



# The Beacon

The Christmas and New Year Issue

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**This Month:** In keeping with the season, we offer a Santa's bag of Twelfth-Step and 12th Tradition articles from The Grapevine, expanded to 12 pages this month; a page devoted to Bill W; One new bookie added to the "Bookie" listings on Page 9; and the **Alcathon** schedule and location on **Pages 4-5!**

There are so many meeting notices that they could not fit all on one page and are scattered throughout this issue, along with a small contribution of my own on page 3, for the first time, in this, my last issue.

Elections were held, and appointments made, on November 13, 2008 for Intergroup positions—the results will be posted in the January 2009 issue. There is still an opening for the 2009 District 25 Grapevine chair, if you are interested (see page 12). As this issue goes to press there are two Alcathon time slots each yet to be taken for Christmas and New Year. If your group would like to sponsor an hour, please contact the Intergroup Office. You can go to any, or as many, Alcathon meetings as you wish. You can even go to your own regular meeting IF they are holding one that day— please DO check first. Some groups choose to do so during Alcathon, others not.

The current green meeting list, is 2008-D. If you do not have one, they are free at any AA meeting, or at the Intergroup office, at 100 Grove Street **Suite 314** in Worcester.

Our warm best wishes to each and every one of you this Yuletide Season for a safe, sober and satisfying holiday, and for a happy and healthy 2009.

Sincerely,  
Richard C, editor.



## AA Wisdom

It's the first drink that gets you drunk.

It's the last one that gets you sober. -John R. New York

"A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle."

"The glory and increase of Wisdom stands in exercising it"

Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift --

That's why it's called the "present" -Jeanne JT

The difference between self-esteem and ego -

Self-esteem doesn't need an audience"

"When you find yourself in a hole, stop digging."



Step Twelve

Tradition Twelve

Concept Twelve

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. "

"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. "

"The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.



**Traditions Checklist**

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 October 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion. Each Month the corresponding Tradition checklist will be published.

On-Line 12 Steps & 12 Traditions, Articles, and Tradition Checklist's

[www.aagrapevine.org/stepsTrads/stepsTrads\\_index.html](http://www.aagrapevine.org/stepsTrads/stepsTrads_index.html)

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1. Why is it good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to conform to my standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?
6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition-or belie it?
7. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain AAs' behavior-especially if they are paid to work for AA? Who made me so smart?
9. Do I fulfill all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?
10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give AA critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?
12. What is the real importance of me among more than a million AAs?





**BILL W'S NEIGHBORHOOD**



TO BECOME AN OLD-TIMER in AA you only have to do two things: don't drink and don't die.

**Recovery Through Giving**

*For a new prospect, outline the program of action, explaining how you made a self-appraisal, how you straightened out your past, and why you are now endeavoring to be helpful to him. It is important for him to realize that your attempt to pass this on to him is a vital part of your own recovery. Actually he may be helping you more than you are helping him. Make it plain that he is under no obligation to you.*  
*Acoholica Anonymous, p. 94*

<<<< >>>>

In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn't a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.  
*The Grapevine, January 1958, op.cit. As Bill Sees It, p.275*

**Goodwill**

The more we point out evil in people, the more we stir up evil in them. If we give hate, we get hate; if we give criticism, we get criticism; if we give goodwill, we get goodwill. If we try to make people aware of the fact that we believe in them, that we trust them, that we discern characteristics of nobleness in their nature, two things will result. The first result will be that we will have a much more contented state of mind ourselves, and the second result will be that people will begin to be friendly and cooperative. Their hostility to us will cool down, or their attitude of cold disdain will mellow into a warmth of interest. It is amazing how much can be done sometimes by a diplomatic handling of situations if people have lots of goodwill in their hearts and are filled with determination to make that goodwill operate.

If we spent as much time trying to make things pleasant for others as we do trying to get our own rights, how different would be our happiness as well as theirs. The way to make people be friendly toward us is to compel our unwilling nature to be genuinely friendly toward them.  
*-Anon. In The Grapevine, October 1966*

When I was a young child, we were poor, because my father drank, and my mother was the breadwinner; I did not realize it immediately because my mother made great sacrifices all her life to shield me from the reality of shortages. As most children do, I just accepted.

Sometimes the lights would go out, and we would make a game of it. I remember well the smell of candles and the discipline a child must learn when trusted with them, and with matches too, at an early age.

Sometimes we would use strips torn from the Boston Globe instead of Charmin in the bathroom, because that is all we had.

We almost always were warm enough, and in one rough year several hurricanes had left us enough wood from the downed trees for the fireplaces to augment the coal for our furnace. That was fun, though I wondered at Christmas how Santa was going to make it past the roaring flames. And we always did have a Christmas.

We often had little to eat, but we were never homeless. We might have to flee when my father went into a drunken and violent rage, but there were uncles and aunts who would take us in for a few days until the storm had passed and it was safe to return home.

But Christmas was always a magic time for me, and for the first few years even my father tried his best to be pleasant and enjoy the season. I developed a belief that if we could somehow last through the year and make it to Christmas, we would be good for another year.

Through the ensuing years I always rallied to Christmas, no matter how things were, and when I was older and working, making good money, things were good, and Christmas was especially sweet then - until I started to drink, and for many years it did not shine so brightly - I lost *my* shine as well.

After many years in darkness, I followed a star and found my way home, almost three years ago, home to the halls. Now, I can once again get that feeling of exultation, and enjoy the special smells of cooking and pine trees, the lights and music decorating both the houses outside, and my own interior state. And like that child I once was, I can again accept what is, and not try to force what I want.

In this festive season, whatever your faith, my family and I wish you and yours the best holiday ever, and a better year ahead. Keep coming, and don't let the light go out.  
Richard C, Editor

**Sponsorship--A Dying Art**


*Chicago Group Suggests A Revival Is Overdue*

From The Grapevine February 1953  
Volume 9 Number 9


*IN the early days of the Chicago Group, sponsorship was done most thoroughly. Indeed, groups elsewhere in the country spoke of the "Chicago system" of sponsorship. The picture has changed. Perhaps it is a natural result of growing big. At any rate, the old style of sponsoring, with the sponsor utterly devoted to his prospect, is seen infrequently. There is no way of checking the probable large number who have failed because of the lack of proper effort by their sponsors.*

**CHICAGO'S SUGGESTED PROGRAM**

1. Responsibility is the first principle of good sponsorship; the sponsor is the one who assumes responsibility for the person seeking help. If one is unable to devote the time and attention essential to good sponsorship, one should not undertake, at least without a strong co-sponsor, such an assignment.
2. Sponsorship must be approached with the most serious attitude. AA is a life or death matter to the alcoholic seeking help; if we fail, the new man or woman has been denied the good chance he could have had with another sponsor. Prepare yourself for the first call on a prospect by re-reading the chapter in the book, "Working With Others."
3. Visit the new prospect as soon as possible after he calls for help; presenting the recovery program to him at the psychological moments he reaches for it may be the factor that saves his life.
4. On your first visit, tell the prospective AA, frankly and simply, some of your own story--with enough Pauses that he may chime in with some of his own experiences and reactions. Let him ask questions. Explain how AA works, but keep your presentation brief and simple. Do not wear out your welcome. . .when he becomes restless take your leave, making an appointment to see him again as soon as practicable.
5. In presenting the program to a prospect, don't thrust your personal views upon him. Tell him about the AA program as it is presented in the book, and let him do his own interpreting, especially in regard to the spiritual aspects. He will get the views of many other AA's, in addition to yours, at meetings and in conversations. Out of all that, with what guidance you can give him, he will find a way to apply AA principles to his own life and problems.
6. Be prepared to sacrifice much of your time for a considerable period to give the prospect the greatest possible chance. Make yourself available to him daily for counsel and companionship.
7. See that the prospect becomes acquainted with many other AA's, so that he may get a broad picture of the AA program and find his own interpretation and application of its principles. Make the prospect truly your friend. Give of yourself without stint in trying to help him. Invite him to your home, preferably for a meal.
8. See that your prospect immediately gets a copy of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous; it is best that he buy a copy. Ownership of the book once was a virtual symbol of AA membership; regular reading and rereading of the book is recommended practice for every AA as a tool of recovery.
9. Do not take on, in your enthusiasm, more prospects than you can properly handle. AA is strong medicine. It affords the recovered alcoholic a unique opportunity to serve his fellow man. The temptation to run up a big score of saved souls is strong. But one new member a year well-sponsored is a better result than 50 given the once-over lightly.
10. Emphasize the importance of regular attendance at meetings by precept and example. Even if you have grown careless about going to meetings, it is your responsibility to accompany the prospect to several such (and this may save you from a relapse). -30-




**!!! CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR ALCATHONS !!!**




The Christmas Alcathon will run **Round the clock for 36 hours**  
**Starting at 12:00PM Noontime on Wednesday, December 24, 2008**  
 Continuing **ALL DAY December 25, Christmas Day, Ending at Midnight**

The NewYear's Alcathon will run **Round the clock for 36 hours**  
**Starting at 12:00PM Noontime on Wednesday, December 31, 2008**  
 Continuing **ALL DAY January 1, 2009, New Year's Day, Ending at Midnight**



St. John's Catholic Church 44 Temple Street, Worcester, Mass. 01604



SLOT	DATE	TIME	GROUP
1	Wed. 12/24	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Worcester 7 A.M. Group
2	Wed. 12/24	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Worcester Gratitude
3	Wed. 12/24	2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Northboro How It Works
4	Wed. 12/24	3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Westboro Sunday Morning
5	Wed. 12/24	4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Wed. Woman's Big Book Step Study
6	Wed. 12/24	5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Auburn Beginners
7	Wed. 12/24	6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	We Mean Business
8	Wed. 12/24	7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	People Helping People
9	Wed. 12/24	8:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Crozier
10	Wed. 12/24	9:00 pm - 10:00 pm	There Is Hope
11	Wed. 12/24	10:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Crossroads
12	Wed. 12/24	11:00 pm - 12:00 am	Charlton Daybreakers
13	Thur. 12/25	12:00 am - 1:00 am	Brookfield Sunday AM
14	Thur. 12/25	1:00 am - 2:00 am	Worcester Young People
15	Thur. 12/25	2:00 am - 3:00 am	Worcester Rebound
16	Thur. 12/25	3:00 am - 4:00 am	Worcester Big book Step Study
17	Thur. 12/25	4:00 am - 5:00 am	Triton
18	Thur. 12/25	5:00 am - 6:00 am	Shrewsbury Gratitude
19	Thur. 12/25	6:00 am - 7:00 am	Worcester Mid Day
20	Thur. 12/25	7:00 am - 8:00 am	Way of Sobriety
21	Thur. 12/25	8:00 am - 9:00 am	
22	Thur. 12/25	9:00 am - 10:00 am	Westboro Forge
23	Thur. 12/25	10:00 am - 11:00 am	Southbridge Original
24	Thur. 12/25	11:00 am - 12:00 pm	
25	Thur. 12/25	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Greendale
26	Thur. 12/25	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Spencer Fellowship
27	Thur. 12/25	2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Quinsigamond Group
28	Thur. 12/25	3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Northboro Saturday Morning
29	Thur. 12/25	4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Courage to Change
30	Thur. 12/25	5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Holden Thursday Night
31	Thur. 12/25	6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Traditions - Millbury
32	Thur. 12/25	7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Auburn Big Book
33	Thur. 12/25	8:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Serenity
34	Thur. 12/25	9:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Sutton Step
35	Thur. 12/25	10:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Way Out Group
36	Thur. 12/25	11:00 pm - 12:00 pm	Reflections Group - Grafton

SLOT	DATE	TIME	GROUP
1	Wed. 12/31	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Worcester 7 A.M. Group
2	Wed. 12/31	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Worcester Young People
3	Wed. 12/31	2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Crozier
4	Wed. 12/31	3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Worcester Big Book Step Study
5	Wed. 12/31	4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Crossroads
6	Wed. 12/31	5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Sutton Step
7	Wed. 12/31	6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Worcester Rebound
8	Wed. 12/31	7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Shrewsbury Gratitude
9	Wed. 12/31	8:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Triton
10	Wed. 12/31	9:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Charlton Daybreakers
11	Wed. 12/31	10:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Traditions - Millbury
12	Wed. 12/31	11:00 pm - 12:00 am	Northboro Saturday Morning
13	Thur. 1/1/09	12:00 am - 1:00 am	Brookfield Sunday AM
14	Thur. 1/1/09	1:00 am - 2:00 am	Worcester Gratitude
15	Thur. 1/1/09	2:00 am - 3:00 am	E. Brookfield Primary Purpose
16	Thur. 1/1/09	3:00 am - 4:00 am	Spencer Fellowship
17	Thur. 1/1/09	4:00 am - 5:00 am	Southbridge Original
18	Thur. 1/1/09	5:00 am - 6:00 am	Westboro Forge
19	Thur. 1/1/09	6:00 am - 7:00 am	
20	Thur. 1/1/09	7:00 am - 8:00 am	People Helping People
21	Thur. 1/1/09	8:00 am - 9:00 am	Quinsigamond Group
22	Thur. 1/1/09	9:00 am - 10:00 am	Way of Sobriety
23	Thur. 1/1/09	10:00 am - 11:00 am	Serenity
24	Thur. 1/1/09	11:00 am - 12:00 pm	We Mean Business
25	Thur. 1/1/09	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Wed. Womans Big Book Step Study
26	Thur. 1/1/09	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Westboro Sunday Morning
27	Thur. 1/1/09	2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Courage to Change
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29	Thur. 1/1/09	4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Greendale
30	Thur. 1/1/09	5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Auburn Beginners
31	Thur. 1/1/09	6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Worcester Mid Day
32	Thur. 1/1/09	7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Holden Thursday Night
33	Thur. 1/1/09	8:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Way Out Group
34	Thur. 1/1/09	9:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Auburn Big Book
35	Thur. 1/1/09	10:00 pm - 11:00 pm	
36	Thur. 1/1/09	11:00 pm - 12:00 am	Reflections Group - Grafton

SLOT	DATE	TIME	GROUP
1	Wed. 11/26	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Worcester 7 A.M. Group
2	Wed. 11/26	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Spencer Fellowship
3	Wed. 11/26	2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Courage to Change
4	Wed. 11/26	3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Holden Thursday Night
5	Wed. 11/26	4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Northboro How It Works
6	Wed. 11/26	5:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Auburn Beginners
7	Wed. 11/26	6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Triton
8	Wed. 11/26	7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Sutton Step
9	Wed. 11/26	8:00 pm - 9:00 pm	We Mean Business
10	Wed. 11/26	9:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Rebound
11	Wed. 11/26	10:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Greendale
12	Wed. 11/26	11:00 pm - 12:00 am	Westboro Sunday Morning
13	Thurs. 11/27	12:00 am - 1:00 am	Worcester Mid Day
14	Thurs. 11/27	1:00 am - 2:00 am	Reflections Group - Grafton
15	Thurs. 11/27	2:00 am - 3:00 am	Southbridge Original
16	Thurs. 11/27	3:00 am - 4:00 am	Worcester Young People
17	Thurs. 11/27	4:00 am - 5:00 am	Crossroads
18	Thurs. 11/27	5:00 am - 6:00 am	Shrewsbury Gratitude

Thanksgiving Alcahthon

SLOT	DATE	TIME	GROUP
19	Thurs. 11/27	6:00 am - 7:00 am	Wed. Women's Big Book Step Study
20	Thurs. 11/27	7:00 am - 8:00 am	There is Hope
21	Thurs. 11/27	8:00 am - 9:00 am	Crozier
22	Thurs. 11/27	9:00 am - 10:00 am	Charlton Daybreakers
23	Thurs. 11/27	10:00 am - 11:00 am	Checkup From The Neck Up
24	Thurs. 11/27	11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Northboro Saturday Morning
25	Thurs. 11/27	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Traditions - Millbury
26	Thurs. 11/27	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Worcester Gratitude
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34	Thurs. 11/27	9:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Auburn Big Book
35	Thurs. 11/27	10:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Way Out Group
36	Thurs. 11/27	11:00 pm - 12:00 pm	People Helping People



**Just Another Drunk**

The Grapevine August 1981  
Vol. 38 No. 3

TRADITION TWELVE never meant much to me until I left the security and non-anonymity of my home group. By "non-anonymity," I mean that my home group knew me, all of me; I had nothing hidden from them.

They had taken me in, a nonperson drunk in the final stages of alcoholism and all the despair that goes with it. They had patiently, and sometimes not so patiently, listened to my eternal poor me's and why me's. All I asked for when I first got to AA was pity. I didn't know enough or have sense enough to ask for sobriety. I didn't even have "the only requirement for membership."

They didn't give me pity--they gave me love. They ignored my symptoms and treated my disease by telling me, no matter what I said was wrong with me, "Don't drink, and go to meetings."

And in meeting after meeting of sharing their experiences, they taught me slowly, one meeting at a time, how to begin to take one Step at a time, and they came to know me thoroughly.

My home group, a beloved family, watched me grow and get well. My sponsor watched me become a sponsor. I felt their love and pride in me and their joy in my growth in AA sobriety. I felt it and knew it because I, in turn, experienced those feelings with newer members. It was a happy time, and my open and honest sharing in my home group made me well known and oh, so very comfortable.

Jobs and responsibilities were given to me as I became more capable. Eventually, I was able to do a few worthwhile projects to help the still-suffering alcoholic. I felt sober and successful, and this very peak experience led me to come out West where a new job awaited.

For over a year now, in several states, I have begun anew with several AA groups and many members. I've gotten a glimpse of that idea of anonymity as a spiritual foundation.

Somehow, living alone in each new and strange place and going, unknown, to a meeting, I was really just another drunk. It was a humbling and good way to start all over. I listened to the same wonderful words coming from the mouths of strangers, and I knew that only their faces were unknown to me.

This understanding of them--a spiritual understanding and a knowing of them because of the AA program--gave me a glimpse of the meaning of the Twelfth Tradition. It was a hint of the meaning of humility, and I found it satisfying. I think it became satisfying because I now had to use the tools I'd been given. I needed to live the slogans and the Steps. I read the Big Book with care. I read copies of the Grapevine that had been carefully selected back home and brought along. Those pages are just like meetings, and in a town where I had no phone numbers to give comfort between meetings or at odd hours, they played a vital role in keeping me sober and comfortable.

I found I became intensely aware of two spiritual ideas: myself as a "personality" with a chance to grow, because I was truly anonymous in each new group; and the AA "principles" I had to turn to, because I did not have my known and loved home group to fall back on. I was on my own, alone and unknown, and at the same time not alone. An AA miracle!

At those first few (and I do mean few) meetings when my travels began, I was just another drunk, trying to stay sober. No one knew how wonderful I might be, nor how sick and rotten I might be, either. But the love was there and was given to me. Somehow, it was very powerful. I was amazed to find myself accepting it humbly and with an awareness of the goodness of anonymity.

After those first meetings, I shared my story and myself, and so I then belonged to each new group. Though I was no longer anonymous to those fellow members, I had gained a precious bit of learning about anonymity as a "spiritual foundation."

- A. M. Santa Cruz, California

**I Will Arise". . .**

The Grapevine December 1948  
Vol. 5 No. 7

*I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. . .*

THE busy bus terminal was a cheery place. An overtone of gaiety and laughter rode the buzzing hum of noise. For this was Christmas eve. People milled all around Bill as he sat on the hard bench, but he hardly noticed. He was absorbed in his own thoughts. Memories, rather--memories that seemed to move across in front of his mind, like a magic lantern show.

This city, a mid-west metropolis, was familiar ground. Only an hour's bus ride from his home town, it had been the scene of many an earlier "binge". Now, in his mind's eye, Bill saw himself sitting in this same terminal, possibly on this same bench, years before. That had been Christmas eve, too--and he was trying to get the last bus home.

EARLY next morning, Christmas morning, Bill had wakened--in jail. "Intoxication, and disturbing the peace." They'd picked him up in this terminal. But Bill hadn't remembered any of it. The big Irish sergeant on the desk had said, "Look, kid, it's Christmas. We didn't want to pick you up last night. You made us. Now, g'wan home to your family and be a decent lad. It's Christmas!" That was the first. There'd been other jails, and worse, since.

Bill got an 8 o'clock bus that Christmas day. Other pictures flung themselves across his mind then, too, during that hour's bus ride. He saw his family, up early. He saw his mother walk into his room, to find his unslept in bed. He saw the tree in the corner of the living room. It had all the old familiar ornaments he'd known since childhood. They glittered warmly when his father turned on the strings of lights. He saw his Dad's face. . .

He tried to go in that Christmas morning. He got as far as the next block. He could see the house, his house. But he was sick, afraid--and inutterably weary. Too weary to make that last block home. For it was the desolate, despairing weariness only an alcoholic can know--and it carried him 500 miles to the east. One short block was too far. But 500 miles wasn't far enough. . .

*. . . And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living. . .*

*(Continued on next page)*

I Will Arise (continued from page 7)

Other Christmases came and went. Bill never managed to "get on his feet." He did well in his job--for a while. Promotions. A really respectable salary. But he never came home for Christmas. Down deep inside, he never felt quite up to the "triumphant return." After all, a fellow had his pride. And that's the way it would have to be. Big! For that, he had to be sure. And he wasn't.

ONE year he almost made it. But, at the last minute, cashed in his railroad ticket to keep a party going--a "Christmas party" that had started five days earlier. After that the downward spiral swirled faster, stronger--and engulfed Bill completely.

These were memories that hit a man in the pit of the stomach. But Bill had learned to accept his past. He could take those memories now, without trying hastily to erase them with a bottle. Six months of A.A. had done that for him. That, and a great deal more. This Christmas, Bill was ready. Really ready. Interrupting his musings the announcer's voice, over the loud speaker, called Bill's bus. . .

*. . . And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. . .*

Bill's dad stood in the doorway of the home town's little bus station. Just a flicker of a smile came over the older man's face when he saw Bill. They met quietly. "Hello, son." "Hi, Dad." For a fleeting moment, the father's eyes searched the son's. A hand went across Bill's shoulder and there was just a suggestion of a confident squeeze on Bill's arm. "The car's over there, son. Mother has breakfast waiting for us. Christmas breakfast."

MOTHER was waiting on the porch, an apron over her new Christmas dress. There was no demonstration. Only a kiss and a quiet, prayerful, "Thank God, you're home!"

Breakfast was just as Bill had remembered. Except that, at first, conversation was a bit jerky. Things were a little awkward. But it was the awkwardness of love, the abiding love of a mother, a father, and a son who'd come home--at last.

The excitement of Christmas, the presents, the visits of old friends, carried them through the day. The strain of the morning had lessened. So, after dinner, Bill suggested a walk around the old home town--for old times sake. Bill's Dad understood, however that Bill wanted to talk.

THEY walked for an hour, father and son. And Bill talked. Words tumbled out, of themselves--easily, confidently. He told his father about A.A.--and of the awful years before. He talked of the meetings; of some of his 12th Step work; of getting his old job back. He spoke of himself--the down-inside-himself part of him, and what had happened to it. It may have been the finest A.A. "speech" ever made--but no matter. The audience was one lonely man, a man who had prayed, and hoped, but who now listened, puffing silently on his pipe--and hearing with his heart.

They had walked far and now stood on the high rise back of the town. Below, the lights twinkled in the clear, frosty air. The snow, on the roofs and reflecting the lights from windows, gave the scene an unreal Christmas card touch. They stopped, and Bill said, "It's beautiful, isn't it?"

"Yes, son, it's beautiful," said the older man. "But--this cold air--kinda makes my eyes water."

*. . . For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.*  
- A.S.

**ACRONYMS heard at meetings**

TRUST: Teaching Recovery Using Steps and Traditions.

FEAR: False Evidence Appearing Real

FEAR: Forget Everything And Run

STOP: Sobriety Tops Our Priorities.

EGO: Edging God Out.

SOBER: Son Of a B--Everything's Real

NUTS: Not Using The Steps.

HALT: If you are feeling Hungry Angry Lonely or Tired - call your sponsor.

SLIP: Sobriety Lost Its Importance

**Short but True AA Slogans**

Easy does it

Live and Let Live

First Things First

Slow me down, Lord.

But for the Grace of God

Think

Call before you fall

Pick up the phone before you pick up a drink



**District 26 Presents**

Of Alcoholics Anonymous

**JOY OF LIVING  
2009  
WEEKEND**

With Al-Anon participation

FEBRUARY 6, 7 AND 8, 2009

COLONIAL HOTEL 625 BETTY SPRING ROAD  
GARDNER, MA 01440 PHONE: 978-630-2500

ROOM RATES (SINGLE, DOUBLE, TRIPLE OR QUAD  
OCCUPANCY) \$99.95 PER NIGHT + STATE AND LOCAL TAX.

ROOM RESERVATIONS **MUST BE MADE DIRECTLY WITH THE  
HOTEL.**

RESERVE ROOMS BY JANUARY 6, 2009

Save the Date – more to follow

Questions? Call Brandy H.

A Christmas Message from Bill W

From The Grapevine December 1952

**Every Day Is Christmas**

THE seventeenth Christmas for Alcoholics Anonymous is here. Considering all that has happened since AA's first Christmas in 1935, no words can portray the meaning of Christmas 1952. The only thing of which we're really sure is that we have given of ourselves, and have received gifts that no imagination can fully describe. Guided, we are sure, by an all generous and wise Providence, AA's message of hope has been carried into nearly every corner of the earth. The Christmas drama of giving and receiving has been re-enacted everywhere and still goes on.

Many of us in AA are of the Christian faith, though not all. We have Jews who look to Jehovah; agnostics who hopefully look to the AA group as their Higher Power; and there are Indians upon our Western plains who regard the Great Spirit as their guide. Now that we have opened tiny beachheads on the shores of Asia, we have no doubt that some of our brothers and sisters there reverence Buddha and others Allah. It is a comforting fact of our life together that none of these differences has ever disturbed us. Indeed, it can be said that they have, in some subtle and mysterious way, bound us even more firmly together. The insurance of that bond is our common kinship in suffering, and our universal release from it by the kind of giving that demands no reward.

So, by whatever name we may call it, the spirit of Christmas is in us all. How best to give and how to receive with ever more gratitude is our common aim. We'd like to practice the spirit of Christmas the year around. Therefore, we shall especially ask ourselves at this season: "What more can we find in order that we shall have more to give?" Since personal example is one of the great energies by which AA spreads, let's have a quick look at the life of a man who became able to practice the spirit of Christmas every day in the year.

He was born in Italy centuries ago. The age in which he lived was almost as confused and baffling as our own. His first attempt at living was just like ours. He ran away from life as fast as he could, and by nearly the same means. Few, it was said, could romance more gaily than he, shake the dice with Dame Fortune with more abandon, nor clatter his wine flagon on the table more loudly. He probably had a pretty good time doing it, too, at least for a while. Bit by bit, though, he got fed up. During a long siege of illness he hit bottom, even as we alcoholics do.

One day he said to himself, "Suppose that in all things I try henceforth to do exactly as my Master would have done." This was the vision that gripped him, and he set foot on the new highroad. Some of his friends were amused, and others were deeply concerned. Some said it wasn't practical; others thought he had gone out of his mind. But by living one day at a time, teaching and sharing as he went, with no thought of reward for himself, he started a movement that deeply affected the whole world of his day; it reached into every level of society. He gave all he had, and that inspired others to do likewise. He brought true comfort where there had been none.

And how did he do this? The prayer he so often spoke tells us. Here it is:

"Lord make me a channel of Thy Peace That where there is hatred. . . I may bring love That where there is wrong. . . I may bring the spirit of forgiveness That where there is discord. . . I may bring harmony That where there is error. . . I may bring truth That where there is doubt. . . I may bring faith That where there is despair. . . I may bring hope That where there are shadows. . . I may bring light That where there is sadness. . . I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to Comfort. . .than to be comforted To understand. . .than to be understood To love. . .than to be loved For. . .it is by self-forgetting. . .that one finds It is by forgiving. . .that one is forgiven It is by dying. . .that one awakens to Eternal Life."

The lesson that Francis leaves us is clear and no example could be brighter. "Freely ye have received; Freely give" and. . .a Merry Christmas!

**HELP WANTED**

**RECOVERING ALCOHOLICS ARE NEEDED  
NO BUSINESS EXPERIENCE NECESSARY**

The Joint Treatment Facilities Committee needs help to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous into treatment facilities. If you are a recovering alcoholic with a suggested minimum of six months sobriety and are working the steps with a sponsor you can perform this rewarding work.

Current Needs Include: Planning Annual Seminar, Outreach to Nursing Homes, Bookie for Treatment Facilities, Keeping Literature Racks Stocked, Bringing the 'Bridging the Gap' Program Information to Facilities and Groups.

Help keep your sobriety by carrying AA's message to the alcoholic who still suffers.  
For more information, e-mail: [treatment@aaworcester.org](mailto:treatment@aaworcester.org)

**Time Change**

**New Time 7:00—8:00 PM**

**Shrewsbury CANDLELIGHT Meeting** is a 12 Step Meeting and a Traditions Meeting on the 1st Wednesday of the month at St. Anne's Church Route 9 Shrewsbury.

Located in Separate building at rear of Church, enter down the front of the building

**The Halt-Line has 12 hours of unmanned phone time....can you spare an hour?**

**Available hours:**

**Mon 2-3, 3-4, 6-7 AM, 8-9, 9-10PM  
Wed 2-3 AM 3-4 AM  
Fri 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-6, 6-7 PM**



**Responsibility Declaration**

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.



**20 Questions**

From The Grapevine May 1997 Vol. 53 No. 12

1. Do you occasionally feel grateful that you are alive and not drinking?
2. Have you awakened in the morning recently and looked forward to getting up and going to work?
3. Have you gone a complete day without drinking or thinking about it?
4. Have you paused in the middle of a busy day and thanked your Higher Power for removing the compulsion to drink?
5. Are you experiencing periods of unexplained serenity?
6. Have you had warm feelings toward another person and wondered if this emotion could be love?
7. Do you sometimes feel good about yourself and wonder if life would be as good if you were not an alcoholic?
8. Do you sometimes feel happy for no specific reason?
9. Have you quit feeling sorry for yourself and decided that recovery in AA has made you a better person?
10. Are you able to admit that you may have been wrong, and to apologize when appropriate?
11. Can you play golf, poker, bridge, or pool, bowl, or do a paint job around home without remembering or wanting a beer?
12. Have you recently--with no ulterior motive--told your spouse and kids that you love them?
13. When you have a problem, have you asked your Higher Power for help and been able to turn it over and go to sleep?
14. Do you have more good days than bad days?
15. Are you able to talk about your feelings at AA meetings, and not just relate events?
16. Do you like yourself?
17. Do you socialize with other AA people?
18. Do you look forward to and enjoy AA meetings?
19. Have you had a dream in which you turned down a drink or did not drink because an AA friend helped you?
20. Do you thank your Higher Power at the end of each day for helping you stay sober?

If you have answered yes to five or more of these questions, chances are good that you're a grateful recovering alcoholic. You should continue going to AA meetings and trying to practice these principles in all your affairs.

If you answered with ten yeses, you are showing definite symptoms of sobriety.

Giving fifteen or more yes answers suggests you may be getting complacent, and should try some beginners meetings and redo Step One.

—W.J. Wilmington, Delaware



**"Bookie" List**

- Vivian Athol Tuesday 8:00—9:00PM
- Fran "Life Second To None" Charlton Saturday 7:00-8:00PM
- Kevin S. "Maintenance & Repair" Douglas Thursday 7:00-8:00 PM
- Andy S. "Fitchburg Sunday Morning" Fitchburg Sunday 10:15—11:30AM
- T.B.A. "Holden Thursday Night" Holden Thursday 8-9:00PM
- George K. "Barbershop Group" Hopkinton Tuesday 8-9:15PM
- Ed H. "Hudson Second Chance Group" Hudson Monday 8:00-9:30 PM
- Frank G. "Clean Air Group" Leominster Friday 7:45 - 9:00PM
- Ken "Am I Listening" Leominster Sunday 7:45—9:00PM
- James S. "Leominster Original Group" Leominster Monday 7:45—9:00PM
- Tom M. "Marlboro Helping Hand" Marlboro Saturday 12:00-1:00 PM
- Ed O. "Millbury Tradition" Millbury Saturday 7:30 - 8:30 PM
- Tom "Mood of Happy Destiny" Natick
- Janelle "How It Works" Northboro Wednesday 8-9PM
- Walt B. "Northboro Saturday Morning" Northboro Saturday 10:00-11:00AM
- Andy L. "Southbridge Original Sunday Night" Southbridge Sunday 7:00—8:00PM
- Tom S. "Stow Sunday Morning" Stow 11:00AM - 12:00PM Sunday
- Dave "Uxbridge Valley" Uxbridge Friday 7:30 — 9:00PM
- Mark P. "Westboro Forge" Westboro Wednesday 8:00 - 9:00 PM
- Melanie Spectrum Westboro State Hospital contact for incoming only-3 meetings nightly (508) 898-1570 x2213 (3d floor)
- Lynn S. "Westboro Sunday Morning AA" Westboro Sunday 11:00AM - 12:00
- Junior "Shrewsbury Gratitude" Worcester Sunday 7:00 - 8:30 PM
- Mary Ellen "Four Corners" Worcester Wednesday 8:00 - 9:30 PM
- Christine "Greendale" Worcester Friday 8:30-10:00PM
- Paul C. "How it Works" Worcester Saturday 6:45—8:00 PM
- Paul C. "Stay Active" Worcester Thursday 6:45 PM
- Art F. "Quinsig Group" Worcester Tuesday 8:00—9:00 PM
- Brendan C. "Serenity" Worcester Thursday 7:30—9:00 PM
- Bobby W. "Worcester New Beginnings" Friday 6:45-8:00 PM
- James S. "There is Hope" Worcester Sunday 10:00—11:00 AM
- Jaye J. "Way of Sobriety" Worcester Sunday 10:00—11:00 AM
- Fran D. "We Mean Business" Worcester Outgoing Only
- Justin "Worcester 7 AM" Adcare Daily 7:00AM
- Bob White Adcare Hospital contact for incoming only-3 meetings nightly (508) 799-9000
- Jen Boris CHL Hospital Worcester contact for incoming only-nights and weekends (508) 421-4464
- Ask for 8-East UMass Hospital contact for incoming only - nights and weekend(508) 334-1000
- Kira "Crozier Group" Worcester Monday 8:00—9:00PM
- George "As Bill Sees It" Worcester Thursday 7:00—8:00 PM
- Josh "Young Peoples' Group" Worcester Tuesday 7:30-9PM

**Steering Committee & Committee Chairpersons 2008**



**Worcester Area Intergroup**

100 Grove St., Suite 314

Worcester, MA 01605

(508) 752-9000

(508) 752-0755 (fax)

[www.aaworcester.org](http://www.aaworcester.org)

**Office Hours:**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>10am-2pm</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>10am-8pm</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>10am-2pm</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>10am-8pm</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>10am-2pm</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>9am-2pm</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>email address</u>
Chairperson	Bob D.	<a href="#">TBD</a>
Alternate Chair	Joe N.	<a href="#">None</a>
Secretary	Dot B.	<a href="mailto:secretary@aaworcester.org">secretary@aaworcester.org</a>
Treasurer	Ellen Mc Q.	<a href="mailto:treasurer@aaworcester.org">treasurer@aaworcester.org</a>
Alternate Treasurer	Lori B.	
Trustees	Harry H. Bob L. Paul M. One vacancy	
Office Manager	John H.	<a href="mailto:steps@aaworcester.org">steps@aaworcester.org</a>
Joint Treatment Facilities	Paul M.	<a href="mailto:treatment@aaworcester.org">treatment@aaworcester.org</a>
Joint Correctional Facilities	Eric R	<a href="mailto:Corrections@aaworcester.org">Corrections@aaworcester.org</a>
Halt Line	Dan M.	<a href="mailto:haltline@aaworcester.org">haltline@aaworcester.org</a>
Social Committee	<b>Vacant</b>	<a href="mailto:Social@aaworcester.org">Social@aaworcester.org</a>
Joint Public Information	<b>Vacant</b>	<a href="mailto:PiChair@aaworcester.org">PiChair@aaworcester.org</a>
Webmaster	Bob L.	<a href="mailto:webmaster@aaworcester.org">webmaster@aaworcester.org</a>
Liaison to District 25	Eric R.	<a href="#">None</a>
Liaison to District 26	Woody S	
Liaison to Area 30		<a href="#">None</a>
Joint Alcathon Committee	Joe N.	
CoChairs Intergroup & District 25	intergroup	
The Beacon	Richard C.	<a href="mailto:Beacon@aaworcester.org">Beacon@aaworcester.org</a>

*Do I do my part?*

The opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does the publication of any article imply an endorsement by either A.A., general services nor Intergroup. Comments, questions and articles may be directed to The Beacon.

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The Beacon—100 Grove Street Suite 314 Worcester, MA 01605 email: [beacon@aaworcester.org](mailto:beacon@aaworcester.org)

The Beacon Staff: April 2008 to December 2008

Editor: Richard C. — Serenity, Worcester, MA. Volunteers include Lisa, Anna, Mike, Glen, Jim Linda & Tom, all at Serenity; Joe and John at Intergroup.; Chet at Quinsig; Tom at Sacred Heart Noontime.

**Rule 62 “ Don't take yourself too damn seriously.”**

**12 Tips for Sober Holidays**

1. Line up extra AA activities (help on the phones, speak, empty the ashtrays).
2. Be host to friends, especially newcomers, at home or at a coffee shop.
3. Keep your AA telephone list with you at all times.
4. Find out about holiday meetings or celebrations in your local groups.
5. Skip any drinking occasions you're nervous about.
6. If there's one you can't skip, take an AA friend--or keep candy handy.
7. Don't think you have to stay late (plan an "important date" in advance).
8. Go to church. Any church. And don't forget about extra meetings.
9. Don't sit around brooding; catch up on reading, museums, walks, letters.
10. Don't project about holiday temptations: remember "One day at a time."
11. Even if you cannot give material gifts, enjoy the beauty of holiday love.
12. Carry the message. Give the joy away, and it will be yours to keep.



AA HAS A TOOLBOX with a wrench to fit any nut that comes through the door.

HEARD AT A MEETING - The trouble with "Two-Stepping" is that you usually combine the wrong parts of the First and Twelfth Steps, i.e., "My life is unmanageable, and I'd like to share it with you."

SEEN ON A BUMPER STICKER: One tequila, two tequila, three keteela, floor.

"AA may not have opened the gates of Heaven and let me in, but AA has opened the gates of Hell and let me out."

All too often, a clear conscience is merely the result of a bad memory.

"Alcoholism: the crutch beating the lame"

<b>Service Meetings Monthly Schedule</b>			
<b>InterGroup/District 25 &amp; 26</b>			
Public Information	Intergroup Office 100 Grove St. # 314 Worcester	4th Monday	<b>TBD</b>
District 25 (GSR's)	St. Joan of Arc Church 570 Lincoln St. Worcester	1st Tuesday	7:30 pm
Joint Corrections	Intergroup Office 100 Grove St. # 314 Worcester	2nd Tuesday	<b>TBD</b>
District 25 - CPC* Committee	Intergroup Office 100 Grove St. # 314 Worcester	3rd Tuesday.	6:00 pm
District 26 (GSR's)	Local 60 Union Hall Mechanic St. Leominster	1st Thursday	7:00 pm
Steering Committee	St. Joan of Arc Church 570 Lincoln St. Worcester	2nd Thursday	<b>6:00 pm</b>
Intergroup Delegates	St. Joan of Arc Church 570 Lincoln St. Worcester	2nd Thursday	7:00 pm
Joint Treatment	Intergroup Office 100 Grove St. # 314 Worcester	4th Saturday	10:00 am
<b>Area 30</b>			
Grapevine Committee	Conference call (Number TBA)	3rd Thursday	7:30-8:30pm
Literature Committee	Carter Methodist Church 800 Highland Ave. Needham	1st Monday	7:30pm
Eastern Mass. GSC	St. John's 80 Mt. Auburn Watertown	4th Wed.	8:00pm
Joint Public Information	Boston Central Service 368 Congress St. Lower Level Boston	1st Thursday	7:00pm
CPC Committee	Boston Central Service 368 Congress St. Lower Level Boston	2nd Thursday	7:00pm
Archives Committee	St. John's 80 Mt. Auburn Watertown	3rd Thursday	7:30pm
Corrections Committee	Boston Central Service 368 Congress St. Lower Level Boston	4th Thursday	7:30 pm
Joint Treatment Facilities	St. Paul's 59 Court Street Dedham	3rd Friday	8:00pm

**Is your Group Represented at the Inter-Group Delegates Meeting?**

If you don't attend you can't vote...

If you don't vote you don't have a voice..

Come find out what's going on in our area

2nd Thursday of the month St. Joan of Arc Church Lincoln Street Worcester 7:00-8:30PM

We counted 150 Groups in Worcester area only about 20 are represented, and only 8 show up at the Delegates meeting on a regular basis. Want to find out more? Call the Intergroup office 1-508-752-9000 or email the beacon:

[beacon@aaworcester.org](mailto:beacon@aaworcester.org)

We'd be happy to answer your questions.

**Your Anniversary**

Can have an extra display!

In recent months, the GrapeVine Committee for District 25 has gone to anniversaries, set up the display board and had reps available to answer any questions people might have. They've also given away or raffled GV subscriptions as part of the celebration.

Contact: [gvd25chr@yahoo.com](mailto:gvd25chr@yahoo.com)

**OPPORTUNITY**

Any person who would like to try their hand as either a member of the **District 25 Grapevine committee**, or apply for the position of GVD25 Chair, please contact the current Grapevine chair at

Contact: [gvd25chr@yahoo.com](mailto:gvd25chr@yahoo.com). The current term will end on 31 December 2008

**Moved**

**Search For Serenity**

Thursday 7:30 - 9:00 PM  
117 Main St., 2nd Floor  
(Use Side Entrance Pleasant St)  
**Spencer ODNS**

**January 2009  
36th Anniversary**

**Fitchburg Sunday Morning**  
Sunday, January 25, 2009

**Notre Dame High School**  
151 South Street Fitchburg, Mass.  
(South St. is Exit 30 off Route 2)

Buffet starts at 9:15AM  
Meeting runs 10:15 thru 11:30AM

**W. A. I. Needs your help!**

There are service positions that remain unfilled. Join us the 2nd Thursday of each month 7:00pm St. Joan of Arc Church Lincoln Street....come see where you can help! Please Join us !!

To find out about social events in **District 26** (North & west of Worcester) check out their unofficial web site: [www.26ac.org](http://www.26ac.org)

**Al Anon - Al Ateen**

The email address to request a packet and a meeting list for Al Anon is: [LDCofMA@aol.com](mailto:LDCofMA@aol.com).

**In Westboro**

Al-Anon Family Groups of Massachusetts, Inc.  
57 East Main Street, Suite 109  
Westborough, MA 01581-1457  
(508) 366-0556

**web sites**

for Massachusetts:  
<http://www.ma-al-anon-alateen.org/>

US

<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/english.html>

**Worcester Noontime**

The High Noon Speaker meeting has moved to Saint Andrew's United Methodist Church on 24 Hamilton Street in Worcester.

**Worcester Noontime**

The High Noon Twelve Step Discussion Group meeting has moved to the Denholm Building on Main Street in Worcester.

**Moved**

**Crozier Group (temporarily)**  
Monday 8:00 - 9:00 PM  
St. Stephen's Church.  
Cnr Hamilton & Grafton Sts.  
**Worcester**



**Moved**

**First Day**

Sunday 10:00 - 11:00 AM  
6 Mechanic St.  
**Webster**

**Moved**

**Early Risers**

Sunday 7:00 - 8:00 AM  
Church of Reconciliation  
3 N. Main St. **Webster**

**Moved**

**The ARC (Addiction Referral Center) in Marlboro has moved from 110 Pleasant St. to 33 Main St. Marlboro**

**Subscription Form**

Please fill out form, enclose your payment, and mail to  
**The Beacon**  
100 Grove Street Suite 314  
Worcester Mass. 01605

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Subscriptions to The Beacon are \$5.00 per year to defray the cost of production and postage. Additional donations from members are gratefully accepted. Worcester Area Intergroup is a non-profit organization, dependent on members' contributions. Please make checks payable to Worcester Area Intergroup.