

### STEP NINE

**Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**

Grouped together with Step Eight, this step gives alcoholics the opportunity to make things right with our fellows; to clean up our side of the street, as we say. We should never be shy on this most important step. If we want to recover, we must be courageous, sensible and sincere.

My step nine amends have been mostly done since my sobriety, but I was told this step could last a lifetime. After making my list (which I wrote out on index cards), I was then able to divide them into three categories, “right now, in the future, and hell no”. Some of the people on my list were deceased, so I wrote a letter and took it to their gravesites where I read my amends aloud and then burned it. If this is not possible, there are many beautiful suggestions that can be helpful. Prayer and discussion with a sponsor will help you find something that feels just right.

My first amends were to my children and husband. I knew they loved me and would be kind to me, so that’s where I began. Before I made my amends, I asked God to give me the courage and thoughtfulness I needed to say what needed to be said. After I was done, I asked if I left anything out and if there was anything I could do to make it right. My immediate family were just thrilled with my changed behavior and lifestyle that all they wanted was more of the same.

After making my “right now” amends, I walked away feeling lighter and happier, which made me willing and anxious to do more amends. For the first time, I felt like a mature grown up.

When I hesitated at my “hell no” amends, my sponsor asked me, “how free do you want to be.” She was so kind yet firm. The entire process just started to make sense to me by this time.

I can honestly say I have received the promises expressed in our beautiful Big Book. To comprehend the word serenity and know peace, to not fear people or economic insecurity. Who wouldn’t want that? Thank you, God. Thank you, Bill, and thank you to all those that came before me.

Nancy

### TRADITION NINE

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

Our 9th Tradition states that AA as such ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. So my question is where would we be if we did not create these service boards or committees? When I look at our Intergroup alone, I can see where we might be, and it doesn’t look too pretty. We have committees that perform invaluable services to local AA, with chairs and co-chairs who keep this committee running, so that’s organization, wouldn’t you think?

An important part of these committees is the spirit of rotation. Of course, this does go at all levels of AA. Why would we do this? This is done so that we are open to new ideas and suggestions from newer AA members and so that we can keep some of the AA members away from “big shotism” as it says in our literature.

This tradition is about “being in charge” and issuing orders or directives. We must keep away from this type of situation. We all know that most AA members do not like to be told what to do, and that’s why we offer suggestions.

Even in the General Service Office in New York there are no ‘bosses’. You would think they may have some authority over the groups, but they do not, they only offer suggestions.

When it comes to AA groups, if they conform to the AA traditions they will be successful, for the most part. If they do not, they may become unglued and close up shop. As it says in the 12&12 “Great suffering and great love are AA’s disciplinarians; we need no others”

In the 12&12, the last sentence of page 175, says, “Though tradition 9 at first seems to deal with a purely practical matter, in its actual operation it discloses a society without organization, animated only by a spirit of service – a true fellowship”. We are but trusted servants, ALL of US!

Patti



## Accessibilities Workshop

September 21, 2020  
6:30-8:00 PM

Meeting ID: 580 289 8848  
Password: 408587

Hosted By  
District 16/17  
Area 45



# YOUNG AND SOBER

I got sober in 1983 at the 4021 Club in West Philadelphia. If you've never been there, this club occupies a large, once elegant, house near the corner of 40<sup>th</sup> and Walnut. It's been an AA clubhouse since the late '40's and looks it. There are ancient linoleum floors throughout, a bunch of battered furniture with an emphasis on round tables and folding chairs, and the obligatory coffee bar. Rooms on the upper floors were used for smaller meetings, as well as a weekly Al-anon meeting. On the third floor was a members-only room with a pool table. It being the early 80's, there was a cigarette machine that only took change and everything there, including the people, had a nicotine-yellow patina. Early this year some friends and I went over there one Saturday night for a meeting. The cigarette machine is gone, but everything else looks *exactly* the same - I'm sure some of the notices on the bulletin board were there when I got sober.

Like AA clubhouses everywhere, 4021 was filled with memorable folk, many of whom seemed to spend almost as much time there as did the old furniture. There was the bar tender I'll call "Chris" who was always ready to share evidence of government UFO cover-ups with anyone interested, as well as many who were not. We had "Old Paul" (I was "Young Paul") who did really good Winston Churchill impressions. In my 59 summers, I've only ever known one woman to regularly smoke a briar pipe (at least in public) and she was always in residence. The kindly old gentleman usually selling 50/50 tickets had, like the clubhouse itself, come into AA sometime in the 40's. There was also "Ross", my sponsor. I'll come back to him in a minute.

At face value, I didn't belong there. I was 21-year-old college kid who, as the old saying goes, had drank less than most others there had spilled. I had never wrecked a car, lost a job, lost a marriage been to jail or lived on the street. When I came in, I think I may have been the only student and one of maybe three members there under the age of 35. It goes without saying that my "I never/not yet" list was an exceptionally long one for that group. When I walked into 4021 for the first time, I had no intention of joining AA - I thought AA might be able to refer me somewhere for people with "a little drinking problem" where I would learn how to control my drinking. Luckily, when I walked into 4021 that Friday morning, one of those "fixtures" convinced me to stay long enough to see if I might possibly belong.

Which brings me back to Ross. I asked him to sponsor me when I had about three days because I decided I needed a sponsor and he seemed like the least bad option at the time. He had been sober for three whole years and rented an apartment around the corner from a land lady he fondly referred to as "Mrs. Hitler". He was not one of those sponsors who gives ultimatums (e.g. "do this or find another sponsor"), but he did have a way of making it clear when he thought you were off the beam - I was anointed "Self Will Run Riot" in place of "Young Paul" for a time.

Ross was also not what would later be termed a "Big Book thumper". What he did do was to help hammer home the fact that it was possible to have my "I never" list and still be belong in AA. He pointed out that it's impossible to lose things like cars, wives, and jobs if you've never had them in the first place. He also noted that you could, as he put it, "bring skid row into your apartment instead of moving to skid row". During my drinking I had gotten the former down to an art.

For the next year and a half, I saw more of Ross than many members of my own family. Most evenings we were at the same meetings, usually at 4021. We'd usually be there long after the meeting ended talking about sobriety and everything else imaginable. He took me on my first spiritual retreat where he duped me into serving as bell ringer (I thought this would be like Notre Dame where I would get to ride up and down on the bell rope and Ross was happy to let me believe that. As it turned out, I could ring the bell with one hand and had to do so for the *entire* retreat - much to Ross' amusement).

When I had a year, Ross took me and Al-Anon (we are just dating back then) to Chinatown for dinner. Near the end of dinner, a waitress passing by dropped a platter of full beer glasses almost directly on top of me. Ross said something about this being an object lesson to always be on my guard as alcohol is never far away. And so it happened that I returned home from my first anniversary celebration dinner smelling like a brewery.

By now you may be wondering if there is a point to all this. Actually, I'm wondering the same thing myself. I do know that when I walked into 4021 for the first time, I had been unable to stay dry, let alone sober, for more than a day or two. Since then, I have never found it "necessary" to take a drink.

I also know that, almost as soon as I walked into 4021, I felt for the first time in a very long time - maybe ever - that I was among my own species. Fellowship alone won't keep you sober, but fellowship kept me sober while I struggled to find a Higher Power and start working the steps.

In some circles AA clubhouses have a bad reputation. Say what you will, but 4021 was "home" in a very special way for the first 18 months of my sobriety. This was so because of "Ross", all of the characters described above, and many others. One of the things that first struck me when I walked into 4021 was the laughter. I wasn't doing much laughing back then and I really wanted some of the joy that permeated the place. This is a program of attraction, not promotion, after all.

Paul S.

# RESENTMENT BONFIRE



**WHEN:** Saturday October 17, 2020

**WHERE:** 620 Chatsworth Road

Tabernacle, NJ 08088

**TIME:** 6:00pm - 9:00pm

**Adults Only Please**

Please join us around the fire for  
some Fellowship and S'mores  
while burning those  
resentments!

Please bring your own  
chair and coffee.  
Water will be provided.

**Rain Date: October 24, 2020**

Sponsored by District 27



## Service Opportunity

There are three open slots needing volunteers for the answering service. They are Tuesday 10:00am - 12pm and 2:00 - 4:00pm and Saturday 12:00 - 2:00pm. Please ask your home group for volunteers to fill this service.

As meetings begin to open and people become willing to meet others one-on-one; please continue to remind everyone that more volunteers are need for the 12-step list. Areas we need most help: Berlin, Camden, Hammonton, and Salem. If you know anyone who would like to be of service, please have them contact us at [answeringservice@aasj.org](mailto:answeringservice@aasj.org) or invite us to speak at your home group.

## FUN THINGS TO DO.....

- **September 26, 2020 from 10:00 am - 2:00 Pm PA/ NJ Canal Loop along the Delaware River Bike Ride.** Meet in New Hope Solebury High School Parking lot, 182 West Bridge Street, New Hope, PA. Easy, breezy and flat 14.4 mile canal loop bike ride from New Hope to Lumberville on the Pennsylvania side. Then walk over the footbridge to Bull's Island and back on the New Jersey side through Stockton to Lambertville. Beautiful scenery! It is a very easy ride, but you can do a 7-mile loop if you so desire. Bring your lunch or eat in one of the towns along the way.
- Smithville Park and hike in October. Date and time will be announced at a later date.
- Please note, the Gratitude Dance has been cancelled for 2020 .

## WORDS OF WISDOM

One of my “defining moments” in early sobriety was when during the smoke break, (remember those?) a lady named Cathy asked me: “So did you want a drink, or did you need a drink?” Without hesitation, I said: “I needed a drink.” She then said “Keep coming back, you’re in the right place.” I damn near cried. I’ve made a point of saying hi to her every chance I get, usually at the Convention every year. Ed said to me: “Two things you need to know about God: Yes, there IS one, and No, it AIN’T you.” It doesn’t cost a dime to be respectful of others. The return on that investment, however, is huge. Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth. (Muhammad Ali)

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path... ;-)

Andy E.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

Anonymous South Jersey is a monthly newsletter published by and for members of South Jersey Alcoholics Anonymous. Opinions expressed herein are NOT to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by either AA or South Jersey Intergroup. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are printed with permission from AA World Services, Inc., and/or the AA Grapevine, Inc.

Contributions from readers are encouraged—you can write about your experience, strength and hope in general, or you can focus on one of the steps or traditions. You can also write about something that touched you at a meeting, something that bothered you at a meeting, or some service commitment you especially enjoy. Submissions are edited for space and clarity. Contact information is required and anonymity is respected.

Due to space limitations, we are unable to publish flyers for events in this newsletter. However, we are happy to include your gathering in the general list of fellowship announcements.

Please send your submissions to  
[newsletter@aasj.org](mailto:newsletter@aasj.org).

# ORIGINS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

## THIS MONTH IN A.A. HISTORY

The origins of Alcoholics Anonymous can be traced to the Oxford Group, a religious movement popular in the United States and Europe in the early 20th century. Members of the Oxford Group practiced a formula of self-improvement by performing self-inventory, admitting wrongs, making amends, using prayer and meditation, and carrying the message to others.

In the early 1930s, a well-to-do Rhode Islander, Rowland H., visited the noted Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung for help with his alcoholism. Jung determined that Rowland's case was medically hopeless, and that he could only find relief through a vital spiritual experience. Jung directed him to the Oxford Group.

Rowland later introduced fellow Vermonter Edwin ("Ebby") T. to the group, and the two men along with several others were finally able to keep from drinking by practicing the Oxford Group principles.

One of Ebby's schoolmate friends from Vermont, and a drinking buddy, was Bill W. Ebby sought out his old friend at his home at 182 Clinton Street in Brooklyn, New York, to carry the message of hope.

Bill W. had been a golden boy on Wall Street, enjoying success and power as a stockbroker, but his promising career had been ruined by continuous and chronic alcoholism. Now, approaching 39 years of age, he was learning that his problem was hopeless, progressive, and irreversible. He had sought medical treatment at Towns Hospital in Manhattan, but he was still drinking.

Bill was, at first, unconvinced by Ebby's story of transformation and the claims of the Oxford Group. But in December 1934, after again landing in Towns hospital for treatment, Bill underwent a powerful spiritual experience unlike any he had ever known. His depression and despair were lifted, and he felt free and at peace. Bill stopped drinking, and worked the rest of his life to bring that freedom and peace to other alcoholics. The roots of Alcoholics Anonymous were planted. ([www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org))

Sept 1930: Bill wrote 4th and last promise in family Bible to quit drinking.

Sept 13, 1937 - Florence R, 1st female in AA in NY.

Sept 21, 1938 - Bill W & Hank P form Works Publishing Co.

Sept 1, 1939 - 1st AA group founded in Chicago.

Sept 30, 1939 - Article in Liberty magazine, "Alcoholics and God" by Morris Markey.

Sept 12, 1942 - U.S. Assist. Surgeon General Kolb speaks at dinner for Bill and Dr Bob.

Sept 1946 - 1st A.A. group in Mexico.

Sept 18, 1947 - Dallas Central Office opens its door

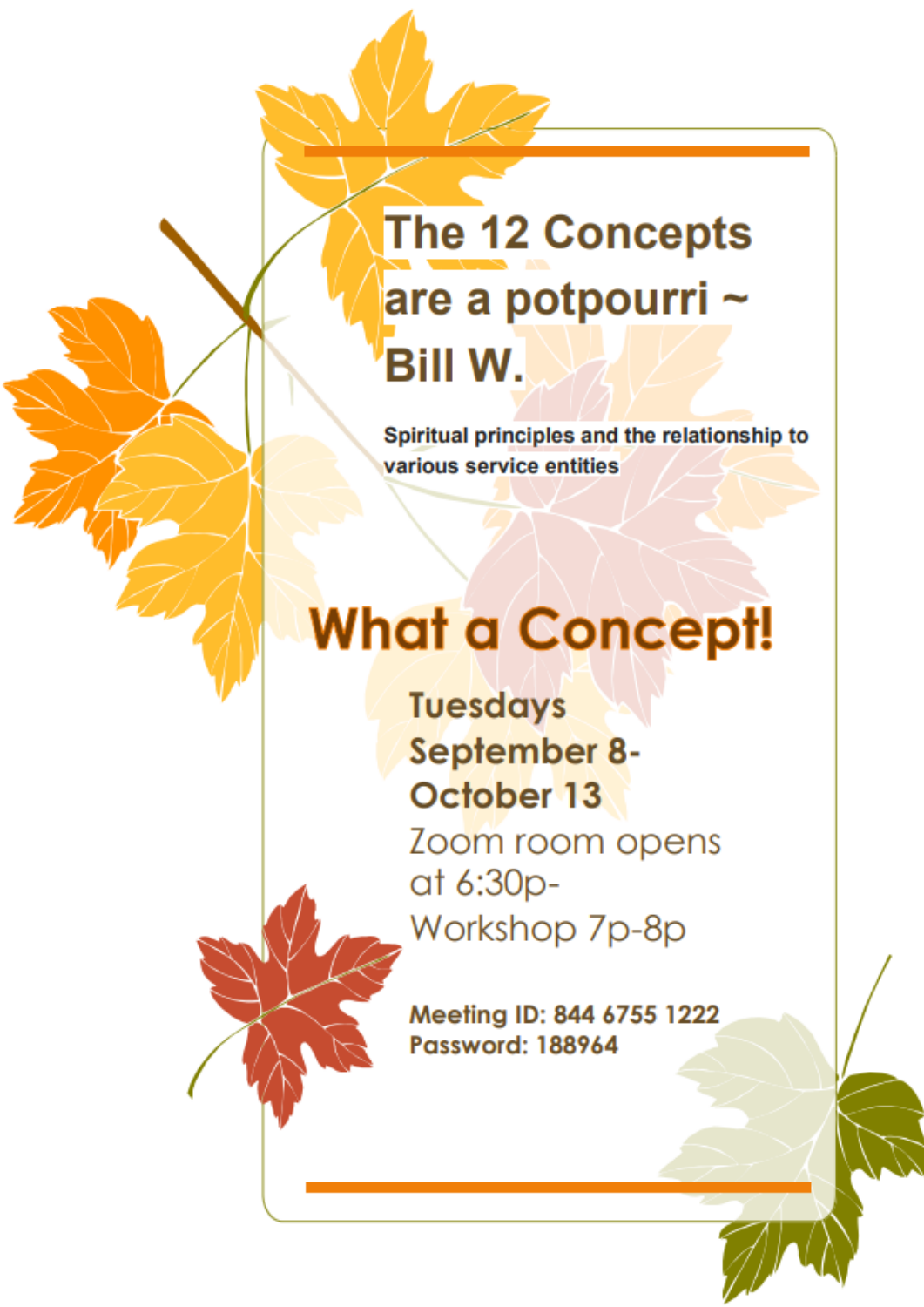
Sept 17, 1954 - Bill D. AA #3 dies.

Sept 19, 1975 - Jack Alexander, author of original Saturday Evening Post article, dies.

Sept 11, 2001 - 30 Vessey St, New York.

Location of AA's first office is destroyed during the World Trade Center attack.





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## **The 12 Concepts are a potpourri ~ Bill W.**

**Spiritual principles and the relationship to  
various service entities**

## **What a Concept!**

**Tuesdays  
September 8-  
October 13**

**Zoom room opens  
at 6:30p-  
Workshop 7p-8p**

**Meeting ID: 844 6755 1222  
Password: 188964**

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