

soberNEWS

New York Inter-Group Office
307 Seventh Avenue, Room 201
New York, New York 10001-6007
(212) 647-1680 (914)949-1200
(212) 647-1648 Fax
www.nyintergroup.org
sobernews@nyintergroup.org



The opinions expressed herein belong solely to our contributors. They do not reflect those of NYIG, or of AA as a whole. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for clarity, grammar, and punctuation.

Join the Party!

NYIG ANNUAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION & HOLIDAY PARTY

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18th
11 am - 8 pm**

NYIG is YOUR Office!

We, the Steering Committee Members and staff, want to express our gratitude for all your efforts in helping us keep the doors open for the still-sick and suffering alcoholic.

NYIG New Year's Eve All-Night Alkathon!

Wednesday, December 31st
Open Discussion Meetings
Every Hour on the Hour
Starting at 10 pm
Ending at 6 am January 1st

ARE SOBER HOLIDAYS



POSSIBLE?

By Antonio G.



The holidays can be a stressful time for an alcoholic. What with all the family gatherings, parties, and reunions. They can be a deadly time, as well. The holidays can bring on immense feelings of isolation and abandonment, which, if we are not careful, may lead us back to a drink.

I remember my first holiday party after joining Alcoholics Anonymous. I was invited to a non-sober event by some "friends" in my industry. Although I was new to the program, I justified accepting the invitation by saying that it was work related, even though I was unemployed at the time. My sponsor urged me not to attend. But with four months of sobriety under my belt, I felt sure that (armed with my sponsor's phone number) I'd be okay.

Nothing could have been further from the truth.

I arrived two hours into the soiree, and many people were already drunk. I felt intense discomfort but got caught up in "making the rounds." I saw people I hadn't seen in years, and was instantly swept away in a sea of nostalgia. After being there only an hour, I was in severe H.A.L.T:

Hungry because I was afraid to eat, not knowing if the food contained alcohol.

Angry at the miserable feeling of knowing I shouldn't be there.

Lonely because I was probably the only person in the room not drinking.

Continued on Next Page

Join the Anniversary Club

Celebrate your sober anniversary by joining New York Inter-Group's Anniversary Club. A voluntary contribution of \$1 or more for each year of sobriety is suggested. Please visit nyintergroup.org for details and donation forms.

UPCOMING EVENTS

EXCHANGE MEETING

Public School 41
116 West 11th Street
@ Sixth Avenue
New York, NY 10011
DECEMBER 13TH
7 am - 8:30 am

NEW INTER-GROUP

DELEGATE WORKSHOP

The New School
Theresa Lang Community
& Student Center
55 West 13th Street, Room 1202
Btwn. Fifth & Sixth Avenues
New York, NY 10011
DECEMBER 13TH
10 am - 10:45 am

INTER-GROUP DELEGATES' MEETING

The New School
Theresa Lang Community
& Student Center
55 West 13th Street, Room 1202
Btwn. Fifth & Sixth Avenues
New York, NY 10011
DECEMBER 13TH
11 am - 2 pm

MANHATTAN AREA FORUM

New York Inter-Group Office
DECEMBER 16TH
7 pm

MANHATTAN CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT FACILITIES

COMMITTEE MEETING

New York Inter-Group Office
DECEMBER 18TH
6:30 pm

ARE SOBER HOLIDAYS POSSIBLE?

Continued From Previous Page

Tired of people insisting that I drink. a meeting, talk to your sponsor.

I finally snuck out and called my sponsor, who calmly suggested I go to a meeting and share about the experience. I complied. I actually attended three back to back meetings that night. It was years before I would attempt anything like that again. Lesson learned.

I'd forgotten that our disease never takes a holiday. I'd heard the stories, but still I tried to "steal second base with my foot still on first." My desire to maintain a sense of "normalcy" was actually my disease struggling to survive. What I didn't realize at the time was that my arrogance, and my unwillingness to take suggestions, could have gotten me killed.

Fortunately, this program provides us with many tools to help fight our disease. First things first: if you have any reservations about attending a non-sober event, do not go. Share about it at

There are also many sober holiday events available. Many groups hold round-the-clock meetings, or Share-A-Thons, over Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. The New York Inter-Group office is a great source of information about group events and sober dances in your area. We are fortunate enough to live in a city with 24/7 meetings, either walking distance or a quick subway ride away. So, there is always a meeting available.

One of the best ways to stay sober over the holidays is by staying close to the rooms: make lots and lots of meetings; share about what you are going through; arrive early and stay late; help with setup and cleanup; go out to fellowship after the meeting; talk to the newcomer; listen to the old-timers and take their suggestions.

So, is it possible to stay sober over the holidays? Absolutely!

BUY NOW!

2015 GRAPEVINE CALENDARS

**AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT
NEW YORK INTER-GROUP!**

Wall Calendar

See striking photographs that reflect various sober themes,

\$12.25

Pocket Planner

Features a Month-at-a-Glance spread and sobriety quotations

\$ 6.00

TWELVE TIPS FOR A SOBER HOLIDAY

By A.A. World Services

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. Here are some tips for having an all-around ball without a drop of alcohol:

Line Up Extra A.A. Activities

Arrange to take newcomers to meetings. Answer the phones at New York Inter-Group. Offer to speak at meetings. Help with meeting setup and cleanup. Or visit a local Detox Center or Hospital Rehab facility.

Be Host to all your A.A. Friends, Especially Newcomers

If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to dinner and spring for the coffee.

Keep A List Of Your A.A. Contacts Handy At All Times

If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything until you've called a fellow alcoholic.

Find Out About Sober Holiday Parties and Alka-thons

Many groups offer a safe place for A.A.s to celebrate the holidays. Also New York Inter-Group, and several other local clubhouses, holds all-day meeting marathons. All are welcome. If you're timid, you can always take someone newer than you.

Skip Any Drinking Occasions You Are Worried About

Remember how clever you were at making excuses to drink? Now put that talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.

Remember to Keep Sweets Handy

This is especially true if you have to attend a holiday party where alcohol is served. Another option would be to bring a sober companion with you to the event.

Arrive Late and Leave Early

If at all possible, show up at an office party or other drinking event well after it has begun. Keep in mind that you don't have to stay if you feel bored or anxious. And don't worry that someone might notice your absence. They will be far too wrapped up in their own merrymaking.

Celebrate in Your Own Way

Although A.A. is not a religious organization per se, many of our members do attend holiday worship services at their local church, synagogue or mosque.

No Brooding or Isolating

Don't sit around by yourself feeling sad and lonely. Get out and do something. Take a walk. See a movie. Catch up on your favorite book. Or better yet, go to an A.A. meeting.

Remember--One Day at a Time

Don't let yourself get worked up now about all those holiday temptations.

Enjoy the Beauty of the Season

Don't worry if you cannot give your friends and family a lot of material gifts this year. Just being there and being sober is present enough. Think of all the holidays you missed because you either didn't show up or were too drunk to remember.

“Having Had a...”

No need to spell out the rest of the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Continued From Page 2

STATEN ISLAND

AREA FORUM

Immanuel Lutheran Church
2018 Richmond Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10314
DECEMBER 18TH
7:30 pm

STATEN ISLAND

CORRECTIONS &

TREATMENT FACILITIES

COMMITTEE MEETING

How Club
552 Port Richmond Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10302
DECEMBER 22ND
6:30 pm Orientation
6:40 pm Meeting

TELEPHONE VOLUNTEERS

COMMITTEE MEETING

New York Inter-Group Office
JANUARY 8TH
6:30 pm

QUEENS CORRECTIONS

& TREATMENT FACILITIES

COMMITTEE MEETING

Elmhurst Hospital, Room A115
79-01 Broadway
Queens, NY 11373
JANUARY 8TH
7 pm

CORRECTIONS &

TREATMENT FACILITIES

LITERATURE PACKING

New York Inter-Group Office
JANUARY 10TH
10 am

Holiday Events

- Tuesday 16th** **BLOOMINGDALE GROUP
CANDLELIGHT MEETING**
Church of the Ascension
221 West 107 Street
New York, NY 10026
7:30 pm
- Thursday 18th** **VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION
& ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY**
New York Inter-Group Office
11 am – 8 pm
- Wednesday 24th** **MIDNITE GROUP
HOLIDAY ALKATHON**
220 West Houston Street
Btwn. Sixth Avenue and Varick Street
New York, NY 10014
Begins Midnight
Ends 11 pm December 25th
- Wednesday 24th** **QUEENS INTER-GROUP HOLIDAY
SHARE-A-THON**
Christ the King Center
145-02 Farmers Boulevard @ South
Conduit
Springfield Gardens, NY 11434
Begins 6 pm
Ends 7 pm on January 1st

Holiday Events

Wednesday 24th

**STATEN ISLAND CHRISTMAS EVE
MEETING MARATHON**

Moore Catholic High School
100 Merrill Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10304
9 am - Midnight

Thursday 25th

**STATEN ISLAND CHRISTMAS DAY
MEETING MARATHON**

Olivet Presbyterian Church
97 Myrtle Avenue @ Broadway
Staten Island, NY 10304
Food and Fellowship
8 am - 8 pm

Wednesday 31st

**BIG APPLE ROUNDUP
NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA**

Judson Memorial Church
55 Washington Square South
New York, NY 10012
Meeting 8 pm
Dance 9 pm – 1 am

Wednesday 31st

**MIDNITE GROUP
NEW YEAR'S ALKATHON**

220 West Houston Street
Btwn. Sixth Avenue and Varick Street
New York, NY 10014
Begins Midnight December 30th
Ends 11 pm January 1st

Holiday Events

Wednesday 31st

**NEW YORK INTER-GROUP
ALL-NIGHT ALKATHON**

New York Inter-Group Office
Open Discussion Meetings
Every Hour on the Hour
Begins 10 pm
Ends 6 am January 1st

Wednesday 31st

**SOHO GROUP ANNUAL
NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY**

Saint Anthony of Padua Church
154 Sullivan Street @ Houston Street
New York, NY 10012
Meeting 8 pm
Dinner 9 pm
Dance 10 pm – 1 am

Wednesday 31st

**STATEN ISLAND NEW YEAR'S EVE
MEETING MARATHON**

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
2018 Richmond Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10304
4 pm – 4 am

Thursday Jan. 1st

**SERENITY ON FISH
NEW YEAR'S DAY ALKATHON**

Eastchester Presbyterian Church
3154 Fish Avenue @ Gunhill Road
Bronx, NY 10469
9 am – 5 pm

Anniversary Medallions!

**Now Available for Sale at
New York Inter-Group!**

**Monday-Friday 9 am - 6:30 pm
Saturday 10am - 4pm**

Aluminum

**24 Hours
Months 1 through 11
\$1.00 Each**

Bronze

**Years 1 through 65
\$2.00 Each**

Buy One for Yourself or for a friend!

WELL THE THEORY IS...

By Pete S.

Theory is if I buy a Bazaar ticket, I could win the Bazaar. The theory becomes a possibility that I could win if I buy one. If I buy many Bazaar tickets it makes the possibilities of winning even more possible depending upon how many I buy.

Now if I buy most all tickets I would no longer call that a possibility of winning. I think that many or more can build the possibility to a chance, even a good chance.

I think you may agree.

The Theory is that if I go to Alcoholics Anonymous, I will not drink

again. That theory becomes a possibility when I actually go to AA. The more I go, and do what is asked, the possibility that I won't drink again increases. Get the picture?

Many Meetings = Many Choices!

Fewer Meetings = Fewer Choices!

No Meetings = No Choice!

Yes there is much more to AA than going to meetings, I am going to hear all those things I ought to be doing in those meetings and I need repetition cause with this head I tend to forget. Keep Coming, It Gets Weirder, but then Acceptance shows up if you work for it.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Continued from Page 3

SPANISH LANGUAGE CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT FACILITIES

COMMITTEE MEETING

Spanish Inter-Group Office
2234 First Avenue

@ 120th Street

New York, NY 10029

JANUARY 10TH

3 pm

QUEENS AREA FORUM

Queens Inter-Group Office
105-29A Metropolitan Avenue
Forest Hills, NY 11375

JANUARY 13TH

7:30 pm

BRONX CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT FACILITIES

COMMITTEE MEETING

St. Nicholas of Tolentine
Fordham Rd & Andrews Ave.

Bronx, NY 10468

JANUARY 16TH

7 pm

WESTCHESTER

BOOKING MEETING

Memorial United
Methodist Church

250 Bryant Avenue

White Plains, NY 10605

JANUARY 17ST

6:30 am

WESTCHESTER

AREA FORUM

First Baptist Church,

456 North Street @ Bryant Ave.

White Plains, NY 10605

JANUARY 17TH

9:30 am

UPCOMING EVENTS

Continued From Page 7

BROOKLYN AREA FORUM

First Unitarian
Congregational Chapel
121 Pierrepont Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201
JANUARY 17TH
2 pm

BRONX AREA FORUM

Westchester United
Methodist Church
2547 East Tremont Avenue
Btwn. Silver St, & Lurting Ave.
Bronx, NY 10461
JANUARY 17TH
2:30 pm

WESTCHESTER CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

Grace Baptist Church
52 South Sixth Avenue
Mount Vernon, NY 10550
JANUARY 20TH
7 pm

BROOKLYN CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

103 Quincy Street, Basement
Btwn. Franklin &
Classon Avenues
Brooklyn, NY 11238
JANUARY 31ST
1 pm

BRIDGING THE GAP COMMITTEE MEETING

New York Inter-Group Office
FEBRUARY 11TH
6:30 pm

CAME TO BELIEVE

By Anonymous

I'd always had a hard time believing in God. Despite my parents' best efforts at turning me into a God-fearing Christian, my gut reaction was always, "Prove to me you exist, God! THEN I'll believe in you!"

So when I first got sober, on July 16, 2000, the idea of putting my faith in something that I couldn't see or hear seemed insane to me. Even more so after my sponsor informed me that if I didn't, I had little hope of staying sober. That the whole point of the 12 steps was to put me in touch with a Higher Power that could solve all my problems, not just my alcoholism.

Again, my response was, "Prove to me you exist, God! THEN I'll believe." And you know what? That's exactly what God did.

Ironically enough, the man who taught me how to drink also brought me to my first meeting. He'd gotten sober a few months before me, and the more he learned about his own disease, the more he shared with me. The more he shared, the more I identified. And the more I identified, the more I tried to prove I wasn't an alcoholic, usually by getting drunk.

Eventually, after a long and bitter struggle, I admitted that I was an alcoholic. I went to meetings every day, got a sponsor, a home group, and started working the steps. With that came a new job, a new apartment, and a host of new friends. Everything in my life seemed to get better once I stopped drinking. Until life decided to throw me a curveball, that is.

On December 22, 2003, I was diagnosed with AIDS.

You see, my sex life and my drinking life were pretty much one and the same. For me the bars weren't just a place to get drunk; they were also a place to get laid.

Of course, like any good alcoholic, I was an expert at denial. For years, I managed to convince myself that my drunk driving accidents and anonymous sexual encounters were no big deal. As long as no one found out, that's all that mattered.

I couldn't bring myself to get tested for HIV. Like I said, my sex life and my drinking life were all tied up together, so I couldn't take responsibility for one without taking responsibility for the other. And I was NOT

Continued on Next Page

Welcome to the Fellowship!

WOMEN'S DOWNTOWN

AA STEP MEETING

St. Andrews Church
20 Cardinal Hayes Place
New York, NY 10007
WEDNESDAYS
1:15 pm

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Most Holy Redeemer Church
173 East 3rd Street, Basement
New York, NY 10009
Rotating Literature Discussion
SUNDAYS
7 pm

CAME TO BELIEVE

Continued From Previous Page

ready to do that. Not yet, at least. Instead, I found out I had the virus the old fashioned way: I got sick. Pneumocystis Carini Pneumonia (PCP), to be precise.

The doctors at Elmhurst Hospital didn't tell me that, of course. They just kept insisting I get an HIV test, which made no sense to me at the time. Then again, I was too busy coughing up both my lungs to really pay attention.

Two weeks after being discharged, I returned to the hospital's Infectious Disease Clinic to receive the big news. A social worker pushed a piece of paper across her desk, with the word POSITIVE typed in big black ink across the center of the page.

Then, she disappeared for five whole minutes. Left me sitting there, all by myself, in her tiny cubicle, being stared at by that incriminating document. Never knew why, exactly. All I knew was that I was alone.

As the minutes ticked by in that tiny cubicle, I could feel the emotions building up inside my throat. I wanted to scream. To cry. To slam the desk into the wall. To throw my chair across the room. Then, just as I was about to lose control, the words of my first sponsor came rushing into my head: "Deal with what is directly in front of your face, and put everything else on the shelf." Suddenly, I could breathe again.

And when the social worker came back, I was able to answer her questions. Within a half hour I was out of the clinic, on the phone with a sober friend, telling him

what had happened. I was laughing. My friend was quick to point out that, had I still been drinking, I would have reacted very differently

He was right, of course. I probably would've gone out to the nearest bar, gotten drunk, and then stayed that way for as long as possible. I wouldn't have told my friends or family. Wouldn't have seen a doctor, or gone on medications. So, in all likelihood, I'd be dead by now.

Only, I'm not dead. Why? I have no idea.

All I know is that someone or something—that I choose to call God—kept the virus at bay long enough for me to hit bottom, to come into this fellowship, and to build a solid foundation of sobriety.

That, my friends, is a 100% bona-fide miracle. There's no other way to describe it.

Nowadays, whenever a newcomer asks me how they are supposed to believe in a Higher Power, I simply tell them, "God has done for me what I *could not* do for myself. And that's the only proof I need."



Be the voice of attraction to the new person calling for help. One year of continuous sobriety is required. Call or come by the New York Inter-Group office for an orientation.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Continued From Page 8

CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT FACILITIES

LITERATURE PACKING

New York Inter-Group Office
FEBRUARY 14TH
10 am

SPANISH LANGUAGE

CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT FACILITIES

COMMITTEE MEETING

Spanish Inter-Group Office
2234 First Avenue
@ 120th Street
New York, NY 10029
FEBRUARY 14TH
3 pm

MANHATTAN AREA FORUM

New York Inter-Group Office
FEBRUARY 17TH
7 pm

STATEN ISLAND

AREA FORUM

Immanuel Lutheran Church
2018 Richmond Avenue
Btwn. Rockland & Signs
Staten Island, NY 10314
FEBRUARY 19TH
7:30 pm

BROOKLYN CORRECTIONS & TREATMENT FACILITIES

COMMITTEE MEETING

103 Quincy Street, Basement
Brooklyn, NY 11238
FEBRUARY 28TH
1 pm

Oddly enough, my first New Year's Eve sober went pretty much like all the years before. My friends and I went to a club. At least, that's what the Soho Group's annual sober dance felt like.

It was in this humungous church on the corner of Sullivan and Houston Streets. When I got there, sometime around 11pm, the dance was already in full swing. The booming techno music could be heard halfway down the block. There were dozens of people standing near the entrance, either smoking cigarettes or waiting in line. It took me a good half hour just to get inside, pay the \$20 suggested donation, and then wade through the massive crowds to the coat check.

Once that was done, I hit the bar. Or in this case, the rectangular table set up along the outer wall, and manned by volunteers who sold bottled water and cans of soda for a buck apiece. I got a water bottle, which I would later refill from the men's room

MY FIRST SOBER NEW YEAR'S EVE

By Michael B.

sink—an old trick I had picked up from my days of drinking and drugging. Then, I stuffed the bottle into my back pocket (another old trick) and stepped out onto the dance floor.

The next two hours went by in a blur of dancing, chatting, and laughing. It still amazed me how much fun I could have without getting drunk. The DJ counted down the last seconds of the old year, and I brought in the new one hugging and kissing my friends. The people I had gotten sober with. The people I *used* to call my friends had turned out to be just drinking buddies. And when I stopped drinking, they stopped calling.

The dance ended at 1am, which was fine by me, because I was starved after dancing so much. My friends and I ate breakfast at this all night dinner of Bleecker Street. The place was packed; the tables were equal parts sober and non-sober. It got pretty crazy in there, with everyone carry-

ing on. And the drinkers were being just as loud as we were.

Most of my friends went home after that, but I was still too wired to sleep. And so was Amanda. She'd heard that Inter-Group was having meetings every-hour-on-the-hour. We hopped on the subway and headed up to 307 Seventh Avenue. I'd never been there before, so I wasn't sure what to expect.

As it turned out, the atmosphere of the place reminded me of an after-party. The office was quiet, except for the meeting going on. The florescent lighting made everything look a little green.

The phone volunteers were all giddy from being up so late. They made us feel welcome, and offered us soda, tea, coffee, and ton of snacks.

Amanda stayed for one meeting. I ended up staying for a second. Then, just like the previous New Year's, I found myself walking home at sunrise.

Bronx 70th Anniversary

1944 - 2014

**Hosted by The Bronx
& Upper Manhattan
General Service Committee**

**Saturday, January 10, 2015
1 - 4 pm**

**Our Savior Lutheran School
1734 Williamsbridge Road
@ Morris Park Avenue
Bronx, NY 10461**

2015 Delegates & Exchange Meetings:

**MARCH 14TH
JUNE 6TH
SEPTEMBER 12TH
DECEMBER 12TH**

**Editorial: Gabby W.
Production: Michael B.
Publication: William F.**