



The Willamette Valley Intergroup

Eye Opener

January 2010

Willamette Valley Central Office

687 Cottage Street NE

Monday - Friday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Saturdays 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Telephone: 503.399.0599

www.aa-salem.com

E-mail: centraloffice@aa-salem.com

January, the 1st Month

Step 1

"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable."

Tradition 1

**"Our common welfare should come first;
personal recovery depends upon A.A. Unity"**

Step One: Powerless, Piecemeal

When I came to AA, I knew I had a problem with booze, but I was reluctant to admit I was an alcoholic. To me, an alky was a stereotype: a white man over fifty wearing a smelly old trench coat, lying in a bus shelter, and holding a bottle of cheap wine in a paper bag. I spent my thirty-eighth birthday in a detox. After the twenty-eight-day treatment program,

I attended one-hundred-forty meetings in ninety days because I knew my way of living didn't work. My best attempts at controlling my drinking and my best efforts at managing my life all drove me to my bottom. So, I took Step One piecemeal: *We ...*

I listened to other people share their experience with booze. My head nodded up and down like a bobble head doll. Although my circumstances were different--I never went to jail (I never got caught)--I could relate to their feelings and their thinking. These people were like me in every respect except one: they were staying sober.

... admitted ...

These AAs reminded me that admitting something was voicing the willingness to accept it. That worked for me. In the beginning, I was unsure and leery about acceptance. But admitting my problem among people who were like me was something I could do.

... we were powerless over alcohol. . .

I attended more than a hundred meetings and listened to chapter five, "How It Works," in each one. I got a Big Book and finally realized that I needed to read "The Doctor's Opinion," too.

In that section, I found simple text that described my illness. I knew I was messed up in my head, but in "The Doctor's Opinion" I learned how my body reacts to alcohol. Here, something new really opened my eyes. I knew alcohol didn't affect my non-alcoholic friends or my ex-wives like it affected me. They got sleepy, dopey, and often queasy if they had one drink over their limit.

I didn't have a limit. When I drank, a switch flipped on inside me and I felt elated, alert, outgoing, powerful, and beautiful. Magically, I became a different person--the person I was too shy and scared to become without booze.

I always wanted to be someone other than myself. I lived with low self-worth. As a teenager, I discovered that booze took my feeling of smallness away. My brain had found a simple solution to a difficult problem, and it didn't look for another one. When I felt small, I drank. When I drank, I entered a zone of big. Inside that zone, I had to have more alcohol.

This was a direct result of my body reacting to alcohol. The allergy and the unique phenomenon of craving were things I knew had happened to me.

For over twenty years, I knew I was mentally weak when alcohol was involved. I was obsessive. I depended on alcohol to drown my unwanted feelings and fears. But on that day in my early recovery, I discovered that what made me an alcoholic was my body, not my mind.

This was very important. It was no longer a matter of will. It was a matter of understanding that my body would always react the same way to booze. It helped me to see that I was not the disease, but that I had a disease--forever. No matter how much I grew through the Twelve Steps, my body would always react the same way to alcohol.

...--that our lives had become unmanageable . . .

"No problems with that part," many of us say when we come into AA. But the phrase means more than throwing our hands in the air and declaring life a chaotic mess.

It means that my disease is progressive. If I am truly powerless over alcohol and there is no earthly power that can relieve me of my obsession to drink, then I need a power greater than human power. Declaring our lives unmanageable places one foot forward, thereby entering Step Two. In doing so, we no longer have one foot remaining in the problem. We move into the solution.

Eric S. Ottawa, Ontario

January 2007 Vol. 63 No. 8

Reprinted with permission. Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc.

D.U.I.

A relapse became the bedrock of one man's sobriety

My name is Emory W. I am twenty-six years old, a member of AA, and currently an inmate at a county jail in northeast Tennessee. This was my fourth D.U.I. conviction.

I just finished reading the December 2005 issue of the Grapevine and have never felt more compelled to share my experience, strength, and hope. There is no meeting here, but after a contact visit with my sponsor earlier this week, I wrote the Sheriff requesting that my sponsor and I be allowed to start one. He brought me the Grapevine today.

My last drink was on October 31, 2005. I was on a three-month relapse. The disease, which we know is progressive, had escalated with hurricane-like destructiveness. After going to court on October 17, I realized that there was no getting out of jail time and I got drunk. In a matter of hours, everything good in my life was gone once again: my girlfriend, my job, and my willingness. I had heard tales of comparable relapses but never imagined the speed with which havoc returned. That Saturday night, my face turned blue and I quit breathing. I managed to remain

sober for nine days after Halloween before returning to the treatment center I had left last spring. After graduating last May, it was as if God himself smiled upon me. I had an incredibly supportive home group and sponsor-- who hired me as his personal assistant and trained me to be a paralegal.

I was administratively discharged from my job to fulfill my legal obligations. Incarceration was the last item on a lengthy list. I had been to jail before, but never for a span enveloping both Christmas and New Year's Day. It's fair to say that I've reached a new bottom. Picking up a white chip again is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do in my life, and something I definitely don't want to repeat. I am set to return to the treatment center and I'm willing to follow their recommendations. For me, this includes a one-year stay at a halfway house.

I think my situation can be summarized with a few key phrases from the chapter in the Big Book, "How It Works." I had kept in reserve some amount of self-will and held on to my old ideas, and the result was nil until I let go absolutely. I had given myself to this simple program, but not completely.

I am now striving to work a very thorough First Step. I hope and pray that this experience, like those yielding an overwhelming feeling of powerlessness described in the Big Book, "finally turns out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built."

I stand humble, faithfully waiting for the sunlight of the spirit to shine brightly upon my life again.

Another Way for One Alcoholic to Talk with Another Alcoholic

Members of our Fellowship in correctional facilities want to correspond with AAs who are "outside," especially male members. It's an excellent opportunity for one alcoholic to talk with another despite the barriers. Home addresses or PO boxes can be used, including inter-group, area, or group PO boxes. To sign up or obtain more information, contact the Corrections Desk at GSO, PO Box 459, New York, NY 10163, e-mail to corrections@aa.org, or call 212.870.3400.

Emery W. Bristol, VA

June 2006 Vol 63 No 1

Reprinted with permission. Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc.

**MID-VALLEY REGION (SALEM)
STATE and FEDERAL CORRECTIONS
Meetings and Contacts**

**Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP)
Mill Creek Group**

First Thursday 6-8 pm, first and third Saturday 8-10 am,
First and third Wednesday 6-8 pm
Contact: Fred D. 503-551-9795

**Oregon State Correctional Institution (OSCI)
Santiam Highway Group**

Saturday 9 am, Wednesday 6:30 pm
Contact: Chris H. 503-999-1758

**Oregon State Penitentiary Minimum (OSPM)
Behind the Wire Group**

Monday and Tuesday 7-8:30 pm
Contact: Tim W. 503-612-1835

**Santiam Correctional Institution (SCI)
Stepping Out Group**

Saturday and Wednesday 6 pm
Contact: Bruce L. 541-752-9100

**Mill Creek Correctional Facility (MCCF)
Down But Not Out Group**

Friday 7 pm
Contact: Bruce L. 541-752-9100

**Hillcrest (Oregon Youth Authority)
Monday 7 pm**

Contacts: Tim E. 503-931-5224

Federal Correctional Institution, Sheridan (FCI Sheridan)

Sunday 1:30-3 pm
Contact: Jack C. 541-515-1968

**“I am responsible . . .
When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help, I want the
hand of A.A. always to be there.
And for that: I am responsible.”**

Willamette Valley Intergroup Minutes December 21, 2009

Chairs and Committee members attending: Gene H., Chair and Access Committee chair; Jane A., Secretary; Ron P., Soberfest chair and Website Coordinator; Laura F., Office Manager; Tiffany B., Outreach Co-chair

Group Representatives:

Jane A.	Tuesday Nite Chapel	Bill B.	Pioneer Group
Ron P.	Silverton Groups	Tiffany B.	Step of the Month
Fred D.	Mill Creek at OSP	Peggy E.	We Are Not Saints
Tom W.	7am Downtown	Brian S.	Capitol Discussion
Sheri W.	Conscious Contact		

Opening: Meeting started with Serenity Prayer. Fred read Preamble and Gene read the 12 Traditions.

Minutes reviewed. Accepted

Reports:

Access Committee: (Billy M.) not present- no report

Al-Anon Liaison: (Barbara S.) not present- report available.

Computer Administrator: (Dave S.) Not present- no report

Eye Opener: (Roger L.) Not present, report submitted that December issue is out and available.

H&I Committee: (Christian) not present. Report submitted: Bridgeway will be having a holiday meeting at 10:00. Serenity Lane panel was quite successful. Bridging-the-gap position is open. Jane reported that the Marion County jail meetings are going well and the new books donated by the Way Home group is much appreciated. It is good to set up for a meeting with 13 participants and have a book for each person to use. The Work Center meeting is still struggling due to lack of clients, but we are being persistent. Fred reported that the Santiam and OSCI institutions could use some volunteers. Hillcrest (juvenile) has a meeting that is going well.

Intergroup Liaison: (Billy M.) Not present - no report.

Meeting Schedule Coordinator: (Margaret B) not present - no report

Phone Coordinator: (Ben M.) Not present, Office Manager reported that he is in need of volunteers for evening shift. Contact Ben for further information.

Office Manager: (Laura F.) There were 283 contacts for November for a total year to date of 4558. The office will be closed on Christmas and New Years day. Laura has created a notebook at Central Office with information about all the committees and planned meetings. The Bi-laws are complete and available. The November sale totals for coins = 278 bronze and 275 aluminum.

Outreach Coordinator: (Tiffany B.) She is attempting to visit 3 meetings a month to convey the message that WVI and Central Office needs all group participation and how service opportunity is available to them.

Soberfest Committee: (Ron P.) Everything is going well. The meal packets are working well. Purchasing the full package saves money for the individual and will keep the cost of putting on the event down also.

Treasurer: (Kathleen K.) Not present -report submitted.

Webmaster: (Ron P.) All is well

Old Business:

Annual review for bi-laws is set for January. There was some concern about doing this so soon. It was explained that the bi-laws had not been looked at for many years and that created quite an extensive update during 2009; however, if an annual review is set up and done, then the amount of time spent each year is minimal.

Book drive: Roger reported that he received three books, so feels this is a no-go project.

New Business:

Laura broached the subject of Central Office participation at the Soberfest event this coming February. In the past WVI has donated \$100 +/- merchandise for this event. Motion was made and seconded for Central Office to donate \$125 worth of merchandise to the Soberfest event with Laura given the discretion to pick the particular merchandise to donate. Passed.

Jane wanted to say again how much the soft back Big Books are appreciated. Thank you again Way Home Group for your donation to Marion County Jail and Work Center.

Gene brought up for discussion the recent broach of anonymity on Face book by an AA member in Salem. This forum was used to criticize a particular group in the area. He referred to a recent article in A.A. World Service literature. It is suggested that Face book; My Space, Twittering etc. should be treated the same way as any other "public setting". We should stay anonymous at the level of press, radio and films. Intergroup Reps are encouraged to share this information at the group level and Gene will get an article into the Eyeopener.

Meeting adjourned

Humbly submitted, Jane A., Secretary

WHAT ABOUT THE INTERNET??

O. What about anonymity?

We observe all A.A.'s principles and Traditions on our Web sites. Since anonymity is "the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions," we practice anonymity on A.A. Web sites at all times. An A.A. Web site is a public medium, which has the potential for reaching the broadest possible audience and, therefore, requires the same safeguards that we use at the level of press, radio and film.

GENERAL SOCIAL NETWORKING WEB SITES

MySpace, Facebook and other social networking Web sites are public in nature. Though users create accounts and utilize usernames and passwords, once on the site, it is a public medium where A.A. members and non-A.A.s mingle.

As long as individuals do not identify themselves as A.A. members, there is no conflict of interest. However, someone using their full name and/ or a likeness, such as a full-face photograph, would be contrary to the spirit of the Eleventh Tradition, which states in the Long Form that, "... our [last] names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed or publicly printed."

Experience suggests that it is in keeping with the Eleventh Tradition not to disclose A.A. membership on social networking sites as well as on any other Web site, blog, electronic bulletin board, etc., that is not composed solely of A.A. members, is not password protected or is accessible to the public.

ANONYMITY AND E-MAIL

Electronic mail is a widely used and accepted method of communication. It is now used regularly as a service tool in A.A., but as with any service, we need to ensure the Fellowship's Traditions are maintained while still receiving the most benefit from this form of communication. When using e-mail it is necessary to consider the anonymity of the recipients of messages. Sending messages to multiple recipients that disclose the e-mail addresses of everyone on the addressee list is a potential break of someone else's anonymity. Therefore, it is a good idea to obtain a recipient's explicit permission before using his or her e-mail address for A.A. correspondence, especially if it is a workplace email address. When sending A.A. mail to multiple recipients who wish to remain anonymous, use can be made of the BCC (Blind Courtesy Copy) option available on most computers.

Excerpts from

5M - 6/08 (PS) www.aa.org MG-18

January 2010 Calendar

Western Area Young People in Alcoholics

Anonymous Convention

When Dec 31, 2009 – Jan 3, 2010 Eugene, OR
WACYPAA 13 'Children of Chaos'. For more information about this event
contact: Josh 503-544-1966 or Leah 503-409-4499

TTCO Speakers Meeting

When Sat January 9, 7pm – 9pm Where St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

Description Take The Cotton Out Speakers Meeting.
AA, Al-Anon Speakers Meeting.

H&I Committee Meeting

When Mon, January 11, 7pm – 8pm Where Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

District 4 GSR's Meeting

When Thursday January 14, 7pm – 8pm Where St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

WVI Committee Meeting

When Mon, January 18, 7pm – 8pm Where Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR, 97301

KIS-S Committee Meeting

When Thurs January 21, 5:30pm – 6:30pm Where Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

KIS-S Speakers Meeting

When Sat, January 23, 7:00pm – 9:30pm

Where Morningside Methodist Church, Salem, OR

Description Keep It Simple Speakers Meeting.
AA, Al-Anon Speakers Meeting.

TTCO Committee

When Tue, January 26, 7pm – 8pm Where Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

Soberfest Committee

When Fri, January 29, 7pm – 8pm Where St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

The Senility Prayer

God, Grant me the Senility to forget the
People I never liked anyway,
The good fortune to run into the ones I do,
And the eyesight to know the difference!!
Amen

THE INSANITY OF ALCOHOLISM

The INSANITY of Alcoholism is NOT the goofy behavior that people exhibit when they are drunk. Everyone who ingests enough alcohol will act goofy. The **INSANITY of ALCOHOLISM** is the alcoholic's persistent return to alcohol in the face of overwhelming evidence that it is destroying his or her life, **over and over again**. There are some in our fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous who have serious mental problems, but most of us joke about how "insane" or "crazy" or "goofy" we are or have been, when what we really are talking about is our emotional immaturity, our impulsiveness, our lack of self-discipline – our character defects if you will. Most of us would have a hard time describing many of our thoughts and actions as being insane. In fact, in some areas of life, we may exhibit a high degree of sanity. However, there is something about the way we perceive the world around us that has always caused us a great deal of discomfort in simply living our lives. Our general discomfort with living has much to do with the way we perceive the effects of alcohol. Our falling short of what is called "well adjusted" is definitely a part of our makeup as an alcoholic. However, that alone does not separate us much from the general population. **It is our physical as well as our mental response to alcohol that is INSANE, and that is what separates the alcoholic from the non-alcoholic.** There are two problems alcoholics have with alcohol: "(1) the obsession of the mind, and (2) the compulsion of the body,

an incomprehensible craving. Somewhere along the line, early or late, we develop an obsession with the idea that alcohol eases our minds and solves our problems. Then, our physical response to alcohol manifests in what the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous calls an allergy. Our alcoholic bodies process the alcohol in a manner which causes us to crave more. The alcoholic insanity of our minds tells us that it is a good idea to drink to relieve our stresses and to have fun. Once we start, our alcoholic bodies tell us we must drink more to satisfy the craving.

As every alcoholic should know, that is where the well known cycle begins, and continues over and over again, leading to death, incarceration, or "wet brain" insanity. What Dr. Silkworth called the "phenomenon of craving," manifesting as an "allergy," is so overpowering that all else comes in second to our primary concern of getting the next drink, even life itself takes second place.

That, my friends, is the "**INSANITY OF ALCOHOLISM.**" It is only relieved and arrested by total abstinence, and as we have found, by the **thorough** application of the 12 Steps of AA in our lives, in all our affairs. to achieve a psychic change, a "spiritual awakening," leading to growth and maturity, and a firm grasp of the reality of life and the world about us.

Reprinted with permission from: <http://www.barefootsworld.net/aainsanity.html>

1st Step Prayer

God, Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, Spirit of Nature, or Spirit of the Universe, my name is _____, and I'm an alcoholic ... and I need your help today.

Look to this day, for it is life, the very life of life. In it's brief course lies all the realities and verities of existence, the bliss of growth, the splendor of action, the glory of power. For yesterday is but a dream, and tomorrow is only a vision. But today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Look well, therefore, to this day.
Sanskrit Proverb

First Tradition Checklist

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into arguments?
3. Am I gentle with alcoholics who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as



Stepping Stones

The historic home of Bill and Lois Wilson

hope shared here

www.steppingstones.org • 62 Oak Road, Katonah, NY