

***Anonymity on the Internet
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public medium where A.A. members and non-A.A.'s mingle.

I asked a question of the GSO PI desk regarding anonymity breaking on Facebook. Specifically I asked: Is it an anonymity break to discuss your affiliation with A.A. on Facebook? I was given 2 articles to read and consider: One was an article printed in the December 2009 BOX 459 and the other was an A.A. member's view on the subject (later published in the October 2010 edition of The A.A. Grapevine). After reflection on the material, I agree that one's affiliation with A.A. has no business being published on a social networking site.

The question arises, however, what is considered affiliation? For that I seek my own conscience as

developed by a deeper understanding and reflection on all of our traditions as well as the "God Voice" that speaks within me. Today I ask: what is my motive? Step 10 in the 12 & 12 reminds me that I have a tendency to "hide a bad motive underneath a good one" and that rationalization is considered an "ancient enemy". We don't have the right to break another member's anonymity. Consider ways in which we inadvertently do this (i.e. mentions of "sobriety", posting photos depicting "A.A. anything" in the background, etc.). The principle of anonymity cuts down roaring egos and the potential for public "big shot-ism". Self-serving anonymity breakers could quickly jeopardize the Fellowship's hard-won reputation. From Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: "had this tendency not been checked, the whole character of our society could have changed, and its future could have been fearfully compromised." As we might be the only Big Book some

will ever see, what kind of messages are we throwing out there?

In closing, I'd like to share this from Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age – "...anonymity is real humility at work. It is an all-pervading spiritual quality which today keynotes A.A. life everywhere. Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinctions as A.A. members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. As we lay aside these very human aspirations, we believe that each of us takes part in the weaving of a protective mantle which covers our whole society and under which we may grow and work in unity." Consider using humility as an outward sign of an inward love and concern for the program that gave us life.

PRIMARY SOURCES: Understanding Anonymity pamphlet and Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age

65th Anniversary of AA in Austin

"Let's Get Gussied Up & Celebrate"

Thursday, December 9, 2010

Double Tree Hotel

6505 IH 35 North

Austin, TX 78752

7:00 PM - Midnight

District 3B/3C

Correctional Facilities Workshop

December 11, 2010 2:00 – 3:30 PM

Lambda Live & Let Live

7801 North Lamar Blvd., Suite F-31

Austin, TX 78752

Hill Country Intergroup Rep Meeting

2nd Monday of the Month, 6:30 PM

Covenant Presbyterian Church

3003 Northland Drive

Austin, TX 78752

November

Volunteers

Office

Mark R.,
James B.,
Eileen B.,
Lyrica J.,
Ginger K.,
Mary Jo B.,
Mark,
Randi R.

Hotline

Andrew G.,
Billy C.,
Robert C.,
Ryan P.,
Linda R.,
Russell B.,

Mike W.,
John G.,
Nancy K.,
Ashley A.,
Mary Jo B.,
Donita T.,
Jeannie H.,
Stewart G.,
Alex H.,
Mark L.,
Eileen B.,
Dennis "Pete"
P., Dudley F.,
Paul B.,
Amy M.,
Gary B.,
Victor P.,

Roland P.,
Chris R.,
Cheryl F.,
Brent B.,
Chris F.,
Will C.,
Glenn S.,
Tom K.,
Jerry T.,
Sharon T.,
Keli D.,
Maggie B.,
Darrin A.,
Gordon K.

Donations

Courage to Change -
\$132
A Way Out - \$400
Hope (Cedar Park) -
\$406
Freedom From Bondage
- \$13
Any Lengths - \$375
Marble Falls - \$50
Keystone - \$125
A Way Out (Bastrop) -
\$100
Allandale - \$317
Northland - \$198
Dry Creek - \$30

On the Colorado - \$40
Western Trails - \$213
Round Rock Big Book -
\$30
Grass Roots - \$75
Bridge to Shore - \$210
Sisters in Sobriety - \$50
Phelan Rd. - \$10
Westlake - \$250
Fresh Start - \$60
Sunday South - \$33
Total: \$3,117

Surviving the Holidays

The holidays — Office parties, family get-togethers, traveling out of town, New Year's Eve...slippery opportunities abound. How do we get through — especially in early sobriety?

Of course many groups have holiday celebrations, and New Year's Eve parties (you can get the latest at <http://austinaa.org/upcoming-events.html>). If you're traveling out of town, you can get advance information about meetings. The General Service Office has links to most Intergroup/Central Offices (<http://www.aa.org>). You can also get info from information, and in many smaller communities from the local police or clergy if there is no telephone listing.

But what about those functions where there is alcohol. The following excerpts from *Living Sober*, pages 64-69 (reprinted by Permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.) offers the following insight and helpful strategies and suggestions for navigating drinking events in sobriety:

“For the first nondrinking months,

it's probably a healthy idea to stay away from our old drinking buddies and haunts, and to find reasonable excuses for skipping parties where drinking will be a major entertainment. It seems especially important to stay away from such affairs if we feel nervous about them.

But, sooner or later, there comes the time when a family or business obligation or a friendship makes us feel compelled to go or perhaps we just want to go. We have developed a number of ways to render such occasions easy for us to take, even though we abstain. Now, we are talking primarily about the big cocktail party or the fairly large but informal dinner-with-drinks evening.

If the host or hostess is an old friend we can level with, sometimes it helps to tell him or her in advance that we are not drinking right now. We do not ask for any special treatment, of course. But

it's reassuring to know there will be at least one person present who is completely sympathetic to our efforts to get over a drinking problem. Sometimes, we can take with us a more experienced non-drinker, or at least a companion who knows we are abstaining and realizes how important it is to us.

It is a very good idea to eat a sandwich or other snack before going to a party, even if you know food will be served later. Something nourishing in the stomach, as we've already said, takes the edge off many trying situations. (And you might carry along a small packet of your favorite mints or a dietetic substitute.) This is even more important when you are headed for a party at which there are likely to be some long heavy drinking hours before food appears.

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November Birthday Club

Anne O.
Austin – 27 years

Fred D.
Primary Purpose Group
30 years (S.D. 10-23-80)



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Join the Birthday Club!

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Newsletter

Surviving the Holidays continued from page 3

Saying aloud to other people that we do not drink helps greatly to strengthen our own determination to stay sober. And there may be a by-product. Occasionally, we find that making such a statement encourages some one else present who also needs or wants not to drink.

Therefore, many of us do not hesitate, when it is appropriate, to say, "I'm not drinking now."

"I'm not drinking today (or this week)" or simply "No Thanks" or a straightforward "I don't care for any" often satisfies the questioner.

If we feel the need to explain any further, we try to do it without lying, and in a way that other people can rapidly understand and accept. For instance, there are old standbys like "Health reason," "I'm on a diet," and "Doctor's orders". Most of us, at one time or another, have been given or have read some such advice from a physician.

"I've had my share," "Had all I can handle," and "Found out it doesn't agree with me" are also truthful.

When we have to fall back on manufactured, murmured excuses for not drinking, we try to reach for one that is not too far-fetched. "I have a mysterious disease" or "I'm on some medication" might shut people up, but more likely would evoke extra questions.

Usually, "I'm allergic to it" seems acceptable. Technically, in strictly scientific terms, alcoholism is not a true allergy, the experts now inform us. However, "allergy" is a petty good figure of speech to describe our condition; if we imbibe the stuff, regrettable consequences certainly do follow.

Just one more thing about this matter of drinking occasions. Many of us have had the guts, if pressure to drink really got unpleasantly strong, simply to make an excuse and leave, no matter what other people may think. After all, our life is at stake. We simply have to take whatever steps are necessary to preserve our own health. Other people's reactions are their problem, not ours."

Living Sober also offers a number of practical suggestions for fending off loneliness and many other topics that can arise in early sobriety, and especially around the holidays, and other occasions.

Have a joyous, sober, and wonder-filled holiday season.

With Blessings,

The Editor