

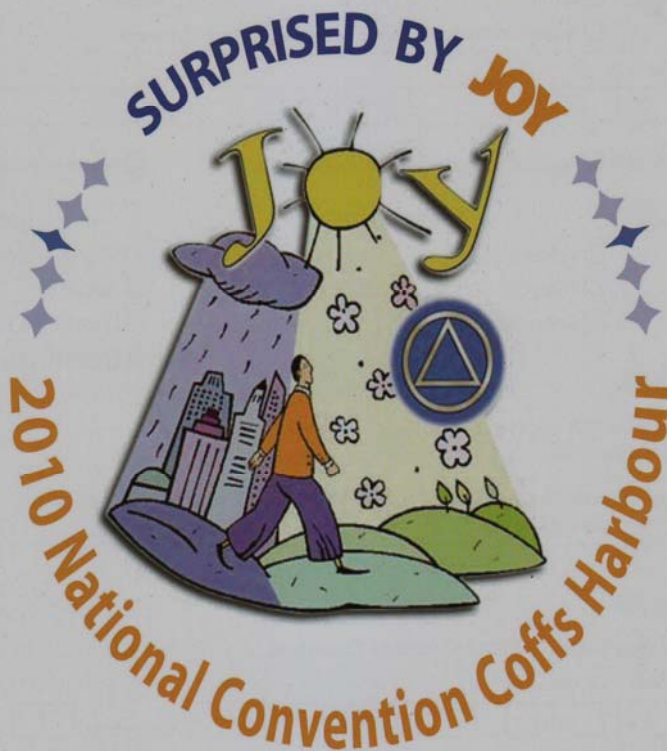
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*2010 National AA Convention
Coffs Harbour
April 1 - 5, 2010*



With Al-Anon and Alateen participation



*On behalf of the 2010 Host Planning Committee
we look forward to celebrating sobriety
with you in beautiful Coffs Harbour, NSW
Australia, during Easter 2010*

March 2010

Quarterly newsletter published by The National Office of Alcoholics Anonymous Australia

www.aa.org.au

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(02) 9599 8866

VACANCY (1)

*** PUBLIC INFORMATION & CO-OPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (PI & CPC) ALTERNATE NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR**

*** ALTERNATE PI & CPC NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR**

Applications close : June 30, 2010

The future of AA depends on attracting the attention of potential Members and referral from professional Friends of AA. The purpose of Service workers at all AA levels in Public Information & Co-operation with the Professional Community is thus awareness-raising, relationship-building with many kinds of professionals and the media, and generally message-carrying to others outside.

AA ~ always seeking to reach and help alcoholics who have yet to consider AA as an option.

A vacancy exists for an Alternate PI & CPC Co-ordinator.

The voluntary role of the Alternate Co-ordinator is to provide support to the National Co-ordinator.

The Alternate Co-ordinator will be fully informed of the National Co-ordinator's activities; may be called on to assist the National Co-ordinator wherever possible, and be available to replace the National Co-ordinator in an emergency.

This a position with a two year tenure.

The PI & CPC National Co-ordinator is responsible :

- To actively promote the growth of PI&CPC activities at national level, providing a communication link for all levels of PI&CPC Service.**
- To co-ordinate (be actively involved but not chair or host) all phases of the biennial PI &CPC Forum and attend.**
- To collect and disseminate PI&CPC Service information at national level, through email, reporting, use of the Service Website, the development of display material and contributions to the quarterly PI Around Australia news sheet.**

People applying for this positions are likely to have the following characteristics: available time, communication skills, basic computer literacy & computer access, co-ordination skills, experience in planning AA events, knowledge of AA General and Central Service structures and familiarity with AA Service literature. Support and training will be provided to enable participation in Service Website oversight. Assistance with expenses is also available.

Nomination forms with current General Service Board Coordinators' brief are available from National Office national.office@aa.org.au. See also Guideline 30.

The appointment will be made by the Chair of the Trustees' PI&CPC Committee, as per Conference instruction. The successful candidates will be selected at the Board meeting of July 2010.

Applications may be posted or emailed to National Office by 30 June 2010
48 Firth Street Arncliffe, NSW 2205

A new book from the AA Grapevine – This collection presents 42 stories from old-timers about how they hit bottom and got sober, as well as vivid descriptions of the early days of AA. But colourful histories are only part of the book. Old-timers have a wealth of lived experience to share with the rest of us.

THE LAST WORD
Words of Wisdom
May 1998

Charlie W. hadn't achieved forty-six years of sobriety without developing a strong sense of the Steps and Traditions, and the intuitive thought described in our Promises. Jack, the newspaper editor in Charlie's hometown, had proved himself an enthusiastic-if uninformed-friend and admirer of AA. He kept pressing Charlie to share his years of wisdom with readers through an interview-anonymously, of course.

Charlie continued to refuse the interview, contending he couldn't speak for AA, or even for his group. But the editor continued to plead until, one day, Charlie relented. "Here," Charlie said, "is the wisdom I've gathered from forty-six years of active and sober participation in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous." And he leaned forward with great confidentiality: "Alcoholics Anonymous, Jack, 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..." Jack's pen scribbled furiously on his notepad. "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking."

The pen flew. "There are no dues or fees for AA membership, Jack; we are self-supporting through our own contributions."

Jack's jaw was going slack with the wisdom of this man. "You see, Jack, Alcoholics Anonymous is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution. It does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose, Jack, is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

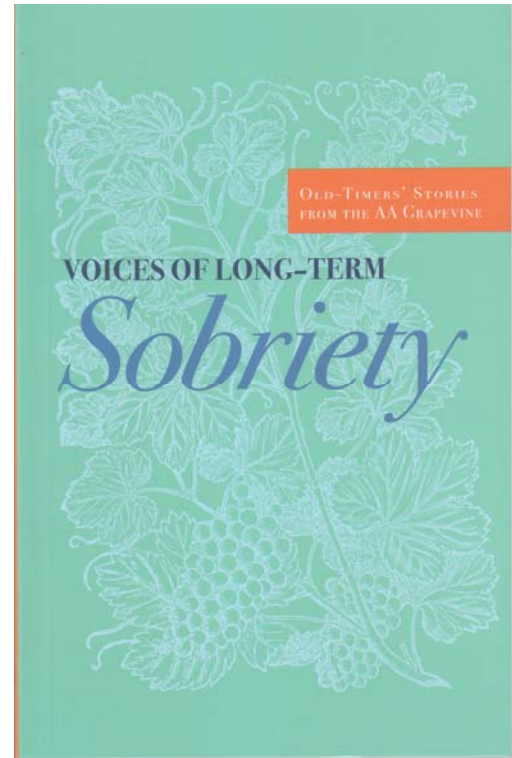
Wow! Away ran Jack with his interview, and, meticulously guarding the anonymity of the old-timer, he ran the interview in full.

AA members read the story in belly-laughing admiration of the adroitness of the old-timer. The general public got a straight-from-the-book definition of what AA is and is not.

And Charlie W. sat back with a quiet prayer of gratitude that his group recited the AA Preamble from memory at the beginning of every meeting.

Page 149 from the book ***VOICES OF LONG-TERM SOBRIETY***

Available now at National Office \$20.00



INAPPROPRIATE SPONSORSHIP

Authorised for publication by the General Service Board

From time to time the Board and National Office receive complaints of sponsorship practices which are of some concern. These include bullying, inappropriate interference in personal and family matters, instructing newcomers not to attend certain groups, associate with certain members, etc. The answers to any queries regarding sponsorship guidelines recommended by AA may be found on our Conference-approved pamphlet 'Questions & Answers on Sponsorship'. From this pamphlet:

In AA, sponsor and sponsored meet as equals, just as Bill and Dr. Bob did.

Sponsorship can also mean the responsibility the group as a whole has for helping the newcomer.

An AA sponsor does not provide any services such as those offered by a social worker, a doctor, a nurse, or a marriage counsellor.

It is the whole AA program – not the individual's sponsor – that maintains the newcomer's sobriety.

Some newcomers benefit from more than one sponsor.

There is no superior class or caste of sponsors in AA.

The sponsor encourages the newcomer to work with other alcoholics as soon as possible, and sometimes begins by taking the newcomer along on Twelfth Step calls.

In all work with a newcomer, the sponsor underscores the fact that it is the AA recovery program – not the sponsor's personality or position – that is important. Thus, the newcomer learns to lean on the program, not on the sponsor. A sponsor who has been truly putting the program first will not take it as a personal insult if the newcomer decides to change sponsors or to go to other AAs for additional guidance.

All members are free to approach sponsorship as their own individual experiences and personalities may suggest.

Hospitalization is not part of the AA program and that a doctor, not a sponsor, is the person who should say whether it is required.

The most effective sponsors recognize that alcoholics who join AA must eventually stand on their own feet and make their own decisions – and that there is a difference between helping people to their feet and insisting on holding them up thereafter.

Members who do too much sponsorship work may get exaggerated ideas about their abilities, may even risk their own sobriety.

CONFERENCE THEMES

I was once asked why we have a “Theme” for the General Service Conference, and I replied that everything has to be labelled. I was, at that time, the Alternative Delegate for my Area, never been to Conference, and had no idea why we had a Conference Theme, but my explanation seemed logical to me.

I have since learned that it is more than just a “label” and I believe that it is a way of setting a mindset for Conference members, and the fellowship as a whole, for the year. Suggestions are put forward, discussions held, and a vote taken to decide what the Conference Theme will be for the upcoming year.

What we, as a fellowship do with the theme, is up to us all. In my experience, the most effective way to promote the Conference Theme is for Areas to adopt it as their theme for their Regional Forum, and set the mood of the forum around it. This actually puts it out there and spreads the message a little further.

Now you have some idea why we have A Conference Theme, well more than I had when I was first asked anyway. I have been thinking about this year’s theme, and whilst I didn’t vote for it, I can now see why those who are obviously more astute than I am did.

“SERVICE - THE HEART OF AA”

I didn’t vote for this theme, because I preferred one of the others, and it reminded me of “Service with a Smile” which was used over, and over, and over again, (or so it seemed), as a theme for every service workshop I attended in my early sobriety. I couldn’t understand why you would want to smile about doing something you were only doing, because your sponsor “suggested” that it would be good for you. Don’t you hate it when your sponsor’s right? Actually I dread the day, if it ever comes, that my sponsor turns out to be wrong.

Like some others out there I came to service kicking and screaming, and whilst I could see, that for the fellowship to survive and grow, it was necessary, I couldn’t get my head around why it had to include me. I thank my God for those out there who sponsored me and lead me to service. I was going to say “pushed”, but most of them are still around and are still the sort of members who will be reading this.

If my sponsors hadn’t encouraged me, with what they believed in their hearts to be good for me, I would have missed out. I would have missed out on meeting a lot of members who want the fellowship to thrive, who have discussed, debated, and shared with me a journey that has been informative, interesting and spiritually enlightening. I would have been deprived of so much personal growth, and robbed of the opportunity of sharing so much.

No organisation just exists. They all need input, and in our case it is input from members. I could now “rabbit on” about how service helps to provide literature, twelve step rosters, afterhours/business hour phone lines, websites, World Service connections, PI&CPC etc, etc, but I won’t because we know all that.

What I do know though, is that if I hadn’t started out with emptying ashtrays, and progressed to washing dishes, I would have never served as an Area Delegate and participated in the General Service Conference, the most spiritual experience of my life.

I have not “always” really wanted to do the tasks that I have been requested to do, but I have done them, and in hindsight, they have been good for me. I have never walked away from a service position, but I have always known I could. I recommend to my spon see’s that service work may be good for them. I know my suggestions are far kinder than any of my sponsor’s was but then again none of them have been as slow to get it, or to grow as I was. I always tell them that they can walk away if they don’t like it, or find that they are unsuited to it, and none of them ever have. Their growth and mine still excites me.

"I've got a lot more out off service than I have ever put into It." is another saying I had always rejected out of hand. What would those old buggers know anyway? Well it's not all oldies and I have learnt far more from younger members in recent times and than I ever thought possible, and their input has helped keep the fellowship and me up to date.

I now know why we have a theme for the General Service Conference. I know that it is not just a title and is intended to get the fellowship thinking about the theme and how it can help us all. Service is the heart of AA not only because it helps to keep it alive, but because it is the sharing of one alcoholic with another, it is growth, and it does help us to live, and thrive, not just survive.

Paul Dennes
Regional Trustee
Central Region

General Service Board Meeting Feb 2010 Hobart

The February General Service Board meeting was recently held in Hobart.

The reason for the Board meeting in locations other than Sydney is twofold.

Firstly, the General Service Board is the General Service arm of AA Australia and as such must represent all of Australia and secondly, the Board tries to meet wherever we are able to carry our message.

The meeting in Hobart allowed the Trustees and National Office staff to meet local members and exchange experience, strength and hope so that their area may grow and help foster service and unity.

The Boards duties are numerous and at the February meeting we discussed the progress and actions required implementing the conference advisory actions & recommendations.

Some of these advisory actions relate to the publishing of a new version (2nd Edition) of the Australian Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Progress on a timetable, evaluation team and guidelines were discussed.

More Stories are to be sought from the Australian fellowship and a Flyer outlining the guidelines and criteria for the inclusion of these stories will be in this issue of AA Around Australia.

Another advisory action from conference is the use of a **1300 National 12th Step Phone Number**. The co-operation of all Central Service Offices will be sought in this endeavour.

A guideline on the setup and content of AA websites is being formulated.

A pamphlet / leaflet on the "**Dangers of AA members giving advice on Prescribed Medication**" is being finalised for 2010 Conference approval.

The next **AA Survey** was also discussed and advice on how best to implement this is being sought.

This is just a small summary of the topics and advisory actions discussed and actioned.

Howard W., Deputy Chairman GSB AA Australia