

Background Notes



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DISTRICT 0490
Central New York
Area 47

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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:

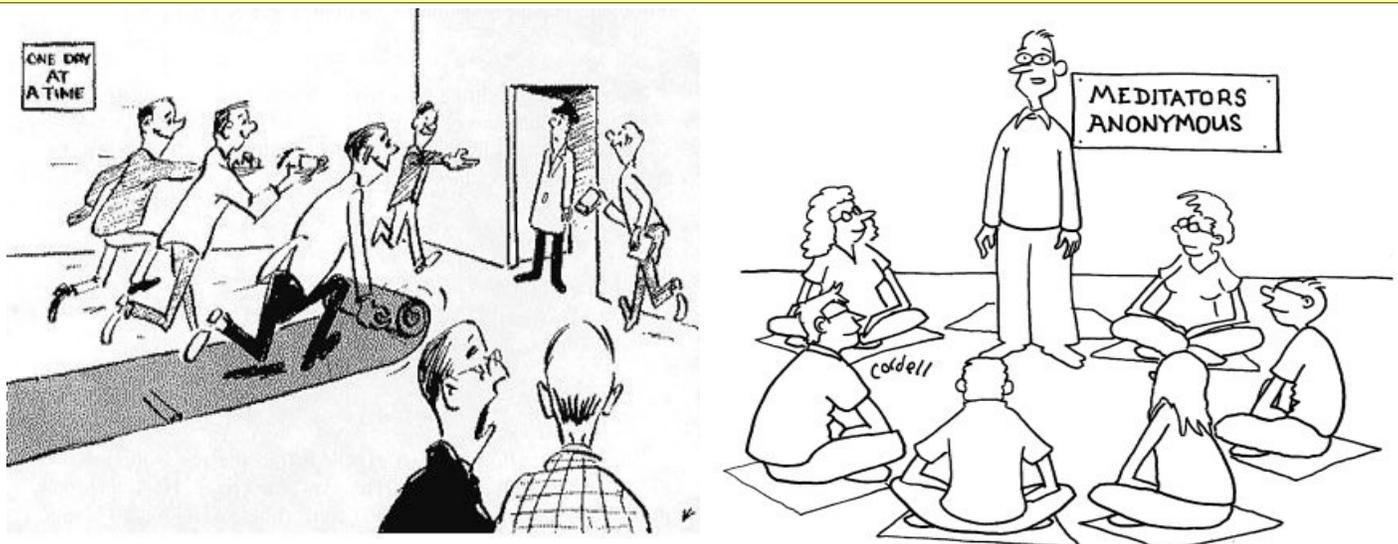
Today I am sitting here looking out my window with the sun shining and the snow melted! We've had a week of warm mostly sunny weather which going into March is a blessing for us in Central New York. I also looked at the paper and they are predicting a possible snow storm. Sober life in district 0490 marches on . I have to admit that as I got and stayed sober over the years, I started to consider summer arriving with our friends returning from the south. No, I am not talking about the geese, birds, and other migratory critters in nature. I am referring to our sober friends who winter south and return home. People like Ray M., Rosemary, Tall Paul, Dennis L. and many others! Somehow when I am sitting in a meeting and the first of those good people walk in I feel peace and warmth with the return of good friends. Very similar to the feeling I get when I travel and stop in an AA meeting in another town, state, or even country...there is a feeling of coming home again. There are several that we have lost over the years who I miss dearly. Always replaced by the next version of people who flee our cold weather but stay connected to home. The rhythms of sobriety seem to be consistent. New people come in, get sober, work the steps, and help others. They get involved, build friendships that last a life time. Are you expanding you personal rhythm of sobriety? Some day I hope to be a sober snow bird...dreams are possible when we are sober!— Bob K.



Our Unique Circumstance

We all come into sobriety at different stages of life. Not only in age, but in obligations. Young people, middle aged, elders, working, unemployed, married, divorced, single, mothers, fathers, grandparents, or any combination of those. You would think that a single solution wouldn't fit for everyone. But it does! Although those circumstances give us different challenges in what we will face moving forward; the biggest challenge to each and everyone of us is living sober and the spiritual growth required to do so. For that, the 12 steps are the perfect solution! When we look at our fellows we see a diverse group with a common problem and a common solution. We are never alone. We can use our situation in life to put a wedge between us and others, but we do so at our own peril. We can think we are the only one that has to deal with circumstances that are common to people, even to recovering people and feel that know one understands. What we understand is that feeling of uniqueness that can drive a wedge between us and moving forward. What we don't address can and generally will make us less effective in sobriety and life. I have found that between meetings, my sponsor, the steps, my friends and fellows in AA, I can discuss anything that is happening in my life. I sometimes flail around to find the best venue, friend, or confidant to do that. I often pray about things and God leads me to the right source to share my different circumstances with. All of my sober friends and fellows provide area's in life that I can admire and aspire to. What I have found over the years is that the better I am plugged into AA, the more opportunity God leads me too. Often when listening to others, one sober alcoholic to another, I find answers and solidify my spiritual solution when simply trying to help them. My circumstances in sobriety have always changed. My solution has never changed. I am blessed with a program for living that I never had previously. I am blessed with a place to feel at home. I am blessed with fellow alcoholics who are my friends, my confidants, and blessed that some confide in me. Putting the steps into action in all other area's of my life have made it a much better existence. Reminding me to put those solutions into my life is a daily effort and I get help from many different sources. I think I can handle any change in circumstance that comes along. I have learned to handle all the new circumstances so far by the grace of God, the 12 steps, and my fellow recovering alcoholics. - Anonymous

On the lighter side



"You give him unrealistic expectations. I'll start working on tearing his ego apart."

"My name is John and I haven't had a think for 36 days."

The Unlikely Sponsor

To this day I still can't fully understand how my first sponsor and I got together. I know exactly what happened and learned over the years of attitudes and circumstances that we were both afflicted with that made us an unlikely pair. I was in the Maxwell House and back then, they required AA attendance and sponsorship. I was desperate to get and stay sober, but had no clue how to do it, that is how I ended up at the house. Although I was eager to learn, liked AA, and was confused as hell; I was still carrying many character defects. Many characteristics of the chameleon that we as alcoholics are able to pull off where second nature to me. I was trying, willing, but unable to let people truly get to know me. Hell I didn't know myself. I was balking at getting a sponsor. I had a list in my head. Finally, my counselor on Monday told me if I didn't have a sponsor by Friday, I was out of the house. I went to the usual Monday meeting where one of my list always attended. He wasn't there. I went to the Wednesday meeting where the next on my list always attended. He wasn't there. Thursday, yep the third who was always at the meeting also wasn't there! I was making coffee at the 5:15 Friday and needed a sponsor desperately. There was an older gentleman who seemed quiet, serene, and fairly reserved who I really had nothing in common with. He was there early. He had one eye, the other was glass and you could never tell if he was looking at you or looking away from you. We were outside chatting and I just asked, "will you sponsor me"? He looked at me or looked away, I am still not sure which, and said "well, I have a lot going on in my life right now.....but, we'll give it a try and see how it goes.". I didn't know I had been holding my breath, but I was because I was out of options. I exhaled. I quickly found out that what he had going on in his life was he had been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and given 4 to 6 weeks to live. He wasn't sure he wanted to put himself and his wife through that. He had considered suicide. The following week he was given an opportunity to participate in a radical new and experimental treatment program. He had to go to Syracuse 3 times a week. I offered to drive him 2 times a week because his wife still worked. Those drives allowed us to get to know each other better than I had the ability to allow him to, just by virtue of the 2 hours each day spent in the car together. He recovered and lived another 10 healthy and wonderfully sober years. At 5 years sober, I took a job out of town. At 10 years sober I was able to move back with the same job and work from home. I was at a 5:15 meeting and the topic was sponsorship and Gene(my sponsor again) started talking about a sponsee he had that he really couldn't stand at first. He droned on and on about how egotistical, blah, blah, blah the guy was and about 5 minutes in I realized he was talking about me, so I blurted out "hey, quit talking about me". Everyone laughed. At the end he talked about how he learned to love that sponsee and how much pride and joy he got from that relationship. I have to admit, I wouldn't have liked myself much at that time either. I look at the circumstances around my Higher Power leading us together. Those unlikely men becoming teacher and student. In sobriety and in life. There is no doubt in my mind that because I was willing, God led me to the right Man. I am also amazed that he said yes under those circumstances! I pray that I am as open and able to help anyone, under any circumstances, who seeks sobriety! I don't always know that I am, but I am willing!

Constructive Meditation

"A clear light seems to fall upon us all—when we open our eyes. Since our blindness is caused by our own defects, we must first deeply realize what they are. Constructive meditation is the first requirement for each new step in our spiritual growth." *As Bill Sees It*, pg. 10; Letter 1946

District News and Events

Mohawk Valley Alano Club March 17th	Sober St. Patricks Day	All Day, meetings, parade, Corn Beef and cabbage. 7 am throughout the day. See flier.
Speaker Meeting March 25th	Candlelight Group 8pm	Methodist Church Main and Grove St. Speaker/Anniversaries

Anniversaries					
Name	## Years	Home Group	Name	## Years	Home Group
Ray M.	35	McConnellsville Group	Frank D.	34	Nooner's Group
Chip D.	5	OCS Group	Dave Y.	4	Nooner's Group
Brad T.	3	Candlelight	Jon K.	2	Nooner's Group
Brian K.	2	Nooner's Group			

District 0490	
PO Box 481 Oneida, NY 13421 Email: district0490@yahoo.com Website: www.aadistrict0490.org	Next District Meeting: March 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	
CNY Area Committee Treasurer PO Box 4875 Ithaca, NY 14852-4875 Website: www.aacny.org	Next Area Assembly: March 18, 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.