

## 12,000 Articles Searchable by Keyword

A.A. MEMBERS, PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THE FIELD of alcoholism and others interested in the program of A.A. are now able to access almost every *Grapevine* article and letter ever published — all 12,000 of them — on subjects ranging from anonymity to spirituality and including 150 essays written by A.A. cofounder Bill W.

With thousands of articles written by A.A. members between June 1944, when the magazine was first published, to December 2003, the archive offers a vivid account of A.A. history in the making, as well as a view of Alcoholics Anonymous today. It also makes stories easy to find.

Using keywords, visitors can search the archive by location, author, or subject to learn what A.A.s have said about such topics as relationships, hitting bottom, getting sober and back to life, and exploring how much — and how little — A.A. has changed.

Readers may also browse through the collection to see hundreds of jokes and cartoons, along with thousands of articles to support their sobriety and deepen their understanding of the principles of A.A.

To subscribe, visitors can go to the *Grapevine's* Website, [aagrapevine.org/da](http://aagrapevine.org/da) and select one of these options: 30-day access, \$2; one-year access for non-*Grapevine* subscribers, \$15; and one-year access for *Grapevine* subscribers, \$10. Registration is accomplished online.



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VOL. 5; No. 7

# Sobriety Variety Pages

# 2

Sobriety Variety Pages is published monthly by Hill Country Intergroup, 1339 Lamar Square Drive, Austin, Texas 78704  
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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>

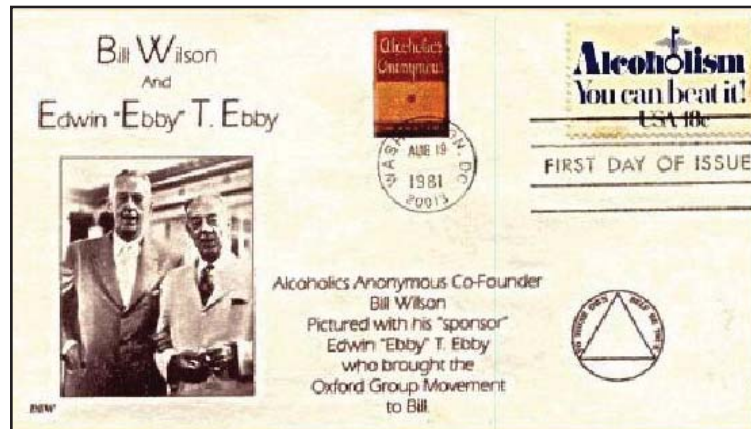
Hill Country Intergroup wishes to thank all who give so much of their time, effort, and personal resources that the vital services we offer continue and grow.

## The Surprisingly Short History of Sponsorship

THE WORDS “SPONSOR” AND “SPONSORSHIP” WERE not part of A.A.’s formative lexicon. When A.A. was still new and untested in the world of alcoholism care, some hospitals wouldn’t accept alcoholics for drying out unless a member of our fledgling program agreed to check him in, visit him regularly during his recuperation, and be responsible for getting him to meetings after he was discharged.

But Bill Wilson, famously, did have what in some ways amounted to a sponsor, Edwin T. (“Ebby”) Thatcher. Sadly, Ebby never really “got it” and is said to have died drunk in 1966, well before Bill’s death in 1971.

Modern A.A. sponsorship is more an extrapolation of the day-to-day twelfth step work of another early member in Cleveland, Ohio, named Clarence.



*A stamp to recognize Bill and Ebby was issued by the U.S. Postal Service in 1981. Both men are pictured on this first day cover.*

Nell Wing, Bill’s secretary, told Bill’s biographer that Clarence was probably “the one man responsible for sponsorship as we know it today.”

Alcoholics Anonymous defines sponsorship as “An alcoholic who has made some progress in the recovery program who shares that experience on a continuous, individual basis with another who is attempting to attain and maintain sobriety through A.A.”

A helpful A.A. pamphlet, *Questions & Answers on Sponsorship* may be purchased at Intergroup for 15 cents a copy.

## The Tradition for July is the Seventh:

**Every A.A. Group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**

**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



### *I Am Responsible*

**August 19 to 21**

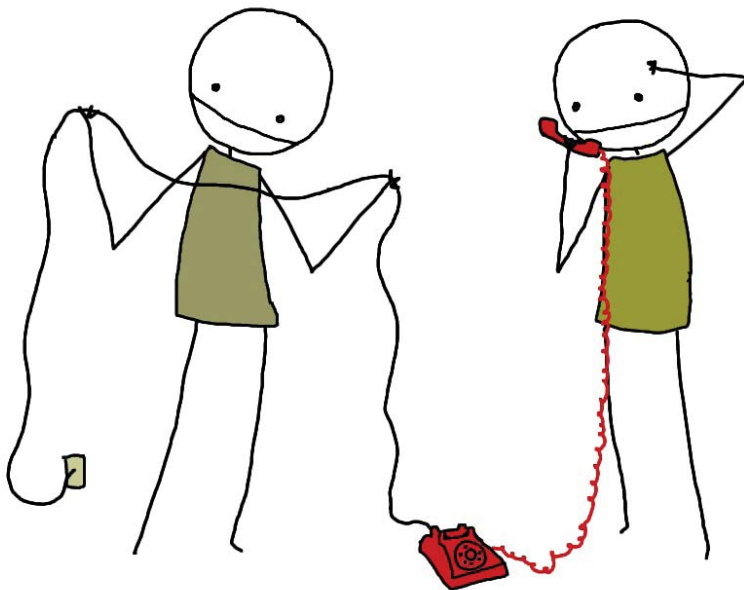
Registration \$20

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 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 June 2005

Kandi A. – 174 Group

Jean B. – 174 Group

Vicky G. – Hope Group

Barbara C. – Hope Group

Drew W. – Legacies Group  
(Bastrop)



## Volunteering Can Be Fun

VOLUNTEERING TO TAKE TWELFTH STEP CALLS AT HOME ON evenings or weekends aids recovery. This entails consenting to stay home or at least be near a phone when the Intergroup office is unmanned, during which time calls to the local A.A. hotline are automatically forwarded to your number.

Handling Twelfth Step calls can also have its lighter side. When my wife and I were living in New Orleans, we agreed to take Twelfth Step calls during one Mardi Gras knowing full well what we were letting ourselves in for. Late that night, the phone rang. The caller knew almost nothing about A.A. but she had what she believed was a reasonable yet urgent request:

“There’s a drunk lying in my front yard and I want the A.A. van to come pick him up right now!” she insisted.

Another time, when we lived in rural Georgia, I volunteered to take Twelfth Step calls one Saturday. I was going to a meeting that evening, but my wife would stay home to handle calls that came during the hour or so I would be gone.

In the afternoon, a call came from a drunk who lived more-or-less between our house and the meeting I would be attending that evening. He agreed to come to the meeting with me. I asked for directions to his house so I could pick him up.

His directions were complicated and his neighborhood was off-the-beaten track, to say the least. When I got near his house, I’d see a school bus in a neighbor’s front yard, he said.

I explained that I’d prefer a fixed landmark; a vehicle could be moved.

“Oh,” he explained, “it’s been there for 15 years.”

Well, I drove up and down his street three times looking for that school bus! As this was before cell phones and I was now going to be late for my meeting, I eventually gave up. He never did get a ride to our meeting that night.

When I finally reached him after I returned home, I explained that I couldn’t find the school bus — or his house.”

Oh,” he replied, “they removed the bus that day.”

—Evan W., *Cat Mountain*

**June Volunteers at Intergroup — Office:** Leslie Ann D., Chad P., Pete (the guy), Dawn W., Morna N., Robert G., Ian M., Roland P., Marty C., Jorge V., Craig W., John B., Jenny, Ned, Kathleen K., Monica, Barb S., Karin D., and Jim H. **Hotline:** Chris F., Danny/Tonya, Pete (the guy), Beth B., Morna N., Beth W., Randy R., Jeremy B., Dave B., Bill U., Keith F., Laurie W., Nancy N., Paul W., Stewart G., Julie A., BOSCO, Carol M., Bob J., Joe/Suzanne, John B., Will C., Ryan P., Richard, Sharon T., Jeff P., NA24, Ruben G., Janet F., Barb S., James B., Jenny P., Ian M., and Janet.



## There are 5 basic types of meetings:

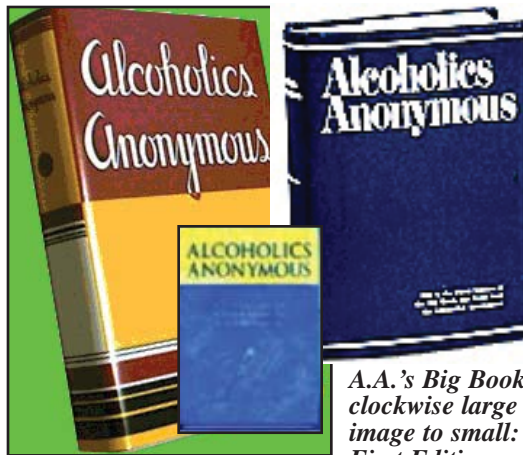
AN **OPEN MEETING** IS AN AROUND-THE-TABLE DISCUSSION ON A topic relating to alcoholism. There will be a chairperson and generally a leader. Someone will read a section from the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* (we refer to this text as the "Big Book") on "How It Works." The leader will then introduce the topic.

A **closed meeting** is the same as an open meeting with the exception that only people with a desire to stop drinking, or people who think they may have a problem with drinking, may attend.

A **speaker's meeting** is just that: A speaker will be introduced who will tell his or her story for the entire meeting, usually following a format of: what life was like when he or she drank; what happened to make them stop drinking; and what sobriety means in their life now.

A **Big Book Study** meeting is specifically designed to help us to improve our understanding of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous* — a good meeting for members new to the program.

A **Step Study** meeting will concentrate on examining in detail the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, the core of our program. Many members of A.A. find these steps to be the solution to the illness of alcoholism.



*A.A.'s Big Book clockwise large image to small: First Edition (1939), Third Edition (1976), and the current edition's cover.*

### 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.

### June Donations From Area A.A. Groups:

Dry Creek \$20, Triangle \$15, Bridge to Shore \$545, Renegade Ducks \$25, Unity of the Hills \$71, Kyle \$20, NA24 \$50, Round Rock Big Book \$23, Central \$42, Into Action \$30, Stoney Point \$13, Dripping Springs \$300, Keep 1st Things 1st \$150, Hope \$80, Hilltop \$300, Living Faith \$50, Allandale \$20, Four Points \$20, Live and Let Live \$352, Lost Pines \$99, Desire to Stop \$151, Lake Travis Serenity \$150, Turning Point \$356

TOTAL - \$2,882

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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.**

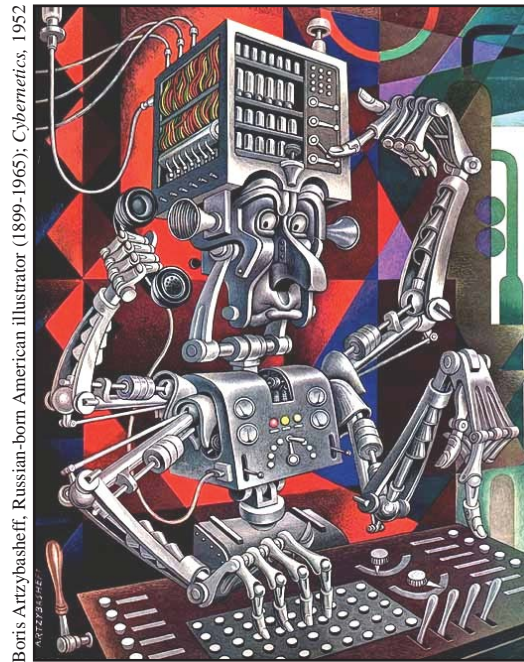
## Let Us Hear From You

*SOBRIETY VARIETY PAGES* WANTS TO RECEIVE YOUR FEEDBACK. To initiate a reader dialog about A.A. in the Austin area, what can you share about the issue below? Or, if you have an observation or question relating to something (anything) that you have experienced 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>

### Another's take on court-ordered attendance

In reference to a letter (May *SVP*) from Lyn, ostensibly an A.A. member, re: court ordered participation in A.A., I have to respectfully disagree for the following reasons:

- (1) I am opposed to anyone being sent to A.A. against their will by anyone or anything (except alcohol), and
- (2) I am opposed to allowing civilians (non-alcoholics) who know next to nothing about alcoholism or recovery from it, to make decisions about who belongs in our Fellowship.



Boris Artzybasheff, Russian-born American illustrator (1899-1965); *Cybernetics*, 1952

**“I am opposed to allowing civilians (non-alcoholics) who know next to nothing about alcoholism or recovery from it, to make decisions about who belongs in our Fellowship.”**

With full knowledge that some of these "referred" (read: threatened) persons are in fact, alcoholic, and will in fact, recover in A.A., I remain opposed to this imposition on A.A. and our Traditions. The net result of this process has been a fellowship which is truly monolithic, but considerably less effective. A.A. is not, and never has been, an "end justifies the means" program. That is why we have Traditions in the first place.

As A.A. members we should always be prepared to help the suffering alcoholic who WANTS help, not simply bending under the long arm of the law.

—Clint R., South Austin