



The Triangle

April 2017

4th Step: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

4th Tradition: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

4th Concept: Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.



Step Four: Where's My Rocket?

Practicing the program in a practical way

In early October 1993, I was dropped off in the middle of rainy nowhere and shuffled into the intake chamber of a rehab. I was scared. I was a long way from my cozy single room occupancy on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and I hadn't been out of New York in many years.

That's where I first learned about the Twelve Steps of recovery; that Alcoholics Anonymous was my only hope; that only a psychic change and a spiritual awakening could cease the inevitable downward progression of my alcoholism. That's where I first heard Dr. Bob's prescription: Trust God, clean house, help another alcoholic. The process of taking inventory, however frenetically, had already begun.

...continued on page 3

~ A.A. Needs Our Support! ~

Please use the following addresses – and don't forget your group's ID #

HMB District 9

HMB Area 48

A.A. World Services

P.O. Box 8112

118 Polar Plaza #114

P.O. Box 459

Utica N.Y. 13505

Amsterdam N.Y. 12010

New York N.Y. 10163

Looking for a meeting? Go to <http://meetings.aahmbny.org/> for a local listing.

Announcements

District 9 Website is up and working! You can access it from the **aahmbny.org** site, under the Meetings tab → District Websites. There are meeting lists, events listings, and more!

April District Meeting: On the 26th (Wed) at Our Savior Lutheran, Downstairs at 6:30pm. The following District Positions are currently open:

- **CPC (Cooperation with the Professional Community):**
Members of C.P.C. committees inform professionals and future professionals about A.A. - what we are, where we are, what we can do, and what we cannot do. They attempt to establish better communication between A.A.s and professionals, and to find simple, effective ways of cooperating without affiliating. Suggested goals and projects are available at <https://aahmbny.org/cpc/>
- **Public Information:**
Responsible for carrying the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about the A.A. program. We carry the message by getting in touch with and responding to the media, schools, industry, and other organizations which can report on the nature and purpose of A.A. and what it can do for alcoholics. The Public Information Workbook is available online at http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/M-27i_PubInfWorkbk.pdf

All are Welcome Group: Our Savior Lutheran, 1640 Genesee St., Utica, 6:30pm

Speakers for April:

- Libby F - April 10
- Kent H - April 24

Saturday Night Serenity Group: The first Saturday of each month is a speaker meeting. First Assembly of God, 9427 Maynard Drive in Marcy.

HMB Delegate's Day of Sharing: Saturday, April 1, 9 am – 3 pm, Sacred Heart Church Parish Center, 50 Mohican St, Lake George, NY 12845. To see flyer go to aahmbny.org ⇒ Events ⇒ Area

Working Through The AA Steps: With The "Back To Basics" Method, Thursdays @ 7 pm, Mohawk Valley Alano Club, AA's First Tradition Group, 6 Cottage Place, Utica, 13502 (Church Auditorium Rear Basement)

For a complete list of area events, go to **aahmbny.org** → **Events**

...continued from page 1

After leaving the hospital, I spent the next year going to AA meetings every night without fail. I got involved. I counted days in a home group where I sat in the front row and raised my hand, shared, and asked for help. I made coffee, I arrived early and stayed late, I helped set up and break down, and I collected phone numbers and then actually used them. I read literature, took suggestions, and became a member of the Fellowship.

I couldn't wait to do this mythical Fourth Step I kept hearing about. It seemed to tower in the distance with great monolithic significance. I heard, "If you don't do a Fourth, you'll pick up a fifth," and "You're only as sick as your secrets." I did a lot of writing, trying to sort out everything that was happening to me. So, the business of putting pen to paper did not seem so daunting. I found it quite helpful. Some fellow AAs seemed genuinely terrified at the thought of writing a Fourth Step, but I was looking forward to the adventure. Of all the Twelve Steps it seemed to glow the brightest, or fiercest.

A Fourth Step is comprised of three main components: resentments, fears, and sex. Fear and sex were all-too-familiar subjects for me, but this resentment jive, what was that all about? The word was not part of my lexicon. I knew it had something to do with annoyance or anger but, perhaps because I was so disconnected from my emotions, the concept didn't exist for me.

One day I came across the French word "ressentiment" and something clicked. If you break the word apart, you have "sentiment" (feeling) and "re" (again). When the time came, I managed to list hundreds of people (individuals and groups), places, institutions, principles, phenomena, and ideas that I resented. Oh, resentment. Now I get it.

I heard in a meeting that an inventory simply took stock of what existed, not the hows and whys. If you were a grocery clerk checking the shelves, you would only note thirteen cans of tomatoes. You wouldn't say, "Well two cans are dented, and one has a label half torn off, and I don't care for this brand so much." You put down only: Thirteen cans of tomatoes. Check. It took me a while to get the idea. I'll tell you how I finally got there.

The sponsor I was working with suggested I write a sex history in order to illuminate my troubles. I dashed off over sixty pages shying away from no episode, no matter how shameful. Fascinating as it all was, I don't know how much it really helped to keep me sober. I worried it was merely a document of shameless exhibitionism masquerading as honesty. However, I did feel tremendously unburdened and much less embarrassed.

The next formal inventory I approached took place a few years later when I was again wrestling with my life sober. I did it according to the three-column

system outlined on page 65 of the Big Book. Again, although it proved illuminating, in the end I felt no genuine relief or greater clarity. Once again, I was disappointed. Maybe I expected too much. Where was my "rocket to the fourth dimension?"

Some years later, still sober in AA, I fell into a depression. Life seemed dull and meaningless. I hung on as best as I could. I knew I didn't live in a vacuum and any drastic moves would deeply hurt and upset my few loved ones. Still, I felt alone and disappointed. I knew it was time to drink.

One day, I found my way to an early morning meeting across town where I knew no one. I raised my hand, managed to get called on, and I asked for help. Thank God I had a decent foundation and that I was rewired to go to AA for help, not the bottle. I got a new sponsor, something I had been resistant to for years.

When it came time to sit down and write a Fourth Step, my sponsor told me to ask God to bring me into the process and, when I was done writing for the day, to ask God to take me out of it. That way I wouldn't walk around in morbid reflection. I began by addressing fear, with a list of what my sponsor called the twelve universal fears, including fears of people, financial insecurity, rejection, humiliation, abandonment, and so forth. I wrote a riff on each one. Then I wrote down all my other fears. Although I had talked about many of these issues, I had never written them all

down in one place. I was afraid; what if someone should find this list of my weaknesses and use them against me?

So, I called my sponsor and told him: "I can't do this, I can't keep it simple because it's all too complicated to take apart and spread out in any coherent fashion!" He gave me a pre-columned grid so that I could plug names on each line and then check off applicable attributes which were neatly arranged across the page. There simply wasn't any room to write anything more than a name in column one, "I am resentful at---," and in column two, a "cause" comprised of maybe four or five of my own words. After I had all my names and causes written down I went back to the beginning and checked off in the third column all that applied in each instance. Piece of cake.

The fourth column is not illustrated in the Big Book as the first three columns on page sixty-five are. It's dealt with a page later: "To

conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got. The usual outcome was that people continued to wrong us and we stayed sore [T]his business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal." I bought all that and read on. I looked at my list again and experienced what the book says: "We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us." In the book we are told to pray for these people we resent. So, I did that--

Then, I looked at my part. The fourth column on the grid I used was labeled "What is the exact nature of my wrongs, faults, mistakes, defects, shortcomings?" It is divided into four checkable boxes: Selfish, Dishonest, Self-Seeking and Frightened, Inconsiderate/Intolerant. I spent a lot of time considering each of these qualities in relation to each specific instance I referenced in column one. In this way, finally, a clear image was formed of my relationship to the world. I remember hearing people in

meetings talk of seeing patterns. Only after completing this process myself did I understand what they were talking about. Familiar ideas left their abstract domain and became living elements that could be understood. From here I could move on to practice the following Steps in a practical way.

In outpatient, many would exclaim, "We're being brainwashed!" To which a wise counselor would reply, "Look where you are--you need your brain cleaned!" I call upon God daily now to help me and a casual conversation with the Higher Power has become a regular part of my interior monologue.

It's not easy pushing that big rock up the hill each day. I think, Hey, I got out of bed yesterday, I gotta do it again today? Well, yeah.

**Steve K.
New York, New York**

-from the Grapevine

CHECKLIST - Questions for Tradition 4:

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his lengths, not mine—to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

2018 HMB Area Convention Committee Meeting

March 18, 2017

Committee meeting called to order by Chair, Chrissy O. at 5:12 pm on Saturday, March 18, 2017 at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Utica, NY. Members in attendance were: Chrissy O (12), Tammie E (9), Brenda O (12), Cindy D (12), John L (9), Larry H (9), Angie W (9), Dave B (12), and Jim C (9).

Minutes from the last meeting were accepted as written.

Selection of a theme for the convention is on hold until after the General Service Conference.

The date is set for October 26-28, 2018.

Brenda (Hospitality) & Chrissy (Convention Chair) met with Hotel Utica and began contract negotiations. 4 break-out rooms are priced at \$200 each per day. Ballroom is \$2500 for 3 days; Saranac room is \$1500 for 3 days. Approximate meal prices were discussed and it was decided that only Friday night buffet (~\$22) and Saturday night plated meal (~\$27) would be offered. John L, who is experienced in catering, has offered to accompany them the next time they go.

Angie W offered to be greeter chair. Larry H offered to be Taper Chair. Cindy D offered to be Souvenir/Logo chair. Committee approved of all three chair appointments. We are still in need of a co-chair and a registration chair.

Dave B (Entertainment Chair) has put some requests out to bands and DJs for prices. So far he has only got one quote back, is waiting on more. Skits for both nights and a talent show for Friday night were agreed on.

Chrissy has contacted Kathy from Rome about organizing the Alanon portion; she has agreed and will be at next meeting.

Tammie E (Program Chair) will contact John W (Area 49, SENY Delegate) and invite him to be the main Saturday night speaker.

The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 29th at 5 pm at Our Savior Lutheran Church.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Submitted in Love & Service,

Tammie E - Secretary/Program Chair