

# District 12 Area 21 Newsletter

## September 2015

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## TWELVE POINTS TO ASSURE OUR FUTURE

These are excerpts from the Forward of the first pamphlet published on the Twelve Traditions in 1947 titled simply *A. A. Tradition* "our experience has taught us..."

*Alcoholics Anonymous has but one purpose: To help the sick alcoholic recover if he wishes.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on any controversial subject. nor does it oppose anyone.*

How shall we AA's best preserve our unity? That is the subject of this booklet.

When an alcoholic applies the "Twelve Steps" of our Recovery Program to his personal life, his *disintegration* stops and his *unification* begins. The Power which now holds him together in one piece overcomes those forces which had rent him apart.

Exactly the same principle applies to each A.A. Group and to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. So long as the

ties which bind us together prove far stronger than those forces which would divide us if they could, all will be well. We shall be secure as a movement; our essential unity will remain a certainty.

If, as A.A. members, we can each refuse public prestige and renounce any desire for personal power; if, as a movement, we insist on remaining poor, avoiding disputes about extensive property and its management; if we steadfastly decline all political, sectarian, or other alliances, we shall avoid internal division and public notoriety; if, as a movement, we remain a spiritual entity concerned only with carrying our message to fellow sufferers without charge or obligation: then only can we most effectively complete our mission. It is becoming ever so clear that we ought never accept even the most alluring temporary benefits if these should consist of considerable sums of money, or could involve us in controversial alliances and

endorsements, or might tempt some of us to accept, as A.A. members, personal publicity by press or radio. Unity is so vital to us AA's that we cannot risk those attitudes and practices which have sometimes demoralized other forms of human society. Thus far we have succeeded because we have been different. May we continue to be so!

But, A.A. unity cannot automatically preserve itself. Like personal recovery, we shall always have to work to maintain it. Here, too, we surely need honesty, humility, open-mindedness, unselfishness, and, above all-vigilance. So we who are older in A.A. beg you who are newer that you ponder carefully the experience we have already had of trying to work and live together. We would like each AA to become just as much aware of those disturbing tendencies which endanger us as whole as he is conscious of those personal defects which threaten his own sobriety and peace of mind.

## Shattered Glass

BILL

by Tova G.

The scents of sadness and despair  
Choke the stale and dusty air  
The sun is gone, the light is dim  
Through my soul the dark seeps in

There has been much damage done  
I look for help but there is none  
I feel among the shattered glass  
For a sign of hope, but alas,

My fingers bleed as does my heart  
All I love is torn apart.  
I am beaten, I am lost  
I see now what alcohol does cost

Where is God, I need Him now  
It is to Him that I must bow.  
And humbly ask for my relief,  
From this pain, from this grief.

I know not how to see the way,  
But for His guidance, I do pray.  
So that I may wake up one morning  
To find my soul has stopped its storming.

Releasing me from the Devil's brew,  
that I may live my life anew,  
And see that help was there all along  
for God and the Fellowship will make me strong.

In 1945 Earl T, founder of AA in Chicago, author of "He Sold Himself Short" and the man described in "The Family Afterward" for getting drunk after being nagged about drinking too much coffee and smoking too many cigarettes, suggested to Bill that he write the Traditions based upon the experiences shared by groups with their various rules.

## Big Book Trivia

### August Answers:

The Second Printing of the First Edition. The Appendix on Spiritual Awakening was also added

### Extra Credit:

The 11th printing of the First Edition changed ex-alcoholics to ex-problem drinker

### September Question:

What page is the Fourth Dimension mentioned?

**Extra Credit:** What page is the sixth sense mentioned?

### Did you know? .

That the Second Edition of the Big Book printed from 1955 until 1976 had a reversible

dust jacket. The inside of the Dust Cover was solid black so that the cover could be reversed and one could carry it around in public without fear of breaking ones anonymity. The first printings colourful Circus Jacket was retired for a more conservative look.

As printed in the Cleveland Central Bulletin November 1948

## CHECK AND DOUBLE CHECK

1. Am I opinionated or have I an open mind. receptive to change?
2. Am I absolutely honest ?
3. Am I generally truthful?
4. Am I envious of others?
5. Do I hold resentments unreasonably long?
6. Will I take correction of habits graciously?
7. Am I reasonably responsible and dependable?
8. Am I tolerant of mistakes of others?
9. Am I selfish? 100% 75% 50% 20%?
10. Am I courageous? 100% 75% 50% 25%?
11. Am I inconsiderate of others' feelings? Am I sympathetic to their desires only when it pleases me?
12. Am I vindictive?
13. Has there been any noticeable improvement in my humility?
14. Am I boresome when I get on a subject which interests me and do I persist in making my listeners take it?
15. Do I show proper respect for the other sex?
16. Are my moral standards irreproachable?
17. Am I a loyal and devoted spouse?
18. Am I a loyal friend?
19. Is my temper generally under control?
20. Have I the "guts" to let another person who knows me intimately judge me by these standards and the grace to accept his judgment for the purpose of eliminating my faults?

## Are Those Points Suggestions Or Rules?

Standing around at the coffee pot before the meeting how often do we hear the words "AA has no rules, only suggestions"? Yet there is a requirement for membership... a desire to stop drinking. Then there are two types of meetings, open which anyone with an interest in alcoholism can attend, and closed limited to those with a desire to stop drinking. Seems that those are all rules.

The long form of Tradition 3 states that Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. While the long form of Tradition Five tells us Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose—*that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers*. Those sound like rules defining a group and its purpose.

Tradition Four states that each group is autonomous, giving each group the power to create rules. Have you ever wondered why some groups say the Lords Prayer at the end of the meeting and others don't? Or why this group reads the traditions or promises while other groups do not? The group has exercised its group conscience and autonomy to set up rules as to how they wish the meeting to be run.

Speaking of meetings District 12 has a rule that no meeting will be listed on the meeting schedule until it has been in existence for 6 months. There is however no rule requiring that a meeting schedule be printed. Printing meeting schedules is a courtesy. Several Districts in fact charge for meeting schedules. As a matter of fact give or take a few minutes meetings always start and end on time, this seems to be yet another rule. Likewise, if a group does not wish to be listed in the meeting schedule there is no rule forcing them.

AA meetings must never accept a free meeting room and be fully self supporting (Tradition Seven) this seems to be another rule. Add to this that meetings must also accept any rules that the owner of the facility places upon the use of the room. The rules keep adding up.

AA's singleness of purpose seems to be a rule. Imagine what meetings would be like if they slipped into politics or sports and everyone forgot the reason there was a meeting in the first place. Let alone the idea of anyone slipping in and discussing whatever was on their mind. Like last nights TV lineup or religion.

Despite what many argue there is no Tradition, Concept or Rule mandating that we only read Conference Approved literature. Add to that neither meeting schedules or the Grapevine are conference approved. Additionally there is a long list of material that the General Services Offices produces that is not conference approved. AA will not tell anyone what they can or cannot read (Guideline SMF-29). It is however fully within the right of the group to vote that only conference approved literature be read or sold at meetings.

With a membership of over 2 million Anonymity, the spiritual foundation of A.A., most take this suggestion very seriously so much so it seems to be a solid rule. The few exceptions that crop up generally are celebrities that are down on their luck hoping to reignite their earning potential. Let's face it everyone knew when we were drinking. The quest for humility mandates that we not brag that we have quit.

A.A. is a fellowship of hope. Does it have rules? Does it need rules? Try some controlled "suggestions breaking". Try it more than once. It will not take long for you to decide, if you are honest with yourself about it. It might be worth a few good stern lectures to get a full knowledge that the suggestions are a matter of life or death. One does not need to be affiliated with the fellowship long to see or hear of someone that died from the malady of alcoholism.

Perhaps there are no rules and that only through unity we are given today to share the message of hope with another alcoholic. As phrased in the long form of Tradition One: *A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die*. Without these suggestions people die. These suggestions are the only mechanism in place to prevent that scenario from playing out and our "bottom" being the grave. The Unity Statement also terms it well

***This we owe to A.A.'s future: to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.***

## Some Rules From the Forties

Before the Traditions every local area had their own rules. These are excerpts from a few areas as provided by the A.A. Archives. All grammar and typographic errors left as originally written.

### **CODE OF PROCEDURE for the A A GROUP OF METROPOLITAN DETROIT September 28, 1942**

Active membership in the A. A. Group of Metropolitan Detroit may be achieved by a prospective member in the following manner.

First, attending four (4) "instruction meetings" as held by a recognized local group. During this time he will read the official A A Book complete. After which the Chairman of the Instruction Meeting will recommend his name to the Chairman of the Local Group.

Second, attending four (4) "regular meetings" of that same Local Group. After which, any two members of not less than six months sobriety may recommend his name to the Chairman of the Local Group as an active member.

### **County Group I Missouri**

#### MEMBERS

1. Must be alcoholic.
2. Must have an honest desire to quit.
3. Must have read the A. A. book.

Will not be considered active members until have attended four consecutive meetings and remained dry for the period.

If there is any doubt about prospect "being alcoholic or honest in the desire to quit, others are to be asked to call, and the prospect shall not be invited to a meeting unless at least two members agree that the prospect has met the three requirements.

### **Little Rock AR, Central Group Adopted August 6, 1946**

- (1) That the problems of men and women alcoholics are so entirely different that, while we will gladly and freely give such help as we can when requested by women., this shall always be kept solely a group of male alcoholics....
- (7) That regular weekly dues be paid, whether in attendance or not, and any deficits be made by assessments according to each members ability to pay.
- (8) That two sponsors be assigned each prospect.
- (9) That all controversial questions be settled by secret ballot, majority ruling, and any member has the right to secure written ballot simply by request

### **The Wilson Club St. Louis MO.**

*3. Upon his third slip he shall be automatically expelled from the club, it being assumed that the club can do nothing for him and that he is a detrimental influence to the membership.*

*(C) Believing that the slipper more than anyone else will be injured by any deviation from the rule 3. In the paragraph next above, it is made inviolable and is not subject to change and shall apply to all and sundry alike.*

*(D) Anonymity shall likewise be inviolable and no member shall divulge the name of a fellow member to anyone without his express permission.*

*(E) Any member expelled under paragraph (B).3, shall not again be eligible for membership in this club until he has been hospitalized or otherwise had institutional care or has been certified to by his personal physician and then only upon an affirmative vote by a two thirds majority of the membership*

# Answering Service Needs Volunteers



## FOR IMMEDIATE

**ASSISTANCE 24 Hours 7 Days a Week call (217)**

### 373-4200

These are important words to anyone seeking help. The responsibility is to insure that there are names on file with the answering service to respond when the call for help comes.

"I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help I want the hand of A.A. always to be there and for that I am responsi-

ble."

This is an opportunity to be involved in the very heart of A.A. Twelfth Step Work.

Additional names are need to help in providing rides to those visiting or in need of a meeting. A special need for members outside of the Cities of Champaign and Urbana.

*To learn about service opportunities contact any District Chair*

*or use the*

*web sites*

*contact page*

*[http://aa-](http://aa-eci.org/)*

*[eci.org/](http://aa-eci.org/)*

*[contact/](http://aa-eci.org/)*

## Conference Approved Literature Explained

As a friend was proof reading this newsletter, they turned with a quizzical look and said "I didn't know the Grapevine was not Conference Approved." To understand Conference Approved Literature one first has to understand that A.A. hosts a General Service Conference (GSC) once a year. The attendees are one delegate from each area in the US. There are 93 US Delegates, each elected for two years. The Delegates are voted on in Area Assemblies by GSR's and DCM's (pamphlet P-9). Each piece of Conference Approved literature goes through multiple votes and multiple readings by EACH Delegate to the Conference. There is also a Literature Committee that oversees the preparation of the literature and brings it to the Conference for a vote. The voting process and preparing the literature for vote is a multi year process. In short an idea is presented to the GSC, it is voted on, the literature committee works on the idea, which at the next GSC if ready is reviewed, changes recommended and there is a vote. This process continues for multiple conferences until a majority of the Delegates agree that the literature is ready to be stamped Conference Approved. It is a very long and costly process but insures that the AA message of hope is not diluted or altered. The Grapevine is published too frequently to go through this multiple year process. As are many of GSO's publications. The Grapevine is Conference Endorsed, but not Conference Approved. This is the same reason meeting schedules and local newsletters are not Conference Approved.

## Announcements

The Tuesday 7:30 women's meeting at Westminster Presbyterian is moving as of September 1st to Grace Lutheran on Springfield and Prospect and we are changing the speaker to the third Tuesday starting September 15th will be Phaedra and will stay third Tuesday after that. .

H.O.W. Group on Monday and Thursday at 7:00 PM; Has moved. Meeting Location: Presence Health Hospital Auditorium B, 1400 West Park Street, Urbana; It is a closed meeting except fourth Thursday for Open .

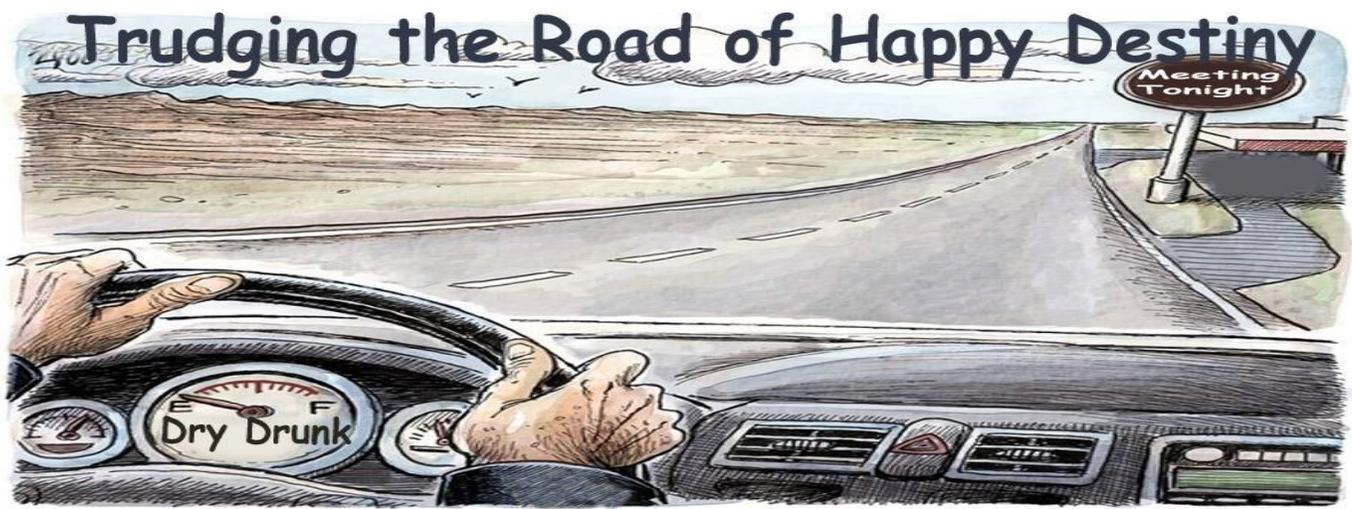
Soberfest September 26. No tickets will be sold at the door. See the August Newsletter for a flier.

The Paxton Tuesday, and Friday 8pm meetings have moved to The Paxton United Methodist Church 210 W. Center St.

We meet in the basement (dining room) as before enter from Taft St. (across from Busey Bank)

Southern Illinois Area 21 Assembly Registration 7:30 a.m.

Assembly 9:00a.m.  
Sunday, September 13th



1936 Webster Unabridged Dictionary— To travel on foot; to walk wearily; to jog or drag along; to travel or march with a labor: Origin probably Swedish Truga. A Snowshoe, also spelled trioga or trudja.

1938 Abbott's Ready Reference Dictionary is identical with the exception that the origin is given as French: trucher: to beg idly

## The Importance of Conference Approved Literature

"Suppose that A. A. had never published any standard literature = no books, no pamphlets We need little imagination to see that by now our message would be hopelessly garbled. Our relations with medicine and religion would have become a shambles. To alcoholics generally we would be a joke and the public would have thought us a riddle. Without its literature, A. A. would certainly have bogged down in a welter of controversy and disunity." – Bill W. pg 384 Language of the Heart.

In 1951 at the First General Service Conference it was recommended that literature published by A. A. be marked conference approved. This was done to solely to distinguish that A. A. literature met a rigorous review process. It was not done to in anyway censor or limit literature published by any other source. The Long Form of Tradition Ten states that "The Alcoholics Anonymous Group oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no opinion at all. Concerning such views they can express no views whatever." The Long Form of Tradition Eleven guides A. A. by stating that "Our public relations policy is guided by attraction rather than promotion". Nothing speaks louder for A.A.'s principle of attraction than it's conference approved literature.

The A.A. website [aa.org](http://aa.org) has a copy of every Conference Approved Pamphlet in a downloadable format. They also offer a fair use policy that allows for the downloading and printing of one copy all their pamphlets. It is well worth taking the time to read one or more pamphlets a day. Are you up for a challenge? Can you read 90 pamphlets in 90 days?

### District 12 Officers and Committee Chairs

DCM Mona Lee H. ([dcm@aa-eci.org](mailto:dcm@aa-eci.org))  
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District 12 holds its meetings on the 3rd Sunday of every month at 2pm in the New Fellowship Corner at 1714 Springfield Ave, Champaign.

If you would like to submit something for publication, or just send comments or questions to the for a Committee, please email [newsletter@aa-eci.org](mailto:newsletter@aa-eci.org). Deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month.