My sponsor has also said that humility is “not thinking of one’s self less, but less often.”

Although, now that I think about it, when I rely upon myself, I am really giving all of my power away. I need to have something other than my own ego be in control, and when it is not God, it is my eating disorder that is in control. The scale becomes my god, for it determines my worth and usually what I interpret it to say is that I am worthless. But I am not worthless! God seems to have a use for me yet. As I turn my thoughts more and more towards The Holy One, I realize that I am filled with a passion to show people the change that is in me and that could not have happened on my own.

It seems to me that what the twelve steps teach us about fully relying on God is that it is a commitment to humility. One night

as I was driving home from work and was contemplating how I would not have my current wonderful job if the events in my life had not gone exactly as they did, I was struck with a powerful feeling of humility. And I finally agreed with my sponsor that the best way to be close to God is through humility. My sponsor has also said that humility is “not thinking of one’s self less, but less often.” I find this hard to do,

for when in the throes of an eating disorder, I constantly obsess about myself and my weight, my looks, and my habits. I think I am virtuous because I am thin, but in truth,

I am pathetic and extremely sick.

There is another component to fully relying on God that I find very hard to do, and that is living in the moment. If I truly am relying on God at all, then I do not need to worry about the future, for it is in God’s complete control.

That does not mean that I will not experience times of great suffering, but it does mean that if my heart is open to hearing what God has to say to me, that I will find comfort. Besides having an eating disorder, I also have an anxiety disorder, but by relying more fully upon God, I am discovering my heart turns to gratitude and then humility more and more easily. As I slowly give up my control and my foolish, foolish ways, and instead more fully rely upon God, I discover joy, and

yes, even serenity—a gift I once thought to be only a cliché, is now starting to fill my existence with peace and hope.

*Happiness Keeps You
Sweet,*

*Trials Keep You
Strong,*

*Sorrows Keep
You Human,*

*Failures Keep You
Humble,*

*Success Keeps You
Glowing,*

*But Only God Keeps
You Going!*

WE'RE ALL TADPOLES

BY: STEVE F.

I was born a tadpole, innocent, naive, with a desire to live. I was nurtured in a loving family in an effort to become a "FROG", Fully Relying On God. Somewhere along the way, I lost sight of becoming a "FROG." It seemed to me that reliance on God didn't produce what I thought I deserved in life. That's when I became a "TOAD", Trusting Only Alcohol & Drugs. They certainly brought what I thought was relief when life dealt me a bad hand. They certainly made the concerts, the tailgate parties and week-ends at the beach much more enjoyable. Being a "TOAD" seemed to be my lot in life, whether tragedy or triumph, alcohol and drugs were my answer.

Being a "TOAD" worked, or so it seemed, for a little while. As time and life progressed, some other things occurred in my life. "TOAD" also became Truly Obsessed And Defiant. At times "TOAD" became Totally Obnoxious And Deranged. Another unwelcome guest in my life appeared as consequences. These so-called CONSEQUENCES brought pain and anguish, not only to me, but to all others around me, especially the ones who love me the most. These consequences landed me in jails, hospitals, institutions, and prisons. Looking back, it appears that being a "TOAD" is a living mutiny. Drugs and alcohol

turned their back on me. They no longer worked for me. They constantly reminded me that there was plenty more misery ahead if I didn't change my ways. I had to make a decision. I could continue living like a "TOAD," swimming around the pond scum of life I created or make some changes.

I decided to

seek treatment at Ridgeview Institute. There, I met some "TOADS", just like me. The only difference being that they were changing. They had found a way to become FROGS. I saw hope in their lives. I saw pain, anger and grief become tolerable without alcohol and drugs. This, I found attractive and wanted the same. They introduced me to the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. After "un-learning" what I taught me, (being a "TOAD"), I found something greater than myself that I could fully rely upon. That something is God. When I live like there is a

These consequences landed me in jails, hospitals, institutions, and prisons.

God in my life, I find that I can stay sober and deal with emotions that I used to medicate over. I find that when I can't reach my Sponsor, I can fully rely on God. He's never allowed anything to come my way in life that He and I can't overcome.

Today, I'm a FROG. I Fully Rely on God. Some days I swim around this crystal pond of life and some days I just sit on the lily pad and enjoy the company of all the other FROGS

in my life.

I'd much rather live like there is a God in my life and find out later there isn't One than to live like there isn't a God in my life and find out later there is One.

It is sure nice being a FROG!



He doesn't drink at all. He's got his old job back. He's paying off all his debts. He's back home with his wife and kids. He goes straight home from work every night. He's cut out all of his old drinking buddies. AND he goes to three or four of those AA meetings every week. NOW I ask you -- What the hell kind of LIFE is that?

THE SAND FLIES OF SOBRIETY

BY: NORMAN H.

Those of us who enjoy the abundant recreational opportunities afforded along the Gold and Emerald coasts of the State of Florida, are undoubtedly well acquainted with a species of insects commonly known as sand flies, sand gnats, no-see-ums and the like. Members of the Ceratopogonidae family, sand flies are small (1-4 mm long), biting insects capable of inflicting intensely itchy, red welts that can persist for more than a week. The proteins in the saliva of these creatures can also cause allergic reactions in some people.

To defend oneself against other insects such as mosquitoes, black flies, etc., a generous application of products such as Deep Woods Off, Skin So Soft by Avon, and many others, is usually sufficient. In remote areas of the Florida Everglades, hats with mosquito netting provide a good defense against mosquitoes and flies, but they are of virtually no value in protecting oneself against sand flies. The



smaller members of the family are able to pass through the apertures in typical window screens and larger mesh netting on tents.

In short, sand flies can make one's life absolutely miserable along the Gulf coast of Florida, and many other areas of this country. If the assertion in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous on page 417 of the 4th edition is true that there are "...no mistakes in God's world", I would surely be interested in knowing why God blessed us with sand flies.

But what do the characteristics of the Ceratopogonidae family of insects have to do with sobriety and fully relying on God? The Big Book tells me that I am free to choose a God of my understanding, and the God that I am coming to know teaches me lessons in many ways. While enjoying a fine seafood dinner along the Emerald Coast recently, I observed a sign on the wall that read, "Frogs are lucky, they eat what bugs them". The lesson that I learned from this

plaque is that when I make a decision to turn my will and my life over the care of a power greater than myself, life will continue to present situations and events over which I have absolutely no control, and that I cannot "eat" everything that bugs me. When tragic events happen in the lives of recovering people, there is a tremendous support network available, and we are truly blessed knowing that we do not have to walk this path alone. But with the minor irritations of life, acceptance of life on life's terms works for me.

In the Serenity Prayer, we ask God for the courage to change the things that we can. Unlike frogs, we generally do not eat everything that bugs us, but we can accept life on life's terms. Like frogs, we are lucky (fortunate may be a better term) to have the support of a power greater than ourselves and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. As we continue our journey along the road of happy destiny, we fully rely on God to help keep us out of the ditch but we apply the Skin So Soft to enjoy the trip.

GOD: ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

BY: ANONYMOUS

When I was in early recovery, my wife and I were pulling into a local shopping mall, and lo and behold there, right by the mall entrance, was a parking place. We took it. My wife said that God had made that space available just for

us. I scoffed back to her that the God of my understanding, in all His universal power and authority, was far too busy to be used for such trivial matters. Not much more was said about it. She does not know it, but when I go to the mall I always

use her parking lot God to find me a nice place to park.

A MEAN DAMN TIME

BY DAVID M.

I know what you're goin' through
You don't believe it, but it's true
I know you feel like this has never happened before
But you're not the only one
Who's done the things you've done.
I can guarantee there are thousands more.

I know you're more than a little blue.
I wish there were something I could do
The way you're feelin'; it's just a crime
I'd like to ease your pain,
and make you smile again,
The time will surely come when these troubles are on the run,
but in the meantime, It's Just a Mean Damn Time

I know all about how to sit at home
With the curtains closed scared and alone
Hearin' the birds singing before you lay down your head
You wanna stop but you wonder when
You can't stop doin' it over and over again
You wanna reach out, but you reach for the bottle instead

I know you're more than a little blue.
I wish there were something I could do
The way you're feelin'; it's just a crime
I'd like to take away your pain,
and make you smile again,
The time will surely come when these troubles are on the run,
but in the meantime, It's Just a Mean Damn Time.

ALANON CORNER

JUDGMENT

BY: MAGGIE S.

I recently heard a speaker here at Ridgeview, who made the following comments, that got me thinking. First, my program is designed “to dismantle the judgment machine”, and second, in working my program, “I give my life, my opinions, and my judgment over to my Higher Power”. On the one hand, there is judgment, and on the other hand, humility. At an Al-Anon meeting in Roswell, I was sitting next to a lady who shared that she had sized us all up in the very first moments of our meeting. She already knew who she liked and respected and who she wasn’t going to give the time of day. It startled us all, but then we all quietly smiled to ourselves, understanding the point she was making. It is arrogant to presume to be anyone’s judge. Who made you God? So, I began reading about judgment vs. humility from our abundant Al-Anon literature. Here are some thoughts I gathered from my notes from many different recovery sources. I’m sure you will recognize many of them.

Humility. An absence of false pride. A humble place of learning. Being humble means climbing down from the ladder of judgment and taking my rightful place in the circle where we are all on equal terms. A circle much like my Al-Anon circle. We are all teachers and students in each oth-

ers lives. This humility allows me to learn at any time from anyone or any experience.

Judgment. The formation of an authoritative opinion or decision. Every time I sit in judgment of someone else, I strengthen the feelings of inferiority from which I am trying to escape. Whether I believe I’m better than other people, or the opposite extreme, lower than whale shit, it’s all the same.

Judgment.

Judgment comes from a place of poor self-worth.

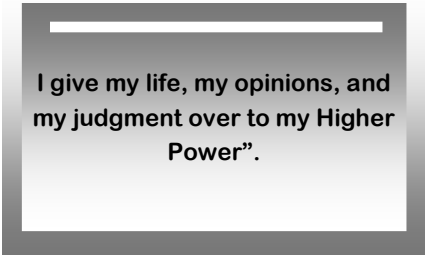
When I compare, I lose. Maybe, for a brief illusory moment, I’ll come out feeling better than someone this time, but next time, I’m bound to feel worse, much worse. This “judgment” is a character defect, a shortcoming, that blocks me from my own self-acceptance, my true spiritual self, and my Higher Power. Where does all of this come from? Why do I do it?

These judgments come from my ego. When we are critical of others, we justify our judgments by saying that we are “simply sharing our opinion”, or “being honest to be helpful”, or perhaps we are “clarifying a situation”. We gossip about others for motives of dimin-

ishing him or her in order to build ourselves up. As Emmet Fox states, “Criticism is only an indirect form of self-boosting.” When we gossip, we avoid focusing on ourselves. Hoping to make ourselves more attractive to others, these tales actually separate us even more from others and from ourselves.

Self-esteem comes from doing esteemable acts. Channel your energy towards someone rather than allowing your judgments or indifference to pull you away. People who love themselves and hold themselves in high self-esteem are those who give the most, contribute the most, love the most. Each of us is unique and valuable. But as long as we hold ourselves above other people, we deny ourselves and others the rich interchange that is possible.

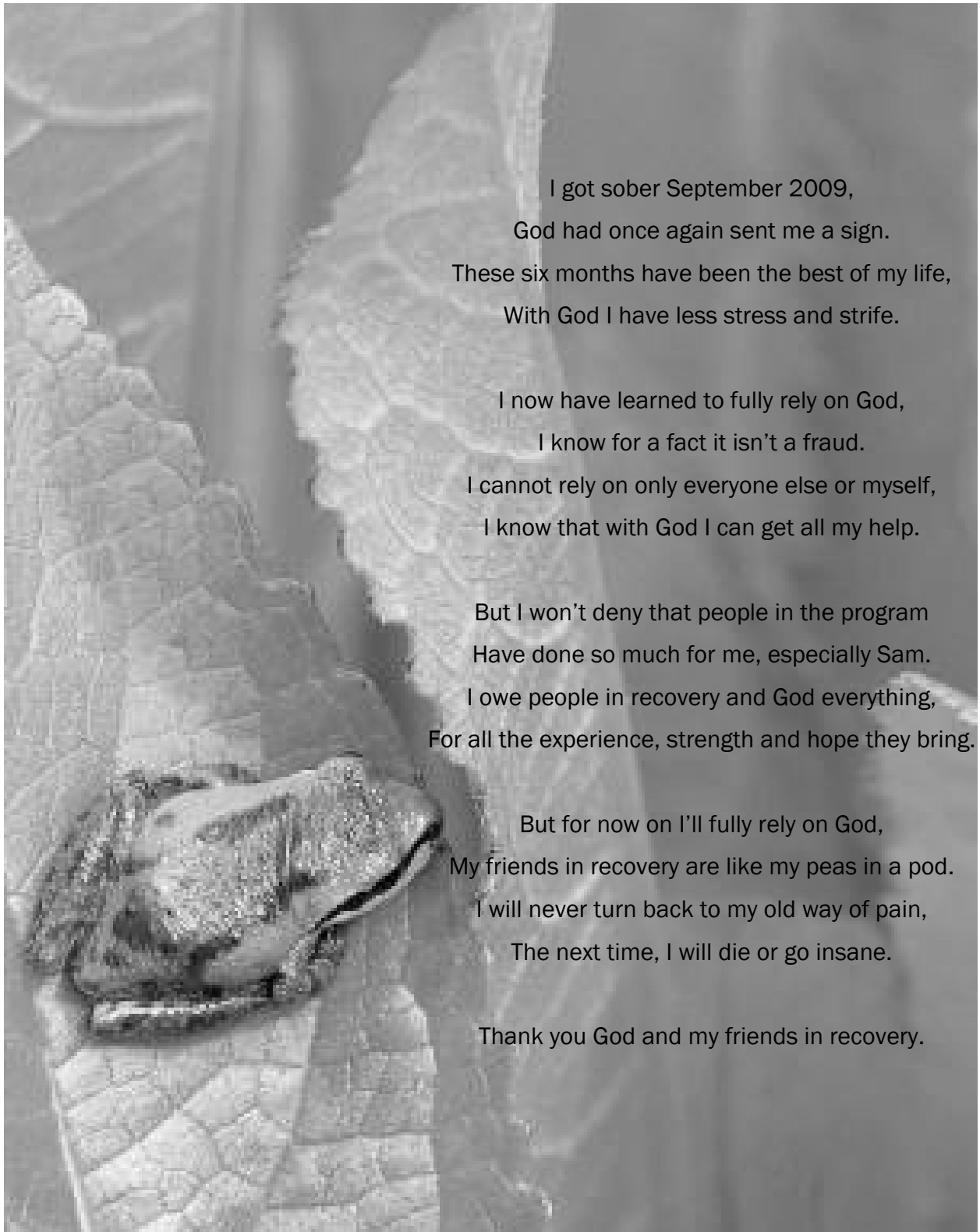
Humility will help us see ourselves in true perspective and keep our minds open to the truth. Our recovery program is where we make the change in our attitudes which permits us, with humility as our guide, to move out from ourselves toward others and toward our Higher Power. With the guidance of my Higher Power, I am dismantling my “judgment machine” and working towards a closer relationship with other people.



I give my life, my opinions, and my judgment over to my Higher Power”.

F.R.O.G.

BY:MICHELLE L.



I got sober September 2009,
God had once again sent me a sign.
These six months have been the best of my life,
With God I have less stress and strife.

I now have learned to fully rely on God,
I know for a fact it isn't a fraud.
I cannot rely on only everyone else or myself,
I know that with God I can get all my help.

But I won't deny that people in the program
Have done so much for me, especially Sam.
I owe people in recovery and God everything,
For all the experience, strength and hope they bring.

But for now on I'll fully rely on God,
My friends in recovery are like my peas in a pod.
I will never turn back to my old way of pain,
The next time, I will die or go insane.

Thank you God and my friends in recovery.

WILLING OR WILLFUL?

BY SCOOTER

Willful (adj): *habitually disposed to disobedience and opposition*

Willingness (adj): *completely prepared or in condition for immediate action, or use, or progress*

Am I *willing* to change, can I surrender and allow the metamorphous of recovery to take hold and progress throughout my flesh and spirit, or am I still *willful*?

Caught up in a state of *willfulness*.

I was *willful* but not *willing*. In my disease and in early recovery I was headstrong and disobedient to anyone who dared to offer advice. I had made it to forty-four years of age without anyone's help, why start now?

- I could stop pouring vodka down my throat to wash down the Xanax at anytime.
- I could take parts of the Big Book and apply them into my life as I saw fit
- I could choose to stop using anytime I wanted
- I alone was in control
- I knew better
- I was fine
- I

Who was I really?

After all, who knew me better than me? How dare these people tell me how it works? Can they not realize that my life is different

from theirs, more difficult? Do they not know who I am?

- An impersonator
- An embezzler
- An addict
- A drunk
- A hider
- A cheat
- A liar
- Alone

What changed?

I realized that I was the sole source of all my problems in a meeting one day. It was not the pills, the booze, the pain, those people, or any other thing I had elected to blame all this on. A Physic Change hit me; if I am not part of the problem then I cannot be part of the solution. Simply, plainly, I and I alone am the problem and I had to give up being *willful*, hand back my control, and learn how to be:

- *Willing* to take action on the advice of those who had taken the journey before me
- *Willing* to give it ALL up in order to obtain it
- *Willing* to surrender my willfulness
- *Willing* to do whatever it takes
- *Willing* to listen
- *Willing*

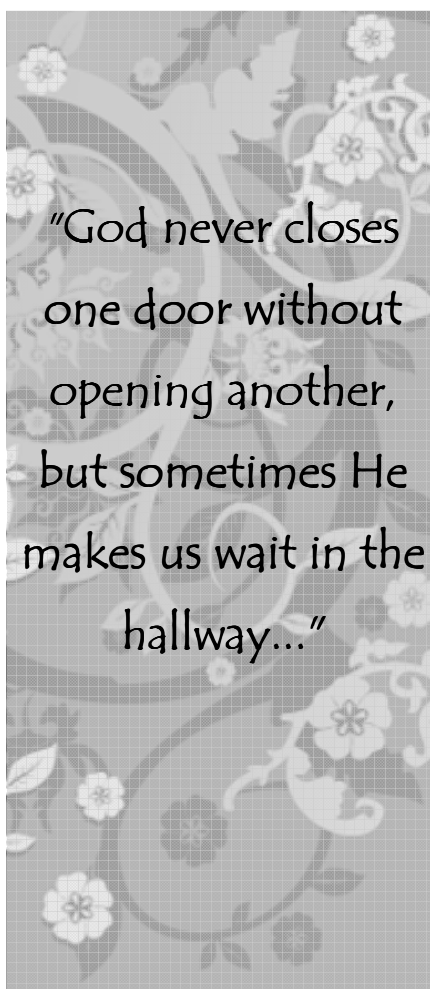
- *Will*

- *We*

And now?

Today I am *willing* to continue the journey because it has no ending, nor does it need one.

Funny how the answer was right in front of me all along, I just needed the right mirror; this program I call recovery and the addicts and alcoholics who have journeyed it's path before me, *willingly* there by my side as I am by theirs



SINE QUA NONE

BY: DAVID M.

Reliance on God was a concept I was raised with. Two of my paternal uncles were Methodist preachers, as was my paternal grandfather. I was brought up to believe that, with God, we could do anything. In my arrogance, and to my eventual dismay, I took that to mean that *I* could do anything; with or without God.

This misconception was, unfortunately, reinforced more and more as my intoxicant intake increased. Having learned to smoke pot as a fifteen year-old, I added other inebriants as the years passed. Alcohol, LSD, speed, cocaine, opium, and even aerosol vapors were added into the list of things I was willing to ingest; hell I'd have smoked catnip if I'd thought it would get me high.

God did not appear on the list. Asking for knowledge of his will did not occur to me.

Over the next 37 years, I

made half hearted attempts at college, including aborted forays onto five different campuses – during which my major always seemed to be to rely on drugs. Several romances blossomed, and died – probably because I was more interested in being stoned than I was in being with... whoever it was at the time. I started many jobs well, only to have my efforts at work flag due to my reliance on dope. Eventually, providence brought me to Ridgeview where, through a conspiracy of miracles, I developed a sincere desire to stop using drugs.

I found that in order to work the program of recovery, reliance on God was no longer optional, it was essential. Now, sometimes, I feel that full reliance on God is a pipe dream, and other times, I feel

that I'm fully reliant on God whether I want to be or not. That is to say: he's running the show whether I want to admit it or not. My life runs much more smoothly when I cooperate. He's *much* better at it than I am.

I found that in order to work the program of recovery, reliance on God was no longer optional, it was essential.

Only to the extent that I pause when unsure, and ask for knowledge of His will for me, am I able to reason effectively. Only to the extent that I am able to do his will instead of mine am I able to take the next right step, and to do the next right thing. The spiritual

part of the recovery program, like the wet part of water, is a *sine qua none*. Without it, there is nothing. Without God, I am nothing.

IN MEMORY OF

RUSS D.

NOVEMBER 2009

HANK S.

FEBRUARY 2010

RALPH H.

FEBRUARY 2010

JOE P.

FEBRUARY 2010

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 \$60,000. 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) 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

THE VIEW

F . R . O . G . F U L L Y R E L Y I N G O N G O D

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SMYRNA, GA
PERMIT NO. 118

3995 SOUTH COBB DRIVE
SMYRNA, GA 30080



Recovery in Bloom



*Serenity Garden
10th Anniversary
Spring Fling 2010*

**Come celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Serenity Garden
May 14-16, 2010
Come join us for food, fun, prizes, entertainment,
and fellowship**

Note: Final logo may differ from that represented here