

the Westword

25 cents
(Suggested Donation)



special "Service" Edition!

december issue/2007

Special "Service" Edition ?

First off, let me say that it is my honor and pleasure to be able to be of service as the Westword Editor and I look forward in serving in this capacity for an extended term as named at the 2007 Intergruop Elections held in November (to see all of the new service chairs elected for both Intergruop and CGSC please look on pg. 5). Thank you... I do believe it is nothing short of God's influence to be asked to serve in this capacity - I am a Graphic Designer by trade - I love to do it!

Second, as some of you may be aware, I have been trying to cater each edition of the Westword to the step which corresponds to the month of publication - this is the 12th month, and therefore this edition is focused on the 12th step.

In planning for this issue, I consulted the Intergruop Steering Committee for their

thoughts on making an "extended" edition for coverage of the 12th step. The ability to "be of service" in the fellowship that saved my life has been one of the "bright spots" in recovery. Service work means a lot to me personally, as well as many others in the Calgary area. This edition is dedicated to those who continue to be of service and help carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

I have tried to choose a selection of "service" and "sponsorship" related stories for this edition. It is my hope that the words in this edition may attract others to the field of service in AA - Service is the "brotherly and harmonious action" described on pg. 17 of the "Big Book". Without the service of others before me, I am quite certain I would no longer be here. Thank you to those who are "in the trenches", fighting the good fight!

*Yours in service,
Adam R.*

Are We Doing Enough?

An AA looks at the changing face of Twelfth-Step work

Gary K.
AA Grapevine
December 2005

I've heard this comment a lot lately: "I am going through the work again." In fact, I heard it again last night at my home group. I guess the people who say this mean they are taking the Steps again, but the work, as I understand it, is not in the Steps themselves, the mechanics of them, or the taking of them. The work is in the Twelfth Step, where we take the message to the alcoholic who still suffers and we practice the principles in all our affairs. That's about all the work any of us can ever really do, and, at the end of the day, is the only work really worth doing.

And yet, I'm told, and have come to understand, that a good number of our people don't know how to do Twelfth-Step work. I don't know how that could possibly happen unless their group isn't doing any, which I suspect, more often than not, is the case. Taking somebody to a detox or treatment center and dropping them off is not Twelfth-Step work; it is a Twelfth-Step taxi service. While certainly a humanitarian effort, it is not the essence of our Twelfth-Step work as such. When we perform such tasks under the guise of Twelfth-Step work, we have commenced to put the work on a service plane and have violated one of the basic tenets; we have made the prospect unduly reliant on us to provide him or her with services.

I was at a multi-district function recently in a large metropolitan area in the Southwest and heard over thirty general service reps (GSRs) report on their groups. I heard about the group hayride, dance, picnics, a new building or two, elections of officers, the addition and loss of meetings, but I heard not one comment about the number of Twelfth-Step calls cleared or taken during the month, how many newcomers were staying

with the group, correctional work, or treatment facility work, and not one report on approaching professionals, or doing public information work.

Similarly, during some general sharing at an assembly in the region a few years ago, I heard someone say, "Since the treatment centers took away all our Twelfth-Step work, we haven't had any around here." I was baffled; to me, there are more opportunities now to engage in active Twelfth-Step work than at any time in our history. The general population is growing, and with that comes the ever-increasing number of people who are in trouble with their drinking. The real problem is that, during the treatment boom, our Fellowship got lazy, depending on the treatment industry to supply the groups with fresh, cleaned-up prospects. We didn't have to do anything but sit around the group waiting for the "booze buggy" to show up with the candidates.

A listing in June 1989 from our local central office contained over 600 names and phone numbers. Today, that same list contains fewer than 300 names-and very few at all in my own community. This math suggests to me that fewer and fewer members are available for Twelfth-Step work-much less Twelfth-Step calls.

I believe there is a difference between taking a "Twelfth-Step call" and doing "Twelfth-Step work." It's the difference between face-to-face Twelfth-Step work and a referral to a nearby meeting. While I admit this speaks to a philosophical point, if we continue the fairly common practice of merely referring folks to the nearest meeting, there is a high degree of likelihood that the work will have to be done in the midst of that meeting or the prospect will be left to deduce for himself or herself just what AA is all about.

This is the case in the face of a large number of addicts and others being sent to our meetings and groups by our "friends of AA" - the professionals, probation officers, judges, defense counsel, and others who deal with drinkers every day. Some of these newcomers are, no doubt, real-deal alcoholics. Many are not. Most new people, after all, are

continued on pg 2: see "Are We Doing Enough?"

I am responsible.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches
out for help, I want the
hand of AA to always be there.
For that, *I am responsible.*

Calgary AA Central Service Office

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Email: centraloffice@telus.net

Office Hours:

Mon to Thr: 8:30am - 1:00pm, 2:00pm - 5:00pm

Fri: 8:30am - 5:30pm, Sat: 9:00am - 1:00pm

Closed Sundays and Stat Holiday Weekends

**CLOSED: Tuesday Dec. 25, Wednesday Dec. 26,
Saturday Dec. 29 and Wednesday Jan. 1.**

NEW MEETINGS

“Back to Basics” (Closed, Mixed)

Monday, 6:00pm AND 8:00pm
Trinity Lutheran Church
840 3rd Ave. SW
Beginners/12-Step
(Intense, 12 steps in 4 weeks!)

Spirit Walkers (Open, Mixed)

Wednesday, 8:00pm
Native Network
19 Erinwoods Dr. SE
Based on Native Spirituality
(Non-smoking but there will be
“smudging”).

Beacon’s Refugee Group (Open, Discussion)

Saturday, 8:00pm
Highland Community Centre
3716 - 2nd St. NW
(Side door)

East Village Women’s Group (Closed, Ladies)

Step & Discussion
Tuesday, 6:00pm
3rd Floor of East Village Place
750 - 5th St. SE
(Buzz: 1015)

CANCELLED MEETINGS

Sobriety & Beyond

Wednesday, 8:00pm
Calgary, SE

Turf Group

Thursday, 8:30pm
Calgary, CENTRAL

Step-By-Step Group

Thursday, 8:00pm
Calgary, SW

Joke of the Month

AA Grapevine

July 1981

MEETING CHANGES

Sobriety & Beyond

Wednesday, SE

This meeting is now held Wednesdays at
7:30pm (NOT 8:00pm) at the New Brighton
Residence Assoc. Building - #2, New Bright-
ton Dr. SE

(Buzz for entry)

Daily Reflection Ladies

Sunday, SW

Listing incorrect in new Meeting List!

**This meeting is held Sundays at 1:30PM
not AM.**

Sorrel Rider Group

Siksika Nation

Listing incorrect in new Meeting List!

**This meeting is held Wednesdays at
7:00pm.**

Stettler Heartland Group

Stettler

Listing incorrect in new Meeting List!

This meeting is held Tuesdays at 8:00pm.

Springbank Tuesday Night

NOW STARTS AT 7:30pm

Springbank Community Church

2nd Ave. & 181st St. NW

(South of Calaway Park entrance)

Rounders

Wednesday, 8:30pm

Cedarbrae Community Centre, Rm. 3

11024 Oakfield Dr. SW

(Summer ONLY)

“ “ In this story from Georgia,
a first-time speaker stood
out from the rest when he
mentioned in his introductory
remarks that it was customary to relate
a few jokes.

A wise guy from the back of the room
sang out,

“You’ll let us know when you tell one,
heh?”

“I’ll let *you* know,” answered the
speaker,

“The others won’t need it.” ☺

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continued from page 1: “Are We Doing Enough?”

coming to our meetings “un-sponsored”, meaning they haven’t had the privilege or the opportunity to be “pitched” about what AA is, what it does, and what it doesn’t do, prior to attending their first meeting.

A lot of this could be deflected if we as a Fellowship would take the time up front to help these folks sort out where they need to go. I was asking a couple of guys the other day where they thought most of their newer people were coming from. How did they hear about AA? Were most of them coming in as a result of inquiry through an intergroup/central office? How about from a parole officer or counselor? A doctor? They confessed that they didn’t rightly know.

In my mind at least, it has become apparent that many groups have all but abdicated their responsibility for the conduct of our basic Twelfth-Step work, in favor of committees or whoever wants to do the work. The net result is that many other people are carrying out message and it is getting garbled.

There are, I believe, a number of things (and this list is by no means all-inclusive) that groups can do to promote the continuance of our vital Twelfth-Step work. First, have greeters (as many as possible) at the door, to ask folks who are not familiar to the group what they are looking for. This is not a screening committee, but people who can offer a welcoming hand and a little talking outside the meeting, at the door. Second, the groups can approach their local judiciary, probation, and other governmental agencies with good, basic AA information, such as

the broadsheet “Information on Alcoholics Anonymous,” which explains what AA does and what it doesn’t do. Third, a group can run notices of its meetings in local, small-circulation papers and on radio/TV stations. (This would be in addition to work done by the public information committee that we find in a good number of our larger metropolitan areas.) Fourth, a group can approach local medical and treatment resources and explain the difference between closed and open meetings, as well as pass out information on the group and their meeting times, rather than de-these local efforts to the appropriate district committee to avoid multiple approaches.

One of the greatest public relations tools AA ever had was the old-time open meeting, where several members of the group share their stories. Unfortunately, many groups have decided to turn open meetings into discussion meetings, and this is too bad, because it is the process of identification that helps people figure out if they are in the right place or not - not the current spin on the problem of the day that you hear in discussion meetings.

All of these things, taken as a whole, will help the group reach out to the alcoholic sufferer and help to foster additional Twelfth-Step opportunity in the community. First will come the inquiries, or Twelfth-Step calls. Then will come the opportunity for good, solid Twelfth-Step work. Time and time again. I see groups that take this approach become vital, growing groups that create opportunities for sobriety all around. ☺

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Live and Let Live

Jim N.
West Springfield, MA
AA Grapevine
June 2002

Nothing has been more helpful to me in staying sober and living a useful life than sponsorship. But in the beginning, I sometimes used my "authority" as a sponsor to bully my sponsees. I ridiculed their thinking and showed little compassion or patience if they acted in ways that I didn't approve of. Where did this soberer-than-thou attitude come from? I think I brought it with me from the days of wine and roses.

Some of the things that I hear from new people who have recently acquired a sponsor or sponsee sound like this: "My sponsor told me to call him every day or he wouldn't sponsor me." "If my sponsee isn't willing to go to any lengths, I will drop him (her)." "My sponsor told me I couldn't share until I had done all Twelve Steps."

The Preamble says that AA is a "fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope." The operative word here is share. Didn't Bill go looking for Bob? Wasn't it Bill's idea that he needed Bob to stay sober? Yet we often find sponsors dictating to spon-

sees what they can do, where they can go, and whom they can talk to. The sponsor does not call the sponsee; the sponsee is required to take all the initiative.

Of course, sponsorship, like everything in AA, is a personal matter. It is a kind of verbal spiritual contract between two people over a number of expectations. But many of these conditions fly in the face of AA's Conference-approved pamphlet about sponsorship and much of our other literature. Bill says that "even the newest of newcomers can begin to carry the message." AA started to grow when Bill and Dr. Bob went looking for a drunk to talk to. It is true that Bill and Bob asked the candidate some questions: First, do you believe you are powerless over alcohol? Second, do you believe in God? And third, are you willing to turn this problem over to God's care?

I was very lucky in this regard because I did not believe in God, yet no one refused to talk to me. I didn't know if I was powerless over alcohol, yet I got the same loving care that people who did get. When I was new in AA, there were no Step meetings in my area and sometimes a sponsor would just take his charge out to the golf course for an informal chat. There was no structure to the relationship. They were just buddies. The amazing thing is that many of these people stayed sober on this loose style

continued on pg 4: see "Live & Let Live"

Warning Shot

David T.
Philadelphia, PN
AA Grapevine
January 2002

Yesterday I received a letter from a young friend. He started out by thanking me for my friendship and support. Then he apologized for having become so distant. Finally, he wrote: "I owe it to you to tell you that I decided to leave AA and that last week I had a drink - actually, two drinks - but they were no problem at all. So try not to worry about me."

Last night I had a vivid dream. I was at what felt like a camp - a beautiful camp, high on a hill, with lush greenery, birds, animals, music, and crystal-clear views in every direction. I felt comfortable and safe, surrounded by good friends, and having much to do. The next thing I recall, it was dark and I was in my bunk listening to the sounds of crickets and familiar voices wishing me a good night's sleep. Before drifting off, I heard a gunshot. I immediately knew it was sniper fire, and I jumped out of bed and looked down into the valley. I could see my young friend, who had strayed far away from camp, into what seemed to be a mine field. I could see him holding his injured, bloody shoulder. I yelled for him to get back to camp. He called up to me, "Don't worry, it's only a flesh wound." I replied, "Get back to camp. It's too dangerous." He strayed farther and I could no longer see him in the dark. I remember thinking that it wasn't safe for me to venture out to find

him. Then I heard an explosion and I knew he was gone.

I awoke at four A.M. feeling sad and worried. I rarely have such an easily understood dream. The camp was my sober life, my AA group, my spiritual haven. The sniper was the first drink. The mine field represented people, places, and things. And the mine itself - the explosion - was alcoholism.

Is sponsorship too frustrating, too painful? I have received many gifts through sponsorship, the first and foremost being continued sobriety. The unique gift of simply being able to listen to another alcoholic with understanding and compassion has not only resulted in my being less judgmental of others, but also of myself. As I approach my seventeenth anniversary, working through the Steps with others continues to renew my appreciation of the gift of recovery. My concern for my young friend is real. The feelings are real. My compassion for alcoholics is real. These are good qualities which I have found within myself in my sobriety. I am grateful for the willingness to be of service to my fellow alcoholics and for the gift of being passionately involved in AA. I have found that it is possible to maintain peace and serenity in the midst of difficult situations, if I am willing to use the tools of recovery and above all, to turn to the Third and Eleventh Steps.

I am increasingly grateful for my sober life. I will keep my young friend in my thoughts and prayers and in my heart, with the hope that he someday finds his way back to camp. ☺

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6 Ways AA Members Support The Local Intergroup

AA Grapevine
December 1994

- 1 They answer telephones.
- 2 They place their name on a Twelfth Step call list.
- 3 They volunteer to help out in other ways, such as doing mass mailings or producing a newsletter.
- 4 They encourage their home groups to make donations.
- 5 They set up a program in their home group whereby individuals pledge a certain amount to intergroup - say, five dollars a month. The monies are collected and sent in at regular intervals.
- 6 They make a personal donation to intergroup. Some AAs compute their annual donation according to the number of years they are sober (e.g., eight years' sobriety means an eight dollar contribution).

continued from page 3: "Live & Let Live"

of sponsorship. At the other extreme, however, the sponsor gave the newcomer a laundry list of things to do and dictated his every move. Some people said newcomers need this kind of sponsorship. But many of these people never left their sponsor's side. They didn't branch out from the sponsor and his other charges, and they became a little clan, with everybody sounding like everybody else. Maybe that's what some people needed. For me, it never would have worked.

My sponsor never told me to do a thing. He was a great listener. He asked questions. Having an older member actually listen to me was very healing because I was so unsure of what I thought. My sponsor listened carefully and asked pointed questions. Another sponsor I knew says, "If you teach a child everything, you deprive him of the opportunity of learning anything." His style of sponsorship is very laid back and open. He looks at what his student is doing that shows promise, and encourages him to continue along those lines.

I have made a terrible mess of being a sponsor, and not just when I was new. I have made bad decisions long into sobriety. A sponsee was making a decision to break up his family after several years of sobriety. I came down hard on the side of his not doing this. But I had also told him from the beginning that he had to take responsibility for his own sober decisions. After I made my speech about why he should not leave his family for another woman, he said simply, "This is something I have to do." A stricter sponsor might have "fired" him. I shook his hand and wished him good luck. He went through with the separation, got divorced, and moved on with his life, depending not on me, but on the whole Fellowship of AA.

I feel that I have done a good job as a sponsor if I talk myself out of a job. Many of the men I have sponsored are now old-timers and I rarely see or hear from them. They have families, jobs, and other interests besides AA. Sometimes I call them when I feel the need for a little guidance. Often they come out with things that I have never heard before, and it amazes me.

"Where did he learn that? I never taught him that." No, I didn't. I taught him to learn on his own, making full use of the whole Fellowship.

We are made aware in Steps Eight and Nine of the danger of dependent relations. We learn that it is through "the twisted relations of family and friends that we have been most troubled." We have been "especially stupid" about our personal relations. Why shouldn't that same observation apply to our relations with our sponsor or sponsees?

I know I will continue to hear people who are spoon-fed AA by their sponsors. I will continue to hear people say "My sponsor told me I had nothing to say so I couldn't speak, even at a discussion meeting." Or, "My sponsor told me not to talk to others about my program." Or, "My sponsor told me to throw out my medication." Or, "My sponsor told me to get out of therapy." And I know I will continue to see what strikes me as a bullying kind of sponsorship. But right along with that brand of sponsorship, I have the freedom to offer another approach. And I think a great part of our strength lies there: No one can tell us what to do, think, or feel. We are all in the same lifeboat. We are all sober under the grace of God. No one of us is any better than anyone else, though we sometimes like to think so.

But I don't believe a sponsor can do a sponsee harm. One of the wonderful things about our Fellowship is that there is somebody for everybody and we usually seek out people who seem to be a good fit. All of us in AA have a right to our own opinion, even if that opinion is that somebody else's opinion is not as good as ours. There is not a society on earth that places greater emphasis on the individual's right to think, say, and do what he or she pleases than AA. The whole structure of AA is based on a democratic spirit. There are no bosses or gurus. Nowhere on earth do we find such a wonderful society, extending so much freedom to so many people. If it works, don't fix it. We have grown from two people to two million, and we show no signs of getting smaller. We must be doing something right. ☺

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CSO NEWS!

- Monthly editions of the Grapevine are available again at Central Office for the **U.S. PRICE!!** (+GST)

- CSO has 2008 Grapevine Pocket Planners & Calendars.

Planners: \$7.00 Calendars: \$12.50

- New items in stock:

4 Styles of pens in a box: \$4.50

Fridge Magnets: \$1.75

- For holiday shopping, CSO is stocked with goodies for your AA friends or family. We have cards, pins, phone directories, key tags, chips, medallions, plaques, Big Book covers, bookmarks, Audio CDs and books, books, and more books.

- Boxed Set of Big Book *and* Experience, Strength & Hope.

- Boxed Set of Dr. Bob and the Good Old-timers *and* Pass It On.

CENTRAL OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED:

Tuesday December 25, Wednesday Dec. 26, Saturday Dec. 29 and Wednesday January 1.

Pot Luck Christmas Dinner

New Beginnings Group will be having a Pot Luck Christmas dinner!

Shepherd King Church

Feel free to arrive at 6:00pm.

**More information please call:
Nancy & Marron 225-1344**

Also note that New Beginnings will be open on the hour from 9 AM until 5:15 PM meeting on Christmas Day. Come and join the fellowship and bring some goodies!

DALHOUSIE MENS GROUP

Annual Potluck

(Gratitude and Birthday Meeting)

Friday, December 28th, 2007
Starts at 8:00pm

Dalhousie Community Church
5511 Baroc Rd. N.W.
Calgary, Alberta

**This is an open meeting, All are welcome.
Food contributions graciously accepted.**

"We need your help!"

The "Back to Basics" Group needs your help!
Currently we are in search of:

- Temporary Sponsors for Beginners
- Beginners
- AA members willing to learn to lead the meetings or be Temporary Sponsors.

At "Back to Basics", beginners take the 12 steps over a 4 week period and then return the following week to serve as the temporary sponsor for a new Beginner. When AA groups in the 1940's & 50's used this approach to the AA program, recovery rates were 50% - 75%. For more details, go to:

<http://www.aabacktobasics.com> OR call:

- Carol G: 264-1900 • Joanne M: 283-7115
- Adam R: 969-7672 • David M: 234-0839

Week #1 of the next 4 week cycle starts:

Monday January 7, 2008

Your choice of 6:00pm-7:00pm
OR 8:00pm-9:00pm.

(see New Meetings listing on pg. 2)

Chestermere Meeting?

Looking to start a new meeting in Chestermere. The room is ready and the coffee can be put on but it needs a group conscience.

All who are interested please phone:

Charlie M.: 616-1308

Ashtrays, Brooms, and Chairs!

The ABC's of Sobriety

M.L.C.

Santa Maria, CA

AA Grapevine

May 2000

Service. One word but such a big action. One word but such a wonderful change of perspective. People who are in service know exactly what I mean. People who aren't probably wouldn't read an article like this anyway.

I heard a speaker share recently that what changed her life was emptying an ashtray - and man, could I relate. I spent over five years just hanging around on the fringes of AA. I didn't drink, but didn't do anything else either. I didn't work the Steps, I didn't read the Book, I didn't get involved in service or the Fellowship: I just went to meetings and didn't drink. I refer back to it as a period of being "stark raving sober."

Then something happened. I somehow got out of myself long enough to help someone else. I somehow put aside all the false pride and bravado that had kept me from doing things I saw as beneath me. I hadn't come here, I reasoned, to set up chairs or empty ashtrays. I came here to quit drinking. I hadn't yet learned that Alcoholics Anonymous is not about "not drinking," Alcoholics Anonymous is about relearning everything I'd ever learned-except the mul-

tiplication tables, the multiplication tables still worked. And the moment I started to help, everything changed.

Over the years since first becoming a secretary of a meeting, more has been revealed. Service is basically just being friendly, living the words at the top of page 20 in our book that tell me my very life as an ex-problem drinker depends upon my constant thought of others and how I may help meet their needs.

Being of service means staying after the meeting to help clean up. Being of service means getting involved in carrying the message behind the walls. Being of service means writing an alcoholic in Nepal because he has no meetings to attend on the mountain where he lives. (That contact is made through the Loners Internationalist Meeting.) Being of service, to me, is a state of mind: being willing to help whenever and wherever I can, period.

Listing the ways I've found to be of service is not something I'm interested in doing, as it would take away from the "why." I am not of service for credit or recognition. I am of service because it's fun, I enjoy it, and it's the right thing to do.

My ten-year-old daughter, Jessica, has learned something that it took me twenty-odd years to comprehend. She has learned to give of herself. Last week I went to pick her up at her after-school program. All the kids were out on the playground, but I couldn't find Jessica. I learned that she was in the kitchen, helping to wash cups. I was so proud when the woman rushed to assure me that Jessica had volunteered

to help, that she was not being punished for anything. Such a thought hadn't even crossed my mind.

I recently stood at the podium of a big speakers meeting and asked for folks to step up and lead the meeting. A relative newcomer with six months shot his hand up. I then asked for suggestions for the ten-minute speaker- same guy, hand shot right up. But when I asked for help cleaning up, his hand was noticeably (to me, at least) still. When the meeting was over, and we were cleaning up, someone suggested a ten-minute speaker. I said, "Fine. Ask him the next time you see him." My friend replied, "Why don't you ask him yourself. He's right over there." He was helping to clean up, emptying an ashtray, and putting away chairs. ☺

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Service Election Results:

Calgary General Service Committee

Officers for 2008-2009

(Election held Monday, October 29, 2007)

CGSC Chair:	Marilyn L.
CGSC Alternate Chair:	Blaine A.
CGSC Treasurer:	Cari B.
CGSC Secretary:	Audrey B.
Bridging the Gap Chair:	Margrit P.
Co-op. With the Professional Comm. Chair:	Joanne M.
Correctional Facilities Chair:	Melissa R.
Grapevine Chair:	Craig J.
Gratitude Round Up Chair:	Jim C. (2008 only)
Group Records and Registration Chair:	Peter F.
Intergroup Liaison:	Kevin L.
Introductory Service Seminar Chair:	Paul K. (2008 only)
Treatment Facilities Chair:	Rick B.
Unity Committee Chair:	Joanne M.
Set Up and Coffee:	Vacant

Intergroup Steering Committee

Chair positions for 2008-2009

(Election held Monday, November 12, 2007)

Intergroup Chair:	Jeff P.
Intergroup Alternate Chair:	Mike M.
Intergroup Treasurer:	Ed K.
Intergroup Secretary:	Sally O.
Phone Monitoring Chair:	Axel K.
Public Information Chair:	Scott S.
Correctional Facilities Chair:	Melissa R.
Intergroup Breakfast Chair:	Jacques B.
Westword Editor:	Adam R.
Special Events Chair:	Melanie S.
Liaison to CGSC:	Tracey B.
Introductory Service Seminar Chair:	Paul K. (2008 only)
Archives Chair:	Tim H.
Banff Round Up Chair:	Jeff P.

Service Solution

One AA's formula for Sobriety

Ward B.

Boulder, CO

AA Grapevine

February 2005

My name is Ward and I'm an alcoholic. I'm a liar, a cheat, and a thief. I do what I do and say what I say for selfish and self-centered reasons. I want you to like me. I want to be someone in the eyes of my fellows. I want the attention. I want my name mentioned and to appear in print. I have ambitions. I am lonely and afraid.

My time is precious. I am busy. I have problems. I'm not interested in keeping commitments. I'm interested in being somebody. I'm not interested in doing what you ask me to do, in doing what the job asks me to do, in doing what I tell you I'm going to do. I'm interested in making excuses, in hiding from my responsibilities, in covering my ass.

I don't have to return your phone calls or show up at meetings that I'm expected to attend. I don't have to do anything. I'm a volun-

teer. I'm not paid to do this. I'm busy. Someone else should be doing it anyway. Why don't you do it? Don't confront me or ask me any questions about what I'm doing or not doing. Don't ask me to show up or be helpful, or I'll get frightened, angry, defensive. I'll get resentful or bad-mouth you. I'll feel sorry for myself and live in self-pity. I'll show you. I'll quit. I'll drink.

Then I got sober, and more sober, and more sober.

When I became my area's public information chair, the previous chair told me that he did not have the time to help me. What an excuse to make excuses, to not do anything, or very little, to procrastinate, to be resentful!

Or, I could do what I was asked to do, to carry "the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about the AA program," to:

1. Form a committee of those in the area who want to do the same work, and share this opportunity to be of service with as many people in AA as possible.
2. Organize AA participation in over a hundred health fairs in April.
3. Use the skills and abilities that God gave me to do what I had never done before.
4. Show up at state conventions with a display booth even if I don't do state conventions because I am of the righteous opin-

ion that state conventions are not AA.

5. Answer the phone or return calls promptly, even if "Beverly Hills 90210" is on.
6. Do what the job asks me to do.
7. Tell you what I'm going to do.
8. Do what I tell you I'm going to do, even when I'm too busy.
9. Make no excuses.
10. Ask for help if I need it.
11. Act in the spirit of the Twelve Traditions.
12. Be uniting rather than divisive.
13. Know the principles.
14. Practice the principles.
15. Act without fear.
16. Be honest and tell the truth, even if it's not popular.
17. Have no ambitions other than to do God's will.
18. Be enthusiastic.
19. Be joyful.
20. Thank God for the opportunity to stay sober by being of service. ☺

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Alcoholics in Action!

Sobriety & Service

Debbie S.

Salt Lake City, UT

AA Grapevine

June 1998

In 1951, Bill W. wrote "Our Twelfth Step - carrying the message - is the basic service that the AA Fellowship gives: this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, AA is more than a set of principles: it is a society for alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die." (The AA Service Manual, pg. 57)

Service starts every time I sit down in a meeting. Imagine the newcomer coming through the open door: the chairs are set up, a pot of hot coffee is brewing, but the room is empty. If I'm not there to welcome the suffering alcoholic, more than likely he or she will not stay. The very act of being there for each other is service.

Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole is dynamic. Think for a moment of a group without a General Service Representative. How does the group make known its conscience to

other groups or AA as a whole? As GSR for my home group I take that conscience to our district and area level meetings. In this way every member of our group is in action.

Currently I'm corresponding secretary at the district level. There are about eighty to eighty-two groups and six service committees in our district. Part of my job is to keep accurate up-to-date rolls which list the group name, group number, the initials of the DCM and alternate DCM, the current GSR's name, address, and phone number, and lastly, the place name of the meeting along with the location and meeting days and time.

I also maintain an up-to-date list of the district committee members - DCMs and alternate DCMs; the six committee chairs - Public Information, Grapevine, Corrections, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Treatment, and Accessibility; the recording secretary, treasurer, and corresponding secretary.

The entire roll is passed at every GSR meeting for each individual to initial their name. Any changes are made at this time so corrections, additions, or deletions are forwarded to our Area Registrar within twenty-four hours of the GSR meeting. She then sends the new information along to GSO within the week. The area registrar is responsible for providing this new information to our area recording secretary whose job it is to send all area minutes and other pertinent paperwork to the GSRs, DCMs/Alternate, and officers of the district. Our area recording secretary has recently no-

ticed a drastic decline in returned mail marked address-addressee unknown. This saves the area a good deal of postage and time.

Sobriety and service: the two are so intimately interconnected for me on a day-at-a-time basis that it is hard to imagine my life without them. Naturally sobriety had to come first for without sobriety service would be unavailable for me. I'm not only a grateful sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous, but gratefully a trusted servant also. ☺

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VALUABLE 12 STEP OPPORTUNITIES

“Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics.”

- Big Book, Pg. 89

Members needed to carry the message to the **Bowden Institution**.

(Please note: Security clearance is required)

More Information: Brenda G. (403) 309-8323 or email: corrections@area78.org

Members needed to carry the message to the **Remand Centre** and **Calgary Youth Offenders Centre**.

(Please note: BOTH require security clearance & min. 1 yr. sobriety)

More Information: Marilyn L. (403) 239-4923

Members needed at Central Service Office as **Telephone Monitors**.

One shift per week, Monday to Friday

9:00am to 1:00pm or 2:00pm to 5:00pm

More Information: Axel (403) 355-5600

Calgary AA would like members for the **12 Step List**.

More Information: Doug (403) 990-9914 or Mathew (403) 777-1212 or email: centraloffice@telus.net

Bridging the Gap is looking for members willing to work in **NE Calgary** as well **Centres Outside of Calgary**.

More Information: Mathew (403) 777-1212 or email: centraloffice@telus.net

Calgary & Area 78 Corrections Committees:

We are always in need of **any and all, current or old Grapevines**, for use in the jails of Southern Alberta. Drop them off in the special box at CSO and they will get read several more times & help inmates to find sobriety. You can also give them to your GSR to take to the CGSC meeting or Area Assembly.

Calgary Archives needs your old Grapevines:

In cataloguing all of our Grapevines for Archives, we have found we are missing a few from years past. We thought, with all our AA friends out there, someone might have some of the missing issues. Specifically we are looking for donations of the following issues:

Any Grapevine 1958 and earlier, Aug. 1961, Aug. 1965, and any issues from 2002 - 2004

Calgary Archives is looking for the following:

Calgary Archives is currently searching for **AA members with more than 30 years sobriety** who are willing to do oral histories.

We are also seeking groups who are **willing to submit Group Histories**.

Calgary Archives is also currently searching for **missing Banff Round-Up posters**. Missing are the posters from 1973 to 1981 and 2002 through 2007.

If anyone has the posters and would like to donate them or even knows who the speakers were for those roundups it would be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in being a part of Archives or for more information: Tim (403) 273-2846

Join the Banff Round Up Committee!

If you are new to service there are experienced members of the committee available to mentor you.

Next meeting: Central Office Monday, January 7th at 6:00 PM.

Contact Jeff P. at 685-2012 or jdpool@poolelawyer.cm for more information.

FUN!

FUN!

All submissions to be included in any upcoming editions of the Westword newsletter should be sent to westwordeditor@gmail.com no later than the first Monday of each month. Anything sent past this deadline MAY NOT be received in time to be included in the edition.

Thank you - Westword Editor

UPCOMING EVENTS

Action Group Gratitude Meeting

(Action Group turns 36!)

December 12th, 2007

8:00pm

Christ Lutheran Church

4211 Richmond Rd. SW

Intergroup Christmas Open House

December 15th, 2007

11:00am - 3:00pm

St. Mark's Church

1802 - 33rd Ave. SW

District 86 Annual Christmas Party

December 15th, 2007

Balzac Community Hall

\$20.00 per Ticket

More Information: Brian 948-0433

11th Annual Christmas Eve Breakfast

Monday, December 24th

8:00am - 11:00am

Admission: \$25.00

More Information: Gary 281-1745

Dalhousie Mens Annual Potluck

Friday, December 28th

8:00pm

Dalhousie Community Church

5511 Baroc Rd. NW

Food contributions graciously accepted!

New Years Eve Party 2007

Monday, December 31st

Doors open: 6:00pm

Dinner: 7:00pm (All Beef Catering)

Dance: 9:15pm - 1:00am

Rotary Park Recreation Centre

617 - 1st St. NE

Tickets: \$50.00

More Information: Norm N. 272-1935

Bring in the New Year; Alive & Sober

Dinner, Meeting & Dance

Monday, December 31st

Full Admission: \$25.00

Just Meeting & Dance: \$12.00

The Moose Hall

5001 - 52nd Ave.

Camrose, AB

Dinner tickets need to be reserved by Dec. 23rd!

More Information: Annette 672-8398

Camrose Intergroup Valentine's AA Roundup

Feb. 16th - Feb. 17th, 2008

The Moose Hall

5001 - 52nd Ave.

Camrose, AB

More Information: Annette 672-8398

In the Fellowship of the Spirit

6th Annual Big Book Journey

Feb. 29th - Mar. 2nd

Camp Horizon

Bragg Creek

More Information: Shelia K. 282-5138

If you would like to contribute a recovery related story to be published in the Westword, simply drop it off at Central Office or email it to: westwordeditor@gmail.com

HAPPY AA BIRTHDAY!

November

272:

John C. 2 yrs.
Rhonda 3 yrs.
Bruce 5 yrs.
Laverne H. 6 yrs.
Don K. 38 yrs.

ABC:

Dan M. 1 yr.
Jay M. 2 yrs.
Marilyn M. 5 yrs.
Alex P. 13 yrs.

Crossroads:

Steve T. 13 yrs.

Dalhousie Mens:

Rick T. 16 yrs.
Brian S. 26 yrs.

Desperation:

Axel K. 3 yrs.

Drawing Board:

Bill P. 1 yr.
Buddy B. 3 yrs.

Edgemont:

Cheryl 2 yrs.
Ken F. 2 yrs.
Marilyn L. 11 yrs.
Ray S. 16 yrs.
Bob U. 18 yrs.
Edgemont Grp. 12 yrs.

Highland Park:

Kristin D. 5 yrs.
Norm S. 10 yrs.
Jane R. 19 yrs.
Gerry B. 42 yrs.

Irricana:

Peter D. 6 yrs.
Sandy C. 8 yrs.
Marlene C. 22 yrs.
Sam C. 27 yrs.

MacKenzie Group:

Peter H. 1 yr.
Ted E. 2 yrs.
Julie R. 5 yrs.
Peter H. 12 yrs.

New Beginnings:

Ginnie B. 2 yrs.
Marilyn L. 2 yrs.
Bill T. 3 yrs.
Alison R. 5 yrs.
Sherry M. 7 yrs.
Sherry S. 7 yrs.
Sandy D. 10 yrs.

Tim S. 13 yrs.
Richard O. 15 yrs.
Jayne R. 15 yrs.
Lynn S. 15 yrs.
Brady W. 16 yrs.
Ellen Mc. 25 yrs.

Northlanders:

Fran Mc.. 9 yrs.
Marsh C. 29 yrs.

Open Door:

Carroll 17 yrs.

Recovery:

Dana M. 1 yr.
Margrit D. 3 yrs.
Valerie B. 3 yrs.
Adrienne B. 7 yrs.
Linda G. 10 yrs.
Irene R. 19 yrs.

Deb C. 21 yrs.
John R. 22 yrs.

Sunday Morn. 11am:

Jim H. 17 yrs.
Leo Mc. 20 yrs.
Marion K. 42 yrs.

Tues. Morning Ladies:

Linda B. 4 yrs.

December

272:

Jacques 2 yrs.
John L. 2 yrs.
Wilfredo 3 yrs.
Percy W. 26 yrs.

ABC:

Dan M. 4 yrs.
Dianne T. 12 yrs.
Mel S. 43 yrs.

Dalhousie Mens:

Don M. 18 yrs.

Desperation:

Desperation Grp. 16 yrs.

Irricana:

Dave B. 1 yr.
Chrissy M. 3 yrs.
Bob K. 4 yrs.
Sean C. 9 yrs.
Dianne D. 14 yrs.
Bob W. 21 yrs.

MacKenzie Group:

Clarke N. 1 yr.
Colin G. 2 yrs.
Shelda M. 3 yrs.
Marie M. 3 yrs.
Angela S. 4 yr.
Colleen Mc. 18 yrs.
David L. 24 yrs.
Jon G. 25 yrs.

Recovery:

Bojana B. 1 yr.
Diana L. 2 yrs.
Eleanore F. 2 yrs.

Greg K. 3 yrs.
Terri-Lynn S. 4 yrs.
Woody H. 24 yrs.
Marie M. 31 yrs.

Sunday Morn. 11am:

Carol C. 10 yrs.

Tues. Morning Ladies:

Mona D. 4 yrs.
Val S. 14 yrs.
Carol G. 24 yrs.

NOTE:

Please remember, if you would like your groups monthly birthday's listed, please be sure to submit them to Central Office, or email westwordeditor@gmail.com, no later than the first Monday of each month.



SUNDAY MORNING BREAKFAST

Downtown Ramada Inn
708 - 8th Ave. SW

Breakfast - 9:00am
Speaker - 10:00am

UPCOMING GROUPS:

- New Beginnings (Dec. 6th)
- Drawing Board (Dec. 23rd)
- The Link Group (Dec. 30th)
- Go For It! (Jan. 6th)
- New Beginnings (Jan. 13th)

Come and join us for breakfast:

Buffet Breakfast \$12.00
Healthy Start Breakfast . . . \$9.00
Toast & Coffee \$4.00
Coffee \$2.00

To inquire about speaking opportunities in the future, call Jacques at 714-5101.



DOWNTOWN SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKER

Fortis Building
North Tower
801 - 7th Ave. SW

Speaker - 8:00pm



TELEPHONE MONITORING

This is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.

- Big Book, Pg. 89

Thank you to all who signed up as late night monitors!

If you would like to serve in this capacity, please phone Axel at:

355-5600