

Central Office of Salt Lake City, Inc.
80 West Louise Avenue
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115-3514

Return Service Requested



LIFELINE

Salt Lake City Central Office Newsletter
February 2013

Admitted we were powerless . . .

Hello friends of the Fellowship, I'm a happy member of the Acceptance group of A.A. I'm thrilled to be living sober and serving as a part of this miracle we call Alcoholics Anonymous. I was asked to share my experience, strength, and hope regarding step 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable. Here's how it happened for me.

I tried alcohol when I was ten years old. Some friends and I got into his mother's liquor that she had under the sink. It was vodka and whiskey. I can't remember everything that happened, but I recall laughing a lot while talking with a religious leader who rarely laughed. At 13 I found a bottle of whiskey left over from a party that I hid in my drawer. Again, I can't remember everything that happened, but I recall laughing, jumping around on my bed, falling down a lot, and waking up, naked and bruised. 14-17 was a lot of alcohol, weed, laughing and jumping around, more nakedness, more bruises, cops, handcuffs, upset parents, more drinking, more cops, more upset parents, some legal fees, and then some sobriety while I did some service for the popular religious organization in Utah.

I returned from my religious service in a foreign land believing that I would live happily ever after, but that didn't happen. My curiosity found alcohol again. I was without defense. I took one drink, and it turned into thousands thereafter. Again, there was the laughter, jumping around, nakedness, bruises, close calls with the cops, upset parents, bars, parties etc. . . It was during this time that I found the courage to look inside myself and see that I was homosexual, and that the religion I was raised with was not the one for me. That was a painful experience filled with tears and mixed emotions. My understanding of life, God, and happiness twisted and shattered. Alcohol consumed me. I drank, I partied, I raved, I sobbed in anger, bitterness, and sorrow. Then there was a deep emptiness. I would drink and laugh at parties, but inside I felt so far away - so alone. I would wake up in the night drunk and crying not knowing why I was crying. There was no joy left in drinking.

I couldn't stop drinking. I wanted to stop, but I couldn't.

This perplexed me, made me laugh a little bit, and then it scared me. I was in something worse than a bad situation. Deep inside I knew it. I contacted a friend and told her what was happening to me. She shared her story with me and I knew that she knew exactly what I was talking about. Her honesty exposed me to the cold fact that I have a progressive disease, and that it will kill me if I drink. I dumped the remainder of my booze, sobered up at her place for a few days, got introduced to Alcoholics Anonymous, and I haven't had a drink since.

Alcoholics Anonymous has presented me with a way to live happily without drinking. I don't ever have to drink again, and I don't want to. I work the steps and they work for me. I have respectfully set aside the religion of my up-bringing. I am content with the sexuality I have been given. I cherish a flexible understanding of Higher Powers, I enjoy a beautiful life today and I owe it to the miracle of Alcoholics Anonymous. It sounds too good to be true, but it's not. Reach out in humility, and you too will be rocketed into the fourth dimension of living.

The Acceptance Group
361 North 300 West SLC
Sundays 3:00pm

If you would like to receive the LIFELINE through the mail please fill out this form and send it to the Salt Lake Central Office, 80 West Louise Ave, Salt Lake City, UT 84115. Your donation is appreciated!

You may also signup to have the LIFELINE e-mailed to you on the Salt Lake Central Office website at saltlakeaa.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Amount donated: \$3.00 \$5.00 \$10.00 Other _____

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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.* 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
lifeline@saltlakeaa.org

Central Office Board of Trustees

board@saltlakeaa.org

Chair	Christy R.
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Immediate Past Chair	Nick R.
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Alternate Trustee at Large	Mike O.

Central Office Standing Committees

Activities (activities@saltlakeaa.org)	VACANT
Archives (archives@saltlakeaa.org)	John N.
Bylaws (bylaws@saltlakeaa.org)	Linda B.
Hotline Telephone (hotline@saltlakeaa.org)	Melinda A.
Literature (literature@saltlakeaa.org)	Chris H.
Newsletter (lifeline@saltlakeaa.org)	Gina F.
Outreach (outreach@saltlakeaa.org)	VACANT
Twelfth Step (12step@saltlakeaa.org)	Al L.
Volunteer (volunteer@saltlakeaa.org)	Susan L.
Website (webservant@saltlakeaa.org)	Jonathan H.

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.

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.

Groups Represented at the December 2012 Central Office Representatives Meeting

5:15 Happy Hours	New Yorker
974 Group	No Rules
A Way Out	Nomadic Lunch Bunch
Acceptance Group	North Cottonwood Group
An AA Group	Nutbuckets
Big Uglies	Park City Men's
By the Book	Sat Hot Topics
Came to Believe	Sots
Early Friendship	South Davis
Fresh Air Serenity	South Enders
Garden Variety	Spiritual Quest
Happy Destiny	Stepping Stones
Highland Group	Sun Morning Breakfast
Honey's	Up Group
Midvale Lunch Bunch	VA Welcome Home
Murray Group	We Care
New Beginnings	Wed Night Foothill
New Life	West Valley Group

7th Tradition Contribution Addresses

AA World Services
Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
<https://ctb.aaws.org/Login.aspx>

Central Office of Salt Lake City
80 West Louise Ave.
Salt Lake City, UT 84115

Area 69 Treasurer
PO Box 433
Draper, UT 84020
<http://utahaa.org/contributions.php>

District 10 Treasurer
PO Box 57271
Murray, UT 84157

District 2 Treasurer
PO Box 615
Salt Lake City, UT 84110

"With a recovering alcoholic, action has to come before understanding and faith . . . We have to act our way to right thinking, rather than the reverse."

*New York, N.Y., January 1968
From: What About This 24-Hour Plan?
Best of Grapevine, Volume 1*

Your Central Office Committee Updates

CO Rep Meeting

Tuesday December 11th 6:30pm
Chair: Nick R.

Introduction of those present
Financial Report – Adam

Few reps had questions regarding the ongoing inventory adjustments. It was explained due to the fact that the system's inventory and actual inventory need to catch up.

Committee Reports

Activities – Central Office will be open to the public on Christmas and New Years Day.

Archives – Continuing to organize. Hung pictures in the meeting space.

By Laws – Going to update with the changes from last month re: annual CO meeting

Hotline – No report
Literature - Pamphlet handed out "Do you think you are different?"
Spoke of new materials available for sale
Year end inventory 12/31/2012 starting at 4pm

Newsletter – Doug spoke about no one turned their articles in last month
He has detailed notes for the new chair

Outreach – Utah Central Office intergroup conference call, next month will be on websites guidelines.
Update on All Groups Meeting

12 Step – No report
Volunteer – No report

Website – New digital files of speaker tapes will be available on line.

Elections

12 Step Chair – Al L.
Activities – Still open
By Laws – Linda B.
Hotline – Melinda A.
Motion was granted to suspend sobriety requirement
Newsletter – Gina F.
Literature – Chris H.
Outreach – Still open
Volunteer – Susan L.
Motion was granted to suspend sobriety requirement
Website – Jonathon H.
Archives – John N.
Two people stood, John and Dan. Majority voted for John.

In closing Nick thanked everyone for letting him be of service. Thanked everyone for their service in the positions over the past two years.

Closed with Serenity Prayer.

Group Contributions, November 2012 & Year to November 2012

	Jan - Nov			Jan - Nov			Jan - Nov	
	Nov 12	12		Nov 12	12		Nov 12	12
11th Step	0.00	52.50	Garden Variety	0.00	282.00	Salt Lake Group	0.00	96.00
12 O'Clock High	0.00	67.45	Grapevine	0.00	155.80	Salt Lake Men's	0.00	360.00
17th x 17th	0.00	129.55	Greater Kearns	0.00	3.50	Salty Paa	0.00	14.65
5-15 Happy Hour	0.00	258.50	Grub Lunch Bunch	60.00	695.00	Sat Nite Speakers	0.00	223.82
90th and 32nd	0.00	50.00	Happy Destiny	0.00	11.75	Sat Beginners	200.00	350.00
974 Group	0.00	567.50	Happy Group	0.00	212.83	Sat Hot Topics	54.00	77.00
A Vision for You	0.00	249.38	High & Dry	0.00	137.50	Sat Morning SOTS	79.50	191.00
A Way Out	0.00	108.00	Highland Group	36.00	441.75	Sharing N Caring	0.00	271.00
AA Sat Speakers	0.00	181.93	Highlanders	0.00	40.00	SLCYPAA	0.00	21.50
An AA Group	37.35	122.83	Hilcrest	0.00	600.00	Sobriety Hour	0.00	1.00
Area 69	25.00	74.50	Holladay	0.00	375.00	South Davis AA	0.00	40.00
As Bill Sees It	0.00	65.00	Honey's Breakfast	0.00	500.00	South Enders Davis	0.00	901.00
Back to the Basics	0.00	28.50	How It Works	0.00	342.00	South Valley Lunch	150.00	626.00
Basic AA	62.11	127.61	Individual	100.42	2,027.20	Speak Easy Women	0.00	394.91
Basic Young Peoples	0.00	578.50	Into Action	0.00	63.00	Spiritual Quest	0.00	400.00
Big Ugliers	40.00	40.00	Island of Misfit Toys	50.00	175.00	Starting The Day	0.00	160.00
Bog Irish	0.00	315.93	Jackson Hole Ladies	0.00	15.00	Stonewall Group	0.00	357.50
Bountiful Comm	0.00	180.00	Jaywalkers	0.00	100.00	Sugarhouse	0.00	373.48
By the Book	0.00	366.00	Keep It Simple	0.00	73.75	Sugarhouse at 7	0.00	282.00
Came to Believe	0.00	150.00	Living in Sobriety	0.00	75.00	Sun Get AA	0.00	75.00
Chapter Five	0.00	106.00	Magna Friendly	25.00	505.00	Sun Morn Breakfast	112.00	234.00
City at Seven	0.00	200.00	Midvale Lunch	100.00	225.00	Survive & Serve	25.50	195.50
Closed Meeting	0.00	754.75	Murray Group	0.00	263.60	Tenth Step Group	0.00	85.03
Come As You Are	0.00	262.30	New Life	0.00	254.00	Thunder Heart AA	20.00	60.00
Corrections	0.00	9.50	New Yorkers	145.00	145.00	Thurs Night Womens	0.00	90.00
Cottonwood Group	0.00	590.49	No Nonsense	0.00	88.44	Try Again	0.00	41.38
Crazy Ladies	0.00	25.00	Nomadic Lunches	147.00	1,502.95	Unity Lunch Bunch	25.00	75.00
District 10	0.00	748.00	NS Sobriety Hour	0.00	330.00	Up Group	0.00	32.00
District 2	0.00	1.00	Not A Glum Lot	0.00	55.00	Wake Up Call	0.00	1,650.00
DNS Group	250.00	1,260.00	Nut Buckets	0.00	226.40	Welcome Home	0.00	100.00
Downtown	0.00	36.00	Off the Cuff	0.00	566.50	WJ Big Book	57.00	113.81
Draper Group	0.00	170.00	Old Fashioned AA	0.00	100.11	West Valley Group	0.00	50.00
Early Beginnings	0.00	703.50	PC Group	100.00	550.00	Women In Sobriety	0.00	91.00
Early Friendship	0.00	646.54	PC Men's Group	0.00	300.00	Women in Solution	0.00	22.94
Every Night Firelight	0.00	300.00	PC Young People	0.00	59.80	Women Stepping Up	0.00	310.00
Eye Opener	50.00	175.00	Primary Purpose	30.00	130.00	Women's 12X12	0.00	309.00
Foothill	0.00	100.00	Quiet Time	0.00	84.33	Young and Alive	0.00	40.00
Fresh Air Serenity	0.00	1,154.17	Richard Street	0.00	242.11	Young People'sPC	0.00	81.88
Friendship Group	55.72	180.59	Right Stuff	0.00	25.00	Other	0.00	1,016.94
G/C Women	0.00	75.00	Round Table Group	0.00	120.00	Total Income	2,036.60	33,125.18

Congrats to our Birthdays! It works — it really does!

Nomadic Lunch

Bob	30 Days
Sally J	30 Days
Sean	6 Months
Derek	1 Year
Holly	18 Months
Stephen	15 Years
Tim	17 Years
Michael Paul	22 Years
Ron	24 Years
Zeke	27 Years
Bud	27 Years
Betty	29 Years

Fresh Air Serenity Seekers Group

Paul	30 Days
Bert	90 Days
Mark	1 Year
Deborah	1 Year
Joan	15 Years
Beth	16 Years
Steffi	26 Years

Please submit your Group's Birthday and news before the 15th

Please e-mail them to LIFELINE@saltlakeaa.org or bring them into the office.

"By 1937, some of us realized that AA needed a standard literature. There would have to be a book ... Well, we did quarrel violently over the preparation and distribution of that book. In fact, it took five years for the clamor to die down. Should any AAs dream that the old-timers who put the book together went about in serene meditation and white robes, then they had best forget it."

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., November 1951
From: "Services Make AA Tick"
The Language of the Heart

From: The Chair in the Corner

Happy New Year! At your Central Office, we are bringing in the New Year with some changes to our Board of Trustees and Standing Chair positions. In November and December the Central Office representatives voted to replace the outgoing Board positions and Standing Chair positions. I will serve as Chair, Wendy W. as Co Chair, Meg G. as Trustee, Betty H. as Trustee and Mike O. as Alternate Trustee while Kent S., Adam U., Jeremy C. and Rich W. will return for one more year! I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Chair, Nick R. and Trustees, Kimmie S., Al L. and Sean B. We will benefit from their contributions for a long time. We were able to amend our by-laws and implement those changes successfully and without much turmoil because of their commitment and desire to create a successful, service oriented Central Office.

One of the major amendments to the bylaws was the addition of the Standing Committees. We've had a full year of active involvement from those committees. These committees were designed to plan and implement all the services that Central Of-

fice offers. This allows AA members the opportunity to get involved and provide service to our community. Here's a little review of what the Committees accomplished this year:

The Archives Committee was approved after the bylaws were amended and Meg G. led that committee to go through the task of sorting through old papers, Grapevines, books, pictures, tapes, ad infinitum. We now have Grapevines catalogued and available from the 1950's to current issues. Digital copies of old speaker tapes were made and are available at the office and online. Please come by and view their hard work. John N. will be assuming the position of Archives Standing Chair and if you'd like to participate, please call Central Office for his contact information.

Shar C. led the Activities Committee with the help of Kimmie S. This committee has the responsibility of planning our fellowship events during the year. Thanks to these ladies, Joel and Penny R. and many more that helped with our picnic, garage sale, chili cook off, etc. The Standing Chair position is open for this year.

"Thank God for all the wonderful people, professional and otherwise, who have helped me or tried to. Even when the help has not succeeded, it has kept me going, kept me trying."

*New Canaan, Conn., April 1976
From: "Just Keep On Going"
Best of Grapevine, Volume 1*

From the Chair, *Continued*

If you would like to stand for the position, please come to the Rep meeting on January 8th at 6:30 pm at Central Office

The Bylaws Committee was led by Linda B. and she will continue serving in this position. The Bylaws Committee has the responsibility of overseeing review and changes to the current Bylaws. It is a tedious job but Linda takes it on with gusto!

Another important function of our Central Office is the Hotline. This phone service is available 24/7 for people searching for a solution, a meeting, a ride to a meeting and contacts. Volunteers answer the phone during office hours but, after office hours, our goal is to have alcoholics living in the solution answer those calls rather than an answering service. Tim H. organized the effort this year and did a great job. Melinda A. will be taking over for Tim – if you'd like to give her a hand, please call Central Office for her contact information.

Doug R. has been the editor of our newsletter, The LIFELINE, for the past 3 years and has done an incredible job. His attention to detail and dedication to a quality publication will provide an easy transition for Gina F. She will chair the Newsletter Committee for the New Year. Doug will continue to serve Central Office as the Volunteer Coordinator on Fridays and as a resource to our newsletter. Once again, please contact Central Office if you would like to help out with the newsletter.

If you've been to Central Office lately you will have noticed some big changes in our literature stock. While we have many new titles and are always stocked, our prices have been reduced across the board to better serve the needs of our members and groups. Chris H. has been responsible for all of our strides made in this area. He will continue on as our Literature Chair for the New Year. He is always in need of help during inventory.

Wendy W. led the Outreach Committee this year. Her committee has worked extremely hard at contacting our groups listed on our meeting schedule to ensure they are open and represented at Central Office. This is important, especially to newcomers, that

a meeting listed on the schedule is there. The All Groups meeting commenced this year, as well. Groups from around the valley sign up to host a meeting and provide a potluck dinner. All Groups meets on the 3rd Saturday of the month at 6 pm and it's a great way to meet people from different groups and share the message. Wendy also has a teleconference meeting once a month with our Delegate and other Central Offices in the state of Utah to enhance communication with all branches of service. She will serve Central Office as Co Chair and the Area as Secretary. The Outreach Standing Chair position for the New Year is open.

The reason Central Office has been able to operate on less money and provide more services is in large part due to the volunteers. Central Office is staffed by all volunteers. We have a paid bookkeeper that comes in for a couple of hours each day to ensure our books are up to date and our bills are paid. Karen S. does an awesome job. But, everything else is done by volunteers. Betty H. chaired the first ever Volunteer Committee and we owe great thanks to her for getting us started on the path of self-support. Betty will serve on the Board this year as Trustee and Susan L. will assume her responsibilities as Volunteer Chair. Please contact Central Office if you are interested in service in this capacity.

Last, but certainly, not least is our Website Committee. Jonathan H. has totally reinvented our website to provide easy access to meeting schedules and information pertinent to alcoholics in the area, as well as, nationally. Please visit our website at www.saltlakeaa.org. Jonathan will serve us again this year as our webservant. If you have any talents to give in this area, please contact Jonathan at webservant@saltlakeaa.org.

If you have any questions and/or suggestions, please don't hesitate to email me at board@saltlakeaa.org.

Once again, Happy New Year!

Christy R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Central Office Salt Lake City Financial Summary November 2012

Income Statement

Revenue	
	\$ 20.00
Prudent Reserve Dividend	\$ 97.00
Chili Cookoff	\$ 802.33
Group Donations	\$ 2,036.60
Sales - Literature	\$ 3,299.12
Sales - Awards & Misc	\$ 1,489.50
Total Revenue:	\$ 7,744.55
COGS - Literature	\$ 2,655.93
COGS - Awards & Misc	\$ 862.25
Total COGS	\$ 3,518.18
Gross Profit	\$ 4,226.37
Operating Expenses	\$ 2,976.90
(Rent, Bookkeeper, Utilities, Printing & Copies, Answering service)	
Chili Cookoff Expenses	\$ 197.33
Inventory Adjustment	\$ 983.02
Other Expenses	\$ 1,242.38
(Carpet Cleaning, Dolly, CPA)	
Total Expenses	\$ 5,399.63
Net Income:	\$ (1,173.26)

Bank Accounts

Prudent Reserve - Fund	\$ 23,766.00
Prudent Reserve - Savings	\$ 5,869.38
Operating Capital - Checking	\$ 13,847.79
Total	\$ 43,483.17

"There have been dark days where a will infinitely greater than my own has been responsible for my sobriety."

Dayton, OH, April 1962
From: "Ever Been on a Dry Drunk"
Best of Grapevine, Volume 1

Available times to volunteer for answering the Central Office Phone line

Saturday - Second Saturday 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM, Third Saturday 6:00 PM to Midnight

Sunday - Fourth Sunday 6:00 PM to Midnight

Monday - Every Monday 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Tuesday - Fourth Tuesday 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM

Thursday - Every Thursday Midnight to 10:00 AM, Second Thursday 10:00 PM to Midnight

Friday - First, second and third Fridays Midnight to 10:00 AM, First, second and fourth Fridays 10:00 PM to Midnight

Melinda A.

E-mail hotline@saltlakeaa.org to volunteer
www.saltlakeaa.org/phones

WAB DAP ME, *Continued*

“Higher Power” or “as we understood him.” I still didn’t believe in God, but I was at least getting more comfortable with using the word. I knew for sure that no one else was going to remove my shortcomings or defects, so it was pretty much up to God and me. So I thought, Let’s do it, big boy!

More action! Step Eight was challenging but I was able to put together a pretty good list. I had literally left damage and debris all over the country. I had hurt many—hotel clerks, restaurant servers, ticket agents at the airport, and just about anyone in public service. I had disappointed friends and family on many occasions. I’m sure I left others with that quizzical look that cats can give, and with an apparent question such as... What the hell is wrong with that guy? Much of the damage I will never be able to make direct amends for. But again the wisdom of the steps covers all angles. The steps said “whenever possible,” and they further said, “not to do so if it would injure them or others.” I was comfortable with my ability to complete Steps Eight and Nine to an acceptable degree, but with the caveat that my new and improved memory might bring up something in the future that I needed to address. Thankfully, there is no time limit, and I found I have been able to make restitution when and if I recalled or was reminded of a particular incident.

For me, Step Ten is really the last of the action steps. It is my favorite step and the one I use most of the time to keep balance in my life. In Step Ten, I put my AA way of living into practical use, every day, all day, in good times or bad. I find it extremely important to stay in touch with my character defects. They never seem to go away completely. My continued use of a personal inventory helps me recognize when anger starts to surface, and to curb that anger immediately. It also helps me be aware when I am resentful over any situation and not to act on it. I have to be cognizant of my intolerance and impatience; and to respond in all situations with love, rather than contempt.

I learned the art of daily “PRAYER” through Step Eleven. I wrote a prayer that I basically plagiarized and rewrote in the first person from portions of Step Ten and the chapter “Into Action” from the Big Book. I call it my morning prayer. It helps me live life more effectively, and it further helps me be aware of my character defects that somehow manage to rear their ugly heads on a regular basis. Prayer helps me temper those defects. Prayer also helps me to better understand my concept of God and the ability to do His will.

There is no question I have had a spiritual awakening as a direct result of the work I have done so far in Alcoholics

Anonymous. I am thankful I have been able to lay aside my prejudice. As a result, I am able to nurture my thoughts, emotions, actions, and words that I believe are in harmony with my belief that the whole universe is, in some way, connected. Further, I have learned to be kind, loving, and respectful of others. I have learned to be considerate of the difference in others’ values. I accept that their values are not wrong—they are just different. This is my definition of spirituality and being a spiritual person. As a result, I believe I have become a better person, and I am now comfortable in my own skin.

Obviously, this revelation and spiritual awakening fits right in with my arrival at Step Twelve: carrying the “MESSAGE!” I was more than willing to carry the message of the 12-step program and to participate in the helping of others. This service work seems to have done more for me than it has for others, but it can certainly be debatable either way. Today I practice these principles in all my affairs. Sometimes good, sometimes not so good! But that is also the beauty of the program. I don’t have to do anything perfect except the first half of the first step, admitting I am powerless over alcohol. I will always have room for improvement. The important thing is that I make every effort to grow and add value on a regular basis.

And finally, last but certainly not least, I had to have “FAITH”! Faith that when all twelve steps were put together and completed, and when I did the work that was required of me, something good would come of it. And it did! I have very little trauma and drama anymore, I don’t have hangovers or the pain from them any longer, my bank account returned, and most importantly, I have gained back the respect I desired from family and friends many times over. And best of all, I now enjoy relief—the relief I so desperately needed on my arrival in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

For all that I have freely been given, I am eternally grateful. The Big Book summarizes it best: and I quote. “Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.”

I have taken that road, and I am happy.

In sobriety,
Alan L.
Salt Lake City

On Tradition 1

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

“Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.”

Our whole A.A. program is securely founded on the principle of humility—that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are—“a small part of a great whole.” Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why A.A. Tradition can confidently state, “Our common welfare comes first.”

“Does this mean,” some will ask, “that in A.A. the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?”

No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no society on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. Alcoholics Anonymous has no “musts.” Few A.A. groups impose penalties on anyone for non-conformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or non-compliance with any principle of A.A. is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, “Judge not,” we observe most literally.

“But,” some will argue, “if A.A. has no authority to govern its

individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?”

The answer seems to be that we A.A.s cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may become so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam, his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction.

So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, “our common welfare comes first.” Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must; we have disciplined ourselves.

Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without substantial unity there can be no A.A., and that without A.A. there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm A.A. We humbly confess that we are but “a small part of a great whole.”

~ Bill W.

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The A.A. Grapevine, December, 1947

So I’m a Drunk

Aside from the belligerent behavior and systematic sabotage of my life and everything within it which I held/hold dear, WHAT’S TO BE EMBARRASSED ABOUT? Surely there are millions upon millions who probably in more ways than not are like me. I've heard some numbers, but I don't know the source reference, so let's just say I'm estimating. Nevertheless, here I am 25 years later, finally smartening up (if that's not a stretch); sobering up. One day I'm drunk/drinking and the next day different. There's nothing magic about it, really. I had given up waiting on the world to uphold some strange ethical code I had in my head/heart? I had all but given up my own. I gave up on myself and the world happily supported that. That cliché about looking yourself in the eye, as much as I hate clichés, well, that happened to me. The disgust I had for the image in the mirror that day, it literally

made me sick to my stomach. Well, that, and the binge hangover, I'm sure.

I remembered when I was vibrant and dynamic. I could keep my own gaze with confidence. I commanded what I did rather than hoped for it. I had a plan (WHAT A LAUGH). Age may have played a factor in all this as well while I studied the deepening lines on my face (damn those clichés) and thought - How did I become this? Long had it been since I bothered to look at myself. The person I saw that day and the one I remembered were two different people. But one in the same. How confusing was that day, huh?

I had been to A.A. before. 15 years ago I received a month sobriety chip. I loved the program but then paid a visit to an

So I'm a Drunk, *continued*

old friend and returned to old habits. I told myself, if I could do it for 30 days, I could do it for an eternity, when I was ready (I said I loved the program, not grasped it). After that point I still held A.A. in high regard, though only as a good alternative lifestyle, when the time came.

This time, my motivation wasn't the rock bottom moment which I shared. At least not at first. It was simply for my most recent drunk buddy. "Sure," I told myself, "it was him who got me into this stupor. I might be messed up, but damn, he fell asleep at the bar!" In my opinion, that was a line you just didn't cross!

So I took it upon myself to be the good friend that got him some help. Being his coworker also, I pestered him all day. Eventually, he caved and agreed to a meeting with me that night. There were a few stipulations, but I figured if I could just get him there, A.A. could put the whammy on him. So I set it up.

I made sure to arrive a little early to tell the people how things needed to go in order to keep him (HA!) "Please don't call any attention to us. We just want to observe," I instruct-

ed. I think we all know how that went. Chips, hugs and names were exchanged, and to make a long story short, he never went back but I did, and continue doing so. Eventually, even though he still suffers, I realized what had taken place, and thanked him for being a supportive friend by getting me through those doors.

It hasn't been peaches 'n' cream by any means. I still get cravings and mood swings, have picked up and put down step 4 several times, am seeking another sponsor, and am trying to tough my way through these things labeled "Service Work." I already see a monumental improvement across the board. I'm not drinking, going to meetings, and trying to carry the message. The one that works for me is: "If you want to continue drinking, that's your business. If you want to STOP drinking, that's OUR business." And so it is.

Thanks for letting me share.

~ Danny S.
Salt Lake City, UT

WAB DAP MF

WAB DAP MF is an acronym for recovery words. It doesn't make sense for most, but it is just weird enough to remind me of my recovery saga and, more importantly, it serves as a guide for my ongoing healing from this deadly disease of alcoholism. It is also a blueprint to guarantee how I get there. These key recovery words stand for Willingness, Acceptance, Belief, Decision, Action, Prayer, Message, and Faith. Listen for these words in my story, and how they work for me.

After 26 years of hard drinking, I found I needed a little relief. I didn't really want to quit drinking; I just wanted to be relieved of all the trauma and drama. I wanted relief from the hangovers and the physical pain from them. I wanted my bank account back. I wanted the respect of my friends, family, and coworkers that I once had. I wanted to quit lying to others, and also to myself. I just wanted a little relief.

If I could just stop drinking for a time, I thought, maybe I could start feeling better and learn to drink like a gentleman. But wait a minute... I had tried to stop drinking many times,

but without success, and I had tried drinking like a gentleman, but invariably would end up in a drunken stupor. I realized I didn't know what drinking responsibly was.

For the first time in my life, I became truly "WILLING"! Willing to make a change. I had been willing in the past, but not truly willing to do anything I could to accomplish a feeling of normalcy. I couldn't remember the last time I felt normal—or if I ever had. What is "normal," anyway? I originally drank to escape reality. I was successful, but only temporarily. I knew I wanted to feel better, and finally I was committed to being willing to do absolutely anything to accomplish it.

That commitment led me to Alcoholics Anonymous and treatment. There I learned another word: ACCEPTANCE! I had to accept the fact I drank too much. I accepted that my bank account was low because I drank and squandered it away. I accepted the reality that my friends and coworkers didn't want to be around me because of my heavy drinking

and personality changes. I accepted the fact that the common denominator of all my troubles was an excessive consumption of alcohol. I accepted I was defenseless over that next drink. My life was truly in a shambles, and I became totally out of control. At AA, they told me I had just described the essence of Step One: I admitted I was powerless over alcohol, and that my life was unmanageable.

Now that I was willing to make changes and accepted that I was powerless and unmanageable, I thought I should feel some relief, but I didn't. What was I supposed to do? Well, I found I was at the doorstep of Step Two: Believing that my actions were insane. At first glance, I didn't think this applied to me. I certainly didn't consider myself insane, by a long shot. But as I took my inventory, I was able to admit that many times my behavior and actions were, at the minimum, sort of dumb. OK, yes, some of them could have been really stupid. All right then... I'll buy insane!

But how was I to have God remove that insanity when I didn't believe in God? Wait a minute... AA gave me an out—they said "a power greater than myself." And to make it easier, they said I could come up with my own conception of that greater power or God. And further, as I understood that Higher Power! How good is that? The point is that I needed not only to "BELIEVE" that my actions were truly insane, but I had to believe that the insanity could be removed with the help of a Higher Power. My job was to simply accept that concept and, if nothing else, to act as if!

I thought, Well, I can do this. And what did I have to lose, anyway? Lo and behold, as time passed, and with my feeble conception of a Higher Power, and the fact I no longer anesthetized myself with alcohol, I quit doing insane things. I

was amazed how well it seemed to be working. And I was equally astonished how little effort it took.

But I wasn't out of the woods yet. I still had not really felt any relief. Now I was confronted with Step Three. Another God step: to give up control! I had always been in control—at least, I thought I was. To give it up was unthinkable. But once again, AA made it easy for me. They said I had to make a "DECISION," that's all. A decision to give up control and turn my will and life over to a Higher Power. It was just that... a decision! I really didn't have to do anything. I could do that! I was starting to feel some relief. It felt good.

Now, for me, I was getting to the easy part of my recovery. ACTION! Action was my bailiwick! When given a specific task, I always enjoyed the challenge. First, I had to take a moral inventory. Some parts were hard to admit to, but most of it was rather easy to do because it was the truth. The difficult part was piecing together the events that took place during the alcoholic blackouts. Admitting these wrongs to my Higher Power and myself was easy, but it was a little more challenging to actually tell it to another human being. My fear was that my secrets were safe with my HP and me, but not so much with someone who could talk. Once I realized that I was most likely the only person in denial of these wrongs, it became easier to acknowledge the immoral fiber of my corrupt actions. Soon I was feeling a little more relief and it felt good. Step Five was good!

Steps Six and Seven were pretty easy for me as well. Once I became aware that I actually had character defects and shortcomings, and, more importantly, learned what they were, I was truly willing to have them removed. I did notice that AA was now talking about "God," and not just referring to a

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Calendar of Events

January

Central Office will be open New Year's Day, 10:00m—6:00pm
CO Board of Trustees Meeting, Central Office January 1, 6:00pm
CO Reps Meeting, Central Office January 8 6:30pm
Newsletter Committee Meeting, Central Office, January 19 10:00am
"Newsletter Party," Fold/label/sort/mail the February 2013 LIFELINE, Central Office, January 25 10:00am

February

Super Bowl Party, Central Office, February 3 4:00pm
CO Board of Trustees Meeting, Central Office February 5, 6:00pm
CO Reps Meeting, Central Office February 12 6:30pm
International Women's Conference, Reno, NV, February 14-17
Newsletter Committee Meeting, Central Office, February 16 10:00am
"Newsletter Party," Fold/label/sort/mail the March 2013 LIFELINE, Central Office, February 22 10:00am
February Area 69 Committee Meeting, Fillmore, UT, February 23