



ALKI-LINE



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The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter • Vol. 19 No.4 • Aug.-Sept. 2009

A Grateful Heart

It took a lot to get me here. I messed up! I screwed up! I f'ked up! I spent a lot of time ripping and running. I ripped through life trying to run away from me, running from my emotions, running from my life, running from my responsibilities. It took a lot of running before I was ready to land squarely in sobriety; my feet planted in reality willing to deal with life on life's terms.

I made a lot of mistakes. I'm grateful for each and every one. They helped me to find the gift of desperation. They helped to break me. They helped me to reach out to my Higher Power and to a bunch of drunks for what I needed. I had to be broken for the real work to have a chance to begin.

I wouldn't change a thing about my past, sordid as some parts of it are notwithstanding. I had to go through what I went through. I had to find my own bottom. I like where I am today. I like who I am today. I know I am right where I am supposed to be even as I acknowledge that this is not where I am supposed to stay. Life, recovery - I no longer draw a distinction between the two - is a journey not a destination. If I am not moving forward then I am certainly headed in the wrong direction.

I am grateful for what I have been given. I am grateful for what has been taken away. I am grateful for what is left. I have learned that it is far better to embrace what I have than to pine for what I do not have. Life is good. My life is good.

It would be so easy to take total and complete credit for where I am today but I know that isn't how I got here. I couldn't do this alone. God knows I tried time and again. I had to ask for help. I had to learn to accept the help that was offered. I had to be desperate enough to begin the process and willing enough each step of the way to do the next right thing. The tools to do that and the direction to take did not come from me. Those things came from those who shared their experience, strength and hope. I followed a well worn path tread by those who came before me. To those souls I shall be forever grateful.

Thank you for 6 years-one day at a time!
Savannah P., New Haven



Recovery in the Basement

My very first A.A. meeting I shook in a church parking lot and with the help of a friend of Bill W. I descended down into the church basement. Twenty-six years later, sober since then, I can be found in that same basement on Monday nights. The strong coffee is just as hot, the Oreo bag opened, and the sharing during the meeting still steadies the "isms" of my disease. And after the meeting, I often find laughter, intimacy, and warm connection with other people in recovery in that exact same parking lot. I have spent hours of fellowship on that pavement in the dark: in freezing wind-chill, under the full or crescent moon, under stars, smelling apple blossoms, in light summer rain. While I am still in the same basement in the same town, I've moved a thousand miles inside myself. I've learned in recovery that it's not the breadth and width of my journey in the outer world, it's the depth of the healing within. A continually blossoming relationship with a Higher Power, using the tools of the program to be the most loving and compassionate person I can be-to live as free from anger, pettiness, and resentments as possible-true friendships and a sober life of integrity: these are the yardsticks with which to measure the forward movement of my life.

Maureen O. West Hartford, CT

Calendar

August 15, 2009 • 22nd Sober Moonlight Cruise and Dance Sponsored by the Occum Grow as We Go Group
Leaves 8 PM Sharp • returns at Midnight

September 11-13, 2009 • 51st Annual Area 11 Convention with AI-Anon Participation • The Crowne Plaza Hotel
• 100 Berlin Rd., Route 372 • Cromwell, CT 06416

September 26, 2009 • District 5 Pasta Dinner • Jesse Lee Methodist Church • 25 Flat Rock Rd., Easton, CT. 6-9p.m

November 15, 2009 • Fall Assembly • 9am-1pm • Knights of Columbus Hall • 2630 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT

**When we have done all we can do, and can no longer see our way,
We know God will be listening, when we bow our heads & pray. —Anonymous**

Would you benefit from an AA meeting? By Anne H.



Soberfest - Fun in the Sun

My husband Paul and I walked in a few minutes late to the first meeting held at the Soberfest in Windsor on June 19, 2009. There was not an empty chair in the room. We sat on a counter along the wall of what seemed to be an "Art Room" for the camp. The Soberfest was held at Camp Shalom a rustic camp along the edge of Rainbow Reservoir. A perfect space in nature that had everything the group needed to celebrate our sobriety. The topic was gratitude and the chair person had decided it was important that everyone in the room got a chance to share. It was nice to hear a variety of voices as members shared their experiences and their gratitude. It was apparent that many in the room had long time sobriety and had been coming to Soberfest for years. But as people in the back of the room began to share I realized that about a dozen of them were from CVH (CT Valley Hospital). I tuned in even deeper to these folks who were either new or just coming back. What miracles we all are! I've put a few years together myself and was truly inspired by listening to their gratitude even though they haven't figured it all out yet. For me, the day ended up being about them, the newcomer.

Paul and I chaired the second meeting on "Change". It was so refreshing to hear the newcomers being willing to apply the principles of the program. After the meeting, several of us gathered outside and one young girl said it was so good to see sober people actually having fun! It gave me pause to remember how it was when I first came into the

program and how emotional my first AA convention was. Gatherings like the Soberfest are so important to the social network that keeps us sober. The volunteers on the Soberfest committee did an excellent job with everything. There are games to be played, meals to be shared, people to meet, feelings to embrace, great music and dancing to be done. It's important to get out to these events when we can. It doesn't matter how long we've been sober or if we just made it here yesterday. We were sober and we had fun - even if it wasn't "in the sun".

Maureen R.G., Windsor Locks

It's up to you

I was sitting in a morning AA meeting writing about a little verse that I read almost every evening. My comment read: "I believe in God *but* I give *myself* credit for every day. I can say I did my best to follow this verse." Then I re-read the verse, meditated a few minutes and changed two words in my written comments. The changes were "but" to "and" and "myself" to "Him." (I believe in God *and* I give *Him* credit for everyday) The verse is titled "It's Up to You:"

*What have you done with the day you had?
Have you made someone happy or someone sad?
God gave it to you to do just as you would.
Did you do what was wicked, or do what was good?
Did you hand out a smile, or just give a frown?
Did you lift someone up, or push someone down?
Did you lighten some load, or some progress impede?
Did you look for a rose, or just gather a weed?
What did you do with your beautiful day?
God gave it to you. Did you throw it away?*

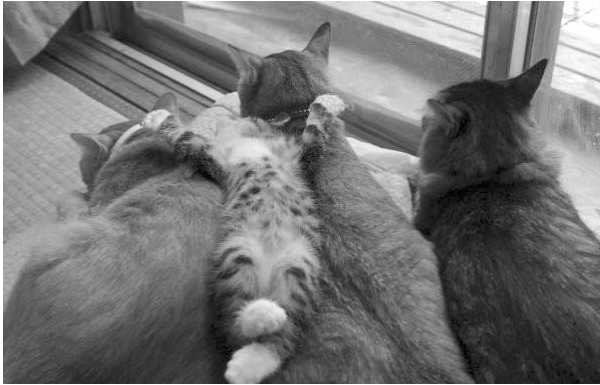
Anonymous

Anger may identify a problem, but it will never solve one. —Anonymous



What's in Your Toolbox?

Last winter, my husband and I spent two months in Peru, where it was not possible for me to get to meetings. I didn't drink, but by the last week of our trip my husband said to me: "You've lost your sense of humor!" I realized that without meetings, this is what had happened. Thank goodness I'm back! *Jennifer, W. Hartford*



Complacency

My name is Dave and I am an alcoholic. I receive Alki-line by mail courtesy of an AA friend in Connecticut. I live in the Northern Territory, of Australia-which is a bit like living in Alaska, but a lot bloody hotter.

I recently celebrated 17 years sobriety, another milestone, yes, but one which I had to fight for. You see, at 16 years sobriety, I had begun to be complacent in my AA program. I had heard other members share about the dangers of complacency, how some had gone out, but I never believed that I would make that mistake. Our disease, however, is cunning, baffling and powerful.

There was an incident in my relationship with my wife, which normally would be solved with some discussion and compromise. It wasn't. I began to pay lip service to the Steps. I simply acknowledged the Steps were there. Meetings-I began to drop them off. I would listen for the differences, not the similarities.

I began to make excuses for not doing a meeting, and too often the excuses were the very reason I needed a meeting. I was in contact with my sponsor less. I didn't drink, though I hit a bottom.

Soon after my bottom in sobriety, I attended an AA Round-Up, and talked with a member who I had not seen for many years. He looked wonderful was enjoying his life. He shared that he fell into the exact same traps in his program. By getting back to the simple basics of the program he was able to shake off the complacency. I identified, followed his example and a year later, I am also experiencing another anniversary in sobriety.

The message is simple, do not let complacency gain a foothold. Take care. Peace and AA love.

Dave C., Australia

HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE MEETINGS

Can you imagine arriving at a meeting in a wheelchair and being unable to enter the building, the meeting room, or use the rest room? Unless our meeting schedules are correct and meet the definitions for Handicapped Accessible and Handicapped Accessible with Facilities this is happening in Area 11.

Schedules use the wheelchair symbol in print and online to designate these meetings. The definitions are on our Web site. Check the Special Needs Committee at ct-aa.org for details. Please check your meeting designation in the schedule and be sure it meets the definition.

Questions can be directed to specialneeds@ct-aa.org.

Special Needs/Languages/Remote Communities Committee

The Special Needs Committee is looking for Language Translators and Signers

Contact Bob P. specialneeds@ct-aa.org
<http://us.mc838.mail.yahoo.com/mc/compose?to=specialneeds@ct-aa.org>

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

Short Articles, Photos, Letters, Suggestions and Constructive Criticism

1. E-MAIL: alkiline@ct-aa.org

**2. MAIL: Alki-Line, P.O. Box 261084
Hartford, CT 06126**

3. HAND material to a GSR (General Service Representative)

This newsletter is by and for alcoholics; however, we review submissions by persons interested in the AA program of recovery. Material may be edited for clarity and length. This newsletter and earlier issues can be printed from the Area 11 Website: www.ct-aa.org.

This is an honest fellowship; we presume all submissions are original or in the public domain. Following publication all copyright reverts to the author.

RECOVERY **ROCKS**

This is an experience
you must not miss!

CSCYPAA **2009**

24th Annual Ct. State
Conference for young
people in AA

with Al-Anon participation

November 27-29th

The Crowne Plaza
100 Berlin Rd., Route 372
Cromwell, CT

CSCYPAA Registration
P.O. Box 501 Middletown, CT 06457

Unity Group's Annual Cookout

Seaside Park, Bridgeport, CT
Saturday, August 8, 2009

11:00 am- 5:00 pm

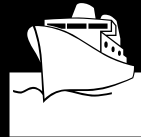
Bring your own chairs/blankets/towels.
We will have hamburgers, hotdogs, soda, salad.

If you have a favorite dish or dessert
please bring it.

22nd Sober MOONLIGHT CRUISE & DANCE



Sponsored by the Occum
Grow as We Go Group



August 15, 2009

Leaves at 8:00 Sharp • Returns at Midnight
Hel-Cat Dock, 181 Thames Street Groton, CT

Information

April (860) 822-0824

Don (860) 822-9808

Carl (860) 376-3396

Email powerless_one@sbeglobal.net

SAVE THE **DATE**

**Area 11
Convention
2009**

51st Annual Area 11
Convention with
Al-Anon Participation

September 11-13

The Crowne Plaza
100 Berlin Rd., Route 372
Cromwell, CT 06416

District 5- Pasta Dinner

Come feel inspired for the desire for Service

September 26, 2009

Jesse Lee Methodist Church • 25 Flat Rock Rd., Easton, CT.

6:00 -9:00 p.m