

January 2012

THE MESSENGER

Middle Tennessee Central Intergroup

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You Call This Unity?

At a recent AA forum, I heard some distressing news. A member reported that some old-timers in his area are going "underground" because they don't like the changes in AA and are frustrated by the problems. These underground meetings are open only to some AAs and allegedly have attendance requirements, such as having to be five years sober.

Just last night, a young man from my home group informed me that a similar practice has started in my area. Some AAs are starting meetings in their homes and "tapping" certain AAs to attend. The young man from my group said that he knew he didn't come from the right socioeconomic group to get "tapped."

Both of these instances caused me to reflect on our First Tradition, and to remember how I got introduced to its principles.

Early in my AA life, my sponsor insisted that I choose and commit myself to a home group. "You need to be part of a group," she said, "in order to grow in sobriety and learn the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous." So that's how One Parkway became my original home group.

It was there I learned that "our common welfare" referred not only to my group, but to AA as a whole. I was told that it was important for me to learn all I could about AA and how it functioned. I was directed to a wide range of AA literature and encouraged to participate in a variety of AA activities.

Every month before our business meeting, we held a Traditions meeting. Regardless of which Tradition we happened to discuss, almost without fail, someone would bring up Tradition One at the business meeting. In fact there was one old-timer who would always say, with much vigor, "If you can't get Tradition One, then, you can't get any of them." There was an amen corner that would chime in, "You're right!" Then we would go about trying to figure out what was or was not good for our common welfare.

There was always talk about commitment. My group taught me that being a committed group member meant putting the welfare of the group before my own; they said learning to do this would ensure my sobriety and therefore my life. Most often, my group members were gentle in teaching me these lessons, but now and then when my ego got out of hand and I decided to do things my way (like taking it upon myself to change the group's format), they loved the group enough and me enough to straighten me out on the spot and in no uncertain terms.

"Unity" was as difficult a concept for me to understand as was "common welfare." I thought it meant that we should never disagree or argue about anything. Once at my group's business meeting, in the midst of one of our usual heated debates, I angrily voiced this expectation. "You call this unity?" I shouted across the table at one of our old-timers. He smiled at me, looking rather amused, and said, "This is enthusiasm. We're arguing about how we can better carry the message." And so I was also taught that inherent, in Tradition One, is the idea that we each need to be willing to do our part for our common good and that we can only do that through participation.

The real demonstration of unity, I came to understand, was evidenced by what happened in the process of, and after, all that heated debate. Everyone got a chance to be heard. The group struggled to arrive at decisions that were for the "common welfare" of the group and AA as a whole. We held hands and recited the Serenity Prayer in unison at the end, knowing that, despite our disagreements, we were each coming back to the group and to AA because we needed it to survive. We each had a responsibility to make sure AA continued to be there for the next alcoholic coming in the door.

At times, I have fallen short of the ideals implicit in Tradition One. Sometimes it's simply because I don't

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**THE NEW MEETING DIRECTORIES ARE AVAILABLE.
PLEASE CONTACT THE CENTRAL OFFICE FOR INFORMATION.**

Central Office—176 Thompson Lane, Suite G-1, Nashville, TN 37211, Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm, Sat, 9am-4:30pm, Hot Line (615) 831-1050, (800) 559-2252 (outside local calling area), Business—(615) 832-1136, Fax—(615) 834-5982, email—mtcoa@aol.com, Website—www.aanashville.org

Not everyone at the bar thought his suicide joke was funny

When I look back at the last few months of my drinking, I get chills. Those months were horrible, and I was miserable. I had come to know the four hideous horsemen—terror, bewilderment, frustration, and despair. I could not stop drinking. I drank from the moment I woke up in the morning until I fell down at night. I was drunk all the time. I was so depressed, angry and shame-ridden. I could not look at myself in the mirror. I could not stand my own reflection. Facing the reality of my train-wreck life was too painful when sober—and barely tolerable when drunk. I was without hope and had reached the end of my rope. I had only one option left: I needed to end my life. I lacked the courage to take the step, but I would ponder it most of the time. I could no longer go on like this.

On Sunday, November 25, 2007, with some borrowed money in my pocket, I arrived at my neighborhood watering hole at approximately 11 a.m. Most everyone knew me at the bar. I had been there a gazillion times. I ordered a shot of whiskey and a bottle of beer. The Minnesota Vikings were preparing to play the New York Giants at noon. The Giants were favored.

The Vikings beat up the Giants pretty good that day. I stayed at the bar, I drank, and I watched the whole game. I stayed and drank through the 3 p.m. game too. I was well-oiled again by the time the Sunday night game started.

I began explaining to all my drinking acquaintances at the bar about my decision to end my life. I became a drunken philosopher as I described the benefits of suicide and the hopelessness of life itself. With a certain slur of my speech, I rationalized out loud that to end one's own life is not necessarily a negative event. I went on to explain that in some cultures, suicide was thought of as a noble act. My drinking pals listened and laughed at my rant because they knew I was at least as drunk as they were. I still have a twinge of shame when I recall this toasted philosopher event. I was an embarrassing, blubbing idiot. It was truthfully what I had become.

At approximately 9:30 p.m. I bid all my drinking buddies and buddies a final farewell as I raised my whiskey in an act of false pride and self-absorption. I finished my drink and left the bar to go home.

It was a cold evening when I arrived at my house. I entered and moved toward the junk drawer in my kitchen. I pulled a flashlight and a box cutter from the drawer. I filled a glass with vodka and walked into the backyard of my home. I sat down behind my garage. I did not want to kill myself in the house because I wanted to avoid the mess it would make.

I lit a cigarette, took a big pull from the glass of vodka and began to roll up my sleeves. There I sat, on the lawn

of my home behind my garage, in the dark. I had a box cutter, a half pack of cigarettes, a flashlight, vodka and a true desire to leave this world. I planned to open the veins in my arms and let my life flow out. I knew there was going to be some pain but I believed it would be short-lived. The trauma no longer concerned me at all.

The thought of not being alive anymore had become so attractive to me. I began thinking that when the folks who wanted to foreclose on my home called me the next day, I would be dead. When the folks who wanted to repossess my car called me the next day, I would no longer exist. The fact that my water had been turned off by the city would no longer concern me. I wouldn't need the water. I wouldn't have to vomit blood anymore. I wouldn't have to face another day of terror, bewilderment, frustration, fear and shame.

Suddenly, I began to hear voices and radio communications in my backyard. I could see flashlights flashing around and more voices. The voices and the flashlights drew closer. I was spotted. These folks shined their flashlights into my eyes. They introduced themselves as members of the police department. They asked, "Sir, are you planning to hurt yourself tonight?" I sat there on the lawn with my sleeves rolled up, a box cutter in my hand, my flashlight lit, and my glass of vodka, and I replied, "No."

I think these officers had some detective skills because they did not believe me. They were very nice to me as they explained that I would be going with them, and there were three of them so I chose to comply with their request.

The policemen took me to the hospital against my will. I do not remember the trip. I do not remember arriving at the hospital. The next event I remember is waking up in the emergency room with this guy sitting near my gurney. I asked him what was going on. He told me that he was just there to keep an eye on me.

As the morning began, I was moved out of emergency to a room against my will. Nurses were putting pads all around me. I asked them what the padding was for. They told me it was to safeguard against seizures. They applied monitoring leads to my chest. The nurses were all very nice to me. An aide stayed with me 24 hours a day to make sure I stayed put. I was confined to my room.

Then the psychologists, doctors, psychiatrists, and social workers came to see me. They all had long lists of questions for me, like: Do you drink every day? Do you ever drink alone? Have you ever had a drink in the morning? Have you ever had a blackout? Do you ever drink more than what you initially planned? Do you ever gulp your drinks? I answered yes to all of them.

After about three days, a worker from the county came to visit me with more questions. He recommended that I go

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to an alcohol treatment facility. I thanked him, but explained I was not interested. I did not share with him that I really wanted to go home and have a drink. No cocktails were being served at the hospital. The county representative explained that if I did not agree to go into treatment, the county would be forced to begin commitment proceedings immediately, so I agreed—against my will. They had some more questions for me. The people were great. I met some folks who were every bit as crazy as I was. I wanted to drink every day but stayed dry in spite of my obsession.

After 30 days in treatment, I began looking forward to getting back to the real world where I could get beer and whiskey. My obsession to drink was still very strong. Unfortunately, the citizens of my county required me to enter a halfway house, where they tested my urine and my breath every day, against my will. There were too many rules to remember, so they had to write them out for us. One was a requirement to attend a minimum of two AA meetings per week and to get a sponsor. I thought that was just ridiculous.

I remember my first meeting like it was yesterday. I took the bus to an AA club because I had no car. The bus dropped me off 30 minutes before the start of the meeting. I wasn't happy with that. Now I needed to figure out how to burn up 30 minutes before the stupid meeting. It turned out there were a few others who arrived early, although I did not see them on the bus. They welcomed me. They were very kind. They asked about me as if they were interested. They taught me how to make coffee for 30 people. They gave me a Big Book. I was afraid of going to AA although I am not sure why. These folks were not scary. They were very nice. The meeting was good, although my emotions were on a hair trigger and it was difficult for me to hold back the tears when the discussion got serious. They told me it was going to get better, but I did not believe it. When the meeting was over, the members told me to keep coming back as if they really meant it.

I came back every week to this meeting and another meeting on a different night. After a couple of weeks I asked this guy if he would be my sponsor.

He said yes, but I would have to call him every day. So every day, I called my new sponsor, against my will. Our discussions each day were sometimes very short and sometimes very long, but I got used to this new regimen without much difficulty. I am happy to report that my

sponsor is a lunatic just like me, so we get along very well. He explained to me that his desire to drink had been taken from him. He no longer craved alcohol. I found this difficult to believe. He said that his obsession was taken away as the result of the program of recovery that was outlined in the Big Book. I began putting these principles into practice. I had a mustard seed of willingness, a little bit of honesty, and a smidgen of open-mindedness. The halfway house had many other rules. It was required that I get a job, so I began interviewing and eventually landed one.

I cannot tell you when it happened to me. I don't know the exact date, but I know that sometime before I got my six-month medallion, my obsession to drink was gone. God was accomplishing things in my life that I was completely unable to do on my own. My perception of the world and my fellow man began to change dramatically. I was relieved of the self-centered, self-absorbed, self-destructive, and self-loathing behavior that had been my prison. I began to embrace my past as my greatest asset, and I began to serve others with enthusiasm and love. I happily attend five meetings per week. I really like the members. They have become true friends of mine.

On the evening of November 25, 2007, someone from the bar had called the police to tell them I was planning to harm myself. I don't know who it was. I have asked for their name. The people at the bar that night know the individual but they will not share it with me. I suppose I will never know who made the call, but I am very grateful the police took me to the hospital against my will. I understand why folks get so low that they want to end their lives. I also understand that once this disease is treated, we can realize what an incredible and precious gift life really is.

Today I have come to know peace of mind, serenity and joy. I experience these things every day. Four years ago I would have been hard-pressed to even define these words. Today they are part of my daily living. In the past four years I have done many things against my will, and I have come to the conclusion that my will is no good for me unless it is in line with God's. I am very fortunate that, by God's grace, I have been given this gift of true happiness and freedom, and it all came to me against my will.

—Allen K., St. Cloud, Minn
Reprinted with permission: AAGrapevine

Cured!

I was cured.

Three years later I found there is no cure.

I had forgotten I am an alcoholic. . .

I've learned once more that the decision as to whether I lead a life of wrong steps and steady declination of reputation and character, or a life whereby I gain respect and consequently regain my own self-respect, boils down to whether or not I take that first drink.

- Thank You For Sharing, pp. 62-63

From the desk of Charles C.

As the New Year begins, I have many thoughts about resolutions. I remember how many times I resolved to give up many vices, including drinking. The night before made the resolution easy on the morning after, but hard to do as a day of leisure unfolded. Swearing off drinking occurred many days other than New Year's Day, also including every day after I attended my first AA meeting in 1986. Everything I heard resonated with me from that first meeting. Over the next 12 months, I only attended about six AA meetings, but "hid out" in Adult children of Alcoholics (ACOA) and Al-Anon. The more I learned about the family disease and the alcoholic personality, the more I had to admit, "I'm an alcoholic".

After drinking beer at a Jackson (Mississippi) Mets baseball game in 1987, I stopped for six months. Then when an old drinking buddy came to town, we headed to Harvey's Tavern on Lakeland Drive. He ordered me a scotch (Chivas Regal, of course) and water, I took one sip and said, "Gary, I can't drink this!" He laughed, wondering why. I told him, and he understood. I have not had a drink since that day, December 9, 1987.

Since that day, I have learned many things. I vividly remember Al H. saying that somewhere between the 3rd Step and the 12th Step, my decisions would become commitments. That means a whole lot fewer empty resolutions. Today, I know that a decision only, is only a decision. A commitment means I take action on that decision, and rather than changing my mind, I make the best of that decision, learn from it, and possibly make a different decision next time.

If I decide to exercise more in 2012, I have to commit to a time, a place, a method and a way to measure my commitment. Commitments are shared with someone, carefully considered and then shared regularly. Getting a sponsor, for example, can't be just a decision. It requires all the consideration, planning and monitoring as any other commitment. Committing to saving means making more or spending less, not just hoping or even praying about it. I have to decide to commit, but like that frog on a lily pad, I am left high and dry in the hot sun until I jump.

I have finally learned that getting married has to be a commitment, not just a decision. In my case, that commitment is like the above: "learn from it, and make a different decision next time". Learning from past mistakes requires a commitment to admit when I am wrong and change. Do you see an outline of the Steps here? "The power to carry it out" comes from changing our decisions into commitments.

Well, this sure has helped me, so now I want to decide if I want to make any New Year's commitments. I am writing this on December 26, 2011, so I have a few days to seriously pray, write and share those commitments. By the time anyone else reads this, it will be 2012. If you made any New Year's resolutions, think about making them commitments, not just empty promises. This is all about The 12th Step and practicing principles. One of those principles is truth and sharing the commitment to sobriety and sober living. Happiness is not an accident; it is intentional.

HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!

Gratitude

One exercise I try to practice is to try for a full inventory of my blessings
and then for a right acceptance of the many gifts that are mine --
both temporal and spiritual.

Here I try to achieve a state of joyful gratitude.

When such a brand of gratitude is repeatedly affirmed and pondered,
it can finally displace the natural tendency to congratulate myself
on whatever progress I may have been enabled to make in some areas of living.

I try hard to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful heart cannot entertain great conceits.

When brimming with gratitude, one's heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love,
the finest emotion that we can ever know.

- As Bill Sees It, p. 37

January 2012

MEETING CHANGES / MEETING ADDITIONS

37160 Keep It Simple Fairlane Church Mon & Tues 7:30pm OD	37046 Limitless Lode College Grove United Methodist Church 8568 Horton Hwy Tues—7pm	38562 Gainesboro, Tn Old Time AA First UMC 302 S Main St Fri—8pm OD	37129 Serenity Group 435 S. Molloy Land Murfrees- boro, TN Sat—2:30p OD/GAY
37040 Happy Destiny Clarksville Fri-Noon 1st Christian Church	37203 WANGL Out Central Cultural Comm Center 1709 Church St Fri- 6:30 pm	37388 Drop the Rock 106 N Anderson St Tullahoma Sat—8:30a Men/ Lit	Brentwood BB Study Sun—7p Now 60 minutes
37040 The Hut Sango Pizza Hut Clarksville, TN Tues-7a Thurs-7a	37067 Cool Springs New- comers Bradford Health Services 1897 General George Patton Dr Franklin, TN Wed-7p CD/Beg	37076 Hermitage Women's Group Hermitage United Methodist Church 205 Belinda Dr Mon—Noon OD	37080 Joelton Meeting Thur—7p OD
37138 805 Group Old Hickory United Meth- odist 1216 Hadley Thurs—8p Speaker OD	37209 Made a Decision Holy Trinity 6727 Charlotte Pike Tues—OD/Gay	37115 Women's Serenity Recovery Now meets Mon—5:30p OD	Portland Unity Fri-6:30p

MOVED

37034
New Life
103 S Horton Pky
Chapel Hill

37064
Garden Variety
St Andrew Lu-
theran
908 Murfreesboro
Rd
Tues / Thurs 7:15
CD/LIT

Brentwood Full
Moon
Otter Creek Church
409 Franklin Rd

37034
Chapel Hill New
Life
Community Baptist
Church
5216 Nashville
Hwy
Chapel Hill, TN

CANCELLED MEETINGS

37212
Ex-Offenders

38501
Cookeville
Weekend Recovery
Thurs—6pm

38501
Cookeville
Weekend Recov-
ery

42223
The Power of Now

38570
Livingston
Tues or Fri

37015
OISVAL Valley
View Ashland City
Fri—8pm

38556
Jamestown
Tues—7pm

37027
Turning Point
Group
Brentwood United
Methodist Annex
Al-Anon
Tues-7pm

38501
Cookeville
Ladies First

37217
Love & Laughter
Thurs—8:15

37212
Natchez Trace
Wed—11am

An elderly man is stopped by the police around 2 a.m. and is asked where he is going at this time of night.

The man replies, "I am on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying up late."

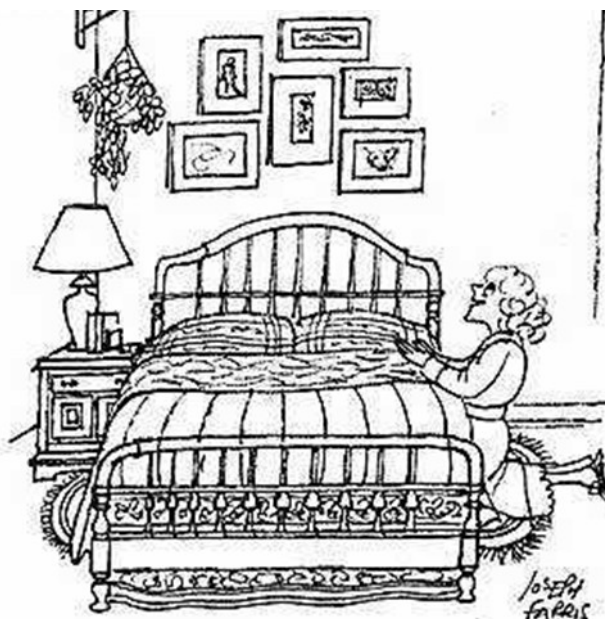
The officer then asks, "Really? Who is giving that lecture at this time of night?"

The man replies, "That would be my wife."

Ring out the old, ring in the new

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson. (1849 --> 50)



"Happy New Year to you!"

(Continued from page 1)

stop and think long enough to realize the ramifications of my actions. Last summer my husband (also an AA) and I took a cruise that docked in a small town in Mexico. A nice lady whom we had met on board ship at a "Friends of Bill W." meeting (attended by alcoholics and non-alcoholics as well) told us about an AA meeting in the town. I knew the lady was not an alcoholic and that she had attended the "Friends of Bill W." meeting because of a problem other than alcoholism. But partly because I didn't want to hurt her feelings and partly because it was convenient for me, I accepted her offer to take us to the local meeting and attend it with us. I could have talked with her about AA and our Traditions, but I chose not to.

At the local meeting that night, my husband and I found out that the group was really struggling for survival. It was the only AA group in town and its few members had never been exposed to AA anywhere else. They were so grateful to have AAs from the United States, where it all started. There was an American woman there who had gotten sober in this small town and a man who was in his first few months of sobriety. They didn't know the woman with us wasn't an alcoholic and called on her to share. She shared at length on a problem that had nothing to do

with alcoholism. During her sharing, a local drunk came and stood in the doorway, apparently approaching AA for the first time. With horror, I realized that without thinking I had put my needs and desires first. What seems like an insignificant action could in reality mean signing the death certificate of the alcoholic who still suffers.

The experience in Mexico reminded me that, like the Steps, the Traditions require vigilance and work on my part if I am to grow in my ability to practice these principles.

I believe that the need as well as the desire to maintain our unity in AA hasn't really changed that much. I think what's changed is that we've gotten bigger and therefore the job and the responsibility have gotten greater. AA has taught me that being "a small part of the great whole" carries with it a responsibility and that there is always something that I can do to contribute to "our common welfare." When my sponsor told me that I needed a group to grow, she also told me that I wouldn't grow by running away and that I had a responsibility to show up.
















I pray that leaving AA or going "underground" never looks like a good alternative to me. I hope instead to remember the lessons that the One Parkway Group, my sponsors, and fellow AAs have taught me.

I've learned that I can strive to make my home group the best AA group in the world, which of course means one that conforms to our Traditions. I have learned that I can strive to be the kind of sponsor who tries to pass on all of AA to the newcomer, our three legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service, and not just what I think the newcomer wants or can handle. I have learned that I can and need to be of service to my group and, where possible, to AA as a whole.

Our literature reminds me that great love and great suffering are our disciplinarians; we need no others. I have no doubt that I suffered as much as I could stand from active alcoholism, but I am not sure I have learned to practice loving Alcoholics Anonymous as well as I believe is possible. I certainly have not yet learned to practice Tradition One perfectly. But I have enough love to try to grow in my ability to place our common welfare first. I am convinced that my life depends on it. I pray that I may continue to grow in unselfishness, enough to care about the lives of all alcoholics, wherever they may be, those that are with us, and those yet to come.

Dorothy H. – Piscataway, NJ
January 1992

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Experience, Strength and Hope

Published by: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc

Did you know that there are 56 stories from the first three editions of the Big Book that have been removed? They are all available to read in one hardbound book. As each new addition became available, stories were removed and exchanged for more current stories, in keeping up with the changes in AA membership.

This book became a great addition to my AA collection, because of the history it contains. Many of the stories taken out of the First Edition are short, maybe a page or two. I couldn't help but think, they are that way, because AA was so new when our first Big Book was printed. Some of the story titles are eye catching. Check out —A Feminine Victory, —The Back-Slider, —A Close Shave, —The Rolling Stone — I think these titles alone invoke curiosity.

When we decided to create a bookmark at the Intergroup Office containing the —Four Paradoxes, I be-came curious about the story. It was written for the Second Edition. —The Professor and the Paradox is a story now only in *Experience, Strength & Hope*.* (Available at Central Office for only \$5.00 + tax)

CAJUN CASINO

January 28, 2012

Cajun Boil
Speaker
Casino
DancingSt. Joseph Church Parish Life Center
1217 Gallatin Rd South
Madison, TN 37115\$10 suggested donation to help support
District 34New Years Eve Dance
1st United Methodist
217 East Main St
Hendersonville, TN 37075
7pm-1amBring finger foods/desserts to
shareArea 64 Assembly 2012
Jan 20th—22nd, 2012
Holiday InnJohnson City—423-282.4611
Or contact:Skip D. for more information:
423.676.3297**FIRST TUESDAY OF
EVERY MONTH:****D 32 Meeting**

When: 6:30pm – 7:30pm

Where: Central Office
Conference Room
176 Thompson Lane**D 35 Meeting**

When: 6:30pm – 7:30pm

Where: 5925 O'Brien Ave

**SECOND TUESDAY OF
EVERY MONTH:****Intergroup Meeting CO**

When: 5:45pm – 6:45pm

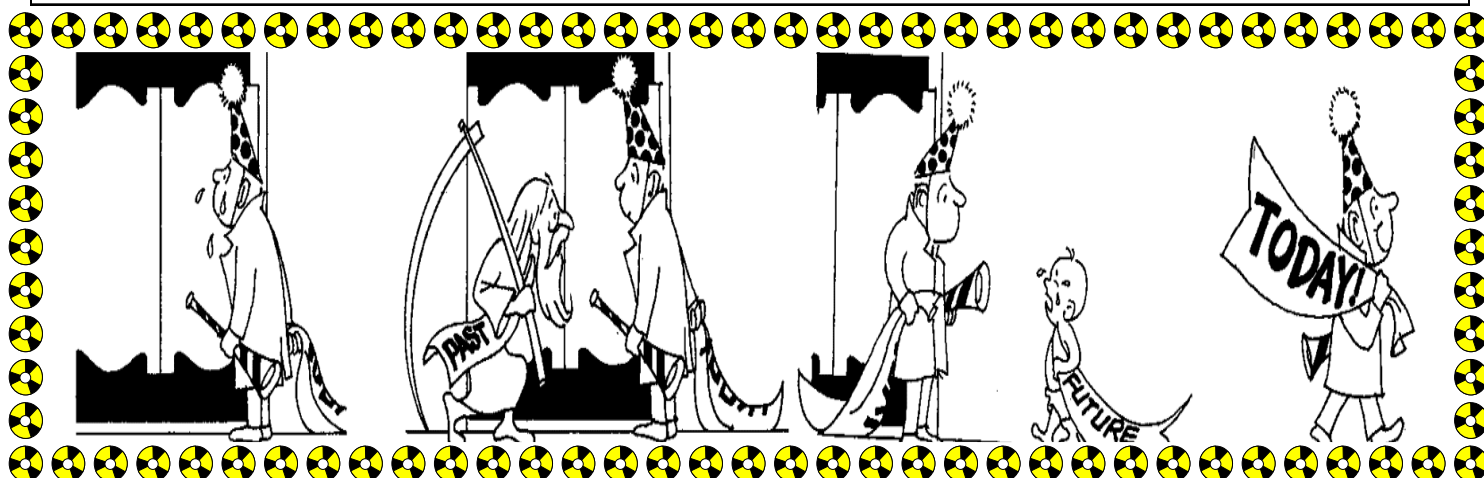
Where: Central Office
Conference Room
176 Thompson Lane**Committee Chair Info:**New Names & Phone Num-
bers will be listed in January
For information or questions
Please contact the Central
Office at
615.832.1136**New Year's Day Party - That Never Was?**

As in many homes on New Year's Day, Janet and Nigel, a happily married couple, faced the annual conflict of which was more important: the football game on television, or the lunch itself.

Hoping to keep the peace, Nigel ate lunch with the rest of the family, and even lingered for some pleasant after-lunch chat before retiring to the family room to turn on the television.

Some minutes later, Janet looked in to see how he was and graciously even brought a cold beer for Nigel. She smiled, kissed him on the cheek and asked what the score was. Nigel told her it was half time and that the score was still 0-0.

'See?' Janet said happily, 'You didn't miss a thing.'



How can someone who has completed all 12 steps relapse? The Big Book says, "What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition." Regardless of what we have done, it only matters what we continue to do. Our recovery from alcoholism and addiction is only as strong as what we do today.

So how and what does happen to recovery when we relapse?

Experience teaches that a relapse starts long before the substance is ever actually taken. The first year of recovery is usually based around just staying sober. Recovery is something new, and there is a joy in at last having found some relief from our damaging and demoralizing addiction that has plagued us for so long. A lot of times we talk about a "pink cloud" or new sense of well-being that overwhelms us in early recovery. If this is where we stop working a program, simply because we feel better, we are doomed. But, that is not what this article is about; it is about the person who does embrace the 12-step program and starts a life of recovery. At this stage of the game, we are usually willing to take suggestions and keep an open mind.

As time moves on, we start to get things back. Things we have placed on the back burner, in order to ground our lives in recovery, begin to return. Usually in years 2-5, we begin to seek a more serious form of employment or even a career, return to school or maybe enter into a relationship. Hopefully, by now we have completed the steps with our sponsor and have a home group. Life becomes more of a balancing act. Where initially our main focus was recovery, now life has crept back in.

Sometimes old patterns of behavior

that may or may not have been addressed during the steps begin to rear their ugly head. This is where we may start to see a relapse begin. Relationship issues begin to surface, whether that is with a boss, co-worker, peer or a loved one, and these can detract from our new found serenity.

Some things such as codependency, over-extending oneself or perfectionism issues, which may have been dormant in early recovery, begin to become more magnified as we seek a healthy balance between life and recovery.

Many people replace their recovery with work, the gym or a relationship. For women, perhaps it may be the birth of a child. We may forget how we got to this point in our lives. Some just get cocky. Contact with recovering alcoholics starts to diminish, meeting attendance declines, and so on. This is the un-working of Step 12, failure to carry the message to other alcoholics. We can begin to be so caught up in the other aspects of life that one of the fundamental pieces of our recovery begins to fall by the wayside.

Next we may stop praying or meditating. This is the undoing of our conscious contact with a Higher Power.

It may be a subtle change at first. It is common practice for many in recovery, who once got on their knees to pray, to discontinue this practice. Where is that desperation for recovery we once had? Our awareness of a higher-power begins to fade.

Here we plummet, un-working steps 10 through 4 in one mighty swoop. A nightly personal inventory slips into a weekly event or becomes non-existent. If there is no inventory, there is no need for amends. There are no shortcomings visible to us. Controlling our defects of character becomes like

trying to corral a litter of energetic puppies, each trying to escape in a different direction. We lose sight of the moral inventory we once made.

Now comes the really scary part: We make a decision to take our will back. Not just a little, as we may have done with certain situations in the past, but the whole enchilada. The power we once believed could restore us to sanity has gone out the window, most likely with our sanity. If our sanity is gone, we once again believe this time will be different. We believe we now have the power, and we can manage our own lives. As we spiral down to insanity, we end up in that disheartening space we thought we had left behind. We once again get that feeling of a deep dark hole in our souls, a void so vast that nothing can fill it no matter how hard we may try.

So what can we do? One way to maintain our program is make sure we have a home group; a meeting we attend, at the very minimum, on a weekly basis. We allow these people to really know us. We take commitments such as coffee maker, greeter, or many of the others available at the meetings we attend. We can allow close friends in our support group to take our inventory. We can keep our sponsor close and be open to feedback. All these little things help us to be accountable to our program of recovery. The Big Book says, "We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink." If we thoroughly understand this, we can see how imperative it is to remain perseverant with our recovery.


*Thomas S.
Coral Springs*

Group	Amt	YTD Amt	Group	Amt	YTD Amt	Group	Amt	YTD Amt	Group	Amt	YTD Amt
21ST AVEUNE		219	EASY DOES IT	200	484	LIVING BY THE PRINT		350	SEEKING SANITY		852
24 HOUR		200	EVERY NIGHT @ 6	37	359	LIVING IN THE NOW		100	SERENITY (D12)	50	550
ANONYMOUS	62	431	FAIRFIELD GLADE	10	140	LIVING THE PRINCIPLES		104	SEVEN DIPS		20
ANY LENGTHS		85	FAYETTEVILLE		80	MANCHESTER MONDAY NIGHT		151	SHADE TREE		3,655
BACK TO BASICS		25	FELLOWSHIP		38	McMINNVILLE		200	SMITH COUNTY		50
BACK ROOM	502	4,904	FIRST THINGS FIRST		500	MID-DAY BREAK	190	1124	SMYRNA GRATITUDE	100	900
BAR NONE		100	FIVE & FIVE		502	MT JULIET FELLOWSHIP		225	TEMPLE HILLS		100
BELLEVUE		166	FRANKLIN		1,250	MUSIC CITY		150	THE BASEMENT BUNCH		425
BELLEVUE—WINNERS & BEG.		165	FRANKLIN RD MENS		200	MUSIC ROW		50	THE STRAGGLERS		275
BIKERS IN RECOVERY	18	68	FRANKLIN RD WOMEN'S		30	MUSTARD SEED	50	500	THE WAY OUT		140
BRENTWOOD FULL MOON		800	FREE TO BE	144	548	NEEDED MEETING - CL		370	THERE IS A SOLUTION		35
BY THE BOOK LEBANON		22	FRI NIGHT PRIME TIME	50	225	NEW LIFE H-VILLE		20	TRUDGING THE ROAD	90	160
BY THE BOOK DICKSON		53	G.O.D. (OF DRUNKS)		268	NIPPER'S CORNER		59	TURNING POINT		1124
CAME TO BELIEVE		75	GLADEVILLE GRATITUDE		100	NORTHBORO		50	VALLEY VIEW		548
CELEBRATE SERENITY		200	GRATEFUL ALIVE		278	NORTHSIDE , CLARKSVILLE		220	WAVERLY		120
CENTENNIAL		60	GRATITUDE (D11)		60	ONE DAY AT A TIME		250	WAVERLY-BELMONT		100
CHICKEN PLUCKER'S MEN'S		200	HAPPY HOUR		211	ONE STEP CLOSER		264	WEEKENDERS		200
CLUB 62		5	HARDING ROAD		550	OUT TO BREAKFAST		250	WEST MEADE		200
COLUMBIA	20	200	HIGH NOON		630	P.O.P.		200	WEST NASHVILLE		317
COMBINED DISTRICTS		30	HIGHER POWERED		100	PAY DAY		150	WESTMINSTER		741
COMFORT ZONE		300	IBI-UBU		70	PORTLAND UNITY		35	WHITE HOUSE		320
COMMUNI-CATIONS		550	JOELTON		52	PRIMARY PURPOSE		380	WINNERS & BEGINNERS		589
DAILY REPRIEVE		146	KEEP IT SIMPLE -BV	23	372	PULASKI	5	15	WOMEN IN THE SOLUTION	32	32
DAVIDSON RD	400	4,250	KEY TO SOBRIETY		361	RARELY FAIL		206	WOMEN'S SPEAKER		160
DICKSON (DAAG)		467	KICKOFF'S NOT TILL NOON		173	REBOS (SOBER)	199	1006	WOODBINE		20
DISTRICT 36 - SPANISH		540	LAFAYETTE NEW HOPE	50	100	RIDGETOP BASICS		117	WOODBURY		300
DISTRICT 9	30	90	LAMBDA		132	ROBERT E LEE WOMENS		100	YOU ARE NOT ALONE (YANA)		20
DONELSON YET		150	LAST CALL		25	RUTS		50	YOUNG TIMERS AA	46	310
DOWNTOWN LUNCH		94	LATE LUNCH BUNCH		3,217	SAFE HARBOR		100	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	2,403	47,151
DOWNTOWN Y		81	LAWRENCE-BURG		80	SANGO SOLUTIONS		25	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ THE MONTHLY GOAL ■ ■ TO KEEP US SELF ■ ■ SUPPORTING IS ■ ■ \$5,200. ■ ■ IS YOUR GROUP ■ ■ CONTRIBUTING? ■		
DROP THE ROCK		65	LET IT HAPPEN		50	SAT NIGHT ALIVE (D11)	30	325			
DRUNKS IN THE PARK	45	376	LIFE SAVERS		200	SEARCH FOR SERENITY	20	320			
EAST SIDE		593	LINDEN		50	SEARCHERS		281			

NOVEMBER PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

THE MESSENGER

	NOVEMBER ACTUALS	CURRENT MONTH BUDGET	ACTUALS TO BUDGET- VARIANCE	NOVEMBER Y-T-D ACTUALS	CURRENT Y-T-D BUDGET	ACTUALS TO BUDGET- VARIANCE
INCOME						
LITERATURE SALES	10,413	11,968	(1,555)	113,430	59,839	(8,530)
COST OF GOODS SOLD						
LITERATURE	9,762	8,801	961	82,550	96,811	(14,261)
FREIGHT	32	-	32	328	-	328
DIRECTORY	-	438	(438)	-	4,816	(4,816)
TOTAL COST OF GOODS SOLD	9,793	9,239	554	82,880	101,627	(18,748)
GROSS PROFIT - LITERATURE	619	2,729	(2,110)	30,550	30,020	531
OTHER INCOME						
COFFEE	-	-	-	15	-	15
GROUP	2,713	5,250	(2,537)	48,272	-	(9,478)
INDIVIDUAL	1,575	250	1,325	4,358	2,750	1,608
MESSENGER	24	600	(576)	2,122	6,600	(4,478)
SPECIAL EVENTS	-	250	(250)	4,057	2,750	1,307
INTEREST	7	-	7	417	-	417
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	4,319	6,350	(2,031)	59,242	69,850	(10,608)
TOTAL INCOME	4,939	9,079	(4,141)	89,792	99,870	(10,078)
EXPENSES						
CASUAL LABOR	300	150	150	1,800	1,650	150
PAYROLL	3,643	3,947	(304)	42,718	43,414	(697)
BAD DEBTS	11	-	11	11	-	11
LEGAL & PROFESSIONAL	145	216	(71)	1,630	2,381	(752)
RENT	2,165	2,091	74	24,004	23,006	997
PRINTING	250	567	(317)	2,725	6,233	(3,508)
PAYROLL TAXES	279	302	(23)	3,268	3,321	(54)
MAINTENANCE	75	-	75	799	-	799
TELEPHONE & FAX	478	550	(72)	5,108	6,050	(941)
ANSWERING SERVICE	164	172	(9)	1,799	1,892	(93)
POSTAGE	178	130	48	1,534	1,430	104
OFFICE SUPPLIES	149	250	(101)	2,312	2,750	(438)
COMPUTER PROJECT	-	117	(117)	628	1,284	(656)
INTERGROUP EXPENSE	92	83	9	157	915	(759)
INSURANCE	-	175	(175)	1,666	1,925	(259)
SPECIAL EVENTS / FUNCTIONS	-	208	(208)	1,978	2,290	(312)
REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	-	113	(113)	-	1,238	(1,239)
TRAVEL	-	167	(167)	1,522	1,833	(313)
DEPRECIATION	67	-	67	365	-	365
OVER/UNDER	28	-	28	125	-	125
TOTAL EXPENSES	8,022	9,238	(1,216)	94,150	101,618	(7,467)
NET INCOME	(3,083)	(159)	(2,924)	(4,357)	(1,748)	(2,610)

BACK TO BASICS		LOVE & LAUGHTER		SEEKING SANITY		SHADE TREE (cont)		SMYRNA GRATITUDE (cont)	
Jim C	01.01.05	Amber N	01.16.10	Beth M	01.12.08	Kimberly N.	01.29.99	Felicia D	01.06.09
BACKROOM		Bob S	01.15.04	Christian A	01.28.10	Link M.	01.08.06	H.G. C	01.01.94
Eric M	01.27.10	Gina M	01.02.02	Ed M	01.12.94	Lisa B.	01.14.08	J.D. M	01.01.10
Jason K	01.10.05	Jayne S	01.01.06	Jim T	01.19.07	Lois A.	01.21.09	Joanna C	01.18.09
Jerry S	01.29.92	Larry K	01.01.11	John E	01.18.09	Marsha R.	01.05.09	Julie C	01.27.05
DONELSON YET		MID-DAY BREAK		Michelle T	01.29.09	Michael J.	01.01.10	Justin T	01.01.10
Chris S	01.13.09	Hoag J	01.29.11	Racheal C	01.14.10	Michael M.	01.10.08	Kell C	01.05.02
Denise S	01.18.95	Jim A	01.01.87	Randy M	01.29.07	Mike K.	01.05.06	Larry K	01.28.11
EASY DOES IT - MT JULIET		Megan T	01.11.04	Sean D	01.26.09	Olivia T.	01.05.07	Michael T	01.02.08
David H	01.16.93	Mike M	01.27.03	Terry W	01.01.98	Pamela D.	01.01.03	Pamela M	01.03.06
David P	01.26.92	Molly	01.01.08	SHADE TREE		Penny Mc.	01.05.09	Peggy J	01.14.06
Dotti B	01.31.04	Tricia M	01.21.??	Arthur C.	01.31.10	Rick G.	01.08.93	Robert W	01.18.08
George M	01.22.11	MT. JULIET FELLOWSHIP		Barb T.	01.11.00	Rick T.	01.11.05	Tom G	01.04.11
Jeri M	01.06.64	Liz B	01.15.06	Barclay R.	01.01.90	Ricky A.	01.20.06	WEEKENDERS	
Kim W	01.07.09	Ronnie W	01.17.05	Brandon L.	01.27.05	Russell S.	01.01.06	Allen J	01.02.09
EVERYNIGHT @ 6		Stanley N	01.19.04	Brandon S.	01.13.07	Sharon H.	01.11.10	Lisa B	01.01.03
Allen J	01.20.11	NIPPERS CORNER		Brent R.	01.31.01	Scott M	01.16.10	Tommy M	01.26.90
Debra M	01.08.11	"B"	01.08.91	Brian D.	01.19.??	Stan N.	01.19.04	WEST NASHVILLE	
Jaime E	01.27.11	Cindy M	01.08.11	Cameron E.	01.01.10	Steve B.	09.09.03	Ricky A	01.20.06
Jennifer S	01.22.08	Clayton H	01.01.06	Conrad R.	01.14.75	Terry W.	01.01.98	WOMEN'S SPEAKER	
Joey B	01.15.10	Loren F	01.27.11	Cora A.	01.22.08	Timbo H.	01.09.95	Becky S	01.17.89
Johnny T	01.17.11	Tom W	01.10.93	Danielle C.	01.19.08	Ulysses C.	01.08.11	WOODBURY	
Keith C	01.08.08	REBOS		Dave F.	01.11.05	Vanessa B.	01.27.09	Bob E	01.31.88
Molly H	01.01.08	Bob E	01.15.08	Dave H.	01.13.05	Wayne H.	01.17.06	Buddy R	01.12.82
Steve D	01.20.04	PORTLAND UNITY		David F.	01.27.05	Wendy N.	01.11.05	Connie E	01.20.88
KEEP IT SIMPLE		Randall H	01.15.11	David S.	01.01.06	SMYRNA GRATITUDE		Lynn H	01.01.95
Cheryl H	01.01.04	Joe P	01.18.11	Ed A.	01.13.09	Byron O	01.28.00		
Dave F	01.11.05	Dave P	01.25.10	Jim E.	01.26.94	Casey B	01.01.08		
Edward S	01.07.99	Debra	01.25.10	Jim H.	01.01.09	Cecilia M	01.21.07		
Greg T	01.23.07	RIDGETOP BASICS		Jim P.	01.20.04	Chad	01.15.10		
Lee B	01.21.89	Barbara C	01.30.07	John B.	01.12.01	Connie	01.13.10		
Mike M	01.26.10	SEARCH FOR SERENITY		Joshua C.	01.02.08	David M	01.26.11		
Ram D	01.10.09	Bob H	01.09.81	Karen R.	01.16.06	David T	01.05.11		
Steve B	01.09.03	Lisa T	01.29.03	Kellie N.	01.07.10	Diane W	01.12.11		
Tim D	01.01.11			Kendra B.	01.22.08	Ed R	01.06.09		

**Middle Tennessee
Central Intergroup
Association**

176 Thompson Lane
Suite G-1
Nashville, TN 37211

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