Into Action!

Westside Central Office

January 2014

What's Happening at the WCO?

The Westside Central Office hosted its first business meeting of the New Year on Monday, January 6th, 7:00pm, at the Beaverton First United Methodist Church (12555 4th ST, Beaverton, OR 97005). Below are some of the meeting's highlights:

Our Public Information (PI) Committee Chair, Derek T, spent the month reaching out to health teachers at Aloha and Wilson High Schools to see if they would like a presentation on A.A. The committee is also considering reaching out to Westside Middle Schools. Young people in A.A. who would like to get involved with these school presentations are encouraged to email Derek at pi@westsidecentraloffice.com.

The A.A. Hotline Committee Chair, Andrew W, is putting together a printed registration form that he can give to A.A.s interested in answering calls on the hotline. In the meantime, interested A.A.s can volunteer using the WCO website's online registration form or by sending an email to hotlinechair@westsidecentraloffice.com.

Josh S, who is the Chair for the new Corrections Committee, announced that they are now a committee of three people! The Committee is currently investigating the Westside to find out what Corrections Facilities are out there and which ones are currently being served. Josh has also reached out to the Oregon Area 58, Portland Area Intergroup, and District Corrections Committees to see how they all can cooperate and coordinate activities. So far, Portland Area Intergroup Corrections Chair, Kelly D, has expressed interest in collaborating with WCO's Corrections Committee. The Corrections Committee meets on the third Thursday of each month, 6:30pm – 7:30pm, at Starbucks Coffee on the corner of Capitol Hwy and Barbur Blvd (10010 SW Barbur Blvd) in Portland. If you are unable to attend the meeting, but would like to get involved, email Josh at cpc@westsidecentraloffice.com.

In Old Business, the tabled motion to increase the prudent reserve from $600 to $750 passed. A second tabled motion requesting authorization to secure a physical office space also passed.

Want this newsletter emailed to you each month? Then subscribe today by sending an email with the subject "subscribe" to news@westsidecentraloffice.com

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Are you looking for a meeting?

Or would you like to read today's *Daily Reflection*, the *Big Book,* or *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* book online? These are just a few of the A.A. resources available on our website. Visit today by pointing your browser to www.westsidecentraloffice.com.

Making a Seventh Tradition Contribution

Besides contributing time and energy to the Westside Central Office (WCO), A.A. members and groups may also make a financial contribution. The WCO is funded exclusively by the voluntary contributions of A.A. groups and members. No contribution is too small. Please make checks payable to Westside Central Office, P.O. Box 19911, Portland, OR 97280-0911.

This Month in A.A. History

- **January 1957:** First A.A. Group in India forms in New Delhi.
- **January 1958:** As a service to its readers, the January 1958 issue of the Grapevine prints a chart outlining A.A.'s services and the Conference structure. Text in the top box of the chart indicates that there are over

Need A.A. Literature?

The Westside Central Office sells A.A. Conference Approved Literature at cost! Visit www.westsidecentraloffice.com/literature or call 503-684-0415 (extension 2) to order literature.

This Month in A.A. History- Continued

7,000 groups registered with the "General Service Headquarters". This includes 500 in institutions (i.e., hospitals, prisons, and other institutions), and 760 overseas.

- **January 1959:** After years of failed attempts, a stable A.A. Group in Colombia forms.
- **January 1960:** First A.A. Group in Guatemala forms.
- **January 24, 1971:** At the age of 75, A.A. Co-founder Bill W dies at the Miami Heart Institute in Miami Beach, Florida.
- **January 2006:** A Japanese General Service Board begins forms in Tokyo. At the time, an estimated 3,500 to 4,000 members are meeting in 290 A.A. Groups in Japan.

Is There an Alcoholic Looking for Your Meeting?

Each day, we are contacted by A.A. newcomers and visitors from out-of-town in search of a meeting. You can help us find a meeting for these individuals by listing your home group's meeting(s) in our meeting directory. To list your group, complete the online form at: www.westsidecentraloffice.com/meetings

If you want to drink, that's your business. If you want to stop, that's ours!
Call 503-684-0415

Upcoming Events

February 3, 2014 – Westside Central Office Business Meeting, 7pm-8pm, First United Church of Beaverton (12555 SW 4th ST, Beaverton, OR 97005).

February 7-9, 2014 – Salem Soberfest 2014 (Chemeketa Community College Building 50, 4601 Winema Place NE, Salem, OR 97301). Salem's 30th annual celebration of fun, fellowship, and sobriety! Visit http://westsidecentraloffice.com/events/aa-announcements/ for more information.

February 13, 2014 – Westside Central Office Public Information (PI) Committee Meeting, 6:30pm-7:30pm, St. Barnabas Church (2201 SW Vermont ST, Portland, OR 97219).

February 15, 2014 – District 23 Service Workshop, 3:00pm-74:00pm, New Thought Center for Spiritual Living (1040 C Ave, Lake Oswego, OR 97034).

February 20, 2014 – WCO Corrections Committee Meeting, 6:30pm-7:30pm, Starbucks Coffee (10010 SW Barbur Blvd, Portland, OR 97219).

February 21-23, 2014 – Oregon Area 58 Quarterly Assembly (Inn At the Commons - 200 N Riverside, Medford, OR 97501). Visit http://www.aa-oregon.org/assemblies.htm for more information.

To list A.A. related announcements in this section, email the announcement to: newsletter@westsidecentraloffice.com

Where Should We Locate Our Office?

The Westside Central Office is now in the process of looking for a physical office space. You can help us decide where to open our office by voting for your favorite location. To vote, visit our website, www.westsidecentraloffice.com, and click on the *Office Location Survey*.

Also if you have any suggestions for an office space or would like to get involved in the search, email us at info@westsidecentraloffice.com.

Get Involved!

The Westside Central Office has the following 12th Step opportunities:

12th Step Calls – Interested in going on a 12th Step Call? A.A. members are needed for the 12th Step Call Committee. We suggest that volunteers have at least 1 year of sobriety, a sponsor, a home group, and have worked all twelve steps at least once. Visit the 12th Step Call webpage at westsidecentraloffice.com/service/twelfth-step-calls or email the 12th Step Call Committee Chair at 12stepchair@westsidecentraloffice.com for more information.

A.A. Hotline - Do you like talking on the phone and helping people? Volunteers are needed to answer the Westside Central Office phone, day and night. Phone shifts last about 2 hours and calls can be forwarded to any cell phone or landline. To learn how you can help, visit the Hotline webpage at

westsidecentraloffice.com/service/a-a-hotline/ or email the A.A. Hotline Chair at hotlinechair@westsidecentraloffice.com.

Public Information – Volunteers are needed to help inform the public on what A.A. is and what A.A. is not. Activities include putting on presentations at area schools, dropping off meeting schedules at hotels/motels, donating Big Books to public libraries, taking out ads with the A.A. hotline phone number in local newspapers, etc. The Public Information committee carries the message to the alcoholic who may not yet know about A.A. Email pi@westsidecentraloffice.com for more information.

Activities – Interested in putting on social or service oriented events? Then join the activities committee. Email activities@westsidecentraloffice.com for more information.

Treatment Facilities – Volunteers are needed to help contact treatment centers and offer assistance in coordinating A.A. meetings and presentations at their facility. The type of organizations this committee works with includes inpatient/outpatient treatment centers; detox centers, hospitals, institutions, nursing homes, etc. Email tf@westsidecentraloffice.com for more information or to get involved with the Treatment Facilities Committee.

Professionals – Volunteers are needed to help carry the A.A. message to professionals, such as health care workers, counselors, law enforcement, etc. who come into contact with active alcoholics. Email cpc@westsidecentraloffice.com for more information or to get involved with the Cooperation with Professionals Committee.

Corrections – Volunteers are needed to help carry the A.A. message to those behind bars. Email corrections@westsidecentraloffice.com for more information or to get .

Does your Home Group have a WCO Rep?

A Central Office Rep (CO Rep) serves as the liaison between the A.A. Group and the Westside Central Office (WCO). Co Reps attend the WCO business meeting and vote their group's conscience on Central Office matters. By electing a CO Rep, your group not only helps the Central Office help the alcoholic who still suffers, but your group also creates another service position for a home group member. Our business meeting is held on the first Monday of the month, 7pm-8pm, at the Beaverton First United Methodist Church, 12555 4th ST, Beaverton, OR 97005. We look forward to seeing your group's Co Rep there!

New Photos from G.S.O.'s Archives

The General Service Office's Archives department has announced the availability of the following five new photos:

- Bill W and Lois W standing in their garden at Stepping Stones
- Bill playing the violin
- Bill at the 1955 General Service Conference with a copy of the Second Edition Big Book
- Dr. Bob leaning against his car
- Father Ed Dowling

Each photo is an 8x10 black and white and available to A.A. members and groups for use in the Fellowship only. It is the policy of the General Service Office Archives to maintain the anonymity of all members, living, or deceased, including our co-founders, at the level of public media. There is a suggested contribution of $2.75 for each photograph. To request one or more of these photos, please contact the G.S.O. Archives at 212-870-3400

"I'm Just a Drunk" By Jen E.

On November 23, 2013 I celebrated 18 years of sobriety. The last five years of my sobriety have been hard fought. I look at other "old-timers" and they seem to stay sober so effortlessly. Of course, this is a case of me comparing my insides to others' outsides. This type of thinking is not productive and I work hard to remember that I'm just a drunk like everyone else in the rooms. The number on my coin does not protect me from this disease.

In 2009 I made a major life change and ended my relationship with my three children's father. During this time, my daughter, who has now been diagnosed as Bi-Polar, was in the throes of teenagedom and her disorder was causing destructive, frightening behavior. My children were very angry with me for my decision and alienated me from their lives – this proved to be the first time I found myself seriously considering a drink. When I got sober, I did it for myself, but part of that decision was that I wanted to be a good mother to my kids. When they didn't want anything to do with me I felt that I had failed everything I had set out to do in parenthood. Thank goodness for my sponsor who told me over and over and over again, "it won't be like this forever" or "this is going to work itself out." I put my faith in her words because she had raised children and had gone through hard times too. Even though I didn't feel that I would ever be able to change the situation, I chose her. After a particularly disturbing incident with my daughter, I found myself sitting in my car in a grocery store parking lot seriously considering going in that store and getting a drink. My spiritual experience up to that point had been mostly a practice, with a few poignant moments that seemed divine. While I was sitting there, with full knowledge that I was powerless over alcohol, but simply not caring, the Foo Fighters song, "Times Like These" came on the radio – I believe a direct message from my higher power. The lyrics of that song caused me to go home and deal with life. Fast forward to today – things are fine. They are not perfect – but they are vastly better than they were. My daughter and I are closer than ever. My relationship with my oldest son is strained, but I work every day to keep my side of the street clean and not to make matters worse.

In 2013, I had a few experiences with the phenomena of craving. The first one came after a medical test when I was heavily sedated. The reaction to the sedation was an intense phenomenon of craving. It was obvious to me what was going on and I just rode out the experience and didn't think too much of it. During the last half of 2013, the phenomena of craving returned several times. I felt like an AA flunky. I was embarrassed – ashamed, really. All the while my brain was telling me that I could handle it this time. It took a few days but I told my sponsor and some friends that I wanted to drink. I checked in with them regularly. I shared about it at my home group, hating every second of it.

During a business trip, when I was alone in my hotel room, feeling an intense craving I asked myself what had changed over the last six months that would cause such a physical reaction. It occurred to me to look through my medications and look at side effects. Bingo! I found that one of my medications was a benzodiazepine. I had heard dual addiction affected people mention “benzo’s” in meetings before but had never really given it much thought. I was an alcoholic through and through – pills didn’t really do it for me. I was always very careful to take meds as directed, because even though I knew that pills were not my first love, I also knew that they had potential to become an issue. When I read the side effects of the drug I was taking (as prescribed by my doctor) I read that the drug is linked to alcohol relapse. I was so relieved to have my answer.

One would think that this would be the end of the story; that I stopped taking the medicine (which I did) and that I am fine now. What is interesting to me is that I still felt ashamed of myself. Like somehow I should have super-human powers to not fall prey to a known, documented side effect of a drug. Even more baffling to me is how long it is taking to recover. Truth be told, there is still a part of my brain that tells me I can do it. I pray for the obsession to be removed and I try to be honest about my state of mind. I tell myself over and over that it’s not worth the risk to engage in any fantasizing about liquor. I listen to those that have relapsed and remind myself that I am one of them. I will have no better luck than they did. I am a just a drunk like everyone else in the meetings. I do not have super-human powers and I am not the one person in the universe that will have a different result. I’m just a drunk.

Into Action! is published monthly by the Westside Central Office. The Westside Central Office is an Intergroup/Central Office serving the A.A. community in the Western Portland Oregon metropolitan area. Our primary purpose is to serve our A.A. groups and members by helping them carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. More information is available at www.westsidecentraloffice.com. Direct all correspondence to: email: info@westsidecentraloffce.com phone: 503-684-0415 (extension 0) mail: Westside Central Office, P.O. Box 19911, Portland, OR 97280-0911.