



The Broken Bottle

11 Computer Drive West, Suite 100 Albany, N.Y. 12205 -- (518) 463-0906

WINTER 2016 - 2017

Happy Winter Everyone!

Yes, it's true. Winter is upon us and along with the snow, ice and freezing temperatures, we have "The Holidays". I hear many meeting topics at this time of year geared toward surviving the holidays without drinking. I know, for me, the early years of sobriety were a challenge. The topics at the meetings encouraged me and helped me find ways to not only survive the holidays without drinking, but to enjoy them. I learned I did not have to struggle with the challenges alone. The first word in the First Step is "We". Others share the struggle. Together we not only managed to make it through, but to enjoy ourselves as well.

Volunteering to help with events planned qualified as service work and I loved it. I found a different way to celebrate and enjoy the holidays with others who had things in common with me. If you are struggling, I hope you will check out the events pages and maybe plan to attend or volunteer for, one or even two of the events. I found that I didn't have to spend my holidays alone, nor did I have to spend it with others who "celebrated" in ways I chose not to. Dealing with loneliness and/or chaos during the holidays is not fun and not necessary.

And of course, after the Holidays are over, we still have winter and cold, wet weather. I have a tendency to want to isolate and stay home during these times. Doing service work and making commitments prevented that. So, I also hope that you check out the Service opportunities listed as well as the events.

Business Meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

These monthly meetings are open to anyone. Visitors are welcome and attendance is encouraged.



One of the most important things I've learned is to give back. All the slogans and cliché sayings are so true, even though it's aggravating to hear sometimes. "To keep it, you have to give it away" and, "You get back what you give". Change your perspective and use this time to make new traditions and new friends. Remember "nothing changes, if nothing changes".

Happy Holidays to all – and stay warm. Soon enough I will be working on the Spring Newsletter.

Debbie P., Newsletter Editor

P.S. If your area is having an event that is not in the newsletter, call the Central Office and let them know. It can be shared with someone calling in from that area who may not be able to travel. And if there is anyone who would like to contribute anything to the Newsletter, please let me know by emailing chair@aaalbanyny.org. Trish will pass it along to me!

Greetings from the Central Office Chairperson;

The holiday season is upon us and in full swing. We have many sober activities happening all around the capital district including Alkathons for Christmas and New Year's. You can go to our website at aaalbanyny.org and click on the events tab to check them all out.

We also have many service opportunities available. We are looking for volunteers to help out at our office and to answer the hotline when the office is closed. This is called night owl duties, we need every other Sunday and every other Friday filled with volunteers. It's easy service work and a great opportunity to give back what has so freely been given to us.

November was the Central office anniversary. The office has been in existence for 11 years and we have been at our new location for 1 year. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer, you can send me an email at chair@aaalbanyny.org or you can call the office and a volunteer will take your information and pass it along. The office number is 518-463-0906. I wish you all a happy, safe, joyous and sober holiday season.

Yours in service, Trish M



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**“The Most Important People”**

When a newcomer identifies himself or herself as being at their first AA meeting, we often hear the words shortly afterward: “You are the most important person in this room.” How true that is. How important it is for the new person to get a solid foundation and a good start to a lifetime of recovery from a potentially fatal disease. Many newcomers’ minds are still affected by the storm clouds of drinking, but when asked about their first impressions of their first meeting, they will often respond with statements like: “I was overwhelmed by the honesty of those who spoke,” or “There was something special going on in there,” or “I felt like I belonged somewhere for the first time in my life.”

First impressions are very important. With that in mind, the guidelines for volunteers titled “Instructions for Answering the Phone at the Capital District Central Office,” have these directives:

“If the caller asks for meeting information, ask if he or she has ever been to an AA meeting. If no, welcome them and explain that they will be welcomed at their first meeting. Tell them what they can expect at their first meeting: a chairperson will do a couple of readings and then often will ask, ‘Is anyone at their first ever AA meeting?’ Explain that they do not have to respond, but if they do raise their hand and give their first name, they will be welcomed by everyone in the group, and the meeting discussion will usually be conducted with the newcomer in mind.

If they have access to the Internet, give them the four websites:

1. The CDCO: [www.aaalbanyny.org](http://www.aaalbanyny.org)
2. HMB Area: [www.aahmbny.org](http://www.aahmbny.org)
3. The listings for meetings in upstate New York: [www.ny-aa.org](http://www.ny-aa.org)
4. The General Service Office in New York City: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

The last one is particularly helpful to then new person. She or he can learn a lot about AA on this site before attending the first meeting. It is also helpful to say to them: “You never have to drink again.” People who have been sober for many years remember their first contact with AA in which a member told them that.”

The Central Office has been keeping track of first-time callers for the past 13 months. Of the 1,841 total calls received during that period, 165 were first-timers; nearly 13 calls per month (12.7), or close to 9 percent of the total calls.

*Being involved in Service Work doesn't have to involve a lot of your time. Even once a month, exchanging a few hours of watching TV, for a few hours of helping another alcoholic that needs our help. This can have a huge impact on other people trying to get & stay sober and have a surprising positive impact on you as well. The Central Office is looking for a Secretary and an Archivist. If you are interested, please call the office at (518) 463-0906.*

**Office Volunteers needed!** The Office Volunteers are AA members who answer the phone and greet and provide services to visitors to the Office during hours it is open. A minimum of one year of continuous sobriety is suggested for this position.

**Night Owl Volunteers needed!** The Night Owls are AA volunteers who take phone calls at home that are forwarded from the Central Office phone during the hours the Office is closed. A minimum of one year of continuous sobriety is suggested for this position.

**Capital District Central Office 12th Step List** 12th Step service is vital to an A.A. member's continuing spiritual development. The CDCO maintains 12th Step lists for the groups in each district we serve. Please consider signing up to make yourself available to give rides to a meeting for A.A.'s visiting from out of town, or people new to the Fellowship. You will also have the opportunity to talk on the phone or go on a 12th Step call with another A.A. to share your experience, strength and hope with somebody who has called CDCO looking for help. Let us know your home group or district so that we can match you up with callers close by.

**Capital District Central Office E-Z Riders List** The CDCO routinely gets calls from people visiting from out of town. They may be unfamiliar with the area and are looking for rides to local meetings. We also get calls from people new to A.A. who are in the same boat. A.A. members who want to help carry their group's message of recovery are encouraged to sign up as E-Z Riders. By bringing visitors or new folks to your meeting, you will be helping them, your group, and yourself- it's a Win Win Win! Please let us know your name, phone number and home group (or other groups you're willing to give a ride to) and we will put it on our list.

Your contact information will be held in the strictest confidence by CDCO. CDCO does not provide A.A. member contact information to any callers or other entities. Call us at 518-463-0906 or email [chair@aaalbany.org](mailto:chair@aaalbany.org).

The CDCO has literature, books, pamphlets and now an assortment of "Recovery Cards", which can be purchased for \$1.00 each. Medallions can be purchased at cost. For a list of items and prices go to  
The CDCO also has many medallions on hand, which can be purchased at cost. The prices are available at: <http://aaalbany.org/literature/>

#### MEETING SCHEDULE CHANGE

All of the meetings of the GOYA Group in Hudson that were held at the First Presbyterian Church, 369 Warren St., Monday through Saturday, have moved temporarily to the First Reformed Church, 55 Green St. until further notice while repairs are made to the roof of the host church.

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### A SOBER LIFE CUT SHORT

He came up to me after a meeting that I often attend and asked if we could talk.

I had noticed that he had been coming to this particular meeting for several weeks. He had openly announced that he was an alcoholic coming back into the program and that he had been without a drink for about a month. He seemed conflicted but he was friendly and projected a very positive presence.

Like me, he was a small-town boy and said that he had been in the program before, but couldn't seem to stay sober. His latest drinking spree had resulted in separation from his wife and teenage sons whom he loved very much.

While he continued to tell me about this conflict, I remember thinking that what he needed to do was focus on his alcoholism. Having years of active experience in AA, I was confident that if he concentrated on not drinking and paid attention to our 12-step program, that he would learn to intuitively know how to handle matters that used to baffle him.



After twenty minutes or so of conversation, mostly him talking to me, he asked if I would be his sponsor. Because of the personal conflict, he had in his life, my first response was to run for the hills, but I sensed that he was a good person and needed help to establish a solid foundation in the AA program. So, I said yes.

We immediately began to meet regularly. We went to meetings together as well as separately and I asked him to touch base with me each day by phone if for no other reason than just to say hello and check-in. He was anxious to learn. He was doing great. He was renewing his relationship with his boys and his priest. The days flew by and the color in his face changed and his smile seemed to broaden each day. After several months, we made plans on a Wednesday to go to a Friday night meeting together where he would celebrate exactly 90 days of sobriety. He was excited and proud; the program had been working.

Early afternoon on Friday, I got a gut-wrenching phone call. Another member of AA called to let me know that my sponsee had been killed in a freak work related accident. Imagine, he was killed on the very day that he had achieved 90 days of sobriety and was going to celebrate that night.

At his memorial service, all the pews at the church were filled. The perimeter walls inside were lined with people two deep and there were at least 100 people standing outside in the street that had to be blocked off. Needless to say, there was not a dry eye in the place.

During the service his priest told everyone that the deceased had recently shared with him that the last 90 days had been the very best days of his life. I didn't know about anyone else at the service, but I know exactly what the priest was referring to.

Later, after the service at the cemetery, I introduced myself as the AA sponsor to the deceased. The priest let out a deep sigh and hugged me. He acknowledged that even if no one else understood, that I would know exactly why the last 90 days had been so precious, and consoled me about our mutual loss.

It seemed to me that he was far too young to leave us and certainly far too happy in his sobriety to die. I had many questions that needed to be resolved.

Over time and thanks to AA at the time of his death, he was a sober man, living a sober life. His family, the small-town community where he grew up, and the boys his life had touched while coaching little league, and his friends are now all a little closer. Where there was death there was also love. The more God helps me accept his death, the more that I can see that every sober day is a gift to be treasured.

Anonymous



### Christmas at the Schenectady Clubhouse

**Date/Time:** Saturday, Dec 24, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. and Sunday, Dec 25, 2016 at 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** 430 Cedar Street, Schenectady, NY 12306

**Group:** Schenectady Clubhouse Group

**Contact:** Theresa C. at [theresatolo@mail.com](mailto:theresatolo@mail.com), Debbie P, or Jim F.

**More Info:**

**Christmas Eve - Saturday, 12/24** -- Open 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. -- Meetings 12:00 noon, 3:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. -- Small Buffet 5:30 p.m.

**Christmas - Sunday, 12/25** -- Open 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. -- Continental Breakfast 8:00 a.m. and Christmas dinner begins at 2:30 p.m. -- Meetings at 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

## Pine Grove Christmas Alkathon

**Date/Time:** Saturday, Dec 24, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, Dec 25, 2016

**Location:** Pine Grove Methodist Church, 1580 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12205

**Group:** District 1

**Contact:** [d1alkathon@gmail.com](mailto:d1alkathon@gmail.com) or Fred M. (518) 312-2108

**More Info:** To volunteer or have your group host a meeting, contact [d1alkathon@gmail.com](mailto:d1alkathon@gmail.com)

## Pine Grove New Year's Alkathon

**Date/Time:** Saturday, Dec 31, 2016 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, Jan 1, 2017

**Location:** Pine Grove Methodist Church, 1580 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12205.

**Group:** District 1

**Contact:** [d1alkathon@gmail.com](mailto:d1alkathon@gmail.com) or Fred M. (518) 312-2108

**More Info:** To volunteer or have your group host a meeting, contact [d1alkathon@gmail.com](mailto:d1alkathon@gmail.com)



## Blooming Grove Big Book Step Workshop

**Date/Time:** Saturday, Jan 7, 2017 8:45 a.m. - Sunday, Jan 8, 2017 3:00 p.m.

**Location:** Blooming Grove Reformed Church, 706 Blooming Grove Drive, Defreestville, NY

**Group:** Set-Aside Group

**Contact:** [aaworkshopbg@gmail.com](mailto:aaworkshopbg@gmail.com)

**More Info:** Designed to be an experience of taking the steps rather than a study of the steps. Helpful for newcomers, old-timers, those who have never done the steps and those looking to help carry the message.

Saturday, January 7 at 8:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m. - Steps 1-5

Sunday, January 8 at 8:45 a.m. -3:00 p.m. - Steps 5-12

Bring a Big Book, highlighter, pen and paper -- Lunch, snacks and drinks provided

## District 2 Super Bowl Party



**Date/Time:** Sunday, Feb 5, 2017 4:00 p.m. - (End Time TBD)

**Location:** Red Door, 35 State Street, Troy, N.Y.

**Group:** District 2

**More Info:**

Meeting 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Game Starts: 6:30 p.m.

## Northeast Regional Forum (NERF)

**Date/Time:** Friday, Jun 2, 2017 - Sunday, Jun 4, 2017

**Location:** Doubletree Hilton, 910 Sheraton Drive, Mars, PA 16046

**Group:** GSO & Western Pa Area 60

**More Info:** Speakers, Workshops & Displays -- Handicap Accessible Event -- Sponsored By: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Hosted By: Area 60 of Western Pennsylvania General Service Inc. This is as close as it gets in the Northeast Region to where it all started... Dr. Bob's house in Akron, OH is just 1.5 hours away!

Treasury Reports and Data Reports are issued monthly and can be found on our website at "<http://aaalbanyny.org/reports/>"