

HOW

A publication of Indian River Central Office

Volume 24, Issue 6

HOW
June 7, 2004

It was erroneously reported in last month's HOW in Through the Years in May that in "1971 - Bill Wilson died and was buried in (a) private ceremony." In fact, Bill died in Miami on January 24th, in keeping with the article in the HOW Volume 24, Issue 1.

It was impossible for the burial to take place in January, however, because the ground was frozen. The ground in Vermont that year remained frozen for the following 4 months, finally giving way for Bill to be laid to rest in early May.

Following is an article found on the internet describing the visit by one AA to East Dorset, Vermont, where he expressed his graveside gratitude and paid his final respects.

The faint rays of an early October sun winked between puffy black rain clouds, doing their best to warm the Vermont mountains.

In a clearing cut out of the maple and pine trees on the side of one of those mountains is a cemetery with simple, tattletale gray headstones lined up, row on row.

The cemetery is just outside the cozy town of East Dorset, once known as the "Marble Capital of the United States." (The town's quarries provided much of the marble for buildings in the nation's capital, as well as the New York City Public Library.)

It is not just another smalltown New England cemetery. It is a very special cemetery, very special to millions of members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Because here one of the two founders of that fellowship is buried, in the same town in which he was born. The name on the stone reads simply, "William G. Wilson, 1895-1971." That's it. Nothing else. No mention of how he and another native Vermonter, Dr. Robert Smith, met in Akron, Ohio, in 1935. And how that meeting gave roots to AA.

Can anyone figure the odds of two Vermont sons, both hopeless alcoholics, meeting in Akron, Ohio, and starting one of the world's most humanitarian fellowships?

Of course.

But to a white-haired man on this October Sunday in that silent cemetery, those odds were insignificant.

He said he was there to pay homage to the memory of Bill Wilson, to break into the hush with the words he had waited 18 years to say, to say at this exact spot: "Thank you, Bill."

This man had been an uncompromising drunk for almost half his time on earth, 28 years scooped out of a life, day by wrenching day. He had lost jobs, wives, family, lost his dignity and his self-respect. He had suffered the misery and the devastation that all alcoholics suffer.

He had seen the inside of jails on many occasions, been asked to leave restaurants and had slept in doorways, under bushes and on benches.

He had wanted to quit drinking countless times. He did -- countless times.

But one Monday evening he went to an AA meeting and something happened. For the first time, he said, he was with people who understood what so many others had not.

From that May evening, he said, his life had gradually and steadily moved up and out of misery. He followed every bit of advice, every suggestion. Gradually, he said, his cynicism grew into astonishment as he learned how the program has reached out and touched desperate individuals for more than 50 years. (In fact, AA's original 12-step program has been adopted and adapted by other groups.) So on this trip to Vermont, he finally was able to say out loud, "Thank you, Bill."

Then he sat back and looked out at the mountains, thinking. He felt warm and safe.

Then a car drove up. A lady got out and walked up the path, then down the row of graves, counting them. When she got to the eighth stone she stopped.

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6 Six VI

STEP

“Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”

Since most of us are born with an abundance of natural desires, it isn't strange that we often let these far exceed their intended purpose. When they drive us blindly, or we willfully demand that they supply us with more satisfactions or pleasures than are possible or due us, that is the point at which we depart from the degree of perfection that God wishes for us here on earth. That is the measure of our character defects, or, if you wish, of our sins.

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TRADITION

“An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”

1. Should my fellow group members and I go out and raise money to endow several AA beds in our local hospital?
2. Is it good for a group to lease a small building?
3. Are all the officers and members of our local club for AAs familiar with “Guidelines on Clubs” (which is available free from GSO)?
4. Should the secretary of our group serve on the mayor’s advisory committee on alcoholism?
5. Some alcoholics will stay around AA only if we have a TV and card room. If this is what is required to carry the message to them, should we have these facilities?

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CONCEPT

On behalf of A.A. as a whole, our General Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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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

Indian River Men's	June 1	Discovery Women's	June 5
South Vero	June 8	Candlelight	June 12
Serenity House	June 15	Vero Beach Group	June 19
Noontime Recovery	June 22	ODAAT	June 26
Easy Does It	June 29		July 3
Candlelight	July 6	Sebastian Freedom	July 10
Easy Does It	July 13	South Vero	July 17
Free & Easy	July 20	Vero 12 & 12	July 24
Friday Young People	July 27	Barefoot Bay	July 31
Indian River Men's	August 3	Candlelight	August 7
Midnight Oil	August 10	Discovery Women	August 14

MONDAYS

Noontime Recovery	June 7	Indian River Thursday	July 12
Safe Harbor Women's	June 14	Noontime Recovery	July 19
South Vero	June 21	Safe Harbor Women's	July 26
Vero 12 & 12	June 28	South Vero	August 2
Friday Young People's	July 5	Vero 12 & 12	August 9

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, Judy Whalen at 778-4044.

CEBH is a speaker/discussion meeting. Our format (as with Alchope) is for two people to go to the facility, a meeting leader and a speaker. Unlike Alchope, however, this is NOT a public meeting. A copy of the AA *Preamble* and *How It Works* are at the front desk. Please return them after the meeting. Once the leader opens the meeting in the usual way, the speaker will share his/her experience, strength and hope as it pertains to alcoholism., making sure to leave adequate time for questions and answers. The meeting is closed with the Lord's Prayer.

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

... Continued from page 1

She stood at the foot of the grave, looking at the headstone. She looked at the sky. Then she rummaged in her purse and took out a large coin-like object. She went to the headstone where piles of similar coin-like tokens were stacked. She put hers on a pile and took one from another pile. (Called "chips," they mark lengths of sobriety in the fellowship.)

Then she came and sat next to the white-haired man. "You a friend of Bill's?" she asked.

"Yes," he said, "and I guess you are too. How long?"

"Twelve years," she said. "You?"

"Eighteen years," he said.

They held hands. They looked off into the distance. Tears came. Finally she said "I have to go, now. I have to go home."

"Where do you live?" he asked.

"London," she said.

Later, the white-haired man said on the way back home, he thought of the simplicity of the AA program, and how Dr. Bob Smith would always remind Bill Wilson to "keep it simple." Then he chuckled and read again the directions to Bill Wilson's grave, directions handed out at the Wilson House, where Bill was born in 1895. (The red-painted house with white columns, on Village Street holds AA and AI-Anon meetings.)

The directions read: "Bill's grave is the eighth stone on the left from the tree stump".

Simple, but it works.



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

NEW AWAKENING GROUP
NEEDS SUPPORT
Monday through Friday

OPEN DISCUSSION MEETINGS
7:30AM
CHURCH OF CHRIST
33rd Ave & Route 60

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

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

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

NEEDS SUPPORT

**NO B.S.
WOMEN'S GROUP**

MEETS TUESDAYS
7-8:30PM
NEWPORT CLUB
TV ROOM

*SOUTH VERO
GROUP*

*FRIDAY NIGHT
11:30PM*

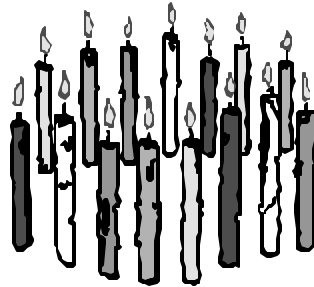
*OPEN DISCUSSION
MEETING*

*NOW MEETS
AT 10:30PM*

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)
Seminar Registration: 954-941-3042
Hotel Reservation: 561-994-8200
For more info, call Ellen M. @ 913-4151



JUNE 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.freesevers.com.

EASY DOES IT		NEW AWAKENING		ODAAAT	
David P.	2	<i>Celebrates Last Wednesday</i>		<i>Celebrates Last Friday</i>	
Leslie W.	2	Zach N.	7	Ted H.	1
Patrick M.	15	Rick B.	13	Patti B.	1
		Bobbi D.	32	Michelle R.	2
		<i>April:</i>		Brian G.	3
SOUTH VERO GROUP		Sam H.	30	Lorrie N.	10
<i>Celebrates Last Wednesday</i>				Beverly	18
Rhonda R.	1			Kathy H.	27
Adam F.	3	I AM RESPONSIBLE		Norman G.	20
Tim K.	3	Bruce S.	9	Ed O'D.	32
Dave O.	4			Bobbie D.	32
Sam P.	7	SAFE HARBOR WOMEN'S		<i>May:</i>	
Kim G.	16	Suzy H.	23	Susan	1
Carole-Jean A.	33			Randy D.	2
Alberta S.	37	HIBISCUS MONDAY NIGHT		Kathy B.	3
<i>May:</i>		Richard S.	4	Mark S.	4
Kieth T.	14	Cherie M.	10	Bev M.	4
				Ken S.	8
INDIAN RIVER MEN'S				Clark M.	8
Jerry H.	1	ROSELAND METHODIST		Mary Lou H.	11
Nick A.	1	SUNDAY BEGINNERS		Roger G.	15
		Dottie K.	1	Tim Z.	18
BAREFOOT BAY		Elizabeth	11	Helen M.	20
Jim T.	13			Suzann H.	22
Barbara M.	18	VERO 12 & 12		Dick D.	22
Pam G.	45	<i>Celebrates Last Thursday</i>		Tulio C.	26
		Terry R.	2	Don McC.	27
INDIAN RIVER THURSDAY		Bill K.	6	Sheila T.	28
<i>Celebrates Last Thursday</i>		Amanda S.	13		
Cathy C.	1	Jim H.	18		
Shelby M.	9	Cheryl Ann B.	27		
Danny W.	3	Eloise R.	28		
Kim G.	16	Charlie D.	35		
Barbara	17	<i>May:</i>			
Suzy H.	23	Robin N.	10		
		Cynthia G.	19		

HAPPY AA BIRTHDAY!



SERVICE AND THE CENTRAL OFFICE – A LIFE GIVING COMBINATION

It's amazing to this alcoholic that less than 50% of all groups registered in Indian River County have representatives attending the Central Office business meeting, held monthly on the 2nd Thursday at 7PM at the Newport Club in the outside room.

It's amazing because each and every one of us, whether we realize it or not, in many aspects of our individual recovery rely on the Central Office. How many of us, when traveling, end up calling Inter-group or Central Office telephone numbers to find out where there is a meeting? How many of us have called the Central Office for help, for a twelve step call? How many of us have visited the Central Office to purchase literature, medallions, and birthday cards? I could go on and on, yet many groups do not even bother to have a Central Office representative. It is mind boggling and defies a logical explanation.

Let's take a look at what the Central Office really is and how it interrelates with the groups and thereby the individual recovering alcoholic. Let's see what would happen if the Central Office just wasn't there. Let's take a look at a hypothetical situation that could be a glimpse into the future if we don't take care of what we have. Here goes:

He was shuffling along, temporarily blinded by the snow that was whipped up by a sudden gust of wind as he turned the corner. Where is that stairway? He knew it was around here someplace.

He couldn't remember the last time he felt this cold, this abandoned, this lonely. No more money, his last vestige of self-worth evaporated when he was thrown out of the lowest dive he had ever been in. Brrr, it's cold, he needed a drink, badly. He didn't know if he was shaking from the cold or because he needed that drink. Where is that stairway! He was sure he was in the right place, or at least close to it.

Slipping and sliding he stumbled on, looking for the stairway leading to the only place that he remembered would not throw him out. But where is it? He was crying now, he couldn't stop. He wanted to die but didn't know how. Fear will do that to a man or a woman who has lost all hope. There it is. Just a few more feet, and then the stairway. He stumbled forward and lunged for the railing alongside the steps leading down. He hung on for dear life as he traversed the icy steps downward to the place he knew would greet him and let him in. Ahh, there's the door. He grasped the door knob but couldn't turn it. Has he really grown that weak?

He tried again, this time with two hands. He still couldn't turn it. He looked up and saw the faded sign, a circle surrounding a triangle. He knew this was it. Why won't they open the door? He fell to his knees and banged on the door, now crying uncontrollably. He screamed as loud as he could. "HELP ME, HELP ME, OH GOD, PLEASE HELP ME." He tried to get up but couldn't. The snow kept falling. It looked pure. It looked beautiful. He laid down and was soon covered by a white fluffy blanket.

He was cold and not breathing when he was found the next day by a maintenance man coming to work. It had stopped snowing overnight and the sun shone brightly, making for a beautiful day as the ice and snow began to melt.

The maintenance man sighed and remembered a day not too long ago when this particular building was used by those AA people. He remembered the newspaper headlines that reported the demise of AA due to non-interest by its members. He remembered reading that the AAs had gotten so comfortable and successful in their individual endeavors that no one was left who was willing to answer the cries for help or to man the telephones or volunteer their time to sit in an office and greet people.

He remembered reading about these AAs in the paper, "After all," the article quoted one individual, "I didn't get sober to be taken advantage of." The article went on to say that this AA thing could have lasted forever, except for its members losing the willingness to give back what had been so freely



Continued from previous page...

given to them. AA just ceased to exist.

A fairy tale you say? I'm sure that would have been the response of the Washingtonians had they been told that their demise was imminent. When William K. Mitchell, John F. Loss, David Anderson, George Stears, Archibald Campbell and James McCurley (the "original six" who founded the Washington Temperance Society of Baltimore) got started on their quest, failure was not an option. Yet their society ceased to exist in less than a decade.

If anyone reading this is foolish enough to think that it can't happen to us, think again.

For instance, there are committees at our Indian River Central Office that may be terminated due to a lack of interest. And there are Central Office/Intergroup committees that exist in other AA communities in South Florida and throughout the country that we don't have in Indian River County because we can't generate enough interest to incite the necessary volunteers. Does that sound like we're healthy? You be the judge.

This is scary stuff folks. It's easy to just sit back and say, "Well, if God wanted it to be, then it would be." To that I say... well, I can't say it in this publication, but I'm sure that those of you who know me get the idea.

As far as this alcoholic is concerned, God doesn't "do" for us, but rather God gives us the ability and the tools to perform His work. And when we don't, well, the results are clear.

Where are the Washingtonians now? Where is the Oxford Group? And where is AA? Today we are a thriving fellowship by any measure. But though today we flourish, it's up to us to use the God given ability and the tools we've been given to keep AA available for the still suffering alcoholic looking for a way out. Don't let him or her find a closed door. Don't let him or her die.

Go ahead, prove me wrong. I know there are people out there who are ready, willing and able to serve on committees for the Central Office. I know there are people out there whose lives would be enriched beyond their wildest dreams through service to AA.

As I am writing this, the Unity Committee of the Central Office is in danger of being shuffled out the door due to a lack of participation. This is a committee dedicated to promoting unity through service workshops, programs and events. There should be people banging on the door begging to be on this committee. But there aren't. And that is not only sad but to this alcoholic it is no less than alarming.

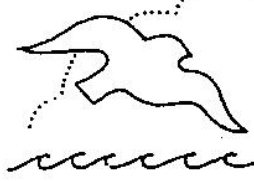
Be counted. Give back. Make sure your group has a Central Office Representative who attends the Central Office business meetings. Make sure that your group has a GSR. Be "a part of" instead of "apart from." Do your part and make sure your group is doing its part to ensure AA will be here tomorrow and for the tomorrows to come.

At the 1965 International A.A. Conference in Toronto, the "RESPONSIBILITY PLEDGE" was formally introduced and adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous. This pledge will be renewed at the 2005 International A.A. Conference, also held in Toronto, but rather than "pledge," why don't we just "do!"

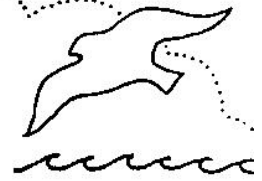
**I AM RESPONSIBLE...
WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE REACHES
OUT FOR HELP, I WANT THE HAND
OF AA ALWAYS TO BE THERE, AND
FOR THAT: I AM RESPONSIBLE.**



HOW



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 Vero Beach, FL 32961
 772-562-1114



URL: www.indianriveraa.freesevers.com

E-MAIL: info@indianriveraa.freesevers.com

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 John H

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PLACE
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