

# SOBRIETY VARIETY PAGES

Volume 7, Issue 9

September 2007

# HILL COUNTRY INTERGROUP

# long form of tradition 9

Each A.A. group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our over-all public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principal newspaper, the A.A. Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.

# step 9

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

# 9th step promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will find that we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will loose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook on life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Alcoholics Anonymous

#### Page 2

#### letter from the editor

The ninth step  $\mathcal{E}$  tradition are represented in this months newsletter.

I would like to express my appreciation to all those who have contributed to this publication. We have received emails with links to A.A. history and photographs as well as written contributions from members. Your ideas and suggestions will appear in these pages. Keep reading  $\mathfrak{S}$  keep sharing this message with members who have not received a copy!

Congratulations to Fred G. who won the ninth step short story contest. You can read his experience strength and hope on page 4.

To add yourself or a friend in the fellowship to the email subscription list for this newsletter send an email to sobrietyvariety@austinaa.org. Thereafter you will receive by email a PDF version of the newsletter each month. Printed copies of the newsletter are available throughout each month at the Hill Country Intergroup office.

I look forward to your input for next months issue. Please send your stories, art work, obituaries of members and ideas to sobrietyvariety@austinaa.org.

Yours in service,

The editor

#### obituary

Tom L. passed away peacefully in the early morning hours of August 24th 2007. He was 68 years of age and 17 years sober.

Tom was an active member of several Austin area groups of Alcoholics Anonymous.

After services were held by his family a memorial was organized at the 24 Hour Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. Tom spent a great deal of time at the 24 Hour Group working with new comers and sharing his experience, strength and hope.

Tom is remembered fondly and will be missed.

## group donations

Our Gang - \$50	1825 (Pflugerville) - \$100	Buda Big Book - \$68
Phelan Road - \$10	Bridge to Shore - \$575	Dripping Springs - \$240
Georgetown - \$350	Keep 1 <sup>st</sup> Things 1 <sup>st</sup> - \$183	Gattis School Road - \$33
North Austin 24 - \$50	Allandale - \$202	Elgin - \$20
Into Action (Lockhart) - \$30	Round Rock Big Book - \$20	Second Chance (Buda) - \$15
Desire to Stop - \$115	Started in Service - \$19	A Way Out - \$40
Tuesday Night - \$31	Live and Let Live - \$800	Dry Creek - \$64
Bouldin - \$300	Lighthouse - \$100	New Beginnings - \$132
Emmaus - \$144	ACWG - \$100	
Westlake - \$350	Kyle - \$20	TOTAL - \$4,161

# HCI birthday club

Congratulations to last months new birthday club members.

Steve B.—Turning Point—23 years Pam M.—Western Trails—1 year

To become a member or donate in honor of a friend we suggest a donation of one dollar per year of the recipients sobriety. That person will receive an HCI Birthday Club card and a mention here in the Sobriety Variety Pages.

Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

# **HCI volunteers**

Office:	Bill H.	Rolando P.	Leslie Ann D.	Paul W.
Marla K.	Mary L.	Heather W.	Hotline:	Jim N
Kevin B.	Billy C.	Gene C.	Tommy B.	Kath L.
Ron W.	Casey C.	Norma A.	Angela E.	Lee A.
Dennis "Pete" P.	Marty C.	Michele B.	Gene C.	Tammy D.
Ricardo	Pam M.	Rachel Z.	Drew W.	Karin S.
Pam R.	Gunnar S.	Steve H.	Joe McF	
Karen D.	Matt B.	Mike C.	Rob C.	

#### Page 4

### 9th step contest winning story

#### "We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it." – The Big Book, <u>Alcoholics Anonymous</u>, p. 83 (A Ninth Step promise).

Sometimes, at a low point in thought, or in some depressed state of the heart, I'd like to disavow my past, all those bad turns in life that finally coaxed the words "I am an alcoholic" from my lips. Quit all this business of cleaning my side of the street. Just put down the shovel, walk to the other side and begin life anew as a normal human being. Clearly, for this alcoholic, sobriety, serenity, life itself, are works in progress!

Thankfully, at such moments, I can look to a more recent past, that spent in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, for the strength to get back to the work at hand. Five years ago, on the occasion of my 5<sup>th</sup> Step, my sponsor cut through the systematic recitation of my 4<sup>th</sup> to ask, "But what's eating your lunch *right now*?" At the time I was a scared, despairing, angry man. I had spent more than nine years in "sobriety" building a new life, then another three drinking my way toward spiritual emptiness and the night that brought DWI and felony possession charges. Only a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> step would remove enough of that fear, despair, and anger to proceed with the business of rebuilding my life.

Five years later, I can appreciate the blessing that hid beneath the troubles I faced then. As I began the 9<sup>th</sup> Step amends process, I first had to accept and face the obligations and restrictions the law would place on my life. Thus began my amends to myself. Next, I needed to address those closest to me: my sons, other family members, friends. Later would come those more distant or less affected, creditors, medical providers, the government.

I am by no means done with the amends process, but I am truly "amazed" at being at least "half way through." I am at peace with and connected warmly to the family of my birth. I've strengthened the bond with my two sons, the youngest who recently celebrated a sober new year of life. And I've learned that with family and sons I cannot "shut the door" on the possible necessity for future amends. As we go through life together, like our friend Charlie W. says, "More will be revealed."

Early on, in increments of \$15 and \$30 a month respectively, I paid off monetary debts to an ex-girlfriend and an old friend who had helped me during my time of relapse. I finished paying all my child support. Although I may never pay off a mountain of student loan debt before I die, I placed my life and finances before the powers that be and report regularly. And two years ago I completed all the conditions of probation and deferred adjudication for the charges I once faced.

Challenges still wait on my 8<sup>th</sup> Step list. In the case of one it feels, as the ol' rancher says, like it's just gettin' down to the nut-cuttin'. But with the help of my higher power, my home group, all you brothers and sisters in sobriety, each day will bring "a new freedom and a new happiness" -- if I work for them.

Fred G.

Page 5

# What Happened To Joe

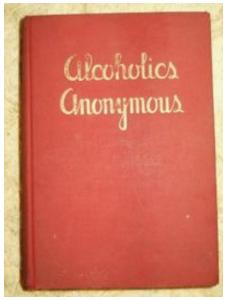


...to be continued in next issue

#### about the first edition big book

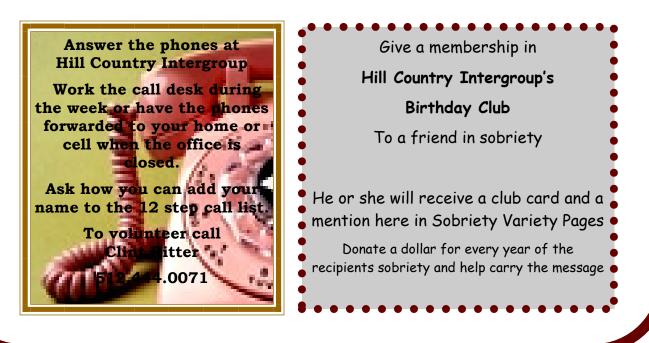
The book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, was published in 1939 and has been a perennial best-seller ever since. While several titles for the book were proposed (including "The Way Out", which was already in use), Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob finally settled on

"Alcoholics Anonymous", and the fellowship itself took its name from the book. The first edition had a "circus cover" of red and yellow, and it was printed in heavy paper and large size, which was thought to make it more saleable—hence the nickname "Big Book", a name that sticks today even though AA has published it in a more conventional size. Sales of the book—and the popularity of AA—increased rapidly after positive articles in *Liberty* magazine in 1939 and the Saturday Evening Post in 1941. The 4th edition was released in 2001. The first 164 pages of the first edition, plus the preface, the forewords, and the chapter called "The Doctor's Opinion" have been left largely intact, with minor statistical updates and edits. In each successive edition, the personal stories have been reviewed to represent the current population of AA, with the result that the stories of the origi-



nal members of the 1930s have gradually been displaced. In 2003 the stories removed from the first three editions of Alcoholics Anonymous were gathered together in the book "Experience, Strength, and Hope."

Wikipedia



#### newcomer blog

Hello, my name is Greg and I am an alcoholic. I introduced myself to this community last month with a short blog about my experience about how I got to this program and struggled with step number one. I have been asked to chronicle my steps in this program and I pray that something that I write helps you in your journey to recovery. I know that by sharing my journey with you I will be helped.

The basic premise that "We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity" was still a bit foreign to me. Believing that there was a power greater than myself was no longer an issue. After all hadn't alcohol been a power greater than me? I knew that it had.

Even though I knew that I was powerless over alcohol, I hadn't ever been con-

fronted with the proposition that I had possibly lost my sanity. Was I really insane? I began to take a look at my actions and thoughts over the last 25 years. I had done many things that I couldn't explain. Why had I continued to drink even after a doctor had told me that my case was fatal and that it was only a matter of time? How had a generally very social person managed to completely isolate himself? How had my life become so out of control?

After all hadn't alcohol been a power greater than me? I knew that it had.

The true definition of insanity is; the state of being insane; unsoundness or derangement of mind; madness; lunacy. I was definitely making unsound decisions and the fact that I continued to do so when I knew what I was doing was self destructive was surly a form of madness. I would get so angry at trivial things and stay angry for hours or even days. Yes this was an example of a derangement of the mind.

When I had about 30 days of sobriety a woman who was chairing a meeting said a phrase I had heard many times before. She said "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results". I don't know why, but all of a sudden this feeling rushed over my body and I realized that is exactly what I had been doing for decades. I kept trying to solve my problems by drinking to forget them. This had never worked but I did it over and over again.

I not only did this with the drink, but also in my dealings with other people. I had become a person that nobody wanted to be around. The more people didn't want to be around the more I acted in the manner that pushed people away, all the while wondering deep down why nobody seemed to care about me. This was lunacy.

Since I had convinced myself of the insanity in my life the only question left to complete step two was to BELIEVE that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. Working with my sponsor we turned to page 47 in the Big Book and I read. "We need to ask ourselves but one short question. 'Do I NOW believe, or am I even WILLING to believe, that there IS a Power greater than myself?" I knew the answer was yes and after affirming this began to pray to my higher power for the restoration of my sanity and relief from my obsession. "If you want to drink, that's your business. If you want to stop, but can't, that's our business."

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Sobriety Variety Pages found at the Hill Country Intergroup website sobrietyvariety@austinaa.org