

Vancouver Area Intergroup of
Alcoholics Anonymous

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VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP

Primary Purpose

A Fragment Of History

By Bill W.

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AA's are always asking: "Where did the Twelve Steps come from?" In the last analysis, perhaps nobody knows. Yet some of the events which led to their formulation are as clear to me as though they took place yesterday.

So far as people were concerned, the main channels of inspiration for our Steps were three in number — the Oxford Groups, Dr. William D. Silkworth of Townes Hospital and the famed psychologist, William James, called by some the father of modern psychology. The story of how these streams of influence were brought together and how they led to the writing of our Twelve Steps is exciting and in spots downright incredible.

Many of us will remember the Oxford Groups as a modern evangelical movement which flourished in the 1920's and early 30's, led by a one-time Lutheran minister, Dr. Frank Buchman. The Oxford Groups of that day threw heavy emphasis on personal work, one member with another. AA's Twelfth Step had its origin in that vital practice. The moral backbone of the "O.G." was absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love. They also practiced a type of confession, which they called "sharing"; the making of amends for harms done they called "restitution." They believed deeply in their "quiet time," a meditation practiced by groups and individuals alike, in which the guidance of God was sought for every detail of living, great or small.

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Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. –
01/11@6:00 PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. –
01/18@6:30 PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. –01/26
@7:00 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. - 01/28
@7:00 PM
- ◆ District 27 Business Mtg. -
01/16 @ 12 PM

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

A Fragment of History Continued...

These basic ideas were not new; they could have been found elsewhere. But the saving thing for us first alcoholics who contacted the Oxford Groupers was that they laid great stress on these particular principles. And fortunate for us was the fact that the Groupers took special pains not to interfere with one's personal religious views. Their society, like ours later on, saw the need to be strictly non-denominational.

In the late summer of 1934, my well-loved alcoholic friend and schoolmate "Ebby" had fallen in with these good folks and had promptly sobered up. Being an alcoholic, and rather on the obstinate side, he hadn't been able to "buy" all the Oxford Group ideas and attitudes. Nevertheless, he was moved by their deep sincerity and felt mighty grateful for the fact that their ministrations had, for the time being, lifted his obsession to drink.

When he arrived in New York in the late fall of 1934, Ebby thought at once of me. On a bleak November day he rang up. Soon he was looking at me across our kitchen table at 182 Clinton Street, Brooklyn, New York. As I remember that conversation, he constantly used phrases like these: "I found I couldn't run my own life;" "I had to get honest with myself and somebody else;" "I had to make restitution for the damage I had done;" "I had to pray to God for guidance and strength, even though I wasn't sure there was any God;" "And after I'd tried hard to do these things I found that my craving for alcohol left." Then over and over Ebby would say something like this: "Bill, it isn't a bit like being on the water wagon. You don't fight the desire to drink — you get released from it. I never had such a feeling before."

Such was the sum of what Ebby had extracted from his Oxford Group friends and had transmitted to me that day. While these simple ideas were not new, they certainly hit me like tons of brick. Today we understand just why that was...one alcoholic was talking to another as no one else can.

Two or three weeks later, December 11th to be exact, I staggered into the Charles B. Townes Hospital, that famous drying-out emporium on Central Park West, New York City. I'd been there before, so I knew and already loved the doctor in charge — Dr. Silkworth. It was he who was soon to contribute a very great idea without which AA could never have succeeded. For years he had been proclaiming alcoholism an illness, an obsession of the mind coupled with an allergy of the body. By now I knew this meant me. I also understood what a fatal combination these twin ogres could be. Of course, I'd once hoped to be among the small percentage of victims who now and then escape their vengeance. But this outside hope was now gone. I was about to hit bottom. That verdict of science — the obsession that condemned me to drink and the allergy that condemned me to die — was about to do the trick. That's where the medical science, personified by this benign little doctor, began to fit it in. Held in the hands of one alcoholic talking to the next, this double-edged truth was a sledgehammer which could shatter the tough alcoholic's ego at depth and lay him wide open to the grace of God.

In my case it was of course Dr. Silkworth who swung the sledge while my friend Ebby carried to me the spiritual principles and the grace which brought on my sudden spiritual awakening at the hospital three days later. I immediately knew that I was a free man. And with this astonishing experience came a feeling of wonderful certainty that great numbers of alcoholics might one day enjoy the priceless gift which had been bestowed upon me.

Third Influence

At this point a third stream of influence entered my life through the pages of William James' book, "Varieties of Religious Experience." Somebody had brought it to my hospital room. Following my sudden experience, Dr. Silkworth had taken great pains to convince me that I was not hallucinated. But William James did even more. Not only, he said, could spiritual experiences make people saner, they could transform men and women so that they could do, feel and believe what had hitherto been impossible to them. It mattered little whether these awakenings were sudden or gradual, their variety could be almost infinite. But the biggest payoff of that noted book was this: in most of the cases described, those who had been transformed were hopeless people. In some controlling area of their lives they had met absolute defeat. Well, that was me all right. In complete defeat, with no hope or faith whatever, I had made an appeal to a higher Power. I had taken Step One of today's AA program — "admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable." I'd also take Step Three — "made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to God as we understood him." Thus was I set free. It was just as simple, yet just as mysterious, as that.

These realizations were so exciting that I instantly joined up with the Oxford Groups. But to their consternation I insisted on devoting myself exclusively to drunks. This was disturbing to the O.G.'s on two counts. Firstly, they wanted to help save the whole world. Secondly, their luck with drunks had been poor. Just as I joined they had been working over a batch of alcoholics who had proved disappointing indeed. One of them, it was rumored, had flippantly cast his shoe through a valuable stained glass window of an Episcopal church across the alley from O.G. headquarters. Neither did they take kindly to my repeated declaration that it shouldn't take long to sober up all the drunks in the world. They rightly declared that my conceit was still immense.

Something Missing

After some six months of violent exertion with scores of alcoholics which I found at a nearby mission and Townes Hospital, it began to look like the Groupers were right. I hadn't sobered up anybody. In Brooklyn we always had a houseful of drinkers living with us, sometimes as many as five. My valiant wife, Lois, once arrived home from work to find three of them fairly tight. They were whaling each other with two-by-fours. Though events like these slowed me down somewhat, the persistent conviction that a way to sobriety could be found never seemed to leave me. There was, though, one bright spot. My sponsor, Ebby, still clung precariously to his new-found sobriety.

What was the reason for all these fiascoes? If Ebby and I could achieve sobriety, why couldn't all the rest find it too? Some of those we'd worked on certainly wanted to get well. We speculated day and night why nothing much had happened to them. Maybe they couldn't stand the spiritual pace of the Oxford Group's four absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. In fact some of the alcoholics declared that this was the trouble. The aggressive pressure upon them to get good overnight would make them fly high as geese for a few weeks and then flop dismally. They complained, too, about another form of coercion — something the Oxford Groupers called "guidance for others." A "team" composed of non-alcoholic Groupers would sit down with an alcoholic and after a "quiet time" would come up with precise instructions as to how the alcoholic should run his own life. As grateful as we were to our O.G. friends, this was sometimes tough to take. It obviously had something to do with the wholesale skidding that went on.

A Fragment of History Continued...

But this wasn't the entire reason for failure. After months I saw the trouble was mainly in me. I had become very aggressive, very cocksure. I talked a lot about my sudden spiritual experience, as though it was something very special. I had been playing the double role of teacher and preacher. In my exhortations I'd forgotten all about the medical side of our malady, and that need for deflation at depth so emphasized by William James had been neglected. We weren't using that medical sledgehammer that Dr. Silkworth had so providentially given us.

Finally, one day, Dr. Silkworth took me back down to my right size. Said he, "Bill, why don't you quit talking so much about that bright light experience of yours, it sounds too crazy. Though I'm convince that nothing but better morals will make alcoholics really well, I do think you have got the cart before the horse. The point is that alcoholics won't buy all this moral exhortation until they convince themselves that they must. If I were you I'd go after them on the medical basis first. While it is never done any good for me to tell them how fatal their malady is, it might be a very different story if you, a formerly hopeless alcoholic, gave them the bad news. Bemuse of this identification you naturally have with alcoholics, you might be able to penetrate where I can't. Give them the medical business first, and give it to them hard. This might soften them up so they will accept the principles that will really get them well."

Then Came Akron

Shortly after this history-making conversation, I found myself in Akron, Ohio, on a business venture which promptly collapsed. Alone in the town, I was scared to death of getting drunk. I was no longer a teacher or a preacher, I was an alcoholic who knew that he needed another alcoholic as much as that one could possibly need me. Driven by that urge, I was soon face to face with Dr. Bob. It was at once evident that Dr. Bob knew more of the spiritual things than I did. He also had been in touch with the Oxford Groupers at Akron. But somehow he simply couldn't get sober. Following Dr. Silkworth's advice, I used the medical sledgehammer. I told him what alcoholism was and just how fatal it could be. Apparently this did something to Dr. Bob. On June 10, 1935, he sobered up, never to drink again. When, in 1939, Dr. Bob's story first appeared in the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, he put one paragraph of it in italics. Speaking of me, he said: *"Of far more importance was the fact that he was the first living human with whom I had ever talked, who knew what he was talking about in regard to alcoholism from actual experience."*

The Missing Link

Dr. Silkworth had indeed supplied us the missing link without which the chain of principles now forged into our Twelve Steps could never have been complete. Then and there, the spark that was to become Alcoholics Anonymous had been struck.

During the next three years after Dr. Bob's recovery our growing groups at Akron, New York and Cleveland evolved the so-called word-of-mouth program of our pioneering time. As we commenced to form a society separate from the Oxford Group, we began to state our principles something like this:

1. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol
2. We got honest with ourselves
3. We got honest with another person, in confidence
4. We made amends for harms done others
5. We worked with other alcoholics without demand for prestige or money
6. We prayed to God to help us to do these things as best we could

Though these principles were advocated according to the whim or liking of each of us, and though in Akron and Cleveland they still stuck by the O.G. absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, this was the gist of our message to incoming alcoholics up to 1939, when our present Twelve Steps were put to paper.

I well remember the evening on which the Twelve Steps was written. I was lying in bed quite dejected and suffering from one of my imaginary ulcer attacks. Four chapters of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, had been roughed out and read in meetings at Akron and New York. We quickly found that everybody wanted to be an author. The hassles as to what should go into our new book were terrific. For example, some wanted a purely psychological book which would draw in alcoholics without scaring them. We could tell them about the “God business” afterwards. A few, led by our wonderful southern friend, Fitz M., wanted a fairly religious book infused with some of the dogma we had picked up from the churches and missions which had tried to help us. The louder the arguments, the more I felt in the middle. It appeared that I wasn’t going to be the author at all. I was only going to be an umpire who would decide the contents of the book. This didn’t mean, though, that there wasn’t terrific enthusiasm for the undertaking. Every one of us was wildly excited at the possibility of getting our message before all those countless alcoholics who still didn’t know.

Having arrived at Chapter Five, it seemed high time to state what our program really was. I remember running over in my mind the word-of-mouth phrases then in current use. Jotting these down, they added up to the six named above. Then came the idea that our program ought to be more accurately and clearly stated. Distant readers would have to have a precise set of principles. Knowing the alcoholic’s ability to rationalize, something airtight would have to be written. We couldn’t let the reader wiggle out anywhere. Besides, a more complete statement would help in the chapters to come where we would need to show exactly how the recovery program ought to be worked.

12 Steps in 30 Minutes

At length I began to write on a cheap yellow tablet. I split the word-of-mouth program up into smaller pieces, meanwhile enlarging its scope considerably. Uninspired as I felt, I was surprised that in a short time, perhaps half an hour, I had set down certain principles which, on being counted, turned out to be twelve in number. And for some unaccountable reason, I had moved the idea of God into the Second Step, right up front. Besides, I had named God very liberally throughout the other steps. In one of the steps I had even suggested that the new-comer get down on his knees.

When this document was shown to our New York meeting the protests were many and loud. Our agnostic friends didn’t go at all for the idea of kneeling. Others said we were talking altogether too much about God. And anyhow, why should there be twelve steps when we had done fine on six? Let’s keep it simple, they said.

This sort of heated discussion went on for days and nights. But out of it all there came a ten-strike for Alcoholics Anonymous. Our agnostic contingent, spearheaded by Hank P. and Jim B., finally convinced us that we must make it easier for people like themselves by using such terms as “a Higher Power” or “God as we understand Him!” Those expressions, as we so well know today, have proved lifesavers for many an alcoholic. They have enabled thousands of us to make a beginning where none could have been made had we left the steps just as I originally wrote them. Happily for us there were no other changes in the original draft and the number of steps stood at twelve. Little did we then guess that our Twelve Steps would soon be widely approved by clergymen of all denominations and even by our latter-day friends, the psychiatrists.

This little fragment of history ought to convince the most skeptical that nobody invented Alcoholics Anonymous.

It just grew...by the grace of God.


AA Literature of the Month

Pamphlet-13-Do you think you're different?

Speaks to newcomers who may wonder how A.A. can work for someone "different"—black or Jewish, teenager or nearing 80, plus nine other people who tell how the A.A. program has worked for them.

EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE

Do you
think you're
different?



The Intergroup Bookstore is now open!

Financial Statements

	October	November	Total	Ytd Forecast	Variance
Income					
Sales	\$ 2,289	\$ 1,261	\$ 19,374	\$ 48,004	\$ (28,630)
Group Contributions	\$ 2,642	\$ 2,513	\$ 24,278	\$ 44,000	\$ (19,722)
Individual Contributions	\$ 496	\$ 83	\$ 11,552	\$ 1,100	\$ 10,452
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 17	\$ 21	\$ 460	\$ 1,650	\$ (1,190)
Fundraising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ (3,000)
Total Income	\$ 5,444	\$ 3,878	\$ 55,664	\$ 97,754	\$ (42,090)
Expenses					
COGS	\$ 1,315	\$ 706	\$ 12,978	\$ 28,325	\$ (15,347)
Fundraising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 220	\$ -	\$ 220
CC & Paypal Fees	\$ 49	\$ 43	\$ 907	\$ 1,155	\$ (248)
Office Supplies	\$ 137	\$ 12	\$ 1,327	\$ 1,375	\$ (48)
Insurance	\$ 48	\$ 48	\$ 579	\$ 550	\$ 29
Licenses & Fees	\$ 32	\$ -	\$ 618	\$ 264	\$ 354
Payroll/Contract Svcs	\$ 3,307	\$ 2,575	\$ 27,740	\$ 47,300	\$ (19,560)
Copy Machine	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,765	\$ 2,200	\$ (435)
Rent	\$ 962	\$ 962	\$ 7,048	\$ 11,000	\$ (3,952)
Utilities	\$ 365	\$ 280	\$ 4,630	\$ 2,750	\$ 1,880
Total Expenses	\$ 6,217	\$ 4,627	\$ 57,811	\$ 94,919	\$ (37,108)
Net Income	\$ (773)	\$ (748)	\$ (2,148)	\$ 2,835	\$ (4,983)
			Ytd PR Reimb (Forecast)		\$ 4,587
			Ytd with PR Reimb		\$ (9,570)

November 30, 2020 Cash Balances	
Main Checking	\$ 4,044
Event Account	\$ 1,400
Prudent Reserve	\$ 12,872
Till Cash	\$ 100
Total Cash Balance	\$ 18,416

November Bottom Line

- Total Revenue – Total Expenses = (\$748)
- Year-to-date \$2,148 in the red
- Group contributions were only ~\$100 less than last month
- Corrections made for error in August payroll number
- Year-to-date (4,587) behind on prudent reserve reimbursement

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous Steering Committee meeting of November 9, 2020

Attendance: Dusty, Phil, Connie, Jennifer, Marc, Patrick, Laurie, Heather, Dee

Opening: The meeting was opened at 6:02pm with the Serenity Prayer. Minutes from the October Steering Committee meeting were read with comments for corrections that should be made, however no motion for correction was made. Minutes accepted. Minutes from the October Intergroup meeting were read.

Hotline: Patrick reported that there are a few new volunteers from the recently annexed District 27. Emily, the Alternate Chair, will be seeking the Chair (must be voted in) at the December Intergroup meeting. Hotline will be holding a committee meeting 12/15/20 at 6:30pm. Patrick advised that at that meeting a motion will be made that when a volunteer's term is expired they will be dismissed. There was discussion regarding dismissing a volunteer, but what if a new volunteer is not lined up. Non-committee members may attend.

Treasury: Please see attached financial report. Laurie advised that the application for a grant was submitted and the county has acknowledged receipt of the application, however there has been no further action by the county.

Office: Heather advised that she has seen an increase in donations. There was discussion that it has been found that there are those in the AA community that do not know what Intergroup's function is and when appealing for financial support there should also be an education piece about Intergroup's function. It was noted that there have been complaints regarding Iron Horse and if they should be removed from the schedule. The consensus is they are not to be removed in accordance with the 4th Tradition.

Activities: There is no new information to report, however, anyone who has fund raising ideas is asked to share them. Jennifer can be emailed through the office: vancaa@vanintgrp.com

Elections: Nominations will be taken at the November Intergroup meeting and additional nominations and voting at the December meeting. Positions to be elected are Chairperson (Dusty), Vice Chair (Marc) and two member positions (Dee, Patrick). In accordance with the guidelines they are eligible to be re-elected.

Website: Marc advised the website has been updated and District 27 is included. A replacement webmaster has not yet been assigned.

Inventory/Cost of Goods: Laurie advised that the process is overly complicated. As she and Marc handle the finances of the office they will review the process together to see if there is a simpler process available.

Close: The meeting was closed at 6:50pm with the Serenity Prayer.

Yours in Service,
Phil B.

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous

Intergroup Representatives meeting of November 16, 2020

Attendance: The following meetings/groups were represented:

Fireside, Cornerstone, R360covery, East Side Women's Book Study, Steps to Freedom, Men's Fireside, Women's Daily Supplement, A New Morning, McGillvray Study Group, Dry Tribe, Minnehaha, Welcome Home, Rock Bottom Recovery, Miracles at Noon, District 27, District 27 Archives, Intergroup office, Steering Committee.

Opening: The meeting was opened at 6:30pm with the Serenity Prayer. Minutes from the last Steering Committee meeting were reviewed. Minutes from the last Intergroup meeting were reviewed and accepted.

Hotline: Patrick reported that District 27 is not included and that several hotline volunteers are from District 27. The hotline committee meeting has been moved to 12/22/20. A Zoom link and agenda will be added to the website.

Treasury: Please see attached financial report. Marc provided a basic review of the report.

Website: Marc reported that District 27 is now included on the schedule. As meetings change they should email information to the office. Assignment of a new webmaster is pending.

Office: Heather advised that an information page is being developed explaining what Intergroup does and how it serves the AA community.

Activities: Dusty advised that bingo has proven in the past to be a good fundraiser for Oxford. He provided an explanation of how the program can work, preferably in January, should the Covid-19 allow.

Old Business/7th Tradition on Zoom: A "how to" guide on placing a donate now button in Zoom will be shared.

New Business/Elections: Nominations were made at this meeting. Additional nominations may be made in December. Voting will take place in December.

Chair: Dusty (incumbent) nominated and accepted

Vice Chair: Marc (incumbent) nominated and accepted

Position 1: Dee (incumbent) nominated and accepted

Position 3: Patrick (incumbent) nominated and accepted

(It was later recognized that Patrick's position is current through 2021)

Position 4: Vacant. No nominations made

New Business/Office Restrictions: Under the proclamation that takes effect on 11/17/20 the office does not have any additional restrictions for Covid-19 restrictions. If at any time the safety of the office personnel or if additional proclamations are made this matter will then be revisited.

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes Continued...

New Business/Schedule Disclaimer: Phil asked that a brief disclaimer be added to the schedule that Intergroup is not responsible to insure that meetings are in compliance with the Governor's proclamation or following CDC guidelines.

Old Business/Government Grant: There was a question as to whether applying for a government grant is in accordance with the 7th Tradition. It was noted that this was an issue that the IG Representatives previously approved, however at this time it is a moot issue as the program has no further funds.

Group News: Dusty advised that there are two churches that can host Cornerstone when the current Covid-19 restrictions are limited. Cornerstone is currently meeting on Mondays and Fridays at 7:00pm at the Salmon Creek Grange. Covid-19 safety guidelines are required.

District News: District 27 is meeting 11/21/20, District 7 on 11/19/20, District 37 on 11/24/20.

AAWS/GSO News: It is generally believed that virtual meetings will continue after Covid-19 is no longer an issue. There are discussions regarding creating Virtual districts.

Closing: The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer at 7:39pm.

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


January 2021

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


The following fliers were taken from a google doc at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/12iv0MUww1kRVjNShMZY6-BuBZl8wtAfi6gYmwJk1U/edit>

Go to the above address for a complete collection of fliers for events!

The Flood Street Meetings, from your Ho-Ho-Home



Christmas Day



8 MEETINGS THROUGHOUT THE DAY

9:00, 10:15, 11:30, 12:45, 14:00, 15:15, 16:30, 17:45

ZOOM MEETING ID: 899 1660 9528

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

This is the Fourth Edition of
the Big Book, the Basic Text
for Alcoholics Anonymous



Attention Professionals:

Judicial, Clergy, Medical, Corrections,
Treatment, Education, Social Workers...

You are Invited!

Information about A.A. 60 minute Panel Presentation with Q&A

If you have patients, residents, clients, or students
with a drinking problem, Alcoholics Anonymous
is here to help. A.A. can be a complement to
virtually any treatment or support you offer a
problem drinker. Come learn more about
what Alcoholics Anonymous is, and is not.

Zoom ID: **840 3911 3545**

Password: **164164**

NewHorizonsGroupAA.com

Saturday Dec 26th

10:30am Pacific / 1:30pm Eastern

DISTRICT 24 UNITY

2021 TRADITIONS WORKSHOPS

COVERING THE HISTORY AND THE TRADITION

BILLY N, ATLANTA, GA (TR.1)	JAN 2
ARISA B, BOSTON, MA (TR.2)	JAN 9
JOHN Q, ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS, NJ (TR.3)	JAN 16
DEE G, SEBASTIAN, FL (TR.4)	JAN 23
JAY E, RINGWOOD, NJ (TR.5)	JAN 30

**3:00-4:30 PM EST
EVERY SATURDAY**



**ID: 328 077 3535
PW: UNITY**

Happy New Year !

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.



The Vancouver Area Intergroup

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