



*Bill Wilson, c. 1940.*

## How A.A. Came to Texas — and Dixie

AS EARLY MEMBERS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, A FEW MEN who met in Akron, Ohio, with Bill Wilson and “Doctor Bob” Smith, A.A.’s founders, would have a profound effect on alcoholic Southerners.

By August 1940, they felt ready to leave Bill and Bob’s side to fend for themselves in sobriety. One, a newspaperman named Larry J., relocated to Houston and began A.A. there. Roy Y., “the first Texan to get sober,” joined the Army when the Second World War came and started a group in Tampa (Fla.), where he was stationed. Fred K. went to Miami, Dave R. to Charlotte (N.C.), and Bruce H. to Jacksonville (Fla.), and recruited members.

Venetian blind salesman Irwin M., whose territory stretched from Jacksonville to New Orleans, was reprimanded for “preaching” A.A. until his alcoholic customers wrote his company to express their gratitude.

*Adapted from his “About the South” column and reprinted by permission of the author from the “Dixie Living” section of The Atlanta Journal-Constitution of August 29, 1993.*

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Sobriety Variety Pages

# 2

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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.

## The only one in a family of drunks to find A.A.

I AM THE ONLY MEMBER SO FAR IN MY FAMILY TO HAVE found Alcoholics Anonymous — but I'm certainly not the only one to have needed it. I have traced *possible* overuse of alcohol by my ancestors all the way back to a popular Roman official in Wales known as "Old King Cole" who died at the ripe old age of 70 in 420 A.D. His drinking is memorialized in a nursery rhyme to this day. If I'm right, 46 generations of suffering by my ancestors stretch between him and me.

My grandfather came to the United States as a boy in 1888 and settled with his parents in Hell's Kitchen in New York City. Because there were no child labor laws in those days, he soon got a job in a bar for five cents a day.



*During my childhood, my grandfather smelled of alcohol. He was the mathematician who helped our side win the First World War.*

He eventually became a mathematician. His obituary in 1949 credits him with "making the calculations" that enabled our side to destroy the *Big Bertha* railroad cannon with which the Germans shelled Paris during World War One.

I realize now that my grandfather always smelled of alcohol and dozed a great deal in "his" chair in front of the radio while I was a child. My grandmother never allowed him to drive their car. Two other family members, both women, were criticized because they were known to "tipple" in their bedrooms each evening before retiring.

By the time my grandfather died, A.A. had been around for 14 years, but it is unlikely he ever learned about our program. Besides a younger cousin, I am the only member of my generation still alive in my family. My cousin has so much as told me that he intends to drink himself to death now that he's retired. I am truly grateful that I was born when and where I was and have been able to avail myself of our simple program.

—Evan W., *Cat Mountain*

## The Tradition for August is the Eighth:

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

## STEPS 6 AND 7 - "REMOVING CHARACTER DEFECTS AND SHORTCOMINGS"

10 AM to Noon - Saturday August 6 at the Mary Lee Foundation Community Center at 1327 Lamar Square Drive, next to the Intergroup Office.

Host Group: *North Austin 24* - Panel Members: Fred G., Charlie W., Annie E., Robert J., and Diane G.

**Please Join Us!**

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Hill Country  
Intergroup's  
Second Annual  
12 Step  
Workshop Series



### *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**

60th  
Texas State  
Convention

## Where Would We A.A.s Be Without Telephones?



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

Second 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 July 2005

Richard W. – Westlake Group

Rudy W. – Lost Pines Group  
(Bastrop)

Theresa R. – Taylor, TX

Scott A. – Into Action Group  
(Lockhart)

Dena C. – Hope Group (Cedar  
Park)

Don B. – Hilltoppers

Glenn G. – Northland Group

David B. – Northland Group



## A reasoned critique of court-ordered attendance

The subject of court-ordered attendance came up in the Delvalle Jail meeting on a recent Wednesday. As one might imagine, a lot of inmates resent it. The court card is often held in contempt. One inmate has had friends sign his court card for him. Another has known bartenders that would sign the card.

This makes me uncomfortable. While I resent Big Brother looking over my shoulder, I'm also a "law and order" guy. I don't like the idea of a court order being ignored. On the other hand, I'm not a lawyer and I'm not a cop. I'm just the group leader. No court is ordering me to do anything, so I am polite. If I have the time and they have a pen, I'll sign the card. Otherwise, I won't.

Some attend meetings just to show that they are trying to help themselves with their problem. A lot of people in A.A. have done that before. When a spouse says, "Either you do something about your drinking or the marriage is over!", we try to look as if we are doing *something*. We drag ourselves into an A.A. meeting. We show up late, sit in the back resentful that we must attend, and leave early.

Sometimes this forced attendance works but mostly it doesn't.

But if forced attendance works sometimes, shouldn't we try it all the time so that those few whom it might help will get the help? Isn't forced attendance similar to an "intervention?"

A.A. does not do "interventions" because most of the time to intervene is to force advice on an alcoholic. A.A.s show up when it seems likely that a prospect will be open to the idea of another way to solve his problem. If we are wrong, we back off and wait for another opportunity — usually after our prospect has gone through another rough episode. But we don't make demands.

Demands rarely worked with us so we don't make demands of others; we make suggestions. If our prospect feels as if he is falling, he will reach out for any branch no

*continued on [next page](#)*

**July Volunteers at Intergroup — Office:** Roland P., Monica, "Pete," Karin D., Marty C., Jenny W., Craig W., Robert G., Herb, Evan W., Jim H., Leslie Ann D., Jorge V., Kirk N., Ned, Ian M., Lynne W., Gene, and Nancy N.  
**Hotline:** Nick H., Will C., Ryan P., Craig W., Beth B., Joe B., Dan and Kathy, Jeff P., Chris F., Karen D., Patty T., Tammy D., Lee A., Mary T., NA24, Alex H., Janet F., Karen M., Patrick G., Gayle B., Meredith H., Milford P., Drew W., Harlan O., Irby G., James B., Marty C., Randy R., Joe and Suzanne, David B., Roland P., Barb S., Jeff P., James M., Dave E., Gary B., and Jamie D.

## Court-ordered attendance "spoils" the "opportunity"

*continued from [previous page](#)*

matter how slender it may seem. That is our opportunity to be of service. We may suggest reading the *Big Book* or attending an A.A. meeting.

A.A. members have worked with the courts in the past to help individuals. Some of us have appeared before the court and testified that an individual is a good prospect for staying sober through A.A. On an individual basis, a judge would give a guy a chance if he seemed willing. But what works for an individual often doesn't work in general. If an unwilling alcoholic comes into A.A., listens grudgingly, and feels no better when he leaves, he may conclude that "A.A. doesn't work" and not return.

We spoil a chance to be helpful if we force an alcoholic into A.A. Telling an unwilling alcoholic to attend A.A. meetings is "making demands" and "forcing advice" on him. That never worked on me.

An inmate asked me, "Why do you always talk about yourself?" He noticed that with most questions that came up in a meeting, I relate a story about myself. I talk about myself for two reasons: first, I hardly ever listen to advice from people unless they have used their own advice. Second, one of my character defects is to give too much advice. So, as a discipline, I tell a personal story instead of giving direct advice and hope others can find the advice embedded within it. It is a gentle suggestion in the form of a story.

I always end the jail meeting by saying "Thank you for helping me." One guy laughs and says that he is grateful for me coming down to the jail, but I make clear the reason why I am there. They don't owe me anything. I'm a nice guy but I'm not that nice. I wouldn't come down to the jail unless I got something out of it as well; I get to stay sober one more day. I'm not just saying that because that's what you want to hear — it's the truth.

My sponsor told me, "When all else fails, working with others always works."

It always does.

—*Izzy R., Austin*

**July Donations From Area A.A. Groups:** Bridge to Shore - \$310, Western Trails - \$200, Northland - \$1,083, Westlake - \$750, Into Action (Lockhart) - \$30, East Austin - \$60, Newcomers (Kingsland) - \$226, Firemakers - \$230, 174 - \$67, New Beginnings - \$75, Allandale - \$20, Stoney Point - \$25, Our Gang - \$75, Light House - \$50, Keep 1st Things 1st - \$124, Friday Night Alive - \$95, Legacies (Bastrop) - \$25, Hope (Cedar Park) - \$38, Central - \$55, Dry Creek - \$30, Four Points - \$20, Hilltoppers - \$300, Kingsland - \$70, Liars Club South - \$135, and Friday Night Group (Austin) - \$40

### 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.



# 6 ¿ES A.A. PARA USTED?

¿Ólo usted puede tomar la decisión de probar A.A. — si le parece que el programa le puede ayudar. Responda SI o NO a las siguientes preguntas:

**1. ¿Ha tratado alguna vez de dejar de beber durante una semana o más, sin haber podido cumplir el plazo?**

La mayoría de los A.A. hicimos todo tipo de promesas a nosotros mismos y a nuestras familias. No pudimos cumplirlas. Luego llegamos a A.A., y A.A. nos dijo: Trate de no beber hoy. (Si no bebe hoy, hoy no se emborrachará.)

**2. ¿Le fastidian los consejos de otras personas en cuanto a su forma de beber—le gustaría que dejaran de entrometerse en sus asuntos?**

En A.A. no decimos a nadie lo que tiene que hacer. Hablamos simplemente de nuestras experiencias con la bebida, los líos en que nos metíamos, y cómo logramos dejar de beber. Nos agradaría ayudarle si así lo desea.

**3. ¿Ha cambiado de una clase de bebida a otra con objeto de evitar emborracharse?**

Intentamos multitud de trucos. Nos hacíamos bebidas suaves. Tomábamos solamente cerveza. No tomábamos cócteles. Bebíamos solamente los fines de semana. Todo lo que se pueda imaginar, ya lo hemos probado. Pero si tomábamos algo que contuviera alcohol, generalmente acabábamos por emborracharnos.

**4. ¿Se ha tenido que tomar algún trago al levantarse por la mañana durante el año pasado?**

Necesita un trago para ponerse en marcha, o para quitarse los temblores? Esta es una indicación bastante segura de que usted no es un bebedor "social".

**5. ¿Tiene envidia de las personas que pueden beber sin meterse en líos?**

Casi todos nosotros nos hemos preguntado alguna vez por qué no somos como la mayoría de la gente, que pueden realmente tomarlo o dejarlo.

**6. ¿Ha tenido algún problema relacionado con la bebida durante el año pasado?**

Sea sincero! Los médicos dicen que si se tiene un problema con el alcohol y se sigue bebiendo, el problema va a empeorar, nunca mejorar. Al final, morirá, o acabará en una institución para pasar confinado lo que le quede de vida. La única esperanza está en dejar de beber. >>>

<<<

**7. ¿Ha causado su forma de beber dificultades en casa?**

Antes de llegar a A.A., casi todos solíamos decir que lo que nos impulsaba a beber eran nuestros problemas familiares o las personas con quienes vivíamos. No se nos ocurrió nunca que la bebida lo hacía todo cada vez peor, que nunca solucionó problema alguno.

**8. ¿Trata usted de conseguir tragos "extras" en las fiestas, por temor de no tener suficiente?**

La mayoría de nosotros solíamos tomarnos "unos cuantos" tragos antes de ir a una fiesta, si creíamos que no nos iba a bastar la ración. Y si no nos servían con la suficiente rapidez, íbamos a otra parte para conseguir más.

**9. ¿Persiste usted en decir que puede dejar de beber en el momento que quiera, a pesar de que sigue emborrachándose cuando no quiere?**

Muchos de nosotros nos engañábamos diciendo que bebíamos porque queríamos beber. Después de unírnos a A.A., llegamos a saber que una vez que empezábamos a beber, no podíamos parar.

**10. ¿Ha faltado a su trabajo o a la escuela a causa de la bebida?**

Muchos de nosotros ahora reconocemos que a menudo nos ausentábamos "por estar enfermos" cuando en realidad estábamos con resaca o borrachos.

**11. ¿Ha tenido "lagunas mentales"?**

Ha pasado horas o días bebiendo sin poder acordarse de lo que hizo o qué le pasó? Al llegar a A.A., descubrimos que esa era una indicación bastante segura del alcoholismo.

**12. ¿Ha pensado que llevaría una vida mejor si no bebiera?**

Muchos de nosotros empezamos a beber porque la bebida hacía que la vida nos pareciera más agradable, al menos por algún tiempo. Luego nos sentimos atrapados. Estábamos bebiendo para vivir y viviendo para beber. Estábamos hartos de estar hartos y recurrimos a A.A.

*¿Respondió SÍ a cuatro o más preguntas? De ser así, es probable que tenga un problema con el alcohol. ¿Por qué decimos esto? Porque miles de miembros de A.A. lo han dicho durante muchos años. La dura experiencia les ha enseñado la verdad respecto a sí mismos.*

¿ES  
A.A.  
PARA  
USTED?

# 8

**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.**

## Area Group Histories: First in a Series



*The 18-month-old non-smoking Allandale Group meets weekdays at noon at Covenant Presbyterian Church at MoPac and 2222. Its members employ effective wayfinding to surprising effect to announce the meetings' availability, schedule, and to direct passersby on 2222 inside.*

## Short History of the Allandale Group

THE RELATIVELY-NEW ALLANDALE GROUP OF A.A. meets at Covenant Presbyterian Church, 3003 Northland Drive in the Sanctuary Building's Room 103 at noon Monday through Friday.

The group was formed in February of 2004 at Covenant, encouraged by the pastor Reverend Jim Singleton. Three members of the church who are also A.A.s got the meeting started.

At the outset there was only one noon meeting a week but attendance was encouraging. Soon the meeting became a Monday through Friday affair. It has been nicknamed the "Holy Smokeless" meeting since it takes place in a church and is non-smoking. All meetings are open discussion. Mondays are devoted to Step Study. Two years sobriety is required to chair the step meeting — six months to chair the Tuesday through Friday meetings.

The church is located at the corner of MoPac and 2222. Signs posted near the street have already proved effective at drawing people in. Other temporary arrow signs are posted on the church campus to direct people to the meeting room. Average attendance during the first half of the year 2005 has been about 15, ranging from 8 to as high as 27.

Y'all come see us when you can!

— Carole J. and Morris J., Allandale Group