

LAST EYEWITNESS OF AA'S ORIGINS DIES IN MEMPHIS

Robert Ripley "Bob" Smith, Jr., 85, last eyewitness of the start of Alcoholics Anonymous, died of congestive heart failure at St. Francis Hospital in Memphis, TN at about 5 o'clock Thursday evening, April 22, 2004.

"Smitty," his nickname in youth and later at recovery gatherings worldwide, was the only son of Anne Smith and Akron, OH physician Dr. Bob Smith.

Then a teenager, young Bob was there on Mother's day, 1935 when his father met New York stockbroker Bill Wilson for the first time. The two co-founded Alcoholics Anonymous, the twelve step recovery program that has helped more than two million people worldwide recover from the disease of alcoholism.

In 1998, Bob Smith Jr. told the *Akron Beacon Journal* that he and his sister were eyewitnesses to history as they saw AA unfold in their Akron home to become a worldwide organization with millions of members. As a child, he recalled, he would often come home to find a drunk in his bed and his home filled with alcoholics. "I loved it," he said. "The first 17 years of my life I had lived with active alcoholism - now there was recovery."

AA's twelve step program has been replicated by more than 250 other groups that use the same steps to overcome addictions to drugs, gambling, food, sex and other behaviors. Bob "Smitty" Smith joined Al-Anon, a recovery program for the spouses, family, friends and other loved ones of alcoholics, when one of his family members began attending AA meetings in Nocona, TX in the late 1970s. It was only then, the younger Smith would say, that he realized the enormity of his father's contribution to the world in the co-founding of AA.

In the past 27 years, Bob Smith accepted invitations to speak at AA and Al-Anon Conventions worldwide thirty to forty times a year. Smith made his last talk three weeks ago in Chicago's Indiana suburbs at the Talumet Round-Up. He had cut back on his speaking engagements to twenty to twenty-five a year only as he entered his mid-80s. Smith would say of such invitations, "They didn't invite me for who I am... It's who I know," referring to the famous co-founders of AA who are regarded as spiritual giants by recovering alcoholics worldwide.

Bob Smith would share his memories of AA's pioneering days at conferences, recalling how his parents and Bill Wilson allowed recovering drunks to stay in their modest Akron home at 855 Ardmore Avenue. Bob Smith's childhood home is visited annually by thousands who wish to see where the program of recovery had its origins.

"It was such a gift to live with Bob. We decided if we had two weeks together or ten years together, we'd take it one day at a time and that's what we did," said Mona Sides-Smith, a Memphis based therapist, who married the son of the AA co-founder in September, 2002. Smith's first wife of more than fifty years, Betty Smith, died several years earlier.

Bob Smith leaves a son from his marriage to Betty, Todd Smith of Vernon, TX and two daughters, Penny Umbertino of Phoenix, AZ and Judy Edmiston of Dallas, TX. He leaves one granddaughter, Kathy Graser

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5 Five V

STEP

**“Admitted to God, to ourselves and to the another human being
the exact nature of our wrongs.”**

When we reached AA and for the first time in our lives stood among people who seemed to understand, the sense of belonging was tremendously exciting. We thought the isolation problem had been solved. But soon we discovered that while we weren't alone anymore in a social sense, we still suffered many of the old pangs of anxious apartness. Until we talked with complete candor of our conflicts, and had listened to someone else do the same thing, we still didn't belong. Step Five was the answer. It was the beginning of true kinship with man and God.

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TRADITION

**“Each group has but one primary purpose—
to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”**

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, “I’m not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn’t apply to me”?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the *limitations* of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

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CONCEPT

In granting the traditional “Right of Appeal,” we recognize that minorities frequently can be right; that even when they are partly or wholly in error they still perform a most valuable service when, by asserting their “Right of Appeal,” they compel a thorough-going debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority.

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TREATMENT: GROUP COMMITMENTS

ALCOHOPE

Meeting Open to AA Community
5925 37th St, Vero Beach, FL 32966
778-7215

CENTER FOR EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

CEBH - Meeting Closed to Public
1190 37th St, Vero Beach, FL 32960
563-4666

TUESDAYS

SATURDAYS

Free & Easy	May 11	Beachside Beginners	May 8
ODAAT	May 18	Sebastian Freedom	May 15
Midnight Oil	May 25	Vero 12+12	May 22
		Friday Young People's	May 29
Indian River Men's	June 1		
South Vero	June 8	Discovery Women's	June 5
Serenity House	June 15	Candlelight	June 12
Noontime Recovery	June 22	Vero Beach Group	June 19
Easy Does It	June 29	ODAAT	June 26

Vero Beach 12 & 12

MONDAYS

Noontime Recovery	May 3
Safe Harbor Women's	May 10
	May 17
	May 24
	May 31

CARRY THE AA MESSAGE!
FOR INFORMATION CALL LEE: 567-4759

Alchope and CEBH meetings are sponsored by the Treatment Committee of the Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous and should be conducted in keeping with AA guidelines.

If your group would like to participate in the rotating commitment for carrying the AA message into these facilities, please contact the Treatment Committee Chair, Lee Kimball.

Group commitments are currently needed for the CEBH meeting on Mondays at 7PM.

F Y I . . . (Non-AA)

MORE F Y I . . .

26th Annual Big Book Study Seminar
with Joe McQ. and Charlie P.
Begins Thursday, July 1st at 1PM
Ends at Noon on Sunday, July 4th, 2004
Embassy Suites Hotel
661 NW 53rd St
Boca Raton, FL 33487
Registration \$20
Hotel Rates \$75 per room per night
(up to 4 people per room)
includes full breakfast
Seminar Registration: 954-941-3042
Hotel Reservation: 561-994-8200

NEW AWAKENING GROUP
NEEDS SUPPORT
GROUP MEETS MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY
OPEN DISCUSSION MEETINGS @ 7:30am
CHURCH OF CHRIST
33rd AVE & ROUTE 60
MONDAY = BIG BOOK WEDNESDAY = STEP MEETING

Look for registration flyers in AA community
or call Ellen M. @ 913-4151

Indian River Central Office
UNITY COMMITTEE
Presents
LONGTIMERS SPEAKER MEETING
In Honor of
69th BIRTHDAY of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
SPEAKERS WITH 35+ YEARS OF CONTINUOUS AA SOBRIETY
SATURDAY, JUNE 5th, 2PM
NEWPORT CLUB
COFFEE & ICE CREAM PROVIDED... PLEASE BRING A DESSERT
SPEAKERS & VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
CONTACT NANCY T. 778-4035

SOUTH VERO GROUP
ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY PICNIC
FT. PIERCE INLET STATE PARK, PAVILION #5
SUNDAY, MAY 30th
COME ONE... COME ALL
\$3.50 PER VEHICLE PARK FEE
PLEASE BRING A COVERED DISH



F Y I . . . and Pass It On!

NEED SUPPORT
OPEN DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Monday 6PM
Newport Club ~ Outside Room

Thursday 7PM
The Source Mission
1872 Commerce Ave, Vero Beach

HELP WANTED
Indian River Central Office
PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE
NEEDS VOLUNTEERS TO SPEAK AT
(NON) AA MEETINGS
in the community
SIGN UP SHEET AVAILABLE
AT YOUR GROUP OR CALL
MARTY P. ~ 299-3296

*SUNSET ROUNDUP 2004
June 4th - 6th
HOLIDAY INN BEACHSIDE
KEY WEST*
URL = www.sunsetroundup.com
E-mail = KQ@sunsetroundup.com
Snail Mail = P.O. Box 2557
Key West, FL 33045

NEW MEETING
WEDNESDAYS 7:30PM
VERO BEACH STEP & TRADITION
CLOSED 12x12 BYOB* DISCUSSION
SALVATION ARMY DINING HALL
2655 5th ST SW
(Corner of 27th Ave and 5th St SW)
Entrance to building on 5th St SW side
* Bring Your Own Book

NEW
(OPEN DISCUSSION / SMOKING) MEETING
SUNDAYS ~ 7PM
NEWPORT CLUB

NEW!
NEW BEGINNINGS GROUP
Meets at Roseland Fire Department
8025 129th Court, Roseland
OPEN DISCUSSION/
SMOKING MEETING
WEDNESDAYS @ NOON

48th ANNUAL FLORIDA STATE CONVENTION
60th SOUTHEAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE
AUGUST 4th - 8th, 2004
*The Adams Mark Hotel
Jacksonville
Rooms @ \$89/Night
Phone 1-800-444-2326*
Information Available at Central Office

WAKE UP GROUP
MEETS TUESDAYS
7-8AM
ROSELAND METHODIST CHURCH (LIBRARY)
OPEN DISCUSSION
12962 ROSELAND ROAD

UNITY COMMITTEE
of INDIAN RIVER CENTRAL OFFICE
NEEDS VOLUNTEERS
WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN AA SERVICE ?
CALL NANCY T. @ 778-4035

VERO BEACH GROUP
SUNDAYS 8PM - OPEN DOUBLE SPEAKER
ST. HELEN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
NOW NON-SMOKING
COME... LISTEN... BREATHE

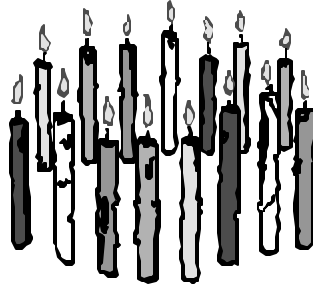
DISTRICT 6
ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL
SATURDAY, MAY 22nd
12 - 3PM
St. Martin Deporres
2555 Savannah Rd
Jensen Beach
PLEASE BRING A DESSERT TO SHARE

NEEDS SUPPORT
NO B.S. WOMEN'S GROUP
MEETS TUESDAYS
7-8:30PM
NEWPORT CLUB
TV ROOM

47th International Conference of
Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous
May 27th - 30th, 2004
The Peabody Orlando
URL = www.icypaa47.org
E-Mail = info@icypaa47.org
Snail Mail = P.O. Box 150412
Altamonte Springs, FL 32715



MAY BIRTHDAYS



HAPPY AA BIRTHDAY!

To publish announcements of birthdays being celebrated by your Group's members each month, please bring list of names and numbers of years to Central Office and put in filing cabinet in folder labeled "HOW Editor," send via e-mail to irhow@yahoo.com, or use link from website at indianriveraa.freemembers.com.

<p>FREE & EASY GROUP <i>Celebrates Last Thursday</i> <i>April</i> Sandy S. 6</p>		<p>HIBISCUS MONDAY NIGHT Hank S. 2 Betsy M. 5 Jerry S. 29 Meave W. 32 Jim L. 32</p>		<p>INDIAN RIVER MEN'S John F. 2 Dave C. 7 Joseph J. 12 Dick M. 18 <i>April</i> Kurt S. 1 Donald P. 3 Bob M. 5 Kurt S. 17 Louis V. 23</p>	
<p>SOUTH VERO GROUP <i>Celebrates Last Wednesday</i> Kelli McC. 1 Liam O'B. 1 Lynne J. 2 Keith T. 4 Michael F. 5 Ellen M. 7</p>		<p>MIDNIGHT OIL Lloyd S. 1</p>		<p>BAREFOOT BAY Dorothy D. 25 Tim Mc 5 Micki H. 2</p>	
<p>NOONTIME RECOVERY <i>Celebrates Last Friday</i> Seth M. 1 Kenny C. 5 Jim K., Jr. 2 George Z. 29</p>		<p>SURFSIDE <i>Celebrates last Thursday</i> Petra D. 2 Steve H. 8 Susie K. 24 Mike C. 31 Meave W. 32 Jim L. 32</p>		<p>DISCOVERY WOMEN'S Julie L. 1 Mickey H. 2 Monica L. 17</p>	
<p>INDIAN RIVER THURSDAY <i>Celebrates Last Thursday</i> Bob G. 6</p>		<p>SAFE HARBOR WOMEN'S Betty H. 1 Diane L. 1 Lin C. 5 Joan H. 12 Ruth W. 22</p>		<h1>HAPPY AA BIRTHDAY!</h1>	
<p>I AM RESPONSIBLE Susan F. 2 Paul S. 6 Bob F. 15</p>		<p>NEW AWAKENING <i>Celebrates Last Wednesday</i> Jeff C. 2</p>			
<p>EASY DOES IT Kathy B. 3 Terry L. 12 Don F. 24</p>		<p>INDIAN RIVER WOMEN'S Rebecca 3 Linda S. 4</p>			

ABOUT GROUP MEMBERSHIP: IF YOU HAVE LEFT A GROUP AND HAVE JOINED ANOTHER, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ALERT THE OLD HOME GROUP THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER A MEMBER. MOST GROUPS MAINTAIN MEMBERSHIP LISTS THAT ARE NOT REVISED OR UPDATED WITHOUT A DIRECT REQUEST FROM THE MEMBER. CONTACT THE GROUP SECRETARY OR ANY TRUSTED SERVANT OR ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE GROUP TO LET THEM KNOW YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR NAME REMOVED FROM THE MEMBERSHIP LIST. THE HOW EDITOR DOES NOT CENSOR THE ANNIVERSARY LIST AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PUBLISHING THE BIRTHDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS AS THEY ARE REPORTED BY THE GROUPS.



On the 5th Tradition

by Bill W. April, 1948 Grapevine

Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose — that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Says the old proverb, "Shoemaker, stick to thy last." Trite, yes. But very true for us of A.A. How well we need to heed the principle that it is better to do one thing supremely well than many things badly.

Because it has now become plain enough that only a recovered alcoholic can do much for a sick alcoholic, a tremendous responsibility has descended upon us all, an obligation so great that it amounts to a sacred trust. For to our kind, those who suffer alcoholism, recovery is a matter of life or death. So the society of Alcoholics Anonymous cannot, it dare not ever be diverted from its primary purpose.

Temptation to do otherwise will come aplenty. Seeing fine works afoot in the field of alcohol, we shall be sorely tempted to loan out the name and credit of Alcoholics Anonymous to them; as a movement we shall be beset to finance and endorse other causes. Should our present success continue, people will commence to assert that A.A. is a brand new way of life, maybe a new religion, capable of saving the world. We shall be told it is our bounden duty to show modern society how it ought to live.

Oh, how very attractive these projects and ideas can be! How flattering to imagine that we might be chosen to demonstrate that olden mystic promise: "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." Fantastic, you say. Yet some of our well-wishers have begun to say such things.

Fortunately most of us are convinced that these are perilous speculations, alluring ingredients of that new heady wine we are now being offered, each bottle marked "Success"!

Of this subtle vintage may we never drink too deeply. May we never forget that we live by the Grace of God — on borrowed time; that anonymity is better than acclaim; that for us as a movement poverty is better than wealth.

And may we reflect with ever deepening conviction, that we shall never be at our best except when we hew only to the primary spiritual aim of A.A. — *"That of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers alcoholism."*

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LAST EYEWITNESS

... Continued from page 1

of Denver, CO. Smith also leave three stepdaughters: Rachel Farmer, Elaine Orland and Elizabeth Douglas, all of Memphis.

Smith spent his working life in Texas as an oil producer. He served as a pilot in World War II, flying the B-24 Liberator on 35 submarine hunting missions out of Africa. Smith worked as a commercial pilot for a time after the war. But he spent the last three decades of his life focused on sharing the gift his father helped bring into the world, AA.

In his book **CHILDREN OF THE HEALER** (Copyright 1992, Parkside Publishing Company), co-authored with his late sister, Sue Smith Windows, Smith's thoughts written on the dedication page seem a fitting epitaph, "For the loving God who allowed me to lead a very exciting life and also loved me through my many mistakes and who allows me to be of service. For the constant love and understanding of four* good kids and a steadfast wife. I am truly grateful. For my loving parents who tried to instill in me values by their tireless example. For the many friends I have met and know as a result of 12 step programs. You have taught me a way of life in these programs that I never would have figured out by myself. I am truly grateful."

One AA member said upon learning of Smitty's death in Memphis, "many thousands of AAs who met Smitty and heard him tell the eyewitness account of AA's origins will mourn his passing but will celebrate his life and the great gifts he shared."

* Betty and Bob Smith had a fourth child, Scott Smith, who preceded them in death.



TO EACH HIS OWN

One of my all-time favorite stories was told a couple of years ago by a gentleman who came down from Cleveland in a blizzard to speak at the St. Vincent Group. He said that when he was new in sobriety he could not believe how good everything was going in his life. His job was great, his home life was unbelievably pleasant and he seemed to be floating on a cloud. He was, however, troubled by how much pain and misfortune his sponsor seemed to be enduring. He did not understand the apparent injustice of it all. Here his sponsor had more sobriety than anyone else around. He was a wise old man who worked with a great many new guys, helping them all trudge that road of happy destiny, yet personally he seemed to be going through a living hell. If anyone deserved some grace, it was he.

So, one night on the way home from a meeting, he decided to talk to his sponsor about it. As he was driving along (his sponsor's car had recently died), he was expounding on his own personal and, admittedly, undeserved good fortune and comparing it to what he felt was the unfair hand that his mentor seemed to have been dealt. He confessed a bit of embarrassment about it all and told the old-timer that it just did not seem fair. Then he sat there waiting to hear some good old AA wisdom. The old guy just sat quietly staring out the side window. After a long silence, he turned his head and said, "Maybe God just thinks you're a wuss."

What sublime dignity. What a great message that old boy is passing on. There is no way to figure out why some of us seem to be on a cake walk while others are bombarded on all sides with misfortune, temptation, disappointment and woe. Is it karma or just "the fickle finger of fate?" One thing I know is that the greatest people I have met are those that have endured, more so than those that have accomplished.

Then too, the degree of difficulty (or ease) that any individual may be having in recovery is in no way a reflection of their moral fiber or spiritual evolution. There are as many roads of recovery as there are roads into oblivion. We each have our own history. We each have [our] own miracles and, hopefully, our own happy destinies. Life's circumstances are nothing more than the playing fields on which each of us individually competes, not against each other, but against the disease.

Alcoholism is an equal opportunity destroyer. Recovery is equally opportune. I've often wondered what that old-timer may have been thinking as he stared out his window. I imagine him recalling his own personal "honeymoon." He could as easily have said, "This too shall pass!" But why rain on the young man's parade. I'm quite sure that he saw no injustice in his sponsee's good fortune as compared to his own. His fortune was simply of a more mature goodness.

by David C.
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Akron Intergroup News

THROUGH THE YEARS IN MAY

1935 - From the Mayflower Hotel, Bill Wilson called Walter Tunks who referred him to Henrietta Seiberling who introduced Bill to Dr. Bob.

1935 - Mothers' Day - Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith met for the first time in Akron, OH, at the home of Henrietta Seiberling.

1938 - Bill and other AA's began writing the Big Book.

1939 - Clarence Snyder told Dr. Bob, his sponsor, he would not be back to the Oxford Group meetings in Akron and would start an "A.A." meeting in Cleveland.

1941 - Ruth Hock learned that Joe W. (credited with coming up with the name *Alcoholics Anonymous*) had a "wet brain."

1942 - Richmond Walker, author of "Twenty-Four Hours a Day," had his last drink.

1943 - Akron AA group had its 8th anniversary celebration with 500 present and sober.

1946 - Searcy W. had his last drink. (Searcy died September 30, 2003.)

1946 - Marty Mann explained Alcoholics Anonymous and the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism on the "We the People" radio show.

1946 - Long Form of Twelve Traditions was published in the AA Grapevine.

1951 - Al-Anon was founded by Lois Wilson and Anne B.

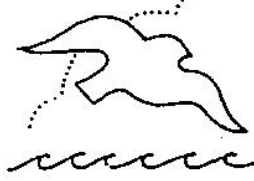
1971 - Bill Wilson died and was buried in private ceremony.

1980 - *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, the AAWS biography of AA co-founder and a history of early Midwest AA, was published.

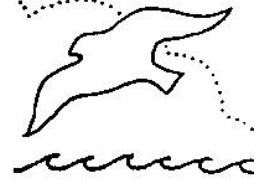
2000 - Dr. Paul Ohliger died at the age of 83. His story, "Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict," was retitled "Acceptance Was the Answer," in the 4th edition.



HOW



Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
 855 Centre, Suite 4, Miracle Mile
 P.O. Box 1776
 Vero Beach, FL 32961
 772-562-1114



URL: www.indianriveraa.freesevers.com

E-MAIL: info@indianriveraa.freesevers.com

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PLACE
 STAMP
 HERE