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. Droves 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 come 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 an 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
Wishing you all a Happy, Safe and Sober Holiday Season.

Keep the Plug in the Jug

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

*GIVE THANKS!*

*STAY SOBER!*

*BE MERRY!

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
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?
pwuZVVjdkRwSFhnMXRJQWhOeDVQUT09

Meeting ID: 835 6563 8123
Passcode: 6970mc
One tap mobile
+13017158592,,83565638123#,,,,*801062#

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 the Events Page on WAIA’s website for Holiday Event updates:
https://aa-dc.org/events

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.
WASHTON AREA INTERGROUP ASSOCIATION

AA at CUA
Addison Road
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)
Burtonsville Big Book
Campus Noon
Capitol Heights
Capital Hill
Carmody Hill Group
Casey Barns
Cedar Lane Women
Change of Life
Cheltenham
Chevy Chase Group
Chinatown Big Book
Chinatown Men's
Cigar Smokers
Clarksburg AA
Cleveland Park
Clinton 45 Plus
Clinton Day
Clinton 6:30
Clinton Sunday Night
Coffee & Donuts
Colesville Sunday Nite
College Park

1920 Cosmopolitan
Crapshooters
Creative Arts
Crossroads of Recovery
Daily Reflections, NW
Daily Reflections, SW
Daily Reflections, UnityPl
Darn Good Big Book
Darnestown Men
Day by Day
Deanwood Women Rap
Deanwood Step
Double Dippers
Double Recovery
Dupont Circle Club
DC Young People
Del Ray Acceptance
Del Ray club
Del Ray Sun Women
District 2
Divine Intervention
Double Recovery
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
Forestville Primary Purpose
Fourth Dimension
Friday Night Fun Too
Friday Night Big Book
Friendly Bunch
Friendship
Gaithersburg Beginners
Gateway
Gateway/Wednesday
Gay 18 New Castle
Gay Group
Georgetown
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
How It Works G’burg
Hyattsville Discussion
Hyattsville Hope
Informed Group
Just Before Noon
Just For Today
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 Hoppers
Lit Womxn
Living Sober by the Book
Living Sober Unity Place
May Day
Men’s Meeting
Meance to Serenity
Men of Dupont
Men In Recovery
Men’s BS Session
79 Merry Miracles
340 Messengers
308 Mideast
2742 Midtown
100 Miracles
Mo.Co. Women
80 Monday Nite Women
612 More Peace of Mind
Montrose Gay
320 Moving into the Solution
Mt. Rainer
94 Nativity
Navy Yard Nooners
108 Neelsville Beginners
109 New Hope
299 NE Sunrise
Never Too Late
Never Walk Alone
540 New Avenue
250 New Beginnings NW
140 New Beginnings/Pool’ville
New Beginners SW
New Beginnings-Women
New Stomping Ground
200 New Unity Gay
No Exclusion
Norbeck Women Fri
171 Norbeck Women Wed
Norbeck Step
185 NW Metro
Nuts & Bolts
129 Oasis Women’s BB
Old Fashion Group
Olney Farm
150 On Awakening
On the Circle
Olney Stag Rap
One Day at a Time
One Day at a Time/R’ville
One Day at a Time/G’burg
One Day at a Time/Lanham
One Hour Back
155 Out of the Woods
180 180 Group
Open Arms
1666 P Street

60 Palisades Mon. Nite
60 Petworth
Phoenix Group/DC
Pool’ville Pot Luck
330 Potomac Group
Potomac Eye Openers
Primary Purpose Gay
371 Progress Not Perfection
125 Prospect group
147 Potomac Oaks
Promises Promises
480 Queer Women
97 Quince Orchard
606 Radicals
Read & Speak
180 Riderwood Bills
120 Room with a View
150 Rosedale Sobriety
Sat. Afternoon/2PM/UP
452 Saturday Morning Steps
132 Saturday Night Happy Hour
Saturday Night Special
120 Scaggsville
Second Chance
120 Serenity House
120 Shepherders
Silver Spring Beginners BB
Silver Spring
Simplicity
Six & Seventh Step
15 Soapstone
240 Sober & Alive
Spiritual Hilltop
75 Sobriety Sister
Southern Sobriety
2000 Spiritual Awakening
St. Barnabas Womens wrap
St. Camillus
1100 St. Mary’s Gay
St. Francis
45 Starting Over Gaithersburg
Step II Group
Sunday Men’s Step
897 Sunday Morning Breakfast
379 Sun. Morn. Breakfast Out
330 Sunday Morning Joy
Sun. Morning Reflections-UP
6000 Sunrise Sobriety
310 Sunshine, G’burg

Sursum Corda
540 Takoma Park Necessity
180 Takoma Rush Hour
Tenley Circle
60 There is a Solution-Women
TGIF
Thurs. Morn. Reset
Triangle Club
Twelve Point Bucks
Unity Noon
120 Unlovely Creatures
Upper Marlboro Step
418 Uptown
User Friendly
129 VA Hospital Ctr
400 Victory Lights
45 Village Idiots
281 Virtually Sober
Vision for You
110 Waters Landing
600 We Are All Beginners
We Care
169 Wednesday Nite Winners
Welcome Group
285 Westmoreland Women
50 West Side Men
107 Westside Women
285 What’s Happening Now
When All Else Fails
White Oak Steps & Traditions
50 Women’s Lit (180 Club)
963 Yacht Club
Yeas & Nays

223 Birthday
330 Faithful Fivers
30,585 Individuals
600 Memorial
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[http://eepurl.com/U30BT](http://eepurl.com/U30BT) or email newreporter@aa-dc.org

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**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

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Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Washington Area Intergroup Association or A.A. as a whole.
December 2021