

December 2020 AA Newsletter:

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

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

12th Concept: "General Warranties of the Conference: In all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the AA Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, wherever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that, though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action".

12th Step Prayer: "God, I offer myself to Thee — to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always".

***Be sure to check the meeting and ZOOM schedule for changes on the Intergroup website at: www.fortwaltonbeachaa.org

December Birthdays:

Care Group

Jill R: Dec 3 13 years

Submit any birthdays in your group to amanda@myardor.com to have them posted in that month's newsletter!

Funnies!

how ready are you for Christmas on a scale of 1-10?



Inspirational Story:

MY FIRST SPEECH AT AN AA CHRISTMAS MEETING...

...didn't happen.

By: Marilyn Spiller

(SOBRIETY DECEMBER 29, 2014)

Carry Nation or Lizzie Borden? The new face and voice of sobriety? I don't think so – not yet...)

I was invited to speak on Sunday at an open AA meeting in Jacksonville, by a lovely woman I have come to know through the blog. The night I was to make the eight hour trek from the mountains of Georgia where I am staying, my engine light went on and the light that indicates the tire pressure is haywire and the service NOW light – it was almost festive. It was Saturday evening during the holidays, in the middle of the woods, in the bible belt – there was no one to fix the car. Even I don't have the chutzpah to drive down a curving mountain road in the fog, in the dark with a dickey car.

Much to my dismay, I had to cancel.

HERE IS WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY:

Hi, my name is Marilyn. I am an alcoholic (pause for the chorus of “HELLO MARILYN!”).

I did not have a choice to quit drinking. At the end of my tenure as a boozier, I had a three bottle of wine a day habit and an addiction so all consuming and isolating I did not have time for anyone or anything but white wine. When I ran out of white wine I drank anything with alcohol – left over vodka, red wine, hostess-gift liqueurs, my collection of tiny bottles of exotic liquors, Nyquil and once, a ten year old bottle of island hooch dressed as a mammy from St Martin... now that was a hangover. I drank in a dark room, all alone.

I could tell you a lot of stories. Ghastly tales of how I finessed my way out of DUI's when I was stopped three times in one night for drunk driving; how I lined up bad-guy boyfriends who smelled my vulnerability, like a debutant with an overbooked dance card; how I lost my house, my vacation home and most of my worldly goods with runaway misspending; how I hurt myself in a series of injurious pratfalls – knocking out my front teeth twice, hematomas the size of tennis balls on my shins, my forehead; how I lost my looks and my sense of humor and any zest for life...

I nearly died many times. I must have wanted to die. I must have hated myself. Why else the abandoned self-abuse?

But this is the holiday season. No time for horrific stories of drunkenness and mayhem, so I'm going to tell you the good things about losing everything. The four good things, I would not have ever properly appreciated if I had not hit hard, rock-bottom and had to (for the first time in my life) ask for help. Here they are (in no particular order because I have trouble alphabetizing and we all know I am lousy at prioritizing – Hello I chose alcohol over security, love, romance or the comfort of hearth and home...):

Family – My children, my very best friend, my mother and a small handful of the longtime beloved have stepped forward like superheroes in one of those movies where the characters are Ironman, or Flame or Green Lantern and they save the world one person at a time... They have been supportive without judgment. They have lent me money, a shoulder to cry on (also a new thing – crying), and provided safe haven when I was alone and afraid... They have shown

me that unconditional love is alive and well and that I have done SOMETHING right in my crazy, retched life.

Community – I write a daily blog called Waking Up the Ghost. It is one of the things that has helped me over the past sober year and a half to stay on track. It has allowed me to vent, reminisce, crow, and cry . It has made me feel like I have the capacity to help others with my words and has introduced me to the support and fellowship available to recovering alcoholics on social media and in meetings such as this.

Friends – I have always thought of myself as a loner. In the final stages of my disease I was a bona-fide recluse. It has only been recently that I have reveled in the notion I have FRIENDS. Friends are those people who come out of the woodwork with a well placed comment or share on the blog, they call on the phone and worry if you've got food to eat or if you are isolating again. They send you specialty gassy-water, and selfie sticks and suggestions for what to do to improve your blog – improve your life. They remind you that you have history together and that you are likeable – loveable even and that YOU CAN DO THIS, because you are strong.

God – Someone said to me, "Maybe you had to go through all this to find enlightenment." God knows I wish there had been an easier way. For so many years I fought it – like a child with an adult's hand on my head – arms length away – swinging at thin air, angry at something or nothing... It is only now, sober, that I realize surrender is not a dirty word. Giving in to a higher power, falling on my knees, begging for help was the first step on my journey toward sobriety. And now I try to pray not only when I am desperate and need help, but also when I am joyful and want to say thank you. Because rusty as I am, my two favorite prayers are just that – Please Help Me and Thank You.

I do not want to mislead you. I am not some paragon of sobriety. I do not have a magic formula for how to stop drinking or stay stopped. In fact some days I get angry, or bored with it all. I still salivate at the smell of white wine, and I still get an occasional hankering for the old drinking days. Am I supposed to say that? Think that?

I drink too much coffee. I am addicted to sugar (I'm working on it, okay?). I have learning differences and OCD that have come to the fore. I am a hot mess. But I'm a SOBER hot mess and for that, on this holiday evening I am grateful.

Merry Christmas.

Happy New Year.

Keep the faith...

Source: <http://wakinguptheghost.com/first-speech-aa-christmas-meeting/>

Newsletter By: Amanda B.