

Kentuckiana News

AREA 26 NEWSLETTER – THE VOICE OF KENTUCKIANA – SUMMER 2008

Freedom from Alcohol



The topic for our next issue will be distributed at the next quarterly meeting in October 2008. The topic will be on "Principles before Personalities." Please submit your stories by September 1, 2008.

You may email your contribution to kentuckiananewsletter@yahoo.com

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Freedom to Live

By Ellen

For me the freedom from alcohol has been the start of a very productive life. I now am reliable and trustworthy. I am a responsible and constructive member of society. I have time for family and friends, even for myself on most days.

I start every day with gratitude for the chance to live and not just exist. Today, I give of myself and what I possess, without expecting anything in return. I can be honest about my feelings and on time to functions. I remember that someone was here for me when I got here and I show up for those coming in behind me. Life is finally worth living and the world around me is something to adore. Every breath and action is a new adventure and I am truly amazed at what I was missing.

I recently went to my daughter's graduation. I had missed the graduation of my older daughter, but we were both there to see my baby accept an honorary "outstanding achiever of the year" award. We hugged and cried and it was beautiful in every sense of the word.

Freedom from alcohol has given me the freedom to live. I now have the freedom to share my experience from the pain, my hope for the future and I have the strength to look forward to all the rewards of life. God has blessed me and given me the freedom to live, love and laugh in all the right ways, for all the right reasons and all the right places.

Freedom, oh my goodness! It is the most joyous thing I could hope to possess. The wonders and thrills of the freedom from the bondage of the entrapment of all the

stuff that held me hostage for so long, is truly worth sharing. All the time I spent trying to fill in the empty spaces has finally come to fruition. My heart has been filled and my life is worth living, all due to "The Freedom from Alcohol".

Thank all of you who paved the path before me and thank God for allowing me to pave another path for those still coming. I have peace, joy and love today.

Freedom from alcohol

By Joe S.

AA did not get me to heaven, but it sure did release me from hell. My sponsor, and the good and remarkably patient people in AA before me got me on that road of happy destiny.

I didn't start drinking until my senior year of college. Whiskey took away the pain of being rejected (again) by a girl who stood me up. My heart was crushed, my coping skills non-existent. Then, with the small amount of money I had, the thought came to me – whiskey seems to be a happy event in every John Wayne movie, maybe it would work for me.

Drunk #1 then began. The evil-tasting stuff was burning my throat. Obviously, it had no redeeming quality, until... my brain absorbed enough alcohol to erase the sting of rejection. My head started spinning, I got sick. Next day came the morning after hangover and remorse for what I did while drunk. My landlady did not speak to me for two weeks.

The cycle of "doomed to repeat over and over again" did not happen immediately. I was temporarily as smart as a hog that

got too much distillery slop and got sick, thus rejecting alcohol "forever." But my brain soon forgot the evil effects of alcohol, and began remembering the happy escape into a different world. Then my drinking began in earnest. At the end, drinking a fifth a day, there came jail, wrecked cars, I was always blaming someone else for my troubles. "If only they would...." You fill in the blanks. My wife and three children were puzzled, dismayed, at a total loss. This is a family illness.

Then my wife found Al-Anon. After a series of tearful meetings, good Al-Anons advised my wife to do the three Gs: Get off his back, get out of the way, and GET A LIFE! I was then on my own, no one to blame at home. AA literature was all over the house. Through what I now call divine intervention, a friend made a twelfth step call on me, and within weeks I was off to a Georgia alcohol treatment hospital.

Then began my journey to "freedom from alcohol." To be honest, the terror of drinking was so present for me that smelling alcohol was repulsive. Smelling alcohol brought back the hopelessness, the remorse, and the guilt. I associated that scent with the smells of places where "seeking lower companions" took me. I was full of despair and "incomprehensible demoralization."

After much too long a time, I got a sponsor, went to more meetings and got involved in service. Service work was a huge help in maintaining my sobriety. Setting up meetings, making coffee, getting involved in Intergroup and Area 26 jobs got me out of myself and into giving back.

I have now enjoyed some thirty plus years of that release from hell. I have a

power greater than myself to turn to, and a sponsor to keep me on the path, occasionally listening to me whine. The twelve steps, traditions and concepts have given me a way to find serenity in the middle of chaos.

The mental images of yesteryear, when they come back, seem fresh and cruel. With those images come tears of gratitude, tears I am no longer ashamed of. Al-Anon brought me to AA, which is the core of my existence – my compass. God is my pilot, and every one of you in A.A. (the greatest organization in the world) is my co-pilot. Freedom from alcohol? You bet I've got it.

My name is Kathy A., and I'm an alcoholic....

By the grace of God and Alcoholics Anonymous, I haven't found it necessary to take a drink since Oct. 2, 1982. If you had told me 25+ years ago that I would find freedom from alcohol, I would not have believed it. Trust me, I didn't just wake up one day and say, "It's a great day, think I'll go to AA."

I grew up the youngest of three and alcohol was always a part of my family life. Before I ever had a drink, I knew how to lie and manipulate—those "-isms." My first drink was much like my last: got drunk, got sick and got in trouble. Not that I was a daily drinker, more of a binge or periodic drinker. But I don't recall ever just having one drink. If I drank, it was to get drunk. I drank to either seek pleasure or escape pain—physical, emotional, spiritual.

By my mid-teens, my parents were divorced and I was the only child still at home. My mother and I were not getting along well at all. I managed to find my first husband at age 16, got married and left home. That did not last long. My husband had joined the service and found out he could get more money if he had a wife. And if I married him, I could get away from home. Today I see that we used each other, and neither one of us cared.

Unfortunately this set up a pattern I would not be proud of, using excuses to justify my drinking and behavior: My mother was mean; my husband left me; my boyfriend broke my heart.

Between the ages of 16 and 22, I was married and divorced three times, and had two babies. I had my first child out of wedlock when I was 18 years old. My family was not real happy with me. I believe that, during this time, I crossed that invisible line into alcoholism they talk about in the Big Book.

At 21, I met a man at a bar who was an admitted alcoholic and addict. I thought he was my knight in shining armor. He had just come out of prison and was living in the backseat of his car. I married him, and he fathered my daughter. He was going to teach me how to "drink like a lady." Ha. I guess that meant use a glass! This turned out to be a very sick relationship. Anything and everything that could happen between two sick people did.

One night after a physical altercation with him, I ended up in the hospital. (Keep in mind that all this time I hid my drinking and told everyone that he was the problem. People believed me for quite

some time.) My husband and I made a deal that if he would go into treatment, I would take him back. Yes, STUPID. By this time my self-worth and self-esteem were in the pits. I had always said I would never be like my mother, but I was turning out just like her.

I would visit my husband at treatment, take him money and cigarettes and then go out partying. When it came time for family week at the treatment center, they told me I should go to "concerned persons" meetings and Al-Anon meetings, so I did. After all, I was this poor little mistreated wife. I realized pretty quickly I wasn't like most of these ladies. They wanted to go have coffee after the meetings and I wanted to drink. But they always told me to come back and loved me unconditionally. I wasn't working a very good Al-Anon program, but I did find help in those women. My husband ended up relapsing, and we divorced, but there was something in those rooms that I wanted, and I started trying not to drink.

God was working on me. I went to a meeting and instead of walking through the AA room to the Al-Anon room, I sat down and later got a 24-hour chip. All this time I thought I was fooling everyone, but there were some people in that meeting who shook my hand, said they were glad I was there, and they were saving me a seat. When people said they had been sober 5 or 10 or 20 years, I thought they were lying. Nobody could stay sober that long, and why would they want to?

I would manage to get a few weeks or months of sobriety, and then go back out for a day or two—but I kept coming back. Then when I had 2-3 months, I got a call that my father was ill. For the next 6

weeks, I sat by his side, didn't go to meetings and didn't call anyone. I went home one of those evenings shaking inside and out. I remembered hearing someone say that if you took a drink it would take away the shakes. Guess I missed the part about diluting the drink. All I had in the house was a little cough syrup and a full bottle of rubbing alcohol.

So I drank half the bottle of rubbing alcohol. Next thing I remember is my 5 year old son on the floor by me saying, "Mommy, please don't be sick anymore!" At the hospital, the doctor said they had done all they could do for me, and at the rate I was going, I would be dead before age 25. My 25th birthday was 2 weeks away. The doctor said from now on it was up to God and me.

A few days later I left the hospital against medical advice and went to a meeting. Don't remember much about it. I cried all the way through the meeting.

I would love to tell you from that day forward all was wonderful. NOT. My father passed two weeks later and it was very hard and painful, but I got through it with God, a sponsor and friends. I made a lot of meetings.

So much has happened over the last 25 years. It has been quite a ride. Those two babies are 27 and 31 now, and have grown up to be great people. I've been so blessed. My second husband (married at 17, divorced at 18) got in touch with me after 20 years. He had joined the service and had been living overseas. Now that he was planning on retiring and coming back to the states...well, you know where this is going. I made my amends to him, sent him a paperback Big Book, visited him a couple of times. Long and short, he

came back home in 1996, and we remarried in 2001. We're still together and he has been sober 11 years now. He is a wonderful, loving husband to me.

In 1996, I was diagnosed with a terminal illness. I guess God has a plan. The doctors told my family I would be dead or in diapers and a wheelchair by the time I was 45. But now I'm 50, still alive and no diapers or wheelchair. Twice the doctors called in my family and told them that they had done all they could and not to expect me to survive. But I'm still waking up and going. It's not easy. I have IV's and a feeding tube, but I am so grateful for God's grace. If today is the day I go, I'll know I have been blessed.

God gave me the love and support to get through the tough times and find the good times with that mother of mine that I didn't get along with. I was able to love her and help her until she passed 2 years ago.

I have great women friends who are good to me and so supportive. Without a doubt, I know today that without God's grace and Alcoholics Anonymous I would not have found freedom from alcohol. Love and prayers, K.A., Smithfield

I lived two lives

By Larry D., Louisville (Germantown)

The newcomer in the Fellowship may wonder how freedom from this potentially deadly disease is possible as they begin their new life in AA. For us seasoned ones, we can respond that it is ultimately easier to be free from alcohol than it is to drink again. Once a person goes back out and takes that first drink and doesn't have that firm resolve within to stay away and

do healthier things instead, that's the beginning of the end.

It used to be that every trivial thing that occurred in my life directed me to the nearest barstool and into the arms of another conquest--a man. But, while drunk, I was also taking hostages, not making friends. When I was drinking, whether it was after work, a weekend or holiday or whenever, I was controlling, fixing, caretaking and role-playing. I was happy as a clam doing that.

I used to go in to work with the smell of Screwdrivers or beer on my breath, or after a night stoned on beer and drugs, sleeping with the first cute guy I met. Even after I got into the program through Adult Children of Alcoholics, I still couldn't stop. I was past powerless. I was out of control. It took me years before I realized or even cared that I was hurting my family as well as myself.

I basically lived two lives. On one hand, I was the hard-working employee, (but my concentration was lowering), active in the local Catholic Church (go figure), member of a church group and community contact person for the group. On the other hand, I loved to party and drink and play around. Luckily, I never contracted AIDS. It took my stepbrother's death from AIDS before I started very slowly realizing that I needed to get a grip. But, I wasn't ready to deal with all of it yet.

I remember my partner and I going to a party in 1992, given by a co-worker. By midnight, I was past loaded. I barely remember getting into the car. It was funny enough that we hadn't even gotten into the house when arriving for the party and I was falling down flat on my face in the grass. Other co-workers were arriving,

and for me, everything was foggy and in slow motion. The laughter ended for me that night.

Since then, I've had no more than a sip of Christmas wine and have been free from alcohol since. There have been times since I climbed upon the wagon in 1996 that I have thirsted for a 6-pack of beer so bad it wasn't even funny. Yet, I knew I couldn't. Having been a former Qualified Medication Aide, I knew what would happen if I did drink again. During a fierce argument with my first lover, he said that if I continued to drink and use, I would either wind up six feet under or in a coma. That is not an exaggeration. I knew he was right. For me, it is quite literally drink and die.

I finally realized that I was an alcoholic. I am so glad I did. Yes, there have been days since that I have wanted to say "hell with it" and go to the liquor store and cart a 24-pack of beer home and inhale the case. But then I ask myself, "Is it worth it? Is it worth sacrificing all your dreams and all the progress you've made just for a 24-pack?" The answer is a definite "no!"

Thankfully with this renewed freedom, I am able to learn to take care of things that I, Larry, need to do. For the last 6 months, I've been in a relationship with a recovering Alcoholic. I am trying to contact Vocational Rehab to see about getting re-job-trained and get back into the job market.

I am able to set goals and achieve them confidently, without an "I'll show them!" attitude, and without a bottle in my hand. I am Treasurer for a local Al-Anon group. I am also painfully learning to be content with what I have and don't have. These days, I take walks when I find myself

getting into another roller coaster mood swing.

The changes I've had to make to achieve freedom from alcohol are worth it. Learning to let go of all the issues of my life without using drugs is worth it. I'm seeing the promises come true, intuitively knowing how to handle situations that used to baffle me. They still occur from time to time, but I enjoy the feeling of not having to turn to alcohol or street drugs to numb them. My smile is more genuine now and not a mask.

Thank God for AA. The possibility of being tempted by that first drink is always going to be there, but now I can walk away from it and not feel like a party pooper. It is truly a blessing to have that freedom now.

Freedom from Alcohol/Freedom from Hell
by Kay G., Sobriety date 2/8/88

To me, they are one and the same. I was caught in the prison and suffocation of alcohol a good share of my life. I never even thought of not drinking until I quit.

My 40th birthday rolled around. No one wished me a happy day, so logical thinker that I was, I decided to give myself a blow out party with a long night of barely remembered flashes of events and a lot of booze. Woke up in bra and panties on a narrow bed in a very enclosed space, no window and a small, narrow door, which was locked. Being the cool, in-charge person, I did the next logical thing by screaming my head off and kicking and pulling at that door.

After an eternity, and some very weird thoughts of what I might have gotten

myself into, the door was finally opened. Turned out it was an old girlfriend I hadn't seen in 2 or 3 years. Somehow I had wound up at her house at 5 in the morning and woke her by ramming my car into the corner of her house. She had gotten me out of my car, into her house and into a room she really didn't use because it had a strong lock on the door. She had stripped my dirty grimy clothes off before she lay me down on her bedding. She had clean clothes, strong coffee, dirty looks, and a mean mouth waiting for me. So of course I had to leave.

Returned home and, geez, what did I hear but "Where were you? What have you been doing?" I always thought those were the dumbest questions because if I knew, I would probably tell. The other dumb question that always annoyed me was "Do you know what you did?" I figured if my own brain did not want me to know, then why would people around me insist on informing me? They never really asked the question that I seemed to hear, "Did I care?"

Anyway, if I had to put up with a Dumb Question Day, I really needed the hair of the dog to get through. Always kept enough in the house for that at least. So I got my little stash and mixed a strong drink, raised it to my lips and heard a male voice to my left and slightly behind me say "You can't do this anymore." Looked around and I was standing in the kitchen by myself, no one even close.

I set that drink down and walked out into the living room and announced that I had quit drinking. Just like that. The reaction was total laughter and joking. Made me mad as hell. After that you couldn't make me take a drink.

I stayed sober (dry) at first because of anger and pride. Then came the sickly days and nights, throwing up when there's nothing left to throw up, diarrhea when there's nothing left to have diarrhea, then came the shakes and the little bugs that only I could see out of the corners of my eyes. Then came the chills and the joint pains. My throat was the worst, it was so dry that I couldn't talk and no amount of water could moisten it. I knew that just one double shot would make it all go away. I knew that just one drink and I 'd stop running to the bathroom several times a day. Just one. But then I would have to listen to the fools who laughed at me and that I would not do. OK, if my problem was that I drank too much (which I had been told for years) and now I wasn't drinking, why did my life keep getting worse and worse, and then a tad worse, to the point that I began trying to figure out the best way to commit suicide? I had thought of it before over the years but now I was serious.

I knew I was a mess and was scared of goofing up a suicide attempt: Didn't want to run my car into a tree and live on as a paraplegic; didn't want to pull a trigger and flinch at the last second so that someone would have to change my diapers for the rest of my life. I was in the process of figuring out a sure way to stop the pain. Started calling a Suicide Prevention hotline late at night. I seemed to talk to one particular lady most of the time. I had been talking to her for about six months when she told me she thought I needed AA.

WHAT??? Hadn't she been listening at all? I didn't drink anymore but here she was talking about an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Finally she dared me to go to

just one. Mainly to get her off my back, I agreed. It didn't dawn on me until later that Suicide Prevention ladies do not normally call you at work to check on you or call your home if you haven't phoned them in a couple of days.

So I went to my first meeting angry because that was the last thing I needed. As it turned out, it was the one thing I really did need.

My first meeting, I was told to "come back," two very simple words that changed my life forever. And I went back and went back and learned a whole new way of life. The people in those rooms accepted me until I could accept myself; they loved me unconditionally until I could learn enough trust and confidence in myself to love myself. They never explained service work to me, they asked me to start doing things. I was told I was expected to dress more properly, to watch my language a little better, and to be a little kinder.

I learned the meaning of foreign words like honor and trust and love. I was told to read the BB; I was told to start on the steps and traditions. No one ever asked me if I was ready; I was told to study the AA Service Manual. Those folks were great to me but don't think for a minute that I was coddled and pampered, matter of fact it was the opposite. They hurt my feelings on a regular basis, they made me mad as a hornet, told me things I did not want to hear, talked about a Higher Power. They made me think. Time after time I swore to myself that I would never go back, but then found myself early for the next meeting. I had found at last my own kind and there was a part of me that knew it from the start.

Do I realize today the living hell I had been in? Yes, oh yes! Freedom from alcohol means that I finally got the chance to have true freedom to live my life.

A Tapestry in AA

By Eddie G.

I go to a meeting and do what my sponsor suggested--I greet someone. I reach out to another and another and another as I work my way around the room. I don't choose whom I speak to. I speak to everyone that is not engaged in a conversation and I speak to those engaged in conversation if they make eye contact.

When I get to someone with more sobriety than me, I listen to what they have to say, because it has been my experience that this is the best way to learn something new without having to experience pain to get it. Most of these people are other people's sponsors and even though they are not mine, I listen.

Some of these are people that do not have sponsors and I listen to them. If I hear something that rings a bell with me about another person in the program, I usually suggest that they might learn something by talking to them.

We all know someone who could not stay sober because they could not "keep it simple." They had to analyze the Big Book like they were doing a thesis on it. And they got drunk. Then they returned to A.A. and got back to work, but this time they kept it simple and they got sober and stayed sober.

Well, I know someone that came into my home group like that when I was about two years sober and now when I meet a newcomer who wants me to sponsor them and they try the intelligent program, then I send them to have a discussion with my friend. He laughs about it, but he shares his experience, strength, and hope on the subject and sometimes they learn from it and sometimes they don't. I am powerless over whether they listen or not.

If I have a sponsee that needs to get with me on a step, then I usually pick him up so we can go to a meeting together. That gives us time to chat. After the meeting, we do the work and he gets what he needs from talking with me and with God. You have to have some time for sponsees, and as long as I accept only a few, I will have time.

I have a home group that sponsors another meeting in a hospital and I go to that meeting to show support for those veterans that have our disease. The men can get to know us and, hopefully, come to our home group when they get out of treatment.

When I came into the program, my first sponsor, Stuart P., told me that if I wanted to stay sober I would get A.A. friends and start "walking the walk," by which he meant I would get an A.A. life. Well, here I am very involved in several groups and that really keeps me grounded in the program. And he was right--I love it!"

I drank for 40 years with the gusto of a hound dog. Now if I can stay sober for another 34 years I will have 40 years sober and I will be 97 years old. Probably

won't happen, so I will just work on today.

As to the title--each thing I do to stay sober weaves into another thing I can do to reach out and help another alcoholic to achieve sobriety--My Primary Purpose.

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Other topics: Singleness of Purpose

Singleness of Purpose not only strengthens AA, it helps other 12 step recovery groups in our Area to grow.

By Gordon R., DCM District 15

Years ago when I was melting down in Maine, attending many AA meetings and seeing a therapist, I learned a very important effect of AA's singleness of purpose. Usually when I would talk about things I was uncovering in therapy (incest, codependancy, food addiction, sex and love addiction) in a meeting, a member of the group would approach me after the meeting and explain singleness of purpose to me and then tell me the Day, Place and Time where I could find a 12 step program dealing with that issue. Often the person talking to me was also a member of that other recovery group.

Because of this caring way of addressing my breaks in AA's singleness of purpose, I received fantastic help, in strong 12 step recovery groups, with problems which were making me crazy. A benefit of this process to the other 12 step groups was that the number of "double winners" coming to them from AA with 12 step experience made them more effective in helping their members who did not also have alcoholism.

I think we each have a responsibility to our fellow AA members to share with

them (outside meeting formats) the experience we have in other 12 step programs when we believe from their sharing that our other program might be useful to them. By doing that, we further the message of singleness of purpose and perhaps strengthen another 12 step group.

My understanding is that over 200 self-help groups have been granted permission by AA to use the Steps, Traditions and Concepts and to modify them to meet their needs. My life may have been saved because of caring members of AA who made me aware that AA was not the place for me to deal with my other issues and directed me to recovery groups where I could get the help and understanding I needed to continue to face and take power away from my DEMONS.

Love and tolerance is our goal; but is it LOVING to let fellow members of AA continue to mention other substances or addictive behaviors in meetings without pointing them to another 12 step group which might better help them to confront other addictions and issues? ~In Love & Service, G.R.

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Other topics: Service Work

Giving Back

by Kay G.

I've been told that alcoholics are lazy people in general. Part of our recovery is to start giving back what was so freely given to us. You can't remain lazy and accomplish that. Also, most of us have been "takers," and a sign of recovery is when one learns to be a "giver." I heard for years that you could sit at a table in

A.A., putting in your two cents every meeting, and not do a dang thing except go back out.

You must get up off your tailbone and physically do something, remembering our program is an ACTION program. It can start as easily as saying 'hello' to new and old alike, by making coffee, by emptying the waste can, by making sure the tables are wiped down, and (a serenity-threatening issue) making sure the bathrooms have toilet paper.

Go to your Group Conscience meetings, but don't vote a certain way just because your friend does. Learn something about the issues before you open your mouth. Learn what the GVR (Grapevine Representative) duties are, or the literature person's or the secretary's. Get a basic knowledge of the workings of your home group and consider making yourself available to serve as treasurer, IGR, GSR, or DCM.

Each time you take on a new service job, you may feel a bit overwhelmed, which is ok. We're all here to learn, and there are so many members willing to help you. No matter how scary things might seem at first, you will get back so much more than you're giving. Are you really and truly grateful for your sobriety? How can you not give back?

Do you know the symbol of A.A.? The circle with the triangle inside? The circle stands for unity; one leg of the triangle is recovery, one leg is the program, and the last leg of the triangle is service. Without all three legs in place the triangle will not stand, and the circle of unity will collapse.

I once heard a long-time member say, "I'm not going to do anything more, I've

done enough." My reaction was WHAT????? I feel that I can never do enough to pay back the program that gave me my life, taught me how and taught me why.

So in closing, I will repeat what was hammered into my head...there's a lot you can do to stay sober, but service work will guarantee it.

Just how badly do you want to stay sober?

Other Topics: Rebirth Through the Third Step

Someone I Could Trust With My Life by Jon S., Richmond

I had just about finished reading the book, "Came to Believe," when I had a strange dream. I dreamed I was walking along a trail in a thick forest. Behind me I could hear people crying in despair, others shouting in anger, some arguing and a few fighting. I didn't know what was going on behind me, but it didn't sound like all was well. In front of me, it sounded like some kind of picnic or party was going on where people were laughing and having fun. That's where I was headed. The trail was rough and mostly up hill. Sometimes the path got very narrow with a cliff on one side. Sometimes the road was so scary, I almost turned back. I passed a few people and some passed me. Then I heard someone coming back down the trail toward me.

I was very concerned that the man was confused, disoriented or something,

because he was obviously going the wrong way. The Man said, "I've come back for you. There are a couple of really steep hills just ahead and I came to help you get past them." After we had got through the rough terrain, He started to go on ahead. I tried to hold Him back so we could walk together, but He told me there were others needing His help. He also told me to keep moving forward because He could only come back so far. I really came to like my new friend in the short time we spent together and I tried again to get Him to stay, but He would not. As He walked ahead faster than I could go, I found a peace and a confidence I hadn't felt in a very long time. I woke up wondering what this dream might mean. I wrote it down so I wouldn't forget it.

I saw my sponsor at a noon meeting the next day. We had lunch in a nearby diner and I shared my dream with him. As I told him in detail what I dreamed, he listened intently to every word. Before I finished speaking, I had the answer: I had found someone I could truly trust, even with my life. I knew I could turn my life and my will over to God and if I had any problems Dave, my sponsor, would help me along. I knew God could, and would, take care of everything else. I told Dave I was ready to turn my life and will over to God.

We prayed the third step prayer together right there in the restaurant. I'm sure some people were wondering why we were praying after we ate, but we weren't concerned with them. I knew I mattered to Dave, and that made him matter to me. Then he said that we had only begun what could be a long journey together. I noticed he said "we" and not "you." I didn't mind that he said "we." When my

friend said it, I took comfort in knowing "we" were not alone.

Just as the Big Book says, "We have a new Employer. Being all-powerful, He provided what we need, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter." (Reprinted from the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 63, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.)

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Other topics: Musings

Were I to start again, or do it over By Eddie G.

...I would have to reinvent me. I would have to be God, and I am not. God gave me what I have and the tools to run my life; and this is the result based on my choices. It starts way back in the land of the little people where big people tell us what we are supposed to believe.

Choice 1. Believe Daddy and Mommy, or not.

Choice 2. Believe Minister, priest, Rabbi, or not.

Choice 4. Believe peers or not.

Choice 5. Believe disease or not.

Choice 6. Believe self or not.

This is already spiraling out of control like a flow chart in a school for A.D.D. kids. I started life with a good brain, asthma, Klinefelter's Syndrome, A.D.D., and a decent but dysfunctional family of alcoholics and wannabe alcoholics.

Then I was asked to believe in:

1. God.
2. Santa Claus.
3. The Easter Bunny.
4. The Great Pumpkin.

Then I was told (2) through (4) were not real.

I lumped (1) in with (2) through (4.)

Then I believed in Mommy and Daddy till Daddy died, and Mommy took to the bottle, so I was left with Self. Then I took a drink, and I got to hear what the disease of alcoholism had to say in my ear all the time. I call alcoholism's chatter in my head "The Committee".

Then 40 years passed and I found out that (1) was real and (2) through (4) really were fictional.

Now that I have Number (1), GOD, in my life, I don't have to take a drink, and I don't have to listen to The Committee as long as I talk to God on a daily basis.

My Role as the Kentuckiana Newsletter Chairperson

By Salem V.

Our purpose is to share news and information, and to carry the message to suffering alcoholics.

Our committee meets each quarter to make recommendations for next month's newsletter and to discuss future business.

Leanne M. collects news events from the districts. Melissa B. is our editor. She sends the rough draft to Leanne, Amy, Chris for further editing.

Salem receives letters through internet and mail and coordinates with the editors. The letters are inserted into the newsletter template which is sent for publishing in Louisville.

Other Events

Reported by LeAnne M.

District 5

What: Picnic and Workshop
When: Saturday, September 20, 2008, Noon, EST,
Speaker @ 5:00 p.m.
Where: Frederickstown, KY

District 17

What: Area 26 Delegate's Report
When: Saturday, September 13, 2008
Where: Riverhouse, Owensboro, KY

What: Friends of Bill W.
When: Saturday, October 18, 2008
Where: Fellowship Hall, Yellow Creek Park,
Owensboro, KY

District 9

What: Fall Picnic
When: Saturday, September 13, 2008
Where: Jenny Wiley State Park, Prestonsburg, KY,
@ Dewey Lake Dam

District 21

What: Annual Picnic and Speaker Meeting
When: Sunday, September 14, 1008
Where: Wilborn Park, LaGrange, KY
Contact: Sharon M., (502) 268-6271

Central/Intergroup Offices in Area 26

Bluegrass Intergroup Office
1093 S. Broadway
Lexington, KY 40504
Phone: 859-225-1212
Toll Free: 1-800-467-8019
Email: bluegrassintergroup@hotmail.com

Bowling Green Central Office
1337 US 31W Bypass
PO Box 20033
Bowling Green, KY 42101
Phone: 502-782-5267

Louisville Central Office
Greater Louisville Groups
332 W. Broadway, Room 620
Louisville, KY 40202
Phone: 502-582-1849
Visit us online at www.louisvilleaa.org
Email: glgi@bellsouth.net

Northern Kentucky Intergroup
1727 Madison Ave
Covington, KY 41011
Phone: 859-461-7181
Toll Free 1-877-257-7856

Owensboro Central Office
302 E. Third Street
Owensboro, KY 42303
Phone: 270-683-0371

Western Kentucky Intergroup
210 W Pierson St.
Fredonia, KY 42411
Toll Free 1-800-606-6047
Email: wkintergroup@mchsi.com

**For Area 26 meeting times and
locations, plus other great
information, please visit:
<http://www.area26.net/>**



Rule 62 Conference

AUGUST 8-10, 2008 at Drawbridge Inn, Fort Mitchell, KY, (859) 341-2800

"TRUST GOD, CLEAN HOUSE, AND WORK WITH OTHERS"

Speakers:

Clancy I -- Venice, CA, Anne O -- Cold Springs, KY, Tom I -- Pinehurst, NC, Bill W -- Clearwater, FL, John C -- Cincinnati, OH, Peggy M -- Bellevue, NE, Al-Anon Speaker TBA

Please no mail-in registration after August 3rd. Registration at the conference is \$25. For additional information, please call: Joshua K. 513-652-1973 or Tony D. 859-866-4106

3rd Annual Delegates Report & Unity Picnic

August 16, 2008, 1:00 p.m. at the Care Center, 3705 Bells Lane, Louisville, KY 40211

For additional information, contact Cecilia M., (502) 587-8076, Chris W. (502) 295-5670, or Lynda R. (502) 836-2320.

Soberfest

September 19-21, 2008, gates open at 6:00 p.m. at Cedar Ridge Camp on 4010 Old Routt Road, outside Louisville, KY

AA and Alanon speakers, bonfire meetings, live bands, dancing, volleyball, corhole, archery, children's activities and much more.

For additional information, contact Missy P., (502) 314-5985

3L Group's 20th Annual Campout & Picnic

August 1-3, 2008, at Kincaid Lake State Park, Falmouth, KY

Speaker meeting, open discussion, sun, fun, and fellowship all weekend long.

For additional information, contact John B. (859) 802-1185 or Tim F. (859) 991-9015

A Vision for You

2009 Kentucky State Convention for Alcoholics Anonymous

February 20-22, 2008, at Crown Plaza Hotel and Suites in Louisville, KY

Scheduled activities include speaker meetings, dancing, workshops, and old fashion ice cream social.

Contact List

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Barbara F.	Delegate	(859) 806-5275	Bobbi-1958@sbcglobal.net
Clinton T.	Archives	(859) 252-7895	Clintgrs@alltel.net
Laura	Corrections	(859) 803-7515	msblondie39@hotmail.com
Jeff N.	Grapevine	(270) 543-5568	jef_hse@bellsouth.net
Terrie G.	CPC	(270) 993-4995	
Bob F.	Treatment	(859) 466-1115	rflge@fuse.net
Lynda R.	Literature	(502) 267-1215	lynda@ourserendip.com
Tom B.	Public Information	(502) 425-8216	tombech@bellsouth.net
Salem V.	Kentuckiana News	(270) 303-9380	<u>kentuckiananewsletter@yahoo.com</u>

Excerpts from DCM Reports
Given at the Area 26 Quarterly
Meeting April 12-13, 2008,
Hopkinsville, KY

District 1 – DCM James G.

District 1 attendance is still low. We are trying a new approach to raising attendance and getting more GSRs involved. We are going to contact each group in the district to ask for suggestions. We are still holding regular monthly district meetings on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Ice House at 6:00 pm. The New Beginning Group celebrated 25 years on April 5, with a meeting and a dance. It was a great night.

District 2 – DCM Janice D.

Not in attendance.

District 3 – DCM Kelvin H.

We had a great time at the State Convention in Bowling Green. We thank everyone who attended. I've been going to birthdays for the longest sobriety in each home group for the past 3 months. We've counted (collectively) 215 years of sobriety so far...The GSRs in District 3 have been planning a workshop for December...seems to be a lot of interest to have it on service work. They hope to have a lot of questions answered for newcomers on how to get involved in service work. There is a concern about getting an intergroup together so we can carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic. It's great to see so much activity in the district.

District 4 – DCM Bill R.

...Three months ago I had five days as DCM for District 4 before we met in Louisville, and I didn't realize what all was involved—WOW, it can keep you busy, but it does keep me sober! We have 21 active groups with 18 GSRs making our District meeting grow. We are working on having some workshops for the district. I am proud of our GSRs.

District 5 – DCM Joe O.

The District 5 meeting was held at the Coffee Club in Lebanon on April 6. We had about 12 GSRs and 7 or 8 visitors. All of the groups said they were doing fine...running steady. A lot of the committee people do not know what they are supposed to be doing, so we are trying to hook them up with the Area committee people to help them figure out what to do. Richard, our corrections chairperson, will be working on getting meetings in the new jail. The District 5 picnic will be held at the Fredericksburg Ballpark on September 20th. All are invited, and (Area 26 Delegate) Barbara F. will be coming down to do a workshop for us.

District 6 – DCM Bob R.

Only 4 GSRs showed up for the March meeting. In March I attended meetings in District 6 to encourage attendance. As a result, more GSRs showed up for the April meeting. In March, 4 members of the Thursday Erlanger Group celebrated anniversaries from 22 to 34 years. The GSRs are planning a picnic to celebrate the history of Northern Kentucky AA on June 22 in Ft. Mitchell.

District 7 – DCM Mitch M.

Not in attendance: report given by Steve G. District 7 is going through a rebuilding stage, and we are trying to get more groups and individuals involved in service. We are currently making new meeting schedules for the district.

District 8 – DCM Donna D.

District 8 continues to deal with lack of cooperation. In order to gain support we took our quarterly meeting to Harlan, way up in the mountains. We had 4 GSRs to show up. We are currently making new meeting schedules for the district.

District 9 – DCM Buz T.

District 9 in far eastern Kentucky has a new meeting in Louisa—this makes the 4th meeting in Lawrence County, and we are pleased. We do have some sad news: Many of you were at the October assembly where you heard about our longest long-timer, Joe. He turned 94 this year and got his 57th year token. Joe passed away very quickly in February. We had a pretty big crowd for Joe and a lot of fellowship. ...Our annual fall picnic will be held at Jenny Wiley State Park Saturday, September 13th. We would like to invite you down—we'll have a big time!

District 10 – DCM Nick S.

District 10 is having a service workshop at the EZ Does It Club in Louisville on May 18 from 1 to 4. Mick M. and O'Dell H. will speak. District 10 holds a monthly meeting

at 1:30 on Sunday at the Care Center in Louisville.

District 11 – DCM Phyllis C.

District 11 has held two district meetings since the last area assembly. We have 18 active home groups in our district. Fifteen of these groups have an active GSR. District 11 is hosting a workshop on April 27th on the 3 legacies. We will have 3 speakers and provide pizza and drinks. There was a "Send a Book to Jail" dance March 29, which was a success. The Clark County men and women's jail meeting are back and active.

District 12 – DCM Kate D.

Our first event sponsored by the district has been rescheduled for April 19 and will consist of a gumbo dinner and a speaker who will focus on the recovery side of the 3 legacies triangle. We have the highest number of groups with active GSRs that we've had in recent years: 14 active GSRs out of 26 groups. Upcoming events include our spring celebration April 19 at the Douglass Christian Church gym in Louisville with dinner and a speaker. The Bluegrass round-up weekend conference sponsored by gay/lesbian AA and Al-Anon members will be May 23-25.

District 13 – DCM Cecilia M.

District 13 holds our monthly meeting on the 2nd Sunday of every month at 1:00 at the Pigeons' Roost in Louisville. Attendance by GSRs recently is growing: we have had 11 to 18 in attendance every month.

District 13 discussed the agenda item and we are in favor of restoring the past delegates' voice only at area meetings and assemblies. There are 2 new meetings in our district: The Convenient Group (which has been inactive) has started meeting again Tuesdays at 10:30 am. This is an open discussion meeting that meets at the Pigeons' Roost. The Desperation Group, which has been meeting since 1993 is getting registered with GSO. They meet on Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at the Electrical Union Hall in Louisville. We are currently starting to work on our upcoming Unity Picnic in Louisville. (See the flyer in this issue of the newsletter.)

District 14 – DCM Brantley C.

Since the last assembly, District 14 has held 2 meetings, hosted by the Lawrenceburg and Georgetown Groups. Nearly all GSRs and committee chairs were in attendance. New district service manuals were prepared and distributed to all GSRs and officers. New committee workbooks were also purchased and passed out to standing committee chairs. Some of our committees actually have committees now, which is something new for us. The Paris Group is putting on a workshop on The Importance of the Home Group on Saturday, April 26. Our next district meeting is scheduled in June and will be hosted by the CHIPS Group in Frankfort.

District 15 – DCM Gordon R.

I am just finding out some of the things I need to know to be an effective servant as DCM. We held our April meeting a week early and still had twice the usual attendance. The attendees, with much more area and district service experience than I, helped make the meeting interesting and informative. I have put out a call in the Bluegrass Intergroup "Scoop" for more help as we seek willing servants to fill the majority of our committee chairs at our next monthly meeting in May.

District 16 – DCM Amy B.

Our district has gotten off to a great start this year. We held our first district event in March: we had a St. Patrick's Day potluck and invited Betty S. from Lexington to talk to us about service. We are currently planning the details of our next district inventory and our next event. (Area 26 Delegate) Barbara F. will be joining us to celebrate AA's birthday in June. We hold monthly district meetings on the first Thursdays of the month, and attendance has increased from the beginning of the year, for which we are truly thankful.

District 17 – DCM Bill W.

District 17 is doing well. Most of the meetings in the district are being well attended. On May 10th we are going to have a workshop with Laura (Corrections), Bobby (Treatment), and Terrie (CPC). I think this is going to be an exciting event. On July 4th, the Hall Street Group will be having their 3rd Annual 4th of July picnic. We have 2 new committee chairs in

district 17: Diana H. (Corrections) and Audrea M. (Public Information).

District 18 – DCM Ed C. (report given by Laura H.)

District 18 is going through lots of changes. The DCM resigned in March, with Alternate DCM Ed C. being willing to step up to the DCM position. We have 3 vacant committee positions and also the Alternate DCM position is open. We have about 7 to 9 GSRs participating. We are encouraging more participation at the district level with members going to meetings and making announcements.

District 19 – DCM Jay S.

Not in attendance.

District 20 – DCM J.D. R.

Not much going on in District 20 since last winter. There is the new Morehead Inspiration Center in Morehead. I have heard some complaints about working with the treatment center people. We have not had any problems with that, because we are going to follow the 12 Traditions in our AA meetings. May 3rd the Into Action Group will be hosting the district picnic. District 20 is still active in the corrections facilities in Morehead and West Liberty.

District 21 – DCM Bernie O.

Our activities have been kind of slow this first quarter, due to bad weather and other things. District 21 has 21 groups and 21 active contacts, about 75% of them GSRs. We have filled

all of our committee chairs. We have a need for old Grapevines, and funds for Big Books for the large prison system in LaGrange. The prisoners like the small format Big Books that fit in their pockets. We have noticed a significant rise in attendance at all of our meetings: Almost every one has had at least a 10% increase. I don't think it is us; I think more people are starting to realize there is a program here that is really going to help them.

District 22 – DCM Eric B.

Our district would like to say thanks for the feedback from other DCMs, Committee Members, and other AA members, helping us get our district going. As a result of that the attendance at our district meetings has been anywhere from 12 to 15 people. Also, through communicating with the groups, our treasury has grown so we are actually self-supporting and have a prudent reserve. We are looking at having a traditions workshop in June. We have a few new service roles in the district: a new secretary – Julie, and special needs chair is Vonda J. Doris has stepped up for literature chair. Vonda J. is reaching out to nursing homes in our district to deliver the AA message to people unable to leave those facilities. Evan volunteered to be our contact person for people who are unable to read, so we can give them access to the Big Book on tape.

District 23 – Dave C. (representative)

I am the GSR for the Hope Group in Ashland. There is one other GSR that

I know of, but he was unable to attend. Our DCM has been unable to continue the work in our district. At our first group conscience meeting we agreed to resume supporting GSO, our district and intergroup on a quarterly basis. We are now in discussions on why \$2,200 is not really a prudent reserve. Since becoming GSR, I have had several beneficial conversations with our Area Chairman, Darryl M., and hope he will be able to attend our meeting in May.

District 24 – DCM Charlie S.

District 24 and District 29 meet jointly on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Participation at these meetings is increasing with new GSRs coming on board. We continue to address the question that was put to us by one of our groups: What are we doing for the newcomer at the district level? And why should we continue to support the district? This has led to some good discussion, and has given us the opportunity to tell the groups about the AA structure, and how we are serving the newcomer by keeping the lines of communication open. This has proven effective in stimulating interest in service work. It seems that where there is controversy, there is interest. We are making plans to do a district level inventory, and have invited a past delegate to sit in on our meetings to give us guidance on how we can best be of service.

District 25 – DCM Pat R.

We have 2 new meetings that have started at the club in Danville: One is a women's meeting at 6:30, and the other is a men's meeting at 8:00. Both meet on Wednesday night. My goal is to get members of the district to become active in service work. I hope to get GSRs for all the groups: We have 3 now. This quarter we plan to have a workshop on Bridging the Gap. Also the 11th Step Retreat at Camp Wakondaho (which had been going on for 20 years) has started up again.

District 26 – DCM Sarah C.

We have 3 meetings in our district. The East End Group is doing well, and so is the Hungry Spirits Group. We elected a new GSR for that group, Lou R. The Cadiz Group has added a Big Book Study, which gives them 2 meetings a week. Their group is really growing. We had a request from the Todd County Jail to bring meetings to them. This information was passed on to a member of the Russellville Group. There is also a group of people that meets on Tuesday nights to study the 12 Concepts.

District 27 – DCM Tim P.

Our last district meeting was March 2nd with 11 of 17 groups represented. Mark D. reported on our 11th annual Howling at the Moon campout that will be held June 6, 7 and 8th at the Barron River State Park picnic area. Several workshops will be held that weekend. Next, we will host the Area 26 Quarterly in July at Cave City. Hope to see you all there.

District 28 – DCM John M.

District 28 in Lexington has been very active this past quarter. We hosted a workshop at the Alano Club in March with the theme "Introduction to Service." Our Area Delegate (Barbara F.) was gracious to attend and share her experience, strength and hope with us. A potluck lunch was served and a panel of 6 shared on various aspects of service work. We had an exceptional turnout of about 60 people! Our district committee chairs have almost been filled. Special Needs is the only committee without a chair. Shawn D. is our new Grapevine Chair; Alice D. is our new Corrections Chair. Our literature committee has made pamphlets, AA guidelines and service manuals available at each district meeting. The motion being brought forward by district 11 was discussed and it was agreed unanimously that past delegates should have their voice restored. We continue to read and discuss the service manual when time permits.

District 29 – DCM Dalton D.

Not in attendance.

District 30 – DCM Richard W.

District 30 has been a hotbed of AA activity. First the clubhouse opened, and several new meetings started there. Also some existing meetings moved to the new facility. Then amidst complaints that the tradition were being violated, the clubhouse closed. Attendance is up considerably at meetings throughout the district, including 2 new ones:

the Monday night 8 Up Group and Thursday night Big Book Study. We would like to thank our Area Delegate for coming to see us in district 30, and to all the officers who were available by phone to give us their experience, strength and hope during this period of growth. We have new chairpersons for our treatment, corrections, literature and archive committees. A computer has been donated to the archives committee.

District 31 – DCM Chip A.

District 31 maintains a constant attendance at meetings. The district meetings have dropped in attendance lately, but our committee members and GSRs have stayed in contact. The Red Door Group has its district dinner coming up on April 26th. There is a new open discussion meeting in Webster County called A Step Forward. It meets every Wednesday from 7:30 to 8:30 in Providence. We have a new corrections chairperson—Georgia. She has established and maintained regular meetings at the Hopkins Co. jail. There are 9 women in the rotation team, and 11 men. Georgia is also planning corrections workshops during May. There is a new 100-bed women's treatment facility in Henderson. The Weaverton Group is adjusting well to having this women's facility in their area. The Red Door, which is the oldest meeting in district 31, is having a dinner on April 26th.

District 32 – DCM Harry M.

Recently 5 cases of Big Books were given to the district by our Intergroup, which held a steak dinner fundraiser. Our corrections chairman, Tony T., has compiled a list of all persons chairing corrections meetings in our district. He has met with the jailer at Grant County to try to re-establish AA meetings in that facility. At our last district meeting we decided to discontinue our Sober Spring Break event, due to lack of attendance. We are considering other activities for our district. We are also compiling an updated list of all the contacts and emails for GSRs in our district. The alternate DCM and I have committed to attending all of the meetings in our district to try to generate more interest in service work at this level.

District 33 – DCM Ray L.

I would like to thank Darryl M., our Area Committee Chairman, for coming to our district meeting and sharing his experience, strength and hope with us. There were 8 of 10 groups represented at our last GSR meeting. There have been 2 new GSRs elected: Dean C. of the Princeton Group, and Jeremy W. of the Benton/Fairdealing Group. We have a new group in Murray, the By the Book Group. All GSRs report that attendance at meetings is growing. Clay D. of the Marshall County 142s was elected the new literature/Grapevine chairperson. Corrections work in the district is also growing, as the men are now carrying the message into the class D facility at Marshall County. There are now a total of 3 meetings being

held at this facility, including one for the women. I am currently seeking an individual qualified to oversee taking the message into the penitentiary located in Eddyville. God has blessed district 33. We invite you to come and share in the hope that we have found.

District 34 – DCM Jeff N.

District 34 is doing well. We had a district dinner and GSR meeting at Calhoun. The speaker that evening was Donnie D. from Evansville, IN. He did a fine job. Due to the small size of our district we are always concerned about being self-supporting. Once again our groups stepped up to the plate. We are very proud of the groups in district 34 and their efforts to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

District 35 – DCM Jerry D.

District 35 has been discussing proposed structure changes. The drug court system is trying to use AA here as an extension of the courts. We have been struggling with the drug courts because of a form that sponsors have been asked to fill out. The form asks for the sponsor's name, address and phone number, as well as asking the sponsor to agree to be contacted by drug court staff regarding their sponsee and his or her compliance with the sponsor-sponsee relationship. The drug court is also asking sponsors to agree to report once a month to the drug court to give information on the sponsee. I contacted my Representative in Frankfort and her

response was surprise at the inappropriate requests. She told us she would email the drug courts around the state to let them know this should not be happening. So far, that has not helped. On the 21st of April we have another meeting with the drug court people. Terrie with the Area CPC committee and Darryl M., Area committee chairman have both agreed to help. The majority of newcomers to AA are coming from the drug courts. We need to try to work with them, but the courts need to know about our traditions, and how inappropriate these requests are.

District 3 Eating Meeting

July 26, 2008, at 13th Street Clubhouse

Bowling Green, Kentucky

GSR – 5:30 p.m.

Eat – 6:30 p.m.

Speaker – 8:00 p.m., Don M., Louisville, is the speaker

Meat and drinks are provided.

Please bring covered dish with something in it.

District 3 Eating Meeting

August 2, 2008, at Preston Miller Water Park in Bowling Green, Kentucky

GSR – 5:30 p.m.

Eat – 7:00 p.m.

Speaker – 8:00 p.m., John L., Evansville, Indiana is the speaker

Meat and drinks are provided.

Please bring a covered dish with something in it.

Kentucky RecoveryFest

August 30, 2008, at Basil Griffin Park, Bowling Green, Kentucky

Athena Cage Amphitheater

A musical celebration of 12 step recovery.

Performers: Michael Purington, Steve Dan Mills and more artists and musicians

For more information, visit

www.kyrecoverfest.com