

CAMEL COURIER

VOLUME 29 ◉ ISSUE 11 ◉ NOVEMBER 2015

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

District 11 – Area 34

coverage area includes:

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

Central Office

3291 Racquet Club Drive
Suite B

Traverse City, MI 49684

◉ ◉ ◉

Hot Line

(231) 946-8823

24/7 Service

Office Hours

Mon – Fri 10AM – 5PM

Saturday – 10AM - 2PM

Email

district11centraloffice@yahoo.com

Website

www.district11-aa.org

WHO THE HELL GETS SOBER AT 18?

Of the many misconceptions regarding alcoholism is the notion that this is an elderly rain-coated man's disease; of addiction, perhaps a slightly more glamorous bent, maybe a young starlet fallen in with a "fast crowd" tattooed and generally musical. But what of a perfectionistic former honors kid from a stable two-parent home? For as much as we may wish otherwise, experience has shown alcohol and substance use disorders to be non-discriminatory, and as an individual caught in its dragnet, I am one of the fortunate few who managed to get, and more challengingly stay, sober young.

Over the years I've met many people who have long-term sobriety initiated in adolescence, and some who got clean at even younger ages than I. The barriers to maintaining sobriety at any age are high and abundant, though individuals in early and late adolescence experience a set of pressures if not particular to their age group, experienced perhaps more acutely without broader frames of reference inherent with simply living longer.

The predominance of what I heard from people who weren't in recovery were variants of the above implicit biases, to the effect of "How can you be sure it wasn't just a phase?" and "Oh wow, was it really that bad?" I felt a perverse need to justify and over-explain precisely how bad it had gotten, lending to hyperbole and imbuing every anecdote with an earnest gravitas. To my mind at that time, the details of my bottom seemed somehow

(Continued on Page 2)

BREAKING NEWS

WEST END GROUP is MOVING

Immediately following the Noon meeting on **OCTOBER 31, 2015**

New Location: In the back of Addiction Treatment Services' "*The Porch*" on 8th and Barlow Streets (across from McLain Cycle & Fitness). The first meeting at the new digs begins on Saturday, October 31 at 5:30pm. Meetings times remain the same.

insufficient in face of this scrutiny, and so: my 36-hour blackout would become a 48-hour blackout; the black eye imparted to me by the drug dealer to whom I was indebted wasn't impressed upon me in a crack house (but it was like, really dirty); and coming-to on the E train platform without shoes, had to involve its two-plus hours of Queens-bound delays, as though being shoeless and not knowing how and being on your way to Queens weren't sufficient indications of unmanageability. (I'm only 92% serious about the Queens part—big ups, Queens, you're beautiful.)

I fell in with strangers, regularly awoke in vomit (mine or others, who knows? What fun!), and may or may not at one point have been wheeled down University Place in an office chair in a certain stage of undress—though my since-rejuvenated sense of dignity would still like to cling to plausible deniability on that one. It was a weird night...and as with most of my nights (and days, at that stage), a very drunken one. While the details of my progressive decline may sound very similar to college-aged shenanigans, the difference lay predominantly in my relationship to alcohol. The litmus test was not in the amount I drank or how hard a drug I used, or even whether I could stop for a set period of time—it was that no matter how much pain alcohol and drugs caused me, no matter how big of a mess I made while I was on them, I would somehow curiously forget (and very quickly) my intended-as-permanent resolve to never pick them up again. Eventually, possessive of this type of “built-in forgetter,” I reached a point described in AA literature as “pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization”—and that turned out to be the greatest gift I've ever received.

Fortunately this sense of despair and other components of the significant body of evidence pointing to the severity of alcoholism's progression within my life, marked by numerous repeated suicide attempts and unshakeable depression, outweighed their insistence, which proved only nearly as insidious as the disease itself. With sufficient counterpoints and strong encouragement to remain in the day, I incrementally managed to build some sober muscle, and my once-innate need to over-flex its bicep progressively eased into a quieter self-assurance based in taking right actions to remain in recovery.

Arguably the biggest freedom we are afforded through the language of 12-step programs is permission to remain in the day. I am not, nor have I ever been, required to commit to a lifetime of sobriety. While I once thought that there was no point in doing such a mass of often excruciating spiritual and emotional work without warranty for guaranteed permanent sobriety and never-ending happiness, I later recognized that this was a trademark of all-or-nothing thinking. I certainly flailed and railed against suggestions, but once I realized that my hesitancy to take action was really only hurting me, and that the pain of the pain itself was greater than my fear of the change, I became increasingly willing to stay in the pain for less time. As the amount of love and attention I received became more and more positive—less focused on externals, more affirming of non-sexual character traits—the more I incrementally began to actually believe that I was worthy of healthy relationships. I was able to wet my feet with service, practice some social skills, and began amassing proof that people may well like being around me sober, without having ulterior motives beyond enjoyment of my company.

I feel a strong need to underscore all of this with the disclaimer that this was all extraordinarily, dazzlingly ungraceful, staggered and pocketed. None of my personal growth or perspective has ever been on a flawlessly smooth uptick, however the important piece seems to be that growth in sobriety has a general upward trajectory, and the blips we take as they come. Though the gentleness requisite of that acceptance-informed approach only came with time, practice and surviving life's bumps and bruises. The beautiful piece of growing up in Alcoholics Anonymous is a strongly supervised and supported adolescence—and simultaneously, the painfully unavoidable piece is that, it's still an adolescence.

My prevalent perception was informed by a strain of perfectionism only an overachieving alcoholic would easily identify. It carried all of the hallmarks of classic perfectionism, yes, with the riders of debilitating fear of asking for

help and a presumed expectation of others that I always know everything at all times. I was the type of person who, from youth, took great pride in being referred to as “precocious,” “mature” and “an old soul.” So, to get sober and be tasked with identifying all of my mistakes, admitting them, and amending those behaviors—not only in the past, but on an ongoing basis—seemed not only impolite to my WASPish sensibility, but moreover positively humiliating.

The experiences I had and the lessons I learned did alienate me from the majority within my age group, making connection with non-sober people in their late teens and early twenties a bit difficult despite my longstanding preference for older adults. The implicit disconnect, naturally, being that the stories of my mistakes were ones for which I was entirely conscious, lacking alcohol to scapegoat, making myself entirely responsible for every misstep and mistake I made. Show me any person, teenaged or otherwise, who’s leaping at the opportunity to squarely accept responsibility for every action they’ve ever taken, and unchecked most might rightly call them a liar. And yet, this proved one of AA’s most valuable paradoxes—that freedom was to be found in personal responsibility, and its inherent amelioration of ongoing anxiety related to avoidance of said responsibility.

This value, as significant as it is, at a point seems insufficient without finding ways of incorporating into one’s recovery things that one enjoys. At a point, I realized that I didn’t really know how to have fun without drinking, and if I’m honest it’s still something I have to practice. I have, however, also outgrown a lot of my preemptive self-judgment for the things I do enjoy, with my version of fun tending toward rousing games of Sudoku—advanced levels, thank you very much—and completing the Sunday Times crossword in pen. But, if that’s not quite your speed, or your interest set is not that of a prematurely geriatric 26-year-old, I’m assured innumerable other options are available. As my grandmother always used to say, “if you’re bored, you’re boring,” and at a point being bored in sobriety seems to become a decision to prioritize comfort in familiarity over expansion and discovery.

Several seeming pitfalls presented themselves, some of which I retrospectively realize were external, and the majority projections of internal expectations, maladaptive coping mechanisms and cognitive distortions. I didn’t know how to identify or unlearn those until I had engaged in years of therapy, though there are many 12-step slogans largely equivalent to basic principles of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy and its more well-known and commonly practiced cousin, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. While no 12-step program in and of itself endorses or opposes clinical psychological or psychiatric services, my personal recovery would not have been sustainable without seeking and implementing outside help. Or if it had been, perhaps it might’ve been a bit more miserable—one of the upsides of maintaining sobriety is that, contingent upon ongoing upkeep, I won’t necessarily have to have occasion to find that out.

Incumbent upon my eighth year of sobriety and entering my mid- to late-twenties, the grip with which I hold recovery has grown less tenuous, and a growth in faith has allowed for the reins to rest.

BY Audrey F. • *The FIX* • October 25, 2015

W A N T E D

EDITOR of the *Camel Courier* – monthly newsletter

Are you looking for an opportunity to serve? Our *Camel Courier*, in print since 1989, needs you! This is our monthly newsletter in print, notifying the entire area about events, along with articles and minutes of important meetings. Mike H., who has been doing a fantastic job of publishing the *Camel Courier* for over two years, is rotating out. If you have at least 1 year of sobriety, computer savvy and willing to put together a great read for the community, please let us know immediately via email at district11centraloffice@yahoo.com and come help be of service to our AA community!

OPEN SPEAKER MEETING

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

✦ Upcoming Speakers ✦

- November 7** Discussion Only due to
TC RoundUp weekend
November 14 Jim F. - West End Group
November 21 Jeff G. - West End Group
November 28 Tommy Boy – TC Group
December 5 Dave C. - West End Group
December 12 Frank F.
December 19 Jay K.
December 26 Mel H. - Kalkaska

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

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

**Jodie S. at (206) 310-1833,
or email: jackieoh1@gmail.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.

THANK YOU

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

Adam	Eleanor	Linda
Butch	Jennifer	Lisa
Daniel	Jim	Susan N.
Ed K.	Jodi	Susan V.
Edwina	Kip	Tamara

Central Office Board Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2015

(Minutes to be approved at the November 11, 2015 Board Meeting)

Board Members Present: Jodie (Chair), Rebecca S. (Literature Chair), Joe (Co- treasurer), and Kip M. (Secretary).

Others present: Ted

Secretary's Report: Kip read the minutes from the August, 2015 meeting. Rebecca moved to accept the minutes as read. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Jodie and Joe presented the Treasurer's report from August and September. It was received and filed.

Webmaster's Report: Jim L. is still planning to take over as webmaster, replacing Jodie.

Camel Courier Report: We are still looking for someone to replace Mike as Editor.

Literature Report: Rebecca reported that the new purchasing systems are taking shape and seem to be working.

Volunteer Coordinator's Report: Central office is still in need of volunteers.

Old Business: Joe moved to have Central Office purchase some chairs and tables for the front room. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business: No new business.

Joe moved to close the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.



DISTRICT 11 MEETING MINUTES

October 10, 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:

- District 11 Statement of Purpose – Deanna D.
- 10th Tradition – Jodie S.
- 10th Concept – Deanna D.
- Declaration of Unity – Ted K.
- Roll Call – 23 voting members

OFFICER REPORTS

Secretary – Deanna D. September 2015 minutes were read and accepted.

Treasurer – Jodie S. October 2015 treasury report was read and accepted. September 30, 2015 ending balance=\$2,183.53 Contributions=\$388.05 from: September District Meeting, West End Group, Westside Group, Unknown Group, Eastside Group, Carp River Group, Grateful Women's AA Benzonia, Lake Leelanau Tuesday Nooners Group, Lambda AA Saturday Group, Set in Stone Group and the monthly service charge refund. Expenditures=\$1,019.24 to Traverse City Fall Roundup, Mel H. (Area 34 travel), Jerry H. (Corrections), Rick T. (Grapevine) and Ted K. (Area 34, April 2015). Prudent reserve=\$600.50. Please send all District 11 contributions to PO Box 1231, Traverse City, MI 49685.

Chair – Paul J. Not present, nothing to report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - No verbal reports this month due to District 11 Elections

PI/CPC Committee. Phil S.

Corrections Committee. Jerry H.

Grapevine. Rick T. Treatment

Facilities. Brian J.

Special Needs. Sharon M.

Central Office Liaison Report. Jodie S., nothing to report, but there are concerns: Mike G. - There was a previous issue with a missed call into the Central Office. Has this been addressed? Jodie S. stated that per the September 2015 minutes, no one has contacted her with any issues. She reiterated that that volunteers are needed in order to answer the phone. The office needs 19 folks to fill all phone shifts. Please contact the Susan at 231-645-1267, if interested to volunteering. Roger B. - He was approached by an individual from the Kewadin Group who tried contacting the Central Office and received a busy signal twice. Again, Jodie S. insists that folks call her directly if they continue to have problems getting through. The Central Office Liaison Report will be added to the agenda for the November 2015 meeting.

DCM REPORTS

Antrim Roger B.

Grand Traverse Michael G. Report sent via email. First off, I want to thank you all for the opportunity to serve this body as the District Committee Member for Grand Traverse County for the next 2 years. I am humbled to be able to serve this fellowship in this capacity. My dedication towards creating more INFORMED groups is exhausting at times. But knowing the alcoholic is still suffering feeds my fire. So once again, thank you. This month has been exciting. I attended the area assembly meeting in Fremont Michigan. E-mailed a full report to the GSR's I am currently aware of in Grand Traverse County. I met with Rich from area assembly. He is the literature chair for that body and I was able to get service manuals 2013 -2014 from him for the GSR's here. I do have a few left if someone needs one. My sincere thanks for his attention in this matter in assisting me in INFORMING the groups! Hats off to you and your service Rich! I was asked to attend a meeting at the Community Mental Health building to discuss service and what it has done for me. I was greeted well and talked about the service structure of AA. I was asked to come back and look forward to it. As most know, I also researched contact information for both the District 11 roster as well as the Eastern Michigan AA Directory and am updating those with the help of Barbara H. (Area 34 Registrar) She is in dire need of YOUR groups info. She is using new software that needs all of your groups info to adequately accept the groups entry. She needs to know the goods on your group such as if it is open/closed, smoking or non, handicap accessible, children safe and so forth. Please make contact with her concerning your group. For the still suffering alcoholic, please update your group! Her info is Barbara H. 231-829-5483 and thank you! And after my discussion last month about the apparent missed phone calls at the Central Office as well as the locked doors during business hour, I want to thank all of the past delegates and trustees and other members for the conversation about answering services in their areas. They gave me valuable information

that look forward to sharing with the groups here. I want to welcome all of the new chair people in this district and want to say thank you for those that are not going to serve at this capacity for the next 2 years. You made me laugh and feeling it from my belly tells me I can laugh today. You may have upset me but that is the fuel I use to learn and so I want to thank you for teaching me. Thank you for being a part of all of these today.

Kalkaska Mel H.

Leelanau Ted K.

AREA 34 - Mel H.

1. Mel made a motion to start drawing names for future scholarships to the East Central Regional Forum nine (9) months in advance of the scheduled conference, and draw two (2) names at six (6) consecutive Area meetings, as the meetings move around the different districts. Alternate names could be drawn in the same fashion. It is a motion that would require a change to the Area 34 Handbook.
2. Bids are open for hosting the WMAA 34 in 2016. Mel H. bid on behalf of District 11 to host the meeting in April 2016. A motion was made by Sharon M., and seconded by Rick T. to have District 11 host the Area 34 meeting in April 2016. Motion passed unanimously.
3. A motion was made to continue taking June and December off of the 2016 WMAA calendar. Motion passed with minority opposition. A discussion followed and the motion was tabled until next month.
4. The PI/CPC committee tried a trial separation into two (2) committees. Due to a lack of participation, a motion was made to reunite the two entities. The motion carried.

GROUP INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CONCERNS

OLD BUSINESS Art H. wrote up and distributed the proposed changes to the District 11 Statement of Purpose (please see attachment). The District will review and discuss at the November 2015 District 11 meeting. Deanna D. will bring a list of bullet points from the past months of District 11 Inventory to review and discuss at the November 2015 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS DISTRICT 11 ELECTIONS

*DCM Chair = Mel H. is nominated and he accepted. The motion was made to elect Mel H. as the new DCM. Motion passed.

*DCM Chair Alternate = Deanna D. is nominated and she accepted. The motion was made to elect Deanna D. as

*DCM Chair Alternative. Motion passed.

*Treasurer = Jerry H. volunteers for Treasurer. The motion was made to elect Jerry H. as Treasurer. Motion passed.

*Secretary = Art H. is nominated and he accepted. The motion was made to elect Art H. as Secretary. Motion passed.

*DCM Antrim County = OPEN. Craig will consider volunteering for the position and report back next month.

*DCM Benzie County = Scott S. is nominated and accepted. The motion was made to elect Scott S. as the DCM for Benzie County. Motion passed.

*DCM Grand Traverse County = Mike G. is nominated and he accepted. The motion was made to elect Mike G. as the DCM for Grand Traverse County. Motion passed.

*DCM Kalkaska County = OPEN. Tabled until next month.

*DCM Leelanau County = OPEN. Tabled until next month.

*Grapevine Committee Chair = OPEN. Tabled until next month.

*Treatment Committee Chair = Paul G. is nominated and he accepted. The motion was made to elect Paul G. as the Treatment Committee chair. Motion passed.

*Corrections Committee Chair = OPEN. Tabled until next month.

*PI/CPC Committee Chair = OPEN. Tabled until next month.

*Special Needs Committee Chair = OPEN. Tabled until next month.

If interested in being elected to any of the OPEN District 11 positions, please consider attending the meeting in November 2015, and throw your name in the hat! This is an excellent opportunity to do service work.

The meeting closed at 11:00 A.M. with the Responsibility Statement. The next meeting will be held on Saturday, November 14, 2015 at the Munson Hospital Cafeteria Dining Room #2 at 9:30 A.M.

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



Calendar of Events - NOVEMBER 2015

November 6, 7 & 8 TC Fall RoundUp 2015, Park Place Hotel in Traverse City, MI. FREE EVENT. For More Information: Go to their website at www.tcfu.com .

November 7, 14, 21, 28 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 Jodie S. at (206) 310-1833, or email: jackieoh1@gmail.com .

November 8 Western Michigan Area 34 Assembly. Hostd by District 10 – Tribal Center AKI Center, 2953 Shaw-be-quo-ung in Manistee at 10:30am. For More Information go to: <http://wmaa34.com/>

November 11 Central AA Office Board Meeting, 3291 Racquet Club Drive – Suite B, Traverse City at 5:30pm. All AA and Al-Anon/Alateen members are welcome. For More Information: Call (231) 946-8823 or email district11centraloffice@yahoo.com .

November 14 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 .

MCYPAA 37 - Convention in Lansing “Rocketed Into a Fourth Dimension of Existence”



November 27-29, 2015

Ramada Lansing Hotel & Conference Center – 7501 W. Saginaw Highway in Lansing

For More Information: Email: mcypaa37@gmail.com , or Website

http://mcypaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/11836567_10204908793780768_1819399948_o.jpg

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: Scott S. @ 231-383-4199, Dan S. @ 231-633-0860, or email nmcc2011nmia@gmail.com, or mail donations to:

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



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

District 11 – Area 34

Central Office

3291 Racquet Club Drive #B
Traverse City, MI 49684
(231) 946-8823

Board Members

Jodie S., Chair
Kip M., Secretary
Ken W., Treasurer
Joe S., Asst. Treasurer
Rebecca S., Literature Buyer
Jodie S., Webmaster
Phil S.
Sue V.

Volunteer Coordinator

Susan N.

Central Office OCTOBER 2015 Treasurers Report

INCOME IN SEPTEMBER 2015

Checking Account Balance	\$ 2,984.35
Total Deposits	\$ 3,036.24
Credit Card Sales	\$ 868.72
Expense Refund	\$ 79.82
TOTAL DEPOSITS	\$ 6,969.13

EXPENDITURES IN SEPTEMBER 2015

Rent	\$ 775.00
Volunteer Coordinator	\$ 460.00
Phone/Internet	\$
Office Supplies	\$ 92.74
Literature Purchased	\$ 968.08
Postage	\$ 21.03
Push to Savings Account	\$
Sales Tax Paid to State	\$
Credit Card Fees	\$ 34.06
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 2,350.91

ALL ACCOUNTS as of SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

Checking Account Balance	\$ 4,618.22
CD Saving (maturity date 6-10-15)	\$ 515.83
CD Saving (maturity date 10-3-15)	\$ 546.59
Savings Account Balance	\$ 1,482.12
TOTAL ALL ACCOUNTS	\$ 7,162.76

SALES REPORT SEPTEMBER 2015

Taxable Sales	\$ 2,076.96
Non-Taxable Sales	\$ 62.50
Donations to Central Office	\$ 1,201.84
TOTAL SALES	\$ 3,341.30
TOTAL SALES TAX DUE	\$ 124.64

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM:

District 11 (toward phone services),
 Westside Group, Kalkaska Tuesday Night Al-
 Anon West End Group, Elk Rapids Group,
 Carp River Group, Williamsburg Group,
 Sunday Kingsley Al-Anon Group

AL-ANON/ALATEEN - District 39

coverage area includes: Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau & Manistee counties.

Al-Anon/Alateen - Family Groups - D39

PO Box 5132 - Traverse City, MI 49696

Information Line - (231) 938-7399 Response within 24 Hours

Website - www.alanon-d39.org

About the *Camel Courier* Newsletter

Published monthly, the **Camel Courier** is free to anyone. Back issues can be found online at **www.district11-aa.org**. Hard copies can be picked up at Central Office.

Articles printed in the **Camel Courier** are the opinions expressed by individuals and not necessarily those of Central Office, its Board of Directors, or AA as a whole.

If you have an AA announcement, a meeting change, an upcoming AA event, or a story to tell ... please submit via snail mail to:

Camel Courier, c/o Central Office
 3291 Racquet Club Drive, Suite #B
 Traverse City, MI 49684
 or email to **district11centraloffice@yahoo.com**

+ + + + +