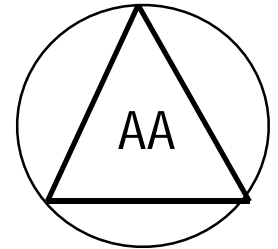


ArenA

The newsletter of Continental European Region

CER is one of the 16 Regions in the
Service Structure of Great Britain

Summer `06



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My Home Group

The next few paragraphs are designed to be part of the history of just another AA Group in just another Intergroup... to most of you it will be anyway, but to me it is the story of my home group, the Karlsruhe Open Arms Group, and how I arrived here.

I have been intending to put this down on paper for quite a while now; procrastination played a big part in me not doing it, but today, the 20th of May 2006 it seems to be more than a necessity because on the 19th of June the last meeting will be held in the premises I have come to know and love...yes, Love...so well.

We are not closing down, nothing so melodramatic, we are just moving. The church we are in is being sold; we have been offered a new place in a different church though. As I said the church is being sold and the rumour goes that it is to become a chicken farm in the not too distant future. It seems that eggs sell better than religion. I hasten to add that this is a rumour and personally don't believe a word of it.

I intend to remain anonymous but this might change as the story goes on. But first of all, how I came to Germany.

I was born in Stoke-on-Trent in England and came to Germany on the 3rd of June, 1978. I came across as a Bricklayer, if you are British you might remember a television series called "Auf Wiedersehen, Pet"... That was me, and yes, all the stories are true. I lived and worked around the Bad Oeynhausen area, which is not far from Bielefeld, Hannover, 70kms away, and Paderborn, about 100.

On March 3rd 1999, I came down to Karlsruhe for the first time in my life on my way to the Clinic in Bad Herrenalb, the famous Walther Lechler clinic, where I was to spend the next 11 weeks. I was an Alcoholic, very depressive and pretty f**** up, if you will forgive my language.

I was already a member of the German AA Fellowship and was attending the three Meetings in the Clinic and the local one in Bad Herrenalb itself. People were also telling me that there was an English Speaking AA Meeting in Karlsruhe, which was 45 minutes away by tram. Fear being part of my life I decided to pay no attention to these very caring people and carry on with the German Speaking AA I knew, and left it at that.

Five weeks later I had plucked up enough courage to call a telephone number on a flyer and arrange to meet. It was Elly. I arrived at Karlsruhe Railway Station and there she was, this big blonde German lady who later became my Traditions Sponsor.

At the meeting was also Christian, now my sponsor, Blacky, Wolfgang and Derek; the topic was Serenity and I was given a Big Book...in English.

It seemed to me that my Higher Power was higher in the English language and that he really meant business. Although I had been with the German Fellowship for about a year, I felt as if I was only now beginning to understand what this 12 Step Program was all about. It was about getting your finger out of your Bum and working the Steps...ACTION.

I was hooked, to put it mildly, and this was a feeling of finally arriving at a place I wanted to be, needed to be and was intended to be. There comes a term to mind now of "The Road of Happy Destiny"...very appropriate.

This was not Kansas, Toto, and certainly not Stoke-on-Trent, but it sure enough felt like home.

I was released from the Clinic on the 21st of May, 1999 and made my way back home in Bad Oeynhausen with the intention of sorting out things concerning my marriage - we were splitting up; my house—I was trying to sell it; and people— making some amends to friends and whomever I was willing enough to make amends to at that time, and then getting down to Karlsruhe to start my new life.

It took a bit longer than I would have liked but I moved down to sort out a place to live on October 3rd, and finally moved into my apartment in Bad Herrenalb on the 21st of November, 1999.

From May to November every Monday evening at 20.00 hours I would sit with my English Big Book in my German farm house in Bad Oeynhausen and imagine I was sitting with my new friends at the Open Arms Group. In June I painted a silk scarf and sent it to them saying that I was thinking of them all. When I arrived there after moving down the scarf had been put in a frame and was waiting for me to hang

Next Region Meeting

- When: Sept. 9th & 10th
- Where: Parnassia, De Perponcherstraat 103, 2518 SR, The Hague
- For further details contact the region secretary via Email aa-secretary@aa-europe.net or your Region Rep.
- All observers welcome

on the wall.

So that's it basically, a short and I hope sweet story of an alcoholic finding his Home Group and today, the 21st of May, 2006 I am pretty much cheesed off that we have to say goodbye to our rooms. Same old story again of not wanting to change? Probably.

But change we must and there are lots of memories still left to put down on paper, like our 25 year Anniversary and the friends that have left us over the years.

I have learned to say now that Blacky and Bodo are waiting for us with a pot full of coffee, but I do so hope that it is tea that is in the pot.

Thanks for reading, best wishes and AA Love from a very, very grateful Alcoholic. SS

Karlsruhe Open Arms Group now meets on
Monday, 19.00 -20.00 hrs
Philippus Gemeindehaus
Am Anger 6b in Karlsruhe

0. Guilt was our Step Zero ... and we screwed it.
1. Just for today I will not pick up the first fatal glass, whether it comes in the form of an alcoholic drink or as misery manufactured in the mind.
2. I now believe that only a power infinitely greater and wiser than myself can free me from the insanities of alcohol and depression.
3. Entrusting myself absolutely to Amida's protection and care, I move out of the driving seat, sit back and enjoy the view.
4. I pause and take a look at myself. Am I sheltering behind the smokescreen of perfection? Are fear and unwillingness at the root of my inertia? What about the program of action!?!?!?
5. I will try to be absolutely honest about myself with another person as soon as the opportunity arises. I will make sure this person knows how I am feeling.
6. "I can't handle this – please help me."
7. May the discomfort I now feel be replaced by joy of the dharma and a trouble-free mind. Be the light of hope at the end of my tunnel.
8. Meditating upon the many beautiful bridges I have burned, the longing to make restitution arises. Forgiveness on both sides is only a step away.
9. High on the list of those I have harmed, I look into the mirror and say "I love you, Marcus, I do love you, I really do love you" - with a big smile.
10. I will treat myself lovingly today and avoid the perilous traps my mind sets for me. Happiness and enjoyment are among my most important goals.
11. Amida brought me to AA and AA brought me to Amida. AA and Amida are two sides of the same medal. I will proudly wear this medal on my chest.
12. Awakened and uplifted, my thoughts turn to another manic-depressive, to another alcoholic. Caring through sharing is a key to my sobriety.

MC

DESIDERATA

When my daughter became pregnant, I did not dare to believe I would really get a grandchild; alcoholic as I am I was convinced it would go wrong. When she was 5 months pregnant, my daughter gave me a "grandma-book". It had all kind of questions, like

- What did you play with when you were young?
- Did you have a bedroom and a bed by yourself?
- Where did you go to school?

Besides that, it had space for photographs. Of course I left the book untouched for another two months.

When she reached seven months I told myself: "It looks like there will be a baby coming out, so... homework for you to do". I also recalled that my daughter had often complained that I never told stories about my youth. For 59 years I had been convinced I had a dramatic youth, so I never wanted to talk about it. My fourth Step finally restored these insane ideas, so also on this front there were amends to make. I intended to put extra efforts into the grandma-book, so I could make up a little bit.

I started writing down things and selecting photographs. Then an article I had about my father occurred to me. Also I remembered that the history of the house we had lived in had once been put on paper. It had been built by the grandfather of my father, six generations older than my grandchild. When I was giving him or her a book, I could not leave out these stories and these papers, I thought. The oldest photograph in the paper was of my grandfather.

The little grandma-book of course became too small, and I bought a big blank photograph album and I started it with: "I am Jacqueline, I am your grandmother (the mother of your mother). I am 62 years old, and I am going to tell you about your family". From there I worked backwards, filling the whole book with stories, photographs, drawings and history. Two days before the baby was due, it was ready.

Nine days later F..... was born. So I wrote on the first page: "For F.....". Then I thought: "What it needs is a nice saying, or poem, to start it off". In our morning meetings we always read the Desiderata. Though it is not

AA-approved literature, we all love it, so it is not surprising that the Desiderata came to mind. It was still there after two days, so I wrote:

*You are a child of the universe
No less than the trees or the stars.
You have a right to be here.
And whether or not it is clear to you
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it
should.*

The last question of the grandma-book had been: "Do you have an advice for your grandchild?" To myself I thought: "My mother was stubborn, I was called stubborn, I've called my daughter stubborn, so my grandchild certainly won't listen to any advice. He will want to find out himself." But again the Desiderata presented itself in my mind, and after a lot of hesitation I wrote:

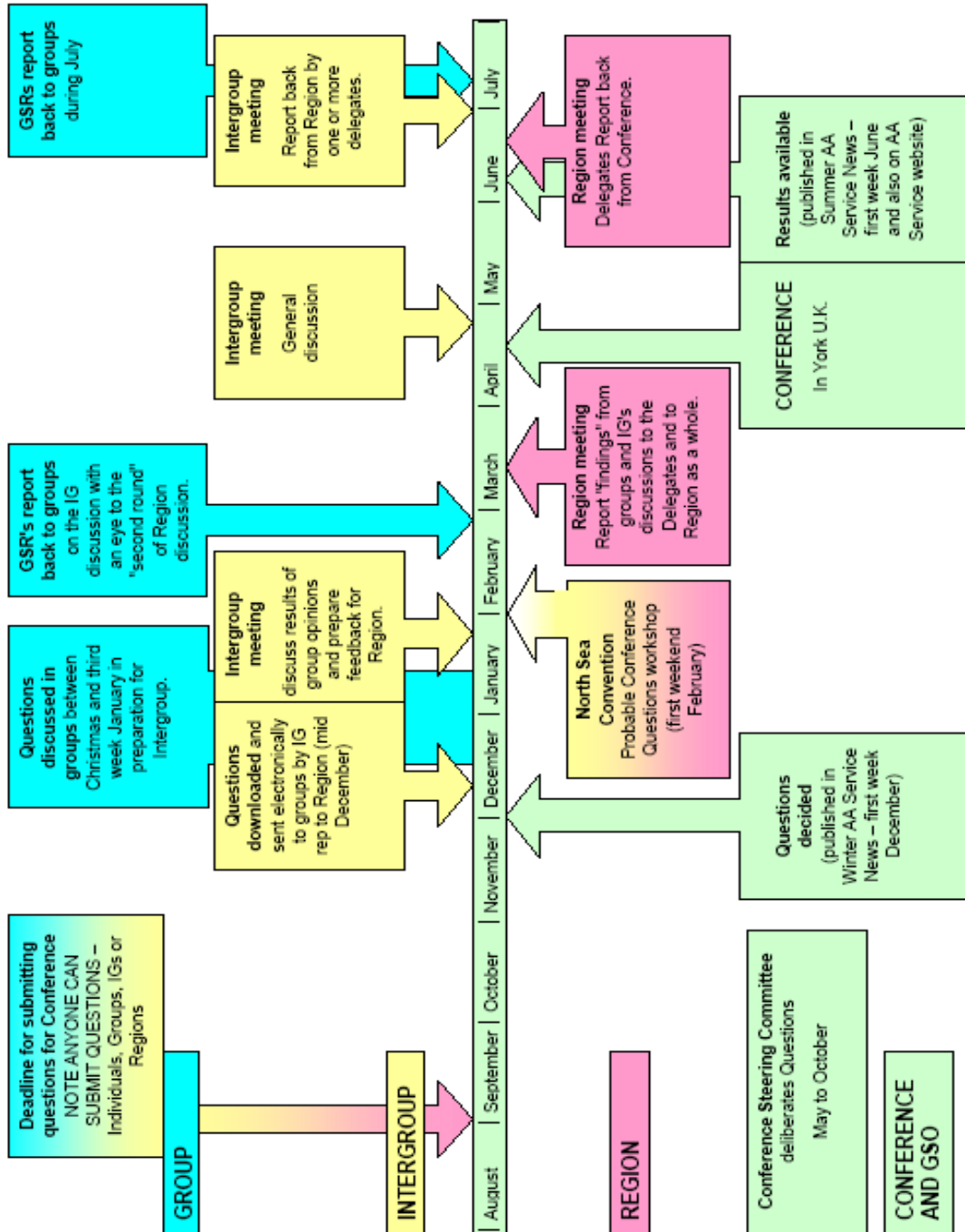
*Therefore be at peace with God,
whatever you conceive Him to be,
and whatever your labors and aspirations,
in the noisy confusion of life keep peace
with your soul.*

My daughter said she cried several times when reading the grandma-book.

CONFERENCE QUESTIONS

How? What? When? Where? Why?

Timeline for Conference Questions and Discussions relating to them



Prepared for NL Intergroup June 2008

Intergroup The Netherlands has developed the above timeline to help them understand the procedures and timeframe involved in dealing with Conference Questions. Hopefully this will give people an idea of when and how the whole thing works and perhaps other IGs can pick up on the idea.

What IS Conference?

We distinguish between Conference the body, made up of delegates from all Regions that make up the service structure in Great Britain and English-speaking Continental Europe, representing the fellowship, and Conference the event - the one full and two half days every year in April when these delegates convene.

The role of Conference the body vis-à-vis the General Service Board and the General Service Office is set forth in the Conference Charter. The order of events and content to be dealt with at Conference the event is set forth by the Conference Steering Committee. It picks questions and issues to be discussed, submitted from throughout the fellowship each year; they determine – in conjunction with the General Service Board – how much time the Board needs for its reports; in short: they try to make maximum use of the time allotted and try to pick the topics the fellowship wants/needs to discuss most.

Some of the issues are discussed in Conference Committees (made up of one delegate from each of the 16 regions) and then presented to Conference as a whole for acceptance or non-acceptance; some issues come up when the General Service Board members give reports on their activities for information to the fellowship and if the latter's consent is deemed necessary for voting; and some are brought up in the time for open discussion.

(Source: Committee 2 Delegate's Report, IS)

Useful Facts:

Region Bank Account: Account Name: Steven Blake
Bank: Kreissparkasse Bitburg-Prüm, BLZ 586 500 30 Account No. 559781
Swift / BIC: MALADE51BIT l.B.A.N.: DE97 5865 0030 0000 5597 81

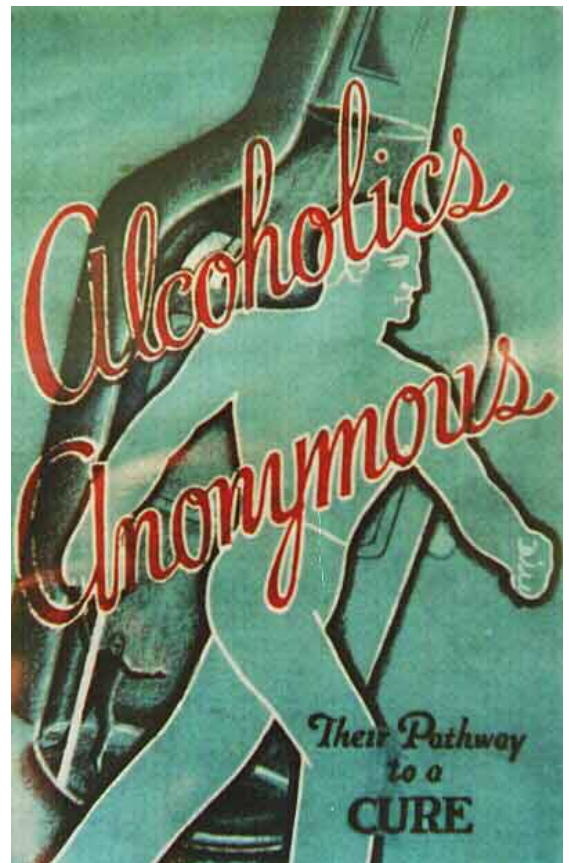
Newsletter Contributions: arenaguys@gmx.de

Future Events (full details on Website)

Sept 1st-3rd	"The Great Reality" 3rd Berlin Convention, Berlin
Sept 22nd-24th	"Steps to Freedom" 13th Annual AA Convention in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia (local language with English meetings)
Oct 18th – 22nd	"Head for the Med" 2006 Costa Brava International AA Convention
Nov 3rd – 5th	"The Road to Freedom", Nice, France. www.aariviera.org or Email: NiceConvention06@aol.com
Nov 3rd – 5th	"The 12 Steps – What are the Results?" 12th Annual Hessen Roundup, Bleichenbach, Germany.
Dec 1st-3rd	"Let Go Absolutely" Fuengirola, Costa del Sol, Spain Email: jasonb747@hotmail.com
Feb 2nd-4th	"We Can" 18th Triborders Convention Ostend, Belgium

An rejected draft for the cover of the 1st Edition of the Big Book.

Courtesy:
Mitchell K.



Region Website:
www.aa-europe.net

A Delegate Prepares for Conference

Prior to Conference, I did the suggested book work: the GB Service Manual, The World Service Handbook, AA Comes of Age, Pass It On, and Doctor Bob and the Good Old timers. Other reading included the Final Conference Reports from 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2005, the Conference Digest, and previous CER Delegate reports I had available. Additionally, I kept up with the Conference Questions Forum on the AA Service website.

Of all that I read, I found the books on the early days of our Fellowship the most helpful. They helped me realise that there aren't many new or unique situations that haven't come up before and allowed me to understand the purpose and spirit behind Conference.

I attended a Conference Question meeting at the North Sea Convention, and heard members views on the Questions at the Hessen and Tri-Borders IG's as well as the February CER meeting.

(Source: Committee 5 Delegate's Report, DA)