



Contributing to GaL-AA

7th Tradition: Self-Support and 12th Step Work

We received inquiries from members on our committee's use of funds. Like all groups in our fellowship, GaL-AA is self-supporting and relies on contributions from groups and individuals. In keeping with the 7th Tradition, we do not accept donations from non-AA sources. Groups (regularly, some sporadically) send monies to GaL-AA from meeting collections. We also receive contributions from AA round-up committees, and individual AA members send contributions as a way of giving back to the fellowship - in short, GaL-AA's operating funds come from you.

**CLICK HERE TO
CONTRIBUTE**

Or visit us here: <http://gal-aa.org/donate/>

What we do with contributions? We maintain an internet website, operate hospitality suites at AA's International Conventions, distribute literature, sponsor registrations for round-up attendees that lack resources, maintain databases of LGBT meetings and roundups, mass mail communications about and from GaL-AA to AA members, and pay fees to service providers necessary for our operations. None of our committee members are compensated with contributions (each donates his or her time freely). We do not use funds for travel expenses (other than hotel accommodations for limited in-person meet-

***“GaL-AA stands for:
Gays and Lesbians in
Alcoholics Anony-
mous. Much has
changed in the thirty
years since we be-
gan”***

Contact Us

GaL-AA
9450 SW Gemini Dr. #45287
Beaverton, OR 97008

Email us: support@gal-aa.org

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

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7th Tradition: Self-Support and 12th Step Work

ings annually), and we meet monthly online so we do not have normal rental expense. Although different from home groups', our expenses are necessary in performing 12-Step work. A summary of contributions from groups/sources is below. Is your group contributing or should it consider contributing? There is an AA world outside any home group that includes special purpose groups (other groups similar to GaL-AA with individuals from distinct backgrounds: International Doctors in AA, International Lawyers in AA, "Birds of a Feather/airline pilots and aviation professionals in AA, etc.), the fellowship's General Service Office (GSO), regional intergroups, district and area committees. No matter what their composition, special purpose groups have the same primary purpose as any AA group: carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. We are united in the first tradition with one another as it states our common welfare comes first with personal recovery depending upon unity. What a great tradition that binds us.

AA's GSO has suggested guidance on the 7th Tradition and financial matters groups should consider in adhering to the traditions and upholding the concepts for AA service. GSO's guidelines remind groups to consider distributing excess funds for 12-Step work. Naturally, the home group's expenses (rent, literature, coffee/snacks, other supplies) are paid before any distributions outside. The guidance recommends groups consider a plan of distribution (a matter for your group's own conscience) for funds in order to further carry out the 5th Tradition and 12th Step work. Many group treasurers are familiar with the percentage plan for sending monies to GSO, intergroup/central office, district and area. If your group doesn't already contribute to GaL-AA, ask your group members to consider us as another AA service entity that relies on your support to carry the message. We are grateful to the groups and individuals for their continuous support. See the website and newsletter for more information on ways to contribute. [Those interested in GSO's guidance may find it in the AA pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix": http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-3_selfsupport.pdf.]



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April—July 2016 Contributions

Date	Contribution	Group
4/2/2016	50.00	Gay, Joyous and Free, Rehoboth Beach, DE
4/2/2016	62.99	Paul N., Washington, DC
4/5/2016	30.00	Lunch Bunch Groups, Portland, OR
4/8/2016	25.00	Mark P., Beverly MA
4/13/2016	25.00	RI LGBT AA
4/15/2016	12.68	Spiritual Awakenings, San Diego, CA
4/15/2016	15.60	Naples, FL Free 2 Be
4/17/2016	30.00	Lambda Group, Raleigh, NC
4/17/2016	80.00	Tom T., Raleigh, NC
4/25/2016	36.25	GALIS, Winchester, MA
4/28/2016	33.37	Live & Let Live AA, Saint Paul, MN
5/3/2016	100.00	SEMRU
5/4/2016	30.00	Nova Men's Group, Portland, OR
5/12/2016	30.00	Step by Step, Maplewood, NJ
5/16/2016	100.00	Bell Book and Candle, Atlanta, GA
5/18/2016	80.00	Sunny Dunes 5th Tradition, Palm Springs, CA
5/19/2016	39.50	3rd of July, West Hollywood, CA
5/19/2016	34.00	Thomas D., Bear Creek, NC
5/24/2016	50.00	Hyannis Live & Let Live, Hyannis, MA
6/8/2016	55.90	San Jose Sober and Free
6/15/2016	36.25	GALIS, Winchester, MA
6/22/2016	15.00	Lambda Group of AA, Dallas, TX
6/23/2016	63.50	18 New Castle Group
6/23/2016	132.00	Minneapolis Fri Nite Back to Basics
6/25/2016	17.00	OH Group No. 132166
6/27/2016	110.90	Sunny Dunes 5th Tradition, Palm Springs, CA
6/29/2016	10.00	Central Jersey Gay Group
6/30/2016	75.00	G&L AA, Des Moines, IA
6/30/2016	116.92	Primary Purpose, Columbia, SC
7/3/2016	12.98	Naples, FL Free 2 Be
7/5/2016	10.00	Lambda Albany Group, Albany, NY
7/6/2016	30.00	Lunch Bunch Groups, Portland, OR
7/9/2016	12.00	OH Group No. 716725
7/9/2016	50.00	Go After Your Sobriety, FL
7/11/2016	220.00	Acceptance Group, Summerville, SC
7/18/2016	56.00	Lambda Galveston Group, Galveston, TX
7/18/2016	15.00	Lambda Group of AA, Dallas, TX
7/20/2016	93.07	Lambda Group of AA, Dallas, TX
7/25/2016	95.83	Sunny Dunes 5th Tradition, Palm Springs, CA

Executive Committee

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Personal stories submitted by AA members to GaL-AA:

Long Journey

Well let me start by saying the journey has been long and winding. I started drinking when I was nine years old. I remember that first drink as if it were yesterday. The warm feeling as it passed my lips, burned down my throat and exploded in my stomach, and for the first time it all made sense and I was at ease. I was to chase this feeling for the next 15 years, but it always seemed to be one drink away. I had also noticed my attraction to men at about this time. I did not understand it but I know I was drawn to boys and men. I loved to look at them thinking how I wanted to be close to them. I never had a name to it since I grew up in a very small town and the word gay was never used or talked about in my house or with my friends until I got older.

I kept drinking and had my first blackout at the age of 14 and found that to be a pattern for many years to come. It was during this period of my drinking that I had my very first crush. Feeling very inadequate and fearful of being found out as a gay, I continued to hide behind my drinking for any or all my inappropriate behaviors with my friends. The conflict and confusion about my attraction to men continued to haunt me for many years. I was told it was wrong and all of my friends would make jokes and fun of anyone they suspected of being gay. This deepened my fears of not fitting in or being alone that I always carried with me. I had a crush on my best friend and one night while drunk we became intimate. The next day he would not look at me or talk to me, just cementing my fears of how sick I thought I was at that time. I continued to drink several times a week blacking out on a routine basis throughout high school. When I graduated I did not go to college. I took a few years off to drink heavy and perfect my alcoholism. I found myself being setup on a date with a woman who was going to school with my best friend. We hit it off and I thought well maybe I just needed to find the right woman to have all these feelings go away. Even while having this relationship I had a crush on a coworker and we became close friends but nothing ever happened. I had many fantasies of being in a relationship with him. After about a year and a half of dating I woke up one morning with my usual hangover and thought, "well, I guess I should get married." During this time I was talking to my neighbor about going to school and she talked me into applying to the local college at the age of 24. I applied in June



for September thinking I would never get in, but God had other plans and I was accepted.

While in school I had chosen a major and we had 12 people in our class so we got to know each other and hung out a lot. Two people in my class started to talk to me about how they use to party and drink but no longer did that anymore and how much better their lives were now. I would stand there thinking well good for you, why are you telling me?

Looking back on it they were 12 stepping me and they deserve medals for doing that because by that time I was showering once or twice a month if I was lucky. I worked nights and would show up looking like I was homeless. They would still corner me at the end of the hallway where the heaters were blowing hot air and I stunk like a dumpster. Little did I know they were both lesbians and sober and how they would save my life many times over. I started going to AA meetings because I could no longer deny my drinking; showing up smelling of alcohol and feeling like falling apart daily. I was given half cups and I would not dare look anyone in the eye. I was taken and loved until I could love myself in sobriety. I got sober, a good sponsor and started to work the steps and be active in my home group. After my second AA anniversary I got married to this wonderful woman

thinking I could just keep my attraction to men as a fantasy life and finally fit in with the world. As time marched on I stayed sober, throwing myself into service work at the district level, being involved in conferences, workshops, etc., all the time never running into any openly gay sober members of AA. Later to find how many I was around and never knew. At six years sober my first son was born and at nine years sober, my second.

At 33 years old I thought I had it all; sobriety, family and a good job, but there was this underlying feeling of my attraction to men. I knew I was gay I just did not want to be even after all this work. I talked with my sponsor and counselors, but I was not ready to deal with it at that time. When I was in my early 40s the wheels started to come off. Marital problems spurred on financial issues. Our relationship was falling apart and I was having a harder time denying my feelings for men. I slowly pulled away from meetings and AA. I was white knuckling it and did not even see it even at 16 plus years of sobriety. I told myself I got this I am OK.

Then at the age of 45 I hit the wall. My sex life had been non-existent for years. My use of gay pornography increasing my fantasy life took over my real life feeling trapped I knew drinking was not going to help but maybe not being alive would do the trick. I continued to have these thoughts that if I killed myself it would be easier than telling these women that I was married to for 19 years that I was gay. I knew my kids would never accept me, how could they? I would be alone and hated so not being

here would be best.

In a moment of clarity it came to me. I reached out to AA again and they reached back. People I had not talked to in years answered their phones and loved me again when I could not love myself. My one friend that I went to school with was able to let me know she was gay and it would be OK. My straight friends did not care. This whole time it was my ego isolating me and feeding me all this garbage just hoping I would drink again.

So I took a large leap of faith and started the process of coming out at the age of 45. I told my wife, then my kids and my mother and sister. Everyone was able to accept me. Even with time my ex wife and I are very good friends to this day.

Now I live my life as an open, gay man. I have found peace and acceptance of myself through the use of the principals of this program. This fellowship and program are the reason I have been able to keep my family close to me. By practicing these principals in all my affairs, the fellowship, my sponsor and the 12 steps, I am living happy, joyous and free.

Ken W.

Dunmore, Pa.





Simply put, I never ever would have expected recovery to be so interesting. Never expected that there'd be so much to be grateful for, especially year after year. Sure there've been some difficult times. Like life itself. But I feel really glad to be in our program of recovery. And now, after nearly 34 years of sobriety, I'm more astonished than ever.

When I'd crawled into my first meeting, I was afraid I'd have to give up having fun, having friends, and most likely, having SEX. What a relief to discover that, as I got settled into sobriety, all those aspects of life only became far more enjoyable and comfortable. Yes, sex included.

Years earlier, after "proving" to myself that I couldn't be an alcoholic by getting an MA in French literature and linguistics, I relaxed into a life of bartending on Castro Street and then in the Russian River area. After all, I was having fun, until it quit being fun for me. I wasn't too worried about the occasional blackout; those were normal weren't they? But one afternoon sitting at my local gay bar, coming out of a fog I realized I didn't know if I had just gotten there ready to enjoy my first beer, or if I'd been there all day and was ready to leave. Too embarrassed to ask anyone, I went out and slept in my pick-up truck. When I later called AA and was assured that I "didn't sound too bad", I headed to my first meeting in Santa Rosa, only to discover that it wasn't the gay meeting that I'd expected. I'd assumed that gays weren't allowed to attend straight meetings. Even in California. When I found the courage to ask the lady secretary with the bee-hive hairdo if this was a gay meeting, I was shocked when she replied, "No honey, but we'll find one for you if that's what you want." Then after checking her meeting guide, she said "There's one in Sebastopol

now (miles away), but you're welcome to join us for this evening if you like." I couldn't believe my ears.

Well, I did stop at my usual bar on the way home just to make sure I wasn't rushing into this sobriety business, but the next morning I remembered the speaker saying "You don't have to drink if you don't want to." Big news for me since I was a daily drinker with a jug of Mountain Castle white wine next to the bed. I just assumed I'd go crazy or explode if I didn't get my daily drinks. Still, I thought I'd give not-drinking a whirl, and got to an LGBT meeting later in the day.

Of course I was scared. What if I was miserable? What if I got bored? And since by this time I'd been unemployable, what if I got a job? Could I stay sober and feel OK? Of course I didn't know, but I went to meetings daily, got a sponsor and started doing the steps. At first that too seemed more like punishment, since I was afraid that if there were any sort of God I'd really be in trouble, but was assured that a Higher Power could love and help. Others in the meetings had one like that! I was sick and tired enough to be willing. The 3rd step asked me to turn my will and life over, but how could I with so many horrible problems in the world? After all, Regan was president; how bad could things get? But dutifully meditating on step 3, I saw that maybe it wasn't my job to figure it out, that just maybe I could trust the AA program and give myself a chance to see what sobriety was like. Later I might be able to understand the God stuff. Well, they said "Don't leave before the miracles happen." And that was my 2nd unexpected change: hoping that I was even worth recovery. The first of course was showing up at a meeting.

Right away I started getting odd jobs, found a place to live, and started to feel better. But that was 1982 and AIDS was beginning to show up. I had what looked like KS removed from my leg but it wasn't cancer. (And, years later when the HIV test came out, I was grateful to learn I was HIV negative.) I was told that even if I didn't have the disease, my best hope was to stay sober. I guess that scared me enough to take it seriously and give myself a chance to live.

Discovering sobriety, I felt healthier, and for the first time ever, wondered if I couldn't work in my academic field. At least now a job wouldn't interfere with my drinking. And as there weren't many jobs teaching French, I went back to school to get certified for ES/FL (teaching English as a second or foreign language), so that by the time I'd been sober a couple of years, I started looking out at life possibilities in a bigger world. Even a nice old lady at the local meeting said, "You need to get out of here and do something now." I did. One of my Japanese internship students suggested that I go to teach in Japan. That's always been the "problem" with recovery, I found I needed to keep growing; needed to learn and challenge myself as appropriate.

If there hadn't been meetings in Tokyo, I wouldn't have gone there. I trusted that if I found the English language meetings right away, I'd be fine. Although I'd little hope that my crash course in Japanese and my certificate for teaching would be enough. Within a week I was working and within three weeks I had a full-time position teaching company classes. Whatever I didn't know about teaching, it came second to showing up with a good attitude and trying to be nice to people. Thus Tokyo became my home for the next 16 years. Like recovery, I was participating in my own adventure and year by year, developed some formidable skills. Our English language meetings increased, with lots of chances for service work. When I moved to a full-time position at a Japanese university, I was well into a life I wanted, a sober life that I was grateful for. The 12th step calls I went on were always wake-up shocks for me.

The callers were mostly well-off professionals with one problem: alcohol. Being reminded of the "solution" I already knew worked, I stayed grateful. And sober.

A life committed to recovery gradually offered me lots of new things. Travel all over the world was available, including taking students on study trips, and of course exploring my own curiosity. I began to use the generous vacations to go to places to study other languages: Dutch in Amsterdam, Spanish in Madrid and Buenos Aires. One of the wonderful unexpected gifts of the program has been to discover sobriety all over the world. Even on ships, there're usually a few others committed to recovery to get to know and share with. The biggest surprise for me has been to see how I didn't have to figure it all out. Participating in my own recovery guided me, via the anonymous hand of HP, through life, its challenges, sorrows,

and joys. The most frightening thing I'd heard in early recovery was that we'd be "Happy, Joyous and Free." I hadn't minded being alcohol-free and miserable. But I never bargained for being happy! Such an outrageous notion, but hey, I had to learn to let go and let it happen.



Now it's been years since I've wanted a drink, even seeing

others at fashionable cafés drinking with impunity, since I regularly attended meetings, I had no problem feeling good about my sober self and accepting that I didn't need to drink to be great; alcohol ceased to appear as a solution. Going to meetings on a regular basis and having the honor of sponsoring several guys now, I trust will keep me from wanting a drink one day at a time. Meanwhile, the adventure of a world packed with recovery and lots of folks to enjoy it with is a daily humbling experience. And yeah, that fear that sex was gone? I've enjoyed every minute of discovering what was right and healthy for me each day.

Tom D.

Pittsboro, N.C..

The Steps...

Step 8: Made a list of **all persons we had harmed**, and became willing to **make amends** to them all.

Step 9: Made **direct amends** to such people **wherever possible**, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Step 10: Continued to take **personal inventory** and when we were wrong **promptly admitted it**.



G*a***L-AA**



The Traditions...

Tradition 8: Alcoholics Anonymous should remain **forever nonprofessional**, but our service centers may **employ special workers**.

Tradition 9: AA, as such, **ought never be organized**; but we may create service boards or committees **directly responsible** to those they serve.

Tradition 10: Alcoholics Anonymous has **no opinion on outside issues**; hence the AA name **ought never be drawn** into public controversy.



Upcoming Roundups around the US and Canada

If you see a roundup missing, please email eric@gal-aa.org with the information..

City	Roundup Name	Website	Start Date	End Date
Columbus	Ohio Roundup	www.ohioroundup.org	8/26/2016	8/28/2016
San Francisco	Western Roundup Living Sober	www.livingsober.org	8/26/2016	8/28/2016
Laguna Beach	Miracles Happen	www.miracleshappen.org	8/27/2016	8/28/2016
Atlanta	South City Roundup	www.southcityroundup.org	9/2/2016	9/5/2016
San Antonio	San Antonio Roundup	www.sanantonioroundup.com	9/2/2016	9/4/2016
San Diego	San Diego Feeling Good	www.feelinggood.org	9/2/2016	9/4/2016
New Jersey	New Jersey Roundup	www.njroundup.org	9/9/2016	9/11/2016
Chicago	Chicago Roundup	www.chicagoroundup.org	9/9/2016	9/11/2016
Duluth	Duluth Roundup	www.duluthroundup.org	9/23/2016	9/25/2016
Tacoma	Lakeshore Retreat	www.lakeshoreretreat.org	9/30/2016	10/2/2016
Toronto	Toronto Gratitude	www.torontogratitude.org	10/7/2016	10/9/2016
Philadelphia	Philadelphia Freedom Roundup	www.philadelphiaroundup.org	10/7/2016	10/9/2016
South Carolina	Carolambda	www.carolambda.com	10/7/2016	10/9/2016
Phoenix	Renewal In the Desert	www.renewalinthedesert.org	10/7/2016	10/9/2016
Provincetown	Serenity by the Sea	www.provincetownroundup.org	10/19/2016	10/23/2016
Houston	Houston Roundup	www.houstonroundup.org	11/24/2016	11/27/2016

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