

CRYSTAL CLEAR

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF NEW YORK CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS INTERGROUP

AUTUMN 2003

- 1 THE END OF DENIAL
My "High Bottom":
Pain, Fear and Misery
- 2 WHERE WAS MERYL?
Into the Rooms
Without a Script
- 3 TOOLS OF SOBRIETY
Part 4: Don't Get Tired
- 3 RELAPSE MODE
Editor's Note
- 4 LINES IN THE SAND
Relapse: Learning
The Hard Way
- 5 TAKING BACK MY LIFE
The Day Before
My First Meeting
- 5 WHO KNEW THERE
WOULD BE ANGELS
A Poem
- 6 ALCOHOLIC ETIQUETTE
What To Do at
An AA Meeting
- 6 BRING OUT THE CLOWNS
Another Poem
- 7 PAGING MR. BIG
God Doesn't Have
To be my Enemy
- 8 KEEP COMING BACK
CMA Meeting List
- 8 NEWSFLASH
Mind, Body & Soul;
Conference Call;
CMA Hotline

THE END OF DENIAL MY 'HIGH BOTTOM': PAIN, FEAR AND MISERY

BY 29, I HAD BEEN IN THERAPY FOR TWO years, and substance-free and health-conscious to a fault for about ten years. Suddenly, I was tired of being healthy and responsible, and a bit uptight. Ready for a respite, I thought that unlike the other "partiers" around me, I was now better equipped to weather an occasional hit of ecstasy.

After initially having a good time as a club/circuit boy, I spent the next three-and-a-half years trying to get my drug use under control, like using only "on special occasions." But I'd increasingly use too much, and then have to deal with days of horrible comedown. One or two ecstasy pills a night progressed to four to six, and maybe GHB and crystal for sex. I found myself doing things very out of character—especially having compulsive sex, usually unprotected and frequently with people I normally wouldn't be attracted to. I said and did things I regretted, which did not represent my perception of myself.

Always in a state of comedown, I was scared, cranky or in tears, generally miserable about something and nothing. Cognitively, I was a mess, and I struggled to perform professionally. My life lost depth and creativity. As if all of this unmanageability wasn't enough, it was my growing fear of my compulsion to have unprotected sex once under the influence that provided the ultimate imperative to get sober.

After a final year of white-knuckling and heavy sporadic binging, I finally received the gift of desperation. At my first CMA meeting on October 8, 2002, I finally accepted that I was an addict, powerless over drugs, and that here I

was home. What took me so long?

Despite how awful my life became, I didn't lose everything. I somehow kept it all together—job, home, other simplistic things. Never mind that I had ceased to evolve. Later on I would see that I lost much more than I had previously thought. My years of quibbling over my definition of an addict was the denial that kept me out there, part of the nature of this disease. I didn't really understand that this is a disease, complete with genetic markers, and that is progressive.

Today I understand that I've always been an addict—despite a ten-year period of healthy living in my 20s, and the fact that I held it together and didn't lose more than I did. In the rooms I hear stories of some people who shot up, became homeless, etc. I was spared these things because I was able to find CMA in time, before my disease caused heavier wreckage. To newcomers I say, "Don't think you're in the wrong place just because you didn't lose more."

Today, at over 10 months, the pain of my using has faded a little. Yet I take my sobriety somewhat for granted, and tend to remember the fun and "glamour" of my using but not so much the agony. I know this is classic addict thinking, for I could not be sober, healthy, employed, happy, and finally overcoming my issues if I were still using. Those thoughts themselves are evidence that I'm an addict, that I did hit bottom, providing a moment of clarity from which my life could begin. My task now is not to forget, and to work the steps to bring my experience of life to a new level. —Marc S.

WHERE WAS MERYL? INTO THE ROOMS WITHOUT A SCRIPT

I LAY ON THE STRETCHER, STARING INTO the sky with dilated pupils. It wasn't easy for my eyes to adjust from the harsh, fluorescent lighting of Bellevue to the bright afternoon of a New York June sky. Especially since I hadn't slept for five days.

So here I was, in an ambulance on my way to rehab. Rehab! Just the word conjured mixed emotions. Never having known anyone who'd gone through the experience, I couldn't help but think of the movies "28 Days" and "Postcards From the Edge." Would I be Meryl or Sandra? Why did movies about recovery always seem to feature women?

I soon found that rehab was nothing like it is on the silver screen. There was no colorful cast of supporting characters providing moments of much-needed humor on my road to recovery. There was no firm-but-wise doctor, patiently answering the innumerable questions parading through my drug-addled brain. And there was definitely no sassy nurse who'd be my surrogate mother, comforting me when everything seemed to be too much to handle.

Rehab was tough. A lot tougher than I'd expected. When I first arrived, I was

taken to a psychiatrist who asked me question after question concerning my drug use. Was this how I was supposed to get better? Why didn't he ask me anything about the underlying issues of my drug use? Where was the deep psychoanalysis that would provide me with the answers of why I had even picked up in the first place? Like many

addicts, I wanted solutions, and I wanted them immediately.

I was diagnosed as suffering from deep depression, anxiety attacks and agoraphobia, and subsequently was

put on medication. For the first three days I slept. When meal time came, I'd scurry out of my room like a rat, and rush back to choke down the tasteless fare so I could hurry up and go back to sleep. I was so out of it that I did not even want to come out of my room for visiting hours. My poor friends took it personally. I barely knew they were there.

It didn't take long for my social worker to find me and ask that I make more of an effort to go to meetings. I was afraid that they'd kick me out for non-participation, and I knew I was not ready to cope in the real world, so I grudgingly attended the four 12-step

meetings a day that were the only "treatment" we received.

It turned out to be the best move I could have made.

Listening to the patients qualify, I realized that these were people just like me, in the grips of an addiction that they could not control. They had admitted to themselves that they were powerless over drugs—and alcohol—and that their lives had become unmanageable.

Why was it so hard for me to do the same?

Once I realized that it was necessary for me let go of my pride and face up to the fact that I was an addict—no better or worse than any other patient there—I was able to commit to the first step. In fact, for me that was the very nature of the first step. Just hearing my voice say for the first time, "My name is Randy, and I'm an addict", started to tear down this wall inside me that had been holding me back from sobriety. Now that the wall is down, I never want to erect it again.

Will I relapse? I'd like to think that I won't make that mistake, but of course I can't say that for sure. What I can definitely say is that as much as the rehab helped me, I never want to go there again... and with a little help from my sponsor, my friends and my Higher Power, I won't have to.

—Randy N.

I was so out of it that I didn't even want to come out of my room during visiting hours.

CRYSTAL CLEAR

©2003 NYCMA—New York Crystal Meth Anonymous

PUBLISHED BY: NYCMA Literature Committee

LITERATURE CHAIR: Bruce C.

EDITOR: Marc P. • DESIGN: Ted D.

SUBMISSIONS AND COMMENTS:

P.O. Box 1517, Old Chelsea Station

New York, NY 10113

news@nycma.org • fax: 212-777-4957

www.nycma.org • phone: 212-642-5029

CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS

CMA is a 12-step fellowship for those with a desire to stop using crystal meth. CrystalClear, the newsletter of NYCMA, is issued quarterly. We reserve the right to refuse submissions and the right to edit for clarity and space, and to avoid triggering the reader. No compensations will be paid for any submissions.

According to our Tenth Tradition, CMA has no opinions whatsoever on outside issues. All articles in CrystalClear reflect personal experiences only and do not necessarily speak for CMA as a whole.

The Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions have been adapted from the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous.

TOOLS OF SOBRIETY

PART 4: DON'T GET TIRED

FIRST, I HAD TO RECOGNIZE THAT I WAS tired, because in early sobriety I was disconnected from my feelings. I often felt uncomfortable but seldom knew what was the matter. Fatigue masked itself as fear, irritability, crabbiness, hypersensitivity, and sadness.

When I realized I was tired, my immediate reaction was that I needed more speed. Sleep was irrelevant. I had a breakthrough when my sponsor showed me that I was, in fact, over tired, and that I needed regular sleep—eight hours a day (every day, think of that!). Moreover, I couldn't depend on feeling sleepy to go to sleep. To determine my bedtime I had to count back eight hours from the time I had to get up. I had to sleep "by the numbers." If it was bedtime, go to bed.

The problem in early sobriety was that I often couldn't go to sleep. I'd lie in bed for hours staring at the ceiling until I couldn't stand it any more. My sponsor assured me that no one ever died of sleeplessness, that it would shortly pass. I'm sure I responded to him with something containing the F-word. Nonetheless, over the first few weeks of sobriety, sleep came back.

When I am anxious or have trouble sleeping, my first suspect is caffeine. Caffeine is in coffee, tea, colas, certain green "dew-like" drinks, and most of the "energy" drinks (read the label!). Some of the "energy" drinks also contained ephedrine (also known as ephedra or ma huang), which also acts in me as a stimulant, like caffeine, only stronger. These also made me feel speedy and triggered me, so I avoided

them like the plague.

I reduced my intake to a cup (not mug) of coffee in the morning, a caffeinated soft drink in the middle of the afternoon and a cup of coffee before a meeting. If I wanted to go to sleep at midnight, my last cup of coffee had to be before 6 P.M. I found that I had to stop drinking caffeine at least six hours

before I planned to go to sleep. Otherwise, I would lie in bed awake with my mind racing until the six hours had elapsed.

I learned to use good sleep hygiene. I did not nap late in the day (an hour midafternoon, though, was bliss). I stayed out of bed until the

designated sleep time. Sometimes before retiring, I had warm milk or some sleepy-time tea, with a spoonful of honey. I washed, brushed my teeth, and had clean sheets on a good mattress. Eventually, I fell asleep and established a regular sleep pattern.

I recognize that everything hurt more when I was tired. I was sadder and angered more easily. I was more fearful. Life did not look so impossible, so hopeless, after a good night's sleep.

During the day, a good night's sleep gave me the strength to face early sobriety. At night, it gave me solace.

—Roy Y.

This is the fourth and last article in our series about a helpful tool of sobriety we call H.A.L.T.: Don't let yourself get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired. You can find the previous three on our website, www.nycma.org/news.

What a strange summer this was. Wet and windy. Then hot and humid. The season so short. Mars so close. The Big Blackout.

And so many relapses.

Maybe it was just my perception. Maybe I was only projecting my own fears and insecurities. But somehow it seemed like crystal was fighting back.

Sponsees disappeared. Friends slipped—friends whose programs I had admired. It made me realize that I, too, have only today.

Case in point: the end of my first sober relationship, which left me drowning in feelings. Feelings I didn't want to deal with. As a result, I let old behaviors slowly creep back. Character defects kicked in. Resentments built up. I skipped meetings and fellowship, neglected stepwork and spirituality, I isolated, I acted out in different ways.

I shrank to the equivalent of a "dry drunk." In my head, I was already setting the groundwork for relapse.

Finally, my sponsor let me have it: Just because I'm in my third year doesn't mean that I can take my recovery for granted. An addict is an addict. And an addict has to keep up: meetings, stepwork, service. If not—pay the price.

But a dear friend taught me another thing: Relapse is not the end of the world. It's part of the journey, in some way or another. It was for me, long ago, I keep forgetting.

This journey is also the message—hope, some of which CrystalClear tries to capture by letting those speak who've struggled.

Summer's over. Fall is here. Just another ending—and another beginning.

—Marc P.

LINES IN THE SAND

RELAPSE: LEARNING THE HARD WAY

RELAPSE IS A BIG PART OF MY STORY.

And each time it has cost me more and more.

I've been in the rooms here in New York City since March 28, 2002. After four recent relapses, I have over 90 days clean and sober

now. And as much

as I can say that I don't consider relapse an option anymore, it could still become reality again, any day.

From my own experience, I've learned that when I stop my positive behavior I give history an opportunity to repeat itself.

This disease turned out to be much stronger than I ever thought it could be. Time and time again I've seen what awful, increasing damage it can do to my life—and to others.

I'm 40 years old, and the wreckage of my past lies open before me. I came to the rooms after I had lost my boyfriend, my apartment, my job, and hurt my friends and family because of my addiction. Through all of this, I thought my problems and my feelings were different from others. I know better now.

I've actually been in recovery already since October, 1983, when my parents made me sign myself into a rehab facility. I was only 20 years old then. Though initially not actively involved in 12-step programs, over the course of time I managed to accumulate periods of continuous sobriety on my own. Once I put together two years and three months.

But I continued to relapse.

With each relapse, my self-esteem

dwindled. I became more and more depressed. My addiction always seemed to get progressively worse. Every time, I drew another "line in the sand." Every time, I crossed it again.

I've also experienced relapse

vicariously—by seeing many friends go out and pick up again. This has been painful, too, and today I realize that it's affecting me even more, in a way it has never affected me before. By watching how relapse an active addiction affected my friends' personalities, their friends, their families and their

jobs, I now understand how the same was true for me when I went through yet another relapse. By watching them go right back to where they had left off, I now understand how I myself always went right back to where I had left off.

What I felt then was a desperation that seemed so far away from any chance of help and salvation. Today, after all these relapses, I feel a different kind of desperation: I'm desperate to stay clean. Some in the program call it the "gift of desperation." And I will stay clean, if I stay present in my disease daily and keep reminding myself of where I went, letting my relapses teach me.

I'm not alone in this.
Others share my pain
if not always
my circumstances.
My feelings have
always been similar
to those of others
in the rooms.

My journey has
been long and
certainly slow. But it
finally did get better.
All I had to do
was to hang in
there and let
the miracle happen.

I've been given an opportunity—albeit a painful one—to learn from my mistakes and to change my behavior, thus improving my life and my relationships. By doing the work to avoid relapsing again, I afford myself clarity of mind.

Finally, I do care enough about myself to know that I won't find anything in a plastic bag, a vile, a bottle or a pill to make me feel better about myself, or eliminate my problems. Finally, I can honestly say that I do have my self-esteem back. Finally, I can see that I'm a valuable person, that I can enjoy my life—even if it's not where I might want it to be at this moment.

I see that I don't need to go back out there again.

I also understand now that I'm not alone in this. Others share my pain if not always my circumstances. I find that only the events in my life were unique. My problems and my feelings have always been similar to those of others in the rooms

Today, I have a job again. I have an apartment of my own after 18 months of couch crashing. I have people in my

life that I can call friends and know they can say the same for me. I'm rebuilding trust in my family relationships and with my ex-boyfriend. I'm even dating again.

All this didn't happen overnight. My journey has been long and certainly slow. But it finally did get better. All I had to

do was to hang in there and "let the miracle happen," as they say.

—Michael K.

TAKING BACK MY LIFE

THE DAY BEFORE MY FIRST MEETING

I wrote this letter to myself the day before I came to my first CMA meeting. It was after a long weekend of using, full of broken promises to myself that I wouldn't use. My boyfriend happened to be away at the time. While at his place, I looked through his personal belongings to find where he might have hid the drugs and paraphernalia that I had asked him to hide. It took me no time to find them. After smoking all of his drugs, I called the dealer to replace the stash, and was off to the races again. On Monday evening, I sat myself down and wrote this letter. I was feeling pretty bad that day. My boyfriend returned on Tuesday and took me to my first meeting.

It took me two months to call myself an addict. I get a kick out of my denial when I read this letter. Whenever I call my addiction into question, I break out this letter as a reminder of where I was that day. While things ultimately didn't

work out between my boyfriend and me, I'm grateful to him for taking me to my first meeting.

With crystal meth I am an abuser. I can't control my urges to get high, and when high have trouble stopping. I don't like to think of myself as an abuser and even less so as an addict. I think abuser is a nicer way of calling myself an addict. I've never felt so powerless to a drug that makes me feel so powerful.

Crystal meth suspends the inevitable. It provides a temporary escape from any troubles I may be experiencing. I like to think that crystal and getting high were rewards for a good effort at work, especially the long stressful hours. When I am getting high before I go to work on occasion, then leaving at lunch to get high again, the reward excuse no longer works. In the end it is just an excuse.

Crystal makes me tell lies and causes

me to act in ways I later regret. It amazes me how the dishonesty does not hurt when I'm high. I can tell bold face lies to someone when I am high, and not think twice about it. Reality is suspended, only to come rushing to greet you days later. The high doesn't get any bigger, but the lows are lower and more intense.

Today, I've decided to take back my life and stop wasting time putting myself in a temporary utopia. The amount of time spent thinking about, doing and recovering from crystal is keeping me from bettering myself. It's keeping me from my responsibilities in my personal and professional life. Drugs have the ability to take from me all that I have worked so hard to achieve. The stories I hear of others losing their lives to drugs cause me to take pause and think how one day the same could hold true for me.

—Frank D.

WHO KNEW THERE WOULD BE ANGELS

I came into the Room
Strange masks were unveiled
Something I wasn't used to seeing
But before I knew it,
A glow began to appear
In and around each of them

I was told about the ninety in ninety
And to take it easy
But, being scared at first
I shrank into a murky cloud
Which, upon being frightened anew
I plowed ahead
Taking the kind words
The soft suggestions

The warm touch
As a baby
Finding its warm soft nipple
To suck the sweet nectar

Little did I know
That these strange faces
Which fell upon heavenly bodies
Were really angels in the mist
Lifting me up and easing my aches
Pains
And tribulations
They didn't tell me there would be Angels
Sent to guide me
Comfort me
Show me the way
For there was another path
Which had been hidden from my view

And with this knowledge
I surrender
And they gave me wings
Stripped me naked
Made me anew

For without them I was hopeless
Powerless to the trials, storms and
hurricanes
Which came my way
But with them I was regenerated
Into a land filled with milk and honey
And at the gate
Were the twelve and twelve
To lead me the rest of the way home
Who knew there would be angels
Sitting in the rooms.

—Darlan M.

ALCOHOLIC ETIQUETTE

WHAT TO DO AT AN AA MEETING

AA IS EVERYWHERE. UNFORTUNATELY, CMA is not. Sometimes CMA will not be available to us, and many of our members attend AA meetings. Many of the AA meetings in New York City are “addict friendly,” but at times, when a group seems not to be, it’s often misunderstood. The following is an experienced perspective on the “lay of the land” at the other fellowships through the lens of the 12 Traditions.

We look at our addiction as being all-inclusive to all mood-altering chemicals even though we were partial to crystal meth. In AA their viewpoint can be different. They look at their disease as alcoholism as defined by the AA “Big Book,” without looking at other drugs.

Alcoholism and drug addiction are often referred to as “substance abuse” or “chemical dependency.” Alcoholics

and nonalcoholics are therefore sometimes introduced to AA and encouraged to attend AA meetings. Anyone may attend open AA meetings. But only those who consider themselves having a drinking problem may attend closed meetings. People with problems other than alcoholism are eligible for AA membership only if they have a drinking problem (see the official AA website, www.aa.org).

The key point is called “singleness of purpose,” or Tradition Five. It provides identification at a deep level where recovery takes place. I know how I felt when I came to my first meeting and heard my story by listening to someone else’s. I knew I was home. It parallels the importance of coming to a CMA meeting and being able to identify with the speaker because they’re speaking

about crystal. Likewise, for the alcoholic it is important that AA meetings discuss alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking (Tradition Three): “Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover.” The tradition is not meant to exclude anyone, but to include all who suffer from the disease of alcoholism. No alcoholic seeking recovery should be turned away regardless of any other afflictions they might have.

If you decide to attend an AA meeting, consider these guidelines and the traditions as they apply at the meeting you are attending.

- *I am an addict. My problem was drugs, not alcohol—why would I attend an AA meeting?* If you’re counting days, or are away on business, go to an open AA meeting and simply listen.
- *If there is no CMA meeting, should I go to AA?* If you need a meeting, go to an open AA meeting and listen.
- *What should I do and say at an AA meeting?* If you have a history of alcohol abuse as well as drug addiction, introduce yourself as an alcoholic or just say (if asked) that you think you have a problem with alcohol (that is all that is necessary).
- *What if I am asked to speak at an AA meeting?* If you do not feel comfortable giving an AA qualification, consider declining the invitation to speak. Tell the chairperson that you are a recovering addict and introduce yourself as such. Keep in mind: It is from AA that we have adapted our program. We owe a debt of gratitude and appreciation for their hard work that has ultimately helped us. It is through the encouragement that AA provides that younger fellowships such as CMA were born.

—Ava L.

BRING OUT THE CLOWNS

Life Storms

Wrecking havoc on the battlefield

Where this tired, weary boy

Just wants to go home

Bring out the clowns

Body’s weak

Mind’s blank

Soul depleted

Wanting a rest

To my weary self

Bring out the clowns

Living on the battleground

Where the mines and booby-traps

Shredded my carcass

Tore pieces from the physical

Left me wanting to go

Bring out the clowns

The blue jay is gone

The birds have stopped their chirping

The Sun has gone down to soon

While I’m looking for the eye in a

hurricane

Bring out the clowns

Eros has flown the coop

Aphrodite is on vacation

And Poseidon is in a fury

While the Moerae’s; Atropus, Lachesis

and Clotho

Are still spinning my web

And will not cut it short

Bring out the clowns

The shards are cutting my feet

When I picked one up

And saw a zombie of my former self

Reveled in the reflection

Bring out the clowns

Did you hear me??

Bring out the damn clowns, already!!

—Darian M.

PAGING MR. BIG

GOD DOESN'T HAVE TO BE MY ENEMY

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD WAS MY ENEMY. He made me feel guilty, bad and small. I blamed him for everything—lack of money, lack of self-esteem, lack of love, addiction, HIV. Life was a curse, God was the culprit, I was the victim.

I didn't know the meaning of spirituality then. For me, "spirituality" was new age bullshit. Or, later, just another excuse for another drug-fueled group hug on another dance floor.

Coming out, I renounced organized religion—in my case, the Roman-Catholic Church. Then, when my first lover killed himself because he couldn't reconcile his sexuality with his faith, I renounced God altogether. I concluded that God was a myth for weaklings to ease their misery.

My own misery peaked in February, 2001. After an emotional meltdown, I decided to come back to CMA after years of trying to stop that cycle of addiction, insanity and depression.

That week began with the White Party. My friends went to Roseland. I went to a different mass, at St. Francis.

I had found myself there before. Even though I had given up on God, St. Francis felt familiar, comforting. The choir, the incents, all that ritual. I was so desperate for help that day, I didn't know where else to go. Old catholic instincts, I guess.

Literally brought to my knees, I wept and "prayed"—yelling and screaming in my head at a God I had decided not to believe in. Later that day, at a CMA meeting, I yelled and screamed some more, still all in my head, hiding in the

back, not saying a word for weeks.

All this "God talk" in the rooms irritated, even infuriated me. Don't stress over it, I was told. As long as you trust in anything other than yourself, you're fine. Trust the group. Trust CMA. Trust this way of recovery. Let this be your Higher Power—for now.

To get across that "God thing," I replaced the loaded terms "God" and "Higher Power" with a word I could accept: "guide." I made this program and the people in it my guide. After all, I had nothing

worthwhile to lose I hadn't lost already.

Then 9/11 happened. Again, it had me question any Higher Power—questions my meetings couldn't answer. A priest at a memorial service I attended that week summed up my doubts by saying, "Where was God on Tuesday?"

There it was again, the trust issue I had with God. Searching for answers, I met a minister of a small interfaith community, which had just opened its doors two days before 9/11. God doesn't prevent, protect or punish, she argued. God simply is, and life simply happens. Good things

happen, bad things happen. And even if things happens to us, they actually happen for us. We may just take a while

to see that, or not see it at all.

God, she said, is the universe, our common source of life. God is love.

In an instant, these words reframed my addiction, my recovery and my faith. Here was something I could work with. I scrapped my old beliefs and opened my mind to new ones.

I began to look for God in the faces in the rooms. I began to listen for God in the shares. I began to sense God in the energy of a meeting. I began to see my God as what connects us all, deep inside, beyond fear, shame and guilt.

I began to pray, clumsily. I chat with my deeper self, usually when I meditate, walk my dog or write my journal. I say thanks for the opportunity to be sober today, and ask for strength for whatever comes my way, both of which I can find in the rooms, my "substitute" Higher Power. I pray to the universe.

And while this is how it works for me personally, there are as many other approaches as people and faiths in CMA. We all got sober somehow, even as atheists—connected by something stronger than our individual gods.

On 9/11, the official victim recorded

as No. 00001 was Father Michal Judge, the chaplain of the Fire Department, who had been in recovery. His favorite prayer has become mine: "Lord, take me where you want me to go; let me meet who you want me to meet; tell me what you want me to say, and keep me out of your way."

Today, God is not my enemy anymore, but my friend.

—Marc P.

When 9/11 happened, I once again questioned any Higher Power. A priest at a memorial service summed up my doubts by asking, "Where was God on Tuesday?"

There are as many approaches to God as people and faiths in CMA. We all got sober somehow, even as atheists—connected by something stronger than our individual gods.

ist meeting

SUNDAY

6:00 PM STEP MEETING (1.5 HRS) ○
Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center

6:30 PM BEGINNERS' BASICS C
Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center

MONDAY to FRIDAY Mornings

7:45 AM GOOD MORNING HIGHER POWER C
Gay Men's Health Crisis

MONDAY

6:00 PM RELAPSE PREVENTION ○
Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center

TUESDAY

12:00 PM TOPIC MEETING C
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center

6:00 PM RECOVERING TOGETHER C
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center

8:00 PM BEGINNER MEETING (1.5 HOURS) C
Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center

WEDNESDAY

6:30 PM TOOLS FOR BEGINNERS ○
Gay Men's Health Crisis

THURSDAY

6:30 PM AS BILL SEES IT ○
Gay Men's Health Crisis

8:00 PM BOOK STUDY ○
Gay Men's Health Crisis

FRIDAY

6:30 PM LIVING WITH HIV C
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center

8:00 PM CRYSTAL CLEAR (1.5 HOUR BEGINNER MEETING) ○
Gay Men's Health Crisis

SATURDAY

8:00 PM MEDITATION MEETING C
Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center

10:00 PM INTIMACY, RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX IN SOBRIETY C
Lesbian & Gay Community Services Center

ALL MEETINGS ONE HOUR UNLESS NOTED

○ = Meetings "Open" to everyone.

C = "Closed"—welcomes anyone who thinks he/she may have a problem with drugs, specifically crystal meth.

LESBIAN & GAY COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER
208 West 13 Street between 7 & 8 Avenues

GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS
119 West 24 Street between 6 & 7 Avenues

CALLEN-LORDE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
356 West 18th Street btw 8 & 9 Avenues

NEWS FLASH

MIND, BODY & SOUL

If you're looking to deepen the spiritual connection of your recovery in CMA, there will soon be a great way to do that: a CMA-related weekend retreat focused on spirituality in April, 2004. Put together by members of our CMA fellowship, this three-day event in a country lodge outside the city will offer meetings, meditation, workshops and group activities to nourish your mind, body and soul. If you're interested in more information or want to volunteer, please contact the planning co-chairs, Jay P. (jaypersi@yahoo.com) and John W. (jw514@aol.com).

CONFERENCE CALL

NYCMA is exploring the idea of hosting its first-ever general conference in New York City in the fall of 2004. The proposed format includes a kick-off meeting on Friday night, an all-day session on Saturday with workshops, meetings and a wrap-up meeting, and maybe a sober dance on Sunday. The conference committee is still looking for volunteers to help with planning and putting together this event. Please get in touch with Erik M. (fm35@nyu.edu), Fernan R. (frc1217@aol.com), or Marc P. (marcp1963@aol.com).

CMA HOTLINE

Tell a friend: Everyone who thinks he/she has a problem with crystal meth and needs immediate help can call (212) 642-5029. This voice mail service offers information on selected CMA meetings in New York City, including times and locations, as well as the option to leave a personal, confidential message. Messages are checked daily. Someone from CMA will discretely call back within 24 hours and direct the caller to the next meeting, or provide other ways of assistance.