

SOBRIETY IN STUMPTOWN

www.pdxaa.com
newsletter@pdxaa.com

Portland Area Intergroup
1212 SE Division, Portland, OR
503-223-8569

October, 2008
Volume 1 Number 10

Monthly Business
Meetings

Moment of Clarity

Portland Area Intergroup: 2nd
Monday, 7:00 PM, 1212 SE

Division St, Portland
PAI CPC: 1st Saturday, 11 AM,
1212 SE Division, Portland

PAI Public Information: 1st
Saturday, 11 AM, 1212 SE
Division, Portland

PAI Treatment Facilities:
Friday, Oct. 10, 6 PM, 1212 SE
Division, Portland

PAI Bridging the Gap: ?

PAI Corrections: ?

PAI Outreach: ?

PAC: 1st Saturday, 6:00 PM,

1111 SW Country Club, L O

Dist 9: 1st Wednesday, 6:30 PM,
24th and Kearney, Portland

Dist 10: last Monday, 7:00 PM,
5th and Hall, Beaverton

Dist 11: last Thursday, 6:00 PM,
186th and Division, Portland

Dist 12: 1st Tuesday, 6:30 PM,
235 SE 80th, Portland

Dist 15: 1st Wednesday, 6:45

PM, 710 6th St, Oregon City

Dist 18: 1st Saturday, 9:30 AM,
215 N 6th St, St. Helens

Dist 23: 1st Tuesday, 6:00 PM,
Lake Grove Fire House

Dist 24: 1st Thursday, 6:00 PM,
SE 16th and Division, Portland

Dist 26: 2nd Thursday, 7:00 PM,
8926-A N Lombard, Portland

Dist 27: 1st Monday, 6:30 PM,
1212 SE Division St, Portland

Dist 31: 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 PM,
937 NE Jackson School Rd,
Hillsboro

Dist 34: 3rd Saturday, 5:00 PM,
485 Portland Ave, Gladstone

Dist 35: 2nd and 4th Saturday,
7:00 PM, 18926 SW Shaw St,
Suite A, Beaverton

Dist 36: 2nd Thursday, 6:00 PM,
2025 SW Vermont St, Portland

Dist 37: 2nd Tuesday, 29775 SW
Town Center Loop East,
Wilsonville

DCM Portland Area: 3rd
Monday, 6:30 PM, 1212 SE
Division St, Portland

"You can't have just one beer."

The thought came into my head out of nowhere. I had never been to an AA meeting, or ever knowingly spoken to anyone who attended AA. But I was about to discover that it was true. How had I come to this point?

At age 15, I fell in love with alcohol. To me, getting drunk was like "having a dream" whenever I wanted. And I wanted to be in this "dream" as often as was feasible. Not wanting to do poorly in school, I managed to limit my drinking to the weekends.

After completing high school, I attended college. There I discovered the joys of marijuana to complement the alcohol. However, having decided to attend medical school, I again was careful to limit my alcohol and drug use sufficiently to allow me to succeed academically.

Once in medical school, I decided that, having "made it," I could relax my self-imposed drug and alcohol restrictions. I allowed myself to get drunk or high during the week, as long as I was caught up in my classes. During this time, it began to be pointed out to me that, while most of my friends liked to drink and use, I *really* seemed to like to drink and use. So, being the responsible person that I was, I decided I would prevent a problem from occurring. I decided I would periodically take drug or alcohol "holidays." I would commit to a period of time

(sometimes months, but usually weeks) without using or drinking. Following the successful completion of my abstinence holidays, I would of course reward myself with extra heavy use. By this time, my use included hallucinogens, amphetamines, barbiturates, opiates, cocaine and more.

The next ten years were marked with periods of increasing use, interspersed with periods of abstinence. I was able to remain mostly abstinent for several years during my internship and residency. However, whenever I returned to use, it was never with more moderation. At one point, about two years before finding sobriety, I became concerned enough about my drug use to pray. One night, while stoned, I cried out, "God, what should I do?" Incredibly, in my intoxicated state, I thought that I "heard" an answer.

God's answer to me was "You need to do two things: First, you need to have faith. Second, you need to stop getting high." Well, I didn't particularly care for this advice. Nevertheless, I chose to believe that even if this all represented some drug-induced hallucination, it may have really been God who gave me the hallucination. So, I dutifully threw all my drugs down the toilette, and began a happy period of abstinence from drugs and alcohol.

Which lasted about ten days. Then, as I began to experience some vague

Continued on next page.

Moment of Clarity, cont.

discontent, it occurred to me that God's directive had been that I stop getting "high;" he hadn't said anything about drinking. I had discovered a loophole.

And thus began my serious drinking. It started with allowing myself "just one" drink (which generally consisted of a full tumbler of gin or vodka) at the end of a rough day. Within two years, I had become an almost daily drinker. I began to blackout. I drove while intoxicated, sometimes with my two children in the car. I returned to using other drugs, I wrote illegal prescriptions. I used drugs while on duty in the hospital. As I increasingly tried to regulate my drinking, the more my drinking escalated. Shame and self-loathing appeared in my life. Here I was with a successful career, a loving wife and children, and so many blessings. Yet I felt like a huge failure.

During this period, I continued trying to demonstrate to myself that I did not have a really serious problem. I would manage to remain abstinent or drink moderately for periods of time. However, these periods of time began to shorten: months became weeks; weeks became days. It finally began to dawn on me that perhaps I should cease drinking all together. At first, this thought was so frightening that I actually began to drink even more.

And then, for some reason, on my son's first birthday, it occurred to me that somehow I really could quit "for good." Two days later, I made the official decision to quit. This would be the day I quit drinking! And so, as a sort of good bye "toast," I decided to send myself off with only one final beer.

And that's when the thought "you can't have just one beer" inexplicably appeared in my head.

I was vaguely concerned that this might be another one of those messages from God so, with some vague hope of insurance, I said a quick Our Father before I opened the bottle and drank it down...

After consuming another five beers and all the scotch in the house, I drunkenly realized that it was true: I could not have just one beer. I cried out to my wife, "I think I'm an alcoholic!" (She replied, "I think so too!"). The next day, I approached a colleague who I had recently learned had had alcohol problem. He took me to an AA meeting after work. It was that night that I discovered the fellowship of AA.

I had no idea at the time, but from that night on, my life would drastically change. I heard it said that, if I completely surrendered myself to the AA way of life, my entire outlook would change. I would know a new freedom and happiness, and that my feelings of useless and self-pity would slip away. These promises and many others have indeed come to pass.

As of today, 22 years later, I have not yet had to take another drink. Life has not always been easy for sure. I've had my share of challenges—losses, depression, and other heartaches. However, when I have been able to use the tools shared with me in Alcoholics Anonymous, I have been able to discover acceptance, serenity, and other blessings within each of these challenges. And my blessings are many. Today I am grateful for my life, and grateful to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, which has allowed me to discover meaning and purpose in my life, one day at a time.

Thank God for my moment of clarity.

Terry M.,
This is Your Life, Portland

Notes From My Desk

Action Is The Magic Word

As many of you already know, we have been given a collection of over 5000 AA talks that represent sobriety from our co-founders to present day stories. "Preacher" Paul initiated the collection and as a result of his dedication and perseverance the collection continues to grow. We have just recently received several thousand additional talks and documents that cover years of AA history that most of us will never come in contact with. Currently we are planning to train a few volunteers to be able to instruct others on

how the collection is organized and how to get the most out of it. We will be having a “featured” speaker of the month that should be a fun and interesting way to discover how other AA’s work their program and how AA has evolved across the country and around the world.

The feature this month is a special talk mp3 formatted CD of Joe and Charlie’s Big Book Study weekend. This was recorded in 1993 in Vancouver Washington. If you would like to purchase one of this month’s featured CD’s please call ahead to central office 503-223-8569 and place your order. (We need to know how many to prepare, we don’t keep multiple copies on hand.) The cost for this mp3 cd is \$12.00. The run time is about 9 hours.

If you think you would be interested in this volunteer position please give us a call and about the “Action is the Magic Word” collection. 503-223-8569, 9am-5pm Monday through Friday.

In Gratitude,
Garry B.
Office Manager

Meeting Updates:

To find information about new meetings or meetings that have changed since the last meeting schedule was printed, click on [Updates](#) on the Intergroup website, www.pdxaa.com.

Coming Events:

To find information about coming events, click on [Events](#) on the Intergroup website.

Rebuilding Our Prudent Reserve

As of the end of the September, we are 18.1% of the way toward rebuilding our prudent reserve with \$5,427.61 toward the goal of \$30,000.

Committee News

Intergroup committees carry the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic. Please help with this Twelfth Step work. Sign up by clicking on [Service](#) on the Intergroup website.

Hotline: openings for Hotline shifts and for 12th Step volunteers. 12th Step Volunteers talk to newcomers who have questions.

Cooperating with the Professional Community and Public Information: The two committees are working together to put the message of recovery to the public and to the professional community—health care, clergy, legal, educators, social workers and others.

Bridging the Gap: BTG is a one-time temporary contact for people transitioning from a treatment center to meetings.

Treatment Facilities: The Treatment Committee is now fulfilling weekly commitments in nearly as many facilities as we were monthly at the printing of last month's Sobriety in Stumptown. We feel like we are heading the right direction but we need support from everyone to continue to grow. Please sign up to volunteer on the website and please come to our next meeting on October 10th at the Intergroup office at 7:00 pm to find personal opportunities to carry the message. In addition to directly carrying the message there is a desperate need for meeting schedules and literature. If you have used books or literature that you can donate to the treatment committee please bring them to the intergroup offices. If you or your group can afford to purchase these items to support us, please do. Garry at the office has set aside an area to store these items for us. For more information, email tf@pdxaa.com

Corrections: Currently our focus is to carry the AA message to youths in the Multnomah County Detention Center (JDH). We need many volunteers to help bring AA meetings to the facility on a regular basis. Call the intergroup office.

Portland Access Committee

The Portland Access Committee meets on the first Saturday of every month at the United Church of Christ, 1111 SW Country Club Road, Lake Oswego, OR 97034. The meeting starts at 6 pm (ish) and usually lasts 1.5 hours. We welcome people just interested in finding out more about what we do. You don't need to know sign language to help. Email us at pdxaccess@gmail.com with questions.

September 2008 Financial Summary

Beginning Cash on Hand: (\$1,562.53)

Income: \$27,673.31

Expenses: \$25,388.86

Ending Cash on Hand: (\$721.92)

Become a Published Writer

Deadline for articles in Stumptown Sobriety is the 20th of each month.

Portland Area Intergroup, 1212 SE Division, is open Monday through Friday, 9 to 5.