

NEWS & notes

Twin Valley Group Offers New Beginners Meeting

On Monday, May 3 the Twin Valley Group initiated a Beginners Meeting coupled with their regular 7:30 pm meeting at the Morgantown Community Church, Rt. 23 & Twin Valley Road, Morgantown PA. That's right... same place, same time, two meetings!

As COH Round Up Nears More Volunteers Needed

With 50 reservations already taken for the second annual Circle of Hope Roundup Speakers



conference in Reading, committee members are busy and are looking for additional volunteers as the three-day event draws near.

Scheduled for June 4 through 6 at the Perkins Auditorium of Penn State Berks Campus, the conference will feature a number of guest AA and Alanon speakers from across the country.

Registration forms are available **o n - l i n e** at www.CircleOfHopeRoundup.com.

Teeing Off for Serenity At Annual Golf Outing

The Second Annual Lancaster County Serenity Golf Outing will be held June 5 at 1 pm at the Overbrook Golf Course, Rt. 501 North in Lancaster. This will be a shotgun start. Check-in is at 12 noon. Cost is \$200 per team (4-man scramble). Food, prizes, and fun are included.

Make checks payable to LCSGO, and mail to c/o Don Ulmer, 216 Fieldcrest Ln., Ephrata, PA 17522.

For more info call Don Ulmer at 717-598-5864 or Matt Leisure at 717-781-6991.

From Simple Beginnings Leesport Group to Mark 28 Years

The Leesport Group of AA will be celebrating their 28th Anniversary on Saturday, May 15 at the Trinity Union Church in Leesport. The anniversary is an open meeting, so feel free to bring family and friends.

Festivities begin at 8 pm with food and fellowship featuring guest speaker, Joe R. from Philadelphia.

The group will hold its regular weekly meeting at 9:30 pm following the festivities. Trinity Union Church is located on Rt. 61 next to the car wash.

Here is an excerpt from the group's history:

Why was the group started?

Frank G. needed a meeting everyday and wanted a local meeting on Saturday night. He couldn't get to a meeting because he baby sat. He lived in the apartment house near the church where the Leesport Group eventually met. His wife worked until 9 on a Saturday night. Once the meeting place was secured, the meeting time was set at 9:30 pm so his wife could pick up their



daughter at the church on her way home from work.

Did your group encounter any special problems or growing pains?

As with a lot of groups, (we were) heading nowhere because of having few or no group officers, lack of knowledge of the

Traditions, people holding offices in more than one group, no real home group structure, lack of business meetings etc.

Then, due to the group's GSR persistence and enthusiasm about a group inventory, the Leesport Group held it's first group inventory on November 22, 1992. The group was restructured according to the guidelines suggested in our A.A. literature, in particular, *The A.A. Group*.

Through trial and error a lot of changes came about after the first inventory meeting.

(Ed. Note: The Leesport Group currently offers babysitting at their weekly meetings.)

RBI To Host Day of Softball Fun

On Saturday, May 29 RBI will stand for Runs Batted In, and the only thing loaded will be the bases as the Intergroup hosts a fun-filled day of softball, food and fellowship.

The games are set to take place from 1 to 5 pm at Morningstar Fellowship, 100 Limekiln Rd., Bechtelsville. So grab you bats, mitts, balls, families, sponsors, sponsorees and get ready to play ball! There is no rain date for the event. Call Carrie C. at 610-404-1518.



Archive Committee Seeks Volunteers

The Archive Committee of RBI, having been tasked with compiling and organizing the histories of area groups among other things, is looking for a few volunteers to assist in their mission. The committee meets the second and fourth Sundays of each month and provides an excellent means of service as well as gaining some insight into the founding and development of the fellowship in our area. Persons interested in joining can call Henry, chairperson, at 484-794-6363

June RBI Meeting Rescheduled

Due to a scheduling conflict, the June monthly meeting of the Reading-Berks Intergroup has been rescheduled for Tuesday, June 29. The meeting will still be held at the Calvary Baptist Church, 510 Park Ave. in Reading at beginning 7:30 pm.

READING-BERKS INTERGROUP

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commitments

INTERGROUP TWELFTH STEP

**Caron Adolescent
Extended Care - Men
Sundays 7 pm**

- May 2 Caron Alumni
- May 9 Leesport Group
- May 16 Robesonia Group
- May 23 Happy Hour Group
- May 30 Lifeline Group
- June 6 Caron Alumni

**Wernersville State Hosp.
See Guard in Building 34
Mondays 7 pm**

- May 3 Robesonia Group
- May 10 CCC
- May 17 Gibraltar Group
- May 24 New Life Group
- May 31 Hilltop Group
- June 7 Sober at Six

**Reading Detox Unit
Every Other Tuesday 8 pm**

- May 4 Walnut St. Group
- May 18 New Life Group
- June 1 Wyomissing Group

**Reading Detox Unit
Thursdays 8 pm**

- May 6 Shillington Lifeline
- May 13 New Millenium Group
- May 20 Birdsboro Group
- May 27 Congo Group
- June 4 Walnut St. Group

I am responsible, when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that... I am responsible!!

**Caron Adolescent
Extended Care - Women
Sundays 7 pm**

- May 2 Caron Alumni
- May 9 Happy Hour Group
- May 16 Women's Sat. Morning
- May 23 Morgantown Group
- May 3 Walnut St. Group
- June 6 Caron Alumni

**St. Joe's Hospital MH Unit
3rd Floor Reed & Walnut Sts.
Mondays 7:30 pm**

- May 3 Walnut St. Group
- May 10 Alpha Group
- May 17 Congo Group
- May 24 Walnut St. Group
- May 31 Robesonia Group
- June 7 Alpha Group

**Caron Foundation
Thursdays 8 pm**

- May 6 Hilltop Group
- May 13 611 Washington St. Group
- May 20 Robesonia Group
- May 27 YASNY Group
- June 3 New Berlinville Group

**Caron Foundation
Young Adult Female
Fridays 8 pm**

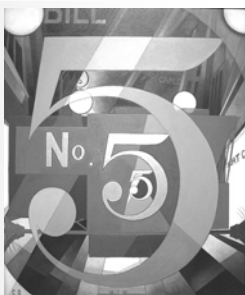
- May 7 Women's Sat. Morning
- May 14 Sober at Six
- May 21 New Life Group
- May 28 Sober at Six
- June 4 Women's Sat. Morning.

If you take a commitment for your group, make sure the person agreeing to go has a substitute if they can't make it. If you would like to go to the St. Joe's meeting, contact the hospital first to see if there are any alcoholics there: 610-378-2092. *When sending group members to commitments, it's great to double up! Send a newer and an older member, and everyone will benefit!! PLEASE make sure that someone honors the commitment that you take for your group.* These may be the only meetings that the patients may have. Remember, "You Are Responsible", when you commit your time. PLEASE don't let these commitments go unattended. If you cannot make your commitment please notify Steve at 610-750-4019.

On the 5th Step. . .

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

We have made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves; at least we have tried, and even though our first efforts at this sort of thing are far off the mark, we have come up with an ugly assortment of defects of character and shortcomings. Were we to stop at this point, that is after completing the 4th Step, there would be nothing for us to do but get very drunk in order to forget it all.



Our program, however, provides for carrying on the process to recovery and this 5th Step is an important link between the recognition of our faults and their correction.

The 5th Step encourages us to think of our faults in specific terms and helps us to be honest in our thinking by requiring us to consider our faults from several viewpoints. We consider how God regards a fault, how our neighbor regards it, how we ourselves regard it, and we force ourselves to take a position on how we will act in the future.

Further, by admitting to someone else the exact nature of our wrongs we are doing something about them, not just sitting and bemoaning them. We are practicing humility and recognizing our dependence on others which helps us to overcome the self-obsession that was leading us to destroy ourselves.

All of this is another way of saying that confession is good for the soul. It is one of the earliest discovered spiritual laws and its observance is just as necessary to our well-being as observances of any of the natural laws we take for granted.

The only reason for attempting to analyze how it works is to make clear why it should be a continuing process. Our spiritual development proceeds in a spiral. The first time around the circuit, or through the Steps, we accomplish much, learning more about the preceding Steps as we perform each subsequent one.

Because we learn something that is applicable to an earlier Step after we have passed it we are impelled to make the circuit again to apply our greater knowledge. We move on a slightly more advanced level the second time around, but again we recognize development as we proceed and we know that we're in a position to do a still better job than formerly--and so the spiral continues--onward and upward and ever away from the kind of thinking that leads to the first drink.

Bob D.
Garden City, Long Island, New York

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Exactly What Happened

"Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it?" So begins the discussion of Step Five in chapter six of the Big Book.

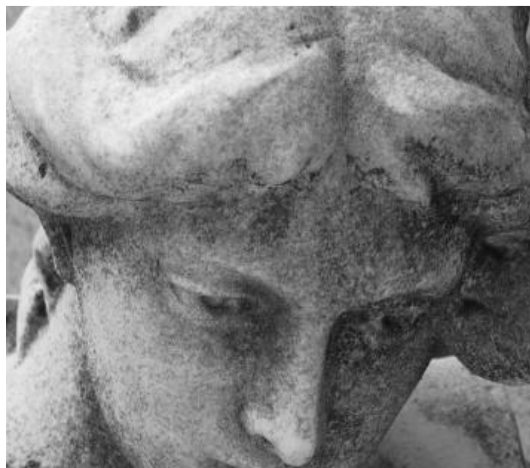
In one of the early issues of the Grapevine, the author of a piece on this Step described it as a link between recognizing our faults (Fourth) and doing something to correct them (Sixth and Seventh).

By the time we come to this Step, it seems to me, we ought to have encountered and begun to deal with the idea of a Power greater than ourselves. When I find myself balking again, because the Step involves further discourse with God, the signal is clear that it's time to backtrack.

Let me return to the earlier Steps and do a little more groundwork. With time, I began to find it comparatively easy to make admissions to God. My God is eager to understand and to forgive, so eager that it becomes easy for me to misinterpret his love, and to overlook his request for rigorous honesty (the basic requirement, incidentally, for sobriety itself).

I sometimes take God for granted. I tell myself that he knows all and it is not necessary to make any admission to him. But that isn't so. It is entirely necessary to take God into my confidence. I ought, also, to take good, reasonable care in my choice of the human being I'll be sharing my Fifth Step with. One aspect of the Step that still delights and reassures me is the use of the words "another human being." By implication, the Step is telling me that I, too, am a human being. I believe it today, but it was news when I first came in. I had long ceased to regard myself as a human being. I had lost my claim to humanity. I had next to no moral values left.

Ideals, ethics, and virtue had fallen by the wayside. In the end it was the most difficult action imaginable to reach out for anyone's help. Finally, I reached out to AA, and made my first



By implication, the Step is telling me that I, too, am a human being. I believe it today, but it was news when I first came in.

attempt to console my friend, I heard myself say, "Tell me exactly what happened."

So it is with this Step. For example, it is not enough to admit that I was a home-wrecker. If I am to be released from the burden of guilt, if I am to be strengthened against further indulgence in my old weakness, I must admit to God, to myself, and to another human being exactly what happened in each case of home-wrecking. I ought also be willing to admit to situations where I might not have caused a split but did actually damage the foundations of a home.

In order to derive full benefit from the Fifth Step, I like to think about the exact nature of my recovery. I was not able to quit drinking and begin recovery all by myself. I needed lots of help. Along with so many others I can say that I got the message of AA through the grace of God, just as through the healing grace of AA I got the message of God.

And I like to think about those messages. The one tells me of a way out of the drinking problem; the other, of a way out of the bondage of despair.

W. H., New York, New York

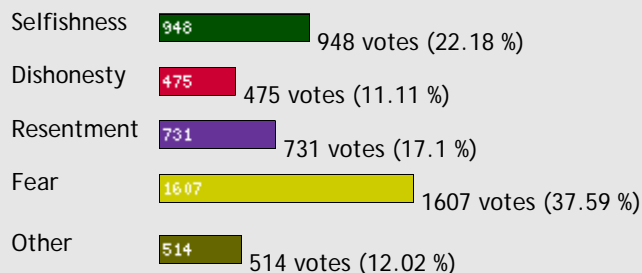
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GRAPEVINE POLL

Results from recent Grapevine Magazine reader polls

Question: *What do you consider your number one character defect?*

Total Responded: 4275





SELECTIONS FROM THE GRAPEVINE

The Welcoming Spring

No Matter How Long Our Winter, Spring Is Sure To Follow

New spiritual roots



But some of me is praying a little, asking that these tiny plants be blessed with strong roots and hardy growth.

THE WHITE dogwood flowers look like snow against the new green of the sweet gums and pin oaks. Azaleas splash bright red, orange, and hot pink among the softer cherry and crabapple blossoms. It is my second sober spring, and I am still surprised at the generous color and the newness of it all. I am grateful to see it, and wonder aloud with friends whether it's always been here, each spring as beautiful as this. "Welcome back to the world," they say.

Yet while I am awed and inspired by the season, deep in my heart I hold a secret. It is painful and I am ashamed of it. Yet it is a simple, common, alcoholic secret. One day during a quiet afternoon AA meeting, among those who know me well, I tearfully share my secret. Yes, I say, I love the beauty of spring, and the beauty of the program, and sobriety, and my wonderful support system. But I still don't feel a part of, or connected to, the power that created all of this. You tell me it is so, and I believe you! But I don't feel it inside me, and I am afraid I never will.

They nod, those AA miracles, and give me their love, their experience, strength, and hope. First, dwelling on negativity will not help. The better way might be to continue to believe, and the feelings will come as we continue to work the Steps. The Steps give us the feelings of worthiness, and help us feel the conscious contact.

Someone points to Appendix II of the Big Book, saying that for him, this feeling was a spiritual experience and has been of "the educational variety." He laughs, too, and says he was grateful his spiritual experiences have been "mercifully subtle."

They say that we are striving for progress, and so we do not always feel in perfect accord with our Creator. And mostly, they remind me to be patient, to keep coming back, and to trust that it works. I feel comforted and clearer somehow.

I think of these things on Saturday while I am planting new seedlings in the garden. Some of me is complaining about the hard work, and how bad my back feels. Some of me is in the future, thinking about how the garden will look in summer, and how I can show off my hard work. But some of me is praying a little, asking that these tiny plants be blessed with strong roots and hardy growth.

A phrase from the Big Book comes to mind as I pat another seedling into place, "his roots grasped new soil." It was Bill W. talking about Ebby T. I laugh and think of all these little plants, like a bunch of AAs, all in new soil, all growing.

I feel silly, laughing like that alone in the gar-



den, but still smiling, I dig another hole and notice, to my surprise, how warm and rich the soil feels. Holding the dirt in my hands, somehow my heart fills up with that warm, rich feeling. And even though I am smiling, I feel tears, too. Another phrase comes into my head, this one from a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay: "God, I can push the grass apart, and lay my finger on Thy Heart." And I feel, finally, that what you told me is the real truth, and I am not alone in the garden.

June 1987, Vol. 44 No. 1

Springtime Regained

MANY OF us in AA remember all to well the lost Spring times of our drinking years. We recall the sadness we felt when belated awareness dawned on us that Spring's gorgeous curtain-raiser had come and gone and, again, we were not there to see it. Sometimes it seemed in our alcoholic thinking that the whole world was passing us by.

But no longer. Now we enjoy Spring's annual show from start to finish. For this pageant of renewing life, which has always been a miracle to humble men, has become a part and a symbol of the miracle that touched us in AA.



As we look forward to enjoyment of the new drama soon to begin outside the window let us remind ourselves of an insight we have found.

And this we know, too: that the life-renewing processes of nature, which happen in Springtime to burst in cascades of color all around us, also flow unceasingly in hidden ways all year round. The tender, unfolding leaf of Spring was made and tucked into its bud during the sere and yellow season of Autumn. Each season and each day contributes to the continuing miracle of life outdoors. That is God's twenty-four-hour plan for things that grow.

As we look forward to enjoyment of the new drama soon to begin outside the window let us remind ourselves of an insight we have found. We know now, in AA, that energizing, life-giving sources also now unceasingly for the human spirit, and can be made to work for us twenty-four hours a day all around the year.

March 1959, Vol. 15 No.

Birth month of AA

WITH THIS month of May, there is across the northern half of a troubled world the full bloom of mid-Spring. The long testing of undecided March has been weathered; the confused tears of April have been profusely shed; and the steadfast skies of the fifth month look down, upon all who will see, with a promise of serenity.

The unmanageable Winter has proven powerless over the returning warmth and the clear light of the sun. The goodness of the life impulse stirs, no matter how acid the soil; and the weakest root grows new strength to break through in the eternal miracle of growth and reaching upward.

This is the birth month of AA.

It was in May that two men who had suffered long years of the barren winterhood of alcoholism met and enjoined themselves into this fellowship that has become another miracle of growth and reaching upward for tens of thousands of us. That May, 1935 was the beginning of the end of the swirling storms, for in June Dr. Bob found his sobriety.

Let us all, young or old in AA, rededicate this birth month. . . in the admission of the First Step those two founders took. . . in the belief and the decision that came next in that Springtime. . . in the weeding out and the cleansing and the regeneration of the next steps. . . in the diligence and selflessness of the Eleventh Step. . . and finally in the action of the Twelfth Step.

Let us so mark AA's birth month of May. Let us be strong in this flowering time that we have found. . . that those still in Winter's darkness may through us glimpse a time of light again.

May 1953, Vol. 9 No. 12

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