



CONNECTIONS

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Official Newsletter of the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous

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From Perfection to Devastation ... to Happy, Joyous & Free *by Angie R.*

My name is Angie, and I'm an alcoholic. My story starts like many. I grew up in a lower-class family. I am the oldest of four children. My father worked 70 hours a week so that my mother could stay home. I went to Catholic school my whole life. From the beginning there was a different standard set for me as opposed to my siblings. There was an expectation for me to be perfect at an early age. I internalized that expectation and made it my mission to be perfect at all costs.

I met my husband when I was 15 years old. We began dating when I was 16 and got married when I was 20. We had our first daughter when I was 21. I graduated college when I was 22. I began teaching elementary school in a prestigious school district in St. Louis. I had my second daughter when I was 25 and my third daughter when I was 27. I was the perfect teacher, mother, and wife. Lessons were always done, students were always learning, children were always taken care of, dinner was always made, laundry was always done. I was perfect or, so I thought.

I drank a handful of times in high school. I never felt the pressure to drink or use. As I entered college, I had a boyfriend in a fraternity, and I worked in a bar/restaurant. So, the opportunities to drink became more readily available. I started to drink more heavily. However, I was able to maintain being on the Dean's List, so I didn't think there was a problem.

As I grew older, I drank with friends on occasion, but I never had any consequences. I would get drunk, but there were never any problems. As I had kids, I would have the cliché "couple of glasses" of wine before bed to unwind from the day.

I began to realize how the wine made me forget anytime that I felt I was needing to be perfect, so I continued to drink more and more. I increased my consumption to two bottles a day. At this point, my husband hadn't noticed I was deathly afraid of tarnishing my perfect image, so I started buying liter bottles and adding water and food coloring to them so that you couldn't tell how much I had drunk. Until one day when my husband poured me a glass of wine, only to discover that it looked more like grape Kool-Aid than wine. He talked to me about being honest about how much I was drinking rather than confronting me with the fact that I might have a problem. I took that to mean that I needed to be sneakier about it. So, I began to drink vodka in secret before my wine consumption for the day began. Then I noticed how the vodka made me feel, so I stopped drinking wine all together.

I increased my consumption from a half pint to a pint to a fifth to two fifths to a half gallon to a gallon a day. My first major consequence was being hospitalized for alcohol poisoning with a BAC (blood alcohol content) of 0.5. I should have died. My next major consequence was a rollover car accident that totaled out my car (with me inside). Then came a suicide attempt. Followed by a massive stroke that left me paralyzed for three months. Then another suicide attempt. Then the DUI.

In the process, I went in and out of rehab nine times and in and out of the rooms of A.A. and C.A. consistently over the eight years this was all happening. I separated from my husband twice and was living in halfway houses or camping out on friends' couches. My family wouldn't let me stay with them and would barely talk to me. Essentially, I had lost them to my disease. During my ninth treatment, I had six months of "sobriety" and moved into an apartment. My children were visiting me, my husband and family were talking to me—things were looking up.

One day, that little voice in my head started lurking, and telling me that I could handle one glass of wine. And instead of using my tools and reaching out to my sober supports, I decided to test it out. So, I bought a single serving bottle of wine. I drank that and then bought a half pint and drank it. And I stopped. I thought I had it under control. Before I knew it, over the course of four days, I was back to drinking a gallon of vodka a day. My 16-year-old told her dad she wouldn't visit me anymore because she didn't want to find me dead. My husband told me that there was no hope of reconciling our marriage. So, I had lost my family once again.

(Cont. on Page 3)

Holiday Happiness— Can You Survive The Encounter?

by Vicky M.



The holiday season brings lots of extra busyness for many of us. It can be easy to slack off on our programs.

Perhaps we may find ourselves in situations where people are celebrating with drinks or even other mind-altering substances due to the increased volume of parties at this time of year. Everyone seems to be having one—our work, our family, even our churches may ramp up their social gatherings with a bit of “Christmas cheer.” How do we ensure that we maintain our sobriety through all of this?

The number one factor, in my opinion, is to be AWARE. Ask questions and understand what will be happening at any holiday gathering you may plan to attend. Will alcohol be served? Who else will be attending? Is there any chance that some of the guests might be celebrating with their own arsenal of substances ranging from a little “nearly legal” marijuana to some coke to pills of any sort—pharmaceutical or otherwise?

Before making your decision on whether or not to attend a non-program party or event, it’s a great idea to talk with your sponsor about it and make a decision together on whether or not your recovery is on a strong enough footing to withstand any temptations you may well encounter. Do some honest soul-searching and determine what is your motive for wanting to be there.

Our *Big Book* tells us on Pages 101-102, “So our rule is not to avoid a place where there is drinking, *if we have a legitimate reason for being there*. That includes bars, nightclubs, dances, receptions, weddings, even plain ordinary whoopee parties . . . Therefore, ask yourself on each occasion, ‘Have I any good social, business, or personal reason for going to this place? Or am I expecting to steal a little vicarious pleasure from the atmosphere of such places?’ If you answer these questions satisfactorily, you need have no apprehension. Go or stay away, whichever seems best. But be sure you are on solid spiritual ground and that your motive in going is thoroughly good. Do not think of what you will get out of the occasion. Think of what you can bring to it. But if you are shaky, you had better work with another alcoholic instead!”

One solution is finding safety in numbers. Invite a program friend whose sobriety is solid to accompany you to the party. Chances are less you will fall off the wagon when you have a recovery buddy by your side. Limit the amount of time you will spend there, and sandwich it in between a couple of meetings for added insurance.

I’ve discovered for myself that I enjoy holiday get-togethers with my program friends far, far more than I do the fiestas where folks are still finding their “bliss” by getting schnockered.

The holidays are filled with Love, beauty, peace and good-will. Celebrate your recovery along with the season, and build new holiday traditions around gratitude for a life free from the bondage of addiction!

Staying Connected

Our local Saint Louis Cocaine Anonymous Hotline (314/36-3506) is answered 24 hours a day by volunteer members of our Fellowship. It’s a Fabulous resource for anyone feeling squirrely—pick up the phone—NOT THE DRUG!!!

Staying Connected

The Missouri Area website (www.camissouri.org) has lots of helpful information, including a link to the C.A. World Services pages. Here, you can not only learn many things about C.A. and their upcoming events, but you can also be directed to one of our on-line meetings, accessible anytime, anywhere you have a computer.

DISTRICT DONATIONS

<i>Meeting Name</i>	<i>August 2018</i>	<i>September 2018</i>	<i>October 2018</i>	<i>November 2018</i>
Come & Get It	\$6	\$6	\$15	
End Of The Line				\$5
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts	\$10	\$10		
Get To Steppin'		\$47.65		
Men's Meeting		\$100		\$100
Serenity On Saturday	\$10	\$10		\$15
THE CA Meeting			\$5	\$2

H & I DONATIONS

<i>Meeting Name</i>	<i>August 2018</i>	<i>September 2018</i>	<i>October 2018</i>	<i>November 2018</i>
Come & Get It		\$15	\$10.50	\$7
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts	\$32	\$24.77		\$34.71
Serenity On Saturday	\$9			\$21

Detailed financial information is available at our monthly business meetings. All C.A. members are welcome and urged to attend if possible.

The Greater Saint Louis District Central Service meeting is held the second Sunday of each month at 4:00 PM at the 212 Club, 204 West Pitman, O'Fallon, Missouri 63366. If the second Sunday falls on a holiday weekend, this meeting is held the first or third Sunday. Confirmed meeting dates are always available on our website www.camissouri.org. Directions—Take I-70 west to Exit 217 Highway K. Go Right on Main Street off the exit ramp. Go .3 mile to left on Pitman. Facility on the left.

The Hospitals & Institutions Committee takes meetings into facilities where addicts cannot get out to attend a meeting on their own. H & I volunteers are constantly needed and should express interest by attending a District Central Service meeting or contacting the District Chair, Laura N. at 636/577-4760.

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From Perfection to Devastation . . . to Happy, Joyous & Free *by Angie R.*

I decided to deal with this once and for all. Nine trips to rehab hadn't done it. I decided what I needed was time. I needed time to figure out how to live my life on life's terms. I enrolled in long term treatment at a Florida facility on 12-16-17. I was onboard to stay for six months. At six months, I decided to stay and finish my steps with my sponsor. I didn't know it would end up being five more months.

At nine months, I decided that I wanted to go home. My family let me know that they weren't ready to have me. I had to be understanding of their feelings, as I had come to see I always put my needs before theirs. At eleven months sober, finally, we were *all* ready for me to come home.

During my time in Florida, a woman asked me to sponsor her. It was one of the biggest blessings of my life. I finally realized the purpose of this program. How it's not all about me but about bringing the message to others.

Through this process I have reconciled my 21-year marriage and rekindled the loving bond with my children. I have regained the trust that I lost so long ago. Today I have just a week left until my one year anniversary, which I will gratefully celebrate with my Wednesday night C.A. home group Fried Pipers & Cocanuts friends who never gave up on me. I thank my Higher Power, this program, and amazing sponsorship for what I have today. I am blessed beyond my wildest dreams.

Editor's Note: Angie R. is one of the many non-cocaine addicts who've found a welcoming home in recovery in C.A. We are glad that she kept coming back!

Connections is a quarterly publication published by the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous. It is intended solely to provide information for the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous. We hope to communicate the experience, strength, and hope of C.A. members, reflecting recovery, unity, and service, within the bounds of friendliness and good taste. This Newsletter presents experiences and opinions of Cocaine Anonymous members. Those opinions expressed herein are of the individual contributors and are not to be attributed nor taken as an endorsement by Cocaine Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous World Service Office, Inc., Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous, or Connections. The editors reserve the right to edit any submissions in adherence to the Twelve Traditions of Cocaine Anonymous. If you would like to know more about Cocaine Anonymous, the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions, please write and ask about C.A. World Service Conference approved literature at CAWSO, 21720 South Wilmington Avenue., Suite 304, Long Beach, CA 90810; e-mail to info@CA.org or fax to (310) 559-2554. Contact C.A. by phone at (310) 559-5833. Also note that the C.A. World Service Office web page is www.ca.org. This publication and all its contents are copyrighted by the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous. Any unauthorized duplication or publication is prohibited. In the spirit of Tradition Six, "C.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution."



Happy Birthday

Congratulations to each of our members who celebrated a sobriety milestone this issue. Birthdays are generally reported via your group GSR, so if you don't see your meeting/birthday listed, please check with your GSR. Or, you can contact the Editor directly. Birthdays printed are those that have already been celebrated since the last newsletter printing at the time this edition went to press.

Fried Pipers & Cocanuts

Wednesday 7 PM
First Unity Church

Caitlin H.	30 Days
Cheryl K.	30 Days
Emilee H.	30 Days
Emma G.	30 Days
Kristen H.	30 Days
Clare P.	60 Days
Erick L.	6 Months
Kristine	6 Months
Kelly C.	2 Years
Dawna W.	3 Years
Tom P.	7 Years
Tracy W.	12 Years
Glenn F.	13 Years
Jim L.	13 Years
Joe B.	13 Years
Michael M.	28 Years
Susan C.	37 Years

End Of The Line

Sunday 6 PM
Baden Facility

Linda S.	14 Years
Monica W.	16 Years
Carl W.	17 Years
Stacy H.	30 Years

Get To Steppin'

Wednesday 5:30 PM
John Calvin Presbyterian Church

Stephanie B.	1 Year
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The Men's Meeting

Saturday 6 PM
Saint Mary's Hospital

Carl R.	26 Years
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Serenity On Saturday (S.O.S)

Saturday 1:00 PM
Harris House

André P.	30 Days
Jaycee N.	30 Days
Tracy S.	30 Days
Josh	60 Days
Kim H.	60 Days
Kristy S.	60 Days
Tabitha C.	60 Days
Nancy O.	6 Months
Carol B.	1 Year
Carolanne D.	3 Years
Tim M.	6 Years
Margo G.	25 Years
Leslie A.	27 Years



SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, January 19, 2019

Greater Missouri Area of C.A.

Annual Unity Event

**Boone Electric
1413 Rangeline Drive
Columbia, MO 65201**

**Plan to come and be a part of
our fabulous fellowship as we
bring hope faith and courage to
newcomers from local Mid-Mo
treatment facilities.**

*I have roamed . . .
And roamed
Through a maze,
Oh, but how He has
Lifted the haze.
I am now able to
Really gaze
Into a better life
And better days.*

- Stephanie B.