

# K.I.T.—KEEP IN TOUCH

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to your  
Area 62 State Newsletter



WE'RE ON THE WEB...  
WWW.AREA62.ORG  
CLICK ON  
KIT NEWSLETTER

Browse through the website and find many interesting areas—KIT, Conventions, Meeting Locations.

### 2004 KIT Topics:

- “Why don’t you choose your own conception of God” - Alcoholics Anonymous Pg 12
- Steps 1, 2 and 3 – How do you do those steps, anyway???
- Acceptance was the answer...
- Your Home Group
- Contempt Prior to Investigation
- Letting Go of Anger
- Quantity vs. Quality
- Participation & Action
- The Traditions

The KIT newsletter is distributed at each Area Assembly. Deadline for the next issue is September 1, 2004.

SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES,  
DISTRICT HAPPENINGS OR  
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Email: [62kit@area62.org](mailto:62kit@area62.org)

Mail: KIT Editor  
113 Rapid River Trail  
Greenville, SC 29615

Questions never answered,  
Joys never filled.  
Life was a merry-go-round  
Yet it always stood still.

Substitutes for a high,  
Substitutes for a low,  
A battle within oneself  
But on the surface it didn't show.

How long was it going to last  
Many years was the charade.  
Then she looked in the mirror  
at a different mold being made.

The guilt was fading.  
The misery wasn't there.  
Only a heart full of love  
Ready to share.

Questions were being answered  
Joys were being filled.  
Life was now a merry-go-round  
And it didn't stand still.

She sang and she danced,  
she laughed and she cried.  
She thought there could never be  
such beautiful feelings inside.

What could have happened?  
How could this dream come true?  
Then she remembered saying,  
“Thank you, AA, I love you.”

-- Libba M.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### FOUNDER'S DAY PICNICS

**June 12, 2004**-Florence-District 80-The Shady Group-Noon meeting, afternoon fellowship, 6:30pm Speaker

June 12, 2004-Districts 7 & 10—Greenville Intergroup—11am-3:00pm Speaker @ 12:30—Timmons Park

June 20, 2004-District 11—10am at High Falls Park on Lake Keowee

60TH SE REGIONAL CONFERENCE  
“The Joy of Living”  
Jacksonville, FL  
August 4-8, 2004

2004 AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS  
The Holiday Inn, Coliseum, Columbia  
September 12, 2004

2004 SC AREA ASSEMBLY  
The Holiday Inn—Coliseum, Columbia  
October 2-3, 2004

SE REGIONAL FORUM  
Louisville, KY  
December 3-5, 2004

58TH SC STATE CONVENTION  
“Rocketed into the 4th Dimension”  
The Sheraton, Columbia, SC  
March 3-6, 2005

2005 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION  
“I am Responsible”  
Toronto, Canada  
June 30– July 3, 2005

KIT (Keep in Touch) presents the experience and opinions of members of Alcoholics Anonymous on the disease of Alcoholism. Opinions expressed here are not those of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or the South Carolina Area Assembly.

Please do not be concerned if your story did not appear in this issue of KIT. Your story or article may be incorporated in a future issue. If for any reason the KIT Committee has decided not to publish an article that has been submitted, we apologize.

The KIT Committee members would like to thank everyone for taking the time to write an article for this publication. If you have any questions or comments regarding the publication of KIT, please contact a KIT Committee Member. We welcome your feedback.

What events are happening in your district or group between September 2004 and February 2005 that you would like published in the next KIT???

## GOD, IF THERE WAS A GOD, OWED ME AN APOLOGY ...

I was nine years old when my Dad was killed by a teenage drunk driver. He was a Southern Baptist minister, my Mom remarried another Southern Baptist minister, and my family slowly became filled with them. I am unsure if my stepfather or the other preachers in the family ever told me that I was going to hell once I later started drinking, but that is what I heard. With the pride of youth, I figured that I would keep on drinking because the trip to hell should be fun if I was going there anyway. As I grew older and drinking became less fun and more hellish, I convinced myself that there is no hell because there is no God, at least one who cared anything about me. God, if there was a God, had not done me any favors lately. God, if there was a God, owed me an apology about my Dad before He could expect me to have anything to do with Him.

It was not long after my first AA meeting that I knew I was powerless over alcohol and that my life was unmanageable. I was still smart enough to know, however, that the Second Step was talking about God when it says "power greater than our-

selfes ..." If this Power could really help me, He should be decent enough to apologize first. He did not, and I continued bouncing in and out of AA.

Another preacher's son in AA helped me finally break through the wall I built between Steps One and Two. He explained that Step Two suggested only that I try to come to believe in something greater than me and that Step Twelve promised that I would have a spiritual experience as the result of these steps. He then suggested that I would find what I was looking for somewhere between working Step Three and Step Twelve. I, in my wisdom, took this to mean that I would get the apology I deserved. I began working the steps. I wanted that apology.

My wall began crumbling after I yelled in anger at a God who may or not exist; put God at the top at my Fourth Step resentment list; shared my resentments toward God and others during my Fifth Step; and continued on through the rest of the steps. Even then, I still had doubts that any of this would work until I woke up one morning and realized that I had not

thought about a drink the day before. Going a whole day without even thinking about a drink was far beyond my power. It must be a Power greater than me restoring me to sanity. From there I developed a God of my understanding and have sought to deepen our relationship as I continue trying to work and rework the steps.

I know today that I could have never had a God of my understanding until I quit blaming the God of my youth for stuff that He had nothing to do with. It would have been my fault, not God's fault, if I had hurt or killed anyone during any of the many times I drove drunk. I decided to give God the same break about my Dad, and show the driver involved in my Dad's accident the same forgiveness that I would have hoped for had I been behind the wheel.

Maybe, just maybe, the God of my understanding let me put myself through the hell on earth I went through drinking so that I could begin seeking to forgive rather than be forgiven.

Robert H.



## Overheard at meetings...

The good news is you get your emotions back; the bad news is you get your emotions back.

If drinking is interfering with your work, you're probably a heavy drinker.  
If work is interfering with your drinking, you're probably an alcoholic.

When I was new, I didn't think I had any obsessions until I started thinking about it. Then it was all I could think about.

How come if alcohol kills millions of brain cells, it never killed the ones that made me want to drink?

From a newcomer reading the 'Promises' for the first time: "We will comprehend the word cemetery and we will know peace."

A treatment center is where you go and pay \$30,000 to find out that AA meetings are free.

Sobriety is the leading cause of relapse.

My life may be unmanageable, but now it's a better quality of unmanageability.

This is a 'One Day at a Time' program. If you are sober today, you are tied for first place in AA.

## VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF MEETINGS

Unlike some groups with several meetings a week, my home group has only one meeting a week. I know from personal experience, as well as from listening to others share their experience, that one meeting a week is not nearly enough for me to be restored to sanity. Therefore, since I want to live as peacefully as possible within myself, amongst God and my fellows, I attend other meetings. I like the side effects of attending varied meetings and groups.

While basically I hear the same stuff talked about at all the meetings, for some strange reason, I'm better able to hear what's being said when different people are saying it. I don't get caught up in personalities and my mind is more open to the message. It reinforces the truth in the message when many voices express positive results from working the steps. Hearing the same stuff from different folks somehow keeps it fresh, too. Maybe it's my incredibly short memory at work, but sometimes something I've heard hundreds of times seems like a novel idea. And if the new ideas are working for all those people, maybe they will work for me, too.

I'm less likely to become stagnant when I attend meetings outside my home group. I get too comfortable going to the same meetings over and over again and I can get caught up in expectations of what I think each person will share. I'm not able to hear what can be life saving information when focusing

on these judgments, rather than listening with an open mind. I have enough trouble trying to ignore my self-centered thoughts while folks are talking, let alone thinking I know what each person in the room will say about the topic at hand. It's real hard to learn anything when in this mindset. Hence attending lots of different meetings helps me get out of myself and listen to others.

Another advantage of going to varied meetings is that it has made my world much larger. When drinking, as well as when I was newly sober, I was scared to venture outside what was familiar and comfortable. Consequently, my world shrunk and fear still dominated my actions. Knowing I had to do something different if I wanted the steps to work for me, slowly I stepped through the fear into new and unfamiliar territory. Fear was not going to keep me confined in my self-constructed prison anymore. Feeling fear, while doing the right thing, is an expression of trusting God, and an opportunity to practice the principles of the program. I can go anywhere provided I have a good reason for being there. What better reason to travel outside the boundaries of fear, than to attend a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The world became even more roomy and inclusive when I recently attended our Area Assembly in Columbia. On Saturday, I sat in on the corrections committee meeting, learning what folks are doing to carry the

message all over the state to people in places I could easily have been myself. The prisoners have no choice about stepping outside their immediate surroundings, and I 'm gonna let fear keep me confined! I began to see just how truly blessed I am. How by accepting responsibility regardless of how I feel about it, I gain more freedom.

On Sunday, while observing the business meeting, I saw first hand how well our traditions work. They stopped being abstract principles and became fact. I was amazed at how well these alcoholics were working together. There weren't any fist fights, nor any name calling and the common welfare seemed to be the priority of everyone. I again saw how ridiculous my fear of new people and places can be. How the lies generated by my fear supply the material for this self-constructed prison. How contempt prior to investigation had robbed me of opportunities to change, to grow. While it only took about an hour to travel to the area assembly, I felt as if I had taken a trip around the world. Because my mind was open to new experiences, my world became a much larger and friendlier place. Perhaps one of the meetings I attend someday be at the International Convention. I'm so grateful my home group has only one meeting a week and it takes more than that to restore my sanity.

Anada L., Kershaw Faith Group

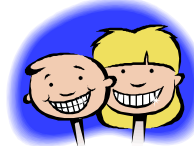
### WHO WILL WE CHOOSE TO BE???

We used to love to blame other people for the burdens and hurdles in our lives. That someone else was to blame for our personal upset was as obvious to us as rain splashing against the windshield. Yet the longer we looked at others rather than at ourselves, the more stuck we became in old behavior.

We've since come to understand that we simply cannot grow, we cannot harvest the fruits of this recovery program, unless we develop a will-

ingness to take responsibility for who we are at every instant of our lives. As we begin taking responsibility for our actions, we feel empowered. We realize that we are who we have chosen to be. And we will be who we decide we want to be. As that reality permeates our consciousness, we will begin to know that our hopes can become real, because the promises in the Big Book are real.

Audrey A., Dillon Co. Group



The Steps... short form

Steps 1-3... Give Up

Steps 4-6... Fess Up

Steps 7-9... Own Up

Steps 10-12... Grow Up

### ONE DAY AT A TIME...

Before finding the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous my solution to life's problems was getting drunk. I would drink as much as I could so I could escape reality. By the end of the evening the laughter wore off and I was usually crying, or in a situation I didn't know how to get out of.

Next came my trip to the porcelain throne where I would kneel, (I don't recall if I took the opportunity to pray since I was on my knees already). Then the grand finale, I'd

pass out. Not much of a way to solve problems, I'd say.

Today, I am amazed at how Alcoholics Anonymous works for me. There are so many gifts offered to me, left behind by Bill Wilson. The ideas and love he shared continues to live and flow from his words and from our own daily experience.

Good things happened in my life, even when I was drinking. I was accepted to a very good college, for example, but I threw that away. I have to watch that I don't do the same thing in my sobriety.

Yesterday was my birthday and my family and friends showed their love to me, and I was able to relax and happily enjoy their attention. There was a time when I wasn't able to do that.

Staying sober one day at a time has been a journey of healing and rebirth for me, and as they told me when I first came in, "It's beyond your wildest dreams" keeps coming true for me. Often times in the simplest thing, do I find the greatest joy and fulfillment, just by staying sober one day at a time.

Melissa

### Thank God for the Opportunity...

At a meeting last week, we had an excellent discussion of some real world issues. The crux of the problems centered around the difficulty of practicing the principles of the AA program "in all our affairs" and "with complete abandon" in a world that doesn't necessarily play by spiritual rules. The meeting led me to ponder my difficulty in trusting God at a gut level.

It is easy to say that I trust God. It is an easy concept for me to grasp intellectually that there is a loving God guiding my life and that I should turn my will and my life over to His care, as directed in the Third Step. But if you want to know if I trust God at a gut or heart level, watch what I do. Watch how I behave. Watch and see how free I am from self-centered fear, and therefore free from my character defects.

When things are going well this is easy to do. "Yeah, God Ol' Boy, this is great. I trust what you are doing. Keep up the good work...and by the way, thanks." When things aren't going well, this is a tall order. "God...D - - - t! Why are you doing this to me? I don't deserve this. (Or maybe I do, but I thought I had you fooled.)"

The inability to trust God is at the root of all my problems. Using the tapestry of life metaphor, ("I am but a thread in the tapestry of life that God is weaving"), I am telling God what color threads to put around me, and I can't even see the design. We encounter problems in life and we determine what outcomes would be acceptable to us. The flaw in this little system of life management is that we make the mistake of believing that our perspective is complete. We believe we have all the information necessary to determine the "proper" outcome. Why did that PACU nurse's teenage daughter get killed in that car wreck??? What a terrible thing (from my worldly perspective). It takes a great faith to accept that if we could see the entire picture, this accident wouldn't be troubling at all, even to the child's parents. How can that possibly be? We ask that question because we have a limited perspective.

Instead of leaving the outcomes to God as directed in the Third Step, we try to control the outcomes. We develop a self-centered fear that this "desired" outcome might escape us, so we resort to the old behaviors which are driven by our character defects. We become dishonest. We become manipulative. We become adversarial. We become angry and resentful at the perceived threats to the outcome we desire. As a result, even if we get the outcome we are so convinced is an absolute necessity, we have no peace. We are stirred up, not content. In our lives, love is replaced by fear. And the bondage of self continues ever stronger.

This maladaptive way of living was my modus operandi for 40+ years. The gift of my addiction is that it has given me the opportunity (not the certainty) to step back and reassess my methods. It has loosened my lock grip on this world and given me the opportunity to become open to a more spiritual way of living. I have found that it takes tremendous courage to approach problems spiritually before the type of faith described above sets in. It is a terrifying prospect, which is why I frequently can't do it. It is not about doing this perfectly, as long as I am trying to make progress.

Honesty, Open-Mindedness, and Willingness! The pain of the disease gave me the willingness to change and the open-mindedness to accept that there just might be a better way. Working the steps, particularly 4 and 5, has given me a more honest assessment of myself, ie, that it was really fear and not greatness.

Thank God for the opportunity.

Anonymous