



STEP FIVE — SPRINGBOARD TO MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

Step 5, like so much of AA, helped me build meaningful relationships with others and my Higher Power. Up until I found recovery, I lived my entire life in some form of isolation. Even before drinking, I loved being alone as a child. As I started drinking surreptitiously in junior high, I found out I loved being sneaky, too. This continued on through my adulthood. I would drink alone in my dorm at college, sneak drinks when no one was looking and look forward to going home from a night out with friends so I could come home and drink by myself, and on and on. I never was truly open with anyone. I had close friends, long term romantic relationships, close family relationships, but I never would be open and completely honest with any of them. It was not so much outright lying, it was withholding. Withholding information, withholding love, withholding time. I just did not want anyone to get to know all of me. Sure, I would show people the good parts and had superficial relationships with lots of people. I was well liked, but no one really knew the true me. I lived a life of isolation, just as I wanted it. This worked for me, until it didn't

Alcohol was a big part of my life from the first drink and just kept becoming bigger and bigger and edging out pieces of my life until nothing was left but alcohol. That is what forced me to find recovery in AA.

Step 5 asked me to do the opposite of what I had

done my whole life. I was asked to use my 4th step inventory to build relationships with another person, my Higher Power, and myself by being vulnerable and having integrity. As my story suggests, I had an immense fear of being vulnerable, about being not liked, about being ashamed of who I was deep inside. I wanted people to only see the good sides of me and not all of me. But now, I was desperate, and willing to follow the suggestions of the program to find lasting recovery and restore my sanity, so I took my 4th step and shared it with my sponsor and another man from my home group. I shared all of it, which took so much courage. It was uncomfortable and frightening, but it was the beginning of my development as a sober man who was willing to be vulnerable and have integrity to own up to the things I did and take accountability for them.

After I was done, I was told to read my 4th step to myself in the mirror and pray to my Higher Power that night about my 4th Step. It sounded silly to me, but I did it. At this point, I had come to terms with the fact that my way was not working and I had to be open and follow instructions. I will never know if this action helped or not, but I have strived since this point to be honest with myself and to learn to trust and confide in my Higher Power.

This was just the beginning. Since this time, I have tried to carry these principles in all my

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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, 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.

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.

608 Seventh Street West - St. Paul, MN 55102

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 1 PM

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affairs. I aim to be open and vulnerable in close relationships, have integrity for all my thoughts and actions every day, and the courage to own up to it when I fall short. Step 5 was the springboard into meaningful relationships with myself, people around me, and my Higher Power. The relationships I have developed in recovery have far surpassed any of my wildest expectations, and I have the program of AA, Step 5, and my Higher Power to thank for that.



Jake B.
St. Paul

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS STILL LEADS IN SUCCESS RATES FOR RECOVERY

A recent article in the New York Times recently offered information regarding A.A.'s value in people finding recovery (excerpts follow).

“... An updated systematic review published by the Cochrane Collaboration found that A.A. leads to increased rates and lengths of abstinence compared with other common treatments...”

“... ‘these results demonstrate A.A.’s effectiveness in helping people not only initiate but sustain abstinence and remission over the long term.’ said leading author, John F. Kelly, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and director of the Recovery Research Institute at Massachusetts General Hospital. ‘The fact that A.A. is free and so widely available is also good news.’ ...”

“... Studies generally show that other treatments might result in about 15% to 25% of people who remain abstinent. With A.A., its somewhere between 22% and 37% (specific finds vary by study). ...”

“...Alcoholics Anonymous is often paired with other kinds of treatment that encourage engagement with it. ‘For people already in treatment, if they add A.A. to it, their outcomes are superior to those who just get treatment without A.A.’ said Kieth Humphreys, a Stanford University professor and co-author of the new Cochrane review. ...”

“... Another study found that for each additional A.A. meeting attended, health care costs fell by almost 5%, mostly a result of fewer days spent in the hospital and fewer psychiatric visits. ...”

“... Worldwide, alcohol misuse and dependence are responsible for 3.3 million deaths per year, **10 times the number of fatalities from all illicit drugs combined.** ...”

“... In the United States, alcohol is a larger killer than other drugs; accounts for the majority of all addiction treatment cases; and is responsible for at least \$250 billion per year in lost productivity and costs related to crime, incarceration and health care. **Moreover, American deaths related to alcohol more than doubled between 1999 and 2017.** ...”

“... Reducing the human and financial burdens of alcohol is an often overlooked public health priority, and the new evidence suggests that on balance one of the oldest solutions—Alcoholics Anonymous has been around almost 85 years—is still the better one.

Bolding of text by Lifeline editor.



THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

Greetings to my fellow friends on this journey we call life. A journey that most reading this are attempting to live sober, like myself, one day at a time. And what an amazing gift it is that I, Andrew, get to sit here sober, a Member At Large on the St. Paul Ingergroup's Board, and pen an article for our newsletter Lifeline. I can Really...? God is Good!

Outlets such as *Lifeline*, *Grapevine*, and many other printed publications, have long been a critical vehicle to carrying AA's message, reaching through to those who may not be able to attend meetings, and how true that is today. During this pandemic, as most of us are hunkered down at home, isolated, and severed from our meetings(in-person), we have had to adapt—and fast. Most of us are now gathering in the virtual rooms of AA. Online, we can still sit across from one another, read the Big Book, and share in the solution of alcoholism. Again what a gift! And what more of a gift is there than knowing that we as a society(AA) can weather this crisis and remain sober, for our basic text tells us so.

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TRADITION FIVE

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Often, when this Tradition is referred to—the reference focuses on the last portion of the Tradition. The thought, “What was Bill trying to communicate to me?”, rarely crosses our minds. The result of that approach is that a misunderstanding begins to form within the minds of those of us who are new to Alcoholics Anonymous. At least that was true in my case.

I recall being in a wonderful discussion with one of our groups oldtimers one day. We were talking about how our group was functioning. I blurted out the phrase, “The newcomer is the most important person in the room!” You see I had become part of the ‘Slogan Slingers Brigade’. Anytime something came up that I wanted to appear knowledgeable about, but didn’t really have the understanding of, I would sling out a slogan. We hear all kinds of them today as apparently the Brigade has amassed large numbers of adherents.

That oldtimers response to me was not quite what I expected. He said, “Son,...”. You know when an oldtimer starts their comments to you with the words “son,” or “buddy,” (in the male case), or “Honey,” or “Sweetheart,” (in the female case), you are about to have some wisdom *impressed* upon you. He said, “Son, if you don’t pay attention to ALL the people in the meeting, there won’t be any oldtimers around to help the newcomers get sober.” A quick review of my own experience drove that point home to the extent that I can still hear his voice today - many decades later.

So, when we contemplate—which I hope each group and member will—the Fifth Tradition, I hope we won’t become members of the Slogan Slingers Brigade. That we will break down what Bill was trying to express to us after his many years of being at the center of AA experience. He always wrote and spoke to the newcomer—that’s why his communication has endured for so many years. So what wisdom is it he is trying to bring to our attention?

In the COVID-19 world in which we currently exist, it may be easier to understand his offering of wisdom. In his day, he learned by watching groups come and go, that selfishness and self-centeredness was not only a dangerous defect for an alcoholic to harbor—it was destructive tendency in an AA group

as well. This is one of the life-threatening impacts of the slogan, “this is a selfish program,” which is often bandied about in AA meetings by the Slogan Slingers Brigade.

The question our contemplation may present to us is, “*How should a group function?*” In the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, it says that we meet so the newcomer can find the fellowship they seek. Notice that the word ‘fellowship’ is in lower case. It simply means the same as ‘comradery.’ It is NOT the *Fellowship of the Spirit* which gives rise to sobriety and which is the basis for our society & program. This ‘comradery’ is simply the doorway to Alcoholics Anonymous—a personal connection. So that is the first question I must ask myself and my Home Group—do we provide that ‘doorway?’ Do we offer a real connection, or merely an association? One that evaporates when the meeting ends.

Secondly, an ‘em dash’ comes after the mention of a primary purpose (this is something used in typography to reverse the order of a sentence). So, in effect, it tells us that we need ‘our group message to carry’ before we open the door of fellowship. But how do we do that?

This will bring us, if we truly want to be a student of the principles underpinning our Steps, Traditions and Concepts, to a review of the content and format of our meeting(s). Do we focus our discussion and comments on the AA experience found in our conference-approved literature—or do we veer off into wide ranging discussions about the ‘things interesting to the scientific mind.’ Topics Dr. Bob cared so little for in AA. Matters better left to a sponsor, or discussions over the phone or at coffee.

It is through the inventory and sharing Steps (4 – 11) that we come to understand our own experience. So, too, an AA group can come to understand its *common* experience. Not each individuals experience—but the kinds of experiences with alcoholism and sobriety that are common to the entire group. That is the ‘message’ the group has to carry to the newcomer. *This is the “We” of the AA program because all of the group members had the experience.* The specific, individual aspects of sobriety the new person can learn from the person(s) they see practicing what they are reading about in AA literature, or hearing about. Consistency keeps the newcomer’s confusion to a minimum—that is the purpose here. The newcomer isn’t the most important person—they are simply the critically needed focal point.

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Our book highlights that during WWII there was concern for the AA members that went off to battle maintaining their sobriety. Would they succeed while distanced from the life of recovery they've grown accustomed to: a life steeped in meetings, working with others, and fellowship? Not only did they succeed, they excelled! Writing letters, sharing with others on the battlefield their experience, strength, and hope, allowed them to remain sober in addition to facing adverse situations (such as this pandemic) with a sense of purpose and resolve learned from the principles of the twelve steps.

So fear not my fellow alcoholics! Although life for us in recovery looks little like it did only a few weeks ago, trust that we as members of Alcoholics Anonymous have the tools to maintain our sobriety as we continue to carry the message through these unprecedented times. Whether it be picking up a pen and writing a check to be mailed off to our homegroup's 7th Tradition, or learning the log-on procedure for a Zoom™ meeting, trust these new opportunities promote growth. Also, let's not forget all the resources that are already in place to aid our success.

The Lifeline has back issues posted on aastpaul.org. The *A.A. Grapevine*, our "meeting in print" has stated that, "Due to the current changing health situation... we are giving everyone free access to all of our 2020 *Grapevine* and *La Viña* issues."

So hunker down and grab a pen or a back issue of your favorite AA publication and trust in God, AA, and your ability to continue carrying the message—even in these most uncertain of times.

In love and service,

Andrew LaB.

Member-At-Large

**MEETINGS MAY BE VIRTUAL,
BUT INTERGROUPS EXPENSES ARE
REAL!**

Don't forget to contribute at:

- The website under the 'Unity' menu item
- Using Square Cash on your phone @ [cash.app/\\$pintergroup](https://cash.app/$pintergroup)
- Send a check
- Join the Faithful Fivers Club

There are a great many things going on in the world today. Many things that I would like to think I can have an impact on. And possibly I could have just a small impact. However, I can have a much greater impact if I remain focused on ensuring that I and my Home Group have a well clarified, simple, truthful and direct message for those seeking it. A lesson hopefully well learned from the example set by the Fellowship of Al-Anon: Carry the message—not the alcoholic!

My father was a teacher. I watched as he was assigned the rowdy and poorly mannered classes. In the course of a school year he would bring that class into line. I was always baffled by his ability to do that. Much later in life I asked him how he accomplished that. His comment was surprising. I had always thought that discipline was imposed on us. His answer contradicted that idea. He said, "I let the boys and girls do as much of their poor behavior as they can stand—and then they want to change." Isn't that what happened to us to bring us into Alcoholics Anonymous? My dad was a bit of a 'natural' Al-Anon. Thank God!

I have had the good fortune over the past decades to observe, and learn from, a great deal of AA experience, and some wonderful sponsors/teachers. Consistently their message was "watch and learn." There have been many kinds of 'messages' thrown about in AA, based on a wide variety of sources, and often quoting great teachers. Some with agendas that intended much more than simply "...laying the kit of spiritual tools at their feet..." However, the ones that have survived are the ones who didn't try and lift people up, but rather reached them where they were—sharing only what AA principles had directly been experienced by the person doing the sharing. (a caveat here: not everything that has the term 'recovery' attached to it is part of the AA program)

So, in the final analysis, at least in my mind, Tradition Five not only provides us with guidance as to what direction we might move our energies and Home Groups—but also presents us with a heritage. That heritage being that if we ensure that others have what we want—it will be automatically given us. One of the paradoxes of the AA program is that all the wonderful gifts we enjoy are by-products of a set of actions we don't fully understand. They are gifts of 'grace,' given by a Higher Power we also don't fully understand, yet have one we have faith in.

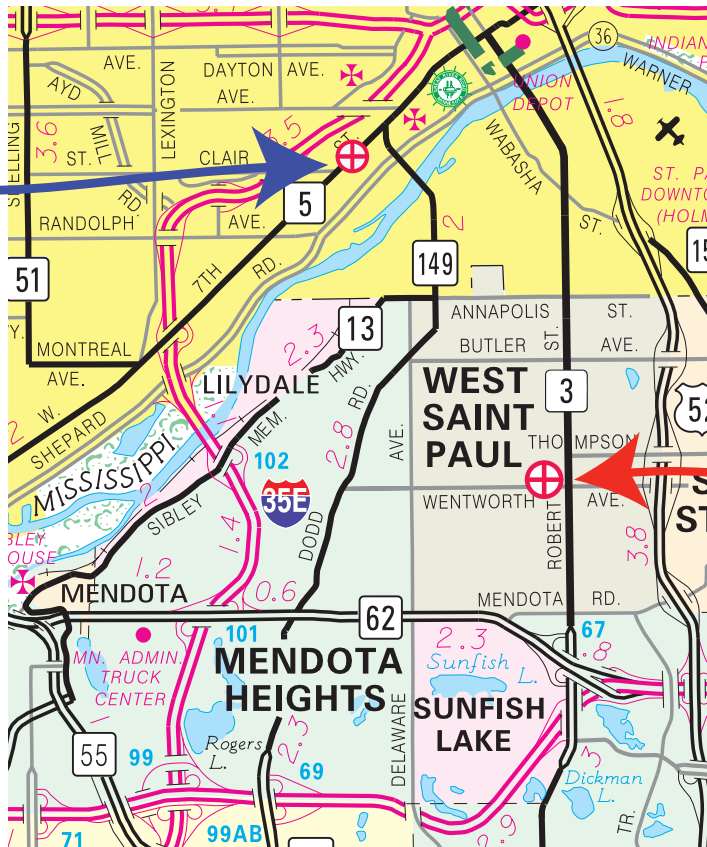
ST. PAUL INTERGROUP IS MOVING!

The Intergroup office will be moving to a new location by May 31st of 2020. We are currently in the process of arranging for transitioning our technology (phone & Internet) services. While you can expect some disruptions -- the office will be open during regular hours and conducting regular business — before, during and after the move.



CURRENT

Location
608 W 7th Street



NEW
Location
33 Wentworth Ave

Intergroup Representatives for the groups that support St. Paul Intergroup can expect a full description on the new location at the next Reps Meeting - either in person or digitally. The new location is 1 block west of the intersection of Robert Street and Wentworth - across from the West St. Paul Dome structure to the north and Carbone's Pizza to the east.

Double-check the Intergroup website (aastpaul.org) to learn which groups are meeting, the clubs that are open, which groups are meeting online. and which clubs/groups are not available until further notice.



STEP FIVE —INTEGRITY—

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

INTERGROUP 2020 EVENTS

OPEN HOUSE - TO BE DECIDED

July 25, 2020 - Hosts: Rachel P. & Andrew LaB.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL - REDEEMER CHURCH

September 12, 2020 - Hosts: Jeremiah W. & Mark J.

GRATITUDE NIGHT - REDEEMER CHURCH

November 21, 2020 - Hosts: Rachel P. & Jimmy D.

FOUNDERS DAY HOSPITALITY ROOM - BLOOMINGTON

November 27-29, 2020 - Hosts: Andrew LaB. & Tom O.

NEW YEARS EVE - REDEEMER CHURCH

December 31, 2020 - Hosts: Lindsey D. & Jimmy D.

This was hard for me because I had lived my life like appearances are everything. I was much more concerned with looking good than with doing good. Unfortunately the greater my academic and professional accomplishments, the more impressive stuff I acquired, the louder my disease screamed "You are a phony." So I never really got the satisfaction or happiness I expected.

My greatest fear was that if you really knew what I was like and what I had done you would not like me and you would leave me and poor little Robby would be all alone living in the park at Christmas. So when I did my first fifth step with my sponsor, I half expected him to run screaming into the night. What I got was unconditional love. He told me about similar things he had done. I learned that nothing human is unmentionable and nothing mentionable is unmanageable.

Later I shared some of my deepest darkest secrets at a meeting. In the middle of it, people got up to get coffee and to go to the restroom.

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LOOKING FOR A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY?

Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl

Upcoming Night Owl Orientations:
Saturday, May 16th, June 20th, July 18th
Third Saturday from 10:00 - 11:00 AM

St. Paul Intergroup Office
608 7th St. West
St. Paul, MN 55102

To RSVP - please call 651-227-5502



12th Step
Calls

2



Website
Visits

9,038



Temp
Sponsor
Requests

13



Night
Owl Calls

249



Meeting
Info Calls

63



Speakers
Provided

0



Literature
Purchased

164 Books

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

- Children of Chaos
- Cottage Grove Groups
- Dakota ALano - Thurs 7:30 Mens
- Firing Line
- Forest Lake Alano
- Friday Night Oasis
- Gloria Dei AA
- Grovers Thursday Night
- Happy Hour Men's Meeting
- Highland Park Groups
- Jan 6th Grp - Roseville
- Lake City Grp

- Lakeland Grp
- Lindstrom Groups
- Mendota 10:30 AA Group
- Midway Club
- Monday Morning Womens' Grp
- No Frills AA
- Pages of Wisdom
- Pocketing Our Pride
- Ridge Runners II - Sat 8:30 AM
- Ridge Runners III - Sun 8:30 AM
- Rosemount Groups
- Sat Morning PS Meeting

- Shivering Denizens
- Stillwater Morning Groups
- Summit Hill
- The Promises Meeting
- Third Tradition - Northfield



30 A.A. Groups contributed \$3,566 and 6 Gratitude Contributions totaled \$348 — 18 Faithful Fivers contributed \$340 as well! **THANK YOU!!**

I realized that nobody but me was wrecked over this stuff. I have learned that anything I am hiding from anybody takes a toll on me and anything I am hiding from everybody is eating me alive.

For me, the primary principle behind Step 5 is INTEGRITY: To thine own self be true. It is about holding me accountable for having my behavior be consistent with the sort of person I aspire to be, the sort of person God created me to be. INTEGRAL means the parts fit perfectly into the whole. I have become a full member of the human race, striving to fulfill the role God has in mind for me.

My lack of integrity most often showed up in what I did not say. Perhaps my ex- would not notice that we now have only 11 Waterford tumblers. If my parents or my teachers wanted to think that somebody else did it, who am I to tell them otherwise.

I used to get upset (make that self-righteous anger) thinking that somebody else was getting away with something. I have learned that in the end nobody gets away with anything, so the best course is always to take responsibility for what I did or did not do. Regardless of what other people think, I will know what I did and I will not be OK with myself, with God or with them until I own up to it.

When I was drinking, none of the physicians or mental health professionals I consulted were able to help me very much because I did not tell the truth about my drinking. One of the reasons I have usually chosen to do Step 5 with my sponsor is that I have a rule for myself "Don't ever withhold anything from your sponsor." A withhold is anything I do not want him to know, usually because I think he will think less of me or because I am afraid I won't be able to get away with doing something questionable that I want to do. So before I hang up the phone or before I leave, I ask myself "What are you withholding?" Often I've been thinking about doing something foolish -- perhaps something that will require amends; perhaps something self-destructive. Then I say, "And another thing I need to tell you . . ."

I think it is important for one person to know EVERYTHING about me. In early recovery, I went from person to person and from meeting, dropping a secret here and a secret there. That was better than hiding it from everybody, but it left me thinking "If anybody knew EVERYTHING, they

wouldn't accept me."

From Step 5, I learned that I was not as good as I had hoped or as bad as I had feared. I was not the best little boy in the world and I was not the worst little boy in the world. I am, in a word, human. And that makes me part angelic child of God and part selfish and self-centered jerk.

Step 5 gave me a more realistic sense of my strengths and weaknesses which is necessary for me to have humility and be teachable. Taking Step 5 helped me identify patterns of bad behavior. While I never enjoy discovering these things (The truth will set you free, but first it will piss you off.), AA has given me the wherewithal to transform my rude awakenings into spiritual awakenings. There is great leverage in identifying my patterns: addressing one pattern can resolve a number of seemingly unrelated problems.

Having taken Step 5 is a deterrent to future bad behavior. Just thinking that I won't want to tell my sponsor about doing something, makes me think twice about doing it. I know that if I do it, sooner or later, I will tell Sponsor Dearest. So would it not be better to just not do it in the first place?

~ Rob M. (2.24.1985) Weber Nooners Group, Corpus Christi, TX
Reprinted from the Coastal Bend Intergroup Newsletter

COMING SOON!



St. Paul Intergroup will be launching a new **online store** which will have all our current inventory items. It will also have "curbside service." Keep an eye on our website for a link to the new store when it is operational.



DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

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.

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



FOUR SAFETY PRACTICES FOR YOUR ZOOM OR ONLINE MEETINGS.

- Don't share meeting passwords unless you know the person is a real AA member.
- Host - set your meeting to place people in the Waiting Room until you allow them in.
- Host - set your meeting so that people are automatically muted when they enter the meeting - until you un-mute them.
- Host - set your meeting so that only hosts & co-hosts can share their screens.

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)

Fairview Community Center
1910 Cty. Rd B West, 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



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

Chris G., Caleb A., David D., David F., Ellen M.,
Eddie, Frank D., Harry D., Isaac F., Laurie P.,
Lewie W., Lydia S., Jensen O., Jimmy D.,
Jodie T-W., Marc S., Neilla M., Pat S., Rachel D.,
Ruth C., Steve R., Tomas S.

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 \$9.83 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.

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we've had a broad spectrum of important issues take place on these committees, and I will always be grateful to have been a participant. For example, Nominating has been working on evaluating and considering changes to the GSB that will make it more effective in service to the fellowship. Finance has been wrestling with how to divest ourselves of the large liability on our balance sheet, the pension plan.

There's no doubt that the Printers Copy Manuscript issue that took place over the first and second year proved to be very trying and was easily the most divisive issue during my tenure. Between the challenges during the process as well as the 2018 General Service Conference's discussions on the issue, my serenity and peace of mind were challenged.

The second and third years also brought on a second position: being a director for an affiliate. In a rare departure for a WCR trustee, I was seated on AAWS's corporate board. This doubled the travel to NYC and more than doubled the workload. The hallmark experience is how embedded I was in the operations of AA. Several committees and sub-committees, plus I had the opportunity to be the inaugural chair of the AAWS Internal Audit Committee and I chaired the DELTA Committee, which was put into place to evaluate the literature sales and pricing process.

Year three had me chairing my first Trustee Committee: Nominating. This brought with it an extra benefit, which was the process for selecting two new Class A trustees. This will also go down as one of the best memories of service as a trustee. I was also seated on Trustee International Conventions-Regional Forums, and with the 2020 International Convention looming, I knew it would be a challenging place to serve.

Participation in Regional Forums will also carry lasting memories. I had the opportunity to chair two in the West Central Region. As a region we introduced a process to forums that coordinated meals with trustees, nontrustee directors and staff members with the AA members attending the forum. It became a huge success not only in our region, but it is now being embraced by other regions, too. I also had the chance to be the AAWS director to the Eastern Canada Regional Forum in 2018. One of the most notable memories of that was I was a 2nd-language attendee, as we were in the heart of

French-speaking Quebec and wearing a headset for the weekend for translation proved to be an eye-opening experience.

It was a big transition from year 3 to year 4. That is because I left AAWS, which was 60+ percent of my time in service as trustee. However, what I thought was going to be a quieter fourth year didn't occur. I had become part of a committee in my third and fourth years with the goal of improving the orientation process for new trustees. I was tasked with a myriad of writing and presentation topics for orientation. And just when I thought I was done after the July orientation in 2019, I was asked to stay on to help author an orientation manual. Hence, my fourth year can be characterized by a extended writing projects, and I'll barely get it all done by my final GSC in April.

I bid you farewell as the WCR trustee. Area 36 provided three fine delegates that I had the opportunity to serve with over the past four years. It is apparent that A.A. is alive and well in Southern Minnesota, and I note the continuing actions taking place to reach both the A.A. members and include them in the service structure as well as bringing the A.A. message to all who need it. The Spirit of Service shines bright in Area 36!

Yours in service,

Tom A.
WCR Trustee

IRISH SOBRIETY?

An Irishman goes into a bar in America and orders three whiskeys. The bartender asks: "Would it be better for you if I put all three shots in one glass?"

The Irishman replies: "No! I have two other brothers back at home, so every time I come into a pub, I order a shot for them as well."

The following week, the Irishman orders just two whiskeys.

The bartender asks: "Did something happen one of your brothers?" "Oh no," replies the Irishman. "I just decided to quit drinking!"

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup
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