

History's Corner, March, 2015 – Tradition 1 – Unity of our Society – Vic L.

Decisions/PIO Group

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity"

By the early 1940's the fellowship began to grow in leaps and bounds because of the dedicated work of the first hundred AA's and favorable public recognition of what AA was trying to accomplish, sobriety from alcoholism. Also, person to person contact with the founders was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain.

The writing and distribution of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* in 1939, the Jack Alexander article discussing the AA society in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1941, the Cleveland experience, and the New York Rockefeller dinner in 1940 created much fervor and frantic growth in membership. Unity became a problem, a serious problem, because no rules or guidelines were in existence to show members how to organize and create a group setting.

Bill W. and the early alcoholics knew rules would not work, lectures were frowned upon, and organization was looked at with great apprehension, so the early members decided on suggested traditions to create unity within the group settings.

The first tradition is about unity and how to acquire it, and more importantly how to keep it within the working framework of the group. So what principles, ideas, functions create unity, we can cite some examples below, but certainly it would not be a comprehensive list, so let's take a look.

First, the greatest act of unity within the fellowship was the writing and agreement among the first 100 alcoholics of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, it was common to recognize prayer at each meeting, to confine our discussion in meetings to our primary purpose, which is recovery from alcoholism through the working of the 12 steps, to see a common problem, a common interest and a common solution. Also, anyone may become a member if they wish to recover from alcoholism; each group would be independent, have no affiliation with any outside interest, would remain anonymous in the public's eye and claim no public authority as the sole path to help alcoholics. The group would be supported financially by its members only, no outside funding or outside influence would be accepted, organization would be minimal or none at AA, and the group would be managed by an informed group conscious, a democracy of participating members.

The unity principles were 12 in number and ratified by the 1950 international convention in Cleveland Ohio. These have worked successfully to keep group survival over the last 65 years. Unity within the group is essential for our continued success and survival.