
FELLOWSHIP CENTER NEWS

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Spring 2011



The First Hour is the Rudder of the Day

Bryan H.

I love this quote. It tells me that my mood and actions first thing in the morning can really steer the rest of my day. The choice is up to me. Do I pray with gratitude, or grumble about another day? I read the “24 Hours” and “Daily Reflections” over my morning coffee, followed by a brief meditation. I like to be inspired by positive thoughts and give myself a fighting chance to enjoy my day, rather than watching the news that shows me problems that I can’t do anything about. Today, I have reason to be positive since I am living a sober life, and doing the next right thing. I also enjoy the safety net of a practical working spirituality.

We have so many tools to help us: prayer, meditation, gratitude lists, talking to another alcoholic in recovery, books, websites, moving a muscle, doing for others, going to a meeting, being part of the fellowship, practicing acceptance and letting go of resentments.

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Upcoming Events...

Annual Election Meeting on Saturday, May 7th (7:15pm) to elect a new Fellowship Center Board Member (must have one year of continuous sobriety). We will be looking for nominees directly followed by a vote for a club member to join the advisory board as the acting secretary.

Coffeehouse 2nd Saturday of every month, 8:00 - 11:00pm

Fellowship Center 1st Annual Celebration will be held on June 11th. Details to follow.

Membership Meetings are now held quarterly, beginning Thursday, July 7th, 8:00pm

We are Not a Glum Lot

Bryan H.

If the newcomer didn't see us smile or hear us laugh, what would be the attraction? Our 12th step ends with: "Understanding is the key to right principles and attitudes, and right action is the key to good living; therefore the joy of living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth step". We insist upon enjoying life.

If I just go to work and A.A. meetings, there's not much joy for me. I need a hobby, something that isn't serious. I need to laugh, and feeling good is a not a luxury, it's a necessity. It helps my emotional balance.

Once I took offence at an old-timer who said that I take myself too seriously. Obviously, he was right. Today, I can appreciate the difference between a day of hopeless drunkenness and a challenging sober day of personal growth.

Our 4th tradition refers to an early A.A. group that wanted to open a 3 story full-service alcoholic center. They adopted 61 rules on how to behave. The foundations services were misused and the head promoter said that he wished he'd paid some attention to A.A. experience. He finally came up with rule# 62: "Don't take yourself too damn seriously." He could laugh at himself, the very acme of humility. I have a lot to be happy about. I'm no longer a prisoner of King Alcohol. I keep growing in spite of myself. I have a host of friends and I know how to be a friend today.

How is the Fellowship Center different from A.A.?

Bryan H.

This concern was found in our suggestion box recently. Think of the Fellowship Center as a non-affiliated host of A.A. meetings, like a church that rents space to an A.A. meeting. Fellowship Center is an independent entity that has nothing to do with A.A. other than provide a space for meetings and related events. As such, the Center does collect rent from each meeting (\$20 per meeting). The Center does not dictate how we run our meetings, nor do A.A. members have the right to make any changes to the Fellowship Center unless the changes are approved by its board of directors. As with a church, we need to be respectful of the property and house rules.

As our preamble states: "... A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution ..." Tradition Six states: "An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose ... we could not lend the A.A. name to any cause other than our own."



**Our special thanks to:
the Brookfield Technology Center for the
donation and hosting of our website:
www.fellowship-center.org**

The Fellowship Center offers room rentals to celebrate anniversaries or other events. The \$20 rental fee includes all coffee and paper products, not usually supplied by organizations. Contact a board member to schedule.

Alcoholism as Viewed by Various Faiths

Islam values the moral and spiritual health of a nation as much as its physical well-being. It considers anything that interferes with the normal working of the mind, numbs our senses, thereby reducing our level of shame or responsibility, or clouds our perception as harmful (this includes alcohol as well as other drugs altering the mind). Islam categorically states that if a substance can destroy the clarity of the mind in large quantities, it is harmful even in minute quantities. Islam, therefore, advocates a total prohibition of narcotic drugs, including alcohol. It forbids the use, not just the abuse of these substances. – www.mustaqim.co.uk

A theme expressed by **Buddhist** alcoholism counselors was that the Buddhist practice of looking inward, truly knowing yourself, and knowing one's place in the world may relate to Buddhist alcoholics becoming convinced that they know a lot about themselves and feel that they are in total control of their drinking. This mindset may lead to a very sophisticated form of rationalization and denial about their addiction. www.alcoholics-info.com

According to a **Judaic** opinion expressed in the Talmud, the "Tree" of Knowledge was actually a grapevine. Thus it was the fruit of the vine that tripped up Adam and Eve, causing them and their descendants untold hardship and misery. - www.chabad.org

There is no **Hindu** religious ban on the use of alcohol. Hinduism generally shies away from such absolute do's and don'ts and strives to deal with individual cases. Yet Hinduism recognizes that alcohol is a powerful substance that has dangers that should not be taken lightly. In Hindu Dharma, we should strive to live in such a way that promotes awareness, respect for others, respect for nature, and a seeking to know the truth directly for ourselves, not just according to the ideas of a book or a leader. - www.dharmicnaujawaan.org

Some passages from the **Christian** Bible reveal that there were those who were well aware of our disease thousands of years ago: "Whose is the misery? Whose the remorse? Whose are the quarrels and anxiety? Who gets the bruises without knowing why? Whose eyes are bloodshot? Those who linger late over their wine ... (Prov. 23:29-30)

"Do not gulp down the wine, the strong red wine...in the end it will bite like a snake and sting like a cobra. Then your eyes see strange sights, your wits and your speech are confused; you become like a man tossing out at sea..." (Prov. 23:31-34) John O (New Milford CT Sunday Reflections Meeting)



FELLOWSHIP CENTER COFFEEHOUSE

2nd Saturday of Every Month 8:00 - 11:00

Live Musical Entertainment by Members and Guests

\$5.00 (\$3 for Members) includes raffle, coffee and snacks

Anyone with musical talent to share is welcome to perform. Microphones and a PA will be set up.

For further information please contact Bryan at hermansdorfer@att.net or call 203/740-0702

Visit www.fellowship-center.org for directions to 18 Great Plain Rd., Danbury, CT

This Time was Different

Kayak Jack

So there I was, leaving detox once again. After my last detox I lasted about 30 minutes; I got high in the lobby of the detox facility as I waited for my ride. It has been a long bumpy journey for me. I had stayed sober for 17 years, relapsed and spent the last 10 years in and out of detox and recovery facilities along with several orthopedic surgeries.

This time was different, I had reached a new low. My wife requested that I not return home to her and our 13 year old daughter. I could not blame her, in fact it was the best thing she could do for herself, our daughter and me. I contacted a man named Marty L. about a place to live. He referred me to Don B. who was in charge of a Sober House. I would be living there with 3 other recovering men.

I expect that Don knew how shaky I was that first day and invited me to ride around with him as he performed several tasks around town that day. I don't know if he was aware that he got me through my first day sober. That night I went to an AA meeting at the Fellowship Center. I met a man there, Al S. The following day we had breakfast and a meeting together. We spent several hours at the Fellowship Center talking and watching a movie. Al had to leave so he contacted Bryan H. who came by, and we talked until it was time for another meeting.

So that is how I spent my first two days of sobriety. I shall be eternally grateful to those that got me through my first days of sobriety and on the path to recovery.

HOUSEKEEPING CORNER

- Last one out, please remember to clean the coffee pots and lock both the front and back doors.
- Please note, Club Room is for Members Only.
- All children must be accompanied by an adult at all times for personal safety and insurance considerations.
- Smoking is outside the kitchen door only.
- No pets, except guide dogs, are allowed inside.

RECOMMENDED SOBER RESOURCES

Our free lending library is located in the Club Room. We have a growing collection of books, CD's & DVD's. Feel free to add your own recovery/spiritual materials.

Check out <http://www.barefootsworld.net/aa/bw3legacies.html>, one of the many on-line resources available for recovery based inspiration and motivation.

USEFUL QUOTES

"You'll never know that God is all you need until God is all you've got."
Rick Warren

"Grace always demands the answer of Gratitude. Grace and Gratitude belong together like heaven and earth. Grace evokes Gratitude like the voice of an echo. Gratitude follows Grace like thunder follows lightning."
Karl Barth, 20th Century Swiss Theologian

"An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind."
Mohandas Gandhi

Dr. Bob's House Repaired

A.A. co-founder's Akron dwelling, a destination point for recovering people worldwide, receives much-needed renovations.

Submitted by Ralph J.

The Akron home, which is a destination point for recovering people around the world has been a museum since the mid-1980s, when the nonprofit group bought it.

The man known as Dr. Bob and his wife Anne, lived there from 1915, a year after it was built at 855 Ardmore Ave., until his death in 1950 at the age of 71. Anne Smith died in 1949 at the age of 68.

Several thousand people tour the facility each year. Most of those visitors pass through during Founders Day Weekend in June, when Alcoholics Anonymous celebrates its June 10, 1935 founding in Akron.

An \$80,000 renovation of the home began Jan. 10 and is expected to be finished by late May in time for Founders Day Weekend June 10-12 at the University of Akron. New wooden flooring is being added in spots in the house, along with new linoleum in some rooms that will be in line with the type of linoleum used during the time the Smiths lived in the house with their two children. Workers have also found a piece of vintage wallpaper from the Smith era during the renovation and hope to find a match. Updates on wiring and repainting with the same colors allow the visitor to experience a site "how it was".

While the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior and is recognized as a state landmark, the organization is attempting to have it also listed as a National Historic Landmark via the National Park Service.

Just a few weeks ago, the lead singer for an internationally known band came to look around. It happens all the time, people walk in and they just break out in tears. Two visitors to the home stopped on their way from Mexico City to New York City, walked in the door and dropped to their knees and started praying. All people associated with the house have witnessed "many spiritual awakenings and spiritual experiences" among visitors to the Smith home. This is our heritage. This is our roots.

An office, some historical records and a Dr. Bob's Home gift shop are located next door.

The nonprofit is seeking funding from area foundations and public entities as well as from private donors.

By Jim Carney , Ohio Beacon Journal staff writer

Sobriety and Resources

Al S.

We A.A.'s are the luckiest people in the world and I can say for myself that, "I've never had it so good!" But sobriety requires work and now-a-days we have almost unlimited resources at our fingertips, If We Choose To Use Them. The website, "[A.A. recovery - ABC Page 60](#)" is an example of one such resource I found while surfing the web a while ago.

It has great articles and links to other good sites and is easy to navigate around. For example, it has an article by Bill W. entitled "The Strange Obsession" about the discussion between Lois and Dr. Silkworth on Bill's drinking obsession when he was admitted to Towns Hospital for the last time. Great stuff, and at the bottom of the article are some cool links: One goes to a copy of an original manuscript page for the article; another goes to an article called, "A Most Important Piece of Paper" which shows a copy of and discusses Bill's "Record of Admission and Discharge" also from his last stay. (As a matter of fact, you can see and handle a copy of this on the kitchen table at Stepping Stones over in Katonah, NY).

This website has a ton of good A.A. stuff and is just one of the many resources that we have available to us today, literally, at our fingertips that just wasn't around years ago. Yes, sobriety does take a lot of work, but nobody said it can't be fun at the same time.



Thank You High Watch

Melissa S.

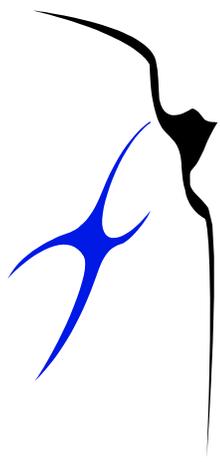
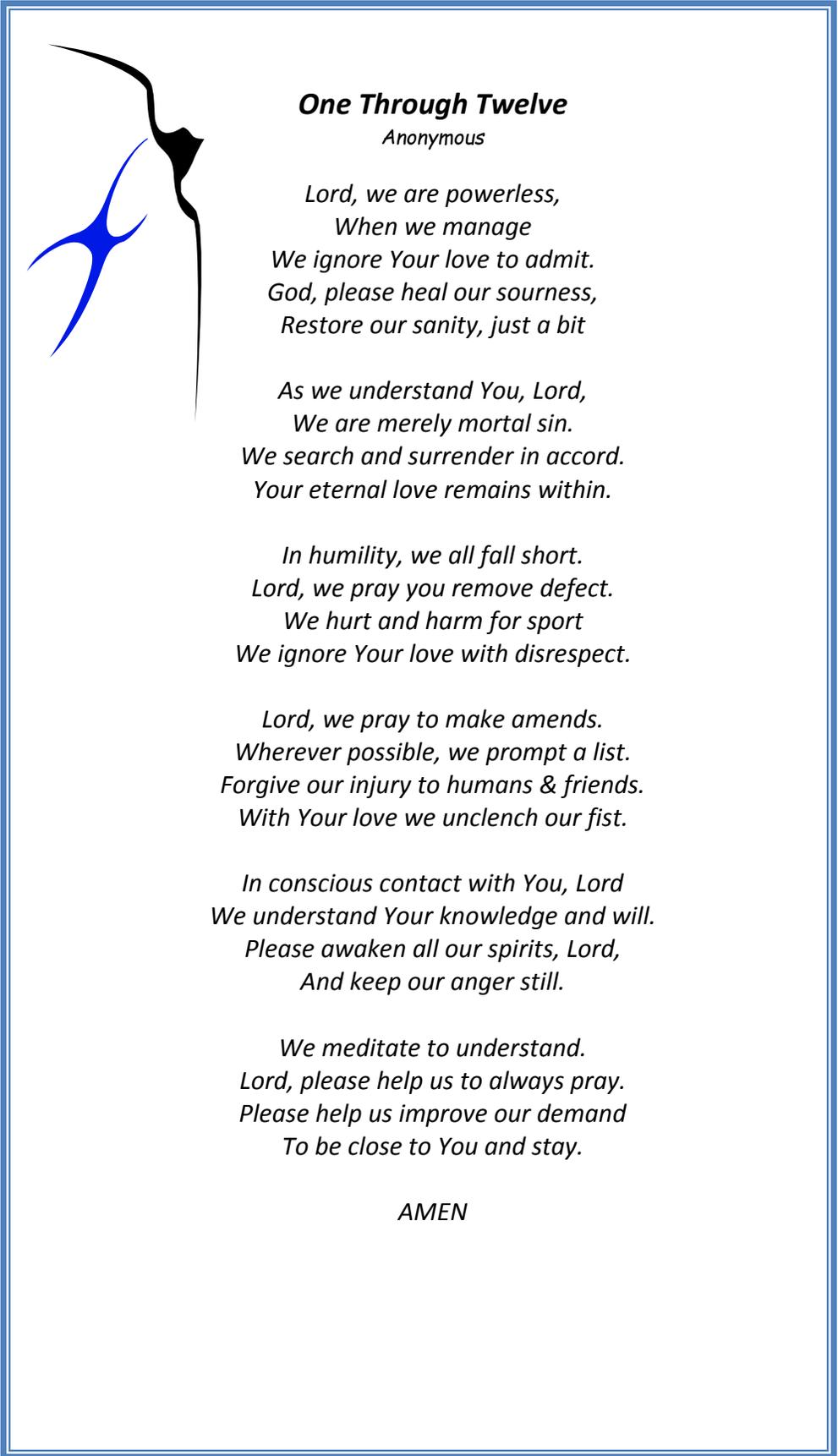
High Watch Farm, now known as High Watch Recovery Center is located on a “Hill of Hope” on Carter Rd. in beautiful, bucolic Kent, CT. As the world’s first recovery center, it was founded in 1940 by AA co-founder Bill Wilson, who recognized the healing energy of the place. Its benefactor, Sister Francis, realized that High Watch was blessed not only by its location and energy, but also by Bill’s vision of what it could do for the ailing alcoholic seeking a spiritual place to heal. High Watch is founded on AA’s 12 Step principles, which is cool because it allows one to “live the program” while recovering.

The farm itself is beautiful with three main dorm buildings, an “admin” house, the pump house, the Chapel, and the Barn, which contains the dining area, kitchen and community space - the hub of the farm. My favorite building is the Chapel, which houses Bill’s writing desk and much A.A. memorabilia. The spiritual aura of the Chapel is hard to miss, even for the bewildered non-believer.

Because no electronic equipment, cell phones, or alarm clocks are allowed at High Watch, a typical day starts with a 7:00 a.m. wake-up call. Breakfast is served (to order if you rise early enough) and the coffee doesn’t stop flowing until 11:00p.m. Daily reflections in the dorms come next; intimate affairs based on various A.A. readings and everyone gets a chance to share. Next, an hour of Big Book study in the Barn with the whole community. This is one of my favorite hours and time passes quickly. I swear, though, there are new lines in that BB every time I read it. Then comes chapel where staff and occasional guests deliver spiritual messages in the form of dialogue, poetry, song or music. Then lunch. Oh, the food at High Watch is outstanding. The High Watch mission is to help the guests regain their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being and I suspect that begins with really good, wholesome food.

In addition to BB study, the farm introduces guests to 12 Step work, suggesting they complete the first three steps with a counselor during their stay. For those so motivated, a 4th step workshop with is offered.

Perhaps the best thing about High Watch is the people. I believe my HP works through people, and this certainly proved to be true during my last stay at the farm. First of all, I was welcomed with love and kindness by the staff, who I expected would be disappointed in me for relapsing again. Secondly, my dorm mates and all the women there, turned out to be the best group of drunks I’ve met in a long while. The laughs and tears we shared were soul-felt, and the gratitude borne of our collective desperation and despair was unlike any other I have experienced. I feel I’ve made some life-long sober friends at High Watch, and I look forward to celebrating recovery at many Saturday night banquets/meetings to come. I left High Watch with high hopes, deep gratitude and a black book filled with phone numbers. I feel closer to my HP than I have in the last five years, and I know if I just continue to make meetings, call people, read, pray, meditate and above all don’t pick up that first drink, that I can achieve a long and healthy sobriety, one day at a time. Thank you High Watch.



One Through Twelve

Anonymous

*Lord, we are powerless,
When we manage
We ignore Your love to admit.
God, please heal our sourness,
Restore our sanity, just a bit*

*As we understand You, Lord,
We are merely mortal sin.
We search and surrender in accord.
Your eternal love remains within.*

*In humility, we all fall short.
Lord, we pray you remove defect.
We hurt and harm for sport
We ignore Your love with disrespect.*

*Lord, we pray to make amends.
Wherever possible, we prompt a list.
Forgive our injury to humans & friends.
With Your love we unclench our fist.*

*In conscious contact with You, Lord
We understand Your knowledge and will.
Please awaken all our spirits, Lord,
And keep our anger still.*

*We meditate to understand.
Lord, please help us to always pray.
Please help us improve our demand
To be close to You and stay.*

AMEN



"You gotta give Charlie credit. He must have made that amends to the IRS!"



"... and on my fourth day of sobriety ..."

(reprinted from www.aagrapevine.org)

Have Something to Say? (1 page more or less)
We need fun event ideas, tips for staying sober, recommended books, personal experiences, A.A. history, etc. Email your article to:
hermansdorfer@att.net or 203/940-0702