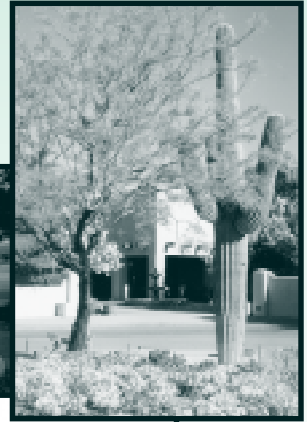


afterwords



A Newsletter from Sierra Tucson
Summer 2002



“Your Brain is Working Perfectly; That’s Why You Have Sugar Cravings!”

By *Monika Woolsey, MS, RD*

A few years ago, a friend of mine invited me to his sobriety “birthday” to celebrate 15 years of abstinence. It was an invitation I was thrilled and honored to accept. Upon entering the room where the 12-Step meeting was being held, I commented to the other friend I had come with that there seemed to be an awful lot of coffee and donuts on the table at the entry. She laughed and said, “You’ve obviously never been to one of these meetings before.”

I have been a nutrition therapist for almost 20 years and have heard clients say, many times, that they were “sugar or carbohydrate addicts.” But I had always discounted the comment. From my scientific perspective, a sugar addiction is an impossibility. For a clinician like me, sugar is the brain’s main source of energy and a necessary life-giving chemical. To say one is addicted to sugar is like saying one is addicted to air; you can’t be addicted to something you need in order to survive. This table loaded with coffee and donuts caused me to rethink that opinion and to reorganize my ideas about bio-chemistry and cravings.

What is it about sugar that makes it such a problem with people recovering from chemical addiction? Whether your drug of choice was alcohol, heroin, Vicodin, food, or exercise, your addictive behavior was likely what you used to manage anxiety. Anxiety, in practical terms, is stress that doesn’t go away. Sometimes this tendency is inherited; anxiety disorder, attention deficit disorder, and bipolar disorder

are examples of inherited conditions that can render a person more sensitive to stress. Sometimes anxiety is learned, as can happen when a person lives in a household where verbal, physical, and/or emotional abuse are the norm.

Sometimes the behaviors we choose to engage in create anxiety. Using addictive drugs can cause anxiety when they create withdrawal symptoms. So can not setting boundaries. Not allowing enough time for sleep is an anxiety producer common to our culture. Skipping meals can drop blood sugar, which the brain perceives as stress. Binge eating changes brain bio-chemistry to increase that anxious feeling. Some of us buy our anxiety in the form of a venti Starbucks triple-shot latte!

The more I get to know about addictions, the more I have come to believe that what is often described as an “addiction” or a “craving” is the feeling of anxiety that is asking for relief. Since anxiety is a stress response that is not shutting down and since the brain is in overdrive when it is under stress, it is natural when feeling anxious to want sugar. That desire for sugar is the brain’s way of asking for the fuel it perceives it needs in order to manage the stress. You were programmed that way to ensure that you would always have enough fuel in your system to fight off danger. That doesn’t mean there is anything “wrong” with you or with your brain. Quite the contrary; it means your brain is a little too efficient at recognizing and wanting to fight off stress.

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Afterwords *Alumni Newsletter*

Address correspondence to:
· **Alumni Coordinator**
· **Sierra Tucson**
· **39580 S. Lago del Oro Parkway**
· **Tucson, AZ 85739**

· **Phone: 800-624-5858, Ext. 2013**
· **E-mail: tmcleod@sierratucson.com**

QUALITY OF LIFE WORKSHOPS™ 2002

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- June 17-21 • Healing Yesterday Today
- July 15-19 • Retreat for Men
- Aug 5-9 • Couples - Creating Intimacy
- Sept 9-13 • Positive Potential
- Sept 23-27 • Relationship-Building Through Equine
- Oct 7-11 • Renewal - Deepening Your Recovery
- Oct 14-18 • Renewal - Deepening Your Recovery

Additional workshops scheduled in 2002 include:
• Healing the Healer • Retreat for Women

"It was a gift beyond my wildest dreams. . ."
~Quality of Life Workshop™ participant

**Sierra Tucson Alumni
have their privileges!**

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to catch a glimpse of the #1
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CRISPY CHICKEN SALAD

- 5 oz. cooked diced chicken breast
- 2 oz. lowfat mayonnaise
- 1 Tablespoon diced white onion
- 1 Tablespoon diced celery
- 1 Tablespoon raisins
- 2 Tablespoons plain lowfat granola
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of black pepper

Combine all ingredients in mixing bowl and incorporate thoroughly with wooden spoon. Chill. Stuff salad in fresh tomato or pita bread or place atop fresh greens. Enjoy!

YIELD 2 HALF-CUP SERVINGS.

½ cup = 2 protein, 1 fat, ½ starch ■■



GRILLED LEMON PEPPERED AHI TUNA

Topped with Roasted Fennel and Bell Peppers

- 1 five-oz. piece of fresh Ahi or yellow fin tuna steak,
approximately 1 inch thick
- 1 teaspoon salt-free lemon pepper
- 1 medium red bell pepper, julienned
- 1 medium bulb of fresh fennel, julienned

Heat grill. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place fennel and pepper on baking sheet and put in oven for 12-14 minutes or until golden brown. Meanwhile, coat both sides of tuna liberally with lemon pepper. Making sure grill is nice and hot, place tuna steak on grates and grill 4 minutes on one side, then flip and grill 3 minutes on other side for a medium steak. Remove to plate. Top tuna with roasted fennel and peppers and serve with fresh vegetable and a favorite starch. For medium rare tuna, reduce cooking time to 2 minutes per side.

YIELD 1 FIVE-OZ. SERVING.

1 oz. tuna = 1 protein

½ cup roasted vegetable = 1 vegetable ■■

From the Editor

Hello, my Recovery Friends!

I want to start off by saying thank you. As of March 1, 2002, it has been one year for me at Sierra Tucson as the alumni coordinator. All of you have made it such an exciting time in my life. Getting to know you has been a pleasure. Whether I met you when you were here as a patient or at an alumni event around the country, it's exciting to meet fellow miracles! I feel that the alumni coordinator position has taken on a whole new meaning at Sierra Tucson. Because of your thoughts, concerns, and ideas, we are continuing to move forward in helping you and future patients post-discharge. Among our new exciting events are the alumni dinners. These dinners have been a great way for alumni and family members to meet. With all my responsibilities to the patients here at Sierra Tucson, I still plan to make one to two trips a month to hold alumni events at different cities.

As a point of interest, Bill O'Donnell, an original founder of Sierra Tucson, has partnered with George Ruff and has bought Sierra Tucson back from the public sector. We are all excited about Mr. O'Donnell's passion and commitment to this facility and to the treatment of addictions/mental health.

I was given a list of questions the other day by a therapist. These questions really opened my eyes to the changes I have made in my recovery and also showed me areas I still need to work on. Whether you have been in recovery a long time or are just starting your journey, I think you will benefit by taking some time to answer the following:

Allowing Others to See Who I Am

1. If I were willing to be vulnerable, (what would happen) . . .
2. One of the things I wish people knew about me is . . .
3. If the child in me could speak, he/she might say . . .
4. If I could be sure no one would hurt me, I would . . .
5. If I could be sure that no one would laugh at me, I would . . .

I want to close with a huge hug and thank you to all of you who made my first year at Sierra Tucson a memorable pleasure. I will continue to pray for Godspeed in your recovery and that all your dreams will come true.

Blessings,



Tim McLeod
Alumni Coordinator ■■



Sharing the Journey

Higher Power,

I ask that you guide my hand in writing as I sit quiet and still in this open space of field. As your brightly burning sun spills over me, I take comfort in the open arms of mountain that looms ahead and curves at my left and at my right, so that I am made to be a small part in the middle of something so great.

Many hopeless thoughts and many sleepless nights brought my tired and restless body to this desperate time in my life. Day by day, as I become more connected to your spirit, my darkness transcends into a translucent blue light of truth.

As I turn inside my body and honor your silence, birds echo the joy in what I've found. I can begin to comfort my scared child with your love. My life right now feels illuminant with hope, happiness and wisdom. Wisdom of life which is full of pain and joy that I can no longer escape. Wisdom of each present moment in all its beauty.

The sound of quiet footsteps crunch behind me as another soul walks in your midst, your beauty. I feel weak

with solitude and peace, a weakness rippling with love as I melt into your earth and smell the grass that sustains my life.

I'm filled with fear of a change that is to occur and joy for what is to come. I feel the fear of moving on to a new chapter of independence, free from reliance on others and strong in the notion of responsibility for my own happiness.

I am learning to connect with new people and learning what is in my best interest to do with this life you made of me. Today I have learned that all my mistakes of past and in future are not your punishments for me, but serve to guide me to an ever more fulfilled and wholesome life.

I've learned that all my feelings are your gifts for me, and life's challenges are mine for the taking. I deserve lightness and I am able to succeed.

Though I may walk in darkness again, your light will find its way into my heart. My love today is a practice of balance. I am grateful to be in this moment.

Ashley B. ■■



S.T.A.R. 15

**Sierra Tucson's
15th Annual Alumni Reunion
will be held
October 11-13, 2002
at the
Westward Look Resort!**



Here is a preview of the speakers/entertainment planned for S.T.A.R. 15!



Scott Kalechstein

Scott Kalechstein sings his sobriety, and yours as well. His songwriting comes from his healing journey, and his recovery tunes are often hysterically funny, such as “Fifty Ways to Love Your Liver” and “Just A Codependent Love Song.” He also has the ability to make up songs in the moment based on audience suggestions. For 20 years, Scott has been sharing his music—both in the United States and abroad. Prepare to laugh till your face hurts!

A singer, songwriter, recording artist, columnist/author, workshop facilitator, and speaker, Scott has received praise from his many performances. Says one listener, “Scott shines when he is singing to a live audience. It is a pleasure to hear a musician who has not lost his sense of humor, humility, focus, or Spirit. . .”



Stephen Kruiser

Stephen Kruiser was hailed as “...an intense young comic who has great instincts” in an early review. A recent review likened his onstage persona to that of a “charging rhino.” He began his performing career as part of a comedy team in 1982 and has spent the years since developing that intensity into a performing style that has left audiences breathless from laughter all over America.

Stephen has entertained at many clubs, such as The Improvisation & The Laugh Factory, Hollywood; Dangerfield’s, New York; Catch a Rising Star, Las Vegas & Reno; Zanies, Chicago; and 2000 & 2001 Chicago Comedy Festival. Stephen has also performed on television shows, including A&E’s “An Evening at the Improv,” A&E’s “Comedy on the Road,” and “The Rascal’s Comedy Hour.”



Alana Sweetwater

Alana Sweetwater sings to reveal truth. Her music is both raw and inviting. Her songs stir strong emotions while her voice, with delicate force, penetrates the heart. While Alana has been compared to female singers and songwriters such as Stevie Nicks, Janis Joplin, and Sheryl Crow, Alana Sweetwater’s sound is original in a way that is refreshing and “difficult to explain.” This is because her music is more of a feeling than a sound.

To date, Alana has recorded two albums. Her 1994 debut, “Hope for the Living,” is the heart wrenching embodiment of Alana’s own healing process after her mother’s death in 1993. Then in 1999, Alana emerged from the chrysalis of grief as a full-blown artist and poet of song in her second album titled “From Behind the Veil.”

Something new—we also have tee times available for all of you golfers on Friday, October 11, 2002!

**Be looking for the S.T.A.R. 15 brochure in the mail the first part of July
or continue to check our website at www.sierratucson.com for updated information.**

Registration begins mid-July. We look forward to seeing you there! ■■■

The North American Alumni World Tour

The tour stops continue. A great time was had by all in San Diego, California (February); Orange County, California (March); Los Angeles, California (March); Indianapolis, Indiana (April); Milwaukee, Wisconsin (April); and Chicago, Illinois (April).

Here is a list of future tour stops.
I hope to see you at an upcoming event!

Alumni Dinners

- June 4, 2002 - Albuquerque, NM
- June 19, 2002 - Pittsburgh, PA
- June 20, 2002 - Washington, DC
- June 21, 2002 - Philadelphia, PA
- June 22, 2002 - Boston, MA
- July 16-17, 2002 - San Francisco, CA

Recovery Workshops

- June 8, 2002 - Phoenix, AZ
- June 22, 2002 - New York, NY
- September 21, 2002 - Phoenix, AZ

SAN DIEGO



ORANGE COUNTY



INDIANAPOLIS



MILWAUKEE



LOS ANGELES



CHICAGO



“Your Brain is Working Perfectly. . .” (Continued from Page 1)

The type of anxiety that is caused by a chemical addiction is relatively simple to address. If you stay away from the chemicals that cause withdrawal anxiety, you don't have to experience withdrawal. Unfortunately, that kind of anxiety is but one of the many we are challenged to face as humans. The others—related to our personality, our environment, and our lifestyle choices—are much more challenging to face. Are you struggling with what it means to manage your bipolar disorder and learn to live life in the middle rather than at the extremes? Are you in a job that expects you to say “yes” when what you learned in treatment is that you need to say “no”? Are you finding it difficult to make the choice to make time for dinner? Do you have a marriage that needs some work? Managing an addiction is easy compared to the challenges of accepting a medical diagnosis or adapting to a relationship at work or at home.

Recent research has investigated the brain chemicals that the brain releases during stress. What they have discovered is that the nerve cells that release norepinephrine, a stress neurochemical, are the same nerve cells that release neuropeptide Y, which increases appetite. What this translates into, practically, is that if you do not manage your stress, you are likely to have food cravings. The solution to this dilemma is not to wait until you are stressed out to try and manage your cravings. . . but rather to learn to manage your stress so that there is less of a need to release the chemicals that cause the cravings.

Eat regular meals. Skipping a meal, then eating a larger meal later in the day may actually increase anxiety. Cholecystokinin is a digestive chemical released in the presence of fat and protein, which also has powerful effects on the nervous system. In moderate amounts, it helps to communicate a feeling of fullness. In large amounts (i.e., a binge), it can increase anxiety. One of the best defenses against anxiety is to make time for breakfast and lunch so that this tendency is minimized.

Make time for sleep. Do you short yourself on sleep and live on caffeine to get through the next day? Caffeine is a stimulant, and it can be a nervous system irritant. Minimizing caffeine (and the need for it by maximizing sleep) can help give your body a break from stress.

Make room for omega 3 fatty acids. Omega 3 fatty acids, particularly the fats found in fish, fish oils, omega 3-supplemented eggs, and marine algae supplements, have been found to be beneficial in managing many mental health conditions, including bipolar disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. They work by helping to “chill out” the nervous system and reduce the need for a stress response. If you don't like fish, consider fish oil or marine algae supplements as part of your daily routine.

Get familiar with the glycemic index. In general, it's not carbohydrates or sugar that are the problem, but how

much you eat them and with what other foods you eat them. Foods with a high glycemic index are more likely to cause swings in blood glucose that can increase moodiness, while low glycemic index foods are less likely to produce drastic swings in blood glucose. Ice cream, for example, is high in sugar, but because of its fat content has a lower glycemic index than potatoes. In general, foods that are processed are more likely to have a high glycemic index. Foods with a high glycemic index have less of a glucose effect if they are eaten in combination with other foods. Potatoes, for example, are less glycemic if they are eaten with meat in a traditional “meat and potatoes” meal.

Know the side effects of your medications. Many of the newer psychotropic medications can trigger insulin resistance. If you are on mood stabilizers (such as Depakote) or antipsychotic medications (such as Zyprexa) and you notice that your appetite for carbohydrates has increased since beginning these medications, be sure to share this observation with your psychiatrist. There may be another medication with a similar therapeutic effect that doesn't affect your appetite. Sometimes, an insulin-sensitizing medication can help make your carbohydrate metabolism more efficient and reduce cravings.

Learn to relax! I have lost track of the number of clients who are so used to being stressed that they can't relax! Your “addiction” may not be to sugar or carbohydrates, as much as it is to stress! One of the tough parts of relaxing is that we then feel our true feelings. It is much easier to be busy so we can avoid the fact that we are angry, sad, lonely, or scared. But in sitting with those feelings, we can start to find the solutions that reduce anxiety. Learning to be comfortable with silence, a break at work, an evening alone. . . all are important to managing food cravings.

Is sugar an addiction? I still can't say. But what I am more understanding of at this point in my work is that the phenomenon of wanting a certain food and being overwhelmed with a desire to eat it is very real. What I have learned from my clients is that avoiding the food often only makes that craving worse. It is in learning to appreciate relaxation and downtime and developing meaningful relationships and leisure interests that anxiety is managed. When that happens, food loses its importance, and recovery starts to be the preferred lifestyle choice.

*Monika M. Woolsey, MS, RD, is a registered dietitian and exercise physiologist and is founder of After the Diet Network, a resource center for topics related to nutrition and stress. Her website, www.afterthediet.com, is popular with people looking for information related to mental health, eating disorders, infertility, chronic pain, and other stress-related problems. Her recently released book, *Eating Disorders: A Clinical Guide to Counseling and Treatment*, is the American Dietetic Association's first book on the topic of eating disorders. ■■*

Aftercare Groups & Alumni Support / S.T.A.R.R.T.

(Sierra Tucson Alumni Recovery Response Team)

Recovery is a gift that grows and expands when shared with others—think of the many ways in which you can help others begin their recovery journey, just as you have begun your own. . . pass it on!

AFTERCARE GROUPS

Scottsdale, AZ

Dorothy Barnes
Psychological Counseling Services
7530 E. Angus Drive
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
480-947-5739
Thursdays, 5 - 6:30 p.m.
\$5 cost

Atlanta, GA

Kathleen McKinney
2900 Chamblee Tucker Road, Building 8
Atlanta, GA 30341
770-936-8851
Every other Thursday, 7 - 8:30 p.m.
(Please call for schedule)
\$15 cost

Los Angeles, CA

Drs. Eagan, Einbund, Bienstock & Chaisson
9911 W. Pico Boulevard, #1480
Los Angeles, CA 90035
310-659-3823 (4# for ST Aftercare Group)
Leslie St. Louis, Group Facilitator
Tuesdays, 7 p.m.
\$10 cost

Houston, TX

Virginia Hoops
3131 W. Alabama, #304
Houston, TX 11098
713-524-6252
Thursdays, 6 - 7:30 p.m.
\$10 cost

ALUMNI SUPPORT / S.T.A.R.R.T. MEMBERS

The S.T.A.R.R.T. (Sierra Tucson Alumni Recovery Response Team) members below are your contacts in the metropolitan areas listed. Alumni activities vary around the country—please call to find out what events are happening in your area.

Birmingham, AL

Mindy H. 256-734-9407

Boulder, CO

Nancy S. 303-527-1830

Portland, OR

Marggi M. 503-332-4153

Scottsdale, AZ

Susanne N. 480-215-8008

St. Petersburg, FL

Maureen W. 727-322-0597

Pittsburgh, PA

Jill F. 412-855-8976

Acton, CA

David S. 661-269-9420

Atlanta, GA

Mary C. 770-988-0083

Nashville, TN

Lee M. 931-729-9223
Sheilah J. 615-377-3716

Los Angeles, CA

Brian F. 323-653-4900

Chicago, IL

Kathy W. 847-446-0026

Austin, TX

Holly L. 512-330-9093
Mark F. 512-301-4192

Newport Beach, CA

Susanna J. 949-706-3311

Lafayette, LA

Tammy M. 337-984-9885

Dallas, TX

Cynthia S. 972-272-4678
Michael C. 214-363-4770

Orange County, CA

Faith M. 949-489-8116

Portland, ME

John M. 207-879-0344

San Francisco, CA

Liz G. 415-898-9997
Phil S. 650-324-2883

Las Vegas, NV

Marianne M. 702-646-0749

Midland/Odessa, TX

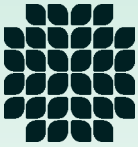
Robert S. 915-685-0879

New York, NY

Nancy L. 212-213-9169

Gillette, WY

Sally B. 307-685-3335



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Summer 2002

Alumni Events

Sierra Tucson offers and supports many events throughout the year for alumni and healthcare professionals. For additional information, you may call **800-624-5858, Ext. 2013** or **2303**, or visit our website at www.sierratucson.com.

Following is Sierra Tucson's schedule of alumni events through September 2002:

Monthly 2002

Tucson, AZ Monday Evenings
 Alumni-led Patient 12-Step
 AA Meeting at Sierra Tucson

June 2002

- 4 **Albuquerque, NM**
Alumni Dinner
- 8 **Phoenix, AZ**
"Live, Love & Laugh in Recovery"
Recovery Workshop
- 17-21 **Tucson, AZ**
"Healing Yesterday Today"
Quality of Life Workshop™
- 19 **Pittsburgh, PA**
Alumni Dinner
- 20 **Washington, DC**
Alumni Dinner
- 21 **Philadelphia, PA**
Alumni Dinner
- 22 **Boston, MA**
Alumni Dinner
- 22 **New York, NY**
"The First Word of the First Step—
Finding the 'We' in Recovery"
Recovery Workshop Series

July 2002

- 15-19 **Tucson, AZ**
"Retreat for Men"
Quality of Life Workshop™
- 16-17 **San Francisco, CA**
Alumni Dinner

August 2002

- 5-9 **Tucson, AZ**
"Couples - Creating Intimacy"
Quality of Life Workshop™

September 2002

- 9-13 **Tucson, AZ**
"Positive Potential"
Quality of Life Workshop™
- 21 **Phoenix, AZ**
Recovery Workshop
- 23-27 **Tucson, AZ**
"Relationship-Building
Through Equine"
Quality of Life Workshop™