

LIFELINE

Salt Lake City Central Office Newsletter

May 2010

Entirely free from the burden of guilt . . .

In the Twelve and Twelve, Bill Wilson introduces Step Five by saying, “scarcely a Step is more necessary to longtime sobriety and peace of mind than this one.” I read this before taking the Fifth Step, and superstitiously believed that I had better be thorough. And, for the most part, I was.

When the day came, I sat down with my sponsor, fully expecting to cause in him the vilest of reactions. I started at the beginning and carried on for an hour or so, only to discover that my story didn’t create the terror in my sponsor that I thought it might. Instead, he just nodded and asked if there was anything else. There was one more thing; but I had vowed to take that little secret to the grave, and no way was I about to reveal it then.

I didn’t experience the elation after taking this step that I hear many people share about in meetings. What I did feel was extraordinarily real. For the first time, I shared my story with somebody from beginning to end. Before this moment, my life had seemed little more than a series of clips from bad movies. In briefly examining these clips, I had always thought that I was either much worse than most alcoholics, or much better than. By verbally stringing these clips together, however, it dawned on me that I was actually just another alcoholic. And this is the script I have since adopted.

On another level, taking this Step with my sponsor served as a trial run, so to speak, for connecting with other alcoholics. While I feared disclosing my story to anybody, I knew that my sponsor was in a sense obligated to take it in stride. Take it in stride he did, which has helped me share my story routinely since that time, and develop invaluable friendships as a result.

Back to my dark secret that I refused to give up. As things go, it gnawed at me until I couldn’t take it anymore. After a month or so, I knew that without relief from this secret, I would drink and use again. I went to an AA meeting and found a friend that I could unload on. I let him have it. Once again, what I believed to be unspeakably horrifying was met with a calming grace. Since completing my Fifth Step on this morning, I have been entirely free from the burden of guilt that my past used to bring me.

I don’t know whether this Step has been the one that has kept me sober and given me peace of mind over the past couple of years. I do know, however, that today I am clean and sober, which for most of my life was unthinkable. If taking this Step had anything to do with that miracle, which I am fairly certain it did, then it was a small price to pay for the life beyond my wildest dreams, as they say.

- The New Yorker, a step study group

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.
80 West Louise Avenue
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115
manager@saltlakeaa.org

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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 list; 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.

Groups Represented at the April 2010 Central Office Representative's Meeting

5:15 Happy Hour
10th Step Group
Acceptance Group
Afternoons
An AA Group
Basic Young Peoples
Bog Irish Big Book Study
Bountiful Community Group
Chapter 5
Closed Meeting for Alcoholics
Draper Group
Fly'n High
Garden Variety
Grapevine Group
Highland Group
Holladay Group
Honeys Breakfast Club
Living in Sobriety
No Nonsense Group
Old Fashion AA
Salt Lake Group
Serenity View
Spiritual Quest
Sunday Morning Breakfast
Thunder Heart AA
Tooele Beginners
Up Group
UNI New Way
Vision for You
We Care

Is your group represented?

The next C.O. Reps Meeting is the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30PM at Central Office, 80 West Louise Ave (2860 South)

Please observe a moment of silence
 In Loving Memory of our friends who recently passed on

Donald "Huck" H.
 1942 ~ 2010

Travis M.
 1968 ~ 2010

Congratulations to our birthdays

Speakeasy Ladies

Jolane	30 days
Marti	30 days
Marsha	90 days
Carrie	1 year
Dacia	1 year
Heidi	1 year
Hillary	2 years
Becky	8 years
Helena	8 years
Betsy	17 years
Amy	20 years
Donnie	22 years
Jane	22 years

Nomadic Lunch

Brian	30 days
Clay	30 days
Lindsay	30 days
Diane	60 days
Jenni	60 days

Jeff	60 days
Todd	6 months
Matt	18 months
Doug	2 years
Steve	21 years

The Murray Group

Tim M.	5 years
Kristine	16 years

Living In Sobriety

Eli	30 days
Brittany	30 days
Mark	30 days
Rachel	30 days
Sidney	30 days
Amy	60 days
Camron	60 days
Christa	60 days
Jason	60 days

Lewis	90 days
Alex	6 months
James	6 months
Kaylee	6 months
Kevin	6 months
Summer	6 months
Denise	1 year
Sasha	1 year
Chris	18 months

Sharing And Caring

Quinn	30 days
Annie	30 days
Cameron	30 days
Nathan N	30 days
Dustin	60 days
Tracy	60 days
Brandon	6 months
Nick	2 years
Brain	15 years
Kevin	21 years

**Please send birthdays, announcements, and comments to the editor at
 LIFELINE@saltlakeaa.org**

Editor's Note: As I've said in previous issues of the LIFELINE my experience in service has been with my home group and within the General Service Structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is where I learned to truly appreciate the committee process. To see God's conscience expressed as a result of an informed group is an amazing process. If you haven't experienced that yet I would invite you to join in your home group's business meeting, volunteer to be your groups Central Office Representative or General Service Representative.

Most of you are probably very clear on this issue, but the following article is an attempt to clarify what the service structure of Central Office/Intergroups is. Most of the information has been taken from A.A. Guidelines on Central or Intergroup Offices.

"A central office (or intergroup) is an A.A. service office that involves partnership among groups in a community - just as A.A. groups themselves are partnerships of individuals. A central office is established to carry out certain functions common to all the groups - functions which are best handled by a centralized office - and it is usually maintained, supervised, and supported by these groups in their general interest. It exists to aid the groups in their common purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers."

Reprinted from A.A. Guidelines, Central or Intergroup Offices with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

Central Offices's and Intergroups are not part of the AA Service Structure but are considered part of AA. As Box 459 from the General Service Office puts it:

Q. Is a central office or intergroup office A.A.?

A. Yes. Central offices and intergroups provide vital local services and Twelfth Step opportunities. A central office or intergroup is an A.A. service office that involves partnership among groups in a community. A central office/intergroup is established to carry out functions common to all the groups, and it is usually maintained, supervised and supported by these groups. It exists to aid the groups in carrying the A.A. message. (BOX 459, GSO, February-March, 2008, p 9)

“FUNCTIONS OF A CENTRAL OFFICE

The A.A. experience has demonstrated that central offices are helpful, particularly in populous areas. There are nearly 1000 central/intergroup offices throughout the world, performing vital A.A. services. These constitute a network of service outlets and A.A. contacts to help carry the A.A. message. Sometimes, however, central office ventures have bogged down in disputes over money, authority, and like matters— thus becoming less effective in carrying the A.A. message. It's not always clear why these troubles have come up, but often it's been because the proper functions

of a central office were not clearly explained or understood, or there was some disregard of the principles in A.A.'s Twelve Traditions. So the following suggestions have been made to outline the basic services a central office might offer:

1) *A.A. Inquiries*—By providing an Alcoholics Anonymous listing in the local telephone directory, the central office may receive inquiries from those seeking help. They will refer the caller to a nearby A.A. group, where sponsorship may be arranged, or have a twelfth stepper contact them. Many local A.A. offices now have their own Web site.

2) *Office Facilities*—The central office can maintain a conveniently located office in which paid workers and/or volunteers are available to carry the message of A.A. to the alcoholic.

3) *Meeting Lists and Other Literature* — At regular intervals, the central office may publish and distribute up-to-date lists of meetings and other information about local A.A. services. Many intergroup/central offices sell A.A. Conference-approved literature for the convenience of local groups.

4) *Information Exchange*—The service office may function as a clearinghouse for the circulation and exchange of information among all the A.A. groups in the community. In this same connection, a logical function of the central office is to provide “program exchange” meetings, where group program chairpersons meet regularly to exchange meetings with other groups.

5) *Local Committees on Public Information (P.I.) and Cooperation With the Professional Community (C.P.C.) in cooperation with district and area P.I. and C.P.C. committees*—The central office is an ideal contact with those in the community seeking information about A.A. Thus, A.A.'s relations with the public and professionals in the alcoholism field are often handled through the cooperation of the area committee

and central office. In general service areas where P.I. and C.P.C. committees are under the auspices of a General Service Committee, the central office works in close cooperation with these committees. A.A. Guidelines and Workbooks on P.I. and C.P.C. are available from G.S.O.

6) *A.A. in Correctional and Treatment Facilities*—The central office can maintain contact with local groups in correctional facilities and treatment facilities, offering literature and prerelease A.A. contacts and arranging for A.A. speakers and visitors to meetings. When there is a correctional or treatment facility committee for this purpose, the service office may assist it through close cooperation with local hospitals and prisons. Central offices handling institutional contacts are also urged to send for G.S.O. material, Guidelines on Correctional Facilities Committees and Guidelines on Treatment Facilities Committees and the Correctional Facilities and Treatment Facilities Workbooks.

7) *Local A.A. Events*—An A.A. central office is a logical body to manage the details of an annual dinner, picnic, or convention, if the participating groups wish it.

8) *A.A. Bulletin or Newsletter*—The preparation of a publication for periodic distribution to A.A. groups is often a function of the central office.

9) *Special Needs Services*—Many central offices carry information on groups that are wheelchair accessible, or signed for deaf members. Some offices have TDD/TTY equipment for communicating with deaf alcoholics.

GROUP REPRESENTATION AT A CENTRAL OFFICE

Service centers usually have no authority on their own account; they derive it from the participating groups. Local group representatives reflect the groups' conscience in the service center operations. In most communities, a central office committee or steering committee is set up to handle the administrative activities of the service office. The

steering committee holds regularly scheduled meetings and deals with general policy and plans. Periodically, the steering committee reports to group representatives on central office problems and accomplishments. It is extremely important to keep a two-way flow of information going between the central office and groups.

STAFFING THE INTERGROUP

Most A.A. central offices now employ at least one paid full-time secretary or manager, as well as A.A. volunteers—members who respond to Twelfth Step calls at the office, answer the telephone, and often carry out other service office duties. Large offices may also have paid clerical workers on the staff to assist the full-time person.

Although the principles involving certain paid employees of A.A. service centers are now widely known in A.A., it is still helpful to review the appropriate A.A. Tradition at the time of opening a new service office. As it states in Tradition Eight: "Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers." It should be clear from this that the paid secretary functions as a paid employee of the central office—not as an A.A. member—during duty hours and is hired largely on the basis of professional skill. Regarding compensation for paid workers, Bill W. writes in "Twelve Concepts for World Service" as follows: "We believe that each paid executive, staff member, or consultant should be recompensed in reasonable relation to the value of his or her similar services or abilities in the commercial world." Also, Social Security and certain insurance benefits are provided, as well as sick leave and vacations. It is suggested that the central office full-time secretary also be accorded a vote as well as a voice on the steering committee. This policy is successfully followed by A.A. World Services, Inc.: The staff coordinator—a paid employee as well as an A.A. member—also serves as a director and thus has a vote on policy matters."

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It seems to the Editor that our Salt Lake Central Office has always fulfilled or exceeded its statement of purpose, which can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. I invite your comments, is your group represented? If not why? Does the CO service structure cooperate enough with the AA service structure? IE is there enough CO representation at the District and Area levels? Is there enough representation of the District and Area levels in the CO service structure? Let me know what you think.

LIFELINE@saltlakeaa.org

Where the Past meets the Present, Area 69 Archives

It was never a goal to stand for an Area position. I was happy in group and district service positions. Serving Area 69 as the Archive Standing Chair has been a priceless experience. The Archive Standing Chair position is responsible for all reports to the Area. Standing at the microphone is still a little overwhelming but it is also a great joy to share about new items that have been donated by members for the Area 69 Archives. My personal favorites were the Big Book signed by a group celebrating a 40th Birthday and a T-shirt donated by a group celebrating a 60th Birthday. Well, let's get real!! Is there anything that isn't exciting, when it comes to preserving our past for our future? It really has been an eye-opening experience to work with Janet in sorting, preserving and displaying the archives.

Let's talk about the round tables. It has been a pleasure to chair the round tables and each time I am awe struck at the depth of information gathered and shared. The program of AA is in a constant forward motion with new GSR's at each round table discussion. This is a wonderful opportunity to discuss the role of Area 69 Archives and inform new GSR's what the Archives does and doesn't do. A very popular topic is the how Archives preserves the anonymity of members while providing an interesting display at all full body assemblies.

Personally, my greatest memory will be attending the 13th National Alcoholics Anonymous Archives Workshop (NAW) in Woodland Hills, CA. The Area budget is set to defray \$300 to each archivist on rotating years so each has the opportunity to attend the NAW. Unfortunately, Janet will not have the opportunity to travel because her turn is this year and the date is set for the same weekend we have our area elections assembly. This was my third NAW Conference but my first as an Area Archivist. Each time I gain a greater perspective and a continued respect for our history and Archives. There are no words to describe the wonderful feeling of camaraderie that accompanies an event full of members with the same objective.

In Addition, I will never forget that this was the time our Area Archives were moved into a gated, climate controlled storage unit with video surveillance. It was a huge step for Area 69 in a continuing effort to improve the conditions for preserving and storing our Archives. I find it ironic that this occurred at the same time the Archives at GSO had their storage area renovated for the continued preservation of the history of our fellowship's archives.

This was the greatest opportunity I have ever had the pleasure of sharing with so many. So, I thank you Area 69 and the fellowship of Utah.

In humble appreciate and gratitude,
Treesa J., Area 69 Archives Standing Chair.

Straight Pepper Mash-up Party

"Straight Pepper", a Utah Rainbow Roundup fundraiser held at Ulysses Salon at 629 S. State in Salt Lake on April 24, was a great success and a lot of fun, proving that we are not a glum lot. The sober event, sponsored by the GLBT AA groups in the Salt Lake and Ogden areas, included dancing, a pot luck dinner, photographs and prize drawings.

Everyone had a wonderful time. Many thanks to the folks who put it together and made it happen.

The twelfth annual Utah Rainbow Roundup will be held at the University Marriott on Friday, August 27 – Sunday, August 29, 2010. For more information visit our website at www.rainbowroundup.org, or call Joe M. at 801-548-4853, or Polly S. at 801-842-2306