

NNIG MONTHLY MEETING SPEAKER



November 14, 2020
NNIG Steering Committee
Interview – Sharron L.
Reno, NV
Speaker at 7:00

November, 2020

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GENERAL WARRANTIES OF THE NORTHERN NEVADA INTERGROUP ASSOCIATION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

In all its proceedings, the Intergroup Association observes the spirit of AA Traditions, taking great care that the Intergroup Association never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus a reserve be its prudent financial principal; that none of the Intergroup Association members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decision be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that no Intergroup Association action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Intergroup Association may act for the service of AA Groups in the Northern Nevada area and parts of Northern California, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Intergroup Association itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

(The above is adapted and modified from "The AA Service Manual", and AA Co-Founder Bill W's. Twelve Concepts for World Service; Concept XII, as adopted by the General Service Conference on April 26, 1962. This adaptation of copyrighted AA material has been approved by the General Service Board)

CENTRAL OFFICE

436 S. Rock Blvd.,
Sparks, NV 89431
Monday thru Friday
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Saturday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

24 Hour Answering Service:

(775) 355-1151 Fax: (775) 355-1560

EMAIL: officemanager@nnig.org

Web Site/Meeting Schedule: nnig.org

The Bracer: nnigbracer@gmail.com



NORTHERN NEVADA INTERGROUP

An Essay by Bill Wilson November 1949

The idea is in the air that AA might adopt Thanksgiving week as a time for meetings and meditation on the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. The friend who hatched this notion tells you why he thinks the idea good. I heartily agree with what he says and hope you will too.

Pre-AA, we alkie could sometimes achieve that dubious state called "sobriety, period." How bleak and empty this alleged virtue is, only God or a dried-up drunk can fully testify. The reason? Of course, every AA knows it: nothing has taken the place of the victim's grog; he's still a man of conflict and disunity. Come then the Twelve Steps of recovery, bringing to him a personality change. The shattered prospect feels reassembled; he now says he seems all one piece. We understand exactly what he means, for he describes the state of being at oneness; he is talking about personal unity. We know he must work to maintain it and that he can't stay alive without it.

Will not the same principle hold true for AA as a whole? Isn't it also a fact that the alcoholic is in no greater peril than when he takes sobriety for granted? If vigilant practice of sound principle is a matter of life and death of him, why isn't that equally so for the AA group, and for our far-flung Society itself?

Yet many of us still take the basic unity of Alcoholics Anonymous for granted. We seem to forget that the whole of modern society is on a dangerous and contagious "dry bender." We evidently assume we are so different from other men and women that disintegration can't hit us. Our unity appears as a gift of heaven; something to be perpetually enjoyed by us AAs quite without effort.

Criticism is not intended, because our present attitude is natural enough. It stems from the fact that no society in its infancy has every enjoyed more providential protection against temptation and untoward happenings than has ours. Minor troubles we have had, but none serious enough to test our adult strength. It's not strange that we are a bit complacent and self-satisfied. Surely there need be no counsel of fear, nor lack of faith, in the prediction that a far greater time of trial may yet be ours. When we think our situation through, simple prudence and foresight will tell us that.

The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous are a distillate of our experience of living and working together. They apply the spirit of the Twelve recovery Steps to our group life and security. They deal with our relations with the world outside and with each other; they state our attitudes toward power and prestige, toward property and money. They would save us from tempting alliances and major controversies; they would elevate principles far above personal ambitions. And as a token of this last, they request that we maintain personal anonymity before the open public as a protection to AA and as proof of the fact that our Society intends to practice true humility.

For the information of the general public and for the instruction of new AA members, the Twelve Traditions have just been released in a much condensed "short form" which we hope will be as widely read and understood as the Twelve Steps of recovery. Should this happen, our current growing pains will be lessened and we shall commence to lay up a great store of insurance for the years ahead.

What then could be more appropriate than to set aside Thanksgiving week for discussion of the practical and spiritual values to be discovered in our Traditions? We could thus reinforce our faith in the future by these prudent works; we could show that we deserve to go on receiving that priceless gift of oneness which God in his wisdom has so freely given to us of Alcoholics Anonymous in the precious years of our infancy.

AA's

Recovery Step Eleven:

"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Three

Unity Tradition Eleven:

"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

Legacies

Service Concept Eleven:

"The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern."

Concept XI - Good Committees, Corporate Directors, Staff and Consultants to Carry Out Day-to-Day Service Activity is a Matter of Serious Care and Concern

The writings under Concept 11 discuss matters related to A.A. service personnel. Paraphrasing here, Bill says: While final responsibility for world services lies with the Trustees, the job of carrying out service activities will require competent leadership and harmonious working relationships among standing committee members, the directors of A.A.'s two corporations, as well as the executives, staff and employees. These matters call for serious care and concern about:

- Who they are; their quality and dedication; their personal qualifications.
- The manner of their induction into service.
- The systems of rotation of membership.
- The way in which the various service jobs are related to each other.
- Special rights and duties of executives, staffs and consultants.
- Having a proper basis for financial compensation for their work.

As in Concept 10, the writings of Concept 11 seem most useful as a reference source. Each detail stands on its own merit; there is no way to summarize. Bill applies the above-listed considerations to the five General Service Board committees existing at the time of his writing (early 1960s). These five committees have since been expanded to thirteen (See Chapter 9 of The A.A. Service Manual).

The early committees consisted of a *Nominating Committee* that aids the Trustees in filling personnel vacancies; *Finance and Budgetary Committee* whose primary purpose is to see that A.A. Headquarters operations are always solvent, in good times and bad; *Public Information Committee* that combines professional public relations methods with the A.A. principle of attraction rather than promotion; *Literature Committee* that revises and updates existing books and pamphlets as well as creating needed new ones; and *General Policy Committee* where any matter of great and significant policy importance can be carefully discussed and hashed out before coming to the Board for final resolution. Today the General Policy Committee has become a General Sharing Session that provides regular opportunity for open discussion of any matter of concern regarding A.A. as a whole.

The writing on Concept 11 concludes with discussion of four principles applicable to A.A. personnel:

- The Board makes policy, but the corporate executives need ample freedom and authority to manage service operations and activities.
- Paid workers are to be compensated commensurate with the value of similar services in the commercial world. They do not get paid less just because they work for A.A.
- Staff rotate among jobs. Among other things, this assures available knowledge and experience in case of emergency situations. It also reduces temptations to destructive competition.
- Full "participation" of paid workers is highly important. All must feel that they are a part of the team.

As usual, Bill concludes the discussion of Concept 11 with a spiritual reference, saying that the only guarantee against the depredations of clashing personalities in A.A. Headquarters is the application of Step 12, a sustained willingness to practice spiritual principles in all our affairs.

This is a 12 part series written by members of the 12 Concepts Study Group in Reno, Nevada. Efforts were made to use simple, everyday language. Each concept is written by an individual member of the group and is not necessarily the opinion of AA as a whole or NNIG. We hope this series will help our community to understand the Concepts and bring interest to those wanting to know more about them.

NNIG & AREA EVENTS

EVENTS HOSTED BY NORTHERN NEVADA INTERGROUP
TO SUPPORT CENTRAL OFFICE

NNIG Monthly Speaker Meetings

Silver Legacy – 407 North Virginia Street, Reno 89501



Monthly Speaker Meeting
Doors open at 6:30 PM
Speaker at 7:00 PM
Limit of 50 Persons in Person
Zoom ID# 843 0142 9257



November 14, 2020

Host Group- NNIG

Interview with an Alcoholic - Sharon L.

Location- Silver Barron room 1-6

December 12, 2020

Host Group- RENVYPAA

Speaker- Kristin S. Reno, NV

Location- Silver Barron room 1-6

January 9, 2021

Host Group-TBA

Speaker-TBA

February 13, 2021

Host Group-TBA

Speaker- Christina R.(Reno NV.)

NNIG Speaker Chair: Chad S. (916) 295-8486
Need more info call: Central Office – (775) 355-1151

*BOOK OF
THE MONTH
Pick Up Your Copy
Today \$2.00 off*



*PAMPHLET OF
THE MONTH
Pick Up Your Copy
Today \$0.40*



MORE AREA EVENTS

**The Driars Club,
Triangle Club,
Alano Club and
Alano Club in Carson City
are open and available
for meetings.**

For Live, in-person meetings,
check with Central Office.
They are keeping a list of all
meetings currently open.

Thank you to all the Groups that Contributed in October

Alano Women in Recovery, Amen Maintenance Meeting, Caring and Sharing in Stead, Carson Sunday Morning Fire Station, Dayton Fellowship Hall, District 14, District 22, Deer Park Rebels, First Responders, Grupo La Nueva Luz, Grupo Nueva Vida, Minden Gardnerville Group, Mt Rose recovery Room, Our Group Big Book, Positive Acceptance Group, RTC Almost Heaven, RTC Beginners are Winners, RTC Little Rascals, RTC Big Book Study, RTC Grapevine/Big Book, RTC Monday Night Men's, RTC New Awakenings Group, RTC Sober N Sane, Sisters IN Sobriety, Sisters OF Sobriety, Southside Group, Truckee Rivers Men's Stag, Whitaker Park, Women's New Harmony



Central office report from Ronda H. November 3, 2020

It is gratitude month and we are doing something special in the office. Everyone that comes into the office we are asking to fill out a card on what they are grateful for and if they choose to write their name and phone number on the back for a prize at the end of the month. All gratitude cards are going up in the office. For the book of the month we have Experience, Strength & Hope \$2 Off, this is a collection of all the stories that have been in the first 3 editions of the Big Book. The pamphlet is the Co-Founders of Alcoholics Anonymous \$0.40. Volunteers hours- 105hrs
Calls into Central Office:


- Calls for AA help - 12
- Calls for Alanon/Alateen - 3
- Meeting information- 81
- Retail / merchandise- 32
- Other 12 step programs- 5
- Events - 0
- New to AA - 3
- Business/Central office- 54
- Total Calls- 190
- Visitors - 225

Ronda
Central Office Manager




NNIG BIRTHDAY CLUB

October Birthdays



Nancy A.
35 Years

Pete K.
27 Years



September 2020:

Linda G. 28 years

Don S. 19 years

Phil S. 19 years

Michael H. 25 years

Previous Birthdays

August:
Sandra D. 25 years

July 2020:
Joanne S. 9 Years,
Laurie 9 Years,
Barbara 45 Years

June 2020:
Ann G. 16 Years
Dave S. 43 Years
Nancy S. 29 Years
Deanna S. 36 Years
Kyle L. 38 Years
Paul C. 29 Years
John L. 33 Years
Donn T. 30 Years
Bill Mc. 31 Years

May 2020:
John L. 33 Years
Donn T. 30 Years
Bill Mc. 31 Years

April 2020:
Paul M. 29 years
Linda S. 15 years
Ron T. 9 years
Susanne T. 26 years
Skip 20 years

March 2020:
Kent L. 38 years
Kim D. 42 years

November 2019
Lizelle S. 22 years
Cheryl Z. 23 years
Mike Mc. 34 years

December 2019:
Sean S. 30 years

Did you know you can share your sobriety and gratitude in a practical way by joining the A.A. Birthday Club? Sign Up today and be featured in the Bracer Birthday Club section of the Bracer. Show your Support for your NNIG & Central Office, Join the Birthday Club. A donation of only one dollar for every year of your sobriety.
Envelopes available at Central Office,
NNIG Business Meeting or Intergroup Representatives

When attending an indoor meeting please be aware of the Covid-19 restrictions from the Governor and the facility where the meeting is held about face masks. Some meeting places have a "Mask Required", if you cannot wear a mask go to a different meeting!

Saturday Night Fever

7:00 pm
1631 Esmeralda Pl.
**Gardnerville/
Minden**

Saturday Grapevine

Noon
141 Industrial Way
Fallon, NV

AA ANSWERING SERVICE NUMBERS

Reno, Sparks, Carson City and all of Northern Nevada: (775) 355-1151
Las Vegas and all of Southern Nevada: (702) 598-1888
Mammoth Lake: (760) 934-3434
North Lake Tahoe: (530) 546-1126
South Lake Tahoe: (530) 541-1243
Susanville, CA: (775) 355-1151

Young at Heart

627 Sunnyside Dr.
Tuesday @ 7:30 AM
Reno

SUSANVILLE NOON DAILY

44 1/2 GAY ST.
SUSANVILLE, CA

N.N.I.G. STEERING COMMITTEE
 Last Tuesday of each month, 5:30 PM
 Central Office, 436 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks

N.N.I.G. BUSINESS MEETING
 First Tuesday of each month, 6:30 PM
 Alano Club, 1640 Prater Way, Sparks

**N.N.I.G. MONTHLY
 SPEAKER MEETING**
 7:00 PM Silver Legacy - Silver Baron A
 2nd Saturday of the month

N.N.I.G. H&I
 First Monday of each month, 5:30 PM
 Central Office 436 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks



District Meetings

DISTRICT-2 Second Thursday of each month, 6:30 PM-Reno
 Central Office, 436 S. Rock Blvd. Reno

DISTRICT 4 First Thursday of each month, 7:00 PM-
 Reno Triangle Club, 635 S. Wells Avenue Reno

DISTRICT 6 2nd Sunday of even numbered months-For
 information email district6@nevadaarea42.org

DISTRICT 8 First Sunday, 3:30 p.m. on odd months
 Call (760) 937-8407

DISTRICT 10A Third Sunday of every other month, 1:30 PM
 680 River St. Elko, NV

DISTRICT 10B Dark since 2017

DISTRICT 11 Only holds meetings 4 time a year, call DCM

DISTRICT 12 2nd Saturday of each Month at 5:00 PM- 457
 Esmeralda Street Wolf Center, Fallon NV

DISTRICT 14 3rd Wed of each "Odd" month at 6:00 PM -265
 Bear Street in Kings Beach CA

DISTRICT 16 Meeting is held 3rd Tuesday of the month
 Sparks Family Christian Church 510 Greenbrae
 Blvd 6:00PM-7:00PM

DISTRICT 18 DARK DISTRICT

DISTRICT 20 Third Saturday of Jan, Mar, May, Aug & Oct
 10:30 AM- Contact DCM @
district20@nevadaarea42.org for location

DISTRICT 22 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month 6:30 PM @
 Central Office

AREA CLUBS

Reno / Sparks Clubs
 Alano Club Sparks, 1640 Prater Way (775) 359-2727
 Driars Club Reno 345 S. Wells Avenue (775) 324-9210
 Triangle Club Reno 635 S Wells Avenue (775) 324-7977

Clubs outside Reno/Sparks Area
 Alano Club Carson City, 1800 HWY 50 East (775) 882-0443
 Bishop Alano Club (760) 873-6700
 Elko Alano Club (775) 738-4747
 Las Vegas Triangle Club (702) 435-0597
 South Lake Tahoe (530) 541-1243
 Susanville (775) 355-1151

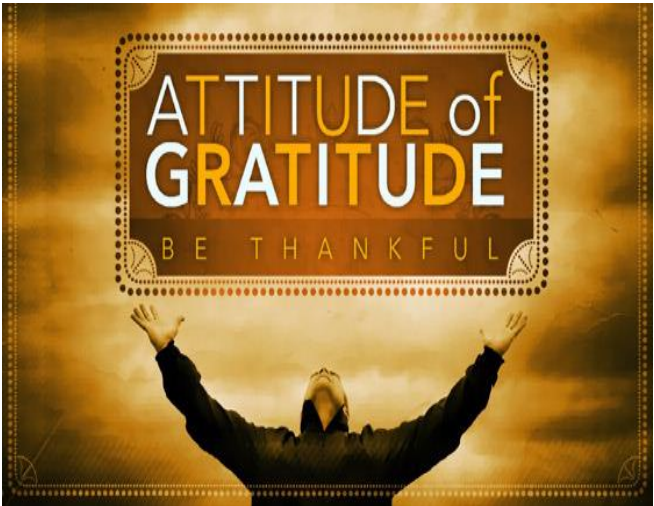


CALLING ALL LONGTIMERS!!!

DO YOU HAVE 35 YEARS OF SOBRIETY?
 IF SO, THE ARCHIVES WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!
 EACH MONTH, THE ARCHIVES WOULD LIKE TO PUT A LONGTIMER'S STORY IN THE BRACER.
BUT WE NEED YOUR STORIES!!!
CONTACT CYNDY:
nigarchives@GMAIL.COM
 OR RONDA: 775-335-1151

Drink Like A Fish

by Rick M.



NNIG/Central Office Group Contributions 2020

Group	October	YTD	Group	October	YTD
3rd Tradition Secular Group		50.00	Happy Hour Reno		142.50
A Vision for You		103.00	Incline Village Fellowship		
Alano Afternoon Serenity			Incline to be Sober		
Alano Brown Baggers			Jamesville Moment to Moment		
Alano Dawn Patrol			Kings Beach AA Golden Group		468.00
Alano Jaywalkers		48.60	Ladies of the Evening		58.77
Alano Sunday Morning Speaker			Ladies of the Lake		67.75
Alano Sunshine Group			Mammoth Good Life Group		50.00
Alano Women in Recovery	3.80	21.50	McGill NV Freedom Group		75.00
Amen Maintenance Meeting	100.00	100.00	Minden Language of the Heart		59.00
A Way Home		253.50	Minden Saturday Night Fever		300.00
Back Room Group		188.90	Minden Stephanie Way Group		320.00
Back to Basics Saturday Night		172.60	Minden/Gardnerville Group	21.24	179.56
Blairsden Graeagle Sister in Recovery		60.00	Minden Wednesday Night Live		
Battle Mountain Fellowship		15.00	Mt Rose Recovery Room	298.50	1378.80
Blue Canyon Airport group			NNIG Business Meeting		79.50
Caring & Sharing in Stead	54.13	252.89	Our Common Welfare		84.15
Carlin Crystal Light Group			Out and Sober		37.00
Carson AA Way of Life			Our Group Big Book	6.00	31.00
Carson After Shifters			Portola Group		
Carson Airport			Positive Acceptance Group	224.33	381.53
Carson Big Book Experience			Pyramid Way Discussion Group		52.50
Carson Brown Baggers		986.00	RTC Afternoon Delight		60.00
Carson Dr. Bob Nightngales		218.58	RTC Almost Heaven	100.00	275.00
Carson Early Birds		951.64	RTC Beginners are Winners	101.00	551.00
Carson Happy Hour		1150.00	RTC Aloha Group		48.60
Carson Jay-Walkers Men's			RTC How We Stay Stopped		80.00
Carson Language of the Heart			RTC Just for Today Women		135.00
Carson Men's NO BS Stag		78.41	RTC Coffee with Bill		75.00
Carson Sandbaggers		510.00	RTC Little Rascals	50.00	150.00
Carson Sisters in Sobriety		50.00	RTC Big Book Study	50.00	50.00
Carson Sunday Morning Fire Stati	75.00	141.40	RTC Men's Trudgers		
Carson Sunday Night Step Study		300.00	RTC Don't Trip Music Meeting		
Carson Valley Gratitude			RTC Grapevine/Big Book	20.00	20.00
Chester Saturday Night Group		75.40	RTC Monday Night Men's	146.00	246.00
Chester Fellowship		67.50	RTC New Awakenings Group	312.00	642.04
Choices		100.00	RTC Mid-Day Group		
Cornerstone Group		76.25	RTC Seniors in Sobriety		50.00
Dayton Fellowship Hall	400.00	600.00	RTC Sober N Sane	30.00	30.00
Dayton Friday Night Rule 62			RENVPA		445.60
Dayton Sunday Morning		46.25	Sisters in Sobriety	100.00	100.00
District 2		332.10	Silver Springs Groups		90.00
District 12			Sisters of Sobriety	92.00	214.17
District 14	50.00	500.00	Sober Readers		
District 22	50.00	449.00	Sierra City		
District 6			South Shore Group		60.00
Deer Park Rebels	154.50	2101.25	Southside Group	15.00	1232.80
Driars 4th Dimension		175.00	Serenity Sisters Big Book		111.10
Driar's Positive Step		180.00	South Reno on Sunday		178.77
Driar's Support Hose			Step 1		50.00
Fallon Grapevine Group		145.00	Susanville Fellowship		100.00
Eye Operner		63.00	Susanville Wed Womens		
Fallon Sunlight of the Spirit		200.00	Sunnyside Group		874.59
Fallon The Real Lunch Bunch			Susanville Thursday Night		
Fernley Groups			Tahoe City Fellowship		20.00
Fireside Group		120.00	The Rock Group		104.50
Galena Friday Night		308.00	Truckee River Men's Stag	500.00	2766.00
First Responders	25.00	25.00	Truckee Dawn Patrol		160.00
Ground Zero		892.50	Truckee Fellowship		
Grupo Accion		100.00	The Twilight Zone		105.00
Grupo Fe Y Esoeranza			Verdi Bookies		
Grupo La Nueva Luz	10.00	60.00	Virginia City Plug in the Jug		404.50
Grupo Latino		20.00	Westwood AA		75.00
Grupo Nueva Vida	15.00	15.00	Willing to go to any Lengths		685.67
Grupo Solo Por Hoy		20.00	Whole in the Ground Sunnyside		675.00
			Winnemucca Serenity Seekers		30.00
			Whitaker Park	40.75	222.75
			Women's 24 Hours A Day		108.81
			Women's New Beginnings		184.00
			Women's New Harmony	35.00	185.00
			Wednesday Night Beginners Meeting		65.00
			Yerington Group		
			Young at Heart		
			Total	3,079.25	27,749.23

Why Alcoholics Anonymous

Is Anonymous

BY: BILL W.

Tradition Eleven: *Our public relations policy is based on attraction, rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.*

Tradition Twelve: *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.*

AS never before the struggle for power, importance and wealth is tearing civilization apart. Man against man, family against family, group against group, nation against nation.

Nearly all those engaged in this fierce competition declare that their aim is peace and justice for themselves, their neighbors and their nations. . . give us power and we shall have justice; give us fame and we shall set a great example; give us money and we shall be comfortable and happy. People throughout the world deeply believe that, and act accordingly. On this appalling dry bender, society seems to be staggering down a dead end road. The stop sign is clearly marked. It says "Disaster."

What has this got to do with anonymity, and Alcoholics Anonymous? We of AA ought to know. Nearly everyone of us has traversed this identical dead end path. Powered by alcohol and self-justification, many of us have pursued the phantoms of self-importance and money right up to the disaster stop sign. Then came AA. We faced about and found ourselves on a new high road where the direction signs said never a word about power, fame or wealth. The new signs read, "This way to sanity and serenity--the price is self-sacrifice."

Our new book, *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, states that "Anonymity is the greatest protection our Society can ever have." It says also that "The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice." Let's turn to AA's twenty years of experience and see how we arrived at that belief, now expressed in our Traditions Eleven and Twelve. At the beginning we sacrificed alcohol. We had to, or it would have killed us. But we couldn't get rid of alcohol unless we made other sacrifices. Big shot-ism and phony thinking had to go. We had to toss self-justification, self-pity, and anger right out the window. We had to quit the crazy contest for personal prestige and big bank balances. We had to take personal responsibility for our sorry state and quit blaming others for it.

Were these sacrifices? Yes, they were. To gain enough humility and self-respect to stay alive at all we had to give up what had really been our dearest possession--our ambitions and our illegitimate pride. But even this was not enough. Sacrifice had to go much further. Other people had to benefit too. So we took on some Twelfth Step work; we began to carry the AA message. We sacrificed time, energy and our own money to do this. We couldn't keep what we had unless we gave it away.

Did we demand that our new prospects give us anything? Were we asking them for power over their lives, for fame for our good work or for a cent of their money? No, we were not. We found that if we demanded any of these things our Twelfth Step work went flat. So these natural desires had to be sacrificed; otherwise, our prospects received little or no sobriety. Nor, indeed, did we.

Thus we learned that sacrifice had to bring a double benefit, or else little at all. We began to know about the kind of giving of ourselves that had no price tag on it.

When the first AA group took form, we soon learned a lot more of this. We found that each of us had to make willing sacrifices for the group itself, sacrifices for the common welfare. The group, in turn, found that it had to give up many of its own rights for the protection and welfare of each member, and for AA as a whole. These sacrifices had to be made or AA couldn't continue to exist.

Out of these experiences and realizations, the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous began to take shape and substance. Gradually we saw that the unity, the effectiveness--yes, even the survival--of AA would always depend upon our continued willingness to sacrifice our personal ambitions and desires for the common safety and welfare. Just as sacrifice meant survival for the individual, so did sacrifice mean unity and survival for the group and for AA's entire Fellowship.

Viewed in this light, AA's Twelve Traditions are little else than a list of sacrifices which the experience of twenty years has taught us that we

must make, individually and collectively, if AA itself is to stay alive and healthy.

In our Twelve Traditions we have set our faces against nearly every trend in the outside world.

We have denied ourselves personal government, professionalism and the right to say who our members shall be. We have abandoned dogoodism, reform and paternalism. We refuse charitable money and prefer to pay our own way. We will cooperate with practically everybody, yet we decline to marry our Society to anyone. We abstain from public controversy and will not quarrel among ourselves about those things that so rip society as under--religion, politics and reform. We have but one purpose: to carry the AA message to the sick alcoholic who wants it.

We take these attitudes not at all because we claim special virtue or wisdom; we do these things because hard experience has told us that we must--if AA is to survive in the distraught world of today. We also give up rights and make sacrifices because we ought to--and, better yet, because we want to. AA is a power greater than any of us; it must go on living or else uncounted thousands of our kind will surely die. This we know.

Now where does anonymity fit into this picture? What is anonymity anyhow? Why do we think it is the greatest single protection that AA can ever have? Why is it our greatest symbol of personal sacrifice, the spiritual key to all our Traditions and to our whole way of life?

The following fragment of AA history will reveal, I deeply hope, the answer we all seek.

Years ago a noted ball player sobered up through AA. Because his comeback was so spectacular, he got a tremendous personal ovation in the press and Alcoholics Anonymous got much of the credit. His full name and picture, as a member of AA, was seen by millions of fans. It did us plenty of good; alcoholics flocked in. We loved this. I was specially excited because it gave me ideas.

Soon I was on the road, happily handing out personal interviews and pictures. To my delight, I found I could hit the front pages, just as he could. Besides, he couldn't hold his publicity pace, but I could hold mine. I only needed to keep traveling and talking. The local AA groups and newspapers did the rest. I was astonished when recently I looked at those old newspaper stories. For two or three years I guess I was AA's number one anonymity breaker.

So I can't really blame any AA who has grabbed the spotlight since. I set the main example myself, years ago.

At the time, this looked like the thing to do. Thus justified, I ate it up. What a bang it gave me when I read those two-column spreads about "Bill the Broker," full name and picture, the guy who was saving drunks by the thousands!

Then this fair sky began to be a little overcast. Murmurs were heard from AA skeptics who said, "This guy Bill is hogging the big time. Dr. Bob isn't getting his share." Or, again, "Suppose all this publicity goes to Bill's head and he gets drunk on us?"

This stung. How could they persecute me when I was doing so much good? I told my critics that this was America and didn't they know I had the right of free speech? And wasn't this country and every other run by big-name leaders? Anonymity was maybe okay for the average AA. But co-founders ought to be exceptions. The public certainly had a right to know who we were.

Real AA power-drivers (prestige-hungry people, folks just like me) weren't long in catching on. They were going to be exceptions too. They said that anonymity before the general public was just for timid people; all the braver and bolder souls, like themselves, should stand right up before the flash bulbs and be counted. This kind of courage would soon do away with the stigma on alcoholics. The public would right away see what fine citizens recovered drunks could make. So more and more members broke their anonymity, all for the good of AA. What if a drunk was photographed with the Governor? Both he and the Governor deserved the honor, didn't they? Thus we zoomed along, down the dead end road!

The next anonymity breaking development looked ever rosier. A close AA friend of mine wanted to go in for alcohol education. A department of a great university interested in alcoholism wanted her to go out and tell the general public that alcoholics were sick people, and that plenty could be done about it. My friend was a crack public speaker and writer. Could she tell the general public that she was an AA member? Well, why not? By using the name Alcoholics Anonymous she'd get fine publicity for a good brand of alcohol education and for AA too. I thought it an excellent idea and therefore gave my blessing.

AA was already getting to be a famous and valuable name. Backed by our name and her own great ability, the results were immediate. In nothing flat her own full name and picture, plus excellent accounts of her educational project, and of AA, landed in nearly every large paper in North America. The public understanding of alcoholism increased, the stigma on drunks lessened, and AA got new members. Surely there could be nothing wrong with that.

But there was. For the sake of this short-term benefit, we were taking on a future liability of huge and menacing proportions.

Presently an AA member began to publish a crusading magazine devoted to the cause of Prohibition. He thought Alcoholics Anonymous ought to help make the world bone dry. He disclosed himself as an AA member and freely used the AA name to attack the evils of whiskey and those who made it and drank it. He pointed out that he too was an "educator," and that his brand of education was the "right kind." As for putting AA into public controversy, he thought that was exactly where we should be. So he busily used AA's name to do just that. Of course, he broke his anonymity to help his cherished cause along.

This was followed by a proposal from a liquor trade association that an AA member take on a job of "education." People were to be told that too much alcohol was bad for anyone and that certain people--the alcoholics--shouldn't drink at all. What could be the matter with this?

The catch was that our AA friend had to break his anonymity; every piece of publicity and literature was to carry his full name as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. This of course would be bound to create the definite public impression that AA favored "education," liquor trade style.

Though these two developments never happened to get far, their implications were nevertheless terrific. They spelled it right out for us. By hiring out to another cause, and then declaring his AA membership to the whole public, it was in the power of an AA to marry Alcoholics Anonymous to practically any enterprise or controversy at all, good or bad. The more valuable the AA name became, the greater the temptation would be.

Further proof of this was not long in showing up. Another member started to put us into the advertising business. He had been commissioned by a life insurance company to deliver a series of twelve "lectures" on Alcoholics Anonymous over a national radio hookup. This would of course advertise life insurance and Alcoholics Anonymous--and *naturally our friend himself*--all in one good-looking package.

At AA Headquarters, we read the proposed lectures. They were about 50 per cent AA and 50 per cent our friend's personal religious convictions. This could create a false public view of us. Religious prejudice against AA would be aroused. So we objected.

Our friend shot back a hot letter saying that he felt "inspired" to give these lectures, and that we had no business to interfere with his right of free speech. Even though he was going to get a fee for his work, he had nothing in mind except the welfare of AA. And if we didn't know what was good for us, that was too bad! We and AA's Board of Trustees could go plumb to the devil. The lectures were going on the air.

This was a poser. Just by breaking anonymity and so using the AA name for his own purposes, our friend could take over our public relations, get us into religious trouble, put us into the advertising business and, for all these good works, the insurance company would pay him a handsome fee.

Did this mean that any misguided member could thus endanger our Society any time or any place simply by breaking anonymity and telling himself how much good he was going to do for us? We envisioned every AA advertising man looking up a commercial sponsor, using the AA name to sell everything from pretzels to prune juice.

Something had to be done. We wrote our friend that AA had a right of free speech too. We wouldn't oppose him publicly, but we could and would guarantee that his sponsor would receive several thousand letters of objection from AA members if the program went on the radio. Our friend abandoned the project.

But our anonymity dike continued to leak. AA members began to take us into politics. They began to tell State legislative committees--publicly, of course--just what AA wanted in the way of rehabilitation, money and enlightened legislation.

Thus, by full name and often by pictures, some of us became lobbyists. Other members sat on benches with police court judges, advising which drunks in the line-up should go to AA and which to jail.

Then came money complications involving broken anonymity. By this time, most members felt we ought to stop soliciting funds publicly for AA purposes. But the educational enterprise of my university-

sponsored friend had meanwhile mushroomed. She had a perfectly proper and legitimate need for money and plenty of it. Therefore, she asked the public for it, putting on drives to this end. Since she was an AA member and continued to say so, many contributors were confused. They thought AA was in the educational field or else they thought AA itself was raising money when indeed it was not and didn't want to.

So AA's name was used to solicit funds at the very moment we were trying to tell people that AA wanted no outside money. Seeing what happened, my friend, wonderful member that she is, tried to resume her anonymity. Because she had been so thoroughly publicized, this has been a hard job. It has taken her years. But she has made the sacrifice, and I here want to record my deep thanks on behalf of us all.

This precedent set in motion all sorts of public solicitations by AAs for money--money for drying-out farms, Twelfth Step enterprises, AA boarding houses, clubs, and the like--powered largely by anonymity breaking.

We were next startled to learn that we had been drawn into partisan politics, this time for the benefit of a single individual. Running for public office, a member splashed his political advertising with the fact that he was an AA and, by inference, sober as a judge! AA being popular in his State, he thought it would help him win on election day. Probably the best story in this class tells how the AA name was used to back up a libel lawsuit. A member, whose name and professional attainments are known on three continents, got hold of a letter which she thought damaged her professional reputation. She felt something should be done about this and so did her lawyer, also an AA. They assumed that both the public and AA would be rightfully angry if the facts were known. Forthwith, several newspapers headlined how Alcoholics Anonymous was rooting for one of its lady members--named in full, of course--to win her suit for libel. Shortly after this, a noted radio commentator told a listening audience, estimated at twelve million people, the same thing. This again proved that the AA name could be used for purely personal purposes. . .this time on a nationwide scale.

The old files at AA Headquarters reveal many scores of such experiences with broken anonymity. Most of them point up the same lessons.

They tell us that we alcoholics are the biggest rationalizers in the world; that fortified with the excuse we are doing great things for AA we can, through broken anonymity, resume our old and disastrous pursuit of personal power and prestige, public honors, and money--the same implacable urges that when frustrated once caused us to drink; the same forces that are today ripping the globe apart at its seams. Moreover, they make clear that enough spectacular anonymity breakers could someday carry our whole society down into that ruinous dead end with them.

So we are certain that if such forces ever rule our Fellowship, we will perish too, just as other societies have perished throughout human history. Let us not suppose for a moment that we recovered alcoholics are so much better or stronger than other folks; or that because in twenty years nothing has ever happened to AA, that nothing ever can. Our really great hope lies in the fact that our total experience, as alcoholics and as AA members, has at last taught us the immense power of these forces for self-destruction. These hard won lessons have made us entirely willing to undertake every personal sacrifice necessary for the preservation of our treasured Fellowship.

This is why we see anonymity *at the general public level* as our chief protection against ourselves, the guardian of all our Traditions and the greatest symbol of self-sacrifice that we know.

Of course no AA need be anonymous to family, friends, or neighbors. Disclosure there is usually fight and good. Nor is there any special danger when we speak at group or semi-public AA meetings, provided press reports *reveal first names only*.

But before the general public--press, radio, films, television and the like--the revelation of full names and pictures is the point of peril. This is the main escape hatch, for the fearful destructive forces that still lie latent in us all. Here the lid can and must stay down.

We now fully realize that 100 per cent personal anonymity before the public is just as vital to the life of AA as 100 per cent sobriety is to the life of each and every member. This is not the counsel of fear, it is the prudent voice of long experience. I am sure that we are going to listen; that we shall make every needed sacrifice. Indeed we have been listening. Today only a handful of anonymity breakers remain.

because I was once a breaker of anonymity myself. I thank God that years ago the voice of experience and the urging of wise friends took me out of that perilous path into which I might have led our entire Society. Thus I learned that the temporary or seeming good can often be the deadly enemy of the permanent best. When it comes to survival for AA, nothing short of our very best will be good enough.

We want to maintain 100 per cent anonymity for still another potent reason, one often overlooked. Instead of securing us more publicity, repeated self-serving anonymity breaks could severely damage the wonderful relation we now enjoy with press and public alike. We could wind up with a poor press and little public confidence at all.

For many years, news channels all over the world have showered AA with enthusiastic publicity, a never-ending stream of it, far out of proportion to the news values involved. Editors tell us why this is. They give us extra space and time because their confidence in AA is complete. The very foundation of that high confidence is, they say, our continual insistence on personal anonymity at the press level.

Never before had news outlets and public relations experts heard of a society that absolutely refused personally to advertise its leaders or members. To them, this strange and refreshing novelty has always been proof positive that AA is on the square; that nobody has an angle. This, they tell us, is the prime reason for their great good will. This is why, in season and out, they continue to carry the AA message of recovery to the whole world.

If, through enough anonymity lapses we finally caused the press, the public and our alcoholic prospects themselves to wonder about our motives, we'd surely lose this priceless asset; and, along with it, countless prospective members. Alcoholics Anonymous would not then be getting more good publicity; it would be getting less, and worse.

Therefore the handwriting on the wall is clear. Because most of us can already see it, and because the rest of us soon will, I'm fully confident that no such dark day will ever fall upon our Society.

For a long time now, both Dr. Bob and I have done everything possible to maintain the Tradition of Anonymity. Just before he died, some of Dr. Bob's friends suggested that there should be a suitable monument or mausoleum erected in honor of him and his wife, Anne, something befitting a Founder. Dr. Bob declined, with thanks. Telling me about this a little later, he grinned and said, "For Heaven's sake, Bill, why don't you and I get buried like other folks?"

Last summer I visited the Akron cemetery where Bob and Anne lie. Their simple stone says never a word about Alcoholics Anonymous. This made me so glad I cried. Did this wonderful couple carry personal anonymity too far when they so firmly refused to use the word "Alcoholics Anonymous," even on their own burial stone?

For one, I don't think so. I think that this great and final example of self-effacement will prove of more permanent worth to AA than could any spectacular public notoriety or fine mausoleum.

We don't have to go to Akron, Ohio, to see Dr. Bob's memorial. Dr. Bob's real monument is visible throughout the length and breadth of AA. Let us look again at its true inscription. . .one word only, which we AAs have written. That word is Sacrifice.

*Editor's note: delegates to AA's General Service Conference are at present considering the advisability of once more briefing publishers on AA's Tradition of anonymity at the public level. (A letter on this subject was mailed to all major newspapers, wire services and radio stations in 1950.) Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc. January, 1955
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SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

The unity, the effectiveness, and the survival of A.A. will always depend upon our continued willingness to give up some of our personal ambitions and desires for the common safety and welfare. Just as sacrifice means survival for the individual alcoholic, so does sacrifice mean unity and survival for the group and for A.A.'s entire fellowship.

A.A. Comes of Age, PP.287-288

- Vitality Unlimited Treatment Facility in **Carson City** is looking for people on Saturdays 6-7pm, It will be on Zoom
- Always looking for people for 12 Step call List in all of Northern Nevada
- West Hills in Reno needs a lot of people to go into meetings on property
- There are many committee chair positions open with NNIG
 - Corrections Chair
 - Sunshine Chair
 - CPC Chair
 - Events Chair
 - Intergroup Representative to Steering Committee
- If anyone is interested in these Chair positions go to the next NNIG Business meeting Every 1st Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM at the Alano Club in Sparks or on Zoom ID# 831 8146 4811

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