

The MESSENGER

Middle Tennessee Central Office Intergroup

\$ 1.00

Amateurs Anonymous

**APRIL
2016**

Tradition Eight: Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

The first two lines of the long form of Tradition Eight state that "Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire." Several lines further we read: "But our usual AA Twelfth Step work is never to be paid for." These may be the most thoroughly ignored words in all of our Twelve Traditions.

The AA message is a message from one amateur to another amateur. AA didn't begin as one of many ways to help alcoholics. It began because there was nothing else that worked for alcoholics. That's still the case.

Who could possibly misunderstand those words in Tradition Eight? Just about everyone, apparently. When Dr. Vincent Dole retired as Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee some years ago, he said, "My greatest concern for the future of AA is that the principle of personal service might be eroded by money and professionalism." Unfortunately, that's precisely what seems to have happened.

In July 1950, Dr. Bob, speaking of AA's beginning and growth up to that date, said, "Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind but have little to do with our actual AA work." Like Vincent Dole, Bob had an uncannily accurate view of our future. Early in AA's existence, Bill W. was offered a job at Towns Hospital as a paid therapist. Every one of those early AAs said, "Bill, you can't do this to us." Bill would have brought a flood of new business and made money for Towns Hospital and for himself, but what do you think would have happened to our Fellowship if Bill hadn't remained an amateur? With a sharply-focused vision of the real roots of our recovery process, those early members saw the perils.

It seems that the farther we go in time from the experience of our founders, the farther we get from what they actually did. In large part that's what's happened in AA. We have endless books and booklets explaining the Big Book and the Steps. We have workshops on something called "relapse prevention" which overlook the obvious fact that if we work and rework the Twelve Steps, we'll stay sober and enjoy mental and emotional health.

Unquestionably, some alcoholics need medication but most of them with depression, anxiety, apathy, and fear suffer from untreated alcoholism--a result of insufficient continuing work with the Twelve Steps. The AA message is not the joy of therapy or the gospel according to Prozac, but a "spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps." The foreword to the "Twelve and Twelve" says: "AA's Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole."

In my experience that's totally correct.

In the spring of 1948, I heard Paul S. talk in Chicago. He was one of the early Akron AAs and I was sober less than a year at the time. Over and over in his talk he said, "AA is of itself sufficient." If the quality of my life isn't what it should be, the best place for me to go for counseling or therapy is to the Big Book or to an AA member who has done enough continuing work with the Twelve Steps to understand that "how it works" means precisely what it says.



Some years ago I was talking with Dr. Leonard Borman, a research associate at Northwestern University's Center for Urban Affairs and the director of the Center's Self-Help Institute. Borman, who'd spent years studying the development of the self-help movement, told me, "Two principles stand out in AA and the self-help movement. One is that a person who has recovered from a problem can be far more helpful than a professional using only theoretical knowledge. The second is that when an individual helps another without charge, they both benefit."

The Twelve Steps provide a precise formula for sobriety and a road to mental, emotional, and spiritual health. They give directions for lives of expanded joy and usefulness. They also point up the need for continuing work in the Steps for my own recovery and continuing work with other alcoholics to pass on what I've been given at no charge. If we work with another alcoholic a spiritual transaction takes place, and we both benefit. If, on the other hand, we're paid for this, it becomes a monetary transaction and the spiritual component is destroyed.

(Continued on page 6)

STANDING COMMITTEE AND GSR WORKSHOP

9TH Tradition – AA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

On Valentine's Day Eve, District 30 sponsored an afternoon workshop at 5925 O'Brien Avenue. The topic? GSR and Standing Committees. I know, I know. Ugh, right? But let me tell you that the unofficial attendance of 74 were filled with so much passion for carrying the message that the passion was contagious. I had seen the agenda and planned my departure during the break but it didn't take good pizza and deserts to keep me around.

The room was filled with area 64 dignitaries including the current Area 64 Delegate, Tony S, who also chaired the workshop, the Alternate Delegate, Chairperson and four standing committee chairs as well as several past delegates and standing committee chairs. But you could see and it was mentioned more than once that this workshop was all about principles and not personalities.

In an effort to share with other AA's who did not or were not able to attend, **The Messenger** posed some questions to Area 64 Alternate Delegate, **Jon P**, who also represented the host District.

TM – Welcome, Jon, and thank you so much for your service in AA and agreeing to this interview.

JP – It's an honor and a privilege to serve our Fellowship! Thank you for the opportunity to do this interview.

TM – What was your overall assessment of the workshop and mention one or two of the biggest takeaways you received?

JP – It was one of the most informative service workshops I've ever participated in. My biggest takeaway was the enthusiasm of 74 people in a General Service workshop. You never really know what to expect with this kind of workshop but the positive energy of this one was undeniable.

TM – You kicked things off with a discussion of the role and orientation of the GSR. What would you like to convey to those who missed your riveting discussion?

JP – To anyone getting involved in General Service I'd like to say "suit up and show up". The more interest I show in my service position the more interesting it becomes. Attending all District functions and Area 64 Assemblies is maybe the most important thing a GSR does. It is also important for the GSR to attend all home group business meetings and give a thorough report on what's happening at District and Area.

TM – Many groups in Area 64 are small, new or only meet once a week and don't have a GSR or other officers to represent their group. What would suggest to increase their participation at the district and state level?

JP – Someone in a small group has to take the bit in their mouth and step up. True leaders in AA are people who are will to walk into the dark and come back to report to the group about what they find. If this is done with vigor, my experience has been that the group will inevitably grow by leaps and bounds!

M – What item or two stuck with you regarding the five standing committees that were represented?

JP – Corrections - The first presenter was participating on his

first workshop panel but you would have never known because he didn't miss a beat. The reason is because he is grounded in principle and literature. Especially the Corrections Workbook which is a service piece from GSO.

CPC/PI - If you are getting involved in CPC or PI work you don't have to go at it alone. GSO has a wealth of helpful material and information at our disposal.

Grapevine - This is one of the most underutilized 12th STEP tools our Fellowship has to offer. This committee can work in cooperation with all the other committees.

Special Needs - This is a much needed but underdeveloped committee. I would encourage groups and districts to at least put this one on their radar.

Treatment - This has been my primary committee in AA since I've been sober. I have served with both presenters for the last few years on the Area 64 Treatment Committee. Both presenters stressed the need for continuity between the people carrying the message into treatment settings in an area. We have to carry a consistent message and this requires communication!

TM – How do we challenge groups to add Standing Committee Chairs where there are none?

JP – It starts with an informed GSR that reports to their group on a regular basis about different committee needs in their district. When I was a GSR I talked about it and talked about it. When people got sick of hearing me I talked about it some more. One day I looked up and every committee rep. position was filled in my group!

TM – You mentioned the fact that you have a service sponsor and are a service sponsor to others. What is the role of a service sponsor and how does it differ from the sponsor that we all have and love?

JP – My sponsor had never served beyond the group level when I became a GSR. I had a thousand questions that he just couldn't answer. I asked a panel 40 past Delegate who had been attending Assemblies since the late 80's to be my service sponsor. He introduced me to tons of service literature, the 12 Concepts for World Service, and we took a deeper look at the 12 Traditions. I Service Sponsor several people today and we meet once a month at my house to go through the Traditions. A good Service Sponsor will serve as a guide through the sometimes tricky world of General Service. Most GSRs find their Service Sponsors at Assemblies but this is not always the case. It's a good idea to look for a Service Sponsor who is grounded in Literature and Principles and also someone who has had a similar Service path.

TM – Any parting thoughts for **The Messenger** reader out there, Jon?

JP – Thanks again for the opportunity to participate in this interview. Alcoholics Anonymous has revolutionized my life. I feel an obligation to make sure I do everything I can to make sure the same Fellowship is around for the generations yet to come. I don't think God got us sober so we can just sit around and be sober!

TM – Thanks again for agreeing to answer a few questions regarding the workshop, Jon. We will see you out there on the road of happy destiny.

Reprinted with permission: Don Rush

Contents

On the Cover
AMATEURS ANONYMOUS

STANDING COMMITTEE
Page 2

A GIFT TO JOE
Page 3

YOUNG AND FREE
Page 3

MEETING CHANGES
Page 4

**INTERGROUP
INFORMATION**
Page 4

PUZZLE
Page 5

SURRENDER FOR SERENITY
Page 6

EVENTS / JOKES
Page 7 & 10

CONTRIBUTIONS
Page 8 & 9

BIRTHDAYS
Page 11

A GIFT TO JOE

Stuck in the rehab, he met a man who gave him a way out and also a way back in.

I was at the beginning of my second year of sobriety. It was late in October and the leaves were falling. The days were cool and the time of year was inviting nostalgia. My drinking friends were long gone and the holidays were approaching. My family would all be getting together soon. They had stayed away my first

sober holiday season. Was it because they were willing to give me the time to adjust? Or were they just uncomfortable with what it would feel like around the new me? Or were they just not yet willing to give up their own liquid holiday fest? I started to feel depressed. However, I was about to get a beautiful gift.

Several weeks prior, I had picked up my first-year medallion. I had made it. The countdown was over. Ed, my sponsor, had cautioned me about letting down my guard after the anniversary. I agreed, but how could I not? It had been the longest year of my life. When I thought back to that first 30 days, it seemed like an eternity ago. That 30-day chip represented the worst period of my life.

Higher Power? I felt God didn't know me, and I certainly didn't know him then. All I had to accompany me during those days were endless thoughts of an uncertain future. Work, which was all I had to hang my identity on, well ... that was gone. I remember being in rehab, just going through the motions ... no alcohol, no job in my future.

Then one Friday afternoon, I met Ed. Fridays in the rehab were the most depressing days of the week.

Some of us got to go home for the weekend—not me. When I saw Ed come in, it seemed like he'd attended that rehab before and must have been a poster boy for recovery. Why else would they let him come up to our floor and lead Big Book studies? I asked him clumsily if he had ever been asked to sponsor any of us rehab people. His answer was, "Only a couple of hundred." I was shocked. How could he possibly be my sponsor? I guess he read my thoughts. He smiled wistfully, saying, "Not one ever followed up with me after leaving here." I couldn't believe it. Not one? That was the beginning of my grasping the fatal nature of this disease. Somehow I scrambled up

(Continued on page 4)



YOUNG AND FREE

After two years in hell, a 15-year-old wants to help others.

"I have people who I can call when I'm having everyday problems"

My life when I was younger was always great. I had a good family. I was always a happy little girl. Once I entered middle school everything changed—I got diagnosed with depression, anxiety, and ADHD. So I started to already hate life and wondering, "WHY ME? I don't want to be like this." I started hating myself at the age of 11, cutting my wrist, burning myself, doing anything to fill the empty whole inside of me.

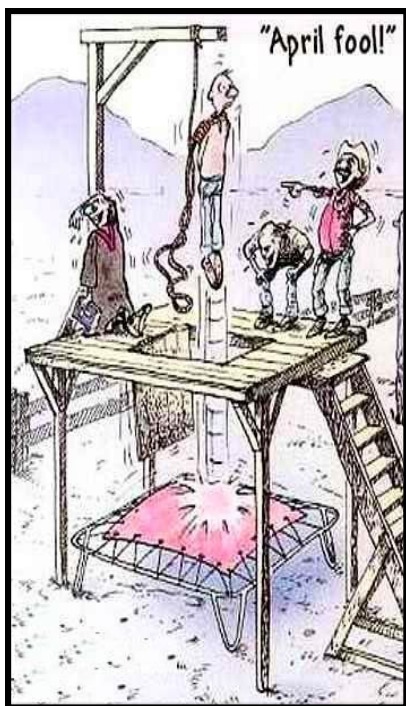
Over the next year I found myself being curious about alcohol, and drugs, and cigarettes. By the time I was 13, I was drinking on the weekends and having a great time. The amazing part was alcohol filled the empty whole inside of me, and I didn't have to let people know the pain I was trying to deal with because they didn't see any of my

scars on the inside like I had on the outside from cutting. I loved the affect alcohol had on me. Just like most people, I felt funnier, prettier, better about my self in every aspect of my life.

I was 14 when I started to drink more and more and smoking weed every day because it was the only way I could feel happy and good about myself. The alcohol helped with the depression and the pot helped with the anxiety—so I thought. But after months of consistently drinking I thought something was up with me. Every time I drank I was puking my guts out, crying or laughing. My moods were unpredictable, I would black out and I thought it was normal.

I wanted to be loved and accepted, and I found that in alcohol. I would switch from vodka to gin to rum to beer. I'm not really sure to this day why I did that but I believe I was trying to reassure myself I was okay and I was the farthest thing from a lame alcoholic

(Continued on page 8)



MEETING CHANGES

NEW / MOVES / CHANGES / ADDITIONS / CANCELLATIONS		
37013	New	Safe Place Antioch - Antioch United Methodist 41 Tusculum Rd Sat 5p
37040	Cancel	Road of Happy Destiny - 2p Sunday
37064	Change	Church of the City - Meeting in the Small White House
37066	Change	Came to Believe - Tues now 5:30p
37069	Change / Move	Woman's AA now Every Woman Has a Story - 1213 Country Rd.
37087	Cancel	Any Lengths - 10p Friday
37115	Cancel	Serenity House - 8p Sunday
37122	Add	Key To Sobriety - Tues & Thurs Noon
37128	Move	Camels - Salem Creek Church of Christ - 2525 Salem Creek Dr
37190	New	Woodbury Sunday Morning - Stone River Hospital - 324 Doolittle Rd.
37206	Add	East Side Sunlighters - 7:30a Tues & Thurs
37208	Add	Recovery of Hope - Sun 6:30p OD/Lit
37209	Cancel	West Nashville - Tues 8p
37209	Cancel	Next Right Thing
37220	New	Hand in Hand - Crieveview United Methodist - 451 Hogan Rd - 6:30p OD/Wmn
37232	Move	Recovery Basement - Vanderbilt Medi Center 1211 21st Ave - Student Center Room 208
37394	Move	Viola Serenity - 9586 Viola Road, Viola

CENTRAL OFFICE OFFICERS	NAME	PHONE #
Chairperson	Drew T	615.440.3991
Central Office Manager	Charles C	615.973.9898
Central Office Bookkeeper		
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		
Treatment Facilities	Jennifer S	615.415.4177
Events Chair	Tina H	615.351.0501
Archives	Everett C	615.226.4880
Sobriety Dinner	Cathy M	615.500.0863

A GIFT TO JOE (con't)

(Continued from page 3)

enough courage to ask him, "Do you have one more in you?" Ed laughed and said, "Let's do this."

After that, everything was different. I found myself looking forward to my daily call to Ed. We would have a mini meeting on the phone. He always knew exactly what to say.

A year later, Ed and I were still together. He had helped me work the first nine Steps. My thinking had settled down and I was beginning to consider returning to work. My weeks consisted of working the Steps with Ed, going to meetings with him and accompanying him to the rehab for that Friday Step Study. During the first year of my sobriety, that Step Study meeting was the high point of my week. I loved the fact that at the end of the meeting, I got to leave and go home. I remember those blank, scared eyes looking back at me in those meetings—anything but secure in their future. We were the only hope some of them had. Ed and I kept sharing our recovery. Sometimes I actually felt we were making a difference.

One Friday afternoon after the meeting, I asked Ed if we could have a talk. I shared with him that since my first anniversary, I had been feeling a letdown and I was worried that this was the way it was going to be from now on. Ed surprised me as usual. He smiled reassuringly as he said, "I've been right where you are."

He opened his Big Book to the chapter "Working With Others," and had me read: "Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics." Ed and I sat there and pondered that same paragraph I had read many times before. Ed looked at me and said, "It just so happens that I have a gift for you today. This Big Book meeting is where you and I first met, and you are the only sponsee from here to stick with me. So, it's yours."

It took a few moments for this to sink in. "Ed, you can't be serious," I said. "I can't possibly fill your shoes here. I don't have what it takes to help them get sober." He looked at me and smiled. "You're right, you don't. It's between God and them. You're just the messenger. But you're ready."

I led that Big Book study for three more years before handing it over to one of my sponsees from, yes, the same rehab Step Study meeting. I discovered how service is not about me or whether I think I'm ready. It's about God working through me. And he works through me even when I'm in one of those ruts we all sometimes find ourselves in while on this amazing journey.

—Joe T., Mt. Juliet, Tenn

Reprinted with permission: AAGrapevine March 2016

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 April 25th
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

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

Find the CAPITALIZED words below.

AUTONOMY is a TEN-DOLLAR word. But in RELATION to us, it MEANS VERY SIMPLY that EVERY A.A. GROUP can MANAGE its AFFAIRS EXACTLY as it PLEASES, EXCEPT when A.A. as a WHOLE is THREATENED. COMES now the SAME QUESTION RAISED in TRADITION One. Isn't such LIBERTY FOLLISHLY DANGEROUS?

Amateurs Anonymous (con't)

(Continued from page 1)

In the past twenty-five years, the treatment of alcoholics has become an immensely profitable industry. In a remarkable coincidence, the optimum length of treatment invariably equaled the number of days covered by insurance. The term "greed" doesn't begin to describe what happened. Greed creates ignorance and it created monumental ignorance in the field of alcoholism treatment on what really helps alcoholics. The problem became obvious. If all that hospitals offered the alcoholic was the AA program, it would be difficult to charge large fees for their services. Inevitably the programs were larded with whatever therapy was popular at the moment. Meanwhile, many individuals and institutions wanted to cash in on these suddenly gold-plated drunks. Countless AAs went to work in the treatment business and began twelfth-stepping for money. Not surprisingly, AA has been increasingly infected by the professional virus. All of this is destined to befuddle a new person on what really works for alcoholics: the Twelve Steps as a continuing way of life.

In our eagerness to be friendly with our friends we've been busily trading our spiritual birthright for a mess of psychiatric pottage. By profession Dr. Bob was a physician, but he helped alcoholics

as an amateur. By profession Bill W. was a stockbroker, who helped alcoholics as an amateur. In the mid-1960s I spent three years as a member of a board of directors charged with dispensing two grants from the Eli Lilly foundation. One of the members was Dr. William Glasser, a prominent California psychiatrist and author of the best-selling book Reality Therapy. A couple of things that Glasser said have always stuck with me. One was, "If all the therapists disappeared today it wouldn't make any difference, because people would find someone else to talk to tomorrow." And the other was, "When you pay a therapist, you're buying a friend."

The AA message is free. We don't buy it and we don't sell it because money corrupts the message. We give it away in gratitude for our own recovery. That's the forgotten meaning of Tradition Eight.

We work with alcoholics for nothing because it's our privilege to help another breathe deeply in the life of the spirit and enjoy the vigorous healing generated by our program's principles. It doesn't work for money.

Paul M.—Riverside, Illinois

Reprinted with permission: AA Grapevine August 1996

SURRENDER FOR SERENITY

Stay while you're here.

I have surrendered many times in my life to Powers greater than myself, such as my parents when I was a kid, the principal at school, the bullies on the playground, the bouncer in the club, the police, and the judge. Very seldom have my surrenders been without a struggle. I have rarely admitted defeat in all sincerity. Rather, I have begrudgingly given up the fight when there was no hope of prevailing, making it clear that I would be back to battle another day.

My attitude of surrender was really more one of retreat, than defeat. People would shake their heads at my defiance, knowing I was doomed to struggle in vain against the powers that be in whatever situation I was placed.

This attitude brought me into the rooms of AA. It was here where I first learned about the concept of surrendering to win. This confused me at first. Did they want me to surrender to alcohol? How was that supposed to work? To admit that I was powerless over alcohol suggested it was my master, and aren't you supposed to obey your master and do whatever it wants? Alcohol wanted me to keep drinking it, in my opinion, so surrendering to alcohol cannot have been the point.

The Third Step suggests that we surrender to a God of our understanding. Was God my enemy, in that case, as I might have suspected from time to time? Maybe God had finally defeated me and was now demanding I surrender, or else worse plagues would be visited on my house.

In contemplating the concept of surrender, in light of How It Works in the Big Book, it occurred to me that the surrender AA required might be the *giving up* of something, not the *concession of defeat* to someone or something. What had to be surrendered, or given up, was my self-will, which wanted me

to keep fighting against the stream of life and wanted me to keep drinking.

I decided that I could surrender my self-will without knowing exactly who or what higher power I was surrendering it to. I was like a guerrilla fighter on a remote island who never got the news that the war was over, and actually was so worn down by sunstroke and starvation that I forgot who I was even supposed to be fighting, if I ever knew. Like that exhausted soldier, I could give up fighting without any need to understand who it was that defeated me.

Once I decided this fact, things seemed to get easier. I relaxed a little and quit trying to run the show, as the Big Book says. My sponsor took me to Dr. Bob's House to say the Third Step Prayer in the upstairs bedroom there. I felt a weight lifted, maybe like a dying patient feels when their loved ones tell them it is okay to let go.

Surrendering self-will was a little like the old Tim dying, but I went on living after that, or at least a new Tim went on living. The part of me that died, whether you call it my ego, my self-will, my defiance, or my old attitudes to life, has not been missed by anyone to my knowledge.

So, yes, I have given up the struggle. The nature of the struggle is elusive to me, like the fog of war. All I know is that I am no longer prepared for battle every day in order to protect myself. The identity of the victor of this battle is also unclear. But now that I have ceased fighting everything and everybody, even alcohol, I get to go home every night, alive and relatively content, and that feels like enough of a victory for me today.

Timothy P, March 2016

Reprinted with permission: Akron Intergroup News



District 13

GALLATIN, LEBANON, PORTLAND, LAFAYETTE, HARTSVILLE, CARTHAGE,
WESTMORELAND, GLADEVILLE, RED BOILING SPRINGS

SPRING FLING 2016

Saturday, April 2, 2016

11am - 5pm

- Welcome/Eat
- Speaker - Diana A., Peoria, IL
- Fellowship
- Speaker - Greg (Skunky), Peoria, IL
- Silent Auction**
- Closing

11:00am
1:00pm
2:00pm
3:00pm
4:00pm
5:00pm

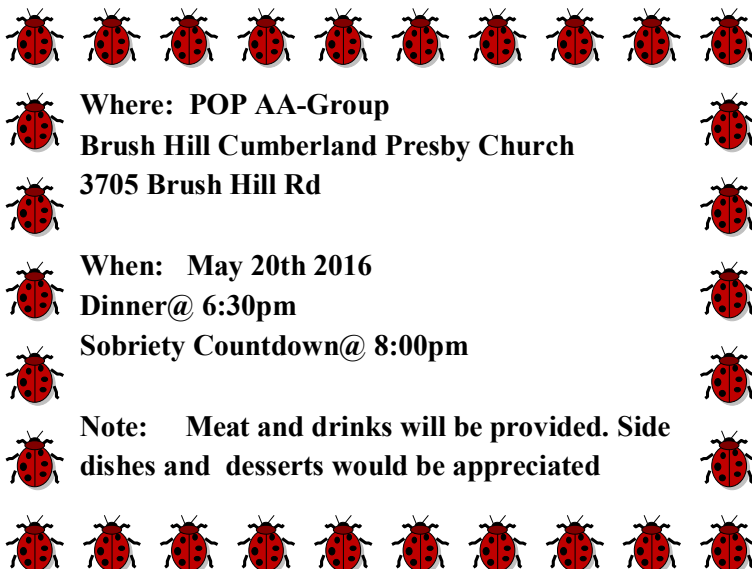
Families Welcome!

BBQ, coffee & tea provided by District 13

BRING A SIDE DISH TO SHARE: SALAD, VEGGIE, DESSERT, FRUIT

GALLATIN CIVIC CENTER
210 Albert Gallatin Ave.
Gallatin, TN 37066

**Each Group/Meeting is invited to prepare a basket - for the silent auction - that embodies its unique spirit (Please include a list of contents)



Where: POP AA-Group

Brush Hill Cumberland Presby Church

3705 Brush Hill Rd

When: May 20th 2016

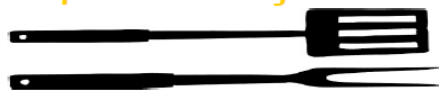
Dinner@ 6:30pm

Sobriety Countdown@ 8:00pm

Note: Meat and drinks will be provided. Side dishes and desserts would be appreciated

Drunks in the Park

4th Annual Family Picnic



SATURDAY
June
11
2016

2:00 PM - 6:00 PM

PINKERTON PARK
405 Murfreesboro Rd.
Franklin, Tennessee 37064



What to Bring:

- Your family
- Your instrument



Food is provided

Questions:
Jean B - 615.516.4585
jeanb127@gmail.com

District 31 Workshop

I AM RESPONSIBLE

Our Panel

Marc N. Phillip C. Toni S.

Also an "Ask It Basket"

Saturday, April 9th

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Lunch Served - Bring a Dessert (if possible)

Location

Old Hickory Presbyterian Church
801 Jones Street
Old Hickory, TN 37138

For questions, contact Darin M. At 615-423-26

Please bring note taking materials



YOUNG AND FREE (con't)

(Continued from page 3)

because who'd want to be one of those? When I was 11, I would go to AA meetings with my dad, and I thought you all were crazy, and I didn't want to be one of you.

By my 15th birthday I was taking pills, still drinking and getting high everyday and trying to convince myself I was normal. I could no longer go to school if I wasn't high. But suddenly I stopped going because I was trying to hide my addiction, and I would be rather high at home by myself. Suddenly I found myself drinking alone because I wanted all my alcohol and drugs for myself. Nobody else was worth sharing with. In October I got a tobacco ticket, which saved my life. I got caught smoking before school and I had to go to 10 counseling sessions at the sheriff's department. I would lie to my counselor about my drinking and everything else going on with my life. But without that counselor, who knows if I would have ever made it to rehab?

My last night drinking, I wanted to go to a party. My parents said no because I got caught drinking two weekends in a row, and they said, 'Hey if you smash your pipe and promise not to drink or get high you can go.' I was like, 'Yeah, yeah I won't drink!' I was crying like a 2-year-old wanting to drink so badly. I had three hours to go to a party. I remember the second I walked in the door I grabbed a can of beer and was just chugging and chugging one after another until I was as drunk as I could get. I came home and I started throwing up for 12 hours. My mom saved my life that night. I don't really remember anything after throwing up except that I admitted I was an alcoholic and I KNEW I had a problem. After 12 dreadful hours of throwing up and shaking, I was not able to talk. I couldn't eat anything, and when I'd drink water, the next second it was thrown up on my floor. That was the worst day of my life, I'll tell you that. I hit rock bottom. I shouldn't be here today typing my story on a computer. The way my mother and family took care of me blows my mind away, after years and years of lying, stealing, getting in trouble, manipulating and the list goes on and on.

February 4, 2008 was the day that changed my life. It was also the best day of my life—the day I entered rehab. At the time I didn't see it as the best day of my life but I am so grateful to have gone to rehab. Throughout my sobriety I have let all my secrets out that have caused so much harm to myself, because I heard what you don't get over, you get loaded over. I was scared shitless to get drunk again. I don't want to ever drink again because many people say to me, 'You don't have to go through what us old people have gone through.' But I've gone through some things that nobody should ever have to and it was a result of my drinking, and I know if I never want those things to happen to me I should never drink again. Today I am a strong 15-year-old who's recovering from a disease that kills and takes many lives.

Before I was living to drink and drinking to live. I don't need that drink to get through the day, for the good times for the bad ones

either. If I stub my toe, I don't need to get drunk over that anymore. After inpatient I went to outpatient and my counselor had everyone go in the bathroom and look at ourselves in the mirror and say, 'I love you.' That was incredibly hard for me to do. But today I can proudly say I love everything about myself. Who cares if I'm not what you want me to be? I cared so much about what you thought of me, I would do anything to get you to like me. I am so grateful that I'm not that way today anymore. I'm such a grateful alcoholic. I don't ever want to pick up a drink because I know that is never going to be the solution to my problems. Thank God I am an alcoholic because not only have I learned I never have to drink again—I've learned the most important things in my life. What other people think of me is none of my business. I have learned to love myself for who I am, and I know I can do anything I can if I set my mind to it. Today I have a wonderful relationship with God.



Today I have a wonderful relationship with my family. Also today I have friends who accept me the way I am, love me for who I am, and don't want me for alcohol or anything thing else. Where in the real world I could never find that before? I have people who I can call when I'm having everyday problems, and it sucks for those normies who don't have the Twelve Steps and the friends that I do in A.A. Because of all you alcoholics I'm happy to be alive. I want to give back everything I have learned. I am going to go through hard times in my journey through sobriety. I already have. My best friend, my dog, died in my arms one night after outpatient at rehab. Also I moved to Florida from California when I had 6 months sober. My fellowship and my family are there. I thought nobody here in Florida would understand me, and I thought I was going to be alone. But with the magic of Alcoholics Anonymous, the power of God, the

belief in myself I know I'm okay today.

Never before would I try to help anyone but myself. I can't explain how good it is to hear somebody say, 'Wow what you shared really helped me,' or 'Thank you for being there for me,' or 'Thanks for leading the meeting, you inspire me' is the best feeling I have ever felt. I truly believe it is better than getting drunk or high out of my mind. It feels so good to spread the message.

I owe everything to AA, because without it I would be a 15-year-old girl living in fear, holding resentments, getting smashed, making horrible choices, and living in a lie. I hated life, I hated God, I hated my family, and I hated you all but today I love every one of those things.

Jenn
Reprinted with permission:
AAGrapevine on-line exclusive

GROUP/MEETING	Dist	Feb	YTD
11TH STEP	30	-	-
21st AVENUE	30	-	12
24 HOUR	32	-	-
60 MINUTES	64	-	-
ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS	0	-	72
ANY LENGTHS	13	-	-
BACK ROOM	35	1,247	1,247
BACK TO THE BIG BOOK	12	42	42
BELLEVUE WINNERS & BEG	35	-	-
BRENTWOOD FULL MOON	33	-	-
BY THE BOOK -DICKSON	15	54	54
CAME TO BELIEVE	33	-	-
CAMELS		-	-
CELEBRATE SERENITY		-	-
CHICKEN PLUCKERS MEN'S	33	-	-
CLARKSVILLE	14	-	-
CLUB 62 UNITY	32	-	20
COLUMBIA	40	20	40
COMFORT ZONE	15	-	-
COMMUNICATIONS	30	100	100
COOL SPRINGS NEWCOMERS	33	100	100
CROSSVILLE NON -SMK STEP	9	-	-
CUMBERLAND UNITY	13	-	-
DAILY REPRIEVE	13	-	-
DAVIDSON ROAD	30	800	1,800
DICKSON AA	15	-	920
DISTRICT 11	11	-	-
DONELSON YET	31	-	-
DOWNTOWN LUNCH BUNCH	32	206	206
DROP THE ROCK		-	-
DRUNKS IN THE PARK	33	350	350
EAST NASHVILLE 86'ers	34	169	169
E. NASHVILLE MEN'S STAG	34	500	500
EAST NASHVILLE WOMENS	31	-	-
EAST SIDE SATURDAY		295	295
EASY DOES IT (MT JULIET)	31	-	-
EVERY NIGHT AT 6	32	-	-
FAIRFIELD GLADE	9	-	-
FAIRVIEW	33	100	100
FAYETTEVILLE	40	-	-
FIRST THINGS FIRST	34	-	225
FIVE & FIVE	30	-	1,891
FRANKLIN 12&12	33	-	-
FRANKLIN 4TH BB STUDY	33	-	-
FRANKLIN	33	-	1,200
FRANKLIN MEN'S	33	-	-
FRANKLIN ROAD WOMEN'S	33	-	-
FREE TO BE	31	-	-
FRIDAY NIGHT PRIME TIME	33	-	-
G.O.D. (OF DRUNKS)	40	-	-
GALLATIN AA		-	-
GLADEVILLE GRATITUDE	13	-	-
GOODLETTSVILLE A.A.	34	-	-
GRATEFUL ALIVE	33	-	-
GRATITUDE	11	60	60
GRATITUDE - MANCHESTER		-	-
HAPPY HOUR- COOKEVILLE	9	-	-
HAPPY HOUR - LEWISBURG	40	15	15
HARDING ROAD	30	-	-
HENDERSONVILLE BB	34	-	-
HERMITAGE	31	-	-
HIGH NOON	34	-	555
HILLSBORO ROAD	32	-	200
HOPE PARK AA LIT STUDY	30	-	-
JOELTON	34	-	50
KEEP IT SIMPLE BELLEVUE d35	33	13	13
KEY TO SOBRIETY	31	-	-
LADIES NIGHT OUT	34	-	-
LAMBDA	32	-	-
LATE LUNCH BUNCH	33	-	500
LAWRENCEBURG	41	-	-
LET IT HAPPEN	35	-	-

GROUP/MEETING	Dist	Feb	YTD
LEWISBURG UNITY	41	-	-
LIFE SAVERS	30	-	-
LIVE & LET LIVE	9	-	25
LIVING BY THE PRINT SAT	30	-	100
MADE A DECISION		-	-
MIDDAY BREAK	32	-	-
MONDAY NIGHT		-	-
MT JULIET FELLOWSHIP	31	100	100
MURFREESBORO	12	30	30
MUSIC ROW	30	-	-
MUSTARD SEED	32	-	-
NOW	30	-	-
NEW BEGINNINGS(Dist 12)	12	20	20
NEW DAY	13	-	-
NEW LIFE H-VILLE	34	45	45
NIPPERS CORNER	32	-	-
NO NONSENSE	32	-	-
NORTHSIDE , CLARKSVILLE	14	-	50
ON AWAKENING		-	-
ONE DAY AT A TIME	31	900	900
ONE STEP CLOSER	33	-	-
OUT TO BREAKFAST	30	-	143
OUT TO LUNCH BUNCH	14	-	-
PAGE 112	31	-	-
PAY DAY	15	-	-
P.O.P.	34	75	75
PORTLAND UNITY	13	10	10
PRIMARY PURPOSE	34	-	159
PRIMETIMERS	33	-	-
PULASKI	40	15	30
REBOS (SOBER)	34	-	-
RIDGETOP BASICS	34	-	-
ROAD OF HAPPY DESTINY	14	20	20
ROBERTSON COUNTY	14	-	-
RUTS	40	-	-
SAFE HARBOR (D14)	14	-	-
SAFE PLACE		53	53
SANGO SOLUTIONS		20	20
SATURDAY NIGHT ALIVE	11	-	-
SEARCH FOR SERENITY	34	-	-
SEARCHERS	34	270	270
SEEKING SANITY	31	-	488
SERENITY (12)	12	-	50
SHADE TREE	31	660	660
SHELBYVILLE	11	-	-
SMITH COUNTY FRIENDSHIP	13	-	-
SMYRNA GRATITUDE	12	220	436
SUNDAY NIGHT BUNCH	32	-	-
TCYPAA	32	-	-
THE STRAGGLERS	33	-	-
THE THREE LEGACIES	34	-	-
THE UNITED	13	-	-
TRINITY	11	-	-
TRUDGING THE ROAD	33	-	-
TURNING POINT	33	-	-
VALLEYVIEW-ASHLAND CITY	15	-	-
WANGL	30	-	-
WAVERLY	15	-	-
WAVERLY-BELMONT	32	-	-
WEEKENDERS	34	-	-
WEST MEADE	30	-	40
WEST NASHVILLE	35	-	-
WESTMINSTER	30	-	750
WINNERS	41	72	191
WOMEN IN THE SOLUTION	11	100	110
WOMEN'S FREEDOM	30	-	533
WOMEN'S OPEN DOOR	30	-	288
WOMENS SPEAKER	30	-	-
YOUNG TIMERS	32	-	-
Grand total:		6,682	16,331

G
R
O
U
P

C
O
N
T
R
I
B
U
T
I
O
N
S

F
E
B

2
0
1
6

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

14th Annual District 15 Memorial Weekend Family Camp Out



*It's A Wonderful World
In The
Sunlight Of The Spirit!*

When: Memorial Weekend May 27-30, 2016
Check-In Friday @ 4:00 p.m. **Check Out** Monday @ 12:00p.m.
Where: Montgomery Bell State Park
Cost: \$5.00 per person per night for rustic cabin or bring a tent and stay all weekend for only \$6.00 (14yrs and younger No Cost)
Contacts: Jason F.- (615) 495-0340 or Sherry P. (615) 306-0764
 All meals will be provided. Please bring drinks and snacks for your family.
Please Register ASAP Cabins Can Not Be Held Without Paid Reservation Cut off May 06, 2016

Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Group: _____ Number of people in Cabin _____/Tents _____
 \$ _____ Amount Paid Please send checks payable to District 15: Attn: Campout
 PO Box 1091
 Dickson, TN 37056



Chili Cook-off & Dessert Auction



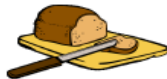
Supporting Area 64's 4th Quarter Voting Assembly

**Saturday, April 9th
5:00 – 8:00pm**

All chili must be in a crockpot and entered by 5:25pm
 No chili will be taken after deadline - No Exceptions



Chili Fixin's are provided but
we need Salads & Breads
 Dinner starts at 5:30pm



Bring your favorite dessert
 for the Auction at 6:00pm

Speaker Tom R. at 7:00pm

Church of the City
 (formerly "The People's Church")
 828 Murfreesboro Rd., Franklin TN 37064

Questions??? Want to sign up to help??? Call Tammy at 615-775-2070



Safeguarding the Newcomer

Presented by Jay D.
 Area 64 past delegate

Event's Date: April 10th, 2016
Time of event: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Address: Last Stop Club
 2122 Utopia Ave.
 Nashville, TN 37211
Contact information: Kerryn J. 479-747-4820
 Or
 Katie B. (615)582-5861

POT LUCK STYLE
 Come Share Your favorite Recipe!
 DRINKS WILL BE AT CONSESSIONS STAND

EVERYONE IS INVITED
 COME HANG OUT WITH US!
 See How To Reach Out To Newcomers & How To Keep Them Safe & Get Involved

THE 58TH ICYPAA HOST
 COMMITTEE PRESENTS

GAME NIGHT DESSERT AUCTION

LITERATURE DRIVE
 BRING PAMPHLETS TO DONATE!

APRIL 22 2016

- MEET AND GREET 06-07 PM
- SPEAKER MEETING 07-08 PM
- BAKE SALE/LITERATURE DRIVE 08-10 PM

CENTRAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
 404 EAST MAIN STREET MURFREESBORO TN

Inquiring sober minds want to know ...

WHAT is GSO?
That's a wonderful question!
HOW is it important??
Many, many ways. Here's how...
WHY do we send \$\$ to NY???

ANSWERS TO THESE & MORE BURNING QUESTIONS AT THE
DISTRICT 30 PRE-CONFERENCE REPORT

Tuesday, April 5 • 6:30 - 8 p.m.
 Led by Jon P., Area 64 Alternate Delegate
 5925 O'Brien Ave., Nashville



ALL ARE WELCOME
 TO ATTEND

**Pizza & Soft
 Drinks Provided!!!**

FFTB
 (free food tastes better)

BACKROOM

Bruce S	03.26.08
Dan S	03.04.95
Eric M	03.26.14
Junie W	03.01.14
Mike L	03.22.11
Patrick D	03.02.04
Phil A	03.09.01
Scott L	03.22.01
Stephenie S	03.20.14
Tiffany S	03.20.13

DONELSON YET

Bridgett A	04.18.13
John W	04.11.91
Mark S	04.15.89
Misty B	04.24.11

FULL MOON

Angela H	04.04.07
Josh H	04.24.12
Laura W	04.26.08
Nat A	04.02.90
Tim K	04.04.06
Tom S	04.01.04
Turner J	04.07.13

HIGH NOON

Danny B	04.02.14
Clyde W	04.20.15
Dave E	04.01.11
Don S	04.24.99
Marcia G	04.08.95
Travis M	04.05.12

LOVE & LAUGHTER

Jeff W	04.25.89
Rob F	04.15.98

MT JULIET

George M	04.04.89
Hal Y	04.23.86
Lacy C	04.27.11

NIPPERS CORNER

Mark M	04.08.12
Mike E	04.23.06

ONE DAY AT A TIME

Danny G	04.21.14
Emilio H	04.23.15
Iszy B	04.01.13
Jeffrey J	04.28.15
Jennifer Q	04.29.??
Josh T	04.01.12
Kelly W	04.17.15
Kim M	04.21.13
Kym G	04.02.12
Michael W	04.18.06
Rob S	04.15.15
Sara C	04.30.10
Stephie R	04.19.03
Timothy M	04.09.14
Yvonne K	04.06.10

POP

Daniel R	04.15.85
Ed B	04.08.03
Larry S	04.02.87
Marlene R	04.01.89

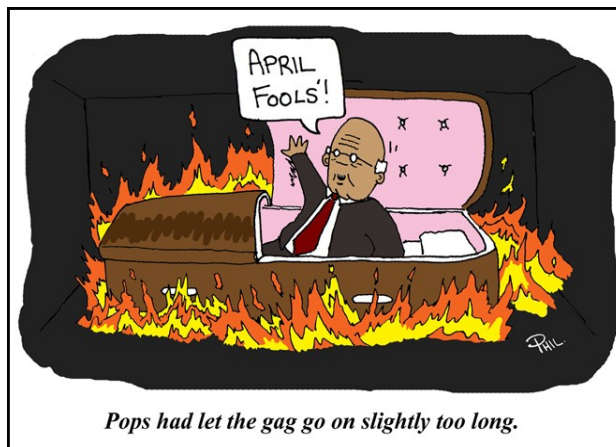
SHADE TREE

Ann T	04.26.09
Bill F	04.17.06
Bo R	04.06.06
Burnette C	04.27.12
Christian A	04.06.14
David S	04.04.06
Dick H	04.15.83
Etta C	04.19.14
Jennifer S	04.26.14
Jimmy M	04.22.12
John H	04.26.11
Jon S	04.20.14
Karen B	04.19.13
Kathy B	04.28.94
Kelly B	04.11.13
Lindsay L	04.01.11
Lynnsey D	04.03.10
Lucy A	04.07.12
Marshall S	04.02.15
Melissa A	04.03.08
Meredith	04.20.14
Monty P	04.10.07
Nick M	04.11.04
Patti H	04.28.13
Peggy P	04.14.14

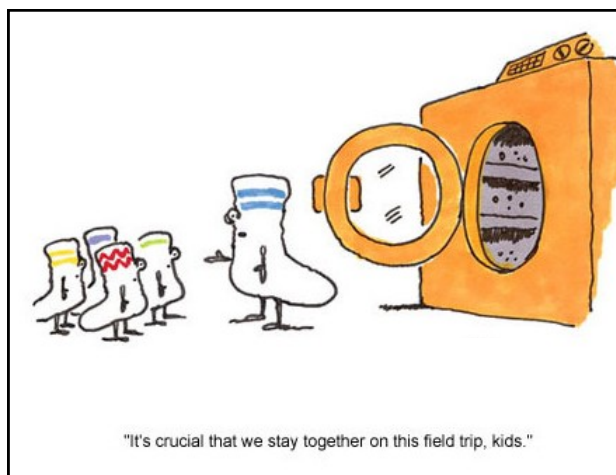
SMYRNA GRATITUDE

Anita M	04.12.95
Breanna R	04.15.14
Brian d	04.18.92
Debbie M	04.21.04
Diane S	04.02.87
Matt P	04.30.15
Monty M	04.21.96
Regina D	04.07.07
Sean S	04.15.14
Tom D	04.05.13

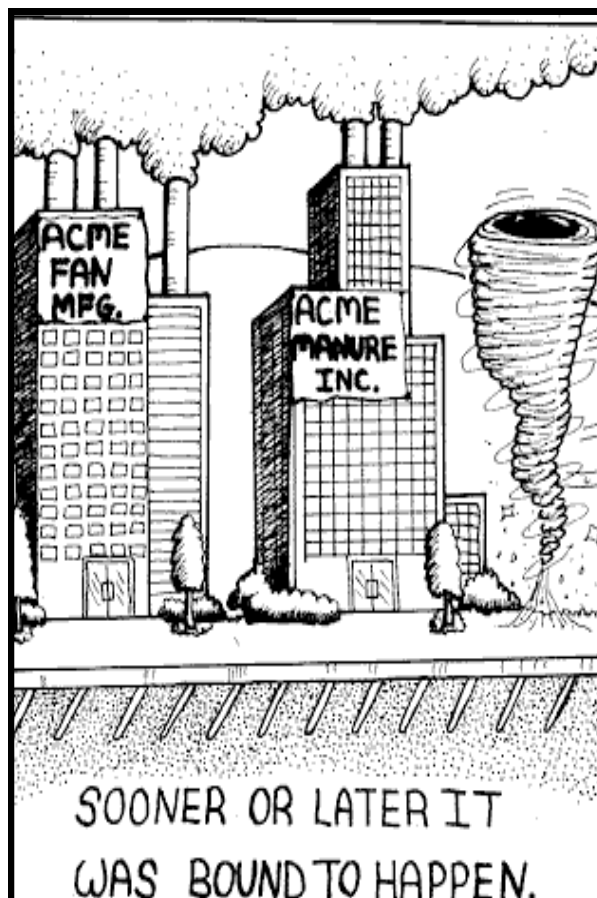
APRIL
ANNIVERSAIRES



Pops had let the gag go on slightly too long.



"It's crucial that we stay together on this field trip, kids."



SOONER OR LATER IT
WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN.

**M i d d l e T e n n e s s e e
C e n t r a l I n t e r g r o u p
A s s o c i a t i o n**

417 Welshwood Drive
Suite 207
Nashville, TN 37211

615.832.1136
800.559.2252

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. Postage Paid
Nashville, TN
Permit No. 517

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Middle TN Central Intergroup Association
417 Welshwood Drive, Suite 207
Nashville, TN 37211

ph. 615.832.1136
Ph. 800.559.2252
fax. 615.834.5982
or e-mail address changes to:
mtcoaa@aol.com



Time to Change?

- ☐ New / Renewal Subscription
- ☐ Address Change

The Messenger is available at an annual subscription price of \$12.00. A limited number of free subscriptions are available upon request by writing or calling the office at the address/phone number listed in this issue.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

PHONE _____ ZIP _____