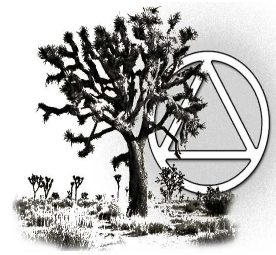


Victor Valley Intergroup, Central Office, Inc.
18888 Highway 18, Suite 107
Apple Valley, CA 92307
Telephone: 760-242-9292; Email: vvigco_aa@yahoo.com;
Web site: www.victorvalleyaa.org



I Am Responsible

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

Our Primary Purpose

ES&H or E&K?

When the Text Book for Alcoholics Anonymous was introduced to the public in April 1939, Bill W. stated the primary purpose of this book is as follows:

“We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. **To show other alcoholics PRECISELY HOW WE HAVE RECOVERED is the main purpose of this book.** For them, we hope these pages will prove so convincing that no further authentication will be necessary. We think this account of our experiences will help everyone to better understand the alcoholic. Many do not comprehend that the alcoholic is a very sick person. And besides, we are sure that our way of living has its advantages for all.”
A.A., pg xiii

He then laid out some general guidelines followed by Doctor Silkworth’s opinion regarding alcoholism. His opinion has since been found to be medically sound.

Interestingly enough, “The Doctor’s Opinion” is the only opinion to be found in the Basic Text. The Authors recognized that expression of “opinions,” not based on fact, could kill alcoholics. They therefore made clear what would be found in this Book regarding the Problem – alcoholism; the Solution – God as we understood Him and – the practical Program of Action which promises recovery. They declared they would share only their **EXPERIENCE** and **KNOWLEDGE**. That declaration is found on page 19 of what members of Alcoholics Anonymous call their Basic Text, “The Big Book.” It is:

“We have concluded to publish an anonymous volume setting forth the problem as **WE** see it. We shall bring to our task **OUR COMBINED EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE** which should suggest a useful program for anyone concerned with a drinking problem.”

(Continued on page 2)

Walking the Walk

Alcoholics Anonymous has been a part of my life for many years, although I could never fully quite grasp the program. It just never full took. Of course the main reason was because I was never really serious about “staying” sober. In the past I have relapsed countless times for never “thoroughly following the path.”

I had come to know that A.A. was a good place. I went to meetings for various reasons, but I was always just “visiting.” I kept A.A. separate from my personal life, and it was a good place to socially visit, get out of jail, or to “get well.” It miraculously always managed to save me.

These life saving miracles were always temporary. Getting “well” always gave me the chance to run amok again. As I got older, I slooowly realized I had transformed from a young man to a, well, and old man. Wrinkled, grayed, yellowed, and brittle boned; the whole nine yards. I was becoming physically and mentally weak. I knew without a doubt that if I did not change, I may wind up that hopeless alcoholic. The one that is all alone, desperately trying to find shelter in the freezing rain with messed pants, completely sick and insane, with only the desire to drink or die. The one that NEVER makes it back. I knew very well I had to do everything necessary to prevent that. I really had to change.

Fifteen months ago I came to the conclusion that A.A. was the best place for me to be if I was really serious about changing my life. I was truly at the turning point. I knew I had to stop “visiting” A.A. like a tourist and start “being” in A.A. like a contributing citizen. From being a member of A.A. to being a brother in A.A. Tremendous extra efforts and personal sacrifices were to be made. I had to plug into the fellowship outside of the meetings as well as in. I stopped socializing with dear friends. I deleted by [Facebook] page. I did not answer calls. (As a musician) I stopped playing and going to shows. I kept clear of potential affairs. I followed the suggestions of my home group and humbly took healthy

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Of course, “setting forth the problem as **WE** see it” would be based on the experience and knowledge of recovered alcoholics, not as seen by untreated alcoholics or non-alcoholics. Unfortunately, a great deal of how “they” see it has filtered into our meeting rooms. Since understanding the problem, alcoholism, as **WE** see it is absolutely essential to being willing to surrender to the Program of Recovery, we must rely on the “Doctor’s Opinion” for a clear statement of the Problem and the demonstration of that Problem as seen in the stories of recovered alcoholics.

Those who accepted the responsibility for the lives of newcomers restricted their “teaching” to the content of that Book. The result was most who were seriously seeking help found lasting sobriety.

In 1947, a member of the editorial staff of the “Grapevine” authored the presently used “Grapevine Preamble.” It reads, in part, “Alcoholics Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women who share their **EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE** with each other that they may solve their common problems and help others to recover from alcoholism.” Only those who had been blessed with a spiritual awakening as the result of the Steps were permitted to talk in the meetings. The newcomer listened to the **EXPERIENCE** of the recovered alcoholic (what they were like, what happened), the obvious **STRENGTH AND POWER** (and what they are like now) s/he had received as the result of having taken the Steps and the **HOPE** the recovered alcoholic had for his/her future, the future of our Fellowship and the future of the newcomer. The newcomer could then take a look at what was required to recover and see the results in those who had achieved that goal. They could then decide if they were, in fact, willing to go to any length to survive.

With the initiation of discussion/participation meetings in the late 1960’s, the content of the meetings began to focus more and more on the experience of untreated alcoholics and even non-alcoholics. More and more, the topics of meetings were the problems unique to the person stating their personal problem rather than the common problems of alcoholics. There was less and less sharing of the strength of recovery as well and any hope for the future. The decrease in the effectiveness of the meetings was offset for a number of years by the great influx of persons referred to Alcoholics Anonymous by members of the treatment industry and the professionals who attempted to guide those who had come to them for help. In the format of these meetings, there was no longer a focus on the **EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE** from the recovered alcoholic based on their **EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE** of the Program of recovery. The result of which has been and continues to be a shrinking number of alcoholics who have approached Alcoholics Anonymous in hope of escaping death or permanent insanity by drinking being denied the information that is vital to survival.

The real underlying source of this tragic situation is weak and ineffective sponsorship. All too often, members of the Fellowship who are not drinking but have never attempted the take the Steps will assume the responsibility for the life of the innocent newcomer. They have no understanding of the simple but highly effective set of instructions for leading a newcomer to the Solution for all their problems as outlined in the Chapter, “Working With Others.”

Step Twelve reads, “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcohol-

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advice and direction. I carefully obtained a legitimate sponsor and worked with him continually. I called and talked to other men in the group. (Whether they wanted me to or not. Ha-ha!)

I studied the Big Book with others. I wrote, wrote, wrote, and then I wrote some more. I listened to CDs and watched DVDs about the program and its history. I led meetings, I took commitments, and I contributed to the 7th Tradition when I was broke. I worked with others. I prayed a lot. I respected my group and truly appreciated my seat in it. Mostly, I did all the things I never did before that I ought to have.

So, what have I become after all of this? Certainly, I am not just a “visitor” of A.A. I am an active member and trusted servant. I am a recovering alcoholic that is responsible, as A.A. is responsible, to anyone, anywhere reaching out for help. I must always be there for the alcoholic who is still suffering as A.A. is always there. And just as I needed the hand of A.A. to be there for me, I am responsible for my hand being there for another – always.

This A.A. Sober, responsible, and always present. Yes, this takes much discipline and hard work. But, when you love doing something, it does not seem like work at all. I now thoroughly enjoy doing all of it, and there is a damn good reason why. I get out of this program much, much more than what I put into it. I have grown to love A.A. I love myself and my life today. I am truly happy, joyous and free.

Thank you A.A.

Carl O., Hesperia Umbrella Group, Hesperia, CA

Minutes of the Intergroup Meeting 21 June 14

The meeting was opened at 9:32 a.m. by Doug H., who led us in the Serenity Prayer. Chad F. read the Twelve Traditions. In attendance were Doug H., Chad F., Joey R., Betty B., Craig B., Helen M., Carl O., Bill P., Jim F., Dory, and Ted B. Ted B. read the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Chad F. gave the report. As of May 31, 2014, there was a balance of \$13,736.41 in savings, \$7,110.34 in the C.D., and \$6,478.34 in checking. Income for the month of May was \$2,191.92, with total expenses being \$2,099.09. [The] net May income before literature was \$92.83. May literature sales were \$1,181.51, with [no purchases]. The net may income was \$1,274.34. In May, 14 people contributed \$749.00 to P.Y.M.W.Y.M.I. The Treasurer's Report was accepted.

Ways and Means Report: Joey R. gave the report. The Founders' Day Picnic was a success!! Gross income from the picnic was \$741.99. The only expense was \$60.00 for renting the park. The net income to Central Office was \$681.99. Thanks go to Joey for a job well done. [And] special thanks to all those who donated equipment, tables, food, and other items for a successful picnic.

Webmaster's Report: Jim F. gave the report. In the past month there were 682 hits on the webpage. And 417 hits on the meeting directory. Since Jim has taken over the webpage there have been 74,400 hits on the meeting directory.

It was a special night when members of New York City's First Family, the de Blasio – Mayor Bill de Blasio, his wife Chirlane McCray, and their daughter Chiara pose with the cast of the Off Broadway play *Bill W. and Dr. Bob* after seeing the performance on Thursday, March 27, 2014.



Office Manager's Report: Craig B. reported that there were 77 visitors to the office in May. There were 149 information calls and no 12-Step calls. There were 101 call-forwarding calls and four 12-Step calls. The totals were 250 information calls and four 12-Step calls. There is a need for an [office volunteer] from 1—4 every Friday. Please call Craig . . . if you are interested. Please announce at your meetings. There is still a need for people on the 12-Step list. Please announce at your meetings. [Volunteers may not use any office shifts or call forwarding shifts as Community Service or to get court cards signed]. There is a continuing need for [alternates to fill office shifts and call-forwarding shifts for those volunteers vacationing] during the summer. If interested, call Craig . . . Clear [book covers] for the 75th Anniversary Edition of the Big Book are now available at Central Office. Thanks go to Bill P. for [filling in for Craig while he was on vacation]. The Office Manager's Report was accepted.

Old Business: Craig B. did not get around to working on the credit card convenience fees in May. The discussion was tabled until the July 2014 meeting.

New Business: Vanessa C. will be working on getting a public information booth for public events in the near future.

The next Intergroup Meeting will be July 19, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. at Central Office.

Chad F. motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted
Ted B., Secretary

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ics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

In Step Twelve is stated the **REAL PURPOSE** of the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous; “Our **REAL PURPOSE** is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” Within our **REAL PURPOSE** is our **PRIMARY PURPOSE**, “we tried to carry this message to alcoholics.” The question is, are we trying to carry this message in our meetings or are we feeding the misery?

Bill W. wrote,

“In the years ahead A.A. will, of course, make mistakes. Experience has taught us that we need have no fear of doing this, **providing that we always remain willing to admit our faults and to correct them promptly.** Our growth as individuals has depended upon this healthy process of trial and error. So will our growth as a fellowship.

“Let us always remember that any society of men and women that cannot freely correct its own faults must surely fall into decay in not into collapse. Such is the universal penalty for the failure to go on growing. Just as each A.A. must continue to take his moral inventory and act upon it, so must our whole Society if we are to survive and if we are to serve usefully and well.” (A.A. Comes of Age, pg 231)

We now know what the problem is and we know what the solution is. Unfortunately, **we have not remained willing to admit our faults and to correct them promptly.** We have been and are plagued with large doses of apathy and complacency. The problem we are trying to live with is needlessly killing alcoholics. The solution promises recovery for those who are will to follow the clear-cut directions in the Big Book. **So, let’s make certain the ES&H we share is limited to the E&K of OUR Program of Recovery as is outlined in our Basic Text, “ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS.”**

Do you want to be a part of the problem or a part of the solution? Simple, but not easy; A price has to be paid.

Many discussion meetings are a lot of talk but recovery is a very short walk; the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, that is!

Submitted by,

John (No Initial, no hometown available)
(I got this at a conference.)

If you would like to receive the newsletter via email, send your email address to: newsletterforthefellowship@yahoo.com

Central Office Activities

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>Y.T.D.</u>
Visitors	78	598
Info. Calls	151	1,643
12 Step Calls	2	6
<u>Call Forwarding</u>		
Info. Calls	68	620
12 Step Calls	4	15
<u>Totals</u>		
Info Calls	219	1,284
12 Step Calls	6	21

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

Kathy G.	32.00
Gary E.	30.00
Craig B.	25.00
Les P.	19.00
Sheldon S.	9.00



Upcoming Events

Intergroup meets the 3rd Saturday of each moth at Central Office at 9:30 a.m.

July 20, 2014

District Meeting, 11085 Central Rd., Apple Valley, CA at the Alano Club.

August 19, 2014

Women’s Banquet at the Ambassador Hotel in Victorville, CA. Watch for more information as it becomes available.

And Finally . . .

My grandfather was sipping a beer when he confessed to me he’d drunk more than usual the day before.

“What’s more than usual?” I asked.

“A case.”

“You can drink a case in a day?”

“Well,” he grumbled defensively, “it doesn’t take all day.”

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A police officer pulled over a guy for waving across two lanes of traffic. He walked up to the driver’s window and asked, “You drinking?”

The driver said, “You buying?”

Submitted by, Kathy F., Hesperia, CA