

District 12 Area 21 Newsletter

March 2016

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Big Book Trivia	2
AA The Group	2
I Stand by the Door	3
What is a group	4
Meeting vs Group	5
District Notes	6

What No Meetings!!!!

Recently at a meeting one of the towns self proclaimed Big Book Thumpers started off on a rant that no where in the Big Book does it mention meetings or the need to go to meetings. Most times rants of this nature simply go in one ear and out the other. This individuals rant didn't and has been bouncing around for weeks.

A few days after the rant and with the words still bouncing a package came in the mail. The contents of the package contained a 33rd printing of the 3rd edition of the Big Book printed in 1989. Which by chance was a Big Book printed 50 years after the first Big Book was printed in 1939 and at one time owned by a Helen C.

Out habit whenever a new Big Book is received I just closed my eyes and

open the book. This book opened to page 160 and highlighted was the last sentence of a paragraph continued from page 159 "Aside from fellowship and sociability, the prime objective was to provide a time and a place where new people might bring their problems." Immediate I had to turn the page and see exactly WHAT this was.

Turning the page back to page 159 these magical words sprung from the page. "Seeing much of each other scare an evening passed that someone's home did not shelter a little gathering of men and women, happy in their release, and constantly thinking of how they might present their discovery to some newcomer." Everyone is thinking that a nightly gathering is certainly not a meeting. Reading the next sentence

is when the book's previous owner Helen reach out and shared why the book opened as it did.

"In addition to these casual get-togethers it became customary to set apart one night a week for a meeting to be attended (turn to page 160) by anyone and everyone interested in a spiritual way of life."

There it was on pages 159 and 160, "customary to set aside one night a week for a meeting".

I had to make sure that this was not a typo in this magical Big Book and checked with a First Printing from 1939, there it was on page 174 (the First Editions of the Big Book have slightly different numbers), the same exact paragraph.

That seemed strange why would someone that loved the Big Book
Continued on page 4

A.A's Singleness of Purpose

"There are those who predict that A.A. may well become a new spearhead for a spiritual awakening throughout the world. When our friends say these things, they are both generous and sincere. But we of A.A. must reflect that such a tribute and such a prophecy could well prove to be a heady drink for most of us—that is, if we really came to believe this to be the real purpose of A.A., and if we commenced to behave accordingly."

"Our Society, therefore, will prudently cleave to its single purpose: the carrying of the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Let us resist the proud assumption that since God has enabled us to do well in one area we are destined to be a channel of saving grace for everybody."

A.A. co-founder Bill W., 1955

Contributing to the Grapevine:

WRITING ARTICLES

Before writing, you might want to leaf through a few issues to see what kinds of articles are published. Most are first-person accounts of the writer's experience with alcoholism and Alcoholics Anonymous. Grapevine publishes stories for special departments such as Emotional Sobriety, Sponsorship, Newcomers, Youth Enjoying Sobriety, Old-Timers and Home Group, as well as articles about the Steps and Traditions, jokes for "At Wit's End" and letters for "Dear Grapevine." But you are not confined to these topics. The editors are always looking for innovative material, as long as it relates to AA experience and reflects an awareness of AA's singleness of purpose. Articles are reviewed by the editorial staff and selected by consensus. You will be notified if your story or photo is selected for publication.

WHAT THE GRAPEVINE DOES NOT PUBLISH

Poems, prayers, song lyrics, tributes to individuals, plays, previously published material or anything unrelated to AA or that violates the principles of AA.

Big Book Trivia

February Answers:

Bill was offered a \$1500 advance by the editor of religious books Eugene Exman

Extra Credit: The chapters that Mr Exman read were THERE IS A SOLUTION and BILL'S STORY, in that order .

March Question:

What typo appears in the First Printing of the Second Edition (1955) that does not appear in the Second Printing (1956)

Extra Credit: How do you differentiate the Second and Third Printing of the Second Edition?

Did you know? That Brown University is becoming one of the largest collections of A. A. History with contri-

butions of material having been made by Dr. Bob's family and Clarence S. (Home Brewmiester).

Hazelden has been the largest collection outside of A. A. Archives in New York. Hazelden's collection includes the works of Dr. Silkworth and Edward W (author of the Little Red Book).

Syracuse University houses Marty M's collection.

As it says in Concept I:

The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

The A.A. Group—the Final Voice of the Fellowship

"Alcoholics Anonymous has been called an upside-down organization because "the ultimate responsibility and final authority for world services resides with the groups—rather than with the trustees, the General Service Board or the General Service Office in New York."

"Twelve Concepts For World Service Illustrated"

The entire structure of A.A. depends upon the participation and conscience of the individual groups, and how each of these groups conducts its affairs has a ripple effect on A.A. everywhere. Thus, we are ever individually conscious of our responsibility for our own sobriety and, as a group, for carrying the A.A. message to the suffering alcoholic who reaches out to us for help.

A.A. has no central authority, minimal organization, and a handful of Traditions instead of laws. As co-founder Bill W. noted in 1960, "We obey [the Twelve Traditions] willingly because we ought to and because we want to. Perhaps the secret of their power lies in the fact that these life-giving communications spring out of living experience and are rooted in love."

A.A. is shaped by the collective voice of its local groups and their representatives to the General Service Conference, which works toward unanimity on matters vital to the Fellowship. Each group functions independently, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

A.A.'s essential group work is done by alcoholics who are themselves recovering in the Fellowship, and each of us is entitled to do our A.A. service in the way we think best within the spirit of the Traditions. This means that we function as a democracy, with all plans for group action approved by the majority voice. No single individual is appointed to act for the group or for Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

Each group is as unique as a thumbprint, and approaches to carrying the message of sobriety vary not just from group to group but from region to region. Acting autonomously, each group charts its own course. The better informed the members, the stronger and more cohesive the group—and the greater the assurance that when a newcomer reaches out for help, the hand of A.A. always will be there.

Most of us cannot recover unless there is a group. As Bill said, "Realization dawns on each member that he is but a small part of a great whole. . . He learns that the clamor of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whenever these could damage the group. It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not."

From the A.A. Pamphlet The Group originally published in 1964

I stand by the door.
 I neither go too far in, nor stay too far out.
 The door is the most important door in the world -
 It is the door through which men walk when they find
 God.
 There is no use my going way inside and staying there,
 When so many are still outside and they, as much as I,
 Crave to know where the door is.
 And all that so many ever find
 Is only the wall where the door ought to be.
 They creep along the wall like blind men,
 With outstretched, groping hands,
 Feeling for a door, knowing there must be a door,
 Yet they never find it.
 So I stand by the door.

The most tremendous thing in the world
 Is for men to find that door - the door to God.
 The most important thing that any man can do
 Is to take hold of one of those blind, groping hands
 And put it on the latch - the latch that only clicks

And opens to the man's own touch.

Men die outside the door, as starving beggars die
 On cold nights in cruel cities in the dead of winter.
 Die for want of what is within their grasp.
 They live on the other side of it -
 Live there because they have not found it.

Nothing else matters compared to helping them find it,
 And open it, and walk in, and find Him.
 So I stand by the door.

Go in great saints; go all the way in -
 Go way down into the cavernous cellars,
 And way up into the spacious attics.
 It is a vast, roomy house, this house where God is.
 Go into the deepest of hidden casements,
 Of withdrawal, of silence, of sainthood.
 Some must inhabit those inner rooms
 And know the depths and heights of God,
 And call outside to the rest of us how wonderful it is.
 Sometimes I take a deeper look in,
 Sometimes venture in a little farther,
 But my place seems closer to the opening.
 So I stand by the door.

There is another reason why I stand there.
 Some people get part way in and become afraid
 Lest God and the zeal of His house devour them;
 For God is so very great and asks all of us.
 And these people feel a cosmic claustrophobia
 And want to get out. 'Let me out!' they cry.
 And the people way inside only terrify them more.
 Somebody must be by the door
 to tell them that they are spoiled.

For the old life they have seen too much:
 One taste of God and nothing but God will do any more.
 Somebody must be watching for the frightened
 Who seek to sneak out just where they came in,
 To tell them how much better it is inside.
 The people too far in do not see how near these are
 To leaving - preoccupied with the wonder of it all.
 Somebody must watch for those who have entered the
 door
 But would like to run away.
 So for them too, I stand by the door.

I admire the people who go way in.
 But I wish they would not forget how it was
 Before they got in. Then they would be able to help
 The people who have not yet even found the door.
 Or the people who want to run away again from God.
 You can go in too deeply and stay in too long
 And forget the people outside the door.
 As for me, I shall take my old accustomed place,
 Near enough to God to hear Him and know He is there,
 But not so far from men as not to hear them,
 And remember they are there too.

Where? Outside the door -
 Thousands of them. Millions of them.
 But - more important for me -
 One of them, two of them, ten of them.
 Whose hands I am intended to put on the latch.
 So I shall stand by the door and wait
 For those who seek it.

I had rather be a doorkeeper
 So I stand by the door.

The poem *I Stand By The Door* was written by Rev. Samuel Shoemaker. Rev. Shoemaker was the director of the Cavalry Mission that Bill attended before and after he sobered up. Rev. Shoemaker was the head of the Oxford Group in the United States and was the one that expelled Bill and the New York alcoholics from the Oxford Group in 1937. There is no record of communications between Bill and Rev. Shoemaker between 1937 and 1943 (per AA Archives in New York). In 1943 Bill and Rev. Shoemaker "made up" and Rev. Shoemaker became a friend and strong supporter of AA. His friendship with AA was so strong that at the Conference at AA in St. Louis celebrating the 25th Anniversary of AA Dr. Shoemaker spoke. His biography, also titled "*I Stand By The Door*", written by his wife Helen Shoemaker names him as a co-founder of AA.

Bill not holding a grudge, this a clear example of how love and tolerance is our code.

WHAT NO MEETINGS continued from page 1 (and I sincerely mean they love the Big Book) make a statement during a meeting that NO WHERE in the Big Book does it mention meetings. Even worse why did their words stick in my head. I have heard many people make the same comment "that NO WHERE in the Big Book does it mention meetings". Sadly over the years I have learned to tune out such rambling.

Helen's magical Big Book still didn't clear the words from me head. So I dug further and found on the bottom of page 15 and the top of page 16 there is another passage. "We meet frequently so that newcomers may find the fellowship they seek. At these informal gatherings one may often see from 50 to 200 persons. We are growing in numbers and power." One piece of Big Book Trivia, A.A. regularly updates the meeting/group count at the bottom of page 16 to reflect the number of documented groups.

Perhaps I was misunderstanding the word "customary" on page 159. In 1939 when the Big Book was written it may very well have had a different meaning. In order to properly understand the meaning of the words that Bill W wove into the Big Book in 1938 and 1939. Overtime I have come across three 1936~1939 unabridged dictionaries. So it was off to the dictionaries. Much to my surprise the meaning of Customary in all three dictionaries was a habitual practice.

Three dictionaries make a clear statement. When the Big Book was written it was a habitual practice to have a weekly meeting. Most would simply shrug this off and say. That was the old Oxford Group, nothing to do with AA. Yet history reveals that AA in New York was kicked out of the Oxford Group in 1937. History also shows that weekly meetings were going on in both Akron and New York.

This of course leads to the question which came first, Alcoholics Anonymous or the meeting. There is a simple answer. The meeting. The name Alcoholics Anonymous was given to the Big Book as it was being written in 1938. The use of meetings (albeit at the one time the Oxford Group) predated either Bill's or Dr. Bob's sobriety. Dr. Bob began attending Oxford Group meetings in 1933 ~ 34 with the hopes of sobering up. Bill attended a couple of Oxford Group Revival Meetings at the Cavalry Mission in 1934 shortly before sobering up.

History clearly establishes that the Meeting Came First, followed by Bill sobering up and his continued attendance at meetings. Then through other Oxford Group members Bill met Dr. Bob who in 1935 was attending Oxford Group meetings with the hopes of sobering up. To close the loop in 1938 came the name Alcoholics Anonymous which was given to the Big Book as it was being written and lastly in 1939 the Big Book was published.

To make a long story short. Yes attending meetings is in the Big Book and it has been since the very first book was printed. Next time you are at a meeting and someone goes off on the rant that no where in the Big Book does it ever talk about meetings, please simply wait your turn, or take a second as the meeting ends and politely point to pages 15 and 16 as well as pages 159 and 160.

In the glory days of South Neil Street a quote was read at the end of every meeting. "Every man has a right to his own opinion, but no man has a right to be wrong in the facts". This quote is credited to American financier Bernard M. Baruch (1870-1965), who said it in 1946.

The Group... Where A.A.'s Service Structure Begins

What is an A.A. Group?

As the long form of Tradition Three clearly states, "Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. 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."

Further clarification of an A.A. group may be found in the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*, Concept Twelve, Warranty Six:

- no penalties to be inflicted for nonconformity to A.A. principles;
- no fees or dues to be levied—voluntary contributions only;
- no member to be expelled from A.A.—membership always to be the choice of the individual;
- each A.A. group to conduct its internal affairs as it wishes—it being merely requested to abstain from acts that might injure A.A. as a whole; and finally
- that any group of alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group provided that, as a group, they have no other purpose or affiliation.

GSR Tool Kit



The topic has recently come up about the paperwork that needs to be filed with New York for a new group or to

make changes to the information for an existing group. That form can be downloaded using this link, printed, then emailed, faxed or snail mailed back to to New York. If you are a GSR please take a few minutes and verify that everything for you group is correct.

http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/e_group.pdf

Is Your Group Linked to AA As A Whole is another outstanding resource. http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/smf-104_en.pdf

Of course EVERYONE should have a copy of the Service Manual handy https://lookaside.fbsbx.com/file/en_bm-31.pdf

The Public Information Kit F-65w should be memorized word for word. http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/-65w_PI_Kit.pdf

For those with a spare coffee pot and bleeding resentment here is a link for starting a new meeting

http://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/starting-a-new-aa-group

Pamphlets targeting GSR's http://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/general-service-representative-gsr

And a link to the items contained in the GSR's KIT

http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/en_GSR_list.pdf

To learn about service opportunities contact any District Chair or use the web sites contact page <http://aa-eci.org/contact/>

Is There a Difference Between a Meeting and a Group?

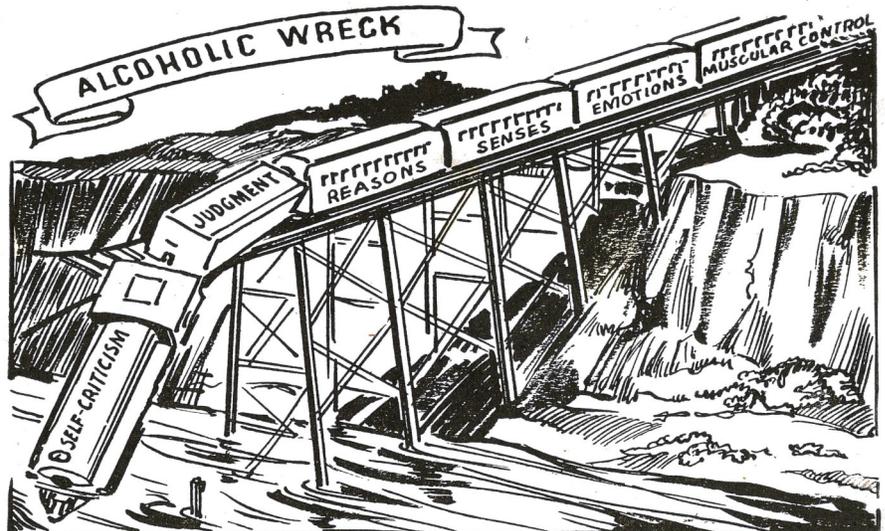
Most A.A. members meet in A.A. groups as defined by the long form of our Third Tradition. However, some A.A. members hold A.A. meetings that differ from the common understanding of a group. These members simply gather at a set time and place for a meeting, perhaps for convenience or other special situations. The main difference between meetings and groups is that A.A. groups generally continue to exist outside the prescribed meeting hours, ready to provide Twelfth Step help when needed.

A.A. groups are encouraged to register with G.S.O., as well as with their local offices: area, district, intergroup or central office. A.A. meetings can be listed in local meeting lists.

Page 12~13 from the pamphlet The Group

From the Editor: Meetings and groups have been integrated into the Fellowship from a time before Alcoholics Anonymous had a name. This integration is so complete that in the core texts of A.A. (The Big Book and The 12 & 12) the word MEETING occurs over 25 times, MEETINGS occurs over 15 times, GROUP occurs over 130 times and GROUPS over occurs 65 times. Which came first? The Steps or the Meeting... Meetings of alcoholics helping other alcoholics were happening in 1935. The Steps were not published until 1939.

From a 1936 School Book "Youth Studies Alcohol"



In December 2016 our District is hosting the Area 21 Assembly. District will need volunteer's to assist in all aspects of the Assembly. This is an excellent opportunity to gain a better understanding of how AA works. Ask your GSR for more details on volunteering!

District 12 Meeting Reports December 20, 2015

- **DCM** – Mona Lee H. (dcm@aa-eci.org), **ALT-DCM** – Mike G (alt-dcm@aa-eci.org)
- o • **Treasurer** – Cheri P. (treasurer@aa-eci.org) Current Balance \$1680.00 less prudent reserve of \$3100.00 and Corrections literature balance of \$689.31

Committee Reports

- **Answering Service** – Antonia D. (answering-service@aa-eci.org) and Jake T.– NO REPORT
Committee Purpose: To take emergency calls and if resources permit assist with providing rides; Goals: Review phone numbers; Committee News: 262 minutes used in December
- **Archives** – Mike W. (archives@aa-eci.org)– NO REPORT
Committee Purpose: N/A; Goals: N/A; Committee News: N/A; Service Opportunities: N/A; Spread the word at meetings, etc.: N/A
- **Corrections** – Mike K (corrections@aa-eci.org) – NO REPORT
Committee Purpose: To bring AA into the Jails; Committee News: N/A; Service Opportunities: N/A; Spread the word at meetings, etc.: N/A
- **Grapevine** – Terry M. (grapevine@aa-eci.org) – NO REPORT
Committee Purpose: Make Grapevine information available to the District; Committee News: New Supply of Grapvines, sign up to take ba
- **Meeting List** – Liza W. (meeting-list@aa-eci.org) Committee News: Changes/updates for the upcoming printing include: AAologists closed Big Book meeting has changed its time to 5:30 PM, Saturday Night Live is a 9:00 PM meeting in Mattoon, the 3 Guys Wednesday meeting in Rantoul has changed its name to Love and Tolerance, Paxton Tuesday and Friday meeting has a new location and a new time of 7:30 PM starting 2/2/16, and the Area 21 address
- **Newsletter** – Martin B (newsletter@aa-eci.org)
Committee Purpose: Publish an informative and entertaining monthly newsletter
- **PI-CPC** – Russ S. or (picpc@aa-eci.org) Committee News: Lakeland Community College is covered and all else is okay; Service Opportunities: Need Piatt and Ford County volunteers
- **Treatment Centers** – Mark G (treatment-centers@aa-eci.org) and Sherri G. News: Nothing new;
- **Website** – Rosemary T. (webmaster@aa-eci.org) Goals: Look into creating a searchable meeting list on the website which would allow sorting/filtering by location, day, time;

District 12 Officers and Committee Chairs

DCM Mona Lee H. (dcm@aa-eci.org)
 Alt. DCM Michael G. (alt-dcm@aa-eci.org)
 Secretary Katrina R. (secretary@aa-eci.org)
 Treasurer Cheri P. (treasurer@aa-eci.org)
 Corrections Mike K. (corrections@aa-eci.org)
 Treatment Facilities Mark G. & Sheri G.
 (treatment-centers@aa-eci.org)
 Meeting List Liza W. & Mona M.
 (meeting-list@aa-eci.org)
 Answering Service Antonia D. and Jake T.
 (answering-service@aa-eci.org)
 Newsletter Martin B (newsletter@aa-eci.org)

Grapevine Terry S. (grapevine@aa-eci.org)
 PI-CPC Russ S. (picpc@aa-eci.org)
 Website Rosemary T. (webmaster@aa-eci.org)
 Archives Mike W. (archives@aa-eci.org)

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. Deadline for submissions is the 20th of each month.