

April 2016

WSFC Newsletter

“I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that I am Responsible.”

This was written for the 1965 A.A. International Convention in Toronto. In an article titled, ‘*How I am Responsible became a part of A.A.*’, from the GSO newsletter, Box 4-5-9. The article identifies former AA trustee, Al S. as the author of the Responsibility Statement.

In the souvenir book for the 1965 Convention, Dr. Jack Norris writes:

*“...We must remember that AA will continue strong only so long as each of us **freely and happily gives it away** to another person, only as each of **us takes our fair share of responsibility** for sponsorship of those who still suffer, for the growth and integrity of our Group, for our Intergroup activities, and for AA as a whole. **It is in taking responsibility that real freedom and the enduring satisfactions of life are found. AA has given us the power to choose – to drink or not to drink – and in doing so has given us the freedom to be responsible for ourselves. As we become responsible for ourselves, we are free to be responsible for our share in AA, and unless we happily accept this responsibility we lose AA. Strange, isn’t it?”***

I have a love – hate relationship with the Responsibility Statement. I hate ANYBODY telling me what I should or should not be doing. I HATE expectations placed upon me. But I LOVE sobriety. I LOVE being happy. I

LOVE feeling satisfied. I LOVE feeling like a contributing member of society. I LOVE feeling like I am living gratitude out loud.

When I reflect on my sobriety, I have absolutely ZERO regrets about practicing the Responsibility Statement in my life. In fact, many of the most impactful moments of my recovery have occurred while I was doing service work or as a direct result of doing service work.

I came to AA hopeless and ready to die. I was more afraid of living the rest of my life the way I was living it than I was of dying. But I didn't want to die. I wanted to live the life I had always dreamed of, I just had no clue whatsoever about how to change my life into the one I had always dreamed of living.

The hand of AA was there for me. It took on many forms. It was a smile from a stranger. It was a fresh pot of coffee at a meeting. It was a handshake and a hello from a greeter at a meeting. It was that weird old lady that always walked around the room and refilled coffee cups during the meeting. It was a clean meeting room. It was clean ashtrays at the meeting. It was a great lead or share in a meeting. It was a toothless, dirty chairperson that was willing to stop and chat for a few minutes after a meeting. It was a grumpy old timer that told me in 7 simple sentences what the keys were to staying sober. It was from another knucklehead just like me who told me how to deal with the guy who was going to ask me to buy him smokes, a cup of coffee and lunch EVERYDAY.

The hand of AA wasn't perfect. It didn't look like George Clooney or Heidi Klum. It wasn't as articulate as Ronald Reagan. It wasn't funny like Robin Williams. It wasn't rich like Bill Gates. It wasn't as smart as Stephen Hawking. It came from imperfect people perfectly fulfilling the Responsibility Statement.

My first sponsor pushed me into service work far sooner than I thought I was ready, in a manner which I thought didn't fit and which I thought someone else might be better qualified to perform. But I did it. I did it at first because he told me that it would keep me sober and make life in AA easier. I do it today because he was RIGHT.

When I complained and whined about it – and I did, he told me to take a little test. He said to do it for 90 days, and during those 90 days, to watch to see who else was doing these different service tasks. I did. After the 90 day commitment I told him I was done and I asked him why I was watching to see who else was doing it. His answer was priceless....he asked me if I was still sober and how many of those other folks who were serving were still sober. I was sober and all of the other people serving were sober too. After I answered, he asked me if I thought there might be a connection. I thought maybe there was. So he asked me if I REALLY wanted to stop.

I have to admit....I REALLY did want to stop. And then he stopped me dead in my tracks. He said, "Look, you've been sober for about 5 months now, longer than you've ever been before and AA has given you this gift. You were broke, homeless, hopeless and at the end of your rope, no one wanted you around and you didn't have a friend in the world. Don't you think a little discomfort, a little time and a little humility is worth giving to the program that has saved your life?" I tried like crazy to come up with an argument, but I couldn't. I kept serving.

It was amazing what happened over the next 90 day commitment. I started to become a Member of AA rather than a meeting attender. I started to move toward the middle of AA. I began to feel like I was making a contribution to the program and meetings rather than draining them. I began to feel better about myself. I had a sense of purpose. I learned people's names, and they learned mine. I began to smile more. People began to smile at me. These were all little things, but they meant the world

to me. These little things were the things that began to change my life. I still made mistakes, I still was a total idiot, I still thought I was funnier, more likeable, better looking and smarter than I really was, but I had a home, I had friends, I had hope and I had the beginnings of self-respect and a sense of purpose.

My first sponsor taught me so many things....I don't think I could ever thank him enough, but one of the best things he taught me was that I don't have to be perfect to serve, I don't have to be "ready" to serve, I don't have to be comfortable to serve, I don't have to be anything more than willing....and once I was willing, the most amazing things happened: I STAYED SOBER, I FOUND HOPE, I FOUND PURPOSE, I FELT BETTER, I MADE FRIENDS, and I TRULY BECAME A MEMBER OF AA.

It's been quite a while since I first learned those lessons and the truth of those lessons have been reinforced over and over again. I still serve, sometimes enthusiastically, sometimes quite reluctantly....but I do it. I do it because AA SAVED MY LIFE, gave me hope and gave me the opportunity to live a life beyond my wildest dreams. I do it because even when I go into it thinking "this sucks" or when I have 27 other things I'd RATHER be doing, I always feel better when I'm done. I can tell you this much....AA has given me so much that I don't think I could ever repay the program enough to make it an equitable relationship.

If you are struggling, or feeling less than fulfilled in recovery, I encourage you to find a way to be the hand of AA...make a pot of coffee, push in the chairs, be a greeter, chair a meeting, volunteer on a committee, stay late talking with a newcomer, come early and pass out the books, clean the coffee area, call someone you haven't seen in the rooms in a while...do something....the life you change, the life you save, may just be your own!

Peg's Place

This is a special section dedicated to the people looking for something funny from the Club Newsletter, namely Peg. The opinions expressed are NOT Peg's but I think Peg will find them funny.



Done

**I DON'T ALWAYS SHARE IN
MEETINGS,**



**BUT WHEN I DO, I WAIT TILL
THERE'S 5 MINUTES LEFT
AND SHARE FOR 20.**

Kyle Jason Lane THANKS!



The President's Corner

The WSFC continues to operate with a strong membership and guest attendance across many meetings each week. We estimate that over 1000 people come through the doors each week. Some seeking help, some offering help to others - and many seeking to find some balance in a hectic world.

Some of the major challenges we face as a club with this growing and vibrant fellowship are at the foundation of our mission. We seek to provide a clean, safe and secure environment for all who are finding their way in recovery. We have many different types of 12 Step meetings as well as Open meetings for all to attend.

We are making some changes to the approach to cleaning and security - watch for these changes to take effect in the coming weeks. Please keep the feedback coming in - both positive and constructive comments are welcome. We also accept a bit of venting... :)

We welcomed several new volunteers and members to our mix so far this year - and we are ramping up the "Events" and continuing the monthly Saturday night dinners. Jenny and her teams of volunteers have nailed it and continue to make the parties fun and entertaining. This Saturday, the 30th is our next event, expectations are high!



Finally, the new board meetings are where the best jokes and friendly banter amongst board members can be heard. As we get to know each other better and find our way more fully into our positions, I am sure the board meetings will become more of a hoot. Anyone is welcome to attend a board meeting and see how things work behind the scenes. We are here to serve you as members and help keep the club moving in the right direction.

Please share your feedback!! (wsfnewsletter@gmail.com)

In your service,

Greg G

SPOTLIGHT ON SOBRIETY

Name: Bill G

Sobriety Date: 4/2/13

Hometown: Bolingbrook

Home Group: 7 am group at WSFC

Favorite thing about the WSFC:

Meetings are always available, and I leave feeling better after each one.

Favorite recovery quotes:

Let go and let God. It makes life so much simpler.

What would you have told the newcomer you?

Get a sponsor, do the steps, and attend at least one meeting a day. It really works.

After 3 years, I have now slowed down on meetings only because of less time available to attend, and my family now wants me around.

Why is service important to you?

I really enjoy it, and it gives purpose to help others. I am no longer a hermit.

Why is being a member of the WSFC important to you?

I want to be part of the solution that worked for me. It will work for others, and it is a great place!

ANNIVERSARIES – CONGRATULATIONS!!!

April

Albert C 33	Jim Q 8	Bill G 3
Dean M 30	Jerry K 6	Mark K 3
Chad T 21	Angus W 4	Harry V 2
Frank B 19	Tom S 4	Dan R 1
Pien C 16	Jim C 3	Richard W 1

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our family! Thank you for your support!

Ruth D	John A
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It's a great time to invite a friend to join us on our journey!

There are a number of great reasons to both become a member and to keep your membership active. Meetings. Fellowship. Social events. Service. What are your reasons for being a member? I'd love to hear them, let me know at wscnewsletter@gmail.com.

Join today, or renew your membership....your contributions are vital to keeping the doors open.

The Membership Process Is Changing

The Board will be rolling out a new program for memberships. First of all, the dues are not changing....it will still be an annual rate of \$75. However, the Board has elected to change the process for renewals and new members starting immediately.

Renewals:

If your membership is up for renewal in January, February, March or April....the renewal fee is \$75

If your membership is up for renewal in May, June, July or August....the renewal fee is \$50

If your membership is up for renewal in September, October, November or December....the renewal fee is \$25

Then for 2017, ALL membership dues of \$75 will be due by 1/31/17.

New Members:

If someone new joins the club in January, February, March or April, their dues for the year will be \$75

If someone new joins the club in May, June, July or August their dues for the year will be \$50

If someone new joins the club in September, October, November or December, their dues for the year will be \$25.

Then for the next year, ALL membership dues of \$75 will be due by 1/31.

The Board has elected to implement this change so that the Membership Coordinator and her Committee can focus on growing membership and raising funds for the Home of Our Own Fund rather than monthly renewal communications.

SATURDAY NIGHT DINNERS ARE COMING BACK!

April 30th the WSFC will be serving dinner between the 5pm Beginner's Meetings and the 7pm Open Speaker Meetings. Donations are appreciated, and Jenny V is looking for volunteers to help shop, prepare, serve and clean up. Please reach out to her if you are willing to do some service work.

THINGS WE HEAR:

"Stick with the Winners," my sponsor said. "How will I know who the winners are?" I asked. "They'll be the ones saying the things you don't like," my sponsor said.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE AREA

New meeting – WSFC – 7 PM Mondays– Big room – Big Book Study

BNAA 51st Round UP – May 13-15 – Holiday Inn, Bloomington, IL – call Linda @ 309-825-3622 with questions

NIA 20 Summer Assembly – June 11 – Lord of Life Lutheran Church, La Fox, IL – call Sue @ 630-696-5996 with questions

2016 Illinois State Conference – August 12-14 – Pheasant Run Resort, St Charles, IL – call Dana T @ 847-322-5256 for more information or www.aailcon.org

Big Book Conference – October 29 – 9:00 am – 4:00 pm – Wheaton Bible Church, Wheaton, IL – call Jason @ 312-834-1819 with questions or email niabigbookconference@gmail.com

The WSFC Newsletter welcomes all feedback and input. If you'd like to add, collaborate, participate, etc....let us know at wsfcnewsletter@gmail.com!

Grateful!