

From the Editor

Valentine's Day is Feb. 14. Many people struggle to come up with their own special plan for Valentine's Day, but it can be even trickier if you're looking to cut out the alcohol. Whether you think you'd benefit from a sober night out, or if you or your partner are in recovery, there are plenty of excellent options for your celebration.

Features of this month's *Central Office Newsletter* include tips for a sober Valentine's Day, letter of introduction from the new Area 78 Panel 72 Delegate, member article about how fighting Hulk Hogan is analogous to fighting alcohol (In both cases we have to surrender) and lessons learned from the movie *Groundhog Day* for those struggling with alcohol.

Enjoy! Keep warm!

In service and with gratitude,
Julia J. Editor ECO News



Pick a nearby outing that does not center on alcohol.

A fancy dinner can really feel like it's missing a glass of wine, and most places you can dance will be focused on liquor sales. Opt for activities that will not feel incomplete without a drink: play a round of mini golf, go see a play at a local theater, or spend the afternoon horseback riding in the park. Check out a local museum or art gallery, and even better if it's something neither of you is familiar with so you can discover together. Choose an activity you'll both love, something low-pressure and entertaining.

(From Michelle Peterson's blog)

Tradition Two

"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."

"Now that I've been elected Secretary, I'll show this group some real leadership!"



"There's only one way to do it and I'll tell you what it is..."



"...furthermore, we'll take our money and establish a fund... I'll manage it..."



Members of A.A. may be chosen to serve in many ways...



Intergroup Representative



General Service Representative



STEP TWO

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

The moment they read Step Two, most A.A. newcomers are confronted with a dilemma, sometimes a serious one. How often have we heard them cry out, “Look what you people have done to us”! You have convinced us that we are alcoholics and that our lives are unmanageable. Having reduced us to a state of absolute helplessness, you now declare that none but a Higher Power can remove our obsession. Some of us *won't* believe in God, others can't, and still others who do believe that God exists have no faith whatever He will perform this miracle. Yes, you've got us over the barrel, all right—but where do we go from here?”

TWELVE STEPS and TWELVE TRADITIONS p. 25

PROMISE TWO

“We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.”

SECOND STEP PRAYER

***“Heavenly Father,
I know in my heart that only you can restore me to sanity.
I humbly ask that you remove all twisted thought &
Addictive behavior from me this day.
Heal my spirit & restore in me a clear mind.”***

Alcoholics Anonymous, Cleveland

CONCEPT TWO

The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

- Do we have an understanding of history of the General Service Conference?
- What is a Conference Advisory Action? Does our home group's G.S.R., D.C.M., area delegate report back to the group on the highlights of the Conference and Conference Advisory Actions?
- Is our group meeting its wider Seventh Tradition responsibilities?

(Reprinted from the General Service Office Service Material SM F-131)

AA HISTORY FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

February 1

1918 – Original date set for Bill W.'s marriage to Lois Burnham. The date was moved up because of the war.

February 2

1942 – Bill W. paid tribute to Ruth Hock, AA's first paid secretary, who resigned to get married. She had written approximately 15,000 letters to people asking for help.

February 5

1941 – Pittsburgh Telegram ran a story on the first A.A. group's Friday night meeting of a dozen "former hopeless drunks."

February 8

1940 – Bill W., Dr. Bob, and six other A.A.s asked 60 rich friends of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for money at the Union Club, N Y. They got \$2,000.

1940 – Houston Press ran first of 6 anonymous articles on A.A. by Larry J.

February 9

2002 – Sue Smith Windows, Dr. Bob's daughter died.

February 10

1922: Harold E. Hughes was born on a farm near Ida Grove, Iowa. After his recovery from alcoholism, he became Governor of Iowa, a United States Senator, and the leading dark horse for the Presidential Democratic nomination in 1972, until he announced he would not run. He authored the legislation which created the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and other legislation to help alcoholics and addicts.

February 11

1938 – Clarence S. ("Home Brewmeister" in 1st, 2nd & 3rd editions) had his last drink.

February 12

1945 – World War II paper shortage forced reduction in size of the Big Book.

February 13

1937 – Oxford Groups "Alcoholic Squadron" met at the home of Hank P. ("The Unbeliever" in the 1st edition of the Big Book) in New Jersey.

1940 – With about two years of sobriety, Jim B. ("The Vicious Cycle") moved to the Philadelphia area and started the first Philadelphia A.A. group.

February 14

1971 – AA groups worldwide held a memorial service for Bill Wilson.

2000 – William Y., "California Bill" died in Winston Salem, NC.

February 15

1946 – AA Tribune, Des Moines, IA, reported 36 new members since Marty M. was there.

February 16

1941 – Baltimore Sunday Sun reported city's first AA group begun in 1940 had grown from 3 to 40 members, with five being women.

February 18

1943 – AA's were granted the right to use cars for 12th step work in emergency cases, despite gas rationing.

February 19

1967 – Father "John Doe" (Ralph P.), 1st Catholic Priest in AA, died.

(continued next page)

February 20

1941 – The Toledo Blade published first of three articles on AA by Seymour Rothman.

February 21

1939 – 400 copies of the Big Book manuscript were sent to doctors, judges, psychiatrists, and others for comment. This was the “multilith” Big Book.

February 22

1842 – Abe Lincoln addressed the Washington Temperance Society in Springfield, IL.

February 24

2002 — Hal M., “Dr. Attitude of Gratitude,” died. He had 37 years of sobriety. Hal testified, anonymously, before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse on December 3, 1970.

February 26

1999 – Felicia G., author of “Stars Don’t Fall,” died. Born Countess Felicia G. in 1905, she was the daughter of Count Josef G. and Eleanor Medill Patterson. She married Drew Pearson in 1925 and divorced him three years later. She married Dudley de Lavigne in 1934, but the marriage lasted less than a year. In 1958 she married John Kennedy Magruder and divorced him in 1964. For most of her professional career, she went by the name Felicia G.

Other February happenings with no specific date:

1908 – Bill W. made boomerang.

1916 – Bill W. & sophomore class at Norwich University was suspended for hazing.

1938 – Rockefeller gave \$5,000 to AA.

1939 – Dr. Harry Tiebout endorsed AA, the first psychiatrist to do so.

1940 – First organization meeting of Philadelphia AA is held at McCready H.’s room at 2209 Delaney Street.

1940 – 1st AA clubhouse opened at 334-1/2 West 24th Street, NYC.

1943 – San Francisco Bulletin reporter Marsh Masline interviewed Ricardo, a San Quentin Prison AA group member.

1946 – Baton Rouge, La., AA’s hold their first anniversary meeting.

1946 – The AA Grapevine reported the New York Seaman’s Group issued a pamphlet for seamen “on one page the 12 Steps have been streamlined into 5.”

1946 – Des Moines Committee for Education on Alcoholism aired its first show on KRNT.

1946 – Pueblo, Colorado, had a second group, composed of alcoholic State Hospital patients.

1951 – Fortune magazine article about AA was published in pamphlet form.

1959 – AA granted “Recording for the Blind” permission to tape the Big Book.

1963 – Harpers carried article critical of AA.

1981 – 1st issue of “Markings,” AA Archives Newsletter, was published, “to give the Fellowship a sense of its own past and the opportunity to study it.”

Thanks to Billy C. and Nancy O. of the group “AA History Buffs” for this list, used by permission.

“Sobriety does interesting things to the mind – clears it up some, lets a bit of honesty and truth filter in, and begins to demand reality.”

“It Takes What It Takes,” Pompano Beach, June 1978, Step By Step

FAITHFUL FIVERS

None this Month

The Faithful Fiver Club was initiated several years ago to generate funds for Central Office. AA members pledge a donation of \$5.00 or more a month. They then receive the satisfaction of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and recognition (if they desire) in the monthly ECOS Newsletter.

Sober Valentine's Day Ideas

Give back to the community

Volunteering probably doesn't jump to mind when it comes to Valentine's Day, but it can be a wonderful way to spend time together. The rewarding experience of helping others creates a meaningful bonding experience, and you'll often meet amazing people in the process. You can make a lunch date of it at the local soup kitchen or spend the evening working the seniors' Valentine's Day dance at the community center, just check out what's going on in your area. Make your holiday about a love for sobriety, a love for each other, and a love for others.

Take a class

There might be an activity you've both been wanting to do, or you could surprise them with a class you know they'll love. Try a beginner's class of a dance style neither of you has heard of. Take a pottery class if your partner loves art. If you're both regulars at the gym, try a beginner's kickboxing or martial arts class. You can check neighborhood and community centers, YMCAs, libraries, art galleries, and dance studios for local opportunities — just make sure the classes are alcohol-free! Many places offer special deals on Groupon, though you should check the fine print for each about holiday booking.

Michelle Peterson

RecoveryPride.org | michelle@recoverypride.org

BIRTHDAY CLUB

None this Month

“What is the Birthday Club?”

- A show of gratitude by AA members, who contribute \$1.00 or more for each year of continuous sobriety.
- These funds are used to HELP SUPPORT Central Office staff and volunteers to carry the Twelfth Step message during the office hours.
- You will receive personal Birthday Card on your sobriety date.
- Please contact Central Office, if you want to join our **BIRTHDAY CLUB!**

#205, 10544 – 114 St., Edmonton, AB
T5H 3J7 780-424—5900
centraloffice@edmontonaa.org

February 2 is Groundhog Day



Consider this quote:

“Sometimes in life, your situation will keep repeating itself until you learn your lesson.”

This is basically the plot of *Groundhog Day*, the beloved 1993 comedy starring Bill Murray. In this film, Murray's character is stuck in a time loop. Weatherman Phil Connors lives the same day over and over again, every day. While this movie is comedic in tone, its lessons hold real value for those of us striving to break the cycle of addiction.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDMONTON CENTRAL OFFICE

In keeping with the AA Seventh Tradition of self-support, Edmonton Central Office can accept contributions only from AA members and AA Groups.

Contributions can be made to Edmonton Central Office by any of the following methods (AA members or groups only please):

- **E-transfer to centraloffice@edmontonaa.org** you will need to provide the answer to the security question via a separate email to this address.
- Visa or MasterCard either over the phone (780-424-5900) or in person (by appointment)
- Cheque made payable to "Edmonton Central Office" and brought to the office (by appointment) or mailed to the office at:

Edmonton Central Office
Suite 205
10544 114 St NW
Edmonton, AB T5H 3J7

- Cash brought to the office (by appointment).
- Arranging on-going monthly contributions by calling or emailing Central Office

The Edmonton Central Office Society is a registered charity. A tax receipt will be issued early in 2022 to individuals whose contribution is greater than \$20.00. For a receipt to be issued, the full name and address of the individual is needed. The receipt will indicate a contribution to the Edmonton Central Office Society.

Note: You can phone Central Office weekdays from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. If you need to visit Central Office, please arrange an appointment by phone or email.



How many members of Alcoholics Anonymous does it take to change a light bulb?

Only one, but the bulb has to really want to change.



A woman attends a funeral for the husband of a high school friend. After the service, she walks up to the sobbing widow and asks, "What happened to Fred?" The widow responds, "Oh it was the alcohol, it finally got him". The woman inquires "That's too bad, but why didn't he just go to AA?" The Widow replies angrily "He wasn't That Bad!"





Group Birthdays February 2022

60 Minutes to Sobriety

Last Sunday

None

Back to Basics (St. Albert)

First Thursday

None

Bonnie Doon

Thursday 8:00

Jan 11 Dan R. 40 yrs

19 George B. 48 yrs

Breathe Easy

First Friday

Feb Davin T. 8 yrs

Bruce M. 9 yrs

Fellowship Breakfast

Last Saturday

Feb 15 Misty M. 2 yrs

Gratitude

Last Monday

Feb 11 Octavus 2 yrs

28 Barry W. 3 yrs

Jasper Place

Last Tuesday None

Last Call

Last Wednesday

None

Mustard Seed

Last Sunday

Feb 5 Debra S. 32 yrs

5 Dar 27 yrs

25 Peter N. 4 yrs

Oilman's

First Monday

None

South Side

Third Friday

Feb 14 Karen W. 17 yrs

25 Andy R. 17 yrs

12 Steps to Serenity

Feb 3 Larry V. 35 yrs

21 Jeff B. 8 yrs

23 Dwight M. 1 yr

26 Brian D. 4 yrs

St. Albert Sunday Night

Last Sunday

Feb 11 Eddy B. 3 yrs

Step Sisters

Last Wednesday

None

Please send members lists

editor@edmontonaa.org

or update your members

list at AA Central Office.

St. Albert Breakfast

Feb 5 Ken M. 26 yrs

13 Walter H. 44 yrs

13 Janice B. 10 yrs

21 Fay D. 51 yrs

WEMG

First Wednesday

Feb 8 Ravi S. 10 yrs

8 James H. 18 yrs

17 Jeff C. 4 yrs

25 Mike B. 7 yrs

26 Matthew G. 1 yr

Westminster

Last Saturday

Feb 4 Linda V. 46 yrs

20 Brenda B. 25 yrs

21 Steve K. 47 yrs



Upcoming Events and other Notables

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

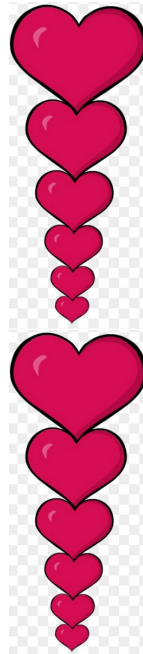
14 WEEK STEP SERIES

JANUARY 11TH, 2022
TIME – 7:00PM

PRESENTED IN PERSON

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE – MAIN FLOOR
1380 SHERWOOD DRIVE, SHERWOOD PARK

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
LINDA C. 780 394 5828 DUNCAN M. 587 930 2302



LADIES AA 12 STEP STUDY

Sunday Jan. 9, 2022

For 13 Weeks

6:00 pm to 7:30 pm (MST)

Coming to you from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Zoom ID: 458-778-3027

PW: 739610

For additional info, email
stepstudiedm@gmail.com

DISTRICT 40 Area 78 West Edmonton BTMWB ROUNDUP

Saturday Feb 5, 2022 doors open at 3:30 pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 842 743 5949

No Passcode

14 WEEK STEP SERIES

(Edmonton)

JANUARY 24, 2022 at 7:00 pm



MOSAIC HOUSE
(Basement) 6811
– 92A Avenue,
Edmonton, AB

CAMEL CLUB

14567-118 Ave., Second floor
When: February 12, 2022
1:30 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

CONTACT US

Deloyce H., Chair. | 780 289-2126 |
egsc.picpcchair@edmontonaa.org

Edmonton Central Office: 780 424-5900
edmontonaa.org

A.A. COMMITTEES

PI-CPC WORKSHOP

Please join us for an afternoon and learn how A.A. speaks to the non-A.A. general public and with professional groups, who may encounter the alcoholic in their daily work. This is a great way to become involved in service and reach out to the alcoholic who is still suffering.

Introducing - A New Way of Life Group

6811-92A Avenue, Edmonton
Located at the Mosaic House
Mondays at 8:30 pm (Starting January 3, 2022)



District 57 Unity Night

Wednesday, March 17, 2022, 7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

On Zoom Enter PMI (Personal Meeting ID): 780 206 7204

AI-Anon Speaker Jill D – Strength and Hope Group
A.A. Speaker Barbara A – Crestwood Group
Area Guest Mike M – Alternate Delegate

For More Information, Please Contact Francis L.
780-206-7204
francislusson@hotmail.com

NEW MEETINGS

South Edmonton Fellowship Centre

9122 34A Avenue NW

Monday 7:00pm In all our Affairs

Tuesday 7:00pm ISMs

Thursday 7:00pm Keep it Simple



WE MARCH BACK TO *Banff*



Banff Park Lodge
Booking ID: 39774
Bow View
Booking ID: 76231
Peaks Hotel & Suites
Booking ID: 39964

THE 2022 BANFF ROUND UP MARCH 4TH - 6TH 2022

The Banff Park Lodge
222- Lynx Street Banff, AB
403-762-4433 / 1-800-661-9266

Room rate: \$152 and up

Registration: \$45

Banquet: \$125 February 27th cutoff

banquet ticket includes registration

**Purchase tickets from Calgary Central Office
or at www.banffroundup.com**

Speakers:

Paula P- Illinois (AA)

Butch M- Ontario (AA)

Doug R- California (AA)

Mari G- Ontario (AA)

Larcine G California (Al-Anon)

Plus: Workshops and Entertainment

Email: info@banffroundup.com for more details



In the spirit of tradition 6 A.A. is not allied with any sect denomination, politics, organization or institution

Trusted Servants Election for the 2022/2023 Rotation

Both the Edmonton Central Office Board and the Intergroup Committee are looking for AA members in our area who would like to perform one of the vital service positions (listed below) to help us carry the message to the Alcoholic who still suffers. The next service rotation will start on January 1st, 2022. The following positions are still open and need to be filled by our membership:

Central Office Board

Directors (two positions)

Intergroup Committee

Vice Chair

Policies & Procedures Chair

Webmaster

These trusted servant positions will be voted on by your Intergroup Reps at the meeting of Edmonton and Area Intergroup. If you are interested in putting your name forward for one of these very rewarding service positions, please fill out and submit the online nomination form at [Edmonton AA - Election Nomination Form](#)



AREA 78

Alcoholics Anonymous

January 2022

To our Members,

The Spirit of Rotation has us beginning our new roles as your Area 78 Committee, serving on Panel 72. I am humbled, and excited to serve as your Delegate for these next two years.

Area 78 is the largest geographical area in Canada/US, covering 3,150,000 sq kms. We serve AA members in Alberta, NWT, Western Nunavut, NE & SE corners of BC, and Maidstone, Sk.

From one alcoholic to all the alcoholics in our fellowship in Canada and the United States, we want to ensure we stay connected. In our structure, the Group supports its members and is supported by their District, which is then supported by their Area, which is supported by the Canada/US General Service of Alcoholics Anonymous out of New York.

How we stay together, know what is going on, and have 'our' voices heard is through the GSRs (General Service Representatives). For their two years, a GSR represents their group at District meetings and at the Area Assemblies. They bring all kinds of information to the members. They also share the voice of their members on all matters concerning the District, the Area and to A.A. as a whole. The GSRs share their members' ideas, concerns, and successes. Delegates, who are elected in each Area, carry the voice of the members to an annual Conference in NY and bring information back for the Districts and Groups.

Our Area Committee includes all the DCMs (District Committee Members) and the Area Committee Officers (6 elected Table Officers and 10 appointed Committee Chairs).

Panel 72 referee to the two-year term an Area Committee serves the members. In 1950 the A.A. Founders turned the running of A.A. over to the membership as a whole, as a way to ensure Alcoholics Anonymous survives, and thrives. We are the 72nd panel since that time. (1950 + 72 = 2022)

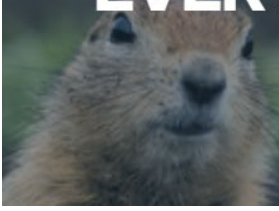
In the spirit of rotation, just as we begin to figure things out, we move on, making room for others. Each Panel is a part of history, a kind of legacy, in the growth *and* continuity of Alcoholics Anonymous. Most of us are familiar with being financially self-supporting. Our service structure ensures that we are also self-governing. We answer to no one but ourselves.

For information or to contact any of the Area Committee Officers, please go to <https://area78aa.org/#> click on "Services"

In Loving Service,

Tami L, Area 78 P72 Delegate

“EVERY DAY WAS LIKE GROUNDHOG DAY”



Many people in 12 Step meetings refer to this film, saying that “Every day was like *Groundhog Day*.” Let’s explore exactly how this movie relates to the experience of addiction.

Ignoring the Consequences

In the beginning of the film, Phil behaves chaotically – he leads police in a high-speed chase, binge eats, commits robbery and has a string of one-night stands. Because the days start right over, he completely ignores the consequences of his actions. He manipulates others and behaves selfishly without regard for how it affects anyone else.

Unfortunately, addiction causes many of us to act this way while under the influence of drugs and alcohol. It can be extremely challenging to put cravings aside and focus on your loved ones. When you’re chemically dependent on a substance, so much of your mental real estate is dedicated to obtaining, using and recovering from that drug or drink. This causes a ripple effect in other areas of life. You may experience worsened job performance, financial difficulty, relationship problems, or legal trouble – worst of all, you probably don’t care. Many addicts watching this film probably see themselves in Phil’s actions.

Feeling Trapped

As the days wear on (and keep restarting), Phil becomes more and more depressed. He desperately seeks a way out of his situation. He commits suicide in a variety of ways, even driving himself (and the groundhog) off of a cliff. However, no matter what he does, it seems he is doomed to keep waking up on February 2nd to Sonny and Cher’s “I Got You Babe.”

Addiction drives us to our breaking point again and again. Whether it’s a DUI, job loss, financial ruin or divorce, we will eventually begin seeing the signs that this cannot go on. That is why the very first step of Alcoholics Anonymous requires us to admit two things: that we are powerless over alcohol (or drugs), and that *our lives have become unmanageable*. Phil realizes that his situation cannot continue, and yet it does. The message here is that when we keep acting the same way over and over, we will keep struggling.

Seeing the Silver Lining

When Phil tries to convince Rita, his love interest, that he is trapped in a loop, things don’t go exactly as planned. Once she is finally convinced of the time warp, Rita encourages Phil to think of it as a blessing, not a curse.

This direction to see the silver lining can help us to avoid hitting rock bottom and seek treatment. We must remember that there is always room to recover, and that our lives are always worth fighting for. While addiction itself is not a positive influence in our lives, over time, the lessons it has taught us can help us to become better people.

Why is Addiction like *Groundhog Day*?

Needing to Make a Change

After his conversation with Rita, Phil decides to use his knowledge of the loop to change himself and other people in the town. He uses his experience to save people from accidents and misfortunes. He also begins a journey of self-improvement, during which he learns piano, ice sculpting and French. In the final version of the loop, Phil passionately reports on the Groundhog Day festivities and makes a splash in town, resulting in the calendar finally changing over to February 3rd.

This is the most powerful message of all. Only by changing himself could Phil break the loop of Groundhog Day. Similarly, only by deciding to seek sobriety can we break the cycle of addiction. We must seek continuous self-improvement, make amends and become better versions of ourselves. By devoting ourselves to the daily practices involved in recovery, we can finally be free.

Break Your *Groundhog Day* Cycle

While the film covered in this blog post is almost 30 years old, its message still resonates. We hope that by pursuing treatment, you are able to break your own cycle of addiction. You deserve a full and vibrant life – not the same day over and over again.

<https://www.cumberlandheights.org/blogs/every-day-was-like-groundhog-day/>

GRAPEVINE Daily Quote

February 4, 2022

"If I simply let go of a character defect – release it – my Higher Power will replace it with a character asset. As I release anger, I find that I am friendlier. As I release hate, I become more loving. As I release fear, I become more secure."

Kathmandu, July 1995, From: "A Lifetime Supply", Beginner's Book



HULK HOGAN VERSUS THE BIG BOOK

I asked my sponsor about it, and he said that we both qualify as old-timers. And I would consider it a compliment if someone called me an old-timer. At the time of this writing, I am 66 belly-button years old, and 27 years clean and sober. In my 27 years of real life, I've read the Big Book and 12 Steps and 12 Traditions many times cover-to-cover, and As Bill Sees It all the time when I need inspiration, and Living Sober, which we used to read from at a meeting I went to in Florida. I've attended meetings on a regular basis for my happy 27 years all over North America, and all over Edmonton, specifically. My friends in the program and I started up a Big Book study meeting in the North End, before it went bust due to COVID restrictions. I tell you all this about myself, because Tom, an old-timer down in Florida before I actually was an old-timer myself, got mad at me in a meeting once for what I'm about to say. He said AA had nothing to do with Hulk Hogan, or Cyndi Lauper, or WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment). AA is all about the 12 Steps, Tom told me in that meeting, when he got mad at me. But it's OK; I can take it.

So, as an old-timer, I can remember when Cyndi Lauper, the pop-star, started messing around in WWE Wrestling. When she accepted her Grammy in 1985 for Best New Artist, she brought Hulk Hogan with her to act as her bodyguard (back then, I bought her album Time After Time, for which she won the Grammy). That's how it all got started—then WWE exploded over the years and Cyndi Lauper faded over the years. Hulk Hogan became Hollywood Hogan for a while, then reverted back to Hulk Hogan. And since his day, The Rock, AKA Dwayne Johnson emerged out of the WWE went into Hollywood and he thinks he's an actor, now. You won't find any of this in the Big Book, and it's what made Tom mad at me in that meeting. But still, it has a lot to do with getting and staying sober.

Staying sober isn't about resisting that first drink. Staying sober isn't trying to quit or going on the wagon. It isn't trying to do anything about alcohol. Staying sober isn't a matter of will-power. My best friend, down in California, isn't in the program. Once when we were talking about sobriety, he asked me about the will-power I must have to stay sober. I told him it's not about will-power. It's about surrender. He exclaimed, "Of course!" Down in Florida, we used to say, "My will, will get me drunk." And if you're trying to resist the urge to drink, drink still has power over you.

I gave up the fight. It's a fight I can't win. Alcohol isn't even an issue for me. It's not a matter of me trying to stop drinking. I can't drink. Some people can drink—I can't. So, what's there to resist? I can't beat Hulk Hogan in the ring. I won't even step into the ring with Hulk Hogan. Imagine me trying to resist the urge to step into the ring with Hulk Hogan! That's what powerless means. Alcohol is bigger and stronger than me and I'll lose every time if I try to wrestle with alcohol. So I surrendered. I surrendered 27 years ago. I don't struggle. It's over. It's over before it starts. I surrender. I give up. I'm not going to fight it. No more than I would step into the ring and fight Hulk Hogan. I know I can't beat either, and that either one would beat me, always, certainly. So there's nothing to resist. There's a big difference between, "I'm trying not to drink," and, "I can't drink." That's admitting we are powerless over alcohol.

Once when I told this story, a friend of mine in the program was silent for a few minutes. He said, "I'm just trying to figure why I kept stepping into the ring with Hulk Hogan and kept getting beat up again and again when I knew I was going to lose." There's that, too. It's what we mean when we talk about hitting bottom. It's when we've been beaten up so bad, so often, we give up.

We quit fighting. We get sick and tired of being sick and tired. We finally admit it's a fight we can't win. Never. We realize that when it comes to alcohol, we have no power. We are powerless over alcohol. It's effortless when we say, "I can't drink," instead of, "I'm trying not to drink."

But I have to be honest. In the very, very beginning, it is a struggle. When your lover breaks up with you and tells you it is over, it's a struggle not to pick up the phone and try to talk again. But you can't. When I first got sober, it really felt like I lost my best friend. But honestly, after time, the struggle ceases. When life opens up its wide arms, and you fill time with fulfilling acts of service and fulfilling activities, hobbies, and constructive enjoyments, you don't even think about alcohol. My first challenge in sobriety was how to fill all that time I used to spend on a barstool, doing nothing—doing worse than nothing because I was hurting myself. But after I got up off the bar stool, and put down drinking, I got back into playing the piano and I'm starting up a band, I self-recorded and made a CD of my original music, I wrote and published a book, served as president of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre—which has brought me as far away as Guadalajara, Mexico. I'm on faculty committees at Saint Stephen's College, and, as a pastor, the church trusts me with the keys to open up and lock up my church, and they trust my guidance with a whole lot more than the church building (which sponsors AA, NA, and GA meetings in its basement). For you, it can be any number of things you can do—Edmonton's a big city, and there's more to do than you might realize in early sobriety. It was Jerry Garcia who said, "Go for the big one—all limitations are self-imposed." But now, alcohol isn't that limitation, anymore. And what a limitation it was! But now, you don't want it to dull the serene joy your life has become, the serene joy your life is. You don't want to be comfortably numb, now. All this because you gave up the fight and surrendered.

If this article makes you mad at me, like Tom got mad at me, it's OK. I can take it. "Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny." (That is in the Big Book, p. 164.) And, we are not a glum lot, after all!

Dave F. (Reflections meeting at the Alano Club)

More Sober Valentine's Day Ideas

Go for a picnic under the stars

Take an evening drive somewhere away from city lights and go stargazing with some cocoa and snacks. Bring plenty of extra blankets, and bundle up together while you listen to music and talk about the things you love in life. If the weather is simply too cold where you are, consider finding a planetarium nearby for all the views without the chilly temperature.

There are all kinds of amazing sober options for your Valentine's Day, so get creative with ideas. Personalize them to your partner and your relationship, and really make the holiday your own. And don't forget the flowers!

Michelle Peterson

RecoveryPride.org | michelle@recoverypride.org

Alcoholism: A Disease of Perception

When My Desperation Outweighed My Denial

Alcoholism is often referred to as a disease of perception, and oh how I find that statement to be true. Like most Alcoholics, early in my drinking days, I did not have a problem as I was single and had no one to answer to and it was perfectly normal to go from work directly to the bar room and spend the evening pouring alcohol down my throat. It was fun, and I did a lot of foolish things in those days.

As my tolerance for alcohol grew, I developed a pattern of drinking that I could open a bar at 6:00 AM and close it at 2:00 AM and you could not tell I was drinking if you did not smell the alcohol on my breath. I reached the pinnacle and that only lasted for a while. Next, I developed a pattern of forgetting what happened the night before (Blackout Drinking) and then people started telling me about the things I did last night, and it was not flattering.

Normal drinkers do not have those kinds of experiences. Then came the DUI's, the nights in jail, the wrecked cars, the broken knuckles, marriage, divorced and, I could go on forever. When I was in the throes of this disease I was living by the dictates of my EGO, to bolster my pride and it was telling me that I did not have a problem. The progression of the malady varies in each individual due to environmental issues. Some people drink into their 60s and 70s before they come to Alcoholics Anonymous. Waking each morning to face the hideous four horsemen, Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, and Despair is not a problem that normal drinkers must face.

For me, alcohol seemed to me to be the solution to the problems and to abandon it would be horrifying to me. My perception at that time was that if I quit drinking, I would spend the rest of my life waking up in that emotional pit and I did everything in my power to deny my condition. As the progression wore on, one by one, I was running out of options and the drink could no longer mask the deception of it all and I was backed into the corner of life and now, what can I do?

On October 15, 1969, my desperation outweighed my denial and I called the telephone operator and asked for the number of Alcoholics Anonymous and she gave me the number of a local A.A. club in a little house about six miles from my apartment and I showed up there to be greeted by three people sitting on a bench in the front yard and within ten minutes of talking to them and seeing the compassion and empathy in their eyes, I laid down in the grass and covered my eyes with my forearm and thought to myself "Thank God, this nightmare is over" and it was. I have never drank, nor wanted to drink ever since that moment.

I was 28 years old at the time and most of the members of that group were over 40 years old and they referred to me as the fortunate one, and I was. From that moment on I have done a 180 degree turn in my thinking and embraced the program of Alcoholics Anonymous in its entirety and it has evolved into a life of peace and serenity that I could not have imagined when I showed up on that lawn in 1969, and right now, as I am trying to explain this miracle, I am wiping tears of joy from my eyes just thinking about it. Go Figure.

... Rick R., Unconditional AA, Poway, CA

Edmonton Central Office Society			
INCOME STATEMENT 2021			
	December		
	Actuals	Budget	variance
<u>General Receipts:</u>			
Group Contributions	\$ 4,337.80	\$6,294.86	\$1,957.06
Individual/Bequeath	\$ 7,975.00	\$7,027.24	-\$947.76
Birthday Club/Faithful Fivers	\$ 100.00	\$444.60	\$344.60
Office Supplies / Postage	\$ 110.50	\$96.22	-\$14.28
Newsletter	\$ -	\$0.00	\$0.00
Rental Income-EGSC, etc	\$ 60.00	\$0.00	-\$60.00
Tradition Seven-meetings	\$ 522.05	\$525.57	\$3.52
Fundraising	\$ -	\$416.67	\$416.67
Other Inc (Interest, etc)	\$ 108.58	\$43.36	-\$65.22
Total General Receipts	\$ 13,213.93	\$14,848.53	\$1,634.60
	\$ -		
Literature & Medallion	\$ -		
Literature	\$ 7,309.40	\$10,409.70	\$3,100.30
Medallion	\$ 1,407.00	\$2,261.68	\$854.68
Total Literature and Med.	\$ 8,716.40	\$12,671.38	\$3,954.98
	\$ -		
Total Revenue	\$ 21,930.33	\$27,519.91	\$5,589.58
	\$ -		
<u>Expenses: (COS)</u>	\$ -		
AAWS & Grapevine Literature	\$ 4,178.92	\$5,503.27	\$1,324.35
Meeting list & Greeting Cards	\$ 84.23	\$420.05	\$335.82
Medallion Purch /engraving	\$ 820.58	\$909.15	\$88.57
Freight / Brokerage	\$ -	\$50.00	\$50.00
	\$ 5,083.73	\$6,882.48	\$1,798.75
<u>Intergroup Expenses</u>	\$ -		
12 Step Answering	\$ 404.87	\$408.33	\$3.46
Literature expense	\$ 13.44	\$3.87	-\$9.57
Communications & Tech	\$ -	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other (Archive, 12 Step,Cred,Grp Serv	\$ -	\$100.00	\$100.00
	\$ 418.31	\$512.21	\$93.90
<u>Administrative Expenses</u>	\$ -		
Accounting & Legal	\$ 179.38	\$232.16	\$52.78
Bank Chgs & Cr Card chgs	\$ 308.16	\$346.01	\$37.85
Computer & IT Maintenance	\$ 128.12	\$500.00	\$371.88
Equipment Lease/Purchase	\$ 359.77	\$695.91	\$336.14
Fundraising expense	\$ -	\$416.67	\$416.67
Insurance	\$ 321.80	-\$351.15	-\$672.95
Newsletter Expenses	\$ -	\$25.00	\$25.00
Office Supplies	\$ 324.31	\$254.36	-\$69.95
Postage	\$ 102.22	\$285.53	\$183.31
Rent	\$ 3,778.56	\$3,663.41	-\$115.15
Repairs & Maintenance	\$ -	\$0.00	\$0.00
Salaries, Source, WCB	\$ 8,685.87	\$7,881.51	-\$804.36
Staff Training / Seminar	\$ -	\$0.00	\$0.00
Telephone / Internet	\$ 133.09	\$216.04	\$82.95
	\$ 14,321.28	\$13,665.45	-\$655.83
	\$ -		
Total Expenses	\$ 19,823.32	\$21,060.13	\$1,236.81
	\$ -		
Income / (Loss)	\$ 2,107.01	\$0.00	-\$2,107.01

Edmonton Central Office - 2021 Group Contributions

GROUP	District	Dec	YTD	GROUP	District	Dec	YTD	GROUP	District	Dec	YTD
60 MINUTES TO SOBRIETY	53		\$0.00	HOME GROUP #18	63		\$0.00	SHER. PARK SISTERS IN SOBRIETY	61		\$333.66
10 AFTER 10 GROUP	46		\$152.40	HOME GROUP #25	63		\$150.00	SHER. PARK TUESDAY NIGHT AT 7	61		\$430.00
84TH STREET	46		\$1,000.00	HOPE THROUGH FRIENDSHIP GROUP	40		\$0.00	SHER. PARK THERE'S MORE TO THE STORY	61		\$774.00
84TH STREET ZOOM	46		\$300.00	HOW IT WORKS GROUP	55		\$750.00	SHIFTERS GROUP	57		\$1,325.00
AB GROUP	57		\$1,080.00	IDEAL BOOK STUDIES	63		\$0.00	SIMPLY SOBER AA GROUP	40		\$0.00
ALANO WOMENS DISCUSSION	46		\$0.00	INTO ACTION GROUP	40		\$400.00	SLAVE LAKE AA GROUP	7		\$0.00
AB BEACH - SONS OF THE BEACH	10		\$0.00	JASPER PLACE GROUP	40		\$551.78	SOBER COUNTRY - EDSON	5		\$200.00
ALTERED ATTITUDES GROUP	46		\$1,000.00	JELLNICK JUMPSTART	46		\$511.10	SOUTHBOUND FELLOWSHIP GROUP	60		\$0.00
AMAZING GRACE	46		\$651.45	LAC LA BICHE TRI SOBRIETY	8		\$0.00	SOBER SOULS OF EDMONTON	46		\$0.00
AS IT IS GROUP	55		\$175.00	LAMONT - BEAVERHILL GROUP	20		\$0.00	SOUTH SIDE GROUP	57		\$0.00
ATHABASCA AA GROUP	8		\$0.00	LANCASTER PARK TRI-SERVICE GRP	64		\$0.00	SOUTHSIDE YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP	57		\$0.00
BACK TO BASICS	64		\$0.00	LAST CALL GROUP	40	\$1,524.00	\$1,524.00	SPRUCE GROVE AFTER 1 GROUP	10		\$300.00
BEAUMARIS LAKE GROUP	53		\$0.00	LEDUC HOW IT WORKS	12		\$0.00	SPRUCE GROVE - SPEAK EASY	10		\$200.00
BEAUMONT HOW IT WORKS GRP	60		\$0.00	LEDUC MONDAY NGHT LADIES 12 X 12	12		\$0.00	SPRUCE GROVE FIRST DOOR ON THE LEFT	10		\$0.00
BEAUMONT GROUP	60		\$2,000.00	LEDUC SATURDAY	12		\$0.00	STEP SISTERS	40		\$318.00
BEAVER HILL CREEK	9		\$0.00	LEDUC SUNDAY BEGINNERS	12		\$400.00	STEPS TO SERENITY GROUP (MEN'S)(Sh Pk)	55		\$330.00
BEAVER LODGE AA	4		\$600.00	LIGHTHOUSE GROUP	53		\$600.00	STONY PLAIN - BEYOND BELIEF	10		\$0.00
BEVERLY GROUP	53		\$0.00	LIONS DEN GROUP	57		\$1,500.00	STONY PLAIN - DISPLACED MALL RATS	10		\$700.00
BONNIE DOON GROU	55		\$0.00	LOVE AT WORK	60		\$0.00	STONY PLAIN - FIRST DOOR ON THE LEFT	10		\$650.00
BONNYVILLE SAT NIGHT GRP	3		\$0.00	MANDATE:SOBER GROUP	40	\$50.00	\$200.00	STONY PLAIN - NEW WOMEN'S GROUP	10		\$300.00
BONNYVILLE NEW LIFE GRP	3		\$350.00	MILLET: STAIRWAY TO FREEDOM GRP	12		\$0.00	STONY PLAIN - SUNDAY 7:30	10		\$0.00
BREATHE EASY GROUP	40		\$1,060.00	MILLWOODS GROUP	60		\$0.00	STONY PLAIN - 12 BY 12 TUESDAY NIGHT GR	10		\$200.00
CAMEL DISCUSSION CLUB	40		\$0.00	MILLWOODS SPRING STEP STUDY	60		\$0.00	STONY PLAIN - WEDNESDAY NITE UPSTART	10		\$0.00
CAMPUS GROUP	57		\$1,100.00	MONDAY AT 7:30 GROUP	46		\$0.00	ST. PAUL - FELLOWSHIP GROUP	3		\$0.00
CAMPUS GROUP - BLUE JEAN R/U	57		\$0.00	MORINVILLE BY THE BOOK GROUP	9		\$0.00	ST. PAUL - YOU GO GAL MEETING	3		\$0.00
CAMROSE CITY GROUP	12		\$0.00	MORINVILLE THURS NITE STEP & TRADITI	9		\$50.00	STRENGTH AND HOPE GROUP	46		\$0.00
CAPILANO STEP GROUP	55	\$250.00	\$550.00	MUSTARD SEED GROUP	46		\$800.00	STRENGTH IN NUMBERS	57		\$1,000.00
CLAREVIEW BIG BOOK GROUP	53		\$180.00	NEIGHBOR CENTER GROUP	57	\$50.00	\$150.00	SUIT UP & SHOW UP BIG BOOK STUDY	46		\$100.00
CORNERSTONE GROUP	46		\$75.00	NEW FOUND HOPE GROUP	53		\$50.00	SUNDAY MORNING OPEN GROUP (SMOG)	57	\$250.00	\$1,250.00
COURAGE TO CHANGE	46		\$0.00	NEW HOPE GROUP	62		\$30.00	SUNDAY MORNING BIG BOOK GROUP	40		\$0.00
CRESTWOOD WELCOME	40		\$500.00	NITON AA GROUP	6		\$0.00	SUNDAY NO NAME GROUP	40		\$0.00
DAILY REFLECTIONS GROUP	55		\$500.00	NO NAME HOME GROUP	63		\$332.10	SUNRISE LIGHT LUNCHEON GROUP	46		\$93.20
DAYS LAND	12		\$0.00	NO SAINTS MEETING	46		\$1,440.00	SURVIVORS GROUP	53		\$0.00
DEVON MONDAY NIGHT GROUP	12		\$0.00	NORTH EDMONTON GROUP	53		\$0.00	TA WOW GROUP	46		\$336.65
DISTRICT 7 SLAVE LAKE R/U	7		\$0.00	NORWOOD GROUP	46		\$0.00	TERRA NOVA GROUP	46		\$0.00
DISTRICT 9	9		\$200.00	OFF THE WALL & LIVING SOBER MTG	55		\$50.00	THE WHY GROUP	46		\$2,200.00
DISTRICT 10 UNITY ROUND UP	10		\$0.00	OILMENS GROUP	57	\$350.00	\$1,400.00	THORSBY GROUP	12		\$0.00
DISTRICT 10	10		\$0.00	ONOWAY GROUP	57		\$0.00	THUS WE GROW	57		\$1,787.50
DISTRICT 12 GSR BODY	12		\$0.00	OPEN DOOR GROUP	55		\$268.95	TO SHOW OTHERS	57		\$549.35
DISTRICE 40/41 COMMITTEE	40		\$0.00	OUR HOUSE	40		\$0.00	TOWER GROUP	46		\$1,100.00
DISTRICT 53	53		\$0.00	OUR PLACE GROUP	46		\$0.00	TURNING POINT GROUP	46		\$0.00
DISTRICT 57 COMMITTEE	57		\$0.00	PEACE RIVER AA GROUP	2		\$20.00	UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT	57		\$400.00
DISTRICT 64	64		\$300.00	PONOKA THURSDAY NIGHT	12		\$0.00	UNITY STEP GROUP	55		\$323.00
DOLPHIN GROUP	53	\$246.35	\$3,278.70	POUNDMAKER'S TREATMENT CTR	64		\$0.00	U OF AA GROUP	57		\$0.00
DRAYTON VALLEY AA.A. GROUP	6		\$0.00	PRINCIPLES GROUP	53		\$0.00	UP THE CREEK	55		\$1,000.00
EARLY BIRDS BREAKFAST GROUP	53		\$0.00	PROVIDENCE GROUP	57		\$0.00	UP THE CREEK ANNIVERSARY DINNER	55		\$0.00
EASTWOOD GROUP	53		\$50.00	RAINBOWS TO RECOVERY	57		\$0.00	UP THE CREEK GRATITUDE MONTH	55		\$0.00
Edm Gen Serv Cmte (EGSC)			\$2,000.00	RAY OF HOPE GROUP	46		\$700.00	VALLEYVIEW A.A. GROUP	7		\$0.00
ELLERSLIE ROAD GROUP	60		\$0.00	RIO TERRACE GROUP	40		\$50.00	VIOLET GROVE LAST CHANCE	6		\$0.00
EVANSBURG GROUP	6		\$633.00	RITE TRAC GROUP	53		\$350.00	VIKING WEDNESDAY NIGHT GROUP	20		\$0.00
FAITH WORKS STEP GROUP	53		\$320.00	SAFE HARBOUR	46		\$0.00	VIRTUAL STUDY GROUP	40		\$100.00
FELLOWSHIP GROUP	57		\$0.00	S.A. BREAKFAST GROUP	64		\$1,280.00	WABAMUN WEDNESDAY NIGHT	10		\$0.00
FIRST DAY GROUP	46		\$0.00	S.A. FRI. NIGHT OFF THE TRAIL GROUP	64		\$329.34	WABASCA GROUP	7		\$0.00
FRIENDS OF BILL GOLF TOURN	60		\$0.00	S.A. MILLENNIUM GROUP	64		\$400.00	WEST END GROUP	40		\$0.00
FRIENDS OF BILL W AT THE HUB	40		\$0.00	S.A. ON THE HILL GROUPS	64		\$680.00	WE AGNOSTICS	46		\$0.00
FT MCMURRAY BACK TO BASICS	21		\$775.00	S.A. SISTERHOOD GROUP	64	\$174.00	\$174.00	WEST END GROUP	46		\$150.00
FT. MCMURRAY NOONERS	21		\$0.00	S.A. SOBER SISTERS GROUP	64		\$0.00	WESTEND 12 STEP GROUP	40		\$0.00
FT. MCMURRAY WOMENS RECOV	21		\$0.00	S.A. STEP STUDY - JAN TO MARCH	64		\$0.00	WEST END MEN'S GROUP	40		\$1,500.00
FT. MCMURRAY ROUND UP	21	\$244.00	\$244.00	S.A. STEP X STEP SATURDAY NIGHT GRP	64		\$600.00	WESTGROVE GROUP	40		\$0.00
FT. SASK BIG BOOK TOOLBOX-TAI	61		\$75.00	S.A. SUNDAY STEP STUDY	64		\$560.00	WESTLOCK AA GROUP FRIDAY NIGHT	9		\$0.00
FT. SASK TOWN GROUP	61		\$600.00	S.A. TUESDAY NIGHT GROUP	64		\$500.00	WESTLOCK SUNDAY BACK TO BASICS	9		\$0.00
FULTON PLACE GROUP	55		\$215.00	S.A. WED. NIGHT CLOSED MEN'S	64		\$0.00	WESTLOCK WEDNESDAY	9		\$600.00
GIBBONS SOBER RIDERS	61		\$450.00	S.A. WOMEN'S STEP STUDY	64		\$100.00	WESTLOCK WEDNESDAY BREAKFAST	9		\$0.00
GRANDIN MEETING	57		\$0.00	SANDY BEACH GROUP	9		\$0.00	WESTLOCK WINNERS CIRCLE	9		\$150.00
GRATITUDE GROUP	53	\$198.25	\$198.25	SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE MEETING	57		\$147.20	WESTMINSTER GROUP	46		\$2,317.00
GRIMSHAW SATURDAY NIGHT GR	2		\$0.00	SEDGEWICK A.A. GROUP	20		\$50.00	WESTMOUNT GROUP	40		\$0.00
HS	57		\$0.00	SERENITY GROUP	46		\$335.87	WETASKWIN SUNDAY MORNING	12		\$400.00
HEADS UP FOR AA - VEGREVILLE	20		\$100.00	SERENITY POOL SUNDAY MEETING	60		\$0.00	WE THINK NOT - ONLINE	55		\$0.00
HELPING HANDS	60	\$400.00	\$775.00	SHER. PARK HAPPY HOUR GROUP	61		\$0.00	WHITECOURT AA GROUP	6		\$0.00
HIGH PRAIRIE - HI GROUP	7		\$200.00	SHER. PARK GROUP	61		\$1,000.00	YOUNG & OLD GROUP	53		\$0.00
HOME GROUP #1	63		\$0.00	SHER. PARK MILLSHAVEN	61		\$0.00	YOUR CHOICE GROUP	53	\$301.20	\$501.20
HOME GROUP #11	63		\$0.00	SHER. PARK 12 STEPS TO SERENITY	61	\$300.00	\$3,920.00				
HOME GROUP #13	63		\$1,060.00								
Total		\$1,338.60		Total		\$2,448.00				\$551.20	\$21,918.56
			\$22,747.80				\$22,354.34	Grand Total			\$67,020.70