

District 13 NH AA Newsletter

Serving the towns of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson,
Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon and Nashua,

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www.nhaa13.org

e-mail: newsletter@nhaa13.org

The primary purpose of this newsletter is to carry the message of recovery to alcoholics and practice the AA principles in all it's affairs. This newsletter's goal is to support a more informed community within AA as it serves District 13.

No Major Changes the First Year *Contributed By Anonymous*

Area 43 Service Office-
Call for Books, chips,
meeting lists, etc..
(603) 622-6967

Why do AA'S suggest no major changes this is my story. I first came to the program in 1986 through the grace of the State of NH Court system. I bounced in and out of prison as well as AA. Twelve years in prison and Twelve years in AA. In and out in and out. Both the cell doors and the wooded doors were revolving for me.

I am a mother of three and the youngest is eighteen, so if you do the math yes I spent most of her childhood behind the walls and that is where she spent most of her time with me. My two older children are 27,26 and they were raised by my mother.

Any way let me get back to why we do not make major decisions or changes in the first year. I am just coming back from a three year relapse. Was sober six year before relapsing. Stopped going to meeting that was the first of many mistakes.

I had the perfect husband, marriage, inlaws, life!!!!!! When we married we had a sober wedding and to this day our friend still talk of that day. When I relapsed I took him with me, another mistake. He is a wonderful man kind, loving, romantic, not to mention easy on the eye.

During this relapse we got arrested he went to prison and I got to go to prison again also. I got out before he did and that set me up for the worst of the worst relapses ever. While he was in prison I drank and drank and drank it was terrible!!!!!!

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Step 11 *"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.."*

Tradition 11 *"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."*

Avoid the Pitfalls By June B

This past summer in my 23rd year of sobriety, I needed to have a full knee replacement. My first thought was: "I had my other knee replaced 4 years ago and made it thru without abusing the narcotic medications, so I will be OK." To most people this might sound like a positive attitude. What the addict alcoholic in me was really saying was "No problem! I can do this myself!" As I heard this voice in my head I realized that this was my disease talking.

I stopped what I was doing and called my sponsor. We reviewed how I successfully maintained my sobriety during my last surgery. Here is the plan for we made to protect my sobriety during the upcoming surgery and recuperation:

Pack my recovery by taking my AA books with me to the hospital and convalescent home.

Bring my AA phone lists and my cell phone.

Do my daily prayers, readings and meditations, putting my faith and strength in my God to see me through it.

Call my sponsor each day.

Keep her informed of what medications, the dosage and how often I could take the medications.

Keep an open dialog on when and how to wean off the meds, without impacting my physical recovery.

During the recuperation period at home, call others and ask for rides to meetings.

Speak up at meetings to let people know where I was at.

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Understanding Anonymity (Tradition 11) *By Dave R. Manchester NH*

Anonymity is a funny thing. Putting aside the facets of spirituality and humility, on the surface it seems like an old-fashioned, unnecessary thing; a throwback to a time when there was a stigma on alcoholism (of course now thanks to People magazine and other entertainment-based media outlets, being an alcoholic is not only accepted but encouraged!). But seriously folks...

I personally think anonymity is the most well-known and yet the most consistently misunderstood Tradition we have. Partially because of the climate of secrecy that has been built up in AA as a result of people not understanding it in its full context.

"Steve spoke at the meeting last night."

"Which Steve?"

"Big Book Steve."

"Oh..."

Sure anonymity protects the newcomers when they come in, allowing them to feel safe that their identity as an alcoholic will be kept confidential. And it protects AA as a whole from a possible black eye when someone has a very public relapse in the media and pictures of them passed out cold behind the wheel get plastered across the internet. But anonymity goes much deeper...

How many people's last names do you know in your home group? Dr. Bob himself pointed out that we are not a secret society. We were never meant to be secret from each other. He once said in a public talk that if he were to only introduce himself as Bob S., we would have made it difficult for people who needed his help to contact him, and would have therefore broken the Tradition of Anonymity by being so anonymous that another AA member could not get a hold of him when they needed to.

The Tradition tells us exactly at what level to maintain anonymity: Press, Radio and Film (and electronic media). By not giving our full names, first and last, to another AA member we break this Tradition just as much as the member who gives his full name as an AA member in the media. One person has broken the Tradition above the level of press, radio and film; the other has broken it below that level - Yet the Tradition clearly states we should only maintain anonymity only at the level of press, radio and film, and at no other level.

As a matter of fact the pamphlet Understanding Anonymity (pgs. 10 & 11) states that: "Experience suggests that AA members use last names within the Fellowship, especially for election of group officers and other service jobs." Yes, it actually suggests AA members use their last names within the Fellowship!

I would argue that you would find the exact opposite being intended and taught at most AA meetings these days. The use of last names within the Fellowship is very much the exception, not the rule. I would also argue that by discouraging members to use their last names with each other it adds to the feelings of isolation many members feel, new and old. It also makes the navigation of recovery that much more difficult for newcomers by discouraging them from learning how to develop a needed intimacy with another human being, an essential part of recovery and becoming a whole person again.

Yes, each member should be allowed to choose how much personal information they give out, that's not what I am saying. But it should be clear that it is their personal choice to do so, and not because they aren't allowed to because "that's not something you do in AA".

I believe that understanding our Tradition of Anonymity is so core to personal recovery and the future health of AA that I make sure to discuss it with the men I sponsor and my friends in the program. We may have loads of literature, but ideals like Anonymity as passed down person to person by word of mouth and like everything else in AA, by our actions.

Dave R.
Manchester, NH

Avoid the Pitfalls By June B. Continued from Page 1.

When I shared these thoughts and feelings with another AA and also at meetings, I regained my serenity and acceptance. The following day I was medically pushed thru to my next milestone. Its funny how that works: when I think I will never get there, I really am on the doorstep of the change, as one of my favorite poems tells me.

Perseverance Poem ~author unknown

When things go wrong as they sometimes will;
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill;
When the funds are low, and the debts are high
And you want to smile, but have to sigh;
When care is pressing you down a bit-
Rest if you must, but do not quit.
Success is failure turned inside out;
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt;
And you can never tell how close you are
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit-
It's when things go wrong that you must not quit."

I thought I had it made. I had a surprise waiting for me after I finally came off the medications. So much for my thinking! The third day off the narcotics I found myself totally emotionally insane and physically shaking. I felt that I wanted to lash out or kill something, anything. Of course I thought it was people, places and things! I had to stop in my tracks once again.

God's grace is good! On this particular day, my sponsor and I already had a plan in place to see each other at meeting. I walked (in my head ran) out of the house to the meeting hobbling with my cane. We did talk before the meeting. My sponsor quickly recognized these symptoms for what they really were the body's reaction to not having the meds in it; withdrawal symptoms. When I told her that I had never felt high on these narcotics like I did when I was actually using, she said, "Never underestimate the addict brain wanting the addictive substance back." I breathed a big sigh of relief for I was not going crazy. I realized that *God* works thru people, if I pay attention and I take the time to listen. I was given a gift of clarity. Then my sponsor asked me to read the acceptance paragraph, to read steps 1 and 2 in the Twelve and Twelve and get rid of the rest of my medications. I did all as I was told, went to another meeting and shared this experience.

The second gift I received came to me after I took time to think about this question: "What is *God* trying to show me?" I believe He wants me, as someone of long term sobriety to be available to and to share with AA people who need to maintain their sobriety while undergoing medical procedures that require the use of narcotics and pain killers.

At present, my knee is getting better every day I am able to do the physical therapy by taking Motrin or Excedrin. I have returned to work. With *God's* help, the Program and the AA fellowship, I have been off all narcotic drugs for over a month, now and I thank *God* for normalcy and my continued sobriety.

No Major Changes the First Year Contributed By Anonymous, continued from page 1

One day I woke up and had enough I was defeated could not take any more, for the very first time I returned to AA on my own without the help of the State of NH. It has been a year now and for this is why I write my story:

I divorced this wonderful man this past year whom I still am in love with and now I sit and hurt and cry and talk to my sponsor about this she tried to tell me not to make any major decisions, I did not listen. Today I talk with him on a daily basis he is working his program and I am working mine. One day I pray our paths will cross again. He still loves me and I still love him. However two sickies does not make a welly.

NH AA Hotline:
1-800-593-3330

District 13 Triggers and Gratitude Workshop

Date: Saturday, November 27

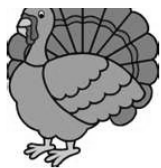
Place: Universalist Unitarian Church
 58 Lowell St., Nashua, NH

Time: 1:00-4:00 PM

Triggers can be sudden - that's what makes them so dangerous. They lead to thoughts and feelings, that if not managed, can and will lead to behaviors and consequences we come to regret. During the holiday season, many of us are besieged with a myriad of trigger thoughts. Like a stray cat that goes away if you don't feed it. Any trigger can be made to go away or minimized if you are prepared.

Join us is for an interactive afternoon of fellowship and reflection on understanding common triggers; coping with your own triggers before, during and after they occur; and how can gratitude help to allay them.

Turkey salad sandwiches (need to something with the leftovers!) and other light refreshments will be provided.



The Early Birds! Thanksgiving Gratitude Meeting

Our Fifth Annual Gratitude Meeting

Will take place on Thursday November 25th, 2010

Breakfast, Coffee and Fellowship at 6:00am to 6:30am

Meeting begins promptly at 6:30am to 7:30am

At Harbor Homes 45 High Street, Nashua NH



(Please use front entrance for that morning only)
 For directions please call Brad @ 603-930-5109

Alkathon Committee Meeting Schedule:

Every other Thursday at Church of the Good Shepard 6-7 pm (same time and place as Function Committee):

Stop by and find out how you are needed and can help carry the message.

Next few meetings:

October 21

November 4

November 18

December 2

December 9

MERRIMACK MONDAY NIGHT GROUP GRATITUDE MEETING!!!

Monday, November 22, 2010

Merrimack YMCA

6 Henry Clay Drive

Merrimack, New Hampshire

7:00 - 8:00 pm *Coffee & Buffet*

8:00 - 9:15 pm *Gratitude Meeting*

Thank-you All Sponsors A Poem by Stretch Aug 22,2010

Since walking in these doors
 An only seeking answers, and then,
 Meeting so many fears, faces of
 it friend;

It's a face I may have
 Never, ever known;
 You know you can call on
 me, just pick up the phone.

All energy's that are positive
 and true;
 They are the one that are
 for me and you.

So as my brother or sister
 in a chase for our lives;

Each day, every day we begin
 A healthier strive.

Thank you for you!

Your Groups AA Event Could and Should be on this page!!!

Please email your AA event to
newsletter@nhaa13.org

or mail to:
 District 13 Newsletter,
 PO Box 3513
 Nashua, NH 03061

Next District Meeting:
Wednesday November 17, 2010
7pm
All AA members
encouraged to attend!!
More info: www.nhaa13.org

The deadline for December Edition will be November 12.