

# SOBRIETY SENTINEL

June 2023 - REPRESENTING DISTRICTS 14, 19 and 20 of AREA 38 - TRICOUNTYAA.ORG

## Missouri State Convention: Unity, Service, and Recovery

The 73rd Annual Missouri State Convention will be held at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City from Friday July 28 to Sunday July 30. There are early registration rates until June 1, 2023, and a reduced hotel room rate until June 26 of \$97 plus tax if you mention the Convention. Additional information can be found at [mostateconvention.org](http://mostateconvention.org).

I went to my first Missouri State Convention in 1989 when I had just a few months of sobriety. I remember being so scared and overwhelmed being around all "those" people that I went to the parking lot and curled up in a little ball in the back seat of my car for relief that first night. Fortunately, I had a solid AA support group and sponsor, and I kept coming back in the many subsequent years.

For me it has been a spiritual experience to attend the recent conventions. Everything to feed the soul of a recovering alcoholic; fellowship, seeing old friends not seen for years and making new friends, and all those amazing speakers. All in a first-class, classy environment that makes a person proud to be there and for me to be proud to be an alcoholic.

In my early days of sobriety, I wondered how I was going to have fun without alcohol in my life?

Today, my answer is: I am going to the Missouri State Convention! A Third Legacy event with Big Book Workshops, a Delegate Q&A, and powerful AA, Al -Anon, Service, Long-Timer and Young People speakers. For the fun part there is the Ghost Prison Tour, Archives Jeopardy, Karaoke and eating ice cream with old and new friends.

Today, I appreciate the gift of being able to participate in my life and being around other recovering alcoholics my Higher Power works through. See you at the Missouri State Convention for fun, fellowship, and new found inspiration!

John A

MOSC Committee 24-25

**73RD ANNUAL  
MISSOURI STATE CONVENTION  
JULY 28-30 2023  
MOSTATECONVENTION.ORG**



## Tradition Four and Rule # 62

It's tradition time and this month we are looking at Tradition 4!

### Tradition 4:

**Long Form:** With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

**Short Form:** Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

Now that both forms are out there...what does all of this mean to you and AA?

**Long form in layman's terms: "...every A.A. group can manage its affairs exactly as it pleases, except when A.A. as a whole is threatened." (pg. 146 12&12)**

**Short Form: Refer to Rule #62 - "Don't take yourself so damn seriously."**

As Bill W. even states in the opening passage of Tradition 4 in the 12 & 12, "Autonomy is a \$10 word." (more like \$50 now with inflation) Autonomy is defined as "the right or condition of self-government". So each group is free/independent as long as they do not affect A.A. as a whole.

### FREEDOM!!!!

Freedom is a wonderful thing...that one can get lost in the weeds and fog of the highest of hopes.

Since each A.A. group is composed of individual A.A.s that come in as "Children of chaos" and ego driven, this Tradition is a safeguard from straying away from our primary purpose. Sobriety has to be its sole objective.

We, as groups, have the freedom to choose the format of our respective meetings. Some examples are if we start/close a meeting with/without a prayer, spend funds as needed, if the meeting is closed/open, and where the meeting is to be held. All of which is decided by the group's conscience, not by an overseeing authority.

The freedom provided in Tradition 4 does not

mean an individual group has the authority to re-word the [12 steps](#) or traditions or to create its own literature. Nor should groups introduce, discuss, or sell outside literature at their meeting places.

I have experienced this from going to different meetings. Some open with the longer form of Serenity Prayer, some read a portion of "How it Works," some read all of the short forms of the Traditions or have a Tradition of the month. I know, personally, that travelling outside of my Home Group setting, other meetings' flow felt off. These groups were not "doing it wrong." They stuck to the Primary Purpose...It was just a different delivery of the message. It was their group's right to format the meeting they deemed fit for its members and still stuck to the sole objective: **SOBRIETY**.

Remember: Trust God, clean House, and help others.....and Rule 62.

I hope to catch you all on the Road to Happy Destiny.

Peace and Love,

Sean W.



# Why am I Still Here?

Twenty months ago, I was hit by a car which transformed my life forever physically. The accident nearly killed me. I'll walk with a limp or a cane for the rest of my life. Thank God for Alcoholics Anonymous which, again saved my life. I was sober over a dozen years at that point, and I needed every tool and relationship that the program had given me to survive with my sobriety and sanity intact.

Dangerous thoughts invaded my brain in the weeks I spent in the hospital and months of early physical recovery. I couldn't help but wonder why I had survived. I was a hairsbreadth from death and now I had a terrifying and uncertain physical recovery ahead of me. I was experiencing uncontrollable pain and anguish. On top of that, I was taking pain medications of which I was terrified of getting hooked. Drugs were not part of

my story but I was afraid of how appealing my body might find them.

My wife was amazing, spending every day with me at the hospital and loving me through this horror. My two teenage sons visited often and survived by choosing to believe us when we told them that dad would be alright. Surgeons, doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, physical therapists, and ministers all did incredible work. My brain constantly told me this was more than I could handle. I had become a burden to all and was without use to anyone. My "Why am I still here?" question was really a veiled "I'd rather be dead" statement. I needed help and I turned to the AA program for it.

We read the fifth tradition in every AA meeting which is that our group's purpose is to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. I am surrounded by people in my homegroup who live that purpose. My sponsor often listened to me cry and told me to trust God when there seemed like nothing else to trust. "God hasn't gotten you this

far to just throw you away," was one of his fondest sayings. My sponsees supported me by visiting, and calling, one even bringing me a Big Book while I was in the intensive care unit.

The thought that formed from all of the love and help I had received was that our group's purpose was also mine. God has put me in the lives of people who need me. The reasons I am still alive are to be the best husband I can be to my wife, to be the best father I can be to my two sons, to stay sober, and to help other alcoholics achieve sobriety. This includes reaching out to others in AA when I need help so they can fulfill their purpose.

Life is becoming a new normal and just like with all the other tools of AA, the sooner I remember to rely on my Why-I'm-Here purpose when I struggle, the better my life is.

*Written By: Brian G.*

# TRI County Jail Visits

We resumed our Saturday visits to the St Charles County Jail in April. Since the onset of COVID they've been suspended. Now we're in full swing!

We visit both men and women inmates who desire more information about Alcoholics Anonymous. This is a great, needed way of spreading our message of hope and a new way of life for these folks. These one hour meetings take place in a classroom inside the Jail. I've attended two of these, during which one of us runs the meeting and the other discusses his experience, strengths and hopes. This leaves about 40 minutes for the inmates to share, ask questions about the Program and talk about what led them to where they are now. We strongly emphasize hope and the opportunity our meeting provides for taking a hard look at their lives and perhaps moving forward in sobriety.

The men's meeting draws 7-9 inmates. In both the meetings I've been involved with there were several men who were familiar with AA and some

actively in the program. Both groups were quite interested in how our stories dovetailed with theirs. In my case, I've spent time in jails on three occasions, which gave us credibility.

Currently, there are a good number of TRI County women conducting meetings. But we need more AA men to help us carry the message. There is a background checking process with the Jail for new meeting participants. It's not a difficult process. Please get in touch with Russ S, District 14 Corrections Chair (636-634-6558) if you're interested in participating in these rewarding meetings!

*In service,*

*Mike M  
Group 124*

**CENTRAL SERVICES**  
**8TH ANNUAL PICNIC**  
**AA AND AL-ANON SPEAKERS @ 1:00**  
**DEER CREEK "ROCKET PARK"**  
3200 LACLEDE STATION ROAD  
MAPLEWOOD

**JUNE 4TH 11-3**  
**ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN**  
**MEAT AND DRINK PROVIDED BRING YOUR FAVORITE DISH**

**POTLUCK & SPEAKER MEETING**  
SPONSORED BY GROUP 124 & AL-ANON HOPE FOR TODAY GROUP  
Fried Chicken, Mostaccioli, & Drinks Provided  
Please Bring a Side or Dessert to Share  
\*\* NO CROCKPOTS, PLUG IN DEVICES, OR OPEN FLAMES

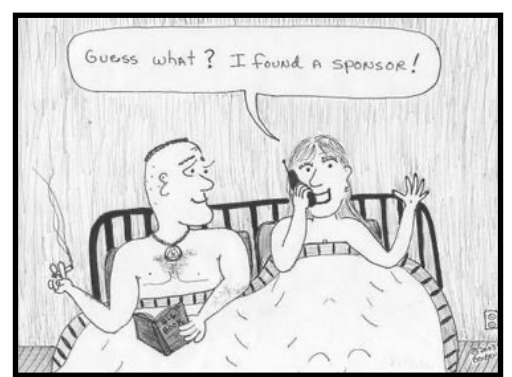
June 22, 2023  
6 pm Doors Open  
6:30 pm Dinner  
7:15 pm AA & Al Anon Speakers

Dardenne Presbyterian Church  
7400 South Outer Rd 364  
Dardenne Prairie, MO  
Event held in the Christian Life Center/Gym

**WOMEN IN RECOVERY FLOAT AND CAMPING TRIP**  
WIRFLOAT@GMAIL.COM

**June 23-25**  
**Riverview Ranch**  
**Bourbon MO**

# SENTINEL SARCASM..RULE 62



*All opinions expressed are those of individuals and do not necessarily reflect the views of AA as a whole. To give feedback or report Tri-County AA news or events, please email [sentinel@tricityaa.org](mailto:sentinel@tricityaa.org)*

# What's Behind the 12th Step? Put Your Hand in My Hand and Together We can do THIS!

**Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

Step 12 is our call to arms. When we have a spiritual awakening, it is natural to have the desire to reach out to other alcoholics and live the principles we learned in AA. Reaching out to newcomers reminds us of where we have come from. Through sharing our experience, strength, and hope, and showing them what their lives could be like, we are able to stay sober for another day.

When we break down step 12, we find there are 3 essential aspects about this step in AA.

## Spiritual Awakening

The first is recognizing that the previous 11 steps have resulted in a "spiritual awakening." Working the steps has created a huge psychological shift in us. Step 12 of AA calls our attention to this new mindset—after all, it's something we should be deeply proud of and grateful for.

## Support Others

Next, we're called to support other alcoholics by carrying the principles we've learned through our own path to sobriety to others who need help. We have now become that source of empathy and experience that was so vital to our own recovery, and we can pay it forward.

This is best done by simply sharing our own story, offering support without judgment, and keeping an open door to any who seeks it.

## Acknowledging the Lifelong Endeavor

Lastly, AA Step 12 reminds us that this process is truly a lifelong endeavor. The principles we've learned and practiced—acceptance, honesty, humility, and self-awareness—are now part of a long-term sober lifestyle.

When combined with our new state of consciousness, we comprise a toolset from which we can draw on daily to lead a peaceful, honest, and fulfilling life of service. Step 12 of AA will never be truly complete, which is what makes it so powerful and rewarding.

So when I was told the position of 12th Step Volunteers Chairperson (for Tri-County Intergroup) was available, I immediately got excited! I was looking for some service work and this was exactly what I wanted to do.

I love to talk about Alcoholics Anonymous and how the program has made a huge impact on my life. This position is the perfect opportunity

to reach out to people calling and asking about Alcoholics Anonymous.

Here is how the 12 Step Volunteers program works:

To be on the 12 Step Volunteers list we suggest that volunteers have at least six months of sobriety, a sponsor, a home group, and have worked the Twelve Steps at least once. We ask for a 1-year commitment, however you may continue indefinitely if you choose.

If you are unable to continue, notify the 12th step chairperson and you will be removed from the call list. You are welcome to return to the volunteer list at any time.

You must be willing to answer calls and assist callers as needed, day or night.

We try to have a fair distribution of male and female AA volunteer members in Districts 14, 19, and 20 to accept inquiries from callers seeking information on Alcoholics Anonymous 24/7. Calls are received on a rotating basis.

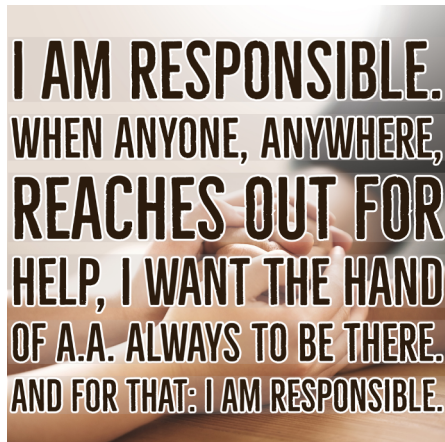
Volunteer committee members are trained on the handling of calls, which may include location and transportation to meetings, directing callers from other areas to appropriate contacts within their area, answering questions about AA in general and/or providing 12th Step interventions.

Calls may also include directing family/friends of an alcoholic to recovery resources in their area and directing people seeking treatment to: [Findtreatment.gov](http://Findtreatment.gov) or 800-662-4357. We have a list of many other resources as well. Some calls are just asking where they can find a meeting.

This year we are making new additions to the program. I am currently compiling a list of towns and districts the volunteers live in or are willing to go to for 12 step calls and arranging transportation to meetings. For instance, it might be difficult for someone in northern Lincoln County to make a 12-step call to someone in southern district 14. The phone volunteer can refer to the list and ask a volunteer in the caller's district to contact the caller. Volunteers are obviously more familiar with meetings and events in their own district.

Another addition to our outreach is we will be taking Big Books on 12 step calls and presenting them to newcomers. It is exciting to reach out to someone for the very first time who says, "I just can't live like this anymore." Making a life-altering impact for another alcoholic is the greatest! We might not ever know about the ripples we have sent out to other alcoholics, but they will. What's behind the 12th step? To paraphrase page 164 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous we are told to ask God in our morning meditation what we can do each day for the man who is still sick. And to give freely of what we find. That is enough for me.

*Written By: Pennie*



# THE FIVE BIG DELUSIONS...DELUSION NUMBER FOUR

## Delusion Number Four (Spiritual

**Disqualification):** *The dreadful sensation that this Higher Power, referenced repeatedly throughout the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, doesn't desire anything to do with us because of who we have become and the wreckage of our past. Or because we identify as one of the "nones," we claim to be atheists, agnostic, or irreligious.*

The chapter "We Agnostics" reminds us that if we are real alcoholics, we most likely suffer from an illness that only a spiritual experience will conquer. This news is not very encouraging for anyone suffering from the delusion of spiritual disqualification. It seems to mimic systemic racism, meaning that this Higher Power, God, and Power greater than ourselves, language, is embedded in the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and excludes certain people.

It's not uncommon in the rooms of A.A. to hear someone say, "when I looked up at the steps and saw "God" referenced, I knew this program would not work for me," or, "I knew this A.A. was an underground religious organization or cult." Why do so many people make statements like these and feel this way? They come from our subconscious and what I refer to as "our box of certainty."

Everyone walks into the rooms of recovery with their "box of certainty." They are certain

God doesn't exist, can't be proved or disproved, or there are only certain ways in which God can be known. Many firmly say, "there is only one way to experience God." When the spotlight of truth is placed upon our "box of certainty," we discover that we worship what we "think" we know about this Higher Power versus truly "knowing" and "relying" on a Higher Power. When you read Bill's story, you will witness Bill pulling out his "box of certainty," placing it on the table, opening it, slowly removing its contents, and injecting them into his conversation with Ebby. You will hear him describe his upbringing and dislike for religion, his judgment of Jesus and so-called "Christians," and his assessment of the God of his misunderstanding. The "good news" that Ebby was sharing with Bill was not attainable for Bill because Bill was spiritually disqualified due to the contents inside his "box of certainty." We all possess such a box; its contents have clogged our channel and blocked our access to the world of the Spirit our entire lives.

What happens next is why Alcoholics Anonymous not only survived but thrived and why you can read, engage, and wrestle with this essay today. Ebby introduces an unthinkable idea to Bill; he suggests that Bill choose his own conception of God. Ebby picked up Bill's "box of certainty" and

temporarily removed it from the conversation long enough for Bill to experience an apocalyptic moment. Bill would later write in an essay titled "God as We Understand Him," April 1961, that "The phrase "God as we understand him" is perhaps the most important expression to be found in our whole A.A. vocabulary." In the Spiritual Appendix of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, we are reminded that an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial can only defeat us and that we shouldn't find difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery, and they are indispensable. You are welcome and encouraged to come into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous with your doubts, questions, beliefs, religion, or lack thereof, and find refuge at last. If you are an alcoholic of the hopeless variety, please don't let the language of God, a Higher Power, or a Power greater than yourself deter you from this way of life and the promises that await you. Commit yourself to becoming willing, honest, and open-minded, lay aside your "box of certainty," and entrust a sponsor to help you engage the Twelve Steps as your new design for living. God will meet you on the other side of this experience.

Written By: Harold L.

# SOBER SUMMER...How to Survive

When the weather starts getting nice and I have officially survived another Missouri winter, I get antsy. Even after almost seven years! I know it didn't have to be sunny and seventy for me to want to drink, but man, being outdoors and doing certain activities is definitely a trigger for me! I have learned to open my tool box, reach in and grab on to whatever I have to in order to stay in the middle of the boat. Sometimes that meant not participating in the activities I love (especially early in recovery). Other times, the tools and the people to carry me through were right there where I needed them. We are not a glum lot! There are solutions to each situation. There are so many things that trigger me during this time of year: going to a Cardinal's game, attending concerts, family reunions, bbq picnics, festivals, float trips, vacations. I could go on but you get the point. Literally anything can be a trigger.

## How do we survive with our sobriety intact?

1. Surround yourself with people in the program and/or family and friends who support your sobriety and will hold you accountable. I have heard others say that because I have a drinking problem doesn't mean

my friends and family can't drink. I call bs! In a situation like this, I am asking for their support and I am asking them to hold me accountable. They can join me in staying sober for this one event. If they can't or are unwilling, I need to pick someone else to attend with me.

2. Find alternative groups to go on a float trip with - there is both

a women's and a men's AA float trip. Many people attend these and find that they have a great time without drinking and bonus...they remember it the next day.

3. The first time I went to a Cardinal's game after getting sober was somewhere around year five. I was afraid to go before then. I loved my beer and nachos at the ball game. I knew it would be a strong trigger and I was not with like minded people. I white knuckled through it but I

was not prepared and found myself on a slippery slope! Take the time to pick out a game you would like to go to and ask some of your sober friends if they would like to make an outing out of it.

4. BBQ's and family picnics, and holidays - it is perfectly ok to not attend these things if you aren't comfortable. Family events like

this, when you grew up in an alcoholic family, almost always include the uncle or cousin who is "in the bag" telling you to "just have a sip, you will be fine." SPEAK UP for yourself. Look them in the eyes and tell them that you do not appreciate the pressure they are putting on you. If your family is anything like mine, the party will end early anyway because cousin Ted and cousin Fred got into a fight over a cornhole game.

5. Vacations. This was absolutely

the hardest for me in my early years of recovery. Laying on the beach in a hammock, reading a book and sipping on a drink was my definition of relaxation. This was the catalyst for a relapse in my early recovery. I needed to redefine what vacationing and relaxing meant to me. I avoided the beach for a couple of years after the relapse but when I went back, I can just remember how much more beautiful and vibrant the colors were and how pleasant the sound of children building sandcastles was.

Let's face it, drinking is embedded in our society's culture on just about every level at this point. That isn't going to change, but you can! By changing our mind set, practicing the Steps and surrounding ourselves with supportive people, we can make it through any season (both literally and figuratively).

Written By: Anonymous

**CHANGE IS  
INEVITABLE  
GROWTH IS OPTIONAL**