

# Lifeline

Central Office of  
Salt Lake  
Newsletter

August 2006

## Rules of Thumb

*September, 1987*

I think we should sometimes take inventory of AA as well as an inventory of ourselves. We need to take a close look at what we are doing and thinking as groups, as well as what we are doing as individual members.

I'm not writing this in order to rewrite the Twelve Steps, nor the Big Book, but we alcoholics are human beings first, even before we are alcoholics. Because we are, we tend to have the same frailties and shortcomings that are common to other humans. Oh, I know that some of us sometimes act and talk as if we were a separate species, but we aren't.

Human institutions and organizations tend to become rigid, to gather rituals and make them permanent after they have served their original purpose, and even extend them to areas where they were never meant to fit.

When I came into AA over twenty-five years ago, there were many doctors who thought the answer to alcoholism was a pill. usually it was a pill that was meant to be addictive.

Many times we had to tell people to throw out those damned pills. And we were right. But over the years doctors have been moving forward and we haven't.

Very few doctors today will lead their alcoholic patients into addiction if they are properly informed by them. But we are still handing down the rigid commandment, "Throw out those damned pills."

A man came into a Fellowship here recently. He suffered from severe depression. He attempted suicide. Thank God it was a failed attempt.

What if he had succeeded? Would the people who handed out the advice have acknowledged their error? or would they have fallen back on the cliché, "He wasn't working the program."?

When alcoholics who are using medication come into AA they should consult their sponsor and inform their doctor. The doctor might very well decide to change or curtail the medication in light of the new situation. In case of doubt the newcomer needs to get a second medical opinion. But we're not doctors. Nor are we gods. We shouldn't attempt to play either role.

Here's another example. Over twenty years ago, in counseling a new man, I formulated a rule of thumb. The problem then (and it's still one we run into frequently) was that he was so freshly sober and his wife was not pleasing him enough. So he was ready to divorce her after years of a drunken marriage and two months of a sober one.

Other alcoholics after just a few months of sobriety are to rush into long-term commit-

(continued on page five)

**CENTRAL OFFICE  
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Central Office is to provide the basic services listed, to include, but not limited to:

- To carry the A.A. message and help those individuals who suffer from alcoholism;
- to maintain a 24-hour Twelve-Step phone service;
- to answer phone inquiries as needed;
- to compile, update and print meeting lists;
- to maintain A.A.-approved literature for sale to members and the public;
- and to print and distribute a newsletter.

Specifically excluded shall be the operation of any club, clubhouse or drying-out place, and acts in violation of the Twelve Traditions of A.A.

**Suiting up and Showing Up  
Groups Represented At the  
Central Office Reps Meeting for:**

**July 2006**

MURRAY GROUP	FOOTHILL GROUP
CITY AT SEVEN	UNITY LUNCH BUNCH
HIGH AND DRY	A WAY OUT
OFF THE CUFF	HAPPY DESTINY
BIGUGLIES	SATURDAY NIGHT SPEAKERS
CHAPTER 5	HILLCREST
SPIRITUAL QUEST	MAGNA FRIENDLY
SIMPLY BIG	LIVING IN SOBRIETY
GARDEN VARIETY	D.N.S.
FRESH AIR SERENITY SEEKERS	STONEWALL
NONONSENSE	5:15 HAPPY HOUR
10 <sup>TH</sup> STEP B.B. STUDY	EYEOPENER
OLD FASHION A.A.	SUNDAY BREAKFAST
HOLLADAY GROUP	SUGERHOUSE GROUP
WEEKEND GET A.A.	WENDOVER GROUP I
5:30 SOBRIETY SMOKING	VISION FOR YOU
BOGIRISH	
CAME TO BELIEVE	

**Is Your Group Represented?**

The next C.O. Reps Meeting is the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 P.M. at the Central City Community Center, 615 South 300 East.

**LIFELINE**

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

*CENTRAL OFFICE OF SALT LAKE CITY, INC.*

We welcome your correspondence and will publish your material, space permitting, if it meets editorial criteria. *Share your experience, strength and hope with another alcoholic.* For a free subscription or to submit articles, suggestions or contributions, contact Central Office of Salt Lake City:

**CENTRAL OFFICE OF SALT LAKE CITY, INC.**

**2480 South Main Street, Suite 112**

**Salt Lake City, Utah 84115**

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To reduce our costs, Central Office would like to update our mailing list for the LIFELINE. If you have moved please contact C.O. at 484-7871

Thank you.

Please visit our website for meeting information.

***www.saltlakeaa.org***

"Let us never be a closed corporation; let us never deny our experience, for whatever it may be worth, to the world around us. Let our individual members heed the call to every field of human endeavor. Let them carry the experience and spirit of A.A. into all these affairs, for whatever good they may accomplish. For not only has God saved us from alcoholism; the world has recieved us back into its citizenship."

**A.A. Comes of Age, pp. 232-233**

### Upcoming Events

August 11th-13th; **First Gem State Roundup**, Doubletree Riverside Hotel, Boise ID.

[www.gemstateroundup.org](http://www.gemstateroundup.org)

August 27th; **Central Office Picnic**, Murray Park Pavilion #5

August 31st—September 3rd; **The Great Outdoor Beaver Meeting**, Beaver, Ut.

e-mail; [jojopelli@gmail.com](mailto:jojopelli@gmail.com)

Sept. 1st—3rd; **2006 Colorado State Convention**, Marriott Denver Tech Center, Denver, CO.

[2006convention@comcast.net](mailto:2006convention@comcast.net) or [state@al-anon-co.org](mailto:state@al-anon-co.org)

September 15th—17th; **CC + H<sub>2</sub>O Men's Spiritual Retreat**, Lava Hot Springs, Idaho

contacts: James B.; [joheeb@gmail.com](mailto:joheeb@gmail.com)

Paul L.; [plundslc@aol.com](mailto:plundslc@aol.com)

Rick N.; [rick\\_nance@netzero.net](mailto:rick_nance@netzero.net)

September 15th —17th; **Women's Big Book Retreat** (not an AA sanctioned event), YMCA Camp Roger

contact: Patti I.; 541.9901

Sept. 22—24; **Fall Assembly 2006 Area 69 Elections**, Red Hills Best Western, Kanab, UT.

info: 435.865.5890

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A group of AA members will travel to Akron, Ohio during September 22nd-24th, 2006. The cost will be about \$500.00 for transportation and lodging.

Anyone interested, please contact Vickie at 521-2114.

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Central Office may still move. Stand by for details!

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### CORRECTIONS

We were just fooling with you all. **Fresh Air Serenity Seekers** is still an AA meeting. Someone mis-read his notes. This group meets at the Alano Club, located at 5056 S. 300 W., every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 12 noon. There is also going to be a Wednesday meeting starting in August.

also. . . .

The address for the **City at Seven** meeting was left off the schedule for July, August and September. This meeting is held on Saturday at 7:00 pm in the Salvation Army Center at 252 S. 300 E. (the rear door)  
Rocketing To The 4th Dimension @ 5056 So. 300W Should have been eliminated from the schedule

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR BIRTHDAYS!

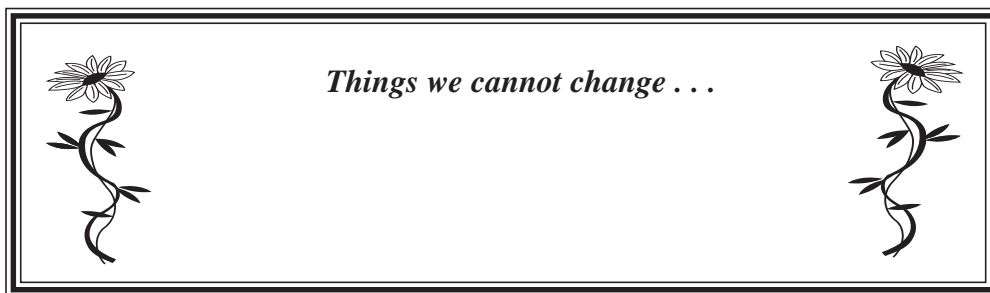


Improve the quality of your sobriety and get out of yourself! Central Office needs volunteers for service work. We need people for 12-Step calls, stuffing envelopes, answering the telephone, et cetera. If you are interested contact Central Office at 484-7871.

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“Heaven protects children, sailors, and drunken men.”

— anonymous —



A Rule of Thumb, continued from page one.

ments or break other long-standing ones. New jobs, new marriage partners, moving: we've all come across these things.

What was the rule of thumb I suggested? "Do not get married, divorced enlist in the French Foreign Legion, or make or break any long-term commitments until you have been sober for one year."

In a recent conversation with a lady in AA, I found that when she first came around she was married to a brutal wife beater. In the course of eleven years of marriage he had broken ten of her bones. The beatings he administered were too numerous to count.

She was told she shouldn't divorce him until she was sober for one year. What had started out as a rule of thumb had become a commandment — a commandment in a suggested program.

Fortunately someone with enough sense to recognize when to ignore rules of thumb told her that it was almost impossible to get sober unless she brought some sanity into her life.

When I came into Alcoholics Anonymous we opened the meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the Preamble. Then someone added a reading from the Hazelton book, *Twenty-four Hours a Day*. Someone else thought it a good idea to add "How It Works"

I spoke at an open meeting last week. In addition to the above, we had "The Promises of AA", "The Tools of AA" and one other whose name I forget. It took fifteen minutes. We then had forty-five minutes for the meeting.

What has happened is that our propensity for ritual and habit has gotten hold of us again. Because we have helped one person, one time, in one place, we must all have it forever. Castor oil did wonders for me once. Should everyone, everywhere take castor oil forever?

With our habit of adding and never subtracting, I fear to see the day when we have forty-five minutes of reading and other rituals, and fifteen minutes of meeting.

In all of the above I see a growth of ritual and habit. In some instances I see worse. I see arrogance and conceit. I see us drifting away from the principles of the program. I see us missing the point in such ideas as being friendly to our friends. What happened to sticking with sobering up alcoholics as our specialty and allowing others to practice theirs? Where is the humility and compassion that Bill W. had when he wrote the Big Book?

The compassion and humility exhibited in writing that book when nobody had even four years' sobriety exceeds what I've gained in twenty-five years. It shames me.

P.E., Merrillville, Indiana  
**The Best of the Grapevine,**  
Vol. 3, pages 174-177

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## Complacency — the Enemy Within

September 1961

I'm in my eleventh year of sobriety in AA and it's not all like I thought it would be in those first few tremulous months. How did I think it would be?

Well, the old hands in our area were dry five to six years when I went shyly through a meeting hall door for the first time. As I became aware of them as people, there developed in me a sense of awe for the old-timer of the day.

(continued on page six)

(Complacency. . .continued from page five)

From my own insecure stance, I thought: "How wonderful to have a platform of sober years to work from. Surely, these men and women who have been dry for so long have a security from the horrors of their alcoholic drinking."

I longed for that security.

Then a decade whirled and I became concious that in some eyes, I, too had become an old-timer. A friend who was to be chairman of a special "big meeting" asked me to dig up a speaker for him.

"I want all the speakers to be in the six to eighteen-month group," he said. "They are the ones who pack a real punch."

I pondered this.

I pondered it even harder after attending that meeting. The speakers had great power. All talked out of the remembrance of recent agony and a great gratitude for their release.

Freedom! Freedom from alcoholism was the theme. How purposeful they made AA life seem!

For the last couple of years I have been uneasily aware of once-active members who have disappeared from meetings, and disturbed by reports of slips suffered by people with years of sobriety. Where was their platform of security? Where was my own?

Recently, a bouncy twelfth-stepper, just over a year dry, brought a slippee to my door. Both were in varying degrees of desperation. The AA man wanted my help in solving a difficult hospitalization problem. The sick man, it appeared, had made himself unwelcome at almost every institution in the area.

The sick one was babbling and arrogant. I became resentful and irritated. A couple phone calls solved the problem and I made a half-hearted offer to accompany them to the sanitarium. The offer was politely turned down.

When they left, I was overwhelmed with shame. True, I had given of my past Twelfth Step experience, but nothing else; no compassion, none of the essential friendship of AA. A chore had been accomplished and my friend knew that for me it had been nothing more.

Is this a common problem of the older AA member — remoteness in time and feeling from the sick alcoholic stumbling in his search for recovery?

One does not, I think, become suddenly remote. It creeps up, as smugness and security displace concern for our sobriety and that of others.

How secure is my eleven-year sobriety today? As secure, I am forced to admit, as that of any other self-deceived older member, who, to the dismay of his friends, has returned to drink. As secure, insight tells me, as that of the newest member, because my sobriety and his are attached to the same branch of earnest desire for freedom and to the same root of spiritual principles.

I am facing the truth that there are no platforms of security in AA. Because if one tarries on a platform, he leaves the living stream of AA. He becomes alone.

And I am remembering that when an alcoholic tries to stay sober alone, he returns to drink At least I always did.

J.M., Vancouver, B.C.  
**Best of the Grapevine;**  
vol 1, pages 32-34

"Don't waste time staring in mirrors."

## After Hours Transfer Phones for Central Office

August 2006

	M O N D A Y	T U E S D A Y	W E D N E S D A Y	T H U R S D A Y	F R I D A Y
<b>First Week</b> 5:30pm-10:30pm	No Nonsense	10th Step Group	Fresh Air Serenity	Skip	Greater Kearns; 6-11
10:30pm-9:30am	**	10th Step Group	**	**	**
<b>Second Week</b> 5:30pm-10:30pm	No Nonsense	10th Step Group	Fresh Air Serenity	Hillcrest Group; 6-10	Basic Young People's; 7-11
10:30pm-9:30am	**	10th Step Group	**	**	**
<b>Third Week</b> 5:30pm-10:30pm	No Nonsense	10th Step Group	Fresh Air Serenity	Skip	5:30 NonSmoking Sobriety Hour
10:30pm-9:30am	**	10th Step Group	**	**	**
<b>Last Week</b> 5:30pm-10:30pm	No Nonsense	10th Step Group	Fresh Air Serenity	Dave S.	5:15 Happy Hour
10:30pm-9:30am	**	10th Step Group	**	Dave S.	5:15 Happy Hour 5:30 till 10:00pm
<b>**Time slots available for your group to answer the phones. Call Central Office during business hours to sign up for a time slot. The phone number is at the bottom of this page.</b> C.O.'s hours are; Monday through Friday 9:30am - 2:30pm and 3:30pm to 5:30pm. Saturday's hours are 10:00am till 2:00pm.		<b>Saturday</b>		<b>Sunday</b>	
		<b>First Week</b> 2:00pm-6:30pm	John T.	9:00am-12:00pm	**
		6:00pm-10:00pm	**	12:00-6:00pm	An AA Group
				6:00pm-8:00am	974 Group
		<b>Second Week</b> 2:00pm-6:00pm	It's In the Book	9:00am-12:00pm	**
		6:00pm-10:00pm	**	12:00-6:00pm	An AA Group
				6:00pm-8:00am	**
		<b>Third Week</b> 2:00pm-6:00pm	**	9:00am-12:00pm	**
		6:00pm-10:00pm	**	12:00-6:00pm	An AA Group
				6:00pm-8:00am	We Care Group
		<b>Last Week</b> 2:00pm-6:00pm	Dave P.	9:00am-12:00pm	**
		6:00pm-10:00pm	**	12:00-6:00pm	An AA Group
				6:00pm-8:00am	**