



THE STAND



APRIL 2012

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

ISSUE SIXTEEN

Turn It Over

Turn it over: This phrase has turned into a bit of a sound bite for any sort of problem an alcoholic in the rooms of AA might be having. Having a bad day? Turn it over to God. Having a problem with a relationship? Turn it over to God. Frustrated in a long checkout line at HEB? Turn it over to God. But what in God's name does that even mean!? I heard this so much in my first experience with AA that it lost all meaning, and I really didn't even know the meaning of it in the first place. I was turning things over, I thought, but was still miserable, still drinking. Perhaps it was because I hadn't really worked the steps, and thusly, Step Three:

Made a decision to turn or will and our life over to the care of God as we understood him, had been taken out of context.

When I was shown how this deal works, and actually did the work, I realized I had read over a key word in Step Three: decision. It was explained to me that I cannot turn my will and my life over to the care of God without the help of God, and that Step Three was a decision that needed to be followed by the action of Steps 4 through 12. Essentially, I was deciding to do the rest of the work, and this is when God helped me to turn my life over to Him. Willingness, action, willingness,

action. This is how the program is set up.

Saying things to a new comer like "turn it over" does about as much good as telling them to "put the plug in the jug." Without explaining first how Step Three fits into all twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, the newcomer will be lost as to how his or her life can be turned over to the care of God. Hit home to the new comer that Step Three is a decision that needs to be followed by rigorous action. There is a reason why the steps are in the order they are in.

by 
Critter F.

Excerpts from Dr. Bob's Talk

A.A.'s First International Convention, Cleveland, Ohio July 1950

I get a big thrill out of looking over a vast sea of faces like this with a feeling that possibly some small thing I did a number of years ago played an infinitely small part in making this meeting possible. I also get quite a thrill when I think that we all had the same problem. We all did the same things. We all got the same results in proportion to our zeal and enthusiasm and stick-to-itiveness. If you will pardon the injection of a personal note at this time, let me say I have been in bed five of the last seven months, and my strength hasn't returned as I would like, so my remarks of necessity will be very brief.

There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual A.A. work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words of "love" and "service." We understand what love is and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind.

Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

And one more thing: None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't take time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us. Thank you very much.

Taken from Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers pg. 337-338

Concept of the Month

Concept IV

At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

Do we understand the spiritual principles underlying the "Right of Participation"?

What does "in reasonable proportion" mean? Do we understand when it is appropriate for A.A. paid staff to have a vote at the General Service Conference or in our local service structure?

Do we expect that, because we are A.A. members, we should be allowed to vote at any group, even if we are not active members of that group?

OFF THE BEAM



N A C T G S E B W E U L E E L
R N B E O E F C C L X Z R N C
T G O V H L W Y I A K E R G W
U E N A B F T O B D S Y R N D
Y R N L O I Q L R E U E V R W
S X J X N S H K N R E J S N L
U G Z A V H S T W D Y J E J E
O J V H A N M S I C I T I R C
L R A E F E S X N G R F A N P
A S R C N S B A G H A T R E D
E E Q T C S Z M Q N Q Y L A T
J F Z O U F P B Q T Z C F I S
V M I R K Q K Y J Q C X L U V
M P T X V H S Y B Z Z O I W K
G H X R O O D F H M E W K K Y

ANGER
ENVY
GREED
JEALOUSY
RESENTMENT
VANITY

CRITICISM
FEAR
HATRED
PREJUDICE
SELFISHNESS
WORRY

<http://stores.ebay.com/Cheryls-Bookmarks>

DCM CORNER

District 12 is 31 Groups with 110 meetings a week. A.A. is the Group: The Group is A.A. We are INDIVIDUALLY conscious of our responsibility and participation in our sobriety and carrying the A.A. message (so explicitly expressed in the last issue of THE STAND) : YOU'RE SCREWED AND THERE IS A SOLUTION {with a personal addendum: "You CAN--Stop Having First Step Experiences"}

We are in a group willingly --- because we want to be: Life-giving communication -- hope, love, acceptance, living experiences of the collective miracle we carry, yet GSR registration and a group's life is not up-to-date in the District- --Ask your GSR if they have received their GSR Packet from New York---if not, I have GROUP INFORMATION FORMS to be submitted to the AREA REGISTRAR (Immediate access to the GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE data-base) to complete the current registration of your group. I can supply individual group GSO designated Group identification numbers.

Half of our District is not current. Bill said, 'The group must have a life or the individual may not'. 'An individual, a group, is part of a great whole--- A Power greater than ourselves.

Jerry B.
servant

The Lowest Bottom

To admit to being an alcoholic has taken an exceeding amount of trial and error. I started drinking like an alcoholic when I was 14 years old. I am now 54 and have been sober for only 25 days. I've quit drinking a myriad of times, but would relapse all over again. When will I quit for good? I don't really know--- maybe not until I'm dead. But I have more hope this time. Here is the story of my last bottom.

I once stayed sober for 9 months because I was locked up: first in county jail and then in a men's corrections facility. There, I was able to go to a treatment program. When I was released, I had in the back of my mind that my legal and drinking problems were the result of bad luck, not alcoholism.

Having saved up a lot of money from a pension, I rented a cheap motel room where I began drinking. That bender lasted over three months. A great deal of bad things happened to me during that period. This is what my life looked like then: I lost my appetite right away. I isolated most of the time, preferring to drink alone. I started forgetting a lot, I'd rather drink and forget than stay sober and think about myself. I obsessed over

television shows which was easier than doing something more meaningful with my life.

... After waking up, I would get earthshaking shakes along with tremendous anxiety, and thoughts about dying. I would often throw up, but then start drinking again right away....
... When I was drinking, I really didn't care much about important things. Then during very brief periods of being sober---or almost sober---I would feel overwhelming remorse and worthlessness, then drink more to kill the pain.

At any rate, sometime during this last drunk, I became "sick and tired of being sick and tired." I'd hit bottom like I'd never hit it before. And I kept remembering how good I'd felt the 9 months I was pressured by the court to stay sober, I desperately wanted that feeling back. Subsequently, I tried several times to stop drinking, only to fail because I would get those intense shakes again---it was drink or die I thought. Then I got so afraid of dying I checked myself into detox. My desire to stop drinking then began to grow and grow. After detox I began going to A.A. every day, connecting with God, my sponsor, my fellow

recovering alcoholics. I was staying sober and sane. What a difference!

Now, still having a great deal of desire to stop drinking, my mind is opening up to all kinds of helpful ways to stay sober. I listen at AA meetings like never before, applying a lot of the suggestions I hear. I study the "Big Book" and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions every morning, after which I pray and meditate. This gets my day off to a good start. I take the advice of my doctors and counselors very seriously. I stay busy through out the day with various sobering routines: socializing with other sober people, spending afternoons at the library, working on writing projects, and so on. It seems the good stuff in my life could go on forever, and I humbly believe my Higher Power, whom I call God, is behind it all.

May whatever experience, strength and hope I have be passed on to others. I am now 30 days into sobriety.

John L.

**Grapevine Article
March 2012**

Bilingual Chair

Committee of the Month

Ever wonder what it would be like if you were in a country where you didn't speak the language or didn't speak it very well? How could anyone there carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous with such a language barrier? Well that's exactly what the Bilingual Special Needs Committee Chairperson does for Area 68 District 12 of Alcoholics Anonymous! Here in Kerr and surrounding counties, we have a small community of AA's that need a meeting in Spanish and it's the Bilingual Chair that organizes and keeps information on times and locations of Spanish speaking meetings. There's a weekly Spanish meeting that meets at the 2211 Club on Saturdays, 2pm.

Besides coordinating the weekly Spanish speaking meeting, the Bilingual Chair also maintains Spanish literature, translates Spanish to English as required by the District and it's Officers and handles incoming calls to the AA Helpline when a Spanish speaking AA is needed.

If can speak Spanish and are interested in helping carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous, join us every Saturday at 2pm at the 2211 Club: 2210 Bandera Hwy (TX 173 at Loop 534), in Kerrville 78028. See you there!

GETTING THROUGH STEP FOUR

by Alex P.

The fourth step has a bad reputation. Often, upon entering the rooms, most of us glance at the Twelve Steps on the wall, and immediately start to determine which steps or concepts we believe are doable and those which we will never be willing to complete. It usually looks something like this:

"I can admit that I'm powerless, not so sure I like that word 'God'." "I'm not telling anybody about the things I've done." And, "I'm certainly not going to apologize to all those people I've screwed over."

I think there are a couple of reasons why Step Four is often the "lagging step" for many in the program. The process of writing out self-inventory can last for months! Why is this?

For one, Step Four is often (but not always – depending on one's sponsor) the first time we have to do any actual WORK in the program. One, Two, and Three are admissions, beliefs, and decisions - but they generally don't entail putting pen to paper. In Step Four, you are actually requiring me to DO something. "It's too much like homework" is a usual complaint. "I'm too busy," is another.

While there may be some truth to these protestations, perhaps one reason we take issue with Step Four is because we know that whatever we write down will have to be spoken aloud and shared with another individual in the Fifth Step. Almost instantaneously, self-

recrimination and self-editing come to the foreground. I have spent years and copious amounts of energy hiding these things from myself: "...he is revolted at certain episodes he vaguely remembers. These memories are a nightmare. He trembles to think someone might have observed him." (page 73)

The other struggle with the Fourth Step is what it requires of me: "...a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." The Big Book calls it "a fact-finding and fact-facing process." My ability to be searching and fearless in any endeavor is questionable at best. I am a being full of dishonesty. I am "driven by a hundred forms of fear." What you are asking of me is too much! It is beyond my power to accomplish! I cannot see the truth about myself much less face these truths. Isn't this precisely the spiritual aspect of what makes me an alcoholic?

Fortunately, the steps are written in order for a reason. The truth is that I can't do Step Four on my own. But the greater truth is that I don't have to: I have just said a prayer that commits my will and life to God. I have asked for His Power to help me do those things I can't do for myself. It is God's Power that carries me through the remaining steps. It is God who gives me the courage to discover and digest some big chunks of truth about myself.

But why do a fourth step in the first place? Have I not been beat down enough by that rapacious creditor

alcohol? Don't I have enough guilt and shame over my past and the things I have said and done? What is the point of bringing all that stuff up? Why not let bygones be bygones?

To see the fourth step as drudgery or a punishment of some sort is a dangerous misconception. Its role is not to punish or humiliate, but to FREE me. Now starting to think somewhat clearly that the alcohol is out of my system, I grow into ever-clearer thinking by facing reality and learning to accept life on life's terms. I am becoming free from self, free from fear, free from delusion – free from all those things which separated me from an experience of and a relationship with a loving God. Like a mountain pass covered with boulders and ice from an avalanche is my relationship with God. Step Four is the vital means by which I clear away the debris of self that keeps me from my Creator. The path to His Power must become clear and the Twelve Steps are the means by which that happens.

In this light, it makes little sense to sit on this step. Why deprive myself of the very Power that can help me and others? There is no requirement that this step be done perfectly – just to the best of my ability. God recognizes our efforts and meets us where we are. At no point in this program can I afford to stop growing, to stop learning, to stop taking action. The experience of countless others shows that a little honest effort goes a long way to true freedom, happiness, and usefulness.

AA's Three Legacies

The founders of Alcoholics Anonymous gave us three great legacies: Recovery, Unity and Service. A sponsor who firmly believed in these legacies embedded the concept of circle and triangle in me in my early recovery.

Our first legacy, Recovery as embodied in the Twelve Steps, gives us the principles that have given us a path to have the necessary vital spiritual awakenings. It is from this process that we can experience happiness and freedom and to live useful and productive lives. The spirit of the Twelve Steps and these principles of retaining grace had to be the fundamentals of our unity.

Thus, our second legacy, Unity as embodied in the Twelve Traditions, has provided us with a fellowship where we have

singleness of purpose "– it's our common solution that holds us together". The fellowship of AA and the AA meeting provide the basis for this unity. These traditions allow for independence of the AA group "4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."

Our third legacy, Service as embodied in the Twelve Concepts, offers us the opportunity to implement our primary purpose "to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers". The need for a lasting and binding structure of AA as a whole became obvious as the original founders sought a way to pass AA, as it was, on to us.

by Bill H.

Announcements

March's Birthday Celebrants

Ingram Sol.

Tember D. 3 yrs. Philip 1 yr.
Taylor 18 mth. Natalie L. 1 yr.
Mike V. 1 yr. Chris B. 1 yr.
Ashley 1 yr..

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

Send Birthdays to
newsletter@aa12.org

District 12 Meetings

The District Meeting
for April will be held
at a different location
and time:

**4/15/12 at the
Salvation Army on
Hayes St. at 2pm**

Please submit questions or comments 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 TBD

Correctional Facilities TBD

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, Apr. 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

Wanna Get Involved?

The Newsletter Committee is
currently seeking volunteers
for upcoming Newsletters.
Please contact Mike S. if you
would like to join the team.
newsletter@aa12.org

SPANISH SPEAKING MEETING EVERY SATURDAY

@ 2PM

2211 located at 2210 Bandera Hwy,
Kerrville, TX 78028

UPCOMING AA EVENTS

AREA 68

WHERE

WHEN

SWTA 68 Spring Conference

Round Rock

Mar. 30 - Apr 1

Texas State Convention

Irving

June 8-10

DISTRICT 12

WHERE

WHEN

District 12 Monthly Meeting

Kerrville - Salvation Army

Apr. 15
2 pm

H & I Signup

Kerrville - 2211

Apr. 15
3 pm

AA Humor

A guy walked into a bar, and ordered a beer. As he drank the beer, he heard a soothing voice say "nice shirt!" Looking around, he noticed that the bar was empty except for himself and the bartender at the back of the bar. A few sips later the voice said "great tie". At this, the man called the bartender over. "I must be losing my mind," he told the bartender. "I keep hearing these voices saying nice things to me, and there's not a person in here but us." "It's the peanuts," said the bartender. "You heard it right," said the barman. "It's the peanuts ... they're complimentary."

District 12 Newsletter Focus

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