



Carry the Message January, 2009

The Huron Valley Area Intergroup Newsletter

Serving the Recovery Community since 1979

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.

Tradition One Long Form

Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of use will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.

Traditions Checklist—from the A.A. Grapevine

- Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other member's inventories?
- Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious precludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
- Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
- Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
- Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
- Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?

64th Anniversary Celebration!

Saturday April 18, 2009 Pioneer High School in Ann Arbor

Main Speaker: Pauline N. (Current Chair of EMJA Area 32, Michigan)

Traditions Players, AA & Al-Anon Panels, Archives, Dinner and Dance

(Volunteers Needed! Contact Linda At the HVAJ office 734-482-0707)

Co-Sponsored by HVAI and District 4

Published by the Huron Valley Area Intergroup, 31 South Huron Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48197 (I-94 exit 183 "Ypsilanti, Huron Street", 0.9 miles north)

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HVAI Contributions

Huron Valley Area Intergroup could not exist without the support of our many Groups and generous contributions from individual members. We rely on your contributions to keep our doors open to the still suffering alcoholics, and those who care for them. We wish to thank the following contributors:

Washtenaw County: District 04

Manchester: Manchester Group

Ypsilanti: Survivors Group
Weekend By the Book
Promises Group GLBT
Starting Over
Work The Steps or Die
Survivors

Ann Arbor: AA at the VA
Sober Spice
King of Kings (Good Shep.)
Singleness of Purpose
Women's Steps to Serenity
Spiritual Solution

Dexter: Women/Substance

Chelsea: Chelsea Hospital Group

Saline: Monday 12&12

Personal Contributions : X 3

Meeting Updates

Our meeting updates are now available online at www.hvai.org.

New to the HVAI website is a searchable meeting directory! heck it out, let us know what you think, and help us to spread the word. You can search by day, time, location, and type of meeting to name a few options.

The Spring 2008 meeting directory is now available. Get one at a local meeting or stop into the HVAI office at 31 South Huron Street, Ypsilanti MI.

- Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?

- Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?

- Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?

- Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of the fellowship?

Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.'s History

Each year the G.S.O. Archives receives thousands of requests for research and historical information. The questions we receive range from very simple questions with easy answers to complex questions involving hours of research. If you have a question about AA's history or archives, we hope you will contact us (or one of the many other local and area AA archives) to try to find the answer. Below are some of the most frequently asked ques-

Why do AA members use tokens, medallions, and chips to mark sobriety? When did that practice start?

The chip system is thought to have begun in Indianapolis in 1942. The tradition is believed to have started with Doherty S., who originally brought A.A. to Indianapolis. Doherty himself, in a letter to Bill, seems to indicate the practice originated in Indianapolis in 1942. Nell Wing wrote in 1962 about the history of the chip system: "...The chip system might have begun in Indianapolis....reference was made in a letter from Doherty to the start of giving out 'chips' and 'tokens.' This was in 1942. I imagine this would be about right, because most of the early groups started in 1940 and it would take about a couple of years to think of anniversaries and

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Send Your Voluntary 7th Tradition Contributions To:

Huron Valley Area Intergroup
31 South Huron Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

District 4
Washtenaw County Treasurer
Box 971502
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Central Michigan Intra-Area 32
C.M.I.A. Area 32 Treasurer
P. O. Box 283
Saline, MI 48176

AA World Service
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 459
New York, NY 10164-0423

Upcoming Events

January, 2009

January 23-25, 2009: *4th Annual Girl Talk Michigan for Women in AA & Al-Anon*, \$165. for the weekend, Columbiere Center, Clarkston, MI Info: GirlTalkMI@aol.com January 25 - 27, 2009

February 6th & 7th, 2009: *Emotional Sobriety Workshop, "The Next Frontier"* from Language of the Heart, pp 236-238. St. Catherine's Family Center, 1254 Grandview, Ohio Info: ESCommittee@aol.com

February 12 - 15, 2009: *45th International Women's Conference: The Language of the Heart*, Salt Lake City, Utah Info: www.internationalwomensconference.org

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marking any time of sobriety. I asked Bill about this and his memory is that the system started in Indianapolis."

In Dr. Bob and the Good Old Timers, it indicates that Sister Ignatia in Akron, working at St. Thomas Hospital, also used medallions: "Sister Ignatia gave each of her newly released patients a Sacred Heart medallion, which she asked them to return before they took the first drink. She would occasionally give out St. Christopher medals as well..." (page 195).

We don't know precisely who started this system first, or when and how it spread to other groups. As with many things in AA, the exact nature of the history eludes us!

What's the history of typical AA slogans like "First Things First" and "One Day at a Time"?

We don't have a great deal of information about the origins of AA's slogans and acronyms, but we can provide some sharing and preliminary information. Many of these slogans, as with other practices in AA, were simply passed

along verbally to other members, so it is impossible to know who started using them first. It is possible that some of the slogans may have originally stemmed from a part of the Oxford Group Movement language, but it could also be that they were original with Bill and Dr. Bob and the early members.

Members have always inquired as to the origins of various slogans, and it has always been difficult to narrow down; in our research, we discovered a letter written by former GSO Archivist, Frank M., dated 1989, who responded to a similar question that was posed to him. This was Frank's response, "Your interest in the origins of 'One Day at a Time' is shared by many of us. Like hand-holding, however, it's difficult to pin-point the exact 'moment.'" That is the problem we find with most of our AA slogans, unfortunately! We do know, however, that many slogans commonly heard have been around since the early days of the Fellowship.

In December of 1958 Ruth Hock (non-alcoholic), who was AA's first secretary, wrote a response to a similar question concerning dif-

ferent slogans. In her reply Ruth wrote:

"...Bill [W.] and I first worked together in January 1936 when he had been sober just a little over one year and at that time 'Easy Does It,' 'Live and Let Live,' and 'First Things First,' were part of the daily conversation. They were also used in the very first drafts of the book, but probably only Bill himself could tell you where he picked them up..."

"As far as I'm concerned all of the above were introduced into A.A. by Bill W. himself although not original with him.

"Some of these could have been used in Oxford Group meetings but there is no way for sure."

In addition to Ruth's response, page 220 of Bill W.'s biography, *Pass It On*, also addresses this topic:

"Some 'A.A. saws' were also used as long ago as the late 1930s: 'First Things First,' 'Easy Does It,' 'Live and Let Live.' Because these appear in the first edition of the Big Book (at the end of the chapter on 'The Family Afterward'), it's probable that the use of the slogans originated with Bill and that he brought them with him from Vermont – old saws with new teeth."

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Who wrote AA's Preamble? And when was the word "honest" dropped from it (i.e. "honest desire to stop drinking"), and why?

The Preamble first appeared in the Grapevine in June 1947, and was written by Tom Y., the Grapevine Editor serving at that time. Its intent was to inform the public as to what A.A. is and what it is not. Shortly thereafter, the Preamble began appearing in each monthly issue of the Grapevine, and later on in much of our A.A. Conference-approved literature. In 1992 the Grapevine published a short history of the Preamble.

In the 1947 version of the Preamble, it contained the wording, "... an honest desire to stop drinking..." as printed in the foreword to the first edition of the Big Book. However, since the adoption of the short form of the Traditions in 1950, the Third Tradition has always read, "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking" and this form was used by Bill in writing the book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

In 1958 the expression "honest desire" was discussed at great length at the General Service Conference. It was felt that it was impossible to determine what constitutes an "honest" desire to stop drinking, thus the word was dropped. The "new" version of the Preamble, without the word "honest," first appeared in the September 1958 issue of the Grapevine.

There have been other versions of the Preamble, written by AA members for their local groups' use, which were then circulated around AA; for example: the "Texas Preamble," the "Wilmington Preamble," etc. Many AA members find these interesting, but they have

District 4 Corner

The HVAI provides this space as a courtesy to District 4 in the spirit of cooperation in carrying the message. Please direct all questions and comments to your Home Group GSR or DCM or attend a District 4 meeting.

HVAI, as well as district 4, need A.A. volunteers to head-up up the various assignments necessary to put on a successful 64th Anniversary of A. A. In Washtenaw County to be held Saturday, April 18, 2009. The location will once again be held at Ann Arbor, Pioneer High School.

Each group meeting in District 4/ Washtenaw County, is encouraged to elect and send a General Service Representative to the district 4 meetings. Meeting of district 4 are currently held upstairs at the First Congregational Church 608 East William, A². District meeting start at 7:00 PM and end at 8:00 PM on the third Monday of each month, twelve months a year.

District 4 Election Results:
D.C.M.: Sean O.

Alt. D.C.M.: Sam P.
Secretary: Terry N.
Alt. Secretary: Katie L.
Treasurer: Lori F.
Alt. Treasurer: Carl R.
Thanks to all who serve.

Open Positions:

Special Needs Committee Chair
Treatment Committee

March Round-Up: Hyatt Regency Dearborn, March 20 – 22, 2009

Mock Conference: Tribal Gymnasium Mt. Pleasant, March 28, 2009

Michigan State Convention: Troy-Detroit Marriot, July 24 – 26, 2009

International Convention of A.A., 2020, Detroit Michigan

never been adopted by the Fellowship as a whole.

I've heard it said that Bill always wished he could change the beginning of 'How It Works' to read "Never have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path" (rather than "Rarely have we seen..."). Is this true?

No. A rumor has persisted for years that Bill wished he could have changed "rarely" to "never." But we know, through Bill's own words, that that is not the case. In a letter to Les V., dated May 25, 1961 Bill W. stated:

"...Concerning your comment about the use of the word 'rarely' in Chapter Five of the Big Book. My recollection is that we did give a considerable thought at the time of

writing. I think the main reason for the use of 'rarely' was to avoid anything that would look like a claim for a 100 % result. Assuming of course that an alcoholic is willing enough and sane enough, there can be a perfect score on such character. But since willingness and sanity are such illusive and fluctuating values, we simply didn't like to be too positive. The medical profession could jump right down our throats... I do remember thinking about it a lot." In addition, the following question and response were made at the 1970 General Service Conference, as part of the "Ask-It" Basket questions. Bill was, of course, still living at this time and was able to respond.