

Pass It On...

Albuquerque Central Office Newsletter

Website: www.albuquerqueaa.org

The Challenge of Sponsorship

Grapevine June 1988
Vol. 46 No. 1

Right from the start, AA spread simply by one drunk talking to another. Bill W. called on Doctor Bob in 1935 in Akron and AA was born. A physician, Dr. William Silkworth, who had worked intensely with alcoholics, was quick to see the possibilities for growth in this approach. But he was also vocal and emphatic about the physical aspect of our illness. Our bodies are not normal. We are allergic to alcohol. But the promise of recovery, he believed, would be through the simple expedient of one drunk talking to another.

AA has gone through a lot of changes since 1935. Today some people are getting their one-to-one recovery counseling outside the Fellowship from paid professionals. I'm not talking about people who seek professional help for problems other than alcohol. A.A.'s have always done that. What I'm suggesting is that we may in some cases without knowing it be encouraging the use of Twelve Step surrogates. Sponsorship is still an important part of the program. But some interesting changes in the AA population are being reflected in the way that sponsorship gets done or, in some cases, doesn't.

One of our great strengths, I think, as a Society that deals effectively with the problem of alcoholism is the informal, loosely structured way in which help is passed along. No appointments required. No papers to fill out. You don't need insurance. It is truly ingenious. Totally unlike any other helping profession

agency. And we have the best track record of anybody when it comes to showing the alcoholic how to live sober.

People who have and use sponsors continue to tell us over and over the importance of having a sponsor. Yet how often we hear, "I have a sponsor but I never see him." "My sponsor is never home." Sponsorship too often tends to be a catch-as-catch-can affair. A few words at a meeting. A message left on an answering machine. A call at spring semester with a half-hearted promise and resolve to "get together real soon."

Some of the changes in the AA population may suggest why more people don't benefit from sponsorship.

People coming into AA today are generally younger, healthier, and better informed about alcoholism and drug addiction. Often AA is not their first contact with information about recovery.

When I was new in the program you met every single person who came to AA in the Springfield area. The meetings were far fewer and smaller and you heard the same person several times a week. Everybody tended to know everybody--sometimes more than was comfortable. As for sponsorship, it was the natural extension of what was very commonly called a Twelfth Step call, a routine part of recovery in Western Massachusetts in the late sixties. You got a call from the AA telephone operator and you and your sponsor jumped in the car and

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From the Grapevine:

“One of the greatest hindrances to our progress is regret, holding the mistakes close and reminding ourselves constantly that we have failed.”

Hook'n Needle

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<h2 style="text-align: center;">Correction Corner</h2> <p>Volunteers Needed To Carry The Message Into Sandoval Detention Center....Urgent Need For Female Volunteers</p> <p>If You Are Interested In Helping And Meet The Following Requirements Please Contact Bill L. (505) 771-2480 or billlumm@peoplepc.com</p> <p>Minimum Requirements: Sober 90 days 6 months since last misdemeanor 2 years since last felony</p> <p>Meetings are taken into the facility every week and you can commit to going every other week to help carry the message.</p>	<p>Central Office Steering Committee E-mail addresses:</p> <p>Michael W. - CO Coordinator Coordinator@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>Kathy H. - Alt. CO Coordinator AltCoordinator@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>Dave C. - Chair@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>Michael Q. Schedule@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>Brian H. Secretary@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>Pat E. Activities@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>Peggy A. Memberatlarge@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>Sally - PassItOn@albuquerqueaa.org Specialneeds@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>Tom C. - Website Chair anonymous@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>Grace L. - Media Librarian media@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>John S. publicinfo@albuquerqueaa.org</p> <p>Steve P. treasurer@albuquerqueaa.org</p>
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Red Road AA Convention</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">May 1, 2, & 3, 2009</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sandia Courtyard (Old Howard Johnson's)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I-40 and Eubank</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Marathon Meetings, raffles, Al-Anon participation, dance, etc.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contact: Jake @ (505) 261-1203 or Mary @ (505) 249-5347</p>	<p>Albuquerque Area Business Meetings</p> <p>Intergroup Rep. Meeting 2:00 pm, 2nd Sunday Desert Club</p> <p>District 3 2:00 pm, 2nd Saturday call the DCM for location</p> <p>District 11 9:00 am, 2nd Saturday Harwood Methodist Church 420 San Lorenzo NW (at 4th)</p> <p>District 12 9:30 am, 2nd Saturday St. Bernadette's 11401 Indian School NE</p> <p>District 13 10:00 am, 2nd Sunday Desert Club</p> <p>District 18 9:30 am 4th, Sunday Rio West Church 6751 Pasilla Rd., RR, NM</p>

Central Office Intergroup Meeting Minutes

2.08.09

Submitted By Brian H. – Secretary

Dave C – Chair

Dave C opened the meeting at 2:01 pm with the Serenity Prayer.

Secretary - Brian H

Review of minutes for January InterGroup Meeting as published in February *Pass It On*. Minutes approved by acclamation.

Treasurer - Steve P

Slightly in the black for the month/year, although by slighter margin than previous year/s. Group contributions high (incorporating Alkathon contributions) for the month. Thanks to all groups for ongoing support of InterGroup. Treasurer's Report accepted by acclamation.

Service Coordinator - Michael W

Shift Coverage: Recent openings in deskworker coverage have largely been filled. Still working to get a group to take Sunday night phone. Contact Central Office for current information about open desk/phone shifts, or for additional information about how to volunteer at Central Office. Grateful to be of service.

Alternate Coordinator - Kathy H

Statistics: Calls fairly normal for the month; slight bump in number of walk-ins. Lots of weekend shifts covered by subs and coordinators; hopefully that will be normalized soon. Grateful to be of service.

Activities Coordinator – Pat E

Not present. Made 700 copies of “What Does Albuquerque InterGroup Do for You” for distribution.

Member at Large - Vacant

Peggy (interim) no calls for service from “Member-At-Large” this month.

Pass It On Editor - Sally

Current issue at the printer (run of 500); now available on-line.

7th Tradition Basket Passed.

Schedule Editor – Michael Q

Not present. Nothing to report.

Community Outreach - John S

Busy month. Coordinated a number of events and fielded a number of referral requests (including January events KOB-TV health fair and Bernalillo County “Community Custody” program; upcoming

February events with Job Corps and CNM Mental Health Awareness Week; March community health event in Mountainair; look for additional details about a large ABQ city community outreach event in May). Contact John S through Central Office – by phone or by email – if you would like to become involved in community outreach &/or public information activities.

Special Needs – Peggy

A written version of short list of suggestions/recommendations regarding individuals requiring Service Animals and their presence at meetings/group events will be soon available.

Library - Grace L

Not present. Ongoing opportunities to volunteer in screening audio speaker tapes and transferring/digitizing archives to cd format. Contact central office for details.

Web Guardian - Tom

Not present. *PIO* is currently available on-line. Updating website as quickly as possible; addressing email delivery issues as they arise. Will be developing cost-comparison between our webhosting service to assess cost of transition to a higher-capacity service contract.

Old Business:

InterGroup (Seasonal/Winter) Bash proposal. Discussion about the logistics involved and lead-time necessary for staging such an event. MOTION MADE to commence planning for a potential InterGroup Conference for early 2010; MOTION PASSED (acknowledging one vote in dissent). Discussion about protocol in assembling a planning committee for this event. Paula G (Any Lengths) volunteered to stand as Interim Chair for planning for this event. MOTION MADE/PASSED to announce the formation of this committee in forthcoming issue of *Pass It On*.

New Business:

Peggy has resigned her position as “Special Needs Coordinator” (2.2.09) and expresses her interest to stand for nomination as “Member-At-Large” today (2.8.09). Two positions – “Special Needs Coordinator” and “Member-At-Large” – open for volunteers to stand for nomination for each of these positions. VOTE: Peggy A (Free Spirits) elected “Member-At-Large” by unanimous vote.

Group Announcements:

High Noon group continues to host ongoing, monthly step workshop (usually 3rd Sunday of the month).

MEETING CANCELLED: “AA Comes of Age” no longer meets (formerly at Brownbaggers/Friday/7:30pm).

Dave C closed the meeting at 3:14 pm with the Third Step prayer.

ATTENDEES:

Dave C (Dawn Patrol/CO Chair)
Michael W (Mountainside/CO Coordinator)
Kathy H (Metropolitan/Alt. CO Coordinator)
Steve P (Free Spirits/CO Treasurer)
Paula G (Any Lengths)
Sharon H (Any Lengths)
Joseph F (Dawn Patrol)
Marian G (Triangle Group)
Terri R (Ladies Room)
Henry L (Seeking Serenity)
Dennis M (Isleta)
Seann F (Serendipity)
Carrol M (One Day at a Time)
John S (Brownbaggers/CO Public Outreach)
Dondo (Happy Hour/SNYP/Dist 12 Alternate DCM)
Jason K (Straight Pepper Diet)
Patrick H (High Noon)
Rose P (El Centro)
Gilbert C (Sunrise Sobriety)
Jim O (Live and Let Live)
Sally G. (Free Spirits/Pass it On)
Jennifer B (Queer Ideas of Fun)
Jim M (Queer Ideas of Fun)
Karyn F (Metropolitan)
Terri R (Cosmopolitan)
Peggy A (Free Spirits/CO Special Needs)
Alan S (In The Book)
Brian H (Dawn Patrol/CO Secretary)

The Steering Committee at Central Office encourage all groups to elect a Intergroup representative. We welcome you to come join us at the next Intergroup meeting. We meet the second Sunday of every month, at 2:00 pm, at the Desert Club.

See you there!!!

District 13 Meeting Change

District 13 is working with the other Albuquerque districts to coordinate a treatment workshop towards the end of the spring. We continue to work on improving communication between our district and the intergroup committee here in town. Our corrections committee still is in need of volunteers. If you are interested in carrying the message to jails and prisons please contact District 13 corrections chair Charly B. at 384-0035. Due to a conflict with the March area assembly, our next district meeting will be held on March 15th at the Desert Club at 10 am. District 13 will be hosting the December assembly and will have our first planning meeting after the March district meeting.

Matt P.
804-2792

Central Office of Albuquerque Treasurers Report: January 2009

Total Contributions/Sales	\$10,910.08
Total Cost of Sales	\$4,382.48
Gross Income	\$6,527.60
Total Expenses	\$5,252.21
Net Income	\$1,275.39

For a copy of the full Central Office income/expense report, please join us at the next Intergroup Committee Meeting. It's the second Sunday of the month , 2:00 pm, at the Desert Club.

January '09 Desk Activity

	Jan. '09	Dec. '08	Jan. '08
	This month	Last month	Last yr.
Phone calls	1364	1208	1247
Information	1153	1021	1023
12 step request	29	16	7
Al-Anon Info	21	18	11
Message	33	36	45
Other	128	117	161
Walk Ins	323	236	230
Information	14	13	15
12 step	1	2	1
Al-Anon	2	0	1
Schedules	14	19	22
Purchases	192	140	164
Tapes	2	1	2
Message	2	0	1
Casual	48	28	42
Other	48	33	45
Desk Workers*	89	84	
Regulars	47	41	
Substitutes	42	43	
Desk Shifts*	177	178	
Weekdays	132	138	
Weekends	45	40	
Weekday Shifts*	138	138	
Regulars	87% 116	70 % 96	
Substitutes	13 % 16	30 % 42	
Weekend Shifts*	45	40	
Regulars	67% 30	63% 25	
Substitutes	33% 15	37 % 15	
Shifts by Michael*	6/3 18 hrs	1/3 3 hrs	
Shifts by Kathy*	3/5 15 hrs	5/10 28 hrs	

Thanks to all who participated this month.

* includes night phone

The Challenge of Sponsorship *cont.*

headed out to talk to a new candidate for recovery. Often you brought a bottle just in case he was really sick. You might bring him home for drying out. With friends you took turns nursing him back to human semblance. There was no other way. There was no detox. With good reasons, a lot of hospitals did not want alcoholics. In any case there was a great deal of routine personal contact with the disease in its active stages and with the physically ill alcoholic. It could be very unpleasant.

Because alcoholism was not yet widely accepted as an illness, people died who did not get the proper medical attention on time. Thank God for the informed AA members who got behind the idea of medical help for a medical problem. Today there are detoxes.

All the same, old-timers will remember there was a certain "esprit de corps" among those sober members who closed caring ranks around the shaky and sick new person in those days. It was a very special kind of experience and, although it has been replaced by something better, I'm glad I had it.

The AA population today is more varied, mobile, and has more resources available to it. Alcoholics are coming in with big life decisions well ahead of them. There's more to do. Conferences. Dances. School. Dating. Career moves. Marriage plans. Houses to buy. Futures to begin. There is, I feel, less emphasis on the past. It seems to me that new people are more oriented toward the future. Groups are bigger. It's easier to hide or get lost, both for sponsor and sponsee, in the forward rush to sober self-reliance and success. I have a feeling, though, that alcoholics find today just as they always have, that unless we place first things first, where we are headed may not be where we are going. That was many times the case with me, thank God.

If the AA member years ago was too sick to help himself and depended entirely on an AA member for guidance, even with problems that the sponsor wasn't entirely competent to handle, could it be that today's new member, sometimes, is *too well* and too well informed to place his newfound and still fragile sobriety into the willing and capable hands of a sober peer? If the sponsor feels intimidated by all the outside resources competing for the new person's attention, could it be that there is false pride on both sides of this wall? I wonder. Both could feel awkward and the temptation to look for a professional substitute could be there.

It seems to me that this is both a change and a challenge to our Society. It is a change that reflects a more varied and mobile, a more self-directed and busier AA population. I think it is a challenge to all of us in AA, for whom all else has failed, to make sure that sponsorship stays alive and well for our own sakes, because we need it to nourish our own sobriety, as well as for the growth of the Fellowship.

Sponsorship is a shared spiritual intimacy unlike any other. It is a life-nourishing experience we must never abdicate to paid professionals as a matter of convenience. It is just too basic to recovery, as it was first conceived, and as it has proved to work.

Sponsorship is not on the way out. But we in AA may have to go a little out of our way to make sure it stays where it started and where it took root--at the heart of recovery in a shared experience with the Steps.

Jim N.
W. Springfield, Massachusetts

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Other Numbers: Al-Anon (505) 262-2177 Oficina Intergrupul Hispana (505) 266-3688

Announcements, Reminders, Birthdays, etc.

El Centro Group

Josh	1 year
Rose P.	1 year
Vince G.	2 years
Erik O.	2 years
Laurie G.	3 years
Laura G.	5 years
Ed W.	24 years
Roger L.	36 years

One Day at a Time!

Seniors Seeking Serenity

Karen R.	3/17/84	25 years
Jeanne S.	3/22/89	20 years



7th Step Experience

Hosted by the High Noon Group

Sunday March 15, 2009

1:30 - 3:15 p.m.

Desert Club

4305 Mesa Grande Pl. SE

Panel: Marcus C., Gene H., Wendy S.

Discussion for 45 minutes, 15 minute break,
Q & A etc.. for 45 minutes

(Munchies potluck - bring your favorite drinks or snacks)

For more info. call Patrick @ 315-1652 or Wally @ 410-4868
(This is a smoke-free event!)

There is a need for desk workers and night phones at Central Office.....266-1900.

Requirements are: deskworkers
Six months of sobriety, home group and a sponsor.

Night phones: all of the above plus
2 years of sobriety and a
good working knowledge of
Central Office.

Become a Faithful Fiver !!

Just pledge **\$ 5.00 a month** to the support of helping alcoholics who still suffer. It's tax deductible and you'll get the *Pass It On* newsletter delivered to your door.



Checks payable to: Albuquerque Central Office. *Thanks for your support!*

Paula G. (Any Lengths Group) has volunteered to chair a committee that has been formed to bring together our proposed "Winter Bash". This event is scheduled for early next year and it to be an all day, fun-filled, and extremely informative experience. If you would like to volunteer your time, your ideas, or would like to in any way participate in this event, call Paula at (505) 341-1009.

UNITY RECOVERY SERVICE

Carry the Message: LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP!

For those interested in how our AA message is carried to the general public and to professionals to reach the still suffering alcoholic, come join us for a Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community Sharing Session.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Area 46 Public Information Committee Chair, from Los Alamos
Area 46 Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee, Las Vegas, NM

Lunch will be served immediately following the presentation.

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 10 AM - Noon

Corrales Senior Center
4320 Corrales Road
Corrales, NM 87048

Lunch will be provided
Contact District 18 with any questions

Albuquerque Central Office Newsletter

1921 Alvarado NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 266-1900

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The Central Office of
Albuquerque is open:

Monday through Friday

8:00 am to 10:00 pm

Saturday and Sunday

9:00 am to 9:00 pm

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The Central Office is
located two blocks
north of
Constitution and four
blocks east of San
Mateo.