



# Sobriety in Stumptown

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Portland Area Intergroup  
825 NE 20th Ave,  
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## *December Stories and Art*

### **Step Twelve and Tradition Twelve**

*by Amy B., Sobriety in Stumptown Editor*

This month's newsletter submissions are focused on the Twelfth Step and Twelfth Tradition.

#### **Step Twelve**

*by Karl B. from Portland, Oregon*

After twenty-six years of sobriety, I have had only two sponsees. The statistic-meisters be hanged, I am still sober. Without trying to avoid practicing the twelfth step where it says "to carry the message to those who suffer" (i.e.sponsees), I have had more sponsors than sponsees in my past. The score is two sponsees versus three sponsors (not counting my wife). I believe the original founders concluded that their sobriety was measured by their attempts at sharing the message. Their success ratio was poor at first. I myself, visualize that action appearing like what a sound wave looks like on an oscilloscope transmitted into space. I used to work at a T.V. signal relay station. You are not around to witness who the receiver is. There are probably Myna birds in South America ca-cooing, "One day at a time and keep coming back" in my voice.

In A.A. there are plenty of incentives to stick with the words that are written in the Big Book. I have slowly realized that after all these years. What seems ancient history (1930's) still has common ground. A.A. has a long way to go before people affected don't stumble around and fall down when they are drunk. Let us pray that A.A. members continue to produce prodigious numbers like our forepersons did.

#### **Tradition Twelve**

*by Barbara E. from Portland, Oregon*

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

The long form of Tradition 12 in the 12x12 (p. 192) emphasizes that the principle of anonymity “has an immense spiritual significance.” Stripping us of our identities provides instant equality and humility and leads to fellowship. It’s almost like wearing uniforms to sacrifice our last names that sets us apart from others—unless one is an Olson or Johnson in Minnesota or a Smith or Jones anywhere.

Anonymity means that Judy O’Grady and the Colonel’s Lady are sisters under the skin, as poet Rudyard Kipling put it for women or Andrew A, Andrew B, and Andrew C become a band of brothers. Granted, some may have been given identifying nicknames—Basketball Bill, Grateful Gertie, Henry the Plumber, Dorothy the Coolerizer—but it’s common that we might know someone for years in the program, but not her/his last name. That becomes a problem only when trying to visit them at a hospital.

Tradition 12 notes the anonymity precept started when AA was young, and sober alcoholics were still regarded with “public distrust and contempt” because neither employers nor friends, families, or practicing alkies knew how to deal with *soberalcoholics*. One old-timer warned many of us that if we ever expected to rise above supervisor level at most Portland corporations, senior management better not find out we were recovering alcoholics because they either don’t understand the difference between “wets and dries” or have little trust in our long-term sobriety.

Small wonder breaking someone’s anonymity in the workplace is still considered a high crime by many AA’s because of the possible dire consequences to employment.

I can attest this view of has not changed at many companies, despite federal employment laws, especially for those working extra hard for upper-level promotions. I was an assistant professor at a state university who was up for promotion and tenure. My anonymity was broken by my department chairman, a recent treatment-center “graduate,” not only to the dean, but to other faculty. Soon after, I got a call from the dean to request I pull my “P & T” application, which at any university means a contract won’t be renewed for the following year.

Turning to Tradition 12’s other vital factor: principles before personalities, a directive that can be as difficult for most of us as doing the 5<sup>th</sup> Step for the first time. That’s because of our fellowship’s monumental “melting pot.” The literature likens it to lifeboat democracy—from captain’s table to steerage-class travelers—all saved from a watery grave, providing they pull together as one in spirit. Indeed, one steamship company’s lifeboat instructions strongly suggests a “community-sing.”

In the outside world, we never would have mixed. But consider AA’s mix: Different economic and education levels. Different genders. Different races and religions. Different ages. Different personalities. Different upbringings. Different jobs. Different views and interests. Different drink preferences. Is it any wonder personalities sometimes clash? That’s why a famous one-liner continues to draw belly laughs: “If you say you love everyone in the program, you’re not going to enough meetings.”

The Big Book and the 12 x 12 have tools to remedy silent scorn or active resentments, even hatred, toward another AA. One is understanding their roots: flaws in others we recognize in ourselves—and hate. Another might be jealousy, or being treated with disrespect. It could even be the target's constant punctuating every sentence with “Y'know” or profanity.

Then come the literature's remedial tools we don't want to pick up—at first:

- Obeying the warning that resentments can get you drunk by your leaving certain meetings to avoid that person and, soon, avoiding *all* meetings.
- The aggravating reminder that many people are emotionally sick and need to be given slack.
- That if you drink, the guy (or gal) you despise may be the first to welcome you back—and mean it.

In my experience, the fastest way to end dislike of another AA has been getting a hotline call pairing me with that individual to do a 12-step call, particularly if it becomes as harrowing or as hopeless as any described in the Book's story section.

I've been on calls involving a threatened window jump, driving from Portland to Estacada and being told to get out, a Salem hospital visit in which my cohort and I decided to play good-cop/bad-cop, a motel job in Maryland where the cohort gave me my first lessons in 12-stepping. On the way home, the post-mortem discussion always proved that the program's principles certainly rose far, far above personality differences. We were now linked by a common effort that didn't necessarily turn into fast-friendships, but *did* take down the walls to make me a fellow among fellows. Too, like Bill and Bob at that famed prospect's bedside, we maintained our sobriety because of those 12-step calls.

## **Step Twelve**

*by George D. from Portland, Oregon*

Well we made it through all 12 steps; this one being the Twelfth. I stated we, in that I couldn't have done it without you the reader, the book, a great sponsor and the tears and cheers found in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. But most importantly was my higher power, whom I choose to call God. For it is as this step reads “Having had a spiritual awakening” as a result of these steps. Personally, I have certainly had that.

When I came into the rooms I was spiritually near dead. All I held onto was a sense that some force had kept me alive. Through suicides, drug and alcohol overdoses, and host of other personal tragedies.

In step one I wrote about my story. Across those pages came the overwhelming and obvious fact that I was an alcoholic, and that I was living in the wreckage of untreated alcoholism. Step Two and Three brought me to a hope and faith that I could someday have a spiritual awakening.

Steps Four through Eleven showed me how to have that awakening and to find a new power.

The second part of this step is "To carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic". For myself this part came quickly, and God gave me what some might call the gift of writing. He also put people in my path who gave the opportunity to share my experience, strength, and hope with others. I also sought to become the intergroup representative for my home group Cabana. Basically, I stepped up, raised my hand and got the opportunity to help others. This writer also chose to involve myself with step studies. My home group has no less than two step study groups, Monday at 7:30pm and Thursday at 7:30pm.

The third part of this step involves "Practicing these principles in all our affairs". To list but a few such as acceptance, surrender, willingness, hope, faith and honesty. These my friends I find are the greatest joys of Alcoholics Anonymous way of life. They came as the result of working the steps, having a relationship with a higher power, and truly practicing these principles in all my affairs.

## **Step Twelve Musings**

*by Mike B. from Portland, Oregon*

My spiritual awakening was discovering the difference between religion and spirituality here in the program. A discovery that freed me from dogma and narrow minded thinking and just mindlessly chanting the same old crap over and over. I was free to open my mind and let go of the concepts of guilt and sin, and focus on the steps and the path, the journey forward into a new way of life and a new freedom. When I'm in a meeting, and I feel that I really have something to contribute that day, I always share my thoughts with the newcomer in mind, and after a meeting, I sometimes greet and welcome a new person, and try to put them at ease with something that is new to them. One thing I've discovered is that I can always learn something in a meeting that gives me that little light bulb that flashes in my mind when I have an "aha" moment. Something that someone said causes that, and just the other day someone I respect very much reminded me about the phrase, "practice these principles *in all our affairs*". Wow, I've *really* got to remember to start doing that every day! Imagine how that could jump start my program!

## **Monthly Business Meetings**

For details about monthly business meetings, contact the PAI Office at 503-223-8569. Or send your questions or concerns to: [1212@pdxaa.org](mailto:1212@pdxaa.org)

**Portland Area Intergroup (PAI):** Business Meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month, 7:00 PM, 4524 SE Stark St. (Unity of Portland), Portland.

**Portland Deaf Access Committee:** Monthly, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of every month, 6:30, The Alano Club, NW 24<sup>th</sup> & Kearney.

**Dist 9:** 1<sup>st</sup> Wed, 6:30 PM, 24<sup>th</sup> and Kearney, Portland

**Dist 10:** Last Mon, 7:00 PM, 12945 Beaverdam Rd., West Side Service Cntr, Beaverton

**Dist 11:** Last Thu, 7:00 PM, "URS" Club, Portland

**Dist 12:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tue, 6:30 PM, 12x12 Club, 7035 NE Glisan, Portland  
**Dist 15:** 1<sup>st</sup> Wed, 6:45 PM, 710 6<sup>th</sup> St., Oregon City  
**Dist 18:** 1<sup>st</sup> Sat, 9:30 AM, 215 N 6<sup>th</sup> St., St. Helens  
**Dist 23:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tue, 6:00 PM, Emmanuel Presbyterian, 19200 SW Willamette Dr., West Linn  
**Dist 24:** 1<sup>st</sup> Thu, 6:00 PM, 5441 SE Belmont St., Portland  
**Dist 25:** 4<sup>th</sup> Tue, 5:30 PM, Immanuel Lutheran Church, 39901 Pleasant Street, Sandy, OR  
**Dist 26:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun, 5:00 PM, St Charles Church, 5310 NE 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Portland  
**Dist 27:** 1<sup>st</sup> Mon, 7:00 PM, 11631 SE Linwood Ave., St. Paul's Methodist, Milwaukie  
**Dist 31:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Tue, 7:00 PM, 937 NE Jackson School Rd., Hillsboro  
**Dist 34:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat, 5:00 PM, 485 Portland Ave., Gladstone  
**Dist 35:** 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sat, 7:00 PM, 18926 SW Shaw St., Suite A, Beaverton  
**Dist 36:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Thu, 6:00 PM, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, 2201 SW Vermont St, Portland  
**Dist 37:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Tue, 7:00 PM, Sherwood Community Center, 21907 SW Sherwood Blvd., Sherwood

## Committee News

**Portland Area Intergroup** is a committee of volunteers that encourages mutual support and cooperation between Portland A.A. groups and provides services that would be too much for the individual groups to handle by themselves. PAI provides services for the AA community and the general public.

**We have several committee positions available. Portland Area Intergroup needs your help.** Working on a committee is excellent 12th Step service work. If you are interested in being on any Portland Area Intergroup committee, send an email to [pdxaa.org](mailto:pdxaa.org) with "COMMITTEE INTEREST" in the subject field. Or, just click on [Service](#) on the Intergroup website. **Intergroup committees carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic.** Please help yourself and others. Sign up. Thank you.

**Bridging the Gap (BTG):** Provides a one-time, temporary contact for people transitioning from a treatment center to A.A. meetings. BTG meets the second Monday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Portland Intergroup Office basement, located at 825 NE 20th Ave, Suite 200, Portland. "We Bridge the Gap so alcoholics leaving treatment don't have to walk alone across that scary gap between the beginning of recovery in treatment and the continued recovery in A.A." Please contact the PAI office via phone, 503-223-8569, or email [btg@pdxaa.org](mailto:btg@pdxaa.org), if you are interested.

**A.A. Hotline:** The A.A. Hotline keeps the Portland phone number for A.A. active 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The way this is accomplished is by volunteer support. Calls to the A.A. number placed after Central Office hours and redirected to volunteers' phones, keeping the volunteer's number anonymous. A volunteer can elect to go on a 12th Step call or just provide the information the caller needs about meetings. Commitments are generally two times a month. In particular, if you're a night-owl, we'd really appreciate your help. Call the Central Office for more information at 503-223-8569.

**Corrections Committee Information:** Take meetings into correctional facilities & carries the A.A. message to the alcoholic who suffers. The Corrections team is looking for A.A. volunteers, both men and women, to bring A.A. meetings into the jails in Multnomah County, specifically Inverness Jail, the Courthouse and the Justice Center. If you have questions on becoming a volunteer, or if you would like to be on the PAI Corrections Committee, please email: [corrections@pdxaa.org](mailto:corrections@pdxaa.org), or call the Central Office for more information at 503-223-8569.

**Cooperation with Treatment Centers:** The Treatment Centers needs your help to share your experience, strength, and hope with the alcoholic who still suffers by taking meeting into treatment facilities. The Treatment Center committee needs volunteers to help coordinate and facilitate meetings at treatment centers. We need your help to contact treatment centers that have reached out to Portland Area Intergroup for A.A. support. We also speak with treatment centers to find out if A.A. is currently bringing in meetings, or if they would like to arrange an appointment to speak with a representative from A.A. that could explain what we can offer them and their patients. We also coordinate with A.A. groups to find out about the service opportunity, and how their group members can participate in this important 12<sup>th</sup> Step work. The committee meets monthly at 6pm, before the Portland Area Intergroup meeting. If you have questions, please email [treatment@pdxaa.org](mailto:treatment@pdxaa.org), or call the Central Office at 503-223-8569.

**Public Information Committee:** Panels meet with the media, schools, clubs, and the general public and show videos (produced by the General Service Office), provide literature, contact information and answer questions about A.A. For more information, email [pi@pdxaa.org](mailto:pi@pdxaa.org), or call the Central Office at 503-223-8569.

**Newsletter (*Sobriety in Stumptown*):** The committee for the very publication you are now reading is looking for members. Send an email of interest to: [newsletter@pdxaa.org](mailto:newsletter@pdxaa.org)

**Events:** The Events Committee needs committee members. Send an email to [Events@pdxaa.org](mailto:Events@pdxaa.org) for more information.

## **Get Published!**

If you have A.A. news, a meeting change, a big event, a story, a painting, a poem, or just a rant, Sobriety in Stumptown wants to hear it! Send articles of 1000 words or fewer to:

[newsletter@pdxaa.org](mailto:newsletter@pdxaa.org)

Deadline for the January issue: January 2nd

### **Step 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.”*

### **Tradition Twelve**

*“Anonymity is the spiritual foundations of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”*

### **Serenity Prayer**

*“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”*

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