

# Sobriety Sentinel

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2022 - REPRESENTING DISTRICTS 14, 19 and 20 of AREA 38 - TRICOUNTYAA.ORG

## Reflections of an AA pallbearer

by ANDREW H  
Group 484

I'd been in AA for about a year when my daughter, then 9, told me, "Ever since you started going to meetings, you're going to funerals all the time." Indeed, I'd gone to four or five funerals that first year alone. But I didn't pull pallbearer duty until recently, at the funeral of my first sponsor, Skip.

Skip was 75 the day I asked him to sponsor me. A group of men from our homegroup would invite me out to Wendy's every Monday, and I had never gone. On the way out of the meeting that day, I asked Skip if he was going. "No..." he said, then he caught something in my demeanor, "Do you want me to go to Wendy's?" Yes, I answered.

While we were waiting for our orders, I asked if he'd be my sponsor. "Sure," he replied. "We'll sit out on my back patio, drink coffee, work the Twelve Steps, and I'll smoke my pipe." And that's what happened. I went to that man's house every morning for the next nine months. After that, we cut back to a few days a week. I could tell him anything, and did.

Covid shut down our homegroup. It brought me to a different job and a different house in a different county. And it changed my relationship with Skip to phone calls only. He wouldn't let me near his house anymore: "I'm super high-risk," he told me. "If I catch this virus, I'm dead."

He had multiple health issues, but the Parkinson's seemed to be taking the greatest toll. When I'd talk to him, he still seemed like himself. He still dispensed sound advice that I followed. But there was a slow, steady decline, both in his condition and in the frequency of my phone calls.

I eventually obtained another sponsor,

For more, please see  
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Courtesy Sts. Joachim and Ann

On New Year's Eve, Tri-County AA will host its annual free Al-cathon event at Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service, 4116 McClay Road in St. Charles. The Alcathon runs from 6:30 pm to just past midnight and features a fried chicken dinner, AA and Al-Anon speakers, music and dancing and more. This file photo does not depict AA members, so no need to blur any faces.

## A Home for the Holiday

Tri-County's Alcathon is a safe, free New Year's Eve event

by TOM B  
Group 113

The holidays are upon us again - a time for family, friends, food and fun. But it can also be a stressful time, especially for those who are newly sober.

That first set of sober holidays can be challenging, but with the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, we need never do anything alone. New Year's Eve in particular has always been known as a major drinking holiday, but there is an alternative.

The Tri-County Intergroup of Al-

coholics Anonymous will again this year be sponsoring the Alcathon, a safe, sober, family-friendly event. It will be held this year on New Year's Eve, Saturday, Dec. 31, at Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service, 4116 McClay Road in St. Charles.

Doors will open at 6:30 pm, with a dinner of fried chicken, side dishes, desserts and drinks served, beginning at 7 pm. At 8 pm, we will have a sobriety countdown, followed by AA and Al-Anon speakers.

Music and dancing, interlaced with raffle baskets and a 50/50

drawing, will begin after the speakers and continue until the stroke of midnight.

Once again this year, this will be a free event for all. To help offset the cost of the event, any groups or individuals who wish to donate a raffle basket would be greatly appreciated. We will also be "passing the hat" for donations that evening.

It has always been very important at the Intergroup to help provide a safe place for people to gather during the New Year's Eve holiday. It is a great time for reflection of the year past and for making plans for the year to come in the fellowship.

I stated earlier this will be a family-friendly event. Children are welcome. We will have on-site babysitters along with indoor games and activities for the children. All food and drinks will be provided, but if you desire to bring a covered dish or a dessert to share, you are more than welcome.

If you have any questions, need any information on raffle basket donations or wish to serve on the activities committee and help with the event, please feel free to contact me (Tom B, 636-248-4010) or the co-chair (Sue S, 314-657-5650). We look forward to seeing you.

## Take hold of the solution to spiritual sickness

My fight through this addiction experience has been perpetuated by my alter ego. All the times I thought I had control - nope. This is a spiritual sickness. Most people don't deal with the same problems or struggles as we do.

I always imagined that I was coping with my life in a positive way, but it was like I was dead inside, keeping a smile on my face. I slovenly trudged through the day with no purpose.

When I came to AA, it was like, *Damn, there are others out there who have experienced these strange dealings that occur in my everyday life?* Too many times I had pushed people away, rebelled, was stubborn as a doorknob that won't latch.

In dealing with the steps, I had

to learn to open up about past traumatic episodes that had colored my existence. For me, trust was the hardest issue.

The AA fellowship, however, has shown me that, even in the darkest parts of my journey, there was a group that could help to lead me in the right direction. If I so choose, I can utilize the healing fellowship that is offered here.

For those who are struggling, I'm fighting for you too, along with so many others. I'm still a long way from getting my shit together, but God willing, I don't have to go back and live life in agony of defeat. I choose to be an overcomer, and I'm not going to fail, regardless of what the world may think of me.

-Anonymous

## AA ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Group 164's Ninth** Annual Gratitude meeting will be held Wednesday, Nov. 23, at St. Charles Presbyterian Church, 131 Gamble St. Doors open at 6p, with a total of 10 AA and Al-Anon speakers between 7-8p. Pie and coffee will follow.

To join from the comfort of Zoom, dial up ID: 562 214 9567, PW: steppers.

**Keith A of Group 5** reports: After more than 35 years meeting in the outbuilding (Celebration Hall) of St. John's United Church of Christ (Friedens Church), we have been forced to move.

Group 5 has outlived the building, and

it is no longer fit for occupation. The church has moved us inside the main church, to a room called the Media Room.

To find us, enter the church through the main double-door entrance by the parking lot. The parking lot is still entered from Zumbehl Road, across from Quik Trip.

After entering the church, go down one flight of stairs and make a left into the hallway. The Media Room is on the left, near the end of the hall. Not really any wheel chair access to this area, however.

Meeting time is still 7 pm on Thursday nights and is still a one-hour meeting.

## BIRTHDAYS

Ted N 10/20 7 years  
Vernon S 10/23 29 years

### GROUP 164

Kristen O 10/26 2 years  
Amber W 10/7 14 years

### GROUP 1122

Pat S 8/24 46 years

### GROUP 77

Dennis T 10/29 4 years  
Holly C 11/1 4 years  
Janet O 11/12 3 years  
Darren B 9/11 2 years  
Mark A 11/4 4 years

**GROUP 484**  
Rich E 10/20 7 years  
Robert C 11/6 6 years

### GROUP 968

Kathy F 10/12 51 years

### GROUP 228

Amy N 11/15 21 years  
Tom M 11/15 13 years

### GROUP 124

Kim S 10/8 10 years  
Mike H 10/29 33 years  
Amber R 11/4 3 years  
Terry F 11/5 13 years  
Jim H 11/11 33 years

## RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

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

## DECLARATION OF UNITY

This we owe to AA's future: to place our common welfare first; to keep our fellowship united. For on AA unity depends our lives, and the lives of those to come.

## DON'T MISS

### Monthly Meeting for IRs:

Sun. 11/20 and 12/18 at 12 pm, Campus Office, 2021 Campus Drive, St. Charles; or use Zoom ID: 874 7379 9414, no password required

### District 14 meeting for GSRs:

Thu. 12/29 at 6:30 pm, Chapel of the Cross Lutheran, 907 Jungermann, St. Peters

### District 19 meeting for GSRs:

Thu. 12/1 at 6:30 pm, 37 Elaine Dr, O'Fallon

### District 20 meeting for GSRs:

Mon. 12/5 at 7 pm, Lincoln County Council on Aging, 1389 Boone St, Troy





Jim O/ARCH

# Gateway to Recovery



Jim O/ARCH

by **JIM O**  
**Big Book Boys Group**

A little more than a year ago, Addiction Recovery Community Help, commonly known as ARCH, opened its doors to the recovery community of Saint Charles and surrounding areas.

In spite of the impact of Covid, ARCH - a not-for-profit 501(c)3 - has been successful in establishing several AA and other Twelve Step meetings at its facility in the heart of downtown Saint Charles.

ARCH has been able to get the word out through various channels about

meeting space availability, and ARCH officials feel confident the facility will fill its meeting calendar in the near future.

In addition to launching its new website ([arch-stc.org](http://arch-stc.org)), ARCH is now hosting a Saturday evening Old Timer Speaker Series. This was a very popular series "back in the day" at the historic Lindell Club.

The initial speaker meeting will be held November 19, 2002 at 6 pm at the ARCH facility, 502 South Fifth Street. There is plenty of parking available, and complimentary coffee will be served.

During the 212 Club's recent shut-

down due to flooding, ARCH was able to provide complimentary meeting space for several of the Club's homegroup meetings.

While it was fortunate that space was available, the number-one goal of ARCH is to fill its calendar with Twelve Step meetings. As we all know, the future growth of Alcoholics Anonymous and other Twelve Step programs, is by coming together with the primary purpose of helping those who still suffer.

To that end, ARCH has ample space available for new meetings, particularly during the morning and afternoon hours. There are also some good

primetime day and evening hours open.

ARCH has been operating on limited rental income and by the financial support of several ARCH Board members. While ARCH is planning upcoming sober special events, including a golf tournament, it is committed to the basic Seventh Tradition principle of being "self-supporting through [its] own contributions."

If you would like more information about ARCH or would like to look into starting a new meeting, check out the website's existing schedule for availability, or call Cindy at (314) 744-0971.

## Pallbearer: Family is created, nurtured

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but over this past summer, I ran into Skip twice, at large events. Each time was a surprise. At Group 124's potluck, I told him, "I thought you were never coming around groups of people again." He replied, "I said that?" I nodded, and he said, "Well, I must have changed my mind." He wasn't remembering stuff too well, but his sense of humor, empathy and intelligence were all still there.

I saw Skip again at a birthday party for the husband of a mutual AA friend. I had bought Skip a 43-year coin the month before and kept it in my car, at the ready. At that party, the last time I saw him alive, I got to present Skip with his coin.

My phone rang about a month later. I was surprised at the name on the caller ID. He hadn't called me in probably a year. "Good morning Skip," I said. A female voice said, "This isn't Skip, it's Judy." His wife. A wonderful woman. Telling me her husband had passed away.

Next time I saw Judy was at the visitation. That was when I started to meet all the family members who, until this point, had existed only as characters in the stories Skip would tell me about his life. Sons, daughters, grandkids, a great-grandkid, in-laws - I interacted with them all over the course of the visitation, the funeral and the luncheon afterward. And I came to realize, it wasn't just sponsees who felt safe giving Skip a Fifth Step here and a Tenth Step there. His family confided in him, and he was gentle with them too, nonjudgmental.

In the lobby of the church before the service, and at the luncheon after, I was surrounded by AA people. My people. But as the crowd thinned, I stuck around. I hung out with Skip's family. Spent the last 45 minutes of my visit at Judy's side. Said my goodbyes. And I took with me feelings of gratitude, love, belonging and usefulness. Which is really the most spiritual outcome a pallbearer can reasonably hope for.



## Diagnosis, Atrophy, Apathy, Relapse, Return

Multiple myeloma changes the game for one woman who goes back out then - by God's grace - finds her home again in AA

by **NICCI Y**  
**Group 167**

I was first introduced to the rooms of recovery more than a decade ago. My sponsor would make profound statements like, "It works if you work it," "Chase your recovery like you chased your drugs," and, "You're either working on recovery or you're working on a relapse; there is no idle in-between." I didn't understand what she meant until I'd lived it.

I was diagnosed with multiple myeloma when I was 38 years old, after breaking my back jumping rope. Immediately, my normal day-to-day life drastically changed. Radiation, aggressive chemotherapy, bone marrow transplant, moving to a different state, reconstructive back surgery with titanium hardware inserted to hold things together, another back surgery, and the death of my dad from cancer were just the beginning of my downward spiral.

Multiple myeloma doesn't go into remission, and I was told I would need daily oral chemo and multiple bone

marrow transplants to aid in extending my time on this earth as long as my body can tolerate treatment. The realization of what my new normal was going to look like thrust me into mental, emotional and spiritual darkness.

During all of this, I stopped working a program, stopped calling my sponsor, stopped going to meetings, stopped reading the literature and stopped reaching out to the people in the fellowship. Like a stone rolling down a hill, my relapse had been set in motion long before I justified the first drink.

I idled in the vastness of hopelessness and self-pity, feeling dead inside despite all I was doing to keep my physical body alive. Then I found Alcoholics Anonymous. As He often does, God met me right where I was at.

Now I'm working on my recovery again. I call my amazing sponsor every day. I attend and participate in a lot of meetings. I'm working my steps and reading the literature. I have a service commitment, and I'm active with people in the fellowship.

God has placed me in the center of a boat filled with beautiful sponsee sis-

ters and other alcoholics who also work their recovery. I am no longer drowning in the darkness. By the grace of a loving and merciful God and Alcoholics Anonymous, I've recovered from a hopeless state of mind.

On a daily basis, I'm learning more about how to embrace acceptance and serenity regardless of circumstance. My joy is no longer defined by what's going on around me but instead by the God who has always resided within me.

Those who have loved and supported me all along the way will have the very best of me for whatever time I'm allowed on this side of eternity. My husband will have the wife he deserves. My children will have the mother they need. My grandchildren will never have to experience me in the grips of the insanity that is active alcoholism. They will have the happy, joyous, and free me. As long as I continue to work on recovery they will have the sober me.

All because God brought me to Alcoholics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous brought me back to God.

All opinions expressed are those of individuals and do not necessarily reflect the views of AA as a whole.  
To give feedback or report Tri-County AA news or events, please email [sentinel@tricityaa.org](mailto:sentinel@tricityaa.org)

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