

# The Freedom Flyer

NFF's Monthly Newsletter ~ Keeping the Community Connected

October 2015

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Stay up-to-date with meetings, announcements, and special events.

## September was Big Month for NFF and the Recovery Community



Top: NFF Volunteers at Recovery Walks, Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>. Photo by Jim Eastwood  
Bottom: NFF Bonfire Celebration Meeting, Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>. Photo by Chelsea Eastwood

Last month was National Recovery Month, and Newfound Freedom gathered together for a couple of big events.

On the morning of September 19<sup>th</sup>, over a dozen NFF volunteers headed to Penn's Landing to join the crew at Recovery Walks. Jim Eastwood lead the pack, along with John Korek, both of whom coordinated the volunteers, the transportation, and all the little things the rest of us don't think about.

"We got there at 6am and helped set up," said Jim. "It's a lot of work but it's exciting. Good to see everyone come out and walk for this purpose."

The event began around 8am, as thousands began flocking to the registration tables, meeting up with their groups, and enjoying some pre-walk music and snacks. NFF volunteers manned the food tents and the registration tables.

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## Happy Fall!



## Spotlight on Creativity: The Writing Contest

This Newsletter was created as a way to connect our residents, our alumni, and the greater community. It is an excellent platform to bring you important news, updates, events, and to highlight the amazing things that happen at Newfound Freedom and in the recovery community.

In addition to being an excellent source for information, we would also like to see the newsletter grow as a platform for creativity- a place for our community to share their thoughts and feelings. We want to facilitate greater involvement from our readers, allowing *you* to take ownership of our little publication.

As a first step to cultivating this collaboration, the Freedom Flyer launched its very first creative contest this past summer. Readers were given several months to submit work of any printable medium based on a given theme- *Change*.

Change is a very important and powerful theme in recovery and in life overall. As we grow, we change. As we learn, as we experience new things, we change. We can choose to work on ourselves, thus sparking a change deep within. This time of year the leaves change color and the weather turns from warm and sticky to cold and crisp. Change is all around us. It is unavoidable and it is constant.

For all of these reasons, we felt that *Change* was a good theme to start with, and it inspired a lot of powerful, passionate work. We were lucky to receive several poems and one short story. Not bad for a first try. This fall we are publishing three of the submitted pieces.

This will not be the Flyer's last creative contest. We will continue to offer these pages to artists, writers, and thinkers of all kinds and encourage more contribution from residents, alumni, family, and friends.

For now, we celebrate these first three pieces and we celebrate the authors who have shared with us their beautiful work.

Please enjoy.

**Thank you to  
everyone who  
submitted pieces to  
our first creative  
contest!**

### Misconduct

Golden girls  
Get picked off  
Fall from grace  
In the blink of an eye.  
Stay in the herd  
Fame is fleeting  
Unless  
You have a spiritual handler  
Whose protection and mercy  
Trumps your ego and delusions  
If you feel like the sacrificial lamb  
You probably are.  
Too complicated and devastating  
To rebound at first  
Heed the prophecies  
Once under the bus  
You scramble back to life  
Back to purpose  
Faith, strength, and wisdom are yours  
Because  
Golden girls  
Can survive  
Even thrive  
Still glitter  
Still grow

*By Karen Burke*



## How It Works (For Me)

*By John Henry*

I used to sit around  
And watch the storm clouds gather  
I felt something was wrong  
I knew something was the matter

I couldn't quite put my finger  
On what was going on  
But I didn't feel joyous and free  
And all my happiness was gone

I took a long hard look  
On how I act each day  
And here's what came to mind  
I always wanted it my way

But that's no way to live  
Something needed to be changed  
My ideas were not working  
They needed to be re-arranged

So here are the steps I took  
To change the way I act  
If they work for me they'll work for you  
And that my friend is a fact

Step 1. I admitted I was powerless  
And couldn't drink even one  
For my life became so hurtful  
I was no longer responsible and fun

Step 2. I needed to believe in something  
More powerful than me  
Maybe a friend, priest or brother  
Or a God I couldn't see

Step 3. I decided I can't do this  
No longer on my own  
So I handed my life over  
To this power I've never known

Step 4. I had to look in the mirror  
And take a strong hard look  
And write my faults and fears  
Even if it could fill a book

Step 5. I couldn't keep this to myself  
I had to tell my new found power  
And tell another human being  
Even if it took a many hour

Step 6. Now I was finally ready  
For my power to remove these wrongs  
That always made me fall short  
That I've been holding on so long

Step 7. So I asked my new found power  
To remove my defective traits  
And everything that goes along with it  
All the greed, selfishness and hate

Step 8. I conjured up a list  
Of all the people I condemned  
And decided it was time  
To find them and make amends

Step 9. So I went out on my way  
And made the proper amends  
To everyone I hurt  
Even strangers, family and friends

Step 10. I continued to take a look  
At how I lived each day  
And admitted all my faults  
When I was wrong in every way

Step 11. I prayed to my high power  
To carry out his will  
During times of meditation  
When all was quiet and still

Step 12. These are the very steps  
I took that made me free  
And I try to help my fellows  
Who drink and act like me

Since making these decisions  
There's no more grief or strife  
By walking through these steps  
I've found a new way of life!

## Untitled

By Christian Hopkins

"If you, free as you are of every weight  
Had stayed below, then that would be as strange  
As living flame on earth remaining still."

And then she turned her gaze up toward the heavens."

— Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*

She kept feeling ghosts had taken over; ghosts that she had neither seen, nor tried to forget before. In the past six months of her life, she had ruined everything; ruined everything without any sense as to what everything meant. The people in her life - family, friends, colleagues, and psychiatrists, people she had never met - all seemed to have a tangible grasp on what everything should mean. Her life appeared a jumble of lost modular condolences. All she could remember were half emotional reactions explained through cloudy references to substances and defense mechanisms that did not pertain to anything she could absorb. Now, walking through a throng of anhedonic faces with a group of strangers with whom she would be living for the foreseeable future, she looked around at the strip mall framed by the gloaming in the west, and sighed. One of the women in her group headed into the building nodding for her to follow, and she did.

She trudged into the room. There were plenty of seats as most of the congregation was still outside, frenzied, in hazy exchange. The room was home to two large wall scrolls, several folding chairs flanking folding tables, a dais in the back that reminded her of her redneck cousin's wedding reception and, centered between the restrooms, a coffee area and basin. Her hands were sticky and sweaty. She moved towards the sink to rinse her hands as the group, en masse, filed in brusquely. After mixing the large amount of non-dairy creamer and sugar into her coffee, she found herself spinning, struggling around the room along with many others to find a seat. Jostled toward the back of the room, she finally found herself in a metal chair next to a sallow and sunken-eyed teenage girl. She squirmed around in her chair as the gavel brought the room to order.

She had just spent thirty days in a treatment facility and had arrived that morning to a recovery house where nothing was definitive except what the house manager told her: "Get a sponsor, a home group, a commitment as well as a job to pay your rent and, most importantly, don't use." She was given a few hours to acclimate and eat and was now here at this meeting.

She had heard in treatment about the benefits of doing step work for sobriety, but did not pay attention. Her thoughts were always occupied with her life back west in what was, or used to be, her home, and the bills, the mortgage, her waning career, and her estranged husband. Apparently, the most important thing to do to stay sober was go to these meetings and to find a mentor to trust who would provide objectivity, whatever that meant. Still, the room and those in it felt alien. Anxiety permeated the surroundings. The space made her feel abject, as if the palate was designed to drain the room of all possible color.

A young man was reading the twelve concepts, but she could not hear him. She caressed her necklace, newly retrieved from the treatment facilities safe, which was given to her by her husband years ago and was worth more than this building and all its contents five times over.

*Where is this place?* she thought. *I know it's up the same river where I kneeled down and wept a month ago, but that's all I know. How was I placed here?*

The chairman asked if anyone was available to be a sponsor. Several people raised their hands, though none looked like someone with whom she could relate. All of the women were much too young, had odd hair color, and wore revealing clothing, while it seemed everyone in the room was adorned with tattoos and piercings, or whatever other permanent statements were fastened to their impermanent bodies. She could not bare the thought of speaking to anyone in the room let alone addressing the crowd as a whole.



The chairman then asked, “Who felt the need to drink today?” A woman lifted her hand in response. She was one of the women that were available to be a sponsor. Her complexion and general demeanor was ragged. Her voice was gravelly, like the sound of pebbles being thrown on a tarmac out of a bucket of water, and her hair, badly dyed a greasy crimson, fell from her forehead in thin ringlets and was parted in two, as if to bring attention to its lack of volume. The woman was obviously out of shape and unhealthy and had been for some time as her weight and her cane confirmed.

The woman had the accent of a northern New Englander, slightly dropping her R’s and rounding her vowels. For some reason she paid attention, however, as this woman went on to explain that she had eight years of sobriety and in that eight years, she had lost a husband to this illness, had lost a house, two cars, three jobs, a career, and a child to a miscarriage. Her speech would have sounded morbid, had she not smiled with each admission, beaming the more before admitting to each loss. The woman had the kind of smile that took up her whole face, all encompassing and dignified.

The woman reminded her of her childhood near Bar Harbor. There was a neighbor that would come over when the fall storms would knock out the power, and her mother would provide hurricane lamps to everyone who came seeking shelter. Her father had built their house before he passed. It was fortified by stone (he was an architect), and withstood the winds better than the older, beaten clapboard houses inhabiting the woods outside of town where they lived. That woman, who reminded her of the woman speaking now, would tell her and all the neighbors tales of travel and loss, experience and doubt, with a wit gained from exposure to both the elements outside as well as her own internal dissensions. As a child, she had not cared so much about the pain in that woman’s stories. What entranced her and the neighbors was her demeanor and steadfastness through it all, and how the storms outside would somehow melt into the distance, each lash of wind and rain becoming less and less as she wove her tales over the occasional screech and pounce. Over the course of the storm, they form a semi-circle, surrounding her, lamps in hands, as they listened to the bitterness and joy and sorrow and human strain in that woman’s tales, finding solace in hearing them. She remembered now, fondly, that those nights and that woman were comforting not because of the stories themselves, but because time stood coagulated and nothing mattered but that voice and its undulating tones.

The meeting came to an end. After standing, and saying The Lord’s Prayer (she had not done this since her childhood and she fumbled the words but remembered the melody), everyone moved toward the entrance. Everyone except this woman, the one person whom she had felt compelled to listen to out of all those who spoke. As she moved toward her, a few people at another table blocked the corridor toward the entrance. She found herself next to the woman who was then struggling to stand with her cane. The woman looked fearful as she rose. She took the woman’s arm to help steady her.

“Are you alright? Able to stand? Can I help you?” The woman, pale though smiling, replied, “All the anguish in this room, which you mistake for my own pain or fear, makes me wince more than this gout. But I could always use help getting through these tables and chairs.” She smiled at this woman, a woman she would have never noticed on the street, or if she had, perhaps would have avoided. She took this woman’s tattooed arm and noticed an Angelica flower near the wrist where she anchored her grip. She remembered the flower flourishing in the meadows in Maine. This woman smiled her all encompassing smile. “You are new here I assume. Welcome.” They both smiled at each other as they walked toward the entrance. Outside the thousand, million tiny lamps above illuminated the hazy crowd beneath, flickering as they do and as they had done during her childhood and throughout her life, though she had not noticed them as of late. She had not seen them as anything but dots to be disregarded, only slightly distinguished from the dark gulf around them. They stood out starkly now, as did the woman’s grip on her arm that was both steady and simultaneously in need of balancing. This woman smiled at her again and asked, “And you, are you ready for what you were first prepared to do?” She did not answer the question, but felt, for the first time in many years as she looked up at the stars, a warm daring fill her heart.

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUBMIT SOMETHING TO THE FREEDOM FLYER?**

Stay tuned for the theme of the next writing contest!

Once things got moving and Recovery started walking, the group switched out their bright green volunteer shirts for bright green RHA shirts and joined up with fellow Bucks County recovery house organizations, along with families and friends who came to support of the cause.

It was a beautiful day for a five-mile walk through Old City Philadelphia, and Recovery Walks was a huge success, pulling in 25,000 people. After the walk, everyone hung around a bit talking, taking pictures, enjoying good company, and jamming out to more music. NFF loved being a part of this positive campaign for ending the stigma of recovery.



Photo by Jim Eastwood

NFF alumni John H. and Allie G hosted the evening. These two did a fabulous job of entertaining and informing the crowd while keeping things moving along smoothly.

Like other months, sober time was celebrated for those in attendance. A few residents stepped up and presented coins to fellow residents and alumni and friends who had come to share in the celebration.

Unlike other months, there were five alumni speakers. Each speaker shared their story for ten minutes and all emphasized how grateful they were for Newfound Freedom. It was a truly inspiring message.

After the meeting, folks hung around talking, laughing, making connections, and eating (a lot of food and cake was provided). There was a great positive buzz around the driveway about how much fun everyone had.

It was a very successful evening of fun and fellowship, and it will not be the last! ♦



Photos by Erin Fleming and Chelsea Eastwood

At the end of the month, on September 28<sup>th</sup>, all of Newfound Freedom was invited to Bowman to enjoy a bonfire celebration meeting. There have been many bonfire meetings in the past, and each one has been unique in its own way. This meeting brought a handful of alumni and there was a great spirit of community in the air.

Stay tuned for the next Bonfire Meeting date!!



## LBGTQ in RECOVERY

Twenty-seven years ago queer activists and allies fought for the rights to live and love without harassment. Every October, we celebrate the pioneers in LBGT history and every year on October 11<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate those who have come out as lesbian, bisexual, gay, trans, queer, questioning, or as allies.

Coming out, being comfortable in one's own skin, and embracing one's differences are innately difficult hurdles to overcome. In a society where you don't know who will embrace you and be on your side and who will be less understanding, even hateful, it is hard to just accept yourself for exactly who you are. For this reason and others, many in the LBGT community begin drinking or using drugs in order to deal with the struggles both internal and external.

According to Recovery.org:

"It is clear that drug addiction is the cause of much suffering among members of the LBGT population, but why exactly is this community afflicted by such high rates of substance abuse? A number of factors can contribute to LBGT drug abuse, including the following:

- Higher rates of depression among LBGT individuals
- A need to escape from the constant presence of social stigma and homophobia
- Efforts to either numb or enhance sexual feelings
- Ease shame and guilt related to LBGT identity
- Drug use among peers leads to pressure on nonusers

"Drug abuse and addiction present major challenges for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LBGT) community. Already high within the general population, rates of substance abuse increase substantially within the LBGT community alone." (<http://www.recovery.org/topics/find-the-best-gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender-lgbt-addiction-recovery-centers/>) This website is a good resource for finding recovery LBGT-specific addiction recovery centers.

Recovery is accessible to everyone. However, those in the LBGT community might still feel out of place in the greater recovery community. It's important that those in the LBGT community have access to support from other members of their community. This website is a good resource for LBGT recovery meetings in Bucks, Philly, and Jersey:

<http://www.philadelphiaroundup.org/?q=meeting> ♦

**If you would like to share your experience as a member of the LBGTQ recovery community, or would like to recommend certain meetings for those who may be looking for the right fit, please contact the Freedom Flyer at [newsletter@newfoundfreedom.com](mailto:newsletter@newfoundfreedom.com) We will include your thoughts in our future issues.**

*Brennan's Corner*  
*Man is Desperate*  
*To Change His Circumstances*  
*But Not Himself,*  
*Therefore He Remains Bound.*



| October/November 2015                            |   |   |  |   |                                     |                               |
|--|---|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sunday   | Monday  | Tuesday   | Wednesday  | Thursday                                      | Friday                              | Saturday                      |
| 11<br>Women's Recovery Rap<br>9pm @ 87 Appletree | 12<br>AA Step Mtg<br>7pm @ First Pres.<br>NA Text Study 7pm @ St.Paul's | 13<br>Men's Big Book Study<br>7:30pm @ 60 Jonquil | 14<br>Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7:30pm @ Bowman | 15<br>Recovery Rap Mtg<br>9:30am @ Blue Ridge | 16<br>Have a great weekend!!! ☺     | 17                            |
| 18<br>Women's Recovery Rap<br>9pm @ 87 Appletree | 19<br>AA Step Mtg<br>7pm @ First Pres.<br>NA Text Study 7pm @ St.Paul's | 20<br>Men's Big Book Study<br>7:30pm @ 60 Jonquil | 21<br>Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7:30pm @ Bowman | 22<br>Recovery Rap Mtg<br>9:30am @ Blue Ridge | 23<br>Have a great weekend!!! ☺     | 24                            |
| 25<br>Women's Recovery Rap<br>9pm @ 87 Appletree | 26<br>AA Step Mtg<br>7pm @ First Pres.<br>NA Text Study 7pm @ St.Paul's | 27<br>Men's Big Book Study<br>7:30pm @ 60 Jonquil | 28<br>Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7:30pm @ Bowman | 29<br>Recovery Rap Mtg<br>9:30am @ Blue Ridge | 30<br><b>PROACT Halloween Blast</b> | 31<br><b>Happy Halloween!</b> |
| 1<br>Women's Recovery Rap<br>9pm @ 87 Appletree  | 2<br>NFF Celebration Bonfire Meeting<br>7:15pm @ Bowman                 | 3<br>Men's Big Book Study<br>7:30pm @ 60 Jonquil  | 4<br>Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7:30pm @ Bowman  | 5<br>Recovery Rap Mtg<br>9:30am @ Blue Ridge  | 6<br>Have a great weekend!!! ☺      | 7                             |
| 8<br>Women's Recovery Rap<br>9pm @ 87 Appletree  | 9<br>AA Step Mtg<br>7pm @ First Pres.<br>NA Text Study 7pm @ St.Paul's  | 10<br>Men's Big Book Study<br>7:30pm @ 60 Jonquil | 11<br>Garage Mtg (Men's Lit Study) 7:30pm @ Bowman | 12<br>Recovery Rap Mtg<br>9:30am @ Blue Ridge | 13<br>Have a great weekend!!! ☺     | 14                            |

## Sunday Nights at 87 Appletree:

### Women's Recovery Rap

*Open to all  
Women of NFF!*

## Upcoming Events!

\*PROACT Halloween Blast- Oct. 30

\*Bonfire Celebration Meeting- Nov. 2

\*Holiday Party- Dec. 19



**\*NFF Celebration  
Meeting\***

**Last Monday  
of  
Every Month!!!**



### Contact Us:

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