



# ALKI-LINE



TAKE ONE, IT'S FREE

The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter Vol. 26 No. 2 Apr. - May 2017

## This AA's First NERAASA

I've never slept in a castle before. I knew I would receive gifts in sobriety, but I had no idea they would be so grand, or come so quickly. I also didn't expect the keys of sobriety to be a blue Sheraton keycard. For anyone who hasn't attended the North East Regional AA Service Assembly (NERAASA), the schedule was simple at this year's event held this past February at the Sheraton hotel in Framingham, Massachusetts; during the day, there were various keynote speakers discussing a wide range of topics related to service (my favorite this year were about Safety in AA, and how to know when 'pleading the third' does more harm to our collective recovery than good). In the evening, there were roundtable discussions, each dedicated to a different committee in the service structure. I was particularly interested in the Corrections roundtable, which I attended on Saturday night, where we discussed the nuances of dealing with prisons, where the attitude towards rules is the polar opposite of AA. This year, after the other roundtables had concluded, a Young People in AA (YPAA) roundtable was held on both Friday and Saturday night, and were attended by approximately 75 folks. If nothing else, this reaffirmed my belief that you're never too young to get involved in service. Another uplifting episode from the weekend was the speaker meeting that took place on Saturday, with easily 950 people hailing from eighteen areas in attendance. The energy in the room was off the charts.

I showed up for the weekend empty-handed, but left with a complete sense of purpose and inclusion. I'll be counting the days until NERAASA 2018, which will be held in Connecticut on February 23-25 at the Cromwell Radisson here in Area 11.

—Spencer M., District 7

**Planning for NERAASA 2018  
has begun!**

**Have questions?  
Want to get involved?**

**For more information, contact:**

neraasa2018@gmail.com

## Hope — A Reason to Get Out of Bed

During my active addiction, I tried anything that took me away. The only reason to get out of bed was the excitement of the chase. Oh, did I chase the long gone feeling that I was suddenly everything I wanted to be, but never felt I was! Yes, I crossed that invisible line into alcoholism. I couldn't control my drinking. After the first sip, I would always end up – sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly – unable to stop.

My new reason to get out of bed is hope. It's a feeling I can't see or touch. Sometimes it's a flicker or sometimes it's a wave. Where does it happen? In Alcoholics Anonymous, in meetings, in the Big Book and in the Twelve and Twelve. Mostly it's the light in the eyes of fellow alcoholics that gives me hope. I get out of bed and show up even if I am scared, mad, glad, sad, or just confused. If I show up even when I'm scared, I start to believe that I can. With hope I am becoming the person I'm supposed to be on the inside, not the person I mistakenly thought I was on the outside, as long as I don't pick up alcohol or other substances on a daily basis.

I could never do this alone. It wasn't my idea. God has touched me and for that I am grateful. Finally, I found a good reason to get out of bed.

—Kelli F., Naugatuck

## Desperation Behind the Walls

Some say being locked up doesn't count as clean time. For me, I was so desperate that I drank aftershave that contained alcohol and I also drank some other solutions that I thought had alcohol. Both tasted nasty. Before I went in, I used to drink Graves grain alcohol and also Yukon Jack with birch beer. Both were bad, but not as bad as what I drank behind the walls. The Yukon Jack with birch beer was so sweet, it was sickening. Now that I'm out, I can go buy alcohol anytime I want, but I don't. I can't drink because the program I'm in has zero tolerance for alcohol.

—Tim F., Meriden

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

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

## The Only Requirement

"The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking."

I heard that at the first AA meeting I attended. At the time, I didn't realize that it was from the AA Preamble. Not that it would have mattered, since I didn't even know what the AA Preamble was. It would take me a long time before I would figure that out.

It was coincidence – or synchronicity – that brought me to my first AA meeting. I went with a friend who was a "regular" at AA meetings; my friend hadn't known me very long and hadn't known I had a problem with drinking. I was at the meeting to support my friend, not because I was an alcoholic. Although I had quit drinking one month before I found myself at the Quiambaug firehouse meeting, I knew I was not an alcoholic. I also knew that I had a drinking problem, but I didn't see how that had anything to do with alcoholism. My denial is a story for a different day. This story is about what kept me coming back.

"The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking."

It is that one line in the AA Preamble that kept me coming back to that meeting. Perhaps it also had to do with the fact that I could identify with what so many people said in the meeting. I almost felt like I didn't have a right to be there, since I wasn't an alcoholic. It was an open meeting, so I knew it would be okay for me to keep going. But it was that one line, read at the beginning of every, single meeting that I saw as an invitation to return.

"The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking."

I kept returning to the meeting, and whenever I was asked if I wanted to share, I would say, "I'm Carol. I think I'll just listen, thanks." I figured that, since I wasn't an alcoholic, I didn't really have a right to take up time and share at the meeting.

"The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking."

After one year without a drink, I identified myself differently: "I'm Carol, and I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous." It was after I had finally started identifying myself as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous that I started to attend other AA meetings. It wasn't until I celebrated two years of sobriety that I finally started to identify myself as an alcoholic.

It took me a while to shake free of my denial that I wasn't an alcoholic. It takes what it takes, and I needed to listen. I did precisely that for two years. I'm not sure I would have stuck around long enough to hear the message, long enough to pay attention and listen, if it weren't for those words.

"The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking."

Those words kept me coming back until I could admit that I was an alcoholic. Those words kept me coming back until I started to do Step work. Those words kept me coming back until the promises started happening. Those words kept me coming back until the miracle happened. Those words kept me coming back... so that I could become sober, and not just dry.

I celebrated six years without a drink this past December.

I have no doubt now that I am an alcoholic. I have no doubt now that were it not for AA, I would not have stayed sober. I know that I need to keep working my program if I'm to stay sober – attend meetings, do step work and service work, and stay connected to the AA fellowship, my sponsor, and my sober friends.

My Higher Power works in mysterious ways. I am sober today by the grace of God and the power of the AA Preamble.

My name is Carol, and I'm an alcoholic.

–Carol K., District 1

## El único requisito

"El único requisito para ser miembro es el deseo de dejar la bebida."

Yo escuché eso en la primera reunión de A.A. a la que yo asistí. En ese momento, no me había dado cuenta que eso venía del Preámbulo de A.A. No que eso hubiera importado, ya que yo ni sabía qué era el Preámbulo de A.A. Me llevaría mucho tiempo antes de darme cuenta de eso.

Fue coincidencia – o casualidad fortuita – las que me llevaron a mi primera reunión de A.A. Fui con un amigo quien era un "miembro regular" en las reuniones de A.A.; mi amigo no tenía mucho tiempo de conocerme y no se había enterado de que yo tenía un problema con la bebida. Yo estaba en la reunión para darle apoyo a mi amigo, no porque yo fuera una alcohólica. Aunque yo había dejado de beber un mes antes de encontrarme en la reunión de la estación de bomberos en Quiambaug, yo sabía que yo no era alcohólica. Yo también sabía que tenía un problema con la bebida, pero no miraba cómo eso tenía algo que ver con el alcoholismo. Mi negación es una historia para otro día. Esta historia se trata de lo que me hizo seguir viniendo.

"El único requisito para ser miembro es el deseo de dejar la bebida."

Es esa línea en particular en el Preámbulo de A.A. la que me hizo seguir regresando a aquella reunión. Quizás también tuvo que ver con el hecho de que yo me podía identificar con lo que tantas personas compartían en la reunión. Casi me sentía como que no tenía derecho a estar ahí, ya que yo no era alcohólica. Era una reunión abierta, así es que sabía que estaba bien que yo siguiera yendo. Pero fue con sólo esa línea, que leían al principio de cada una de las reuniones que yo veía como una invitación a regresar.

"El único requisito para ser miembro es el deseo de dejar la bebida."

Seguí regresando a la reunión, y cuando me preguntaban si quería compartir algo, yo decía, "Soy Carol. Creo que solo voy a escuchar, gracias." Yo me figuraba que, ya que yo no era alcohólica, realmente no tenía el derecho de ocupar el tiempo y compartir durante la reunión.

"El único requisito para ser miembro es el deseo de dejar la bebida."

Después de un año sin una bebida, me identifiqué en una forma diferente: "Soy Carol, y soy un miembro de Alcohólicos Anónimos." Fue después de que finalmente me empecé a identificar como un miembro de Alcohólicos Anónimos que empecé a asistir a otras reuniones de A.A. No fue sino hasta que celebré dos años de sobriedad que finalmente empecé a identificarme como una alcohólica.

Me llevó un tiempo sacudirme esa negación de encima de que yo no era una alcohólica. Lleva lo que tiene que llevar, y yo necesitaba escuchar. Hice eso precisamente por dos años. No estoy segura si me hubiera quedado suficiente tiempo para escuchar el mensaje, suficiente tiempo como para prestar atención y escuchar, si no hubiese sido por aquellas palabras.

"El único requisito para ser miembro es el deseo de dejar la bebida."

Aquellas palabras me hicieron seguir viniendo hasta que pude admitir que yo era una alcohólica. Aquellas palabras me hicieron seguir viniendo hasta que pude encontrar una madrina. Aquellas palabras me hicieron seguir viniendo hasta que empezara a hacer el trabajo de los Pasos. Aquellas palabras me hicieron seguir viniendo hasta que las promesas empezaran a suceder. Aquellas palabras me hicieron seguir viniendo hasta que sucediera el milagro. Aquellas palabras me hicieron seguir viniendo...para que yo pudiera estar sobria, y no solo seca.

Celebré seis años sin un trago este pasado mes de diciembre.

No tengo duda alguna ahora que yo soy una alcohólica. No tengo duda ahora que si no hubiese sido por A.A. yo no me hubiera mantenido sobria. Yo sé que necesito seguir trabajando mi programa si he de mantenerme sobria – asistiendo a reuniones, hacer el trabajo de los pasos y trabajo de servicio, y mantenerme conectada a la comunidad de A.A., mi madrina, y mis amistades sobrias.

Mi Poder superior trabaja en forma misteriosa. Yo estoy sobria hoy por la gracia de Dios y el poder del Preámbulo de A.A.

Mi nombre es Carol, y soy alcohólica.

–Carol K., Distrito 1

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

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

## Saved

My Higher Power, God, is the Divine Physician. He knew I was sick and guided me into the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Some of us need a nudge or even a push. But, we want to get well, right? I'm so grateful to Him and the Fellowship and all its teachings. Also to all my brothers and sisters, who keep me sober "One day at a time." God bless and love you all.

–Grateful Heart, District 7

## A Fish Tale

If you drink like a fish

You will be smoked, fried, or baked and laid on a dish,

No longer will you be given a wish.

So, if you want not the dish,

Go To AA and listen and work toward that special wish:

Sobriety.

Not caught anymore, thank God and Alcoholics Anonymous.

–Once a Fish

## Women's Day in Recovery Saturday, May 6, 2017

Please join us for our 15th annual day of fellowship and recovery. Our theme this year is "Each Day – A New Beginning."

We will have yoga, writing, and meditation workshops, as well as other themed meetings. A continental breakfast and lunch are provided.

The day is capped with our countdown and a guest speaker.

Registration is required. There are only 400 seats available, so please sign up early!

Registration forms can be found online:  
[www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/](http://www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/)

**For more information, email:  
wdirect2017@cox.net**

## **“Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare” New Service Material from the General Service Office**

In January, the General Service Office (GSO) published new service material that provides information regarding safety in Alcoholics Anonymous. Safety is an important issue within AA — one that all groups and members can address to develop workable solutions and help keep our meetings safe based on the fundamental principles of the Fellowship. The origin of this new publication, soon to be available as one of AA’s pamphlets, can be traced to incidents reported to GSO in which the safety of AA members was threatened or violated.

As noted in the publication, our AA groups are made up of alcoholics who gather for the sole purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. However, we are not immune to the difficulties that affect the rest of humanity, such that problems of outside world can also be brought into the rooms of AA. By providing a safe environment in which alcoholics can focus on maintaining sobriety, the AA group can fulfill its primary purpose – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

The three-page publication provides information, based upon the Traditions of our Fellowship, which individuals and AA groups can use to help ensure that all members feel as safe as possible in AA. Notably, the last page of the publication includes a list of helpful suggestions and reminders listed below for groups and individual members to consider regarding the topic of safety:

“Here are some helpful suggestions and reminders:

- Talk about issues of safety before they arise.
- Safety is something each member attending an AA meeting can be mindful of.
- Communicate clearly what AA is and what it is not.
- Sponsorship plays an important role and sponsors can be helpful in pointing out warning signs or unhealthy situations to sponsees and newcomers.
- AA members who are concerned about the words or actions of a sponsor or other member, may find it helpful to speak to someone they trust, their AA group, or a professional, as needed.
- Include Safety and the AA Meeting Environment as topics for a group inventory.
- Consider developing group guidelines and procedures on safety. Recommend that no one walk to a car alone but be accompanied by a trusted fellow or travel in a group.
- In all discussions about safety, keep the focus on our primary purpose, our common welfare, and place principles before personalities.”

Currently, copies of the publication (SMF-209) can be found on the GSO website: [http://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/smf-209\\_en.pdf](http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/smf-209_en.pdf)

## **Save The Date**

**Women’s Day in Recovery: “Each Day a New Beginning”**  
Saturday, May 6, 2017 — 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM  
Central Connecticut State University, New Britain  
Registration forms are available online:  
[www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/](http://www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/)

**Spring Assembly**  
Saturday, May 20, 2017  
VFW Hall, 41 Veterans Drive, New Britain, CT

**Soberfest**  
June 2 – 4, 2017  
Odetah Campground Resort  
38 Bozrah Street Extension, Bozrah  
Registration forms are available online:  
[www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/soberfest/](http://www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/soberfest/)

**Soberfest Golf**  
June 2, 2017  
River Ridge Golf Course, 259 Preston Road, Griswold  
Registration forms are available online:  
[www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/soberfest/](http://www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events/soberfest/)

**Rompiendo Fronteras / Breaking Frontiers 2017**  
Domingo, 30 de Juilo, 2017 / Sunday, July 30, 2017  
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Hamden Plains United Methodist Church  
15 Church Street, Hamden

**Area 11 Convention**  
September 29 – October 1, 2017  
The Radisson Hotel, 100 Berlin Road, Cromwell, CT

**Fall Assembly**  
November 12, 2017  
VFW Hall, 41 Veterans Drive, New Britain, CT

Visit [www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events](http://www.ct-aa.org/new-and-events) for more info.

## **We Want To Hear From You!**

Submit Articles, Photos, Letters,  
Suggestions and Constructive Criticism:

**Email:** [alki-line@ct-aa.org](mailto:alki-line@ct-aa.org)

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

**Hand** material to a GSR

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](http://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.*

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

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