

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:

It's that time of year again. We are coming into the Holiday season and there are sure to be many meetings where the topic is "How do I get through the Holidays (or a specific Holiday) sober?" For those of us who have been through many, we don't think about these type of things without the help of the newcomer. Eventually, they too become second nature, although they can still create stress and worry. However, early on, especially your first holiday season but often into your first few; these are real concerns. We generally didn't need an excuse to drink, but were certainly happy when we had one. Normal people look at these celebrations as conviviality, they can drink a little, they also tend to keep the true spirit of the holiday clear. For the alcoholic and in particular, this alcoholic; they became drunk fests. I used to use a vacation from work to include time around Christmas (or Hanukah) and New Year. I was drunk from start to finish. When I got sober, if I didn't bring that topic up, I certainly listened carefully when others did. What I heard was generally along these lines. "Make a plan". "Go to meetings before and after family gatherings". "Go early to participate in the true meaning of those celebrations, and leave early". "Don't drink". "Take a number to call someone (sponsor is good idea) if you get uncomfortable". "Leave before the drinking starts to hit high gear". "If you really think you cannot stay sober around anyone in particular, including your family, don't go. But let them know you love them." That is exactly what I did. I always and still find I want to see my AA fellows on holidays. I find it a comfort and I like you people. I went to a meeting before, spent time enjoying my family and the holiday, left early. After while, it might have been year two, my family started to ask when I left early "oh, Bob are you going to a meeting?". "Yep, love you". They would respond "we love you too." They have grown to expect me fully engaged and sober. I think they have grown to like that. They certainly don't miss the old drunken son, father, brother. Happy Holidays!!- Bob K.



Rocketed into the 4th Dimension

The book talks about being "rocketed into the 4th dimension" and we see and hear about this term in Science, metaphysics and in recovery, but what does it really mean? When I was drinking and using, I was always looking to get "over there". Over there was the place where the chemicals would take me. It was a place where I felt like I wanted to feel. Where things were what I wanted them to be. Where I loved the way I felt. Where nothing bothered me. Where I was happy, experiencing life on a deeper level, where the sex was good, the friends were awesome, the music was vibrating through every molecule in my body and where everything was perfectly aligned. I chased that place for years... But even though I got there once in a while, I could never figure out how to stay there. The consequences of trying to get there piled up day after day, making it harder and harder to find that perfect place again. Toward the end, there was no perfect place anymore. I couldn't get there, no matter what I put in my body. The mysterious and wonderful place some called the 4th dimension, or more often the place we called "wasted", was no longer a magical, wonderful place. It was more like a living hell.

When I entered into recovery and heard talk of this magical place where life was awesome, where friends were lifelong, where the worst of days were still reason to celebrate, and where everything was aligned in perfect harmony. I thought I had gotten there during my pink cloud days, where the relief I felt from getting clean off of the poison felt so good. But after a while, that relief faded. Now what? It turns out that the pink cloud of relief and hope for a better life has very little to do with what Bill W called the "4th dimension". The idea is much bigger than the relief I get from cleaning up. For me, when the relief faded, I got discouraged. I stayed sober and clean for as long as I could stand it, but as time passed, the colors and music and feelings of early sobriety seemed to all fade and turn to grey. I never actually got to the 4th dimension and I became sour and salty toward God, AA/NA and all of you people who claimed there was such a place in sobriety. I thought it was a lie. So I inevitably went back to drinking.

After the inevitable crash to yet another bottom, I was finally desperate and willing enough to do anything and everything that could save my life. I didn't want to feel like I was a dead man walking anymore. I wanted to know what it felt like to live and enjoy life. I wanted sobriety, but not just physical sobriety because that never got me where I needed to be. I needed emotional, physical and spiritual sobriety. I needed more than what I once had, or I was never going to stay. The amazing thing about being totally broken is that there is no more fight. No more debate. No more intellectual bullshit that would keep me balking at the 12 steps. I had nothing left, but to pick up the spiritual kit of tools that had been laid at my feet... What continues to amaze me to this very moment as I type this, is that I have found that amazing place where mind, body, and spirit all seem to intersect and where life is filled with mystery, pleasure, peace, and harmony. I don't get there nearly as often as I would like, but I get there! I have been following the instructions for life through the 12 steps with all the desperation of a drowning man and the results are almost exactly like the way I once hoped they would be back when I was deep in the addiction. Today, I get to experience the place that I had been searching for in the bottle, and I get to do it 100% clean. All it took was the complete destruction of my life and a desperate willingness to seek out and find what you guys had promised me. What I once thought was a big fat lie, has turned out to be truth. Each day that I wake up and remember that it is my job to align my life with this universe and to embrace the role I was given through the instruction found in the 12 steps. Every day that I do this, I get a shot at that amazing place called the 4th dimension. Where my mind and my feet are in the same place. Where life is exactly as it should be, good, bad and ugly. Where I no longer fight God or you or them. Where I give instead of take. Where I care. Where I love. Where I find peace. The only thing that can keep me from living in this magical place is myself. Each day is a day when I must keep the twisted thoughts of my mind at bay and continue to focus on the new path that was laid at my feet. If I stay on that path, the world remains full of color and amazement. When I stray from that path, I get lost in the grey shadows. Today, I want to stay in the light, in the present, in the now, in the 4th dimension!

KEVIN D. OCALA, FLA.

Do I Need Rehab?

When we get involved in 12 step work at times we are a bit conflicted. AA works for us as a long term (permanent) solution to our drinking problem. So when talking about sobriety and what we do to live a good sober life, we inevitably talk about the 12 steps and AA. So when confronted with a prospect, do we simply tell them to go to AA, don't drink, get a sponsor, work the steps, and help others. Many of us have our history to fall back on. We share what we did. For me that included a detox (we should always advise at least a medical consult), a rehab, and then AA as the solution. Not all members had a medical detox and rehab. Some came directly to AA got and stayed sober. Not all prospects need detox and rehab. So what do we do besides sharing our experience. I think in these things we use good sense and common history. We also listen to the prospect. Is this their first attempt at considering getting sober? What is their drinking pattern and volume? Have they been to countless programs and the fact is they are not going to gain additional knowledge from yet another? What are they willing to do? What are they capable of doing from a financial prospective (ie: insurance, life obligations)? It does get quite complicated. Here is what we know for certain. AA works if you are willing, able, and honestly put forth the effort to make the 12 steps a way of life and combine that with service. Some people need medical detox for health and safety, so we shouldn't make that decision so we insist they seek medical advice. That leaves rehabs, halfway houses, sober living, and outpatient programs. Some people benefit from a running start in sobriety. I know I did. I believe eventually if I suffered long enough drinking and knowing there was a solution my desperation may have allowed me to get sober strictly by attending AA. I also believe, it may have taken more suffering than I might have been able to live through. I did benefit from rehab and a halfway house that gave me time to plug into AA. So, I think a prudent path is to make the prospect aware that first AA is our solution and can be theirs. Make them aware of other programs that can give them a running start. Insist that they understand detox can be fatal and should be directed by a physician. Or that they should immediately seek a medical detox if symptoms get severe. Another thing that I have found limitless is to utilize the fellowship. Our members know most all regional programs. There length, effectiveness, costs, and availability. Get them to AA. Guide them after.

Help Carry the Message:

Our AA District 0490 is wholly dependent on contributions from the groups in our district to help carry the message of AA in it's many forms (Schedules, Newsletter, Website, Answering service; literature, pamphlets and reading material for facilities, corrections, and professional outreach, etc..). Our contributions of late have been sporadic and limited to a few of the groups in our area. Please bring up the need to consider the standard distribution at your home-group business meetings where and when ever possible! It is critical to our mission in carrying the message. With the district meetings starting again in September please remember to send donations with your DCM.

On the Lighter Side

be careful who you help...



"I had a layover in Omaha ... which led to a hangover in Des Moines."

District News and Events

What	When	Where	Details	Contact
Speaker Meeting	26th pm	Methodist Church— Corner of Main St. and Grove St., Oneida, NY	Speaker, Anniversaries, Dessert	N/A
Harvest Dinner	Nov. 24th, 7pm	OCS Methodist Church— Canastota-	Speaker, Anniversaries, Dinner	N/A

Anniversaries

Name	## Years	Home Group	Name	## Years	Home Group
Ric H.	34	OCS	Dennis R.	27	Stockbridge
Brian L.	6	OCS	Annette C.	2	Nooners

District 0490

PO Box 481
Oneida, NY 13421
Email: district0490@yahoo.com
Website: www.aadistrict0490.org

Next District Meeting:
Nov. 19, 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 Registrar
PO Box 18063
Rochester, NY 14615
Website: www.aacny.org

Next Area Assembly:
Nov. 12th, 1pm-5pm
St Pauls Untd. Meth. Syr.
visit website for details

Alcoholic Anonymous World Svc.

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

