



STEP FOUR

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

In the forward to the second edition, Bill Wilson, AA's Co-founder, writes that in order to save ourselves we must carry our message to the other alcoholics. This is done in many different ways. We do it to through storytelling at meetings and we do it the through our twelve-step work. Perhaps the activity that solidifies our message is the creation and sharing of our inventory, the 4th and 5th steps.

What is it that provokes a person to write their resentments, fears, and relationship histories and then share this with another person? An alcoholic must accept and hope beyond hope that doing this work will provide release from the obsession of the mind, the phenomenon of craving and the insanity of alcoholic drinking. Alcoholics come to believe that their successful recovery requires this vital self-inventory process. Then the work must be done.

Sanity is defined as the ability to think and behave in a normal and rational manner. Most of us didn't want to quit drinking yet our drinking was abnormal and our minds irrational. Since our lives were unmanageable and we were at a point of utter desperation, we succumbed to these action steps, direction from a sponsor, and faith that we would be restored to sanity.

We created a fearless and moral inventory of ourselves. Step four is a journey of self-introspection.

Our actions while writing this step reveals patterns in thinking and behavior that have caused us and others harm.

One of the most powerful parts of my inventory was looking at my insanity and unmanageability before, during and after a painful break up with someone I *desperately* loved (emphasize on desperately). After writing my inventory, I realized I had extreme emotions, unrealistic expectations and I craved love all the time. When it ended, I resigned myself to self-pity, self-loathing and depression - what Bill refers to as the messy bog (12 and 12, page 45). The revealing of my distorted thinking and behavior increased my desire to let AA and my higher power teach me a new way of living.

The idea of sharing deep felt secrets is not special to alcoholics anonymous. Other spiritual practices require sharing as a part of an inner self house cleansing. Unitarian Universalists have a method of communication between members called story sharing. "We don't just accept our differences; we honor and celebrate them. And by sharing our different experiences and honoring our histories, we can grow together as we work toward serving the bigger picture and creating a better future."

(1) Likewise, the practice of confession within the Catholic Church has provided ritual for centuries. "Acknowledging the truth of your sinfulness before God and recognizing your need for His grace to help you become the person, He wants you to be will really, truly set you free."

(2) Buddhism, as well, is primarily a tradition of Devotion to spiritual practice. Within this framework,

Continued on Page 2

The Lifeline: Purpose Statement

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, 33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355. W. St. Paul, MN 55118-3431. 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.

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.

33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355, West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

Website: www.aastpaul.org e-mail: lifeline@aastpaul.org Fax: 651-290-0209

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

continued from page 1

the sangha or regular confession of wrongdoing to other monks is mandatory. Sangha is a Sanskrit word, generally meaning "association," "assembly," "company" or "community." This level of sharing happens between those who have attained any of the four stages of enlightenment.

(3) Why is this a necessary part of our steps in recovery? When people relapse and you ask them why, the first reason given is they quit going to meetings. The second most common reason is they were keeping secrets which kept them separate and isolated. Step four is the purging of our deepest secrets. It is like opening up a sealed dark room in our soul realizing that the dust and dirt needs to be cleaned out. We then, continuously, take action to keep it clean.

Embarrassment and shame is probably the reason why people are afraid to do Step 4. They procrastinate, apply half measures and often leave the program before, during or right after the fourth step. If we remain open and willing to go through with this step, we get new perspectives on our lives and our relations with others and the world. We shine light on our patterns and take responsibility for our past, present and future actions. With honesty, willingness and thoroughness we build the firm bed rock on which upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built.

(4) It sets us up to be accepted, loved and to become a part of a society. It opens our soul to forgiving ourselves and others. This is the way to greater peace and wisdom.

I have had the privilege of writing, revisiting and rewriting my inventory many times. It does not get old for me as I have lived thru the pain of destructive alcoholism and gut-wrenching recovery. Inventories are not a chore and something I do grudgingly. It is not enough to do it alone; I must share it and the insights with another. I listen for clues how others have proceeded through Step 4. The experiencing of Step 4 offers not only forgiveness but humility, and desire to set right my wrongs.

Thank you for letting me be of service in this writing. I hope it enhances someone's recovery.

*Janice B.
Reprinted from
The High & Dry Newsletter
Greater Seattle Intergroup, Seattle, WA*

TWELVE STEP CRASH COURSE



IT was a sunny day. I left the park at noon to meet a friend at the movies. I never made it. Usually I'd worry about what this person thought of me, which is one of my character defects. I am a people pleaser. I don't want people to be mad at me or dislike me. However, I wasn't in control of my arrival this time.

The last thing I remember was getting on my motor scooter and heading down the road.

In fact, I had no memory of having to meet her at the movies. I had no memory of the last 24 hours. The last thing I remember was getting on my motor scooter and heading down the road. Little did I know I had been in an accident several miles away and was airlifted to San Jose. My first helicopter ride, and I had zero memory of it. (By the way, I was sober.)

I had broken my leg, foot, both wrists, and I had a concussion. I couldn't take care of myself because of these injuries. I only had use of my left leg. So, I went to a rehabilitation facility for three months.

Despite this tragedy, my spirits were good. I don't know why. I couldn't feed myself, walk, get out of bed, use the bathroom bathe or shower, answer the phone in my room, or reach to pull the string to turn on and off my light. But something inside me was calm and peaceful. I was happy.

I had visitors almost every day. I never knew how loved I was. It seemed my worries slipped away, and so did my anxiety and need to control. In the rehab, I didn't have to think about anything but the present.

Without knowing it, I was surrendering. I was not in control. So this is what they mean when they say powerless. Powerless felt good. With surrender I found serenity. Occasionally, fears came up about things like having to be in a wheelchair for three months (which turned into six months) and being in a nursing home for three months. I was even scared to drink water because that meant I'd have to pee; then I'd have to call for an aid to put a bedpan under

Continued on Page 3

me and wipe me. I couldn't even take a shower for a month. Instead, an aid gave me a sponge bath once a week.

I thought, I'm too young for this type of care. But I had no choice. Ah, acceptance. The first two weeks I had a metal rod screwed into the outside of my leg, running from my thigh to my ankle. The rod reminded me of a vice grip. As weird as this contraption was, it didn't bother me, physically or aesthetically—until I got it removed and had surgery to repair the fractures and put metal plates in my leg and ankle. That was the worst pain in my life. Thank God my addictions didn't kick in. Unfortunately, the pain medicine that some addicts dream about weren't taking the pain away. Yet, I didn't want to drink, use, or compulsively eat.

I finally understood what those folks in AA were talking about and feeling. As the Big Book says: 'We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace...'

For the next three months, I remained in pain. But rather than dwell on it, I learned to be mindful and present. Something I was never very good at. This is what being physically limited taught me. In addition, multitasking—something I always prided myself on— was not an option. I found this out when I lost my balance while getting out of my wheelchair and trying to put a hospital gown on the bed at the same time. Each task had to be slow and thoughtful, or I might fall. Multitasking is not being mindful and present.

I also learned to have more compassion for others. I asked my visitors how they were doing and what was going on in their lives. It wasn't all about me. Old grudges and resentments slipped away. Even though this tragic accident happened to me, I wanted to know about them. I had found acceptance that this accident happened. But it did and it created a calmness and joy like I never had before. So, I finally understood what those folks in AA were talking about and feeling. As the Big Book says: "We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.... Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us now— sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly."

In my case, it was slowly. But it did come and still does.

*Melissa P.
Santa Cruz Intergroup Newsletter*

DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)

Fairview Community Center
1910 Cty. Rd B West, Rm 108
Roseville
3rd Wed., 7:30 PM
Email: dist8@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 15 (Wash. Co.)

Christ Lutheran Church
11194 N. 36th St.
Lake Elmo
4th Mon., 7:00 PM
Email: dist15@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 19 (Dakota Co.)

Rosemount Community Center
13885 South Robert Trail
Rosemount
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM
dist19@area36.org
Email: dist19@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)

Grace Lutheran Church
1730 Old Hudson Rd.
St. Paul
2nd Sun., 7:00PM
Email: dist26-area36.org (for Zoom info)

GOD GRANT ME THE
SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS
I CANNOT CHANGE...
COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN...
AND WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.



WORLDLY INDEED!



OVER the last few years my life has been utterly transformed by the program and fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Life has truly taken on new meaning, and I've long stepped away from the dreaded "jumping off point." In a number of ways, I have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.

And yet, I've continued to struggle on a daily basis to fight off selfish urges and self-centered agendas. Despite being a few years away from the last drink, there is still much room for improvement.

Before COVID-19, I was traveling a great deal. I was enjoying the life that the program of Alcoholics Anonymous had given me. I've probably been on 3-4 times the amount of adventures in the last few years of sobriety than my entire life leading up to that point, and for that I'm truly grateful.

I wasn't going to as many meetings, and I wasn't spending time I could've spent with the people I cared about. I had a hard time picking up the phone and telling people that I was struggling, let alone calling them to ask how THEY were doing.

As coronavirus began to sweep the nation, I, like many others, didn't take it seriously. I thought it wouldn't affect me. After all, I'm young, healthy, and I live alone. I was wrong.

A rational level of fear began to engulf me. I thought of others in a way that forced me to take action and precautions. After all, it's less about me getting the virus than it is about possibly spreading it to someone at risk, let alone someone I know and care about.

Last week, I found out I had been exposed to at least 1, possibly 2 cases. I made the decision to get tested. All in all, it was very painful, and I wouldn't get tested again unless I displayed symptoms. Nonetheless, I got tested and they urged me to create an account online to get the results faster.

I raced home, scared yet relieved all at the same time. At least I would know, sooner or later, whether I'd been afflicted or not. I jumped onto my computer and created my account. I checked my results, and I found what I needed to see more than anything in that moment.

I found the bloodwork from my last drunk on April 1, 2017. It was the worst day of my life, and I should never forget that. I had been admitted to the same hospital group in another state at a different facility, but the records were housed in the same online database.

Continued on Page 5



Website Visits

7,108



Night Owl Calls

176



Meeting Info Calls

48



Speakers Calls

0



Literature Purchased

133 Books

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

- Apple Valley Daily Reflections
- Cottage Grove Groups (CGAA)
- Firing Line
- Forest Lake 12x12
- Forest Lake Alano
- Gloria Dei AA
- Happy, Joyous & Free - Mahtomedi
- Highland Park Groups
- Hugo Group
- Little Canada Wednesday Night
- Midway Club
- OMD
- Pocketing Our Pride
- Rosemount Groups
- Shoreview 12x12
- SOS - Sharing Our Sobriety - Afton
- St. Paul Sun Speaker Mtg
- Summit Hill
- There's A Better Way
- Third Edition Group
- Third Tradition Group - Nfld
- This Simple Program
- Weekend Jumpstart II
- White Bear SAT AM Women's Group

- 24 A.A. Groups contributed \$3,567
- 14 Gratitude Contributions totaled \$960
- 24 Faithful Fivers contributed \$1,590
- 20 Digital Contributions \$1,911



WE WANT TO EXPRESS OUR DEEPEST THANKS TO THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE SO GENEROUSLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONTRIBUTION DRIVE THIS PAST MONTH!

THOUGHTS

FROM THE

BOARD

ALREADY ACCEPTED

Renee B. – The Firing Line

In my past life, I was fired from a volunteer position. Yes, you read that correctly. I showed up to help an organization without expectation of compensation, and they kindly told me they did not want me there. If you did not think someone could fire you from volunteering, I am living proof that that opportunity exists.

Granted, if you are an alcoholic like me, maybe you had a similar experience. Someone, somewhere telling you that your kind of help is just not wanted.

The beauty of AA, however, is that all of us are already accepted. Our help is always wanted, needed, and our willingness to be of service is the most valuable thing about our organization. Without it, Alcoholics Anonymous cannot survive. When our members step forward to assist, they create the lifeblood of our survival.

The power of volunteering in AA goes beyond just making coffee or cleaning up after the meeting. There are opportunities to lead the meeting, balance the group's books, or create a website for one of our entities. Volunteer opportunities in AA do not stop there. Intergroup needs help too. Volunteers routinely help answer phone calls or represent their AA meeting at the monthly Intergroup Council Meeting. Even someone like me can be on the Intergroup Board.

Most entities with a Board (like a non-profit or corporation) put their members through a strict vetting process. One submits their resume, interviews, and maybe, just maybe, the other Board Members might vote them in if it all comes together. Not just anyone can be on the Board, especially someone like me who could not even keep a job I worked for free.

That is not the case with AA. My Tradition 3 (a desire to stop drinking) membership card tells them I belong. My willingness is like a resume with the

12th step at the top of the list. I do not need to be perfect. I do not even need any experience, and for a girl who was fired from volunteering, it sure feels good to be accepted. That same acceptance is right here, right now, for you too.

If you would like to learn more about Saint Paul Intergroup's service opportunities, you can find some options at the website <https://www.aastpaul.org/>.

Continued from page 4 - Worldly Indeed

On that dreaded, awful night, I had a BAC of .378, was suicidal, and had truly hit rock bottom. I'd lost my girlfriend at the time, my job, and had absolutely nothing going for me. I was on the brink of homelessness, and my family was completely done with me. I went to treatment the next day, and my journey into sobriety and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous began to take over.

COVID-19 has left me feeling utterly powerless. I can't see some of the people that I care about most, and it's like the 4 horsemen (terror, bewilderment, frustration, & despair) are creeping back in all over again. It's crucial for me to remember that I've felt this way before, and even more important to recognize that I will feel this way again. Now more than ever, I trust infinite God rather than my finite self.

Since I've been quarantined for the last couple of weeks, I've continued to seek ways to be of service to the program and fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. It started with my home group by making sure we were set up to hold online meetings. Then it spiraled, and I became determined to help others stay connected to their home groups in the Memphis/North Mississippi Area.

Through doing this service work, I've met a lot of new people who I can say I feel close to, connected to, and indebted to. I have never meant it more when I say that I thank YOU for allowing me to be of service.

I'm grateful to know that for today, to drink is to die. I find solace in knowing that I have no desire to drink, that the obsession has been lifted, and that I've been given the strength to take on life on life's terms.

*Yours In Love & Service,
Alcoholic, John G
reprinted from
The Tipler - Memphis Intergroup Newsletter*

THE OTHER A.A.



THE program, of Alcoholics Anonymous' Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts, has been the most wonderful and exhilarating gift that a society of people who have gone quite off track could ever dream of receiving. Our body, spirit and inner being have been drawn up out of the depths of misery in which we had become entrenched. Drawn up by the AA program. Drawn up slowly, but steadily, toward the light which we had seen shining on others. A light that seemed impossible for us to find shining on our being.

How often we thought that our leaving this mortal plane would be better for all concerned. How often the pain of hearing that others still loved us only caused us greater pain because we knew the real truth of our degradation. And how far away any sense of peace or comfort seemed to be – light years beyond our grasp.

And yet, here we are—standing in that very light. Freed from all sorts of bondages, beginning with the bondage to self. Freed from the chains that held us down from our aspirations, that held us away from those we love, and that held us in the dark corners of our existence. We have been brought forward to open vistas of possibilities, to healed and improved relations with those we love, and into a bright shining world that offers us an ever-expanding hope for our lives.

We marvel at this amazing gift we have been given. We are *happy* that we have been released from the prison of our alcoholism, we are *joyous* that we have been given the gift of rebirth of our spirit of light, and that we are now *free* to share this amazing gift with others who shiver in the darkness of the soul—just as we used to.

The beauty that lays before us seems to stretch on into infinity. While there may be shadows in this new land, we understand that those shadows exist

only because the light is so bright on other parts of that landscape. Casting its glorious beacon of hope forward for us to follow as we follow the path of this new adventure.

This is also true of the inner landscape as we survey it. The monsters, trolls and grotesque beings that we used imagine living there have either been released, or their illusion has dissipated as the light came in. The walls that built the maze in which we often lost our way have been taken down, brick by brick. While pitfalls and hills still remain—we can now see that they need not hold us back or distract us from our journey toward that which we were intended to become. The opportunity of life has been returned to us!

This is the bright side of AA. But as in all things there is another side. AA can stand for Alcoholics Anonymous, but it can also stand for **A**rrogance and **A**pathy! Just as the road moves upward when we first join Alcoholics Anonymous, the path of the Other AA spirals downward. Each path begins with a seemingly major event. In the case of Alcoholics Anonymous we call it *Hitting Bottom*. Perhaps the best description of that event on the Other AA is to say it is *Hitting the Top*!

I have seen many more people get drunk due to the *Hitting the Top* experience than I have seen drinking again due to difficulty or tragedy. It seems that while our book says that many of us will pursue the idea that *someday, somehow, he will control and enjoy his drinking right into the gates of insanity and death*, there is also an almost invisible demon lurking behind that idea which has to do with regaining power or control of our lives. While it hides behind the drinking idea—it actually affects people in a way that moves them toward the drinking idea. It seems to work almost like ventriloquism. It ‘throws’ its voice forward to draw the person in.

It is comprised of a triple-threat which includes 1) getting the right job, 2) getting the right spouse/partner and 3) getting the right home, or some similar triad of ‘rewards’. Folks who enjoy these three benefits within a short timeframe are often at great risk without realizing it. Of course, just like with drinking, the person has to embrace this idea for it to have its full effect.

It comes about so subtly. There isn't an immediate sense of power—there is just a very gradual sense of well-being, which culminates in a sense of “I got it!” How many times have we heard this phrase in meetings only to no longer see the person who stated it at the meeting. Apparently, without realizing

it, what they are saying is what they have “got” is a reactivation of their active alcoholism.

The first sign is the beginning of **Arrogance** – the first “**A**.” Often it seems to begin around a significant sobriety anniversary (i.e., 5-Years, 10-Years, etc.). The thought(s) comes, “I have done my part. I have done 12th Step work, I have done my share of Service work, and I read a lot of spiritual literature. Aren’t those all the things that define recovery?”. The idea then presents itself, “Is this all there is?”. This is the true beginning of Arrogance because it operates from the assumption that we can determine how sobriety ought to reward us. In essence we set our own ‘sobriety standard’ which needs to be met. Gratitude is on the way out the door at this point. With that beginning thought, you can well imagine the other ideas which will swirl around in the mind going forward.

This leads to the second “**A**” – **Apathy**. It could be said that *apathy is the henchman of arrogance*. It is the job of Apathy to change the former excitement of AA participation into disdain, the former interest in others into a return to self-centeredness, and the former openness to tomorrow into a fear of what is to come. Its efforts are designed to move our entire existence into a negative realm—much like the black & white negatives one would see when developing photography film years ago.

While Arrogance is all encompassing—Apathy is all consuming. It will consume not only the person experiencing it, but all who find themselves in its presence for too long. So, too, it will consume the AA group if it is not stopped. Apathy is an erosion from within and so it is much harder to detect until far too late.

There is an antidote to the Other AA—it is foregoing the desire to “know” in favor of the effort to “understand.” *Knowing is an act of Arrogance—Understanding is an act of Humility.* Understanding just how much our program has to offer, the understanding of one another, the understanding that all our experiences add to our spiritual growth and finally the understanding that we will always be a “work in progress.” This coupled with an understanding that the real Alcoholics Anonymous will always need our committed and concerted efforts and support. But most importantly, an understanding that our task isn’t to satisfy ourselves, but to provide well-being for other sufferers. We cannot rest on our laurels!

*Just Saying
St. Paul, MN*

SURRENDER AT 30,000 FEET



I’m an alcoholic, and this is my story. The serenity prayer meant a lot to me when I was new in sobriety. I discovered that the three principles of the prayer — acceptance, the courage to change and wisdom — helped me to discover exactly what I needed to do.

When I was still in my drinking days, I climbed telephone poles and crawled underneath houses for a living. When I quit drinking, I discovered that I was afraid of heights and claustrophobic. During my fourth and fifth step work, I discovered that I had these tremendous fears. I started having panic attacks. So I changed jobs and I didn’t have to climb poles or crawl underneath houses. Flying on airplanes was another matter.

Many, many, times I sat in a seat on a plane repeating the serenity prayer to ease my fear of being in a confined space. But on this particular Saturday, I was flying from Atlanta, Georgia to Sacramento, California seated in Row 33 – the very last row of seats. As soon as I was seated, claustrophobic fears started to overwhelm me. I could feel a panic attack overtaking me. I needed to get out and I didn’t know what to do.

I asked the flight attendant if I could get off the airplane, but the doors had been closed and the plane was ready to taxi. I sat there not knowing what to do other than stand. I unbuckled my seat belt and stood. I closed my eyes because I was in a terrible state of fear.

I had some choices. My wife had just had a knee operation and she had some pretty good stuff. Behind Row 33 was the restroom and beyond the restroom was the galley. The solution to my fear was to drink and the solution NOT to drink had to come to me. As I closed my eyes and meditated, a passage from another big book came into my consciousness, “Be still and know that I am God”. As I stood I closed my eyes and I repeated this “Be still and know that I am God”, ‘Be still and know that I am’, “Be still and know”, “Be still”. I don’t

Continued on Page 11

St. Paul Area Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes, February 16th, 2021 7:30 pm

1. Opened with the Serenity Prayer, Introductions, and read the Primary Purpose of Intergroup.
2. Approve prior month's minutes (motion: Mary S, 2nd: Frank N).
3. **Treasurer's Report**, Lisa L – Total Contributions: \$11,487 Expenses: \$8701 Total Revenue and Net Income: \$15,484 and \$5,104. We have met 2/3 of our Contribution Drive Goal. The Board has put \$10,000 into the Prudent Reserve Account.
4. **Office Report**, Dennis B – Intergroup's finances are in better shape. We have seen an up-tick in sales, and have restocked medallions. The office has seen more volunteers, but could still use coverage for the morning shifts. *Please email lifeline@stpaul.org for further information.*
5. **Night Owl Report**, Rachel P/Robyn W – There are 7 open shifts, and they are posted on the Intergroup website. Orientation is offered the 3rd Saturday at 10:00 am. There is a one-year sobriety requirement. Please bring back to your groups to see if we can fill them. *Please contact Robyn W at NightOwl@aastpaul.org or leave a message at the Intergroup Office.*
6. **Website Report**, Jonathan L – There are 783 regular weekly meetings and 292 groups hosted by the website. The website servants are working on a glitch that interferes with transferring the website volunteer forms on the website. There are opportunities to serve, please report back to your groups. *Contact Jonathan & Sergey at webservant@aastpaul.org.*
7. **Outreach Program**, Lindsey D – Outreach volunteers are needed to spread the word about Intergroup, its function, how it serves the AA community, and how groups can offer their support. *Please contact outreach@aastpaul.org if you are interested in serving as there is a protocol, a script to follow, and a list of meetings from which to choose.*
8. **Update from the Board**, Robyn W – The Board voted to transfer \$10,000 from Intergroup's checking account back into the Prudent Reserve. This had been the goal of the Contribution Drive to repopulate it.
9. **Liaison Reports**:
 - a. **District 8**: Mike C, Area delegates are showing up at the meeting tomorrow night, anyone can show up. Info for the zoom meeting ID#: 84682476414, passcode #: 758891
 - b. **District 15**: Melana M, Washington County Fair has traditionally held an AA booth.
 - c. **District 19**: Brian M, discussed placing brochures in clinics, hospitals, and jails. Contact madhouse0143@gmail.com
10. **Intergroup Events**, Rachel P, Robyn W
 - a. Recap:
 - b. Upcoming: Intergroup sponsored events coming soon on zoom: Spring Fling, April 17, 2021 & Open House, June 26, 2021
11. **Old Business**:
12. **New Business**:
13. **Group AA Announcements**:

OMD has a potluck, medallion, and speaker meeting on the first Friday of the month, both in zoom and in person.
Sunday AM Big Book meets both in person and online, follows state Covid guidelines.
Saturday AM treats which used to meet at Fellowship Club now on zoom, Saturday mornings at 9 am, info on website.
Uptown House has blended AA and Alanon Medallion Meetings on the first Saturdays at the Recovery Church at 7 pm.
Mahtomedi's 7 p.m. Friday night's 12 & 12 is meeting in person (but you have to give your name to the church secretary)
14. **Suggestions for next month's agenda**: *Please contact secretary@aastpaul.org*
15. **Grapevine Report**, Elly C; Volunteer for March: Ken S
16. **Concept review**, Brian M; Volunteer for Concept III: Duane
17. **Mock Rep Report**, Mary S; Volunteer for March: Ryan B
18. Closed with the Responsibility Statement

Attendance:

Lisa L - Board Treasurer
Gary - No Time Like the Present
Ryan - One More Was Added to the Fellowship
Katherine A - Pocketing our Pride
Ken S - Como Big Book Study
Lydia S - Uptown House
Rachel P - Board chair
Brian M - Meeting of the Waters, Mendota
Jenny T - Fireside Women's Big Book
Mary S - Uptown House Co-Chair
Jeremiah W - Member at Large
John K - Member at Large
Duane - OMD
Laurel M - Dei by Day

Ryan R - Basic Text
Emily H - Rule 62
Tom W - Firing Line
Jonathan L -- Webservant
Elly C - Member at Large
Jeremy L - Saturday Morning Treats
Robyn W - Alt Chair
Caleb L - West End Club
Jennifer G - District 15, Member at Large
Frank N - Third Edition Big Book Study
Dennis B - Office Manager, Intergroup
Melana M - 12 by 12 By the Book in Mahtomedi
Rosemary F - Saturday Morning White Bear Lake Women's AA
Mike C - District 8, New Brighton
Jodie - Secretary

Next Meeting: March 16, 2021 7:30pm

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...

33 Wentworth Ave E.
Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

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

LOOKING FOR A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY?
Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl
 If you are interested - Contact:
 Nightowl@aastpaul.org
 to schedule training.

St. Paul Intergroup Office
 33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355
 West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431
 To RSVP - please call 651-227-5502

2021 INTERGROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Advisor to the Board (non voting)	Lindsey D.
Chairperson	Rachel P.
Alternate Chairperson	Robyn W.
Secretary	Jodie T-W.
Treasurer	Lisa L.
Alternate Treasurer	Renee B.
2022 Member-At-Large	Jennifer G.
2022 Member-At-Large	Elly C.
2021 Member-At-Large	Jeremiah W.
2021 Member-At-Large	Andrew LaB.
Manager	Dennis B.
Web Servant (non voting)	Jonathan L.
Web Servant (non voting)	Sergey K.
Night Owl Coordinator (non voting)	Robyn W.



Office Volunteers:
 Skyley K, Jimmy D., Chris, Mary D., Lindsey P., Lynn E., Angela, Trey B., Roger, Neilla M.

TRADITION FOUR

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting AA as a whole,

I think of the basis of autonomy in an AA group, or Service entity as coming as a direct result from the Second Tradition; that says in part “Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.” This is part of the great paradox of AA: Leaders who do not govern. How does our fellowship, or any organization for that matter run on principles such as this? The essence of this is “caring without controlling.”

There is no body of laws or directives from “up above” that tell a group what to do, or how to behave. The definition of the word autonomous is simply “not subject to control from the outside.” The Traditions are only suggestions - on how to conform just enough so that a sick and suffering alcoholic has the freedom to discover his own path and his own choices to becoming sober, and then how to pass it along to others. Along with a “directed autonomy” governed by spiritual principles, comes a Recovery that will LIVE by spiritual principles.

Every person’s sobriety is his or her own; not forced into any sort of conformity. It enables us to see the workings of a group conscious and a loving God in our Fellowship; especially in business meetings, and in our anniversaries where stories of true unfettered Recovery enrich our own lives.

Looking at our Traditions as a whole, they are representative of our Second Legacy of AA Unity. Everywhere on the planet you find an AA meeting, an alcoholic should find the same sense of welcome, warmth and love that he or she can find in the meeting around the corner from their house. Yes, our meetings are autonomous, but conformity is a must in several areas. The basket must remain a spiritual entity where money and spirituality mix, because the funds placed in the basket have a sole purpose - helping a suffering alcoholic to find a solvent, secure meeting place, with refreshments and coffee - the old “standby” and trademark of an AA meeting.

We are autonomous, yet we cannot let any outside agency sponsor us or financially support us, lest we become beholden to an outside cause and lose

track of our Primary Purpose - helping the alcoholic.

We are autonomous, and although we may pay a qualified AA member for his electrician’s services, we NEVER pay for Twelfth Step work.

We are autonomous, and though people may speak about Recovery on the airwaves or on social media, they are NEVER to identify their Recovery as coming from Alcoholics Anonymous. We don’t endorse any new medical breakthroughs in the field of alcoholism. That sort of thing remains out of our purview.

We are autonomous, and even though political tensions in the nation remain at a high, AA NEVER has an opinion on these outside issues. An AA when confronted with the question of “exactly what happens at AA meetings,” the AA answered, “we just tell our stories and people listen.” How much more can we “Keep It Simple” than that.

The second part of Tradition Four states “. . . except when to do so affects AA as a whole.” This is very serious. Think of a bunch of building blocks stacked on top of one another, like a child does when playing. If one of the middle blocks - acting like it has too much autonomy - gets placed wrong, falls, and causes the tower to fall, the welfare of the tower is destroyed.

Now how in practical terms can the autonomy of a group harm AA as a whole? Right now, in the present we have seen examples of this. We are amid a viral pandemic. Governmental authorities are not allowing any types of groups or organizations to meet indoors, or even together outdoors because this presents a terrible health crisis. AA is facing one of its most serious challenges now. Thanks to the miracle of the Internet and social media and phone, AA groups can have “virtual” or online meetings to continue to spread the message without spreading the illness. AA is autonomous and yet we must obey the authorities in the communities we meet in.

We always say, “there is no such thing as an AA Police,” and this is correct. However, groups that have continued face to face meetings in complete disregard of public health ordinances put AA at risk. If, for example, local press would find such a meeting, no matter how many thousands of lives AA has saved, or how many local drunks have found contented sobriety, this one bad move would gain a maelstrom of unwanted and negative press coverage. This affects AA as a whole.

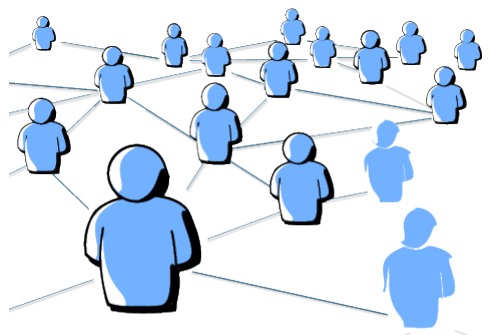
Continued on page 11

If one person catches the virus, and they have been a regular attendee of the meeting that is still going on face to face, and God forbid the individual or a close family member dies, it could affect the reputation of AA as a whole.

Now, we said earlier that there are no AA Police. However, the trusted servants who sit as chairs and heads of the various Service committees, along with General Service Reps, DCM's and chairmen, etc., are what is known as "The Guardians of the Twelve Traditions." It is a responsibility of these trusted servants to go to these groups or contact them by phone or e-mail to tell them they must not meet for the good health and safety of the AAs who attend these meetings, and advise them to seek alternatives. We would be remiss in our responsibility to those we serve if we did NOT do this.

No one can force these groups NOT to meet face by face; we can only advise against it, as was just explained AAs our duty to those we serve. However, we can and have taken action in the form of not mentioning any groups like these to people calling our hotline or looking up meetings on our website. Our only aim, with the Traditions as our guide, is to provide good, safe Recovery meetings to the sick and suffering alcoholic, and in times of this unprecedented crisis, direct them to phone or online meetings.

*In Trusted Service, Steve Sh.,
Albertson Searingtown Group
reprinted from
Nassau County Intergroup
Long Island, New York*



CONNECTIONS

know how long I actually recited those words. I know that I recited them over and over again until I was interrupted.

The flight attendant tapped me on the shoulder and said; "Sir, you're going to have to sit down. The airplane is about to take off."

As I sat down for the next 51/2 hours, I knew that God had done for me what I could not do for myself. And, as I recited the passage that I had made my new mantra, I put my name in it. My experience was just as detailed in the Big Book on page 63. "As we [I], felt new power flow in, as we [I] enjoyed peace of mind, as we [I] discovered we [I] could face life successfully, as we [I] became conscious of His presence, we [I] began to lose our [my] fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter."

I realized that through prayer and meditation (just a few of the simple tools of this program), I was able to achieve a new freedom after many years of sobriety. My Higher Power said to me on that day, "Be still and know that I am." The promises of the program never stop manifesting.

*Howard H.
reprinted from By The Way
Sacramento Intergroup Newsletter*

Minnetonka Big Book Study Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

presents its

27th Annual Serenity "Breakfast" Sunday May 23, 2021

Using a virtual Webinar format



Guest AA Speaker
Butch M. from Barrie, Ontario


Serenity Interpreting Services
Speaker will be ASL interpreted

to register, go to
SerenityBreakfast.EventBrite.com

Webinar logon information and passcode will be sent upon registration

Speaker Meeting: 10:30 am to Noon

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup
33 Wentworth Ave E
Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

Change Service Requested

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities MN
Permit 7451

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 *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*.

1. Contact Information:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: ____ ZIP: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

2. Amount & Frequency:

Amount \$ _____
Frequency: (check one)
 Monthly Quarterly Bi-Annually Annually
Start on: ____/____/____
 Faithful Fiver (\$5.00/month)
 Terrific Tenner (\$10.00/month)
 Fantastic Fifteener (\$15.00/month)

3. Choose a Payment Method:

Credit Card/Debit
 Visa MasterCard AMEX Discover
Card # ____/____/____/____
Expiration Date: ____/____
Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____
**I authorize St. Paul Intergroup to automatically bill my account as specified (monthly, quarterly, etc). I understand that I am free to cancel this authorization at any time by contacting Intergroup.*

Check - Please make payable to:

Saint Paul Intergroup
33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431