

Vancouver Area Intergroup of
Alcoholics Anonymous

October/November 2019
Volume 22

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Primary Purpose

VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP

Lets Ask Bill W.

Thanks to Jim B. of Canada who put together this presentation of text and articles on the Washingtonian Temperance Society. Jim originally had these articles on the web site of historyofaa.com which is no longer online and placed here for historical & research purposes. <http://silkworth.net/>

Question 1. The Disease Concept — How do you justify calling alcoholism an illness, and not a moral responsibility?

Answer: Early in A.A.'s history, very natural questions arose among theologians. There was a Mr. Henry Link who had written "The Return to Religion (Macmillan Co., 1937). One day I received a call from him. He stated that he strongly objected to the A.A. position that alcoholism was an illness. This concept, he felt, removed moral responsibility from alcoholics. He had been voicing this complaint about psychiatrists in the American Mercury. And now, he stated, he was about to lambaste A.A. too. Of course, I made haste to point out that we A. A.'s did not use the concept of sickness to absolve our members from moral responsibility. On the contrary, we used the fact of fatal illness to clamp the heaviest kind of moral responsibility on to the sufferer. The further point was made that in his early days of drinking the alcoholic often was no doubt guilty of irresponsibility and gluttony. But once the time of compulsive drinking, veritable lunacy had arrived and he couldn't very well be held accountable for his conduct. He then had a lunacy which condemned him to drink, in spite of all he could do; he had developed a bodily sensitivity to alcohol that guaranteed his final madness and death. When this state of affairs was pointed out to him, he was placed immediately under the heaviest kind of pressure to accept A.A.'s moral and spiritual program of regeneration - namely, our Twelve Steps.

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Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. – 11/11@6:00 PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. – 11/18@6:30 PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. –11/26 @7:00 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. - 11/28 @7:00 PM

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

Keep reading this article...turn the page!

Lets Ask Bill W.

Continued...

Fortunately, Mr. Link was satisfied with this view of the use that we were making of the alcoholic's illness. I am glad to report that nearly all theologians who have since thought about this matter have also agreed with that early position. While it is most obvious that free will in the matter of alcohol has virtually disappeared in most cases, we A.A. 's do point out that plenty of free will is left in other areas, It certainly takes a large amount of willingness, and a great exertion of the will to accept and practice the A.A. program. It is by this very exertion of the will that the alcoholic corresponds with the grace by which his drinking obsession can be expelled. (N.C.C.A. 'Blue Book', Vol.12, 1960)

Question 2. Mental Obsession — What is meant by mental obsession and the obsessional character of alcoholism?

Answer: Well, as I understand it, we are all born with the freedom of choice. The degree of this varies from person to person, and from area to area in our lives. In the case of neurotic people, our instincts take on certain patterns and directions, sometimes so compulsive they cannot be broken by any ordinary effort of the will. The alcoholic's compulsion to drink is like that.

As a smoker, for example, I have a deeply ingrained habit - I'm almost an addict. But I do not think that this habit is an actual obsession. Doubtless it could be broken by an act of my own will. If badly enough hurt, I could in all probability give up tobacco. Should smoking repeatedly land me in Bellevue Hospital, I doubt that I would make the trip many times before quitting. But with my alcoholism, well, that was something else again. No amount of desire to stop, no amount of punishment, could enable me to quit. What was once a habit of drinking became an obsession of drinking - genuine lunacy.

Perhaps a little more should be said about the obsessional character of alcoholism. When our fellowship was about three years old some of us called on Dr. Lawrence Kolb, then Assistant Surgeon General of the United States. He said that our report of progress had given him his first hope for alcoholics in general. Not long before, the U.S. Public Health Department had thought of trying to do something about the alcoholic situation. After a careful survey of the obsessional character of our malady, this had been given up. Indeed, Dr. Kolb felt that dope addicts had a far better chance. Accordingly, the government had built a hospital for their treatment at Lexington, Kentucky. But for alcoholics - well, there simply wasn't any use at all, so he thought.

Nevertheless, many people still go on insisting that the alcoholic is not a sick man - that he is simply weak or willful, and sinful. Even today we often hear the remark "That drunk could get well if he wanted to."

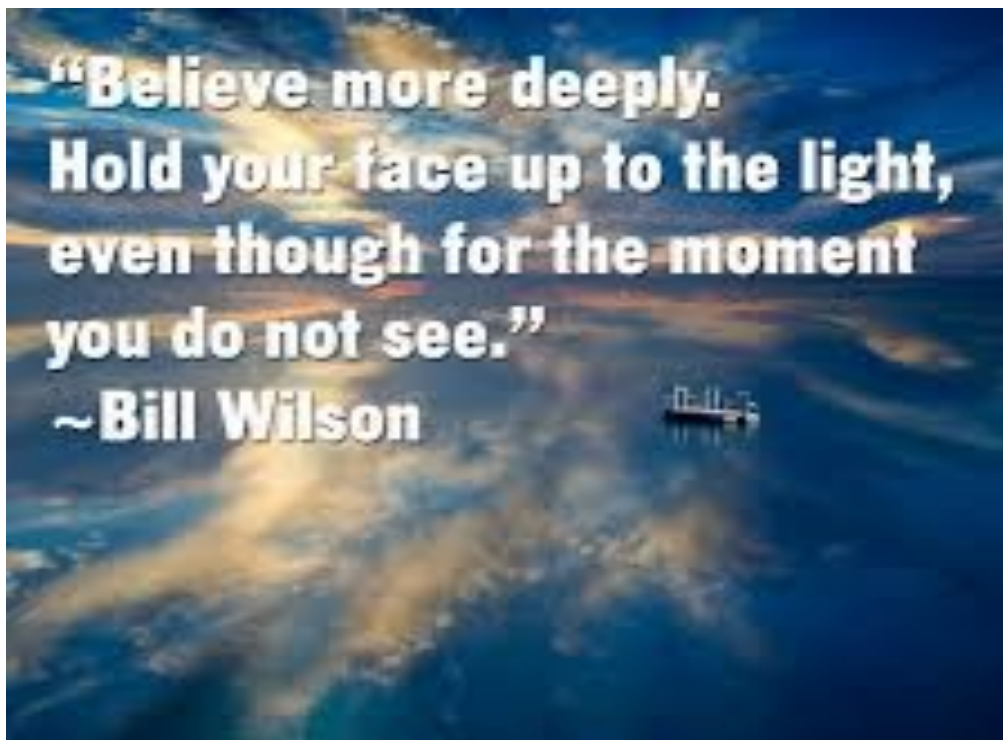
There is no doubt, too, that the deeply obsessional character of the alcoholic's drinking is obscured by the fact that drinking is a socially acceptable custom. By contrast, stealing, or let us say shop-lifting, is not. Practically everybody has heard of that form of lunacy known as kleptomania. Oftentimes kleptomaniacs are splendid people in all other respects. Yet they are under an absolute compulsion to steal - just for the kick. A kleptomaniac enters a store and pockets a piece of merchandise. He is arrested and lands in the police station. The judge gives him a jail term. He is stigmatized and humiliated. Just like the alcoholic, he swears that never, never will he do this again.

Lets Ask Bill W. Continued...

On his release from the jail, he wanders down the street past a department store. Unaccountably he is drawn inside. He sees, for example, a red tin fire truck, a child's toy. He instantly forgets all about his misery in the jail. He begins to rationalize. He says, "Well, this little fire engine is of no real value. The store won't miss it." So he pockets the toy, the store detective collars him, he is right back in the clink. Everybody recognizes this type of stealing as sheer lunacy.

Now, let's compare this behavior with that of an alcoholic. He, too, has landed in jail. He has already lost family and friends. He suffers heavy stigma and guilt. He has been physically tortured by his hangover. Like the klepto-maniac he swears that he will never get into this fix again. Perhaps he actually knows that he is an alcoholic. He may understand just what that means and may be fully aware of what the fearful risk of that first drink is.

Upon his release from jail, the alcoholic behaves just like the kleptomaniac. He passes a bar and at the first temptation may say, "No, I must not go inside there; liquor is not for me." But when he arrives at the next drinking place, he is gripped by a rationalization. Perhaps he says, "Well, one beer won't hurt me. After all, beer isn't liquor." Completely unmindful of his recent miseries, he steps inside. He takes that fatal first drink. The following day, the police have him again. His fellow citizens continue to say that he is weak or willful. Actually he is just as crazy as the kleptomaniac ever was. At this stage, his free will in regard to alcoholism has evaporated. He cannot very well be held accountable for his behavior. (The N.C.C.A. 'Blue Book', Vol. 12, 1960)



Bookstore News

“Take me to your Sponsor” Has Arrived!

“Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past,” our co-founder, Bill W., writes in *Alcoholics Anonymous*. “But why shouldn’t we laugh? We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others.”



Congratulations!

MARC T. — 33 YRS.

PHYLLIS — 44 YRS.

DICK — 40 YRS.

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

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

Gratitude Dinner

November 23, 2019 5:30 pm-9:15 pm

*First Presbyterian Church
4300 Main St, Vancouver, WA 98663*

*Speaker ~ Kendra D.
from Los Angeles, CA*

Dinner – Pork & Chicken

- *5:30 pm – 7:00 Social hour*
- *7:00 pm – 7:10 Serenity Prayer & welcome guests*
- *7:10 pm – 8:05 Dinner*
- *8:05 pm – 8:25 Raffle*
- *8:30 pm – 9:00 Speaker*
- *9:00 pm 9:10 pm break*
- *9:15 Close with the Lord's Prayer*

AAGRAPEVINE

From the February 1948 magazine.

Calls for Restatement of A.A. Purposes

A.A. helps the individual alcoholic create within himself a spiritual and physiological change. A.A. is not trying to start a mass movement for the betterment of the whole human race.

A.A.s are banded together not for the purpose of educating the general public on the problems of alcoholism but for the prime purpose of helping the individual alcoholic with his individual alcoholic problem.

A.A. as a society is not primarily interested in hospitalization, psychiatry or theology. Those are all a part of the education of the individual alcoholic and he learns to use as much or as little of them as he needs as an individual in the solution of his personal alcoholic problem.

A.A. is not a cure for alcoholism. There is no known cure for the disease of alcoholism. A.A. is a society of alcoholics who have found a successful method of staying sober and who are trying to pass that information on to other alcoholics who are honestly looking for a way to rid themselves of the obsession to drink.

A.A. did not come into being to make a public show of the alcoholic--he can and does that job expertly himself--but rather to give the individual alcoholic a sanctuary where he could find the help he needed from other individuals.

A.A. exists today, not because of the vast amount of publicity it did and does receive, but rather in spite of it. The reason it does exist today is because it does continue to help the individual alcoholic and shows him how he cannot only help himself but can help others who have the same disease, and shows him how he can in this way make amends for some of the havoc he has created in the world--and shows him how he can do this and still remain anonymous himself if that is his wish.

A.A. does not exist today because of the misguided efforts of some individuals in A.A. who wish to hang the alcoholic up on a clothes line.

A.A. needs today to take an inventory of itself and find out whether or not we have or are being crowded off the main course by these misguided individuals who, seeking self-aggrandizement, are using A.A. for their own selfish interests and not caring who knows about them, are forgetting that maybe the newcomer and some of the others do not care to wash their dirty linen in public.

Don't misunderstand me; I am not as an individual ashamed of the fact that I'm an alcoholic. As an individual I'm proud of the fact that I had courage enough to admit it and then did something about that admission by joining A.A. I'm very much of the belief that A.A. has done its part in arousing the interest of the general public, the medical profession, the ministry, and the judiciary.

Having accomplished that, we should turn the scientific part of the alcoholic problem over to the agencies that have been created for this express purpose, and go back to the original and prime purpose for which A.A. came into being.

A.A. must leave to others the answers to: What is the disease of alcoholism? How can it be prevented? How can it be cured? What causes some individuals to become alcoholic?

This article is continued on page 11

Group Contributions and Financial Statements

Financial Statements

Contributions for September	Group Name	Contributions Year to Date
	12X12	146.00
	159th Street Women's Group	250.00
6.00	AA Rainbow Miracles	8.00
316.40	A New Morning	2,783.64
	Amboy Renegades	35.00
	As Bill Sees It	640.25
100.00	As We Recovered	150.00
500.00	Battleground AA	500.00
	Birds of a Feather	100.00
171.42	B & P	246.42
	Cascade Group	100.00
	Cascade Locks Spiritual Brkfst.	75.00
	Chapter Nine	238.12
9.73	Camas Group	156.06
	Cornerstone Group	45.00
	District 7	10.00
	Doing Right on Thursday Night	25.00
	Early Birds	292.20
	Early Light	52.00
	East County Women's Group	50.00
80.00	Eastside Brown Baggers	680.00
	Easier Softer Way	55.00
	Fireside	605.00
81.02	First Shot	521.96
76.24	Fresh Start	654.15
	From the Book	146.75
	Gorge Gals-North Bonneville	50.00
	Hokinson	192.01
	La Center Group	31.58
60.00	Ladies Big Book Study	60.00
	Lewis River AA	125.96
	Lighthouse	380.00
	McGuilivray Study Group	866.72
	Men's Eastside	300.00
100.00	Men's Fireside	400.00
	Minnihaha	250.00
300.00	Miracles at Noon	3,009.70
	Ready and Willing	42.72
	Reconciled	281.71
	Renegades	35.00
	Ridgefield AA	148.98
	Rock Bottom Recovery	115.00
	Round Table Group	334.40
160.00	Saturday Night Big Book Study	654.00
40.00	She Who Remembers	220.00
	Sober Uppers	25.00
	Step Sisters	293.31
300.00	Stevenson AA	700.00
	Sunday Night Alternative	40.00
	Sunday Solutions	1,636.35
	There is a Solution	173.15
	Wayfarer's	88.70
97.08	Wednesday Night Recovery	543.76
	Welcome Home	98.17
	West Vancouver Group	62.36
	Wine to Water	40.60
	Women's Fireside	200.00
85.00	Women in Sobriety	240.00
2,482.89	SUBTOTAL	20,204.73
179.00	Miscellaneous/Individual	2,257.25
2,661.89	TOTAL	22,461.98

	September (\$)	YTD (\$)
Revenue		
Sales	3,526	37,558
Group Contributions	2,483	20,204
Fundraising/Picnic	0	0
Misc. Income	165	1,142
Individual Contributions	179	2,257
Total Revenue	6,353	61,161
Expenses		
Cost of goods sold	2,072	21,242
Fundraising Expenses	67	67
Merchant Services	75	745
Office supplies	238	1,378
Equipment rent	126	1,755
Building rent	757	8,481
Utilities	671	3,636
Net Wages	1,370	18,091
Payroll taxes	1,428	5,553
Insurance	0	343
Licenses	182	266
Travel and Meetings	0	79
Remodel Project	0	1,781
Total Expenses	6,985	63,416
Net Income /(Loss)	(632)	(2,255)

September Bottom Line

- Total Revenue – Total Expenses = (\$632)

- For the month of September, we did (\$431) worse than forecasted

-Year-to-date doing \$1,110 better than forecast

Septemeber 2019 Cash Balances

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

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous Steering Committee meeting of September 9, 2019

Attendance: Marc, Chris, Dee, Cassia, Phil and Evelyn, visitor from East Side Brown Baggers

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

Hotline: Patrick submitted a written report. Please see attached report for opportunities to volunteer for the hot line and 12-step.

Treasury: See attached report. The office is financially stable and is currently doing better than forecasted.

Office: Marc has applied for non-profit status which if approved will provide us with Microsoft Suite for approximately the same cost as our current back-up system.

Events: Laurie and Cassia met with Shari, events chair, regarding the open house and discussing future events. Due to the probability of rain the open house (9/21/19, 10am-2pm) will serve pizza rather than doing BBQ.

New Business: None (seriously, none whatsoever).

Closing: The meeting closed at 6:14 pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Yours in Service

Phil B.



Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes

VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS **Meeting Minutes: Intergroup Representatives meeting of 9/16/19**

Attendance:

Mark O, Reconciled	Kasmir Z, East Side BB	Phil B, Central Group
Chris C, Rock Bottom	Shari W, Sunday Women's Lit	Chris H*, MSG
Robin M, Fireside	Cassia N*, Office Mgr./Wm Fireside	Warren R, New Morning
Dusty G, Cornerstone	Ton S, Men's Fireside	Dave C, 1 st Shot
Julie E, Sunday Solutions	Michelle, Dry Tribe & Women in Act.	Patrick M*, MSG
Ryan S, MSG		*Non-Voting

Opening:

The meeting was opened at 6:30pm with the Serenity Prayer and with the reading of the purpose of the Intergroup. Dusty did a presentation of the 9th Tradition. Minutes from the 8/12/19 and 9/9/19 Steering Committee meeting were read. Minutes from the 8/19/19 IG meeting were accepted.

Hotline:

Patrick reported that there are openings on the hotline for Sunday 9am-noon, Saturday 9am-noon and Saturday noon-3pm. There is a need for more 12-Step volunteers in the outlying areas and women in all areas.

Treasury:

Please see attached report. The office is financially stable and doing better than forecasted. The next finance committee meeting will be 10/14/19 at 5:30pm immediately before the IG meeting. Questions/concerns should be emailed in advance so appropriate data is readily available.

Office:

No new information to report.

Outreach:

Dusty reported that visits are being made to groups/meetings and that he has 11 more meeting on his list that he intends to visit.

Events:

Shari reported that the open house for 9/21/19 is ready to happen.

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes

Continued...

Old Business/Saturday Office:

Opening the office on Saturdays is still a project in the works. Flyers will be made available. Interested volunteers should contact Cassia at the office.

Old Business/Gratitude Dinner:

Gratitude dinner is 11/23/19 at the First Presbyterian Church. Kendra D from Los Angeles will be the speaker. Save the date flyers are available.

New Business:

None

Group/District News:

Mark is seeking support for the Reconciled.

Warren reported that A New Morning will hold a workshop on sponsorship 9/29/19 following the regular meeting: 8:45am-10:45am.

Closing:

The meeting was closed at 6:51pm with the Serenity Prayer.

Yours in Service,



Phil B.

From experience, I've realized that I cannot go back and make a brand-new start. But through A.A., I can start from now and make a brand-new end.

Alcoholics Anonymous

A.A. has only one reason for its existence, that is to help the individual alcoholic with his individual alcoholic problem. If we lose sight of that or allow A.A. to be crowded off that main course we will be guilty of killing the goose that laid the golden egg for us. And when we kill that goose we will kill ourselves.

A.A. cannot do its job and allow itself to become involved in the mass alcoholic problem because that job involves organization, finance, and leadership, all of which are dynamite to the program of life set forth in the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

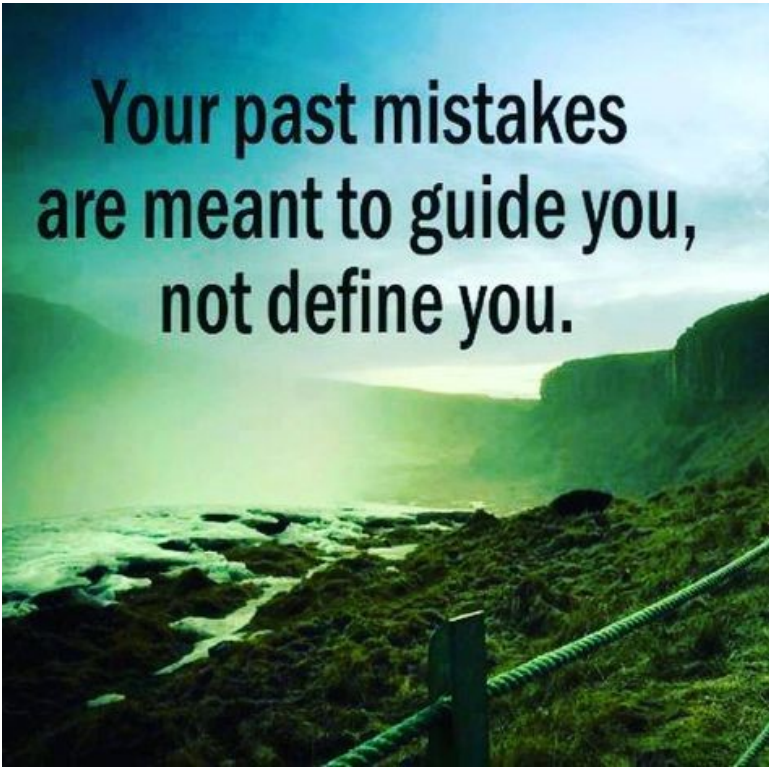
A.A. teaches us the broad principles of true democracy plus the spirit of true Christianity, and those go out the door when we build an organization out of A.A.

Every member of A.A. today should ask himself this question: Am I doing what I'm doing in the name of A.A. because of a true desire on my part to help the individual alcoholic or am I, deep inside me, looking forward to the time when I will be known as the man who helped put A.A. on the map as a big time organization, with hopes that I will receive the homage due me as a great benefactor of mankind?

A.A.'s continued existence depends on our coming up with the right answer and that answer must be an honest, fearless and lasting one.

-- J.F.H.

San Diego, California



Your past mistakes
are meant to guide you,
not define you.

This article is continued from page 6

Upcoming Events

November 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1. Friday Night Happy Hour Speaker Mtg.: 7:30 pm	2. OB's Speaker Mtg.: 7:30 PM
3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9. Wayfarer's Speaker Mtg.: 7:00 pm
10.	11. Steering Committee Mtg.: 6:00 pm	12.	13.	14.	15.	16. Rule 62 Speaker Mtg.: 7 :00 pm
17.	18. Intergroup Rep. Mtg.:6:30 pm	19.	20.	21. District 7 GSR Mtg.: 7 pm	22. Central Group's Birthday Meeting: 8:00 pm	23. Gratitude Dinner 5:30-9:15pm
24. ♦ Sideways Sunday Potluck: 7:30am ♦ Carson Potluck: 6:30 pm. Speaker: 7:00 pm ♦ Hokinson Potluck: 6:00 pm ♦ Sober Sickos:7:30 pm	25.	26. District 37 Mtg.: 7:00 pm	27.	28. District 7 GSR Mtg.: 7 pm	29.	30.

For a full description of each of these upcoming events including locations, visit the events page on our website at:
www.vancouveraa.org

Alcoholics Anonymous - Newsweek, February 19, 1940

Alcoholics Anonymous

Science Column

Medicine usually claims to cure only about 2 per cent of the cases of acute alcoholism it treats. Last week a non-medical group appeared which made the unusual claim that 25 per cent of its cases were cured. Called Alcoholics Anonymous, the group was a club composed of ex-drunkards and men trying to overcome the liquor habit who, for obvious reasons, prefer their names to remain unknown. Not particularly anxious for publicity, it nevertheless came into the limelight last Thursday evening when John D. Rockefeller Jr. gave a dinner party for educators and others interested in the club's work.

The organization has existed for more than four years; yet it has spread its gospel only by word-of-mouth advertising and a free book.

It started with two members; today it has something around 500. It has no dues, but it does have a strict membership requirement: an honest desire to stop drinking.

The founder was a commercial traveler who found himself obsessed with liquor and was unable to get cured at any of the sanitariums he tried. Finally, though he was an agnostic, he turned to what for want of a better name might be called faith. Immediately he got help in the form of his own determination to stop drinking; almost as soon, he was impelled to help another drinker cure himself in the same manner.

From these two men sprang the society and its three principles of (1) telling another person--a friend, a member of the group, perhaps even a priest, in the case of a Roman Catholic--of the trouble that has turned him to drink, (2) resolving to abstain henceforth; (3) helping others to abstain. In short, members subordinate a desire for liquor for something higher--call it God, Buddha, faith, self-determination, or what you will.

Today the society has branches in Akron, Cleveland, Chicago, and the New York metropolitan area. It meets in small groups at various members' houses and keeps the address of its headquarters as secret as its - members' names--giving out only two post-office box numbers in New York, one for general inquiries and the other for requests for its book. Through the generosity of men who have conquered alcoholism and of onlookers like Rockefeller, who does not drink but is interested in movements to eradicate drunkenness, it raises a budget for salaries of its directors and stenographers, rent, and stationery.

(Source: *Newsweek*, February 19, 1940)



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.

TIME OUT

A member was asked to speak at a new meeting and got a little carried away. After talking for nearly two hours, he finally realized what he was doing and said, "I'm sorry I talked so long. You see, I left my watch at home."

An old-timer in the back of the room hollered out, "There's a calendar behind you!"

—O.P., Amherst, Nova Scotia, April 2017

*This joke can be found on page 22 of "Take Me to Your Sponsor"
AA Grapevine

The Vancouver Area Intergroup

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