



Hotline.....570-654-0488 — 800-640-7545

Central Office.....570-654-1226

Website <https://aaintergrouppneps.org/>**Office Address:**422 N. Main St., Pittston, PA
18640**Office Hours:**

Saturdays 10 AM—2 PM

2nd Tues./month 5—6:30 PM

Email:

nepaintergroup@gmail.com

Monthly IGR Meeting:Meeting held at 7PM the 2nd
Tuesday of the month atQueen of the Apostles School
Building715 Hawthorne St, Avoca, PA
18641**Table of Contents**

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Holidays, a time for Action

With the Christmas and New Year holidays coming, life and sobriety can be a challenge. We seem to have no problem packing a room, a hall, or a grove for an activity. Why aren't our service positions or committees packed the same? Wouldn't it be the right thing for us to do, especially around the holidays? We are a society based on action, right? Doesn't it seem like too much revolves around the *fluff*?

Anonymity is what our 12th Tradition says is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions. Our 12th Step says, "we carry this message" freely and most important anonymously. I try a little harder at Christmas time to make at least one person's life a little easier than mine. It's not about money, it is not about possessions, it's about the gratitude we experience in a sober life.

I often wonder why we rush some items at our monthly meetings. Are we really putting thought into all our actions? In the last few years some items are brought up and voted on with little or no discussion. What about our home group members? Are we passing motions just to speed through our meetings? It's something we ought to think about to safeguard our future. Contributions have always been on our treasurers' reports by group or member name for as long as I can remember. In a matter of seconds, we changed it. How will we know where all of our funds come from? Are all contributions all from AA members? We should make that visible for everyone in NEPAIG to see. *I will certainly ask my group to discuss it at our next business meeting and ask our IRG why if they voted for it.*

An increasing number of commitments are not being fulfilled each month. *When I looked at the Institutional commitments still left for this holiday I thought, "what can I do?"* I always try to make at least one near a holiday in the hope of meeting someone who does not believe this nightmare will end. I want to tell them, "Yes it can!" I have taken a couple of open commitments, how about you? With our hearts full of gratitude, there should be no unfulfilled commitments.

In my second year of sobriety, I was on a commitment with a couple "old timers" to put on an AA meeting at SCI Waymart. It was Christmas Eve. The prison was usually a loud and bustling place. After we were cleared we were led down a hall, but it was a different one. We usually had our meeting in the auditorium. This night we were led to the cafeteria. It was totally unexpected.

The smell of fresh coffee brewing was overpowering. The Warden decided that the AA meeting would be at tables, and with hot coffee! That this was allowed was hard to imagine. The look on the inmates faces as they filled the room spoke for itself. You could hear a pin drop in that cafeteria when normally the roar of 100+ men was heard. Then it happened, as a voice rang out, "Hi my name is XXX and I'm an alcoholic. The miracle of sobriety was playing again that holiday. Let's make sure it rings again on this one. Peace to everyone!"

bob p.



Were you there? A recap shared.

I had the privilege of attending the EPGSA Annual Convention in Lancaster a few weekends ago. Fortunately two other home group members and I traveled together. One of them is a newcomer. It was great to see him really focusing on the workshops and engaging in the experience.

Since we only were there on Saturday, we tried to attend as many of the workshops as possible. One that stood out was the Intergroup workshop. My term as IGR is ending but it was helpful; to hear the discussion. Our newer member attended that one also. It was fun watching him try to just figure out what Intergroup even is - while also showing a little spark of interest. Maybe someday he'll want to get involved or persuaded to!

The most memorable part of the day for me was walking through the Archives room, all of us together, an old timer, a newcomer, and me somewhere in between. We took time browsing the displays, reading the history, and talking about everything we saw. It was powerful to stand there with them and feel connected to AA's roots. Experiences like that help me feel grounded in our fellowship.

We also attended a workshop about on leadership in AA. It was presented as a skit. The scene was set in a French restaurant, with a maître d' serving plates of "leadership qualities" - open-mindedness, teachability, listening, and so on. There were "pauses" built into the skit so the audience could participate and share their input. I was really a fun and creative way to look at leadership.

The last workshop we attended was about the AA Grapevine. We learned about its various uses - such as podcasts, digital subscriptions, and printed copies. It was a great introduction for anyone unfamiliar with how accessible the AA Grapevine really is.

Overall, we had a great time as a group. As always the ride to and from an AA event seems to offer the best opportunities for unity - and of course the "Meeting after the meeting".

Joe McG

First Things First Group, Dickson City



A message from your chairperson.

I took the Newsletter chair in the spring of 2023. With a 2.5-year gap between newsletters. I thought, "well you could get off your dead butt and do something", which I did! It was a challenge at first, it had been just over 30 years between this newsletter and my first AA one. I was "on fire" in AA back in 1992 and District 52 had asked me to be their District GVR. A newsletter seemed perfect. I jumped at the opportunity. Not out of humility but out of the insanity of early sobriety! I just wanted to be a bigger part of AA and this was the chance I had to take.

When I became your chairperson, I made it a point to try promote Unity. I tried involving outlying areas with the newsletter. We have gotten messages from outlying members saying they like and read the newsletter. We kept it focused on service. They're the principles we need to learn and relearn. It's what an Intergroup newsletter should do. So in our spirit of Rotation this will be the last newsletter I will put together as your chairperson. Your next chairperson deserves your support, offer it to them freely. I wish you all the best in sobriety!

in service always,

bob p.





Staying Jolly Without the Booze

The holidays can be a tough time for anyone, and if we are newly sober they may seem even more difficult to face. I first started coming into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous at 21, and through many small bouts of sobriety (*or rather drybriety*), I've tried to face holidays with no solution in my life even if I was not drinking.

Any day I don't drink is a holiday to me. The holidays can be full of laughter and love but this time of the year can be overwhelming and launch me into a state of self-centered fear too. So my number one suggestion for the holidays is what I would suggest on any other given day: get out of self. That can range from helping family or friends prepare food, to reaching out to another alcoholic who may be struggling as well, and there's so many other ways too. The opportunities to be of service are endless. If I'm thinking about others, it's very hard to think about myself.

Another suggestion I find helpful is to focus on the spiritual rather than material, which for me that means being present with those I am with. Anytime in my life whether it's a holiday or not I find when I choose material instead of spiritual, I become delusional and my priority is to self-serve. It takes me away from the present moment and I'm seeking instant gratification in material things – which always fails in the end. As materialistic things only have that "good feeling" for a short amount of time, and I want my peace to last. This can also come out in the way of wanting to control things, rather than letting God run the show. The holidays may not be (*and probably never will be*) the perfect Hallmark movie expectation I want them to be, but the fact that I can show up, be sober, and try to be useful today wherever I am is a miracle. I let God do the rest. I was never able to be there for anyone but myself in my life before and today I can be there for my family, friends, and

fellows.

It is also always helpful to stay connected. Have people you can contact in the fellowship during the holidays, and know a meeting you can get to if need be. A.A. is 24/7, 365 days a year so there is always a meeting somewhere. Often certain places will do marathon meetings as well for holidays. Remember that you are not alone if you are struggling with the feelings that can come with facing holidays sober.

The twelfth step is "*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.*" Practicing the principles in all my affairs doesn't just mean practicing them when they suit me, it means practicing them regardless of if they suit me or not. It is exactly that — a practice. I continue to learn and grow each day through the application of these steps. It's not going to be perfect. During the holidays I can just try my best to practice these principles, as abiding by them has never steered me wrong so far. I have recovered due to a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, but I am never cured. Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic.

Yet I am not in the bondage of an alcoholic obsession today. This program has granted me a beautiful freedom I've never known before. All it took to start was some willingness to follow simple directions. If you are still very new to all this, and are filled with fear and feelings you didn't even know you had, a new way of life *IS* possible. I never thought it was for me, thinking I was somehow different kept me sick. Today I feel a part of something greater than myself. The gifts of sobriety and working this program are endless. I have meaningful relationships, I can face hardships and get through them, I can contribute to this world rather than take — and you can too!



Emily J.—BTG Chair



NEPAIG BOOKSTORE, open Saturdays 10 AM to 2 PM

422 N Main St., Pittson, PA 18640

570-654-1226 or now online!

Don't forget AA Literature and Grapevine items and books make great stocking stuffers. So many things are available at our own NEPAIG Store, AA.org and the AA Grapevine online store.

A perfect gift for a sponsee, sponsor, AA friend, someone in an institution or Treatment Facility or even someone who doesn't even know they want one!

The Rise & Fall Of A Home Group

AA Grapevine – October 1987

Once upon a time there was a home group of Alcoholics Anonymous. I say "once upon a time," because this group no longer exists. It folded one day after many, many years of serving the alcoholics in its community. Why?

I found this meeting to be a very healthy group of Alcoholics Anonymous. There were many old-timers to be seen talking with new people, there were greeters at the door, a secretary, treasurer, and a GSR all discussing group business. New people were welcomed with a cup of coffee and a handshake. The group just beamed with happy people. A large crowd each week caused many tables to be filled and seats were hard to come by. The last Tuesday of each month the group broke down into smaller groups for table discussion shops to learn about the Traditions and how they helped groups stick to their primary purpose. She learned about Conference-approved literature and how it shouldn't be mixed in with other literature to confuse the new people about which is AAs and which is not. She also learned about money in the Fellowship, the 60-30-10 and other plans, and not using basket money to buy outside literature. It was exciting to me to watch this group become informed on issues that affected it as one group within the larger AA. But then, slowly, the group's customs and practices began to erode. At one group business meeting the GSR pointed out that the literature the group literature representative had purchased was not Conference-approved literature and was purchased with money intended for AA use. The business meeting ended with the literature representative throwing the outside literature order forms at the group and leaving.

The rest of the meetings each week were closed speaker/discussion meetings and again seats were hard to come by and the importance of getting there early was common. Coffee was always ready for the first early person to arrive and there was always fellowship after the meeting. Sound good? Maybe this is your home group? Through wind, heavy rain, floods, thunder and lightning an amazing number of us made our way to Fresno. The words "I made it!" were music to my ears, and I heard them over and over again. Close to 2500 of us participated One meeting, after a group conscience discussion, a woman was offered the responsibility of GSR. She got the job after discussion about whether she would be good for the group. She started attending area assemblies to me to watch this group becoming informed on issues that affected it as one group within the larger AA.

But then, slowly, the group's customs and practices began to erode. At one group business meeting the GSR pointed out that the literature the group literature representative had purchased was not Conference-approved literature and was purchased with money intended for AA use. This business meeting ended with the literature representative throwing the outside literature order forms at the group and leaving.

Later at another business meeting, discussion was held on whether an interpreter for the hearing impaired could be allowed to attend a closed meeting. The group conscience decided against it, since it was a closed meeting. An old-timer, in disagreement, took the matter before the people attending that night's meeting whether they were members of that group or not. The people attending voted to reverse the decision of the group conscience by opening the meeting to anyone. That meeting conscience weakened the effectiveness of that group conscience, and more people left the group.

This group was so well attended the church adjusted the rent accordingly. But money was always there because of the number of people who attended the meetings. The group became so effective in carrying the message that a local alcoholism referral agency began sending its new young people to the Tuesday meeting as an introduction to AA. This drew other young people to the meeting and eventually it began to be known as a great place for young people to meet. Within a year after this flood of young people, a local center for troubled children began sending some of its clients to the meeting also. By this time some of the old-timers had found other Tuesday meetings to attend. When asked

why, they said, "We are not hearing the language of AA that we need to hear to stay sober." Others thought the real reasons might be age differences, dress, language of the street, and just plain being outnumbered young to old.

A powerful principle in AA, rotation - the passing-it-on to the newer people - was in order for the group to grow. This time there was no discussion by group conscience about who would be best for the group or who was sober, but rather anyone who would volunteer got the responsibilities. Secretary, treasurer, and GSR were passed on to people who didn't know the first thing about the principles of AA or anything of the Traditions in action. Once a chairman offered the Traditions for a discussion topic one night and they turned into feelings, drug talk, Freudian concepts, and rehab language. He never came back and neither did the former officers of the group. The group had become a group of the blind leading the blind.

Group conscience began discussing the topics: how do we get older people to return, how are we going to pay this high rent? What are we going to do?

A local DCM was asked to attend a group conscience meeting to listen and offer some suggestions. Members talked about the Traditions, Steps, outside literature, getting sober people to chair the meetings, turning radios off, and the quality of sobriety that action in AA offers. A plea went out to older members to please return to the meeting. A few did return, but only for a short time. These kids seemed to be left on their own. A new group conscience emerged, struggled for a short time, and failed again when volunteers were needed to fill the frequently vacated group responsibilities. Again, there was no leadership from the now "younger old-timers," as they too left for other groups. Finally, with the rent too much, no coffee, no unity, our home group met last week to announce the end.

Bill W. said that the force which will destroy Alcoholics Anonymous will come very slowly from inside the Fellowship. This group lasted some fourteen to seventeen years. AA consists of home groups, and as a Fellowship we are seeing a breakdown of this principal structure.

If we as a Fellowship don't carefully pass on to newer members the responsibilities that come with being a group, many more groups will go the way of this group. The old-timers must stick around to teach the newer members "how it works," not only in the Twelve Steps but in our groups. Sometimes the new people must drag the answers out of the old timers, and if they are not at the meetings, we will repeat the mistakes made early in the Fellowship.

We must learn how to keep this Fellowship alive and our groups intact for the next member who needs it. By helping insure the sobriety of others to come, we insure our own sobriety today. The best member of Alcoholics Anonymous that one can be is the best member of a home group that one can be. **W.S., Rochester, N. Y**

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The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA, available from the AA Grapevine

SKU—GV46

Price—\$14.99

The 30th Anniversary Edition is a collection of previously published stories from AA Grapevine, the International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous. AA members share moving experiences about the importance and joys of belonging to an AA group. This updated anniversary edition includes extra stories and a brand-new chapter on meetings using technology, showing how members have adapted to meet new challenges. A great way to start an AA meeting.

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Missteps of the Season!

1. *We admitted we were powerless* over the holidays—that our bank balances had become unmanageable.
2. *Came to believe* that paying attention to advertising would drive us insane.
3. *Made a decision* to turn our will and our credit cards over to the shopping malls *as we understood them* from watching TV.
4. *Made a searching and fearless* shopping list for our family and friends.
5. *Admitted to* the bank and to ourselves the *exact nature* of our credit rating.
6. *Were entirely ready* to remove extravagant gifts from our shopping lists.
7. *Humbly asked* for a diet that would remove the ten pounds by the New Year.
8. *Made a list of all persons we had* bought the wrong sizes and colors for and became willing to make exchanges for them all.
9. *Made direct* returns to stores whenever possible, except when they had gone out of business.
10. *Continued to take personal* grocery lists to the store and when we could use a coupon and promptly cut it out.
11. *Sought through* procrastination and couch potatoing to improve *our conscious contact* with the home team, praying only for the health of the players and their power to carry the ball.
12. *Having had* a rude awakening *as the result* of opening our credit card statements, we tried to eliminate shopping from our daily disciplines and fill our time with more AA meetings,

Posted as “anonymous” and reprinted from the December 1990 edition of the “Hotline to Thirty-Nine” District 39 Newsletter

A New Year, A New Decade, 1990

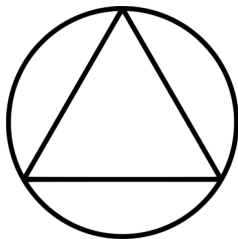
As the promise of a joyful future unfolds before us, it is VITAL to remember we can only stay sober, “One Day at a Time”. Many of us have worked hard to enjoy a sober holiday season. Some of us have not been successful.

Remember the holidays are a time for merry-making, but the work never stops. We become relaxed with our program, our sobriety is threatened. The post-holiday blues threaten our sobriety too. Snow covered roads, cold temperatures and the feeling we’ve gotten past the “Holiday Season Hump” can take us back to a drink. Meetings, a sponsor and support groups keep us away from one.

One day at a time we have a choice to make, the right one!

Written as “Anonymous and reprinted from the “Hotline to Thirty-Nine” District 39, January 1991 issue





Our Three Legacies

Unity

Recovery

Service



Recovery, Unity, Service — these are the Three Legacies given to the whole membership of A.A. by its founders and their fellow oldtimers. When this heritage was announced, at the St. Louis Convention in 1955, celebrating A.A.'s 20th birthday, Doctor Bob was already gone. But Bill W. spoke for him and the other pioneers, as well as for himself, in turning over to all of us the responsibility for A.A.'s continuation and growth.

Reprinted from "A.A.'s Legacy of Service", with permission of A.A.W.S. Inc. ©

Unity (physical)

Unity is comprised of our spiritual principles found in the 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. When we repeat our "Declaration of Unity" we say, *"To this we owe to A.A.'s future. To place our common welfare first. To keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come."* ©

We place "our" common welfare first, by placing our personal ambitions to the side as we strive to work for the common good. We surrender a part of ourselves to be part of a whole of recovered alcoholics. We start to accomplish this when we join and participate in an A.A. group. That is where it all begins, in the A.A. group.

The health and survival of the A.A. groups is paramount to our survival, as a society and as individuals. Our A.A. Grapevine publishes a book entitled "The Home Group: Heartbeat of A.A." Its title sums up the place of groups in our society. No member is leader of the group. We are led by a loving God, as shown to us through our "informed" group conscience. We work as one.

Recovery (mental)

The principles of our 12 Steps are what we use to recover from alcoholism. In the symbol above Recovery would be the base or bottom. It's the foundation of how we are built. When we repeat our "Responsibility Statement" we say, *"I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. For that I am responsible."* ©

Starting at Step 1 where we admit defeat to alcohol with all our heart, we then naturally look to a Power greater than ourselves for help. We make a decision to turn over our lives. We take inventory and see the how and why of ourselves. We bring that to this Power, ourselves and another human being. We become entirely ready for a spiritual life and humbly ask Him for help. We become willing to make right what was made wrong and then with His help accomplish that, no matter what the outcome may be. We continue these actions daily. We learn to pray and meditate as a part of life. We experience an awakening, a spiritual change and live with purpose.

Service (spiritual)

This Legacy as defined in our "12 Concepts for Word Services" When we had the spiritual awakening our 12 Steps bring, we try to carry this message to other alcoholics and practice these principles in all our affairs.

In our Big Book it says "Practical experience shows that nothing so much ensures immunity from drinking than intense work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our 12th suggestion. Carry this message to the other alcoholic."

We can practice this Legacy in hundreds of way. Face to face with other or prospective alcoholics is one way. But it's not the only way. A group or any part of our service structure is another. Contributing in the spirit of our 7th tradition, support our world services through literature purchases, bringing literature into areas where it is wanted and needed. There are ways for everyone to participate.

To be of service is our motto, of service to ourselves and to others. Our principle of attraction versus promotion is key for us to always be of service to others.

3 Legacies, Declaration of Unity, Responsibility Statement, quote from Chapter 7, Working with Others are reprinted with permission of A.A.W.S. Inc. ©

REMEMBER, SOMETIMES OLD ADVICE IS THE BEST ADVICE

STAY SOBER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON AND THE REST OF THE YEAR!

Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking. Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.



1 Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season. Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.



2 Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers. If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.



3 Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time. If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.



4 Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations

given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.



5 Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.



6 If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.



7 Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.



8 Worship in your own way.



9 Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.



10 Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations. Remember—"one day at a time."



11 Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy. Maybe you cannot give material gifts—but this year, you can give love.



12 "Having had a . . ." No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

AA Grapevine© & La Vina© needs your help!

- ❑ **Subscribe or renew your Grapevine or La Vina subscription today. You can subscribe to the print magazine or online—or subscribe through the APPs read and listen to the magazine right on your smartphone.**
- ❑ **Ask your group to start a Grapevine or La Vina subscription—or add another.**
- ❑ **Contribute to the “Carry the Message” program as an individual or as a group to provide subscriptions to those in need.**
- ❑ **Tell your friends, home group, district and area that we need subscribers now, more than ever.**
- ❑ **Consider gifting a subscription to someone who could benefit from the AA message.**
- ❑ **Become a GV Rep for your home group. We need help from our trusted servants to reach groups that don’t have the AA Grapevine or La Vina—or even know it exists.**
- ❑ **Make the AA Grapevine and La Vina part of your local events, with workshops and presentations.**

Thank you for your service

Sarah S. District GVR, D39

NEW MESSAGING APP

“GroupMe” © is a free messaging APP. Owned by *Microsoft*©. It works on all platforms IOS, Android, SMS and the web. It offers the same function as our previous **“Text Blast.”**

Privacy Features: GroupMe does not share personal information like phone numbers and email addresses with other group members.

To protect your anonymity, you will need to take care when building your profile on GroupMe. If you choose to register your last name, which is optional, be aware that it will be displayed. We suggest not using your last name following our Tradition on Anonymity.

You do not have to download the APP, there is a QR code below in the center to be invited into the group messaging. It is NOT a chatroom, communication is one way.

Bridging the Gap

Services and Info



New GroupMe ©

Messaging APP



Need a Meeting

Changed or Corrected?



Contact the Website Committee

nepaaaigwebsite@gmail.com



DRY DOCK—Slogans & Humor

In the spirit of

"Ham on Wry" ©

There's a new Reality show on TV, all about alkie. It's called, "Naked and Afraid of what people think of me!"



Q: What do alcoholic birds drink?

A: Molt liquor.

What's the difference between an alcoholic and a stoner?

The alcoholic will run the stop sign. The stoner will wait for it to turn green.



I read something at the doctors that said you might be an alcoholic if you drink every day.

Whew, I only drink at night!



A drunk woke up in a jail. Not know where he was or how he got there he asked the officer on duty, "Why am I here?" "For drinking" the cop says. "Great" says the man, "when do we start!"



Victor E. & "Ham on Wry" © reprinted with permission of the AA Grapevine Inc.

Contribute to the A.A. Birthday Plan

The birthday plan is for groups or members who wish to contribute to the General Service Office on their A.A. birthday. \$1 per year is suggested, but many members may contribute as much as they wish up to \$7,500. Envelopes for use are available at our Central Office.

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<https://www.aa.org/aa-contributions-self-support>

