

Camel Courier

VOLUME XXIV ISSUE 1

JAN 2012

GRAND TRAVERSE REGION MONTHLY SOBRIETY PUBLICATION

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

District 11 – Area 34

coverage area includes:

Antrim, Benzie,
Grand Traverse,
Kalkaska, & Leelanau
counties.

Central Office

124 N. Division Street
Traverse City, MI 49684

24 Hour Hot Line

(231) 946-8823

7 Days a Week Around the Clock

Business Line

(231) 946-6716

Business Office Hours

Mon – Fri 10AM - 5PM
Saturday 10AM - 2PM

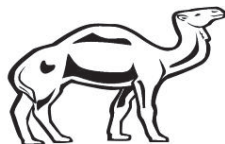
Email

district11centraloffice@yahoo.com

Website

www.district11-aa.org

The CAMEL



each day goes twice to his knees. He picks up his load with the greatest of ease. He then walks through the day with his head held high and stays for that day completely dry.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Central Office is in need of a Literature coordinator.

Twelve Step work for women volunteers to give rides to women and return calls is needed.

Annual meeting of Central Office second Wednesday of January at 5:30 PM to review offices and procedures. AA's are encouraged to attend.

Central Office Board is looking for additional members to serve on the board. Consider attending meetings and serving. Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month at 5:30 PM

CD's of Clancy I. and Jim H. are available at Central Office for \$5.00 plus shipping. Stop by Central Office to pick up a CD or call (231) 946-6716 to have one mailed.

CREATE A NEW YOU IN THE NEW YEAR

It's that time of the year when we assess where we are in life and decide what we would like to achieve in the coming year. Some people never see the resolutions made for the New Year come to be, while others do accomplish their goals. Those that do not often are afraid of change or of the effort to change. Those that do follow strategies that give them success Here are some suggestions to help you be successful.

Be Specific in your goals.

State exactly what you want. "I will exercise thirty minutes a day three days a week." Being specific gives you a marker of success and lets you know when you have arrived. Resolutions like, "I will get fit." or "I'll get out of debt." are too general.

Do not resolve to change what you cannot control.

Follow the Serenity Prayer in all your affairs. Make sure resolutions are under your direct control. "I will drive the speed limit." is within your control. "I will make sure the police do not stop me." may not be.

AL-ANON

District 39

coverage area includes:

Antrim, Benzie,
Grand Traverse,
Kalkaska, Leelanau &
Manistee counties.

Al-Anon Family Groups-D39

PO Box 5132
Traverse City, MI 49696



Information Line

(231) 938-7399

Response within 24 Hours

Website

www.alanon-d39.org

About the *Camel Courier*

Articles printed in the **Camel Courier** are the opinions expressed by individuals and not necessarily those of Central Office, the Board of Directors, or AA as a whole.

If you have an AA announcement, a meeting change you want others to know about, an upcoming AA event, a new meeting you want to get started, an anniversary, or a story to tell ...

please submit
via snail mail to:

Camel Courier, c/o Central Office,
124 N. Division Street,
Traverse City, MI 49684,

or email to:
acgib1@sbcglobal.net
and enter "**Camel Courier**"
in the Subject Line.

All items are subject to editing.
Deadline for submission is the
25th day of every month.

Published monthly, the
Camel Courier is free online at
www.district11-aa.org.

Attitudes are contagious.
Is yours worth catching?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CENTRAL OFFICE

On January 2, 1989, we officially opened the doors for the Central Office. This office housed the local AA Hotline, provided a new communication hub to bring our area groups into closer unity, and served as the local bookstore for AA and Al-Anon materials as well as other items.

Prior to this time and this office, groups purchased their books and other items directly. There was little or no group unity in our district. We cover 5 counties! That's a lot of territory. Before our office started, our phones were answered by an outside answering service. Our 12 step list was very small.

Thanks to all the volunteers, trusted servants past and present, and most of all..thank you God.

This appeared in the Camel Courier, Volume VII, Issue 1, January, 1995

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Trust in your Higher Power and do good. Cease from anger and resentment.
Do not worry; worry only causes resentment.

ABOUT RELAPSING

By the time you read this, the holidays will be over and we will be in the time of "let down." Now is the time to renew and reinforce our AA commitment else the specter of relapse becomes very real. I listen to people talk about relapsing, of going out and coming back over and over until they get it right and I have picked up some common behaviors that often occur to cause a relapse.

Often a person begins by pushing people away. Prayer and meditation become a side thought and the Higher Power is neglected. A reduction in the number of meetings begins and then the person stops going all together. Service work begins to slide. We start judging everyone and anything about the program. Our attitude towards things becomes negative and we start to think nothing will ever change and that nothing is going right. Before a person knows it, their thinking warps around to the idea that life was better when they were drinking. Life was better with alcohol than without. Before they know it, they are picking up a drink.

But that drink is not as pleasurable as before, There is guilt and remorse. The disease has crept back in because recovery has slowly crept out. The only cure is to return to the tables, to the fellowship who will tell us we NEED a meeting, that we need to call our sponsor They are not afraid to tells us our attitude stinks because that is what we need to hear.

Just because we are in recovery does not mean we won't have a bad day. Bad days are a part of life, but so are good days. But we can be grateful that we can move past the bad days and that we can enjoy the good days.

Life is good today – good, bad, and ugly, and even, sometimes, great.

KEEP COMING BACK!

Calendar of Events - Jan 2012

Central Office Annual meeting, 2nd Wednesday, 5:30 PM, Central Office

District 11 meeting, 2nd Saturday, 9:30 AM, Munson Hospital, Basement Conference room.

CMIA 32 Area Assembly, Sunday, February 5th, VFW Post 4005, 416 Shiawasee St. Corunna, MI.

Northern Michigan Corrections Committee, February 8th, 5:30 PM, Alano Club,
836 Robinwood Ct., Traverse City, MI.

- ◆ Do you have an upcoming AA or Al-Anon event in your area? Please email information to: acgib1@sbcglobal.net
Are you interested in sharing your story as a guest speaker at a future open meeting?
Please call John at (231) 649-5444

Central Office Treasurer Report of NOVEMBER, 2011

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Checking Account Balance Nov. 2011 | \$ 3033.93 |
| Deposits | <u>5442.42</u> |
| Checking Account Before Nov. Expenses | \$ 8476.35 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Checking Account Balance Nov. 2011 | \$ 2048.81 |
| CD Saving | 509.89 |
| CD Saving | 542.40 |
| Sales for Nov. 2011 | 2760.57 |
| Sales Tax Collected | 155.82 |
| Donations | 625.66 |

EXPENDITURES FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Rent | \$ 735.88 |
| Coordinator | 440.00 |
| Telephone | 146.27 |
| Literature | 3029.29 |
| AT&T Yellow Pages | <u>19.08</u> |
| | \$2052.99 |

ROUND-UP:

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Oct. Balance | \$ 6296.78 |
| Donations/Deposits | 375.00 |
| Transfer | <u>2000.00</u> |
| Nov. Balance | \$4671.78 |

EXPENDITURES FOR ROUND-UP NOV.

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Signs Now | \$ 101.01 |
| Annie's of TC | 208.31 |
| GJ. Rentals | 136.76 |
| Have Services | 1556.40 |
| Arnie Minka | <u>54.54</u> |
| TOTAL ROUND-UP EXPENSES NOV. | \$ 2057.02 |

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED 11-1-11 TO 11-30-11 FROM THE FOLLOWING:

East Jordan Thursday Meeting, Monday Night Scottville Group, Nancy M.
Back to Basics Group Suttons Bay Keep It Simple Group Rapid City Debbie R.
Susan S. in memory of Bill Stepke Traverse City Group of AA Maple City Group
TC East Side Group

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT TO HELP CENTRAL OFFICE

CARRY THE MESSAGE.

Recovery, Unity, and Service – Mary Beth C.

JANUARY SOBRIETY ANNIVERSARIES

| | | | | | |
|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Phyl C. | 1-1-1984 | Cheryl B. | 1-1-2008 | Barry I. | 1-2-2009 |
| Ed. V. | 1-3-1975 | Doug F. | 1-4-1989 | Teresa M. | 1-6-2002 |
| Gary S. | 1-9-2007 | David S. | 1-18-2007 | David I. | 1-28-1992 |

An accumulation of **132 YEARS** of sobriety. Congratulations!

THE CAMEL COURIER IS UPDATING THE SOBRIETY LIST

To share your sobriety date, e-mail your first name, initial, and month/day/year

To: acgib1@sbcglobal.net Enter *Camel Courier* in the subject line

We are either working on Recovery or
We are working on a relapse.

STEP AND TRADITION OF THE MONTH

STEP 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.

TRADITION 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on AA unity.

Reprinted from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions with permission of AA World Services, Inc.

Central Office Needs Volunteers

Staff the OFFICE, handle AFTER HOURS CALLS, be on the 12 STEP CALL or RIDES LIST ... PLEASE WE NEED YOU!!!
If interested call Susan N., our Volunteer Coordinator, at Central Office (231) 946-6716, or (231) 645-1267.

THANK YOU

| | | |
|---------|------------|-----------|
| Charlie | Jim R. | Mike H. |
| Cheryl | John C. | Neil. |
| Cyndi | John Mo. | Paul. |
| Dale | Kenneth W. | Rick C. |
| Daniel | Lisa | Rick T. |
| Doug | Leslie | Ruth Ann |
| Edwina | Lori | Stephanie |
| Eleanor | Mary Beth | Susan |
| James | Merceditas | |

Central Office -- December Call Log

***109** Females & **151** Males contacted Central Office
***105** by phone, **135** walk-ins & **33** after hours calls

INQUIRING ABOUT:

- * **47** Conference Approved Literature
- * **28** Non-Conference Literature
- * **06** Al-Anon Literature
- * **04** Pamphlets
- * **34** Gift Items
- * **03** Special Items
- * **44** AA Meetings in District 11
- * **14** AA Meetings in Other Areas
- * **01** Al-Anon Meetings
- * **04** Other Alcoholism Resources
- * **01** Other 12 Step Programs
- * **10** Ride to Meeting
- * **01** 12 Step Call
- * **01** Drinking Problem—Self
- * **07** Drinking Problem –Family
- * **04** Drinking Problem—Other
- * **42** Other

Not Available Visits to website

TO THE NEWCOMER

Almost nobody looks forward to attending their first AA meeting or “keeping on coming back.” This column attempts to help the newcomer find answers and the long-timer remember what it was like.

The twelve steps start with an admission of powerlessness over alcohol, that life has become unmanageable. They end with the realization that a spiritual awakening has occurred and the recommendation to help other alcoholics achieve sobriety.

The alcoholic moves from the short-term, instant gratification and a preoccupation with self, to a concern with others. Those recovering in AA say this sobriety is a miracle.

In the past we wished for changed or sought by the force of our will to change. We may even have asked others to “monitor” our efforts. None of this worked. Our human resources were insufficient. We failed miserably.

Then we came to AA. We learned in the second step that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. Later, we accepted the third step and made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

We attended meetings regularly and started to form friendships. We listened to others share their hopes, life experiences, and struggles. They had compassion and a desire to help us. We saw that they were not drinking anymore and were at peace. We began to think we could have this new life too. We were told we can have it but we must work at it. They called it “working the steps.” Go to meetings and work the steps.

We begin to feel that we are making connections and there are no strings attached. We begin to feel relief. There is a connection to fellowship. Others give us their phone numbers and tell us to call. They take an interest in our lives with no selfish attachments. We begin to respond.

One day someone asks us for advice. We see a newcomer and give him/her our phone number. Without a conscious decision, we have passed into the realm of taking the message to others.

We who could not say, “No,” to a drink, now cannot say, “Yes.” Our sobriety and peace of mind have become secure in our Higher Power and others in the fellowship.

Here are some suggestions that may help you. Read the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve. Get a sponsor, stay in touch, and do what your sponsor tells you. Speak at meetings, tell your story. Involve yourself in service. Do not accept responsibility for another’s behavior. You are only responsible for your behavior. Go to as many meetings as you can.
Keep coming Back!

From The Tables

With the help of AA I made it through the first two years and with that success, I can do many more things. I learn from the people who share the adversity in their lives that they make it through because of AA and I can too. Also, by sharing we help the new ones who come in thinking that now that they are in AA, life will be a breeze. I got stronger and closer to my higher power as I listened. I know that without AA and my higher power, I could go back to my old ways.

What helps me get through the holidays is to get out of myself. When I first got clean and sober, my life was a huge mess in every way. Also, I could not afford to buy Christmas presents for anybody. It was suggested that I try doing something for somebody else. I took this suggestion and began doing volunteer work at a local women's shelter. This helped me more than I can describe. It made me grateful for all the wonderful blessings I did have. My suggestion for getting through the holidays without drinking is to help somebody else and go to meetings. You won't believe how great this works and how grateful and close to your Higher Power you will feel.

I suffer from grief this time of year. Grief over a loved one gone, grief over my missed opportunities, and grief over those wasted years spent drinking. But now I have friends in this fellowship, opportunities for service work, and the ability to get outside of myself and help others. Grief still is with me, but I know that if I go to meetings and stay with the program, life will get better.

This program works for any alcoholic who wants to stop drinking. That was where I was fourteen years ago. I wanted to stop drinking. So, I started going to meetings, got a sponsor, and did what I was told. And you know what? The program stepped up and started working IN me. Something changed in me mentally, physically, and spiritually. One day I woke up and realized I did not want to go back to my old drinking life. I don't know if I'll make it to fifteen years, but just for today, I will not drink. I continue to go to meetings, talk to my sponsor, meditate, journal, sponsor, carry the message, and do the best I can to make life livable. Recovery, I have come to realize is not a punishment; it is a gift. I look at meetings as a way to connect with my AA family and learn more from them. I love this life. I do not always like it, but I love it. The only thing I have to pick up today is the phone, an extra meeting, or AA literature.

**The Twelve Steps Lead to Recovery
If We Work Them Diligently!**

Central Office Board Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2011

(Minutes to be approved at January 11, 2012 Board Meeting)

Board Members Present: Rick C. (Asst. Treasurer) MaryBeth C. (Treasurer), Nick K. (President), Elise (Secretary, Interim Literature Buyer), Jamie R. (Co-Webmaster), Rick T. (Retiring Webmaster), Jack, Art G. (Editor, Camel Courier.

Others Present: Susan (Volunteer Coordinator), Carrie B. (prospective new board member), Genie (Chair: Fall Roundup), Paul R.

The meeting was called to order by President Nick at 5:00, beginning with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Secretary's Report: Elise read the minutes of the Nov. 9 Board Meeting. Rick C. made a motion to accept the minutes as read, Art seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: MaryBeth reviewed the Treasurer's Report. Discussion about the final numbers relating to the Fall Roundup. Will have a better picture of all expenses and credits next month.

By consensus the board agreed to let Genie give a report about the Fall Roundup at this point in the agenda. Genie reported that the Roundup generated lots of positive comments; board members reported same from calls to Central Office. Genie will get with Mary Beth to clear up any outstanding invoices and expenses. All donations have been accounted for. Genie stated that she would not be available to Chair any future Roundups that Central Office may decide to hold.

Webmaster's Report: Outgoing webmaster Rick T. had nothing new to report.

Literature Report: Elise reported that we are still looking for a new Literature person to take her place. Discussed the pricing of the CDs from the Fall Roundup. \$5.00 per CD is the selling price, plus S/H if appropriate. Some complaints have been registered about CDs stalling and skipping in players. MaryBeth will coordinate with the vendor to look into the problem. People may order the CDs by calling Central Office. Year-end inventory count is scheduled for Dec. 29th at 1:30. Central Office will pay for food and soda for the volunteers that day.

Volunteer Coordinator's Report: Susan continuing to find enough volunteers to fill all positions in Central Office. She stated a particularly high need as of late for Rides to Meetings for Women and 12 Step calls. Volunteers are getting new keys from Rick C. as appropriate. Will do phone coverage only on 12/24, closed on Christmas Day. May do same schedule for 12/31 evening and 1/1/12.

Camel Courier Report: Art is working on January issue. Asked about continuing to print Sobriety dates for people. Should these be reaffirmed by the individual AAs before they are printed in the CC? Art will put a blurb in the upcoming CCs to have people verify their Sobriety dates.

Archives Report: Position is still open. No report.

Old Business: Carrie and Jamie reported that they have met and discussed working together on the Webmaster role for Central Office. They feel that they have a plan and a desire to work together as Co-Webmasters.

New Business: Rick C. is handing out new keys. The new keys are numbered and Rick is keeping a record of person to key number. They are stamped Do Not Duplicate.

Carrie was asked to join the board and she was approved. Rick T. presented motion to the board the plan to have Carrie and Jamie to Co-chair as Webmasters. Art seconded Rick's motion it was approved. The new Co-chairs are working on a new look for the site that they will present to the board before launching it.

Board discussed that best way to label the We Agnostic's meeting at Westend. After discussion of how to achieve this, board decided to put Agnostic on the line next to the time and day of the meeting rather than amend the key for just one meeting. Webmasters will take care of doing this.

Elise indicated that she would like the board to consider a different procedure in putting new people on the board. Perhaps to have the prospective board member submit an "application" or letter of intent with appropriate information on it. Then board would consider the "application" or letter at the next board meeting and discuss it without the prospect in attendance. The President could follow up privately with the person. Elise asked board to think about it to discuss next meeting.

Elise reported on the opportunity of space available at the Old State Hospital grounds, specifically the former sanctuary of All Faith's Chapel. Would the board like to schedule an appointment for a tour? Would the board like to consider moving to another location? A brief discussion of pros and cons ensued. Board decided to table discussion on this until January.

Jack asked if the board intends to put on another Roundup. If so, would we do it in coordination with District 11? Tabled until further discussion.

Paul discussed the possibility of using the website and Camel Courier to channel District 11 information. Board's opinion is that District 11 has always been able to use this opportunity and that the lack of usage of these opportunities is from District 11's side.

Rick T. asked if Central Office is going to be involved in the Spring Roundup and if so, to what extent? Tabled until next meeting.

Nick reminded members that January meeting is the annual meeting and plan on a longer meeting to cover all of the yearly business as well as the normal monthly reports.

Jack made motion to end meeting and Art seconded it. Motion carried and meeting ended at 6:35 with The Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting is 1/11/11 at 5:30 at Central Office.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elise A., Secretary

MCYPAA Aims, Purposes, and Convention Report

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. We direct our attention towards young people by providing the Michigan Convention of Young People in AA, which meets annually on the weekend after Thanksgiving. Experience had shown MCYPAA as a prime opportunity for young people to participate and share their experience, strength and hope within AA as a whole.

On November 25th, a group of about 17 of us from Northern Michigan made the annual 'pilgrimage' to MCYPAA (Michigan Convention of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous). This year's convention took place at the Lansing Center in Lansing, Mi. It is held in a different city every year. Part of our reasoning for going this year was because a few of us had formed a Bid Committee and were submitting a bid to host this convention in 2012. Most of you are already familiar with our efforts. There are two experiences that I need to share. The first being, the YPAA Convention experience as a whole and the second being the bidding process.

For those of you who have never been to a YPAA convention, let me tell you, it truly is an experience you must not miss; especially newcomers. 300+ people, relatively all around the same age (16-35 is the majority), having fun, laughing, dancing, being REAL sober.

Alcohol had been the only thing that I could find that would allow me to be and do all those things. Here, I see 300+ people doing that all on their own. It truly was one of my first spiritual awakenings. The whole weekend was a learning experience. There may be some misconceptions that YPAA conferences are just a big party. Not the case, the panels and the speakers have been some of the most phenomenal I've ever heard. The experiences, the strength, and, most importantly, the hope that I gain from these adventures have enhanced my sobriety ten-fold. In the 3 years I have been sober, I have been to 7 other conventions in 4 states, including ICYPAA (the International Convention) in New York City in 2010. Participation in these conventions has made a very awesome promise come true for me today, travel.

The bidding experience for Northern Michigan to host the State convention has been nothing but a positive experience. It's difficult and a lot of hard work, but the 'character building' and work ethic that I have experienced have made it that much more worth it. It makes you appreciate your program much more, because without it, you'd probably kill someone. It makes you learn how to lean on other people, how to work as a team. Most importantly, it's taught me to not give up; No matter what. "Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake". Every experience is a learning experience and I have learned a lot about myself through this process.

Even though we did not win the bid (Congratulations to Mount Pleasant, a WONDERFUL committee), we were able to outreach YPAA all over Northern Michigan, to the still sick and suffering Alcoholic young person. And that is why we do it. That is our primary purpose. Thank you to all the groups who have supported us these last two years. Here's to another marvelous bidding year in 2012!!

Lacy M.
Petoskey, MI

Camel Courier

Central Office
124 N. Division Street
Traverse City, MI 49684

JANUARY 2012