

The Washingtonians

Alcoholics Anonymous was only ten years old when Bill W., AA's co-founder, wrote: "Those who read the July [1945] Grapevine were startled, then sobered, by the account which it carried of the Washingtonian movement. It was hard for us to believe that 100 years ago the newspapers of this country were carrying enthusiastic accounts about 100,000 alcoholics who were helping each other stay sober; that today the influence of this good work has so completely disappeared that few of us had ever heard of it. . . ."

"May we always be willing to learn from the experience!" Bill cautioned.

Founded by six drunks in 1840, the Washingtonians had grown in membership to hundreds of thousands in twelve short years, and then destroyed themselves as an organization and dropped out of sight. By 1857, all that remained of their spectacular power as a method of treatment was the Home for the Fallen in Boston.

In a talk on the Traditions shortly before his death, Bill said that the Washingtonians had done things "which were very natural to do, but which had turned out to be utterly destructive. And it was this spectacle of the past, brought before us as our Traditions were evolving, that confirmed that we were probably very much on the right track in this matter of public controversy; in this question of paying our own bills; in this question of not becoming involved with other enterprises, and so on down the line. And above it all, it confirmed the great protective guide of our anonymity Tradition."

Later, in the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, Bill wrote: "In many respects the Washingtonians were akin to AA. . . . Had they stuck to their one goal, they might have found the full answer. Instead, the Washingtonians permitted politicians and reformers, both alcoholic and nonalcoholic, to use the society for their own purposes. . . . Within a very few years they had completely lost their effectiveness in helping alcoholics and the society collapsed.

"The lesson to be learned from the Washingtonians was not overlooked by Alcoholics Anonymous. As we surveyed the wreck of that movement, early AA members resolved to keep our Society out of public controversy."

And to a friend Bill wrote, "I wish every AA could indelibly burn the history of the Washingtonians into his memory. It is an outstanding example of how, and how not, we ought to conduct ourselves. In a sense, Alcoholics Anonymous has never had a problem seriously threatening our overall unity. Yet I notice that some AAs are complacent enough to suppose we never shall."

Bill also recalled the fate of the Washingtonians before 1,500 AAs gathered at the annual banquet in New York City on November 7, 1945. "In short, the Washingtonians went out to settle the world's affairs before they learned how to manage themselves. They had no capacity for minding their own business. . . . The negatives within them overthrew the positives.

"That won't happen here," Bill urged in closing, "if we remember, publicly and privately, our own simple principles of honesty, tolerance, and humility, and we live only by the grace of God."

Traditions! Words to remember! Thanks, Bill. Thank you, Washingtonians.

D.P., Ogden, Utah
The Best Of the Grapevine, Volume I
pages 209 - 211

LIFELINE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
CENTRAL OFFICE OF SALT LAKE CITY, INC.

We welcome your correspondence and will publish your material, space permitting, if it meets editorial criteria. *Share your experience, strength and hope with another alcoholic.* For a free subscription or to submit articles, suggestions or contributions, contact Central Office of Salt Lake City:

CENTRAL OFFICE OF SALT LAKE CITY, INC.
80 West Louise Avenue
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115
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**CENTRAL OFFICE
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Central Office is to provide the basic services listed, to include, but not limited to:

- To carry the A.A. message and help those individuals who suffer from alcoholism;
- to maintain a 24-hour Twelve-Step phone service;
- to answer phone inquiries as needed;
- to compile, update and print meeting lists;
- to maintain A.A.-approved literature for sale to members and the public;
- and to print and distribute a newsletter.

Specifically excluded shall be the operation of any club, clubhouse or drying-out place, and acts in violation of the Twelve Traditions of A.A.

“Let us never be a closed corporation; let us never deny our experience, for whatever it may be worth, to the world around us. Let our individual members heed the call to every field of human endeavor. Let them carry the experience and spirit of A.A. into all these affairs, for whatever good they may accomplish. For not only has God saved us from alcoholism; the world has recieved us back into its citizenship.”

A.A. Comes of Age, pp. 232-233

Suiting up and Showing Up

**Groups Represented At the
Central Office Reps Meeting for:**

July 2008

AN A.A. GROUP	HONEY'S
ACLOSED GROUP	EARLY FRIENDSHIP
NOT A GLUM LOT	UNITY LUNCH
YOUNG AND	BY THE BOOK
ALIVE	HOLLIDAY GROUP
BIGUGLIES	DNS
CITY AT SEVEN	A NEW LIFE
CAME TO BE-	NONONSENSE
LIEVE	INTERESTING A A
SOBER SISTERS	SATURDAY SPEAK-
AFTERNOONERS	ERS
COME AS YOU	SUGERHOUSEMEN'S
ARE	VISION FOR YOU
OFF THE CUFF	GARDEN VARIETY
HILLCREST	CANDLELIGHT
GROUP	YOUNG AND ALIVE
10 TH STEP GROUP	FLYIN' HIGH
A WAY OUT	BOUNTIFUL COM-
CHAPTER 5	MUNITY
974 GROUP	

Is Your Group Represented?

The next C.O. Reps Meeting is the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 P.M. at Central Office, 80 West Louise Ave. (2860 South)

Please visit our website for meeting information.
www.saltlakeaa.org

To reduce our costs, Central Office would like to update our mailing list for the **LIFELINE**. If you have moved please contact C.O. at 484-7871
Thank you.

Upcoming Events,

and Schedule Changes

August 1st — 3rd; **Maple Grove Campout**, Maple Grove, UT.

August 22nd — 24th; **Indian Creek Campout** Little Bear Campground - Huntington Canyon, UT. ?-callMel-435-613-9265

August 24th; **Central Office Picnic**, Murray Park, Pavilion 5 Murray, UT.

August 29th — 31st; **2008 Pacific Regional Forum**, Doubletree Hotel, Spokane, WA.

Info: General Service Office @ 212.870.3400 or www.aa.org, or, mikemc2@comcast.net

September 5th — 7th; **Women's Big Book Retreat**, Provo Canyon UT.

September 19th — 21st; **CC+H2O, Men's Spiritual Retreat**, Lava Hot Springs, ID.

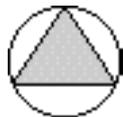
Info: James B. @ 801.232.1514 or email joheeb@gmail.com

Rick N. @ 801.301.1058 or rick@selectcomfortsystem.com

November 27th — 30th; **42nd Las Vegas Roundup**, Las Vegas, NV.

contact: www.lasvegasroundup.org

February 12th — 15th, 2009; **45th International Women's Conference**, Salt Lake City, UT.



A.A. Central Office of Salt Lake will be hosting a **12 Step Call Workshop** on Saturday, August 9th, 2008 at 2:30 p.m. The workshop will last until three-thirty p.m.

Those interested please call Camille @ 801.916.0831 or Bill @ 801.604.0511



Grantsville has a New Meeting!

The **Grantsville Good News** is meeting at 151 Cooley Street (the V.F.W.) in Grantsville on Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. This is an open meeting.

Special Events:

The **Backstreet Club** in Bountiful is having their 5th Annual Cell to Well 9.5 mile/15 k walk-run September 13th, 2008. For more info about this event call the Backstreet Club @ 397-0450

Have you seen the stars, So far away, yet as close as tommorrow. —P.S.—

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR BIRTHDAYS!

LET GO...

to "let go" does not mean to stop caring, it means I can't do it for someone else

to "let go" is not to cut myself off, it's the realization I can't control another

to "let go" is not to enable, but to allow learning from natural consequences

to "let go" is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands

to "let go" is not to try to change or blame another, it's to make the most of myself

to "let go" is not to care for, but to care about

to "let go" is not to fix, but to be supportive

to "let go" is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human

to "let go" is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes but to allow others to affect their destinies



to "let go" is not to be protective, it's to permit another to face reality

to "let go" is not to deny, but to accept

to "let go" is not to nag, scold or argue, but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them

to "let go" is not to adjust everything to my desires but to take each day as it comes, and cherish myself in it

to "let go" is not to criticize and regulate anybody but to try to become what I dream I can be

to "let go" is not to regret the past but to grow and live for the future

to "let go" is to fear less, and love more

Author Unknown

Improve the quality of your sobriety and get out of yourself! Central Office needs volunteers for service work. We need people for 12-Step calls, stuffing envelopes, answering the telephone, et cetera. If you are interested contact Central Office at 484-7871.



Dear God:
Please help me set aside
everything that I know about you,
about me, about this program, and
and about these steps...
For an open mind and a new experience of
you, of me, of this program and these steps
Amen



One Alcoholic Talking to Another

The Big Book may not be a page-turner, but major insights come in rapid succession. Sobriety depends on admitting complete defeat; sobriety depends on willingness ~no, more than that ~to believe in a Higher Power; sobriety is happy, joyous and free; a person can be reborn. “As we felt new power flow in. . . .we began to lose our fear of today, tommorrow, or the hereafter. We were reborn.” (page 63) Each new insight seems stronger than the last, and each one seems straight-forward. Everyone has some idea of what it means to be willing, to admit defeat, to feel happy, etc. However, there is one insight that looks simple but is not- the power of one alcoholic talking to another.

At the end of “Bill’s Story” he writes, “Each day my friend’s [Ebby Thatcher’s] simple talk in our kitchen multiplies. . . .” (page 16, [Big Book] emphasis added) Likewise Dr. Bob — less the creative leader than Bill but more intellectually sophisticated — highlights a similar moment when one alcoholic (Bill W.) talked to him, the other alcoholic, and saved him from doom. At the end of “Dr Bob’s Nightmare” the good doctor asks a rhetorical question and answers it. He is writing about the evening at Henrietta Seiberling’s home in Akron, Ohio, when he first met Bill W.

The question which might naturally come into your mind would be: “What did the man (Bill W.) do or say that was different from what others had done or said?” . . . This was a man who had experienced many years of frightful drinking. . . .but had been cured by the very means I had been trying to employ, that is to say, the spiritual approach. He gave me information about the subject of alcoholism which was undoubtably helpful (Dr. Silkworth’s medical assessment that it was a physical malady, not a moral or spiritual one). *Of far more importance was the fact that he was the first living human with whom I had ever talked, who knew what he was talking about. . . .from actual experience. In other words, he talked my own language.* (page 180, italics in the original [Big Book])

It is simply breathtaking that Bob summarily dismisses spirituality and science in favor of meeting a person who talked his language. How could he set aside those two formidable human projects? Whatever this new thing was that happened, at Henrietta’s it had power.

“Talking my language” is no mean feat. How many of us who studied a foreign language in school feel we can speak it today? Moreover, fluency is not just lining up words like those little refrigerator magnets. Language is what we say and more; in Dr. Bob’s helpful expression, language is what we “do or say.” To speak is often to take action. Dr Bob was also right when he made “talked my language” equivalent to Bill’s knowing “from actual experience.” Language is a reservoir of experience and possibilities. When one alcoholic talks to another, past and future are in play. By hearing the experience and possibilities of the speaker, the listener may take a crucial action: personal identification. Suddenly, and in Dr. Bob’s case for the first time in his life, the world felt welcoming. What terrible loneliness it must have been for Dr. Bob! Until the evening with Bill, he hadn’t met even one human being who talked his language. Perhaps I can put it better if I share a personal story.

(next page, please)

(One Alcoholic to Another. . .)

One day I decided to attend a meeting at a local church. When I arrived, there was no group. The pastor was changing lightbulbs in the courtyard, so I asked him where the meeting was. He didn't know and said they hadn't been renting his room for three months. I decided to stand on the sidewalk outside the church, just in case someone else had seen this meeting in the Directory. We could go for coffee. As I stood there, suddenly everything I saw took on a dramatically different quality. The trees, buildings, fences, sidewalks and cars —everything— looked impenetrable and set off against me. I faced a rock-hard opposition. After a time, I don't know how long. This sight and the feeling of impenetrability and opposition faded; my normal vision returned. It occurred to me later that, yes, there had been no A.A. meeting in that one place on gift, showing me how the world would be for me if there were no A.A. meetings ever, anywhere. And I realized with a shock that I was living only a few decades removed from that reality, a mere sixty years after the Big Book was printed—a close call!

One point of this story is that I was alone. There was no other alcoholic to talk with. I must suppose that for most alcoholics who lived before A.A. or who have not yet joined the fellowship, it was and still is far better to continue drinking and have the company of drunks, than to remain among non-alcoholics who don't understand, and to face the opposition of an impenetrable world alone. Dr. Bob must have realized that any event such as his unexpected talk with Bill Wilson which released him from that painful, unyielding, solitary trap, had to have awesome power.

Bill himself came to understand the power of one alcoholic talking to another by stages. The 1934 mountain-top experience that struck him sober occurred in the isolation of his bed at Townes Hospital. His initial understanding of this power was altruistic (as Dr. Silkworth still characterized the movement as late as 1938, p.xxviii). For the first six months, Bill felt an obligation to share with other alcoholics what had happened to him from his new, superior condition, in order to create the same life-changing spiritual experience in those poor, pathetic drunks. It was only in 1935 when Bill got to Akron, failed in his business deal and was afraid he'd drink again, that he realized talking with another alcoholic did not just work, it was something he needed for his sobriety. He was no longer so superior. This new thing, "my language" had to occur among equals. Thus it's easy to see why Bill and Bob had such a strong partnership: simultaneously, during one long evening in Akron, Dr. Bob became Bill's first equal, and Bill became Dr. Bob's first fellow alcoholic — in a way, his first fellow human being. His world was no longer set off against him. We never forget our first love.

—anonymous—

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"I see "humility for today" as a safe and secure stance midway between violent emotional extremes. It is a quiet place where I can keep enough perspective and enough balance to take my next small step up the clearly marked road that points toward eternal values."

*Grapevine*, June, 1961  
From: *As Bill Sees It*,  
page 199

# Phone List

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