

VOLUME XXXII

# THE VIEW

NEWSLETTER OF THE RIDGEVIEW ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION STEERING COMMITTEE

## ANOTHER CHANCE

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THE  
RIDGEVIEW  
ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION  
3995 SOUTH  
COBB DRIVE  
SMYRNA GA  
30080



Take a deep breath  
pick yourself up  
dust yourself off  
and start all over  
again



## UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENT	TIME	DATE	LOCATION
Gratitude Dinner	5:00 PM	Sunday, November 19, 2017	Set Up – 3:00 PM Dinner – 5:00 PM Meeting – 6:30 PM
First Friday	7:45 PM	December 1, 2017	Day Hospital
Scottish Rite Santa	7:00 AM	Monday, December 25, 2017	Children's Hospital
New Years Eve Dance	8:00 PM	Sunday, December 31, 2017	Set Up – 10:00 AM
First Friday	7:45 PM	January 5, 2018	Day Hospital
GSSA	—	Friday, January 19, 2018	Macon
First Friday	7:45 PM	February 2, 2018	Day Hospital
Super Bowl Party	3:30 PM	Sunday, February 4, 2018	Ridgeview Gym
First Friday	7:45 PM	March 2, 2018	Day Hospital
Men's Workshop	—	Friday, March 23, 2018	Rock Eagle
Good Friday	—	March 30, 2018	—
First Friday	7:45 PM	April 6, 2018	Day Hospital
First Friday	7:45 PM	May 4, 2018	Day Hospital
Mother's Day	—	Sunday, May 13, 2018	—

This issue, as well as archival copies, are available on our website at [www.ridgeviewalumni.com](http://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](mailto:steering@bellsouth.net) or contact us thru the Website. Please put "newsletter" in the subject line.

**Thank you to those who submitted articles for this edition of the Newsletter, if we have learned anything in Recovery it is that  
We cannot keep what we have if we do not give it away!**

If you would like to submit an article for the next Newsletter, please email it to Alex H. at [alexhuntebrinker@yahoo.com](mailto:alexhuntebrinker@yahoo.com) using "Newsletter" in the subject line.

Alex Huntebrinker, *Communications Chair, Editor, Proofreader, Design & Layout*

Ray Williams, *Co-editor, Proofreader*

Dawn Liistro and Sean Cleary, *Communications Co-chair*

Lisa Roberts, *Steering Committee Minutes*

Paul S. Liistro, Jr., *Alumni Website*

Janet Ticconi, *Bulletin Boards*

Barbara Wheeler, *Endowment Fund & Communications*

## ANOTHER CHANCE

SUBMITTED BY: SEAN C.

I have often wondered why I was given so many opportunities to get sober. As I reflect on the last 10 years of my drinking, I can see clearly where my Higher Power had been inviting me into Alcoholics Anonymous. I couldn't see it then, and therefore I pretty much refused God's mercy out of ignorance and selfishness. My track record shows a pattern of getting "dry" and then going back out. I never stayed long enough to get any kind of recovery. My firm belief was that I could never get over the overwhelming obsession to drink, so why even try?

There were many times I'd show up at A.A. long enough to get the dust to settle. I thought that once my wife, employer or family saw me attending meetings, they'd get off my back and leave me alone. This kind of manipulation never worked, and I would get frustrated. Also, the thought of living sober frightened me because I didn't know what that looked like. I couldn't imagine such an existence.

God can be mysterious in

how He sends us messages. Right after my divorce in

***I emphasize to the men I sponsor that it isn't necessary to go back out drinking. Relapse isn't a requirement to join A.A. However, at the same time, I am so thankful that the old-timers repeatedly urged "Keep Coming Back"!***

1992, I moved into a cheap apartment. I had to share the same porch with the neighbor next door. Shortly after I moved in, I was sitting on the porch with my rum and coke, reading the sports page. Not long after that, the gentleman next door came outside and introduced himself. He was about my age and had a nice demeanor. We talked about sports for a bit and he went back inside. Over the course of the next few months, I'd say hello to Rick in passing. We'd chat and then go our own ways.

I was out on the porch one

night when I saw that Rick had left a blue book on the table that we both shared. It was titled, "Alcoholics Anonymous." Since it was about to rain, I knocked on his door to return the book. Rick answered the door and invited me in for a minute. Somehow we got into a discussion about drinking. Rick suggested that I keep the book and look it over. It turned out that he had 11 years of sobriety and went to meetings down the street. They were the same meetings I would show up to periodically. Rick had been watching me for some time. I figured out that the Big Book on the table wasn't left there by coincidence.

Now you would think that I would take advantage of this opportunity to get sober. Instead, my keen alcoholic mind told me that I can no longer drink on the porch. In fact, this was a new obstacle. I was going to have to put forth a great deal of effort to hide my drinking from Apartment B5.

**Cont' next page**

## CONT'FROM PG. 3 - ANOTHER CHANCE

Over the years that I have been in recovery, I've seen hundreds of men and women, like me, come into the halls of Alcoholics Anonymous and then

go back out again. Getting sober was the most difficult thing I have ever done in my life. I never understood these "one chip wonders" who get it the first time. Both my Boston sponsor and Georgia sponsor

fall into this category; they only have one white chip. I emphasize to the men I sponsor that it isn't necessary to go back out drinking. Relapse isn't a requirement to join A.A. However, at the same time, I am so thankful that the old-timers repeatedly urged "Keep Coming Back"!

I have a lot of other tales like the "Rick Story" that are evidence of God's persistence with me. I was given chance after chance, and I couldn't see it. In fact, I didn't plan on making July 26, 1999 my sobriety date. My scheme that day was to get as drunk as I possibly

could. Through some coincidences that happened on that Monday, (coincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous), I arrived at Chateau Ridgeview.

***What I have discovered over the years is that my Higher Power continues to give me chance after chance. I have been given a lot of opportunities to grow spiritually as well as emotionally***

Since I wanted to get an "A" in rehab, I would carry a Big Book with me most of the time. A few days later, I read the words on page 58 which stated: "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path". I had heard this before but this time it resonated with me. I decided to get serious. I was desperate.

What I have discovered over the years is that my Higher Power continues to give me chance after chance. I have been given a lot of opportunities to grow spiritually as well as emotionally. The "Promises", which are read at most meetings, have come true in my life. Of course, the "economic insecurity" thing keeps popping up from time to time. What I didn't count on was

the joy I experience daily. Just knowing that I don't have to drink for this day gives me a boatload of gratitude.

In summarizing, I don't know why I was given so many opportunities. It's funny, but since I got sober in Georgia, my sister doesn't think Massachusetts AA works. She saw me blow away chance after chance. Thankfully, I have a loving God who put the right people in my life, at the right time, in the right situation. It was hard work and still can be at times. Every chance that was given to me was necessary in order for me to be where I am today, enjoying sobriety and enjoying life.



## ANOTHER CHANCE

SUBMITTED BY: STEVEN F.

Have you ever felt like there's just no use in trying anymore? Sometimes you just feel like giving up altogether? Nothing seems to be going right? I feel as though a lot of people reading this have felt exactly that same way. I certainly have. I made some half-hearted efforts to change, and I kept getting half-hearted results. My sick mind kept trying to fix my sick life, and it just wasn't going to happen.

Then one day . . . that began to change. I went to treatment at Ridgeview and was told I didn't ever have to feel that way again. I was given another chance. This time, after detox, I became willing, willing to take suggestions from others who've been down the same path but somehow were enjoying life today. Having a clear head made quite a difference. Before coming to treatment, a clear head was something I didn't recall having in many years.

I made a choice. I made a decision. I was going to take this opportunity and give it my all. I chose to be honest. I chose to be open-minded. I chose to be willing. I chose to give it 110% of everything I had left. Hell, I figured if it didn't work, at least I gave myself another chance.

Surely I'd be entitled to drink again if the process failed.

Thank God for another chance! Waking up, not hung-over, was foreign at first. The bloodshot eyes started clearing up. I could look at the man in the mirror without sheer disgust. I actually looked forward to my day

***I made a choice. I made a decision. I was going to take this opportunity and give it my all. I chose to be honest. I chose to be open-minded.***

without dread. I genuinely felt that I might even succeed. That glimmer of hope was the only thing that kept me hanging on. I needed this more than ever, and some part of me really wanted it too. It was a bit rough in the beginning. Why shouldn't it be? Hell, I spent the better part of 30+ years screwing it up. Overnight results were small, at best.

Not drinking during the day was monumental. A few days

turned into a week. A few weeks turned into a month. At this point, the man in the mirror started smiling at me. He had been given another chance. He was proud of what I was becoming. That made me feel good, not the kind of good I thought drinking gave me, but the "feel-good-in-your-heart" kind of good, the "reward-your-soul" kind of good.

It's been a while since that transition took place in my life. One day at a time, I continue to do the things I learned early on in the process of living a sober life. Countless blessings have come my way. Countless others, I'm sure, are on the way.

Life isn't always a bowl of cherries, but at least it's not that bowl of crap I used to carry. Life has taken on new meaning. I can't imagine living any other way today.

Thank goodness, I was given another chance!



**The 3 C's of life:**  
**CHOICES, CHANCES, CHANGES.**  
You must make a  
choice to take a chance  
or your life will never change.



## ANOTHER CHANCE

SUBMITTED BY: TREVA H.

We all have two lives. The second one starts when we realize we only have one.

I came into Ridgeview as a patient with two things left: a very faint heartbeat and a son with a broken heart. The last thing I ever wanted to do was to cause pain to anyone, especially my son and mother.

While sitting in the access center waiting to be admitted, I said, "God, how did my life come to this?" and, "Help me find the solution to stop the chaos and pain I am causing myself and others."

I was so happy to be behind locked doors, because I could

not be trusted. Little did I know I was about to be given another

*I was so happy to be behind locked doors, because I could not be trusted. Little did I know I was about to be given another chance to position myself to stop the insanity in my way of thinking.*

chance to position myself to stop the insanity in my way of thinking.

I've talked about God as though we really had a relationship all my life. The only God I had a relationship with when I

came into the rooms of AA was drugs and alcohol. It is through the power of love that I received from sponsorship, alumni, and my dear friends that I met while in treatment that I learned the character of God and how much he loved me.

Today I don't struggle with my addiction. I always had a living problem, but that is not the case today. At long last I have peace. And I thank God for the courage I found in the alumni to trust and receive the necessary help to change.

Second chances are not given to make things right but are given to prove that we could be better even after the fall.



# THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.

There is a time of day that I used to dread. It is the morning. I can say that now and smile because the idea of waking up is no longer something that scares or disappoints me. I once lived in fear of facing another day while I was struggling with alcoholism and drug addiction. From the moment I awoke, (or more precisely... came to), my mind started racing and wondering about the night before. What embarrassing thing had I done? What was the last thing I remembered? Who was I with when I ended up on this couch, bed, or floor? Those were just some questions I really did not want answered. A drink would temporarily soothe those nagging thoughts and feelings of remorse. It was a lonely existence, even as an ever-changing contingent of fellow "partiers" and users surrounded me.

My physical, emotional, and spiritual life had been in a steady substance induced decline for decades. It was marked by several attempts to restart my adulthood by choosing a college and

future career path. Every attempt would start out with a solemn oath by me that I was going to

***I knew my past was full of blown chances at becoming the man I am meant to be. However, this time it felt different... My new lifestyle fed my spirit and connected me with a Higher Power***

grow up and achieve my goal. The power of my addiction always derailed my plans. Each failed attempt at a life revival added on another layer of self-loathing and more excuses to numb my emotions. Bars and taverns were the only place I felt at home because it enabled me to drink like I needed to drink, and engage in superficial relationships so nobody would get to know the real me. Being alone was unacceptable because I would be in the company of my worst enemy.

I never imagined that an emotional, spiritual breakdown and overwhelming feeling of impending doom would lead me to a place of serenity. All of my past

attempts at controlling my drinking and drug use led to short periods of being dangerously "dry" or the realization that I was unable to face life. My way was not working. I did the unimaginable: I asked for help. The first cry for assistance was a plea to God. It was simple and honest, compared to the formal prayers of my religious upbringing. I begged aloud, "God, please help me!" Next, since I had once again been separated from my car the night before, I asked my girlfriend to come get me one more time. She had grown tired of coming to the rescue and she was definitely weary of hearing my meaningless promises. This time I said the words she had waited so long to hear, "I need help." We went home, and I called an old drinking friend who had been sober for over a year. I told him I was ready to do whatever he did to change his life. He had been waiting and praying for my call.

**Cont' next page**

## CONT'FROM PG. 7 • THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

SUBMITTED BY: EDDIE C.

He sent me to Ridgeview, and I started to face reality, and myself, without my usual substances to alter my mind and mood. It was here where I met others just like me. It was here where I found relief. It was here where I found hope. I was introduced to the 12-step program, which has given me a blueprint for living. I knew my past was full of blown chances at becoming the man I am meant to be. However, this time it felt different.

There was never a spiritual component to my previous attempts to reboot my life. My new lifestyle fed my spirit and con-

nected me with a Higher Power of my own understanding. I started forming real relationships with other recovering alcoholics and addicts. Slowly, a sense of purpose arose in my heart and soul.

My spiritual flame, which had been on the verge of extinction, became fanned by the realization that I no longer had to run from life, from me. That cry for help happened over 18 years ago. It has been an eventful journey full of twists and turns, rewards and disappointments. The difference is that my perception has been altered. I was given one more chance to realize and accept that

I could not change my past, others, or so many of the things I do not like about the world. I could, however, work on me. Thanks to this program of recovery, I have learned to love and accept love, cherishing my sobriety while creating a new life. I finally graduated college forty years after my first attempt, and even earned a Masters degree on top of that. Escaping with booze and drugs used to be my only way to cope.

Today, I wake up with a sense of purpose and gratitude. I know longer dread the dawn of a new day. Instead, I embrace it as a gift.





# ANOTHER CHANCE

SUBMITTED BY: RAY W.

*Chance* as in “opportunity” – or as in “risk”? Well, both actually, in the sense that alcoholics/addicts are generally offered another chance or two or three, etc., by their spouses, other family members, employers, friends or colleagues; but all of these are not only offering another chance, but taking one as well – that is, a risk, perhaps a big one. A Twelve-Step fellowship risks nothing in welcoming back someone who has gone back out. Rather, the Fellowship has much to gain from such hospitality. That’s why the returnee is applauded as he or she receives another white chip. It takes some courage to do this, and that should be recognized.

The difference, of course, is that the Fellowship is not wrecked by a relapse, but families, friendships, and jobs often are. There is that sad account in the Big Book (p. 136) of the employer who could not take another chance at offering his employee another chance: “I was at one time assistant manager of a corporation department employing sixty-six hundred men. One day

my secretary came in saying that Mr. B. insisted on speaking with me. I told her to say that I was not interested.

I had warned him several times that he had but one more

*It was my time, my chance to live, and I took it” (Big Book, p. 316).*

chance. Not long afterward he had called me from Hartford on two successive days, so drunk he could hardly speak. I told him he was through – finally and forever.” Little did the boss know then that his words – “finally and forever” – would now also describe the very end of his former employee’s life: Mr. B., without another chance offered, committed

suicide.

Another chance at the workplace, in the marriage or the friendship, nearly always becomes just another risk on the part of others if the alcoholic/addict does not take up the chance, the opportunity, offered in the Fellowship. “I’m convinced if I had continued on my course,” a young woman testifies on coming into AA, “I wouldn’t have survived much longer. I don’t believe I was smarter than anyone else, as I’m often told by those who came in at a later age. *It was my time, my chance to live, and I took it” (Big Book, p. 316). Let us do the same, whether it’s our first opportunity or “another chance” of whatever number. The risk is too great to do otherwise.*



## A CHANCE TO BREAK THE RELAPSE CYCLE

SUBMITTED BY: JOHN P.

My name is John and I'm in recovery, five times through treatment programs with three of those at RVI. Just to further explain about me – because I need you, the reader, to understand that I'm the type of person who goes on long, well-supplied binges; I seclude and am lucky if I make it to the ER. For me this is simply because one of any substance was never enough. Why would it be? In fact, for a long time, I played a game with myself that I could just have one, but I will always succumb to an appetite that will strangle me to death.

Personally, I think that I never stood a chance of not becoming a non-alcoholic drinker, because it's a leading killer in my family, extending well up both sides of my family tree, and my parents drank heavily for years and then prescribed a program of absolute abstinence for their children. I couldn't put this information together, connect the dots, if you will, until this present period of sobriety and with actually doing everything I could do to ensure that my recovery comes first.

All the years of trying to do things my way in a 12 step pro-

gram weren't working, so I simply had to follow directions like I would follow a GPS, and that simply means sticking to the program as it was laid out for me by my case manager and my doctor at Ridgeview. I had never fully done that before, and truthfully a lot of people don't, and that's what keeps the cycle of relapse on repeat. I now go to meetings. I accepted the suggestion, and I see a therapist...and talk. I have a very

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

competent sponsor that I'm going through the steps with, and the biggest thing of all is attending Aftercare on Thursday nights.



I can without a doubt state that the last eight months of sobriety have been the best eight months I've been sober yet in the four years I've been at it, and it's only because I forced myself to attend Aftercare. I committed to myself, when I was sitting in Ridgeview last January, that I could make time once per week to come back to Ridgeview to attend Aftercare with Sam Anders on Thursday nights no matter what. I cannot put into words the gratefulness and love I feel in my heart for the people who are in the Aftercare program and for those still out there that will join us one day. Like with any change in my life, I didn't like it at first, but being an active part of the Ridgeview Alumni community gives me access to the knowledge of lots of people with decades of sobriety and those with only days. For me there is no better reminder of what it would be like if I were to come back through as a patient or for me to choose to do the next right thing and keep on the amazing spiritual journey of light, laughter, and Love I have everyday – but always only just for today.

## A SECOND CHANCE

SUBMITTED BY: ROBIN M.

Another disappointment to myself and everyone around me. After several attempts at short-lived sobriety, I managed to pick up again after so many good things had happened in recovery. Returning to the rooms full of shame and guilt, I was unable to look at anyone, just wanting to hide. Then, after making that long walk to pick up the surrender chip, the group surrounded me with love and under-

standing. I was told to keep coming back and to not give up until the miracle happened. No judgment, only unconditional love. The fellowship provided a safe harbor from the storm of my addiction and provided the support I needed to recover one day at a time. The program of action through working the Twelve Steps helped me

build a connection with a higher power, clean up my past, and help others with my experience in and out of recovery. I'm grateful for second chances – and sometimes more than that – to have the opportunity to pick up the pieces and begin again.

We all at certain times in our lives find ourselves Broken. True strength is found in picking up the pieces.



## EVERY DAY IS ANOTHER CHANCE

SUBMITTED BY: ANTHONY R.

I have started my life anew many times. There was my life from birth to age 20, which began with such promise, yet ended in tragedy. Then there was my life as a young adult. Utter failure. There was my life as a hopeless drunk and every day was exactly the same. Prior to the latter, I was always able to decide when to end one life and begin another. It was a liberating experience – that feeling of letting go of the past life. But my life as an active alcoholic seemed to be the one I would

never escape. I thought I had ran out of chances. Time had caught me. Self-will had failed me. I was going to die alone and miserable.

This time, it was a power greater than myself that decided to grant me a new lease on life. But the difference is that every day is a new lifetime. Every day I'm set free. Every day I get another chance to show my higher power that I am worthy of the greatest gift of all. Sobriety.

The truth is, most days I don't earn it. I am not of maximum

service. I act out of fear. I caused harm. The only thing I have done right every day since getting sober is not drink. But some days... some days I maximize my service work; I spend time in prayer; I meditate; I make those phone calls; and I show my gratitude for being given another chance



## RECOVERY WORD SEARCH

This recovery word search can be a valuable tool when trying to prevent relapses into addiction. By completing this word search, addicts can remind themselves why they are on the path to recovery in the first place. As a meditative tool, this word search may help provide relief and focus for recovering addicts.

**Difficulty: Medium (Add Backwards)**

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

### Words List

meetings  
relapse  
addiction  
counselor  
motivation  
illness  
clean  
serenity  
program  
prevention  
groups  
change  
choices  
courage  
sponsor  
acceptance  
denial  
anniversary  
joy  
life  
health  
spirituality  
powerlessness



## NEW YEARS EVE PARTY – DECEMBER 31, 2017



# Celebrate New Year's Eve Sober



## Dance, eat, and enjoy the fellowship



## Celebrate with your family and friends



*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 \$100,000 towards our first \$500,000. Every single dollar raised goes into an asset management account over which the Alumni Steering Committee has sole control.*

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

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

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

### Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund Campaign

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Make checks payable to:** Ridgeview Alumni Association Endowment Fund

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

# Serenity Garden—Memorial Brick Order Form

# THE VIEW

ANOTHER CHANCE

3995 SOUTH COBB DRIVE  
SMYRNA, GA 30080

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

## Announcement:

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

We thank you for taking the time to update us.

Love & Service,  
Communications Committee

Alumni Steering  
Committee

