

# The Lifeline



March, 2011

24 Hour Phone: 651-227-5502

Volume 47, Issue 3

## **TRADITION THREE: The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.**

In the Intergroup office, we have regular opportunities to discuss who gets to be an A.A. member. When we train new volunteers on the phones about once a week, we have to explain the difference between “closed” meetings, which are limited to those people who have a desire to stop drinking, and “open” meetings, those open to anyone, including family, friends, people with other addictive problems, or students assigned to attend a meeting for a class.

We try to be helpful to every caller, whether they do or don’t have a “desire to stop drinking,” just as our Responsibility Statement talks about “anyone, anywhere” reaching out for help, and the hand of A.A. being there. If the caller doesn’t have a clear desire to stop drinking alcohol, we send them to open speaker meetings or beginner meetings. If callers and visitors are looking for something other than an A.A. meeting, A.A. literature, or a Twelfth Step call (a one-on-one meeting with a sober A.A. member), we explain A.A.’s intentionally narrow focus, and direct them to resources outside of A.A. Of course, we are careful never to endorse any specific organization or institution.

Who gets to go to a “closed” A.A. meeting? Who gets a Twelfth Step call from sober A.A. members? The caller who wishes to stop drinking does. We do not ask the caller to use the word “alcoholic” at this early point in their sobriety career — we don’t make any diagnoses. We don’t ask the new person to commit to stopping forever. “Just for today” is good enough, at this early stage.

However, sometimes the caller will cause our phone volunteers some confusion by bringing up the topic of “problems other than alcohol” - namely, drugs. Maybe they have been charged with a drug-related offense. Maybe they feel that drugs “brought up the bottom” for them. Well, with over thirty different volunteers answering phones each month, we have to keep things very, very simple. We tell the volunteers that the caller’s drug problems matter to us about as much as if they were vegetarian, Sagittarian, Presbyterian or Libertarian: Do you have a desire to stop drinking? If they “qualify” by the Third Tradition, and they mention drugs, we add one extra step: In addition to meeting information and a Twelfth Step call, we give them the number of the other Twelve Step program that can help them with their other issue, the drug problem. We keep in mind that some A.A. groups don’t want to hear about drugs in the meeting; other groups seem to believe that if you’re an A.A. member, you talk about whatever is on your mind. Intergroup has no power to enforce the Membership Tradition, nor the Primary Purpose Tradition in the groups. Since the groups are each autonomous, they decide together what the ground rules for sharing are in their group.

Some one will read this and wonder, “Why do we bother with all this? Why hasn’t A.A. become ‘Everything Anonymous’ by now? A drug is a drug is a drug, right?” That might be true in some ways, but when it comes to the way the Third Tradition plays out in our Twelve Step work, our Co-founder Bill W. wrote some things that really apply here.

In a 1944 talk to the Medical Society of the State of New York (see the pamphlet, “Three Talks to Medical Societies”) Bill explains,

“Now when one alcoholic who has got well talks to another who hasn’t . . . the new man sees in a few minutes that he is talking to a kindred spirit, one who understands. Neither can the recovered A.A. member be deceived, for he knows every trick, every rationalization of the drinking game. So the usual barriers go down with a crash. Mutual confidence, that indispensable of all therapy, follows as surely as day does night. And if this absolutely necessary rapport is not forthcoming at once it is almost certain to develop when the new man has met other A.A.’s.”

In a 1958 talk, Bill reflected again on his historic visit with Ebby, over Bill’s gin at the breakfast table: “The spark that was to become Alcoholics Anonymous had been struck. One alcoholic had been talking to another, making a deep identification with me and bringing the principles of recovery within my reach.” Bill used the word *identification*. That’s what Bill D., the Big Book’s “Anonymous Number Three” meant when he said, “If I had thought they didn’t know what they were talking about, I wouldn’t have been willing to talk to them at all.” Bill D. was willing to talk with Bill W. and Doctor Bob, and to trust them, and to have hope for himself, all because he had heard their stories, and he *identified* with the way they drank. He saw that they had had the same problem as he did.

We can send an alcoholic who got in trouble for cocaine to talk to an alcoholic who is also addicted to pills—they have booze in common; but we can’t have a heroin addict with no alcohol problem trying to Twelve Step a wino, or even a chronic, daily marijuana user. We can’t send a crack addict to talk to someone who’s drinking vodka all day. At this early stage of the process, they will see their differences, rather than their similarities, and that crucial identification will not occur. And that could cost us a life. It could also cost us the future survival of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Tom N., Office Manager

**St. Paul Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous®**

Web Site: [www.aastpaul.org](http://www.aastpaul.org)

E-mail: [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org)

Fax: 651-290-0209

Office Hours: Monday through Friday — 9 AM to 6 PM; Saturday 9 AM to 1 PM

1600 University Avenue W. Suite 407 St. Paul MN 55104

**STEP THREE: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**

My reaction to the Steps was that of getting a graduation certificate after finishing the course. That would require some fast work, and study. I set about the “work” of studying and memorizing; and theoretically “doing” the Twelve Steps.

Slamming through the Steps in that first thirty days was eventful and rewarding. The Eleventh Step stopped me in my tracks. Attempting to seek through prayer and meditation to improve a conscious contact with God, as We understand him, I was pushed back to Step Three.

The experience was the reward of surrendering to this way of life in totality. My opinion through these years of A.A. is that no one will surrender to this way of life without first agreeing that 1) there is a problem; and 2) that I, alone can not handle it.

Those propositions accepted, leave me the only choice is to go on through life, doing my best each day, to give my decisions and thoughts to that Higher Power/God in charge of all. My only job then, is to act each day as if I am being directed by His Will and not my own. Easy to say, hard to do. Some days I do this very well, and other days not so well – but always to the best of my ability that day.

Thanks to Tom McM.  
Sunday Big Book, Osseo, MN

**CONCEPT THREE: As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the A.A. General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional “Right of Decision.”**

Just because someone had the title “boss”, did not mean that I had to listen to him/her. So coming into A.A. was just another place to not listen. Didn't anyone know with whom they were dealing? There were awards, certificates, etc. on my walls to prove that I was somebody.

Journeying into service work required me to not just hear other people's opinions, but to listen to their side of the proposal. In contrast to my drinking days, it appeared that other people's ideas/opinions were theirs. It soon became apparent that these people were just as fervent in their love for A.A. as I.

It then became necessary to empower those that were trusted servants with trust. Trust that they knew their job, that there had been a selection process that placed them in the position. More than that, I had to let each individual decide what the job actually is. It is important to do their job as they see it, because one has to believe in the guiding hand of Divine Providence in all areas of our fellowship, and therefore, He, who presides over us all – has made the selection process.

— Anonymous

<b><u>2011 Steering Board</u></b>		<b><u>Office Calls in January*</u></b>	
<b><u>Chair:</u></b>	<b>John D.</b>	Meeting information	191
<b><u>Alt. Chair:</u></b>	<b>Denise A.</b>	Inventory/hours	27
<b><u>Secretary:</u></b>	<b>Don N.</b>	12th Step calls	15
<b><u>Treasurer:</u></b>	<b>Darrell B.</b>	Temporary sponsor	20
<b><u>Alt. Treasurer</u></b>	<b>Cedar H.</b>	Speaker request	17
<b><u>Members at Large 2012:</u></b>	<b>Chris S. &amp; Wanda B.</b>	Special events	2
<b><u>Members at Large 2011:</u></b>	<b>Jes N. &amp; Charlie S.</b>	Outside issues	34
<b><u>Advisor to the Board:</u></b>	<b>Julie M.</b>	Info for professionals	8
<b><u>Office Manager:</u></b>	<b>Tom N.</b>	Administrative	156
		Other	86
		<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>556</b>
		<b>Daily average</b>	<b>26.5</b>
		Visitors	248
		<small>*Call tally is for calls taken during office hours only and does not include calls taken during Night Owl shifts.*</small>	

## St. Paul Area Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes, January 18, 2010

- I. Opened with Serenity Prayer and Introductions. Cedar presented Intergroup's Primary Purpose.
- II. Last month's Minutes approved.
- III. Treasurer's Report – Written report submitted reflected a healthy budget. The 2011 Budget will be submitted next month. Questions can be sent to [treasurer@aastpaul.org](mailto:treasurer@aastpaul.org).
- IV. The Office Report – Service opportunities available; contact the Office for details.
- V. The Website Report – Groups are encouraged to contact Jonathan (web servant) or the Office for AA-related events so they can be added to the website.
- VI. Outreach Program – Contact Roxi (chairperson) or the Office if interested.
- VII. Night Owl Report – Contact Leslie (coordinator) or the Office for current openings.
- VIII. Intergroup Events:
  - Spring Traditions Workshop (Tradition 6) – March 19<sup>th</sup> (12<sup>th</sup> alt) – Darrell, Chair
  - TGIS – April 30<sup>th</sup> (16<sup>th</sup> alt) – Jes, Chair
  - Open House – June 18<sup>th</sup> (11<sup>th</sup> alt) – Chris, Chair
  - Ice Cream Social/Old Timers – August 20<sup>th</sup> (6<sup>th</sup> alt) – Wanda, Chair
  - Fall Step Workshop (Step 9) – October 8<sup>th</sup> (15<sup>th</sup> alt) – Charlie, Chair
  - Gratitude Night – November 19<sup>th</sup> – Denise, Chair
  - Founders Day Hospitality Suite – November 25-27<sup>th</sup> – Cedar, Chair
  - New Years Eve – December 31<sup>st</sup> – John D, Chair
- IX. Old Business:
  - A. Budget for 2011 will be submitted next month.
- X. New Business:
  - Bill S. is leaving the part-time position in the Intergroup Office he's held for three years.
- XI. Grapevine Report – Next month's volunteer: Charlie
- XII. Concept Review (Concept I) presented by Cedar. Matt volunteered to present Concept II next month.
- XIII. Mock Report – Rhonda. Volunteer for February: Diane.
- XIV. Closed with the Responsibility Statement.

### Attendance:

Terrie, Back to Basics Burnsville	Rhonda, Basic Text	Grayson, Como Park Big Book	Joe, Defogged Men's Group	Rebecca, Fireside Women's BB
Doug, Hole in the Donut	Rick & Harry, Main Idea	Jill, Mendota Sat 10:30 AM	Beth, Midway Club	Emily, No Time Like the Present
Scott, Northwestern Alano Sq 1	Matt, Outright Mental Defectives	Terry, Rosemount Groups	Ryan, Students of Life	Diana, Summit Hill
Jeanne, Third Edition	Leslie, Night Owl Committee	Toni, Stillwater Morning Groups	John, Highland BB Sunday Night	John D, Board Chairperson
Denise, Alternate Chairperson	Darrell, Treasurer	Cedar, Alternate Treasurer	Don, Board Secretary	Tom, Office Manager
Julie, Board Advisor	Wanda, Member at Large 2012	Chris, Member at Large 2012	Jes, Member at Large 2011	Charlie, Member at Large 2011

**7th Tradition  
Suggestions for Groups**

“Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

The Conference-approved pamphlet: “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” offers the following suggestions for the distribution of group funds after group expenses have been paid:

**50% St. Paul Intergroup**  
Spruce Tree Center  
1600 University Ave. #407  
St. Paul, MN 55104

**30% General Service Office**  
P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

**10% Southern MN Area 36**  
Area Assembly  
P.O. Box 2812  
Mpls., MN 55402

**10% District Committee**  
Ramsey County:  
District 8, P.O. Box 2267  
St. Paul, MN 55102  
  
Dakota County:  
District 19, P.O. Box 1466  
Burnsville, MN 55337  
  
Washington County:  
District 15, P.O. Box 181  
Lake Elmo, MN 55042  
  
SE Ramsey County:  
District 26, P.O. Box 75980  
St. Paul, MN 55175

**BE A NIGHT OWL !!**  
Night Owls are often the first A.A. contact for the newcomer! A Night Owl shift is a once-a-month commitment to answer Intergroup phones after hours. Some shifts can be done in the office; all can be done from home. The commitment can be filled by an individual or a group. **If you can help, call the office or go to our website: [www.aastpaul.org](http://www.aastpaul.org)**

**District Meetings**  
**District 8 (Ramsey Co.)**  
Fairview Community Center  
1910 Co. Rd B, Rm 203, Roseville  
3rd Wed., 7:30 PM  
  
**District 15 (Wash. Co.)**  
Christ Lutheran Church  
11194 N. 36th St., Lake Elmo  
4th Mon., 7:00 PM  
  
**District 19 (Dakota Co.)**  
Rosemount Community Center  
13885 South Robert Trail  
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM  
  
**District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)**  
1099 Payne Ave. St. Paul  
2nd Fri., 6:00 PM  
[www.district26-area36.org](http://www.district26-area36.org)

**Thanks to all the super volunteers who helped in the Office during January!**  
Anna M, Debbs, Shane, Grigoriy, Mike F, Rich M, Dan W, Ty, Steve B, Andy H, Willie M, Mike S, Matt O, Frank D, Paul J, Burt K, Henry O, Mark S, Bill A, Greg C, Lance T, Steven W, Dale H, Erik N, Nick S, Tyler R, Jack R, Mike G, Robert H, Jennifer B, Greg T, Barb, Robin, Cole N, Maria, Gary, Bert, Jamie S and Ty.

*Thanks to all the Night Owl volunteers and groups as well!*



**JANUARY CONTRIBUTIONS**  
Number of Group Contributors: 53  
Total Group Contributions: \$4604  
Number of Faithful Fivers: 13  
Total from Faithful Fivers: \$317

**Thanks to the groups that contributed in January!**

- 11 W Bernard Group
- Amazing Grace Group
- Baffled Lot, Lake Elmo
- Basic Text
- Basic Text Women's Group
- The Book Club
- Cedar Cliff Group
- Dakota AA Saturday AM
- Dakota Alano Friday 6 PM
- Dakota Alano Monday 6 PM BB
- Dakota Alano Thursday 1145 AM
- Dakota Alano Thursday 730 PM
- Dakota Alano Thursday 530 PM
- Egan Burnsville Savage Sat Speaker
- Farmington Monday Night
- Fellowship Friday Group
- Fireside Women's BB Group
- Forest Lake Alano
- Gratitude In Action
- Happy Hour 12&12
- Happy Joyous and Free
- Hastings Rivertown BB
- Highland Park Groups
- Hugo Group
- Lake Elmo Thurs Night Group
- Maplewood Groups
- Midway Club
- Monday Morning Women's Group
- New Brighton Alano Squad 14 BB
- Oasis Group Apple Valley
- Outright Mental Defectives
- Our Real Purpose
- Pocketing Our Pride
- Ridge Runners I Thurs 730 PM
- Ridge Runners II Sat 830 AM
- Rosemount Groups
- Roseville Wed Night
- Shoreview Big Book Plus
- Steps to Freedom
- Summit Hill
- TGIF Macalester
- This Simple Program
- Twelve Steppers Arlington Hills
- Uptown Sat Orientation Meeting
- Uptown Club
- Valley Creek Monday
- White Bear Lake
- White Bear Wed AM Women's
- Woodbury Primary Purpose

**The Lifeline: Purpose Statement**  
*The Lifeline* is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup Association office of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is about, by, and for members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or Intergroup. (Exception: Quotations from A.A. books or pamphlets are reprinted with permission from A.A. World Services, Inc.) We welcome articles of opinion or descriptions of personal experience, which should be sent to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 1600 University Avenue #407, St. Paul MN 55104. Materials or articles cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length and content that might violate A.A.'s Traditions, etc. The deadline is the 13th of the preceding month (i.e., submit a Tenth Step essay by the ninth month, September).

# UPCOMING A.A. EVENTS!!

**2011 West Central Region  
A.A. Service Conference  
March 4 - 6, 2011  
Nisswa, Minnesota  
See [www.area36.org](http://www.area36.org)**

**Aim for Ames Roundup**  
Quality Inn, Ames Iowa  
March 25 - 27  
[www.aimforames.org](http://www.aimforames.org)

St. Paul A.A. Intergroup  
Spring Step Workshop  
Saturday, March 19th, 2pm

**Southern Minnesota Area 36  
AREA ASSEMBLY**  
Hutchinson, MN Event Center  
Saturday, March 26, 9am - 5pm

**Southern Minnesota Area 36  
Delegate's Workshop**  
(Discuss Agenda Items for General Service Conference)  
Gopher Hills Golf Club, Cannon Falls, MN  
Saturday, April 9th, 9am - 4pm

**Sunlight of the Spirit Weekend**  
Holiday Inn, Fairmont, MN  
April 15 - 17

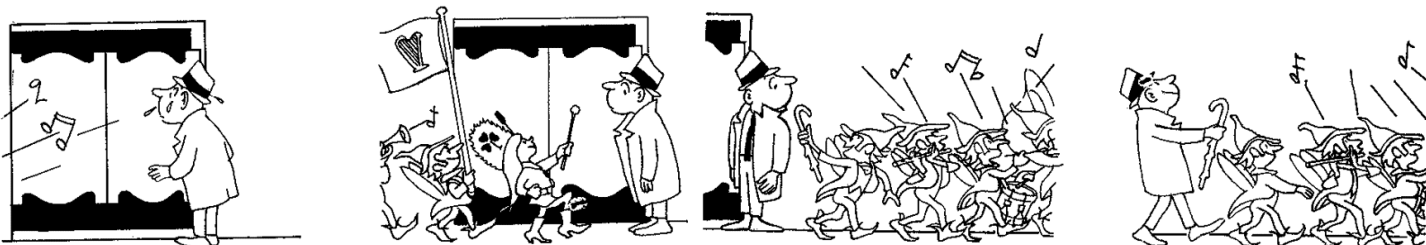
## Dear Bill W.,

Even though I work a very active A.A. program, there are times when it's just crazy inside my head; when things go badly with other people, even though I feel I'm doing my best to get along. Maybe I didn't do a good enough job on working the Steps? Do I need to start over? I get so disappointed with myself!

— An Anonymous Drunk

“Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help.”

Reprinted from page 84 of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, by permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.



Victor E. cartoon reprinted from the March, 1979 A.A. *Grapevine* by permission of the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.

## Is your meeting represented at Intergroup?

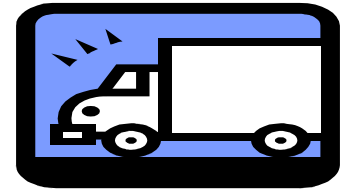
The March Representatives' meeting will be held Tuesday the 15th at 7:30 pm, at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 436 Roy St. N, St. Paul, 55104. The church is just south of the Spruce Tree Centre, across the street from the Intergroup office.

St. Paul Intergroup  
Spruce Tree Center  
1600 University Ave. W. Ste. 407  
St. Paul, MN 55104

Change Service Requested

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Please let us know if your address changes one month ahead of time. It saves us the cost of return postage and enables you to get each issue of *The Lifeline*. Our mailing permit does not provide for mail forwarding. Thank you!



## St. Paul Intergroup Faithful Fiver Form

Faithful Fivers contribute \$5.00 to St. Paul Intergroup each month to enable us to continue to carry our life-saving message. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to *The Lifeline*. You may also contribute annually, quarterly, etc.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send this form and a check to:**

St. Paul Intergroup, 1600 University Avenue W., Ste. 407, St. Paul, MN 55104

I would like to receive *The Lifeline* every month by email, not postal mail. My email address is:

(please print clearly) \_\_\_\_\_