

SPONSORSHIP AND SERVICE

I envisage “sponsorship”, as we use the term in Alcoholics Anonymous, as one alcoholic sharing experience, strength and most importantly, hope with another.

I was not sure exactly what I was looking for when I came to AA, but I know that I identified with a lot of people here. It became evident that people here, at one time, were despondent and felt similarly to myself, yet they somehow were able to laugh about it now. They had changed. I believe that’s where I received a faint indication there was hope for me.

My first sponsors were people I sought out, as pride and fear fettered asking. They were attending a “Big Book” study, where I was able to eavesdrop on their recovery. I was taken aback by the honesty of the personal events and secrets they shared. These were the very things I had told myself go to the grave with me. I have since heard someone say that we are as sick as the secrets we keep. No doubt, I stayed sick a long time. They were telling me what they were doing rather than what I should do. It became apparent that the remorse and self-loathing I seemed to be plagued with could be alleviated were I to change my attitude and actions. This was the beginning of a sharing experience that proved to be life-saving. Although I had little or no faith in anything or anyone when I arrived here, I soon learned trust in confidant was imperative to my recovery. The sponsor I have today is a person I receive strength from by obtaining credible answers and by sometimes knowing just when to listen which allows me to see the truth about myself and my situation.

I encourage those I sponsor to participate in their sobriety by getting involved in service. This is a result of learning one of the most basic truths I know ... helping others helps me. An aspiration of mine is that someday these values become their convictions. I believe our experiences are worthless unless we share them with others. I don’t claim to have all the answers but, thank God, I have found meaning in my once empty life by giving away what was freely given to me. Anonymous

Any member wishing to share their experience, strength and hope via writing an article, please submit by the 20th of the month before, to be included. Submit with your full name, which group you belong to and it should approximately 250 - 300 words.

We will protect your anonymity.

You can email to: centraloffice@edmontonaa.org or drop it off at the office.

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ECO News is published monthly on behalf of Edmonton Intergroup. All printed and mailed copies are to be paid for either by subscription or walk in. Email copies are free. There is no use of funds donated via 7th Tradition process. Minimal editing may be done. This newsletter presents the experiences and opinions of AA members and relays information received at Central Office concerning roundups, conferences, birthdays and other events that may be of interest to subscribers. Any opinions expressed should not be attributed to AA. Publication of any article does not imply endorsement.

We would like to hear from you about your AA related experience, strength and hope, keeping in mind copyright and credit concerns. Any feedback will be appreciated.

Submissions should be between 250 and 300 words. Submit with your full name, group, and a phone number where you can be reached (of course we will protect your anonymity).

Material must be submitted no later than the 20th of the preceding month for it to print in the next month's issue.

Submit articles to AA Central Office, #205, 10544 114 St NW, Edmonton, AB T5H 3J7

Fax: (587) 523-4334

Email: centraloffice@edmontonaa.org **Subject Line: Attention ECO News**

TRADITION THREE

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

The tradition in its pure form without any conditions attached is simply that. When AA was in its infancy, groups were asked to submit a “list of protective regulations. The list was a mile long. If all those rules would have been in effect nobody could have possibly joined AA.” *Quote from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.*

As well, there were also a list of people not eligible to join; Beggars, tramps, prisoners, Psychiatric patients, gay people and prostitutes. So as it was stated who was going to be the judge, jury and executioner of his own sick sister or brother. There was the case of the agnostic. He was let in because he challenged the oldest group members to see if they would stand by Tradition Three. They decided the way it was written they had to. There was the case of the fellow with another addiction. They allowed him in and he became a great member and a great supporter of the group.

Myself, the fellow who is writing this article, I have this affliction as well. In today's society many of my brothers and sisters have this same situation. Where do we go to seek help?

The coverage is in our Blue card reading at most meetings, ‘Please confine your discussions as it relates to alcohol.’ The chairperson will remind those who stray off topic or should.

Finally there is no complete absolution in this Tradition, meaning you can't be kicked out of a meeting. My group has adopted a policy of zero tolerance of abusive behaviour. Usually at our next monthly business meeting the individual with abusive behaviour apologizes to the group and promises to have a better conduct then he or she is allowed back in.

As stated in Tradition One, “Our common welfare should come first.”

Thank You, John C., 84th St. Group.

We nurture each other's special beauty by our loving actions. We all need to know we're truly appreciated. We may already believe that our life is purposeful, and we may already appreciate our unique talents. And the contribution we're making at a particular time may be evident to our friends or co-workers. Even so, our fears of not being lovable can still haunt us at times.

These fears are easily put to rest when we help someone else feel special. All it takes is a moment of thoughtfulness, perhaps the simple decision to offer a smile or a loving touch. Offering words of encouragement to friends who are feeling helpless, or simply taking time to listen when they need to talk, will assure them that they matter and that we care. Our Higher Power needs us as emissaries of love in the world.

OLD TIMERS CORNER

The Story of Jack Mc.

Jack Mc. Had his last drink on April 29, 1961, but didn't go to his first AA meeting until almost three months later. Upon entering the program the Alcoholic Foundation of Alberta was up and running, located on 103 Street, south of 100th Avenue. It was there he presented himself. They offered a treatment program, a medical doctor attending each morning, a couple of psychiatric nurses and a number of professional counselors with sociology and psychology degrees.

Part of the intake process then was a series of six lectures, two each week, dealing with concepts and ramifications of alcoholism. Individual or group counseling was then made available on a voluntary basis.

Any suggestions of AA involvement, of which there were many, met with resistance. It wasn't until Jack began to realize that there was little left for the people at the Foundation to do for him that he started to acquiesce. "I was sort of running out of space. It was a case of simple arithmetic that if everyone that came in the front door of the foundation asking for help was still attending counseling meetings 36 years later they're going to need a fairly large room to accommodate them all."

All the while Jack was being encouraged to attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings he continued in the belief that he wasn't really an alcoholic and didn't have to do that. Eventually, about 13 weeks down the road, "in my clouded thinking I came to realize I had been sober for 13 weeks which was some sort of new world record for me. And I had no idea what was happening to me, but I didn't want to lose it."

As the counselling sessions ended, a facilitator again brought the AA issue to the fore. "Well, Jack," he said, "this is our last session. You've done really well and everything is going well for you, but we still suggest that you go to AA. That's your decision. If you want to go, we can set it up."

Another client, in lock-step with Jack, had capitulated a little earlier and had gone to AA offered to set up a meeting. Jack agreed.

Now, it was suggested a home group would be preferable over a public group because, Jack feels, of his earlier resistance or reluctance. The first meeting was in a private home.

To Jack's best recollection it was George S., then the director of the Alcohol Foundation, who started the Home Groups in Alberta. The first was in the upstairs boardroom of the Foundation office in Edmonton. Most people found comfort in the setting identifying it with a treatment centre. With expansion, the decision was made that the group would move to a private residence.

Limitations on that setup were soon realized. Most homes could not accommodate 15 to 20 members so a natural split took place. When Jack entered the program, there was the original group, that had moved from the boardroom to private homes, and Home Group 2 had emerged as a result of a split.

The evolution of the Home Groups is what George had in mind. He wanted to establish a meeting where his clients could get started on the AA program. The Foundation, as a treatment facility, was lacking in AA programming and did not espouse long term treatment. For Jack, it was either AA or back on the street.

Thrilling and exciting is the way Jack describes his entry into the program. At the time he felt AA was well organized and established with a number of extremely good open groups of the late fifties and early sixties.

The Home Groups, however, didn't experience rapid expansion because they were not a walk-in situation. But, Jack explains, there was a great proliferation with numbers of young people being attracted to the Home Groups. Again, to Jack's best recollection, Home Group #1 did not grow as others had and did not split. Home Group #2 did split creating number #3, etc. Soon there would be groups numbered in the twenties and thirties from the original number two cell. But, Jack cautions, there's a natural evolution. He says not every piece of fruit on the vine is going to grow and flourish, so that some of the groups perhaps split too quickly, or didn't have a solid foundation, so that after a year or so they suddenly found themselves with a small nucleus of members, making it difficult to function at that level. As a result, some of those numbers returned to Central Office to be recycled.

The idea of home groups was not well received by everyone within the AA community. There existed a perception of elitism or that maybe some of these guys were too good for the open groups. Jack says, "there was something just not right." Where did these guys fit into this situation? It was quite a number of years before the general AA community came to the realization that there wasn't any such thing as elitism in the Home

Continued on next page

OLD TIMERS CORNER

The Story of Jack Mc.

Continued from last page

Groups, that anybody who wanted to come could come. They didn't have to have a job. They didn't have to have any money. They could be just out of an institution. The difference was they were meeting in homes with a little more comfort, and the big thing was, there were few expenses.

"Therefore, all of the Seventh Tradition proceeds belonged to AA. We didn't have to pay hall rent, buy coffee or insurance. If there were suddenly 20 home groups and all were turning their money in to Central Office, to Alberta and New York the financial contribution would be greater than all the open groups put together.

Others soon recognized all AA's were the same, meeting at roundups and other group functions. It was simply that some people chose to meet at one location rather than the basement of a church or some other such facility. All animosity and concern soon waned, according to Jack, and the situation became harmonious and cooperative.

Another difference cited is the fact all home meetings were closed and stag (men only). And, in the beginning the Home Groups were always stag meetings. But Jack points out, the next evolution would be the ladies of AA establishing their own series of home groups, The Hilletes. After a number of years in Home Groups, Jack doesn't attend any longer. He says he owes his sobriety to those groups. " Obviously, it worked for me."

Unable to attribute any particular message to his sobriety, Jack simply states, "I must have been ready. I ascribe to the fact there is a bottom, but there is more than one.

"Nonetheless, I had reached a bottom because after I had been sober a couple of months I realized that, not only was I an alcoholic but I was a fairly serious one. I had learned enough about this illness to know that I had a lot of symptoms which would indicate this was a fairly advanced case.

Even without that knowledge, if you start to drink three bottles of whiskey a day you have a slight problem, if it isn't serious.

At the outset, Jack was a reluctant member of the program but he kept going to meetings because, despite his diminished capacity, he wasn't drinking. There were 12 Step meetings and he was getting very little out of it.

"I don't think there was any conscious recognition in me that I was getting any of this information. I was listening, and, sometimes I agreed and sometimes disagreed because there were a lot of things I didn't think were right. And, I would argue about it. I wasn't real happy about being in AA."

A turning point in Jack's sobriety may have come the day a nurse from the Foundation called. In tears, she asked if he would 12 Step her husband. With the family in imminent break-up, the nurse was as at odds as to what could be done with the alcoholic spouse.

Jack inquired, "Will he ask me to make the 12 Step call?"

"Yes, he will," the nurse answered. "I'll have him phone you if you'll make the call."

Continued next month

SPONSORSHIP

- S is for Service Work
- P is for our Primary Purpose
- O is for Open-mindedness
- N is for Newcomers
- S is for Self-awareness
- O is for One Day at a Time
- R is for Responsibility
- S is for Surrender
- H is for Humility
- I is for Daily Inventory
- P is for Peace of Mind

Borrowed from Betty S., Edmonton

BEFORE

It is sad when we don't say what we think of loved ones
Till it's too late to say I love you, I'm proud of you.
I take my friends and relations, for granted thinking later.

However, there are times when we don't get a chance.
So, I just want you to know your presence in my life has
Brightened up my life and home when my days are dark
Your light keeps me going.

Your friendship means so much so before it is too late
I want you to know this is how I really feel in my heart.
That I love you and even though I don't make it a habit to say so
You make my world a better place with you in it.

Poem by Violet G., April 1995

STEP THREE

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.”

An awareness of my Higher Power operating in my life is deep and profound to me. That doesn't mean that I always understand what is happening or what God's will is for me. However, I am absolutely open in my meditations to hear what He is trying to tell me and what direction he wants me to follow.

To make the decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of a God as I understand Him was not difficult for me once I came to understand the absolute necessity of doing this Step, in relation to the degree of my recovery. I liked the idea that it took me out of the driver's seat and put my Higher Power there as I know He has much more knowledge, insight, caring and love in His heart for me than I ever had. I have become very aware of the danger I put myself in with respect to my physical, emotional and spiritual health.

As well, my own father was a violent alcoholic, the personification of self-will run riot. When he was sober, he had a gentle kindness about him, but when he drank, which was more often than not, he flew through our lives like a tornado leaving us in shreds in his path. Although my father abused, neglected and abandoned me, about a few years ago, I came to understand that I could adopt my Higher Power as my Father and He will heal the wounds within me and always be there.

I love the concept of a loving, caring Father who will be there when I need Him, who will pick me up, dust me off and set me on my feet again when I fall on my face, as I so often do. Sometimes I just talk to Him in my head, when I'm trying to solve some problem or figure out a course of action. Then I have to remember to sit back and listen for His answer or answers and I work hard at doing that.

At all times, I have to remember that I am very shortsighted when it comes to seeing what is good or bad for me as I cannot see the big picture. My Higher Power can see the big picture and my recovery is always part of it.

Often, I can tell what is the right step for me, as events will fall into place easily once I have done the footwork. As I've heard at meetings many times, “If you're constantly hitting your head against the wall, maybe you should turn around and go the other way!” What a novel thought!

As it says on page 568 of the 4th edition of the Big Book, “We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery ... these are indispensable.” All I have to remember to work Step Three is to make the decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand Him. He does a much better job than I do.

Faye E., Oilmen's Group, Edmonton, AB

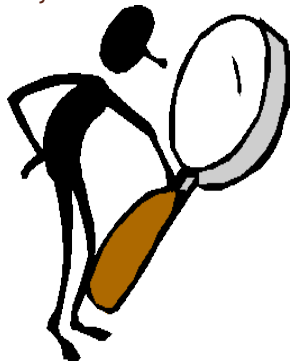
QUIPS, QUOTES, ETC. FROM AA GRAPEVINE “A RABBIT WALKS INTO A BAR

Question? What did the sponsor say to the sponsee after he told his story to the group?

Answer: “Your “I”'s are too close together.”

I dialed the number of a newcomer and got the following recording: “I am not available right now, but thank you for caring enough to call. I am making some changes in my life. Please leave a message after the beep. If I do not return your call, you are one of the changes.

.....
I had a terrible handicap that made me feel sorry for myself in early recovery: I suffered more from self-pity than anyone else around.



THIRD STEP PRAYER

from Atlanta, Georgia AA World Conference – July 2015

God, I offer myself to Thee to build with me and to do with me as thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy love and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always!

.....
Fear Prayer

God please remove my fear and draw my attention to what you would have me do.

BILL W'S LETTER TO A MEMBER CONCERNING DEPRESSION

The following excerpts from a letter of Bill W. were quoted in the memoirs of Tom P., an early California AA member. Tom did not use the person addressed ~ perhaps because he was still living.

Tom said:

Here in part is what Bill Wilson wrote in 1958 to a close friend who shared his problem with depression describing how Bill himself used St. Francis's prayer as a steppingstone toward recovery:

Dear ...

I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA ... the development of much more real maturity and balance) which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result and so into easy, happy and good living ... well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally.

Last autumn, depression, having no real rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depression, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release depression? By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis prayer ... "It is better to comfort than to be comforted." Here was the formula, all right, but why didn't it work?

Suddenly I realized what the matter was ... My basic flaw had always been dependence, almost absolute dependence on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Reinforced by what grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed upon any set of circumstances whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and institutional satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing a love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, I could not avail myself of God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that as long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependency meant demand ... a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit, an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the real current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may be able to gain emotional sobriety.

Of course, I haven't offered you a really new idea ... only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own "hexes" at depth. Nowadays my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet in bright sunshine. *****

Tom said "Bill's words of wisdom helped and inspired me and many others. To those who have never been there, it is hard to describe the gratitude that overflows in men and women who are delivered from the black depths of depression into the light. As with delivery from the bondage to alcohol, it is a hosanna of the heart that never ends.

Birthdays

in - March

60 Minutes to Sobriety

Last Sunday
 Mar. 26 Jim M. 7 yrs.
 Kim m. 13 yrs.
 Tatianna P. 3 yrs.

Breathe Easy

First Friday
 Apr. 7 Hank M. 0 yrs.
 Ken C. 6 yrs.
 Lorraine L. 1 yr.

Campus

Last Monday
 Mar. 27 Marnie D. 3 yrs.
 Rachael L. 9 yrs.
 Steve C. 6 yrs.

Capilano Step

Last Thursday
 Mar. 30 Ross S. 7 yrs.
 Pierre S. 34 yrs.
 Connor F. 1 yr.

Crestwood Welcome

Last Monday
 Mar. 27 Jack D. 37 yrs.
 Jane B. 36 yrs.
 Andrew. 1 yr.

Dolphin

Closest Monday
 Mar. 6 Nicole F. 1 yr.
 Doug R. 1 yr.
 Mar. 13 Doug. 2 yrs.
 Mar. 27 Bill. 1 yr.

Eastwood

Last Monday
 Mar. 27 Brian M. 30 yrs.

Ellerslie

Last Thursday
 Mar. 30 Doug B. 30 yrs.
 Deon M. 16 yrs.
 Tina E. 10 yrs.
 Rick H. 2 yrs.

Fulton Place

Last Friday
 Mar. 31 Ray L. 35 yrs.
 Richard W. 19 yrs.
 Brian L. 30 yrs.
 David C. 6 yrs.

Hillette's 2

Closest Wednesday
 Mar. 8 Cathy C. 7 yrs.

Jasper Place

Last Tuesday
 Mar. 28 David C. 3 yrs.
 Ken C. 6 yrs.

Knights of Sobriety

Last Friday
 Mar. 31 Greg O. 4 yrs.
 Peter G. 10 yrs.
 Scott B. 2 yrs.
 Sean M. 15 yrs.

Lighthouse

Last Friday
 Mar. 31 Jonathan M. 18 yrs.
 Jordan T. 1 yr.
 Cheryl R. 1 yr.
 Tyler F. 1 yr.
 Sherry R. 10 yrs.
 Lynn J. 1 yr.

Millwoods

Last Tuesday
 Mar. 28 Bill B. 26 yrs.
 Joanne B. 14 yrs.

Providence

Last Wednesday
 Mar. 29 Mary Jo W. 30 yrs.

Shifters

Last Saturday
 Mar. 25 Iga S. 20 yrs.
 Ron G. 38 yrs.
 Marcel. 5 yrs.
 Peter P. 17 yrs.
 Paula B. 26 yrs.
 Ryan D. 4 yrs.

South Side

3rd Friday
 Mar. 17 Andy R. 12 yrs.
 Anne V. 5 yrs.
 Dan S. 10 yrs.

South Side Young People

Last Sunday
 Mar. 26 Phil G. 5 yrs.
 Dawn M. 3 yrs.
 Justin M. 3 yrs.
 Jody M. 3 yrs.

West End 12 Step

First Tuesday
 Apr. 4 Tina M. 2 yrs.

Westgrove

Last Sunday
 Mar. 26 Sherry R. 10 yrs.
 Larry O. 3 yrs.
 Peter G. 10 yrs.

SURROUNDING AREAS

SHERWOOD PARK

Happy Hour

Mar. 31 Milt C. 37 yrs.

ST. ALBERT

S.A. Sunday Breakfast

Last Sunday
 Mr.26 Robin R. 2 yrs.
 Simone H. 5 yrs.
 Dianne N. 22 yrs.
 Wyman C. 56 yrs.
 Andreas A. 2 yrs.

S.A. Brotherhood Group

Mar. 29 Ben C. 3 yrs.
 Bill S. 39 yrs.

SPRUCE GROVE

Serenity Centre

Mar. 20 James S. 31 yrs.



GROUPS IN NEED OF SUPPORT

Mon. 8:00pm Oilmen's Group (O)
 11223 - 51 Ave., back dr.
 (Holy Spirit Luth.Church)

Tues & Sat. Rite Trac Group
 8:00pm 13111 - 79 St.

Tues. 8:00pm Young & Old Mtg.
 6329 - 118 Ave. (O)
 (Recovery Acres)

Tues. 8:00pm Hope Through Friend.
 16940 - 87 Ave., Rm. 016
 (Misericordia Hosp) (O)

Tues. 7:30 pm Southbound Fellowship
 10603 Ellerslie Rd.
 (Ellerslie Baptist Church)

Thu. 7:00 pm AA Group (O)
 11325-89 Ave.
 (St. Joseph's College)

Sun. 7:00 pm Phoenix Fireside
 22210 Stony Plain Rd.
 (Our House Centre)

Need new members & support

Definition of an alcoholic bottom: When things get worse faster than you can lower your standards.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ROUNDUPS & FUNCTIONS

Banff, AB

Mar. 3 - 5 Banff Roundup \$103.00
 sponsored by Calgary Intergroup
 Banff Park Lodge Regis. \$37.00
 Contact: 403-777-1212

Edmonton, AB

Mar. 18 Bridging the Gap Workshop
 1 - 5 pm 10728 - 124 St.
 (Alano Club)
 Contact: 70-278-0533 or 907-4286

St. Albert, AB

April 8 District 64 40th Annual Roundup \$35.00
 8:30-on 20 Greensboro Drive
 St. Albert United Church
 Contact: 780-459-8891, 292-1554 or 458-5069

Ardrossan, AB

Apr. 28-29 District 61 9th Annual Roundup \$45.00
 80 - 1st Avenue
 Ardrossan Community Hall
 Contact: 780-298-6540 or 410-1434

THE GAL IN THE GLASS

When you get what you want in your struggle for self
 And the world makes you queen for a day
 Just go to a mirror and look at yourself,
 And see what THAT gal has to say.

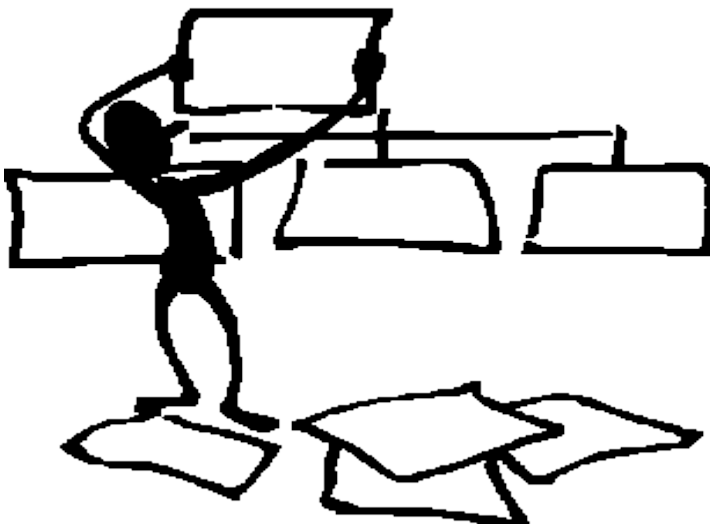
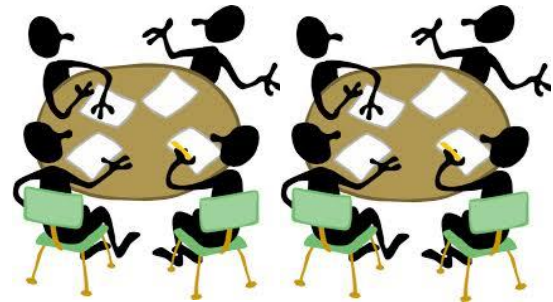
For it isn't your husband or family or friend
 Whose judgment upon you must pass;
 The gal whose verdict counts most in the end
 Is the one staring back from the glass.

Some people may think you're a straight-shootin'
 chum
 And call you a person of place
 But the gal in the glass says you're only a bum
 If you can't look her straight in the face.

She's the gal to please, never mind all the rest
 For she's with you clear up to the end,
 And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult
 test
 If the gal in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of
 years
 And get pats on the back as you pass,
 But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
 If you've cheated the gal in the glass.

... Anonymous



**REQUEST FOR AA GROUPS TO OFFER TO BE
 PART OF A MEETING, AS A GROUP, SEVERAL
 TIMES A YEAR.**

Wed. 8:00 pm Jump-Start Meeting
 11229 - 100 Ave., bsmt, side dr.
 (Jellinek House)

This is a newcomer meeting needing the wisdom
 and hope from members willing to share.
 Contact Sheldon 780-488-1160