



Thoughts from an Intergroup Volunteer

Attending a meeting should be an essential part of one's recovery program. Sitting with other Alcoholics that are willing to share their experience, strength and hope with each other is one of the pillars of the Alcoholic Anonymous movement. Early on the founders realized that where other methods had failed, the opportunity for one alcoholic to sit down and talk to another alcoholic produced results. This was the impetus that started the AA ball rolling. It is the same model that is repeated today all over the world. Going to meetings should become a regular part of staying sober. It is part of our ongoing maintenance. An analogy that I often use is that going to meetings is like changing oil in my car. If I change it on a regular basis, the car runs smoothly. If I fail to change the oil, sooner or later the engine begins to get gummed up and begins to cough and sputter. It will eventually stop running altogether. I need to maintain my AA engine.

Often when an individual relapses, one of the first things that they will say is that they stopped going to meetings. Really?

When I was still using, I did not like ev-

ery bar that I went into. I could make the same observation about AA meetings. I needed to find one where I felt comfortable. It is why many of us find what we call our home group. Each group is autonomous and runs in such a manner that is guided by a group conscience. Guided by AA Principles and Traditions, there is still room for individual meetings to vary in their format. There are step meetings, topic meetings. Big Book meetings, 12 x 12 meetings, etc. You get the idea. We have a smorgasbord available to us that offers many choices. That being said, not all meetings are equal. Some are better than others. Why is that?

As a long-time member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I consider myself to be a steward of the program. In other words, long-time members of any particular meeting should take a certain amount of responsibility for how that meeting reflects AA as a whole. I believe that unfortunately this is lacking in many meetings today. We have sort of devolved into what I refer to as AA lite. Nobody wants to hurt someone's feelings, so we stay silent when the train starts to run off the tracks. You know what I am talking about. I silently pray to God that someone who is off track at a meeting pass, or I rationalize that even though someone is off topic, maybe they just needed to get it off their chest. Do you ever wonder why someone who is new to your meeting never comes back? Could it be that your meeting has lost its focus?

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 Online Store: aaspi.company.site E-mail: lifeline@aastpaul.org Phone: (651) 227-5502
Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9:30 to 5:30, Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 Sunday Closed

THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

I was a member of a club that appointed squad leaders for each meeting. A certain amount of sobriety was required to hold that position. Part of their responsibility was that when things were starting to go off the tracks, being as considerate as possible, the squad leader would get things back on track. This was not always easy. People can get offended. I found though that by laying out some simple ground rules at the start of the meeting, and trying to be as consistent as possible, over time this produced reliable results. The regular attendees were familiar with the ground rules. Sometimes there were circumstances that required more immediate stewardship. On occasion I would have to ask someone to pass and be quiet. Once it got so far off the rails that I had to ask someone to leave. These occasions are rare, but they do come up. I must ask myself, am I willing to stand up and defend AA principles? Do I have a responsibility to the movement to do so?

Newcomers are the lifeblood of AA. Your meeting may be their initial exposure to a possibility of a life in recovery. As stewards of the program, we should always keep this in mind. I have attended meetings that have lost their focus, and new attendees never returned. Coincidence? I have also attended meetings that have gone off the rails, and I never went back. So what point am I trying to make here? AA meetings are essential to recovery. Old timers have told me the Third Step is actively working in every meeting. God works in space and time through people. A well-run meeting is a blessing. Let's all do our part to keep our meetings on track. Lives are at stake.

Bernie W.

There's a comedian with a standup special dedicated to comparing the first year of marriage to year twenty. In one joke, he talks about the hoops some newlyweds jump through to avoid their partner knowing they're going poop, but then twenty years later are yelling from the bathroom "bring the camera!" In another joke, he talks about how he used to be sweetly greeted from his wife after a long and hard day at work with a genuine interest in how his day was, and now, twenty years and some kids later, is greeted with "Do you want to know what went on in this house today? While you were at your 'job'!?" (His delivery is impeccable and impossible to replicate in written form.)

The memory has me reflecting on the first year of sobriety vs. twenty-four years of sobriety. In my first year, I saw service work as a means to be noticed, with the most important jobs being trusted servant and treasurer. I saw those positions as leadership roles not service roles. Twenty years later, if I get a commitment that involves more responsibility than an announcement, I curse myself silently for attending a business meeting on election night. Plus, everyone knows the coffee position and greeter roles are the most important.

In my first year, everything was a Big Deal. Why? As an alcoholic, I'm either the big deal or I make them. AA calls that ego, but first year me called it engineering. Twenty years and a few rock bottoms in sobriety later, I realize, nothing is too

big to deal with. I also discovered the superpowers we all possess: the capability to make a speck of dust into a mountain OR to turn a mountain into a speck of dust. I remember the first time I achieved “the miracle of the mundane” and that it felt boring. I was so used to intense feelings and chaos that I didn’t know how to exist in “the middle” of the pendulum, so I did what came natural to me as an alcoholic. I did the equivalent of taking a baseball bat to a wasp nest to see what would happen. Now, twenty years later, as a result of practicing principles and putting them before my personality, AA has given me a profound peace worth protecting. I’ve also learned how to use those tools for protection, not as weapons... because for a long time I didn’t have the wisdom to know the difference. I remember reading Step Three thinking I needed to join a convent or become a missionary and move to Guatemala to build churches. Thank goodness, twenty years later, I know that Step Three is just committing to a process.

Early in my sobriety, I learned that recovery is like baking a cake and the ingredients are: a Higher Power, steps, sponsorship, prayer, fellowship, meditation, service, and meetings. How much of whatever ingredients I use for my cake is up to me given my current circumstances. At the end of the day, when life throws something at me, my cake determines how much strength I’ll get to endure what’s in front me—not the cake of others. I’ve seen some cakes look amazing but don’t taste the greatest, while others have cakes that look lop sided and maybe like they were decorated by wreck-it Ralph, but they are the most delicious and nourishing things anyone has ever had. The cakes that I made in my first few years of sobriety would not taste good to me today. However, I also know that the cake I make for myself today

would not have sustained me in my early recovery. As someone who got sober at a young age, I required more fellowship than I do today. In twenty years, I’ve learned to stop comparing my recovery to someone else’s and most importantly, to stop judging when it doesn’t look like mine. Some of us thrive on several meetings a week and others thrive on one. Some are big on service in AA, while others find it more useful to be of service in different ways.

In 24 years, I have experienced and observed pain, joy, fear, loss, love, struggle and achievement. I’ve learned that the majority of AA experiences—good and bad—are just par for the course. I do my best not to interfere with someone’s learning process (aka experience) or not to give my unsolicited suggestions.

Things to look forward to around twenty years: how to observe instead of absorb, how to support instead of fix, and how to be what you chose to become.

Member at Large - Jamie L.

Open House & For Fun Cribbage Tournament

Saturday
May 16th

11am - 2pm

Cribbage,
50/50
Raffle &
Chilly
Dogs

Free Entry

Suggested
Contribution of \$6 for
food

Beverages \$2

33 Wentworth Ave E
West St. Paul MN
651-227-5502



A Different Perspective

By: Christina R. I Stockton, Calif.

May 2022 | 60th Anniversary of the Concepts | On the Cover

As I get older in sobriety, my appreciation for the AA program that saved my life only grows. I came into the rooms at age 39. I had nothing, only a few letters that I brought out of jail with me and the clothes on my back. After my forced sobriety of a few months in jail, I found myself right back to drinking, hanging out in bars, getting into uncontrollable messes. How on earth did I get back there so quickly?

I am thankful that with the help of the staff at a treatment center, I was introduced to AA for the first time. At the meetings, I met a lady who appointed herself as my sponsor and she took me through the Steps.

After a few months of sobriety, I quickly got into service and started hearing about things like Traditions and Concepts. I'm an alcoholic of the educational variety, meaning I wanted to learn more about what these were. I wanted to be sure that my time wasn't being invested in some new-age, pyramid-scam cult.

In my hometown, we are blessed to have over 15 AA groups, many of them offering three meetings a day. Soon I kept seeing this

certain member repeatedly at the same meetings I attended. He had something I wanted. He had an understanding of the Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of World Service. He shared this experience to help me deal with the world around me, as I was slowly learning how to deal with myself in this world.

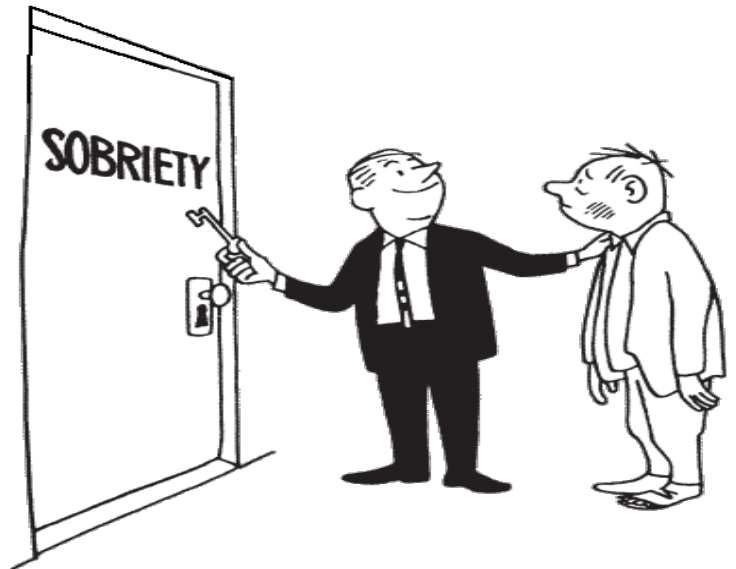
But as I learned, I found it hard not to judge my fellow members for their shortcomings. Our groups' guidelines were inconsistent and, irritatingly, either too strict or too lenient. All I could see was everyone's faults and flaws. I knew that I needed to do something about this because the only thing that I was seeing in our meetings were the differences among us, not our similarities.

So I gathered up the courage and asked this man, "Old Mossback," as I affectionately call him, to be my service sponsor. My sobriety has been enriched and strengthened tenfold since that day.

He and I jumped into literature studies about the Traditions and spent over a year discussing them, him teaching, me learning. We attended speaker meetings and on the car ride to and from the meetings, he would treat me to a story-telling session of his experiences with AA, specifically in general service, which became my passion. Over time, a whole new world opened to me. Who knew that everyone, including myself, had the right to be wrong? Who knew that each Tradition was more flexible than I would have considered possible?

I could finally enjoy peace of mind at any group or among any AA members when I remembered to keep in mind ideas such as autonomy, self-support and anonymity. I am learning daily more of our AA history and the different types of literature available that allow me to see things in a different perspective. I truly learned about humility in action from this man.

Recently, Old Mossback visited the Wilson House in Vermont and he sent me a picture of the headstone of our cofounder, Bill W. On that headstone, he placed his 29-year chip I had given him some months before. Words cannot explain how amazed I was that my token of appreciation to the sponsor who helped save my life was sitting on the marker for one of the people who founded the program that saved both of ours.



Office Update

- We recently updated our database of reps and volunteers so that we can better share updates, information, and events with our community
- We could always use more volunteers, St. Paul Intergroup runs on volunteers and the more members we have participating in AA St. Paul Intergroup the better it runs and more it can help care our primary message.
 - We will be selling literature at Gopher State this year and we could use some help with setting up the booth and selling literature at the conference. If anyone is interested in helping please contact the office to get on the sign up sheet.
- We will have our regular suite at Gopher State as well, so the Board will be Excited to see you stop by.
 - If you could talk to your groups about sending reps to our monthly board and rep meeting, this is one of the best ways to support St. Paul Intergroup, please also ask your reps to confirm their contact information with the office so they can receive updates for the meetings

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 2407
James A Farley Station
New York, NY 10116-2407

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

WAYS TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT INTERGROUP

1. VIA SQUARE

Use the camera on your phone to scan this QR code to be redirected to the SPI contribution webpage :



2. VIA CHECK

You are always welcome to stop by during business hours, or mail a personal or AA group check to the office at:

Saint Paul Intergroup
33 Wentworth Ave E, Ste 355
West St. Paul, MN
55118-3431

AREA 36 PINK CAN PLAN

THE PINK CAN PLAN COLLECTS FUNDS TO PURCHASE AA LITERATURE FOR ALCOHOLICS IN CORRECTIONS FACILITIES IN SOUTHERN MINNESOTA.

MAIL CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

**PINK CAN PLAN
PO BOX 41633
PLYMOUTH MN 55441-0633**

PLEASE POST ON BULLETIN BOARD

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Activities and Accommodations:

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Highway 100 & 494 • Bloomington, MN

MEETINGS • SPEAKERS • FELLOWSHIP • HOSPITALITY ROOMS • A.A. FILMS

REGISTRATION – \$30.00 Contribution (Ages 13 & Over)

Register in Advance

Guaranteed Special Room Rates.
Register early for the best rate. Details
at www.gopherstateroundup.org
or directly with DoubleTree by Hilton at
800-222-8733.

Mention Gopher State Roundup
for a special rate.

Gopher State Roundup is a special A.A.
conference with AI-Anon participation.
Gopher State Roundup is self-supporting.



DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

2025 INTERGROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)
3rd Wed., 7:00 PM
Email: dist8@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 15 (Washington 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.)
2nd Weds. Of the Month -7pm to 8:30pm
Eagan Community Center
1501 Central Pkwy
Saint Paul, MN, 55121
Lone Oak Room
dist19@area36.org

Advisor to the Board: Ricardo G.

Board Chair: Alex S.

Alt. Board Chair: Brandon H.

Treasurer: Don H.

Alt. Treasurer: Marc K

Secretary: Zach B

Members at Large:

Emily M.

Jamie Lynn

Matt

Kristine C.

Office Manager: Jacob F.

Webservant: Jonathan L. & Ethan

GREEN CAN PLAN

PLEASE HELP PROVIDE AN ASL INTERPRETER AT AN AA MEETING IN DISTRICT 8



CHECKS CAN BE SENT TO

ASL FUND

PO BOX 131831

ROSEVILLE, MN 55113-0020

OR

CONTRIBUTE ELECTRONICALLY

VENMO @ASLFund-DistrictEight

Contact District 8 ASL Fund Coordinator



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

St. Paul Intergroup Outreach Committee

Together We Can Help

- Help keep meetings up to date!
- Let people know about Intergroup!



Volunteer!

Scan the QR
Code



**Truly Make a Difference in
the Life of an Alcoholic!**

The Hand of AA Always to be There...

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

(651) 227-5502
outreach@aastpaul.org

If you would like to financially contribute to St. Paul, this QR code will bring you to the St. Paul Intergroup website contribution page.



There are other ways to contribute to St. Paul intergroup as well and you can find those on our website or at the office in person.

Office Volunteers

Bernie, Lynn, Frank, Mike, Matt, Sue

Thanks to your all and thanks to our many Night Owl volunteers as well.

Hoot Hoot!

If you are interested in being of Service, please Vist our Website or contact the office!!

The following groups, members and Faithful Fiver members made the service of intergroup possible in the month of January:

- 25 A.A. Groups contributed - \$4,661.80
- Faithful Fivers contributed - \$6,976.52
- Total Contributions - \$11,638.32

Forest Lake Alano
Wednesday Night Men's 12 x 12
Old Timers
Midway Club
Sunday Night Grace
Thursday Meditation Meeting
Saturday Morning Womens Group
Pages of Wisdom

Mahtomedi Happy Hour 12 & 12
Grovers Thursday Night
North Dale Group
WBL Thurs Bloom Ave
Weekend Jumpstart II
Shoreview 12 x 12
Clay City AA
4th Step Workshop
East Side Club - East Side Group
Roll of Nickels

Saturday Morning Womens Group
A Vision for You

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Please let us know a month in advance if your address changes. 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 **Individual Contribution** Enrollment Form

Your Intergroup strives to be self-supporting, and with your personal support we can continue to carry our vital message of Hope and Recovery to all who need and want it. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to the Lifeline. Contributions may be made annually, bi-annually, quarterly, or monthly. Please consider becoming one of our *Terrific Tennes* (\$10.00/month), *Fantastic Fifteeners* (\$15.00/month), or *Thoughtful Thirtiers* (\$30.00).

1. Contact Information:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: ____ ZIP: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

2. Amount & Frequency:

Amount \$ _____
Frequency: (check one)
 Monthly Quarterly Bi-Annually Annually
Start on: ____/____/____
 Terrific Tenner (\$10.00/month)
 Fantastic Fifteener (\$15.00/month)
 Thoughtful Thirtiers (\$30.00/month)

3. Choose a Payment Method:

Credit Card/Debit
 Visa MasterCard AMEX Discover
Card # ____/____/____/____
Expiration Date: ____/____
Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____
*I authorize St. Paul Intergroup to automatically bill my account as specified (monthly, quarterly, etc). I understand that I am free to cancel this authorization at any time by contacting Intergroup.

Check - Please make payable to:

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