

The MESSAGE June 2023



Unforgettable Bill W.

BY: BOB P. | RIVERSIDE, CONNECTICUT
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He has been called the greatest social architect of the twentieth century. He called himself Bill W. As a securities analyst, he made fortunes for himself and his clients. But he lost everything when he became a hopeless drunk. Then, through the gift of a Higher Power, he found a road to recovery and helped create a unique Fellowship that has brought hope and new life to millions around the world. I am part of that Fellowship, and I was given the amazing grace to know this extraordinary, ordinary man.

Twenty-five years ago, doctors told me I was going to die--soon--if I didn't stop drinking. But I couldn't face reality without copious quantities of vodka, followed by beer chasers.

As a young man, I had come to New York City from Kansas, carved out a career in public relations, married, had three children, and established a home in a fashionable Connecticut suburb.

On the outside I looked prosperous, but inside I was tormented by feelings of inadequacy. When I was forty, an enormous abdominal swelling was diagnosed as advanced cirrhosis of the liver. I had been getting purplish bruises all over my body and suffered nosebleeds--all typical of this kind of liver damage. Once, on a business trip, I couldn't stop vomiting blood and lost half of all I had. My life was saved with transfusions. But I couldn't stop drinking, even after I had another hemorrhage.

Finally, my physician gave up on me and sent me to Dr. Harry M. Tiebout, one of the few psychiatrists then practicing who were sympathetic toward Alcoholics Anonymous and who recognized alcoholism as a disease, not a character flaw. Tiebout suggested I go to AA, but I was too far gone to quit drinking at that point and was committed to High Watch Farm in Kent, Connecticut. There I took the first of AA's Twelve Steps: I admitted I was powerless over alcohol, that my life had become unmanageable. On July 4, 1961, I joined the Fellowship of AA and started a sober life.

Three years later, when I volunteered to help AA with public relations, I met Bill W. He was a legend, and I was nervous as I entered his Manhattan office.

Bill was slouched in a chair, his feet up on a battered oak desk that was scarred with dozens of burn marks from cigarette stubs. When he stood he was about six feet, two inches--slender and loose-limbed. He had a long face and sparkling blue eyes. He acted as if meeting me was the nicest thing that had happened to him in years. "I'm Bill," he said, stretching out his hand. "I'm a drunk."

I started mumbling how I owed him my life, and Bill, embarrassed, looked at the floor and said, "Just pass it on."

AA Central Office of Shreveport

24 Hr. Hotline (318) 865-2172 office@aa-shreveport.org www.aa-shreveport.org Office Hours

Mon & Thurs 10am-5pm Tues, Weds, & Fri 10am-4pm

Groups Responsible for

HOT LINE June 2023

Hardy May 29 -June 4
Lunch Bunch June 5 -11
5:30 Highland June 12 -18
On the Way Home June 19-25
Maverick June 26- July 2

This is a great service that you do for the person that is still suffering.

THE HOT LINE OUR MISSION:

"When anyone anywhere reaches out I want the hand of A.A. to be there. For that I am responsible." BW

If your group is not currently taking the hot line at least one week a year, please call us to add your group!
Call the Central Office for the schedule!

We need the help of your group and individuals to keep the 24 hour Hotline open for the still suffering alcoholic!

We need you!

In time, I became a voluntary trustee of AA and came into regular contact with Bill W. At conferences and meetings, I often watched him seek out the newcomers off in a corner. He knew the loneliness, the shyness, and the insecurity of the alcoholic. "I'm Bill," he'd greet them, just as he had me. "I'm a drunk." I never heard him use the word "alcoholic" when referring to himself.

Bill acted and seemed like an ordinary man. But he was an extraordinary ordinary man. It didn't take me long to realize that everybody who knew him had wonderful stories to tell about Bill and his wife, Lois, who cofounded Al-Anon for the families of alcoholics. But nobody had a better story to tell than Bill himself.

He called it the "bedtime story." I heard it first in 1966 at the office Christmas party, but he had been telling it for years. We had gathered for fruit punch, cookies, and carol singing. Then, as people sat on desks and chairs, there was an expectant silence. Bill W. had been standing by the punch bowl. Now, with a slithering, corkscrew motion, he settled on the floor and started to talk.

East Dorset, Vermont, boasted fewer than 500 inhabitants when Bill W. was born there on November 26, 1895. He grew up in a home torn by arguments, which often led to Papa's going away for a few days. Bill felt that sense of some disaster lurking around the corner which many children of broken homes experience. It tormented him as he got older. When he was ten, his parents divorced and went their separate ways--something almost unheard of in 1906. Bill was left with his maternal grandparents.

To make up for his loneliness and feelings of inadequacy, Bill became an overcompensator. At age twelve, he began to show drive, ambition, competitiveness. When his grandfather read a book about Australia and told Bill that only a native of that country could make a boomerang, Bill spent six months whittling until he carved one that worked. Later, he saw that boomerang as a curse--because it proved to his ego that he had the tenacity and will to be number one at anything--music, sports, science. For example, he fixed a broken fiddle and practiced until he played first violin in the school orchestra. He was not a jock by nature, but he drove himself and became captain of the baseball team.

In nearby Manchester, a popular summer resort, Bill got to know Ebby Thatcher from Albany. The two young men became lifelong friends. In 1913, two years after meeting Ebby, Bill met and fell in love with another summer visitor, Lois Burnham, a slim, dark-haired girl from a well-to-do Brooklyn, New York, family. Lois' love for Bill was as burning and constant as his for her, a love that was to survive the vicissitudes of all his years of alcoholism. But alcoholism was still far down the road.

Bill W. did not take a single drink of alcohol until he was a twenty-two-year-old army officer stationed near New Bedford, Massachusetts, during World War I. The shy young man from Vermont felt clumsy and out of place at social gatherings--until someone gave him a Bronx cocktail, a mix of gin, sweet and dry vermouth, and orange juice.

"That barrier," he said, sighing, "that had always stood between me and other people came down. I felt I belonged, that I was part of life. What magic there was in those drinks! I could talk and be clever."

Unlike some alcoholics, who go through a slow process of increasing dependency, Bill became a blackout drinker from the start. He was one of those persons in whom alcohol powerfully alters mind and emotion. The first drink sets up a craving for a second, and the drinker has absolutely no control if he takes the first.

Bill was careful to restrain his drinking when he was with Lois and her family. He and Lois were married before he was shipped to France as a second lieutenant in the Coast Artillery. There, he discovered fine burgundy and cognac. By the time the war was over in 1918, he had proved to himself again that he was a number one man, a leader of men, a hero.

When Bill returned to the States, he and Lois lived with her parents. By day he worked as a fraud investigator for an insurance firm. At night he attended Brooklyn Law School. Soon he was fascinated by the stock market and became a successful analyst, speculator, and wheeler-dealer with clients at several brokerage houses on Wall Street.

But Bill's drinking was taking over. He was too drunk to pass his final exam at Brooklyn Law. Any disappoint-ment--or success--now became an excuse for getting drunk. And when Bill drank, he often became abusive and violent. He got into fights with waiters, cabdrivers, bartenders, strangers. In the morning, after moods of guilt and remorse, he would swear to Lois that he would never drink again. By evening, he was drunk.

For a long time, Bill and Lois were able to delude themselves. They lived in a luxurious apartment, joined country clubs. As late as 1928, Bill was making thousands of dollars and drinking much of it away. Some mornings Lois found him dead drunk, asleep, outside the apartment house.

The stock-market crash in October 1929 wrecked whatever Bill's drinking had not. Deeply in debt, he and Lois again moved in with her parents. Lois got a job at Macy's. Bill now lived to drink, because he had to drink to live. "Like other alcoholics," Bill told us, "I hid liquor like a squirrel stores nuts--in the attic, underneath flooring, in the flush box of toilets. When Lois was out working, I'd replenish my secret supply. I was now drinking for oblivion--two, even three bottles of gin a day."

By 1932, Bill had begun to fear for his sanity. "Once, in a drunken fit," he said, "I threw a sewing machine at Lois--my dear Lois. Another time I got mad at her and stormed through the house kicking out door panels, smashing walls with my fists. I remember a night when I was in such hell that I was afraid the demons inside me would propel me through the window. I dragged my mattress downstairs so I couldn't suddenly leap out."

In midsummer of 1934, Bill entered New York City's Charles B. Towns Hospital, which specialized in the treatment of alcoholism. Most people regarded alcoholics as persons who lacked willpower, character, and moral discipline. But Bill's doctor at Towns, William Duncan Silkworth, was one of the few medical men to conclude that alcoholism is a sickness. He told Lois that not many alcoholics as far down the slope as Bill was ever recovered. He was already showing signs of brain damage. Bill would have to be confined for the rest of his life.

But Bill looked so robust after the treatment that he went home. This time he stayed sober for several months. However, the morning following Armistice Day, Lois found him in a stupor, hanging on the fence outside the house. They looked at each other, and Bill saw the last gleam of hope dying in her eyes. He knew he was doomed. "Well, so be it," he thought. He resigned himself. "As long as I have my gin."

Not long afterward, Ebby Thatcher, Bill's old friend and fellow drinker, phoned. What a strange coincidence. (We in AA say that a coincidence is a miracle in which God chooses to remain anonymous.) Bill invited him over. How good it would be to share a few with his former drinking buddy.

Soon the doorbell rang. There stood Ebby--clear of eye and clean of breath. "What's got into you, Ebby?" Bill asked. Ebby grinned and replied, "I've got religion."

So Ebby had become a starry-eyed crackpot. "I figured he'd start preaching at me," Bill recalled. "He didn't. He just told me how his drinking had gotten out of hand, how he'd been in trouble with the law, and how a couple of friends had given him a place to live." One of them, Rowland Hazard, a hopeless drunk, had been in and out of sanitariums for years. He finally went to Carl Jung, the Swiss psychoanalyst. Was there no hope? Rowland asked.

"Yes," Jung had said. In rare instances, alcoholics had powerful spiritual experiences, "emotional displacements and rearrangements," which suddenly turned them around. Jung had tried for such a change in Rowland and failed.

But one day Rowland attended a meeting of an organization called the Oxford Group--where people gathered to talk about their shortcomings and to follow certain precepts. There Rowland experienced a profound change of emotions and found a direct contact with God. He stopped drinking.

When Rowland told his story to Ebby in Vermont, the first link in the chain of what would become Alcoholics Anonymous was forged. And now Ebby was carrying the message to Bill.

"Ebby told me he had to admit he was licked," Bill said. "He had to openly admit his sins, make restitution to people he had harmed, and give love without a price tag. He had to pray to whatever God he believed in-and if he didn't believe in a God, to act as if he did. Ebby told me he hadn't had a drink for six months.

"A couple of weeks later, after another bender, I went back to Towns Hospital and checked myself in. Ebby came to see me. 'Get honest with yourself,' he said. 'Talk it out with somebody else.' But I didn't want any part of this God foolishness. 'Pray to whatever God you think is out there,' Ebby said. 'That's all there was to it.'"

During one more sleepless night, Bill fell to the "very bottom," and "my stubborn pride was wiped out." He called out, "If there is a God, let him show himself! I am ready to do anything!"

Suddenly, the hospital room "lit up with a great white light." A strange ecstasy flooded through him. "A wind not of air but of spirit was blowing" was how he described it. "I felt at peace. . .and I thought, No matter how wrong things seem to be, things are all right with God and his world." Bill was discharged on December 18, 1934. He never took another drink of alcohol. But he was always at pains to reassure us that most alcoholics did not have sudden blinding experiences like his. Most of us found a God, a Higher Power of our own, very slowly.

In the beginning months of his sobriety, Bill pulled drunks out of bars and took them to Oxford Group meetings. He preached at them. Nobody stayed sober. He tried helping patients at Towns Hospital. He failed. Dr. Silk-worth told Bill to talk with drunks, not at them, and to stress the hopelessness of the disease.

Bill was getting a foothold in Wall Street again, but on a business trip to Akron, Ohio, he felt a strong urge to drink. In his hotel lobby, he looked at the directory of churches, selected one at random, and made a call. Was there any hopeless drunk he could talk to, he asked the minister. That call led to a surgeon, Dr. Robert Smith--Dr. Bob, as he is known to us--a desperate alcoholic who had tried to stop drinking and couldn't.

The two men talked for hours. Bill didn't preach or exhort. He quietly told his story, and the urge to drink passed. And, after one final binge, something happened to Dr. Bob. On June 10, 1935, he took his last drink. Alcoholics Anonymous--although it still did not have a name--began that day.

Before long, Bill was holding meetings at his home and eventually at a place on West 23rd Street. In 1938, he wrote a 164-page manuscript entitled "Alcoholics Anonymous." And that's how our Fellowship got its name. That year the book sold few copies. But the Fellowship now began to grow slowly.

The first national publicity AA received came from an article in the magazine *Liberty*, which brought 800 letters and several hundred orders for Bill W.'s book.

That article led to a piece in *The Saturday Evening Post*, published in March 1941 and entitled, "Alcoholics Anonymous." It created a sensation, and groups sprang up from Maine to California--many just based on some desperate person's reading the book and trying to put its principles into practice. Now translated into thirteen languages, the book sold over 700,000 copies in 1985, more than five million in all. And that group Bill started in Brooklyn in 1935 has now grown to approximately 35,000 groups in the United States, and 70,000 worldwide.

That was the story Bill W. told to us each year at AA headquarters.

On January 24, 1971, at the age of seventy-five, Bill died of emphysema. Two days later, the New York *Times* published his obituary and put it on page one--and the world learned his full name: William Griffith Wilson.

Epilogue. Last July [1985], I stood on a podium at Montreal's Olympic Stadium and looked out on about 50,000 faces from fifty-four of our 114 member countries, including four members from Poland, our first representatives from an Iron Curtain country. "My name is Bob P.," I said. "I'm an alcoholic. Welcome to the fifti-

eth anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous."

A roar came up from all sides, an exuberant cheering sound that went on and on. As I listened to that roar, and to the speakers that followed, I realized that each of us was paying tribute to the most unforgettable character in our changed lives: Bill W.

THE TULANE GROUP

FOUNDER'S DAY CELEBRATION

Saturday, June 10th, 2023 3:00-8:00 The Highland Club

3:00 - Volleyball, Cornhole, and Dominoes 6:00 - Potluck Dinner with Music from Uncle Helen 7:00 - History of AA, The Big Book, and The Tulane Group with Neil N.

A 50/50 Raffle will also be held!

\$\$\$ Price Changes **\$\$\$**

Here we are again announcing price increases.

We just received notice that the *Gold Plated*,

Silver & Gold Plated Medallions

AND

All Aluminum & Bronze Chips

Have increased in price as of June 1, 2023
Unfortunately, we have to pass on the increase to our customers but we will not do until we replenish our inventory.

We are doing our very best to keep our prices affordable and at the same time to be able to operate Central Office efficiently in order to

Help the Still Suffering Alcoholic!!!

Central Office Intergroup First Saturday of month

generally even numbered months at Highland Club and odd numbered months at Koala Club

COI Steering Committee Meeting AND COI Meeting First Tuesday of month

6:00pm Steering Committee & 6:40pm COIs at Central Office,

Treatment& Corrections AND PI & CPC Committees Meeting

(Public Information & Cooperation and Professional Community) Second Tuesday of month

6:00 pm at Central Office

Tri State Convention Committee Second Sunday of month 2:00pm at Central Office

District 1—Area 27 Committee Third Tuesday of month

6:30pm at The Highland Club DCM Thomas D. (318) 286-9339, blaze71023@gmail.com

Come join us and be a part of service!

STEP 6: "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg. 63
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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."

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg. 155
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Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

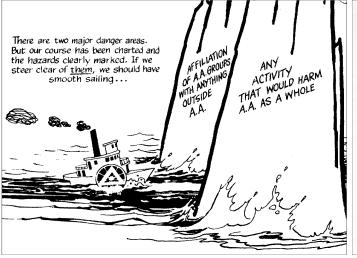
Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An A.A. group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to A.A. such as clubs or hospitals which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the A.A. name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, A.A. managers are usually preferred. But for hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside A.A.— and medically supervised. While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never to go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An A.A. group can bind itself to no one.

The A.A. Group...Where it all Began Pg 44 Reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services

TRADITION FOUR Check List

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

- 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?







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CONCEPT SIX: "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.

Thanks to all the Central Office Backers contributions for the month of March & April 2023. If you would like to be a Central Office Backer (COB) just give us a call (318-865-2172) and we will happily email, fax or mail the application to you.

March & April 2023...\$1,770.00

Thanks for all the Group Contributions...March & April 2023...\$1,612.85

 Anonymous...\$300.00
 Tulane...\$31.10

 COI Meeting...\$49.00
 Twin City...\$20.00

 Keystone...\$41.00
 White Dove...\$50.00

 Personal Recovery...\$376.00
 Winners...\$422.00

 Saturday Night Live...\$13.75
 Other...\$210.00

 Shreveport Young People...\$100.00

April Intergroup...Basic Training...\$172.48

Bill W. said "I am responsible. When anyone reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. to always to be there. And for that I am responsible."

Thanks for helping your Central Office be responsible.

Addresses for Group Contributions for 2022:

Central Office of Shreveport

2800 Youree Dr., #362A, Shreveport, LA 71104 (50%)

District 1, Area 27

P. O. Box 3924, Shreveport, LA 71133 (10%)

Louisiana Area Assembly, Inc.

7350 Jefferson Hwy., Suite 485-179 Baton Rouge, LA 70806 (10%)

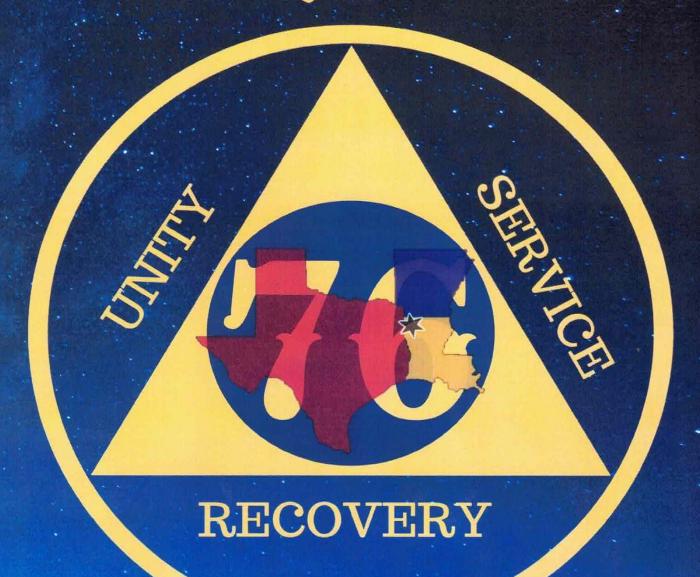
General Service Office

P. O. Box 2407, James A. Farley Station, New York, NY 10116-2407 (30%)

(Percentages are suggested based on support of four service entities) (Use your group conscience)

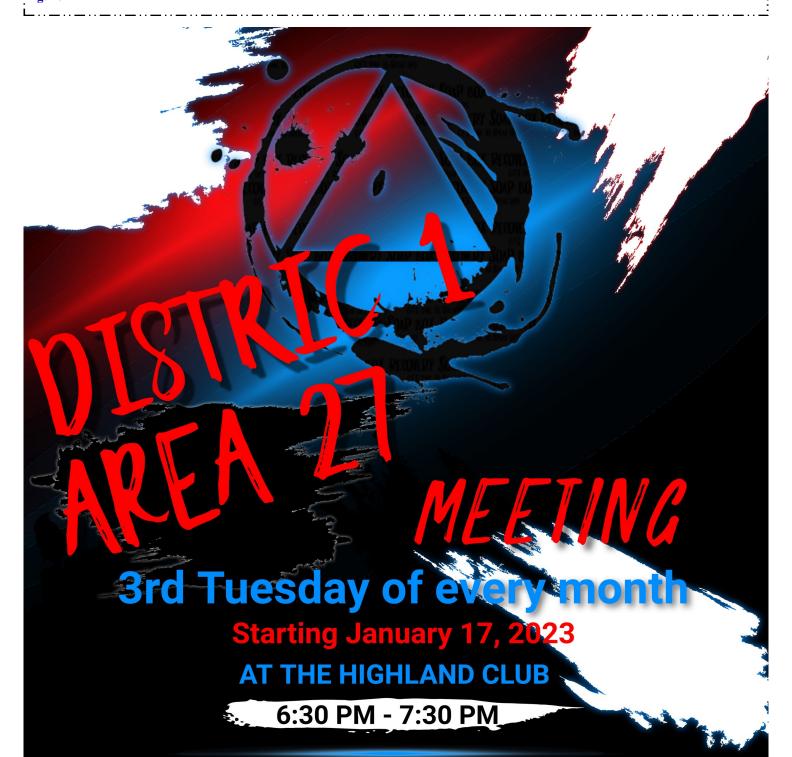
76th Annual Tri-State NOVEMBER 3-5, 2023

76th Annual Tri-State Convention Planning Committee



If you would like to participate please come to the A.A. Central Office on the 2nd Sunday of every month at 2:00 P.M.

WE HAVE SEVERAL CHAIR POSITIONS CURRENTLY NEEDING FILLED.



What is a GSR?

The General Service Representative has the job of linking his or her group with AA as a whole. The GSR represents the group at the district and area levels, bringing the groups' thought, news and problems to the District committee member and to the Delegate, who then passes them on to the conference. In return, the GSR brings back to the group the information and remedies that affect AA-unity, health, and growth. To the extent that a GSR keeps the group informed, then expresses the group conscience, only then can the Conference be assured it is acting for AA as a whole. Ideally, all groups should make every effort possible to have an alternate GSR.

The GSR "...may be the most important job in AA. By choosing its most qualified man or woman as GSR, a group helps secure its own future - and the future of AA as a whole." -Bill W.

Tulane TUESDAY SPEAKER Meetings



June 2023

June 6 Paul E.

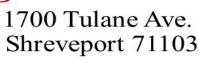
June 13 Ellen B.

June 20 Chris S.

June 27 Shelly H.

7:30pm







The Message is published to improve communications between local A.A. Groups and encourage the participation of A.A. members in services and activities that promote sobriety. Opinions expressed in letters and articles are those of the authors and do not indicate endorsement by Central Office of Shreveport Intergroup or Alcoholics Anonymous.



June 2023 Intergroup

HOSTED BY:

The Highland 5:30 Group & LAMBDA Group

DINNER @ 6pm

Live Auction @ 7pm

Speaker @7:30

50/50 RAFFLE

JUNE 3, 2023

at the Highland Club 1711 Tulane Ave Shreveport, La 71103

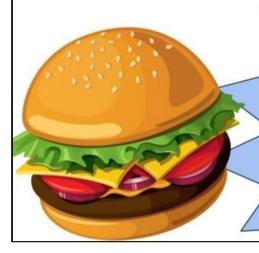
PLEASE BRING DESSERTS

Hamburgers
&
Ice Cream Cones

SPEAKER:

Dons

39 plus years





CHILI COOK-OFF

SOTO FRE TO HASTE

JUNE 10, 2025
KOALACUB 1-5PA

EVENT DETAILS

50/50 Raffle Dessert Auction Raffle Prizes OR Code



SPEAKERS: 3:30-5:00 PM BILL H. 9/19/1998

GINA H. 4/17/2006

Cating Meeting

THE STATELINE GROUP OF WASKOM

Speaker: Ryan R., No Guarantees Group

Tuesday, June 20, 2023

Eat @ 6pm, Speaker @ 7pm

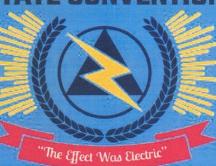
Potluck, Bring a dish or dessert to share

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1305 W. TEXAS AVE. (HWY 80 EAST) WASKOM, TX 75692

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK:
THE STATELINE GROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS - WASKOM, TX









JULY 8TH 2023

Holiday Inn South

9990 Airline Hwy Baton Rouge, LA 70816

SPEAKERS

Bobby B. | Lafayette | AA Karmen B. | Baton Rouge | Al-Anon

PANELS

FOOD, FUN, FELLOWSHIP

www.aa-lastateconvention.org

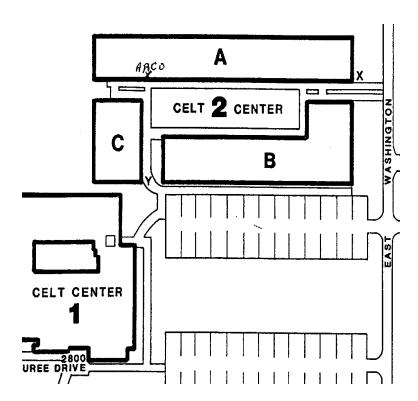


visit website to pre-register

Central Office

Please come by to check out our selection of approved AA World Services Books, Step workbooks, daily meditations, Bill W.'s Autobiography, Al-Anon books and workbooks and more. Colorful tri-plate medallions, recovery jewelry and greeting cards that make *our anniversaries memorable*.

If you don't see what you are looking for we will order it for you upon availability.



The Central Office Intergroup

The Central Office of Shreveport 2800 Youree Dr., Suite #362 Bldg A Shreveport, LA 71104-3646

