



Sobriety Variety



Published by the Hill Country Intergroup

1339 Lamar Square Drive, Suite 204, Austin TX 78704

Volume 5, Issue 12 - December 2005

A Change of Command

My son is a member of the Junior ROTC at his high school. This week they had a "Change of Command" ceremony where one of the students takes on the position of Corp Commander. A young man came on the PA system and explained that in times past it was common for the average soldier to not know who his commander was... having never seen him in his day-to-day business and battles. This ceremony was established in part so that the average soldier could see his commander and know that the commander was in his proper place and running things.

In the midst of battle, the average soldier has much to grumble about and perhaps he will blame his

commander for the situation, but at least the soldier knows someone is out there with a plan even if it doesn't seem to make a lot of sense at the moment and there is someone to whom he can direct his complaints and perhaps a few curses.

When I came into Alcoholics Anonymous, I struggled with the "Higher Power" thing. I didn't like depending on Him because in the past I never got results, or so my thinking went. I spent more time cursing Him than asking for help.

There were others who struggled with the "Higher Power" thing too. My buddy, Duffy, was one of them. He was an atheist and didn't like all this talk about a Higher Power. He thought that his own intellectual power was enough to beat his drinking problem.

I admired Duffy. He stood up to "The Establishment," the phrase used then for those guys who seemed to run everything and never gave the average guy a chance. He expressed his complaints in meetings and jeered at us. I thought that if anyone could beat the system and get sober by self-will alone, it was Duffy. But even though I grumbled about my Higher Power and even cursed Him, I still believed He existed. I didn't want to borrow problems. I had enough problems

already. My life went on. I lost track of Duffy.

Years later I was still sober and a lot happier. I had a regular job and I was working in the AA program too. I felt it was my obligation to "pass it on." I got a call from a guy who had just lost his job. His boss had fired him for being drunk on the job. He told me he was using cocaine so I took him to a different 12-step program, NA. I was curious.

In the past Narcotics Anonymous was not a good place to go for help. Addicts used to come to AA meetings and beg to be let in. It must have been bad over there. But over the years, things change. "Maybe NA has improved," I thought. I wanted to see for myself.

I sat in the meeting with my new prospect. It was a crowded, happy place. It was so crowded, there was barely a place to stand. NA had improved indeed!

As we waited for the meeting to begin, a man burst into the room. All eyes turned to him as he stumbled to his seat. People laughed and propped him up before he fell to the floor. "He is drunk!" I said to myself. As the man came by my seat, I looked into his vacant eyes. He was not drunk. His brain was fried. The man was gone. All that was left was a shell. As he stumbled past me, I

Contents

Sign Up Now!!!!.....	2
Monthly Meetings at Intergroup.....	2
AA History.....	2
November Volunteers at Intergroup.....	3
Recovery Jones.....	3
November, 2005 Donations From Area AA Groups.....	4
HCIA Birthday Club – New Members November 2005.....	4
Contact us.....	4
New Office Hours.....	4

secretly hoped that my new prospect realized, "This is what awaits you if you don't do something now!"

The next day, I was driving to work. My mind drifted back to that meeting and the man who had stumbled past me. There was something about his eyes that seemed so familiar. Then it hit me. I knew him! I quickly pulled my car over. I was crying and I couldn't stop. It was Duffy!

Duffy was so smart. He was so good. He thought he was all the "Higher Power" he ever needed, but he didn't make it.

I know atheists in the program who are successful, but they know their commander. They find some power greater than themselves even if it is only the AA Group itself. Duffy didn't know his commander. He didn't think he needed one. Now he can't think at all.

I miss him and still think of him. His fate is what awaits me if I don't do something now.

I am anonymous in keeping with the traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous but since you must call me something, call me Israel, the one who struggles to understand a Power greater than himself.

Monthly Meetings at Intergroup

- *Treatment Facilities Committee*, 1st Monday at 7:00 PM
- *Correctional Facilities Committee*, 1st Monday at 7:00 PM
- *Intergroup Reps*, 2nd Monday at 6:30 PM

Sign Up Now!!!!



Answer the Intergroup *HOTLINE* phones
from your home (or cell phone)*

One night per quarter - 6:00 PM to 8:00 AM

OR

Sat. or Sun. day time - 8:00 AM TO 8:00 PM

Sat. or Sun. night time - 8:00 PM TO 8:00 AM

*Calls will be forwarded to your phone from the Intergroup office.

The service commitment is one night per quarter (every three months).

Requirements for this valuable service work are:

- 1) Six (6) months of continuous sobriety
- 2) Have taken AA's Twelve Steps
- 3) Familiar with the seventh chapter of the Big Book
- 4) Willing to make the above commitment for one (1) Year

ALSO

Work the phone desk at the Intergroup Office

Three hour shift between 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM., M-F

Call Clint Ritter at (512)448-9017

From 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

- *Grapevine Committee*, 2nd Saturday at 2:00 PM
- *Board of Trustees*, 3rd Thursday at 6:30 PM



AA History

Who authored Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers and Pass it On?

From : Unpublished manuscript of AA World History (1985) by Bob P. Chapter 12 Literature

In the last decade of A.A.'s first 50 years, two handsome historical biographies of its co-founders were added to its major hardcover books. The need for such information was discussed many times in the early 70's, especially as the early members who had known Dr. Bob and Bill were dying off. Then, at the World Service Meeting in New York in 1976, delegates from overseas requested strongly that priority be given to a biography of Dr. Bob, as they felt they knew too little about him. Partly because of that impetus, the 1977 Conference authorized the joint-biography project to go ahead.

The task was assigned to Niles P., a

November Volunteers at Intergroup

Office:

Jeff B. "Pete"
 Gene C. Herb
 John B. Leslie Ann D.
 Roland P. Jeffrey M.
 Marty C. Scotty H.
 Chris F. John P.
 Monica Robert G.
 Phil Ian M.
 Jeffrey

Hotline:

Ryan P. "Pete"
 Meredith Gene C.
 Kathy L. Tommy B.
 Gordon K. Cherie G.
 Mary T. David K.
 Harlan O. Dana B.
 Ian M. Alex H.
 Charles H. Ian A.
 BOSCO Susie C.

Richard D. Paul W.
 Gary H. Beth B.
 Drew W. Ruben G.
 David B. Joe B.
 Jamie D. Jeff P.
 Jeremy B. Sharon T.
 Barry F. Nancy N.
 Deb J. Pam B.
 Tammy D.

past trustee and past assistant general manager of G.S.O. under Bob H. Niles quickly exhausted the material in the archives and then undertook interviews on tape with relatives, friends and acquaintances of Dr. Bob and pioneer members of Midwestern A.A. The locals of these interviews included not only Ohio and Dr. Bob's native Vermont, but California, the D.C. area, Florida, North Carolina, New York and Texas (where he spent time with Dr. Bob's son.) In the course of the research, the book naturally expanded from biographical limits into a memoir of early A.A. in the Midwest. Niles' enormous and sensitive job of digesting, organizing and assembling the material from the tapes was supplemented by prodigious editing by Janet C. Tastefully and masterfully designed by a nonalcoholic book designer Nelson Gruppo, the book was illustrated with 26 photos. Entitled "Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers," it was published in 1980.

Niles P. immediately began research for a similar biography of Bill W., except that the problem was now one

of selection from the plethora of material to draw on, including the Robert Thompson biography published by Harper & Row. Also, Niles felt overwhelmed by the challenge of portraying Bill's complex character, colored by his own personal acquaintanceship with the co-founder. Finally Niles fell ill with cancer and resigned from the assignment.

Mel B., a professional writer working in corporate relations in Toledo, Ohio, was engaged to take over. After working for two years, Mel produced a voluminous, thoroughly researched, well-written manuscript. (A remark made by the nonalcoholic stenographer whom Mel hired to type the final manuscript should be preserved for posterity. Unfamiliar with A.A., she got caught up in the drama of Bill's story, and when she had finished, she said, "He was such an intelligent and talented man. It's too bad he

Recovery Jones



I've finished my fourth step!

<http://www.recoveryjonescartoons.com/>

never did anything with his life!")

The Literature Committee felt that Mel B.'s manuscript lacked vitality and failed to make Bill come alive. So the project was turned over to Catherine N., a freelance writer in New York, to add human interest

November, 2005 Donations From Area AA Groups

Giddings - \$278	NA 24 - \$50	Wimberley - \$30
Central - \$115	Keep 1 st Things 1 st - \$334	Northland - \$ 806
Bridge to Shore - \$500	Lighthouse - \$100	Hilltop - \$250
Miracles - \$185	Allandale - \$40	Living Faith - \$70
Dry Creek - \$84	New Beginnings - \$150	Total: \$3101.00
Courage to Change - \$84	Renegade Ducks - \$25	

touches. After conducting additional interviews, she started to work on the manuscript. Soon, however, Catherine stopped in frustration, reporting that she could not do justice to the subject by patching and filling and asking for permission to do a complete rewrite in her own style. She was given a go-ahead and spent another year and a half in producing the final book.

A number of suggested titles were considered, but none seemed quite right. Then one day, a staff member showed Bob P. general manager of G.S.O. a thank you letter from a member who was the delegate from Delaware for his visit to G.S.O. on Open House Day. He compared his feelings with the first time he had met Bill. "I was a couple of months sober and so excited," he wrote, "so thrilled to actually meet the co-founder that I gushed all over him with what my sobriety meant to me and my undying gratitude for his starting A.A. When I ran down, he took my hand in his and said simply, 'Pass It On'" Bob P. exclaimed, "There's our title!" The book was subtitled, "The Story of Bill Wilson and how the A.A. message reached the world." Again designed by Nelson Gruppo, it came off the press just before Christmas 1984.

*From the AA History Lovers
Group on Yahoo.com*

HCIA Birthday Club – New Members November 2005

Karen C. - SOS Group -
Bondville, IL

New Office Hours

Beginning Monday January 2nd, 2006, new office hours will be in effect at the Hill Country Intergroup Office. We will be open from 9AM to 6PM, Monday through Friday and will continue to be closed on weekends and most major holidays. This will change the M-F phone desk shifts for office volunteers to 9AM to Noon; Noon to 3PM; and 3PM to 6PM. The M-F Hotline shift will now start one hour earlier and will run from 6PM to 8AM. Saturday, Sunday and holiday Hotline shifts will now run from 8AM to 8PM (day shift) and 8PM to 8AM (night shift).

Here's wishing everyone a great holiday season.

Contact us

Hill Country Intergroup
1339 Lamar Square Drive,
Suite 204, Austin TX 78704

(512) 444-0071

Fax (512) 444-7586

Email:

Austinaa@austin.rr.com

World Wide Web:
<http://austinaa.org/>

