The Scary Pandemic . . .

And Recovery Answers

The Miracle of Recovery continues
The Covid Apocalypse

The COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020; it felt like an apocalypse. My friend and I each lived alone so we decided to become “COVID-roommates.” We consoled each other that it was normal to drink during a time like this. Liquor stores never had a shutdown.

There was a repeated cycle of binge drinking, feeling remorse, self-pity, and hopelessness, and buying more alcohol to assuage these negative emotions and thoughts. I blacked out only to wake up feeling that I may not come out of this pandemic alive.

I was desperate and saw a psychologist. He suggested I try A.A. Zoom meetings. I did since it was a “doctor’s” order. I shut off my camera because I was ashamed. I listened and shared sometimes, often ending in tears. Kind people put their contact info in the chat. I contacted one after another binge. That lady became my sponsor and suggested I call her daily and attend as many Zoom meetings as possible. I followed her advice. I asked my friend to return to her house because I realized she was a huge trigger. I began to heal and feel better as I attended meetings, talked to my sponsor, psychologist, and positive people in the program.

A year has passed, and my life is completely different. My body is healing, and my spirit is peaceful, joyous, and free from the shackles of my addiction, despite this ongoing pandemic. Thank you, God and A.A., for saving my soul!

J.Y.
Learning How to Learn: Returning to School Sober

When I first considered the idea of returning to school to earn a master’s degree, I was skeptical about the likelihood of my success. Despite three years of sobriety, I could only think back on my record as an undergraduate and wonder if I wouldn’t repeat all the same mistakes. At this time, more than a decade earlier, I had created an embarrassing record for myself.

After starting out as a freshman with a nearly perfect GPA, my grades as a junior were so bad that I was placed on academic probation and forced to take a semester off from school. The reasons for this downward progression were hard to explain, even to myself. I had not spent much time drinking (that came later) nor had I encountered material beyond my ability. I had somehow lost the ability to meet deadlines and to apply myself to my coursework in a systematic fashion. I found myself in the dean’s office semester after semester requesting extensions for research papers. Even when such extensions were granted, nearly all of the work I submitted was incomplete in some way. Unable to grasp the nature of my problem and find a solution for it, I became resigned to the idea that I would repeat this pattern endlessly. My only hope, as I could see it then, was to get out of school and put the whole experience behind me.

Thanks in large part to the awareness brought by the program, I know today that the demon with which I was grappling was perfectionism. Having set myself the unattainable standard of immediate success in every endeavor, I became afraid to engage in any activity in which a favorable outcome was not assured at the outset. I can now see that this pattern severely undermined my ability to learn, for it made me afraid of the natural learning process which consists of gradual improvements in one’s skills.

I’d like to say that I took this insight and thoroughly applied it to my graduate studies. If I had, I have little doubt today that those years would have been immeasurably enhanced. But the truth is that I wasn’t able to let go of that character defect entirely while in school. My hours spent rewriting sentences in final papers is testimony enough to that. With the help of my sponsor and regular meetings, however, I was able to let go of the most crippling aspects of the defect and learn once again to submit assignments on time. I was able to experience first-hand the wisdom underlying the program’s assertion that it is progress, not perfection that matters. For I found that this simple idea enabled me to let go of my anxieties about the outcome and to simply give the work my best shot. In short, this idea gave me back my capacity to learn.

Of course, anyone who’s spent any time at all in the program can point to a dozen other tools of recovery which would be useful to the recovering alcoholic as she or he returns to school. The concept of approaching a problem one day at a time was enormously helpful to me as I prepared for my comprehensive exam, as was the reminder that we need only do the “next right thing.” The idea that an alcoholic is no better or worse than others, but simply a worker among workers was also helpful as I struggled with classmates. And, most important of all, the Steps enabled me to remain sober. Without that foundation, school or any other serious endeavor – would be impossible.

Cindy L, WHC-L Chayim Group
New Reporter, Washington DC.
Redemption (A poem)

Twisting turning writhing back on itself
The dark maze surrounds, confounds
Lurching spinning writhing we fear for ourselves
The maze enfolds, controls

The thorns reach out with greedy hands
The branches betray us, delay us
Staggering away from day to next day
The pain connects, rejects

What’s that scent? Over the pain?
Somewhere ahead, somewhere through
What’s that sight? Up in the heights?
A bloom seen yet unseen

Climb! Climb, though the thorns tear your skin
Pierce your cheek, when you reach
Climb! Climb, through the baffling hurt
Though you are scared, reach for the clear air

Somehow, some way, some when
There are roses, blooms, on these thorns
There’s no defeat, the smell so sweet
In those hard to reach heights so right

The maze of the past is a crooked mirror cast
A spell to break, a shackles to shake
These and many more are the ways we describe
How the past from us and our future divides

Bursting blooming opening in riotous color
The rose of redemption rises above the maze
Rise up! Seize the day, seize sun’s rays
The bloom unfolds, enfolds you

Rest your hands on the petals
Heal your heart - make a new start
Feast your eyes on the rose
Then, let your teary eyes close

You may fall - twisting, turning back

(For the maze is jealous of its children)
Keep in your soul, the part hidden from all
The rose that you found, to which you are bound

Resting, growing, blooming in your soul
Hold tight as the maze starts to fight
When you can strike when your fire is alight Reach
above the below and find the sun’s glow –

Striving, surviving, and then thriving, we’ll be
Above the maze, above the haze
It hurts! Oh, it hurts to get there
But in the sun we will meet as one

A day long ago a man shouted “You below!”
Helped me to climb to a rose I could find
Today though I fall I treasure that call
Today I can cope - I can offer new hope

The scars twist, encircle, ensnare my hands
For my journey was not easy nor kind
The maze lurks within, the painful dead sin
I seek my rose each day, for help I must pray

On good days I shout “You below! Look above!”
My battered hands are yours to command
For our thorns are our own
But the maze is shared – I can help, I can reach, I can care

Tony V
Sunrise Serenity
Del Ray Club
24 Ways

“When I was starting in the program, you showed me how and suggested I keep coming back. When I thought you were crazy, you showed me patience. When I shared with you that I might be crazy, you understood. When I didn’t think sobriety was possible, you introduced me to my Higher Power. When I got sketchy, you showed me ways to avoid the slip. When I thought being sober was enough, you introduced me to serving others. When I was patting myself on the back, you told me about character defects. When I thought I was serving others, your examples showed me I could go a lot further.

When I was down, your door was open. When I plateaued and got into a lull in the program, you re-introduced me to my Higher Power.

When I forgot what life was like when I first came in here, you sent me to a First Step meeting. When I let things become overwhelming, you showed me the better way was to keep it simple. When I began to attend fewer meetings, you asked me if I was cured. When I said ‘I’ve got this now,’ you laughed and said I’d better get to a meeting. When I asked you to save my life, you just asked me for a dollar—if I had it.

When I worried, you suggested I turn it over. When I was stuck in my head, you introduced serenity. When I came to meetings, you didn’t judge. When I was judging others, you forgave me. When I still do things the wrong way, you call me on it and remind me to do the next right thing.

You have shown me what eyes look like we reach rock bottom and what they can look like three months later. When I said, ‘I’ve never done that,’ you said, ‘. . . yet.’

When I got my chip, you threw down some mojo. When you share with me, I learn what I didn’t know I couldn’t live without.”

J.F., Oconomowoc, WI
Appeared in the Silver Streak,
Las Vegas Intergroup
HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

Eat, Drink and be Scary!

I gave you life.
You give me your Reese's.
That's the deal.

- Every Mom on Halloween

AND WHEN THE CLOCK STRIKES MIDNIGHT, HALLOWEEN WILL END

THEN BAM CHRISTMAS CAROLS EVERYWHERE

turns out the meow was coming from

INSIDE THE HOUSE!!
Washington Area Intergroup Association (WAIA)
4530 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite 11
Washington, DC 20008-4310

Dear WAIA:

It is with sincere gratitude, to acknowledge your recent significant contribution to our General Service Office ($10,000.00 of August 13, 2021).

I see that the WAIA Office is currently open to volunteers (and public) - with appropriate precautions in place. We've all been through a lot these past two years and it is especially inspiring to see that your Office has safely re-opened. Thank you for your service.

Also, from your website, it pleases me to learn that WAIA volunteers are answering the "AA phones" 12 hours a day - with night calls re-routed to Night Watch volunteers. On a personal note, in early sobriety, I regularly called the Nassau Intergroup phone service (in New York) for good orderly direction. As such, it was a real thrill for me, a few years later, to staff the overnight service from time to time. So, thanks for reviving those fond memories.

Next month's Grapevine magazine, September 2021, page 50, announces the start of our annual photo contest www.aagrapevine.org/photocontest. Please consider sending along any photos of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, MD, as well as Washington, DC, for consideration.

On behalf of all of us here on the General Service Board, thank you again for practicing the 7th Tradition. It is because of voluntary contribution(s), such as yours, that all alcoholics who reach out for help have a place to turn for hope.

Together we can,

Francis G.
Northeast Regional Trustee and AA Grapevine Director
AA World Services, Inc. = (212) 870-3400
AA Grapevine, Inc. = (212) 870-3018
THE AA PREAMBLE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

THE PREAMBLE was introduced in the June 1947 issue of the AA Grapevine magazine. It was written by the then-editor, who borrowed much of the phrasing from the Foreword to the original edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous.

In those early years, the Grapevine had just begun to circulate among nonalcoholics, and the Preamble was intended primarily to describe for them what AA is and is not. It is still often used for public information purposes. As time passed, it began appearing in all Conference-approved publications, and many AA groups now use it to open meetings.

The original version differed in two ways from the familiar form we all know: 1) It stated that the only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking,” and 2) it contained only the very brief statement “AA has no dues or fees.”

People often ask why the word “honest” was deleted. At the 1958 General Service Conference, a delegate asked about the words “honest desire to stop drinking,” suggesting that since “honest” does not appear in the Third Tradition, it might be deleted from the Preamble. In discussion, most Conference members felt that as AA had matured, it had become almost impossible to determine what constitutes an honest desire to stop drinking, and also that some who might be interested in the program could be confused by the phrase. Thus, as part of the evolution of AA, the phrase had been dropped from common usage. The midsummer 1958 meeting of the General Service Board of Trustees ratified the deletion, and since then the Preamble has read simply “a desire to stop drinking.”

At the same time, the phrase “AA has no dues or fees” was clarified to read as it presently does: “There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.” The current version of the Preamble appears on page one of every issue of the Grapevine.

At the 71st General Service Conference in 2021, after a series of votes, a final Advisory Action requested that “The Preamble revision replacing the words ‘men and women’ with the word ‘people’ be presented to the General Service Board for approval as the new revised A.A. Preamble.” The revised A.A. Preamble first appeared in the July 2021 AA Grapevine and the July/August La Viña, and afterwards throughout Grapevine and A.A.W.S. literature and other media.

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AA PREAMBLE©

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people 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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Back To Basics

The Alcoholics Anonymous
Beginners' Meetings

"Here are the steps we took . . ."
in Four One-Hour Sessions

10 AM Saturday October
2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd

Laurel Recovery
368 Main Street Laurel MD 20707
laurelrecovery.org
Happy Destiny Retreat Presents The 14th Annual

Fall Bonfire

Saturday, October 9, 2021
Rain Date October 23, 2021, Check Website to confirm.

Suggested Donation is $5

• Live Music
• 50/50 Raffle
• BRING YOUR OWN PICNIC DINNER
  Light Snacks and Drinks Provided
• Fun for the Whole Family

4:00 pm – Dinner, Music, Fellowship & Festivities
7:00 pm – AA Meeting

For More Info or Service Opportunities:
Email: happydestinyretreat@gmail.com
Call or Text: Jack C. 301-908-8396

Website: happydestinyretreat.org

RSVP
Please fill out this online form so we may keep you updated. We will follow Howard County’s mandated covid safety protocols. https://tinyurl.com/hdbonfire

MASK POLICY
Masks are highly encouraged when gathering close to others outside of your household. Please practice safe distancing.

WHAT TO BRING
• A mask
• A Newcomer
• Your Own Picnic Dinner
• Chair/Blanket/Flashlight
• Warm Clothes/Jacket for After Dark

NO PETS PERMITTED

Located at Greenbank Farm
7158 Brooks Rd, Highland, MD

From the Montgomery County area, head EAST on 108 toward Howard County. After you cross the Patuxent River into Howard County go about a mile. Take a LEFT onto BROOKS RD, then turn into the FIRST DRIVEWAY on the LEFT.
Taking the Path of Freedom from the Bondage of Self

“FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE” (Big Book) Seminar

In-Person Meeting Only

WHERE: Church of the Assumption – Basement
3401 Martin L. King Avenue, SE WDC, 20032

Two Sessions

WHEN: Saturday, October 23, 2021 .... 1:00- 3:00pm
Saturday, October 30, 2021 .... 1:00- 3:00pm

Please Bring Your Big Books With You to Sessions:
Presenters: Terry R.
        Tiffany R.
        Carmella D.

(Please Pass This On)

COVID19 PROTECTIONS:

YOU MUST WEAR A MASK WHILE IN THIS MEETING ROOM.
SEATING WILL BE APPROPRIATELY SPACED FOR YOUR SAFETY.
THE ROOM WILL ALSO BE WELL-VENTILATED FOR YOUR SAFETY.

Thank you, Jeretha G.
SAVE THE DATE
JOIN US FOR AREA 13'S
ANNUAL GRATITUDE BREAKFAST
35TH ANNUAL
NOVEMBER 14, 8:30 AM
ZOOM INFO TBD
SAFETY CARD FOR A.A. GROUPS

The General Service Office has made this optional card available as an A.A. service piece for in-person/online groups that wish to use it. Please feel free to utilize, choose a section(s) or adapt the text to your group’s needs.

**Tradition Five states:** Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Any person seeking help with a drinking problem is welcome at this group. No A.A. entity determines an individual’s membership in Alcoholics Anonymous. It is this group’s conscience that if any person endangers another individual or disrupts the group’s efforts to carry A.A.’s message, the group may ask that person to leave the meeting.

This group strives to safeguard the anonymity of A.A. members and attendees; however, keep in mind that anonymity in A.A. is not a cloak for unsafe and illegal behavior. Addressing such behavior and/or contacting the proper authorities when appropriate, does not go against any A.A. Traditions and is meant to ensure the safety of all in attendance.

The short form of Tradition One states: “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.” Recognizing the importance of group unity, our group wishes to create a safe meeting environment in which alcoholics can focus on achieving sobriety.
Additional Sharing:

- Safety is a topic within A.A. that groups and members can address. Developing workable solutions to help keep meetings safe can be based on the principles of A.A. In discussions about safety, keep the focus on our primary purpose, our common welfare, and placing principles before personalities.

- Predatory behaviors and unwanted sexual advances are in conflict with carrying the A.A. message of recovery and with A.A. principles.

- A.A. does not provide medical advice or detox services; it has no opinion on outside issues, including medication. Medical advice should come from a qualified physician.

- The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. Groups and members strive to create a safe environment for the alcoholic who still suffers.

- If safety concerns arise, individuals can speak with a sponsor, members of the group, a trusted friend and/or a professional to address the concern.

- Service entities, such as areas, districts and intergroup/central offices, are available to help provide A.A. services and shared experience. All groups and entities in A.A. are autonomous. There is no government within A.A. and no central authority to control or direct its members, but we do share our experience, strength and hope.

For more information on this topic, see the service piece “Safety and A.A.: Our Common Welfare” (SMF-209) at aa.org.
WAGSA
Area Committee Meeting

October 11, 2021
6:00 pm – Orientation for new GSRs and DCMs (OPTIONAL)
7:00 pm – Area Meeting Begins

Zoom Meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82944514857?pwd=T2E0ZkpqMkIrCtS2QGevQ0Flidc4QT09

Join by Phone:
(US) +1 662-778-8021 (PIN: 582244691)

WAIA
Monthly Board Meeting

October 12, 2021—8:00 PM

Monthly Board of Directors Meeting – 2nd Tuesday of the month (except August)

Join Zoom Meeting: 8:00 PM
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83460598434?pwd=VVBEK2FNSzcxS3VZDFVOXhMa1oxZz09

Meeting ID: 834 6059 8434
Passcode: 819862

One tap mobile
+13017158592,,83460598434# US (Washington DC)

14th Annual
Happy Destiny Retreat
Fall Bonfire

Saturday, October 9, 2021

Bring your own Picnic Dinnr
4pm—Dinner, Music, Festivities and Fellowship
7pm—AA Meeting
Suggested Donation: $5.00
Website: happydestinyyretreat.org

Events are updated regularly!
If you would like to submit an event, send an email to events@aa-dc.org. A pdf flyer may be attached
CONTRIBUTIONS

WASHINGTON AREA INTERGROUP ASSOCIATION

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AA at CUA
AA & Family Issues
Addison Road
Adams Morgan Meditation
All Are Welcome
Anacostia
Andrews Armed Forces
As Bill Sees It, NW
As We Understood Him
Aspen Hill 5th Chapter
Aspen Hill Phoenix Mon.
Aspen Hill Phoenix Fri.
Attitude & Action
Attitude Adjusters
Back to Basics
Barnesville
Beginner Basics (DCC/Wed)
Beginners & Winners
Beginners are Winners
Beltsville
Brightwood
Brookland
Broad Highway
BYOL
BYOL (NonSmoke)
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Campus Noon
Capitol Heights
Capital Hill
Carmody Hill Group
Casey Barns
Cedar Lane Women
Change of Life
Cheltenham
Cheznut Lodge Outreach
Chevy Chase Group
Chinatown Big Book
Chinatown Men’s
Cigar Smokers
Clarksburg AA
Cleveland Park
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Coffee & Donuts
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1920
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Daily Reflections, NW
Darn Good Big Book
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Deanwood Women Rap
Deanwood Step
Double Dippers
Double Recovery
Dupont Circle Club
DC Young People
Del Ray Acceptance
Del Ray club
District 2
Divine Intervention
Dunn Drinking
Dunrobbin
8AM Men’s Big Book
Early Times
Epiphanies
Ex Libris
Faith Fellowship
Faith Group
52 Pick-Up
Fireside Spirituality
Foggy Bottom
Foglifters
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Friday Night Fun Too
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Gay Group
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Glenarden
Glen Echo
Goldsboro
Good News Beginners
Good Shepard
Grapevine Sat Women
Greenbelt Step
Growing Group
Happy, Joyous & Free
Help Wanted
High Noon
High on the Hill
High Sobriety
Hill Lunch
Hope Fellowship
Hope/Oxon Hill
Hyattsville Discussion
Hyattsville Hope
Informed Group
Irreverent Women
Jaywalkers
Just Before Noon
Just For Today
Kensington YP Step Study
Keys to Kingdom
Kid Friendly Big Book
Kingman Park
Language of the Heart
Landover Discussion
Lanham-Seabrook
Laurel Recovery
Leisure World Noon
Leisure World Big Book
Let Go Let God
Life Is Good
Little House
Lit Womxn
Living Sober by the Book
Living Sober Unity Place
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Merry Miracles
**WASHINGTON AREA INTERGROUP ASSOCIATION**

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If you would like to receive the hard copy of New Reporter, make check payable to WAIA and mail it to:

**Mail to:** WAIA
4530 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 111
Washington, DC 20008

$15.00 Year
$28.00 Two Years
$12.00 Group Rate

A free digital copy of the New Reporter is posted every month to our website at: https://aa-dc.org/new-reporter

To receive an email with the link each month, sign up using this form:

http://eepurl.com/U30BT or email newreporter@aa-dc.org

Have a story about your recovery in AA? Tell us your stories about how you’re saying sober in these difficult times.

Why not share it with all of us? If you’d like to contribute to the New Reporter, please send in your material to:

newreporter@aa-dc.org
THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE
Freddy C., August 26, 2021, Serenity House, 36 Years Sober

The NEW REPORTER is a monthly publication of the W.A.I.A., Inc., 4530 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20008. Printed Subscriptions are $15.00 per year and Digital Subscriptions are FREE. Articles and event information are encouraged from members of the Fellowship and its friends.

Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Washington Area Intergroup Association or A.A. as a whole.