



Volume 4, Number 1, January 2005

FEATURES:

- FYI
- Spotlight on Our Groups
- Traveling Highlights
- Little known Facts of AA
- District 52
- Member's Musings
- Carrying the Message

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

LET'S CELEBRATE

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

70 YEARS OF AA !!!!

AA's and Al-anons from around the world will meet and celebrate AA's 70th birthday in the Canadian city of Toronto on June 30th thru July 3rd, 2005.

Registration for this world-wide event started in Sept. of 2004 but it's not too late to join in the fun. Pre-registration deadline is May 16, 2005.

The theme for this year's convention is "I am responsible". Beginning Thursday at midnight thru early Sunday, Marathon Meetings will be held in English, Spanish and French.

Topic Meetings, Workshops, Panels, Special Interest meetings and Regional Meetings will be held Friday and Saturday at the Convention Center, the Intercontinental and Fairmont Royal York hotels.

Friday night at the Skydome Stadium, is the Flag ceremony and Opening AA Meeting, Saturday night an Oldtimers AA meeting and on Sunday morning the Closing AA Meeting.

Dancing and other activities are interspersed with the meetings.

Anyone interested in going to the Convention can find detailed information and Registration Forms in the lobby, Aberdeen Bldg.

You may also register online at www.aa.org.
SEE YOU IN TORONTO !

A LETTER TO MOM

In 1989 I was the object of a family intervention. I was in complete denial and had no idea that my drinking was causing so much pain. My daughter was unable to be there so she wrote to me instead. Here is her letter:

"To Mom"

When I see you in the morning and you're off to work you are so bright and alert...a whole person. Later, when you arrive home, you are rich with your day. I wish it could stay like that.

So many years I've hoped for it but your sidekick comes in and takes over. I wish your buddy wasn't alcohol. It makes you believe it's your friend and relaxes you...but it won't tell you what you can't remember, or don't see, from the night before.

It won't let you see our pain because it knows that would mean a choice...alcohol or family. If you dump the family will the vodka comfort you and put it's arms around you? Do you know that I would love to be able to put my arms around you and just be able to talk with you. I can't get my arms around both you and the vodka. As a matter of fact, sometimes I can't do it because the shadow of vodka lingers.

I want to poison the vodka like it's been poisoning you. I hate your buddy vodka, because sometimes I get angry at you or I ignore you because of it. Does that hurt the bottle of vodka you have stashed away? No, Mom, it doesn't...but it hurts you and of course it hurts me too.

I can't sit back any longer and watch your buddy hurt you. I'm very concerned with what's happening. I just don't know how to communicate with you when you're drinking. It's like you're escaping from everything...even good things like your family and love.

Why are you leaving us??

Submitted by Anonymous
member with 15 years of sober
living thanks to AA.

AA ACRONYMS

P.U.S.H.

**PRAY UNTIL SOMETHING
HAPPENS**

F.E.A.R.

**FACE EVERYTHING AND
RECOVER**

G.O.D.

**GOOD ORDERLY
DIRECTION**

GROUP OF DRUNKS

TRAVELING HIGHLIGHTS



Variety in meetings can spice up your program.

In early sobriety, I was a creature of habit. Same meetings, same stories, same times, and same people were what made me comfortable. I am grateful for those meetings to this day because they opened a new life for me. Today I still go to the same two meetings fairly regularly because I'm comfortable there.

About a year into this new sober life I had to visit my brother in another state. He got the number of a friend of his who was a friend of Bill W's. so that I could talk to him and go to mtgs in Stowe, Ohio. I didn't call him. Fear took over. I was not with my home group and I wasn't comfortable. I had my big book and I remember reading that Dr. Bob was from Akron, Ohio. Stowe was right next door. Some-how I found where Dr. Bob lived and drove there with my brother. This was really the first time I had ventured away from my home group.

Dr. Bob's house was a nondescript row house in Akron. I guess I had expected something else. Inside, there were pictures and friends of Bill and Bob were there to give you a tour. There were even video tapes taken from super eight movies of Bill and Bob! It was amazing to see these two after reading about them.

A chimney had been removed and the house was selling pieces of the mortar that kept the bricks together to keep the house open to the public. I bought one. It was like a second medallion to me, and I kept it in my pocket with my medallion. The next year I gave it to a woman from my home group who was getting her year medallion.

That was twelve years ago. In Dr. Bob's house I felt like I was at a meeting. It was spiritual though I didn't really have a spiritual part of a program yet. But I felt something in that house that was special. For one, I was no longer afraid to go to a place that wasn't my home group.

When I got back to Winter Park, Florida I started going to other meeting in Orlando. I still attended meetings in my home group but branched out.

All meetings are good for me. It doesn't matter where they are. I started to travel more in my job so I started going to meetings in

other states even in other countries. (No coffee at meetings in England, just tea!) Meetings in New York City are everywhere and at all times ... within blocks of each other!

I was fortunate to visit Bill W's grave site in East Dorset, Vermont on 2 occasions. The first time I was by myself. For my second visit, my family was with me. I drove up to Vermont from my sister's place in New York state.

Bill W's house, where he was born, still stands and has meetings regularly and is also a bed and breakfast. They give you a map to his and Lois' grave site. It's like a treasure map! You find this great little cemetery on a hill and the directions tell you to go to this one maple tree, walk seven or so grave stones in and you're at the burial place of Bill and Lois.

I followed the directions and there I was. There were two unmarked stones. What humility! I prayed the Serenity Prayer as the wind blew through the cemetery on a sunny summer day. It was very spiritual. I smiled and cried a little at the whole experience.

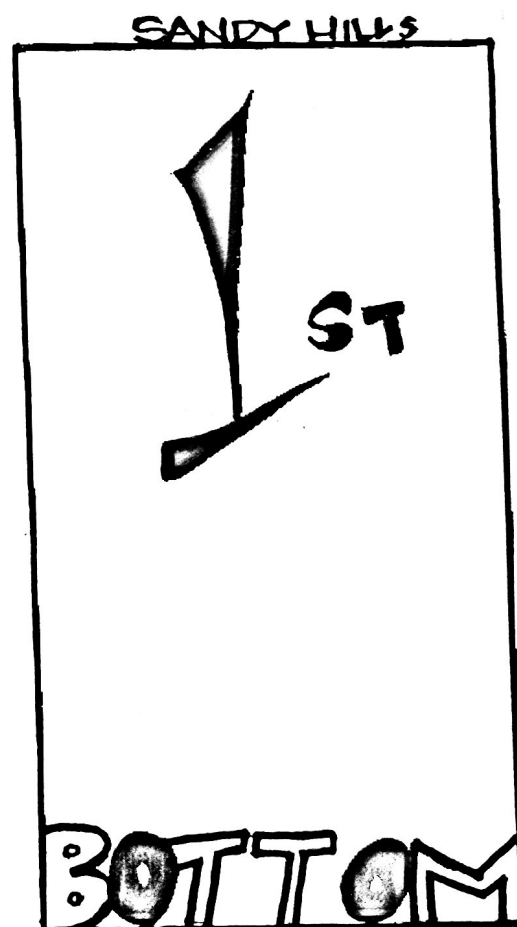
Then I looked up and realized I was in the wrong row! Bill and Lois' graves were just above me. Big grave-stones with his and Lois' names fully displayed. There were flags, as he was a veteran. There were also

medallions, food, footprints, and messages left for him.

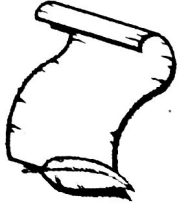
I really started crying then. These were tears of joy. Today, I find that I cry when I'm happy or sad. Before sobriety, I cried out of shame, guilt, and anger.

Today I'm grateful to be sober, grateful to be a part of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, and grateful to have experienced meetings, formal and otherwise, in many places all of which have helped me stay sober one day at a time.

By: AA member Jay S.



MEMBERS MUSINGS



“HIS WILL... NOT MY WILL”

For me, AA is first a spiritual program which teaches me how to live a better way of life. To be sure, a sober life; but, much more than that, a life of fulfillment, peace and serenity.

The 12 Steps of AA are the path back to my own spirituality... which I believe is in all of us. For me, the Steps are part of a daily routine designed to eliminate self will and to help me live my life according to His will.

I embrace Bill W's belief in a Higher Power (for me God) who is a loving and forgiving God who wants only good things for me and everyone.

In Step Three I'm entirely ready to turn my will and my life over to the care of God and in Step Eleven I pray for the knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry it out.

With that shift from a life based on MY will, to HIS will, God has led me out of a life which resulted in jails, institutions and suicide attempts. He has led me into a life of sobriety, fulfillment peace and serenity.

But, how do I know God's will for me? How do I know that which is HIS will...not MY will? The honest answer for me, just a kindergartner in the AA program, is... I don't know!

When I lived in Cleveland I asked these questions of my sponsor, Rick S. He suggested that I read a pamphlet entitled *The Four Absolutes*, published by the Cleveland Central Committee of AA.

Overview: *The Four Absolutes*

HONESTY
UNSELFISHNESS
LOVE
PURITY

In the Foreword the pamphlet clearly states that *the Absolutes*, as such, are not a formal part of our AA philosophy of life. They were borrowed from the Oxford Group's movement in the early days of AA. Yet many old time AA groups still permanently display *The Four Absolutes* placards on meeting nights.

In my personal experience of several years attending AA mtgs in the Cleveland area I can confirm this to be true. In fact, many members believe, as the

Foreword suggests, "If you will revisit the 12 Steps with care you will find that *The Absolutes* form a thread which is discernable in a sober life of quality".

The Four Absolutes, when applied, suggest we ask four simple questions:

Honesty: Is it true or is it false?
Unselfishness: How will it affect the other fellow?
Love: Is it beautiful or is it ugly?
Purity: Is it right or is it wrong?

Many members "recognize *The Absolutes* as guideposts to the finest and highest objectives of man". A model of discerning God's will for me.

Rich suggested that I employ *The Four Absolutes* in a different, but simple way, that might help me determine God's will for me.

1st: Honesty: Am I being honest with myself and others (no half truths.)? If I am honest then I may continue on.

2nd: Unselfishness: Am I acting without expectations?

3rd: Purity: If my actions are both honest and unselfish then my motives are pure.

Finally, to determine God's will for me I must act out of love.

4th Love: If I have been honest, unselfish and pure then I am acting out of love.

IF I AM ACTING OUT OF LOVE IT IS GOD'S WILL !

Since I began practicing the spiritual principles of AA and applied this simple model that was suggested to me by my sponsor to determine God's will for me, I have a new life of sobriety, fulfillment, joy, peace and serenity.

Written by AA member:
Bob Q

Note: The 15 page pamphlet entitled *The Four Absolutes*, may be ordered for 40c each by calling Cleveland AA at:

216-241-7387

or by writing to:

Alcoholics Anonymous
1701 East 12th St
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Be part of the NEWSLETTER

Have your travels taken you to AA meetings in interesting places? Do you have an urge to tell us how you "carry the message"? Do you want to tout your Home Group or simply tell us about your experiences in AA?

We need your articles... so please write your heart out. The Newsletter is published 3 times a year and YOU make it a success. Ginnie D

CARRYING THE MESSAGE



Carrying the message...just how can I carry the message Am I carrying the message? Moreover, what is the message?

After being asked to write this article I meditated on those questions. My answers came through many avenues.

I was reminded of when I first got sober and wanted to run out telling everyone about this great new way of life. I bought several copies of the Big Book and started handing them out to several of my friends. I became an expert in the AA two-step.

What is the "two-step" you ask. It's Step One straight to Twelve. Heck, I wanted to be the guy beating the AA drum...look at me, I'm sober, join me, it's great! Oh yeah, I was a thriving example of peace and serenity alright. Hmm...somewhere I read something like: "obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got" ..(BB, pg 164)

I believe there are many ways to bring the message to those still

sick and suffering. There are jail meetings, treatment meetings, Twelve Step calls, participating in discussion meetings, being a speaker, taking a service commitment and several other formal ways. Through awareness I have been reminded that some of the most powerful ways are the simplest.

During early sobriety I was extremely active in service work, chairing treatment meetings, sponsoring several people and holding service positions at the group and Intergroup level.

All of these are important parts of carrying the message to me. However, it has been my experience that taking the time to stick my hand out and welcome the newcomer is the starting point of a powerful healing process for myself and the new person.

I got sober in Germany and had the pleasure of going back over not too long ago for a convention (over there they are called round-ups). It was there that I, once again, learned that I seem to be of the most service when I'm not even aware of it.

One of the members I hadn't seen in a few years came up to me, thanking me for my part in his sobriety. Being the good AA I am, I just said "you're welcome but it wasn't me, it was God." Of course, inside, my ego starts inflating itself, saying "see all the good things you have

done". Dale just replied back, "Oh, I know it was God, I'm just glad you allowed him to work through you relaying the message to me". Dale went on to say what I had done was to make him feel welcome, just by saying hello. Here I was, thinking it was all the formal things; but, what got through were the most basic actions of being a human being.

I have found in my travels that there are many ways to be of service. I just never really know when my Higher Power is going to use me or how He is going to call upon me to be of service.

What I have found all over the world in the hearts of AA is love, hope, understanding, joy, compassion and a sense of belonging. I never again have to go through anything by myself or be alone if I choose not to be. If I choose not to be !!

Every member of AA carries a message of some kind. If you have one week you are showing the person with one day it can work. The person with one day shows the person with one hour there is hope. The newcomer shows me what it is like and what my life is about today.

I have one purpose in life today, to stay sober and help someone else achieve sobriety. As long as I keep focus on my primary purpose everything else seems to be pure gravy. It seems when I'm living the Steps I don't have

to worry about carrying the message...it is displayed for the whole world to see. Of course, when I'm not living in the solution my insanity is equally evident.

All I can hope is to give back what was so freely given to me by so many people.

With love and service,
George W

PUZZLE

Unscramble the words and find what the recovering alcoholic told the suffering drunk?

P E R A G
_ O _ _ O

E G A T
_ _ O O

C I L S K
O O O _ _

C U H O P
_ O O _ O

T O N K
_ O O O

ANSWER:

_____ is a _____

PUZZLE answer on Pg. 8

DISTRICT 52 NEWS

District 52 is comprised of five counties:

Richmond, Moore, Lee
Hoke and Scotland.

GSR's (General Service Representatives) from AA groups in these counties make up District 52.

Newly installed officers for 2005 are:

DCM: Rick M.
Rockingham

Alt. DCM: Jim M.
Moore

Secretary: Cynthia C.
Moore

Treasurer: Jimmy B.
Moore

District 52 meeting
schedule for 2005:

March 5th
June 11th
Sept 17th
Dec 10th

All meetings are held at the
AA bldg. on Wilder Avenue
in Aberdeen...2 to 4 pm.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR GROUPS



SUNRISE GROUP

The "Sunrise Group" is the latest addition to the roster of AA meetings in Moore County.

It is the only early morning meeting on the schedule:
7:30am, Aberdeen Bldg, (CD).

The following article was written by one of the founding members:

"As the early morning rays of sunlight flickered through the window of the meeting room, the leader opened the first gathering of the Sunday Sunrise Group with the Serenity Prayer.

It was a perfect sunrise on the threshold of the winter season. It was as if the hand of God had placed the sun and the window exactly where they belonged for the start of the new group.

Only five AA members were present, but not surprisingly the group conscience was at peace with the diminutive number of attendees seated around the kitchen table.

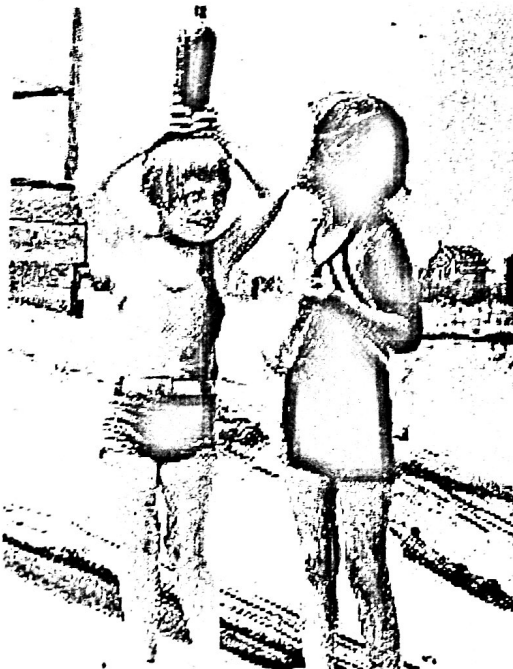
Today, despite some crowding, the Sunrise Group still meets in the kitchen, yet everyone always feels comfortable.

The discussion is grounded in the Big Book and the Twelve Steps. The topic is presented in the form of a question. Each participant answers the question with his or her own personal experience.

Not unusual is the laughter and good cheer as both newcomers and old-timers share their stories. Quite appropriately, the stories portray the solution to the question of recovery rather than languishing in the problem of alcoholism. The Sunrise Group is a comfort to sober alcoholics who dwell with God.

The Sunrise Group is a closed discussion meeting and welcomes smokers. Meetings are at 7:30 AM It meets at 7:30 AM Sundays at the Aberdeen building."

Is this where it starts ?? Who knows...but we thought it would be fun to show some of our earliest introductions to alcohol. If you have any pictures with this theme please submit them to the Intergroup for inclusion in our Newsletter.



Ginnie D proudly displays the bottle she's found on the beach.

Rich M gets his first introduction to a "real" man's brew.



LITTLE KNOWN FACTS OF AA



WHY DO WE CALL IT THE "BIG BOOK"

Circulation of the 400 mimeographed draft copies of the Big Book in early 1939 was followed by several months of review and discussion.

Finally a copy with handwritten corrections was delivered to Edward Blackwell, president of the Cornwallis Press, who reluctantly agreed to print 5,000 books for a down payment of \$500. Only the question of the book's price remained to be argued over..

Here is how Bill W. describes these events in *AA Comes of Age*:

"When making these arrangements with Mr. Blackwell we fixed the retail price of the book at \$3.50. This figure was the result of long and heated arguments.

Some members had insisted on a \$1.00 book, others wanted a \$2.50 printing. They had turned deaf ears to Henry's plea that we must make something on the deal or else we

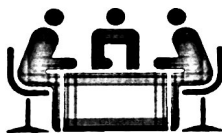
could never operate a headquarters office, much less pay off the shareholders.

But Henry finally won through and, as a consolation to the contestants, we directed Mr Blackwell to do the job on the thickest paper in his shop. The original volume proved to be so bulky that it became known as the "Big Book". Of course the idea was to convince the alcoholic purchaser that he was getting his money's worth! "

PUZZLE answer:

"There is a solution"

WHAT IS INTERGROUP?



We are a service committee formed for the purpose of supporting AA activities in the Moore County area of NC.

Our goal is to improve communication and understanding among our AA groups.

The Sandhills Intergroup is comprised of interested volunteer members and representatives from the AA groups in Moore County. The ideas and suggestions of local AA's are welcome and all are encouraged

to attend the monthly meeting at 9AM on the first Saturday of each month at the AA building on Wilder Ave in Aberdeen.

Sandhills Intergroup is financed by local AA groups. The treasurer presents an annual estimated budget that covers Intergroup function such as:

The 24 hour answering service that will give meeting information to the caller or will pass along the call to one of our AA members who are listed on the 12th Step List.

The Website that provides our meeting schedules and directions to meetings,.

Meeting schedules and the Newsletter, both updated and printed every 4 months.

Distribution of meeting schedules & literature to local hotels, motels, schools, hospitals, community services, law enforcement, mental health and medical and professional agencies.

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