

Straight Talk

A publication of Fairview Riverside AA
U of M Medical Center

Meeting
Listings
Inside

September -
October 2016

Visit us online
<http://www.aafairviewriverside.org/>

Interested In Doing Straight Talk?

I have been doing Straight Talk for most of the last twenty years or so. Easily one of the best things I have ever done for myself and my AA program. But I believe, or at least hope, it has helped many people. The time has come for it to pass to someone else. My last issue will be the November/December issue of 2016. If you are interested in continuing the publication of Straight Talk, please see the AA Trustees. They meet on the second Sunday of the month at 6:30pm in the Brennan Center of the East building.

David O., Fairview Riverside AA

... we tried to carry this message



- 1) The Sunday night General Meeting will be needing new people to run the meeting. This involves set up, take down, handling donations, emceeing, and occasionally being the fill in speaker. This commitment is every Sunday evening from 6:30 to 8:30. Contact our current trusted servant Stephanie at the meeting or see contact info below.

- 2) The Wednesday night Big Book meeting needs people with some sobriety under their belts to participate and help facilitate the meeting. This is a very important meeting for the patients in Lodging Plus. For many this is their first exposure to the Big Book and a great opportunity to learn from those who have gone before. Wednesday nights at 8:15, in the North building ground level room NG42.

If you are interested in either of these 12th Step opportunities, please contact the Board of Trustees at aabtriverside@gmail.com or through our website: <http://www.aafairviewriverside.org/contact.htm>

Or just show up and step up.

My Name's Becca...

My whole life had been surrounded by some sort of addiction. I was born in a family with an alcoholic/addict father. I thank God every day I have an amazing mother to overpower the pain I felt growing up without someone I had to call daddy.

He left our family when I was only eight years old, leaving his daughter and son behind because getting drunk and high was more important. I never understood how someone could do that until the day I looked in the mirror and saw myself as him. I became the person I hated so much. This is my story:

I'm not a bad person.

I can't change my past and no matter how dirty my past is, my future is absolutely spotless.

I had my first drink at the age of 13. I loved it; everything about it. And at first it was the solution to my depression and anxiety. I felt the most free I have ever felt. It was like I was reborn. There was magic in alcohol right from that first sip. I spent my high school career only caring about when I could drink next.

My Name's Becca... continued on page 3

The Powers That Be

Few other words are of an equal. Used so many different ways to refer to so many different things. Always dealing from a position of strength and authority... Power!! Sometimes we don't even know that we have it; or that we really don't.

I remember when I was a child, on Easter, black jelly beans were always the most sought after. My brother and sisters and I would trade various colors back and forth. One black was usually worth several of any other color.

The Powers That Be, continued on page 4

"I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MY OWN SOBRIETY"



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Of

Trust

She was very thin and appeared much older than her thirty-five years. She seemed confused, lost. I welcomed her.

She asked me where she should go. I suggested the First Step meeting and guided her to the room. I sat next to her. I asked if she'd like a cup of coffee. She replied, "Only if it has a shot of whiskey in it." I told her I understood, and brought her a plain cup anyway. She could not hold the cup without shaking. She barely sipped it. That was the first time I saw her.

After that, I saw her often at the meetings. She began to share her experience with alcohol. One night, after a meeting, I gave her my phone number. She called me several times. She talked. We shared. She asked me to be her sponsor.

First Step, Second Step, Third Step, Fourth and Fifth Steps, right through to the Twelfth Step. We read the Big Book together, at least once a week, sometimes twice. We laughed at ourselves. I looked forward to seeing her.

At ten months sober, she picked up a drink, drove into a tree, and died instantly.

***I learned we don't love people
because they are perfect.
If we did,
there would be no one to love.***

I felt the pain of loss. I missed her. I grieved for her. I felt angry at alcohol. I had come to love her and now she was gone. After many months, the pain eased a bit. I shared my feelings with my sponsor and my friends in AA.

I awoke on a beautiful summer morning and began to think about her and the great gift she had given me. My heart smiled; I was thankful she had come into my life. She had given me the gift of trust. She had indeed been a part of God's gift, insuring my recovery. I learned we don't love people because they are perfect. If we did, there would be no one to love. Could she know how grateful I am to her?

Three years later, while attending another AA meeting, I saw a young gal walk in with that same look of confusion. I greeted her with a smile, and she said, "This is my first meeting. I'm scared." I assured her that she'd be okay, and offered her coffee and a chair.

After the meeting, she approached me and asked, again, what my name was. I repeated, "Fran".

She said, "You were the one. You knew my mother. She died in a car accident. After being sober for ten months, she picked up a drink and drove. It's been about three years, now. I have a drinking problem. Will you help me?"

My cup runneth over.

*By Fran H., L'Anse, Michigan
From AA Grapevine*

It's A Promise

On April 1, 2002, I celebrated a five-year anniversary... on the job! What's the big deal? In thirty-four years I've had twenty-eight jobs. Subtract the last five years for my present job and that leaves twenty-seven jobs in twenty-nine years. An average of almost one job per year!

You see, I always knew better than my boss. I was never appreciated. I always knew the answers; nobody else knew what they were talking about.

What does this have to do with sobriety? Everything. I've been hanging in for eleven and a half years. The Promises do start to come true. Sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. I never thought I would enjoy working, let alone earning more money than I've ever earned before. I still have financial problems of my own making, but I know the Promises will continue to come true if I work for them.

Thanks to my Higher Power,
Bill W. and company,
and the people in the rooms of
Alcoholics Anonymous.

By Anonymous - From AA Grapevine



My Name's Becca... continued from page 1

I was obsessed with that next drink. Nothing else seemed to matter. The partying had gotten me into trouble at home which resulted in four hospitalizations and one arrest. I still didn't learn my lesson though, I continued to drink. Even after smoking weed laced with PCP and ending up in the hospital, that didn't stop me.

The insanity of this disease is scary. I had no fear. When I graduated high school is when it started to go downhill. I jumped from relationship to relationship. I needed that validation because I hated myself; everything about myself.

This ended me up in a few very abusive relationships. You know they say "the person you date is the exact reflection of who you are and what you think you deserve."

My Name's Becca... continued on page 5

What Can You Do?

If you have been a member of AA for a while, or even if you are still very new, you may have noticed that there is more to keeping the meeting going than simply attending the meeting. I recall when I was still pretty new to AA and attending the Sunday General Meeting. At the time, it worked very well for me, since I really did not want to go to an AA meeting anyway. Sit for an hour, get a little card signed to show the court that I had been to an AA meeting, and that was it. But one Sunday night as I was heading to the meeting in the cafeteria (this was back when it was in the building known then as the Rehab Center and the hospital was still called Saint Mary's) I noticed a sign on one of the bulletin boards in the hall. It read:

**AA at Saint Mary's
is made up of lots of willing people.
5% are willing to do the work,
the other 95% are willing to let them.**

The name of the hospital has changed, but I believe the percentages are still about the same. As important as it is for an alcoholic to attend AA, there is so much more that is possible. You could... be a sponsor, help with the Sunday General Meeting, help with Wing Meetings, be an AA trustee, help with Gopher State Roundup, write something for Straight Talk, take a meeting to a jail, help set up as needed before a meeting, clean up after the meeting, or maybe you have some special skill that could benefit AA. My experience with doing things like this has been that it gives me a greater connection to AA and makes my sobriety even stronger.

An advertisement for 'Straight Talk' featuring a fountain pen and handwritten text. The text asks if the reader has written something and if they would like to have it published in 'Straight Talk'. It provides instructions to leave a copy in the AA squad #1 box in room F537 of the West building (5th floor), addressed to Straight Talk.

**Have you
written
something?**

**Would you
like to have
it published in
Straight Talk?**

**Leave a copy in the AA squad #1 box
in room F537 of the West building
(5th floor). Address it to Straight Talk.**

The Powers That Be, continued from page 1

Of course the idea was to end up with as many jelly beans as possible. Having lots of black ones was a position of control - a position of power. It got to a point of being such a big controversy that "The Easter Bunny" had to count to make sure we each started with the same number of black ones. I have never liked the flavor of black jelly beans.

I guess at least at times, having power is important to everyone. A friend from high school once talked of an opportunity he had at two different jobs. They were both for the position of security guard. He wasn't sure which one he would take. The pay did not really matter to him. However, the question of which job would offer him the most power and authority was a big concern.

"Having power is not nearly as important as what you choose to do with it."

I don't know who said that. But I suppose many people would do well to heed that advice. With sobriety, it's a major tenet. Right away in Step One we discovered that we either did not have it or used it wrong. As we move into the other steps, we learn that it's often best to share power with someone or something else. And at times, let someone or something outside of ourselves have all the power.

But sobriety can give us power as well:

Power to choose.

Power to manage our affairs better.

Power to stay sober.

There is the matter of learning how to use all this power. There is no magic. None of it is meant to be quick or easy. After all, it is power we have never had; or at least not used properly.

When I was in my outpatient group, one of our first assignments was to make a list of things that had more power than we did. The counselor we had at the time I did my list, made a special point of saying that for each of us in the group, drugs and/or alcohol must be first on the list. At the time it seemed a bit silly to me. I'd kinda figured it needed to be on the list. But first, third, or tenth, on the list is on the list. Looking back, it now makes sense.

The Powers That Be, continued on page 5

Have a question
about what happens to
the dollar you contribute at
your AA meeting?

The AA trustees
have the answer.

The trustees meet
on the second Sunday of
each month in
the Brennan Center
(East Building)
at 6:30pm.



Join us for a
Speaker Meeting

Brennan Center
East Building
Sunday @ 7:15pm

AA
Sunday
Night



My Name's Becca... continued from page 3

My very last relationship was the worst. Drugs, alcohol, and fighting consumed the entire thing. I loved him though; even with all the lies, the bruises, the fights, I loved the chaos. The lifestyle I had was nothing but abnormal, and it felt so right.

Having no money due to our addiction, lead to us selling drugs. Whether it was my pills, or being the "middle man" in crack deals, the stress between us got too great and ended our relationship in one last fight. The scars left on my heart hurt more than the bruises he left all over my body.

A quote that best describes this feeling is:

"It's like you're screaming and no one can hear.
You almost feel ashamed that someone could be that important; that without them, you feel like nothing.
No one will ever understand how much it hurts; you feel hopeless, like nothing can save you.
And when it's over and it's gone, you almost wish that you could have all that bad stuff back,
so that you could have the good."

When the relationship was over I went on a two month straight drinking binge. I would do anything for a bottle, whether I had to steal, pawn valuables, or have sex with a guy. I degraded myself just to feel ok, to stop the shaking. Just to hide the pain of what had happened to me. And every time I degraded myself it was another reason to drink. It was a vicious cycle. I felt trapped, lost, and broken. A lot of people got hurt during those two months. I was walking through hell every day and I was dragging the people who care right behind me.

I've put my mother through unbearable pain. She never knew if she was going to get a phone call saying her only daughter is dead. The sad part of it is that I was praying and praying I would die. I put myself in situations where the possibilities of my life ending were great. I've come to near death experiences more times than I can count; ranging from alcohol poisoning to drunk driving to getting involved with gang members. I didn't value life anymore. I felt I had no reason to live. I couldn't stop drinking on my own, it was nearly impossible. I ended up in two different rehabs from September to December. Relapse is a part of my story.

This disease is very powerful; every day I'm sober that monster is doing pushups and getting stronger, waiting for me to slip so it can drag me back to hell. I have 33 days sober today. Even though most days are beyond s****y and my emotions drown me, at moments I feel a genuine happiness that can't be found in a bottle, a pill, or a guy.

I feel grateful that I can look at myself in the mirror and say "I'm not a bad person". I can't change my past and no matter how dirty my past is, my future is absolutely spotless.

I take it day by day and I do not drink no matter what.
Addiction is what I have, NOT WHO I AM.

By Becca - From the Alcoholism Guide.org

The Powers That Be, continued from page 4

I believe that, without exception, our addiction was the only thing we could list that:

Had power because we gave it.
Had enough power to destroy us.
Had enough power to make us believe we had power over it.
Had enough power that even if we realized all this, it was still difficult to decide to change anything.

Nothing else we might put on the list could fit all of this.

Starting recovery was not my idea. It seemed as if I had no power in this. The court decided it for me. I guess that had a lot to do with why I put the court on my list. I've discovered that many things have more power than I do. But I believe that by staying sober and working my program, I have the most power I can and the best way of using it. I also believe it's a continuing effort and that I need to keep it all in perspective. After all, at one time I even allowed jelly beans to have a lot of power.

By David O., Fairview Riverside AA

From Recent Email

A prosecuting attorney called his first witness, a grandmotherly woman to the stand. He approached her and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know me?"

She responded, "Why yes, I do know you, Mr. Williams. I've known you since you were a boy, and frankly, you've been a big disappointment to me. You lie, you cheat on your wife, and you manipulate people and talk about them behind their backs. You think you're a big shot when you haven't the brains to realize you'll never amount to anything more than a two-bit paper pusher. Yes, I know you."

The lawyer was stunned. Not knowing what else to do, he pointed across the room and asked, "Mrs. Jones, do you know the defense attorney?"

She again replied, "Why yes, I do. I've known Mr. Bradley since he was a youngster, too. He's lazy, bigoted, and he has a drinking problem. He can't build a normal relationship with anyone, and his law practice is one of the worst in the entire state. Not to mention he cheated on his wife with three different women. One of them was your wife. Yes, I know him."

The defense attorney nearly died.

The judge asked both counselors to approach the bench and, in a very quiet voice, said, "If either of you idiots asks her if she knows me, I'll send you both to the electric chair!"



Shopping for a new head?



“!
”

**If you drink,
don't park;
accidents cause
people**

-- Anonymous

U of M Medical Center Fairview Meeting Listings

Day	Group	Time	Location
ACA ACOA			
Monday	10	8:00pm	North Building - Ground Level NG22
Tuesday	4	9:00pm	North Building - Ground Level NG22
Al-Anon			
Monday	36	7:00pm	North Building - Ground Level NG23
Tuesday	33	7:00pm	Bethany Lutheran Church Franklin Avenue @ 25th Avenue
Sunday	AA General Meeting	7:15pm	East Building - Brennan Center
CA			
Wednesday		8:30pm	West Building - 5th Floor Lecture Hall
GA			
Sunday		7:00pm	East Building - MB114 (Dining Room F) (Tunnel Level)
NA			
Friday		8:00pm	East Building - Brennan Center
OA			
Monday		4:45pm	East Building - MB114 (Dining Room F) (Tunnel Level)
WA (Workaholics Anonymous)			
Wednesday		11:30am	East Building - Dining Room E

*Is your group not listed? Is your group listed incorrectly?
Please leave a note with any changes in the AA group one mailbox.

Mailboxes are located in the West Building - Room F537.

AA Meeting Listings U of M Medical Center Fairview

Day	Group/Squad	Time	Location
Monday	3	5:30pm	East Building - Dining Room E
	43	7:00pm	North Building - Ground Level NG48
Tuesday	57/36	1:00pm	West Building - Fifth Floor F571
	62	7:00pm	Bethany Lutheran Church Franklin Avenue @ 25th Avenue
	9	8:00pm	North Building - Ground Level NG42
Wednesday	32	5:30pm	East Building - MB114 (Dining Room F) (Tunnel Level)
	20	7:00pm	West Building - Fifth Floor F541
	71(signing meeting)	7:30pm	West Building - Fifth Floor F572 (American Sign Language Only)
	51	8:15pm	North Building - Ground Level NG42 (Big Book Meeting)
Friday	46	7:00pm	East Building - MB114 (Dining Room F) (Tunnel Level)
	70	8:30pm	North Building - Ground Level NG42
Saturday	1	8:00pm	East Building - Brennan Center
Sunday	47	5:30pm	East Building - MB114 (Dining Room F) (Tunnel Level)
	General Meeting	7:15pm	East Building - Brennan Center
	2	8:30pm	East Building - Brennan Center
Trustees	2nd Sunday each month	6:30pm	East Building - Brennan Center

People who don't go to meetings aren't there to see what happens to people who don't go to meetings.

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