

Covid, the 12th Step and Staying Sober throughout the holidays.



Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking. Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.

1



Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season. Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.

2



Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers. If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.

3



Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time. If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.

4



Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations

given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.

5



Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.

6



If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.

7



Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.

8



Worship in your own way.

9



Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.

10



Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations. Remember—"one day at a time."

11



Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy. Maybe you cannot give material gifts—but this year, you can give love.

12



"Having had a . . ." No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

Old Timer Learns 12-Step Lesson in Year 27

Hello, I am Tony and I am an alcoholic. I have been sober for many years and have actually been editing this newsletter for more than 20 of those years.

I have been blessed by a very active recovery experience during the Covid epidemic. Although meetings were disrupted briefly, our fellows found many ways to stay connected and to keep the torch lit through quarantines, mask mandates and even through the deaths of some members.

We began meeting outdoors and on Zoom. We kept the Intergroup office staffed. We were able to go on 12th-Step calls. Drove of newcomers entered the fellowship.

And about those newcomers. I gained a new appreciation for those who enter with problems other than alcohol. Many who are addicted to drugs started to come in and I have to admit that I learned so much from their struggles.

It has been a blessing and an honor to be in the thick of it. And in my journey, I can report that the realization and the living of my primary purpose has never been more evident.

I have multiple service commitments and I do my best to do the best I can to meet those commitments.

I go to three meetings a day, most days because I enjoy the fellowship so much. I have been given so much through working the 12 Steps that I just want to keep getting more.

I don't know why I have become so focused on my primary purpose, but it seems to fit. Today I am grateful indeed.

Tony F.
Saturday Morning Live, Annapolis, MD



GSR Shares joy of service through the 12th Step

The 12th step means someone brings you to A.A. so you can see for yourself people really do get sober and enjoy themselves. On March 5th 1976 I was taken to my first A.A. meeting after 15 years of out-of-control drinking. I didn't see anyone I knew, I didn't hear anything that made sense but I haven't had a drink since. The man that brought me told me if I didn't take a drink for one day and came and SIT WITH Y'ALL my life would get better. By doing that I learned there is a Program that's found in our basic TEXT and a Fellowship that brings the program to life. I can't tell you all that has happened to me, for me and in me but I can tell you for sure that when I stopped drinking, I stopped having drinking problems. A.A. has taught me how to stay sober and share my experience, strength and hope with others and for that I am Grateful.

Lee M.
GSR

Into Action: All Aboard! ***General Service leads to love and service***

I got into general service in the same age-old way that I have heard many other alcoholics speak about: My sponsor raised my hand at our home group's business meeting. And in a flash, I was a GSR (general service representative).

I didn't realize it at the time, but I had just embarked on one of the most inspiring and fulfilling chapters in my A.A. life. General service has deepened my reverence and passion for A.A., and I am forever grateful to my sponsor volunteering me that fateful night.

Right away my first question was, "Hey man, what's a GSR and what did I just get myself into?" As I began to get involved at the district level, I learned to appreciate the breadth and depth of A.A. as I became involved in the service structure. Then came out first area assembly. As our district began to make plans and discuss our travels, I felt excitement and camaraderie grow. It reminded me of my high school sports days, when the big game was coming up and the team was getting ready to hit the road.

I entered my first area assembly like a wide-eyed, small-town boy arriving in the big city for the first time. Full of questions, confusion and a sense of awe, I began to understand how all of the pieces fit together, from my home group to the district to the area assembly and to the General Service Conference. The energy and passion of a grand room full of smiling, laughing A.A. servants was infectious. I couldn't help but want what everyone had.

As time went by and I started to get my bearings as a GSR, I began to feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude that I had the opportunity to participate. It didn't matter whether I made coffee, cleaned up, took the phone watch or became a GSR, the time I have spent in general service has truly been an honor and a privilege. Frankly, I had my reservations when I first took the GSR position. Did I have time of this? Did I really want to do this?



As it turns out, every minute spent in service has paid huge dividends in my sobriety. I can't help but feel more connected and more excited about A.A.

One of my favorite pieces of A.A. advice is to stay in the middle of the boat. Don't get swept away in a squall of self-pity, resentment, isolation or complacency. It's true. The more I participate, the bigger the boat gets, and I have come to realize that the life raft I crawled into in early recovery is now a grand ocean liner, sailing the open seas of the world. The crew is assembled not only of my friends and neighbors, but a band of fellow travelers from all corners of the globe and walks of life.

For me, recovery is all about human connection. Being a GSR has allowed me to meet, work and connect with a much wider network of members beyond my local groups.

It gives me great peace to know that I get to play a small part in this beautiful program called A.A.

Adam W.
Virginia Beach, VA
From the *Grapevine*

♪ Locked Down and Plugged In

A longtime A.A. member and musician tunes in to stay focused and useful as the COVID-19 pandemic dims the lights on the performing world. (Originally appeared in the Grapevine)

I am a lifelong musician and I've had a performing and teaching career for 47 years. Since all my heroes were junkies and alcoholics, I mistakenly thought that in order to join the successful musicians' club I would have to follow suit.

I damn near drank and drugged myself to death over the course of 15 years. It never occurred to me that I was damaging myself physically, spiritually and emotionally, as well as hurting the people around me and severely limiting my musical ability. I was a daily user and abuser. Alcohol became my main priority.

Thankfully, several of my drinking buddies made the decision to avail themselves of A.A. all around the same time in 1981 in New York City. Eventually, I joined them in the rooms, primarily due to my back being against the wall. I had left many of the tools of my trade – my instruments – in pawn shops, and spent most of our money. My wife issued an ultimatum: I could get help or get out.

I spent a few years trying to do things my way before I surrendered and availed myself completely of a Higher Power, along with working the Steps, going to meetings regularly and helping others to stay sober. This is very much what I do in A.A. to this day.

When traveling to play music, I've always made a point of hitting meetings wherever I am. I also have a posse of guys I remain in contact with on a regular basis via email, video chat and cell phone. I have several sponsees. I make sure to have literature with me at all times and I read and play daily. If I keep the program front and center in my daily life, everything seems to work out. A.A. members have shown me that I can go through anything without picking up a drink and come out the other end a better person for it.

The Covid-19 pandemic this past year has caused havoc in the working lives of many folks in the performing arts. I have not played in person with other musicians for many months now. The bulk of my work as a performing musician was put on hold. I'm grateful that the program has

taught me to deal with what's in front of me a day at a time. I work to accept the things I cannot change.

As a result of becoming financially more responsible over time and learning how to make the most of any situation, I've been able to enjoy the past year, looking at the inability to work as something my Higher Power has put in front of me. The structure of A.A. has helped me to stay positive, active and inquisitive. That way, I move forward without succumbing to 'stinking thinking.'

Today, I'm enjoying staying home for the first time in over 40 years. I cook, read, learn, exercise and try to stay spiritually connected. I'm having a good time hanging with my wife and my A.A. friends, working on my music, going to online meetings all over the world and staying plugged into the program.

I've been blessed to be sober since 1984. I've had the same sponsor since I came to A.A. On his recommendation, I'm sharing my experience, strength and hope with the intention of inspiring some of you of you to hang in there and keep coming back.

I truly owe everything to A.A. I will keep showing up, making music and doing what I can to help others. Sobriety is the gift of life.

Bob M., Los Angeles, CA

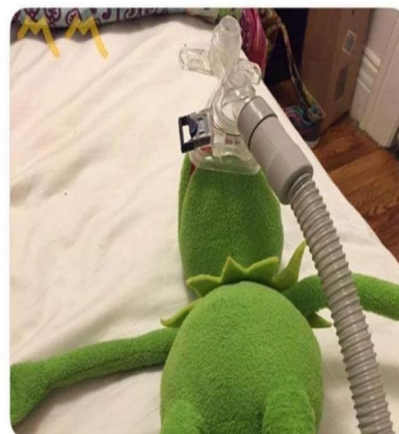




Me: it's not about how many times you fall, it's about how many times you get back up

Cop: that's not how field sobriety tests work

Me after laughing at my own jokes



News from the Grapevine!

The “meeting in print” podcast started on October 4, 2021, with a new episode scheduled for each Monday.

Each week Don and Sam will interview a different member about their experience, strength and hope, in a casual “meeting after the meeting” manner. Special features will enhance each episode.

A new podcast episode will be available in English every Monday.

To hear the podcasts go to
www.aagrapevine.org/podcast

AA Men's Meditation Retreat

Friday, December 10 – Sunday, December 12, 2021

Matt G, Retreat Master

Loyola Retreat House
9270 Loyola Retreat Road
Newburg (Faulkner), Maryland 20664



Come join the Sunday Men's Step Meeting at its eighth annual **AA Men's Meditation Retreat** at the **Loyola Retreat House**, located on the banks of the Potomac River. The Retreat offers opportunities to meet and share your experience, strength, and hope with old friends, and establish new friendships that may help sustain your own recovery for years to come. All attendees must be fully vaccinated and must show proof of vaccination (vaccination card, photo of card, etc.) In addition, all attendees must wear masks in all public spaces (this is a requirement of the retreat center.)

The total cost for the Retreat is \$250. This includes your room and all meals at the Retreat House. The fee is payable with an initial deposit of \$125, to be paid on or before November 1, 2021. The full amount is due from all attendees by November 22, 2021. Payments and deposits are non-refundable. Anyone who attends for any period of time/for any part of the retreat is required to pay the full cost of \$250 for the weekend. Attendance is limited and available on a first come/first served basis. Reserve your place with a payment through Venmo, Zelle, or credit or debit card on our web site:

Mens2021Retreat.com

Venmo: @mens-retreat

Zelle: Stephen McGarry 301 922 3557

or send your check payable to: Silver Spring AA Mens Retreat
8112 Flower Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Please include your email address or phone number on your check or money order so we can confirm your payment and reservation.

WAGSA Area Assembly/Inventory

December 13, 2021 - 7:00 pm 2nd Monday of the month except July

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83565638123?pwd=ZVVjdkRwSFhnMXRJQWhOeDVQUT09>

Meeting ID: 835 6563 8123

Passcode: 6970mc

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,83565638123#,,,,*801062#

Check the Events Page on WAIA's website for Holiday Event updates:

<https://aa-dc.org/events>

WAIA Monthly Board of Directors Meeting

December 14, 2021—8:00 PM 2nd Tuesday of the month except August

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83460598434?pwd=VVBEK2FNSzcxS3VXZDFVOXhMa1oxZz09>

Meeting ID: 834 6059 8434

Passcode: 819862

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,83460598434# US (Washington DC)s

CHECK OUT OUR EVENTS CALENDAR

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

AA at CUA	1920	Cosmopolitan	Gay Group
Addison Road		Crapshooters	100 Georgetown
All Are Welcome		Creative Arts	Glenarden
390 Alphabet Soup		Crossroads of Recovery	Glen Echo
Anacostia		Daily Reflections, NW	172 Goldsboro
780 Andrews Armed Forces	296	Daily Reflections, SW	30 Good News Beginners
250 As Bill Sees It, NW	30	Daily Reflections, UnityPI	Good Shepard
1050 As We Understood Him	120	Darn Good Big Book	217 Grapevine Sat Women
660 Aspen Hill 5th Chapter	1248	Darnestown Men	1545 Greenbelt Step
Aspen Hill Phoenix Mon.		Day by Day	30 Growing Group
20 Aspen Hill Phoenix Fri.		Deanwood Women Rap	Happy, Joyous & Free
750 Attitude & Action		Deanwood Step	Help Wanted
Attitude Adjusters	44	Double Dippers	High Noon
Back to Basics		Double Recovery	High on the Hill
Barnesville		Dupont Circle Club	180 High Sobriety
Beginner Basics (DCC/Wed)		DC Young People	Hill Lunch
Beginners & Winners	210	DCC Noon	Hope Fellowship
Beginners are Winners	134	DCC Women Fri.	60 Hope/Oxon Hill
Beltsville	248	DCC Tues. 6PM	How It Works G'burg
60 Brightwood	3202	DCC—930 Club	Hyattsville Discussion
Brookland		Del Ray Acceptance	Hyattsville Hope
360 Broad Highway		Del Ray club	156 Informed Group
3000 BYOL	24	Del Ray Sun Women	1860 Into Action, Germantown
20 BYOL (NonSmoke)		District 2	191 Investment
789 Burtonsville Big Book		Divine Intervention	Irreverent Women
Campus Noon	44	Double Recovery	Jaywalkers
Capitol Heights		Dunn Drinking	330 Just Before Noon
1105 Capital Hill		Dunrobbin	Just For Today
Carmody Hill Group		8AM Men's Big Book	Kensington YP Step Study
100 Casey Barns	1500	Early Times	47 Keys to Kingdom
Cedar Lane Women	775	Epiphanies	Kid Friendly Big Book
Change of Life		Ex Libris	Kingman Park
356 Chairman's Choice		Faith Fellowship	540 Language of the Heart
Cheltenham	126	Faith Group	Landover Discussion
Chestnut Lodge Outreach		52 Pick-Up	Lanham-Seabrook
Chevy Chase Group		Fireside Spirituality	Laurel Recovery
Chinatown Big Book	65	Foggy Bottom	Leisure World Noon
212 Chinatown Men's	109	Foglifters	Leisure World Big Book
25 Cigar Smokers		Forestville Primary Purpose	Let Go Let God
Clarksburg AA	240	14 Promises	Life Is Good
Cleveland Park		Fourth Dimension	Little House
Clinton 45 Plus		Friday Night Fun Too	21 Lit Hoppers
Clinton Day		Friday Night Big Book	74 Lit Womxn
Clinton 6:30		Friendly Bunch	Living Sober by the Book
Clinton Sunday Night	600	Friendship	Living Sober Unity Place
160 Coffee & Donuts		Gaithersburg Beginners	May Day
Colesville Sunday Nite		Gateway	50 Men's Meeting
College Park		Gateway/Wednesday	Meance to Serenity
		Gay 18 New Castle	600 Men of Dupont

	Men In Recovery	60	Palisades Mon. Nite		Sursum Corda
	Men's BS Session	60	Petworth	540	Takoma Park Necessity
79	Merry Miracles		Phoenix Group/DC	180	Takoma Rush Hour
340	Messengers		Pool'ville Pot Luck		Tenley Circle
308	Midcast	330	Potomac Group	60	There is a Solution-Women
2742	Midtown		Potomac Eye Openers		TGIF
100	Miracles		Primary Purpose Gay		Thurs. Morn. Reset
	Mo.Co. Women	371	Progress Not Perfection		Triangle Club
80	Monday Nite Women	125	Prospect group		Twelve Point Bucks
612	More Peace of Mind	147	Potomac Oaks		Unity Noon
	Montrose Gay		Promises Promises	120	Unlovely Creatures
320	Moving into the Solution	480	Queer Women		Upper Marlboro Step
	Mt. Rainer	97	Quince Orchard	418	Uptown
94	Nativity	606	Radicals		User Friendly
	Navy Yard Nooners		Read & Speak	129	VA Hospital Ctr
108	Neelsville Beginners	180	Riderwood Bills	400	Victory Lights
109	New Hope	120	Room with a View	45	Village Idiots
299	NE Sunrise	150	Rosedale Sobriety	281	Virtually Sober
	Never Too Late		Sat.Afternoon/2PM/UP		Vision for You
	Never Walk Alone	452	Saturday Morning Steps	110	Waters Landing
540	New Avenue	132	Saturday Night Happy Hour	600	We Are All Beginners
250	New Beginnings NW		Saturday Night Special		We Care
140	New Beginnings/Pool'ville	120	Scaggsville	169	Wednesday Nite Winners
	New Beginners SW		Second Chance		Welcome Group
	New Beginnings-Women	120	Serenity House	285	Westmoreland Women
	New Stomping Ground	120	Shepherders	50	West Side Men
200	New Unity Gay		Silver Spring Beginners BB	107	Westside Women
	No Exclusion		Silver Spring	285	What's Happening Now
	Norbeck Women Fri		Simplicity		When All Else Fails
171	Norbeck Women Wed		Six & Seventh Step		White Oak Steps & Traditions
	Norbeck Step	15	Soapstone	50	Women's Lit (180 Club)
185	NW Metro	240	Sober & Alive	963	Yacht Club
	Nuts & Bolts		Spiritual Hilltop		Yeas & Nays
129	Oasis Women's BB	75	Sobriety Sister		
	Old Fashion Group		Southern Sobriety		
	Olney Farm	2000	Spiritual Awakening	223	Birthday
150	On Awakening		St, Barnabas Womens wrap	330	Faithful Fivers
	On the Circle		St. Camillus	30,585	Individuals
	Olney Stag Rap	1100	St. Mary's Gay	600	Memorial
	One Day at a Time		St. Francis		
	One Day at a Time/R'ville	45	Starting Over Gaithersburg		
	One Day at a Time/G'burg		Step II Group		
	One Day at a Time/Lanham		Sunday Men's Step		
	One Hour Back	897	Sunday Morning Breakfast		
155	Out of the Woods	379	Sun. Morn. Breakfast Out		
180	180 Group	330	Sunday Morning Joy		
	Open Arms		Sun. Morning Reflections-UP		
1666	P Street	6000	Sunrise Sobriety		
		310	Sunshine, G'burg		

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<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



Day

Years

12/1

Diane

Living Sober by the Book

21 Years

12/2

Gloria B.

Progress Not Perfection

40 Years

12/8

Paulette J.

Living Sober by the Book

29 Years

THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

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.

VOLUNTEER

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

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December 2021