



CONNECTIONS

Volume 62

Official Newsletter of the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous

November, 2011

Surviving The Season With Your Serenity Intact

Deck the halls  *by Vicky M.*

The holiday season is upon us, and that usually means a lot of “extras.” Extra time with family, extra parties/festivities, extra stuff that needs doing, extra STRESS!

If you're new in the program, this time of year can be particularly dangerous. I, personally, can attest to that fact, having come into recovery for the first time in August, 1989, but having a sobriety date of January 20, 1990. What started out as good solid clean time was derailed by a holiday function where I fell prey to the temptation of an open bar which, after several drinks, led me straight to the dope dealer's house and another six weeks in the depths of my disease. Although I had been warned that event might be a dangerous place for me, I chose to ignore the suggestions of those with more program experience and had to learn the hard way. I'm just grateful that, eventually, I was able to find my way back here—not everybody does.

Even though we don't relapse, those of us who now have some time under our sobriety belts can still allow the holidays to adversely affect our normal serenity level. We get caught up in the hustle bustle of activity and find ourselves with too much to do and not enough hours in the day. Or perhaps our family members are demanding we spend holiday time with them, often creating conflicts when more than one relative is expecting us to show up at THEIR celebration when we've got invitations to two or more events all happening at the same time.

How do we maintain our peace of mind and protect ourselves from the holiday madness that can ensue? Here are a couple of suggestions that might help:

- ✓ DO NOT slack off on your meetings because you “don't have time” to get there. Sobriety must always remain your number one priority, and at this hectic time of year or ANY time you are facing a challenging life event, it's actually best to STEP UP your meetings and add in an extra one or two when you can. If your holiday schedule dictates that you need to miss one of your regular groups, pick up a different one during the week. This not only ensures you get your regular dose of program “medicine”, but often attending a new meeting adds a fresh perspective.
- ✓ Start holiday preparations—i.e., shopping, decorating, family event planning, gift wrapping—EARLY. Waiting until the last minute to try and get everything done will guarantee a rise in your stress barometer. If it is not your usual habit to get a jump start on things, remember that when we got sober, we became willing to try something different and found it worked. Use the same philosophy here. Ask God for some willingness to plan ahead. Once you try it, you will be sure to discover how much easier it is on everyone involved!
- ✓ Set up a conscientious support system for yourself.
 - Carry phone numbers with you at all times and USE THEM. Reaching out to another program member when you are starting to feel squirrely is an amazing centering tool. It not only helps you, but it also helps the person that you are calling remember to keep their program in sharp focus.
 - Alcohol is legal and an accepted social custom, especially around the holidays. If you must attend a function where you know others will be drinking, bookend your attendance with meetings or a get-together with your sponsor/sponsee before/afterwards. Don't stay too long—be aware of your motives for being there and don't subject yourself to unnecessary exposure to a potentially dangerous/resentment-breeding scenario. Do **NOT** go anywhere you know people will be using drugs.
- ✓ Take advantage of the many, many fun sober activities held this time of year (see details about our C.A. open house on last page of this issue). There are lots of dances and parties hosted by all the different 12-step programs. Check what's going on by visiting local 12-step websites or calling their information line numbers. Many of the independent recovery clubs hold 24 hour marathon meetings on the holiday dates themselves, specifically designed for people to have a safe, sober place to go. If you aren't aware of these locations, ask people with time in the program to direct you to such a spot.

Remember that the holidays are just another stretch of staying sober one day at a time. Enjoy yourself, but don't allow your regular recovery routine to be interrupted!

2012 District Elections

"Learning Service Work At A New Level"

OR

"How To Be Selfish Without Even Trying!"

by Vicky M. – 2011 Saint Louis District Chair

December means many different things to people. For most, celebration of the holidays takes center-stage. For some, it's a year-end wrap-up of business or personal matters, preparing for a fresh start in January. For Saint Louis Cocaine Anonymous, it means election of new officers.

Just as the disease of addiction is a selfish thing, recovery necessitates an element of selfishness as well. We have to assign our program a number one priority if we want to stay sober. This requires a somewhat selfish mindset, and we are taught by our sponsors that in order to keep it, we must "give it away." Quite a paradox of selfishness, but selfishness nonetheless!

So, ladies and gentlemen, I now appeal to your sense of SELFISHNESS and suggest that you consider fostering your spiritual growth in the program by getting involved in service at the District level. Once a month, on the second Sunday at 4 PM, a dedicated group of addicts in recovery gather to spend an hour discussing the business end of C.A. *Ideally*, we have a General Service Representative (GSR) present from each regular group listed in our Where & When (note: H & I meetings do not have GSR's). In addition, we have a District Chairperson, a District Vice-Chair, a Treasurer, a Secretary, a District Service Representative (DSR), and half a dozen or so committee chair people.

Do the math. If you add up all the numbers, we should have about 20 warm bodies at the District meeting every month. Notice, however, I said "ideally," for the fact is that if we get six—that's a good month! Many of the jobs available go unfilled for lack of a willing participant. True, a person can hold more than one position, and many of us wear more hats than our poor heads can hold. But every December, we have a chance to bring in some new blood. New blood infuses fresh life into our midst, ultimately ensuring that C.A. remains stable and healthy—is HERE for the next addict who hits bottom and wants to get help.

Will YOU consider being selfish by getting involved in service at the District level? Please attend our December 11 meeting and at least learn what this level of service means. The place is the 212 Club, 204 Pitman in O'Fallon, Missouri. This year, we're having a Holiday Open House immediately preceding the election meeting (see last page of this newsletter for details).

The final complaint I'll address is—"oh, but O'Fallon—that's so FAR!!" I live in Oakville, which is just about a mile this side of Arnold. For me, O'Fallon is truly on the other end of the Saint Louis map. But I go to the District meeting every single month because I VALUE my recovery. It says we must be willing to "go to any lengths." And the good news is . . . you might just find that you enjoy this kind of giving back. I guarantee you'll make new friends and benefit in ways beyond your wildest dreams! See you there! (Note—see page three this newsletter for directions to the 212 Club.)

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 you have a computer.

DISTRICT DONATIONS

<i>Meeting Name</i>	<i>June 2011</i>	<i>July 2011</i>	<i>August 2011</i>	<i>September 2011</i>	<i>October 2011</i>
End Of The Line		\$47	\$24		
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts	\$30		\$29.37		
Men's Meeting		\$60.50		\$44	
Serenity On Saturday	\$40				\$20
The Thursday Night Meeting	\$62		\$42.60		\$37.50
There Is A Solution	\$3				\$4.90

H & I DONATIONS

<i>Meeting Name</i>	<i>June 2011</i>	<i>July 2011</i>	<i>August 2011</i>	<i>September 2011</i>	<i>October 2011</i>
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts	\$61.48		\$57.72		\$35
Men's Meeting		\$60.50			
Serenity On Saturday	\$36.95	\$15.05		\$30.25	
The Thursday Night Meeting			\$56		\$32.50

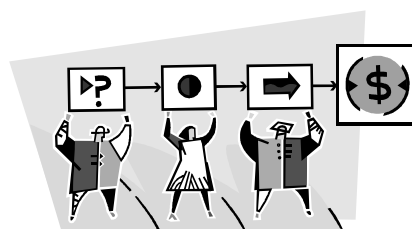
Detailed financial information is available at our monthly business meetings. All C.A. members are welcome and urged to attend if possible.

The Greater Saint Louis District Central Service meeting is held the second Sunday of each month at 4:00 PM at the 212 Club, 204 West Pitman, O'Fallon, Missouri 63366. If the second Sunday falls on a holiday weekend, this meeting is held the first or third Sunday. Confirmed meeting dates are always available on our website www.camissouri.org. Directions from Saint Louis—Take I-70 west to Exit 217 Highway K. Go right on Main Street off the exit ramp. Go .3 mile to left on Pitman. Facility on the left in strip mall. Park and enter from rear.

The Hospitals & Institutions Committee takes meetings into facilities where addicts cannot get out to attend a meeting on their own. H & I volunteers are constantly needed and should express interest by attending a District Central Service meeting or contacting the H & I Chair, Laura N. at 636/577-4760.

Did'ja Know?

Our World Service Office, located in Los Angeles, provides the cornerstone for our organization to grow and flourish. It's a help-desk, inventory source, and common denominator for Cocaine Anonymous meetings around the globe.



Donations are essential to keep the headquarters financially solvent. Because C.A. was launched on 11-18-82, November has been declared "Gratitude Month." One suggestion for this fellowship-wide acknowledgment of appreciation for C.A. is to pass an extra can at your meeting this month with all funds collected being specifically earmarked as a World Service donation. Hopefully, your meeting is already allocating regular donations from the 7th tradition basket (see our C.A. pamphlet, "The 7th Tradition," for a suggested breakdown of how to distribute meeting monies.) A "Gratitude Month" collection would simply augment what you are sending for a once-a-year increase in your support.

Alternatively, individual members may make a personal contribution directly to CAWSO. Some people choose to make an annual individual offering on their recovery birthday as a sign of their indebtedness.

However you decide to support C.A. financially, the point is to give as generously as you are able. Remember how much we used to spend on our drugs! And what price can you possibly put your sobriety?

Information on contacting CAWSO is outlined below.



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, 21720 South Wilmington Avenue., Suite 304, Long Beach, CA 90810; 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 Six, "C.A. is 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 7 PM
First Unity Church

Jacob H.	30 Days
Josh G.	30 Days
Kris D.	30 Days
Leslie R.	60 Days
Mary N-H	90 Days
Heather O.	6 Months
Tim C.	6 Months
John W.	1 Year
Kelly C.	3 Years
Glenn F.	6 Years
Jim L.	6 Years
Joe B.	6 Years
Sarah S.	6 Years

The Thursday Night Meeting

Thursday 7:30 PM
Saint Mary's Hospital

Teresa T.	20 Years
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There Is A Solution

Friday 8:30 PM
Coffee House

William D.	18 Months
Susan C.	30 Years

Serenity On Saturday

Saturday 1:00 PM
Harris House

Jake C.	30 Days
Yolanda R.	30 Days
Amanda T.	60 Days
Nancy O.	60 Days
Eugene	90 Days
Kawana	90 Days
Jerry C.	9 Months
Chad	1 Year
Dee	1 Year
Douglas M.	1 Year
Jim T.	18 Months
Leslie A.	20 Years

End Of The Line

Sunday 5:30 PM
Blessed Hope Bible Church

Joyce K.	1 Year
Antwain R.	4 Years
Estelle M.	4 Years
Mike C.	4 Years
Aman L.	8 Years
Marissa J.	9 Years
Rick M.	9 Years
Robyn T.	9 Years
Denise A.	14 Years
Greg W.	14 Years
Michael K.W.	16 Years
Pam S.	16 Years
Carolyn M.	17 Years
Cynthia C.	19 Years
Smitty	23 Years

"The

significant

problems we

face cannot be

solved at the same

level of thinking

we were at when

WE created them."

- Albert Einstein



Saint Louis District of C.A. presents



Pot Luck—
Bring Something
Delicious to Share!

Prizes Galore!!
Cup Raffle +
50/50 Raffle

Games Music

Special Guest Appearance
by Magician Bruce D.

2011 Holiday Open House Sunday, December 11 2 - 4 PM

212 Club, 204 West Pitman, O'Fallon, MO
(See Page 3 This Newsletter for Directions)

Food, Fellowship, FUN!!!

Plan to Stay for the District Election Meeting Immediately Following

