



COFFEE POT TALK



NDIAA NEWSLETTER



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Feature Article

Shifting Perspectives

Amber W.

Sobriety date: 6/19/2019

When I was about seven, my mom bought me some biographical books themed on historical figures telling allegorical stories. She had also gotten me many Nancy Drew Mysteries and a series of illustrated versions of the classics such as War of the Worlds and The Three Musketeers. I had forgotten all about these books until watching the Marie Curie biographical movie, Radioactive, last night. The book featuring Curie, The Value of Learning, was one of my favorites.

I recalled having spent so many hours reading and setting up a pretend library in my bedroom, complete with alphabetizing a cataloging system and a checkout process. I loved being alone to escape into other worlds, to ponder possibilities. Daydreaming, reading, and playing pretend were my very first forays into numbing my feelings and escaping reality.

I'm not sure exactly when it happened but until recently, I just could not seem to recall happy memories of my childhood. In my adolescence, my memory narrowly focused solely on the trauma and abuse that occurred in my home. I began to wear my pain as a uniform, choosing a punk aesthetic and lifestyle to show just how much I felt outside of mainstream society. I took tremendous pride in my decision to reject normalcy and held both middle fingers up at the world. I found friends that felt similarly and quickly binge and blackout drinking became a norm in my life. I stoked my pain as

**Merry
everything
and a happy
always.**

one would a campfire, gathering the tinder of each old and new wound until a fire of pain and rage roared within me and eventually, exploding violently outside of me.

I will soon turn 44 years old. In the process of working the steps over the past 16 months, I've had many moments that are excruciatingly painful or breathtakingly beautiful. Quite often these moments occur within days of each other, the pain being the last-gasp of a resistant behavioral or thought pattern.

As my perspective has been shifting in recovery, my love of writing, my passion for learning, and good memories are returning. Bad memories don't hold the weight they once did. I'm pursuing new hobbies and am building deep friendships with other women, most of which are also working a step program. I've made amends for the pain I have caused others.

When a new memory of damage I had caused in my drinking surfaces, I do an inventory and amends as needed. I'm not perfect by any means. Becoming aware of my impact on others has become a daily habit through texting my sponsor my 10th step nightly and apologizing as needed. In the texts, I include three things I'm grateful for which has also helped to shift my perspective in a gentle yet powerful way. I'm also beginning to take better care of my physical body in ways that I had neglected for years.

I still often feel a lurch in my chest, my heart flip-flopping in fear with thoughts of the future. I silently talk to myself with phrases like "stay in the now" or "come back to the present" or "God's will, not mine", no longer attempting to shame myself out of these fears based on being financially responsible or in a loving and committed partnership.

On those days when serenity escapes me, I have the tools I've learned through the program and the deep knowing that this too shall pass, my higher power has me and, most likely, another breakthrough is imminent.

These brief glimpses into the psychic change that is occurring have me in utter awe and gratitude for the gift that is working the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. I'm excited to see what the future holds but am in no hurry to get there. Mostly I'm content in doing the next right thing, one day at a time.

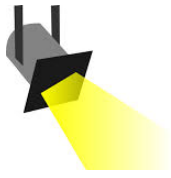
I have made SOS my home group and built a vast network of women with good sobriety to lean on. And they in turn can count on leaning on me. I often journal a "did right" list with my nightly 10th step to remind myself that my actions, not my feelings, are the facts I need to concern myself with. I'm steadily becoming the woman of integrity I always wanted to be, and had lied to myself that I was.

Our principals

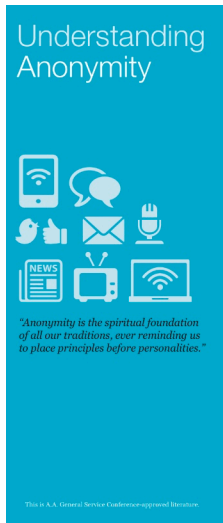
Step 12: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and practice these principles in all our affairs."

Tradition 12 "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities"

Concept 12: "The conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action."



Literature Spotlight



Understanding Anonymity, P-47

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

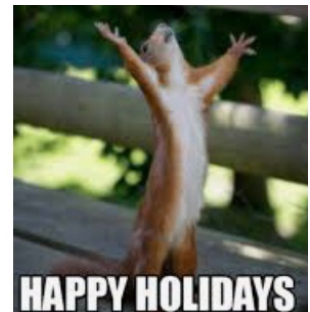
When I mentioned to a colleague that I chose Understanding Anonymity, P-47, for the December 2020 Spotlight on Literature, she remarked, "that one (pamphlet) is so important, - as they say, it's so important it's half of our name!"

Perhaps Tradition 12 should lead the list of Traditions because it does not just remind, but *ever* reminds that principles must come before personalities as anonymity *is* the spiritual foundation of all of our traditions. That seems simple enough but do we fully understand the meaning of anonymity? Or, one could ask, what does it mean to be fully anonymous and should we be? What *is* its purpose? Understanding Anonymity, P-47, sheds a good deal of light on this multi-faceted subject.

The pamphlet opens with the statement: "it (anonymity) is often referred to as the greatest single protection the Fellowship has to assure its continued existence and growth." That certainly gets your attention. The introduction also notes that "anonymity serves two different yet equally vital functions...at the personal level...and at the public level." The first protects members from identification as alcoholics and the second protects the Fellowship from members who would exploit their A.A. affiliation for personal gain. These lessons were learned the hard way in A.A.'s early days as some with celebrity status boasted of recovery in A.A. only to denigrate it in subsequent slips.

The sub-topic, *Anonymity on a person-to-person basis*, addresses the concerns of newcomers who find shelter from stigma and shame in the rooms of A.A. "...anonymity has proved one of the greatest gifts that A. A. offers the suffering alcoholic." Many who are unsure of their sobriety, travel to attend meetings away from their neighborhood in an attempt to avoid chance meetings or recognition as an alcoholic. They must be reassured of our commitment to Tradition 12. Other newcomers, filled with joy and gratitude for freedom from alcohol, wish to shout it from the rooftops to family and friends alike. Although that is a personal decision, they must be cautioned not to reveal the anonymity of other members. "Tradition 12 reminds us that who you see here and what you hear here, stays here" is frequently advised at the conclusion of A.A. meetings.

Anonymity at the public level covers A.A. affiliation in the media or through business enterprises or employment. One example of the latter would be identifying as an A.A. counselor while working in the addictions' recovery field. Without violating the Traditions, A.A. members can identify in media interviews as recovered alcoholics if they do not reveal their A.A. membership. It is acceptable to simply say, I work a 12 Step program.



The anonymity statement read at A.A. events states in part: ...”we respectfully ask that A.A. speakers and A.A. members not be photographed, videotaped, or identified by full name on audiotapes or in any published or broadcast reports of our meetings, including those reports on the Internet or other new media technologies”. The General Service Office annually mails an anonymity reminder to most news outlets, but what about the numerous anonymity breaks that take place by individuals on social media platforms?

Well-meaning A.A.’s compromise anonymity when they congratulate one another for A.A. anniversaries or achievements in social media posts. This anonymity breach can multiply exponentially as “friends” respond. “When we post, text or blog, we should assume that we are publishing at the public level.”

Facts about anonymity in A.A. reminds us of the A.A. member’s responsibility, and not that of the media, to maintain anonymity. Although a family member may break anonymity of their deceased loved one in an obituary, the pamphlet states that “the anonymity of still living A.A. members should be respected in obituaries or in any type of printed remembrance or death notice.” That sentence was added to the **Understanding Anonymity** via a 2008 Conference agenda item submitted to the General Service Conference by a member from Area 59, Eastern Pennsylvania. A local newspaper in Levittown, PA, had published an obituary in which a grateful spouse thanked the deceased husband’s living sponsor, (a good friend of mine), by full name.

Our founders could not have imagined a digital world of Facebook and Zoom but the Tradition stands firm regardless. **Understanding Anonymity** provides some guidelines to navigate the complex world of multiple medias.

What about Zoom meetings? “Unless password protected, a Website requires the same safeguards that we use at the level of press, radio and film. (Tradition Eleven). Simply put, this means that unless password protected, A.A.s do not identify themselves as A.A. members using their full names and/or full-face photos. Online meetings should not be recorded.

When can we use last names within the fellowship? For the election of officers and other service jobs. And of course, we need not be anonymous to one another on a personal basis outside of the rooms. Finding John D. at the hospital can be challenging! Some homegroups provide names, addresses and phone numbers of and for confidential use of homegroup members only.

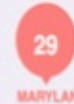
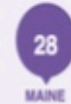
More questions? Please pickup Understanding Anonymity, P 47 or download at aa.org.

Love and support in service,
Sheila D

The A.A. Service Manual

A Study Of The First 12 Chapters

— UNLOCK THE MYSTERY



Thursdays Jan 7- Feb 11
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm ET

Zoom ID 837 3047 2616
Passcode 462942



p70a12delegate@gmail.com
area28delegate@gmail.com
a29p70delegate@gmail.com

A.A.s Legacy & Introduction

Terry H.~ Nikki O.~ Cynthia T.

Panel 70 Delegates
12, 28 & 29

The Group and its GSR

Deb D. Past Delegate Area 48

The District and the DCM

Billy N. Past General Service Trustee

The Area Assembly and Activities

Monica F. Panel 71 Area 19 Delegate

The Area Committee

Lori M. Area 29 Chair

The Delegate

Bob W. Past Trustee At Large

The Annual Conference Meeting

Elaine McDowell, Trustee Emeritus, GSB

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Mary C. GSO Staff

The General Service Board

J. Gary L. Past N.E. Past Regional Trustee

The Boards Operating Corporations

Jimmy D. S.W. Regional Trustee

The General Service Office

Phyllis H. Past GM GSO

The AA Grapevine

Cindy F.

Past Delegate Area 71

Current Non-Trustee Director Grapevine
Board

Join us in this collaborative rendition of unlocking the mystery of
The A.A. Service Manual.

Areas 12, 28 & 29 are pleased to invite you to join us on Thursday evenings
from 7 pm – 8:30 pm (ET)
Beginning January 7 – February 11 2021

Come be part of the informative presentations and lively discussion



....Into Service

Shelly C – Sobriety date June 10th, 2012

Homegroup – SOS Sisters off the Sauce

Service position – Chairperson for Northern Delaware Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous

Position length – 1 year as Vice-chair, 1 year as Chair

Sobriety requirement: 3 years of continuous sobriety

Service position responsibilities:

“The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of Intergroup and shall participate as an ex-officio member of all committees and has oversight responsibilities for all legal reporting requirements of the organization. The Chairperson shall appoint all committees he/she deems necessary to the orderly administration of the affairs of Intergroup. The Chairperson shall appoint an Office Manager from existing elected members of the steering committee. The Chairperson shall perform all duties as assigned to him/her by the representatives of Intergroup from time to time. This office shall be for a term of one year.” - NDIAA By-Laws Article VIII “Duties of Officers

My Chairperson’s duties have been incredibly unique over the past few years. I have served as the Chairperson for NDIAA since September/2018. I was voted in as a member of the Steering Committee as the Vice-chair in February/2018, filled the Chairpersons position when the prior chair had stepped down in August/2018, a new vice-chair was voted in and stepped down shortly after taking the position, the vice-chair position was vacant until February/2020 at that time the members of NDI voted for me to maintain office for a final year and what one hell of a year it was. Confused yet? I kind of was too when all of this was happening, therefore I leaned heavily on my predecessors for guidance on what the heck I was doing, that is what this good student of AA had to do and was taught to do. I was totally ready to take this new “fast tracked” journey of AA service.

How has this service commitment changed/enhanced your personal sobriety?

For the years leading into this position, I was not attending meetings regularly, I did not “fit in” with you from Delaware. I was a transplant from a little town in Bucks County, PA called Ivyland, I had moved from Bucks County to Philadelphia and moved to Wilmington in 2015. I joined SOS about 9 months into living in your state (because I was becoming a dry drunk) and became the groups intergroup rep shortly after. Ever since I took on that commitment every single person I had encountered while attending an intergroup meeting welcomed me and helped me learn the “ins & outs” of NDI. I had never had an enhanced journey like his one I am currently riding. As the chairperson I am more involved in AA then I ever was, taking that leap of faith and standing for the vice-chair changed my whole idea of AA and my sobriety. Did I completely know what I was getting myself into, not one bit, would I change anything about my decision, no freaking way! I have gained so many great friends along the way just from being in service, people that I would have never met from just attending a meeting. So many predecessors I can lean on for advice inside and outside of these rooms. Gaining the position on the NDI steering committee was a life saver for me I was on the verge of self-destruction, and that could have ended this beautiful life I have today. It gave me a

purpose, a reason to show up and be of service for my fellows in the program of AA. I am excited to continue my journey of service as the Treasure for the Delaware Convention.

How has AA service changed/enhanced your personal sobriety?

AA service has made me responsible for the fellow AA in need “I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.”

I have made myself more available to the alcoholic in need, I see firsthand how it is important for “us” to be available to one another when we are in crisis. The central office (NDIAA office in Trolley Sq) is a key component for the individual who needs guidance pertaining to AA in Delaware, the office coordinator Jamie has taught me all about how the office helps the one in need. I am looking into being a volunteer for the home answering service once my position terms out. I would have never thought of filling a position of that nature if it were not for my personal journey of seeing the need for volunteers. Helping another alcoholic is such a joyous and fulfilling feeling for me, something I could never get from a drink.

“We are like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table. Unlike the feelings of the ship's passengers, however, our joy in escape from disaster does not subside as we go our individual ways. The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us. But that in itself would never have held us together as we are now joined.” Chapter 2 There is a Solution Pg 17. The Big Book

None of us are alike, we all come from different background; some from the steerage, some from the captain's table. We all have one common goal; that is to stay sober and to help another alcoholic. For this alcoholic all of that is true today. I do not live a life of selfishness, but one of selflessness. I have learned more about myself while being involved in AA service over the past few years than I have ever learned in my whole prior journey, that is because I took that leap of faith and stood that one day. None of us are alike, but we all have made it to the same chair and earned our seat.

Current and past service positions held:

Current: Chairperson for NDIAA and official timekeeper for SOS

Past: Greater, Coffee maker, Ashtray cleaner, Key holder, Intergroup rep for NDIAA, and District 23 GSR

Thank you all for allowing me to be of service.
Shelly C.



2 Drunks and a Cup of Coffee

Kim B.

3/10/91



Someone recommended I give Kim B a call for my column so, I did :) I had a great time chatting with her and we found that we had a lot in common. I must say, I got a lot out of our conversation but the one thing that stuck in my mind is when she said that when doing a 5th step, we crack our soul open and share it with another human being. That is the most eloquent way I have ever heard it stated.....just perfect! Enjoy the interview!

How did you find A.A.? My oldest brother was in A.A. I was newly married and my husband said I needed to call my brother so I did. My brother said don't drink today so I didn't and he took me to a meeting that night. People were happy and laughing and really welcoming. I was actually introduced at 16 but I didn't buy it then but this time, I did. I knew that my brother was changing. He wasn't as angry as he used to be and he was always reading the Big Book and his feet didn't smell as bad as they used to because he was taking care of himself...lol.

What is your favorite chapter in the Big Book? How It Works. It's still a mystery how it works, it's just a miracle. I wouldn't even question it, you give it a way to keep it, it just doesn't make sense but it works. I like that it lets new comers know exactly what they should do. Really, for anybody who wants to work the steps and lead a spiritual life. It tells us Steps 1-3 is getting good with God, 4-7 is getting good with yourself and then 8-12 is getting good with others. I also like There is a Solution. That is just the guide for living. It lets people know that no matter what they have done, no matter how far down the scale they have gone, they don't have to stay like that.

What is your favorite step? The one that I have received the most grace from is step 5. I'd like to say that we crack our souls open and we share it with others in step 5. Especially with the Sex Harms portion. We can look someone in the face and tell them the most shameful thing and they still love us afterwards. That is the beauty of A.A.

What is your favorite slogan? Let go and Let God. I used to say let go or be dragged lol. It just gets easier when I said I can't, He can, I think I'll let Him.

What is the most important part of your program? Working with Others. Now, at this point in my life, it is so important. Letting them know, no matter what, you can do this. I get sobriety out of it - another day sober.

What was the first piece of advice you received? Don't drink and go to a meeting and circle the meeting you are going to tomorrow on the meeting list and do that for 90 days. A lot of people don't do 90 in 90 anymore but I did because I didn't go to rehab. It gave me a really good foundation in the fellowship.



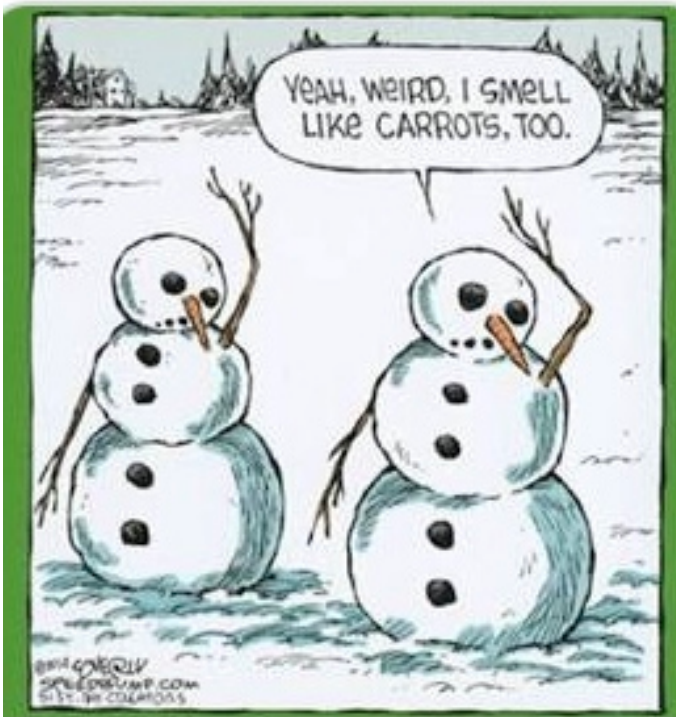
What advice would you give a newcomer? Don't give up before the miracle happens.

What has changed in A.A.? It's so readily available or those who want it. You can text or get on zoom. You don't have to clean ash trays anymore....lol. It's not as stigmatized as much as it used to be. It's a little more accepted. Not completely but, we have made so much progress.

What do you think of Zoom meetings? My daughter is in Japan in the military right now and is sober because of it. Me, my son and her were all in the same meeting together. It made the world a lot smaller. It has been hard for me because I never thought I would not be able to walk into a meeting but I am really grateful we have this way of connecting right now during this pandemic. There still is nothing like sitting in a room full of drunks though.

Any last thoughts? One time, my first husband put another substance out on the table and said "Here, you can do this but you can't drink, that makes you crazy." I ran out of the house, in the pouring rain and went to a pay phone and called my temporary sponsor who helped me through it. I knew I would have used them but for some reason God kept me sober. The best part is that both of my kids are sober and they never saw me drunk. What a blessing.

Rule 62





Stone Cold Sober

Many of us are very sensitive to criticism of AA. Here is this program that saved our lives and/or gave us the lives that we have, and someone is knocking it. One of the most common criticisms I hear is that AA is a program of contradictions, and then they usually give the example of our slogans.

Now I am a huge lover of the slogans, but I agree, some do contradict each other. We tell people “think, think, think,” then we tell them, “don’t think, don’t drink, and go to a meeting,” and then also tell them, “think first, not second.” So, when I look at it that way, I see where it can be a little confusing, if not a lot confusing!

I explain the contradicting slogans like tools in a toolbox. Not every problem is a nail that needs a hammer, another issue may require a wrench, or a screwdriver. Because as recovering people we experience life on life’s terms, different circumstances will arise. Sometimes when we are brand new and hanging on by a thread, we need to not think, not drink, and go to meetings. Other times, when we are in a fit of anger we may, however, need to think first, not second, i.e. think before we open our mouths.

Another contradiction in slogans is “meeting makers make it” verses “meeting makers make meetings.” This one was harder for me to work out, because, in my mind, meeting makers make it – if I don’t stay in the middle of AA I might fall of the edge. However, I know other people who practice the steps and attend very few meetings. How to work out the two point of views?

Years ago, when I was brand new, my then boyfriend and I were having a fight. My eventually to be father-in-law, who was recovering for many years and a longtime member of AA said to me, “Remember, everyone has to work their own program.” At the time I had no idea what that meant, but now I do. Although we all use the same steps and traditions, and have been gifted the legacy of recovery, unity, and service, we all work our programs slightly differently. This may apply to meetings but also on how to sponsor people, how often we use the literature, and what types of service we do.

What is important is that I respect everyone’s experience, strength and hope and do not pass judgement on their working of the program. Do I tell people AA is perfect? Of course not. We are a spiritual program of imperfect people., just like any other group of human beings. Progress not perfection, but it works if you work it, so work it, you’re worth it. We’re all worth it, So as the slogans tell us “easy does it” or as another version of the slogan says, “easy does it but do it!

As always, this is just one alcoholic's experience, strength and hope. Take what you like and leave the rest. I wish you faith and patience, the faith that it works, and the patience to let it.

In fellowship, Maria



Through the Eyes of Newcomer

Hi there! Id like to say Happy Holidays to everyone...from me to you. I couldn't do this program without those that are in the fellowship with me!

In the past few weeks I have been working on my amends. I had to admit that during my drinking days my alcoholism and drug use didn't just affect me. The shame and guilt of the complete hold alcohol had on me rippled to those that loved me. The powerlessness I felt they also felt. They couldn't love me healthy. They couldn't care about me enough to fill the void I was filling with substances. Sitting down and writing an amends to a person who I had ripped off and who had passed away before I got sober. When I learned of his death I felt..numb. Like how do I make this right? How can this Step work completely? That's when I realized that this amends was first and foremost for the person I was making it for. This person had helped me and I took advantage of that. Because of selfish and self centered ways, this person had been lied to and then because I couldn't face it, I had put him down to others. It was that ripple effect that I was realizing and the only way to face it was to write to this person. I wrote one of the most open, honest and transparent letters or works of poetry, that I have ever attempted. This is so hard. So..raw. But I also felt...growth. Healing. And that's what I realized is a gift of this fellowship. I am learning to have honesty and willingness. It's not an instant answer or "cure". The desire to drink has been lifted however I never forget that to drink is to die. And that too would have a ripple effect on those I care about. Today I have 10 months clean and sober. I am willing to face my alcoholism with the 12 steps because by taking the suggestions of those it has helped, helps me. This holiday season I am seeing things to be grateful for. The gifts of A.A are an everyday part of my life. To be willing and honest about myself and my past and face today sober and clean. For these things I am thankful. There are things the 12 Steps have given me and they help me to live happy, joyous and Free! Merry Christmas!!!!

Yours in service,
Danielle H.



New Meetings

During this difficult time, please see the Intergroup Website (www.ndiaa.org) for current Zoom meetings.

Newsletter Stuff Needed

If you would like to contribute to the Newsletter, please email Emmy K at NDINewsletter@gmail.com Here are a few examples of how you can contribute:

- ~ Feature articles
- ~ Sneak Peak into Service articles
- ~ New Column Ideas
- ~ Cartoons or Rule 62 submissions
- ~ Fellowship opportunities
- ~ Groups needing support
- ~ New Meetings
- ~ Topics you would like to see covered in the Stone Cold Sober or Literature Spotlight columns
- ~ Longtimer volunteers for interviews



Anniversary Club: We do it One day at a Time....

Bob A. 7/9/90
Bob M. 1/17/83
Brendan D. 5/3/09
Brenda A. 2/23/85
Carel B. 4/26/04
Carolyn W. 7/15/82 Christopher K. 1/03
David C. 2/1/94
David G. 7/6/99
David F. 11/23/07
David K. 12/03/72 45 yrs.
Debbie H. 03/16/91
Doris S. 04/80
Doug W. 2/28/91
Ed H. 01/28/96
Franny C. 05/07/96
Fred M. 5/5/90
Gail R. 06/04/92
Jaime B. 08/08/04
Jaffrey H. 11/24/96
Janice S. 12/25/2010
Jason B. 4/20/09
Jim S. 04/10/88
Kara G. 11/8/12
Kathy O. 6/11/97
Ken H. 11/4/97
Ken P. 09/20/83

Kerry O. 04/20/08
Laura R. 6/21/95
Leslie D. 2/20/1990
Liza F. 1/20/05
Marilyn M. 6/26/99
Marie R. 9/6/83
Mary Ellen S. 1/24/10
Melissa S. 06/23/08
Mike M. 4/20/91
Nancy V. 2/21/05(Deceased)
Patricia K. 12/17/87
Patsy M. 1/6/88
Phyllis M. 03/09/88
Sally C. 10/15/95
Shirley U. 3/19/76 41 yrs.
Stanley B. 03/05/79
Suzanne M. 04/04
Tenney W. 5/15/82
Tom H. 07/02/04
Tom McD. 01/16/96
Tracy D. 2/28/2013
Valerie S. 2/3/89
Walt A. 01/94
Wes J. 4/21/75 42 yrs.
Wes M. 2/1/94

ATTENTION FAMILY!!!!!!

Would you like to celebrate your anniversary, show your fellows how the program works (one day at a time) and contribute to your Northern Delaware Intergroup at the same time? The Anniversary Club is easy to join. Here's how it works....you can email the information below to Jamie at mainoffice@ndiaa.org or fill out the form and mail it to 21B Trolley Square, Wilmington DE 19806.. A small donation of \$1 per year sober is all it costs to have your name and anniversary date printed in the Newsletter every month for a whole year:

Anniversary Club Contribution Card	
Sobriety Date	_____
Home Group	_____
Name	_____
Contribution	_____

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BE POSITIVE

Sending You Bountiful Blessings!

Sending you Bountiful Blessings for this holiday season. May you feel Peace and Fulfillment in all that you do. May you be showered with Abundance in all its forms. And may Serenity follow you wherever you go. Have a beautiful holiday season filled with Love and unexpected Miracles!

