



STEP ELEVEN

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.



WOULD any of us rebel or resist if someone said to us, “we suggest that through the use of discussion and thought you can learn to drive your new car.”? I doubt we would even raise an eyebrow at that suggestion. And yet, when the Twelve Steps suggest exactly that in Step Eleven our defiance rises right up and we quickly search for an excuse to avoid following the suggestion at any cost.

An older AA member once remarked to me that “There are only two things a drunk will not tolerate. One is being told what to do, and the other is being told what they cannot do.” With a puzzled look on my face, I asked, “Well, then, what can you tell

them?” “Nothing”, he said, “that’s why we only suggest in AA.”

Maybe we have been raised in a family and environment that could be termed “very religious.” That presents a different set of problems for us relative to this Step. It is very likely that we were taught, and perhaps trained, to follow a rigid procedure when engaged in prayer. We may have heard lectures or discussions about the various types of prayer—which lead us to arrive at the conclusion that there were only certain prayers that were “valid” or “approved” or effective. Now, we find our rebellion focused directly on that former teaching or training. Somewhere in our mind is the thought that if we do this as we were taught – ‘they’ will be right (whomever ‘they’ are) —and that is an idea we just cannot tolerate at the moment.

Depending on our experience with the previous steps, we begin to have an argument within the confines of our own mind about whether or not we have, or can develop, any kind of conscious contact with this Higher Power that is so often talked about. Most often, that is a losing battle. We are people who always decide we are not good enough.

There is a much better way to get comfortable with the Eleventh Step. One which gets us right to the heart of the matter with this Step. It ‘keeps it simple’ and allows us the needed insight and freedom to “do the experiment”, as Bill W. used to say.

Using the analogy noted at the beginning of this article, let’s think about the Eleventh Step like getting a new car. The ‘new’ may be a brand-new car right from the dealer, or a car that is new to us. A car that

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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, 33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355. W. St. Paul, MN 55118-3431. Materials or articles mailed to us cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length, and content that might violate A.A.’s Traditions, etc.

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.

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

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

Office Hours: Monday through Friday – 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM; Closed weekends and holidays

we have seen driven by others and have wished we were in their driver's seat. A car with all the 'bells and whistles' that we can imagine we would truly enjoy.

If we were to somehow find ourselves owning such a car, what would we do? Wouldn't we ask a friend who has one about the best way to operate it? Wouldn't we read the owner's manual at least well enough to understand how to operate it? Wouldn't we spend some time thinking about what we heard and what we read before taking it out on the road? We certainly would because we wouldn't want to wreck it.

Or maybe we have admired an outfit that someone else has been wearing, or a clothing style that is currently very popular. Having now saved up the money to make the purchase, wouldn't we ask a dear friend to go with us to help pick out the very best color and style combination for us? We would talk about all the variations we see, the colors possible, the accessories that might go with it. We would look at the tag on the item to see what the care and maintenance instructions are, so we can keep it in the very best condition.

These two illustrations are perfect applications of the practice of Step Eleven! It asks us to *consult and consider*. Steps Two & Three have shown us that we need some guidance for the lives we lead and the actions we take. The conversations would be virtually the same – in principle – as those of getting a new car, or a new outfit.

Nobody worries much about how to talk to their friends about their next car or their next outfit. We just have the conversation, hear what our friends and associates have to say, consider any new information they presented to us, or suggestions they may have offered. Following that, we make the best decision we can and go about our merry way. It's on to the next challenge.

We also don't worry much about our relationship with them. We just walk right on up and start talking about what is on our mind. Sometimes, we even interrupt their conversation with others just to talk about our idea or concern. We have faith that we have a solid relationship with them. The contact is already there as far as we are concerned.

Why not take the same attitude toward Step Eleven? We tend to forget that the Step says,

"*sought to improve*" rather than '*sought to develop*.' We would never have made it to Step Eleven if there had not been a conscious contact all along. An honest inventory in the previous step has given us quite a lot of evidence that we haven't done this all on our own. Too many times have we made poor decisions or mistakes only to survive them and move forward. We just can't claim we did that all on our own power.

Finally, we see signs wherever we go, on the highway, in buildings, on packages of products we buy. We rely on many of them to help us understand how to go forward without unnecessary harm. That is really all that Step Eleven is trying to get us to do with our spiritual lives—*consult, consider and learn* so that we can avoid the pitfalls in life. It's just freely given safety guidance. What a gift!

Anonymous

DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)

Fairview Community Center
1910 Cty. Rd B West, Rm 108
Roseville
3rd Wed., 7:00 PM
Email: dist8@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 15 (Wash. Co.)

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

District 19 (Dakota Co.)

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

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

Southern Minnesota Area Assembly
P.O. Box 2812
Mpls., MN 55402-0812

10%. District Committee...

Ramsey County:

District 8, P.O. Box 131523
St. Paul, MN 55113

Dakota County:

District 19, P.O. Box 1466
Burnsville, MN 55337

Washington County:

District 15, P.O. Box 181
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

SE Ramsey County:

District 26, P.O. Box 75980
St. Paul, MN 55175

LOOKING FOR A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY?

Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl

If you are interested - Contact:
Nightowl@aastpaul.org
to schedule training.

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

2021 INTERGROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

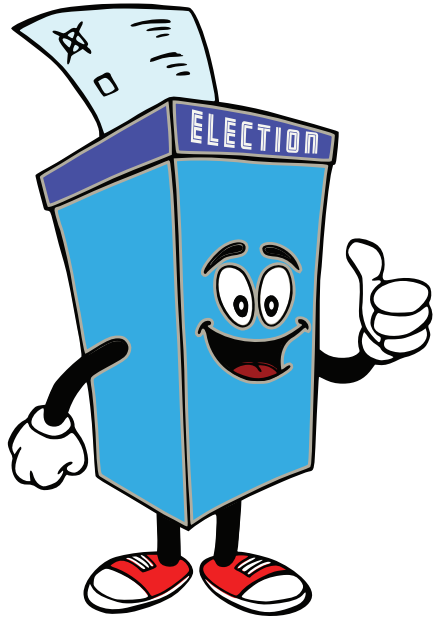
WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

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



Office Volunteers:

Mary D, Lynn, Roger, Suzanne,
David D, Connie, Frank D, Tony R,
Aric, Lance, Matt, Debbie, Nancy



ELECTION OF NEW INTERGROUP BOARD MEMBERS

The elections take place at the November Representatives Meeting

POSITION

RESPONSIBILITY

Alternate Chair

Fills in for Chair when needed
 Attends all meetings of Board, Committees & events
 Co-Chair Executive Committee
 Ex-officio member of all committees

Secretary

Attends all meetings of Board, Committees & Events
 Provides accurate minutes of meetings
 Provides notices of meetings
 Member Executive Committee

Alternate Treasurer

Attends Meetings of Board & Committees
 Performs duties of Treasurer when they are absent
(With the exception endorsing checks or making deposits and acting as ,member of Executive Committee)

Member-At-Large 2023

Attends all meetings of Board, Committees & Events
 Acts as Event Chair for at least one event per year
 Two-year commitment
 Two-years sobriety required

Member-At-Large 2023

Attends all meetings of Board, Committees & Events
 Acts as Event Chair for at least one event per year
 Two-year commitment
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TRADITION ELEVEN

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

FROM the beginning to the end of my drinking there was a continuous downward fall to the course of my life. Before I got sober, I surrounded myself mostly with heavy drinkers. They seemed to get me. Also, they never questioned my drinking.

After a doctor told me that my liver was failing due to my drinking, I spoke to a therapist who suggested I try out A.A. Honestly, my first meeting scared the heck out of me.

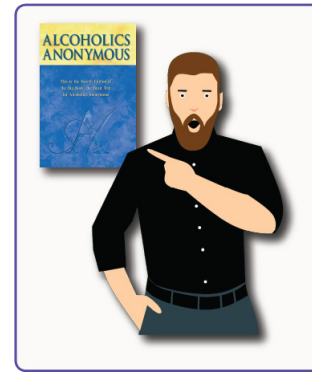
I didn't understand— what was going on. Everyone in the room seemed to know I was new. A few weeks later I found a meeting that I connected to and the people I met there helped me to branch out to others.

Early on, people said to me things such as, “stick with the winners” or “if you see someone who has what you want, go talk to them.” That was the attraction of the program. The words we speak and the lives we live are what draws and keeps people together in our fellowship and allows us to share the

Honestly, my first meeting scared the heck out of me

gift of sobriety with others.

As time went on, I thought of all the people throughout my life who could benefit from this program; there were many! Then I thought, if only there was a way to spread the message and help people to find us. That's when I started learning about the 11th Tradition: “Attraction rather than promotion.” In other words, it wasn't mine or anyone else's job to proselytize our program to others. How we showed up in our lives is what drew people to us. Over time, I've been lucky enough to see some of my old friends enter our rooms and find the gift of sobriety.



There were times I would get a phone call from someone I hadn't seen in a while, saying, “I have a problem with alcohol and I don't know what to do, but I do know that somehow you stopped drinking. Please help me.” I know that feeling of desperation all too well. The person who I am today and the life that I live carries the message; it's the personal connection which shows there is a different way to live. A better way. A way free from bondage of

Early on, people said to me things such as, 'stick with the winners'

alcohol.

The people who showed me the way didn't try to pressure or evangelize. There were no public figures pushing A.A. The people who got me to take the first step through those doors were people who cared enough to let me know A.A. was available and I could try it or not. I'm grateful that I've gotten to be one of those people in the lives of others, who says, “This is what worked for me and continues to work for me. You're welcome to try. I'll try to answer your questions, but I'm not a spokesperson or a leader. I'm simply one member whose life was saved.”

The person who I am today and the life that I live carries the message

I'm glad there isn't a public face to A.A. and I hope that members remember that our actions as sober members will continue to attract people to our program.

*Erik C.
The Point Newlster
San Francisco Intergroup*

NEW PAMPHLETS NOW AVAILABLE

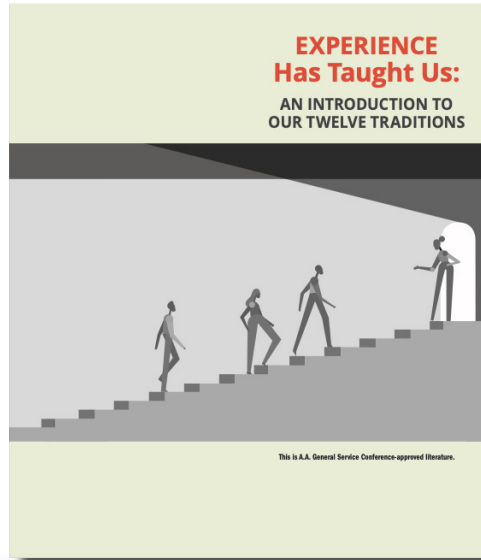
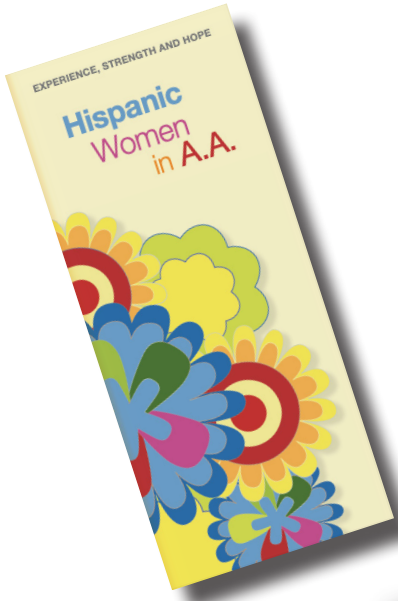
The new pamphlets approved for creation and/or revision by the 71st General Service Conference have been completed and are available at the Intergroup Office. They are:

***Experience Has Taught Us: An Introduction to Our Twelve Traditions* — NEW**

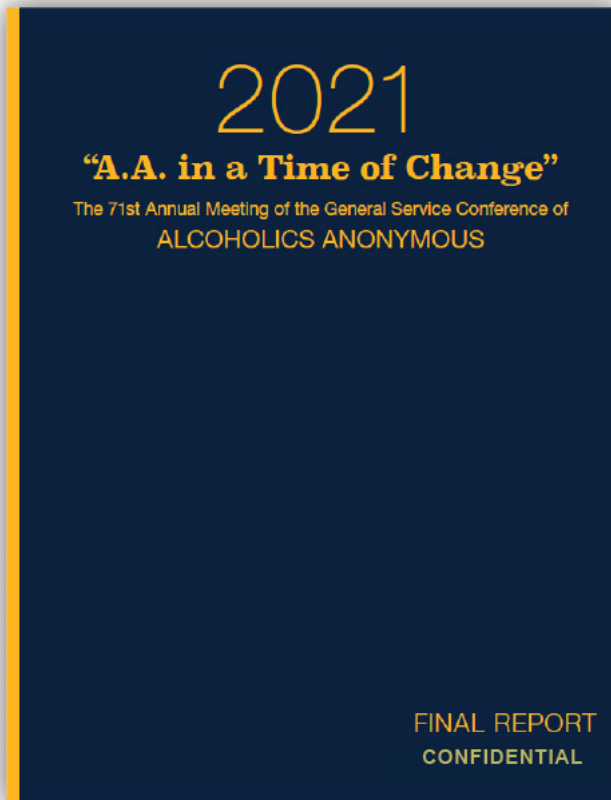
***Hispanic Women in A.A.* — NEW**

***Faith Leaders Ask About A.A.* — Updated**

71st A.A. General Service Conference Report



Pamphlets
\$0.50



Conference
Reports
FREE
courtesy of
the Area 36
Delegate

CONFERENCE REPORT

Join in the celebration of Gratitude

***St. Paul Intergroup
Gratitude Night
November 20, 2021
7:00 PM - 10:00 PM***



***Zoom ID:
860 8122 5926
Passcode:
gratitude***

***Main Speaker: To Be Announced
8:30 PM***

Our Heritage

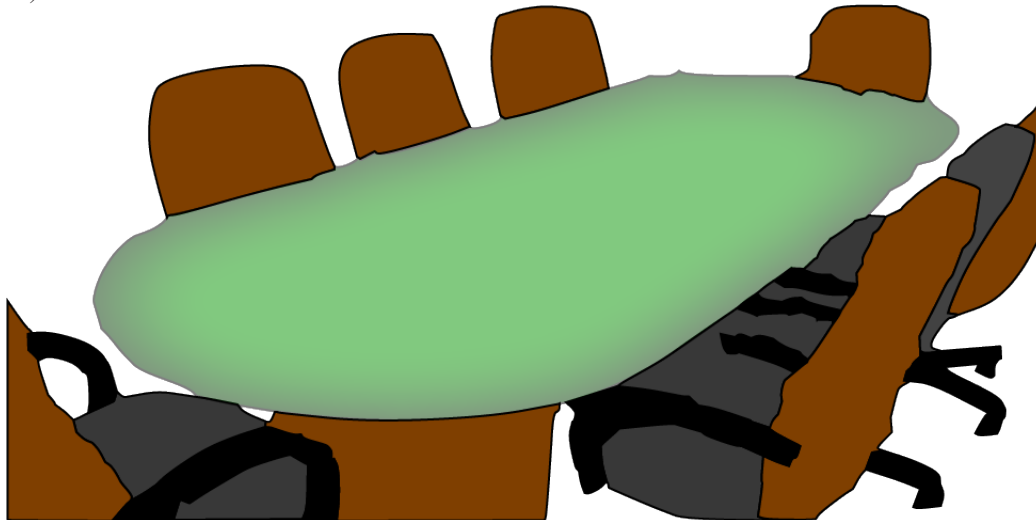
***Longtimers speak at: 7:00 PM
Female Speaker: TBA
Male Speaker: TBA***

BILL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS

Reprinted from the 1955 General Service Conference report.

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THIS is a story told out of turn, of a meeting that was never considered for the agenda of the Fifth General Service Conference. If it deserves a place in the record, that is because it suggests, more eloquently than any formal vote or advisory action, the responsibilities inherent in the Third Legacy of Service which is now passed into the hands of the Conference and, through it, into the hands of all who comprise our fellowship. *(It is a story retailed by a narrator who was only an accidental witness to a fragment of the scene.)*



The time was the evening of the first day of the Conference, that period when the agenda was reserved to area Delegates exclusively. It is an evening of open time for Bill, for members of the Headquarters staff, for those Trustees who had already joined the burgeoning throng in St. Louis. It was an evening when Bill, facing a week that was sure to drain emotional and physical resources, might have been forgiven for seeking the companionship of a small gathering, or the deeper comfort of solitude itself.

Those intimate privileges were not to be his that evening. Instead, unknown to most, Bill was participating in a meeting at which no notes were taken, no rules of order invoked, no decisions solemnly recorded.

In a little-used room off the beaten path of the Jefferson Hotel's main traffic, Bill sat on one side of along green-covered table. Encircling him were

perhaps to or a dozen men who cannot be identified except to indicate that they were men of disciplined minds, questing and compassionate hearts and high status in their community .

Through one of their number who knew and applauded A.A., they had sought the privilege of meeting Bill, of talking with him of this recovery program whose earliest courier he had been. They sought, also, (it may be assumed) the right to ask all manner of questions.

They did not all arrive in one group—but singly and by twos and threes. They approached quietly by way of an outer room, quickly concluded the amenities of recognition and joined those who had preceded them at the green table.

The first night visitors arrived at nine o'clock. Occasionally a visitor would leave, only to be succeeded minutes later by another arrival. Ten

o'clock passed. There was a brief break in the meeting and then, through the closed door, once more was heard the faint rhythm of questions asked and answered, the blurred roar of hearty laughter and the occasional clinking of an ash tray.

Eleven passed. The indistinct hum of voices continued. By now most of the Headquarters people had put down their last coffee cups of the day and were groping for the awkward bulk of their room keys. By now, more sophisticated members might have reasoned, Bill had given amply of this time and had earned the right to escape to personal privacy.

Midnight came and passed. Moving down the deserted corridor, a watchman tested the door gently and then withdrew, perhaps perplexed by the strange scene. For this must have seemed an odd meeting. The trappings of men seeking simple

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St. Paul Area Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes, September 21st, 2021 7:30 pm

1. **Opened** with the Serenity Prayer, Introductions, and read the Primary Purpose of Intergroup.
2. **Approved** prior month's minutes (motion: Brian M, 2nd: Paul C.).
3. **Treasurer's Report, Lisa L** – **Total Contributions: \$6,121 Expenses: \$11,280 Total Revenue: \$9,574 Net Income: -\$3,224.** August is fiscally reflecting a typical summer slowdown, although June and July were robust for revenue. Operational expenses are up with new workman's comp payments, vacation fill-ins, and equipment purchases for the office and hybrid meeting technology. We are just shy of 15K away from our Prudent Reserve goal of 60K! Thank you to all who have contributed! It's so convenient to practice the 7th tradition and purchase literature/medallions online to support our Intergroup at aastpaul.org! *See Treasurer's Report for complete financial details.*
4. **Office Report, Dennis B** – Due to Gopher State being cancelled, we have a good level of inventory at the office. We are excited to receive the new Grapevine Book *Prayer & Meditation!* As there have been many changes to meeting times/formats, we are only printing the paper directory a few at a time. Updated reprintings will be on different colored covers. We are seeking speaker volunteers; there is a two-year sobriety requirement. *Please see the Manager's Report for more details or contact the office at Lifeline@aastpaul.org for any info.*
5. **Night Owl Report, Robyn W** – There are 3 open shifts listed on the website. A shout-out to Paul C., our faithful Night Owl trainer! Orientations are on the third Saturdays at 10 am on Zoom. *Please email NightOwl@aastpaul.org.*
6. **Website Report, Jonathan L** – There are 786 regular weekly meetings and 290 groups served by Intergroup and listed on our website. We are looking for volunteers to help run the website. Feel free to forward any group special AA events or announcements to webservant@aastpaul.org.
7. **Outreach Program, Lindsey D** – Shout outs to Brian M. and Tom W. for helping with the Outreach committee! We need volunteers to visit meetings either online or in person and share about Saint Paul AA Intergroup, its function, how it serves the AA community, and how groups can offer their support. *Please contact outreach@aastpaul.org.*
8. **Update from the Board, Robyn W** – We will not be having an in-person ice cream social, but are still hosting an online Gratitude Night in November. We will update our Zoom account in order to be able to accept 300 attendees. More info to come next month on the exact date, time, and speaker details!
9. **Liaison Reports:**
 - a. **District 8** (Ramsey County): **Heather B** - There is a Sponsorship Forum in Lake Elmo at the Christ Lutheran Church on the second Wednesdays at 6:30 pm.
 - b. **District 15** (Washington County): **Melana M** - Consider visiting the Intergroup Archives.
 - c. **District 19** (Dakota County): **Brian M** - The District has extra funds in case groups need help with cancellation issues from Gopher State. Rosemount AA is hosting a Fourth Step Workshop on Sunday afternoons. *Please contact Brian M at madhouse0143@gmail.com for more information.*
10. **Intergroup Events:**
 - a. **Recap:** Gopher State Roundup has been cancelled due to the pandemic.
 - b. **Upcoming:** Gratitude Night in November. More info to come next month! ☺
11. **Old Business:** No Old Business to discuss.
12. **New Business, Lindsey D** – The Intergroup Board is looking for a new Alt Treasurer to take the place of Renee B; and this position will transition into the Treasurer position beginning next calendar year. There is a two-year sobriety commitment. *Please contact Dennis B at the office at (651) 227-5502 or email manager@aastpaul.org if interested.*
13. **Group AA Announcements:**
 - **Gary B** - *No Time Like the Present* is moving to Como Park Lutheran Church near Hoyt and Hamline: Monday nights at 6 pm, 1376 Hoyt Avenue West, St. Paul.
 - **Glenn P** - Announcing a new Big Book meeting via online only called **Second Sandwich**, meeting Tuesdays at 6:15 pm. Zoom ID: 508099826, no password.
14. **Suggestions for next month's agenda:** *Please contact Jodie at secretary@aastpaul.org*
15. **Grapevine Report, Melana M; Volunteer for October:** Emily H
16. **Concept IX review, Robyn W; Volunteer for Concept X:** Brian M
17. **Mock Rep Report, Mary S; Volunteer for October:** Camille K
18. **Closed** with the Responsibility Statement

Attendance:

Elias F - West End
Lucia D-W - OMD
Robyn W - Alt Chair
Dayna K - Day by Dei
Mary S - Uptown House
Rachel P - Board Chair
Jodie W - Secretary
Tom W - Firing Line
Sergey K - Webservant
Lisa L - Board Treasurer
Emily H - Rule 62

Elly C - Member at Large
John K - Member at Large
Dennis B - Manager
Jonthan L - Webservant
Ken S - Como Big Book
Lisa L - WBL Women's AA
Bob H - 3rd Edition
Mike C - NBAS Rep
Paul C - Night Owl Committee
Lindsey D - Board Advisor
Renee B - Member at Large

Patti M - New Brighton Big Book
Brian M - Meeting of the Waters, Mendota
Dave P - Happy, Joyous & Free
Camille K - A New Light Women's
Gary B - No Time Like the Present
Melana M - 12X12 By the Book, Mahtomedi
Ryan B - One More was Added to the Fellowship
Heather B - Safe Haven Women's, Dist. 15
Glenn P - Second Sandwich BB Study (new meeting!)
Roger E - Basic Text, NW Alano

Next Meeting: October 19th, 2021 7:30pm

THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

Resilience

Renee B. – *The Firing Line*

THE last time I wrote this for the Intergroup Board was July 2021, and the theme was “OPENING BACK-UP.” It seemed like life (at least in the USA) would be back to normal with the vaccine distribution. But now, as I write this in September, we’ve been through another COVID spike, and health advisors are unsure what this winter will bring. As a result, many AA meetings were going back to Zoom and looked forward to gatherings like Gopher State were postponed (AGAIN). Even Intergroup is unsure what to do with the well-attended November Gratitude meeting.

All of this reminds me of parts of the Big Book (the nickname for the main text of AA, a book titled “Alcoholics Anonymous”) where chronic drinkers get drunk over and over again, certainly not learning any real lesson from the last event. Those in recovery know this is part of the disease of Alcoholism, and we’ve taken “steps” to stop this potentially life-ending pattern. (See what I did there with the use of “steps”? ☐ This is where writing sober can be fun. HA! However, back to the “Main Idea.”)

Frequently, in AA meetings, when discussing these parts of the book, folks can quickly zero into the debilitating nature of this vicious cycle—and it is. It is heartwrenching for any of us who have been through this toxic pattern ourselves or with a loved one.

The flipside of this battle, however, speaks to how freaking RESILIENT we are.

In all seriousness, Alcoholics are a tough bunch. How many times did Bill W., Dr. Bob, you, me, and countless others in the rooms of AA fall, smack dab down, and get back up to try again? Granted, we all know those who lost this battle. We tragically mourn the loss of fellow members all too often, yet for each person who didn’t have the chance to get back up, a significant number of us did.

We are fighters. We are strong, and our fallen stand with us to encourage us to continue the battle.

Our resiliency is why I know we will all be okay whether we go back to zoom or in-person meetings. We are problem solvers who are only stronger together.

Look for updates at the Intergroup website regarding various upcoming changes. Better yet, encourage the AA groups you attend to send a representative to the Intergroup meetings hosted on the third Tuesday of every month. Call St. Paul Intergroup (651-227-5502) for more information and help ensure the hand of AA will always be there.



12th Step Calls

3



Website Visits

7,821



Office Calls

248



Night Owl Calls

240



Meeting Info Calls

65



Speakers Calls

1



Literature Purchased

213 Books

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

- A Vision for You
- Apple Valley Daily Reflections
- Dakota Alano
- Forest Lake Alano
- Gratitude in Action
- Grovers Thursday Night
- Happy Hour Men’s Meeting
- Happy, Joyous & Free - Mahtomedi
- Highland Park Groups
- Inver Grove Heights Club 84
- Lake Elmo Thursday Night Grp
- Mendota 1030 AA Group
- Midway Club
- Next Right Thing
- OMD
- Pages of Wisdom
- Ridge Runners III Sat 8:30 AM
- Rivertown Big Book
- Rosemount Groups
- Sisters of Serenity
- Stillwater Rivertown BB Grp - Sun.
- Summit Hill
- Third Tradition - Nfld
- Thursday Night BB - Nfld
- White Bear Lake Sat AM Women’s
- Widening Circle

- 27 A.A. Groups contributed \$ 3,574
- 10 Gratitude Contributions totaled \$ 371
- 26 Faithful Fivers contributed \$ 988
- 14 Digital Contributions \$ 923

WE WANT TO EXPRESS OUR DEEPEST THANKS TO THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE CONTINUED THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF INTERGROUP.

IT REALLY MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

answers from one of their number are simple indeed and almost forgotten these days.

For these are times when the overstuffed briefcase, the sharpened pencils and pristine pads, are too often the conventional symbols of meetings.

There were none of these in the room with the green table. This was a meeting of minds and hearts, a giving and taking of experience, a tentative search for deep truths that may one day be shared without reserve by all who would heal themselves and others, so that the greatest purposes of life may be realized.

Well past the hour, the meeting came to an end. The tall, lanky man called Bill moved slowly to the door with his new friends—these people who had come in all humility to ask questions about this thing called Alcoholics Anonymous and to try to relate it to their own experience and knowledge and insights.

Bill moved though door and the night visitors with him, chatting the small talk with those who meet for the first time to work toward common roots of experience and thinking.

And the thought occurred to one who witnessed what might be deemed an isolated, minor incident—the thought occurred that perhaps this meeting testified to the need for the General Service Conference which had brought some many A.A. members to St. Louis in this, momentous week.

For A.A., as a promise and demonstration of the possibility of man's redemption from depths of his own making, will probably always have night visitors who would ask privately about what we offer freely. And we do not have the right to ask why such visitors do not gather with us by day in public places. We have only the responsibility to be sure that, when Bill is no longer among us, we shall have a structure to which all visitors can turn and find inscribed those few and simple truths to which we owe so much.

The burden of building this structure and of inscribing what we have learned, and what we may learn tomorrow, may well divert us from more attractive pursuits.

Some visitors may be those who would come to scoff or to mutilate the principles of experience we have inscribed. Some may seek to destroy the structure itself, which must be built to withstand the malicious as well as the uninformed, those who would permit decay from within as well as those who would approach from beyond the walls.

In our past, searching for sobriety, seeking to maintain it, we too have known what it meant to be a visitor in the in the night. We have gone forth seeking help. And we have gone forth to pass that help along.

Looking outward, conscious of our need to reach out to those who have understanding or need it, we may perhaps have limited our conception of the Twelfth Step. Unlike Bill, we may unconsciously believe that the Twelfth Step point only in one direction—away from us and out to our brother.

But the steps pf the night visitors come toward us and we must have a haven where these people can always find answers they seek, always find private refuge, if they require it, always find the gift of our time, our interest and our willingness to share.

This we build this structure of the General Service Conference not for ourselves, although the house is ours in name, but for those unknown travelers who knock upon our door, by day or by night, for all time to come. We build it not to adorn mere men or women but to house simple learnings and to illuminate them.

Less than a generation ago, there were few doors toward which the alcoholic or his family or his friends could turn their steps. A generation hence Bill may not be with us to stand at the door of the house we are building this week. But the house must be there and it must be strong. And the door of the house must always be open.

For the steps of him who seeks our shelter, to us shall always be those of our brother.



SPONSORS SAY THE DARNDDEST THINGS!

Sponsee to sponsor: “What will I do when you are gone?”

Sponsor to sponsee: “I have been bringing you the answer in my hands like a couple of cups of water, it is up to you now to go to the river.”

Contributed by John McA. - Nashville

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