

The Broken Bottle

THE CAPITAL DISTRICT CENTRAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER www.aalbanyny.org

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CAPITAL DISTRICT CENTRAL OFFICE 575 BROADWAY, Rooms 128-130, Albany, NY 12204

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"I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that I am responsible."

TRADITION 11 reads: "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," and **TRADITION 12** states: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities" "These last two Traditions are so closely tied together, it's tough to speak about one without talking about the other.

When I was first in the program, I thought that the significance of these two Traditions was that they protected MY privacy and ensured that MY alcoholism would be kept a secret. My anonymity at the time was very important to me, as I wanted (I thought) to protect my husband, whose name was known in the town where I got sober. What a scandal it would have been, if people had known he was married to an ALCOHOLIC!! After my initial months in A.A., anonymity took on a wider importance: it guaranteed to newer newcomers that their alcoholism could remain a "secret" "out there." Then, after I had been sober a few years, I got into A.A. service at the Group, District and Area levels, and anonymity took on yet an additional dimension – anonymity "breaks." Newspaper articles about A.A.-er's sports, education and government. And their successes in business, "famous" people who broke their And hearing of the dangers of relapsed. How could they be so anonymity and subsequently careless about the welfare of A.A. as a whole?

Then came a real lesson in humility for me. I was in a service position in Pennsylvania that had as one of its responsibilities to inform the press, and radio and television stations, of our Traditions of Anonymity. In one of the newspapers there was a center-fold article about the wedding of two members of the Fellowship, complete with first and last names of the couple AND their A.A. guests, and pictures of the wedding party and the reception. I wrote a carefully-worded letter to the editor of the newspaper about our Anonymity of keeping last names and pictures of A.A. members out of the public press.

I proceeded to sign the article with my first and last names. Well, the editor chose to publish my names! using both my first and last names!

As I rotated from one service position to another, anonymity often came into discussions about A.A.: "confidential" directories, A.A. workshops and conventions, and A.A. service positions in the Central Office and the General Service Structure. The gist of those discussions was that in the public level, we should use our last names, so that people can get in touch with us. Service within the Fellowship is not at the public level..

With this issue, Marcia G, our chairperson, concludes her reflections on the Twelve Traditions of A.A. begun in the February 2008 **BROKEN BOTTLE**. We're grateful, Marcia!

In the **Foreword of TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS** we read, "A.A.'s Twelve Traditions apply to the life of the Fellowship itself. They outline the means by which A.A. maintains its unity and relates itself to the world about it, the way it lives and grows."

And, further underscoring the importance of the traditions in the recovery of alcoholics, the following from Appendix I of THE BIG BOOK ON-LINE:

To those now in its fold, Alcoholics Anonymous has made the difference between misery and sobriety, and often the difference between life and death. A.A. can, of course, mean just as much to uncounted alcoholics not yet reached

Therefore, no society of men and women ever had a more urgent need for continuous effectiveness and permanent unity. We alcoholics see that we must work together and hang together, else most of us will finally die alone.

The "12 Traditions" of Alcoholics Anonymous are, we A.A.'s believe, the best answers that our experience has yet given to those ever-urgent questions "How can A.A. Best function?" and "How can A.A. best stay whole and so survive?"

Sacrifice is the underlying spiritual meaning of anonymity.

In Bill W's talk "Why Alcoholics Anonymous is Anonymous." [See pages 286-294 of Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age] Bill said: "At the beginning we sacrificed alcohol. We had to, or it would have killed us. But we couldn't get rid of alcohol unless we made other sacrifices. Big shot-ism and phony thinking had to go. We had to toss self-justification, self-pity, and anger right out the window. We had to quit the crazy contest for personal prestige and big bank balances. We had to take personal responsibility for our sorry state and quit blaming others for it.

Continued on page 3

BOOKS CURRENTLY IN INVENTORY AT CDCO PRICE

12 Steps and 12 Traditions (hard cover)	\$6.40
12 Steps and 12 Traditions (soft cover)	\$6.00
12 Steps and 12 Traditions (large print)	\$6.75
12 Steps and 12 Traditions (pocket size)	\$4.50
12 Steps and 12 Traditions (Span. soft cover)	\$6.00
A.A. Comes of Age (hard cover)	\$7.50
Alcoholics Anonymous (hard cover)	\$6.00
Alcoholics Anonymous (soft cover)	\$5.60
Alcoholics Anonymous (large print)	\$6.30
Alcoholics Anonymous (pocket size)	\$3.50
Alcoholicos Anonimos (hard cover)	\$6.60
Alcoholicos Anonimos (soft cover)	\$6.00
As Bill Sees It (hard cover)	\$7.00
As Bill Sees It (soft cover)	\$6.60
Came To Believe (soft cover)	\$3.75
Came To Believe (large print)	\$4.25
Came To Believe Spanish (soft cover)	\$3.75
Daily Reflections (soft cover)	\$7.25
Daily Reflections (large print)	\$7.75
Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers/Pass It On (Boxed Set)	\$17.50
Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers (hardcover)	\$8.50
Experience, Strength and Hope (hard cover)	\$9.00
Living Sober (soft cover)	\$3.75
Living Sober (large print)	\$4.25
Living Sober Spanish (soft cover)	\$3.75
Pass It On	\$9.00
Service Manual/12 Concepts (soft cover)	\$2.55
GRAPEVINE A.A. Conference Approved: Emotional Sobriety (soft cover)	\$11.00

Some Housekeeping Details ... If you're volunteering and someone comes in to buy A.A. literature, it is absolutely critical that an order form be filled out and filed with the money. With about 98% of the transactions, this is being done beautifully! THANK YOU! We really need 100% to know what books are most in demand as well as for inventory control.

*We can't do it without YOU: keep the door open, lights on, phones ringing, pamphlet rack stacked. Our dedicated volunteers, those in the office, Night Owls and those who help get people to meetings and so much more are the life blood of this operation, as are the dedicated groups that take seriously the commitment to donate a portion of the basket receipts on a regular basis to support YOUR CDCO. The following list represents contributions for two months ending 11/17/2008. **THANKS!***

Cohoes Wed. Evening Group	\$125
Coming Back Group	\$ 50
Friday Big Book Group	\$130
Glenville Men's 11 th Step Group	\$212.50
Gratitude Group	\$ 25
Groups of District 2	\$375
John	\$ 18.60
John L	\$ 1
New Hope Group (14)	\$ 50
Saturday A.M. Eye Openers Group	\$300
Schenectady Club House	\$ 50
Share At Noon Group	\$ 80
Step Right Inn Group	\$102
Sunday Morning Promises Group	\$300
Tuesday Night Step Group	\$ 50
Twin Town Group	\$ 50

REMEMBER

www.aalbanyny.org

Alex S. is "growing" our CDCO website like dandelions in May! You can find all sorts of interesting information there ... including the minutes of the monthly CDCO meetings. Please visit the site! Thank you, Alex!

JOIN THE FUN... AND STAY SOBER IN THE BARGAIN!

WHAT: Christmas and New Year's **ALKATHONS**

WHERE: Pine Grove United Methodist Church

1580 Central Av., Albany, N.Y. 12205 (.9 mile
West of Colonie Center on left)

WHEN: December 24 and December 31 beginning at 6
p.m. each of those dates and running for 24
hours of meetings, food, fellowship!



My first holiday season in Alcoholics Anonymous coincided with the first Christmas and New Year's Alkathons. A recovering angel, as he turned out to be, relocated very briefly to our area from Boston bringing with him the idea of 24 hour meetings to help alcoholics get through the holidays: to stay away from a drink; to relieve loneliness if away or estranged from family; to take the edge off family gatherings where alcohol or "old baggage", or both, might be in large supply by providing an escape for an hour, or a few; by making available a congenial, festive setting where recovering people ...old and new-timers... could get together and eat, drink and be merry with round-the-clock meetings, speakers, dancing, card playing, good food and wonderful fellowship. We've had continuous holiday Alkathons since thanks to the hundreds of local member/volunteers who picked up the Boston angel's challenge and made this tradition possible. I shudder to think of where lonely, afraid alcoholics spent their holidays pre-1979.

It would be impossible to overstate my gratitude for the first Christmas and New Year's Alkathons. I can close my eyes and see, and hear, people like Sam T, Kandu, Georgea, Brownie, Jim D, Howie K, Lu, Merle and so many more who have now completed their sober journeys as they extolled the virtues and mirades of this program. Somehow I, who 'd not had a drink in ten months, yet who was still about doing it my way ... that is everything but GOD ... must have believed them at some level because I hung around for the next Alkathons and the next and the

Many men and women have begun their journey in the fellowship at one or another of our holiday Alkathons when they've come in from the cold to the warmth of our hope and love and laughter and promise of a new start.

In recent years I've missed many Alkathons ... not because I've outgrown the need for the fellowship and hugs I had in 1979, but because I am often away, seeking a less arthritic clime. However, there comes a moment, about 1 p.m. on Christmas afternoon, wherever I am, when I can hear over the din of the music, the conversation of the adults or squealing of the children, the sound of Kandu praising, "THIS BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL PROGRAM!" A tear spills and I quietly reply, "AMEN".

Maryanne S.

Barb L., who authored this essay on "How It Was" is celebrating 40 years of uninterrupted sobriety this month

When you can laugh at yourself no one gets offended! My eldest daughter was 16 when I had my last drunk. Years later, she recalled for me that one late wintry night I stumbled onto the back porch clutching a brown bag with three bottles of beer. She heard the noise and came to my aid. She said I asked her not to take the beer away from me. She got me to the second floor bedroom.

She asked me if I remembered this performance. I had not, so she continued. She told me it was 11 p.m., I was covered in snow and was wearing only my flannel granny gown and boots. There were no stores open late in those long ago days so she surmised I'd got the beer at LE PETIT PARIS, an upscale bar/nightclub on upper Madison Avenue in Albany. We lived then on North Pine Avenue, a not inconsiderable walk in the cold and snow at that hour in the described duds.

It took a few years for me to lighten up and wonder: granny gowns have no pockets – money? ... and the look on the bartender's face? ... priceless!

Barb L.

TRADITIONS

(from page 1)

"To gain enough humility and self-respect to stay alive at all we had to give up what had really been our dearest possession – our ambition and our illegitimate pride."

"But... (s)acrifice had to go farther. Other people had to benefit too. So we took on some Twelfth Step work; we began to carry the A.A. message. We sacrificed time, energy, and our own money to do this. We could not keep what we had unless we gave it away.... A.A.'s Twelve Traditions are little else than a list of sacrifices which the experience of twenty years has taught us that we must make, individually and collectively, if A.A. itself is to stay alive and healthy.

"Anonymity is the greatest single protection that A.A. can ever have.... [it] is our greatest symbol of personal sacrifice, the spiritual key to all our Traditions and to our whole way of life...

And, on page 132 of Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: "The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice. Because A.A.'s Twelve Traditions repeatedly ask us to give up personal desires for the common good, we realize that the sacrificial spirit, well symbolized by anonymity, is the foundation of all these Traditions. It is A.A.'s proved willingness to make these sacrifices that gives people high confidence in our future."

Marcia G., Chairperson

In Memoriam Corner

Recently three good friends of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, very long time members of the fellowship, ended their days here ... having given so much to all whom they encountered. Together these three represent about a century of sober years, one day at a time! Members who knew them well have generously reflected on their lives.



Lu McCabe was what I wanted to be when I "grew" up in AA and she helped me get there. Lu swept into a room like a ship in full sail, followed by an entourage of people like me – new and scared but willing. She was direct and opinionated and we loved her for that. She was a kind and patient mentor in all things sober. She taught us how to live life to the fullest, in sobriety, with happy hearts and open minds.

I envied her abilities as a story teller. Her most memorable sayings (to me) were "Wear life like a loose garment" and "Don't sweat the small stuff – it's *all* small stuff." We quoted her long after she left our New York winters for the friendlier climate in California. Some of us stayed in touch and kept track of her travels and her golf scores. She was an original -- had her own game plan and her own rules and she stuck to them. We all admired her for that and wish her well on the next leg of her journey to the stars.

Anne D.



For me, **Sol** was an oldtimer who would always listen carefully to what I had to say and, when asked, would offer a helpful suggestion based on the experience and strength of many sober days. His hope was always for a good, sober life. Of his drinking days he often said he was "tired of dying" and that he chose to live. His sober life touched the lives of hundreds and hundreds of AA members in the Capital Region. I believe we are all better people for that association with him. If there are AAs gathered in the Far Beyond, I'm sure Sol is reminding them about "the importance of meetings." These days, our meeting places have an empty chair. He would want nothing better than to have a newcomer take his place.

Anonymous



A. A has lost a dear friend: **Norman H.**, who died October 1, 2008. A true gentleman and a gentle man, Norman was very humble about all the amazing things he had done in his life. 87 years old at the time he died.... and sober at least half those years, Norm was very involved in AA service, particularly at the group and district level. He was - secretary of District 1 and treasurer of District 1 (more than once) and did not aspire to any further offices, preferring to be a humble servant. We miss him already!!

Pat L