



DISTRICT 81

NOVEMBER 2024

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Step 11:

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Tradition 11:

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

Concept 11:

The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

**WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE, REACHES
OUT FOR HELP; I WANT THE HAND OF
AA ALWAYS TO BE THERE. AND FOR
THAT: I AM RESPONSIBLE.**

UPCOMING EVENTS & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Happy Thanksgiving

November 6: District 81 meeting 7pm at Kelley's in La Marque 4604 Gulf Fwy, La Marque, TX 77568

November 9: Understanding Anonymity Workshop 1-4pm at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church 4613 Hwy 3, Dickinson, TX 77539; see flyer!

November 13: Accessibility Committee meeting 6:30pm online via Google Meet <https://meet.google.com/qvk-rjzk-nad>

November 13: Correctional Facilities meeting 6:30pm at the Bay Area Club, 2111 Webster St, League City, TX 77573

November 19: Grapevine Committee meeting 5:30pm via Google Meets, send email to Grapevine committee chair to receive meeting info

November 20: Website Committee meeting 6pm online; send email to john.a@aa-seta.org to be added to the Google Meet invite.

November 20: Literature Committee meeting 7:30pm in Room E at the Bay Area Club, 2111 Webster St, League City, TX 77573

November 25: Newsletter Committee meeting 5pm in the cafe area of the Friendswood Public Library, 416 S Friendswood Dr, Friendswood, TX 77546

November 27: Finance & Budget meeting 6:30pm at Jason's Deli in League City, 2755 Gulf Fwy S, League City, TX 77573

November 27: Treatment Facilities Committee meeting 6:30pm at Jason's Deli in League City, 2755 Gulf Fwy S, League City, TX 77573, and via Zoom: 868-5564-9879; passcode: 06-10-1935

November 28: PI/CPC Committee meeting 6:30pm via Google Meets <https://meet.google.com/csw-pwgf-gyp>

November 29: Archives Committee meeting 6pm at the Alvin Taylor Street Club, 204 S Taylor Street, Alvin, TX 77511

December 4: District 81 meeting 7pm at Kelley's in La Marque 4604 Gulf Fwy, La Marque, TX 77568

January 3-5, 2025: SETA Convention at the Royal Sonesta Hotel 2222 W Loop S, Houston, TX 77027; see flyer!

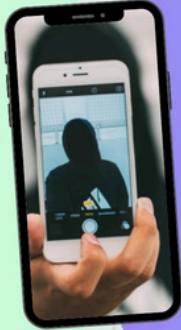


UNDERSTANDING ANONYMITY

Have you ever asked yourself:

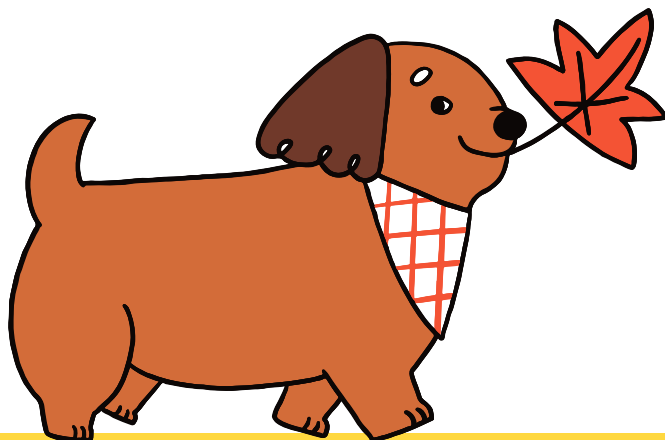
- How is anonymity a spiritual principal?
- Why is AA anonymous?
- What does that mean?
- What's the big deal?
- Why do long timers care so much about it?

You are not alone!



JOIN DISTRICT 81 WORKSHOP COMMITTEE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2024 FROM 1PM - 4PM
 HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
 4613 HIGHWAY 3 DICKINSON TX 77539



SOUTH EAST TEXAS AREA 67
 presents

HAPPY 2025 JOYOUS & Free

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

AT THE ROYAL SONESTA HOTEL - HOUSTON

FEATURING:

RICK W - GRAPEVINE TX	TERESA J - ALBUQUERQUE NM	JUDITH R - BISMARCK ND	SHAWN G - DES MOINES IA
JIM W - CANCUN, QR, MX	KARINA C - PHOENIX, NY	MAGDA D - RICHMOND TX	SEVI M - HUMBLE TX
KATIE B - ABERDEEN SD	MRTT C - HUTTO TX	DEBORAH D - HOUSTON TX	ROSIE M - HUMBLE TX
ELIZABETH H - LEAGUE CITY TX			

AGENDA TO INCLUDE MULTIPLE STAGES

SPAN & ENG WORKSHOPS	YPAA SPEAKERS	80'S DANCE PARTY
ASK THE OLD-TIMERS	AL-ANON	MARATHON MEETINGS
AA HISTORIAN	COMMITTEE SHOWCASE	ICE CREAM SOCIAL

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
 REGISTRATION, SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES
 AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS VISIT:

SETACONVENTION.ORG

TICKETS:

\$30 - PRESALE (ENDS 12/13/24)
 \$35 - AT THE DOOR

WHERE DID THE 12 STEPS COME FROM?

A FRAGMENT OF HISTORY BY BILL W. JULY 1953 A.A. GRAPEVINE

... Continued from the October issue of the Newsletter...

Something Missing

After some six months of violent exertion with scores of alcoholics which I found at a nearby mission and Towns Hospital, it began to look like the Groupers were right. I hadn't sobered up anybody. In Brooklyn we always had a houseful of drinkers living with us, sometimes as many as five. My valiant wife, Lois, once arrived home from work to find three of them fairly tight. They were whaling each other with two-by-fours. Though events like these slowed me down somewhat, the persistent conviction that a way to sobriety could be found never seemed to leave me. There was, though, one bright spot. My sponsor, Ebbie, still clung precariously to his new-found sobriety.

What was the reason for all these fiascoes? If Ebbie and I could achieve sobriety, why couldn't all the rest find it too? Some of those we'd worked on certainly wanted to get well. We speculated day and night why nothing much had happened to them. Maybe they couldn't stand the spiritual pace of the Oxford Group's four absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. In fact some of the alcoholics declared that this was the trouble. The aggressive pressure upon them to get good overnight would make them fly high as geese for a few weeks and then flop dismally. They complained, too, about another form of coercion -- something the Oxford Groupers called "guidance for others." A "team" composed of non-alcoholic Groupers would sit down with an alcoholic and after a "quiet time" would come up with precise instructions as to how the alcoholic should run his own life. As grateful as we were to our O.G. friends, this was sometimes tough to take. It obviously had something to do with the wholesale skidding that went on.

But this wasn't the entire reason for failure. After months I saw the trouble was mainly in me. I had become very aggressive, very cocksure. I talked a lot about my sudden spiritual experience, as though it was something very special. I had been playing the double role of teacher and preacher. In my exhortations I'd forgotten all about the medical side of our malady, and that need for deflation at depth so emphasized by William James had been neglected. We weren't using that medical sledgehammer that Dr. Silkworth had so providentially given us.

Finally, one day, Dr. Silkworth took me back down to my right size. Said he, "Bill, why don't you quit talking so much about that bright light experience of yours, it sounds too crazy. Though I'm convinced that nothing but better morals will make alcoholics really well, I do think you have got the cart before the horse. The point is that alcoholics won't buy all this moral exhortation until they convince themselves that they must. If I were you I'd go after them on the medical basis first. While it has never done any good for me to tell them how fatal their malady is, it might be a very different story if you, a formerly hopeless alcoholic, gave them the bad news. Because of this identification you naturally have with alcoholics, you might be able to penetrate where I can't. Give them the medical business first, and give it to them hard. This might soften them up so they will accept the principles that will really get them well."

Then Came Akron

Shortly after this history-making conversation, I found myself in Akron, Ohio, on a business venture which promptly collapsed. Alone in the town, I was scared to death of getting drunk. I was no longer a teacher or a preacher, I was an alcoholic who knew that he needed another alcoholic as much as that one could possibly need me. Driven by that urge, I was soon face to face with Dr. Bob. It was at once evident that Dr. Bob knew more of the spiritual things than I did. He also had been in touch with the Oxford Groupers at Akron. But somehow he simply couldn't get sober. Following Dr. Silkworth's advice, I used the medical sledgehammer. I told him what alcoholism was and just how fatal it could be. Apparently this did some-

thing to Dr. Bob. On June 10, 1935, he sobered up, never to drink again. When, in 1939, Dr. Bob's story first appeared in the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, he put one paragraph of it in italics. Speaking of me, he said: "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 in regard to alcoholism from actual experience. In other words, he talked my language."

The Missing Link

Dr. Silkworth had indeed supplied us the missing link without which the chain of principles now forged into our Twelve Steps could never have been complete. Then and there, the spark that was to become *Alcoholics Anonymous* had been struck.

During the next three years after Dr. Bob's recovery our growing groups at Akron, New York and Cleveland evolved the so-called word-of-mouth program of our pioneering time. As we commenced to form a society separate from the Oxford Group, we began to state our principles something like this:

1. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol.
2. We got honest with ourselves.
3. We got honest with another person, in confidence.
4. We made amends for harms done others.
5. We worked with other alcoholics without demand for prestige or money.
6. We prayed to God to help us to do these things as best we could.

Though these principles were advocated according to the whim or liking of each of us, and though in Akron and Cleveland they still stuck by the O.G. absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, this was the gist of our message to incoming alcoholics up to 1939, when our present Twelve Steps were put to paper.

I well remember the evening on which the Twelve Steps was written. I was lying in bed quite dejected and suffering from one of my imaginary ulcer attacks. Four chapters of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, had been roughed out and read in meetings at Akron and New York. We quickly found that everybody wanted to be an author. The hassles as to what should go into our new book were terrific. For example, some wanted a purely psychological book which would draw in alcoholics without scaring them. We could tell them about the "God business" afterwards. A few, led by our wonderful southern friend, Fitz M., wanted a fairly religious book infused with some of the dogma we had picked up from the churches and missions which had tried to help us. The louder the arguments, the more I felt in the middle. It appeared that I wasn't going to be the author at all. I was only going to be an umpire who would decide the contents of the book. This didn't mean, though, that there wasn't terrific enthusiasm for the undertaking. Every one of us was wildly excited at the possibility of getting our message before all those countless alcoholics who still didn't know.

Having arrived at Chapter Five, it seemed high time to state what our program really was. I remember running over in my mind the word-of-mouth phrases then in current use. Jotting these down, they added up to the six named above. Then came the idea that our program ought to be more accurately and clearly stated. Distant readers would have to have precise set of principles. Knowing the alcoholic's ability to rationalize, something airtight would have to be written. We couldn't let the reader wiggle out anywhere. Besides, a more complete statement would help in the chapters to come where we would need to show exactly how the recovery program ought to be worked.

12 Steps in 30 Minutes

At length I began to write on a cheap yellow tablet. I split the word-of-mouth program up into smaller pieces, meanwhile enlarging its scope considerably. Uninspired as I felt, I was surprised that in a short

time, perhaps half an hour, I had set down certain principles which, on being counted, turned out to be twelve in number. And for some unaccountable reason, I had moved the idea of God into the Second Step, right up front. Besides, I had named God very liberally throughout the other steps. In one of the steps I had even suggested that the newcomer get down on his knees.

When this document was shown to our New York meeting the protests were many and loud. Our agnostic friends didn't go at all for the idea of kneeling. Others said we were talking altogether too much about God. And anyhow, why should there be twelve steps when we had done fine on six? Let's keep it simple, they said.

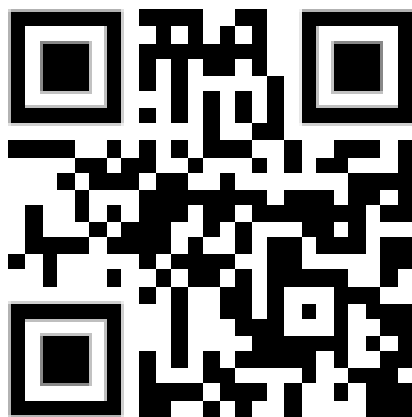
This sort of heated discussion went on for days and nights. But out of it all there came a ten-strike for Alcoholics Anonymous. Our agnostic contingent, speared by Hank P. and Jim B., finally convinced us that we must make it easier for people like themselves by using such terms as "a Higher Power" or "God as we understand Him!" Those expressions, as we so well know today, have proved lifesavers for many an alcoholic. They have enabled thousands of us to make a beginning where none could have been made had we left the steps just as I originally wrote them. Happily for us there were no other changes in the original draft and the number of steps stood at twelve. Little did we then guess that our Twelve Steps would soon be widely approved by clergymen of all denominations and even by our latter-day friends, the psychiatrists.

This little fragment of history ought to convince the most skeptical that nobody invented Alcoholics Anonymous.

It just grew...by the grace of God.

**Submitted by Tom B.
District 81 Archives Committee**

Scan QR code to access the District 81 website!



"LET'S TALK RECOVERY"

WITH KATHLEEN H. AND GUEST, SCOTT B.

1. *What is your Sobriety Date*

May 25, 2005

2. *What is your Home Group*

Live at 5. We meet every day at 5:00 at the Bay Area Club

3. *When I think of you, I think of "Yankee Boss" a tough boss you had to work for in the past. What tools of the program did you use to stay sober and cope?*

Meetings. Sponsor. Inventory. I needed to do 3 inventories over 1 ½ years to find my part. I had to realize that he was sick too. He was sometimes charming and sometimes vindictive. I had to come to understand that he was sick.

4. *You are married to a woman in recovery. How does recovery impact your marriage?*

Recovery enhances my marriage. As I work my program with my sponsor, I don't say "Have you been to a meeting?" I learned from other couples in recovery. Sometimes I do take her inventory, but it's always done in love. If it's done out of ego, it will blow up. My motives are everything.

5. *You've been sober over 19 years, but I still see you at a lot of meetings. How does making meetings help you at this stage of recovery?*

Meetings is where the magic happens. It's where I meet the newcomer and carry the message.

6. *You sponsor a lot of men. What do you enjoy most about sponsorship and what is the most challenging part of sponsorship?*

I enjoy passing on what was freely given to me. The most challenging part of sponsorship is my selfishness and staying in my own lane. I can only share my experience strength and hope, not my opinion. My advice must stay with the framework of the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am not the arbiter of another

person's conduct.

7. *What do you do every day to stay sober?*

I connect with God first thing. I actively participate in my recovery throughout the day through prayer, meditation, fellowship, and inventory.

8. *What is your advice for the newcomer struggling to stay sober?*

Keep trying. Connect with a group.

9. *What is your favorite sentence from our AA literature and how did it change your life?*

God either is or He isn't. What is my choice to be? AA p.53

If my answer is 'yes,' that God is everything then I must line up behind that. I have to check that my actions line up with God.

10. *You've shared that you had to do several 4th step inventories. Why didn't a 10th step inventory cover it?*

I discovered that my 10th step inventories were superficial and didn't get to the root causes and the conditions piled up. I had a nagging feeling in my gut. I had to dig deeper.

11. *You mentioned that you have served as a Rodeo chairman for the Houston Rodeo and that presented challenges. What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?*

As chair, over 800 people reported to me. There was a lot of drinking at committee meetings and I was afraid someone would confront me about my not drinking. No one ever did.

12. *Final thoughts?*

I love A.A.





THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF THE GRAPEVINE

There are options for print and digital subscriptions, ranging from 1 month to 3 years. Get one for yourself, buy one as a gift for your sponsee or sponsor, or both! It's a wonderful way to share experience, strength, and hope.

Scan the QR code below using your phone's camera feature and be taken directly to:

<https://www.aagrapevine.org/store/us-subscriptions>



OCTOBER F&B REPORT

D81 Budget Summary	
Opening Checkbook Balance	\$ 12,193.99
Group Contributions	\$ 828.09
Other Contributions	
Less Expenses	\$ 464.39
Net Income	\$ 363.70
Ending Checkbook Balance	\$ 12,587.54
Prudent Reserve Emergency Funds	\$ (2,000.00)
Unused Budget (Restricted Deficit)	\$ (9,085.47)
Available Funds	\$ 1,502.08