

SOBER TIMES



Balk... balk...
balk... balk...

Volume I, Issue II

Williamsburg Area Intergroup

Fourth Quarter 2011

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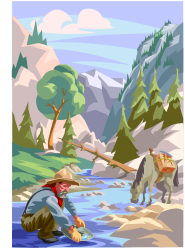
VSCYPAA

I had been planning on attending my first VSCYPAA 2012 event, the Halloween Bash, for weeks. The day had come; I walk into the church and am greeted by my fellow young people scurrying about to finish the decorations. Shortly after, we all gather to listen to the experience, strength, and hope of the speaker, Alfred. By the end of the meeting I turn around from my seat in the front row and am blown away by the amount of fellow AA's that had arrived! The party truly began at that moment when I found out all surrounding cities came out for one primary purpose: to carry the message that we are not a glum lot in our fellowship! ~Jessica B

I asked a newcomer, "Some of us are going to a Sober Halloween Dance in Hampton. Do you want to go?" "Yes." he replied. "Are you going to wear a costume?" I asked. "Yes, I'm going to grab something from my Mom's closet." I told him "Awesome, I'll pick you up at 7!" We pulled up at 7 and the newcomer ran out in his street clothes. "I thought you were going to wear one of your Mom's dresses?" "No way, I was just kidding. Besides you said there were going to be lots of people there without a costume." I did not force it. When we got to the dance, most people were wearing costumes, some risqué, some unbelievable, and some just awesome. So, when we first saw a cross dresser, I thought to myself, "Look, you could have done it." And then when I saw another and another I thought "You should have done it. Sobriety is about being able to do things you would not normally be able to do." Now I think sobriety is about setting an example of freedom which includes not wearing a costume if you don't want to. I bet this newcomer could now wear one of his Mom's dresses because he saw other alcoholics were able to do it. Maybe even a wig and makeup, maybe next time we can even get him out on the dance floor. ~Anonymous

Ex-Drunk Strikes Gold

After years or maybe a lifetime of feeling alone I find myself sitting in a room of almost 200 people (most of whom I do not know). Instead of feeling afraid, I feel overwhelmed with a feeling of serenity and a sense that I am in the right place, with people who are like me. That was several years ago at the Gratitude Dinner and all I had to do was raise my hand and say "I will help". Being of service keeps me involved in a fellowship that saves my life every day.



~Anonymous

Un-Burning Bush Experience

My Higher Power speaks my language. I was in my first year of sobriety and trying to define myself. (I couldn't just be) I said to myself "I am someone who always seems to miss things." I might even have had some examples. A new A.A. group had formed and told me, "GSR would be a good position for you." I did not know what that was but took it anyway.



might

So, this is why I was on my way to a District meeting that was temporarily meeting in a new location that month at a church; and I was consciously under the impression that I am someone who always misses things. I pull into the church courtyard on time for the District meeting. I lit up a cigarette and joined the small group in front of the steps. There was some small talking and an off-handed remark about a fire. I asked, "What fire?" They said, "The fire department just left...that hedge was on fire." There was such a contrast between the scene that I encountered and the scene that had just left. I said to myself, "No way, a burning bush and I missed it! There was actually a burning bush while I was on my way to an AA service commitment and the fire department put it out before I got to see it. Typical."

I thought this was hilarious, but later I realized that I actually had a burning bush experience. I got it in exactly the way I could understand it. I am grateful for my un-burning bush experience.

~ Anonymous

Circle and Triangle

As you may or may not know, we are accepting submissions of art in the shape of the circle and triangle symbol. They can be paintings or photos or drawings or ?. One is chosen for publication each issue. There were 3.5 entries this round. This issue's winner is Jamie S. He wins \$1000 which comes out of the Newsletter Committee Budget. Just kidding, he wins a speaker CD. Thanks to all those who participated.



Sober Times Word Search

Try to find all the words before taking the next drink, Then call someone.

t	s	s	e	r	g	o	r	p	n	e	m	p	p	a
s	m	s	t	n	i	l	m	c	e	k	e	r	n	e
a	r	e	c	o	v	e	r	y	o	t	o	e	t	
i	t	l	d	y	r	e	b	o	s	r	n	g	c	o
e	e	r	s	i	w	g	b	n	s	y	a	r	i	b
p	y	e	s	t	t	g	n	o	m	n	a	a	v	e
i	t	w	i	o	i	a	l	i	n	c	o	m	r	u
h	i	o	r	b	o	u	t	t	e	o	p	e	n	
s	b	p	t	h	t	y	t	i	n	e	r	e	s	i
w	e	f	i	i	g	s	o	d	o	e	e	a	e	t
o	l	a	o	p	o	n	l	a	e	n	t	m	w	y
l	i	n	v	e	n	t	o	r	y	a	w	e	o	s
l	l	b	s	p	i	r	i	t	u	a	l	n	r	i
e	s	a	e	s	i	d	r	e	o	v	i	d	i	i
f	c	m	t	e	p	r	a	y	e	r	l	s	s	t

step
amends
meeting
powerless
anonymity
fellowship
meditation
twelve
program
solution
sponsor
prayer
tradition
unity
bigbook
inventory
service
action
spiritual
recovery
serenity
sober
progress
disease

Sobriety Timeline



- Karen J. 08-27-2011
- Mike K. 01-26-2011
- Donna H. 11-19-2010
- Sue B. 11-01-2010
- Traci A. 09-30-2010
- Victoria B. 08-09-2010
- Pete V. 04-19-2010
- Kathy C. 11-02-2008
- Jamie H. 05-15-2008
- Lynwood G. 01-23-2008
- Lacanas O. 01-15-2008
- Michele J. 12-01-2007
- Bobby E. 11-27-2007
- Carol S. 11-01-2007
- Mark J. 09-11-2007
- Elizabeth D. 06-08-2007
- Paul D. 05-16-2007
- Mary Pat M. 01-05-2007
- Carl A. 01-27-2006
- Pat G. 11-01-2005
- Amy G. 08-13-2005
- Denise S. 09-01-2004
- David P. 02-27-2003
- Bitsy W. 04-11-2002
- Leigh S. 07-09-2001
- Adam M. 11-14-2000
- Becky S. 09-01-2000
- Kathy S. 01-15-2000
- Jesse F. 01-09-2000
- Chris H. 07-04-1998
- Chris C. 10-01-1996
- Leslie M. 03-31-1995
- Bobbie J. 11-01-1994
- David A. 01-11-1993
- Katrina W. 04-25-1992
- Jim S. 05-16-1990
- Cliff J. 07-25-1989
- Mel S. 12-01-1986
- Kay S. 11-29-1986
- Denny W. 12-15-1979
- Henry W. 12-14-1975
- Ruth M. 11-01-1975

Special Purpose Meetings



This is my take on special purpose meetings. (Gay, bi-sexual, and lesbian folk might need to look for the similarities in the following). There was a time when I thought men's only or women's only meetings were hardcore AA. At these meetings there would be no distractions, no wasting energy trying to look good or sound good to members of the opposite sex.

Of course, this is what I thought about these meetings, I rarely actually went to single sex meetings. I would say "Why go to a meeting with no members of the opposite sex, when you can go to a meetings with them?" I still think this is one of the reasons women only or men only meetings are not very well attended, because there is one step you can't work at these meetings...the thirteenth step (Which goes both ways). Recently I was mentioning to my sponsor about going to one of these meetings (with pride) and I received a grimace. My sponsor doesn't like these meetings! This was the first time it had been suggested to me that a "special interest" type meeting might not be a good thing. I think this is because of the possible conflict with the third Tradition: "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking." This topic is covered in the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated" which states, "By their own account, those attending special interest groups consider themselves AA members first. They attend general membership meetings as well as those that fill their other individual needs, and they remain devoted to AA's primary purpose." So, what remains important is the focus of sobriety and recovery from alcoholism, which has to do with the primary purpose of A.A. A.A. is for recovery from alcoholism, this is what keeps us unified. Now, if you need the anonymity of another affiliation to get you into sobriety, you are not alone, and if someone needs more anonymity maybe "special interest" meetings can provide that. But only so long as that is what the group is gathered for, can they call themselves an A.A. meeting. So, if I am going to an open meeting to try to find a date, I am also breaking the tradition, and that could mean sobriety hangs in peril. How do I know that I am not hiding a "bad" motive under a "good" one by only going to certain meetings? This is why I attend a men's only or women's only meeting, to see if I want sobriety or sobricandy.



~Anonymous

INTERVIEW WITH THE ALCOHOLIC

Interview with Philippa W, November 2011



What is your sobriety date?

3-27-2005

Describe your first drunk.

I loved myself in a picture of the experience I saw later – relaxed and comfortable in my own skin. I did all kinds of things I wouldn't have done if I weren't drunk – things that I continued to do almost every time I drank.

Describe your first AA meeting.

Weird – the 5:30 Monday night speaker meeting here in Williamsburg – a few people were sitting with the speaker, facing an audience in auditorium style chairs. On one hand it was easy to be anonymous, on the other I recognized people from the community. They all seemed comfortable in their own skin, which I was not.

What advice would you give to a newcomer?

Keep coming back, sit up front where you can speak to the winners, and hear the winners speaking.

What led you to believe you were an

alcoholic?

Thanks to a family history of alcoholism and recovery, I knew I was an alcoholic long before I was ready to stop. But once I stopped getting drunk, but continued to brown in and out and it wasn't fun anymore but I couldn't stop and continued to make terrible choices in every other area of my life – life had become unmanageable. Then, I knew.

What is your favorite AA quote?

From members: "It's not how much you drink; it's what happens when you drink."

From the Big Book: "What used to be a hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it." (pg. 87)

How did you get your first sponsor?

I obtained my first sponsor by asking a woman who shared with steady and kind commitment to the program, was older, and I now recognize as emotionally sober -- she gently turned me down but directed me to a younger woman who she believed to be available, and a good fit. She was right!

What are your current service positions in AA?

Archives Committee member – I get to do the interviews of members with 20 years or more.

What is your favorite AA prayer?

Seventh – page 76 in the Big Book

What is your favorite AA slogan and how does it apply to your life?

How Important Is It – as a recovering drama queen, as well, I often lack discernment on the details – HP provides that.

Interview with Elizabeth D, December 2011

What is your sobriety date?

June 8, 2007

Describe your first drunk.

I was 13 and at my cousin's bar mitzvah. I drank Jack and Coke and felt I was the coolest girl in the room. I chased that feeling until I quit drinking. It didn't take much and I ended up passed out upstairs in a bedroom and missed most of the party.

Describe your first AA meeting.

My head was still cloudy and I was full of anxiety. I remember feeling safe. I was able to relate to everyone sharing which gave me hope that I could recover, God willing.

What advice would you give to a newcomer?

Get a sponsor and go to a lot of meetings. It was important for me to have someone to be accountable to on a daily basis while my head cleared. Ask what is expected of you and make sure you get someone who wants to read the Big Book with you. I truly believe my willingness to take suggestions and

the ability to be brutally honest with another woman has been the foundation of my recovery. My secrets keep me sick. My mind is insane when it comes to matters dealing with myself. I talk everything through with my sponsor to get a fresh perspective. And finally, I get on my knees and pray.

What led you to believe you were an alcoholic?

After my first DWI, I was in ASAP and I asked the definition of an alcoholic. She answered "Doing the same thing over and over again expecting a different result." I now know that is the definition of insanity. It clicked for me. Every time I drank I thought this time I won't get out of control. I will only have a couple. But, after the first drink all bets were off. I had no control over how much I drank or the outcome of the evening.

What is your favorite AA quote?

"The center fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has en-

tered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves."

How did you get your first sponsor?

I got my first sponsor the first week I got sober. I listened in meetings and liked what this woman shared. I could relate to her. I went up to her after a meeting and asked her to be my sponsor. We immediately set up a time I would call her every day and we got together once a week.

What are your current service positions in AA?

I previously was the treasurer for my home group and on several committees.

What is your favorite AA prayer?

Third step prayer

What is your favorite AA slogan and how does it apply to your life?

"You are right where you are supposed to be." My sponsor says this to me a lot. It used to irritate me but I know understand I can't force "it". I have to be patient, do what is asked of me, and trust God.

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or ask your Intergroup Rep

Business Meeting**Intergroup Chair Corner**

I can't believe it's almost 2012. Thank you to all of the Intergroup Committee Chairs for working so hard all year. This is a busy time of the year for the Special Events Committee. Thank you to Sheldon and his committee for all of their hard work in planning and coordinating another successful Gratitude Dinner. Keep it going guys, one Alkathon down and two to go!

~ Yours in Service, David A. Intergroup Chair

Announcements: ~ When attending the Wednesday 8pm, 12&12 Group at St. Stephens Lutheran Church on Jamestown Road, be sure to check with chairman for William & Mary parking pass for lot across the street from church. You can be ticketed by W&M police (\$161.00) without a parking pass.

Quotes & Sayings

- ◆ "A joy shared is a joy doubled. A burden shared is a burden halved."
- ◆ "Think, think, think, before you drink, drink, drink."
- ◆ "Think the drink through."
- ◆ "One day at a time."
- ◆ "You've got to give time, time."
- ◆ "Insanity: Doing exactly the same thing over and over, expecting different results."
- ◆ "The Serenity Prayer is the handrail to grab until you can work the Steps."
- ◆ "The hamster stopped running, but my mind kept going."
- ◆ "Easy does it, but do it."
- ◆ "If you call me before you drink, maybe I can help you. If you call me after you drink, you're going to help me."
- ◆ "Keep what simple?"
- ◆ "I'm a spiritual, sober, sex-machine."
- ◆ "I'm F.I.N.E."
- ◆ "If you don't take the first think, you can't get thunk."

Your article was going to go here

Grapevine Joke

A young AA was visiting her father over the holidays, and told him she was stepping out for a while to go to a local meeting. He gave me a big hug, and said in a fatherly tone, "Well, just be careful, Sweetie, there are alcoholics at those meetings, you know."

Note to Self

[To be read when near relapse]:

You want to live! You've been down that road before. It's a lie you tell yourself when you say, "That can't or won't happen to me!" Stop now and listen or someone you love will die. Please hear me, God and help me to listen, and heed this advice, for there may be no return this time.

Do you remember losing consciousness while in a tool shed full of sharp and exposed tools? Do you remember being in a garage rife with freshly spilt gasoline leaning against a motorcycle and both tumbling over? Do you remember flogging yourself with statements like: "Why don't you light up and smoke next time you hang out in the fume filled shed (trying to escape reality)." Do you remember losing your will to live and the constant sadness and hopelessness you felt? All this was a gift from your addiction.

Addiction lures you into thinking this is a normal life and that your situation is still under *your* control. Do you remember deals you broke with yourself like, "I'm sobered up enough to drive...slowly," after you told yourself this is something you would never do!

Many people who believed these lies are no longer alive. The addiction doesn't remind you of all the bad that it has given you, when it comes to remind you of the good. Even when you *try* to remember the reasons for not picking up again, the danger is minimized with insane rationalizations like, "Oh that won't happen, again." You are in the presence of a foe who will continue until you are dead. Even after your last suicide attempt, it came to ask when you were ready to party again!

For all the love you will miss, all the friends you have and could make, all the dreams not dreamed, all the places you haven't seen, the movies you would see, all the games to play, all the books to read; for all those who love you.

Don't listen to your addiction, please. I'm you and I want to live! Please don't kill me! I have so much love to give and to receive. Remember all those who listened to addiction and are no longer here; I bet it told them not to worry too. Now they are dead. Please as I look to heaven, I want to live. Please let me live...please...please...

~ Anonymous