

District 8 Newsletter Web Version

Names and finances removed to preserve anonymity

Minutes	p. 2,3,4
Positions	p. 5
Meeting News	p. 5
My group	p. 6,7
Personal story	p. 8
Gotta laugh	p. 9

An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*



This issue contains **minutes of District Committee meetings** for the previous month.

If it has a **gold box** around it, it's from the minutes.

That includes **reports from the DCM, committee chairs, and GSRS.**



There will be a description of one **District position** and a short bio of the person elected to that job.

If there is important information to pass on about **AA as a whole**, that will be included.



There is also room for **personal stories.**



One will be included per issue and only have a name with permission.

There will be **District news and events**



And finally, the **Gotta Laugh** section.



If this sounds like fun and you are an AA member, we can put you on the [distribution list](#). Please contact newsletter@cowichanaa.ca.

Telephone answering
service: 250-597-3282

Tidbits from the May minutes, indicated by a gold box.

Any deletions represented by...

DCM Report:

This is what we AAs of District 8 are a part of: According to estimates as of Dec 31, 2020, the General Service Office, based in New York provided the following numbers based on estimates from listed Groups and autonomous General Service Offices in approximately 180 countries. (The GSO in New York does not keep membership records.) Our worldwide numbers are an estimated 2,138,201 members in 129,790 groups. The United States and Canada together have 1,525,043.

Yes, we are part of a large lifesaving fellowship, and we must do our part to maintain it.

District 8 at this time has 13 active groups with 5 meetings suspended or closed.

Changes brought about by Covid-19 and its variants have very much affected us. As you are aware change is almost a constant at District and group level. As individuals we may understand what may be called Covid Fatigue but we also show up as much as possible to do our jobs here at District. We have certainly been affected but we do "Stay the Course..." thanks to you all. I ask you to recognize this positive despite all else. The business of District 8 continues to get done.

At this meeting we will hopefully set a date and get ready for a District Service workshop. I confess that at first I was quite excited and had the makings of a large scale convention but trimmed it to a simpler format to what we have previously done here in District 8. I would also ask you if you would like another Workshop planned or a fun event like a Soiree before we get into summer activities. We could address this in our June Meeting. I think it fair to suggest that we all need to laugh more. We also need to attract more members to get involved with service work. This message needs to be consistently carried to the groups of our District.

I will be placing in our June Agenda provision for a discussion of job descriptions at the District level. Other than basic requirements we have never done that. It would help new people to make decisions about how they would seek to serve. It may well be a lively discussion as we work out a consensus regarding how detailed to get. Please give this some thought before June 8th.

Please monitor our Website for Service and Speaker Events coming up.



OLD BUSINESS:

MOTION: To take over the Brownbaggers' Zoom account... Carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Future Speaker Meeting or Next District Event: Member reported that there will not be a rally, but maybe we could organize an event.

Getting the Word Out About Changes: Member shared a concern. She is hearing that community members don't know about the Alano Club moving... Getting the word has been more challenging than previous, and because the District does not currently have a Public Information person. One member has done some outreach. Another member...to go along with member to the RCMP. Member will make sure there is a sign about the move up at the old Alano Club.



COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Archives: Newly elected chair

Corrections: Newly elected chair

Meeting Directories: Newly elected chair Having served as a temporary Meeting Directories chair, member reported that she has worked on a job description for the position. She offers to help the newly elected Meeting Directories chair learn the job.

Newsletter: Chair reported that ... she has received feedback that it's informative and fun...

She brought forth a concern regarding the responsibility for printing the newsletter...this is an opportunity for service for members who have printers...as part of their 7th offering, but not ...mandatory or a way for the District to avoid the expense of printing.

She also invited volunteers to join her to learn and produce the newsletter.

The web version of the Newsletter has not received any negative comments. She is gathering emails of people who wish to be sent the Newsletter... and there is an announcement indicating this in the last Newsletter.

Telephone Answering Service: Chair: There were 6 calls in April. Two for information and one was reaching out. Three calls were hang-ups.

Webmaster: The website gets about 20 visitors a day. The Meeting webpage is the most popular. The newsletter was downloaded 15 times. Two 12 step calls have come through the website.



GSR REPORTS:

Brown Baggers: GSR ... they are continuing to meet in-person and via Zoom. They have 3-6 people meet in person and 3-5 meet via Zoom. They have 3 new members and they are getting newcomers.

Cheminus Wednesday Night: GSR ... a member, who had 64... died today at age 94 years...they meet Wednesday and Sunday in-person at 7 pm. Attendance is up to 10 people... Two birthdays in May... 4 years and ... 24 years.

Courage to Change: GSR ... 7-8 people regularly attend. They have a newcomer. They are meeting at Sylvan United Church. Irene is the new treasurer. This meeting has amalgamated with the HUB.



Cowichan Station: GSR. ... they are meeting in hybrid fashion... 6-8 persons meet in-person at the HUB and 6 join via Zoom [157 308 586; password is hubaa]. The ... space can take up to 20 people in-person. The first Thursday of the month is an open meeting dedicated to birthday celebrations. In May, one member will celebrate 29 years and another will celebrate 2 years.

Hump Day United: GSR has resigned as GSR and there is no report.

Lifeline Lake Cowichan: GSR ... the group is still meeting Thursdays and Mondays in-person. Generally, 5-10 people attend. They see newcomers pop-in.

Quamichan Step Study: GSR reported the group continues to meet via Zoom on Thursdays at 7 pm. Regular attendance is 7. Visitors from other parts of the world and treatment attend. They will be discussing an in-person and Zoom hybrid... One...is celebrating 12 years in May; Another ... 35 years.

Saturday Morning Women's: GSR ... 6-12 people attend the Saturday meeting in-person at Duncan United Church and 6-12 are attending the Thursday night Zoom meeting. A member is celebrating 44 years in May. In June, another member will celebrate 40 years and another will celebrate 7 years. The group formed an ad hoc outreach committee. This committee is contacting members who haven't been attending over the past year. GSR asked the group about service and the feedback was that people are feeling overwhelmed.

Sisters of Sobriety: GSR (see report for Saturday Morning Women's Meeting above)

Stepping Stones: GSR reported the group continues to meet on Zoom with attendance of 18-20 people. Member will celebrate 39 years in May.

The Solution: The newly elected GSR, reported that this meeting has been restarted... They are meeting in-person and via Zoom on Mondays and Fridays at 6:30 pm... in-person... at the new Alano Club, 450 Whistler Street...

Traditionally Yours: GSR reported that the group has been meeting face-to-face since the end of December 2020... at St. John's Anglican Church on Jubilee Street Sundays at 2PM and reads from The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions for discussion topics. This meeting is managing but attendance is sporadic:...Please mention this group...to encourage attendance...the meeting may have to be closed.

Wednesday Women Heart to Heart: GSR ... the group meets at St. John's Church and that attendance ranges from 6-12 persons.

Saturday Morning Men's Group: GSR ... this meeting is doing well... at the Alano Club on Saturdays at 9:30 am... both in-person and via Zoom...

OTHER REPORTS:

Rally: Member reports that there is not to be a Rally this year... Three members will join with organizing member to investigate the feasibility of doing something in its place... They urge members to ask their groups their thoughts.



Service Opportunities

There are 3 empty chairs at our district 8 table and one exciting opportunity for a techy kind of person in area 79. To check these out, go to cowichanaa.ca.

Positions

You can find out about each position and the person in it by reading this place every month

Grapevine Chair

A.A. Grapevine: The job is to familiarize members with the Fellowship's international journal, A.A. Grapevine, and the enhancements to sobriety the magazines offer. The magazines contain articles written by A.A. members based upon their personal experiences; discussion topics; regular features; and a calendar of special A.A. events. GVRs participate in the activities of their area's Grapevine committee, announce the arrival of new magazines at the group each month, encourage members to submit articles and illustrations, and explain how members can order their own subscriptions.



The AA Group: Where it all begins. (https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-16_theaagroup.pdf)

Grapevine Chair:

I was introduced to the Grapevine magazine in my very early sobriety. I was at a meeting and my sponsor handed me a couple to borrow from a table set up there. I didn't know it at the time, but that little magazine was going to be my lifeline to A.A. that first year. A month and a half after my last relapse, I was very ill and diagnosed with a severe auto-immune disorder. I spent the next months in and out of hospital, a lot of the time unable to attend in-person meetings. But I loved the stories I had read in the Grapevine and signed up for a two-year subscription. I looked forward every month to receiving my magazine, wrapped in a black nondescript plastic cover. I learned about our program through their journeys, connected to the way they described their feelings before and after discovering A.A. I read my almost exact story in a Grapevine. It gave me hope. It is easy to break one out when I am having a hard day or hand one off to a newcomer. Once I was introduced to service, I knew what I wanted to do - become a Grapevine Chair. I feel passionate about sharing this little message of hope wrapped up in our magazine to those suffering, just like I was in the beginning. Being a Grapevine Chair has been just as wonderful as I imagined it. It hasn't required a ton of time, and I am having so much fun! I am very grateful for the life I am living today, some of my health has returned and I am sober. I owe this in part to the Grapevine magazine, which inspired me to keep going that first (really tough) year.

In gratitude and service.

Meeting news: Check this spot monthly for updates and changes to meetings

Traditionally Yours has paused for the summer due to low attendance. They hope to resume in the fall.

Grassroots has now registered and have a GSR! They meet odd days at the park on Chesterfield St.

All meetings are listed at cowichanaa.ca and regularly updated but we know not everybody checks there so we will also post updates here. Please let admin@cowichanaa.ca know of any changes asap.

WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT MY GROUP?

For the next few issues, we are asking representatives from various groups to tell us what they like about their group and why they would recommend it to others. We recognize and celebrate each group's autonomy and unique spirit and want to hear about yours. Some reports are long and involve several members, and some are short. That doesn't matter. We will fit them in as they arrive. If you think your group is great, let us know and we will tell everyone.

Email newsletter@cowichanaa.ca



Member for Courage to Change

The group was started in 2018. We quickly had 8 members and the spring and summer meetings had up to 20 guests at times. Even though the numbers declined in 2019 to the point that there were only 2 active members we continued to keep the doors open every Tuesday for most of 2020. The group has sustained itself and even thrived throughout the pandemic. That's commitment! Throughout the pandemic the group has always maintained a presence and an open door, though zoom was never a possibility. Then we joined with Tuesday Happy Hour and are up to about 7 to 8 active members meeting every Tuesday at the Sylvain United Church, Shawnigan. We even have had a newcomer attend regularly for the past seven weeks. We make sure we try to keep people safe by asking about their health when they come in, we mandate mask wearing, set the tables up so people are 2 meters apart, and have people come in single file through one door and out another. I keep coming back because it is the closest meeting to my house and I also love the fellowship connection. The personalities are part of it, but it's that feeling of coming back to home that keeps me coming back. I go to other meetings three times a week but this is my home.

Three women speak for Saturday Morning Women

Woman 1: I volunteered to be a driver to pick up women from a treatment centre, bring them to the meeting, and then return them. I had heard it was a great meeting, but I really wasn't into this women's only kind of thing. I did this for probably half a year, and then I decided to find a new home group. I decided to go with the Saturday A.M. group. I liked that they had the treatment centre women with such early sobriety and they celebrated that by giving out stones with inspiring words on them. I also loved that there is so much long-term sobriety and many of the women of the valley came to that meeting even though they weren't members. I was welcomed with open arms and was made to feel such a part of the group! I have come to love the Women's meeting for so many reasons. It feels like family and I have so much love and support from these ladies! I have never had an inkling to leave this group! We are truly there for one purpose; to help the alcoholic who still suffers!

Woman 2: When the pandemic happened, I was in a lull where I didn't have a home group because the one I had didn't do Zoom. In the last year or so I have had a breakthrough of the wall I had regarding women. Before that I struggled to trust women and it wasn't until I made an amend to someone that I felt that wall come down. I realized how much support I need as a mother and who gets that more than other women. I finally decided to attend when they began offering Zoom meetings and immediately felt at home. The time is good for me too; Saturday Mornings at 10:30. When the group went on Zoom it helped with keeping me connected. When we started back in-person, we followed guidelines of the church where we meet. We wear masks, come in one door and out another, hand sanitizer, a contact list, and proper spacing. The baby can't get the vaccine and I have to keep both of us safe. The main thing for me is that I feel safe in this meeting, I don't feel judged for past poor decisions, I can be authentic in myself. I also have never had a home group where people actually check in on me. That makes me feel safe and at home and able to be of service. One of the ways I do that is I am the chair of our outreach committee. Participants who want to reach out to people went through our contact list and phoned people we hadn't seen in a while. If there are any problems, such as with Zoom, we can support them. We had such a great response we decided to keep doing it. Another great thing about our group is that because women from the treatment centre couldn't come during the pandemic, our group has provided them with a Grapevine subscription.

Woman 3: I wasn't good with women either when I started out with AA. I joined because I thought it was important to join a group, and I have never regretted it. I've been a member for about nine years now. I have found the women's group to be my saving grace. It doesn't matter what I share or how bad I feel or how good I feel, they support me, especially when I was in the hospital with my cancer surgery. I have found some really good, close friends in this group, and, in turn, they have taught me how to be a good friend and how to give of myself without keeping score. When the pandemic hit I thought "what do I do now?" and Zoom came along and I love it. I was not terribly computer savvy so women from my group talked me through getting on Zoom. I love the Thursday Zoom meeting. I find the sharing at that meeting wonderful and sometimes it can get really deep. Different people come to the Zoom meeting than those who come to Saturday. It's really nice to branch out and hear different literature and hear people's take on it. I'm hoping that it continues even after we are all back to in-person meetings. It fills a need.

The Alano Club Depends on Memberships To Keep the Doors Open



**PURCHASING A CLUB MEMBERSHIP NOT ONLY GIVES YOU
REDUCED CONCESSION PRICES AND ACCESS TO SPECIAL EVENTS
BUT IT ALSO ALLOWS YOU TO BE PART OF
THE COWICHAN VALLEY'S 12 STEP SUPPORT COMMUNITY**

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT "YOU"

PLEASE HELP AND BUY A MEMBERSHIP

Phone or text Judy S. at 250-710-7741

or email: sullivan687@msn.com

The name and contact information in this poster were used with permission.

A Personal Story: Orlando S. (Name used with permission)

I'm Orlando and I am an alcoholic.

This has been a strange year to be in recovery. This has, in many ways, been the most strange and challenging year for me, (short of my first year). The first few months of Covid I felt completely cut off and so greatly missed the fellowship of AA. I used the phone to stay in touch with friends but it's not really the same as face to face contact.

In some ways I felt like I was shriveling on the vine, but on the other hand my spiritual life was enhanced because I was forced into having a stronger dependence on God and less of a dependence on people. It seems to me that's the more healthy spiritual way: a greater dependence upon God.

I knew that I had to do something to counteract the boredom and when Zoom came along I decided to embrace the new technology (albeit somewhat begrudgingly at first). The more I did the Zoom meetings the more comfortable I became with the technology. Now I do meetings all over North America and have attended meetings in England and New Zealand.

It's been my experience that Zoom has really given a turbo-boost to my program. Hearing different messages and listening to different formats and different accents has been a whole lot of fun.

When things do in fact return to "normal" I'm sure that, like the rest of the world, AAs like me have discovered that Zoom is a very useful tool for recovery and will remain so.

Like the big book says, people went off to war and their recovery was actually stronger than the folks left at home. So what's a little pandemic if we really want sobriety?

During this challenging time, we are encouraging stories of how you coped and are coping during COVID. What kept you sober, how do you find fellowship, how has your relationship with technology changed or been challenged? Any personal story is welcome, and, of course, you can write about anything else that is on your heart. Keep the focus on your recovery. Editing will be with your permission and only for the sake of brevity, anonymity, and propriety. Send them to newsletter@cowichanaa.ca.

What does love mean? Here's what some 4 to 8-year-olds think:

'When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore, so my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love.' Rebecca - 8

'Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and just listen.' Bobby - 7

'Love is when Mommy gives Daddy the best piece of chicken.' Elaine - 5

'You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.' Jessica - 8

Gotta Laugh

There was an elderly couple who noticed that they were getting a lot more forgetful, so they decided to go to the doctor. The doctor told them that they should start writing things down so they don't forget.

They went home and the old lady told her husband to get her a bowl of ice cream. "You might want to write it down," she said.

The husband said, "No, I can remember that you want a bowl of ice cream."

She then told her husband she wanted a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream. "Write it down," she told him.

Again he said, "No, no, I can remember: you want a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream."

Then the old lady said she wants a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream and a cherry on top. "Write it down," she told her husband.

He said, "No, I got it. You want a bowl of ice cream with whipped cream and a cherry on top." So he goes to get the ice cream and spends an unusually long time in the kitchen, over 30 minutes. He comes out to his wife and hands her a plate of eggs and bacon.

The old wife stares at the plate for a moment, then looks at her husband and asks, "Where's the toast?"

