

# Utah Area 69 Newsletter

January—March , 2005

Volume 1 Issue 1

*Basics of the Home Group -  
Recovery, Unity, Service*



## Report from our Delegate

I'm an alcoholic and my name is Mike. I currently serve as Delegate – Panel 55, Area 69, State of Utah.

Even as I write this, that introduction to my service position still seems unreal – a dream I never thought would happen to me.

I recently attended my first Area meeting as Delegate. It was one of the most amazing encounters I have ever had. Everything I had heard about being the new Delegate was suddenly happening to me - especially the expectation I had been warned about. "When you are elected Delegate, everyone expects you to know everything you need to know to about being a Delegate and everything about AA as a whole (or something real similar to that)."

On Monday, prior to the Area Meeting, I had picked up a box from the post office that contained somewhere around 500 or more sheets of paper. This little item was the full agenda for each of the Conference Committees at the General Service Conference - including background materials. By the time Friday rolled around, I had managed to get to a print shop and procure 2 more full copies of the materials. I still had not found enough time to read any or all of the material. I spent most of Friday just getting the copies sorted and marked for distribution to

our hard working Area Committee Standing Chairpersons.

When I walked into the meeting on Saturday morning, I had very little more information than anyone else arriving at that meeting as to what any of the Agenda items were and/or what was contained in the background materials. From the first questions I was asked, it was clear that the expectation was I had full knowledge of all the materials I was passing about. I intuitively knew that prayer was my only hope. I slipped away to a quiet corner and made my plea for help to my Higher Power.

Is there a God in my life? I am absolutely convinced that is true. Ironically, coincidentally, or just God protecting his anonymity, almost every question I was asked after I made that prayer, was about some part of the materials I had glanced over while I was sorting it into little piles. I had not read a single item in detail. However, if I didn't know any more about it than that brief glance, I at least had seen the material in question. I'm convinced that it was God's hand that stopped me each time I paused in my sorting to read something that caught my eye.

I have to report that, since that meeting, I have had more opportunity to peruse

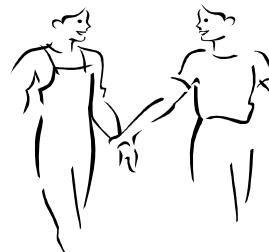


the materials and prepare myself for the Pre-Conference Assembly. To my great relief and knowing that God is on my side, I will be content to know that I really don't have to know everything there is to know about being a Delegate or everything there is to know about AA as a whole. More will be revealed and it will be just when I need to know.

Thank You for this opportunity to serve and for a life exceeding my wildest dreams....

Mike Ohlson

Delegate, Panel 55, Area 69  
– State of Utah



*The Home Groups of Alcoholics Anonymous are the beacon for all those yet to come—so let's keep our legacies alive and active, making our groups a safe and healing place for all of us.*

## Upcoming Area Events

- 55th General Service Conference – NY, NY  
April 17-23, 2005
- Post-Conference Assembly – SLC, UT.  
May 20-22, 2005
- International Convention – Toronto, Canada  
June 30-July 3, 2005
- Pre-Assembly Workshop – District 11  
August 20-21, 2005
- National Bridge the Gap Workshop – St. Joseph, MO. Sept. 9-11, 2005
- Fall Assembly – Logan, UT Sept. 23-25, 2005
- Fall Workshop – Vernal, UT  
Nov. 5-6, 2005
- Area Committee Meeting  
Provo, UT  
December 3, 2005

## What We Were Like...

### 70 Years Ago...



In the early months of 1935, thirty nine year old Bill Wilson was going through those first days without a drink. He was attending meetings of the Oxford Movement at the Calvary Church in Manhattan with his wife Lois. Making the trip by subway from their home at 182 Clinton Street in Brooklyn, NY. Bill was trying to help the drunks at the church by telling them of his wonderful experience at Town's Hospital in mid December 1934. (He was admitted on December 11, 1934). After the Oxford meeting he would meet with some of them and share his high-powered message. Only one problem, no one was staying sober for more than a few days. Dr. Silkworth had even advised him to "Stop preaching at them."

In April 1935 through some contacts on Wall Street. (God does have a sense of humor, the company that gave Bill this break was called "Beer and Company".) He got a chance to be apart of a group to make a bid to take over "National Rubber Machinery Company" in Akron Ohio. Bill jumped at the opportunity. He would show those guys in Wall Street that he was back and a new man, not the drunk they all knew him to be. As was his wont he studied the legal and financial reports and understood the ins and outs of the proposed takeover. The early trips he and Lois had taken to little know companies when they were first married showed him the need to be on top of things and now he had even more to prove.

At the end of May 1935 the walls of hope had collapsed around him, always prone to depression, he sat in the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel, one of Akron's finest, alone again. His business companions had gone home, Bill wanted to give it one more try. So he sat with ten dollars in his pocket and no one to talk to and Bill needed others to keep the darkness away. He heard the familiar warm noise of the hotel bar and thought, "I think I'll go into the bar and have a "ginger ale" and scrape up an acquaintance". He moved slowly towards the bar and passed a listing of Akron's pastors, Bill later said "sanity returned" he knew he needed another drunk to help him stay sober. Bill then made that fateful call that put him in touch with a local drunk, Dr. Bob Smith.

Dr. Bob said to his long suffering wife Anne, "I'll give this bird fifteen minutes" the conversation lasted over two hours. Bob said later that "Bill knew the drinking game". Like many others that Bill tried to help Dr. Bob stopped drinking for a while but he HAD to go to the medical convention in Atlantic City NJ., after all he hadn't missed one in twenty years by God. Bob started drinking as soon as he got on the train and of course missed the convention. He arrived home in a blackout. A couple of days later he told Bill he had to go to work and perform an operation. Bill gave him a beer to calm his nerves and let him go, in more ways than one. Bill and Anne waited the rest of that day on pins and needles, thinking the worst. Dr. Bob Smith finally arrived home, sober. He had been out making "Oxford group restitutions" which later became our ninth step. Dr. Bob never drank again and on that day seventy years ago June 10th. 1935, that we mark as the birth of Alcoholics Anonymous. I think it is remarkable that AA didn't start when Bill was full of light and power in Town's Hospital in December 1934 but when darkness enveloped him and he and another drunk leaned upon one another to stay sober together.

Submitted by John McG. Via the internet

## What Happened...

### A Lesson in Humility and Honesty

Just over a year ago, in February 2004, I left my home in Utah and began traveling south (to warmer weather) with no planned final destination. I had moved to Utah in 2000 to return to school to pursue a master's degree. When I arrived in Logan that summer I immediately started attending AA meetings and followed the suggestions I remembered hearing in my early days of sobriety. I found a new homegroup, a new sponsor, and made myself available for service both inside and outside of my homegroup. Soon after I was privileged to have the opportunity to sponsor again, to be involved in the 12<sup>th</sup> step work I enjoy the most. My life was full and very busy.

I was exhausted by February 2004 as I had been burning the candle at both ends for far too long. I was ready for a road trip, ready to have a "vacation" from all my responsibilities, including my service commitments in AA. I wanted to have time for ME. As I began to travel I soon found out that I felt very disconnected from AA. Although I attended meetings while traveling, and was in periodic contact with my sponsor, I missed attending my homegroup on a weekly basis. I missed being involved in service and having regular contact with those I knew in the program (both sponsees and other alcoholics).

Throughout my sobriety I have found that even when I fail to regularly invite the God of my understanding into my life, He is always there for me. God had a plan for me! By the end of March I had been offered (and accepted) a job in Tucson, Arizona. I could become reconnected with A.A.!

My second move in sobriety was far more difficult than my first. It seemed harder for me to reconnect with the fellowship and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Today I realize it was false-pride, ego, and fear that stood in my way of me and my fellows. I was no longer one of the few with double digit sobriety and I felt like a newcomer all over again. I felt as if I had nothing to share in meetings. Despite this, I trudged along and took the next right action. I found a new homegroup, became involved in service, began sponsoring once again and found a new sponsor with whom I started working through the steps again.

My new job demanded a lot of my time and between work and my full immersion back into A.A. I began to feel completely overwhelmed. I was involved in all three of our legacies; recovery, unity and service, but something wasn't right. I didn't have the desire to drink. By the grace of God, and through this program, the obsession to

drink had been lifted for me many years ago. I did, however, begin to contemplate making the “supreme sacrifice” (suicide) and these continued thoughts scared the hell out of me. I began to isolate and had to force myself to get out of bed in the morning. It took every ounce of energy for me to put one foot in front of the other and “suit up and show up.” How could I, with 12 years of sobriety, doing all the things I had been taught to do in A.A., things that had been vital to my recovery, feel like this? My false-pride kept me from being honest to anyone about how I was feeling and what I was contemplating. I continued to slip into a black hole of nothingness.

Pain is a great motivator as one day, when I felt as though I would need to be placed in a padded cell, I sought help outside the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. I was diagnosed with clinical depression. What a hard pill to swallow! To survive, I had to get brutally honest with my sponsor, my spouse, my family and others in A.A.

The last 4 months have been tough and full of hard work as I have been trudging that road to a happy destiny. I have discovered that the 12 steps are not the solution to all of my problems as I had to be placed on medication to correct the chemical imbalance in my brain. However, I do believe that if I had not been diligently doing my step work, been involved in service, had sponsees and a sponsor in my life, I would not be walking this earth a free woman today.

The solution to all my problems still lie in the first 164 pages of the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous as well as in our other literature. I am very grateful that Alcoholics Anonymous recognizes that we sometimes need to seek outside help. I am very grateful that Bill W., one of our co-founders, also suffered from depression. I am also very grateful for the pamphlets “Problems Other Than Alcohol” and “The A.A. Member – Medications and Other Drugs.”

God had a plan for me as through this process I have restored and deepened my relationship with Him and have learned more about humility and honesty. I can once again be happy, joyous and free!

Sent to us by Ann W. From Tucson, Arizona

## What We Are Like Now.

## Geese



When you see geese flying in a "V" formation, you might be interested in knowing what scientists have discovered about why they fly that way.

FACT: As each bird flaps its wings it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

TRUTH: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the trust of one another.

2. FACT: Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front.

TRUTH: There is strength and power and safety in numbers when traveling in the same direction with whom we share a common goal.

3. FACT: When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point.

TRUTH: It pays to take turns doing hard jobs.

4. FACT: The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

TRUTH: We all need to be remembered with active support and praise.

5. FACT: When a goose gets sick or is wounded and falls out, two geese fall out of formation and follow him down to help and protect him. They stay with him until the crisis resolves, and then they launch out on their own or with another formation to catch up with their group.

TRUTH: We must stand by each other in times of need.

We Are Fortunate That There Are More Geese In Life Than Turkeys. Let's Remember To Uphold Each Other In Friendship And Give Each Other A Big "Honk" More Often.  
(submitted by Janet H. via the internet)

***\*\*In Loving Memory—Our friend and fellow traveler, Don Huff, passed away March 13th, 2005. He will be greatly missed by all those whose lives he touched in his service to Area 69 as a Past Delegate, and for keeping our AA memories alive through his willingness to serve as one of the tapers of our events. We will really miss you, Don. God bless your family—Our prayers will be with them...***

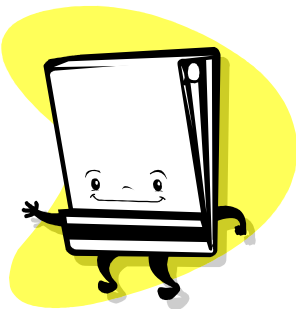
## A Bit of Humor...

A man goes to a party and has too much to drink. His friends plead with him to let them take him home. He says, "No" - he only lives a mile away. About 5 blocks from the party, the police pull him over for weaving and ask him to step out of the car and walk the line. Just as he starts, the police radio blares out a notice of a robbery taking place in a house just a block away. The police tell the party animal to stay put, they will be right back. They hop a fence and run down the street to the robbery.

The guy waits and waits, and finally decides to drive home. When he gets there, he tells his wife that he is going to bed, and to tell anyone who might come looking for him that he has the flu and has been in bed all day. A few hours later the police knock on the door. They ask if Mr. Joe is there and his wife says yes. They ask to see him and his wife replies that he is in bed with the flu and has been so all day. The police have his driver's license. They ask to see his car and the wife asks why. They insist on seeing the car, so she takes them to the garage. She opens the door. There, sitting inside the garage, is the police car, with all its lights still flashing!

(True story, as told by the driver at his first AA meeting... or, true as far as we know)

Submitted via the internet



---

## "ON THE COVER OF A MATCHBOOK"

When my friend Frank would hear someone in an AA meeting share about having trouble taking their 4th Step he would generally share, and during his talk he would say "If you're having trouble writing your inventory, come to coffee with me after the meeting and I'll show you how to take it on the cover of a matchbook."

Then, when he had the unsuspecting newcomer across from him in the coffee shop, he would take out a book of matches, tear off the cover and say "Here, write your name on this". When the new person said "What else?" Frank would say "Write the word "everything", because that is what you think is wrong with you". This of course was just an ice breaker to start a discussion of a more helpful way of taking inventory as described in the Big Book. (Which is an interesting thought, since Frank was also one of the founders of the Icebreakers Group of AA - but that is another story!)

It is interesting to me just how difficult we can make our 4th Step inventory. I tried taking this step in a number of ways during the early years of my sobriety, and all of them worked, because they allowed me to stay sober long enough to finally do it the way the Big Book describes. When I finally was able to reach a point in sobriety where I could take at least a reasonably fearless inventory, I also was able to see for the first time the clear-cut directions in Chapter Five (yes, the part after what is read at most meetings!)

The directions, like everything about our program, are simple - but not easy! They require willingness, honesty and open-mindedness. Most important, they require that we have taken the 3rd Step, as this is what removes enough of the fear to allow us to continue with the process.

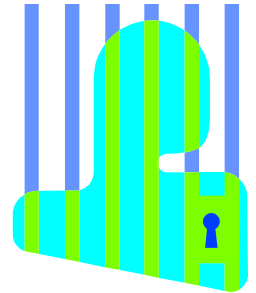
Now, each time I sit in a meeting during a discussion of Step 4, I remember my friend Frank and think "I have to start carrying a matchbook with me!"

Sent to us by Mickey H., Past Delegate, Panel 49

## News from Our Treatment Chair

As the new treatment facilities chairperson, I would like to invite you to participate in the "Bridging the Gap" Program. The newest members of our fellowship need your help getting to their first few meetings. These are members who are being released from institutions, either correction or treatment facilities and they need our help. The real world outside of the Treatment Center, Halfway House, or Jail can be very difficult. It is best if the new member can attend their first meeting within 24 hours of release. This is 12 Step working — an opportunity to share your recovery one to one with a new member. These initial visits should be a team of two sober members. You may also serve as the new members temporary sponsor. It is best if men sponsor men, and women sponsor women. If you are interested please provide your name, address, phone numbers, and sobriety date, and email this information to [Treatment@utahaa.org](mailto:Treatment@utahaa.org). I will share your information with your district treatment chairperson and they will contact you with information on the new members, or you may be contacted directly by me. Please specify if you are willing to work with new members from either treatment or correction facilities, or both. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Keith M.—Treatment Facilities Chairperson — [tf@utahaa.org](mailto:tf@utahaa.org)



**\*\*\* Please Keep in Mind that Our Area will be hosting the  
2006 National "Bridging the Gap" Workshop  
— Details will be coming SOON!!**

**Also, the Bridging the Gap Workshop this year will be held  
September 9-11, 2005 in St Joseph, MO., at the Ramada Inn**

**—Let's see what we can do to show the Fellowship our interest in this awesome  
service opportunity, and try to get there to welcome folks to come out West for the  
first time to share their experience, strength and hope with us!!**

For more info. on this years Workshop, Please contact Tina H. 216-271-3411 or Mark C. 703-329-0292

### **R.I.P. (Rest In Peace)**

*Alcoholics Anonymous was saddened to learn this week of the death of one of its members, Someone Else. Someone's passing creates a vacancy that will be difficult to fill. Someone Else had been with us for many years and did far more than one person's fair share of the work. Wherever there was a job to do, an activity to volunteer for, a committee meeting to attend, one name was on everyone's list: "Let Someone Else do it."*

*It was common knowledge that Someone Else was among the largest contributors to AA. Whenever there was a financial need, everyone just assumed that Someone Else would make up the difference. Someone Else sometimes appeared superhuman, but a person can only do so much. Were the truth known, everybody expected too much from Someone Else.*

*Now Someone Else is gone. We wonder what we are going to do. We can't depend on Someone Else anymore. Someone Else left a wonderful example for us to follow-but who is going to follow it? Who is going to do the things Someone Else did?*



*Anonymous, May 2002 Grapevine*

**Utah Area 69 Service Committee**



**\*\*\* This is a *Confidential Publication*,  
to be used and distributed only amongst the  
membership of Alcoholics Anonymous \*\*\***

*The Utah Area 69 Newsletter is available to all members of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are truly “self-supporting through our own contributions”. Without your help, the newsletter is not possible, (or is very boring...).*

*Please send your stories, reports, jokes, cartoons or whatever else strikes your fancy related to recovery to the Newsletter Chair at;*

*Newsletter@utahaa.org*

*Or Newsletter Chair*

*335 S. State St. 37-9, Roosevelt, UT. 84066*

# Utah Area 69 Newsletter

Contact us at [utahaa.org](http://utahaa.org)—or write Newsletter Chair at 335 S. State St. 37-9 Roosevelt, Ut. 84066