

MAINSTAY

New Zealand - Aotearoa

May / June 2010

Experience

Strength

Hope



The 12 Steps

- 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.*
- 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
- 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*
- 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*
- 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*
- 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*
- 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*
- 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
- 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
- 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*
- 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*
- 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

AA Preamble

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

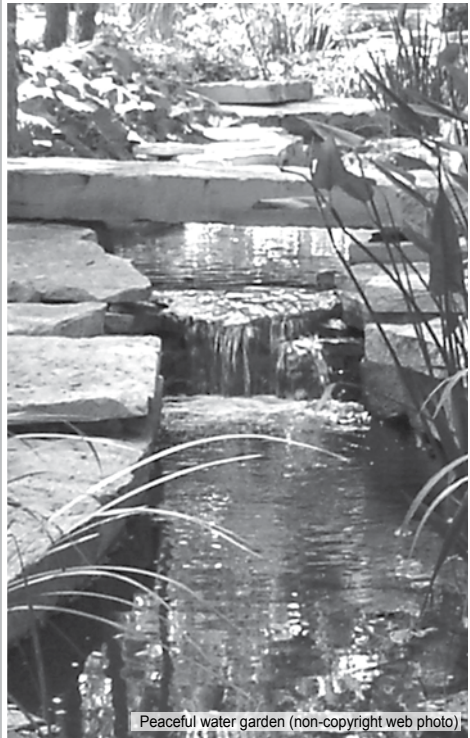
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PHOTO CREDITS:

Front: 'North Canterbury' by Geraldine, Christchurch

Back: 'Dandelion' by June D, Nelson



Peaceful water garden (non-copyright web photo)

Mainstay is the magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous in New Zealand. It communicates the experience, strength, and hope of AA in New Zealand reflecting a broad spectrum of current AA experience in recovery, unity, and service. Mainstay is a 'meeting in print' including the service and AA group fellowship aspects of AA life and AA meetings, and only publishes articles relating to AA and alcoholism. Mainstay aims to be self supporting and is not affiliated to any outside groups or interests and does not accept paid advertising. Submission of articles and letters are invited and should be sent to:

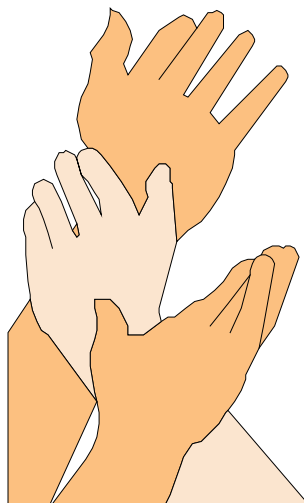
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Publication of any article does not imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or Mainstay. Personal opinions expressed in letters or articles should not be attributed to the Fellowship. There is no payment for contributions and they cannot be returned. The editor may edit material and cannot guarantee to publish every contribution.

Anonymity will be protected, but contributions and correspondents are asked to include their first name, locality and a contact telephone number or email/physical address (not for publication).

I am Responsible

***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.***



Dear Members,

Hello from your new editorial team, comprising June D (Nelson) and Toni C (Wellington), Nicky T (Christchurch) and Mike (Manager, GSO).

The Board is still on the lookout for editors from the Northern and Central Area, so if you consider that you have the skills to assist in producing Mainstay, please send a brief resume to:
mainstay.nzgso@xtra.co.nz
or contact Mike at GSO.

At the April Conference the results of the Area Assemblies voting on the continuance of Mainstay was presented. Both Northern and Southern voted to continue, with Central voting to discontinue Mainstay in its current format. As a part of this process the Board reviewed the history of Mainstay, and the comprehensive review undertaken on Mainstay in 2006 has been considered. That review outlined how Mainstay could become something AAs' wanted to subscribe to, if the content provided what the fellowship (as a whole) wanted. Given this, and in line with the results of the vote, both the Board and Conference have confirmed that an editorial team will be put in place

and revisit the recommendations contained in that review. We will be working through those recommendations, including investigating a new web based, electronic delivery subscription via the new members' website.

Please let us know what you think of your 'meeting in print' and feel free to provide any feedback and/or suggestions on the publication of Mainstay. Also, please don't forget to keep sending us your letters telling of your experience and the strength and hope you have found through AA.

***From Your
Editorial Team.***



Sharing...

The Nightmare's Over

At age 19 my drinking was intermittent with only two drunks. One on the beach at Breaker Bay at high school and the second on a rugby trip to Waitara.

What happened? The simple answer is alcoholism.

After four years of Air Force Service I was a daily drinker with a huge tolerance. I drank on prescription medication of tranquilizers and opium based sleeping pills. For 22 years after leaving the Air Force I had night mares most nights about being executed – shot, hung, guillotined or electrocuted. I would escape only to go through the same horror the following night. Other dreams were that I would rejoin the Air Force and steal the Queens DC3 from Ohakea.

Then there was the bullying that took the form of mild sexual abuse. For some reason some of my learned friends thought I was gay. The abuse was mostly homophobic verbal abuse but progressed to mild assaults of a sexual nature. When I went out with a woman they said I was a lesbian.

I went to the Wigram base medical seeking help. In the 12-Step treatment centre I attended I was told I was not “stupid” or “ignorant”. I was a sick person who could get well not a “bad person who would become good”. The way that the disturbance would be removed was through the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, particularly Step Four.

At meetings during my first 2½ years of sobriety in Toronto I met victims of sexual abuse from a Catholic orphanage. By comparison my problems were luxury problems. By sharing my story in group therapy sessions at the treatment centre and at some meetings I gained some peace and serenity. The execution nightmares ceased and I slept soundly.

I was told I was not “stupid” or “ignorant”. I was a sick person who could get well not a “bad person who would become good”

So this is my experience. The strength is I survived and stayed sober. The hope is that some readers will identify with my sharing and start the road to recovery and sobriety.

**Graham “Big Cup”
Wellington**

*(editor's note: letter abbreviated
- word limit for Mainstay is 500- 600. Thanks)*

83...

and Still Looking Forward

My name is Ken and I am an alcoholic! At an AA meeting at Naenae on 11th February 1970 I admitted this to nine other alcoholics after having accepted it for some time but was ashamed to admit it to anyone else. My drinking had been out of control, and about three years before that, because I was in trouble and my wife said I had to, I had asked an AA member for help. Dick called for me after work and as we drove home told me his story with alcohol and how he had recovered by doing the programme of AA and loaning me a copy of the Big Book (first edition). I found Dick's story interesting and he seemed a nice guy, but, I did not think I was an alcoholic as I thought that I was different from those alcoholics in the Big Book.

So I continued to drink and from time to time I would ring Dick (usually from the pub) and he would tell me that what was happening to me was what happened to "we alcoholics." Also I started to recognise that I was like those Big Book stories in that, in common with all of them, when I drank I would lose control. I started to accept that I was probably an alcoholic but would not, and did not want to, be-

lieve that I could stop drinking yet, so continued to drink and get angry if anyone suggested I was an alkie. (One of my mates used to call me the most dignified drunk in Upper Hutt! I liked that!!!)

As I continued to drink on a daily basis, life got more and more complicated and miserable, I hated myself for what I was doing to those I loved and started to think that if only I could get away from them and

others who were interfering with my drinking, I could just keep on drinking without anyone else getting hurt, and hopefully I would die. With that idea in mind I rang Samaritans asking to get in touch with AA; my intentions were to stop drinking for long enough to get the money to buy a one-way ticket to Sydney so that I would be able to drink until I died

without anyone I loved knowing what had happened to me.

Fortunately for me I did not get what I wanted. As a result of my phone call I was visited by a sober ex-drunk who convinced me that, (1) for an alcoholic to continue to drink the end result is insanity and then death. (2) It was possible for me to stay away from the first drink one day at a time. He told me he did this by trying to follow a simple spiritual programme. He suggested I seek a higher power of my understanding through the use of the

I realised this is where I belonged. These eight men and one woman had solved my problem, and if I kept listening to them I could do so also.

AA 12 Steps.

After a few more futile attempts to enjoy drinking, I got to my knees and told that Higher Power that I was not sure whether He existed, but if He did I wanted His help. Two nights later my visitor took me to the Naenae meeting, and as I listened to the members I realised this is where I belonged. These eight men and one woman had solved my problem, and if I kept listening to them I could do so also.

So began a wonderful journey through a life I never thought possible.

40 years on it is still working for me. Some of the things that happened to me were not what I wanted, or not the way I wanted. But they proved to be what I needed. I have come to believe that God will do for me what I cannot do for myself, and He will do it even though I do not think it is right!

So at 83 years of age I am looking forward to the future, one day at a time. And I intend, on a daily basis, to continue to try to practice Steps 10, 11 & 12.

May your God be with you

Ken, Waikanae

***The more hands I shake,
the less resentments I feel.***

Lifetime Learning

I've recently celebrated 18 years of continuous sobriety, and thought I'd share some of the things I've learnt in that time:

Let go and let God – my life is now none of my business. As soon as I think it is, I'm in trouble!

Mind my own business. If my life is none of my business, why would anyone else's be?

It works – it really does! This programme of action – the steps, traditions and concepts of service – work in every area of my life; home, play, work, family, everything. Sobriety is just the beginning.

If it ain't broken, don't fix it. The AA 'ain't broken'!

Take the cotton wool out of my ears and stick it in my mouth. I'll hear more and it sure makes it hard to drink!

The more hands I shake, the less resentments I have.

Today is a gift – that's why we call it 'the present'. Alcoholics who get and stay sober are the tip of the alcoholic iceberg. I hope I never forget how incredibly lucky I am to have this gift.

Love and fellowship

Nicky T
Aranui Monday, Christchurch

Gratitude - The Best Possible Repayment

Cos is it.....when things aren't going well, it's usually because I've become ungrateful.....my mind can still quickly shift from that 'Attitude of Gratitude', I have learned and 'tried' to practice in my 23 wonderful sober years, and spin back into that self-centred thinking that I immersed myself in, as a sick, hopeless alcoholic. Many times I have to consciously 'switch' to thanking God for all the rich blessings I have received - with a full and thankful heart.

And I need to carry this message to others who, like me, found the miracle of recovery in this AA Fellowship and now experience a new freedom. That's what I call my "spiritual gratitude"..... but there is an urgent need to carry another message to those who, like me, have recovered from the agonies of alcoholism..... the AA Gratitude Fund needs our help to continue passing on the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic.

How can we help? Many AA's don't even know what the Gratitude Fund is...I didn't....until my sponsor pointed out to me how a donation on a regular basis would "give something back" and God knows!!, I squandered enough money on booze all those years as a daily drunk!

The GSO (General Service Office of AA - in Wellington) has been set up to serve the Fellowship of AA in NZ and the Gratitude fund is used to provide the 0800 free phone service, the website, support World Service and translate literature etc. Today I have a duty to inform others about the Gratitude Fund.....a 'kind-of' PI (Public Information) 'within our own

Fellowship'....informing our members of it's existence, what it is used for and asking them to support it, as I have done for the past 20 years. It doesn't matter the amount one gives; it's the regular giving (with gratitude) that matters.

This AA Fellowship only works because of the people within it; the triangle in the circle signifies Unity, Service & Recovery and the same 'magic' that happened for me when I walked through the AA doors can happen for others if the hand of AA is always there.....and for that, 'We Are Responsible'..... the AA Gratitude Fund needs our support - please ask about it today and help retain this wonderful gift we all enjoy.

June D (Nelson)

***'We Are Responsible'...
Ask about the
AA Gratitude Fund
today and help retain
this wonderful gift
we all enjoy.***

We're Not 'Special'

Hi, my name is Peter and I came in to AA about 18 months ago with anything but a sane and stable disposition. I did not recognise this nor know why at the time. I have since been attending AA meetings 3-4 times a week, have a Sponsor with about as many years of sobriety as I have alive and have read and listened much. Some of my learning's include: Take the cotton wool out of your ears and put it in your mouth. Helps the hearing and prevents the drinking. Your programme is your programme. Others have their own. Leave them to it. Suggest but don't tell. Principles above personalities. Let it go ...and lots more that many will be familiar with.

I now have a daily routine, only ever think about alcohol in terms of wondering why I seldom think about it and wake every morning and deliberately choose my attitude.

I hear many who claim that their drinking robbed them of choices. I do not agree. Apart from the movement of time and circumstance, the same choices as were present when we drank are there today. It is simply that when we drank we either did not see the choices or made the wrong ones. Life is very much the same as it was. All that has changed

in sobriety is that we see it clearly now. I am also not one that agrees with the adage "it's my alcoholic mind making me think this way, act this way etc" I've been to A&D Counselling, I've been to my GP and I have yet to hear anyone define "an alcoholic mind". I choose to be me, have my mind, no-one else's and simply refuse to let "my alcoholic mind" (whatever the hell that is) become a "prop" for life's up's and down's. I do not need a

rubber cushion tied to my bum to act as a safeguard when I stumble and fall and refuse to accept that when I do it has anything to do with being an alcoholic, much less "an alcoholic mind". I don't need a wheelchair following me around in case I fall. Plenty of non alcoholics fall every day without one, accept it as an accident and move on. Why should I, as an

alcoholic, regard myself as anything different? We are not "special" we are quite normal people with a disease...just like thousands of others with other diseases. It seems, however, some allow their disease to be an escape route from the reality of life or a convenient excuse for the things that happen along the way.

I have stopped drinking, my behaviours have changed and I just wish I knew of AA and the 12 step Programme as a way of life long before I drank and needed both.

Why should I, as an alcoholic, regard myself as anything different? We are not "special" we are quite normal people with a disease...

Many will not agree with me on this. That's OK with me. It's your choice and congratulations for being sober enough to have them to make.

Peter

Learning to 'just be' ...

Sometimes I have a bird's eye view visualization of what my life used to be like, just before I came into AA. It was full of colour, and colourful people, but it also had that tinge of nastiness, weirdness and meanness that the 'hard life' can have. I didn't fit in anywhere, my family were much more odd than I was, and there were times I could honestly point the finger at them as the problem. Yet, out in the big wide world, and without my family as the reference point, I soon learnt painfully that I was just a little more than odd. I honestly thought it was all 'them' rather than 'me'. I really was the square peg in the round hole. Little wonder that I came to AA via the back door of Alanon.

I came into AA an opinionated, angry young person. After I had done the steps and traditions the first time, I became a blank slate, which lasted for quite some-

time, and I didn't seem to have an opinion on anything. It was a good thing for me because I needed to grow up and here it was, that I was given another chance to try and grow up in a normal way, find my way in the world and 'just be'. Just be another member of society instead of the one that was the angriest and most ridiculous. Just be the normal person instead of God incarnate. Just be the person who got on with the job at hand, just like everybody else. I wasn't better than anyone else, I wasn't worse than anyone else. I just was and still am, a member of the human race.

***I was given
another chance to
try and grow up
in a normal way,
find my way
in the world
and 'just be'.***

I came into AA at the age of 20, at the time it wasn't the legal drinking age. I was three months sober when I had my 21st birthday, and it was a sober one. My first drink was at about the age of six, when I drank a bottle of perfume. Alice in Wonderland was my hallucination – I must of just read the book beforehand! One of my first memories is of complete anxiety – I was meeting some of my cousins for the first time, and I really thought I was going to explode or something because I just felt so dreadful, and I had NOTHING to take it away.

A few more years later, I discovered alcohol and a few other drugs could take that feeling away and give me another one. At the age of 14, I was working

out in my mind how I would get the next drink. I didn't mess around with beer or anything that had a lower alcohol content than your top-shelf spirits. Jeeze, if one was going to get written off, then why bother with beer? Possibly some mis-placed alcoholic snobbery on my part. It doesn't make much sense unless you are an alcoholic. We've all got those strange things we did, like it says in the Big Book – only drinking beer or wine, or only knocking off on the hard stuff, or (fill in your rationalization here.)

I don't think I would have a chance out in the world without the AA program in my life. It has seen me through some pretty tough times that would have seen the average person written off. I have lived through the death of two of my children, and also many other calamities that come along in life. I have a God in my life, that makes sure I palm myself off as 'normal' and has seen me through some pretty harrowing stuff. I now know that the NOTHING to take my anxiety away, is actually a GOD to take it away.

God Bless, **Rebecca T.**

Still Willing

Hi,
my name's Simon and I'm an alcoholic.

I came into an AA meeting some time in May 1998, not really expecting much of anything – wasn't able to share, glad I wasn't asked to, I'd used up everyone and everything else, myself included, and was still going – just.

I forced myself to keep going to the meetings, a meeting a night for the next seven – eight years, getting to them any way I could, sometimes bringing other guys with me, sometimes accepting a lift.

I don't think I would have a chance out in the world without the AA program in my life. It has seen me through some pretty tough times...

Clicked with a guy one night at a meeting, thought he seemed nice and nutty – he was to become my first sponsor. Open and honest sharing, one on one, almost from the beginning – I was desperate. He took me through the steps, a step a week, sharing his own experience, strength and hope and also each going through

the big book Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions together.

I became involved in simple group service work, attending the Southern Area Assemblies and visiting out of town meetings. I became someone my family and others wanted to be around – became employable, trustworthy, reliable, useful, responsible – learnt the basics in AA, used what I learnt out in the world – it worked. Still felt bad, thought mad, stayed close to AA and just kept on go-

ing. Started to gain some peace of mind, felt better, it kept getting different.

Today I still have a sponsorship of other guys in the fellowship when asked (nothing will so much ensure our immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics), read my Big Book and 12 and 12, ask God for help and thank Him daily, attend two AA meetings weekly – sometimes more. Regular contact with other alkies – most recovering, some not (in person or via the phone) feels good. To watch others take action and get well keeps me doing what I need to do.

I'm so glad I've been given this chance to live and am still willing, just for today, to keep on going.

Thank you.

Simon L
Friday night men's meeting
Nelson

Taking the Steps to Freedom

Now 16 months sober, my emotions have gone from one extreme to the other, continually moving back and forward. From feeling sorry for myself, blaming everyone and everything except me, for landing me behind bars and losing my family, friends, and employment, to the frank re-

alization that I was the one who committed fraud, who betrayed trust, friendship, loyalty and love.

4th and 5th step work has, or more correctly is giving me the courage to address the areas of life, past and present, that have impacted and are impacting on not only my life, but those many, many people that I have affected.

What an experience it can be to work on a 'grudge list'. The self destruction that I revealed in for over a quarter of a century has led me to realize the shallowness of my self belief was fed by my own insecurity – fed each morning, afternoon and evening by alcohol, the protective blanket I thought – felt as though booze was eating at my core from the inside out.

My journey, now underway, has to focus on repairing inner rot. I hope and pray that my family will accept the new me, that in time I can re-earn my place in family and society – sober.

I have been given the opportunity to learn a trade for future employment opportunities. I now have a more tangible feel for the meanings – EXPERIENCE – STRENGTH – HOPE.

Tony W
Tongariro/Rangipo Prison

***I hope and pray that
my family will accept
the new me, that in
time I can re-earn
my place in family
and society
– sober.***

Have You Seen These Men?



**If you can positively identify these men,
send an email to our
AA New Zealand national archivist at
archives.nzgso@xtra.co.nz**

Don't throw away those old copies of Mainstay!

Dear Mainstay

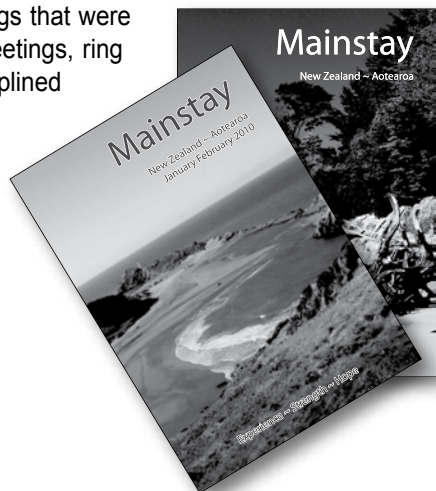
Last year I was having a difficult time with fear and self-pity. I was at home one day and feeling desperate, picked out at random some old copies of Mainstay. In the issue from September 2005 there was one letter in particular from Jasmine in Invercargill that spoke exactly to me that day. It gave me hope, because here was someone writing honestly about exactly where I was and sharing the solution she had found. I read it many times that day and afterwards.

Today I am not living in fear or self-pity every day. I have had an opportunity lately to do lots of service and I understand what people mean when they say service is a privilege. I have benefited a thousand times more than anyone else. When I was struggling badly with my mind, an oldtimer said to me "nothing will so much ensure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics". That has proved true over and over since I've been in recovery.

I feel very humbled that some of the people who have helped me along the way are no longer in the programme. I know there aren't any guarantees for me – I just try to live one day at a time, do what is in front of me and keep in fit spiritual condition. It's all the simple things that were suggested when I first came in – go to meetings, ring my sponsor, read the Big Book, live a disciplined life, pray, try to help someone else.

I want to thank Jasmine for her letter all those years ago.

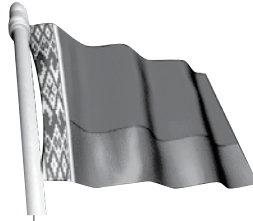
**Esther
Wellington**



April 2010

BELARUS

Country Report



I thought that members may have been interested in some of the Country Reports from the last World Service Meeting. One I particularly wanted to share was from Vladamir K, of Belarus.

Our service structure is still young, only six years old, although Belarusian AA itself has been in existence for almost 19 years. There was a need for our organization to obtain legal status, even before the group conscience expressed this desire. The community, as far as it knew about us, trusted us. The authorities, however, viewed with fear various events that brought many people together, and their attitude was negative. It was most obviously felt during the presidential election campaign in Belarus.

In any gathering of people, the authorities suspected the activities of the opposition. Whereas, at the end of the last century we could rent a big hall for holding our AA events without any problem, by 2005, it had become impossible to do so without being a legally registered organisation.

We decided to take this step, because we had no option. Not all AA members understand why we need our office, and AA groups are not ready to provide sufficient financial support for its operation. So far we are able to pay the following

salaries to our paid workers: 45 Euro to the Office Manager and 35 Euro to the accountant, the rest are volunteers.

Every day we have some volunteers who are on duty at the office to answer the phone calls. This year many organizations have been deprived of their privileges regarding their rent payments, but due to our great efforts we managed to keep our rent privileges.

We are most grateful to G S O New York and AAWS Inc, for financial assistance without which we could not have accomplished what we have already done. Now we are trying to explain to our AA groups why we experience acute financial need and how much each AA member should donate, so that the work of our service centre is not paralysed. Some groups have realised our needs, others still don't understand them and there are also such groups that are waiting to see what will come of all our endeavors. Out of 58 AA groups, 44 donate money towards our needs.

I hope and believe that all the groups will come to understand and make the right decision. My heart aches when I think about the future of our operation and I hope the Lord will hear my prayers. Our AA Fellowship and its young structure need the experience of AA structures in other countries. It will be of great benefit to us, sooner or later. I thank you for the experience, strength and hope you are going to share with us.

Northern Area Assembly March 13th Tauranga

Dear Fellowship

One of the first things that always greets me on arrival at a Northern Area Assembly is the buzz of conversation and the sounds of old friends uniting.

The next thing that hits me is the realisation that another four months have passed. This gives me a timely reminder to do a recovery checklist. This is something I have found has worked for me for many years and you might find helpful.

These are the questions I like to ask myself:

- Am I an active member of my home group?
- Do I attend regular meetings other than my weekly home group?
- How long is it since I have read the 12 steps and 12 traditions in long form?
- Have I made steps, 10, 11, and 12 a part of my daily life?

The Big Book reminds us: We have a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual programme”

The Western Bay District Committee hosted a great assembly and put an immense amount of energy into the Public Meeting. This showed on the night with a good turnout of both AA members and members of the Public. We were re-

mindful at this Assembly how important it is to carry the message to our friends outside of AA as recent research has shown that most people hear the message from people other than AA members.

When a group hosts a Northern Area Assembly, two members of the Northern Area Steering committee become ex-officio members of the hosting committee. Our role is to assist the hosting committee by passing on experience and information.

Over the last four years there have been more Northern Area Assembly's hosted by Zone 3 groups than any other zones. Has your District Committee Meeting thought about making the decision to host an assembly in your area on a regular basis? It's a great way to grow fellowship and increase the membership of your group.

We were fortunate to have Chris C, Chairman of the Board of Alcoholics Anonymous join us in both the business meetings and as a speaker at the Public Meeting. He told us about upgrades to the website so check into aa.org.nz for updates.

AA celebrates 75 years on June 10th and along with local initiatives there is a strong National presence this year. During the week of June 10th ads will be

shown on television promoting the AA Works number. Now would be a good time to ensure your phone lists are up to date and that your AAWorks systems are working well as a strong response to these ads is expected. Is your group ready to welcome the Newcomers these ads will bring in?

Founders' day celebrations are being held in Auckland during this week with afternoon and evening events. More information to follow.

Public information workshops led by myself and Daniel are being held throughout the area. Hauraki DCM and Rotorua Intergroup have hosted them and Waikato DCM will be hosting the next one on April 25th followed by Northland DCM on July 25th.

These workshops are based on the steps, traditions and legacies of AA. Everyone is welcome.

I'm looking forward to the next Assembly hosted by Hauraki District Committee which will be held at:

**Whangamata Area School,
Main Road Whangamata,
July 10th**

Yours in Fellowship

**Diane R
Chairperson Northern Area Assembly**



From Mt Maunganui looking east towards Papamoa
(non-copyright web photo)

PI Week

6 to 12 June 2010

***If you want to drink that's your business,
if you want to stop we can help***

AA's 75th birthday or anniversary is to be marked by an information campaign to show how to get in contact with the fellowship. General Services Board chair Chris C says the campaign will provide signposts for still suffering alcoholics to inform them that AA has a 24 hour phone and a website that they can contact. 'The activities are about following the Toronto declaration and ensuring people reaching out for help can find the hand of AA.'

The difference between attraction and promotion is that promotion is a comparative sales message 'something is better than something else'. We simply say here is AA.

Roger S, Chair of General Service Conference says the Conference PI Committee has had strong support from New Zealand AA as PI teams and committees have made contact. 'The Board and Conference are working together to ensure the hand of AA is seen over the week of AA's anniversary.'

And the traditions are very clear: anonymity is personal anonymity not anonymity of AA so it can't be found. "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV and films."

Round the country:

There have already been around 10 PI workshops up and down NZ on anonymity and 12 Step work – and there are more coming with Auckland on 9 May, Southland on 10 May, Christchurch on the 15th. There will also be workshops in Nelson, Upper Hutt, Hawke's Bay and other regions.

And on and around 10 June there are public meetings and AA celebrations: Dunedin will turn its radio meeting 'Happy Hour' into a birthday party; Auckland is having a major meeting and a dinner; Upper Hutt is having a BBQ & speaker meeting; Nelson residents will see a billboard featuring the 0800 number; and other regions are having speaker meetings as well.

I Am Responsible: when anyone anywhere reaches out for help...

But most importantly for the week of 6 to 12 June the phones will be answered by live alcoholics in most of the country.

PI committees are being sent media kits to give to local papers, radio and TV to explain the 75th birthday and tell them a bit about AA.

If your Group, District Committee or Intergroup wants to get involved contact

writeforyou@paradise.net.nz or nzgso@xtra.co.nz
for more information

A National Initiative

Media have slots available for not for profit organisations and we have gained a few of these and put some funds from the 7th tradition so during June you may see

- TVNZ showing AA public information messages
- Radio with the same messages as TV
- Newspapers with PI messages
- AA posters on Websites
- in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch some buses will have the AA poster full size on the back

Non-AA spokesperson

AA literature talks about AA using our friends to speak for us when we can't. As AA isn't anonymous but its members are during June Ian Hastings, ex Police Drug Squad, may speak to media on our behalf. Ian has family members in recovery and who has attended AA meetings and conventions here and overseas understands our traditions. He will say 'I'm not an alcoholic, but I've seen that if someone has a drinking problem AA can help.' Dr Tom Flewett who is a non-Alcoholic Trustee on our Board may also talk with a similar message but also adding that AA cooperates with medical and other professions and they can suggest to their patients and clients they try AA.

The new public Information AA website aa.org.nz is attracting around seven 12 step enquiries a week! This is likely to increase over the birthday week.

Gratitude week:

Traditionally, AA celebrates 'gratitude month' in October. This has been moved to the week of June 6 – 12 to coincide with Founder's Day (June 10) and PI week. Groups who wish to participate in this have a separate collection which is optional for members wishing to donate over and above their usual seventh tradition.





'He talked my language'

"The wonderful old broad smile was on his face as he said almost jokingly, 'Remember, Bill, let's not louse this thing up. Let's keep it simple!'"

An Invitation

Dear Fellow AA's

You are invited to attend the 48th New Zealand Convention of AA in 2011 in NELSON, the Sunshine capital and center of New Zealand.

We are offering you a weekend of the best of AA Fellowship, sharing and caring. In your spare time we can offer cafes, the best Saturday market in NZ, potters, artists, fabric weavers, glass blowers, and shopping as well as bush, rivers, beaches, lakes and long and short walks all within an hours radius of the convention. We are the gateway to three National Parks - the Abel Tasman National Park, the Kahurangi National Park and the Nelson Lakes National Park. Golden Bay, 1 ½ hours drive away over the Takaka Hill, with it's amazing outcrops of marble, offers more artisans, wonderful beaches and the Waikoropupu Springs

To do all, or even part, of what is available to you in Sunny Nelson, we suggest you have at least 5 days here.

As Nelson is one of the most popular summer resorts in NZ you will also need to book your accommodation very early. Some budget accommodation is available.

Please visit our website on www.aaconvention.org.nz

Jeannie, Secretary
Host Planning Committee



**48th New Zealand Convention
of Alcoholics Anonymous**

21, 22, 23 January 2011

Venue: Nelson College, Waimea Road, Nelson

BULLS AND BEARS BIG BOOK STUDY WEEKEND

**Friday 15th - Sunday 17th
October 2010.**

2120 Atatarawa Rd, Akatarawa

(The road between Upper Hutt and Waikanae,
just before the Staglands animal sanctuary.)

Cost \$85.00 for the weekend
includes supper on Friday, three meals on Saturday,
breakfast & lunch on Sunday
as well as tea, coffee, biscuits.

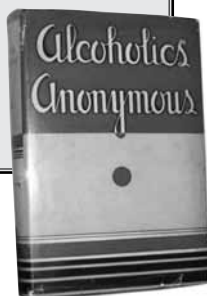
Contact: Jo J. 021-043 1572

Venue: Wellesley Country Park, Akatarawa

(<http://wellesleycountrypark.co.nz/>)

The price includes shared/dorm-style
accommodation, plus all meals

Please enquire if funds prevent
you from attending



AA Events

If you have an AA event you would like included on this page please email us at events.nzgso@xtra.co.nz

For more information on the events listed below, see the Alcoholics Anonymous website or contact GSO (page 2).

28th May 2010

Language of the Heart

AA Weekend Retreat

Address: Te Rau Aroha Anglican Camp, 66 Seaforth Road, Waihi Beach

When: 28th May 2010

Weekend starts: 3pm Friday; Ends: 1pm Sunday (approx)

This is an adults only weekend retreat.

Just a few minutes from the beach & local shops, this is an excellent location. We have morning & evening meetings with lots of time in between to take advantage of the bushwalks, hot pools, goldmine, beach walks & more. 2 units and a house (with lounge, bedrooms, bathroom) again this year! It worked well last year so why fix what isn't broken. **YOU WILL NEED TO BRING YOUR OWN FOOD.** We supply tea, coffee, basic toiletries etc.

It is advisable to book ahead to ensure your place. This is a popular camp and small in numbers (approx 16 beds with room for campervans, etc.) There is no Marae style accommodation available as the chapel is open to everyone on site.

What you need: Food, Personal toiletries, bedding (sheets and blankets)

TOTAL COST: \$55

DAY VISITORS: A donation would be a great help!

Reservations Contact phone: 0275018155 txt or call Bex

6th June 2010

A.A. Wednesday Steps and Traditions Group invites you to a

**PUBLIC AWARENESS WEEK and
AA 75th Anniversary Celebration**

*** * * * * STEP 12 WORKSHOP * * * * ***

1.00pm – 4.00 pm Venue: Brian Davis Room, Corner of Hill Street and Molesworth Street. (Building at back of Saint Paul's Cathedral.) Free Parking.

Contacts: Daniel 934 8222 or Natasha 475 3331. Please bring a plate for afternoon tea!

12 June 2010

FOUNDERS DAY 2010

Celebrating 75 years of Unity Service & Recovery

Venue: Jubilee Hall, 545 Parnell Rd - Saturday, 12 June 2010, doors open at 1.30pm

Day Registration Only: \$15 Full Registration incl. Dinner: \$60

Dinner tickets are limited so be quick to get yours!!

To purchase tickets or for more information contact: nzfoundersday2010@gmail.com

1-4 July 2010

International Convention

San Antonio, USA

The 2010 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held July 1-4 in San Antonio, Texas with the theme "A Vision for You." A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.'s 75th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Alamodome. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio Convention Center and local hotels.

cont.../

Convention registration and housing reservations will open on September 1, 2009. In August, the registration packet will be mailed to every group in the U.S. and Canada listed with G.S.O., as well as to intergroup/central offices and other G.S.O.s around the world. It will also be posted online.

27th 28th 29th August 2010

AA's Annual Karapiro Steps Camp

Location: Finlay Park Christian Camp, Finlay Rd, Karapiro
17km South of Cambridge, Approx 20mins North of Tirau

Cost: Adults: \$70, Children 5 -13yrs \$40, Children 0-4 Free

Weekend Highlights: Children Friendly Camp, Centrally Heated Accommodation, Kayaking, Flying Fox, Confidence Course, Large Spa Pool, Gymnasium, Beautiful Scenery, Chapel, Public Meeting, Awesome Company, New and Improved Menu

You will need to bring: Sleeping Bag, Pillows, Towels, Toiletries, Swimming Gear, Other Necessities, Torch

Registrations by 24th August 2010 to either:

Charles Phone: 07 8864624
Mobile: 027 4863013
Email: Lockingtons@xtra.co.nz

Frances: Work: 07 886 6930
Mobile: 072 2267050
Email: toklocks@xtra.co.nz

21, 22, 23 January 2011

48th New Zealand Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous

Venue: Nelson College, Waimea Road, Nelson

You are invited to attend the 48th New Zealand Convention of AA in 2011 in NELSON, the Sunshine capital and center of New Zealand.

We are offering you a weekend of the best of AA Fellowship, sharing and caring.

Website on www.aaconvention.org.nz

Heard in Meetings

"You'll go a long way in AA because you've got a long way to go"

"You're okay, you've always been okay and you'll always be okay"

"Walk with curiosity"

'We can't, God can, so let him!'

*"I thought I was the biggest piece of s**t the world
ever revolved around"*

*"3 meetings a week - good on you, 2 meetings - good luck,
1 meeting – goodbye"*

(re 4th step ... heard in Ireland)

"you can't plough a field by turning it over in your mind"

"Don't analyse the programme.. use it!"

*"Sponsorship=TRUST= Teaching Recovery Using
Steps & Traditions"*

"No big shots in AA, just one shot and we're all dead"

"If something is good for my ego, it's no good for my sobriety"

"I don't look like my story anymore!"



A nice lady came in a few weeks ago. She'd had ten years and had a slip. She said: I'm hear to buy a big book and this time I'm gonna read it. Hmm I wondered - how many years can she get if she actually reads the book?

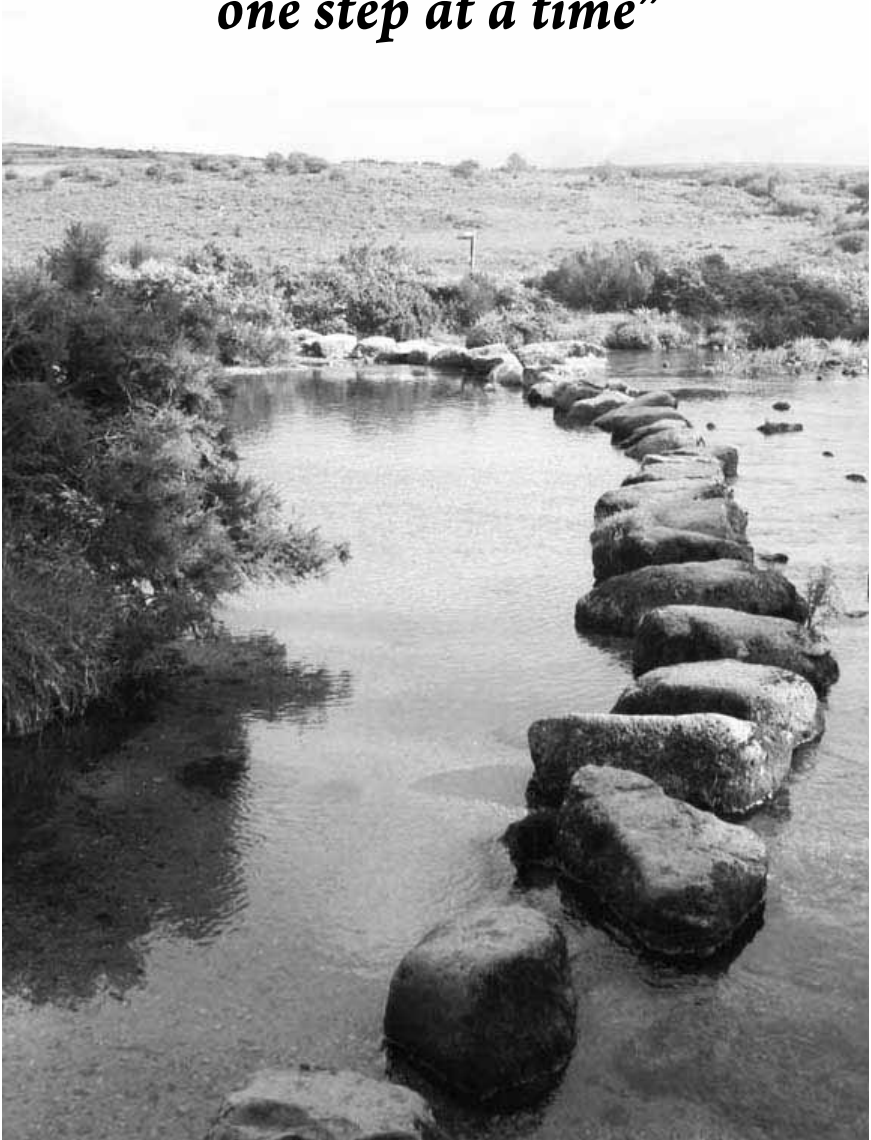
Heard at a prison meeting:

"You know what it's like when you are driving and you are getting the bash?" Incredibly I was nearly the only one in the room who didn't nod. A salient reminder that domestic violence and alcoholism have an unhealthy attraction for each other.

"Every night when the stars come out there is an AA meeting starting. The world is turning and stars are coming out all around the world and there are AA meetings starting. There is always an AA meeting starting somewhere."



***“Take one day and
one step at a time”***



Stepping Stones : Dart River, UK (non-copyright web photo)

Subscriptions

# Ordered	Type of subscription	Price (inc GST & PP)
	Individual subscription for 12 months	\$30.00
	Group subscription for 12 months	\$30.00
	Sponsored subscription for 12 months	\$24.00
	Sponsored subscription for 6 months	\$12.00
	Overseas subscription for 12 months	\$40.00

Subscriber and renewal details

Name of person placing order

Post Mainstay to (name and address)

Send invoice to (name and address)

Group's name (if order is for a group)

Contact Phone number and/or email address

Post completed order and payment to:

Mainstay at GSO, Po Box 6458, Wellington 6141
or email your details to: nzgso@xtra.co.nz



The 12 Traditions

- 1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.*
- 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*
- 3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.*
- 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.*
- 5. Each group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.*
- 6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*
- 7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*
- 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*
- 9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*
- 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*
- 11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.*
- 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

*God, grant me the serenity to
accept the things I cannot
change, courage to change
the things I can, and wisdom
to know the difference.*



