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VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP

Primary Purpose

Step Five – Building An Arch

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I first heard about Step Five from my sponsor. He had recently taken it, and it didn't sound like fun. His immediate reaction to his own "spiritual house cleaning" was to launch me upon a Fourth Step. He wanted to give away what he'd received. I thought, "What happened to 'This is a selfish program'?"

Step Four took a very long time. At all of it I balked. I thought I could find an easier, softer way, but I could not. With all the earnestness at his command, my sponsor became cunning, baffling, and powerful, constantly reminding me that half measures availed me nothing. I hated him.

The day finally came when even I had to admit that I'd completed Step Four to the best of my ability. That's what had me so upset. The best of my ability didn't look so hot in those days. I called my sponsor to tell him I'd finished, expecting to take a six-month to a one-year sabbatical from the Steps after this arduous trek into my life. That's when he lowered the boom. "Great," he said. "The best time to take the Fifth Step is right after you finish the Fourth. Meet me at my home tomorrow at six." Son of a gun! "Who do you think you are?" I thought, but aloud I said "Okay, I'll be there."

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Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. – 05/10@6:00 PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. – 05/17@6:30 PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. –05/25 @7:00 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. - 05/27 @7:00 PM
- ◆ District 27 Committees Mtg.- 05/15@10am
- ◆ District 27 Business Mtg. - 05/15@12 PM

(All monthly business mtgs. are held currently on Zoom).

Step Five—Building an Arch Continued...

I hung up the phone and said to myself, "I bet Bill W. didn't have to go through this!" I used to think the Big Book referred to Step Five when it said, "What an order! I can't go through with it." I thought, how can talking about all this junk that I never wanted to write down in the first place make any difference?

By the time I finished Step Five, I knew that I was well on my way toward "building an arch" through which I would "walk a free man." What happened? Did God convert me into a religious AA dervish? Was I brainwashed by some mystical technique into an AA true believer? Did I go into permanent shock? None of these things happened. The truth is much simpler. Step Five simply accomplished exactly what I was promised, based on the tried and tested experience of Alcoholics Anonymous.

This is what happened. For starters, I had prepared for Step Five by making a beginning on the previous Steps. I had my Fourth Step inventory which had given me new awareness, albeit a not completely objective one. Nevertheless, I had it. Though the temptation to avoid sharing with "another human being" was nearly overwhelming, my fear of not following my sponsor's instructions to the letter was even greater.

I arrived at my sponsor's home promptly at six. I didn't want to be late for my "funeral." He ushered me into the living room and I sat in what was obviously the condemned man's chair. Given to redundancies in times of hysteria, I commented on the weather at least twice, and God only knows how many times I mentioned the state of local AA affairs. Then my sponsor said those terrible words: "Why don't you get out your Fourth Step so we can get started."

I feared that doors automatically sealed themselves during Fifth Steps. But I prayed to God and "asked His protection and care with complete abandon." "Okay, where do you want to begin," I asked, hoping for mercy. "Why don't we begin with your grudge list," my sponsor said. "But before we begin," he added, "why don't we pray and ask our Higher Power for guidance. After all, this is a three-way deal. God is very much a part of this. It's his grace that brought you here."

Sometimes sponsors can really surprise you. This was one of those rare times. We prayed, then he became his old self again, indicating that it was time I began. We went over my grudge list, item by item. I read and explained. He listened and commented. Before we were halfway through the list, I began to realize that the advice, counseling, and experience he shared was not only his but that of others as well. It was the experience of one drunk talking to another, but it was also the resonating voices of countless men and women in AA who had shared their experience, strength and hope with each other. Was this God-consciousness? I wondered as I continued my disclosures.

Step Five—Building an Arch Continued...

Finishing the grudge list, we assailed my list of fears. To my surprise, I discovered my sponsor and I shared some of the same ones. By this time, occasional laughter interspersed the more serious portions of the unfolding panorama of my life. I was beginning to feel a sense of relief. It continued to grow even as we discussed pertinent aspects of my “list of major human failings the Seven Deadly Sins.” It was incredible! As years of humiliation, pride, and fear fell away into harmless debris, my sense of isolation actually began to dissipate. I no longer felt like a freak, a pathetic caricature of humanity, incapable of integrating myself into the world about me. The existence of God’s presence was no theory; it was fact. God was with us and my cup did indeed run over. It overflowed with his love as it was translated into the experience, strength, and hope of two twentieth-century alcoholics joined in the miracle of a spiritual awakening known as recovery.

Those secrets that I’d sworn to take to my grave were now dead and buried under the fertile soil of new freedom nurtured by truth and sharing and laughter, moistened by tears of relief and joy, and warmed by the sunlight of the spirit. “Step Five works! It really does!” I marveled. I knew now that the man who was leaving was not the same man who had fearfully entered this Fifth Step sanctuary just a few hours previously.

Today, after many revisits to Step Five, I know that my initial experience was no fluke, that “God does move in a mysterious way his wonders to perform,” and that Step Five is one of those wonders. I’ve also been privileged to share in the Fifth Step experiences of others. Since there is nothing like personal experience to qualify one for this extremely personal spiritual awakening, I would suggest having done the Fifth Step as a prerequisite for hearing someone else’s. We must be prepared to share our own Fifth Step disclosures, laughter, and tears so that the experience of others might be as profound as our own. Being able to keep confidential the disclosures of others is also essential. This experience is only between God and ourselves.

Franklin D. Roosevelt said, in his first inaugural address, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself” If we’re willing to expose the pages of our lives to the love and understanding of our Higher Power and a fellow alcoholic, we’ll surely know a new freedom and a new happiness. We’ll discover that love is never having to feel alone again; that God’s presence in our lives has become profound; and that the unity of the Fellowship of the spirit can be ours so long as we are willing to pass it on.

Chico C., West Palm Beach, Florida

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Financial Statements

	January	February	March	Total	Ytd Forecast	Variance
Income						
Sales	\$ 2,860	\$ 2,004	\$ 3,094	\$ 7,957	\$ 7,500	\$ 457
Group Contributions	\$ 1,702	\$ 1,955	\$ 1,617	\$ 5,275	\$ 7,500	\$ (2,225)
Individual Contributions	\$ 397	\$ 465	\$ 925	\$ 1,787	\$ 1,500	\$ 287
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 61	\$ 20	\$	\$ 81	\$ 150	\$ (69)
Fundraising	\$ -	\$	\$	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Income	\$ 5,020	\$ 4,444	\$ 5,636	\$ 15,100	\$ 16,650	\$ (1,550)
Expenses						
COGS	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,025	\$ 2,217	\$ 4,941	\$ 4,500	\$ 441
Fundraising	\$ -	\$ -	\$	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
CC & Paypal Fees	\$ -	\$ 65	\$ 57	\$ 122	\$ 315	\$ (193)
Office Supplies	\$ 190	\$ 241	\$ 257	\$ 688	\$ 150	\$ 538
Insurance	\$ 48	\$ 48	\$ 49	\$ 146	\$ 150	\$ (4)
Licenses & Fees	\$ 216	\$ 90	\$ 65	\$ 371	\$ 75	\$ 296
Contract Services	\$ 620	\$ 720	\$ 828	\$ 2,168	\$ 2,025	\$ 143
Wages	\$ 2,035	\$ 1,372	\$ 929	\$ 4,336	\$ 5,625	\$ (1,289)
Taxes	\$ 919	\$ 370	\$ 286	\$ 1,575	\$ 1,950	\$ (375)
Copy Machine	\$ 337	\$ 260	\$ 237	\$ 835	\$ 750	\$ 85
Rent	\$ 962	\$ 962	\$ 962	\$ 2,887	\$ 3,000	\$ (113)
Utilities	\$ 361	\$ 778	\$ 412	\$ 1,551	\$ 900	\$ 651
Total Expenses	\$ 7,388	\$ 5,932	\$ 6,300	\$ 19,620	\$ 19,440	\$ 180
Net Income	\$ (2,368)	\$ (1,488)	\$ (664)	\$ (4,520)	\$ (2,790)	\$ (1,730)

March 31, 2021 Cash Balances	
Main Checking	\$ 6,206
Event Account	\$ 7,164
Prudent Reserve	\$ 12,870
Till Cash	\$ 100
Total Cash Balance	\$ 26,340

Grant Fund Distributionn		
	Amount	Balance
Beginning	\$ 12,204	\$ 12,204
December	\$ (2,000)	\$ 10,204
January	\$ (2,286)	\$ 7,918
February	\$ (2,093)	\$ 5,825

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous Steering Committee meeting of March 8, 2021

Attendance: Laurie, Leanne, Phil, Jenn, Bruce, Dusty, Dee, Patrick, Marc

Opening: The meeting was opened at 6:00pm with the Serenity Prayer. Minutes from the February Steering Committee meeting were accepted. Minutes from the February Intergroup Representatives meeting were reviewed.

Hotline: Emily reported by email advising that there are several new volunteers on the hotline and on the 12-Step list. There are volunteer opportunities which can be found on Intergroup's website.

Treasury: At the current rate the grant Intergroup received will be used in four to six months. Feedback being received is that because of the grant Intergroup is not in need of financial report. It was requested that Dusty address this issue in opening remarks at the Intergroup meeting. Please refer to attached financial report for detailed information. Forecasting will be revised quarterly.

Office: Marc stated that customer traffic continues to be tracked. Inventory and pricing is being updated.

Activities: Jenn reported she has no new information. The venue for a possible activity has not gotten back to her as they have been busy assisting the homeless community.

Old Business: None. The old business agenda items, forecasting and customer traffic tracking, were already covered.

New Business/Audit: The guidelines call for an annual audit which has not been done and brought to the Steering Committee's attention by one of the groups. Laurie reported that she has two CPA sources, BLH Accounting and Schiller & Co that can conduct the audit. Bruce made a motion to authorize the audit with an expenditure of up to \$100. Motion passed.

New Business/Audit: Marc made a motion for an additional audit to be conducted by one or more of the treasurers from District 7, 27 and/or 37. It was noted that the guidelines call for the audit to be conducted by a disinterested party and entities that deal directly with Intergroup are not disinterested, Motion failed.

New Business/Treasurer Duties: It was noted that the guidelines call for the treasurer to receive and disburse funds and that this guideline has not been followed. There was no motion on this matter. This issue was brought forth to reiterate the guideline and the necessity to follow it.

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Continued...

New Business/Outside Vendor: It was noted that Cassia was retained on a part-time, off-site, employee however she has been paid as an outside vendor. It was further noted that she has not been paid direct and that her funds earned have been paid to Marc. Paying as a vendor saves Intergroup money in payroll taxes. A motion was made that Cassia be reclassified as an outside vendor. Motion Passed.

New Business/Conflict of Interest: It was noted that the guidelines prohibit Marc from being an outside vendor if he is a Steering Committee member and that there has never been authorization for him to be a vendor. A motion was made that Marc is not a vendor and that funds earned by Cassia be paid to Cassia. Motion Passed.

New Business/Office Staff Responsibilities: It was noted that Leanne has time to conduct additional duties. Marc agreed to create a detailed list of office staff duties so that they can start being migrated from Cassia to Leanne. The Steering Committee will review this issue at the April meeting.

Closing: The meeting was closed at 7:16pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Yours in Service,
Phil B.



There are 113 A.A.W.S. videos posted to YouTube

Search YouTube using the term 'a.a. world services inc' to locate the official channel for Alcoholics Anonymous World Services.

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous Intergroup Representatives meeting of March 15, 2021

Attendance: Dusty, Steering Committee (SC) & Cornerstone ... Dee, Steering Committee ... Michael, Welcome Home ... Julie, Women in Action ... Robin, Fireside ... Patrick, Steering Committee & McGillivray Book Study ... Tony, Men's Fireside ... Carey, Hockinson ... Marc, Steering Committee & Miracles at Noon ... Emily, Hotline ... Connie, District 27 ... Aiden, Rock Bottom Recovery ... Phil, Steering Committee & R360very ... Jenn, Steering Committee & Doing Right ... Laurie, Steering Committee & Sober Uppers ... Sujin, non-voting guest
Please note that this shows attendance at the time when the meeting was opened and additional AA members joined after the meeting was started.

Opening: The meeting was opened with the Serenity Prayer at 6:31pm. Attendees introduced themselves. A quorum exists. Minutes from the 2/15/21 IG meeting were accepted. Minutes from the 3/8/21 SC meeting were reviewed. Dusty discussed the need for continued financial support.

Hotline: Emily advised that all positions are filled however there are volunteers that are overdue to rotate out. Volunteer opportunities can be found on the website.

Treasury: Laurie advised that at the current trend the grant money will be exhausted in approximately three months. The office is currently running approximately <2000> net. An audit of 2020 financial records is pending. Please see attached financial report for detailed information.

Office: Marc reported that there has been an increase in customer traffic after 5:00pm and suggested that the office may want to explore the idea of winter hours/summer hours. He stated that a rolling inventory, i.e., one day inventory books, then pamphlets, etc., will be conducted. Phil inquired who is the office manager which Dusty stated is Cassia.

Activities: Jenn stated she has no new information.

Webmaster: The office does not have a new webmaster. IG Reps are asked to announce this volunteer opportunity at their groups.

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes Continued...

Old Business/Office Hours: Discussed during the office report. No motions, no action. CLOSED

New Business/Audit: Discussed during the treasury report. No motions, no actions, however still an open item to the Steering Committee. PENDING

Group News/Cornerstone: Dusty previously reported Cornerstone would be relocating to a more permanent location however that did not occur due to insurance requirement of the host location.

Group News/Hockinson: Carey reported that Hockinson has reopened after a two week closure in accordance with CDC recommendations due to a possible Covid-19 exposure.

Group News: As meeting information changed IG reps are asked to notify the office by email vancaa@vanintgrp.com so that schedules can be updated.

District News/District 27: Connie reported that committees are transitioning and that there will be a speaker meeting. She will get the information to the office to include in the website.

Closing: The meeting was closed with the Serenity Prayer at 7:11pm.

Yours in Service,

Phil B.



For a full description of upcoming events including locations or zoom information, visit the events page on our website at:

www.vancouveraa.org

To add any events to future calendars, please email us your flier at vancaa@vanintgrp.com (even if it's a zoom event)!

All Newsletter submissions are due on the 1st of the month for which you want them published.

Upcoming Events

May 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Wayfarer's Speaker Mtg. on Zoom: 7:00 pm
9	10 Steering Committee Mtg.: 6:00 pm	11	12	13	14	15 District 27 Com- mittees Mtg.: 10am- 12 pm District 27 Business Mtg.: 12 pm-3 pm
16	17 Intergroup Rep. Mtg.:6:30 pm	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 District 37 Mtg.: 7:00 pm	26	27 District 7 GSR Mtg.: 7 pm	28	29
30	31					

The Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous exists to serve local groups of Alcoholics Anonymous within the vicinity of Vancouver, Washington. The Organization serves as a clearing house to distribute literature to local Alcoholics Anonymous groups, to provide contact among these groups, and to maintain an answering service.



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