

## SOBRIETY VARIETY

FEBRUARY 2012

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## JANUARY 2012 VOLUNTEERS

## Office

Dan H., Wendy F., Leslie Ann D., Pat F., Kenny K., Claire C., Frank D., John B., Billy C., Marty C., Valerie A., Michael N., Stephanie F., Kimberley W., Mike FO., Gary F., Matt B.,

## Hotline

Rachel E., Marty C., Keith W., Jeannie H., South Austin Big Book Group (SABBG), Rick P.,

Drew W., Tom F., Dar-  
rin A., Randy R., Nancy  
K., Toni H., Gary B.,  
Jerry T., Beth B., Ro-  
land P., Charles S.,  
Brad C., Into Action  
Group (Elgin), Mark A.,  
Karin S., Linda R., Siiri  
W., Sharon T., Paul B.,  
Tom K., Glenn S., Tom-  
my V., Maia M., Jim G.,  
Mike B., Leslie Ann/  
Kelley D., Chris C.,  
Mary Jo B., Ryan P.

## 2012 Hill Country Intergroup Board

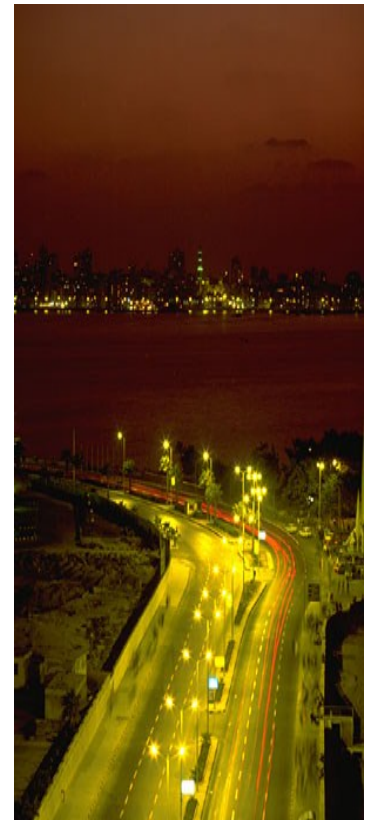
We welcomed new Trustees Solis R., Nancy A., Dave A., and Randy R., as well as the District 3B/3C Intergroup Chair, Brian M.

Congratulations to all!

*Executive Committee members are:*

*Chair - Suzanne McF.      Vice Chair - Dan W.  
Secretary - Nancy A.      Treasurer - Charles M.*

Outgoing Trustees, Buster S., Susan P., Patrick M., Eileen B., and former District Intergroup Chair, Mike B., served HCIA with distinction, and leave some big shoes to fill. Many thanks to all of them for their service .



During gas rationing in WWII, AA's are granted the right to use cars for 12th step work in emergency cases.

## Intergroup Workshop

Georgetown  
(Whitehouse) Group  
February 11, 2012  
@ 1:30  
5th Step ES&H  
Troy N. & Marti R.  
from Northland

**Concept 2: When, in 1955, the A.A. groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference - excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter - the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society.**

- Do we have an understanding of the history of the General Service Conference (the "Conference")?
- What is a Conference Advisory Action? Does our home group's G.S.R., D.C.M., area delegate report back to the group on the highlights of the Conference and Conference Advisory Actions?
- Is our group meeting its wider Seventh Tra-

dition responsibilities?  
 As I sit here and write this what comes to mind is the GSR election in October. Are we electing people that have the potential to be effective leaders in A.A.? Are we as a group encouraging them to learn about AAWS and the history of A.A. in general. Are we aware of the power we have entrusted in the delegates, the directors and

staff of AAWS and A.A. Grapevine, Inc., and the trustees? And do we take it personally to stay informed on the happenings in A.A. and the effects on the future of A.A. or do we say that's the job of the GSC? Do you know where the agenda items come from? If not, who's responsible and then does Concept 1 become null?

## Group Conscience: The Bedrock of Unity!

"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

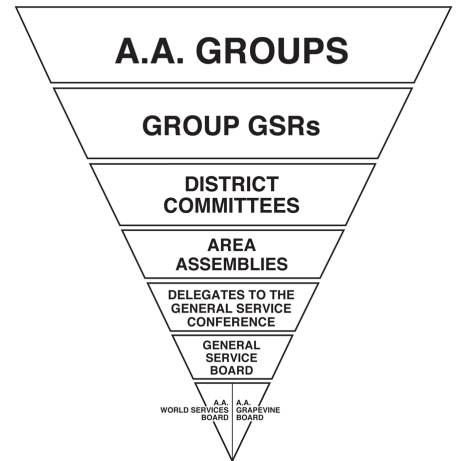
As I sat down to write tonight the words looked all to familiar. Then I realized I could not express my belief in unity after the group conscience with out inserting the thoughts of Louisiana Past Delegate Charlie B. as he spoke at one Southeast Regional Forum. As printed in BOX 459 His words as follows...

What is a group conscience? "The concept has been a part of A.A.'s functioning from its earliest days, and co-founder Bill W. undoubtedly drew heavily on the reliance on A.A.'s forerunner, the Oxford Group, upon a conscience of the group. Bill often told the story of how in 1936 the first A. A. group in New York City turned thumbs down on his chance to accept a job as lay counselor at Towns Hospital (Pass in On, p 175). Despite his dire straits, the group thought his acceptance would compromise the principles of the new movement, and Bill reluctantly heeded the conscience of the group.

The concept was formally defined with publication in 1946 of Tradition Two: 'For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.' This Tradition is used as the principal basis as well for the development of the Twelve Concepts for World Service.

Why Is It important? "It is my concern that we in service have not made it clear to all in the Fellowship, and the newcomer in particular, the importance of arriving at a group conscience. I have often heard members refer to a simple business meeting or a vote on a simple housekeeping problem as a group conscience. Such disregard for the basic nature of the concept serves only to cheapen its intent. After all, this spiritual

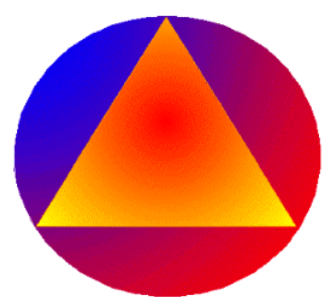
STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE  
(U.S. and Canada)



HCIA Birthday Club

January 2012  
 New Members

George F.  
 Simply AA  
 4yrs



Lost Pines - \$67	Saturday AM Serenity - \$125	1313 - \$463
Sunday South - \$19	Georgetown - \$270	1825 - \$150
Higher Power Hour - \$332	Bridge to Shore - \$1208	Women in Conscious Contact - \$133
A Way Out (Austin) - \$400	South Austin Big Book Group - \$51	Living Faith - \$75
Northland - \$225	Back to Basics (Marble Falls) - \$50	Pennsylvania Group - \$75
Lake Travis Serenity - \$250	Tin Roof - \$100	Burnet Noon - \$150
The River Group - \$25	Marble Falls - \$50	Friday Nite Group (Austin) - \$114
Promises (Kyle) - \$66	Sunshine - \$134	Wimberley - \$10
Kempner - \$19	Brown Bag (Kingsland) - \$50	What It's Like Now - \$93
2 <sup>nd</sup> Chance (Buda) - \$28	Any Lengths - \$121	Fresh Start - \$28
Keystone - \$135	Sunshine - \$25	Pedernales River Group - \$29
Spiritual Awakenings - \$15	Austin City-Wide Group - \$150	Central - \$55
Driftwood - \$53		
Phelan Rd. - \$10		
Allandale - \$583		Total \$5936



principle that allows us to formally define the will of God as we understand Him is one of the principles that sets our Fellowship apart from other movements. It requires a great leap of faith that we alcoholics accept with a sense of duty and gratitude. When one looks at it in this way, the need to be completely informed takes on new meaning. The wonderful thing is that it works! Not only that, but it has a profound effect on all I have witnessed in service. The group conscience is essential to unity; without unity A.A. could not survive."

How does it work? The group conscience is relied upon at all levels of service--the group, district, area and General Service Conference, as well as service committees. A decision must meet two principal criteria in order to qualify as a group conscience: First, the decision must be made only after complete knowledge and through discussion of the question at hand; and, second, any decision made must meet the requirement of substantial unanimity--defined by the Conference as a two-thirds vote, but in practice usually much greater.

When should it be used? Just which matters demand a group conscience are dictated by the gravity of the question before the group. Generally speaking, any matter of policy or financial consideration meets the requirement of a group conscience. Lesser matters, such as determining the time of a meeting or that most important matter concerning the brand of coffee to be used, would require only a single majority vote. Obviously, anything affecting A. A. as a whole, or any group in particular, would require a formal group consideration.

What if it turns out to be wrong? This can and does happen, Charlie acknowledges, "When we're too hasty in our decisions or, Lord forbid, we make a mistake." But most of the mistakes we've made in the past have been quickly rectified either through a process of trial and error or A.A.'s built-in right of minority appeal. We are so fortunate to be a part of a fellowship that is free of dogma and despotic leadership. We have prospered with the principles of the Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service where lesser fellowships would surely have failed. It has been my experience that this can occur only in a movement that is secure enough to allow each of its members to define their own God; and focused enough not to try being all things to all people, but to rely instead on the single purpose of carrying the message to alcoholics who still suffer."

Do AA entities circumvent the group conscience by reallocating funds to other AA entities?

Respond to  
hciaskitbasket@gmail.com

Share Your Experience, Strength & Hope

Submit an Article or News For Publication

hcnewslettereditor@gmail.com

**CAME TO BELIEVE... STAYED FOR SANITY**

I had always knew that there was a God, I just sometimes forgot it wasn't me. I remember the first time I read step 2, I was at a loss because I didn't believe I could be restored to something I never had. My journey began with Yes there is a God, No it isn't Me... but what is this thing called sanity. The state of being sane... free from mental derangement; having a sound, healthy mind; having or showing reason, sound judgment, or good sense. Nope pretty sure that I never had that. Thankfully, my sponsor was good with words. They said that restore could also mean mend and that all I had to believe is that my mind could be mended into a healthy mind. I wasn't quite sure about me but there were a few people I had watched over about 10 years that were being restored/mended into a sane individual. Though what I think helped me the most was this guy that came to almost every meeting; he had several mental illnesses and from time to time would go off his meds. Most people were afraid of him on some level but he and I connected on a level that was beyond suffering from alcoholism. This guy would tell me if the best he could do some days was just not drink and not hurt anyone that I could do it also. I considered what these men told me and at some point in those few days I came to believe in maybe. So my journey to a sane mind and body started on a maybe and though today one or the other and sometimes both get off kilter, I remain entrenched in all three legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous because I know that my Higher Power has and continues to restore me to sanity. I am a prime example that no matter the mental defect be it alcoholism, mental illness or traumatic brain damage, there is a power out there somewhere that keeps me sober. Today I use these long ago embarrassing ailments to reach out to another alcoholic and that has been the most amazing joy of coming to believe. Thanks to my Higher Power I have stayed and found sanity.



**I Am Responsible...**

**When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that:**

**I am**

**Responsible!**

February 1938

Rockefeller gives \$5,000 to AA.

Saves AA from professional -ism

**DECLARATION OF UNITY:**

THIS WE OWE TO A.A.'S FUTURE:

TO PLACE OUR COMMON WELFARE FIRST;  
TO KEEP OUR FELLOWSHIP UNITED.

FOR ON A.A. UNITY DEPEND OUR LIVES, AND THE LIVES OF THOSE TO COME.

**AA GRAPEVINE**

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous



Printed Publication

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aagrapevine.org



## TRADITIONS — HOW THEY WORK

### STOLEN FROM DICK F. IN MASS



Rarely have we seen a group fail that has thoroughly followed AA's Traditions. Those who do not follow them are groups who cannot or will not accept these simple principles, usually groups that are constitutionally incapable of being humble. There are such unfortunate groups. They are not at fault; they seem to have been developed that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of functioning which demands practicing group humility. Their chances of surviving are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from affiliation and guru-itus, but many of them do survive if they are willing to refrain from these activities.

Our group meetings disclose in a general way how we handle our affairs, remain in unity, and seek to carry AA's message. If a group decides it wants recovery, unity, and service to be its experience, and is willing to practice humility to get them - it is then ready to adopt certain principles.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, more effective way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold onto money, power, and prestige and the result was chaos until we practiced the Traditions in all of our group life.

Remember that we deal with alcoholics, seeking to direct rather than be guided, affiliate rather than cooperate, to accumulate rather than to pass it on. Without help unity is beyond our reach. But there is One who has all power that One is God. May you find Him in your group conscience now!

Warping the Traditions availed us nothing. We began to see our coming destruction. We asked His guidance toward unity with honest humility.

Here are the principles which are suggested as the way towards group unity:

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.



## TRADITIONS — HOW THEY WORK STOLEN FROM DICK F. IN MASS

Continued...



7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio, and film.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities

Many of us exclaimed, "those don't apply to this situation." Do not be unique. No group has had the misfortune of "curing" all alcoholics or people with other problems. We are not magicians. The Traditions are not as old-fashioned as they seem. The point is they guide us in how to be of service to fellow sufferers. The principles set down are guides to group progress. Better to be of a service to some than of no use to all. We hope to see our group progress, that is why we have group inventories. Not to become the model for AA as a whole.

The Traditions as written, the experience that developed them, and the chaos resulting from their avoidance or misuse make clear three pertinent ideas.

- (a) That a group, unguided, could destroy everyone's chance of recovery.
- (b) That probably no amount of human power could get alcoholics to make my solution for the group work out right.
- (c) That God would grant us a humble unity when we follow AA Traditions.

# Austin Groups

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 higherpowerhour  
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 westerntrails  
 mensliterature  
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 renegadeducks  
 spiritualawakenings  
 thearch  
 welcomehome  
 youngpeoplesaa  
 awayout  
 bridgetoshore  
 grassroots

aastorytime  
 central  
 eastaustin  
 fridaynight  
 hilltoppers  
 livingfaith  
 southaustinbigbook  
 theturningpoint  
 westlake  
 miracles  
 northland  
 saturdaymorningserenity  
 straightpepperdiet  
 thebreakfastclub  
 westwoodhome  
 twelveandtwelve  
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 hairofthedog  
 liarsclubnorth  
 principlesofrecovery  
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 weagnostics  
 meditationand recovery  
 northoneeighthythree  
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 somearesickerthanothers  
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 unity  
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 seventhstreetsisters  
 bouldin  
 fosdickmensbigbook  
 liarsclubsouth