

Sobriety Sentinel

OCTOBER 2023 - REPRESENTING DISTRICTS 14, 19 and 20 of AREA 38 - TRICOUNTYAA.ORG

HAPPY AND SOBER IN THE RAIN

On August 26th, Tri-County AA held its annual picnic at Laurel Park in St. Peters. After a week of the hottest weather St. Louis has seen in years, we were looking forward to the temperature coming down into the upper 80s with a slight chance of a spot shower. What we and meteorologists did not anticipate was that it would rain virtually nonstop from 9 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon. At the picnic, a memory came to mind of the first time I worked the first step with a sponsor who had me list 20 things that I was powerless over. Naturally, I struggled with coming up with 20 but, of the original 7 that I generated, weather was one of them. God does have a sense of humor.

I did learn some things from this event, however. First of all, I was reminded that acceptance is the key to everything. I was very impressed with the mood and demeanor of all the volunteers who helped set up, decorate, prepare the food, and set up audio equipment, not to mention transport many supplies in the rain. Everyone was upbeat and had a good time just simply being of service and being adrift together in the same lifeboat in the storm. Secondly, I was pleasantly surprised by how many AA members braved the weather conditions to come out and attend the picnic. Attendance was estimated between 120 and 150 people. I received comments from several people during the course of the picnic about the beauty of the pavilion and the park as a whole. It is a shame that due to the weather people were not able to avail themselves of the many amenities at Laurel Park and the games we had planned but I hope people enjoyed themselves nonetheless.

Once again this year, Ken C. from Group 340 brought out his large pull-behind barbeque pit and he and some of his friends prepared hamburgers, bratwurst, and hotdogs for the picnic. D.J. from Group 113 was in charge of frying up 35 pounds of catfish. With numerous side dishes and desserts, no one left hungry.

At 2:45 Laura G. and Julie S., current and past chairs of Tri-County respectively, gave a brief talk on what Tri-County is and what it does. This was followed at 3:00 by our speakers, Tammy W. for Al-Anon and Lois L. for AA. All of our speakers did a great job and were well received. Following the speakers, we raffled off numerous baskets that had been donated by the groups. We had some great baskets this year. A special shout-out to Tracy K. and Group 392 in Hawk Point who donated 3 very nice baskets. Following the baskets, the 50/50 was drawn and the picnic drew to a close shortly before 5 p.m. just as the sun came out. God does have a sense of humor.



Once again, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the more than 20 volunteers who helped put on the event, the AA members who supported the picnic through their attendance, and the groups who showed their love by donating baskets. People in AA never cease to amaze and inspire

me. The AA literature says "We are not a glum lot - we absolutely insist upon having fun" and this year's picnic was a perfect example of that.

If anyone has any concerns, suggestions, or feedback on the picnic, we at Tri-County would love to hear from you because we want to make it the best event possible.

In service,

Tom B.

FELLOWSHIP DISCOVERY

I came into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous as a chameleon. Most of my life I would warp myself to become the same as everyone around me and it took me deep into my alcoholism for years. At the beginning of sobriety, I fell into the rooms not knowing who I was, what I liked and who I wanted to become as I ventured down the path into recovery. I found myself feeling like an outsider in a room full of people. There were times where I felt like the kid on the outside of a picture window out in the cold looking in at people full of merriment, joy and peace wondering if that was ever something that I deserved to receive in my life. Honesty I felt separate, different and alone and not worthy of such things in my life. I will say that the chameleon did serve as an asset in the beginning because I really wanted what you all had and was willing to mold myself to do the things that I saw working in your lives. However, today I have found that it no longer serves me as I have discovered my authentic self and love the woman I am today!

One of the ways I have been able to do this is to surround myself with a tribe of women in recovery that help me stay accountable, teachable and grow with me spiritually. Just recently we were able to connect on a weekend getaway. It was something I needed to fill my cup and have it overflow with gratitude. Friday night we had a fire and turned over our worries, doubts, fears and gratitude to a higher power. I

was able to share a very vulnerable list full of shaming thoughts I need to let go of with these beautiful women. When I was done sharing, many of the women present said thank



you so much for sharing, that list could have been written by me. I am reminded that no matter the thought or idea we are never alone in them. When I can stay vulnerable not only do I grow but I am able to help the forest grow with me. We started Saturday morning off with yoga led by a very talented woman. It is her talent, and she was willing to share this with all of us. She was so patient, kind and non-judgmental as she led us through a journey of inner peace and contentment. That evening I was able to venture out on the lake in a kayak and watch my higher power show off with a magnificent show of falling stars and wishes. I got to have a night full of laughter and wonderment. My all-time favorite moment was Sunday morning when one of the ladies shared that she was struggling, and I was able to witness her being surrounded by others to love and support her. The weekend taught me that we can come together as women and recover without judgment or condemnation and instead we straighten each other's crowns and walk hand in hand down the road to happy destiny. When we are our authentic selves, we can share our strengths and weaknesses with those around us and create the fellowship we have always craved.

Written By: Patty A.

THE GLUE THAT BINDS US...TRADITION SIX

Traditions are the glue that holds AA together and the compass that guides AA in the right direction. Each month we look at a Tradition, where possible, associate it with one or more of the Steps, and describe how it can be used in our world beyond Alcoholics Anonymous, i.e., in all our affairs.

Tradition 6 Short Form: An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

The "related facility" may be an outside group combating alcoholism—or an enterprise that A.A.'s want to start or join. It was the latter that most often confronted the young

Fellowship. Outside agencies were scarce in the early days of AA, and some members thought A.A. should cover the whole alcoholism field. Led by a "super-promoter" (as the

"Twelve and Twelve" describes him), one group built an all-purpose center, including a section for drying-out treatment. Picture any group tackling such a project! Arguments over cost, architecture, staff, fees, medication, and rules might even make the local paper. (And pity the poor newcomer straying into the group— "We'll get around to you in a minute.")

Though that ambitious center failed, some individual members have since founded successful clubhouses, rest farms, halfway houses, etc. The enterprises are run by these A.A.'s and patronized by other members or prospective members. But

money and property is involved. Therefore, it has proved wise to keep the operation of the facility separate from that of any A.A. group, and to keep "A.A." or terms like "Twelfth Step" out of the name.

Toward outside agencies dealing with alcoholism, the A.A. policy is "cooperation but not affiliation." A group cooperates, for example, by welcoming referrals from clinics or by sponsoring A.A. groups in institutions. But in one area, money for a rehab facility was solicited at an A.A. meeting—implying affiliation. In another, A.A. was listed among beneficiaries of a United Fund drive....**From the 12 Traditions Illustrated**

Principle: Non-Affiliation

Tradition 6 - Step Connection: The sixth step poses the question, how can I become entirely ready to have my defects of character removed? The answer is in the sixth tradition. In fact, the sixth tradition describes my main character defects: the problems involved in seeking money, property, and prestige. The sixth tradition contains the solution to my problems of money, property and prestige: the more primary in my life carrying the message becomes, the less problems of any kind I have!

Using Tradition 6 in our Relationships - Beyond A.A.: This tradition is important in protecting the relationship and its unity. It keeps each member responsible for themselves. No person can meet all the needs of another; we're responsible for taking care of ourselves but are enhanced by our association to each other. Our separateness is our mutual strength. It

promotes a relationship of healthy equals. A partner should be supportive - spiritually, emotionally, and physically to the relationship, but a mature partner doesn't do for the other what he/she should do for themselves. Doing so could promote an inflated ego which would divert the primary purpose of the relationship which is to express God's love and not one's own self-will. You will note that God does not do for you what you should and can do for yourself - he only helps when you need something beyond your own power - this is part of God's love for us. He realizes that to help us when we can help ourselves is to cripple us and that he'd never do. Without realizing it we create situations in which we place ourselves in the role of helper, fixer, enabler, and create sick dependencies in those we try to help.

Communication is vital in a relationship. You can encourage another and be interested in each other's growth in all the important areas, but you must allow the other person the dignity to grow (and perhaps fail) on his/her own without your insistence or advice. Allow the other person to have different ideas, concepts, beliefs, feelings, etc., and allow yourself this same freedom also. Partners/friends should complement one another - not be crutches for one another in any area of the relationship. This tradition protects each individual's identity in the relationship and thus preserves the unity of that relationship.

Written By: Greg K.

MEDICATION IN RECOVERY

Alcoholics Anonymous has a few hot button issues where our population is divided. The one that personally affects me the most is the subject of medicine. My partner and I are both in the program and have very different views on whether medicine should be taken or not. I have severe depression, anxiety, and OCD and find that for my quality of life, sanity, and sobriety it is necessary to be medicated. My partner on the other hand is of the opinion that if one is practicing the AA program fully it should take care of all issues; mental, emotional, and physical. Therefore rendering medication unnecessary.

If I am unmedicated, I find it almost impossible to get out of bed in the morning and if I do make it out of bed, I can only find my way to the couch for the rest of the day. I struggle to accomplish many of the necessities required of life, such as work, making food, walking my dog, and interacting with friends and family. This is not only because of my depression but also because of my crippling anxiety. I analyze everything to death and then become so overwhelmed by tasks and decisions that I am unable to take any action. However when I am medicated, I am a happy and productive member of society who is motivated to follow my interests and accomplish everyday activities.

Though I take medicine, I stay current with my sponsor and

other women in the program about what I am taking and my current mental state. In this way I stay accountable and if one of those women sees something that is not right in my behavior they can help me get into a solution.

My partner and I have had many discussions pertaining to the subject of medicine where we have tried to make the other see our side, yet have been unable to do so. It has caused tension in our relationship, and within me personally, a fear to discuss medicine and my mental state at all with my partner.

Recently we had a major argument about me taking medicine. It is heart wrenching to want my partner's support and to feel that I do not have it in this matter. Thankfully, we both work a strong program and were able to come back to the subject a few hours later with cooler heads and some self reflection, personally with the help of my sponsor. We came to the agreement that neither of us would be able to change our beliefs to match the others and that we need to make the decisions that are best for us according to our belief system. So in the end we applied one of the AA slogans, Live and Let Live. We still make decisions together as a couple however when it comes to this subject we allow the other to do what is best for them and we stay out of each other's programs.

I know that we are not the only couple that stand on different sides of a hot button issue like this and I hope that sharing about it will help someone.

Written by: Anonymous

EMBRACE THE MYSTERY

Alcoholics Anonymous member, author, and spiritual teacher Herb K. compares "the mysterious dance between grace and willingness" to the chicken-or-the-egg question. Which came first, good things happening to us that we didn't deserve, or our desire and readiness to seek God's help? I believe it's a combination of both that gets us to AA and to full spirituality, but how much of that is us and how much is our Higher Power? The intricacies of this entanglement are just one form of Divine Mystery. I'm paraphrasing Herb K here, and some of this passage includes him paraphrasing Father Webber and the AA Big Book:

The word God is only a symbol, attempting to name the ultimate and unnamable Mystery at the foundation of reality. The secret to 12-Step recovery is that it's a spirituality where God remains anonymous, without any specific required name: "the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek.

Willingness is the key. But Grace is the power to turn that key. I took this question [chicken

*or egg] into meditation, and I saw: I was taken to a place of willingness and I was willing to be taken. A reference book titled *The Inspirational Atheist* includes an entire chapter of quotes on Mystery. Even independent of belief in God, this Power can clearly cultivate wonder and awe. Here are a few:*

1. *To allow mystery, which is to say to yourself, "There could be more, there could be things we don't understand," is not to damn knowledge. It is to take a wider view. It is to permit yourself an extraordinary freedom: someone else does not have to be wrong for you to be right. -Barry Lopez*

2. *I find enough mystery in mathematics to satisfy my spiritual needs. I think, for example, that pi is mysterious enough (don't get me started!) without having to worry about God. Or if pi isn't enough, how about fractals? Or quantum mechanics? -Tom Lehrer*

3. *There is a theory which states that if ever anyone discovers exactly what the Universe is for and why it is here, it will instantly disappear and be replaced by something*

*even more bizarre and inexplicable. There is another theory which states that this has already happened. -Douglas Adams, *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe**

I've kept my view of God simple—all-Loving, all-Knowing, all-Powerful, all-Forgiving. Since starting work with my sponsor in Herb K's book "Twelve Steps to Spiritual Awakening," I've added all-Caring and all-Mystery.

One of Herb's instructions for daily prayer includes a section in which I:

- a) Use my will to be present to the Presence of God
- b) Allow the Spirit to guide me
- c) Respond from my heart
- d) Embrace the Mystery
- e) Am conscious of my intention.

Mystery is very much part of the Power that is sufficient for me to overcome alcoholism and to feel the Presence and the Fellowship of the Spirit today.

Written By: Andrew H

Upcoming Events

FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT
SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 1

ST. LOUIS FALL CLASSIC 2023
@ CROWNE PLAZA
WWW.STLFCCLASSIC.ORG

CONCEPTS COME ALIVE SIMPLIFIED
District 20 Workshop
CARL B-Area 38 Archivist
History of AA in MO
SAT., SEPT. 23 FROM 12-3
Zion UCC
725 Main St. Troy, Mo
Hosted By: Group 113
lunch, drinks and dessert

Hilljack House Family BBQ Fundraiser
\$10 per plate
Saturday Sept. 23rd 11-4
Deer Creek Park @ 3200 Laclede Station Rd, Maplewood MO

KICK BALL TOURNAMENT
AA SPEAKER @ 2:00
NA SPEAKER TO FOLLOW
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT DAWN S.
(314) 243-3192

FRIENDS OF BILL W. GOLF OUTING
EAGLE SPRINGS GOLF COURSE
4 PERSON SCRAMBLE
SEPTEMBER 30TH @ 1:00
SIGN IN: 12:00-12:30
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
RICK P. 314-657-7865
NORTH COUNTY OFFICE 314-731-4854

District 14 Workshop
"THE FOURTH DIMENSION"

SAVE THE DATE
October 7th from 2-4

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2023

SAVE THE DATE!

82ND ANNUAL CENTRAL SERVICE OFFICE
ALANO BANQUET
Orlando Event Center 2050 Dorsell Village
Maryland Heights, MO

212 CLUB TO AM UNTIL GONE
Fundraiser
September 23
Corner of Veterans Memorial/Highway K

MEETING INFO

West County Club
ESTABLISHED 1986

The 12 Steps Presented By AA Couples

OUR PRESENTERS
9/26 Kelly and Rick K Steps 1,2,3
10/3 Suzie and Harold L. Steps 4,5
10/10 Maggie and Marc W Steps 6,7
10/17 Becky and Mark Z. Steps 8,9
10/24 Tonya and Matt H. Steps 10,11,12

6:45-7:45pm
Main Meeting Room
Everyone Welcome! Snacks provided.
16296 Westwoods Business Park, Ellisville MO.

Alcoholics Anonymous
HAS A NEW HOME

SLOW LEARNERS GROUP 1182
MONDAYS @ 6:00

FIRST ST. CHARLES UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
801 FIRST CAPITAL DIVE

PLEASE USE THE 8TH STREET ENTRANCE ONLY

Saturdays 9AM
ARCH
Addiction Recovery Community Help
Big Book Meditation Meeting
Music combined with Silent Prayer

502 5th Street, St. Charles, Mo.
For information call 314-283-3169
Everyone welcome!!!
Complimentary donuts and coffee
arch-stc.org

A.A. ON THE ROCKS PRESENTS

Journey Through The 12 Steps
Coed - A.A. Big Book Based
12-Step Workshop (Bi-weekly)
September 2023 - March 2024.

Community Connection Hub
(Meeting in the "Freedom Room")
140 Weldon Parkway
Maryland Heights, MO 63043

Tuesday Evenings
7:00 to 8:30 PM CST
For More Information & To Reserve Workspaces
Use all Formats, Please Email Us at
aaontherocks@gmail.com

In-Person and Virtual Meeting
2024 Meeting ID: 763 658 8276
Password: AAO76

Come and join us!

SUPPORT NEEDED @ The Office

Candlelight 12 & 12

Friday Night @ 10 PM

SOBRIETY SISTERS GROUP 1147
NEW LOCATION
Chapel of the Lake
Lake Saint Louis

STARTING OCTOBER 4TH
NOON MEETING
ROTATING FORMAT

DID YOU CALL YOUR SPONSOR TODAY?

PEOPLE'S OPINIONS ARE NONE OF MY BUSINESS

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "You wouldn't worry so much about what others think of you if you realized how seldom they do." And my sponsor says, "What other people think of you is none of your business." But I *do* worry about what others think. It's a major source of my anxiety. For years, I had no idea this was self-centered behavior. When my sponsor told me I was letting my ego run loose like a bull in a China shop, I was shocked and offended.

I thought self-centered meant "conceited or vain." It actually means "holding one's self-interest as a standard for decision-making." Believing other people are thinking or talking about me is self-centered behavior. This was standard practice when I was drinking. I never actually *heard* anyone say anything about me, but I knew what they were thinking! And I knew it wasn't nice. I still have a bad habit of reading other people's minds. It takes me about 20 seconds to decide what they think of me. I can make up my mind from a single text message, Facebook post, or a glance at a meeting or at a stoplight. And I know their thoughts of me are always critical. They think I'm lazy.

Unintelligent. Weird. Not as good. Why? I'm an alcoholic. My ego is not my amigo.

The truth is that no one is thinking about me, and even if they are, it probably looks a lot different than my assumptions. Why do I project my self-doubt onto other people? It's unfair to me and even more unfair to the other person. It makes me anxious, unhappy and causes me to behave towards people in ways they don't deserve. My sobriety is much too important to risk by imagining what people are thinking about me.



"Selfishness – self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate... Resentment is the 'number one' offender."

-AA Big Book, p. 62, 64

I've started to foster a bit of humility—small and fragile, sometimes fleeting—but it feels good. Not taking anything personally is a magical life hack. It's liberating and peaceful. There's no point in pretending I never care what others think of me. That would be dishonest.

There are things I try to remember. First, nothing other people do is because of you. It's because of themselves. If someone is intentionally snappy or rude, it's a pure reflection of how they're feeling at that moment. Second, it's impossible to overanalyze or obsess over anything you DON'T follow on social media. If I do see something disagreeable, I don't engage. Responding is not the way to end the exchange; ignoring it is. Finally, if it's out of my hands it should be free from my mind. No sense in fretting about it.

I hope you enjoyed this article, but if not, it's none of my business.

Written By: Missy R.

SENTINEL SARCASM...RULE 62

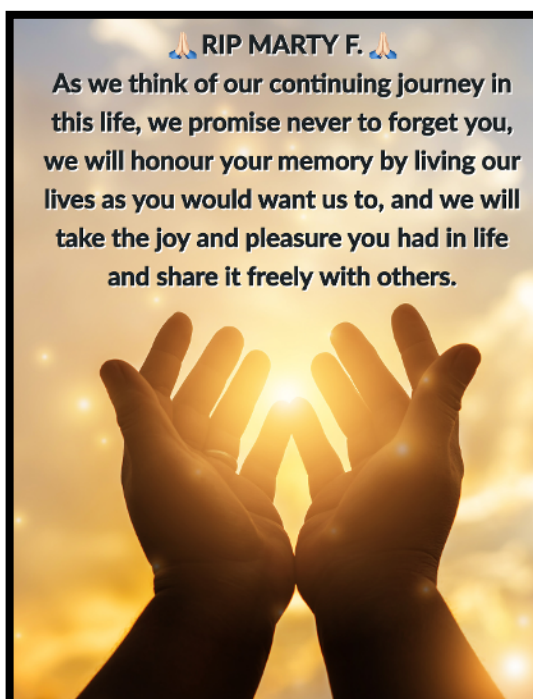


That's all for now folks...

LET GO

- let go so you can smile again.
- let go so you can be a good friend.
- let go so you can feel good about yourself.
- let go and remember you can ask for help.
- let go so you can finally live.
- let go and remember not to constantly give.
- let go so you can find your way.
- let go so you can live for today.
- let go and hold onto positive thoughts.
- let go and remember the battles you've fought.
- let go so you can finally be free.
- let go so you can live and let be.
- let go so you can settle your mind.
- let go and leave your past behind.
- let go so you can learn to be whole.
- let go so you can strengthen your soul.
- let go of the hate and hold onto the love.
- let go and turn it over to the Man up above.
- ...when you're overwhelmed and struggling, breathe in and just know, we're all only human and it's okay to let go.

Written By: Cassy K.



The Ninth Step Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through.

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

Self-seeking will slip away.

Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

3rd ed. Big Book pg. 83 & 84

**CHANGE IS INEVITABLE
GROWTH IS OPTIONAL**