



The Voice Within

AA SERVICE – *LEGACY OF ACTION*

I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that, I am responsible.

DISTRICT 12 CHRISTMAS ALCATHON

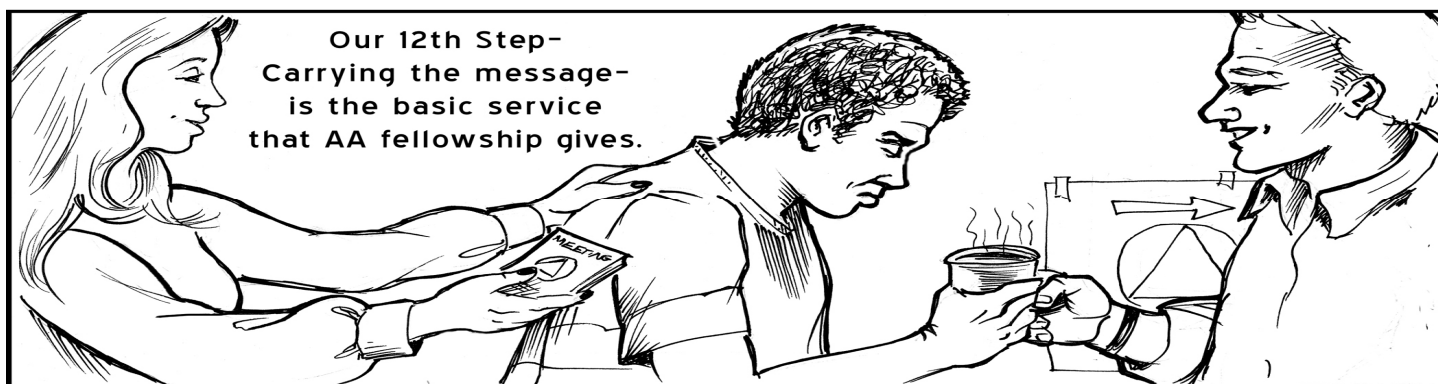
TWENTY FOURS HOURS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS, PLUS FOOD, FELLOWSHIP AND FUN! 6 PM CHRISTMAS EVE. TO 6 PM CHRISTMAS DAY.

SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE. 500 COMMERCIAL ST., MANCHESTER.

AA GROUP	START TIME	END TIME	(HELP UNTIL)
HARD HAT	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	(8:00 PM)
PRECISE METHOD	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	(9:00 PM)
HAPPY HOUR EAST	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	(10:00 PM)
KEEP IT SIMPLE	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	(11:00 PM)
JOY OF LIVING	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	(12:00 AM)
WE STOPPED IN TIME	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	(1:00 AM)
RAINBOW BIG BOOK	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	(2:00 AM)
FIRST LIGHT OF DAY	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	(3:00 AM)
HEARD IT THRU THE GRAPEVINE	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	(4:00 AM)
NORTH END GROUP	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	(5:00 AM)
COURAGE TO CHANGE	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	(6:00 AM)
LIVING SOBER	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	(7:00 AM)
MANCHESTER ORIGINAL	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	(8:00 AM)
CLEAN AND SERENE	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	(9:00 AM)
FREE AT LAST	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	(10:00 AM)
PASS IT ON	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	(11:00 AM)
MEN'S 12 & 12	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	(12:00 PM)
HAPPY HOUR WEST	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	(1:00 PM)
PATHWAY TO SOBRIETY	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	(2:00 PM)
SUNDAY SERENITY	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	(3:00 PM)
"DONNA'S GANG"	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	(4:00 PM)
MASSABESIC GROUP	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	(5:00 PM)
QUEEN CITY GROUP	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	(6:00 PM)
(2) ST. PIUS, and	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	(7:00 PM)
WOMEN'S BACK TO BASICS			

December 2011

DISTRICT 12 NH ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



There is action and more action. "Faith without works is dead"...to be helpful is our only aim.
Alcoholics Anonymous pp. 88-89

ANONYMITY AND SERVICE

At the turn of the year, Americans are encouraged to rejoice. Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, the Winter Solstice, a New Year. Lights, parades, parties, plays, presents, beautiful music. Winter is just beginning, and its beauty is worthy of celebration. There's enjoyment to be had, and why not?

But this widespread presentation of joy and happiness is just that, a presentation. *You're probably not going to experience overwhelming joy as a result of attending a concert or finding the perfect sweater for your mom.* Sharing a special holiday meal with someone or playing *The Messiah* could spark joy, or be just another task. It depends on what you bring to the party, so to speak.

In the preface to the 1984 edition of *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor E. Frankl wrote:

...success, like happiness, cannot be pursued: it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself...happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it. I want you to listen to what your conscience commands you to do and go on to carry it out to the best of your knowledge. (17)

Frankl says you can't get happiness by *trying* to be happy, or arranging your life (or other people's) in order to *produce* happiness, or buying the things you think are going to *make* you happy. True happiness will come in the long term when you live according to your conscience and take action, the kind we often describe as "giving back" or "paying forward." This is service. People might serve their country, their state, their community, or their church. AA service might mean chairing a meeting, sponsorship, taking a commitment, acting as a group services representative (GSR), or serving on a district committee.

Service means acting in the interests of other people in recovery, not just yourself. Service helps to erode self-centeredness, the "me-first" attitude. It doesn't pay any money. It takes time. *Sometimes you might find yourself doing things you're not good at, or don't enjoy.* But in the experience, the opportunity for growth and change in knowledge, skills, character, and spirituality is beyond any other.

In December, AA meetings and members often reference the twelfth step and twelfth tradition. Both tradition and step are based on the idea that to keep sober ourselves, we must pass it on. We must get outside of ourselves and be of use. This fits perfectly with the move from the old year to new, as we change from what and who we used to be to sober people with meaningful lives.

The Twelfth Step says, "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to pass this message to other alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." Not only do we live according to the principles of recovery and unity, but we help pass the message of hope to fellow alcoholics. This service might mean setting out the chairs before a meeting, or mopping the floor, or making coffee. Anyone who is new in the program, or who doesn't feel able to speak in front of a group yet, can help pass the message by making meetings possible. Being able to perform these helpful tasks gives a person a boost of self-respect, even when everything else seems hopeless and out of control.

continued

The Twelfth Tradition reads, "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." This tradition encourages us to forget our desire for personal honor or distinction and serve as just another member of AA, not as some kind of Sobriety Superstar. This tradition means focusing on the message you hear from a speaker, not on whether you personally like or dislike the person who is speaking at any particular moment. And this anonymity opens the door to humility. In humility, we gain respect for others and ourselves. We grow as people of grace and dignity.

True, there are people who treat service as one more chance to be in the spotlight, or be in control. But even if you elect to be responsible for more work, or are honored with an award, it's the service itself that gives you the greatest opportunity for growth and happiness, if you willingly and gratefully accept that gift. Then you will realize the dream of contentment and happiness that so many chase without success. The glimmer and light of the season is beautiful, but what we can become and achieve through service is truly something to celebrate. -Cathy H, Manchester

NEW YEAR'S EVE DINNER DANCE

District 12's Function Committee is sponsoring the 2011 New Year's Eve Dinner & Dance, from 6:00PM New Year's Eve to midnight.

The event will be held at the Parish of the Transfiguration Church on 305 Kelly St. in Manchester. The evening will start with a Fellowship hour with Appetizers and refreshments, followed by a Pork Loin dinner. There will be two guest speakers, raffles, and dancing to midnight to the music of The Rick Shaw Band.

Tickets are \$20 per person available in advance and at the door for the full evening with dinner, or \$10.00 at the door after 8PM. For information or advance ticket sales contact Terry F. (603)828-7932 or Roger D (603)828-7932.

If we don't drink and get to meetings we do in fact get older and sometimes the way to get off the pity pot is to express yourself so here I am claiming another page...a day in sobriety.

Now that the back to back ones have turned into tens of thousands it is good to note that things get better as does our ability to handle people, places and things. Getting down on my knees is no longer something that my knees can handle and every so often the right side of my body is pain racked so lately I have been seeking out the handicapped accessible meetings.

A lot of the church basements have stairways with rails to pull ourselves along with if the knees and feet have trouble following. There are meetings at various shelters that have fewer than 10 steps and that's a plus. The Educational Variety meeting at the Springfield College (current home of the Alcahthon) has a wonderful elevator! Hopefully you get my point which simply is that the joy is in the journey and when the spirit has been helped the body finds a way to follow. Janet K

THE VOICE WITHIN NEEDS YOUR SUBMISSIONS

Stories of experience, strength and hope, anecdotes, articles on AA in general, group announcements, etc.

Cathy H. Newsletter Chair Voicewithinnews@gmail.com

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December 2011

DISTRICT 12 NH ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

THE PULSE OF DISTRICT 12.

It has been my pleasure and honor to serve the members of District 12 as the Voice Within newsletter chair for the past three years.

In the capacity as Chair, the guidelines for responsibilities in our District Charter include the phrase “stay in contact with the pulse of AA groups within the district.” Well, what is the pulse? I’ve found there are many different pulses, not just a single energy, that flows through our area. Rather than dredge up and illustrate, or pontificate, (or bore you is more like it) with all the different pulses I’ve seen flow from the AA groups, I’d like to boil it down to one, the most important, I believe. The One pulse beating under it all is our common effort at sobriety and usefulness, and what that single Unifying effect of chasing sobriety results in. We all have our individual beliefs about just how to practice this program, and how to engage in our fellowship, and just which of the three sides of the AA Triangle might take precedence in our AA life. There’s Service, there’s Recovery, and then there’s Unity. Some swear by just showing up to meetings and thinking they’re engaged in only their Recovery. Some swear by spending as much time involved in Service as most of us do at a full time job. The main Pulse, though, that I see, is Unity. Regardless of how much, or how little you do, we need each other; in one capacity or another, we feed that Unity somehow.

If there is one thing I’ve learned about service, it’s this: It’s not about what I want. It’s not about me. From the day I stepped foot into my very first AA meeting, this journey has been not about fulfilling my own desires, but about completing actions that are foreign to my nature. Yet paradoxically, from that flows the key to my fulfillment. And I hope I take that in ever widening circles out into the world, the one outside of AA. I hope that if you never have, that one day you’ll find yourself engaged in Service. There is a prayer written by an unknown confederate soldier that reads partially:

*I asked for strength that I might achieve; I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men; I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.
I got nothing that I had asked for, but everything that I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered;
I am, among all men, most richly blessed.*

I’ve been blessed to be the Voice Within Chair. I know that Cathy H. will do a tremendous job with it, (if you have any doubts all you have to do is read her submission earlier in this edition) and she has some new great ideas to try out. But do me a favor, if you would: sit down some time at your computer, and send her your thoughts, your ideas about sobriety, your lessons learned, or insights gained. The rest of us need your message as only you can impart, and in turn, you get to “Pass It On”.
Lance C.

Someone once said, “Writing is easy. You just sit at your typewriter and think until drops of blood appear on your forehead.”

My name is Cathy H, and I live in Manchester. I’ve been in and around the program for over 20 years, with a few relapses along the way. (Relapse is NOT one of the steps, newcomers!) It is my privilege to begin service as editor of *The Voice Within* starting in January. *The Voice Within* will continue to abide by the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. I’m looking forward to reading and publishing your articles and commentary, as well as letters to the editor. I’ll be trying some new things, so if you have ideas for the newsletter, please contact me at voicewithinnews@gmail.com. I’d like to thank Lance for all his help and guidance, and for doing a great job over the last three years. With the help of you, the writers and readers of District 12, I think this could be fun.