

VOLUME XXIV

THE VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGEVIEW ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION STEERING COMMITTEE

**H.A.L.T.
(HUNGRY, ANGRY, LONELY, TIRED)**

STORIES BY

| | |
|------------|----|
| JOHNNY L. | 3 |
| MAUREEN M. | 4 |
| JOHN W. | 4 |
| GEORGE M. | 5 |
| JOHN W. | 6 |
| BILL | 7 |
| TERRI L'H. | 9 |
| DOUG F. | 10 |
| TOM S. | 10 |
| MARY R. | 11 |
| ANONYMOUS | 11 |
| ANONYMOUS | 12 |
| STEVEN F. | 13 |
| PUZZLE | 14 |
| JOHN W. | 16 |



THE
RIDGEVIEW
ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION
3995 SOUTH
COBB DRIVE
SMYRNA GA
30080

UPCOMING EVENTS

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Spring Fling Weekend | 6:30pm 8:00pm 12:00 noon | Friday, May 30, 2014 Friday, May 30, 2014 Sunday, June 1, 2014 | Ala-Non Speaker Meeting—Day Hospital AA Speaker Meeting—Day Hospital Alumni “Carnival” Event—Tennis / Pool Area |
| Golf Tournament | 8:00am | Monday, June 2, 2014 | Towne Lake Hills Golf Club—Woodstock, GA |
| 1 st Friday Speaker Meeting | 7:45pm | June 6, 2014 | Day Hospital |
| 1 st Friday Speaker Meeting | 7:45pm | July 11, 2014 | Day Hospital |
| White Water Rafting | 8:00am | Sunday, July 20, 2014 | Meet @ Pro North—Quest Expeditions—Ocoee, TN |
| Atlanta Round Up | | Thursday, July 31, 2014 | Westin Atlanta Perimeter North |
| 1 st Friday Speaker Meeting | 7:45pm | August 1, 2014 | Day Hospital |
| Summer Retreat | 4:00pm | Friday, August 8, 2014 | Camp Donnie Brown |
| Allatoona Round Up | | Friday, August 15, 2014 | Hilton Garden Inn—Cartersville |
| 1 st Friday Speaker Meeting | 7:45pm | September 5, 2014 | Day Hospital |
| 1 st Friday Speaker Meeting | 7:45pm | October 3, 2014 | Day Hospital |
| Men’s Workshop | | Friday, October 2014 | Rock Eagle |
| Georgia Pre-Paid | | Thurs., October 16, 2014 | Jekyll Island |
| Women’s Workshop | | Friday, October 2014 | Rock Eagle—Date TBD |
| 1 st Friday Speaker Meeting | 7:45pm | November 1, 2014 | Day Hospital |
| Bowl—A—Thon | 10:00am | Sat. November 2014 | Place & Date TBD |
| Gratitude Dinner | 5:00pm | Sun, November 24, 2014 | Gym |
| 1 st Friday Speaker Meeting | 7:45pm | December 6, 2014 | Day Hospital |
| Scottish Rite Santa | 7:00am | Thurs, Dec. 25, 2014 | Scottish Rite Children’s Hospital |
| New Years Eve Dance | 8:00pm | Wed., Dec. 31, 2014 | Gym |
| 1 st Friday Speaker Meeting | 7:45pm | January 2, 2015 | Day Hospital |
| 1 st Friday Speaker Meeting | 7:45pm | February 6, 2015 | Day Hospital |
| 1 st Friday Speaker Meeting | 7:45pm | March 6, 2015 | Day Hospital |

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.

**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 Liistro at dbliistro@bellsouth.net using “Newsletter” in the subject line.

Warren Taylor: *Communications Chair*

Dawn B. Liistro: *Chair Emeritus, Newsletter Formatter, & Proofreader*

John Wallace: *Proofreader*

Sean Cleary: *Co-chair, Minutes*

Delores DeFreitas and Dorothy Seiden: *Bulletin Boards*

Barbara Wheeler: *Endowment Fund & Communication*

DON'T TAKE YOURSELF SO SERIOUSLY

SUBMITTED BY: JOHNNY L.

Such an important thing to remember. We all know the pain, agony, and loss that got us here, but a lot of us forget to enjoy the ride now that we are here. When I go to RE-BOS, they are always having outings named, "We are not a Glum Lot!" It is strange that we alcoholics have to be reminded that it's okay to have fun.

In the beginning of being sober I was full of guilt, remorse and certainly didn't feel worthy of having fun. Especially the last time I came back from my relapse, adding shame to my list of horrible feelings. But the program has been truly healing. My sponsor's understanding, working the steps, meetings, networking, the big book, and of course Ridgeview, has helped me learn to live my life sober and to be happy; I mean really happy. Life and sobriety ...working together, has been contagious.

Rewards from this come in the strangest directions. I get to help people. Sometimes in those endeavors I get quite the priceless story.

Such is the case when I helped my stepson change the v8 engine in his 4x4 truck. I got to walk him through the steps of swapping the engines and we got it running. We didn't have time to finish it because the weekend

I was full of guilt, remorse and certainly didn't feel worthy of having fun. Especially the last time....

was over and he had to go back to work. So I finished it up and straightened out the loose ends. I put the old engine in the back of his truck and test drove it to gas station and put some gas in it. It felt good to give him the call that his truck was fueled, test driven, and ready to go.

That following Saturday he got a friend to give him a ride to our house to pick up his truck. You could see he was happy to finally have his truck done, so I threw him the keys and said try it out, and off he went.

Not long and he was back. The first thing he said with that deer in the headlight look.... " Johnny you're not going to believe what happened. "

Of course I'm still an alcoholic

and thinking the worst... transmission blew? Engine blew? Speeding ticket? Stock market crashed? Gas is now \$20.00 a gallon?

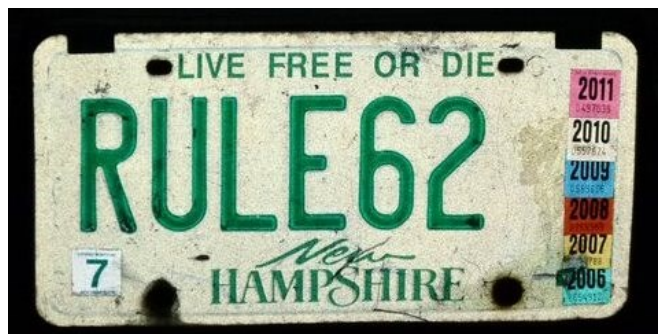
He said "NO!!!!!" With sincere panic *"The Engine Fell Out Of the Back of the Truck!"....." And it's in the middle of the intersection!"*

I didn't see that one coming. Okay at this point I head straight to load the crane in my truck, dying laughing at the same time as I go to the intersection with my truck. As we are hoisting the engine into the back of my truck, I have tears in my eyes because I'm laughing so hard as the passing cars are taking pictures and asking how? The cop that passed even laughed. I'm

laughing now thinking of it again LOL. I'm sure it was a sight to see.

The point in all this is s**t happens. Good or bad, make the best of it. You never know who is watching. My stepson gets to see that it's okay to enjoy life, no matter what may fall your way and that I owe to AA.

*The point in all this is s**t happens. Good or bad, make the best of it.*



H.A.L.T.!SUBMITTED BY: MAUREEN M.

I was *hungry* to be fed and to be heard
Ever *angry*, my soul screamed whenever stirred
I was *loneliest* within familiar crowds
And so *tired* that I lived nightmares out loud

But something magic happened when
I learned how to live again...

Once fed up with *hunger*, I learned how to eat
Serenity slapped my *anger* still
Crowded out now, *loneliness* cried out sweet defeat
No longer *tired*, I can face the real

When I HALT, I'm not denied
The tools to ever stronger stride
Toward purpose, with God at my side

THESE ROOMSSUBMITTED BY: JOHN W.

A collection of individuals, strangers most
Hailing from locales spanning each coast
Individually managing a neural hot mess
Spots of light amidst a creeping darkness.
Gathering to confront the shivers of cold
Shaking free the bonds that alcohol holds.

Beams crossed in beautiful synergy
Combining, building, exploding with energy
Bring clarity, peace, and tranquility
Via the building crescendo of soliloquy,
To buttress the soul of collective sobriety
Of a group purposefully shunning notoriety.

Hands physically unite in concluding collective prayer
Myriad voices melding to one for all to share
From the communal fount of spirit
So palpable that all can feel it.
Another day of many spent one at a time
Allowing through themselves God's power to shine.

COOL THOUGHTS FOR HOTHEADS

SUBMITTED BY: GEORGE M.

Righteous indignation is the capacity to arouse anger when it matters. When people are mistreated and I don't feel concerned, I'm lacking compassion or in denial. Anger moves me to action. But my hot temper blinds me to reality and drives a wedge between others and me. I don't find a receptive audience when I'm enraged. People just resist or discount my accusations and get angry in response, which makes me angrier!

Dealing with my anger is a work-in-progress. To bring out the anger lurking under the surface, to let myself feel my anger, begins to loosen anger's grip on me.

To recognize my anger, I name it, and identifying the target of my anger is an important first step in rendering it harmless. Anger is a normal response to loss and is a natural human emotion, just like happiness, excitement, or fear. How do I accept my anger, even if it is irrational?

Unexpressed anger can build up until it erupts, with health problems or risky behavior. One way to let my anger out is by writing about it. I

wrote a letter to my father describing my painful memories and angry feelings. I went to his grave and read the letter aloud. My emotions took over and I was able to feel the relief many years after his death. I knelt at his grave, the tears flowed, and years of hurt and anger washed away.

Another way I cope is by sharing my anger with a healing person, someone who can handle it. Healing (HEAL) people connect us to God's love in a powerful way. When people are here for us, Empathetic, Accepting, and Listening, God works through them to bring us the healing we need. Keep a close lookout for them. Seek them out. Tell your friends how they can care. "Here's what I need from you. Let me be upset without trying to cheer me up or fix things. Let me talk. Let me cry. Give me a hug. Just be here and care."

When my mother died last year, I experienced anger and grief, but I didn't drink like I did when my father died twenty years ago. For

years, I felt guilty about certain feelings, such as anger, apathy, and even moments of happiness, from escaping reality. In recovery, I learned guilt is irrational, often buried inside, and arises out of unrealistic expectations, distorts the facts, and is usually over things I cannot change. Forgiving myself, praying the Serenity Prayer, and asking God for help gives me some perspective on being human.

Letting go of guilt is key to healing anger. When pride hides as anger, I am Edging God Out. The Prayers of the 3rd Step, 7th Step, and St. Francis, are to Let Go and Let God daily. They help me to interrupt my anger, grief, or other emotional buildup, to break the negative cycle, to stop, not react and gain self-control.

Today, I am learning to avoid angry people. Like a bad virus, I get infected, especially if I have anger issues.. "Don't hang out with angry people; don't keep company with hotheads. Bad temper is contagious--don't get infected." (Proverbs 22)

... my hot temper blinds me to reality and drives a wedge between others and me.

When people are here for us, Empathetic, Accepting, and Listening, God works through them to bring us the healing we need.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

ACROSS

1. We **THOUGHT** we could find
3. Life **BECOMES** unmanageable
5. Restless, **IRRITABLE** and discontent
8. Quit **SEEKING** to God
9. Quit reading the Big **BOOK**
11. 1/2 measures avail us **NOTHING**
12. Everyone else is **WRONG**

DOWN

1. Quit **TALKING** to sponsor
2. Character **DEFECTS** flare up
4. Alcohol- **CUNNING** baffling and powerful
6. An **EASIER** softer way
7. Stop going to **MEETINGS**
10. Powerless **OVER** alcohol
13. Hold onto our **OLD** ideas

OWNER OF A LONELY HEART? OR HOW TO KISS YOUR LONELINESS GOODBYE

SUBMITTED BY: JOHN W.

I love acronyms. A.A. is rife with them. So rife, in fact, that it seems as if the higher power of the universe knew that A.A.s would need them to stay grounded and to keep from over-complicating things. One of my personal favorites is KISS, which stands for Keep It Simple Stupid. Those who know me well all agree that I need to keep this acronym front and center in my personal recovery! While pursuing the easier, softer way has proven ineffective, the simpler way always

wins the day. I'm sure I read somewhere that ours is a "simple program"... Here's how the KISS principle can work.

Have you ever found yourself alone, and wondered if that is ok? If you are asking this question, then you are likely trying to understand the difference between isolation and solitude. Isolation reflects one's choice to separate from others, to detach in order to be alone or apart. In medical terms, scientists isolate diseased cells in order to study them and/or limit their contagion. Solitude, on the other hand, reflects a state of being alone with an absence of humanity around us.

There are typically no negative connotations associated with solitude. On the contrary, solitude often reflects a peaceful context, as in being alone in nature. Is the preceding

as clear as mud? Does it sound like psychobabble bull pucky?

Following the KISS principle, there might be a simpler way to understand the state of our mental health. Recalling a basic truth that our feelings reflect our thinking, we could just ask ourselves, "How

do I feel?" If you feel good, then there's likely no need to dig further into why you are alone. If, on the other hand, you don't feel so

good, or you're feeling stressed, then you likely need to take action.

This action could take many forms. You could try to delve into your thinking, for example. What is the inventory of thoughts floating around in your head? Which of them appear to be bothering you? What might have triggered your angst? This

approach can work well, if you have the discipline to evaluate yourself objectively. However, executing this approach may be too daunting to undertake, leaving you dissatisfied, frustrated, and, unfortunately, still alone.

Alternatively, you could simply (there's that word again...) find another alcoholic or addict to talk to about your situation.

Maybe the person is your sponsor or maybe it's your closest friend in your sober network. I've always found that

talking things out with another person greatly helps to identify what is bothering me.

Furthermore, the simple (again... I know... I can't help it...) act of talking to another person tends to deflate my problems significantly. For one thing, the concerns that

occupy my head never sound as dire when I verbalize them to another person. Also, I get the feeling that the other person is "in my camp," which makes it two of us facing the problem, rather than just me alone. I'm convinced that

two of "us" can solve anything!

So if you find yourself alone and wondering whether that is ok, then the following approach usually works for me. Ask yourself how you feel. Take action, if warranted. Talk to someone else in the program. Above all else, keep it simple.



Recalling a basic truth that our feelings reflect our thinking, we could just ask ourselves, "How do I feel?"



One of my personal favorites is KISS, which stands for Keep It Simple Stupid.



GUS

SUBMITTED BY: BILL

I never felt unconditionally loved.

By a mother who came to my bed room late at night, to a father who, spurred by tales of my disobedience, would have me bloody and curled into the fetal position as soon as he came home from work, I soon developed a coat of armor that I learned would protect me: ANGER.

I insulated myself from you and others by always being on the attack, extending the hand of anger before you could even think about hurting me. If you were smart, you would run. Sometimes, you would not. After I punished you, with words, slaps, kicks, you would skulk away, because you never really loved me. Unconditionally.

Years of attempting to abate my ANGER with copious amounts of adult beverages only served to feed the beast; I lashed out at you, at me, at the world. And then I found AA.

You told me that you loved me. What bull. I held your hands in the circle to conclude the meeting, but I wanted nothing more than to escape your grip and run.

But, after much trial and error, and a drawer full of white chips, I stayed, got a sponsor, worked the steps, tried to be of service, met a girl, got married... and seethed with ANGER.

Said girl soon found out that I was a raving loony. She stayed, but in my heart, I wanted

her gone. Soon after the wedding, we became, intentionally, pregnant. Soon after that, the pregnancy ended.

So, we decided to get a dog.

We named him Gus. A typical Golden Retriever, Gus peed, pooped, chewed, yipped, and barked his way under my skin. Come home from work and find the table leg chewed nearly in two, scream at Gus. Poop on the rug after just coming in from a poop walk, slap. Bark at 3:00 A.M. for no apparent reason, kick.

Afterward, adrenaline from my ANGER receding, Gus would slink (how does a dog learn to slink?) to where I was sitting and lay between my legs and whimper. For a long time, I would not reach to offer him a pet to console him. Still, he would lay there and look up at me with those big Golden Retriever eyes, and just be with me. I hated him for it. It hurt on so many levels. Mostly, it hurt because I felt my ANGER, my constant friend and advisor, my suit of armor of a lifetime, slowly leaving me. I was scared.

Over time, I stopped abusing Gus. Gus, however, did not allow me the courtesy of *not* reminding me of what I had done to him. Loud noises freaked him out. Yell at my wife, Gus ran for cover. Smart pup, that Gus dog.

After several years of marriage, and many meetings, sponsor one-on-ones, professional help, service and time with you, I experienced, and my wife enjoyed, greater periods of time between my blowups. Gus became less skittish. Imagine that?

At 12 years of age, Gus started slowing down. I refused to allow myself to acknowledge that he would not be with us forever. Although it was clear that he was in pain, if you didn't take him with the other dogs for a walk, he sat at the front door and cried. He struggled to get up and down. We helped him up the stairs at night. I once tried to carry him, but, Gus would not suffer that indignity, and would somehow make it up those 13 steps on his own.

We took Gus to the Gus doctor; she told us that when it "was time", we would know. A week later, Gus could not get up. He would not eat or drink. We "knew".

I carried Gus to the car, and gently placed him in the back seat. We drove to the vet, not saying a word.

It was very early on a Saturday morning, but, prompted by our earlier call to the emergency number, the vet was ready for Gus. Two of the vet assistants, carrying a pup stretcher, walked solemnly to our car. With tears in their eyes, they softly placed him on the stretcher and carried him inside to an examination room. Soon, the doc came in and offered kind words and gentle touches.

When I finally was "beaten into a state of reasonableness", and surrendered to the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous,

I insulated myself from you and others by always being on the attack, extending the hand of anger before you could even think about hurting me.

GUS (CON'T)

SUBMITTED BY: BILL

She left us in the exam room for our last moments with Gus. My mentor; my friend. I was beyond consolation. I held Gus in my arms and sobbed, soundlessly. I thought back to how, as a puppy, I had treated Gus with the same ANGER I treated everyone. And although I tried mightily, Gus would not cease to love me, uncondi-

tionally. I left the examination room, went to the car, and fell apart.

The God of my understanding sent that fuzzy pup to me, because He knew that I would not let another human being in to my heart. Thank you, Big Guy.

When I finally was "beaten

into a state of reasonableness", and surrendered to the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous, I was surrounded by love and understanding. Not knowing how to accept your love, or how to give love back, you kept on loving me anyway. And, Gus the dog, who is now in pup heaven, just loved me too.

AA FUNNIES



God grant me the laughter to help me see the past with perspective, face the future with hope, and celebrate today—without taking myself too seriously.

— Jane N.

HALT AMONG OTHER THINGS...

SUBMITTED BY: TERRI L'H.

I love all of the sayings and acronyms in AA and HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired) is one of my favorites. This one clearly explains important moments to watch out for but I've got a few more. Here are a few examples I have lived through and learned from.

EGO

Wow! This one is a biggie. Early in sobriety during my stay in the halfway house at Ridgeview, I was told to get on my knees and pray every morning as soon as I got out of bed and to do the same thing every night. "On my knees?!" I thought. Now mind you, there was NO ONE in my room when I was doing this and yet I felt weird and uncomfortable. That's ego for ya! On top of that, I had the gall to complain that I didn't know what to say. I really must have thought I was something. The only one who could hear me was GOD, and all He wanted was for me to make some kind of connection, and I faltered because I didn't know what to say? I was told to say anything and to speak to GOD as if He were my best friend so that's what I did and now do (without feeling weird about it). I can't believe I wasted so much time in EgoLand on this one. I wouldn't give up my connection to my higher power now for anything and I will GLADLY tell him that on my knees!

Early in sobriety during my stay in the halfway house at Ridgeview, I was told to get on my knees and pray every morning as soon as I got out of bed and to do the same thing every night.

LAZINESS

This one can creep up on me, so I have to be super vigilant. One of my routines that I learned at Ridgeview was to meditate and read some recovery literature for a few minutes each morning before beginning my day. Sounds easy enough, right? Well, it can be, but it can also be easily skipped when laziness takes over. Getting 15 minutes of extra sleep has sometimes seemed so much more important as I lie in bed with my eyes half open. But here are both scenarios. On the mornings when I've skipped, my day becomes rocky at best. I seem to race around running late all morning. Traffic is HORRIBLE, and I'm sure to be late. Everyone gets

on my last nerve and I'm thoroughly worn out and exhausted from trying to keep control of everything all day long. I'm still baffled as to why on earth I would do this to myself when I know how to make it better. When I do the right thing, my day flows more like this: I calmly get ready and I look to the sky as I'm sitting in traffic and happily say "Thank you, GOD, for this beautiful morning." Seriously! I am that happy morning person who gets on some people's nerves because I see beauty in things. I think that the person who cut me off must need to get somewhere more quickly than I do. I give up control to GOD throughout the day on the stuff I

... "Thank you, GOD, for this beautiful morning." Seriously! I am that happy morning person who gets on some people's nerves because I see beauty in things.

can't handle, and I hang on to my serenity. I smile and laugh a lot more on the days that I beat laziness. This leads me to my next big caution item.

CONTROL

These are the times when I think to myself "I got this!" As human beings, we know that we don't have control over things like hurricanes and tornadoes but guess what? We don't have control over a whole lot more than just the weather. So why is it that I try to take back control over situations that are clearly out of my league? EGO! That's why. AND we are back to the beginning.

So take it from one who has lived and learned. Remember HALT, but also remember to rid yourself of Ego, Control, and Laziness. Maybe I'll try to come up with some cool new acronym so I don't forget, although the pain that comes from not doing the right thing ought to be reminder enough.

I work really hard at trying to see the big picture and not getting stuck in ego. I believe we're all put on this planet for a purpose, and we all have a different purpose... When you connect with that love and that compassion, that's when everything unfolds.

Ellen DeGeneres

CONTROL ALT DELETE

SUBMITTED BY: DOUG F.

I've had a day that did not go my way at work. I pack up my stuff, leave the office, and hit the freeway.

Traffic jam!

No one is moving and those that are moving aren't letting anyone in. I inch toward the 75/85 split heading north just to find that idiots are in the wrong lanes and they crisscross across the lanes at the last moment while talking on their phones to correct this. I get madder and inch up to ensure that they don't get in. Later on as I work my way through the mess, I find I need to get over and some person won't let me in. I get even more frustrated and flip them off. This whole day has just gone to hell and the commute home adds gas to my fire.

Finally arriving home I find my arms full and getting to the alarm pad causes me to drop things. I just become more upset. I'm late and my family is already asking what we want

to do for dinner before I can even get my shoes off. I am short spoken and I'm sure the expression on my face tells them to back away. I plop in my chair to go through the mail and find that a credit card is charging me a late fee from last month. Really? \$45 dollars just because I was three days late?

Needless to say the evening continues as I expected it. In fact my attitude ensured it. As I lay in bed thinking about the whole mess, I play it backward just to find it all started with me being late to work and missing the first 5 minutes of a conference call. No one said anything but I was snappy and short the whole time. After the call someone asked if I was ok and I said, "Yeah, why?" As I reconstructed the day I found that I played a part in everything that went wrong that day. From being late to paying the bills on time, I

allowed common circumstances to drive my mood into a slow rage.

There is a common cure to PC problems: control, alt, delete. This causes a restart to the troubled device and often gets rid of the problem. Somehow on this day I forgot that I could have ctrl-alt-deleted my day at any point. I forgot that anger eats away my serenity and cascades upon itself if not addressed. I failed to see my part and attacked others instead of pausing and looking at my role in it.

Realizing this in bed, I turned to my spouse and asked forgiveness for the anger I had when I arrived home. I prayed to my higher power and set my day right. Getting sleepy I reached over to the night stand and made sure that this time the alarm was really set.

There is a common cure to PC problems: control, alt, delete. This causes a restart to the troubled device ...

H.A.L.T.

SUBMITTED BY: TOM S.

Hungry, angry, lonely, tired; any one of these can spiral me off into 'poor me' thinking and we've all heard "Poor me, poor me, pour me a tall one".

It has been my experience that whenever one of those traits is not dealt with in a timely manner it will seek one of the others for company. If I'm tired, I'm often grumpy or I'm quick to get angry if I've not taken time to eat something. If those two together aren't dealt with promptly

they will get their other two friends together and there I am, totally off the beam!

Awareness is essential to prevent this from happening as often as it used to.

Being in the moment increases my awareness.



FAREWELL TO ALCOHOL

(WRITTEN AS PART OF A GROUP ASSIGNMENT @ RIDGEVIEW)

SUBMITTED BY: MARY R.

I have given you loving care for far too many years. I have chilled you to the perfect temperature. I have opened many beautiful vessels that held you, to release your lovely aroma and perform the perfect ritual of letting you breathe and honorably taken you into my body as you liked. I have mixed you perfectly as a martini, gin and tonic, daiquiri, and many others. I have taken you straight up to feel your comforting warmth. I have blended you with the finest of ingredients for many elegant meals complemented by the best wines and finished satisfyingly with desert and accompanying cordials. I have always provided

you with the finest glasses and decanters to carry you gently into my body.

Ah, but you are a fickle and evil lover! I turned to you in a time of my greatest need and you turned on me; oozing into every neuron and synapse of my brain and every fiber of my body; blurring my cognitive abilities, masking the real me, trying to steal my family and the best parts of my life. I know that you have planted deep roots and will always be there waiting.

But I am serving you notice that you are being cut off. Through a being far greater than me and you and the love and support of my family and friends, I am taking back my life! I know that you

will merely bide your time, lying in wait, ready to jump back into control. But where you reside is surrounded by the best of me and the fabulous memories of my life. With my higher power, and the support of my family and friends, I will trap you and smother you, so that your roots will shrivel. They may never die completely, but you will get no food, water, or sunshine from me to help you grow and awaken to take over again. You will be minimized and overpowered by my Higher Power, me and my group.

Ta-Ta Forever

Good Bye and Good Riddance
you f***ing predator

HALT OR STOP

SUBMITTED BY: ANONYMOUS

When I crawled back in, the acronym HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired) hardly applied. My particular Drug of Choice didn't allow for hunger. I wasn't angry, I was indifferent. I didn't feel lonely, although in reality I was very alone. I was tired, though, very tired of living the life that had nearly killed me.

I could more identify with the acronym STOP (Stupid, Timid, Loathing and Pressured).

I felt stupid because I had, in my mind, blown almost four years of sobriety. I was returning to treatment after an eight-month relapse. I felt timid because I was in a new city with very little chance of ever returning home. I felt loathing because my self-worth and self-esteem were in the

cellar. I felt pressured to get better quickly, although I knew that probably could not happen.

I had lost everything. I had never known true hunger, but not being gainfully employed, full meals were sparse. I still was not angry, but I felt defeated. I would not let myself be lonely because that is a choice, and I chose to stay close to people in recovery. There were times when I felt tired, because the relapse had taken away my health.

After I retained a sponsor and started working slowly through the Steps (again), things started to get better, seemingly at the same pace that I was working the Steps. I had to be careful this time to be as thorough as possible because I felt that this was my last chance. I found a job which meant food.

I avoided anger because I had nothing to be angry about. I kept going to meetings and expanding my recovery network to avoid loneliness. As I regained my physical health, I no longer felt exhausted.

Today, with my life back on track, I have the tools to avoid HALT. I do not hesitate to use them. I don't have to be hungry anymore. I am not easily angered because the directions laid before me in the Big Book tell me to "pause." I will not allow myself to feel loneliness because that remains a choice. When I feel tired I keep it simple- get some rest.

Our program teaches us how to avoid HALT, but it's up to us to apply the tools.

ANGER

SUBMITTED BY: ANONYMOUS.

How does anger fuel alcoholism?

Where did the anger come from? I had had a tumultuous child hood but I moved on and just discounted that 12 year experience. Anger wasn't an issue that I remember. But later in life I found alcohol, at age 15, so if there was anger the alcohol would mask it over. Drinking was magic for me. I felt good inside and out. It was the answer for why I didn't fit in, why the self-consciousness went away and why my skin fit better. So I set out to imbibe alcohol whenever I could.

Very quickly though I started to get into trouble, never once considering why. The next period of years many things happened. Horrible things from loss of marriage and children, DUI's and jail time, loss of a significant relationship, indefinite loss of my driver's license, started hanging out at low-end bars, and got and lost many jobs.

I went to AA at age 35 for various visits after not being able to stay dry. After many additional low-end life problems, I went back at age 40. I stayed dry for over three years, never ever being approached about the Big Book or Steps. Of course I didn't need a sponsor, right? I went on vacation at age 43 and drank every day. I entered treatment this time and stayed dry for 11 years. No sponsor, no steps, no Big Book and very few meetings toward the end. During that time I achieved some financial success. Guess what I developed during that time? A huge amount of ego, pride and only a small amount of fear. So in 2002 I picked up again and was

in a blackout for about two weeks.

I had been married for 10 years at this time and my wife seriously contemplated dumping me. But she didn't. She wanted me to leave because she didn't want me to die in our home that we loved so much. Total degradation is the only description I can come up with. I ended up at Ridgeview Institute, sick, sad and sorry. I hated every minute of it. I displayed anger I didn't know existed in me towards staff and other patients. I particularly hated Sam Anders for getting in my face in front of a whole group.

Upon leaving R.V.I., it was strongly suggested for me to go to Anger Management, and, of course, I had a tantrum about it. But I did seek out a therapist/teacher and, true to form, also resisted this process. We found out why I was so angry and we met it head on, no holding back. Turned out I had experienced severe trauma as a child and we addressed it in detail. I discovered that alcohol was my suppressant, which explained why the anger continued to show up in dry times when I had no substance to calm me down. The feelings I was having during dry times were finally explained. Until the anger and rage was addressed I could not stay sober.

I was supposed to see this Therapist/Teacher for 6 months and I did. I found real recovery with a Sponsor, a home group, 12 Steps, a network of men, meetings, and service work; the real thing. I am still married to my wonderful wife; the anger is gone for the most part. I have achieved some certifications that allow me to do the work I like to do. Very important to me, I am an active Ridgeview Alumna now and have been for a while.

I must add that the relationship with the therapist I had to see for 6 months, as I stated earlier, continued for another four years. Need I say more?? ANONYMOUS

Article from Psychology Today Magazine:

"While the relationship between anger and alcohol, not directly causal; there are multiple instances whereby the two are interactive or dependent on each other. Studies suggest that growing up in poor neighborhoods with unstable homes can lead to lifelong frustration and anger. Emotional and physical harm at any point in life can cause anger in any age group. Some people deal with this anger by abusing alcohol. Alcohol's known effects make it easy for someone with anger management issues to block out negative images, people or events in their life. Thus, alcohol becomes a suppressant for some people."

"But because of the progression of addiction seeking relief drinking again was causing lower and lower bottom. So the answer was A.A. and 12 Step Recovery. As bad as I needed it I did not take it seriously. But I did do one thing right, I sought out therapy! It changed everything and the anger went away, really went away. Being ignorant about the intense work I did, I didn't know how important maintenance was. So with no 12 Step or any other support over a period of double digit years the anger and depression returned."

I'M A VOLUNTEER

SUBMITTED BY: STEVEN F.

People can say what they will, but I feel as though life is about choices. I choose to volunteer for a number of things. Some of these leverage my experience, my strength and my hope. One of the early tools I learned in recovery was HALT. Never get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired. I can certainly relate to those feelings and emotions, especially where my alcoholism was concerned. Have you ever decided to drink when you were angry or lonely? What about hungry or tired? I know I certainly did.

There's a story in the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous about a guy who got hungry. He made some choices in what to do about it, too. He chose to drive in the country, stopped at a roadside place, complete with a bar, to "get a sandwich." No intention of drinking, he thought he might find a customer to sell a car to. He ordered a sandwich and a glass of milk. He still had no thought of drinking. "Suddenly, the thought crossed his mind that if he were to put an ounce of whiskey in his milk, it couldn't hurt him on a full stomach." Another choice. The experiment went so well, he ordered another whiskey and poured it into

some more milk." Yet, another choice. That didn't seem to bother him, so he tried another." Need I tell you the outcome? If you don't know, check out page 36 in the Big Book. It's all "IN" there.

Moving forward, on page 64 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, you can find a line that reads, "We asked ourselves why we were angry." This is a part of doing a 4th step. Funny how anger seems to play a big role in most people's 4th step. It's usually at the root of a resentment, in one form or another. Practically every line of my 4th step was

riddled with anger. It's no wonder "Anger" is part of the HALT acronym.

Now to lonely. You need to look no further than page 1 in Bill's story. Bill plainly states, "I was very lonely and again turned to alcohol." Since he used the word "again," it tends to lead me to believe that he used alcohol as a coping mechanism for his loneliness. Apparently he knew the effects of alcohol and felt this to be a viable solution. Why else would he state it so plainly? I don't know about you, but I can

certainly relate.

Tired. Who hasn't had a long hard day and wanted to cap it off with a few drinks? After all, don't I deserve it? Sometimes I'm just tired of the

fight. This battle has lasted so long, I can't fathom the notion there's another solution. So, I take my tired self back to that miserable place and drink to oblivion. Not a comfortable place to be, but it's all I know.

So, there's a small look at Hungry, Angry, Lonely and Tired. I volunteered to write this story in hopes that someone else might relate to some of these instances in

their own life. Know this, THERE IS A SOLUTION!!! Volunteer yourself to change. It's called willingness. That's where it all begins. YOU get to make that choice. If you want it, you will find it. If not, well, chances are, it won't happen.

One last thing I'd like to share that my first sponsor shared with me. His version of HALT:

Hush up, Act right, Love others and Trust God.

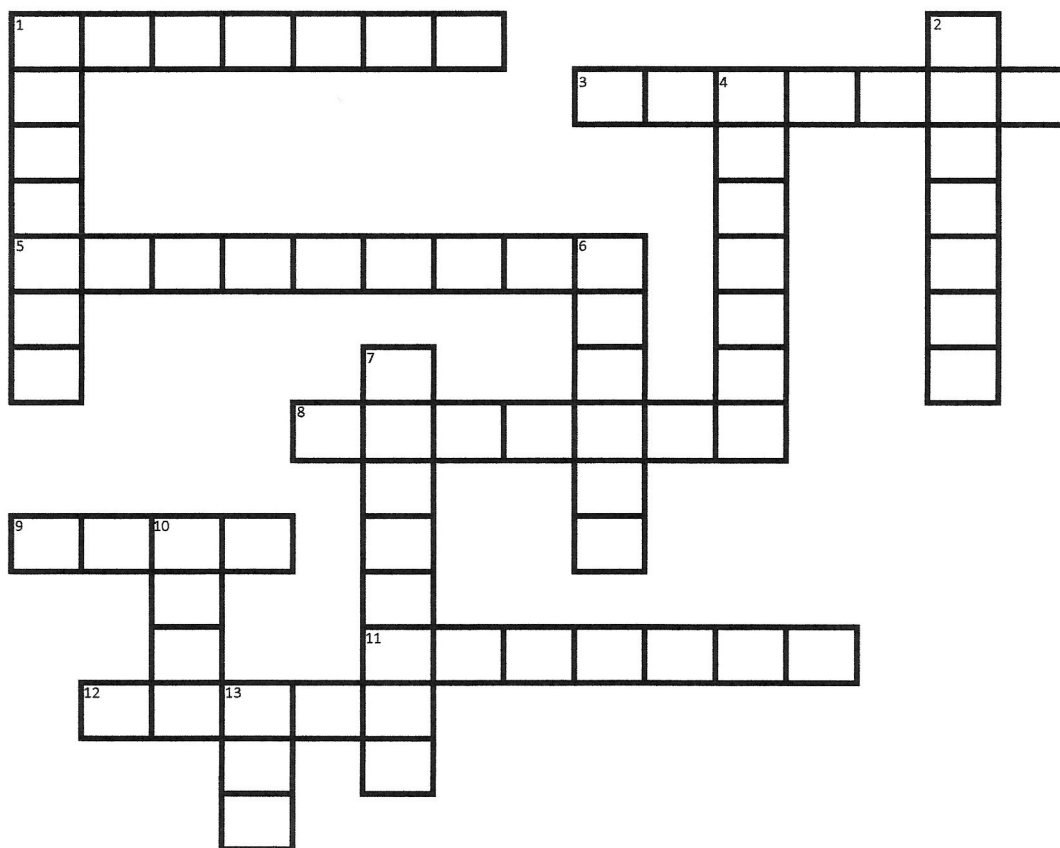
May you find sobriety and dwell there.

... my first sponsor shared with me. His version of HALT: Hush up, Act right, Love others and Trust God. May you find sobriety and dwell there.



Step 12 .com
"Carry this message"

COMPLACENCY LANE PUZZLE



ACROSS

1. We _____ we could find
3. Life _____ unmanageable
5. Restless, _____ and discontent
8. Quit _____ to God
9. Quit reading the Big _____
11. 1/2 measures avail us
12. Everyone else is _____

DOWN

1. Quit _____ to sponsor
2. Character _____ flare up
4. Alcohol- _____, baffling and powerful
6. An _____, softer way
7. Stop going to _____
10. Powerless _____ alcohol
13. Hold onto our _____ ideas

S OBRIETY
L OSES
I TS
P RIORITY

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 \$86,650 and change. towards our first \$500,000. Every single dollar raised goes into an asset management account over which the Alumni Steering Committee has sole control.

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

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

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

Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund Campaign

Date: _____

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

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

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

Make checks payable to: Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund

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

Serenity Garden—Memorial Brick Order Form

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

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

(Line 1) _____

(Line 2) _____

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

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

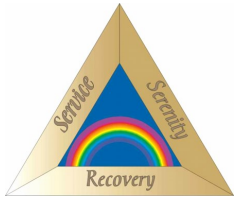
Make checks payable to: Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund

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

THE VIEW

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

3995 SOUTH COBB DRIVE
SMYRNA, GA 30080



SURRENDER

SUBMITTED BY: JOHN W.

Living a life of my own choosing
Fighting, flailing, but alas only losing
My wife, my children and my health
Clouding over my own True Self.

I cannot begin to account the cost
Of passion and inspiration lost.
Neural impulses re-directed,
I struggle to remain connected

To my peeps, my posse, and my
breed.

In a bottle I found my creed.
Oft hidden in my house or car
At times my solace-taking alone in a
bar.

Down, down I slid to the depths of
Hell.
Slipping, sliding, down the well
Of hurt and shame from all the lying
I truly felt that I was dying.

"Help!" I cried to my Higher Power

I could not last another hour.
In prayer and meditation I found
Him
And slowly the fires of Hell did dim.

Peaceful surrender is what I sought
Found recompense that cannot be
bought.
Happiness, joy, and beautiful sound
Of melodious songs that I have
found.