



Chestnut Health Systems  
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Bloomington, IL 61701

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# The Beacon



A quarterly publication from Chestnut Health Systems Alumni Services 2nd Quarter 2009

## A Letter to Our Readers

Hello Again,

After our harsh, cold winter, the sun has finally begun to shine longer and the air is becoming warmer. Over the past few months we have had great strides in advancing our Alumni program. There will be more in the months to come, and we need your help to carry the message to the next person searching for a solution from their addiction.

Alumni Services has planned a variety of events for 2009. These events are open to ANYONE over the age of 18 who is in recovery. Some of the events will be open to bringing a guest or spouse, and some of these events will include activities for kids as well. Being early in a recovery path, it can sometimes be intimidating to attend a group or function, but I know for myself I always felt better for walking through the fear and showing up. We look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events.

Check out our Illinois Recovery Calendar of Events, as well as the Calendar of upcoming local events on the back page. In recovery it is so important to replace boredom, complacency, and old using activities, with new sober experiences that are around us...we just have to have the courage to try something new, and try it sober! There is also a website for Bloomington-Normal that has great coupons that are free to the public to print for local restaurants and events, check it out: [www.bloomingtonnormalcvb.org](http://www.bloomingtonnormalcvb.org)

I welcome any ideas or suggestions you have for Alumni Services, feel free to contact me at 820-3819 or e-mail me at [alumni@chestnut.org](mailto:alumni@chestnut.org).

Sincerely,  
Amy Kennedy  
Alumni & Volunteer Coordinator

## International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous July 1-4, 2010

San Antonio, Texas with the theme "A Vision for You."

A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.'s 75th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Alamo Dome.

Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio Convention Center and local hotels.

Convention registration and housing reservations will open in fall 2009.

For more information go to AA World Service Website: [www.AA.org](http://www.AA.org)

## [www.chestnut.org/alumni](http://www.chestnut.org/alumni)

A page just for Alumni is on Chestnut's website. This page includes a calendar of events, volunteer opportunities, and highlights from past alumni events. Look for the following to appear in the future newsletters and information on alumni support groups.

## Believe It or Not: Strange Tales from the History of Addiction Treatment

By: William L. White M.A.

Efforts by professionals to "treat" alcoholism and other addictions have a long and colorful history. Alcoholics have been forced to drink their own urine and forced to drink wine in which an eel had been suffocated. They have been surreptitiously dosed with everything from mole blood to sparrow dung and subjected to a Swedish treatment in which everything they consumed and even their clothes and bedding were saturated with whiskey.

They have been prescribed dietary treatments that included the apple, salt, grape, banana, onion, and watermelon cures. They have been fed gold, iron and bark to quell their appetite for alcohol.

Harm done in the name of good is an enduring theme in the history of addiction treatment. Even Dr. Benjamin Rush, the father of the American disease concept of alcoholism, treated alcoholics by blistering, bleeding, and unknowingly poisoning them with mercury-laden medicines.

In the 19th century, alcoholics and addicts were routinely prescribed alcohol, narcotics, marijuana, sedatives, stimulants, and hallucinogens. Dr. J.B. Bently prescribed cocaine by the pound as a treatment for alcohol and morphine addiction and reported, as a testament to the cocaine's effectiveness, that his patients were requesting additional quantities of cocaine and that they had completely lost their appetite for alcohol and morphine.

There were bromide sleep treatments for narcotic withdrawal that killed 20% of patients undergoing the procedure.

There was the physician who, noting that alcohol intake decreased among his patients suffering active stages of gonorrhea, recommended medically infecting alcoholics with gonorrhea as a way to save the expense of sanatorium treatment.

Through the first half of the 20th century alcoholics and addicts were subjected to legally mandated sterilization which on the grounds that it would prevent the birth of future generations of alcoholics and could treat the underlying physical causes of alcoholism.

There were early 20th century serum therapies that involved raising blisters on the addicts skin, withdrawing the serum from the blisters, and then injecting this serum into the addict during withdrawal. There were also withdrawal therapies in the 1930s utilizing substances that could induce psychoses of up to two months duration.

Alcoholics and addicts were indiscriminately exposed to whatever was in vogue within the broader arenas of medicine or psychiatry. The 1940s and 1950s witnessed addiction treatments that included electroconvulsive and insulin shock therapies and the use of psychosurgery (the prefrontal lobotomy). At least one alcoholic commended the latter, reporting that, following the surgery, he could get "twice as tight on half the hooch."

The 1950s also witnessed the use of methamphetamine as a medically prescribed substitute for alcohol and heroin—a practice that nurtured the subsequent growth of a methamphetamine injection subculture.

It is easy to look back with condescension at the practice of treating morphine addiction with cocaine or alcoholism with practically every other psychoactive drug.

It is easy to look back with outrage at the mandatory sterilization of alcoholics or their being blistered, bled, and subjected to invasive interventions from psychosurgery to shock therapies.

But an important lesson is that the harmfulness of these interventions was not visible in their own time. History demands that those seeking treatment for addiction to alcohol and other drugs honor the adage, "Let the buyer beware" and demand that treatment providers adhere to the ultimate ethical mandate: "First do no harm!"

White, W. (2006). Believe it or not: Strange tales from the history of addiction treatment. Posted at [www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org)  
William White is the author of *Slaying the Dragon: The History of Addiction Treatment and Recovery in America*, from which this article is abstracted.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Upcoming Local Community Events

MAY

May - October  
Downtown Bloomington Farmers Market  
Saturdays 7:30am - Noon

May 1st - First Friday's in Downtown Bloomington. An evening of Arts & Entertainment. 5:00pm - 8:00pm

May 1st 5:30-8:00pm  
Free Family Fun Carnival  
Miller Park Pavilion—front lawn

May 10th Mother's Day

May 17th  
3rd Sunday Market  
Bloomington Interstate Center

May 23rd Local Pools Open

May 25th Memorial Day

**ALUMNI CHICK NIGHT**  
Golf Learning Center  
(Women Only) More details to come.

JUNE

June 3 - September 30th  
Uptown Normal Trailside Market  
Tuesday Nights 3:30 - 6:00pm  
Across from Children's Discovery Museum.

June 5th - First Friday's in Downtown Bloomington. An evening of Arts & Entertainment. 5:00pm - 8:00pm

June 13 GLT Summer Concert  
Downtown Bloomington, IL  
4:30-9:30 and it's FREE!

June 18th Franklin Park Concert  
6:00pm Ice Cream  
7:00pm Free Concert  
(every Thursday through 7/30)

June 21st  
3rd Sunday Market  
Bloomington Interstate Center

**ALUMNI Guy's NIGHT OUT**  
Golf Learning Center  
(Men Only) More details to come.

JULY

July 3rd - First Friday's in Downtown Bloomington. An evening of Arts & Entertainment. 5:00pm - 8:00pm

July 4th  
USA Independence Day  
Firework Displays at several local parks

July 11-12th Sugar Creek Arts Festival in Uptown Normal

July 19th 3rd Sunday Market  
Bloomington Interstate Center

July 29 - August 2.  
McLean County Fair  
Bloomington Interstate Center

**Recovery Alive, July 25**  
7pm Potluck  
8pm Speaker:  
Martin Luther King Dr.  
Conference Center (Downstairs)  
**DESSERT CONTEST**  
(bring your best home made dessert & win a prize)  
\*open to bring a guest or spouse



## Congratulations!

On April 25th we had our pot-luck and recovery speaker event at the Martin Luther King Dr. location. We also had our drawing for the 19" flat screen TV/DVD.

Congratulations to Pamela Bonanno who's name was drawn from the jar of tickets by one of our adolescent clients. Pamela is a Chestnut Alumni and was very excited to be the winner and get to take the TV home.

Please join us on Saturday July 25th for our next Speaker & Pot Luck!

## Spring Into Service!

Being of Service is an important part of recovery and what better way to give back than by volunteering at Chestnut?

- Recovery Phone Volunteers
- Recovery Coaches
- Adolescent Chemical Dependency Treatment Program Mentors & Tutors
- Adult Chemical Dependency
- Treatment Program Mentors
- Marketing Communications &
- Clerical Support Services
- Special Events
- Facilities & Maintenance

More information, and a volunteer application can be found on our website: [www.chestnut.org/volunteers](http://www.chestnut.org/volunteers). You can also contact Amy Kennedy at (309) 827-6026.



Tuesday Nights 6-9:30pm  
1st Assembly of God  
800 E. Vernon Ave. Normal, IL.

Friday Nights 6-9:30pm  
Heartland Community Church  
1811 N. Linden St. Normal, IL

(309) 454-2402 for more information.

## MEDITATION CORNER

*"Although all men share a common destiny, each individual also has to work out his personal salvation for himself. We can help each other find the meaning of life, but in the last analysis, each is responsible for finding himself."*

-Thomas Merton

One of the great spiritual truths is that each person must work out his or her own personal salvation. When a person you care about is in trouble, you can reach out to support his or her healing, but past a certain point you can do no more. No matter how much you love, you cannot carry another person's burdens.

What can you do when someone you love is in pain? First, affirm that there is a purpose behind the experience. Know that the soul has some important lesson to learn that will be of great value to him or her.

Second, although you cannot directly intervene, your positive thoughts and prayers do make a difference. Visualize your friend surrounded by light and love. This type of healing acts directly on the soul level and does not encounter resistance from the conscious mind.

Finally, know that Divine protection is present. The forces of light are always available to the person who requests help. Ultimately, no soul can be lost; as all who ask will be guided to the safety of their spiritual home.

*From: Listening to Your Inner Voice. Copyright 1991, by Douglas Bloch. Reprinted with permission from The Hazelden Foundation.*



## Chick Flick Night

We had a lot of fun on our Girl's Night Out. We all went to dinner at Monical's Pizza and then caught the movie, "He's just not that into you." It was great to hang out with other sober women.

We hope that you can join us on our next event on Sunday May 31st when we check out the Golf Learning Center.

## Guy's Night Out

We had a total of 15 people for our guy's night out, with dinner at Fiesta Ranchero and then to the movie, "Knowing" which really was good and kept us on the edge of our seats! Everyone appreciated being able to get out with other people in recovery and have a good time with lots of laughs about the hot sauce...(guess you had to be there). Hope that you can come with us next time on June 28th when we go to the Golf Learning Center to wack a few golf balls.



The Alumni Department wants to hear from you.  
Call or send us an email to keep in touch and let us know how you are doing!  
[alumni@chesntut.org](mailto:alumni@chesntut.org)

## increase the peace

### Forgiveness

By: Amy Kennedy

While doing research for this quarter's newsletter, I ran across an interesting article about forgiveness. In my recovery, I have experienced struggles with forgiveness in my own life, and have also been in a personal prison of being unable to forgive others and myself. Over the years I have learned to practice forgiveness and felt the freedom that accompanies that practice. Along with that practice came the shift in myself of no longer wanting to live in the chaos and drama of the resentment and victim role, because it was no longer a comfortable way to react.

I recently found on a website called News Wise, that National Forgiveness Week runs from June 14 to 20 and is called "a celebration of the people, by the people and for the people of the U.S." by Positive People Partners - its founding group. The weeklong observance asks people to forgive themselves on Sunday, spouses on Monday, children on Tuesday, family on Wednesday, friends on Thursday, neighbors on Friday and enemies on Saturday.

Forgiveness Week started less than a week after the execution of convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh. Maybe that's good, according to a recent forgiveness study by researchers from Hope College in Holland, Mich. The study found that "victims who harbored bad memories and nursed grudges towards their offenders suffered more aversive emotional and physiological responses that may erode health over time, while forgiving responses may enhance it." In short, resentments hurt us in many ways.

In a separate article, Hope Assistant Professor of Psychology Charlotte VanOyen Witvliet wrote: "For those deeply wounded by this heinous crime, they may find that in addition to justice, they may need to embrace forgiveness in order to come to an even greater resolution. This comes from understanding that forgiveness is not to be confused with excusing, minimizing, ignoring, or forgetting," says Witvliet. "Furthermore, for those hurt by the actions of an offender, justice is an appropriate and necessary response to crimes, however justice alone may not bring the resolution many victims long for."

Researchers define forgiveness in two ways. One is relinquishing bitterness or vengeance, and the second is adopting a merciful response towards the offender - finding even a small way in which you can genuinely wish good for the offender. I know that the later of these two was personally very difficult. I struggled with even feeling good about myself because of things I had done and the torment those feelings produced; I wouldn't wish that internal struggle onto someone else. That made it easier to make a start to wish good for others.

Witvliet went on to say, "The difficulty with forgiveness is that we often want the offender - like McVeigh - to confess, express contrition and repent and show outward signs of transformation. But, there are times when that's not going to happen, and this may be one of those cases," says Witvliet. "If we who have been victimized and wait to forgive until that offender expresses those feelings, we essentially commit to remaining as a prisoner to our bitter, hurtful feelings. We're giving control of our emotional, physical and spiritual state to the very person who wasn't trustworthy in the first place -- rather than embracing the key that can release us from the prisons of our destructive emotions. There is nothing easy about forgiveness. It takes so much moral muscle. It takes tremendous courage, and yet this difficult path ultimately leads to life."

Witvliet also talked about the physical devastation that can be caused, "Chronic unforgiving and begrudging responses may contribute to adverse health outcomes by perpetuating anger and heightened sympathetic nervous system arousal and cardiovascular reactivity," says Witvliet. "Expression of anger has been strongly associated with chronically elevated blood pressure and with aggregation of platelets, which may increase vulnerability for heart disease - especially if the expressions of anger are frequent and enduring. Although fleeting expressions of unforgiveness may not erode health, more frequent, intense, and sustained unforgiving emotional imagery and behaviors may create physiological vulnerabilities or exacerbate existing problems in a way that erodes health."

I truly related to this article and know that I can experience feeling exhausted and drained after a bout of anger or rehashing an emotional hurt from my past. The important thing is that I try to live in the solution today and everyday, not in the mud of the problem or past. I surround myself with supportive people in my life that also strive to live in the peace of the solution and help to lift one another up to accomplish that.

*-Parts of this article were reprinted with permission from [www.newswise.com](http://www.newswise.com)*

## Illinois Recovery Calendar of Events

### May 2009

- BNAA May 25th Annual Memorial Day Picnic Underwood Park-Jersey Ave. Normal, IL 11am-3pm
- Great Family Fun - Please bring a side dish to share if you can.
- AA Vision for you Group May 29 Pot Luck 7pm with 8pm Speaker: Ray S. St. Mary's Church Bloomington, IL (last Friday of every month)
- Oakland Ave. AA Noontime Group Saturday May. 14 Noon Speaker St. Matthews Church 1920 E. Oakland Ave. Bloomington, IL (second Saturday of every month)
- NA OOPS Speaker Jam XII May 2 Recovery, Food, & Fun 9am -Midnight Salvation Army 229 W. Main St. Decatur, IL
- AA Chicago Second City Round-up May 15-17 Speakers: Tim R. IL., Billy N. NJ., Burns B. KY, Pat Y. CA, & more. Workshop with Dr. Burns B. Info:Bill (708)372-4186 Jonas (773)988-7423 Kimmy(773)559-9539 Holiday Inn Chicago North Shore Skokie, IL
- St. Louis Annual AA Spring Fling Convention May 22-24 Hilton Frontenac 1335 S. Lindbergh Blvd. Speakers: Keith D.& Sue D. CA., Michael E. GA., Joe G. TX., Beth G. OH. Info: John S. (314)413-5939 Eva S. (314)620-5572
- 51st International ICYPAA Atlanta GA. May 21-24 Info: Marcy(404)661-4464 Pat(404)387-8478 Matt(404)723-5193

### June 2009

- AA Vision for you Group June 26 Pot Luck 7pm with 8pm Speaker: Joyce H. St. Mary's Church Bloomington, IL (last Friday of every month)
- Oakland Ave. Noontime Group Saturday June 13 Noon Speaker St. Matthews Church 1920 E. Oakland Ave. Bloomington, IL (second Saturday of every month)
- 25th NA Annual Flight to Freedom June 12-14 Speakers, Workshops, Meetings, Dance, Raffles Info: Hank (618)233-0730 Jim (618)735-9201 Gene (618)242-4942 McNair Campground Carlyle, IL.
- 9th Annual Midwest Motorcycle AA Convention June 26-28 Emerald Acres Campground, Pearl City, IL Speakers:Lyle P. GA., Kathy O. WV., Mari G. ONT., Tim T. OH. Info: Mike (815)238-8340 Tom (815)623-5329 [www.MMAAC.org](http://www.MMAAC.org)

### July 2009

- BNAA Annual 4th of July Picnic Underwood Park-Jersey Ave. Normal, IL 11am-3pm
- Great Family Fun-Please bring a side dish to share if you can.
- AA Vision for you Group July 31 Pot Luck 7pm with 8pm Speaker: Joe T. St. Mary's Church Bloomington, IL (last Friday of every month)
- Oakland Ave. Noontime Group Saturday July 11 Noon Speaker St. Matthews Church 1920 E. Oakland Ave. Bloomington, IL (second Saturday of every month)
- 30th NA Annual High on Life Picnic July 24th-26th Info: Pete (417)483-3854 Donnie (417)492-3343 Bucksaw Resort, Truman Lake, Clinton Mo.
- Recovery Live PotLuck & Speaker July 25 7pm PotLuck, Dessert Contest & 8pm Speaker: Kara H. Chestnut Health Systems, Martin Luther King Dr. Conference Center (downstairs)