

Hooked On Recovery

September 3, 2004

Sea Glass

I like to look for sea glass. I like to wander down the beach, and casually look. It's really fun when some of my kids are tagging along. The colorful pieces of sea glass stand out amongst the sand and stones. Other colors blend in. It is always an event when you spot a nice piece. We even have loose categories for the pieces we find; small, ordinary, nice, sweet and then trophy. We are all looking for trophies. Joshua is probably the best spotter. I don't know how he sees all the white pieces he finds; must be those 10 year old eyes.

How does a piece of glass become sea glass? This is the theory. A bottle or other glass receptacle ends up in the ocean. It breaks into pieces. Then through the tumbling of the surf and the slow grinding of the sand it wears down, gets round edges and has a sanded look. Large, thick, well-worn pieces fall into the trophy category.

I spend a lot of time strolling the beach (usually with a fishing rod in hand), so I find my share. Joshua spends a lot less time and still finds as many pieces. There are more common pieces, like green, brown and white corresponding to the color of all those beer bottles thrown in the ocean (my theory). Rare colors are blue, pink, yellow and turquoise. There is one color that is the most elusive, the most rare, the most desired and we have only seen one in the many years we've been looking and we didn't actually find it.

This summer, my aunt and uncle were visiting us on the Cape for a few days. They are from the Buffalo area, so don't get to the beach too often. It was about mid-morning, I had a few baits out, my rods were spiked and I was chatting with my uncle at the water's edge. We were talking about sea glass (Joshua had already found quite a few), so Tom reaches into the water and pulls out a piece and says, "Like this one." I looked. I gasped. A piece of ruby red sea glass! He had done it! He had found the Holy Grail of sea glass. I ran up the beach and showed the family. We all bowed to my Uncle in appropriate reverence and quickly tucked the treasure away for safekeeping. Today it is in our home and just about everyone who visits gets to see it.

So here we go into the analogy again; shards of glass transformed into treasure. Sounds like recovery to me. I look at my own recovery and I still vividly remember some days when I needed a drink or a drug and it felt like shards of glass going into my system. That was just the physical part. Each time I consumed something or doing something I knew to be wrong, I was ingesting a spiritual shard of glass. (Isn't that a cool word, shard?) Anyway these shards literally ripped my soul to shreds, leaving me bleeding spiritually and near death. Then I found recovery and through my recovery I found God.

By doing the next right thing, God supplied the waters of hope and the sands of time in recovery to cover the shards of glass. The pain subsided. Then the sand and the water began to work, to move, shifting my perspective and my attitude. The shards of glass lost their sharp edges. They no longer bit into my soul. And now today, as I look back and sift through the sands of time, I occasionally find something colorful, beautiful, a new creation. I look at it and think, "My God, how could you possibly turn that experience into something so beautiful. Only You can do that.

Thank you.”

Hooked on Recovery is a biweekly message from CCAR Executive Director Phillip Valentine, person in recovery since 12/28/87, devoted husband, father of four (expecting number five) and just another surf fisherman. He welcomes all your comments and suggestions on this column, email him at phillip@ccar.us. Or visit the website at www.ccar.us to get more information on this year’s *Recovery Walks!* and to see previous articles.