

WHAT'S INSIDE

Letter From the Editor / 2

In Memoriam: Nell Hurley / 3

Safe Passage: Tips for
Traveling While Sober / 4

Books / 5

Retreat Directory / 8-9

Many Small Steps Can
Lead to a Giant Step / 11

Ask the Expert: Nature-
based Therapy / 12

Resource Directory / 13

Time to Retreat / 14



A GUIDE TO THE AURORA

Chasing the Northern Lights in Minnesota

by Jen Shepherd / Photo by Vincent Ledvina

Sometimes healing comes in the most unexpected places, including under a cold, dark Minnesota sky. There's something unforgettable about seeing the aurora in real time. Seeing the aurora can be a bucket list item, but chasing it can offer lessons in patience, hope, and gratitude. Experiencing the northern lights can also support overall well-being. This article features three experts: space physics Ph.D. student and aurora researcher Vincent Ledvina, retired science teacher and photographer Elizabeth Miller, and photographer Hussain Alwael.

WHAT ARE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS?

The Aurora Borealis is a natural display of light visible in the night sky that occurs when electrons from space interact with Earth's upper atmosphere. Ledvina explained that the different colors are due to different gases being

excited in the atmosphere, and that the aurora holds cultural significance for many Indigenous peoples that predates Western science.

AURORA CHASING BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

Chasing the aurora can be as simple as a virtual chase to as complex as taking an aurora tour in Alaska or Norway. It's always smart to have a plan and know what you're getting into. As the saying goes, "Expectations are premeditated resentments." Have hope—but remember that the aurora doesn't have an itinerary. Miller, who regularly photographs the northern lights in northern Minnesota, said that they aren't a destination that you can just "go and see" like the Duluth Aerial Life Bridge.

A GUIDE TO THE AURORA to pg 6

JOHN H. DRIGGS

Who's in Control: You or Your Work?

Work used to be like walking the family dog—you did it out of a sense of duty, and it was good for your soul. Nowadays, work is more like walking a pit bull—you hang on for dear life as it drags you along. Too many of us are overworked, threatened by job insecurity through downsizing and corporate restructuring, and expected to perform tasks that several co-workers used to share. The American Dream has transformed too many of us into "wage slaves."

Unfortunately, our family lives and community connections have suffered. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2023 data shows parents with school-age children now average just 52 minutes/day of primary childcare. KPMG (2024) found that guilt about family time is the second biggest challenge for working parents (43%). Clearly, the workplace has become a surrogate family, consuming more of our time and energy at the expense of irreplaceable family time.

Since 1991, millions of workers have fallen victim to corporate restructuring and reassignment, causing many families to relocate and severing the community roots so precious to a healthy family life. Too many of us have become, in Vance Packard's poignant words, a "nation of strangers." We dare not invest in our communities if we expect to be uprooted. The unpredictable demands of the workplace leave us in a state of perpetual uncertainty and disconnection—estranged from ourselves and from our children.

All of us suffer on a more personal level, too. In 2023, the CDC cited that 11.4% of U.S. adults take medication for depression (~29M) and 16.5% take any mental health medication (~40M+). So many of us are pressured by careerism, consumerism, and materialism that we don't even see ourselves as having choices about our jobs. Studies consistently show that the vast majority of workers feel their jobs lack meaning or engagement. Gallup's 2024 "State of the Global Workplace" report found that 77% of workers globally are either disengaged (62%) or actively disengaged (15%). So many of us who settle for comfortable wages haven't considered whether our jobs contribute to our broader personal needs—feeding our spirits, enhancing our minds

JOHN DRIGGS to pg 10



IN MEMORIAM

Nell Hurley: A Life in Service to Recovery

Nell Hurley, a tireless Minnesota recovery advocate, passed away on Saturday, April 25th at her home in St. Paul. She was 56. She leaves behind a recovery community she helped build from the ground up; one that carries her spirit in its culture, its compassion, and its commitment to the self-respect of everyone in recovery.

Read more on page 3

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Investment in Yourself

by Sharon Chapman

"We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are."

MAX DE PREE (1924-2017)

AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN AND WRITER



Photo by Brent Olson

Retreats are not inexpensive. Neither are classes, courses or degrees. Even a wellness day at a spa can add up. But moving forward in life, business, or health usually doesn't come without a hefty price tag.

However, I've recently noticed that instead of saying that something will "cost" a certain amount of time, money, or some other form of exchange, the current trend is to rephrase that term to "investment."

You might think that this is just a marketing ploy—and on a certain level, you'd be right. But it also makes perfect sense. If you're not willing to invest in something that will bring you a greater return—health, wellness, business, or pleasure—how can you expect results?

So, for example, people who spend money on going on a retreat every year are, in fact, "investing" in themselves. They make an initial investment and expect a return on that investment at the end of the retreat. It might be a set of new skills, greater wellness, or new friendships but each offers its own reward for that investment.

I recently committed to a very expensive coaching program to expand my

The best return is an investment in yourself.

marketing reach for my business. The cost alone scared me, to say the least! But—and this was probably lesson number one from the program, before even signing up—that cost was rephrased as an "investment." If you're not prepared to invest in yourself, what can you expect in return?

We only grow through expanding our horizons, constantly learning (or re-learning) things, taking time for wellness, and having a healthy dose of curiosity. Those who remain in the same routines, year in and year out, and refuse to move out of their comfort zone—even when the rest of the world has

moved on—miss out on so much in life. Yes, it's scary stepping out; I used to be that person. But once I saw the return that I could get on my investment, it became so much easier to do.

There is a whole world waiting for you out there. Don't you want to invest in it?

Invest in the best version of you,

Sharon

PURCHASE A SUBSCRIPTION

\$20 for one year / \$35 for two!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION TO _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

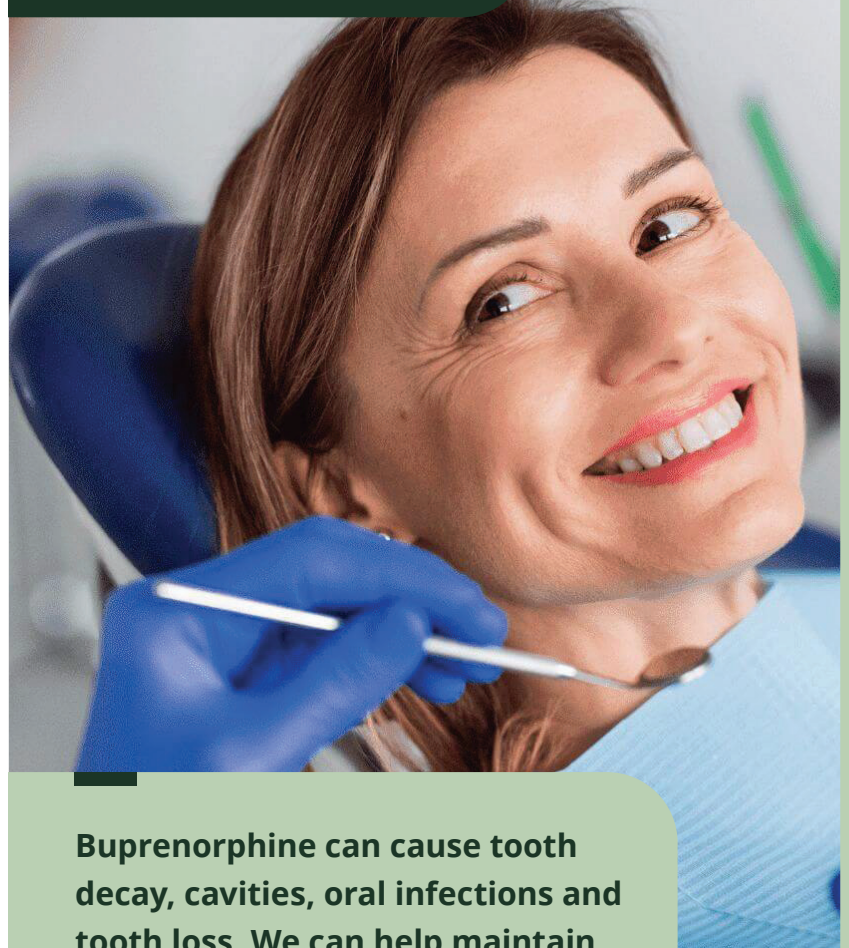
PLEASE ADDRESS CHECK TO THE PHOENIX SPIRIT AND SEND TO (OR ONLINE):

4190 Vinewood Ln. N., Suite 111 PMB 403, Plymouth, MN 55442. *Thank you!*

Sedation & Implant Dentistry

www.toothbuilder.com

Your holistic dentist.



Buprenorphine can cause tooth decay, cavities, oral infections and tooth loss. We can help maintain and improve your oral health if you are currently on or have been on buprenorphine.



Dr. Karl Anderson holds a Dental and Masters of Science degree from the University of Minnesota Dental school. He received training at UCLA in the early eighties in Branemark surgical training course, and he is a graduate of the Misch Institute. His specialty degree is in the field of periodontics. Dr. Anderson has placed and restored dental implants since 1985. He has been involved in the development of several implant products. He is a recovering alcoholic with long term sobriety who is passionate about helping others.

TESTIMONIALS

"Best dentist ever! So relaxed, so kind, excellent customer service! Accommodating, understanding not judgemental not pressuring you into procedures you don't actually need. All around, best dentist office of my life."

"Hands down the BEST dental experience I have ever had. I used to be so terrified of dentists that I would get a special Rx for anxiety before appointments. At Sedation & Implant I have had extensive major work done with no anxiety and no Rx needed ahead of time. Gentle, experienced, and kind. Dr. Karl Anderson. I have found my dentist for life. We live in Wisconsin and he is well worth the drive. The Lord has truly gifted this man in his profession."

"Sedation and Implant Dentistry is very much focused on keeping my teeth healthy. When I had gum disease, they did a great job of only taking care of what needed to be taken care of. No horrible invasive gum surgery!"

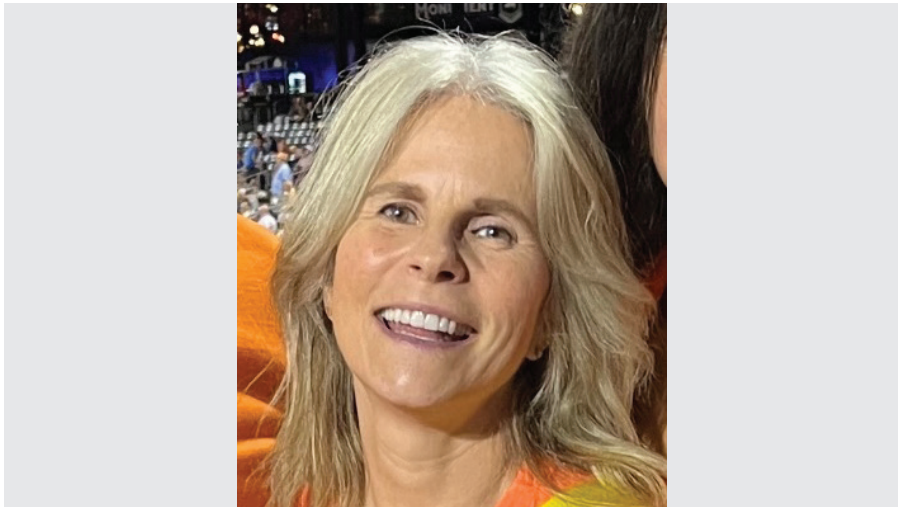
Sedation and Implant Dentistry

1815 Suburban Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55119

651-735-4661 | www.toothbuilder.com

IN MEMORIAM

Nell Hurley: A Life in Service to Recovery



There is a particular kind of person who makes you feel, simply by being in the room with them that you matter. They make you feel that you have something to offer, and the world is better because you're in it. Nell Hurley was that person—and the recovery community in Minnesota, and far beyond, is immeasurably poorer by her absence.

Nell, a tireless Minnesota recovery advocate, passed away on Saturday, April 25th at home in St. Paul, one block from where she was born. She was 56.

Nell entered recovery in 1997 at the age of 27. From this point forward, her life became an unfolding act of generosity. She wore her recovery not as a badge of accomplishment, but as an open invitation, a way of saying to anyone struggling, “This is possible, and you are worth it.”

Her fingerprints are on nearly every corner of Minnesota's recovery landscape. She was the founding Executive Director of Minnesota Recovery Connection, the first recovery community organization in the state, giving thousands of Minnesotans a place to belong and a voice in managing their own care. She brought her talents to Hazelden Betty Ford, to Augsburg University's StepUP collegiate recovery program, to The Phoenix, and to the national level at SAMHSA, and Faces and Voices of Recovery. She founded Hurley Health, her own fitness coaching practice, rooted in the beliefs that she held deeply: Every person is naturally creative, resourceful, and whole. She showed up fully authentic in every role she held and in every room she entered.

Jeremiah Gardner, a former colleague at Hazelden Betty Ford, captured something essential about what made Nell so extraordinary, “I always felt valued and worthwhile in her presence—like I brought something to the conversation and to the world. Her humility and ability to help me feel that way was a superpower and a gift. One can have no greater trait, in my opinion. We will all miss Nell dearly.”

The gift of making people feel seen and significant was not incidental to her work. It was the work. Whether she was supporting a young person in recovery who was navigating college life at StepUP, coaching a client through Hurley Health, or sitting across from a colleague at the end of a long day, Nell had a way of meeting people exactly where they were.

Kate Moeller of Fully Vested Recovery Movement, and a dear friend of Nell, remembered her this way: “Nell was the kind of person who was genuine. She oozed compassion and kindness. She was an absolute bulldozer paving the way for the recovery community, always doing the next right thing. Nell showed up. Authentic. Beautiful. And with a laugh that could make you wet your pants from laughing so hard with her!”

Wendy Jones of MARCO reflected on what it meant to be welcomed into Nell's world: “Nell nurtured and tended the garden of Minnesota's recovery movement wherever she went. She had moved on from MRC years before I showed up, but she sought me out with a warm embrace and guiding hand as though we had always been walking this path together. She helped me find my way, shared her abundant knowledge and connections, and made me feel like I wasn't an imposter. She was the best peer support anyone could ask for, always sharing, connecting, supporting, and helping to clear the path.”

Ericka Otterson of Augsburg StepUP beautifully stated: “Some people don't just do the work, they become part of it. Nell Hurley was that kind of person. Her presence in the Minnesota recovery community, her ties to StepUP, and the genuine connections she built will outlast any words written in her honor. We are better for having known her.”

Nell lived a life of purpose, of presence, and of profound kindness. She chose recovery every day, and in doing so, she made it easier for countless others to choose it, too. This is a lasting legacy, one which is already woven into the fabric of the community just like Nell.

Nell is survived by her husband, William C. Moyers, and their son, Jasper. She leaves behind a recovery community she helped build from the ground up; one that carries her spirit in its culture, its compassion, and its commitment to the self-respect of everyone in recovery.

Before she passed, Nell wrote the following on her CaringBridge page:

“As I reflect on the richness of my life, I am feeling so deeply grateful for the abundance of memories I have gathered and the people I have had an opportunity to love so deeply. Thank you for being a part of this beautiful, adventurous, curious, light and love filled journey.” ☽



The Phoenix Spirit

RECOVERY • RENEWAL • GROWTH

PUBLISHERS Aaron and Jen Shepherd
phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com

EDITOR / WRITER Sharon Chapman
phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com

SALES DIRECTOR David Goldstein
ads@thephoenixspirit.com

COMMUNITY RELATIONS Jen Shepherd
phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS John H. Driggs
Angelo Gentile
Mary Lou Logsdon
Mark T. Scannell
Jen Shepherd

ADVISOR Mike Engen

DISTRIBUTOR Metro Periodicals

PRINTER House of Print

*Every trial, and every issue
we find and face holds
within it
the seeds of healing,
health, wisdom,
growth and prosperity.
We hope you find a
seed in every issue.*

The Phoenix Spirit is a bi-monthly publication for people actively working on their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. We are committed to providing articles, advertising, and information about recovery, renewal, and personal growth to help people experience life in a balanced, meaningful way.

Resource Directory

Retreat

Franciscan Retreats & Spirituality Center
Prior Lake, MN 952-447-2182
FranciscanRetreats.net
Serenity Retreat Weekend December 4 - 6, 2026

Eating Disorders

Melrose Center
Melrose's experienced team provides eating disorder treatment including specialized care for those struggling with an eating disorder and substance use disorder. Melrose Center has five Twin City metro locations. Visit melroseheals.com or call 952-993-6200.

Substance Use Disorders

Minnesota Teen Challenge
If you or a loved one is struggling with drugs or alcohol, we're here to help. In addition to our effective and affordable residential Licensed Treatment, faith-based Long-Term Recovery and convenient Outpatient program, we have extensive prevention and transitional/aftercare services. Freedom from addiction starts here. 612-FREEDOM or mntc.org

Sober Technology

Soberlink
Rebuilding trust is one of the hardest parts of recovery. Soberlink's real-time alcohol monitoring lets you share verified sobriety results with family, counselors, or courts, giving you the proof and confidence to own your journey. More info at soberlink.com. Email: support@soberlink.com.

To be included in the Resource Directory, reach out to David at ads@thephoenixspirit.com.

RETREAT AND TRAVEL

Safe Passage: Tips for Traveling While Sober

by Angelo Gentile



Image generated by AI (ChatGPT)

Early in his recovery, Stephen P. boarded a plane for a conference, flying from Portland, Ore. to London, U.K. As the only sober person in his traveling party, he struggled. On the flight over, he was surrounded by people indulging in, as he said, “adult beverages.” And, once in London, in the city of pubs and ales, his struggle continued—until he walked into an AA meeting.

“Going to the meeting in London was really great, I was able to exhale,” Stephen recalled in a recent interview with *The Phoenix Spirit*. “Because I was with my people, I was able to connect with my people—even though I was the only one without an accent,” he added with a smile.

Tom H. of Minneapolis travels extensively for work, and recalled a time, also in early recovery, in which he was in Omaha, NE. for a consulting job. He was in a hurry, driving from downtown to the west side of the city to make an AA meeting on time.

“I hadn’t really taken the first step yet, I had been attending meetings and introducing myself as Tom, just Tom,” he recently told *The Phoenix Spirit*. “I finally got to the meeting just as they were doing introductions, and that was when I burped out ‘I’m Tom and I’m an alcoholic,’ for the first time ever, anywhere ... I wasn’t sure where that came from ... in reflection, it was the exhilaration of having arrived at a safe place. It meant I was likely not going to drink that night, and

that was the core of it ... if I could find a meeting, that meant I was likely not going to drink.”

Traveling while sober, whether for work or pleasure, and whether one has long-term sobriety or is new to the program, can sometimes present challenges, as Stephen and Tom experienced.

With those challenges in mind, consider these tips that may help you successfully navigate your travel while staying clean and sober.

MAKE A PLAN BEFORE YOU GO

Those in recovery who are planning a trip should come up with a sobriety plan before they go, advised Tara Bauman, therapist for Maple Grove-based Innovative Psychological Consultants.

“With my clients who are traveling, we first come up with a plan,” Bauman said. “We find and schedule a meeting where they are traveling to, an actual day of the week, that sort of thing. This is lined up before they go ... Having a set plan ahead of time has been way more helpful than just saying, ‘Here are some things I can do or could do.’” She said this is especially beneficial for someone new in recovery.

If traveling for work, Bauman said, look at your calendar and decide where you can fit in a meeting. “Again, the key point here is planning ahead of time ... set yourself up for success. Plan before you go.”

Rochelle Gredvig, a clinician with Peacetree Family Institute in Elk River, agreed. “Have a game plan, figure out ahead of time what you are going to do for your sobriety while traveling. Maybe calling your sponsor, or online meetings, Zoom meetings, you can connect when you’re anywhere via your phone.”

ATTEND MEETINGS WHEN TRAVELING

The most effective strategy by far, according to Bauman and Gredvig, is attending meetings while traveling, noting that, even though there are plenty of sessions available online, the connections made at in-person, 12-step meetings are tough to beat.

Stephen P. said he enjoys meetings while traveling. “One of the things that going to meetings out of town does for me is hearing new things ... I mean, I go to the same meetings at home and so I often hear the same stories or shares, some people don’t mix it up ... when traveling, you get to hear other people you haven’t heard. You also often get to experience different versions of the meeting format, which is interesting.”

Meeting new people also is a benefit, Stephen added. He recently went to a meeting every day on a vacation in Mexico. At the meeting, “they were happy to have visitors, new meat, new blood, because they get to hear different stories. You bring newness to them, and you get newness from them. It’s a reciprocal experience.” Stephen said he also encourages those he sponsors to attend meetings when traveling. “If you need that hit. Go to a meeting and you will be a star.” Stephen has attended meetings in Hawaii, Michigan, Colorado, California and elsewhere.

“At out-of-town meetings, you are very welcomed and it is a safe place, everyone understands,” said Tom H. He has attended meetings throughout the United States, plus Australia, Ireland, Paris and elsewhere. When he travels for work, especially long-term consulting assignments, “one of my highest priority items is to find the Alano Club where I can hang out ... they are always the safest rooms in that locale.”

Additionally, “when people hear I’m from Minnesota, they know it’s the Land of the 10,000 Treatment Centers,” Tom quipped. “If there is a meeting of, say, 20 people, somebody at that meeting has a connection to Minnesota recovery.”

Finding a meeting has also never been easier these days, thanks to websites and various apps that will help you find locations and schedules for meetings of AA, NA and other 12-step programs.

CHECK IN WITH YOUR SPONSOR

Checking in with one’s sponsor was mentioned by several sources as a good idea while traveling.

One of my highest priority items is to find the Alano Club where I can hang out ... they are always the safest rooms in that locale.

“This is especially key if you can’t get to a meeting,” said Bauman, the therapist. “If someone is not able to get to a meeting if, say, they are traveling for work, set a check-in time with your sponsor or other supportive friends and family.”

“This strategy is all about accountability,” Bauman says. “We can all have good intentions, but if you’re there, out of town, and having a good time and not going to a meeting ... but if you’re there and you have it planned that you’ve scheduled to check in with your sponsor, there’s more accountability.”

PACK A BIG BOOK OR ADD APPS TO YOUR PHONE

In this smart-phone age, several sources advised adding some recovery-related apps to your phone, apps that can help you find an out-of-town meeting, or provide a digital version of the *AA Big Book* which even offer you usual daily reflections.

More than 100,000 weekly AA meetings are listed in an amazing app, the Meeting Guide app, which can help you quickly find meetings. Set your location and it does the rest. The NA Meetings app provides information about in-person meetings, virtual meetings and includes a variety of other features.

In addition, the app Everything AA is remarkably chock full of information: read or listen to the *Big Book*, read a daily reflection or use an online meeting finder, among other options.

Those who may be more old school, can still pack a *Big Book* inside their wheelee bag or backpack. In fact, the *Big Book* is generally available in a number

SAFE PASSAGE to page 5

PetDoctors ANIMAL CLINIC

Award-Winning pet health care right in your neighborhood!

- Complete Medical, Dental and Surgical Care
- Wellness Plans
- Laser Therapy
- Kitty Cottages Boarding
- Rewards Program

25 East Franklin Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55404
612.607.0044
PetDoctorsAnimalClinic.com

FEAR FREE

MINNEHAHA ANIMAL HOSPITAL

4809 Chicago Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55417
(612) 825-4427
MinnehahaAnimalHospital.com

Award winning clinic - with a gentle touch

- Complete Medical, Dental & Surgical Care
- Wellness Plans
- Rewards Program

FEAR FREE

What Wome Want!

from page 4

of portable and pocket-sized soft-cover editions. And, of course, the *Twenty-Four Hours a Day* meditation book is available in a small, pocket-sized hard cover format. Other 12-step programs offer meditation books in similarly smaller sizes.

BEWARE THE TRIGGERS

Airport lounges. Happy hour at the pool's tiki bar. Free drinks at the after-hours trade show reception. Those in recovery face a multitude of triggers or temptations when traveling. As the clinicians have advised, planning before you go can also help meet this challenge.

One strategy calls for visualizing how you'll respond before you're in the moment. As the website for the Tennessee Detox Center advised, "Practice polite, confident 'no, thank you' responses—you don't owe anyone an explanation. Identify safe spaces at your destination: a quiet café, a park, a gym, or a local meeting ... (and) plan go-to alternative beverages—mocktails and non-alcoholic craft options have expanded significantly and are now widely available at most venues." Additionally, AA's book *Living Sober* advises "arrive late and leave early," as an effective strategy for maintaining sobriety when attending parties or other functions where alcohol is present.

Fortunately, these days, "people are a lot more accepting of someone who doesn't drink," said Peacetree's Gredvig. And, in a work situation when traveling, "having a co-worker or a boss who knows your situation can be helpful. If someone you are with knows, you won't likely drink in front of them."

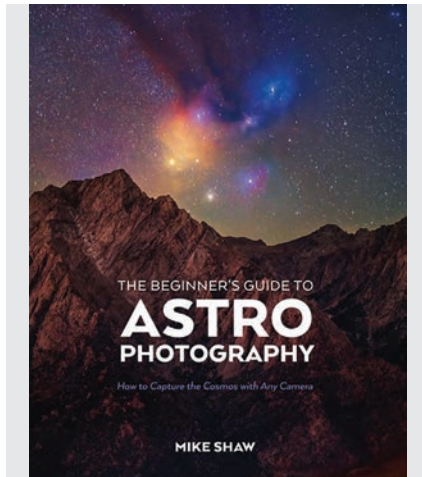
Ultimately, though these tips are intended to help you maintain your own sobriety, keep in mind the 12th step in your travels: Your presence, your story, your experience, strength and hope, can be of help to someone in recovery. Stephen remembers attending a meeting in a rural area of Michigan with a friend, "where meeting attendance was sketchy. There were just two of us there, and then a third guy showed up who had just gotten out of treatment and he said he really needed a meeting. We were put in his path to help him out, we were there to carry the message."

Angelo Gentile is a Minneapolis freelance writer. He recently reported on the rapid rise in sports gambling and addiction for The Phoenix Spirit.

CRISIS TEXT LINE
TEXT "MN" TO
741741



Books



The Beginner's Guide to Astrophotography

How to Capture the Cosmos With Any Camera

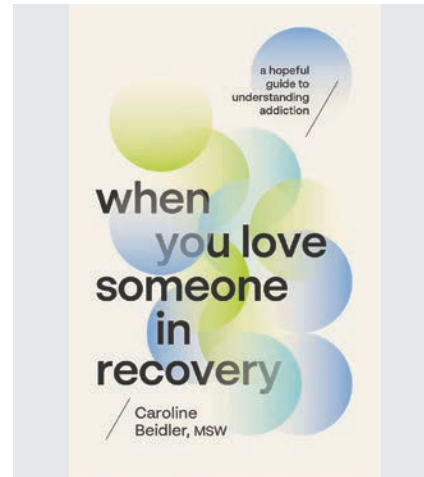
By Mike Shaw
ROCKY NOOK

The night sky has captivated humans for thousands of years, and it's no wonder so many photographers are drawn to capturing its immense beauty and mystery. From the glowing arc of the Milky Way to the craters of the moon, the rings of Saturn to distant galaxies millions of light-years away, the cosmos offers endless subjects for the curious photographer. But for those just getting started, finding the right guidance can be a challenge. Too many astrophotography books dive headfirst into advanced theory, overwhelming beginners with complex physics and intimidating lists of expensive equipment.

The Beginner's Guide to Astrophotography takes a refreshingly different approach. Written by photographer Mike Shaw, this approachable and practical guide is designed for anyone who has looked up at the night sky and thought, "I want to capture that" — no advanced degree required, and no need to empty your wallet.

The book begins by helping you develop a solid understanding of the night sky itself — what's up there, when to find it, and why it matters for your photography. From there, Mike walks you through gear in a way that is both honest and encouraging. Whether you're shooting with a smartphone, a DSLR, or a mirrorless camera, you'll find guidance tailored to what you already own. You'll learn what gear you truly need, what you can skip, and which accessories will make your nights under the stars more enjoyable and productive.

From there, the book covers camera technique in depth, including exposure settings, focusing in the dark, and composition strategies for stunning results. Mike also introduces the best apps for planning shoots, tracking weather, and navigating the sky. And once you've captured your images, he guides you through post-processing techniques to bring out the full beauty of your shots.



When You Love Someone in Recovery

A Hopeful Guide to Understanding Addiction

By Caroline Beidler
THOMAS NELSON

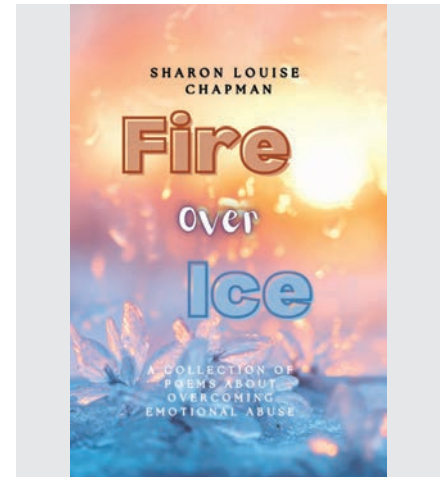
Many of us know someone in addiction recovery, but few of us truly understand what that journey looks like — or how to best support the person we love through it. We worry about saying the wrong thing. We feel confused or helpless when our loved one continues to struggle. We're not sure where to begin.

When You Love Someone in Recovery offers a compassionate and practical guide for friends and family members who want to show up well for someone on the recovery journey. Author, speaker, and addiction recovery expert Caroline Beidler brings both personal and professional experience to these pages. As someone who has lived in sustained recovery and now helps others find their footing, Caroline understands this path from the inside out.

In this book, she walks readers through the four pillars of recovery — hope, wellness, community, and service — while addressing the questions that friends and family members most often ask: What does it actually mean to be in recovery? How can I support my loved one in body, mind, and soul? How do I set healthy boundaries while still showing compassion? What misconceptions do I need to let go of?

Caroline's approach goes far beyond the stereotype of anonymous meetings in church basements. Recovery, as she presents it, is a full way of life — one that fosters well-being, healthy coping strategies, new passions, and deep personal faith.

Filled with honest personal stories, real-life accounts from people thriving in recovery, reflection exercises, and evidence-based research on the body and brain, this book is a call to both action and compassion. You will come away with renewed hope and a clearer sense of how to walk alongside your loved one toward lasting healing.



Fire Over Ice

A Collection of Poems About Overcoming Emotional Abuse

By Sharon Louise Chapman
BLUE GARDEN PRESS

A raw collection of poetry about surviving emotional abuse.

One of society's hidden problems, emotional abuse hasn't traditionally gotten much press time in mainstream media. Yet, we are starting to see small changes in recent years, as people begin to recognize the long-term damage of ignoring the consequences of it.

In this collection of fifty heartfelt poems, Sharon Louise Chapman journals her personal journey of falling into the trap of emotional abuse, her fight to free herself, and the long road to recovery afterward. However, the journey itself was not a linear one.

If you or someone you know has endured a similar situation, this book, although a collection of poetry and not a self-help guide, may prove invaluable.

From the Author:

"It has taken me many years—and a long, emotional journey—to write this collection of poems and to get to the point where I was ready to publish them. I had no control in writing them. They were an outpouring of my bottled-up grief and emotions from too many years spent within an emotionally abusive relationship.

Once they started pouring out of me, the flood continued for several months. A few of them didn't materialize until about a year or so later. Not all of my poems made it into this book. I chose the best ones that I felt told my journey."

Sharon Louise Chapman is a published author, writer and editor with over 18 years of experience in the publishing business.

She is a 20-year business owner, botanical perfumer and vintage aromatherapist. Her creative streak exploded during her recovery process. She created a healing herb garden, wrote poetry and stories, and re-painted her house in lots of colors. She still experiences flashbacks and episodes of PTSD. Her constant companion is her service dog, Harry.

Many of the book descriptions are from the writers, publishers or promotional releases. If you have a book you'd like featured or have an old favorite you'd like to share with others, please contact us at phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com and we may include it in an upcoming issue.

from page 1

Best Conditions for Seeing the Northern Lights in Minnesota

Clear skies are important, but a few stray clouds can add interest and mood to photos. The best time to see the aurora in Minnesota is between fall and spring, though summer can bring some amazing shows. Some people avoid chasing in the summer due to limited dark hours, wild-fire smoke, bugs, and ticks.

Aurora Chasing Etiquette

Good etiquette helps everyone enjoy the experience. Turn off your car lights as soon as you arrive, dim phone and camera screens, and use a red light pointed downward if you need illumination. Keep noise low, avoid repeatedly opening car doors, and give photographers space by not walking in front of cameras or tripods. Be mindful that some people enjoy socializing while others prefer silence. Keep dogs under control or consider leaving them at home, pack out any garbage, and always respect private property.

Aurora Chasing Safety Tips

Aurora chasing often means being out alone in the dark, so preparation matters. Scout your location during the daytime, let someone know where you are going, and when you'll be back. Bring basic emergency supplies such as food, water, blankets, and a phone charger. Stay aware of wildlife, know where the 24-hour gas stations are located, and try to remain within cell service range. Do not pull over and park on busy roads, and stay off of private property. Most importantly, don't drive when you are overly tired, and pull over at a rest stop if you need to rest.

Best Places to See the Northern Lights in Minnesota

Where you go depends on the weather conditions as well as the strength of the geomagnetic storm. During the stronger substorms, the aurora pushes further south and can be seen in southern Minnesota and Iowa. On those nights, it is possible to see the aurora from the Twin Cities. Otherwise, you'll need to be at least 1-2 hours north of the 45th parallel (the Twin Cities latitude).

During fall through spring, there are usually hours of darkness to view the aurora from Minnesota State Parks before they close for the night. In the summer, consider renting a campsite, or using public water access sites and boat



This page: Vincent Ledvina out capturing the aurora (Photo provided by Ledvina). *Opposite page (Clockwise):* Southern sky aurora over a golf course (Photo by Jen Shepherd); Edited photo comparison L to R: How aurora looks to unaided eye, edited, heavily edited for media (Photo by Elizabeth Miller); Aurora in Minnesota (Photo provided by Hussain Alwael).

launches. If you want to venture north, Voyageurs National Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) offer amazing views. On nights with stronger geomagnetic activity, head south to areas like Hastings or the Eagle Lake Observatory in Norwood Young America.

Use a light pollution app to see the Bortle Dark-Sky Scale. Miller said light pollution can travel up to 60 miles. She added that unless there is a stronger geomagnetic event, the North Shore is challenging because there are few spots on the shoreline that face directly north. Heading inland can open up more options.

Best Aurora Forecast Apps and Tools

Modern tools make aurora chasing easier, including weather apps, GPS, light pollution maps, and real-time alert apps such as SpaceWeatherLive and the Glendale App. Facebook groups like the Upper Midwest Aurora Chasers or Twin Cities Aurora Chasers are helpful for real-time photos and community updates. Ledvina also offers *A Beginner's Guide to Aurora Chasing* (2nd ed.), an e-book covering aurora science and chasing techniques in depth.

You don't need expensive gear to photograph the aurora.

A smartphone with night mode, a tripod, and a remote shutter can capture good images.

Understanding Aurora Forecast Limitations

Ledvina cautions against relying on the Kp index alone, noting that it represents a three-hour average of past activity rather than real-time conditions. Instead, he recommends tracking solar wind data and coronal mass ejections (CME), along with measurements from L1 monitoring points where the data is observed before reaching earth. This can provide about a one-hour lead time to help aurora chasers get to their location. Ground-based magnetometers, webcams, and reports from aurora chasers can help confirm aurora activity.

Miller adds that long-range aurora forecasts are often unreliable, comparing them to a meteorologist predicting thunderstorms several days in advance.

HOW THE AURORA CAN SUPPORT RECOVERY AND MENTAL WELLNESS

For many people, the northern lights are more than a beautiful display in the sky. For those in recovery, being outside under a dark sky can offer something that is hard to find anywhere else. Like the aurora itself, hope and light can appear in darkness when they're least expected.



NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN RECOVERY AND A COLLEGE EDUCATION.

StepUP® at Augsburg University helps students thrive in recovery while succeeding in college. The StepUP program offers full-time addiction counselors on site, an engaged community of support and accountability, and on-campus recovery residences.

For more information, visit augsburg.edu/stepup.



Grounding, Presence, and the Night Sky

There is something surreal about being outside at night. You feel centered on the ground, hear the crunch of each step, and the anticipation builds as you find your spot. Away from screens and the noise of daily life, the awe takes over and the mind begins to settle with an inner calm. The smells, sounds, and the things that are easy to miss during the day bring focus to the present moment. Aurora chasing requires patience. There is no rushing the lights or forcing them to appear. The quiet waiting and watching can be a form of mindfulness.

Planning, Safety, and Taking Back Control

For people who live with health conditions that limit what they can do, a well-planned aurora chase can be empowering. Being intentional about safety includes knowing your location well, having a friend or two with you, and staying within your limits physically and mentally. When the planning pays off, there is a sense of having shown up for yourself and that can build confidence. For people carrying the weight of trauma or anxiety, being present and reclaiming peace can feel like a new form of freedom.

Uncertainty, Resilience, and Showing Up Anyway

Even on nights with strong forecasts, the aurora may not cooperate the way that you'd hoped. It may show briefly, arrive after you leave your location, or it may not show up at all. Learning to hold onto hope while accepting this uncertainty is similar to the skills required in recovery: patience, flexibility, and not giving up. Disappointment is a part of the process, but so is resilience.

Perspective and Connection

Standing and watching the aurora move across the dark sky has a way of

putting things into perspective. Seeing something so vast and powerful can bring a sense of humility. Many people feel a sense of peace and connection to something greater than themselves. Whether going out with friends or standing near strangers who share the same excitement, aurora chasing can foster a sense of belonging. For some, that connection is spiritual. Whatever it means, that brief shift in perspective can be a powerful part of the healing journey.

Creating Joy Through the Night Sky

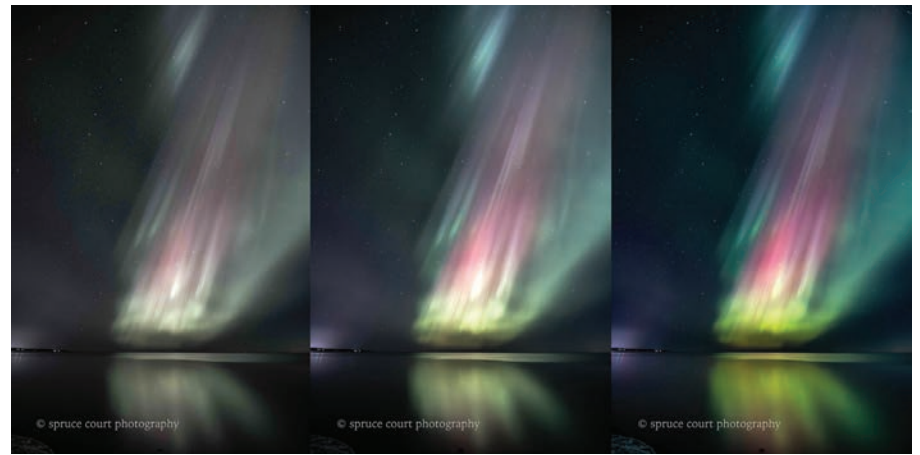
Experiencing the aurora can be more than a hobby. It can become a source of joy, meaning, and positive memories. Many aurora chasers can look at a photograph and instantly remember the night it was taken, the geomagnetic storm, and the emotions they felt in the moment.

Alwael said that photography and the night sky helped him to better understand his ADHD. He explained that when daily life feels repetitive, the brain searches for an escape, and without the right support, unhealthy coping patterns can develop.

Alwael offered this encouragement: "Believe in yourself, and focus on what excites you to develop healthy coping mechanisms to help yourself on your healing journey. Be kind and loving to yourself, no matter what happens or mistakes you make, because you deserve kindness, love, and joy. Create your joy."

AURORA PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

You don't need expensive gear to photograph the aurora. A smartphone with night mode, a tripod, and a remote shutter can capture good images. For those looking to upgrade, Alwael of National Camera Exchange recommends a camera with manual controls, a strong low-light sensor, a wide-angle lens with an aperture of f/2.8 or lower, a sturdy tripod, and a remote shutter release.



Miller notes that cameras often capture more color and detail than the unaided eye. "The cameras pick up more light and color," she said.

EXPERT INSIGHT: VINCENT LEDVINA (THE AURORA GUY)

Originally from Minnesota and now based in Alaska, Vincent Ledvina is a space physics Ph.D. student, aurora researcher, and professional aurora chaser. He's known for helping people understand the science behind the northern lights.

What is your research focused on?

My PhD research focuses on auroral beads and how these small-scale structures develop into auroral substorms. This work matters because it helps us understand how Earth's magnetosphere and upper atmosphere interact. Substorms can dump a large amount of energy into Earth's atmosphere very quickly, increasing satellite drag, raising radiation exposure, inducing currents that can disrupt power grids, and interfering with signals such as GPS.

Where are we in the solar cycle, and what does that mean for aurora viewers in Minnesota?

Right now, we are in the declining phase of Solar Cycle 25. The solar maximum occurred around late 2024, but that does not mean aurora activity immediately drops off. For places like Minnesota, the aurora can be visible even without a major geomagnetic storm. Modern cameras and phones can often pick it up, even when it is faint to the eye.

Why is Alaska such a reliable destination for aurora chasers?

Fairbanks is one of the best places in the world because it lies directly beneath the auroral oval. When you are under the oval, the aurora can appear overhead even during relatively quiet geomagnetic conditions. A strong road network also means you can drive toward clearer skies if clouds move in.

After all your years of chasing the aurora, what keeps drawing you back?

The aurora has the potential to do something unexpected. Seeing the northern lights changed my life, and I want other people to have the chance to experience that same sense of wonder. It always has the potential to surprise you. The more I learn, the better I can anticipate a great display, but it can still defy expectations. And watching someone see the aurora for the first time never gets old. Seeing the northern lights changed my life, and I want others to have that same experience.

FINDING LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Recovery and healing often happen one day at a time, sometimes one moment at a time. The aurora can serve as a reminder that light still exists in darkness, and that hope can appear in unexpected ways.

Jen Shepherd is a clinical social worker, clinical aromatherapist, and aurora chaser based in Minnesota. You can find her at Shepherd Therapy and Shepherd Wellness.

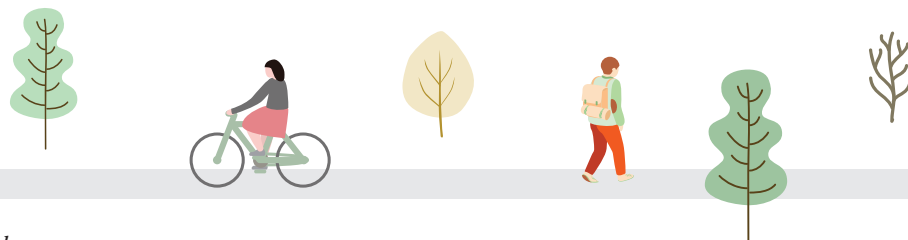
Learn more

Vincent Ledvina (The Aurora Guy)
www.theauroraguy.com

Hussain Alwael
instagram.com/hussain.alwael

Elizabeth Miller
sprucecourt.myportfolio.com

Retreat Directory



The following is just a partial list of the many retreat centers throughout Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. We recommend doing your own research to find the get-away that fits your needs.

ARTS RETREATS

The Grand Marais Art Colony

Grand Marais, MN
218-387-2737
www.grandmaraisartcolony.org

Boundary Waters are to the north; Lake Superior is to the south. GMAC explores visual arts in that liminal space between. They exist to advance the aesthetic inquiries and experimentations of artists. GMAC is an artist-centered space offering residencies, classes, signature events, and exhibitions. GMAC is a welcoming community that supports risk-taking and self-discovery; and are an immersive gathering place where you can germinate and exchange ideas, inspirations and techniques.

Tofte Lake Center

Ely, MN
218-365-7769
www.toftelake.org

Tofte Lake Center (TLC) is a non-profit organization that provides residencies for artists who crave dedicated time to work on their projects, for creatives who seek individual growth through guided workshops or retreats, for arts organizations that want to make time to re/focus on their goals or mission, for arts leaders to gather to exchange ideas with colleagues in their field. TLC is on a pristine lake near Ely, Minnesota, and adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Tofte Lake Center was established in 2008 by Liz Engelman and Michael Bigelow Dixon.

The Old School Artist Retreat Center

Lengby, MN
218-209-2051
www.oldschoolarts.org

A rural Minnesota retreat center in a restored 1906 schoolhouse. Private studio stays, hands-on classes, and intimate four-day retreats designed to help artists recharge, reconnect, and create.

FAMILIES COPING WITH AN ILL CHILD OR LOSS

Faith's Lodge / Child Loss Foundation

Danbury, WI
612-825-2073
www.childlossfoundation.org/faith-s-lodge

A unique retreat center for families who have a seriously ill child or have suffered the loss of a child. Located on 80 acres, about two hours from the Twin Cities. Faith's Lodge was established in 2007 by Mark and Susan Lacek after their daughter, Faith, was stillborn. They wanted to create a place where those coping with the death of a child could find the hope, strength and connection that wasn't there for them. Since opening in 2007, Faith's Lodge has served over 13,000 people from across the US.

NATURE RETREATS

Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center

Sandstone, MN
320-245-2648
ospreywilds.org

In January 2020, the Audubon Center of the North Woods formally changed its name to Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center. Osprey Wilds is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) residential environmental learning center and conference & retreat center nestled on the shores of Grindstone Lake in east-central Minnesota.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area

Northern MN
218-626-4300
www.fs.usda.gov

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area is in the northern third of the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota. More than 1 million acres, it extends nearly 150 miles along the international boundary adjacent to Canada's Quetico Provincial Park and is bordered on the west by Voyageurs National Park.

SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

ARC Retreat Community

Stanchfield, MN
763-689-3540
www.arcetreat.org

Nestled in 90 acres of pine forest and wetlands, ARC is an interspiritual retreat community. ARC's mission is to serve individuals and groups seeking time apart for rest and spiritual renewal. ARC is nurtured on sacred land, promoting environmental sustainability, and exemplifying a just and inclusive world where every voice is valued and respected. ARC is a powerful place to do your healing work. Labyrinth, fire circle, library, chapel, meeting rooms.

Benedictine Center of St. Paul's Monastery

St. Paul, MN
651-777-7251
www.benedictinecenter.org

For over thirty years the Benedictine Center has been helping guests find their way to quiet, prayer, and renewal. Contemporary monastic environment of Benedictine Sisters.

Center for Spirituality and Enrichment / St. Scholastica Monastery

Duluth, MN
218-723-6699
retreatduluth.org

The Center for Spirituality and Enrichment provides opportunities for holistic spiritual and personal growth grounded in the Catholic Benedictine tradition of St. Scholastica Monastery.

The Christine Center

Willard, WI
715-267-7507
www.christinecenter.org

For over 40 years the Christine Center has provided a spiritual home to visitors of all spiritual paths. A woodland sanctuary with a beautiful circular meditation hall, chapel, library and bookstore. Programs offer healing and personal development.

SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY

Jesuit Retreat House on Lake Winnebago

Oshkosh, WI
920-231-9060
www.jesuitretreathouse.org

The Jesuit Retreat House is located on 20 acres of beautiful lakeside property offers six 12-Step silent retreats among its 30 weekend retreats each year. Weekend retreats start Thursday evening with dinner and end with lunch on Sunday. 5-day and 8-day directed retreats based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola are available in the summer. Retreats include daily Mass, private reflection time, devotions, spiritual direction, reconciliation, and a healing service. All guests stay in private bedrooms with their own bathroom.

Lakeplace Retreat Center

Bovey, MN
218-245-1395
www.lakeplacecenter.com

Northern Minnesota location provides a serene environment where participants learn to live a chemical free life influenced by a strong sense of fellowship, along with freedom, trust, and dignity to make responsible choices.

Franciscan Retreats & Spirituality Center

Prior Lake, MN
952-447-2182
franciscanretreats.net
Serenity Retreat Weekend: December 4-6, 2026

Tucked among 60 acres of nature, our December 4-6 Serenity Retreat weekend specifically serves those in recovery with a supportive community and program, while also focusing on their spiritual lives. Private room. Meals are cooked onsite. Beautiful chapel, library, and lounge with fireplace. Other private and group retreats are also available throughout the year.

Come make memories with us!

✉ Stay@waldheimresort.com
🌐 www.waldheimresort.com



Waldheim Resort

Your Vacation Destination in Minnesota's Northwoods
on the Sandy Shores of Big Pine Lakes

**9096 Waldheim Lane Dr
Finlayson, MN 55735
(320) 321-9096**



Cabins
RV Camping + Events

Celebrating
★30★
years!

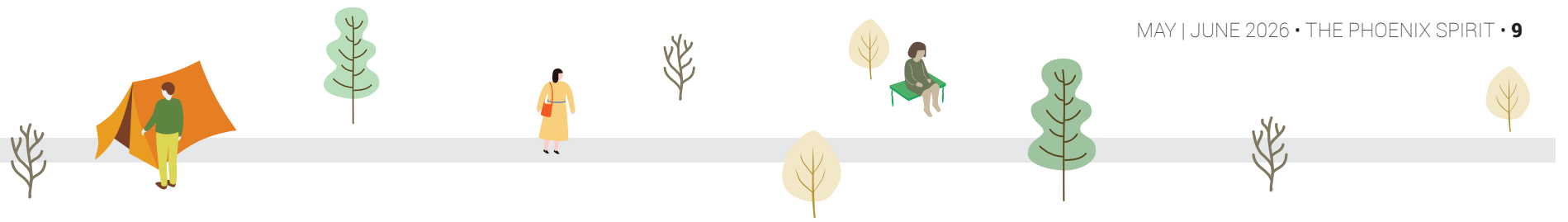


1/2 way between the Twin Cities & Duluth

For Our Latest Specials · Like Us on Facebook



@WaldheimResort

**SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY****Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center**

Farmington, MN
952-469-2175
mtolivetretreat.org

Surrounded by 150 acres of woods, wildlife, and water, guests are nourished by connecting with nature, others, and themselves. Our modern and adaptable meeting rooms and lounges welcome groups and individuals for day retreats or overnight stays. Comfortable and fully renovated overnight accommodations offer solitude and rest. Professional chefs serve homemade, nutritious meals daily. Amenities like the pool, sauna, labyrinth, trails, and campfires enrich your renewal. Spiritual care and programming support are available.

Pacem in Terris Hermitage Retreat Center

Isanti, MN
763-444-6408
www.paceminterris.org

Pacem serves both individuals and groups amidst a 240-acre wilderness, including oak woodlands, wetlands, native prairie, and a lake.

The Dan Anderson Renewal Center

Center City, MN
1-800-262-4882
www.hazeldenbettyford.org

Retreat participants will enjoy a variety of group and speaker sessions, recovery yoga, evening fellowship, healthy meals and access to the pool, fitness center, meditation center and more.

The Retreat / McIver Center

Wayzata, MN
952-476-0566
www.theretreat.org

The McIver Center is available for use by private groups and is also available to 12 Step Groups, outside groups, and organizations. Staff is available to work with each group to help shape and personalize their retreat experience.

SPIRITUAL / RECOVERY**Shalom Spirituality Center**

Dubuque, Iowa
563-582-3592
www.shalomretreats.org

Shalom Spirituality Center has various options available if you are looking for a quiet space or considering time away for a private overnight retreat.

St. Anthony Spirituality Center

Marathon, WI
715-443-2236
sarcenter.com

Continuing our Franciscan roots we welcome all seeking healing, hope and transformation through deeper connection with the Divine, Self, Others and Creation. In the heart of Wisconsin, St. Anthony's offers themed retreats, recovery retreats and private, individual retreats. Come experience peace and tranquility in our historical building and acres of beautiful grounds, woods and trails.

St. John's Abbey Guesthouse

Collegeville, MN
320-363-2573
www.abbeyguesthouse.org

Benedictine monks offer 30 rooms in their guesthouse that also has a meditation chapel, library, meeting rooms, and dining room. Located in central Minnesota on 2,740 acres of woodlands and lakes, the Abbey Guesthouse provides monastic hospitality to all who call.

Waldheim Resort

Finlayson, MN
320-321-9096
www.waldheimresort.com

Vacation destination in Minnesota's Northwoods on the sandy shores of Big Pine Lakes, halfway between the Twin Cities and Duluth. Cabins, RV camping, events. Two lakes are known for crappie, bass, northern, walleye and both sunfish and bluegills. Local proximity to trails, rivers, state parks and forests offer an extension of activities to the resort.

AURORA VIEWING**Boundary Waters Canoe Area**

Superior National Forest, NE MN
218-626-4300

Established in 1964, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) has changed little since the glaciers melted. Part of the Superior National Forest, this stunning wilderness features over 1,200 miles of canoe routes, more than 1,000 lakes and streams, and nearly 2,200 designated campsites. Permits are required year-round for both day and overnight visitors and can be reserved online at recreation.gov.

Lake of the Woods

Baudette, MN
612-279-3550

Lake of the Woods, tucked in the far northwestern corner of Minnesota, is one of the best places in the state to catch the Northern Lights. Its remote location means minimal light pollution, and its wide-open skies and expansive water views offer an unobstructed horizon in nearly every direction. Sitting close to the Canadian border puts viewers well north of the 49th parallel, increasing the chances of seeing auroral activity even during quieter geomagnetic nights. Fall through spring are the prime seasons, and local resorts and outfitters make it easy to plan a stay around the forecast.

Eagle Lake Observatory

Norwood-Young America, MN
952-466-5255

The Eagle Lake Observatory, operated by the Minnesota Astronomical Society and located within Baylor Regional Park near Norwood Young America, is one of the premier public stargazing destinations in the state. Situated at an elevation of 1,000 feet and well outside the Twin Cities metro, its dark skies and open hilltop setting make it an excellent spot for catching the aurora on active nights. The observatory hosts regular public star parties throughout the year, and its warming room and on-site facilities make for a comfortable night out under the sky — whether the Northern Lights cooperate or not.

Silverwood Park

St. Anthony, MN
763-694-7707

Silverwood Park, nestled along the shores of Silver Lake in St. Anthony, is a unique and accessible spot for Twin Cities aurora watchers. Its open lakeside setting and paved mile-long trail offer unobstructed views of the northern sky, and the lake itself adds a beautiful reflective element for photographers. While metro light pollution is always a factor, Silverwood is a convenient option on nights when geomagnetic activity is strong enough to push the aurora south. After a night under the stars, the park's café is a welcoming place to warm up.

AURORA VIEWING**Gooseberry Falls State Park**

Two Harbors, MN
218-595-7100

Gooseberry Falls State Park on Minnesota's North Shore is one of the most popular aurora viewing destinations in the state — and for good reason. Its location along Lake Superior puts viewers far enough north to catch frequent auroral activity, and the park's dramatic shoreline, waterfalls, and rocky lava flows offer stunning foreground elements for photographers. Away from significant city light pollution, the dark skies here are a major draw. The park is open year-round, and whether the lights are dancing overhead or not, Gooseberry Falls is a breathtaking place to spend a night under the stars.

Voyageurs National Park

International Falls, MN
218-286-5258

Voyageurs National Park is a water lover's paradise, with more than a third of its 218,054 acres covered by four large lakes and 26 smaller interior lakes. Explore by motorboat, canoe, or kayak, and enjoy swimming, fishing, and over 27 miles of hiking trails. The park offers more than 270 camping and day-use sites — most accessible only by boat — ranging from secluded island tent sites to houseboats. Ranger-led programs run mid-June through mid-September, and equipment rentals are available locally year-round. Voyageurs is also one of Minnesota's finest spots for viewing the Northern Lights. Its northern latitude, low light pollution, and wide open skies over the lakes create ideal conditions for catching the aurora on active nights. Whether you're watching from a houseboat rocking gently on Rainy Lake or standing quietly on a remote island campsite.



unplug &
recharge

Mount Olivet
Conference &
Retreat Center
Farmington, MN
952.469.2175



**LAKEPLACE
RETREAT
CENTER**

SEE PAGE 15

...find the missing peace.
FRANCISCAN
RETREATS AND SPIRITUALITY CENTER
SERENITY RETREATS
952-447-2182
16385 St Francis Lane
Prior Lake, MN 55372
[FranciscanRetreats.net/
Serenity-Retreats](http://FranciscanRetreats.net/Serenity-Retreats)

Driggs from page 1

and bodies, contributing to a social good, or living in harmony with our environment. Too many of us suffer from chronic migraines, depression, sexual dysfunction, and weakened immune systems simply because we have allowed our workplaces to control us. It's time for us to walk the dog, rather than the other way around.

THE WRONG JOB IS COSTLY

Susie, a bright woman in her forties, came to see me because her physician could find no medical explanation for her constant lethargy and low spirits. Despite graduating at the top of her college class, she had remained stuck for years in a demanding, chaotic secretarial job at a local university. She believed the prestige of a university position would boost her self-worth—but clearly, given her intellectual gifts, she needed to confront underemployment as a personal issue. To do so, she had to break a vicious cycle of medicating her depression with compulsive spending. As she resisted the numbing effects of overwork and debt, she recovered enough energy to apply to graduate school.

Marty, a 60-year-old advertising representative, had recently lost a prestigious \$300,000-a-year position due to downsizing. He wanted his wife to be more understanding of his crisis. Rather than accepting a simpler life or a less lucrative role, Marty adopted a bunker mentality—withdrawing from his marriage and compulsively pursuing ad rep jobs to compensate for his loss. He could not accept his wife's love without the validation of a high-paying title. Eventually, he lost his marriage as well.

Lawrence arrived in my office wearing khaki pants, a safari shirt, and rather chic shoes—not the look one might expect from an electrical engineer. Plagued by low motivation and disinterest in learning new software, Lawrence took little comfort in his technical skills. He revealed to me a secret life: exquisite drawings of houses he had designed, and a lifelong dream of becoming an architect. His father had forcefully discouraged Lawrence's artistic interests, dismissing them as impractical and unmanly. Lawrence was a classic example of career mismatch.

WHY DO WE STAY IN DYSFUNCTIONAL SITUATIONS?

Work problems originate both within ourselves and outside ourselves. Those of us with significant financial obligations may have prepared our whole lives for the dynamic challenges of our careers, only to have that certainty undermined by restructuring, downsizing, or managed care. Our fatigue, numbness, and emotional absence from family may have less to do with personal shortcomings and more to do with the impossible demands placed on us—and our willingness to buy into the cultural myths of consumerism. To offset our emotional emptiness, many of us work harder, consume more, and see no other options. Many otherwise healthy families have been worn down by the vicious cycle of overwork, fatigue, numbness, and resignation that is so inherent to the modern workplace.

Other reasons for work problems lie within ourselves. Many of us stay in dysfunctional workplaces for the same reasons we stay in troubled relationships—we unconsciously reenact patterns

Suffering is the inevitable result of being a round peg in a square hole.

learned in our families of origin. Some of us are too threatened to be happy, because happiness would require us to grieve losses we have long kept frozen. For example, if you grew up in a family that offered little encouragement, you may gravitate toward workplaces where praise is also withheld—because being praised would only sharpen the pain of what you lacked as a child.

OTHER OPTIONS

In 1851, the English social critic John Ruskin observed that work happiness depends on three things: we must be fit for our work, we must not do too much of it, and we must find meaning in it. To make ends meet, we simply need a job that pays our bills. But to find genuine fulfillment, we need a career. Each of us has something unique to contribute to life. People who discover their calling often say, "Do I really get paid for this?" The process of defining and redefining our career is often a lifelong endeavor—made harder when we are out of touch with our emotional selves or trapped in our parents' dreams. But finding meaningful work is not optional. Our self-esteem depends on it.

Take small steps each day to address your work situation. Read *What Color Is Your Parachute?* Allow yourself to imagine your dream job. Interview people who do that work and see what your dreams are made of. Gather a group of trusted friends over dinner to offer perspective on what you'd be good at. If you're caught in a dream job gone haywire, consider your options. Perhaps it's time to strike out on your own, or to simplify your lifestyle. Doing what you love while eating peanut butter sandwiches may be far better than dining on caviar on the corporate treadmill. Read *Your Money or Your Life* by Vicki Robin and Joe Dominguez. You may need to reinvent yourself to reclaim your life. Whatever your direction—don't let your work push you around. Stand up for yourself. When your work becomes more important than you are, it's time to tighten the leash on the dog. You are not your work, and there is far more to you than any job could ever define.

John H. Driggs, is a retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker, living in St. Paul and co-author of Intimacy Between Men.

This article first appeared in the February 1999 issue of *The Phoenix Spirit*. John Driggs is taking a break from writing for a season due to health reasons. Read more of John's writing at our website: thephoenixspirit.com.

MINNESOTA HOPE DEALERZ ORGANIZATION





Hope lives here!

Free, confidential peer support and resources for recovery, housing, and stability—right here in Minneapolis.

WHAT WE OFFER

- Peer Recovery Support (CPRS)
- Housing navigation & placement
- Recovery residence referrals
- Narcan distribution & overdose prevention and crisis de-escalation training
- Men's trauma & addiction group: *Circle of Hope* (FRIDAYS, 6–7:45 PM, V3 SPORTS)
- Community outreach: *Hope Responders*
- Reentry support, employment & entrepreneurship classes
- We offer comprehensive assessments and warm handoffs to treatment and community partners

Walk in. Call. Text. We'll meet you where you are and make a plan—together.



CALL/TEXT: 612-416-2531 | WEB: www.MinnesotaHopeDealerz.org
VISIT: 705 42nd Ave N, Minneapolis, MN 55412

Not an emergency service. If you're in immediate danger, call 911. Minnesota Hope Dealerz Organization is a 501(c)(3). Donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

I don't understand why I can't stop gambling.

Gambling addiction is real. There is help.

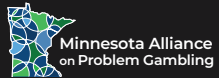
Treatment is free and it works.

Find Help

You're Not Alone

If you or someone you love is struggling with a gambling problem, you can **find help** at www.mnapg.org/find-help



1-800-333-HOPE

SPOTLIGHT ON RECOVERY

Many Small Steps Can Lead to a Giant Step

by **Mark T. Scannell**



Photo illustration by Anton Vierietin

Small steps! As I watched the recent journey of the astronauts to the moon and back, I was reminded of where I was on July 20th, 1969, when Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, uttered what have become immortal words for me: "one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." I believe those words ring true for all of us. Life and recovery both involve learning to be satisfied with small steps. I want to reflect on this in the rest of this article.

The bottom line is that few of us have the opportunity to take BIG steps, like walking on or traveling to the moon, developing a drug to cure cancer, or hitting a home run to win the World Series. The great majority of humankind go about our lives in relative obscurity, and very few people have any idea what we did. We do many things without being recognized or acknowledged.

What I love about Armstrong's words from the moon was the connection he made between the small steps we take and how they can create something much larger, even a leap! One of the ways I understand this is to find others with whom to work and share. I always return to those words from the beginning of the Hebrew Bible: "It is not good for humans to be alone." (Genesis 2:18) A community, and it doesn't have to be hundreds of people, can make a difference and have a sizable impact. This might mean finding ways to share our gifts and resources with people who are less fortunate than we are.

I see this taking place in the 12-Step group that I have been part of for over thirty years. In becoming part of such a group, I have found that we connect with each other and are able to support one another in our recoveries. My contribution is multiplied by belonging to such a group. Not only am I helped and supported, but I am also able to help and support others. I believe in the importance of two-way streets, where not only am I able to help others, but others are also able to help me. This exemplifies how a number of small steps, each of us supporting each other, can often lead to a leap and a giant step for all

group members. From these meetings and the support we receive, each of us can then reach out and help others, our families, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and more. I deeply believe we need safe places to live our recoveries beyond the times that the group meets. I see this as one way to look at Step 12 of the 12 Steps: "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to all others who are part of our lives and to practice these principles in all of our affairs"—translation mine. My 12-Step experiences have focused for me the value and power of taking small steps, like joining and being part of a recovery group. This step flows into my life and the different people who are part of it. I love the imagery of an equation where $1 + 1$ can often equal $3!$ When people connect, unexpected things, even leaps, can happen.

I am also struck by the use of the word "steps" both in the sense of small steps leading to giant ones, and in the wisdom that comes from working the 12 Steps. How central the act of taking steps is to both living and recovery. We can always ask: where are the steps, and the Steps, we are taking leading us? Toward what we are hoping for in our recoveries, or further away?

My experiences have affirmed the words Neil Armstrong spoke many years ago from the moon that small steps can lead to leaps and giant steps. For me, this has meant looking beyond myself and recognizing what the groups I belong to are able to accomplish, both individually and together. Recovery and contributing to society require being part of groups that support one another, like 12-Step and recovery groups around the world. If you don't belong to one of these groups, I would encourage you to find one, where hopefully you will see small steps leading to giant leaps beyond ourselves.

Mark T. Scannell is an avid 12 Stepper, has been working the Steps for over 30 years and sees them as foundational for a healthy and sane life. He authored a book on the 12 Steps: Affirm & Nurture: A New Look at 12 Steps.

THE 12 STEP CORNER

Step 6

by **Mark T. Scannell**

"In completing the moral inventory of ourselves, we came to realize that we have behaviors that were and are harmful to other and ourselves."

The first point this Step raises is that when we take inventory, it is about our own behaviors, not the behaviors of others. It is often easier to take inventory of others, but the Step is clear: stay within yourself.

Becoming aware is at the heart of this Step, in this case, aware of behaviors that have been harmful to others and to ourselves. In my experience in recovery, we often overlook what our harmful behaviors have done to ourselves, not just to others. For example, our addictions have frequently left us isolated, disconnected, and carrying shame.

Another important awareness in working Step 6 is that none of us is perfect. We have all acted in ways that have harmed others. This realization can begin the process of forgiving ourselves, a vital and often underestimated aspect of recovery.

Mark Scannell is an avid 12 Stepper, has been working the Steps for over 30 years and sees them as foundational for a healthy and sane life. He authored a book on the 12 Steps: Affirm & Nurture: A New Look at 12 Steps.

CRISIS TEXT LINE

TEXT "MN" TO

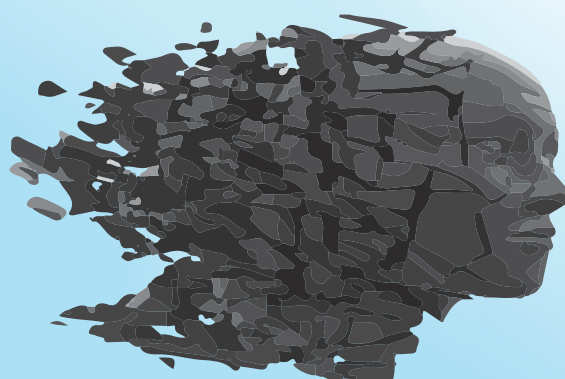
741741

No matter how many mistakes you make or how slow you progress, you are still way ahead of everyone who isn't trying.

TONY ROBBINS

Vinland Center provides drug and alcohol treatment for adults with cognitive disabilities, brain injuries, and/or multiple disabilities.

There are many causes of brain injury, and each brain injury is unique. Our staff members are highly trained to work with people living with disabilities caused by brain injuries.



1:2

One out of two people living with a brain injury suffer from some form of substance abuse issue, accordingly to the Office on Disability.

763.479.3555 • VinlandCenter.org



Kari Kleven
MSW, LICSW

Kari loves working outside with nature as a therapeutic partner and sees the benefits to her clients (and to herself) every day. Her style is relaxed, flexible, and playful, but also direct. She has been in the field for over 17 years, and never stops feeling deeply privileged to walk alongside the people she works with — to hear their stories, their pain, and their deepest hopes, to witness their courage, and to be a part of their growth and healing.

Kari's specialty is working with children ages 0–6 and their families using the Child-Parent Psychotherapy model, though she also enjoys working with individual adults. She welcomes children into adult sessions as well when needed, or when it supports the therapeutic process. She addresses issues such as emotional and behavioral regulation difficulties, attachment, anxiety, depression, grief and loss, and trauma.

NATURE-BASED THERAPY IN RECOVERY

Ask the Expert

Q Can you share a little bit about your background and what led you to nature-based therapy?

I'm a licensed clinical social worker and the founder of Minneapolis Nature-Based Therapy. Early in my work in a community mental health clinic, I began noticing that when clients, especially those dealing with trauma, anxiety, or substance use, spent time outside, they often felt more grounded and open. In 2020, what started as occasional outdoor sessions grew into a full practice centered on the idea that nature can be a powerful support in the healing and recovery process.

Q How would you describe nature-based therapy to someone who's never experienced it before?

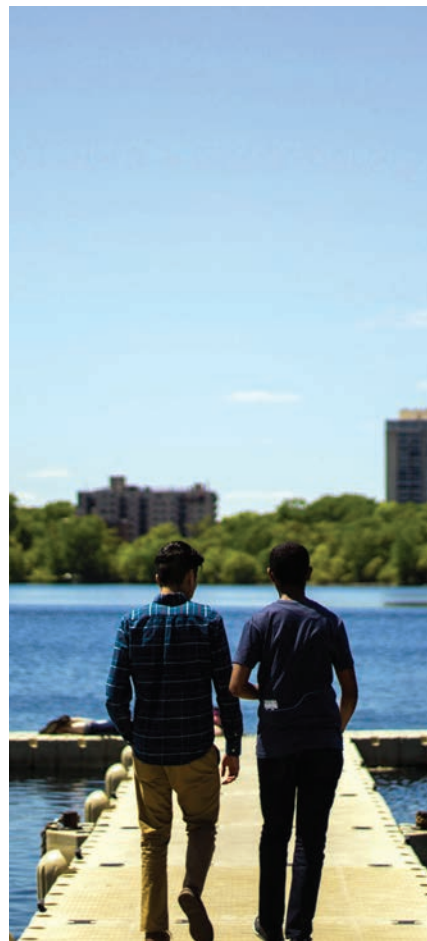
Nature-based therapy is simply therapy that takes place outdoors, using the natural environment as part of the work. Instead of sitting in an office, we might walk or sit in a quiet natural space while talking. For many people in recovery, being outside has the potential to reduce intensity, soften shame, and make it easier to stay present with what they're going through.

Q How can spending time in nature support someone in their recovery journey?

Recovery often involves learning how to tolerate difficult emotions without numbing or escaping them. Nature can help by offering a calming, regulating backdrop that makes those emotions feel more manageable. It also creates space to reconnect with the body, build awareness, and experience moments of relief, which are all important parts of sustaining recovery.

Q What does the research say about how time in nature impacts stress and overall mental health?

Research shows that time in nature can lower stress hormones, improve mood, and support emotional regulation, all of which are important in recovery. Even some brief time outdoors has been linked to reduced anxiety and depression, as well as improved attention span and sleep. There's also growing evidence that nature-based interventions can support people working through trauma and substance use by helping the nervous system settle.



I began noticing that when clients, especially those dealing with trauma, anxiety, or substance use, spent time outside, they often felt more grounded and open.

Walking on a dock in Minneapolis / Photo by Ryan Millsap

Q What is forest bathing, and how can people incorporate this into their recovery?

Forest bathing, or *Shinrin-yoku*, is a practice of slowing down and engaging your senses in a natural setting. It's not about exercise; it's about noticing and being present. For someone in recovery, this can be a way to practice staying in the moment, even when it's uncomfortable, while also giving the body a chance to settle.

Q For people with health issues, allergies, or other challenges with being outside, what are some ways they bring nature indoors?

Nature can still be part of therapy and support healing and recovery even when getting outside is difficult. Bringing in plants, natural light, or materials like wood and stone can help create a calming environment. Even looking out of a window at trees or listening to nature sounds can offer a small, but meaningful, sense of connection and regulation.

Q What are a few simple ways that someone could begin incorporating nature into their daily life?

Start with small, manageable moments. Step outside for a few minutes, take a short walk, or sit somewhere you can notice the natural world around you.

In recovery, consistency matters more than intensity. So, even brief, regular moments of connection can make a difference over time.

Q What's one message you hope readers take with them about the relationship between nature and recovery?

You don't have to do recovery alone or rely only on willpower. Nature can be a steady, accessible support, something that you can return to again and again when things feel hard. Even a few minutes of connection with nature can help you feel more grounded, more present, and a little less alone.

If you have a question for the experts, or you are an expert interested in being featured, please email phoenix@thephoenixspirit.com. Experts have not been compensated for their advice.

Learn more

Minneapolis Nature-Based Therapy
www.naturebased.care

SUPPORT / RESOURCE DIRECTORY

RECOVERY GROUPS

12 Step Caregivers Group

Meeting: Every Thursday / 7 pm CST
Location: Online via Zoom
Contact: deannam48@gmail.com

We are a group of caregivers who share their experience, strength and hope with one another. We read out of the book *Self-care for Caregivers, a Twelve Step Approach* by author Pat Samples. If you are a caregiver for a loved one or in any capacity, come join us for additional support and solutions to the day to day challenges of caregiving. This is an informal book study and discussion. Connect with De Anna M.

Meeting ID: 735 956 0104,
Password: freedom (all lower case)

Co-Dependents Anonymous (MN)

Meeting: Various times / days
Location: Online and In-person
Contact: minncoda@gmail.com
Website: minncoda.org

Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA) is a 12 Step fellowship of men and women. CoDA supports people to create healthy, loving relationships starting with themselves, whether or not addictions exist in their lives. Local meetings are held in person and online. Please visit our website MinnCoDA.org to learn more about codependency recovery and find a meeting near you.

Adult Children of Alcoholics & Dysfunctional Families (Fridley)

Meeting: Saturday at 10:00 am
Location: Room 1 (St. Phillips Lutheran Church, Fridley, MN)
Contact: acadfridleymn@gmail.com
Website: adultchildren.org

Enter through Door 3 or Door 11 and proceed to meeting in Room 1. (Room 1 is on the opposite side of the church from Door 3 and Next to Door 11). Watch for signs and maps.

Co-Dependents Anonymous (MN)

Meeting: Various times / days
Location: Online and In-person
Contact: minncoda@gmail.com
Website: minncoda.org

Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA) is a 12 Step fellowship of men and women. CoDA sup

Gam-Anon

Meeting: Various times / days
Contact: 718-352-1671
Website: gam-anon.org

Gam-Anon is a 12-step self-help fellowship of men and women who have been affected by the gambling problem of a loved one.

The message of Gam-Anon is: "Come join with us. We too were alone, afraid, and unable to cope with the deterioration in our relationships, the financial problems, and the debt caused by the gambling problem. We know that living with the effects of a loved one's gambling can be too devastating to bear without help."

RECOVERY GROUPS

Narcotics Anonymous (MN)

Meeting: Various
Contact: info@naminnesota.org
Website: naminnesota.org/find-a-meeting

Narcotics Anonymous is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean.

We have found through our group experience that the therapeutic value of one addict helping another is without parallel.

Greater Minneapolis Intergroup Alcoholics Anonymous

Meeting: Various times / days
Location: Online and In-person
Contact: 952-922-0880 and info@aaminneapolis.org
Website: aaminneapolis.org

Intergroup is a local service office dedicated to helping newcomers who are seeking Alcoholics Anonymous.

- Phones answered 24 hours a day
- Maintains online A.A. Meeting Directory
- 12-Step calls
- A.A. Literature – English, Spanish, non English languages
- A.A. Grapevine publications
- A.A. Orientation Meetings
- MIRUS monthly newsletter (Minneapolis Intergroup Recovery Unity and Service)
- Public information
- Publication of Meeting Directories
- Cooperation with Outside Agencies

COLLEGIATE RECOVERY

Augsburg StepUP

Contact: stepup@augsborg.edu
Website: augsborg.edu/stepup

StepUP is one of the oldest and largest residential collegiate recovery programs in the United States, offering sober living alongside a full college experience. The program is unique in that it addresses both mental health and addiction recovery, built on evidence-based research and proven techniques that emphasize the stages of change and the abstinence model. Students in recovery fully engage in the Augsburg experience, including study abroad, varsity athletics, student government, and research.

StepUP is led by experienced, highly trained staff and licensed counselors, and provides students with the opportunity to make lasting friendships while thriving in a sober social scene and sober living college experience.

To be included in our printed support page and online resource directory, visit us at thephoenixspirit.com/resources. Listings are \$100 or \$165/year.

RECOVERY COMMUNITY ORGS

Minnesota Alliance of Recovery Community Organizations (MARCO)

Contact: info@marcomn.org
Website: marcomn.org

MARCO is a statewide Recovery Community Organization (RCO) working to build an ecosystem of recovery. We believe that long-term system change starts in our communities and that RCOs are essential partners in building a recovery-oriented society. MARCO is a grassroots 501(c)3 organization, and all monetary donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Minnesota Hope Dealerz

Contact: 763-290-2736
Website: minnesotahopeddealerz.org

We're committed to investing our expertise and resources in order to further achieve our cause. Since 2019, we've been supporting our community members in a variety of ways and measuring our success not by monetary size, but by qualitative measurements such as the scale and effectiveness of our efforts. Just imagine what we can achieve together!

In 2019, our Movement, which is a 501 c3 NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION that realized by working together, we could overcome our challenges much more efficiently, and that is why we ultimately decided to launch The Minnesota Hope Dealerz.

PROVIDERS

Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge

Contact: 612-373-3366
Website: mntc.org

Our mission is to assist men, women and teens in gaining freedom from chemical addictions and other life-controlling problems by addressing their physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

Missions, Inc.

Contact: 763-559-1883
Website: missionsinc.org

Missions Inc. is a nonprofit organization with a proud history of more than a century of service. We are located at three sites in Plymouth, St. Paul and Columbia Heights, MN, providing chemical health, domestic violence and long-term care services through seven programs, serving over 3,000 people each year.

RockBridge Treatment & Recovery

Contact: 844-815-7625
Web: treatment.rockbridgehealth.org

We address your whole person, body, mind, and spirit. Our accommodations are surrounded by a natural setting full of serenity and peace to begin healing your body. Our chapels and opportunities to pray and talk to chaplains will help heal your spirit through Faith-based addiction treatment.

PROVIDERS

Transformation House

Contact: 763-427-7155 or intake@transformationhouse.com
Website: transformationhouse.com

Transformation House is a behavioral health care provider, specializing in substance use disorders (SUD) and mental health treatment services. Located in the Twin Cities' North Metro, with two residential facilities, outpatient programs, a psych clinic, and sober living we offer superior quality treatment and exceptional support for families, social workers, criminal justice case managers, and referents.

Vinland National Center

Contact: 763-479-3555 or Intake@vinlandcenter.org
Web: www.vinlandcenter.org

Vinland provides drug and alcohol treatment for adults with cognitive impairments. Staff members strive to make all possible accommodations for cognitive deficits and adaptations for individual learning styles.

NON-PROFIT ADVOCATES

Minnesota Alliance on Problem Gambling

Contact: 612-424-8595 or info@mnapg.org
Website: mnapg.org

MNAPG is a non-profit, gambling-neutral organization dedicated to improving the lives of Minnesotans affected by problem gambling. MNAPG is a coalition of individuals and organizations sharing the belief that problem gambling is a serious public health problem that is both treatable and preventable.

SOBER TECHNOLOGY

Soberlink

Contact: support@soberlink.com
Website: soberlink.com

Rebuilding trust is one of the hardest parts of recovery. Soberlink's real-time alcohol monitoring lets you share verified sobriety results with family, counselors, or courts, giving you the proof and confidence to own your journey.



**Concrete Repair
Masonry Repair
Step Repair
Foundation Repair
Demolition or New
Bobcat Work**

**Call Gary
651-423-6666**

ESSAY

Time to Retreat

by *Mary Lou Logsdon*



Photo illustration by Anton Vierietin

"All of humanity's problems, stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone."

BLAISE PASCAL

Scattered. I feel scattered. It is spring and the earth is coming alive. I take on that spring energy. I cannot sit still. I want to be in the garden. I want to clean out closets, rearrange the bookshelves, toss out stale spices. I want to walk in the woods to see the spring ephemerals—hepaticas, wild ginger, bloodroot—that are here for such a short time. I don't want to miss them. I don't want to miss anything! There is cleaning up the patio, bringing the lawn furniture out of storage, raking the lawn. Planting, preparing, pruning. Scattered.

Each of the seasons has its own tempo. Spring, for me, is *presto*, very fast. Winter's tempo was *largo* and I am ready to speed up. Hopefully by summer I can move into *moderato*.

It must be time to retreat.

Retreat. To withdraw, draw back, retract. That is how my dictionary defines the verb retreat. When life is too much, too busy, too scary, to where do you retreat? What do you retreat from? Or to?

We find the tradition of stepping back from the routine of life across cultures and faith traditions. The Jewish people gave us Sabbath, a day of rest for people and animals where work was forbidden. The word sabbatical comes from the word sabbath. A sabbatical allows a person leisure time, often a full year, to pursue study or travel, a time away to rest and refresh. Europeans get 4-6 weeks of vacation yearly. That gives them time to step back for quiet as well as for active vacations.

Quiet time can be woven into our lives. We can find a quiet space in our home or a nook at the local library or a favorite coffee shop where we can linger to think or write or simply be. We could take a weekday or a weekend, clear our calendar and focus on our own inner journey.

Many businesses and organizations take their leadership team on an annual retreat. The objective is to get away from the day-to-day routine, in order to free up head space and encourage creativity, as they peer ahead and plan for the future.

Retreats give us space to consider where we are, where we've been, and where we are going. May you enjoy your own company.

Often that planning requires a look back to see where the institution has been successful and where it needs reassessment.

Our personal retreat could be similar—where have I been since my last retreat? What is calling me now? We might go on a retreat to get reacquainted with ourselves, sit down with a journal, take a few minutes to quiet our brain, then think about what we are missing about ourselves. Have I lost my way? Or a piece of myself? Or am I out of balance in some way? When I look at my calendar and my bank account I see what is important to

me. Does it match my values? Does my life need rebalancing? How do I balance the "doing" with the "being"? What dreams have I had that have fallen by the wayside, hopes I barely remember, parts of me that have gone missing in action?

Recently, I retreated to my cabin in the woods. I didn't go there to accomplish anything or to socialize or to work. I went there to be. At the cabin I can leave behind the tasks and be free of others' expectations. The cabin has a stillness that holds simple being.

What is a retreat not? It is not an escape. It is not running away from our problems or dilemmas or fears. While we don't have to leave home to retreat, binging on the latest Netflix series is not a retreat. Nor is a trip to Las Vegas to try our luck at Black Jack or to see the latest shows. It's not playing video games. It likely will not provide a dopamine high. I can run away from things I would rather not deal with and enjoy the time away, but that isn't a retreat.

A retreat is a journey inward, a place to catch up with ourselves, to reconnect with the person we once knew but have drifted away from. It is a quiet time out.

When do we rest our spirits? You may want a retreat to reconnect with the Holy—a prayer retreat with a few days to sink into one type of prayer or a time to explore different kinds of prayer. There are meditation retreats that give the retreatant blocks of time for meditation, sitting and walking. There are directed retreats that blend quiet time with talks and structure. There are various retreat houses that offer space and time to calm our weary souls.

How does silence feel? Inviting? Terrifying? There are so few places of silence in our lives. It is easy to have music or news or commentary in the background or funneled into our ears throughout the day. What might three or four days of silence feel like?

During my most recent trip to the cabin, I was serenaded by frogs—loud, melodic songs—no doubt calling for a mate. That din offers me a calming presence. I am mesmerized by the complexity of the sound as it resonates from the nearby pond. If your retreat is in a natural setting you will be accompanied by howls, hoots, and trills. A joyful noise.

We are never really alone on retreat. Sometimes a whole phalanx accompanies us—old nemeses, our inner critic with her list of failures, a friend who understood us so well and died too early. We can gather trusted companions—authors, sacred texts, icons of saints or heroes to accompany us.

Maybe you want to bring a poet along, say Mary Oliver or Naomi Shihab Nye. Who of us couldn't ponder for hours "Tell me what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life" from Oliver's poem, "The Summer Day" or Nye's "Kindness" where she says, "Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside, you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing"?

Retreats give us space to consider where we are, where we've been, and where we are going. May you enjoy your own company.

Mary Lou Logsdon is a Spiritual Director and Retreat Leader in the Twin Cities. She can be reached at logsdon.marylou@gmail.com.

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

ALICE WALKER

GAMBLING HOTLINE
1-800-333-4673
OR TEXT "HOPE" TO
53342

Recovery is not a race. You don't have to feel guilty if it takes you longer than you thought it would.

ANONYMOUS

Lakeplace Guest House and Cabins for AA, NA, Alanon and Associated Couples

Courtesy of:

The Lakeplace Foundation Inc.

For Current Use



Imagine you and your friends from your own group being able to share your own strengths, hopes and experiences here in this highly spiritual, north-woods community.

With these three cabins and Guest House, your group can choose from several activities for fellowship, while being provided several areas for your meetings.

Please consider these many benefits:

- Advance Scheduling *(for current and future openings)*
- Weekend or Weekly Options
- Available for Groups of From 4 to 20 Persons *(4 to 10 in the winter)*
- On-Site 24/7 Staff for your convenience test
- Use of Lakeplace Amenities
- Summer or Winter Fishing
- Several Meeting and Community Areas
- Stunning "12-Step Wilderness Walk"
- Provided Without Cost *(guest donations appreciated)*

In the future, exclusive use of the Lakeplace Retreat Center campus may be provided by the Lakeplace Foundation for Alano Societies and independent AA, NA, Alano groups and their associated couples.

To review this possible contingency, along with its video presentation, please enter the address indicated below on your search bar:

**Lakeplace Foundation
Website**

www.lakeplacefoundation.org

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Home | Enhancements |
| Video Tour | Services |
| About Us | Information |
| Accommodations | Contact Us |

*We believe this offer by Lakeplace Foundation is consistent with our AA "Traditions" #6 and #7:
We are an independent corporation, seek no endorsement from AA, NA, Alanon or their financial support.*

**25704 County Road 338
Bovey, Minnesota 55709
218 910-0800**

Get Help *without* Hitting Pause

Addiction treatment designed for working professionals, so you can stay present for your family, your career, and the relationships that matter most. We offer:

- Individualized Treatment Plans
- Personal Technology Access
- Private Rooms
- Premier Amenities



Get Help Today

(844) 815-7625 rockbridgetreatment.org

A stylized illustration of a diverse group of people's profiles in various colors (orange, red, blue, green) against a dark teal background. The profiles are shown in profile, facing right.

**NOT JUST
SOBRIETY**

**Compassion.
Community
Recovery.**

OUTPATIENT | LICENSED RESIDENTIAL | LONG TERM | TEEN | PREVENTION

 **Adult & Teen Challenge**
Minnesota

612-FREEDOM (373-3366)
mnc.org