The Lifeline



March 2017

24-Hour Phone: 651-227-5502

Step Three: Made a decision to turn out will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood him*.

Decision of the Mind

After barely escaping a trip to the Indiana State Penal Farm for drunken misbehavior, I quit drinking forever—I was nineteen years old. Then, when I was twenty years old I quit drinking forever ... and the same decision-of-the-mind took place at least once a year for the next twenty-four years. Losing job after job coupled with many weekend trips to the hoosegow only made my decision-of-mind all the stronger, but yet nothing changed except different cities. Whether it was Los Angels, San Francisco, The new Orleans French Quarter, or the Florida Palm Beaches, my dry periods usually lasted only weeks or a few months at the most.

I tried some of the "quitting drinking methods mentioned on Page 31 (of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous), plus drinking high protein milkshakes; eating of all sorts of health foods; tossing the Lucky Strikes away; playing hardball; swimming; lifting weights at the local YMCA and walking through the woods. Consequently, I began to feel full of energy and absolutely wonderful! One of these health episodes lasted for six months before I flopped.

What was wrong with my decision-of-mind?

I have come to believe that although my problem was in my conscious mind, it was lurking unbeknownst to me—in my subconscious mind, as well. All the time I was sober and feeling confident never to drink again, a hidden deep-down-devil was lamenting, "The day will come when we can drink again!" And perhaps the evil added: "and it may be tonight!" So my real problem existed in a place I could not comprehend anything about—in my unapproachable inner subconscious self. Someone said: "Self cannot get rid of self, so we have to find a power greater than self to solve our drinking problem."

Of course, I didn't know this when I came to AA, but when I asked God for help via the Twelve Step program of action, He miraculously changed both my conscious and subconscious mind to where I can see and act on the truth in drinking each and every time.

The mental devil has all but disappeared and I haven't had a drink since my first AA meeting. This took place many years ago.

- Bob S, Richmond, Indiana

(Reprinted from The Alcoholic Anonymous Cleveland Central Bulletin, Vol. LXXIV-No. III, December 2016)







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Tradition Three: The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Religious Indifference

Over my years in AA I have had the opportunity to attend jail and prison meetings in three different states. When I moved home to North Carolina in 2004 I was happy to be able to attend corrections meetings in this state as well.

There is a men's minimum-security prison here in my hometown and I became one of the outside sponsors for its weekly AA meeting. Because it is a minimum-security facility, many men are serving short sentences or have achieved minimum-security status after serving time in a higher-security prison. Some are nearing their release dates, so the turnover of the men attending the AA meetings is fairly high. A few fortunate inmates at this facility are permitted to attend outside meetings with an AA sponsor. Because of the turnover, I usually take three or four different men to the outside meetings each year.

Last Friday night was the first time I took Grant F. to an outside meeting. About the only things I knew about Grant were that he attended the prison AA meeting regularly, one of the inmates I sponsor recommended him, he sounded like he has been sober for a while and he was currently serving as an officer of his group. When I picked up Grant at the prison I noticed that he was wearing a kufi. (Kufis are traditional skull caps worn by Muslim men.) As we pulled up to our AA building I noticed that Pam B., our "Cookie Lady," was carrying in some freshly baked cookies for our meeting. I told Grant that he was in for a treat and to please enjoy her cookies as we introduced him to everyone at the meeting.

Our Friday night meeting is a Big Book study meeting and we were on the Eleventh Step, starting on the bottom of page 85. Our practice is to read a few paragraphs and then comment on what was read. We had a small number of people at our meeting and there was plenty of time for everyone who wished to share. Most of us commented about our religious upbringings and how we had learned to pray and to rely on prayer. Almost everyone in the room besides Grant had identified himself or herself as a Catholic or a Protestant as they shared about their experience with prayer. Grant said that he had had some concerns about coming to our meeting because he is a Muslim and was not sure how he would be received. He said that prayer was a big part of his religion and that he prays every day.

I told Grant I was glad that he was there. The doors to AA are very wide. Our Third Tradition states, "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." AA has no litmus test for deciding whether or not you can join AA other than the desire to stop drinking. We do not ask your politics, your profession, your marital status, your favorite sports teams, your religion or even if you have one. I said that I had been raised as a Southern Baptist and they do not believe in drinking alcohol. Muslims do not believe in drinking alcohol either, yet there we both were, in an AA meeting on a Friday night in Sanford, N.C. When I dropped Grant off at the prison after the meeting, I asked him if he wanted to go again the next week. He wanted to know if there would be more cookies.

There is no small print in the Third Tradition. There is no application to fill out, no initiation fee, no screening committee and no rulebook. AA is working for so many of the diverse people in the meetings I attend.

- Mickey H., Springfield, Utah

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The Lifeline: Purpose Statement

The Lifeline is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup, Incorporated. It is about, by, and for groups and members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or Intergroup. We welcome articles on a Step, Tradition, or Concept, in addition to descriptions of personal experience. We also welcome cartoons and drawings expressing the wry side of our A.A. experience.

Please email your article to lifeline@aastpaul.org, or send it by regular mail to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 608 Seventh Street West, St. Paul MN 55102. Materials or articles mailed to us cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length, and content that might violate A.A.'s Traditions, etc.

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Thoughts from your Board

I am coming up on a significant milestone this month. 30 years sober, one day at a time! This has caused even more reflection than usual on my life and recovery. Service work has played a big part my recovery. Serving on the Board for St. Paul Intergroup has turned out to be a significant gift, no doubt. Personally, this gave me just what I needed to be in the middle of the herd and reestablish in a new home group. I had spent nearly twenty years at my previous home group and have been with my new home group six years.

Over the last six years, at times I struggled with feeling a part of my large home group. The feelings of anxiety and inadequacy have all but dissolved somewhere along the way. For me, it took being in leadership role to force me to be not only more involved with AA, but I unexpectedly became much more involved in my home group. This is God doing for me what I could not do for myself. Case in point, a fairly new member to our group had relapsed and had an important job in our group. I was really touched that I was a person that he felt safe to contact and see if I could find someone to do the job or get the materials needed to do the job. This may sound small but it's what made me realize that I was truly a member of my group and doing my job as a longtimer! BTW, the person is sober and was able to keep his job at our group.

- Sandy K., Advisor To The Board

Concept Three: To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional "Right of Decision."

In Concept Three, it seems to focus on two things: "... clearly defined working relationship. . " and "... Right of Decision. .." For years I really failed to be able to understand these ideas.

I was driving truck and the best definition of my working relationship with the management of the company would most charitably be defined as "adversarial." Basically, I was trying to run a company I didn't own from the cab of my truck I also didn't own. And then one day, after a few years of sobriety, my attitude changed. This was, as it turned out, another one of those changes that happen to us when we practice the Program as well as we can. Changes that we never intended or even understand.

I asked my boss exactly what was expected of me in the job I had. He carefully explained it. Once I understood the responsibilities, I focused my efforts solely on accomplishing what those responsibilities were. No more, no less. Just do my job as asked and expected. Miraculously, life became a much greater joy! I actually found that I could go to work without a cloud of dread and resentment hanging over me. It seemed the sun shone in my life every day. I was having a wonderful time!

Then things changed again. The VP called me in and offered me a management job. A job in which, among many other things, I was to supervise the men I used to work with. I told him about the pretty recent change of attitude that I had experienced, and then said, "Since this new attitude has taken hold, I have been very happy here—why do you want to ruin that?" His answer was that every time he had thought of who might fill that position, my name had popped into his head. So finally, he said, I gave in to the thought and here we are.

What a paradox! Now that I now longer demanded to be the decision-maker, I was presented with the very opportunity I had sought for so long. I discovered that I now longer needed to make decisions to prove anything – just to make my best effort at making the best decision I could. Interesting how we learn- isn't it?

- Dennis B. – Area 36 Past Delegate, Panel 41

District Report - **District 8**

Accessibility in District 8

We are incredibly fortunate to have so many meeting available to us here in District 8. This vast district includes St. Paul, Maplewood, White Bear Lake, New Brighton, Roseville, Arden Hills, Little Canada, North Oaks and Vadnais Heights. We are also quite fortunate to have the St. Paul Intergroup Office available for our use. This office is a wonderful resource for finding accessible meetings.

What is accessibility all about?

In a nutshell it is about discovering difficulties for the still suffering alcoholic to access A.A. because of language, culture, geography, or life condition. This can include disability issues either physical or mental. This last rotation had a committee of 4 members addressing these issues in District 8. We concentrated our effort on increasing awareness of accessibility issues.

What are we doing in the committee?

We are visiting meetings. We are trying to spread the word about accessibility issues. We are gathering contact information from A.A. members willing to be available to help a member access their meeting. This can be as simple as arranging to meet a metro mobility van at the front door and helping an individual into the building. We are looking to make sure that meetings which state they are accessible actually are and requesting groups update the St. Paul Intergroup if they are accessible but not listed accurately in the meeting guide. Our committee is currently meeting once a month to discuss progress made and any difficulties or issues which need to be addressed. Any A.A. member is welcome to visit or join this committee.

How are we applying the Tradition to our committee?

Tradition 5 is really our focus in this committee. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Our goal is to help groups carry out this Tradition. We also encourage Tradition 7: Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions, by suggesting that the groups both do the actual service work in addition to putting a little extra money in their basket. In addition when working in a committee of A.A. member who may not normally mix we have to remember Tradition 12: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

Opportunities for you or your group.

District 8 has seldom had financial difficulties funding service work but having the service workers to make the work happen has often been challenging. We have seen many committees just try to throw literature at the problem of reaching the new comer. In the accessibility committee we thought we might try a different approach. We have created an Accessibility Loan Library. This library includes a variety of braille, audio, and large print conference approved literature. We have available to GSR's (Group Service Representatives) an opportunity to check out this literature at the District meeting for members of their group who may have accessibility issues. If the member decides that the literature is helpful and wanted then the GSR and the group may decide to purchase the item for the member. If not then the GSR simply returns the item to the following District meeting. If you are interested in being a part of this service work contact the district or come to meeting. District 8 meets at 7:30 pm every 3rd Wednesday of the month at Fairview Community Center in Roseville, room 108.

- Erica J., Former District 8 Accessibilities Chair

UPCOMING A.A. EVENTS!!

58th Annual Alano Club Banquet Florian Gardens 2340 Lorch Ave, Eau Claire, WI Saturday March 11th & Sunday, March 12th For More Info: Call Wendi D. 715-559-1194, or Carol B. 715-832-6933

Southern Minnesota Area 36 Delegate's Workshop/Area Assembly

Bethel Lutheran Church Northfield, MN

Saturday, April 1st - 9:30 AM-5:30PM

For More Info: www.area36.org

Your News?

We invite you to share your AA news here! Please send your items to *lifeline@aastpaul.org.* We look forward to hearing from you.

Group and Area News

New Meeting: The Fellow Traveler's group meets Sundays 5:00PM at the Saint Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Avenue, Saint Paul, 55108. the meeting is Closed, Topic/Discussion, All ages & Mixed.

New Meeting: *It's 7AM Somewhere* group meets Fridays 7:00AM in the basement of Claddagh Coffee Café at 459 West Seventh Street, Saint Paul, 55102. the meeting is Closed, Step, All ages &.Mixed

~Please let the Intergroup office staff know about any changes to your meeting~ Email: lifeline@aastpaul.org or call 651-227-5503 30th Anniversary Aim for Ames Roundup *"Follow the Path"* Quality Inn & Suite East 13th Street & I-35, Ames, IA Friday, March 24 - Sunday, March 26th For more info: www.aimforames.org

EACYPAA XV

Eastern Area Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Back From the Gates of Death

Hyatt Regency, Milwaukee, WI

Thursday, 23 March – Sunday, 26 March

For More Info: http://www.eacypaaxv.org/

Fourth Step & Big Book Workshops

By The Book 4th Step Workshop

Wednesdays, ~6:30PM - 7:45PM ~ 2218 1st Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55404 For more info: www.aabythebook.org

Itching To Share Your A.A. Story?

Your Intergroup currently serves over 60 speaking commitments each month - more than 720 different opportunities each year to share your experience, strength, & hope!

Most of our speaking commitment are weekly opportunities - many are A.A. groups and some are treatment facilities. Most are evening and weeks, but some are daytime—so lots of choices!

If you are available during the daytime or at shortnotice, we would especially like to hear from you!

To sign-up, please call 651-227-5502 Mon - Fri, 9 -5:30, or complete our volunteer sign-up sheet on our website: http://www.aastpaul.org/?topic=18

A minimum of two years sober is requested.



Looking for a Service Opportunity? Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl!

Upcoming Night Owl Orientations: Saturday, March 18th, April 15th, May 20th Every Third Saturday from 10:00 -11:00 AM St. Paul Intergroup Office 608 Seventh Street West - St. Paul, MN 55102 To RSVP please call: 651-227-5502

St. Paul Area Intergroup Representatives' Meeting Minutes January 17th, 2017

Opened with the Serenity Prayer, introductions, and Jenni S. read the Primary Purpose of Intergroup. Minutes from last month were reviewed. Tom S motioned and Mark seconded, motion approved. Treasurer's Report, - Matt R submitted a written report read by Jenni. Bank account is \$35,096. Liabilities decreased and receivables decreased. Total contributions are up and office sales are up. Expenses are down. Overall net sales of \$8,603. Contact Matt R at treasurer@aastpaul.org. Office Report, Bill S, The Intergroup Office is now handicap accessible during non-winter months using the portable rollout ramp (snow banks limit its use in the winter). It takes a little time to set up so those needing handicap accessibility are asked to provide notice when possible. The bathroom is currently not handicap accessible. Grapevine announced a price increase on all books and most content related items effective March 2017. See the office report or the Lifeline for specific pricing details. Group Contributions exceeded 7k for the first time since Nov. 2014! Contact Office at manager@aastpaul.org. Night Owl Report, Cheryl, Explained function of Night Owl. Orientation at 10am Saturday Jan 21st. If cannot cover your shift please contact the backup number. Contact Night Owl at nightowl@aastpaul.org. Website Report, Jonathan gave the report. 660 meetings and 279 groups total. Up 5 meetings and up 1 group. Downtown Alano meetings have been updated. New volunteer Seth is working on the mobile application and there has been some progress. There are service opportunities and 2 open Night Owl shifts. Contact Sergey or Jonathon at webservant@aastpaul.org. Outreach Program, Carolyn M, We need volunteers to visit meetings. Contact Carolyn M at outreach@aastpaul.org. Update from the Board, Lesli D, Starting to plan the 2017 events, hoping to set dates soon. Volunteer appreciation event tentatively scheduled Feb. 25th chaired by Tom S and Erik M. Liaison Reports: District 8, Chris, Reported budget. Starting a list of treatment commitments with sobriety reqs; District 15, Julie H, no report; District 19, Patrick is new rep for intergroup. District 19 has been working with hospitals and treatment centers and focusing on outreach. Upcoming Intergroup Events – Intergroup Volunteer Appreciation Dinner (Feb 25th) Old Business, - Office seeking volunteers à Still seeking volunteers to mid/late afternoon but more people have been volunteering. New Business, Stephanie H will report on Gopher State next month Group AA Announcements: OMD 1st Fr 2/3 7pm potluck, speaker and medallion ceremony, 1221 Marshall Av. Speaker is Duane M. Suggestions for next months's agenda: None Grapevine Report, JD; volunteer for February, Dan S Concept XII, Lesli D; volunteer for Concept I for February, Mark M Mock Rep Report, Travis W; volunteer for February, John K Closed with the Responsibility Statement Meetings Represented: Como Park BB; District 19; The Firing Line, Roseville; Maplewood Alano Groups, Maplewood; MNYPAA St. Paul Bid Committee; Outright Mental Defectives, St. Paul; New Brighton Big Book; New Brighton, No Time Like the Present,

Roseville; New Found Freedom, St. Paul; Pocketing Our Pride, St. Paul; Problem & Solution, St. Paul; Rule 62 Step & Tradition, St. Paul; Sun Nite BB – Mahtomedi, Mahtomedi; St. Paul Speaker Meeting, St. Paul; Summit Hill, St. Paul; Women's Basic Text, St. Paul.

2017 Steering Board:		Office Calls/Visitors—January 2017	
Chair:	Jenni S.	Meeting information Inventory/hours	78 33
Alternate Chair:	Lesli D.	12th Step calls	6
Secretary:	Rob C.	Temporary sponsor Speaker request	31 30
Treasurer:	Matt R.	Special events	0
Alternate Treasurer:	Karen C.	Outside issues Info for professionals	15 3
Members-at- Large 2017:	J.D. & Carolyn M.	Administrative	73
Members-at- Large 2018	Tom S. & Eric M.	Other Total Calls	55 324
Advisor to the Board:	Sandy K.	Average Calls/Day Total Visitors	14.7
Manager	Dennis B.	Average Visitors/Day	210 8.1

7th Tradition Suggestions for Groups

"Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

The Conference-approved pamphlet: "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" offers the following suggestions for the distribution of group funds after group expenses have been paid:

50% <u>St. Paul Intergroup</u> 608 Seventh Street West

St. Paul, MN 55102

30% General Service Office P.O. Box 459 Grand Central Station New York, NY 10163

10% Southern MN Area 36

Area Assembly P.O. Box 2812 Mpls., MN 55402

10% District Committee

Ramsey County: District 8, P.O. Box 131523 St. Paul, MN 55113

Dakota County: District 19, P.O. Box 1466 Burnsville, MN 55337

Washington County: District 15, P.O. Box 181 Lake Elmo, MN 55042

SE Ramsey County: District 26, P.O. Box 75980 St. Paul, MN 55175

The Lifeline



District Meetings

District 8 (Ramsey Co.) Fairview Community Center 1910 Co. Rd B, Rm 108 Roseville 3rd Wed., 7:30 PM

District 15 (Wash. Co.)

Christ Lutheran Church 11194 N. 36th St. Lake Elmo 4th Mon., 7:00 PM

District 19 (Dakota Co.)

Rosemount Community Center 13885 South Robert Trail Rosemount 2nd Wed., 7:00 PM

District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)

Grace Lutheran Church 1730 Old Hudson Rd. St. Paul 2nd Sun., 7:00PM www.district26-area36.org



Thanks to all of the FANTASTIC Office Volunteers who helped in Janaury:

Bob P., Burt K., Chad C., Chuck L., Deb E., Denise J., Don C., Ernest S., Frank D., Henry O., James H., Jeff K., Joe E., Kathleen S., Luis V., Marc S., Suzanne B., Ty K., Will S., Woody W.



Thanks to all the Groups that contributed in January!

A Baffled Lot

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A Way Out Amazing Grace Group Andover Day by Day Bock, Pete Book Club- 'The book club' Coffee Bene Como Park BB Complete Defeat Group CRC Friends of Bill W. Dakota Alano Dakota Alano SAT 11AM Dakota Alano SAT 9AM As Bill Sees It Day by Day Women's Group **Defiant Brats East** Defogged Men's Group Fellowship Club AA Fireside Women's BB Group Forest Lake 12 & 12 Forest Lake Alano Friday Night By The Book Gratitude in Action Halfway There Hampden Park Group Happy, Joyous and Free - Mahtomedi Highland Park Groups Hole in the Doughnut Group Hugo Group Island Lake Group Jumpstart 12 & 12 Lake Elmo Thurs Night Group Main Idea New Brighton BB No Time Like the Present Pocketing Our Pride Ridge Runners II Sat 830 AM Ridge Runners III Sun 830AM **Ringmaster's Group Rosemount Groups** Roseville Wed Night Saturday Morning Serenity Group Shoreview 12 x 12 Sober Goats Stepsisters of Northfield Group Summit Hill Una Luz en el Camino Uptown Club Valley Creek Monday Valley Creek Thurs Night

Thanks to our AWESOME Night Owls too!

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup 608 Seventh Street West St. Paul, MN 55102

Change Service Requested



Please let us know if your address changes one month ahead of time. It saves us the cost of return postage and enables you to get each issue of *The Lifeline*. Our mailing permit does not provide for mail forwarding. Thank you!



St. Paul Intergroup Faithful Fiver - Enrollment Form

Faithful Fivers graciously contribute \$5.00 or more to St. Paul Intergroup each month to enable us to continue to carry our vital message of Hope and Recovery to all who need and want it. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to *The Lifeline*. Contributions may be made annually, bi-annually, quarterly or monthly.

~Yes! Please enroll me as a Faithful Fiver!

1. Contact information:	<u>Choose a Payment Method</u>:	
Name	Credit Card/Debit Card*	
Address	Visa MasterCard	
City State ZIP Phone Number Email	Card #//// Expiration Date:/	
2. <u>Amount & Frequency</u> :	Name on Card	
Amount: \$ Frequency: (check only one) Monthly Quarterly Bi-Annually Annually Start on/ Please send my receipt to my email address	Signature*I authorize St. Paul Intergroup to automatically bill my account as specified (monthly, quarterly, etc.). I understand that I am free to cancel this authorization at any time by contacting Intergroup. Check - Please make payable to: Saint Paul Intergroup	
Please send my receipt to my home/postal address Please send my Lifeline to my email address instead	608 Seventh Street West Saint Paul, MN 55102	