



LIFELINE



I am responsible when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there, and for that I am responsible.

life·line | \ 'līf-, līn : 1. A rope or line used for life-saving, typically one thrown to rescue someone in difficulties in water. 2. A thing on which someone depends for a means of escape from a difficult situation.

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>

If you're just setting out on your recovery journey, I want to first say congratulations. Making the decision to live in recovery is no easy task, but you've done it. Now that you're here, I want to offer some encouragement and practical guidance on what to expect during your first 30 days of sobriety. This first month is undeniably a rollercoaster but rest assured: the changes you are making are not only sustainable, but they're also deeply rewarding if you choose to stay the course.

and fear all in the same day. That's okay. You're not broken. You're healing. Journaling can be a powerful tool to track these emotions and give them shape. I also encourage you to talk to a counselor or connect with a sober community. Putting words to what you're feeling can disarm some of the fear, anxiety, and discomfort that comes with early recovery.

Physical Changes: The Good, The Bad, and the Encouraging - Physically, your body is undergoing a

better I slept. Waking up without the cobwebs of a hangover made me feel energized for the first time in a long while. Your appetite will likely return, and once you regain consistency in your diet, you'll notice improvements in your energy, digestion, and even your mood. To keep the momentum going, stay hydrated, find nutritious foods you enjoy, and carve out time to rest. With a clear mind, you'll be able to listen to your body more closely and appreciate the positive changes taking place inside you.



Emotional Ups and Downs Are Normal - One of the first things you'll likely notice in early sobriety is emotional volatility. As our reliance on alcohol or drugs fades, the brain begins to recalibrate. This can result in unexpected mood swings, and that's perfectly normal. Give yourself plenty of grace to feel the emotions that may have been pushed aside while using and drinking. You might bounce between anxiety and guilt, hope

transformation. The detox period can bring fatigue, headaches, insomnia, or flu-like symptoms. These experiences are common, but if you're currently in detox, please consult a doctor. Withdrawal from alcohol, opiates, and other substances can be life-threatening and should always be taken seriously. Once you've cleared the detox stage, the physical benefits begin to emerge quickly. The first thing I noticed after getting sober was how much

Navigating Social Situations: Take Your Time - During your first month, you might find yourself invited to social gatherings where drinking or using was once the norm. Before we dive into practical tips, let me say this clearly: It is 100% okay to say no. Your recovery is sacred. If you've done the hard work to get sober, you absolutely deserve the peace of mind that comes with taking things slow.

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(con't) Early sobriety isn't selfish, it's self-protective. You are building the best version of yourself, and no party, dinner, or event is worth jeopardizing that.

When you do feel ready to re-engage socially, come prepared. Bring your own drinks. Have a few ready responses in case someone asks why you're not drinking and always have an exit strategy if things become uncomfortable. (For more detailed tips, check out our last blog post on sober socializing during BBQs, vacations, and holidays.) Above all, be patient with yourself and remember this; those who mind don't matter, and those who matter won't mind.

Cravings and Triggers: Know the Warning Signs - One of the best ways to protect your sobriety in the early days is to become aware of your triggers. Everyone's triggers are different; stress, boredom, loneliness, grief, and even celebrations, but recognizing them is key. Relapse isn't just the act of using again. It's a process that often starts with thought patterns and emotional cues long before the actual substance shows up. This is where awareness becomes your greatest asset. If you haven't already, I highly recommend working with a therapist during these early months. Together, you can identify root causes, process pain, and develop personalized strategies for coping.

Simple practices like taking a walk, calling a sober friend, cooking a healthy meal, or even just pausing for a few deep breaths can break the cycle of a craving. Build a toolbox of go-to strategies, and don't be afraid to use all of them. Life will always throw curveballs, but with the right tools, you can stay grounded no matter what comes your way.

Daily Habits that Strengthen Your Sobriety - Sobriety is built one day at a time, and often, one small habit at a time. Establishing a daily rhythm can help you stay focused, feel anchored, and create a sense of accomplishment. Some habits to consider:

- Start your morning with a clear intention; prayer, meditation, or simply writing down one thing you're grateful for.
- Track your sober days with an app, calendar, or journal.
- End your day with reflection; what worked, what challenged you, and what you're proud of.

Even the smallest victories matter. Celebrate them, stack them and let them become the foundation of your momentum.

Support is Not Optional, It's Essential - No one does this alone, and one of the most important parts of staying the course is building a support network.

That might include:

- A 12-step group such as AA
- A therapist or counselor
- Online and in-person sober communities
- Trusted friends or family members

Find someone you can be 100% honest with – someone who will listen without judgment and remind you of your strength when you forget it yourself.

Mindset is Everything - Begin shifting your thinking from "I can't drink" to "I don't need to drink." This is a journey of reclaiming not restricting. When the going gets tough (and it will), come back to your why. Why did you choose sobriety? Why does it matter to you? Write it down. Say it out loud and revisit it often. You might also consider writing a letter to your future self. A reminder from this version of you to

the one who may someday feel tempted to turn back. Let that letter be your anchor when the waves start to hit.

You Are Healing - The first 30 days of sobriety are challenging, but they are also foundational and transformative. You're shedding old patterns, making space for growth, and beginning to step into a life that's truly your own. You don't have to be perfect. You just have to keep showing up. You're not alone, you're not weak and you're not too far gone. You are healing. You are growing. And you are doing something incredibly brave. Stay the course, I promise it's worth it.

<https://slaterrecovery.com/your-first-30-days-of-sobriety-what-to-expect-and-how-to-stay-the-course/>

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He saw a person on the ground and yelled down to him, "Can you help me? I don't know where I am." The man replied, "Sure, I'll help you. You are in a hot air balloon hovering 30 feet above the ground...between 40 and 41 degrees North latitude and between 59 & 60 degrees West longitude."

"Wow, you must be an AA sponsor", said the man in the balloon. "I am", said the man, "but what gave me away?"

"Well", answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically right but I am still lost. Frankly you're not much help at all and you might even have delayed my trip."

"You must be an AA sponsee", replied the man. The man in the balloon was amazed and said, "I am, but how did you know?"

The man on the ground said, "Well, you don't know where you are or where you're going. You have risen to where you are due to a lot of hot air. You are expecting other people to solve your problems and the fact is that you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but, somehow now IT'S MY FAULT" !

When I walked into AA, my first question was: Am I an alcoholic? To answer this, I didn't need to evaluate how long I had been drinking or compare my consequences to anyone else's. I had good reasons to stop—and yet I didn't, because I couldn't. I had the double-edged sword of a mind that would always take me back to drinking and a body with an insatiable craving for more when I started.

Step One taught me something that shook me: I was drinking against my will. As the consequences escalated, I swore to others – I won't do it again. But deep down, I knew I had lost control. When the impulse to drink came, I had no defense, and I obeyed it. I'd drink far more than I intended, ending up physically sick and full of regret. As I read the Big Book, I saw the truth: without accessing Power, I was going to drink again. No matter how hard I tried or how much I didn't want to. But I still did not surrender, and I continued drinking. I told myself I still had time—that I could come back whenever I wanted. Then one day, an AA member looked me in the eye and said, "The alcoholism will never be done." Something shifted. It hit me: if I drink again, I might not make it back here. I was in the grip of a progressive and fatal illness, and it might not release me next time. I remember sitting in a meeting when a thought crossed my mind: This is your opportunity. Grab it.

Now the question became: What do I have to do? I admitted defeat and surrendered to the daily programme of action. I saw it had worked for others and it worked for me too. I am powerless over alcohol, and I need Power. The Twelve Steps showed me that to stay sober, I need to stay under God's direction—24 hours a day. – Cara R.



That quote steps up the essence of Step One to me – the end of denial, the acceptance of my powerlessness over alcohol and the acceptance of the work required to find the solution offered by the Twelve Steps of the AA programme. Without working my way through the steps, I am without agency or control. I am defenseless against the first drink and incapable of considering the inevitable consequences of drinking for my mental and physical health, and careless of the harm

caused to those around me. I have to accept the realities of the illness of alcoholism and seek connection with other alcoholics in order to begin a true recovery.

Recovery begins with understanding the symptoms of alcoholism. In doing so, I can begin to construct defenses against relapse, as one thing that I have learned is that there is no such thing as a safe slip: my next drink could kill me. If I don't put my program first, I cannot hope to combat the mental obsession and the physical craving which feed each other. This illness is progressive, fatal and incurable. Acceptance of that allows me to build barricades against the physical craving and mental obsession which are part of it.

Today I feel hopeful about my recovery. I am gaining understanding of my illness and have accepted it. Most importantly I am taking responsibility for managing it. If I do nothing, I will continue to feel overwhelmed and powerless. But if I continue to reach out to my fellows in AA, to put the work in and to seek a spiritual awakening, putting in the effort before focusing on the outcomes, that work will be rewarded.

– Beth

It can be helpful to think of 'my power' or 'human-power' as consisting of two things (i) Knowledge (of what to do), and (ii) Ability (to do it). When it came to alcohol, I was always missing one or both the components of 'my power'. Catastrophic results of excessive drinking made it plain as day I should drink less. And surely I could use 'my power' to achieve this? I had the knowledge of what to do; set a drinks limit. But I soon found I had no ability to do this. I would always drink more than intended and do damage to my life and body. I had component (i) of human-power but not component (ii). I knew what I had to do but I couldn't do what I had to do. Unable to control or moderate, I sought another solution.

For many years there hadn't been a session I hadn't regretted. I couldn't recall an occasion where a budget, time-limit or good-behaviour intention was adhered to. Drinking was definitely not in my best interest. I should stop altogether. I should exert my power and quit for good. I know what to do, now do it. I would get a few days booze-free, sometimes weeks and think I'd cracked it. But I would always start drinking again. The compulsion to carry on drinking would override the knowledge of how disastrous it was for me. Alcoholism was a hijacker and could take over my life at any moment. I could make plans, set intentions and know drinking was bad for me but could become hostage to a drinking bout out of nowhere. Alcohol was not some problematic sector of my life. Alcohol – the hijacker – was the dominant governor of my life. I had to admit that. To 'admit' means to confess to be true. Having one component of human-power, or part of it, at some times but not at another is to have no power at all. I admitted I was powerless over alcohol – that my life had become unmanageable. I confess this truth to that innermost part of me. That is Step One. – Danah HW.

<https://alcoholics-anonymous.eu/general-post/we-admitted-step-1/>

When I was living in NYC (2002-2016) I remember one night sitting in a meeting at my home group, and there was a girl in her early 20's who was attending her very first A.A. meeting. She sounded confused and frightened. She, and the other newcomers in the room, were given some great ideas on how to embrace this new world of recovery so they could get the most out of their time in the rooms.

Our meeting script read just before sharing begins at each meeting states, "A.A. co-founder Bill W. said that our chief responsibility to the newcomer is a clear and adequate presentation of the program." I'm finding in meetings today I hear far more about the **"problem"** and far less about the **"solution"** (e.g., the Steps, relationship with a Higher Power, a personality change [or spiritual experience]).

I went home that night after the meeting and started thinking about what I wished I'd been told in my first days in A.A. While I believe "everything happens in God's world exactly as it's supposed to," I wish I had been told some of these things in ways I could understand, things that in my 35th year of recovery are my foundation to daily living. I reached out to my sober network at that time and asked them to share with me what was the one thing THEY wished they had known as a newcomer. The following is an edited list of their thoughts along with experience, strength and hope from them and from myself.

"I wish I had known...."

1....*That not drinking and going to meetings were only PART of the solution.* I continue to hear this in many rooms of A.A. It is certainly part of the solution but not the complete answer.

2....*Not to be afraid to ask questions even if I think they are stupid.* I remember in my first week, I kept hearing people

12 Things I Wish I'd Known As A Newcomer

refer to "the big book." What exactly is that? Are they referring to the Bible? I was terrified to raise my hand and ask that question. It's okay to say that I don't fully understand every single word found in the literature and to ask for definitions when I don't.

3....*What people meant when they said get a sponsor and do the work.* How does one pick a sponsor? What, specifically, is this "work" people talk about? I was told early on to sit in meetings, listen, and when I hear someone speak that I feel "has" what I want – that's who I ask to be my sponsor (even if only temporarily). The work? Let that sponsor hand-walk you through the 12 Steps. I simply didn't know the importance of having a good sponsor and how valuable the first 164 pages of the Big Book were.

4....*That there is a massive difference between the "program" of A.A. and the "fellowship" of A.A.* My grand sponsor who has been sober since 1959 tells me that he believes that we have a responsibility to the newcomer to help them fully understand the difference between the PROGRAM of Alcoholics Anonymous and the FELLOWSHIP of Alcoholics Anonymous. The program of A.A. is in one place and one place only – the first 164 pages of our book (which contains our 12 Steps). It's our instruction manual. I treat my untreated alcoholism by taking the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

first. Meetings, sponsorship, slogans & service work are not the program and alone, will not keep me safe from untreated alcoholism – they are valuable tools found within the fellowship. Today, I believe that a combination of ALL of these things (knowing that taking the Steps comes first), will put me on the path to right living.

5....*That I would make mistakes but in the end, everything would still be*

okay...

6....*That when I heard "men with the men and women with the women for obvious reasons," I really understood what that meant..*

7....*That most of the slogans we see in A.A. meeting rooms ARE NOT the program, they are sayings found only within the Fellowship.*

8....*That the work is rigorous but a lot less painful than the bitter morass of self pity that I had been living in. I had to stop being stubborn and become willing to do the work if I wanted what I saw in others in the rooms.*

9....*That my fear is a mile high, a mile wide and only paper thin. I had no idea how to deal with my fears when I first came in. I was taking myself way too seriously because I didn't know there was any other way to cope.*

10....*What to say out loud in my very first meeting. I wasn't sure if I wanted to say that I was an alcoholic yet. I wasn't even completely sure I was, but I said it just so I could fit in and you wouldn't ask me to leave.*

This is by no means a comprehensive list of things I wish I had known - just the personal experience of a handful of A.A. members. Giving the newcomer a clear presentation of the program of AA is up to me and every member of A.A. so the newcomer gets the message of the program as Bill W. wrote it.

<https://take-the-12.org/12-things-i-wish-i-d-known-as-a-newcomer/>



It Happened IN JANUARY

January 1: 1943: Columbus Dispatch reports 1st Anniversary of Columbus AA
1946: The A.A. Grapevine increased the cost of a year's subscription to \$2.50.
1948: "Columbus Dispatch" reported first anniversary of Central Ohio A.A. Group.
1948: First A.A. meeting was held in Japan, (English speaking.)
1988: West Virginia A.A. began first statewide toll-free telephone hotline.

January 2: 1889: Bridget Della Mary Gavin (Sister Ignatia) was born in Ireland.
2003: Mid-Southern California Archives moved to new location in Riverside.

January 3: 1939: First sale of Works Publishing Co. stock was recorded.
1941: Jack Alexander told Bill Wilson the Oxford Group would be in his Saturday Evening Post article on A.A.

January 4: 1940: First A.A. group was founded in Detroit, Michigan.
1941: Bill and Lois Wilson drove to Bedford Hills, NY, to see Stepping Stones and broke in through an unlocked window.

January 5: 1939: Dr Bob tells Ruth Hock in a letter that AA has "to get away from the Oxford Group atmosphere".
1941: Bill and Lois visited Bedford Hills again.
1941: Bill Wilson told Jack Alexander that Jack was "the toast of A. A. — in Coca Cola, of course."

January 6: 2000: Stephen Poe, compiler of the Concordance to Alcoholics Anonymous, died.

January 7: 1984: "Pass it On" was published on this Dates.

January 8: 1938: New York A.A. split from the Oxford Group.

January 10: 1940: 1st AA meeting not in a home meets at King School, Akron, Ohio.

January 12: 1943: Press reported the first A.A. group in Pontiac, Michigan.

January 13: 1988: Jack Norris, M.D., Chairman/Trustees of A.A. for 27 yrs. died.
2003: Dr. Earle Marsh, author of "Physician Heal Thyself," sober 49 years, died

January 15: 1937: Fitz M brings AA meetings to Washington DC.
1941: A.A. Bulletin No. 2 reported St. Louis group had ten members.
1941: Bill Wilson asked Ruth Hock to get him "spook book," "The Unobstructed Universe."
1945: First AA meeting held in Springfield, Missouri.
1948: Polk Health Center Alcoholic Clinic for Negroes started operations with 14 willing subjects. The Washington Black Group of A.A. cooperated with the clinic.

January 17: 1919: 18th amendment, "Prohibition," became law.

January 19: 1940: First A.A. group met in

Detroit, Mich.

1943: Canadian newspaper reported eight men met at "Little Denmark," a Toronto restaurant, to discuss starting Canada's first A.A. group.

1943: 1st discussion for starting AA group in Toronto.

1943: Wilson's returned from 1st major A.A. tour started in Oct 24 1943.

1999: Frank M., A.A. Archivist since 1983, died.

January 20: 1954: Hank Parkhurst, author of "The Unbeliever" in the first edition of the Big Book, died in Pennington, NJ.

January 21: 1951: A.A. Grapevine published memorial issue on Dr. Bob.

January 23: 1961: Bill W. sent an appreciation letter, which he considered long-overdue, to Dr. Carl Jung for his contribution to A.A.

January 24: 1918: Bill Wilson and Lois Burnham were married, days before he was sent to Europe in WW I.
1945: 1st black group St. Louis
1971: Bill Wilson died in Miami, Florida, only weeks after sending a postcard to Senator Harold Hughes of Iowa, saying he wanted to live long enough to see Hughes become President.

January 25: 1915: Dr. Bob Smith married Anne Ripley.

January 26: 1971: New York Times published Bill Wilson's obituary on page 1.

January 27: 1971: The Washington Post published an obituary of Bill Wilson written by Donald Graham, son of the owner of the Washington Post.

January 30: 1961: Dr. Carl Jung answers Bill's letter with "Spiritus Contra Spiritum."

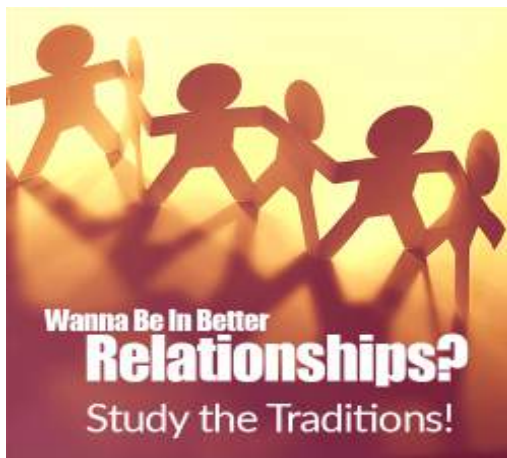
<https://toledoameetings.com/important-dates-in-alcoholics-anonymous/>

WE BEFORE ME

Unity begins with an individual. Having unity within oneself and with one's Higher Power is vital to expressing unity in any other relationship. When one is following the guidance and will of a Higher Power, inner balance is achieved and then the ability to participate in a healthy relationship is greatly improved. Thus the relationship's unity is best serviced by each individual's unity with a Higher Power.

The Twelve Steps produce recovery and enable us to match calamity with serenity without taking the first drink. Recovery is the restoration of our relationship with God through sobriety. Our happiness, though, is incomplete unless we expand our loving relationship with God to our relationships with each other.

The Traditions show us how to love each other. The principles of the group apply to the individual. Through working the principles of the traditions we carry out the steps in the world. We live in the solution, not the problem. We are united with each other in love. When we love, we



want to serve. The concepts of service then show us how to love each other through being of service to the world. Hence, A.A. has the three-word motto, "Recovery-Unity-Service", based on the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service.

Since the bottom has risen in A.A. there has been a need to go beyond recovery into learning how to get and maintain relationships. We must apply the First Tradition in all areas our life (A.A., Work, Home, etc.) so our sobriety isn't threatened. If we do not place our common welfare first, we could easily stay a loner and

eventually drink out of loneliness.

Step-Tradition Parallel

Each tradition answers the question raised by the parallel step. The connection between the First Step and the First Tradition is that I am powerless over alcohol and have an unmanageable life, so I am dependent upon uniting myself with A.A. for my personal recovery. The Step states the problem and the Tradition states the solution. What do I do about my powerlessness and unmanageability? I join A.A. and place our common welfare first, since my personal recovery depends upon doing this.

As it states at the top of this page, the 12 Traditions were created to help each A.A. group maintain unity and relate better to the world about us. With that in mind, they have been widely used in helping us learn how to be in better relationships with everyone in our life. Below is a snapshot inventory you can take to see how well you are honoring the spiritual principle found in this Tradition, both in and out of the rooms of A.A.:

1. In my life, am I a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive?
2. Do I gossip under the guise of "helping"?
3. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
4. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
5. Am I as considerate of those around me as I want them to be of me?
6. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
7. Do I share all of me, the bad and the good, accepting the help of those who care about me?
8. How important is open-mindedness in a relationship?
9. Are you more of a "giver" or a "taker" in your relationships?
10. Do you have a balance in your relationships avoiding extremes?
11. Do you use silence as a refuge or punishment while expecting others to read your mind?
12. Can you be flexible in matters of what you want in a situation?
13. Can you accept others as they are?
14. How healthy are your current relationships?
15. What action can you take to change your feelings about something or someone?
16. In your current relationships what can you do personally to promote more unity?

"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward."

<https://takethe12.org/t1/>



AA Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable.

My Step 1: Came to the realization that alcohol consumption had severely impeded my ability to accomplish every one of my life's aspirations.

Step one combines simplicity with unadorned honesty. To begin the recovery journey all I had to do was make a decision; admit something. It was now an undeniable fact that I had reached a point where the ability to resist the compulsion to take a drink had been destroyed. Quantity and frequency choices were no longer mine.

Here's how most of my days would start. We owned and I operated a restaurant and bar in rural Indiana. I mean rural – corn, soybeans, hogs, and dairy cows rural. As experienced drinkers know, the standard shot glass is 2 oz. with a white line at the 1 oz. level. At six o'clock in the morning I filled the glass up to the line with whiskey, added a blurb of peppermint schnapps, dribbled in several drops of bitters, tossed it down the hatch and chased it with black coffee. Three of these little beauties in the space of five minutes eliminated those pesky hangovers.

Needless to say, my life needed new management. I suffered from what I call alcoholic usurpation, a form of thievery that robbed me of the ability to apply reasoned judgment to the reality of my daily life. Alcohol played the role of a skilled embezzler and I, the alcoholic, played the role of co-conspirator using denial, blaming, feigned ignorance, and other conceal-

ment tactics to cover the losses. Inevitably, bankruptcy occurred. The cover up was exposed. Confession time had arrived.

In one sense, my admission of powerlessness over alcohol was motivated by a feeling of guilt associated with and derived from the consequences of my drinking. But more importantly, the admission signified my unconditional surrender. Life looked bleak.

My first experience with AA was part of a treatment program in 1980. By 1984, reliance on willpower had led to perpetual relapses; helplessness and hopelessness saturated my entire being. These two feelings combined with self-loathing drove me back into the rooms of AA where I was met with empathy and camaraderie, and surprisingly, the realization that I had already done Step 1.

Four years of intermittent AA attendance had not resulted in sustained sobriety but it had not been a complete waste. I had seen the joy and heard the laughter; I had enjoyed the self-deprecating humor, and had learned from the stories of success and the agony of failure. I wanted what those people had, I wanted sobriety.

At first glance, Step One may appear to be somewhere between formidable and impossible to a still suffering alcoholic who had been beaten down to a near zero sense of self-worth. Here is where reason and common sense finally came into play for me. Every AA meeting I attended presented evidence of successful recovery.

All I needed to do was open my mind to the possibility that I too could succeed. As distasteful as the concept of powerlessness may be, Step One restricts it to one thing, powerlessness over alcohol. Completion of this part of the step requires only one concession – a commitment to abstinence.

As the third tradition of AA states "...the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." Pure simplicity! Well, maybe not so simple. One might ask, does doing step one actually require a commitment to abstinence? Based on the wording of the third tradition, I think it does. If I state a desire to achieve something, the statement itself carries with it the implicit necessity for commitment. My stated desire to stop drinking carries with it a commitment to abstinence. In this context what else could the word stop mean?

The second suggestion in Step 1 is also a limited request. It does not say that we alcoholics have always lacked the competence to manage our lives. The implication is clear, my powerlessness over the mind altering effects of alcohol created the unmanageability. More simplicity – remove the cause, then rebuild a lifestyle based on reason and common sense. I was told repeatedly that compared to a life based on alcoholic fiction, reality isn't that bad. Beyond any doubt, I now know that to be true. In retrospect, I now understand that the intense pain created by my addiction motivated two significant changes in attitude.

(continued on page 8)

(con't) Four years of ambivalence toward the seriousness of my addiction had been replaced with the belief that sobriety was both necessary and doable. Today, those two principles, necessity and doability, are tools I apply to important decisions on a regular basis.

The completion of Step One primarily required honesty, but it also suggested the immediate need for some humility and gratitude. Four years of failure to stay sober had taught me that reliance on my own volition was not a winning strategy. Powerlessness and unmanageability

needed to be reversed. I had finally realized the necessity for outside help, and I already owed a debt of gratitude for the "welcome back" support I had received. Help was staring directly at me; all I needed was enough humility to accept it.

<https://aaagnostica.org/johns-recovery-step-one/>

GROUPS CHANGING THEIR LOCATION

Beginners At Noon

Drunks Are Us

Lexington Park Big Book

Monday Nite Group

Not Quite Right

46940 SOUTH SHANGRI LA DR.

SUITE 12

LEXINGTON PARK, MARYLAND 20653

Starting December First



**What kind of
"Event" would you like
the District to host ???**

Provide suggestions to:

- Your Home Group GSR
- The Events Committed Chair:
Mary F. / maryfearns82@gmail.com
- Attend a District 36 Committee Meeting
2nd Tuesday of the month, 6:30pm, Hollywood Rescue Squad

District 36



Committee

Is looking for a Co-Chair

Contact Your Home Group GSR or Mary F.
(maryfearns82@gmail.com) for information




Manhattan Daily



Every Day at 9.15pm EST * Central
8.15pm * Pacific 6.15pm * NSW VIC
QLD 11.15am * NZ 1.15pm

Zoom ID 895 0664 0809 No Pass reqd

JANUARY 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 Chris L., 36 yrs, Poplar Hill	2	3 Justin W., 20 yrs, Hap- py Hour
4 Sara S., 12 yrs and Ella D., 10 yrs, Bedouin	5	6 Donna S., 9 yrs, Holly- wood Kaki B., 32 yrs, Laurel Grove	7 Mary Jo G., 6 yrs, LexPk Step Sisters	8	9	10 Peter A., 14 yrs, Helping Others J.R.D., 7 yrs, Laurel Grove Neal Z., 2 yrs, We Wuz Wurz
11 Francis R., 34 yrs, KISS Mandy W., 2 yrs, ODAAT	12	13	14	15 Vance D., 1 yr, Basic Text Robbie H., 1 yr, Charlotte Hall	16	17 Claudia D., 15 yrs, Early Risers
18 Will B., 5 yrs, KISS	19	20	21	22	23 Paul S., 7 yrs, Cove Point	24 Kevin S., 1 yr, Hap- py Hour
25 David D., 17 yrs, KISS	26	27	28	29 Joe B., 2 yrs, What's The Point Larry K., 3 yrs, Poplar Hill	30 Jimmy S., 20 yrs, Mon- day Nite AA	31 John W., 38 yrs, and Eileen M., 26 yrs, Kingston Creek Dave H., 1 yr, Laurel Grove

FEBRUARY 2026



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Gordon M., 44 yrs, KISS	2 Jimmy S., 20 yrs, Monday Nite AA	3 Kim S., 30 yrs, Leonardtown Big Book	4 Fran C., 3 yrs, Battled and Rattled	5	6 Jamie Q., 8 yrs, Laurel Grove	7
8	9	10	11 RC, 7 yrs, Patuxent River	12	13	14
15 Bobby L, 29 yrs, Nev- er Too Late	16 Eric S., 2 yrs, Mon- day Nite Traditions	17	18 Laura P., 13 yrs, Step Sisters	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Dickie R., 41 yrs , Old Neil, 37 yrs and Pat S., 13 yrs, Poplar Hill	27 Brian B., 18 yrs, Cove Point	28 Dennis B., 50 yrs, King- ston Creek Beth M., 23 yrs, Early Ris- ers

**REVIEW OF THE
2025 FINAL
CONFERENCE
REPORT**



**Working Together,
Increasing Trust**

THE 75TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE
OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Sundays @ 7 pm EDT

Date	Presentations	Presenters	Position
12.07.25	Trustees Committee: Corrections	Kerry M	Class A Trustee
12.07.25	Conference Committee: Corrections	Bridget B	Delegate Area 25
12.14.25	International Committee and World Service Meeting Highlights	Robert L	Trustee At Large Canada
12.14.25	A.A. Around the World and REDELA	Jennifer B	Trustee At Large US
12.21.25	Trustees Committee and Conference Committee: Literature	Terry P	Delegate Area 29
12.28.25	Conference Committee: Policy/Admissions	Kerri K	Delegate Area 46
12.28.25	Floor Actions	Martha M	Delegate Area 10

ID: 812 3740 8344 PW: FCRR

Dial in 301-715-8592

MORE INFORMATION:
aa.fcrr@gmail.com or
finalconferencereportreview@gmail.com



Scan For
Updates

Spanish
Interpretation
provided

**Check
this out!**

<https://share.google/xld7TYdMEF78PGZID>

BILL W.

**2026 FOOTPRINTS
IN THE WINTER SAND**



**TICKETS
ONLINE
ONLY**

**REGISTRATION
BEGINS**

SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

footprintsinthewintersand.com

HYATT REGENCY RESORT & SPA CAMBRIDGE, MD

JANUARY 30th ~ FEBRUARY 1st 2026

NEW

AA Women's Group
Bedouin Women – Language of the Heart
Thursdays – Starting November 6, 2025
7:00 p.m.

Phillips House
37 Duke Street Prince Frederick

JOIN US



Service Opportunities!

Area 29

You Are Invited

GSR ORIENTATION

First Monday of Every Month
7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Zoom ID: 845 5904 4220

Password: GSR

New to General Service? Want to learn more about it or get a refresher?

All new General Service Representatives (GSRs) in Area 29—and any member of Alcoholics Anonymous—is welcome to attend our monthly orientation session!

Deafaa.org is a vital 12-step tool

Deafaa.org is organized by a Ninth Tradition Service Committee with the purpose of creating and maintaining an accessible website for the Deaf-Blind as a clearinghouse of an information, including listings of accessible A.A. meetings and events and A.A. resources. Deafaa.org has one primary purpose to help fellow alcoholics recover from alcoholism.

It is included in the updated A.A. Guidelines on [Sharing the A.A. Message with the Alcoholic Who is Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing](#) (M/G-13)

- A.A. Meetings - ASL + ASL-Interpreted
- Big Book and 12 & 12 Videos in ASL
- Info on A.A. in LSQ (Quebec) and LSM (Mexico)
- A.A. Grapevine YouTube Playlist (Anonymity-protected stories by Deaf AAs in ASL)
- Fellowship, Sponsorship and Service
- Created and maintained by Deaf A.A. members



Add a hyperlink to the top of your homepage "ASL Meetings"



Include a QR code to printed meeting schedules

Why the top of your intergroup homepage? English as a second language (ESL) is incredibly difficult for native "pre-lingual" Deaf people to learn. For an ESL or non-English communicator, navigating a website in English in order to identify Spanish or ASL information is so difficult because of the "visual noise" of an unfamiliar language, that having a link "below the fold" or anywhere other than near the top of your homepage, makes it ineffective.



"Not Hearing" Icons are considered offensive to many in Deaf culture



Only denotes "Assisted Listening"



Indicates ASL Interpretation

Scan to download QR codes and hyperlinks
Questions? Email deafaawebmaster@gmail.com



Alcoholics Anonymous

Maryland Deaf Access Committee (MDAC)

Created to organize the foundation of funding and scheduling in-person AA meetings interpreted in American Sign Language (ASL) in Area 29



Who We Are

The Maryland Deaf Access Committee (MDAC) is a group of AA members who work in cooperation with our local area districts and home groups to help ensure we can carry the message to ALL those seeking recovery.

Focus

Our main focus is providing ASL (American Sign Language) interpreters at in-person AA meetings in Area 29 to make the fellowship more accessible to the Deaf and hard of hearing community

AA Traditions

We follow AA's 12 Traditions and are not affiliated with any outside organization. More information will be provided on our website soon. Also see our FAQs.

Contributions

We rely on contributions from AA members and groups to pay for ASL interpreters. We encourage people to remember that when we're discussing having ASL interpreters at meetings, we're discussing providing language access to A.A.

Contributions can be made by

Venmo@ MDAC-2023 or

PayPal@ MarylandDeafAccess@gmail.com

Please share our website: www.mdacAA.org

MarylandDeafAccess@gmail.com

Maryland Deaf Access Committee (MDAC) Alcoholics Anonymous

Visit our Website!
<http://mdacAA.org>

We organize the funding and scheduling of in-person / hybrid AA meetings interpreted in American Sign Language (ASL)



PayPal & Venmo QR Codes



We follow all of AA's 12 Traditions



We rely on contributions from only AA members & AA entities



We provide language Access via ASL interpretation



Our focus is to make AA accessible to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Contributions accepted via PayPal@

MarylandDeafAccess@gmail.com

and Venmo @MDAC-2023



"BLUE TOP @ NOON"

Lexington Park United Methodist Church

21760 Great Mills Road

12:00 noon

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Tuesday will be the Daily Reflections

Wednesday will be the Big Book

Thursday will be a Step/Tradition meeting

Come check us out and join our group!

CLEAN AIR GROUP

The Clean Air Group

Is in need of support

And home group members

Come on out and check us out

Friday nights 6:30pm.

St. Andrews Episcopal Church

44078 St. Andrews Church Rd.

Support Your Local Groups!

THE WHAT'S THE POINT GROUP!!

COME OUT AND CHECK US OUT AT OUR

IMPROVED NEW LOCATION

THE CALLAWAY BAPTIST CHURCH

20960 POINT LOOKOUT RD.

THURSDAY EVENING 8:00PM.

WE NOW HAVE

AIR CONDITIONING.!!!



NOT QUITE RIGHT

The Not Quite Right Group

8:00pm. Friday Nights

Good Samaritan Lutheran Church

20850 Langley Rd. (Middle Building)

Lexington Park, Md.

Is in need of Support

and Home Group Members

**SOUTHERN MARYLAND
INTERGROUP
ASSOCIATION
MEETING MINUTES 11/8/25**

OPENING - The Serenity Prayer

Board Members Present: Todd M – Chair; Lorraine J - Vice-Chair (remotely); Bruce O – Treasurer; Shaara W - Secretary and Paul S – Parliamentarian.

New Member(s)/Visitor(s) Introduction: Roger R, Turn it Over; Keith, and Phil T, Today.

Groups & Committees Represented:

Buddy F – Archives Chair; Bill L– Web/Bookstall (remotely); Keith H – Lifeline; Faye S, We Are Not Alone and Cindy C, Awakenings.

SMIA Chair Report: Todd reported the Area 29 Panel 74 Delegate Report (reporting GSO Highlights) which includes:

- Archives – is moving forward with a multi-tiered audio-visual preservation project including inventorying analog recordings and planning digital migration for long term access.

- GSO – is seeing rapid growth in digital communications from incarcerated individuals prompting exploration of recent technology tools for Corrections correspondence and support.

- AAWS – approved production of Plain Language Big Book audiobook (budgeted at \$20,000) and permanently reduced the price of the Commemorative First Edition Big Book reprint to \$2.00.

- The Public Information Committee – approved adapting three Australian AA PSA videos (called “Are You Risking Your Job?”, “Are You A Danger To Your Family?” and “Cham-Pain”) for use in the US and Canada, ensuring they remain consistent with AA’s principles of attraction rather than promotion.

- A new 2026 Membership Survey is being developed using random sampling methodology including two dedicated subcommittees - one for survey content and one for methodology – to update the questions and sampling approach.

- Finances - End of 3rd Q unaudited financial statement shows

- -Contributions - \$7.1M (11% less than budgeted; 13% less than 2024)

-Gross Literature Sales - \$11.95M (7% greater than budgeted; 11% greater than 2024)

-Net Literature Sales – \$5.965M (4% less than budgeted; 2% greater than 2024)

-Operating Expenses – 13.65M (3% less than budgeted; 2% greater than 2024)

-Grapevine Operating Deficit - \$300K deficit (subscriptions: 41,643 print; 17,0558 App/Online (slightly under forecast))

-La Vina Operating Deficit – \$363K deficit (subscriptions: 8,035)

-Resource Fund – 6.2 months of operating expenses (a major Reserve Fund draw-down of up to \$2.45M was proposed to support GSO office retrofit and stabilize Grapevine operations, which would reduce coverage to about 5 to 7 months for a brief period.

- NERAASA is meeting the February 20th through 23rd in Portland, Maine. All information can be found on the marylandaa.org website.

Vice-Chair Report: Nothing to report.

Secretary Report (corrections/additions). Motion to accept the November Minutes as posted on the Web and in the Lifeline. Second. All in favor.

Treasurer Report (corrections/additions): Motion to accept the December Treasurer’s Report as posted on the Website and in the Lifeline. Second. All in favor

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Corrections/Treatment/Public Information/PCP

Calvert: Going splendidly. Kenny G. is very enthusiastic.

Charles: RCA meetings are filling up 6 days a week, if you want to go, let us know.

St. Mary’s: Looking for people with one year sober to bring meetings into the detention center.

Telephone: Todd read Melissa’s report: Total Calls – 25; Calvert – 1; Charles – 7; St. Mary’s – 4; Not Specified – 13; and Time 52 minutes.

Where & When: The Where & When is ready to be printed. Motion to print 1,000

copies of the Where & When during the end of December, dating it January 2026. Second. All in favor.

Lifeline: Keith H. reported that things are going well. He welcomes any suggestions, feedback, etc., by the 27th of the month. Flyer submissions should be in Portrait and .pdf. He asked again for someone to draft a short article about getting into AA via the corrections process..

Events: Serenity Breakfast: Need a chairperson and set the committee.

Picnic: Still a long way away. Buddy F. will chair this year.

Gratitude Dinner: Still waiting for accounting.

Workshops: Buddy is setting up Bookstall Bingo for some time in January.

Bookstall: No. Visits 0 No. Orders 8 Total Collected \$160.25. Expenses Big Books \$380.71

Website: Main Site Total Visitors (initial visit) 2549 – up 2% Bookstall Site 1356 – down 43%

Most frequently visited pages:

Home Page: 2863

Where/When: 436

Contact: 291

Announcements: 259

Where/When Search: 256

Meeting Change Information

The following meetings moved to the new Beacon of Hope location at 46940 S.

Shangri La Drive, Lexington Park MD:

Not Quite Right

Monday Night Group

Lexington Park Group

Drunks R Us

Beginners At Noon

Sober By the Bay in Calvert County has been suspended until further notice. The Wayside Group in Charles County will start meeting at 7pm on 1/2/26. The Wednesday Noon Big Book meeting was terminated 11/30/25. All meetings at the Awakenings Group in Calvert County have been changed to Literature meetings.

(continued on page 15)

(con't) Currently there are 136 meetings in our service area (127 in-person, 6 hybrid, 8 online and 1 suspended). Lifeline posted 12/2/25. Finance Page updated 12/2/25. SMIA minutes posted 11/14/25. Where/When posted 12/2/25. Phishing attempts are now nearly non-existent. Targeted access attempts against the main site and Bookstall have dropped from over 30k to under 900. The

remaining traffic is likely just background noise. In short, the security changes have been effective.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: Need better communication system for linking remote participants. Agreed to table it for consideration next month.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER District 36 is hosting 2 Alkathons, one on Christmas Eve, starting at 6 p.m. at the Hollywood Rescue Squad and another on New Year's Eve at the Leonardtown Knights of Columbus. Motion to Adjourn. Second. All in favor.

CLOSING – Responsibility Pledge

NERAASA 2026

NorthEast Regional A.A. Service Assembly

All A.A. members are welcome! #ComeMeetMaine! Area 28

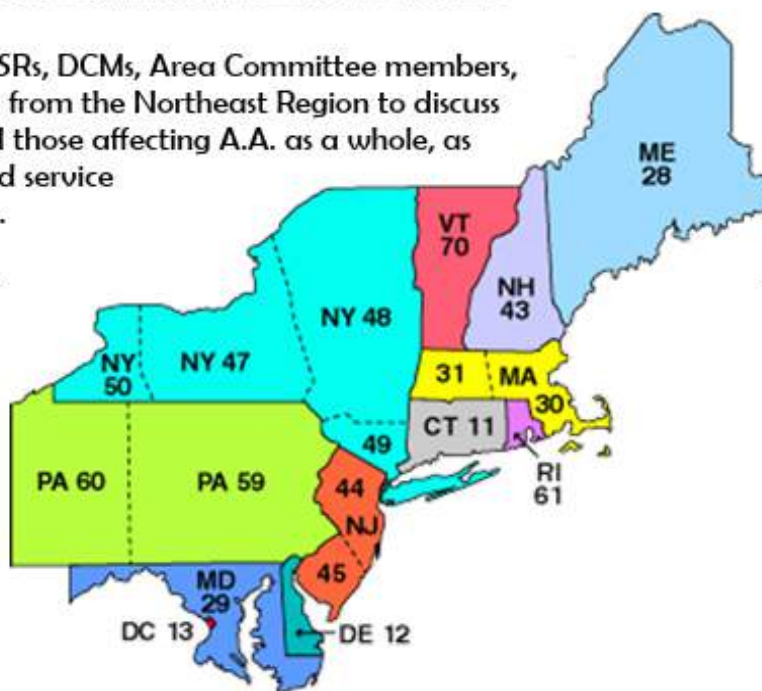
PURPOSE: The purpose of NERAASA is for GSRs, DCMs, Area Committee members, and Intergroup/Central Office Representatives from the Northeast Region to discuss General Service Conference- related issues and those affecting A.A. as a whole, as well as pertinent aspects of recovery, unity, and service common to the Areas of the Northeast Region.



February 20-22, 2026

Holiday Inn By the Bay
88 Spring St
Portland, ME 04101

Deadline for hotel registrations 1/19/2026



"We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost their self confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve." Alcoholics Anonymous, p. xxviii

January 2026

Southern Maryland Intergroup Association Inc

Treasury Report

Monthly Contributions:

\$570.85

www.somdintergroup.org/contribute

SMIA, PO Box 767, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622

Southern Maryland Intergroup Association Inc Monthly Statement of Financial Position November 25, 2025 - December 24, 2026

Assets

Primary Business Checking	\$ 3,668.17
Prudent Reserve	\$ 4,301.00
PayPal	\$ 799.62
Bookstall Cash on hand	\$ 100.00
Total Assets	8,868.79

This Month's Expenses

Bookstall Purchases	\$ -
Liability Insurance	\$ -
Lifeline Printing	\$ (135.06)
Misc	\$ -
Phone Answering Service/1-800#	\$ (61.63)
Post Office Box	\$ -
Rent	\$ (150.00)
Webmaster	\$ -
Website	\$ (73.93)
Where & When	\$ -
Picnic	\$ -
Travel	\$ -
Workshops	\$ -
SMIA Archives	\$ -
Office sup (coffee, postage & faxing)	\$ -
Bank Charges and Fees	\$ (16.00)
Other - Tax Filings	\$ -
Total Expenses	\$ (436.62)

Southern Maryland Intergroup Association Inc Yearly Statement of Activity April 25, 2025 - April 24, 2026

Year to Date Income

Contributions	\$5,302.78	BUDGET Shortfall 41%
Bookstall Sales	\$ 1,450.20	59%
Gratitude Dinner	\$ -	100%
Serenity Breakfast	\$ -	100%
Total 2025 Income	6,752.98	53%

Year to Date Expenses

Bookstall Purchases	\$ (1,317.76)	BUDGET Left to Use 67%
Liability Insurance	\$ (351.00)	-29%
Lifeline Printing	\$ (1,011.46)	-5%
Misc	\$ (104.74)	0%
Phone Answering Service/1-800#	\$ (481.41)	-48%
Post Office Box	\$ (120.00)	0%
Rent	\$ (1,200.00)	33%
Webmaster	\$ (1,026.00)	67%
Website	\$ (646.10)	24%
Where & When	\$ -	100%
Picnic	\$ (773.22)	23%
Travel	\$ -	100%
Workshops	\$ -	100%
SMIA Archives	\$ -	100%
Office sup (coffee, postage & faxing)	\$ (148.00)	18%
Bank Charges and Fees	\$ (112.00)	-12%
Other - Tax Filings	\$ -	0%
Total 2025 Expenses	\$ (7,291.69)	59%

Total of Checking and PayPal Allows us a financial Runway of	3.01	Months
Number of Months of Fiscal Year Remaining	4	Months
For our 2024-2025 planned expenses, we currently have a	\$ (1,469.54)	Shortfall

		C&T	PI/CPC
Remaining Service Committee Budgets	Calvert	\$ 275.00	\$ 31.00
Budget Year 2024 (01May2025 - 30Apr2026)	Charles	\$ 375.00	\$ 250.00
As of 12DEC2025	St.Mary's	\$ 99.00	\$ 18.60

Please include your current group number when submitting correspondence or contributions to the SMIA. You can find your current group number at <https://somdintergroup.org/wwsearch.html#gnlf>. If your group does not have a current group number, contact the Area 29 Registrar at registrar@marylandaa.org.

WHERE DO WE SEND OUR CONTRIBUTIONS?

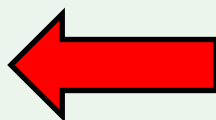
1) All contributions can be made online:

www.somdintergroup.org/donate.php

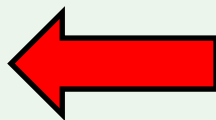
2) Or they can be mailed to the appropriate office location:

PLEASE NOTE THAT GSO AND MARYLAND GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE ADDRESSES HAVE CHANGED

**General Service Office
Post Office Box 2407
James A Farley Station
New York, NY 10116-2407**



**Maryland General Service
PO BOX 1834
Frederick, MD 21702**



**Southern Maryland Intergroup (SMIA)
P.O. Box 767
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622**

**District 1 Trust Fund (Calvert)
P.O. Box 234
Barstow, MD 20610**

**District 35 (Charles)
P.O. Box 1981
La Plata, MD 20646**

**District 36 (St. Mary's)
P.O. Box 1334
California, MD 20619**

ATTENTION GROUP TREASURERS:

***Remember to include the 6-digit GSO Group Number on all correspondence to Maryland General Service.**

Samples of Group Contributions to A.A. Service Entities*

Distribution Plan of _____
(YOUR GROUP NAME)

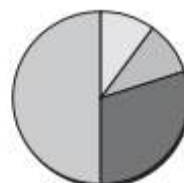
Your Group Service # _____

(Be sure to write group name and service # on all contributions.)



____% to district
____% to area committee
____% to G.S.O.
____% to intergroup or central office
____% other A.A. service entities
____% other A.A. service entities

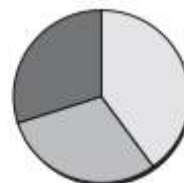
OR



10% to district
10% to area committee
30% to G.S.O.
50% to intergroup or central office

OR

If you have no intergroup/central office.



40% to district
30% to area
30% to G.S.O.

SMIA SERVICE TEAM:

Chair: Todd M.
Vice Chair: Lorraine J.
Secretary: Shaara W.
Treasurer: Bruce O.
Parliamentarian: Paul S.
Web: Bill L.
Bookstall: Buddy F.
Lifeline/Archives: Keith H.
Telephone: Sheri R.
Where & When: Pat P.

**THE DEADLINE FOR ALL
LIFELINE MATERIALS IS
THE 27th OF EACH MONTH.**

DISTRICT 35 CHARLES COUNTY

Please join us at our next District Meeting
the first Thursday of the month @ 7pm

Peace Lutheran Church
401 Smallwood Drive
Waldorf, MD

Or via ZOOM

Meeting ID: 85795899259

Password: D35!2025

Mailing address:
PO Box 1981, La Plata, MD 20646

NEW BOOKSTALL HOURS:

First and Third Thursday of the
month 6:00pm - 6:45pm

Second Saturday of the month 9am - 10am

DISTRICT 1 CALVERT COUNTY

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Accessibilities Chair

Men's Institutions Chair

Bridging the Gap Chair

District Meeting:
7 PM, 3rd Monday
St. Paul's Episc. Church
25 Church St.
Prince Frederick, MD
20678

District 1 Trust Fund
PO Box 234

Barstow, MD 20610
www.calvertaa.org



**SERVICE KEEPS
US SOBER**

DISTRICT 36

ST. MARY'S COUNTY

PO Box 1334, California, MD 20619

www.district36mdaa.org



Please send any up-
dates for the Where &
When to:

[smia.whereandwhen@
somdaa.org](mailto:smia.whereandwhen@somdaa.org)

Current meeting guides are
available at the monthly
SMIA meeting on a limited
basis.

DISTRICT NOTES

The next SMIA Meeting will be held on

Saturday, February 14 at 10:00 AM

Join us in person @

Immaculate Conception Church,
28297 Old Village Road, Mechanicsville, MD
20659

Or via Zoom @

[https://zoom.us/j/99982597908?
pwd=QzVLcUZrVHdacFlrYUNZN21tdkluQT09](https://zoom.us/j/99982597908?pwd=QzVLcUZrVHdacFlrYUNZN21tdkluQT09)