

# NNIG MONTHLY MEETING SPEAKER



May 8, 2021  
Chris G. Reno, NV  
Jay Walkers  
Speaker at 7:00  
Zoom Meeting ID# 843 0142 9257

## May, 2021

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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



# The Bracer

## NORTHERN NEVADA INTERGROUP

### The Fifth Step - a Way to Stay High

BY: E. S. | BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

#### He felt he had found the secret of flying without a machine

OUR CO-FOUNDER Bill W. indicates in the Big Book that a return to drinking is a definite possibility if the Fifth Step is not taken conscientiously. I believe this. I have had faith in the AA program since my first meeting.

In the depth of my despair while drinking, and not thinking that I was an alcoholic, I was sure there was a force somewhere that could help me. It never occurred to me to stop drinking. The sheer logic of that never entered my mind. And I did not consider AA. But I was searching. When I arrived at AA, I knew the mirage of help had become a reality.

I realized that I needed all of AA if I wanted more than bits and pieces of sobriety. That meant taking all Twelve Steps. I began reading about them. I am sad for the people who do not read the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. This is the most meaningful book I own. It is a million wise books in one. It's miraculous how AA books grow in impact every time I read them.

I was interested in Bill's explanation of the Fifth Step in the Big Book. In meetings, I told people about my drinking exploits, but something at the perimeter of my mind kept nudging me and saying, "They know all this. This isn't the Fifth Step. Tell them. . . something painful!"

I took the question to my sponsor. He talked about the misguided drive that some people have to tell all, over and over and over again. He advised me to look for "the exact nature" of my wrongs, instead of just drawing lurid pictures. In preparation for the Fifth Step, he said, I should think through the Fourth, counting my assets as well as my liabilities ("something painful"). "The Steps are there to help you, kid," he said, "not hurt you."

I had already gone the clergy, doctor, and analyst routes. Now I wanted that "other human being" to be an AA. So, I finally picked one and began talking as honestly as I could. When I finished, guess what this guy said. (I don't have to tell any long-time member.) He said, "Is that all? Wait till I tell you about me..."

I felt as if I had discovered the secret of man being able to fly without a machine. What a high! And a safe one. I had been introverted and tense. I had been blocked by a fat ego that made sharing impossible, by a lack of communication, by a fear of love. The Fifth Step swept away all those barricades.

With some humility, I could begin to find joy in the simple delights of life. Sober-and-serene is much better than drunk-and-depressed. I plan not to drink today. The safest way I know to avoid it is to keep my ego down while building up my self-esteem, and the surest way to do that is to continue taking the Tenth Step--a comforting continuation of the work I finally did in the Fifth Step.

I believe in God. I have no secrets, and I fear no man. I am not anxious about death. I am alive, forever, within this 24 hours. And I stay high all the time, high on life, thanks to the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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Elections for Steering Committee & NNIG Chairpersons  
June 1st. See all positions available on Page 5!

## Concept V

*Throughout our world services structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.*

Newcomers to A.A.’s General Service Conference are often surprised at the pains taken by the presiding officer to make sure the minority has a second opportunity to present its views. Even after extensive debate on an issue, followed by a vote in which a “substantial unanimity” is reached, those opposed are polled individually to see if they wish to speak further to their minority view. In fact, numerous instances can be cited in which this minority view is so compelling the Conference has then reversed itself. This is A.A.’s “Right of Appeal” in action, and Bill says the same principle should apply to meetings of our area committees, trustee committees and boards. On an issue of grave importance, the minority has the actual duty of presenting its views. This “Right of Appeal” recognizes that minorities frequently can be right; that even when they are in error they still perform a most valuable service when they compel a thorough-going debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority. “Trusted servants,” according to Bill, “do for the groups what the groups cannot or should not do for themselves.” And in exercising their “Right of Decision” (see Concept III), trusted servants are almost always “a small but truly qualified minority” — whether in the form of area committees, staffs, boards or even the General Service Conference itself. It is incumbent upon them, therefore, in their own meetings, to pay special deference to the minority voice.

This Concept also warns us of “the tyranny of the majority” and points out that in A.A., a simple majority is seldom sufficient basis for a decision. That’s why we usually require at least a two-thirds majority. Lacking this, it is preferable to delay the decision; or in the case of an election following the “Third Legacy Procedure,” to “go to the hat.” (See Service Manual, Chapter I.) The “Right of Appeal” also permits any person in the service structure, whether paid or volunteer, to petition for redress of a personal grievance. He or she can complain directly to the General Service Board, without prejudice or fear of reprisal.

A A's

### Recovery Step Five:

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

Three

### Unity Tradition Five:

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

Legacies

### Service Concept Five:

*“Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.”*

# 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



**May 8, 2021**

**Speaker- Chris G - Reno, NV**

**Host Group- Jaywalkers**

**Location- silver barron room 1-6**

**June 12, 2021**

**Speaker- Xochitl N - Santa Monica, CA**

**Host Group- RTC Almost Heaven**

**Location- silver barron room 1-6**

**July 10, 2021**

**Speaker- Bob D - Las Vegas, NV**

**Host Group- Alano Positive Acceptance Group**

**Location- Silver Barron Room**

**August 14, 2021**

**Speaker- Alan J - Reno, NV**

**Host Group- Minden/ Gardnerville Group**

**Location- silver barron room 1-6**

**September 11, 2021**

**Speaker- Cathi W - Reno, NV**

**Host Group- A Way Home**

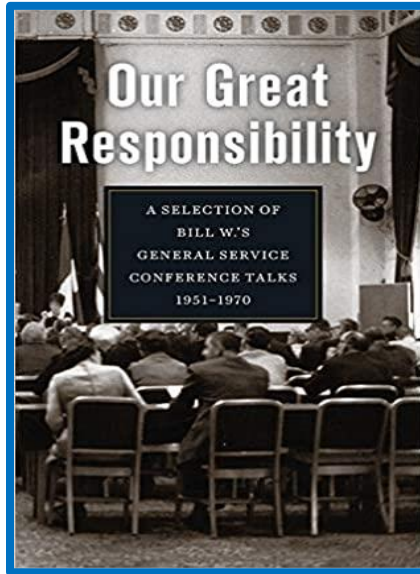
**Location- silver barron room 1-6**

NNIG Speaker Chair: Chad S. - (916) 295-8486

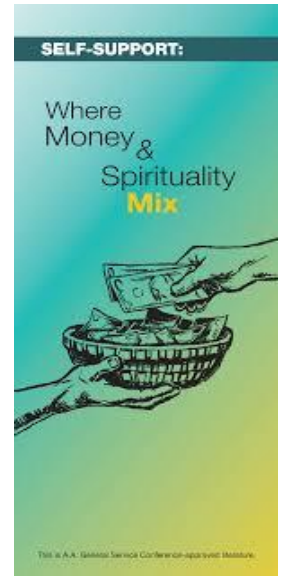
Need more info call: Central Office – (775) 355-1151

Join us for dinner at Millie's 24 inside the Eldorado @ ~5pm with the speaker

*BOOK OF  
THE MONTH \$13  
FREE with purchase get Reprint  
of original Big Book*



*PAMPHLET OF  
THE MONTH  
Where money & Spirituality  
Mix FREE*



## TRADITION 5

BY: MITCH | SAROSOTA, FLORIDA

### LOOKING FOR A HAND

I was at my regular open discussion meeting, and there was a newcomer attending. I began a list of phone numbers of group members and gave it to him during the meeting. He asked, "What is this?" I explained. He told me he wanted a sponsor. I'm also new in the program, so I felt that I might not be the best choice out of the group. I suggested that he raise his hand and share.

After he shared that he just got out of detox and needed a sponsor, the chairperson asked if all people willing to be sponsors would raise their hands. Out of about fifteen men with many years of sobriety, not one hand went up. After the meeting, I was the only one who walked up to the newcomer and told him to call me.

I am embarrassed by our group's actions. Many members often express their gratitude to AA and their willingness to give back. But when the chance was right in front of them, nobody volunteered.

I wonder how many of us talk the talk, but don't walk the walk?

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## FOUNDER'S DAY PICNIC 2021



**Bowers Mansion, Washoe Valley**

**Saturday June 12<sup>th</sup> 11-3pm**



**Kids & Adult Games**  
**Hamburgers & Hot Dogs**  
**Food served between**  
**Noon-2pm**

**Pot Luck- Please bring only**  
**sealed store bought items**  
**\$5 Suggested Contribution**

For more information call Central Office

775-355-1151

## Central office report from Ronda H. May 4, 2021

The book of the month is still *Our Great Responsibility* and receive a copy of the reprint of the big book. There have been 25 sold of the 50 that was ordered. We still have masks at the office only \$8 we are still going to need these for a while. We have some new visitors chips, they are \$1.40, the chips have the **RENO** arch on it. We need to keep updated on the meetings so please call the office or email of any changes.

Volunteer Hours: 126.5

### Calls into Central Office:

- Calls for AA help - 7
- Calls for Alanon/Alateen - 3
- Meeting information- 68
- Retail/merchandise- 17
- Other 12 step programs- 6
- Events - 6
- New to AA - 8
- Business/Central office- 67
- Total Calls- 182
- Visitors - 244

Ronda  
Central Office Manager




## April 2020:

**Previous Birthdays**

**MARCH BIRTHDAYS**

Kent L. 39 years  
Kimmi 44 Years  
February  
Tom C. -- 40 Years  
Skip P. -- 21 years  
January 2021  
Joan H. 50 Years  
December 2020  
Cindy M. 32 Years  
Anonymous 33 Years  
November 2020:  
R Jeh H. 34 Years  
Lizell S. 23 Years  
October 2020:  
Nancy H. 35 Years, Pat F. 27 Years  
Sharon F. 36 Years  
September 2020:  
Linda G. 28 years, Dan S. 19 years  
Phil S. 19 years, Michael H. 25 years  
August 2020:  
Sandra D. 25 years  
July 2020:  
Joanne S Years, Laurie 9 Years,  
Barbara 43 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

No Birthdays this month????



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  
Hybrid 7:00 pm  
Masks required  
United Methodist  
Church  
386 Main St.  
Chester, CA**

*Serentiy on Sunday  
9:00am  
635 S. Wells Ave  
Reno*

**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

**Friday 6:30pm  
1550 Ramsey  
Light House  
Assembly of God  
Silver Springs**

**INCLINE VILLAGE  
THURS  
7:00 - 8:00 PM  
The Village Church  
736 McCourry Blvd**

**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  
 2<sup>nd</sup> 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** Virtually contact DCM

**DISTRICT 4** First Thursday of each month, 7:00 PM-  
 Zoom ID: 876 7717 4234 PW: District4

**DISTRICT 6** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of even numbered months-  
 For information email [district6@nevadaarea42.org](mailto: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** 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:district20@nevadaarea42.org) for location

**DISTRICT 22** 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

The office will be closed on the following holidays

May 31 – Memorial Day

Saturday June 12<sup>th</sup> - Founders Day

Monday July 4- Independence Day

Monday September 6 - Labor Day

Friday October 29 - Nevada Day

Thursday November 11 - Veterans Day

November 25 & 26 - Thanksgiving

December 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

### POSITIONS AVAILABLE FOR ELECTIONS JUNE 1, 2021

POSITIONS	SOBRIETY
Steering Committee	
CHAIRPERSON	5 Years
VICE-CHAIR	5 Years
SECRETARY	2 Years
TREASURE	5 Years
2-INTERGROUP LIASONS	2 Years
<b>NNIG Chairpersons</b>	
Activities Events - Chair	4 Years
Answering Service - Chair	2 Years
CPC/PI - Cooperation with the Professional Community - Chair	2 Years
Public Information - Chair	2 Years
H&I - Chair	2 Years
Bridging the Gap - Chair	2 Years
Corrections - Chair	2 Years
Treatment - Chair	2 Years
Pink Can, Literature	2 Years
Monthly Speaker Meeting - Chair	2 Years
Sunshine Committee - Chair	2 Years
Web Site - Chair	2 Years

**Look in the Operating Procedures on the website at [nnig.org](http://nnig.org) for qualifications for these positions, find the one that fits you, or someone you know, and come to the June meeting for elections.**



Drink Like A Fish

by Rick M.



## NNIG/Central Office Group Contributions 2021

Group	April	YTD	Group	April	YTD
3rd Tradition Secular Group			Happy Hour Reno	400.00	400.00
A Vision for You			Incline to be Sober		
A Way Home		140.00	Incline Village Fellowship		
Alano Afternoon Serenity			Jamesville Moment to Moment		
Alano Brown Baggers			Kings Beach AA Golden Group		
Alano Dawn Patrol			Ladies of the Evening		
Alano Jaywalkers	175.53	175.53	Ladies of the Lake	18.34	127.59
Alano Sunday Morning Speaker			Mammoth Good Life Group		
Alano Sunshine Group			McGill NV Freedom Group		
Alano Women in Recovery			Minden Language of the Heart		40.00
Amen Maintenance Meeting	276.00	276.00	Minden Saturday Night Fever		
Back Room Group	76.02	175.58	Minden Stephanie Way Group		226.00
Back to Basics Saturday Night			Minden Wednesday Night Live		100.00
Battle Mountain Fellowship			Minden/Gardnerville Group		
Blairsdon Graeagle Sister in Recovery			Mt Rose Recovery Room	430.15	1350.07
Beginners are Winners On-Line Group		214.50	NNIG Business Meeting	11.50	11.50
Caring & Sharing in Stead	295.25	568.97	Our Common Welfare		
Carlin Crystal Light Group			Our Group Big Book		50.00
Carson AA Way of Life			Out and Sober		
Carson After Shifters		250.00	Portola Group		
Carson Airport			Positive Acceptance Group		94.53
Carson Big Book Experience		118.00	Pyramid Way Discussion Group		60.00
Carson Brown Baggers		962.80	RENVPA		
Carson Dr. Bob Nightngales			RTC Afternoon Delight	100.00	150.00
Carson Early Birds		1149.22	RTC Almost Heaven	150.00	600.00
Carson Happy Hour	266.56	1166.56	RTC Aloha Group	1500.00	1500.00
Carson Jay-Walkers Men's		200.00	RTC Beginners are Winners		
Carson Language of the Heart			RTC Big Book Study		184.00
Carson Men's NO BS Stag			RTC Coffee with Bill	81.00	81.00
Carson Sandbaggers		100.00	RTC Don't Trip Music Meeting	50.00	151.00
Carson Sisters in Sobriety			RTC Grapevine/Big Book		25.00
Carson Sunday Morning Fire Station			RTC How We Stay Stopped		60.00
Carson Sunday Night Step Study			RTC Just for Today Women		113.25
Carson Women's Night Out		200.00	RTC Mid-Day Group		67.26
Crystal Bay Nooners	50.00	250.00	RTC Little Rascals		97.50
Chester Fellowship		250.00	RTC Recien Liegados		
Chester Saturday Night Group			RTC Mid-Day Group ON-LINE	45.00	92.87
Choices		100.00	RTC Monday Night Men's		
Cornerstone Group			RTC New Awakenings Group	401.68	620.11
Dayton Fellowship Hall			RTC Seniors in Sobriety		150.00
Dayton Friday Night Rule 62			RTC Sober N Sane		30.00
Dayton Sunday Morning			Serenity Sisters Big Book		
Deer Park Rebels		66.00	Serenity on Sundays		150.00
District 12			Silver Springs Groups		
District 14	50.00	450.00	Sisters in Sobriety		199.40
District 2		400.00	Sisters of Sobriety SOS	81.00	81.00
District 22	51.00	160.00	Sober Readers		
District 6			South Reno on Sunday	70.39	70.39
Driars 4th Dimension	1.66	31.66	South Shore Group	60.00	60.00
Driar's Positive Step			Southside Group	218.72	734.18
Driar's Oldtimer, Newcomers	50.00	50.00	Step 1		
Eye Opener	253.00	301.60	Sunnyside Group	470.00	538.60
Fallon Grapevine Group		65.00	Susanville Fellowship		
Fallon Grapevine Group-Online	40.00	40.00	Susanville Thursday Night		
Fallon The Real Lunch Bunch			Susanville Wed Womens		
Fernley Groups		400.00	Tahoe City Fellowship		
Fireside Group		40.00	The Rock Group		
First Responders			The Twilight Zone		50.00
Galena Friday Night		133.00	Truckee Dawn Patrol	200.00	900.00
Ground Zero		1200.00	Truckee Fellowship		235.80
Grupo Accion	40.00	40.00	Truckee River Men's Stag	300.00	1062.00
Grupo Fe Y Esoeranza	20.00	20.00	Verdi Bookies		
Grupo La Nueva Luz	10.00	40.00	Virginia City Plug in the Jug		212.00
Grupo Latino			Wednesday Night Beginners Meeting		
Grupo Nueva Vida			Westwood AA		
Grupo Solo Por Hoy			Whitaker Park		
Jamesville God Grant Me		141.27	Whole in the Ground Sunnyside		275.00
			Willing to go to any Lengths	160.00	630.00
			Winnemucca Serenity Seekers		
			Women's 24 Hours A Day		
			Women's New Beginnings		
			Women's New Harmony	125.00	155.00
			Yerington Group		
			Young at Heart		
			<b>Total</b>	<b>6,527.80</b>	<b>21,610.74</b>

# THE WASHINGTONIANS

## --WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

BY: BRAD B. | SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Maybe I should have known I was an alcoholic when I went to school so drunk that I couldn't make it to class, and instead passed out in my high school's basement boiler room for six hours. Or when I misjudged the amount of 150 proof rum it would take to make my senior class retreat tolerable, and vomited all over the retreat director. Perhaps the bare fact of my daily drinking and the associated lies and theft it took to maintain it should have clued me in to the fact that I had a problem with alcohol. It didn't: my denial was etched in granite, and the well-intentioned teachers, parents, and coaches trying to divert me from the disastrous path I was on were easily ignored.

After several turbulent, painful years, I came to realize that the immense loneliness and despair that I felt related somehow to my drinking. Hoping to learn to "drink like a gentleman"--I couldn't comprehend a life without alcohol--I made a phone call one night that led me to Alcoholics Anonymous, via a local detox center. In the rooms of AA I learned the fatal nature of my illness, and in the Big Book and fellowship found a power that enabled me to stay sober one day at a time. I had just turned twenty-one years old. The power that I found in Alcoholics Anonymous has kept me sober for nearly five years now, and has given me a life beyond my wildest dreams. Marriage, a house, an interesting job, an education--all of these things have come my way as a result of being sober and applying the principles I've learned in AA to my daily affairs. Even more importantly, I've developed a deeply satisfying spiritual life as a result of working the Steps as directed by the Big Book and a loving, caring sponsor. The past five years, however, have had a few "downs" as well as plenty of "ups" and a recent one of those "downs" has reminded me of the importance of the concept of singleness of purpose, both to my personal recovery and to the survival of our Fellowship. The phrase "singleness of purpose" can be found in the account of the Fifth Tradition in the "Twelve and Twelve." Tradition Five itself reads "Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." Our Preamble, printed in the Grapevine, also discusses singleness of purpose: "Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety." The chapters on Traditions Five and Six in the "Twelve and Twelve" eloquently describe how absolutely essential this concept is to the survival of AA, stating "The very life of our Fellowship requires the preservation of this principle." The "Twelve and Twelve" goes on (in the chapter on Tradition Ten) to describe the Washingtonian Movement, a nineteenth-century movement among alcoholics that was, initially, similar to AA in many ways. Over one hundred thousand alcoholics sobered up with the Washingtonians, before the movement self-destructed in the chaos caused by involvement in a myriad of issues unrelated, or only remotely related, to alcoholism. Lacking singleness of purpose, the movement collapsed. The experience of the Washingtonians provides compelling evidence for the importance of AA focusing directly and exclusively on the issue of alcoholism.

My strong belief in the importance of the principle of singleness of purpose for the Fellowship of AA has some important consequences. It means that when I go to a meeting, I introduce myself as an alcoholic, period. Like many alcoholics (including Bill W.--see page seven of the Big Book), my story includes drug use, ranging from pot to crack to LSD. I don't hesitate to share this at meetings when it is relevant, as it is part of the experience that brought me to AA, and a part of my story that many other young people, especially, can relate to. However, I think it is extremely important to emphasize that I am an alcoholic, and that in meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous we discuss the common solution to alcoholism that we share. If I'm an "alcoholic and an addict" and you're an "alcoholic and a compulsive overeater" and the person leading the meeting is an "alcoholic and a compulsive gambler" we begin to lose our commonality. I become slightly different from you--an attitude that I believe is potentially fatal. Moreover, we've started down the slippery slope that doomed the Washingtonians. Our program is no longer focused on the single purpose of recovery from alcoholism, but instead is tackling the issues of drug addiction, gambling, codependency, etc.--very serious problems, undoubtedly, but outside the scope of Alcoholics Anonymous. A careful reading of Traditions Five, Six, and Ten has convinced me of how dangerous this is to the continued existence of our Fellowship, and it is my responsibility as an AA member to ensure that the hand of Alcoholics Anonymous is always available in the future to reach out to the suffering alcoholic. I've found that the concept of singleness of purpose applies to my life in an even more immediate, personal way as well. When I got sober at twenty-one, I didn't have an established career to return to, a family to reunite, or even all that much wreckage of the past to clean up. The future was a blank slate, and the newly found freedom of sobriety made the possibilities overwhelming. I immediately jumped into school, work, and relationships--and suddenly didn't have time for meetings. Life would get chaotic and painful and I'd make my way back to the Fellowship and principles just long enough to soak up a little bit of serenity by osmosis, then head back out into the fray. Fortunately, some AA members were able to point out to me the insanity of my actions, and I was able to alter my behavior before it led me to the inevitable drink.

I discovered that in order to maintain any semblance of spirituality and serenity in my life, I needed to live by the principle of singleness of purpose. Like the Fellowship as a whole, I have but one primary purpose: to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety. The same three reasons that support our group commitment to singleness of purpose underlie my personal commitment: (1) duty--I can repay those who have given me this gift by giving it away to others; (2) love--I've learned compassion for those still suffering and want to help others; and (3) self-preservation--I must help others in order to stay sober myself. I inevitably find that when I'm able to stay focused on my primary purpose, my "secondary purposes" (school, jobs, relationships) work themselves out quite satisfactorily. For me, the concept of singleness of purpose has become the bedrock of my personal program of recovery, just as it is the fundamental principle supporting the structure of our entire Fellowship.

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