

DISTRICT 3

NEWSLETTER

A LOOK AT SOME THOUGHTS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEMBERS
AND EVENTS IN SOUTHERN KENTUCKY, AREA 26 DISTRICT 3.

FALL 2016

IN THIS PUBLICATION:

THOUGHTS ON PERSERVERANCE, AWARENESS OF GOD,
SERVICE, THE IMPORTANCE OF FELLOWSHIP, AND A FEW LOCAL
HOMEGROUP HIGHLIGHTS.

The thoughts expressed herein are solely those of the members that submitted them, they do not represent AA, Area 26, District 3, The District 3 Newsletter, or the District 3 Newsletter Committee as a whole.

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Hello,

I am glad that you are taking the time to review our newsletter. It is the hope of this committee that this newsletter is an enjoyable reflection on thoughts from members in our district. In the following pages you will find a collection of articles on the topics of perseverance, awareness of God, service, the importance of fellowship, and home group highlights. It is our goal to bring you thought provoking articles in each publication as well a few highlights of local home groups. We are blessed to have many meetings in this district and our goal in offering the home group highlights is to promote a greater awareness of each of these home groups. This is the first publication of this committee and we hope that it will grow from here. Don't forget to sign up for our email list to receive each issue which will be published on a quarterly basis. The email address given on the front page (a26d3newsletter@gmail.com) can be utilized to add yourself to our email list but also to submit articles for the upcoming issues or to add events to our event section. On the last page you will find the topics for the next publication feel free to write and submit any articles on these topics. May this newsletter serve as a forum for thought in our sobriety and only aid in the strengthening of our unity as a fellowship.

Respectfully,

Shane G.

HOME GROUP HIGHLIGHT- Scottsville Step Study group

I had never had the pleasure of attending this meeting, and afterwards, I regretted not doing so sooner. Located in the Scottsville Fire Station, next to the courthouse, this home group meets every Tuesday night at 8:00. One of the wonderful things about going to new meetings is the ability to observe and relate to my own home group and this was no exception. The atmosphere upon entering was much like I had expected, these alcoholics share a common bond and a joyous intimacy among themselves. This bond of a common cause, shared experiences and hope gained through a common solution could be seen on the faces of the members, this is the only a part of, "the indefinable something in the eyes," spoken of in, A Vision for You.

After the meeting, I was granted the opportunity to speak with one of the home group members, he informed me that the group has been in existence for over 10 years now and originally met in another location prior to moving to the fire station. He related the home group as a place where you can be a part of, like a family, which has a greater concern for you. This sentiment expressed by him makes sense to many alcoholics who much like himself, never felt a part of anything prior to coming into the program, we were very much apart from. This man chose this as his home group because the focus was on the solution. This solution focused meeting had started with reading from Alcoholics Anonymous page 53, "When we became alcoholics, crushed by a self-imposed crisis we could not postpone or evade," this is the feeling so many have upon entering these rooms, and how better to get to God, then to trudge this road alongside a family who are trudging the same path. No longer apart from, a home group provides us with regular encounters with people just like us, this is an experience you must not miss. I would suggest you visit this meeting, and if you don't have a home group, consider this one.

PERSERVERANCE
Perseverance Can Be Defined as Patience

“I think I can, I think I can, I think I can,” is the mantra of a new little engine that was asked to perform what appeared to be a scary, insurmountable task: to pull a train over a mountain in the pouring rain. The Little Engine that Could, one of my favorite early childhood stories, was my first glimpse into the importance of perseverance. I especially loved the ending when he exclaims, “I thought I could, I thought I could, I thought I could!” I smile as I equate this to the meaning of perseverance in my experience with AA and my recovery today—what appeared to be an insurmountable task (to quit drinking and drugging), through perseverance, has become much more than doable, but a way of life that I want to continue to strive to live.

Perseverance can be defined as patience; its Latin root is actually “very strict”. Allow me to quote Vincent de Paul (1581 –1660): “*We should take as a maxim never to be surprised at current difficulties, no more than at a passing breeze, because **with a little patience** we shall see them disappear. Time changes everything.*” While Vincent de Paul says with “a little patience,” perhaps with “a very strict patience” I must live in recovery. With “very strict” denoting undertaking with vigor, I must courageously endure—often through the experience of pain—and, no matter how hard these difficulties may be, never give in.

With unfailing determination, I persevered in active drinking for thirty years. That perseverance oftentimes took a tremendous amount of patience—usually not a very comfortable patience to endure! One can persevere in many activities besides drinking: a vocation or calling (i.e. to a career, to marriage, to being a mother or father, or to a religious order); keeping one's house clean; keeping up with the latest trends; etc, etc., whatever one chooses to persevere in takes endurance, energy, and focus. It is not for the feint-hearted, and it takes passion. Boy was I passionate about drinking, especially in the beginning!

So, what am I passionate about today? What do I desire today? I am passionate about my sobriety! I desire God! My passion is to fall in love with the God of My Understanding as He loves me. Without faith in my Higher Power, I absolutely cannot be patient—I absolutely cannot persevere. Today, I am not alone in my enduring passion, and I can hope to maintain my sobriety. I desire it as passionately as I desire keeping in conscious contact with my God. I know God wants this for me today.

However, can I patiently sit by, twiddling my empty thumbs, to stay sober? No...patience requires action on my part. For example, just as I must love NOW and I must live in God's will NOW, I must also be patient NOW (sounds like an oxymoron—to be patient NOW seems quite impatient). If I do these things NOW, I am persevering, and I have no time but the present. I must persevere through action. Sometimes that action is to not act immediately, like when I am hurt or confused, but eventually it is my responsibility to accept or to change and to have the God-granted wisdom to know the difference.

“I think I can” has evolved into an “I thought I could” (one day at a time), but this was only revealed to me after I came through the doors of AA.

Kathleen B.

HOME GROUP HIGHLIGHT- Paragraph Group

On a crisp Autumn morning, I strolled into the Thirteenth Street Clubhouse to attend the Paragraph Group meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, affectionately referred to as the 845, as that is the time it starts every day of the week. Getting settled I looked up the Daily Reflections before the meeting and it read, "Without Unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat;..." from As Bill Sees It. The readings were read, announcements given and the chairperson asked for a topic, after a few moments of silence, pain became the suggested and obvious topic. It was then that I got to witness the unity of the fellowship as exemplified by this home group, as they began to share their experience, strength, and hope on this topic. Newcomers, old-timers, and everywhere in between began to relate how this program had enabled them to deal with pain and where this process, spawned from pain, took them. A home group member who I spoke with after the meeting told me that a home group is an environment where we learn lessons through service, and what I saw during the meeting showed this to be true, alcoholics working one with another fulfilling their primary purpose. The gentleman who I spoke with went on to tell me that as love and tolerance is our code, tolerance is gained by allowing others to be wrong or right. The attraction, he said, we feel towards like hearted or spirited people builds into a spiritual connection and it's this dynamic that is imperative in a home group. This dynamic that is ever growing and changing as those involved do, is what gives us that familiarity within our home group. This stands out to me as profound, because of its truth, we are supposed to be continually growing but this is only possible by the nurturing of our symbiotic relationships with other alcoholics, especially those we interact with on a regular basis. I left this meeting feeling reenergized in mind and spirit, to see people unite, from various paths of life and help someone suffering, is a truer definition of family than most I have seen. If you don't have a home group, I would suggest this one, it's early morning time is one of the prime motivators of some of the members, and it's an excellent way to start your day.

AWARENESS OF GOD

Not Mine, But Thine

"We all need the light of God's reality, the nourishment of his strength, and the atmosphere of his grace."

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Since coming into A.A. I have found that prayer and meditation are not only helpful, but necessary, if I am to grow spiritually. Through my experience I am learning that if I keep growing spiritually then I can be free from the bondage of self that fueled my alcoholism. Through the practice of the 11th step, I am discovering the plan God has for me. As I accept my place in God's world, I am growing more comfortable with who I am. I don't waste time revisiting situations I don't understand and can use that time, and energy, in pursuit of constructive change.

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I once heard shared in a meeting that “For every step I take towards God, he takes a thousand steps towards me.” In the early days of my sobriety, my prayers were as simple as “Thy will be done, not mine.” As time, has gone on and I have grown through faith, practice, and guidance from my sponsor, my prayers are now like talking to my best friend. I thank him for another day sober, express gratitude for this life he has given me, telling him my innermost thoughts and feelings. Never forgetting to include, “knowledge of his will for me and the power to carry that out,” without which I am lost. Today I know that to be of maximum service to others I need to seek His will always. If I focus on being grateful for the things in my life, the desire to carry out God’s will becomes easier. As I continue to improve my ability to stay in conscious contact with God, I’ve developed more self-love, joy, inner peace, and happiness. Without the 11th step I wouldn’t have the strength or courage to practice these principles in all areas of my life.

Lauren R.

Making It to The Light

Before coming to AA, I always felt doomed! I had no idea how real God was, as I do today. I did not believe in God before I came into these rooms. It took many dark days and being carried into the light for me to even realize I was never truly alone. Having made it to the light alive and well, I became fully aware of something greater than myself. Having a Spiritual Awakening made me fully aware of the God of my understanding. The 11th step prayer gives me peace, emotional balance, and guides me in the Sunlight of the Spirit. Without the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, there’s no way I would have an awareness of God.

Santana C.

HOME GROUP HIGHLIGHT- Living Hope

When I came into these rooms, I had a home group out of convenience, both of time and the ability to work with my sponsor who was also a home group member. I fell in love with this meeting and was adamantly opposed to changing it. At around 10 months sober I was forced to find a new home group due to a change in schedule. I was looking around, not wanting to commit to another home group from my own stubborn pride, this would be a new experience and those are not comfortable for me. One night I attended Living Hope and after the meeting found myself in a serious conversation with my sponsor because I felt that something I had shared was contradicted by another person. My sponsor suggested that I continue to go to this meeting and work on this issue. Thus, Living Hope became my new home group. Awkward though it was at first, I saw that this was a family, at this time we were a small meeting averaging 15 people most of the time.

Cntd. Nest Page

We have since grown as a group and as individuals. Another home group member told me that she feels a home group is where she can share intimately and where the other people know her and she knows them. This provides for a different level of interaction amongst them. This environment brought about by the intimate knowledge of each other and our sharing of experience, strength, and hope builds an atmosphere that I don't feel outside of this meeting. This lovely woman who was kind enough to share her thoughts with me originally began attending this meeting because that is where she met with her sponsor, and it grew from there to become her home group where she got involved. She said that a home group is vitally important to help us become accountable and allow others to get to know the real you, as you get to know them. This building of relationships with others, is a critical part of sobriety, as a support group is essential. The beautiful thing about Alcoholics Anonymous is that we aren't all crazy on the same day, so when I'm having a rougher day than usual, chances are that some of my support group are not. This allows us an even greater opportunity to work one with another. If you are free on Thursday nights, join us at 7:00 at First Baptist Church in Bowling Green. For me this group has become additional members of a family I began to build in sobriety, and even if you don't wish to join us, you are welcome to visit.

SERVICE

You Give and Receive

The 12th step in our program states that we carry the message to other alcoholics, it is our primary aim and purpose. The simplest way to describe being of service to others is being ready to help wherever, whenever someone in recovery is in need. This may include listening to another alcoholic or giving a ride to a meeting, making coffee or setting up chairs, being involved in a service position or participating in fundraisers or conventions. The combination of these things has played a vital role in my Sobriety.

In the beginning for a newcomer we may wonder how AA works and what is expected of us, then someone reaches out and gives us a task, making us feel a part of and there our own foundation of fellowship and service begins. There is no requirement that you must go into service, but many with long-term Sobriety relate service to being a vital component.

Service is a part of who I am, I was raised in AA by strong women who were and still are heavily involved in service. I must actively apply the 12th step daily in my life. I believe if we fail to acquire the spirit of service we will have missed out on one of the greatest gifts AA offers, the ability to give our sobriety away and therefore keep it.

As service being our third legacy it states " Service to others in the fellowship reminds us that we owe our sobriety to the work of earlier members, and that our continued Sobriety depend on the hundreds of thousands who still need to learn of AA " simply giving of yourself is one of the best ways to strengthen your recovery, you give and receive- doubly blessed.

Amanda W.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FELLOWSHIP

Utilizing The Fellowship

The fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous provides a valuable resource that has been of immeasurable importance to recovering alcoholics around the world. We can be grateful that today's alcoholic has access to such a powerful tool. In the early days of the program alcoholics were scattered far and wide with little access to the support that a fellowship of our kind provides. Today that support is available through the abundance of meetings that exist in communities worldwide. It means relief from an isolated existence, as well as the benefits of shared experiences that we alcoholics can learn and grow from. By utilizing this resource, we can greatly increase our chances of recovery.

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous lays out a set of principles that form the foundation of a new and wondrous life in sobriety. But applying these principles in our day to day lives can be a daunting task without the help of fellow alcoholics. We learn what those tools are through the literature of the program but to truly learn how to use them we must rely on the experience strength and hope of those who use them in their lives daily. The fellowship also provides a place where we can begin to relearn how to connect with others. For many of us our life before recovery was a dark and lonely place, plagued by the inability to form true relationships with another human being. When we find, the love, understanding, and support of our fellows in the rooms of A.A. we begin to make those connections once again. Knowing that we share a common goal makes us feel a part of something greater than ourselves and we know we are no longer alone. We are no longer forced to live a life based on the perceptions of a sick alcoholic mind.

The fellowship of Alcoholics anonymous provides guidance love and support that we can draw on to help propel us to the fourth dimension. But as with all the spiritual tools that have been laid at our feet the fellowship is only be effective when we use it.

Ron C.

In the societies that left their mark of goodness on time, the sense of history was not a matter for pride or for glory; it was the substance of the learning of the experience of the past. In the purpose of such a society there was always truth and constancy, but never a supposition that the society had apprehended all of the truth - or the superior truth. And in the sense of destiny there was no conceit, no supposition that a society or nation or culture would last forever and go on to greater glories. But there was always a sense of duty to be fulfilled, whatever destiny the society might be assigned by providence for the betterment of the world.

This is the crossroads at which we in A.A. stand. This is a good time to re-examine how well we have looked upon our A.A. history and how much we have profited by it, what false insights or false glories we may have been extracting from history - to our future detriment. It is a moment to examine the purpose of this Society. Indeed, we are very lucky to be able to state as the nucleus of that purpose a single word: sobriety.

Bill W. on the best assurance of a continued AA existence

IN THE NEXT PUBLICATION

We will be offering thoughts on the topics of ***Honesty, Hope, Faith, Practicing The Traditions In Our Lives***. Would you like to share your thoughts on one of these topics? If so simply write an article of 2-3 paragraphs length and submit it to

a26d3newsletter@gmail.com

All articles will then be reviewed. In the event, that many are received (given space within the newsletter is not unlimited), those received first will be published. Please submit articles by December 15th for the Winter Publication in January. It is our goal to get this published in the first week of each of the quarterly publication months. This newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis in January, April, July, and October. If you would like to receive a copy of this newsletter by email, please send us an email requesting to be put on our list to the address above. Any upcoming events as well as questions, comments, or concerns can also be sent to that address. Don't forget that you can also find this publication on our District 3 Website.

www.bowlinggreenaa.org

UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR DISTRICT

November 5th Eating Meeting hosted by Living Hope and Old Timers' Groups

At First Baptist Church in Bowling Green, eat at 6, Andi H. of Cincinnati will speak at 7. Meat and drinks will be provided, please bring a side dish or dessert. For more information contact Kenny C. Lauren R. Jennifer E. or Shane G.

November 6th District 3 GSR Meeting 1:30 at The Central Office

November 24th Thanksgiving Dinner at Clubhouse before the noon meeting

Please bring a covered dish and join us this day, we have much for which to be thankful.

December 25th Christmas Dinner at Clubhouse before the noon meeting.

Please bring a covered dish and join us to celebrate the gifts of sobriety and fellowship.