

# Hill Country A.A.<sup>®</sup> INTERGROUP CONNECTION

Volume 2 - Issue 11- December 2018

## OFFICE MANAGER

Gary H. — Austin  
*Northland Group*

## HCIA BOARD

Tammy B. — Austin  
*North Austin 24 Group*

Larry D. — Hutto  
*North Austin 24 Group*

Tessa R. — Austin  
*Seventh Street Sisters*

Dan H. — Austin  
*12 @ 12*

Mark K. — Austin  
*Lake Travis Serenity Group*

Kit L. — Austin  
*R.R. Big Book Study Group*

Jason I. — Liberty Hills  
*Way of Life*

Norma A. — Buda  
*Single Purpose Group*

## GIVING BACK!

### STEP 12.

*Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

**T**he first eleven steps of the A.A. program certainly woke my spirits up. How about you? Turning our lives over to a higher power, inventory, admission of wrongs, amends, meditation – all new behaviors, at least for me. My entire attitude about life, my fellows, and God was clearly transformed by the process.

This transformation was not deliberately sought after, but rather the by-product of working, taking, and finally living A.A.'s famous twelve steps. In the beginning, all I wanted from A.A. was a chance rest up and get the wife off my case. Thoughts about prolonged sobriety, a new life, a new way of seeing the world, and beginning to care for those about me – none of this ever crossed my mind.

"The Joy of Living" is the theme of Step 12, as written in The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Little by little, the old was replaced by the new. I quit running from my past, owned it, and learned to move forward. I found new friends within the fellowship and left the old, bad influences behind. Somehow a trip to Dairy Queen on Saturday night with home group members was far better than a case of beer, girls under each arm and a hot tub.

(continue on page 5)

*"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."*

# MEET Tessa R.



## your Board Member

### **What is your name and your service position?**

Tessa R., Intergroup Rep for Seventh Street Sisters and Intergroup rep chair.

### **How long have you been in AA?**

5 years

### **What is your home group?**

Seventh Street Sisters

### **Who is your sponsor and why did you pick him?**

Sabrina C., because she is a woman who has what I want in the program, and who I watched handle life on life terms sober and with grace and dignity. She practices the principles in all of her affairs and I admire her.

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

I have been the secretary for my group and this is my second term as Intergroup rep. I have been on the host committee for TXCYPAA and TCQYPAA. I also organized a group retreat for Seventh Street last year.

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

I had a tough break up in sobriety and realized that I needed to really sit down and show up in my home group. To carry over the principles of the program into all of my relationships.

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

Nope

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

To add some diversity to the board, being a young woman with some sobriety seeing things from the perspective of a large women's group in AA. And adding my experience of growing up with technology, how it affects AA and what to consider there.



## OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

### **November 2018:**

Michael G., Pat F., John B., Dan H., Fletcher M., Jack W., Jill F., Marty S., Jay B., Jeff K., Nancy W., Rick A., Coleen B., Murdo M., Glenn S.

## HOTLINE VOLUNTEERS

### **November 2018:**

Jesse B., Dan C., Jose V., Dudley, Gordon K., John F., Will H., Randall T., Kyle B.

## WEEKEND GROUP VOLUNTEERS

### **November 2018:**

Graceland, Hope Group, Primary Purpose Group, Westlake Group, Sunday Sunrise 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 IN NOVEMBER

<b>Group Name &amp; District</b>	<b>\$Amount</b>
1313 Group - 3C	\$528.89
7th Street Sisters - 3C	\$132.78
Act Of Faith - 3B	\$4.20
Allandale Group - 3B	\$116.82
Allandale Group - 3B	\$285.52
Bouldin - 3C	\$1.85
Bridge to Shore Group - 3C	\$653.42
Children of Chaos - 3B	\$200.00
Courage to Change - 3B	\$70.35
Desire To Stop - 3C	\$1,032.00
East Austin Group - 3B	\$46.00
Friday Nite Alive - 13	\$59.54
Graceland Group - 22	\$130.00
HCIA Board	\$15.00
Keep First Things First - 3C	\$350.00
Kingsland Group - 13	\$300.00
Lost Minds - 29	\$250.00

<b>Group Name &amp; District</b>	<b>\$Amount</b>
New Life - 3B	\$1,500.00
Newcomers Group - 13	\$50.00
North Austin 24 Hour Group - 3B	\$75.00
Reps Meeting	\$49.00
Second Chance - 2	\$33.00
Second Chance - 2	\$22.75
Spiritual Awakenings - 3B	\$195.95
Stoney Point Group - 22	\$37.00
Stoney Point Group - 22	\$19.00
Sunday Sunrise Group - 3C	\$42.00
Western Trails - 3C	\$25.00
Westlake AA - 3C	\$500.00
Westlake AA - 3C	\$500.00
Wimberley Group - 2	\$177.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7402.77</b>

<b>Group/Name &amp; District</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
7th Street Sisters - 3C	\$33.20
Allandale Group - 3B	\$50.00
Allandale Group - 3B	\$50.00
Anonymous.	\$10.00
Anonymous.	\$10.00
Anonymous.	\$10.00
Anonymous.	\$10.00
Bridge to Shore Group - 3C	\$150.00



**THANK  
YOU  
for your  
DAC  
Contributions**

<b>Group/Name &amp; District</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
Desire To Stop - 3C	\$25.00
Keep First Things First - 3C	\$150.00
North Austin 24 Hour Group - 3B	\$25.00
Westlake AA - 3C	\$75.00
Westlake AA - 3C	\$75.00
Wimberley Group - 2	\$118.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$791.67</b>

*The Deaf Access Committee thanks you for your help in providing interpreters for Deaf AA members!! We are growing in numbers, continually, and more and more requests for meetings are coming in!! If you would like to know more about the Deaf Access Committee and how you can help serve our fellowship through this special service, please contact us!!*

## *cont. Giving Back!*

It took some time, but I discovered I could have fun without getting buzzed from the booze. Concerts, ball games, bowling, pizza, and holidays all could be enjoyed without drinking. **Amazing!**

When I was two years sober I went to a large, monthly birthday meeting to pick up my chip. After all the celebrants had their moment at the podium, we retired for cake and fellowship. A long time member came over to congratulate me and said something I will never forget. "James, you've been taking from A.A. these past two years. It's high time you start giving back." Then she walked off and left me to think.

My service to A.A. at this point was at the group level. I had made some coffee, helped fold up and stack chairs, and even found speakers for meetings. I stepped up my game by being available to sponsor other men. I volunteered to help out at the intergroup office and took a part in the annual Jamboree. I became more and more a member of my group and A.A. community. At ten years sober, I was asked to be our group's GSR and I accepted, unsure just what the duties entailed. The willingness to serve in that capacity forever changed the trajectory of my sobriety.

Service to other alcoholics has kept my sobriety fresh and bright. Every chance to extend the hand of A.A. to another seeking help strengthens my own sobriety and fills me with gratitude. Sponsorship is the ultimate service we provide, I believe. Today, I am humbled when asked to serve in any capacity.

God has sent some interesting challenges my way. The variety of men I have sponsored spans from a gang member, a blind professor, a gay graphic designer, a plumber, a chiropractor, a welder, and others. God also given me numerous chances to show others what A.A. Traditions mean and how we use them as guideline to solve group problems. Then there was the time we found a Twelve and Twelve in the Farsi language for a man in Austin. Another time, we helped link a 15 year old girl from Laredo with other sober A.A. members of similar age in southwest Texas. The presentation of our book, Alcoholics Anonymous to the Navajo nation after years in the process of translation was especially heartwarming. Delivering Grapevine materials and magazines to a men's group in a prison facility brought smiles to many faces, including mine.

### **STEP 12.**

*Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

Today, the challenge to 'practice these principles in all our affairs' is an ongoing growth opportunity for me. The step son who isn't doing it right. The co-worker with the annoying personality. The A.A. member who always shares the same way and the same thing. Any commercial service representative contacted by phone. Barking dogs. Long lines at the grocery store or the ATM machine. The ex-wife. And on and on. Each situation poses great opportunity to apply the principles discovered in our steps. To be honest even when it hurts, to value other's right to be wrong, to set my own wrongs right, to lead a life that no longer benefits from my greatest shortcomings, to live a totally transparent life - these are the conditions I strive for and keep me on my knees asking my God for strength to do His will every day.

I truly love my sober life today. What an amazing statement from someone with my past. I am free today from alcohol and am alive physically, emotionally, and spiritually. By God's grace, I have found this to be so and pray others will someday join us in the Fellowship of the Spirit.

*Grateful in Service, James H.*

**"ON  
WHAT  
SLENDER  
THREADS  
OUR  
DESTINY  
SOMETIMES  
HANGS..."**

*Bill W.  
1954*

*Texas State Convention*



## PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES

**TRADITION TWELVE:** *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

**W**henever I consider my personal relationship to any of the traditions of AA, I find that I must look to all of the principles of the program – the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts. I must look at my personal responsibility, my home group responsibility, and my responsibility to AA as a whole. My usual starting point on that journey is to first review the long-form of the Tradition:

“12 - And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles above personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.”

The 12 x 12 uses the phrase “anonymity is real humility at work” to reflect the spirit of the tradition. My personal experience is that inventory is required to fully realize that responsibility and to make progress in practicing this kind of humility. On a personal level, I start with the basic inventory question from our basic text then delve a little deeper.

Where have I been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, and frightened? Have I caused harm? Do I take a kind and tolerant attitude with those in AA who rub me the wrong way or whom I find annoying? Do I roll my eyes when certain people talk? Does my ego demand that I talk in every meeting, or do give others the opportunity to share? Do I allow others to make mistakes, learn, and grow as I was allowed to make mistakes, learn, and grow? Do I practice a program of attraction, or am I constantly calling attention to myself and pointing out how my AA is best? Do I keep an open mind and really listen to others and consider where I may be wrong – especially when I’m on the receiving end of criticism? And once having sought out these character defects that require attention from my Higher Power, have I taken the actions

required in Steps 5 through 9 to repair any damage I’ve done?

On a group level, many groups also take a regular inventory so that they may better carry the message to those who still suffer. Does my group have clicks or do we truly welcome and include those who are new, or who may be a little (or a lot) harder to work with, or who have hygiene or mental health issues, or who may be different from the majority in some other way? As a group, do we take seriously our call to be a group among groups and participate in AA as a whole through activities such as the General Service Structure and Intergroup/Central Offices? Do we see our group as somehow superior to other groups instead of just another group of drunks meeting together to stay sober and help others to recover? Does my group truly try to practice the traditions, or do we look for that loophole that justifies breaking the spirit if not the letter of the traditions because we’re somehow special?

As a fellowship, inventory is of course a lot harder to pursue. But I do believe there are questions that we can ask ourselves as individuals and as groups that may lead us forward as a fellowship in demonstrating this principle of humility in action. The Concepts can also be a guiding factor here as well. Do I have an attitude that somehow AA has the solution to the world’s problems instead of focusing on the idea that we have a (not the) solution to alcoholism? Do I break my anonymity on Facebook and other public venues? Bill W. in Tradition 12 reminds us that the “spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice...It is AA’s proved willingness to make these sacrifices that gives people their high confidence in our future”. Do I get in arguments on the internet with critics of AA? Concept 12, Warranty Five reminds us “we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defense”. Do we as individuals and groups hold our trusted servants responsible for helping to uphold this tradition as well as our other principles?

**HCIA**

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## Cont. Principles Before Personalities

### TRADITION TWELVE:

*Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

Bill W. wrote that "Indeed, the attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of each of AAs Twelve Step". And he reminds us that that after Step One the "...remaining eleven steps state perfect ideals. They are goals toward which we look, and the measuring sticks by which we estimate our progress". For that I am grateful. I continue to stumble over the practice of humility in my recovery as well in my group life and within the fellowship. I've yet to find the perfect group that always practices the traditions

perfectly, and our General Service Conference, Board, and other trusted servants sometimes fumble and fail at the practice. To me that is the true beauty of this tradition. It is our spiritual foundation at all levels and we continue to grow and learn together not just for our own recovery, but for those future members who will come long after we are all gone.

Maggie B., Being Convinced, Cedar Park, TX

*Save The Date - March 9, 2019  
Appreciation Day*

## THE GRAPEVINE

DECEMBER 2018

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## WE'RE Not Alone



**F**or eight months, I was crushed by an overwhelming depression. My father had shot himself. Then two months later to the day, my mother killed herself with pills. I found myself spending hours after work dozing on the couch until dinner. Then I'd drag myself to bed. I was down to one AA meeting a week. It was one of the lowest points I'd ever had in sobriety. This time life had handed me a mountain I couldn't climb.

One night after my third trip back and forth from the couch to the front door, trying to open it and go to a meeting, I noticed my wife looking at me. I told her with my hand still on the doorknob, "I don't want to go to a meeting tonight." She said, so kindly, "When you don't want to go ... isn't that when you have to?"

Bob H. Dana Point, California

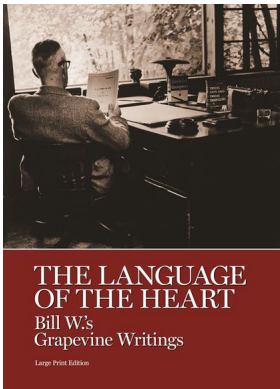
# THE GRAPEVINE - Daily Quote



**NOVEMBER 7, 2018**

**"O**ur Twelve Traditions ... represent the sum of our experience as individuals, as groups within AA, and similarly with our fellows and other organizations in the great fellowship of humanity under God throughout the world. They are all suggestions, yet the spirit in which they have been conceived merits their serious, prayerful consideration as the guideposts of AA policy for the individual, the group, and our various committees, local and national."

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A.A. Co-Founder, Dr. Bob, September 1948, Reprinted with permission*



**DECEMBER 4, 2018**

**"N**o matter how truthful the words of my message, there could be no deep communication if what I said and did was colored by pride, arrogance, intolerance, resentment, imprudence, or desire for personal acclaim -- even though I was largely unconscious of these attitudes."

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AA Co-Founder, Bill W., July 1960, "The Language of the Heart", The Language of the Heart -  
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# THE GRAPEVINE - Magazine



**D**ecember can be a joyous time of year, but it also can be stressful for alcoholics—especially if you're newly sober. Luckily, the love and the fellowship in AA rooms heighten this time of year. It's a special time in AA when we can reach out and help each other. This month's special section features inspiring sober holiday stories, as well as a few touching remote community articles.

In the story "28 Hours Straight," a member having a rough year remembers how there's nothing like a good AA "alkathon" to keep him sane, sober and useful during the holidays. An old makeshift tree on brown paper reminds one sober dad about the most important things in life in the story "The Best Gift." In "A Special Bond," a woman in Texas tells how she finds hope by writing women members in prison this time of year. And in the remote community story "Tank Buddies," two Army soldiers, far from home, and in the field for weeks, find they have a second mission—help each other stay sober.

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THROUGH  
DECEMBER 31, 2018**

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**Pick up your last minute gifts online, for free shipping OR stop by Intergroup office for many books.**

# Help Carry the Message of AA

## AA GRAPEVINE SUBSCRIPTION CHALLENGE 2018

### WHAT IS IT?

A challenge to increase new **Grapevine** and **La Viña** subscriptions\* in 2018

### TWO PRIZES

Receive a special section in a **2019** issue of **GV** or **LV** featuring members' stories from the winning state, province or territory achieving:

1. The greatest percentage growth in new, paid subscriptions\* or subscription gift certificates **OR**
2. The greatest increase in new subscriptions\* or subscription gift certificates overall

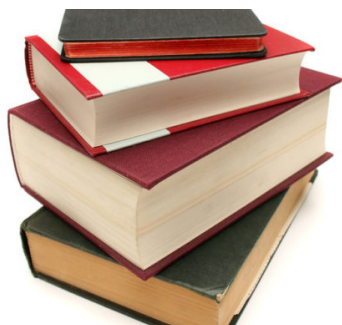
### WATCH FOR DETAILS

Beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>  
[www.aagrapevine.org/challenge](http://www.aagrapevine.org/challenge)  
 or  
[www.aagrapevine.org/challenge-lv](http://www.aagrapevine.org/challenge-lv)

*\*A new subscription is one that hasn't been active in the past 6 months.*

AAGV strives to be self-supporting through the sale of subscriptions and other items.

*All of these books can be purchased at Hill Country Intergroup Store.*



**INTERGROUP OFFICE NOW OPEN EVERY SATURDAY FROM 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

*And normal during business hours Monday through Friday,  
we are open for sales of Literature and Chips.*

*If you are interested in Volunteering Saturdays at Intergroup, contact your Intergroup Rep., or for more information call 512-444-0071.*