

District 48



Monthly Newsletter

September 2016

Greater Williamsport Area Alcoholics Anonymous

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

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

Welcome to the District 48 September Newsletter !

Hard copies of the D48 newsletter will be made available to all GSRs at the monthly district meeting for distribution to your individual meetings. The newsletter is also posted on the district website, district48aa.org, where it can be viewed or printed out to share.

In order for this newsletter to become a viable and relevant communication vehicle that shares positive news of Recovery among us – **you need to be an active participant**. Spread the news of what's working in your meeting, home group and life.

Zipped up tight

*For a long time, she needed her leather jacket for armor.
Now she was beginning to thaw*

I was a salty newcomer, swaddled in my hoodie and leather jacket, not wanting to talk to anyone. That jacket had protected me everywhere, from sleeping behind dumpsters to traveling by freight train. Now I kept it zipped tight in the meeting that was to become my home group. I was a sexual assault survivor, and part of how I dealt with that was dressing so that many people mistook me for a young man. I kept my hair buzzed short.

After a month or so of listening in meetings, it began to dawn on me that AA people meant what they said. People weren't being nice because they expected something in return. It wasn't until much later that I understood this selflessness as the core of Step Twelve, and the foundation of the program.

Discovering AA was like experiencing a Christmas morning that wasn't going to end in a fight. I realized that the essential goodness in my heart, which I'd buried under crusty layers of beer coasters and cigarette butts, did not make me a chump. That goodness was being excavated, validated and reflected back to me by other folks in recovery.



Upcoming Events

Registration Forms & Flyers @
www.district48aa.org

October

Area 59 Day

Chili Cook-off Harrisburg

22nd Annual Alkathon

(November)

59th GSR Convention
(E.P.G.S.A. – Gettysburg)

Important Announcements

- Is your meeting in need of fresh faces or dwindling in attendance?
- Are you celebrating an anniversary next month and would like to share the news?
- Is there a special event your group is working on & you want to spread the word?

***If you answered yes to any of the above or think you have a news item for consideration for upcoming issues, please submit the information to:

newsletter@district48aa.org

Submission deadline is the 28th of each month prior to publication.

Zipped up tight (cont.)



My emotions started softening. I began to let my hair grow and started to wear makeup. I was scared. I felt more like my genuine self, but I wasn't used to male attention. I felt like a pubescent girl all over again.

Just the same, I softened quickly. I became very open. Some old-timers told me to stick with the women but my drinking buddies had been almost exclusively male. I didn't know how to talk to girls. I was intimidated by them. That's how I crossed paths with what I now recognize as a "13th stepper" on the prowl.

He was a bit older than me. I'll call him Glen. He worked at a rehab program and went to my home group. He always brought over a mob of dudes from the residence. They all sat together in their button-downs, sometimes looking shifty or haggard, but always freshly scrubbed. I found their disciplined appearance and cheery, irreverent manner appealing.

At the time, I wasn't in a rehab program. I still lived in a sort of crash-pad house with seven other young people who were all still drinking and using.

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At AA meetings, Glen always talked to me, offering recovery advice or compliments. Once he rolled up on me in his truck as I was walking back home after a meeting. He offered me a ride. I don't remember what we talked about, but I clicked into flirtation mode, an old habit from hitchhiking, to get a ride as far as I could, maybe money, drugs or booze, and all while assessing the need for an exit strategy.

The next time I was in a meeting with Glen, he was beside me in the closing prayer circle. He rubbed my hand and caressed it instead of just holding it. I wanted to break away but felt I couldn't interrupt. I also felt that there was no way I could hold him responsible. No one would believe me if I said he had acted inappropriately.

I took a risk and broke my silence to a woman with more time than me. She assured me I wasn't the first person in AA to experience this. Talking to her gave me the courage to take action. I called Glen out on the group level in a meeting. I described his behavior without using his name. I told them he made me feel angry. The next person who spoke was a man. He said it wasn't appropriate to bring it up on group level. He said I was engaging in crosstalk.

I felt mortified, but the woman I'd confided in spoke next. She backed me up, saying that newcomers are vulnerable. She looked right at Glen and said this sort of thing happens too often.

Zipped up tight (cont.)

Following the meeting, to my surprise, other women came up to me and thanked me for what I'd said. Shortly after that, I braved my first women's meeting and said I needed a sponsor. The woman who would become my sponsor came up to me afterward and asked if I was willing to go to any

length to stay sober. I told her I was willing and we started to work the Steps. Glen left me alone after that meeting.

I wore my leather jacket to a concert the other night, but most of the time it hangs in my closet. I don't need it to sleep safely or to hide my emotions anymore.

When my sponsor and I got to the Fourth Step, I still felt resentment toward Glen and a lot of other people. I had trouble seeing my part in the resentment. After all, I was the one who had been wronged. But my sponsor showed me that I had used Glen by taking rides from him when I disliked him. I came to understand this as a character defect, a survival tactic. It was one way I had kept my addiction fed. But it no longer served me.

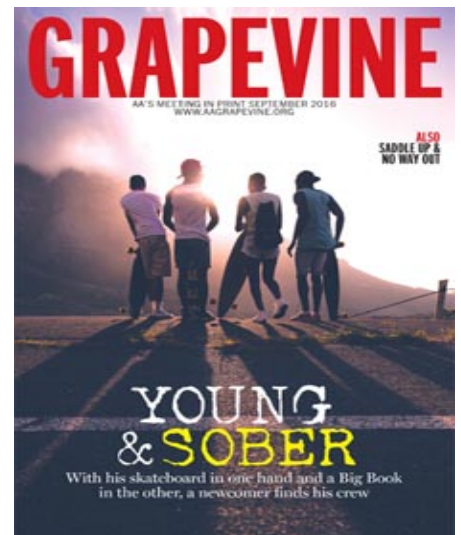
When I got to Step Eight, Glen went on my amends list, even though I had misgivings. But with my sponsor's guidance, I understood that owning up to my part was about my growth and healing. It had nothing to do with whether he had done right or wrong. It had nothing to do with excusing or accepting his behavior.

With this understanding, I somehow had enough humility to make amends to him discreetly after a meeting. To my surprise, he apologized right back to me. Months later, in another meeting, I listened to him and heard his suffering. I was able to understand that, while he had acted that way to a newcomer, he was working through his own difficulties.

Making amends to Glen was an important lesson. It allowed me to move on and make amends to loved ones who my resentment would have blocked me from ever reconciling with. I had so much justified anger against them. But I had learned that I needed to heal myself and focus on my recovery. I am still close with the woman who backed me up in that meeting. She is one of my best friends in sobriety and I know she will get things that I can't talk even to my sponsor about.

I wore my leather jacket to a concert the other night, without fear of drinking, but most of the time it hangs in my closet. I don't need it to sleep safely or to hide my emotions anymore. Today I wear my heart on my sleeve.

Anonymous



September 2016 Cover
www.aagrapevine.org/

In the Community... Meetings in Need of Support:

Jersey Shore Step Meeting

Thursdays/7:00 PM

Trinity UMC

1407 Allegheny Street

Fantastic Meeting

Wednesdays/10:00 AM

Our Lady of Lourdes Church

100 Walnut St./Montoursville

Boomerang

Wed. & Thurs./1:15 PM

New Covenant Church of Christ

202 E. Third St./W'port

(Academy St. Entrance)

District 48 Hotline:

866-671-6130

24 Hours/Day – 7 Days/Week