



CONNECTIONS

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Official Newsletter of the Greater Saint Louis District of Cocaine Anonymous

July, 2013

Pondering Pride . . .



By Vicky M.

Here it is the seventh month, so we can be sure that a lot of meetings will be focusing on the Seventh Step—*Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings*. Shortcomings come dressed up in all sorts of disguises and/or finery as the case may be. Our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book helps us to identify some of the more glaring transgressions by reminding us of the list commonly known as the seven deadly sins. Pride, anger, lust, gluttony, envy, greed and sloth are generally easily identifiable in ourselves once we've done the Fourth and Fifth Steps to the best of our ability. We're told ". . . *it is not by accident that pride heads the procession. For pride, leading to self-justification, and always spurred by conscious or unconscious fears, is the basic breeder of most human difficulties, the chief block to true progress.*" (pages 48-49, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*)

Recently, I was on a road trip listening to a recorded twelve-step speaker talk while I was driving. I have a pretty large collection of these, which I add to regularly and share freely with friends and sponsees. My first sponsor lent me some of hers when I was new, and I immediately recognized the benefit of having a "portable meeting" at my fingertips anytime of the day or night. In those days, the speakers were distributed on cassette tapes. Now, you get a CD; but if you have an MP3 player connected to the internet, you can also download countless talks from various free websites. It's an awesome tool I use all the time to keep me rooted in my program.

On this particular day, the speaker I happened to be listening to was a well-known celebrity. He was talking at an Alcoholics Anonymous event in California. Imagine my surprise when during his talk, he began sharing about his connection with Cocaine Anonymous. My ears perked up as he spoke of his close friendship with Johnny S., one of our co-founders. Apparently they got sober about the same time, and this particular person was quite familiar with the dedicated role Johnny played in getting C.A. started and helping it to grow. The two remained close for 18 years until October 31, 1999 when Johnny, God rest his soul, committed suicide. The speaker brought this up in his talk while pondering why people with long-term sobriety go back out. He believed this situation illustrated how pride can be so destructive in its manifestation through our addiction. Johnny had been suffering from chronic pain issues for a very long time; but, according to this good friend, making the decision to "check out" must have seemed easier than facing an entire fellowship of people who looked up to him with the admission he'd fallen under the grips of narcotic pain medications. As a long-time C.A. member, I was aware of Johnny's suicide and his battle with chronic pain toward the end of his life, but hearing this rather intimate insight from someone who had been close to him gave me pause to think at length about our insidious disease and all its ramifications.

Pride. How has it manifested itself in my life over the years? Both before and after recovery, I can think of numerous occasions where pride played an ugly role in my making less than prudent decisions. I can only pray if I am ever faced with the kind of situation in which Johnny lived and died too soon, I'll remember his story and choose a different outcome.

An alternate perspective I'd like to relate is how pride worked in reverse for a fellowship member who attended my home group for a short time. The meeting topic for the night was the Seventh Step, and we were discussing how our character defects are never fully removed from us—how that on any given day, our defects can be assets, depending upon the circumstances. I clearly remember this young man saying, "I know exactly how that works. I've got two years of sobriety, and I am absolutely convinced that part of the reason I've been able to say sober is that I KNOW my pride wouldn't let me come back and admit it if I were to relapse. I have GOT to stick around!" I never forgot that guy, and I use his share regularly as a case in point to exemplify how our shortcomings can work in a positive way.

Pride is not entirely evil. Only when my emotional and spiritual balance is out of whack will I let pride interfere with doing the next right thing. It's appropriate to take pride in my accomplishments, as long as I recognize that the God of my understanding is truly the One who gets the credit.



DISSECTING TRADITIONS

On Saturday, May 4, our District hosted a Twelve Traditions workshop at the Harris House (home to our Serenity On Saturday 1 PM group). Kudos to **Matt R.** for organizing this all-day event, which included speakers on each of the traditions, raffles and plenty of good food.

Eleanor M. greeted people enthusiastically as they arrived, presenting everyone with their complimentary cup raffle ticket. No time was wasted as Jenifer W. kicked off the first of the twelve talks, delivering an excellent perspective on the nuts and bolts of Tradition One. Workshop chair **Aman L.** kept things flowing as each of the rest of the speakers took their turns. Thanks to all who volunteered to speak on a tradition: **Darryl J.** (8), **Dwannna R.** (3), **Jeannette J.** (7), **Jenifer W.** (1), **Joe L.** (11), **Joy L.** (10), **Laura N.** (6), **Matt R.** (9), **Mike C.** (12), **Pamela D.** (5), **Rob W.** (2) and **Vicky M.** (4). Although the talks were all very insightful, the best part of any of these events is always the fun and fellowship. Addicts in recovery really know how to have a good time!

One of the many points shared during the twelve presentations was how to utilize the traditions in your personal life. Folks sometimes tend to associate traditions with only the C.A. group, when, in fact, the principles outlined work for any group dynamic. Try practicing the traditions at home or at work—you might be surprised at how they can improve the quality of your relationships! One of the handouts given during the workshop actually had the Twelve Traditions as adapted for relationships. **Connections** thought you might find these of interest:

TWELVE TRADITIONS OF A COMMITTED RELATIONSHIP

1. Our common welfare should come first. A healthy relationship depends upon family unity.
2. For our family purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He expresses Himself in our family conscience. Each partner is but a trusted servant to the union—neither governs.
3. The only requirement for a good relationship is a willingness to do what it takes to make the partnership work.
4. Each partner needs to maintain their own separate identity, except when it adversely affects the other partner or family as a whole.
5. Each partner has but one primary purpose—to carry his/her own *positive* attitudes to one another—in and out of the relationship union.
6. A partner ought not be *overly*-supportive—spiritually, emotionally, or physically—to the other partner, lest problems of ego-gratification divert him/her from the primary purpose.
7. Each partner ought to strive to be fully self-supporting—spiritually, emotionally, and physically.
8. Partners should remain forever humbly aware that outside assistance in some instances can be extremely beneficial for the relationship.
9. A family should be pliable in its organization; but we may appoint certain members directly responsible to serve certain family functions.
10. A family relationship should avoid heated controversy.
11. Our relationship dynamics should strive to generate attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain a demeanor of respect, love and tolerance where each other is concerned.
12. Humility is the spiritual foundation of our way of life as partners, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

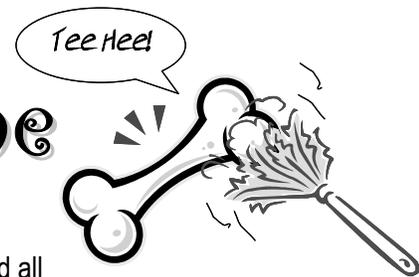
Staying Connected

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.

To Tickle Your Funny Bone



"I never considered myself an addict because I had it going on out there. I was truly living the dream I had always visualized. I was making big bucks, had lots of women, a wife and kids, and all the nice toys that money can buy. Who could ask for more? The answer to that, in case you are wondering, is an addict."

--pages 151-152, *Hope, Faith & Courage, Volume II*

"The weekend ended with a C.A. meeting in the monks' cemetery at the end of a clear, beautiful day. We each took our turn sharing our gratitude and love as the sun began to set and a cold wind blew across the desert floor. Suddenly, interrupting a particularly heartfelt share, one of the representative (with three months off freebase) reached into his pocket and cried out, "Oh no!" He pulled out a rather large plastic bag filled with cocaine. Thirty hearts began to race. Thirty minds began to run. As a group, we simply froze. The thought of the entire service structure of C.A. being wiped out in an afternoon was too absurd. Someone nervously suggested we take a group conscience."

--page xxx, *Hope Faith & Courage*

Heard from a speaker at the podium of a C.A. convention—

"My sponsor told me I could sit on the pity-pot as long as I wanted, but the only thing I would get out from that is a RING AROUND MY ASS."

DISTRICT DONATIONS				
<i>Meeting Name</i>	<i>March 2013</i>	<i>April 2013</i>	<i>May 2013</i>	<i>June 2013</i>
Big Book Study		\$5.00		
End Of The Line			\$10.00	
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts	\$15.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
Men's Meeting	\$42.00	\$30.00		
Serenity On Saturday	\$15.00		\$.35	
The Thursday Night Meeting			\$20.00	
There Is A Solution	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$15.00	\$20.00

H & I DONATIONS				
<i>Meeting Name</i>	<i>March 2013</i>	<i>April 2013</i>	<i>May 2013</i>	<i>June 2013</i>
Fried Pipers & Cocanuts	\$17.30	\$30.25	\$16.64	\$16.00
Serenity On Saturday	\$33.00		\$21.69	
The Thursday Night Meeting			\$40.00	

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 Pittman, 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—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.

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, Vicky M. at 314/846-2346.

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 about 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.

End Of The Line

Sunday 5:30 PM
Blessed Hope Bible Church

Monica W. 11 Years

Fried Pipers & Cocanuts

Wednesday 6:45 PM
First Unity Church

Tom B. 30 Days
Angie R. 60 Days
Joani B. 60 Days
Carol Anne D. 90 Days
Chris P. 90 Days
Shane P. 90 Days
Carol D. 6 Months
Jenifer W. 1 Year
Tiffany D. 1 Year
Josh G. 18 Months
Terri G. 18 Months
Angie F. 6 Years
Steve H. 6 Years
Dennis S. 10 Years
Laura N. 12 Years

There Is A Solution

Friday 7:30 PM
Father Dempsey's

Curtis W. 30 Days
Rob W. 30 Days
Donnell P. 60 Days
Kevin M. 90 Days
Walter A. 90 Days
Keith W. 6 Months
Norris G. 6 Months
Eric A. 9 Months
Paul S. 9 Months
Mark 2 Years
Ray C. 3 Years
Matt R. 11 Years
Donna T. 17 Years
Dwanna R. 20 Years
Jerry S. 22 years

Big Book Study

Friday 7:30 PM
Provident Healthcare

Darryl J. 14 Years

Serenity On Saturday (S.O.S.)

Saturday 1:00 PM
Harris House

Lindsay K. 30 Days
Ned S. 30 Days
Tommy D. 30 Days
Chris M. 60 Days
Kawana A. 90 Days
Kendra W. 90 Days
Mike W. 90 Days
Candice K. 6 Month
Nancy O. 1 Year
Tiny L. 2 Years
Glenn F. 8 Years

Men's Meeting

Saturday 6 PM
Saint Mary's Hospital

Timothy S. 9 Years
Gerald R. 16 Years
Wilbur B. 26 Years

See You At The Greater Missouri Area Picnic

Saturday, July 20, 2013 Noon - Dusk

Stephens Lake Park - Gordon Shelter

2001 East Broadway - Columbia, MO 65201

Swimming * Fishing * Volleyball * Horse Shoes * Badminton

50/50 Drawing * Cup Raffle * Music

Meat & Drinks Provided—Please Bring A Side Dish To Share

Speaker at 4 PM