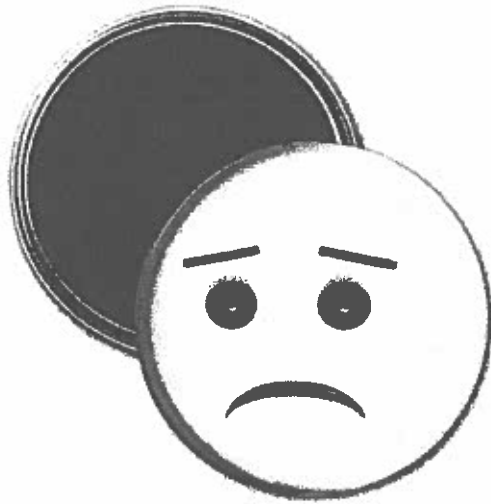


WINTER 2016

# Kentuckiana News

*THE VOICE OF AREA 26*

## *Fighting the Winter Blues? Stay in the Solution!*



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The goal of Kentuckiana News is to inspire recovering alcoholics through articles on AA topics that share the experience, strength and hope of AA members.

**The topic of our Spring (April) issue is: *It's In the Book!***  
*How has the Big Book answered your questions about living sober?*

Please submit your articles for the Spring issue to [Kentuckiana@area26.net](mailto:Kentuckiana@area26.net)  
Deadline for article submission is March 1, 2016

## **ON POINT: FIGHTING THE WINTER BLUES? STAY IN THE SOLUTION**

*"Sometimes we become depressed. I ought to know; I have been a champion dry-bender case myself...Intellectually I could accept my situation, emotionally I could not...Part of the answer surely lies in the constant effort to practice all of AA's twelve steps." (Reprinted from As Bill Sees It, pg. 30, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.)*

### **The Winter Blues, by Jim S.**

The question is, how do we cope with winter blues? As a recovering Alcoholic of just a little over six years I always struggle with what I refer to as seasonal depression. When I was in the madness of alcoholism I had my "remedy" of vodka and beer. Take away my relief, my comfort, and I am faced with the realities of life.

The holidays have ended and I have just enjoyed another sober Holiday season. My Birthday is January 3<sup>rd</sup> so I manage to stay pretty pumped up naturally until that day comes and goes. Pro football lasts a bit longer into January, which I enjoy, but other than that the long cold, dark days start to creep into my mind and I start feeling a little off, a little down. I have sudden bouts of loneliness out of the blue for no apparent reason. My alcoholic brain starts to tell me there is something wrong and it tries to tell me that a drink sounds pretty good about now. But because of the fact that the obsession to drink has been removed that's all it is: a fleeting thought. I will not allow drinking to be my solution.

So there I am, feeling down; the Winter Blues have bitten me. The first thing I do is to increase my prayer and meditation time. I try to spend more time in spiritual thought and prayer. I talk about my blues with someone who gets it and "tell on myself," I say I am down today and that's ok. I have learned over the years that it's ok to be down, to be sad as long as I don't allow it to consume me.

Action is what's needed; along with increased prayer and meditation I will increase my daily exercise routine, two good examples of positive actions. I will increase my normal AA meeting schedule by one or two additional meetings a week, look for a Big Book study group and work the twelve steps again. Get out of the ho-hum of normal everyday life and maybe take a vacation in February. I will volunteer somewhere a couple times, feed the homeless or chair a meeting. Help a newcomer!! Sit down and watch my favorite movie again (If I want to cry I watch the movie "Jack Frost." Crying for me is an emotional cleansing. If I want to laugh I put in "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation", here again laughter is one of the healthiest things I can do. Set one

goal to complete a task I have put off, like cleaning out the closets. Things like this make me feel better when completed.

My point is I have a choice today to sit and do nothing and be miserable or to take action against the inevitable seasonal depression. Today I choose to take action. We recovered Alcoholics really have more options when you think about it than we did when we were drinking, we can take what we know works and just accelerate and add to our program to keep us serene through the dog days of winter.

These are just some of my winter blues remedies that I hope will help someone else.



*"I asked myself, why can't the Twelve Steps work to release me from this unbearable depression? Suddenly I realized what the answer might be. My basic flaw had always been dependence on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security and confidence. Reinforced by what grace I could find in prayer, I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people and upon circumstances." (Reprinted from As Bill Sees It, pg. 63, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.)*

**How I lose those Winter Blues, By Alex M.**

When the first leaf falls I know what is coming. Days grow short. I get up and go to bed in the dark. Temperatures drop and the snow shovel appears. Jackets, sweaters and overcoats get moved out from the hall closet. Storm windows go up and the house is sealed. Winter is still two months away and I'm already depressed.

Depression leads me to isolation and self-pity, regardless of the cause. That black dog makes dealing with all of life so much harder. When I was younger I did not know what to do with my depression and other feelings I didn't like until I discovered alcohol.

What a relief! Alcohol took away all the feelings I didn't like including depression. Later, when I was told alcohol was a depressant, I laughed and said "not for me".

How things change. Coming into AA I was beaten, miserable and very suicidal. During a brief honeymoon my suicidal thoughts disappeared but they quickly returned until I did the step work and started to clean up my past. After that, my depression, along with my obsession to drink, was removed.

Today I still get a bit of the winter blues, but I don't put a gun in my mouth when it occurs. Besides having

an attitude of gratitude, I've found that planning ahead helps even when I'm unsure of the outcome.

The best way for me to confront my depression is by thinking of myself less. So every fall as the leaves start to turn, I think about what type of AA service project I can get involved with for the following year.

My first year I chaired a few meetings at my Home Group, became willing to sponsor and read all I could about the history of AA. The next year I started speaking at meetings and committed to going to one new meeting a week that I had never attended. Later on I became involved in our local Intergroup, which offered a wide variety of service opportunities. Helping to host a meeting at a

homeless shelter, getting involved in an ongoing step group and doing some writings about my experience in AA kept the blues away. I'm not sure what new service project I'll do next year, but just by thinking about it I'm not so dejected when it gets dark at 5 PM.

Starting a project does not mean I cut back on my regular meetings, sponsoring, praying, or doing any of the usual maintenance activities. I still work to stay sober.

I am no service saint and sometimes think all this planning is silly and simple-minded. But if that's what it takes to get me through the winter blues I'm happy to do it. There's always a toolbox solution available if I am willing to use it.



"When we approach step ten, we commence to put our AA way of living to practical use, day by day, in fair weather or foul. Then comes the acid test: can we stay sober, keep in emotional balance, and live to good purpose under all conditions?" (*Reprinted from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg. 88, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.*)

**Staying in the Solution, by Ray H.**

My experience is this: Use my holiday period of anguish as a time for inventory. Even businesses take this time of year for their inventory. Of course I am not speaking of a physical inventory, (although more diets take place during this time of year). I am conveying my need to take stock of resentments, fears, self-centered ego ideas, and all the seven deadly sins that affect my spiritual condition without me even knowing it.

Although daily inventories are the ultimate in keeping my alcoholism in check, there are times I might think I have gotten over an ordeal, when in reality I haven't.

Winter is often the time when I realize that I can't get away from myself. I am stuck with my problem: Me. Society and life today has so many diversions to get away from ourselves, that we may be doing ourselves a disservice regarding recovery when we use these diversions as a hiding place. The older I get, the more I feel the effects of the shortness of life itself. How can I be free and find peace within? I have found, having gone through depressions, that being put through dark nights, allowing the program of action to do its job, and surrendering to that Power greater than ourselves will lead me to and through a period of spiritual development and growth.

During our drinking careers, the power of alcohol became a false idol of living. Sometimes, especially for newcomers, it all might seem unbearable that our "best" friend (alcohol) has turned into a nightmare of despair. But using these gray periods is useful in recovery itself. Avoiding the "elephant in the room" and not talking to someone about it creates more isolation and alienation from being part of the great whole.

One of my defects of character is that of being a hoarder. I will buy or find bargains thinking that this is something I really *need*, when, truth be known, I really don't. I will hold on to something that only creates clutter and piles up in some sort of unsorted storage. The same applies to the inner workings of my spirit. Spirit versus Ego, Fear versus Courage, Resentment versus Peace, Truth versus the False, all the intangibles of interior conflict of my true self. Barely into winter, attending discussion and reading meetings of AA, and maybe an occasional speaker meeting keeps me grounded. Chasing the "blues" away may seem a daunting task, and a struggle, but the whole set of spiritual tools given to us through people who have traveled this path, is the map to freedom and peace. Sometimes it's good to spend time alone for prayer and reflection, sometimes it's good to feel empty, and sometimes it's good to feel tired. This may conflict with the HALT idea, but it was only during these times that I was given the motivation to move forward. The power of getting to a surrender point was the "turning point" where I asked "His protection and care with complete abandon."

The gray days of winter expose the skeletal frames of trees, and growth seems nonexistent. Yet the interior of the trees contain the life source of the sap that will fuel and generate from its roots new growth, and renewed life. The twelve steps of AA heal me from the inside out, not the outside-in. Sometimes we need to feel the "blues" before we make a change. The winter blues can be a good thing when used wisely for our growth.



## TRADITIONS 1 – 3 THROUGH THE EYES OF OUR MEMBERS



### Tradition One

A few thoughts about Tradition One, which states, **"Each member is but a small part of a great whole, AA must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first, but individual welfare follows close afterward."** (*Reprinted from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 189, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.*).

The first thought that comes to mind is that if we are considering our common welfare as essential to the survival of AA, the question arises, "What is it that we have in common? What actually establishes the unbreakable bond that holds us together in a progressive unity?" Well, one doesn't have to look far to see and hear that one thing that we all have in common, is that we cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This craving is described as the inability to control the amount we drink once we start. Without exception, every alcoholic has this experience. So, when we share our stories around this experience no alcoholic within reach of our voice is ever excluded; no one is left out.

Secondly, when this cycle of drinking becomes so unbearable that it can no longer be tolerated, we make a firm commitment not to drink again. But after any considerable period of time, in nearly every case, we find ourselves unable to live up to our commitment and we drink again. We have lost the power of choice over the first drink. And here too, when we share our experiences in regard to having had no mental defense against the first drink, as baffling as it seems, no real alcoholic is left behind. Again we are held in unity. So it would seem that this atmosphere of identification established in the sharing of this most tragic and destructive common experience opens the portal for the alcoholic to recognize, accept, and ultimately participate in our common solution, the need to find a Power greater than ourselves through the practice of The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

This life-saving solution, which is more easily accepted when the problem is effectively communicated to the newcomer, is of such urgent importance that no personal sacrifice is too great to preserve the welfare and unity of our fellowship.

Therefore, no matter how many different issues I may have or how tempted I am to share these experiences, I must behave responsibly, not only toward every other alcoholic in the meeting especially the newcomer, but also to the fellowship as a whole. So, whenever I might have the urge to share some particular event or experience that is not consistent with AA's "PRIMARY PURPOSE," I need to remember that according to Tradition One "no personal sacrifice is too great for the preservation of the fellowship."

This means that if I have trouble with gambling, food, drugs, politics, race or religion etc., that for the "common welfare" and survival of AA, I must refrain from discussing these outside issues in an AA meeting. No personal ambition, desire, or individual is more important than AA's purpose. Our common welfare must come first or Alcoholics Anonymous will fail in its mission and in this failure AA will surely die.

For alcoholic after alcoholic will fail to identify his problem, will not recognize the solution and will suffer "The Alcoholic Death" in the meetings of AA. So let us join together in maintaining the life-saving atmosphere of identification and unity for the sake of the next suffering alcoholic that comes through the door of Alcoholics Anonymous.

*Article written in 2012 by former Area Delegate George. J.*



## **Tradition Two**

***"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."***  
*(Reprinted from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 132, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.)*

Before the 1950 International Convention, Bill W. shortened 11 of the 12 Traditions. Only Tradition Two was made longer. Some of Tradition 9 was moved to Tradition Two, "All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in AA are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole," and changed to "Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." *(Reprinted from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 191-192 with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.)* This change is significant, because it makes A.A. unique among organizations. We are a society of alcoholics with no rules; nothing to govern us but suggestions that come from our group conscience.

AA's Tradition Two seems a little naive. But AA has withstood the test of time and proves that our faith does work.

The first statement in Tradition Two begins with the words, "For our group purpose..." Our literature tells us that each group has but one primary purpose --to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who have not been given the truth may die. The paradox behind this is we must give it away to keep it. Tradition Two suggests that we should always consider our primary purpose when making decisions for our group and AA as a whole. No personal sacrifice is too great."

"...A loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience." (*Ibid*) When we first come in the doors of A.A we learn that our defects of character have been blocking us from God. We have to get down to the causes and conditions and remove the things that have been blocking us from the sunlight of the spirit, if we are to find a solution to our problem. AA history has shown us that the group is no different.

When the group leaders become bosses, dictators or rulers who try to govern the group, it can't help but cause trouble. The Group will go through growing pains until the defects are worked out. It is only when our leaders become trusted servants and allow the group conscience to make the decisions that our ultimate authority, "a loving God" may express himself.

*By Gary P.*



### **Tradition Three**

*"The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking." (Reprinted from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 139, with permission of AA World Services, Inc.)*

In A.A.'s infancy, the program began getting a lot of (positive) publicity. A good thing, of course, but one that early AA's found terrifying. What if all this attention attracted the wrong sort of people? Wouldn't there be drunks with other problems showing up at our door? Wouldn't newcomers include criminals or loose women? "Won't there be social undesirables? we asked...Mixed with a certain amount of snobbishness and smugness, this was downright fear...Since that early time literally all kinds of people have found their way in Alcoholics Anonymous. Our inclusiveness is now very broad indeed." (Reprinted from AA Comes of Age, p. 201, with permission of AA World Services.)



Much to the surprise of the founders of AA, the “wrong sorts” of people were exactly what all we drunks were! In spite of our inclusion in AA, the program still thrives. No wonder we jealously guard the unity of AA.

I’m very grateful to AA’s trusted servants and leaders for making it possible for me and for so many others to become a part of AA. How else would I have ever received the gift of sobriety, found a society of friends who accept and care for me regardless of my past, and who help me to become a better person every day?

*by Melissa B.*

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### And Now, A Few Bad Jokes...

•A drunk walks into a bar and orders a whiskey. Just before he takes a sip, a guy runs in and says, "Bill, your house burnt down!" So he runs outside, but then he thinks, "I don't have a house," so he goes back into the bar and sips his whiskey.

Another guy runs in and says, "Bill! Your dad died!" He runs out of the bar, gets on his horse and rides a little ways, but then thinks, "My dad died years ago," so he goes back into the bar and knocks back the rest of his whiskey.

A third guy runs in and says, "Bill! You won the lottery!" So he runs out, gets on his horse and rides all the way to the bank, but then he thinks, "Hey, my name's not Bill!"

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• A drunk walks into an elevator, but there's no elevator there. He falls five stories and lands on the bottom of the elevator shaft. He lays there a few seconds, slowly opens his eyes, and says, "Dammit, I said UP!"

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•I used to drink all brands of beer. Now, I'm older Budweiser!



## Dr. Carl Jung's Solution for Alcoholism

By Bob S.

It only takes one shot of whisky to whisk me on an uncontrollable drunken spree. Dr. Silkworth describes this as an abnormal allergy of the body, but that does not explain why I would guzzle down that first drink, knowing very well the result may be disastrous. I believe Dr. Carl Jung had the answer for such a puzzling lack of judgment. He writes about subconscious influences (archetypes), which spasmodically control my conscious decisions, leaving me *without choice* in the matter of drink (mental obsession).



Jung explains: Certain archetypal influences compulsively strive for exotic experiences, or at least some form of emotional meaningfulness. Although this presents no problem for most normal people, it left me with an emotional vacuum yearning to be filled. This filling, of course, took place at the local tavern. Alcohol was my salvation, my *higher power*!

Dr. Jung points out that from antiquity, gods generally resided *high* up on mountains or clouds. The Greek God of wine, Dionysius, who lived on mount Olympus, is often thought as being a drunkard, but not so—he provided the *wine of spiritual joy* to the expectant Greek society below. Dr. Jung stated: “*When Mt. Olympus was dismantled, we turned the gods into symptoms.*” In other words, alcoholics, like me, suffer from a lack of spirit (spirituality). Dr. Jung used the Latin expression, “*Spiritus contra spiritum,*” to further explain that my alcoholic obsession is really a low-grade attempt to obtain a spiritual experience. On page 27 of the Big Book, Dr. Jung revealed the solution to Rowland H.’s alcoholism: “*Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences.*” This statement turned out to be the AA solution for alcoholism!

AA’s Twelve Steps have upgraded my drunken low-grade spiritual search to a *high-grade spiritual Higher Power* which has brought about a personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism—at least for now. Thank you Dr. Jung! Thank you God!



**Upcoming AA Event!**

65<sup>th</sup> Kentucky State Convention

**Back To Basics**

February 26 – 28, 2016

Sloan Convention Center

1021 Wilkinson Trace, Bowling Green, KY 42104

**Host Hotel: *Holiday Inn University Plaza***

**1021 Wilkinson Tr., Bowling Green, KY 42104**

**Special rate \$89, ONLY if reserved by 1/26/2016 and by calling (270) 745-0088**

***AA Speakers***

*Doug & Tracy M., Powder Springs, GA*

*Scott L., Key West, FL*

*Ron F., Dickson, TN*

***Al-Anon Speaker***

*Teresa R., Campbellsville, KY*

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For More Information:

Contact the State Convention Committee at: [kystateconvention@gmail.com](mailto:kystateconvention@gmail.com)

Or visit: <http://www.kystateconvention.com/>



## GOOD TO KNOW

### *What A.A. does NOT do*

#### A.A. DOES NOT...

1. Furnish initial motivation for alcoholics to recover;
2. Solicit members;
3. Engage in or sponsor research;
4. Keep attendance records or case histories;
5. Join "councils" of social agencies;
6. Follow up or try to control its members;
7. Make medical or psychological diagnoses or prognoses;
8. Provide drying out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, or any medical or psychiatric treatment;
9. Offer religious services;
10. Engage in education about alcohol;
11. Provide housing, food, clothing, jobs, money or any other welfare or social services;
12. Provide domestic or vocational counseling;
13. Accept any money for its service or any contributions from non-A.A. sources;
14. Provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.

(Reprinted from the pamphlet AA at a Glance, copyright 1977, by the AA General Service Office.)

### *From the pamphlet Singleness of purpose and problems other than alcohol*

Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as "substance abuse" or "chemical dependency." Non-alcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to A.A. and encouraged to attend A.A. meetings. Non-alcoholics may attend **open** A.A. meetings **as observers**, but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed A.A. meetings.

**Have a Wonderful Winter !**