

SOBRIETY VARIETY PAGES

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Our Mission

**WE WORK
24 HOURS A
DAY
FOR YOU!**

**Information 12th
Step Referrals
Service
Opportunities**

www.austinaa.org

How Big Is Your God

I always wondered about how the program really worked in my life. It wasn't that I didn't feel the presence of a higher power or see the program working in others, but how did all the pieces come together? I struggled early in the program with asking for help or even believing that it was going to be ok. I just could not see the forest for the trees, and needless to say I had difficulty with certain aspects of the program, like praying and meditation they seemed to be a waste of time, because they just were not working on any of my problems. I had a few years in the program when I met a man who later became my second sponsor that taught how to love and be loved, be a friend and have friends, and to give rather than to take. We spent a lot of time together going through the book again and during that process he helped me understand the true meaning of steps and the principles behind them. I understood the 11th step prayer for the first time in my sobriety and I had only scratched the surface at that time. I learned that prayer was to ask god what I could do to be of service to him and meditation was listening for the answer. God willing I will have 12 years this month on the 19th and the man that helped me understand that sobriety is not about not drinking has been gone for several years now, and I miss him dearly as he helped me become a man at 35 years old. I stopped praying to get out of trouble with the law, to not struggle with finances, and for all those things that I thought I should have. I stopped saying that I cannot meditate. I now pray that I be shown how to be of maximum service to GOD and my fellows. I then meditate to listen for the answers. I do not always like the answers, but I follow the directions to the best of my ability today. Today I can no longer tell you how big my GOD is, because I have learned how to trust in infinite GOD where there are no limitations on what we can accomplish together. I have learned that GOD gives me all the strength I need to handle each and every situation without fail.

I say in meetings that Alcoholics Anonymous saved my life and gave me a GOD of my understanding that either is or isn't and I choose that he is.

Robert C.

October History (A Prestigious Award)

In San Francisco in October 1951, the American Public Health Association presents Alcoholics Anonymous with the Lasker Award, "in recognition of its unique and highly successful approach" to an "age-old public health and social problem." The award is made possible through benefactions of Mary and Albert Lasker, New York philanthropists. A ceremony with Bill W. and Board of Trustees chairman Bernard Smith as speakers is attended by some 3,000 A.A.s and family members, physicians, public health experts, and clergymen. (AA World Services Archives)

**Hill Country
Intergroup
Representatives
Meeting
2nd Monday
Of the
Month
6:30 PM
Covenant
Presbyterian
Church
Education Bldg.
Room 107**



*HCIA Birthday
Club
OCTOBER
BIRTH DAYS*

2012

*John B.—27 Years
South Austin Big
Book Group
(SABBG)
Robert C.—12 Years
Bastrop Friday
Night Group*



SEPTEMBER VOLUNTEERS

Office -

Billy C., Marty C., Mike S., Dan H., Frank D., Pat F., Michael N., John B., Donna Jean E., Allen B., Eileen B., Jim H., Charles M., Claire C., Leslie Ann D.,

Hotline -

1313 Group, Marty C., Mark A., Meredith H., Jim H., A Way Out Group (Bastrop), John B., Rachel E., Beth B., Georgetown Group, Eileen B., Keith F., Lee A., Alex H., South Austin Big Book Group (SABBG), Chris F., Dan B., Dave E., Mary Jo B., Western Trails Group

SEPTEMBER DONATIONS

- | | |
|--|---|
| Hope Group (Cedar Park) – \$225 | Legacies (Bastrop) - \$10 |
| River Group (San Marcos) - \$50 | Central - \$52 |
| Desire to Stop - \$451 | Bridge to Shore - \$700 |
| Stoney Point - \$120 | Keep 1 st Things 1 st - \$270 |
| Llano - \$75 | Firemakers - \$300 |
| What it's Like Now - \$118 | Western Trails - \$20 |
| Sunset Canyon - \$100 | Citywide - \$150 |
| 7 th Street Sisters - \$177 | 164 Page Winners - \$75 |
| Allandale - \$797 | Westlake - \$2,000 |
| South Austin Big Book Group (SABBG) - \$68 | Marble Falls - \$50 |
| Grass Roots - \$75 | Northland - \$281 |
| Beautiful Downtown Driftwood—\$60 | September Totals= \$6,524 |
| Lake Travis Serenity - \$300 | |

Why Bother With The Big Book?

AROUND THE TABLES just the other night, a guy said to me, “you’re hung-up on the Big Book. There are other books and other ways to work the program. Remember, those guys who wrote the Big Book didn’t have much sobriety when they wrote it.” The first part of this statement, I considered a compliment. The last part perplexed me, because I had been thinking how wonderful it was that the Big Book had been put together at all by the pioneers, during what must have been trying and terrifying times. I had just reread Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, which is poignant, to say the least... Some time in the late 1930’s Bill W. wrote the portion of the Big Book including (on page 85) these words: “It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.” That statement is as true today as it was then. Reading the Big Book and using it as guide for spiritual progress has freed me to develop and grow. Yeah, I’m hung-up on the Big Book. But then, I’m hung-up on the “Twelve and Twelve,” the grapevine, As Bill Sees It, my wife, my son, my home, my clients, and you. And I think I have found a dandy, peachy-keen way of life just because some clowns with only a couple of years’ sobriety decided to write a book. Thank God they didn't wait!

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AA HUMOR SECTION

Old habits are hard to break:

There was a group of AA members driving to a conference in a distant city. About halfway there, they stopped for a coffee break. The restaurant was near a botanical garden, and they decided to walk around there to stretch their legs before going on. As they admired the beautiful beds of flowers, a sweet little old woman approached them and asked, "Are you members of the Wild Life Society?"

"No" madam".. answered one. We used to be, but then we joined AA.

You Might Be An Alcoholic If:

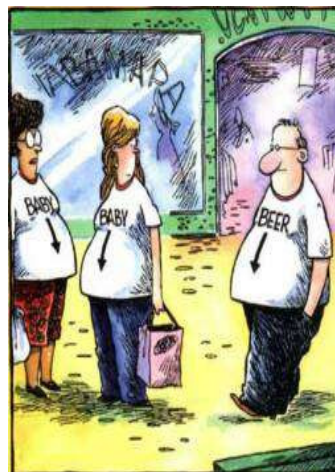
If you are reading this.

If for some reason, there is salt on the rim of your basketball hoop.

If you wake up one morning and fall off the hood of your car.

If your doctor finds traces of blood in your alcohol stream.

You can focus better with one eye closed.



AA Thought For The Month

Stay In Today

Bill and Lois (Wilson) always retained their capacity for enjoying themselves, each other, and nature. They did not let anxieties about past or future interfere with that enjoyment. As a couple, they were gifted with that elusive ability to “live in the now.” (It is hardly surprising, then that this is one of the most potent and useful suggestions of the AA program.)

Pass It On p. 216



Even Camels Know How



WANTED

Your Stories of Experience, Strength, and Hope:

- The best/worst meeting I ever attended.
- Funny story.
- Most /least helpful thing I heard was.....
- How I finally let go of.....
- My most meaningful amend.....

REWARD

This is Carrying the Message



“Cling to the thought that, in God’s hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have—the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert death and misery for them”.

Bill W.

This section will be devoted to telling your stories. Please send in your stories to:
hcieditor@hotmail.com

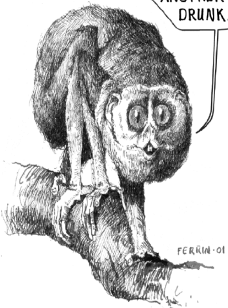
Capital Of Texas Conference

Get ready for Austin’s Conference. The first ever Capital Of Texas Conference will be held in August 2014. The conference committee has been doing a lot of work to put together a great conference right here at home. Look for further information to be given as the details come clear.

What makes an A.A. convention click for its participants? It’s probably not style or form that matters so much as the spirit and feeling behind it. As one member puts it, the best A.A. convention is “just a darned good A.A. meeting blown up big.” Just watch enthusiastic members at any A.A. convention and you’ll get what he means. The atmosphere alone is worth the trip. Here you’ll find fellowship, laughter, warmth, and understanding—”heaped up, pressed down, and running over.”

MR. LORIS SAYS:

I USED TO SUFFER FROM A CASE OF TERMINAL UNIQUNESS, BUT NOW I REALIZE I'M JUST ANOTHER DRUNK.



An Agnostic Discovers His Place In The Fellowship

After being in and around the AA program for more than 30 years, I now have 17 years of continuous sobriety. I was not able to get sober and stay sober until I became honest with myself about “the God thing.”

Religion and church attendance had been a significant part of my early life. We lived across the street from the Methodist church that my grandfather had helped establish, and I attended Sunday school regularly. I frequently attended church with my grandfather and became a member when I was 12.

In junior high school I was introduced to the sciences and adopted them as my sources for understanding the world and myself. Math and the sciences were my primary focus in high school, and I majored in mechanical engineering in college. Church attendance was only at Christmas and Easter, if I went at all.

With marriage and children, church again seemed the thing to do. We joined a Methodist church, enrolled the kids in Sunday school, and began attending regularly. For me, it became just a good way to kill an hour until sports programming started on TV and the convenience stores could sell beer. When the kids were old enough to have the option of not going, we reverted to Christmas and Easter attendance. Asked if I believed in God, I could truthfully answer, “Yes.” However, I viewed the Bible as no more than a collection of legends and fables, and religious practices as having some benefit, but holding no real significance for me.

There was nothing unusual about my drinking history—for an alcoholic. From a few beers in high school, my drinking progressed until alcohol took control of my life. Finally, largely thanks to my doctor’s (a neighbor) and wife’s nagging, I consented “to do something about my drinking.” My doctor identified several treatment options, and I selected the one that sounded most compatible with my lifestyle. That I might be an alcoholic never entered my mind. I didn’t fit the profile, I thought. They put me in the backseat of our car with a six-pack of beer, and off we went. After a brief interview, I was admitted on the spot.

It was a total surprise to me that the treatment program turned out to be very AA-oriented. In addition to AA meetings held at the facility, we were transported to two or three other meetings a week, so I received a good introduction to the program.

When I was discharged, I was given a list of AA meetings in my small city. I started attending a couple of meetings a week and performing minor service work, but mostly just sat as an observer. The only thing I was doing right was not drinking, but I was a long way from being sober. That lasted a little over two years. Then I drank for four months and returned to the program after a brief “rehab refresher.”

Convinced that I had to get more serious, I started following directions. I read the Big Book, memorized its prayers, and recited them in my morning meditations. I joined a group and got a sponsor, studied the Twelve and Twelve, and worked the Steps. I attended at least five meetings a week, and did service work in my home group. Feeling good about my progress, I was confident my sobriety was solid.

Eight years later, domestic and job-related problems arose and I got drunk. After 11 weeks of drinking, I went back to the program totally demoralized. I was sure I had learned my lesson. A little over two years later, I got drunk again.

Feeling that I must be one of those “hopeless drunks,” I immediately started going to AA meetings again, but there was something very wrong. If asked, I could still honestly say that I believed in God, but God had no real meaning for me.

I stayed in and around the program for several months, but nagging questions kept haunting me. Was I constitutionally incapable of being honest with myself? What is it about AA that works, when the best theological and medical minds have tried for centuries to find a solution? Why would a loving God wait until Mother’s Day, 1935, to plant the seed that grew into the AA program when alcoholism has been a problem for thousands of years? What was it about that meeting between Bill W. and Dr. Bob that was so special?

All I knew for certain was that something had to change or I was going to start drinking again. In desperation, I finally got honest about “the God thing.” Only to myself at first, I admitted that I did not believe in God. That was the lowest point of my life. I was not drinking, but now I did not feel comfortable in AA either.

Fortunately, I realized there was one thing I did believe without reservation: AA works! In all those years in and around the program, I had seen too many “drunks” get sober—and stay sober. So, if there is no God, why does it work? I have found my answer, one that enables me to stay sober. AA works because only an alcoholic trying to stay sober can help another alcoholic wanting to get sober. It works because only a recovering alcoholic can identify with, have credibility with, and thus help another drunk. And the bonding that can occur between them is a spiritual experience! They help each other stay sober. That, I believe, is what really happened in Akron between Bill and Dr. Bob, and it is still how it works today.

We need to remember that AA, with or without God, does not cure us of our addiction to alcohol. If we were truly “cured,” wouldn’t we be able to drink normally? AA gives us the hope, the will, and the tools to live without drinking—but only for one day at a time. It gives us a philosophy and the support for living a life that is healthy, happy, joyous and free. That does seem like a miracle, especially to a suffering alcoholic.

There are now six “free thinkers” meetings a week in our city. It started with the “We Agnostics Group” and three or four drunks showing up. Today, we have three groups meeting in different parts of the city and often have over 20 recovering drunks in attendance. We continue to grow in membership and in acceptance in the greater AA community. Our meetings follow the usual formats: we have both open discussion and literature study (Big Book and Twelve and Twelve) meetings. The main difference is that there are no prayers. We read Appendix II from the Big Book at the beginning of our meetings and close by reciting the AA Responsibility Declaration: “I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.”

There are “freethinkers” groups all over the country with increasing numbers of sober agnostic and atheist drunks, proving that there is a choice. In working with newcomers, we stick to the basics and encourage them to work the Steps, but also to find their own understanding of a “power greater than themselves.”

So, to all AAs, please judge us “freethinkers” by the quality of our sobriety. We are not trying to tell anyone not to believe in God. What we do believe in is working for us.

HILL COUNTRY
INTERGROUP



If you would like to help with the newsletter or you would like to volunteer at the Intergroup office you can contact us at (512) 444-0071. There are many opportunities for service work. You can also sign up to be on the 12th step list. Volunteering through the intergroup is a great experience.

Upcoming Events For September/October

Oct. 13th—Lost Pines Group (Bastrop, TX) - Speaker Meeting!

Oct. 19th-21st—SWRAASA (Albuquerque, NM)

Oct. 19th-21st—3rd Annual Men's Step Work Retreat. Sponsored by the Next Function Group (Leakey, TX)

Oct. 20th—Florence (TX) Renaissance Group - Speaker Meeting!

Oct. 20th—Austin Citywide—Monthly Potluck and Speaker Meeting!

Oct. 27th—617 Foundation/Living Faith—36th Anniversary!

Oct. 27—Western Trails Group Talent Show!

November 3rd—HILL COUNTRY INTERGROUP ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE!

November 4th - Yellow House Foundation Golf Tournament!

November 10th—HILL COUNTRY INTERGROUP QUARTERLY WORKSHOP @ The Phelan Rd. Group (Bastrop)!

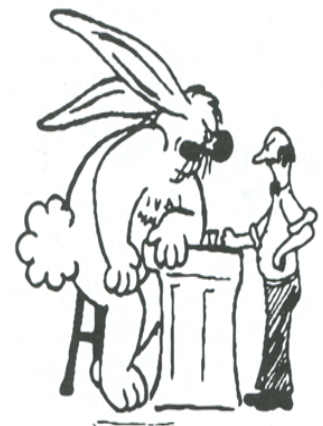
November 10th—Big Book Experience (Riverbend Church)!

For more information on these or any upcoming events go to the Hill Country Intergroup Website.

The website address is:

www.austinaa.org

You will find flyers with all the pertinent information for the event and a map to the location.



"If you can see me, I'm the least of your problems."

Suzanne S., Vernon, Texas

