



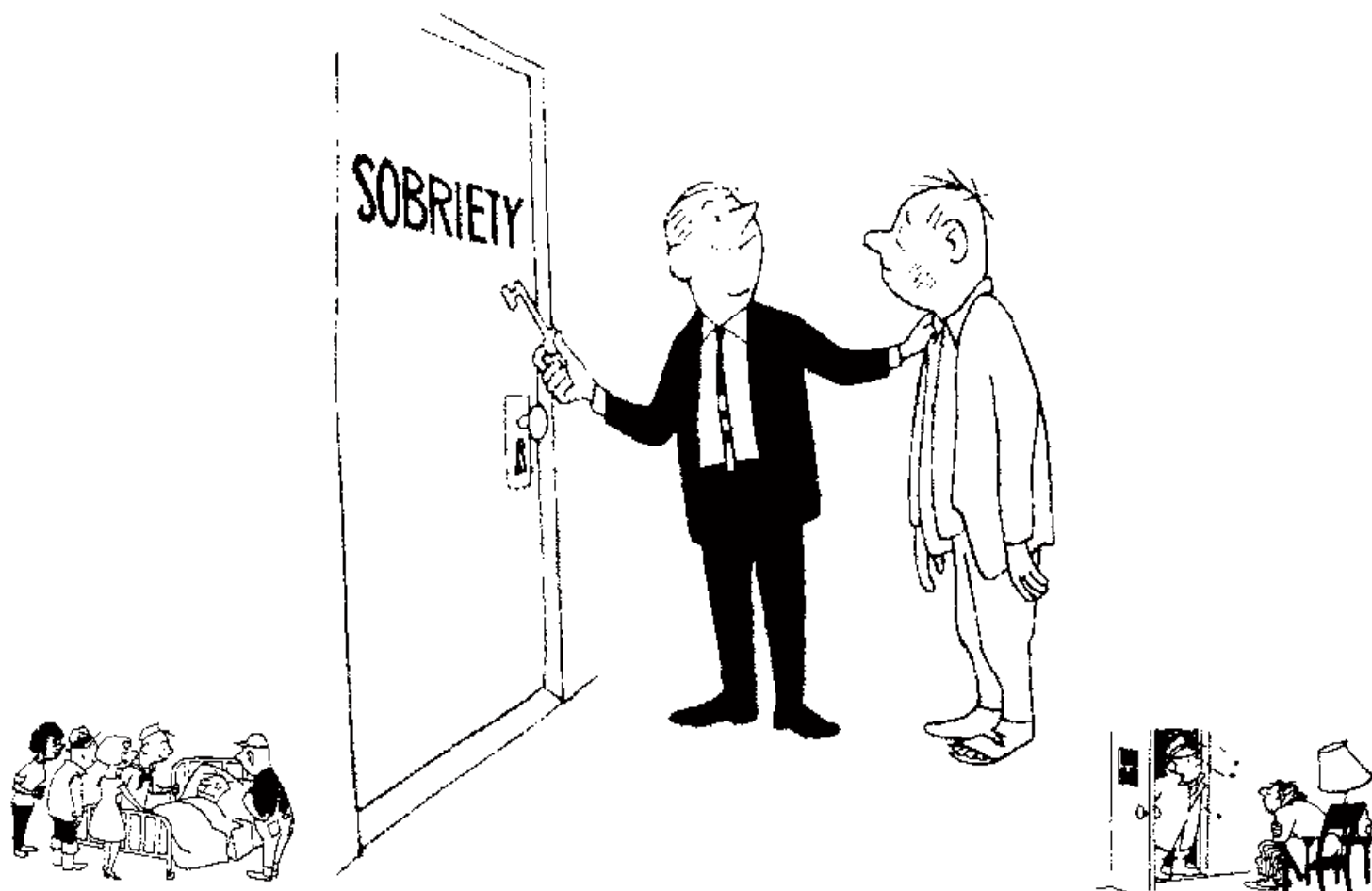
# **THE BEST OF**



# **THE EYE OPENER**

**FREE** Vol.7 Num.71 January 2008 166 S. Champlain Street Burlington, VT 05401 **FREE**

**"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 responsible."**



# **EYE OPENER COMMITTEE**

**EDITOR:** Ana B.  
**FOUNDER & FORMER EDITOR:** Erwin L.  
**INCOMING EDITOR:** Andy T.  
**FORMER CHAIR:** Brian H.  
**INCOMING CHAIR:** Sam S.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Kyrie W.  
Eric L.  
Joe U.

Please welcome Andy T. as the new Eye Opener Editor. As he begins this service commitment, the Eye Opener will be going through somewhat of a transition. Please make a habit of submitting something ASAP to either Andy T. or Ana B. to help make this transition go smoothly. Below are some questions you can ask yourself if you're not sure what to write about. The Opener Committee would like to thank you all for your continued support.

## **WRITER'S BLOCK?**

1. Who are you? first name and last int. only
2. What is your sobriety date?
3. Who helped you to get in AA? other than HP?
4. Who is your sponsor? Who is his/ her's name? first name and last int. only
5. What group did you join?
6. Why did you join that group?
7. Do you do any service work, in Area, District or Home Cir.?
8. Do you have any sponsees? first names and last int. only
9. What is your most important tool in your program?
10. What would tell a newcomer about getting sober the first time?
11. What is it like for you today?

**Please hand story submissions to Andy T. or Ana B.  
Or email them to Andy T.  
ajwsurfer@juno.com**

## HISTORY OF DISTRICT 2 & 11 NEWSLETTERS

The first newsletter to arrive in District 2 was the "District 2 News." It first circulated around mid 1985, and stayed until July/August 1988. It was an 8.5X11 sheet of paper copied on both sides. Archives is still looking to have copies of this newsletter. So look around your group or at home, and please send them to District 2, P.O. Box 12, Burlington, VT 05401.

In mid 1989 the 1st VT Intergroup started a newsletter. It was called "The News." This newsletter only lasted about three months. After that, three A.A. members wanted to start bringing a newsletter back to District 2. Erwin L., Herb and Angie distributed the first copy in October 1989. It was printed on 8.5X14 sheets, folded in half. The only problem was that the newsletter didn't have a name. Subsequently a contest was held in an effort to provide the newsletter with one. Just by reading the rules and prizes, you could tell they would try to include humor in the newsletter.

### The Rules

- The name must be printable, no profanity or slurs of any kind.
- Judging will be done by the P.I.C. members - Decision final.
- Bribes will be considered.
- Entries can be made through your Intergroup Rep or by mailing to P.I.C. at the office.

### The Prizes

- One book (A.A. literature) of winner's choice.
- One year as a P.I.C. member.
- A scenic bus trip to Winooski aboard one of CCTA's delightfully appointed "Trolleys". (One Way)

Two months after the first issue was circulated, Herb and Angie moved. Erwin L. helped the Intergroup put the newsletter together. It was printed on 8.5X11 sheets. But this time it had a name. Diane L. came up with the "Eye Opener." The name has stayed ever since. The Intergroup did the newsletter from October 1990 until May 1992. It was distributed every two months. The Intergroup ended up closing its doors around late 1990. The distribution of the "Eye Opener" newsletter ended as quickly as it began.

In November 1993, Erwin L. started the "Eye Opener" back up. This time it was printed on 8.5X14 sheets, folded in half and using a different color for each month. The "Eye Opener" had a Step/Tradition box, a calendar and a list of group commitments in every monthly issue. The main purpose of the "Eye Opener" was to connect the groups to District, putting all the special events and group events together so all A.A. members could get together. It also had many members share their experience, strength and hope with others by submitting A.A. related stories of their recovery. Erwin L.'s favorite section was the letters from the Pioneers; they showed him how A.A. had changed, and how it hadn't changed.

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## DISTRICT 2 & 11 NEWSLETTERS (Continued)

The circulation of the "Eye Opener" lasted about three years. Unfortunately, Erwin L. moved in 1997. The "Eye Opener" stopped, but was not forgotten. Finally he moved back into town in 2000. In March 2001, circulation of the "Eye Opener" started up again. Erwin L. went to District 2 to see if they could pay for it. They agreed to pay for it as long as its contents were within Traditions. A few months later, he approached District 11 to see if they would be willing to split the cost. They agreed. In addition, District 2 wanted a logo to show that they were in compliance with Traditions. If you look at the cover, you will see the District logo in the upper-left corner. This logo started coming out about July 2003, and has remained ever since.

The "Eye Opener" stayed in the hands of Erwin L. until June 2005. At this point, he was no longer able to do it. So once again, District was without a newsletter. About a year later, Ana B. volunteered to start it back up. In August 2006, she put out the first issue of the much missed "Eye Opener." Ana B. immediately sought to make improvements in an effort to make the "Eye Opener" more popular. While keeping Erwin L.'s style intact, she progressively made additions including Anniversaries, Puzzles, Quote of the Month, A.A. History and District Meeting Notes. She also worked to create a format that was more space efficient and more reader friendly.

In October 2006, District 2 voted to create a Chair position for the "Eye Opener." Miranda M. was elected as the first Chair. Ana B. remained as the editor. Two months later, Brian H. took over as "Eye Opener" chair. Brian's input and enthusiasm has been extremely valuable to the success of the "Eye Opener." In January 2007, Both Districts voted to increase the "Eye Opener" budget by 50%. This allowed for larger issues. Later that month, the "Eye Opener" Committee met for the first time. Present members include Brian H., Ana B., Erwin L., Eric L. and Kyrie W. The Committee meets the third Sunday of every month 9:15PM at the Turning Point Club in Burlington, Vermont. New members are always welcome.

All together, the "Eye Opener" has been in circulation for about 13 years. Ana B. strongly believes, "Its continued success relies primarily on A.A. members submitting their stories of recovery." An added benefit to A.A. members who submit stories is that every issue is put into Archives. They get to be a part of A.A. history. For those who wish to share their experience, strength and hope, submissions can either be handed to a Committee member or sent to [soxtatoo2004@yahoo.com](mailto:soxtatoo2004@yahoo.com). I would like to personally thank the many members of both District 2 and 11 who through the years have made the "Eye Opener" a valuable tool of recovery.

- Erwin L. -

### SUGGESTIONS WANTED

If you have any suggestions, questions or things you would want added to the Eyeopener, send an email to the address below.

[ajwsurfer@juno.com](mailto:ajwsurfer@juno.com)



## **DAILY REFLECTION**

**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."**

**Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 85**

### **Life By Choice**

**I** am sure that the title alone may seem to some as grandiose and dramatic. I am sure that the opening sentence may seem bold, belligerent, prideful, and full of ego...my friends I assure you that humility, self awareness and a thorough understanding of who I am and who I was drives these opening words.

In the ears of many alcoholics, all the descriptive words above ring loud and clear, a certain feeling of insight, understanding, calmness and ownership of who we can be, ensues our thought process when we hear these words, or at least it did for this alcoholic. For me these are precious pearls that drove me to the realization that every action I take is based on a choice "I make." I am who I choose to be today.

Granted this has no merit on the actions that other people take in my life that effect me. However with this new understanding, I have the ability to walk through my days with as much suffering, resentment, dignity, grace and spirituality as I choose to. I no longer have to play the role of the "victim," nor do I retain the right to do so. There is an overpowering freedom that comes with this; the freedom that allows this drunk to hold his head high in the face of adversity, to be comfortable sitting in my

own skin and not wanting to be anywhere but the place I am, at that time, nor do I make the choice to wish that my past had been different.

I will no longer make the choices that once enslaved me to do the will of my alcoholism, nor will I choose to live my life in the darkness of my defects of character, or the ugliness of survival. No friends! I will make the choice to work the 12 Steps of AA to the best of my ability. I will make the choice to lend ear to the words of those who have come before me, as well as those that come after me. I will wage the bloody life long battle against this disease that we all cope with. Friends...I will choose to live!

These are choices we all have had all the while. I took the love, compassion, understanding, patience and dedication of what Tom K. would refer to as "my fellow brothers and sisters," in order for me to come to a place where I believed enough in myself and in the potential of what my life could be; to see that this was a choice worth making. This took some time. I know, I know...every alcoholic's favorite word; time. With time and practice of these 12 Steps, my mind became "clearer," and I was able to see me without the mask

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## Life By Choice (Continued)

that I had worn for far too long. I became aware.

The areas in which I could really use improvement (and there are many) became clear to me, often times much to my self-centered surprise. What was even more surprising was the day I realized these were areas in which I truly wanted to change. With each new revelation of who I was, a new choice presented itself. It is one of those quick little "catch phrases" that we all hear when we come into the rooms. That choice

was simple, and continues to remain as simple as I let it be.

The choice; grow or go! Again I made the choice to live. This is not a choice I regret, and it is one I hope you will make and continue to make. Through the example of action, inspiration is born. I hope we all choose to make the choice to inspire, and to let others inspire us. It is my sincere hope we all choose...life!

Bryant P.  
February 2007

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# ***Area 45 Presents...*** ***NERAASA '08***

**17th Annual  
Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly**

**2008 General Service Conference Theme  
"Communication And Participation - The Key To Unity And Self-Support"**

**West Atlantic City, Southern New Jersey  
February 22nd, 23rd and 24th, 2008**

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of NERAASA is for GSR's, DCM's, Area Committee Members and Intergroup/Central Office Representatives of the Northeast Region to discuss General Service Conference related issues and concerns affecting A.A. as a whole, as well as pertinent aspects of recovery, unity and service common to the areas of the Northeast Region.

### **LOCATION:**

Clarion Hotel & Convention Center  
6821 Black Horse Pike, Atlantic City West, EHT, NJ 08234

**For Further Information, Please Visit:  
[www.neraasa.org](http://www.neraasa.org)**

**\*ALL A.A. MEMBERS ARE WELCOME!\***

## Serenity At Last

*I* frequently hear people in meetings speak of "the gifts of the program." Things like patience, tolerance, compassion, serenity and love are surely God given. But they are less a gift and more a reward for hard-work. When I first came to AA, I thought these things would come to me by simply putting "the plug in the jug." Unfortunately, (or is it fortunately?) it is by staying in touch with the fellowship and working the steps to the best of my ability that these things have come to me.

When I first came to AA, I was emotionally bankrupt. I felt like I was willing to do anything not to feel that way anymore. Really what I was willing to do was to not drink and go to meetings. Just not drinking and going to meetings is good enough in the beginning and even on some days now. But I need to keep my recovery moving forward every day or I will never see the benefits of sobriety, and I might die of complacency. My disease does not stop progressing for anything or anyone, so my recovery needs to continue moving forward. I also cannot expect to receive any of the fruits of sobriety if I am not willing to do the footwork. The work I am referring to is our twelve steps, which are a vital part of my recovery. Along with these steps, there are also many helpful tools I have gained by going to meetings and talking with other alcoholics in recov-

ery. I just need to apply these principals in my every day life, and I will begin to see results.

I used to pray to God directly for attributes such as patience and tolerance. Usually I get an instance that allows me to cultivate these attributes. God puts the old woman in the Winnebago driving 20mph on my way to work for a reason. It is an opportunity to grow. I will not be freely given patience, but I get plenty of opportunities to cultivate it. Whether I take the opportunity or not is up to me. Tolerance of others can be cultivated in a couple of ways. The first and most important for me is to control my actions, that is, restraint of pen and tongue. If I can manage to keep my impulse control in check, I can avoid those amends that always follow some unneeded and unhelpful remark. I also need to remember that I am no different than anyone else, and the defects I am ridiculing I have been guilty of myself before. Remembering the three C's is also a helpful way to cultivate tolerance. I need to remind myself that I don't get to Criticize, Condemn or Complain today. Criticizing or condemning anyone or anything is a small form of playing God. I think my way is better and I let people know. Unfortunately when I play God, I

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### **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

***"O thou invisible spirit of wine,  
if thou hast no name to be known by,  
let us call thee devil."***

***-William Shakespeare-***

## Serenity At Last (Continued)

don't need God. Then I get drunk, and we know what happens after that. I also don't get to complain today. I am just along for the ride like everyone else, and I can let God handle the details.

Serenity is not just the absence of anger and pain, but it also includes the pursuit of joy. It is also not the absence of trouble, because that would just be the absence of life itself. Serenity for me is a calmness of heart while handling life's responsibilities and trials. By working the steps I can relieve myself of anxiety, shame, resentments and self-pity. After a thorough housecleaning I can begin to fill myself with healthy, beneficial feelings. This occurs only when I take the right action. Taking the right action, regardless of how I feel about it is one foundation of my sobriety. I find that helping others is the best place

to start in my pursuit of joy. It is in helping others that I can forget myself, and paradoxically find who I really am.

It is important for me to remember that just because I do the work does not mean I will see immediate results. "...Sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, they will always materialize if we truly work for them..." So I take it a day at a time, just like everyone else. I don't pray directly for patience anymore, I pray that I may love my fellows the way God loves me. For it is in this unconditional love that I find patience, tolerance, compassion and understanding. So I will keep coming back, and continue to work for these rewards of the program.

Mike M.  
Milton "At Last" Group  
February 2007

## **A.A. TURNING BACK TIME**

**January 24, 1971**

Bill W. dies; 36 years sober

**February 1954**

Bill W. declines offer of honorary Doctor of Law degree from Yale University

**March 1941**

Jack Alexander article on A.A. published in Saturday Evening Post

**April 1939**

Alcoholics Anonymous, the Big Book, published

**May 1935**

Bill meets Dr. Bob on Mother's Day

**June 1944**

First issue of the A.A. Grapevine published

**July 1955**

Three Legacies: Recovery, Unity and Service, accepted by Fellowship at International Convention

**August 1939**

Dr. Bob and Sister Ignatia begin treating alcoholics at St. Thomas Hospital, Akron

**September 1939**

Liberty magazine article on A.A. published

**October 1969**

First World Service Meeting, New York City

**November 16, 1950**

Dr. Bob dies; 15 years sober

**December 11, 1934**

Bill W.'s last drink



## I Am An Alcoholic, Named "Tom"

Every weekend from age 15 to 50, I drank: Martinis, Rob-roys, Vodka, Beer and Wine. I always believed that if I ever desired to stop drinking, all I need do is resolve to stop, and I would. However I never had any desire to stop, for drinking was the solution for my grave mental and emotional problems.

I attended my first AA meeting in January 1985 to help my now deceased ex-wife of then, 23 years, to stop drinking. I went because she was diagnosed as terminal cirrhosis due to alcohol abuse, and that if she continued drinking, she would be dead in a year. I attended that first meeting not thinking I was an alcoholic. I had decided to quit on Thanksgiving Day of 1984, but drank that next Saturday, which surprised me. I quit again on November 24, 1984, but found it very difficult to stay stopped until that first

meeting. I have not found it necessary to pick up a drink since then.

I attended AA meetings for three years, never stating I am an alcoholic. Finally, I heard my story from Paul H., the weekend drinker. I also heard Tom O. define an alcoholic as one who did not get into trouble every time he drank, but when he got in trouble, he had been drinking! This definition fits my drinking history, and I started admitting my powerlessness over alcohol and that I am an alcoholic. More has been revealed to me. I am able to admit that over those 35 years of drinking, every aspect of my life was adversely affected; work, family, social life, sports and all. Now as I approach my 19th year, the Promises are being realized, and they keep me coming back.

Tom K.  
November 2003

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### **THIS IS A.A.....?**

- Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship designed and administered by a bunch of ex-drunks whose only qualification for membership is they can't hold their booze and don't want to learn how.
- It has no rules, dues, or fees; nothing any sensible organization required.
- At meetings, the speaker starts on one subject and winds up talking about something entirely different and concludes by saying he doesn't know anything about the program except it works.
- The groups are always broke, yet always seem to have money to carry on. They are always losing members but seem to grow. They claim A.A. is a selfish program but seems to always help others.
- Every group passes laws, rules edicts, and pronouncements that everyone ignores. Members who disagree with anything are privileged to walk out in a huff, quitting forever, only to return as if nothing happened and be greeted accordingly.
- Nothing is ever planned 24 hours ahead, yet great projects are born and survive magnificently. Nothing in A.A. is according to Hoyle. How can it survive?
- Perhaps it is because we have learned to live and laugh at ourselves. God made man. He made laughter too. Perhaps He is pleased with our disorganized efforts and makes things run right no matter who pushes the wrong button. Maybe He is pleased, not with perfection, but because we are trying to be nobody but ourselves. We don't know how it works, but it does and members keep receiving their dividend checks from their A.A. investments

**IT IS SMART TO BE SOBER. IT IS MUCH EASIER, MY  
FRIEND TO STAY SOBER THAN TO GET SOBER**

## Into Life

I danced with the devil  
I held God's hand  
My mind was in the past  
My eyes towards the future  
I stood alone a time to decide

I wavered forward and back  
Unable to make a decision  
Lost in eternity  
I reached for what was near

Nor God  
Nor the devil  
Could I see

But failure to move  
Left me dead  
Only my mind  
My body had perished  
My soul lost

I consumed the disease of the day  
Spiraling into darkness  
The void of all voids  
Was now my home

I closed my eyes  
One last time  
Torment and fear  
My only companions  
Death  
Had long since passed

From the depths of my soul  
I screamed one word  
And only one word  
Please!

My voice carried on forever  
My heart ripped open

Behind the cry  
Was a depth of faith  
His mighty hand  
Reached through time and space

So weak  
I could not grasp  
So blind  
I could not see

He was there  
Anyway

Little did I understand  
The power of Him  
His love  
Transcending all  
Light entered the darkness  
I was pulled  
From the depths of despair

When I came to  
I was in a room  
People spoke in tongue  
Words so foreign to me

Yet  
I began to understand  
They spoke of disease  
I consumed  
The disease  
Which was me

I stood up  
Scared and alone

I passed through a door  
Into a long dark hall  
I could see no beginning  
Nor an end  
The devil was near

The disease  
Began to whisper  
It called my name  
I began to fear it

Again  
Began the end  
But I had tasted the truth  
It was in me  
Somewhere

It was now my turn  
Paralyzed with lies  
I could hear the words in tongue

In the dark hall I stood  
Rocking to and fro

Finally  
I took a step

Not just any step  
But the one  
That led to the answer

The pain was black  
The truth  
A dull gray sky  
The pain I could feel  
The sky I could see

I began to walk  
Unknown to me  
He walked by my side  
His light my guide

My world began to grow  
My soul found life  
The body I called  
Me  
Emerged

The path ahead  
Was long  
Narrow  
Twisting  
Winding

Behind me  
Immediate relief  
So the devil said

No end in front of me  
The journey before me

The relief behind me  
Was just apart from fear  
To take a step forward  
Only could be taken  
with faith

In this I'd never be alone  
Even when  
I stood in the shadows

So I began  
To trudge  
Into life

**Member of  
Young & Old Alike  
Anonymous  
February 2004**

## The Twelve Steps To Insanity (May 2005)

1. I decided I could handle alcohol, if other people would just quit trying to run my life.
2. I firmly believe that there is no greater power than myself, and anyone who says it isn't so is insane.
3. I made a decision to remove my will and my life from God, who didn't understand me anyway.
4. I made a searching and thorough moral inventory of everyone I knew, so they couldn't fool me and take advantage of my good nature.
5. I sought these people out and tried to get them to admit to me, by God, the exact nature of their defects of character.
6. I became willing to help these people get rid of their defects of character.
7. I became humble enough to ask these people to remove their shortcomings.
8. I made a list of all the people who had harmed me, and waited patiently for a chance to get even with them all.
9. I got even with these people whenever possible, except when to do so would get me into trouble also.
10. I continued to take everybody's inventory and when they were wrong, WHICH WAS MOST OF THE TIME, told them as soon as possible.
11. I sought through concentration of my willpower to get God, who didn't understand me anyway, to see that my ideas were best and He ought to give me the power to carry them out.
12. I have maintained my drunkenness for twenty-five years with these steps, and can thoroughly recommend them to other alcoholics who don't want to lose their hard earned status as drunks, but wish to be left alone, to practice intemperance in everything they do, for the rest of their days.



Originally called "Came to Believe," the full - color painting first appeared in the Grapevine in December 1955. The artist, Robert M. presented it to Bill W. in May 1956. Bill wrote that "the whole heart and essence of AA can be seen just by looking at it...." The name of it changed in 1973 to "Man on the Bed" after the book "Came to Believe" came out.

# TODAY IN THE NEW TECHNOLOGY

Most of us have learned to live with Voice Mail as a part of our lives. But have you ever wondered what it would be like if God decided to install Voice Mail?

Imagine praying and hearing the following:

Thank you for calling Heaven,  
For English, Press 1.  
For Spanish, Press 2.  
For all other languages, Press 0.

Please select one of the following options:

Press 1 for Requests.  
Press 2 for Wishes.  
Press 3 for Thanksgiving.  
Press 4 for Christmas.  
Press 5 for Complaints.  
Press 6 for all other inquiries.

I am sorry. All of our angels and saints are currently busy assisting other sinners. However, your prayer is important to us and will be answered in the order it was received. Please stay on the line.

If you would like to speak to:

Higher Power, Press 1.  
Jesus, Press 2.  
Moses, Press 3.  
Holy Spirit, Press 4.  
Allah, Press 5.

If you wish to hear King David sing a Psalm while you hold, Press 6.

To find a loved one who has been assigned to Heaven, Press 7 then enter his or her SS#, followed by the \$.

If you receive a negative response, hang up and try area code (666).

For reservations in Heaven, please call 1-800-K-A-D-D-I-S-H or enter J-O-H-N, followed by #316.

For answers to nagging questions about dinosaurs, the age of the earth, life on other planets and where Noah's Ark is, please wait until you arrive.

Our computers show that you have already prayed today.

Please hang-up and try again tomorrow.

The office is now closed for the weekend to observe a religious holiday.

Please pray again on Monday after 9:00pm.

If you are calling after hours and need emergency assistance, please contact your local rabbi or pastor.

Thank you for calling God.

June 2002



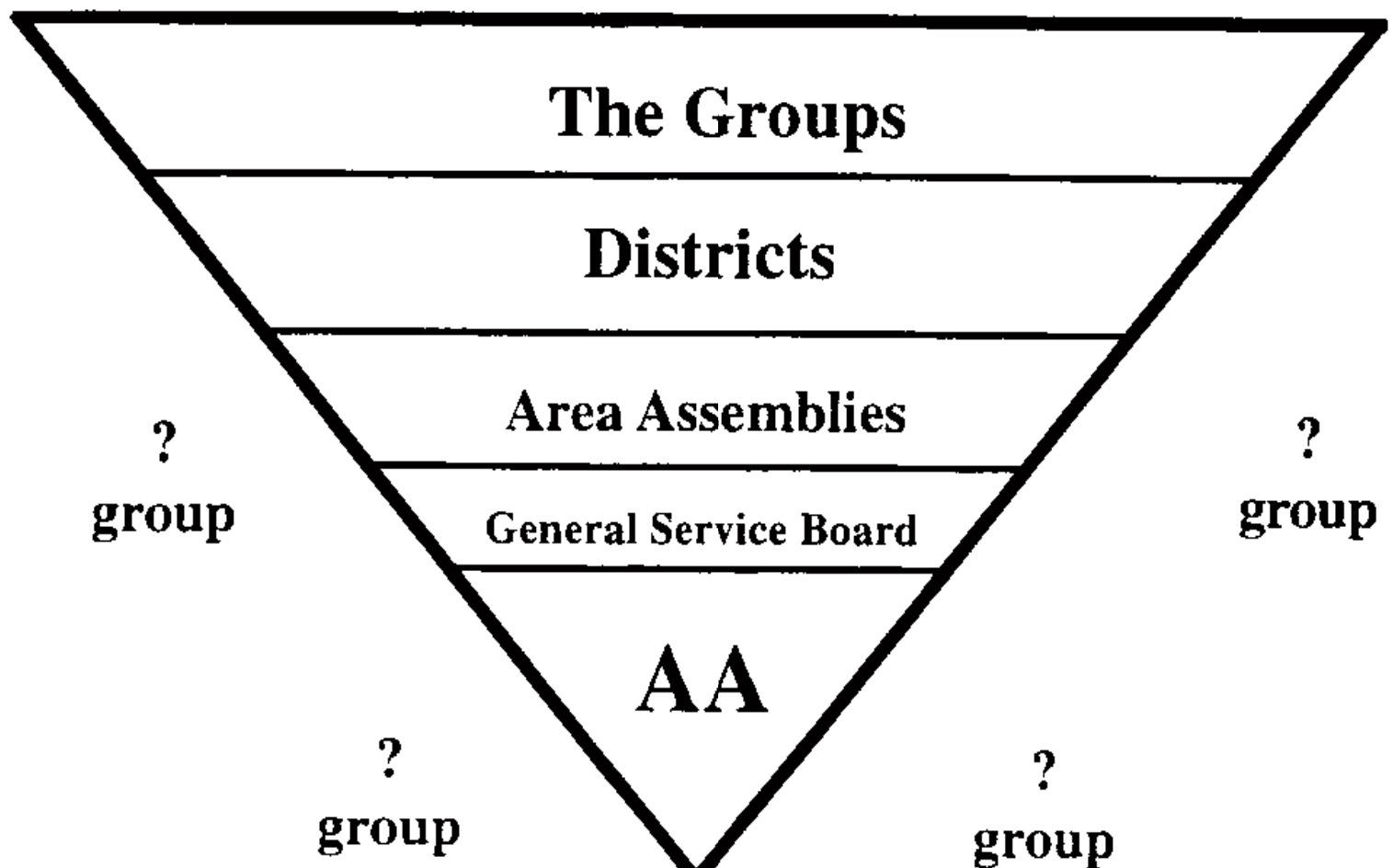
# TRUSTED SERVANTS

Here is the inverted triangle of Alcoholics Anonymous. Where is your group? Your group is the most important part of A.A. Your group has a vote in all things that affects A.A. as a whole. Did your group have a vote on the new Big Book? Did your group have a voter at the last District Meeting? Did your group have a say on how the money was spent at the Full Area Assembly? If you answered no to any of these questions, then perhaps you can do something for your group. Is your group in the center of A.A. or on the outside of it? Get involved in your group.

Bill W. - "Do for the groups what the groups cannot or should not do for themselves."

"When Dr. Bob and I are gone, who would then advise the trustees and the office?"

The answer was, "The A.A. Groups."



April 2002

# DISTRICT 2

## GROUP HISTORIES

### Early Risers

Early Risers was founded in May 1986 by Bill A., Russ K. and Erwin L. Early members also included Kevin F., Frank B., Stan B. and Archie S. By 2002, membership had grown to about 20. They began meeting at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Burlington at 8:00am. Current meetings are Monday - Friday at 8:00am. These days the Early Risers Group holds a Harvest Dinner every year around Thanksgiving time.

### Sober Sunday

The Sober Sunday Group was founded in June 1992 by Terrance L. Early members also included Harry, Steve M. and Tony O. They began meeting at Carpenters Hall in Burlington at 9:30am. They later moved to the Police Station in Burlington in 1997. By 2002, there were about 10 members, with 40 - 60 people attending the meeting.

### Live & Let Live

This group started at the Champlain Drug and Alcohol Services building, located at 45 Clarke Street, in Burlington. Eight people attended the first meeting in March, 1983. Among those present were David S., Stan B., Archie S., Kevin F., Russ K., Bill A., and Erwin L. David began the meeting; members decided to remain "an AA meeting" until more members attended. A vote would subsequently be taken on becoming a group. The meeting did become a group, and in October of 1983, Archie S. became "GSR"; Stan B. became treasurer, David S. became Alternate GSR, and Erwin L. became Chairperson.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Beginning of 2008, Group History Forms will be circulated. What is the history of your group? It will be a welcome addition to Archives!

# DISTRICT 11 GROUP HISTORIES

## Serenity Group

The Serenity Group was founded in July 1974 by John H., Gale H. and Mike C. Early members also included Ellen M., Debbie D., Bill H., Barbara M., George W., Jim C., Ted McQ., Jim C., Wayne L. (who started the Hinesburg Group), Molly H. and Don (who started the Stowe Group), Hazel J., Harry W., John F., Bill B., Red D., Aline P., Jan P. and Lynne S. By 1997, membership had grown to 66. Serenity Group began meeting at St. James Episcopal Church in Essex Junction on Thursdays at 8:00pm. By 1997, they held a Beginners meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30pm, a closed Step meeting on Tuesdays at 8:00pm and a closed Discussion meeting on Thursdays at 8:00pm.

## Milton At Last Group

The At Last Group was founded on October 26, 1983. Millie P. was the first GSR. Early members also included Victor, Glen, Starr, Gail M., Joe, Merle, Matthew, Rollie, Ed, Ken, and Don H. In later days, membership grew from 25 to about 50. The group began meeting at the United Church in Milton.

## Atlantic Group

The Atlantic Group was founded on May 5, 1989. The first GSR was Theresa M. The first speakers were Slim S., Peter and Cheryl. The group originally met at the 1st Congregational Church in Burlington, but later moved to St. Michael's Chapel in Colchester. Average attendance is 45 - 55.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Beginning of 2008, Group History Forms will be circulated. What is the history of your group? It will be a welcome addition to Archives!

# *A.A. District 2 Meeting Notes*

(December 2007)

## **WELCOME!**

Jenn S. - New GSR for Big Book Step Study  
Eric B. - New GSR for Early Risers

### **DCM Report**

- Gordon's last District Meeting as DCM. "It's been a learning experience." Thank you Gordon!

### **Committee Reports**

- **Answering Service** - An individual apparently called in and asked the Answering Service if we wanted to do a Bingo Night as a non-profit organization. David G. informed them that we could not since we are "self-supporting."
- **Meeting Lists** - New meeting lists distributed. Sometimes there is a lapse between meeting list printing because we have to go through District 11.
- **Archives** - The District 2 Archives was successfully moved to its new location at the 1st Baptist Church.
- **Eye Opener** - Andy T. is the new Editor, replacing Ana B. Stories are desperately needed. Thank you to the Groups who have made commitments.

### **Group Reports**

- **Early Risers** - Harvest Dinner was a success. Group elections were held and all positions were filled.
- **Sober Sunday** - Due to renovations at the Police Station, beginning December 23 the meeting will be held at the Multi Generational Center at 9:30AM till about March 2008.
- **Off The Wall** - Managed to get a few more group members that were desperately needed.

### **New Business**

**2008 District Budget** - After very little discussion, the budget passed. Below are the changes from 2007 Budget to 2008.

- **DCM** - \$450 increased to \$550
- **Secretary** - \$200 decreased to \$100
- **Archives** - \$235 increased to \$300
- **P.O. Box** - \$80 increased to \$90
- **Eye Opener** - \$450 increased to \$500
- **Holiday Dinner** - \$300 decreased to \$200

### **\*NEXT DISTRICT 2 MEETING\***

7PM Monday, January 14 1st Baptist Church 81 St. Paul St., Burl.  
**All Are Welcome!**



# *A.A. District 11 Meeting Notes*

(December 2007)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Because of the snow storm, quite a few were unable to attend.

## **WELCOME!**

Arthur V. - New CSR for Back To Basics Group

### **DCM Report**

- Lynne plans to attend the December Full Area Assembly in Brandon.
- "State of the State" distributed and highlighted.

### **Secretary Report**

- November meeting minutes/contact list distributed.
- Plea for group/committee reports via email.
- Any changes in contact information should be submitted to the incoming Secretary (**YET TO BE ELECTED**)

### **Treasurer Report**

- The revised budget proposal was distributed via email in advance by Howard.

### **Old Business**

- **2008 Budget Proposal** - Curt made a motion to approve the budget. Renzo argued that the budget proposal should be delayed until next meeting, when a larger representative body would hopefully be assembled. **Motion Tabled.**
- **D11 Workshop at New Year's Alcothon** - "Sponsorship" is the topic for discussion. There will be three speakers (10 minutes each) followed by Q & A. There are commitments from three groups and alternates.
- **D11 Thanksgiving Alcothon** - Everyone had a good time. Thought to have finished "in the black."

### **New Business**

- **District 11 Officer Elections** - Joe U. steps up to serve as District 11 DCM. Thank you very much Joe!!! Voted/Approved. There was also some talk of strong candidates for Secretary and several Committee Chair positions. Hopes expressed that they can be brought in for the next meeting. Anyone interested, please attend the D11 January meeting.

### **\*DISTRICT 11 MEETINGS\***

First Monday of Every Month, 7PM St. James Episcopal Church Rt. 2, Essex Jct.  
**All Are Welcome!**

# "We Will Suddenly Realize That God Is Doing For Us ....."

You wake up one day and think to yourself, "I haven't had a drink in a few weeks, how did I do that?" A good question. Willpower? The newest Tony Robbins Lecture tape? Been drinking more milk lately? Or maybe taking your vitamins like mother always told you? Maybe, but maybe it's possible that Something has had a hand in this new life.

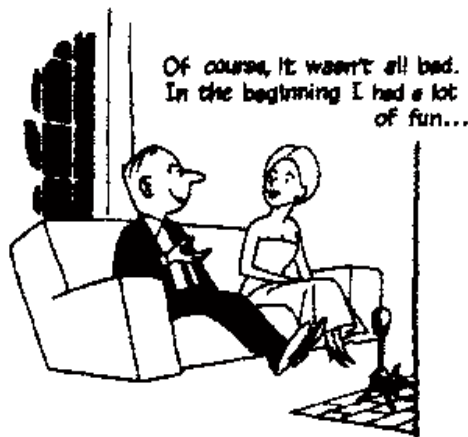
God, Creator, Goddess, Gaia, Great Spirit, Allah; take your pick from the salad bar of names for that Something that grants us the chance to have a new life.

When I had finally reached Steps 8 and 9, things had gotten better in my life. I was asked to face some things in my life that I had avoided for a long, long time. Amends that I owed to family, friends and others had to be addressed. I was afraid to do some of these things, talk to some of these people and repay what I owed. I felt that I could not do these things or wouldn't have the wherewithal to complete what I was being asked to do. Yet I was doing them, slowly, and with some fear.

The right people came into my life at the right times and finally the right opportunities appeared. Even though sometimes I didn't jump at the chances, they kept reappearing. All it took from me was the commitment somewhere deep down inside to want to keep trying. And that, I believe is when God will do for me what I can't do for myself, even if I fail repeatedly but want to keep trying, as long as I let go of the results. I can say from my own experience that it was suddenly that the idea of God helping became true. I can tell you that it was just a bit frightening too.

I know that God won't cook my breakfast for me, or do the laundry, cut my grass, or go to work for me and bring home the paycheck. I've found that God expects me to do the things that I can do for myself. In looking at it, it's not such a tough bargain to live with. I was raised to be self sufficient, but have learned that it doesn't go the whole way. There have been times when I've uttered the universal prayer: HELP! And I have found that the answer comes.

Russ P.  
July 2002

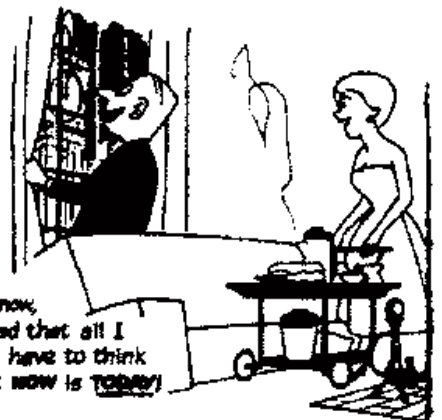


...In those  
days I was  
awfully cute...

...and brave...

...and dashing...

...or so I thought...



## **SLAVE PRAYER**

Oh Lord, I ain't what I want to be,  
Oh Lord, I ain't what I ought to be,  
Oh Lord, I ain't what I'm gonna be,  
But thank GOD,  
I ain't what I used to be.

Watch your thoughts; they become words.  
Watch your words; they become actions.  
Watch your actions; they become habits.  
Watch your habits; they become character.  
Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

### **-Rules To Live By -**

Be flexible, Have a sense of humor, and  
remember - Nothing is Forever,  
This To Will Pass.

"Fix the Problem, Not the Blame"

"Life is Uncertain, Eat dessert First"

"Accept people as they are,  
not as you would like to be"

"All you really need to know,  
you learned in kindergarten"

- \* Share Everything
- \* Play Fair
- \* Don't Hit People
- \* Put Things Back Where You Found Them
- \* Clean Up Your Own Mess
- \* Say You're Sorry When You Hurt Someone

January 2001

Tired of being told like it is???  
Still looking for that easier/softer way???  
Had enough of that same old time-tested direction!!!

Then you're ready for.....  
**(RENT - A - SPONSOR)**

**\* NO READING \* NO WRITING \* NO DEADLINES \*  
\* MANY MODELS TO CHOOSE FROM \***

**Standard Features Include**

- Listening to your sniveling without constant reference to the Steps
- Co-signing your excuses and rationalizations
- Solving problems with relationships and financial insecurity
- Working only the Steps you want - in the order you choose

**Special Added Features - This Month Only**

- Low interest loans for homes on the hill, high dollar imported cars, vacations to far away places
- Computerized matching service for finding Mr. or Mrs. "Right"

**Yes, at RENT - A - SPONSOR we know how unique you really are.  
And we DO understand!!!!**

Learn the secret of giving it away before you even get it  
Our convenient, easy two-day follow-ups

**Why walk the walk when you can simply talk the talk?!!!**

Remember: Our Motto is, "**Less Is More**"

Act now and receive a free copy of the cassette:  
"**Stay Sober On War Stories Alone**"

**CALL TODAY #1-800-SPONSOR**



Tired of people telling you to join a group and get active?!!!

Make coffee!!!

Pick up chairs!!!

Your luck has just changed/but you don't have to!!!

**\* Join Today \***

# **"ON THE WAGON GROUP"**

**\* NO COMMITMENT \* NO RESPONSIBILITY**

**\* NO CHAIRING \* NO CLEAN UP**

## **JUST SHOW UP**

- Meetings start at 8:05pm and end at 8:55pm
- You can join on the spot and get your medallion without any work
- You can chair meetings with less than 90 days of sobriety
- No need to attend group conscious meetings
- You don't have to help anyone but yourself

## **EXTRA BENEFITS**

- Get free hand outs
- No getting active in the group
- Talk about anything but alcohol

To join **"ON THE WAGON"**

See our secretary or call:

## **1-800-DRY-DRUNK**

We can show you how to walk around with a bottle in your back pocket.

**\* So if you want to be just DRY, jump on the wagon \***

**Remember our Motto:**

**"A FIST WILL FORM WHITE KNUCKLE SOBRIETY"**

## Wise/Funny Things Heard In A.A. Rooms In District Two

You can't be high and sober at the same time.

One shot and I'm shot.

The alcoholic's favorite exercise  
is jumping to conclusions.

A grateful alcoholic will not drink.

No matter what else happens:  
If we're not drinking, we're making progress.

If you miss the first Step,  
you'll fall flat on your face.

Seven days away from AA makes one weak

There is a dark side of A.A.  
That's because it's made up of people.

The difference between a s \_ \_ t-head  
and a brown-noser is a  
matter of depth perception.

Believe in Miracles,  
but don't depend on them.

If you don't grow, you'll go.

Don't count the days.  
Make the days count.

If you want to make God laugh,  
tell Him your plans for the day.

Back sliding begins when knee bending stops.

With an attitude of gratitude,  
it is impossible to get drunk.

Ideas are funny things.  
They won't work unless you do.

Truthfulness and sincerity don't come easy.

Before you say: I CAN'T,  
say: ILL TRY.

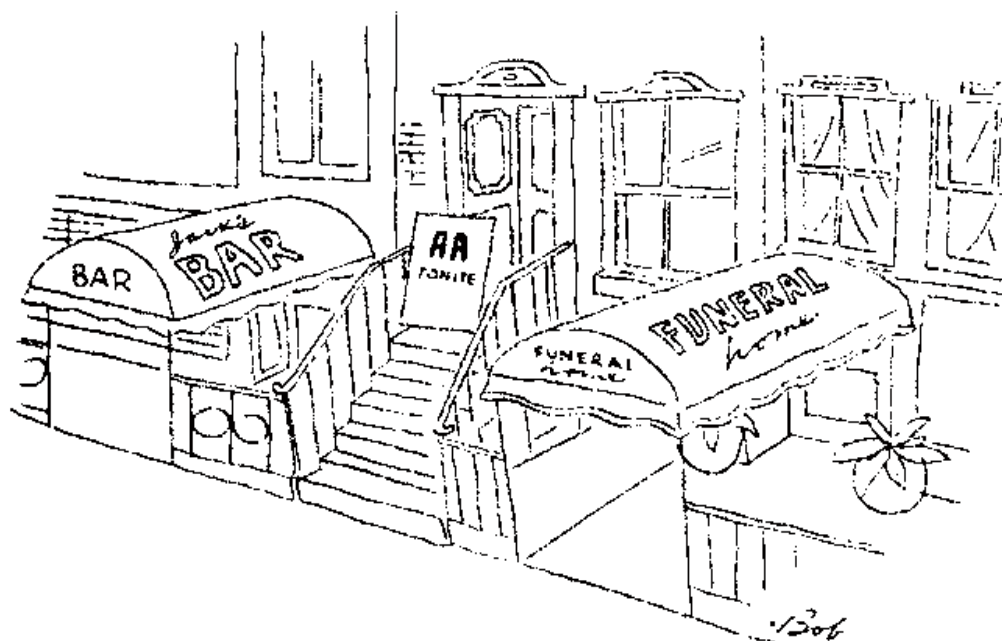
The impossible is often the untried.

Bring the body,  
and the mind will follow.

Action is the antidote to despair.

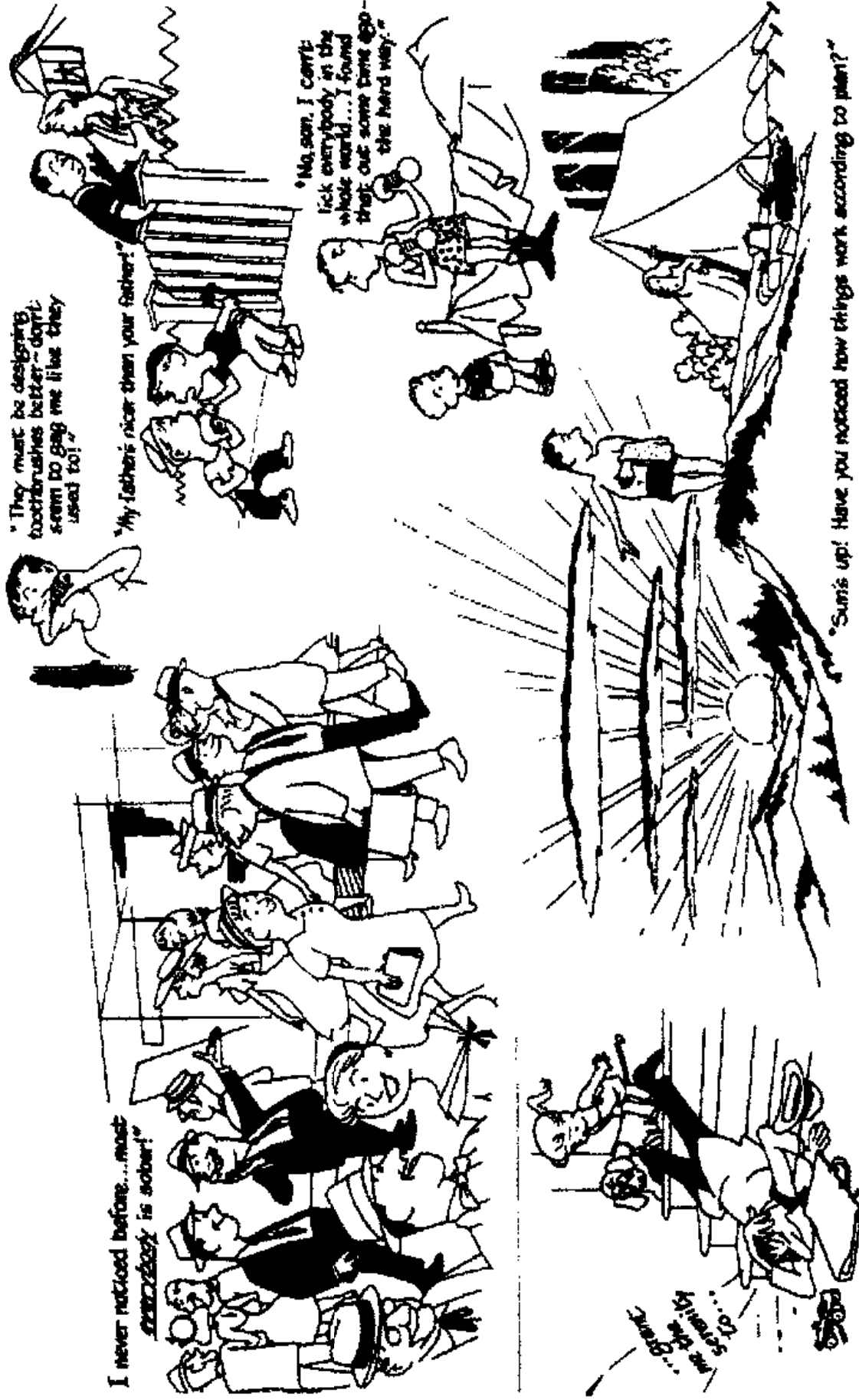
The height of spirituality is  
being connected with other people.

### August 2001



# HUMOR PAGE

1. You tell your best buddy you've missed him for a couple of days, and he's been in a rehab for the past month.
2. You tell your best buddy about the good time the two of you had the night before, and discover he wasn't even there.
3. The letters on the eye chart start to look like real words.



# A.A. TRIO

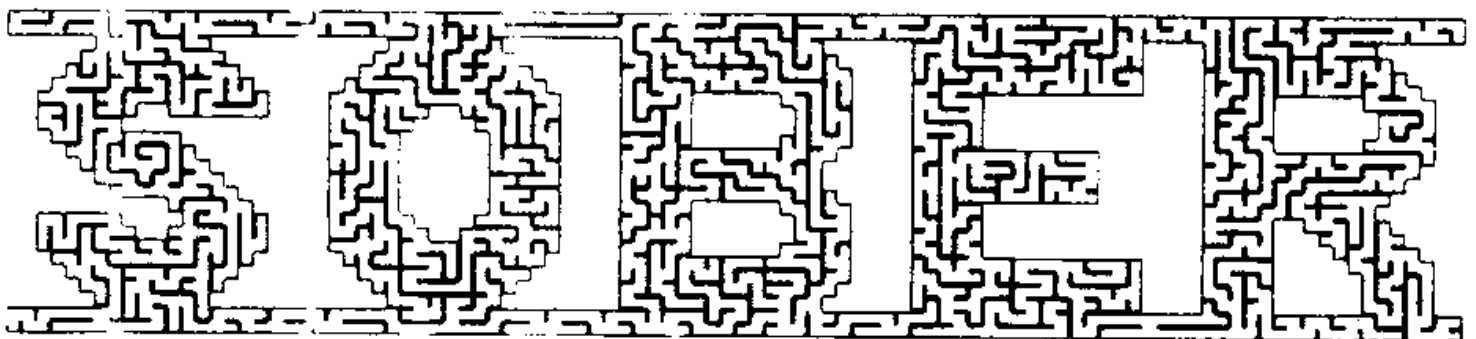
Locate in the diagram all the letters that appear exactly alike three times. A letter may appear many times in different styles, but you only want those that are exact triplicates. Rearrange the TRIO letters to spell an A.A. related word.



TRIO WORD: \_\_\_\_\_

# a.a.-maze-ing PROGRAM

\*\*\*TO SOLVE THE MAZE, START AT TOP LEFT AND END AT BOTTOM RIGHT\*\*\*



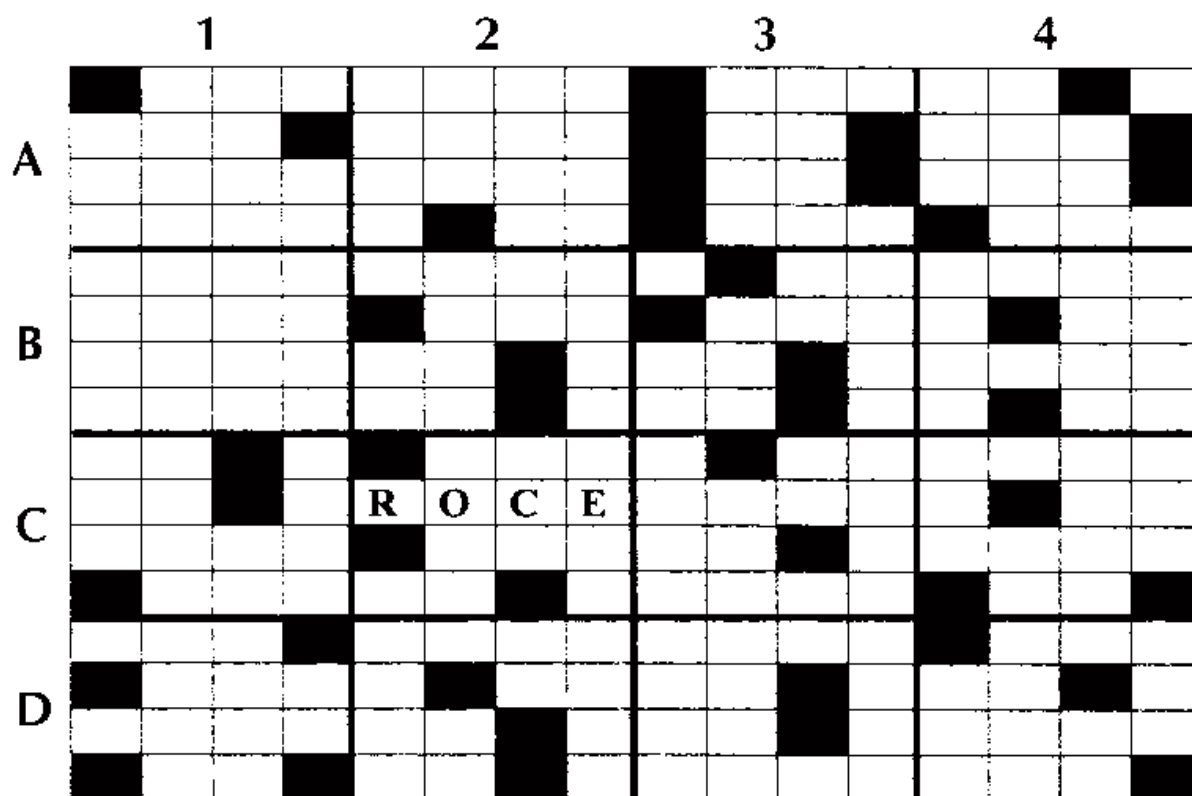


# A PUZZLING DISEASE

Your goal is to fit the PUZZLE PIECES into their proper places in the diagram to reveal a quotation from the Big Book. Fill the diagram by placing the PUZZLE PIECES horizontally into their corresponding sections of the diagram. There are 16 sections, identified by letter/number combinations (A-1, A-2, A-3, etc.). The quotation reads left to right, line by line. A black square indicates the end of a word. One PUZZLE PIECE has been entered for you.

## PUZZLE PIECES

<b>A-1</b> HAT WIT BACK UNIT	<b>A-2</b> Y IT BONE BOOK HOUT	<b>A-3</b> IS OF DOU HAS	<b>A-4</b> T BT OUR THE UNB	<b>B-1</b> ELIE FIED RATI THOU	<b>B-2</b> I W GH ON OUR VABL	<b>B-3</b> I P Y AS SI TS TAS	<b>B-4</b> K N AL PA MPLI REPA
<b>C-1</b> A P AL RT LAB DEED	<b>C-2</b> P OR THO VER ROCE	<b>C-3</b> E Y MA SE AINS EDIN	<b>C-4</b> G IN OF ARLY TERI	<b>D-1</b> IT HEL ITS OCIE	<b>D-2</b> A F P FO TO TY CREA	<b>D-3</b> C O ND RM TION UNCT	<b>D-4</b> S UR DID ION AUSE



# SOBRIETY



# SEARCH

Find as many words as you can in the puzzle below. For added fun, the vowels have been removed. Anywhere you see a dot, that's where the vowel should be.

Y	·	G	·	R	·	·	C	·	R	·	C	L	·	·	·	·
P	R	·	M	·	Z	·	D	S	·	N	·	T	Y	S	M	M
P	·	·	·	·	L	C	·	R	·	M	R	·	·	·	·	·
·	T	·	·	S	·	R	T	W	·	M	S	·	P	R	D	·
H	S	T	T	·	·	C	T	·	·	N	P	·	·	V	S	D
B	·	L	·	·	V	·	·	L	·	B	T	L	T	·	·	·
·	R	·	N	S	C	M	S	L	R	·	C	R	·	V	W	N
L	V	·	G	·	·	P	S	·	·	M	·	C	L	·	W	·
P	·	G	V	D	·	R	Y	N	D	P	·	D	L	R	·	T
M	C	R	·	N	C	T	T	G	P	·	R	F	G	·	N	·
·	·	·	S	M	·	R	·	·	·	T	·	·	R	H	S	·
S	R	·	S	N	·	P	S	M	S	R	G	C	Y	S	W	R
F	R	N	G	P	·	C	L	S	·	·	·	R	T	·	·	R
C	·	·	P	·	·	N	L	·	F	N	D	N	·	·	R	F
·	D	·	C	S	·	G	G	·	S	T	D	C	·	B	·	·
T	S	·	N	·	H	·	G	N	W	T	·	S	V	H	·	N
L	·	V	·	N	G	S	·	B	·	R	·	C	R	·	P	S
Z	·	L	·	F	S	·	·	C	G	·	V	N	·	D	·	P

GRACE  
 SOBER  
 HAPPY  
 SIMPLE  
 PHONE  
 PEACE  
 SHARE  
 BELIEVE  
 SANITY  
 MEETING  
 ACTION  
 FRIEND  
 DISEASE  
 AMAZED  
 ANSWER  
 MIRACLE  
 WISDOM  
 DONATE  
 FREEDOM  
 HONEST  
 SPONSOR  
 MORAL  
 LISTEN  
 SERVICE  
 DIGNITY  
 WILLING  
 PATIENT  
 WELCOME  
 SUPPORT  
 SURVIVE  
 SUGGEST  
 RESTORE  
 COURAGE  
 WELFARE

# PIECE BY PIECE

The spaces between the words in this quote have been eliminated. All the letters are divided into 3-letter pieces. Rearrange the pieces (not individual letters) to reconstruct the message. The dashes indicate the number of letters in each word.

AAF ACR ALA AND CEM DIV EAN EGR EIN ELL ENT  
ESS FOR HIP HOL ICE ICS IDU IFI IRE IVA IVA JUS  
LCO LFO LFO MEA NDS NSS ODO OUP OWS RIF  
RTH RTH SAC TAS THE TYA UNI URV URV

RIF

MEA

E IN

IRE

## A.A.NAGRAMS

Gain Costs

8

5

Diner Posse

9

11

Butt Tissues

1 4

Deer On A Spit

10 2

Falser Senses

7

3

6

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

FINAL WORD

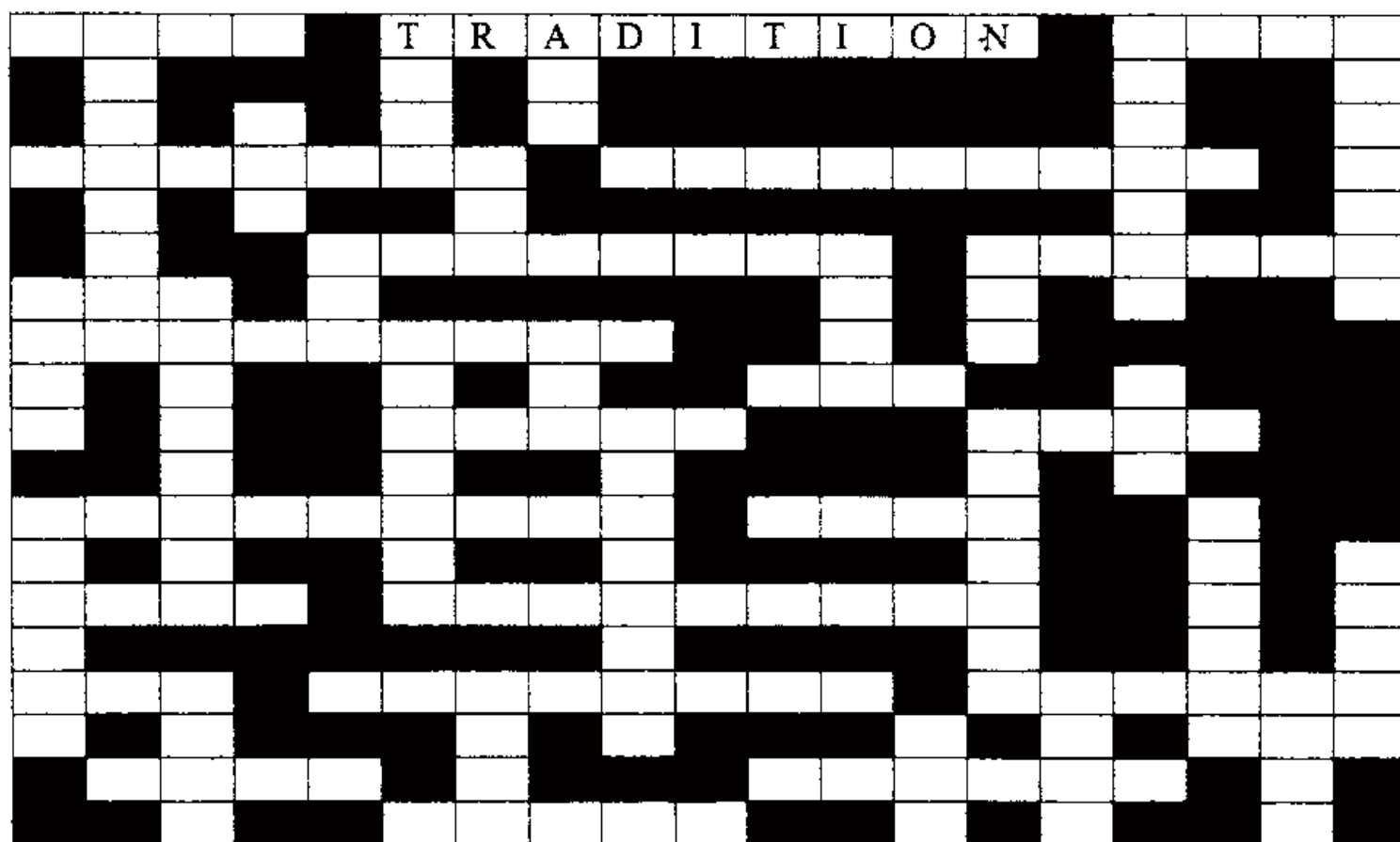
# A.A. CRYPTOGRAM

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
			K								T														

" L D  
 U R Y R T S R B W U W O G B U S Y R N Y R Z W K S R  
 Y P U D E W I N U H U S B K R W H U K Y S Z C S Z N  
 L D L L D L D  
 E D T K B O W T T L R R Y W N D D K B D T K S R  
 Y S B Z R R Y F D V N D H P U R H U R Y  
 D  
 U R K S R H U L A O I B C R H D Y L A G D H "

## A FULL - IN LIFE

Act Ask Can Day End Ego God GSO GSR Try Use Way Call  
 Care Easy Fear Gain Hugs Mind Open Pass Past Road Turn Will  
 Blame Ready Steps Change Member Misery Reward Scared Cunning  
 Message Program Results Trusted Donation Illusion Positive Recovery  
 Thorough Anonymous Challenge Emotional Maintains Tradition



## WORD DROP

The words in each vertical column go into the spaces directly below them, but not necessarily in the order they appear. When you have placed all the words in their correct spaces, you will be able to read a quotation from the Big Book by reading across the diagram from left to right.

[illegible]

## LETTER DROP

The letters in each vertical column go into the squares directly below them, but not necessarily in the order they appear. A black square indicates the end of a word. When you have placed all the letters in their correct squares, you will be able to read the quote across the diagram from left to right.

[illegible][illegible]



## My Actions Are My Choices

**M**y life seemed like a deadend and worthless prior to me getting sober. Every day I wondered why I was alive, questioning my God and having a hard time accepting that I actually was here for a reason and had a purpose.

Like a lot of other alcoholics I have come to know, coming into the rooms of AA I was a shell of a person; I was spiritually bankrupt. It has taken time. But little by little I have come to realize that not only do I belong, but I have a real purpose on this earth. Today when I wake up, I thank my H.P. for another day to make a difference.

When I entered the rooms, I was told to get a sponsor, join a Home Group, work the Steps and find a power greater than myself. Along with that came another saying that was said as frequently as the ones above, "Ya now have a Choice." For some reason that stuck with me. Hearing this so many times allowed me the opportunity to break through my fog. At that point I was given a gift from my Higher Power; the gift of Choice. The benefit of not taking that first drink allowed me Choices I didn't have when I was an active alcoholic.

There have been times I could have either thrown in the towel and succumb to my disease, or stick with it and be a great Mom, good friend and good daughter. I can pay my bills on time, I can travel around the world, I can further my education and career, and some days just stay sober. If I stay sober that day, then I am a success!

Today I have a purpose and I make a difference because I choose to stay sober. My possibilities and my dreams are endless. Today I have Choices.

Jill S.  
High Noon Group

## The Miracle Will Happen

**I** have been around AA for three years and the most continuous time I have not used or drank was a little over four months. Sobriety for me has not been easy. I chose to take that first drink that is always followed by more drinks. I chose to take that first hit that always led to more. I took my will back. I lost faith in my ability to trust GOD.

My life is unmanageable!! I have lost almost everything!! It is hard for me to explain what sobriety means to me, for I have not been sober for long. I do know what it looks like and I know a little about how it feels. Sobriety is freedom!! (Which I do not have much of) Sobriety is what I want!!!

Today I want to live a sober life, and I want my life back!!! When will that happen? I do not know; it is not up to me. All I need to do is show up for life, take responsibility for my actions and have faith in my GOD.

Sobriety is a precious gift that I have not treasured in the past. Today, for me, sobriety is a new life!! Happy or sad, healthy or sick, rich or poor, sobriety will happen only when I give my will to GOD.

For me to keep my sobriety, I must be honest. I must continue to go to meetings. I must use the phone. I must follow the suggestions that I have been told. I must pray on my knees and mean what I say. I must stay away from bars. I must have trust in others who are SOBER!!!

This is what sobriety means to me.

Sarah

March 2005

## **From Swizzle Sticks To Meeting List**

*W*hen I took out my winter clothing and went through the pockets, I found a variety of folded AA meeting lists and literature. They were the survivors from those which had been worn out or given out.

I laughed at the stark contrast between this scene and my pockets from my drinking days. There were no AA meeting lists of course, but plenty of flotsam and jetsam from which even the most casual observer would deduce, "This guy has a big problem." There was crumpled, alcohol-soaked cash, (if I was lucky not to have spent it or lost it), broken and bent swizzle sticks. I sometimes kept them to keep track of how many drinks I had; later nervously kept for no purpose. Then there were match books. I did not smoke, but always took match books to remind me where I had been the night before. And then there were the business cards, sometimes lots of them, ostensible collected for future contacts, but often containing names for people I had no recollection meeting. And there were the scrapes of paper with attempts to catalog the locations of my drinking or containing ideas, plans, and writings that were never followed up. Sometimes, I'd use wrappings from the mints, used to mask, unsuccessfully, the aroma of Gin in court or the office in those ever-decreasing breaks for real work; I began to have drinking as my sole occupation and preoccupation.

Those pockets told the story of my life, just as the pockets tell the story of my life today. If they are empty of meeting lists, it means I have given them all away. Time for another supply.

**Dennis McM.**  
**Sober Sunday Group**  
**November 2004**

## **What I Was Like, How I Got Here, What It's Like Today**

*I* would roller skate home naked after the bar closed, letting my everything blow in the wind. I had a bubble gum machine filled with every color of illegal prescription medications I could get my hands on and dress according to the color. Even after waking up in motel rooms, pushing my clothes ahead of me across the floor hoping, whatever it was I had woke up next to wouldn't wake up. You would think this and all the other things in my life would have told me I was an alcoholic, but it didn't. No, I had to wait until I was dieing and waking up in a bed full of blood and vomit. I had drank and drugged all the night before.

From that day, 28 years and 11 months ago, I said, "I just want to stay alive," and it is what I have lived by every day since then. I've got a sponsor, I attend meetings and most of all I work the steps. This has given me a life which I love. All I had to do was change everything about myself. As a child I was taught never to hate my parents, school and my religion. I have learned to share everything at meetings, the good and the bad. I have never asked why, I don't need to know all the answers and I have never needed therapy or counseling. Poverty, Rape and Prison is my past; I'm no longer sick with secrets.

I have found an extended family of love and support in AA, and I don't feel alone. Rewards of my sobriety has been the same job for 25 years, a partner, 2 adopted sons and a home. I didn't use anything when my mother passed away, finding out I have cancer or the police coming to my door to tell me my partner died getting off a plane. Since I found the love and support in AA and the people in it, I have never found a reason yet why I should relapse. All I have to do is the footwork. I have a life I have always wanted filled with peace and serenity.

**John F.**  
**April 2001**

## Spiritual Progress, Not Spiritual Perfection

*M*y first attempt at praying was for a different reason than now. I was still drinking when I first thought I'd try it and was having simultaneous bouts of anxiety and insomnia. I always blamed these internal forms of chaos on outside circumstances: the boys, the job or lack of money.

So, when I came across a suggestion in a book about prayer helping you sleep, I tried it. What did I have to lose? More sleep? Well, it worked. It worked so well that I remembered when it came time to leave a relationship, I would ask for the strength to do so in a prayer.

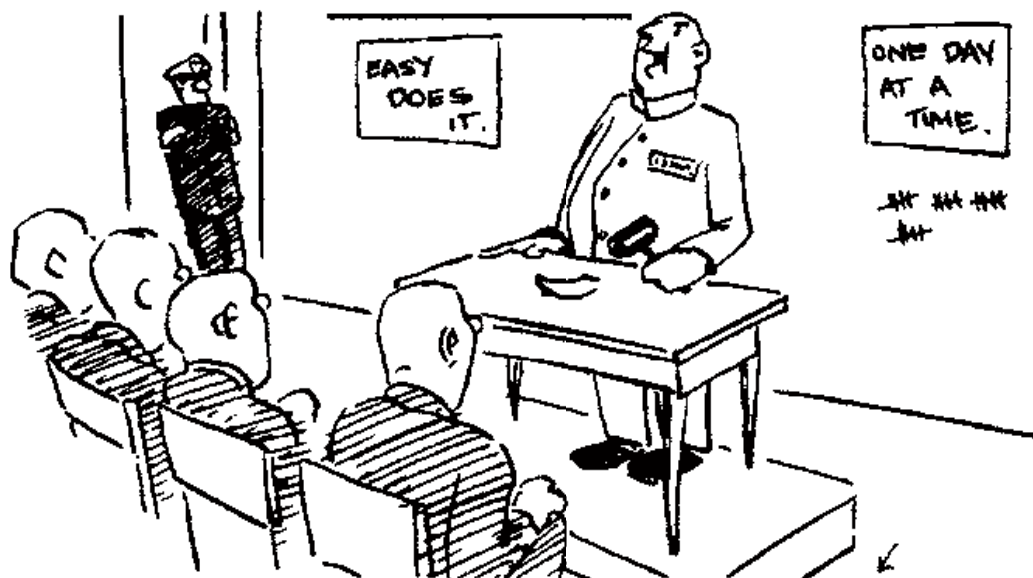
I was emotionally numb after who knows how long of taking the "I don't care" attitude about the relationship. I wasn't able to ask for what I wanted, but I was able to pray. Within weeks, a transformation occurred. I was able to ask others for help out of the situation I had felt trapped in for so long. Asking for help had not always been a strong suit of mine, but knowing that things would always fall into place was. That feeling of things coming together, however, dwindled the more and longer I drank.

When I came to Alcoholics Anonymous, I was relieved to ask for help through prayer - after all it didn't mean I had to ask anyone directly for it, except when I had found my

sponsor. Other than that, I felt comforted that my presence at a meeting showed me that I was willing to be helped. Accepting people's phone numbers was another way I felt that I was asking. In the beginning, using the numbers wasn't always easy, and it took quite a while to get comfortable with the idea. For me, it was simply showing up, getting a sponsor and praying for the help to stay sober that worked.

Things started falling into place again for me when I began working the steps. It had been some time since I had that feeling, and it was good to welcome it back. Once praying became routine, it was easy to see when I was doing it. I basically didn't like what I saw and felt like when I wasn't praying. So it made sense for me to be diligent about it. Eventually praying became less about an action that required minimum time for maximum benefit to me, and more about how I can use it to help change the way I think. The fact that I would want to be a better person for others is amazing to me. I always knew I needed to change, but I didn't know how. I'm glad to know that I'm an alcoholic. I'm even more happy to know there's a solution.

Tonya  
Hill McMahon Group  
February 2003



*"My number is 7895641, and I am an alcoholic!"*

## Man In The Glass

When you get what you want,  
in your struggle for self,  
and the world makes you king for a day,  
just go to a mirror and look at yourself,  
see what the man has to say.

For it isn't your mother or your father or wife  
Whose judgment upon you must pass,  
the fellow whose judgment counts most in your life  
is the one staring back from the glass.

He's the fellow to please,  
never mind all the rest,  
for he's with you right up to the end,  
you've passed your most difficult dangerous test  
if the man in the glass is your friend.

People may call you  
a straight shooting chum,  
and say you're a wonderful guy,  
but the man in the glass  
says you're only a bum  
if you can't look him straight in the eye.

You can cheat the whole world,  
as you pass through the years,  
and get pats on the back as you pass,  
but your final reward will be heartaches and tears  
if you've cheated THE MAN IN THE GLASS!

**R.B.**

We need  
**Faith**  
because we do not  
have all the  
**Answers**

### **A SMILE**

A smile is something that gives strength  
to others; those who receive it, without  
making poorer those who give it, takes  
but a moment, but memory of it  
sometimes lasts forever. No one is so rich  
and mighty that he can get along without  
it, and no one so poor that he can be  
made rich by it. A smile creates  
richness in the human world. Give it  
freely, for it is a wealth that cannot be  
lost, it is something that is yours  
until the last breath is drawn, it is the  
sue and it is pictures that articulate the  
trouble. Yet it can not be bought, begged,  
borrowed or stolen, for it is something  
that is of no value to anyone until it is  
given away freely. If some people are to  
understand, give your smile, give them the  
strength. As he who needs a smile,  
but he who has none to give. R.B.

## **Rules To Live By**

Be flexible. Have a sense of humor, and  
remember - Nothing is Forever.  
This Too Will Pass.

"Fix the Problem, Not the Blame"

Life is Uncertain. Eat dessert First

"Accept people as they are,  
not as you would like to be"

This page is from the early Eye Openers of 1994. It contains works from a very dear friend  
of A.A. and of mine, Roly B.



# January 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:30AM (Mon - Thurs) EARLY BIRD MEETING Christ Church U/M, Redstone	2	3 DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY STORIES	4 8:00PM (Every Friday) BACK TO BASICS Congreg. Church Church Hill, Charlotte	5
6	7 7:00PM District 11 Meeting St. James Episcopal Rt. 2, Essex Jct.	8 7:30AM (Mon - Thurs) EARLY BIRD MEETING Christ Church U/M, Redstone	9	10	11 8:00PM (Every Friday) BACK TO BASICS Congreg. Church Church Hill, Charlotte	12
13	14 7:00PM District 2 Meeting 1st Baptist Church 81 St. Paul St., Burl.	15 7:30AM (Mon - Thurs) EARLY BIRD MEETING Christ Church U/M, Redstone	16 DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY ANNOUNCEMENTS	17	18 8:00PM (Every Friday) BACK TO BASICS Congreg. Church Church Hill, Charlotte	19 DEADLINE FOR ANNIVERSARY SUBMISSIONS
20 9:15PM Eye opener Committee Meeting Turning Point, Burl.	21	22 7:30AM (Mon - Thurs) EARLY BIRD MEETING Christ Church U/M, Redstone	23	24	25 8:00PM (Every Friday) BACK TO BASICS Congreg. Church Church Hill, Charlotte	26
27	28	29	30	31		



# **Acronyms**

(that help me stay sober)

**AA** = Attitude Adjustment

**EGO** = Easing God Out

**FEAR** = Face Everything And Recover, or on a bad day, **F\_ \_ k Everything And Run**

**GOD** = Good Orderly Direction or Group Of Drunks

These versions of God were very helpful to me in the beginning when I was just learning to pray and envision a Higher Power.

**AGE** = Another Growth Experience

find it helpful to realize that I will always be growing

**RAGE** = Resisting Another Growth Experience

**YET** = You're Eligible Too

If I start drinking again, all those YET's will happen. In fact, if I get off the AA beam the YET's in recovery can happen - resentful, critical, judgmental, isolated and mean spirited.

**HOW** = Honesty Openness Willingness

The 3 keys to my recovery.

**PEACE** = Prayer, Exercise, Abstinence, Conscious contact, Everyday

Always a good rule of thumb for living usefully and walking humbly under the grace of God.

**THINK** = Thoughtful, Honest, Intelligent, Necessary, Kind

This is useful for those times when I have to communicate with others.

is my comment T.H.I.N. & K.?

**S=RP** = Suffering Equals Resistance to Pain

Most of my suffering in recovery can usually be attributed to my resistance to pain or change.

**MEG** = Most Excellent God!

This is what I now call my God - she is a hoot, easy to access and absolutely trustworthy. And She doesn't keep score! How cool is that?

Heidi D.  
Williston Work It Group  
February 2005

## A Time To Stop

**I** realize now I have a disease. I spent many years in self-loathing due to my actions. I had wallowed in self-esteem. I spent 24 years searching for the approval/love I perceived I never received from my mom. So, when I felt I never got approval from my mom, I attempted to get her disapproval. I was good at that. I drank and drugged whenever/wherever I could.

When I graduated from High School, I attempted to get a beer belly. The whole idea of wanting to be an alcoholic appealed to me. In college I was comforted by the amount of people that drank as I did. I got to 20/20's. My roommates and I called going out on speeders, pot and alcohol the triple threat. My roommates laughed at me when I got "the look." I guess it meant I was totally gone because they would have to fill me in about the evening after I got the look. I was totally insane and loving it. I felt like the life of the party, always willing to take a dare. In fact, one night after partying I ended up in the hospital. But I was famous. I thought I was cool.

After college, I worked the restaurant circuit and found drinkers like myself. I continued thinking this was the way everyone my age behaved. I ended up in Cleveland going to graduate school, but still searching for approval. I hooked up with people who did not have my best interests at heart. I survived crack, acid and rape. Soon after I decided to move in with my brother in California.

To no avail, I still could not find serenity. Drugs and alcohol were readily available. I worked in a Microbrewery. All my friends were drinkers like me, once again. I fell in love and got pregnant, we married and moved to Vermont. I still didn't understand why I was unhappy. I had found love, had a baby, and was living in a beautiful state.

There were many problems in the marriage; physical and emotional abuse. After a number of episodes, we decided to quit drinking for a year. After the year was up, we celebrated with a bottle of champagne. Our drinking progressed quickly downhill. For the next 3 years, I yearned for the happiness I found dry. I blamed my husband for my drinking and was going down a slippery slide to depression.

Finally, my daughter told me that all my drinking and pot smoking scared her. I realized I was hurting more than myself. It would have been okay to hurt myself, but it was not okay to hurt my children. I stopped drinking and smoking since she said those words.

I was very skeptical about AA, but I was encouraged by my distant cousin (27 years sobriety). I went to the Sober Sunday Group. I was given a Big Book and read it front to back and started attending a meeting once a week. The things I heard were making sense. I became more and more attracted to what others were saying. I decided I wanted more. I wanted happiness and fulfillment, and fast. I have added lots more meetings to my week, and my husband has joined the program also. I can't say life is perfect, but it is getting better all the time. There is less yelling, fighting, rejection and hurt. We are learning how to be a sober family, for the affects of alcohol is inherent in all of us.

I want to pass on a legacy of skills that are preventative and helpful to my children. I want them to love themselves and to be all they can be. I am so grateful to have found AA and a new way of life. I am teaching my children that there is help available; that they don't have to do it alone.

**E.K.**  
**January 2003**

## "Not Drinking" Wasn't Good Enough

**I** made the choice to quit alcohol in large part because of how appalled, ashamed and disgusted I was by the things my children had witnessed when I was drinking. For me, in the beginning, the decision to stop was one based upon logic and empirical reasoning. I am living proof of something we hear again and again in AA: Choosing to stop drinking based on this kind of reasoning, as far as it may go, does not go nearly far enough.

Let me quickly say that there is no doubt in my mind that my life improved when I stopped drinking, and the lives of my children improved in turn as a result of my stopping. The extremes of behavior that were associated with my alcohol consumption ceased when I cut myself off from booze, to the everlasting relief of everyone who had anything to do with me, most especially my family. Surely this was something to be grateful for, but it was only a marginal improvement in a life which saw little else in the form of the rewards of genuine progress. In many respects, my life worsened, even as I continued not to drink. Why?

Eighteen years or so would go by between my last drink and my ultimate arrival in AA. While I never drank in that time, my interior life had completely deteriorated, and with it any possibility of serenity. I was dry--but I was also selfish,

cruel, untrustworthy and unfaithful, ego-centric, manipulative...you name it, and probably worse on every count than when I had stopped drinking.

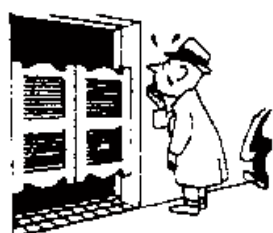
It was through AA, and the wisdom and support of people in the program, that I realized what I had failed to understand, and really believe I had been incapable of seeing, in all that time: To not drink is a great gift, but if I want to be "happily and usefully whole," then I need to do more than merely not drink. I need to deepen and broaden my spiritual connection to all things--cultivate a relationship with a power greater than myself, on a daily basis, and strive to maintain that relationship on a daily basis--if I'm to have any hope of achieving and maintaining humility, the one thing I've come to believe I can't have serenity or sobriety without.

Every day I pray for the strength to put the needs of others before my own needs. It's never easy, but it's a daily reminder that I can be arrogant and insufferable just as easily without alcohol as with it. In the four years since I've been doing what I can to take the suggestions and principles of this program to heart, I can say I honestly see more progress in earning the respect of my children again than in the prior 18 years of dry but self-centered misery.

Ralph C.

There Is A Solution Group

**VICTOR E.**



**January 1963**

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# KEEP COMING BACK!

## A.A. ANNIVERSARIES 2007

### CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF YOU!

Cynthia G.	37 Years	February 23	Eric L.	19 Years	September 12
Sylvia L.	30 Years	March 27	Terry R.	18 Years	May 7
Joanne M.	29 Years	November 22	Lynne R.	18 Years	June 21
Kyrie W.	26 Years	July 23	Bob M.	17 Years	February 13
Jim M.	26 Years	September 7	Arthur V.	17 Years	May 7
Erwin L.	26 Years	October 18	Rocky	17 Years	May 27
Dave B.	25 Years	April 10	Pete M.	17 Years	August 16
Eileen L.	24 Years	April 2	Mary Ellen M.	17 Years	November 23
Lois M.	24 Years	August 15	Pete O.	16 Years	January 1
Frank B.	24 Years	August 27	Heather H.	15 Years	May 7
Nick M.	24 Years	November 14	Carla C.	15 Years	July 31
Robert H.	23 Years	September 7	Paul B.	15 Years	September 18
Tom K.	23 Years	November 24	David T.	14 Years	January 15
Will R.	23 Years	November 30	Andy T.	14 Years	September 15
Eddie P.	22 Years	May 20	Maggie G.	14 Years	November 12
Diane L.	22 Years	July 1	Greg T.	12 Years	February 26
Glenn S.	21 Years	March 16	Misty G.	11 Years	January 2
Heidi G.	21 Years	May 20	Desiree J.	11 Years	March 2
Chris C.	21 Years	December 1	Amber D.	11 Years	May 16
Sam S.	21 Years	December 2	Dan B.	11 Years	August 16
Jan S.	20 Years	April 27	Rob G.	8 Years	June 21
Crow	20 Years	May 1	Erin R.	6 Years	January 8
Jason N.	20 Years	May 20	Steve L.	6 Years	May 26
Howard H.	20 Years	November 17	Bill J.	6 Years	July 18
Dawn F.	19 Years	March 26	Bryant P.	6 Years	July 28
John M.	19 Years	April 12	Gordon D.	6 Years	August 29
Franny S.	19 Years	April 21	Curt G.	5 Years	January 17
Michael H.	19 Years	July 31	Bob B.	5 Years	January 29
Ann M.	19 Years	August 4	Amanda N.	5 Years	February 3



# IT WORKS IF YOU WORK IT!

## A.A. ANNIVERSARIES 2007

### CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF YOU!

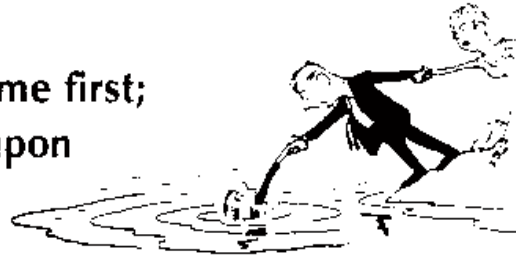
Joe D.	5 Years	May 28
Nasev V.	5 Years	June 6
Debbie D.	5 Years	September 15
Chia L.	5 Years	October 20
Ted R.	5 Years	October 30
John D.	5 Years	December 9
Joe S.	4 Years	February 18
Julie S.	4 Years	March 31
Bill A.	4 Years	May 22
Meagan W.	4 Years	June 18
Franky A.	4 Years	July 1
Ann C.	4 Years	September 6
Samie F.	4 Years	September 7
Matt E.	4 Years	November 28
Jessica M.	3 Years	May 28
Frank V.	3 Years	June 14
Rheal G.	3 Years	August 8
Jessica B.	3 Years	August 27
Ana B.	3 Years	September 19
Jessie O.	3 Years	September 22
Daniel G.	3 Years	September 29
Dalton M.	3 Years	October 1
Steve S.	3 Years	October 1
Jesse M.	3 Years	October 1
Megan W.	2 Years	January 14
Brian H.	2 Years	January 26
Miranda M.	2 Years	March 15
Samie P.	2 Years	March 18
Jason C.	2 Years	March 29

Dan W.	2 Years	April 7
Laura Y.	2 Years	April 15
Todd S.	2 Years	April 17
Kristy	2 Years	May 13
Erica S.	2 Years	May 20
Terry G.	2 Years	May 24
Robert M.	2 Years	June 1
Jessica B.	2 Years	June 24
Stephanie S.	2 Years	August 21
Mike M.	2 Years	August 21
Kathryn F.	2 Years	October 2
Julie K.	2 Years	November 3
Sean P.	1 Year	January 9
Brian H.	1 Year	January 12
Maggie H.	1 Year	January 27
Sheila P.	1 Year	February 15
Alan G.	1 Year	March 3
Craig T.	1 Year	March 18
Joe M.	1 Year	May 2
Roger B.	1 Year	May 4
Scott N.	1 Year	May 5
Jennifer S.	1 Year	May 23
Shane K.	1 Year	June 10
Chaim R.	1 Year	August 1
Erin J.	1 Year	September 17
Aleisha R.	1 Year	September 21
Henrique	1 Year	September 22
Ryan B.	1 Year	November 9
Jeffrey S.	18 Months	July 29



# STEP/TRADITION BOX

"Our common welfare should come first;  
personal recovery depends upon  
AA unity."



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## PLEASE SEND GROUP DONATIONS SOON!

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TO THINE OWN  
SELF BE TRUE

THANK YOU GOD AND A.A. FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY!

- Ana B. -