

# The DIALog

A PUBLICATION OF THE DALLAS Intergroup ASSOCIATION (est. 1947)



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## From the Director

Thanks to the continuing support of our groups and individuals, we are starting off 2016 on a positive note. To further our efforts to stabilize the Central Office financially, we are working on a new event for November. It may not be possible for this year but by next year we hope to have an event similar to an earlier dinner we once had at the Lone Star Gas Building. If anyone went to one of the dinners please contact the office. At the moment we are considering a "Bill W. Birthday Dinner."

Coming soon is our 10th Annual Chili Cook-off!! As it is our 10th, we will have some special events as well as the chili and cornbread cook-off. Bob C. is planning the event so you can rest assured it will be memorable. As soon as the date is set flyers will be sent to all groups and posted on our event calendar. Our speaker this year will be Chris C., from the Frisco Group. We would love to see the previous 9 winners try for another win against some different groups. If your group has never entered, the 10th Cook-off would be a good time to start!

Our new board members have their committee assignments and are ready to help our groups. All Committee Chairs can be easily contacted through the Central Office.

- *Speaker Bureau:* Greg L., Cornerstone Group
- *Nightwatch/Visitation:* Jimmy D., Chicago Group
- *Treatment Committee:* Dave R., Georgetown Group
- *Jails/Corrections Committee:* Florinda F., Rowlett Group
- *Special Needs Committee:* Mike D., Clean Air North
- *Outreach/Visitation:* Doug L., Cornerstone Group
- *PI/CPC Committee:* Micki G., Clean Air North
- *Special Events Committee:* Bob C., Georgetown
- *Newsletter Committee:* PJ HR, Allen Group

(We need volunteers to work in the office on both shifts. If any member has time and the willingness to commit for at least 6 months to work with us please contact janis@Aadallas.org or carrie@aadallas.org ) Thanks!

**Janis R., Executive Director**

## This Newsletter Edition

Greetings from the New DIALog Editor. I am excited to serve the Dallas Intergroup in this capacity.

I was fortunate to sober up on July 4, 1988 in West Texas with a bunch of strong A.A. old-timers...many of whom knew Bill W. and Dr. Bob. These old-timers taught me there were Three Legacy's in the A.A. Program: Recovery (12 Steps), Unity (12 Traditions), and Service (12 Concepts for World Service). They shared the history of A.A. as well as their experiences and spoke to me in a language I could understand. They said the A.A. Program was like a three legged stool. It needed all three legs to be functional and I needed to all Three Legacies to "grow in understanding and effectiveness" as stated on page 84 at the beginning of Step 10 in the Alcoholics Anonymous. Although I did not like most of these old-timers in the beginning (today I realized they cared more about my sobriety than they cared about my feelings!) I am grateful they taught all three sides of the A.A. program and held me accountable.

In 2016, each newsletter will focus on A.A.'s history and two of each our A.A.'s Three Legacy's. We will start the year with contributions from local A.A.'s on Steps 1 and 2, Traditions 1 and 2, and Concepts 1 and 2.

Our next edition will focus on Steps 3 and 4, Traditions 3 and 4, and Concepts 3 and 4. If you would like to share your experience, strength and hope on these topics, please feel free to send your article to Janis R. at the DIA.

Thank you for the opportunity to be of service.

*PJ HR*

## To Subscribe

Support your Dallas Intergroup Association, and get your DIALog hot off the presses! For individuals and groups, a yearly subscription is \$12; two years, \$18.

Please contact carrie@aadallas.org or call the Dallas Intergroup Association at (214) 887-6699.

# Spotlight on a DIA Board Member

It is an honor to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Dallas Intergroup and to be elected as Board Chair for 2016. As I have grown in sobriety, I have come to understand and appreciate the importance of the service that the Dallas Intergroup provides to Dallas A.A..

On May 9, 2004, I was granted the gift of sobriety. Early on in my recovery, my sponsor got me involved with service by taking meetings to treatment centers and serving as a trusted servant at my home group. I have continued to stay involved with A.A. service. I am looking forward to helping facilitate the Dallas Intergroup Board to effectively operate in all its aspects of service to the Dallas A.A. community. I also Chair the ever busy Speaker Bureau Committee. When I was elected to the Dallas Intergroup Board in 2015, I was given this committee and, "Wow!" it really opened my eyes to the amount of work that goes into running all the different aspects of the Dallas Intergroup.

I am looking forward to working with the Dallas A.A. community in the coming months. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. Thank you for everything that you do for A.A. and the Dallas Intergroup!

*Greg L., DIA Board Chair*

## Step One: All Over Again

It was such a small bottle of wine; just one of those little bottles that come in a four pack at the convenience store. And, I didn't even get drunk! Maybe I wasn't an alcoholic now. My sobriety date was seven years earlier. I had moved and had not found a home group. I wasn't working with a sponsor. Sporadic meeting attendance had turned into total absence from A.A.. My prayer life was on life support and when I did pray, I didn't give thanks for my sobriety or pray for another 24 hours of sobriety. Each one of those acts of omission made it more likely that I would pick up a drink again. I thought I had graduated from A.A.. Surely I deserved one little drink after all this time. I had problems and couldn't sleep. I was agitated and discontent.

Within a couple of weeks, I was off to the races, drinking heavily and hiding it from my family. Vodka in the morning took the edge off and helped me get over the night before. In Step 1, I had admitted complete defeat seven years before my relapse. There is nothing in the Big Book or the Twelve and Twelve that says we may be powerless over alcohol for a little while when we work Step 1. I guess in my mind I believed that someday I could drink like other people. My wife found out that I was drinking again and lying about it. She left me and wished me luck in my recovery. Once again, I was powerless over alcohol and my life was out of control. I had a belly full of A.A. and it wasn't mixing well with the vodka and wine. I was right where the God of my understanding needed me to be.

I went back to my A.A. group with my head hung low. I was embarrassed to admit defeat. They didn't care. They were just glad to have me back. I found a sponsor with a lot of sobriety who would tell it like it is. He told me to get right in the middle of A.A. and make his group my home group. Missing meetings was to be the exception

rather than the rule. My prayer life had to become a priority. I was taught to never say no to service work and to help other alcoholics. Doing all of this has made it easy to remember what I admitted in Step 1. I'm happy to know that I am powerless over alcohol and I always will be. I'm no longer resentful when I see others drink without consequence. I've never had it better than I have right now with my life in A.A.. I've looked at the bottom of a lot of bottles and I've never seen anything close to matching what I have now. My wife came back, and not because of the pleadings and promises of a drunk. She came back because she wanted to share her life with someone who demonstrated they were happy, joyous and free by the way they lived. I am grateful to A.A. and my higher power for a second chance at life.

*Doug T.*

## Step Two: Came, Came To and Came to Believe

When I got sober in Alcoholic Anonymous, I didn't know that taking the steps was going to be a necessary part of the process. As I began reading the steps on the wall, I immediately decided which of them applied to me or better yet; which ones I would be willing to do. That brought me to Step 2. That was the first but not the only step that I quickly decided I would not be doing. Because if I took Step 2, I would have to admit that I was insane. I didn't think I was insane and I was certainly not going to admit it to you if I was.

My sponsor was insightful and he asked me to look up the work insanity in Webster's Dictionary and call him with what I found. To my amazement, I found it did not say I was crazy or insane. It simply said that sanity was "health and soundness of mind". We discussed the possibility that just maybe health and soundness of my decisions could have possibly been better with a little consulting with another person (maybe a sponsor). We came to the conclusion after sharing my story with him, that a power greater than myself might be a better option than my very best thinking. He said after all my best thinking got me to A.A.

However; I still was not completely convinced. He also told me that Step 2 requires some faith, and I had none. It's difficult to have faith when one has always depended on nobody but one's self. To me, faith was the abnormal dependence on the grace of God. At this point in sobriety I couldn't depend on a God I didn't know, trust or understand. After all, I knew God could not trust me. When I was just a kid my aunt and grandmother told me that "if you do those things or think those things, God will get you". I knew from that experience I was "toast". My sponsor however told me that my problem was that I didn't have a power greater than myself and that if I would get such a power it would solve my problem.

At first I made the group my higher power, and then I used my sponsor's higher power. One day I noticed that although my problems had not gone away entirely, I no longer reacted to them the way I had done in the past. My anxiety and fear had indeed subsided. My sponsor said that was because I had finally trusted in a power greater than myself, which was indeed doing for me that which I could not do for myself. He's still doing it after more than 27 years sober.

*Joe G.*

# Tradition One: Unity

“Since personal calamity holds us in bondage no more, our most challenging concern has become the future of Alcoholics Anonymous; how to preserve among us A.A.s such a powerful unity that neither weakness of persons nor the strain and strife of these troubled times can harm our common cause.”

Bill W. wrote these words 70 years ago, at the inception of what we know as the “flying blind” period in A.A. history. A.A. was age ten and experiencing phenomenal growth, primarily as a result of articles written by non-A.A. members for Liberty Magazine, the Cleveland Plain Dealer newspaper, and the now-famous Jack Alexander article for the Saturday Evening Post.

As most of us are aware the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous are principles that were codified by Bill in a set of articles written for the Grapevine magazine - “Twelve Points to Ensure Our Future”. The Traditions were the result of compiling as much A.A. experience as possible from A.A. groups, which up to that time had established various rules and regulations concerning A.A. membership. As Bill reviewed all of this material he discovered that even he or Dr. Bob would not qualify as A.A. members in certain groups.

The Traditions developed and were unanimously approved by the Fellowship at our first International Convention in Cleveland, Ohio in 1950. This Legacy of Unity was never intended to be exclusive - our A.A. Tradition guarantees that any alcoholic can be a member of A.A. and never meet any other criteria. Our co-founder spent the remaining years of his life and his sobriety doing everything he could to ensure the Unity of A.A. - Bill absolutely believed that A.A. must continue to exist or that most of us would perish.

I heard an old-timer say that the 1st and 12th Traditions are ‘bookends’. If any of the Traditions are infringed upon the 1st and 12th Traditions are always impacted. The 1st Tradition begins “Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole.” This reinforces our principle of anonymity - nobody is anybody in A.A.. There is no most important person in the room - we all have equal standing whether we have 1 day or 50 years of sobriety. But we also all have equal responsibility - responsibility to carry the A.A. message, responsibility to engage with our fellows both new and old, responsibility to say yes when A.A. asks us to serve, responsibility to ATTRACT new alcoholics to Alcoholics Anonymous because of how we present the program in our actions.

Bill said pride, fear, and anger are the primary enemies of our common welfare. I would add that in my experience we could add apathy and indifference. At what point in our history did we restrict communicating with one another to the formality of the hour in which we gather in an A.A. meeting? When did we lose sight of the purpose of A.A. which is selfless action? When did we begin to see more and more members who depend on daily A.A. meetings to regurgitate their problems so that they feel better but the common welfare is undoubtedly negatively impacted?

I find that many of us have never read the Jack Alexander article, which is one of our A.A. pamphlets and is available in printed form or on our GSO website [www.A.A..org](http://www.A.A..org). I would like for my fellow members to know, before they read the article for the first time, that Jack Alexander was an investigative reporter. He approached A.A. as a scam and was going to expose it for the fraud that he and others

believed it to be. A.A. had no “street cred” at the time.

Jack came to meetings of A.A. (speaker meetings - that is all we had then). Jack observed our attitudes and our behavior, listened to our stories. Then, Jack wrote the article that may still be the single most important piece of A.A. Public Information material ever produced. Read Jack’s article and think about it in the context of the A.A. meetings you attend. If Jack was in that meeting in order to develop a story about A.A. what would he write? (All A.A. pamphlets and books are available at the Dallas Central Office, as well as Grapevine material.)

*Jimmy D.*

# Tradition Two

As members of Alcoholics Anonymous, we need the principles of the Traditions to keep the unity of Alcoholics Anonymous just like we need the principles of the 12 Steps for Recovery to stay sober. Tradition 2 as it reads in the short form of the 12x12 is this, “For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

Historically, Bill himself wrote that he had to be reminded by alcoholic members that it was not a good idea for him to take a paying job as a lay therapist. He believed this potential job must have been divine intervention by God, allowing him an opportunity to help numerous alcoholics and pay back debts to his Wall Street creditors. When Bill told members of his group what he was planning to do, they responded, “Don’t you realize that you can never become a professional?...Bill, haven’t you often said right here in this meeting that sometimes the good is the enemy of the best? Well, this is a plain case of it. You can’t do this thing to us. Thus spoke the group conscience. The group was right and I was wrong; the voice on the subway was not the voice of God. Here was the true voice welling up out of my friends. I listened and - thank God - I obeyed.” (Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, p.101-102).

In my personal life, I too have heard the “voice of God”. However, I did not heed the direction of others. I suffered and harmed others but learned valuable lessons about listening to the ultimate authority and the importance of applying this principle.

This tradition also speaks about trusted servants and leadership asking “Does A.A. have a real leadership? Most emphatically the answer is Yes, notwithstanding the apparent lack of it.” (Tradition 2 in the 12x12). When I first got sober and attended group conscience meetings, I thought, can we really trust a bunch of drunks to pay the bills and run this group? It is important to choose trusted servants for their experience and willingness to serve rather than having a popularity contest or to appoint a warm body to fill the position. Our trusted servants do not govern or rule other A.A. members..

This was my early experience as a trusted servant at a group. I was a responsible member of A.A. with a heart to serve. I didn’t know what my skills were, if any, but serving the group taught me about my strengths and weaknesses and where I could best be of service. The group conscience is the ultimate authority. I still need these principles to help me at all levels and out there!

*Lisa H.*

# The Twelve Concepts: Our Third Group of Spiritual Principles

I was honored when our DIALog editor asked me to write the first article in a series of articles about our Twelve Concepts. The series will cover two Concepts per issue for six issues, starting with this issue. Many people are not very (or at all) familiar with the Concepts, other than perhaps noticing they are in an appendix to The Big Book. Other people know the Concepts have something to do with General Service, and think to themselves, “If I’m not involved with General Service I don’t need to know anything about the Concepts.” While it’s true that folks in General Service may make the most active and frequent use of the Concepts, I think it’s helpful for anyone in our Fellowship to have at least a (if you’ll pardon the pun) general sense of what they’re about.

Before taking up Concept I and Concept II, perhaps it might be useful to discuss the Twelve Concepts generally. What are they, exactly? They are twelve spiritual principles that guide our world service efforts, just as the Twelve Steps guide our recovery and the Twelve Traditions guide our interaction with each other and the world around us.

In 1962, Bill W. wrote twelve essays on the Concepts, similar to those found in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, which are published today as either a standalone book, Twelve Concepts for World Service (BM-32) or bound with The A.A. Service Manual (BM-31). The essays are essential reading for any A.A. trusted servant, in General Service or otherwise. The pamphlet “The Twelve Concepts Illustrated” (P-8) is a combination of witty illustrations and easy-to-read text that is a great introduction to the Concepts; I highly recommend it to any A.A. member.

The Concepts are no more a set of rules than are the Steps or the Traditions; they simply suggest what our experience has shown tends to work best. One aim of the Concepts is to minimize chances of personal conflict and friction and to set up some checks and balances that help keep our egos in check. We see some of those checks and balances in Concept I and Concept II.

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

One definition of responsibility is “important duties, decisions, etc., that you are trusted to do.” And one definition of authority is “the power to make decisions.” I can’t think of more appropriate definitions for this Concept.

In A.A.’s early years, services like printing and translating literature, our public relations, and sharing of experience among our groups were entrusted to the stewardship of a group of trustees and a national service office under the trustees’ direction. When the trustees or the service office needed guidance early on, they turned to our co-founders Bill W. and Dr. Bob.

But in the late 1940s, Dr. Bob became gravely ill and Bill began to ponder his own mortality, realizing the guidance he and Dr. Bob had

provided would eventually have to come from elsewhere. In 1955, we accepted both the responsibility and the authority to make important decisions for our Fellowship. In a very real sense, A.A. belongs to us; its future and our future depend upon us.

Today, as in 1955, it is our responsibility to be sure A.A.’s affairs are conducted in a way that is best for us, and best for the still-suffering alcoholics who have not yet found us. Each A.A. member—from the newest newcomer to the oldest old-timer, and everyone in between—has an equal vote. Tradition Two suggests how we best carry out our authority: by relying on a loving God to express Himself through the group conscience.

**Concept II:** The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

In Concept I, we see that A.A. members worldwide, acting through their various groups, are responsible for guiding our Fellowship’s affairs, and that we have the authority to carry out that important responsibility. But practically speaking, how can so many members possibly come together to actually do that?

The short answer is we can’t. We let our trusted servants do it for us. I’m reminded of the old saying, “Too many cooks spoil the broth.” In the context of our Society’s world services, the members of the General Service Conference are trusted servants to whom we delegate our collective authority, and this spirit of trust and delegation is seen throughout the Concepts.

What exactly is the General Service Conference? Think of it as a big group conscience meeting for all the A.A. groups in the United States and Canada. The Conference is made up of approximately 135 members: 93 members are delegates from various geographic areas across the U.S. and Canada, and the rest are trustees, General Service Office staff, etc. The Conference meets each year in April, making decisions about things that affect our Fellowship as a whole, such as literature, public information, our Grapevine magazine, etc., which we often collectively refer to as “World Services.”

The upside-down triangle above depicts how the spirit of trust and delegation works. At the group level, in addition to considering internal group affairs such as whether a meeting should be open or closed, a Big Book meeting or a Step speaker meeting, etc., we are also responsible for considering those World Service matters that are on the upcoming Conference agenda. The groups select a General Service Representative (GSR), and this GSR carries her or his group’s conscience to the district (a collection of groups in a given geographic location) and to the area (a collection of districts and their groups in a given geographic location), and it is at the area assembly where the delegates to the Conference get guidance from the groups in her or his area. In this way, delegates are well-informed about the collective conscience of the groups in their respective areas. Once the Conference is over, the delegates are responsible for reporting to their respective areas the decisions made at the Conference.

As the current delegate for Northeast Texas Area 65, it is my pleasure and privilege to be your trusted servant at the Conference, for all of

the groups in the Dallas area (and beyond). If I can be of service to your group in any way, please email me at [delegate65@neta65.org](mailto:delegate65@neta65.org). (If you don't have access to email, you may reach me through the Intergroup office.)

*Tom M., NETA Delegate*

## Serving in the Spirit of Cooperation

In an article titled "A.A.'s Legacy of Service" Bill W. writes in 1951: Our Twelfth Step – carrying the message – is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer – ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.

I have had the privilege and opportunity of serving Alcoholics Anonymous in various ways. My most recent service position is as Chair of Northeast Texas Area (NETA) 65, a part of our fellowship's General Service structure. But several years ago, after being active at the group and district levels for some time, I decided to "take a break" from General Service, and truthfully, had plans to rest on my laurels for a bit. God had a good laugh, and sent a Dallas Intergroup board member my way with an invitation to stand for one of the openings on the DIA board. I made the decision to go for it, with the assumption that I could "coast" for two years, clueless to what was in store and how our Intergroup really operates. Without going into how my responsibilities and duties evolved, eventually as Chair of the Board Committee, I found that I had to open my mind, pray for willingness, roll up my sleeves, and learn as I commenced a new adventure in service.

I have learned since then how valuable a unified and cooperative working relationship is between our Intergroup and NETA, especially since returning to General Service at the Area level. I am speaking from my limited personal experience, but as a service organization, Inter- groups are closer to the trenches, taking on the vast amount of inquiries and pleas for help that no individual or group could possibly take on.

When someone looks up Alcoholics Anonymous' local contact, chances are they'll see a number for the nearest Intergroup or Central Office.

The Area on the other hand, is more organized to assist in making 12th Step work possible. It has an Intergroup Liaison to serve as an area representative to maintain open two-way flow of communication on Intergroup/area matters. Both DIA and NETA have similar service committees like Corrections, Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Treatment Facilities, etc. The more we cooperate with each other in all areas, the less we duplicate our efforts,

and a much larger, more effective pool of volunteers can be utilized to carry the message.

I am extremely grateful for the guidance and availability of Janis R., DIA's Director. We've developed a warm friendship over the years as we exchange information that is helpful in serving our fellowship as a whole. We have had the privilege in participating in various workshops, sharing sessions, and conferences together. She and her volunteers have been frustrated when many A.A.'s call in to the Dallas Intergroup, expecting them to know everything about A.A.. Naturally, a large percentage of our fellowship does not know anything about our General Service structure, and if they did, it would be difficult to get in touch with any specific trusted servant, unless they knew about our NETA65.org website. Recently a new group's General Service Rep called in and wanted to know when and where the District meetings were held. So I was able to provide Janis with district maps and a list of DCMs currently serving in the Area.

Dallas Intergroup has been invited to various Area Assemblies to display conference approved literature for perusal and purchase. Area Assemblies and other service functions are posted on the DIA website. I strongly believe in supporting my Intergroup. For the Area's annual new GSR/DCM orientations, I go to DIA for the service manuals, pamphlets, and other literature that I need for the attendees. These circumstances are only scratching the surface of the extent in which we may cooperate and be helpful to each other!

Service in sobriety has been a thought provoking journey of wonder, humility, and purpose for this alcoholic. As I've heard before, "It's humbling to grow up in front of people, and learn as we go." But I wouldn't change one minute of the growing opportunities that service to DIA, NETA, and to our fellowship as a whole has afforded me over the years. I've made so many friends, and will get to meet many more, as I have a deeper respect for everything that goes on with our spiritual program of action. Keep coming back to serve, and what may start out as an overwhelming, confusing mess of deliberations and responsibilities, can, in my experience, begin to feel like another adventure with purpose and usefulness under God's grace– a great way to learn about and experience all three of our legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service.

*Tina P., Panel 65, NETA 65 Chair*

## From the Archives

### Jack Alexander and Alcoholics Anonymous

Judge Curtis Bok, owner and publisher of the Saturday Evening Post, first heard about a fledgling group of drunks known as Alcoholics Anonymous from two friends, Dr. Hammer, a member, and C. Dudley Saul, both from Philadelphia. Dr. Hammer went on to help establish and financially support the first A.A. groups in Philadelphia. Judge Bok asked one of his top reporters, Jack Alexander, to look into the society and write a report. Alexander was known for his "hard-nosed" reporting and for his exposure of corruption. He came to A.A. as a critic and came away as one of our strongest supporters. His first article on Alcoholics Anonymous appeared in the March 1941 issue and the rest is A.A. history, and an A.A.WS pamphlet (P-12), which contains the full text of the article. The exposure from Alexander's first article caused a boom in A.A. membership and inquiries resulting

in an incredible 400% increase in membership by year's end. The fellowship went from a struggling 2,000 members to over 8,000 and showed no signs of slowing. Thanks to the article A.A. was off and running.

Nine years later, in April of 1950, Jack Alexander wrote a second article as a follow-up to his initial report entitled "The Drunkard's Best Friend". It is an excellent look at our early fellowship. Alexander began with the difficulty of obtaining alcohol in rural regions and the brisk business of vanilla extract. Vanilla extract was high in alcohol content, easily found in most grocery stores and legal in dry or local option areas. Using Aroostook County, Maine as an example he noted that once Alcoholics Anonymous hit town, it had a "disturbing" effect on vanilla extract sales. One local grocer lamented that the sales had plummeted back to normal.

While the impact of A.A. was not always that noticeable, Alexander stated that A.A. was doing quite well helping "confirmed" drunks to quit drinking. He noted that members never referred to themselves as ex-drinkers regardless of how long they had been sober because they would always be vulnerable to a relapse.

Alexander detailed some of the successes overseas. One report was on the Secretary of a group in Dublin, Ireland whose letters were prized by all A.A.'s in the area. His notes about a typical meeting went like this:

8PM. The Chairman and I sat alone.  
8:05 One lady arrived, a nonalcoholic  
8:15 One man arrived.  
8:20 A County Cork member arrived to say he couldn't stay, as his children had just developed measles.  
8:25 The lone lady departed.  
8:30 Two more men arrived.  
8:40 One more man arrived and I decided to make a start.  
8:45 The first man stated that he had to go out and have a drink.  
8:50 He came back  
8:55 Three more arrived.  
9:10 Another lady, propped up by a companion, arrived, gazed glassily around, collected some literature and departed unsteadily  
9:30 The chairman and I finished speaking.  
9:45 We reluctantly said good night to the new members, who seemed very interested

This was considered a great success by the Secretary although anyone outside of A.A. might have seen a dismal failure. Alexander noted he was voicing optimism based on the "chaotic" character of early A.A. meetings. For years after the beginning of A.A. in 1935, the progress was quite slow. Few of the thousands of "topers" would pause long enough to listen.

Six years after it all began, when Alexander first investigated A.A., they could count at the most 2,000 members, and some of these were still "giving off residual fumes", or what we now politely call newcomers. He noted that any figures were a matter of conjecture due to the fact that there was "no control at the top and A.A. is constantly ridden by maverick tendencies and operates in a four-alarm-fire atmosphere". Besides, no one had time to check. As of this second article, the membership now claimed 90,000 members. He guessed that about 2/3 of that number had been sober anywhere from 15 years to 6 months,

and the rest had enough sober time to keep a job. Newcomers were at an all-time high, with a rate of 20,000 a year. Of this number, about half would stay sober from the start, one fourth would achieve sobriety after a few slips and the other one fourth would remain problem drinkers according to "old-timers". This is where the often quoted 75% success rate arises.

He goes on to define a problem drinker as one "who takes a drink for some compulsive reason he cannot identify, and having taken it, is unable to stop until his is drunk and acting like a lunatic". That still sounds about right.

Of course even in 1950, 90,000 sober members were but a drop in the proverbial bucket. Statistics for that time period has estimates of between 750,000 and 1,000,000 problem drinkers "still on the loose" in the United States alone. Alexander noted that the number was sure to increase to over 4,000,000 people "who drink too much for their own good". Some might quit when they get old enough to consider a hang-over too high a price to pay for a night of "artificially induced elation", but a number will spill over into the compulsive drinker class.

The origin of alcoholism was still a mystery but was considered a major public health concern. The disease was harder to pin down because the origins involved psychic as well as physical elements. Business and industrial firms were showing concern about reduced productivity and absenteeism and were now providing medical and psychiatric aid to alcoholic employees. The most plausible explanation in 1950 was that alcoholism was a sickness resembling that caused by various allergies. Obviously it took a while for Dr. Silk worth's opinion to be accepted by the non-alcoholic public. Alexander went on to state that psychiatry had been successful in only a small percentage of cases. Clergymen using a spiritual approach and the relatives of the drunk using everything from moral persuasion to a "simple bat to the jaw" managed to persuade a few chronics to become "unchronic". At the time many still insisted that alcoholism was solely the result of "twisted thinking".

Alcoholics Anonymous had an approach that used medical advice, a few elementary principles of psychiatry and a strong spiritual weapon, and was the only approach that had achieved anything like success. Alexander pointed out that a lot of people were annoyed by A.A.'s "ludicrous strivings and dead-pan thumping of the sobriety tub", but they could scarcely ignore the results. The achievements of A. A. in 1950 stood out as "one of the few encouraging developments of a rather grim and destructive half century".

At the time A. A. had over 3,000 groups in the United States and the routine excuses every drunk had for their excessive drinking, were losing their validity. In most cities of any size there was a telephone listing with the Alcoholics Anonymous name. He said that a nickel call would bring a volunteer worker who would not talk down to a drunk nor do any urging, but would give the caller an abbreviated talk about the program. The drunk would then be invited to telephone again if he/she was serious about wanting to become sober. Another way to contact A.A. was through the Central Office or Intergroup.

A.A. was also becoming available overseas in 26 different countries. The most successful at the time were Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which had more members than the whole movement did nine years ago. A.A. was also strong in Scandinavian countries that bolstered their program with a new European aversion drug called

Antabuse. Scotland had groups in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Dundee and Campbeltown.

Alexander found that alcoholism was most closely associated with complex civilizations which tend to breed the basic neuroses of which uncontrolled drinking is just one expression. Nonetheless, A.A. had started in some out-of-the-way places as well as Cape Town, South Africa, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Durban, East London and in two towns in then Southern Rhodesia. Alaskan groups were forming in Anchorage (which started during a blizzard), Palmer and Ketchikan. A small group had started in the leper colony at Molokai, supported by A.A. members from Honolulu.

A.A. in 1950 had most of the problems we have today. The Treasurer on occasion ran off with the money, love affairs got people drunk, and gossip created maelstroms in the fellowship. Alexander thought that such complications were no more frequent than in the rest of society but in A.A. they seemed to stand out more and do more damage due to our “emotionally explosive society”. He compared the fellowship to a Grand Hotel. To help explain an alcoholic, the old-timers at the time said “an alcoholic is just like a normal person, only more so”. Throughout the article Alexander describes the alcoholic in action both as a drunk and as a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

By 1950, over 10,000 patients had gone through a five day “rebuilding course” at St. Thomas Catholic Hospital in Akron, Ohio (Dr. Bob’s hospital), St. John’s Episcopal in Brooklyn and Knickerbocker in Manhattan. One of the first things members did with a newcomer was a merciful but thorough ego deflation. They “forcefully” brought home the fact that if he/she continued to drink he/she would without a doubt die prematurely, or go insane from brain injury, or both. The newcomer was then told that unless he/she accepted the existence of a power greater than him/her and continually ask this power for help, the quest for sobriety would probably fail. The idea of a power greater than ourselves was considered the key of the program and it could be taken not on a basis of mere acceptance or acknowledgment, but had to be one of complete surrender. Dr. Harry M. Tiebout described such surrender as a conversion experience. Once a person has such surrender they become “a relaxed, natural, more realistic individual who can dwell in the world on a live and let live basis”.

Early sobriety did not produce a 60 or 90 day wonder during this time period but had a “Chautauqua Phase” instead. This was the period when a new member started lecturing at meetings about what was wrong with the fellowship and how these defects could be remedied. Senior members then and now let them talk themselves out of the stage. Hopefully. The Chautauqua Phase was often when a member would break away and start a new group or get drunk. The article noted that alcoholics were “too individualistic to be organized”, and no one was in command. The groups were “governed by representatives elected by the neighborhood groups to a rotating body called the Intergroup. (Be a part of history and join us at the next Intergroup Meeting!)

One of the changes Alexander noted about Alcoholics Anonymous was a wider social acceptance which meant more women were joining. In 1950, women comprised about 15% of the total membership. In New York, women were 30% of the membership. Another change was the average age of members. The average age dropped from about 47 to 35 years of age. The fellowship was no longer merely a haven for “last gaspers”. Because of widespread publicity, much for which Alexander

could take credit, alcoholics are discovering what their trouble was much earlier. Another development was the growth of the sponsor system. The newcomer got a sponsor right away. The function of the sponsor was to take the newcomer to meetings, to see that he/she gets all the help they need and to be on call at any time for emergencies. An emergency was described as a phone call to the sponsor when the newcomer felt like drinking and the problem could usually be resolved with that simple phone call.

A.A. was finally reaching rural areas where more resistance was met than in urban centers. There seemed to be a greater stigma attached to alcoholism in a small town. The small town drunk had the same delusion as the rest of the fellowship; that no one knew they drank when they were really the gossip of Main Street. In a small town everyone knew, where in a large city the truth was limited to a drunks’ circle of friends, family and community.

The city of Los Angeles was cited as particularly enthusiastic for Alcoholics Anonymous. Instead of the small local groups this city liked the theatrical mass meetings with 1,000 or more present. It was in Los Angeles that the fellowship had huge dances, jewelry with the A.A. symbol and bronze chips/pins to celebrate birthdays. Instead of a secret stigma, the folks in L.A. celebrated their sobriety from the beginning. After 3 months a sober member of A.A. would receive a bronze pin. After 1 year he/she was entitled to a ruby chip to put in the pin and after 3 years he/she was entitled to a diamond chip. Rings bearing the A.A. letters, compacts, watch fobs and pocket watches could be found in Los Angeles and they were worn with pride. Another equally enthusiastic membership was, of course, Texas. Members in the “ranch sector” flew or drove 100’s of miles to a meeting or to attend an A.A. square dance or barbeque. In Dallas-Fort Worth there were “a dozen oil millionaires who ensured fancy club quarters in old mansions”. Dallas-Fort Worth usually provided food and coffee. At a southwestern group in Texas they got the governor to release a “life-terminer” for a weekend to be a guest speaker who spoke of Alcoholics Anonymous in prison. One member gave a “lawn party and buffet supper” to celebrate Herman, the life-terminer. This was claimed to be the first celebration of its kind in the United States.

Each section of the U.S. seemed to have its own brand of A.A. The Midwest was businesslike and serious. The Deep South tended to do a certain amount of Bible reading and hymn singing. The Northwest and the upper Pacific Coast funded their groups with the proceeds from slot machines. New York, “a catchall for screwballs and semi-screwballs” from all over was considered pious. New England was temperate and characterized their brand of A.A. as most serene. The goals of A.A. could be summed up with the words of the Serenity Prayer which could be found hanging in most groups as well as small cards in the purses and wallets of members. The Serenity Prayer was used to end the second of Jack Alexander’s articles on Alcoholics Anonymous.

Many thanks go to Jack Alexander and his love of Alcoholics Anonymous.

**“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.”**

*Janis R., Executive Director, DIA*

# Group Contributions

January 2016

	<b>TOTAL</b>
Allen Group	50.00
Belmont	50.00
Carry the Message	88.75
Clean Air Group	125.00
Cornerstone	250.00
Dallas North	270.00
Denton Unity	106.00
District 55	200.00
Duncanville	150.00
Friendship Group	150.00
Frisco Group	261.41
Get 'Em Sober	55.00
Lake Highlands	293.16
Lakeside Group	1,000.00
Legacy	50.00
Lifesavers/No Charges	10.00
McKinney Fellowship	10.00
McKinney Miracle Group	459.24
McKinney Serenity Group	500.00
No Hassle	923.85
Oak Lawn	20.00
Prosper Country Grp	209.50
Ray of Hope - Seven Points	20.00
Richardson	60.00
SEDCO Group	300.00
Shalom Today	30.00
Show Me	40.00
Singleness of Purpose	62.45
Southwest Clean Air	60.00
Speaker Share Group	50.00
Step Up	150.00
Terrell Group	60.00
The Colony Group	20.00
The Gift of Sobriety	30.00
Town North	100.00
Traditional	25.00
Waxahachie	10.00
White House	50.00
Wylie Group	10.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>6,309.36</u></b>

## Find Us Online

At [www.aadallas.org](http://www.aadallas.org) you'll find group announcements, an events calendar, a searchable group directory, online bookstore & more.

# Upcoming Events: February & March

## NETA 65 TREATMENT COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

**February 20 @ 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

*The Prosper Country Group, 205 S Church Street, Prosper, 75078*

"Bridging the Gap: From Treatment to A.A.": Treatment Facilities Committee Workshop Prosper Country Group, Prosper United Methodist Church, 205 S. Church St., Prosper, TX Feb. 20th, 2016: 1pm-4pm Topics to Include: Purpose of the TF Committee Conducting A.A. Meetings in Treatment Facilities Getting the Newcomer Started in a Home Group Bridging the Gap Working Within the Traditions in TF Meetings Lunch and Snacks will be provided. Everyone is welcome! (contact JoAnne N, NETA Treatment Chair via their website, <http://www.NETA65.org>)

## LAKE HIGHLANDS GROUP'S 35TH ANNIVERSARY!

**February 20 @ 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

*Lake Highlands Group, 8535 Ferndale Rd, Suite 6, Dallas, TX 75238*

The Lake Highlands Group will be celebrating their 35th Anniversary Feb. 20th, from 6pm to 9pm. 35 Year's of A.A. at the Lake Highlands Group, (Feb. 1981-2016.) Anniversary Cake at 6:30pm Group History at 7:30 pm, by Charlie S. Guest A.A. Speaker, Gary K, from the New Life Group, Sulphur Springs, at 7:45 Help them celebrate 35 years of recovery, unity and fellowship. Lake Highland's 35th Anniversary.

## GRAPEVINE WORKSHOP/HOW TO

**February 21 @ 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

*Clean Air North, 16517 Addison Rd #108, Addison, TX 75001*

Clean Air North Group is hosting a Grapevine Workshop on Feb. 21st from 2-4pm. Tips for Submitting Stories to the Grapevine History of the Grapevine, our meeting in print Refreshments Raffles Grapevine Panel for Q&A For questions contact the group.

## 30th ANNUAL LAKE MURRAY MEN'S CONFERENCE

**March 4 @ 2:00 pm - March 6 @ 11:00 am**

*Lake Murray Lodge, Ardmore, TX 73401*

"One Day at a Time" Lake Murray Men's Conference will be held March 4-6, 2016, at Lake Murray Lodge, Ardmore, Oklahoma. Friday: 2pm Registration, 8pm Speaker, Steve L., Colorado Springs, CO Saturday: Breakfast, Discussion Meetings, Lunch, Workshops, 8pm Speaker, Bill S., Atlanta, GA Sunday: Breakfast, 10am Speaker: Larry T, Lakewood, CA Registration: \$40 For Lodge or Cabin Reservations: 800-654-8240

## SISTER TO SISTER CONFERENCE 2016

**March 4 @ 4:00 pm - March 6 @ 1:00 pm**

*Three Mountain Retreat, FM 182, Clifton, TX 76643*

March 4-6, 2016, Three River Retreat, 109 Private Road, 4231, Clifton, TX 76643 Speakers: Ludi R, Lorena, Tx Olga R, Waco, TX Shelley S., San Angelo, TX [www.wacosistertosisterconference.com](http://www.wacosistertosisterconference.com) See website for further information. \$65 Deposit. Total cost \$130.

## CASA GROUP'S 62nd ANNIVERSARY!

**March 12 @ 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

*Casa Group, 9999 Ferguson Rd, Dallas, TX 75228*

The Casa Group will celebrate 62 years of Unity, Service and Recovery on March 12, 2016 from 5pm to 9pm. 9999 Ferguson Road, behind St. Mark Presbyterian Church; Casa entrance and parking on Millmar. Group phone: 214-503-3666 FOOD, FAMILY AND FELLOWSHIP. 5pm: Al-Anon Speaker, Carol B., Cornerstone Al-Anon Group 6pm: Dinner Brief History of the Casa Group by Robert M.T.M. (during dinner) 7pm: A.A. Speaker, Janis R., Sunday Morning Live Group 8pm-9pm: Desserts and Fellowship Come join the fun and help.