



STEP TWO:

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

MY PERSONAL STRUGGLE WITH STEP TWO, BY SUSAN D., OFFICE VOLUNTEER

I was introduced to A.A. at the early age of eighteen, after experiencing blackouts and horrible withdrawals from drinking alcohol. Shortly after it was actually legal for me to consume alcohol, I entered my first treatment. Drinking had caused so much damage in my life that I fully embraced the first step of the A.A. program. There was no need for a counselor to convince me I was powerless over alcohol, and to say my life was unmanageable was putting it mildly, for I could see it was a total disaster.

It was strongly suggested to me upon leaving treatment that I attend A.A. meetings, but even with the acceptance of the First Step, I cringed and rebelled against the Second Step of the program. There were two words in this step I had such a negative opinion on that it deterred me from going to A.A. and getting sober for many years. First, I was appalled at the mere inference I was insane. If I remained dry, surely the men with the white jackets weren't going to haul me away. Second, the God I had learned about as a child in religious schools was all-punishing and sent people to Hell to burn for eternity for their sins. It was difficult to believe this very same God was going to be helpful in restoring my life.

In essence, after looking at Step Two, I made a decision to ignore the counselor's suggestion to attend A.A. I thought it would be best to do it my way, for then I wouldn't be inconvenienced with all this God stuff. Life as a non-drinker would surely bring happiness on its own and make me a winner if I exercised a strong will over my affairs.

Throughout the next twenty-seven years my best intentions and strongest determination failed over and over again, leading to a vicious cycle of being dry, then miserable, and finally getting drunk. I was the "heartbreaking riddle" to all who cared about me.

Despite feeling powerless to fix my drinking problem, I remained too stubborn to entertain the idea of a Higher Power, nor would I accept the idea of insanity pertaining to me. (Although my life could sure be labeled as "insane" by those around me.) Once again I would get back on the horse, holding the reins even more tightly than before, only to fall off again with deeper bruises. Now my attitude toward God was one of belligerence, for how could He be doing this to me?

Even in the depths of despair I wouldn't believe in anything more powerful than my self will, determination and own intellect. I also held on to the belief that by being abstinent from alcohol I would be free from insanity. After all, I was convinced my insanity arose from my behavior while drinking and remained blind to my departures from sanity while I was dry. Without alcohol and without a Higher Power my insanity showed itself quite blatantly as I continued to be selfish, defensive, impatient, miserable and intolerant or as the Big Book states, "restless, irritable and discontent." Living on these principles of self-sufficiency and grandiosity resulted in insanity and ensured I would get drunk yet again.

There were numerous interludes of being on the wagon during which I lived in a state of exaggerated self-concern and felt angry or anxious most of the time. I would jump on the high-speed gerbil wheel of life, frantically working harder and putting in longer hours at my job. I spent much time seeking out more to fill my day, to get relief from my pain-filled emotional jag. All of this doing and self-seeking were tiring and so exhaustion set in, only making my life one horrible chore to endure. Like quicksand, or as the often-referred-to Chinese finger puzzle, the harder I fought to be free, the more I remained stuck in a life of despair. All too often the option of taking a drink seemed a reasonable and rational solution to this frenzy. And so I drank—only to start this pattern over once again.

My last relapse happened nine months ago and it nearly killed me. I needed to be hospitalized for a week to restore my physical health. Perhaps it took a near-death experience to pry open my mind and to have the veil of pride and self-righteousness lifted just enough to allow me to look at the Second Step with a fresh perspective.

It was during my stay at the hospital that I abandoned the scientist in me and picked up the phone to speak to a chaplain. To my surprise he showed up right away and we spent hours in discussion, sharing our thoughts on God. The chaplain was somehow able to dispel a belief I had had since childhood — that a Higher Power is a punishing deity and because of this He wouldn't be of any help in my struggles with daily living.

Continued on Page 2.

St. Paul Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous®

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E-mail: lifeline@aastpaul.org

Fax: 651-290-0209

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday — 9 AM to 6 PM; Tuesday: 9 AM to 8 PM

1600 University Avenue W. Suite 407 St. Paul MN 55104

My Personal Struggle, continued from Page 1.

After leaving the hospital I began to attend A.A. meetings regularly and developed a sincere interest in what the program had to offer. As the fog lifted, I began to notice profound changes occurring in some of the newcomers that could only be described as miracles. In addition, there were others who caught my attention because they seemed to possess something special, and this was a special something I really wanted. Later, I would learn the common thread among the newcomers and those having this special something was their belief in a Power greater than themselves, or more simply, faith.

My next challenge was to face my distaste for the word "insanity." This was easily solved in just one A.A. meeting. When I spoke honestly about the its negative connotation, most of the people in the room smiled. Each person spoke, sharing their ideas on what insanity meant to them. One person said it can be "a lack of soundness of mind," while the next person shared a dictionary definition of "extreme foolishness." With this new information and in reviewing my life, it became impossible to argue with these folks. Yes, I had been insane not only while drinking, but equally so when living life as a dry drunk.

"Came to believe . . . " is exactly as it implies: A process. My journey began with a telephone call to a chaplain and continued on when I came to believe the A.A. group I attended was a Power greater than myself. Next, I asked my sponsor for help when old beliefs resurfaced. Over time I observed the miracles occurring in the newcomers before my eyes. I watched as other members calmly dealt with catastrophes, and transcended their pain to live sober and joyous lives. This all defied scientific reasoning and the only way for me to comprehend this was to believe there was something operating that could be explained only by the presence of a Higher Power.

Today, I believe in a Higher Power, whom I call "God," and I have discovered that faith is the absolute crux for us to get well. Finally, after years of loneliness and inner turmoil I have a newly found peace and a connection to the world. By accepting Step Two we begin to heal and by inviting God into our lives we are expelled from the obsession to drink, we move toward sanity and receive the beautiful gift of knowing we are never alone.

The Twelve Traditions: Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

The Steps are for the individual alcoholic; the Traditions tell us how to run our groups; and the Concepts guide us in how we run A.A. as a whole. But of course, the lessons and principles in the Steps, Traditions and Concepts can be applied to our lives and our fellowship at each level.

The Second Tradition gives us tips on how to understand our Higher Power when we have willingness, but very little experience with faith—when we really don't know what to believe, and how to relate to a Higher Power. Our Higher Power should be a "loving God," merciful and forgiving, as we usually find our fellow A.A. members to be when we do our Fifth Step.

Tradition Two also helps us to find God's will for us when we have little experience with listening for the "still, small voice" that can come after some practice with prayer and meditation, as suggested in the Eleventh Step. Tradition Two tells us that God "may express Himself in our group conscience." When we're confused about a decision or a course of action; when we're angry or upset, we do well to check in with our sponsor, our sober friends, members of our home group before we make a decision or take an action. It's often through talking it over that we begin to see the right course of action; and it's often through this process of spiritual consultation that we gain a feeling of peace when faced with "situations that used to baffle us."

— Anonymous

2009 Steering Board

<u>Chair:</u>	Mary Jo N.
<u>Alt. Chair:</u>	Julie M.
<u>Secretary:</u>	Jeff T.
<u>Treasurer:</u>	Michael K.
<u>Members at Large 2009:</u>	John D. & Jeff C.
<u>Members at Large 2008:</u>	Lisa L. & Mark K.
<u>Advisor to the Board:</u>	Tom S.
<u>Office Manager:</u>	Tom N.

Office Calls in December

Meeting information	233
Inventory/hours	31
12th step calls	15
Temporary sponsor	31
Speaker request	19
Special events	16
Outside issues	33
Info For Professionals	1
Administrative	146
Other	53
Total Calls	466
Daily average	21.2
Visitors	162

Call tally is for calls taken during office hours only and does not include calls taken during Night Owl shifts.

Saint Paul AA Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes, December 16, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 (attendees below); The IG Primary Purpose was read by Lesli D.

November minutes were approved and accepted as is.

Treasurer's Report. Diane E. December total contributions \$5,821– 46.8% of Income. Group contributions were \$4,706 which is above the budgeted amount. Total contributions for December were above the budgeted amount for the month. And contributions for 2008 were well above budget. December Sales \$6,574 – 53.2% of Income Sales for December were quite a bit above budget for the month as well as for the year.

Office Report -- Tom N. A) Remember that our monthly *Lifeline* accepts personal essays for Steps & Traditions; Group Histories are also welcome – please feel free to send in your St. Paul area group history. It'd be great to get this info into our archives and sent out to all of our members.

Website Report – Jonathan. Motion made & 2ndd to change website search to include 'neighborhoods' and 'zip codes'. Passed unanimously. Jonathan will make updates after discussing with NightOwl Committee chairperson (Patti M). Remember to send in new meeting and event info to the office for posting. Details on web statistics are available on www.aastpaul.org.

Outreach Program – Jeff C. No report (Jeff working)

Night Owl Report – (Patti M absent). Joe S. announced Orientation meeting 12/20 10a-noon at SPIG office.

Intergroup Events.

- Gratitude Night – Great Meeting!! SRO.
- New Year's Eve – December 31st. Speaker is Ed M; Band (Capital City Soul Tones) is lined up; Dance lessons by J.D.; Marathon AA meetings will be held starting at 9p: Steps 1-3 (9;-9:45) hosted by Uptown (Jes); Steps 4-6 (9:45-10:30) hosted by Hole In The Doughnut; Steps 7-9 (10:30-11:15) hosted by The Grind, and Steps 10-12 (11:15-11:55) hosted by Como BB. Volunteers are needed for setup, vendor, teardown, greeters, etc.... signup sheet passed.

Old Business.

- By-Laws Committee – Committee met 12/2/08; Tom N. met w/lawyer, reviewing a "model" By-laws template for possible use for us. To be reviewed at next committee meeting in January.

New Business.

- Mary Jo recognized outgoing Board Members (Jeff T, Lesli D, Steve B, & Jeff H) and incoming Board Members (Julie M, Jeff Th, Michael K, Jeff C, & John D).

Group Announcements- Firing Line and Como BB will be having regular meetings on Christmas; Midway Club will be hosting marathon meetings on Christmas & New Year's holidays.

Concept Review – Thank you, Garth M, for doing Concept XII. Volunteer for January is Val.

Mock Report – no report this month; Volunteer for January is Jes.

Closed with the Responsibility Statement and Lord's Prayer.

Attendees:

Betsy-Happy, Joyous,Free	Garth M-Defogged Mens	Julie M-Basic Txt	Walter-Como BB
Charlie S-NTPL	James L-3rd Edition	Lesli D-Board Secretary	Steve S-West End
Cheryl B- ?	Jeff Th-FiringLine/Mplwd	Lisa L-Board At-Large	Jonathan-Web Servant
Dave N-HoleInDoughnut	Joe B-OMD	Mark K-Board At-Large	
Diane E-Board Treasurer	Joe S-HJF, BTB 12x12	Mary Jo N-Board Alt Chair	Ellen H-Mahtomedi 12x12/ Amigos III

Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 16th. Same place, same time (7:30 PM)

7th Tradition Suggestions for Groups

"Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

The Conference-approved pamphlet: "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality mix" offers the following suggestion for the distribution of group funds "after group expenses" have been paid.

50% St. Paul Intergroup

Spruce Tree Center
1600 University Ave. #407
St. Paul, MN 55104

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 2267
St. Paul, MN 55102

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

BE A NIGHT OWL !!

Night Owls are often the first A.A. contact for the newcomer! A Night Owl shift is a once-a-month commitment to answer Intergroup phones after hours. Some shifts can be done in the office; all can be done from home. The commitment can be filled by an individual or a group. **If you can help, call the office or go to our website: www.aastpaul.org**

District Meetings

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)

Fairview Community Center
1910 Co. Rd B, Rm 203, 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
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM

District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)

1099 Payne Ave. St. Paul
2nd Fri., 6:00 PM
www.district26-area36.org

Thanks to all the terrific volunteers who helped in the Office during December!

Andy, Anna F., Carolyn, Cheryl H., Chloe, Dan S., Doug, Emily, Jack, Jack R., Jaclyn, Jeannie, Jeff, John D., Katie, Kris, Mark, Mark H., Mia, Mike, Nate, Nathan H., Nicole, Paul, Paul Ray, Roy, Shane E., Steve C., Susan D., Tammy S., Taylor, Tim, Tim S.

Thanks to all
the Night Owl
volunteers and
groups as well!



DECEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

Number of Group Contributors: 46
Total Group Contributions: \$4706
Number of Faithful Fivers: 22
Total from Faithful Fivers: \$1021
Special Contributions \$103

"Thanks!" to the groups that contributed in December:

Bayport Saturday 8 AM Serenity
Como Park Big Book Study
Cottage Grove Groups
Dakota Alano Sunday 8 PM
Dakota Alano Thursday AM
Dakota Alano Wed. Roosters
East Side Club Groups
Fireside Women's Groups
Forest Lake 12 & 12
Fourth Dimension
Happy Hour 12 & 12
Happy Hour Little Canada
Highland Park Groups
Hope and Unity Group
Just for Today Women's Group
Keep It Simple Group
Maplewood Group
Mendota Sat. 10:30 Group
Midway Groups
Monday Meeting
New Brighton Groups
North Branch Community Groups
North Dale Group
Oasis Group
Primary Purpose Burnsville
Ridge Runners II
River Rats
Rivertown Big Book (Hastings)
Rosemount Groups
Roseville Centennial Group
Roseville Wednesday Night
Shoreview 12&12 Group
Shoreview Big Book Plus
South Suburban
St. Paul Park
Steps to Freedom
Summit Hill Group
The Book Club
The Firing Line Group
Third Edition Group
Third Tradition Northfield
Uptown Groups
Valley Creek Monday Group
West End Groups
White Bear Women's Wed. AM
Woodbury Serenity Sisters

The Lifeline: Purpose Statement

The Lifeline is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup Association office of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is about, by, and for 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 Intergroup. (Exception: Quotations from A.A. books or pamphlets are reprinted with permission from A.A. World Services, Inc.) We welcome articles of opinion or descriptions of personal experience, which should be sent to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 1600 University Avenue #407, St. Paul MN 55104. Materials or articles 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. The deadline is the 13th of the preceding month (i.e., submit a Tenth Step essay by the ninth month, September.)

UPCOMING A.A. EVENTS!!

45th International Women's Conference
February 12 — 15, 2009
 Salt Lake City, Utah

www.internationalwomensconference.org

Southern Minnesota Area 36
Trusted Servant Leadership Training

Saturday, February 21, 2009
 St. John's Lutheran, 500 3rd St W

Embers in the Fire
Women's AA Retreat
 Northern Pines Assembly Grounds
 Park Rapids, MN

March 6th — 8th

District 15 - Washington County
Spring Service Celebration

Christ Lutheran Church - Fellowship Hall
 Lake Elmo, MN

Saturday, March 7, 11:30 to 3PM

Aim for Ames Roundup

March 27 – 29
 Quality Inn - Ames, Iowa

www.aimforames.org

The Fifteenth Annual
Sunlight of the Spirit Weekend
 Holiday Inn - Fairmont, Minnesota

April 17 - 19



Cartoon reprinted with permission from the A.A. Grapevine, February 1995.

The Twelve Concepts: Concept Two

“When, in 1955, the A.A. Groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference—excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter—the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society.”

The General Service Conference meets once each year in April, when the Area Delegates and the staff and trustees of A.A. World Services, the General Service Office and the A.A. Grapevine make decisions on matters affecting A.A. as a whole.

There are two items on which the General Service Conference may NOT act: Changes to the Twelve Traditions, or to Article 12 of the Charter of the General Service Conference. Article 12 is, word for word, the Long Form of the Twelfth Concept. Changes to the Traditions or to Charter Article 12 require the written consent of three quarters of all the A.A. groups.

Summarized from *The A.A. Service Manual*, and the pamphlet, *The Twelve Concepts for World Service, Illustrated*.

Is your meeting represented at Intergroup?

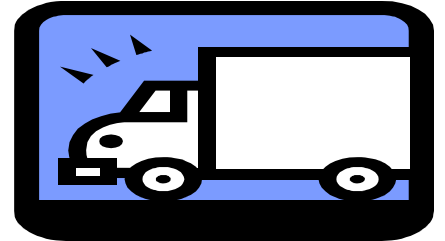
The February Representatives' meeting will be held February 20th, 7:30 pm,
 at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 285 N. Dale St., St. Paul, 55103.
 The church is located just south of I-94; from Dale turn west on Iglehart to park.

St. Paul Intergroup
Spruce Tree Center
1600 University Ave. W., Suite #407
St. Paul, MN 55104

Change Service Requested

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Please let us know if your address changes one month ahead of time. It saves us the cost of return postage and enables you to get each issue of the *Lifeline*. Our mailing permit does not provide for mail forwarding. Thank you!



St. Paul Intergroup Faithful Fiver Form

Faithful Fivers contribute five dollars to St. Paul Intergroup each month to enable us to continue to carry our life-saving message. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to the *Lifeline*. You may also contribute annually, quarterly, etc.

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Please send this form and a check to:

St. Paul Intergroup, 1600 University Avenue W. #407, St. Paul MN 55104

I would like to receive the *Lifeline* every month by email, not postal mail. My email address is:

(please print clearly) _____