



# The Communicator

APRIL | 2015

Green Bay Area 74 District 01  
newsletter@greenbayaa.org  
www.greenbayaa.org  
HOTLINE - 920-432-2600

*"I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."*

30th Anniversary Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention-Toronto, Canada (July 1965)

## **"ONE ROOM AT A TIME"**

**At 22 years sober, she was about to make a big move—but this time she let her past experience do the heavy lifting**

I've heard it said that we can do anything "one day at a time." I've lived that way for many years in sobriety. Taking it one step at a time, sometimes one minute at a time, has worked beautifully for this alcoholic. But in May of 2011, it was one room, one box at a time.

That spring, I became worried about my job. I'd worked for four plus years as a virtual administrative assistant to a life insurance agent from another state but I had never met the man. All of our business communications were by phone and internet. It was my dream job. The hours were great, I could be of service, the money was just what I needed, and the agent was a prince to work for. But as with many other businesses in this economy, things started to slow down and my hours were diminishing. I was working part-time and began having trouble making ends meet. One day I wrote "my job" on a piece of paper and put it in my God box.

Three days later, my sponsor and I were sitting at my kitchen table talking when my phone rang—it was the insurance agent. He informed me that my job was going to end in January of 2013. However, he added that he was expanding his business and opening a new office. He wanted to know if I'd be willing to relocate to Iowa. He gave me some points to consider, and we set up a time for me to go to Iowa at his expense and meet with him to discuss the offer.

Luckily, the lease on my apartment had expired and I was able to renegotiate a new one that would allow me to stay until October 1st. So the wheels were set in motion. I called a local truck rental company and reserved a truck and car trailer for a reasonable price. A friend of mine who happened to be moving too offered me all of her leftover boxes, so I didn't have to scour the planet or purchase boxes.

The previous year I had guardianship of my daughter's son, but had relinquished custody. My grandson lived in Georgia with his father, stepmom and two sisters, and was doing very well. My daughter had a daughter in foster care in South Carolina. I tried to get guardianship of her, but every door was slammed in my face. I had to accept that God had a plan for this child and had to pray for whatever was best for everyone in the situation. My heart hurt for my daughter and my grandchild. My 33-year-old son, who lived near me, told me the new job offer was too good for me to pass up and to please go with his blessing.

I kept getting on my knees each day and asking God to show me what his will was. Things just kept falling into place. But I was still unsure about my move. I had moved another time in sobriety and I had stopped going to as many AA meetings. I had also stopped calling my sponsor and other sober alcoholics. I had nine years of sobriety at the time and thought I'd be fine. I was "fine," alright. By the time we moved that time I was stark raving sober. Fortunately, the Twelfth Step saved me: a newcomer needed a ride to a meeting and when I tried to share with her what I didn't have, I realized I had to get up off my backside and get plugged into the program again before I drank. God did for me what I could not do for myself. I got a home group and a sponsor. I became the GSR of that home group. I got back into the Steps and Traditions, and my life flourished. I was back in the center of the boat of AA.

Because of that experience at nine years, I decided I needed to do things differently this time. I started and ended my days on my knees. I did an Eleventh Step daily. I called my sponsor every day. I talked to another alcoholic every day. I stayed in touch with the women I sponsor. I told them, "I'm not gone yet just because I just stepped down from my service commitment as the Area 23 Southern Indiana Chairperson." I was blessed to help with the transition of the new chairperson. I also finished my work on an Ad-Hoc Committee for Area 23.

Today I still go to at least three meetings a week. I still put my hand out to the newcomer because I'm still "responsible." I don't do these things because I am Ms. AA. I do these things because complacency will get me drunk, and because I believe in my heart that anything I put before God I will lose. I know that if I don't guard my sobriety with all I have, I won't have it very much longer.

Lately, I've met so many people who had some time under their belt and went back out. I don't want that to be me. I try to keep in mind when I go to a meeting that the person sitting next to me may be hurting, no matter how much time they have. I had 22 years when my whole life was turned upside down. I needed my fellows in AA to hold me close and accountable. I'd like to thank the men and women in my AA community who walked the path with me and shared all their love as I began my new journey, and God for keeping me safe in the palm of his hand.

—Mary O., Brownsburg, Ind.

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**AA Grapevines Needed - Editions Date 2010 to 2015 - Donate to Green Bay Central Office Archives**

## **HIS FIRST MEETING & RUNNING OUT THE DOOR WAS AN ATTRACTIVE OPTON**

*Like a Duckling: At his first meeting, he was just about to leave before going in, when someone stopped him*

After 33 years of conducting the same drinking experiments, but expecting difference results, I found myself reluctantly entering the side door of a church with the sign, "Friends Of Bill W. meet here." Confused, I look at the piece of paper on which I had scribbled the address my soon-to-be-sponsor had given me. I wonderd who Bill W. was as I stood off to the side, preparing to bolt.

It seemed to me that I had made an honest attempt to attend an AA meeting and with the thought of leaving right then and there, which appealed to my diseased thinking, I started to walk away. Fortunately, someone was approaching and got my attention with, "Hey ... You're not going to leave before the miracle happens ... Are you?" It was Bob, the man who would become my sponsor. I asked him where the meeting was since it was clear that this was the place where some guy named Bill was having a church gathering or something. He smiled at me and said, "You're at the right place. Bill W. is the co-founder of AA." Well, that was stupid, I thought. Why not just put AA on the door? I would find out later.

Fortunately, I stuck around the rooms long enough to eventually understand the concept of anonymity. But that night, being the new guy, I was catapulted back in time to when I was in grade school and that old feeling rushed over me as Bob led me through the door. "What will they think of me?" I wondered. Bob told me the same thing my mother told me back then, "It'll be OK."

I didn't have a clue nor know where to start but I knew one for certain: Drinking was no longer the solution; it was the problem. But what to do about it? I had tried everything. This was the last place I wanted to end up. But somehow, with those words, Bob had cleared a tiny path of hope through the field of chaos that was my state of mind. I remember nearly tripping on his steps as we made our way to an open table.

Like a duckling following its mother to water, I did not leave Bob's side all evening. I sat in my chair as the meeting began, and heard the chairperson ask if there were any newcomers. I looked at my sponsor puzzled as he gave me a look. I took it to mean: raise your hand if you want our help. And so I did, and with the applause from everyone in the room as I declared my membership—that I was an alcoholic—I felt that I had done the right thing for the first time in a long time. It was an enormous feeling of emancipation. I had taken Step One right then and there and I was home. It was like someone had taken the shackles of denial off my hands and feet. I was free at last. I understood I would not have to take a drink if I didn't want to. By declaring I was an alcoholic that night, I no longer had anything or anyone to hide from—including myself. I no longer hid in the shadows. By admitting my powerlessness, I stepped forward from the darkness and into the light.

That was December 2006. It's funny that when I was looking at all those people that night, especially those at the chairperson's table, they all seemed so important to me. They seemed omnipotent. Something I knew I wasn't. As it turned out, I chaired that meeting and many others later on.

Now I realize that some of them didn't have that much time at all. The guy from whom I took over the meeting—to whom I had accorded almost presidential status—had only three months more than me. I think of that expression, "A watched clock tells no time." When we focus on time, it seems to stand still. But when we go into action in the program of AA, one day at a time, time seems to fly. Today, it's fun to be sober. Maybe that's why they say, "Time flies when you are having fun."

—Matt S., Buffalo Grove, Ill.

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[www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org)

## **FINDING TURTLES**

*Like the treasures of the sea, happiness comes when he's not busy looking for it*

E-For many years, my wife and I have vacationed in Puerto Escondido, a surfing and fishing town in Mexico. I always tried to curb my drinking there, but always failed. During a trip in December 2005 I overheard a friend, David, who I knew was in AA, mention to another friend that he was going to a "meeting," and I asked him if I could attend. That was the beginning of my sober life.

Now when I come to Puerto, I attend meetings and go swimming with my AA friends. Some of us have extended our swims along the coast for up to an hour or more each day, primarily for exercise, but we find the beauty and the sea life to be an added bonus.

I recently realized that in all my years of swimming in the ocean, I have never seen a turtle when I was purposely looking for one. They always seem to appear below me when I'm focused on something else. When we swim in the ocean, we're watching out for small fishing boats that might not see us moving slowly in the water. We are constantly paying attention to the location of rocks that are covered with spiny sea urchins and noticing the currents and the waves and how they affect our progress. But mostly we're enjoying swimming and watching out for our fellow swimmers. Occasionally we are delighted to see the rare turtle, manta ray or dolphin.

In the years before I started my sobriety, I looked for happiness everywhere, especially in a bottle. I never found happiness when I looked for it then, any more than I find turtles when I'm searching for them today. Happiness and contentment are a part of my life as a result of working the Steps of AA and practicing each day what I've learned in the program, beginning with acceptance.

Happiness today appears without my looking for it. It comes when I'm living my life a day at a time, putting one foot (or arm) in front of the other, helping my fellow travelers and keeping an eye out for rocks or other obstructions in front of me. When I swim, I swim to exercise and enjoy the company of friends; I do not expect results. When I find something special or beautiful during a swim, I give thanks for that moment, share it with a friend and continue on. I have found that if I try to "hold on" to seeing a turtle by swimming above it, it will swim away, sometimes with amazing speed. The same thing applies in my daily life. I try to appreciate the many wonderful experiences of sobriety without trying to hold on to them and make them last longer. Happiness is not the goal. For me, it's the result of living life well. It comes without effort when I'm doing the right thing, staying sober and being grateful with my fellow AAs.

—Peter S., Geyserville, Calif.

[www.aagrapevine.org/feature/35430](http://www.aagrapevine.org/feature/35430)

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### **In a Child's Room**

*The day HP took a dad's eyes off the wall and directed them to the bottle in his hand*

It was December 5, 2006, the day before my last drink. Drunk once more with the same amount of resolve as the day before, I sat burdened with remorse at the desk in my home office. I was 50 years old, going on 18. This would be the year that my alcoholism had finally introduced me to myself: a selfish good-for-nothing drunk who couldn't stop drinking. Life was passing me by, I thought. I had become a coward who was too scared to live and too scared to die.

Already fortified, I reached for the knockout blow, a half pint of whiskey I had hidden in the bottom drawer of my desk. Before drawing on my reserve pint, I gazed around the room that used to be my eldest son's bedroom. Memories of simpler times flooded my mind as I stared at the footballs, baseballs and soccer balls on the wallpaper. He's long gone and grown up now. The brick of realization that my time with him was wasted and lost suddenly struck a mighty blow. Tears began to fill my eyes, as I wept and wondered. I started to feel sorry for myself.

What have I done? I thought. Look at me! That wallpaper symbolized at that moment the price I had paid for my drinking. It also symbolized a time when I was full of the joy of living; life seemed to have purpose back then. I was this adoring, caring father who was blessed to have the first-born son in my family, with another child on the way. But look at me now! I said. Suddenly I was overcome with rage.

I uncorked the final bottle that would do the trick, and with God's grace, the last one I would ever need to put in my mouth. A strange thing happened the moment I chugged that last bit and slammed the bottle on the desktop. My eyes were led to the label where it read, "80 percent alcohol by volume." It suddenly became so clear: Alcohol. That's what was the matter. That's what happened to my life!

Instinctively I slid out of my chair and to my knees where I wept a prayer to God, my Higher Power. I was done and I think he knew it. That was my spiritual awakening. The next day, for the first time I had no desire to pick up a drink. I had awoken from many a hangover fully knowing that at some point I'd be drinking. But on December 6, it was different. God had done for me what I couldn't do for myself. The obsession was removed.

I took to the life-saving program of Alcoholics Anonymous like a duck to water. The Twelve Steps became my steps back to freedom, a freedom I had left for a "liquid lie." The joy and wonderment of living are with me again.

—Matt S., Buffalo Grove, Ill.

[www.aagrapevine.org/feature/37329](http://www.aagrapevine.org/feature/37329)

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### **A New Kind of Love**

*In sobriety, she learned how to love herself and others*

I'm sitting at the base of Greylock Mountain, in Atlanta, Idaho. It's very quiet and I have the gift of this opportunity to contemplate. Soon, I will have my three-year sobriety birthday. It doesn't sound like long, but it's not been easy for me.

I am one who has had to work at it. It took lots of changes, transformations, experiences to get here. It's been worth it, though. My heart is beating a sober rhythm. I feel so clear and am filled with gratitude. I am experiencing a love I have never known and it truly is grace.

I've done a lot of things in my drinking days that I'm not proud of. Even sitting here, in Atlanta, I have memories of these woods—falling on the way back to the cabin, of conversations in the bar that are embarrassing to remember, of all that beer breath I woke up with.

I used to drive up here while drinking. It's a miracle that I am not in prison for all the drunk driving I did. I can see that now. Back then, I couldn't see a thing except how to get drunk and stay drunk, and sober up enough just to work, until I couldn't even do that anymore.

Walking into these rooms of AA when I was lost, blind, and when I was at the end, was the best thing I ever did for me.

As I sit here in the mountains, away from the city, away from meetings, away from fellowship, I notice that this love, this peace and serenity I feel is due to finally learning how to care for myself. I am able to sit still and breathe mountain air. I can have a clear, coherent conversation with my friend. I can live and function on a daily basis. I can do all these things without a beer by my side.

Most importantly, I learned how to love. This love is not the slurry, blurry, mushy, crazy, on a buzz, calling people at two in the morning love. This is a love that comes from a place of peace and serenity inside. It is not clouded by alcohol. It is inner truth. It is clear. It is still. It is silence. It is a love I have never known, and I'm so excited for more! I am beginning to experience some happiness.

My heart is full and resonates like a drum to the rhythm of a sober walk. It's because of the program of AA that I am here. For this, I continue to buy a ticket for a seat in this place! What a great ride!

—Brenda M., Boise, Idaho.

[www.aagrapevine.org/feature/3093](http://www.aagrapevine.org/feature/3093)

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### **A Rabbit Walked Into a Bar**

The speaker was going on and on. A man in the fifth row stood up and walked out. As the speaker was winding up, the man returned. After the meeting, the speaker asked the man where he went. "I went for a haircut," he said. "A haircut? Why didn't you get a haircut before the meeting started?" The man replied, "I didn't need a haircut before the meeting started.

[www.aagrapevine.org/samples/rabbitsample.php](http://www.aagrapevine.org/samples/rabbitsample.php)

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# Unity

\* Indicates an online detailed flyer or registration form at [www.greenbayaa.org](http://www.greenbayaa.org)

## ANNUAL MOOSE & GOOSE

### CORRECTIONS LITERATURE FUND RAISER\*

Saturday, April 11, 2015  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
349 N. Main St. Seymour, WI 54165  
5:00 PM Social time, 6:00 PM Dinner, 7:30 PM Speakers  
For General Information & Donations Contact:  
Rolland G. (920)722-5417, Dan L. (715) 851-1970  
Terry W. (715) 526-6758  
email: [slowhand1@frontiernet.net](mailto:slowhand1@frontiernet.net)

### CHILI COOK-OFF\*

SATURDAY APRIL 18TH 2015  
At the 218 Club  
218 Onieda Street  
Green Bay, WI 54303  
Noon - 4 PM  
Doors open at 12 Noon,  
Contest starts at 1 PM, Judging at 2PM

### 10TH ANNUAL SPRING FLING\*

SATURDAY APRIL 25, 2015  
5:00pm-Fellowship, 5:30pm-GSR Sharing  
6pm-Pot Luck Dinner, 7:00pm-Speakers  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
2901-13th Street Menominee, MI 49858

### CLINTONVILLE INTERGROUP\*

SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2015  
Christus Lutheran Church  
120 N Main St  
Clintonville, WI 54929  
Registration-5:00 pm, Dinner-6:00 pm

### AREA 74 SPRING CONFERENCE\*

MAY 15-17, 2015  
Radisson Hotel & Conference Center  
2040 Airport Drive  
Green Bay, WI 54313  
Kimberly S. (920) 592-9337

### GOPHER STATE ROUNDUP XLII\*

"THE COURAGE TO CHANGE"  
MAY 22-24, 2015  
DoubleTree Bloomington Hotel  
Bloomington, Minnesota  
Registration Fee: \$15  
ASL Interpreters are furnished for Speaker Meetings  
[www.gopherstateroundup.org](http://www.gopherstateroundup.org)

### NORTHEAST WISC. TRI-STATE ROUND UP\*

JUNE 12-14, 2015  
Radisson Hotel & Conference Center  
2040 Airport Drive  
Green Bay, WI 54313  
Cost: \$25 (after June 1st - \$30)  
Round Up Saturday Banquet - \$25  
Registration forms available - Online & Central Office

### SEYMOUR INTERGROUP\*

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2015  
Emmanuel Lutheran Church  
349 N. Main Street  
Seymour, WI 54165  
Doors Open-4:00pm, Dinner-6pm, Meeting-7:15

## CIRCLE CITY ROUND UP\*

JULY 17-19 2015  
Crowne Plaza Indianapolis Airport  
2501 South High School Rd.  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46241  
Registration \$25 (\$35 w/banquet)  
Marcy (812) 241-6357  
[circlecityroundup@yahoo.com](mailto:circlecityroundup@yahoo.com)

## 2015 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS\*

JULY 2-5, 2015 - Atlanta, Georgia  
With the theme "80 Years - Happy, Joyous and Free."  
Pre-registration deadline: May 12, 2015  
Pre-registration fee: \$100  
For more information: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

## 218 SUMMER PICNIC\*

SATURDAY AUGUST 15TH 2015  
At Murphy Park Pavilion  
1627 Dousman  
Green Bay, WI 54303  
11 AM - 4 PM

# Service

## HOTLINE VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY NEEDED

Volunteers needed to take 12th step calls from the Hotline.  
2+ years of sobriety is required.  
Training meeting on Thursday, March 26th-6:30 PM at the Central Office.  
Betsy N. (920) 362-9397

## Green Bay Area Central Office

Central Office Volunteers Needed:  
Mon-Fri: 10:00 am - 1:30 pm or 1:30 pm - 5:00 pm  
Saturday: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Betsy N. at (920) 362-9397  
1270 Main St. #102, Green Bay, WI 54302

## Bridging the Gap\*

1270 Main Street #102  
Green Bay, WI 54302  
[bridging@greenbayaa.org](mailto:bridging@greenbayaa.org)  
[www.greenbayaa.org/service.html](http://www.greenbayaa.org/service.html)  
Introduce newly released inmates to AA  
Volunteers with minimum one-year sobriety & sponsor

## Volunteers Needed Serving Brown County Jails\*

Help Carry the Message Behind Bars!  
Corrections Volunteers Needed  
For Authorization Forms  
Contact: Tim T. (920) 227-3156 or [tetoepel@aol.com](mailto:tetoepel@aol.com)

# Donate

## GREEN BAY AREA CENTRAL OFFICE

1270 Main St. Suite 102  
Green Bay, WI 54302  
(920) 432-2600  
[www.aagreenbay.com](http://www.aagreenbay.com)

## AA DISTRICT 01 TREASURER

PO Box 632 Green Bay, WI 54305

## AA AREA 74 TREASURER

PO Box 84 Paradise, MI 49768  
[www.area74.org](http://www.area74.org)

## AA GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE (GSO)

Grand Central Station  
PO Box 459 New York, NY 10163  
(212) 870-3400  
[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

## --NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED--

Are you or someone you know interested in creating this monthly newsletter?

Learn more at:

Monthly GSR Meetings: 6:30 pm, Second Thursday, Green Bay Area Central Office - 1270 Main St. #102, Green Bay, WI 54302  
District Chairperson Tom Y. [dcmdistrict01@greenbayaa.org](mailto:dcmdistrict01@greenbayaa.org)