

Hill Country A.A.® Intergroup Connection

Volume 3
May 2018

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Northland Group

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A VERY SINCERE “Thank You!”

The Hill Country Intergroup Board of Trustees and Representatives would like to express our appreciation and gratitude for the event held on April 21st – Intergroup Appreciation Day.

First, our thanks to the committee that envisioned, and then followed through with all the planning, organizing, and execution of this event... including the long list of those that smoked brisket, donated for the silent auction, volunteered at the event, and helped spread the word about the event. Last year, we learned that an autonomous group of dedicated AAs wanted to organize a day of fellowship and provide an opportunity for HCIA to communicate our mission and standing. It was apparent from the beginning that this committee intended to organize the event within the framework, spirit, and principles of our 12 Traditions. Throughout the process, we were humbled by the commitment of all those that served – a wonderful demonstration of Recovery, Unity, & Service. Well done and Thank You to the Intergroup Appreciation Day volunteers!

And Hill Country Intergroup would also like to say “Thank You” to all those who attended the event. It was great to see old friends and make new ones as well! It gives us great pleasure to see that Intergroup’s efforts are supporting so many individuals and groups within the area in carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. AA in Central Texas is alive and well!

“The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us. But that in itself would never have held us together as we are now joined. The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action.”

**“ON WHAT SLENDER THREADS
OUR DESTINY SOMETIMES HANGS...”** *Bill W. 1954 Texas State Conv.*

FROM THE EYES & EARS OF A OLDTIMER

In 2003 the first Oldtimer Banquet was hosted by Hill Country Intergroup. I don't recall attending that first one, but I have attended many since then. As a current "long-timer" as we are referred to in Alcoholics Anonymous sometimes, I never dreamed I could stay sober this long. My first recollection of an Intergroup Office was in early sobriety when a small building off of Burnet Road became the first Intergroup Office with a "part-time manager" and volunteers selling literature. I remember visiting there to look and sometimes purchase literature. We have come a long way since then.

When that first banquet was held, my husband and I had already moved to Bastrop and that year I had 24 years of sobriety which wouldn't have qualified to be called an "oldtimer". My first memory of hearing an "Oldtimer" speak (not sure it was the Oldtimers Banquet) was Searcy from Dallas. Now that was the real Oldtimer back in the day and was one heck of a speaker. My feelings of being in the presence of such old time sobriety was one of respect and total admiration that someone could stay sober that long, and wondered if I would ever be able to stay sober as long as someone like Searcy. My doubts of ever reaching the status of an "oldtimer" were one of skepticism and doubt and I wasn't sure I could do that if I lived that long.

My first D.O.T. (Designated Oldtimer) was Pat O'C. from Austin, who had 50+ years when he left us to go to the Big Meeting. He and I had heard that term at a State Convention in Dallas and it was suggested that "we newcomers" should find a D.O.T. to look up to and talk to - so returning home, my first choice was Pat and told him so. From that day forward, he was thrilled, delighted and honored to be called a D.O.T. and we laughed about it every year on his A.A. Birthday in June.

After being around now for actually 40 years (my first go-round in A.A. was in late 1978, but alas I wasn't quite through drinking until April 13, 1979), I began attending the Oldtimers Banquets and have had the honor and privilege to hear some remarkable speakers throughout the years not only from Texas, but a few from Colorado and California. One year the HCIA Office Manager asked me if I knew any out of town oldtimers that I would recommend for the Oldtimer Speaker and I jumped at the chance to suggest one of favorite people that taught me so much about THE Program. That was Lloyd J. from Dallas who spoke in 2008 and I was even asked and further honored to get to introduce him. Lloyd passed a few years ago, but left behind an enduring legacy for so many of us that knew him.

Now that I am considered a long-timer/oldtimer, I still attend lots of meetings and upon many occasions I look around the room and lo and behold, I sit there in a state of wonder,

MANY THANKS To This years Volunteers!

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

March 2018: Chris, Coleen B., Dan H., Fletcher M., Jack W., Jeff K., Jill F., John B., Marty S., Michael G., Murdo M., Nancy W., Pablo H., Pat F., Rick A., Robert C.

April 2018: Chris, Chris, Coleen B., Dan H., Jill F., John B., Marty S., Michael G., Murdo M., Nancy W., Pat F., Rick A.

HOTLINE VOLUNTEERS

March 2018: David S., David W., Dudley, Gordon K., James H., John F., Tom K.

April 2018: David S., Fred J., Jesse H., John F., Mary T., Reggy T., Tom K.

WEEKEND - GROUP VOLUNTEERS

March 2018: Northland, 7th Street Sisters, South Austin Big Book Group, Keep First Things First, Turn Around Taylor

April 2018: Northland, Spirit of Love, Hope Group, Elgin Group



TO VOLUNTEER
Call 512-444-0071

To volunteer in the office, or answer the Hotline on a weeknight or if your group would like to take the hotline for the weekend.

THANK you, AA Groups and all For Your CONTRIBUTIONS MARCH

Group Name & District	\$ Amount
Allandale Group – 3B	\$433.61
Bastrop Friday Night Group – 29	\$75.00
Bridge to Shore Group – 3C	\$368.80
Brushy Creek Serenity – 22	\$40.00
East Austin Group – 3B	\$85.00
Georgetown Group – 22	\$47.37
Georgetown Group – 22	\$103.23
Graceland Group – 22	\$86.22
HCIA Board	\$17.00
Jonestown/Lago Vista Group – 22	\$420.00
Keep First Things First – 3C	\$495.25
Keep First Things First – 3C	\$260.00
Lakeview Group – 22	\$506.15
Legacies Group – 29	\$40.00
Northland – 3B	\$153.50
Northland – 3B	\$164.25
Oak Hill R.U.S.H. Hour Group – 3C	\$30.00
Our Gang Group – 3B	\$114.00
Principles Before Personalities – 22	\$100.00
Reading Rainbow – 3B	\$37.45
Reps Meeting	\$30.00
River Group – 2	\$25.00
Rule 62 – 3B	\$109.20
Stoney Point Group – 22	\$15.00
Sunday Morning Sidewalk - 29	\$160.00
Triangle Group – 3C	\$48.18
We Are Not Saints – 3B	443.00
Westlake AA – 3C	\$400.00
Wimberley Group – 2	\$113.17
Total Contributions - Groups	\$5,020.38

Group/Name & District	\$ Amount
Allandale Group – 3B	\$50.00
Anonymous	\$10.00
Bridge to Shore Group – 3C	\$150.00
Desire To Stop – 3C	\$25.00
Donation Can at HCIA Office	\$3.15
Georgetown Group – 22	\$23.69
Georgetown Group – 22	\$51.61
Keep First Things First – 3C	\$212.55
Keep First Things First – 3C	\$111.00
Legacies Group – 29	\$40.00
Lighthouse Group – 3C	\$20.00
Reading Rainbow – 3B	\$16.05
Rule 62 – 3B	\$109.20
Triangle Group – 3C	\$48.18
Westlake AA – 3C	\$50.00
Wimberley Group – 2	\$75.45
Women's Recovery – 3B	99.69
Total DAC Contributions	\$1,135.57



TO VOLUNTEER • Call 512-444-0071

To volunteer in the office, or answer the Hotline on a weeknight or if your group would like to take the hotline for the weekend.

THANK you



for your DAC Contributions

EYES & EARS

as I realize I may be the one person in the room with the longest sobriety time. Sitting in the rooms today, it is often that newcomer that impresses me with their wisdom and sharing of *THE program*. Their mentors, like mine, have obviously been "carrying the message." My second "dearly departed sponsor" told me years ago that we often hear that the most important person in the rooms is the new person, but it was suggested and I agree - that's not true. The most important person in the meeting is that Oldtimer/ Long-Timer because they/we are the ones that have "THE MESSAGE" and without us that new person will not hear *THE message*. That's a tremendous responsibility for all of us whether oldtimer, a midtimer or even a newcomer.

That's the main reason why I still listen to those men and women who have been sober longer than me - my sponsor for one and those "Old Friends" that gather once a year at the HCIA Banquet for our Annual Reunion. Last year there were several us standing around talking, sharing memories of those early days and realized we represented sobriety dating back to the early to late 70's and beyond and shared how we loved seeing each other and being able to share our stories from "back in the day". To me, the best part every year at the "HCIA Tribute to Oldtimers" is the sobriety count down. To see that man or woman that is still around with 50+ years or more of sobriety stand up and be recognized moves me to tears every year. This year's Banquet Speaker will also be one of those "folks" that came into the Program when I did - a peer - as we started our journey to become who we are today - An Oldtimer - Carrying the Message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I shall remain forever grateful for those men and women who have left us the Three Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous. My mentors and yours too.

May God Continue to Touch All of Our Lives in a Special Way - One Day At A Time!

Janice W., Lost Pines Group
Bastrop, District 29

TO KNOW WHERE WE COME FROM

I was asked to write a submittal for the HCIG Newsletter, the subject suggested by the Newsletter Chairperson would be, 'The First 100 men and women of Alcoholics Anonymous.' As we discussed this idea further, it became obvious that we couldn't start there, that it had to be farther back on the timeline of events leading up to the founding of our beloved fellowship. We'll start with 'a certain American businessman...'(pg. 26 BB), Rowland H. and his quest for sobriety, which took him all the way to Zurich Switzerland, in search of pioneering psychologist Carl Jung, who pronounced his patient, Roland, a chronic alcoholic. After some treatment Roland had thought he had found the hidden springs of his mind, the things that made him alcoholic. Roland stayed under Jung's care for a period of about 8 months, after which time he left Switzerland, on his way home he stopped over in Paris to meet up with some old friends. While there, he got drunk. He returned to Switzerland, and to Jung, where Jung told him he was hopeless. Roland asked him if there was any solution to his malady, anything at all he could try? Jung then told Roland that only a vital spiritual experience can help him. He goes on to explain that he must cast aside old ideas and beliefs, and adopt new conceptions for the needed spiritual experience.

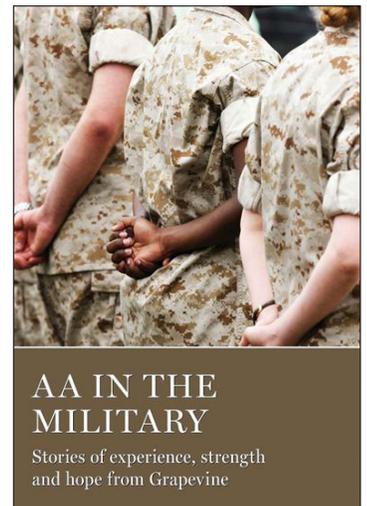
Continue on page 5

THE GRAPEVINE DAILY QUOTE

"Peace and enlightenment come when you stop evaluating in terms of good or bad and merely accept all of life as it is and try to learn from it."

El Granada,
California,
March 1989

"A Program of Action,"
The Best of the Grapevine, Volume 3



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Knowing Where We Come From...

Roland then returned back to the states, and joined The Oxford Group, which was headquartered at Calvary Episcopal Church in NYC, where Reverend Samuel Shoemaker was pastor, and American leader of The Oxford Groups. Roland had a spiritual transformation as the result of his work with the Group, and as a result of that, he found sobriety. The premise of The Oxford Groups of the time was the idea of personal 'soul winning'; or each one, reach one, sort of philosophy. Once you had a spiritual transformation, you go to help the next guy.

Around the same time Roland had heard that an old drinking buddy was to go before a judge in Glastonbury Vermont. The friend was a man named Ebby Thacher, they had met while summering in New England and remained friends throughout the years. Ebby was to go before a Judge Collins Graves to be committed to the Brattleboro Retreat (formerly it was The Vermont Asylum for the Insane) on account of his drinking, and resulting escapades. Roland had traveled to Vermont with two additional Oxford Groupers, Shep Cornell and Cebra Graves, Cebra happened to be the son of the presiding Judge. During the court proceedings Roland and company had convinced the Judge to release Ebby into their care, rather than sentence him to be committed. One can only think that the spiritual conversions of these men, through their association with The Oxford Group was so obvious that the Judge could not deny it. Once Ebby was under their care, they hauled him back to New York, where he resided at The Calvary Church Mission, just around the corner from Rev. Sam Shoemaker's Church. Ebby started attending Oxford Group meetings as one of the conditions of his release to his friend's care. His friends shared with him their experiences of their recoveries, Ebby then excepted for himself the Oxford Group principles, which precipitated his own sobriety, starting his journey of recovery. Encouraged by personal witness of his friends, thinking he would do likewise, he sought out an old acquaintance of his own.

Ebby remembered a friend and had heard was on the verge of alcoholic collapse. They had known each other for several years, drank heavily together while Ebby's family summered in Vermont. The man was Bill Wilson, he was born and had grown up in the small town where they had met, East Dorset. Ebby had heard that Bill was living in Brooklyn, staying in the house his wife had grown up in,

at 182 Clinton street. He was a perfect prospect, he would arrange to visit him. He took the subway from Manhattan over to Brooklyn to meet his old friend, he knew that he had to do this in order to maintain his own sobriety. He was greeted at the door by Bill's wife Lois, who then showed Ebby into the kitchen where Bill sat at the table drinking a mixture of gin and pineapple juice. Bill noticed that his friend was different, there was something about him, he was clear-eyed and in good spirits, downright cheerful. Bill was a little suspicious, he asked Ebby to have a drink with him, Ebby refused. Bill then asked him what had gotten into him, Ebby went on to explain what had happened to him, and the people through which he had found it. The two men talked for a while, and at some point Bill asked Ebby about the simple principles of recovery he was employing. Ebby first explained the principle of admitting that you were hopeless, that you didn't have the power to help yourself, he went on to say that you had to get completely honest with yourself, and with another person, next he explained that it was imperative that restitution is made for harms done other people. The final principle in this four step plan was to work with others, with no demand for money or acclaim, altruism in the true sense of the word. The terms of these principles was not too big of an obstacle, but when it came to the God idea there was still a great hesitancy, it was there that he balked. His friend urged him to find his own conception of God.

Bill's drinking got progressively worse through the year 1933, he was committed to Charles B. Towns Hospital three times during that year. Towns Hospital specialized in the care and treatment of alcoholics and while there he fell under the care of Dr. William Silkworth, a specialist in the field of alcoholism. Dr. Silkworth explained the nature of alcoholism, that this malady was not just some moral failing, or a matter of being weak willed, but that the alcoholic was bodily and mentally different from his fellows, and that these traits set him apart as a distinct entity.

Ebby's visit to Bill took place in November of 1934. He drank until December, at which time he went to visit 'The little doc that loved drunks', Silkworth. He checked himself into Towns Hospital for the last time.

If Alcoholics Anonymous genesis is to have a 'Big Bang' of sorts, it would have to be Bill's spiritual experience on this visit to Towns Hospital. While he lay there in bed he had a profound alteration in his reaction to life, his roots grasped new soil, he was on different footing. While laying in bed there the thought

TO KNOW WHERE WE COME FROM

then came to him that within just a few short miles there were probably thousands of men just like him, that might benefit from the type of experience he was having. He knew that if he wanted to keep this thing, that he had to approach others offering his experience to them.

Once out of the hospital he set out to find alcoholics that might benefit, as he did, from this process. He approached hundreds, for months, without a single success. Dejected he returned home one night and confided to his wife Lois that he felt like a failure in his attempts to help others. Lois then uttered that magic response, "But you're still sober Bill." Hope was restored in those few words,

It was six months later, in May of 1935 that Bill found himself in Akron Ohio on a business opportunity. The prospect of work didn't turn out favorable, and Bill found himself in poor spirits, once again demoralized back at the Mayflower Hotel where he was staying. The hotel bar was in full swing, full of laughter, music and folks having a great time. Bill had a decision to make, our fate hung in the balance. He could go to the bar, or use the phone in an attempt to find someone to try and help. Bill called several numbers in the directory, to no avail. He phoned a local church and reached a pastor there, Rev. Walter Tunks, he asked if there might be an alcoholic he might help? Rev. Tunks didn't know of one, but provided him with Henrietta Sieberling's phone number, he knew she was well connected about town and attended Oxford Group meetings as well. Bill called Henrietta and asked her the same question he had asked to Rev. Tunks, she thought for a moment and said she knew of someone, a local Doctor in town that had been attending the local Oxford Group meetings. Henrietta agreed to phone the man to see if he would be willing to meet with Bill.

The man's wife, Anne Smith answered the phone, she asked her husband if he would be willing to meet with Bill? The hesitant reply came back, that yes, with the condition that it be for no more than 15 minutes, he would meet with him. The meeting was set for the following day at the Seiberling Estate. "On such slender thread our destiny sometimes hangs"..... (to be continued).

Steve V.
Elgin, Texas



MEET YOUR Board Member Jason I.

What are your name and your service position?

Jason I. - Hill Country Intergroup Board of Trustees
(2018 Chairperson)

How long have you been in AA?

My sobriety date is December 20th, 2009

What is your home group?

My home group is Way of Life Group – NW Austin

Who is your sponsor and why did you pick him?

My sponsor is John H. of the Unity Group. I chose him because he came across the room and sat next to me at my first meeting. I originally thought that he did so because I was such a promising prospect for Alcoholics Anonymous. I later found out that he sat next to me for another reason: He thought it was very likely that would not make it through the meeting and that he would need to use his CPR training while waiting for the ambulance to arrive. I did not come into the rooms on a winning streak. All that said, I obviously did not "pick" my sponsor. It turns out to be one of many examples of God doing for me what I could not do myself. I feel blessed to have stumbled into the Higher Power Hour Group, have met John H., and started on this amazing journey.

(Answers on page 7)

CONTINUE - Jason I. YOUR Board Member

What other types of service - past or present - have you been involved in?

My first service commitment was as Intergroup Representative for Higher Power Hour. After about 2 years with that position, I served as group treasurer. I have also served for Next Function Men's Retreat, Secretary for "An AA Group" in Ingram, TX, and several other miscellaneous commitments. My most recent commitment has been in service to Capital of Texas Conference. I joined the committee in January 2013 and served through August 2016 as Environmental Chair, Conference Co-Chair, and Conference Chair. I stay involved with the CTC committee for special events and support of their ongoing efforts.

Do you think sponsoring makes a difference in your program?

Sponsoring makes ALL the difference in my program of recovery. I'm a firm believer in keeping our program simple. Trust in God, Clean House, and Help Others is about as simple as it gets. Helping others is our means to a new way of life. I would not have the peace of mind, faith, and joy that I have today without sponsorship. I would not be sober today without sponsorship. I would probably not be alive today if it were not for sponsorship.

Was there a turning point in your sobriety that you think was significant?

Something Really significant happened for me around the 9 month mark in sobriety. I had had several spiritual experiences up to that point, but I began to truly have a spiritual awakening. I had essentially gone through the 12 steps with my sponsor in about 4-6 months and just kept my nose in the Big Book, continued practicing 10, 11, and 12, my feet in the rooms, and following the example of countless men that showed me the way... and it happened! It kicked in! I began to see what I could do for AA, instead of exclusively

asking what AA could do for me. This happened because I took that actions. I did not "figure it out" before hand, understand what all the steps meant, fix myself, understand God, or (in the beginning) even believe that the process would work. But just by following my sponsor's simple suggestions, I was restored to sanity and my problem had been removed.

Do you think there have been any changes in AA since you've been sober?

I have not been in AA long enough to observe any generational changes. I have been sober long enough to recognize one truth: *That change is inevitable. And if I'm not comfortable with that, I might be in big trouble. The other thing that I need to be conscience of is that I need to honor my own principles - To Thine Own Self Be True. I know that changes are going to happen in Alcoholics Anonymous (for seemingly better or worse) and that I need to find my peace of mind with esteem-able, principle driven actions on my part.*

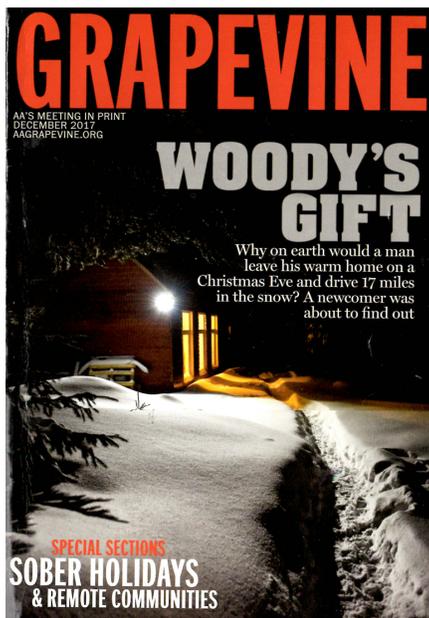
What do you hope would be the best thing to come out of your service to the fellowship as an Intergroup Board member?

As I have a large enough sample size of doing service work in AA, I know some good things are definitely going to come out of my service commitment to Hill Country Intergroup. First and foremost, I know that I can be but a small part of carrying the AA message to the Alcoholic who still suffers. This is done on a one-on-one basis by our fellowship here in the Central Texas Area and I'm honored to be part of a organization that helps facilitate that effort. The other thing that has made an impact on me while doing service work are the relationships built in the process. I literally have hundreds of dear friends - friendships that are founded on meaningful and lasting bonds as a result of being of service. I love Alcoholics Anonymous!



MY FEET STAY RIGHT HERE

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It was three days before my six-year sobriety birthday and I went back out. It took exactly three seconds to say, “hell with it,” and take that drink. I had pulled away from the program because my husband had gone back out and it got too uncomfortable to go to meetings. But not going just made me restless and irritable, and one day when I needed some relief, I downed a drink.

**One day, I downed a drink.
It took me two years to get
back to AA, mostly because
of my pride.**

I told my husband, and when I came home from work he greeted me at the door with a drink. He then threw me a surprise keg party for my sobriety birthday. Everyone else thought it was my real birthday. The next day, after it was all over, my husband told me he thought I really was an alcoholic and that I should stop drinking.

I told him that I didn’t throw away six years to just drink one night-I had just begun. It took me two years to get back to AA, mostly because of my pride.

I’ve been sober now since March 1987 and I try not to forget just how quick and easy it was for me to take that drink that day. I’m so grateful I came back. I try every day to keep my feet right here in AA.

Karen M.
Webberville, Texas