

# To the Newcomer

YOU HAVE JUST MADE WHAT IS POSSIBLY THE MOST IMPORTANT decision of your life. You've taken Step One and said to yourself, "Yes, I'm powerless over alcohol. My life is unmanageable. I can't stop drinking, and I want help." In order to stop drinking, and stay stopped, there are a few simple principles

that you will need to apply to your life: AA's program of recovery as outlined in our Twelve Steps. They can work as effectively for you as they have worked for countless others.

Here are some additional suggestions which we feel can be helpful to you on your path to recovery.

### *Live One Day at a Time*

AA is a "one day at a time" way of living. We try to break life into small pieces that we can handle. We stay sober one day at a time, or when necessary, one hour at a time. We do our jobs one task at a time. We solve our problems one problem at a time; we clean up our past one mess at a time.

### *Go to Meetings*

There are meetings all over the Texas Hill Country: 365 days a year, morning, noon and night. The schedule for these meetings may be found in your local meeting directory, available at every group or from our office, or on our Website. Take in as many meetings as you can: many long-sober AAs suggest jump-starting your program by attending ninety meetings in ninety days.



### *Find a Sponsor*

A few members may tell you that they stay sober without the aid of a sponsor, and having one is indeed not a requirement.

However, our AA experience tells us that you will have a

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# Sober Society Variety Pages

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Hill Country  
Intergroup, 1339  
Lamar Square Drive,  
Austin, Texas 78704  
512-444-0071  
Fax: 512-444-7586

For meeting  
information go to  
[www.main.org/aa](http://www.main.org/aa)

To submit articles,  
letters, or news for  
publication, use  
[mailto:austinaa@  
austin.rr.com](mailto:austinaa@<br/>austin.rr.com)

Hill Country Intergroup  
wishes to thank all who  
give so much of their  
time, effort, and personal  
resources that the vital  
services we offer  
continue and grow.

## *To the Newcomer - continued from page 1*

much better chance with a sponsor than without one. In fact, you will probably find that communicating with your sponsor is a vital part of your participation in the AA program.

Your sponsor will listen to you and make suggestions based on his or her experience. S/he will not serve as a financial advisor, marriage counselor or psychologist, however. Sponsors are but experienced guides to the AA program of recovery: the Twelve Steps. Some AA groups will help you find a temporary sponsor; if you are not certain about your group's practices regarding sponsorship, simply ask the chairperson after a meeting.

## *Choose a Home Group and Get Involved*

For most of us, one particular AA group has become a unique haven for our sobriety, a place where we have many friends, where we can feel particularly safe in sharing exactly what's going on with us today. This special place is known throughout the AA fellowship as the Home Group, often referred to as "The Heartbeat of AA."

A number of large AA groups meet several times each day, and there are smaller groups that meet from once to five times per week. You are encouraged to visit groups of different types before deciding where you feel most at home. Ultimately, involvement at the group level will be more important to you than the size of the group or how often it meets. Our AA experience tells us that giving away what we have been so freely given is fundamental to our continued sobriety, and we can always find many varied ways to be of service in our home groups.

## *Family Matters*

It is said that the average practicing alcoholic affects the lives of at least five other people. Many of these are family members, and there are ways that you can share your recovery with them.



## *Open Meetings*

Most AA groups have a varied program of open and closed meetings. Closed meetings are for alcoholics, but family members may go along to open meetings with the AA member. Many weekend speaker meetings are open meetings. We have indicated the meeting type on our group meeting schedules.

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*This article was adapted from the Dallas Intergroup Website,  
[www.aadallas.org](http://www.aadallas.org)*

**Sunday Steps**  
 1801 Kinney Avenue  
 Kinney Avenue Baptist Church  
 5:30 p.m.  
 Closed Speaker/Step

**North Austin 24**  
 Monday through Friday at 7 p.m.  
 1000 Prairie Trail  
 837-9362

**New Meetings**

**60th  
 Texas State  
 Convention**



***I Am Responsible***

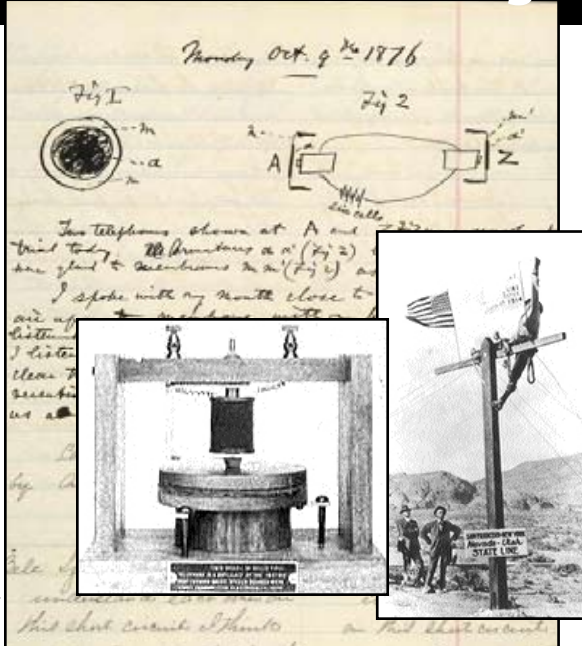
**August 19 to 21**

**Registration \$20**

Send to Treasurer, P O Box 595833, Dallas 75359  
 Accommodations: Harvey Hotel, Irving, Texas  
**Call for Reservations 1-800-922-9222**

**Think about how recovery depends on telephones!**

*Background:  
 Alexander  
 Graham Bell's  
 patent applica-  
 tion for the  
 telephone.  
 Insets, far  
 right: final  
 transcontinen-  
 tal telephone  
 pole, June  
 1914, and  
 near right:  
 Bell's model  
 of the tele-  
 phone in the  
 Prints and  
 Photographs  
 Division of the  
 Library of  
 Congress.*



Phone volunteers are needed to man the phone desk at Intergroup, refer callers to the Twelfth Step call list, and take phone calls at home for the answering service. All positions require a minimum of six months of continuous sobriety and that you have taken all of A.A.'s 12 steps, be familiar with Chapter Seven of the *Big Book*, and be willing to commit for a year. If you're interested in these opportunities for service, grab a phone and call Clint Ritter at Intergroup: 512-444-0071.

**Meetings at  
 Intergroup**

**First Monday at 7 p.m.:**

Treatment Facilities  
 Committee and Correctional  
 Facilities Committee

**Second Monday at 6:30  
 p.m.:**  
 Intergroup Representatives

**Seond Saturday at 2 p.m.:**  
 Grapevine Committee

**Third Thursday at 6:30 p.m.:**  
 Board of Trustees

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## Hill Country Intergroup Birthday Club Members for May 2005

Matt B. – Westlake Group

Monica B. – Bridge to Shore  
Group

Tom M. – Fitchburg Serenity  
Club - Deforest, WI

Larry D. – Dripping Springs  
Group

Tim T. – Hilltop Group

Milford P. – Brushy Creek  
Serenity Group

Jamie D. – Turning Point  
Group

Marc S. – Bouldin Group

Chris S. – Westlake Group

Linda S. – Turning Point Group



## The Strange Obsession – by Bill W.

IT WAS A HOT NIGHT IN THE MIDSUMMER OF 1934. I FOUND myself at a noted address in Central Park West, New York City. It was in Charlie Towns Hospital for drying out alcoholics.

Sobering and sweltering out a fearful hangover I laid abed in an upstairs room. Downstairs the doctor looked across his deck at my wife Lois.

She was saying, "Doctor, why can't Bill stop drinking? He always had great willpower. Yet here he is, facing ruin again, and still he can't stop. The more he struggles, the worse he gets. I am scared, heartbroken and confused. I know he is, too. He'd do anything - anything at all to stop. Tell me, Doctor, why can't he?"

Lois was asking the same terrible question that uncounted women had asked before. Hers was a riddle quite as old as man's first discovery that alcohol could be made from grapes and grains.

Again she said, "Please tell me the truth Doctor. Why can't Bill stop?"

In his long experience with serious drinkers the good doctor had faced that terrible heartbreaker a thousand times. By nature compassionate, he never failed to wince whenever a distraught wife, husband or friend of a sufferer had profounded anew the burdened riddle of alcoholism. Bill's dilemma had interested and moved him deeply. How could he now bring himself to tell Lois the truth?

The benign little doctor's face turned grave as he began to speak. "When Bill first came to this hospital three years ago, I felt that he might be one of those rare cases who might recover. I hoped that when he better understood himself and the nature of his illness, he might win out. In spite of his several severe relapses since then, I have gone on hoping. For, as you say, he desperately wants to quit and his will to do so is very great. But now I'm discouraged. I'm afraid he's going to be like nearly all the other alcoholics who come my way."

"Well Doctor," cried Lois, "just what do you mean by that. Won't he ever get better?"

Gently, the doctor went on, "Mrs. W.," said he, "As you already understand, your husband is a sick man. But I've never told you just how sick an alcoholic can be, nor have I ever explained this illness to you as I understand it from my long observation. I think the time is here to tell you more about his illness and how really serious his condition now is. There are a lot of theories about the underlying causes of compulsive drinking like Bill's. Of these we can take our pick. But there are some solid facts, too, which no one who has watched many

*Continued on next page*

## May Volunteers at Intergroup

Office: Pete "The Guy", Charlie F., Barb S., John B., Morna N., Craig W., Roland P., Marty C., Monica, Robert G., Ian M., Leslie Ann D., Chad P., Evan W., Kim B., Deede C., Dawn W.  
Hotline: Randy R., Robert B., Paige J., Linda/Mike, Laney B., Bruce K., Mary T., Shelley C., John G., Tom K., Ian M., Paul G., Janet F., Chris F., Jamie D., Leslie Ann D., Janna, Linda F., Michael R., Karen M., Tommy B., Jay B., BOSCO, Mark L., Kathy/Dan, NA24, Kathy L., Connie/Mike, Dave K., Christa, Pete "The Guy", James M., Beth B., Dennis P. N., John B., Irby G., Deanie/Dennis

### *The Strange Obsession - continued*

alcoholics could well dispute.

"Fact one is that innumerable alcoholic men and women really want to control their destructive drinking and then find, to their dismay, that they cannot. They cannot moderate their drinking as other people do. Nor, even when faced with the most terrible consequences, can they stop altogether, no matter how desperate their plight. Never do the excuses they make for their sprees justify their pattern of continuous self-destruction. Their behavior becomes completely illogical and irrational - it really verges on insanity. And even when they well understand all this, they go on as before. Where alcohol is concerned, their minds no longer rule their emotions.

"A new spree can be started upon the slightest of excuses or rationalizations. Sometimes the provocations seem great, but it's always very small when the certain destructive results are considered. When for example life gives the average man a heavy bump, he doesn't seize a hammer and beat himself into insensibility. Yet, in effect, that's what the sick alcoholic does, over and over. All reason, all incentive, even the greatest desire to stop, seems to be swamped when the craving for alcohol takes hold.

"Therefore the biggest fact about alcoholism is its obsessional nature. It is one of the most subtle yet most powerful compulsions known. Once it's grip is firm, the chance for recovery is diminished. How to help the alcoholic to expel his obsession is the problem. But we doctors have had little success: I've seldom helped even one case in a hundred.

"Nor is the drinkers obsession the whole story: alcoholism is a physical malady too. In nearly all cases the bodies of problem drinkers become painfully sensitive to alcohol. In the early stages of their malady some alcoholics can drink quantities of liquor without serious physical reaction. But continued excesses finally cause them to lose that ability; they seem to get allergic to the stuff; so much so that hangovers produce great physical agony and sometimes delirium tremens or convulsions too often followed by brain damage and mental deterioration than can be permanent."

Again she asked, "Doctor, what can we do?"

So he had to tell her that I would have to be locked up or go mad and die. That it would all end with heart failure during delirium tremens, or that I would develop a wet brain, perhaps within a year. That soon I would have to be given over to an asylum or an undertaker.

*Used by permission.*

### **AA Group Donations – May 2005**

Donors (Groups): 174, Allandale, Bridge to Shore, Burnet Noon, Central, Courtyard, Four Points, Friday Nite (Austin), Georgetown (White House), Hilltoppers, Into Action (Lockhart), Keep 1st Things 1st, Lago, Vista Lakeview, Living Faith, Lost Pines (Bastrop), New Beginnings, New Life (Shoal Creek), NA 24, Northland, Round Rock Big Book, Seniors, Stoney Point (Round Rock), Suburban. Total Group Donations \$ 2,742.97

### **Join the Hill Country Intergroup Birthday Club**

Send this information accompanied by the suggested donation of \$1 for each year of sobriety to Intergroup at 1339 Lamar Square Drive, Austin 78704

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sobriety date \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Home Group \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Donor (if a gift)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**All donations go to Intergroup services. You will receive a Clubmember card and be listed opposite in your birthday month.**

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**Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.**



**Alcohólicos Anónimos es una comunidad de hombres y mujeres que comparten su mutua experiencia, fortaleza y esperanza para resolver su problema común y ayudar a otros a recuperarse del alcoholismo. El único requisito para ser miembro de A.A. es el deseo de dejar la bebida. Para ser miembro de A.A. no se pagan honorarios ni cuotas; nos mantenemos con nuestras propias contribuciones. A.A. no está afiliada a ninguna secta, religión, partido político, organización o institución alguna; no desea intervenir en controversias; no respalda ni se opone a ninguna causa. Nuestro objetivo primordial es mantenernos sobrios y ayudar a otros alcohólicos a alcanzar el estado de sobriedad.**

## Let Us Hear From You

*SOBRIETY VARIETY PAGES* WANTS TO RECEIVE YOUR FEEDBACK. To start a reader dialog about A.A. in the Austin area, what can you share about either of the questions below? Or, if you have an issue or question relating to something (anything) that you have observed, or learned, in Hill Country A.A. meetings, feel free to start a new thread now. Click here to send us an e-mail about it: <mailto:austinaa@austin.rr.com>

### Court-Mandated A.A.: Carrying the Message

I have been in meetings where "court-ordered" people have attended and I don't feel that it has negatively affected the other members of the group.

I haven't seen a lot of acceptance or progress from the person [ordered] to attend, but then again, who knows what seed has been planted. I am always hopeful that hearing some of the messages will at least mess up their future drinking.

If nothing else, they now know where to go if they ever do get serious about recovery. I am in favor of it!

Thanks for letting me share. *Lyn*

*Do you agree or disagree with the opinion of this writer?*

### Speaking of Carrying the Message

*Do you know why the historic painting reproduced below resonates with many A.A. oldtimers? What's going on in the painting, which still hangs in a quite a few of our meeting rooms?*



**June's tradition is the Sixth: "An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."**