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VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP

Primary Purpose



FOURTH EDITION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

PAGES XXV-XXXII

THE DOCTOR'S OPINION

We of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the reader will be interested in the medical estimate of the plan of recovery described in this book. Convincing testimony must surely come from medical men who have had experience with the sufferings of our members and have witnessed our return to health. A well-known doctor, chief physician at a nationally prominent hospital specializing in alcoholic and drug addiction, gave Alcoholics Anonymous this letter:

To Whom It May Concern: I have specialized in the treatment of alcoholism for many years. In late 1934 I attended a patient who, though he had been a competent businessman of good earning capacity, was an alcoholic of a type I had come to regard as hopeless. In the course of his third treatment he acquired certain ideas concerning a possible means of recovery. As part of his rehabilitation he commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing upon them that they must do likewise with still others. This has become the basis of a rapidly growing fellowship of these men and their families. This man and over one hundred others appear to have recovered. I personally know scores of cases who were of the type with whom other methods had failed completely. These facts appear to be of extreme medical importance; because of the extraordinary possibilities of rapid growth inherent in this group they may mark a new epoch in the annals of alcoholism. These men may well have a remedy for thousands of such situations. You may rely absolutely on anything they say about themselves. Very truly yours, *William D. Silkworth, M.D.*



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Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Archives Committee Mtg.-
01/12/2022 @ 6:00 PM
- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. -
01/10/2022 @ 6:00 PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. -
01/17/2022 @ 6:30 PM
- ◆ District 27 Committee Mtg.-
01/15/2022 @ 10 AM
- ◆ District 27 Business Mtg.-
01/15/2022 @ 12 PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. -
01/25/2022 @ 7:00 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. -

The physician who, at our request, gave us this letter, has been kind enough to enlarge upon his views in another statement which follows. In this statement he confirms what we who have suffered alcoholic torture must believe that the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind. It did not satisfy us to be told that we could not control our drinking just because we were maladjusted to life, that we were in full flight from reality, or were outright mental defectives. These things were true to some extent, in fact, to a considerable extent with some of us. But we are sure that our bodies were sickened as well. In our belief, any picture of the alcoholic which leaves out this physical factor is incomplete.

The doctor's theory that we have an allergy to alcohol interests us. As laymen, our opinion as to its soundness may, of course, mean little. But as ex problem drinkers, we can say that his explanation makes good sense. It explains many things for which we cannot otherwise account.

Though we work out our solution on the spiritual as well as an altruistic plane, we favor hospitalization for the alcoholic who is very jittery or befogged. More often than not, it is imperative that a man's brain be cleared before he is approached, as he has then a better chance of understanding and accepting what we have to offer.

The doctor writes:

The subject presented in this book seems to me to be of paramount importance to those afflicted with alcoholic addiction.

I say this after many years' experience as Medical Director of one of the oldest hospitals in the country treating alcoholic and drug addiction.

There was, therefore, a sense of real satisfaction when I was asked to contribute a few words on a subject which is covered in such masterly detail in these pages.

We doctors have realized for a long time that some form of moral psychology was of urgent importance to alcoholics, but its application presented difficulties beyond our conception. What with our ultra-modern standards, our scientific approach to everything, we are perhaps not well equipped to apply the powers of good that lie outside our synthetic knowledge.

Many years ago one of the leading contributors to this book came under our care in this hospital and while here he acquired some ideas which he put into practical application at once.

Later, he requested the privilege of being allowed to tell his story to other patients here and with some misgiving, we consented. The cases we have followed through have been most interesting; in fact, many of them are amazing. The unselfishness of these men as we have come to know them, the entire absence of profit motive, and their community spirit, is indeed inspiring to one who has labored long and wearily in this alcoholic field. They believe in themselves, and still more in the Power which pulls chronic alcoholics back from the gates of death.

Of course an alcoholic ought to be freed from his physical craving for liquor, and this often requires a definite hospital procedure, before psychological measures can be of maximum benefit.

We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost their self-confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve.

Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices. The message which can interest and hold these alcoholic people must have depth and weight. In nearly all cases, their ideals must be grounded in a power greater than themselves, if they are to re-create their lives.

If any feel that as psychiatrists directing a hospital for alcoholics we appear somewhat sentimental, let them stand with us a while on the firing line, see the tragedies, the despairing wives, the little children; let the solving of these problems become a part of their daily work, and even of their sleeping moments, and the most cynical will not wonder that we have accepted and encouraged this movement. We feel, after many years of experience, that we have found nothing which has contributed more to the rehabilitation of these men than the altruistic movement now growing up among them.

Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks—drinks which they see others taking with impunity. After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery. On the other hand—and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand—once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules.

Men have cried out to me in sincere and despairing appeal: "Doctor, I cannot go on like this! I have everything to live for! I must stop, but I cannot! You must help me!"

Faced with this problem, if a doctor is honest with himself, he must sometimes feel his own inadequacy. Although he gives all that is in him, it often is not enough. One feels that something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change. Though the aggregate of recoveries resulting from psychiatric effort is considerable, we physicians must admit we have made little impression upon the problem as a whole. Many types do not respond to the ordinary psychological approach.

I do not hold with those who believe that alcoholism is entirely a problem of mental control. I have had many men who had, for example, worked a period of months on some problem or business deal which was to be settled on a certain date, favorably to them. They took a drink a day or so prior to the date, and then the phenomenon of craving at once became paramount to all other interests so that the important appointment was not met. These men were not drinking to escape; they were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control.

There are many situations which arise out of the phenomenon of craving which cause men to make the supreme sacrifice rather than continue to fight.

The classification of alcoholics seems most difficult, and in much detail is outside the scope of this book. There are, of course, the psychopaths who are emotionally unstable. We are all familiar with this type. They are always "going on the wagon for keeps." They are over-remorseful and make many resolutions, but never a decision.

There is the type of man who is unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink. He plans various ways of drinking. He changes his brand or his environment. There is the type who always believes that after being entirely free from alcohol for a period of time he can take a drink without danger. There is the manic-depressive type, who is, perhaps, the least understood by his friends, and about whom a whole chapter could be written.

Then there are types entirely normal in every respect except in the effect alcohol has upon them. They are often able, intelligent, friendly people.

All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated. The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence. His immediately precipitates us into a seething caldron of debate. Much has been written pro and con, but among physicians, the general opinion seems to be that most chronic alcoholics are doomed.

What is the solution? Perhaps I can best answer this by relating one of my experiences.

About one year prior to this experience a man was brought in to be treated for chronic alcoholism. He had but partially recovered from a gastric hemorrhage and seemed to be a case of pathological mental deterioration. He had lost everything worthwhile in life and was only living, one might say, to drink. He frankly admitted and believed that for him there was no hope. Following the elimination of alcohol, there was found to be no permanent brain injury. He accepted the plan outlined in this book. One year later he called to see me, and I experienced a very strange sensation. I knew the man by name, and partly recognized his features, but there all resemblance ended. From a trembling, despairing, nervous wreck, had emerged a man brimming over with self-reliance and contentment. I talked with him for some time, but was not able to bring myself to feel that I had known him before. To me he was a stranger, and so he left me. A long time has passed with no return to alcohol.

When I need a mental uplift, I often think of another case brought in by a physician prominent in New York. The patient had made his own diagnosis, and deciding his situation hopeless, had hidden in a deserted barn determined to die. He was rescued by a searching party, and, in desperate condition, brought to me. Following his physical rehabilitation, he had a talk with me in which he frankly stated he thought the treatment a waste of effort, unless I could assure him, which no one ever had, that in the future he would have the "will power" to resist the impulse to drink.

His alcoholic problem was so complex, and his depression so great, that we felt his only hope would be through what we then called "moral psychology," and we doubted if even that would have any effect.

However, he did become "sold" on the ideas contained in this book. He has not had a drink for a great many years. I see him now and then and he is as fine a specimen of manhood as one could wish to meet.

I earnestly advise every alcoholic to read this book through, and though perhaps he came to scoff, he may remain to pray.

William D. Silkworth, M.D.

STEP

1

HONESTY

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-
that our lives had become unmanageable.



AA GRAPEVINE TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

Tradition One:

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery
depends upon AA unity.

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person? Am I sometimes divisive? Do I ever gossip or take another member's inventory?
 2. 2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I foster arguments with statements such as "just for the sake of discussion"?
 3. 3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I sometimes abrasive?
 4. 4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
 5. 5. Do I ever put down some AA activities for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
 6. 6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support AA as a whole in every way I can, or just the parts that I understand and approve of?
 7. 7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
 8. 8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility ?
- 6

Financial Statements

Vancouver Area Intergroup November 30 2021 Financial Report Year to Date P&L Forecast to Actual									
	July	August	September	October	November	Total	Ytd Forecast	Variance	
Income									
Sales	\$ 3,106	\$ 1,858	\$ 1,814	\$ 1,552	\$ 1,673	\$ 24,862	\$ 27,500	\$ (2,648)	
Group Contributions	\$ 3,063	\$ 1,814	\$ 1,544	\$ 4,105	\$ 3,397	\$ 25,373	\$ 27,500	\$ (2,127)	
Individual Contributions	\$ 514	\$ 889	\$ 1,029	\$ 750	\$ 738	\$ 8,449	\$ 5,500	\$ 2,949	
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 2	\$ 150	\$ 5	\$ -	\$ 6	\$ 241	\$ 550	\$ (309)	
Fundraising	\$ -	\$ 346	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 527	\$ 873	\$ -	\$ 873	
Total Income	\$ 7,586	\$ 4,856	\$ 4,391	\$ 6,407	\$ 6,341	\$ 59,787	\$ 61,050	\$ (1,263)	
Expenses									
COGS	\$ 2,530	\$ 1,619	\$ 532	\$ 819	\$ 1,262	\$ 15,882	\$ 12,100	\$ 3,782	
Fundraising	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ 200	
CC & Payroll Fees	\$ 64	\$ 60	\$ 47	\$ 49	\$ 50	\$ 617	\$ 1,155	\$ (538)	
Office Supplies & Misc	\$ 30	\$ 9	\$ 182	\$ -	\$ 18	\$ 1,118	\$ 550	\$ 568	
Insurance	\$ 40	\$ 49	\$ 49	\$ 49	\$ 49	\$ 538	\$ 550	\$ (12)	
Licenses & Fees	\$ (157)	\$ 70	\$ 70	\$ 148	\$ 70	\$ 902	\$ 264	\$ 638	
Contract Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,442	\$ 7,425	\$ (4,984)	
Wages	\$ 1,781	\$ 1,665	\$ 861	\$ 2,773	\$ 1,025	\$ 18,704	\$ 20,625	\$ (1,921)	
Taxes	\$ 734	\$ 393	\$ 379	\$ 744	\$ 486	\$ 5,853	\$ 7,150	\$ (1,297)	
Copy Machine	\$ 238	\$ 345	\$ 238	\$ 238	\$ 238	\$ 2,780	\$ 3,300	\$ (540)	
Rent	\$ 975	\$ 975	\$ 975	\$ 975	\$ 975	\$ 10,687	\$ 11,000	\$ (313)	
Reconciliations Disc	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Utilities	\$ 460	\$ 313	\$ 250	\$ 422	\$ 380	\$ 4,401	\$ 2,750	\$ 1,651	
Total Expenses	\$ 6,731	\$ 5,498	\$ 3,583	\$ 6,418	\$ 4,533	\$ 64,103	\$ 66,869	\$ (2,766)	
Net Income	\$ 855	\$ (642)	\$ 808	\$ (12)	\$ 1,808	\$ (4,316)	\$ (5,819)	\$ 1,503	

November 30, 2021 Cash Balances	
Main Checking	\$ 16,580
Event Account	\$ 1,400
Prudent Reserve	\$ 12,873
181 Cash	\$ 100
Total Cash Balance	\$ 31,253

Grant Payroll Allocation		
	Amount	Balance
Beginning	\$ 12,204	\$ 12,204
December	\$ (2,000)	\$ 10,204
January	\$ (2,285)	\$ 7,919
February	\$ (2,093)	\$ 5,825
March	\$ (2,040)	\$ 3,785
April	\$ (3,591)	\$ 194
May	\$ (194)	\$ 0
Total Disbursed	\$ 12,204	
Balance	\$ 0	

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

January– December 2021

AA GROUPS	YTD TOTAL	AA GROUPS	YTD TOTAL
12 & 12 Study Group	\$186	Men's Eastside	\$500
A New Morning	\$3,276.46	Men's Fireside	\$350
Around Town	\$100	Minnehaha Group	\$620
As Bill Sees It	\$860	Miracles At Noon	\$1,681.01
As We Recovered	\$50	Name In the Hat	\$1,055.01
Battle Ground BBSG	\$134.84	Ocean Park AA	\$100
		Over 55	\$608
Camas Group	\$458.79	Noon Timers	\$1,000
Cascade Locks Spiritual Breakfast	\$187	Ready and Willing	\$600
Chapter 9 Couples	\$45.86	Renegades	\$310
Cornerstone	\$525	Ridgefield Recovery Group	\$555
Doing Right	\$120	Round Table Group	\$100
Dry Tribe	\$150	Rock Bottom Recovery	\$25
Early Birds	\$950	She Who Remembers	\$140
East County Women's Group	\$1,100	Sisters United	\$20
Eastside Brown Baggers	\$1,433	Shoulder to Shoulder	\$608
First Shot	\$2,591.28	Sober Uppers	\$300
Fresh Start	\$936.71	Step Sisters	\$49.88
Friday Night Happy Hour	\$456	Steps to Freedom	\$615.10
Gorge Gals	\$90.75	Sunday Night Alternatives	\$100
Grays River Grateful	\$178.48	Sunday Solutions	\$192.49
Happy Destiny	\$50	The Lighthouse	\$121
Hockinson AA	\$1,303.69	Tightrope Walkers	\$100
Keep Coming Back	\$115.79	Wayfarers	\$140.48
LaCenter Group	\$127.37	Westside Group	\$214
Ladies by the Lavender	\$230	Women's Daily Supplemental	\$142
Lewis River AA	\$170.50	Fundraiser	\$872.50
McGillivray Study Group	\$792.60	Individual Contributions	\$6,841.59

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous Steering Committee meeting of December 13, 2021

Attendance: Steering Committee Members: Dusty, Leanne, Phil, Michael, Laurie, Julie, Bruce, Patrick, Dee ... Alex, presumptive Treasurer ... Amy & Jeremy, Iron Horse

Opening: The meeting was opened at 6:00pm with the Serenity Prayer.

Minutes from the November SC meeting were accepted.

Minutes from the November IG meeting were distributed.

Treasury: Please see attached financial report.

Laurie pointed out that November only shows one payroll period and that December will balance out when there are three payrolls. Report accepted.

Office: Leanne reported that sales are up and that there are a number of flyers posted in the office. She has been providing assistance for the outreach chair.

Hotline: There is an immediate need for volunteers: Monday 9pm-12am, Tuesday 6am-9am, Tuesday 9am-12pm, Thursday 9am-12pm.

Old Business: None

New Business/Iron Horse: Amy and Jeremy would like Iron Horse to be placed on the meeting schedule and are aware that is an IG decision. It was noted that they are meeting at the Orchards location which does not have the club name posted on it, that there are no acts of discrimination towards the LGBTQ community and that they are not associated with the Iron Horse Foundation which is at the Hazel Dell location. They were unaware that mail was sent regarding being removed from the schedule and the desire to repair the relationship. They plan to attend the IG meeting requesting to restore the relationship with Intergroup.

New Business/Office Manager Review: The SC conducted Leanne's annual review. Respecting employee confidentiality rights details are not being provided in these minutes.

New Business/Website: There have been access issues with website access. A motion was made and passed to have the presumptive webmaster move the website to the new internet service as soon as possible. (see other SC activity for additional information on this topic).

Meeting was closed at 6:28pm.

Yours in Service, Phil B.

Other Steering Committee Activity Outside of this Meeting

11/22/2021: By a majority vote held by email the SC authorized the website be moved away from GoDaddy. Internet services are being found that provide better service at a lower cost.

11/29/2021: By a majority vote held by email the SC authorized the website to be moved to Bluehost at a cost of \$19 per month for the first three years.

12/2/2021: By a majority vote held by email the SC authorized the website to be moved to inMotion at a costs of \$20 per month for the first three years. Difficulties were encountered in trying to move to Bluehost.

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous
Intergroup Representatives meeting of December 20, 2021

Attendance:

Leeann, Office Manager	Amy, Iron Horse	Kirsten, East County Women
Phil*, R360very	Julie* (not a group rep)	Dusty*, Cornerstone
Carey, Hockinson	Lori, Women's Daily Suplmnt	Tony, Men's Fireside
Leanna, East County Women (not a group rep)	Steve, Over 55	Kelsey
Anthony, Rock Bottom Rcvry	Linc, Camas	Michael, Sunday Solutions
Heidi, Minnehaha	Robert (not a group rep)	Patrick*, McGillivray Study
Dee* (not a group rep)	Adam, How It Works	Laurie*, Sober Uppers
Bruce*, B&P	James, Lighthouse	* Steering Committee

Opening: The meeting was opened at 6:01pm with the Serenity Prayer. Roll call was taken. Dusty discussed his experience as the IG Chair. Minutes from the 11/15/21 IG meeting were accepted. Minutes from the 12/13/21 SC meeting were distributed.

Hotline: Volunteer opportunities are posted on the website.

Treasury: Please see attached financial report. Laurie reported that November was a good month as group donations were up and funds from the Camas fundraiser are posted.

Office: Leanne reported that the issues that had her purchasing literature from an outside vendor have been resolved and she is again purchasing from World Services.

Old Business/Guidelines: The second draft of the guidelines were accepted.

New Business/Iron Horse: Reps from Iron Horse met last week with the SC and discussed restoring the relationship with IG. At that meeting they were advised this was an IG issue and they would need to attend this meeting. Amy did not make any requests stating that Iron Horse has not yet had a business meeting.

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes Continued.....

Old Business/SC Elections: Nominations for SC positions that terminate at year end were made last month. No additional nominations were made at this meeting. All nominees accepted. The SC positions are as follows:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Ending 12/31/21</u>	<u>Beginning 1/1/22</u>
Chair	Dusty	Laurie
Vice Chair*	Michael	Michael
Treasurer	Laurie	Alex
Recording Secretary	Phil	Phil
Position 1*	Dee	Dee
Position 2	Julie	Julie
Position 3	Patrick	Kelsey
Position 4*	Bruce	Bruce

*Indicated positions not voted on. These positions terminate 12/31/22

Old Business/Non-SC Positions:

Robert was elected as the webmaster.

Amber was elected as the outreach chair.

Group News: There are flyers in the office and on the website.

Cornerstone meeting for Friday 12/24/21 is moved to 12/23/21 with a potluck at 6:00pm

Rock Bottom, Hope Dealers & Cornerstone are hosting a New Year's Eve Dance

McGillivray Book Study is returning to in-person for Wednesday, Thursdays & Fridays

(except for Christmas and New Year's Day)

Welcome Home is moving to St John's Lutheran Church is Hazel Dell

Lighthouse is holding an Alcolthon on Christmas

Lighthouse is hosting a New Year's Eve Dance

Camas is having a potluck on New Year's Eve

East County Women's will hold their meeting on Christmas

Minnehaha will hold their meeting on Christmas Eve

The meeting was closed at 7:04pm.

Yours in Service,

Phil B.



Upcoming Events

January 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 Steering Committee Mtg.: 6:00 pm	11	12 Archives Committee Mtg: 6:00 pm 5	13	14	15 District 27 Committees Mtg.: 10am-12 pm District 27 Business Mtg.: 12 pm-3 pm
16	17 Intergroup Rep. Mtg. 6:60 pm	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 District 37 Mtg.: 7:00 pm	26	27 District 7 GSR Mtg.: 7 pm	28	29
30	31					

Archives Corner



Vancouver Archives currently serves Districts 7 and 37 of Western Washington AA Area 72. The Archives Committee meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. We would love to have you visit our meeting! There are many service opportunities!

On November 14, 2021, Archivist Penny, and Alt Archivist Harry, set up a display at Central Group, aka Blue Door. Penny spoke of the history of the group which started in 1946 and was the first meeting in Vancouver! She also conducted a moving tribute to Central Group members who have passed. Following are a few photos of the display.



PLEASE donate your group documents to Archives! **Don't throw anything out!** We will digitize your records and physically store and preserve your signs, relics, etc.

Upcoming Events:

- * 01/12/2022 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Archives Committee Meeting at Intergroup Office
- 06/24-26/2022 Pacific Northwest Conference at the Heathman Lodge.

Area Archives and Vancouver Archives will have an Archives room separate from the main room, which will allow for a display of more materials.

Our Greatest Danger: Rigidity

Bob Pearson

Bob Pearson (1917-2008) was General Manager of the General Service Office from 1974 to 1984, and then served as Senior Advisor to the G.S.O. from 1985 until his retirement. His story is in the Big Book as "AA Taught Him to Handle Sobriety," 3rd edit. (1976) pp. 554-561, 4th edit. (2001) pp. 553-559.

During the 1986 General Service Conference, Bob gave a powerful and inspiring closing talk to the conference at the closing brunch on Saturday morning, April 26. It was an especially significant occasion, because he knew that he was going to retire early the next year, and that this would be his last General Service Conference. The following excerpts are taken from that farewell speech, as published in the Conference's final report: The Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous 1986 (Roosevelt Hotel, New York City, April 20-26, 1986), Final Report. This is my 18th General Service Conference -- the first two as a director of the Grapevine and A.A.W.S., followed by four as a general service trustee. In 1972, I rotated out completely, only to be called back two years later as general manager of G.S.O., the service job I held until late 1984. Since the 1985 International Convention, of course, I have been senior adviser.

This is also my last Conference, so this is an emotionally charged experience. I wish I had time to express my thanks to everyone to whom I am indebted for my sobriety and for the joyous life with which I have been blessed for the past nearly 25 years. But since this is obviously impossible, I will fall back on the Arab saying that Bill quoted in his last message, "I thank you for your lives." For without your lives, I most certainly would have no life at all, much less the incredibly rich life I have enjoyed. Let me offer my thoughts about A.A.'s future. I have no truck with those bleeding deacons who decry every change and view the state of the Fellowship with pessimism and alarm. On the contrary, from my nearly quarter century's perspective, I see A.A. as larger, healthier, more dynamic, faster growing, more global, more service minded, more back-to-basics, and more spiritual -- by far -- than when I came through the doors of my first meeting in Greenwich, Connecticut, just one year after the famous [July 1960] Long Beach Convention. A.A. has flourished beyond the wildest dreams of founding members, though perhaps not of Bill himself, for he was truly visionary. I echo those who feel that if this Fellowship ever falters or fails, it will not be because of any outside cause. No, it will not be because of treatment centers or professionals in the field, or non-Conference-approved literature, or young people, or the dually-addicted, or even the "druggies" trying to come to our closed meetings. If we stick close to our Traditions, Concepts, and Warranties, and if we keep an open mind and an open heart, we can deal with these and any other problems that we have or ever will have. If we ever falter and fail, it will be simply because of us. It will be because we can't control our own egos or get along well enough with each other. It will be because we have too much fear and rigidity and not enough trust and common sense. If you were to ask me what is the greatest danger facing A.A. today, I would have to answer: the growing rigidity -- the increasing demand for absolute answers to nit-picking questions; pressure for G.S.O. to "enforce" our Traditions; screening alcoholics at closed meetings; prohibiting non-Conference-approved literature, i.e., "banning books"; laying more and more rules on groups and members. And in this trend toward rigidity, we are drifting farther and farther away from our co-founders. Bill, in particular, must be spinning in his grave, for he was perhaps the most permissive person I ever met. One of his favorite sayings was, "Every group has the right to be wrong." He was maddeningly tolerant of his critics, and he had absolute faith that faults in A.A. were self-correcting. And I believe this, too, so in the final analysis we're not going to fall apart. We won't falter or fail. At the 1970 International Convention in Miami, I was in the audience on that Sunday morning when Bill made his brief last public appearance. He was too ill to take his scheduled part in any other convention event, but now, unannounced, on Sunday morning, he was wheeled up from the back of the stage in a wheelchair, attached with tubes to an oxygen tank. Wearing a ridiculous bright-orange, host committee blazer, he heaved his angular body to his feet and grasped the podium -- and all pandemonium broke loose. I thought the thunderous applause and cheering would never stop, tears streaming down every cheek. Finally, in a firm voice, like his old self, Bill spoke a few gracious sentences about the huge crowd, the outpouring of love, and the many overseas members there, ending (as I remember) with these words: "As I look over this crowd, I know that Alcoholics Anonymous will live a thousand years -- if it is God's will."

JANUARY 28 - 30, 2022

A.A. HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

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Transgender Alcoholics
Barry L. & Living Sober

Vancouver Area Intergroup 2022 Newsletter will be distributed in the first week of each month instead of the middle of the month.

If you would like to share your :

- AA Birthday on the Calendar
- Experience Strength & Hope
- AA related content or topics
- AA Flyers

In the Upcoming Newsletters please feel free to email :

vancaa@vanintgrp.com

You Are Wanted Needed & Loved!

