

Central Office
910-678-8002
310 Green St.
Fayetteville, NC
28301

Website:
fayaa.org

Upcoming Events

March 14:

Bare Bones book study began reading "Not-God, A History of Alcoholics Anonymous' Meeting is from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Thursdays. Details on page 2.

May 15:

BCR-CO Council meeting, 6:30 p.m., board room, 310 Green St., Fayetteville.

May 17-19:

Area 51 (North Carolina) Spring Assembly at the Bordeaux Holiday Inn & Convention Center in Fayetteville.

May 26:

District 51 Spring Fellowship, hosted by Central Group on German Street. Business meeting at 1 p.m., speaker or program at 2 p.m., food and fellowship at 3 p.m. (Moved a week back because of Area 51 Spring Assembly).

July 18- 21:

Sixty-sixth North Carolina State Convention at Hilton North Raleigh/Midtown on Wake Forest Road. Pre-registration \$15 before June 27, \$20 afterwards. Details including hotel reservations information at aannorthcarolina.org

The Common Bond

The Newsletter of the Bladen, Cumberland, Robeson Central Office

April 2013

India's Jack Alexander and lessons for AA

By Carl Anonym

I have just finished reading the current issue of Box 459, Vol. 59, No 1/ Spring 2013, which is available online at www.aa.org.

I took a while to reflect on the article titled: India's "Jack Alexander Moment." I began reverie concerning the possibilities for and the growth of AA in America and in India. I know for a fact that AA has been in India at least since the publication of our 3rd edition of the Big Book, because of the article "Lifesaving Words," which shows the sheer power of our literature for one who reads, understands, and applies it.

I began to think upon the power of another kind of exposure. The article says that there were 1,100 groups and about 30,000 members. I presume their groups were doing much the same thing that our groups were doing. Having hotlines, perhaps

Inspiration: stimulation or arousal of the mind; an inspiring or animating action or influence. Often accompanied by a vision.

announcements in the paper, internet sites, word of mouth and perhaps having prospects directed to them from treatment.

I'm not so sure about treatment and Doctor referrals. If anything like the U.S., India would have substantial impediments, due to their version of HIPAA (Health Insurance, privacy, portability Act) and the Mental Health Act of 1973 with amendments for Health Providers to refer folks to nonmedical providers or call us in for help.

It would seem that their problems and approaches might be simi-

lar to ours and when they try something old, and something new, we might gain inspiration, strength and hope from them. So now we have two occurrences of a nonalcoholic helping us: Jack Alexander a print journalist in the U.S. in 1941 and Aamir Khan a television journalist in India in 2008.

The approaches are strikingly similar and have in common the strongest method of media available at their disposal – Jack Alexander a national magazine, Aamir Khan national television. Both were journalists investigating the efficacy and validity of the AA recovery organization. Both came to the same results, and surprisingly the two cultures half a world away and separated by many decades in time responded in very similar ways.

The rewards for AA and our God has been many thousands of suffering alcoholics reached

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'Not-God' documents early history of AA

The Bare Bones book study meeting on Thursdays has begun a reading and study of "Not-God, A History of Alcoholics Anonymous," by Ernest Kurtz.

The book was originally written as the dissertation for Kurtz's Ph.D. in the History of American Civilization from Harvard University. During his research in the 1970s, Kurtz gained unlimited access to AA archives at the General Services Office in New York. He also interviewed surviving early members and friends of AA including Bill W.'s widow, Lois, and Bill's longtime secretary Nell Wing. He also uses excerpts from the Big Book and other AA literature.

The title 'Not-God' appears to cause some confusion with those in the Fayetteville community not familiar with Kurtz or this book. As Kurtz writes in his Introduction, "Not-God" means first "You are not God," the message of the AA program. As is clear

from the epigraph on page vii – a pungent reminder drawn from the very heart of 'How It Works,' the key fifth chapter of the book 'Alcoholics Anonymous' – the fundamental and first message of Alcoholics Anonymous to its members is that they are not infinite, not absolute, *not God.*"

Kurtz here is referring to p. 62 of the Big Book: "First of all we had to quit playing God."

Kurtz's history covers the influences of the Oxford Group, psychiatrist Carl Jung, philosopher William James, an Akron social matron Henrietta Seiberling, who hosted the first meeting between Bill W. and Dr. Bob in Akron, and John D. Rockefeller Jr.

Kurtz has been on the faculty of Rutgers University Summer School of Alcohol Studies and with the University Michigan Center for Self-Help Research and Knowledge Dissemination.

Sober thoughts

(Helpful quotes for the AA way of life)

It is the individual who is not interested in his fellow men who has the greatest difficulties in life and provides the greatest injury to others. It is from among such individuals that all human failures spring.

– Alfred Adler

The louder he talked of his honor, the faster we counted our spoons.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Preach the Gospel to all the world, and if necessary, use words.

– St. Francis of Assisi

Make contact with the BCR-CO

Common Bond editor: commonbond2011@gmail.com
Fayaa.org webmaster: webmaster@fayaa.org
Central Office: bcrcentraloffice@embarqmail.com
also info@fayaa.org
Hotline: 910-678-8737
Snail mail: 310 Green St. Fayetteville, NC 28301



The Man on the Bed: AA No. 3 found hope

Reprinted from: Box 459, Vol. 58, No. 1/ Spring 2012

In Part I Bill W. and Dr. Bob S. had two conversations to persuade Bill D., who would become AA member No. 3, to try their program. They told him he to just stay sober for 24 hours. An idea that Bill D. liked

Noting that Dr. Bob S. and Bill W. seemed genuinely happy to be sober, Bill said, "You seemed to be so well pleased with your sobriety, and you looked it and seemed to talk so confidently yourselves that, really, after a day or two I began to, along with my wife, have confidence, at least to a certain extent, that it could be done. ... I wasn't afraid that the program wouldn't work but I was still doubtful whether I would be able to hang on to the program. But I did come to the conclusion that I was willing to put everything I had into it.

"I remained in the hospital eight days. During those eight days I had raw sauerkraut and raw tomatoes the whole time. On the Fourth of July, Doc came by the hospital and I had a friend who told me I could have her cottage for a week out at the lakes." Piling into a car, Bill W., Dr. Bob S. and his wife, and Bill and his wife all went together to the cottage. "There wasn't any liquor around. For the first week it was

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rather tough. The other folks would come out and visit us most every day, and we would go over on a little island there and take a picnic lunch and sit around and try to devise a means of staying sober, in addition to what we already had. Naturally, the fellowship and being busy all the time was a great help. I was out there for more than a week and was helped a lot by these fellows coming out there. It was rather rough, but I still was willing and still wanted to go ahead and get rid of this problem I had. ...

"Of course as time went on, I began to get my health back and began to feel I didn't have to hide from people all the time. ...

"I still go to meetings," said Bill from the vantage point of many years of sobriety. "Because I like to go. I meet the people that I like to talk to. Another reason that I go," he concluded, "is that I'm still grateful for those good years that I've had."

Bill D. died in Akron on September 17, 1954. In memoriam, Bill W. wrote, "That is people say he died, but he really didn't. His spirit and works are alive today in the hearts of uncounted A.A.s, and who can doubt that Bill already dwells in one of the many mansions in the great beyond.

The force of the great example that Bill set in our pioneering time will last as long as A.A. itself."

Note: Bill Dodson's story of recovery and hope is published in Alcoholics Anonymous editions 2, 3, and 4. However, I could not find it in the first edition of our big book. I have also reviewed the original draft edition and the Working draft with suggested changes and Bill Dodson's story is not mentioned or included in those. Though I have not read and reviewed it, "Dr. Bob and The Good Oldtimers" does list thirteen references in the index for a total of 19 pages. I have not reviewed "Pass It On" either, but again its index lists 3 references for a total of 4 pages.

Note: All who read this may add data to this article by sending information with source annotation of the data's origin to cpcdst51aa@yahoo.com. Such information will be appreciated and passed along to others in the AA Community.

Note: This article is very appropriate with respect to the way Dr. Bob S. and his wife Anne, along with Bill W. and others worked with, and twelve stepped Bill D.

