

NEW FRONTIERS

February 2004

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER FOR ALL A.A. MEMBERS OF
WESTERN NEW YORK AND THE NIAGARA FRONTIER
We request that this newsletter be kept within the Fellowship to insure anonymity.

Mental Obsession

On Dec. 7th 2002 I returned again to the tables of A.A. This time as humbled by booze as ever. I'd had periods away from drink previously, through this wonderful fellowship, but never had I been fully "clean". The thing that held my interest all along was how I related so much to Dr. Silkworth's description of the phenomenon of craving. That surely was my experience while drinking, but I didn't believe I had any obsession for alcohol. Times would get tough; I knew a few drinks would help, so I drank. Where is the obsession in that? Of course it never turned out to be just a few drinks but I never spent much time in the thought of a drink for it to be considered any type of an obsession.

I learned enough in my previous trips in and out of the doors of A.A. to know I needed to take some action this time. Specifically, get a home group and get involved in the operation of that group, and get a sponsor who could be a guide through the 12-step program outlined in the book "Alcoholics Anonymous". By taking this action I was able to eclipse my previously elusive 3-month goal.

It was "Fat Tuesday" and I started thinking about drinking. It followed me around for about 8 hours. At about 10pm I got a call from a friend who was too drunk to drive and I had to go pick her up in Allentown, the site of my spiritual, emotional and physical "bottom". We got into an argument on the way home and now the obsession is so overwhelming I decided to do what I should have done 8 hours before, call a sober friend. I called a friend who had about the same amount of sobriety time as me. He was in the middle of eating and was very little help and then unexpectedly a recovered man with 17 years of sobriety walked in the door. My friend handed him the phone. I told him about my day and how I'd been thinking about drinking for over 8 hours and he said, "Wow, normal people don't do that!" That wasn't what I was looking for him to say. I was looking for an immediate answer to the problem. I hung up the phone and thought about what he said, "normal people don't do that". Shortly afterward I realized he's right, normal people don't do that. I don't understand "normal" drinkers any more than anyone of you reading this, but I do know they don't think of drinking for an extended period of time. They either drink or if they have good enough reason not to, they don't. In hindsight I realize that was the day I accepted the mental aspect of my decease, the mental obsession.

Anonymous

“Trusting God”

taken from “The Man In The Mirror,” by Patrick Morley

Until you have been up against the wall, totally backed into the corner, all your resources expended, no more ideas from your own ingenuity, no more wise counsel from friends ... until you have been totally exhausted and without hope ... not just for a moment - but for weeks and months or even years on end; not until then will trusting God ever move entirely from abstract to personal. You know it in part, but until you come to the point that you feel you will die unless God shows you some compassion, only then will you ever trust him completely. Once you pass through this threshold of His grace, you will have incredible power to overcome anxiety ... you have seen the hands of God reach down, responding to your faith.

Submitted by Paul C. ~ Thruway Group

Alcoholism

Progressive, Incurable and Deadly

Many hypotheses were formulated to define the nature of my illness. Some samples are the aberrant chemical makeup of the body resulting in a physical susceptibility, the escapist theory or numerous other idiosyncrasies. Simply stated, I have an allergy, which, left untreated, is fatal.

In the beginning, my use of alcohol seemed innocent enough, a few beers as I lightheartedly drifted through life. I was a fun loving guy, full of childish pranks. The euphoric feeling that alcohol produced was exhilarating! Alcohol was my good friend; it brightened my life and enhanced my personality.

My drinking was progressing at a fast pace now. The sense of comfort and relief that alcohol used to bring to me had changed. My days were filled with feelings of restlessness and depression. Alcohol had become a necessity in my daily routine. Then came blackouts and trouble, family & friends avoided me. My alcoholic cravings were becoming more and more noticeable, everyone and everything was unimportant; the temperate and social drinker was dead. A physic change occurred, and my tolerance level increased to an unbelievable height. How did this phenomenon transpire?

I changed drinks; made promises, set time limits, - all to no avail. I tried to recapture those “happy days”, only to find that alcohol dominated my every decision. Invisible gremlins inhabited my daily life. I was terrified and hopelessly addicted to alcohol. I lost friends, jobs and finally my family and my freedom. I tried desperately to have one drink and found myself miserably drunk again, blackouts marred my memory, and alcohol was my master now. Alcoholism paralyzed my thinking process. I was defeated.

AA was suggested to me in my stay at the “Old Terrace House”, my humiliation was complete. Nights in the missions, being homeless, and my introverted thinking convinced me my life was a mess. I was warmly greeted at AA meetings, but I still felt uncomfortable. Denial was blocking my thoughts and actions. I reluctantly attended meetings as I was told, and soon I saw my life beginning to change. I accepted a Higher Power for my spiritual deficiencies, and the alcoholic fog began to lift. I was also told to correct my thinking by social & physical activities to release my nervous energy. I will be forever thankful for those people who, in my early years of sobriety, guided me in my recovery. I discovered ‘The Doctor’s Opinion’, read it thoroughly and I understood the nature of my illness. I was offered a new way of life, one of honesty and sincerity of purpose. I am sober today by the grace of God and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Yours in the Fellowship, John H. ~ Sunday Morning Breakfast

ARE WE ALKYS REALLY SENSITIVE PEOPLE???

As I sit around AA tables they are sounding more and more like group therapy sessions with AA members telling each other that its OKAY that they drank, and welcome back. I actually sat at an AA table where a young lady made the statement it was "OK" to go back out drinking...as everyone at the table had done it too. There were three AA members that were at the table, one with 21 years one with 18 years and one with 17 years. None of which had found it necessary to pick up a drink from the first day that they had stumbled into AA, and they all agreed that it had been their "Higher Power" that got them and kept them SOBER!!!! Then the AA member that is "coming back" expounds about how he/she knows exactly what they did wrong also just what caused them to drink again. It always entailed just how sensitive they were; of course it was always caused by somebody or something other then themselves. Oh yes, they know exactly what they have to do to not pick up a drink again!!!!

The really SAD and Devastating part is...NONE of it has anything to do with "Not Picking Up The First Drink" or the AA Program of getting and staying "SOBER ONE DAY AT A TIME"!!!!

When I was about six (6) months sober, and I was sitting at a table, you know, that's when AA members get to a meeting an hour early, you know so they have time to talk to their sponsors and other AA members, the "Meeting before the Meeting" when some new comer starts to talk about what his counselor had said about just how sensitive he was, and that he had to go into a half-way house to maintain his Sobriety. That was about all he got to say .A very well respected "Old Timer" said to us; "Yeah we are really sensitive all right. Hmmm let's see ... we break into the kids piggybank steal all the money, then go into our wives purses, steal all of the rent and food money; and when she tries to stop us, we punch her out too. YEAH...WE ARE REAL SENSITIVE...ALL RIGHT!" Then continued with; "Lets see now, your counselor wants you to go into a half-way house to maintain your sobriety, with you that would mean that you have to quit your job, because you are lucky enough to still have one, give up any and all responsibility for supporting your wife, kids and yourself and you're going to do that right? Yeah we are SENSITIVE-all right!!!"

A close friend and long-time sober & active member of AA, Frank S., told me of an incident that transpired in the AA Clubhouse in Las Vegas while he lived there. Frank was sitting having coffee with an "Old Timer" at the club that just so happened to be the SPONSOR for the fellow in this story... This newcomer was about two (2) weeks SOBER and had been sleeping in his car in the club parking lot and cleaning up in clubs rest rooms. He came in and sat down with Frank and his sponsor and began by saying how Spiritual it was for the Members of the club to let him sleep in his car and use the club to clean up in. He asks his sponsor what he thought he ought to do next? His sponsor said; "I think you ought to get a job!" The newcomer said; "Gee, I look lousy! His sponsor said; "Then get a Lousy Job!" What we really are is..."SELF CENTERED, IRRESPONSIBLE, CHILDISH ALCOHOLICS" consumed by our ALLERGY TO and MENTAL OBSESSION FOR ALCOHOL. It's all in the "BIG BOOK"! I came to believe years ago that the AA way of doing things was to get Alcoholics back to being a useful, productive members of society as soon as possible, not make them more irresponsible then they already are. Also that each and every Alky was "RESPONSIBLE" for his/her own recovery. GOD BLESS, I PRAY that your road to "Sobriety", is without as many pitfalls as mine!

Respectfully submitted Glen S. - Matt Talbot Group

Step Two: Came to believe a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could will these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn't there. Our human resources, as marshaled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly.

Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a *Power greater than ourselves*. Obviously.

Alcoholics Anonymous ~ page 44-45

When we became alcoholics, crushed by self-imposed crisis we could not postpone or evade, we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn't.

Alcoholics Anonymous ~ page 53

Few indeed are the practicing alcoholics who have any idea how irrational they are, or, seeing their irrationality, can bear to face it. For example, some will be willing to term themselves "problem drinkers," but cannot endure the suggestion that they are in fact mentally ill.

They are abetted in this blindness by a world which does not understand the difference between sane drinking and alcoholism. "Sanity" is defined as "soundness of mind." Yet no alcoholic, soberly analyzing his destructive behavior, whether the destruction fell on the dining-room furniture or his own moral fiber, can claim "soundness of mind" for himself.

As Bill Sees It ~ page 141

When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon The Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did.

The Wright Brothers' almost childish faith that they could build a machine which would fly was the mainspring of their accomplishment. Without that, nothing could have happened. We agnostics and atheists were sticking to the idea that self-sufficiency would solve our problems. When others showed us that "God-sufficiency" worked with them, we began to feel like those who had insisted the Wrights would never fly.

We were seeing another kind of flight, a spiritual liberation from this world, people who rose above their problems.

Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 52-53, 55

Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Where does AA get its direction? Who runs it? ... the group has a so-called rotating committee, very sharply limited in its authority. In no sense whatever can its members govern or direct the group. They are servants. ... The committee gives no spiritual advice, judges no one's conduct, issues no orders. Theirs (elder statesmen) is the quite opinion, the sure knowledge and humble example that resolve a crisis. When sorely perplexed, the group inevitably turns to them for advice. They become the voice of the group conscience; ... They do not drive by mandate; they lead by example. This is the experience which has led us to the conclusion that our group conscience, well-advised by its elders, will be in the long run wiser than any single leader.

12 & 12 pages 134-135

*BUFFALO CENTRAL OFFICE
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
(716) 853-0388
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BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14203
Schedule on line at ny-aa.org
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FEBRUARY 2004

MEETING CHANGES:

New Meeting; BACKDOOR GROUP, Thursday's, Dunkirk, 8:30 PM, 117 Leopard Street, Open Discussion.

SATURDAY NITE SOBER; Dunkirk, now meets at 8:00 PM, St Elisabeth Ann Setton Church, 328 Washington Ave., corner of 4th.

Half & Half Group; Thursday's in Fredonia, **NO LONGER MEETS.**

A STRONG DESIRE, Monday's at 9:00 AM, at High Hopes Club, 2969 Bailey, **NO LONGER MEETS.**

NORTH JAVA SUNDAY, meets at 8:00 Pm at St. Nicholas Convent on Route 98. Closed Meeting.

WE CHOOSE LIFE; Wed. at 5:30 PM @ St. John's Grace Episcopal Church, 51 Colony Court, **NO LONGER MEETS.**

NEW MEETING; WOMEN'S BOOK STUDY GROUP, closed discussion, Thursday's at 7:15 PM, Southern Erie Clinical Services, 4390 Quinby Dr.

TRI COUNTY GROUP is now an open speaker the last Saturday of the month. St. Joseph's Church, East Main St., Gowanda.

NEEDS SUPPORT, RIDE SOBER GROUP; meets 9:00 AM Saturday's, Victory Assembly Church at 688 Tonawanda Street, across from the fire hall in Riverside.

LOVE GROUP; Friday's, 1:00 PM, St. Michael's Parish, 651 Washington Street, well attended but has a **Need for Members.**

LAST DAY'S FELLOWSHIP, Friday's, 7:00 PM, Wind Ministries Motor Club Coffee House, Corner of Bailey & Clinton, **NEEDS SUPPORT.**

PLEASE NOTE

- Twenty-Four Hours a Day & The Little Red Book - The cost of these publications are now \$10.
- **FYI**, any and all events in our mailings must feature an **A.A. meeting or workshop**. Example: a speaker followed by a dinner or dance.
- **MOBILE MEETING- ARE YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, HOMEBOUND OR CONFINED IN A NURSING HOME AND UNABLE TO GET TO A MEETING? IF SO, AND YOU WANT A MEETING BROUGHT TO YOU, CALL CENTRAL OFFICE AND LEAVE YOUR NAME AND NUMBER, SOMEONE WILL GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS.**

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:

- ~ Feb. 1, **Central Committee Meeting**, 7 pm, 651 Washington Street, St. Michael's Parish. (Hosted by Lakeshore).
- ~ Feb. 1, **Corrections Committee Meeting**, 6:00 PM, 651 Washington Street, St. Michael's Parish.
- ~ Feb. 12, **International AA Women's Conference**, large planning meeting. Thursday, 6:00 pm. Maryvale Presbyterian Church, 425 Maryvale Drive, Cheektowaga.
- ~ March 14, **General Service Assembly**, 1 PM, Hamburg Town Hall, 5999 South Park Ave., Hamburg. (Hosted by Cazenovia Group)
- ~ Feb. 19, **New Frontiers Committee**, 7:00 PM. St. Michaels Parish Center, Electric And Warsaw, Lackawanna, before the Victory meeting.
- ~ Feb. 13, **Treatment Facilities Committee**, 9 PM, after the Ironhorse Group, St. Paul's United Church, 49 Indian Church Rd., South Buffalo.
- ~ Feb. 25, **Ellicott Group**, will be celebrating its 24th Anniversary. 608 William Street, 8 PM. Refreshments will be served. All are welcome.
- ~ Feb. 28 **Archives Committee Meeting**, Archives are still available for group functions or Anniversaries, with 30 days notice.
- ~ Feb. 26, **63rd Buffalo Fall Convention Meeting**, 2nd Meeting, Thursday, 7:00 PM @ Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1080 Main Street, Buffalo.

COMING EVENTS

- ~ Feb. 14, **Love Group 4th Anniversary Valentines Dance**, Doors open at 6:00 PM, Speaker at 7:00 PM, followed by food, fun and dancing. \$3.00. St. Michaels (downtown), 651 Washington Street, parking in rear.
- ~ February 19-22, **40th Annual International AA Women's Conference**, Buffalo Convention Center. Flyers available at the office.
- ~ Feb. 23, **Kensington Discussion** will be celebrating their 34th group Anniversary. Speaker and eating meeting. Please bring a dish to pass. Cleveland Hill Lutheran Church @ 7:45 PM.
- ~ April 4, **Serenity Groups 41st Anniversary Breakfast**, Holiday Inn, 1881 Niagara Falls Blvd., Amherst. 9:30 am. Breakfast followed about 11:00 AM by speaker. \$10.00 pre - sale tickets.

2nd STEP: "Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

2nd TRADITION: " For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority- a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

2nd CONCEPT: To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of AA- the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staff, committees, and executives- with a traditional "Right of Decision."

PLEASE SUPPORT THE ENVELOPE SYSTEM

... Yours in the Fellowship of the Spirit...

Terry Bateman.... Executive Secretary

Buffalo Central Committee

February 1, 2004

John opened the meeting at 7:10PM, with a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer. Norm-Lovejoy Group read the Purpose of the Central Committee. Tom-Lovejoy Group read the traditions. Motion to dispense with reading of last months' minutes, motion by Mike, Abbott Men's, second, John- Sunday Morning Breakfast. Welcome to new Central Committee members. Joe S-Living Sober, Norm-Lovejoy, Lynn-Rise N Shine, Gene S. -Journey Groups.

27 Groups Attended: **District #1:** Journey, Main and High, New West Side, Rise & Shine, Sunday Niter's, Sunrise Court **District #2:** Living Sober, North Buffalo **District #3:** Abbott Men's Disc., Any Lengths, Cazenovia, Courage, Rainbow, Southtown, Sunday Morning Breakfast, Victory **District #4:** Action, Holland. **District #5:** Big Book Lockport, Nia County Rep. **District # 6:** Lakeshore. **District #7:** Buffalo, Casting, Ellicott, Fresh Start, Let Go & Let God, Lovejoy, Spirit of Hope

Charmaine spoke on how we were going to explain Traditions and how to implement them. She asked Mike from Abbott Men's Discussion group to discuss what they meet to him. Mike discussed: AA traditions have taught us "What did you do for AA today?" and to give back to AA.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ENVELOPE SYSTEM: Terry B. report for January \$1,322.00.

STEERING COMMITTEE: Mark reported acceptance & recommendations of the unofficial audit by Patti S. Recommend that body do the same. Need to have the committee for the move report their numbers. Convention Committee of Past Chairperson share their experience with present chairperson.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Patti reports: Terry & I have been working to create an efficient financial system for AA. In the process mistakes were uncovered. AA has long needed an accurate and professional system for managing finances. With my background and Terry's willingness, we are currently developing a system which, will be accurate and easily managed. Please be patient with us as we work for the good of AA. In AA, we are encouraged to live in the solution. When considering the financial issues please support us concentrating on ways to improve things rather than criticizing them. Our common welfare comes first personal recovery depends on AA unity. As the Financial secretary, in March, I will work with our Accountant to provide AA with the result of an official audit. Anyone concerned, wishing to speak with me should do so before or after the Steering and Central Committee Meetings.

An unofficial audit was conducted of the 2003 revenue and expenses with the following findings comparing this to year-end 2002:

Central Office: 1) 2003 expenses exceeded revenue by a negative (-9052.27) or 10% of the income. 2) Income dropped (-\$5545.41) or 5.8% from 2002 to 2003 with expenses increasing \$4341.73 or 4.6%

Treatment: 1) Income exceeded expense by \$261.23 or 6.5% of the income.

2) Income increased \$210.22 or 5.5% from 2002 to 2003 with expenses increasing \$465.67 or 14%

Correction: 1) Income exceeded expenses by \$486.39 or by 12.5% of income. 2) Income increased \$627.37 or 19.2% from 2002 to 2003 with expenses increasing \$10.04 or 0.03%

TREATMENT: Tom reports: 4th Tues. 1:00pm needs coverage V.A.M.C. Central Committee tabled motion to greenlight the 12th step call at E.C.M.C. until the reps come back next month to vote. Lakeshore Lighthouse as suspended Tues. at 1pm meeting. Reflections in Lkpt. Mem. Hospital changed meeting room. BTG calls 10-15 range per month. Jamestown BTG is receiving calls. There is no information from Niagara County, they do not report to Bill L.

CORRECTIONS: Bob L reports: NY State has issued new application forms for new applicant interested in attending AA meetings at State Prison. Please call Bob L. for application (716- 876-1932). Help is needed to fulfill our commitments at Wende (Friday evening & Sat. afternoon) and Collins 2 (Tuesday evening) For info please call Andrew K (716-652-6294) and Bob L

SCREENERS: No report

CENTRAL OFFICE: Terry reports: AA info: 251, 12-Step: 7, ALANON: 9 Visitors: 53 Volunteers: 7. The office still has less than one months' operating expenses. I have cut back in every area in the office I can think of and still function efficiently. **WE NEED HELP!** Explanation to the corrected financial forms, First when Patti was reviewing, we discovered that the health insurance was registered twice in Nov. that was removed and that was the form that was mailed out. After that Father Baker Group said their totals and mine didn't match. I discovered that in May the contribution was registered but not added into the year to date column. This launched another complete overhaul in the group contributions. All the invoices came out and a complete year form created. There were other corrections made. The new form is easier to follow for groups, as it shows each month contributions. The downside is it takes more paper and is too costly to mail each month. I would make a recommendation to mail this quarterly, rather than each month. They are still available each month at the Central Committee Meeting. You are the groups; it is your decision. Is everyone receiving the Mailings? If you don't receive them by the 1st of the month contact Terry.

PIC : No report

NEW FRONTIER: No report.

2004 FALL CONVENTION: Jim reports next meeting on March 25th 7:00pm at 1080 Main St.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE: Pete reports NY State Convention will be 7/23-7/25 2004 at the Holiday Inn.

COURTESY REPORTS

ARCHIVES: Tom reports the Archives will be at the Women's Convention and the Day of Sharing, Lakeshore.

GSA: no report

Old Business: Joanne stated that Women's Convention needs volunteers and that men are really buying up the raffle tickets.

New Business: Al- Lakeshore District 6 motions to have \$100.00 given to the Day of Sharing. Motioned denied after representatives voted.

Charmaine-Steering Committee: Motion for past committee convention chairs give advisement to present and future convention chairpersons. Bill H. Holland seconds.

Motion to close: Pete Lockport #1 second, Mike Abbott Men's Discussion.

Thank you for the 7th Tradition.

Meeting closes at 7:50pm with prayer.

*** Coffeemakers for March-Williamsville and April-Cazenovia*****

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve AA. Kim E.

Heard at a meeting:

You don't have to go to prison to do time, you can do it in your own mind.

~~I didn't get my life back in this program ... I~~
got a life for the first time.

Sometimes the smartest person at the table is the one suffering the most.

It's not what I KNOW; It's what I DO.

Once you've been in AA awhile, you can be honest and truthful because you've stopped doing things you are ashamed of.

RULE 62

A good exercise for the heart is to bend down and help another up.

Life is what you make of it ... kinda like Play-Doh.

Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.

Every time I drank over my problems, I'd come to and my problems had had puppies.
Joanna W.

But For The Grace of God

"Hey, buddy! Can you tell me where I can catch a bus?" The question came from a somewhat unkempt man who accosted me on the street. I was on my way to a mid-morning AA meeting and running a little late. My first impulse was to say, "No, I can't." Talking to street people does not come easily to me. Instead, I responded, "Maybe. Where do you want to go?"

The man repeated his question. "Where can I catch a bus?" I looked him over briefly. His appearance was that of a person who needed a little personal hygiene and whose two possessions in life were the clothes on his back and the desire to drink.

"Look," I said, "If you go down that street to the stop light, you'll be on W ___ Street. I'm sure there must be a bus stop near that intersection."

He stepped closer and tottered a bit. "I was in Viet Nam. Didja know that?"

"What a coincidence. So was I," was my reply.

"I knew that," he said. Then he leaned forward. "I'm drunk."

"Amazing! I'm on my way to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting," I said. My thoughts raced. Did I want this guy in my car? Would I have to take him home? Would I have to sponsor a derelict for the rest of my life? It is amazing how fast I can project my future. Nevertheless, I asked him, "Would you like to come to an A.A. meeting?"

He stepped back and said, "No thanks. I just want to catch a bus." Then he turned and began to walk away. I suppose I should have gone after him and tried to reason with him.

"A new way of life," I could have said. "One day at a time. It works for me; it can work for you." But I didn't. I was rooted to the spot, speechless. Because, you see, I was watching me walk away. But for the Grace of God, there went I. Today, I have choices. When I was drinking, I didn't have options. Now I do. That anonymous man does not. He kept me sober that day.

When I finally arrived at the meeting, it was a gratitude meeting. I was deeply, profoundly grateful.

John P. ~ Nashville

Who's Sitting Next To You?

I know who you are. You are "X" who attends the ABC Meeting at the XYZ Club where AA's meet in Anywhere, USA. I saw you the other night at the eight o'clock meeting. I don't know how long you've been sober, but I know you've been coming around for a while because you spoke to a lot of people who knew you.

I wasn't one of them. You don't know who I am. I wandered into your meeting place alone the other night, a strange town, I got a cup of coffee, paid for it, and sat down by myself.

You didn't speak to me. Oh, you saw me. You glanced my way, but you didn't recognize me, so you quickly averted your eyes and sought out a familiar face.

I sat there through the meeting. It was okay, a slightly different format but basically the same kind of meeting as the one I go to at home. The topic was gratitude. You and your friends spoke about how much AA means to you. You talked about the camaraderie in your meeting place:

You said how much the people there had helped you when you first came through the door – how they extended the hand of friendship to make you feel welcome, and asked you to come back. And I wondered where they had gone, those nice people who made your entrance so welcoming and so comfortable.

You talked about how the newcomer is the lifeblood of AA. I agree, but I didn't say so. In fact, I didn't share in your meeting. I signed my name in the book that was passed around, but the chairperson didn't refer to it. He only called on those people in the room whom he knew.

So who am I? You don't know, because you didn't bother to find out. Although yours was a closed meeting, you didn't even ask if I belonged there.

It might have been my first meeting. I could have been full of fear and distrust, knowing AA wouldn't work any better than anything else I'd tried, and I would have left, convinced that I was right. I might have been suicidal, grasping at one last straw, hoping someone would reach out and pull me from the pit of loathing and self-pity from which, by myself, I could find no escape.

I might have been a student with a tape recorder in my pocket, assigned to write a paper on how AA works – someone who shouldn't have been permitted to sit there at all but who could have been directed to an open meeting to learn what I needed to know. Or I could have been sent by the courts, wanting to know more, but afraid to ask.

It happens that I was none of the above. I was just an ordinary drunk with a few years of sober living in AA who was traveling and was in need of a meeting. My only problem that night was that I'd been alone with my own mind too long. I just needed to touch base with my AA family. I know from past experience that I could have walked into your meeting place smiling, stuck out my hand to the first person I saw, and said, "Hi, my name is ---. I'm an alcoholic from ---."

If I'd felt like doing that, I probably would have been warmly welcomed. You would have asked me if I knew Old So-and-so from my state, or you might have shared a part of your drunkalog that occurred in my part of the country.

Why didn't I? I was hungry, lonely, and tired. The only thing missing was angry, but three out of four isn't a good place for me to be. So I sat silently through your meeting, and when it was over I watched enviously as all of you gathered in small groups, talking to one another the same way we do in my hometown. You and some of your friends were planning a meeting after the meeting at a nearby coffee shop. By this time I had been silent too long to reach out to you. I stopped by the bulletin board to read the notices there, kind of hanging around without being too obvious, hoping you might ask if I wanted to join you, but you didn't.

As I walked slowly across the parking lot to my car with the out-of-state license plates, you looked my way again. Our eyes met briefly and I mustered a smile. Again, you looked away. I buckled my seat belt, started the car, and drove to the motel where I was staying. As I lay in my bed waiting for sleep to come, I made a gratitude list. You were on it, along with your friends at the meeting place. I knew that you were there for me, and that I needed you far more than you needed me. I knew that if I had needed help, and had asked for it, you would have gladly given it. But I wondered ... what if I hadn't been able to ask?

I know who you are. Do you remember me?

Interested in receiving the New Frontiers?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Enclosed is a check or money order made payable to the AA Central Office earmarked the "New Frontiers" for \$ _____ for _____ copies.

Rates:

1	Copy	\$10.00	20 Copies	\$57.00
2	Copies	13.00	30 Copies	75.00
5	Copies	24.00	40 Copies	95.00
10	Copies	33.00	50 Copies	120.00
15	Copies	43.00	60 Copies	135.00

Mail to the Central Office:
845 Ellicott Square Building
295 Main Street
Buffalo, New York 14203-2412

IN MEMORIAM
Things We Can Not Change

Eugene B. – Tri-Step Group - 10 Years
Major A. – Cold Springs Group - 18 years
Frank B. (Fearless Frank) – Eternal Vigilance Group - 20+ years
Mark B. – East Amherst Group - 15 years
David W. – Remember When

Let's remember them and all the others who passed on in our prayers

Share your Experience, Strength and Hope.

Please submit your articles to Central Office by the 15th for next months issue.

E-Mail address: buffalooa@hotmail.com

New Frontiers committee meets the 3rd Thursday of every month - 7:00pm - St Michaels, corner of Warsaw & Electric in Lackawanna.

The Central Office of Western New York publishes the *New Frontiers* monthly. We are supported by your subscriptions and Central Office donations. The *New Frontiers* presents the experience and opinions of members of Alcoholics Anonymous on the disease of Alcoholism. The staff reserves the right to edit any article for clarity and length. Articles will not be returned. Opinions expressed here are not those of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply the endorsement by the Central Office of Western New York or Alcoholics Anonymous. (Exceptions: Quotations from ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS and other AA books and pamphlets are reprinted with permission of AA World Services, Inc. Articles reprinted with permission of AA Grapevine, Inc. Are subject to the GRAPEVINE copyright.)

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Amherst/Snyder

James S. 3m
 Tom R. 3m
 Patricia S. 3m
 Cindy M. 6m
 Joey C. 9m
 Laura G. 9m
 Cory S. 9m
 Matt L. 9m
 Jen R. 1y
 Ronald K. 1y
 Donald S. 2y
 Daniel K. 2y
 Tim G. 2y
 Lyn H. 2y
 Bill H. 3y
 MaryLou C. 3y
 Tom K. 3y
 Mark L. 4y
 Dave Z. 6y
 Dave Z. 6y
 Gary P. 7y
 James W. 7y
 Neil S. 8y
 Sharon L. 14y
 Bob G. 15y
 Dave H. 15y
 Jim C. 19y
 Jim S. 20y
 Beverly B. 21y
Cold Springs
 Willie H. 25y
Courage Group
 Julie S. 19y
 Beverly K. 21y
 Jane Marie B. 28y
Ellicott
 Robert R. 6y
Fireside
 Mike M. 3y
 Patty T. 4y
 Bret B. 5y
 Denise O. 6y
 Katie S. 10y
Fresh Start
 Connie W. 5y
 Tyron H. 11y
 Peter A. 19y
Giving
 Melissa M. 9m
Holland
 Cheryl M. 6m

Ironhorse

Danny A. 3m
 Colleen C. 3m
 Kimberly F. 1y
 Jerry L. 1y
 Bruce B. 6y
Journey
 Suzanne D. 9m
 Jocelyn 9m
Kenmore
 Don K. 3m
 Dan W. 2y
 Francine F. 7y
 John H. 15y
 Debie F. 16y
Lakeshore
 Mark S. 7
Living Sober
 David S. 1y
 Steve V. 1y
 Joe C. 4y
 Deana G. 4y
 Larry P. 17y
 Lyn W. 32y
Lovejoy
 Chuck Y. 3m
 Charlie S. 6m
 Dave B. 6m
 Carl D. 6m
North Buffalo
 Dave S. 4y
 Marty S. 4y
 Melissa L. 4y
 Tom C. 6y
 John S. 6y
 Sean McG. 6y
 Dave S. 10y
 Ed O. 10y
 Rick L. 15y
Rise & Shine
 Denise 3m
 Allen E. 6m
 Kim S. 6m
 Carl F. 9m
 Tom H. 1y
 James D. 2y
 Renea P. 2y
 Fred H. 2y
 Melissa M. 3y
 Ed B. 3y
 Pat C. 8y
 Celia D. 8y
 Marvin B. 19y

Southtowns

Kim E. 3y
Spirit of Hope
 Antwan D. 6y
Sun. Morning
Breakfast
 Carol K. 4y
 Joseph B. 11y
 Liz O. 16y
 Max W. 17y
Thruway
 Tom Z. 3m
 Brenda B. 1y
 David D. 3y
 Tom B. 6y
 James M. 12y
 Liz O. 16y
 Kathy K. 17y
 Joyce T. 17y
 Dan T. 20y
 Mickey G. 24y
 Ellen Mc 19y
Victory
 Debi C. 4y
Welcome
 Joe 7y
 Kathy P. 7y
 Bob L. 8y
 Carol P 17y
Women's
Westside
 Alicia A. 6m
 Alicia B. 6m
 Hannah S. 6m
 Cheryl B. 9m
 Jennifer D. 1y
 Sue V. 22y

GROUPS CELEBRATING

Love
 Thankful
 6th Step
 Lake Shore
 Harmony
 Common Problem
 Kensington
 Tuesday Women's
 Everybody's Group
 Clarence Men's Disc II
 Early Bird
 Wake-Up Call
 Daily Reflections
 By the Book
 How It Works
 Recovery Near
 The Gardens
 Tri County
 Handicappers
 Grateful

*have the anniversaries
 submitted by
 the 15th
 of the month
 previous*

**But for
 the
 Grace
 of God.**

