

# THE CONNECTION

Winter 2023

Connecting the Barrington and Lake Zurich A.A. community with news, stories and articles of hope and inspiration



Visit [www.barringtonaa.org](http://www.barringtonaa.org) – For information about local meetings and AA assistance or contacts call our 24/7 answering service - 847-382-4455

*This is a story received from a fellow recovering alcoholic. Reprinted with permission by David O./Illinois*

## THE BOLOGNA SANDWICH



I was born in Chicago in May of 1959, fourth oldest of five children. My mother and father were born of European immigrants, neither graduating high school. Ours was a hard-working middle class Catholic family. My father had joined the US Army after the attack on Pearl Harbor on his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. He saw heavy combat, was severely injured in the invasion of Sicily and was honorably discharged. I believe

this experience hardened my dad, causing him to administer quick, stern punishment throughout my childhood.

I was not quite seven years old, when on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, 1966, my oldest brother, Al, was involved in a catastrophic car crash that left him horribly disfigured with third degree burns over his entire body. Not only did it change the course of his life, it changed mine as well. As a third grader, it was almost impossible to deal with. My parents were at the hospital night and day for months, while distraught family members and friends kept watch over us.

It was the height of the Viet Nam war. My brother and his friends around the neighborhood were of draft age. They hung around our street corner nightly. Over the next few years many of them went off to war. I loved those guys and girls. I idolized them. It was fun and exciting. There was lots of beer drinking and pot and drug use. I used to be the beer runner, grabbing beers from the hidden cooler. I'd sneak one once in a while. And I liked it.

We moved a few years later, as medical bills piled up. My brother needed many skin grafts and surgeries. My parents were working or at the hospital a lot of the time. When Al was home, I hung out with him a lot. We played cards and checkers daily. And he taught me how to play chess. He didn't have many friends at that time. And my friends didn't come to our house. He was hard to look at.

I stayed busy with sports and playing outside. I was a crossing guard and altar boy. I also always did lawn mowing and snow shoveling for neighbors to make some money. If I didn't earn it, I wouldn't have any. My dad's work ethic was instilled in me at an early age. I had two or three paper routes over a few years. Dad helped me roll papers and sometimes delivered them with me before he went to work and I went to school. And I also worked odd jobs at the convent and rectory and delivered prescriptions and cigarettes on my bike all over the neighborhood. My friends had lots of new and cool things. So if I wanted them, I would have to work for them

Around that time, fourth or fifth grade, my brother, who was three years older, dared me and my best friend to drink stuff in the liquor cabinet—hard alcohol and lots of it. I remembered how the beer made me feel and didn't think it would be very different. After the first few sips, I felt something. And again, I liked it. But it didn't end there. He had us drink a lot more. And we were crazy intoxicated. He let us leave the house in that condition and roam around the 'hood. We were insanely drunk. A few neighbors spotted us but couldn't corral us. We were finally grabbed by our priest, who happened to be jogging by the park by our house. He brought us home. He knew our family well. We were very lucky not to have been hurt or killed. I suffered quick and severe consequences. much more than my friend or brother. The unexplainable thing was I liked most of the experience. I had gained some fame or at least notoriety. And looked forward to the next time. And the next.

In junior high, I hung around a group of older guys and girls occasionally. They were my brother's friends and others, who were high school age or older. I was exposed to pot smoking and drinking regularly. (.....continued on the last page)



## RECOVERY TUNEUPS

### **SHARE's need for volunteers, especially women.**

SHARE is an outside treatment program looking to connect outgoing patients with Alcoholics Anonymous groups. They request participation at these meetings, even if only to listen or to share your experience, strength, and hope. They feel it is a helpful benefit for the patients to connect ASAP with the meetings when they leave. If you would like to come to the meetings please reach out to Heather P to get the paperwork required prior to volunteering. [Hhebb824@gmail.com](mailto:Hhebb824@gmail.com) is the contact information for Heather P.

### **DISTRICT 28 AREA MEETINGS**

*A handful of meetings are still organizing online virtually. Some are using a hybrid method, with the option to participate terrestrially or virtually, and some meet fully terrestrially. This list is comprised of information gathered in the District 28 meeting.*

### **HYBRID MEETINGS:**

[Tuesday Night 12 & 12](http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/tuesday-night-12-12/) – 7:30 p.m. Tuesday. (<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/tuesday-night-12-12/>)

[Living in Recovery](http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/living-in-recovery/) – 7:30 p.m. Friday (<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/living-in-recovery/>)

[Sunday Early Birds](http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/lake-zurich-early-birds/) – 9:00 a.m. Sunday (<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/lake-zurich-early-birds/>)

[Sunday Morning Newcomers](http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/sunday-morning-newcomers/) – 11:00 a.m. Sunday

(<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/sunday-morning-newcomers/>)

[No Name Group](http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/no-name/) – 10:30 a.m. Sunday (<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/no-name/>)

Sunday Men's Meeting 7:00 pm

### **TERRESTRIAL ONLY MEETINGS:**

[Tuesday Night Real Time \(Men's Meeting\)](http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/tuesday-night-real-time/) – 7:30 p.m. Tuesday

(<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/tuesday-night-real-time/>)

[Lake Zurich 12 & 12](http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/lake-zurich-12-12/) – 7:00 p.m. Wednesday (<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/lake-zurich-12-12/>)

[Still At It 12 & 12](http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/still-at-it-12-12/) – 7:30 p.m. Wednesday (<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/still-at-it-12-12/>)

[Barr Pals](http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/barr-pals/) – 8:00 p.m. Tuesday (<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/barr-pals/>)

[Saturday Morning Men \(Men's Meeting\)](http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/saturday-morning-men/) – 8:30 am Saturday

(<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/saturday-morning-men/>).

Masonic Hall (Closed, Mixed Meeting) – 8:00 am Saturday 312 Cook Street, Barrington

Continued on next page....



## RECOVERY TUNEUPS

Continued.....

### **VIRTUAL ONLY MEETINGS:**

**Sober Sisters 12 & 12** – 7:00 p.m. Tuesday

(<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/temporarily-online-sober-sisters-12-12-study/>)

**Women's Way** – 7:00 p.m. Wednesday (<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/womens-12-12/>)

**Barrington Big Book Meditation** – 7:00 p.m. Wednesday

(<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/barrington-big-book-meditation>)

**Sober Sisters Big Book Study** – 7:00 p.m. Thursday

(<http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/womens-big-book-2/>)

**Sunday Night Big Book** – 7:30 p.m. Sunday - USER ID: 993473232. Password: 690283

**Please inquire with meeting contacts for further meeting information.**

Please send information about meetings that need support, so it can be printed in *The Connection*! For a full list of District 28 meetings, please visit our website: <http://barringtonaa.org/meetings/>

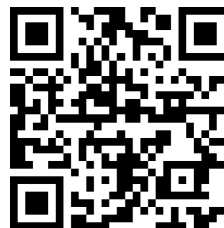
## Got App?

Have you downloaded the AA meeting guide to your phone yet? Here are the QR codes for the links. When you scan the code into your phone, your screen will be transported to the App store location for the App. They are FREE

Mac App Store:



Google Play App Store:



**District 28**  
**Monthly Zoom Speaker Meeting**

**Date: Third Saturday of every month**

**Time: 6:00 p.m. CST**

**ZOOM ID: 642 998 8664**

**PASSWORD: RECOVERY ZOOM**

**LINK:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6429988664?pwd=dJlnK3hoL1RTMnFPSUJyOGFWS2lQZz09>

**\*\*\*Zoom information will remain the same for every meeting\*\*\***

**LEGACY OF SERVICE:  
CONCEPTS STUDY**

Hosted by NIA 20 District 11

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of Every Month  
7:30pm via Zoom

Meeting ID: 970 0499 1067  
Passcode: 639187

Contact [dcm@aa-nia-dist11.org](mailto:dcm@aa-nia-dist11.org)  
with any questions







## RECOVERY TUNEUPS

THE CONNECTION  
District 28

ALL AREA'S OPEN  
MEETING FOR ANY

ACCESSIBILITY



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Topics and Solutions for our A.A. Members who cannot find our rooms due to an Accessibility or Remote challenge.

EVERY 2<sup>ND</sup> & 4<sup>TH</sup>  
MONDAY of the MONTH  
7pm - 8pm EST

ASL Interpreter provided

Zoom ID: 690-393-7306  
PW: Area45

(An open meeting to all Group, District, Area and Intergroup, Accessibility Committee members and Area Panel Officers)  
More info: [area47aacontact@gmail.com](mailto:area47aacontact@gmail.com)

Monthly Grapevine Workshop



Please Join Us On The 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Thursday Of Each Month For  
Our Great Grapevine  
Workshop.

7pm - 8pm Cst

Zoom ID: 83853282292  
P/W: grapevine

### Want to support GSO? (AA's General Service Office)

Please see this website to make contributions: <https://contribution.aa.org/>

Please also remember to support AA Northern Illinois Area 20 (NIA 20)!

For more information, please visit the NIA 20 website: <https://aa-nia.org/>

Are you confused about what the service structure is for AA?

Here is the link for the diagram

**<https://tinyurl.com/AAWSOSS>**



## RECOVERY TUNEUPS

The following Chair Positions are open and looking to be filled. Thank you for considering service work.

- Archives Chair & Alternate Chair
- Accessibility/Special Needs Chair & Alternate Chair
- Alternate Answering Service Chair
- Alternate Bridging the Gap Chair
- Corrections Chair & Alternate Chair
- CPC/PI Alternate Chair
- Grapevine Chair & Alternate Chair
- Literature Alternate Chair
- Alternate Newsletter Chair
- Alternate Secretary Chair
- Alternate Treasurer Chair
- Alternate Website Chair
- Treatment Chair & Treatment Alt Chair

**Interested?** : We welcome you to join us at the District 28 meeting and learn more.

**What's Involved:**

- We meet at 6:30 pm on the first Monday of every month on ZOOM.
- Be there to participate in the meetings.
- The outgoing chair will bring you up to speed (i.e. training on the position details.)

District 28 business meetings take place the first Monday of every month at 6:30 pm on ZOOM  
(ZOOM ID: 859 7316 9941, Password: SERVICE)





NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA 20 ~ 2023 SPRING CONFERENCE  
**IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE AND SERVICE**  
**~MARCH 10-12, 2023~**

CO-HOSTED BY DISTRICTS 22 AND 23  
HYATT REGENCY SCHAUMBURG - 1800 EAST GOLF ROAD, SCHAUMBURG, IL 60173 - (847) 605 1234

**ONLINE REGISTRATION**

[bit.ly/sprcon2023](http://bit.ly/sprcon2023)

ENDS ON FEBRUARY 10, 2023



**AA SPEAKERS**

SLOAN B. FROM WAUKESHA, WI

JEFF V. FROM FARGO, ND

**ON SITE REGISTRATION**

BEGINS AT 3PM ON MARCH 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2023

**AL-ANON SPEAKER**

NORA FROM CHICAGO, IL

**RESERVE A ROOM**

[bit.ly/nia20spring2023](http://bit.ly/nia20spring2023)

\$119.00 PER NIGHT



**PANELS**

ALCATHON

LITERATURE

ARCHIVES

BANQUET

DANCE

FELLOWSHIP

**QUESTIONS/VOLUNTEERING**

MIKE B - 224-575-0879

ANA Z - 773-653-0119

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please Specify: ☐ AA ☐ Al-Anon ☐ Alateen ☐ Guest

☐ Registration \$30 ☐ Saturday Boxed Lunch \$15

☐ Banquet Dinner \$52 (Choose One) ☐ Chicken ☐ Vegetarian

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: 2023 Northern Illinois Area Spring Conference, PO Box 681491,  
Schaumburg, IL 60168

Make Checks Payable to: 2023 Spring Conference

☐ Special Needs/Accessibility Services (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_





## **We are not a Glum lot!**

**Jokes for the fun of it ☺**

1. AA is for quitters.
2. Alcoholism doesn't run in my family, it walks. You spill less that way.
3. Me: "It's not about how many times you fall down, it's about how many times you get back up!"  
Cop: "That's not how a field sobriety test works."

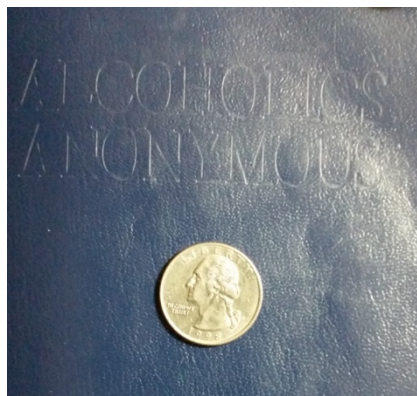
If you have any clean AA related jokes, please send them to [BKS.EMCY@gmail.com](mailto:BKS.EMCY@gmail.com) and maybe we will use them in a future newsletter. Thanks!

### **Bored?, Winter Cabin Fever?**

#### **Fun activities to do that don't involve bars or pubs, in winter**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Go for a walk and take photos of nature                                      | Visit a state park and explore the caves |
| Go camping (winter is warm this year)  | Go skiing                                |
| Go swimming indoors  | Visit the spa                            |
| Work a puzzle  | Build a snowman                          |
| Build a snow fort or an igloo  | Listen to music                          |
| Visit a library's new Maker Labs and make something cool                     |  |
| Dance in your living room  | Paint                                    |
| Redecorate the house   | Feed the squirrels then take pictures    |
| Take pictures of the sunset, trees, sunrise, nature                          | Exercise                                 |
| Make paper boats and float them in the puddles this spring                   |  |
| Put on your rain boots and splash in the puddles then take a hot bubble bath |  |
| Fix something around the house   |  |
| Invent something   |  |





## This Quarter's Big Book Scavenger Hunt

1. What year was the Lasker Award given to Alcoholics Anonymous?
2. What were the Sudden Revolutionary Changes described in the first few chapters?
3. In which section of the big book is ALANON mentioned and the address for their office given?
4. On what page is God mentioned for the 100<sup>th</sup> time?
5. What is the "new job" described in "Working With Others" on page 102?
6. Which Principle is "a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments, and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance"?
7. Which concept says "Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration."?
8. What is the UPC bar code number?
9. What are "some of the methods we have tried to stop drinking"?
10. How many chapters are in the Big Book?



- Answers:**
1. 1951 Big Book – Appendices IV – The Lasker Award (pp.571)
  - 2.
  3. Big Book – Appendices VI – How to Get in Touch With AA (pp 573)
  4. Page 93 – "...he does not have to agree with conception of God. He can choose any conception he likes..."
  5. "Your new job is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others so never hesitate to go anywhere if you can be helpful."
  6. PP 568 – Contempt prior to investigation
  7. Concept # V
  8. Last page in the book – 9781893007178
  9. PP 31 – Drinking beer only, limiting the number of drinks, never drinking alone, never drinking in the morning, drinking only at home, never having it in the house, never drinking during business hours, drinking only at parties, switching from scotch to brandy, drinking only natural wines, agreeing to resign if ever drunk on the job, taking a trip, not taking a trip, swearing off forever (with and without a solemn oath), taking more physical exercise, reading inspirational books, going to health farms and sanitariums, accepting voluntary commitment to asylums – we could increase the list infinitely.
  10. 17 introductory chapters, 42 story chapters, 7 Appendix chapters = a total of 66 chapters (unless you count the first two pages listing the other books and copyright information as a chapter then it's 67).

**.....continued from page one story by David O:**

And I introduced my friends to it.

I had very little guidance or discipline then, and my school work suffered. I'm convinced I had dyslexia or some learning disability. But I didn't get much help from anyone and was drinking and getting high more often now. Approaching eighth grade, I had to switch schools because we couldn't afford St. Pete's anymore. I knew some people, as it was in the same area. But it was a major change. I began to hang with a different group while still hanging with the older crowd in my old neighborhood on occasion. I began to sell weed and get beer for friends.

In high school, I slacked off from the get go. I failed three classes in the first semester, drinking and getting buzzed daily. Quit all sports and other activities. Had to go to summer school.

I was 14 and began to go to work with my mom after school at the banquet hall she worked at. Mom and other family members had worked there for years. It was a big and popular place, most likely mob operated or influenced. It was cool.

I made some money and stayed out of trouble. Well, sort of. After a while on the days I worked, I would arrive early and help the bartenders get set up with glasses, ice and fruit, etc. I would also help myself to whatever I could get my hands on from behind the bar. Liquor was easier than beer because you could hide it in a coke. And I made a few extra dollars in tips. At 16 I was a head busboy and had keys to everything. The management knew my mom very well and I would work all the time.

School was just an afterthought. No one ever checked or helped me with my school work. I would steal beer, bottles of liquor and food almost every night. My friends and girlfriends would wait for me to get off, usually around nine or ten. We hung around street corners. I was kind of a big shot. They showed up when I did, for good food, alcohol and weed. This went on for a few years.

I managed to graduate high school. Barely. I was obsessed with sex, drugs and rock and roll. The song of the same name came out in 1977, the year I graduated. It was my anthem. I never even considered going to college. Most of my friends did, as well as my girlfriend. So, I went to college parties as often as I could.

My mom died that year of cancer at age 53. I was 18. She died unexpectedly. It was crushing. I was very close to her. Some said I was her favorite. Maybe I was. I spent a lot of time with her. She worried about me. But I never got in much trouble.

I got into the building trades as a union tile setter not long after that. My path crossed with a group of guys in the business. They were 10 to 20 years older and liked to work hard and drink hard. Most got high as well. My kind of guys. I fit in. I was part of a crew for the next seven or eight years. We drank at lunch daily. Got high before and after work regularly.

These guys were among the best in the business, so no bosses or customers complained. My immediate boss was widely acknowledged as the best in the trade—but also as a bad alcoholic. Accurate in both cases. He kept me working all the time. Everyone wanted him. And I was his guy. We were a team.

But the drinking began to become a problem. It interfered with my dating and other things. My boss got his third DUI and lost his license. The economy was very bad, so I had to agree to drive him to work every day. He insisted we stop for a few drinks every day. I also would have to go out at break time to get him a bottle of vodka. I was offered morning drinks but never took them. It had to be noon. I didn't want to be like him. I got my first exposure to AA taking him to a court-ordered meeting. I didn't admit to being an alcoholic so I didn't stay. I went to the bar instead and picked him up afterwards. That lasted a few months.

I worked hard and saved a lot of money. I bought an apartment building. The future was bright. I was living large—lots of money, lots of women, nice cars, travel. My close friends and I wanted to go to all 50 states before we died. I made it to 45 of them by age 25 and eventually got to all of them. Anything I wanted I did.

Around that time my dad died of cancer at 59. I was 23. He suffered a lot, and I was there when he died.

I had already met and fallen in love with the woman of my dreams. Unfortunately, she was engaged to one of my best friends. But the feeling was mutual. We were very much in love. I bought a house and we got married. We had our first child before our



first anniversary. My wife knew my boss pretty well and insisted I stop working with him. I became a journeyman that year and was able to go my separate way. But by now I was an alcoholic.

In 1987, we were expecting our second child. The economy was again pretty bad. We really needed money and I decided to sell my apartment building. It was my life savings. I needed some liquid money. I took the proceeds, paid some bills and invested in the stock market, which was booming a few weeks before the “Black Monday” Oct. 19, 1987, stock market crash. I lost most of my money plus owed the IRS \$18,000. I was in dire straits.

Early in 1988 we had our second child. IRS insisted I sell my house to pay them back. The economy was in a downturn. I no longer had my boss as a security blanket. My daughter was diagnosed with congenital hip dysplasia at six months old. It required many hospital visits and procedures and a body cast for nine months. My wife had to stop working to care for her, and work was slowing down rapidly for me. Drinking was taking a new direction. It was now used to cope and escape instead of for relaxing and enjoyment.

I worked out a deal to pay the IRS back, with penalties and interest, over three years. The IRS had complete access to all of my income and assets, house and cars included, and were monitoring everything. Those were very tough years. I worked very hard long days, a great deal of it doing side work for extra cash. I sold drugs regularly and gambled quite successfully over that span, and met my IRS obligation. But my alcoholism was growing progressively.

I had worked harder than ever before in my life for three years and had nothing to show for it, except my baby girl had made a nice recovery. We were thrilled! And we had our third and last child, a son, a few years later. My desire to regain what I lost was overwhelming: coming from humble beginnings, then achieving a secure and desirable lifestyle—then losing it—was devastating. But the economy was on the rise and for years things got much better. I drank and got high every day. I was certainly an alcoholic, but my life was not yet unmanageable. But that was coming on fast.

As a tradesman the ups and downs of the economy “came with the territory.” In the 2008 Recession, I was almost 50 years old—an old guy in construction. The financial and real estate collapse of that fall hit hard. There was no work at all for at least five or six years. I had to leave the trades and take a much lower paying and harder job with the airlines and with irregular hours. My drinking really took off.

The new work schedule had me getting off at 11 p.m. or later. That became my new quitting time and happy hour for two years. Drinking till I fell asleep was routine. I became a morning drinker from then on, even when I went back to tiling. I had become accustomed to drinking during those hours. Quickly drinking became a necessity in the morning, often before work, then always before work. Then by 2015 upon awakening.

I would go into detox and rehab multiple times. I also began to go to AA from time to time. I had been going to some meetings already, but put no effort into it, so I got nothing out of it. I then tried a sponsor and tried the steps, my way. It didn’t work. I drank throughout this time, and I said, “AA wouldn’t work for me.”

I was pretty much drinking around the clock. I had had terrible pain in my abdomen for quite a while. I went to a gastroenterology doctor and found I had something on my colon and my throat was in bad shape. I had signs of blood in several places. My doctor said I wouldn’t last long if I didn’t stop drinking, but since my parents and a few family members died of cancer at this age, in my mind I had been given a cancer death sentence. I wasn’t gonna stop now. I drank more, if that was even possible. But they did surgery and it turned out that the tumor on my colon was benign.

I was now trying to work construction again, but troubles continued to pile up. I got my first DUI in August of 2016. I would have several major surgeries including hip and shoulder replacements. I would get my second DUI on Mother’s Day in 2017. I was at my lowest point ever. I had never really been in trouble with the law before these DUIs, but here I was, 58 years old, and going to jail.

Everyone had had enough of me. My daughter was getting married and didn’t want me to attend. My house was in foreclosure and it was the worst time to sell. We were getting no offers.

I lost my driving privileges. Besides my other health issues, my body was breaking down. I really couldn't tile any longer, so I couldn't pay my bills anymore. And my wife would be out the door as soon as we lost or sold our house. I had hit my bottom.

I had never been so desperate. I saw no way out. I surrendered to God and AA. I was pretty much alone and broke. I had met my sponsor in rehab, and he stuck with me through all of this. He told me if I wasn't giving up, he wasn't either. And we would work the steps that much harder and more thoroughly. I had never really done them properly. I wanted to do whatever was necessary to recover from this hopeless state of mind and body.

At the end of August 2017, I was sentenced to 10 days in county jail. The State was trying for 60 because I had been such a danger to society for chronic drunk driving. I was scared to death of going to jail. I didn't know what to expect. I had no idea of the spiritual awakening I was about to experience after the intolerable 18 hours of processing into incarceration: handcuffed, shackled, strip searched, with no sleep for over two days.

I was informed I would be in a dorm setting with 60 inmates and would have a lower bunk. I was given a bed roll and pillow and sent in to find my bed. It was around 1 a.m. They assigned me an upper bunk instead. I tried to climb up and was struggling to make it and stepped on the lower bunk. In the dark, I felt a sharp pain. My legs got knocked out from under me and I went down, standing up. I was shoved to the wall and grabbed by an angry man twice my size and half my age. He accused me of taking his stuff. I was in hell. I told him I was just trying to get up in the upper bunk.

Early the next morning, there was some commotion. Breakfast was being handed out. I had barely slept, and couldn't possibly eat. I gave away everything. Guys were fighting to get my stuff. I passed out for a while. I woke up because it was so loud in there, everyone screaming and swearing. When I sat up, a guy in the next bunk stood up, a giant of a man. He was in and out of the system most of his life. I was startled by his appearance. His name was Nate. He had a horribly disfigured face. He informed me he was shot at close range with a large caliber weapon during a robbery. The bullet went through his mouth and out his eye. He looked like a monster. He couldn't speak very well and was blind in that eye.

But he was friendly and told me lunch was coming and to not give away or let anyone take it without trading for something. Lunch came, they were on me like vultures, including the guy from the lower bunk, who said he should have hurt me last night. Fortunately, Nate was right by me and told him to back off.

Nate asked for my bologna sandwich in a trade. He pulled up his pillow to show me his stash. They secure their commodities under their pillow. It's their spot. No one touches another guy's pillow. That's why the guy from the lower bunk got so mad at me.

I looked at his things, like lemonade packs, salt, pepper, sugar, ketchup, cookies, etc. Drugs. He also had something else. I said, "Is that a Big Book"? He said, "Yeah." He got it from another guy who worked at the library with him and had gotten out. He said I couldn't have it, but for my bologna sandwich he would let me read it while I was there—provided I read it out loud, because he was bored and couldn't read too well.

So, I started to read, and he said, "Let's go sit at the table over there." The Maury Povich Show was blaring on the TV. I hadn't left my bunk area yet. So, I opened the book and started reading. After a few minutes, Nate said, "Wait. I know someone who needs to hear this." He came back in a minute with another guy. Before I could get through the "Doctor's Opinion," a few more guys were standing nearby.

I continued reading. By now there were a dozen guys sitting and standing around. They were calling me "Old School" and "O.G." and wanted the TV turned down or off because they couldn't hear "Old School" read. I was now surrounded by 30 inmates. In the back of my mind, I thought this could be a dangerous situation. It was real quiet. The quietest time so far. I read on. A group of guards came rushing in to see: why the silence? One guard said he'd never seen anything like it--me reading the Big Book to these guys. Several asked me, "What's the solution? You said there is a solution!" And, "How does this thing work?"

I was exhausted. I needed to sleep. But I felt something had just happened to me. I had a spiritual experience. At about four months sober, something clicked that day in jail, and I felt what it was like to carry the message. I looked forward to reading

more of the Big Book. There were fewer guys the next few times but it was still what I needed. I got released after a couple of days. Shortly after jail, my daughter hinted about my attending her wedding. We sold our house, but my wife stayed with me.

The thought that I might be able to drink again someday remained, but the obsession was lifted that day at the table in jail. To keep those drinking thoughts away, I went to meetings regularly. My sponsor suggested service work. And my ever-improving relationship with God keeps me focused on the "Promises" coming true in sobriety. A life changing experience happened because of a bologna sandwich!

**HAVE A STORY, LESSON LEARNED, or BIT OF JOY, HOPE, FAITH or GRATITUDE YOU  
WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?**

Write it out and submit it to THE CONNECTION! NEWSLETTER  
We want to hear from you!

Please email your items to the newsletter chair via email at: **BKS.EMCY@GMAIL.COM**  
Use subject line Connections Newsletter so it does NOT get lost.

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS NEWSLETTER!

*Hope you have a lovely day!*