

# The Eye pener

Vol 23 No. 8 - October 2023

Your Experience, Strength, and Hope via the Written Word

## My AA Anchor

**My home group,** Milton at Last, in Milton, is my A.A. anchor. In fact, since I came into the rooms over 34 years ago, A.A. home groups have been the anchors that kept me from running away.

I experienced a 'high bottom,' if you measure bottoms in relation to age, tragedies, health issues or incarcerations! I was 25, one DWI charge, one divorce, maintaining a career in the National Guard, and working full-time for the Guard. I was addicted to beer as much as I was to dysfunctional relationships, which brought all the drama and reasons to get drunk. I met a guy who was mandated to go to A.A. by the courts and was experiencing the low bottom by rejecting the fellowship over and over again. I followed that drama!

He introduced me to A.A. meetings, which provided me with the first glimmer of alcohol as the problem for my drama and not the answer. I was attracted to the cheery huggers, smoking and drinking coffee.



After several tries over the next year, my boyfriend and I were able to remain sober. I got a sponsor who told me to join a home group and get active. So, I did!

My first home group was a large, double speaker meeting where we set up 50 chairs in the school gym. There were plenty of assignments to sign up for. Early on, I considered getting drunk many times over the boyfriend drama, but I had a commitment to set up, greet, make coffee, bring snacks, or chair the meeting. That encouraged me to put off getting drunk. By the time my commitment was complete, I did not want to drink anymore and was able to deploy other tools to deal with the boyfriend and other realities of being a sober grown up.

Circumstances have caused me to change my home group a few times over the years, but the recipe is the same. When my disease nudges me to go back out, my home group anchor keeps me from leaving. I moved to Milton in 2003. I have less drama, but my disease sometimes tries to lure me away. It is my love and commitment to my group members, our primary purpose to keep the lights on for newcomers, and the feeling of connection that have anchored me to my home group.

The best advice I give newcomers is: join a home group and get active!

Peace.

~Doris S.

Milton at Last

THE ARTICLES CONTAINED HEREIN ARE PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF INDIVIDUALS' EXPERIENCES.

THEY DO NOT REFLECT THE OPINIONS OR POSITIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EYE OPENER COMMITTEE OR A.A. AS A WHOLE.

---

## Humility and Serenity

---

### I remember

watching the commercial as a child, “Nobody chooses to be an alcoholic.”

I thought there was something inviting and mysterious about that commercial, and interesting. The last thing I wanted to be was ordinary. I never felt comfortable just sitting with anything, and starting drinking at an early age made me feel like I was taking control. It took a couple of years to figure out the right amount to drink, but when I finally did, it was like a light went on. I now had a purpose in life: to get more alcohol and to seek out

people that drank like I did.

I had family that found recovery, and I was always familiar with AA. To me, it seemed like it was all old people that just liked to talk about the old days. But I heard enough truth and honesty to make me think. Like how “my uncle died” - repeatedly - and I had to miss work to go to his funeral, when the truth was that I was really too hung over to go to work or too afraid of not getting enough alcohol to get through the day.

In just a few years, drinking dictated where I worked, where I lived, and who I spent time with. I wanted something more in life, but I just couldn't see the whole puzzle. It began to affect my health to the point where I wanted to stop drinking, but I was powerless. I thought that eventually I could think or reason my way out of the situation I

was in. When I thought of going to a meeting, I imagined that I needed to come through the door and tell everyone how to get sober. I had no idea how to humble myself.

At last, I came to a physical, emotional, and spiritual bottom. In a flash, I lost the desire to drink.

I soon found that alcohol was but a symptom of this disease. After 60 days of white knuckling it on my own, I was still lying and stealing and wishing I could stop, but I was out of ideas. In a fit of desperation, I humbled myself and called the hotline. I admitted I was an alcoholic and asked where the next meeting was.

The next day, I went to my first meeting as a qualifying alcoholic. As broken as I felt, I'll never forget the sense of hope I felt in that first meeting when someone said, “You never need to drink again.” (p. 3)

GOD GRANT ME  
the *Serenity* to accept the things I cannot change  
the *Courage* to change the things I can  
and the *Wisdom* to know the difference

Please visit the AA Vermont District [News & Events](#) page for more information.

I went to meetings every day, I talked and listened to other alcoholics, and I practiced not lying, one day at a time. Gradually, I started being honest with myself and others. I found that there wasn't some big secret to life and staying sober. I just needed to be humble, ask for help, and tell the truth. My home group talks a lot about being able to do "the next right thing," and when I'm able to put all the parts of my recovery into action, this is possible.

~Matthew T.  
Milton at Last

---

## Beyond Grateful

---

### My name is Emily,

and I'm an addict and alcoholic. I grew up in a suburb outside of Boston with two parents, an older sister, and a younger brother. Growing up as a middle child, I always felt a bit in the shadows, and both my siblings had pretty serious anger issues. When my older sister was in middle and high school, there was a lot of fighting at home between her and my parents. Sometimes the fighting became physical, and I often spent time at friends' houses to avoid being at home during the fights.

Around the time she left for college I started smoking pot with my friends, and I was quickly hooked. I was smoking whenever I had the

chance, including at home by myself and before school. When I was caught smoking, my parents reacted pretty harshly. They told me I was just like my sister and couldn't believe I had done this to them. I started drinking with friends and by myself shortly after. I also started self harming around this time. I felt like I had a deep sadness inside of me, and I was always trying to numb it with substances. I was diagnosed with depression in high school and started therapy, which is something I've continued throughout my life.

During college, the drinking and drug use continued. I also discovered I was a lesbian, and I fell in love with my best friend. After years of keeping that secret, I finally told her and ended up losing most of my friends over it. Around that time, my cousin died of leukemia at age 8. (p.4)

### Milton At Last (Open)

United Church Milton | 51 Main ST, Milton

Discussion | Wheelchair Accessible

Wednesdays | 8:00 p.m.

Hybrid meeting in-person and on [Zoom](#).



My friends had to call my parents to take me out of school because my drinking had gotten so bad. I returned to school, and the drinking and drugging continued into my twenties. I moved to Boston for work and continued to drink and drug by myself and with friends. Along with my depression, my anxiety started to become bad. I was prescribed Ativan by my psychiatrist. For years I tried to manage my rollercoaster of emotions with substances on my own, but I felt like it was a constant uphill battle.

In May 2022, my fiancé and partner of 9 years broke up with me. That's when I completely broke down and decided to get help. I went to an inpatient facility in California then moved back to Burlington to do outpatient after that. I immersed myself in the AA community here in Burlington, got a sponsor, and

started working the program with everything I had. Within months of getting sober in May, my life was already changing for the better. My depression and anxiety felt much more manageable. I was realizing that a sober life was worth living.

I completed the 12 steps with my sponsor in June shortly after my one year sobriety date. I feel beyond grateful to have worked the steps with such an amazing person. I am also so honored to get to be part of this program. I have learned so much about managing my life and really living it, instead of hiding from it out of fear or just living in resentment. The fellowship of the program and the values that we learn have changed my perspective on life and allowed me to be a better partner, friend, daughter, sister, and all around better human.

~Emily

Step



Please visit us at [www.burlingtonaa.org](http://www.burlingtonaa.org) for more local stories and meeting information.

---

## Eye Opener Committee

*Districts 2 & 11 Vermont*

Founder	Erwin L.
Editor	Ali J.
Chair for District 11	Ali J.