

ALTERNATIVE

"INTER-GROUP NEWSLETTER FOR THE READING AREA" September, 1993

District #33 invites you to our annual workshop. Please join us for an afternoon of food, fun, and fellowship, as we present to you. . .

the internationally known. . .



"The Twelve Traditions Skit"

The skit, a dysfunctional A.A. meeting in action, will be followed with audience participation in the form of roundtable discussions. English/Spanish - interpreter provided.

Time: 1pm to 4pm Free Lunch

Date: September 26, 1993

Place: Muhlenberg Rec. Ctr., Reading, PA

Located along the scenic Schuylkill River

For more info, contact Barb R. at 215-670-9771

TRADITION NINE

AA, as such, ought never be organized;
but we may create service boards or committees
directly responsible to those they serve.

By Bill W.

(from the August 1948 Grapevine)



The least possible organization, that's our universal ideal. No fees, no dues, no rules imposed on anybody, one alcoholic bringing recovery to the next; that's the substance of what we most desire, isn't it?

But how shall this simple ideal best be realized? Often a question, that.

We have, for example, the kind of AA who is for simplicity. Terrified of anything organized, he tells us that AA is getting too complicated. He thinks money only makes trouble, committees only make dissension, elections only make politics, paid workers only make professionals, and clubs only coddle slippers. Says he, let's get back to coffee and cakes by cozy firesides. If any alcoholics stray our way, let's look after them. But that's enough. Simplicity is our answer.

Quite opposed to such halcyon simplicity is the AA promoter. Left to himself, he would "bang the cannon and

twang the lyre" at every crossroad of the world. Millions for drunks, great AA hospitals, batteries of paid organizers, and publicity experts wielding all the latest paraphernalia of sound and script; such would be our promoter's dream. "Yes, sir," he would bark. "My two-year plan calls for one million AA members by 1950!"

For one, I'm glad we have both conservatives and enthusiasts. They teach us much. The conservative will surely see to it that the AA movement never gets overly organized. But the promoter will continue to remind us of our terrific obligation to the newcomer and to those hundreds of thousands of alcoholics still waiting all over the world to hear of AA.

We shall, naturally, take the firm and safe middle course. AA has always violently resisted the idea of any general organization. Yet, paradoxically, we have ever stoutly insisted upon organizing certain *special services*; mostly those absolutely necessary to effective and plentiful Twelfth Step work.

If, for instance, an AA group elects a secretary or rotating committee, if an area forms an intergroup committee, if we set up a foundation, a general office, or a Grapevine, then we are organized for service. The AA book and pamphlets, our meeting places and clubs, our dinners and regional assemblies—these are services, too. Nor can we secure good hospital connections, properly sponsor new prospects, and obtain good public relations just by chance. People have to be appointed to look after these things, sometimes paid people. Special services are performed.

But by none of these special services has our spiritual or social activity, the great current of AA, ever been really organized or professionalized. Yet our recovery program has been enormously aided. While important, these service activities are very small by contrast with our main effort.

As such facts and distinctions become clear, we shall easily lay aside our fears of blighting organization or hazardous wealth. As a movement, we shall remain comfortably poor, for our service expenses are trifling.

With such assurances, we shall without doubt continue to improve and extend our vital lifelines of special service; to better carry our AA message to others; to make for ourselves a finer, greater Society, and, God willing, to assure Alcoholics Anonymous a long life and perfect unity.

Quote
of the
Month

Only One Reason

I believe we are all sober and alive for only one reason: God has a job for us to do. I have also come to believe that I must please God first, myself second, and everybody else third. When I can live and feel that way – and it isn't all day every day – things seem to work out. When I try to run the show, everything goes to hell.

– *Came to Believe*, page 97