

The DIALog



A PUBLICATION OF THE DALLAS INTERGROUP ASSOCIATION (est. 1947)

Dallas Central Office | 6162 E Mockingbird Ln, Ste 213, Dallas TX 75214 | 214.887.6699 | www.aadallas.org | aa-help@aadallas.org

From the Director:

Hopefully you were able to attend our 65th Anniversary the second Saturday of September.

We had two speakers talk about the Responsibility Statement including Bob C., who was in the audience the night Bill W. first read it to the membership. Larry J. discussed our current needs. The speaker, Donna H., was delightful as always. Her talk is available at the Central Office. Thanks to everyone who helped with the event. Our next anniversary speaker will be Sandy B., from Florida. Our anniversary is always the second Saturday in September so you can make plans. Margaret M. from the Clean Air Group won first prize, a Visa pre-paid card, for her side-dish entry and Cornerstone won first prize, also a pre-paid Visa, for the most participation by a group. We had a lot of fun and hope more of you will join us next year. The next DIA event is the 7th Annual Chili Cook-Off.

If your group does not have an Intergroup Rep, we would love to see a member of your group at our meetings. We have nominations in November (second Thursday at 8 p.m.) if you would like to visit and see how the Intergroup runs. We also have our annual dessert extravaganza in November making that meeting one of our best! We will have to say good-bye to 5 of our Trustees this year, so the election will be very important. The only members eligible to vote are those Reps on our current Roll Call.

If you don't have an Intergroup Rep but would like to be involved, please come visit us. If you need more information, you can check the Intergroup Rep page on our website or contact the office. See you soon!

Janis R.

Grief, Guilt Led Me to Relapse

by Paula R., Southwest Clean Air

My name is Paula R., and I am an alcoholic. In order to relate my battle with alcohol, I need to go back to October 1983.

I was 44 years old, a wife and a mother of three. I had been drinking socially since my twenties. My alcoholism accelerated over those years to daily drinking. Many times I started drinking as early as nine in the morning — after the children left for school and my husband went to work.

I had an amazing tolerance for alcohol and an ability to hide my feelings as well as my bottles.

I hit bottom in October of '83, ending in the hospital for dehydration

and alcohol poisoning. As my husband wheeled me into the emergency room, a young intern knelt in front of me and asked what was wrong.

For the first time, I said "I'm an alcoholic." His response was, "So am I but I haven't had a drink in seven years because I go to Alcoholic Anonymous."

While in the hospital, a nurse came to my room to ask me if I needed a referral to a treatment center. I resisted. She gave me the phone number of a therapist who would not treat me unless I went to AA.

I went to AA, more to please my therapist and my family, never dreaming that it could possibly help. In my mind, I truly believed I would die

(continued on page 5)



Trudging the Road to Happy Destiny

by Rosanne P., Kessler Park Group

Bill W. ends the first 164 pages of the Big Book with this valediction: "Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to our 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. May God bless you and keep you — until then."

He uses verbs which summarize the actions we must take to work the program. His verbs include, "abandon," "admit," "clear away,"

"give" and "trudge."

Wait a minute... "trudge?" I'm not a Big Book scholar but I have

read the words "abandon," "admit," "clear away" and "give" in the book and can apply them to my efforts to stay sober.

The word trudge, however, appears to be misplaced — at least as I understand the word. Here's my 'contempt prior to investigation' about

(continued on page 5)



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Carrying the AA Message in Treatment Centers

by Traci A., DIAlog Reporter

I spent time in two treatment facilities for alcohol detox and recovery before coming into A.A. October, 2011.

Returning to treatment facilities to work with other alcoholics was something I wanted to do. In sobriety, I have gone with several A.A. groups to carry the message to treatment facilities. I have also sponsored clients of treatment centers.

So, I thought I knew enough to write a decent article about this type of Twelfth Step work. “Think again,” I’d soon told myself.

After meeting with Dallas Intergroup Association’s (DIA) Treatment Center Committee Chair, I realized I didn’t know much. Continuing to grow in effectiveness and understanding was about to begin — again.

Celebrating 65 Years of Service

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My program stresses an attitude of “teachability” — a willingness to learn and experience new ways of being and adopting new attitudes.

I was reminded that our primary purpose of sharing our experience, strength, and hope is based on our premise of giving it away in order to keep it, which is the principle of the Twelfth Step.

After completing the Twelve Steps, I was motivated and eager to do service work. “Enthusiasm, preparation and a good sense of what A.A. does and does not do are essential,” I recently read in the Treatment Committee Workbook.

Okay, I am an alcoholic. Therefore, I have the mind of an alcoholic. “Preparation and good sense” are not the terms I would use to describe the way I roll on a daily basis.

Gratefully, those A.A.s experienced in this type of Twelfth Step work freely share what they have learned. Service materials, A.A.-approved literature, and the various levels of Treatment Center Committees are instrumental in helping members toward a successful Twelfth Step experience.

DIA’s Treatment Committee Chair, who requested anonymity, suggested the following key points for AA members when taking meetings to various treatment centers.

- Understand our Twelve Traditions, and apply them.
- Suggest Open Meetings. Closed Meetings are restricted for alcoholics only. This singleness of purpose is what unites alcoholics in a common bond, which is key to



recovery in A.A.

- Read or use the following Literature or Service Materials: 1.) *Treatment Committee Workbook*. 2.) Show DVD: *Hope: Alcoholics Anonymous* or DVD: *Videos for Young People*. 3.) Review pamphlets *A.A. Tradition—How It Developed*, *Bridging the Gap*, *A.A. in Treatment Facilities* and *How A.A. Members Cooperate*.
- Provide A.A.-Approved literature: *The A.A. Group*, *A.A. In Your Community* or *Bridging the Gap*, a temporary contact program.

- Cooperate fully with the rules and regulations in treatment facilities. We are their invited guests.

On applying our Traditions in a treatment setting, DIA’s Treatment Center Committee Chair advised that AA members “explain the principles behind a Tradition rather than simply quoting the Tradition as we do not want to give the impression that we are trying to tell them what they can and cannot do.”

Not all our Traditions apply in treatment settings, he said. Tradition Three, Five, Seven and Twelve most often come into play in treatment settings. Members are encouraged to have a good understanding of these four Traditions, and be able to apply them.

For example, Tradition Three allows patients/clients who are dually addicted to attend AA meetings as long as one of the problems is alcohol. Tradition Five offers AA members the opportunity to carry the message. Tradition Seven is not necessary in a treatment center. Tradition Twelve reminds us to not take credit for our own or others’ recovery.

To volunteer to take meetings into treatment centers, contact the Dallas Intergroup office at 214-887-6699 or go online at www.aadallas.org.

Alcoholics in Jails, Prison Need Meetings Too

by Cherry K., DIALog Reporter

In 1977 the General Service Conference decided to form two committees within the rapidly growing Institutions Committee. One committee dealt with treatment facilities and the other correctional centers.

Even though the number of groups taking meetings into correctional facilities has increased, the need for AA meetings within prisons and jails has grown at an even faster pace. Dallas Intergroup also has seen tremendous growth for its correctional facility committee.

“When it comes to taking meetings into prisons and jails, we in Dallas are blessed to be surrounded by a wealth of people and information,” says Larry J., Dallas Intergroup Corrections Committee Chair.

The basic function of the correctional facility committee and its members is to take AA meetings into jails and prisons. It encourages “outside” group participation in this kind of Twelfth Step work. Some AA groups have correctional facilities representatives.

At the Dallas Intergroup Rep meetings, a correctional facilities report is given and any needs for volunteers are announced. Those needs are then carried back to the Intergroup Reps’ home groups to recruit volunteers.

Anyone interested in taking meetings to correctional facilities can either email Larry J. at larjon72@yahoo.com and/or attend the upcoming Carry the Message Corrections Conference, Saturday, Nov. 10 at a soon-to-be determined location.

Conference participants will learn about the Texas Department of Criminal Justice’s, TDCJ, orientation and certification process. The workshop and lunch are free. The time is from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Cornerstone Group AA member Sarah L. has been through the Texas certification

and orientation workshop. She says it was an opportunity to learn what to expect when going into Texas prisons and jails. She also learned “a lot of stuff that you never thought you’d need to know,” including safety and “just in case” issues.

Larry’s sponsor, AA member Tom I.

from North Carolina, worked for the North Carolina Department of Corrections for 39 years. Here are Tom’s Beliefs about Corrections. Many of these beliefs apply to the program no matter where you are or where you go.



- The program is exactly the same for those inside as it is for those outside.
- The people inside are far more like me than unlike me.
- Every tradition can be practiced 100% on the inside.
- We spend far too little time on working on the quality and effectiveness of what we do (and too much time on arrangements and routine operations).
- People are most willing to respond to specific requests for help, either service or material.
- You can help someone in a correctional facility by simply showing up.
- Being an enthusiastic, good example of recovery is a great contribution.
- My work is with alcoholics who happen to be confined, not inmates, prisoners, or convicts.
- Speaker meetings, at an established frequency, should be a regular feature of groups in corrections.
- Always remember that someone new to AA is present at most meetings in correctional facilities.
- Keeping commitments is extremely important. Walk like you talk.

Sign up to be a DAAMES: Dallas AA Messenger Envoys

The Dallas AA Messenger Envoys, DAAMES, may be a long name, a long drive and a long way for the sober women of Dallas to take AA meetings to the women’s prison in Gatesville, but it sure is loads of fun.

DAAMES started 18 years ago when Kathleen CH was looking for another woman to go to the units at Gatesville. Lawanda T. said she had been cleared by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to take meetings into the jails and prisons, so off they drove to their first Gatesville meetings. Soon, Marilyn K. and other women joined.

After a year or two, it became an organized 12 Step service opportunity and DAAMES was officially named. Today, Stephanie Z. is the coordinator for DAAMES. A group departs Dallas at 6:00 a.m. the second Saturday of every month.

Though the drive is long, DAAMES quickly discovered it provided them the opportunity to have a meeting going, a meeting there and a meeting coming home. They have a blast and who knows, maybe some of the women at the prison are sober — DAAMES still are!

They always make a stop in West, the Czech capital of Texas, for the sweet and savory pastry kolache and piping hot coffee.

What could be more fun than a carload of sober women — come join DAAMES.

Call Kathleen CH at 214-282-9108 or Stephanie Z at 214-625-2724.



How to Chair a Discussion Meeting

These guidelines are the product of a workshop on chairing meetings conducted by Dallas AA members. They are made available to assist people in this valuable area of service.

There are several kinds of meetings: open, closed, discussion, speaker, etc. A concern is how or if the message of AA is being carried in our discussion meetings.

There is no right or wrong way to chair a meeting but perhaps there is a better way to carry our message to the still suffering alcoholic.



Q: What are the basics for chairing a discussion meeting?

Answer

- The chairperson is responsible for opening and closing the meeting, providing structure to the meeting and leading the discussion.
- Refer to your groups' meeting format and follow all the steps outlined; each AA group is autonomous and can decide how meetings are to be conducted.
- If you are unsure of anything regarding chairing a meeting, ask your sponsor or a trusted servant of your group.
- Our conduct in meetings goes back to sponsorship.
- If you sponsor people, share with them your experience about chairing meetings.

Q: What do you do when a person attends a closed meeting who does not fulfill the Third Tradition?

Answer

- Explain what AA is and is not
- You do not have to say you are an alcoholic to attend a closed meeting; a desire to stop drinking is the only requirement for membership
- You are a member if you say you are; no one in AA decides if anyone is an alcoholic
- Ask non-alcoholics to leave the meeting and return to an

open meeting. (Should be done on a one-on-one basis. Public embarrassment should be avoided.)

- Another approach to the non-alcoholic addict in particular is to have members who have both alcohol and drug history meet separately with individuals and give them proper direction to a program that will address their problem.

- Keep NA, Alanon and Nar-Anon meeting schedules available

- Refer the person to the pamphlet that was written by Bill W., *Problems other than Alcohol*.

Q: How do you take care of a drunk and/or disruptive person in a meeting?

Answer

- Remember we are all here because we are alcoholics.
- Experienced members can assist the chairperson if they are being hampered by a disruptive drunk.
- The chairperson can call them down and ask them to be quiet.
- Two members can take them into another room or outside to talk to them.

Q: What do you do if you are unable to chair when you are scheduled?

Answer

- Replace yourself with a regular member of the group.
- If your group has a program committee, call that representative and ask to be replaced.

Q: How do you ensure the topic of a meeting remains AA when a member brings up outside issues?

Answer

- Remind the members present that we are only here to share our experience, strength and hope. We cannot "fix" people, places or things.
- If your group has a program committee, then it selects chairs and discussion leaders who have well-established sobriety, usually six months minimum.

The Blue Card: Closed and Open Meetings

This is a closed meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In support of AA's singleness of purpose, attendance at closed meetings is limited to persons who have a desire to stop drinking. If you think you have a problem with alcohol, you are welcome to attend this meeting. We ask that when discussing our problems, we confine ourselves to those problems as they relate to alcoholism.

This is an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We are glad you are all here — especially newcomers. In keeping with our singleness of purpose and our Third Tradition which states that The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking, we ask that all who participate confine their discussion to their problems with alcohol.

Singleness of Purpose and Problems other than Alcohol

Some professionals refer to alcoholism and drug addiction as "substance abuse" or "chemical dependency."

Non-alcoholics are, therefore, sometimes introduced to AA and encouraged to attend AA meetings.

Anyone may attend open AA meetings but only those with a drinking problem may attend closed meetings. People with problems other than alcoholism are eligible for AA membership only if they have a drinking problem.

George E. Vailiant, M.D., nonalcoholic trustee of the AA General Service Board, made the following statement: "Singleness of purpose is essential to the effective treatment of alcoholism. The reason of such exaggerated focus is to overcome denial. The denial associated with alcoholism is cunning, baffling and powerful and affects the patient, helper and the community. Unless alcoholism is kept relentlessly in the foreground, other issues will usurp everybody's attention."



Grief, Guilt ... *cont'd. from page 1*

and didn't much care if I did.

AA proved to be the best thing that had ever happened to me. I loved the people from the first day. Even the old and unattractive building we met in felt comfortable and safe.

It felt so good to tell the truth, to give up the hiding and to look my family in the eye with honesty.

I was one of those newcomers who wanted to do everything right and by the book.

I chose a wise and loving sponsor who helped me but always insisted on total honesty.

The only difficulty I had was believing in a God who cared about me. This didn't seem to be a stumbling block especially since the Big Book had a special chapter "We Agnostics" just for me.

The years between 1983 and 1998 were good ones even though we had problems with our son who began to drink alcoholically and had to go to a treatment center at age 19.

But there was a silver lining even in that event because our son Matt embraced the program. He was able to make that spiritual connection with no trouble at all, a connection that had been so difficult for me.

On April 17, 1998, we were awakened in the middle of the night with a phone call

no parent ever wants to receive.

Matt, our beloved son, had been killed in a car accident. He was 32 years old.

I never thought about drinking. I did, however, wish I could sleep and not wake up. I wanted to turn off my feelings and stop the pain.

Praying and meditation became difficult. The word "Why?" kept cropping up in my prayers and the frequency of quiet time and spiritual peace was diminishing for me.

I still went to AA but was unable to talk about Matt and the pain I was feeling.

Eventually I tapered off on my meetings. My sponsor passed away and I did not get a new one.

Over a period of 13 years, I went from four or five meetings a week, to three, to two, to once a month and finally to none at all.

Without the AA program and AA people, the shaky relationship with God that I had began to fade away.

My mom developed problems that sometimes accompany aging, and I felt guilty about the lack of understanding and love between us.

The solution I eventually chose to escape the grief of my dead son and the guilt of my tenuous relationship with my mother was to drink.

After 27 years of sobriety, I turned to

my old friend alcohol. I even went back to hiding my bottles of wine just as I had done during my drinking days.

The first thing I would do in the morning was "sneak" into my closet and have a drink before breakfast.

I never thought of calling anyone in the program or asking God for help. I had withdrawn from everything that could have stopped my drinking.

I began to have periods of illness. I found I couldn't drink at 72 years old like I did in my forties.

After my third hospitalization, my husband found my wine bottles hidden in the closet. My deathly slide into alcoholism came to an abrupt halt.

My husband called a friend in AA and before I could make up an excuse not to go, I found myself in a treatment center. It was like going home.

After being there for six weeks, I returned home July 2011. I went from a sheltered environment, a treatment center, back into the real world.

I found it difficult to find an AA group where I felt comfortable, and the normal everyday events of living life sober continued to throw me. I spent August to December of 2011 having small slips.

Finally, I found a home group that fits. I had the good luck to get a sponsor who I trust and can confide in. I am praying that

(continued on Back Page)

Trudging the Road to Happy Destiny ... *cont'd. from page 1*

the word trudge.

I picture a sad, tired alcoholic, barely able to put one foot in front of the other, on an unpaved, un-shaded road. The alcoholic does not seem happy, joyous or free. Somehow the destination does not seem to be Happy Destiny.

Is there more to the meaning of this word than I know? Did Bill W. carefully choose the word trudge?

Don't get me wrong: I love Bill W.'s word choices, especially the ones he uses to describe drunks and drinking, such as "sots" (page 8), "debauch" (page 8), "a jag" (page 9), "alcoholic crackpot" (page 9), "getting tight" (page 21), "senseless series of sprees" (page 21), and, my favorite, "can't stay on the water wagon" (page 22).

The Big Book is well-written. It is peppered with descriptive words and sayings from the early part of the Twentieth Century. Trudge is one of those words. The online Merriam-Webster Dictionary's definition of the verb trudge is "to walk or march steadily and usually laboriously." It gives the example of "trudged through deep snow." This example convinces me that Bill W. *did* carefully choose the word trudge.

We alcoholics trudge through deep stuff on the road to Happy Destiny. We don't skip along or dance as if on the way to Oz. But neither are we staggering, stumbling, crawling, falling down or passing out on the road.

Because we have joined AA, we have been given a road map of Twelve Steps and

we have been given like-minded walking companions with whom we walk or march steadily, usually laboriously, on the road of life.

It is the condition of life — the deep stuff — that makes our walk trudging. It's not our physical or mental states that are trudging if we are embracing the program.

When we embrace the program, we abandon, admit, clear away and give. And we join and meet others who realize that the walk is trudging but our sober lives are not.

We aren't sad and tired. We trudge happily, joyously and freely in the Fellowship of the Spirit until we reach Happy Destiny.



News, Updates & Events... more on aadallas.org

OCTOBER

Clean Air Group's 27th Anniversary: Saturday, Oct. 13 at 9850 N. Central Expressway, Suite 214, Dallas, 75231.

Dinner at 6 p.m. (main entrée, drinks and cake provided), brief history of Clean Air Group, speaker meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Grapevine Grape-A-Thon: Sunday, Oct. 14 from 1-5 p.m. at Freedom Group, 2232 N. Town East Blvd, Mesquite.

Potluck dinner, speakers, raffle, history of the Grapevine and the play *Man in the Bed*.

Metropolitan Women's Quarterly Meeting: Thursday, Oct. 18 at Unity Church, 6525 Forest Lane, Dallas. 7:30 p.m.

coffee/snacks/fellowship hosted by Dallas North Group, 8 p.m., speaker is Nancy B. of Unity Group in Denton. For more information, call Leigh at 214-289-7630.

The Oak Cliff Group, the oldest AA group in Dallas, Celebrates 65 Years: Saturday, Oct. 20, starts at 11 a.m., 3108 Dawes, Dallas, 75224. Fiesta celebration includes homemade Mexican food (enchiladas, tamales, fajitas), great AA speakers, raffle and fellowship. Please support the oldest AA group in Dallas by celebrating its 65th Fiesta Anniversary. For more information, call Carlos at 214-715-2390.

Halloween Parties

- District 55 PI/CPC Halloween Party:** Saturday, Oct. 27, 2012 at 618 E. Irving Blvd, Irving, at 9:30 p.m. For more information, call Karen at 972-815-5496.
- Halloween Dance at Freedom Group:** Saturday, Oct. 27 at 9 p.m. (following the 8 p.m. meeting) at 2232 N. Town East Blvd, Mesquite. Snack and costumes welcome!
- Town North's Annual Halloween Party:** Saturday, Oct. 27 from 9 to 1 p.m., 12895 Josey Lane #214, Farmers Branch, 75234. Dancing by DJ Gregg D., bring favorite snacks, costume contest, prizes, \$5 at the door.

NOVEMBER

Carry the Message Corrections Conference: Saturday, Nov. 10, location TBD. Texas Department of Criminal Justice orientation and certification, free registration and lunch, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

46th Annual Las Vegas Roundup: Thursday Nov. 22 through Sunday Nov. 25 at the Riviera Hotel on the world-famous Las Vegas strip. This year's conference is dedicated to Back to Basics...whether a newcomer or an oldtimer, the basics still apply. Get ready for a weekend of great speakers, good fellowship and special events. For more information, go online at www.lasvegasroundup.org.

Group Contributions September 2012

Addison	0.00
Allen Group	100.00
Aquarius Group	0.00
Belwood	0.00
Big Book - Dallas	0.00
Broad Highway	0.00
Carrollton	200.00
Chicago	20.00
Clean Air	84.60
Clean Air North	1,830.61
Colony Group	0.00
Cornerstone	125.00
Dallas North	370.00
Downtown Group	30.00
Friendship Group	0.00
Frisco	1,125.62
Georgetown	400.00
Gift of Sobriety, The	60.00
Highland Park Women's	20.00
Hope Group	200.00
Lake Highlands	20.00
Lakewood	0.00
Lambda	0.00
Legacy	0.00
Lewisville	830.30
Little Elm Group	265.30
McKinney Miracle Group	256.25
Mesquite Bigtown	101.25
New Life Group	0.00
Oak Cliff Group	0.00
ODAA	0.00
Prosper Country Grp	200.00
Richardson	30.00
Romance and Finance	0.00
Ross Avenue	10.00
Rowlett	10.00
Seniors in Sobriety	22.00
Southwest Clean Air	41.12
Town North	25.00
Town South	5.00
Traditional	310.48
Van Alstyne Group	204.35
Waxahachie	40.00
White House	50.00
Wylie Group	10.00
TOTAL	6,996.88

Grief, Guilt ... *cont'd. from page 5*

my sobriety date of January 8, 2012, will be permanent, one day at a time.

If I could give any advice to my friends in AA, it would be, don't stop going to meetings no matter the length of sobriety. Keep the spiritual connection to a God of your understanding strong and vital.

I've been in both places, sober and not sober, and no doubt...sober is the place to be.