

The **MESSENGER**

Middle Tennessee Central Office Intergroup

\$ 1.00

A Volunteer's Journey

**JANUARY
2016**

On a warm autumn morning in 1987, I walked into 202. I was early for the 11:30 meeting, which meant I'd have a few minutes to hang at the half-measures tables downstairs. In those days, 202 was part Zen monastery, part meat market, all three-ring circus. The one exception was Sunday morning, which had a breakfast meeting that was like High Mass at the Vatican. It featured people I figured had sobered up with Bill and Bob. Angie, Joe, Bunny, Dr. Charles and the others were, in my mind, Old Testament characters. I liked and respected them, but they intimidated me. I felt more comfortable around New Testament types like Frank and Sandy and Susan. They had maybe six or eight years, and that was about all I could handle when it came to someone else's sobriety. Anything beyond that and I viewed them as people we ought to name buildings after.

But this was not a Sunday morning, and so the usual weekday characters were there. There was Jimmy Joe from O-hi-o, who might break into song at any moment. There was Wilson, a businessman who did a lot of TV commercials and spent enough time and money in and out of treatment that he should have been a part owner of Cumberland Heights. There was Morris, who had a voice like Chewbacca and spent all his time in a comfortable chair right inside the door. I never saw him in a meeting. There were aspiring playwrights, established country stars, lawyers, priests, street people, and out-of-work writers like me. Between us, we were addicted to a lot more than alcohol, but we learned pretty quickly that the steps would work on anything and that working on ourselves was the bottom line.

Anyway, I walked in and there at a table sat my sponsor—the aforementioned Frank, who had just celebrated his eighth A.A. birthday. He was sitting with an attractive young woman and he waved me over.

"Ace," he said, for Frank called me Ace more often than not, precisely because I was not an Ace. I was still fresh and generally clueless. "This is Jackie."

I said hello and sat down.

"Jackie's working with Lauretta at Central

Office," Frank said. Lauretta was Old Testament. She and some others had founded Central Office eight or nine years earlier. "She's going to take over before long as office manager."

"That's great," I said.

"We're always looking for volunteers," Jackie said, "people to answer phones and sell literature."

"I've only got six months sober" (I figured that would get me out of any volunteering).



"That's perfect! Six months is the requirement. When can you start?"

"What?". I could feel the steel jaws of the trap cutting into my leg.

"I've got openings on Mondays and Wednesdays."

At the time, I worked setting type from 4 p.m.-midnight, and that left my days open. With Frank sitting there looking at me, my fate was sealed.

"How about Wednesday?" I asked. At least that bought me two extra days.

"I've got morning or afternoon."

"It'll have to be mornings."

"Be there at 9," she said. "It's on Bandywood in Green Hills."

And so I started working at Central Office. If I had to guess, I'd say it was October 14, 1987. I've been coming every other Wednesday since, which means I've

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got 28 years of phone calls and Big Book sales, of talking to sober and drunk alcoholics and their wives, husbands, mothers and children. At this point, I've had six Central Office managers, four Central Office locations, and plenty of adventures, a few of which I thought I'd share.

—I worked an extra shift when “My Name is Bill W”, a terrific TV movie with James Woods as Bill Wilson and James Garner as Dr. Bob, aired as a Hallmark Hall of Fame special on the evening of April 30, 1989. Coincidentally, I think that's when my knowledge peaked. For a while there, I knew everything. I've been getting dumber ever since. The local station put our number at the bottom of the screen and urged people who thought they had a drinking problem to call. I got just three or four calls, but they turned into great, heartfelt conversations.

—We were on Thompson Lane a few years later (after a stint in the Kinnard Building on 21st Avenue South) when my shift partner showed up drunk. Now, I've had quite a few interesting shift partners as a volunteer, including Pam, a fellow writer and wonderful conversationalist who's been my partner for many years now, but this guy was a first. He was, to quote Bill Wilson, “boiled as an owl.”

This is interesting, I thought.

“We've got a situation here,” the office manager, Don R., said when I went into his office to talk about it. Don was an interesting character. He had four different five-year chips. You read that right. He got drunk after five years sober three different times. Then, finally he got five years and kept going. He died with eight years sober.

“What are we going to do?” he said.

“Well, he can't be answering the phones and dealing with walk-ins the way he is.”

“No,” he said. “Tell him he's got to go home.”

“Me?!” I said.

“Yes, you. You know him better than I do.”

I took a deep breath and walked to his desk. Being a drunk, he denied being drunk, and it took me about ten minutes of verbal thrust and parry before he finally took off.

—There were times when I'd take 12-step calls myself after my shift. I knew, when the caller sounded really drunk, to cut my losses and say,

“Sober up and call back tomorrow.” But sometimes I'd pick up another sober drunk and visit someone who was drinking and scared or newly sober and shaky and still coherent enough that a discussion would actually help. Once, when I couldn't find another sober drunk, I picked a guy up at a motel after my shift. He seemed fairly sober but he also seemed like the type who'd be working people for money or a crash pad. We got out of the car at 202 and he pulled it out and started taking a leak right there in the parking lot. I was not in great control of my profanity level at the time and I let him have it. He shrugged it off and went inside. I went home, letting those inside the building sort out whatever adventures were to follow.

—Peggy B.C. and I had a running joke—at least, I think it was a joke. Please don't ask her. She kept me on probation pretty much the whole time she was office manager, usually because there was always something I still didn't know that I should. It would be written on the chalkboard. “Rob S.— on probation as of ____.” It would list the date, sort of like those, “101 days without an accident” signs.

Through it all, I've had a clear-as-water vision of why I volunteer. It's because when I actually got serious about sobering up, I called Central Office here in Nashville. A sweet older woman named Mary answered the phone. She talked to me, not down to me, and she seemed happy inside her skin and with her sobriety. She was friendly and charming and professional, and AA, which had intimidated me a bit, no longer seemed so daunting. That's when I understood that AA is just people like me, sober a day at a time and happily trudging the road. I met Mary when I started working at Central Office, and she was as lovely in person as she was over the phone. I hope she understood just how grateful I was—and still am.

And every time I work at Central Office now, I want to be somebody's Mary. The longer I show up and volunteer, the more chance I have to be just that.

*Rob S. - Hermitage Group
Nashville TN – Central Office Volunteer*

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

***There is a beautiful white bear
in the zoo who, some days, is
very playful and friendly and
other days he just lies in a
dark corner and doesn't move.***

He's a bipolar bear.

Embroidering Resentments

Years of AA and Step work showed him that he could cut the thread on his anger

Despite numerous opportunities over the years to recognize the truth, I did not perceive myself as an angry or resentful person. The most telling opportunity to glimpse the truth occurred when I was in a play in college. The director commented of my performance that, "Anger is the only emotion you do well."

I "did anger" realistically, as opposed to well, because I was eaten up with it. A rational person would have grasped this after completing a Fourth Step that was 31 pages long in which 157 resentments were carefully catalogued. I was not a rational person, however. Reality began to intrude when I did Step 5 with my kind and deeply spiritual sponsor.

After patiently listening for several hours, my sponsor got up to leave. As he opened the door, he turned around and mentioned, "You did not say whether you had a resentment toward God. You might consider it." This got my attention because it was true. God had not made my list! It would be nice to report that this struck me like a bolt of lightning from the sky and that suddenly all was well. This would not be true though. Instead, my sponsor's acute observation began a gradual process in which I realized that I was steeped in anger and resentment. This realization freed me to move forward with the 12 Steps.

Laboring over Step 8, I wrestled with whether I was willing to make amends to all those I had harmed and specifically to

my father. My resentment and anger toward my father was justifiable, I reasoned. Therefore, I concluded I did not owe him an amends. During a meeting, however, someone read this passage from the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions from page 90: "Nor were we ever skillful in separating justified from unjustified anger. As we saw it, our wrath was always justified. Anger, that occasional luxury of more balanced people, could keep us on an emotional jag indefinitely."



I could not deny or rationalize this simple truth. I added my father to my list and moved on to Step 9. I decided to write my father and tell him how much I loved and respected him. As I wrote him, I could feel years of anger and ambivalence slipping away. Shortly thereafter, he wrote back a generous, loving letter that still brings tears to my eyes now, many years later. Steps 4, 5, 8, and 9 provided the vehicle by which I recognized my resentments toward God and my father. In turn, this led to reconciliation and healing with both.

Years of "pink cloud" sobriety ensued. If I had resentment, I examined my motives

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THE MESSAGE OF OUR MEETINGS

Tales of our antics in active alcoholism may be funny. Stories of our old bizarre reactions to life when drinking may be interesting. But they tend to carry the mess more than the message. Philosophical arguments on the nature of God are fascinating. Discussions of current controversies have their place-however, it's not at an AA meeting.

Those times when we grow disgusted with meetings and find ourselves complaining that "they don't know how to share" or "it was another whining session" are probably indications that we need to take a good, hard look at how we share.

What we share about how we got into recovery and how we stayed here through practicing the Twelve Steps is the real message of recovery. That's what we are all looking for when we go to a meeting. Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic, and what we share at meetings can either contribute significantly to this effort or detract greatly. The choice, and the responsibility, is ours.

Just for today: I will share my recovery at an AA meeting.

Embroidering Resentments

(Continued from page 3)

and conduct. If I owed an amends, I made it promptly. Regardless, I prayed for the other person, asking the best for them. I let go and let God. About two years ago, however, I found myself resenting my life partner and some of my co-workers. I prayed for them but the resentments recurred. I became obsessed with the resentments. One Saturday morning last summer, I was showering and was mad about having to go to work.

In addition, I was embroidering an elaborate resentment toward my companion sleeping innocently nearby. Having worked myself into a literal and figurative lather, I was seized by a sudden inspiration: I did not have to be angry. I had a choice. This insight was liberating.

My serenity returned only to be shaken a few months later when a co-worker did something that sent me into paroxysms of anger and self-righteousness. I tried praying for the person and to be released from my resentment and my desire for vengeance. When the resentment did not go away, I spoke about my problem at a meeting. The chairperson picked up her Big Book and turned to this passage at page 552:

CENTRAL OFFICE OFFICERS	NAME	PHONE #
Chairperson	Drew T	615.440.3991
Central Office Manager	Charles C	615.973.9898
Central Office Bookkeeper	David W	615.973.9962
Vice Chairperson	Travis D	615.642.1027
Secretary	Jennifer S	615.218.0883
Treasurer	Garrett D	615.957.7674
Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community	Al C	615.587.1616
Special Needs	Reanate M	615.625.8483
Corrections	Vacant	
Treatment Facilities	Jennifer S	615.415.4177
Archives	Everett C	615.226.4880
Events Chair(formerly Sobriety Din-	Tina H	615.351.0501

It took three weeks but it worked. My resentment is gone. The passage, by the way, is from the story, "Freedom from Bondage." How very appropriate. Anger is an emotion and, as such, is neither inherently good nor bad. The issue is what we do with our anger. In the past, I either subjected

"If you have a resentment you want to be free of, if you will pray for the person or the thing you resent, you will be free. If you will ask in prayer for everything you want for yourself to be given to them, you will be free. Ask for their health, their prosperity, their happiness, and you will be free. Even when you don't really want it for them and your prayers are only words and you don't mean it, go ahead and do it anyway. Do it every day for two weeks, and you will find you have come to mean it and to want it for them, and you will realize that where you used to feel bitterness and resentment and hatred, you now feel compassionate understanding and love."

others to my wrath or I permitted deep resentment to take root.

I am an alcoholic and I cannot afford the dubious luxury of anger or resentment. I am more grateful than I can express for the many gifts God and Alcoholics Anonymous have bestowed on me. Of these gifts, one of the greatest has been liberation from my corrosive, all-consuming anger and resentment. I sometimes wonder what happened to the director of the college play. He was wrong: I did not do anger well. In fact, I have learned to try hard not to "do anger" at all.

—Bob B., Beaumont, Texas

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A Chihuahua, a Doberman and a Bulldog are in a bar having a drink when a great-looking female Collie comes up to them and says, "Whoever can say liver and cheese in a sentence can have me."

So the Doberman says, "I love liver and cheese."

And the Chihuahua says, "Liver alone . . . cheese mine."

**FIRST TUESDAY OF
EVERY MONTH:
District 30 Meeting
When: 6:30pm – 7:30pm
Where: 5925 O'Brien**
SECOND MONDAY OF

**EVERY MONTH:
Intergroup Meeting
When: 5:45pm – 6:45pm
Where: Central Office 417
Welshwood
STEERING
COMMITTEE**

**When: Monday January 26th
5:45pm – 6:45pm
Where: Central Office
417 Welshwood
FIRST TUESDAY OF
EVERY MONTH:
District 32 Meeting**

**When: 6:30pm
Where: Club 62
329 Peachtree**

P	Z	G	V	W	V	E	L	C	S	E	Y	E	Q	C	B	K	X	I	M	T	W	D	E	G
H	C	L	K	B	K	M	T	Z	M	W	C	X	G	M	V	X	Y	G	N	P	R	L	H	S
U	L	O	C	Q	S	V	H	Q	V	D	L	P	Q	C	I	L	E	G	F	E	T	D	E	R
O	U	W	B	Z	C	Z	B	E	U	Z	C	P	X	K	B	X	O	R	A	D	Q	P	S	K
J	Z	I	D	Z	O	G	K	T	W	U	J	R	B	A	Q	Q	A	R	U	P	L	R	J	L
U	R	N	E	T	E	S	D	Q	G	M	S	A	C	F	U	L	Y	M	R	C	Z	S	B	I
S	V	G	N	A	U	Q	S	I	F	T	W	I	W	K	P	C	H	O	Q	O	Y	I	M	V
H	B	H	N	F	J	V	Q	L	J	T	L	K	E	K	J	S	R	P	J	T	W	Z	Z	Y
Q	T	B	I	H	D	D	H	Y	B	P	D	R	W	I	C	O	A	E	G	I	N	Z	J	C
M	F	Y	K	E	D	F	E	S	X	N	E	X	L	T	Y	M	F	N	I	U	U	M	H	J
R	D	Q	S	U	N	Y	O	E	O	C	B	W	T	T	N	E	R	E	F	F	I	D	I	Y
D	M	E	H	R	U	T	N	H	T	M	R	U	H	Y	P	U	V	D	J	K	J	G	I	L
N	R	R	S	C	X	I	A	V	V	P	E	A	S	D	G	M	Z	D	D	H	K	F	N	A
T	P	E	E	C	A	L	Q	O	H	F	I	T	S	L	F	I	X	C	I	H	X	W	R	N
I	G	H	R	Y	C	I	P	Q	L	K	Y	N	H	U	J	R	O	O	D	H	U	T	J	P
O	J	T	F	S	G	T	D	M	I	U	K	Z	J	I	M	R	X	U	E	G	C	D	Z	K
M	B	C	C	T	Y	U	U	A	C	A	O	S	V	P	N	W	E	L	N	X	F	J	X	C
F	Y	C	B	O	X	F	B	J	R	R	P	L	W	L	W	G	O	I	D	D	B	U	S	H
A	O	A	E	O	S	O	V	O	A	S	I	S	H	Y	A	C	M	M	W	F	C	E	U	S
V	V	A	O	D	U	C	S	O	L	P	T	Y	A	N	D	O	T	Y	M	V	U	W	E	Q
G	F	J	S	T	B	C	O	T	B	O	W	N	T	M	C	J	R	J	Z	X	G	T	R	Y
K	R	R	A	U	N	E	F	N	I	E	G	Y	Q	H	A	F	Q	B	V	K	B	Q	F	Y
G	Q	G	O	O	E	W	W	M	S	L	H	W	L	I	D	U	E	D	P	V	V	I	X	O
O	K	E	R	R	P	Y	O	L	L	K	I	D	C	N	L	B	I	D	Q	N	I	T	N	D
D	J	X	O	X	G	H	F	B	O	E	R	S	W	M	Z	V	D	A	H	R	F	J	R	J
T	I	T	K	A	W	N	H	A	P	P	E	N	E	D	N	J	F	S	S	C	G	N	L	J
T	J	H	F	B	R	N	N	V	N	S	X	N	S	T	J	B	E	R	U	T	I	I	E	I
P	C	B	B	B	O	O	S	J	J	C	B	U	P	A	B	O	C	T	V	J	Z	D	N	I
H	A	N	U	K	F	J	G	H	F	V	O	U	P	H	M	H	A	J	S	H	N	J	Q	K
M	X	G	F	R	F	R	E	A	F	K	K	S	D	E	Q	O	K	I	F	L	V	K	H	Z

Find the CAPITALIZED words below.

His COMING was an OASIS in this DREARY DESERT of FUTILITY. The DOOR OPENED and he STOOD there, FRESH-SKINNED and GLOWING. THERE was SOMETHING ABOUT his EYES. He was INEXPLICABLY DIFFERENT. WHAT HAD HAPPENED?

UNITY

The First Tradition has been called our unity statement. Unity is imperative if AA will survive for the next suffering alcoholic who comes through the door. But too often the word "unity" is misunderstood. Often we interpret it as "coming together in a common place"; or, "superficial friendliness and jovial glad-handing"; or even, "public displays of affection (such as hugging)." In truth, while such public expressions may accompany unity, it goes much deeper than these surface levels.

Yes, we share a common malady--our alcoholism--but anyone who has ever frequented the bar life can tell you that commonality in our illness alone produces little unity.

The Big Book says, "Love and tolerance of others is our code." In truth, this is the basis of real unity. Genuine love can come only from the source of love, which we call our Higher Power; tolerance, in turn, is the expression of this love toward our fellows. Tolerance is easy to practice toward those of our fellows with whom we share more than one commonality. For example, it's natural to tolerate people with whom we share a socio-economic status, interests and hobbies, education or (perceived) intellectual level; but what about those of divergent religious, political, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds? Can we be tolerant of them as well?

Since its beginning, AA has tried to foster a climate of acceptance of everyone who has a desire to stop drinking, regardless of background. The short form of our Third Tradition reminds us: "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." In its zeal to accomplish this end, it even added the words "as we understood him" to the word "God" in the Third Step, allowing each person to choose his own conception of God in the hope that this word need be a barrier to none who wish to practice our program of recovery. Thereafter, Christians, Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, even agnostics and atheists--at last permitted to seek their own conception of a Higher Power--were able to find recovery from our common illness. This tolerance was key to AA's success and survival.

But tolerance is a two-way street. Living in the Ozarks (firmly located in "The Bible Belt"), I experience frequent examples of low-key "evangelizing" in my AA meetings. This is a subtle form of intolerance that is usually tolerated by other members so long as it doesn't get too far over the line. But occasionally, newcomers, who are not yet aware of the bounds of religious decorum in meetings, do cross that nebulous line, angering those of an agnostic tendency. I recently found myself in just such a meeting.

A young newcomer, returning from morning mass still attired in his white shirt and tie, attended the 10 A.M. meeting of my home group. The meeting included a young lady--also a newcomer, who declares herself an avowed atheist--and an older man who refers to himself as a Wiccan. As the meeting progressed, an elderly old-timer boldly declared his faith in Jesus Christ. Feeling thus emboldened by the comments of the old-timer, the young male newcomer then whipped out a pocket Bible and proceeded to read. As if on the sound of "charge," half the group bolted upright and stormed from the meeting, leaving the young man puzzled. I myself felt embarrassed and ashamed.

After the meeting, I approached the young Bible-reader. I told him that I, myself, though not a church-goer, am also a Bible-reader. However, I said, such readings are not appropriate

in an AA meeting, where members of various beliefs attend. I also suggested to the old-timer that perhaps he should go easy on the "J.C." talk. When the Wiccan asserted himself, I also reminded him that Wicca is a religion and not to be promoted in AA.

As I said earlier, tolerance is a two-way street. At the 10 A.M. meeting the following day, virtually the same crowd appeared, except the young Bible-reader. I introduced the topic of "tolerance" for the discussion, and then gently challenged those present about their behavior at the previous day's meeting. I said that tolerance must be practiced both ways--both toward those of an agnostic tendency and toward believers with an evangelical tendency.

AA's unity does not depend on uniformity or even conformity; it depends on love and tolerance of others with their peculiarities. In AA, I've learned to focus on similarities, not differences. AA is not the place for debates about religious dogma, but when newcomers attend, such slip-ups are inevitable. This is when tolerance is most applicable.

Narrow-minded bigotry has no place in AA. We neither promote nor attack another member's religious beliefs; nor is it our job to try to convert anyone to ours. We in AA are here to save drunks, not souls!

DAVE C.—Springfield, Mo.

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*Area 64 First Quarter Assembly
Hosted by District 11*

ROCKETED INTO A 4th DIMENSION



**January 29th – 31st
Manchester, TN 37106**

*Holiday Inn Express & Suites
Phone: 931-728-9383
111 Hospitality Blvd.
Manchester, TN 37160*

*Room Rate: \$95.00
Cut-off: January 20, 2016
Rate Code: AREA 64
Contact info: JEFF GILLEY
931-619-8716*



When Do I Need a Meeting?



When I need some peace of mind.

I need a meeting.

When I don't know what to do with my time.

I need a meeting.

When I feel like splitting for a desert island.

I need a meeting.

When I think I don't need a meeting.

I need a meeting.

When I start thinking I can think for myself.

I need a meeting.

When I'm worried about everyone but myself.

I need a meeting.

When I start thinking I can cut down because I've made a meeting every night for a month and I'm feeling fine.

I need a meeting.

When I start feeling guilty, or sad, or lonely and "need time for myself". *I need a meeting.*

When mom says you can afford to miss "just this once" in honor of your Aunt Tilley's birthday.

I need a meeting.

When the kids have been sick, or my temper's too quick, when my heads in a fog and I'm kicking the dog, when I can't find my reason, or time's changing the season, things are good or they're bad, or I'm happy or sad, when I'm falling in love, or can't find my glove and it's 20 below, "that guys driving too slow!", "this one's driving me nuts", I've got squirrels in my guts, if it's starting to rain, if I'm feeling no pain, got a zit on my face and a broken shoe lace and I hear myself saying "Yeah, but ... *I need a meeting.*"



A Rabbi and a Priest buy a car together and it's being stored at the Priest's house.

One day the Rabbi goes over to use the car and he sees him sprinkling water on it.

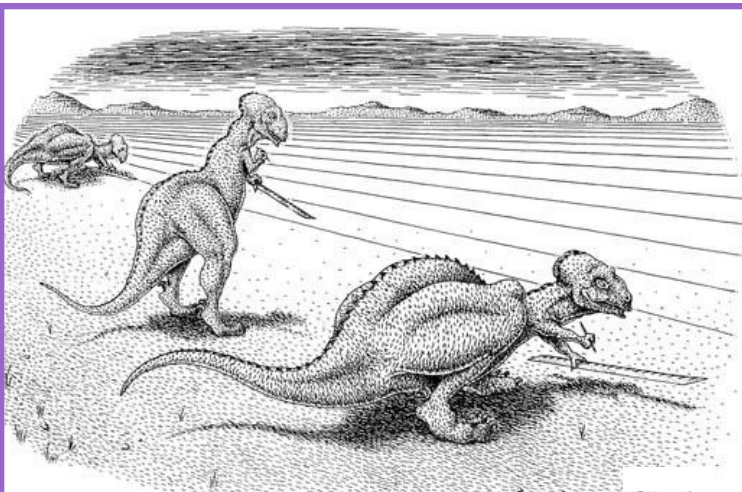
The Rabbi asked, "What are you doing?"

The Priest responded, "I'm blessing the car."

So the Rabbi said "Okay, since we're doing that....", takes out a hacksaw and cuts two inches off the tail pipe.



"No doubt about it, Bob ... You're infected with tiny fighter planes. What's worse ... you're a carrier."



When dinosaurs ruled the earth.

NEW / MOVES / CHANGES / ADDITIONS / CANCELLATIONS		
37040	Cancel	Road of Happy Destiny - 2p Sunday
37064	Address Change	Celebrate Serenity - 828 Murfreesboro Rd. (Church of the City-small white house)
37115	Cancel	Serenity House - 8p Sunday
37122	Add	Key To Sobriety - Tues Noon

WHATEVER IT TAKES

A performance artist makes the time to help a fellow drunk

The cute blond on the bar stool reached out her hands for me. "Hey, Sweetie, did you find the ladies' room?" I nodded my head. As a matter of fact, I had, but this young lady had me confused with someone else.

As a recovering alcoholic of a year and a half, I inwardly smiled at inebriated ladies. Because I am a spoken word poet, I still sometimes frequent nightclubs and bars--strictly sober this time. "Oh, I'm sorry," she said, obviously embarrassed. "You are not who I thought you were. I'm afraid I've had a bit too much to drink."

"No problem," I answered pleasantly. "I certainly understand. That has happened to me."

The bartender refilled my glass with club soda and a lime. Although I had never chatted with him about my sobriety, he knew me well enough to keep those club sodas coming.

When I got sober, I was concerned that I would have to give up my stage appearances and my social life. Through the power of the Twelve Steps, I have learned how to avoid alcohol and continue the art I love. I had begun drinking because of my constant contact with nightclubs. Just a glass of wine here and there. Then more.

Four years later, I was a full-fledged alcoholic waking up with the shakes, downing eighteen ounces of straight Scotch every night, and driving to work with a hangover every morning. That was just the weekdays. The weekends were far worse. Every Sunday I stayed in bed nursing a hangover.

A good party was when I vomited on the way home so I could sleep without the dizzy bed syndrome. My performances were characterized by slurring and giggling. I could no longer walk across a stage or daintily step over microphone cords.

What had started out to be fun had become a nightmare. The last year I drank, I lost part of my liver function. Through AA, I learned how to deal with life on its own terms and enjoy myself in the environment I still loved. The alcohol was not a threat to me. I knew what horror hid inside the bottle.

The young lady was now asking, "Don't you drink?"

"Not any more," I said, and tried to change the subject. I work hard to not make an issue out of my sobriety when I am out. I was at a poetry open mike with people who chose to drink--not at a meeting!

She wouldn't let it drop. "You used to drink?" she persisted.

"Yes," I said. "I learned I couldn't handle it. Have you heard this poet before?" I asked.

"When did you know you had to stop?" She was looking at me quite earnestly now, ignoring the poet on the stage. She really wanted to know. Suddenly I recognized that look she was giving me. She was asking for help.

Gently, I took her by the arm and led her to a quiet spot in the club. In a lowered voice, I told her some of my story. I asked her some of the questions from the AA World Services website. I ended by saying, "If you are asking yourself that question, the time to stop is probably now. Later, you may not be able to."

I told her to get in touch with AA and prayed with her to the clink of glasses and the beat of the music. That night on stage, I chose to do my "drunk poem," where I tell my story in spoken word verse. She watched me raptly. As I left the club, she smiled and waved. Her husband thanked me.

I learned that night that there is no perfect time to share the message. I must be available whenever and wherever my Higher Power needs me. I have wondered about that woman many times. Wherever she is, I hope she is doing well. I listen carefully to people out in public now. My reluctance to avoid preaching almost kept me from sharing a message with someone who was asking for help.

Lori T—Grand Prairie, TX
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GROUP/MEETING	Dist	Nov	YTD
11TH STEP MTG	30	-	73
21st AVENUE	30	-	167
24 HOUR	32	-	550
60 MINUTES	64	140	250
ANONYMOUS		96	718
ANY LENGTHS	13	150	325
BACK ROOM	35	2,571	4,982
BACK TO THE BIG BOOK	12	-	220
BELLEVUE WINNERS & BEG	35	-	100
BRENTWOOD FULL MOON	33	-	1,329
BY THE BOOK -DICKSON	15	-	257
CAME TO BELIEVE	33	205	305
CAMELS		15	50
CELEBRATE SERENITY		-	425
CHICKEN PLUCKERS MEN'S	33	-	376
CLARKSVILLE	14	-	100
CLUB 62 UNITY	32	-	10
COLUMBIA	40	-	220
COMFORT ZONE	15	-	630
COOL SPRINGS NEWCOMERS	33	-	456
CROSSVILLE NON -SMK STEP	9	17	57
CUMBERLAND UNITY	13	-	100
DAILY REPRIEVE	13	-	146
DAVIDSON ROAD	30	900	5,050
DICKSON AA	15	-	600
DISTRICT 11	11	-	120
DONELSON YET	31	-	100
DOWNTOWN LUNCH BUNCH	32	180	499
DROP THE ROCK		-	100
DRUNKS IN THE PARK	33	350	1,427
EAST NASHVILLE 86'ers	34	-	309
EAST NASHVILLE MEN'S STAG	34	-	600
EAST NASHVILLE WOMENS	31	-	138
EAST SIDE SATURDAY MTG		283	1,053
EASY DOES IT (MT JULIET)	31	-	275
EVERY NIGHT AT 6	32	-	58
FAIRFIELD GLADE	9	17	151
FAIRVIEW	33	50	250
FAYETTEVILLE	40	-	85
FIRST THINGS FIRST	34	-	1,070
FIVE & FIVE	30	-	648
FRANKLIN 12&12	33	-	200
FRANKLIN 4TH BB STUDY	33	-	200
FRANKLIN	33	-	1,950
FRANKLIN MEN'S	33	-	400
FRANKLIN ROAD WOMEN'S	33	-	300
FREE TO BE MTG	31	-	558
FRIDAY NIGHT PRIME TIME	33	-	25
G.O.D. (GROUP OF DRUNKS)	40	-	150
GLADEVILLE GRATITUDE	13	-	98
GOODLETTSVILLE A.A.	34	-	226
GRATEFUL ALIVE	33	115	191
GRATITUDE	11	-	25
GRATITUDE - MANCHESTER		-	50
HAPPY HOUR- COOKEVILLE	9	-	100
HARDING ROAD	30	-	400
HENDERSONVILLE BB	34	-	50
HERMITAGE	31	-	200
HIGH NOON	34	-	1,280
HILLSBORO ROAD	32	-	250
HOPE PARK AA LIT STUDY	30	-	180
KEEP IT SIMPLE BELLEVUE	33	-	413
KEY TO SOBRIETY	31	-	400
LADIES NIGHT OUT	34	-	50
LATE LUNCH BUNCH	33	-	1,750
LAWRENCEBURG	41	-	40
LET IT HAPPEN	35	-	100

GROUP/MEETING	Dist	Nov	YTD
LEWISBURG UNITY	41	-	21
LIFE SAVERS	30	-	250
LIVE & LET LIVE	9	-	25
LIVING BY THE PRINT SAT	30	-	375
MADE A DECISION		-	205
MIDDAY BREAK	32	125	686
MONDAY NIGHT MTG		-	17
MT JULIET FELLOWSHIP	31	-	250
MURFREESBORO	12	15	165
MUSIC ROW	30	-	300
MUSTARD SEED	32	300	600
NOW	30	-	85
NEW BEGINNINGS(Dist 12)	12	20	160
NEW LIFE H-VILLE	34	45	75
NIPPERS CORNER	32	-	46
NO NONSENSE	32	-	110
NORTHSIDE , CLARKSVILLE	14	-	225
ON AWAKENING		-	25
ONE DAY AT A TIME	31	-	800
ONE STEP CLOSER	33	-	581
OUT TO BREAKFAST	30	-	169
OUT TO LUNCH BUNCH	14	-	379
PAGE 112	31	-	46
PAY DAY	15	-	125
PORTLAND UNITY	13	-	65
PRIMARY PURPOSE	34	130	552
PRIMETIMERS	33	175	175
PULASKI	40	15	90
REBOS (SOBER)	34	-	210
RIDGETOP BASICS	34	-	44
ROBERTSON COUNTY	14	-	25
RUTS	40	-	100
SAFE HARBOR (D14)	14	-	350
SAFE PLACE		150	223
SANGO SOLUTIONS		-	60
SATURDAY NIGHT ALIVE	11	-	70
SEARCH FOR SERENITY	34	120	360
SEARCHERS	34	-	200
SEEKING SANITY	31	-	1,264
SERENITY (12)	12	50	550
SHADE TREE	31	-	5,940
SHELBYVILLE	11	-	300
SMITH COUNTY FRIENDSHIP	13	-	200
SMYRNA GRATITUDE	12	101	1,940
SUNDAY NIGHT BUNCH	32	100	200
TCYPAA	32	-	33
THE STRAGGLERS	33	480	480
THE THREE LEGACIES	34	-	13
THE UNITED	13	-	600
TRINITY	11	-	50
TRUDGING THE ROAD	33	-	130
TURNING POINT	33	-	147
VALLEYVIEW-ASHLAND CITY	15	-	1,241
WANGL	30	-	265
WAVERLY	15	-	68
WAVERLY-BELMONT	32	-	100
WEEKENDERS	34	-	50
WEST MEADE	30	-	100
WEST NASHVILLE	35	-	78
WESTMINSTER	30	-	216
WINNERS	41	71	71
WOMEN IN THE SOLUTION	11	86	447
WOMEN'S FREEDOM MTG	30	-	350
WOMENS SPEAKER MTG	30	-	285
YOUNG TIMERS	32	-	79
Grand total:		7,072	57,401

Middle Tennessee Intergroup Association
Statement of Activities - Actual and Budgeted - Schedule 1
For the Month and the Eleven Months Ended November 30, 2015

	November 2015			YTD 2015		
	Actual	Budget	Budget Variance	Actual	Budget	Budget Variance
Income						
Literature Sales	\$ 8,767.38	16,230.00	(7,462.62)	\$ 117,738.20	178,530.00	(60,791.80)
Literature Purchases	(5,975.84)	(11,355.00)	5,379.16	(75,440.67)	(124,905.00)	49,464.33
Freight In	(13.67)	(41.00)	27.33	(414.67)	(451.00)	36.33
Net Literature Sales	2,777.87	4,834.00	(2,056.13)	41,882.86	53,174.00	(11,291.14)
Non Profit Income	-	-	-	-	-	-
Group Donations	7,203.51	5,166.00	2,037.51	58,194.19	56,826.00	1,368.19
Individual Donations	870.96	366.00	504.96	3,528.74	4,026.00	(497.26)
Messenger Donations	108.00	29.00	79.00	240.00	319.00	(79.00)
Website Donations	-	-	-	2,727.20	-	2,727.20
Special Events	4,040.00	333.00	3,707.00	4,800.00	3,663.00	1,137.00
Interest	2.71	1.00	1.71	22.94	11.00	11.94
Total Income	15,003.05	10,729.00	4,274.05	111,395.93	118,019.00	(6,623.07)
Expenses						
Casual Labor	200.00	200.00	-	2,200.00	2,200.00	-
Payroll	6,054.38	4,783.00	1,271.38	51,690.04	52,613.00	(922.96)
Bad Debts	-	-	-	66.70	-	66.70
Legal & Professional	350.00	200.00	150.00	4,133.75	2,200.00	1,933.75
Sales Tax Expense	-	-	-	0.04	-	0.04
Rent	946.00	1,000.00	(54.00)	10,997.71	11,000.00	(2.29)
Printing	-	333.00	(333.00)	1,214.36	3,663.00	(2,448.64)
Payroll Taxes	463.16	320.00	143.16	3,954.28	3,520.00	434.28
Repairs & Maintenance	50.00	97.00	(47.00)	550.00	1,067.00	(517.00)
Equipment Rental	103.00	120.00	(17.00)	1,218.56	1,320.00	(101.44)
Telephone & Fax	496.38	541.00	(44.62)	4,867.18	5,951.00	(1,083.82)
Answering Service	195.00	233.00	(38.00)	2,394.00	2,563.00	(169.00)
Postage	41.49	200.00	(158.51)	1,319.54	2,200.00	(880.46)
Office Supplies	84.73	250.00	(165.27)	2,442.04	2,750.00	(307.96)
Computer & Technology	69.74	250.00	(180.26)	1,342.53	2,750.00	(1,407.47)
Intergroup Expense	-	125.00	(125.00)	541.40	1,375.00	(833.60)
Insurance	-	200.00	(200.00)	1,778.00	2,200.00	(422.00)
Special Events	1,590.09	191.00	1,399.09	1,590.09	2,101.00	(510.91)
Travel	-	333.00	(333.00)	2,383.84	3,663.00	(1,279.16)
Furnishings	204.86	-	204.86	204.86	-	204.86
Depreciation	7.92	50.00	(42.08)	87.12	550.00	(462.88)
Total Expenses	10,856.75	9,426.00	1,430.75	94,976.04	103,686.00	(8,709.96)
Net Income	\$ 4,146.30	1,303.00	2,843.30	\$ 16,419.89	14,333.00	2,086.89

A stupid guy dies and goes to Heaven.

The gatekeeper of Heaven says, "Heaven is getting too full, so you have to pass this quiz to get in. First question: which two days of the week begin with T?"

The guy replies, "That's easy. Today and tomorrow."

The gatekeeper says, "OK, I'll give it to you. Second question: how many seconds are in a year?"

The stupid guy says, "Twelve: January 2nd, February 2nd... ."

The gatekeeper says, "OK, OK, I'll give it to you. Last question: what is God's first name?"

The stupid guy replies, "Howard."

The gatekeeper asks, "How on earth did you get Howard?"

The guy says, "It's right there in the prayer: Our father, who art in heaven, Howard be thy name."

A woman hiking in Yellowstone Park was chased by a grizzly bear and she ran to a ranger station where she was arrested by park rangers.

It's illegal to run through the park with a bear behind.

JANUARY

DONELSON YET

Denise S	01.18.95
Walter L	01.09.91

NEW DAY

Haley J	01.21.15
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SHADE TREE

Ann Clark	01.21.13
Barclay R	01.01.90
Becky R	01.13.15
Bob A	01.10.15
Brandon P	01.20.13
Casey F	01.02.15
Dorothy M	01.12.13
Jim E	01.26.94
LeeAnn C	01.15.15
Lisa MB	01.14.08
Lorie P	01.22.13
Lois B	01.21.09
Marsha r	01.05.09
Mike K	01.20.12
Mike S	01.08.14
Philip H	01.22.15
Randall C	01.09.15
Rebecca A	01.02.15
Rick T	01.11.05
Sharon H	01.13.10
Trevor P	01.28.94
Wayne H	01.17.06
Wendy M	01.21.09



EASY DOES IT

David H	01.16.93
David P	01.26.92
Dottie B	01.31.04
George M	01.22.11
Jeri M	01.06.64
Kim W	01.07.09

FELLOWSHIP

Frances S	01.01.00
Gary W	01.30.12
Jim C	01.01.03
Ray J	01.07.15
Ronnie E	01.07.12
Rudy S	01.02.01

HIGH NOON

Angie E	01.01.99
Angie M	01.01.89
Austin H	01.08.89
Christine C	01.17.99
David D	01.12.11
Kathy G	01.26.13
Mike S	01.15.14
Pam K	01.30.85
Peggy O	01.13.10

LOVE & LAUGHTER

Bob S	01.15.04
Gabby J	01.05.14
Gina M	01.02.02
Jayne S	01.01.06
Ram D	01.11.09

ONE DAY AT A TIME

Amy R	01.28.09
Campbell C	01.28.11
Darryl M	01.22.12
Emily B	01.02.15
Emily S	01.05.80
Jason K	01.10.05
Jesse M	01.08.10
Justin S	01.27.12
Kevin L	01.11.15
Kristina K	04.14.13
Phillip K	01.10.08
Rich F	01.28.11
Scott W	01.23.06
Tony N	01.01.07

POP

Jesse M	01.08.11
---------	----------

PORTLAND UNITY

Dave P	01.25.10
Debra L	01.25.10

SEEKING SANITY

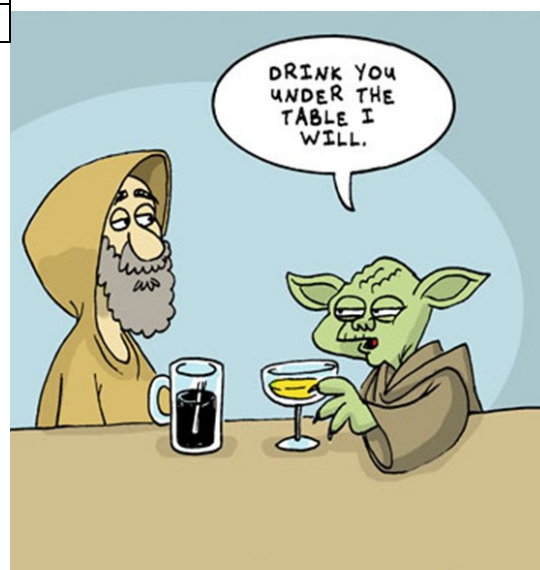
Alex G	01.14.14
Beth M	01.12.08
Christian A	01.28.10
Jennifer H	01.19.12
Jim T	01.19.07
Kay B	01.18.12
Michelle T	01.29.09
Randy M	01.29.07
Rex L	01.28.98
Sean D	01.26.09
Terry W	01.01.98

THE SOLUTION

Karen M	01.01.89
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WOMEN'S SPEAKER

Becky S	01.17.89
Elizabeth G	01.11.79
Mary C	01.09.92
Merle F	01.28.86
Nancy K	01.28.13
Tena S	01.01.15

JANUARY
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