



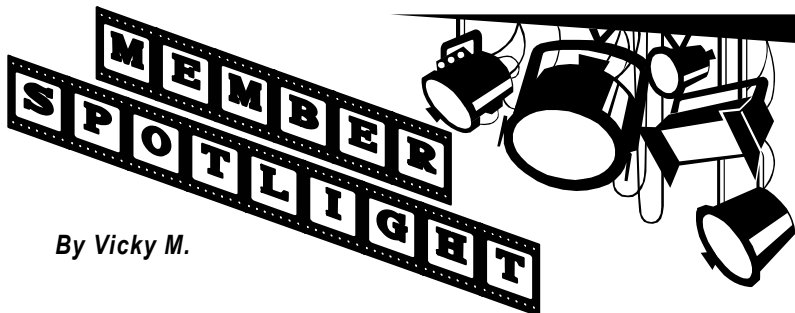
OF GREATER ST. LOUIS

CONNECTIONS

Volume 54

Official Newsletter of the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous

May, 2009



By Vicky M.

"I'm Big D . . . and this is the place to be!"

Anyone who's been around St. Louis C.A. for any length of time knows this infamous tag line belongs to **Darnell B.** Sober since October 8, 1988, Big D is a regular fixture at our Saint Mary's Hospital Thursday Night Meeting; our Saturday night Men's Meeting; and our Monday night Harbor Lights Hospitals & Institutions meeting—as well as attending an AA home group on Tuesday nights. He rarely misses a monthly C.A. District or H & I business meeting, and he holds the record for most C.A. Hotline volunteer phone slots covered each and every week—currently four but previously as many as eight.

Because he is truly one of our local C.A. icons, I decided to interview Darnell for *Connections* so everyone could learn more about this guy who has given so much of himself to our program.

Connections: Do you remember the first time you ever heard of C.A.?

Big D: When I was in treatment, some of the people there decided to start a C.A. meeting at our facility. CA was very new in the 12 step community at that time.

Connections: Tell us what you recall about the early days of Saint Louis C.A. when it was just getting started, and how you got involved with helping back then.

Big D: First they asked me to chair a meeting one night. Then I was asked to go get the literature for the meeting. I had to go all the way out from the city into Ballwin—into the basement of some tavern, and that's where I met the guy who had the literature. I used to have to drive all the way out there at night all by myself. At first I didn't know where in the world I was going, but I learned my way around and started getting the literature every month for our C.A. meeting. Then I started distributing the literature out to other people who were starting some C.A. meetings. Then I became the Treasurer. Later on, I went down to a meeting in Memphis and met some people from Kansas City C.A. They said, "hey why don't we get hook up and try to do something." So I got their phone numbers and when I came back to St. Louis, I told the others about these people. So me, Joe L. and a few other people started communicating with the K.C. Cocaine Anonymous group about what we could do as a team. The first time we got together it was in Jefferson City, and then we eventually found a place to meet in Columbia.

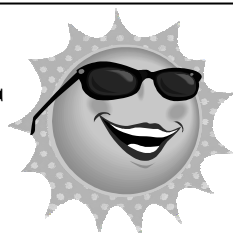
Connections: So, obviously, you were involved with C.A. service work right from the start.

Big D: Yes. I was willing to do whatever it took to stay sober. I was going to aftercare twice a day, in the morning and at night. I wasn't working then, so I had a lot of time to devote to my recovery. I started picking up different people and taking them to meetings with me. Every time I went to a meeting, I always picked up a carload and took them along. Of course, that was helping me too.

Connections: That speaks volumes about how service work helps keep you sober! Do you remember how the C.A. Hotline got started?

(continued on next page)

H & I COOKOUT DAY PROMISES PLENTY OF FUN IN THE SUN!



The second annual Hospital & Institutions "Cookout Day" fundraiser is scheduled for Sunday, May 17, 2009. It will again be held in Forest Park—we have Site #11 on Wells Drive reserved for our party, which starts at noon and will end . . . well, we just don't know!!

Admission to the picnic is FREE, where you can enjoy games such as dominoes and washers, as well as plenty of fellowship with other members and their families. Yes, FAMILIES! This is the event to bring your kids, your parents, even your neighbors. There'll be plenty of food and fun for everyone.

If you can, please bring an appetizer or side dish to share. BBQ burger and hot dog plates, along with soft drinks and water, will be sold for free-will donations.

And if you're feeling lucky, maybe you'll buy a chance to win one of the four gift baskets which will be raffled off on the spot.

No C.A. party would be complete without a speaker or two—and we have a couple of great ones this year in Ed D. and Kay K.

Naturally, all of the regular Forest Park attractions will be open and available—bike/walking paths, zoo, museums—something for everyone!

So mark your calendars now to come on out and join the fun! For more information or to volunteer to help, please contact our H & I Chairman, **Earl S.** at 314/956-0145.

Staying Connected



Our local Saint Louis Cocaine Anonymous Hotline (314/361-3500) is answered 24 hours a day by volunteer members of our fellowship.

It's a fabulous resource for anyone feeling squirrely—Pick up the phone—NOT THE DRUG!!!



Staying Connected

The Missouri Area website www.camissouri.org

has lots of helpful information, including a link to the C.A. World Services pages. Here, you can not only learn many things about C.A. and their upcoming events, but you can also be directed to one of our on-line meetings, accessible anytime, anywhere via computer.

M E M B E R

S P O T L I G H T

(continued from front page)

Big D: Yes. I went out and bought a phone with an answering machine. We got ourselves a phone number. We had called out to the World Service Office in California to see how to do it. At first I was picking up the calls from the answering machine.

Connections: *Didn't eventually we get an answering service to field the calls?*

Big D: Yes, they would give out meeting information, but when an addict called in for help, they would call me or Smitty to call them back. Then, eventually, we got a committee going and set up the system we have now where all the Hotline volunteers are addicts in recovery who take turns answering the phone round the clock. The Hotline really did great once we got that committee going and used the call forwarding to make it all work.

Connections: *You have been one of the most dedicated phone volunteers and hold the record for the most time slots covered by one person. How many phone calls do you think you average a week?*

Big D: Ooooo . . . quite a few. I couldn't really say a number. People call to find out where the meetings are, and then you get the family members who call, and I tell them about Al-Anon and some of them end up coming to our regular meetings to learn about the addiction part.

Connections: *In all the Hotline calls you've dealt with over the years, are there any that really stood out as memorable?*

Big D: There have been so many calls—it's hard to say. But it's always great when I run into somebody at a meeting that I talked to on the phone, they realize I'm the one they talked to, and they come up and thank me for helping them.

Connections: *The Harbor Lights H & I men's meeting is one that you've chaired for many years. What is it about this facility that's kept you so loyal to it?*

Big D: I've been doing Harbor Lights for about 12 years and am the one who started the meeting. The priest at Harbor Lights came to C.A. and asked us to come there and start a meeting, and I volunteered to do that. When the meeting first started, we used to have women at the meeting too. But later on, we started having men come from the penitentiary, and the priest from Harbor Lights quit having the women attend because the men who had been in prison for a long time were all chasing after the ladies instead of paying attention to the meeting. It's been just men ever since.

Connections: *You get a pretty good turnout there—about how many men show up each week?*

Big D: Every week it's over 30 people. Most of them are living in the facility, but we still have outside addicts who come each week to sit in and listen to the speaker.

Connections: *Switching gears now, on a personal level, tell us about your family.*

Big D: I've been married for 44 years. My wife really supports me in my program. We have six children and twelve grandkids. It's a nice family—our kids live in St. Louis except one of my daughters who lives in Georgia. I've got a couple of sons who probably need to be in the program, but I've just got to wait until they're ready. Hopefully, one day they'll get here.

Connections: *You often bring one of your grandsons to C.A. meetings and events. He's pretty much growing up all around recovery. Do you think hanging out with us is having a positive effect on his formative years?*

Big D: Oh yes—that's Dominic [Darnell laughs—a hearty chuckle obviously filled with love]. Every time I go to a meeting, he wants to go. Of course they won't let kids come in at Harbor Lights, but I try to take him whenever I can. He loves being around the program. It's got to be good for him.

Connections: *Over recent years, you've faced some health issues. How has being sober in the program helped you deal with these challenges?*

Big D: It has helped me tremendously. I learned that I could make it by doing the right thing, no matter what, one day at a time. The program people gave me the courage to go on and do whatever I had to do, and I'm grateful for all the help my friends have given me. I'd like to thank each and every one of them. Without their help, I probably wouldn't be here.

Connections: *Finally, if you could share one "pearl of wisdom" with every newcomer who walked in the doors of C.A., what would it be?*

Big D: I'd tell them I only need but one meeting a week, and for that reason I go to SEVEN meetings in order to figure out which ONE it is! Because of this, I haven't found it necessary to relapse, for which I'm really grateful. Newcomers need to go to lots of meetings—meeting makers make it—one day at a time!

Thanks so much for you time, Darnell! You are truly an inspiration to us all, and I, for one, am proud to share "the road of happy destiny" with you. "May God bless you and keep you always!"

TRADITIONS WORKSHOP PROMOTES UNITY

On Saturday, February 28, Saint Louis C.A. participated in "Celebrate Around The World" by hosting a 12 Traditions Workshop at Tyler Place. The event started promptly at 9 AM and went on throughout the day, devoting a 30 minute segment to each of the 12 Traditions. A dedicated core group of people showed up for the free breakfast and stayed for the duration, while others came and went throughout the day.

Laura N. (2), Sarah S. (3), Vicky M. (4), Kay K. (5), Jeannette J. (6), Darryl J. (7), Matt S. (8), Aman L. (9), Ozie N. (10) and Jackie W. (12) all spoke on the Tradition indicated, some using visual aids and detailed handouts. Traditions 1 and 11 didn't have speakers, so the group read from the 12 & 12 and had open discussion. District Unity Chair **Matt R.**, Traditions Workshop Chair **Ozie**

N. and all of their committee did a fine job on this event; and those who participated not only had fun but learned a lot about our 12 Traditions in the process!

Celebrate Around The World is a Cocaine Anonymous World Service Unity Event. Each year on or around the first Saturday in March, local C.A. groups, districts and/or areas are encouraged to rejoice in their recovery by sponsoring events, knowing that recovering addicts all over the globe are joining them in the celebration.





Step Three



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

The most important choice in my life is whether I am going to work all Twelve Steps in my life today or not. To me, Step Three is still a decision. The decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of the God as I understand Him is carried out by me living out the rest of the Twelve Steps in my life one day at a time. No longer do I have the choice in drink or drug. This fact defines what makes me *Powerless* over cocaine and all mind altering substances. I do have the choice, though, to make the Third Step decision every day.

When I say yes to the Third Step decision, I am deciding that I am no longer going to play God. I am going to let God be God, and I am going to be me. I am going to seek the *wisdom* of the principals of the Twelve Steps, the council of my fellows, and the *Care of God as I understand Him*. As *His Care* unfolds for me, and as it plays out in my life, I begin to receive these gifts outlined in the Third Step promises on Page 63 in the Big Book.

“When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.”

Written By One Of Our Local Members Who Wishes To Remain Anonymous



Getting High = \$100 → Bail Bond = \$1,000 → Attorney Fees = \$10,000
→ Staying Clean & Sober . . . PRICELESS!!! ←

DISTRICT DONATIONS

Meeting Name	January 2009	February 2009	March 2009	April 2009
Come & Get It		\$13		
End Of The Line		\$33.62		
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts	\$27.50	\$25	\$25	\$43.42
Hope Faith & Courage				\$3.81
How It Works		\$10		
In The Light	\$12	\$15		
It's All Good	\$5	\$5		
Living Our Recovery Daily	\$5	\$12.30		
Men's Meeting		\$18.71		
Message Of Hope	\$27.94			
No Reservation Needed	\$1.07	\$20		\$21.97
The Thursday Night Meeting	\$75		\$63	\$36
There Is A Solution	\$1	\$1	\$1	\$1.63

H & I CAN DONATIONS

Meeting Name	January 2009	February 2009	March 2009	April 2009
Come & Get It	\$73	\$12		
End Of The Line			\$28.81	
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts		\$48.91	\$41.63	\$85.32
How It Works	\$9			
In The Light	\$11	\$15		
It's All Good	\$20	\$30.73	\$9	\$15
Living Our Recovery Daily	\$11	\$20.37	\$9.72	\$15
Men's Meeting			\$18.71	
No Reservation Needed	\$27	\$1	\$20	\$22
The Thursday Night Meeting	\$38			\$12

Detailed financial information is available at our monthly business meetings. All C.A. members are welcome and urged to attend if possible.

The Greater Saint Louis District Central Service meeting is held the first Sunday of each month at 4:30 PM at *New Horizon Church*, 206 Emerling in Saint Louis, Missouri 63121. If the first Sunday falls on a holiday weekend, this meeting is held the second Sunday. Confirmed meeting dates are always available on our website www.camissouri.org. Directions—church is located just north of Highway 70, between Florissant & Hanley Roads—Use Florissant exit—Emerling is first side street on the left (across from fuel station).

The Hospitals & Institutions Committee takes meetings into facilities where addicts cannot get out to attend a meeting on their own. H & I volunteers meet at 3:00 PM the same day and location as the District Central Service meeting (see last paragraph).

Connections is a quarterly publication published by the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous. It is intended solely to provide information for the fellowship of Cocaine Anonymous. We hope to communicate the experience, strength, and hope of C.A. members reflecting recovery, unity, and service, within the bounds of friendliness and good taste. This Newsletter presents experiences and opinions of Cocaine Anonymous members. Those opinions expressed herein are of the individual contributors and are not to be attributed nor taken as an endorsement by Cocaine Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous World Service Office, Inc., Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous, or Connections. The editors reserve the right to edit any submissions in adherence to the Twelve Traditions of Cocaine Anonymous. If you would like to know more about Cocaine Anonymous, the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions, please write and ask for C.A. World Service Conference approved literature at CAWSO, 3740 Overland Avenue., Suite C, Los Angeles, CA 90034; e-mail to info@CA.org or fax to (310) 559-2554. Contact C.A. by phone at (310) 559-5833. Also note that the C.A. World Service Office web page is www.ca.org. This publication and all its contents are copyrighted by the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous. Any unauthorized duplication or publication is prohibited.

“In the spirit of Tradition 6--We are not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution.”



Happy Birthday

Congratulations to each of our members who celebrated a sobriety milestone this issue. Birthdays are generally reported via your group GSR, so if you don't see your meeting/birthday listed, please check with your GSR. Or, you can contact the Editor directly. Birthdays printed are those that have already been celebrated since the last newsletter printing at the time this edition went to press.

Fried Pipers & Cocanuts

Wednesday 6:45 PM
First Unity Church

Alex V.	30 Days
Kyrstin W.	30 Days
DJ	60 Days
Chris A. (1/24/09)	90 Days
Jennifer B.	90 Days
Laura E. (12/20/08)	90 Days
Scott L.	90 Days
Vince S.	90 Days
Walter M.	90 Days
Amy B.	6 Months
Kara B. (8/18/08)	6 Months
Tom P. (10/26/08)	6 Months
April D. (7/7/08)	9 Months
Don D. (7/11/08)	9 Months
Doug H. (7/11/08)	9 Months
Natalie M. (10/7/07)	18 Months
Jenifer W. (4/12/08)	1 Year
Mark B. (4/27/08)	1 Year
Steven Z.	1 Year
Mark B. (5/3/06)	3 Years
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts Meeting (4/13/94)	15 Years!!

It's All Good

Wednesday 7:30 PM
Carondolet Church of Christ

Angie S.	30 Days
Cory M.	60 Days
June D.	60 Days
Greg L.	90 Days
Kevin R.	90 Days
Mike J.	90 Days
Bob B. (8/28/08)	6 Months
Chrissy C. (8/4/08)	6 Months
Julie H.	6 Months
Laura S.	6 Months
Amy J.	1 Year
Bud R.	1 Year
Kyle M. (3/13/08)	1 Year
Angie F.	18 Months
John W.	18 Months
Nicole L.	18 Months
Tim S.	10 Years
Jeannette J. (2/10/89)	20 Years
Deborah J.	22 Years

The Thursday Night Meeting

Thursday 7:30 PM
Saint Mary's Hospital

Ozie N. (10/1/07)	18 Months
Donna R. (3/26/96)	13 Years
Jackie W. (4/23/89)	20 Years

Living Our Recovery Daily

Friday 8:00 PM
212 Club

Matt S. (4/24/06)	3 Years
Laura N. (4/1/01)	8 Years

End Of The Line

Sunday 5:30 PM
Blessed Hope Bible Church

Rena M. (3/18/06)	3 Years
Kim M. (3/11/05)	4 Years

What's Coming Up



Yardsale Fundraiser

(for C.A. Women's Luncheon)



Saturday, May 16, 2009

7 AM - 1 PM

BARGAINS GALORE--COME & SHOP!!

313 Anita Drive

Fairview Heights, IL 62208

For More Information or If You Have Something To Donate—
Please Contact Donella C. 618/234-2283



2009 Greater Missouri Area Show Me Recovery Convention

"Reflections of Hope"

August 7-9, 2009

Hyatt Regency Crown Center
Kansas City, Missouri

Register Early (by 7/1)
to Save \$\$\$\$



Registration Forms Available:
Online At camissouri.org (click on "Events")
OR
At Most Local C.A. Meetings (ask your GSR)