

JANUARY, 2000

E.V.I. News

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Emerald Valley Intergroup
(541) 342-4113

Confessions

of a Big Book Thumper

A close friend from Texas, where I got sober, told me once, "Nobody can stand a walking Big Book." It is true that there are those of us who tend to cling a bit tightly to those precious first 164 pages and many of us refuse to listen or even argue when the conversation tends to drift into non-Conference approved ways of looking at life, the universe, and sobriety. I am writing this in part to promote an understanding on the less-reactionary side, and partly to explain one alcoholic's reasons - or, if you prefer, excuses - for my hard-hat attitude on this sensitive subject.

In the old days, back before John Barleycorn became my constant companion, I was quite the bookworm. I read everything from science fiction to Plato, sure that the answers were on paper somewhere. I eventually gave up this idea and found workable solutions in my shot glass. From my present perspective it doesn't surprise me that having given up on any definite, workable way of life, I found one when I got sober via the medium I had first searched in - the printed word. That first night I went back to my pup tent (such were my lodgings at the time) and proceeded to gobble down every word of the Big Book. Every line rang as clear and true as the smile on the chairman's face that first meeting night, and not one whit of it was anything I'd ever seriously considered before. In my state of mind at the time, anything that wasn't my idea was probably a good idea. The phrases were full not just of information but of joy. I was free to be wrong, and maybe this God fellow might not be so bad after all.

It was as if I opened up my mind, cleared the shelves of all previous material installed a Big Book and a "Twelve and Twelve," and then sealed it up tight. Having found an answer that had worked for so many others, I became unwilling to tamper with it in any way. I had messed up every gift I'd ever received, and I wasn't willing to do that with this precious thing I had so graciously been given. The Book (to me, the term included both pieces of literature) was not to be trifled with. Most Big Book Thumpers (BBTs) have similar stories to relate in regard to their extreme bias. We seem to share many other traits, also.

In my trials as a BBT, I have found many recurring themes which it is entirely possible are not conducive to AA unity. Yet, I cannot help but harp on

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Intergroup

EVI Office

1262 Lawrence Street, No. 7
Eugene, OR 97401
Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm
Saturday 9:00 am - noon

Drop by for a visit!

E.V.I. News

**Emerald Valley Intergroup's Newsletter
for the A.A. Community in Lane County**

EVI News is a monthly newsletter of the Emerald Valley Intergroup. It is about, by and for the members of Alcoholics Anonymous fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article or event or notice imply endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or EVI. (Exceptions: Quotations from A.A. books or pamphlets which are reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.) EVI News is produced to support communication within the fellowship; please respect the anonymity of any A.A. member mentioned herein. EVI News reserves the right to edit any submissions for clarity, length, language, and editorial policy. Contributions gratefully accepted for consideration for publication.

Submissions due last Monday of each month. To submit articles or event information, mail them or drop them off at the EVI office c/o EVI Newsletter. Submissions can also be e-mailed to: eviaa@efn.org

Newsletter & Web Site Committee meetings are held the last Monday of each month at 6:30 pm at the E.V.I. office at 1262 Lawrence St., No. 7.

EVI Web Site

www.efn.org/~eviaa

Meeting schedules, business meeting minutes, and much more.

The little squiggle in the address is found right next to the exclamation point on the keyboard. Save a book mark or favorite and check back often!

Continued from page 1

them to the annoyance, no doubt, of my fellow members. I am sure this tendency goes back to my old need to be right, but I forget this and assume I am merely “viewing with alarm for the good of the movement” — and I have Bill’s own printed Word right here to back me up, helped along by the swift cut and accurate aim of my interpretation.

For instance, I am perfectly capable of running down a women’s group that has been helping drunks for twenty years because the Tradition says “the only requirement for membership,” etc. I will glance askance at some drunk advising another drunk to slow down on some Step he is working, interrupting their seditious little session (uninvited, of course) with some comment like: “The only pause mentioned in the Book is on page 75, third paragraph, for one hour between Steps Five and Six.” I am then free to return to my corner and recover, certain that justice has been served.

But this Big Book Thumping is not a form of hypocrisy. We BBTs are nothing if not honest Pharisees. We turn our perfectionist eyes ever inward. For instance, I am unable to watch television. I will start to turn on the tube, pick up the Book, check the first 164 pages ... nope, doesn’t mention TV. Never mind that TV hadn’t been invented when the Book was written. If Bill and Dr. Bob didn’t do it, then I had better steer clear. If I am asked to go water skiing—I’m sorry, it doesn’t say a thing about water skiing in the Book. I can get away with golf (Bill played golf), but I can’t comfortably go to even AA dances (doesn’t mention dancing).

This preoccupation with a dogmatic view of the Book seems to be based on the belief that the human intellect is of no value at all. Given my record before AA, such a belief makes sense. However, where I make my mistake is in applying this judgment to you. I’ve assumed “you wanted perfection, just as I did” (page 449). My tolerance is based, not on the certainty that you are wrong, but on the fear that you might not be—and that would mean that there is more than one valid way of seeing things. The Book leaves many questions open, so I assume that means there are no answers meant for mortal drunks.

A week before this writing I was in conversation with an alcoholic who had some five times my length of sobriety, when the man made an obvious error. I responded with — my favorite line! — “That’s not what the Book says.” His response startled me. He said, “This program is not about the Book. It’s about people. I’m telling you what I have learned.” Well! That’s a fine how-de-do! After all, I was only trying to help (forgetting that *I* had called *him*,

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asking his help on a medical problem we share which is only briefly mentioned in the Book). It is denial, or something like it, that makes me want to gloss over the fact that there are certain phrases in the Book that I tend to ignore or even protest against. Ideas such as “Our book is meant to be suggested only” are obvious balderdash. Same thing goes for “More will be revealed,” and “Here no specific rules can be given.” These sentences leave one with the distinct impression that there is leeway involved in working this program — and leeway is something I cannot afford. Give me an inch and I’ll take the interstate. And so I go my *merry*, rigid way, refusing any advice that doesn’t have a page number attached, closing my ears if I hear something that sounds “tainted” by pop psychology or spiritual hedonism. “Straight is the way and narrow is the gate.” Sobriety is the “eye of the needle.”

It is not my intention to portray BBTs as unfeeling automatons, spouting truisms they’ve never experienced, harping at those around them to do things their way, and running training camps for bleeding deacons. The truth is that BBTs stay sober. They are emphatic about the Book because it works and has worked for them consistently. I see this around me and have for some time.

3 I, of course, had role models (having never had an original thought) and picked those who had what I lacked. I was inconsistent, undependable, given to intellectual and emotional flights of fancy, and totally without a conception of a God who could help me. The people I saw who seemed to have solved these problems were those people who began sentences with the phrase, “The Book says... “ So I talked to them at length, and they told me that I, too, could recover, just as they had.

It may be that you have someone like me in your group. If that’s the case, there is no need to fear him or pick up a resentment. If such a person corners you and patiently tries to explain how something you said at a meeting was wrong, or some opinion you expressed is sure to get you drunk, it isn’t necessary to choose between running and fighting as your only viable options. Just quietly say “Thank you, but I don’t have to be perfect today.” If he’s like I am, this response is sure to put his tail firmly in between his legs, forcing him to retreat and lick his wounds until he musters the gumption to apologize. And remember — he is a valuable asset to the group, for should anyone need to know where to find something in the Book, he is there, ready, willing and anxious, with page numbers on tap, to fulfill his function as a Big Book Thumper.

Anonymous, Athens, Alabama

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People

TREASURER

Treasurer / Gary R.	485-7777
Vice Treasurer / Mel M.	345-4450
Bookkeeper / Wendy W.	431-6920
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VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Bill B.	689-5421
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LITERATURE

Wendy W.	431-6920
Inventory / Jim P.	684-0619

ANSWERING SERVICE

Johanna M.	302-9086
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ARCHIVIST/HISTORIAN

Linda	345-5827
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PUBLIC INFORMATION (PI)

Barney	726-6980
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COOPERATION WITH PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC)

Angel	431-4924
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ACTIVITIES

Linda L.	345-5827
Don H.	782-4794

E.V.I. NEWSLETTER

Chair/Matt D.	302-6865
Vice/Adrian M.	349-1275
Website/Michael W.	343-2566

E.V.I. SPEAKER MEETING

Chair/John G.	741-7163
Vice/Al D.	345-2058

OUTREACH

Chair / Peggy W.	349-9864
	pwebb@oregon.uoregon.edu

HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS (H&I)

Chair / Harold B.	342-1557
	barton@continent.com
Secretary / Gus P.	343-4815

COOPERATION WITH TREATMENT FACILITIES (CTF)

Gus P.	343-4815
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HOSPITALS

Susan J.	895-4421
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CORRECTIONS

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JAIL

Coordinator / Karl B.	345-7466
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	edrogers@efn.org

Vice-Chair/Chris H.	345-7405
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Secretary/Dina.	345-8750
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Treasurer/Gary R.	485-7777
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At-Large/Michael W.	343-2566
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	mlwebb@pond.net
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At-Large/Debbie M.	349-0885
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At-Large/Bill N.	747-7486
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	rubberspur@aol.com
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At-Large/Dann L.	484-2330
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Who is sitting next to you?

I know who you are. You are "X" who attends the ABC Meeting at the XYZ Club where AAs meet in Anywhere, U.S.A.

I saw you there the other night at the eight o'clock meeting. I don't know how long you've been sober, but I know you've been coming around for a while because you spoke to a lot of people who knew you.

I wasn't one of them.

You don't know who I am. I wandered into your meeting place alone the other night, a stranger in a strange town. I got a cup of coffee, paid for it, and sat down by myself.

You didn't speak to me.

Oh, you saw me. You glanced my way, but you didn't recognize me, so you quickly averted your eyes and sought out a familiar face.

I sat there through the meeting.

It was okay, a slightly different format but basically the same kind of meeting as the one I go to at home.

The topic was gratitude. You and your friends spoke about how much AA means to you. You talked about the camaraderie in your meeting place. You said how much the people there had helped you when you first came through the door -- how they extended the hand of friendship to make you feel welcome, and asked you to come back.

And I wondered where they had gone, those nice people who made your entrance so welcoming and so comfortable.

You talked about how the newcomer is the life blood of AA. I agree, but I didn't say so. In fact, I didn't share in your meeting. I signed my name in the book that was passed around, but the chairperson didn't refer to it. He only called on those people in the room whom he knew.

So who am I! You don't know, because you didn't bother to find out. Although yours was a closed meeting, you didn't even ask if I belonged there.

It might have been my first meeting. I could have been full of fear and distrust, knowing AA wouldn't work any better than anything else I'd tried, and I would have left convinced that I was right.

I might have been suicidal, grasping at one last straw, hoping someone would reach out and pull me from the pit of loathing and self-pity from which, by myself, I could find no escape.

I might have been a student with a tape recorder in my pocket, assigned to write a

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AA Meetings

New:

7:00-8:00 PM Friday
New Beginnings Group
Veneta
25133 Broadway,
Valley Methodist Church

7:30 PM Tuesday
Down the Drain
Drain, OR., A St.,
United Methodist Church

7:00-8:00 PM Monday
Get Well Group
Eugene (WC) (O) 255 Maxwell Rd.,
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

6:00-7:30 PM Wednesday
Wednesday Womens Group
Eugene (WC) (C) 340 Blair Blvd.,
JESCO

M oved:

5:30-6:30 PM Monday
Old Time AA
Springfield (C) (X) (WC)
418 N. "A" St,
First Christian Church

8:00-9:30 PM Tuesday
Old Time AA
Springfield (C) (X) (WC)
418 N. "A" St,
First Christian Church

8:00-9:30 PM Sunday
Big Book Study Group
Springfield (O) (S) (BB)
5334 Main St. VFW building

Gone but not forgotten:

7:30 Wednesday
Beginners
Cottage Grove

6:00 PM Monday
Light at the end of the tunnel
Vida Fire Station

6:00 PM Thursday
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Cottage Grove

7:30 AM Sunday
First Shot
Cottage Grove Alano Club

EVI Service and Fellowship Calender

All events at EVI office and in the PM unless noted.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Steering Committee 5:30 Spkr Mtg Committee 7:30 779 V St. Spfd	District 20 (GSR) 7pm Creswell Libr. Lisa B 302-9255 District 33 (GSR) 6:30 Woodland Apt Tom S. 686-8388 Answering/12 St Johanna 302-9086	District 19 (GSR) 6:30 Bruce H. 302-0501			Outreach Committee 10:00 AM EVI Speakers Meeting 7:30 989 Country Club Road Eug.
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	EVI Business Meeting 6:30		District 6 (GSR) 6:30 Larry W. 334-3609			Cottage Grove Alano Club Speakers Mtg 8:00 PM 519 E. Main St. C.G.
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Public Information Committee 6:30	Office Volunteer Meeting 5:30	Activities Committee 7:00	Cooperation Prof. Committee 6:30		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	Newsletter Committee 6:30		H & I Committee 6:00			
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
	Literature Committee 6:30	Steering Committee 5:30				

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Business meeting

Contributions '99

As Bill Sees It	75.00
Attitude Adjustment	2046.82
Autumn Group	465.00
Brown Bag Group	193.44
Cottage Grove Gratitude	76.00
Cottage Grove Noon	46.21
Courage to Change	30.00
District 20	57.87
Downtown AM group	2,353.49
Drop The Rock	132.66
EVI business meeting	208.57
Fireside group	25.50
First Monroe Group	5.00
Franklin Fellowship	30.00
Franklin Monday Night	30.00
Freedom Of Choice	146.00
Friday Back Road Bunch	15.00
Friday Big Book Study	48.11
Friday Physical Awakening	100.00
Friday Night Stag	100.00
Friday night young peoples	195.77
Gratitude Group	215.02
Harrisburg Group	50.00
Last Chance Study Group	126.94
Last House on the Block	20.00
Life By The Book	10.00
Lowell Lakeside	40.00
McKenzie Bridge	174.55
Monday Mens Stag	150.00
Monday Night Cont. Study	10.00
Monday Night New Group	27.46
New Freedom	1083.00
New Freedom 2	787.84
Old Time AA	35.00
Physical, Mental, Spiritual	75.00
Plug in the Jug	10.00
Saturday Night Beginners	70.00
Saturday Step	180.00
Sober Awakenings	1,260.00
Sponsorship	25.00
Stairway to Sobriety	60.00
Sunday Morning Big book	510.00
Sponsorship	125.00
Sunday Women's Step Stdy	102.00
Sunlight of the Spirit	15.00
Sutherlin Group	131.80
There Is A solution	141.96
Thursday Candlelight	10.00
Thursday Night Group	100.00
Thursday Voyagers Group	84.12
Tuesday Beginners	30.00
Unknown	448.25
We Need Each Other	200.00
Wednesday Mens Noon	50.00
Wednesday Men's Stag	160.00
Who am I Group	20.00
Womans Road to Recovery	300.00
Womens Bedrock	85.00
Women's How It Works	40.00
Women In the Solution	50.00
Total Contributions/Group	12,403.38
fundraising:	
EVI Speakers Meeting	1500.00
Faithful Fivers/Individual	2,109.71

December 13, 1999

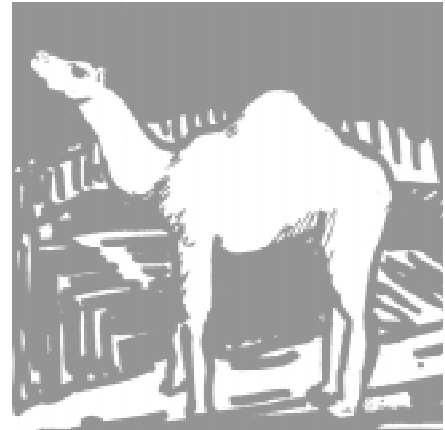
In the excitement of our December meeting, or perhaps the holiday season, the minutes slipped from the grasp of our trusty secretary Al, so the following is more of a recap.

Meeting opened with the serenity prayer, minutes from the November meeting read and approved. All introduced themselves and a quorum count of EVI reps was taken and we had 20 (1 short). It was decided to hear financial and committee reports and hope that another rep or two wandered in.

Financial report - contributions down a little for November, at \$717.55 group, and 218.45 individual (mostly Faithful Fiver), but net income was positive, and in general finances look better than they did a year ago. Thank you all for supporting Intergroup. We heard committee reports from Office Volunteer, Literature, Diverter, Public Information, Activities, News, Speaker Meeting, Outreach, and H & I.

By the time reports were done we had a quorum with 23 representatives present and proceeded with elections.

The slate included Vice-Chair, 2 At-Large Steering Committee positions, Vice-Treasurer and Secretary. As Per our new Bylaws, we used written nomination forms, written ballots and the third legacy procedure (as outlined in the Service Manual). A short explanation follows: On the first ballot, if a candidate has 2/3 of the vote they are elected, if not a revote is held. If one candidate does not have 2/3, the candidates with less than 1/5 of the total vote are dropped and a revote is held. If no candidate has 2/3, those with less than 1/3 are dropped. On the forth ballot, if no candidate has 2/3, the top two remain and the chair asks for a motion for a 5th ballot, if that is not proposed, seconded and passed, the names of the two remaining candidates go into a hat for a draw.



24 hours

The following positions were filled: Vice-Chair by Chris H. Vice-Treasurer by Mel. M. At large Steering by Michael W. and Dann L., and Secretary by Dina. Two of those elections went to the hat, so it was a lengthy process, but worth it. We had good candidates and tight races, and it was all kinda fun.

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paper on how AA works -- someone who shouldn't have been permitted to sit there at all but could have been directed to an open meeting to learn what I needed to know.

Or I could have been sent by the courts, wanting to know more, but afraid to ask.

It happens that I was none of the above. I was just an ordinary drunk with a few years of sober living in AA who was traveling and was in need of a meeting.

My only problem that night was that I'd been alone with my own mind too long. I just needed to touch base with my AA family.

I know from past experience that I could have walked into your meeting place smiling, stuck out my hand to the first person I saw and said, "Hi. My name is -- . I'm an alcoholic from -- ."

If I'd felt like doing that, I probably would have been warmly welcomed. You would have asked me if I knew Old So-and-so from my state, or you might have shared a part of your drunkalog that occurred in my part of the country.

Why didn't I! I was hungry, lonely, and tired. The only thing missing was angry, but three out of four isn't a good place for me to be.

So I sat silently through your meeting, and when it was over I watched enviously as all of you gathered in small groups, talking to one another the same way we do in my home town.

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You and some of your friends were planning a meeting after the meeting at a nearby coffee shop. By this time I had been silent too long to reach out to you. I stopped by the bulletin board to read the notices there, kind of hanging around without being too obvious, hoping you might ask if I wanted to join you, but you didn't.

As I walked slowly across the parking lot to my car with the out-of-state license plates you looked my way again. Our eyes met briefly and I mustered a smile. Again, you looked away.

I buckled my seat belt, started the car, and drove to the motel where I was staying.

As I lay in my bed waiting for sleep to come, I made a gratitude list. You were on it, along with your friends at the meeting place. I knew that you were there for me, and that I needed you far more than you needed me. I knew that if I had needed help, and had asked for it, you would have gladly given it. But I wondered ... what if I hadn't been able to ask?

I know who you are, Do you remember me?

Fran D., New Orleans Louisiana

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What's New

Conventions:

Winter Holidays 2000

"A New Beginning"

Feb. 11th - 13th , 2000

Bellevue Hilton - Bellevue, WA.

For more info call :

(425)644-0105 or E-mail :

hmkinsella@usa.net

Shasta Winterfest

"We Are Not A Glum Lot"

January 28th, 29th, & 30th 2000

Red Lion Hotel , Redding CA.

For more info call Sam Cone at

(530)222-5942

Sobriety 2000

"A Journey not a Destination"

February 4, 5 , 6 , 2000

Burbank Airport Hilton

Burbank, CA.

For more info call the Infoline:

(818)734-0383 or E-mail at:

www.sfvaaconvention.com

Winter Conference

"USA & CANADA"

January 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th

International Inn

1808 Wellington Ave. at Berry

Winnipeg , Manitoba

For More info call:

(204)786-4801

International Conv!!

"Pass it on- Into the 20th Century!!"

International Convention

Alcoholics Anonymous

June 29th - July 2nd , 2000

Minneapolis , Minnesota

For more info call :

(805)654-0110

Oregon Area Quarterly

"Nonsense"

February 18th - 20 , 2000

Reston Inn , Medford

2300 Crater Lake Ave.

For more info call Ron D. at

(541)779-1758

Also check with us at our

Website for more details :

www.efn.org/~eviaa

Should EVI relocate?

The EVI office lease will be up for renewal at the end of April. The question is shall we stay or shall we go? We have a relocation committee looking into the question, but would like some feedback from our AA community.

There are pro's and con's to moving the EVI office:

Pro:

1. Many of us feel that we could find a lower rent, and/or a better space than the current situation. There is a lot of smaller office space on the market now, and we may be able to do better (in terms of rent, size or both) elsewhere.
2. If we were to find a place that was not subdivided as we are now, we may well be able to hold the monthly business meeting there too. This would not only save the rent of the church space for the meeting, but would be a lot more convenient for all. Our EVI

reps would be able to pick up fliers, we would have a copy machine and computer handy, and anything else we might need close at hand. This could be quite helpful

EVI has changed a lot in the last few years, and there is something to be said for a fresh start in a new place. It could help us get past some of the old struggles and on to a more cheerful, fun and effective working environment. Visitors would have a clear sense that things are not the same.

Con:

1. Folks know where EVI is. We have been there a long time.
2. It would be quite a chore to move, and would cost something.

There may be more arguments for staying put, We couldn't think of any. Any decision on moving the office will

be made with the approval of our EVI representatives of the advisability of doing so, with the Steering Committee approval of the criteria, price and lease terms, etc. And in accordance with the recommendations of our relocation committee. But before we do anything, we want to hear from you. What do you see as the issues, and should we stay or should we go? Please send a letter to the EVI News, drop us an email at eviaa@efn.org or talk to any of the Steering Committee, Relocation Committee, or your EVI representative. We hope to have a Sharing Session on this topic in the near future, and will keep you posted.

Michael W.

Member At Large, Steering Committee

Dann L.

*Member At Large, Steering Committee,
Chair, Relocation Committee*