

Clear crystal

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NYCMA
NEW YORK CRYSTAL METH
ANONYMOUS INTERGROUP

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FIRST THINGS FIRST



Reading the Big Book in context

Ever since I was old enough to spell, I've loved to write. I've been successful at it both academically and professionally. My writing appears in print weekly in a variety of publications, and as someone who is paid to spin ideas until readers are dizzy, I am expected to be manipulative in my prose.

After all, there is a difference between the truth and "the truth." Language is a powerful thing. My ability to understand its intricacies for better—

but more often for worse—has gotten me through a lifetime of lying remarkably unscathed. This addict never called to tell you he

wouldn't be in. He wrote heartbreaking e-mails about his grandma dying. Again.

Ironically, it is the same understanding of language's ability to alter our personal realities that helped me to get sober and strive to be rigorously honest. Because of my background, it's been relatively easy for me to see past language's limitations.

The world doesn't need words to be what it is. *It just is.* People, on the other hand, are stuck with words. It's the primary way we communicate with each another. The trouble is that words don't all mean the same thing to all people and that, over time and across regions, their meanings can change. To Shakespeare, for example, a *purse* was not a woman's bag but a man's wallet.

See **BIG BOOK** on Page 7

Hospitals, institutions

To lead sober lives and to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers is our primary purpose. In this spirit, Intergroup H&I Chair Mike A. is seeking help in taking CMA meetings to local hospitals and institutions. Members who are interested in joining this effort, perhaps as part of an organizational committee, are encouraged to contact Mike. CMA in New York currently sponsors one regular H&I meeting a week.



'Dead Man Walking'

I had heard in the Rooms before that picking up is the last stage of relapse. Quite true, but if somebody would have told me that I would use crystal meth again one day, I would have laughed.

With a strong foundation in recovery up until that point—including 28 days of in-patient rehab, 19 months of out-

See **RELAPSE** on Page 6

CMA-ers meet in Queens

A full 360 degrees. A complete turnaround. That is the best way to describe my life today.

A little more than five years ago, I lived in an apartment that bred nothing but poison and negativity. The only people who frequented thought only of themselves, their own welfare. Sad to say,

I walked among them with the same attitude and thoughts.

Today my life is so far removed from that place and mentality. Let me give you a short look into my life and apartment today.

On Mondays between



7:45 P.M. and 8:30 P.M., the doorbell rings 10 or 15 times. Each person who walks in is full of love and compassion, and most practice the ideal of selflessness. They have so much to share.

I am talking about a meet-

See **QUEENS** on Page 2

Planning begins for 2007 Share-A-Day

Planning has gotten under way for our third Share-A-Day this fall.

Jeff G. has been named chair of this year's event, and Intergroup has set aside \$3,000 to help pay

for it.

Last year, about 150 people attended the day-long series of recovery-related workshops and guest speakers.

This year's steering

committee recently met for the first time. For the past two years, the event has been held in October.

More details will be announced at meetings as they become available.

CMA AT WORK

LITERATURE COMMITTEE SETS PRIORITIES The NYCMA Literature Committee has outlined its goals for the coming year. The committee's next project will be to draft a new version of the "Alcohol and Other Drugs" pamphlet. It also will try to draw up three new pieces of literature this year. The new pamphlets would deal with issues relating to the first 90 days of recovery, relationships and intimacy, and how to start a CMA meeting. Literature Committee work sessions are open to all members. Contact Chair Mike R. for more information.... **WEBSITE UPDATES** **CONTINUE** Intergroup's Public Information folks continue to add more features to nycma.org. Members now may download updated Literature Clearinghouse order forms from the site's literature page. The Clearinghouse has greatly expanded its inventory during the past year, and the new order form reflects this....

MEMBERS REQUEST NEWSLETTER GUIDELINES Representatives of individual meetings have asked the Literature Committee to set formal guidelines for articles that appear in *Crystal Clear*. They have also requested that the information be posted online, along with an e-mail link to make it easier for members to submit articles.

Members adopt bylaws

As NYCMA has grown, so has the need for a more formal structure to the organization's operations. Along with the incorporation and the pending nonprofit filing with the Internal Revenue Service, NYCMA continues to take steps toward securing its future with the adoption of bylaws. Bylaws are "stockholder-approved rules governing the conduct of a business." The business structure of NYCMA Inc. required a deviation from standard corporate bylaws to include many rules unique to our organization. The bylaws of NYCMA Inc. contain 14 articles covering everything from membership to finances to election of officers and chairs.

These new rules were written with one idea in mind. NYCMA Inc. is "governed" by the Twelve Traditions of Crystal Meth Anonymous. The general purpose of

NYCMA Inc. as stated in Article III of the bylaws is as follows:

"...to act as a New York nonprofit public benefit corporation, organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or any future federal tax code. Intergroup is not organized for the private gain of any person. It is to serve the public good by providing a fellowship of support and education to people who are recovering or trying to recover from addiction to crystal meth and to their families and friends, and ultimately to the general public all of whom suffer the consequences of this serious addiction."

Unlike standard corporations, NYCMA Inc. is administered by Intergroup and not a board of directors elected by stockholders. Although NYCMA Inc. must have a board, its directors are elected by the voting members of Intergroup. The Board's role is to oversee the business affairs of Intergroup by offering suggestions for the improvement of Intergroup's services and business

practices. This structure ensures that "your voice," as expressed by the group conscience in the election of Group Service Representatives, will continue to be heard at all levels of NYCMA Inc.

After several months of research and writing, I had a draft of the bylaws I was satisfied with. In January 2007, a committee was formed to review the bylaws. I was grateful to the 12 volunteers who offered to read my representation of NYCMA Inc. On February 28, 2007, Intergroup adopted the bylaws.

When I was elected Structure and Finance Chair of Intergroup, it was by a landslide but only because no one else wanted the position. I had no idea of the hours I would spend on the telephone over many months to various New York State departments. But I believe in NYCMA. It saved my life or, should I say, gave me a life. **DON S.**

QUEENS from Page 1

ing called "59th Street Bridge Back to Life." This meeting was started by four of us to try to spread the message of recovery to the people of Queens and surrounding areas. Blair F., Philip R., Chet K. and I sat together in Blair's apartment and planned how this meeting was going to be. I believe our Higher Powers were there with us and helped shape an incredible meeting.

This was the result: The meeting focuses on solutions and tools. As each person enters the meeting, he or she is given a pen and an index card. We ask everyone to write down a solution or tool and put their card in a bag. A volunteer is asked to begin. He or she reaches into the bag, selects a card and reads what is written on it. After reading it to the group, the option is to share about the topic on the

card or anything else. In true beauty-pageant style, the bag is passed to the next person, who begins the cycle again. This makes for a great meeting with no one rehearsing what they are about to share. I believe God speaks at our meeting.

On the last Monday of every month, the meeting forgoes the routine in order to honor celebrants with cake—sobriety cake, we like to call it. Anyone who is eligible for a chip that month is allowed to share for three to five minutes to tell how they did it. Anyone celebrating any anniversary in years (a birthday) gets five to 10 minutes to share. This awesome meeting is held in my house for the moment but changes location every three months. We will be deciding where the meeting will be moving next. Please refer to nycma.org for future locations. If you need directions, feel free to call Blair F., John P., Brandon M. or Jarod C. Come on over! **JOHN P.**

I WASN'T IN KANSAS ANYMORE... What do a grandmother, a former exotic dancer, a devout Mormon and five gays from the Coasts have in common? We all wanted to help addicts who are still sick and suffering by publishing the first national CMA book.

As part of the CMA World editorial board, I was privileged recently to take part in this effort. Nine of us sat in a room in Phoenix for eight hours, eating leftover pizza for lunch while trying to find the perfect words to describe our program to the unfamiliar.

We all left exhausted but with a lot accomplished, including fleshing out descriptions for about half of the Twelve Steps and choosing the name of the book, *Crystal Meth Anonymous: An Introduction*. (We've reserved the right to change our minds on the name.)

Ordinarily those of us in the room that day would probably have very little in common. But with recovery as our focus and service as our goal, we worked together so well.

By the way, if you're in Phoenix, check out the "CMA Rocks" meeting,

which is held every night. What a boisterous crowd! The motorcycles parked in front of the clubhouse were impressive, too. It was the first time I'd ever been to a CMA Clubhouse. What a great feeling to know I don't have to be alone when I travel outside of the city. **T.M.**

My journal: Nine reasons I'm grateful

1 I have more than 23 months of continuous sobriety. Initially, this was mostly achieved by regular attendance at CMA meetings. I found a sponsor immediately. He loaned me his copy of the Big Book the night we first met and took me to different meetings, so I always knew where there was a meeting each day of the week. While I didn't follow his suggestion to vigorously work the Steps, he helped me *try* to work them, despite my less-than-100-percent effort.

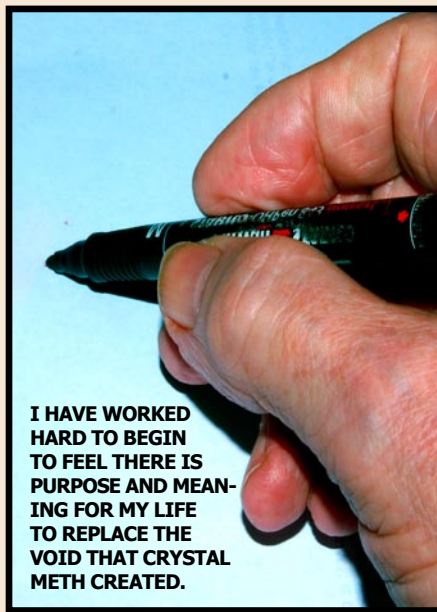
2 I'm mostly grateful I haven't relapsed. I don't consider myself an addict of the hopeless variety, and this frequently tempts me to believe that I could relapse without major difficulty "under the right circumstances." What keeps this in check is playing the tape all the way through, particularly the part that includes Jim's suicide. Bottom line is that I can't afford to find out if I can relapse without serious consequences. I've already had enough of those, thank you very much, so I take "people, places and things" very seriously.

3 We who are relatively new to the program are fortunate to have an established Twelve Step program addressing the specifics of crystal meth addiction, including the Intergroup supporting all the CMA meetings in Manhattan and the relatively new, vibrant "59th Street Bridge Back to Life" meeting in Astoria. Kudos to those courageous crystal meth addicts who pio-

neered the way for us, who in addition to working the Twelve Steps to get sober, wrestled with the Twelve Traditions and struggled to place principles above personalities so the rest of us could benefit from this established structure. A few of these addicts have more than 10 years of continuous sobriety. That's twice as long as it's been since my crystal meth use even started.

4 I've had the privilege of getting to know quite a number of fellow CMA-ers well enough for them to spontaneously, warmly welcome me to any meeting. It took a few months to start letting go of my insecurities and be available for this kind of connection and relationship. Initially, it was difficult to raise my hand and share, so others could get to know me. I'm grateful to now be reaping the rewards of this effort and process. I now have 93 (just counted them) names of men and women from CMA in my cell phone.

5 Newcomers and others counting days continue to be an amazing boost to my sobriety. I readily relate to their stories. I'm not yet that far removed from the sometimes-horrific negativity and pain of using. Their mix of timidity and courage remind me of my first days



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in the Rooms. I'm motivated to do all I can to encourage and support them, including those times when there's not all that much I can do. They usually have no idea how much their presence and experience is supporting my own recovery, and that's okay.... Yet another one of the miracles of CMA.

6 Fellowship, meaning going out to eat with other CMA-ers after a meeting, is a less formal venue in which we share about our using experiences and exchange encouragement and support in recovery. I have greatly benefited from getting better acquainted with other addicts in this relaxed atmosphere. Sharing a subway ride or a movie takes this even further in developing one-on-one relationships. Like many of my fellow addicts, the only friends, or even acquaintances, from my using days are those who also have found their way into CMA. The friendships I've developed in CMA are the kind I expect to keep for the rest of my life.

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SUGGESTION BOX

Summer Lovin'

Looking back, what was your first sober summer like? How did you stay sober, while allowing yourself to have a little fun?

My first sober summer was exciting. I was discovering something new about myself and meeting lots of new (sober) people. Groups of us went to the beach, had picnics in Central Park or went to exhibits. I also saw lots of movies. We came up with different ideas of fun sober things to do. **KAMAL F.**

I was terrified to be in the city on the weekends, so I accepted invitations to the beach and elsewhere whenever I could. And when I was in NYC, I stuffed my days with meetings, movies and walks along the river—all with new sober friends. I'd forgotten how much I liked socializing. Here was this whole part of myself I thought I'd lost. **MARK L.**

Last summer was tough for me, but I took advantage of the warm weather and spent a lot of free time in parks reading and meditating. I especially loved the rocks by the Central Park Lake, and I really looked forward to the Pier Meetings and fellowship on the weekends. I'd also finally recovered enough to work full time, which gave me a sense of purpose and kept my mind occupied. **MIKE M.**

My first sober summer was an opportunity for me to make friends again and be in the sun, which I had grown to fear and avoid during my using days. On weekends, I attended the morning Pier Meetings to start my days off in the sunlight and with a breeze off the river. Going to fellowship afterward helped nurture a sense of summertime camaraderie. I also jump-started outdoor exercise activities that made me feel better about myself, especially bike riding, which also got me to my meetings. **MIKE R.**

WHAT IS CMA? Crystal Meth Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other so that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from addiction to crystal meth and all other mind-altering substances. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. There are no dues or fees for CMA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. CMA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; and neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to live free of active addiction and to carry that message to the addict who still suffers.

Adapted with permission from *Grapevine* magazine.

MY SEARCH FOR Supersoberman



POW!
FWAP!
POP!
KA-BOOM!
ZAP!

My new
tool to
fight
cravings:
staying
in the
here and
now

Much like many of us, I was pretty beaten up when I first came to CMA. While I didn't necessarily understand what being a crystal meth addict meant, I knew I had a problem and needed help. I did not identify as an alcoholic, however, and balked at the concept that in order to be in CMA and participate in the outpatient rehab program in which I had enrolled, I would have to give up

alcohol. The response from fellows and rehab counselors alike was, "If you don't have a problem with it, then you won't have a problem not drinking for a while." Always up for a challenge, I put the drinking issue on "the shelf." For the next 12 months, I managed to stay clean through exhausting effort, fellowship, rehab, an immense amount of support from my sponsor, Step work and months of "white knuckling."

At the same time, I was building an enormous resentment toward concepts in the program that I was told were fact but that I didn't really buy into: "Alcohol will lead you back to crystal. Don't question the arcane language in the Big Book when it's worked for thousands of people! Just follow (accept) suggestions and eventually you'll get it." I developed the erroneous impression that if I didn't do things the way everyone else did, I was just deluding myself and being terminally unique. I began to feel like everyone was taking my inventory, lighting it on fire and hurling it back at me. By con-

trast, most of the people I met in program who supposedly had "gotten it" (which I took to mean as having clean time) seemed far from perfect and, in fact, individually did not have everything I was seeking for myself. In effect, I was looking for Supersoberman, who skipped through life happy, joyous and free, like the Big Book says.

Separately, while I was the only crystal meth addict in my group of non-Program friends, I became painfully aware that their cocaine addictions were spiraling out of control. So there I was, feeling stuck between two groups of people, not wanting to be part of either one. So was I surprised when, in my 14th month, I relapsed? Not really. Nor was I



surprised that my time in CMA had given me the determination to take action and deal with the issues that “broke the shelf.” I worked diligently to change my program and made some progress. If all else failed, though, I had told myself that I could still have an “emergency” relapse. When I lost my job a couple of months later—after having for the first time felt as if my side of the street was clean—I had very strong feelings of failure, professionally and in my program. The pain just wouldn’t go away no matter what I tried, and I coped the only way I knew how—hence Relapse No. 2.

Lessons

First, I think it’s important to provide the caveat that I don’t feel as if I’ve found The Answer, as I believe that this is an ever-changing concept for me. I believe that I have gained some powerful tools that have helped put my program back on track.

Acceptance

Our Step work teaches us acceptance and action. Action is not generally a problem for me, but acceptance... ugh! For me to accept, I need to understand through experience, but often I lose my objectivity. Nothing like a couple of relapses to point out what I needed to work on!

Relationships

I expressed to a fellow one night my failures in identifying with sober people, and his response shocked me. “Joe, I haven’t found anyone in program who has *everything* I want, but I’m not going to use over it,” he said. *How dare he derail my frenzied, months-long search for the perfect sober example and deprive me of my self-*

righteous protestations that the program wasn’t working for me!

My Fellow was pointing out that I was searching so diligently for a certain experience that I had forgotten why I was looking in the first place. He also helped me understand that taking pieces of others’ sobriety and weaving them into my own

to have been the obvious outcome. This is a lesson I’ve begun applying to my other reservations as well.

Letting Go

This is probably my biggest challenge. Gradually, I’ve come to the understanding that I’ll be taken care of over the long term, but my ad-

How dare he derail my frenzied, months-long search for the perfect sober example and deprive me of my self-righteous protestations.

program was healthy—and had nothing to do with terminal uniqueness. Letting go of the incessant desire to find one individual with whom I could identify has allowed me to go back and see which aspects of other people’s programs might be beneficial to my own and allows me to express compassion and loving kindness toward them.

Reservations

After my first drug relapse, I resolved to decide, once and for all, if I would ever drink alcohol again. (The only thing I knew for sure at the time was that I didn’t ever want to get drunk.) What I learned after a couple of drinks was that I had no tolerance for the stuff. I felt uncomfortable and foggy, which I didn’t like. I had spent so much time stewing over the total-abstinence issue that I missed what now seems

dict behavior creates tunnel vision in the present and only allows me to feel the pain of a lost job, of a failed relationship or of declining health. Through working with my therapist and jumping headlong into my study of Buddhism, I am throwing all of my energy into just being present for everything in my life at any given moment. My mind can only process so much at one time, but if I can remain open, pain or whichever other emotion I may be facing eventually will fade. This practice (more like sobriety boot camp!) has helped me to knock out some gigantic cravings.

This is what seems to be working for now, but I understand it might not in the future. My challenge is to change my program to keep up with life, to keep “the shelf” free of reservations and let my addiction do all of the push-ups it wants in the other room—as long as that door stays locked. **JOE S.**



THE TWELVE STEPS OF CMA

1. We admitted that we were powerless over crystal meth and that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of a God of our understanding.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a God of our understanding praying only for the knowledge of God's will for us, and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to crystal meth addicts, and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.

The Twelve Steps of CMA are adapted with permission from AA World Services Inc.

CMA trustees to review pamphlet

The CMA General Services editorial board has finished its first piece of literature, titled "What Is Crystal Meth Anonymous?"

The two-sided pamphlet now goes before the CMA Board of Trustees for interim approval. The editorial board has recommended approval by the trustees.

(CMA members eventually will get to vote on whether to

give the publication full approval at a World Conference that is expected to be held in the next couple of years.)

If approved by trustees, the pamphlet will be made available to local Intergroups for distribution. NYCMA's Literature Committee has decided to stock the publication in the Literature Clearinghouse.

In addition to a gen-

eral outline of CMA, the pamphlet also addresses topics such as relapse prevention, why CMA is different from other fellowships, and why we abstain from using alcohol and other drugs, along with crystal meth.

WHAT IS CRYSTAL METH ANONYMOUS?

WHAT ARE THE TWELVE STEPS? WHY ONE DAY AT A TIME? WHAT ABOUT ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS? HOW CAN I STAY CLEAN? Crystal Meth Anonymous

RELAPSE from Page 1

patient, plus 35 months of being active in CMA—I never would have believed it. So the question after I came back to CMA was: *Where did my relapse begin?* I didn't stop going to meetings, or calling my sponsor, or sponsoring others or checking in with my psychotherapist. I worked the Twelve Steps. I am a credentialed alcohol and substance abuse counselor and was working in the field. I was comfortable in my own skin. I was days away from commemorating my third year as a sober man. So what went wrong?

On the day of my relapse, I was not horny or craving crystal. The obsession to use had left a long time ago, thanks to my Higher Power and the hard work I had done in the Program. Yes, I had bad days like everybody else as I confronted the consequences of long-term use.

So how did I get sober and then abruptly make a left turn, changing my entire life in seconds—once again becoming a dead man walking? The six days I was out took me to the Land of Nowhere. I didn't want to stay there, and I didn't want to come back. I didn't want to use anymore, but I didn't want to be sober again either. These thoughts made me realize that my relapse was real and that I was planning to stay in it a long time. I had a sense of relief because my using had let out the pressure of being sober for so long. This feeling, however, was followed by a mix of sadness and fear because I had left behind a beautiful sober life with friends. Lots of the Promises had come true for me. There was also a sense of how dangerous the path I was on was; that it would not be any different from the path I was on before getting sober. Jails, institutions, almost dying. The unmanageability and the consequences were running together side by side. In six days, I had lost so much again, and if I had continued, my life would have been next.

I SOMETIMES STILL FELT POWERLESS OVER CERTAIN OLD HABITS

The guys I was using with had no idea what devastation crystal meth can cause. My new vocational career was to help others with the disease of addiction, yet I was completely powerless, brought to my knees again by my drug of choice. It was unreal. I could not help myself—or them. I was spaced out again, alone and high with only my insane thoughts. I was furious, in a rage. *How could my desire to be sober go down the drain?!* I knew what was to come: detox, Day One, the shame, the guilt. Luckily, I decided to move past all of that and begin to hunt for what went wrong.

First, I needed supervision, so I checked myself into an outpatient program again. Ninety meetings in 90 days. Sponsor. Therapy. Soon, I discovered loneliness was the key to my relapse. I had been unable to bring the love of friends and the fellowship into my home and my life. I still couldn't trust anybody. I had navigated meetings and fellowship in deep silence. There was isolation, fear, shame. Guilt also played a role. I am the victim of child abuse. From an early age, I had to ignore my own feelings and needs in order to comply with those of my abuser. This led to insecurity, fear, low self-esteem and isolation. To survive, I created my own little, safe world. Even as a sober adult, I sometimes still felt powerless over certain old habits that arose when something was going wrong. I raged in silence, hid my own feelings from everybody. In my "safe" world, sharing with no one, I was okay (or so I thought). I had abused myself to the point that I could not take it anymore.

The lesson I learned was hard, but I am sober today. It is not easy, but I accept, understand, love and share every feeling I have now. I am happier this way. It's like life has begun for me. I would like to express my gratitude to my fellows/friends for helping me during this difficult time. I'd especially like to thank my Higher Power for another chance at life. **SERGIO S.**



In Service: MY EXPERIENCE AS A GREETER

KAREN L., GREETER, 7:30 P.M., TUESDAYS, LGBT CENTER

Love as service is at the core of our Traditions. It's what allows the program to work. Addiction is a disease of isolation. Loving gestures help us to break out of isolation.

I personally have received the multiple benefits of giving love as service by greeting members at the door. As people walk in, I welcome them with a smile and a hug. I ask

them how they're doing. I tell them about the free cookies and donuts at the back table.

The love I experienced inspired me to become a member of CMA rather than remain a welcomed guest.

There is an abundance of daily opportunities to give love as service. You can say hi to the person next to you at a meeting. You can smile

and give someone a hug before or after a meeting.

You can lend an ear to someone who needs to talk.

They say that service keeps you sober. Well, in my opinion, love as service is the best service position. Its intrinsic design leads directly to sobriety. Guess what? You're in luck, because this position is always open.

BIG BOOK from Page 1

It's been helpful for me to approach Program literature—the Big Book in particular—by keeping its context in mind. Yes, the Big Book's writing is antiquated. At times, it is absurdly so. But again, isn't the same true of Shakespeare, arguably the greatest playwright and poet in the history of the English language? The Big Book has had an impact easily likened to that of Shakespeare's writing in terms of its sheer magnitude. Millions upon millions of people have recovered because of this book.

Having little to use as a model, the pioneers of recovery had to create a new language to communicate their message. I can remember my first day in rehab when we were told we'd be having a Step meeting. I didn't have a clue what they were talking about. I had yet to learn Program-speak. They might as well have been speaking Sanskrit.

As we began to read, I immediately judged the literature's near-century-old diction as hopelessly outdated, and my prejudice against certain words (like *God*) made my opinion that much harsher.

I never noticed that it also says to choose our own God, which is initially referred to in the Steps as "a power greater than ourselves." There is enough wiggle room in these words for anyone to make it work, provided his eyes are reading rather than rolling. That flexibility and openness to interpretation is intentional, and it is peppered throughout Program literature. Given when the Big Book was written, this flexibility must have sounded jarring. A lot of people, rather than thinking it old-fashioned and rigid, considered these texts to be radical.

One particularly archaic-sounding chapter is "To Wives." But even this portion, reflective of

the period's views toward women (which AA's founders had nothing to do with creating or nurturing), opens with the following in the second sentence: "But what we have said applies quite as much to women. Our activities in behalf of women who drink are on the increase." Consider also these words from the chapter's second paragraph: "But for every man who drinks, others are involved... the mother and father who see their son wasting away. Among us are wives, relatives and friends." The chapter may be called "To Wives," but it opens by addressing a much wider segment of society.

With all of the other Twelve Step fellowships that exist, the basic message of recovery has been rewritten over and over. It's the same in any language and applies to any addiction. It transcends the limitations of words. Like the world, the Program doesn't need words to be what it is. *It just is*, and it is something so powerful that no words, I believe, can do it justice. How many times have you heard someone say, "I don't know how it works—it just works?"

As addicts, we need to find the resources that work best for ourselves as we continue to grow in our sober lives. Those of us who judge the Big Book based on its linguistic style—and are, therefore, unable to read it with an open mind—rob themselves of the opportunity to learn from the founders of our Program. Their writing can be inelegant, as everyone's often is, but these words were the first to help people recover from our incurable, progressive and fatal disease. Because of the book they wrote, we not only have the chance to save our lives but to make our lives worth living. We can finally fill what we clumsily call "the God-shaped hole" with something other than crustal meth and self-hatred. **MIKE M.**

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7 I entered the Rooms wary of the Big Book and the BB Study meeting.

At the same time, I was intrigued by the cool guys being enthusiastic about the Big Book, to the extent of even taking it out openly to read on the subway! To this day, I am less than diligent about reading my Big Book, but I have always enjoyed and benefited from the BB Study meeting.

8 I'm thankful to finally be working the Steps, rather than just sharing

about how difficult they are for me—an excuse to do very little. Being unwilling to follow suggestions promptly is a behavior that no longer works for me. I'm working to release my resentments, including toward organized religion. I'm particularly grateful for the wisdom of my sponsor, who helps me avoid entanglements of ego and self-will run amok. This lets me integrate the resulting spiritual freedom into my daily life.

9 My tools and resources in recovery have included CMA, therapy,

group sessions, a support network of concerned and loving CMA family, wonderful sponsors, long-time colleagues, caring providers and other friends. My therapist has described all this to me as having "all the guns firing." Yes, recovery does take commitment and diligent work. The rewards of doing so bring unexpected pleasures and continued progress, which is often hard for me to see. I have worked hard to regain a sense of purpose, replacing the void that crystal meth created. Meth had me for lunch before I even knew I was on the menu. Now I want to smell the roses. I am realizing that my relationships are most important—and the only things that will truly matter at the end of my life. **JIM H.**

Shortly after writing this article, the author celebrated two years of continuous sobriety.

EXPERIENCE
STRENGTH
AND HOPE

Q: When referring to Program service, what does being "a trusted servant" mean to you? A: I think of myself as more of a trusted custodian. The group's conscience has put me in the position of being of service to the group. This means that I should put the group's needs before mine in what I've been entrusted to do. I consider it an honor to be proud of, not prideful of. **JEFF G.**

MEETINGS

SUNDAY

- 9:00 AM **Pier Meeting**++++ End of the Christopher Street Pier
 9:15 AM **Sunday Solutions**(c) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 1:30 PM **Getting It** 46th Street Clubhouse
 6:00 PM **Step Meeting** (o)[†] Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 7:30 PM **Beginner's Basics** (c) Lesbian & Gay Community Center

MONDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 6:00 PM **Relapse Prevention**(o) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 7:30 PM **Juntos En Sobriedad**+++ Gay Men's Health Crisis
 8:00 PM **NA Book Study** (o) Realization Center
 8:30 PM **59th Street Bridge Back to Life** 36-01 31st Ave., #4D - Astoria, Queens

TUESDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 6:00 PM **Recovering Together** (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 7:30 PM **New York Group No. 1: Beginners** (o) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:00 PM **Long-Term Sobriety** Gay Men's Health Crisis
 9:15 PM **Midtown Miracles** (o) 46th Street Clubhouse

WEDNESDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 5:15 PM **Recovery for I.V. Drug Users** Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
 6:30 PM **Tools for Beginners** (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 6:30 PM **Solutions in Recovery** (c) Callen-Lorde Health Center
 7:00 PM **CMA Uptown** (o) William Ryan Health Center
 8:00 PM **Conscious Contact/11th Step** (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis

THURSDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 6:30 PM **CMA Agnostics** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 6:30 PM **As Bill Sees It** (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 8:00 PM **Big Book Study** (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis

FRIDAY

- 7:45 AM **Good Morning, Higher Power** (c) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 6:15 PM **Living With HIV** (c) Callen-Lorde Health Center
 8:00 PM **Crystal Clear** (o) Gay Men's Health Crisis
 8:30 PM **The O'Toole Meeting** (c) St. Vincent's O'Toole Building

SATURDAY

- 8:30 AM **Pier Meeting**++++ End of the Christopher Street Pier
 5:00 PM **Promises** Manhattan Plaza Health Club
 9:15 AM **Saturday Solutions** (c) Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 8:00 PM **Meditation Meeting** (c)++++ Lesbian & Gay Community Center
 9:30 PM **Intimacy, Relationships & Sex in Sobriety** (c)
 Lesbian & Gay Community Center

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER



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Submissions and Comments: P.O. Box 1517, Old Chelsea Station, New York, N.Y. 10113; e-mail: info@nycma.org; fax: 212-777-4957; phone: 212-642-5029 **Crystal Meth Anonymous:** Crystal Meth Anonymous is a Twelve Step fellowship for those with a desire to stop using crystal meth. Crystal Clear, the newsletter of NYCMA, is published periodically. We reserve the right to refuse submissions and to edit for clarity and space and to avoid triggering the reader. No compensation will be paid for any submissions. According to our Tenth Tradition, CMA has no opinions on outside issues. Opinions expressed in articles are solely those of the writers and do not speak for CMA as a whole. The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of CMA have been adapted with permission from AA World Services Inc. CMA is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous. Illustrations and photographs are printed with permission.

BUSINESS MEETINGS The following are suggestions based on or experience. Each group is autonomous and conducts business according to its own group conscience. **Why do we need business meetings?** Business meetings take care of logistics necessary to keep a meeting going. Business meetings help ensure CMA meeting time is dedicated to recovery, not business details. **What gets addressed at a business meeting?** Business meetings often address matters such as [finances, format, scripts, Intergroup involvement and service positions]. **What are the responsibilities of the Chair and Secretary during a business meeting?** Business meetings are usually led by the Chair of the most recent regular meeting. The Secretary takes notes or keeps minutes. It's a good idea to put any notes from business meetings in a folder or notebook, so there is a record, especially when it comes to motions that have been passed or tabled. The Chair cannot make a motion, second a motion, call to question, or offer a pro or con. The Chair does not vote, except to break a tie. When a tie occurs, it is suggested that the Chair vote for the status quo, but it is the Chair's prerogative to vote as he or she wishes. The Secretary can make motions, vote and otherwise participate like any other member. Chairs, Secretaries and other members should announce an upcoming business meeting at least a week in advance. **Who can attend a business meeting?** It is customary in CMA to include all who are interested in a group's business meeting. Many of us choose not to vote at meetings of groups we do not attend regularly, since we might not be aware of those groups' practices and needs.

—Excerpted from the NYCMA pamphlet titled "Business Meetings"



MEETING DETAILS

[†]The last Sunday of every month is a Traditions meeting. +++Meeting is conducted in Spanish +++Please try to arrive on time so as not to interrupt the silent-meditation portion of the meeting. +++Weather permitting through October **(o) Open Meeting:** Welcomes anyone interested in the CMA program. **(c) Closed meeting:** Welcomes anyone who has, or thinks he or she might have, a problem with crystal meth.

DIRECTIONS

- **46thStreet Clubhouse** 252 West 46th Street, between 7th and 8th avenues
- **Callen-Lorde Community Health Center** 356 West 18th Street, between 8th & 9th avenues. Check at front desk for room number.
- **Gay Men's HealthCrisis** 119 West 24th Street, between 6th and 7th avenues. Check at front desk for room number.
- **lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Community Services Center** 208 West 13th Street, between 7th and 8th avenues. Check listings at front desk for room number.
- **Manhattan Plaza HealthClub** 482 West 43rd Street, Conference Room Minnesota 1.
- **St. Vincent's O'Toole Building** 203 West 12th Street, Sixth Floor, Large Conference Room
- **Realization Center** 19 Union Square West, Seventh Floor
- **William Ryan Health Center** 110 West 97th Street, between Columbus and Amsterdam