

# Keep In Touch

October 2001

## Announcements

The Area website address is as follows:  
<http://www.southcarolinaaa.org>

~ REMEMBER ~

The next Area Assembly is scheduled  
February 9th & 10th, 2002.

### Future KIT Topics:

Change  
Responsibility  
Singleness of Purpose  
Shared Experience

**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 alarmed if your story did not appear in this issue of KIT. Your story or article will 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 will contact you.

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

## The Serenity Prayer

GOD, grant me the serenity  
to accept the things  
I cannot change,

Courage to change the  
things I can, and the  
wisdom to know the difference.

Living ONE DAY AT A TIME;  
Enjoying one moment at a time;  
Accepting hardship as the  
pathway to peace.

Taking, as He did, this  
sinful world as it is,  
not as I would have it.

Trusting that He will make  
all things right if I  
surrender to His Will;

That I may be reasonably happy  
in this life, and supremely  
happy with Him forever  
in the next.  
Amen

Reinhold Neibuhr  
1926

## SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES, DISTRICT HAPPENINGS, OR CALENDER OF EVENTS

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The next KIT publication will be presented in February at the Area Assembly. What events are happening in your district or group between February and June of 2002 that you would like published? **Deadlines for submission of articles is January 1, 2002.**

## Calendar of Events;

### ALKATHON - SOBER NEW YEAR'S EVE DANCE

Dec. 13, 2001 Mt. Pleasant Armory  
8 pm - 1 am  
Theme: Chinese New Year! \$10.00

### Next Area Committee Meeting

January 6, 2002 10:00 am

### Fourth addition of Big Book to be out around Thanksgiving.

### Sandlapper Roundup

November 30 - December 2, 2001  
Landmark Resort Hotel  
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina  
Registration: \$20.00

### SC State AA Convention

February 28 - March 3, 2002  
Landmark Hotel  
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina  
Registration: \$15.00/Advance  
\$20.00 /Door

### General Service Conference

New York - April, 2002

### SE Conference in conjunction with West Virginia Convention August, 2002

### SC Regional Forum

November 28 - 29, 2002

### SERCYPAA

Columbia, SC - July 2002

### NC Young People in AA

November 8th thru 11th  
Wilmington, NC  
Info: <http://www.nccypaa.org>

## The Original A.A. Preamble

Tonight, I am acting as Chairman in my turn. As is customary for each of us, I will introduce myself -- and as I call on the other speaker(s) of this evening, I ask that they introduce themselves in the same manner.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, and through following its Program, I have refrained from drinking since \_\_\_\_\_.

We are gathered here because we are faced with the fact that we are powerless over alcohol and unable to do anything about it without the help of a Power greater than ourselves. We feel that each person's religious views, if any, are his own affair. The simple purpose of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is to show what may be done to enlist the aid of a Power greater than ourselves regardless of what our individual conception of that Power may be.

In order to form a habit of depending upon and referring all we do to that Power, we must at first apply ourselves with some diligence. By often repeating these acts, they become habitual and the help rendered becomes natural to us.

We have come to know that, as alcoholics, we suffer from a serious disease for which medicine has no cure. Our condition may be the result of an allergy which makes us different from other people. It has never been permanently cured by any treatment with which we are familiar. The only relief we have to offer is absolute abstinence, the second meaning of A.A.

There are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Each member squares his debt by helping others to recover.

An Alcoholics Anonymous member is an alcoholic who, through application of and adherence to the A.A. program, has forsworn the use of any and all alcoholic beverages in any form. The moment he takes so much as one drop of beer, wine, spirits or any other liquid containing alcohol, he automatically loses all status as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. A.A. is

not interested in sobering up drunks who are not sincere in their desire to stay sober for all time. Not being reformers, we offer our experience only to those who want it.

We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree and on which we can join in harmonious action. Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our program. Those who do not recover are people who will not or simply cannot give themselves to this simple program. Now you may like our program or you may not, but the simple fact remains that it works and, we believe, is our only chance to recover.

There is a vast amount of fun included in the A.A. fellowship. Some people might be shocked at our seeming worldliness and levity but just underneath there lies a deadly earnestness and a full realization that we must put first things first and with each of us, the first thing is the solution to our alcoholic problem. To drink is to die! Faith must work twenty four hours a day in and through us or we perish.

In order to set our tone for this meeting, I ask that we bow our heads and join in a few moments of silent prayer and meditation followed by the Serenity Prayer.


### **(PAUSE FOR THE SILENT PRAYER & SERENITY PRAYER)**

I wish to remind you that whatever is said here at this meeting expresses our own individual experience as of today. We do not speak for A.A. as a whole and you are free to agree or disagree with anything that is said here tonight. In fact, it is recommended that you pay no attention to anything that cannot be reconciled with what is in the Big Book - "Alcoholics Anonymous".

If you don't have a Big Book, it is time you bought one. Read it! Study it! Live with it! Follow the directions in it and learn what it means to be an A.A. member.

Are there any visitors from out of town or from other groups? We would like to know who you are and where your home group is.

We are just glad we are all here and we are all here because we are not all there.




## IS ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

**Listed in the telephone directory in your hometown?**

**If not, why?**

**AA is an anonymous organization, not a secret one...**



## Lost But Now Found

I'm out of the pit and I'm headed home,  
my spirits free, I am no longer alone.  
The wall has been lifted in front of my tomb,  
I feel like a child that just came from the womb.

A new beginning started that very first day,  
surrounded by the love that you were giving away.  
You all gathered round as you heard the good word,  
that one of your own had returned to the herd.

Like a child that had just been misplaced,  
you cleaned me all up and found me a place,  
You welcomed me back with all the love in your heart,  
all that you asked was to try a new start.

So, as I look forward to start a new life,  
I'd like to thank you all, in my time of strife.  
It was your love and support that brought me from there.  
It was from all of your blessings that God answered my prayer.



Robby H.

## "We're Not Alone"

Live not seeking to do your own will,  
For if you do, it is yourself you will kill.  
Seek Gods knowledge and accept His grace  
And He'll lead you away from that selfish place.  
Trust Him, feel Him, and know He is there.  
That you're never alone, your problems He'll share.  
God uses the small things to overcome the large.  
When your problems seem big, let go and let God take charge.  
Never listen to the voice that says,  
*"It's too late!"*

For there is one who has all power  
and His power is great.  
Live in the moment, not regretting the past,  
Let God handle the future,  
and your sobriety might last.  
Clean and sober,  
happy, joyous and free  
All these promises God has granted to Thee!!!



H.H.

## Delegate's Corner

The year 2001 is coming to a close and my time as your Delegate is also ending. I consider it a privilege to have had the opportunity to serve as your Delegate. I have been honored to be able to represent Area 62 during the past two years at GSO in New York and also at the Regional Forum and Regional Conferences in the Southeastern Region. To be a part of the conference that approved the fourth edition of the big Book is an experience I will never forget.

Words cannot express the growth and feelings I have experienced in my spiritual life as well as growth in the wonderful Fellowship that we all know. The GOD of my understanding has been good to me.

I believe that Area 62 is proceeding into the future with the vote that was taken at the last Assembly. The substantial unanimity shown by the group conscience truly indicates that we are progressing in the right direction. By electing Area Officers in an area wide method we insure that no one will ever be overlooked who is eligible and willing to serve. Any individual can stand for the position they are eligible for at each election. I realize that we may have some problems to begin with however; by seeking God's help we will overcome these problems. What an exciting time to be a part of Area 62!

Again thank you for allowing me to serve as your Delegate. What a learning experience it has been. Little did I know when I attended that first meeting in 1975 that I would one day be honored to be selected as Delegate for Area 62. I will continue to attend Area Assemblies and will attempt to assume the role of Elderly Statesman instead of Bleeding Deacon, both described in our book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. If I get out of line, let me know! See you at the next Assembly.



In Love and Service,  
Your friend and trusted servant,  
Darwin H.  
Panel 50, Area 62

## A Turning Point...

When I called AA, I was desperate. No car, no phone, no house fuel, bills from everywhere, and sick as only a drinking alcoholic can be. I asked a friend to drive me 5 miles to a town and borrowed a dime to call AA from a booth. The operator asked for 5 cents more, as AA was in the next town. When I told her what I was trying to do, she put the call through without the nickel. Fifteen minutes after I returned to my home, an AA member was at my door. He became my sponsor and directed me to my first meeting that night. Whenever I doubt the presence of a Higher Power, I remember how God found me that phone operator.



Ed. C.  
Aiken, SC

## Answering Service Blues

When you visit out of town, how do you find a meeting? When someone hurts due to alcohol abuse, is it easy for him or her to find someone to talk to? Who is on the other end of that number listed in the phone book and newspaper?

For many years in Beaufort County, both north and south of the Broad River, recovering alcoholics answered the A.A. phone in their homes. These people could give meeting times and support to anyone who called. In years past, this was the practice in many parts of the country.

When times changed, and a modern answering service became the best choice to field schedule questions and rotate 12th Step calls to many different people, the A.A. groups set up two services, one in Hilton Head, the other in Beaufort.

Rumors, crises, and confusion go with the territory in keeping an answering service up and running. Sadly, A.A. service entities can get tainted by rivalries, real or imagined. Once we get the company trained to our needs, they often find that one or two people are usually available, calls are routinely routed to them and others on the list rarely get a call.

Small companies run into financial difficulties; one service even disappeared in the night, leaving the number high and dry. Others have been sold to larger companies in neighboring cities, losing the down home touch and familiarity with local directions to meeting places.

Billing practices of answering service companies sometimes leave smaller areas with burdens of debt. Service by the call is best for us. Helping find meetings takes time. Providing connections to recovering alcoholics for 12th step calls takes time. When they bill by the minute, a good service can cost more than the groups that contribute to the service can pay.

To solve the problems inherent with answering services, A.A.s all over the country use many solutions. Someone, a trusted servant, a Group, or a committee, must keep the vital ingredients, 12th Step lists and meeting schedules, up to date. In populated areas, central committees that maintain District or intergroup offices set up rotating schedules of A.A.s to man the phones.

A few months ago, Box 459 highlighted a region that solved their problem with a computerized answering machine program that allowed people to find meetings by number and forwarded 12th Step calls to a pager. We all are getting used to, "For such and such, press one."

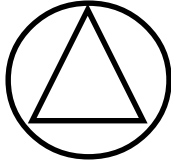
In Beaufort County, District 61, both answering services, one serving fifteen groups in Hilton Head/Bluffton, and the other serving six groups in Beaufort/Port Royal/Sea Islands, each send over \$150 a month (that's more than \$300 of your 7th Tradition money!) to a company located in Brunswick, Georgia. We both experience poor directions to meetings, and the company bills by the minute, so joining the two services would save only a little.

The most important ingredient in solving any dilemma involving more than one entity is communication. We met together at the last Hilton Head Intergroup meeting, May 1st. Everyone attending agreed that by cooperating we can better serve suffering alcoholics, both the newcomer and those visiting our beautiful area.

Together, one day, we may be able to spend a few hours answering phones, ourselves, alcoholic to alcoholic. Perhaps, once debts are paid, and we join the two services at a more cost-effective answering service, we will be able to afford a computer to answer and direct our calls. The possibilities are endless when we approach our mutual difficulties with honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness.



Cyndi F.  
Beaufort, S.C.



**i Hablemos Espanol  
Aqui!  
Donde: Brown Bag  
Grupo De AA**

**Wesley lylesia Unida Metodistrea  
1725 Gervais St.  
(Puerta Traseva de a Bodega  
Anexa Junto a la Iglesia)**

**Miercoles  
A Las Doce y Cinco  
Por La Tarde**

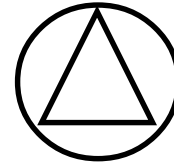
*¡Bien Vinedos!*

South Carolina  
General Service  
Committee

**ARCHIVES**  
ARCHIVE TOURS  
OR  
WORKSHOPS

CALL  
INTERGROUP OFFICE  
803-254-5301

BETWEEN 8 - 5  
MON - FRI.



**Spanish Speaking  
Meeting!**

**Where: Brown Bag  
Group of AA**

**Wesley UMC, 1725 Gervais St.  
(Rear door of Annex Building  
Next to the Church)**

**Wednesdays  
12:05 PM**

*Welcome!*

## "What did you do today?"

So you've been around for many years, helping to spread AA  
You've worked like hell since you first came in but what did you do today!

I heard your pitch, it was kind of long, you really told them how  
You worked the steps in '81 but how are you working them now?

Do you still get up from your soft warm bed when someone is in trouble?  
Do you grab your hat and your AA book and get there on the double?

Or have you forgotten the early times, when you were sort of new.  
Maybe you've been around so long that AA is old hat to you.

Maybe you're one of the Senior Saints, Sober and satisfied,  
and you've forgotten when you were sick and when you damn near died?

Maybe I shouldn't bring it up, maybe you're too blase.  
But just for the hell of it Mister, what did you do today?

Have you been around so cock-eyed long you leave it to Harry, Betty or Sam  
Because you're not your brother's keeper and just don't give a damn?

Maybe tonight the fights are on or you're going to the old ball game.  
So what the hell if the guy is sick he has only himself to blame.

Well, Mister, you have a perfect right to work your own AA  
and you know you'll do it your way no matter what I say.

But tonight before you go to bed just look in the glass and pray  
that you and GOD know the answer to

**WHAT DID YOU DO TODAY?**

**of all the places i can go...  
of all the faces that i know...  
of all the things i think and do...  
my thoughts keep coming back to you...**

**God right me up, with both feet on the ground...  
my mind made clear and body sound...  
i'll know at once you've made me whole...  
when i feel your love within my soul...**

**God let me help my fellowman...  
that he might see and understand...  
the beauty...grace...the love you share...  
with those who pray and show they care....**

**all things happen for a reason....  
to each thing there is a season...  
the acorn that falls upon the ground...  
becomes the tree that stands profound...**

**i cannot feel a windows pane...  
i cannot see when i'm insane...  
i cannot do what needs be done...  
when'er i'm constantly on the run...**

**twas liquor took me to my depths...  
with chain & shackles there was kept...  
with no relief...before me doom...  
til i came into the AA room...**

**as old country john sees it...**



## Brief History of Alcoholics Anonymous In South Carolina

Our hope is that when this chip of a book is launched on the world tide of alcoholism, defeated drinkers will seize upon it, to follow its suggestions. Many, we are sure, will rise to their feet and march on. They will approach still other sick ones and fellowships of Alcoholics Anonymous may spring up in each city and hamlet, havens for those who must find a way out. (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 152)

A letter dated November 13, 1942, in the archives of the General Service Office in New York from an attorney in Spartanburg named John L. apparently is the earliest, written inquiry to the office from someone in South Carolina. The group that later was established because of his inquiry marks the beginning of Alcoholics Anonymous in our state. John L. wrote in part, "A group of us are interested in the book published about 1939 by your society and are interested in forming a local chapter." Other correspondence in the archives in New York indicates the group experienced difficulty getting started, but eventually did hold its first official meeting on September 15, 1944, at the Cleveland Hotel in Spartanburg with 6 members in attendance.

In the summer of 1946, Marvin Mc. moved to Spartanburg from Atlanta, Georgia and discovered that the group no longer existed. He resurrected the group and the members began calling it the Central Group. The group, however, again had problems meeting consistently and became inactive. In 1955, a new Central Group was started and began holding meetings regularly at 202 Pine Street and later at 109 Wall Street. In the early 1950's, several A.A. members in Spartanburg formed Alconon Inc. Records indicate the corporation obtained funding and later was able to purchase property and construct a facility at 349 East St. John Street. Members attending meetings at the location started the second group in Spartanburg and named it the St. John Group after the street. In the early 1970's, the Central Group and the St. John Group merged and became known as the Central-St. John Group.

Information in the South Carolina General Service Committee's Archives indicates a woman in Columbia named Mary D. wrote the then named Alcoholic Foundation in New York in late November 1944, and informed the office the office that she and two other members of Alcoholics Anonymous had started an A.A. group in the city. She also stated in her letter the names of the other two members were David H. and John C. and that their little group was holding meetings in the private dining room of the Jefferson Hotel where John C. was employed.

Documentation also relates that the group later began referring to itself as the Central Group and had moved to 819 Harden Street in the mid 1940s. Additionally, records indicate that a club named A Corporation Of Alcoholics (ACOA) was registered with the South Carolina Secretary of State's office on January 31, 1947, as a nonprofit organization. Following the corporation's construction of a facility at 2015 College Street, the group began holding meetings there in the fall of 1947.

Records in the General Service Office show that a William H. of Charleston, South Carolina began corresponding with the office as early as 1943. He stated in one of his letters that he had been sober for over ten years outside of A.A., but would be glad to help get Alcoholics Anonymous started in Charleston. As often occurred when starting new groups in A.A.'s early days, William H. experienced a great many problems. Finally, after several failed attempts to start a group and with the help of other A.A. members including Mary D. who had moved to Charleston from Columbia, he eventually was able to have the group hold its first official meeting on March 26, 1946, at St. Phillip's Episcopal Church's Parish House. The group, however, later was dissolved but in 1948 other groups in Charleston named the Mid-Town Group and Tidewater Group were started.

Newspaper clippings, directories and other material in the archives of the South Carolina General Service Committee reveal that Alcoholics Anonymous grew rapidly in south Carolina during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Groups were started in cities across the state including Greenville (1945), Anderson (1946), Bennettsville (1947), Laurens (1948), Greenwood (1948), Conway (1950), Greer (1951), and Lancaster (1952). Archival material also reveals that the first state convention in South Carolina was held in Charleston, July 16-18, 1948, at the Francis Marion Hotel and approximately 100 A.A. members attended the convention. Data in the archives also discloses that by the end of 1952, the membership of Alcoholics Anonymous in South Carolina had reached 917 and that there were 44 groups registered with the New York office. In addition, John J. from Cheraw became the first delegate elected from our state and he attended the General Service Conference in New York in 1952 and 1953.

Directories show that the growth of Alcoholics Anonymous in our state continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s. the membership in 1959 had increased to 1,015, and there were 64 groups. By 1969, there were 1,294 active A.A. members attending meetings in South Carolina in 84 registered groups. During the mid 1960s, South Carolina or as officially designated Area 62 by New York, divided itself into three regions known as the Upper Region, Central Region, and Lower Region. In the mid 1970s, districts were created in Area 62 and the committee system was initiated which further facilitated growth in our state.

Recorded information states that the first intergroup office named the Greater Columbia Intergroup Of Alcoholics Anonymous opened in Columbia in September 1979, followed by other intergroup offices opening in the 1980s in Greenville, Charleston, and Myrtle Beach. These offices provided members easy access to meeting information and allowed for the quick purchase of literature. In the 1980s and the 1990s, a great deal of meeting diversification also came about in South Carolina. In addition to standard speaker and discussion type meetings, A.A. meeting schedules show that "Big Book" study meetings, 12 and 12 meetings, young people's meetings, women's meetings, gay meetings and other specialized meetings became commonplace across the state of South Carolina. Meetings also began to be held in the mornings, at noon, in the afternoons and late at night. Moreover, non-smoking meetings became the norm in most places. Today, groups can be found everywhere in our state from large metropolitan areas which have scores of groups and hundreds of meetings to small towns such as Denmark, Estill, Ridgeway, and Greeleyville that have only one or two meetings a week.

Archival material reflects that the 50th Annual South Carolina State A.A. Convention was held March 20-23, 1997, at the Adams Mark Hotel in Columbia, South Carolina with nearly 800 members in attendance. Information in Area 62 archives also relates that in April 1997, at the 47th General Service Conference in New York, Betty S. from Columbia was elected Southeast Regional Trustee. Also, that in October 1999, Darwin H. from Conway, South Carolina was elected Area 62's Delegate and that he attended the 50th General Service Conference.

*Continued at top of next page...*

Bill W. expressed the hope in Alcoholics Anonymous when it was first published in 1939 that our fellowship would one day reach everywhere and that it might provide a means of recovery for alcoholics who want to recover. As we enter a new millennium, data shows that we have grown in our state from 1 group and 6 members in 1944 to over 300 groups and approximately 6,300 members in the year 2000. It is evident that Bill's hope has been realized to a large extent in our state. May God continue to bless us.



**Anonymous**  
**March 13, 2001**

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(From the Original Manuscript - the way Bill wrote...)

## Chapter 5 How It Works

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our **DIRECTIONS**. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living that demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it -- then you are ready to **FOLLOW DIRECTIONS**.

At some of these **YOU MAY BALK. YOU MAY THINK YOU** can find an easier softer way. **WE DOUBT IF YOU CAN**. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and through from the very start. Some of us have tried to hang on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that **YOU** are dealing with alcohol -- cunning, baffling, and powerful! Without help it is too much for **YOU**. But there is one who is all powerful -- That one is God. **YOU MUST** find Him now!

Half measures will avail **YOU** nothing. **YOU** stand at the turning point. **THROW YOURSELF UNDER** His protection and care with complete abandon.

**NOW WE THINK YOU CAN TAKE IT!** Here are the Steps we took, which are suggested as **YOUR** Program of Recovery:

1. Admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care **AND DIRECTION** of God, as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready that God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly, **ON OUR KNEES**, asked Him to remove our shortcomings -- **HOLDING NOTHING BACK..**
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10 Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our contact with God, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual **EXPERIENCE** as the result of **THIS COURSE OF ACTION**, we tried to carry this message to **OTHERS, ESPECIALLY ALCOHOLICS**, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**YOU MAY EXCLAIM**, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to the principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures, before and after, **HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO SELL YOU** three pertinent ideas:

- (a) That **YOU** are alcoholic and cannot manage **YOUR** life.
- (b) That probably no human power can relieve **YOUR** alcoholism.
- (c) That God can and will.

**IF YOU ARE NOT CONVINCED ON THESE VITAL ISSUES,**  
**YOU OUGHT TO RE-READ THE BOOK TO THIS POINT OR ELSE THROW IT AWAY!**

If you are convinced, you are at step three, which is that you make a decision to turn your will and life over to God as you understand Him. Just what do we mean by that and just what do we do?

(Well, that is what we are here to learn.)

## Recovery Fallout

I listened intently to a recovering group member share his current struggles with smoking cessation in a weekly AA meeting last week. He described his desire to quit smoking, his approach to seeking help and the current problems he was having as a result of his 'success'.

It seems that he was doing well with the 'quitting smoking' part. He had not had a cigarette in several months and was feeling good about this accomplishment. What followed, however, were his struggles with some of the fallout that occurs with smoking cessation; in this case, the inevitable weight gain. This mushroomed into how this negatively effected his mobility, his job and his self-esteem. He was obviously frustrated by this side effect and appeared on the verge of giving up on his goals.

### I could relate.

I wanted to stop drinking many years before this actually occurred. I recognized that I was an alcoholic by virtue of the exposure I had with numerous legal and social problems, treatment episodes and AA meetings. It was clear to everyone, including myself, that I was not successful with my many attempts to manage life, particularly, with alcohol. From 1984-1991, when I would try to stop drinking,, I would follow a recipe of various components to meet this goal. Generally, this would follow a bad episode of drinking, which would lead to:

1. Starting back to AA
2. Enroll in a treatment program
3. Find yet another job
4. Try to appease those around me
5. Attempts to resolve whatever legal problem I acquired from my last binge.

The best I could do was to put together 14-30 days of 'sobriety' at a time. What typically happened was that I would begin the process of making a life-style change (not just stopping drinking) and would become so uncomfortable with the 'fallout', that I would rush into a binge drinking episode just to manage the discomfort.

The fallout usually involved several issues. First, I craved the release of alcohol more than the taste. This resulted in a strong urge to drink (which I refer to as an obsession). Secondly, there were the relationships - Girlfriend, employer, friends, family. These were particularly stressful because of the damage from alcoholism. These folks were not generally impressed with my initial efforts at sobriety and were somewhat skeptical! Third, I was not comfortable in my own skin!! Alcoholism is a way of life, and while it causes great pain, it is at least familiar. This familiarity can seem very desirable in the midst of high stress, confusion and frustration, and was easily obtainable by getting the first drink. Fourth, I had no solid spiritual foundation to work from. I had prayed, and believed in God. The problem was that I had not developed this relationship through consistency and reliance upon my higher power. Simply put, I was too impatient to await His miracles that were designed for my success. My mind would take all of this discomfort, make a rationalized assessment that this was not working, and develop a rapid plan of sabotage to eliminate any hope of achievement.

I refer to this as "The Fallout".

*Continued at top ...*

## What Worked This Time:

I have learned that fallout is a natural and logical response to making a life-style change. To me, it is like walking in three feet of water across a pool. The momentum that follows brings with it a flow of water that doesn't seem noticeable until I stop. What follows are small waves resulting from the 'pull' of by movement.

Life is like that...I 'pull' things along (people, places and things) with my movement. In alcoholism, these things would be pulled along, sometimes for years. When I stopped, they would overtake me like a tidal wave. I coped with this fallout, or overflow, by hanging on as long as I could, then impulsively running to a drink. This would start the cycle all over again, when the next window of opportunity presented itself.

As of today, I have been given almost 10 years of continuous sobriety. This has brought its share of life-style changes and challenges. I feel that I have overcome many of these and met many of my goals through:

- God's help
- AA, family and friends  
(God has given me these as a resource)
- Faith
- Perseverance and discipline

I'm certainly not through with the recovering journey, but I am aware of the fallout and resulting obstacles that can sabotage my efforts to be a better person. It is through this awareness that I try to walk in AA's principles to the best of my ability.

 **JB**  
**Aiken, SC**

## AA Humor... In Spite of Us

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship designed and administered by a bunch of ex-drunks whose only qualification for membership is that they can't hold their liquor and don't want to learn how. It has no rules, dues or fees, nor anything else that any sensible organization seems to require.

At meetings the speaker starts on one subject and winds up talking about something entirely different and concludes by saying he doesn't know anything about the program, except that it works. The groups are always broke, yet always seem to have money to carry on. They are always losing members, but seem to grow. They claim AA is a selfish program, but always seem to be doing something for others.

Every group passes laws, rules, edicts, and pronouncements which everyone blithely ignores. Members who disagree with anything are privileged to walk out in a huff, quitting forever, only to return as if nothing happened and greeted accordingly. Nothing is ever planned 24 hours ahead, yet great projects are born and survive magnificently. Nothing in AA is according to Hoyle. How can it survive?

Perhaps it is because we have learned to live and laugh at ourselves. God made man and He made woman. He made laughter too. Perhaps He is pleased with our disorganized efforts and makes things right no matter who pushes the button. Maybe He is pleased, not with our perfection, but with our sincerity. Maybe He is pleased with our trying to be nobody but ourselves. We don't know how it works but it does and members keep receiving their dividend checks from their AA investments. It is smart to be sober, and it is much easier, my friends, to STAY sober than to GET sober.

A circular fingerprint graphic in the background, with the letters 'KIT' overlaid on it.

KIT