



# INTERGROUP NEWS

JUNE 2025 ISSUE 3

## WELCOME

Welcome the **SERVICE** issue of **Intergroup News**, a publication of Napa Valley Alcoholics Anonymous.

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## Artists in Sobriety

Each issue of **Intergroup News** features works of artists in our Napa Valley fellowship. We invite you to enjoy the paintings of Janna W. and Danielle S. and the photography of Mike B.



by Mike B.

## Artists in Sobriety, continued



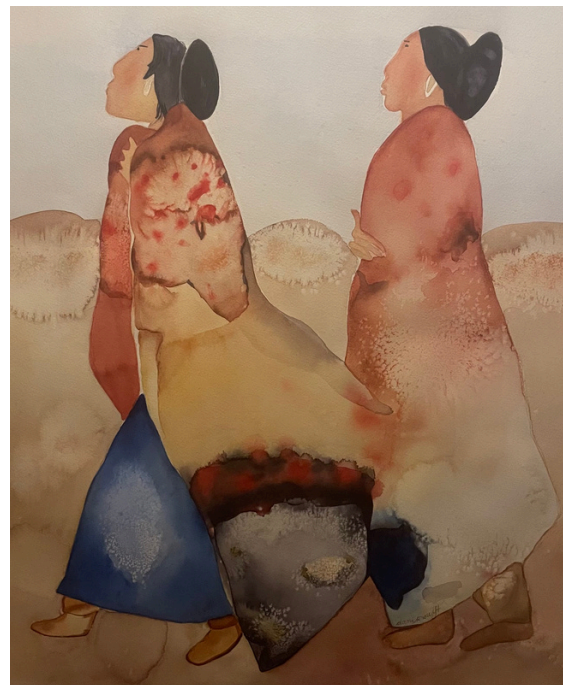
**by Mike B**



**by Janna W**



**by Danielle S**



**by Danielle S**

## WHAT IS INTERGROUP?

Napa County Intergroup Fellowship is a service body directly responsible to the AA groups of Napa County. Its primary purpose is to meet the needs of the AA groups and to provide services as required.

The monthly Intergroup meeting provides an opportunity for Intergroup representatives to share group experience and problems, and to keep their groups informed about other service activities in the Napa Valley AA community.

Intergroup publishes our Meeting Directory and our newsletter, **Intergroup News**, facilitates the AA hotline, coordinates the monthly Birthday Meeting, provides a resource for AA literature to our groups, manages the website [aanapa.org](http://aanapa.org), and oversees the NVIG budget. During the winter holiday season, NVIG sponsors Alcatrons – 24 hour continuous meetings and fellowship on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

## BE A CONTENT CONTRIBUTOR

Would you like to share your experience, strength and hope, and perhaps artistic vision, with the Napa Valley AA Fellowship? It's a great way to be of service. We are looking for personal stories, reflections on the Steps and Traditions, and visual arts expressions. Written contributions are limited to 500 words or fewer, and in keeping with our Tenth Tradition: Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, thus the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

You can submit your contributions, or any comments, questions or concerns to **[newsletter@aanapa.org](mailto:newsletter@aanapa.org)**

# Save the Date–Nov. 1, 2025

## Need volunteers

Fall Inventory Assembly, Chardonnay  
Hall, Napa Valley Expo  
Pre-Conference Dinner – October 31st  
Crosswalk Church

We need Volunteers to execute this historic event. The first time in memory our Pre-Conference Dinner will include Intergroup, District, Area and General Service. A combination pot-luck dinner, a birthday meeting / prior Trustee Speaker & an Anniversary/Halloween Party.

***But to do this, we need many Volunteers.*** This is a great Service Commitment for Sponsors, Sponsees, and dedicated AA members. For more information contact;

Jeff D	510-384-0731
Sandra S	707-363-0720
Duncan L	707-684-8989
Alex W	707-280-0373

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## Let's Gather for Service!!

<http://aanapa.org>



## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS STEPS 1,2,3 BY JUSTIN I.

I came into Alcoholics Anonymous a few times, after many relapses. I was worn out, exhausted and desperate to get my life back to where it once was. I would have settled for “as good” or “close to” the life I had before I started drinking every night. Anything was going to be an improvement from the 24/7 intoxication I was currently maintaining.

My most recent relapse ended on January 3, 2021 on the streets of downtown Napa. The night before I had slept on a discarded mattress in my girlfriend's backyard. It wasn't until later that she was made aware of that. Nobody wanted me and I was too ashamed to show my face anywhere except the liquor store counter. Just before this, my car died and I was given a DUI all in one series of moments. Just before that, I lost my job because of drinking.

My guess is, (based on a few prior blood tests in the hospital) that I was idling at an average of .35-.4 BAC every day. My record was a .48 at the St. Helena hospital. (That's 48% booze. I was half booze!)

A rare moment of clarity hit me as I realized I had nothing left. While wandering downtown that day I remember thinking to myself, “We used to have a job, a car, friends, a girlfriend...” I had stayed in a sober living environment earlier in the year and knew that was my only hope of staying sober. I walked the few blocks and knocked on the front door. 10 days later, I had gone through another horrible detox and was allowed to move in.

So! Now that we have a little context, let's get into the task at hand! How did I do the first 3 steps!

### STEP 1:

I'm a real rebellious son of a gun. So I never wanted to admit that I had a problem. Nobody wants to admit they're different. I was first confronted by my girlfriend after I moved in with her and she witnessed how I really drank. Once confronted, I had to start hiding.



## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS

### Steps 1,2,3 by Justin I. (cont.)

Then my mother from Nebraska showed up for a surprise intervention! I of course said that I would slow down, but I only ramped up the drinking, lying and hiding. So off I went to rehab! I said that I had a problem, and introduced myself as an alcoholic to appease everyone, but I didn't mean any of it. I of course drank within a couple weeks after my 30 day stay at Duffy's. It took 15 months of a self-will run (taken from the Big Book, Chapter 5) riot to arrive at the point that I mentioned above. This riot included the following events:

- A seizure after being released prematurely from medical detox
- Arrest for public intoxication after an incident in the park
- Rehab #2 in Atchison, KS
- Another trip to the drunk tank after passing out in the taxi lane at the Oakland Airport
- Driving my car off the road and running into a tree branch, breaking the windshield (I think... I saw the damage the next day)
- Car dying in American Canyon and waking up in the dirt next to a building. I vaguely remember talking to the police that night.
- Being blocked in by my girlfriend's mother so I could not drive, then having her follow me on foot as I verbally berated her. (She and I never recovered from that one)
- Back to rehab again for a 10 day detox. Drank so much in the Uber to rehab, that when I arrived, I was unresponsive. I was taken to the hospital with the aforementioned .48 Blood Alcohol Content.
- Disappeared from a job after we were forced to work from home due to the (at the time) new Covid19 virus. Spent a week dodging calls and eventually sent a resignation by email.
- Car dies on a highway exit. I get out to run the remaining 3 blocks to my girlfriend's house. Police swarm and I'm arrested for DUI, plus whatever the bonus DUI is for high BAC.
- Lost my job due to drinking in the office. I passed out on the floor and woke up to the HR representative and facilities manager standing over me horrified.

## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS

### Steps 1,2,3 by Justin I. (cont.)

It took ALL of this, folks! Any one of those single incidents is enough to have someone take a look at their life and make some changes.

This is alcoholism.

The realization that I came to while wandering the streets was my initial step 1. I later admitted to my first sponsor that my life had become unmanageable

Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than us could restore us to sanity.

So! Now that we've made peace with the fact that we have a problem and must stop, we now need to accept a higher power into our life. Now this was a bit of an issue for me at first. Through rehab and meetings, I had "yeah, sure"-ed my way through all this, but it was difficult to give up my rebellious "come on, we're adults believing in this?". I grew up in small town Nebraska, so the idea of joining those religious folks did not appeal to me.

However, when you've run your life into the ground like I had, you can accept humility and say "why not?"

If there is something that's out there and can help me, I'll take it! It doesn't have to be any of the religions that we've been led to believe are our only choices. My HP (higher power) does not require a collection basket, and he calls me "bitch" when I'm all up in my defects.

The point is, it's whatever you want it to be. Whatever you want to talk to. I wish I had someone to talk to at 4am when I'd wake up with anxiety after the booze wore off and think "2 hours until the liquor store opens".

## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS

### Steps 1,2,3 by Justin I. (cont.)

Step 3- Made a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of god as we understood him.

Now that we have our customized Higher Power, it's time to let him/her know that we are giving everything over to them. For me, it was a desperate "TAKE IT!". My way had not worked.

There's a quote that I've heard "Our best thinking got us here". I loved that and it helped me justify the need to give it up. God's will is another term that I struggled with at first. But all it means (to me) is that I cannot control anything. So just accept that and let life happen. Good things will come just as bad things do.

4 years in I have found myself gravitating towards the old timers. I recently got a sponsor who was the first man I saw and genuinely thought "I want what he has". I see the old timers and their absolute disregard for what anyone thinks, and I want that. (There's that rebelliousness again!) I know that all of this will come with age, time of sobriety. The one thing that is guaranteed to get me there is thorough and continuous working of these steps.

There is a line from a song that comes to mind that I will close with:

"All I wanted was a sliver to call mine.  
All I wanted was a shimmer of your shine."

-Colin Meloy (The Decemberists)



## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS

### GOMU by Jean C.

Lately I have been thinking  
About the tone of the literature  
In relation to god's will:  
"Obedience"  
"Submission"  
"Discipline"

The Big Daddy in the Sky  
To whom I drag  
My sorry ass  
When I'm disappointed  
In my desires,  
Who subsequently  
And reliably  
Tells me  
"No."

That's how I interpreted  
The second and third step  
During my first AA rodeo.  
And I didn't last very long  
Riding that bull.

So this time around  
I took GOMU -  
"god of my understanding"  
Very seriously,  
As if my life  
Depended upon it  
Because it does.

And I found  
My GOMU,  
Charlie-  
Immediate  
Personal  
Conversational

## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS

### GOMU by Jean C. (cont.)

And I made him real  
By means of an avatar  
With a jam band vibe:  
Strawberry blonde hair,  
Scruffy beard,  
Kind eyes,  
And a sweet,  
Slightly goofy,  
Omnipresent  
Smile.

Because  
That works  
For me.

Charlie is different.  
Not a "No"  
Kind of god.  
More of a  
"Hey, babe,  
I've got something  
Better for you,  
Hang in there,  
I've got your back"  
Kind of god.

So I never  
Have to pray:  
"May your  
(distasteful and dispiriting)  
will be done."  
Rather, I pray:  
"Hey, man,  
What's going on?"

## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS

### GOMU by Jean C (cont.)

What delightful  
Magic and miracles  
Do you have in store  
For me today?  
Please help me  
To recognize them.  
And count me in,  
Because you know  
What you're doing,  
And I clearly don't."

Charlie  
not only  
loves me,  
but actually  
likes me.

And Charlie  
Never never never  
Lets me down.  
It's a matter of  
Perception  
And trust.

Of course,  
It's not all rainbows  
And unicorns.  
We live in the physical  
world.  
All things must pass,  
So there will be heartache.

## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS GOMU by Jean C. (cont.)

But that's when  
Charlie sits  
On the edge of my bed  
And watches over me

In perfect  
Companionable  
Silence.

Now some  
Might call this  
Heresy,  
Blasphemy.  
Psychosis.

That's okay.  
I don't play  
By those rules  
Anymore.

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## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE STEPS AND TRADITIONS 4 THROUGH 9

Our next issue will highlight members' personal reflections on Steps 4-9, and Traditions 4-9. We welcome your contributions of 500 words or fewer.

We will also continue to feature our fellowship's artists in sobriety. Content contributions can be submitted by email to [newsletter@aanapa.org](mailto:newsletter@aanapa.org)

## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS

### BR for AA, by Megan H.

Tradition 1: "Our common welfare should come first: personal recovery depends upon AA unity".

So, BottleRock happened, and for the first time in my life, I actually remember what happened during a multi-day music festival. I remember everything. I'm nearly 63, was born in Southern California, and have been going to live music venues since my first fake ID, somewhere around 14. I've seen many many bands, but do I remember anything much at all- Nope. My only evidence is a box full of ticket stubs: Elvis Costello, The Plimsolls, Joe Jackson, Blondie, Pretenders- Joni Mitchell, The Who... you get it: L.A. Rock in great, relatively small, venues (except The Who), and all with a bar full of every liquor combinations you could imagine. Heaven. But I remember very little if anything; except, my ID always worked.

Fast forward- BottleRock. I've attended each year from the beginning, but never sober. Of course I'm an alcoholic, but you would not have heard me admit it. I just really liked to drink and have a good time. All the time. I was usually at the front of the stage rocking it out, never missing a minute (and usually leaned on friends to remember).

On May 25th, 2025, I reached 5 months of sobriety- my bottom was low; and, at first, sobriety was hard. Like- really hard. My last drink was 12/22/24, but I did not stop shaking for days, and attended what became my home group for the first time on 12/24/25. After a time, I asked a woman from the meeting who had what I wanted to sponsor me, and began working the Steps. That's what was hard. That honest look at all of the chaos I created. All the problems I created. I was a mess. I had created mess- everywhere. But, I was determined to change my life, to never again reach such a bottom, (If I did not stop drinking, I would soon be dead.) and to follow through with suggestions. She continues to be present, every step of the way.

## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS

### BR for AA, by Megan H. (cont.)

But- I was angry. Like, really angry. People are basically stupid and that was my [angry] philosophy.

At the closing of the morning meeting, maybe one or two weeks into sobriety (I still had the shakes), a person closed out with a phrase to which I took great offense- and I let him know it. The response: "We are not a glum lot: keep coming back". How dare he not take me seriously- scary mean dude. I did not like him and he had nothing for me. Not one thing.

Let's fast forward. BottleRock. I'm loving my new sober life and working hard to deepen my spiritual program and continue to work methodically through the Steps. I follow all of my sponsor's suggestions (to the best of my ability), and realized I needed to reach out for support during this 3-day concert. And so I did. And who responds? Scary "Keep coming back" dude.

Cutting to the chase: on the first concert day, he texted me three times before I realized it was more than a suggestion that we meet and realized his suggestion was really a very important instruction. Nervous while walking towards his concert spot, I wondered, "Was I to be lectured? To be told I'm silly or not good enough?" Nope. I saw him sitting, and as soon as he saw me he was warm and gracious and welcoming. It was almost as if he knew how nervous I was- I plopped on his blanket and we began talking- a bit superficial at first, but then- it got real. Fast.

We talked a lot about spirituality, honesty, growth, and how to keep reaching out. He shared his experience supporting others and made it very clear that what I was doing, new to sobriety and at a rock concert, was not easy.

## MEMBERS REFLECTIONS

### BR for AA, by Megan H. (cont.)

"A 'slip' for me is when I'm not close to my spiritual program, which leads to taking a drink- to 'Going out'".

This was exactly what I needed to hear and finally prayers to the Higher Power(s) of my understanding became nearly constant: this is a spiritual program. Currently, I really do pray all day, every day and learned I needed to "turn my will and life over to the god of my understanding". This scary guy- he taught me a LOT. We are all the lucky beneficiaries of the "Elders" in AA. Those with experience, freely share all they have learned.

On Sunday, I stayed home. I had learned to pay attention to my needs, so I stayed in bed and read, walked my dog, took naps; I no longer felt the need to be the 'Life of the Party!!'. I just wanted to rest, reflect, and write in my journal about all I had learned.

Alcohol Anonymous is a blessing. We have each other. And, the more we reach out, whether to ask for support or to offer suggestions or a guiding hand, the stronger we all become.

Thank you all for my sobriety today. To actually remember every act I saw and to recognize when I was too tired to attend another day is a gift of recovery; it is the gift of us working together. I no longer have to live an unmanageable life, as I've learned to turn my will and my life over to my Higher Power.

Keep coming back 'cuz it works if you work it.

(P.S.: Those scary people in the program? They see through you and love you. Trust them.)