

The MESSENGER

Middle Tennessee Central Office Intergroup

**FEBRUARY
2013**

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It is also available on-line at www.aanashville.org.

If you read *The Messenger* on-line, a contribution to The Middle Tennessee Central Office would help and be appreciated.

**PLEASE MAKE A NOTE
STATING YOUR
DONATION IS FOR
THE MESSENGER.**

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Lightning strikes twice

Step Two helps an alcoholic get past his denial and see how alcohol was affecting his life

LIGHTNING never strikes twice in the same place. I have heard that said many times; but according to what I've read, lightning strikes twice each time it strikes. It comes in two flashes, so close together that they seem like one.

Step Two is like that. It uses the words "restore us to sanity." Before I got sober I was working in the field of mental health, doing bilingual counseling, taking people to AA meetings and going back a year later for their anniversaries. How could I, a professional in the fields, need to be restored to sanity? But that bolt, those words, opened up a crack in the armor of my denial. I began to see how alcohol was affecting every area of my life, in an increasingly negative way. It was always getting worse, never better. Yet I kept finding rationalizations to continue. If insanity is being disconnected from reality, then I was certainly insane.

The second part of the flash was more positive. I could be restored to sanity. Countless members of AA had been restored, with the help of a Higher Power in the spiritual program of the Fellowship of AA. So I went back to AA, not for others, but for myself. There I found the proof in a group of reasonably happy people enjoying life in a way I had forgotten could ever exist. Some of them seemed so peaceful and content they seemed better than normal. So I kept coming back, and have been doing so since 1986. The double "whammy" had worked. My prayer life left my head and went back to my heart. My spiritual life became real again and began to slowly grow. The Steps, Traditions,

a home group and good sponsorship were a wonderful formula for a happy way of life.

Well, how about now, almost 22 years later? The lightening bolt of my first experience of Step Two has mellowed over the years. Now, almost 80 years old and coming up on 22 years of sobriety, it is easy for me to take sobriety for granted, to get complacent. I can start to sound like a know-it-all, at times even pontificate or spout truisms or clichés. This kind of an attitude can easily lead me first to a dry drunk and eventually to a wet one.

I came to believe that what was the solution then is the solution now. AA is a spiritual entity. When I remember that fact and go into action on it, the original awe of Step Two stays alive in a calmer and more peaceful way. Take a look at the phrase "spiritual entity" in the Grapevine's Digital Archive. I think there are 33 entries, most of them by Bill W. and Dr. Bob. The last one is from May 2006, and talks of Tradition Five. I agree with the alcoholic who wrote that. When I put that into practice along with Step Two, all of my character defects are included in the lightning bolt, and become manageable now, one day at a time. If I want to have a reasonably happy and productive life, and an enjoyable degree of serenity, then I have to pray, meditate and do some spiritual reading--in other words, lead a spiritual life. I've never been able to find another way that works. How about you?

ANONYMOUS – Maryland
Reprinted with permission: AAGrapevine
Feb 2010

THE VOICE ON THE TAPE

After almost two decades, she stumbles upon the woman who saved her life

THAT voice, I thought. That's the woman on the tape! I was sitting in a noon meeting that I had not attended in three months. I had been the secretary but had had to give it up because of a conflict with work. A friend of mine was visiting from out of town and my sponsor was there also. We were celebrating my friend's 15 years of sobriety with friendship, conversation, a meeting, lunch and a trip to the ocean.

The woman whose voice I recognized was sitting in front, sharing on gratitude--the topic picked by the speaker that day. I had goose bumps as I listened to her; I began to shake, and my heart pounded in my chest. I wracked my brain trying to remember if she had said her name. Yes! She had. It was Sandy. The name matched the memory that was slowly materializing in my mind.

What I was about to experience was a sobriety dream come true. I had always wanted to meet the woman to whom that voice belonged and thank her for saving my life.

In 1987, I was trying one more time to get sober. I had just been blessed with my first DUI (two more were to follow) and a sober uncle of mine had given me the tape of an AA speaker, a woman he had heard in 1986. The tape had a black and red label with the name Sandy and a date written across it. I listened to it a few times but was frightened by some of the similarities in her story and mine, especially the part about playing Russian Roulette with a handgun and "pulling the trigger and hearing the click" and how "it was the loneliest sound because it meant one more time I had to live. "

At that time in my life, that was how I was living. I would put a bullet, just one, in my .38 and go drink. When I reached "that point," I would leave whatever dive I was drinking in and drive around. (I still had a car at that time.) At some desolate spot, I would pull over, reach under the seat, pull out my gun, hold it to my head, close my eyes, and squeeze the trigger. Click. I would spin the cylinder, slam it closed, and try again. Click. I did this for a year and a half. One time it went off. The details of that scenario are not important for this story, but what I know today is there is no reason for me to be alive, except that I am supposed to be.

Sobriety was not to be mine for another year. Somehow, through all my insanity and the loss of everything--because it did get worse--I managed to keep that tape of Sandy's story.

For the first six months of my sobriety, I listened to it every day, sometimes two and three times a day. I kept thinking, If this woman made it, maybe, just maybe, I can. I listened to it until I quit shaking. I listened to it until I found a sponsor. I listened to it until I had the courage to stop listening and start talking.

Although I have had many angels in my sobriety, none was as powerful as the one whose voice I heard coming from a borrowed tape recorder for six months. Throughout the years I have played that tape for every woman I have sponsored. I have dreamed of the moment, my entire sobriety, of what was about to happen after the noon meeting on March 26, 2003.

After the meeting I turned to my sponsor and my friend and said, "I have to talk to that woman. " They did not know what was happening, but they followed me down the aisle between the rows of chairs to where Sandy was leaning over, picking up her purse. I touched her arm. She did not look anything like I had pictured. She was shorter than I had imagined. She had red hair, and she was dressed all in purple.

She turned to me and smiled with a bit of a question in her eyes. I had never seen her before, and I'm sure she had never been to the meeting when I was the secretary. So, she had no idea who I was. "I recognized your voice," I managed to choke out. "I have one of your tapes. You saved my life. "

Much to my surprise, she grabbed me and hugged me. I cried in her arms and told her the story of my first six months of sobriety. And I thanked her for saving my life. She reminded me of one of the promises and started to cry as well. "They do come true," she said. "No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. You will never know how much I needed to hear that I have made a difference in someone's life. "

My sponsor and friend were witnesses to all of this, making it even more special. They, too, had tears in their eyes. My friend, who was celebrating 15 years, exclaimed, "Well, this will keep me sober another 30 years at least!" I kept telling Sandy, "You saved my life. All of my sobriety I have wanted to thank you, and here you are!"

The day wound down. My sponsor, my friend, and I enjoyed a wonderful lunch and great recovery conversation. The ocean was spectacular, and my friend headed for home with renewed spirit for her own sobriety. After she left, I dragged out one of my boxes of AA speaker tapes. I probably have over 100 tapes. I was going to find Sandy's tape. I hadn't listened to it in years, but I knew it was in one of two boxes. I opened the first box and sighed. The tapes were piled on top of each other with no order to them, no neat little rows. I knew I was in for a long afternoon. I reached in and pulled out the first tape my fingers touched. I turned it over: The tape had a black and red label on it and the name Sandy was written across it with a date.

*Gay B—Seaside, CA
Reprinted with permission: AAGrapevine Nov 2010*

The title of this article has little to do with anything anyone has ever said directly to me. It has more to do with what my own head (when I am more consciously connected to God) tells me to do. I believe Dr. Bob once said something to the effect that the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, in its most basic form, boils down to love and service. Through working the program, today I am much more inclined to offer that love and service.

My experience with service prior to arriving in AA is very limited. For most of my life, any service I offered came with a price tag. Either I received money, sometimes in the form of pay, or, I received some sense of glory, usually in some form of ego-feeding. In both examples, the service offered came with a sense of self-seeking and selfishness.

My experience with service after entering AA is vastly different (most of the time). The 12 & 12 mentions, "Service, gladly rendered, obligations squarely met..." these are actions that take place in my daily living when I am spiritually fit.

My first experiences with service in AA came in simple forms. Thankfully so, as I was not too capable of offering much help to anyone at that time. I heard mentioned in a meeting the action of cleaning ashtrays. I did that a couple of times at the clubhouse I attended meetings; but as an ex-smoker, this task was not a favorite. Setting up chairs before the meeting was much more appealing so I did that frequently.

After a month of sobriety, I felt compelled to chair meetings. Passing out the readings and opening and closing meetings did not appear too difficult. Although the suggested requirement was six months of sobriety, there weren't many members with six months arriving in time to begin the meetings. I chaired weekly and encouraged others who were working The Steps to participate.

At four months, and branching outside the clubhouse to area meetings, I declared a home group and quickly found myself in a service position. The sense of belonging I felt when a long-timer nominated me to be the clean-up person was overwhelming. I felt at home at my very first meeting, but I truly felt love when I was given the opportunity to help at my home group. I was the clean-up guy for two years and then progressed into the position of cake server. Those two year commitments seemed long but they kept me coming back week after week.

My second home group led me to a service position of Intergroup Rep. Some fear arose as I had no idea what that was but felt a familiar sense of ease and comfort attending my first Intergroup meeting. I was experienced with another form of service by that time, that of bringing meetings to correctional facilities. When Intergroup committee nominations ensued, I felt

compelled to nominate myself for Corrections Chair. I found out it is OK to nominate oneself for service positions in AA, as long as you are willing to follow through and self-seeking is not the primary motive.

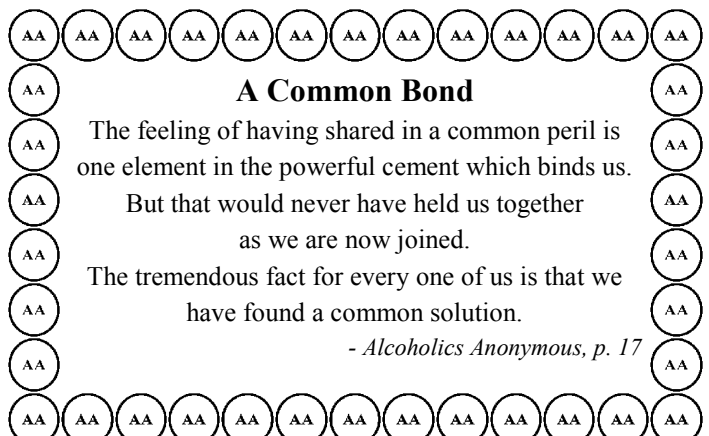
Although I had no idea what the Correction Chairperson did, there was always someone to show me what to do in AA. I served for two years as Corrections Chair as I learned that there is a spirit of rotation in AA. The spirit of rotation allows for all members who want to serve in a position have the opportunity to do so. Allowing for rotation also helps to ensure we don't become too comfortable, or ego-driven, in our positions.

I continue to serve on Intergroup as I was nominated into a Steering Committee position last year. Although I am no longer the Intergroup Rep for my home group, I will continue to serve as best as possible while God leads me through AA. I hope to be helpful to my home group's new Intergroup Rep but also know that there are many other sober members of AA willing to show fellow members how to love and serve. I also know I can count on the guidance of my sponsor to help.

A couple of months ago my home group was holding nominations for service positions. I know it was time for me to rotate out of my current position but wanted to remain in some capacity of service. I mentioned to my sponsor that I was fearful about the possibility of no longer serving on our Steering Committee. He asked if it was because I wanted to make sure things were run correctly. I quickly responded, "No! I am afraid of not being in a position of service at our group". He told me he was glad I had that dedication.

I am also glad I frequently have that dedication. Alcoholics Anonymous gave me back my life. The least I can do is try to give my life back to AA. The best I can do is to go and serve, then go and serve some more.

Michael A. - Brentwood, TN



From the desk of Charles C

As I write this on a cold January day, I am reflecting on a conversation last week with a fellow alcoholic and classmate in Warren, Arkansas. He marveled that our small hometown now had a treatment center and asked if we had any. I named a few of the larger and more famous facilities here, but did not say we probably had 50 plus treatment centers. Nashville is blessed with great assets and a noted "recovery community". Our website at aanashville.org shows 912 meetings a week in Middle Tennessee. A vendor recently called and shared that she had seen a magazine article listing Nashville as one of "The Top Ten Recovery Communities" in the country. Alcoholics Anonymous certainly has a presence and a positive influence here. We do make a difference!

Our office is a huge part of that community. Your Middle Tennessee Central Office just completed yet another banner year in 2012, highlighted by our Annual Sobriety Dinner November 30th. The event not only raised almost \$3,000 to help this office carry the message, but the event itself was a great opportunity for sharing and fellowship. Thanks to Mike A. for his story and to all for a successful event!! If you would like to help with the 2013 Dinner, let us know.

We also greatly need volunteers at Central Office to work a four hour shift. We especially need help on Saturday! We want to be open 6 days a week, but need volunteers to do so. It is a special opportunity for service work, and is always rewarding. As I write, our Monday a.m. volunteer is speaking to a fellow coming off a relapse, who just "needs to talk".

Remember, "Whenever someone reaches out, the hand of AA must be there".

We sold over 8,000 Big Books through the office last year, part of \$150,000 in annual sales. We sell 500 desire chips a month and almost 100 one year medallions. I always think about the impact of one year's sobriety on families, businesses and the overall blessings to all. Thanks to all of you for all you do.

Also, a special thanks to all the groups and individuals for contributions in 2012, totaling \$64,700. Contributions not only finance the office but allow The Intergroup committees to function. The office is also able to sell all Conference approved literature at the catalog price and stock approximately \$30,000 for distribution immediately to groups and individuals.

If you have any questions or input concerning the finances and operation of your Middle Tennessee Intergroup Office, we welcome your participation. Part of our monthly financial statement is also included in The Messenger each month.

On a final note, remember to send in your group birthdays as well as any upcoming events by 10th of preceding month for publication. We need March birthdays and events by February 10th.

BECOME A FAB FIVER!!

<i>CENTRAL OFFICE OFFICERS</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>PHONE #</i>
Chairperson	Cynthia S	407.468.5641
Vice Chairperson	Michael A	615.497.6617
Secretary	Sara B	615.708.0384
Treasurer	Don R	931.239.1523
Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community	Al C	615.883.4553
Corrections	Nancy C Jody C	530.218.8176 931.319.3446
Treatment	Jon T	804.306.6256
Archives	Don D	615.525.7643
Central Office Manager	Charles C	615.832.1136
Central Office Bookkeeper	David	615.832.1136

FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH:

**District 32 & 35
are now combined
Meeting**

When:

6:30pm – 7:30pm

Where:

**Central Office
Conference Room
176 Thompson Lane**

SECOND TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH:

**Intergroup Meeting
(Central Office)**

When:

5:45pm – 6:45pm

Where:

**Central Office
Conference Room
176 Thompson Lane**

If you search the Big Book you will not find the word sponsor or sponsorship anywhere in the first 164 pages. But if you search through *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* you will find the concept of sponsorship sprinkled throughout the volume. It is first found on page 22, but a discussion concerning Step Two contains a great quote: "At this juncture, his AA sponsor usually laughs. This, the newcomer thinks, is just about the last straw. This is the beginning of the end. And so it is: the beginning of the end of his old life, and the beginning of his emergence into a new one." How appropriate! How many of us have a very early memory of our sponsors laughing at something we said. In the beginning, we probably thought that our sponsor was laughing at us when in fact they were laughing with us.

So somewhere between 1935 and the early 1940's the formal concept of sponsorship came about. In *AA Comes of Age*, Bill W. refers to Ebby T. as his sponsor from the very beginning, so sponsorship

existed from the start, it just was not called that in the early days.

Up to the publication of the Jack Alexander article in *Saturday Evening Post* in 1941, we had very few members. Everybody sponsored everybody. When a new man would go into St. Thomas, all of the Akron AA's would go to see him in the early days. However, after the explosion of membership in 1941 after the *Post* article, (and to a lesser extent in 1939 after the Eldrick Davis *Plain Dealer* piece) it was no longer possible for everyone to take care of all the members so the practice of picking one person to help with the Steps was started.

The proof in the pudding is found in *A Manual for Alcoholics Anonymous*, published by King School Group #1 in the 1940's. The pamphlet has specific sections written "To the Sponsor." The duties were laid out and made very clear:

"You must assume full responsibility for this man. He trusts you, otherwise he would not submit to hospitalization."

You must fulfill all pledges you make to him...This is a very critical time in his life. He looks to you for courage, hope, comfort and guidance...you have in your hands the most valuable property in the world - the future of a fellow man. Treat his life as carefully as you would your own. You are literally responsible for his life...you should make it a point to supply your patient with the proper literature - the big "alcoholics anonymous" book, this pamphlet, other available pamphlets, a Bible, and anything else that has helped you...Remember, you depend on the newcomer to keep you sober as much as he depends on you. So never lose touch with your responsibility, which never ends."

Quite a charge to us all from the early Akron AA's. It is a concept that worked 60+ years ago and works today. The key to sobriety is to pass on what was so freely given to you.

Reprinted with Permission—AA Archives

Getting Through the Slump

Recovery isn't always a steady progression. Sometimes AAs have to retool.

In 1991, my life was going great. I had been actively working the Twelve Steps with my sponsor for five years. I had a new wife, two new stepsons, and a new job in a new city. Moving from Lexington, Kentucky, to Huntington, West Virginia, was a trial, but we survived and began to settle in. I knew we would be fine. After all, I had stayed sober through my divorce from my first wife, and I had begun to accept that I would not be involved in the daily parenting of my daughter. But in spite of these heartaches, the Promises were materializing in my life. I declared myself well.

I began to attend meetings in Huntington, but things were different. Back in Lexington, the clubhouse was a beautiful antebellum mansion in an upscale neighborhood. In Huntington, it was a small house in a middle-class neighborhood. In Lexington, chips were given at the end of a meeting, rather than at the beginning and there were big speaker meetings. In Huntington, the meetings were small and there were fewer speaker meetings. My focus on these de-

tails was my disease telling me to compare rather than to identify. And I was listening.

In Lexington, I did Twelfth Step work and had several sponsees. They were not staying sober, so I came to believe that I was not skilled at AA service work. This was my rationalization for seeking service work outside of AA when coming to Huntington. I became the assistant Little League coach. The kids and their parents I met there were all nice people, but it was no substitute for AA. I also became a Cub Scout leader and later, a Boy Scout leader. Both brought me into contact with nice people, but not AA. My disease was telling me that the measure of success when working with other alcoholics was their sobriety, not mine, and again I was listening. I had forgotten how many "failures" Bill W. had before he met Dr. Bob. Those failures kept Bill W. sober.

At the same time, I decided to fulfill my lifelong desire to complete my master's in business administration. I had started it in

1979, but dropped out due to my drinking. So thirteen years later, at thirty-eight, I enrolled in the master's degree program at a local university, rather than spending my nights at meetings or working Steps.

All of my non AA pursuits were apparently noble and done with honorable intentions, but they came with the cost of my emotional sobriety. If you asked me, I could give you all the right answers. Yes, I had a sponsor (but didn't use him). Yes, I went to meetings (occasionally). Yes, I was doing just fine. So everything looked good on the outside, but my AA program was eroding: The cravings were coming back and so were obsessive suicidal thoughts. Fear of losing my new family was the only thing that kept me from drinking. It took about five years, but by late 1996, my "wellness" had disappeared.

In desperation, I threw myself into a psychiatrist's office and begged for help of some kind. I was diagnosed with vegetative depression. He put me on an anti-depressant and I started therapy. This

(Continued on page 8)

EVENTS

12 STEPS & 12 TRADITIONS WORKSHOP

A Workshop That You Don't Want To Miss!

Steve L. - Brentwood TN.
Steve will walk us through the
12 Steps of A. A.
and then share his
Experience, Strength & Hope.

Chet P. - Orlando FL.
Chet has a very unique way of
presenting the 12 Traditions.
He will then share his
Experience, Strength & Hope.

When: Saturday - March 16th, 2013
9:00 AM - 5 PM

Where: St. Paul's Episcopal Church
315 East Main St.
Murfreesboro TN 37130

Hosted by District 12
Lunch will be provided!

Event will be recorded by Victory Tapes
and they will also have various speaker tapes on site for sale.

**Please DO NOT park in the Jr's Foodland parking lot.

Parking can be found directly across the street,
along North and South Academy and the SunTrust parking lot.

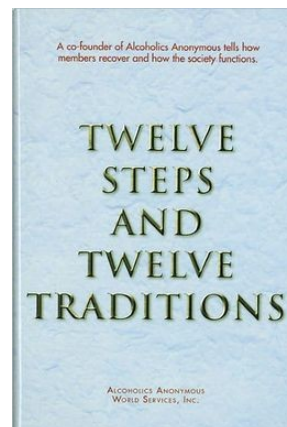
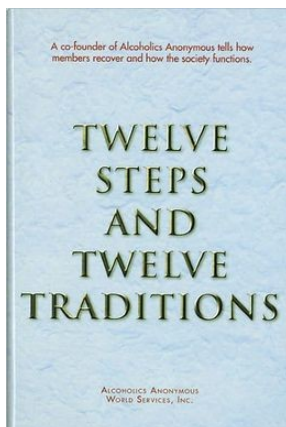
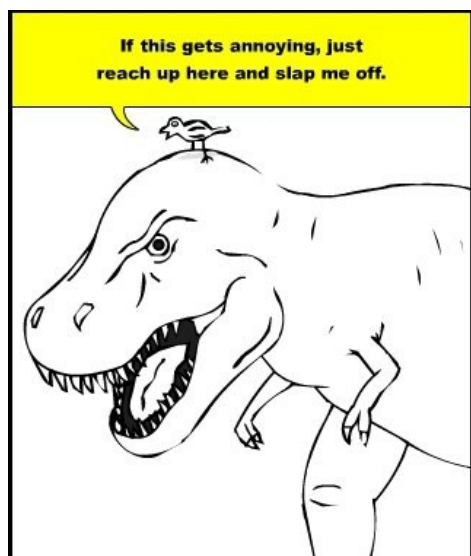
For more information, you can call Alan W. at 615-429-0069

or email at alanwil87@gmail.com.

A husband and wife (married for sometime) are driving down the road when the wife screams at her husband, "Slow down, the speed limit is 35!". The husband screams back, "I'm not speeding". Several minutes later the wife screams out again, "You just ran a red light!". The husband (getting more angry) yells back, "The light was yellow, not red. Don't tell me how to drive!".

A few minutes later, the police stop the couple. The officer informs the husband that he was stopped for speeding. The wife exclaims "I told you that you were speeding". The husband then tells her (under his breath) to "Shut up", and is getting angrier by the minute. The officer asks the husband if he is aware that he also ran a red light. The wife then says "I told you the light was red!". The husband then screams (even louder) at his wife to shut up again.

The officer then (concerned for the wife's safety) asks the wife if her husband always treats her this way. She then tells the officer, "No, he only acts like this when he is drunk!".



HUNTSVILLE ROUNDUP

2013 Back to Basics

Feb 1st—Feb 3rd

Holiday Inn Select
401 Williams Ave
Huntsville, AL
256.837.2268

SPRING FLING

for district 13

Sunday—Feb 10
Cedars of Lebanon

12:30 till 9 pm

Chili Cook-off
Long-timers Sharing
Fun and Dance

HOMEGROUP WORKSHOP

When: Saturday - February 23

Where: 1224 Broad Street
Cookeville, TN

Breakfast at 9am
Workshop 10am—1pm

Sponsored by the Cookeville Group
For more information, contact:
Don R. 931.239.1523

MEETINGS—NEW—MOVED—CHANGES—CANCELLED

NEW		MOVED	
37046	College Grove United Methodist Church 8568 Horton Hwy College Grove Tue & Thur 6:30am OD	37027	Drunks in the Park 7105 Crossroads Blvd #107 Brentwood
37061	Erin AA Lockharts Chapel Methodist Church 2385 Hwy 149 Erin Tues & Thurs 7pm OD	37075	New Life - Good Shepherd Meth Church, 525 New Shackle Island Rd Hendersonville
37064	Road to Recovery Fellowship Bible Church 1725 Columbia Ave Suite 100 Rm 102 Franklin Tues 8p CD	37211	Saturday Eyeopener Club 62 323 Peachtree Nashville 9am OD
37066	G-AA 107 College St Gallatin Mon & Fri 8pm Sun 7pm OD	37122	Key to Sobriety Grove United Meth 6485 Central Pike Mt Juliet
37067	Cool Springs Newcomers Bradford Hlth Svcs 1897 Gen George Patton Dr Franklin Mon & Wed 7pm CD/Beg	37221	Twenty Four Bellevue Pres Church 100 Cross Timers @ Hwy 70
37076	Women's BB Study Hermitage Pres Church 4401 Lebanon Rd Hermitage Sat 3pm	CHANGES	
37080	Joelton - Sat 10:30am OD	37013	Higher Powered Fri 8pm
37082	Comfort Zone Oak Street House 335 Oak street Kingston Springs Wed Noon	37046	College Grove - Tues & Thurs changed to 7am
37115	Serenity House 102 Harris St. Madison TT Wed 8pm	37174	Women's AA Mtg changed to S.O.S. (Sisters of Sobriety)
37127	Back to the Big Book 4321 Woodbury Pike Murfreesboro Sat 8:30am BB/CD	37204	Vine Hill Thurs 9am is now at 4pm
37130	The Camels 1907 Kensington Dr Murfreesboro Mon 7pm CD	CANCELLED	
37138	Open Speaker 1216 Hadley Ave, Old Hickory, United Methodist Church - Sat - 8:05pm	37027	Prime Time - Tues night
37148	Portland Unity Fri 6:30pm	37027	Drunks in the Park Tues 6:30
37172	Robertson County 208B 8th Ave East - Springfield - Wed 7pm CD	37066	Turning Point
37190	Woodbury Senior Citizens Center 609 Lehman St Woodbury TN Sun 7:30pm OD	37086	LaVergne Solutions Saturday
37206	Eastside Women's Eastwood Christian Church 1601 Eastland Ave Tues 6:30pm	37087	Lebanon By the Book Mon 6:30pm
37211	Safe Place Oasis Church 7533 Lords Chapel Dr Tue & Thurs 6:30pm OD	37172	Robertson County Wed & Sun night
37211	Steel Magnolia Women's Last Stop Club 2122 Utopia Sun 10am CD/WM	37174	S.O.S. Women's Mtg Springhill Mon & Fri 10am BB
37211	The Spiritual Giants Club 62 329 Peachtree St M-W-Sa-6p	37203	Rarely Fail
		37209	Reconciliation Group
		37210	Inner City
		37210	Green Street
		37212	Natchez Trace Thurs Noon
		37217	Back to Basics
		38501	Cookeville Weekend Recovery Thurs 6pm



(Continued from page 5)

went on for one year and was effective. During that time, I continued to go to an occasional AA meeting. One day the therapist suggested that depression was the true nature of my disease. All the things I had heard about denial from AA meetings welled up and rebelled against her suggestion. Yes, I had periodic depression, but I am also a real alcoholic. This awakening, caused by her challenging statement, caused me to re-focus: I decided to start over at Step One.

By July of 1998, I was back on the AA beam. I was attending more meetings and working the Steps. I was scheduled to complete my comprehensive exam for the MBA, but my wife was also scheduled to have serious neck surgery. I had to keep first things first and I took care of my wife. I was unable to study as much as I needed to and failed the exam. While I was very upset, I knew I had made the right choice. I had regained the proper perspective. All the degrees and jobs and leadership roles wouldn't keep me sober and sane, but the principles of AA would. I focused on my program and trusted God to show me how to do the next right thing. In November, I retook the exam. I studied hard and left the results to God.

I struggled during the exam. I had to

answer the one remaining question correctly in order to pass. When I looked at it I began to shake. The last question was very similar to one of the last problems I had reviewed the night before. I could hardly write because I was shaking so much.

In 1999, at just the right time, my job took me to Brooklyn, New York, for five months. Being away from the family routine, I was able to focus on AA and do some serious work on Steps Four and Five. At my first meeting in Brooklyn, I met John D. We became great friends and spent a good deal of time working with others, including attending detox meetings. Trying to help others was helping me get better.

I had a lot of time to reflect on my life and when I returned to Huntington, I knew I had to make some changes. When I came home, I found a new home group, a new sponsor, and new meetings. Over the past year, I've worked Steps Three through Nine with my new sponsor and we talk almost daily. I seem to find lots of ways to work Step Ten regularly, and reading the "Daily Reflections" book has really helped me with Step Eleven.

Rather than attend "comfortable" suburban meetings, I go to meetings at the

downtown treatment center where I can see the more apparent consequences of my disease. I identify with these folks because we share the same disease, not because we are well. This Twelfth Step work helps me to keep my last drunk "green." I try to remain focused on the fundamental principle that, one day at a time, I am able to arrest the disease of alcoholism through the help of God and the AA program.

I am learning in a deeper way what our Third Step really means when we "turn our will and our lives over to the care of God." The "Twelve and Twelve" says, "That is just where the remaining Steps ... come in." As I have tried to work the Steps, dependence on my God becomes easier. I'm learning to trust him in every area of my life and my faith is growing. I'm able to sense his presence in all my affairs. Working the program changes my perspective from self-centered fear to God-centered serenity.

There is no cure for my disease, but there is a program of recovery and I am getting better. This is the path to wellness on which I hope to remain.

John Y. - Huntington, West Virginia

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Scientists have finally developed a 'stay-sober' pill!



I feel drunk
but I'm Sober

To people familiar with endless drives for charitable funds, AA presented a strange and refreshing spectacle. . . They pointed out that the irresponsible had become responsible, and that by making financial independence part of its tradition, AA had revived an ideal that its era had almost forgotten.

- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 165

Group	Mo Amt	YTD Amt	Group	Mo Amt	YTD Amt	Group	Mo Amt	YTD Amt
21ST AVEUNE		210	GLADEVILLE GRATITUDE		170	PRIMARY PURPOSE		265
24 HOUR		160	GOODLETTSVILLE A.A.		549	PULASKI		35
ANONYMOUS GROUPS	173	1,297	GRATEFUL ALIVE		341	RAY OF HOPE		200
ANY LENGTHS	75	225	GRATITUDE	100	213	REBOS (SOBER)		307
BACK DOOR AA		100	HAPPY HOUR		180	RIDGETOP BASICS		134
BACK ROOM		5,093	HARDING ROAD	200	850	ROAD OF HAPPY DESTINY	30	90
BACK TO BASICS		25	HENDERSONVILLE BIG BOOK		50	ROBERT E. LEE WOMEN'S		150
BAR NONE		100	HERMITAGE		150	SANGO SOLUTIONS		55
BELLEVUE		524	HIGH NOON		725	SAT NIGHT ALIVE MEETING		330
WINNERS AND BEGINNERS		155	HILLSBORO ROAD		1,390	SEARCH FOR SERENITY		450
BIKERS IN RECOVERY	47	438	HILLWOOD FAMILY		200	SEEKING SANITY		1,166
BRENTWOOD FULL MOON	300	900	IBI-UBU		325	SERENITY	50	600
BY THE BOOK (LEBANON)		25	JOELTON MEETING	50	50	SHADE TREE		2,222
BY THE BOOK (DICKSON)		151	KEEP IT SIMPLE BELLEVUE	38	827	SISTERS OF FAITH		75
CAME TO BELIEVE		75	KEY TO SOBRIETY		86	SMITH CNTY FRIENDSHIP	50	50
CELEBRATE SERENITY		123	KICKOFF'S NOT TILL NOON		283	SMOKE FREE-Sobriety 1st		212
CHICKEN PLUCKER'S		250	LAFAYETTE NEW HOPE		75	SMYRNA GRATITUDE	100	1,200
CLARKSVILLE		50	LAMBDA		150	SUNDAY NIGHT BUNCH		300
CLUB 62 UNITY		12	LAST CALL		25	TEMPLE HILLS		150
COLUMBIA	20	240	LATE LUNCH BUNCH		1,777	THE BASEMENT BUNCH	75	275
COMFORT ZONE		500	LAVERGNE SOLUTIONS		175	THE HUT		40
COMMUNICATIONS		157	LAWRENCEBURG		80	THE STRAGGLERS	25	150
COOKEVILLE		150	LET IT HAPPEN		50	THE UNITED		400
COOL SPRINGS NEWCOMERS		51	LIFE SAVERS		250	THE WAY OUT		950
CROSSVILLE NON-SMK STEP		71	LINDEN		100	TRUDGING THE ROAD		200
DAILY REPRIEVE		146	LIVING BY THE PRINT		300	TURNING POINT	216	920
DAVIDSON RD	900	5,000	LIVING IN THE NOW	50	85	VALLEYVIEW ASHLAND CITY		160
DAVIDSON RD WOMEN'S		241	LOVE AND LAUGHTER		25	WANGL		128
DEKALB CTY FRIENDSHIP		450	MADE A DECISION		130	WAVERLY		120
DICKSON AA		125	MCMINNVILLE		100	WEEKENDERS	100	200
DISTRICT 9		30	MID-DAY BREAK		1,370	WEST MEADE		200
DONELSON YET	150	255	MT JULIET FELLOWSHIP		325	WEST NASHVILLE		210
DOWNTOWN LUNCH		446	MURFREESBORO	6	58	WESTMINSTER	223	899
DOWNTOWN y		70	MUSIC CITY HAPPY HOUR		100	WHITE HOUSE		160
DROP THE ROCK	50	150	MUSIC ROW		300	WINNERS AND BEGINNERS		256
DRUNKS IN THE PARK		674	MUSTARD SEED	50	600	WOMEN IN THE SOLUTION		283
EAST SIDE SATURDAY		750	NATCHEZ TRACE MEETING		220	WOMEN'S AA		30
EASY DOES IT	358	488	NEEDED MEETING CLOSED		144	WOMEN'S SPEAKER		115
EVERY NIGHT AT 6		339	NIPPERS CORNER MEETING	19	47	WOODBURY		780
FAIRFIELD GLADE		114	NORTH BORO		50	YOUNG GUNS		92
FAYETTEVILLE		110	NORTHSIDE, CLARKSVILLE		225	YOUNG TIMERS		90
FIRST THINGS FIRST		636	OUT TO BREAKFAST	178	238			
FIVE & FIVE		1,225	OUT TO LUNCH BUNCH		445			
FRANKLIN		1,751	P.O.P.		400			
FRANKLIN WOMEN'S		150	PAY DAY		75			
FREE TO BE	150	747	PEACHTREE	25	75			
G.O.D. (GRP OF DRUNKS)		300	PORTLAND UNITY	12	72			

	Mo Amt	YTD Amt
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	3,819	54,382.

DECEMBER 2012 FINANCIALS

	DECEMBER ACTUALS	CURRENT MONTH BUDGET	ACTUALS TO BUDGET- VARIANCE	DECEMBER Y-T-D ACTUALS	CURRENT Y-T-D BUDGET	ACTUALS TO BUDGET- VARIANCE
INCOME						
LITERATURE SALES	9,818	12,435	(2,617)	139,599	149,218	(9,620)
COST OF GOODS SOLD						
LITERATURE	(6,745)	(8,333)	1,588	(96,306)	(100,000)	3,694
FREIGHT	(27)	-	(27)	(389)	-	(389)
DIRECTORY	(276)	(438)	161	(2,324)	(5,250)	2,926
TOTAL COST OF GOODS SOLD	(7,048)	(8,771)	1,723	(99,018)	(105,250)	6,232
GROSS PROFIT - LITERATURE	2,770	3,664	(894)	40,580	43,968	(3,388)
OTHER INCOME						
GROUP	3,843	4,667	(824)	54,652	57,959	(3,307)
INDIVIDUAL	970	292	679	10,161	3,500	6,661
MESSENGER	72	208	(136)	1,227	2,500	(1,273)
SPECIAL EVENTS	2,918	333	2,585	4,898	4,000	898
INTEREST	4	17	(12)	91	200	(108)
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	7,808	5,517	2,291	71,029	68,159	2,871
TOTAL INCOME	10,578	9,181	1,397	111,610	112,127	(517)
EXPENSES						
CASUAL LABOR	-	150	(150)	1,050	1,800	(750)
PAYROLL	3,861	4,122	(261)	52,063	51,340	723
LEGAL & PROFESSIONAL	145	155	(10)	1,730	1,865	(135)
SALES TAX EXPENSE	2	-	2	(1)	-	(1)
RENT	2,255	2,197	58	26,863	26,365	498
PRINTING	-	413	(413)	3,347	4,950	(1,603)
PAYROLL TAXES	295	314	(18)	3,905	3,907	(1)
MAINTENANCE	91	74	17	969	890	79
TELEPHONE & FAX	486	475	11	5,804	5,700	104
ANSWERING SERVICE	370	191	180	2,176	2,286	(110)
POSTAGE	94	100	(6)	1,553	1,200	353
OFFICE SUPPLIES	213	167	46	2,225	2,000	225
BANK SERVICE CHARGES	-	-	-	68	-	68
COMPUTER PROJECT	-	83	(83)	929	1,000	(71)
INTERGROUP EXPENSE	-	83	(83)	280	999	(719)
INSURANCE	-	175	(175)	1,695	2,100	(995)
SPECIAL EVENTS / FUNCTIONS	908	167	742	1,725	2,000	(275)
REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	-	-	-	44	-	44
TRAVEL	365	274	91	2,135	3,290	(1,155)
DEPRECIATION	13	42	(29)	284	500	(216)
OVER/UNDER	(1)	-	(1)	(58)	-	(58)
TOTAL EXPENSES	9,097	9,180	(84)	108,787	112,191	(3,404)
NET INCOME	1,481	0	1,480	2,822	(64)	2,887

BRENTWOOD FULL MOON	
Amanda D	02.02.08
Daniel W	02.13.78
Heather C	02.17.98
Julian F	02.27.10
Katie S	02.21.09
Mike A	02.12.90
Pam M	02.02.12
Patty B	02.08.11
Toni S	02.13.95
Woody M	02.28.10
BRENTWOOD FULL MOON	
Andy E	02.19.09
David B	02.26.92
Don H	02.18.08
Matt L	02.23.10
Mike A	02.12.90
Robert R	02.06.02
Stephie WC	02.02.02
EASY DOES IT	
Fran	02.12.94
Jacalyn	02.15.11
Jimmy	02.22.06
Walter	02.19.07
FELLOWSHIP	
Cody M	02.11.12
Mitch R	02.24.89
Robert T	02.24.06
Rusty B	02.09.94
KEEP IT SIMPLE	
Allen F	02.02.02
Beth B	02.28.11
Burl G	02.05.79
Dave Z	02.12.93
Doug B	02.10.03
DR R	02.14.07
Kim N	02.16.04
Laurie P	02.10.12
Mark P	02.24.96
Todd O	02.12.12
Valerie K	02.17.03
LATE LUNCH BUNCH	
Andy D	02.26.12
Deb SH	02.11.12
Emily W	02.10.12
Jerry M	02.17.11
Jim J	02.08.12
Mark P	02.24.96
Michael D	02.28.91
Robert G	02.28.12
Robin A	02.19.12
Thea P	02.10.00

MID-DAY BREAK	
Alf F	02.11.07
Alisha J	02.13.10
Amy M	02.02.09
Brian C	02.04.12
Clay W	02.20.12
Debra S	02.14.11
Emma B	02.14.92
Jenny B	02.19.11
Jesse L	02.02.93
Kathleen J	02.22.00
Kenny K	02.14.09
Kim H	02.27.09
Musa L	02.16.01
Shanna B	02.24.09
Tatum W	02.12.12
Tim B	02.17.04
MT JULIET FELLOWSHIP	
Jimmy S	02.10.97
MURFREESBORO	
Amy H	02.10.90
Kermit H	02.07.90
NIPPERS CORNER	
Angela W	02.05.10
POP	
Steve F	02.18.00
PORTLAND UNITY	
Ray V	02.??.12
REBOS	
Kenny W	02.06.06
Randy C	02.20.10
Roger H	02.14.93
Scott H	02.19.12
RIDGETOP BASICS	
Rebecca C	02.25.84
Rusty R	02.06.94
SEEKING SANITY	
Bubba W	02.02.09
Carie K	02.05.04
Dave O	02.17.09
David F	02.10.08
James C	02.17.07
John C	02.01.10
Leland G	02.08.08
Lisa C	02.20.85
Micheal H	02.02.12
Nancy R	02.28.11
Peggy H	02.28.11
Renita D	02.24.09
Traci A	02.25.11

SHADE TREE	
Amy H	02.21.06
Angela L	02.23.07
Ann C	02.04.98
Arthur C	02.28.??
Bob O	02.25.09
Bryan F	02.13.03
Carie K	02.05.04
Carol C	02.01.09
Chip C	02.20.06
Chris L	02.07.05
Cindy C	02.14.09
Drew C	02.28.11
Endean D	02.13.05
James E	02.08.95
Jeff L	02.22.01
Jennifer B	02.05.09
Joe C	02.03.05
John G	02.13.11
Joyce D	02.17.08
Kathy W	02.??.09
Kathy W	02.21.08
Kimberly C	02.09.06
Liz E	02.08.09
Lynn H	02.17.09
Martin B	02.18.08
Melissa L	02.09.06
Patsy T	02.01.08
Ramona M	02.09.08
Scott S	02.16.07
Scott W	02.16.10
Shawn R	02.14.08
Tammy H	02.11.12
Woodrow S	02.02.09
SMYRNA GRATITUDE	
Bob C	02.28.12
Chris S	02.11.09
Chrissy H	02.14.07
David S	02.02.09
Don E	02.05.02
Franklin B	02.16.10
Jeff J	02.17.09
Lisa B	02.09.10
Paul C	02.09.09
Randy C	02.19.12
Sandra K	02.07.11
Wendy J	02.14.12
Wendy P	02.03.12
ROBERT E LEE WOMEN'S	
Pam M	02.02.12
Sandy R	02.28.02
Tawanda	02.14.97
WOMEN'S SPEAKER	
Jane Z	02.07.09

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Padlocked to the AA Way of Life

On this date in 1992, I received a call from my sister saying that my Dad had died. I was in the Florida Keys with my wife and sons for Christmas vacation, and had been sober in AA less than 2 years. My first response was to call Buff, my sponsor at the time, and ask for guidance. He suggested that I find a quiet place and thank God for the time I spent with my Dad.

I would have never thought of taking that action on my own.

When my Mom had died four years earlier before I got sober, I had no program, no sponsor, no sobriety. I went straight to the liquor store, and numbed my way through the ordeal of her funeral.

After a quickly-arranged flight back to Nashville that day, we weren't home but a few minutes until I heard a knock on my door. There was Terry S. handing me a platter of sandwiches from some guys in AA. Today, as I look back at that moment, it was right then that I padlocked myself to the AA way of life and to its people. Eight years later, Terry became my sponsor and still is today. Every year I remind him of that day, and he reminds me that he was just following his sponsor's suggestion that day to bring us the sandwiches.

The loving actions we take in recovery can change someone's life forever.

I love this Way of Life!

-Mike A—Nashville, TN

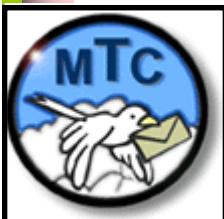
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