



THE SERENITY TIMES

The monthly newsletter of the Darwin district OCTOBER 2021

Tradition 10. Long Form.

No A.A. member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues – particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters, they can express no views whatever.



And so, thanks to AA,
I have stayed sober for
10 years. Thank You.

But before I go ...



...I know I speak for all of AA.
When I protest the current legislation
...it must not pass!

!!#*!!#

AND to that end I am
sending an email in the name
Of AA and our group...

And through this outburst everyone is arguing like our two penguins pictured above. Picture the sound of 20 penguins fighting.... Not much different than a room full of AA members, arguing. Let's not be drawn into public controversy it only causes a breakdown of what AA is all about. OUR SOBRIETY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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

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Office Hours:
11am-2pm Monday-Saturday
(Please call before visiting as we
are short of volunteers)
District Committee Member **Vacant**
Treasurer **Vacant**
Secretary **Vacant**
Registrar **Vacant**
Webmaster **Vacant**
Co-ordinator -- Caroline B.
Maintenance Officer **Vacant**
Public Information Officer **Vacant**
Literature Officer **Vacant**
Treatment & Correctional Facilities
Coordinator **Vacant**
Roundup Coordinator **Vacant**
Editor-- Susan B

Next Meeting
The next District meeting for
committee members and GSR'S is
scheduled for Wednesday
December 8th, 2021, via Zoom.
The next Area meeting is Sunday
November 7th, 2021
9am 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
The editor has the right to decide
the suitability for printing, of all
articles forwarded, and would love
to print your story or a story about
your group, service, steps anything
that will encourage others,



How could
anyone get
sober in an
outfit like that??



WHAT SERVICE MEANS TO ME

Doing service work for AA has been an important part of my sobriety which so far has lasted for over 35 years and for which I am truly grateful.

There was never any possibility that I might have achieved sobriety through any other means, and like most alcoholics I had to come to the undeniable conclusion that I was totally powerless over my disease and that my life was completely unmanageable, the only hope being the discovery of some power greater than myself which I found in AA.

Although recovery has not always been without difficulties the fact that I am basically content, mentally, and physically healthy and generally optimistic about life today means that I have been able to meet all these challenges and to overcome all the obstacles so far - even though they may have seemed insurmountable at the time.

I know I had some terrible problem last month, but I can't remember what it was – and I know there will be something equally as challenging just around the corner!

My own experience, and the experiences of all my fellow AA members, is proof that faith is the antidote to fear, and with faith there is nothing to fear.

Despite that simple philosophy I need AA to always be there since I am unable to maintain this way of life on my own. Due to the nature of my disease, I must remain connected to the fellowship.

My biggest problem in life as an alcoholic, even before picking up a drink, was an inability to connect to any sort of higher power and to other human beings – and I have heard alcoholism at various times described as “disease of disconnection.”

Meetings provide me with a way of connecting with others in a way I cannot achieve through “normal” social behavior – I still feel uncomfortable at, and therefore avoid where possible, “normal” social functions like parties and barbeques!

Service work connects me more closely to the fellowship, so that I really feel like a part of it rather than just a recipient of its benefits.

Very early in sobriety I joined a group and took on positions like treasurer, literature officer and then secretary. For quite a few years I helped on the annual roundup committees.

I was introduced to (and given jobs in) the District (later to become the Central Service Office and now back to the District again) and also the Area Committee.

As the alternate delegate I assisted the delegate and learned how AA Australia functions as a truly members organization, and later took on the delegate role for three years.

As a delegate I attended the General Service Conference and gained a greater understanding of how AA carries the message effectively throughout Australia and beyond.

Recently I have been active in our District as Treasurer.

Service work has shown me how important it is for members to take up service positions since AA needs to make sure the message is carried to the alcoholic who still suffers.

We need to publish and distribute literature, maintain websites, operate service offices, run conventions, provide public information, carry the message to treatment and correctional facilities, support remote regions and less



developed countries, publish guidelines to groups and ensure that we are consistent and coordinated in how we spread the message – otherwise the whole magnificent structure will collapse into oblivion!

AA works on the spirit of rotation – after two or three years, office bearers in the Group, District or Area need to rotate off and provide the opportunity for newer members to experience the same rewards of service as well as bringing in enthusiasm, new ideas and fresh approaches.

This is a good time to mention rotation as most positions in both the Area and the District have become vacant and the structure is being unofficially held together by a few GSRs.

I encourage all groups to attend the next quarterly District meeting on 8th December and nominate members for the vacant positions.

In conclusion I like to always remember the three equal components that make AA what it is - Unity, Recovery and SERVICE!

Pat Mac Nightcliff Saturday Zoom Group



(Thank You Pat for your contribution. The Editor)

DO YOU HAVE A SERVICE STORY YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

Your stories are helping others.

serenitytimesaa@outlook.com is the email address to send anything for the newsletter.

No further bus contributions received for the week ending 1st October. Total contributions received remains at \$4,463.40. We have **passed our target of \$4,000** by 15th November. Dan has now managed to move things along a bit, and we are hoping to have the first bus with the ad on the back on the road by the **first week in November!** We have signed the order for the **final amount of \$5,494**. We can still accept contributions for this project during October, but as agreed if the full amount is not achieved by special group contributions the balance will be paid from the District operating account.

Also, another reminder that I resigned from my position as Treasurer effective 1 September 2021 so this is a great opportunity for someone to take over the role for the next two years – please let me know if you are interested or want to nominate someone.

We have done so well with the Bus project, even though Dan T has resigned from the PI Officer's position he is still seeing out the completion of our bus project. Thank you, Dan.



Yes, another position is available for an enterprising person to take on the PI position.



CAROLINE'S CORNER



Hi everyone,

Thought to this time round to do a review on a pamphlet titled This will help you to gain just that simple understanding of what its Sponsorship

Great little tool to guide you as you may be thinking of taking on Sponsorship, or thinking of having a sponsor. about.

Till next time.

Caroline B.

How does sponsorship help the newcomer?

It assures the newcomer that there is at least one person who understands the situation fully and cares — one person to turn to without embarrassment when doubts, questions or problems linked to alcoholism arise. Sponsorship gives the newcomer an understanding, sympathetic friend when one is needed most. Sponsorship also provides the bridge enabling the new person to meet other alcoholics — in a home group and in other groups visited.

How should a sponsor be chosen?

The process of matching newcomer and sponsor is as informal as everything else in A.A. Often, the new person simply approaches a more experienced member who seems compatible, and asks that member to be a sponsor. Most A.A.s are happy and grateful to receive such a request.

An old A.A. saying suggests, "Stick with the winners." It's only reasonable to seek a sharing of experience with a member who seems to be using the A.A. program successfully in everyday life. There are no specific rules, but a good sponsor probably should be a year or more away from the last drink — and should seem to be enjoying sobriety.

Should sponsor and newcomer be as much alike as possible?

Often, a newcomer feels most at ease with a sponsor of similar background and interests. However, many A.A.s say they were greatly helped by sponsors totally unlike themselves. Maybe that's because their attention was then focused on



DO YOU HAVE A CALLING TO DO SERVICE?

IF SO THE REMOTE COMMUNITIES NEEDS YOU!

The Remote Communities initiative is an effort to carry the AA message to people living in geographically remote communities in Australia.

Experiencing lockdown most members are much more aware of how much harder sobriety is if you do not have ready access to meetings, sponsors and fellowship. Often members in remote communities do not have ready access to the internet, may not be able to afford a decent phone, may not be able to read or write.

Regional Coordinators are asked to:

- Provide information to members about Remote Communities and how they can assist in carrying the message.
- Persuade interested members to form a committee and encourage Districts/Areas to include Remote Communities Reports at Assemblies.
- Write reports and articles on Remote Communities through a variety of media such as AA newsletters and AA service website.
- Encourage the Fellowship to provide funds to carry the message.
- Identify resources and strategies that will assist in carrying the message to isolated communities.
- Assist the National Coordinator with organising a Remote Communities Forum.

SUGGESTED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE FOR ALL COORDINATORS

- Available time
- Basic computer literacy & regular computer access
- Knowledge and experience in AA Service
- Understanding of General and Central Service structures.
- Familiarity with AA Service literature.
- Experience in service other than at group level

Experience in PI&CPC would be most helpful

The term of appointment is 4 years if you are interested in this important area of service please supply an application with a brief address of the suggested skills & experience to natremotecom@gmail.com and I will onforward application for review and appointment by the Chairperson of the Trustees' Remote Communities Committee.

YIS

Diane

National Remote Communities Coordinator

natremotecom@gmail.com

0434 765 549



T.B. leaves town

Members gathered on September 5 to farewell a member who certainly left his mark on the Fellowship in Darwin.

About 25 members same to an informal lunch at the Darwin Sailing Club to say goodbye to Terry B, sober for 27 years. Some members of his family from Queensland also attended.

Terry was the founder of the Bill W Camp held for the past 27 or so years in late July at Douglas Daly. The camp has become a mecca for AA travellers from every State, attracting a good number this year despite Covid-19 restrictions. Terry loved taking visitors out bush on tag-alongs and probably raised the adrenalin level of some, taking them on a canoe trip on crocodile-infested rivers.

With a happy knack of gathering people together and enthusing them, Terry started up some meetings in Darwin, mainly for beginners. Two that come to mind were at the Baptist Church in Parap and the Sobering-Up Shelter at Coconut Grove.

Terry has left town to live near his family (and some of his grandchildren) on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. Along with a good number of other members, I'll miss him.

Bob W

Picture: The cake at Terry's farewell with his sobriety date.



THE SERENITY PRAYER

*God grant me the serenity
To know the things, I cannot change
Courage to change the things I can
And the
Wisdom
To
Know the difference.*



HOW IMPORTANT IS YOUR HOME GROUP TO YOU?

Traditionally, most AA members through the years have found it valuable to belong to a group which they call their "home Group." This is the group where they attend regularly, accept service responsibilities, and sustain friendships.

Although all AA members are welcome to all groups and feel at home at any one of these meetings, the concept of the home group has remained the strongest bond between the AA member and the fellowship.

With membership of a group comes the right to vote at the group conscience meeting on issues that might affect and might also affect AA as a whole---a process that forms the very cornerstone of AA's service structure. As with all group conscience matters, each AA member has one vote; and this, is voiced through each person's home group.

Over the years the very essence of AA strength has remained with our home group, which, for many members, becomes our extended family. Once isolated by our drinking, we find the home group a solid, continuing support system, friends and, very often, a sponsor. We also learn firsthand through the group's workings, how to place "principles before personalities" in the interest of carrying the AA message.

Talking about her homegroup, a member says: "Part of my commitment is to show up at my home group meetings, greet newcomers at the door and be available to them--- not only for them but for me. My fellow group members are the people who know me, listen to me, and steer me straight when I'm off track. They give me their experience, strength, and AA love, enabling me to 'pass it on' to the alcoholic who still suffers."

WHAT DOES YOUR HOME GROUP MEAN TO YOU?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION BY WRITING A STORY ABOUT YOUR HOME GROUP?
IF SO, PLEASE FORWARD TO THE EDITOR AT serenitytimesaa@outlook.com

Why are home groups important to AA?

This is where people begin their journey, where they begin to learn and participate in service work. The home group is where, as members we learn about the how's of AA and as a newcomer it makes us feel like we belong.

We start to get to know people and their stories, where they come from, and it starts to make us feel safe. We see people come and sadly we see people go, slowly learning what works and what doesn't. Developing close friendships help when things get tough.

By going to the same meeting each week, we learn things like where our donations go, we also learn about the different serving roles in our group and how they work, getting us ready for when its our turn to participate in service work, participating helps make us feel more part of the family.

By getting a homegroup, we are accepting the responsibility of participating in the whole system of AA, assisting Alcoholics Anonymous to keep strong and healthy.

We all want AA to be here for our children and grandchildren if they should ever need it.

*I am responsible, when anyone anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there.
And for that: I am Responsible.*



HUGH ADAMS

Written by Peter Adams
RECOVERY JOURNEY EULOGY

April 24th, 2021

Provided by Typhoon Tony.

The fact that we're celebrating the life of a person who was much loved, respected and 98 years old, owed much to Hugh's recovery from alcoholism.

After years of a reasonably stable family life that included enjoyable and mostly moderate drinking, he gradually lost the ability to control his drinking, and despite his best efforts, drifted into the quicksand of addiction. Forty-two years ago, Hugh seemed old and broken; being alone, deeply isolated, hollowed out inside and highly anxious in response. Any possibility of recovery seemed very unlikely, and his future looked bleak.

I am Peter and I am an alcoholic, my father asked me to share something of his recovery journey, which was very important to him. I think its quite uplifting and reflects highly on Hugh. It also involves some quite stretched coincidences. One relates to a sickly little fatherless boy who needed an operation, but being malnourished, was sent to recuperate at Cholmondeley Home first, which was a children's charity to which Hugh's father Ernest gave much support. Being warm, well fed, and cared for was a major turning point for the little boy, who later believed the months of care had saved his life.

Unlike Hugh, I was an early onset alcoholic. Alcohol had a highly attractive opiate-like effect on me, with damaging high tolerance and a strong craving that soon led to physical dependence and a dangerously derailed life. But addiction is very hard to notice when you have it, being noticed more by others. So, despite all my car wrecks, comas, and bad nerves, it never occurred to me that I drank too much. Having such a hopeless alcoholic son was a nightmare for Hugh.

I survived by the grace of God, whatever this may be, and eventually went into the DTs in a mountain hut. With my delirium worsening, and being very desperate and naïve, I sought professional help and soon found myself in a room with no door handles in a mental hospital, where I was rapidly medicated into much worse toxic state. Misdiagnosed and tormented by the mind-bending effect of heavy psychiatric drugs, my parents were told I'd never work again and must take the medication for life.

The addiction expert, whose uninvited chance visit saved my life and had a profoundly positive effect on my life and had a profoundly positive effect on Hugh, had come a long way since his time at Cholmondeley Home. Trevor Grice was now a highly regarded staff member in the US Navy Antarctic Program and being blacklisted had slipped in without staff knowledge to check on a young alcoholic being held on my ward. Trevor was also a recovered alcoholic whose life had been saved by the kindness of strangers, and accordingly felt it a proper duty to ask if there were any other alcoholics there. He was directed to where I lay in a terrified fog. His immense charisma filled the room, broke through the haze, and he made real contact with me. As we talked, he recognised their toxic mistake and offered to introduce me to others like myself who were doing better. True to his word, a few days later he talked the staff into letting him take me to an AA meeting at the American Base.

The meeting had a calming effect on me that was very attractive in my highly agitated state, so in a cunning move Trevor talked Hugh into taking me next. Trevor was very astute with an uncanny ability to penetrate false fronts, so that Hugh's addiction status stood out to him like a neon sign. Seeing that Hugh had a good heart and was very worried about me, Trevor leaned hard on him. So, Hugh, who was undermined by his own less visible addiction, found himself sitting in strong, well run AA meetings as my minder. He heard from a wide variety of alcoholics who were much happier and more successful than either of us, who talked honestly about their past drinking and resulting misery, and who outlined how they had recovered. He identified with their drinking stories and soon came to the private realization he was an alcoholic himself. Although being a business executive in partial denial, Hugh initially assumed he was a "better class" of alcoholic. Over coffee he got to know Trevor better, as well as many other live wire recovery types. Then, against very strong medical advice, I finally dumped the medication that was crippling me, radically improved, and started taking myself to meetings.



After several attempts, Hugh managed to stop drinking, which was a critical step. But he stopped going to AA as well, and due to the years of inner damage he had sustained, slid into the painful state of untreated addiction. His friends in the health profession strongly urged him to take medication for anxiety and depression, but having seen how they had treated me, he recognised they knew nothing about addiction, even though he rather liked going skiing with them. I was aware of his deepening troubles and tried to get him to meetings, but he firmly refused.

Finally in desperation, he did take some Valium, and being already filled with solid alcohol, was rapidly transformed into a much better than normal state and felt completely free of anxiety and depression. Of course, it wore off later that day and the painful state rebounded to a much worse level than before! Most people in this position fix the rebound with more Valium, but Hugh had seen the tragic result at AA meetings, where the term “professional help” was used to mean ‘being made worse’ or to explain a suicide. So, while desperate, he knew better. It was at this stage, being in strong recovery and recently back from the Antarctic, that I ‘just happened’ to drop in at his elderly mother’s house, where he was reduced to living. Hugh was sitting on the floor looking grim and asked where I was heading, which happened to be an AA meeting, then asked eagerly if I had a spare seat.

Hugh had no expectation of getting any benefit from AA but had no other options. He was asked to share and for the first time spoke honestly about being an alcoholic who no longer drank but was still gripped by anxiety and depression for some very mysterious reason. However, and very surprisingly to Hugh, the other speakers saw no mystery at all and recognised him as a garden variety untreated case who just needed to go to meetings and work a recovery program which would hopefully soon clear his misery away. They grabbed him over coffee, exchanged phone numbers, and reassured him he would recover if he meant business. That business would mean getting more involved with meetings and working with others. It was quite calming for him and sparked a faint glimmer of hope, since they were friendly and sincere people who had recovered from a similar position. So, in the heat of the moment, he agreed to go to an AA meeting at the prison with Des, who was an old truck driver and a real recovery expert.

By the next afternoon Hugh had realised with growing apprehension the last thing he wanted to do was go to the prison, which was completely out of his comfort zone. He rang Des to put him off. But Des just brushed off his objections by saying he would pick him off shortly. Unlike the other meetings, many at the prison group were worse off than Hugh, and for some odd reason he felt better afterwards. Over the next few weeks Hugh went to meetings most nights, and sometimes to friendly café sessions afterwards. He rekindled his contact with Trevor Grice, stayed with him during his jittery early stage, and benefitted greatly from Trevor’s compassionate expertise during late night sessions around a teapot. I also minded him sometimes when he was very bleak, and he stayed at my flat occasionally. He began forming new recovery-based friendships with a variety of people and tried to help others under the guidance of mentors. What began in fearful desperation soon grew into a raw, exciting, and busy period of reconnection to life, with renewed vigour and purpose.

A few months later he was at the prison meeting when he had a pivotal experience that revealed how much he had changed. Being accosted by a desperate and distraught addiction sufferer, Hugh was amazed to hear himself calmly responding as a strong helpful person who intuitively knew how to handle the situation that would have been very frightening and completely beyond him previously. It was a particularly moving meeting, and later when the heavy metal gate clang shut behind him, it suddenly dawned on him that the terrible gripping sense of black depression and inner emptiness which had been his constant companion, had just vanished. He had been too busy to notice it, but the clang of the gate had jogged his memory back to his first visit, and it was of great significance to Hugh how his life-crippling state was lifted from him. While he did have the same normal ups and downs in life that most people do, he told me that the terrible feeling of black depression and inner emptiness never returned.

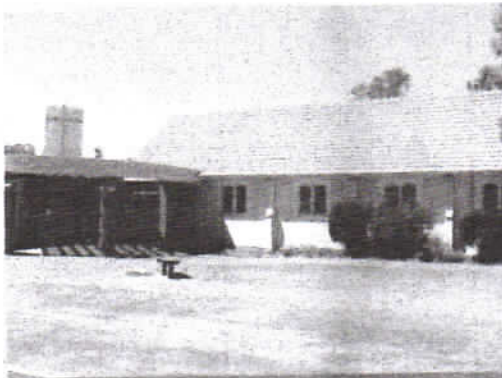
Hugh’s AA experiences rebuilt his damaged confidence and social skills. He began reconnecting with others, rekindling his fishing and boating interests, and expanding his social circle by making new friends outside AA. This included going on his first proper dates since his marriage had ended. He even took on running the prison meeting. But then he met someone special named Miriam. He went to Africa with Miriam for an extremely memorable holiday, which was the first of many. It was also quite remarkable as a recovery milestone, because at the end of his drinking Hugh had been



so undermined by fear that he had struggled with domestic flights. But now he was enjoying flying around the world, exploring caves, walking up to wild lions and elephants at night, and camping out in lion country, while protected only by the skill of an unarmed guide and the Serenity Prayer.

Hugh made the most of his recovery opportunity, which revitalised his life, and greatly valued the contact he maintained with his close recovery friends. He was a much-loved grandfather and great-grandfather, who took a keen interest in the lives of his descendants and enjoyed close relationships with them. Being also well acquainted with the life-and-death nature of addiction, he saw the gulf between those in strong recovery and the more numerous others trapped by an extremely powerful inner hijacking process that usually wins. His older brother Neil, who he regarded as much stronger than himself, died a miserable alcoholic death in his sixties. He tried to help his younger brother David, who he was close to, but his efforts were always frustrated by the iron grip of addiction.

Hugh attended his last AA meeting at Rangiora a few weeks prior to his passing, having been in recovery and trying to help others for over 42 years.



The New and the Old Methodist Church where AA meets in Rangiora, New Zealand, near Christchurch on the South Island. This is where Hugh attended his last AA meeting.

