

***THE SERENITY TIMES***  
THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
OF THE  
DARWIN DISTRICT

**STEP 10**

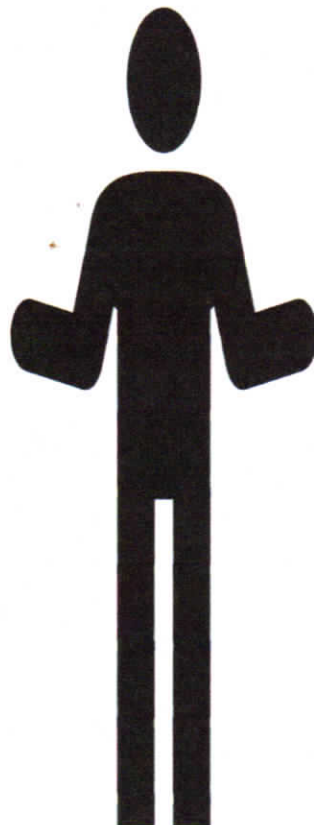


***Continued to take  
personal inventory***

***and when we***



***were wrong***



***we promptly admitted it.***



**Darwin District**

Darwin District serves the A.A. groups in the Darwin District.

**Darwin District Office**

Nightcliff Community Centre  
5/18 Bauhinia St Nightcliff NT 0810  
PO Box 40760

Casuarina NT 0810

**Telephone** 0889485202

**Email:** [aadarwin.@bigpond.com](mailto:aadarwin.@bigpond.com)

**Website:** [aadarwin.org.au](http://aadarwin.org.au)

**Office Hours:**

11am-2pm Monday-Saturday

Mick G (District Committee Member)

Pat M (Treasurer)

Kitty Kat (Secretary)

Deb H (Office Coordinator)

Denis P (Registrar)

Mick G (Webmaster)

Caroline B (Literature Officer)

Denis P (acting Maintenance Officer)

Dan T (Public Information Officer)

Doug W (Treatment Facilities Coordinator)

Vacant (Correctional Facilities Coordinator)

Vacant (Roundup Coordinator)

Susan B (Editor)

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be a monthly office committee meeting to be held at 7pm Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup>

October via Zoom Conference call.

The next quarterly District meeting for all GSRs and committee members is scheduled for Wednesday the 9<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm, also via Zoom.

**To submit your story, or any other articles A.A. suitable for printing in the**

**SERENITY TIMES:**

Please contact the editor at

[serenitytimesaa@outlook.com](mailto:serenitytimesaa@outlook.com)

The editor has the right to decide the suitability of all articles forwarded.





#### **Public Information Update**

##### **Treasurer DDO: Pat M**

09/09/2020 Current balance (cash and bank account) \$6,921.98.

We recorded a surplus for the month of \$600.90, compared to a smaller surplus of \$279.19 for the same month last year-the difference attributable mainly to higher expenses in August 2019 including a large literature order payment of \$879.29. Year to date that is for the full financial year 2019-2020, we show a small surplus of \$753.39 which is good considering the impact of the pandemic on group contributions. Group contributions this month amounted to \$885.70 with the donation of the Darwin Unity Weekend of \$356.50 making up 40% of that. In August 2019 group contributions were lower at \$670.15. Literature sales amounted to \$251.20 and we paid a literature invoice for \$101.90 with no outstanding invoices at present.

**DCM: Mick G.** There are currently 18 meetings operating in the Darwin District. All information on the AA Website under meetings. A new group has been formed; it has been operating for four months and working at becoming officially a group. **The Darwin Service Group**, on Zoom, Wednesday nights at 7pm. This group carries its message through workshops on the 12 Traditions, The 12 Concepts and in future all and every area of Service and Unity.

It is wonderful to see each group acting autonomously in what will be the ever-shifting sands of Covid 19 for the near future.

**Northern Region Area A:** Our area committee member has been working hard with others of the General Service Office to realise the General Service Conference October 2020. It has obvious difficulties with the inability to meet "face to face" due to Covid 19.

**Service Work:** Thank you to all the members rotating off from their positions. Your time and effort has been invaluable to the continuing work of the Darwin Office in supporting the AA groups of Darwin.

THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPAL OF "ROTATION" MEANS OTHERS MAY ENTER SERVICE FURTHER ENHANCING THEIR SOBRIETY.

A special mention to Pat M and John S, who have worked tirelessly over the decades in Service positions, but especially for your wisdom, direction, guidance, and experience in the

development of the current Darwin structure. We and those who come after you are indebted to your service.

**The office and Covid:** In recent conversations with David from the NTG team, he stated that the 1.5 metre rule was no longer mandated.

He did suggest however, that it was in everybody's interest to maintain social distancing and all other actions previously undertaken in the Covid 19 plan. Events with less than 100 people do not require completion of a checklist or safety plan, however the physical distancing and hygiene principles should still be considered and implemented. (ntg website)

**Secretary:** Kitty Kat has filled this position for 3 months. Pat M has rolled off.

**Literature:** Caroline B GSO has advised that they are currently out of stock of 4th edition Big Books. The drop off in literature orders and Group contributions has caused GSO to be more careful about what and when they order stock. The GSO management group has decided to go ahead with reprinting 10,000 books in total. That will provide enough stock for a bit more than 2 years. The order has been placed and it is anticipated that the books will arrive late October or early November. However, plenty of 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Australian Big Books in stock. Editor's Note ..... For the newbies GSO is the abbreviation Of General Service Office, which is in NSW.

**Treatment Facilities:** Doug W has filled this position. Deb H retired. Doug is keen to get this up and going again. Hopefully, many volunteer to go visit these facilities and tell the residents your strength, hopes and courage.

**Registrar:** Denis P has filled John S position.

**Office Coordinator:** Deb H has replaced Sam H who has rolled off. Please announce Tuesdays and Thursday's vacancy to your groups.

**Office Maintenance:** Denis P acting. Denis has been keeping the office clean and in order. There is only a maximum of 4 in the office at one time. A sign has been printed and put on door.

**Public Information Officer:** Dan T Nothing to report this month.

**Editor Serenity Times:** Susan B I have created 3 Newsletters with the help of contributions from members. I thank all the members that have contributed so far and really hope others will share their story of attaining sobriety, your strengths, hopes and fears, also other interesting contributions that relate to AA. No Prayers or Poems are allowed.

As the editor I retain the right to choose what is used in the newsletter. Remember this is the newsletter for the Darwin District, it is your newsletter, not mine.

Email: [serenitytimesaa@outlook.com](mailto:serenitytimesaa@outlook.com)





# HISTORY OF ALCOHOLICS IN DARWIN AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY Part Two

5) A big gap in our history follows. Anecdotally only, we record a RAAF base perimeter guard joining the group, (date uncertain), and the venue for meetings equally vague. However, it is known that meetings from 1963-1965 were conducted in a building in Smith Street, Darwin, located opposite the Uniting Church on the City side of the intersection. The room comprised a handful of old church pews behind a lattice wall, very exposed to the prevailing breeze or monsoon, take your pick.

6) In May 1963, a young member fresh from the South, aged 20, arrived by air in the Top End. He was bound for a buffalo abattoir on the Mt Bundy Station, 100 miles from Darwin. Recently discharged from Royal Park Psychiatric Hospital, (as it was known from 1959-1999) located in Melbourne Victoria. This young man had a mere 4 months of shaky sobriety, scared and bewildered, he was booked for one night into the cheap accommodation facility know as "the flophouse" on Mitchell Street. (The site is now occupied by the Sheraton Hotel). His transport to the job was to depart early next day. As he lay on his bed under a mosquito net, inhaling the perfume of Darwin's famous frangipani and smoke of grilling steak from an adjoining outdoor 'bistro', to the repetitious juke-box performances of Ray Charles' "Take these chains from my heart", he was besieged with panic, suddenly realising his predicament. He had no known AA contact-the prospect of an 8-month work contract, in isolation, no vehicle, terror set in.

7) Wanting to rectify the situation, he quickly got up, not knowing how or what he could do. Noting his surroundings, to avoid getting lost, he headed for the main street. He passed the Methodist Overseas Mission HQs, where the lights were still blazing. He reckoned the Methodist Church (being nominally teetotal), might be where he could find somebody who could help. Rev. Norman Pearce greeted him sympathetically and promised that even though he did not know of the existence of AA, he would endeavour to find out and write to him. Within a week, John Johnson was kindly invited by mail, "When you next come into town, come straight here, I'll take you to meet Les at his home". Thus, the two were linked.

8) The two other members of the group, Bill S. and Ian W. were both south on leave at the time - leaving Les on his own and somewhat lonely. It was then that Les briefed John on how the group became established, and this account to be recorded 44 years later. So eager was John for anything "AA", he eagerly devoured all that Les could provide him on Darwin's AA beginnings. At staggered intervals, first Bill, then Ian returned from their respective holidays, making John the number 4 member of the group. Out on his abattoir job, John worked a 6-day week, but could only get to town if a fellow employee had a vehicle with an available vacant seat. Fortunately, a compulsive gambler made the trip approximately 6-weekly, (when the urge for a flutter prevailed). In the meantime, John re-established contact by mail with his sponsor, the late Ricky B. of Melbourne. The only AA literature John had brought with him to the Top End was the little pamphlet, '15 Points For The Alcoholic To Consider When Confronted With The Urge To Take A Drink'. (The title was nearly as long as the text, but an ideal piece of literature for a recovering alcoholic who has ill feelings or resents ('God as we understood Him'). He only had the pamphlet because his sponsor plucked it from a groups literature stand and thrust it into his pocket, accompanied by the urge to 'read it when you have got time, and you have time NOW' (TO BE CONTINUED)







## My Story

Snapshot of my story.

I was born in the Pilbara North Western Australia and moved to Perth at 5 years of age.

My first letter to anyone was in preschool to mum saying "I don't like it here mum, there's too many people, I want to go back to Tom Price.

Grade one, I can remember the fear and head talk of what others are going to think about me and how they are going to view me as mum walked me to my first day of school.

The fear of not fitting in feeling separate was there at an early age.

I come from a hard-working family who enjoy a drink. Sunday roast dinner, family get togethers, sipping Dad and Grandads emu export beers and racing my little brother to Nanna's fine glass cabinet to collect glasses for everyone. Excited knowing that I would get a glass of champagne and a little glass of Grandad's top shelf port, wanting to sit up and be an adult, be somebody else.

Age 11 little football league days Dad offered to buy my friend and myself 2 beers and only 2 each.

The warm glow numbing and tingling effect it gave me, I would continue to chase that experience until alcoholics anonymous reached out to me at 38 years of age.

Always looking for something to change the way I felt and thought, to give me that sense of connection to others.

This progressed me through juvenile centres, adult prisons, rehabilitation centres, hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, homeless shelters, and on the street.

When I came to live with Mum and Dad at 35 years of age, in Darwin, the progression of my alcoholism exploded.

Legally not allowed to drink, constantly in and out of hospital and prison.

It was on my last visit to Darwin prison, my counsellor suggested someone I could talk to and listen, to what he has to say.

She told me to keep an open mind.

I started work with this man who is still my sponsor today, going on nearly five years.

I held the 4<sup>th</sup> edition big book close to me like it was gold, like my life depended on it.

The program, 12 steps, good sponsorship, a home group, and working with others has set me free from my obsession to drink, free from prisons and institutions.

A continuous effort to work the program has enabled me to be of real use and helpfulness to others today. Alcoholics Anonymous is the best thing that has ever

happened to me, and for that I am an incredibly grateful alcoholic.

Denis P.



Thank you,  
to all who attended the Family Cricket Match at Lake Alexander on Sun 6<sup>th</sup> September.  
I believe a good time was had by all.



## The Darwin Round Up and Bill W Camp:

Bob has reported that both weekends went very well, enjoyed by all who attended, with money donated to DDO.





## Alan's Story

Hi, my name is Alan and I am an alcoholic. I grew up believing alcohol was evil and that I was never to touch the stuff, that is what my parents instilled in me from an early age. However even though I held this belief, one night I gave in to peer group pressure, I had a drink and many more that night, I absolutely loved the effect. It instantly made me the life of the party, it made me feel like I had arrived at last. Up to that point in my life I had always felt lesser than others, with low self esteem and like I did not fit in. I distinctly remember thinking that my parents were so wrong about alcohol. I can look back now and see that my mental obsession with alcohol was born and bred that very night. Alcohol simply was my answer to life, from that point on no matter where it took me. Subsequently I used alcohol, people, places, and things to try and build myself up. I can also look back and see right from the beginning that I had the physical allergy that occurs in the alcoholic once they put alcohol into their system. There were so many times over the years that I would swear off alcohol only to be drinking again, usually a short time later and once I started it was all over red rover. I so identify with the doctor's opinion and the theory that the doctor talks about in the alcoholic cycle. This cycle was repeated over and over and over for the next 23 years, and in the process, I hurt people, damaged property, and made an absolute mess of my life. I came to AA because I had run out of options and it was the last card in my deck as I was hopeless. I didn't come to AA because of any particular incident while drinking, but because I couldn't see any point to life with or without alcohol, to be quite honest I wasn't concerned about the people, places and things that I had damaged along the way. I simply wanted my own pain and suffering to go away. I honestly did not want to be in AA, but I soon heard stories just like my own and realised that I was not the only one that suffered the way I did, which had been my belief. I certainly got some relief from attending meetings and joined a home group, relatively early on, I also did some service work within the group. However as much as I was getting some temporary relief from the daily meetings I was attending, I soon found I was to experience another level of pain from simply attending meetings and trying not to drink one day at a time. Over my some 13 years in AA, I have experienced horrific pain and suffering and at times more drinking,

simply because I was not willing to apply AA's simple recovery program in my life.

I love AA today and as much as the fellowship undoubtedly has strength, I absolutely understand that the strength or power on its own is not enough for me to be free of the real problem that is self, let alone free from the obsession to drink.

It has only been through the steps process and my relationship with God that I have experienced the promises described in the Big Book.

Each day is a day that I must be willing to take the action and initiate contact with my higher power, that I may grow spiritually and deal with the very human problem (spiritual Malady) of self.

What I understand today is that the program of recovery does not actually concentrate on the alcoholic problem at all, what it really focusses on is that very human spiritual malady that all humans are capable of suffering from.

As an alcoholic though, once I get right spiritually, I in turn get right mentally (obsession to drink) and physically (craving once I put alcohol into my system), in this respect, as AA tells me, "We have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body". This is my experience contingent on the maintenance or rather growth of my spiritual condition.

I owe my sobriety today to the fellowship of AA, the AA program of recovery and my faith and belief in God.

I had to be rid of my old ideas.

I needed a psychic change.

I needed to get right with God, myself, and the world around me.

I had to have a spiritual awakening sufficient to recover from alcoholism and God has made that possible.

Today I experience the joy of the promises outlined in the Big Book.

They are only promises until I have experienced them from following the clear-cut directions found in the big book.

After that they are the proof that AAs solution really works!

One of the greatest freedoms I have today is helping other alcoholics achieve sobriety through the practice and teaching of AAs 12 step recovery program.





This month I would like to introduce you to a new section.

Thank you to our wonderful Literature Officer Caroline B, we are adding a new section, Caroline's Book of the month. This section will feature a book from our AA literature with a review written by Caroline.

This page will serve to familiarize members with some of the literature available from the Darwin Office.

The Editor

Want to enhance your reading?

Read something a little different, but still in line with recovery...books like emotional sobriety, spiritual experience one and two are available. Perhaps curious about AAs history...books like, AA comes of Age, Pass it on, Language of the heart and Dr Bob and the old timers. Or simply to work with others...books like, The Big Book, and 12x12s both Big Book and 12x12 come small size as well. Also available the 12x12 in large print. Its all here in a wide range at the DDO office Darwin, please feel free to Contact Caroline B. via the office.

Welcome To

**CAROLINE'S BOOK OF THE MONTH**

About the book.

Title..... Step by Step

Step by Step; Real AAs, Real recovery shows how AA members of all ages, from all lifestyles and from around the world, followers of mainstream religions and atheists, newcomers and old-timers, have recovered and found a new way of life by working the 12 steps. Here is

a variety of experiences that AAs have written about the steps and sent to the Grapevine over the course of its existence, from the 1940s to the present.

Caroline's view of this book.

This book is so great to not only identify with but in its own way each story speaks for itself, of experience and in a special way gives further insight as it goes through each of our 12 steps.

Regards

Caroline B.

To purchase a copy of this book contact Caroline via Darwin Office

**Telephone 0889485202 between the hours of 11-2. Caroline is generally in attendance Monday's, or via, Email [aadarwin@bigpond.com](mailto:aadarwin@bigpond.com)**

**God grant me the**

**Serenity**

**To accept the things**

**I cannot change,**

**Courage**

**To change the things I can,**

**And the**

**Wisdom**

**To know the difference.**

