



H.A.W.S. **MAINLINE**

Heroin Anonymous World Services
Monthly Bulletin

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This informational bulletin's purpose is to
increase communication between the groups of
Heroin Anonymous throughout the world.



SEPTEMBER **2021** ISSUE



Photo by [Claudio Tester](#)

OPEN WORLD **BOARD POSITIONS**

HAWSOB Update

Hello, Heroin Anonymous! I want to thank each and every one of you for reading the Mainline and for keeping our fellowship alive. HAWS is almost entirely run by volunteer members of HA; we meet every month to try and carry out HA's business throughout the year.

It was such a thrill to meet many of you at the HAWS Conference. It's wonderful to be a part of such pivotal moments in HA's history. We

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have been working diligently to implement changes advised by the Conference and are anxiously awaiting arrival of the first ever Regional Service Trustees at the board meeting.

Do you love service work? Do you find the traditions and concepts to be stimulating instead of depressing? Do you want to make sure that HA is here for years to come? Then service with the HAWS board may be right for you!

We are accepting applications for the following positions:

- **Treasurer:** This is for a highly responsible HA member with experience in accounting or managing money.
- **Public Information Chair:** This position, voted in by the 2021 HAWSC, will exist to inform and cooperate with the general public and potential HA members.
- **Outreach Chair:** Another product of your votes at the conference, this board member will maintain and establish contact with new and forming HA groups, districts and areas throughout the year with the primary goal of informing them about the conference and HA as a whole.
- **At-Large Voting Member:** This position is for new members to the board. Its sole function is to show up and help us to discuss and vote on decisions. Eventually these members join other committees and may be asked to fill other roles.
- **Non-Addict Advisor:** This is someone who is not a member of HA. They may be an expert in recovery fellowships, non-profits or possess various business skills that they wish to volunteer for the good of HA.
- **Vice-Treasurer:** Our newest position, this member would be a part of checks and balances on the board... pun intended! As Vice-Treasurer you will assist in the maintenance of HA's funds which directly affects our ability to serve the fellowship!

If you are interested, please send service resumes, references and inquiries to: hawssecretary@gmail.com

Thanks for letting me serve,

Pat B., HAWS Secretary

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“THEY” BECAME “WE”

Personal Story: Alex G. – Portland, OR

My third year of sobriety was ROUGH. It wasn't so much that traumatic events were taking place in my life (there were a few to be sure), but for some reason I felt as spiritually bankrupt as the day I got sober. I don't think I'm alone in this. There seems to be something about the three-year mark that leaves addicts feeling empty. Perhaps it's that the "honeymoon phase" is over. Maybe we spend all of our energy trying to save the world only to watch people we've grown to love die right in front of us. Maybe that's just how long it takes to realize getting off drugs doesn't eliminate life's problems. Maybe I felt like an imposter. Whatever the reason, I'm sure I would have relapsed had I not discovered HA in the midst of all this.

I spent my first three years in our sister fellowship, AA. Their book made sense to me. Although I was never much of a drinker, I felt intensely connected to the Big Book, and the description of the spiritual malady within it. I knew that my story was being told in the pages. It wasn't too difficult to fit in; I would use phrases like "when I was out doin' my thing" or "when I was in the mess" so no one ever questioned that I might be in the wrong fellowship. More often than not, it didn't matter. I

became sold on the solution laid out within the 12 steps very early on, and that became the central focus of my shares. Other more drug-centric fellowships, for whatever reason, never felt like they were for me. I couldn't give a specific reason. They seemed to work great for friends of mine. I tried and failed to feel a part of, and so I stuck around AA.

Eventually, sponsorship started to become an issue. There were basically two types of sponsees: alcoholics who had never done heroin and felt they couldn't relate to me, and heroin addicts like me who didn't feel like they belonged in the meetings I was taking them to. I started to think they might be right, but I didn't know where else to go. The increasing stress of questioning my place in 12-step meetings was compounded by the fact that I had two contentious break-ups with women in the rooms in the last two years. They needed a safe place to be sober and so did I, but being in meetings together was awkward (it turns out waiting a year to date doesn't actually make your relationships as perfect as I was told it would).

One day, I went to our local AA Club to check out a Wednesday night meeting. The parking lot seemed way

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more full than usual. There was something in the air - a good vibe, a happy energy. My friend Ron approached me and immediately said, "You used to do heroin, right?"

I responded, "Nice to see you too, Ron". He was right though, and before he even said it I pieced together what was going on. A Heroin Anonymous meeting was starting that night at the club. I'd heard of it, and like any good addict, I held contempt prior to investigation. But when it was time to go inside, my feet magically started walking downstairs towards the HA meeting, instead of upstairs towards the meeting I'd originally come for.

It was one of the best meetings I've ever attended in my life. I don't remember the topic, but I

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know it was one of the steps. The shares were on point, relevant and helpful. They were coming out of the Big Book I knew so well, but from an angle I could relate to heavily - not just because I was a heroin addict, but because they understood the rut I was in. They made me feel comfortable in my own skin, but more importantly, I felt motivated. Eventually, "they" became "we". Years later, I am a proud member of HA and in addition to carrying the message to newcomers, I sincerely hope anyone "under cover" in another fellowship can find the joy and camaraderie I did in the rooms of HA.

- Alex G.

A MIRACLE-MAKING MACHINE

Convention/Conference Experience: Anonymous

Recently, I participated in the third HA World Conference, and I was the chairperson for the third HA World Convention, both of which occurred in Atlanta, GA, consecutively. My experience at both was incredible, a defining moment in my sobriety, and I was

asked to provide a description of my experience.

First, let me qualify: I am a heroin addict. Before I found heroin, I knew nothing but depression and anxiety. I thought everyone else was ignorant to the

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fact that life was purposeless, and that my existence was a mistake. When I found heroin, I was relieved of this pain, but this was short-lived. Within a few years, the hole in my soul was back, and I had given everything - money, relationships, family, and health - to heroin. I spent some years of my life trying to get twenty more dollars, to just get a little more dope, to hopefully avoid being sick for just a few hours. I had given up on trying to get sober when I was first introduced to HA and found others who had also come to realize the same powerlessness. I accidentally got sober by my rehab forcing me to go to meetings and get a sponsor. It turns out that if I worked the program, my skepticism was irrelevant. That was over 14 years ago.

The Conference: For HA, a conference is basically a bunch of members who discuss and vote upon how to design HA's service structure to best help heroin addicts. It occurs over the course of three days and groups from all over send elected "delegates" to represent their area. COVID resulted in the cancellation of the 2020 conference, and really took a toll on 12 Step fellowships in general, so I was concerned that HA might fizzle out. I realized that this fear was delusional when I got to the conference. I saw about 60 members of HA, most of whom had years of sobriety in HA and had gone far out of their way to be present. I like to think that I am

less emotional than most, allowing my decision-making to be less biased. On the first day of the conference, I spent most of the time trying not to cry tears of joy that would interrupt the meeting. Here was a group of people whose lives depended upon HA, just like mine, and who were giving other people opportunities to avoid the unbearable suffering that embodies my spiritual malady. I am lucky to have witnessed much of the fellowship materialize throughout my sobriety. To watch this group of delegates collaborate to help people just like me was magnificent. I told a friend, "this room is a miracle-making machine". I look forward to seeing HA's continued growth which is clearly in good hands.

The Convention: Unlike a conference, a convention is more like a celebration of recovery in the host city, Atlanta in this case. The convention was also postponed from 2020 to 2021 like the conference. As has been the case with many organizations, the pandemic posed a lot of challenges to the people doing the work. Due to my previous convention experience, I was asked to help, and I served as the chairperson for about the last year. Being the chairperson was a breeze; the members of HA on the organizing committee were just as devoted as I am, and successfully navigated all their responsibilities with grace. Despite this, we were afraid that COVID would destroy our plans;

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however, we faced the realization that some members of HA had taken the pandemic badly. Many of our friends relapsed during the pandemic, some making the "ultimate sacrifice", as the big book says. HA needed a convention in Atlanta to show the newcomer that it is possible to recover. "We'll do our best", we said. Perhaps to our surprise, the convention was incredible. Many members of HA from across the US attended and Atlanta was inundated with sober heroin addicts. We had meetings and parties, we went out to eat, we got serious about how we run our meetings, we talked about things that didn't matter at all, and we came together as people who had recovered from a hopeless state. If you haven't been to a convention, I strongly recommend it.

I would like to share one more anecdote. A member had brought the "archives" from HA World Services, which is essentially a collection of items from past conventions. One of the items was a large piece of fabric rolled up, about 4' by 6'. I

didn't know what it was, and was unrolling it in a busy hallway, the convention attendees passing by. As I unrolled the fabric, it appeared to be covered with member's signatures. "Well, that's not very anonymous", I thought. Seconds later, I realized that they were not signatures, but messages. At the first world convention, in 2014, HA members had written messages to their loved ones who had passed from the disease. There were hundreds of them. The gravity of our service to HA hit me hard again, and again, I did my best to hold back tears, this time of both sorrow and joy. The reality is that some people will not survive their battle with heroin addiction. I think, however, that by showing the people of Atlanta that HA works miracles, we gave some heroin addicts an opportunity to access a life that I never thought existed, and I certainly didn't think I deserved.

- Anonymous

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If you would like your meeting featured in our meeting spotlight or have any other content you would like to submit, please feel free to contact us at haworldbulletin@gmail.com.

Thank you!
The Folks at The HAWS Mainline



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