



## FROM HOPELESSNESS TO HOPE

### Step Two

*Came to believe that a Power Greater than ourseleves could restore us to sanity.*

Thinking back to newcomer status, I remember early on when my grand sponsor's husband chaired an evening meeting at Santa Teresa Hospital and his topic was Step Two. After the meeting my sponsor asked "What did you think?" My answer was that inasmuch as I came to AA to get sober, not "sane", I could not relate. She said, "Hmmm. . .you

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I came in feeling  
**Hopeless**  
The second Step gave me  
**Hope.**

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mean your behavior in various stages of inebriation was all sane? Then you're not an alcoholic, but only you can decipher that." She went on, "When the chairperson was sharing, he was saying that he had to believe that a power greater than himself had brought him out of the insanity of his drunken behavior and was in the process of restoring his sanity. . .one day at a time."

At the time, it was a lot for me to take in. She gave me an assignment which was to remember all the times my behavior stayed sane while in various degrees of intoxication. But of course, I could come up with nothing. However, after I was given reading to do and a lot of writing on how I related to that reading, I got a God Shot and Yesss I came to believe a Power greater than myself could restore me to San-

ity. To be honest, I thought it was really a lot to do but then came the **Hope** of the second Step beside the **Help** she was willing to give me.

It was like I really had had the blinders on before my second God Shot. I came in feeling **Helpless**. The second Step gave me **Hope**. My sponsor, who I believe was picked for me by God, gave me **Help**. From hope and help came **Change**. And through the first 9 Steps came a **New, Sober, Life!** As it says in the first forward of the first Bog Book, "We are the first 100 who have recovered from a **seemingly Hopeless state of Mind and Body.**" I always remember it does not say "recovered from the **Disease.**"

"Thank you God for another day of sobriety." is my daily mantra, and I'm so grateful that God sent me the three ladies he did to teach me how to practice

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I came to believe a  
Power  
greater than myself could  
restore me to  
Sanity

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the gift of altruism in passing on the **Hope, Help, and Change of Step Two.** Thank you Bill W.

- Danette G.

*Reprinted with permission from the COIN newsletter of the Santa Clara County Central Office, February 2019*

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### **The Lifeline: Purpose Statement**

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*The Lifeline* is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc. It is about, by, and for groups and 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 St. Paul Intergroup. We welcome articles on a Step, Tradition or Concept, in addition to descriptions of personal experience. We also welcome original cartoons and drawings expressing the wry side of A.A. experience.

Please email your article to Lifeline@aastpaul.org or send it by regular mail to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 608 Seventh Street West, St. Paul, MN 55102. Materials or articles mailed to us 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.

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**608 Seventh Street West. - St. Paul, MN 55102**

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

# SAFETY IN A.A.: TRADITION 2

## *Tradition Two*

*“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”*

Tradition 2 states: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. Then the question becomes: “If there is no “authority” in an AA meeting, and our leaders do not govern, they just serve, who is responsible to make an AA meeting safe?”

You are. So am I. And so is every AA member in the group. As an alcoholic, I don’t like being told what to do. This tradition usually works well for me. The hardest part is that I can’t tell you what to do either, which I don’t like so much. However, sometimes I

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### *But what do we do when the disruption is not so blatant?*

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have to speak up if I think someone’s actions are making the meeting unsafe for other members.

When everyone is in charge and we are all responsible to maintain a safe environment, it takes discernment as to how to handle situations that can be perceived as unsafe. If someone comes into a meeting who is disruptive, usually some members of the same gender will take the person outside the group to give him or her the attention he or she needs while allowing the meeting to continue to fulfill the group’s primary purpose. But what do we do when the disruption is not so blatant? How do we react when people sharing their experience, strength and hope slip into sharing the exhibits racism, sexism, homophobia, or make an inappropriate comment about religion and/or politics?

After a meeting, I reminded a member who spoke despairingly about my childhood religion and gently reminded him about Tradition Ten. I also talked to a longtime member after a meeting who didn’t bother to give hugs to the two men who celebrated sobriety milestones, but made a point to give an attractive young woman multiple hugs to celebrate her few weeks of sobriety. I am not sure if I handled these situations correctly because I haven’t seen either men in a meeting since, but I felt not addressing the issue would eventually erode the safety of the group.

There was an indigent person in my neighborhood that came to a group I belonged to for snacks. He got a cup of coffee and a bagel and then left, usually not staying for the meeting. Someone from the church

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### *That is why it’s imperative to balance the Traditions and not use them as Spiritual Billy Clubs*

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noticed him and told our treasurer that the church had a restraining order against him. They instructed us to ban him from our meetings and to call the police next time we saw him. A group conscience was called. Lively and spirited discussion ensued. Ultimately the group decided that it would be wrong to jeopardize our meeting space and we complied with our landlords request. Tradition One was cited that the group’s needs took precedence over a member’s needs. A few members talked to him, gave him a When and Where, and told him he could go to AA, he just couldn’t come to this meeting because of the restraining order. Again, I’m not sure if it was the right answer. Traditions are not rules. Traditions are guidelines and ideals and Tradition Five is just as important. That is why it is imperative to balance the Traditions and not use them as Billy Clubs. Even though I wasn’t 100% convinced it was the right decision, I was willing to accept the authority of the Group Conscience. Especially since I believe that every time I participate in a group conscience, I practice Step Eleven with my fellow, beloved AA members.

*Alicia R., Member of the Campus Group*



*Reprinted with permission from the Footsteps newsletter of the Cincinnati Intergroup Council of AA, February 2019*

# THE WEST CENTRAL REGION

## – CHANGES & OPPORTUNITIES –

With the start of a new decade and new year, many new starts and changes are taking place in the West Central Region (WCR). New delegates, election of a WCR Trustee, chartering the WCR and technology tools will all be part of the changes taking place. Plus, the region is resurrecting the regional secretary position.

Four new delegates begin their two-year rotation in our region: Jim S. (N.MN), Jessica N. (NE), Jamey N. (SD) and Ramona B. (WY). The areas have elected very capable servants, and I consider myself fortunate to serve for four months with these delegates. I encourage everyone to meet and greet these new trusted servants, who will be at the West Central Region A.A. Service Conference (WCRAASC) in Billings, Montana.

My term as trustee for the region will end officially on April 25th, when the new WCR trustee will begin to serve you. Seven of the eight delegate areas in the WCR have provided a candidate for the election, which will be held on Wednesday during the General Service Conference week. The candidates are:

- Area 24 (IA) Mike L.
- Area 35 (N.MN) Michael J.
- Area 40 (MT) Gerry R.
- Area 41 (NE) Trent G.
- Area 52 (ND) Mike R.
- Area 63 (SD) John T.
- Area 76 (WY) Brooke C.

The election process will be by the Third Legacy Procedure. The voters are the eight delegates of the WCR, plus 4 randomly selected individuals from the Conference Committee on Trustees and 4 randomly selected individuals from the Trustee Nominating Committee. Each candidate has submitted a resume and these are first examined by the Trustee Nominating Committee, and are then provided to the voters during the Conference. By the way, the other region having an election for trustee is Western Canada, the smallest region with only four delegate areas.

On a recent conference call between the trustee and the currently serving delegates as well as the four incoming delegates, a couple of major business items were addressed. For about three years the delegates and trustee have been discussing opportunities to increase the communication within the West Central Region. The initial discussion began with resurrecting the Regional Reporter, which was a newsletter in which all the areas in the WCR sent in information and the newsletter was then

distributed to all the areas. This fell by the wayside many years ago, but there was keen interest in finding a method of facilitate communication between areas.

It didn't take long to have a consensus that any communication would be in electronic form. A web site also quickly came to mind as the central repository for a unified location to distribute information. A prototype was created that included a blog system to have a loosely coupled discussion point, but ultimately, the decision was to simply create a site that provides the basics and natural outgrowth would occur. Of course, the question arose of who would maintain it?

While these discussions were occurring, a serious concern was also being raised by all the areas that were hosting the WCRAASC. The major stumbling block to the hand-off from one area to another was the issue of a bank account. Federal regulations have tightened the process of setting up and maintaining a bank account. Based on the feedback from hosting areas, we needed to address compliancy issues that had not been addressed as the banking laws became more stringent.

Ultimately, it became evident that the WCRAASC had to have an umbrella organization, e.g., the WCR, that would be recognized by the bank (and the IRS). After well over two years of research and discussion, the simplest solution was to write a very simple charter for the WCR that indicated it performed one function – to host the WCRAASC. A basic organizational form under IRS statute 501-C-4 provided us with a basic identity to be able to resolve our banking issue. With great fortune, we were able to retain the assistance of Connie R. from Montana to handle the paperwork for this issue. This will soon be completed.

With the banking and chartering issue, we also will be required to report annually the income from the WCRAASC. That, coupled with the realization of the need to (1) manage a new flow of information between the trustee and delegates, (2) that a web site would require some regular maintenance, (3) a need to have regular minutes from conference calls, and (4) to organize and archive all the documentation from each WCRAASC, all made the reinstatement of the regional secretary an appropriate step to take for the WCR. A past delegate, Gerry R. from Montana has assumed it until the WCRAASC. The delegates will then determine if, how and whom will continue in this position, as deemed appropriate.

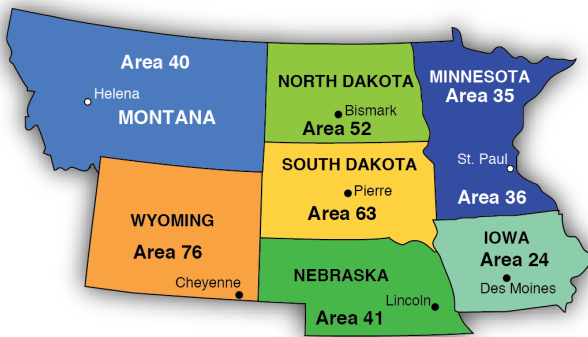
Now that these decisions and actions have been taken, the communication between the trustee and delegates, plus inter-area communications, can be enhanced through

“ . . . Four new delegates begin their two-year rotation in our West Central Region. . . ”

technology. A basic web site is in the works that does not require extensive technology skills, instead using a common platform from Wordpress to develop the site. The domain wraa.org has been secured, and I have confidence we can serve the fellowship in the WCR in even better fashion in coming years. There has already been a number of suggestions to grow the use of the web site, such as a central repository for Conference background information. The WCR has also already adopted an electronic filing system with a subscription to box.com to electronically archive all our documents, and the opportunity to share that with others is a real possibility.

So, as the days begin to draw to a close on my trusteeship, I am attempting to bring a sense of clarity and a clear point of demarcation for issues that have been in the works for the last four years. While the group conscience will continue to guide it in the future, I do believe the group conscience through the presence of qualified delegates from the eight areas during my tenure has benefited the unity and communication in the WCR. It has indeed been a pleasure to see the WCR change and embrace new opportunities for A.A.

Yours in service,  
Tom A.  
WCR Trustee



# Hoots!

**WANTED:** One New Night Owl Committee volunteer

The Night Owl Committee members take turns carrying the back-up Phone for one week at a time. We help out if a volunteer has a problem and we also make the reminder calls.

**Requirements:**

- 1 year sobriety
- Answer the back-up phone during your rotation
- Experience with Night Owl
- 2 year commitment

Thank you!  
Frank N.  
Night Owl Committee Coordinator

Night Owl Tidbit: Do you have an interesting Night Owl story you want to share? Send an e-mail to [nightowl@aastpaul.org](mailto:nightowl@aastpaul.org).

PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR THE CURRENT LISTING OF NIGHT OWL SHIFT OPENINGS, UNDER ‘SERVICE/NIGHT OWL PROGRAM’ MENU ITEM.

## LOOKING FOR A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY?

Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl!

*Upcoming Night Owl Orientations:*

*Saturday, Jan 18th, Feb 15th, Mar 21st*

*Every Third Saturday from 10:00 -11:00 AM*

St. Paul Intergroup Office

608 Seventh Street West - St. Paul, MN 55102

To RSVP please call: 651-227-5502

UNITING THE TWIN CITIES

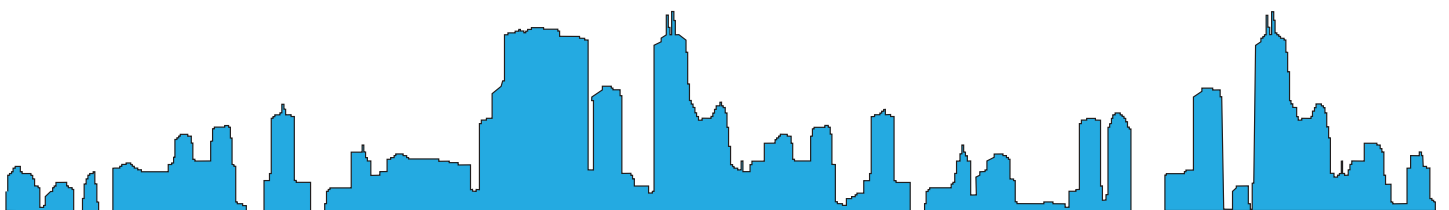


THE FELLOWSHIP  
WE CRAVE

SATURDAY  
JUNE 6, 2020

STATE FAIRGROUNDS  
PROGRESS BUILDING

GAMES — MEETINGS — SPEAKER  
SOBRIETY COUNTDOWN — DANCE



# THE PARADOX OF THE ALCOHOLIC

by Austin Ripley

*(Paradox - a statement that seems contrary to common sense yet is perhaps true.)*

The alcoholic of course is many things, as we all know. He is the world's supreme paradox. He drinks not because he would, but because he must. He does not drink for pleasure, he drinks to pain. Yet he drinks. He will mortgage the wealth of the future, to pay off the debts of the past, so that he may drink up the non-existent present. He is the only one in nature, I think, who seeks stimulation in a sedative, only to find that it acts upon his nerves as excited misery. He seeks to inflate his puny ego in a provocative wine of Bacchus, and succeeds in shriveling his soul in the bitter gall of remorse. He escapes desperately to free himself from the facts of reality, and runs headlong into the prison of fantasy. Success is just as fatal as failure to the alcoholic. He will drink with exhilaration to success and to sadness and misfortune. He drinks to get high in the evening, knowing how low he will get in the morning. When the alcoholic smilingly gets to the first drink he can get, he is transported to heaven. And when he is unable to get the last drink he can pour, he is transported to hell. The alcoholic, like most people, thrills to the beauty of life, and then how frequently he seeks the ugliness of existence. When he is sober he craves to be drunk, when he is drunk he prays to be sober. Such is the weird paradox of the alcoholic that the only way in which he can feel better, is to drink that which makes him feel worse. He starts out on his drinking, no matter who he is, with all the dignity of a king, and winds up his drinking like a clown. So he goes, his incredible, incomprehensible, paradoxical way. Leaving in his wake his human wreckage, that which he does cherish most. Down the road of alcoholic oblivion he stumbles and staggers until he either finds himself at the door of Alcoholics Anonymous or death intervenes.

**FROM OUR SOUTHER MINNESOTA ARCHIVES:** Austin Ripley was a well-known writer of a syndicated column called "Minute Mysteries" that was originally carried by the Chicago Tribune. He was also a much sought after speaker at Alcoholics Anonymous events in the Upper Midwest. He and Pat C. often shared a podium at group anniversary banquets and always drew a very large crowd. He later helped found both the Midwest Council on Alcoholism, and the Guest House treatment centers for Catholic priests and lay people.



12th Step  
Calls

12



Website  
Visits

9,254



Temp  
Sponsor  
Requests

20



Night  
Owl Calls

177



Meeting  
Info Calls

76



Speakers  
Provided

37



Literature  
Purchased

400 Books

## THE FOLLOWING GROUPS AND FAITHFUL FIVER MEMBERS MADE THE ABOVE SERVICES POSSIBLE:

- Amazing Grace Group
  - Burnsville - Primary Purpose
  - Children of Chaos Plus
  - Como Park BB
  - CRC Friends of Bill W.
  - Dakota Alano
  - Dakota Alano - Thur 11:45 AM
  - Eagan/Burnsville/savage Spkr
  - Elements
  - Foresdt Lake Alano
  - Fri Night Fellowship Grp
- Glorie Dei AA
  - Grapevine Grp
  - Gratitude In Action
  - Grovers Thursday Night
  - Hastings Club
  - Highland PArk Groups
  - Hudson Alano
  - Jan 6th Grp - Roseville
  - Lake Elmo Thurs Nite Grp
  - Little Canada Happy Hour
  - Midway Club
- Oakdale Monday Meeting
  - Next Right Thing
  - North Branch Community Grp
  - North Dale Group
  - Ridge Runners II Sat 8:30am
  - Rosemount Groups
  - Sat Morning PS Meeting
  - Shoreview 12x12
  - South St. Paul 301 Club
  - Summit Hill
  - Uptown Club
- White Bear Lake - Thursday Nite
  - White Bear Sat AM Women's Grp
  - Woodbury Primary Purpose

22 Faithful Fivers contributed as well!

36 A.A. Groups contributed \$4,047 and 22 Regular Individual Contributions totaled \$1,505 — THANK YOU!!

St. Paul Area Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes December 17th, 2019 @ 7:30 PM

1. Opened with the Serenity Prayer, introductions, and read the Primary Purpose of Intergroup.
2. Minutes from last month were reviewed, Mike motioned , Rafael seconded, motion approved.
3. Treasurers' Report, Mark J.—Group contributions and sales down. Gratitude Night upped total contributions. Slowness of sales and contributions typical of this time of year. Tracking better overall contributions and sales over last year. Operational expenses down. Able to break even over month of November. Contact Justin or Mark at treasurer@aastpaul.org.
4. Office Report, Ken S.—No Lifeline yet. It will be done soon-will be mailed tou to reps when its done. Need office volunteers to help answer phones. *Please email lifeline@aastpaul.org for further information.*
5. Night Owl Report, Frank N. — Not available
6. Website Report, Jonathan L.— 733 weekly meetings, 294 groups. Up 4 groups and 4 meetings since last month. Service opportunities on website, open Night Owl shifts. Updated software to Night Owl and Board site. Waiting to hear back from World Service regarding meeting finder app and having working link to our site on meeting finder that may show more info. Lots of bots trying to break into website. Sergey taking care of updates. Seth and Jonathan working on interface so office can make corrections or add things to the site. Traffic down compared to last year, but is probably due to meeting finder app.
7. Outreach Report, Jummy D.—Need help visiting meetings in NW suburbs of Minneapolis to check on MIA meetings. On Jan 1st, Rosemount lost their space, West End at a new location.
8. Update from the Board, Lindsey D.—Re; new location, our current lease is through June 2020. Negotiations with potential new location—more info to come Jan or Feb 2020.
9. District Reports
  - a. District 8, Mike C.—This month, Laura from area will be giving a presentation on temporary contact for prisons/treatment centers. Accessibility looking for a meeting for vetrans with Ramsey County Veteran's Center.
  - b. District 15, Melana—Still haven't decided on a theme for spring workshop. Reviewed budget, passed with minor changes.
  - c. District 19—N/A
10. Upcoming Intergroup Events:
  - a. Recap
    - i. Gratitude Night—Went great! Fantastic speaker, slightly above average cake. Raised money for Intergroup. 180 people attended
    - ii. Founder's Day—Intergroup suite had great turnout from meetings, who filled time slots
  - b. Upcoming
    - i. New Years Eve—Dec 31st @ 7pm. 2 local 15-20 min speakers. Chris D. from Rapid City, SD main speaker. Dance @ 9pm
11. New Business—Intergroup 2020 proposed budget. 16 voted in favor, 1 abstained, budget passed.
12. Group Announcements
  - a. New Years Day Pancake Breakfast @ Mill City Commons Church, Twin Cities Bid for ICYPAA
  - b. Main Idea Xmas eve potluck 6pm-10pm, 7pm meeting, 9pm candlelight meeting @ 1st Baptist Church
  - c. OMD potluck 1st Friday, open speaker Sobriety recognition, St. Mark's church on West 7th St.
  - d. St. Paul Speaker Meeting, 4th SUN, sobriety recognition and speaker mtg 4pm
  - e. OMD will be meeting on Xmas Day 7-9pm@St. Marks
13. Suggestions for next month's agenda, please email secretary@aastpaul.org
14. Grapevine Report, Andrew—Volunteer for January, John K.
15. Concept VII, Melana—Volunteer for Concept VIII \_\_\_\_\_
16. Mock Rep Report, Lesli D.—Volunteer for January, Dan N.
17. Closed with Responsibility Statement

Zach B. Basic Text	Barb B-H. Como Park BB	Mike C. District 8	Melana G. District 15	Eric E. Farimont Group
Greg S. Lakeview AA	Ken S. No Time Like Present	Peter M. One More Was Added	Paul C. OMD	Heidi B. Pocketing Our Pride
Rafael K. Roll of Nickels	Erik V. Summit Hill	Mary S. Uptown	Joe J. Uptown	Cathy J. Women's Basic Text

Next Meeting: January 21st, 2020@7:30 PM  
St. Stanislaus Church, 398 Superior St. W., St. Paul, MN 55102



# GROUP NEWS

# DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

### ***New Meeting: Elko New Market.***

Starting January 8th, 2020 there will be a Big Book meeting at the Elko New Market Library. The meeting starts at 7:00 PM. The address is as follows:

110 J. Roberts Way  
Elko New Market, MN

### ***District 8 (Ramsey Co.)***

Fairview Community Center  
Co. Rd B, Rm 108  
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  
Rosemount  
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM

### ***District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)***

Grace Lutheran Church  
1730 Old Hudson Rd.  
St. Paul  
2nd Sun., 7:00PM  
[www.district26-area36.org](http://www.district26-area36.org)

## ***The Jaw Dropper***

**Sponsee:** “Wow, I think the world would sure be a much better place to live if *everybody* worked the Twelve Steps!”

**Sponsor:** “You are right, it most certainly would be better – but it would be improved even more if *you* worked them!”



## THE NEWS FROM YOUR GROUP

Have an AA potluck, holiday or special event you’re planning? We invite you to share your AA news here!

Please send flyers to: [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org)

We are happy to publish any AA-Related flyers in the Lifeline at your request. Please submit 1 month prior to event.



***Thanks to our wonderful volunteers  
and Night Owls who sacrifice their  
time to lend a helping hand to the still  
suffering alcoholics!!!***

Andy H., Amber L., Arlene V., Brent H.,  
Chris G., David D., David F., Frank D., Feli-  
ciano S., Isaac F., Jeff K., Jimmy D., Jodie  
T-W, Mac N., Martc S., Matt F., Mike D.,  
Neilla ., PAt S., Spence L., Tosh A., Tim C.



# SELF-SUPPORT SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUPS

“Every A.A. 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**  
608 Seventh Street West  
St. Paul, MN 55102

**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 131523  
St. Paul, MN 55113

**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

***What started as a \$1.00 in the basket,  
with inflation would be \$8.00 in the  
basket today!***

***SOBRIETY IS STILL CHEAPER  
THAN A RELAPSE!***

# 2020 INTERGROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Advisor to the Board	Rob C.
Chairperson	Lindsey D.
Alternate Chairperson	Rachel P.
Secretary	Paul W.
Treasurer	Mark J.
Alternate Treasurer	Tom O.
2020 Member-At-Large	Jimmy D.
2020 Member-At-Large	John K.
2021 Member-At-Large	Jeremiah W.
2021 Member-At-Large	Andrew LaB.
Manager	Dennis B.

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



St. Paul Intergroup is in need of volunteers to answer the phones during business hours (9 am-6 pm) Monday through Friday, as well as assisting with the mailing of the Lifeline and stocking of literature. Shifts are available from 9:00 AM-Noon, Noon-3:00 PM, and 3:00 PM - 5:30 PM. You can sign up for one or more of the shifts that fit your schedule. ***We need people we can count on to be there.*** Drop by to sign up. Training takes about 45 minutes and is at a scheduled time — generally Friday morning.

# HE COULD SAVE ME FROM MYSELF

Membership requires a desire to stop drinking, so I attended meetings for quite a while as a non-member. This wasn't my first rodeo, and I knew I was an alcoholic, but I wanted a drink more than I wanted to pick up

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**I'd experienced sobriety, and I'd experienced a desire to be sober—but not at the same time.**

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another chip. I was allowed to stay anyways though, and I am beyond grateful for that today.

I came back to AA to find the same people I'd surrounded myself with each time I'd ridden the water wagon before; *my* people were the ones looking for somebody to help them prove that there is no God and that AA doesn't work, and I found them. I discovered a few of them keeping secrets in the treatment center I lived in, a couple more gossiping in the back row at meetings I attended, and a small handful talking only amongst themselves at each recovery-based outing I went to. I recognized them because they were just like me: disengaged, disruptive, and dishonest. They didn't stay in my life for very long though, and a new group of people eventually took their place, but it all happened painfully slowly for me.

I'd experienced sobriety, and I'd experienced a desire to be sober, but not at the same time.

If I was ever sober for more than a few hours, I just wanted a drink. This is where my breakthrough began and the steps came in. I couldn't give my will and my life over to the care of God because I didn't believe in one, but I knew I couldn't go back to my old life either. I was at the jumping off point. I refused to honestly work the steps, but knew I'd die if I drank, so I decided that ending my life was the only answer. I had a plan and was ready to put it into action, but as I was leaving the treatment center I lived at, a woman who worked there stopped me. She said she needed to talk to me.

I was used to this, as I was unreasonable and unruly on a regular basis, so I went with her. This time was different though. She told me she knew what I was up to, and that she wanted to read something to me before I left. She opened the Big Book to page 8 and read, "*No words can tell of the loneliness and despair I found in that bitter morass of self-pity. Quicksand stretched around me in all directions. I had met my match. I had been overwhelmed. Alcohol was my master.*" She sat there quietly while I told her what I thought and how I felt, and she told me that it didn't matter. All that mattered in that moment was what I was going to do about it, so I got honest.

My honesty brought me exactly where I needed to be at that time, which was a psychiatric hospital. There, at about 87 days sober, I was paired with a roommate who was experiencing vivid and horrifying hallucinations while detoxing. She described to me what was happening, and I described to her what I'd done when faced with that same sickening reality just a few months before. She looked right at me in complete disbelief and asked me how my life got so good. I replied, "It's not. I'm your roommate." She reminded me that I'd been sober almost three months, and asked how I'd done it. I replied without thinking, "I don't know. It must be God, cause it's not me." That was the moment when I started to believe that the existence of a Higher Power was not entirely impossible. I certainly didn't believe it did exist, but I wasn't certain it didn't.

So I remained a skeptic, but held onto this new idea that Step 2 didn't say I had to believe in a Higher Power that will make me sane, it really just says I'll start to believe that if one exists, it could restore me to a state of mind I don't need to escape from. I explained to my sponsor that the steps probably still wouldn't work for me, and she said, "The worst thing that could happen is nothing happens, and that would be a good excuse to drink." And I needed that excuse more than anything, so I agreed to work

the steps with only a belief that if God was real, He could save me from myself. Nothing else had worked, so I tried it.

I spent my first year on the fence about the “God” thing, but after I’d taken the steps and miraculously racked up over 12 months of continuous sobriety, somebody asked me to sponsor them, and that did it. I’ve believed in a loving, caring, forgiving Power of the Universe since then. Being asked for help was the only evidence I needed that something that is bigger than me and more powerful than alcohol is working in my life. I could finally see that I am living proof of a loving God because I was not able to stay sober on my own.

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**“I don’t know. It must be God,  
cause it’s not me”**

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Life hasn’t been easy in sobriety, but it’s been amazing. I’ve had those bathroom floor moments, the ones where it feels like my whole world is falling apart, and nobody answers the phone, and it’s just me and God, and all I can do is scream through the tears and beg for Him to show me the truth so I can continue my life sober, and He does. The God I know today was there with me for all the years I spent worshipping other things. He’s waited patiently and protected me despite my best efforts to shut Him out and to leave this world. He guides me gently towards a life beyond my wildest dreams, even when I’m convinced my own ideas are best. He is love, and truth, and all things good.

I can’t fully explain how I came to believe in a Power greater than myself that’s restored my desire to be sober and alive, but I can tell you what my sponsor wrote in my book that is absolutely true:

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, well-worked, will lead us inevitably into the hands of God.

- MEGAN A.  
GARFIELD, TX

*Reprinted with permission from the Hill Country AA  
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## THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

Happy 2020! Reflecting upon the new year, I think about where I was before AA (and St. Paul Intergroup): I’d be starting the day hungover (and this is best case scenario). What little thoughts I had running in my head could not even cohere into a simple pattern of rationality. I wanted something new – something better. I wanted help. Thank God for St. Paul Intergroup!

While I wasn’t one of the many of you that called the office looking for a meeting, I found the website (aastpaul.org) they maintain and found a meeting. If it wasn’t for St. Paul Intergroup, that site wouldn’t be there; those phones would not be answered. This is what makes St. Paul Intergroup so vital. They provide resources to the still suffering alcoholic, so that they may come to find the peace that so many of us have found. I know that I wouldn’t have found that peace and why I’m so active with St. Paul Intergroup today.

A new year often means change for many. A quick glance at the website tells me there are 773 meetings in St. Paul (supported by 293 groups). I think about the Intergroup Representatives meeting (held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month) and ask – where is everyone? So, in the spirit of change, I would like to extend a challenge to you: if you attend a meeting that is not represented at the Representatives meeting, advocate at that meeting to come attend! Come yourself! AA and service is so much more than the meeting(s) we attend. To truly reach the suffering masses, we must be active in spreading the message. St. Paul Intergroup provides that conduit. We just need to show up.

Yours in grateful service,  
Mark J.  
St. Paul Intergroup Treasurer

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup  
608 7th Street W.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102-3010

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## St. Paul Intergroup *Individual Contribution* Enrollment Form

Your Intergroup strives to be self-supporting, and with your personal support we can continue to carry our vital message of Hope and Recovery to all who need and want it. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to the Lifeline. Contributions may be made annually, bi-annually, quarterly, or monthly. Please consider becoming one of our *Faithful Fivers (\$5.00/month)*, *Terrific Tanners (\$10.00/month)*, or *Fantastic Fifteeners & \$15.00/month*.

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