



WABASH VALLEY INTERGROUP

Newsletter

See page 2 for a member’s experience at the Wabash Valley Spring Men’s Workshop and page 3 for an article about upholding our Traditions by our Area 23 delegate.



Tradition Five: *“Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”*

From Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pages 150 and 151:

“Shoemaker, stick to thy last!”...better do one thing supremely well than many badly. That is the central theme of this tradition. Around it our society gathers in unity. The very life of our Fellowship requires the preservation of this principle.
The unique ability of each A.A. to

identify himself with, and bring recovery to the newcomer in no way depends upon his learning, eloquence or on any special individual skills. The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety. These legacies of suffering and of recovery are easily passed among alcoholics, one to the other. This is our gift from God, and its bestowal upon others like us is the one aim that today animates A.A.s all around the globe.

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Event Calendar

May 06-08, 2011
Unity Days
 Shakamak State Park
 Jasonville IN

May 20-22, 2011
2nd Annual Wabash Valley Spring Men’s Workshop
 Shakamak State Park
 Jasonville IN

May 29, 2011
11th Annual Hog Roast-Poker Run
 Burdette Park
 Evansville IN

June 04, 2011
Illiana Mini-Conference
 Girl Scout Covered Bridge
 Council Building
 Terre Haute IN

SOBRIETY ANNIVERSARIES APRIL 2011

- Don K – 27 years
- Mary Ellen W – 23 years
- Terry A – 19 years
- Debbie W – 9 years
- Don O – 3 years
- John T – 3 years

To see your sobriety anniversary here, in print, email the date to: contact@terrehauteaa.com

For a complete listing of upcoming events and downloadable copies of event flyers, visit our website at www.terrehauteaa.com

Step Five: “Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

From Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions page 57:

What are we likely to receive from Step Five? For one thing, we shall get rid of that terrible sense of isolation we’ve always had. Almost without exception, alcoholics are tortured by loneliness. Even before our drinking got bad and people began to cut us off, nearly all of us suffered the feeling that we didn’t quite belong. Either we were shy, and dared not draw near others, or we were apt to be noisy good fellows craving attention and companionship, but never getting it—at least to our way of thinking. There was always that mysterious barrier we could neither surmount nor understand. It was as if we were actors on a stage, suddenly realizing that we did not know a single line of our parts. That’s one reason we loved alcohol too well. It did let us act extemporaneously. But even Bacchus boomeranged on us; we were finally struck down and left in terrified loneliness.

When we reached A.A., and for the first time in our lives stood among people who seemed to understand, the sense of belonging was tremendously exciting. We thought the isolation problem had been solved. But we soon discovered that while we were not alone anymore in a social sense, we still suffered many of the old pangs of anxious apartness. Until we had talked with complete candor of our conflicts, and has listened to someone else do the same thing, we still didn’t belong. Step Five was the answer. It was the beginning of true kinship with man and God.

This vital step was also the means by which we began to get the feeling that we could be forgiven, no matter what we had thought or done. Often it was while working on this Step with our sponsors or spiritual advisors that we first felt truly able to forgive others, no matter how deeply we felt they had wronged us. Our moral inventory had persuaded us that all-round forgiveness was desirable, but it was only when we resolutely tackled Step Five that we inwardly *knew* we’d be able to receive forgiveness and give it too.

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WABASH VALLEY MEN’S SPRING WORKSHOP

My first experience at a men’s retreat was as a result of two AA men cornering me after a speaker meeting and telling me (a) I *was* going, (b) the time they would pick me up, and (c) my registration had been paid for. It was classic AA “*shut up and get in the car*”. Although my brain came up with a hundred excuses as to why I couldn’t go, a weak “OK” leaked out of my mouth and I was hooked. Ever since, I’ve attended men’s retreats on a regular basis and have loved every minute of them. Last May the men of the Wabash Valley sponsored our first week-end retreat at Shakamak State Park and by God’s grace and some hard work, it was a marvelous success. The highlight for me was the opportunity to hear the experience, strength and hope of some of the men of Al-Anon who led a workshop and hung around for the week-end. Their perspective on life and recovery were instructive and inspirational for me and I’m glad they’ll be back.

This year’s retreat and workshops will be held on May 20 to 22, again at Shakamak State Park. The

Retreat will again feature workshops, speaker meetings, fellowship, good food and a great opportunity to recharge and reconnect. For \$50 you’ll get bunk house accommodations, good meals, various workshops, three great speaker meetings, campfires and some really great fellowship. We had men from three states last year and this time around we’ve reserved the entire Family Campground and Dining Hall for the week-end. Scholarships are available for those that need them; no one will be turned away. There’s a fishing lake, corn hole tourneys, horseshoes, hoops and plenty of time for fellowship and fun. Registration covers bunk space, meals Friday dinner through Sunday breakfast, coffee, soft drinks and as much AA as you can handle. ***So join us!***

See you there,

Mark K.

The Hand of A.A. — Inclusive Never Exclusive

In his writings about the early days of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill Wilson recounts tales of fear and intolerance, membership rules and regulations geared, ostensibly, to protect groups from anything or anyone that might upset the lifeboat that was A.A. At one point Central Office asked groups to send in their membership rules for a review. It was determined that had all the edicts been in force everywhere at once, very few could have ever joined Alcoholics Anonymous.

Groups ultimately survived and learned to not be afraid of what a particular type of newcomer might do to sully A.A.'s reputation or effectiveness. In an August 1946 article Bill explains that if alcohol is an uncontrollable problem for the newcomer and he or she wishes to do something about it, that's enough for us. We wish to deny no one his chance to recover from alcoholism. We wish to be as inclusive as we can, never exclusive.

Since those early days the AA pendulum has done what pendulums do... swung to the opposite extreme. In many quarters of our Fellowship exists the notion that A.A. can help all kinds of people with all kinds of problems. Maybe this came about because we want to share our exuberance for sobriety and a new way of living with the whole world; or perhaps it's due, as the joke goes, to treatment centers with only one van. Or maybe we're simply not passing along our traditions to newcomers.

I'm not so sure we did ourselves any favors by coming up with a shortened version of the Twelve Traditions. The short form is what's read at most meetings and often the only version members know. Consequently, our third tradition is often interpreted as "just say you don't want to drink" whether you drink or not. Yet the long form of that tradition clearly states: Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism... *alcoholism* being the important word. Often our responsibility statement is interpreted as a mandate for saving the world... *when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help; I want the hand of AA always to be there.* The logic that follows is that our Twelve Steps work for all sorts addictions. After all, look at how many 12-step programs exist today.

What is ignored is the need for identification. If the steps were all that was needed for recovery, we could sit at home and work them alone. Meetings would be irrelevant. But it doesn't work that way. A necessary part of our recovery is identifying with other human beings who have been where we've been, done what we've done, and felt what we've felt... and have recovered. How can someone who doesn't have a problem with alcohol (but doesn't want to drink) identify with the alcoholic? Would I go to Gamblers Anonymous to treat my overeating? Do Overeaters Anonymous to learn how to live, one day at a time, without crack cocaine? The steps may be the same, but it's not the same. Related? Probably. But not the same.

Encouraging non-alcoholics to participate in A.A. creates problems for alcoholics and for the individual who is not addressing his or her real problem. By not guiding them to a program that more specifically addresses their problem, we may be signing their death warrant. As Bill says in "Problems other than Alcohol," It has been learned that there is no possible way to make non-alcoholics into A.A. members." Membership, no. But we can welcome them as observers at our open meetings.

Bill goes on to warn that our first duty as a society is to insure our own survival... that we must avoid distraction and multipurpose activity... that an A.A. group, as such, can't take on all the personal problems of its members, let alone the problems of the whole world." When our primary purpose gets muddled with talk of drugs, pills, white flour, nicotine... anything other than alcohol, what happens to the alcoholic? There are programs specifically for people with those other problems. But what about the alcoholic? Where will he go? Who can he find to identify with?

Of course, "Andas" are always welcome... one who is an alcoholic *and a* drug addict; an alcoholic *and a* compulsive eater. As individuals, there's no reason we can't be useful by working with outside groups. Bill reminds us that "in A.A., the group has strict limitations, but the individual has scarcely any."

A.A. groups have fallen apart because a few well-intentioned members insist that although the person isn't an alcoholic, she should stay because for today, he or she doesn't want to drink. I've seen a group censure their GSR for taking a self-proclaimed non-alcoholic aside to explain that it was a closed meeting for alcoholics only. Upholding the Traditions is not an easy or popular stance to take in today's A.A. Those who do are often characterized as rigid and out-of-touch with today's reality or as uncaring and fearful bleeding deacons. I call them solid. And I hope to have the courage to be one of them.

Virginia R., Delegate
Panel 60/Area 23 southern Indiana

MINUTES OF WVIG MEETING APRIL 05, 2011

Dave K opened the meeting with a moment of silence followed by The Serenity Prayer. Dave B read The Twelve Traditions. There were 12 members present.

Terri S gave the treasurer’s report. Barb S gave the secretary’s report. Dale H gave the literature report. There was no correctional facilities report. Marcy B gave the office/committee report.

Motions were made and seconded to approve all reports.

Old Business:

1. Terri S purchased a new printer for the office.
2. Marcy B is still working on getting copies of all newsletters to District, Area and GSO Archives. Linda M offered to help.
3. Mike F presented receipt for 24-hour 12-step cell phone and was reimbursed. He is also willing to continue to provide the service of carrying the phone for another month.

New Business:

1. Dave B announced Unity Days at Shakamak Park May 06- 08.
2. Dave K announced Family Recovery at Fowler Park Jun 16-18.
3. Dale H announced Wabash Valley Spring Men’s Workshop at Shakamak Park May 20-22.

Dave K closed the meeting with The Lord’s Prayer.

DONATIONS TO INTERGROUP MARCH 2011

Greencastle (mtg?) = \$50.00
 Linton 12-Steppers = \$10.00
 Thursday Big Book = \$67.40
 Monday Beginners = \$70.00
 Grapevine = \$100.00
 Tuesday Newcomers = \$83.25
 VCPL 12&12 = \$54.80
 Brazil Harmony = \$35.00
 Brazil Monday Night = \$30.00
 Wabash Valley Group = \$21.50
 Just for Today = \$50.00

Thank you all for your Seventh Tradition contributions to Wabash Valley Intergroup.

May’s newsletter will list the March and April contributions to the Correctional Facilities Literature Fund.

Help Wanted

Women to help take meetings into Vigo County Work Release. One year sobriety and background check required.

For more information contact: Terri S. at 812-238-5791

People to fill service positions at Wabash Valley Group – Sundays at 6:00pm at St Stephens Episcopal Church

Contribute

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WE ARE SELF-SUPPORTING THROUGH OUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS