

First Alameda Meeting Opens End of March

The first LifeRing meeting in the city of Alameda will open at 6:30 on Wednesday evening March 30 at the Temple of Truth Spiritual Center located at [1300 Grand St.](#) in Alameda. The meeting room is upstairs. Founding convener Frank W., a long-time participant in LifeRing meetings at the Oakland Kaiser CDRP, is starting the meeting in response to many requests for a meeting in the city of Alameda. Alameda is located on an island on the east side of San Francisco Bay next to Oakland. -- 3/16/05

Teens-Only Meeting Opens in Union City

A new LifeRing meeting for teens only has opened at the Union City CA Kaiser Permanente Medical Center. The meeting time is Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. The place is Group Room 3 in Building C at the north end of the campus. LifeRing convenors Craig O. and Trish S. supervise the group. The group has been meeting since Feb. 16. Attendance is limited to people under 20 years of age. -- 3/5/05

Convenors Present At Conference

LifeRing convenors Katie F., Craig O., Alicia B. and Marty N. participated in an all-day conference of about 200 chemical dependency and mental health providers from Alameda County on



Wednesday March 2, and led an hour-long workshop presentation on LifeRing in the afternoon. LifeRing brochures and books reached participants from a table in the hallway. The inclusion of LifeRing in the conference program marked a step forward in professional recognition. LifeRing was also mentioned on several occasions in plenary sessions and other workshops during the event, held in the Clark Kerr Conference Center on the University of California campus in Berkeley. Katie F. organized LifeRing participation in the event and coordinated with conference organizers. -- 3/3/05

Convenors Present At Center for Recovery

LifeRing convenors Owen P., Carola Z., and Marty N. presented LifeRing to a meeting of staff of the [Center for Recovery](#) in Concord CA on Friday afternoon Feb. 25. The Center is attached to John Muir/Mt Diablo Health Systems and is the leading chemical dependency inpatient program in Contra Costa County, a largely suburban area about 30 miles east of San Francisco. Marty presented the basic LifeRing philosophy. Owen and Carola were former patients in the program and gave strong personal endorsements to LifeRing for helping them achieve long-term recovery. -- 3/3/05

LifeRing Presents to Homewood Centre

LifeRing convener Jason Kelly recently presented LifeRing Secular Recovery to the Homewood Health Centre (famous from William White's [Slaying the Dragon](#)

[book](#)). Jason was invited to present at the Homewood Health Center's Transitional Care department for several of the case managers/ counsellors at this facility.

Jason reports the presentation went really well and there were suggestions from Homewood staff that Jason present to three other divisions of the Homewood also. This is really great news. -- 2/21/05

LifeRing Service Center Gets Toll-Free Number

The [LifeRing Service Center](#) in Oakland CA now has a toll-free telephone number: 800-811-4142. The new number allows people anywhere in the US and Canada to call LifeRing at no charge to them. The existing local number, 510-763-0779, will continue to operate as usual. The same numbers will reach [LifeRing Press](#).

Because the Service Center is staffed entirely by volunteers who may not be available at any given time, callers are asked to be patient if their call goes to voicemail. Every effort is made to return calls the same day. -- 2/15/05

New LifeRing Starts In Hollywood CA

A new LifeRing meeting will start on Saturday Feb. 5 2005 in Hollywood CA, its founding convener Tim M. has announced. The meeting place is The Village @ Ed Gould Plaza, [1125 N.McCadden Place](#) in Hollywood. The meeting time is on Saturdays from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. For further information contact Tim at 818-762-5987 or email tmou-ton@earthlink.net.

More on unhooked.com

 **To find out more about LifeRing:**

Browse to www.unhooked.com, the Internet voice of LifeRing Secular Recovery. Join LifeRing **email lists** and **chats**.

Read ***Recovery By Choice: Living and Enjoying Life Free of Alcohol and Drugs, A Workbook***. A 300-p. self-help workbook that helps you build your own individual recovery plan.

Read ***How Was Your Week? Bringing People Together in Recovery the LifeRing Way***. A LifeRing convener's handbook.

Read ***Presenting LifeRing Secular Recovery: A Selection of Readings (2nd Edition)***. Why LifeRing works and why more counselors are referring patients to LifeRing meetings.

Read ***Keepers: Voices of Secular Recovery***, a paperback with motivational anecdotes, stories and poems.

Read ***The LifeRing Bylaws***. How LifeRing is organized and self-governed.

Buy these books at LifeRing meetings or online from www.lifering.com.

Ask for **LifeRing brochures**.

LifeRing will be happy to send a speaker or speakers to address your audience.

Contact LifeRing:

LifeRing Service Center
1440 Broadway #312
Oakland CA 94612-2023
Tel. 510-763-0779
Toll-free: 1-800-811-4142
Fax 510-763-1513
service@lifering.org



LifeRing Newsletter

LifeRing Secular Recovery — Empower Your Sober Self

**Bulletins:
See Back Page**

Introducing a Prototype Of the New Newsletter

The old LifeRing newsletter is no more; long live the new LifeRing newsletter! Building on the experience gained and lessons learned from the publication of the former newsletter ("LifeLines"), LifeRing is moving on to a new newsletter with a new name, a new editorial concept, and a new format.

The new name is yet to be decided; but the old name confused too many new people. People thought the organization was called LifeLine, like the newsletter. When you're the new kid on the block, you need to be clear about your name; and our name is LifeRing.

The new concept is spelled out in detail on the inside pages. Briefly, it centers on an inclusive editorial board that works in conjunction with the elected leadership of the organization and has access to the resources of the Service Center.

The new format is based on the wide availability of "legal size" paper, which almost anyone can print. This size paper is easy to fold and distribute. As before, the issue will be published online as a PDF, and convenors will be encouraged to print it and distribute it to participants in their meetings. Each issue will consist of a single two-sided sheet. Publication will happen as often as there is material fit to print. Do you have an item? Email it to

newsletter@lifering.org.

Inside:
PARTICIPANT SURVEY SUMMARY OF RESULTS

See You in Guelph!

Fifth Annual LifeRing Congress Coming up in Guelph Canada

The fifth annual LifeRing Congress is just around the corner: Friday April 29 through Sunday May 1, 2005.

The program this year highlights outstanding guest speakers from Canada and the U.S.

Charlotte Kasl, the author of the ground-breaking classic *Many Roads, One Journey: Moving Beyond the Twelve Steps*, is coming from her home in Montana to keynote the Saturday session.

Ronald E. Warner, the veteran counselor and trainer from Toronto whose name is synonymous with Solution-Focused Therapy, will present a brief introduction to this positive, secular counseling modality.

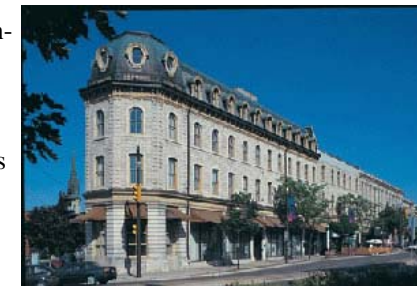
Senior Canadian research scientist Alan Osborne will present a summary of his recent research into what works and what doesn't work in addictions treatment.

All presentations on Saturday are open to the public.



Family Fountain in downtown Guelph

Saturday night features a sumptuous banquet. There's a reception and a LifeRing meeting Friday evening. Sunday is dedicated to the LifeRing Delegates' Assem-



Guelph is a historic city with two rivers running through it

bly, the governing body of the LifeRing network.

The University of Guelph is hosting the event. It also offers very economical on-campus lodging for students and others. Lodging at commercial inns within walking distance of campus is also available.

Thanks to the generosity of a number of donors, registration for the event is only \$69 US (\$85 Canadian). That price includes all presentations and the Saturday banquet. Tickets to the Saturday talks only are US\$12 (\$15 Canadian). You can register—and book on-campus lodging—using your Visa/MC by going to www.unhooked.com, the LifeRing web site.

The U of Guelph campus is near to Toronto's Pearson International airport (Code YYZ). The area is known for its scenic beauty. A side trip to Niagara Falls is contemplated.

For registration and complete details about the 2005 LifeRing Congress in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, see www.unhooked.com.

Sobriety Is Our Priority!

2005 Membership Survey: Participants Love LifeRing But We Have Much Work To Do To Become Bigger, Younger and More Diverse

More than 400 people completed the 30-item questionnaire for the 2005 LifeRing Participant Survey.

The responses were overwhelmingly positive about LifeRing: 93 per cent who had attended at least a few LifeRing meetings would recommend LifeRing to their friends. Survey experts say that this question is the single best indicator of “customer satisfaction.” LifeRing scored very high on this measure.

The most frequent suggestion for improving LifeRing was “more meetings!” Nearly half of the 189 people who wrote in suggestions for improving LifeRing raised this point. A detailed wrapup of survey results that contains every suggestion will be published on unhooked.com.

The qualities that participants most valued about LifeRing meetings were absence of religious content, positive empowering atmos-

phere, encouragement to build a personal recovery program, crosstalk, and small group setting, in that order.

About 85 per cent had participated in other recovery support groups in the past. Currently, 45 per cent are attending LifeRing exclusively. More than half of LifeRing participants currently also attend another support group, mainly AA (33%), other 12-step groups (20%) or treatment after-care groups. Of those who attend more than one group, 61 per cent rate LifeRing their “main” support group.

The average age of LifeRing participants in the survey is 47.8 years. The sample is about 58 per cent male, 42 per cent female. Occupations and educational levels ranged all over the lot. About one third have some college, and about half have completed college or beyond.

About three quarters of the sample had been raised in a religion. Currently, 40 per cent attend religious services. About 20 per cent attend services monthly or more often.

The average amount of clean and sober time of LifeRing participants is 2.75 years. About one third were new to sobriety, with less than three months clean and sober. More than 85 per cent indicated they had used more than one drug (including alcohol). Among particular drugs, 94 per cent had used alcohol, 70 per cent tobacco, 68 per cent marijuana, 41 per cent powder cocaine, about 30 per cent prescription drugs, and smaller percentages for crack, heroin, methamphetamine, and club drugs.

The survey sample showed a close relation-



ship between LifeRing participants and treatment programs. Counselors were the leading source of first information about LifeRing (35 per cent), even exceeding the Internet (34%). Nearly half had obtained some kind of treatment for substance issues within the past year. About 45 per cent had received a diagnosis for a co-occurring disorder, with half of these citing clinical depression.

The survey also showed that LifeRing has much work to do. To meet the members’ No. 1 demand for improvement, we need to have many more meetings. That means developing and promoting many more convenors.

We also need to do a better job making all participants aware of LifeRing literature and LifeRing services online. Only a minority of participants had read any piece of LifeRing print literature beyond a

handout. Although more than half the sample had visited the unhooked.com web site, several participants in f2f meetings did not even know that LifeRing has an active Internet presence.

We also need to become younger and more ethnically diverse. Currently only one per cent of participants are under 20, and only another six per cent are in the 20-30 age bracket. Only nineteen per cent identified their ethnic group as other than “white.”

In sum, the 2005 Survey showed strong satisfaction with LifeRing as currently constituted. People love what we do and want more of it. But there is much work to do. The numbers should serve as a benchmark to measure how much progress we make in the future toward a bigger, younger, better-read and more diverse recovery organization.

— Marty N.

Many Hands Cooperated To Make Survey a Success

Numerous LifeRing convenors helped to make the Membership Survey a success. Among those deserving special mention are Craig O. and Robert D. of Hayward CA, for running the pilot survey; Katie F. of Berkeley and Carola Z. of Walnut Creek CA for extra hours spent in data entry; Lee N. of Hayward CA for number crunching and data analysis; Jack P. of New York, Jack McNeil of Vancouver Island, Jason Kelly of Guelph, Mark C. of San Francisco, Mark L. of Walnut Creek, Katie F. of Berkeley, Wendy W. and Larry R. of San Rafael, Carola Z. of Walnut Creek, and others for making copies of the questionnaire, administering it in their meetings, and mailing the results to the Service Center; and to Gary B., Chet G., Henry S., Andree G., Ernie C., Matt M., Dennis T., Meg H., and others for setting aside time in their meetings to allow members to fill out the questionnaire. Thanks, last but not least, to all 401 people who participated!

Proposed Concept Statement for New LifeRing Newsletter

The 2003 Congress authorized establishment of a LifeRing newsletter. The initial effort produced four issues under the name “LifeLines.” It appears that the newsletter project is now in need of new energies and a fresh start. This document sets out a proposed concept statement by way of guidelines for the new effort.

The new newsletter will have an editorial board composed of LifeRing member volunteers



interested in the project on a long-term basis. The number of people on the editorial board is flexible and depends on circumstances. Existing members of the editorial board will elect other

members as they deem appropriate. At least one member of the editorial board will be a current member of the LifeRing Board of Directors and will act as liaison, but will have no special powers on the newsletter editorial board. Apart from the philosophical boundaries that apply to all LifeRing meetings as defined in the LifeRing charter and bylaws, the newsletter editorial board will have complete editorial independence, and will construct its own internal process.

The LifeRing Service Center will cooperate in the production and distribution of the newsletter as follows:

- By lending its name, mailing address, telephone and fax line numbers to be published in the newsletter as its legal publishing address and for contact information, and by promptly forwarding to the newsletter editorial board all communications received for the newsletter; and
- By providing space and password access

on the www.unhooked.com website and if necessary any other LifeRing websites for posting the online version of the new newsletter in full, and for promotional messages relating to the newsletter at reasonable times and places; and

- By providing the newsletter editorial board with software useful in producing the newsletter insofar as the Service Center has or can obtain such software; and
- By acting as print production and print distribution center for the newsletter to the extent that the Service Center has the resources to do so and there is demand for a print version; and
- By granting the newsletter editorial board permission to reprint any materials from the LifeRing web sites to which LifeRing Inc. owns copyright, and to assist the newsletter editorial board in obtaining permissions to reprint material

for which copyright is held by others; and

- By collecting, holding, disbursing, and accounting for any funds dedicated to the newsletter project or expended in its support, and making a report on the newsletter’s financial picture to the annual Congress; and
- By channeling news stories, features and other potentially publishable material to the newsletter editorial board for consideration; by providing promotional and/or ad copy for LifeRing Press publications and other LifeRing products; and by being helpful to the newsletter board with consultation, advice, and other assistance as may be required.

For its part, the new newsletter editorial board agrees that:

- It will adhere to the basic LifeRing philosophy of abstinence, secularity, and self-help in its editorial decisions and in

the choice of editorial board members, and will establish and enforce minimum clean and sober time thresholds for editorial board members; and

- It will serve the entire LifeRing network, including participants in face meetings, participants in online meetings, convenors of all kinds, members of the board of directors, officers, and members of other committees, as well as friends of LifeRing such as referral sources, past members, and sympathetic members of the general public; and
- It will be an active force in building the LifeRing organization, and will assist in promoting upcoming organizational events such as the annual Congresses and other events, will help to publicize new face and online meetings and to support existing ones, and will on a regular basis include informational and promotional material about LifeRing Press publications and other LifeRing

products; and

- It agrees that the copyright to any material first appearing in the new newsletter, insofar as copyright is not owned by others, will be owned by LifeRing Inc. and may be reproduced, reprinted, or republished in other forms and media by LifeRing Press at a later date, provided that credit is attributed to the newsletter as first source of publication; and
- It will strive to produce a newsletter that contains a balance of news and features, that promotes diversity, tolerance, and unity in the organization, and that aims for a professional appearance and a high level of quality in form and content, so that the newsletter will be a credit to the entire LifeRing network and all of its participants.