



ONE SHOW AT A TIME

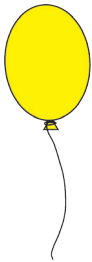
~ Who We Are ~

Fall 2013

The Wharf Rats are a group of concert-goers who have chosen to live drug and alcohol free. Our primary purpose at shows is to make ourselves available to anyone who feels we may have something they want. We don't tell others how to attend their show. We offer clean and sober support, strength, fellowship and hope. We are not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous nor any other twelve-step group. We are a group of friends sharing a common bond, providing support, information and some traction in an otherwise slippery environment.

Look for the yellow balloons, signs and the Wharf Rats information table.

Hello Everyone!



It is with mixed feelings that I write this to you today. I am very excited to bring the Wharf Rat Newsletter back for everyone to enjoy but also sad to see Ken H. pass the torch. Ken had been THE newsletter for many, many years he leaves behind some awfully big shoes that need to be filled. Thank you, Ken, all the for years of dedication and loyal service to the Wharf Rat Newsletter. This moment also brings to mind the events of the past couple of years since the last printing, most notably, the passing of 2 beloved Wharf Rats.

We all have lost family and friends to a variety of causes over the years; some have made a great impact in our life. Two such people passed away recently. The first is our friend Andrew K., may he rest in peace. Andrew passed away on May 6th 2012. Not only was he a wonderful man, husband, father, and friend, but he was also a long time Wharf Rat and instrumental in the formation of both the A.A. and N.A. meetings in San Francisco. Another is Sheri H., who passed away on July 20th 2013. She was a frequent contributor to this newsletter and VERY active part of the Wharf Rat listserv. Both leave behind countless family and friends and will be sorely missed by the Wharf Rat and Grateful Dead community. Thank you both for the years of service, friendship and guidance. Rest in peace, my friends!

Please bear with me as I acclimate to this new service position. It was a little slow going to get it back up and running but things seem to have fallen into place and we should have a constant and frequent newsletter. I have some good ideas including festival specific editions of the newsletter. For a few years now, I have been of service at High Sierra Music Festival Wharf Rat table and some of the most common questions at the table are; "What times are the meetings here?" and "Where is Camp Traction?" Well, with a little foreknowledge and some careful planning, the answers to those questions along with other festival specific information could be included in the Newsletter for easy distribution to all attending Wharf Rats.

PLEASE contact me as soon as possible at wharfratsnewsletter@gmail.com if you have any current information different than what we have printed here for any Wharf Rats meeting and/or "yellow balloon" group. We'd like to keep everything as current as possible and seeing that it has been a couple years, some meetings may have fallen by the wayside. Also, please use the same email address and send in your contribution to the newsletter. Share your experience strength and hope with other Wharf Rats. Remember, this can sometimes be the first contact that a person has with the Wharf Rats, so be sure to send in your contribution and be of service to a person who needs it.

Thank you kindly for the opportunity to be of service to the Wharf Rats.

Until next time, be safe and have a good show!

-Antonio C.



We are so blessed to be clean and to have this wonderful community of music loving folks. Wharf Rats and other yellow balloon groups are so open minded and loving. I've slowed down a bit on the scene, the Midwest has been skipped a bit, but I love all our connections on line. So many ways to stay in touch. Indi's WR mtg., Rats NA drain ditch yearly hoedown is wonderful. I was also able to get to St. Louis area's 1st year celebration of their Days Between mtg. What a great party with live music and kick-butt food. Thanks Bob E, he grilled tons of chicken and pulled it all together.

Grateful for all that is, was, and will be.

Love, Mama T

ONE SHOW AT A TIME

Brian, Wharf Rat, Alcoholic.....This really happened! I was at my bottom. Life had stopped being worthwhile.

The notion of going to shows seemed like such an ordeal anymore. My life had turned into a deep rut of working and drinking and the working part was getting more difficult. I had reached a point where I had asked for help, for I knew life didn't have to be like this. With the guidance of others I managed to get myself checked into a 28 day rehab center, the day was Monday but they had no opening until Thursday. The intake counselor advised me not to try to detox myself, so the next three days the alcohol became medicine. I took just what was needed to avoid the jitters.

Wednesday evening I ran out so I had to journey to the local market for what I hope was my last bottle. I got into my car, I had the radio on KPFA, and it being Wednesday night "Dead to the World" with David Gans was on. As I turned on my car, streaming from the speakers was Jerry singing....

Comes a time when the blind man takes your hand, says don't you see?

Gotta make it somehow on the dreams you still believe.

Don't give it up; you've got an empty cup that only Love can fill.

It seemed like he was singing straight to my heart. I had tears streaming down my cheeks. I

did buy the bottle but did not finish it. The next morning as I was driven to the treatment center and I was absolutely bathed in serenity.

I soon (re)discovered the joy of life I had thought was gone forever. Music has taken on whole new dimensions in sobriety. I have found a whole new joy in going to shows and festivals through Wharf Rats and the many other yellow balloon groups that have been cropping up all over.

It has been over five years since that evening and I haven't found the need or desire to drink or do any other substance. Do I believe it was a coincidence? Could it be that the Universe lined everything up at that time and place to have that message for me when I needed it the most? Who can say for sure..... Thanks for allowing me to share.

Peace, Brian S.

ANOTHER DOPELESS HOPE FIEND

My name is Charlie W., substance abuser, Wharf rat, and human being.

Family is an incredible source of strength – especially when it comes to the bonds we build in the recovery community.

Every year, we trek up the Atlantic coast to Gathering of the Vibes. The last several years, it's been held at Seaside Park in Bridgeport, CT.

It is without a doubt the most family-friendly music festival I've ever attended: The kids' tent, Andy the Music Man, the Peace Parade, for starters.

But what has made our experience even more special is the kindness we've felt each year from our fellow Wharf Rats' community. It is truly a beautiful thing. We all camp together every year; break bread, share coffee and blow bubbles. The table is always beautifully situated, and you can count on Murph, Amanda and a host of others to greet you.

But our daughter Emmalee, now age 6, has come to look forward to it more and more each summer. She loves the dressing up, the face painting, the kids' tent... but I think most of all she loves the attention lavished upon her by our fellow Wharf Rats.

They have watched her grow since infancy, and marvel each year how she has changed and matured. My wife Andrea and I know she is in a safe place when we are with the Wharf Rats.

This summer, I told people it was Emmalee's 7th Gathering of the Vibes, even though she was only 6 years old. Howzat? We had just learned, a week before Vibes '06, that we were with child. It was there we shared our good news.

This year, Emmalee realized even more she is part of something special.

The three of us attended one of the regular meetings at the Vibes' waterfront WR table, and there was a big crowd. The yellow balloon went around, and people shared their own

experiences with strength and hope.

Before the meeting was over, she asked for the balloon and shared her own thoughts, speaking of her gratitude for everyone who was there.

It was entirely unexpected, and it brought tears to my eyes.

She has brought such richness, enjoyment and beauty to our lives.

But there also are the rewards you never expect. In many ways, they can be the sweetest.

Charlie W.

WHARF RATS High On Music

On Nov. 11th '98 I began to understand what the word powerlessness, as well as unmanageably had meant in my life. I had just walked into my first A.A. meeting, and prior to that, on Aug. 28th '98 I was allowed to walk out of Federal prison, after 7yrs.

My life has always been good for the most part. I loved to dance, loved to have friends around me, and was always ready to feel different. One of my most vivid memories growing up were from high school. There was a guy named Cosmo whom would miss a few days of school a lot during the year. I quickly learned he was listening to the Grateful Dead and going on tour.

Fast forward about 10 yrs. I was at my first Dead show in Columbia, Md. at the Merriweather Post, it was summer tour '83 and I was hooked. I had never seen the likes of what I had seen that day. People were dancing madly, bright colors were the flavor of the day, it was like a rainbow. At that point I knew I was in the right place. I had arrived finally! The bus had come by, and I had gotten on.

During my 7 year run following the Boys from one coast to the other, and in between I had always noticed the "Wharf Rats". But my thinking was that these guys couldn't control their drugs & alcohol, nor did they really know how to enjoy them! I have to admit that I didn't have much respect for them because they were different. As I went from city to city, I was always looking for the differences between me and the locals. One might say that I was very much living in an illusion, without the drugs & alcohol. As well as being in a delusion.

I was so willing to be a part of the Wharf Rats at my first show with 9 mos. of sobriety, that I was ready and willing to go to any length to stay sober. I was at the Santa Barbara bowl, and the table coordinator said that they had been waiting for me. At that point, I became so emotional with gratitude that I started to cry, and all I heard was welcome home. I have and still to this day do table work. I always thought that there was nothing like a Dead show...Well there is nothing like being a "Wharf Rat" enjoying the music drug & alcohol free.

Thanks to those whom were at the Tables when I got there.

PEACE, LOVE & MUSIC
Michael R.

STICKERS

✱ Wharf Rats ✱

ANOTHER DOPELESS
HOPE FIEND

You Don't Need Dope
To Dance

STILL CRAZY AFTER
ALL THIS SOBRIETY

STICKERS

ONE SHOW
AT A TIME



Save Your Face

THIS IS YOUR
BRAIN ON HUGS



Save Your Face

STICKERS

WHARF RATS
High On Music

True Deadheads Get
High On Music

Let Go & Let Jerry



If you'd like to be of service at an upcoming show please call the Wharf Rat contact in your area. If there is no contact in your area, maybe you'd consider becoming one. Tables are always in need of support. Table service, or covering tables for bathroom and dance breaks for people who are tabling. Donations of candy, yellow balloons, pens, envelopes are always welcomed. Stop by and see if you can help if you are inclined. Meet your local Wharf Rats, we can certainly promise you a warm welcome and you will walk away with some new clean & sober friends. Thanks to all the Wharf Rats everywhere who tended tables and volunteered in a hundred different ways this last year to meet all the needs of Wharf Rats bringing tables in whenever and wherever we can. Without your loving service, we'd be without the family gatherings and traction in this slippery environment that we share at shows..... Hugs to you all.



Real Traction – I have absolutely met, by far, the most interesting, talented, giving, loving, annoying, and tragic people in our little community. I often think of finding the yellow balloons when I was new in recovery and feeling very much like a stranger during the first set of a show 500 miles away from my home group and on shaky ground. I didn't feel like drinking, but, I didn't feel a part of the celebration that shows always seemed to bless me with. Mired in self-pity, I found you, laid out my self-centered misery; you hugged me up, delivered me to an area to dance, led me to a campfire, sang and played until the small hours of the morning, and became my friends. The last few years I have actually seen people stumble to our tables - wasted – and tired. I have had the opportunity to meet them meetings locally or plug them into people in their own towns. I have seen them pick-up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at their feet and awaken! Recently, one of these men I met who was hammered at a show picked up his first year clean and sober and worked a table with me carrying our message. Our simple message carried through your living example. It's been 24 years on this beautiful ride. Closed my eyes and have seen more music sober than I ever did high. Thank you all for showing me that I really don't need dope to dance and I never need go through anything alone again!

David F.



Hey now~~~~

As I begin my 20th summer of freedom, I reflect on an amazing life of Rock~n~roll~n~recovery! It has been a privilege and an honor to serve behind the yellow balloon~~~at small clubs and cavernous arenas~~Baseball fields and even a castle~at festivals and legendary venues~~As long as Phil or Bobby, the Other One's, the Dead, Ratdog or P & F, or Furthur are playin', we will be there...with our beautiful and inviting tapestry covered table~~~mountains of candy, newsletters, bumper stickers, glitter and gadgets and toys! Trusted servants will greet you with a

hug and a beautiful beaming smile that say “you can do this too!” You can dance without dope.

You can do what you love to do without doing what you “love to do!”....

With a fellowship of kindred souls, some time away from alcohol and drugs, some recovery under your belt and a grateful heart, you CAN do this! It is a life beyond compare....

As I write this an amazing thought has occurred to me....it was 18 years ago today, 6/17/1995, that I attended my last Grateful Dead show @ Giants Stadium...it was a bittersweet day! A few things happened that day that would impact me tremendously...1st off, and I mean no disrespect @ all, but it was by far the worst performance by the band I ever saw~~~and there were 100's...

A security guard approached me @ setbreak and asked if I had heard of the Wharf Rats...of course I had.

He showed me a Save Your Face tattoo on his arm...took a shortcut by Jerry, introduced me to him and told him who I was ~~~he looked sick and drained and tired and beat~~~glanced up @ me and smiled and told me to keep doin' what I'm doin'...and his head fell back down to his chest~~heartbreaking to say the least!

I had been to a few dozen meetings @ shows before this, but that day I committed to the Wharf Rats and have never looked back! I have had the privilege of tabling hundreds of shows on the East Coast....in about a month I will be doing the Cooperstown, NY Furthur show (c'mon ~~baseball, upstate NY and Furthur with a Wharf Rat presence? Doesn't get much better than that!) And on the 23rd through the 28th we will be rocking the Gathering of the Vibes in Bridgeport, CT!!

Amanda L, Johnny A. Georgie G and yours truly will be @ the table! Our “office” has the LI Sound as it's backyard and it front of us is a 400 acre park donated by PT Barnum himself, packed with 25,000 music lovin' freaks!!

We have our own Clean & Sober camping (ask for a parking pass when you order your ticket)there will be 2 official meetings each day, tons of rap sessions around camp, late night meetings after the headlining acts and tons of sober fun and fellowship! Stop by the tables please. Show some support~give some love~and take what you need!!!

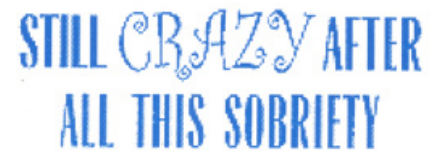
I am blessed beyond words by the friends I have made over the years~~~shout out to Daddy Don whose love and inspiration got the ball rolling~~~Robert and Carol C for giving me the opportunity to serve~~Dana for all she has done~~Amanda, Johnny, Georgie, Brian, Tom C, Ken H and all the Vibes tablers over the years~~Antonio for taking over the newsletter, Warren for his years of service (thank him for the stickers!) and on and on and on....

We don't need dope to dance....remember this.. at the table you will find traction in an otherwise slippery environment~~~

See you @ the jubilee~~~

with peace, love and service,

Murph S.



My first show was my second trip, Englishtown 77. I was 14. TODAY I acknowledged 8 yrs, and it's not the first 8th anniversary, but I hope it's my last. Wharf Rats and having traction in an otherwise slippery environment has saved my life. Twirling at shows taught me how to meditate. This is a much MUCH better way of life - I hope we beam the serenity to anyone at shows that needs it. Because like the song says, I had “too much too fast”, and “I'd rather be with you”. When Bobby fell over last spring, I kinda panicked. Quite familiar, the denial that says we can handle it, and don't need to sit this set out. I know that slo-mo fall all too well, and I am so grateful for more music, more magic, more clean and sober time for us and for all who want it! May we always be visible to addicts like a candle in the dark. (-)^\}

Peggy B.



Stay Connected!

We may have been the first, but we are not the only ones out there! Fellow “yellow balloon” group websites and yahoo groups.

Camp Traction - Clean and Sober Festival Camping
www.camptraction.org

Wharfrats Together
http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/Wharfrats_Together

Wharfrat Women
http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/Wharfrat_Women

Phish
www.phellowship.net and
Phellowship@yahoogroups.com

String Cheese Incident
www.scijellyfish.org and
theljellyfish@yahoogroups.com

moe.
happyhourhero.org and
happyhourhero@yahoogroups.com

Widespread Panic
www.soberfans.com and
Gateway-WSP@yahoogroups.com

Disco Biscuits
www.thedigitalbuddhas.org and
DigitalBuddhas@yahoogroups.com

Umphrey's McGee
www.muchobliged.org

Particle
GoldenGators@yahoogroups.com

Yonder Mountain String Band
velcrockangaroos@yahoogroups.com

Gov't. Mule
Monkeyhill@yahoogroups.com





Greetings family, my name is Bob E., a Wharf Rat from the St. Louis area. My clean date is 11/7/1993

I grew up in the Bay area in the late 60's early 70's, a military brat my folks were stationed in Alameda. So at an early age I was introduced to "OUR" music and everything else that was associated with it. I don't really think I ever had a chance to use successfully. Not being OK with myself, I was searching and ended up looking in the wrong places. I used any and everything on the outside to try to fill the hole inside and failed miserably.

There was nothing in that first joint or jug of ripple that told me that I was gonna be a junkie, far from it, it gave me the illusion of fun, a falsehood sence of belonging. It robbed me of everything that I thought I held dear, most importantly the people and music that I grew up loving.

My world crashed in 93, after my fourth trip to the ER. I landed in a city jail where I detoxed, no suboxone or methadone, a whole lot of being dope sick. I never want to forget how I felt. I went to treatment from there to get some charges reduced, not to get clean and they tricked my ass, I sat on the side of that bed and got honest with me for the first time, how in the hell did you get here, my truth unfolded in front of me and I owned it. After becoming OK with I guess I'll just die this way the last several years, a healthy fear and will to live was installed in me. I bought into a lot of things they told me, followed some suggestions and was re-born so to speak.

It was somewhere in 1999/2000 that I felt a void in my life and had a deep desire to again follow some of my passions. After 7 years of recovery I thought, I liked going fishing, did I have to stop going fishing?- No! I had to stop getting fucked up when I went, so I didn't catch as many or as big, said I had to stop lying too.

I had met some kindred spirits in the rooms and we decided that the music we had loved for so long was waiting on us. We started doing local shows with an understanding that if we felt uncomfortable we would leave, didn't have to figure out why, just bolt. There will always be another show, don't know if I have another shot at this thing called life.

In 2002, when Alpine Valley hosted the family re-union, I almost wet myself. Four of us packed up for the weekend and hauled ass...

It was a magical weekend, another turning point in my life, the music filled the air, and I attended my first Wharf Rat table. My eyes filled and my heart was full, I NEVER KNEW!!!! That's all it took.

Fall tour and New Years in Oakland, my life came full circle, my spirit was again sparked, yes, lost dreams do awaken and new possibilities do arise, and I am so grateful to introduce you to "Loose Lucy", my 78 VW Westphalia, we have been in service in the Midwest for over 11 years now, carrying the message, "You Don't Need Dope To Dance" at festivals and shows near and far. Have table, will travel...

We have a meeting here, in Belleville IL on Thursday nights, "Days Between" a gathering of the tribe, if you're ever in the area, by aLL means, please pop in, we would love to have you. Welcome Home!! Forever grateful to the Rats, and the yellow balloon community, for giving a guy like me a SAFE PLACE to be in an arena that I love.

In humble service, Bob E

Let Go & Let Jerry

I finally had to admit to myself that I was powerless. When I came to that point, something changed and sobriety became a lot easier.

Michael T

True Deadheads Get High On Music

I caught the Dead everywhere west of the Colorado between '84 and '95. I lived to use and used to live. I spun my way up and down the coast, show to show, venue to venue! I was high on anything and everything that crossed my path. More was definitely my drug of choice and too much of everything was just enough! I knew the life I was living was no good, I needed a new start, to live a life, I would. And what a long strange trip it had been...

Then the miracle happened! All I know is a bus came by and I got on and that's when it all began! Going to my first sober show back in 1997 at the Irvine Amphitheater for "The Other Ones," I definitely felt like a stranger... My buddy Travis had been in recovery for a few years, who loved the Dead, invited me to the show. He knew about the Wharf Rats and said there would be a meeting and people in recovery. I had yet to feel

so excited in recovery. I had no idea that I could go to a show and not get totally wasted! It had only been about a year since I experienced that powerlessness, pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization, and surrendered to a new way of living. Those feelings were still fresh and I felt a little uneasy, but went to the show anyways. With two feet firmly planted in recovery and my HP at the helm, I had nothing to fear.

Today I am grateful for the Wharf Rats and those that came before me and showed me the way... One show at a time! Once in a while we can get shown the light, in the strangest of places if we look at it right! One thing for sure is that, I don't need dope to dance. Guess that makes me another dopeless hope fiend!

Yours truly, Court Card!



ATTENTION ALL WHARF RATS!!

Feeling grateful and want to share about it?

Perhaps you have some history or an amusing story with the Wharf Rats?

Send it in and share it with the rest of the WR community! Jerry left us 18+ years ago and in that time the Wharf Rat community has grown not only in strength but in numbers. Share a little bit about your experience and help us get to know you better.

We are always accepting submissions for future issues of the newsletter, so if you have the time and feel the inclination, send us an email with your story to:

wharfratsnewsletter@gmail.com

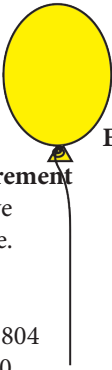


Save Your Face

How can I reach you after the show?

Wharf Rats Contacts

www.wharfrat.org



WR Treasurer Stickers & Misc. Procurement

Long & short sleeve
"T-Shirts" available.

Warren F.

34 Oxford Road
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Lisa T.

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Chef Larry

(951) 818-6458

cheflarry@sbcglobal.net

WHARF RATS MEETINGS

East Norwich, Long Island, NY

Save Your Face Group of WR's

Contact: Tom (631) 672-6851 or Sabina H. (516) 526-4445

beanloveslife@yahoo.com

Tuesdays, 7:15-8:45PM, Community Methodist Church. Take the LIE to Exit 41N (106N), take 106N to 25A (Northern Blvd.), make

U-turn on corner of 106N and 25A. Entrance on Vernon Ave., Fellowship door. Come One, Come All!

Meeting in Pittsburgh, PA

"Need A Miracle Group of NA"

Contact: Michelle R. (412) 576-5537

michellerua@gmail.com

Tuesdays 8:00 - Music and fellowship at 7:30
Greenstone UM Church, 939 California Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15202

Indianapolis, IN Rats NA Drain Ditch

Contact Tim D. (317) 319-4697 walstib@netzero.com

Fridays 7:00-8:00PM, Woodruff Place Baptist Church
1735 East Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN.

Days Between (A Gathering of the Tribe) Meeting

Contact Bob E. (618) 779-5358 hedded2@charter.net

Thursdays 8:00 - Whenever

13 S. High St.

Belleville IL 62221

WR Bradenton, Florida

Contact Richard G. (941) 737-3773

FCBRFC@gmail.com

Wharfrat NA Thursdays 7:00-8:00PM

has moved to Faith United Church of Christ

4850 SR 64 East Bradenton, FL 34208



Delray Beach, Florida "Gone Are The Days"

Contact Chris S. (908) 328-5465

walshed63@aol.com

Sundays at approximately 9pm, during the set break of the weekly Crazy Fingers show at Boston's on the Beach, 40 S Ocean Blvd Delray Beach, FL 33483, meeting is held in the pavilion on the beach across the street and to the north of Boston's.

San Francisco, CA

Contact Charlie E. (415) 314-8442 Csmcchar@aol.com

Thursdays 8:15-9:15PM, Holy Innocents Church, on Fair Oaks, between 25th & 26th Streets. Fair Oaks is parallel to and between Delores & Guerrero Streets. Contact Charlie anytime. If you are in the Bay Area and can't make it to the meeting, join them for dinner before the meeting. If he can help you stay sober today, give a call.

NA, "Terrapin Station Group"

Contact: Donald W. Cell: 415-948-1345

Wednesdays 6:30PM

San Francisco Alano Club (in the big room in back)
1748 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

Los Angeles, CA

Contact: Charlie E. (415) 314-8442

CsmcChar@aol.com

Tuesday 8:00PM - Chandler Lodge
11455 Chandler Blvd. (Cross St. Tujunga Av)
North Hollywood, CA. 91601

IF WE CAN'T REACH YOU, NO ONE ELSE CAN! Meeting contacts whose email addys and/ or phone numbers are not active, will be removed from the list. The conclusion being the meeting is no longer active. Please keep us current with your contact info if you want to continue to be listed here. It matters ... to the folks out there trying to reach us, it definitely matters. Thanks all.

-Your Editor in Service.