

HERE'S HOW

Published in Fellowship by the Chicago Area Service Assembly

Prescription For Change

Prescription for Alcoholics

by Betty G.

Just a few words that cannot express the gratitude I feel for Alcoholics Anonymous. By the Grace of God I am "just" an alcoholic. I used to think the medical profession, priests, ministers, self-help books and all sorts of human things and beings could help me with my alcoholism.

This past year we celebrated my 30th anniversary and, more than ever, I see how important it is to carry the message that is in our conference-approved literature. The instructions are laid out in our Big Book. "To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book." N.B. synonyms for precisely are exactly, accurately, specifically, correctly and in particular.

I thought I was a moral degenerate, an absolute failure. I had guilt and shame that seemed impossible to get rid of. Sadly, this was not just when I was new. By the Grace bestowed upon me after I repeatedly asked for God's help, the miracles began to happen.

I had been going to meetings drunk, not only in my early AA membership, but also for many, many years after I stopped drinking. Some call this untreated alcoholism, depression, etc.; some get treatment from professionals as I did. Bill W. called it emotional hangovers. However, in our Big Book, we read how the earliest members worked the steps and reached out to others to carry the message. We read amazing answers to our problems. In one of the stories, it says, "Certainly, now, anyone would have agreed that only a miracle could prevent my final breakdown. But how does one get a prescription for a miracle?"

Dr. Bob wrote a prescription for alcoholics in 1937. Always remember it. It says:

1. Trust God. 2. Clean house. 3. Help others.
I came to believe I could be restored to sanity.
Color me grateful.

Service Is the Secret

by Anonymous

I came to AA just to stop drinking; that's it. When I followed directions, I found myself being usefully whole. I loved feeling like I had value. I loved seeing others benefit from my efforts. I loved that a message was being carried to those who needed it. It made me want to do a little more. I experienced the heartache when some did not make it. I found that the reason was their unwillingness to apply themselves and take action. They refused to think of others and reach out to new people. I have seen alcoholics come and go in AA. The ones that stay seem to be chin deep in service to AA and to others.

They do things like open up the meetings, get there early, stay late, go out for fellowship after meetings and/or hang out for quite a long time in the parking lots talking to the newly sober. They are at council meetings, General Service meetings, assembly meetings, conferences and workshops. They show up for committee meetings, parties, anniversaries and workdays at the Central Office. They take time out of their personal schedules to bring their experience, strength and hope to the correctional institutions, detoxification centers and treatment facilities.

They give and give some more. These individuals who "make it" in AA have service commitments. They say what they mean and mean what they say. You can count on them to do what they say they will do. I love it when we can trust each other! It is refreshing not to have the worry that AA will look bad. I love to represent AA and not bring shame to my sponsor, to my Home Group, to my home town, or to AA as a whole.

Responsibility is freedom! When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that, I am responsible!

If He Were Sought

by Rick S.

"If He were sought." (last words of "How It Works," Chapter 5 of

the Big Book)

"If we work for them." (last words of "The Promises," pp. 83-84 of the Big Book)

"The joy of living is the theme of AA's Twelfth Step, and action is its key word." (in the first paragraph of the "Twelfth Step," Twelve Steps and Traditions)

When the student is ready, the teacher(s) will appear. That saying rings as true with me today as it has throughout my sobriety. I can read things over and over in our literature, have fellow members repeat similar principles repeatedly, but only when I'm ready and willing, do I get the message.

So lately "school has been in session" and I, the student, have been hearing loud and clear the following message: In sobriety we need to do the necessary footwork to get the desired results. Thus, the new found emphasis on the following words: if He were sought, if we work for them, the joy of living is the theme of AA's Twelfth Step and action is its key word. They explain to me that results will follow certain actions.

In the beginning of my sobriety, the desired result was primarily not drinking, just eliminating the poison I was putting in my system that was destroying me physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. As time has gone on, in addition to staying clean and sober, I have come to a place where emotional sobriety, the ability to be comfortable in my own skin--to be at peace with the world and myself--is what I truly long for. I have experienced this peace at various times and when I'm "there," it hits me that it's a place that I didn't really believe I could get to without alcohol or drugs.

Back to the lesson being taught to me in the school of my recovery which I believe our Higher Power (for me He is simply God) puts together uniquely for each of us. The lesson is this: my desire to have great rewards come to me without effort or difficult, uncomfortable work is just not going to happen. This was true when I was drinking and equally true in my life of recovery. The words that I've been hearing, "Immediate gratification is the way to go!" nicely summarize a destructive belief I have which demands that I get where I want to go fast, artificially and without any effort or footwork on my part.

Therefore, for me it goes like this. By nature I do not like difficult, uncomfortable things that take a long time to do, that require major effort and where the results of my labors do not materialize in the very short term. I have this unrealistic expectation that I should be able to do something quickly and easily and gain deep and immediate rewards.

During my drinking years (part 1 of my life), I, like all of us, ran into difficult situations and complex problems involving people at work, at home and in my circle of friends. Situations that required time and effort to work through, sort out, and eventually resolve. The key words here, work through and eventually. However, during part 1 I had no desire or intention of spending

the effort necessary to do this and instead found a solution that much better fit my nature. The formula I used for difficult and uncomfortable? Whiskey and beer (preferably taken together) to get me where I wanted to go as quickly as possible.

The problem with using alcohol and/or drugs to address life is painfully clear to me now. They don't solve anything. They make matters worse. Moreover, what was the worst part for me was that I didn't learn anything when I was using as a solution. I did not do the necessary work to resolve the situations in the right way and to learn the lessons of life that I could apply going forward. No pain, no gain. No effort, struggle and discomfort; no growth in my ability to deal with life on its own terms. Instead, more alcohol and drugs to numb myself until the situation faded away or someone else did what I should have done.

Okay so that was then. How about after years of recovery and God-inspired insights and learning (part 2 of my life)? I now desire emotional sobriety and the ability to deal with all the complex scenarios that life brings my way in a sober, mature manner. That is fine. A good goal. However, it comes with this requirement: I must put in the effort, the foot work, to achieve that which I am seeking. By working at this goal day by day, I am building a strong foundation that can be used as long as I live. This approach will also bring about the true satisfaction of having met life squarely and as an adult--without the comfort of alcohol that took the place of the pacifier and soft blanket that I hung onto when I was five years old.

The thing that helps me in the program when I get these types of insights is to move from general statements and understandings to specific and concrete actions and examples. So when I hear "if you work for them," God helps me translate that message into specific terms.

In the last few weeks, these things have crystallized in my mind and I have been discussing them at meetings. They include the following:

1. Go to meetings, as many as possible and reasonable as determined by my family, my sponsor and myself.
2. Apply the Twelve Steps in all my affairs, everyday and in all situations. As an example, do a daily Tenth Step inventory and discover where corrective action is needed.
3. Engage in the fellowship of AA. I need to interact with people, period. Share my struggles, joys, learning and questions with my fellows in recovery.
4. Seek to grow spiritually through whatever ways work. For me, in addition to the items above, this includes church, journaling and attending spiritual retreats.
5. Help others, in and out of AA. This includes my family. When I help others, I get out of myself and that is a really good thing for a selfish, self-centered person.
6. Take care of my physical and mental condition. This includes adequate eating, sleeping, exercise and having fun.

When I write these "requirements for my emotional sobriety," guess what my immediate reaction is? That is right! This is a lot of work and takes discipline (boy, I hate that word!) However,

the following simple question becomes the important one for me to answer on a daily basis. How important is physical and emotional sobriety to me and how much effort am I willing to put into it? The formula is simple and the key requirement is willingness and associated humility.

Remember Me

by Victor

Hello. Just in case you forgot me, I am your disease. I hate meetings...I hate Higher Powers...I hate anyone who has a program. To all who come in contact with me, I wish you death and I wish you suffering.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am the disease of alcoholism. I am cunning, baffling and powerful. That's me. I have killed millions and I am pleased. I love to catch you with the element of surprise. I love pretending I am your friend and lover. I have given you comfort, haven't I? Wasn't I there when you were lonely? When you wanted to die, didn't you call on me?

I was there. I love to make you hurt. I love to make you cry. Better yet, I love to make you so numb you can neither hurt nor cry.

When you can't feel anything at all...this is true gratification. And all that I ask from you is long term suffering. I've been there for you always. When things were going right in your life, you invited me. You said you didn't deserve these good things and I was the only one who would agree with you. Together we were able to destroy all the good things in your life. People don't take me seriously. They take strokes seriously; heart attacks, even diabetes, they take seriously--FOOLS. Without my help these things would not be possible. I am such a hated disease and yet I do not come uninvited. Many have chosen me rather than reality and peace.

Many hate me and I hate all of you who have a Twelve Step program. Your program, your meeting, your Higher Power. All of these things weaken me and I can't function in the manner I am accustomed to. Now I must lie here quietly. You don't see me but I am growing bigger than ever. When you only exist, I may live. When you live, I may only exist. But I am here...

And until we meet again, if we meet again, I wish you death and suffering!



The Lead

by Anonymous

So here I sit, emptied, all poured out
Trusting that it had an impact, planted a seed
What am I stressed about?
My story's my story, my song is my song
Take it all, take all of me
Now the comments,
Everyone hears what they heard,
Some different, some the same
Hearing insights, fragments and clues,
Ways to grow, ways I've grown
A moment of intimacy

Higher Power

by Matt S.

I lost my higher power a long time ago; it has all the answers, the ones I need to know.
I've searched in bottles all my life and now the pain I endure cuts me like a knife.
How helpless and lonely can one man feel? As I squander time to make a new deal,
The demon in my head says all will be ok, if I just relent and let him have his way.
It will all be ok, so he says, as I drink away another good day.
How do I escape this maddening existence when I haven't the power to begin to resist it?
I have finally found the power I need; in those rooms of fellowship we will all succeed.
Though we haven't the cure, together in friendship we can endure.
Learn, we can, to better ourselves in living, a better life of constant giving.
We exist today in what must be given freely away.
A day at a time is what they say, to keep us safe, our demons at bay.

Sponsorship

by Monica F.

Who has listened to all my miseries and woes, to whom have I spilled the beans?
Who has guided me with complete confidence and seen into my dreams?
Who has shared with me their experience and joy that has brought them pleasure and pain?
Who answers my calls when I need them, even when there is a game?
Who shares a connection of spirituality that is too difficult

to explain?

Who is part of my higher power from which I have so much to gain?

It is you, my sponsor and mentor, who helps bless my soul and keep me sane.

It is you, my sponsor, the seasoned vet, the one who I call late at night.

It is you, my sponsor, who helps me when the itches are in sight,

That craziness which seems to settle in my mind and brings me to a fright.

My wonderful, professional sponsor, whom I know is always (usually) right,

You are the call I make when I see the bar in sight.

Our sponsorship is that of a partnership and I know I have a part;

Yet so many times I just want to sit in the dark.

I let the world around me get deep into my brain and the sudden chill haunts me and
no one can explain.

My sponsor helps me focus on my defects and regrets; it hasn't been the worst experience yet.

CASO Corner

By Laura N Gonzalez



2011 Annual Spring Appeal letter please share with the meetings you attend. Thank you to the many of you whom have already contributed:

Do you remember what it was like when you first walked into an AA meeting? Were you scared? Did you wish you were invisible? Did you hope that person coming towards was not going to talk to you – then they did? How fast did you want to run? Deep down inside you knew ‘this is where I belonged’. Did you hear your story and realize you’re not alone? Did you finally get hope to know there is a better way?

Your Chicago Area Service Office (CASO) carries out the tasks of Alcoholics Anonymous that cannot be done by any single Group. CASO is where many alcoholics make their first contact with A.A. and where thousands of A.A. members call for meeting information. The office is the face of A.A. here in the Chicagoland Area; it provides the backbone for our A.A. service work.

We all recognize that the one-on-one Twelfth Step work performed at the group level is the most important way the Fellowship reaches out to the alcoholic. Then there is the work done at the local, district, and area level that far exceed the volume of work done at CASO. I ask that together we continue to work diligently carrying the message of hope to the new person. This is work we all as alcoholics must pass on to keep. CASO is simply a way that this very important work may be accomplished, and the CASO staff has proven to be very good at carrying out this aspect of service work. We cannot do this vital work alone – we need you!

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the hundreds of volunteers it takes to run the office. You are on the front line answering the telephones – one alcoholic talking to another. This simple concept of one-to-one sharing is the spiritual heart of every service we provide. We cannot possibly reach out to the thousands of alcoholics that call for help without your help. I want to thank those who help us in the bookstore stocking shelves, packing orders, and helping with day-to-day operations. I am forever grateful to you for giving your valuable time.

I would like to remind us all that it's not about money. Yes, it takes money to pay the bills, keep the coffee flowing and literature distributed. But most importantly it is about all of us together embracing a common solution, one that we can absolutely agree upon. “A way of life” that ensures alcoholics like you and me a place “at the table” in this wonderful Fellowship, Alcoholics Anonymous. However, this Higher Powered given freedom from bondage takes work. It requires each member to actively participate in A.A. by tireless giving of oneself to others in the hope that one day they too will enjoy freedom. By actively participating in our recovery, we help those we are privileged to

sponsor discover our spiritual way of life. By actively participating in our Home Group, we are of service, not sitting on the sidelines letting others do the work. By actively participating in our local services at the Chicago Area Service Office and the Area, we participate in the worldwide responsibility to ultimately ensure that when “anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, the hand of A.A. will always be there”. Yes, it starts and finishes with me. I am an A.A. member and I must assume the responsibility that has been entrusted to me by our founders. And so it is for you.

CASO cannot do these things without the kind support from you, the fellowship. We ask that you hold a special 7th tradition collection at your group for this appeal. You may have a special collection after your 7th tradition collection once a week, twice a week, or once a month during the spring and send this in to help. We'd like to ensure your group's needs are met first.

This appeal is a part of our budget - it helps fund committees, pays rent, and pays your Chicago Area Service Office workers. We are successfully able to reach thousands of alcoholics each year due to your past contributions. As a reminder, financial support of your Chicago Area Service Office is voluntary and not conditional.

Clearly, if we do our part and encourage others to actively participate in the A.A. Fellowship, we need not worry about where our resources will come from. It will materialize. We can rely upon it. Celebrating the Seventh Tradition is simply expressing the need for a given service and, once the need is clear, the necessary support is received. Through simple, straight-forward, and consistent communications, we lovingly remind your group that your office and our services belong to you and your group members. You are the members and the rightful purveyors of Alcoholic Anonymous.

Your generous contribution means that an alcoholic is on this end of the phone 24/7. Every day, members of A.A. selflessly give of their time answering phones so that when any alcoholic, any time, reaches out for help, the hand of A.A. will be there. They need an office to go to, telephones to answer, desks and meeting directories to refer to and 12-steppers to do their job. And when those volunteers go home, more volunteers freely take up the task from home, answering calls throughout the night, until the office opens again. Please call me if you'd like to answer the telephones. We need You!

Your generous contribution means that kids in schools and programs around Chicago can learn about Alcoholics Anonymous, that there is a solution to a drinking problem. Our Public Information Committee and the Cooperation with the Professional Community committees go to hundreds of schools, events, fairs, conventions and other gatherings. They let people know A.A. is there and that alcoholics are not alone.

Your Spring Appeal group contribution to CASO is a gift that helps carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Your generous contribution means that for those who cannot hear the A.A. message can see it spoken to them though sign language. For those who cannot see, can read the message through Braille. Our Special Needs Committee responds to those who need a little extra service, so that signed meetings and special equipment are available to help make A.A. accessible to everyone who has a drinking problem.

Your generous contribution means that thousands of A.A. members can come together to share their experience, strength and hope. Each year, Chicago A.A. holds special events that help bring together A.A.'s from all over the area and show a powerful example of sharing, gratitude, and joy that will encompass the language of the heart as we celebrate our recovery.

Your generous contribution helps preserve our heritage. A.A. has a rich history and Chicago has been an integral part of that almost from the beginning. Volunteers share our space to gather the historical materials from past and present preserving our fellowship and its program for those yet to come. Their displays make our story available and show that we are each a small part of a great whole. Did you know the first meeting in Chicago was September 20, 1939?

On behalf of the Chicago Area Service Office, Area 19 and the many alcoholics who will be touched by your groups generosity thank you,

Laura N. G.
Chicago Area Service Office Manager

“Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a Society, we resist the temptation to receive money form the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility – one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid.

When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts, we are only being prudent. But when we are generous with the hat we give a token that we are grateful for our blessings and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer.”
Bill W.

INSIDE AA

"The more things change..."



The stories presented here were first told to a reporter, himself a member of AA, as part of a series of articles published in the Chicago Daily News in February 1950. They were then republished as the AA pamphlet "Inside AA". Though some of the facts, figures and language in the articles may seem a bit dated, the stories themselves ring eerily true to what many of us hear in the Rooms today. Here's How will be republishing these stories over the coming months. We thank the Chicago AA Archives Committee for their collaboration. We hope you enjoy "Inside AA".

The Only Child

From Inside AA

How can a person determine to his own satisfaction whether he is an alcoholic? He might start out by comparing his experience to this, the story of a man in his early 40's who has been a member of Alcoholics Anonymous for four years. The story is factual except for a few changes to preserve the man's anonymity.

"I was born on Chicago's South Side, an only child," he said. "My father had a well-established business and, while we weren't wealthy, we were well-to-do, and I had everything a kid might want."

"I went through high school without any trouble although there were some fellows nipping at the gin bottles in my junior and senior years. But at college, it seemed to be quite the thing to do some drinking, to have a source of supply, to carry a flask."

"I coasted along through my freshman and sophomore years. I was getting quite a reputation in my crowd as a stout, two-fisted drinker."

"The payoff came early in my junior year. I was on my way back to school, in a borrowed car, from a night spot. The girl with me and I had put away a lot of gin."

"We came to a turn in the road and I forgot to make the turn. We wound up in a ditch, upside down. I had a few minor bruises but the girl had a skull fracture and a broken leg."

"The state police pulled us out of the wreckage. Instead of thanking them, I got into an argument. One word led to another and finally to the police station. That ended my college career."

"I came back to Chicago and went to work for my father. It's a business where you work at top speed when a case comes along, meanwhile you loaf. It fitted in nicely, the loafing part. It gave me more time to drink."

"I met a nice girl. One night, foggier than I suspected, I went to her home -- she lived with her folks on the sixth floor of one of those big apartment buildings -- and there was no answer to the bell."

"So she wouldn't see me huh? I managed to get on the fire escape and started for the sixth floor."

"There had been some 'Peeping Tom' scares in the neighborhood and it wasn't long before the police were on the scene."

"I took my second trip to the police station. A kind-hearted lieutenant, after talking to the girl, her folks and my folks, let me go. My next visit was when a bunch of us swiped a double-decker bus and wrecked it going under a low viaduct. Our fathers squared that and lectured us about the evils of Demon Rum."

"Then I got a scare. I went out to get into my car one morning after a bad night. I hadn't remembered how I got home." "I walked around the car to see if it was in shape. There was blood on the right front headlight and on that side of the bumper."

"For the next couple of days I read the paper with fear and trembling -- thinking maybe I was a hit and run driver. But there were no reports in the paper. What happened that night, where the blood came from, I've never found out."

"The scare slowed me up and I cut out most of my drinking. I married the girl -- the same one that lived in the sixth floor apartment."

"Married, I took a new interest in my job. For six or seven years things went along fine. We had three children, two boys and a girl. Then one day my father criticized my handling of a case. He couldn't do that to me. I'd show him. I did. I went out and got drunk, stayed drunk for a week."

"My wife and my folks corralled me, tossed me into a sanitarium. The psychiatrist there gave me a long song-and-dance, told me I was an alcoholic, to cut out drinking altogether. I followed his advice for six months. Then there was a high school reunion. I started out with a few beers and got home three days later."

"My father couldn't understand me. He told me there were no drunkards in his family. Which brought Mom into the center of the ring, announcing there weren't any in her family, either."

"Things went from bad to worse. My father never fired me. Sometimes when I was able, I worked. At other times, I was a kind of remittance man; my father would send the paychecks out to the house and I could always talk my wife out of a chunk of them."

"There were more visits to hospitals and sanitariums. At home I slept with a jug alongside the bed. Then one day I ran into an

old drinking companion.”

“How’s for a drink?” I said to him.

“He laughed and said he hadn’t a drink in 18 months. ‘Ulcers?’ I asked. ‘No,’ he said, ‘Alcoholics Anonymous.’

“We went to a bar -- I had the shakes. While he drank a soft drink, I poured in some bourbon to quiet the grasshoppers. He was like a guy on a soap box, full of enthusiasm. I promised to go to a meeting. I wanted a peek at these holy rollers.”

“Well I went. With my fingers crossed, ready to laugh. I’m still laughing. And I’m still dry.”

* * *

The AA test for alcoholism is a simple one. The first step of its recovery program says: “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.”

To an AA, an alcoholic is one who is powerless over alcohol, whose life -- domestic, social, business -- has become unmanageable by his use of alcohol.

In short, an alcoholic is one who cannot control his drinking once he starts.

AA experience, supported by medical testimony, is that once a man slips past the line separating the uncontrolled drinker from the controlled drinker, there is no going back.

Never again can he drink in a controlled manner.

AA says it isn’t the amount a man drinks or when he drinks it; the test is: Is alcohol making his life unmanageable?

The Undersized Guy

From Inside AA

“Anybody can quit drinking for 24 hours.”

When a man enters Alcoholics Anonymous he signs no documents, he makes no promises or pledges as to how long he will refrain from drinking.

All he is asked to do is to quit drinking for today.

“That 24-hour idea was the thing that sold me on AA,” said Jim, a member for more than eight years. “My drinking didn’t get into high until I was around 30. I was living in one of the North Shore suburbs, with my wife and four kids.

“We got running around with a crowd that liked to drink. I got to like to drink, too. Soon they were calling me ‘Jim the Bartender,’ because I was always helping the host mix the drinks.

“That way a fellow could nip off an extra one or two every time there was a round of drinks.

“But after I had arrived at several parties with a head of steam on, fallen flat on my face a couple of times, insulted a few hostesses, the crowd sort of eased us out.

“But I had plenty of other drinking friends, fellows I worked with, and so I did more drinking away from home.

“I had built up a good reputation in the business I’m in. Like a lot of organizations, there was some tolerance for drinking.

“A few years slipped away and I worked out a pattern something like this. My wife would haul me out of bed in the morning, shove me under a shower, try to get me to drink a cup of coffee, and then take me to the train.

“I’d arrive at the office half awake. I didn’t need a drink usually, because I was still half drunk from the night before. At noon-time I’d grab three or four fast ones. Again in mid-afternoon, I’d get a sustainer or two, and then at quitting time I’d settle down to a little drinking.

“If there was no reason for going home -- the reasons for going home early seemed to be getting fewer -- I’d settle down to a little steady drinking and catch a late train.

“Sometimes I’d miss the last train and that meant a cab from Howard St. And the stopover there might mean a fight with a cab driver or a policeman or both.

“Sober I was a peaceful guy, but drunk -- that whisky gave me muscles like it does a lot of us undersized fellows.

“There was only one time I got what I might consider a draw -- most other times I got licked. I stumbled into the North Western Station one night. Some mixup caused the railroad to park its California train on the track where my train was usually set. “I climbed on to the observation platform, thinking ‘My, these suburban trains are really getting fancy.’

“A trainman, noticing me draped there, asked me where I was going. I told him. He told me this was a California train; that it didn’t go near Wilmette. I told him to go give a Chinaman a singing lesson.

“He called the railroad police and fisticuffs followed. I wound up in Desplains st. station. I got a look, the next day, at the shiner I had hung on one of my opponents.

“For a long time after that I used to sneak through the suburban entrance so I wouldn’t encounter that railroad man. He was about eight inches taller than I.

“My employers began to grow restive. My wife was in despair. I began to think that I must be going crazy. Every Sunday I would

resolve that this week it will be different; and every week it was the same, drunk nearly every night.

“Then a drinking companion of mine went into Alcoholics Anonymous. Tales drifted back that it was some kind of a daffy cult. Then another of my drinking companions went in. “One day I was grouching in a barroom that whisky had lost its curative powers, that I was dying of the stuff and didn’t know what to do about it.

“Then for the first time the two of them, sipping soft drinks, spoke up and told me about AA. I don’t know to this day what they said but it seemed to make sense and I agreed to go to a meeting the following Sunday.

“I was shaking so badly that my escort to the meeting stopped at a barroom and let me have three or four fast drinks. We went on to the meeting at a home in Winnetka.

“Some of the people I knew casually -- a drinking man gets to know a lot of drinking men. There was some talk, then some card games, and then something to eat.

“After a couple of passes at a cup of coffee, I sneaked out into the kitchen where I could hunch down and sip the coffee without having to lift the cup.

“I wanted to quit drinking because the next stop, if I didn’t, seemed to be the insane asylum. But I came from people who lived on into their 80s and I had just passed 40.

“It seemed like a long and dismal vista - 40 years without a drink. I mentioned this. Then it was the AAs told me about the 24-hour idea. Just quit for today. Why worry about tomorrow or next week or next month?

“So I concentrated on the plan of one day at a time. I didn’t sleep much those first three or four weeks, but wrestling with the thing one day at a time got me over the hump.

“Then life began to be wonderful. I had forgotten there was such a thing as breakfast. I rediscovered it and it’s still my favorite meal. “This 24-hour idea might seem a childish thing, might seem like a guy was kidding himself. But I woke up one day to the thought that if this was a good way of licking the drinking problem, it might be a good idea to try living my whole life that way.

“And that was paydirt. It’s common sense that if you concentrate on a thing, you do a better job on it. By concentrating on living today, by resolutely slamming the door on the past and refusing to daydream about the future, I get a whole lot more out of life. And so do my fellow AAs”

* * *

This is the story that Jim tells when he goes to call on a person who has asked for help from Alcoholics Anonymous. He takes him along to meetings where the alcoholic hears similar stories from other AA members. He hears how this phase of the program or that has helped as the 24-idea helped Jim.

He doesn’t have to try to “explain” his drinking to the members of Alcoholics Anonymous. They give him complete understanding. They too, have told the same lies, done the same daffy things, suffered the same horrors, the same remorse, brought themselves to the same ruin.

That’s what the psychiatrists call “group therapy.” AAs call it AA.

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU ABOUT SPONSORSHIP!

Although sponsorship is a hallowed AA tradition, it is never mentioned in the Big Book. So the question is: What exactly is sponsorship?

It is defined in many different ways. Some see it as a relationship of equals, where an older member and a new member share their recoveries in a friendly give-and-take. Others see it as a mentorship while still others view the sponsor as a drill instructor shaping the newcomer into a sober citizen. How do you view sponsorship? What makes a good sponsor? Should a sponsor be kind and understanding or firmly directive? What are the responsibilities of a sponsor? Of a sponsee? Is it demeaning to refer to a sponsee as a pigeon? How many people can one person sponsor effectively at the same time? How do lines of sponsorship come into play (or should they)? Why is sponsorship important—or is it?

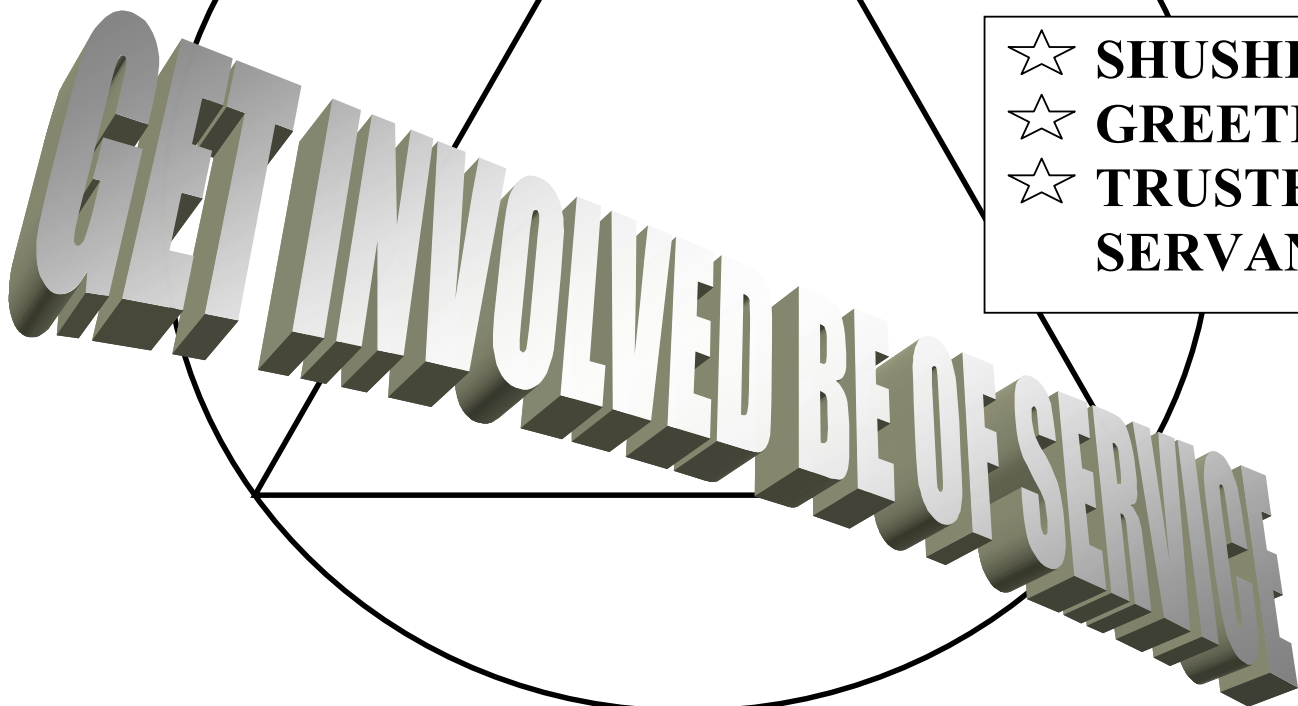
Monika F. wrote the poem in our poetry section about her sponsor. Tell us your story about a great sponsor or sponsee. How did you first connect? How have you worked together? What have you gotten out of the relationship? Or send us a story on any sobriety-related topic!

e-mail: hereshow@chicagoAA.org

ALL CHICAGO OPEN SEPT 17 2011!!!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

ONE YEAR OF SOBRIETY SUGGESTED



- ☆ SHUSHERS
- ☆ GREETER
- ☆ TRUSTED SERVANTS

YOU MUST BE AVAILABLE:

THURSDAY SEPT 15, 2011 6 - 8 PM

SATURDAY SEPT 17, 2011 5:00 PM

Please email your:

**Full Name, Telephone Number, & Email
Address to: acovolunteers@yahoo.com**

Theo A. or Peggy L. will call you with further details to confirm your commitment. Thank you.

Service Committee Reports... Keeping You Informed

General Service Conference Area 19 Delegate's Report

by Michael H. (773-848-5783; miken2u@aol.com)

I would like to thank the fellowship of Area 19 for the privilege to serve as your delegate to the General Service Conference. While it's my primary responsibility to go and actively participate, then come back with a report on what took place, I plan to do much more. My responsibility also includes serving you at the group, district, and committee level. So I will make myself available to you the fellowship of Area 19. I put my contact information at the top of this report for you to let me know your concerns or what I can do to serve you better. There will also be brief reports in our Here's How bimonthly newsletter for those who can't attend the Assembly.

It is with deep sadness that I note the passing of William W. on January 22, 2011. He will be sorely missed. Please keep his family in your prayers.

The AAWS Board met on 1/27/2011 and, upon a recommendation from its Ad Hoc Committee on E-Technology, approved a proposal to sell literature in digital format. The Big Book and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions will be available for sale by late summer. The Board approved a change to the text on GSO's AA Website explaining how to access local resources that provide AA meeting information.

GSO's General Manager reported that contributions increased 1.8% in 2010, totaling \$6,409,000. Online contributions during the previous six months mark showing grew to \$82,750. GSO had a net income for the year of approximately \$1,302,000 or 29% over budget which is very positive news. In addition, the 2010 International Convention generated a surplus of \$850,000. 2010 was also a year in which GSO made significant savings on almost every budgeted line item by holding off on permanent hires, limiting outside contract work and following through on reductions for translations and travel. With implementation of e-Book publishing later this year, GSO will depend even more on the Fellowship for expanded support through contributions. An opening on the AA Staff will be announced in the spring issue of Box 4-5-9. Areas are reporting election results or updating the changes via their access to GSO's record data base, Fellowship New Vision (FNV). To assist the new Area Registrars with FNV, GSO's Administrative Service Manager provided Registrar Web Training.

The Publications Director reported that for the 12 months ending December 31, 2010 1,701,373 books were distributed, including 885,134 Big Books. Sales of \$12,183,911 for the year netted approximately \$1,766,089. Total revenue (gross profit from literature sales, contributions, and interest earned on cash

flow) was \$14,277,491.

Literature Committee -- Last year the conference approved the development of a pamphlet that "focuses on spirituality and includes stories from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in AA. The Trustee Literature Committee agreed to forward to the Conference Committee on Literature a report on the development of literature which focuses on spirituality for consideration. However, the TLC noted "that although the item was forwarded for consideration, the committee did not support its intent and encourages a thorough review of the trustees' report on the development of literature which focuses on spirituality before any decision is made."

The Nominating Committee of the Conference Trustee Committee refused to approve the full slate of Grapevine Directors. The GVB was asked by the Chairman of the GSB to reduce their own Board to seven which is in keeping with their By-Laws and calls for a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 10 directors. Subsequently, the Nominating Committee disapproved the two new candidates. There were several reasons stated. (a) The resumes of the candidates did not have business, financial, publishing, or technology experience. (b) The cost of two additional directors was estimated at approx. \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year. (c) The GV outsources a majority of their business. (d) It was considered "unseemly" to have one director for every employee. (e) One-third of the GV board was against it. The issue was brought to the whole General Service Board and voted upon. The majority of Trustees concurred with the Nominating Committee. So the motion carried but when this is presented at conference, you can expect a lot of discussion and probably a Concept V Appeal.

Public Information -- At last year's Conference, the Trustees Public Information Committee was asked to "draft a policy on actors portraying AA members or potential AA members in videos." This draft states: "Videos produced and distributed by the GSB, AAWS and AA Grapevine Inc. that include actors portraying AA members or potential AA members shall not show the actor's full face unless: (a) The General Service Board, by substantial unanimity, agrees that the proposed video is consistent with the AA tradition of attraction rather than promotion, and that such use of an actor or actors does not in fact, or in appearance, place personalities before principles, and (b) The General Service Conference authorizes, by substantial unanimity, the production and distribution of such video.

Grapevine -- In 2010 year-end losses were \$394,335. From Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, the GV withdrew \$588,000 from the Reserve Fund to cover various additional losses and operating expenses. The 2011 projected losses were originally estimated at approximately \$300,000 but now are anticipated to be approximately \$94,000. This is due to eliminating three positions and moving one employee to AAWS. Paid subscriptions in 2010 were 93,104

compared to 102,281 in 2009. (9,177 fewer subscriptions) The 2011 anticipated average paid circulation is 88,235. This is 4,869 fewer subscriptions representing an additional 5% decrease for 2011. Sales of the Audio Grapevine are down 23% from last year and the Digital Archive sales are down 26% from last year.

La Vina -- 2010 losses amounted to \$75,481 after losses in 2009 of \$54,468. Projected losses for 2011 are \$114,697. Paid subscriptions for LaVina in 2010 were 8,741, down from 9,663 in 2009. The Trustees Finance Committee recommends to the GSB that a thorough re-evaluation of the Boards' commitment to continued production/support of LaVina be undertaken. There are numerous Spanish-speaking-type GV's available from South American countries. The best-known (and profitable) is called "Plentitude," published in Mexico and subscribed to by many in the U.S.

Thank you for allowing me to share this information with you. In Serenity and Service.

Illinois State Conference Information

On August 5th through the 7th of 2011 the Chicago Area (19) of Alcoholics Anonymous will be hosting the Illinois State Confer-

ence in Skokie, Illinois. This year the host committee has put together a wonderful program. Invited speakers include the Chairman of the General Service Board of AA, Ward Ewing and the General Manager of the General Service Office (NY) Phyllis H. Both will be sharing their experience working for & serving the Fellowship. Other guests include Harold G. who spoke in San Antonio during the International Convention of AA last year as well as our Regional Trustee, Pam R. The program will also include many local Speakers notably our very own Office Manager at the Chicago Area Service Office, Laura G. and a local member Ana H. will kick off the convention on Friday night.

Throughout the convention there will be panels taking place touching topics such as being young in AA as well as in being in a relationship in sobriety. Other topics will include speaking on the Steps & Traditions. There will be Alcahthons taking place during the weekend as well as a Hospitality Suite and separate childcare to allow parents to attend meetings.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact:
 Bill W 312-206-0642
 bwalk2009@att.net
 ISC2011@hotmail.com

2011 Illinois State Conference
 Hosted by Area 19
 August 5th, 6th, 7th
 Holiday Inn North Shore
 5300 West Touhy Avenue, Skokie,
 Illinois 60077

Contact: Bill W 312*206*0642
 bwalk2009@att.net
 ISC2011@hotmail.com

Registration only _____\$20
 Registration & Banquet _____\$60
 (deadline 7/25/11)
 Alateen _____\$10

We are responsible for AA's future. Let it begin with US

Please return this portion with your payment

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

Please make checks payable to:
 Illinois State Conference
 Illinois State Conference
 P.O. Box 64591
 Chicago, IL 60684

Please check appropriate:
 AA Al-Anon
 Alateen Guest

Total Enrolled _____

Call the State Conference special needs coordinator no later than two weeks before the conference if an interpreter is needed

Name
Address
City
State Zip Country

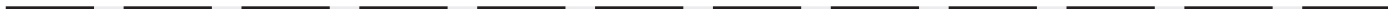
If address changes please indicate your old address:

Name
Address
City
State Zip Country

- I am a new reader.
- \$5.00 annual subscription enclosed.
- Here's an extra contribution of \$__
to help keep Here's How self-supporting.
- Please remove my name from your mailing list.
- I can't contribute now, but please keep me on
the mailing list.

Please mail to:
Here's How
180 N. Wabash Ave, Suite 305
Chicago IL 60601

Make checks payable to: CASO



Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chicago, IL
Permit 9817

Chicago Area Service Office, NFPC
180 N. Wabash Ave, Suite 305
Chicago IL 60601
Dated Material, Do Not Delay