

INDY AA REMAINS UNDILUTED

Editor's note: This is a very hot button topic. Please see the lead article in next month's Paper for the other side of the story.

I am not a regular member of our Indianapolis Inter Group Service Committee. However, I recently had occasion to sit in for an absentee Member/friend (to give a Special Needs Update) on a night when an unusual and very important issue was presented to the Committee for consideration. On this night, our Service Committee took (or more accurately, reinforced) what many believe to be an important stand by declining to recognize a certain local 12 step group as an "Alcoholics Anonymous" group. This action was taken in accordance with the GSO guidelines regarding the role of Inter Groups in recognizing 12 step groups as "AA" groups or not. The GSO specifically advises or recommends that Inter Groups not sanction groups as "AA" groups where the group has re-written the 12 steps to fit the group's views or philosophy.

Over the past several months, the Committee members (and others) attended several of this group's meetings in order to develop an informed conscience. The group in question had clearly made its deviation from and re-writing of the AA 12 steps a matter of public knowledge, and it had affiliated itself with a national organization of a like-minded, non-AA organization (though a representative of the



group purported to announce an 11th hour decision to "un-affiliate"). The group also ignores certain of the AA Traditions (while emphasizing others) to suit its unique approach to sobriety and recovery.

None of the recent discussions within the Committee in these regards focused on whether this group's approach to sobriety is effective or not for its members; the *only* issue was whether the group was carrying the **AA** message, as described in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and as found in the AA 12 Steps. As such, your Committee had the courage to stand by its earlier determination that the group in question, while well-motivated and perhaps effective in its own right, was NOT an AA Group, by *definition*. This decision was explained during the discussions as NOT being one of exclusion of any *individuals* as members of Alcoholics Anonymous (which of course no person or body can do); only that the group itself

was not following or carrying the AA message as found in the Big Book and the 12 Steps. As such, the Committee exercised its proper role (according to the GSO) in expressing its view that the group is NOT an "AA" group, by excluding this particular group from the AA Inter Group schedule of AA Meetings and Groups. Nor will the Inter Group accept this group's attempted contributions to the Inter Group (and in fact has already been returning those to the group).

This ought not to be considered controversial - merely common sense and obvious. However, in the event and to the extent this recent development might be discussed "out there" in the coming days or weeks, it is important for all to note that nothing in the Committee's decision in any way attempts to exclude or limit ANYONE from AA membership, so long as he/she has the requisite desire to stop drinking. And nothing in the Committee's action was in any way intended to affect, either way, the right of this group to exist as its own brand of a 12 step recovery group, though it is not an "AA" 12 step group.

My personal editorial comment is "KUDOS" and "THANK YOU" to our Service Committee for a job well done in helping to keep Alcoholics Anonymous from becoming diluted in our city. Trusted Servants in action.

From Stephen U.