



Amy F. Goodusky, a former paralegal, rock 'n' roll singer, practicing attorney, and Connecticut Law Tribune regular contributor comes out of semi-retirement to share her thoughts about the LCL-CT program. Amy continues her recovery journey and has recaptured her serenity as the proud owner and operator of Haywire Farm in West Granby.

A BELOVED VOICE FROM THE ROOMS...

My experience with Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL) has not been typical.

I did not come into contact with LCL until long after I had gotten sober, and as a result of staying sober, was able to take the LSAT successfully, attend law school, pass the bar, and begin practicing.

To be admitted to the bar, I had to appear for a hearing before the Statewide Grievance Committee. A friend says, "I could have used a drink on the way to kindergarten;" I could have used LCL on the way to the hearing. What would become LCL had already influenced the vetting process. The examining committee asked me sophisticated questions. Did I have a sponsor? Did I regularly attend 12-step fellowship meetings? Had I done a fourth and fifth step? The answer to all of these questions was affirmative. I was admitted to practice in January, 1996, and hurled without prelude into the lobster pot.

At a seminar held at Hartford Superior Court, when I had been sober for almost 20 years and practicing more than a decade, I met LCL's executive director and offered to serve as an LCL volunteer. Every Wednesday night for four years, I went to the LCL lawyer-only 12-step meeting in Rocky Hill. There, I met people who were sober, but whose eyes did not glaze over when I said, "short calendar," "summary judgment," and "*res ipsa loquitur*." Practicing law presented the greatest challenge to my sobriety and relentlessly invaded my serenity. Finally, I was in the company of like-minded people, struggling with the same issues that threatened to drown me in alcohol.

Here is a community of those who think they alone are afflicted. It is an oasis of hope.

I cannot say enough about LCL's executive director and nucleus of dedicated volunteers. The words "tireless" and "indefatigable" come to mind, but I know these people, and they are tired. They do it anyway. They keep herding the strays, ministering to the troubled, finding safe harbors for the damaged vessels lucky enough to sight the lighthouse. They never give up—on any of us.

In Connecticut, LCL has not only welcomed and helped many members of the legal community but has raised awareness of the pervasiveness of emotional illness, addiction, depression, and desperation in our line of work. It emphasizes compassion and care as a gateway to recovery and has eroded the notion that reprisal is the only answer. We are sick people; LCL offers us the chance to heal and facilitates the healing process in a multitude of ways.

When my service commitment to LCL became impossible to keep—I moved and took another job an hour away in the opposite direction from the Rocky Hill offices—I was asked to join the LCL Board of Directors. I have had many professional successes both as an attorney and in my personal life—being asked to join the board elevated me to another level. For the first time ever, I felt like an adult: no longer the eternal child at the grownups' table. My opinion clearly mattered. This was something that was not necessarily true in practice, in my family, or in any venue I had encountered. I had arrived.

I'm retired from practice now. I do some teaching. One of my students started talking to me one day about her son. He was a lawyer. He had a drinking problem. He was going to die, she thought. He got willing some time later, when alcohol had almost taken his life. Thank God I knew where to send him. ■

LCL, as an institution, has done magnificent outreach. It comforts and bolsters anxious newcomers, people once at the tops of their games fighting for their professional and personal lives. It provides a highly specialized sanctuary for the rarest of rare breeds.

By Amy F. Goodusky