

## Alumni ★★★★★

**Kevin K.** entered Sober Living By The Sea in 1997 and will soon be celebrating his 6-year anniversary. His success story is close to my own. We entered treatment around the same time and we had many characteristics in common. I remember when Kevin first arrived at the 48th Street house, with his eyes wide and crazed; his mind still racing from the lingering effects of amphetamines. The hyper, post-amphetamine demeanor he exhibited was familiar and I immediately related to his experience.

Kevin was a self-professed "speed freak", like myself, and our first conversation was about the insane behavior we participated in while drinking and using. Kevin was a problem case at S.L.B.T.S. at first, resulting in a long stay at the Ranch for disciplinary problems after thirty days at S.L.B.T.S. I must admit that I never expected him to return and neither did many others at the time. It was to my disbelief and pleasant surprise that Kevin did eventually return to S.L.B.T.S. and with his sobriety intact. He remained in Sober Living with me for another eight months. After our stay at S.L.B.T.S. we moved into an apartment together in the area, and continued to be involved in the recovery community in Newport Beach and S.L.B.T.S.

Kevin went back to school and after a few years obtained a B.A. in computer technology, maintaining a 4.0 GPA the entire time. He is currently finishing up his Masters degree in between working full time and sponsoring a number of current Sober Living residents. Kevin's presence at S.L.B.T.S., like the presence of many other former residents who remain involved here, continues to be a key part of S.L.B.T.S.'s treatment regime. Kevin is a miracle of recovery by all accounts and we appreciate all that he continues to do at S.L.B.T.

—Brendan Bickmen

## Activities

### Sunrise Recovery Ranch

A beautiful inpatient treatment facility specializing in the treatment of chemically dependent males. Sunrise Ranch, in association with Sober Living By The Sea, offers the highest quality primary care treatment available. A great place to get started on the path to recovery.

#### Alumni Meetings:

**Riverside:** Every Monday 7-8:30 pm at Sunrise Ranch; dinner provided from 6:30 - 7:00 pm for those who RSVP. Every Tuesday at 7:30 pm.

#### Newport Beach:

Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Sober Living By The Sea Center (patio) from 6:30-7:30.

Dinner is served at 6 pm.



## Inside Story

### Keep 'em Flyin'

By Dr. Kevin T. McCauley



*Kevin McCauley is a 36 year-old physician in recovery from intravenous demerol and cocaine addiction. He now works to help addicts understand the neurophysiological basis and medical aspects of addiction. As Director of Medical Education at Sober Living By The Sea, Dr. McCauley lectures on addiction medicine for residents and families as well as providing staff training on addiction medicine. He serves further through media presentations and marketing of programs and as liaison to local and national treatment professionals.*

The main reason I went to medical school was because my mother is a doctor. When she was pregnant with me my alcoholic father battered her, and when she tried to ask her obstetrician for help he told her "doctors don't handle that". My mother went to nursing school and raised me by herself. At the age of forty-two, she graduated from the Medical College of Pennsylvania, and she is now an obstetrician. At her office, if a battered woman needs care the doctor "does handle that". Since I wanted to follow in her footsteps, I entered the Medical College of Pennsylvania just two years after my mother graduated.

After medical school, I joined the Navy and went to Pensacola, Florida to become a

Naval Flight Surgeon. After I received my gold wings, I went to Marine Corps Air Station Tustin in Orange County, California to be the doctor for a squadron of helicopters - the Red Lions (HMH-363). I took care of all the Marines in the squadron (the pilots and the enlisted) and flew with them in the squadron's CH-53D Sea Stallions.

I enjoyed being the "family doctor" for the squadron. Two years later, I

was transferred to Marine Corps Air Station El Toro (also in Orange County.) to fly with an F/A-18 Hornet training squadron -The Sharpshooters (VMFAT-1010). Although this job was much harder - grounding pilots and investigating fatal mishaps - I was still looking forward to a career in the Navy in Aviation Medicine.

While stationed in Orange County, I had a surgical procedure to remain physically qualified to fly. I was prescribed Percocet for pain and given a week's convalescent leave. While I had taken Percocet before for a tooth extraction and did not like the feeling it gave me, this time the work stress that I was not managing properly disappeared and the feeling was very pleasant. Still, I did not take Percocet until six months later, and again the stress relief was instantaneous. Over the next year I broke a series of personal

boundaries - each one fairly small, but together they added up into a severe transgression - and I became addicted to intravenous Demerol.

I enjoyed being in the Navy, caring for my Marines and flying fighter jets. I did not want to use Demerol. When I came into consideration for flight surgeon to the Blue Angels, I was determined to quit.

To my very great astonishment, I could not. In medical school I learned that addicts were liars, cheats and thieves, and that as doctors we "don't handle that sort of thing." I was very good at kicking drug seekers and addicts out of my office. Ironically, I became a drug addict myself.

If I had been a civilian doctor I would simply have called my state medical board and entered their impaired professionals program. But since I was a medical officer at a Marine Corps combat squadron - and the military has

understood perfectly why the Marine Corps had to court-martial me. I'm glad they did - if for nothing else to send the message that Navy Doctors can't mistreat Marines and get away with it. I was sentenced to one year at the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. I used the time to read everything I could find about addiction.

While I don't believe that prison is a substitute for good treatment, for myself I am grateful: I got my first year sober courtesy of the federal prison system. As I try to reinstate my license to practice, I try to help other addicts understand the neurochemical basis of their behavior, and help them find strategies to change it. I advocate for their rights as patients just like any other group of patients, because I feel that this is the best way to make crime and harm due

to addiction less likely.

It is humbling for me to realize that by becoming addicted to drugs and going to prison, I have been given a powerful clinical tool that most physicians do not have - credibility with drug addicts, and empathy for their suffering. I try to use that tool to pay back the Marines I let down by making sure some other addict doesn't do the same thing.

It is not easy to understand addiction. Its symptoms are often frustrating, sometimes disgusting - and even criminal. But addicts suffer too, and just like other patients they need good doctors. And addicts - whether single mothers or jet pilots - respond very well to humane treatment, and that can decrease the harm to society from addiction.

Every year, there are more and more of us who do handle that. ■

#### What's Your Story?

There are many great stories in the world of recovery. If yours is one of them, we'd like to hear it. Send it to Editors, SLBTS.

### Come Sail With Us!

All of you are invited to go sailing with other alumni members. We leave from Sober Living By The Sea's main office at noon and return approximately 4:00 pm. We sail a beautiful, well equipped 42 foot Catalina named "Tonic" from Lido Sailing Club in Newport Harbor out into the big blue sea! Please call Sober Living for details and reservations. 1 800-647-0042.



### Lake Arrowhead

Sober Living By The Sea's Lake Arrowhead lodge provides a superb mountain retreat opportunity. This facility, which sleeps up to 14 persons, is located at Lake Arrowhead in the San Bernardino mountains 80 miles east of Newport Beach. It provides a serene atmosphere conducive to reading, contemplation and communion with nature. Overlooking a world-class 18 hole golf course, it also provides a well-equipped game room, exercise equipment, fireplaces and laundry facilities.



## Networking Meetings

The Network Luncheon has become a pleasant way for professionals in the field to obtain their CEU's. Once a month professionals from around the country gather at the SLBTS Beach House to update each other on current trends in the recovery profession and listen to experts in the field lecture on their particular area of expertise.

With a catered lunch, a beach front setting, and CEU's, it makes the drudgery of attending conferences a seemingly archaic necessity. The luncheon is by invitation only, but all professionals are welcome to attend if they call in advance. Some of the past featured speakers have included Dr. Kevin McKulley, an ex-fighter pilot and expert in the field of the physiological aspects of treating addicts, and Dr. Jerry A. Boriskin, whose talk on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder will run in a future issue.

Call 800-647-0042.



"When our goals are to change others rather than ourselves, we experience stress."

Mary Cook, M.A.

## The Victorian

Specializing in the treatment of eating disorders. The Victorian House, the newest addition to the Sober Living By The Sea



treatment centers, provides a quiet, relaxing atmosphere for people needing treatment for their eating disorder. A full-time staff of professionals provide therapy groups, recovery meetings and individual counseling. For further inquiries call: 800-647-0042.

## The TEACH Program



Get Sober and Go To College!

Sober Living By The Sea offers you the opportunity to take steps toward your future, while you are taking steps to clean up the past.

In addition to the traditional Sober Living By The Sea treatment we provide:

- Enrollment in College
- Registration in Classes
- Group Counseling
- Transfer Counseling
- Career Planning
- Fun Activities
- Academic Advising

TEACH PROGRAM

