



The Beacon

November 2013

The Beacon Statement

The Beacon is published to foster unity, facilitate communication among AA members and groups within the North Alabama area, and present the experience and opinions of individual members of Alcoholics Anonymous on the disease of Alcoholism and recovery from it. Opinions in The Beacon are not those of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or the Huntsville Area Intergroup Association. We aim to be an instrument of carrying the A.A. message, and to publish AA related material, including personal stories of experience strength, and hope—as well as what we feel to be important information about what is happening in this area. All material is reviewed by the Beacon editor and the Huntsville Area Intergroup Association.

The Beacon on the Web!

For those who have access to the “Web”, The Beacon is available via the internet. Just visit the AA District 20 web site at: <http://www.aahuntsvilleal.org> and click on the “NEWS” menu entry. Each issue will be posted (in PDF format) for download directly after publication.

Beacon Submissions

To reach the editor with article suggestions, feedback, contributions and ideas: Email to: beacon@aahsv.org. Or drop off at The Beacon mailbox inside the Central Office, 3322 S. Memorial Pkwy, Bldg 600, Suite 603, or call 256-885-0323.

From the Editor:

My battle with that staph infection is over. Now to get back to the task at hand—namely, to send out the latest Huntsville Area Intergroup News.

ANSWERING SERVICE CALL LISTS

Of most importance to every AA member in this area is our attempt to update the answering service call lists of volunteers willing to be contacted through our Answering Service to talk with folks who are looking for answers about the Fellowship and recovery. These lists will be distributed to all groups on Nov 24th—at the HAIA and District 20 meetings. If you are interested in sharing the “message” with another alcoholic, please search out this list and let us know the hours/days you can be available to either (1) answer a request for AA information that will be forwarded to you by the Answering Service, and/or (2) be willing to go out on a 12th step call. Keep in mind that often this is often the very first contact the newcomer has with our Fellowship. There are many instances where AA members previously listed in the Answering Service book were not available when called. This means that the person needing help was not able to talk one-on-one with another alcoholic. You can specify the days of the week and hours you will be available to take calls from the Answering Service. This is one very valuable service you can be involved in on your journey on the Road of Happy Destiny. If you would like more information on this service work, please feel free to call me, Bill P., at 256-426-5717 or Patty K.J. at 256-508-2630. I’ll leave you with this one question: Do you remember your first contact with AA? How much better was it to talk with another recovering alcoholic than to search out and read a static computer web site?

— Bill P., Ed.—

HOPE

“The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer from alcoholism.”

— Excerpt from the book Alcoholics Anonymous, page 17 —

JOY

“So we think cheerfulness and laughter make for usefulness. Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past. But, why shouldn't we laugh? We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others.

— Excerpt from the book Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 132 —

EXPERIENCE

“But the ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with facts about himself, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic in a few hours. Until such an understanding is reached, little or nothing can be accomplished.”

—Excerpt from Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 18 —

(These were submitted by Pat M., Harvest Group)

Honoring Commitments

Over the past few weeks, I have learned a very valuable lesson. Sometimes it is very difficult to honor a commitment. But, in spite of not being physically able to produce a Beacon, I was still able to honor my commitment to sign on the Answering Service at 6 PM on Thursday night -**almost** every time I was supposed to. Yes, I am fallible. Yes, I'm getting older and my “forgetter” keeps getting me into trouble. The commitment still stands, whether I do the action of transferring the phone from the Central Office or not. I have made a pact that I will make sure that phone is transferred—no matter what—from now on. With that said, -- can I direct a question at those folks who have signed up to put in a two hour “stint” at the Central Office? Can YOU make a pact to make sure that someone is sitting at the Central Office during your tour? Sure, it's very easy to call Brenda K. and say that you just can't make it. But that doesn't solve the problem of an empty chair and an unanswered telephone. The number of unanswered calls are on the increase. Alcoholics are NOT being helped. We all need to look inside ourselves and ask “am I fulfilling my commitment”? You are not alone—I am one of those who has “dropped the ball” over past weeks and months. Let's all try to “honor our word” through action. I owe this Fellowship so very much. It truly hurts when I fall down and fail to keep up to my “word”. I plan to make amends in this area starting now — how about you? And for other members: Brenda K. keeps announcing that there are vacant time slots available — do you have two hours to “spare” to answer the phones? How valuable is YOUR sobriety? I don't know about you, but just going to meetings is not sufficient to maintain my sobriety. I must get into “action”.

Submitted by Bill P, Editor

Researching A.A. REDSTONE GROUP History

If you have information about the history of the **Redstone Group**, please send by email to the group's GSR: RedstoneGroup@aahsv.org .

1. Who were the founding members of the group?
2. Where and when was the first meeting held? (At that time, in the Huntsville area, how many groups or meetings were in existence?)
3. Have there been any changes to the group's name over the years?
4. What initiated the meeting: was it the off-shoot of a parent group; was there a split due to disagreements; did a few A.A.s simply decide to start a hometown group, etc.
5. How did the founding members let the community know that a new A.A. meeting was forming?
6. How were the meeting spaces acquired?
7. How many members attended the group's first meeting?
8. Describe member composition, for example, men only, women, young people, etc.
9. How did the group experience growth over the years?
10. Who were the early group officers? List, for example, GSR, Group Contact, Chair, Group Secretary, etc.
11. How often were meetings held and has that changed over the years?
12. Describe the group's growing pains or controversies.

Please feel free to send additional recollections that are significant to the history of the Redstone Group.

Fellowship Group Events

Open **Thanksgiving Day** from 7:00AM to 9:30PM with eating starting at 1:30PM

Christmas day: Open all day from 7:00AM to 9:30PM, eating will start at 1:30PM

New Years Eve: Meeting at 11:00PM - Closed discussion meeting

New Years Day: Open all day from 7:00AM to 9:30PM - snacks will be available

Huntsville Area Intergroup Association (HAIA)

Holiday Party



When? December 15th from 1:30 PM to 5 PM

Where? Fellowship Group, 3322 South Memorial Parkway, Suite 508, Huntsville, AL

Speaker at 3 P.M.

Thoughts To Remember

A recovering alcoholic without a sponsor is like leaving Dracula in charge of the blood bank.

Life consists not of holding good cards, but of playing the cards you hold well!

(submitted by Pat M., Harvest)

WHO'S SITTING NEXT TO YOU?

I know who you are. You are "X" who attends the ABC Meeting at the XYZ Club where AA's meet in Anywhere, U.S.A. I saw you there the other night at the eight o'clock meeting. I don't know how long you've been sober, but I know you've been coming around for a while because you spoke to a lot of people who knew you. I wasn't one of them.

You don't know who I am. I wandered into your meeting place alone the other night, a stranger in a strange town. I got a cup of coffee, and sat down by myself. You didn't speak to me. Oh, you saw me. You glanced my way, but you didn't recognize me, so you quickly averted your eyes and sought out a familiar face. I sat there through the meeting. It was okay, a slightly different format but basically the same kind of meeting as the one I go to at home.

The topic was gratitude. You and your friends spoke about how much AA means to you. You talked about the camaraderie in your meeting place. You said how much the people there had helped you when you first came through the door how they extended the hand of friendship to make you feel welcome, and asked you to come back. And I wondered where they had gone, those nice people who made your entrance so welcoming and so comfortable. You talked about how the newcomer is the life blood of AA. I agree, but I didn't say so. In fact, I didn't share in your meeting. I signed my name in the book that was passed around, but the chairperson didn't refer to it. He only called on those people in the room whom he knew. So who am I? You don't know, because you didn't bother to find out. Although yours was a closed meeting, you didn't even ask if I belonged there.

It might have been my first meeting. I could have been full of fear and distrust, knowing AA wouldn't work any better than anything else I'd tried, and I would have left convinced that I was right. I might have been suicidal, grasping at one last straw, hoping someone would reach out and pull me from the pit of loathing and self-pity from which, by myself, I could find no escape. I might have been a student with a tape recorder in my pocket, assigned to write a paper on how AA works - someone who shouldn't have been permitted to sit there at all but could have been directed to an open meeting to learn what I needed to know. Or I could have been sent by the courts, wanting to know more, but afraid to ask.

It happens that I was none of the above. I was just an ordinary alcoholic with a few years of clean living in AA who was traveling and was in need of a meeting. My only problem that night was that I'd been alone with my own mind too long. I just needed to touch base with my AA family. I know from past experience that I could have walked into your meeting place smiling, stuck out my hand to the first person I saw and said, "Hi. My name is - . I'm an alcoholic from - . If I'd felt like doing that, I probably would have been warmly welcomed. You would have asked me if I knew Old So-and-so from my state, or you might have shared part of your drunk-a-log that occurred in my part of the country. Why didn't I? I was hungry, lonely, and tired. The only thing missing was angry, but three out of four isn't a good place for me to be.

So I sat silently through your meeting, and when it was over I watched enviously as all of you gathered in small groups, talking to one another the same way we do in my home town. You and some of your friends were planning a meeting after the meeting at a nearby coffee shop. By this time I had been silent too long to reach out to you. I stopped by the bulletin board to read the notices there, kind of hanging around without being too obvious, hoping you might ask if I wanted to join you, but you didn't.

As I walked slowly across the parking lot to my car with the out-of-state license plates you looked my way again. Our eyes met briefly and I mustered a smile. Again, you looked away. I buckled my seat belt, started the car, and drove to the motel where I was staying.

As I lay in my bed waiting for sleep to come, I made a gratitude list. You were on it, along with your friends at the meeting place. I knew that you were there for me, and that I needed you far more than you needed me. I knew that if I had needed help, and had asked for it, you would have gladly given it. But I wondered . . . what if I hadn't been able to ask?

I know who you are. Do you remember me?