

March 2010

# REACHING OUT

Reaching Out to Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties

“Whenever anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of  
A.A. always to be there. And for that, I am responsible  
Bill Wilson, A.A. Founder

Lansing Central A.A. Office  
1915 E. Michigan Ave., Ste. D (in back), Lansing MI 48912  
(517) 377-1444 ~ ~ aalansingmi.org ~ ~ Email: aalansing@att.net  
Wheel chair accessible

*Lansing Central Office*

*Invites you*

*To Join Them*

*Mackinac Island*

*October 2010*

*More info in next issue!*

## **We need your help!**

Do you someone who would benefit from additional assistance from the Lansing Central Office with regard to Special Needs?

Do you have resources or abilities (brail Big Book, ability to sign, desire to take meetings to shut ins, etc.) that could help someone in the greater Lansing Area?

The Lansing Central Office is seeking input from individuals and groups to see how we can better serve those who are physically handicapped , hearing or sight impaired, and those who cannot get to meeting because of a disability or other circumstances.

Your ideas would benefit us to improve our dedication to meeting the needs of all people in the greater Lansing Area.

Please send your suggestions to [aalansing@att.net](mailto:aalansing@att.net), call 517-377-1444 or stop by the Lansing Central Office and let us know any ideas you or your group may have.

Bring the topic up at your meetings and send your ideas.

Let's get the discussion going and keep Reaching Out!

### **Step 3**

**Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God,  
as we understood Him.**

### **Tradition 3**

**The only requirement for A.A. membership is a  
desire to stop drinking.**

### **Concept 3**

**To ensure effective leadership, we should endow each element  
of A.A.— the conference, the General Service Board and its service  
corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional  
“Right of Decision”.**

### **Promise 3**

**We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.**

Find “The Promises” in the Big Book,  
“Alcoholics Anonymous” pg. 83 & 84.  
Reprinted with permission of A.A.

**Central Office Board Meeting  
(First Mondays of Month)**

April 5, 2010

May 3, 2010

**Fellowship-Potluck 6 - 7 pm    Meeting 7 - 8 pm**  
at the Central Office

**2010 COMING EVENTS**

**LANSING CENTRAL AA SPONSORED EVENTS**

May 15	Celebration of Sobriety Dinner
August 22	Lansing Central AA Picnic
October 15-17	Mackinac Island Weekend
November 6	Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
December 31	New Years Eve Party

**Other AA Events**

May 28-30	58th Michigan State Convention- Boyne Mtn. Resort
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Please contact Lansing Central Office to announce any AA events.

**24 Hour AA Help Line  
(517) 377-1444**

**All AA Volunteer Answering Service**

**Websites:**

AA General Services Office, NY:

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

Lansing Central AA Office:

[www.aalansingmi.org](http://www.aalansingmi.org)

AA Central Michigan Intra-Area 32:

[cmia32.org](http://cmia32.org)

District 6:

[www.aadistrict6.org](http://www.aadistrict6.org)

**Lansing Central AA Board Members  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Jane H..... Chairperson  
 John K.....Treasurer  
 Don W.....Secretary  
 Mark M..... Member At Large

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS**

Activities..... Alva J.  
 Answering Service.....Steve H.  
 Archives..... Jim D  
 C.P.C..... Paul H  
 Correctional Facilities.....Fred H.  
 LCAA Liaison ..... Christopher P.  
 Membership..... Tommy G  
 Newsletter.....Leslea B.  
 Office Manager..... Vickie V  
 Public Information .....Dennis S  
 Treatment Committee..... Tim L.

**Archives Corner**

The Archives is located at the Lansing Central AA Office. Check out the AA memorabilia in the Archives Area anytime you are in the office, now located at 1915 E. Michigan Ave., Suite D.

We are in the process of updating a Lansing Area history pamphlet to take to the San Antonio International Convention this year. If you or anyone you know anyone that has AA memorabilia from the 40's and 50's, let me know. Your help is appreciated. Looks like another full AA year coming up.

If you have any questions, comments or items to donate call Jim D. at 517-694-9753 or leave a message at Lansing Central Office 517-377-1444. Thank you for your continued interest and support.

Jim D.....Archivist Area 32

**Alano Clubs in Lansing**

**Alano Club South**

3320 S. Cedar  
(No Phone)

**Alano Club West**

2909 W. Genesee  
321-4989

**Alano Club East**

220 S. Howard  
482-8957

**Thanks to Mark B,  
our web master,  
who continues to improve  
Lansing Central's web site.  
Check out our website for  
various recovery activities &  
meeting schedules.  
Download Reaching Out, to  
read on your computer.  
[aalansingmi.org](http://aalansingmi.org)**

**Holt Freedom Group**

Monday night 8:00 pm

Closed AA & Al-Anon meetings.

Friday night Women's Meeting

7:30 pm

Friday night Speakers

8:30 pm

March 5.....John D.

March 12.....Barney

March 19.....Tommy G.

March 26.....Jeff M.

at: St. Michael's Episcopal Church

6500 Amwood Drive

Lansing, MI 48911

near Pennsylvania & South Cedar

Between Target & Bob Evans

**NOTE:** Opinions, letters and stories printed by Reaching Out are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication constitute an endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous, the Lansing Central Office, or any group within Alcoholics Anonymous.

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Corrections Committee  
**“Jail Can be a Spiritual Experience”**

Help us “carry the message: of AA into the local County Jails.  
**Volunteers must be cleared before attending first meeting.**

**Central Office (517) 377-1444**  
**Fred H., Corrections Chair (517) 420-5419**  
**Meetings are from 7:30 - 9 PM**

\*EATON COUNTY JAIL - **Charlotte**  
Men - Tuesday  
Women - Monday

\*INGHAM COUNTY JAIL - **Mason**  
Men - Monday & Wednesday  
Women - Monday

\*CLINTON COUNTY JAIL - **St. Johns**  
Men - Monday  
Women - Wednesday

**We are in need of soft-covered AA & Alanon Literature  
donations i.e. Old Grapevines & forums.**  
Thank you ..... Corrections

**Alano Club East**

**Friday Night Speakers**

**8:00 pm**

March 5.....Leslea B.  
March 12...../.....Scott L.  
March 19.....David C.  
March 26.....Dana P.

**Alano Club West**

**Saturday Night Speakers**

**8:00 pm**

March 6.....Josh W.  
March 13.....Mike F.  
March 20.....Barney B.  
March 27.....Wade S.

### **Third Tradition Checklist**

#### **The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.**

*"AA's Twelve Traditions have, in my experience, often proved vital in keeping me sober, and helpful otherwise in all my affairs."*

WHO CAN measure what is in the heart of another? No one presumed to measure the sincerity or quality of my motivation to get well when I first approached AA. Our Third Tradition is based on group experience, and its wisdom has truly been proved to me in personal experience. It is a powerful weapon for safeguarding my own recovery.

When I first offered myself to AA, some twenty-five years ago, I met almost no requirements for joining any decent gathering. The preceding months had been nothing but drunkenness, accompanied by a sickness at heart which few but alcoholics can fathom. I could have completed no questionnaire or application blank. I had no address, no telephone, no references. My last few employers would have warned anyone not to let me inside the door. My estranged family would have agreed. I had no religion, no job, no clothes except those I was wearing. I could not have paid a penny for entertainment in a penny arcade. From my past behavior, I could not prove that I deserved any kindness or help. I was dirty, and I stank. I had only a highly undesirable sickness to offer AA, and that was all AA asked of me.

I was so chilled inside, so bleak and numb that, although I had no overcoat, I did not notice the bitter wintry weather on the January day when I first walked, zombielike, up the steps into the old AA clubhouse on New York's West 41st Street. What shakes I could not control, I pretended were deliberate, if weird, gestures. My mouth was cottony; I had not had a drink for about thirty-six hours. I knew from gloomy past experiences that I must just hold on for one more minute, make my legs take one more step, try to think of some great happy moment in the past (or invent one), steel my will just one more time, and sooner or later I could get a drink, after I had investigated this Alcoholics Anonymous business. Or, mercifully, I would suddenly die. I had no strength to ask for help. I was taking this dangerous risk--getting near strangers who, I was told, did not ask for names and had been pretty bad drinkers themselves--just to see whether I could observe while being unobserved.

*I was prepared--with lies. . .*

Although I did not know what to expect, I was prepared--with lies, naturally. I had to be. If anyone asked me how much I drank, I always lied; the quantity was irrelevant to how drunk I got or what happened to me. If I was asked what I would do to get a drink, I would have to lie, because if I admitted the truth, I would surely be punished. If I was asked how I behaved when drunk, I would lie, partly to cover up the blackouts, partly to hide the bits of shameful truth that I did recall.

Since this was in 1945, before our Third Tradition was written, the AA woman who

spoke to me first had no formal printed guidance for deciding whom to admit to AA for help. But she had compassion. She did not begin with a blunt "Are you an alcoholic?" If she had, I would have said, "Certainly not," with my usual nasty aloofness. Nor did she ask, "Do you want to stop drinking?" In my state, the question would have seemed absurd, if not insane. The one thing in the world I needed and wanted that minute was a stiff drink. But I was afraid to take one. That fact glued my feet just inside the door of the old building, where I pretended to be reading a handy bulletin board.

But she spied me lurking about, and, in a kind but not over-gooey voice, she said, "Are you having trouble with your drinking?" I was thunderstruck. It was the one query I had not prepared a lie for. Before I knew what was happening, I told the truth. I nodded yes.

"Well, I'm a drunk myself," she said. "Come on in and we'll talk it over."

She spoke easily, with no emotionalism. I had thought I was beyond surprise, but I could only stare in disbelief. She seemed so serene, so content, so clean, so respectable. How could she say she was a drunk?

We sat down, and my education began. *She asked no questions*, so I did not have to be cautiously alert; I could just listen with full, intense attention. I heard about her disease, alcoholism, and her recovery in AA. It was more comforting, more nourishing, and more enduring than any drink had ever been. Probably my face remained frozen, but my heart thawed, and I had to keep blinking rapidly and blowing my nose. Finally, warm inside, I began to feel the cold I had come in out of.

Dreading the answer, I was afraid to ask what was in my heart: "Will you, *please*, let me join?" I knew I did not deserve it, so, with a disdain often practiced, I tried to sound casual while managing to murmur, as if only impersonally interested, "How does one join?"

She said that my simply coming there meant I wanted help, and if I just wanted to be a member of AA, then I already was.

I hope I never forget the floods of relief those words brought. I particularly need to remember them when I am disturbed or inconvenienced by "improper personages" who sometimes intrude on nice, clean, sober, orderly AA meetings these days. A group near my home has "banned" two alcoholics from its premises. Impossible types, I heard. Most uncooperative, very undesirable.

I was not in on these exclusions, but during my early AA days I sometimes led the pack in verbally stoning an alcoholic out of the one place where he could have found help at that time. We had many rules of membership then. They were a nuisance, because we had to keep changing them almost weekly to keep the "wrong" people out and let the "right" people in. Sometimes, one week's sergeant-at-arms was himself excluded the next week, because he was drunk. Me.

Perhaps today's would-be rule-makers for AA membership, or guardians of the premises, are those whose drinking lives had such virtue as to earn for them the "privilege" of AA assistance. But no member I know claims such deserts, and I know I do not. As you see, I am now as intolerant of rule-makers as they are of the sick alcoholics they find undesirable.

Honestly now, if, in order to get into AA, we had had to meet any standards more rigid than the one given in the Third Tradition, who of us would be alive? Think of all the wonderful people, including the nonconformists, eccentrics, and kooks who make such valuable additions to our number, who would have been kept out of AA if we had any requirement for membership other than a desire to get well.

Although I know it is impossible to judge what is in anyone else's heart, and arrogant even to try, I still find myself trying at times. I have heard myself on the telephone at Intergroup screening would-be members, as if judging whether or not they were worthy of our help, whether or not they merited our love.

I have even asked a drunk such an awful question as "Do you really want to stop drinking forever?" Or "Have you had any AA contact before?"--as if prior membership were a requirement, or perhaps grounds for disqualification. Or "What kind of pills do you take?" I have been impatient with a slipper, too, forgetting that this binge could be his last, as one of my own finally was (so far).

In fact, just today I found myself deciding that I do not care for so-and-so's brusque and hypocritical brand of AA; nor do I like what that fanatic such-and-such says so rudely about spiritual matters; and I can't stand the phony-sounding piety of still another fellow AA.

I fear that in my heart I am ruling out of my AA anybody who does not meet my own high and mighty requirements for membership. It is as if, each time I disdain an alcoholic for whatever reason, I add another brick to a wall supposedly safeguarding my recovery, or at least keeping it cozy and comfortable for me. And if I keep on adding rejection bricks or exclusion bricks to my wall of safety, you know where I'll wind up: isolated behind the wall I have built; right back where I was before AA; *alone*.

One of my own first AA contacts did suggest that, later on, I could earn my AA membership if I wanted to. And I wanted to desperately, because I was already feeling smothered by the enormous debt of gratitude that I felt I owed to AA. I do not think I could have survived the burden of owing so much if AA had let me go on thinking it was all being done only for unworthy me. But I was assured that AA people kept *themselves* sober by trying to benefit me. It was also a great relief to be told that I could, in a sense, pay off my debt simply by talking to someone else, some day, as I had been talked to. It was *not* suggested that I help only the clean, the proper, and the unpilled, the nonbrusque and unhypercritical, the nonfanatics, the pious, or the impious.

1.

Apparently, for me, the price of our AA brotherhood (First Tradition) and of our fearless trust of each other (Second Tradition), if I want them, is learning unstinting acceptance of others--a love which can be claimed by anyone who wants it. He may not say he wants it, or act as if he does, but if the desire is in his heart, even unknown to himself, that is enough.

### **Third Tradition Checklist**

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I overimpressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he has been to AA before? What his other problems are?

B.L.

Manhattan, New York

### **Sober Potluck**

**March 13, 2010**

**Eastminster Presbyterian Church**

**1315 Abbott Rd**

**East Lansing MI**

**Dinner @ 7pm**

**Speaker @ 8:30**

**\$5 suggested donation**

**Bring a dish to pass**

**Triple Hosted by:**

**Lansing, Kalamazoo, Westside MCYPAA Bid Committees**

**Upcoming 2011 Michigan State AA Planning Committee  
March 28th @2:30pm  
Causeway Bay Hotel, Lansing MI**

Lansing Central AA Group  
Donations by Group Summary

	Jan 10	Feb 1 - 26, 10	TOTAL
12 Steps and Traditions	10.00	0.00	10.00
815 AM ACE	279.25	35.75	315.00
As Bill Sees It	54.50	0.00	54.50
Beginners AA St. Johns	300.00	0.00	300.00
Berkey Hall Group	0.00	25.00	25.00
Blizzard Group	0.00	170.00	170.00
Charlotte AA	25.00	0.00	25.00
Clean Air Fri	0.00	188.00	188.00
Cover to Cover BB	0.00	156.00	156.00
DSG - Mason	0.00	100.00	100.00
Grow or Go	0.00	60.00	60.00
Holt Every Nite AA	700.00	0.00	700.00
Holt Freedom Group	50.00	50.00	100.00
Keep It Simple	200.00	0.00	200.00
LJ & LS	75.00	0.00	75.00
Miracle on Miller	100.00	0.00	100.00
Monday Night Group	80.00	0.00	80.00
Monday Nite Speaker Mtg. ACS	54.00	0.00	54.00
Mt. Hope A.M.Group	459.10	150.00	609.10
Primary Purpose	80.00	0.00	80.00
Room To Grow	270.00	0.00	270.00
Route 164	48.47	0.00	48.47
Sense of Humor	0.00	70.00	70.00
Shaftsborg DSG	0.00	0.51	0.51
Shaftsborg Group	150.00	0.00	150.00
Singleness of Purpose	82.80	0.00	82.80
St. Theresa Group	0.00	25.00	25.00
Sunday AM Clean Air	120.00	0.00	120.00
Unity Early Bird	0.00	324.00	324.00
Westphalia Group	0.24	0.00	0.24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,138.36</b>	<b>1,354.26</b>	<b>4,492.62</b>

**Upcoming Central Michigan Intra-Area 32 Meetings**

April 11, 2010 in Skidway Lake hosted by District 26

All groups GSR's are welcome to attend these meetings as a representative of your group at the Area level. There is a New GSR Orientation during these meetings. Please check website for more info. [www.cmia32.org](http://www.cmia32.org)