

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:

The Tuesday night Candlelight meeting at the Methodist Church—Main St. and Grove St. at 8pm has changed format to a Big Book study and has seen dramatic increase in attendance. The Nooners meeting at the Presbyterian Church on Stone and Broad St. has a 12 and 12 meeting on Wednesday that is always well attended. I have seen over the years meetings grow and get smaller as they often do. There is one thing that has always held true. There is a demand for the program of AA. There are alcoholics of all terms of sobriety who require AA meetings that are focused on carrying the message, the solution, and the support of AA as outlined in the book. Meetings that seem to be stable over time have many things in common, the formula is time tested. 1) Business meetings. 2) Home-group encouragement. 3) Members who are willing to sponsor and encourage sponsorship. 4) Encouragement and mentorship in service commitments. 5) Group officers. 6) DCM's who attend the district meetings. 7) Practice the concept of rotation for service and officers. We live in a small rural area and are blessed with very strong AA community. Focusing on the basic tenants of AA ensures a healthy group of members moving forward. Recovery-Unity-Service the three parts of our recovery triangle can and does begin with the AA Group and continue on to the District, Area, and AA as a whole. Please continue to strive to build strong AA groups that teach the steps, help the newcomer, mentor the newcomer in service, and allow the Sober AA members to give back freely what was given to them. I have been blessed to get sober in Oneida, I carried what I learned to a move to another area and participated in two other AA Districts. I have attended AA meetings in many towns, states, and other countries. AA always starts with one alcoholic helping another. AA meetings are the lynchpin of the growth and health of Alcoholics Anonymous. Please continue to carry the good work of AA by building strong AA groups, those in which you participate! God Bless. - Bob K.



Choose Your Friends Wisely

When I was a kid I was told to "choose your playmates wisely." That wisdom served me well in my youth and into my teens. I hung out with the people that were involved in positive activities, who were going places and who had goals for a good life.

Once I started drinking, that advice went right out the window. The fun people were the ones being rowdy, reckless and living inside the chaos. I loved those guys! We had so much fun! As time passed the guys I used to hang out with all fell by the wayside. They seemed boring and unattractive to me. The hot heads, the guys who would drink till they puked, the guys who said "hey, lets try that!" were the guys I wanted to hang out with. But as more time passed, they must have remembered what their parents told them about a guy like me, because even the rowdy crowd started avoiding me. All I did was drink and talk about drinking and wonder where we were drinking that day. Even the crazy ones had jobs they had to get to and responsibilities that didn't allow them to drink the way I wanted to drink, so they too fell by the wayside. For a while I found a whole new crew to spend good times with once I got into the drug world. These guys were a whole new kind of dangerous. And I liked it. We had some really good times! And as you expected, even those guys could not keep up with my thirst for intoxication. In the end, I was very much alone. One long time friend and out drug dealer were the only ones left in the crew. And when your drug dealer tells you to slow down, that's a pretty good sign you've crossed into the frightening darkness of the end.

After finding myself at the bottom and was forced through an intervention to get sober and find 12 step recovery, I decided to back away entirely from the old life. I stopped hanging out at bars, going to the old friends' houses, and changed my playmates altogether. One of the big lessons I learned in the early years of sobriety was that MANY of the people in recovery have gotten clean or sober, but MANY of them have not changed the desire to hang with the old crew and to stay close to the old life. As I got sober and learned to stay that way, I have come to respect that childhood advice more and more. When I look at who I hang out with, those people are going places, doing good things and living respectable lives. They are respected in the workplace and in their homes. They are good people.

But when I look around, I see lots of folks who are chronic relapsers, who can't seem to get the whole sobriety thing, who struggle with life, finances, employment, relationships, and sobriety. Those guys all seem to still want to live in the old life, with the old friends. They are attracted to other relapsers. That's who they hang out with. The old saying, "stick with the winners" seems to be lost on those folks. Dr. Silkworth says they "can't differentiate between the true and the false". They are stuck in old ideas and can't get out of the attraction to the old lifestyle. And they can't stay sober!

Recovery is about change! And like that childhood advice, I should continue to choose my playmates wisely by sticking with the winners, the guys who are on the path to responsible, productive, respectable lives. The guys who respect others, who care, who treat their wives and families with respect, the guys who are willing to admit their faults, the guys who are willing to lend a helping hand and who are willing to be true friends by telling me the absolute truth!

If anyone reading this finds themselves in the revolving door trap of the chronic relapser mentality, isn't it worth a look at that age old advice and consider that maybe it's time for some change? Is it time to break free of the old life, the old friends and the chaos that comes with them?

Just some food for thought.

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



Playing God

I get to be wrong. I get to screw up royally. I get to suffer from my decisions. I get to feel, to wonder why, to hope, to complain, to judge, to hate, and to reject. I get to run on up to the holy mountaintop anytime I want to and to look down at the world in bitter disgust. But I also "get" to suffer from my actions and choices.

I have found that there is wrong in this world, and I see it in others all the time. I seem to have a special gift for seeing YOUR defects! It just comes to me naturally. It's almost like I can read minds, see the future and how YOUR life is going to fall apart as the result of YOUR actions. I'm like a spiritual Nostradamus!!!!

And some days I can convince myself that all you just read above is true! The real truth is that, YES I can choose to do all that, but at what expense?

Usually, I find that when I am judging the world my forehead is wrinkled up with tension. My heart rate is up an extra dozen or so beats per minute. My friendships are strained. My mind gets racing and my emotions are prickly and raw. I feel stressed and I'm certainly NOT connected with God. How can I be connected with God when I am busy "playing God"? When I'm like that, I might be "right" about whatever I'm looking down at, but I'm certainly not HAPPY. I'm not serene. I'm not at peace. I may not be thirsty, but I'm certainly not content!

"The first thing apparent was that this world and its people were often quite wrong. To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got." BB66 If I want to be happy and sober and serene, I have to stop this habit of judging the world from some spiritual mountain top. It's not easy for a guy like me to do. I naturally find offense and get a sense of fear inside of me when I look at the actions of others. I'm threatened by them and how they are going to effect me or others. My instinct is to change and correct them. But I've learned slowly and sometimes quite painfully, that it is not my job to fix others.

My job in life is to prepare myself to do better and to be better at connecting with my HP and with others. It is so hard to connect with others when you are always "right". But on the other hand, when I stop and use the AA tools found in the steps, to go one step beyond "THEM" and begin to look at my TRUTH, things inside of me change. I begin to see the real cause of my discomforts in life. And it's always me and my attitude. My attitude directs my actions, and my actions end up getting my forehead all wrinkled up and my emotions flared up like rattle snake about to strike! I see that the problem is me. Yes, they might be at fault for what they do, but the way I feel inside about it is 100% my fault and responsibility.

Gene D used to say "we all have feet of clay, Kevin". He would remind me that we all screw up and that none of us are perfect. The 12x12 leads us to move toward perfection in all we do but reminds us we will never get there. But in moving with purpose in that direction, I get to keep the focus on me and not others. When I can do that, my heart rate slows, my emotions stabilize and my connection with God improves.

When I stop trying to play judge and jury on others, I can see that I have more than a full-time job in dealing with my own flaws. If I would put half as much energy into looking at my own defects as I do into looking at others, I'd be a much happier person!

So, each day is a day when I get to reassess my actions and my thought-life and to see where I have gotten all bound up in selfishly trying to play God. I can use the simple inventory to find my truth, my flaws, and my defects. I can surrender the truth of those ugly parts of me and admit that they are a real and present danger to my own sobriety. Only then can I have a chance and reconnecting with serenity and my higher power. Only then can I be of real usefulness to others and to God.

Some days I do this well. Other days I act like I've never even heard of the 12 steps, let alone learned to apply them into my life! But each day that I try to stay on the beam, try to admit my faults, and try to do better at connecting with you and God, I get another chance at laying my head down at night in peace and sobriety.

Today that choice is mine. Play God, or surrender.

Kevin D.—Ocala, Fla.

District News and Events

What	When	Where	Details	Contact
Rome District 12 Dance	Sept. 9th, 7:15—12pm	First Methodist church 400 N. George St	Dancing, food, fun bring a dish to pass.	Donations accepted at the door but not re- quired
Speaker Meeting	Sept. 24th, 8pm	Methodist Church— Corner of Main St. and Grove St., Oneida, NY	Speaker, Anniversaries, Dessert	N/A
Octsoberfest	Weekend October 1st	Old Forge, NY Macauly Mountain	AA, Camping, Chair Lift, meetings, speak- ers	N/A

Anniversaries

Name	## Years	Home Group	Name	## Years	Home Group
Debby S.	32	Nooners	John O.	10	Wed. Main and Grove
Michael D.	2	Nooners			

District 0490

PO Box 481 Oneida, NY 13421 Email: district0490@yahoo.com Website: www.aadistrict0490.org	Next District Meeting: Sept. 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: Sept. 10th, 1pm-5pm St. Mary's Church, Kirkwood, 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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