



## STEP TWELVE

*Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

**WHEN** I first read this step it was at once exciting and terrifying. Of course, I had brought my friend to AA to get him sober (having no idea what it was) and it had turned out I was the one with alcoholism. I knew the feeling of wanting to help out another kindred spirit. But the idea of ‘practicing these principles’ in all my affairs seemed like asking an awful lot of me. After all, everything I had tried had eventually fallen apart in failure—so how was I going to pull this off?

The Twelfth Step is so incredibly broad and dynamic that it is difficult for us, when we are new, to really wrap our minds around what it truly is about. Not only that, it seems to morph into something entirely new each time I approach it with more experience to share. And to top that off, everyone in the meetings I attended seemed to be doing it a different way. That made it impossible for me to try and ‘fake it’ in order to get you to think I was really doing what it asked of me.

My first sponsors were ‘slogan sponsors’ and so every time I needed some help—I got a slogan to follow. I loved the “Easy Does It” one because in my mind it meant “you don’t have to bother with that!” It wasn’t until I was sober over a year that I

got a sponsor who helped me understand what the Twelve Steps were about. I don’t fault those first sponsors (a man and wife team) because they were just doing what had been done with them. But the second sponsor had moved into town and brought with him the approach that had been used on him – working the Steps.

He, and subsequent sponsors, helped me to understand that the Step says, “THE result—not A result.” Funny how that little change made a world of difference in my approach to this. I learned that it was through the surrendering to a God, thorough inventories that were shared, restitution for harms caused and an ongoing conversation with this new God thing that the by-product would turn out to be a new me. Not something I designed, not something I fashioned through my own desires and wishes and not something that was focused on serving me—but a person who could be of service to their fellow alcoholics, without regard for a personal game plan. That’s not what I signed up for—but it’s what I was given.

I thought I had a ‘message’ long before I really had one. I was taught that the message wasn’t what I may or may not know about alcoholism. As a matter of fact, it wasn’t about any kind of knowledge at all. It was about understanding. I discovered that fear and prejudice cannot coexist within understanding. The only thing that can exist in the realm of understanding is experience and faith. The experience I have had in ‘practicing these principles’ and the faith that has developed as the result.

I had a bit of trouble trying to figure out how I was

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

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*The Lifeline* is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc. It is about, by, and for groups and members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or St. Paul Intergroup. We welcome articles on a Step, Tradition or Concept, in addition to descriptions of personal experience. We also welcome original cartoons and drawings expressing the wry side of A.A. experience.

Please email your article to [Lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto: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](http://www.aastpaul.org) e-mail: [lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:lifeline@aastpaul.org) Fax: 651-290-0209

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

going to keep all these 12 principles (I thought) in my mind as I went through the day. I was given a definition of a ‘principle’ that really helped me to get a working grasp of this. It was explained to me that, “A principle is a truth upon which other truths can be based.” And, that these were 12 Steps (actions) were based on some underlying principles. SO, I had to find those underlying principles. Turns out there were just a few. Basically, I discovered that there were probably only 4 of them—Honesty, Unselfishness, Purity and Love. The Purity one threw me for a loop for a while, until I discovered that it meant “the willingness to be purified”—kind of why we have Steps 6 & 7.

The next realization was that, if you are committed to this effort, a point arrives at which you stop making hard work of the Steps and they begin to work you. So, in essence, I began to experience the ‘by-products’ of a dedicated effort to practice the principles in all my affairs. It happened without me trying to make it happen at all. I suppose it’s no different than developing any other kind of ‘habit.’ Although it’s a bit mind-boggling to think of working the Twelve Steps as a kind of ‘habit.’ But we all have a wide variety of things that we do on a daily basis that we don’t mind calling habits, that are actually very good for us.

Now I don’t want to leave the impression that I do these things without much thought or effort. I still have to be mindful of what I am trying to be and to become and so I need to measure it all by the Steps and principles that are at the center of my life. The point I am trying to make to make is that it seems to have become more natural for me to make the effort. The result of which has been an ever-increasing new awareness of the world I live in and the gifts I’ve been given. I try to be careful to check and see if I have learned something new about me, about the Program, about my Higher Power and about spiritual principles each day. Obviously, I can’t say “yes” every day. But if I have gone a week without a yes somewhere in that sequence of questions – I need to sit down and do a careful inventory of where my focus has been. Without that experience and faith—I have no message to carry! And therefore, I cannot work Step Twelve. There are many out in the world who hunger for the gifts we are freely given. How sad it would be if I cheated them by not receiving those gifts or sharing what I receive.

*Anonymous  
St. Paul, MN*



**I**t is dark when I say a prayer and get out of bed these days, cold. My cat, still curled up on the blanket, reaches out a paw to make me stay.

Hey God, I’m here. Help me remember you today. Help me remember you in each moment. That I may do Thy will.

Then the feet hit the floor. The coffee pot is on. I am in the shower, getting out carefully so I don’t step on the sprawled cat just outside. He fears I will forget to feed him. As I look in the closet, he plops down on both my feet communicating his dislike of the morning departure. When I slip my feet out from under him, he forgives the abandonment only because it means breakfast in his bowl.

It is still dark when I am in the car, driving down the two lane road to Main Street. There is no radio news, no music, just me and HP. We wind into the mountains. Occasional headlights pass. We are driving through prayers, one line at a time. Some lines last miles.

I am now willing that you should have all of me...

I am now willing...

At the summit I consider GoogleMaps, another higher power of sorts. I navigate into the valley, into the sea of cars. The sky beginning to gray in the east.

With the sunrise, the long winter shadows grow. I snap photos in my mind. I know if I could hike up that one hill, it would be a great sunrise. If I could fly along those old railroad tracks...

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## St. Paul Intergroup Contribution Drive!

***We must reach NEW contributors to continue to provide vital services!***

**HOW:** We need YOU!! Reach out to your AA Groups and fellow AA members and encourage them to contribute. [www.aastpaul.org](http://www.aastpaul.org)

- Become a “Faithful Fiver” – call 651-227-5502 to sign up!
  - Online Contributions!
- Mail checks to the office!
- Visit the Office or shop online!
- Square Cash App: \$spintergroup

**GOAL:** \$25-30,000 for expenses through end of the year and another \$30,000 to build our prudent reserve by Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

### WE CAN DO THIS!

We list 800+ meetings! If every meeting contributed \$18.75/month for the next 4 months, we would hit our goal! About ~24% of meetings contributed last year. ***Does your group contribute?***

***THANK YOU, CONTRIBUTORS!!!!***



**REMINDER:** How does St Paul Intergroup serve the still suffering alcoholic, the AA Fellowship, and Groups? ***Intergroup is who people reach when they look up AA.***

- Answers phone 24 hours a day.
- Publishes a Meeting Directory.
- Provides guidance about finding a sponsor to newcomers.
- Sells AA literature and medallions.
- Maintains the website with meeting and event information.
- Maintains a list of Speakers and those willing to do 12 Step work.
- Publishes the *Lifeline* newsletter!

**NEED MORE INFORMATION?** Email the Outreach Committee at [outreach@aastpaul.org](mailto:outreach@aastpaul.org) or contact Dennis B., Office Manager, (651) 227-5502, email: [manager@aastpaul.org](mailto:manager@aastpaul.org), Office location: 33 Wentworth Ave E., West Saint Paul MN 55118

# ST. PAUL INTERGROUP 2021 PROPOSED BUDGET

## INCOME

	2020 Budget	2020 YTD Jan-Sept	2021 Budget	2021 vs 2020 Budget
General Contributions	\$10,000	\$7,384	\$10,000	\$0
Special Contributions/Online Store	\$2,800	\$614	\$9,000	\$6,200
Group Contributions	\$56,000	\$34,942	\$47,000	-\$9,000
Faithful Fivers	\$7,500	\$8,086	\$10,000	\$2,500
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>76,300</b>	<b>51,027</b>	<b>76,000</b>	<b>-300</b>
<b>Office Sales</b>				
AA Literature	43,000	15,066	19,186	-23,814
General Merchandise	40,000	16,023	21,000	-19,000
Printing Service	2,500	731	0	-2,500
<b>TOTAL SALES</b>	<b>85,500</b>	<b>31,820</b>	<b>40,186</b>	<b>-45,314</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>161,800</b>	<b>82,847</b>	<b>116,186</b>	<b>-45,614</b>
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>				
AA Literature	29,400	10,771	15,000	-14,400
General Merchandise	15,000	6,007	9,000	-6,000
<b>TOTAL COST OF GOODS SOLD</b>	<b>44,400</b>	<b>16,778</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>-20,400</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>117,400</b>	<b>66,069</b>	<b>92,186</b>	<b>-25,214</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Salaries	65,346	46,433	37,440	-27,906
Taxes	1,640	1,732	10,920	9,280
Staff Training	1,500	0	0	-1,500
Payroll Service	2,000	1,464	2,236	236
Accounting Service	1,000		700	-300
Office Rent	23,256	13,873	22,500	-756
Internet Service/Telcom	6,000	4,703	6,000	0
Insurance - Board & Office	3,381	2,697	4,230	849
Office Supplies	3,600	1,847	2,000	-1,600
Postage	500	540	600	100
Equipment Lease	7,000	5,514	7,380	380
Grapevine Subscription	35	64	240	205
Outreach Expenses - Lifeline, etc.	6,200	1,253	4,000	-2,200
Contracted Services	1,200	1,706	2,000	800
Credit Card Fees	2,300	664	1,500	-800
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>124,958</b>	<b>82,490</b>	<b>101,746</b>	<b>-23,212</b>
NET INCOME	117,400	66,069	92,186	-25,214
TOTAL EXPENSES	124,958	82,490	101,746	-23,212
<b>TOTAL NET INCOME</b>	<b>-7,558</b>	<b>-16,421</b>	<b>-9,560</b>	<b>-2,002</b>

# GROW WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED!



**HERE** are some things to consider if you have moved to a new sobriety area. Even though your new city does not “do” AA right, in your opinion, be still and listen to what you hear in the ‘new to you’ meetings. Look around and see if there are old-timers, folks over 30 years, that have been sober in this area for most or all of that time. Spend some time getting to know the people in the meetings before you attend their group business meeting to change the format of the meeting to match where you came from. Consider starting a new meeting similar to what you are used to instead of disrupting the flow of the meeting that may have existed longer than you are sober.

I say this from my own personal experience from moving to different sobriety stations. I got sober in Southern California, Huntington/Newport/Sunset/Laguna Beaches and the surrounding areas. In my opinion it was the greatest place ever to get sober. It was like a great big pep rally of sober people. They clapped after every share and the meetings were an hour and a half long. I suppose to allow time for all that clapping. At almost four years of sobriety I moved to the Monterey Peninsula. Boy did they do their meetings wrong! It was pretty uncomfortable until I complained to my Papa Sponsor and he told me to do what they do. So, I did! Even though they were doing it wrong, they were doing it and had members there with long term sobriety. If it was working for them, maybe it could work for me. It did!

At 11 years sobriety I moved to Gallatin, Tennessee. Boy did they do it wrong! Since I had previous experience in moving, I took my time finding meetings in Sumner, Wilson and Davidson Counties where I was comfortable. Only to learn that the folks in that area only went to meetings in their area and rarely left their city for meetings. That made me kind of crazy because I was taught in Southern California that we “go to any lengths” to stay sober and that meant going to different areas for meetings. Even though they didn’t go to other meetings, I did and I met lots of fantastic people.

At 24 years I moved to Reno! Again, they didn’t do it right, but they had a vibrant fellowship here! Lots of

people with a similar amount of sobriety of myself. I learned the term “stay in the middle of the herd”. What a great philosophy! The most annoying thing here was a lot of chanting during the readings in the meeting and would end the meeting with the AI Anon statement of “who you see here...”. That drove me nuts, but inspired me to find meetings where they don’t do that. So far, I have not been inspired to start a meeting with guidelines in the format to meet my pet projects.

In closing I would like to compare AA meetings to restaurants. If you don’t like the food, don’t go to that restaurant! If you can’t find a restaurant you like, open your own business! Remember, no two meetings will ever be the same... Grow where you’re planted!

*Anonymous  
Northern Nevada Intergroup*

## IT’S A SLIPPERY TIME OF YEAR



Lately, I have heard a lot about relapse in meetings. Most of the shares around relapse are surrounded by remorse and guilt, some with gratitude.

I have also heard narratives at meetings from sober members of AA who have been lucky enough not to experience a relapse. These members sometimes express anger around the relapse of close friends as if it is a personal betrayal. I have heard things like the doors of AA are not revolving doors, and although we have many relapses, we may not have another recovery.

Although I agree with these sentiments, I cannot help but want to change the narrative around relapse.

As someone who has collected a year, or two, or three and then relapsed, I can say the following with certainty: The first few painful weeks of sobriety are challenging to avoid. Hurdling these few weeks is a task and miracle in itself. However, shortly after the pain stops, the memory of the pain of those first few weeks seems to disappear. The forgotten pain

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# HOLIDAY SAVINGS

Not Available Online

## BUT ONE - GET ONE FREE



Must place order, with payment, between December 1 and January 31, 2020. They will be delivered in February.



Let these guys hang around your wallet a little longer — save 15% on your purchase of AA literature if you spend \$100 or more. Advance paid orders must be placed between December 1, 2020 and January 31, 2021 to qualify.



12th Step Calls

3



Website Visits

7,893



Night Owl Calls

176



Meeting Info Calls

85



Speakers Calls

2



Literature Purchased

94 Books

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

- A Baffled Lot
- A New Light
- Amazing Grace Grp
- Apple Valley Daily Reflections
- Basic Text
- Came to Believe
- Centennial AA - Lino Lakes
- Como Park Big Book
- Complete Defeat Grp
- Defiant Brats East
- Easy Does It
- Farmington Monday Night
- Forest Lake Alano
- Friday Night 12x12 By The Book
- Hastings Club
- Highland Park Grps
- Highland Park Squad 8 - Sun 6:30 BB
- Jumpstart 12 & 12
- Lake Elmo Thursday Night Grp
- Live and Let Live
- Mahtomedi Happy Hour 12 & 12
- Midway Club
- Pocketing Our Pride
- Ringmasters Grp
- River Rats
- Rivertown BB Grp - Hastings
- Rosemount Grps
- Roseville Wednesday Night
- Rule 62 Step & Tradition Grp
- Scandia Big Book
- Scandia Monday
- Short Stories
- Simple Reliance
- Sisters of Serenity
- St. Peters Fellowship AA Grp
- Summit Hill
- This Simple Program
- Uptown CLub
- Valley Creek Thursday Night
- White Bear Saturday AM Women's Grp

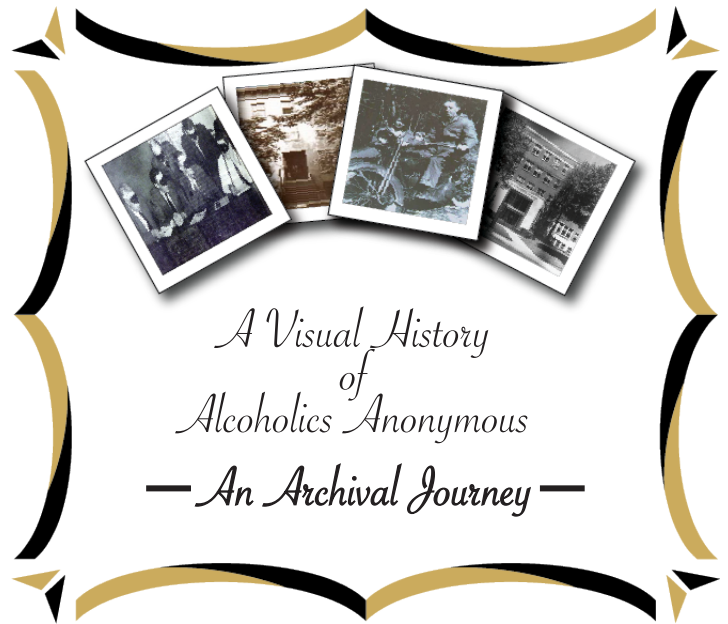
- 40 A.A. Groups contributed \$6,500
- 11 Gratitude Contributions totaled \$2,103
- 23 Faithful Fivers contributed \$1,576
- 51 Digital Contributions \$1,802

**LONGTIMERS WHO HAVE LED THE WAY  
FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FOLLOWED**

*We thank those who have come before us and have held true to the A.A. Way of Life so that we, too, could follow in their footsteps for still others. Those below have celebrated over 25 years of sobriety!*



<b>NAME</b>	<b>SOBER DATE</b>
L. B.	OCT 27, 1973
LES J.	AUG 04, 1976
DONOU M. F.	OCT 14, 1976
ELLY C.	JAN 14, 1978
DENNIS B.	NOV 05, 1978
LUCILLE M.	DEC 05, 1978
BOB M.	SEPT 29, 1979
MARTY B.	OCT 04, 1980
TOM O.	OCT 29, 1980
CAMILLE G.	SEPT 22, 1982
HENRY G.	APRIL 20, 1983
SAM T.	OCT 01, 1984
CARLA N.	FEB 15, 1985
WENDY M.	OCT 25, 1985
NANCY R.	SEPT 20, 1986
PAUL M.	JULY 15, 1988
MICHAEL B.	JAN 11, 1989
SKEETER S.	MAR 29, 1990
TOM W.	JULY 03, 1990
HAROLD C.	OCT 06, 1992
JIMMY D.	SEPT 24, 1993
STEVE B.	AUG 17, 1994
BRYAN M.	AUG 27, 1994



The above noted book is a NEW publication by A.A.W.S. It is being released on February 14th, 2021. However, it may be preordered from Intergroup between December 1, 2020 and January 31, 2021 for the discounted price of \$11.00. After January 31st, the price will increase for purchasers.

This book originated as the “souvenir book” for the 2020 International Convention. It is a “celebration of our history in words and images.” It includes a special focus on Detroit in A.A.’s history — and updated coverage of recent innovations in A.A. group life.

*Slippery Time of Year - continued from page 5*

makes it look like no big deal to drink/use and then come back.

Every time I have returned: I have always regretted the time in sobriety lost. Each time I relapsed, I never regretted all the time I missed being out in the relapse. That did not happen in my experience.

No one can keep me sober but me. The program is Alcoholics Anonymous, not Utopia Anonymous, not Eden Anonymous. Tradition Twelve talks about personalities because they are many in this program. The good news is that the better I run my program, the more personalities with which I get along. I will not have an opportunity to get along with those personalities if I do not stay sober.

Lastly, I am chronically in recovery. I have returned a dozen or so times, and I am here. My seat has been loyal to me waiting, and it has always gotten better: sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly.

- Rimi K

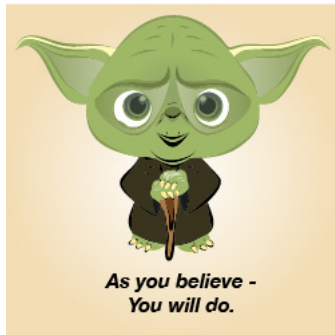
# THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

## DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

Hello Friends,

My name is Robyn Rose W. and I have the privilege of serving as Night Owl Committee Coordinator. Each month there are many groups, individual volunteers, Night Owl Committee members and others that are taking the phones after the Intergroup Office closes. As such, a compassionate presence is available at all times when someone is in need, and compassion is empathy in action.

We do have a number of open shifts to fill at this time. Taking a phone shift can be an invigorating or reinvigorating experience. In Star Wars The Empire Strikes Back Luke has a hard time believing that he can use the force to do the impossible. Yoda reminds Luke "That is why you fail." What does this have to do with Night Owl you say? When we take the risk to be vulnerable to ourselves, another person, and all that is present in a moment, something unexpectedly remarkable can happen that transcends our usual concerns.



Deepak Chopra writes that as humans we have this tendency to have a thought and then immediately followed by an impulse to act. I know this to be true for myself. To this moment, left to my own devices I still can feel and behave in ineffective ways. In recovery, we're working to become effective. Prayer helps. Trust helps. Waiting helps. Letting go helps (thanks Melody Beattie).

It takes time to learn effective new responses. When we do we can appreciate what is happening for us, not to us. Thankfully, there's the Steps. We can find the means to tolerate what otherwise may

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

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

### ***District 15 (Wash. Co.)***

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

### ***District 19 (Dakota Co.)***

Rosemount Community Center  
13885 South Robert Trail  
Rosemount  
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM  
[dist19@area36.org](mailto:dist19@area36.org)  
Email: [dist19@area36.org](mailto:dist19@area36.org)

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

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

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feel intolerable. We can sense the support and calm that comes from finding our true selves behind our protective masks.

Does this always happen on a Night Owl call? Perhaps not consciously and still I believe it's there. Unity, recovery and service is happening. Sometimes we just need the Yoda's of the world to show us that it can be done. AA and the Night Owl has been doing that for me. Just wanted to share that. Thank you for the opportunity to be of service.

Respectfully,

Robyn Rose W  
Night Owl Committee Coordinator



# 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

# 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	Lisa L.
2020 Member-At-Large	OPEN
2020 Member-At-Large	John K.
2021 Member-At-Large	Jeremiah W.
2021 Member-At-Large	Andrew LaB.
Manager	Dennis B.



**Office Volunteers:**  
Neilla M., Lynn, CJ M, Frank D.  
Chris M., Mary D., Jeff T., Steve R.

# TRADITION TWELVE

*Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

I came from a family that was riddled with alcoholic drinkers and many of them had the problem as bad as I did. I recall the first month, or so, when I got sober, still hanging out with them at our favorite watering hole, drinking ginger ale. I would slip out every night at 8:00pm and go to the A.A. meeting at 8:30 and return at 10:30 pm without telling anyone where I was going. I didn't want anybody to know that I was checking out the A.A. program. I didn't want to face the ridicule at the time, and I wasn't sure it was going to work for me. If it didn't work, I wouldn't have put up with their mocking me. You might say that I was protecting my anonymity at the time and didn't even know it.

After thirty days of that, I didn't care who knew about it because I believed I had found the answer, and I did. Soon after that I was one of them that wanted to shout it from the rooftops and try to sober up everyone around me and you know how that turned out. As I dragged each or my five brothers to A.A. meetings, it seems that they each learned just enough to be able to rationalize exactly why they were not alcoholics, and they ridiculed me any way. Two later died of alcohol related symptoms and a third committed suicide. That was among the experiences that gave me hard earned lessons on the respect for the principle of anonymity.

Of the rest of my immediate family of ten, only one sister saw something in me that she liked, and she got sober in the program and hasn't had a drink in over forty-eight years. We are exposed to the discussions in A.A. meeting as the newer members complain about someone breaking their anonymity, or the ones that want to shout it from the rooftops, like my former self, and that will always be the case in A.A. as that is one of the symptoms of alcoholism. We are failed idealists that need attention, but as we get more and more experience, we learn the true value of the spirit of anonymity.

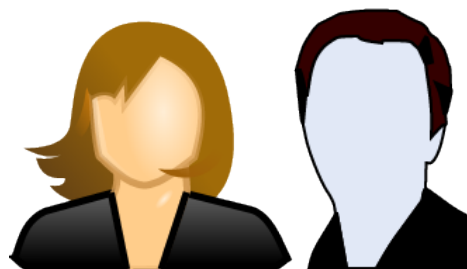
We can always come up with some noble reason for tooting our own horn and we can dress it up in the altruistic motive of sacrificing one's own anonymity

to save someone's life and that , sometimes, in the long run, destroys the chance of being a good example and often turns out doing just the opposite, and I have personally witnessed that.

In Tradition Twelve it talks of Anonymity as "The spiritual foundation of all of our Tradition ever reminding us to place principles before personalities". There is a difference in the "Spirit of the law", and the "Letter of the law". We who have been diligent with the program have been highly influenced by the Spirit of what the founders learned and introduced us to in the form of the 12 steps and the 12 traditions, and they all come in the form of unselfishness of the spirit. I have yet to find one prayer or principle in the two books that we use, as reference guides, that are of a material nature or of selfish motives. This tells me that the things I do, that are as the result of practicing the principles of the program, should be done unselfishly and without fanfare.

So long as I needed the attention that I was always seeking when I was looking for the photo opp., I was still only following the letter of the law, so to speak. When I came to understand the Spirit of Anonymity, I was able to rein in my EGO and my selfish motives. I try to be a good role model and do it quietly. It seems to work better that way.

*Rick R.  
San Diego Intergroup  
Coordinator Newsletter*



VIRTUAL REGIONAL FORUM - WESTERN U.S & CANADA  
DECEMBER 19, 2020  
REGISTRATION OPENS NOVEMBER 20, 2020  
SEE WEBSITE AT: WWW.AA.ORG

I wish I could take pictures all day. I wish I could just go walking, take the world in moments. But, I stay on course. I remember when sunrise just meant I had to face another day so the longing—the choice—becomes gratitude and I imagine it a blessing that soars over the city streets and gardens, into the forests, cresting the tops of trails, landing where it is most needed.

When I pull into the near empty parking lot, I say thank you. (Sometimes it is a very specific gratitude such as, Thank you for helping me survive that commute.) I trust what is, that I'll do my best. And, I go in to work.

These winter days, my step 11 isn't a bent knee supplication or a cross-legged oommm. It's just a routine morning commute, a shift in focus from me and my world to something other, some unknown plan. It's a good kind of uncertainty, an acceptance of what has changed enough for me to be useful.

*Santa Cruz County  
Intergroup Newsletter*

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## Don't Tell Me What To Do!

I don't like being told what I can or cannot do. If I had walked in through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous and heard, "You must stop drinking" or "You need to give us money" or any other command, rule or regulation, I would have walked right back out those doors never to return. Fortunately, I was never given any orders. I wasn't forced to donate money and to my great surprise, I wasn't told that I had to stop drinking. Instead, I was told the only requirement to be a member is a desire to stop drinking, and a spiritual way of life might solve my drinking problem.

I wasn't sure that I was an alcoholic. I loved getting wasted and drinking people under the table, but did that mean I was an alcoholic? My first sponsor explained that alcoholism can be classified as an allergy of the body and an obsession of the mind. That made sense but I wasn't sure I had those problems.

Then she did something totally unexpected. She told me to go try some controlled drinking. I could not believe that this woman who had given her time and energy to help me stay sober was telling me that I could go drink. If she had forbidden it, I would have gotten drunk. Instead, I imagined what controlled drinking would feel like, and realized that it would be absolutely miserable! I accepted the fact that I was an alcoholic, followed my sponsor's suggestions, and began to recover.

After being sober for a few years and adopting A.A.'s way of life, I discovered something about myself that surprised me. While I hate being told what to do, I love having structure in my life. Somehow, Bill, Bob and the founding members of A.A. created a way for our fellowship to be self-sufficient, financially sound and non-controversial, while helping us avoid fights over money, property or prestige. There are no laws and no punishments in A.A., only a set of spiritual traditions that guide the way we operate. As I incorporate these principles into my daily life, the world becomes more manageable.

principles unite  
our vibrant  
members



I continue  
to marvel at  
the principles  
and traditions  
that unite our  
vibrant and  
headstrong  
members.  
What worked  
for alcoholics  
over 80  
years ago

still works for us today. Each member of A.A. is considered a guardian of our spiritual principles and traditions. When a feisty newcomer, ready to fight about the rules, walks through our doors I smile and tell them I once felt the same way. When they are unsure if they are an alcoholic, I happily suggest some controlled drinking. The look of confusion and wonder on their faces brings me endless joy. When they tell me they are willing to work the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, I offer a few suggestions that just might change their life.

*Anonymous  
The POINT  
San Francisco Intergroup*

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

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