

The **MESSENGER**

Middle Tennessee Central Office Intergroup

\$ 1.00

A Study of Tradition 3

MAR 2021

"My name is Rosemary R. and I am an alcoholic." "That's a simple introduction. And powerful. It tells you who and what I am, instantly. It immediately connects me to you if you, too, are an alcoholic."

Speaking at the June 1989 Northeast Regional Forum in Portland, Maine, Rosemary called identification "the very essence of our common bond" and expressed concern that the "the way we traditionally introduce ourselves at meetings has changed so much, the word 'alcoholic' often is omitted entirely."

The delegate (Panel 39) for Central New York pointed to a new crop of introductions heard around A.A. --- from "I'm cross addicted" and "I'm chemically dependent" to "I'm a recovering person." She said that she is "always tempted to respond, 'You're a cross addicted what?' 'You're a chemically dependent what?' And 'Whom or what are you recovering from?' Her frustration mounts, she added, "because I need to know that you're at a meeting for the same reason that I'm there --- for ongoing recovery from the disease of alcoholism."

Rosemary further believes that the breakdown in the way we identify ourselves "puts a serious strain on our unity and singleness of purpose. When I say at an A.A. function that 'I'm a drug addict and an alcoholic' or 'I'm a cross addicted alcoholic,' I am telling you that I'm a special kind of alky---my case of alcoholism is different from yours! I add an extra dimension to my disease---one that, because of our singleness of purpose, should not be addressed at an A.A. meeting. I have just cut our common bond in half and, more importantly, have diluted my own purpose for being there."

In her area, Rosemary noted, "it was thought that after a person was around A.A. for awhile, all the other descriptive words would fall away and we would hear, 'I am an alcoholic.' But this has not happened. We see people sober in A.A. for two, three, four years and more---still clinging to the treatment jargon they were first taught. They have not made the transition."

What we need to do, Rosemary suggested, is to separate our issues and take them separately to the programs designed to address them: Narcotics Anonymous for drug addiction; Overeaters Anonymous for addiction to food, and so on. When participating in these various meetings, she feels, "we should identify ourselves accordingly."

It has been suggested, she said "that we approach treatment facilities and, in the spirit of cooperation and concern for the newcomer, ask that they instruct their patients on how to separate their addictions rather than group them together under the label of 'addictive personalities'---using the catchall phrase we hear so often, that 'a drug is a drug is a drug.'"

The idea of seeking outside cooperation is all very well, Rosemary observed, "but I wonder if the real answer doesn't lie squarely within our own Fellowship. Isn't it the responsibility of each of us to keep our program intact, to pass it on to the newcomer as it was given to us? Importantly, can we do this with patient explanation, tolerance towards differences---and more patient explanation? I believe we can, through committed sponsorship, strong home groups and active service. That way, our new members will learn how to be a part of A.A., not a fragment of it."

Most of us, Rosemary concluded, "have heard it said that if A.A. is ever destroyed, it will be destroyed from within. In my opinion, apathy, cloaked often in the guise of 'live and let live,' is one of our greatest enemies. But the destructive force is not those members who introduced themselves as 'cross-addicted alcoholics'---it is the attitude of those members who sit back and say, 'So What!'"

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A St. Patrick's Day Business Trip

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An AA uses the tools of the program to stay sober while traveling with work colleagues

During my drinking days and early recovery I loved to travel. However, I had not ventured further than a day trip from home since my husband had become seriously ill on our last trip five years ago. At that time, he came home by air ambulance and when we were all finally back in New Hampshire, I said "I don't care if I ever leave home again." My life was full with family, friends, work and the program. Although, Recently, I had been questioning what it meant for me to put AA first in my life.

Twenty-five years of going to meetings and working the program had not prepared me for my feelings in anticipation of a business trip to Chicago. The trip was not optional, and I was to travel with a group of eight colleagues who had not overlooked the fact that we were going to be in Chicago over St. Patrick's Day. They took every opportunity to mention that they were looking forward to the green beer and all that it entailed.

Business travel in the ski industry with lots of entertaining and an expense account was an integral part of the last years of my drinking. Since getting sober and establishing a family in early sobriety, my work did not require any overnight travel, nor was I interested in being away from home, family and my AA home group. However, I had flourished in my new field and had earned the opportunity to present as faculty at a national conference.

Leading up to the trip, I found myself

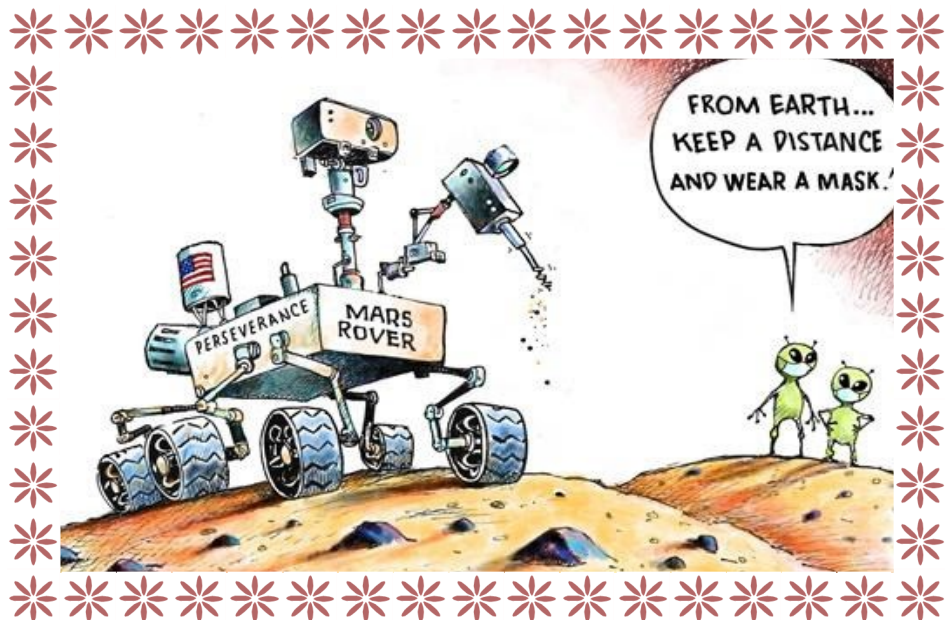
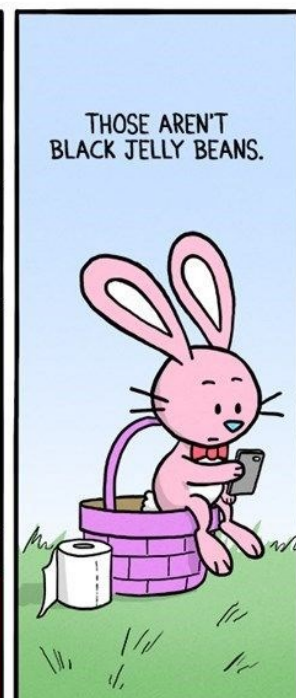
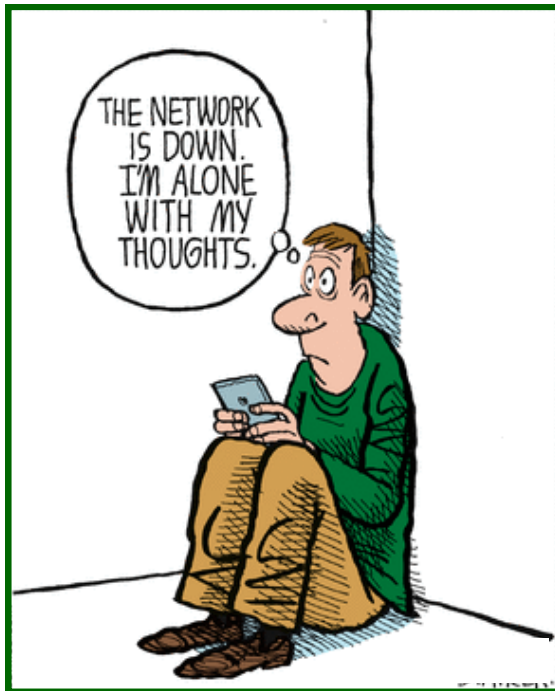
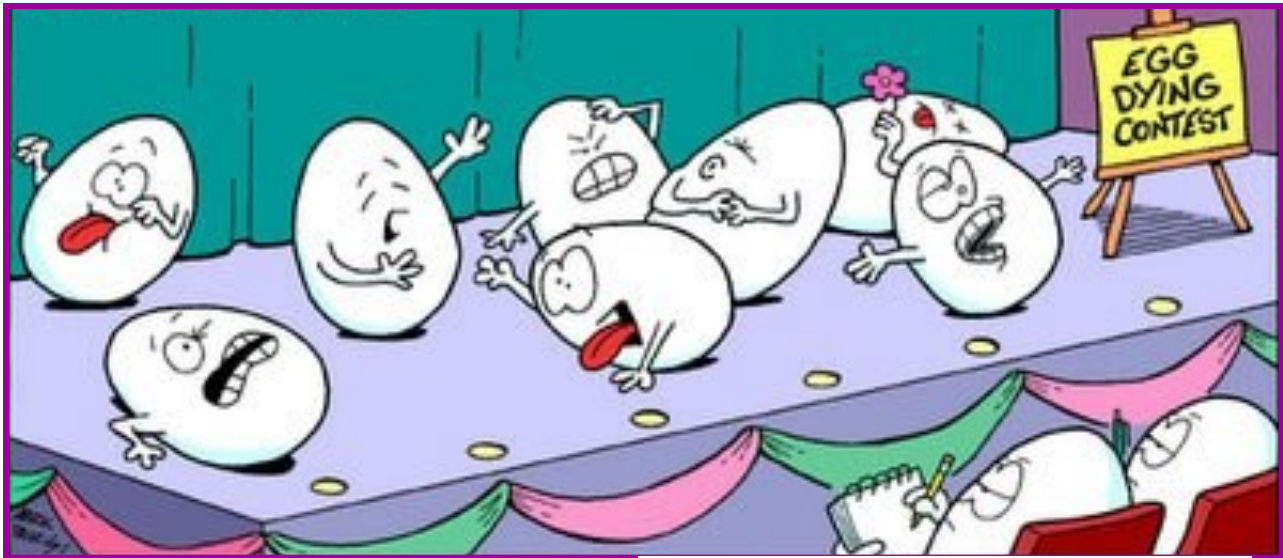
with unfamiliar feelings and was surprised when I examined them to discover anxiety mixed with dread. My eager anticipation and excitement for the business trip was not matching reality. I was experiencing a well-remembered, pit-in-the-stomach dread that I had not had for some time. I accepted my fear and talked about it at meetings and with other recovering alcoholics without much relief. I asked a friend who had gotten sober in Chicago for an AA contact name and phone number. I researched downtown Chicago meetings online, printed a meeting list, and made a plan. I studied online maps of the Windy City and decided that The Mustard Seed seemed to be within striking distance of my hotel and offered a variety of meetings. An AA friend confirmed that meetings at the Mustard Seed would be a good option.



On my first morning in Chicago, I ventured out of the hotel and was greeted by a homeless person. He explained that he lived at a shelter, was going to school and needed cash for transportation to a math class. He added that he was sober, pulling out his three year medallion. I pulled out my medallion and gave him some folded money. Since we were walking down the street together, I asked him to point out any nearby AA meeting locations. He obliged and I felt as though God were speaking to

(Continued on page 5)





Suggested Zoom AA Meeting Etiquette**Sign into a Zoom meeting on time or early.**

- Because of larger attendance at zoom meetings, we want to respect the time of all people. Focus on the agenda and chairperson, just like a regular AA Meeting.

Avoid cross talking.

-Zoom meetings can get large. Today there are few of them & many AA's who need a meeting.

-To promote an orderly & efficient meeting, do not cross-talk and keep your shares short.

-There will be many more people attending Zoom meetings and we need to give as many as possible the chance to share.

Mute your phone or computer when you are not the speaker.

-This reduces annoying and unwanted background noise.

-There will be an icon of a microphone on your screen to click to mute or unmute.

Raise your zoom hand to be identified to speak by the Chairperson or Host.

- There will be prompt or icon to "raise your hand." Click it if you want to share.

-There will be prompt or icon to "lower your hand." Click it once your called upon or change your mind about sharing.

Control if you want yourself to be video broadcasted or not.

- There will be prompt or icon of a video camera on your screen to click to have yourself video broadcast to the rest of the callers, or not, it's your call.

Control your name that Zoom displays as your identification.

-On your screen you can click on your name/picture and 4-5 prompts come up. Clique on "rename" and follow instructions. For example, Zoom might identify you as "John Smith." If you want, you can change it to "John S.."

(Continued on page 5)

Chairperson	Garrett D	615.957.7674
Central Office Manager	Charles C	615.973.9898
Central Office Bookkeeper	Bill M	615.512.5710
Vice Chairperson	Joe C	615.491.1824
Secretary	Lindsey T	615.260.6295
Treasurer	Butler M	225.226.5457
Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community	Steve M	865.567.6734
Accessibility Committee	Jennifer S	615.717.7682
Corrections	Stephen T	615.926.9467
Treatment Facilities	Darin M	615.423.2620
Events Chair		
Archives	Don M	615.708.7957
Sobriety Dinner		
Newsletter	Pat P	615.574.4412

1ST TUESDAY OF EVERY MO.

District 30 Meeting
When: 6:30pm – 7:30pm
Where: 5925 O'Brien

2ND MONDAY OF EVERY MO.

Intergroup Meeting
When: 6:00pm – 7:00pm
Where: Central Office
417 Welshwood

STEERING COMMITTEE

When: Monday Apr—26th
6:00pm – 7:00pm
Where: Central Office
417 Welshwood

1ST TUESDAY OF EVERY MO.

District 32 Meeting
When: 6:30pm
Where: Last Stop Club
2122 Utopia

2ND SATURDAY OF EVERY MO

District 34 Meeting
When: 10am
Where: 200 E. Cedar St
Goodlettsville

A St. Patrick's Day Business Trip

(Continued from page 2)

me that morning.

The next day, I found a noontime meeting in a church basement around the corner. The hotel concierge had filled me in on the closest meetings. The people were warm and welcoming and I met another sober alcoholic. She was visiting from out of town, staying at the same hotel and attending the same conference! My new friend was twenty years sober and while feeling vulnerable she had poured the contents of the hotel-room mini-bar down the sink the night before. Apparently, I was not so alone. We exchanged phone numbers.

During the rest of my stay, I went to meetings, watched the St. Patrick's Day festivities, and on the last day of the trip, I called that pre-arranged AA contact. Having the phone number of a local Chicago member of Alcoholics Anonymous had felt like having insurance in my pocket. The Chicago contact

was expecting my call as his friend in New Hampshire had let him know that I would be visiting the city and would likely call. He was kind and supportive and allowed me to express my gratitude. He demurred, saying that he didn't do anything. But I knew that he provided the back up that I needed. I knew to the core of my being that if I had landed on thin branches while in Chicago and felt any temptation to drink, that I could have called upon him and that he would have been there to help me. For that, I was grateful!

I was trying to relax at the airport in anticipation of going home when out of nowhere a good friend from the program approached me. I leapt out of my seat and gave him a huge hug. My traveling companions raised a few eyebrows but I didn't care. God was certainly taking good care of me on this trip. All I had to do was put AA first.

DANA M. | LEBANON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
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Suggested Zoom AA Meeting Etiquette

(Continued from page 4)

Passing of the "virtual basket"

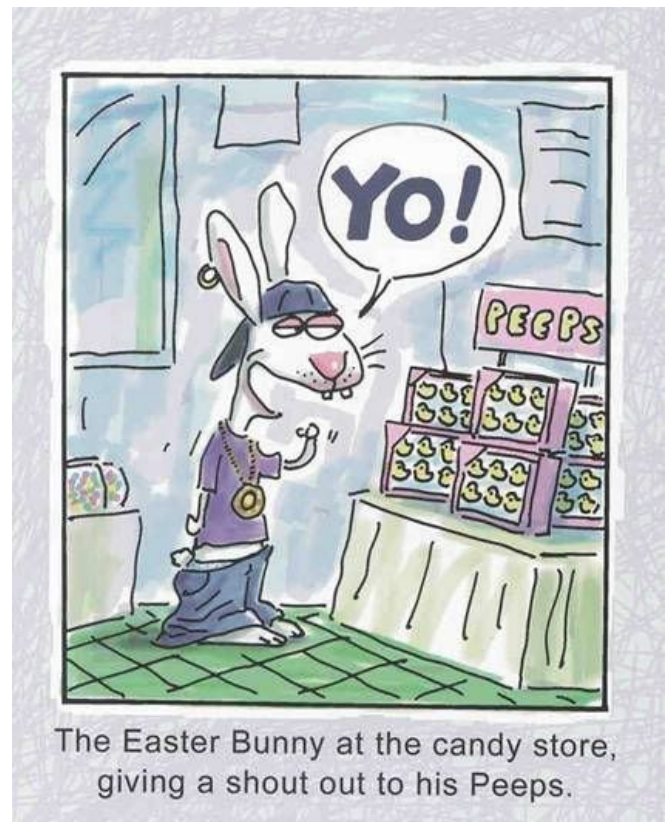
- Your Home Group Treasurer should make a suggestion on how to get your 7th Tradition Donations to him/her.

The meeting before & the meeting after the meeting.

- The Host may open the zoom meeting before the start of the Regular Meeting and keep it open after the end of the Regular Meeting to facilitate fellowshipping, social chatting and catch up time.

**This Document will Evolve as We Use & Learn
Zoom.**

Remember: It's Progress, not Perfection!



Sister Mary Ignatia

Sister Mary Ignatia (1889-1966) Born Della Mary Gavin in 1889 in Ireland, Sister Ignatia worked with Dr. Bob to help admit alcoholics into St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio, starting in 1939. She surmounted obstacles to personally care for thousands of alcoholics over the next several decades, both in Akron and later at St. Vincent Charity Hospital in Cleveland. Beloved by all who were associated with or helped by her, she was commonly referred to as the ***“Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous.”***

Originally a musician, Sister Ignatia was transferred by her order, the Sisters of Charity of Saint Augustine, to St. Thomas Hospital in Akron to work in their admissions office. It was in that capacity that she first met and worked with Dr. Bob. In an interview with Bill W., Sister regaled the co-founder with cherished recollections of Dr. Bob and their work with drunks at St. Thomas:

“Dr. Bob was the essence of professional dignity. He had a fine sense of humor and exceptional vocabulary.... Now, as I look back over the years, I realize that Dr. Bob was slowly but surely preparing me for the great project he had in mind. We often discussed the problem of alcoholism and the tragedies caused by excessive drinking. The individual given to alcoholic addiction is frequently a wreck of humanity – broken in body and soul, and heart and unable to help himself. His loved ones suffer, too; there were many broken homes and hearts because of compulsive drinking.” (Recording of Sister Ignatia, 1954)



Her work in helping alcoholics was done with much dignity and modest distinction. In December 1949, she was presented with the Poverello Medal of the College of Steubenville. The medal was given to her for the A.A. Fellowship for her untiring efforts with alcoholics in Akron. In March 1961, Sister Ignatia received a letter of acknowledgment for her pioneering contributions from the White House (President Kennedy), which she shared with Bill W. The letter read:

“Dear Sister Mary Ignatia: Through an admirer of yours, the President has learned of the fine work you have done in the past at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, and, more recently, at St. Vincent’s in Cleveland. He has been informed that a large number of citizens have been restored to useful citizenship as a result of your efforts. As you have been a strong influence for the good to many people, you have added strength to your community and nation.”

In response to receiving a copy of the President’s letter, Bill responded to Sister Ignatia and wrote:

“We have read the marvelous letter which President Kennedy requested be sent to you. It reminds me that I have no words to tell of my devotion and my gratitude to you, of the constant inspiration you have given me and so many over the years by your example of the finest in all that is spiritual and eternal, as well as temporal.”

Following Dr. Bob’s death in 1950, Sister Ignatia continued her work at St. Thomas. Then in 1952, she was transferred to St. Vincent Charity Hospital at Cleveland, where she was placed in charge of its alcoholic ward. Upon arrival, the ward at “Charity” was part of a dilapidated wing and was in great need of rejuvenation.

Sister Mary Ignatia

Through the Sister's urging and much assistance from A.A. members with carpentry skills, the ward was soon transformed and named Rosary Hall Solarium. Sister Ignatia provided each patient who left her care with a Sacred Heart badge. Receiving this item was accompanied by a personal promise to the Sister that the patient would return the badge before they drank again. She died in Richfield Ohio, at age 77, on April 1, 1966. There were reportedly about 3,000 people present at the funeral, including A.A.'s co-founder, Bill W.

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Sister Ignatia

Alcoholics Anonymous
Historical Recordings
Old Days & Old Times

#602



AA Speaker Sister Ignatia the Angel of Alcoholics
Anonymous 30 Minute Talk [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

BACK ROOM

Aaron H	03.29.16
Caroline B	03.16.??
Karin S	03.29.19
Tiffany H	03.20.13

WOMEN IN THE SOLUTION

Ginny P	03.27.19
Kathleen S	03.30.85

WOMEN'S SPEAKER

Sarah H	03.12.17
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Interrupt the Rehearsal—A Newcomer Shares

A member realizes that constant ruminations may bring him closer to a drink

Alcoholics Anonymous recognizes several emotional states that can lead to a resumption of drinking. Resentment is surely one; fear another, depression and sorrow, regret and grieving yet others.

These transitive emotions are surely natural and unavoidable in the course of everyday life. Death is a natural progression of life. Loss of social status, of financial stability, loss of a loving relationship, loss of an occupation or career, the loss of good health, of eyesight, of a limb, the onset of a debilitating injury or illness, all these things may fall into our lives at any moment. It pays not a whit for us to predict disaster or fear the future, and it also pays us not a penny to perpetually bemoan or exaggerate problems after they have fallen upon us, as nature wills. Life happens.

However, alcoholics tend to cultivate negative emotions rather than exorcise them after they have run a natural course.



A long-ago sponsor pointed out to me that most of my considerable negativity was volitional—that is, I willed it upon myself. Most of my resentments and fears were in small part, imaginary. I was furious. He

gently pointed out some of my character traits to me, telling me, "I can prove that you make up much of your misery."

He said, "You rehearse your misery. Think about it. You were telling me last week about the little fender-bender you had in the parking lot at the laundromat. At first, you said it was your fault, that you had not turned around to look as you backed out. Then, I noticed in the retelling to someone else, it was mostly the fault of the elderly lady who had driven up behind. At first, you had said it was your idea to pay for her car repair to keep from reporting to your insurance, since it was a minor expense. Then, in the retelling, you were a martyr to the old lady's fear of having her driving privilege revoked. Your initial response was honest and admirable; in the rehearsal and retelling, you became less and less honest, and more and more resentful and self-serving. After a day or two, you were angry enough to spit nickels.

The same with your last girlfriend. In your first telling to me, she was justified in leaving an angry drunk. Despite her expensive addiction to collecting stray animals, you could have come to terms with her had you not been drunk on a daily basis. She had finished nursing school, and her financial independence would have taken over that expense. Soon, however, in your retelling of the story, your internal rehearsal of your lines took over, and she was a monster, "the crazy cat lady," possibly a tramp, a spendthrift, a harridan, a shrew. You gradually rationalized your part in the fiasco, blamed her and revised your history."

As much as I hated that man at that time, I knew he was correct. I did not change my behavior right away—in fact, I stopped talking to him for a while. Too much honesty at one time was intolerable. But the lesson did not go unheeded. I began to notice that rehearsal process going on in every day life all the time. I would find myself going over past conversations in my head. "I should have said this, I should have said that. I should have just punched him in the nose. I should have walked out. The next time she says that, I'll ..."

One day I read a story in the paper about a famous method-acting school in New York, attended by the royalty of film actors. The story described in some detail how "method acting" consisted of rehearsing and repeating emotional states, attaching real-life emotions to fictional scripts to produce realistic emotions during a performance.

The process was almost a psychiatric analysis for the actors, because they had to dig into their memories for real-life crises to mine for emotion. They included psychological tricks that were the emotional equivalent of putting a sharp stone in a shoe to create a pained limp on stage. The actors sometimes required months to get back out of character after a prolonged shoot, carrying residual anger or grief or fear with them after the show was over.

That is me! I cried in my head. My resentments, my fears, my angers, my painfully sensitive self-image, my grandiosity, it was all there, on the rehearsal hall floor.

(Continued on page 9)

Interrupt the Rehearsal

(Continued from page 8)

POSITIVE EMOTIONS



I have come to realize that my biggest job in AA is to confront and stop this natural desire to justify, to rationalize, to reframe and rehearse emotional states. I am not a slave to emotional over-reaction, I am not the sum of what happens to me; I am capable of soberly facing "life on life's terms" without rehearsing myself into a drink. This is why I go to many meetings. I am in many details the same man I was; I need to hear how other people stay sober one day at a time, how other people rise above daily tribulations to be the best people they can be under every adverse condition. This what Bill W. called the final frontier; emotional sobriety. Instead of rehearsing illness, I imitate wellness.

*David—Cape Coral, Florida
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YOUR GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

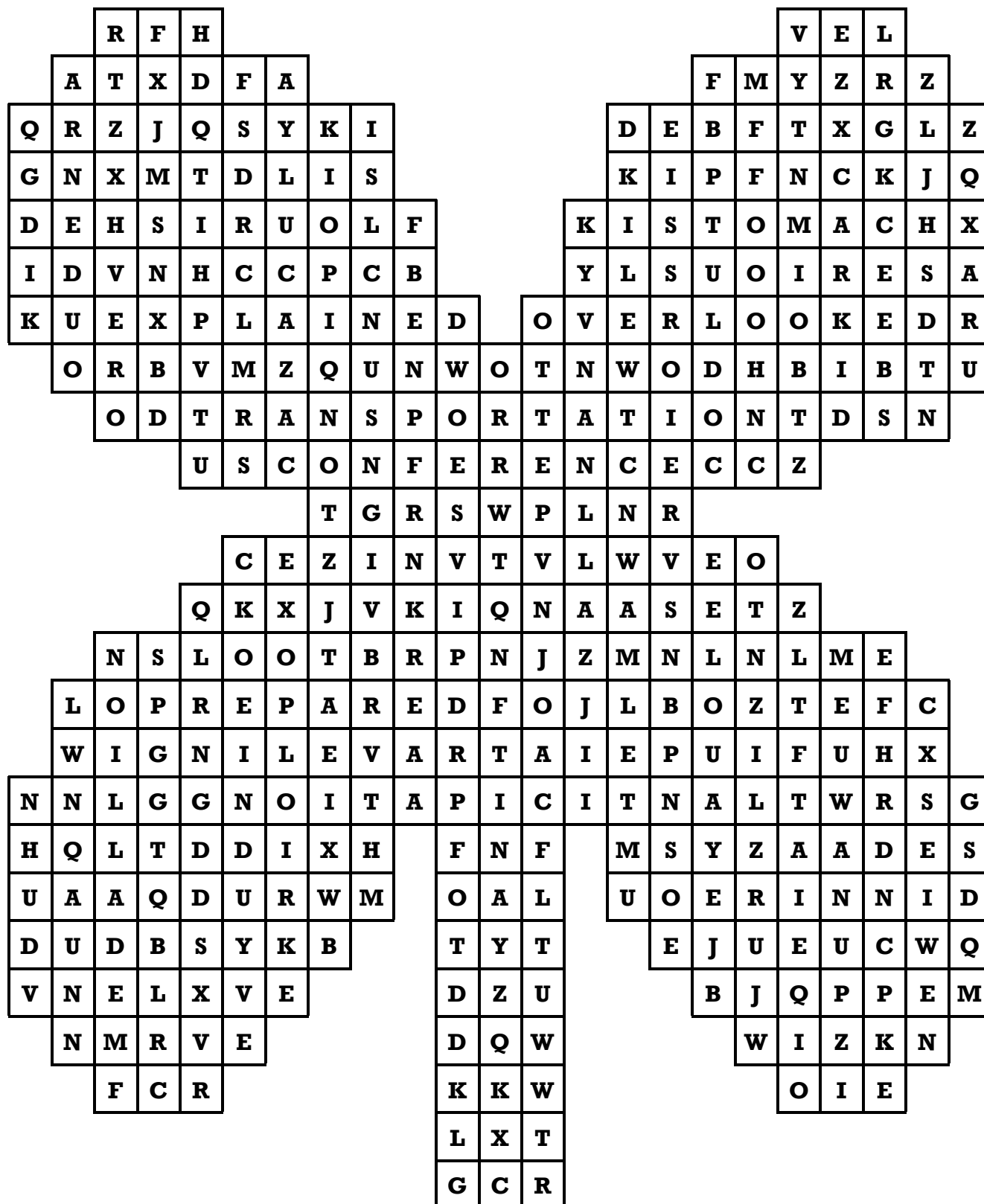
GROUP / MEETING	JAN	YTD
86'ers	340	340
AWOL	90	90
BRENTWOOD FULL MOON	193	193
BY THE BOOK, LEBANON	40	40
COLUMBIA	20	20
COMFORT ZONE	175	175
COOKEVILLE	90	90
DICKSON	150	150
DRUNKS IN THE PARK	692	692
EAST SIDE SATURDAY	315	315
EASTSIDE SUNLIGHTERS	302	302
EVERY WOMAN HAS A STORY	123	123
FIRST THINGS FIRST	257	257
FREE TO BE	111	111
GRATITUDE	10	10
LADIES NIGHT OUT	250	250
LATE LUNCH BUNCH	2,000	2,000
LIVING BY THE PRINT	200	200
LIVINGSTON 12x12	25	25
MURFREESBORO	15	15
NIPPER'S CORNER	73	73
NOON WOMEN'S STEP STUDY	37	37
NORTHSIDE	50	50
ONE PURPOSE	25	25
ONE STEP CLOSER	309	309
OUT OF THE FOG/OUT OF THE BOG	423	423
PAGE 112	133	133
RECOVERY ON THE ROW	150	150
SAFE PLACE	325	325
SATURDAY NIGHT ALIVE	20	20
SERENITY IN THE PARK	200	200
SHADE TREE	647	647
SMYRNA GRATITUDE	431	431
SPRING HILL	156	156
TRINITY	200	200
UNITED	200	200
WAKE UP	45	45
WOMEN IN THE SOLUTION	50	50
WOMEN'S FREEDOM	267	267
GROUP TOTALS TO DATE	9,137	9,137
INDIVIDUALS	2,456	2,456
COMBINED TOTALS TO DATE	11,593	11,593

Middle Tennessee Intergroup Association
Statement of Activities - Actual and Budgeted - Schedule 1
For the Month and Year Ended January 31, 2021

	January 2021			YTD 2021		
	Actual	Budget	Budget Variance	Actual	Budget	Budget Variance
Income						
Net Literature Sales	2,287.08	2,783.00	(495.92)	2,287.08	2,783.00	(495.92)
Group Donations	9,137.02	6,939.00	2,198.02	9,137.02	6,939.00	2,198.02
Individual Donations	3,108.89	525.00	2,583.89	3,108.89	525.00	2,583.89
Messenger Donations	12.00	12.00	-	12.00	12.00	-
Website Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special Events	-	708.00	(708.00)	-	708.00	(708.00)
Interest	4.29	184.00	(179.71)	4.29	184.00	(179.71)
Total Income	14,549.28	11,151.00	3,398.28	14,549.28	11,151.00	3,398.28
Expenses						
Casual Labor	225.00	242.00	(17.00)	225.00	242.00	(17.00)
Payroll	6,271.00	6,047.00	224.00	6,271.00	6,047.00	224.00
Legal & Professional	350.00	350.00	-	350.00	350.00	-
Rent	1,046.00	1,046.00	-	1,046.00	1,046.00	-
Printing	-	50.00	(50.00)	-	50.00	(50.00)
Payroll Taxes	463.27	463.00	0.27	463.27	463.00	0.27
Repairs & Maintenance	-	25.00	(25.00)	-	25.00	(25.00)
Equipment Rental	100.08	116.00	(15.92)	100.08	116.00	(15.92)
Telephone & Fax	515.24	475.00	40.24	515.24	475.00	40.24
Answering Service	221.99	216.00	5.99	221.99	216.00	5.99
Postage	251.56	137.00	114.56	251.56	137.00	114.56
Office Supplies	89.26	208.00	(118.74)	89.26	208.00	(118.74)
Bank Service Charges	55.00	40.00	15.00	55.00	40.00	15.00
Computer & Technology	352.95	416.00	(63.05)	352.95	416.00	(63.05)
Intergroup Expense	109.72	150.00	(40.28)	109.72	150.00	(40.28)
Insurance	-	200.00	(200.00)	-	200.00	(200.00)
Special Events	-	375.00	(375.00)	-	375.00	(375.00)
Travel	-	583.00	(583.00)	-	583.00	(583.00)
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	-	12.00	(12.00)	-	12.00	(12.00)
Over/Under	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses	10,051.07	11,151.00	(1,099.93)	10,051.07	11,151.00	(1,099.93)
Net Income	4,498.21	-	4,498.21	4,498.21	-	4,498.21

Can you find the words below that come from the story on Page 2?

TOOLS	TRAVELING	VENTURED	SERIOUSLY	AMBULANCE
QUESTIONING	PREPARED	ANTICIPATION	OVERLOOKED	STOMACH
DOWNTOWN	EXPLAINED	SHELTER	TRANSPORTATION	MEDALLION
	NATIONAL	CONFERENCE	FLOURISHED	



**M i d d l e T e n n e s s e e
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