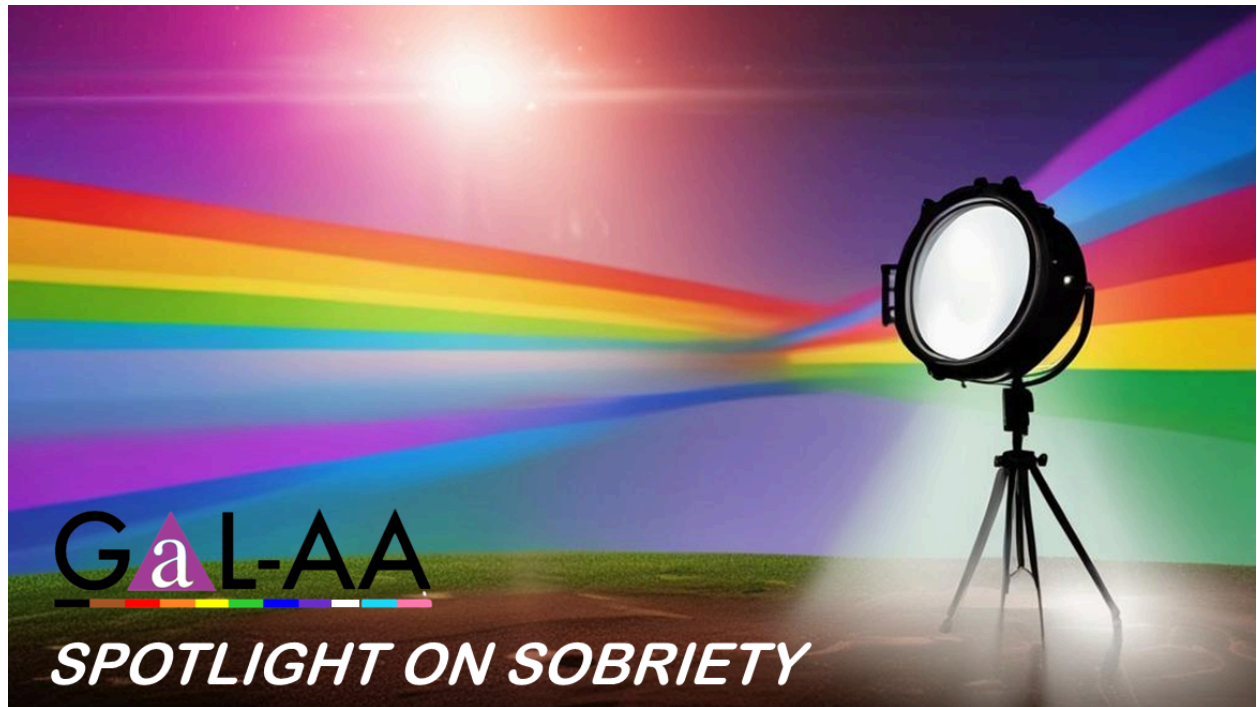


Spotlight On Sobriety July 2026



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From Fear to Freedom



I don't remember my sobriety date (May 22, 2007) as clearly as I might like, but I remember the feeling that brought me to recovery: the exhaustion of being fed up with my life, my choices and the endless cycle of hiding. That feeling is what finally pushed me toward change. It was the moment I realized I couldn't keep living behind masks of my own making.

From childhood, hiding was how I survived. I grew up feeling different, disconnected and ashamed of feelings I was told I shouldn't have. When my peers discovered those feelings in fifth grade, the bullying began, and I learned to bury myself even deeper. I hid behind food, behind alcohol, behind relationships, and eventually behind marriage. Each layer of concealment was meant to protect me, but each one only isolated me further. What I thought was armor was really a cage.

Alcohol became my most reliable disguise. I started bartending as a kid, tasting every drink I served. I loved the feeling of numbing out. By college I was drinking to fit in and not be found out. Drinking gave me a mask. It let me pretend I fit in, even when I felt like an outsider in every room I walked into. Later, I hid behind a marriage I knew wouldn't last, and then behind a long-term relationship that was more about appearances than love. I kept hoping each new layer of hiding would finally make me feel safe, but it never did.

The weekend of May 19, 2007, became my breaking point. I woke up after mixing pills and bourbon, grateful to still be alive, and finally saw that I couldn't keep hiding. I was exhausted by my own life. A friend pointed me toward AA, and even then, I resisted. I tried to do sobriety my way, without fellowship, without guidance, and without surrender. I thought I could outthink addiction, manage it or negotiate with it. All that did was leave me miserable and more alone than ever.



Everything shifted when I walked into the Galano Club in Atlanta, a place where I didn't have to hide my sexuality or my addiction. For the first time, I could focus on recovery without pretending to be someone I wasn't. I didn't have to straighten my voice, edit my story or shrink myself to fit in. Listening to others share honestly, I realized I wasn't alone. Their stories cracked something open in me. I saw pieces of myself in their pain and in their hope.

Recovery gave me more than sobriety, it gave me honesty. Through the steps, I told my secrets, made amends, and began to live openly. I learned that honesty isn't a single moment; it's a practice. My instincts may still nudge me toward hiding, but today I have tools to pause, reflect, and choose differently. I can ask for help. I can tell the truth. I can let people see me, even when it feels uncomfortable.

I don't live in the shadows anymore. I have a sponsor, sponsees, a home group, and a fellowship that loves me exactly as I am, not the version I used to perform, but the person I actually am. I came to AA because of my drinking problem, but I stayed because of my thinking problem. The program didn't just help me put down the drink; it helped me step out from behind the walls I'd built over a lifetime.

And the truth is, recovery isn't just about not drinking. It's about learning to live without hiding. It's about showing up fully, letting myself be known, and discovering the freedom that comes from finally being seen.

Jim D.
Atlanta, GA



Message from the Chair



Summer Has Arrived!

(AI generated image, no real people featured)

GaL-AA is continuing to improve its ability to reach out and share experience, strength and hope with all members of the LGBTQ+ Alcoholics Anonymous community. We are also continuing to refine our organization. With these goals in mind, we are announcing the formation of our Communications Committee, which is a merger of the Outreach, Newsletter, and Marketing Committees. Anil P., our Deputy Chair, will serve as Coordinator with Steve N. as Marketing Liaison, Chris B. as Outreach Liaison, Julie B. as Roundup Liaison, Mark B. as Contribution and GSO Liaison and James R. as Newsletter Liaison.

Planning is well under way for our annual in-person meeting, scheduled for this July 9th

through 12th. We are happy to be returning to a GaL-AA tradition of holding this meeting in conjunction with a LGBTQ+ AA roundup. This year, we are particularly pleased to be gathering in San Francisco alongside the Western Roundup Living Sober, which is celebrating its 50th

anniversary. This event started in June, 1976 in the Student Union Building of San Francisco State University and holds the distinction of being the first openly gay roundup in the country. GaL-AA is planning a workshop for the roundup. This will be a Jeopardy-style game on AA History with three teams answering the clues. This month's edition of **Spotlight On Sobriety** includes more detailed information on the roundup schedule and locations.

As you can see, the Communications Committee is off to a running start, matching the activity levels of all our committees. We are currently seeking volunteers to work with each committee along with Pierre B. Vincent B. and Randy E., We hope to welcome more. This growth is bringing forth new ideas, which are providing GaL-AA with an even broader perspective of our world and purpose.



As you can see, the Communications Committee is off to a running start, matching the activity levels of all our committees. We are currently seeking volunteers to work with each committee along with Pierre B. who is continuing to serve as our Liaison with GSO, and Vincent B. and Randy E. who are working with the Newsletter Committee., We hope to welcome more. This growth is bringing forth new ideas, which are providing GaL-AA with an even broader perspective of our world and purpose.



Many individuals are inquiring about the next International convention, which is scheduled for 2030 in St. Louis. We are already beginning to plan for it, as organizing GaL-AA's participation in a successful convention of this size and scope requires a significant amount of time. As always, please remember to Stay Sober and if you're not already, consider becoming a member!

www.gal-aa.org/members

Sincerely,
Hilde

Quarterly Financial Update

GaL-AA's Treasurer reports are published monthly for transparency into how your support

helps us continue to carry the message.

You can view those on our website:

<https://www.gal-aa.org/treasurer-reports>

To sign up to be a supporting member, visit our members page: <https://www.gal-aa.org/members>



Quarterly, we publish groups and individuals that contributed during the past quarter. We thank them for their continued support!

Quarterly Reports

<https://www.gal-aa.org/treasurer-reports>

Voices of Sobriety



GaL-AA is excited to introduce a new monthly feature in *Spotlight On Sobriety* called **Voices of Sobriety**.

One of the greatest strengths of Alcoholics Anonymous is the collective experience of its members. Every day, newcomers and long-time members alike face questions, challenges, and situations that can seem overwhelming when faced

alone. Yet, within our fellowship are countless stories, insights, and lessons learned that can help light the way.

Each month, the Newsletter Committee will present a sobriety-related question or situation that reflects the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ people in recovery. Readers will be invited to share their thoughts, experience, strength, and hope through a simple online form. Responses will be limited to approximately 200 words, making it easy for members to participate regardless of writing experience.

Selected responses may be featured in future editions of *Spotlight On Sobriety*, allowing our members to learn from one another and hear a variety of perspectives on common recovery topics.

In addition to responding to the monthly question, members will also have the opportunity to submit ideas for future topics. Have you faced a recovery challenge that you think others could benefit from discussing? Have a question you wish someone had answered when you were new? We want to hear from you.

As a small token of appreciation, members whose responses or suggested questions are selected for publication will receive a GaL-AA bookmark.

The goal of Voices of Sobriety is simple: to create another way for our fellowship to connect, share, and support one another. Whether you are celebrating decades of sobriety or counting your first days, your voice matters, and your experience may be exactly what someone else needs to hear.

We look forward to hearing from you in the first edition of **Voices of Sobriety**.

Our first question we would like to have our membership answer:

I want to celebrate PRIDE with friends. Any tips on having fun while maintaining my sobriety?

[Link to Submit Answers https://www.gal-aa.org/voices-of-sobriety-answers](https://www.gal-aa.org/voices-of-sobriety-answers)

[Link to Submit Questions https://www.gal-aa.org/voices-of-sobriety-questions](https://www.gal-aa.org/voices-of-sobriety-questions)

Western Roundup Living Sober - July 10 to 12th 2026

[Register Now](#)

Latest Newsletter From Living Sober - June 2026

[Click Here](#)



((Breaking news))

GaL-AA will be holding a workshop at this event. It will be held at the Castro Theater, Saturday, July 11th at 4:00 PM, check your event schedule for more details. Come out and see us and meet the GaL-AA Executive Committee.

A VISION FOR YOU

In 1976, something remarkable began. Living Sober was founded in San Francisco as the first AA conference created for LGBTQIA+ alcoholics. It inspired attendees from across the country to return home and start gatherings of their own and serve as somewhat the spiritual ancestor of LGBTQIA+ conferences, roundups and retreats. Fifty years later, this trailblazing

conference is still thriving—alive with new energy, connection and recovery.

Living Sober has long been a cornerstone of the Bay Area's queer AA community. Its impact deserves to be honored, preserved and celebrated. LGBTQIA+ people continue to face both personal and systemic challenges, and this conference remains a powerful symbol of recovery, strength and pride.

For the 50th Anniversary in 2026, to celebrate this remarkable history, we're bringing Living Sober to the Castro Cultural District, one of the nation's first gay neighborhoods.

Why are we moving Living Sober to the Castro?

There are (3) big reasons why we think the Castro is the perfect home for Living Sober:

1. Bringing the conference to the heart of our community

While LGBTQIA+ recovery happens all over San Francisco, the Castro has always been at the center of it all. It only makes sense for Living Sober to be there too.

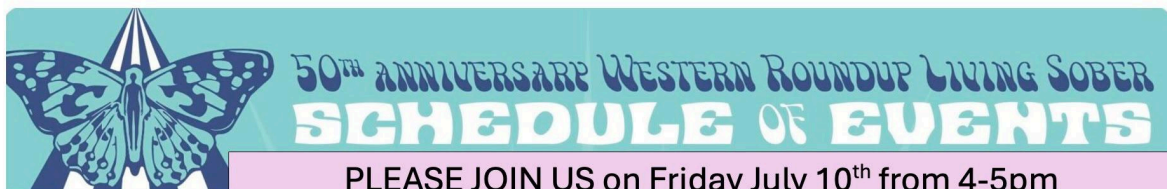
2. Showcasing what makes San Francisco special

We want to create a conference experience that's worth the trip—especially for those visiting from out of town. Holding it in the Castro, right after SF Pride, lets us highlight what makes recovery here so unique and magical.

3. Carrying the message

We know that not everyone struggling with alcohol knows where to find us. By being present in the Castro, we make recovery more visible, reaching alcoholics who might not have found us otherwise.

[Register Now](#)



PLEASE JOIN US on Friday July 10th from 4-5pm

in the Castro Theater!

Arrive by 3pm to pick up your ID Badge from Registration



7 LGBTQ AA Pioneers: We've been here from the beginning

Big Book Authors, Pamphlet Creators, Tradition 3!

by Mily T. – San Francisco

We are their legacy!

WHERE TO FIND THE ACTION

All spaces where our events and workshops will be held for the weekend are within 2 blocks of each other in the heart of The Castro District, including:

- Castro Theatre
Celebrating 50 years of Living Sober at one of San Francisco's most beloved landmarks
- Castro Country Club
Where LGBTQ+ recovery and fellowship have found a home for decades

- Queer AF (Harvey Milk's Former Camera Store)
Located in Harvey Milk's former camera store, a landmark of LGBTQ+ history where community, connection, and pride continue to thrive
- Most Holy Redeemer Church
For generations, a home to recovery meetings in the Castro, offering a space grounded in reflection, healing, and community
- Eureka Valley Recreation Center
One of the Castro's longstanding homes for recovery meetings, where community, fellowship, and new beginnings come together

Schedule of events: <https://livingsober.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Image.jpg>



Celebrating Our Sobriety Milestones



To add or edit your sobriety date, click on the link in the email you received from us. It is in the footer of the email where it says “update your preferences”. If you are not an email registered member yet, please [click here](#) to sign up.

First Name	Last Name	Sobriety Date	Years
Anthony	W	June 17, 2016	10
Avi	S	June 14, 2014	12
Bob	S	June 22, 2017	9
Bonnie	J	June 8, 1959	67
Brian	E	June 15, 2019	7
Candice	G	June 20, 1999	27
Charlie	L	June 24, 2023	3
Chris	K	June 11, 2000	26
Chris	K	June 25, 2018	8
Dan	S	June 2, 1963	63
DONNA	J	June 5, 1988	38
Doug	D	June 12, 1980	46
Ernie	S	June 13, 2010	16
Gail	M	June 6, 1993	33
Gary	H	June 8, 1990	36
Glitter	R	June 8, 2019	7
Gregory	C	June 20, 1982	44
Jeff	S	June 1, 2025	1
Jennifer	J	June 12, 1990	36
Kay	W	June 15, 2009	17
Keith	H	June 11, 1994	32
Kent	J	June 14, 2009	17
Kevin	W-S	June 2, 1981	45
Mandy	S	June 13, 2023	3
Mark	C	June 24, 1985	41
Michael	B	June 7, 2004	22
Nicole	G	June 11, 2024	2
Paul	E	June 22, 2022	4
Philip	B	June 2, 2021	5
Pierre	L	June 8, 2009	17
Roli	B	June 25, 2017	9
Skip	D	June 19, 2008	18
Tait	A	June 15, 2023	3
Tim	H	June 20, 1990	36
Tyler	J	June 14, 2017	9
Tyrone	C	June 22, 2016	10
V	B	June 7, 1990	36

Spotlight On Sobriety July 2026

The Spotlight On Sobriety July 2026 features personal stories, articles, and reflections submitted by members and friends of the fellowship. The views expressed are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of [*Alcoholics Anonymous*](#) or [GaL-AA](#).

Statement of Inclusion

<https://www.gal-aa.org/statementofinclusion>

GaL-AA exists to serve lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender people, queers and others in *Alcoholics Anonymous* regardless of how they self-identify. GaL-AA embraces all members of the AA Fellowship.

Your GaL-AA Newsletter Team

SpotlightOnSobriety@gal-aa.org

Become a GaL-AA Supporting Member

<https://www.gal-aa.org/members>

Become a GaL-AA Member

<https://www.gal-aa.org/members>

Join our Social Media Channels

<https://www.gal-aa.org/members/social-media>

