



THE STAND



JANUARY 2012

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHWEST TEXAS AREA 68 DISTRICT 12 OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

ISSUE THIRTEEN

Our Common Dilemma

We of Alcoholics Anonymous are blessed to be united in our common solution. "We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action" (BB pg. 17). This is, and should be, our focus in meetings; Carrying a clear message to the new comer on how to have a spiritual experience through the twelve steps, thus connecting him to a power that can keep him sober and which will solve his problems. This is pulling him in with a vision of hope.

Our common solution, however, could not have come about if we real alcoholics did not all have a common dilemma. This is what I was not told about in my early days of AA. For years I just attended meetings, in and out, in and out, picking up enough desire chips to shingle a small warehouse, and never heard the solution, but just as important, was never told what my problem was. I might have heard both, and I suppose I could have read the book, but no one, until I came to Kerrville, Texas, sat me down and talked to me about powerlessness.

"Lack of power, that was our dilemma" (BB pg. 45). That's why I could not stop drinking, I had no power. Alcohol was my solution, but it had stopped working, and with my mental obsession and physical allergy, I was unable to stop even though I wanted to. I have heard many times things like, "well, he just didn't want to stop bad enough". I did want to stop bad enough, but didn't know I had a disease that wouldn't let me. This powerlessness business is vitally important when working with a new comer, one on one, qualifying him as the real deal. I hate to say it, but the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous are filled with folks who are not alcoholics. I have watched countless folks, good people mind you, well intentioned but unable to convey a true message for the fact that they could get sober despite not doing the work, talk about "sticking with the winners", and going to a meeting every day. I tried that, thinking that I was now in a club that just didn't drink. But I couldn't just not drink and go to meetings; I had to have a solution with depth and weight, because

my disease has depth and weight, enough so that it was killing me.

As a recovered alcoholic, through working the steps and getting in touch with a power greater than myself, not a doorknob, I am no longer powerless. It is not a power that comes from me, but something I got connected to through the work. I truly believe that God will do for you what you cannot do for yourself. I can work the steps, but I cannot keep myself sober, that is God's work.

So please, when working with a new comer, give him the tools to qualify himself. Tell him of our common dilemma, that we are powerless over alcohol, and that our lives had become unmanageable. If he does not identify with the powerlessness, and he can stop on his own, that is wonderful. But if not, show him the common solution we have for our common dilemma.

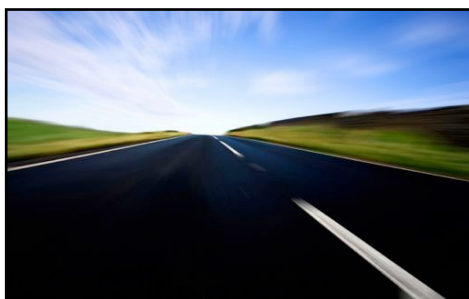
by 
Critic F.

Grapevine Article - May 2009 (cond.)

A Simple Direction

"How it Works" heard for the first time, is a life line.

Before I was assigned to a detox ward at a local hospital, the emergency room doctor told me that I had just made it there in time to stay alive... Upon my release from the hospital, the staff had advised me to get to an AA meeting as soon as possible and learn how to stay sober. I took this direction very seriously and went that same day. I recall sitting in a corner seat, feeling loneliness to the depth of my soul unlike any that I had ever known. I was



still "befogged," as the Big Book says – confused, disoriented, and worst of all wanting the relief that had always been there with a few drinks. I did not want to be there but I was terrified to leave... While looking through red and bleary eyes at those around me – who appeared to be so happy with sobriety – I was filled with doubt that I could or would be capable of acquiring what they had... I couldn't concentrate on what was being shared. However, I strived to hear at least something of experience, strength and hope that I so desperately needed. I knew that my solution to life's problems – my lover, my only friend – would have to be left behind forever. How depressing and sad it was to realize that I, who thought I could control alcohol, had now come to the "jumping off place." How precious the words I remember more than anything else from that meeting: "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path." Ah, that was what I needed; a simple path, a route, a direction to take and stay focused on! My recovery came with acceptance of those encouraging words, a single thread that developed into a lifetime...

Robert H.
Nashville, Tennessee

Concept of the Month

Concept I

Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

Does our group have a general service representative (G.S.R.)? Do we feel that our home group is part of A.A. as a whole and do our group's decisions and actions reflect that?

Do we hold regular group conscience meetings encouraging everyone to participate? Do we pass that conscience on to the district, area, or the local intergroup meetings?

Is the "collective conscience" of Alcoholics Anonymous at work in my home group? In my area?

Where do we fit in the upside-down triangle of A.A.?

Are we willing to do what it takes to insure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions?

IT'S AN INSIDE JOB...

by Shelly M.

Hello Everyone in Stand Land!

My name is Shelley M, and I will be stepping into the position of CFC chair along with David M, on January 1, 2012. As you may have read in previous editions of this column, (By our fearless leader, Clay E) we have a lot happening in our correctional community.

Our first priority will always be to carry the message to the alcoholic still suffering.

Our second priority in the immediate future is to lend our full support to Josie, Clay, and all the other fabulous volunteers that are working diligently to produce the **CFC Conference on February 17-19, 2012.**

In the coming months we will also be addressing:

- Our standing with Kerr County.
- Standardization of applications and background checks.
- Meeting collectively with all the volunteers in our district to collect information and feedback.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for our sobriety, which is possible in part through service.

Please contact us anytime! (before 9pm by phone)

Shelley: (830) 377-2699
hamish2006@yahoo.com

David: (830) 370-2895
dmckinnons@gmail.com

All our best in recovery,

David and Shelley

Please join us:
CFC Planning Committee meeting
720 Club
January 7, 2012 @ 2pm
Clay E. (830) 496-0003

— **DCM CORNER** —
"The Main Thing Is God". That thought is continually on my mind, sometimes. A.A.: group, district, area, GSO, is the product of recovery and unity in service guided in a singular orientation.

District XII exists in the midst of the group: the representation of A.A. -- and Area 68...it is life of groups in service. The inheritance of this functioning District has come to continuing life in those called to serve--GSRs, District Officers, Committee Heads under "The Main Thing". It is that "simple" only when we forget this does the process of progress lose its focus.

Jerry B. 8 years recovery, outgoing GSR-Brown Bag; incoming DCM.

"I just want to be able to dress up and go out with my friends."

"I'm tired of working the program."

"I'd gotten back

everything I'd lost -- AA

wasn't a priority for me anymore."

"Nobody wanted to be around me. I didn't want to be around myself."

"I didn't have any other options."

"I had lost all hope of ever being happy again."

These are some statements from people in our fellowship. Some experiencing AA for the first time; some returning after a relapse; and some who have yet to make it back. One thing they all have in common is that their statements reflect the awesome truth of the first step of our program: that left to our own devices and willpower, we are without defense against that first drink.

This time of year is known for relapse. Whether justified or not, people use the holiday season -- with its stressors of family, loneliness, and parties -- as an excuse to go back out again. The delusion that must be smashed - to be able to drink like a normal person -- often reasserts itself strongly during this period. Justifications, experimentation, and lack of willingness to stay committed to the program of AA often result in disastrous consequences. We quickly learn that we can never again recapture the early days of our drinking careers. But sometimes this truth is learned too late, as the broken hearts of friends and family reeling from death by overdose of their alcoholic loved one can attest to.

My ability to deny the reality of my disease, of what works and what doesn't, and to lie to myself is without parallel. We alcoholics, despite numerous repeated attempts and evidence to the contrary, often continue to entertain the fantasy that one miraculous day we will once again become normal drinkers.

What is the root cause of this fantasy? The strange mental blank spot to which the Big Book refers? Is it faulty brain chemistry reasserting itself? Lack of effort in carrying the

message to others? Or is it as simple and poisonous as developing a sense of entitlement?

In my last article on the first step I focused on the promise

of Step One. But it is impossible to receive this promise without an acknowledgement of the fact that I am bodily and mentally different from my fellows. I only get power and manageability from God when I surrender my own feeble attempts to obtain these things for myself. In other words, the success of my recovery is rooted in acknowledgement of the truth of my condition. The spirit of Step One also contains a kernel of gratitude: it was such a RELIEF to learn that I was alcoholic: to have a name to place for the essential displacement and disconnectedness from which I had been suffering long before I ever took my first drink. Gratitude was also experienced when you took me in, showed me how you got better, and told me I could do the same. And gratitude abounds every time I work with a newcomer and get to see God working in their lives and transforming them from the inside-out. Entitlement nullifies gratitude because it tells me that somewhere along the way I have once again become self-sufficient. I start to believe that I can do without God. I start to believe that I can do without the experience, strength, and hope that you share. I start to believe in the power of ME.

The sad fact is that nothing has changed out there. As oldtimers tell us, they will gladly refund our misery. I have yet to meet one single person returning from a relapse who talks about how great it was. And yet, our inclination is to not learn from the experience of others but to consider ourselves unique. Uniqueness will kill me if I'm not careful.

Step One moves me away from myself and towards the solution. I must constantly allow God to continue the reduction of my ego and self-reliance. There is no point where I can safely reassume the reins of my life. The history of my drinking and its consequences proves this.

by Alex P.



Solution Seekers

Solution Seekers was formed earlier this year after the Young Pioneers group was dissolved by a handful of men wanting an AA tradition-based meeting within a more informal format. So they created the fellowship they craved.

Solution Seekers is an intimate men's group. A great part of our camaraderie stems from the fact that those in attendance can share more than once and that we are not there to judge one another. We believe in open discussion among peers and our topics and solution come straight from the pages of the Big Book. God is our Beloved Director and each week we share stories about how God as we understand Him is working in our lives today.

Our membership is steadily growing and we actively encourage newcomers to come check us out. We have committed home group members and numerous opportunities for group service. We have recently added a monthly speaker meeting on the last Wednesday of each month which is followed by our group conscience.

One group member had this to share about what Solution Seekers has meant to him. "This group has been so instrumental in my spiritual growth as well as the fellowship and service side of the triangle. It's unique in that it is more informal, and with it being a small group of guys there are far less distractions than the bigger meetings. It's amazing how much solution I hear weekly in this meeting. Topics are right out of the big book and our discussion stays focused on our own experiences with the solution and our connection God. I have found God to be my only solution, and I know the only good I transmit is when I get out of the way and bring Him into the present. Solution seekers has been a huge part of me finding God and seeing him work in others." Solution Seekers Men's Group meets Wednesday nights at 9:30pm at the 720 Club.

Committee of the Month -- Archives

Like any other A.A. service, the primary purpose of those involved in archival work is to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Archives service work is more than mere custodial activity; it is the means by which we collect, preserve and share the rich and meaningful heritage of our fellowship. It is by the collection and sharing of these important historical elements that our collective gratitude for Alcoholics Anonymous is deepened.

A.A. members have a responsibility to gather and take good care of the fellowship's historical documents and memorabilia. Correspondence, records, photographs, newspaper and magazine articles from the past need to be collected, preserved and made available for the guidance and research of A.A. members and others (researchers, historians, and scholars from various disciplines)-for now and for generations to come.

Suggested duties of District Archivist

- A. To collect, organize, coordinate, suggest, communicate, preserve and exhibit archival material in their home district.
- B. To attend their district's G.S.R. meetings so they may express their district's will to the Archives Quarterly.
- C. To attend the Oregon Area Archives Quarterly committee meetings.
- D. To forward to the Area Archivist the original (preferably) or, a copy of all archival material pertinent to the Oregon Area, collected by their district.
- E. To assist the Archivist on any visit to their district.
- F. To fulfill the same duties as the Area Archivist in they're own district, especially, in trying to interest others in the Archives and, in "carrying the message."

The District 12 Archives Committee is in need of volunteers! If you want to help out, see Jim A. from the Brown Bag Group and see where you can be of service.

BEFORE THE BIG BOOK

by Paul W.

Bill Wilson sobered up in the fall of 1934 and Dr. Bob achieved permanent sobriety in the summer of 1935. However, the first edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous was not published until 1939. This fact gives rise an interesting question. What did the early pioneers of AA use in lieu of the Big Book?

According to Dr. Bob, "When we started in on Bill D., we had no Twelve Steps and no Traditions. But we were convinced that the answer to our problems was in the Good Book. The parts we found absolutely essential were the fifth through seventh chapters of the Book of Matthew, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and the Book of James."

Accordingly, the pioneers also relied heavily on literature that examined those three groups of scripture.

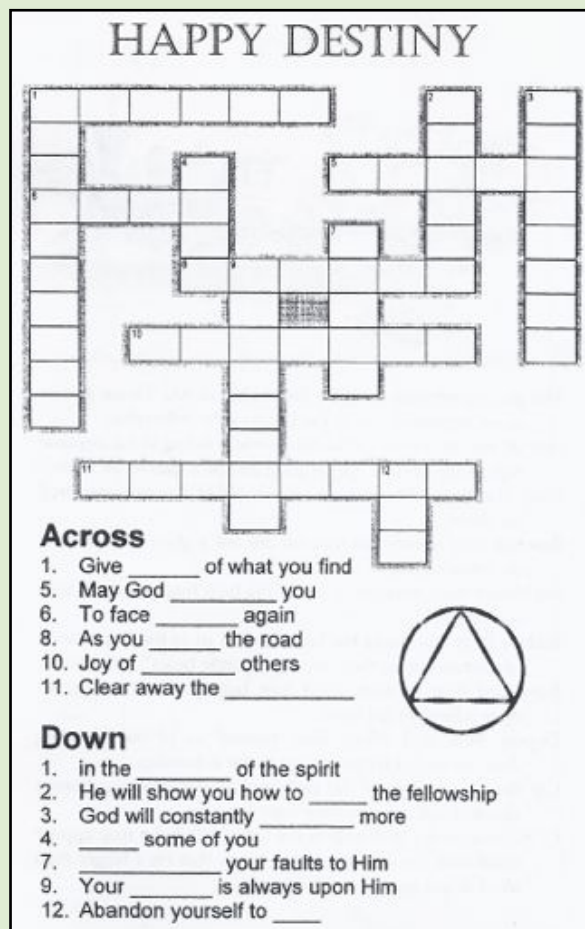
In New York, Bill worked with a recovering alcoholic whose mother was secretary to Emmet Fox, a popular lecturer on New Thought philosophy. When the early New York group adjourned its weekly, members would frequently adjourn after a meeting and go to Steinway Hall to listen to Fox's lecture. His book Sermon on the Mount, which discusses, analyzes and interprets chapters 5-7 of the Book of Matthew, was a staple at meetings in both Akron and on the East Coast. To this

day there are AA groups around the country that distribute Fox's pamphlets along with Conference-approved AA literature.

Another popular volume with the early members was Henry Drummond's *The Greatest Thing in the World*, a short and simple treatment of I Corinthians 13, which lays out the importance of love (paramount), the source of love (God, who is love), and the characteristics of a loving person (patience, kindness, etc.).

For morning meditation, or "quiet time" as it was known back then, the members used *The Upper Room*, a pamphlet of daily devotional published by the United Methodist Church. Also popular were *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers, *The Runner's Bible* by Nora Holm, *The Meaning of Prayer* by Harry Emerson Fosdick, *Victorious Living* by E. Stanley Jones, *Practicing the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence and *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A. Kempis.

Many modern members of the fellowship still use all or some of these sources. And even those who don't still feel their influence. Almost all of the spiritual principles which Bill later incorporated into the Twelve Steps and the Big Book came from their pages.



<http://stores.ebay.com/Cheryl's-Bookmarks>

Announcements

December's
Birthday Celebrants
Ingram Sol.

Craig W. 3 yrs.
Boston John 6 yrs.
Tom N. 2 yrs.
Jeff C. 3 yrs.
Sid 3 yrs.

Have a sobriety birthday coming up.
We would like to help you celebrate.

Send Birthdays to
newsletter@aa12.org

**SWTA 68 Annual
CFC Conference**
February 17-19, 2012

Friday, February 17 5:00 pm—Registration Desk Opens 6:00 pm—Hospitality Room - Snacks 7:00 pm—Welcome & Introduction 7:15 pm—Open Mic / Round Robin Speaker Meeting - Raffle - AA Meeting	Saturday, February 18 7:00 am—Registration Desk Opens 7:00 am—Hospitality Room - Snacks 8:00 am—Opening Ceremony Speakers - Panel - Raffles - Meetings - Workshop - Entertainment
Sunday, February 19 7:00 am—Coffee & Rolls in Hospitality 8:00 am—Opening Ceremony Speaker Meeting - Ask-It-Basket - Business Meeting	Pre-Register and Save This Years Rates Are: Pre-Registration \$10.00 Registration At The Door \$12.00 PRE-REGISTRATION MUST BE POST MARKED BEFORE FEB. 1, 2012
RESERVATIONS  1001 Junction Hwy Kerrville, Texas 76028 www.innofthehills.com Rooms \$75.00 per day For Reservations Call (800) 555-5555 or (800) 292-5890 ASK FOR CFC CONFERENCE RATES Reservations Must Be Made BEFORE February 1, 2012 to receive Conference Rates	Speakers - Workshop Chris R. - Ingram Martha W. - Kerrville Clay E. - Kerrville Larry M. - Austin Traditions Workshop Charlotte S. - San Antonio
If you have Questions, contact: District 12 CFC Chairman - Clay E. (800) 496-0003 Area 68 CFC Chairman - David T. (800) 360-9589	

Please visit **www.aa12.org** for more
information and downloadable flyer and sign
up form.



*ask
annie!!*

Please submit questions to
newsletter@aa12.org

District 12 Trusted Servants

DCM Jerry B.

Alternate DCM Linda H.

Secretary Leslie C.

Alt. Secretary William A.

Treasurer Edie T.

Archives Jim A.

Correctional Facilities Shelly M.

Grapevine Shirley B.

Help Line Perry C.

Newsletter Mike S.

Public Information Tamby E.

Cooperation with Professional Community Sandy T.

Spanish Meeting Coordinator Jose B.

Treatment Facilities Andrew B.

For email and contact information please visit
www.aa12.org

AA Service Opportunities

HELP WANTED!!

**Awesome service
opportunity! Reach
out to fellow AA's in
treatment facilities.**

**"GIVE BACK WHAT
YOU HAVE BEEN
GIVEN!"**

**H&I sign-ups will be
held at the 2211,
Kerrville, TX**

**Sunday, Jan. 15th at
3pm
DON'T MISS IT!**

THE GRAPEVINE

**Get your
subscription
TODAY!!**

**For more
information**

contact

Shirley B.

Please submit all
AA Service
Opportunities to:
newsletter@aa12.org

*District 12 Public Information
Committee*

Education and Planning Meeting

Educational topic for October will be:

"Traditions Checklist"

Wednesday, Jan 18th @ 6pm
at

AA Meeting Room

at St. Peter's Episcopal Church,
Corner of Main St. and Tivy St. next
door to the Cottage Shop in Kerrville

SPANISH SPEAKING MEETING EVERY SATURDAY

@ 2PM

2211 located at 2210 Bandera Hwy,
Kerrville, TX 78028

UPCOMING AA EVENTS

AREA 68

WHERE

WHEN

Austin Roundup

Austin

Feb. 3-5

2012 SWTA 68 CFC Conference

Kerrville - Inn of the Hills

Feb. 17-20

DISTRICT 12

WHERE

WHEN

2012 SWTA 68 CFC Conference
Planning Committee Meeting

Kerrville - Inn of the
Hills - Upstairs in Lobby

Jan. 7
2 pm

District 12 Monthly Meeting

Ingram - Outpost

Jan. 8
2 pm

H & I Signup

Kerrville - 2211

Jan. 15
3 pm

Ham on Wry

You Might Be An Alcoholic If:

...you loose your car at least once a week.

...you celebrate getting out of jail by getting drunk.

...you don't have any friends, just drinking buddies.

...your job is interfering with your drinking.

...it's normal to drive with one eye shut so not to see double.

...you measure distance by how many beers it takes to get there.

District 12 Newsletter Focus

To inform the AA community of information pertaining to
District 12, Area 68, and GSO and to enlarge group
participation.