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MIRUS

Minneapolis Intergroup: Recovery, Unity, Service

February 2015 *Step, Tradition, and Concept Two*

Step Two

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

My early days of sobriety are both a blur and vivid, as clear as they were yesterday. What I do remember is that I could not keep going the way I was living. I had hit rock bottom, broke and helpless.

What brought me to AA? I was living in my brother's basement. Six months before this I had been fired from my job at a bank. My life had been unmanageable for a long time but I was finally willing to admit it. Every night I would swear I would not drink again but the next day I'd find myself drinking again. I stole wine from my brother's wine cellar. Sometimes I would go to MacDonald's in the morning, buy a cup of orange juice and put alcohol in it and just drive around. I would add Bailey's Irish Cream to my morning coffee and tell myself "that's just an eccentricity." I would go to parks and sit aimlessly, feeling sorry for myself, helpless and hopeless.

When I would return home messed up, my mom would ask me same old questions: "Where have you been? Did you find a job?" To drown out her voice, I would turn music on and turn the volume louder and louder. One night when I was doing that I could not hear her voice, but I saw her face. The pain in her eyes was too much. I knew I could not go on like this anymore. This was around summer of 2004. I was 38 years old and I felt like an immature child.

My life had fallen apart; I had to face it. I needed help. I did not know where to reach for help but a voice inside of me told me to look for AA online. I'd been to AA before, court ordered after I had two DWI's in my 20's. At that time, I thought AA was like an organized religion. The "God" word bothered me. What had "God" ever done for me? My father died when I was young. I am gay; so many people think "God" hates gays. So I did not want anything to do with "God," and I remained very discontented.

This time around, after I made the call to Intergroup, I started to go to some afternoon meetings. I would go there and just complain and whine about how unmanageable my

life was. People would just smile and tell me to "keep coming back." I had nowhere else to go so that is what I did. I started to meet people and would go for fellowship with them.

Once I was at a meeting that had Higher Power as a topic. I was very upset. One of the guys walked around with me afterwards and talked about how his higher power was always with him. He told me how I could choose anything or anyone to be my HP, a God of my own understanding. A seed was planted. I liked that idea but I was still not sure — but what did I have to lose?

Soon after, I met my sponsor. I remember the first time I met him at a coffee shop and he walked in with a Big Book. I was so embarrassed. I did not know or think we were actually going to read out of it there. We talked about

Step Two continues on page 5

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Speakers ASL Interpreted Greater Minneapolis Intergroup
of Alcoholics Anonymous
Welcome Al-Anon & Alateen



**32nd Annual
Gratitude Night**
Saturday February 21, 2015

AA Speaker: Mari G, Ontario, Canada
Al-Anon Speaker: Scott T., Bloomington, MN

6:30 Social Hour/Musical Entertainment

7:30 Program & Speakers

10:00 Musical Entertainment and Dance

Celebrate gratitude by visiting the service tables before and after the speakers!
Area 36 TFC/CFC/Pink Can Gopher State Roundup/Founders Day
Area 36 Remote Community/Special Needs Greater Minneapolis Intergroup
Area 36 Archives / AA Grapevine Greater St. Paul Intergroup
Area 36 P/CPC Al-Anon-Alateen Information Services

MINNEAPOLIS CONVENTION CENTER
1301 Second Avenue South, Minneapolis
Ballroom A—Across from Dunn Bros
Look for greeters. Look for blue & yellow balloons.

Tickets: \$12.00

Tickets available starting December 18th @ Reps Meeting

Intergroup Office – IG Representative – Ticket Committee – At the Door

This Intergroup event is self-supporting through the sale of tickets.

Minneapolis Intergroup - 7204 W 27th Street Suite 113 - St. Louis Park MN 55426
952.922.0880 aaminneapolis.org

Greater Minneapolis Intergroup • Alcoholics Anonymous®

7204 W. 27th St., Suite 113 • St. Louis Park, MN 55426-3112 • 952-922-0880 • www.aaminneapolis.org • email: info@aaminneapolis.org
OFFICE HOURS: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9 am-4:30 pm • Tuesday & Thursday 9 am-7 pm • Saturday 9 am-1 pm

Notes from your Service Office:

"Celebrating 80 Years of Recovery, Unity & Service – The Foundation for Our Future."

The Pass It On Marathon on New Year's Eve was a great success. Chairpersons Jake H. and Alison L. worked for months to prepare for the event, coordinating many committee chairs and volunteers to run the show. The speaker, Brittani L., shared her story, a testament to the program and how it can transform a life. The Sobriety Countdown introduced us to several newcomers with 10 days or less of sobriety.

Many thanks to all the volunteers!

Recovery, Unity and Service Conference

I attended the RUS Conference in Owatonna on the weekend of January 2-4. There were many presentations on various aspects of Recovery, Unity and Service in Alcoholics Anonymous and how these three legacies can be carried out by our membership.

This conference, with its thought-provoking and inspiring topics and well-planned presentations, was very impressive. One attendee said, "I can't believe all AA members don't attend the RUS Conference – it is so great!" I agree wholeheartedly. I look forward to going next year.

This conference reminded me to be thankful for each AA member who participates in service, whether attending District Meetings, Intergroup Rep Meetings, the Area Assembly Meetings, serving on Area Committees or any of

the many more opportunities we have available to anyone who wishes to enhance their AA experience and make it possible for newcomers to have the many services AA has to offer available to them.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 21st for the 32nd Annual Gratitude Night at the Minneapolis Convention Center. This is a night for celebrating and acknowledging everyone who has contributed to the success of Greater Minneapolis Intergroup – to name just a few, those who are on the twelfth step list and available to make a call to an alcoholic who still suffers, the individuals and groups who cover the Intergroup phones, the group representatives, those who facilitate the Orientation Meeting, the volunteers who prepare the MIRUS for mailing, the dedicated Board members, and many, many more. It's not about a few of us but all of us.

Gratitude Night features two excellent speakers, Mari G., from Ontario, Canada as AA speaker and Scott T. from Bloomington as the Al-Anon speaker. Music and dancing follows. Another feature is a number of tables set up with information on the various Area 36 committees. Please come and bring some friends and family!!

In Service,

Your Office Manager, Gail S.

Notes from Your Board

"It may seem incredible that these men are to become happy, respected, and useful once more...The practical answer is that since these things have happened among us, they can happen with you...The age of miracles is still with us. Our own recover proves that!"

Oh ya? Me? No way! Happy, respected and useful? Get out! I just wanted the pain to stop. As I got to the end of my drinking in January 1988, my body hurt and I felt sick. The dread, terror and despair were far worse though. There was relief when I stopped drinking. But these emotions were worse in late summer 1993 when I finally gave A.A. a serious look. Thank God for the men I knew who had similar sober dates to mine who pointed the way to A.A. meetings, service (some of these guys were answering phones at Intergroup) and a sponsor. Again, I wanted relief from the pain. I thought, "If it can work for these guys, maybe it can work for me too."

I am blessed to be working side by side with the Intergroup Staff, fellow and past board members and volunteers who serve the groups and A.A. members.

We had a lovely time at our Winter Open house in December. And Pass it On was a grand success. There was still ample free parking, yet we had the highest attendance since 2010. It was a great time.

I'm looking forward to spending time with y'all at Gratitude Night in February.

Yours in service,

Robert S.

Calendar of Events

Open Speaker Meetings

Thursday:

Central Pacific Group, 7:30 pm
Central Lutheran Church, 333 South 12th St., Minneapolis

Foxhall Chapter 7 Group, 7:30 pm
Wooddale Church, 6636 Shady Oak Road, Eden Prairie

Friday:

Edina Open Speaker Meeting, 7:30 pm
Christ Presbyterian Church, 6901 Normandale Blvd., Edina

Three Legacies, 7:30 pm
Cross of Glory Baptist Church, SW Corner Excelsior Blvd and Shady Oak Road, Hopkins
A sign language interpreter is provided each week.

Saturday:

There Is A Solution (Beginners Meeting),
6:00 pm, Dakota Alano Society, 3920 Rahn Road, Eagan

Saturday Night Open Speaker Meeting,
8:00 pm, 2218 1st Avenue South, Minneapolis

Saturday Night 7:30 Open Speaker Meeting
At The Common Table
2001 Riverside Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55454
(parking in back of bldg. off Riverside)

Saturday Night Live Open Speaker Meeting, 7:30
Basilica of St. Mary's School, third floor
16th & Hennepin (behind the church)
Handicap accessible

Tradition One, 7:30 pm
Pilgrim United Methodist,
4325 Zachary Lane, Plymouth

Sunday:

Step & Speaker Open Meeting; 7:00 pm
First Baptist Church,
10th & Hennepin, Minneapolis

Special Events

February 21, 2015
Minneapolis Intergroup's 32nd Annual Gratitude Night
Minneapolis Convention Center
Minneapolis, MN
Doors open 6:30 pm

April 18, 2015
Archives Alive! No.3
Area 36 Archives Repository
Glencoe, MN
9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Deadline for publication of notices is the 10th of the preceding month.

May 17, 2015
21st Annual Serenity Breakfast
By Minnetonka Big Book Study Group
At Minnetonka Community Center
Breakfast 8:00 am to 10:25 am
BB Meeting 9:00 am to 10:00 am
Speaker 10:30 am to noon
Speaker will be ASL Interpreted

General Service Announcements

February 14, 2015
Area Committee Meeting
Best Western, North Mankato, MN
9:30 am – 11:30 am; 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

February 27 – March 1, 2015
West Central Regional Service Conference
Norfolk Lodge and Suite, Norfolk, NE

March 21, 2015
Area Assembly
Best Western Nicollet Inn, Burnsville, MN
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

April 11, 2015
Delegate's Workshop
St. John's Lutheran Church, Northfield, Mn
9:00 am to 4:00 pm

April 19 – 25, 2015
65th Annual General Service Conference
New York, NY

Most Area 36 events have a map on how to find the location @ www.area36.org. Open Speaker Meetings are listed for the convenience of members who wish to bring newcomers and non-alcoholic friends. Listing in the Minus should not be construed as any endorsement on the part of Minneapolis Intergroup. Call Intergroup if you need directions to any of these Open Speaker Meetings. Roundups, Workshops and Special Events are not endorsed by Minneapolis Intergroup and listings are provided for informational purposes only. Flyers for these events are available at the office.

HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSINGS
FEBRUARY 16TH
PRESIDENT'S DAY
Phones answered by Night Owls

AA Pamphlet of the month:
A.A. and the Armed Services

AA Book of the month:
Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers

Grapevine Book of the month:
Dr. Bob-1951
&
Bill W.-1971
Grapevine Editions

Concept Two

‘Concept I establishes the “final responsibility and ultimate authority” of the A.A. groups; but, in actual practice, how are they to manage A.A.’s service affairs? By delegation, Concept II declares.’

When in 1955, the A.A. groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference—excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or Article 12 of the Conference Charter—“the actual voice and effective conscience of our whole society...”

Bill and Dr. Bob transferred their **immediate** service responsibility and authority to the Board of Trustees and transferred their **ultimate service responsibility and authority** to the A.A. groups themselves. Bill writes: “In the course of these developments, the great difference between ultimate and immediate service authority became apparent. As early as 1945, it began to be evident that the co-founders’ ultimate responsibility and authority for services should never be wholly vested in a board of trustees.” (Concept II, The A.A. Service Manual). How I understand this is that groups hold the ultimate authority and the Conference and Trustees hold the operational authority. The groups delegate this authority to the Conference and Trustees, they do not transfer it them. The groups ultimately remain responsible for the actions of the Conference and Trustees.

The principle of unselfishness provides for the difference and distinction between ultimate authority and immediate authority. We are asked to develop an attitude of discipline in order to implement our first concept attitude of dedication.

Concept II in action is seen annually by the delegates from the U.S. and Canada meeting every spring for six days at the General Service Conference in New York with the trustees of the General Service Board, the staffs of the General Service

Group Contributions – December 2014. Thank you all, in the Spirit of Hope.

4100 AA Group	Chunks & Measures Sq 88 at 2218	It Might Have Been Worse	Ridge Runners II Group	Temple Wed. AA Group
42nd St AA Group	Common Solution Big Book Study	It Might Have Been Worse	Rojo Group	TGIF AA Group
A Levelers Group	Coon Rapids Alano Sq 2	Kozy's Noon Men's AA	Rule 62 AA	The Hand of AA
A Vision for You	Dakota Alano 1145am Thurs.	Ladies Night Happy Hour-Sahara Club	Salt & Pepper Senior Group	There is a Solution Womens AA
AA Tuesday AM Group	Dakota Alano Friday 6pm	Lake of the Isles Men's Tues PM	Saturday Classes	Third Tradition Group of AA
Alliance AA	Delano Saturday Morning	Lakers Mon 630	Saturday Night Live Group	Third Tradition Group of AA
Artists & Musicians AA	For Today Group	Mainstreeters AA (Plymouth II Alano)	SDSG	Thursday Night Womens AA Group
Basic Principles	Garage Dogs Mens Group GDMG	Minnetonka Big Book Study Group	SDSG	Tradition 3 Group of Edina
Basic Twelve	Garage Dogs Mens Group GDMG	Monday Night Temple Meeting	Serenity Group - Maple Grove	Tradition Five
Basic Twelve	Garage Dogs Mens Group GDMG	Monticello Wed AA 6:30	Serenus AA Group	Tradition Three AA at St. Joseph Church
Boiler Room Squad	Golden Valley AA Group II	New Hope Alano Sq 7	Squad 7 Big Book Study, Blaine	Timing Point Group Wayzata
Breakfast Club-Saturday A.M.	Gratitude Group	Pearls of Wisdom	St. Louis Park Sunday Night AA Group	U.R.S. Tuesday Nite A.A.
Bridges-Shakopee	Gratitude Group	Phoenix Group	St. Luke's Mon Nite AA Group	Valley West Thurs AM Group
Bryant Lake Group	Groveland Group	Plymouth 2 Monday Night Group	Step by Step - Long Lake	We Agnostics of Uptown
Candlelight Group--Chaska	Happy Hour Sq 27	Practical Experience	Steps to Serenity Group	Wednesday OK AA Group
Carver AA Group	Hope's Noon AA	Promises on Knox	Suburban North Squad 9	Womans AA Redeemer Luth.
Cavalier Club Mainstreeters	HOW II Group	Rich/Blmngn Alano Sq 6G	Sunday Night Grace	

Every AA Group that sends a group contribution is sent a receipt along with a "Thank You" letter from the office. It is the responsibility of the group treasurer or trusted servant to share the receipt and "thank you" letter with their respective group. Every AA Group that sends a contribution will be listed in the MIRUS. On request your AA group can request a contribution summary.

Group Contributions/Birthday Plan** December 2014

Basic Twelve

Foxhall Chapter 7 - (2)

Bridges - Shakopee

**On their sobriety birthday, many AA members contribute one dollar or more for each year of sobriety to any or all of our four service entities; District, Area Assembly, the General Service Office and the local Intergroup. Some members attribute their birthday contribution to their home group. Those groups receive a receipt and "Thank You" letter from the office and are listed in the MIRUS.

Twelve Concepts for World Service, written by Bill W. in 1962

When, in 1955, the A.A. groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference – excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter – the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society.

Office and the A.A. Grapevine. They consider in committees and as a conference body matters deemed to be of importance to A.A. as a whole. Prior to that meeting every A.A. in our Area is given ample opportunity to review, consider and be heard on the matters expected to be dealt with. These items will come to us in the form of “Proposed Conference Action Items” and will be brought to your attention through the upcoming service structure meetings. All A.A.’s are encouraged to attend these meetings, which will include your local District meetings, the annual Southern Minnesota Delegate’s Workshop, and the annual West Central Regional AA Service Conference (WCRAASC). The WCRAASC rotates around our region each year – this year it is in Norfolk, NE.

The “where and when” of all these events can be found elsewhere in this newsletter and in a full calendar and flyers available on our Area 36 web site at: <http://www.area36.org>. For this structure to be fully effective, we all need to participate and have our voices heard.

Yours in Service,

Lisa G., Panel 65 Delegate, Area 36, Southern Minnesota
delegate@area36.org

Reference for this article and additional information about the Concepts can be found in “The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service” http://www.aa.org/pdf/products/en_bm-31.pdf and “The Twelve Concepts Illustrated” pamphlet (P-8) http://www.aa.org/pdf/products/p-8_the-twelveconcepts.pdf

Intergroup Board

Board Officers

Chairperson	Robert S.
Co-Chairperson	Jane H.
Secretary	Lisa M.
Treasurer	Tom B.

Board Members

Mary G.	Ron C.
Jim R.	Jeanie O.
Doug H.	Michael D.
Ginger B.	Miles S.
Gail S. Office Manager, Ex-Officio	

General Service District Board Liaisons

District 7	Mary G.
District 13	Jeanie O.
District 14	Ginger B.
District 17	Doug H.
District 18	Michael D.
District 19	Miles S.
District 20	Robert K.
District 21	Ron C.
District 22	Jim R.
District 24	Tom B.
District 25	Lisa M.

Intergroup Staff

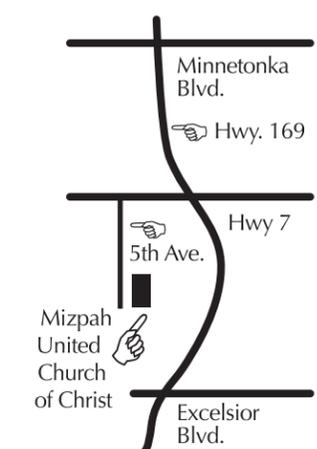
Gail S.	Office Manager
Claudia S.	Office Assistant
Terri D.	Office Assistant
Drew H.	Office Assistant

Your Intergroup Board meets every month at 6:30pm on the Tuesday before the Rep’s meeting in the Intergroup Office.

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The MIRUS represents the experience of AA members. Their thoughts, expressed herein, are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does this publication imply endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or Greater Minneapolis Intergroup.

NOTICE • NOTICE



**Intergroup
Reps meeting**
Thursday,
Feb. 26th
6:30 pm

At Mizpah United
Church of Christ:
412 5th Ave. N.
Hopkins, MN 55343.
(See orientation mtg
directions)

Metro District General Service Meetings

District 7	Second Monday, 6:30 pm St. Andrew Lutheran Church 13600 Technology Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55344
District 13	First Tuesday, 7:00 pm United Methodist Church 10506 Hanson Blvd. N.W., Coon Rapids
District 14	First Monday, 7:30 pm United Methodist Church, 609 8th St. NW, Buffalo, MN
District 17	Second Tuesday, 7:30PM Crossroads Assembly of God Church, 10478 Bell Ave, Plato, MN
District 18	Second Thursday, 6:30 pm 1900 Nicollet Avenue S, Plymouth Congregational Church
District 19	Second Wednesday, 7:00 pm Rosemount Community Center, Room 210 13885 S. Robert Trail, Rosemount
District 20	4th Tuesday 7:00 pm Twin Lake Alano Club Brooklyn Center
District 21	Second Tuesday, 7:30 Pilgrim United Methodist Church; 4325 Zachary Lane, Plymouth
District 22	Second Wednesday, 7:30 pm St. Paul's Lutheran Church; 13207 Lake St., Minnetonka (N.W. corner of Baker Rd. and Hwy. 7)
District 24	First Monday, 7:00 pm St. John's Lutheran Church; 8th and Fuller, Shakopee
District 25	Second Wednesday, 7:30 pm Woodlake Lutheran Church, 7525 Oliver Ave South, Richfield, MN 55423

Intergroup A.A. Orientation Open Meetings

The Saturday Orientation Open Meeting takes place every week at 10am at the Mizpah Church, located just west of 169 and just south of Hwy 7 in Hopkins.

02/07	The History of AA and its Founders Her Story
02/14	Step Six / Tradition Six His Story
02/21	AA Literature: The AA Grapevine Her Story
02/28	Step Seven / Tradition Seven His Story

January 1948

Editorial: On the Second Tradition

"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."

Sooner or later, every A.A. comes to depend upon a Power greater than himself. He finds that the God of his understanding is not only a source of strength, He is also a source of positive direction. Realizing that some fraction of that infinite resource is now available, his life takes on an entirely different complexion. He experiences a new inner security together with such a sense of destiny and purpose as he had never known before. As each day passes, our A.A. reviews his mistakes and vicissitudes. He learns from daily experience what his remaining character defects are and becomes ever more willing that they be removed. In this fashion he improves his conscious contact with God.

Every A.A. group follows this same cycle of development. We are coming to realize that each group, as well as each individual, is a special entity, not quite like any other. Though A.A. groups are basically the same, each group does have its own special atmosphere, its own peculiar state of development. We believe that every A.A. group has a conscience. It is the collective conscience of its own membership. Daily experience informs and instructs this conscience. The group begins to recognize its own defects of character and, one by one, these are removed or lessened. As this process continues, the group becomes better able to receive right direction for its own affairs. Trial and error produce group experience, and out of corrected experience comes custom. When a customary way of doing things is definitely proved to be best, then that custom forms into A.A. Tradition. The Greater Power is then working through a clear group conscience.

We humbly hope and believe that our growing A.A. Tradition will prove to be the will of God for us.

To hear our ultimate authority

"The AA Traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living. They show us how we may best relate ourselves to each other and to the world outside. Each tradition asks us to lay aside personal desires, ambitions, pride and resentment. They ask for personal as well as group sacrifice."

—Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age p. 96-97.

My first experience with this tradition was when I attended one of the monthly business meetings at my new home group in Minneapolis, MN. The topic that was being discussed was quite contentious, with strong opinions being voiced both pro and con. The debate centered on a particular service the group was considering offering to group members. The old timers were set in their ways and had a very narrow idea of how the group should position itself on this particular topic. After all, they were the founders and knew what was best for the group. The old timers felt that providing this service was outside our primary purpose – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. On the opposite side of the issue were others who felt that this particular service would help our group carry the message and provide more open access to our meetings to a larger group of individuals.

Many people are coming to think that Alcoholics Anonymous is, to some extent, a new form of human society. In our discussion of the 1st Tradition, it was emphasized that we have, in A.A., no coercive human authority. Because each A.A., of necessity, has a sensitive and responsive conscience, and because alcohol will discipline him severely if he backslides, we are finding we have little need for man-made rules or regulations. Despite the fact that we do veer off at times on tangents, we are becoming more able to depend absolutely on the long-term stability of the A.A. group itself. With respect to its own affairs, the collective conscience of the group will, given time, almost surely demonstrate its perfect dependability. The group conscience will, in the end, prove a far more infallible guide for group affairs than the decision of any individual member, however good or wise he may be. This is a striking and almost unbelievable fact about Alcoholics Anonymous. Hence we can safely dispense with those exhortations and punishments seemingly so necessary to other societies. And we need not depend overmuch on inspired leaders. Because our active leadership of service can be truly rotating, we enjoy a kind of democracy rarely possible elsewhere. In this respect we may be, to a large degree, unique.

Therefore we of Alcoholics Anonymous are certain that there is but one ultimate authority, "a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience."

Bill W.

(All of the editorials by Bill covering the 12 Points of Tradition appear in the new 48-page Tradition pamphlet, along with the 12 Points themselves. Copies of the new pamphlet were distributed free during November by the Alcoholic Foundation through the group secretaries. Extra copies may be had at 10 cents each by addressing requests to: Alcoholic Foundation, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y.)

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Step Two continued from front cover

"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail."
—Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 89

**Intergroup
12 Step Service Opportunities
Contribute Your Time
at Minneapolis Intergroup
Just Stop In!**

Daytime Phone Answering
Training Provided
Daytime Office Volunteers
Service work available

**Carry the AA Message
to Outside Agencies***

Groups and Members are Invited to:

Scott County Jail in Shakopee (Men & Women)
Hennepin County Adult Detention Center (Men)
Mission Nursing Home, Plymouth (Men & Women)
Waseca Federal Women's Prison (Women)
Sherburne Co. Jail/Federal Holding Facility (Men & Women)
Augustana Health Care (Men & Women)
Pride Institute (Men & Women)
Smith Lodge Transitional Housing (Men & Women)

Call or Stop by the Office for Details

**In Cooperation with the Professional Community*

"This is our *twelfth* suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can."
—Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 89

The debate ran hot. After much discussion a vote was taken. During the first vote, it seemed that one side was the clear winner. However, after hearing and discussing the minority opinion, the tide changed and a new light was shed. As I watched this unfold, something I found completely amazing happened. The group had come upon an answer, not by one person's voice crowding out all others, but by small individual statements of how this service would affect the members and those they knew. The group was able to come to a decision without resentment, fear or frustration. Our ultimate authority spoke through the group discussion.

The lesson I have learned from this Tradition is that no one person in the AA group is in charge. Our experienced older members can offer great insight and direction, but no directive. They can share their experience, strength, and hope, but never force the group to adhere to their dictates. They cannot make either service policy decisions or mandate group affairs without the group conscience to guide these decisions. The conscience of the group, when properly informed of the facts, issues and principles involved is often wiser than any one leader. The right decision will come to us if we are open to it.

Kathryn F., Independence, MN, for the Mirus
Reprinted from February 2002

going to any length to stay sober. I thought I was unique but he told me I was just a garden variety drunk. This actually reassured me. Still, when it came to doing Step Two, I had some resistance. I thought I was an intellectual, but I did not know if I was an atheist or an agnostic. I really did not know the difference. I just knew I did not believe in God. My sponsor did not want to push his beliefs on me. He asked me to talk to five other people in AA about how they found or worked spirituality in their lives.

Besides that, I am not insane! How dare you? I thought insane meant being in psych wards and I had never been to one, although I certainly would have qualified. My sponsor had to explain to me "repeating the same thing over and over and over again and expecting different results is insanity". I remembered how I had kept telling myself "this time it will be different." I can tell you it never was different. I wanted to drink like normal people, but I would always end up in blackouts or getting sick. I could never control my drinking. When I tried to, I was miserable. Once I asked a friend to watch me at a party. I told her I would only have one beer. That whole night I had to sit by her as if she was babysitting me — a 38 year old man.

It was clear that it was my best thinking that brought me into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, and that I had to turn it over to someone else now. But trust had always been a big issue for me. How can I trust? But by choosing to listen to a sponsor, I made the choice between spiritual life and alcoholic death. Carl Jung said "Put yourself in spiritual atmosphere and hope divine lighting strikes you". That is what I did.

Since that day in July of 2004, ten years later, I have come to believe in a Power greater than myself. I am a firm believer in positive affirmations. I also meditate pretty regularly.

I have learned to trust people. I have hope now. I know people are genuinely willing to help me and actually want good things for me. And I also want good things to happen for others. Now I love to help others and I live in gratitude.

I am so grateful for this program. I have met the most wonderful people. Alcoholics Anonymous has saved my life. I am glad I found that gift of desperation that allowed me to be open minded and trust again. I have realized God does not make too hard terms with those who seek them.

P.B., Minneapolis, for the MIRUS