

Background Notes



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DISTRICT 0490
Central New York
Area 47

| <i>Inside this issue</i> | |
|----------------------------|---|
| From the Newsletter Chair | 1 |
| Freedom of a Happy Life | 2 |
| Building A Strong AA Group | 2 |
| On the Lighter Side | 2 |
| Social Media Sobriety | 3 |
| The Maintenance Steps | 3 |
| District News and Events | 4 |
| Anniversaries | 4 |
| General Information | 4 |
| | |

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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FROM the Newsletter Chair:

February is a great month in sobriety for the drudge that we often feel through our central NY winter. It's a great month because of our easy access to a really nice Regional conference for alcoholics, alanon, and alateen. This February 9—11 is the 31st annual Mid Winter Salt City Roundup will once again be held at the Holiday Inn 7th North St. Liverpool, NY (see page 4 for additional details). I encourage anyone in our fellowship or the others who can attend to do so. It certainly revealed to me the breadth of our fellowships. It's also family friendly. Hundreds of people effected by alcoholism descending on a local spot to celebrate recovery is encouraging and enlightening for people new to sobriety. I would like to encourage our membership, those who attend, to take the time to submit a summation of something that happened that enhanced your sobriety to our newsletter by emailing that experience to backgroundnotes@yahoo.com. I remember two specific things besides the overall experience that jumped out to me the first time I attended at would have been the 9th annual Round-up. I ran into a "girl"(lady) that I had gone to High School with. She was always a happy and positive person, but I hadn't seen her in years. She was 11 years sober and I was in my first year. It made a real impression on me that she had already been sober so long. Alcoholism is no respecter of personality nor ability. I was just new in sobriety so I still wasn't sure that I wasn't just a bad person for allowing alcoholism to bring me to the lows it did. She didn't seem to be heading towards trouble when I knew her, I guess she was just alcoholic! The other thing that impressed me is at the dinner there were upward of a 1000 people in the room and they had a sobriety count-down. There was a person that stood up at one day sober. I'll never forget it, it brought tears to my eyes, sitting there thinking "How does someone end up here, at the banquet with one day sober"? What a gift from God! Please submit something that made an impression on you. What an opportunity we have in sobriety! — Bob K.



Freedom of a Happy Life

The Big Book actually sets up the fourth step to help us and assist us in keeping honest by instructing us to do the entire column before moving on to the next column. ie: It was easy for me to list (for resentments) all the people and institutions I had resentments against. At some point I bitched about all of them (column 1). Then by working down the list describing the scenario)(Column 2). I did have to try to keep out spin and justification out of describing the scenario to be honest. After describing the resentment and scenario my reaction to those were again apparent and I listed those (Column 3). In the book it describes what would be a 4th column in parenthesis which describes the underlying "character defect" that caused my reaction (usually some level of fear or insecurity for me), that was the real eye opener that led to understanding, willingness to see my part in things, and the ability to be aware and correct those responses and actions going forward. - Then I moved right to the fifth step with my sponsor. That gave me freedom and a basis through his ESH to understand these character defects were mostly misplaced or accentuated human reactions to life...we tend to be extreme in our emotional response to life! - get to work for freedom of a happy life! - Anonymous

Building a Strong AA Group

It may seem trivial to some, but there is a formula I have noticed that seems to build a strong and well attended AA group. The first thing is to have monthly business meetings, every month. Encourage home group membership and attendance at the monthly business meetings, that is where decisions are made. Elect officers (GSR, Secretary, Treasurer, Chairpersons, coffee makers, Literature Person) and have officer rotation. GSR's should attend District Meetings to bring information to the District and back from the District. Of course a group should be self supporting (Rent, Coffee, supplies). They should adhere to a prudent reserve for funds and distribute the remainder through AA District 60%, Area, 30%, and General Service Office 10%) as possible. These distributions ensure the AA message is delivered on levels that individual groups are unable to. There is little relative overhead as possible by the pyramid structure of AA to ensure maximizing of this effort. These are observational....additional information can be found at aa.org or in most meetings via pamphlets. Join a group and help maximize it and keep it strong!

On the lighter side



"What do you mean you're not willing to pay the price for that drink?"



"I really can't explain why your cancer has spread. Did you do a moral inventory and ask God to remove your shortcomings and moral failings, like I prescribed?"

Social Media Sobriety

Does social media have a positive or negative effect on AA and our ability to pass the message? Is Social media a threat to people's ability to get sober? Is Social Media a breach of anonymity? Where does Social Media fit in regards to Sobriety? All good and legitimate questions. To help express my opinions on this I am going to use Face Book (FB) as a generic term for all Social Media platforms, the platforms are in effect, interchangeable for this consideration. I searched aa.org and came up with 21 relative guidelines and publications addressing all forms of electronic communications from email, websites, and social media. It is very complicated and I am writing an opinion here so some of my opinion may be in direct conflict with AA's stance and/or other members opinions. Is social Media a breach of anonymity? To answer that logically I look to the tradition of non affiliation. As long as a social media platform claims no affiliation nor represents itself as AA, or states as most responsible groups that there is no affiliation to AA, then I think that is satisfied. The anonymity question is much more complicated because people can set up their own profiles totally anonymous (which is a consideration when reading posts) or a profile that offers too much personal information that makes anonymity impossible. Mine fits the latter. My profile states my first and last name and a good portion of personal information that makes anonymity impossible. So to satisfy the anonymity I only belong to closed groups. I consider the fact that a group is not open to the internet at large and only for people interested in sobriety a hedge against a breach of anonymity. I believe that Social media as a whole is just another communication method and generally helps pass the message of sobriety. My opinion is it is best used to encourage others to work the program in all areas of life or new/struggling people to go to AA in person. AA is a face to face proposition. Overall it helps individuals spread the message. Is social Media a threat to people's ability to get and stay sober? I personally think it can be! My fear when I originally joined a group was I see people here who are trying to use this exclusively as a means to get sober and it scared the heck out of me for those poor misguided souls! It certainly could be an easy out to half measure sobriety. In addition you have no idea where people are in sobriety, how they actually live, or if they are even sober when they reply to others questions. Where does Social Media fit in regards to Sobriety? When I eventually realized like anything, I was there to carry the message, not control it; I finally calmed down a bit and came to the realization that my role was to simply encourage good AA practices, period. So social media like the telephone is simply another communication method. The big difference between the internet is that it is a mass communication method. There are sites I have removed myself from because they get really off track. There are people on line who use the anonymity of the internet (not to be confused with anonymity of the program) to perpetrate predatory behavior. The internet especially in comments don't always bring out the best in people, there are a lot of misinterpretations and some purposeful aggressiveness. We will continue to look at this as an organization. But as all things, I think the classic term of "caveat emptor" or let the buyer beware is a good rule of thumb. Be careful and if in doubt, ask your sponsor!

The Maintenance Steps

The "maintenance steps"; step 10, step 11, and steps 12! These are the steps we live and work daily. In order to do that you need to work the proceeding 9 steps thoroughly and honestly. The maintenance steps are the goal. If you haven't got there get there. If you have work to stay there. Step 10) Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11) Sought through prayer and mediation to improve our conscious contact with *God as we understood him*, praying only for the knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out. 12) Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

District News and Events

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|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| Speaker Meeting | Candlelight Group | Methodist Church Main and Grove St. |
| February 25th | 8pm | Speaker/Anniversaries |
| | | |
| February 9-11 | Mid-Winter Roundup | Holiday Inn—Electronics Parkway, Syracuse AA, Alanon, Alateen Convention http://www.saltcityroundup.com/ |

| Anniversaries | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|---------------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| Name | ## Years | Home Group | Name | ## Years | Home Group |
| Tom S. | 18 | Nooners Group | Dan L. | 11 | Sherril |
| Brent Z. | 3 | Nooners Group | Samantha B. | 2 | Nooners Group |
| | | | | | |

| District 0490 | |
|--|---|
| PO Box 481 Oneida, NY 13421 Email: district0490@yahoo.com Website: www.aadistrict0490.org | Next District Meeting: February 18, 2:00pm Oneida Rec. Center 217 Cedar St, Oneida, NY |

| HOTLINE NUMBERS | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Oneida | 315-533-1227 |
| Rome | 315-201-6644 |
| Utica | 315-732-6880 |
| Syracuse | 315-463-5011 |

| Area 47 | |
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| CNY Area Committee Registrar PO Box 18063 Rochester, NY 14615 Website: www.aacny.org | Next Area Assembly: February 11, 1:00 TBA visit website for details |

| Alcoholic Anonymous World Svc. | |
|---|---|
| Grand Central Station Box 459, New York 10163 Website: www.aa.org |  |

This newsletter is a service of and publication of District 0490, Central New York, Area 47 of Alcoholics Anonymous. Background Notes is not endorsed nor approved by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. or Central New York Area 47. The purpose of this newsletter is to reach out to the alcoholic who still suffers, provide information to the AA Community, and general information to the public about AA's program of recovery. The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc, CNY Area 47, or District 0490.