

# CAMEL COURIER

VOLUME 29 ◉ ISSUE 2 ◉ FEBRUARY 2015

## ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

**District 11 – Area 34**  
coverage area includes:  
Antrim, Benzie,  
Grand Traverse,  
Kalkaska, & Leelanau  
counties.

**Central Office**  
124 N. Division Street  
Traverse City, MI 49684

◉ ◉ ◉

**Hot Line**  
(231) 946-8823  
24/7 Service

**Business Line**  
(231) 946-6716

**Business Office Hours**  
Mon – Fri 10AM - 5PM  
Saturday 10AM - 2PM

**Email**  
district11centraloffice@yahoo.com

**Website**  
www.district11-aa.org

**Board**  
Jodie S., Chair  
Kip M., Secretary  
Ken W., Treasurer  
Victor F., Literature Buyer  
Jodie S., Webmaster  
Mike H., Newsletter Editor  
Phil S.  
Dale B.  
Sue V.

**Volunteer Coordinator**  
Susan N.

## Dr. Bob ♦ AA Co-Founder ♦ Part One

Dr. Bob Smith remembers his childhood hometown of St. Johnsbury, some 100 miles northeast of the East Dorset birthplace of Bill Wilson, as having a general moral standard “far above the average.” The consumption of alcohol was considered a question of morality. “No beer or liquor was sold in the neighborhood, except at the State liquor agency where perhaps one might procure a pint if he could convince the agent that he really needed it... Men who had liquor shipped in from Boston or New York by express were looked upon with great distrust and disfavor.” (Doctor Bob’s Nightmare, p. 171)

Judge and Mrs. Walter Perrin Smith were prominent citizens in the archetypical New England village of about 7,000.” Judge Smith sat on the Caledonia County Probate Court. He was also, at various times, state’s attorney, member of the state legislature, superintendent of St. Johnsbury schools, director of the Merchants National Bank, and president of the Passumpsic Savings Bank. In addition, he taught Sunday school for 40 years. Dr. Bob, who rarely discussed family background, described his father as being a typical Vermont Yankee – reserved and taciturn.” (Dr. Bob and The Good Oldtimers, p. 9) Beneath the granite surface, the Judge had warmth and passion, and considerable indulgence toward his only son.

That son was Robert Holbrook Smith, who was born in their large home on August 8th, of 1879. He had a much older foster sister, Amanda Northrup, but he essentially grew up as an only child. “Mrs. Smith... was... a stern, tight-lipped, churchgoing lady who busied herself with the countless social and religious activities of St. Johnsbury’s towering, gray stone North Congregational Church. “Grandma Smith was a cold woman,” said Sue Windows, Dr. Bob’s adopted daughter.” (Good Oldtimers, p. 10) Mrs. Smith did live to see her sybaritic son become sober. The Judge died in 1918.

### **A “Churchy” Childhood and a Taste of Hard Cider**

Young Bob was forced to go to church, Sunday school and other prayer meetings, as many as four or five times per week. “This had the effect of making me resolve that when I was free from parental domination, I would never again darken the doors of a church.” (Good Oldtimers, p. 12)

A second rebellion was more immediate. Sent to bed at five o’clock every evening, he went without argument, but stealthily slipped out to join his friends, once he thought the coast was clear.

Bob was a boy who liked the outdoors – hunting, fishing, hiking and swimming. One day, while at a neighbor’s farm helping the men bale hay, he discovered the “secret stash” of one of the workmen, a jug of ‘hard cider,’ and the irresistible lure prompted a large swallow. He liked the taste. He was barely nine. Although he was not to drink again for ten more years, this single event was memorable.

(Continued on Page 2)

At school he managed creditable grades in spite of an effort level that was less than diligent. He was popular, having plenty of friends. At a high school dance at the St. Johnsbury Academy, he met Anne Robinson Ripley who would, many years later, become Mrs. Robert Smith.

### **The “Dinkingest of Ivy League Schools”**

Dr. Bob attended Dartmouth which “had a name then for being a rugged backwoods school where the 800 or so students spent the long winters ignoring their books and drinking as much beer and hard cider as they could hold.” (Good Oldtimers, p. 18) Bob Smith could hold a lot – he was a prodigious drinker. At university, sixty miles from parental supervision, he was unrestrained.

Regarding his college drinking, Smith writes, “I did it more and more, and had lots of fun without much grief, either physical or financial. I seemed to be able to snap back the next morning better than most of my fellow drinkers... Never once in my life have I had a headache, which fact lends me to believe that I was an alcoholic almost from the start. My whole life seemed to be centered around doing what I wanted to do, without regard for the rights, wishes, or privileges of anyone else; a state of mind which became more and more predominant as the years passed. I was graduated “summa cum laude” in the eyes of the drinking fraternity, but not in the eyes of the Dean.” (Nightmare, p. 172) At college, he developed a fondness for billiards, horseshoe pitching, and several forms of cards, including the beginnings of a lifelong passion for bridge. Highly competitive, he played to win. He was also a very skilled chugalugger.

### **“My Son the Doctor? No, I Don’t Think So!”**

“When it came to things he really wanted, Bob was hardworking. He was also ambitious, and he wanted to become a medical doctor like his maternal grandfather. For some reason we have never learned, his mother opposed this quite strongly. He had no choice but to get a job.” (Good Oldtimers, p. 24) He became a salesman for Fairbanks Morse, a St. Johnsbury manufacturer of platform scales. The future doctor was uninspired by “heavy hardware,” and was not particularly successful. Weekends were spent bingeing. After two years, a change of companies took him to Montreal, and then to Boston.

With pledges and sweet promises, he finally persuaded his parents to send him to medical school, but his reckless drinking caused him to get expelled from the University of Michigan after his second year. The assistance of his father enabled a transfer to Rush University, where his jitters caused him to miss several classes, and “his life in school became one long binge after another, and he was no longer drinking for the sheer fun of it.” (Good Oldtimers, p. 25) His worsened imbibing prompted his fraternity brothers to send for his father, who’s quiet attempts at understanding only heightened Bob’s feelings of remorse. Hard liquor replaced beer, binges lengthened, and shakes intensified. At one final exam, he could not hold a pencil, and turned in three absolutely blank booklets.

### **Two Dry Quarters, Eight Dry Months**

On the carpet once more, Bob was given a final chance. The dean of the medical school decided that if Bob wished to graduate, he needed to come back for two quarters, remaining completely dry. This he was able to accomplish, and in 1910, at age 31, he was finally Dr. Bob Smith.

### **City Hospital, Akron, Ohio**

“I conducted myself so creditably that I was able to secure a much coveted internship in a western city, where I spent two years. During these two years I was kept so busy that I hardly left the hospital at all. Consequently, I could not get into any trouble.” (Nightmare, p. 174) The new doctor opened an office downtown, in the Second National Bank Building, where he was to remain until he retired in 1948.

“Perhaps as a result of the irregular hours and tense work of a new GP, Dr. Bob developed considerable stomach trouble. “I soon discovered that a couple of drinks would alleviate my gastric distress, at least for a few hours at a time,” he said. It didn’t take him long to return to the old drinking habits. Almost immediately, he began to ‘pay very dearly physically,’ to know the real horror and suffering of alcoholism.” (Good Oldtimers, p. 28)

### **Drying-Out Spots**

When so bad that he could not function, the new medical practitioner put himself into one of the local “drying-out” spots. This happened at least a dozen times. In one small hospital for patients with socially unacceptable ailments, he sabotaged the sincere efforts of the staff by getting friends to smuggle in whiskey by the quart. If unavailable, he then stole medicinal alcohol.

### **Sobriety And Tranquil Domesticity**

In 1914, Judge Smith dispatched a doctor to bring Bob home where he remained in bed for two full months before daring to venture out. He was utterly demoralized. “Scared straight” Smith stayed sober, and believed he was that way to stay. He went to Chicago to finally marry Anne, which he did on January 25, 1915. It was about a full year since his last drink.

**(Continued on Page 3)**

“The first three years of the Smiths’ married life were ideal, free from the unhappiness that was to come later. Dr. Bob continued to stay sober, and any lingering doubts Anne may have had were stilled. Then were then, as always, an extremely devoted couple... Dr. Bob’s professional life was going smoothly, too; he was developing a reputation as a physician, work he loved... A bit authoritative and difficult to approach, he was sympathetic and understanding once you started talking.” (Good Oldtimers, p. 30) In 1918, the Smiths became the parents of Robert Jr., later known as “Smitty.”

### **The Volstead Act**

Activism by the very vocal forces of Temperance, the Anti-Saloon League, and other anti-alcohol groups had successfully pushed for a dramatic end to the explosively expanding problems with drunkenness in America. By late 1917, the Eighteenth Amendment, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxication liquors, had been passed by Congress, and was awaiting ratification by the states. The drunkenness problem would be ended (in theory) by a complete shutdown of supply. America would become “dry.”

“With the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment I felt quite safe. I knew everyone would buy a few bottles, or cases, of liquor as their exchequers permitted, and that it would soon be gone. Therefore it would make no great difference, even if I should do some drinking. At that time I was not aware of the almost unlimited supply the government made it possible for us doctors to obtain, neither had I any knowledge of the bootlegger who soon appeared on the horizon... During the next few years I developed two distinct phobias. One was the fear of not sleeping, and the other was the fear of running out of liquor.” (Nightmare, p. 175)

Of course, it was not only physicians who were able to get liquor during Prohibition. The Ebby Thachers, Rowland Hazards, and Bill Wilsons of the world did the worst of their drinking during America’s grand failed experiment. The thirty-sixth state (of forty-eight) provided ratification on January 16th, 1919, and the legislation would be in force one year later. The Amendment was repealed in 1933, ironically, right about the time a rapidly deteriorating Bill Wilson entered the Towns Hospital for the first time.

### **855 Ahdmaw Avunuh**

The Smith family home at 855 Ardmore (Ahdmaw, with Bob’s heavy New England drawl) Avenue, purchased new in 1915 for \$4,000. is quite ordinary by the standards of physicians’ homes in the current era. “This house, neither modest nor opulent, speaks of unadorned respectability. It recalls that Dr. Bob shared the stolidly simple ways of his Vermont ancestors, including their moral and verbal austerity.” (Bill W. and Mr. Wilson, Matthew J. Raphael)

Visited annually by many thousand alcoholics and addicts in recovery, anxious to be near “where it all began.” The now famous residence has been designated a “National Historical Landmark” and a museum. Founders Day, held each June, is a weekend of the celebration of sobriety, with a very large component of bikers. Gigantic men, muscled and leather clad, tattooed and pierced, some former gang members, are seen bawling like babies, overwhelmed by the enormity of being at the site of the birth of a life-altering process.

For Mrs. Smith, it must have been more of a hysterical landmark as her husband once more fell into the pit of destructive drinking. The good doctor, of course, needing to earn an income, had various ways of “managing” his drinking, such as no morning drinking (usually), taking sedatives instead, to quiet the “jitters.” Today, he would recognize a “dual addiction.” “I had sense enough never to go to the hospital if I had been drinking, and very seldom did I receive patients.” (Good Oldtimers, p. 33) On a good day, he would stay “dry” but well-sedated until four o’clock, then go home, acquiring a good supply along the way. Thus, he preserved his great “secret,” discovering later that he fooled himself far more than anyone else. Amazingly, this life went on and on and on.

### **The Oxford Group**

Five years after the birth of Robert Jr., a daughter Sue was adopted. As the children aged, they grew more and more aware of their father’s alcoholism. They have fond childhood memories, nonetheless. Possibly to counterbalance his own strict upbringing, Dr. Bob was the most liberal of parents. The long-suffering and frustrated Mrs. Smith, however, took up cigarettes in her fifties, and became a chain smoker. “She was broiling inside. She had to be.” (Good Oldtimers, p. 37) Bob’s promises to his wife and children, though sincerely made, barely got him through a day.

By 1933, the country’s full-blown Depression, combined with a bread winner who only rarely made it to work, left the Smiths in economic desperation. Only the national mortgage moratorium kept the family from losing their house. Dr. Bob was often irritable, and this tetchiness was without doubt magnified when Anne dragged him to the Oxford Group. In spite of bitter remembrances of the “force-fed” religion of his childhood, the guilt-ridden inebriate could hardly refuse the pleadings of his more devout spouse who surely clung to the faint hope of a religious cure.

The Oxford Group had burst dramatically onto the Akron scene in January of 1933, when “a rubber company president [Harvey Firestone], grateful because the Oxford Group had sobered up his son [Russell, “Bud”], brought some sixty OG leaders and team members to Akron for a ten day ‘house party,’ as their gatherings were called. They held meetings throughout the day, and it all

culminated in a dinner for 400 prominent citizens of the community.” (Good Oldtimers, p. 55) This group profoundly attracted Anne Smith, who dragged her recalcitrant husband to this altar of potential redemption.

Despite his original antipathy, Smith was somewhat drawn to the Oxford folks, “...because of their seeming poise, health, and happiness. They spoke with great freedom from embarrassment, which I could never do, and they seemed more at ease on all occasions.. I was self-conscious and ill at ease most of the time, my health was at the breaking point, and I was thoroughly miserable... I gave the matter much time and study for the next two and one half years, but I still got tight every night nevertheless.” (Nightmare, p. 178)

“My wife became deeply interested and it was her interest that had sustained mine, though I at no time thought it might be the answer to my liquor problem.” (Nightmare, p. 178)

By the Spring of 1935, even the dedicated and ever hopeful Anne Smith must have realized, in her heart of hearts, that the desperately desired spiritual cure was not to be forthcoming.

### **The Mayflower Hotel and The Seiberling Gatehouse**

By the Spring of 1935, there were things that Bill Wilson, now five months sober, knew as well. His Towns Hospital “spiritual experience” along with the religious practices of the Oxford Group, were insufficient, in and of themselves, to sustain his sobriety. A few years later, he would write, “...I soon found that when all other measures failed, work with another alcoholic would save the day.” (Bill’s Story, p. 15) And, “Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works, when other activities fail.” (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 89) Lest the key point be missed: “...it is well to let him (alcoholic dad) go as far as he likes in helping other alcoholics. During those first few days of convalescence, this will do more to ensure his sobriety than anything else.” (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 129)

Bill Wilson’s “clean wind of a mountaintop” spiritual experience was a mere five months removed, but possibly already past its “best before” date, when at the Mayflower Hotel, on May 11th of 1935, “his self-pity and resentment began to rise. He was lonely... Now began the personal crisis that was to set in motion a series of life-changing events for Bill. There was a bar at one end of the lobby, and Bill felt himself drawn to it... the idea was loaded with danger... For the first time in months, Bill had the panicky feeling of being in trouble... I thought, ‘You need another alcoholic to talk to. You need another alcoholic just as much as he needs you!’” (Pass It On, p. 135-136)

And thus the phone calls were made that led Bill Wilson to Dr. Bob, through Reverend Tunks, Norman Sheppard, and Henrietta Seiberling. Beyond this point the events are well known, recorded in some detail in the “Foreword To The Second Edition.” It is worth revisiting Bob Smith’s own words regarding what was magical about this first meeting, and more impactful than thirty months of Oxford Group religiosity: “He gave me information about the subject of alcoholism which was undoubtedly helpful. Of far more importance was the fact that he was the first living human with whom I had ever talked, who knew what he was talking about in regard to alcoholism from actual experience. In other words, he talked my language.” (Nightmare, p. 180)

Dr. Bob stopped drinking and Bill Wilson moved into the Smith home. There was to be one more relapse at the AMA Convention about a month later, but the physician then sobered permanently in June of 1935, the date memorialized as the start of AA. Perhaps fittingly in an organization priding itself on a lack of organization, the famous date was incorrectly remembered as June 10th, but is now thought to have been June 17th.

BY: Bob K. from St. Johnsbury, Vermont

SOURCE: *AA Agnostic – March 30, 2014*

**NOTE: “Dr. Bob ♦ Part Two” will appear in the March issue of the *Camel Courier*.**

## **Central Office Announcements**

### **SEEKING NEW OFFICE SPACE**

Central Office is looking for office space. We need a minimum of 700 square feet that is ADA accessible, located in/near downtown, has two or more rooms, as well as parking available. If you have a lead, please call Central Office and leave a message at (231) 946-6716, or email - [district11centraloffice@yahoo.com](mailto:district11centraloffice@yahoo.com).

### **CENTRAL OFFICE ALWAYS IS IN NEED OF VOLUNTEERS**

Whether you can help in the OFFICE (computer savvy recommended), handle AFTER HOURS CALLS, be on the 12 STEP CALL or RIDES LIST ... We Need You! For more volunteer information, call **Susan N.**, our Volunteer Coordinator, at (231) 645-1267.

### **NEW BEGINNERS MEETING ON WEDNESDAYS AT WEST END GROUP**

Starting February 11, a Beginner’s meeting will take place every Wednesday at 5:30pm at West End Group, 720 Elmwood in Traverse City.

# How About A Group Inventory?

BY: Anonymous - Scarsdale, New York

*When the article, "How About a Group Inventory?", was first published in August 1956, taking an inventory of a group was a relatively new idea. Since then, it has become one of the most frequently requested Grapevine articles at the office. Perhaps that's because, as the author remarks, many AAs have found that taking a periodic inventory works as well for the group as it does for the individual.*

*Groups have found various ways to take inventories. As Roy R. suggests in the article, "Notes from a Group Inventory Chair," some ask themselves the questions in the AA Group pamphlet, available at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org), your, local intergroup, or the Alcoholics Anonymous World Service office. Others set aside time to go over the Traditions Checklist, available at [www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org) or your local intergroup. Still others develop questions of their own. If your group has had a similar experience, sharing your story may help other groups. So we hope you will consider sending it to the Grapevine.*

*Step Four and Step Ten have to do with personal inventory. All twelve of AA's suggested Steps are personal in that they deal with the individual. They constitute his charter of freedom. The Twelve Traditions, on the other hand, relate to AA as a whole and to AA in its various parts, particularly the groups. They constitute AA's guide to unity. Now if the individual should take periodic inventory, why not the group?*

• ————— •

A group is not an inanimate thing. You hear references made to "the spirit of this group..." A group has personality and so groups differ one from another as do individuals. Some groups do well, others do poorly. Some groups flourish for a while and then go into a decline. Some groups fail, close down and cease to hold meetings. Why?

If an individual should take inventory even if he is doing well, why not the group? If things are not progressing satisfactorily, then an inventory is particularly in order.

How does a group take inventory? Much in the same manner as an individual. It should probably be done at a closed meeting. The leader might have pencil and paper and some prepared questions. The group then, through its members present, should review its assets and liabilities--not just the financial items, though these, too, might be included. Emphasis should be given to the overall job being done, to an examination of how the group is executing its responsibility. This might best be accomplished by asking some questions. The following queries are not intended to be complete in coverage but merely illustrative. They may suggest others more directly applicable to your group.

- 1.** What is the basic purpose of the group? To keep its members sober? To welcome new members? To provide a social outlet? The Fifth Tradition says, "Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." Is that somewhat surprising?
- 2.** Just what is your group doing to "carry" the message? Does it take refuge completely in the Eleventh Tradition which says, "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion?" Sure, it welcomes newcomers, but is that carrying the message, or is it reaping the harvest resulting from the prior sowing of others? Does the newcomer in fact practically have to beat down your door in order to get in? If he sneaks in, do you ignore him?
- 3.** Your group has thirty-five members after five years of existence. "Very good," you think. Are you sure the number should not be 100? What is your "trading area" population? 60,000? Applying the national average, there should be 1,500 drunks in your area. Again applying the rough national average, fifty-five of the 1,500 should be in AA. But with your group's talent, members with available time, and other assets, perhaps your figure should be half again as large as the national average. Perhaps then you should have eighty-two instead of the projected fifty-five, or the thirty-five you already have? Why don't you have more? Has your group done anything lately to bring the AA message to the attention of local editors, physicians, judges, teachers, and other public leaders who can be helpful in reaching those who need AA?
- 4.** Are you getting a proper cross-section of your community? Or just the low bottoms? Or just the high bottoms who form a cozy, executive clique to which other types of alcoholics receive a frigid welcome? Do you get the proper percentage of men and women? Or mostly men? Or mostly women?
- 5.** Do your members stick or is turnover excessive? Do a lot of new prospects come in but fall by the wayside quickly? Are you complacently sure that part of this is not due to group methods? Does your group do a proper job in educating, encouraging, and assisting the spouse of the alcoholic?
- 6.** How effective is your sponsorship system and how much of a sense of sponsorship responsibility does your group have? What does it do about a prospect who comes in without a sponsor? Or the one who comes for a while and then does not show up? How many times will you "go after" him? Twice, ten times? Or do you say, "to h--l with him," or "he knows where it is. If he wants it, let him come and get it"?

(Continued on Page 6)

**7.** Has everything practical been done to provide an attractive meeting place where new people will be reasonably comfortable and to which older members will be glad to return? Or are you satisfied with inadequate quarters on the run-down side? Are you paying reasonable rent or are you taking advantage of some church, fraternal club, or other organization which in a sense is underwriting your sobriety? Did you ever figure out how much cash your group could get up in an evening in the days when all who are now its members were drinking and when the cash was going for liquor?

**8.** Has proper effort been made to explain to all members the need and value of working in the kitchen and performing other housekeeping duties? Have they been told precisely how to do those jobs, or is the whole matter left to their initiative and imagination even though they have little of either? What methods do you use to bring members more definitely into the group, to make them feel that they belong?

**9.** Is adequate opportunity given to all eligible members to speak before the home group and before other groups? Does anyone actually keep a check list to see that no one is overlooked? How far back does that list go?

**10.** Do you pick officers with care and consideration on the basis that officership is a great responsibility and an opportunity for unusual Twelfth Step work? Or do you consider the whole thing a chore and a sort of joke, electing someone in open meeting who may not even be present? Do you elect someone because you think it might be good for him, forgetting that our common welfare should come first?

Have you given thought to the selection of a nominating committee whose job it would be to consider all eligible members, evaluate their stability, interest in the group, ability, available time, and other relevant factors? The nominating committee could then present the slate of candidates to the group for its consideration. While other names could be suggested at the election meeting, the group will usually support its committee. This method tends to eliminate the occasional nomination from the floor of the least likely member by an ill-advised or even confused buddy.

**11.** Does your group lend its fair share of support to intergroup and the General Service Office? These service organizations are doing a Twelfth Step job on an area, a national, and an international basis. No one group could carry out that responsibility. Could your group prepare and finance the publication of a Big Book? Or contact editors and movie producers to prevent the dissemination of erroneous information that might be harmful to AA, and to supply correct information of value to the alcoholic who still suffers?

AA is easier to know about today because of the work of our service organizations. AA is respected today and it is therefore easier for some of us to join than it was years ago. My sobriety or your sobriety in the final analysis might depend on the overall national acceptance of AA. Any disgrace to AA on the national level would have an effect in every local area, in every group. Do you ever give any thought to these broader concepts, or is your group thinking solely on a provincial, selfish level? If your group has a broad outlook, does it result in action, in generous help to your intergroup and the General Service Office?

**12.** Just what *has* your group done during the last six months to carry the message?

Most of these questions relate to the Fifth Tradition, carrying the message. Many others could be raised relative to a group's success in the light of other Traditions: common welfare, unity, group conscience, money, outside interests, anonymity--could all be subjected to extensive inquiry.

In taking group inventory, the chairman, leader, or secretary might want to make some notes. The group might wish to take action as it went along. Ideas could be referred to committees and chores assigned to specific individuals for execution. A complete set of minutes might be prepared for reading at the next inventory meeting, say six months hence. The minutes might help to look back and see what improvements resulted from the inventory taking.

We are fortunate that it was *the group* which developed into the primary instrument for channeling the AA message. AA did not necessarily have to develop in that manner. The founders might have chosen paid consultations, paid sanitarium incarceration, paid correspondence courses, or a dozen other methods of transmitting the message.

The fact that the informal no-dues-or-fees group was created is the principal reason why AA has grown so rapidly.

It may be the reason why you and I are sober.

The group is a precious thing. Let's look after it.

SOURCE: *AA Grapevine* – August, 1956

**Additional Article of Interest ... *6 Challenges and 6 Rewards of Being Young in Recovery*** - Being in recovery at any age elicits both challenges and rewards, but being young, at a pivotal, sometimes confusing point in life even without worrying about sobriety, makes said challenges and rewards even more prominent. ( . . . to continue reading, go to: <http://www.thefix.com/content/6-challenges-and-6-rewards-being-young-recovery> )

## Calendar of Events - FEBRUARY, 2015

**February 7, 14, 21, 28** Open Talk at Munson Hospital basement, 1105 Sixth Street, Traverse City, 8:00pm. Please contact Andrew B. at (231) 409-0966, or email: bakera15@yahoo.com, if you would like to be a Speaker.

**February 11** Central AA Office Board Meeting, 124 N. Division Street, Traverse City at 5:30pm. All AA and Al-Anon/Alateen members are welcome. For More Information: Call (231) 946-6716.

**February 14** District 11 Meeting, Munson Hospital at the Cafeteria Dining Room #2, 1105 Sixth Street, Traverse City at 9:30am. For More Information: Email area34.district11@gmail.com.

**2015 International Convention  
of Alcoholics Anonymous  
July 2-5, 2015  
at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Georgia**

This year's theme:  
*"80 Years – Happy, Joyous and Free."*

For More Information:  
[http://www.aa.org/pages/en\\_US/2015-international-convention-of-alcoholics-anonymous](http://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/2015-international-convention-of-alcoholics-anonymous)

**63rd Michigan State Convention  
August 21, 22, 23, 2015  
McCamy Plaza Hotel in Battle Creek, MI**

For More Information, contact:  
Jim H. at (616) 366-5143 or  
Barbara H. at (231) 829-5483

View Flyer:  
<http://www.wmaa34.com/Portals/0/REV.%202015%20State%20Convention%20%20Flyer.pdf>

❖ **Early AA History Presentation by Norm B.** ❖  
**Saturday, March 21, 2015**

✦ **Doors Open at 9:00 AM** ✦ **Presentation Begins at 12 Noon with Discussion Afterwards** ✦  
at the Clare Nazarene Church - 10160 S. Grant Street in Clare, MI

Hosted by District 26 Unity Council

For More Information, Contact:

**Pat (231) 642-1303 or Ted (989) 429-8100**

**Open Speaker Meeting  
at Munson Hospital Basement  
Every Saturday (8:00pm)**

✦ **Upcoming Speakers** ✦

February 7 **Joe R.** from Petoskey  
February 14 **Kal F.** from Traverse City  
February 21 **Ann W.** from Traverse City  
February 28 **Amanda T.** from Cheboygan  
March 7 **Eric C.** West End "We Agnostics"  
March 14 **Bonnie I.**  
March 21 **Quack Quack** – TC Group  
March 28 **Doug B.** from Traverse City

**\*\* Speakers Subject to Change \*\***

If you're interested in being the main speaker,  
please contact:

**Andrew B. at (231) 409-0966,  
or email: bakera15@yahoo.com.**



Warrior, Heal Thyself.....is a new program being launched by 'A Matter Of Honor' (AMOH) that will be using the AA 12 Step model to address the complex issues of PTSD.

Our first group will target those with collateral injuries.....specifically the spouses, children and parents of veterans with PTSD.

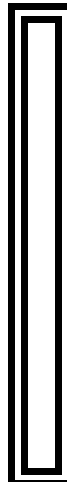
Beginning February 16, we will meet every Monday evening (from 6:30pm to 8:00pm) at the Unitarian Universalist Church located at 6726 Center Road in Traverse City. Please join us.

For more information, contact  
Linda F. at (231) 944-9862.

**A Matter of Honor**  
**PO Box 4316 ✦ Traverse City, MI 49685**  
**Website: <http://www.AMOH.US>**

## Central Office Treasurers Report of DECEMBER 2014

Checking Account Balance .....	\$ 2,516.93
Total Deposits .....	\$ 3,817.43
<b>Before December Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$ 6,379.36</b>
<b>Expenditures In November 2014</b>	
Rent	-735.00
Volunteer Coordinator	-460.00
Phone/Internet	-172.84
Accountant	-316.00
Office Supplies	-73.13
Postage	-17.13
Literature Purchased	-00.00
Push to Savings Account	-250.00
Sales Tax Paid to State	-139.76
Bank Fees	-23.66
<b>Total Expenses for December</b>	<b>\$ -2,187.52</b>



<b>Checking Account Balance December 2014</b>	
CD Saving	\$514.67
CD Saving	\$545.79
Sales for December (before Sales Tax)	\$2,329.37
Donations to Central Office	\$807.34
Savings Account Balance	\$1,755.70
<b>Remaining Balance</b>	<b>\$5,952.87</b>

**Contributions Received in December**

West End Group, Clear Minds Group,  
Keep It Simple Elk Rapids,  
New Hope Group, Lake Ann Group,  
Kaleva AA Group

✦ Report compiled by Ken W. ✦

### AL-ANON/ALATEEN - District 39

coverage area includes: Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau & Manistee counties.

### Al-Anon/Alateen - Family Groups - D39

PO Box 5132 - Traverse City, MI 49696

**Information Line - (231) 938-7399** Response within 24 Hours

**Website - [www.alanon-d39.org](http://www.alanon-d39.org)**

### Central Office JANUARY 2015 CALL LOG

- \* **53** Females & **51** Males contacted Central Office
- \* **47** by phone, **57** walk-ins & **7** after hours calls
- INQUIRING ABOUT:**
- \* **16** Conference Approved Literature
- \* **12** Non-Conference Literature
- \* **05** Al-Anon Literature
- \* **07** Pamphlets
- \* **23** Gift Items
- \* **04** Special Items
- \* **19** AA Meetings in District 11
- \* **01** AA Meetings in Other Areas
- \* **02** Al-Anon Meetings
- \* **01** Other Alcoholism Resources
- \* **00** Other 12 Step Programs
- \* **01** Ride to Meeting
- \* **03** 12 Step Call
- \* **02** Drinking Problem—Self
- \* **00** Drinking Problem—Family
- \* **00** Drinking Problem—Other
- \* **20** Other

### Central Office Always Needs Volunteers

Whether you can help — in the OFFICE, handle  
AFTER HOURS CALLS,  
be on the 12 STEP CALL or RIDES LIST ...

**PLEASE WE NEED YOU!!!**

For More Information,  
call **Susan N.**, Central Office's Volunteer Coordinator,  
at (231) 645-1267.

## T H A N K Y O U

To all the **JANUARY, 2015**  
**Central Office Volunteers:**

Butch	Josh	Rick C.
Charlie	Kip	Ruthann
Daniel	Linda	Susan N.
Edwina	Lisa	Susan V.
Jim R.	Marilyn	Tamara
Joseph		Victor



# Restraint of Tongue and Pen

I have been a little distressed lately by some of the sharing at discussion meetings I have attended. On several occasions, I have listened as AA members shared their anger or frustration regarding religious, racial, sexual, and political issues, that they apparently felt had contributed to their suffering. From the back of the room, I watched as people began to twist in their chairs and felt the tension rise in the room.

Through the grace of my Higher Power and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, I am sober today and have been for over eight years. One night, in early sobriety, while riding to a meeting with some of my new friends, an old-timer shared with us his belief that there are certain areas of discussion we should carefully avoid getting into at AA meetings. These are topics that relate directly to religious, political, racial, and sexual opinions.

He went on to explain that the avoidance of these topics is based on the following Traditions:

Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

Tradition Three: The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Tradition Ten: AA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

There is only one problem that we all have in common--that is our problem with alcohol. It is this problem that gave us our unity in the first place. Once we begin to move beyond our alcoholism, we are talking about the things that make us different--things that can serve to separate us, divide us, even rip us apart.

AA members come from vastly different backgrounds and experiences which directly affect our views of the world. Many people come into the AA Fellowship with very strong feelings regarding these areas of life. Sometimes there are deep-rooted feelings of anger, resentment, and even outright hatred. These are potential powder kegs that could go off at any time.

The plain and simple fact is that we are never going to be able to solve these kinds of larger problems from the inside of an AA meeting. The only problem we have a real chance of solving is our common problem with alcohol, and we can only solve that one day at a time.

The world's worst bigot, regardless of how one defines that term, has the same requirement for AA membership as the rest of us: a desire to stop drinking. Within the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, we are all supposed to be equals. What if members feel they have the right to espouse their viewpoints on these matters? Are we prepared to open a door that we might later find impossible to shut? In a very short time, we could be at each other's throats and the unity that we so desperately need would be gone.

This is something that I myself have been guilty of. One night after sharing at a meeting, I was approached by a friend who said: "I see you're still bashing in your religion." I was angry and he was right. After five years of sobriety, I had forgotten what that old-timer had taught me. I was still blaming my problems to some degree on the religion that I had been raised in. More importantly, by being specific about the denomination, I was being insensitive to the other members in the room. It is more than likely that some of those in attendance were adherents of that religion and the effect of my comments was to belittle their religious beliefs.

The portion in the Big Book on "How It Works" says: "Our stories disclose in a general way, what we used to be like, what happened and what we are like now." When with friends, inside or outside of the program, I am free to divulge my personal opinions on any issue; but when sharing in the rooms, I have learned to keep my opinions to myself. Instead, I have been taught to share my experience, strength, and hope--in a general way.

In turn, I have benefited from the experience, strength, and hope of alcoholics of every persuasion. Part of being open-minded for me today is subjugating my own points of view in order that I may continue to learn and grow in sobriety.

That old-timer concluded his remarks by saying: "Unity, unity, unity. Look at the first three letters of that word. It tells us that *You and I* can do together what we cannot do alone. We need each other."

# DISTRICT 11 MEETING MINUTES

January 10, 2015

The meeting opened at the Munson Hospital Cafeteria Dining Room #2 at 9:40 A.M. with the Serenity Prayer, followed by the opening readings and roll call:

1. District 11 Statement of Purpose – Mel H.
2. 1st Tradition – Phil S.
3. 1st Concept – Phil S.
4. Declaration of Unity – Phil S.
5. Roll Call – 11 voting members

## **OFFICER REPORTS**

**Secretary** – Deanna D. December 2014 minutes were read and accepted as corrected.

**Treasurer** – Jodie S. January 2015 treasury report was read and accepted.

December 31, 2014 balance \$3,208.20. Contributions=\$752.13 from: District 11 December 2014 Meeting, West End Group, Eastside Group and Area 34 reimbursement. Expenditures=\$293.99 to: Amber J. District Service Day Reimbursement, Mike Young District Service Day reimbursement, Kalkaska Senior Center Donation/Area 34 Assembly and Paul Johnson Area 34 Assembly. Prudent reserve=\$600.27. Please send all District 11 contributions to PO Box 1231, Traverse City, MI 49685.

**Chair** – Paul R. Not present, nothing to report.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**PI/CPC Committee**. Phil S. He is still waiting for the two schools in Leelanau County to provide him with dates and times to come in and give presentations.

**Corrections Committee**. Jerry H. The Pugsley meetings are going well. Area 34 has donated quite a few books and Release Forms, in English and Spanish, to the prison. Dan S. sent the Northern Michigan Corrections Committee treasury report to the District 11 gmail address. Deanna will check the District 11 email to see if it has been received. Jerry did get Maurie's contact information and will give him a call. Per Paul J., the Kalkaska would like to donate copies of their Grapevine magazines to the jail.

**Grapevine**. Rick T. The Grapevine is having a subscription challenge to increase new Grapevine subscriptions in 2015. More details available on their website in late January 2015. Also available via the Grapevine website:

- ✦ A calendar that individuals/groups can use to post upcoming recovery events
- ✦ A free seven (7) day trial of the digital Grapevine
- ✦ Free audio talks available for listening
- ✦ Sign-up to be a Grapevine Area Chair in an effort to carry the message in our five county community

Rick would like to continue to raffle off Grapevine subscriptions in 2015. If interested, please contact Rick T. Jodie S. would like to look into possibly giving gift certificates away for Grapevine subscriptions at raffles in 2015, to make the subscription process easier and more efficient for raffle winners.

**Treatment Facilities**. Brian J. Not present, nothing to report.

**Special Needs**. Sharon M. She still intends to get to different meetings with the special needs survey. It has gotten to a conscience level. Ted K. stated that he has an issue with hearing, and has a difficult time understanding what is being said at Area Assemble Meetings. Ryan D. also said it was difficult to follow what was being said at the December 2014 Area 34 Assembly meeting because of too much conversation at one time. Possible solutions might be one person speaking at a time, one person directing the meeting topics and an improved PA system. Sharon will take that concern to the Area level.

**Central Office Liaison Report**. Phil S. At present, there are issues with literature ordering/selling. The office is hurting for volunteers. The monthly meeting will be this Wednesday, January 14, 2015 at 5:30 PM and elections for the Central Office board will be held. If interested in running for position, please plan to attend.

## **DCM REPORTS**

**Antrim**. Roger B. Not present, nothing to report.

**Benzie**. Open position, no report.

**Grand Traverse**. Paul R. Not present, nothing to report.

**Kalkaska**. Mel H. He has not heard back from the Kalkaska jail about a set weekday for holding a women's meeting. He will follow-up. The Blizzard Weekend will be held January 16-18, 2015. NOTE: Sleigh rides will not be available this year.

**Leelanau**. Ted K. Nothing to report.

**AREA 34**. District 11 hosted the Area 34 Assembly in December 2014. District 11 won the bid to host the Area 34 Assembly again in April 2015.

## **GROUP INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS/CONCERNS.**

Ryan D., West End - The group has purchased renters insurance through Recovery Source in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1-800-851-4291. The cost is \$460.00/year for a one-million dollar policy to cover the AA Group. West End has committed to donating \$1,200.00 to the TC Fall Roundup 2015.

Jodie S., TC Group - Group Conscience will be held Sunday, January 11, 2015. They will discuss officer positions within the group and

rotating meeting chair people.

Deanna D., Westside - The Fifth Friday Open Talk will be on Friday, January 30, 2015 at 8:00 PM. There will be a potluck following the 5:30 PM meeting. Please bring a dish to pass.

Paul J. – The new Kingsley Big Book Study meeting started on Thursday, January 8, 2015 at 8:00 PM at The Rock. A flyer is out and circulating. Jodie S. will post it on the Central Office website. Nine people braved the winter storm to come out for the first meeting.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

**December 2014 Area 34 Assembly** Mel H. turned in a receipt for money spent on supplies for the December 2014 Area 34 Area Assembly.

**District 11 Bank Account** Jodie S. – Chemical Bank did not charge District 11 the \$7.00 service fee last month, so she is going to hold off on bank shopping for now.

#### **District 11 Inventory Agenda, February 2015**

Ted K. - The General Service Office website has an inventory list for groups that we could use as a guide. There are twelve (12) items on that list. He suggested that we discuss the following inventory items at the District 11 meeting in February 2015:

1. The extra funds District 11 has on hand
2. District 11 in relation to AA Groups
3. District 11 in relation to Area 34
4. District 11 in reaching our Statement of Purpose

How should we proceed with the inventory portion of the District 11 meeting in February 2015? A discussion followed. **Motion:** by Jodie S. to have an abbreviated District 11 meeting next month, followed by taking the proposed inventory. A discussion followed.

**Amended Motion:** by Phil S. to have an abbreviated District 11 meeting next month, followed by taking the proposed inventory until the noon hour. Deanna D. seconds the Amended Motion. Amended Motion passes unanimously.

Who shall lead the inventory meeting in February 2105? A discussion followed. **Motion:** by Phil S. to have Ted K. run the inventory. Jodie S. seconds the Motion. Motion passes unanimously.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Jodie S. - She presented the committee with the District 11 2015 Proposed Budget. A discussion followed regarding the TC Fall Roundup donation of \$750 budgeted for 2015. It was a one-time donation in 2014. **Motion:** by Mel H. to strike the TC Fall Roundup donation of \$750 budgeted for 2015. Ted K. seconds the motion. Motion passes, majority opinion.

Sharon M. - The District should budget a certain amount of money for special events in the AA community (example: TC Roundup). A discussion followed. **Motion:** by Sharon M. to replace the TC Roundup budgeted item to Special Events, District 11 in the amount of \$750. A discussion followed. **Amended Motion:** by Ryan D. to budget \$1,500 for special events in 2015 that will to be voted on individually as proposed. Amended Motion passes unanimously.

**Motion:** by Phil S. to pass the District 11 2015 Proposed Budget. Mel H. seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

The meeting closed at 11:21 A.M. with the Responsibility Statement. The next meeting will be held on Saturday, February 14, 2015, at 9:30 A.M. at the Munson Hospital Cafeteria Dining Room #2, Traverse City, MI.

-- Yours in love and service,  
Deanna D., District 11 Secretary



## **Central Office Board Meeting Minutes**

**January 14, 2015**

(Minutes to be approved at the February 11, 2015 Board Meeting)

**Board Members Present:** Rick C. (Chair) Victor (Literature Purchaser and Assistant Treasurer), Mike (Newsletter Editor), Sue V., Phil S., Jodie S. and Kip M. (Secretary). Others present: Susan N. (Volunteer Coordinator).

**Secretary's Report:** Kip read the minutes from the December meeting. It was pointed out that the minutes incorrectly stated that the December minutes would be approved at the January 8, 2015 board meeting. It should have stated that the minutes would be approved at the January 14, 2015 board meeting. Phil moved to accept the minutes as corrected. Motion carried unanimously

**Treasurer's Report:** The report was received and filed.

**Webmaster's Report:** Jodie reported that the website and meeting schedule was up to date as of January.

**Camel Courier Report:** Mike, from Area 34, has not been in to record the past issues of the Camel Courier. He still is expected to do this soon.

**Literature report:** Nothing to report.

**Volunteer Coordinator's Report:** Still need help at Central Office. The call forwarding is scheduled and strong.

**Old Business:** Gift Certificates were presented and appreciated by all the volunteers. Susan N. handed them out.

**New Business:** Phil made a motion to hire someone to come in to Central Office to enter information into the computer to get the office up to date on all of the Quick book entries. The amount this person would be paid would not exceed \$300.00.

Motion was voted down by a vote of 6-1 with one abstention.

Vote recorded as follows: Victor opposed, Ken opposed, Kip opposed, Susan V. abstained, Phil in favor, Jodie opposed, Rick opposed and Mike opposed.

Jodie made a motion to make a list of all possible reasons an AA member would not be accepted as a volunteer if the member applied to

become one. Motion carried unanimously. Jodie to follow through with creating a preliminary list.  
Ken made a motion to hire our present CPA for the upcoming tax preparation. Motion tabled.  
Jodie made a motion to close the meeting. Motion approved unanimously.



**Annual Meeting of Central Office – District 11**  
**January 14, 2015**

Elections were held for the following positions: Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary

**Secretary:** Kip was elected unanimously.

**Treasurer:** Ken was elected unanimously.

**Chairperson:** Rick C. was nominated and Jodie S. was nominated.

Vote was four votes for Rick and four votes for Jodie.

As follows: For Rick: Mike, Ken, Rick and Kip. For Jodie: Victor, Phil, Susan V. and Jodie.

It was agreed between Rick and Jodie that Jodie would become Chairperson and that Rick would become Vice Chairperson.

Meeting adjourned.



**Northern Michigan Corrections Committee (NMCC)**  
**Quarterly Meeting Minutes ◆ December 17, 2014**

Meeting opened w/ serenity prayer @ 6:45 pm. 6 attended, 2 Kalkaska, 4 Grand Traverse, 1 Mason County volunteers.

8/28/2014 minutes read, accepted

8/28/2014 Treasurers Report: Beginning balance \$617.20, -\$277.72 (GT Co. jail books), -\$356.16 (Big Books for distribution); End balance \$97.54; Donations: West End (Nov.\$50 and Dec.\$50); Current balance \$197.54

Passed hat \$10 for West End meeting room usage

Motion to accept, passed

Old Business

New flier complete. Thanks Rick T. NMCC Info posted at Central Office and in Camel Courier newsletter

Email updated /not complete

New Business

Suggested baskets for collecting used Grapevines

Meeting closed with responsibility statement @ 7:45 pm.

Next quarterly meeting: March 18, 2015 at 6:45 pm. West End Group meeting place - 720 Elmwood (&11th) in Traverse City.

Northern Michigan Corrections Committee (NMCC)

*Carrying the AA Message into Jails and Corrections Facilities*

For information on volunteering to help with meetings or for donations towards purchasing literature,

please contact: Dan S. @ 231-633-0860, Rick E. @ 231-330-1091, or email [nmcc2011nmia@gmail.com](mailto:nmcc2011nmia@gmail.com),

or mail donations to: Northern Michigan Corrections Committee, PO Box 5712, Traverse City, MI 49696

***We would like to congratulate Jodie S. as the new Central Office Board Chair!***

***Jodie has been involved in Central Office service for the past two years, and has experience in Central Office in different states, volunteering and participating on other boards for many years. Her business management experience will be an asset to the office. Jodie is excited to serve, and is interested in continuing the work that Rick C. and others have been doing to date, focusing on District 11 Central Office's purpose to "assist its fellowship to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety."***