



ALKI-LINE



TAKE ONE, IT'S FREE

The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter Vol. 26 No. 4 Aug. - Sep. 2017

ANGELS OF AA

I went from the top of the music world — songs on the radio, videos on TV, world tours with a band, tour buses and stage crews, playing big venues and actually making some money for a change - to living in a single room above a barroom, playing the piano for my rent, spending my unemployment checks on booze, and hiding from life. My brother put it perfectly, back in those dark days. He said "It's as if your life is getting smaller and smaller".

How can one descend into such bleak insanity, settling for so little? The answer, I know now, is denial and fear and the unwillingness to face my demons. In my case, the demons were alcohol and Xanax. You've heard that saying "God puts people in your path"? Well, God has placed angels on my path to recovery.

I had quit drinking in 1980, after getting steadily worse from the age of 14. I went to one AA meeting and did not pick up a drink for twenty years. During that period, many things happened, some of them very good including a record deal, several U.S. and world tours with a band, music videos, television appearances, and hits on the radio. However, as the resentment against the music business and fears started to eat away at me, I started to think about drinking, more and more and so drink I did. Well, you know what happened. My drinking at first didn't work, so I drank more. I started going right from being sober to a blackout. I got fired from my job, kicked out of my stepdad's house, essentially homeless and nearly broke, wondering where I'd go. I began living above a barroom, playing the piano for my rent, and drinking and still abusing Xanax.

After a seizure placed me in a hospital, the doctors and I decided it would be best for me to go to a detox facility in Fal-mouth called Gosnold, since I had no other place to go. When it came time for me to leave, the first angel put in my path on my road to recovery was the director of a sober house. He got me a grant for the first three months until I could get a job. That job was at McDonald's, where I showed up from 7am to 3pm every day for two and a half years, working with teenagers. I also attended meetings every night (that was mandatory at the sober house), got a sponsor, visited other A.A. groups with my home group, and started working the Steps with my sponsor.

The second angel God sent me was a counselor from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. He interviewed me, to see if I might qualify for some funding to help me get

back into society. It turned out he was a fan of my music and told me he'd like to see if he could get his agency to obtain some seed money for me to do what I do best: make another album. In the process of doing this album, an old friend of mine who had sung backup with me in the early '80s got in touch with me and offered to sing on this record. After a few recording sessions with her in 2007, we fell in love and were married in 2008. She was the third angel sent to me only because of my life in A.A. I have since released another record and I now have a renewed career.

Today, I am sober, real, alive and always, always grateful for the angels of A.A.

-G.H., Danbury, CT

"If God had a refrigerator
Your picture would be on it.
If She had a wallet,
your photo would be in it.
She sends you flowers every spring, and
a sunrise every morning.....
Face it, friend.
She's crazy about you!"

Adapted from a quote by Max Lucado

-Laura Y.

Holiday Alkathons

Please submit your Holiday Alkathons (Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's) by September 1, 2017 for publication in the October/November edition of the Alkiline.

Basic information would be helpful, EVEN IF your committee is not fully formed and the details are not yet finalized.

I Gave AA a Chance

My name is Anita and my sobriety date is October 12, 2016. I've always had God in my life. At an early age I would go to any church I could find. I did Bible Study with a neighbor and went to church every Sunday.

As I grew older, I found alcohol and at age 11, I took my first drink. Alcohol became my best friend. Wherever I could get it, I would and alcohol became my primary motive to make friends. We stole from parent's liquor cabinets and hung with the older kids for beer. I was always so excited to get that next drink but between drinking and cigarettes I never had money.

When I reached age 13, I started popping pills. The combination of pills and drinking made me feel like I fit in, that I was somebody and could be anything when I was high. When I reached high school, I discovered pot and at that point, I felt like I was at the top of my game. I felt no one was better than me so what could go wrong? Little did I realize that my life was starting to spiral downhill and it continued that way for quite some time. As I got older, my drink switched from beer to hard liquor.

When my grandfather died, my drinking increased explosively and stayed that way for over 20 years. My life became so stressful that I began drinking and blacking out. Because the thrill of the blackouts wasn't enough, I began burning my arm by rubbing my nails into my arm enough to cause a skin burn. When I discovered cutting my friends started getting concerned. They started noticing the cuts and telling me to stop, but what did they know of my pain? I began drinking every night and cutting during the day.

When a friend saw me cutting at work, she convinced me to get help. I ended up in the hospital for a week. Once I came out, I was in an intensive outpatient program for 3 weeks and it was suggested that I attend AA meetings. I attended my first AA meeting and thought God had abandoned me. I decided that AA was not for me. My counselor told me to try a couple more meetings to give it a chance and I'm glad I did. I would not be sober today without my sponsor and my friends here in the Joy of Living group, I don't think I would be here. I finally have the help I need to keep on going. At the time of this writing, I am 7 months sober.

—Anita E.

Le di una oportunidad a A.A.

Mi nombre es Anita y mi fecha de sobriedad es el 12 de octubre de 2016. Siempre he tenido a Dios en mi vida. Desde una temprana edad yo iba a la cualquier iglesia que pudiera encontrar. Hice estudios bíblicos con un vecino e iba a la iglesia cada domingo.

Conforme fui creciendo, encontré el alcohol y a la edad de 11 años, bebí mi primer trago. El alcohol se convirtió en mi mejor amigo. Donde fuera que lo pudiera conseguir, lo hacía y el alcohol se convirtió en mi motivo primordial para hacer amistades. Robamos de los gabinetes con licor de mis padres y nos la pasábamos con los niños mayores por las cervezas.

Yo siempre estaba tan emocionada por conseguir ese próximo trago pero entre la bebida y cigarrillos yo nunca tenía dinero.

Cuando llegué a los 13 años de edad empecé a tomar pastillas. La combinación de pastillas y bebiendo me hacía sentir como que encajaba, que yo era alguien y que podía ser cualquier cosa cuando estaba elevada. Cuando llegué a la escuela secundaria, descubrí la marihuana y en ese punto, yo sentía como que estaba en la cima. Sentía como que no había nadie mejor que yo así es que ¿qué de malo puede suceder? Ni me había dado cuenta que mi vida empezaba a ir hacia abajo en espiral y continuó de esa manera por un buen tiempo. Mientras iba haciéndome mayor, mi bebida cambió de cerveza al licor fuerte.

Cuando mi abuelo murió, mi bebida aumentó explosivamente y se mantuvo de esa manera por más de 20 años. Mi vida se había convertido tan estresante que empecé a beber y sufrir lagunas mentales. Ya que la emoción de sufrir estas lagunas mentales no era suficiente, empecé a quemarme el brazo pasándome las uñas tan duro en el brazo que causaba una quemadura en la piel. Cuando descubrí la práctica de cortarme mis amistades empezaron a preocuparse. Ellos empezaron a notar las cortadas y me decían que dejara de hacerlo, pero ¿qué sabían ellos de mi dolor? Empecé a beber cada noche y a cortarme durante el día.

Cuando una amiga me vio cortándome en el trabajo, ella me convenció de buscar ayuda. Terminé en el hospital por una semana. Una vez salí, estuve en un programa intensivo para pacientes de afuera durante tres semanas y fue sugerido que yo asistiera a reuniones de A.A. Yo asistí a mi primera reunión de A.A. y pensé que Dios me había abandonado. Decidí que A.A. no era para mí. Mi consejera me dijo que tratara unas cuantas reuniones más para darle una oportunidad y me alegro que lo así hiciera. Yo no estaría sobria hoy sin mi madrina y amigos aquí en el grupo The Joy of Living, creo que no estaría aquí. Finalmente tengo la ayuda que necesito para continuar hacia adelante. En el momento de esta escrito, llevo 7 meses de sobriedad.

—Anita E.

Transformation Through AA

The day came when remaining closed tightly in a bud was more painful than taking the risk to blossom. I am inspired to grow beyond my current life situation. I am not defined by my past. I transform any limited belief about myself into awareness of my divine potential. During meditation, I imagine myself like the bud bursting forth through the soil. My divine potential unfolds. I envision myself transformed and morphing into what I was created to be through the Steps. With divine guidance I allow my greatness to shine as a brilliant expression of God's love here on earth.

—Jim S., Waterbury

**How to reach AA:
866-STEPS12**

My Message to You

At age 42, I have come to realize it is not healthy for me to look at my past when evaluating the success of my life. The failures experienced left me with many scars, reminding me daily of where I came from. The challenge is to not let these dictate who I am today when discouragement falls upon me.

When I finally put the bottle down, I knew the bottle could not put me down any longer. Spirituality started to manifest from asking for protection from both unhealthy desires and the obsession to use. This allowed me to feel involved, like I belonged. Usually I just attended meetings, until others showed me the power of unity. I watched, listened and learned how life without alcohol or drugs was possible. The primary purpose of AA, to help those who still suffer, is truly what saved my life.

Surely, I experience tough times still - don't get me wrong. I do know that a drink or drug will not help any situation, any way, shape, or form. Nothing in life is perfect. Being able to get through things gives me the strength not to pick up. One day at a time it gets better.

—Bryan, Willimantic

The Struggle

There he goes again, Lord, drink in hand.

Wondering how he got here though he can hardly stand.

He's all out of lies. He's been here before. He knows there's an answer, but he doesn't think it's for him.

He'll wake in the morning and try it again. His babies are dying and his wife is near the end.

I think he's ready but I can't be sure.

I hope he is willing to open up the door.

Everybody's waiting with open arms. He is feeling hopeless and they see it in his eyes.

He'll go home in the evening and kiss his kids goodnight.

He'll fall down on his knees and pray to God to take this fight.

I know it isn't easy and that's no lie.

Someday he will get it in time. So don't give up on him I'll tell you why.

Because someday his light will shine.

—Shaun J.

Formidable Foe

Alcohol is a formidable foe that can't be controlled.

You must surrender to win.

Put it in God's/Higher Power's hand.

No more fighting what can't be beat.

Life seems easier when we admit alcohol we can't defeat

Life goes on sometimes beautifully.

—Tim F., Meriden

The Sober Life

The sober life is not a routine existence in some quaint picturesque village of safety and certainty. No, the sober life, the life worth living, is out there in the wooded wilds of the unknown. It's out there on the craggy battlefields that test our wits and wills in the daily fight with our own demons. It is found during the long, onward slog through the storms and strife when we hear only the whispers and taunts of foes and opponents.

The sober life fills us with wisdom and meaning, but only after we have paid with our sweat and sometimes our tears. It is in the marching on even when we are tired, weak and fearful. Our brothers and sisters and family and friends have cheered us on and toiled with us despite the messiness and apparent madness of it all.

The sober life is walking the path less traveled, an uncharted path chosen by each of us alone. It is often a meandering, overgrown path that leads only to another unpaved road. It's when we have the guts to stand naked before the world as who we really are and when peering into the souls of those around us, we see an image of the Divine.

The sober life allows us to plunge ourselves bravely and unconditionally into love that has no bottom or boundary. We are able to soar magnificently above our shortcomings and express our best selves. It's in a world rich with choice, challenge, fear and freedom that our greatest gifts and adventures await us.

It's time to ready ourselves and to be bold.

It's time to live a sober life.

—Jim S., Waterbury

Responsibility Pledge

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

And for that,
I am responsible!

**Para ponerse en contacto con AA, llame:
855-ESPANCT**

No Longer Broken

I have been thinking about the past and how I used to move fast just wishing it would last. Then one day it all came to an end. I was broken and ashamed and though I didn't know what to do, I knew I had to change.

Over two years ago, I was a train wreck, not knowing my ass from my elbow or in which direction I was headed. The worst part was that I thought it was normal to use alcohol to take the pain away but instead it made my life a nightmare. I needed the drink. I didn't want it but it wanted me and it had me, like an abusive relationship. Alcohol made me think I was not good enough and I needed it just to feel good and function daily.

In January 2015, I got the chance to escape its clutch and I haven't looked back since. Life may not be perfect, but it is a hell of a lot better than it was.

This I owe to AA.

—Dennis H., Thomaston

Service Opportunity: Accessibilities Committee

It is the purpose of this committee to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, including many members who have special needs. We define AA's with special needs as persons who are blind or visually challenged, deaf or hearing at low levels, chronically ill or home-bound.

We invite all of you to join us. Opportunities for service are everywhere. We are in short supply of language and ASL interpreters. We need letter writers. There are many opportunities to serve. There are many bridges to build. But we need the builders!

Contact Us at accessibilities@ct-aa.org.

We Want To Hear From You!

Share your stories, essays, articles, poetry, etc... with others through the Alki-Line.

We are accepting submissions of one page or less:

Email: alki-line@ct-aa.org

Mail: Alki-Line, 112 E. Main St, Meriden, CT 06450

Hand material to a GSR

Alki-Line

This newsletter is by and for alcoholics; however, we review submissions by all interested in the AA program of recovery. Material may be edited for clarity and length.

This newsletter and earlier issues can be downloaded at www.ct-aa.org.

This is an honest fellowship; we presume all submissions are original or in the public domain. Following publication all copyright reverts to the owner.

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Save The Date

Area 11 Convention:

A New Freedom & A New Happiness

September 29 – October 1, 2017

The Radisson Hotel, 100 Berlin Road, Cromwell

Registration forms are available online:

<https://www.ct-aa.org/area-11-2017-annual-convention/>

Fall Assembly

November 12, 2017

VFW Hall, 41 Veterans Drive, New Britain

Connecticut State Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (CSCYPAA) XXXII

November 24, 25, and 26, 2017

The Radisson Hotel, 100 Berlin Road, Cromwell

Visit www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events for more info.

Service Opportunity: Bridging the Gap

Perform 12th Step work by serving as a temporary contact and bringing someone that is leaving a correctional or treatment facility to their first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Suggested requirements: 1 year of continuous sobriety, working the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and the 12 Traditions, as well as a willingness to serve.

To get involved, email btg@ct-aa.org and be sure to include your name, gender, length of sobriety, phone number, and location.

¡Queremos saber más de Usted!

Mándenos las historias personales, los ensayos, las opiniones, la poesía, etc... y entérenos más de usted en el Alki-Line.

Se puede entregar una página o menos de las historias a una de los siguiente:

Por el correos electrónicos: alki-line@ct-aa.org

Por el correos: Alki-Line, 112 E. Main St, Meriden, CT 06450

O De mano: a su GSR or Representativo de Alki-Line