

SOBRIETY IN STUMPTOWN

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Portland Area Intergroup
1212 SE Division, Portland, OR
503-223-8569

July, 2008
Volume 1 Number 7

Monthly Business Meetings

Portland Area Intergroup: 2nd Monday, 7:00 PM, 1212 SE Division St, Portland

PAI CPC: 1st Saturday, 11 AM, 1212 SE Division, Portland

PAI Public Information: 1st Saturday, 11 AM, 1212 SE Division, Portland

PAI Treatment Facilities: Friday, Aug. 8, 6 PM, 1212 SE Division, Portland

PAI Bridging the Gap: ?

PAI Corrections: ?

PAI Outreach: ?

PAC: 1st Saturday, 6:00 PM, 1111 SW Country Club, L O

Dist 9: 1st Wednesday, 6:30 PM, 24th and Kearney, Portland

Dist 10: last Monday, 7:00 PM, 5th and Hall, Beaverton

Dist 11: last Thursday, 6:00 PM, 186th and Division, Portland

Dist 12: 1st Tuesday, 6:30 PM, 235 SE 80th, Portland

Dist 15: 1st Wednesday, 6:45 PM, 710 6th St, Oregon City

Dist 18: 1st Saturday, 9:30 AM, 215 N 6th St, St. Helens

Dist 23: 1st Tuesday, 6:00 PM, Lake Grove Fire House

Dist 24: 1st Thursday, 6:00 PM, SE 16th and Division, Portland

Dist 26: 2nd Thursday, 7:00 PM, 8926-A N Lombard, Portland

Dist 27: 1st Monday, 6:30 PM, 1212 SE Division St, Portland

Dist 31: 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 PM, 937 NE Jackson School Rd, Hillsboro

Dist 34: 3rd Saturday, 5:00 PM, 485 Portland Ave, Gladstone

Dist 35: 2nd and 4th Saturday, 7:00 PM, 18926 SW Shaw St, Suite A, Beaverton

Dist 36: 2nd Thursday, 6:00 PM, 2025 SW Vermont St, Portland

Dist 37: 2nd Tuesday, 29775 SW Town Center Loop East, Wilsonville

DCM Portland Area: 3rd Monday, 6:30 PM, 1212 SE Division St, Portland

The Grace of God and The Help of Friends

My drinking exploits spanned a space of 30 years. With the exception of an automobile accident in 1974 that should have ended the lives of my best friend and myself, my drunk-a-log follows the same path as most. My last drunk was the day of my Mother's funeral. I attempted finding that false peace of mind a few more times, but at the end, a quart of tequila offered nothing but the feeling of total despair and loneliness.

I had lost my wife, my boys, my business and soul. It turned out that my wonderful wife had stayed with me because she still cared about me enough to help me through both of my parents' illnesses and deaths. She was an angel.

I spent the next two years doing geographics up and down the West Coast. One November night of 1998 in Stockton, I decided that life was not worth living anymore. I surrounded myself with photos of my wife and children, and with my cat in my lap, put my grandfather's .38 caliber pistol in my mouth. At that exact moment, my phone rang. The friend that had been in the accident with me, called and asked if I would consider moving to Portland to help him in his business. I put my house on the market, packed what belongings I could into a U-Haul and with my cat, and left town.

The next six months were filled with loneliness, shame, guilt and all of

those other useless emotions. I eventually came to miss my boys and moved back to be near them. I immediately set out seeking employment. The very first place that I applied at hired me. Every employee in that company was in recovery. I spent the next two months listening to guys talk about recovery, AA, their Higher Power, and about 12 stairs or something.

On New Years Eve, 1999, I attended a party with my former brother in law. Bob, who had four years of sobriety, asked me how I was doing. I told him that I had been miserable and depressed. He suggested that I try a couple of meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. When I pointed out that I hadn't had a drink in almost two years, he suggested that I try AA to find a new way to live life. That night I entered a beer chugging contest and sixteen ounces later, left almost two years of being dry and miserable behind. The beer hit my stomach and it took around five seconds for that feeling to arrive. It was a feeling of courage, strength, confidence and complete peace. It was a feeling that I had not experienced since I took those first couple of drinks when I was 14. Soon, I was headed back to my home, thinking all I had to do was turn my car into an overpass abutment at 80 miles an hour and no one would ever know the difference. I had relived my thirty years of drinking in just one hour, with one 12-ounce beer.

Continued on next page.

The Grace of God and The Help of Friends, cont.

I attended my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting on January 3rd, 2000. I did not realize it at the time but it turned out to be the best way ever to start the New Year. My first few tries at finding a sponsor ended in failure, mostly for lack of accepting the Second and Third Steps. Eventually, I met a woman that told me I was not as special as I would like to believe, to shut up and listen for the similarities. She became my sponsor and my first assignment was to memorize the Third Step Prayer and to say it, on my knees every morning and evening. My life slowly began to change for the better as I came to believe in a higher power. To this day, I consider her one of my best friends and believe that I would not be in AA, had my Higher Power not blessed me with her presence in my life.

Portland was beckoning me to return. My friend from the car accident had just lost his wife to this disease and with great fear of leaving my first home group, I packed up and headed North. I walked into my first meeting at The Fire House on March 8th, 2003. The warm welcome that I received let me know that I had arrived at the right place. I have had two great sponsors since I moved here. The first moved East and the person that he suggested to take over has been another one of God's blessings. I have also been blessed by being able to stay involved in recovery on a professional and personal level.

The people that are kind enough to walk with me on this still new journey, have taught me that the problems and fears that used to be so enormous in my alcoholic mind are only part of every day life. I have lived through the death of many dear friends, financial problems, and the failure of the first romantic relationship since my divorce.

Although these and other events of daily life have caused pain and sometimes anger, I am slowly learning that prayers can replace resentments with peace of mind and gratitude. If I can keep my ego in check and listen to those that I have been blessed to have in my life, there is nothing that can ever cause me to return to that dark and gloomy life. I believe that my higher power is guiding my life through those angels that I call The Fellowship. I call my past sponsors at least once a month. My current sponsor and I keep in touch daily and I never forget my first assignment. I still say the Third Step Prayer on my knees, every morning and evening.

Greg F., Sunrise Session, Lake Oswego

Notes From My Desk

How Much Does AA Cost Anyway?

This question is asked nearly everyday from prospective new AA members that call the hotline for information. For one reason or another, they have called AA's hotline or central office collecting information on what appears to be a new chapter in their lives. The question is frequently answered with, "there is no charge for attending AA meetings. We do pass the hat to pay for meeting expenses, but do not feel obligated to contribute until you understand what is going on. Even at that point you are not required to contribute anything."

Those of us that are in AA for more than a month or so, soon learn that there are expenses in AA but we try to keep them at a minimum. At the group level, we have rent, coffee, literature and sometimes groups can afford cake or other forms of celebration for AA birthdays and anniversaries. When the group has an excess of Seventh Tradition funds, above their own needs and prudent reserve, those funds are usually split up and disbursed to New York Headquarters, Oregon Area, local District's and local Intergroups. This is a very brief description of how we support AA. But the question is, "How much does AA cost?"

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The answer is different for us all. For some people just the down payment is the loss of one or more families, multiple jobs and countless trips to jail. For others it may be merely the cost of a DUII. I know AA's who had to kill people, destroy numerous families and cost society hundreds of thousands of dollars before getting to AA. I think you get the idea of where I am going with this. It ain't cheap just qualifying to be an AA member, let alone the FULL price we pay to be actual AA members!

If we were to inventory our own "cost" of AA membership and then multiply that number by two million people, I think we would have an enlightened perspective of the cost of what we have been given as our program of recovery. The road to AA is paved with pain, suffering, deceit, and despair, let alone the billions of dollars we squander. Ah, but after we get here, the road of happy destiny is paved with love, blessings, kindness and forgiveness, to say the least. Much better on this road, wouldn't you say?

AA costs each of us different amounts. Just like travelers on a plane going from Portland to New York City, many of the tickets have a different price, even though the destination is the same. When we get to AA and begin to practice the principles and rebuild our lives, we should remember our own cost of membership, and try to help others keep their cost down. We do this by being willing and able to carry this message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic. We have many AA service opportunities at District, Intergroup and Area. Please help by offering to volunteer. Keep offering and keep offering. AA is nothing without volunteers.

Garry B., Office Manager

Part 2 next month: The Cost To Keep AA in Our Lives

Meeting Updates:

To find information about new meetings or meetings that have changed since the last meeting schedule was printed, click on [Updates](#) on the Intergroup website, www.pdxaa.com.

Coming Events:

To find information about coming events, click on [Events](#) on the Intergroup website.

Rebuilding Our Prudent Reserve

As of the end of the June, we are 18.1% of the way toward rebuilding our prudent reserve with \$5,427.61 toward the goal of \$30,000.

Committee News

Intergroup committees carry the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic. Please help with this Twelfth Step work. Sign up by clicking on [Service](#) on the Intergroup website.

Hotline: openings for Hotline shifts and for 12th Step volunteers. 12th Step Volunteers talk to newcomers who have questions.

Cooperating with the Professional Community and Public Information: The two committees are working together to put the message of recovery to the public and to the professional community—health care, clergy, legal, educators, social workers and others.

Bridging the Gap: BTG is a one-time temporary contact for people transitioning from a treatment center to meetings.

Treatment Facilities: If you remember your first exposure to AA in a treatment facility, you know how important it is to carry AA's message of recovery to these newly sober people. We are bringing in eight new meetings a month to Hooper Detox and the St. Vincent Psych ward, and more on the way. Call the intergroup office to see how you can help. Better yet, show up for the next committee meeting at the intergroup office on Friday June 6th at 7:00 pm, 1212 SE Division; hope to see you there!!!

Corrections: Currently our focus is to carry the AA message to youths in the Multnomah County Detention Center (JDH). We need many volunteers to help bring AA meetings to the facility on a regular basis. Call the intergroup office.

Portland Access Committee

The Portland Access Committee meets on the first Saturday of every month at the United Church of Christ, 1111 SW Country Club Road, Lake Oswego, OR 97034. The meeting starts at 6 pm (ish) and usually lasts 1.5 hours. We welcome people just interested in finding out more about what we do. You don't need to know sign language to help. Email us at pdxaccess@gmail.com with questions.

June 2008 Financial Summary

Beginning Cash on Hand: (\$3242.44)

Income: \$23,368.92

Expenses: \$24,436.60

Ending Cash on Hand: (\$4,310.12)

Become a Published Writer

Deadline for articles in Stumptown Sobriety is the 20th of each month.

Portland Area Intergroup, 1212 SE Division, is open Monday through Friday, 9 to 5.