

# 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:**

Thanksgiving often takes on special meaning to those of us in sobriety! We are of course thankful for the blessings of family and abundance in our lives as most Americans are. We however have been given a gift, participated in a miracle, been blessed to live a life that few afflicted with alcoholism ever experience! Prior to the founding of AA there was little chance for late stage alcoholics to ever gain sobriety and thus experience life in all it's wonder. There were of course the rare recoveries through faith, self will, or incarceration either prison or mental health commitment where freedom was limited. We have always admitted that AA is not the only way to stop drinking. It is however the proven path to maintain a spiritual awakening and thus recovery for alcoholics that has ever taken root throughout history. In addition AA has over time raised the bottom for millions that have found sobriety prior to the late stage alcoholism. Many have been spared permanent damage physically, spiritually, and emotionally by not entering into their 50's and 60's as an active alcoholic.

In my case I am a mixed bag of all those types of damage as well as having been spared additional damage by finding sobriety in my mid 30's. God has blessed me to still have a second chance at life and to function at a higher level than simply staying sober. Sobriety itself when I first came in would have sufficed. I found that I have a responsibility to use those abilities often by serving others in sobriety as an expression of thanks.—Bob K.



***Holiday Sobriety***

Active alcoholism often hurts the people that we loved the most. Family, spouses, children, close and lifelong friends. Often when we come into the program those relationships are damaged. Often our loved ones have distanced themselves, or are so unsure of our sobriety or ability to maintain it the holiday season is one of tension. The good news is that with time we often repair those relationships and in fact improve them to a level that we had not experienced since prior to the start of our drinking. My first sponsor used to talk about a "living amends". By that he meant that staying sober in and of itself is a form of amends to those we caused damage to via worry and concern. This form of spiritual damage is often repaired at some level over time by not having the worry continue. Our loved ones become a witness to the great changes that sobriety allows us to embrace and the demonstration at long last potential fulfilled. It is critical that we work through the steps and the ninth step in particular to maximize the blessing of reconciliation with our loved ones. It is also critical for those of us who have experienced these miracles to understand that not all relationships, ours or others are always repairable. Often the holidays are a lonely place for people in early recovery, recovering fellows who have less than forgiving families, or those of us who have done enough damage that it is not repairable to bring them back into the fold of the family. It is important that we encourage and support each other by attending meetings and giving love and encouragement during these times as if they were any other day. I have also found that attending a meeting prior to or after a family gathering allows me to be the best I can be during the actual event. Show your loved ones that sobriety works. Anonymous

***Spiritual Journey***

I heard someone ask why AA's had to have a spiritual awakening. This is what I thought:

The original solution was taken from the Oxford Group and brought to Bill by Ebby Thatcher. The Oxford Group was a Christian based program. Bill saw the miracle of one drunk working with another and Dr. Bob was quite faithful. They combined the two and made it a "spiritual" program to ensuring the program did not fall by the wayside like all other previous programs that did not hold to a simple solution to the alcohol problem. They always got conflated with some exclusion rather than alcoholism. They realized the value of spirit but wanted all people (even agnostics) to be able to participate. I believe that was the miracle and divine inspiration. God Doesn't care how you come to him, he only that you to come!

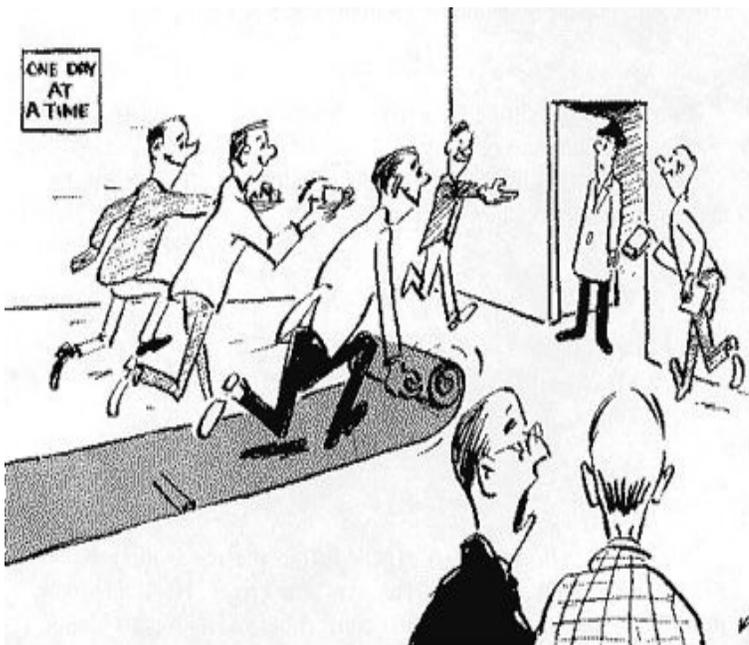
As part of my practice I read AA literature as a spiritual exercise. Knowledge is a key ingredient required to excel at any effort. Knowledge is important if I am to be of service. I can increase the quality of my own recovery and position myself as a better instrument to help another sick and suffering alcoholic If I take time to educate myself, not by rote but as a meditative exercise. When I read, think, and meditate about the program and history of AA it helps to move the information from my head to my heart. It is then that I am more apt to put it into action. My life is better because of AA. My faith is better because of AA. My relationships are better because of AA. I do not know why we were chosen. I know God has a plan to put us to good use If we are willing and open to that. I will learn what it was I had to do, if I lived up to that task when I pass over. I have no doubt I will If I stay sober and help another alcoholic.

Anonymous

## Humbly asked for Guidance

I was broken when I walked into the doors of AA. I couldn't stop drinking. I had finally identified the fact that I had a drinking problem and couldn't stop. It was a devastating discovery. My obsession with alcohol, the degradation of ability caused by alcoholism had for many years caused me to operate on self will without ever acknowledging it. I had a belief in God but had long since stopped seeking direction from my Higher Power or from morality guided by religion. As a person I had many good qualities that for years I was unable to put to practical purpose. I cared about people, I loved people, I was compassionate and caring. I had however long lost the ability to act in a manor that showed those qualities to anyone. I felt those things, but couldn't express them in anything but shallow words. My actions only caused worry, pain and despair to the few people that still were in my life on a daily basis. After a quick introduction to AA that failed due to my still glaring character defects I was able to finally plug in. The people in AA encouraged me. They advised me. They spent time with me. My sponsor walked me through the steps. The fellowship encouraged me and showed me how to live in a manor that showed care and concern for others. I was given a concept of prayer that was neutral to asking for specifics and directed at following whatever God's will was for me. I started to understand that God's first desire was for me to be sober, be of use to him and others, to find peace, serenity (at times) and happiness. - 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."

**District News and Events**

Event	Day/Date/Time	Location	Description
Harvest Dinner	Friday 11/25/16 7:00 pm	Canastota United Methodist Church. 144 Center St. Canastota	Dinner/Meeting/ Speakers
Speaker Meeting	Sunday 11/27/16 8:00 pm	Oneida Methodist Church Main St. and Grove St.	Meeting/Chips Anniversaries/ Cake

**Anniversaries**

Name	## Years	Home Group	Name	## Years	Home Group
Joanne M.	5	Stockbridge	Lori A.	2	Nooners Group
George M.	1	Nooners Group			

**District 0490**

PO Box 481 Oneida, NY 13421 Email: <a href="mailto:district0490@yahoo.com">district0490@yahoo.com</a> Website: <a href="http://www.aadistrict0490.org">www.aadistrict0490.org</a>	Next District Meeting: November 20, 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: <a href="http://www.aacny.org">www.aacny.org</a>	Next Area Assembly: November 13, 1:00 <small><i>St. Francis of Assisi Parish Center,</i> 7820 Bridgeport - Minoa Road, Rte 298</small> visit website for details
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**Alcoholic Anonymous World Svc.**

Grand Central Station Box 459, New York 10163 Website: <a href="http://www.aa.org">www.aa.org</a>	
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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.