

Background Notes



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Newsletter email: backgroundnotes@yahoo.com : Please submit personal ESH, articles, sobriety date: adds & updates.

**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 OUR Newsletter Chair:

My first sponsor Gene D. always stressed the need for service. As I worked through the steps, he told me "it's time you started to give back". I was three weeks out of rehab, living in the Maxwell House and just starting my fourth step. I asked him what I should do to accomplish that. He told me the 5:15 needed a coffee maker. I took the job. That service commitment did more for me than the little I did for the group. I started to become a real member of the local recovery fellowship. I worried about the coffee setup for 45 minutes prior to the meeting instead. It was an additional 45 minutes I wasn't battling the compulsion to drink and by being there early, I really got close to the AA members. I was through steps 1-9 at three months and just starting to expand the maintenance steps. A guy that was in the "House" asked me to sponsor him. I told him I didn't know if I could, I'd have to check with my sponsor. I told Gene that I was asked to sponsor someone, hoping he would tell me I wasn't ready. He told me "yes, you should, that is what we do". I asked "what do I show him"? He said, "show him what you did to stay sober". I went back to my prospect and told him Gene said I could (lol...had to get permission). I started him right off on the steps and the most amazing thing happened, my sobriety started to get stronger. Shortly after I started sponsoring this young man, Gene brought me and Tim S. to the answering service meeting. The answering service was our local interface for passing the message at first contact. Dick L. was running the answering service. At the first meeting Tim and I signed up to field calls. The next meeting it was Dick, Tim and I. Gene had rotated out. I learned later about teaching sponsee's and newcomers about service and why rotation is an important concept. Dick L. said we needed someone to volunteer to do the Newsletter. I looked at Tim. Tim looked at me. I looked at Tim. Tim is a stubborn man. I said "alright, I'll do it". Because of that start I had been conditioned to give back. 22 years later, I have a coffee commitment and I am once again the newsletter chair. It is with great pleasure that I do this. The circle is complete.—Bob K.



Taking Sobriety with Me

My name is Kevin D and I am an alcoholic. I currently live down in Florida with my wife BettyJo our daughter and grandbaby, but my journey in sobriety began in Central NY in my early 20's.

I grew up in Chittenango, and was an honor graduate, football player, martial artist, church member, boy scout and for all outward appearances, a good guy until I found my new best friend. That friend's name was alcohol.

As a kid who was raised on the straight and narrow at home, when I went off to college the guardrails, that had kept my life in order until then, quickly fell off. In a few short years, I became a daily drinker. Milwaukee's Best, cheap Rum and Coke, and making the rounds to the dive bars that had the best bang for the buck flowing from the taps became my primary focus in life. I loved drinking! I loved what it felt like. I accepted the consequences because the feeling that came from drinking far outweighed, (in my mind) any damage being done. Or so I thought.

My life became focused around the next drink, the next party, the next band to go hear so we could drink. My circle of friends changed almost overnight and in very short order I found that I liked drinking more than I liked honoring old friendships. I liked drinking more than I liked working. I like drinking more than I liked my girlfriend, my family, my career and ultimately more than life itself. Like Bill W in his story, I became a lone wolf.

I began seeking out those "sordid places" the Big Book talks about and found myself helplessly entangled and twisted in an ever darkening alcoholic world. After years of drinking my insides became so twisted, my emotions so entangled and my spirit so broken, that I became hopeless.

In 1995 my family put together a family intervention where I stubbornly accepted the help that was offered to me. At 23 years old after attending a couple of meetings in Syracuse and Manlius, I went to a noon AA meeting downstairs at the public library in Oneida. It was there that the seeds of sobriety in AA were first planted.

My first memory of that meeting was seeing an old man with one eye sneak his little puppy dog into the meeting under his shirt. He had just come from cancer radiation treatment and was fighting for his life, but instead of going home to rest after his radiation, he came to that AA meeting and snuck his adorable little dog in with him. He had a smile and a demeanor that lit up the room. I remember him telling a story about needing to make a decision of whether to take the handful of change he had collected that day to buy a bed at a flop house or to buy another bottle of wine. He chose the wine. I understood that man instantly.

In short order I met a few more people that left an indelible impression on me. Big Book Steve, Gangster Mike, the tall guy Jim C, and old timer Judy W. I remember "Ronnie.com", Black James who called us his family, and Big Bill. I would see Tim S and Bob K almost every day at the noon meeting. I remember the adventures of Vanessa A and a guy who was actually named Bill W who drove a muscle car.

After 3 years of making lots of meetings but only doing some minimal effort at step work with Steve R, I arrived at a point where life was becoming impossible again. I was suffering quietly on the inside, but I had not accepted the entire program yet and kept all of these good people at arms length from me. I was twisting on the inside, struggling with life but I was only halfheartedly applying some of the steps and I was reaping what half measures give us. Nothing.

At just shy of 3 years sober, I began drinking again. In less than 24 hours I was drinking round the clock again. I felt so lost. The love and fellowship that had been offered to me in those meetings in Oneida seemed a distant memory. I couldn't stand that I was drinking again and I couldn't stand the thought of going back to half measures sobriety, where my insides were always in turmoil. I hated myself for ending up like this. I hated God for allowing me to end up like this. And I hated AA for failing to keep me from getting like this.

On April 1st of 1998 I took my last drink before I decided to kill myself. But for the grace of God, I couldn't go through with it. Something stopped me. At the time I didn't know what it was...

After detoxing on my own for 6 days I showed back up at the Maxwell House on a Monday morning and met with my sponsor, Big Book Steve. Something broke inside of me. I cried and cried and cried. I was literally at the last house on the block. I wished for the end, but I could not end my life. I reached the jumping off place'

Steve and I talked in his car for what seemed like hours. He told me, point blank that I had been coming around AA for years, but I had never really joined. He said I had been making a farce of what AA really is. He talked me through my relapse, and guided me through the chapter More About Alcoholism, showing me my story and the reality of step 1. I saw that I had made a good beginning, just like Jim and Fred in that chapter, but I had failed to enlarge my spiritual condition.

He told me I had a belief in step 2 that AA could work, and that is why I came back and why I was sitting in his car. He guided me through step 3 right there in his car and sent me off to pick up a white chip at the 5:15 group. After that meeting Gene D grabbed me and hugged me and wouldn't let me go. He told me he loved me and that you guys needed me. My insides melted and the Grace of God entered my heart through that man's loving gesture.

I went home that night and wrote my first honest 4th step. The next day Steve met me before the noon meeting to hear my 5th step. It was 3 pages of red ink. It was everything I had kept secret from him for those first 3 years and everything that was driving me insane. I left that 5th step with a list of defects and harms to others.

He sent me home after the meeting to spend an hour alone and decide if I was all in or not. I was. I knelt down next to my bed and prayed the 7th step prayer for the first real time in my life. I got up from that prayer a changed man. I commenced to start working on my amends and continuing to take inventory. I began to learn how to pray from the heart.

On April 1st I will be celebrating 18 years of continuous sobriety. There is never a day that goes by when I don't think about Oneida and the lasting impact that town had on me and my sobriety.

Living down here in Florida, the meetings are different, the fellowship is different and the people are different. But the language of the heart is exactly the same. AA carried me to Florida and AA continues to blossom in my heart and in my life.

Today I remain active in my home group. I sponsor a bunch of men and am committed to service work in AA. The men I sponsor have never met Big Book Steve or one eyed Gene, but they all know the impact they and the members of the Oneida fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous had on me. I pass on what you all freely gave me to the men in my life today, and my life continues to be blessed beyond measure.

Gratefully,

Kevin D.

When all else Fails, Help another sick and suffering alcoholic-it is sure to keep you sober



A Humble Beginning:

As we looked back over those early scenes in New York, we saw often in the midst of them a benign little doctor who loved drunks, William Duncan Silkworth, then Physician-in-Chief of the Charles B. Townes Hospital in N.Y., a man who was very much a founder of AA. From him we learned the nature of our illness. He supplied us with the tools with which to puncture the toughest alcoholic ego, those shattering phrases by which he described our illness: *the obsession of the mind* that compels us to drink *and the allergy of the body* that condemns us to go mad or die. These were indispensable passwords. Dr. Silkworth how to till the black soil of hopelessness out of which every single spiritual awakening in our fellowship has lowered. In December, 1934, this man of science had humbly sat by my bed following my own sudden and overwhelming spiritual experience, reassuring me. "No Bill", he had said, "you are not hallucinating. Whatever you have got, you had better hang on to; it is so much better than what you had only an hour ago." These were great words for the A.A. to come. Who else could have said them?

When I wanted to go to work with alcoholics, Dr. Silkworth led me to them right there in his hospital, and at great risk to his professional reputation.

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age—pg. 13

Always Room for Improvement

I had been in the program for 27 years and I was in a rut. I was unhappy with my job mainly due to one person who treated me poorly, I was overweight, and I struggled with how I felt about myself. I was going to meetings and I was praying regularly, but I was in a rut just the same. I was constantly complaining at meetings about what this guy was doing to me...poor me!!! AA helped me realize that I needed to take action. I couldn't stay in this constant state of stress; it was killing me. I was finally able to leave my job and just be home without working (I know that is a luxury) and things started to look up. I was finally able to start losing weight, something I had struggled with for a long time and something that I was constantly chastising myself about. As I was shedding pounds, I also found I was shedding the resentment I had built of the person I had been working with at the old job. That took some time. I was taking care of myself much better—more sleep, more spirituality, more self-care... All this meant more recovery—I now spend more time with my higher power and I take more time to practice the spiritual principles of the program. Today I am content. Working with others, going to lots of meetings, treating people well wherever I go, trying to be the best person I can—that's my mission today, thanks to AA. - Ellen R.

District News and Events

Event	Date	Time	Location	Description
Trusted Servants Workshop	April, 17 2016	12:30-2:00	Oneida Recreational Center	Open to all AA members. Highly suggested for people interested in or performing service. Light Refreshments

Anniversaries

Name	## Years	Home Group	Name	## Years	Home Group
Bob K	9	Cementheads	Linda H	24	Sherrill
Sue S	22	Stockbridge	Tiffany W	6	Nooners
Alex R	5	Sherrill	Pat C	3	Sherrill
Rich S	3	Nooners	Jim D	2	Nooners
Steve R	28	Kirkville	Kevin D	18	Ocala Fla

District 0490

PO Box 481 Oneida, NY 13421 Email: district0490@yahoo.com Website: www.aadistrict0490.org	Next District Meeting: April 17, 2:00pm Oneida Rec. Center 217 Cedar St, Oneida, NY
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HOTLINE NUMBERS

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

Area 47

CNY Area Committee Registrar PO Box 18063 Rochester, NY 14615 Website: www.aacny.org	Next Area Assembly: April 10, 1:00 Owego United Methodist Church 261 Main St. Owego, NY visit website for details
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Alcoholic Anonymous World Svc.

Grand Central Station Box 459, New York 10163 Website: www.aa.org	
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