



The Willamette Valley Intergroup

Eye Opener

December 2009

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.

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December, the 12th Month

Step 12

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

Tradition 12

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

Twelfth Step Work Is AA

If we live AA, we are doing Twelfth Step work. . .how infinitely more powerful is our message, if the suffering alcoholic recognizes that AA has produced in us a patient, humble, and loving friend of God and man.

OBVIOUSLY there would be no such thing as this life-saving fellowship called Alcoholics Anonymous, were it not for the regenerating two basic elements

which seem to me to make up the vital Twelfth Step. They are, of course, a mission to carry the message, and a high calling to practice daily the AA principles in all our affairs as best we can.

If we look first at the mission territory into which we are to carry our message, we will better understand the absolute necessity of putting into practice the principles we advocate. It should not be difficult for us to familiarize ourselves with the mission fields into which we are venturing, inasmuch as we have all, more or less, recently dwelt in that outer darkness ourselves. That darkness, wherein we were, and where they are now groping, is a hell on earth. On the fringes of despair, our prospective members are utterly alone in their losing battle, with no one to understand their problems, much less anyone to give them any permanent help in their tragic and desperate plight. The world, in its fantastic progress, has left them behind as hopeless and helpless. Their closest of family ties have been severed, and where there was love, there is pity; where there was loyalty, there is contempt. Their faith in all things human as well as divine has been totally shattered. They are literally alone, abandoned, and doomed. They must blot out of their minds the joys of the past and they dare not face the inevitable sorrows of the future. Their souls cry out, as did their Divine Master's, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Our mission, our carrying of the message, is the lone response to their plea, it is the only ray of light to pierce the Stygian darkness that encompasses them. Will they hear us? Will they respond to our beacon of hope? Can they again put their trust in men? The answers to these questions lie in the second basic element of our Twelfth Step.

It seems to me that we will almost always be able to answer these two questions in the affirmative, if and when we really practice the principles of AA in all our affairs. The virtues of patience, humility, and charity must be ours, not at our meetings alone, but in every hour of our twenty-four hour program. Were it not for the charity of our sponsors we would not be here tonight. If they had not been possessed of patience, how many of us would still be here? Had they not the virtue of humility, of what concern would our sad situations have been to them? Our sponsors were sober, they knew the life-saving program. It is true that someone else had given it to them, but it does not necessarily follow that they were obliged in justice to hand it on to you and me. Thank God they were not only hearers of the word, but they were doers of it also. They were living the AA program, they were putting into daily practice the principles of AA in all of their affairs.

I said to begin with that this Twelfth Step is the step of regeneration. If there were no Twelfth Step, there would not be any AA. I firmly believe that even Bill and Doc, our founders, could not have kept themselves sober for long, had they not come up with this crowning admonition of the new way of life they developed. Because, the Twelfth Step simply means living the other eleven steps. It follows as does the day the night, that when we have recognized our dependence upon God (as we understand him) and we have

turned our lives entirely over to his guidance and care, we will observe the command to love one another as he has loved us. In other words, we will always be doing Twelfth Step work, as long as we are adhering to the other eleven steps.

Many of us find Twelfth Step work very difficult, others of us seem to find very little opportunity for it. Much of our concern over these apparent difficulties lies in the fact that we try so hard to define Twelfth Step work. It cannot be defined in terms of the number of contacts made or even in the number of men and women we have introduced to the program. Twelfth Step work is AA. If we live AA, we are doing Twelfth Step work. Our every thought, word, and deed either builds up or tears down the program. We must practice what we preach; our own sobriety is by no means secure because we may have lost the florid complexion and now have an extra buck in our jeans. The change, if it is to endure, must originate in the very depths of our souls. When our hearts have been turned over to the care of God, our lives have in all truth been changed.

This new life will communicate itself to all with whom we come in contact. The message of AA will be carried far and wide to alcoholics and non-alcoholics alike. Who could possibly estimate the number of AAs who have come into this new life as a result of the good example of one of our members. How many non-alcoholics have been witness to the change in an alcoholic acquaintance and as a result, the non-alcoholic carries the message to another in need of help with his problem.

How many of our former bar buddies, who are still at the bar, are watching us? How many of them are already on their way into AA, because they see the light shining through us?

Not for a minute would I belittle the glorious and meritorious work of those who spend themselves in what we commonly refer to as Twelfth Step work. It is the work that we all must do whenever the opportunity presents itself to go to the aid of an alcoholic in distress. What I am trying to say is that Twelfth Step work is much broader and all-embracing than what we sometimes realize. We all know that in carrying the message to another alcoholic we find our best approach, in fact generally our only approach, lies in pointing out what we had to do to sober up; in telling, not what he must do, but what we have found worked for us. How infinitely more powerful is our message, when he already knows or at least immediately recognizes that AA has produced in us a patient, humble, and loving friend of God and man.

Therefore I think that we must go out on Twelfth Step calls ever mindful that we are very likely only the immediate instrument in this particular case, and as we go to and return from that call, our journey may well be fraught with occasions to sow the seeds for many, many calls yet unheard. Yes, I think that the as yet unarticulated calls must be given voice by our daily practice of AA principles in all of our comings and goings.

R. J. M. Jamestown, New York

[May 1953](#) Vol. 9 No. 12

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Personalities Before Principles

A FELLOW I sponsored surprised me by saying there were some people that he did not like to sit at an AA table with. "What do you think?" he wanted to know.

My mind went back to the nervous breakdown I had four years ago, after five years of sobriety. There is no doubt that I did not contribute much to anyone else's growth during the months that followed. I sensed that people were avoiding sitting at my table. However, I was sober, I was going to meetings, and I was in great need. I was gripped with terror that I would be shut out at the only place where I had been truly accepted.

As time went on, I found that I had more positive things to say. Old acquaintances began to be renewed, and I no longer had the feeling that I was being avoided. But this conversation with my pigeon brought back the old feelings with surprising force. I think there are two good reasons for sitting at a table with someone I don't care for: First, he may benefit from it; second, I will undoubtedly benefit from it. Often, the thing I most resent hearing is the thing I most need to hear. And the Big Book tells me that it is very easy for me to slip into a "greater than, less than" kind of relationship to others. The hardest thing for me to do is to see myself as an equal--and it is also the most necessary for my survival.

But what if I just don't get anything out of what that person is saying? I can remember the times when I had nothing to give, and the patient people who were willing to give to me and ask nothing in return.

The Fifth Tradition says, "Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." The Twelfth Tradition tells us to keep "principles before personalities." Can we afford to forget this?

M. B. Taylor, Michigan

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Good for nothing

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." Living the Twelfth Tradition is a lesson in humility when applied on an individual basis. It prohibits me from upstaging AA and keeps the spotlight off of myself. It keeps me from calling up political and religious leaders and telling them a thing or two. It keeps still my pen when a psychiatrist decides that AA needs to be controlled. You see, my personality still gets me in trouble, but not like it did before sobriety.

Anonymity keeps my name and picture completely out of the media. It protects me from myself. But there is another side to this beautiful word, and I rarely ever hear it discussed at meetings. Anonymity means to do something for somebody else and keep my big mouth shut, not even letting the person on the receiving end know who the giver is. Now *that*, my dear friends, leads to spiritual growth in the area of humility. A man with a lot of years in AA coined a phrase for it: Being good for nothing. Try it, you'll like it.

ANONYMOUS Shreveport, Louisiana [January 1989](#) Vol. 45 No. 8
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Tradition Twelve Checklist

- 1. Why is it good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?**
- 2. When I do not trust AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?**
- 3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?**
- 4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to conform to my standards, not its own?**
- 5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?**
- 6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition-or belie it?**
- 7. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?**
- 8. Do I complain about certain AAs' behavior-especially if they are paid to work for AA? Who made me so smart?**
- 9. Do I fulfill all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?**
- 10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give AA critics real ammunition?**
- 11. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?**
- 12. What is the real importance of me among more than a million AAs?**

Willamette Valley Intergroup Minutes November 16, 2009

Chairs and Committee members attending: Chair, Gene H.; Secretary, Jane A., Treasurer, Kathleen K.; Eye-Opener Editor, Roger L.; Soberfest Chairman, Ron P.; Office Manager, Laura F.; Outreach Coordinator, Bob M.; H&I Chair, Christian W.

Group Representatives:

Jane A	Tuesday Nite Chapel	Roger L	FNLS
Ron P	Silverton	Fred D	Mill Creek Group
Tom W	7am Downtown Group	Tiffany B	SOM Sat am
Bob M	Dallas Tues/Thurs	Sue H	Group I
Bill B	Pioneer Group	Brian S	Capitol Discussion group
Peggy	We Are Not Saints	Bill M	Second Chance
Karen	Deaf Community	Gene	proxy for OSCI

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

Minutes reviewed. And accepted

Reports:

Access Committee: (Gene H.) Way Home Group is taking meeting to Bridgeway on Tuesday and Saturday weekly. Recently the transportation monies to get clients to meetings were discontinued. This AA group has stepped up and will now provide a weekly 2-way bus ticket for each client that signs up to attend a meeting.

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

Computer Administrator: (Dave S.) not present. One of the groups asked for clarification between this position and it's duties and sobriety requirements and the Webmaster duties. Read from the Bylaws. This position is vacant.

Eye Opener: (Roger L.) This month's edition is out.

H&I Committee: (Christian) Trevor has now started a 2-hour meeting at the state hospital on Center street on Wednesdays. The contact person is Mark. Was not sure whether Mark wanted his phone number out, will confirm and get back to the committee. Serenity Lane now has a meeting, but no further information concerning times and dates were available. Discussion about providing big books to Bridgeway will be discussed under new business.

Intergroup Liaison: (Gene H.) Billy M. will be taking over this position. He mentioned that it was a two-way street of information being channeled to the district from WVI and from district to WVI. It was also mentioned that the District is a very important spoke in the AA service wheel. Group representation to the district makes sure that our voice is being heard at the Area level as well as Regional and World level. Currently the District organization is at bare bones and could certainly use some service bodies. District meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at St Paul's church at 7pm in the basement.

Meeting Schedule Coordinator: (Margaret B.) not present. It was noted that although Margaret does not attend the meetings as suggested by the bylaws, she is doing a great job on maintaining accurate and up-to-date meeting schedules.

Phone Coordinator: (Ben M.) Not present. It was noted that although Ben does not attend the meetings as suggested in the bylaws, he is doing a great job at covering the volunteer phone lines.

Office Manager: (Laura F.) There were 302 contacts in October with an average of 327 a month for the year. She has received the new schedule from the SOM group who is doing volunteer work as a group at Central Office every other Saturday. They are committed through May 2010. Groups are now using the office 4 nights a week.

Outreach Coordinator: (Bob M.) The third brochure has been completed and available. Each IR was given a copy to pass around in their group. He has worked with Roger and will have another recruiting article in the December newsletter. He has recruited Tiffany B to join him on the Outreach Team. She will continue the work while he is gone. He will be back in March.

Soberfest Committee: (Ron P.) The Halloween dance was a success. One of the groups asked for clarification of the Soberfest committee to WVI. It was clarified that Soberfest is a stand-alone committee that provides social activities within the Willamette Valley area. (See below for further clarification)

Treasurer: (Kathleen K.) Kathleen distributed the monthly report. She explained the charge by US Bank that is being reversed. The large difference between in-flows and out-flows is a result of a deposit that was not made until November 1 and will be included in next month's report.

Webmaster: (Ron P.) All is well.

Old Business: The second vote to approve the Willamette Valley Intergroup By-laws was taken. It passed. Any further changes that need to be made will be done at the beginning of 2010 during the annual review. Thanks to all who worked hard to bring these guidelines up-to-date. The last revision of these was done in 2000.

New Business:

As soon as all the paperwork is complete, Bill M will be taking over the position of "proxy" to the OSCI group.

The Advisory committee has unanimously approved the Treasurer to move the WVI bank account from US bank to West Coast Bank. Kathleen will also make sure that there are three signors on the checking account which would be Treasurer, Kathleen Kelliher; The Office Manager, Laura Falls and the WVI chairperson, Gene Hergistad.

Christian W. asked if 4 big books could be donated to Bridgeway each month. A discussion followed on how AA could provide literature to clients at Bridgeway or provide a library of literature for clients at the treatment center, but could not buy literature for Bridgeway which is a for profit organization. Christian will get further clarification. Jane noted that there were several hardback big books available that had been removed from the Marion County jail that could be donated (they are used and stamped with "property of Marion County jail"). But again, they need to get to prospective members and not to the organization.

Peggy noted that the We are Not Saints on Sunday is changing their time from 7:30-8:30 to 7-8:15.

Roger asked that the IR's advertise the book drive.

Meeting adjourned **Humbly submitted, Jane A., Secretary**

**** Soberfest was originally created as a sub-committee of WVI. It has evolved over the years to become an independent group of AA and Al-Anon members who create social activities for the benefit of the recovery community. The annual profits of these activities are donated to different organizations within the recovery community IE... AA District 4, Willamette Valley Intergroup, Al-Anon Information Service.**

Intergroup Representative (IGR)

To: You, the EyeOpener Reader

Subject: Does your Group or Meeting have an Intergroup Representative (IGR)?

If you have an IGR, Congratulations and Thank You. If you don't, how about talking this need up at your next Group Conscience (Business) Meeting.

What is an Intergroup Representative? The Intergroup Service Representative (IGR) has the job of linking his or her group with the Intergroup Committee (in our case) the Willamette Valley Intergroup. The I.G.R. represents the voice of the group conscience reporting the group's thoughts, and decisions, to the Intergroup Committee.

Well, what is the Willamette Valley Intergroup, and what is it's purpose? Willamette Valley Intergroup is a nonprofit corporation which provides an Alcoholics Anonymous Central Office governed by an Intergroup Committee.

Well, now, what is the Central Office and what is it's purpose? The Central Offices exists to carry out certain functions common to all groups, in the Willamette Valley Area, and it is **maintained, supervised and supported by these groups**. It exists, to encourage mutual support and cooperation between groups, in order to aid the groups in their **common purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers**, in accordance with Traditions Five and Nine.

Only when a I.G.R. keeps the group informed, and communicates the group conscience, and group needs, can the Intergroup Committee and Central Office Staff truly act for Willamette Valley A.A. as a whole.

This message is brought to you by your Intergroup Outreach Team and your EyeOpener Editor. Thanks.

December 2009 Calendar

District 4 GSR's Meeting

When Thursday December 10, 7pm – 8pm **Where** St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

TTCO Speakers Meeting

When Sat December 12, 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, December 14, 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

KIS-S Committee Meeting

When Thurs December 17, 5:30pm – 6:30pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

WVI Committee Meeting

When Mon, December 21, 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR, 97301

TTCO Committee

When Tue, December 22, 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

Soberfest Committee

When Fri, December 25, 7pm – 8pm **Where** St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

KIS-S Speakers Meeting

When Sat, December 26, 7:00pm – 9:30pm

Where Morningside Methodist Church, Salem, OR

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

The Active Alcoholic's 23rd Psalm:

*King Alcohol is my shepherd, I shall always want.
He maketh me to lie down in gutters,
He leadeth me beside troubled waters,
He destroyeth my soul.
He leadeth me into the paths of wickedness for the effects sake,
Yea though I walk through the valley of poverty
And have delirium tremors, I will cling to drink.
For thou art with me, thy bite and thy sting they torment me.
Thou prepares an empty table in the presence of my family,
Thou anointest my head with hellishness,
My cup of wrath runneth over.
Surely destruction and misery shall follow me all of my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of the damned forever!*

***Sunday - We Are Not Saints Big Book study
Woodland Chapel - 582 High Street
change starting time from 7:30pm to 7:00pm
beginning November 15th***

***Then there's the guy who has one year and proclaims at a meeting, "I'm finally beginning to like people!"
To which the old-timer with 20 years says, "Oh don't worry. You'll get over that!"***

A DRUNK CAME ACROSS a magazine article about the horrors of liver disease and other damage that drinking can do to one's body. He found what he read frightening, so he told his drinking buddies that he'd had enough. "That's it!" he said. "After today, no more reading."

Hi, my name is Roger, and I'm an alcoholic. I'm also a diabetic. Does that make me a diabolic?"

Got something for the Eye-Opener?? Email your stuff to:

Roger.l@comcast.net

Salem Soberfest 2010

Registration forms for Salem Soberfest 2010 are out and available; at meetings, Central Office, for download online at <http://www.aa-salem.com/soberfest.htm>. The theme for this year's Soberfest is 'Freedom From Bondage', and Candace R. designed the butterfly logo.

The goal of the Soberfest Committee over the last few years has been to provide an affordable and enjoyable social event for AA and Al-Anon members in the WVI area. Any funds that are generated above the cost of operating Soberfest are donated back for service within the area. Below is a pie chart that illustrates and breaks down percentages of expenses and donations. The large bright blue pie slice represents money we have been able to donate back to the area.

One of the problems with putting on an event of this size in Salem is the lack of suitable facilities, and how much it costs to rent the few facilities that are available. We have been fortunate in the last few years because we have been able to rent the space at Chemeketa Community College at a very reasonable price. One of the reasons we get the facility at the price we do is because they expect to be able to make some of that up by catering our event and selling meals. Treating yourself to a meal, or meals, at Soberfest is a great way to thank our friends at Chemeketa for supporting us. If you have had a meal at Soberfest in the last few years then you know that the Catering Staff at Chemeketa really spoils us with the meals they serve us. In essence, buying meals at Soberfest enables us to come back year after year to a facility that we can afford, at a price that allows us to donate money back to service.

This year we are offering a package deal on meals. You can purchase all of the banquet meals together for \$35.00, an \$8.00 savings over the individual price. If you send in your registration before Jan. 15th registration for the event is \$15.00 (\$20.00 after the 15th). This year it is possible to attend the entire Salem Soberfest 2010 weekend for \$50.00 for the complete package of ; registration, all the meals, speakers, the dance and all the entertainment. We hope to see you there, the second weekend in February 2010.

*Thank you for your support. Ron P.,
Committee Chair for Soberfest 2010.*

A Season of Gratitude

My first sober Christmas, I received a handful of cards from AA people. Some I didn't even know. I had not received a Christmas card for years; on skid row, sending cards was unheard of. I bought a box of Christmas cards and reciprocated. Then a miracle occurred. My hands weren't jerking. I was reading and comprehending the verses and my eyes were not bloodshot, as in the past. I could even sign them legibly, and I knew who I was sending them to and what those AAs meant to me. I could never have done this before. I will never forget these spiritual experiences. For me, every sober Christmas is a time of great reflection. I gaze at the Christmas tree and the gifts. A few needles on the rug remind me of my self-pity tears. And, at the top of the tree, an angel of joy rests. I have been given a new life through thoughtful people, day by day. Chuckie B Treasure Island, Florida

During the Christmas holidays in 1966, guess what? I was drunk. My brother, who had recently gotten sober in AA, came to visit me. "You should go to AA. That's where it's at," he said. I raved, "I know where it's at! I'm a jazz musician! 'It' is wine, women, and song; drugs, sex, and rock 'n' roll; it's being hip, slick, and cool; it's recognition, fame, and applause. That's where 'it's' at!" I bellowed back. "Go to AA," my brother calmly repeated. "That's where it's at." "Okay, smart mouth, what is your idea of 'it'?" He said, "'It' is anonymous. It has no name, it's the complement to professionalism. It is 'God as we understood him.' So you can't argue with us. We surrender." I was astonished. That's all he said. His silence was more convincing than any words. Curious, I went to my first AA meeting on January 2, 1967, and have been sober ever since, by the grace of God and the help of AA.