



THE MAN IN THE HOLE

A sick alcoholic lay in the bottom of a deep hole where he had fallen during a drunken stupor. He cried for help. A doctor passing by heard the cries and leaning over the top of the hole said, "Give me your hand, my friend, and I'll help you." Desperately the drunk tried to reach the doctor's outstretched hand. After several futile attempts, the doctor said, "It's no use. I'll have to get a ladder," and departed.

Then a minister hearing the cries for help peered over the top of the hole and he too said, "Give me your hand, my poor man, and I'll help you out." Again, attempts to reach the outstretched hands of help were futile. "Try harder, the minister said, but the effort so exhausted the sick man that he collapsed on to the bottom of the hole. "Perhaps I can find a rope," said the minister as he went away.

Presently a Third Man appeared at the top of the hole and called in a cheery voice: "Hi, pal, you really want to get out of that mess?" "Yes! Yes! I do!" wailed the sick man. "Help me, please, please help me!" Before the sick man realized what was happening the man with the cheery voice had dropped into the hole and was standing alongside him. "You fool," exclaimed the sick man. "Why'd you do that? You can't help me from down here!" "Let me try, anyway," replied the Third Man. "I can see you've been having trouble with booze. I did too, once. I'm an alcoholic and I've been in the same kind of mess you're in ... c'mon, climb on my back and I'll try to push you up."

After considerable struggling the sick man was pushed over the top, out into the sunshine again. The sober Third Man easily climbed out and joined the other. "Now that you're out of that mess, do you think you want to keep on drinking? Or would you really like to get sober and stay that way? It's your decision to make. I helped you get out of the hole but the choice – to be sober or drunk – is up to you... If you are interested, I can tell you about a plan for living I practice that keeps me sober on a day to day basis." He smiled and placed an arm on the other man's shoulder. "How 'bout it?":

The sick man thoughts were wavering, like his body, but he answered, "I am willing." Although he didn't realize it at the time, the word "willing" was the magic one ... the key to his future.

Because as admitted alcoholics, it is through willingness to work the program of Alcoholics Anonymous that we learn to surrender our will and our lives over to the care of a Power greater than ourselves. In turn we gain hope and faith, yes even rebirth.

The Third Man knew that only through his willingness to help another alcoholic, through understanding and love, could he insure his own daily sobriety ... he also knew that it was most important to help the sick man believe that the remorse of yesterday and the fear of tomorrow could be dissolved into one twenty-four hour period called faith in today ... He hoped he could help the sick man realize that he need never be alone anymore ... that gratitude was a vital word in his new vocabulary.

... Anonymous, borrowed from Tri-County Central Office News, Tampa. Fl.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE

Excerpts from a talk given by Pat L., at WRAASA, Cranbrook BC 2005

Let me begin by saying that I have a passion for CPC (Cooperation with the Professional Community and PI (Public Information.)

I believe that early intervention by a Professional could have made a difference in the lives of my Mother and Father -both of whom were alcoholic - and in the lives of myself and my family members.

The message was never carried to my Father and he died at the young age of 68 from complications of cirrhosis of the liver.

My Mother found AA later in her life at 59 years old after many, many visits to doctors and hospitals where her disease was never discussed. She carried the message to me when I was 39. She was an active member of AA and was sober until her death 12 years later. During that time, myself and my family became aware of the disease that decimated us.

Our Fifth Tradition Long Form states _ -
Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity **having one primary purpose** – that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

We, as individual members of our respective Groups shall also heed this as our primary purpose. As it says in Step Twelve “we tried to carry this message to alcoholics.”

Many of the Alcoholics who still suffer; are today visiting their doctors, priests, lawyers, parole officers, therapists, employee counselors and many other professionals who will see the alcoholics maybe as long as seven years – I repeat-
seven years- prior to their ever being told about an AA meeting or given the opportunity to meet an AA member in recovery.

Through CPC, the professional will be made aware of a program of recovery for the still suffering alcoholic and that information can be carried to them.

Many children are today talking to their teachers and asking “what can I do about my mother or father’s drinking? I can’t get to school because there is no one at home who can take care of me.”

Through PI, the teacher, the student, the reader will be made aware of a program of recovery for the still suffering alcoholic and that information can be carried to them.

Many of these people daily encounter the suffering alcoholic, and in spite of rising public awareness, many of them simply don’t know what to do with a drunk.

We have a message of hope and recovery for those alcoholics who still suffer and wish to listen. The program of recovery is one that works for the millions of people that have wanted it.

“Informed communications is the key!”

AA through the years has been truly grateful for the guidance and inspiration of many non-alcoholics. Open communication and friendly cooperation between informed AA members and the professional can mean that more of the millions of sick and suffering alcoholics out there can experience the joy of living sober.

Our preamble says it simply and needs repeating over and over again if necessary:

“Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.”

“Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.”

We must keep our own sobriety and spiritual condition in very good shape and at the top of the list in our own recovery as we may be the only example of our Twelve Step Recovery Program and the Big Book of AA that anyone will ever see. Our continued sobriety depends upon helping others to recover from alcoholism.

“Passing it On” and “Carrying the Message” are critical keystones to my own personal story of recovery and that of the many family and friends that may follow me.

Together we can do what none of us could accomplish alone.

WHAT'S YOUR SCORE?

Members of the Portland, Ore. Group make wide use of a personal inventory chart. Newcomers find it particularly helpful when starting out on the Program of Recovery, and older members continue to check themselves by it at frequent intervals.

The inventory contains 20 questions. You can give yourself from one to five points on each. A total score of less than 50 is regarded as poor; 50 to 60 fair; 60 to 65 low average; 65 top 70 high average; 70 to 80 excellent; over 80 "impossible in this world."

This score card as sent in by Leo C.

KEEP THIS AND CHECK YOUR GRADE EACH MONTH

| | |
|---|-------|
| Has my past been a mess and am I EARNESTLY DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH A BETTER WAY OF LIFE, and am I willing to make the effort? | _____ |
| Do I admit BEYOND ANY DOUBT that I am powerless over alcohol ~ that if I use it, it will destroy me? | _____ |
| Do I sincerely believe that there is a power greater than myself in which I WILL PUT MY TRUST regardless of what happens? | _____ |
| Do I realize the importance of talking to AA members and attending all AA MEETINGS POSSIBLE, or do I hedge and make excuses? | _____ |
| Am I really willing to MAKE RETRIBUTION where possible to those I have harmed, or am I just kidding? | _____ |
| Do I SINCERELY OBSERVE daily moments of constructive meditation, thinking of my humility and desire to understand? | _____ |
| Am I TRULY HONEST with others, or will I chisel if I get a chance? | _____ |
| Am I PATIENT in waiting for the rewards of my efforts? | _____ |
| Am I FRIENDLY and do I TRY TO OVERLOOK the shortcomings of others, regardless of who they are? | _____ |
| Am I tolerant ~ do I show consideration for those whose beliefs, practices, or habits differ from my own? | _____ |
| Am I a gossip ~ do I repeat rumours or chatter about other people's affairs? | _____ |
| Am I GRATEFUL for ALL HELPFUL THINGS and DO I SAY SO? | _____ |
| Do I have REAL COURAGE and am I FREE FROM FEAR OF ALL KINDS? | _____ |
| Do I really have CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF and others, or am I filled with doubt and suspicion? | _____ |
| Do I cooperate with others and HELP PROVIDE constructive ideas? | _____ |
| Do I practice SELF-CONTROL and really forget and forgive differences? | _____ |
| Am I neat in my appearance, and do I keep as clean as I can under the circumstances, both in body and mind? | _____ |
| Am I extending any effort to help others with their problems? | _____ |
| Do I realize that my problem is NOT MONEY, but mental and physical? | _____ |
| Am I making any reasonable effort to OVERCOME any other undesirable habit Or CHARACTERISTIC I may possess? | _____ |
| Total | _____ |

HAPPY VACATION, WITH A FEW SAFEGUARDS

So, you're going to take a vacation, we hope. Well then, you know, by this time in AA, certain unchanging facts, we also hope.

You know, for instance, that alcohol and salt water don't mix, any more than gasoline and beer. You know that high dives when drunk mean a nose-dive; that the fish that bites on a worm isn't as dumb as you are if you start nibbling, because the fish doesn't know any better.

You know, too, that no real golf courses, or at least no course that you should be playing, has a 19th hole. The course stops at the 18th, and you should start counting from one again. And the wise AA, when he stops for the pause that refreshes makes sure that the drink is something that really refreshes, does not regress. (That's no ad ~ make it buttermilk if you wish, but just don't make it you-know-what.)

Vacation time can be and is meant to be pleasant, relaxing, and fun. It won't be for any AA who permits it to get him off the beam.

A few simple precautions have helped many in AA to get the fullest enjoyment out of a vacation even though far from their Home Group and temporarily cut off from the usual AA connections.

1. Remember that the axiom, "Once an alcoholic always an alcoholic." Holds in any locality in the world and is just as true at the seashore as atop the Rocky Mountains.
2. Before leaving, get the addresses of the Groups nearest to the place or places you are going to visit.
3. Re-adopt, or carry on, the 24-hour plan.
4. Read a little now and then along the way, or whenever possible, from AA literature or kindred books.
5. Drop a postcard, or if more energetic, a letter, to some AA back home. You don't even have to mention the subject. Writing a few words of greeting will help to keep the AA ties strong for you.
6. While loafing, take a mental inventory of how much you have gained since you stopped drinking.
7. Remind yourself of how much you stand to lose if you take the first drink.
8. Take conscious notice of how pleasant it is to get up in the morning a without a hangover.
9. Let your imagination play occasionally on how many more opportunities now lie ahead for a useful and interesting life.
10. And remind yourself, chum, that you didn't do it all by your own little self.

Simple and perhaps crude as these suggestions may be, they work.

Nearly everyone is smart enough to rub on some kind of oil before he goes out to loll on the beach. He knows that he'll get sunburned if he doesn't.

Why not apply even that slight degree of intelligence to the other aspects of vacation time?

Cases of mishap and misery for the AA on vacation can often be traced to a failure to set up safeguards against the effects of changing the daily routine. Anyone is likely to be more vulnerable to distractions and disturbances when he is operating out of his usual orbit.

But it is a fortunate fact that one can hold to his usual orbit of thinking wherever he is. The mind is not earth-bound.

There need be no mishaps for any AA who sincerely wants to stay on the beam. Or, if that statement sounds dogmatic, at least it is true that he can minimize the dangers almost to the vanishing point by taking a few precautions which in themselves should add to the pleasures of a vacation.

As somebody once said, it's not so much a matter of learning something new as it is of being reminded of what we already know.

... Reprinted with permission, AA Grapevine, July 1947



*Cherish every moment
and every person in your life,
because you never know when will be
the last time you see someone.
Life is fragile.
Take nothing and no one for granted.*



BARLEY CORN

The Bright Side, Waterloo, Iowa

Sandy: "Macintosh must have had a lot to drink at the concert last night."

Mack: "How's that?"

Sandy: "Well, when I was taking him home, he let me fall twice?"

● *****

The Paradox, Kansas City, MO

Son: "Pop, what's an alcoholic?"

Father: "A man who tries to pull himself out of trouble with a corkscrew."

● *****

Mrs. Hilbba sought her hostess and inquired:

"What's become of that pretty waitress who was passing the cocktails?"

"I'm sorry," apologized the hostess: "Were you looking for a drink?"

"Thank you, no." said Mrs. Hibba, "I was looking for my husband."

● *****

The barkeep kept a pet parrot and one evening a drunk climbed atop a stool and tried to catch hold of it. "Scrum, landlubber," shrieked the outraged Polly. "What's the big idea?" The drunk looked surprised, tipped his hat, mumbled, "Golly, I'm sorry, mister? I thought you was a boid."

● *****

... Reprinted with permission from AA Grapevine, February 1947

DON'T QUIT

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill.

When funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,

When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out.

Don't give up though the pace seems slow,
You may succeed with another blow.
Success is a failure turned inside out.

The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far,
So, stick to the fight when you are hardest hit.

It's when things seem worst that you must
not **QUIT!!**

... Author unknown

LARRY J. 1940 - AUTHOR OF THE TEXAS PRAYER:

"Our Father, we come to You as a friend. You have said that, where two or three are gathered in Your name, there You will be in the midst. We believe You are with us now. We believe this is something You would have us do, and that it has Your blessing. We believe that You want us to be real partners with You in this business of living, accepting our full responsibility, and certain that the rewards will be freedom, and growth, and happiness. For this, we are grateful. We ask You, at all times, to guide us. Help us daily to come closer to You and grant us new ways of living our gratitude."

This prayer was used to open many of the AA meetings in Texas.

8TH STEP PRAYER

God, please remove my fears and show me Your truth. Show me ALL the harms I have caused with my behaviour.

Lord, make me willing to make amends to one and all.

... borrowed from AA Meeting In A Pocket.

The Big Book "MUSTS"

"Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you have not got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us." Big Book, page 164

While the program is considered a suggested method for dealing with the disease of Alcoholism, there are places within the Big Book where the authors used the word 'MUST.'

The following is a list of the 40 MUSTs from the Big Book.

He suddenly realized that in order to save himself he MUST carry his message to another alcoholic. (Forward to the 2nd Edition). In this statement he confirms what we who have suffered alcoholic torture MUST believe—that the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind. (The Doctor's Opinion)

The message which can interest and hold these alcoholic people MUST have depth and weight. (The Doctor's Opinion). In nearly all cases, their ideals MUST be grounded in a power greater than themselves, if they are to re-create their lives. (The Doctor's Opinion)

Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I MUST turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all. (Bill's Story). If we are planning to stop drinking, there MUST be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol. (33)

Once more: The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense MUST come from a Higher Power. (43) But after a while we had to face the fact that we MUST find a spiritual basis of life –or else. (44)

They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually does not think so. Above everything, we alcoholics MUST be rid of this selfishness. We MUST, or it kills us! God makes that possible. (62)

We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrongdoing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill. How could we escape?

We saw that these resentments MUST be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol. (66)

Whatever our ideal turns out to be, we MUST be willing to grow toward it. We MUST be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing. In other words, we treat sex as we would any other problem. In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come if we want it. (69)

We MUST be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. Rightly and naturally, we think well before we choose the person or persons with whom to take this intimate and confidential step. Those of us belonging to a religious denomination which requires confession MUST, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority whose duty it is to receive it. (73)

The rule is we MUST be hard on ourselves, but always considerate of others. (74)

We say this because we are very anxious that we talk to the right person. It is important that he be able to keep a confidence; that he fully understand and approve what we are driving at; that he will not try to change our plan. But we MUST not use this as a mere excuse to postpone. (74)

Our drinking has made us slow to pay. We MUST lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them. (78)

Although these reparations take innumerable forms, there are some general principles which we find guiding. Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We MUST not shrink at anything. (79)

Before taking drastic action, which might implicate other people, we secure their consent. If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated we MUST not shrink. (80) Sometimes we hear an alcoholic say that the only thing he needs to do is to keep sober. Certainly, he MUST keep sober, for there will be no home if he does not. But he is yet a long way from making good to the wife or parents whom for years he has so shockingly treated. (82)

Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We MUST take the lead. A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry will not fill the bill at all. We ought to sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past as we now see it, being very careful not to criticize them. Their defects may be glaring, but the chances are that our own

Continued...

actions are partly responsible. So, we clean house with the family, asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness, and love. (83)

The spiritual life is not a theory. WE HAVE TO LIVE IT. Unless one's family expresses a desire to live upon spiritual principles, we think we ought not to urge them. We should not talk incessantly to them about spiritual matters. They will change in time. Our behavior will convince them more than our words. We MUST remember that ten or twenty years of drunkenness would make a skeptic out of anyone. (83)

It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we MUST carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee--Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which MUST go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will. (85) Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we MUST go further and that means more action. (85)

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest, or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we MUST be careful not to drift into worry, remorse, or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken. (86)

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people, recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends--this is an experience you MUST not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives. (89)

To be vital, faith MUST be accompanied by self-sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action. (93)

These things will come to pass naturally and in good time provided, however, the alcoholic continues to demonstrate that he can be sober, considerate, and helpful, regardless of what anyone says or does. Of course, we all fall much below these standard many times. But we MUST try to repair the damage immediately lest we pay the penalty by a spree. (99)

If there be divorce or separation, there should be no undue haste for the couple to get together. The man should be sure of his recovery. The wife should fully understand his new way of life. If their old relationship is to be resumed it MUST be on a better basis, since the former did not work. This means a new attitude and spirit all around. (99) Both you and the new man MUST walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress. (100)

Wait until repeated stumbling convinces him he MUST act, for the more you hurry him the longer his recovery may be delayed. (113)

Though it is infinitely better that he have no relapse at all, as has been true with many of our men, it is by no means a bad thing in some cases. Your husband will see at once that he MUST redouble his spiritual activities if he expects to survive. (120)

The head of the house ought to remember that he is mainly to blame for what befell his home. He can scarcely square the account in his lifetime. But he MUST see the danger of over-concentration on financial success. Although financial recovery is on the way for many of us, we found we could not place money first. For us, material well-being always followed spiritual progress; it never preceded. (127)

Since the home has suffered more than anything else, it is well that a man exert himself there. He is not likely to get far in any direction if he fails to show unselfishness and love under his own roof. We know there are difficult wives and families, but the man who is getting over alcoholism MUST remember he did much to make them so. (127) We have come to believe He would like us to keep our heads in the clouds with Him, but that our feet ought to be firmly planted on earth. That is where our fellow travelers are, and that is where our work MUST be done. (130)

If your man accepts your offer, it should be pointed out that physical treatment is but a small part of the picture. Though you are providing him with the best possible medical attention, he should understand that he MUST undergo a change of heart. To get over drinking will require a transformation of thought and attitude. We all had to place recovery above everything, for without recovery we would have lost both home and business. (143)

When the man is presented with this volume it is best that no one tell him he MUST abide by its suggestions. The man MUST decide for himself. (144)

Continued ...

Long experience with alcoholic excuses naturally arouses suspicion. When his wife next calls saying he is sick, you may jump to the conclusion he is drunk. If he is, and is still trying to recover, he will tell you about it even if it means the loss of his job. For he knows he MUST be honest if he would live at all. (146)

We have shown how we got out from under. You say, "Yes, I'm willing. But am I to be consigned to a life where I shall be stupid, boring, and glum, like some righteous people I see? I know I MUST get along without liquor, but, how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute?" (152)

But life was not easy for the two friends. Plenty of difficulties presented themselves. Both saw that they MUST keep spiritually active. One day they called up the head nurse of a local hospital. They explained their need and inquired if she had a first-class alcoholic prospect. (156)

Though they knew they MUST help other alcoholics if they would remain sober, that motive became secondary. It was transcended by the happiness they found in giving themselves for others. (159)

Still you may say: "But I will not have the benefit of contact with you who wrote this book." We cannot be sure. God will determine that, so you MUST remember that your real reliance is always upon Him. He will show you how to create the fellowship you crave. (164)

... Submitted by Rick K., Breathe Easy Group

RELAPSE: LIKE DANCING WITH A GORILLA

Praying for Potatoes

One of the things I have always enjoyed about A.A. meetings is our ability to poke fun at each other, in a lighthearted way. We laugh at things that others would consider to have been tragic incidents in our lives but we seem to have come to terms with these past negative experiences and what we are really laughing at is the absurdity of our old way of thinking. Sometimes we need to have things explained to us in simple terms. The world of A.A. is ripe with metaphors, similes, and allegories that make the learning process much easier to understand. With all of the re-learning we go through to help us in changing our old way of thinking, we are faced with the task of setting new principles, new disciplines, and new priorities in place for our actions and behaviors in the future.

Starting with the first and most important priority, we have to be convinced that, we "*are like men who have lost their legs, they never grow new ones*". (BB CH.3) It can't be put any better than that. Then you may hear it said about relapse: *It's the first drink that gets you drunk, not; taking that first drink is like dancing with a gorilla, the dance isn't over till the gorilla says you're done*. These things are truths that we all hear at meetings, but these things will not stop anyone from picking up a drink if they are not done yet.

In A.A. we hear a lot about prayer and meditation, and it seems that everyone has their own way of defining what that means to them. Some may be reunited with the religion of their childhood, while others may feel that they are agnostics and seem to find a sort of neutral approach in finding a power greater than themselves, and that seems to work for them. Then there are those that consider themselves atheists and, as it says in the 12X12 (step two). "A, one-time, Vice President of the American Atheist Society got through with room to spare." However, we, as individuals, frame our own approach to how we incorporate this concept into our lives is equally acceptable, as long as it replaces our own, failed way of thinking.

What we pray for is another, sometimes, misunderstood practice that may be clarified by a few metaphors that we hear in meetings. Asking God to cure someone of an illness seems, well-meaning but misguided. If God worked his wonders at that level, *the hospitals would be full of sinners and the people we pray for would all be healthy and happy*. I can only pray for the understanding and strength to deal with these things when they are presented as it is suggested in step eleven, "*praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.*" (step 11) i.e. God, please show me what to do, and please give me the strength to do it; I do not do well on my own.

Most of the principles I live by today are backed up by stories that *illustrate a point* that may have been easy to misunderstand when my old way of thinking was involved. The next thing that I find important is that I have to do the things that I learn when I ask for guidance and not just give them lip service, after all, "*If you're going to pray for potatoes, you better grab a hoe*".

... Rick R. Unconditional AA, Poway, CA



A.A. HISTORY IN AUGUST

- Aug 1, 1943 - Washington Times-Herald (DC) reports on AA clubhouse, to protect anonymity withholds address.
- Aug 3, 1954 - Brinkley S. gets sober at Towns Hospital after 50th detox.
- Aug 8, 1879 - Dr. Bob born in St. Johnsbury, VT.
- Aug 9, 1943 - LA groups announce 1000 members in 11 groups.
- Aug 11, 1938 - Akron & NY members begin writing stories for Big Book.
- Aug 15, 1890 - E. M. Jellinek is born, author of "The Disease Concept of Alcoholism" and the "Jellinek Curve".
- Aug 16, 1939 - Dr Bob and Sister Ignatia admit first alcoholic to St. Thomas Hospital, Akron, Ohio.
- Aug 18, 1988 - 1st Canadian National AA Convention in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- Aug 19, 1941 - 1st AA Meeting in Colorado is held in Denver.
- Aug 25, 1943 - AA group donates Big Book to public library in Quincy, MA.
- Aug 26, 1941 - Bill writes Dr Bob to tell him Works Publishing has been incorporated.
- Aug 28, 1954 - *24 Hours a Day* is published by Richmond W.

Other significant events in August for which we do not have a specific date:

- 1934: Rowland H and Cebra persuade court to parole Ebby T. to them.
- 1939: Dr. Bob wrote & may have signed article for Faith magazine.
- 1941: 1st meeting in Orange County, California held in Anaheim.
- 1981: Sales of the Big Book passes 3 million.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDMONTON CENTRAL OFFICE

In keeping with the AA Seventh Tradition of self-support, Edmonton Central Office can accept contributions only from AA members and AA Groups.

Contributions can be made to Edmonton Central Office by any of the following methods (AA members or groups only please):

- E-transfer to centraloffice@edmontonaa.org you will need to provide the answer to the security question via a separate email to this address.
- Visa or MasterCard either over the phone (780-424-5900) or in person (by appointment)
- Cheque made payable to "Edmonton Central Office" and brought to the office (by appointment) or mailed to the office at:

Edmonton Central Office

Suite 205

10544 114 St NW

Edmonton, AB T5H 3J7

- Cash brought to the office (by appointment).
- Arranging on-going monthly contributions by calling or emailing Central Office

The Edmonton Central Office Society is a registered charity. A tax receipt will be issued early in 2021 to individuals whose contribution is greater than \$20.00. For a receipt to be issued, the full name and address of the individual is needed. The receipt will indicate a contribution to the Edmonton Central Office Society.

Note: You can phone Central Office weekdays from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. If you need to visit Central Office, please arrange an appointment by phone or email.

Living Sober



Living Sober, page 81

Investment Counsel



"In the first few weeks without a drink when the wolf is at the door,
 And the sheriff's at the window and you're sleeping on the floor,
 And life looks bleak and hopeless from a monetary angle,
 It's time to spend, in certain ways, to solve the awful tangle:
 That token or that bus fare to get you to a meeting,
 That dime to use the telephone for that necessary greeting,
 That nickel for 'expenses' that makes you feel you matter,
 That dollar for the coffee shop for after-meeting chatter.
 All these are wise investments for the neophyte to make.
 This 'bread', when cast upon the waters, always comes back cake.

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ANGLE
 BREAD
 CAKE
 CHATTER
 COFFEE
 COUNSEL
 DRINK
 EXPENSES
 FIRST
 GREETING

HOPELESS
 INVESTMENT
 LIFE
 LIVING
 MATTER
 MEETING
 MONETARY
 NEOPHYTE
 SHERIFF
 SLEEPING

SOBER
 SPEND
 TANGLE
 TELEPHONE
 TIME
 TOKEN
 WATERS
 WEEKS
 WINDOW
 WOLF

AA THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

(courtesy AA-Alive.net)

June 29, 2020

Fellowship

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.

- *Alcoholics Anonymous, (Working With Others) p. 89*

Thought to Ponder

Together we can do what we could never do alone.

AA-related 'Acronym'

Y A N A = You Are Not Alone.

A LITTLE CHILD

Stevie is my 5 ½ year old boy. The first three years of his life were separated from my by alcoholic fog, before AA. It was evening, the Sunday before Christmas. We lay there on the couch together, listening to soft radio music.

“Daddy, I like to be in the dark like this with you.”

“Yes,” I said, “It’s fun, isn’t it?”

“Uh huh. He was silent a moment. “This way I can dream without being asleep.”

I wonder if there is a better way of explaining “meditation.” DP, Ogden, Utah

... Reprint with Permission, AA Grapevine, February 1947

PUT AND TAKE

WHAT I MUST PUT INTO AA

1. Complete sobriety.
2. One hundred per cent 12th Step work.
3. Love for my fellow man and woman.
4. Attendance at the meetings, as essential to my new way of life.
5. Giving all in my power and time to help bring in new members who have an alcohol problem.
6. Above all, forever as now, remaining an active member.

WHAT I GET OUT OF AA

1. Peace of mind and contentment.
2. The 24-hour program by which I can live a clean and decent life.
3. Happiness in my home and in my daily life.
4. Better citizenship.
5. Better health, physical and mentally.
6. Respect, not disrespect, from my fellow man or women
7. Many new friends.
8. Blessings from God, as a result of making a decision to turn my will and life over to His care as I understand Him.
9. The privilege of being an AA member forever, and this I know I am, just as long as I say I am.
... Reprint with permission, AA Grapevine, Aug. 1947



POTENT PROOF FOUND IN 12TH STEP

The Bulletin (Midwest Council on Alcoholism, Inc.) Minnesota, Minn.: “Practicing the 12th Step in particular will help to promote an understanding of the 2nd Step.

It so often demonstrates the operation of a Power Greater than ourselves. No Group of ex-drunks or any other mortals could alone bring about the miracles that are accomplished so often in 12th Step work.

Bit by bit, if not suddenly, even the most doubting will eventually be able to say, too, that he ‘came to believe.’”

... Reprinted with permission, AAS Grapevine, May 1947

OUR GREATEST DANGER: RIGIDITY

BOB P.

Here are some very inspiring excerpts from the talk that Bob P. gave at the 1986 AA General Service Conference. Bob discusses his gratitude and concerns with AA's future as he knew this was the last General Service Conference that he would be involved with.

This is my 18th General Service Conference — the first two as a director of the Grapevine and A.A.W.S., followed by four as a general service trustee. In 1972, I rotated out completely, only to be called back two years later as General Manager of G.S.O., the service job I held until late 1984. Since the 1985 International Convention, of course, I have been senior adviser. This is also my last Conference, so this is an emotionally charged experience.

I wish I had time to express my thanks to everyone to whom I am indebted for my sobriety and for the joyous life with which I have been blessed for the past nearly 25 years. But since this is obviously impossible, I will fall back on the Arab saying that Bill quoted in his last message, “I thank you for your lives.” For without your lives, I most certainly would have no life at all, much less the incredibly rich life I have enjoyed.

Let me offer my thoughts about A.A.'s future. I have no truck with those bleeding deacons who decry every change and view the state of the Fellowship with pessimism and alarm. On the contrary, from my nearly quarter-century's perspective, I see A.A. as larger, healthier, more dynamic, faster growing, more global, more service-minded, more back-to-basics, and more spiritual — by far — than when I came through the doors of my first meeting in Greenwich, Connecticut, just one year after the famous [July 1960] Long Beach Convention. AA has flourished beyond the wildest dreams of founding members, though perhaps not of Bill himself, for he was truly visionary.

I echo those who feel that if this Fellowship ever falters or fails, it will not be because of any outside cause. No, it will not be because of treatment centers or professionals in the field, or non-Conference-approved literature, or young people, or the dually addicted, or even the “druggies” trying to come to our closed meetings. If we stick close to our Traditions, Concepts, and Warranties, and if we keep an open mind and an open heart, we can deal with these and any other problems that we have or ever will have. If we ever falter and fail, it will be simply because of us. It will be because we can't control our own egos or get along well enough with each other. It will be because we have too much fear and rigidity and not enough trust and common sense.

If you were to ask me what is the greatest danger facing A.A. today, I would have to answer: the growing rigidity — the increasing demand for absolute answers to nit-picking questions; pressure for G.S.O. to “enforce” our Traditions; screening alcoholics at closed meetings; prohibiting non-Conference-approved literature, i.e., “banning books”; laying more and more rules on groups and members. And in this trend toward rigidity, we are drifting farther and farther away from our co-founders. Bill, in particular, must be spinning in his grave, for he was perhaps the most permissive person I ever met. One of his favorite sayings was, “Every group has the right to be wrong.” He was maddeningly tolerant of his critics, and he had absolute faith that faults in AA were self-correcting.

And I believe this, too, so in the final analysis we're not going to fall apart. We won't falter or fail. At the 1970 International Convention in Miami, I was in the audience on that Sunday morning when Bill made his brief last public appearance. He was too ill to take his scheduled part in any other convention event, but now, unannounced, on Sunday morning; he was wheeled up from the back of the stage in a wheelchair, attached with tubes to an oxygen tank. Wearing a ridiculous bright-orange, host committee blazer, he heaved his angular body to his feet and grasped the podium — and all pandemonium broke loose. I thought the thunderous applause and cheering would never stop, tears streaming down every cheek. Finally, in a firm voice, like his old self, Bill spoke a few gracious sentences about the huge crowd, the outpouring of love, and the many overseas members there, ending (as I remember) with these words: **“As I look over this crowd, I know that Alcoholics Anonymous will live a thousand years — if it is God's will.”**

... Bob P. (1917-2008) was General Manager of the General Service Office from 1974 to 1984, and then served as Senior Advisor to the G.S.O. from 1985 until his retirement. His story is in the Big Book as “AA Taught Him to Handle Sobriety.”

THE ANECDOTE BIN

- A fellow drunk who does drink, reports J.W. from Reading, Pa., was told by a bartender: “No more for you, pal. You've had enough.” Asked the drunk: “What thinks you make so?”
- B.P. from Little Neck, N.Y., tells about a newcomer who claimed he wasn't an alcoholic but admitted he had convulsions when he drank. “I get it.” An older member told this character, “you're one of those convulsive drinkers.”

... Reprinted with permission, AA Grapevine

WE THE PEOPLE ~ ~ THE GABRIEL HEATTER BROADCAST OF APRIL 25, 1939

The first national exposure for Alcoholics Anonymous came with the April 25, 1939, "We The People" broadcast. Gabriel Heatter's radio program was a tremendously popular show that was tuned in by millions of people. Morgan R., the AA member who spoke on the program, was expected to launch sales of the newly published book, "Alcoholics Anonymous".

In short recording below, Bill W. describes how Morgan was prepared for his three-minute talk by being held in a hotel room with security guards for 10 days to prevent him from drinking before his radio appearance. Here is the transcription of the interview:

"WE THE PEOPLE"

HEATTER: The man beside me now has had one of the most gripping and dramatic experiences I've ever heard. I'm not going to tell you his name. And when you hear what he has to say I think you'll understand why. But after checking the facts the Listeners Committee of "We The People" decided to grant him time because they feel that if one person is helped by hearing his story, then WE THE PEOPLE will have done a real service. Alright, sir.

ANONYMOUS GUEST (Morgan R.): Six months ago, I got out of an insane asylum. I'd been sent there because I was drinking myself to death. But the doctors said they could do nothing for me. And only four years ago I was making \$20,000 dollars a year. I was married to a swell girl and had a young son. But I worked hard and like lots of my friends ~ I used to drink to relax. Only they knew when to stop. I didn't. And pretty soon ~ I drank myself out of my job. I promised my wife I'd straighten out. But I couldn't. Finally, she took the baby and left me.

The next year was like a nightmare. I was penniless. I went out on the streets ~ panhandled money for liquor. Every time I sobered up ~ I swore not to touch another drop. But if I went a few hours without a drink ~ I'd begin to cry like a baby and tremble all over. One day after I left the asylum, I met a friend of mine. He took me to the home of one of his friends. A bunch of men were sitting around, smoking cigars, telling jokes ~ having a great time. But I noticed they weren't drinking. When Tom told me they'd all been in the same boat as I was ~ I couldn't believe him. But he said, "See that fellow? He's a doctor. Drank himself out of his practice. Then he straightened out. Now he's head of a big hospital." Another big strapping fellow was a grocery clerk. Another the vice president of a big corporation. They got together five years ago. Called themselves Alcoholics Anonymous. And they'd worked out a method of recovery. One of their most important secrets was ~ helping the other fellow. Once they began to follow it the method proved successful and helped others get on their feet ~ they found they could stay away from liquor.

Gradually ~ those men helped me back to life. I stopped drinking. I found the courage to face life once again. Today I've got a job ~ and I'm going to climb back to success. Recently we wrote a book called "Alcoholics Anonymous". It tells precisely how we all came back from a living death. Working on that book made me realize how much other people had suffered ~ how they'd gone through the same thing I did. That's why I wanted to come on this program. I wanted to tell people who are going through that torment ~ if they sincerely want to, they can come back. Take their place in society once again!

... Posted by Tim F., Apr. 25, 2020

ANNOUNCEMENT OF OPENINGS FOR NON-TRUSTEE DIRECTOR POSITIONS

There will be upcoming openings for non-trustee director positions in 2021 for both AA World Services and AA Grapevine, Inc.

Non-trustee directors are AA members selected for business or professional experience that relates to the activities of the corporations. Per the AAWS and AA Grapevine bylaws, a non-trustee director can serve up to four successive one-year terms.

Full details will be made available on aa.org and aagrapevine.org, the Meeting Guide app news alert feature and in a letter to Conference members and Fellowship later in the year.

... Box 459 Bulletin Board, Summer 2020

GOSSIP, CRITICISM AND CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

Understanding, Empathy and Compassion

Hanging on to resentments and criticizing the behavior of others is often a noticeable characteristic of some members of the program that never seem to find the serenity and peace that is mentioned in the promises. For some people it seems impossible to let their guard down. I think that most of us can understand this, simply because we all have to face this issue and deal with it, to one degree or another, as we go through the twelve-step process. One of the things that I learned when I was faced with this matter was that I had a *self-esteem* problem and I overcorrected, by pointing the faults of others, to somehow make myself appear normal. This never worked for me as I could not fool my *conscience*. Things only got worse. I still worked through the steps and did what I could at the time. No one gets it perfect the first time, but we can make a second effort at it when we have established a track record of living by principles. AA meetings are a training ground for how we treat others and if we can't accept the people there, it's a cinch we won't do it outside of the rooms.

Everyone that comes to AA brings with them their own assortment of mental, emotional, spiritual, and material problems, and none of us are without these concerns. If we didn't have them, we wouldn't need this program. We all feel somewhat vulnerable and we establish our own firewalls, with the help of our EGO'S, to protect ourselves from our perception of what those other people are doing, saying, and thinking. We each might establish hard and fast protective reactions, mentally and verbally to protect our own turf. With so many different personalities brought together in one group, it's very hard to let down our guards, after all, we all feel somewhat justified when pointing out the faults of others. This is what the alcoholic personality does.

With the understanding that *most forms of criticism and character assassination stem from low self-esteem*, it occurred to me that I was just as guilty of the very things that I was accusing them of. I likened it to *two old men in a convalescent home hitting each other with their canes because one was not walking fast enough for the other*. I had to step up to the plate and become strong enough to *look deeper into their motives and understand what caused them to behave the way they did, and not be threatened by their outside behavior*. I cannot express in words the mental freedom that this principle has produced in me. When I see someone acting out, my first thought is *not judgmental in nature but of empathy and compassion*. My next thought is "what I can do to help him or her". Having adopted this approach, I have come to terms with all the people that I **interact with** on a day to day basis and I no longer in conflict with anyone. To me, *they are all like kids just learning how to do life*. They all have problems and I am not going to be one of their problems. I must be strong enough to replaced words like *resentment, judgment, and criticism* with *empathy, understanding and compassion*. Today I have no adversaries that I can think of, and *peace of mind is the natural result of this approach*.

I find no exceptions to this principle and I cannot be selective about who I apply it to. Everyone gets amnesty in my book. All that mental **gymnastics about "those other people"** is a distant memory and I can't think of a single time that practicing this principle didn't serve me well. The only one that is sorry for this profound and life changing transition is my EGO, but about that; who am I to criticize? ☺

... Rick R., Unconditional AA, Poway, CA

DISCLAIMER:

ECO News is published monthly on behalf of Edmonton Intergroup. All printed and mailed copies are to be paid for either by subscription or walk in. Email copies are free. There is no use of funds donated via 7th Tradition process. Minimal editing may be done. This newsletter presents the experiences and opinions of AA members and relays information received at Central Office concerning Roundups, Conferences, birthdays and other events that may be of interest to subscribers. Any opinions expressed should not be attributed to AA. Publication of any article does not imply endorsement.

We would like to hear from you about your AA related experience, strength and hope, keeping in mind copyright and credit concerns. Any feedback will be appreciated.

Submissions should be between 250 and 300 words. Submit with your full name, Group, and a phone number where you can be reached (of course we will protect your anonymity).

Material must be submitted no later than the 20th of the preceding month for it to print in the next month's issue.

Submit articles to AA Central Office, #205, 10544 114 St NW, Edmonton, AB T5H 3J7

Fax: (587) 523-4334

Email: centraloffice@edmontonaa.org **Subject Line: Attention ECO News**

2020 Birthdays for August

60 Minutes to Sobriety

Last Sunday
 Aug. 30 Khan K. 3 yrs.
 Marilyn S. 32 yrs.
 Randy P. 3 yrs.

Breathe Easy

First Friday
 Sep. 4 Colin H. 2 yrs.
 Rick K. 35 yrs.
 Wayne P. 36 yrs.

Clareview Big Book

Last Wednesday
 Aug. 26 Nadine E. 1 yr.
 Dayle W. 43 yrs.

Crestwood Welcome

Last Monday
 Aug. 31 Barbara A. 46 yrs.
 Larry S. 27 yrs.
 Jackie M. 17 yrs.
 Patsy T. 16 yrs.
 Derek T. 12 yrs.
 Jim J. 10 yrs.

Fulton Place

Last Friday
 Aug. 28 Doug R. 31 yrs.
 Dwayne H. 3 yrs.

Mustard Seed

Last Sunday
 Aug. 30 James . 27 yrs.

Oilmen's

First Monday
 Aug. 3 Jan D. 57 yrs.

Providence

Last Wednesday
 Aug. 26 Rob B. 4 yrs.

Rite Trac

Last Thursday
 Aug. 27 Alex S. 51 yrs.

Step Sisters

Last Wednesday
 Aug. 26 Rita W. 2 yrs.

The Why Group

Last Saturday
 Aug. 29 Courtney G. 6 yrs.

Thus, We Grow

Last Tuesday
 Aug. 25 Jim B. 49 yrs.

West End 12 Step

First Tuesday
 Sept. 1 Lynne H. 7 yrs.
 Braden L. 4 yrs.

West End Men's

First Wednesday
 Sept. 2 Paul B. 36 yrs.

Westgrove

Last Sunday
 Aug. 30 Jo K. 8 yrs.
 Rod C. 11 yrs.

Westminister

Last Saturday
 Aug. 29 Val C. 8 yrs.
 Diane L. 36 yrs.
 Kevin S. 18 yrs.

*SHERWOOD PARK

Friday Night Happy Hour

Last Friday
 Aug. 28 Dave H. 20 yrs.

Twelve Steps to Serenity

Last Monday
 Aug. 31 Sharon M. 5 yrs.
 Mike D. 5 yrs.
 Gord S. 23 yrs.

*ST. ALBERT

Back To Basics

First Thursday
 Sept. 3 Chris P. 4 yrs.

St. Albert Breakfast

Last Sunday
 Aug. 30 Julie R. 9 yrs.
 Moe H. 15 yrs.
 Elmer M. 35 yrs.
 Shirley M. 43 yrs.
 Eileen B. 44 yrs.

St. Albert Sunday Step

Last Sunday
 Aug. 30 Arlene B. 19 yrs.

BIRTHDAY CLUB

Chuck C.

FAITHFUL FIVERS

No members this month



GROUPS IN NEED

OF SUPPORT

First Day Group (Last)

Mon. 8:00 PM 10528 – 98 St.
 Marion Centre

Oilmen's Group (O)

Mon. 8:00 PM 8318 – 104 Street
 S.S. Chapter Hse, N dr.

60 Minutes to Sobriety (Last)

Sun. 8:00 PM 13708 – 74 St.
 McClure Unit. Church
 Elevator

St. Albert Brotherhood (Last)

Wed. 8:00 PM 15 Corriveau Ave.
 Red Willow Church

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Three good rules for speaking are: Be brief. Be heard. Be seated. Of them all, we believe the one which can stand the least abuse is the second, "Be Heard".

We used to be critical of AA speakers, but after our own first few harrowing attempts at giving AA talks, we changed our view. In our estimation now, anyone with enough courage to stand up and face an audience is a good speaker, if we can hear what he's saying.

When audiences come up against a speaker who swallows his words, mutters in his beard and cuts the volume off in the middle of his sentences, what else can they do but fidget, gaze around the room, and wish they were somewhere else?

So please, all you AA speakers of the present and future, raise your voices! Be heard! You have a captive audience and through common courtesy they must sit there until you sit down. In turn, that same courtesy demands that whatever you have to say, say it clear, understandable tones.

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 J.G.T., Negunee, Mich.

Calendar of Events

2020 ROUNDUPS & FUNCTIONS

Edmonton, AB

Aug. 20 75th Anniversary Committee

5:30 PM Zoom meeting ID328 256 654
Password March19201

Open to all members who wish to be part of this celebration. Tentative date: Nov. 7/2020

Meanook, AB

Aug. 21-23 District 9 Roundup \$30.00

Meanook Community Hall,
Theme: No Longer Alone
Sat. Only \$20. Teens 12-18 \$15. Kids free

Mundare, AB

Aug. 28-30 7th Annual AA Roundup \$25.00

With Vegreville Participation
Zhoda Hall, 155045*TWP Rd.552
Located between RR155 & RR160
Contact: (780)632-1308

Greig Lake, SK

Sep. 4-7 41st AA Campout Roundup 7th Trad.

Meadow Lake Provincial Park
Meetings, Fishing derby, Pot-Luck meals
Contact: greiglakeroundup@hotmail.com

Grande Prairie, AB

Sep. 11-13 62 Annual G.P. Roundup \$?

Sexsmith Civic Center
Contact: 780-518-9035, 296-3515, 587-297-6610

Red Deer, AB

Sep. 18-20 Area 78 Fall Assembly

3310 - 50 Avenue
Cambridge Red Deer Hotel

Drumheller, AB

Oct. 3 District 15 AA Roundup \$25.00

10 AM 627 - 6 St. E.
Church of the Nazarene Hall
Contact: area78dist15@gmail.com

MISSING GRAPEVINE MAGAZINES

The following Grapevine magazines are missing from our Archives.

July 1944 - December 1949 -

1949 All except May

1950 All

1951 All except Jan., Feb. & Oct.

1952 All

1953 All except July

1954 All except March, August & Nov.

1955 Only January, February & March

1956 Only Jan., February, April & Nov.

1957 Only February, June & July

1958 Only January

1959 Only August

2004 Only March

2015 Only January

2016 we now have all of them

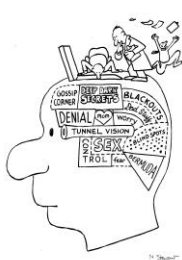
2017 Only February & November

2018 Only March



And the 'lil woman gets so sore that she actually buys me a bottle and sez: "Go ahead. Drink yourself to death!" And I sez: "What—on one bottle?"

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AA
Grapevine,
February
1947



STAY SAFE

STAY SOBER