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Apologies All Around

The new year has gotten off to a rocky start. You may have noticed the newsletter has been late the past few months and for that, Patterson Print Shop, has apologized. Many of you know Tom U. has worked at the printer for the past several years and has been a great asset in the publishing of our newsletter. What you may not know is that Tom suffered a heart attack in December and has been off since that time. That has caused some delays at the printer's. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Tom.

Last month's newsletter had a couple of glitches in it. James J.'s name was left off at the end of his excellent essay on Step Two. And the article, *A Beginner's Humility*, by Ed L. was incomplete. This month it will be run (hopefully) in its entirety.

My humble apologies,
Betty B., Editor

Step Three

Mad a Decision to Turn Our Will and Our Lives Over to the Care of God as We Understood Him.

We now commence work upon Step Three only after we have fully admitted complete defeat over alcohol and have come to the realization that we are indeed insane and that no human power can relieve us of our malady. As the Step directs us, we must take this time to decide. This decision is neither easy, nor should it be taken lightly, as it will indelibly shape our lives through sustained joy and sobriety. Here might be a good point for a word of caution: once this decision is made, it cannot be undone through any sort of rationalization or a wishful return to our previous blissful ignorance. Despite our wish for the escape of inebriation, the truth is a bit troublesome in that it will no longer bend to our twisted perceptions. We can no longer fit the world into our little boxes of horror and pull the strings of our friends, neighbors, or families. Indeed, Step Three liberates us from the burden of responsibility that only rightly belongs to Providence. But, we must be willing.

Where does this willingness to surrender originate? It springs forth from the completion of Steps One and Two. After these introductory suggestions have been taken, willingness washes over our spirit—soaking us through

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Tradition Three

“The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.”

Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Three—Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

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Tradition Three for a long time was a puzzler, too: “*The only requirement for A.A. membership is a sincere desire to stop drinking.*” We worried a lot about membership. In fact, when heavy publicity first came our way, we were scared witless. We said to ourselves, “Won’t all kinds of odd people show up? Complications, you know; alcohol mixed with other things.” In those days we were always talking about the mythical character called the pure alcoholic; no complications, you understand, just a guzzler. We actually thought we were like that ourselves! Hence, when members began pouring in, our worry mounted. “Won’t there be mighty queer people? Won’t there be criminals? Won’t there be social undesirables?” we asked. Mixed with a certain amount of snobbishness and smugness, this was downright fear. We simply did not

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and through with an eagerness to begin healing. Then, like the inexplicable force of gravity, we find ourselves drawn toward the Power. Our willingness, tenuous as it may be, begins to retract the heavy slabs of doubt that have kept us in the darkness of our self-constructed dungeons. Slivers of illumination peek through the cracks in our egotism and we begin to see that there is a Power greater than mankind and that it just might do for us what we have not been able to do for ourselves.

What then, the honest seeker will ask, exactly is this Power? It is of paramount importance to distinguish between a God of our understanding and a god of our creation. This point cannot be overstressed. The demarcation lies in *that which actually exists* and what we, as alcoholics, create through our own imaginative faculties. It is the difference between sobriety and insanity; salvation and ruin. The Power which *actually* exists, that which is greater than us, takes many forms. It is up to each alcoholic to arrive at his own explanation and understanding of that Power. ***Under no circumstances, however, are we permitted to create our own god.*** A deity of our own creation is not, by definition, greater than us. No creation is greater than its creator. If the god of our understanding is the same as the god of our own creation, then this power is not adequate to provide us with the defense against that first drink. If we find ourselves defenseless against drink due to a lack of a sufficient higher power, then we are destined to slip. It is only a matter of time. The essence of Step Three, then, is that we arrive at our own understanding of the Power that has existed beyond time and dimension—a Power that is both ancient and new; and, is willing to restore us to a life in deep communion with Him and with our fellow creatures.

Submitted by,  
James J., Apple Valley, CA

## A Beginner's Humility

I looked around the noon Attitude Adjustment meeting in Quartz Hill, CA, not recognizing a soul, yet feeling right at home. Thinking it would be “just another meeting,” I didn’t foresee the revelation [that was] about to happen, or realize that I sported an attitude that needed adjusting. When the “chip chick” asked if there were any newcomers or folks attending this meeting for the first time, I raised my hand and introduced myself. I was first shocked and then chagrined to see her bustling towards me holding out a shiny, silver new

know what or who would turn up.

Since that early time literally all kinds of people have found their way into Alcoholics Anonymous. Our inclusiveness is now very broad indeed. For example, not too long ago I sat talking in my office with a member who bears a title of Countess. That same night I went to an A.A. meeting. It was a winter night and there was a mild-looking little gent taking the coats. He was not charging anything, either. He was just doing it to be obliging. I said, “Who’s that little guy?” And somebody answered, “Oh, he’s been around for a long time. Everybody likes him. He used to be one of Al Capone’s mob.” That’s how universal A.A. is today.

Via, Alcoholics Anonymous  
Comes of Age, p. 102

(con’t)

comer’s chip, like it was adhesive and she was going to stick it on my forehead! I stood mortified, not hugging back, as she enveloped me, the newcomer, in a welcoming bear hug.

I’d been sober four years, a dedicated member attending a thousand meetings, sponsee, sponsor, GSR, District secretary; the list goes on and on and on, *ad infinitum* (*ad nauseous* is a better description). In the few short seconds it took her to cross the room and hug the breath out of me, I’d formulated my rebuttal and prepared by defense, that a newcomer’s chip was beneath me, a stalwart member in above-average standing. And I’d just opened my mouth to say as much when she indicated that it was their practice to give newcomer’s chips to *both* those alcoholics with less than thirty days sobriety *and* those visitors fellowshipping with them for the first time. Thank God she didn’t ask me how I did it!

I felt flushed with embarrassment, grateful that I hadn’t (once again) opened-mouth-and-inserted-foot, thankful for one more revelation why *Keep Coming Back*, even for us cocky toddlers, is so important. After I settled down, I discreetly substituted my four-year-chip with the shiny newcomer’s chip in the small plastic window of my Big Book cover to remind me that maintaining “newcomer humility” in A.A. is essential for so long as I remain a sober member, whether that be a day or sixty years. I’ve come to appreciate the wisdom of maintaining childlike humility and gratitude just for today. As my friends in Clifton Forge, Virginia are fond of saying: Don’t get too many years and not enough days!

Submitted by,  
Ed L., Wrightwood, CA

With a bowling ball in one hand and a bottle of beer in the other, you have two chances to end up in the gutter.

“Borrowed” from, *The A.A. History Calendar*

# Minutes of Victor Valley Intergroup Meeting, February 19, 2011

Matt N. opened the meeting at 9:32 a.m. with the Serenity Prayer. Melanie W. read the Twelve Traditions.

Wayne U. read the December 18, 2010 minutes. Sheldon S. motioned to accept, Kara O. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Sheldon S. gave the report. Wayne U. motioned to accept, Betty B. 2<sup>nd</sup>; Approved. See the newsletter for full report.

**Office Manager's Report:** There were 96 visitors to Central Office with 214 info calls, resulting in four 12 Step calls. Call forwarding received 195 call with five 12 Step calls. Craig and the committee thanked the 18 groups for their donations in January. Craig has changed the minimum requirement for Central Office volunteers to 6 months with sponsor approval.

**Ways and Means:** Founder's Day chairperson not present. Ride to Recovery is scheduled for two weeks after the High Desert Convention. To get involved, or for more info, call 760-985-3462.

**Public Info:** Radio announcements are still going as well as newspaper article.

**Old Business:** Matt N. was elected as Co-Chairman of Intergroup.

**New Business:** A new shift has opened at Central Office for Thursday morning and Friday afternoons. If interested, please call Craig B. at 760-242-9292. The Hispanic Intergroup meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month at 12036 Bartlett Ave., Adelanto.

**Birthdays:** Helen M. with 29 years on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Julie D. with 22 years on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Congratulations!

**The next Intergroup meeting will be April 16, 2011 at Central Office, 9:30 a.m.**

Wayne U. motioned to adjourn, Kara O. 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Craig B. prayed us out at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wayne U., Secretary

**Attendees:** Betty B., Newsletter, Kara O., Past Chairman, Sheldon S., Treasurer, Melanie W., SNCG, Doug H., HUG, Maria, Hispanic Intergroup, Wayne U., Secretary, Craig B., Office Manager, Matt N., Co-Chairman, Julie D., TGIF.

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## Directory Changes

### HESPERIA

The last Monday, 10:00 a.m. and the last Saturday, 7:00 p.m. meetings (Back to Basics, H2) are now celebrating Birthdays with chips!

## Upcoming Events

**May 21, 2011**

**8th Annual Women's Banquet at the Ambassador Hotel in Victorville. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m. More information to follow.**

**April 16, 2011**

**Intergroup Meeting at 9:30 a.m. at Central Office. 760-242-9292**

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## A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous

The Akron Manual

1940

*Part 1 of ?*

The following article was submitted by John B. of Apple Valley, CA. The original pamphlet is 24 pages long; much too long for our newsletter.

What I have decided to do is edit it and run it in its entirety over the next few months. I hope you enjoy it!

Betty B., Editor.

**Edit.** This present text, available for printout at [www.iusb.deu/~gchesnut](http://www.iusb.deu/~gchesnut), was formatted for web by Glenn C. (South Bend, IN) in January 2002; the editorial notes are his. His text was drawn from one prepared by Barefoot Bob, who scanned the text of an original copy of the pamphlet and reformatted it for web on May 15, 1997; see [www.barefootworld.net/aamanual.html](http://www.barefootworld.net/aamanual.html).

Bob says that this little booklet was written and being distributed within one year of the publication of the Big Book, which would date it to 1940. On the basis of a number of statements made within the text, it certainly could not have been produced much later than that. This pamphlet assumes hospitalization at St. Thomas Hospital under the care of Sister Ignatia and the overall supervision of Dr. Bob as the normal first step in recovery, and gives recommended readings (e.g. the *Upper Room* for your morning meditation) which dropped out of A.A. practice fairly soon thereafter, but parts of its advice are still very relevant, and it makes very fascinating reading even today. We must assume that Dr. Bob himself (and probably Sister Ignatia, too) gave their approval to the statements made in this little booklet.

This is the first half of the manual, containing the most important introductory material. (The second half, which is available at this site as a separate printout, contains a series of assorted thoughts on learning to live the program and a long section on meetings.)

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Forward

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This booklet is intended to be a practical guide for new members and sponsors of new members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

TO THE NEWCOMER: The booklet is designed to give you a practical explanation of what to do and what not to do in your search for sobriety. The editors, too, were pretty bewildered by the program at first. They realize that very likely you are groping for answers and offer this pamphlet in order that it may make a little straighter and less confusing the highway you are about to travel.

TO THE SPONSOR: If you have never before brought anyone into A.A. the booklet attempts to tell you what your duties are by your "baby," how you should conduct yourself while visiting patients, and other odd bits of information, some of which may be new to you.

The booklet should be read in conjunction with the large book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Bible, the daily lesson, any other pamphlets that are published by the group, and other constructive literature. A list of suggestions will be found in the back pages of this pamphlet. It is desirable that members of A.A. furnish their prospective "babies" with this *Manual* as early as possible, particularly in the case of hospitalization.

The experience behind the writing and editing of this pamphlet adds up to hundreds of years of drinking, plus scores of years of recent sobriety. Every suggestion, every word, is backed up by hard experience.

The editors do not pretend any explanation of the spiritual or religious aspects of A.A. It is assumed that this phase of the work will be explained by sponsors. The booklet therefore deals solely with the physical aspects of getting sober and remaining sober.

A.A. in Akron is fortunate in having facilities for hospitalizing its patients. In many communities, however, hospitalization is not available. Although the pamphlet mentions hospitalization throughout, the methods described are effective if the patient is confined to his home, if he is in prison or a mental institution, or if he is attempting to learn A.A. principles and carry on his workaday job at the same time.

If your community has a hospital, either private or general, that has not accepted alcoholic patients in the past, it might be profitable to call on the officials of the institution and explain Alcoholics Anonymous to them. Explain that we are not in the business of sobering up drunks merely to have them go on another bender. Ex-

plain that our aim is total and permanent sobriety. Hospital authorities should know, and if they do not, should be told, that an alcoholic is a sick man, just as sick as a diabetic or a consumptive. Perhaps his affliction will not bring death as quickly as diabetes or tuberculosis, but will bring death or insanity eventually.

Alcoholism has had a vast amount of nationwide publicity in recent years. It has been discussed in medical journals, national magazines and newspapers. It is possible that a little sales talk will convince the hospital authorities in your community that they should make beds available for patients sponsored by Alcoholics Anonymous.

If the way is finally opened, it is urged that you guard your hospital privileges carefully. Be as certain as you possibly can that your patient sincerely wants A.A.

Above all, carefully observe all hospital rules.

It has been our experience that a succession of unruly patients or unruly visitors can bring a speedy termination of hospital privileges. And they will want no part of you or your patient in the future.

Once he starts to sober up, the average alcoholic makes a model hospital patient. He needs little or no nursing or medical care, and he is grateful for his opportunity.

To be continued.

And Finally . . .

Hymn # 365

A minister was completing a temperance sermon. With great emphasis he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and pour it in the river."

With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river."

And then finally, shaking his fist in the air he said, "And if I had all the whiskery in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river."

Sermon complete, he sat down.

The song leader stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, nearly laughing, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn # 365, 'Shall We Gather at the River.'"

Via, the Internet