

SOBER TIMES

Williamsburg, VA Intergroup Information

District 38

Winter 2014-2015

WHAT ALKATHONS MEAN TO ME

It was four days before Thanksgiving. I remember it like it was yesterday. By the time this is read, I will be sober five years. Five years! I stare in awe at those two words. Five years and I am such a different person today. My world has changed. I had wanted to die, but had not the courage. I stood at the turning point and asked for His protection and care with complete abandon. Half measures availed me nothing. I thought I could find an easier, softer way, but I could not. Five years. There was a time when I couldn't stay sober 5 hours. I am simply grateful... so very grateful.

I was 41 years old. I was so ashamed of what I had become...afraid every day of everything and couldn't stop drinking. Oh how I wanted to. I tried controlled drinking on a daily basis and failed on a daily basis. If I wasn't drinking I was thinking about drinking. Drinking, thinking about drinking. Drinking, thinking about drinking. Waking up with the horror, hopelessness and remorse of what I may have done. I was so alone, desperate, ashamed and afraid and I just didn't know what to do. Then I found AA. I'll never forget that first meeting. I was terrified. The 8pm Friday night meeting at the Baptist church. It was packed. I sat in the back and prayed

no one would call on me. And I listened. I was so moved by the stories I heard, stories of hope and help. These people looked happy. I wanted whatever it was they had.

I don't know what it was about that particular day or why my last drink WAS my last drink, only that I had been struggling for about two and a half years in and out of AA trying to make it work. So 4 days after my last drink found me at the 8am Thanksgiving Alkathon meeting. I was still detoxing at this point and I was a mess. I just remember how happy I was to be in a room full of alcoholics on the holiday. It was warm and there was coffee and breakfast and it felt good not to be hung over. I felt like I belonged with these dear people who had gotten up so early on a cold blustery Thursday to make it to this meeting. I came back to the noon meeting that day and again to the 8pm meeting. I spent time talking with other alcoholics in the meetings between the meetings. There was such a warmth and love that I could feel all the way to my bones. I had isolated for so long and had been so lonely I felt overwhelmingly grateful to be accepted by these people. And they understood me. They were me.

Christmas morning I showed up at 8am to the first meeting of the day. There were about 10 people there, not as many as the Thanksgiving 8am meeting, but not a glum lot either. Every person spoke and I did, too. My voice shook and I shook and it was ok. I came back to the noon meeting that Christmas Day and again to the 8pm. I had never felt so a part of anything in my life. I had felt loved and cared for instead of holed up drunk at home waiting for relatives to leave. I did the same for the New Year's Day Alkathon. There was something very special about starting the New Year in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. I had wanted a fresh start and there seemed no better way to emphasize that.

I have attended every Alkathon since that first one Nov. 26th, 2009. I call it my "Holiday Trifecta". I'd like to say I have no idea how I made it through those first Holidays but I do know. Spending my time in the company of other alcoholics at the Alkathons got me through. Today I go and I see all those in early sobriety trying to find shelter from the storms in their hearts and I pray they find it there. I know I did. My name is Shelia and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is Nov 22nd, 2009.

Alkathons Christmas & New Years Day

At The Wesley Foundation

526 Jamestown Road

Fellowship: 8am-9pm

Meetings on the Even Hours

Muffins, Ham, Coffee, & Ice Tea provided.

Bring your Signature Dish or Dessert to share.

If you would like to be of service see a Special Events Committee member, call 757-253-1234

My Assembly Experience

The 2014 VAC Fall Assembly was quite an experience for me, especially considering the number of years it has taken this Alcoholic to finally follow the Good Orderly Direction from people who were experiencing what I so desperately wanted, a sober life. It can only be described as God's grace that today, one day at a time, I see the immense spiritual value in service work.

This Assembly gave me a deeper understanding of the importance of turning everything fully over to a higher power to the best of my ability each day, not to mention just how difficult that can be. It further reinforced that sobriety takes work, and in this case service work, that required me to surrender my will a bit further. The experience showed me the value of keeping my spiritual condition as the focus for my continued growth and sobriety.

What an absolute miracle that any group of people would strictly follow specific rules, based on spiritual experiences. These experiences allow God's will to ultimately rise to the top of any discussion and/or decision that arises. Not much gets done quickly in A.A. or so I have observed. I now see this as a great lesson for me (more of God's grace I imagine). It is now no secret that I need to slow down and have patience in my life. Patience allows God's will to stir up discussions and spirited debates, and then see its way through to a final result.

Case and point - even as I write this, I must fight to not make this article too much about me. Thus, I can certainly tell why an Area assembly, full of people like me, would need to strictly follow spiritual guidance of those who served before us. How else do we humble our opinions and egos? How do we allow a Higher Power to come through in such topics such as spending the money which has been contributed by us, the AA members and our groups?

From the start, I could feel and sense a strong connection and unconditional love with the many other trusted servants that were in attendance. It was very evident to me that we all had a strong bond, given our responsibility to our respective home groups and AA as a whole. We were there to bring a group conscious that ultimately has a main purpose to assist in helping us carry the message of sobriety for the sick and suffering alcoholic.

How the VAC helps to carry the message became very clear for me. I attended Committee meetings, such as Corrections and Cooperation with Professional Community / Public Information. This brought together so many valuable insights and experiences which we are now able to take back to our individual districts and local communities. We heard great ideas and feedback from workshops that shared experience on the importance of service work in both staying sober and helping another Alcoholic.

Many of us have been there, sharing frustrations and discontent with Area, District and/or our home group meetings at one time. However, I am now happy to report that this assembly has given me a deeper sense of meaning behind service and the business of A.A. It's not only necessary to help carry the message, it's a golden opportunity for spiritual growth to improve my ability to let go, let God and just live another day sober.

Words will never fully capture the immeasurable gratitude I have for the unconditional love and fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you for saving my life each day!

Sincerely,
Rich G.

Grapevine Literature

Now Available

Looking for some new literature? The Intergroup bookstore will now have Grapevine literature available. This is AA approved and comes in the form of the monthly magazine, books, cd's, and electronically. Talk to your home groups Intergroup representative to find out what's available .

BOOKSTORE HOURS ADDED

Now Open 1st & 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Intergroup Office

5:30-6:30pm

Williamsburg Area Intergroup Contact Information

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