

# CAMEL COURIER

VOLUME 29 ◉ ISSUE 6 ◉ JUNE 2015



## ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

**District 11 – Area 34**

coverage area includes:

Antrim, Benzie,  
Grand Traverse,  
Kalkaska, & Leelanau  
counties.

### Central Office

124 N. Division Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684



### Hot Line

(231) 946-8823  
24/7 Service

### Business Office Hours

Mon – Fri 10AM - 5PM

### Email

[district11centraloffice@yahoo.com](mailto:district11centraloffice@yahoo.com)

### Website

[www.district11-aa.org](http://www.district11-aa.org)

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## So, You're Sober. Now What?

Because getting sober is only the first step. Here's a long range forecast from a series of voices.

Maybe you found salvation from your poison through a 12-step program, or some other program, maybe church—or perhaps you simply woke up one day and said, “Enough!” But you did it. Congratulations. It really is a brilliant achievement to conquer one’s demons, to basically save your own life. But how you got sober is not the focus of this.

The question is: so now what?

Consider the amount of time you put into your addiction—just into obtaining your drug of choice, getting high or drunk and then, recovering from the high/drunkenness. Maybe you even put some time into cleaning up the messes you created when you were “under the influence.” Maybe, you eventually gave up on that.

That’s a lot of energy and time—and where does that time and energy go when you stop that cycle?

I am talking about people who have been in recovery, sober, clean, abstinent, “on the wagon” for a while. You have your foundation down whether it is “meetings,” church, or the strength of your decision to stop. But where does that energy and time go that was once devoted to using?

In a recent interview with Rich Roll, he shared with me that after multiple years sober, he developed a food addiction as well as workaholism. He commented that he was miserable until he turned that around and directed his energy to sports: running, swimming, and biking.

James Fry, author of *That Fry Boy* says, “When I first got sober, I was so thrilled with being able to hold down friendships and stay gainfully employed that I didn’t find myself wanting for anything else. It wasn’t long though, before I found that with the gift of living a normal life, also meant I was now eligible for ‘normal’ problems. Be it boredom on the job, in relationships or simply just the slow burning humdrum of daily existence,

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without the excessive peaks and lows I had conditioned myself to during my using days, my newly found happiness was starting to lose its shimmer. Yes I was sober, and incredibly grateful for the fact, but also crazily bored at times."

"This left, unchecked could become rather dangerous ground. Sure, I had no intention to alleviate the boredom through using anymore, but what about the other things now more readily available to me as a sober member of society, that offered up a quick hit of pleasure, without needing to work on myself such as sex or relationships? I needed to take committed action if I was to be happy. To date, I have found intense physical exercise to fill this void, whilst also improving my general well-being. I prefer to exercise with others, because not only does it push me a little further than when I do it alone, it has become a great way to meet others, too. Recently, writing has also taken prominence in my life. Putting words on paper (or a computer screen) has not only given me something to do with my time that I enjoy, but through the publishing of my work has connected me with like-minded individuals across the world. In my experience, addicts, whether they are using or not, are seekers by nature. In sobriety, that trait, when used wisely can be an amazing gift that can open up new worlds for us."

Whether you were homeless or "functional," active addiction takes over your life in an insidious and all-inclusive way. You may be a successful writer or a captain of industry. Still, a prevailing thought in your mind, most of the time, is about getting high and, possibly, how to get away with it. Maybe the thought is about how much you want to stop and trying to think of ways to do so. Regardless, addiction has you in a chokehold.

Martha Frankel, the executive director of Woodstock Writers, remarked: "When I was using, I spent a lot of my time thinking about getting high, getting high or recovering from getting high. When I stopped, I had a lot more time. I went to lots of meetings. I sort of stumbled from one meeting to another, building a foundation for my sobriety. As I got my bearings, I realized that time shifted in a way that I hadn't ever experienced before. Some days seemed elongated, some compressed. So I started knitting. Knitting did a couple of things: it gave me something to do with my hands when I wanted to pick up a drink. And it gave me an incredible feeling of accomplishment, even if it was just knitting a baby hat. Also, it was a great thing to do at meetings! Now my life is so busy and full, I sometimes yearn for those days when it was just meetings and knitting."

Breaking any destructive pattern of behavior frees you up to live a fuller life. Isn't that what breaking the chains of addiction is about? The world becomes (hey, it always was!) a larger place. Did you really care about global warming and GMOs when you were looking for a vein? But now you have become (figuratively) an active member of the present world. No purple haze between you and reality.

I spoke with author and spoken-word artist Bucky Sinister and asked him what life was like for him now. What kind of life had becoming sober allowed him? "Some things were too late to go back to. But others were not. I wanted to get a college degree and own my own home. I also had always wanted to perform standup comedy. It took two years to finish my BA. After that, I started standup, while looking for a new job. Two years after my BA, I got a solid office job. Two years after that job, I bought my home. After I bought my home, I started training in Russian Kettlebell Sport. All the while I've been writing on a regular basis. When I was a drunk for 15 years, I wrote and published one book. In 13 years of sobriety, I've written and published six. I get paid work in comedy clubs and I compete in two kettlebell competitions a year. That's the long answer, I guess. You do everything you've wanted to do. You don't allow excuses to be your limits. It's too late for me to go back to high school and try out for the basketball team and I am not eligible to be an astronaut, but many things you want to do are within your reach. I ask my sponsees to create a list of all the times they enjoyed being outside of drugs and alcohol. From there, we find out what they really enjoy in life. Then you try to fill your life with that. Some people, it's as common as starting a family. Other people want to rebuild a Harley. Just figure out what you enjoy doing, and do the fuck out of it."

"All of these things would've been better had I done them from youth, but I can't get that back now. I can only move forward."

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Painter Erin Parish remarked that some of her behaviors in active addiction did not change in sobriety but her motivation and experience of them did. "When first sober there is a chasm of time and energy that actively needs to be attended to. I now read lowbrow novels, nap, eat healthily as a scientific hobby, and take a lot of baths."

"In the past I went to the movies, shopped, redecorated, I joined book clubs even. But there was still the big question mark looming over my head, 'What do normal people do?' I don't think I ever really figured out what 'they' do but this is what I have in my life."

"Involved in fitness after age 25, the reasons I work out have changed. I have added a much more intense weight-lifting regimen to my life, and am taking more pleasure in the process of working out. The sense of well-being chemically brought on by the exertion is priceless. The sense of self-esteem is also irreplaceable as it directly counteracts the voices in my head and replaces the temporary reward I would have gotten from doing drugs and drinking."

"I did a couple of obstacle races and metaphorically they taught me that life is an obstacle race and to just keep going. I wanted to try them before my joints insisted I stay in a safer zone. I do a lot of boxing training and get a thrill out of kicking the bag."

"Between studio time, fitness, and diet, I strive to find my perfect stride. I am always looking for ways to maximize my time as I never seem to finish all the work I need to do. I am fortunate to be in that position so I really can't complain. When my hands are cramping from painting, I tell myself that 'it is good work if you can get it,' take an aspirin, and gratefully listen [to] the silence."

"To relax, I go to Cuba with my husband to visit his family where there is no Internet and no phone. I don't speak the language at a conversational rate, so I have tons of time to read and nap. Cuban Spanish is notoriously rapid and idiomatic so it gives me a chance to disengage. His family is very kind and I don't know what they are saying so I can't shade their words with nuance. I also make sure I have my own spot to go to as Cubans like to be social through the night. I love that it is not bad manners to read or take a nap during a party."

Author Molly Jong-Fast was quite clear regarding the change her life has taken since getting sober. "I have been sober since I was 19 and without sobriety, I would have nothing. I attend an AA meeting everyday. I have a whole life since becoming sober. I am married, have kids, and I have written a bunch of books. In the last two years, I have gotten seriously into yoga. If I was still using, I would have none of this."

If you look at recovery as a process, the first phase is getting sober. After that foundation is built, the next logical phase seems to be about creating a life worth staying sober for.

BY: Regina W. SOURCE: *The FIX* – May 26, 2015

## ⊙ ⊙ **Central Office Changes** ⊙ ⊙

- Central Office will be closed on Saturdays. We will be happy to make special arrangements if you are not able to get to us during our normal office hours.
- We now have just one contact number: (231) 946-8823. Our business line, (231) 946-6716 has been discontinued due to lack of use.
- All literature is now being sold at the former group discounted price! This will allow individuals to purchase items at the same rate and have one price for all.

# The Biggest, Meanest Dude I've Ever Seen

**After his first prison commitment, an AA swears he'll never do that again**

My drinking career began in my teens, and I drank alcoholically for the next 35 years. During my drunken life, I lost two wives, two businesses, four houses and any semblance of sanity. Even with all this mayhem and chaos, jail was never a part of my story.

Alcohol beat me into submission. I became aware that it was ruining my life. After five years of trying to stop drinking on my own, I surrendered and came into AA. I was tired and willing to try anything.

Early in recovery, my sponsor stressed the importance of service work and immediately volunteered me to make coffee for our group. Four months into my sobriety, my sponsor and I spoke at a state correctional facility. This was a scary, eye-opening experience. The offenders (that's what the state now calls inmates) were as much a mixed bag as you would see at any AA meeting, only some of them were much bigger and stronger, which made me nervous. At the end of that first meeting inside the walls, we closed by holding hands in a circle and saying the Serenity Prayer. The man standing next to me holding my hand was the biggest, meanest-looking dude I have ever seen. He just scowled and didn't say anything. When I left that meeting, I said to myself, That was interesting. I will never do that again.



Just two months later, I was asked to speak again at that same prison. The officer in charge of recovery meetings there was good friends with my sponsor, who told me I should go back. Reluctantly, I agreed. My experience the second time was better. Some of the offenders recognized me and said they were glad to see me coming back to speak. Even the big guy who stood next to me at the end of the previous meeting was there. He was still as big, but he didn't look as mean, and when we closed I made sure not to stand next to him.

Not long after, the AA person who had been chairing the meeting relapsed. The prison officer asked me to take his place and chair the weekly meeting. I wasn't sure I wanted this position, because I was only six months sober and still didn't feel comfortable in the prison. My sponsor convinced me it would be all right to try. If the position wasn't for me, I could ask the officer to find someone else.

Since that time I have brought meetings into correctional facilities on a weekly basis. That big, mean-looking dude was elected leader by the prison group, and I watched him grow over six years to become happy, joyous and free, and not just "free" in the AA sense, but, after his third parole-board hearing, literally free.

I was roped into carrying the message into prison by my sponsor. But now I feel privileged to continue this work. It has been a source of struggle and hope throughout my sober life. This is not a commitment for the faint of heart. Some of these guys are searching for what may be their last chance at what we call a normal life. The message I carry in needs to be strong and well-grounded. This need has made me work harder at my own sobriety and spiritual connection. Without God working through me and directing me, my message could easily become

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garbled and self-centered. I've attended many Big Book meetings in an effort to better understand how the program works, and it's helped me to grow immensely in my own sobriety.

The true measure of this program and of this commitment is to see how many lives God has touched through our efforts. This is what keeps me coming back to these institutions. I have, over the last 18 years, brought meetings into county jails, work release programs, medium security state facilities, maximum security state facilities and federal facilities.

Every one of these places holds people who are looking for a better life. The offenders attend these programs voluntarily and receive no credit or "good time" for attendance. People at institutional AA meetings are there for recovery. Many of them haven't attended meetings on the outside, and so this is their first involvement in AA. The prison environment is not conducive to recovery, and they can be ridiculed for attending AA meetings. They are often referred to as "quitters." They also have the added difficulty of dealing with personalities and rules, official and unofficial, in a closed community that can fuel resentments. Putting this program into their lives gives them the tools for living life on life's terms. Watching this program work, and its members support each other in this difficult place in their lives, is the miracle of recovery.

This is not a commitment I take lightly, nor is it one that I allow to fuel my ever-present ego. All I have to do is look out in the meeting to be reminded: "There but for the grace of God, go I."

My hat is off to anyone bringing meetings into detoxes, rehabs, treatment centers, prisons or jails. This work is an opportunity to grow in recovery. It is a privilege to do God's work. If you wish to really grow in your sobriety, I can affirm this path has worked wonders in this drunk's life and recovery. Don't be scared off by the security at these facilities, and don't be intimidated by the stereotype portrayed by the media. These are people just like you and me, who are looking for a solution. Most of them are in prison as a result of problems with drugs and alcohol. Introducing them to recovery is a blessing we can share with people who don't have the opportunity to do "90 and 90" and who have limited access to meetings.

Writing to offenders (Corrections Correspondence) or meeting an offender upon release (Bridging the Gap) are also opportunities to do service. Ask your district or area corrections chairperson about these opportunities to reach out to another alcoholic.

I have had many service positions in AA over the years, but nothing has been as rewarding as my work with other alcoholics in institutions. In all the years I have been doing this work, I have never found it necessary to pick up a drink, and whenever I get lazy about going to a meeting, Wednesday comes along and I have to make my prison commitment. This always puts me back on track. Over the years, my work in institutions has helped me evolve into a man; not the man I could be, and probably not even the man I should be, but definitely not the man I used to be.

BY: David S., Saugerties, N.Y. SOURCE: *AA Grapevine*

## **Northern Michigan Corrections Committee (NMCC)**

*Carrying the AA Message into Jails and Corrections Facilities*



**For information on volunteering to help with meetings or for donations towards purchasing literature, please contact: Dan S. @ 231-633-0860, Rick E. @ 231-330-1091, or email [nmcc2011nmia@gmail.com](mailto:nmcc2011nmia@gmail.com), or mail donations to:**

**Northern Michigan Corrections Committee, PO Box 5712, Traverse City, MI 49696**

## Calendar of Events - JUNE, 2015

**June 6, 13, 20, 27** Open Talk at Munson Hospital basement, 1105 Sixth Street, Traverse City, 8:00pm. If you would like to be a Speaker in the upcoming months, please contact Andrew B. at (231) 409-0966, or email: [bakera15@yahoo.com](mailto:bakera15@yahoo.com) .

**June 10** Central AA Office Board Meeting, 124 N. Division Street, Traverse City at 5:30pm. All AA and Al-Anon/Alateen members are welcome. For More Information: Call (231) 946-6716.

**June 13** District 11 Meeting, Munson Hospital at the Cafeteria Dining Room #2, 1105 Sixth Street, Traverse City at 9:30am. For More Information: Email [area34.district11@gmail.com](mailto:area34.district11@gmail.com) .

### ★ FOUNDERS' DAY 2015 ★

80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous

June 12, 13, 14, 2015

in Akron, Ohio – THE Birthplace of A.A.

For More Information:

<http://foundersdayregistration.akronaa.org/>

### 2015 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous

July 2-5, 2015

at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Georgia

This year's theme: "80 Years – Happy, Joyous and Free."

For More Information:

[http://www.aa.org/pages/en\\_US/2015-international-convention-of-alcoholics-anonymous](http://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/2015-international-convention-of-alcoholics-anonymous)

### 63rd Michigan State Convention

August 21, 22, 23, 2015

McCamy Plaza Hotel in Battle Creek, MI

For More Information, contact:

Jim H. at (616) 366-5143, Barbara H. at (231) 829-5483

View Flyer:

<http://www.wmaa34.com/Portals/0/REV.%202015%20State%20Convention%20%20Flyer.pdf>

### International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ICYPAA)

57<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

September 3 - 6, 2015

in Miami, FL

For More Information:

<http://icypaa.org/>

*Mark Your Calendar*



## 2015 Traverse City Fall Roundup

November 6, 7 and 8, 2015

Park Place Hotel ◆ Traverse City, MI

**Registration is FREE!**

For More Information:

Visit our website at <http://www.tcfriu.com/> to register online,  
to view a printable flyer and for more event details  
as they become available.

## OPEN SPEAKER MEETING

at Munson Hospital  
Conference Room in Basement  
Every Saturday (8:00pm)

✦ Upcoming Speakers ✦

June 6 **Genie A.** - Suttons Bay  
June 13 **Mike Y.** - Kalamazoo  
June 20 **Chad D.** - Traverse City  
June 27 **\*\* O P E N \*\***  
July 4 **Loren F.** - TC Group  
July 11 **Mike S.** - Lansing  
July 18 **Susan V.** - TC Group  
July 25 **Sheldon G.** - Petoskey

**\*\* Speakers Subject to Change \*\***

If you're interested in being the main speaker,  
please contact:

**Andrew B. at (231) 409-0966,**  
**or email: [bakera15@yahoo.com](mailto:bakera15@yahoo.com).**

## Central Office

### Always Needs Volunteers

Whether you can help — in the OFFICE, handle  
AFTER HOURS CALLS,  
be on the 12 STEP CALL or RIDES LIST ...

**PLEASE WE NEED YOU!!!**

For More Information,  
call Central Office's Volunteer Coordinator,  
**Susan N.**  
at (231) 645-1267.

## T H A N K Y O U

To all the **MAY, 2015** Central Office Volunteers:

Andrea	Josh	Ruthann
Butch	Kip	Shannon
Daniel	Linda	Susan N.
Edwina	Lisa	Susan V.
Eleanor	Marilyn	Tamara
Jim	Rick	William

RECOVERY ✪ UNITY ✪ SERVICE

## Central Office Treasurers Report of APRIL 2015

Checking Account Balance ..... \$ 5,014.91  
Total Deposits ..... \$ 3,449.06  
Before April Expenses ..... \$ 8,463.97  
**Expenditures In April 2015**  
Rent -735.00  
Volunteer Coordinator (March exp.) -0.00  
Phone/Internet – (March & April) -380.86  
Office Supplies -0.00  
Postage -47.92  
Literature Purchased -864.50  
Push to Savings Account -0.00  
Sales Tax Paid to State -0.00  
Bank Fees -28.48  
**Total Expenses for April \$ -2,056.76**

### Checking Account Balance April 2015

CD Saving	\$515.10
CD Saving	\$546.14
Sales for April (before Sales Tax)	\$2,193.74
Sales Tax Due to State of Michigan	\$131.62
Donations to Central Office	\$1,041.88
Savings Account Balance	\$2,256.39
<b>Remaining Balance</b>	<b>\$8,554.18</b>

### Contributions Received in April

West End Group,  
Sunday Kingsley Al-Anon, Clare Third Step Group,  
Primary Purpose Group, Cadillac Serenity Group,  
Carp River Group, New Hope Group, Beulah Group,  
Kewadin Satisfaction Group, Westside Group,  
Clear Minds Group, Lake Leelanau Tues. Nooners AA

✦ Report compiled by Jodie S. ✦

# WHY I DRANK

'I tried to drink like 'other people' because they looked 'normal' to me. Other people drank and they were fine; I could tell. I would judge them by how they looked on the outside and I wanted to be like that.

Something inside me was different and it wasn't fine. Which is why I had to lie to myself – a big fat lie that ate me up and that I had to keep telling myself, because it kept a lid on the horror. I had to lie about what I was doing to myself. I had to lie about how I really felt. I had to lie about who I was. I had to lie because I was terrified of the horror inside me being exposed.

This may only make sense to someone who has had a problem with drink or any other mood or mind-altering substance. Or it may make sense to you if you have lived a life of desperate compromise and unfulfilled promise.

Do you understand? Have you got secrets inside you? Do you have to lie too?

Do you know what it's like to live with such a denial of your truth that you wake up every morning in despair and feel like your soul is lying on the floor next to you and you have no idea how you are supposed to make it through the day, let alone through life?

I just couldn't figure out how everyone else lived. How were they doing life? How come it was so easy for them?

I know I was born this way. I never felt right. I always felt that I was looking at you through a glass screen. I was on one side, alone, and everyone else was on the other side.

I've always felt wrong. I would measure myself up against people. I would always come up lacking, so I'd just try harder to be like them. I wanted my insides to feel like their outsides looked. So I drank and drank. I didn't know there was another way to live this life.

And for a while, the burning pain inside me stopped because alcohol numbed everything. However, it took me further and further away from my truth; from who I was and could be.

Alcohol wasn't killing me. Alcohol was holding me together.

I spent twelve years drinking and self-destructing. I still had a job and a place to live, but I felt like my insides were going black and I had no way of changing that. I kept drinking because it took away the pain. I couldn't even begin to describe my internal experience to anyone else; it hardly made sense to me. In reality, the drink worked for me for two years, then it stopped working and I began to feel even worse than I had before I started drinking.

I slowly began to die on the inside.

Anyone who has ever had a drink or drug problem or has suffered from depression will understand what that feels like. And it wasn't just the drink, drugs and nameless men I slept with that were killing me, it was the lies I had to tell myself. I seemed to have this default programme that was set on misery and denial.

One of the earliest memories I have is of being maybe five or six and lying perfectly still on the bathroom floor, hoping the 'wrongness' in my head would go away. I thought that if I lay perfectly still then everything would just stop. If I didn't move, I couldn't feel, and if I didn't feel it couldn't hurt. I wanted to stop 'being'; I didn't want to exist in the way that I was.

It was a very existential moment for a six year-old. I was totally, totally aware of my aloneness and my difference and it was more than I could bear in my tiny heart; I wasn't strong enough to carry that load and I had no one to turn to for help with it. Most adults don't admit to the emptiness that prevails in their own hearts, how could anyone cope with a child who was lost in hers? I saw it in my mother's eyes once, when she caught me lying on the bathroom floor, just staring. I saw that flicker of recognition deep in her eyes that immediately got buried under the sheer fear of acknowledging it.

The absolute unbearableness of being.

I know she saw it but was powerless to articulate it. What words can illustrate that dark ache that vibrates deep inside someone? I saw also the fright that a mother would feel when she saw her child behaving in that odd way, a terror of seeing a child's insides so nakedly exposed, and the darkness within them.

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There isn't really a particular moment when you realise you're different from other people around you, it's more of a series of realisations that happen slowly over a period of time, accompanied by a slow creeping feeling of fear that the last thing you can ever do is reveal what is inside you to any one else.

I was so uncomfortable in my own skin that it frightened me to think that someone else might see this. I have no idea why I felt like this; it was as though I was born with this irrational fear of anyone else seeing who I really was. I was petrified of it.

There was a point, when I was a child, when I believed anything was possible. I may have only just been at the beginning of living a life in fear; paradoxically, I still had fearlessness. I believed I could be anything. The world was there for me to fulfil my dreams in. When I said I wanted to become a doctor, a vet, an astronaut, a movie star, be somebody, do something when I grew up, I really believed that I could.

And then as time went on, fear overtook me and I forgot what I was capable of. I withdrew inside myself, ignored my dreams, my hopes, my passions, and compromised myself. I settled for less than second best and rationalised that this was reality. I became someone I didn't recognise.

Deep in my heart, in my truest self, in my soul, I knew I wasn't living the life I was meant to be living; I knew I wasn't the person I was meant to be; I knew I was lying to myself, but I had to keep lying in order to keep doing what I was doing to myself.

The first lie was like a thin layer of tissue paper laid over my spirit (my inner voice) – no big deal, it just makes the voice a little less insistent. But then I told myself another lie. Another layer of tissue was laid over that voice to muffle it a little more, and so it goes on.

The first feeling I ever had was of being wrong, different, uncomfortable; my whole life experience prior to getting sober was how painful life could be. I knew something was very wrong with me; the way I felt was too terrible to try to articulate to another person, it was so arbitrary and intangible. I couldn't begin to put it into words.

My fear crippled me. I lived in blind terror every day. Everything was frightening for me. Other people terrified me. I felt so worthless in their eyes and was sure they would see any minute what a despicable human being I was and discard me. At any given time I couldn't really explain what I was frightened of. I just knew that I was scared. It ate me up inside. I would try and act as if it wasn't there, try to ignore it, but it would come back stronger.

Some days it felt like I could barely breathe because the fear was crushing me. It made me feel sick. I struggled to find different ways to cope with it.

Drink, of course, numbed it briefly. I tried to ask for help, but I couldn't find the words that would make someone take me seriously. I wanted to be saved. I wanted someone to pick me up and put me in a nice padded room and tell me I would never have to worry about anything ever again. I wanted to go mad, but I was too frightened to, so I just stayed in this perpetual state of unqualified fear.

I had always felt so wrong inside, so empty and broken, that these feelings were normal for me; I had nothing to compare them with. I had never experienced real contentment or peace. I didn't know what it was like to like myself, let alone to love myself.

And yet, when I began this journey of spiritual awakening and I took responsibility to peel off the layers that kept me trapped, something incredible happened.

It was very subtle. I almost didn't notice that anything had changed, but one day I realised I no longer felt 'wrong'. The feelings of 'wrongness' had just gone, evaporated. After that I understood that it was ridiculous to believe that I was revolting or disgusting; I realised I was just an ordinary human being. I was OK. I no longer hated myself.

Something felt very different inside. I felt lighter, freer, unburdened. I just did the work and the results followed. I liked the results, so I kept doing the work and I've never stopped, because every day I seem to grow a little more, and finally I realised I loved myself.'

How was this possible, I thought? For thirty years I had felt so totally wrong, and then in the space of a few months my thinking and belief systems had undergone profound and radical change.

## Central Office Board Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2015

(Minutes to be approved at the June 10, 2015 Board Meeting)

**Board Members Present:** Jodie (Chair), Ken (Treasurer), Mike (Newsletter Editor), Phil, Susan V., and Kip M. (Secretary).

**Others present:** Susan N. (Volunteer Coordinator), Rebecca, and Joe.

**Secretary's Report:** Kip read the minutes from the April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Phil moved to accept the minutes as read. Motion carried unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jodie presented the Treasurer's Report. It was received and filed.

**Webmaster's Report:** Jodie reported that it didn't seem like a good idea to change our web hosting company at this time. Jodie reported that she is still receiving help with the web page from Jim L. Jim is still interested in taking over the Webmaster's position in the future.

**Camel Courier Report:** Mike reported that there was three new subscribers this past month.

**Literature report:** Purchases: AA literature-\$864.50

**Volunteer Coordinator's Report:** Susan N. reported that Central Office is still short of volunteers. Eleanor will be returning. We are still short 4 shifts.

**Old Business:** Phil moved to go forward and have Jodie and Kip negotiate for the space that was found at 806 Hastings. Motion carried unanimously. Phil moved to purchase the point of sale system, Square, for Central Office. Price not to exceed \$1000.00. Motion carried unanimously.

**New Business:** Kip moved to accept Rebecca onto the board and for her to become purchaser for Central Office. Motion carried unanimously. Phil moved to accept Joe onto the board and for him to become Assistant Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously. Ken moved to close the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.



## DISTRICT 11 MEETING MINUTES

May 9, 2015

The meeting opened at the Munson Hospital Cafeteria Dining Room #2 at 9:33 A.M. with the Serenity Prayer, followed by the opening readings and roll call:

1. District 11 Statement of Purpose – Deanna D.
2. 5th Tradition – Phil S.
3. 5th Concept – Phil S.
4. Declaration of Unity – Phil S.
5. Roll Call – 14 voting members

### OFFICER REPORTS

**Secretary** – Deanna D. April 2015 minutes were read and accepted.

**Treasurer** – Jodie S. Not present, April 2015 and May 2015 Treasury Reports sent via email.

March 31, 2015 ending balance = \$3,056.88. Contributions= \$131.90 from: Sunday Night Suttons Bay BB Study, Carp River Group and West End Group. Expenditures=\$3.00 to: Paper Statement Fee. Prudent reserve=\$600.35.

April 30, 2015 ending balance= \$3,003.59. Contributions= \$7.80 from: Lake Leelanau Tuesday Nooners. Expenditures= \$61.09 to: Paul J. for Area 34 April Assembly, Mel H. for Area 34 April Assembly and Paper Statement Fee. Prudent reserve= \$600.35. Please send all District 11 contributions to PO Box 1231, Traverse City, MI 49685.

**Chair** – Paul J. Not present, sent report via email. He did attend the area assembly in Kalkaska hosted by District 11. It was well attended however, not as many from our own District as he would have liked. Thanks to Mel for opening and attending to the kitchen, making coffee, and venison stroganoff, Phil brought Mel's chili, Jodie brought donuts and we also had pulled pork and many other dishes that others brought. THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED. He stayed busy helping Mel in the kitchen most of the morning but did have an opportunity to sit in on the archives committee and found that Mike from Area 34 had been in town for two (2) days copying all of the district records with help from Jodie (thanks Jodie). He would be interested in any old info on the local AA community. INTERESTING NOTE: Mike found the earliest record of an AA meeting in Traverse City that is registered with the GSO to be the Dry Dock Group in 1946. At the time, there were only twelve (12) groups registered in the state of Michigan, and it is believed that the Dry Dock Group went on to become the TC group. Although records have yet prove it, with so few meetings, they were often known by the city they were in. If that is the case, then maybe they transitioned into the TC Group.

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This is of course, purely speculation. If anybody has any additional information, Mike can be reached through Area 34. We also have the Northern Inter Area Spring round up coming up on Memorial Day weekend. All information is available on the District 12 website. Founders Day is coming up in June and that information is on the District 12 website. The Fife Lake Groups are hosting the annual Father's Day picnic at the park in Fife Lake on June 21, 2015. Please bring a dish to pass. Brian and Amber J. are the speakers. It should be a good time, please get the word out.

Roger B. moves to accept Paul J.'s report as acceptance of the District 11 Chair position. Amber J. seconds the motion. Discussion followed about holding off and deferring the vote until next month. The vote proceeds, and is not unanimous, but the motion carries. Paul J. is the new Chair for District 11. Minority vote, Ryan D. would like Paul's physical presence for the vote, especially since we have several newcomers attending the District 11 meeting. There is no majority comment, or majority recall of the vote.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

PI/CPC Committee. Phil S. Nothing to report.

Corrections Committee. Jerry H. Not present, nothing to report.

Grapevine. Rick T. Not present, sent report via email. He is still out there and involved in Grapevine work. He hopes to be getting a schedule together for the upcoming year of events to give away Grapevine subscriptions. He hopes that he will start hearing from people about showing up to their open talk or other events to hold a Grapevine raffle. He has been working with a few people that are taking AA meetings into the jails and prisons and gathering up used and new past issues of the magazine for them to take in. He will be at the NMIA Spring Roundup on Friday, May 22, 2015 with the Grapevine display and of course Victor E. Please contact Rick for raffle inquiries or for assistance in getting Grapevine material to someone in need.

Treatment Facilities. Brian J. Nothing to report.

Special Needs. Sharon M. Not present, nothing to report.

Central Office Liaison Report. Phil S. The next monthly board meeting is May 13, 2015. The Central Office is still looking at available rental space.

## **DCM REPORTS**

Antrim. Roger B. The Central Lake annual picnic will be held on July 13, 2015. It will start around 11:00 A.M. Please bring a dish to pass.

Benzie. Scott S. from Benzie County volunteered to become the new interim DCM. He shared his background in recovery and service work. He stated that meeting attendance has been up over the last few months, and he is working to help with leadership amongst the groups. Motion to have Scott S. as the new interim DCM for Benzie County. Motion passes unanimously.

Grand Traverse. Michael G. from Grand Traverse County volunteered to become the new DCM. He shared his background in recovery and service work. Motion to have Michael G. as the new interim DCM for Grand Traverse County. Motion passes unanimously.

Kalkaska. Mel H. Not present, sent report via email. Mel attended the March 2015 Area 34 meeting held in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Most of the meeting was dedicated to a pre-conference review of the 2015 General Service Conference. Each committee was to review their agenda items. He sat in with the Grapevine committee. The agenda items were targeting ways to increase Grapevine & La Vina sales. One idea that was presented by the outgoing Grapevine chair for the Manhattan district was to: 1) contact PI/CPC chairs to make a list of Facilities that may be interested in receiving free subscriptions, 2) Make a flyer and contact the facilities to see if they would like to receive them. 3) Encourage groups and the district to sponsor subscriptions for those facilities, and 4) Send thank you notes to the groups and facilities that got involved. Everyone thought that was a great idea. All committees presented their thoughts on their respective agenda items. The Directories Chair also noted that press time was coming soon and there were still a lot of updates needed. Old Business - The finance committee is in need of an alternate chair. New Business - A motion was made and passed to send our delegate to the GSC informed but uninstructed. Mel reported that District 11 was looking forward to hosting the April 2015 Area 34 meeting, and that District 11 is in the process of an inventory and hoping for some positive ideas from that. At the April 2015 Area 34 meeting, Mel and Marv S. worked with the Directories Chair to update information for the Kalkaska County groups. Mel spent most of his time at that meeting in the kitchen, so I defer further information on that meeting to others. As the Kalkaska County DCM, Mel assisted the Rapid City group with getting forms for their new GSR. The Fife Lake Father's Day Picnic is planned for June 21, 2015 at the Fife Lake Park. Speakers for the picnic are Brian and Amber J. from Williamsburg. Also, the Kalkaska Tuesday Night group is planning a 5th Tuesday Potluck for June 30th. The speaker will be Matt G.

Leelanau. Ted K. updated the meeting schedule for Leelanau County. He passed around a sample for folks to see. There is a new Step meeting at Noon on Fridays.

AREA 34. District 11 hosted the Area 34 Assembly in April 2015. Mel H. will attend the Area 34 Assembly for May 2015 in Stevensville, Michigan.

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## GROUP INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CONCERNS

Amber J. is now GSR for the New Hope Group which meets on Thursday evenings in Williamsburg/Acme. The 1st Thursday after each calendar quarter is AA Birthday night, and cake is served for all anniversaries from the previous quarter.

Deb R. is now the GSR for the Williamsburg Group.

Daniel F. is now the Alternate GSR for TC Group.

There is a new Big Book Study meeting at the Seventh Day Adventist Church on Sundays at 5:00 PM.

## OLD BUSINESS

District 11 Inventory. The Inventory is again postponed until the June 2015 District 11 meeting.

## NEW BUSINESS

Brian J. suggested that the committee take five (5) minutes or so at each District 11 meeting to discuss the service structure so that we (and newcomers) get a better understanding of it. Ryan D. suggested that we discuss the concept of the month in more detail. Ted K. discourages the monthly concept idea, but suggested that it stay along the line of actual service levels. Ted K. is willing to lead a service structure discussion lasting no longer than 2.5 - 5 minutes. Amber J. motions to spend 2.5 - 5 minutes at the start of each District 11 meeting discussing the AA service structure. Ryan D. seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously. Deanna will add the Service Structure Discussion to the monthly agenda.

The meeting closed at 11:45 A.M. with the Responsibility Statement. The next meeting will be held on Saturday, June 13, 2015, at 9:30 A.M. at the Munson Hospital Cafeteria Dining Room #2, Traverse City, MI.

-- Yours in love and service, Deanna D., District 11 Secretary

*"I know that my life is no longer my own. My life now is in the hands of 'a new Employer.' Even though I still complain now and then about the working conditions and sometimes have trouble getting along with my fellow employees, it's a great improvement over the way things were when I was in charge."*

"The Root of Our Troubles"

Emotional Sobriety

December 1979

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Published monthly, the **Camel Courier** is free to anyone. If you would like to be added to the email list, simply send a request to Mike H: [mthotis@aol.com](mailto:mthotis@aol.com) and enter "**Camel Courier**" in the Subject Line.

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