



East Central Illinois  
District 12  
AA Newsletter  
March 2008



**Tradition Three**

**The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.**

1. In my mind, do I prejudice some new AA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I over-impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?

**Have you or any of your sponsees ever attended an AA Conference??**

This year's Spring Conference in Mt. Vernon, March 7-9 will be a great place to experiencing the AA Program in action. Ask around, share a room or ride with fellow AA,s already planning to attend. Get creative & start your own group of attendees. Unity, Service, & Recovery  
\*\*\*\*HOPE TOSEE YOU THERE\*\*\*\*

**Ham on Wry**

AFTER A **THIRD STEP** discussion in Burbank, California, a newcomer asked Don McT., "How can you be sober so long and say you don't understand God?" Don replied, "Young man, I've also been married to the same woman for fifty years, do you think I understand her?"

**AA at Its Best**

Each Saturday at 9:00 A.M., the small AA group in Papua, New Guinea, meets in a tiny room above the Lutheran Church administration building. We are a small group, eight members only.

Last Saturday it rained all day. Blinding sheets of water hammered down. My little station wagon ducked like a submarine through the lake-like puddles on my way to the meeting. At the meeting place, though, I found the gate locked. I thought, Perhaps I'm a bit early, so I'll just wait.

The tape player in my car had a new set of batteries in it, and I happened to have a rare AA speaker tape with me, passed on to me by one of our almost nonexistent AA visitors. So, amid the pounding sheets of rain, safe in my car, I put in the tape of Clarence S., the 1973 guest speaker of an **AA convention** in California, and sat back to listen.

Meanwhile, Noah arrived for the meeting, barefoot and wet. I threw open the car door and he climbed in. "Listen brother," I said, "this is AA at its best." Soon Pondros arrived, also barefoot, after walking nine miles through the rain. So did Luke, Tokeso, and Kapi, but not the secretary with the key to the gate. The tape rolled on. Clarence was telling how he started the first AA group in Cleveland, Ohio in 1938. That first meeting had been literally a riot, with drunks and reporters fighting. But the meeting kept going. (I turned up the sound. With the rain drumming on the roof and all those bodies packed into the car, full volume was necessary.)

Someone, it seemed, had brought a few signs reading "Think" to the first Cleveland meetings. Said Clarence of this, "Any alcoholic coming into AA cannot think; he has nothing left to think with. The alcoholic feels, he does not think. The **Third Step** sorts out the men from the boys when you select a caretaker whom you trust with your will and your life. If you've done the first nine Steps of the program, don't ask your Higher Power for another day of sobriety. You are sober. There must be better things to ask for your needs right now! When you pray and meditate, remember, the Lord gave you two ears and one mouth." When you pray, Clarence said, you are talking to God. When you meditate, you are listening.

The tape was over. The time had gone too quickly, and the secretary had never come. The rain pelted down. We said the Serenity Prayer, drove to a roadhouse, and had some coffee and a bite to eat. What a meeting it was!

Colin C. Papua, New Guinea **September 1992**

District 12  
Little Book Store  
515 Bonnymeade Dr.  
Champaign, IL 61821-3490  
217-359-3457

**C-U, Rantoul, Monticello, Mattoon,  
Charleston, Tuscola, etc.  
District 12 is HOSTING  
THE 2009 AREA 21 SPRING CONFERENCE**

2008 Southern Illinois Area -21 AA Spring Conference  
Hosted by SIA-21 & District 7  
March 7 - 9, 2008

***"Communication and Participation –  
The Key to Unity and Self Support"***

**Friday:** 4:00pm Registration Opens  
7:45pm Opening of the Conference  
8:00pm Chuck A. – Evansville, IN

**Saturday:** 8:00am Panels begin  
1:30pm Joe O. – St. Louis, MO (Al-Anon)  
6:00pm Banquet  
7:30pm Program begins  
8:00pm Don M. – Louisville, KY.  
10:00pm Dance/Band – Sullivan Drive

**Sunday:** 10:00am Bill H. – Mt. Vernon, IL.

1 - 4 per room  
\$70.00 + tax per night  
You must reserve by Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>  
and mention SIA Spring  
Conference for special rate.  
Mt. Vernon Holiday Inn  
222 Potomac Blvd.  
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864  
800-243-7171 / 618-244-7100



SPEAKERS  
HOSPITALITY ROOM  
PANELS  
ALCATHON MEETINGS  
ARCHIVE DISPLAY  
GRAPEVINE and LITERATURE  
INFO  
LIVE BAND  
FELLOWSHIP & MORE

For More Information Contact:  
Doug H. (618) 292-1854 or Yvonne F. (618) 967-8174  
Area21.2008springconference@yahoo.com

**Registration Form**

One person per form please  
may be copied

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-registration \$20.00  
Banquet \$19.00

Make Checks Payable and Mail to  
2008 SIA-21 Spring Conference  
PO Box 42  
Nashville, IL 62263

Please Check Only One  
AA \_\_\_\_\_ Al-Anon \_\_\_\_\_ Alateen \_\_\_\_\_ Guest \_\_\_\_\_

Deadline for Mail Registration is: March 1<sup>st</sup> 2008  
Must Reserve Banquet by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008

**Tradition Three**

**The only requirement for AA membership**

**is a desire to stop drinking**

The Third Tradition is a sweeping statement indeed; it takes in a lot of territory. Some people might think it too idealistic to be practical. It tells every alcoholic in the world that he may become, and remain, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous *so long as he says so*. In short, Alcoholics Anonymous has no membership rule.

Why is this so? Our answer is simple and practical. Even in self-protection, we do not wish to erect the slightest barrier between ourselves and the fellow alcoholic who still suffers. We know that society has been demanding that he conform to its laws and conventions. But the essence of his alcoholic malady is the fact that he has been unable or unwilling to conform either to the laws of man or God. If he is anything, the sick alcoholic is a

rebellious nonconformist. How well we understand that; every member of AA was once a rebel himself. Hence we cannot offer to meet him at any halfway mark. We must enter the dark cave where he is and show him that we understand. We realize that he is altogether too weak and confused to jump hurdles. If we raise obstacles, he might stay away and perish. He might be denied his priceless opportunity.

So when he asks, "Are there any conditions?" we joyfully reply, "No, not a one." When skeptically he comes back saying, "But certainly there must be things that I have to do and believe," we quickly answer, "In Alcoholics Anonymous there are no *musts*." Cynically, perhaps, he then inquires, "What is this all going to cost me?" We are able to laugh and say, "Nothing at all, there are no fees and dues." Thus, in a brief hour, is our friend disarmed of his suspicion and rebellion. His eyes begin to open on a new world of friendship and understanding. Bankrupt idealist that he has been, his ideal is no longer a dream. After years of lonely search it now stands revealed. The reality of Alcoholics Anonymous bursts upon him. For Alcoholics Anonymous is saying, "We have something priceless to give, if only you will receive." That is all. But to our new friend, it is everything. Without more ado, he becomes one of us.

Our membership Tradition does contain, however, one vitally important qualification. That qualification relates to the use of our name, Alcoholics Anonymous. We believe that any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. Here our purpose is clear and unequivocal. For obvious reasons we wish the name Alcoholics Anonymous to be used only in connection with straight AA activities. One can think of no AA member who would like, for example, to see the formation of "dry" AA groups, "wet" AA groups, Republican AA groups, communist AA groups. Few, if any, would wish our groups to be designated by religious denominations. We cannot lend the AA name, even indirectly, to other activities, however worthy. If we do so we shall become hopelessly compromised and divided. We think that

AA should offer its **experience** to the whole world for whatever use can be made of it, **But not its name**. Nothing could be more certain.

Let us of AA therefore resolve that we shall always be inclusive and never exclusive, offering all we have to all, save our title. May all barriers be thus leveled, may our unity thus be preserved. And may God grant us a long life--and a useful one!

Bill W.

February 1948

## DECISION TIME

So far we have been dealing with acknowledging the problem: the fatal nature of the disease of alcoholism; and, coming to believe "there is a solution" to our seemingly hopeless state of mind and body: a Higher Power who can and will restore us to sanity, if He were sought.

Once we put ourselves on the footing of accepting this Higher Power as our Director and we as the actors, as the Principle and we as the agents, as our Father and we as his children, we feel the power coming into our lives, we are at **Step Three: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understand him"**.

Many people are scared off from this step because of the "G" word: God. Let's consider the even scarier word, the "D" word: Decision. In this step we are deciding to go in a particular direction. This direction asks us to leave behind 'self' reliance; and, enter a pattern of daily life that is 'God' reliant, a reliance on a power other than ourselves.

Remember the tricky question, "If there are three frogs sitting on a log and one decides to jump off, how many frogs are on the log?"? Most of us blurted out "Two", until the teacher pointed out that the frog only 'decided' to jump, there was no information that he did. The answer was "Three" frogs were still on the log. This simple story describes the Third Step. At this point, we are deciding to 'jump'. We have not yet jumped! Before we do jump, we need to make the decision.

Look around the rooms of AA. There are many people who not only 'decided to jump' but 'have actually jumped'. Listen to the stories of their lives after they jumped. If what has happened to them appeals to you, Jump! Make that decision.

A word of caution: if you don't yet have a sponsor, someone to guide you through the activities that lead to the fulfillment of 'turning your will and your lives over to the care of God, as you understand him, do so at this point. Do not proceed beyond this point without the help of someone who has traveled the road. Don't jump alone. Find someone who has made the trip, and continues to travel the Road of Happy Destiny, and is willing to go along the road

with you, and ask them. If one person (usually the one person you think you will be comfortable with), is not able to help, keep asking. Someone will be in need of helping you, as much as you are in need of them.

Are you ready to make this decision to continue on the AA road?

The book suggests we say a simple prayer, like this:

"God, I offer myself to Thee, to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy will always!"

Welcome to the Road of Happy Destiny!

Anonymous. March 2008

Ham on Wry

Jack F. Aurora, Illinois

THE LONG-ESTABLISHED CHAIRMAN OF A LONG-ESTABLISHED MEETING asked his visiting speaker, "What topic were you thinking of emphasizing?"

"Step Three."

"Might not be such a good idea," counseled the chairman. "If folks hereabouts want to hear about God, they go to church."

"Well, how about taking inventory and making amends?"

"Nah, Folks hereabouts like to feel good. Thinking about character defects and digging up the past and all that only makes 'em blue, and starts spats between husbands and wives."

"Then, what topic *can* I use?" cried the exasperated speaker. "Well, we usually just talk about our AA program."

## SPEAKER MEETINGS / EVENTS

Sunday 3/16/08

SWAT Speaker-Bob S.& Potluck-Noon  
@Hall

Friday 3/07/08

2008 SIA Spring Conference-SEE FLIER!!  
1st Friday Food & Fellowship - Spaghetti  
6:30-? @ SHACK (every 1<sup>st</sup> Friday)

Saturday 3/9/08

AS BILL SEES IT Speaker- 8pm @ HALL  
(every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday)

Saturday 3/15/08

2009 Area 21 Spring Conf Planning Mtg. -  
2pm @ HALL

Serenity Shack Speaker- 8pm Amy R.  
@SHACK (every 3rd Saturday)

Sunday 3/16/08

District 12 Traditions Panel-10am HALL  
District 12 Business Meeting-2pm HALL  
(every 3rd Sunday)

Saturday 3/15/08

Easter Egg Hunt & Brunch - 10am-Noon  
@Shack

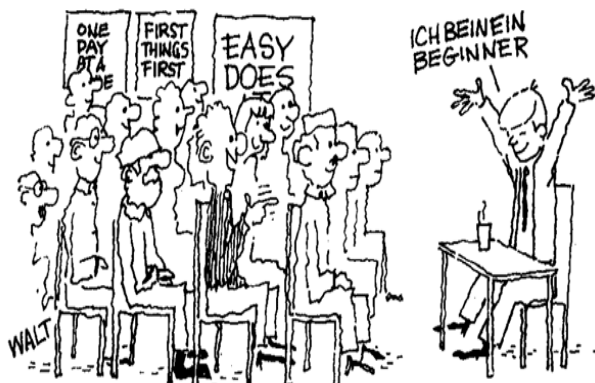
Thursday 3/27/08

HOW Speaker- Karen J. 8pm @ HALL  
(every 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday)

Friday 3/28/08

Friday Night Fellowship Group (Episcopal  
Church-7:30 Speaker- Sean M. - Chicago

HALL = 718 s. Randolph, Champaign, IL  
SHACK = 117 N. Ohio St., Rantoul, IL



"Well, he certainly has charisma!"

## JOKE

This man at the side of the road was fixing his flat tire. A police car stops behind his and the officer strolls to him to offer help. The man says he's doing OK and doesn't need help.

The officer takes a walk around the car to make sure everything is OK. He spots a large knife with a fancy handle on the passenger seat. When he asks about the knife, the man says it's his and he uses it as a juggler at the local circus.

The officer then asks him to demonstrate his act to be sure the man is telling the truth, and the man goes through his routine.

Meanwhile a car with two recovering alcoholics drives by. The driver says to his passenger, "Man ... I am glad I stopped drinking when I did. It's amazing what they make them do these days at those roadside sobriety checks!"

## A TRUE STORY:

At a district meeting recently, a member made a motion that we **donate a couple hundred dollars to outfit the hospitality room at the upcoming New Hampshire AA Convention with refreshments.** His motion was seconded, and the chair asked if there was any discussion before the vote. To clarify the motion, I raised my hand and asked if "a couple hundred" meant "two hundred dollars." "Doesn't 'a couple' mean 'two'?" he quipped. "I don't know," I said. "I used to stop for 'a couple' of beers almost every night." Andy H. Portsmouth, NH

Dear Friends,

I am writing to you on behalf of your 2008 SIA Spring Conference planning committee. In the spirit of the conference--Communication & Participation--I am asking for your help. Throughout the conference there will be a hospitality room open with coffee, soft drinks, light snacks & FELLOWSHIP!

**We would be grateful for donations from your groups.** Donated items may be dropped off at the hospitality room at the beginning and through-out the conference. Donations via check may be mailed to: 2008 SIA-21 Spring Conference P.O. Box 42 Nashville, IL 62263 Or Yvonne Fourez, Co-Chair & SIA Treasurer 5668 Yellow Banks Road Mulkeytown, IL 62865 Thank you for your participation in this event! Let's have some FUN! Yours in service, Yvonne