

12th District Central Office
113 Camilla Ave- Martinez
Augusta, GA 30907-3406



SOBER DAZE

November—December 2014 A 12TH District Publication

Not on fire

A FEW days after I came into AA I was at a meeting and the topic was gratitude. With just a couple of days' sobriety I was still full of anger, resentment, shame, guilt and fear. The world had failed to give me what I felt it owed me and everyone in it had let me down. Life was painful and hopeless. I absolutely did not feel grateful for anything!

When it came my turn to share I said "My name is Regan, and I have nothing to be grateful for, so I'll just pass." The long-timer next to me leaned over and whispered in my ear, "Be grateful you're not on fire." What the heck did that mean?! I turned and glared at him with the meanest look I could muster, but he just smiled at me. That old man and his comment made me even more angry. I still continued going to meetings, listening and trying to figure out what people were talking about. It took a few weeks, but eventually I began to understand what that man had been trying to tell me.

I had been focused on all the "bad" things in my life. I was pretty much homeless and had been sleeping in cockroach-infested abandoned buildings and even a dumpster before coming back to AA. I was unemployable, I had no money, and I had lots of legal and financial problems, some of which I was looking at jail time for. I had abandoned my son, destroyed my marriage, and my father had told me that if I ever came near the family again they would call the police. There was nobody who understood how I felt or who even wanted to be around me, let alone help me! Now here I was, living in some halfway house in a town I didn't even like, and sitting in this stupid AA meeting with all these losers! How could anyone be grateful for any of that?

But gradually, I began to see that good things had started happening in my life. True, I still had strained relationships and the same legal and financial problems. But I was sober!

I had a roof over my head and a warm bed to sleep in. I had food to eat and clothes to wear. I was surrounded by people who really understood me and were willing to help me, expecting nothing in return. This is what that old man was saying to me. No matter what is going on in my life, no matter how bad things seem, I can always find something to be grateful for if I just look hard enough.

Even now, many years later, I can still occasionally put myself in a place that seems utterly hopeless with seemingly unbearable circumstances that I am certain I cannot possibly survive.

Then I remember what that old man said and I know there has to be something to be grateful for if I am only willing to change my attitude and look for it.

I might have to start with just being grateful I am not on fire, but once I get that, I can always build from there.

Regan G., Mesa, AZ, March 2010

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF AA DIGITAL GRAPEVINE

Inside
Charlie's Hello
Page 2

Calendar of
Events
Page 3

Warning Holidays
Ahead
Page 4

God's Time
Humor
Quotes
Page 5

Birthdays
Page 6

Faithful Fivers
Page 7

Letter from the new Central Office Manager

Early in my sobriety I started attending AA meetings at 113 Camilla Avenue. At the end of the building was an office with a sign that read "AA Central Office". I did not know what went on in this office and assumed it was a place where a lot of secret AA stuff went on, and I had no business going in there. Later on I needed a Big Book and a Twelve and Twelve and was told I could buy them at the Central Office cheaper than ordering them from the General Service Office in New York. I was also told I could get a lot of other AA related items there. When I went to the office I was surprised to find out just how much went on there. They told me they sell a large number of AA related items, answer hundreds of phone calls, manage the augustaaa.org website, print meeting schedules and the Sober Daze Magazine, supply materials to District Committees, aid the startup of new AA Groups, and much more. Then they told me the office is run completely by volunteers and that of 350 Central Offices in North America, Augusta is the only one that is 100% volunteer, with no paid employees. Wow, I was impressed! Years later at a time when I was no longer a Group Service Representative (GSR) or District Committee Member (DCM), my wife said I should find a new service position instead of sitting on the couch all day. I went to see Pat F. at the Central Office and said I would like to be one of her volunteers. While doing my training, Pat told me it was time to have a paid Central Office Manager. I told her I was against that idea and 20 years of an all-volunteer office was something Augusta should be proud of. I joined the Board of Directors for the Central Office in January 2014, and at my first Board Meeting, Pat announced that she was going to retire and I should replace her as Office Manager. After some thought, I decided to give the job a try. Pat has been retired for a couple of months now, and I am trying to keep things going and carry the message as we have for the last 20 years. I love this office, as Pat did, and appreciate the volunteers and Board Members that are so key to its continuing success. We need to keep in mind that the Central Office belongs to all of us. We need to support it because, like all things, if it is neglected, it will go away.

Thank You All for the chance to be of service to District 12.

Charlie J

2014 Events to Look Forward To:

Faithful Fivers

Thank you for supporting the Central Office!

Charles A	Rosanne G	Lisa S
Jim & Billie B	David J	Linda S
Tony B	Pat J	Gene & Judy T
Cathy C	Traylor J	Neal T
Bruce & Kathy D	Rosemary M	Frank W
Carson E	Jimmy H & Tammra N	Kathryn Z
Edith E	Moselle P	
Ted & Michael E	Ronnie P	
Keylor G	Ed R	

Enroll in the Faithful Fivers

"Faithful Fivers" are A.A. members who, in gratitude, contribute five dollars a month toward supporting the 12th District Central Office. With this support, the Central Office pays for the printing of this publication and, when you enroll, will make sure it is delivered to your home when the issue comes out.

Payment Plan

I agree to pledge, and here is my donation of \$ _____ for _____ months.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

Phone Number: _____ **Sob. Date:** _____

Make checks payable to:
12th District Central Office
113 Camilla Ave.-Martinez
Augusta, GA 30907
(706) 860-8331

Thank you for your support!!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!

ALPHA		Richard P	12/16/2005	Keylor G	12/1/2004	Barry H	11/2/2009
Mildred H	11/5/2008	Steve B	12/16/2011	Kathy M	12/5/2009	Ben L	11/12/2010
BAKER AVE		Chantel L	12/17/2009	Seth G	12/6/2012	Charles H	11/15/1992
Annie H	11/1/2010	Christopher D	12/17/2011	Robbie B	12/8/2011	Crystal W	11/20/2012
John S	11/11/2006	Paul C	12/19/2003	Jerry P	12/15/2012	Dave Y	12/2/1984
Kathy W	11/11/2011	Brian K	12/27/2005	Dan C	12/30/2011	NEW PERCEPTIONS	
Autumn D	11/17/2007	Alex D	12/29/2011	Lisa S	12/31/1990	Linda R	11/11/1984
Chip H	11/26/2011	Adam G	12/30/2010	IN STEP		Larry B	11/19/2011
Chantel L	12/17/2009	GRATITUDE		Tammra N	12/12/1992	Denise N	12/2/1998
EVANS		Marie R	11/10/1983	MARTINEZ		Andy M	12/6/2009
Annie H	11/1/2010	Ellen W	11/30/1995	Judy S	11/1/1985	Melvin F	12/9/1978
John S	11/11/2006	Leta P	12/4/2003	Andy R	11/6/2008	Mike T	12/16/2005
Kathy W	11/11/2011	Marilyn P	12/4/2008	MID DAY		Randy M	12/19/2008
Autumn D	11/17/2007	Dan C	12/30/2011	Stephen C	11/15/2007	Paul M	12/24/2008
Chip H	11/26/2011	HAPPY HOUR		Don C	11/18/2008	NO NIPPING NOONERS	
Chantel L	12/17/2009	Chelsea S	11/5/2010	Don T	11/21/1987	Brian S	11/1/2008
FOREST HILLS		Carmen K	11/9/2004	Tara G	11/23/2000	Shannon B	11/15/2003
Paul W	11/1/2003	Terri B	11/20/2010	Joey A	12/10/2008	Travis B	11/20/2008
Ian O	11/4/2006	Debbie G	11/16/2007	Bill B	12/20/2008	Mark S	11/26/2007
Bill B	11/5/2009	Andy R	11/18/1989	NATIONAL HILLS		Lorenzo D	12/11/2008
Kristen K	11/12/2007	Erika C	11/30/2008	Melissa K	11/5/2013	SOUTHSIDE	
Drew S	11/14/2012	Lee J	12/8/2008	Pat M	11/5/2008	Barney M	12/28/2012
John Paul C	11/15/2013	Rich M	12/23/2007	John C	11/6/2013	THOMSON	
Tara O	11/18/2007	HEPHZIBAH		Brian B	11/7/2009	Pansy R	11/14/1990
Slade C	11/18/2013	Fred G	11/29/1988	Valerie S	11/7/2007	Marilyn P	12/4/2008
John D	11/29/2011	Jim A	12/17/2002	Rebecca I	11/14/2011	Stephanie B	12/26/2013
Vicki D	11/29/2011	HILL		Shannon B	11/15/2003	Too SLEEPY to DRINK	
LeeAnn H	11/29/2013	Kenny G	11/6/2012	Peter N	11/21/2012	Jesse B	12/4/2006
Todd B	12/10/2010	Fred C	11/10/2012	Yana P	11/25/2011	Pat M	12/6/1987
Dorothy A	12/13/1995	Dustin H	11/12/2013	Brandon S	12/10/2011	WASHINGTON	
Tamara W	12/13/2012	Winchester D	11/19/2010	Cindy B	12/10/2012	Gene P	11/2/1997
Tyler B	12/14/2011	Slade C	11/18/2016	Katy D	12/31/2013	Dean M	12/28/2010
Brad J	12/14/2013	Susan H	11/23/1981	NEW BEGINNING		Louise B	12/29/1981
Erik F	12/15/2010	John D	11/29/2011	Nina B	11/1/2010		

Every year they come—your area and state (or out-of-state) AA events that really get you fired up for sobriety - making you fall in love with the program all over again. Submit your favorite upcoming events to Sober Daze
Service work available for all events listed below!!!

Woodstock of the South
Dec. 4-7, 2014 - \$35.00 in advance, \$40.00 at the door.
A three day festival of sober living

7000 Lanier Islands Parkway
Buford, GA 30518

Questions? Go to
www.aawoodstock.com or call 404 735-9254

2015 Hilton Head Mid-Winter Conference
AA and AI-Anon Fellowship

January 30 – February 1, 2015

The Westin Hilton Head Resort
2 Grass Lawn Avenue
Hilton Head, SC 29928

Limited to 900 Registrations, Pre-Registration \$30.00
Tickets are \$35.00 at the door.
888-627-8551 / 843-681-4000

35th Chattahoochee Forest AA Conference—Helen, GA
November 13—16th 2014

Information: Linda Smith (912) 687-4323

Forest Hills Christmas Party
St. Mark's United Methodist Church

December 5, 2014
Eating begins at 6:30. Meeting at 8:00

Submit your

Stuff!
Jokes, Stories, Events, Poems, Quotes, etc.
Get published in SoberDaze!

soberdaze12th@gmail.com

OR

The Central Office
113 Camilla Avenue
Augusta, GA 30907

Office Hours: Mon.—Thurs. 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m./Friday 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
706-860-8331

Warning! Holidays Ahead " Suffer this moment to be fair and

clear." It's the moment we can handle...

IT NEVER seems to fail that when November rolls around there's a struggling newcomer in our group who asks at a closed meeting: "But how am I to get through the holidays?"

The answer from old-timers present is, just as unfailingly, the same: "A holiday, like any other day, need not be coped with until it comes. And when it does come, it is only twenty-four hours long."

There are other answers, of course--to the effect that one mustn't get too tired, must remember to eat, and would do well to avoid the kind of festivities that present particularly difficult temptations. It may be suggested that the newcomer try to look beneath the tinsel commercialism for the deeper meanings of thanksgiving, peace, good will, and the dawning of a new year. All very helpful advice.

But, remembering how I had my own last drink one late October, and how near I came to panic at the thought of the meant-to-be-happy season ahead of me, I believe that the twenty-four-hour concept was the most immediately effective tool I was given.

As a beginner in AA, I was one of those who had to break the concept down into periods of thirty, twenty, or even ten minutes at a time. Often the lines of a favorite poem ran through my head as a kind of prayer: "Suffer this moment to be fair and clear." It is indeed only the *moment* we can hope to handle, whether or not that moment falls on a hectic holiday.

As it happens, I had then (as I have now) a home to manage, a family to feed, and an office job to do. Then (though to a much lesser degree now), I had hard-drinking friends who loved to party. So the holidays meant too many demands on my time, as well as on my emotional and physical strength. I have learned this is apt to be especially true of women, even if they are not alcoholics.

But the holidays may be just as hard in quite another way for the man or the woman who has lost home and family and job and friends, who lives quite alone, haunted at such a time by the rest of the world's apparent gaiety. The desire to escape too many people and activities and the desire to blot out loneliness and boredom can lead equally fast to the bottle. This is a frightening truth for one still battling the physical compulsion to drink. But it need not be fatal.

What do I remember about those first holidays? We had a houseful of guests for Thanksgiving. I know this only because I find it noted in an old date book. The day is a blank in my mind. On Christmas we had more guests, people who enjoyed cocktails before the feast while I hid out in the kitchen fussing over the food. We were invited to "open houses," which I had to skip. On New Year's Eve I asked my husband to take me to a double feature at the local movie. I was thus removed from temptation all evening, and when we came out it was past midnight. A new year had begun.

I know that I cried some during those holidays. I was often tight-lipped. More than once, I flounced out of the house to walk off a temper or a temptation. It was rough. And I was helped by remembering that, in a very different sense, it was rough for the Pilgrims on the first Thanksgiving, for the shepherds of Bethlehem on the first Christmas. Somehow, as I clung to the sobriety of the present moment, I felt closer than ever before to the long-ago origins of the holiday season. For all my shows of temperament, I believe I even made it a happier time for those around me than I had done in the past. Most importantly, I got

through without a drink.

It was not until the evening of January first that I felt a full surge of thankfulness--blessed emotion--to my AA friends and to the Power beyond us all that had sustained me a few hours, a few minutes at a time. I had discovered that the program works, and I was far stronger within myself than I had been in mid-November.

If there is any message here for those coming to our Fellowship new and shaky in the late fall, it is this: Hang on; stick close; live for the day or the moment; don't let the mechanical reactions of the past sneak up on you; don't spoil the present, imperfect as it may seem, with a single shot, a single glass of enticingly sparkling wine. The sense of accomplishment and *comfortableness* that follows on making it through one's first sober holidays is beyond compare. There may be tensions in later years, but none quite so traumatic. And if ever the holiday blues do strike, call on your AA friends. They understand because they've been there, too. They have learned, as you will, the more than compensatory joys of gratitude, and giving, and beginning each day anew.

M. C. Pleasantville, New York 1967

God's Time

After 15 years of chronically relapsing, I was finally willing to go any length to stay sober. I had struggled all my life with the concept of God. AA's members patiently shared their experiences of how they "came to believe," and I found my God. At around 4 months sober, full of fear, I moved several states away. Leaving my home group, "Linden St.", was overwhelming. I showed up at my first meeting in my new location, not knowing anyone. It was a large meeting, and I felt very lost and very alone. At one point, I looked up at the clock, and printed plainly on its face was the name of its maker, "LINDEN." I knew at that moment that God was in control, He was my maker, and that He had been with me all along.

Sara R. – 2014 – Midday Group



"And on my third day of sobriety...."

AA Quotes

"Remember it's OK to look back but don't stare"

"Minds are like parachutes. They only function when they are open."



"Nobody gets a newbie into that zombie state quicker than Phil does when he reads to them from The Big Book"