



LifeRing Secular Recovery

A network of positive support groups for living free of alcohol and other drugs

Winter 2014

Newsletter

Turning another page – 2014 and beyond

by Njon Weinroth

I was trying to think of what I could write about during the holiday season that would be appropriate to the year-end sentiment. The *Recovery By Choice* book covers the domain “My Culture” that really resonates with me this time of the year. Our society pressures us to give in to the frenetic, mad, holiday scramble, to stampede and bulldoze our way to 3.5% savings on something that will be forgotten by next summer. Our celebrations call for “jovial spirits” and copious or excessive consumption. We even make excuses for these excesses based on the season, LOL. At least, this is how I interpreted my culture previously.

In sobriety however, I notice people’s every-day kindness and generosity. I no longer have to fall into that artificial construct of a conditional, seasonal spirit of giving that is so prevalent. I am grateful for the people that I have chosen to have in my life. I am grateful for the fortune that I have, to be able to shape my life into something that I enjoy. It sounds ridiculously cliché, but I am grateful that I can be of service. I get so much more out of it than I put in (ugh, I’ve become that guy I used to laugh at). It’s not all rainbow puppy-dogs, unicorns and crème brûlée. I still get my feelings hurt, smash my toe on the coffee table, forget the simplest word I need when speaking, and get the flu, but these things don’t spiral me out of control any longer. “You have no power here. Be gone, before somebody drops a house on you, too!”

I heard one of my mentors say once “I can truly say that today, the things I have, the things I want, and the things that I need are all closer to being the same, more so than ever before”. It sounded pretentious at the time but it stuck with me and really corresponds to what I’m feeling while writing this. It brings me to a list of things I want for myself. I hope I’ll realize some of this next year ☺

My ~~resolutions~~ goals for 2015:

- Take better care of my body. Get more exercise and eat better, sleep more. I find I really enjoy this

- more than expected when I do it regularly.
- Allow myself to be more vulnerable with people that I know and let them get to know the real me, instead of the *me* I’d like them to think that I am (this one is actually easier than it sounds).
- Be more generous with praise outside of support meeting settings. Retrain my brain to better automate this process.
- Allow personal attacks to pass over me and continue on their trajectory away from me. I’m slowly learning that having the last word is not winning the game. I hate getting suckered into responding to foolishness.
- Make more difficult decisions. I’ve traditionally gone with a knee-jerk reaction or no action based on my fear of not making the perfect decision. I hope to continue on the collaborative path I’ve chosen and to be a true catalyst of change.
- Further integrate my personal, professional and leisure lives and cross-pollinate my circles of friends. I have really good taste in friends, as I become more open to each; the different aspects of my life have greater overlap.
- Be kinder to myself and not spread myself too thinly. When I try to take on too much, I feel like that lady on the Hoarders program, with 127 cats in various states of health. She has so many, she can’t help them as she so wants to, and they all end up worse off than they would have been without her help. And her house is falling down around her!! I don’t want to be that lady.
- Take a REAL vacation. It’s been too long!

I’m really looking forward to seeing what 2015 has in store for me and for LifeRing. I truly love seeing the way people are contributing to make the organization both more accessible and noteworthy. We’ve really upped our game, and to me this goes a long way to demonstrate the benefits of self-empowerment.

Thanks to the members and all of those that continue to contribute in so many ways!

Pals and ePals, “You are never alone”

by *Tim Reith*

It was my fellow board member Craig Whalley who introduced me to our ePals program several years ago. This program is for folks who have contacted LifeRing for help but are hesitant to join one of our on-line forums or chat. They prefer one-to-one conversations. I lose about 50% of these folks after one or two e-mails. Craig says that, by his measure, this is quite good.

The biggest reward for me is my correspondences with prisoners. These are "snail mail" exchanges so they actually are "Pals" and not "ePals." The turn-around times for such letters are long. Often three weeks or more. In part this is because all my letters are read going in and all returning responses are read coming out.

One prisoner, a "lifer," was tried as an adult even though only 16 years old at that time. A new law in his state allows consideration of such people for leniency. He has been incarcerated for 20 years. After a successful prison hearing, a recommendation for his parole was sent to the governor for final approval. He should hear of the decision in a few weeks.

Another fellow, convicted of selling drugs, writes with more sensitivity than most. He introduced his fiancé to heroin some years ago and she died of an overdose. He will live with terrible guilt for the rest of his life. He has identified a little star in the night sky and he pretends that it is she looking down upon him with forgiveness. He knows this is not true, but he pretends it is because it lifts his burden a bit.

Prisoners are all lonely. Every one. Some have families but they are mostly forgotten or ignored. It is easy for me to write them a page or two. Some tell me I am the only one who even thinks about them. So sad for them, but it's rewarding for me to think I have helped out a little.

It's important to me to make my prisoner friends feel as though they are helping me, as I am helping them. I emphasize that our letters constitute "two-way streets" and indeed they do. I tell them of my troubles and they write back with advice. Another quote: "You are never alone and I will always be here if you want to talk or work through specific pains you have." I could have written that, and may have at some point.

A sober and sane Christmas

by *Mary S.*

I love Christmas, but because my life has changed so dramatically, I have to be extra vigilant. I was a daily drinker, and therefore tend to neglect to talk about or plan strategies for navigating seasonal minefields. But since I cherish sobriety above all else, I don't take chances. For example I never take punch unless I'm positive it's alcohol-free. Fruitcakes, rum balls, foil-wrapped chocolates—forget-about-em! When I walk into a setting where alcohol

will be present, I make sure I go on a full stomach--not filled with "pub" food, but with a protein such as peanut butter, cheese, etc. And because I refuse to perpetuate the drinking ritual, I don't engage in "pretend" drinking, i.e. drinking out of stemmed glasses, etc. One of my "bibles" with regard to food is Liz Scott's *The Sober Kitchen*. She gives many wonderful alternatives to cooking with alcohol, and de-bunks the myth that alcohol burns off in the cooking process.

But beyond the minefields, I have to take measures to be sure my head is in the right place. I can't draw on Christmases past, whether positive or negative, to create Christmas in the present tense. I have to watch my self-talk. If I say things such as "the holidays depress me", I will ensure myself of misery. Many of us have been conditioned to believe that at this season, everything that feels empty will be filled; that everything that is dark within, will be illuminated. So how do I overcome this funk, and use it as an opportunity to grow in recovery? For me, it's making a conscious effort to come out of self. It could mean contributing to a toy drive, volunteering time, or even visiting someone who's in the psych ward because of addiction. Sometimes this requires overcoming shyness, or worse yet, a sense that we have nothing to give. I'm not talking about a Pollyanna positivity, but a powerful life-changing resolve. With our thoughts and words, we become victims or creators of our own reality.

In early recovery, sometimes we have all we can do to get our heads around the concept of abstinence, and then work toward coming to a place of acceptance. That's great, and I don't believe in rushing the process. However, sustainable recovery means that I have to slowly work on all the other stuff, and to utterly let go of everything that no longer serves me. With regard to Christmas, it means that I have to consciously let go of my neediness, of my expectations of others, etc. etc.

What about you? Does the prospect of the holidays fill you with joy? With dread? With nothingness? Are you willing to talk about it on [your] list [or in your group]? ...

A peaceful, sober day to all!

The Martini could not have looked more perfect

by *Cathy R.*

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
Enjoy every minute of it.

The party was quite boring. The food was late in coming. A bad emotional marriage for me. Hunger and boredom. The martini could not have looked more perfect. Clean, crisp and cold it called to me. Just eat one of my olives. It won't kill you! Immediately, I had visions of convulsions and the sound of sirens out my window. The humiliation of being carried out on a stretcher to the city hospital. The horrified look on my husband's face as

I admitted to drinking rubbing alcohol to quell the convulsions. The never ending question, did you try to kill yourself??

Flash forward three glorious sober years. My life is far from perfect. It is a wonderful work in progress. Forty years of drinking stole a lot from my life. I hurt many people. Those who love me have forgiven me. Those who cannot forgive me, will no longer be part of my life. I can only ask for forgiveness. I am not entitled to receive it. No time for the negative.

In retrospect, there were many lost opportunities. The shoulda woulda coulda's. They are no more. We can only give thanks and move forward.

I spent the good part of my first sober year on-line with meetings and chat rooms. It was my salvation. My on-line relationships got me through the darkest days and nights of my early sobriety. Hours on-line, breaking for ice cream, the comradery and helping newbies to get through the night. I did not like the 12 Step groups as they rejected me when I did not attend face-to-face meetings and get a sponsor. I began lying to them just to fit in. Then I realized that lying and hiding was no longer my way of life. I then found Lifering and settled in. No judgment, no pressure. Just unconditional love and support. Thank you, all my cyber friends. I look forward to having a meeting close by me in the near future. Happy Hanukah, Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2015 to you and yours.

Every sober day is a blessed gift we give ourselves!! It is not something that JUST happens. WE make it happen together.

LifeRing Secular Recovery's 2015 National/International Annual Meeting: Save the Dates!

Just a quick note about the dates and location of our 2015 Annual Meeting. We'll be gathering in beautiful **Salt Lake City, Utah** next year for a program that will include engaging presentations from a variety of speakers; convenor support workshops; opportunities for mixing and mingling; and, of course, opportunities to participate in the governance of LifeRing Secular Recovery. The dates are **Friday, May 29 through Sunday, May 31**.

The speakers and presentations are being calendared on **Saturday, May 30** to encourage addiction and recovery professionals, policy makers, and other interested members of the public attend and to learn more about LifeRing's sober, secular, and self-directed approach.

We hope you will plan on joining us!

If you would like to volunteer to serve on the Annual Meeting Planning Committee, or have program suggestions, or questions about planning your travel to Salt Lake City, please contact board member and LifeRingUtah convenor Mahala Kephart at mahala@lifering.org.

LifeRing Board Chair appointed to S.F. Advisory Board on Mental Health

LifeRing's Chairman of the Board Njon Weinroth has been appointed to seat #2 of the San Francisco Advisory Board on Mental Health, effective November 26, 2014. Congratulations, Njon!

This is another breakthrough for our organization, as it will have an impact in raising public awareness about LifeRing and choice in recovery.

Most counties have advisory boards to the government. They are local entities whose meetings are open to the public and they are an excellent way to get to know people in the local recovery scene.

If you're interested, contact your local government and try attending just one meeting of any of your county's advisory boards. Folks will get to know us better.

Hazle Settlement a Victory for Secular Recovery

by Byron Kerr

In 2007, Barry Hazle, Jr. of Shasta County, CA was charged with a drug offense in Shasta County Superior Court of California. Mr. Hazle pled no contest to the charges and received a sentence of one year in state prison. After serving one year in prison Barry Hazle was released on parole. A condition of his parole was that he attend a ninety-day, residential drug treatment program. Barry Hazle immediately said that he was willing to undergo drug treatment, but specifically desired a secular approach to treatment.

Westcare, Inc., the state contractor that was enlisted to procure a treatment facility for Mr. Hazle ignored his request for secular treatment and placed him in Empire Recovery Center that used 12-Step facilitation exclusively. Mr. Hazle objected immediately to both Westcare and his parole officer, a Mr. Crofoot. Barry Hazle was told that he must participate in the 12-Step program or risk charges of parole violation.

Barry Hazle was expelled from the treatment program at Empire Recovery for being, "disruptive, though in a congenial way" according to court records of Empire staff testimony. Mr. Crofoot arrested Barry Hazle on charges of parole violation and forced Mr. Hazle back to state prison for an additional 100 days.

Barry Hazle filed a federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for eastern California, claiming violation of his constitutional rights under the First Amendment. In the meantime, Mr. Hazle's original criminal conviction was thrown out and the original conviction no longer stands. John Heller was the lead attorney in the federal lawsuit and was one of the featured speakers at our 2014 LifeRing Conference in Santa Rosa, May 31, 2014. Marty Nicolaus introduced Mr. Heller. One of the high points of the entire

conference was when John Heller introduced Barry Hazle to the LifeRing audience. Mr. Hazle received a very welcoming ovation from the LifeRing crowd.

At the time of the LifeRing Conference, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals had already ruled that the case must be re-tried and that compensatory damages were mandatory. Other issues surrounding the State of California and Westcare, Inc. were also ordered re-tried due to improper instructions given to the original jury.

The final settlement, reached on October 14, 2014, was reached without a full re-trial. It was apparently reached by way of a settlement conference. While the \$1,950,000 settlement is significant, the victory for choice of recovery support is the most important aspect of this settlement. The fact that the State of California is paying half and a private company is paying half is also important.

Barry Hazle has stated that he intends to remain active in the recovery community. He has also stated a desire to build a home in the mountains. His bravery and courage in standing up for his rights certainly entitles him to a home in the mountains.

Bay Area Convenor Training Session

On Saturday, January 31st, 2015 from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM, there will be a convenor training session in Emeryville, California. Dee Dee Stout, a Bay Area expert in addiction and group training, will guide us in Motivational Interviewing techniques that can be used to convene a more successful and enriching meeting experience.

The San Francisco LifeRing is sponsoring this event and will buy lunch for the first 15 convenors to email the Service Center at service@lifering.org. The address, agenda and handouts will be emailed to you after the first of the year.

Did you know...?

IRS allows 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations (will be the same in 2015).

Your time you give us as a volunteer, e.g. to convene a meeting, is not deductible on your tax return, but you can deduct the mileage you drive going to and from those meetings.

Second Edition of “Empowering Your Sober Self” now available

LifeRing is pleased to announce that a new, second edition of *Empowering Your Sober Self* by our co-founder Martin Nicolaus is now available. Many congratulations and our deepest thanks to Marty! Without you, we'd be nothing!

Here's the author's note and preface to the second edition:

The text of this second edition corrects several typographical errors. The worst of these was the inexcusable misspelling of the last name of Jean Kirkpatrick, founder of Women for Sobriety. Neither I nor the publisher's otherwise eagle-eyed copy editor caught the mistake in time. It is rectified here, with apologies.

A new Supplement for this edition touches on several recent publications that deal with the addiction rehab industry and with research developments in genetics. The recent publications underline and reinforce the message of Chapter 6 that addiction rehab is ripe for thoroughgoing reform.

Already in 2009, decades of belief in the existence of an “alcoholism gene” had been severely shaken. In its place stood guarded generalities about multiple genes and gene-environment interactions, as I point out in Chapter 7. Since then, a series of genome-wide association studies has all but pulverized the “alcoholism gene” theory. Scientists can now say with confidence that there is no significant difference between the DNA of alcoholics and non-alcoholics. The Supplement provides details and references.

I want to express my deep appreciation to Lesley Iura of Jossey-Bass, the publisher of the first edition, and to Jennifer Peters of its parent company John Wiley & Sons, for their gracious agreement to revert the rights to the book after the publisher's print run was exhausted. It seems entirely appropriate that this book, which is dedicated to the LifeRing network, should from now on be published by LifeRing Press.

This new edition also updates references to the LifeRing web site; it is now www.lifering.org. There are also some changes in layout and typography, and there is a new Index.

A gratifying number of people have told me that the first edition has been a force for good in their lives. There is no greater reward for an author than this.

Martin Nicolaus

LifeRing Utah Going to the Dogs

So many of us in LifeRing Utah consider our canines to be important members of our extended support system that we decided to create meetings where they can join us. Twice a month, we meet in a large city park – a lap is roughly a mile – to walk together with our dogs. It's turned out to be a wonderful opportunity to enjoy each other's company while being outside and to get in a good stretch while we're talking. We weren't sure what the response would be when we started this earlier in the year, but our “un-meetings” have become a real fixture in our schedule.

-Mahala Kephart

LifeRing in Canada

Hi Everybody.

Just a few words on what LifeRing Canada is doing.

- We produced a 35 minute movie of a normal LifeRing meeting. We will include the movie with all future new-meeting boxes. This should be a big help to distant meetings where the new convenors may not have had much experience in attending face to face meetings.
- We also hope to produce a 5-10 minute version of the movie for marketing and similar uses.
- We have had success in running a Workbook Workshop that consists of 4-1 hour weekly sessions that provides a good introduction to how to use the workbook. All attendees are required to purchase a workbook for the course. We have set the maximum attendance at 10 and permit people to make up a missed session at a subsequent meeting. We will start our 5th set of sessions on January 7th.
- We now have 4 meetings in the Vancouver area and are hoping to add to that number in the new-year.

We wish you all happy holidays and a prosperous new year.

John Banks, President LifeRing Canada

Undercover: The Mystery of Substance Abuse

by Emily Marcus

I am a reader, a true bookworm—I love books. Mostly I read novels, but for the past two years I have been on a different sort of jag, cutting my fiction with narrative nonfiction of the drug and alcohol variety.

I've been sober five years, and I think that my progress in winding my way through recovery and landing in a place of comfortable abstinence is such that my private, literary interests are turning back towards addiction. Not my own—my problem with alcohol wasn't very interesting, and if it were I would hope that I'd be writing about it myself rather than reading other people's work. These days I don't want to drink, but I do sometimes want to be immersed in the words of others' illicit activities and attempts to describe themselves, and think about their behaviors and the world as it relates.

It started with two books by Bill Clegg, *Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man: A Memoir*; and *Ninety Days: A Memoir of Recovery*. Bill Clegg is a handsome, talented, super-successful literary agent in Manhattan who had a very bad crack addiction. For three years, I too was a literary agent in Manhattan. It was the best, most favorite work I have ever pursued. I loved it, and it didn't work out.

These two books stirred up tremendous agitation and envy in me. It staggered me that Clegg was able to destroy such a wonderful career, then write two exhilarating memoirs, and then return to work at a world-famous literary agency, with not just aplomb, but to media darling-level accolades, wealth and success.

But it propelled me further into the genre, loosened. Last winter I accidentally discovered *At Last*, the fifth and final book in an autobiographical series of novels by a British aristocratic writer named Edward St. Aubyn. Over the next several months I read them all—*Never Mind*; *Bad News*; *Some Hope*; *Mother's Milk*—and found, amid some of the most poetic and beautiful prose I have ever seen, a painful story of childhood abuse, neglect and rape, privilege, addiction, and family.

The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt, an epic literary novel about trauma, loss, friendship, substance abuse, and beauty, consumed my summer. The sadness of this book ran so deep that I could only read it a little at a time; but I read it every day, and for months.

In August, *The Fix* published a list of their ten best addiction memoirs, and I copied it down and picked out two classic works. I read Caroline Knapp's *Drinking: A Love Story*, and Jerry Stahl's *Permanent Midnight* at the same time, unhappily switching back and forth between them. Both books made me uncomfortable, *Drinking* for its joyless simper, and *Midnight* for its unrelenting sleaze.

That's a shame, but there are more books on the list (including Clegg's) and the next one I read was a winner. *How to Stop Time: Heroin from A to Z* by Ann Marlowe is unexpected in so many ways, sparkingly smart and sanguine.

I have, of course, gone through many different reading phases, but this one feeds a hunger I have to unravel the mystery of substance abuse—something I both understand and don't—and it's deep, and it is alive.

Call for Submissions: Stories of Secular Recovery

Recovery stories provide evidence that freedom from addiction is possible. In early 2016, LifeRing Secular Recovery plans to publish a collection of recovery stories that have been shaped by secular tools, practices, and concepts. If you are in recovery from addiction to alcohol or other drugs, and your recovery is supported in a secular way, LifeRing Press wants to hear from you.

We hope our volume will represent many kinds of personal experiences and viewpoints with stories authored by a wide variety of individuals who are in recovery from alcohol or any other addictive drug. We seek stories from all members of the secular recovery community -- a community we know is filled with interesting people of diverse backgrounds and circumstances. We hope our volume will represent both a variety of secular recovery

experiences and the diversity of the secular recovery community. And we hope our volume will provide both evidence and inspiration that it is, indeed, possible to achieve and maintain sobriety using secular tools, practices, and concepts.

While the traditional structure of conflict (the struggle between our addicted and sober selves), crisis and turning point (what made us decide to seek freedom from addiction), and resolution (living in recovery) fits most recovery stories, we also seek stories with innovative structures. In short, we want real stories of real recoveries, and encourage you to share your story, warts and all, with authenticity, passion, and a sense that your story has the possibility to change lives.

- What was it that finally made you decide to get clean and sober?
- Can you describe the kind of decision-making process you went through?
- What tools, practices, and concepts helped you achieve sobriety?
- Do you still use those same tools, or have they evolved or changed over time?
- What gives meaning to your life in recovery?

Whether you achieved sobriety on your own or through your participation in secular recovery organizations like LifeRing, SMART Recovery, AA Agnostica, or Women for Sobriety, your story of secular recovery is important. We look forward to hearing from you.

Please read our submission guidelines carefully, and feel free to contact us with any questions.

LifeRing Press | LifeRing Secular Recovery

1440 Broadway, Suite 400
Oakland, CA 94612
1.800.811.4142

Submission Guidelines for LifeRing Press – Stories of Secular Recovery:

All submissions must include a cover sheet with the title of the piece; the author's name, address, telephone number, and email address; and a brief bio of the author.

Please use 12-point type (Arial or Times New Roman preferred). Traditional essay or story entries should be double spaced; poetry should be single spaced. Pages should be sequentially numbered, with the title of the piece but no other identifying information about the author; this will ensure unbiased review by our panel of readers. We encourage submissions of poetry; micro-essays (no more than 1,000 words); essays (1,000-2,500 words) and longer works (5,000 word maximum).

Entries selected for publication are subject to editing; the LifeRing Press editors will work with authors on the final edits and ensure that the author's name appears as you wish in the final publication.

We prefer electronic submission of your entry, and that it be in one of the following file formats: .doc, .docx, .pdf or .pages. You will receive an email confirming receipt of your entry.

All submissions must be previously unpublished work; all rights for future publication of selected entries will be held by LifeRing Press. Authors of stories selected for publication in this volume will receive a free copy of the book; no other payment will be made.

To submit your work electronically, please email it to: service@lifering.com.

If you must submit your work by postal service, please mail it to:

LifeRing Service Center,
1440 Broadway, Suite 400, Oakland, CA 94612.

If you have questions about the volume, the submission guidelines, or submitting a story for publication, please email Kathleen at liferingcolorado@gmail.com.

Submission deadline: July 1, 2015. Entries received after this date cannot be considered for publication.

Happier Holidays

by Carola Ziermann, editor

This is the time of year where I'd like you to take a moment to reflect on what you could do to become more involved to help sustain our wonderful organization.

LifeRing Secular Recovery invites you to take on an active role in our rapidly growing organization.

Please think about any skills you have - web design, office administration or accounting, creative arts, people or presentation skills - which you could put to good use to help this organization thrive. Maybe you would like to help out at the Service Center, or work on some of our projects online, or you would like to take on the convening of an existing meeting or even start a new one?

No matter what you can contribute, any commitment you make to LifeRing is a commitment you make to your sobriety and to yourself.

If you cannot volunteer at this time, please think about supporting LifeRing with a tax-deductible donation. LifeRing Secular Recovery is a free-standing non-profit organization and supported only by donations and literature sales. Please volunteer, support, donate.

I'd like to thank all our dedicated volunteers for their tireless work. Many thanks to our convenors and my fellow board members for their continued commitment to LifeRing and especially to our two newcomers Emily Marcus and Dan Carrigan who bring a lot of talent and already a nice fresh air to the organization.

I wish all of you Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year, all the best for your sobriety and because of it, even happier holidays!

LifeRing Metrics

by Robert Stump, Executive Director

Here are some highlights that have happened in the Service Center over the last couple of months.

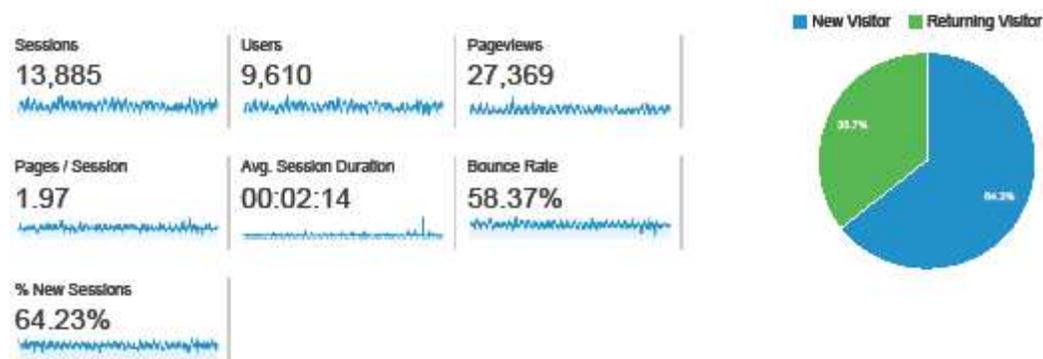
Book sales

First off, we just received a \$5,000.00 book order from the LifeRing folks in Sweden. A very welcome pot of money for our bank account. In addition to LifeRing Sweden, LifeRing Ireland, and LifeRing Canada have ordered books from us at this time for use in their LifeRing programs.

The past couple of months have seen a large amount of money being used to restock the LifeRing Bookstore. *Recovery By Choice* was first up with an order of 2,500 books from our book publisher. Second up, was an order of 2,000 books for *Empower Your Sober Self*. To finish the spending splurge, we bought 150 of the *How Was Your Week* manual. We received very good deals on the first two book orders, so we didn't completely drain the bank account. It should be pointed out that *the Recovery By Choice* is in its fourth edition and *Empower Your Sober Self* has just been published in its second edition. Both of these books can be found in our Bookstore at www.lifering.org/bookstore. Martin Nicolaus has been quite prolific in his writings and will continue to grace us with his wisdom and knowledge about the LifeRing approach to recovery.

Web Site

Because we are such a geographically diverse group of people, the internet is vital to our growth and success. Here is a snapshot of LifeRing.org between the dates of November 4th to December 4th, 2014. It shows a lot of activity. Those of you who have much more experience interpreting this data, will likely see lots of areas of needed improvement. Please feel free to write the Service Center at service@lifering.org and give us some needed insight.



LifeRing Support Committee

Here's a plug for a crucial group of people helping the Service Center. The LifeRing Member Support Committee, is a group of people providing directions and goals for the Service Center. They have met several times already and are developing a framework to guide the Service Center into the next year. This group will be addressing such areas as online and face-to-face meetings, convenor training, election logistics, and providing a program to help with organizing a volunteer force. Of particular importance is the convenor training subcommittee. Dan Carrigan, who leads this group, is providing the needed leadership and experience to create a national training program for new and existing LifeRing convenors.

Face-to-Face Meetings

11 new meetings have started since the last newsletter was published, nine meetings are open to the public and two meetings are taking place at private facilities. Nine meetings are in the US, two are in Europe. Go to www.lifering.org/find-a-meeting to find a schedule of meetings in the United States and beyond.

Donations

This final topic is most important. We do not do fundraising throughout the year. We only ask for money one time each year and that time is now. At the end of this year, in the spirit of giving, we ask you to make a one-time donation to continue this worthy cause. The secular recovery movement is growing across the United States and we are a vital component of this movement, but to make a difference we need resources – both money and time. Please, if you cannot give of your time, would you please take a moment and consider giving a monetary gift, large or small, to help take the LifeRing Message into the greater recover community that we serve.

Thanks.

We need your financial support

This time of year is a crucial time for many people who struggle with alcohol dependency or drug addiction. We see many people coming into a meeting for the first time and others attending more frequently to get additional support in their recovery during the holiday season.

LifeRing Secular Recovery is a volunteer based organization and our Convenors, who lead our weekly meetings, Officers, and Board Members do not receive any compensation for their work. The organization is supported by local meetings and literature sales – and donors like you.

If you haven't already made a gift to LifeRing this year, please do now – and if you have already done so, please consider adding to your already generous support. Your support is important in making sure that LifeRing survives and continues to grow. Your tax-deductible contribution helps to cover cost for office rent, telephone, printing, website maintenance and for providing a LifeRing presence at conferences and other events.

We welcome corporate and matching grants. Another simple and flexible way to ensure we can continue with our work for years to come is a gift in your will or living trust, known as a charitable bequest. If you wish to include a bequest to LifeRing in your will or living trust, please contact our Service Center or visit our website for more information.

We are happy to announce that a new, second edition of *“Empowering Your Sober Self”* by our co-founder Martin Nicolaus is now available - and this year, for any donation of \$100 or more, we will send you a copy signed by the author as a special Thank-you for your support.

Thank you for your continuous help and support.

Happy Holidays and all the best wishes for 2015!



LifeRing Secular Recovery
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www.lifering.org

Questions? Call us toll-free at 800.811.4142

We are a non-profit corporation 501(c)(3)

Executive Director: Robert Stump

Board Members:

Njon Weinroth, Chairman

Dan Carrigan, Mahala Kephart, Byron Kerr,

Emily Marcus, Joseph Mott, Tim Reith,

Craig Whalley, Carola Ziermann

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