

NEW FRONTIERS

OCTOBER 2011

A.A. of the Niagara Frontier

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.
to insure anonymity.

"The Boy and the Man"

BILL TOLD his own story many, many times. It usually covered his early years only in rough fashion and centered upon his miraculous recovery from alcoholism and the growth of Alcoholics Anonymous during the 1930's.^[1]

Modesty--not the AA Tradition of anonymity--prevented Bill from ever publishing in detail memories of his childhood, his early years at school, his marriage, his life as a young man, his first encounters with alcohol, and his experiences in the Army during World War I.

Here, published for the first time in Bill's own words, are some of his recollections of the thirty-nine years before he took what was to be his last drink. They were written, according to Bill, "to set the record somewhere near straight," and they paint a poignant picture of the child and youth who was to become co-founder of AA many years later."

One of my earliest recollections is looking out of the window from my crib just as the sun set over the great Green Mountains of Vermont. It is an impression that never left me. There is no spot quite like that part of New England--the spot where I first saw those mountains, that spot in which I can recall so many associations of my childhood.

My grandmother, after the death of her husband, took over his work--running a hotel in East Dorset, Vermont, assisted by her growing boys, one of whom was my father, Gilman, It was there that I was born.

The site of my birth (with peculiar justice, as it turned out) was a room just back of the old bar. I can remember hearing my old friend Mark Whelan, the postman, tell of the great curiosity that my arrival aroused among other children and the patrons of the hotel.

My father was a quarryman and quarry operator and worked the great marble quarries of the area, which provided stone for many noted buildings, like Grant's Tomb and the main branch of the New York Public Library. Incidentally, alcoholism wasn't unknown on the paternal side of my family. Grandfather had a serious case of alcoholism, and it no doubt hastened his death, although some years prior he had, to everyone's great surprise, hit the sawdust trail at a church revival meeting and was never known to drink afterward. This caused great consternation. Grandmother used to say, among his erstwhile buddies, agnostic and hard-drinking Civil War veterans.

I did not know it, but my father was, at times, a pretty heavy drinker, although he never became an alcoholic. Like me, he was a person who became elated by success and would celebrate it on extended srees, together with some of his affluent marble-quarry friends. Though I never understood the details, I think one of these episodes had consequences that greatly affronted my mother and increased the strain between them.

My mother's side of the family included hard-driving people of immense will and great fortitude. They had difficulties in forming close relationships with others. They were capable of great love for their own--and this was certainly a factor in my maternal grandfather's relationship with me--but somehow, although they were highly respected people, they were scarcely dearly loved by outsiders.

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My early memories are pretty dim until about the age of seven. I had, of course, gone to school, in the two-room schoolhouse at East Dorset, but was soon transferred to another school when the family moved to Rutland. I well recall how overcome I was by the large number of children around me, and how I began to develop a great shyness. At the same time, I felt a certain amount of competitiveness. Because of my shyness and awkwardness, I began to work overtime to be a baseball player. And even at this age I manifested much interest in science, and got a place fixed up in the woodshed for a laboratory.

I remember how horrified my father was when he came home one night to discover that I had mixed certain acids (I have forgotten which) to make nitroglycerin in the back shed. When he arrived, I was dipping strips of paper into the nitroglycerin and burning them. You can imagine his reaction, accustomed as he was in his quarry work to the use of dynamite, which is but a pale imitation of nitro. I remember clearly how gingerly Dad lifted that dish, dug a very large hole, wet the hole, carefully spread the evil stuff across the bottom, and just as methodically covered it up.

I remember fine companionship in those days with my dad, who used to play ball with me in the yard every night. And on Sundays, we would rent a covered buggy (I forget what it was called) with a flat top and tassels all around, and drive about in some elegance and with a great deal of satisfaction.

On the other hand, my mother, Emily, was a disciplinarian. I can clearly recall the agony of hostility and fear that I went through when she administered my first tanning with the back of a hairbrush--for exactly what misbehavior I cannot remember. But, somehow, I never could forget that beating. It made an indelible impression on me, particularly because of the realization that I had made *her* so enormously angry.

At school, I do not think I achieved any particularly good records. In the academic world, it was always to be my fate that some of my grades would be very good and some very poor. In sports, I also alternated between feeling extremely competitive and elated upon success, and deeply discouraged and timid in defeat, particularly if that defeat took the shape of a thorough physical trouncing by some smaller kid. Even then, I was beginning to grow oversize for my age.

As much as I try to think about early-childhood friends, it is hardly surprising to me that I cannot remember having any who were really intimate. Playmates, yes; but, because of my shyness and awkwardness, I do not believe that I ever made intimate friends. I was forever trying to dominate somebody or being dominated by somebody. My one close tie was with Mark Whelan, a fellow about ten years older than I was, upon whom I depended for his superior knowledge of the ways of the world.

My mother was not well; she had a serious operation and was confined to home as an invalid for a long time. And then, a little while after she recovered. I was told that my father had gone away on a business trip. When he didn't return, I sensed that something was wrong. Shortly after that, we pulled up stakes--Mother, my sister Dorothy, and I--assisted by my mother's father, and moved back to East Dorset.

Then came a shock which I can never forget. Soon after we moved. Mother took Dorothy and me on what we thought was to be a picnic at a beautiful North Dorset pond. We sat on the shore under a shade tree, and Mother seemed very quiet, and I think that we all had a sense of foreboding.

Then Mother told us that Father had gone for good. To this day, I shiver every time I recall that scene on the grass by the lakefront. It was an agonizing experience. I hid the wound, however, and never talked about it with anybody, let alone our maternal grandfather and grandmother, with whom Dorothy and I now went to live.

My parents were subsequently divorced, and some time later my father remarried. He died on February 14, 1954.

Mother embarked on a career which took her to Boston, and I saw little of her for the next few years. Her homecomings were always occasions of a great deal of joy and excitement, especially at Christmastime. But somehow, I realized, there was a sort of barrier between Mother and me. I loved my father, but I admired and respected Mother in a different manner.

Somewhat later on, Dorothy went to live with Mother, and it fell to the lot of my grandparents to bring me up in East Dorset. I remember this period of my life vividly.

By this time, I was ten or eleven, still growing (even more rapidly), still suffering from my physical awkwardness and from my mother's and father's separation and divorce. I remember hearing Mother and Grandfather talking about this divorce and how it could be brought about. I recall Mother's covert trip to Bennington, Vt., to see a man called Lawyer Barber. Then I learned that the divorce was complete. This certainly did something to me which left a deep mark.

Quite early, I learned to swim, and got competitive about it. In fact, this began to apply to all sports. I felt I had to be able to wrestle like Hackenschmidt, bat like Ty Cobb, walk the tightrope like the folks in the circus, and shoot like Buffalo Bill. And so it was throughout the warp and woof of my existence.

When my neighbor Rose London installed a circulating library in the deserted cobbler shop of her late father, I began to be a voracious reader as quickly as I got the ability, reading anything and everything that came into that library. In fact, I used to sleep very little when on those reading sprees. I would supposedly go to bed (after being sent there rather sternly by my grandfather), and then I would wait until I felt that he would not notice the light, and I would turn up the old kerosene lamp. I'd place it on the floor, and lay a book alongside it and hang off the edge of my bed to read, sometimes all night.

I also liked very much to construct things, to work with tools and chemicals. I had turned my room into a chemical laboratory for a while, and then I started experimenting with radio, a brand-new invention in those days. I believe I had one of the first wireless-reception sets in Vermont. I studied Morse code and was always amazed that I never could keep up with the fast operators. But my radio adventures created quite a sensation in the town and marked me out for distinction, something which, of course, I increasingly craved, until at last it became an obsession.

I was subsequently sent off to a boarding school situated in Manchester, Vt., about five miles distant. I boarded there five days a week, returning to East Dorset weekends.

The first experience there that affected me deeply had to do with baseball. In primary school, I had excelled. None of the kids there were much good. But in Manchester I was up against a lot of competition. On my very first appearance on the field, someone hit a fly ball. I put up my hands and somehow missed catching it, and it hit me on the head. It knocked me down, and I was immediately surrounded by a crowd of concerned kids. But the moment they saw I wasn't hurt, they all started to laugh at my awkwardness, and I remember the terrible spasm of rage that came up in me. I jumped up and shook my fist and said, "I'll show you! I'll be captain of your baseball team." And there was another laugh. This started a terrific drive on my part to excel in baseball, a desperate struggle to be Number One.

If I could not get anybody to play with me, I'd throw a tennis ball up against the side of a building. Or I'd spend hours and hours heaving rocks at telephone poles to perfect my arm, so that I could become captain of that baseball team. To this day, my right arm still won't straighten out; apparently, I injured the socket. Nevertheless, I did develop a deadly aim and great speed with a baseball and had a high batting average. So, in spite of my awkwardness, I became Number One man on the baseball field. The pitcher was the hero in those days. I became pitcher, and I finally made captain.

In this period I was extremely happy, because I was succeeding where it mattered on all fronts. I played first violin in the high-school orchestra--a very bad first violin, and it was a very poor orchestra, but I *did* it. In my school work, if my interest was high (as it was in chemistry, physical geography, and astronomy), my marks would range from ninety-five to ninety-eight percent. Other subjects, including English and algebra, caused me trouble, and I received poor grades.

At this time, despite my homely face and awkward figure, one of the girls at a nearby seminary--the minister's daughter, in fact--took an interest in me. The local young ladies had been slow to notice my presence when I first appeared in Manchester, and I had developed terrific feelings of inferiority respecting the gals. Now I suddenly found myself ecstatically in love!

Then occurred an event which was to have a profound bearing upon my later years. The principal of the school interrupted our chapel exercises one morning to announce with a grave face, that the minister's daughter (my girl) had died unexpectedly the previous evening.

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I can still feel the appalling blow of that morning. It was a cataclysm of such anguish as I've since had but two or three times in my whole life. It resulted in what was called in those days "a nervous breakdown," which means today simply a terrible depression. Interest in everything collapsed. No athletics, no schoolwork, no attention to anyone. I was utterly, deeply, and compulsively miserable. I used to sneak out and go to the graveyard where the girl was buried, sitting there for hours, convinced that my whole life had utterly collapsed.

I could not, of course, be Number One any longer. I could not be *anybody* at all. I could not win, because the adversary was death. So my life, I thought, had ended then and there.

The upshot was that I failed German and, for that reason, could not graduate. Here I was, president of my senior class by this time, and they wouldn't give me a diploma! My mother arrived, extremely angry, from Boston. A stormy scene took place in the principal's office. Still, I didn't get that diploma.

I don't know how I got through the summer that followed. It was spent in anguish and compulsive reflection, all centering on the minister's daughter. I somehow managed to finish a makeup course in German, and then Mother hustled me off to live with her in Arlington, Mass., just outside Boston. I was entered in a local high school and barely got through some courses there. Because of my scientific interests, the idea was that I should become an engineer and prepare for the difficult entrance examinations for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Needless to say, I took the exams and could hardly pass one of them.

Somehow or other, I entered Norwich University, the military college of the state of Vermont, where entrance requirements were far easier than for MIT.

It was at this time that I met Lois, the wonderful woman I was to marry later. She was the daughter of a Brooklyn, N.Y., physician, who brought his family to North Dorset for the summers. There, they occupied a small cottage constructed on the exact spot where Mother had told me of her impending breakup with Father, years before.

Lois came into my life as tenderly as a mother comes to a child. It started as a summertime romance. I met her, was attracted to her (and she to me, I imagine), and began to fall in love with her. It was just that simple.

By the fall of 1914, however, I was enrolled in Norwich, where the discipline was almost as strict as at West Point. Again, I felt I was nobody. I couldn't even begin to compete in athletics, in music, or even just for popularity with the people around me. I keenly remember, when the rush for the fraternities was on, that I didn't receive a bid to a single one. I tried out for baseball and football and was not good enough to get on either first team. There was a fellow who played the violin so much better than I could that I couldn't even get near the dance orchestra. Although I handled some of my studies well, I began to fail in others, I was second-rate at best.

It was a bleak winter. Lois and her family had gone back to Brooklyn. I had injured my elbow. Somehow, I became convinced that I also had heart trouble and was going to die. As soon as I would attempt a few simple exercises, a terrible palpitation would set in and I would collapse. Of course, I was promptly taken to the infirmary, and it was found that absolutely nothing was the matter with me. This happened again and again, until, at the end of a couple of weeks, I was sent to my grandfather in East Dorset, which was just exactly where I wanted to go.

Summer came, and Lois reappeared and lifted me out of this gloom. By now, we had fallen deeply in love, and, naturally, I was cured of my "heart trouble." I loved and was loved, and there was hope again. Still, I recall long conversations with Lois in which I declared that I was no good, couldn't face school again, and couldn't bear leaving her.

Lois symbolized a way of life which had always made me feel inferior. Her people were of a fine family in Brooklyn--people we Vermonters called "city folks." She had social graces of which I knew nothing. Folks around me still ate with their knives, so her encouragement of me and interest in me did a tremendous amount to buck me up.

But back to school again I had to go. I launched into a terrific effort to compensate for my past failures. I started to become far more popular with my schoolmates, and, although I was behind in my studies, I was made a noncom in the school training corps. I discovered that I had a talent for military drill. At any rate, I was saved from not graduating (or the threat of it) by World War I.

I arrived in the Pittsburgh, N.Y., Army training camp in May 1917. By this time, Lois and I were engaged. My feelings were certainly mixed. On the one hand, we Vermonters were proud of our military traditions and believed that the duty of a citizen was willingly and gladly to bear arms. On the other hand, I think, I was most scared by the prospect that I might not be able to live out my life with Lois, with whom I was by now deeply in love.

Things moved pretty well in Pittsburgh at first. Because of the strenuous discipline at Norwich, my schoolmates and I had a tremendous head start on the rest of the raw recruits and stood out miles above the average. Besides, I was developing a Hair for leadership--and a liking for it, too. Yet underneath was this ghastly fear: Maybe my number was up. I wanted to live because of Lois and the promise of the future.

For advanced training, I chose the coast artillery, putting my money on one of the safer branches of service, thought. Well, one evening just after mess, those of us who had made that choice were shipped to Fort Monroe, Va. As the train pulled out, half the Plattsburgh camp stood around us, jeering, "Playing it safe!" I was overwhelmed with a terrible feeling of shame and guilt, as if I had somehow let my Vermont ancestors down.

The course of study was subsequently completed at Fort Monroe, and I was commissioned as an artillery officer. I was just twenty-one years old. From Monroe, I was transferred to Fort Rodman in Massachusetts, just outside New Bedford. Here was all the tradition of the old Army, seasoned regular officers and noncoms, along with the drafted men and volunteers. How I enjoyed that atmosphere, encouraged as I was by actually being put in command of soldiers. But still there crept into me at times that nagging undertone of fear about going abroad.

Meanwhile, the society people of the community nearby began to invite young officers into their homes. This was the first time in my life I had ever been in such exalted company (as I saw it then). Once more, I felt fearful and inept. In conversation, I could hardly say two words. And the dinner table was a terrible trial.

Then somebody put into my hands what was called a Bronx cocktail, my very first drink. All during college, I had backed away from drinking, looking down my nose at those among my classmates who would go to Montpelier, drink beer, and consort with "loose women." That was beneath me. I also knew what liquor had done to some of my ancestors, so I was frightened. But here it was in my hand!

I felt so self-conscious that I simply had to take that drink. So I took it. And another one. And then--the miracle! That strange barrier that existed between me and everybody else seemed instantly to vanish. I felt that I belonged where I was. I was a member of the universe; I was a part of things at last. What rare magic those first three or four drinks produced! I became the life of the party. I could talk freely and well. I was even asked to various subsequent social occasions. But I think that even that first evening I got thoroughly drunk. And at the next party or two, I passed out completely. But those were years when everybody drank hard, and not much was made of my behavior.

Lois visited me at Fort Rodman, and I think it was on that particular visit that we decided to be married before I was sent overseas. In New Bedford, I was reluctant to introduce her to my new friends. The people of my fiancée's household did not frown on liquor, but they weren't consuming it at the rate my friends and I were. So I escorted Lois to one of the parties, kept the lid on my drinking, and again felt much on the inferior side throughout the evening.

Shortly after, I traveled on leave to Brooklyn to be married. Without liquor, I felt my old discomfort and awkwardness in her family's home, although her parents and friends went out of their way to make me feel comfortable.

We were married, returned to New Bedford, and took an apartment downtown. I only had to report to the post in time for reveille. The rest of the time was my own.

That was a pretty ecstatic period of my life. Lois and I gave parties ourselves and served plenty of liquor. She began to get concerned because I'd manage to pass out entirely at about every third party. But then, it was a glad-bad time, happy on the whole, marred only by the constant undercurrent of my fear of going to war. Deep down, I was scared and very, very ashamed.

In late spring or early summer of 1918, sudden orders came for me to report to Fort Adams in Newport, R.I. Upon arrival, I discovered that all officers lived in tents on a part of the old parade ground, while Lois and the other wives

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congregated in Newport itself. We could see each other, usually, one evening a week and on weekends. The parting was coming closer, and we knew it.

The dreaded day finally arrived. I remember going out to dinner with Lois and another officer and his wife. A pall of gloom settled over us all. I remember feeling an aversion to the mood of pessimism and thinking how selfish and self-concerned it was. Afterwards, Lois and I stood alone on one of the beautiful cliffs at Newport, overlooking the sea. It was an utterly desolate part of the shoreline. She and I gazed out over the ocean, wondering. The sun was just setting, and we talked about the future with joy and optimism. There I felt the first glimmerings of what I was later to understand as a spiritual experience, while it evolved in me over the years. I shall never forget it.

So, when we marched away and were loaded onto the train, and I waved to Lois from the car window as we pulled out for Boston, my mood wasn't too low.

On a British ship, the Lancashire, we set sail (via New York Harbor) eastward. How well I recall that voyage! There was an undercurrent of nervousness on board, of course, but the ship's company was really full of cheer and confidence. I quickly gained the friendship of the steward and one of the ship's officers. The latter gave me my first experience with brandy, which I imagined kept out the terrible cold of the northern sea route and took my mind off the fact that we were traveling through waters infested with German submarines. Finally we arrived in Britain.

Quartered at first at Manchester in England, we presently marched to Southampton, where we boarded a transport in the late afternoon for the battlefields of France. I remember that I actually enjoyed the run across the Channel without lights, and the precautions we had to take lest a cigarette or match show, and the apprehension of coming closer to the enemy. At last, excitement!

We were subsequently shipped to a small town outside Limoges, Belgium, where we continued training. And then we were moved to the artillery-range area. This time we were actually to fire our guns, although only in practice. It was as close as I came to being killed overseas.

We had settled in a tiny village in the mountains, and I recall how our batteries and our battalion were set up, dug into a bank. We were supposed to fire into a low hilltop and into the country beyond. We carefully measured the distance between guns and made the calculations, and I was finally sent about nine miles away, to the place where the shells were supposed to land. About 300 yards from us, off in a field, a piece of canvas was set up on which the four guns were supposed to be trained. And I was in a slit trench, with a periscope to observe the operation from a distance.

When the number-one gun fired, we could hear the report over our phones, and we were terrifically thrilled when the shell came down practically on the mark. Boy, we thought, were we good! Then number four was fired. All of a sudden, there was a frightful sinking sensation in my solar plexus, a feeling that the earth was opening up in a yawning pit beneath me, and an awful concussion. Tons of dirt were blown over me.

I barely managed to crawl out of that slit trench, only to find out that, due to a miscalculation, the number-four gun had been trained right *on us*. It was a miracle that I came out alive and comparatively unhurt.

We were, still in that small mountain town when the armistice was signed. The town went crazy. There I saw my only drunken Frenchman, who embraced me and mumbled how wonderful the *Etats Unis* was. By this time, I had taken quite a fancy myself--to the local French wine, which was freely available everywhere. But before my taste for it developed too far, we were sent off to the city of Bordeaux. After a while, we were shipped home.

Lois met me at the port in Hoboken, and life started again. Like all returning vets, I ran into a few difficulties. Unlike most of them, I was heading toward a destiny that lay in directions I could not conceivably have anticipated when I stepped off that ship onto the New Jersey shore and into the waiting embrace of my lovely wife.

** Capsule autobiographies by Bill, treating in brief these early times, appear in Alcoholics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age.*

*Reprinted with permission from Grapevine
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Heard @ a Meeting:

We have good news and bad news here. The good news is you never have to drink again, even if you want to. The bad news is that we're your new friends!

The longer I'm sober, the drunker I was.

Serenity is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to cope with it.

Alcoholic drinking's three stages: impulsive, compulsive, repulsive.

Remember: It's OK to look back but don't stare.

Happy to Report

~ Warren H.- Abbott Men's Discussion- Is still among us...our sympathies go out to his dad's passing

IN MEMORIAM

Things We Can Not Change

Charles L.- Spirit of Hope ; 22years

Justin G.- Courage Group; 20+years

To all our members who have lost family & loved ones our prayers are with you.

Share your Experience, Strength and Hope

Please submit your announcements by the **12th** for next month's issue.

Articles can be submitted at any time.

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"Everyone is a genius but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will spend its whole life believing it is stupid." Einstein

PLEASE READ AT YOUR MEETING...HELP KEEP EVERYONE INFORMED:-)

*BUFFALO CENTRAL OFFICE
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS*

(716) 853-0388

9:00 AM- 12:30PM, 2:00 PM- 4:30 PM

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OCTOBER 2011

MEETING CHANGES

- **Victory Group**, Thursday's in Lackawanna, **Has Resumed**. Thursday', 8 PM.. Queen of Angels Church, 144 Warsaw at Electric, Lackawanna.
- **Albion New Beginnings** has **changed their start time** to 8:00 PM on Wednesday's.
- **Springville Saturday Afternoon Group** on Oct. 8th & 22nd, Nov. 5th & 19th, will meet at 2:30 PM at Bertrand- Chaffee hospital in the Cafeteria. After this will return to the normal meeting time and place.
- **Miracles Happen Group**, Wed. 10 AM, North Point Clinic, 66 Mead St., N. Tonawanda, **NO LONGER MEETS**.
- **Thankful Group**, Friday's 2 PM **needs someone to take over running the group**. If not, the group will close Nov.1st. Must be 3 years sober to take over the treasury.
- **Powerless Group now meets on Holiday's**. Monday's at 5:30 PM. 176 Clark St.
- **Sprout into Sobriety** Tuesdays @ 2 pm **need support**. Living Faith Church 1907 Center Road West Seneca
- **Living Clean Group needs support**. Tuesday's 7 PM, Sisters Hospital (parking \$1) 3rd floor, conference room C.
- **Living In The Solution** Group **No longer Meets on Friday's** at the Amity Club, 340 Military Rd. Buffalo.
- **Central City Cafe'** Group, in the city of Buffalo, **NEEDS SUPPORT**. We need home group members, set-up people, a coffee maker, treasurer and a new chair person. Monday's @ 1PM, Durham Memorial Outreach, 200 E. Eagle St @ Michigan.
- **Open Mind Group**, 8 PM , Wednesday. Unitarian Church, corner of Elmwood & West Ferry, **NEEDS SUPPORT**.
- **Elmwood group**, now call it's meeting place the Friends Of Bill W. meeting place no longer the Sobriety Emporium, 2590 Elmwood Ave in Kenmore, 14217, near the corner of Kinsey.9 AM/1 PM/4 PM & 7 PM everyday of the year and at 10 pm Fri./Sat & Sun. nights and we **need support**.
- **IF YOUR GROUP IS NOT MEETING, PLEASE INFORM THE CENTRAL OFFICE. THIS ALSO INCLUDES THOSE MEETING DAYS WHEN YOUR SITE IS CLOSED FOR A HOLIDAY.**

COMING EVENTS

~ Oct 1, **70th Buffalo Fall Convention Meeting**, Saturday, 12 NOON Buffalo Central Office, 681 Seneca Street

~ Oct. 1, **Rural is Plural 14th Annual Stone Soup Party**, East Otto, 12 NOON until after the Bonfire, Speaker at 7 PM. Please bring a dish to share and a chair or two. @ Marvin S., 9446 Harvey Rd., East Otto for more info call:257-3220 Elvers at Central Office

- ~ Oct 2, **Steering Committee**, SUNDAY 5 PM, Central Office, 681 Seneca
- ~ Oct 2, **Central Committee Meeting**, SUNDAY, 7 pm, Buffalo Central Office(Hosted by Courage Group).
- ~ Oct 9, **General Service Assembly**, 12 Noon., Hamburg Town Hall.
- ~ Oct 10, **GSA, Area 50, District 11 Business Meeting**, Monday, 5 p.m. – 6 p.m. Niagara Branch Library, 280 Porter Ave, Buffalo. Contact Maureen M., 716-310-5885 for more info.
- ~ Oct 11,18,25, Nov 1 & 5; **An Introduction To the 12 Steps Workshop**. To acquaint members with the 12 Steps in 5- 1-hour sessions. Tuesday's; 6:00 PM. Sponsored by Caz Manor Group, 486 N. Legion Drive, Buffalo. Journey through the 12 steps in 5/ 1 hr sessions
- ~ Oct 17, **Treatment Facilities Committee**, MONDAY, 6 PM, Buffalo Central Office,681 Seneca Street. Please if you or your group are taking a meeting into a treatment facility , could you please send a rep to this meeting
- ~ Oct 18,**Public Information Committee meeting**, Tuesday, Anyone interested in helping the community understand who we are, what we do, and what we are not to do, PLEASE come out and get involved. Help keep A.A. around for your children. Buffalo Central Office, 6 PM.
- ~ Oct 16, **Corrections Committee Meeting**, 3rd SUNDAY, 7:00 PM, Buffalo Central Office, 681 Seneca
- ~ Oct 22, **Archives Committee Meeting**, SATURDAY, 9 am, Buffalo Central Office.
- ~ Oct 7-9: **Women's Fall Spiritual Weekend Retreat** will be held at the St. Columban Center in Derby, NY. Cost is \$135 which includes your 3 day/ 2 night stay & meals. The focus of the retreat is on the promises & our theme is: A New Freedom & A New Happiness. There will be speakers, groups, an evening reflection program, meditation, spiritual advisors, bon fire (weather permitting) & lots of food, fun & fellowship. Registration flyers can be found with this month's central office announcements mailings/ or our contact person is Marilyn S. 799-4094.
- ~ Oct 8, **Matt Talbot Group Annual Traditions Day**.9 AM, St John's Lutheran Church, 67 Litchfield Ave, Depew. Potluck lunch with keynote speaker.
- ~ Oct 21-23, **70th. BUFFALO FALL CONVENTION:** Buffalo Marriott Hotel, 1340 Millersport Hwy. Amherst
- ~ Oct 25 ???, "**Nightwatch" Committee Meeting**, Tuesday, 6 PM , Central Office, 681 Seneca
- ~ Oct 29,**A.A. of Jamestown 66th Anniversary**, Saturday, Kiantone Fire Hall, 2318 Stillwater-Frewsburg Rd., Kiantone, NY, 4 Speakers, Panels, Banquet, Fellowship & Dance. Registration, \$20, Registration + Banquet, \$35.
- ~ Oct. 29, **Easy Does It and Sober Train Groups' 4th Annual Halloween Party**, Saturday from 8 to 11 following Sober Train's 7 o'clock meeting. Central Park Methodist Church, 216 Beard Avenue, 14214. Food, DJ, dancing. \$5 donation suggested. Costumes optional.
- ~Dec 24, **Friends of AA Annual Christmas Vigil**; 291 High St, Moot Senior center. Doors open at 4 PM. **Donations accepted**. Children's toys, Dinner at 6PM, Santa at 7:30 PM. Contact Charles Lloyd:602-5037, Mona W.:510-5636 or Blaine H.:553-1504 or Leslie S.: 553-6298. Open Mic.

10th STEP: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

10th TRADITION: “Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be draw into public controversy.”

10th CONCEPT; Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined

PLEASE SUPPORT THE ENVELOPE SYSTEM...

Yours in the Fellowship of the Spirit...Terry Executive Secretary

BUFFALO CENTRAL COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 11th, 2011

Jake J. Committee Chair opened the meeting at 7:00 PM with a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer. Kristina Women Making the Effort read the Preamble, Pat from Thruway Group read the Purpose of Central Committee and Kim from Lovejoy read the Twelve Traditions. It was moved by Dean from Williamsville Group and seconded by Pat Thruway Group to accept the July minute as written by Annie Lakeshore Group.

New groups were greeted and 20 groups were represented: Dist #1 Main & High Dist #2 North Buffalo, Questions & Answers, Three Legacies Dist #3 Courage, Sunday Morning Breakfast, Thruway; Dist #4 Action, Orchard Park Step; Dist #5; Dist #6 Carrying The Message, Derby, Carry The Message, Sobriety Men's Discussion, Lakeshore, WE Group ; Dist #7 Coldspring, Lovejoy, Solidarity Dist #8 Amherst Snyder, Lighten-Up, Williamsville, Women Making The Effort.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

•**ENVELOPE SYSTEM:** No Report

•**STEERING COMMITTEE-** Chip reported districts 1, 2,5,7,8, and District 2 alternate representative, Chairperson, Co-Chair, Financial Secretary and Executive Secretary were present. District 6 still needs representation. There is a recommendation that the "Kenmore Avenue Book Study" group be added to our meeting schedule. We reviewed groups with outstanding unpaid book/literature purchases and progress made to date to resolve these items. The annual evaluation has been completed and reviewed with Terry, in accordance with our By-Laws. At this time, the Steering Committee recommends a zero percent (0%) change in compensation.

•**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Rick W. reported our revenue for August was \$7760.00 and our expenses were \$9097.00 for a loss of \$1,337. Included in the revenue was \$364.00 from The Envelope System and \$1,000 bequest from a deceased member. We purchased a ramp for \$115.00 for wheelchair access to Central Office. There are four outstanding invoices for a total of \$608.00. Feelings Group \$128.00, University Men's \$122.00, University Men's \$126.00, SilverCreek Friendship \$44.00, and Eyeopener \$188.00. The Executive Secretary now has a debit card to make purchases instead of putting it on her personal credit card and be reimbursed by AA.

•**TREATMENT:** No Report

•**CORRECTIONS** Matt Reported Corrections Committee needs volunteers to help man their table at The Buffalo Fall Convention.

•**CENTRAL OFFICE:** AAINFO:197,12STEP:1,ALANON:2,PIC:0,VISITORS:109,VOLUNTEERS:17. Groups we are in need of contact from are, Beginning Sobriety 11-7, Courage-3, Dawn Of Hope-2, Feelings-2, Powerless-7, Recovering Women & The Big Book, Renaissance 1-2, Threshing Floor-1, It-8, Sobriety On Saturday Night-5, Spiritual Studies (Albion), Welcome-2. Terry would like to thank Sue B. who is helping her with QuickBooks program. The second printing of the schedule is in. The Central Office seminar will be from Sept. 28th-Oct. 3. Terry cannot attend the next Steering Committee meeting or Central Committee due to this Seminar.

•**NEW FRONTIERS:** No report

PIC: No Report

Night Watch: Jason D reported The Nightwatch committee met on August 23rd, 2011. Topics discussed were: We are continuing to put together the binders that volunteers will be using to assist them in making phone calls. Gathering the information of the groups who want to volunteer to man the phones into a excel spreadsheet type database. If your home group is interested in getting involved we would be happy to attend your group business meeting to explain the NightWatch program in detail. Anyone interested can contact Jason at nightwatchbuffalo@gmail.com or 716-289-8960. Our next committee meeting will be help on September 26th, 2011 at 6pm at Buffalo Central Office.

•**CONVENTION:** Verbal Report

•**GSA LIASON:** No Report

AD-HOC: Report of the Ad-hoc Committee on the Prudent Reserve to the Central Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous on the Niagara Frontier, Inc.

This ad-hoc committee was formed at the request of the chairman of the Central Committee, Jake J. for the purpose of making recommendations regarding our prudent reserve policy. This report has been prepared as a result of committee meetings, research via the internet of other intergroup practices, past financial reports of the Buffalo Central Committee, and the suggestions of informed and concerned members of our fellowship.

The current level of the prudent reserve is \$28,000 plus accrued interest. This amount is based on a long-time custom of the Central Committee which averages 3 months of expenses based on the previous one or more years.

In approaching the issue several questions were considered:

Why do we need one?

How much should be in it?

Does it have a stated purpose, or is it a "slush fund"?

By researching the practices of other intergroups, the range seems to be between 1 and 12 months of expenses.

Three different possibilities have been looked at for coming up with a defined direction in establishing the level of the prudent reserve:

- 1) Based on our custom, and on the year-end report for 2009 expenses, our prudent reserve is at \$28,000
- 2) Based on the 2010 year-end financial report, the cost to provide fundamental services for 1 year, excluding labor and those expenses which produce a monetary return, was \$30,100. Labor is excluded in this area because in the case of a contingency event, employees would collect unemployment and COBRA would manage health insurance.
- 3) Our largest potential liability is the Buffalo Fall Convention which requires total expenditures of around \$30,000.

These last two items and their similarities in dollar amounts seem to generally support the current level of the prudent reserve. They are unrelated however.

The use of the prudent reserve as a slush fund to cover shortfalls in our operating income does not seem to be an appropriate stated purpose. Proper budgeting and use of donations and revenue should be adequate to make up for those shortfalls.

The purpose of the funds should be as a contingency fund as opposed to an easy backup for a temporary shortage of cash. Other means can be utilized for that. A contingency event may be considered an unforeseen major event that requires extraordinary measures to remedy such as fire, uninsured loss, lawsuit, etc. that would require expenditure larger than our general account could handle.

Using one year of expenses excluding labor and those expenses that produce a return as a guideline seems to be a practical guideline to be followed in maintaining our prudent reserve levels moving forward as it more accurately reflects our purpose of having a fund set aside for emergency use.

Respectfully submitted

•**ARCHIVES:** Pat reported at our the last meeting we set up projects for members to do. We are trying something new and having our traveling display at two locations at the same time. Our past Archivist made up a tribute to 9/11 showing the AA meetings being held at Ground Zero for AA members helping in the rescue of people there. The binder was brought to this meeting so everyone could see it. We set up a work day for September 20th at 7pm at Buffalo Central Office. We had a donation of AA material which was Janet N.K.'s by Bob K. her husband.

If you want to bring our display for any AA event please give us at least a 30 day notice. You can email us at the Area 50 WNY.org website look for archives. Our upcoming displays are Action Group, Matt Talbot, Allegany Day of Sharing, The Cataract Convention and The Buffalo Fall Convention. We would like to thank the following groups for their donations Thruway and Sunrise City Court. Please make checks payable to Western New York Archives. Our meetings are held on the 4th Saturday of the month at the Buffalo Central Office at 9am. The meeting this month is on September 24th. Come join us.

•**OLD BUSINESS:** PIC is still looking for a chairperson. Chuck from Sobriety Men's Discussion was nominated to stand for Steering Committee Representative, he accepted and the vote passed unanimously.

•**NEW BUSINESS:** The Kenmore Avenue Book Study was voted into the schedule unanimously. The recommendation by steering committee for the 0% increase in compensation for the Executive Secretary was seconded by Tina from Amherst Snyder. A motion was made by Dean from Williamsville and seconded by Cheryl from Lakeshore to table this issue until next month so the group representatives can bring it back to the groups. The motion passed with 11 votes.

NEXT MEETING October 2nd, 2011

Jake J. thanked Women Making The Effort for this month's refreshments and reminded The Courage Group of their commitment for next month.

It was moved by Rick Lockveiw and seconded by Kim Lovejoy that we adjourn; adopted. Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer at 8:10pm

Respectfully submitted by Annie D. Recording Secretary Lakeshore Group.

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

GROUP	CENTRAL		CORRECTIONS		TREATMENT	
	AUGUST	YEAR	AUGUST	YEAR	AUGUST	YEAR
11:45		0.00		0.00		0.00
12 Steps/12 Traditions		180.00		0.00		0.00
4th Step Stumblers/F.U.N.		0.00		2.00		0.00
6th Step		0.00		0.00		0.00
A Day At A Time		0.00		0.00		0.00
Abbott Men's		100.00		353.00		100.00
Acceptance/Welcoming		100.00		0.00		0.00
Achievement		0.00		0.00		0.00
Action		0.00		0.00		0.00
Age Doesn't Matter		0.00		0.00		0.00
Akron Awareness		0.00		0.00		0.00
Alexander		0.00		0.00		0.00
Amherst/ Snyder		456.00		0.00		0.00
Amsdell Lakeshore		0.00		0.00		0.00
Any Age		0.00		0.00		0.00
Any Length	35.00	280.00	15.00	120.00	15.00	120.00
Arcade		0.00		0.00		0.00
As Bill Sees It		275.00		60.00		60.00
Attica		50.00		0.00		0.00
Attitude Adjustment(Williamsville)		50.00		25.00		25.00
Attitude Adjustment(NF)		20.00		5.00		5.00
Attraction	100.00	400.00		0.00		0.00
Backdoor		0.00		0.00		0.00
Back To Basics		61.00		0.00		0.00
Beginners Group (NF)		20.00		0.00		0.00
Beginning In Sobriety II		0.00		0.00		0.00
Beginnings Women		0.00		0.00		0.00
Big Book Lockport		150.00		0.00		0.00
BB Spiritual Studies		0.00		0.00		0.00
Big Book Study	30.00	60.00		0.00		0.00
Blasdel		15.00		0.00		0.00
Blasdel Monday Night		0.00		0.00		0.00
Bodhisattva		0.00		0.00		0.00
Boulevard Helping Hand		20.00		0.00		0.00
Boulevard Women		0.00		0.00		0.00
Brass		0.00		0.00		0.00
Building Hope		0.00		0.00		0.00
By The Book		0.00		0.00		0.00
Carry the Message	50.00	125.00		0.00		0.00
Casting		0.00		0.00		0.00
Castile		50.00		0.00		0.00
Cathedral Park		0.00		0.00		0.00
Cayuga Wake- Up Call		760.00		0.00		0.00
Caz Manor	75.00	345.00		0.00		0.00
Central City Café	20.00	20.00		0.00		0.00
Chapter IX		0.00		0.00		0.00
Cheektowaga	50.00	500.00		0.00		0.00
Clarence Men's		0.00		0.00		0.00
Clarence Men's II		0.00		0.00		0.00
Cold Spring		0.00		0.00		0.00
Common Bond		0.00		0.00		0.00
Common Solution		0.00		0.00		0.00
Commitment		0.00		0.00		0.00
Constant Vigilance(Varysburg)		0.00		0.00		0.00
Complanters		0.00		0.00		0.00
Courage		0.00		0.00		0.00
Daily Reflections		0.00		0.00		0.00
Daily Reprieve		0.00		0.00		0.00
Dawn of Hope		25.00		0.00		0.00
Derby		80.00		0.00		0.00
Derby Lunch		0.00		0.00		0.00
Desire		500.00		0.00		0.00
Desperate		0.00		0.00		0.00
Downtown Men's		0.20		0.00		0.00
Dunkirk Monday Night		0.00		0.00		0.00
Early Bird South		0.00		0.00		0.00
Early Rising Obliging		0.00		0.00		0.00
East Amherst	250.00	500.00		0.00		0.00
East Amherst Traditions		378.00		0.00		0.00
East Aurora		300.00		100.00		100.00
Easy Does It	30.00	340.00	30.00	340.00	30.00	240.00
Ellicottville	25.00	50.00		0.00		0.00
Everybody's		0.00		0.00		0.00
Express		0.00		0.00		0.00
Eyeopener		1618.80		0.00		0.00
Eyeopener South		600.00		260.00		0.00
Father Baker		75.00		0.00		0.00
Feelings		0.00		0.00		0.00
Fireside PM		0.00		0.00		0.00
Fireside	172.00	1250.00		0.00		0.00
First Things First		360.00		0.00		0.00
Forestville Sunday Serenity		0.00		0.00		0.00
Fredonia Discussion		33.00		0.00		0.00
Freedom		475.00		100.00		0.00
Fresh Start	15.00	105.00		0.00		0.00
Friendly		0.00		0.00		0.00

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

GROUP	CENTRAL		CORRECTIONS		TREATMENT	
	AUGUST	YEAR	AUGUST	YEAR	AUGUST	YEAR
2 Friends of Bill W.		50.00		0.00		0.00
1 Frontier(New)	26.84	258.63		0.00		0.00
3 Gardenville	0.65	55.65		0.00		0.00
8 Georgetown		0.00		0.00		0.00
2 Getting Better		0.00		0.00		0.00
6 Gettin With It		15.00		0.00		0.00
7 Gifted		0.00		0.00		0.00
1 Giving		0.00		0.00		0.00
6 Go to Any Length		529.50		35.30		35.30
5 Golden Slipper		200.00		0.00		0.00
2 Grand		0.00		0.00		0.00
2 Grand II Joy of Living		50.00		0.00		0.00
2 Grateful		100.00		0.00		0.00
3 H.O.W.		0.00		0.00		0.00
6 Hamburg		0.00		0.00		0.00
6 Hamburg Early Bird		0.00		0.00		0.00
8 Hand		120.00		0.00		30.00
2 Handicappers		0.00		0.00		0.00
1 Happy Faces		0.00		0.00		0.00
7 Harmony		0.00		0.00		0.00
3 Helping Hand		150.00		0.00		0.00
8 High Noon		0.00		0.00		0.00
8 High View		150.00		0.00		0.00
7 Higher Power		60.00		0.00		0.00
4 Hillbilly	250.00	250.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
6 Holiday Village	100.00	1400.00		100.00		100.00
4 Holland		0.00		0.00		0.00
6 Honest Solutions		0.00		0.00		0.00
2 Honesly		30.00		0.00		0.00
Hope's Horizon		25.00		0.00		0.00
2 How It Works/Men's	200.00	1025.00	75.00	75.00	50.00	50.00
7 Humbolt		0.00		0.00		0.00
3 Inspiration		0.00		0.00		0.00
5 Intoxicated on Life		480.00		0.00		0.00
3 Ironhorse		402.96		33.25		33.00
8 IT		0.00		0.00		0.00
5 Johnson Creek Big Book		0.00		0.00		0.00
1 Journey		0.00		0.00		0.00
3 Just For Today/ Cheektowaga		0.00		0.00		0.00
5 Just For Today/ Albion		65.00		0.00		0.00
4 Keep It Simple Sister	40.00	125.00		0.00		0.00
2 Keep On Coming		0.00		0.00		0.00
2 Kenmore		0.00		0.00		0.00
8 Kensington		0.00		0.00		0.00
6 Lake Shore		150.00		0.00		0.00
6 Lakeview		150.00		0.00		0.00
3 Lancaster Dailey Reprieve		0.00		0.00		0.00
5 LewPort		0.00		0.00		0.00
2 Liberty Women	50.00	175.00		0.00		0.00
4 Life Today		44.00		0.00		0.00
8 Lighten UP		150.00		0.00		0.00
1 Living Clean		0.00		0.00		0.00
2 Living in the Solution		0.00		0.00		0.00
2 Living Sober		0.00		0.00		0.00
5 Lock City		150.00		0.00		0.00
5 Lockport #1		550.00		55.00		55.00
5 Lockport Discussion		50.00		0.00		0.00
5 Lockport Ladies		0.00		0.00		0.00
5 Lockport Tuesday		100.00		0.00		0.00
5 Lockview		240.00		80.00		0.00
6 Look To This Day		0.00		0.00		0.00
7 Love		0.00		0.00		0.00
7 Lovejoy		50.00		50.00		50.00
8 Lower River		0.00		0.00		0.00
1 Main and High	0.87	38.87		7.00		7.00
4 Main Street		300.00		0.00		0.00
8 Maple Men's		0.00		0.00		0.00
4 Marilla	40.00	342.00		0.00		0.00
3 Matt Talbot	60.00	300.00		0.00		0.00
6 McKinley Winners		140.00		0.00		0.00
5 MEDINA STEP WORK/BIG BOOK		0.00		0.00		0.00
5 Medina New Life		0.00		0.00		0.00
8 Mercy		0.00		0.00		0.00
3 Mid-day		138.39		0.00		0.00
8 Midnight Discussion		0.00		0.00		0.00
5 Miracle Happen		75.00		0.00		0.00
7 Monday CO		10.00		0.00		0.00
5 Monday Big Book		0.00		0.00		0.00
2 Morning After		300.00		0.00		0.00
7 New Awakening		0.00		0.00		0.00
3 New Beginnings/St. Vincent		30.00		0.00		0.00
New Freedom		0.00		0.00		0.00
New Hope		0.00		0.00		0.00
5 New International		0.00		0.00		0.00
3 New Life		30.00		0.00		0.00
5 New Outlook		0.00		0.00		0.00
1 New Westside		0.84		0.00		0.00
6 Niagara Frontier Men's Disc.		40.00		0.00		0.00
2 North Buffalo		800.00		100.00		50.00
4 North Java Monday		0.00		0.00		0.00
4 North Java Sunday		0.00		0.00		0.00

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Buffalo, NY 14210

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