

The ODAAT TIMES

Volume 2 Issue 5, September 2022

78th Annual White House Conference

"I Am Responsible." September 23-25. Registration \$25 includes all meetings and meals. White House, 1400 Pennsylvania Ave., Des Moines.

Iowa Women's AA Luncheon

Sunday, October 23. Registration: \$35 in-person, \$15 online. Des Marriott, 700 Grand Ave., Des Moines.

Ray Harrison Dinner Group Anniversary

Thursday, October 6th. Big Al's BBQ.

Winterset Anniversary

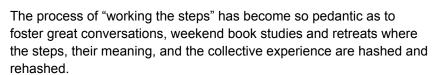
Saturday, November 5, 6 p.m. Speakers and raffle.

THE SPACES BETWEEN THE STEPS

or the next couple of months, as I delve into this topic, I will be posting what I am "musing about" and writing about what I believe the core concepts of this idea are. What follows is some of the work I did initially while trying to flesh out this concept.

PARTI

The idea that the steps need to always be approached in a specific way or a traditional sequence has always bothered me a little. In fact, what I am doing right now has always been a little irritating – one more expert explaining the steps to the poor unenlightened.





So what I hope to accomplish over the next few months is an investigation and a study of the sequencing of the steps. I'm not planning to take them out of sequence, just a "rebundling" of sorts.

I know for a fact that my view of being in recovery or being sober is "my view" and it's not better or worse than anyone else's. If it's successful in keeping people from practicing the particularly unique brand of insanity addiction seems to burden us with, it's worth pursuing.

The way I have described this idea to others is from some thoughts I've had about the way the steps are generally approached by those who attempt to present them in most cases today. There is nothing wrong with this sequence and there is nothing wrong with any of the approaches that have been proposed regarding the presentation of the steps. How the steps are presented in general isn't the issue at all. How the steps are presented to the newcomer vs. the long-timer may have some bearing on this but not really. How the steps are presented will not be altered by someone writing a book with a different approach to the steps. There are frankly many of those out in the market place.

The other thing this is not going to be is an alternative way to look at the steps offering any other insight than is already inherent in the steps. Because the steps are a profound "way of life" that is recommended to a particular set of individuals, it remains always open to interpretation. I think one of the first misinterpretations is that these steps are for everyone. It's often heard—especially for

someone who is approaching these directions for the first time—that "everyone" would benefit from what these steps offer especially as applied to navigating life. In truth, the circumstances or experiences that bring a person to a willingness to make these changes are in themselves powerful and severe. Most people don't have the need or motivation to make these suggested changes unless their lives are pretty much in shambles. There is also an element of "if other people in my life followed this program they would behave in a way I like" or "could deal with."

It's true that many of the principles that went into the development of the steps are generally viewed as "good rules to live by" and are in fact already used naturally by people who don't find a need to make vast personal changes in order to get on with their lives. The other element of this has to do with wanting to "give back." This is seen time and time again among people who have experienced the "profound alteration." They feel they have found a secret that needs to be shared. Again, the people they generally are trying to share this information with either have no interest in the information because they don't have the problems the person trying to share with them have or they do have those problems and aren't ready to deal with them, at least not in the ways suggested by the sharer.

I propose looking at the spaces between the steps, especially those steps that are not ordinarily "bundled" together when discussed. In most standard step studies, the following is the standard characterization for three "sets" of action steps: four and five, six and seven, and eight and nine. Because there has always been a sense of "ready, set, go" to these steps, one being the preparation for the step before it and the next step the action that naturally follows the preparation, this has determined how the steps should be presented. For those new to the process, this may look like the only true preparation there is. At meetings the sharing about the steps (hopefully based on the sharer's experience) is very straightforward and doesn't usually go very far afield from what the basic understanding of the step may be. In other words, there isn't very much straying from concepts that have been shared and espoused about the steps for years. The person who speaks most effectively won't necessarily sway people any better than someone who rambles, but clearly has an experiential understanding of the step.



This process would have a focus on the bridges between the key steps. the breakdown of the steps would be like this: Three and Four, Five and Six, Seven and Eight, and then, Nine and Ten. The information to be discussed between these steps are some substantial transitional things.

Perhaps someone has come up with this approach before, but I haven't actually heard of it being implemented. Sometimes people are funny about these kinds of things, thinking that changes of this nature present significant threats to the sanctity of AA or the Twelve Steps or some other nonsense. There isn't the hint that this is a change to what already exists in people's own experience, especially if they've approached the steps as many in recovery have — as a living, breathing thing and not a set of "to-dos" from another century.

The changes to this sequence may actually have the capacity to illuminate areas which sometimes run the risk of being skipped over. Sometimes the person "working the steps" may be eager to complete them so they can say they have. This may run roughshod over the "touchy-feely" mentality that often accompanies writing on these subjects, but the entire truth is people take the steps for a wide variety of reasons, without realizing why themselves. The why of it often gets lost in the doing of it. But never be fooled into believing you know what motivates people most. It's particularly difficult to predict.

Another way to look at this is the potential for "freshness" of vision. When I am forced to think about the transition between two steps that are paired up in what might be considered an "untraditional" way. I want to be able to look at what "links" these steps together. It's important for me to talk about that in more detail. I need to also keep my mind away from what's been written on this subject before. There is much written on this topic, but the same percentage of people stay sober. So one would have to believe that it isn't the preponderance of things written on recovery that is making the big difference. It might be more about the approach. There is also that cachet of the guru that makes some writing all of a sudden passé.

This reminds me of something an Old-timer told me. He said that when he took a "new guy" through the book, he would buy a new book. That way he wouldn't be distracted by all the highlighting and notes that he might have put in the book the last time. I thought this concept was brilliant because it tapped into the idea of coming to everything we do or experience for the first time

because it is changed by everything we do and experience before we come to it. I haven't been greeted with that same attitude by others I've told that story to. Most cling to the idea that the sum total of their knowledge and experience is in the highlighting and hen-scratching they put in their book when they first went through it. (Actually, it was my sponsor.)

I need to make it clear that I'm not recreating a "book study." There are already plenty of those around. What I'm going to do is go through this process for myself. As a result, the discovery for me will be the information I pass along. This isn't a lone project or a project designed for a lone soul. It's a project that is informed by everyone I've come in contact with, every meeting I've ever attended, every person I've considered my sponsor (whether I asked him or not), and everyone I've ever touched with my own

Once I made it to the idea of changing this sequence into somewhat non-standard chunks, I was able to actually see that the writing might be more beneficial to me than it is to anyone reading it. So the going forward will really be about writing about the steps in a little different approach, but strictly the way I see it and not authoritative. Frankly, I would be tremendously dubious of anyone presenting themselves as an authority.

recovery, both my struggles and my successes.

I think it would be wise to discuss Steps One and Two in a way that allows one to see the fundamental understanding of preparing to change. See how these steps may lead one toward doing something that they don't believe in.



I have repeated, over time, the observation that the people who get into and stay in long-term recovery are those whose consequences (or perceived consequences) are finally so severe they are willing to do things they don't believe in. I added the part in the parenthesis because that describes me within the context of this sentiment and I fully believe this sentiment. I wanted to call specific attention to this because it helps me understand what I am about a little better. I want to be able to communicate with those who struggled as I did with the general understanding of that. THE TRICK IS IN THE DISCOVERY AND NOT IN THE KNOWING.

Stay tuned for Part II.

Take good care - RCC

October 3, 2019

We Want YOU!

The ODAAT Times is looking for personal story submissions! Please send your 500+ word story to ds.decommons.com. The ODAAT Times is looking for personal story submissions! Please send your 500+ word story to ds.decommons.com.

Events

Events can still be found at the <u>Des Moines Central Office Website</u>. Continue to send your events to <u>The Manager</u>.

Meetings in the Spotlight - Step Study

Freedom & A New Happiness Wednesday, 8 p.m. 2301 Hickman Rd.

Friday Freedom Train Friday, 7 p.m. Zion Lutheran Church 4300 Beaver Ave.

Open meetings are available to anyone interested in the Alcoholics Anonymous program of recovery from alcoholism. Nonalcoholics may attend open meetings as observers.



Meeting Guide



Brought to you by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., Meeting Guide is a free of charge app that provides meeting information from A.A. service entities in an easy-to-access format.

Over 100,000 A.A. meetings are currently listed. The information is refreshed twice daily by relaying meeting information from more than 300 A.A. service entities; area, district, intergroup/central offices, and international General Service Office websites.

Download on the Apple App Store
Download App on Google Play

Book Review: Step By Step - Real AAs, Real Recovery

From *Grapevine*, the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, personal stories of finding a new way of life by working the Twelve Steps

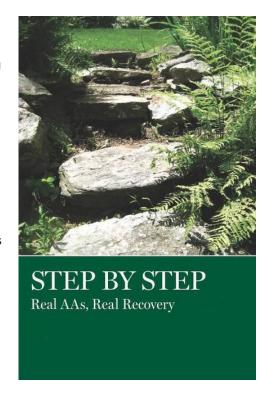
Learn how AA members of all ages and all lifestyles from around the world, including spiritual, religious and atheists, as well as newcomers and old-timers, have found serenity and sobriety through the twelve-step program that Alcoholics Anonymous is based on.

In this collection of some of the most powerful contributions from the *Grapevine* archive dating from the 1940s to the present, readers at any stage of recovery will gain perspective through the experiences of their peers and learn practical ways to apply the Steps in everyday life.

With individual chapters for each Step, this honest and intimate collection of timeless stories and letters is a great resource for sponsors and sponsees, to guide conversation at meetings, or to use in personal reflection.

This book features a variety of experiences from members about the joys and challenges of working AA's Twelve Steps. There is a chapter for each Step. Great for sponsees and AA Step meetings.

Central Office Literature



AA Back In The Day

Hello A.A. history aficionados! Chris V. here with your next installment of what it was like for A.A. back in the day. This issue we are looking at the history of organization and professionalism in A.A. A wonderful lens with which to view this story is that of how Intergroups and central offices interact with our local A.A needs. It only took two short years after the publication of the Big Book for the first central office to officially open in Chicago in 1941. While the Chicago office was the first to officially open, there were simultaneous organization of local A.A. resources occurring around the country. Cleveland's Central Committee formed in 1939 but would not open the Cleveland District Office until 1945. The formation of the Cleveland Central Committee is historically fascinating, in that the traditions of "the spirit of rotation" is seemingly born from the need to unify Cleveland A.A. and provide resources to the surrounding community. These Central Office and Inter-Group Associations spring up in every A.A. community around the country as the message of recovery takes hold in new areas, and groups find a need to centralize some resources to help with the 12-Step message. These communities have used various approaches to formalizing organization, with some having only loose 'central committees' and others, fully incorporated companies which run offices, lots of Tradition 4 autonomy represented here too, lesson from these experiences do not just relate to traditions 8 and 9.

Of course, with even a minimal amount of organization that some A.A. communities choose to take, there can be, let's say, issues. Wherever money, property and prestige enter the picture, there can for sure be a need for reflection about the next proper step. This is reflected not only in our history related to local service offices, but the several controversies that came from printing the Big Book and establishing the Alcoholic Foundation (now the General Service Office). Thank goodness for the building of A.A.s shared experience found in our Traditions. As centralized offices developed, so did our understanding of how 12 step work may be best carried to the alcoholic still sick and suffering. Tradition 8 reminds us, "A.A. should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers." This principal helps us stay on the beam, while allowing groups to establishes services that will help other reach A.A. Our local Des Moines Central office is a spectacular example of this. Our Central Office helps maintain services like making local literature available to individuals as well as groups, meeting lists, a 12 Step list, and Phone Army, to name a few. Our traditions remind us that the folks who maintain these roles are not professional 12 steppers, and are valued

The General Services Office of Alcoholics Anonymous.



employees worthy of their hire. Des Moines Central Office is also an excellent example of how differently the traditions can work in different cities. For several years, the need for centralized tasks were handled in combination with local meetings, clubs and A.A. District 7, and in 1996, Secretary of State documents were filed to separate the naming of the office to its current designation. However, these resources are maintained by the local fellowship, it seems someone is always willing to pick up the phone when a new person calls.

Tradition 9 also keeps us within bounds to help us stay united and away from problems of money, property and prestige. We have been talking about some of the service boards or committees which the tradition refers. Thank goodness for this tradition which guides us on the appropriate use of our resources to help serve the next sick and suffering alcoholic. Let us also remember the formation of the Cleveland Central Committee mentioned above which worked out issues as they came together (not unlike the history of Des Moines!). Traditions 8 and 9 are the result of the spiritual back and forth which occurred during the formations of these several organizations across the country. This discussion is alive and well today, and is always an evolving vision, after all, nobody expected Covid and its impacts. As we shift back to "normal", these institutions continue to play vital roles in how we connect with each other. As we morph from printed meeting lists, to apps that can connect us in the matter of a few clicks, professionals and special service boards will be vital as we discuss these matters of money, property and prestige. Thank goodness for our shared experience and history is all I can say!

In love and service,

Chris V.

Feel free to contact me at cvanme6758@yahoo.com if you ever have suggestions, questions or wish to discuss sources. See the below links for information in this article.

Chicago AA History
Cleveland AA History
Des Moines AA

Organized for Service

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions – Bill W.

Third Legacy of Service

A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer — ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service. ~Bill W.

Click on the links below, or visit <u>aadsmco.org</u> then Menu, then Volunteer Sign-Up! All the forms are there!

The links below take you directly to each form!

12 Step List - Sign Up Link

Phone Army - Sign Up Link

Central (In)Office Volunteer - Sign Up Link

The below link is not a Volunteer form, but a handy, and hopefully informative Newsletter! You will automatically get the next issue in your in-box when it's Posted to the website!!

ODAAT Times Newsletter - Sign Up Link



Faithful Fivers

What Is a Faithful Fiver? A.A. Members who support the Des Moines Central Office/ Intergroup with direct contributions. These contributions help stabilize our Budget. In addition to Contributions from Groups and Literature sales, Faithful Fivers can be a source of funds that help provide a predictable operating budget.

We invite A.A. members to contribute affordable, tax deductible amounts directly and regularly as supporting members or Faithful Fivers. You are a Faithful Fiver if you are an A.A. member and you say you are a Faithful Fiver.

What's affordable? \$5 per month, \$1 per week, \$15 per month. Any amount that fits your budget and level of gratitude.

Faithful Fiver contributions are not to take the place of, nor affect Group Contributions!

How do you contribute? You may set up regular 'recurring' contributions through our website: <u>Donate Here</u>

Simply look for the Faithful Fivers contribution line and fill in the amount and the rest of your payment information!

Or you can simply send a check, or if you prefer, bring in cash or a check. Please note 'Faithful Fivers' on your check/money order!

Every A.A. service is designed to make 12th Step work possible. They include:

- · 24/7 phone answering (by A.A.'s) inquiries from those seeking help
- · Direct callers to your AA Meetings
- · Publishes an AA Meeting Directory
- · Maintains a current 12th Step list to help the still suffering Alcoholic
- · Maintains an informative and up to date website: aadsmco.org
- · Publishes ODAAT Times Newsletter every other month
- · Acts as an information exchange for all Greater Des Moines Metro (and Southern Iowa) meetings
- · Contributions are limited to \$5,000 per member per year.

YES! I want to be a Faithful Fiver!

I am a __ New member __ Current Member __ Returning Member

Amount \$_____ Monthly_ Quarterly__ Annually__

Name

Address _____

City _____ State___ Zip_____

Mail to or set up automatic bill pay to:

A.A. Central Office 1620 Pleasant St., Ste. 228 Des Moines, IA 50314

AA Volunteers

A variety of activities and service opportunities are available.	ilable! Comple	te the Gratitude with	n Service form below.
Des Moines Central Office / Intergroup - Gratitude with	Service (10/2	1)	
Return to: dsm.central.office@gmail.com or DSM Centr	ral Office - 162	O Pleasant St., Ste. 22	28, Des Moines, IA 50314
Date*First Name		Last Name	
Address		*Phone	
*City	*State	*Zip	*Gender
*Sobriety Date Home Group			
*email		*Alt Phone	
*Required for inclusion in 12-Step list			
Chec ODAAT Times Newsletter - email only	k your sele	ctions below!	
12th Step List Volunteer			
Weeknights			
Weekdays			
Weekends			
Or complete online at <u>12-Step sign up</u>			
Phone Army Volunteer			
Weekday mornings			
Weekday Evenings			
Weekends			
Or send email to dsm.central.office@gmail.com. You w	ill receive a sch	nedule, pick your tim	e(s) instructions and info to follow.
Central Office Volunteer			
Office Phone Volunteer			
Other Office Help			
Literature Sales Help			

www.aadsmco.org

Traditions Checklist

These questions were originally published in the Grapevine in conjunction with a series of articles on the Twelve Traditions that ran from November 1969 to September 1971. While they were originally intended as suggestions for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

Tradition Nine

AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

- 1. Do I still try to boss things in AA?
- 2. Do I resist formal aspects of AA because I fear them as authoritative?
- 3. Am I mature enough to understand and use all elements of the AA program—even if no one makes me do so—with a sense of personal responsibility?
- 4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any AA job I take?
- 5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any AA job?
- 6. Why doesn't every AA group need a constitution and bylaws?
- 7. Have I learned to step out of an AA job gracefully-and profit thereby-when the time comes?
- 8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?

Tradition Ten

Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

- 1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an "AA opinion" on Antabuse? Tranquilizers? Doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Alcohol? The federal or state government? Legalizing marijuana? Vitamins? Al-Anon? Alateen?
- 2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression I am stating the "AA opinion"?
- 3. What in AA history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
- 4. Have I had a similar experience in my own AA life?
- 5. What would AA be without this Tradition? Where would I be?
- 6. Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
- 7. How can I manifest the spirit of this Tradition in my personal life outside AA? Inside AA?

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September 2022 This Day in A.A. History! TUESDAY THURSDAY SUNDAY MONDAY WEDNESDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY 28 29 31 2 3 1939 1st AA group founded in Chicago. 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Flynn, author of "Independent Blond" born. 11 12 14 15 16 17 1940 - Bill moved the Alcoholic Foundation office to 30 Vesey St., NY. 2001 - 30 Vesey St., NY, was almost destroyed on September 11, 2001. 2001 - Father Mychal J., 1937 - Florence R, 1st September 15, 1979 died Assist. Surgeon General female in AA in NY. 1941 sober in the World Trade Kolb speaks at dinner for - WHJP in Jacksonville, D. AA#3 dies. Center attack. Bill and Dr Bob. FL airs Spotlight on AA 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 1965 - The Saturday Evening Post publishes article "Alcoholics Can Be Cured - Despite AA". 1947 1975 - Jack Alexander, 12 steps Bobbie V who W & Hank P form Works Central Office opens its author of Saturday replaced Ruth Hock as his Evening Post article, dies. doors Publishing Co. secretary in NY. 26 29 30 25 27 1939 - Morris Markey runs story on AA, Alcoholics and God in Liberty Magazine. 1975 - Bill W a biography by Robert T is published. 2003 - Searcy W. died today, sober 20,962 days 1930 - Bill wrote 4th (last) promise in family Bible to quit drinking. 2 3 1939 - Group started by Earl T in Chicago. Other significant events 1940 - AA group started in Toledo by Duke P & others. in September for which 1940 - Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases gives Big Book unfavorable review. we have no specific date: 1946 - Bill & Dr. Bob both publicly endorsed National Committee Education Alcoholism founded by Marty M. 1946 - 1st A.A. group in Mexico. 1948 - Bob writes article for Grapevine on AA "Fundamentals - In Retrospect". 1948 - 1st issue of Grapevine published in "pocketbook" size. 1946 - 1st AA group in Mexico City is formed.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
25	26	27	28	29	30	1		
						1939 First A.A. group in Chicago. 1941 - Local news reports 1st AA Group in New Haven, CT. 1957 Alcoholics Anonymous book A. A. Comes of Age is published.		
2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1944 National Committee for Education on Alcoholism formed by Marty Mann - later to become "National council on Alcoholism."	AA Grapevine adopted as national publication of AA.		World Service meeting held in New York. Oct. 5 - 7	1941 - 900 dine at Cleveland dinner for Bill D, AA #3 1988 - Lois W, Bills wife and a co-founder of Al-Anon, dies at age 97		1988 Memorial Service for Lois Wilson at Stepping Stones, NY		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
October 9-11, 1969 1st World Service meeting held in New York with delegates from 14 countries.	1943 - 6 of 1st 9 AA's attend clubhouse anniv. in Toledo. 1970 - Lois reads "Bills Last Message" annual dinner in NY. 1988 - Lois is buried next to Bill in Manchester, Vermont	2001 A.A.'s first office is destroyed in 9/11 attacks.		1937 - Florence R., first female A.A. in New York, gets sober. 1939 - Bill W. gets his drivers license. 1947 - "The Melbourne Group" held its first meeting in Australia.	1938 - Bill W. & Hank P establish Works Publishing Co. 1939 - Journal of American Medical Association gives Big Book unfavorable review.	1904 Marty M, early AA woman, is born in Chicago.		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
	1935 - Ebby T, Bills sponsor, moves in with Bill and Lois. 1954 - Bill D. (A.A. # 3) dies.			Bill wrote promise to Lois in family Bible to quit drinking. By Thanksgiving added second promise.	1939 Cleveland Plain Dealer begins series on AA by Eldrick B. Davis.	1963 - E M Jellinek, alcoholism educator and AA friend dies. 1949 - Florence R, AA's 1st sober woman, begins drinking again, commits suicide.		
AA groups i California. (1943 - Wils major A.A. Jan 19, 194 1973 - Trust Committee	24	25	26	27	28	29		
	1942 - L.A. Times reports AA groups in 14 California. cities. 1943 - Wilson's start 1st major A.A. tour, returned Jan 19, 1944. 1973 - Trustee's Archives Committee of AA has its 1st meeting.				1994 National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence celebrates 50 years.	F. of Omaha, Nebraska traveled to Des Moines to make a Twelfth Step call on Judge Ray H. Founding A.A. in Iowa.		
30	31							
1939 Liberty Magazine publishes "Alcoholics and God".		Other significant events in October for which we have no specific date:	1936 - Bill C. a Canadian alkie staying at Bill's house, committed suicide using a gas stove. 1939 - 1st central committee formed in Cleveland; 1st example A.A. rotation. 1942 - 1st issue of Cleveland Central Bulletin is published. 1944 - First non American branch started in Sydney, Australia by Father T V Dunlea & Rex. 1951 - Lasker Award presented to AA in San Francisco. 1951 - Sister Ignatia wrote "Care of Alcoholics - St. Thomas Hospital & A.A. Started Movement Which Swept Country" article in "Hospital Progress" the journal of Catholic Hospital Association. 1954 - The "Alcoholic Foundation" renamed the "General Service Board of A.A." 1958 - Playhouse 90 TV airs "The Days of Wine and Roses".					

About

The ODAAT Times is a local newsletter published by the Des Moines Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous. This publication provides current information about new meetings, upcoming AA-related events, and articles of interest submitted by local members. For more information and for submissions please email the office. Opinions contained herein are strictly those of the author(s). We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length, and any content which may violate the AA Traditions, etc. Publication of opinions, articles, and announcements does not represent, express, or imply endorsement or approval by AA at any level. AA literature reprinted with permission of AAWS.

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Questions or comments? E-mail us at dsm.central.office@gmail.com or call 515 -282-8550.

