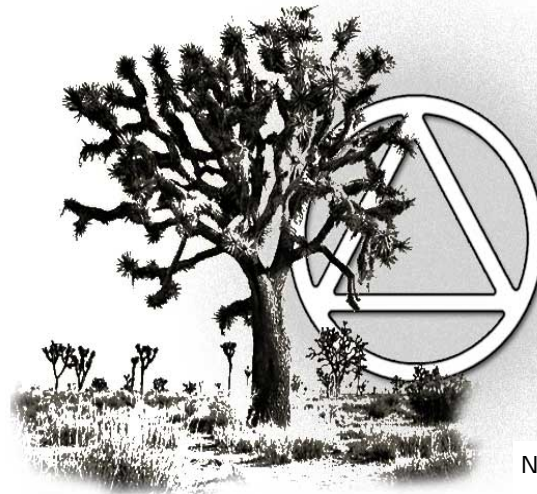


INTO ACTION

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NOVEMBER 2008

Signing your name in an Anonymous Program

People showing up at A.A. meetings with slips to be signed to verify their attendance sometimes raises concerns among group members. Some may fear that someone their unwilling is likely to violate the anonymity of group members. Those in a small group may fear being inundated by court-ordered individuals.

A.A. has been cooperating with the court system for decades, helping judges, probation officers, and others become aware of A.A. as a resource. One result has been court-mandated attendance at meetings by those charged with alcohol-related offences, typically driving while intoxicated (DWI). There are also persons showing up with other types of slips to be signed, such as those who reside in halfway houses that require residents to be alcohol-free.

Some A.A. groups, based on their experience and by their group conscience, do not sign attendance slips of any kind. Usually, groups leave it up to the chair people to sign or not, depending on how comfortable they are about putting their names and sometimes phone number on the slips. The position of these groups is that those who sign do so in the spirit of cooperation. In signing slips of any kind in A.A., neither the group or the members are bound in any way. Those mandated by courts are usually required to go to meetings for a period of time.

“Signing cards doesn’t bother me one bit” says Jerry W., an A.A. in Kalamazoo Michigan. But I do tell

those whose cards I’m signing “this is not going to get you sober”.

Jerry, who is six years sober, was himself getting slips to sign when he first came to A.A. “I’ve saved those slips. I like to look back and see the meetings I’ve attended, and I’ve got a bunch of phone numbers on mine”, he says.

“When I came into A.A. I was facing a court date to answer a DWI, and it wasn’t my first, which means they can take your license away. My job, which required that I drive, was on the line”.

Jerry had a psycho therapist who pushed him to go to A.A. and had him bring back slips signed to prove his attendance. “I didn’t want to go, but my lawyer said that proof of A.A. attendance will help with my court appearance. So I went, and I started to get sober”.

“Funny thing is that when I got to court I was resigned to what ever was going to happen. I didn’t feel like trying to hustle anyone or manipulate the system-which was a first for me”. As it turned out the judge said “so your going to A.A. well, lets see what happens”.

At this group in Kalamazoo, he says those with slips to be signed drop them in the basket at the break, to be picked up at the end of the meeting. “You are self-conscience taking that slip out of that basket, I’ll tell you. I was impatient for the day when I could come to meetings and not have to get those slips signed,” says Jerry.

(Signing Continued on page 3)

(Signing Continued from page 1)

A big issue for some members, though, is the problem they have sharing honestly and openly in rooms where there may be those who don't want to be there. "their thinking is we don't want to be in meetings-laying our stuff out on the table, our personal stuff; speaking honestly and openly-with those who don't want to be there and who might be endangering anonymity".

That aspect of the issue has been a point of contention in Otsego, where A.A. Kelly D. lives. "in my experience more energy has been expended on this issue than any other," says Kelly, who has been sober for 13 years. I've signed about 1,000 of these slips over the years". He has seen a number of newcomers with court slips rising since the mid-1990's. "I filled in as chair for one of the evening meetings and 18 of the 20 people there had court slips. Let me tell you, you can get writers cramp signing 18 slips. Seriously, I don't like it. There's not the trust and confidentiality that you need in an A.A. meeting. There's very little real sharing, and some of those are openly hostile," says Kelly.

Steve L. of Biwabik, Minnesota, sober in A.A. for 27 years, agrees it can be a problem. "Some who come with slips to be signed, you can tell cant wait to get out. These are the ones who make others uncomfortable and make people question weather signing cards is a good idea," says Steve. "there's the issue of signing slips comes up 5 or so years as a new crop of service people come in. they ask : 'should we be doing this? Is this affiliation?' The answer is that we can do it in the spirit of cooperation," says Steve.

"I tell those coming in with court slips that, "you haven't been sentenced here, which is true; they are given a choice of going to jail or to a facility or to A.A." as to weather these mandated attendees remain sober, Steve says: "My experience is that it is about the same attrition rate for people coming in new, weather they are getting slips signed or not. You don't know-its like trying to pick out from among a group of newcomers who is going to stay".

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August/September 2008

Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need

(Excerpts from Bill W.'s article in the April 1959 Grapevine. See Concept IX, page 38 of "Twelve Concepts of World Service" for the full article)

Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: "Our leaders do not drive by mandate: they lead by example." In effect, we are saying to them, "Act for us, but don't boss us."....

Therefore, a leader in A.A. service is a man (or woman) who can personally put principals, plans, and policies into such dedicated and efficient action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker and he exercises no judgment of his own – well, he really isn't a leader at all....

Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its service. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source....

Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has, or can obtain, sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action forthwith, provided, of course, that such action be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility....

Another qualification for leadership is give-and-take, the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress is nearly always characterized by a series of improving compromises. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then, it is truly necessary to stick flatfooted to one's convictions about an issue until it is settled. These are situations for keen timing and careful discrimination as to which course to take....

Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism. This is an acid test. There are always the constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship.

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Service Material from the General Service Office

TRADITIONS CHECKLIST from the A.A. Grapevine

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

Practice These Principles....

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.

1. Do I sometimes promote AA so fanatically that I make it seem *unattractive*?
2. Am I always careful to keep the confidences reposed in me as an AA member?
3. Am I careful about throwing AA names around—even within the Fellowship?
4. Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering, alcoholic?
5. What would AA be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition Eleven? Where would I be?
6. Is my AA sobriety attractive enough that a sick drunk would want such a quality for himself?

Announce at your group or meeting

A NOVEMBER TRADITION

Gratitude Month

November 2008

Pass the basket twice.

Once for the 7th tradition,
the other for gratitude month.

Minutes Victor Valley Intergroup

18 Oct. 08

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Kara O. who led us in the Serenity Prayer. Sally read the Twelve Traditions.

Betty B., read the minutes from the August 08 meeting.

Sam D. motioned to accept them as corrected, Glen R. seconded the motion and it was approved.

Sam D. gave the Treasurer's Report in Sheldon's absence for Sept. 08. Please see the Financial Statement published in the newsletter. Glen R. motioned to accept the report, Matt N. seconded the motion and it was approved.

Craig B. gave the Office Manager's Report. For September there were a total of 94 visitors to the office with 265 information calls and three 3 Twelve Step calls. Call forwarding had 173 information calls with 5 Twelve Step calls. Eleven meetings donated in September. Wednesday morning office shift is open for four weeks. Jack N. has been on a "medical leave" since breaking his hip. Craig gave Jack's granddaughter, Lori, a huge thank you for stepping up and volunteering for his shift. Craig also thanked all the volunteers, both the office and call forwarding.

Old Business: Craig reported that once Sheldon S. returns from vacation, all shifts will be filled – for now!

New Business: Craig B. reported that November is gratitude month. One idea for the groups to show their gratitude is to possibly pass the basket twice, once for their expenses and the other for a donation to Central Office.

Also, all the books in Central Office will be on sale for the month of November. Most will be \$1.00 off. New York is lowering the price of "Experience, Strength and Hope." The office has four available at \$3.60. Craig entertained us with a reading of the first story, which caused James J. to purchase one right on the spot! That now leaves three copies. James J. is getting ready to resubmit the public service announcements to the local broadcasters. Charter, however, says they no longer accept them, and for the El Dorado group, he will need to go to Corona. He also suggested that he get with our web master to see about starting a paid blog page. He would cover the expense. He also made a plea for letters, stories, etc. for the newsletter in order to keep the interest local. Central Office is now selling non-conference approved items. Come by and check them out.

Announcements: Sam D. will have 11 years on Oct. 23, Glen R. got 3 years on Oct. 10. The Convention Committee now meets on the third Wednesday of the month in the new building at the Alano Club at 7:30 p.m. They will be dark in December though.

The 7th Tradition was passed. THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE 20 December 2008 AT OF 9:30 A.M. Matt N. motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 a.m., Glen R. seconded the motion and it was approved.

Submitted by,

Betty B., Secretary

Faithful Fivers

Anonymous
Craig B.
Sam D

Make sure your name is here NEXT month!

What are Faithful Fivers

They are A.A. members who pledge at least \$5.00 each month toward the support of there local Central Office to “carry the message”. “Many of us have spent more than \$5.00 on alcohol during our drinking days.”

I agree to pledge.
Here is my contribution of \$ _____
Name: _____
Address: _____
City _____ State/Zip _____

We here at *INTO ACTION* would love to hear from you about your experience, strength, and hope. Maybe something that’s happened in recovery or an experience that has happened to you that shows how the program is working in your life. It’s an effective way to help other members who may be inspired by your story. It’s like a local meeting in print, any time you want to read it. It’s just another way of being of service.

E-mail your story to: vvigco_aa@yahoo.com

Please add your name and phone # to all stories for we reserve the right to edit for content and/or clarity

Back to Basics

Speakers for November/December 2008

November 15	Bud S.	Pasadena
November 22	Christy D.	Beaumont
November 29	Steve I.	California City
December 6	Connie B.	Crestline
December 13	Jessie C	San Dimas
December 20	Patrice H.	Corona
December 27	Keith D.	Yorba Linda

Meetings are Saturday Night at 7:00 pm

Church Of The Nazarene
8518 Maple Ave
Hesperia CA.

Join us for coffee and homemade cookies

	BEHAVIOR	DISEASE	FEAR
INJUSTICE	OFFEND	POWERFUL	RESENTMENT
BAD	CHARACTER	DISORDER	GOD
INSANITY	PHYSICAL	PRINCIPALS	TWIST
BAFFLING	CONTROL	DRINKING	GOOD
INSULT	POWER	REPRIEVE	ALCOHOL

A	C	H	A	R	A	C	T	E	R	S	B
L	A	P	H	Y	S	I	C	A	L	L	A
C	B	E	H	S	V	I	O	R	B	A	F
O	J	L	O	R	T	N	O	C	I	P	F
H	Y	D	I	S	E	A	S	E	P	I	L
O	T	L	U	S	N	I	D	O	G	C	I
L	I	J	F	T	S	I	W	T	X	N	N
T	N	E	M	T	N	E	S	E	R	I	G
I	A	R	E	P	R	I	E	V	E	R	O
R	S	O	F	F	E	N	D	A	B	P	O
C	N	K	U	G	N	I	K	N	I	R	D
Y	I	L	R	E	D	R	O	S	I	D	C

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