

# The Gateway

June 2011

District 14

HMB Area 48

New York

**District 14: Altamont, Duanesburg, Guelderland, Niskayuna, Schenectady, Scotia**

*"Some day we hope that every alcoholic who journeys will find the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination." Big Book - page 162*

## Step 6

**THE WASHINGTONIAN MOVEMENT** By Milton A. Maxwell, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Sociology, State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington



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

## INTRODUCTION

Certain similarities between the Washingtonian movement of the nineteenth century and the present day fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous have been commented upon by a number of observers. In view of this resemblance there is more than historical interest in an account of the first movement in the United States which brought about a large-scale rehabilitation of alcoholics. The phenomenal rise and spread of the Washingtonian movement throughout the land in the early 1840's was the occasion of much discussion, exciting a deep interest. The cause of its equally rapid decline have been a subject of much speculation and are still of concern to the members of Alcoholics Anonymous who may wonder whether or not their movement is destined to a similar fate. This article, therefore, will present not merely a description and history of the movement but also an analysis of the similarities and differences between the Washingtonians and Alcoholics Anonymous.

Since the Washingtonian movement is so intimately linked to the larger temperance movement, it may be well to recall the developments which preceded 1840. Before the 1830's, "temperance" was hardly a popular cause. Even in 1812, when Lyman Beecher proposed to his fellow Congregational ministers that they formulate a program for combating intemperance, "... the regular committee reported that 'after faithful and prayerful inquiry' it was convinced that nothing could be done to check the growth of intemperance..."(1). The custom of serving liquor at ecclesiastical meetings probably influenced the outcome of this "prayerful inquiry." But Lyman Beecher was not to be stopped. He headed a new committee that recommended the following steps:

....that district assemblies abstain from the use of ardent spirits (not

## Pass it on...

Share your stories of experience, strength and hope; group anniversaries; jokes; and other AA related news!

## Tradition 6

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.

## Concept 6

The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.



“A.A. REGENERATION”

*Such is the paradox of A.A. regeneration: strength arising out of complete defeat and weakness, the loss of one's old life as a condition for finding a new one.*

A.A. COMES OF AGE, p.46

A thousand beatings by John Barleycorn did not encourage me to admit defeat. I believed it was my moral obligation to conquer my “enemy-friend.” At my first A.A.

meeting I was blessed with a *feeling* which had nothing to do with my “moral fiber.” I knew instinctively that I was in the presence of a great love when I entered the doors of A.A. With no effort on my part, I became aware that to love myself was good and right, as God had intended. My feelings set me free, where my thoughts had held me in bondage, I am grateful.

P. 179

## As Bill Sees It

### Single Purpose

“there are those who predict that A.A. may well be come a new spearhead for a spiritual awakening throughout the world. When our friends say these things, they are both generous and sincere. But we of A.A. must reflect that such a tribute and such a prophecy could well prove to be a heady drink for most of us—that is, if we really came to believe this to be the real purpose of A.A., and if we commenced to behave accordingly.

Our Society, therefore, will prudently cleave to its single purpose: the carrying of the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Let us resist the proud assumption that since God has enabled us to do well in one area we re destined to be a channel of saving grace for everybody..”

<< << << >> >> >>



A.A.COMES OF AGE, P. 232

## We are NOT a glum lot...

Oldies but goodies

Judge: “You’re a menace to other drivers, and pedestrians, too! I’m going to revoke your license.”

Defendant: “Your Honor, you can’t. My living depend on this!”

Judge: “So does theirs!”

## Current District 14 Trusted Servants

**D.C.M.**...(District Committee Member).....**Kathy H.**

**Alternate DCM/Records** .....**Tammy D.**

**Treasurer** .....**George D.**

**Bridging the Gap** .....**Gerry W.**

**Cooperation with the Professional Community** ..**Brian J.**

**Corrections-Men's** .....**Wilbur S.**

**Corrections-Women's** .....**Chris G.**

**Functions** ..... **Fred C**

**Newsletter Editor** .....**Patti G.**

**Public Information** .....**John C.**

**Special Needs** .....**Debby W.**

**Secretary**.....**Alice M.**

**Treatment** .....**Mike H.**

## Notes....

**The Bridge Center...** in Schenectady is now holding a men's speaker meeting on Wednesday evenings. If you are interested in speaking at this meeting please contact

Gerry Wurtzel at 331-9729 or [gwurtzel1@yahoo.com](mailto:gwurtzel1@yahoo.com)

**Schenectady County Jail \*\*\*** Meetings need volunteers...

**Women's Jail Meeting** - Chris G.  
**Men's Jail Meeting** - Wilber S.

**New Meeting in District 14:** "Young and in AA." Monday nights, 7:45-8:45 p.m. St. Joseph's Church, 600 State St., corner of State and Lafayette, use Lafayette entrance.

Contact any District 14 Committee member or your group GSR for more information.

**Washingtonians (cont)...** wine) at ecclesiastical meetings, that members of churches abstain from unlawful vending or purchase (not from lawful vending and purchase) of liquor, that farmers, mechanics and manufacturers substitute monetary compensation for the ration of spirits, that voluntary associations aid the civil magistrates to enforce the laws, and that the pamphlet of Dr. Rush (2) be printed and circulated

(1).The fact that these proposals were regarded as radical by the custodians of the New England conscience is a sufficient clue to the state of public opinion in 1812.

It was not until 1825 that Lyman Beecher preached his famous Six Sermons



**HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

**COME TO THE MEETING! OPEN TO ALL A.A. MEMBERS...**

**July 18, 2011 ... 7:35 PM—9 PM... Scotia United Methodist Church**



# HMB 2011 Convention November 4-6, 2011

"We are Responsible for A.A.'s Future  
- Let it Begin With Us"

## Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center

542 Route 9  
Fishkill, NY 12524  
(845) 896-6281

Http://www.holidayinn.com

Single Rooms: \$89 per night (plus taxes) / Double Rooms: \$109 per night (plus taxes)

Hotel Reservations should be made directly with the hotel.

Please use Group Code "HMB".

Hotel Reservations MUST be secured by October 4, 2011.

## Friends • Fellowship • Meetings & Speakers • Panels & Workshops

Pre-Registrants  
will Receive an Extra  
Free Shuttle Ticket for  
an Archive Hotel!

Entertainment Friday & Saturday Night  
Saturday Night Banquet  
Hosted by the Hudson Valley Cluster  
(Districts 3, 7, 11, 15, 16, 17)

Pre-Registrants  
will Receive an Extra  
Free Shuttle Ticket for  
an Archive Hotel!

For More Information: Lori W. (518)387-1923 / Deb D. (845)331-0213

## Upcoming Events

- 7/29-31/2011 NY State Convention SENY  
(Tarrytown)
- 8/19-21/2011 NYS Informational HMB  
(Latham)
- 9/10/2011 Election Assembly Eastern  
Cluster
- 10/15/2011 Area Assembly Central Cluster
- 11/4-6/2011 HMB Convention—Hudson  
Valley Cluster—(Fishkill)

## Washingtonians (cont)...

(3), in which he defined intemperance not merely as drunkenness but as the "daily use of ardent spirits." In 1826, in Boston, Beecher and Justin Edwards spearheaded the founding of the first national society, "The American Society for the Promotion of Temperance" (American Temperance Society) which sought, according to its constitution, "...to produce such a change of public sentiment, and such a renovation of the habits of individuals and the customs of the community, that in the end temperance, with all its attendant blessings, may universally prevail (4)."

The temperance movement began to take hold. In 1829 there were about 1,000 societies with a membership of approximately 100,000. By 1834 there were 5,000 local societies claiming 11,000,000 members, a gain of 500 per cent in 5 years. A temperance press had been established. Effective literature had emerged. Politicians were taking notice. In 1836 the American Temperance Society was merged into the new and more inclusive "American Temperance Union," which decided to take the stand of "total abstinence from all that can intoxicate (5)."

This step required an entirely new orientation. It is therefore not surprising that some 2,000 societies and countless individuals were not ready to go along. Many wealthy contributors, unwilling to forgo wine, withdrew their support. Some leaders were discouraged by the resistance to the new pledge and became inactive. Various controversial issues added to the dissension. The movement fell upon lean years. Its leaders, in 1840, were wondering what could be done to restore the momentum of the years preceding 1836. Their efforts were groping and limited.

As for the alcoholic, it was the prevailing opinion, up to 1840, that nothing could be done to help him. Occasionally a "drunkard" did "reform," but this did not erase the general pessimism as to the possibility of rehabilitating drunkards. Since alcohol was held to be the "cause" of alcoholism, the temperance movement was aimed solely at keeping the nonalcoholic from becoming an alcoholic. This implied indifference to the alcoholic was epitomized by Justin Edwards in 1822: "Keep the temperate people temperate; the drunkards will soon die, and the land be free (6)."

Thus the stage was set for the emergence of the Washingtonian movement.

## Contributions to A.A. as a Whole

### Tradition Seven:

"Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

No A.A. Tradition had the labor pains this one did. Collective poverty initially a matter of necessity. Fear of exploitation. Necessity of separating the spiritual from the material. Decision to subsist on A.A. voluntary contributions only. Placing the responsibility of supporting A.A. headquarters directly upon A.A. members. Bare running expenses plus a prudent reserve is headquarters policy.

### Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

Please remember to use your group # when sending contributions.



### District 14

PO Box 494  
Schenectady, NY 12301

### HMB Area Association

RTE. 30, #114  
118 Polar Plaza  
Amsterdam, NY 12010

### General Service Office

PO Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

### Capital District Central Office

575 Broadway, Room 128-130

Menands, NY 12204  
Phone: 518-463-0906