

Vancouver Area Intergroup of
Alcoholics Anonymous

September/October 2019
Volume 21

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Primary Purpose

VANCOUVER AREA
INTERGROUP

The story behind the Jack Alexander article on A.A.

On March 1, 1941, *The Saturday Evening Post* published an article titled "Alcoholics Anonymous: Freed Slaves of Drink, Now They Free Others" written by Jack Alexander. The article became a major turning point in Alcoholics Anonymous' history.

The story behind the article begins when the owner of *The Saturday Evening Post*, Judge Curtis Bok, learned of A.A. from two friends. He was interested in having the *Post* tell the story of the organization and called upon well-known journalist of *The Saturday Evening Post*, Jack Alexander, to do so.



Undated picture of Jack Alexander

This article was found at https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/jack-alexander-article

Keep reading this article...turn the page!

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Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. – 10/14@6:00 PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. – 10/21@6:30 PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. –10/22 @7:00 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. - 10/24 @7:00 PM

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

The story behind the Jack Alexander article on A.A. Continued...

Bill W., co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, eager to publicize the A.A. message, met with Alexander. He gave Alexander access to records, a tour of significant A.A. sights, and set up interviews with both nonalcoholic trustees of the General Service Board and A.A.s.

Correspondence between Jack Alexander and Bill W. from early 1941 shows the excitement felt in anticipation of the article's release. On January 4, 1941, Alexander wrote to Bill W. and enclosed a manuscript of the article for Bill to read. On January 6 Bill replied and from his response the eagerness for the article's release is apparent. Bill wrote:

I wish I could adequately convey to you the sense of gratitude that one of us feels towards you and the Saturday Post for what is about to take place. You can not possibly conceive the direct alleviation of so much misery as will be brought to an end through your pen and your good publishers.

For many a day you will be the toast of A.A.- in coca cola, of course!

Following the March 1, 1941 release of the article, inquiries began to flood in, leaving the small staff of the "A.A. Headquarters," the precursor to the General Service Office, busy. On March 12, 1941 Ruth Hock, first non-alcoholic secretary of A.A., wrote to Dr. Bob, A.A. co-founder, to update him on what was going on in New York. She said that the office had become swamped, 918 inquiries in 12 days as a direct response to the article.

The offices of *The Saturday Evening Post* also received a large number of inquiries. A March 26, 1941, bulletin by the *Post* relays the power behind the article.



Cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*, March 1, 1941

Following the publication of "Alcoholics Anonymous" by Jack Alexander, the Post floor received an unusually large mail from readers, much of it asking how contact could be established with groups who are doing this work in various cities. There were several instances of calls on our branch offices for information on local organizations of this unusual group.

Eight years after the release of the wildly successful 1941 *Saturday Evening Post* article Bill W. wrote to Jack Alexander with a request. Bill W. was interested in a follow-up article and was hoping Alexander would write one, and on June 8, 1949, Bill W. wrote the following:

If you can spare me a little time, I'd like to come down to Philadelphia and see you. Eight years ago the Saturday Evening Post took AA out of the pioneering stage and made it a movement. Uncounted thousands owe their great good fortune, yes their very lives, to what the Post did then. We still ship reprints of your article by the carload.

Nowadays AA rarely asks for publicity. I suppose we still get it in enormous quantities partly for that reason. Yet the time is here when an exception should be made.

The point of this letter is what I would definitely like to ask you folks a favor. Will you print another piece about us.

The general public has only the vaguest idea what our society really looks like. I think they would be interested in an inside view.

The story behind the Jack Alexander article on A.A. Continued...

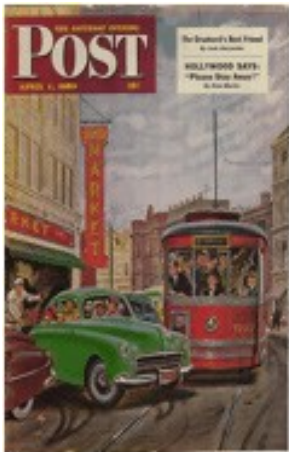
From our standpoint, a vital job has to be done. Now that the recovery formula is above ground and working at a prodigious rate, our main problem is that of maintaining our unity as a movement until every drunk in the world has had a good look at the idea.

So then, if John Q. Public could get an inside view of what our fellowship is really like, and it could become quite clear to him what good AA's do and what they don't do in their relationships with each other and with the outside world, the Saturday Evening Post would have written an insurance policy on our future, the value of which no men could ever reckon.

On June 9, Jack Alexander replied that he had always thought about writing a follow-up but had never gotten around to it. He also writes that there is trouble with the idea and says:

There is basic trouble about it, though; I don't see, offhand, where there is enough new material to justify a second look. True, the number of AA's has ballooned enormously, but that in itself is merely statistical. The basic story—the psychology of drinkers, how the AA's work on them, the steps towards arresting the habit—remains unchanged; or so it seems to me.

On December 13, 1949 Bill W. wrote to Jack Alexander outlining the major turning points in the AA movement which included the decision to leave the Oxford Group, about Rockefeller insisting they did not need money, the formation of the Alcoholic Foundation, and the first two chapters of the Big Book.



For the next few months Bill W. and Jack Alexander corresponded regarding corrections that either of them thought needed to be made to the article. Finally, eight months after Bill W. initially presented Jack Alexander with the proposed idea for a follow-up, the article was released. “The Drunkard’s Best Friend” was published in the April 1, 1950 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post*.

“The Drunkard’s Best Friend” was a success, just as its predecessor was. On April 22, 1950, Bill W. wrote to Ben Bibbs, editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*, in praise of Jack Alexander and the two articles. Bill wrote as follows:

Jack Alexander, in his recent Saturday Evening Post story “The Drunkard’s Friend,” has done it again.

Cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*, April 1, 1950

We of Alcoholics Anonymous wish to tell how immensely grateful every man-jack of us is for this happy circumstance. It is not the least exaggeration to say that Jack’s “Alcoholics Anonymous” article of nine years ago brought recovery within the reach of 10000 alcoholics and great happiness to as many homes. Since the public impression of this last piece of Jack’s is tops, we make no doubt that it will accomplish a fine result.

We know that the whole world will one day agree that these two articles of Jack’s about A.A. are to be regarded the greatest public service the Saturday Evening Post has ever done. And that’s saying a great deal, indeed.

When Jack Alexander passed away in 1975 he was credited in his *West Texas Register* obituary as the newspaperman who made “Alcoholics Anonymous a major organization by the articles he wrote about its work.” Today, the General Service Office Archives still receives inquiries requesting both articles.

Note: [A.A. World Services publishes the 1941 article in pamphlet format and sells approximately 22,000 a year.]

Bookstore News

Coming soon to your Intergroup...“Take me to your Sponsor”!

Sobriety can be tough sometimes, which is why recovering alcoholics can always use a good laugh. In AA, members learn to not take themselves too seriously, to be happy, joyous and free. Luckily, sobriety can be pretty darn amusing.

Two of the most beloved departments of Grapevine are the “At Wit’s End” jokes and the cartoons, all contributed and drawn by AA members. This book contains some of the best laughs of the last few years, dealing with meetings, sponsorship, dating and marriage, friends and coworkers, character defects and more. We hope this book brightens your day and gives you some hearty, well-earned laughs.



Congratulations!

PHIL B. .. — 27 YRS.

DEBBY B. — 33 YRS.

EVELYN M. — 31 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!



Gratitude Dinner

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, November 23, 2019

Speaker ~ Kendra D.
from Los Angeles, CA

Additional details to follow.
Doors will open at 5:30 pm.

We need Volunteers!

For more information, or
to volunteer, please call
the Intergroup Office -
360.694.3870

AAGRAPEVINE

From the September 1952 magazine.

We Meet Old Friends in AA

O, Good resolutions! Made whilst I was ill, why didst thou desert me when I was well?

Someone has suggested to me that I should record my first impressions of AA, and as this might be of interest and helpful, I am setting down what actually happened, and then my subsequent impressions of it all.

In our small city (Auckland, New Zealand--population 370,000) where all the pubs (drinking hotels) are in the main street or close by, we all know or have heard of each other, and, as I went along to my first AA meeting, I approached the ordeal anxious and fearful. This was to be my first semi-public appearance, where my mere presence was an acknowledgment that I could not control liquor. It was a very humbling experience, and I felt rather sheepish. I was, however, agreeably surprised to find that at least half of the 18 members present were known to me, and most of the remainder knew of me. I need not have worried as I met fellow sufferers there who had recently disappeared from the various pubs and now greeted me like a long lost stricken friend, offering me help and advice in all my troubles and making me completely at ease. A common affliction or catastrophe certainly does bring us humans together.

What was done for me on that evening only a month ago, gave me such a spiritual awakening, that I am up in the air, and have not yet come down.

I had been on a binge the night before; I had seen our City Probation officer (or Parole officer, as I think it is in America) that morning about my trouble and been introduced by him to my "sponsor" who turned out to be an old drinking cobbler from another town. I had not seen him for many years, and he enthusiastically invited me to go to the AA meeting that night. It was all so sudden. My sponsor evidently guessed my financial position and purchased for me what I now know to be the Big Book (it was only last week that I could repay him his outlay) and away I went home with my Big Book to help me through the sleepless nights to follow.

I went along to my sponsor's office the next morning to talk things over, and while there the telephone rang. After the conversation he looked at me and said: "Do you want a job?" "All right," I said, "Well, there's a slippee in the----Hotel. He's been there a fortnight, and hasn't eaten a thing for days. The Hotel is booked out for the coming horse races and there is no room for him as he had booked in for only a few days. Help get him out of there and take him up to the Public Hospital."

What an assignment! First day in AA, and someone off the program! I visited the chap in the hospital almost every night for the next fortnight, and during conversations ascertained that he had slipped because he got off the program. . he had failed to remind himself sufficiently and constantly of the Twelve Steps to recovery.

As to my impressions. . .on looking back over these, to me, hectic hours, I imagine in retrospect seeing myself and some convivial friends going aboard a submarine tied up to a wharf in our harbour. We know nothing about submarines, none of the crew are about, and so we shut ourselves in and have a right royal time with what we find. . .wine, women and song, but, unbeknown to us, the vessel is gradually sinking, and when we have finished celebrating, we find the submarine has completely sunk, and is lying on the bottom of the harbour near the wharf.

One of the bright lads finds out how to get out of the escape hatch, comes to the surface, scrambles up on the wharf, and with the aid of the Big Book gets "dry." He looks over the edge of the wharf to ascertain if he can see any of his mates coming up. Yes, there's one, appealing for help. After a while, he gets on the wharf too, and so

This article is continued on page 11

Contributions for August	Group Name	Contributions Year to Date
146.00	12X12	146.00
	159th Street Women's Group	250.00
	AA Rainbow Miracles	2.00
377.56	A New Morning	2,467.24
	Amboy Renegades	35.00
	As Bill Sees It	640.25
	As We Recovered	50.00
	Birds of a Feather	100.00
	B & P	75.00
	Cascade Group	100.00
	Cascade Locks Spiritual Brkfst.	75.00
50.12	Chapter Nine	238.12
34.43	Camas Group	146.33
25.00	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
	Eastside Brown Baggers	600.00
	Easier Softer Way	55.00
	Fireside	605.00
52.25	First Shot	440.94
100.46	Fresh Start	577.91
	From the Book	146.75
	Gorge Gals-North Bonneville	50.00
	Hokinson	192.01
16.50	La Center Group	31.58
	Lewis River AA	125.96
50.00	Lighthouse	380.00
	McGuilivray Study Group	866.72
300.00	Men's Eastside	300.00
100.00	Men's Fireside	300.00
	Minnihaha	250.00
340.10	Miracles at Noon	2,709.70
	Ready and Willing	42.72
	Reconciled	281.71
	Renegades	35.00
118.98	Ridgefield AA	148.98
	Rock Bottom Recovery	115.00
	Round Table Group	334.40
	Saturday Night Big Book Study	494.00
	She Who Remembers	180.00
	Sober Uppers	25.00
	Step Sisters	293.31
	Stevenson AA	400.00
	Sunday Night Alternative	40.00
460.00	Sunday Solutions	1,636.35
	There is a Solution	173.15
18.43	Wayfarer's	88.70
71.97	Wednesday Night Recovery	446.68
	Welcome Home	98.17
	West Vancouver Group	62.36
	Wine to Water	40.60
	Women's Fireside	200.00
	Women in Sobriety	155.00
2,261.80	SUBTOTAL	17,721.84
188.60	Miscellaneous/Individual	2,078.25
2,450.40	TOTAL	19,800.09

Group Contributions and Financial Statements

Financial Statements

	August (\$)	YTD (\$)
<u>Revenue</u>		
Sales	3,296	34,031
Group Contributions	2,262	17,721
Fundraising/Picnic	0	0
Misc. Income	89	977
Individual Contributions	189	2,078
Total Revenue	5,835	54,808
<u>Expenses</u>		
Cost of goods sold	1,869	19,170
Fundraising Expenses	0	0
Merchant Services	81	670
Office supplies	11	1,140
Equipment rent	188	1,629
Building rent	724	7,724
Utilities	171	2,965
Net Wages	2,545	16,722
Payroll taxes	0	4,124
Insurance	107	343
Licenses	75	85
Travel and Meetings	0	79
Remodel Project	0	1,781
Total Expenses	5,770	56,431
Net Income /(Loss)	65	(1,623)

August 2019 Cash Balances	
Main Checking	\$ 8,708
Event Account	\$ 1,400
Prudent Reserve	\$ 12,050
Petty Cash	\$ 100
Total Cash Balance	\$ 22,258

August Bottom Line

- Total Revenue – Total Expenses = (\$190)
- For the month of August, we did \$255 better than forecasted
- Year-to-date doing \$1,541 better than forecast
- Moved \$5,000 to main account from Prudent Reserve to beef up inventory before open-house

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous Steering Committee meeting of August 12, 2019

Attendance: Kasmir, Laurie, Chris, Marc (by phone), Cassia, Phil and visitors Shari and Patrick

Opening: The meeting was opened at 6:05 pm with the Serenity Prayer. Minutes from the July Steering Committee meeting were accepted. Minutes from the July Intergroup meeting were reviewed.

Hotline: We were introduced to Patrick who is making himself available to chair the committee. Patrick has reviewed the duties and responsibilities and meets the requirements. Patrick will attend the Intergroup meeting to introduce himself.

Treasury: See attached report.

Events: We were introduced to Shari who is making herself available to chair the committee. Shari has reviewed the duties and responsibilities but does not meet the “suggested” requirements. Shari will attend the Intergroup meeting to introduce herself.

Open House: The office open house is scheduled for September 21, 2019, 10:00am-2:00pm, which will include a BBQ. A tentative food budget of \$200 was approved. Flyers will be made.

Gratitude Dinner: The First Presbyterian Church (usual location) has been reserved for November 23, 2019 and a speaker has been booked. Save the date flyers will be made.

Closing: The meeting closed at 6:35 pm with the Lord’s Prayer.

Yours in Service

Phil B.



Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes

VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS INTERGROUP REPRESENTATIVE MEETING FOR AUGUST 19, 2019

Attendance:

Marc T ~ Miracles	Mark O ~ Reconciled
Shari W* ~ Ladies by the Lavender	Chris H ~ MSG
Cassia N* ~ Women's Fireside/Office Manager	Mike T ~ B & P
Wvelyn M* ~ East Side Brown Baggers	Lauri H ~ Sober Uppers
Ronnie C ~ Camas Group	David R ~ Welcome Home
Kevin P ~ Hockinson Group	Phil B ~ Central Group
Michelle ~ Dry Tribe	Dusty G ~ Cornerstone
Warren R ~ A New Morning	Patrick* ~ MSG
Shaun C ~ BGAA	Tom S ~ Men's Fireside
Robin M ~ Fireside	Richard ~ Lighthouse
Julie E ~ Sunday Solutions	Kasmir ~ East Side Brown Baggers

* Indicates non-voting member

Opening:

The meeting was opened at 6:30pm with the Serenity Prayer. Laurie did a presentation of the 8th Tradition. Minutes from the 8/12/19 Steering Committee meeting were reviewed. Minutes from the 7/15/19 Intergroup meeting were accepted with a correction. Please note in group news that "Fireside" should be "Men's Fireside".

Hotline:

The IG Reps were introduced to Patrick who made himself available to chair the committee. Patrick is aware of the duties and responsibilities. The IG Reps voted in Patrick to chair the committee.

Treasurer's Report:

Please see attached financial report. Laurie reported the IG is financially stable.

Office Report:

Cassia reported there is nothing new to report.

Old Business/Activities:

The IG Reps were introduced to Shari who made herself available to chair the committee. Shari is aware of the duties and responsibilities and the IG Reps were made aware she does fall short of the suggested guidelines. The IG Reps voted in Shari to chair the committee.

Old Business/Open House:

The office open house is scheduled for 9/21/19, 10:00am-2:00pm, which will include BBQ.

Old Business/Saturday Office:

Opening the office on Saturdays, staffed with trained volunteers, is still a project in the works.

Old Business/Gratitude Dinner:

The dinner is scheduled for 11/23/19 at the First Presbyterian Church (usual location). Kendra D from Los Angeles will be the speaker.

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes Continued...

New Business/Outreach:

Dusty reported that the committee is active and has reached out to seven groups/meetings.

Group News/Lost Member:

Laurie reported that Virginia passed away. Passed away sober. Virginia was a friend of AA and the inter-group.

Group News/Reconciled:

Mark reported that Reconciled is asking for support for their Friday big book study meeting.

Closing:

The meeting was closed at 7:04pm with the Serenity Prayer.

Yours in Service,

Phil B.

We are going to know
a new freedom and a
new happiness.

Big Book

AAGRAPEVINE

From the September 1952 magazine.

We Meet Old Friends in AA

This article is continued from page 6

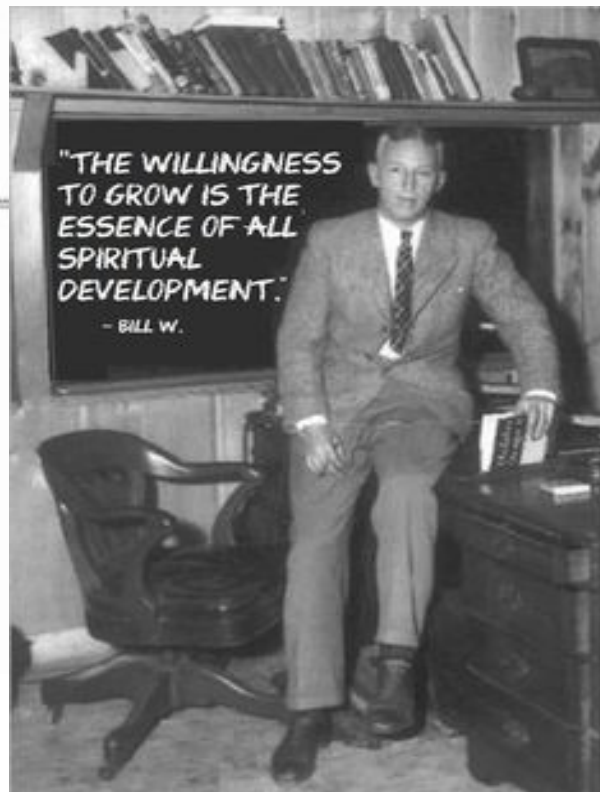
it goes on until it is my turn to come up. What a sight it is too! I see all the smiling faces on the wharf. . . I feel so foolish in all my wet clothes, but a life-line is thrown out, and many willing hands are applied to heave me up on the wharf.

I am now on the wharf feeling fine, getting dry, and in my turn looking to see if any more are coming up, when all of a sudden up goes a cry, "Man over-board." Someone has failed to steady himself on the wharf, got too near the edge and fallen into the tide again. Can we get him out before he sinks? God knows.

I think that impression of the workings of AA will last with me for a long time. I hope it will.

-- Aleck

Auckland, New Zealand



Upcoming Events

October 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4 Friday Night Happy Hour Speaker Mtg.: 7:30 pm	5 OB's Speaker Mtg.: 7:30 PM
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Wayfarer's Speaker Mtg.: 7:00 pm
13	14 Steering Committee Mtg.: 6:00 pm	15	16	17	18	19 Rule 62 Speaker Mtg.: 7 :00 pm
20	21 Intergroup Rep. Mtg.:6:30 pm	22 District 37 Mtg.: 7:00 pm	23	24 District 7 GSR Mtg.: 7 pm	25 Central Group's Birthday Meeting: 8:00 pm	26
27 ♦ Sideways Sunday Potluck: 7:30am ♦ Carson Potluck: 6:30 pm. Speaker: 7:00 pm ♦ Hokinson Potluck: 6:00 pm ♦ Sober Sickos:7:30 pm	28	29	30	31		

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

www.vancouveraa.org

AAGRAPEVINE

From the December 1947 magazine.

New A.A. Booklet Mailed

An important new pamphlet, *A.A. Tradition*, by Bill W., already has been mailed to the group secretaries. Enough copies have been sent to enable every member to obtain one free of charge. Be sure to ask your secretary for a copy.

The pamphlet, a 48-page booklet, contains a foreword by Bill; the 12 Points of Tradition to assure A.A.'s future; discussions on anonymity, money, hospitalization, clubs, incorporation, the A.A. General Service Center and other reprints from *The A.A. Grapevine*.

Although there is no charge for the first distribution of the booklet, additional copies may be obtained for 10 cents each by writing Works Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex, New York 17, N. Y.



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

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