



The Beacon

February 2017

The Beacon Statement

The Beacon is published to foster unity, facilitate communication among AA members and groups within the North Alabama area, and present the experience and opinions of individual members of Alcoholics Anonymous on the disease of Alcoholism and the recovery from it. Opinions in the Beacon are neither those of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or the Huntsville Area Intergroup Association. We aim to be an instrument of carrying the AA message and to publish AA related material including personal stories of experience, strength, and hope as well as important information about what is happening in this area. All material is reviewed by the Beacon Editor, Carla M..

The Beacon on the Web

The Beacon is available via the internet. Just visit the AA District 20 website at: <http://www.aahuntsvilleal.org> and click on the "News" menu entry. Each issue will be posted (in PDF format) for download directly after publication.

HAIA Officers 2017

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HAIA COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Activities	Kathy S.
Office Manager	Gary P.
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Resources (+Lit)	Dottye P.
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Beacon Submissions

The Beacon is looking for articles. Please email beaconcarlam@gmail.com if you would like to write an article. Articles may be any length and on any topic related to AA.

Birthdays and Announcements

We would love to publish your group's list of birthdays and announcements for the month of March! Please email your submissions to the editor or drop them off in the Beacon mailbox at Central Office by February 21.

Wisdom Heard In Meetings:

Around Town

It's not the lions and tigers that will get you. It's the fleas and ticks!

Stay in the middle and you won't fall off the edge.

You hit bottom when you put down the shovel.

We have to allow others the right to be wrong.

Treat people with courtesy, kindness, justice, and love, to maintain emotional sobriety and prevent emotional hangover.

Complacency is the enemy of growth.

We may not have control over what we receive, but we do have control over what we perceive.

Replaying the "What they did to me" and getting even in my mind is time squandered in resentment.

Pause, pray, keep your mouth shut. Do the next right thing.

Ego will eat you up-it will destroy you.

Today, my reward is being sober.

The problem is in my head. I think too much.

Hope changed to faith.

To what degree you are honest and open is the degree of what you will get back.

There is freedom in not having to control people, places, and things.

The steps are there to heal us not to hurt us.

Attitude is an action word.

When you treat folks a certain way they reciprocate.

Psychic Change - I had hope that there might be a different life -

This Month in AA History...

February 2, 1942 - Bill W. paid tribute to Ruth Hock, AA's first paid secretary, who resigned to get married. She had written approximately 15,000 letters to people asking for help.

February 5, 1941 - Pittsburgh Telegram ran a story on the first A.A. group's Friday night meeting of a dozen "former hopeless drunks."

February 8, 1940 - Bill W., Dr. Bob, and six other A.A.s asked 60 rich friends of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for money at the Union Club, N.Y. They got \$2,000.

February 12, 1945 - World War II paper shortage forced reduction in size of the Big Book.

February 13, 1937 - Oxford Groups "Alcoholic Squadron" met at the home of Hank P. ("The Unbeliever" in the 1st edition of the Big Book) in New Jersey.

February 14, 1971 - AA groups worldwide held a memorial service for Bill Wilson.

February 16, 1941 - Baltimore Sunday Sun reported city's first AA group begun in 1940 had grown from 3 to 40 members, with five being women.

February 18, 1943 - AA's were granted the right to use cars for 12th step work in emergency cases, despite gas rationing.

February 21, 1939 - 400 copies of the Big Book manuscript were sent to doctors, judges, psychiatrists, and others for comment. This was the "multilith" Big Book.

1916 - Bill W. & sophomore class at Norwich University was suspended for hazing.

1938 - Rockefeller gave \$5,000 to AA.

1939 - Dr. Harry Tiebout endorsed AA, the first psychiatrist to do so.

On Cultivating Tolerance

By Dr. Bob Smith

**From the editorial column of the July 1944
AA Grapevine**

During nine years in AA, I have observed that those who follow the Alcoholics Anonymous program with the greatest earnestness and zeal not only maintain sobriety but often acquire finer characteristics and attitudes as well. One of these is tolerance.

Tolerance expresses itself in a variety of ways: in kindness and consideration toward the man or woman who is just beginning the march along the spiritual path; in the understanding of those who perhaps have been less fortunate in education advantages; and in sympathy toward those whose religious ideas may seem to be at great variance with our own.

I am reminded in this connection of the picture of a hub with its radiating spokes. We all start at the outer circumference and approach our destination by one of many routes. To say that one spoke is much better than all the other spokes is true only in the sense of its being best suited to you as an individual. Human nature is such that without some degree of tolerance, each one of us might be inclined to believe that we have found the best or perhaps the shortest spoke. Without some tolerance, we might tend to become a bit smug or superior - which, of course, is not helpful to the person we are trying to help and may be quite painful or obnoxious to others. No one of us wishes to do anything that might act as a deterrent to the advancement of another - and a patronizing attitude can readily slow up this process.

Tolerance furnishes, as a by-product, a greater freedom from the tendency to cling to preconceived ideas and stubbornly adhered-to opinions. In other words, it often promotes an open-mindedness that is vastly important - is, in fact, a prerequisite to the successful termination of any line of search, whether it be scientific or spiritual.

These, then, are a few of the reasons why an attempt to acquire tolerance should be made by each one of us.

Support While Getting Sober

Submitted by Teresa K.

Madison Hopeful Group

I decided to get sober on New Year's Eve, 2016. Since a new year was approaching, I wanted to change my life. After two years of just hoping for change, I decided to kick start the next chapter in my life. After a yearlong process of getting a divorce, I knew I needed to do something for myself.

I am feeling more resistance from my family now that I am getting sober. My going to a meeting is an inconvenience for them. Even though I found a group close to me, and I know bringing my kids is not a problem, I have asked family to watch them so I can start something for myself and get comfortable before bringing others along. If I ask and it interrupts their plans, I don't mind taking them but I prefer to go alone for now.

Why, in the beginning of the process, are people resistant to the change? Because they are used to the status quo and the disruption is wreaking havoc in their lives? Would experiencing me sober be a struggle until they get to a new status quo? I am thinking that must be so; at least, I have been told this by those in the program of AA.

I hope I am letting my family know it is a new beginning for all of us. They won't be sitting at home in the evening dreading the phone ringing. Hoping that it isn't me calling from jail, or the police asking to have them come up the street to come get my kids, or the hospital calling to tell them I am there. Or a friend calling to tell them something bad happened.

The positive support I have now is a friend who hasn't known me very long but knows without alcohol I am a wonderful person. I also have my kids to help me through the day. When I have stressful days and want to run up the street to get a bottle, I get angry, then I turn to my thoughts to my AA group. I know I would disappoint them and most of all myself. Right now, I also remember two of my calming techniques - playing my favorite music or finding something to laugh at. Most of all, I know I can go to a meeting any time.

Focus on Step Two and Tradition Two

One night while I was sitting in a Second Step meeting I caught bits and pieces of what a woman named "Ann" was sharing with us. I had been in AA three long months, and the inside of my head was still like a can of worms. I heard her say, "This is a list of stinking thinking that precedes the drinking. If I entertain any one of these thoughts for too long the rest will follow and I could pick up a drink. I use Step Two to rid my mind of these deadly thoughts."

Up to that point I believed I was surely different. I had been diagnosed by my psychiatrist as having an anxiety neurosis with schizophrenic reactions (I never mentioned my drinking to him), and I was impatiently waiting for somebody to address my unique form of insanity. Well, thank God my unique malady

Step Two

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

was described to me by Ann in seven short sentences:

- 1) "I'll show them!" 2) "I miss the fun." 3) "Is this all there is?" 4) "Next time will be different." 5) "I wasn't that bad." 6) "The world is passing me by." 7) "What's the use?"

After the meeting I asked Ann to give me a copy of her list of "stinking thinking." As soon as I got home I affixed it to the refrigerator door and referred to it many times during the following days. It is still the basic guide for my Second Step inventory. As I progressed in my recovery in AA by trying to apply all of the principles in the

twelve suggested steps I added a couple of thoughts that can be lethal for me. I also jotted some notes next to each line. My up-to-date list reads this way:

- 1) "I can handle it." (Playing God, omnipotence); 2) "Is this all there is?" (Lack of gratitude); 3) "I miss the fun." (Fantasy, illusion); 4) "I'll show them!" (Resentments); 5) "I'll never get that bad." (Omnipotence); 6) "Next time will be different." (Fantasy, illusion); 7) "The world is passing me by." (Despair, lack of trust); 8) "One can't hurt." (Fatal illusion).

That night some nine years ago I was introduced to sanity. Since then, a day at a time, I am being restored to sanity by my Higher Power through the Fellowship of AA.

Grapevine, February 1987, Vol. 43 No. 9.

Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself through our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Tradition Two Checklist

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, AA committees and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with any AA Twelfth Step job or other AA responsibility?
3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs? Praise for my AA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussions, or can I yield in good spirit to the group consensus and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at AA chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?