

Gays and Lesbians in Alcoholics Anonymous

GaL-AA Spring Newsletter

May/June/July 2016

Submit Your Story!

Help to carry the message by contributing your story and experience to GaL-AA!

GaL-AA is looking for member stories to publish in upcoming newsletters.

We'd love to hear from you today!

Please email us your story today to eric@gal-aa.org and go to our website www.gal-aa.org to download and complete the release form to be included in our upcoming newsletter!

General guidelines: 800-1500 words about "what it was like, what happened, and what it is like now."

We will notify you before publication if your story is chosen.

Yours in Service,
GaL-AA Executive Committee

"GaL-AA stands for Gays and Lesbians in Alcoholics Anonymous. Much has changed in the thirty years since we began"

Contact Us

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Visit us on the web at www.gal-aa.org

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AA Slogans...

*Live
and Let
Live..*

*Easy.
Does
...It...*

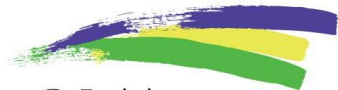
*But for
the
Grace
of God.*

*Think
Think
.... Think*

*First
Things
First.*

- easy does it
- first things first
- live and let live
- but for the grace of god
- think.....think.....think
- one day at time
- let go and let god
- kiss---keep it simple stupid
- act as if.....
- this too shall pass
- expect miracles
- I can'the can.....I think I'll let him (steps 1,2,3)
- if it works.....don't fix it
- keep coming back.....it works if you work it
- stick with the winners
- keep right size
- sobriety is a journeynot a destination
- faith without works is dead
- poor me.....pour me.....pour me another drink
- if god seems far away, who moved ?
- turn it over
- aa=altered attitudes
- nothing is so bad, a drink won't make it worse
- we are only as sick as our secrets
- there are no coincidences in AA
- be part of the solution, not the problem
- sponsors: have one-----use one-----be one
- I can't handle it god; you take over
- keep an open mind
- it works -----it really does ! (page 88,line 8 in the big book)
- willingness is the key
- more will be revealed
- to thine own self be true
- I came; I came to; I came to believe (steps 1,2,3)
- live in the NOW
- the road to sobriety is a simple journey for confused people with a complicated disease
- another friend of bill W.'s
- We will intuitively know
- we will be amazed
- no pain.....no gain
- go for it
- keep the plug in the jug
- do it sober
- let it begin with me
- just for today
- sober `n` crazy
- pass it on
- it's in the book
- you either is-----or you ain't
- before you say: I can'tsay I'll try
- don't quit 5 minutes before the miracle happens
- some are sicker than others
- we're all here because we're not all there
- alcoholism is an equal opportunity destroyer
- practice an attitude of gratitude
- carry the message

What are some of your favorites?



GAL-AA
Gay and Lesbians in Alcoholics Anonymous

GaL-AA >Pronounced - Gay-La or ga'la
[gey-luh, gal-uh; especially Brit. gah-luh] Show IPA adjective
Another Name for Gays and Lesbians in Alcoholics Anonymous



Contributions for Dec 2015/Jan-Mar 2016

Step by Step, Maplewood, NJ	30.00
San Antonio Lambda Group, TX	125.00
The Light Group, Raleigh, NC	40.00
Lambda Group, Raleigh, NC	74.00
Rose City Men's Group, Portland, OR	21.93
Harry P. (group unknown)	200.00
Live & Let Live AA, Saint Paul, MN	47.59
Sunny Dunes 5th Tradition, Palm Springs, CA	67.51
Lunch Bunch Groups, Portland, OR	35.00
Lambda Group of AA, Dallas, TX	41.86
L&LL Upper Montclair, NJ	100.00
Hot and Dry Conf.	251.50
Naples, FL Free 2 Be	18.95
Primary Purpose, Columbia, SC	60.96
Sunny Dunes 5th Trad, Palm Springs, CA	50.00
Bell Book and Candle, Atlanta, GA	111.00
716725 Dayton, OH	94.00
Poz Sobriety, Beaverton, OR	88.20
L&LL St. Paul, MN	44.42
Go After Your Sobriety, FL	50.00
G&L AA, Des Moines, IA	75.00
Montclair Friday Night Men's Group, NJ	30.00
San Antonio Lambda Group, TX	125.00
Sunny Dunes 5th Tradition, Palm Springs, CA	60.00
Step by Step, Maplewood, NJ	30.00
Rush-Hour Group, Miami, FL	51.50
Lambda Galveston Group, Galveston, TX	44.53
Spiritual Awakenings, San Diego, CA	13.12
Sunny Dunes 5th Tradition, Palm Springs, CA	80.00
3rd of July, West Hollywood, CA	75.76

Executive Committee

Chairperson

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Executive Committee Stories

Jim A: I live in Los Angeles and was introduced to GaL-AA (IAC) when I attended the AA 50th Anniversary International Convention in Montreal in 1985. The group hosted a wonderful hospitality suite and sponsored several meetings and events. I was fortunate to attend several more conventions including Toronto (2005), San Antonio (2010) and Atlanta (2015). GaL-AA was a mainstay of my experience and I participated in the meetings and events coordinated by the group.

I was also involved in an annual roundup in Palm Springs. I helped start Hot n' Dry and served as the first Chair and on the executive committee since it started in 1988. We have donated annually to GaL-AA since our inception. I am happy to be in an advisor position to help GaL-AA be of service to the GLBT community.

Eric W: Greetings from the Gateway City, St. Louis, Missouri. I am humbled and excited to be elected to be your GaL-AA Advisor II. It's only been a few months and I am busy working with the rest of the wonderful committee and helping out wherever I can. My date of sobriety is January 4, 2005 and I am looking forward to being of service to the LGBT AA community both at the local and national level.

I'm originally from the Metro Detroit area where I grew up surrounded by family and friends. Alcohol was never really around because it was rampant on my mom's side of the family and they did their best to shield me from its wrath they endured. Since this is a family disease, it eventually found me in high school. The few times I drank, it was about quantity in as little time as possible. It transformed this shy, nerdy kid into the life of the party and I no longer felt isolated and different. This was about the time I was trying to deal with my sexuality and alcohol masked those difficult feelings. After high school in 1997, I was accepted into a music program at the University of North Texas near Dallas. It wasn't long before I found the party crowd and the bar scene. I was underage, uncomfort-

able, and quickly discovered I could score any number of party drugs in that scene. They didn't care I was underage and I could party without fear of getting kicked out for drinking. The consequences weren't severe at first, but eventually I paid a price in all aspects of my life; my friendships, relationships, family, school, health, and finances all took a toll. I spent the next few years

bouncing back and forth between Metro Detroit and Dallas before the drugs were out of control. In 2000, I was finally able to buy alcohol and decided it was more prudent to drink than continue with the drugs. It wasn't long before I was drinking every day and more depressed than ever. I made the final move back home to Michigan to live with my dad and at that point I felt I couldn't get any lower. I was wrong. Even though I was able to get another job, move out on my own, purchase my own car and begin to live like an adult, drinking continued to spiral. Eventually, I found cocaine and that

kicked my drinking into high gear. I could party longer, drink more, which made all those horrible feelings vanish once again. But by 2004, I was lonelier, depressed and stuck with the question, "Is this what the rest of my life will look like?" I could no longer go a day without any alcohol in my system for longer than the time I spent at work. I could no longer go a weekend without

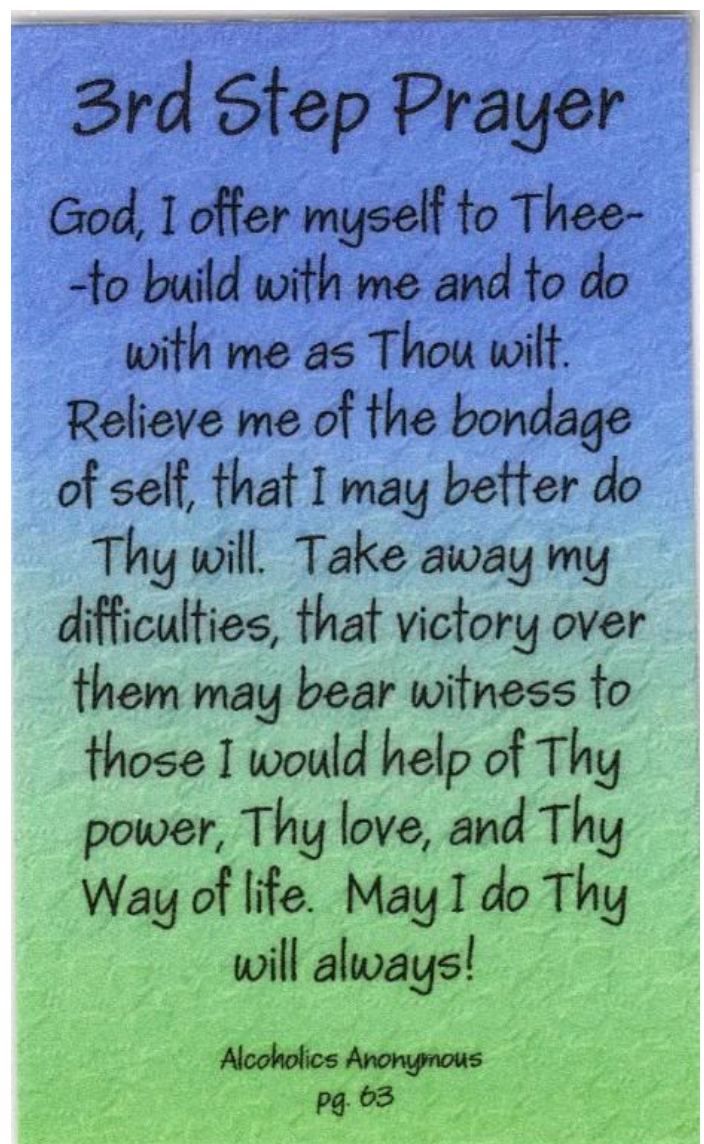


spending all my money on drugs. I wanted to die, but the thought of killing myself was out of the question.

Later that year, a family member was admitted to a treatment center. It was at that moment I realized there was some hope and I, too, could get help. It was a few months more of grappling with this disease that I finally checked into that treatment center on January 3, 2005. The next day was my very first day of sobriety in more years than I could remember. I spent ten days in medical detox and the next three months in intensive outpatient treatment. I found gay AA meetings and a sponsor that drove all over town to meetings with me and spent time working the 12 steps.

I learned early on that service work was very important. I made coffee, opened meetings, chaired, served as treasurer and secretary in a few of the meetings in Metro Detroit. My sponsor and I got involved with our local roundup, Together We Can. I served in many committee positions that got me meeting people and keeping me out of my head. After a few years, I was asked to become a board member because of all my service work. I spent 2009 and 2010 on the board serving as AA Co-Chair and AA Chair of the Together We Can roundup in Detroit. There is no better place to learn how to work with a bunch of alcoholics than getting elected to a board or service committee where you're in charge, and everyone is coming to you with issues, questions, complaints, ideas and just plain drama. I was extremely fortunate to have found another sponsor with as many years' sobriety as I was alive who worked me through all 12 steps again and became my sounding board for everything driving me crazy.

It was a few years later in 2012, I finally graduated from college with a Bachelors of Science; promises coming true as a result of my work in the 12 steps. I was then given the opportunity to up-root my life and move to the St. Louis area to begin the next chapter of my career. With eight years of continuous sobriety under my belt, I felt it would be easy to make new friends and get involved. Unfortunately, I expected this to happen without doing the footwork. It was several months of floundering and "just getting by" before I stepped up and got myself a new, local sponsor and



began to get involved with the Steps Alano Club, the St. Louis Spring Retreat, and all the other service commitments I graciously accepted because "you can't keep it if you don't give it away."

My life today is full, generally happy, and most of all, free. This is a direct result of having a conscious contact with my higher power, service work and the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Mark P: My name is Mark and I'm GaL-AA's newly elected alcoholic secretary. My sobriety date is April 21, 2005. It is a tremendous privilege to have been asked to join the GaL-AA Executive Committee. I've participated in many service activities outside the group level in my urban and suburban districts and in the Area 30 (Eastern Massachusetts) General Service Committee. When this service opportunity came up, I thought I've done it all! One of the things I am thankful for is that there is so much to do in AA—no one person can ever do it all. It truly is a "we" program.

My story isn't much different from any other alchy that has admitted powerlessness over alcohol and whose life had become (willingly mind you) unmanageable. I did not grow up in an alcoholic home, but my mom's and dad's siblings were riddled with this disease. Mom was a potential alcoholic—we used to polish off a bottle of Chablis making dinner after school, it all seemed normal and harmless back then. Some say it's a "family" disease, but I don't think I was born an alcoholic, I certainly wasn't an alcoholic from my first drink, but I think I was destined to be one. I cannot say I inherited alcoholism, and I'm not an alcoholic because I'm gay. I drank and drugged alcoholically for three decades. I qualify and claim my seat in AA because alcohol became my drug of choice at the age of 25, when I started drinking daily. I was white high-octane, vodka and gin vs. beer or wine. At the end, I was as sick and suffering as most of us. Alcohol was my antidepressant, tranquilizer and a ne-



Easy
Does
It



Keep
It
Simple

cessity. I had masked fear and insecurity by self-medicating since I was 14. Gay for me was always "normal". Although I had two gay brothers that I was close to and parents that were ultra-permissive even by today's standards, I was introverted, painfully shy and lonely. Alcohol didn't make me fit in, it was a great escape from all those unwanted feelings. I was looking for happiness where I could never find it.

Time marched on and my drinking exacerbated, insufferable hangovers became the norm and family and friends started commenting on my constant drinking. I tried AA in my early 40s, attending a few beginners' meetings when my drinking became concerning, even for me. I couldn't utter the word "alcoholic" coupled with the words "I'm an" in close proximity to one another. I left those meetings and headed straight to my neighborhood liquor store. I wasn't one of "you" and did not have to conceal how much I drank by going to different package stores. You see, I thought my drug was OK, legal, socially acceptable, available and cheap compared to substances other than alcohol. I know now I was only kidding myself.

At the end of my drinking, I had to be removed from society and detoxified under medical supervision. I made my way into the halls at 47, broken, angry, frightened, confused, ashamed, overwhelmed and arrogant as anyone could be. I was "mocus", and I hated the answer: that "I" was an "alcoholic". Beyond that answer, however, AA offered a solution. To this day, I always feel safe in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. For me the miracle is "a" desire to stop drinking, expressed in our Third Tradition and preamble. I get it from others in recovery who share their expe-

rience strength and hope with me and tell me how they overcame obstacles that challenge serenity and sobriety.

How it works for me? I've heard it over and over in AA meetings, "It works just fine!" I stay sober, don't drink or use drugs, and my recovery revolves around being an active member in AA. I have trust and faith today in my Higher Power. I make a great cup of coffee, without booze in it! Yeah, it was my first service commitment in my gay AA home group. Service is a way

to participate in my own recovery and help others. I had a spiritual awakening after the "terrible two's": I wasn't God's gift to mankind just because I was staying sober. A year after that, when I learned something even more devastating: that my real problem was selfishness and self-centeredness (years away from my last drink mind you), I just wanted to be an alcoholic! Today, I try to give back. I never thought in my wildest dreams, I would love being sober and part of something like AA, helping newcomers and others, and having recovery being fostered in me at the same time. These are the legacies of Unity, Service and Recovery we share with each other and pass on to one another. I am grateful today.



The Steps...

Step 5: Admitted to **God**, to **ourselves**, and to another **human being** the exact nature of our wrongs.

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have **God remove all these** defects of character.

Step 7: **Humbly** asked Him to remove our **shortcomings**.



The Traditions...

Tradition 5: Each group has but one primary purpose — **to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers** .

Tradition 6: An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, **lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose**.

Tradition 7: Each A.A. group ought to be **fully self-supporting**, declining outside contributions.

GAL-AA

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Contact Us:

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9450 SW Gemini Dr. #45287
Beaverton, OR 97008

Visit us on the web at:

<http://www.gal-aa.org>

On our website you can:

Search for Meetings

Add a Meeting

Find a Roundup

Find additional resources

Mark a donation

And a whole lot more!

Upcoming Roundups 2016

New Mexico New Mexico Roundup www.nmroundup.org 5/20/2016-5/21/2016

Phoenix AZ Spring Break www.azspringbreak.org 5/20/2016-5/22/2016

Dallas Big D Roundup www.bigdroundup.com 5/27/2016-5/30/2016

Los Angeles AALA www.aalaroundup.org 5/27/2016-5/30/2016

Pass it on!

If you don't see your roundup listed please contact: eric@gal-aa.org to give us the information.