



The Winner's Circle

West Central Intergroup's Monthly Newsletter



www.westcentralaa.org

August 2010

WEST CENTRAL INTERGROUP

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Statement of Purpose:

The primary purpose of this newsletter is to carry the AA message to alcoholics and try to practice the AA principles in all of its affairs. We are mainly accountable to West Central Intergroup as a whole, and hope to provide an open forum for the many diverse views of its members, striving to remain within the bounds of good will and the spirit of service. Articles are not intended to be statements of AA policy nor imply endorsement by AA or this newsletter.



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

Name	Home Group	Date	Years
Judy C.	Sunday Morning Special	8/15/1982	28
Debbie H.	Happy Hour @ The Club	8/3/2001	9
Will G.	Happy Hour @ The Club	8/17/2009	1

CELEBRATING THE NEWCOMER

"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics" (page 89 BB)
The next several newsletters will focus on the most important person in any AA meeting: **"The Newcomer"**

A short introduction by a new-comer.

I have not always been true to myself. I have not always been true to my higher power; I have not been true to all of you that want to help me. I need your understanding to help you to get to know me and my issues (of course, without expecting anything). I am not comfortable to tell you that I need you, as I really do not know you. But, coming to meetings and getting to understand that I am not alone really helps me understand that I am not alone and ultimately – I DO NEED YOU!

If that makes sense to you, then you know that I thank you for your non-bias acceptance. I am an alcoholic and a person that seeks a solution to that what ails me –alcoholism!

If I could say anything to the "newcomer" (which I am), is that it does work if you want it. In my short time I have learned that you (we) have to seek a solution to help us. A band of brothers (and sisters) within AA practicing a formal lifestyle is a proven solution for us newcomers to follow.

I thank all of you that have achieved sobriety for multiple years and hope that you continue the desire to help us who really need you the most!
Keith W. recently sober

Name: Keith W.

Sobriety Date: June 30, 2010

First Meeting: Wednesday night Step Group, MD

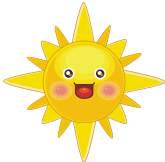
Why AA? I did not know what else to do and I need help

Most unusual meeting: Biggest challenges in sobriety: Deaths of loved ones, especially my daughter. Balancing and trying to be a human being rather than a human "doing".

Best change in sobriety: Starting to get manageability back in my life.

Greatest joys in sobriety: Figuring out I was not alone.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 20-22	 Sunlight of the Spirit Conference, York PA Six great speakers from all over the USA over the weekend, ice-cream social, registration \$25. Accommodation at York Holiday Inn \$87 per night. More info and registration form go to www.sosyorkpa.org
August 26-29	ICYPAA 52, (International Conference of Young People in AA) 1535 Broadway, New York, NY. www.ICYPAAHOST.org .
September 7 – 12	2010 Sessions by the Sea, Ocean City, MD

NEW MEETING

Living Sober Group meets on Thursday nights at 7.00pm. Section of "Living Sober" booklet discussed each week.

Centennial UMC, 8 W. 2nd St, Frederick.

Open. Babysitting room available.

MINUTES FROM INTERGROUP MEETING –June 30, 2010

Intergroup Chair Brigitte F. opened the meeting at 7 p.m. with the Serenity Prayer and the Purpose of Intergroup. The May minutes were read and approved. The following new group reps were welcomed: Michael from Friday Night Red Door, Scott from Walkersville Big Book, Sarah from Sunday Night Step Group, Annie from Catoclin Furnace and Doug from Mt. Airy Last Stop.

Reports:

Chair – Brigitte thanked the Standing Committee Chairs rotating out of their service positions for their dedication and hard work – Sonny, Leanne, Dale, Pete, Doug, Dale, Linda and Kirsten.

Vice Chair – No report.

Treasurer – Jodie welcomed as new Treasurer. Financials and Balance Sheets were distributed.

Standing Committees

Literature – John Van C. new coordinator. All in good order.

Where & When's – Kevin nominated for position.

Public Information – Agreed new website is fabulous.

Institutions – Linda advised Annual Orientation went well and Women's meeting now moved to Tuesday evenings (from Sunday afternoons) which will hopefully result in an increase in volunteers. Ursula welcomed as new Women's coordinator.

Office: No report.

Activities – Michelle welcomed as new coordinator. Advised that due to deficit there will not be a summer picnic but perhaps a fall event.

Newsletter – Mike McK. welcomed as new co-editor (along with Barry A. who was absent due to surgery).

CPC – Dick G: advised three new locations will have Where and When's and Committee is discussing which other pamphlets to include in pamphlet holders that have been ordered.

District Reports:

District 40: Walter, DCM advised Workshop on AA History was well attended. Delegate will be giving report at next District meeting on July 19th.

District 41: Dick G. advised of upcoming events - workshop on July 10 at 9 a.m. on Sponsorship, at the location of the New Freedom Friday night meeting and annual summer picnic will be held July 24, noon to 6 p.m. at Old National Pike Park; speaker Nancy K at 4 p.m.

ICYPAA: Alyssa reported on five successful events that have been held and outlined many upcoming events (see newsletter for details). Encouraged people to register for ICYPAA as soon as possible as nearby hotels are filling up.

Old Business: Balance Sheet was discussed. Contributions are down (as for all non-profits) so costs need to be cut. Various committees reduced their expenses accordingly. Budget accepted.

New Business: Dick reminded everyone of the Internet broadcast of Flag Ceremony at 75th Convention.

The meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer at 7:30 p.m.

PINK CAN CONTRIBUTIONS

June-10

Commuter	71.84
Walkersville Walkin' Thru the Book	27.00
	\$ 98.84

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

June-10

New Freedom	223.00
New Windsor Monday Night	225.00
Primary Purpose	8.80
Serenity at Seven	60.00
Walkersville Walkin' Thru the Book	12.00
	\$ 528.80

EARLY AA BEGINNERS LESSONS

History of the Beginners Classes: a Speech by Wally P. *Submitted by Jim M.*

Initial growth in Alcoholics Anonymous took place in Cleveland, Ohio. Clarence S. and the guys went out actively pursuing drunks and brought them off bar stools and street corners. We don't do that today, but we were doing it back then [late 1930's and 1940's]. And it worked!

In early 1940, when there were about 1,000 members of AA, more than half were from Cleveland. The book 'AA Comes of Age' talks about it on pages 20 and 21: "It was soon evident that a scheme of personal sponsorship would have to be devised for the new people. Each prospect was assigned an older AA, who visited him at his home or in the hospital, instructed him on AA principles, and conducted him to his first meeting." So even back in the early days the sponsor was taking the sponsee to meetings and getting together with him, rather than having the sponsee track the sponsor down. 'AA Comes of Age' continues by saying, "But in the face of many hundreds of pleas for help, the supply of elders could not possibly match the demand. Brand-new AA's, sober only a month or even a week, had to sponsor alcoholics still drying up in hospitals."

Because of this rapid growth in Cleveland, the idea of formalized classes started. In the book 'Dr. Bob and the Good Old-timers' it states on page 261, "Yes, Cleveland's results were the best. Their results were in fact so good that many a Clevelander really thought AA had started there in the first place." Over half of the fellowship was from Cleveland up and through the mid-1940s.

During the winter of 1941 the Crawford Group (founded in February 1941) organized a separate group to help newcomers through the Steps. By the first issue of the Cleveland Central Bulletin, October 1942, the Crawford "Beginners' Class" was listed as a separate meeting. And in the second issue, in November 1942, there was an article entitled "Crawford Men's Training." This refers to possibly the first "Beginners' Class." "The Crawford Men's Training System has been highly acclaimed to many. Old AA's are asked to come to these meetings with or without new prospects, where new prospects will be given individual attention just as though they were in a hospital. Visiting a prospect in his home has always been handicapped by interruptions. But the prospect did not dare to unburden himself completely for fear of being overheard by his relatives and by the AA's reticence for the same reason. Hospitalization without question is the ideal answer to where the message will be most effective; but the Crawford training plan strikes us as being the next best."

In the early days they weren't sure if you could get sober if you didn't go to treatment. That was one of the early questions -- could a person get sober without going to a three or five-day detox. Because it was during that detox that sometimes ten and twenty AA members came to visit the new person. And each hour the prospect was awake he would hear someone's story -- over and over again. And something gelled during these hospital stays. But they were trying to do it outside of the hospital and this is where the first of the classes came from.

These classes continued at Euclid Avenue Meeting Hall through June 1943 and at that time the Central Bulletin announced a second session -- "The Miles Training Meeting." The bulletin read, "The Miles Group reports they have enjoyed unusual success with their training meetings. The newcomer is not permitted to attend a regular AA meeting until he has been given a thorough knowledge of the work." The newcomer couldn't go to a meeting until he completed the training session. A lot of places didn't allow you to go to AA meetings until you had taken the four classes. You didn't just sit there -- you had already completed the steps when you went to your first AA meeting. "From 15 to 20 participate at each training meeting and new members are thoroughly indoctrinated." These meetings grew and spread and visitors came from out of town and out of state.

In 1943 the Northwest Group in Detroit, Michigan standardized the classes into four sessions. "In June 1943 a group of members proposed the idea of a separate discussion meeting to more advantageously present the Twelve Steps of the recovery program to the new affiliates. The decision was made to hold a Closed Meeting for alcoholics only for this purpose. The first discussion meeting of the Northwest Group was held on Monday night June 14, 1943 and has been held every Monday night without exception thereafter (as of 1948). A plan of presentation of the Twelve Steps of the recovery program was developed at this meeting. The plan consisted of dividing the Twelve Steps into four categories for easier study." The divisions were:

1. The Admission
2. Spiritual
3. Restitution and Inventory
4. Working and the message

"Each division came to be discussed on each succeeding Monday night in rotation This method was so successful that it was adopted first by other groups in Detroit and then throughout the United States.

Finally the format was published in its entirety by the Washington, DC Group in a pamphlet entitled 'An interpretation of our Twelve Steps.' The first pamphlet was published in 1944 and contains the following introduction: "Meetings are held for the purpose of acquainting both the old and new members with the Twelve Steps on which our Program is based. So that all Twelve Steps may be covered in a minimum of time they are divided into four classifications. One evening each week will be devoted to each of the four subdivisions. Thus, in one month a new man can get the bases of our Twelve Suggested Steps." This pamphlet was reproduced many times in Washington, DC and then throughout the country and is even still being printed in some areas today.