

Vancouver Area Intergroup of
Alcoholics Anonymous

August/September 2019
Volume 20

2203 Fairmount Avenue, Ste. A
Vancouver, WA
98661

Vancouveraa.org
vancaa@vanintgrp.com
(360) 694-3870



Primary Purpose

VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP

Alcoholics Anonymous: Faith Meets Science

[Lee Ann Kaskutas, Dr.P.H.](#)

Abstract: Research on the effectiveness of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is controversial and is subject to widely divergent interpretations. The goal of this paper is to provide a focused review of the literature on AA effectiveness that will allow readers to judge the evidence for AA effectiveness themselves. The review organizes the research on AA effectiveness according to six criterion required for establishing causation: (1) magnitude of effect; (2) dose response effect; (3) consistent effect; (4) temporally accurate effects; (5) specific effects; (6) plausibility.

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Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. – 9/9@6:00 PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. – 9/16@6:30 PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. – 9/24 @7:00 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. – 9/26 @7:00 PM

(All monthly business mtgs. are held at the Intergroup Office).

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Alcoholics Anonymous: Faith Meets Science

Continued...

The evidence for criteria 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 is very strong: Rates of abstinence are about twice as high among those who attend AA (criteria 1, magnitude); higher levels of attendance are related to higher rates of abstinence (criteria 2, dose-response); these relationships are found for different samples and follow-up periods (criteria 3, consistency); prior AA attendance is predictive of subsequent abstinence (criteria 4, temporal); and mechanisms of action predicted by theories of behavior change are present in AA (criteria 6, plausibility). However, rigorous experimental evidence establishing the specificity of an effect for AA or Twelve Step Facilitation/TSF (criteria 5) is mixed, with 2 trials finding a positive effect for AA, 1 trial finding a negative effect for AA, and 1 trial finding a null effect. Studies addressing specificity using statistical approaches have had two contradictory findings, and two that reported significant effects for AA after adjusting for potential confounders such as motivation to change.

Results (only 3 of 8 total figures included):

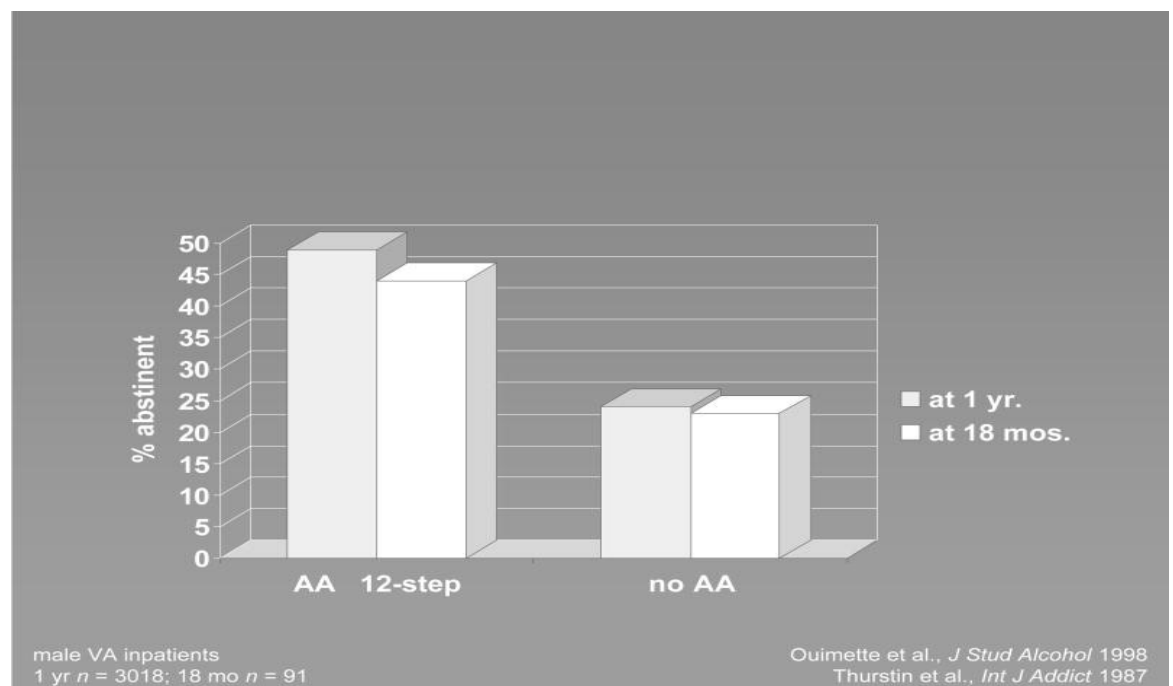


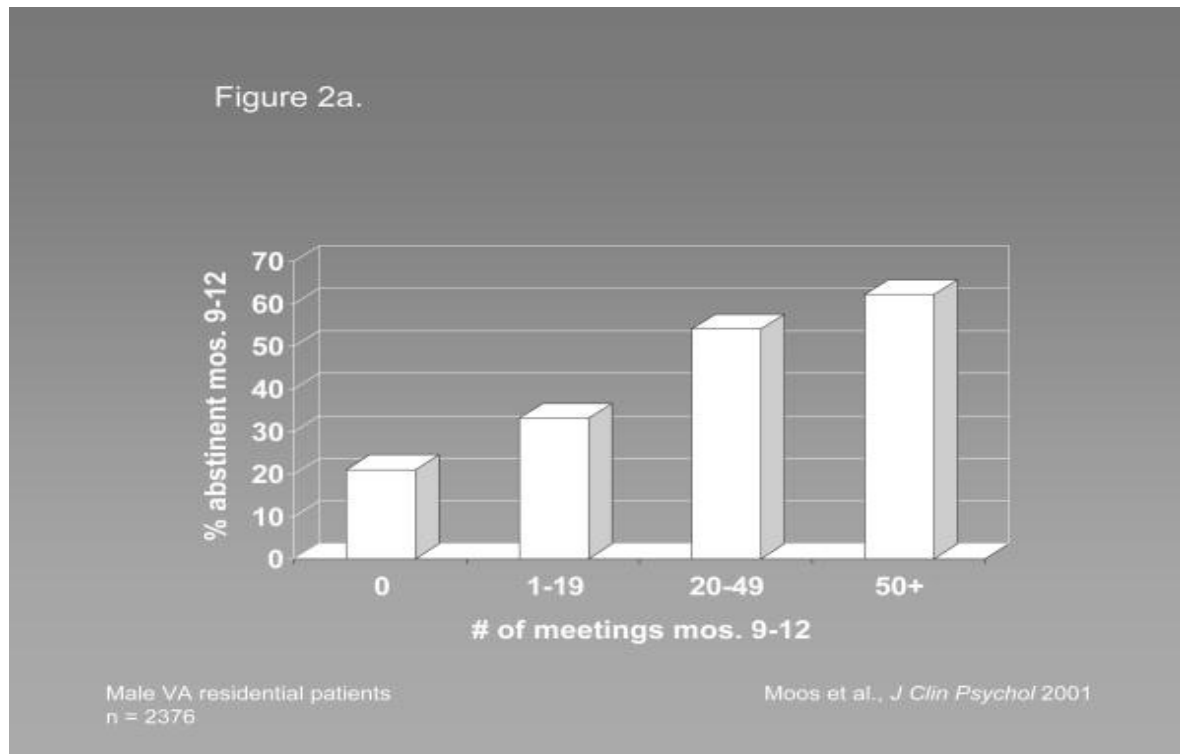
Figure 1

Strength of Association:

Alcohol abstinence & AA/12-step group exposure

Alcoholics Anonymous: Faith Meets Science

Continued...



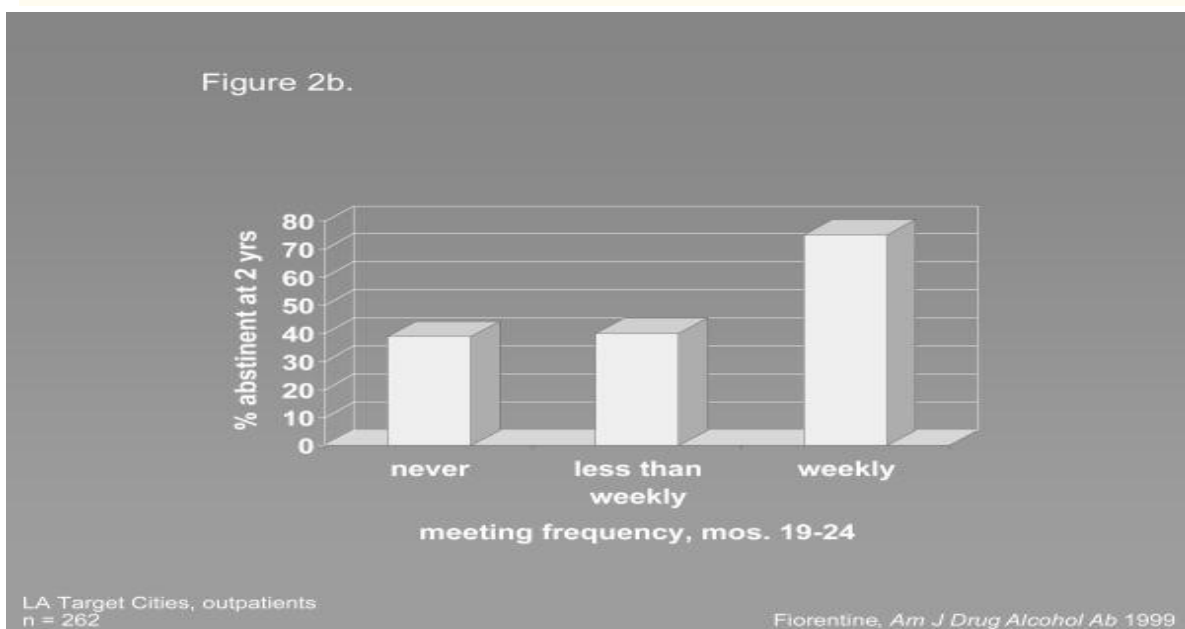
[Figure 2](#)

Figure 2a. Dose Response Relationship:

Alcohol and drug abstinence & number of 12-step meetings

Figure 2b. Dose Response Relationship:

Alcohol abstinence & frequency of 12-step meetings



Conclusions

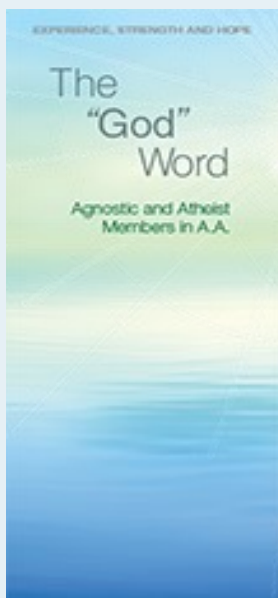
As stated at the outset, the experimental evidence for AA effectiveness (addressing specificity) is the weakest among the six criteria considered crucial for establishing causation. Only two studies provided strong proof of a specific AA or TSF effect: the outpatient arm of Project MATCH (with effects at 1 and 3 years) [2, 3], and the intensive referral condition in Timko's trial (with effects for abstinence at 6 months and 1 year) [24]. The effect sizes were similar, with the TSF/Intensive referral conditions having a 5-10% advantage in abstinence rates. It is noteworthy that neither of these studies attempted to randomize patients to AA per se; instead, they focused on interventions intended to facilitate AA involvement.

One reason that several of the other trials may not have found positive effects for AA/TSF is because many individuals randomized to the non-AA/non-TSF conditions also attended AA; thus, the AA or TSF condition ended up being compared to a condition consisting of an alternative treatment plus AA. This was the case in Walsh's hospital inpatient treatment vs. AA study [23] and in the aftercare arm of Project MATCH [22], and arose because the patients in the non-AA/non-TSF conditions also had attended 12-step-based inpatient treatment, which in turn engendered strong participation in AA. Thus, AA attendance levels were high in the inpatient hospital condition in the former study, and in the CBT and MET conditions among the Project MATCH aftercare subjects. In fact, CBT and MET aftercare patients attended more meetings than the TSF outpatients, and the aftercare patients overall attended twice the number of meetings at every follow-up compared to the outpatients [22, see pp.191–192].

There are other concerns with the Brandsma trial [25] which call its experimental results into question. The control condition allowed for participation in actual AA meetings, while those in the AA condition attended a weekly AA-like meeting administered by the study (that was not an actual AA meeting). The description of the AA condition states that the steps were used for discussion content, the group focused on newcomers, and they told patients about sponsors [25, p.34], but it is not clear whether the meetings were led by AA members, whether crosstalk was allowed, whether the meeting leader shared their story as part of the meeting, or whether the meeting format was what one would encounter at an actual AA meeting. The meetings may not have been open to other AA members in the community, and not been listed in the AA meeting directory, which would mean that a potentially important therapeutic ingredient of AA--the experience of longer-term members--would not have been present in the AA condition. This is of special concern because the control condition did allow for attendance at such meetings.

Given these challenges in conducting rigorous randomized trials of AA effectiveness, researchers have turned to statistical methods to address the selection bias associated with AA attendance in observational studies. These efforts are intended to address criteria 5, specificity of the AA effect. The goal with these methods is to statistically adjust for study participants' likelihood or propensity to attend AA, prior to evaluating AA's impact on subsequent drinking. One approach, used in two studies of AA effectiveness, is an econometric method using so-called "instrumental variables" to parse-out AA attendance. The instrumental variables in one study were the availability of AA meetings in one's community and being able to drive to meetings [39]; after adjusting for these potential confounders, AA's effect on abstinence was reduced from OR = 3.70 ($p < .05$) to OR=1.69 (not significant). Using different instrumental variables (perceived seriousness of drinking, and having a coping style tending towards information-seeking solutions), another study [40] found that AA's impact on heavy drinking was significant and doubled in magnitude after correcting for the instrumental variables. A third study [41] adjusted for baseline motivation and psychopathology as potential confounders, and found that those with more AA involvement at 1 year had fewer alcohol problems at the 2-year follow-up interview. Another statistical study of selection bias, now under review, used Propensity Scores to adjust for study participants' propensity to attend AA [42], and found that the odds of abstinence associated with AA attendance were reduced, but remained significant, after adjusting for individuals' propensity to attend AA. The method allowed investigators to study whether the selection bias operationalized by the Propensity Scores varied based on whether an individual had a low versus a high propensity to attend AA. Among those with a high propensity to attend AA, AA's effect was minimal (e.g., OR=1.3); however, among those with a lower propensity to attend AA, the odds of abstinence associated with AA attendance were significant and of considerable magnitude, ranging from 2.7 to 6.9.

Bookstore News



“The God Word” has arrived!

Introduction: A.A. is not a religious organization. Alcoholics Anonymous has only one requirement for membership, and that is the desire to stop drinking. There is room in A.A. for people of all shades of belief and

non-belief. Many members believe in some sort of god, and we have members who come from and practice all sorts of religions, but many are also atheist or agnostic. It's important to remember that A.A. is not a religious organization; we have a simple idea that there is a power greater than us as individuals.

What we all have in common is that the program helps us find an inner strength that we were previously unaware of — where we differ is in how we identify the source. Some people have thought of the word “God” as standing for “good orderly direction,” or even “group of drunks,” but many of us believe that there is something bigger than ourselves that is helping us today. This power may lie within some person's religious beliefs, or it can be completely separate from any religion. For example, one member looks at the sea and accepts that it is a power greater than him. We could ask ourselves, “Do I believe that somehow there is a power greater than myself?”

Alcoholics Anonymous: Faith Meets Science

Continued...

What, then, is the scorecard for AA effectiveness in terms of specificity? Among the rigorous experimental studies, there were two positive findings for AA effectiveness, one null finding, and one negative finding. Among those that statistically addressed selection bias, there were two contradictory findings, and two studies that reported significant effects for AA after adjusting for potential confounders such as motivation to change. Readers must judge for themselves whether their interpretation of these results, on balance, supports a recommendation that there is no experimental evidence of AA effectiveness (as put forward by the Cochrane review). As for the scorecard for the other criteria, the evidence for AA effectiveness is quite strong: Rates of abstinence are about twice as high among those who attend AA (criteria 1, magnitude); higher levels of attendance are related to higher rates of abstinence (criteria 2, dose-response); these relationships are found for different samples and follow-up periods (criteria 3, consistency); prior AA attendance is predictive of subsequent abstinence (criteria 4, temporal); and mechanisms of action predicted by theories of behavior change are evident at AA meetings and through the AA steps and fellowship (criteria 6, plausibility).

For the full article, go to <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/>

Congratulations!

***On your continuous length of sobriety...
You did it one day at a time!***

LAURIE H. — 10 YRS.

RAE DELL B. — 29 YRS.

SUE MC. — 19 YRS.

If you would like to acknowledge someone celebrating a monthly or annual birthday, please call, email, or let us know when you come in to purchase their coin so we can add them to the next newsletter!



VANCOUVER INTERGROUP
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

OPEN HOUSE

SEPTEMBER 21, 2019

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

2203 Fairmount Ave.
Suite A
Vancouver, WA 98661



Join us in an open house celebration at Vancouver Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous on September 21, 2019, at 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. We welcome you to see the remodeled Intergroup Office and enjoy in fellowship eating BBQ and browsing through the bookstore that offers, pamphlets, chips, Big Books, and much more!

Food will be free with a suggested donation of \$2.00 per meal to help with costs, thank you!

The Vancouver Area Intergroup

Phone: 360-694-3870

Email: vancaa@vanintgrp.com

Website: www.vancouveraa.org

Group Contributions and Financial Statements

Financial Statements

	July (\$)	YTD (\$)
Revenue		
Sales	4,419	30,736
Group Contributions	2,586	15,460
Fundraising/Picnic	0	0
Misc. Income	107	888
Individual Contributions	226	1,890
Total Revenue	7,338	48,974
Expenses		
Cost of goods sold	2,452	17,301
Fundraising Expenses	0	0
Merchant Services	69	589
Office supplies	44	1,129
Equipment rent	198	1,441
Building rent	875	7,000
Utilities	593	2,795
Net Wages	2,893	14,177
Payroll taxes	936	4,124
Insurance	48	235
Licenses	0	10
Travel and Meetings	0	79
Remodel Project	0	1,781
Total Expenses	8,108	50,661
Net Income /(Loss)	(770)	(1,687)

July 2019 Cash Balances	
Main Checking	\$ 3,780
Event Account	\$ 1,400
Prudent Reserve	\$ 17,048
Petty Cash	\$ 100
Total Cash Balance	\$ 22,328

July Bottom Line

- Total Revenue – Total Expenses = (\$770)
- For the month of July we did \$569 worse than forecasted
- Year-to-date doing \$1,388 better than forecast

Contributions for July	Group Name	Contributions Year to Date
100.00	159th Street Women's Group	250.00
2.00	AA Rainbow Miracles	2.00
266.37	A New Morning	2,089.68
	Amboy Renegades	35.00
200.00	As Bill Sees It	640.25
	As We Recovered	50.00
	Birds of a Feather	100.00
75.00	B & P	75.00
100.00	Cascade Group	100.00
75.00	Cascade Locks Spiritual Brkfst.	75.00
	Chapter Nine	188.00
25.82	Camas Group	111.90
	Cornerstone Group	20.00
10.00	District 7	10.00
	Doing Right on Thursday Night	25.00
189.70	Early Birds	292.20
	Early Light	52.00
	East County Women's Group	50.00
	Eastside Brown Baggers	600.00
55.00	Easier Softer Way	55.00
	Fireside	605.00
38.56	First Shot	388.69
75.47	Fresh Start	477.45
	From the Book	146.75
	Gorge Gals-North Bonneville	50.00
	Hokinson	192.01
	La Center Group	15.08
	Lewis River AA	125.96
50.00	Lighthouse	330.00
227.72	McGuilivray Study Group	866.72
	Men's Fireside	200.00
250.00	Minnihaha	250.00
320.00	Miracles at Noon	2,369.60
16.06	Ready and Willing	42.72
	Reconciled	281.71
	Renegades	35.00
	Ridgefield AA	30.00
	Rock Bottom Recovery	115.00
	Round Table Group	334.40
190.00	Saturday Night Big Book Study	494.00
40.00	She Who Remembers	180.00
	Sober Uppers	25.00
71.31	Step Sisters	293.31
	Stevenson AA	400.00
	Sunday Night Alternative	40.00
	Sunday Solutions	1,176.35
79.00	There is a Solution	173.15
19.91	Wayfarer's	70.27
62.04	Wednesday Night Recovery	374.71
47.22	Welcome Home	98.17
	West Vancouver Group	62.36
	Wine to Water	40.60
	Women's Fireside	200.00
	Women in Sobriety	155.00
2,586.18	SUBTOTAL	15,460.04
225.81	Miscellaneous/Individual	1,889.65
2,811.99	TOTAL	17,349.69

Experience, Strength, and Hope

Through the grace of God I was introduced to AA and given a quality of life I have never known in the 52 years I have been alive. My journey of alcoholism began in August 2017 when I learned that my daughter was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and was dying. The crushing pain I felt was unbearable. I found that I could wrap myself up in a warm cocoon of alcohol and get through each day pushing aside my pain by drinking more and more each day.

In August 2018 my daughter died and I was drinking heavily. I was concerned about my drinking and asked my doctor if I had a problem and was told that since I was working full-time; working on my under-graduate degree full-time; biking; hiking; and volunteering, I was just a moderate drinker and not to worry.

In May 2019 during Memorial Day weekend I was considering ending my life and for the first time went down on my knees and prayed for help from God. The next day there was a knock on my door – which I did not answer due to my being intoxicated and not wanting to see anyone in my condition, and when the person left I found a recovery coach card left on my front door. I thought I might call when I sobered up but I never did since I was now on a binge I could not bring myself back from, so I just went on my computer and the treatment center I finally checked myself into came up into my browser with a chat box and I thought, “Hey, I could talk to someone by chat and they won’t hear me slur my words.” Well, I ended up talking with them on the phone and checked into treatment the next day and spend 63 days in their facility. During this time I developed a close relationship with my higher power, gained a sponsor, and am no longer isolated as I now have a community of sober friends. I gave up my cottage and job to move to Vancouver and live in sober housing to continue my recovery.

I have a sense of peace that I have never experienced before. I live moment to moment just relishing each minute and giving thanks for the gift of my alcoholism that brought me to the path on this journey of recovery and enlightenment. I have hope for each day. I am blessed for all the people who are brought into my life that support me and that I can give hope to.

—Shari W.

We are now accepting personal A.A. stories for our “Experience, Strength, and Hope” section in future Newsletter Editions...if you have a story about how A.A. changed your life, please submit via email to: vancaa@vanintgrp.com

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous Steering Committee meeting of July 8, 2019

Attendance: Laurie, Chris, Marc (by phone), Dusty, Cassia, Phil

Opening: The meeting was opened at 6:03pm with the Serenity Prayer. Minutes from the 6/10/19 Steering Committee meeting were accepted. Minutes from the 6/17/19 Intergroup meeting were reviewed.

Hotline: No report. We do not have a hotline chairperson. Maureen is assisting during the transition while we search for a new chair.

Treasury: The financial report is not available in the usual format as the bank statement has not yet been received. We are approximately \$2,000 ahead of forecast.

Intergroup: Cassia will be on vacation 7/11-31/19. Laurie will be filling in.

Old Business/Service Positions: We are still in need of a chair person for the hotline and events. Cassia has been working with Anna on the outreach and will present information at the Intergroup meeting.

New Business/Gratitude Dinner: The First Presbyterian Church (usual location) has been reserved for 11/2/19.

New Business/Observation: It was noted that we rushed to elect a Vice Chair and that we should have sent the nomination back to the groups for opportunity to make any additional nominations.

Closing: The meeting closed at 6:13pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Yours in Service

Phil B.



Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes

VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS INTERGROUP MEETING FOR July 15th, 2018

ATEENDANCE:

Mark Q – Reconciled
Richard R - Lighthouse
Nicole – Rock Bottom Recovery
Chris H – MSG
David R – Welcome Home
Richard R – Lighthouse
Kevin S - cornerstone
Laura H-Women in Action
Ronnie C – Chair /Camas Group
Julie E-Sunday Solutions

Darcy S – Friday Night Happy Hour
David C- First Shot
Phil B – Central Group
Ryan Snell - MSG
Robin M – Fireside
Tom S – Men’s Fireside
Kasmir - ESBB

OPENING: Meeting was opened at 6:35pm with the Serenity Prayer and a reading by Kasmir of the Vancouver area intergroup purpose. Phil gave a presentation on the 7th Tradition. Minutes from the July 8th Steering Committee meeting were reviewed and accepted. Minutes from the June 17th IG Committee meeting were reviewed and accepted.

HOTLINE: Desperate for hotline chair! Please stress the importance of this service position to your home groups.

FINANCIAL: Laurie gave Treasurers report. Down 433.00, but 232.00 ahead of forecast for the month. Year to date we are 530.00 ahead of forecast. See attached.

INTERGROUP: Cassia says Hi!!!

COMMITTEES: Financial committee meets quarterly. Next meeting to be held 6pm, third Monday of October. All are welcome to attend.

OLD BUSINESS:

- ♦ OPEN HOUSE: Motion made and passed to hold open house on September 21st from 10am-2pm. More information forthcoming on how you can help.

NEW BUSINESS:

- ♦ GRATITUDE DINNER: Will be held November 23rd. Event flyers with all relevant information to circulate soon. Along with Volunteer and raffle donation sign-up sheets.

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes Continued...

GROUP NEWS

CENTRAL GROUP: 9th Annual Hot August Nights Dance / Barbeque!!! August 3rd at 1501 Columbia Street from 7-11pm. Food, Dancing, Fun!

RECONCILED: Business meeting temporarily moved from Monday to Friday.

FIRESIDE: No midnight meeting. 7:30 & Noon on Wednesday.

MCGILLIVRAY STUDY GROUP: Decision to read pre-meeting literature straight from book as a reminder that it's all found in the Big Book !

1st SHOT: Saturday meeting at 8am is awesome! Encouraging everyone to attend. Bring your own coffee. St Paul's Church across from courthouse. See ya there!

The meeting was closed at 7:03pm with the Lord's Prayer.


Yours in Service,

Nicole W.
Recording Secretary



Upcoming Events

September 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6 Friday Night Happy Hour Speaker Mtg.: 7:30 pm	7 OB's Speaker Mtg.: 7:30 PM
8	9 Steering Committee Mtg.: 6:00 pm	10	11	12	13	14 Wayfarer's Speaker Mtg.: 7:00 pm
15	16 Intergroup Rep. Mtg.:6:30 pm	17	18	19	20	21 ♦ Intergroup Open House: 10am-2pm ♦ Rule 62 Speaker Mtg.: 7 :00 pm
22	23	24 District 37 Mtg.: 7:00 pm	25	26 District 7 GSR Mtg.: 7 pm	27 Central Group's Birthday Meeting: 8:00 pm	28
29 ♦ Sideways Sunday Potluck: 7:30am ♦ Carson Potluck: 6:30 pm. Speaker: 7:00 pm ♦ Hokinson Potluck: 6:00 pm ♦ Sober Sickos:7:30 pm	30	 <div> <p><i>For a full description of each of these upcoming events including locations, visit the events page on our website at:</i></p> <p><u>www.vancouveraa.org</u></p> </div>				

What is the history behind AA's Responsibility Statement?

The Responsibility Statement reads:

"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."

It was written for the 1965 A.A. International Convention in Toronto . I have enclosed an article titled, 'How I am Responsible became a part of A.A.', from the GSO newsletter, Box 4-5-9. The article identifies former AA trustee, Al S. as the author of the Responsibility Statement. In the souvenir book for the 1965 Convention, Dr. Jack Norris writes: "...We must remember that AA will continue strong only so long as each of us freely and happily gives it away to another person, only as each of us takes our fair share of responsibility for sponsorship of those who still suffer, for the growth and integrity of our Group, for our Inter-group activities, and for AA as a whole. It is in taking responsibility that real freedom and the enduring satisfactions of life are found. AA has given us the power to choose – to drink or not to drink – and in doing so has given us the freedom to be responsible for ourselves. As we become responsible for ourselves, we are free to be responsible for our share in AA, and unless we happily accept this responsibility we lose AA. Strange, isn't it?"

In a Grapevine article in October 1965, the Responsibility Statement is discussed, and Bill W. expresses his views: Two major thoughts stood out in the remarks of the many speakers, alcoholic and nonalcoholic, at AA's July Toronto Convention. The first was admiration and gratitude for AA's startling success in sobering up hundreds of thousands of lost-cause drunks. The other was concern that the success which has come to AA over the thirty years since its start in Akron, Ohio in 1935 would not lead us to any complacency about the size of the job still to be done. The theme of the Convention was: Responsibility. "I am responsible. . .when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible." AA's co-founder, Bill, in his talk to over 10,000 attending the major sessions of the Convention, stressed the need for co-operation with all who work on the problem of alcoholism, the more than 100 agencies in the United States and Canada alone now engaged in research, alcohol education and rehabilitation. "Too often, we have deprecated and even derided these projects of our friends just because we do not always see eye to eye with them," Bill said. "We should very seriously ask ourselves how many alcoholics have gone on drinking simply because we have failed to cooperate in good spirit with these many agencies. No alcoholic should go mad or die merely because he did not come straight to AA in the beginning." "The first concern of AA members should be with problem drinkers the movement is still unable to reach," Bill said. He estimated that there are 20 million alcoholics in the world today, five million in the U.S. alone. "Some cannot be reached because they are not hurt enough, others because they are hurt too much," he declared. "Many sufferers have mental and emotional complications that seem to foreclose their chances. Yet it would be conservative to estimate that at any particular time there are four million alcoholics in the world who are able, ready and willing to get well if only they knew how. When we remember that in the 30 years of AA's existence we have reached less than ten per cent of those who might have been willing to approach us, we begin to get an idea of the immensity of our task and of the responsibilities with which we will always be confronted."

There have been two Advisory Actions from the General Service Conference regarding the Declaration of Responsibility since it was introduced. In 1971, the Conference recommended that: The Literature Committee, following the general feeling of the Conference, reaffirm both the spirit and the wording of the "I am Responsible" Declaration from the International Convention held in Toronto in 1965. And in 1977, the Conference recommended that: The Responsibility Declaration not be changed, as it was made at the 1965 International Convention in Toronto.

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.



*This comic was taken from <https://annkroger.com/drawings-and-cartoons/>

The Vancouver Area Intergroup

2203 Fairmount Ave,
Ste. A
Vancouver, WA
98661

Phone: 360-694-3870
Fax: 360-694-1032
E-mail:
vancaa@vanintgrp.com