The MESSENGER

Middle Tennessee Central Office Intergroup

$ 1.00 AUG 2021

Please join us for the

Annual Celebration of Sobriety Dinner

A Middle Tennessee Intergroup Potluck

Friday, November 19, 2021

Woodmont Hills Church

3710 Franklin Road at Woodmont Blvd

We are keeping our eye on the new covid issues—so please stay tuned.

6pm Reception

7pm Dinner

8pm Speaker

Meat, Desserts & Drinks Provided

Please bring Casseroles, Vegetables, Salads, Side Dishes, & Bread

Please have on site by 6:45pm

Tickets $15

Please contact Central Office @ 615-831-1050 for tickets

Central Office—417 Welshwood Dr., # 207, Nashville, TN 37211, Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm, Sat, 9am-1pm,

Hot Line (615) 831-1050, (800) 559-2252 (outside local area), Business—(615) 832-1136, Fax—(615) 834-5982, Articles for The Messenger—blamethemessenger@gmail.com- email—mtcoaa@aol.com, Website– www.aanashville.org

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CLARENCE S.—"THE HOME BREWMEISTER"

Clarence S., Cleveland, Ohio.
(OM, p. 274 in 1st edition, p. 297 in 2nd and 3rd editions.)

Pioneers of A.A.

"An originator of Cleveland's Group No. 3, this one fought Prohibition in vain."

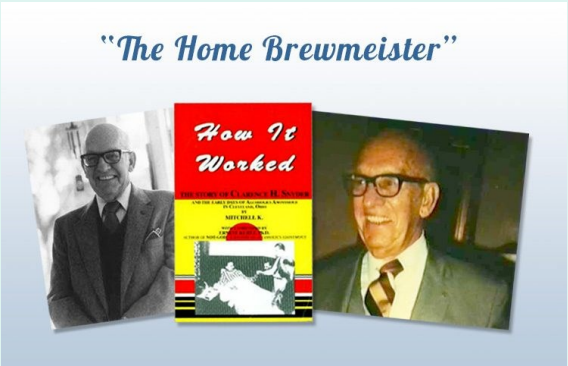
Clarence had his last drink on February 11, 1938, according to the article he wrote for the A.A. Grapevine November 1968 issue. Fifteen months later he organized the first Cleveland group.

Clarence was born on December 26, 1902, in Cleveland, Ohio, the youngest of three brothers. He dropped out of high school at fourteen, after his father's death, and went to work. He later took many night courses studying economics, business, credits and collections. This prepared him for later employment at the City National Bank in Cleveland, from which he was fired for alcoholism at the age of thirty-two. It was not the only job from which he had been fired.

After holding good positions, making better than average income for over ten years, he was bankrupt in every way. He was in debt, he had no clothes to speak of, no money, no friends, and no one any longer tolerated him except his wife, not even his son or the saloonkeepers. He was unemployable. He said in a talk he gave in 1965 that he couldn't even get a job with the WPA. His wife, Dorothy, who worked for an employment agency, couldn't even get him a job.

Then Dorothy heard of a doctor in Akron who had been successful in treating alcoholics. She offered him the alternative of going to see Dr. Bob or her leaving for good. He agreed and that was the turning point in his life. He entered the hospital (after first going on a three-day drunk). While in the hospital a plan for living was explained to him, a simple plan that he found great joy and happiness in following.

He became an enthusiastic 12th stepper, literally dragging prospects for A.A. off bar stools.



Clarence started the first A.A. group in Cleveland in 1939, in part because some Roman Catholic priests in Cleveland were refusing to let Catholics attend the Oxford Group meeting in Akron.

This was the first group to use the name Alcoholics Anonymous. Nell Wing, Bill W.'s long-time secretary, said that Bill had been using the name since 1938 in letters and a pamphlet, but on this slender basis, Clarence forever claimed to have founded A.A.

Dorothy also was very active and did much to help A.A. in Cleveland. They were divorced before Clarence was drafted into the Army in 1942. Dorothy and their son moved to California.

Unfortunately, Clarence had an abrasive personality, and as one of his friends said, you either loved him or hated him. According to Nell Wing, had he not been so abrasive he probably would have been considered a co-founder of A.A.

When Clarence left Cleveland for military service a farewell party was held for him and he was presented with a wristwatch as a gift from all the West Side groups who acclaimed him for his pioneer work in Cleveland and particularly on the West Side. In a letter from basic training, Private Clarence S. said the going was rough, and he wished he were fifteen or twenty years younger. He supplied his address at Fort Knox, Kentucky, for anyone who wished to write him, and said he missed the association of the groups and was looking for other A.A. members in Kentucky.

CLARENCE S.— "THE HOME BREWMEISTER"

He became very hostile toward Bill W. He opposed the traditions and continued to use his full name in public. He led a small group to oppose the Conference and the General Service Office.

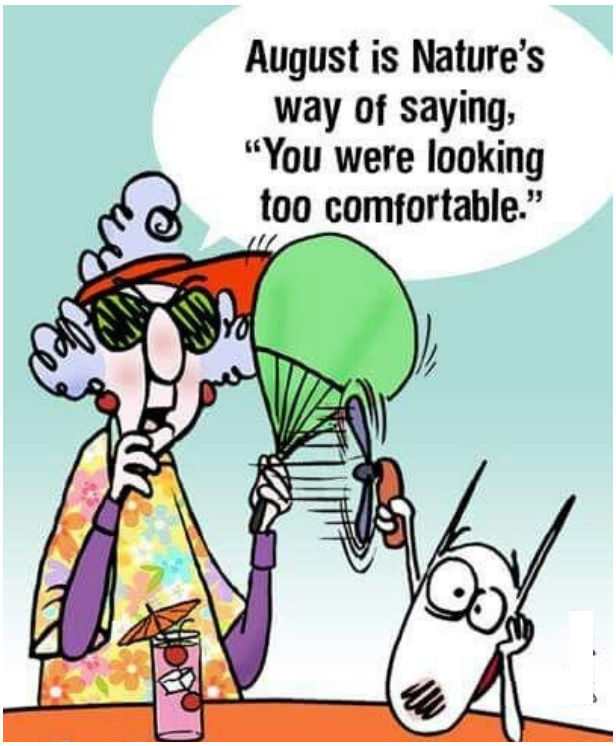
After the war he married his second wife, Selma, who worked at the Deaconess Hospital, where her father was the director. Clarence often took alcoholics there to sober them up. Clarence and Selma moved to St. Petersburg, Florida. Eventually they divorced.

Clarence then married his third wife, Grace (also an A.A. member), and joined her as a member of the Assembly of God Church in Winter Park. They did much A.A. work together and conducted many religious retreats. Unlike Bill W., he always used his full name in public, and was honored with several prestigious awards for public service during his life, which he did not hesitate to accept.

He remained very active in A.A., and his A.A. work became increasingly Christian fundamentalist in nature. He and Grace lived at 142 S. Lake Triplet Drive in Casselberry, Florida, until his death on March 22, 1984.

He was buried in Cameron Cemetery in Cameron, North Carolina, in Grace's family plot.

aacl.org



A Study of Tradition 8

The short form of Tradition 8 reads:

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

The long form of Tradition 8 reads:

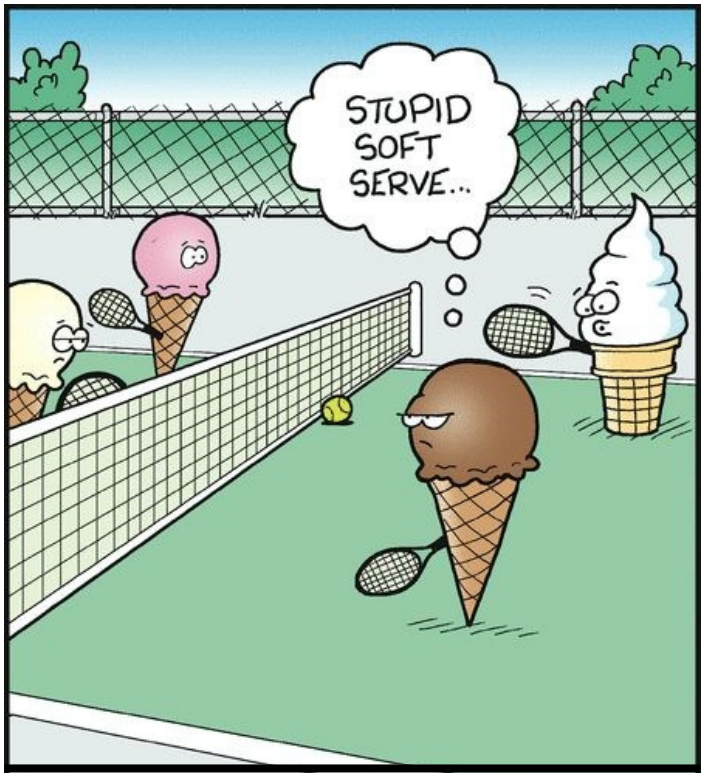
Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we may otherwise have to engage non-alcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual AA "12th Step" work is never to be paid for.

Most of us have explained to prospects that we don't get paid for carrying the AA message. We do it because it's the best way to stay sober and that's plenty of payment. This does not mean, of course, that the idea of turning professional has never entered any AA member's mind.

In AA's early years Bill W was offered a job as a lay therapist at Towns Hospital with a very generous salary. It was during the great economic depression when enormous numbers of people were out of work and jobs were extremely scarce. Because of his alcoholism, Bill and his wife Lois had been living a hand-to-mouth existence for quite a number of years. Bill wanted the job very much.

As it turned out, the spirit of Tradition 2 emerged and the group members who were meeting at Bill's home formed a group conscience and asked Bill not to take the job and Bill complied. It became

(Continued on page 7)



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 Oct—25th
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

3RD SUNDAY OF EVERY MO
District 35 Meeting
When: 4pm
Zoom: 715 0132 4166
Pswd: D3520

Follow Grapevine and La Viña on Instagram!

We are happy to announce that following the 2021 General Service Conference action, AA Grapevine, Inc. will be starting Instagram accounts for both AA Grapevine and La Viña magazines.

Our launch date is July 7, 2021. You'll be able to see our Daily Quote each morning, know when our new magazine issues release, learn about new books and be inspired by both AA pioneers and today's members.

We hope that through Instagram we'll help members stay connected to Grapevine and La Viña, and to AA as a whole, by finding inspiration when engaging with this social media platform. We also hope to attract those who might benefit by learning more about Alcoholics Anonymous.

To follow us on Instagram, use these addresses starting on July 7, 2021:

@alcoholicsanonymous_gv

@alcoholicosanonimos_lv

¡Sigue a Grapevine y La Viña en Instagram!

Nos complace anunciar que después de la acción de la Conferencia de Servicios Generales del 2021, AA Grapevine, Inc. abrirá cuentas de Instagram para las revistas AA Grapevine y La Viña.

Nuestra fecha de lanzamiento es el 7 de julio del 2021. Podrás ver nuestra Cita Diaria cada mañana, saber cuándo se publican las nuevas ediciones de nuestra revista así como la publicación de libros nuevos, y tomar inspiración tanto de los pioneros de AA como de los miembros de hoy.

Esperamos que a través de Instagram podamos ayudar a los miembros a mantenerse conectados con Grapevine y La Viña, y con AA en su conjunto, al encontrar inspiración por medio de la interacción con esta plataforma de redes sociales. También esperamos atraer a aquellos que podrían beneficiarse aprendiendo más sobre Alcohólicos Anónimos.

Para seguirnos en Instagram, use estas cuentas a partir del 7 de julio de 2021:

@alcoholicosanonimos_lv

@alcoholicsanonymous_gv

August 20 – August 21, 2021

Richmond, Virginia

25th Annual Southeast Woman to Woman Conference

"Secrets Women Don't Share"

A Conference for sober Alcoholic women with Al-Anon participation

Miracles in Progress

This is a Virtual Event

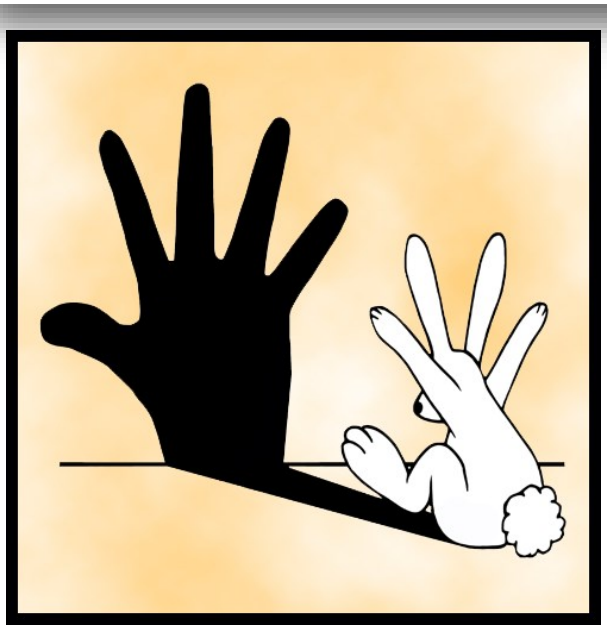
Speakers *Workshops* *Old Timers Panel* *Marathon Meetings*

Registration is free but required at www.sewomantowoman.org

FREEDOM

National Corrections Conference
November 12-14, 2021
Hilton New Orleans Airport
New Orleans, Louisiana

nationalcorrectionsconference.org
Contact Stacy C. for more info:
704-361-2755
correctionsarea27@gmail.com



Sobriety Under The Sun 2022 Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Sobriety Under the Sun * Westin Resort * Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

January 21-23, 2022

19th Annual English Speaking AA Conference with Al-Anon Participation

AA Speakers: Russ K Tampa, Florida / Theresa F Nan Nuys, CA / Mike W. Vancouver, BC

Al-Anon speaker: Larcene G Hawthorne, CA

The social activities include the Friday sunset tapas + Mingle (ticket required)
Saturday Mexican buffet with mariachi serenade (ticket required) & ice cream social,
Sunday sunset cruise and Monday whale watching/snorkel cruise.
Register EARLY, last year's convention sold out the end of September.
"Keep coming back" to our website for dates & all the lastest information and registration: www.aapvconvention.com

The day after Beethoven's funeral

The day after Beethoven's funeral, at midnight, a drunken man, having just left the bar, went into the graveyard, where he heard a strange sound. Looking for the source of the mysterious sound, he discovered it was coming from Beethoven's grave. Alarmed, he called his friends, and found they could hear the sound too (even the sober ones).

Soon, a crowd was forming at the graveyard. The mayor, who was very familiar with classical music, recognized the sound as Beethoven's 9th Symphony played backwards. When it ended, Beethoven's 8th Symphony started playing, also backwards, and then the 7th, and then the 6th, and so forth. At dawn, having reached a conclusion, the mayor said to the gathering crowd:

"There's nothing to fear, gentlemen. He's just decomposing."

Two little boys stole a big bag of oranges from a neighbor.

They decided to go to a quiet place to share the lot equally. One of them suggested the nearby cemetery.

As they were jumping over the gate to enter the cemetery, two oranges fell out of the big bag but they didn't bother to pick them since they had enough in the bag.

A few minutes later, a drunkard on his way from a bar, passed near the cemetery gate & heard a voice saying: "One for me, one for you. One for me, one for you. One for me, one for you."

He immediately sobered up & ran as fast as he could to a church nearby, for the priest. "Father, please come with me. Come & witness God & Satan sharing corpses at the cemetery"

They both ran back to the cemetery gate & the voice continued: "One for me, one for you. One for me, one for you. One for me, one for you."

Suddenly, the voice stopped counting & said: "What about the two at the gate?"

A Study of Tradition 8

(Continued from page 3)

clear to those early members that no AA should ever ask or accept payment for "carrying the message to somebody else. Does this apply to AA members today who work as counselors in treatment centers? The answer is no and this was mentioned in Tradition 6. On the job they may be alcoholism counselors not "AA counselors, and at meetings they are AA members not alcoholism experts.

As AA membership grew new questions arose. Intergroups or central offices were at first staffed by volunteers. Today, most of these offices are so busy that full-time employees are needed. Are these employees being paid for doing 12th Step work?

The answer again is “No.”

A similar change took place at the GSO in NY. It was originally a tiny office for Bill W and a secretary. 70 years later, it has grown into the present GSO, fully staffed, with a big mailroom keeping the lines of communication open throughout AA worldwide. Remarkably though, the number of employees at the GSO is quite small.

In these office jobs the GSO and Grapevine staffs are paid for their business and professional skills. Working on Conference-approved books and pamphlets or on Box 459 or the Grapevine, and La Vina these AA

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YOUR GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

GROUP / MEETING	JUNE	YTD
3 LEGACIES		79
805		200
86'ers		717
ANONYMOUS		60
AWOL		146
BACK TO THE BIG BOOK	50	50
BACKROOM	600	1,212
BASEMENT BUNCH		17
BRENTWOOD FULL MOON		443
BY THE BOOK	145	245
CELEBRATE SERENITY	135	285
CENTERVILLE		495
CHICKEN PLUCKERS		240
CLARK STREET	100	500
COLUMBIA	40	140
COLUMBIA BASEMENT	75	75
COMFORT ZONE		631
COOKEVILLE		90
CROSSVILLE AA		70
CROSSVILLE NOONERS	100	313
CROSSVILLE SERENITY		100
DICKSON	75	225
DISTRICT 9		300
DONELSON Y.E.T.		100
DOUBLE DIPPERS		50
DRUNKS IN THE PARK		1,340
EAST HICKMAN		500
EAST SIDE MEN'S STAGE	1,100	1,100
EAST SIDE SATURDAY		635
EASTSIDE SUNLIGHTERS	175	1,517
EVERY WOMAN HAS A STORY		225
FAIRVIEW		250
FAYETTEVILLE	25	50
FIRST THINGS FIRST		469
FIVE AND FUVE		30
FRANKLIN		1,700
FRANKLIN ROAD WOMEN'S		92
FREE TO BE		206
FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE		25
G.O.D.		65

GROUP / MEETING	JUNE	YTD
GOODLETTSVILLE		200
GRATITUDE		20
HENDERSONVILLE BIG BOOK		400
HUT		100
KEEP IT SIMPLE		60
KEY TO SOBRIETY	200	400
LADIES NIGHT OUT		355
LAFAYETTE NEW HOPE		50
LAMBDA		184
LAST HOUSE ON THE BLOCK	5	5
LATE LUNCH BUNCH		3,000
LIVING BY THE PRINT	200	600
LIVINGSTON 12x12	25	75
MCMINNVILLE		60
MEN'S LOG CABIN		120
MONDAY NIGHT OUT		50
MURFREESBORO	15	90
MUSTARD SEED	300	500
NIPPER'S CORNER		323
NOON WOMEN'S STEP STUDY		37
NORTHSIDE		50
N.O.W.		85
ONE PURPOSE		75
ONE STEP CLOSER		498
OUT OF THE FOG/OUT OF THE BOG		1,073
OUT TO BREAKFAST BUNCH		74
PAGE 112	200	333
PORTLAND UNITED		25
PRIMARY PURPOSE		67
PULASKI	5	30
RECOVERY ON THE ROW		150
ROBERTSON COUNTY	34	110
RUSHH HOUR		86
SAFE HARBOR		50
SAFE PLACE		325
SATURDAY NIGHT ALIVE	20	120
SAVE HER A SEAT	50	50
SEEKERS, SPARTA		500
SERENITY		50
SERENITY IN THE PARK		200
SHADE TREE	1,246	2,855

A STUDY OF TRADITION 8

(Continued from page 7)

members use their abilities as correspondents, managers, writers, editors, artists, proofreaders, accountants - as well as their understanding of AA from the inside.

Central Offices will also often have an (overworked and underpaid) AA member as a full-time office manager to take care of phone contacts, literature, Group and meeting information and Bridging the Gap contacts (that's where someone who is leaving a treatment center or prison or jail is matched up with a volunteer AA member who will take them to a group and a meeting when they are discharged). Central office also maintain lists of speakers and volunteer members willing to accept 12th Step calls at all hours of the day and night.

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YOUR GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

GROUP / MEETING	JUNE	YTD
SMYRNA GRATITUDE	744	3,173
SOBER ON SUNDAY		200
SOBRIETY FIRST LEBANON		100
SPARTA FELLOWSHIP		50
SPRING HILL		209
SPIRITUAL WARFARE		100
STRAGGLERS		350
THERE IS A SOLUTION		191
TRINITY	200	400
TURNING POINT		300
TWO TO LIFE	100	100
UNCOMMON WOMEN		89
UNITED	200	600
WAKE UP		188
WAVERLY		240
WEST NASHVILLE	26	61
WHITE HOUSE		132
WOMEN IN THE SOLUTION		100
WOMEN'S FREEDOM		490
GROUP TOTALS TO DATE	**6,188**	**35,593**
INDIVIDUALS	428	11,078
MESSENGER	-	17
COMBINED TOTALS TO DATE	**6,617**	**46,688**

THE RISE AND FALL OF A HOME GROUP

Once upon a time there was a home group of Alcoholics Anonymous. I say once upon a time, because **this group no longer exists.** It folded one day after many, many years of serving the alcoholics in its community. **Why?**

I found this meeting to be a very healthy group of Alcoholics Anonymous. There were many old-timers to be seen talking with new people, there were greeters at the door, a secretary, treasurer, and a GSR all discussing group business. New people were welcomed with a cup of coffee and a handshake. The group just beamed with happy people. A large crowd each week caused many tables to be filled and seats were hard to come by. The last Tuesday of month the group broke down into smaller groups for table discussion meetings. The rest of the meetings each week were closed speaker/ discussion meetings and again were hard to come by and the importance of getting there early was common knowledge.

Coffee was always ready for the first early person to arrive and there was always fellowship after the meeting. Sound good? Maybe this is your home group?

One meeting, after a group conscience discussion, a woman was offered the responsibility of GSR. **She got the job after discussion about whether she would be good for the group.** She started attending area assemblies and workshops to learn about the Traditions and how they helped groups stick to their primary purpose. She learned about Conference-approved literature and how it shouldn't be mixed in with other literature to confuse the new people about which is AA's and which is not. She also learned about money in the Fellowship, the 60-30-10 and other plans, and **not using basket money to buy outside literature.** It was exciting to me to watch this group **becoming informed on issues that affected it, as one group within the larger AA.**

But then, slowly, the group's customs and practices began to erode. At one **group business meeting** the GSR pointed out that the literature the group literature representative had purchased was not Conference-approved literature **and was purchased with money intended for AA use.** This

(Continued on page 11)

Middle Tennessee Intergroup Association

Statement of Activities - Actual and Budgeted - Schedule 1

For the Month and Five Months Ended May 31, 2021

	May 2021			YTD 2021		
	Actual	Budget	Budget Variance	Actual	Budget	Budget Variance
Income						
Net Literature Sales	2,792.65	2,416.33	376.32	10,280.13	12,081.67	(1,801.54)
Group Donations	4,582.55	6,666.67	(2,084.12)	29,403.85	33,333.33	(3,929.48)
Individual Donations	1,478.80	1,264.83	213.97	10,650.24	6,324.17	4,326.07
Messenger Donations	-	12.50	(12.50)	17.00	62.50	(45.50)
Website Donations	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special Events	-	333.33	(333.33)	-	1,666.67	(1,666.67)
Interest	3.72	4.17	(0.45)	19.17	20.83	(1.66)
Total Income	8,857.72	10,697.83	(1,840.11)	50,370.39	53,489.17	(3,118.78)
Expenses						
Casual Labor	225.00	266.67	(41.67)	1,125.00	1,333.33	(208.33)
Payroll	6,271.00	6,272.00	(1.00)	31,355.00	31,360.00	(5.00)
Legal & Professional	350.00	350.00	-	1,750.00	1,750.00	-
Rent	946.00	1,046.00	(100.00)	4,830.00	5,230.00	(400.00)
Printing	-	50.00	(50.00)	-	250.00	(250.00)
Payroll Taxes	480.00	480.25	(0.25)	2,383.27	2,401.25	(17.98)
Repairs & Maintenance	-	25.00	(25.00)	-	125.00	(125.00)
Equipment Rental	89.02	95.83	(6.81)	487.10	479.17	7.93
Telephone & Fax	513.31	475.00	38.31	2,573.73	2,375.00	198.73
Answering Service	177.45	250.00	(72.55)	1,442.39	1,250.00	192.39
Postage	72.89	95.83	(22.94)	614.68	479.17	135.51
Office Supplies	116.56	208.00	(91.44)	436.68	1,040.00	(603.32)
Bank Service Charges	40.00	40.00	-	215.00	200.00	15.00
Computer & Technology	92.86	250.00	(157.14)	849.39	1,250.00	(400.61)
Credit Card Service Fees	67.01	50.00	17.01	327.74	250.00	77.74
Intergroup Expense	-	166.67	(166.67)	-	833.33	(833.33)
Insurance	-	216.67	(216.67)	1,525.00	1,083.33	441.67
Special Events	-	83.33	(83.33)	-	416.67	(416.67)
Travel	-	250.33	(250.33)	-	1,251.67	(1,251.67)
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	-	26.25	(26.25)	-	131.25	(131.25)
Over/Under	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses	9,441.10	10,697.83	(1,256.73)	49,914.98	53,489.17	(3,574.19)
Net Income	(583.38)	-	(583.38)	455.41	-	455.41

ANNIVERSARIES

ANY LENGTHS

Allison B	*08.27.19*
Jana G	*08.16.20*
Jenna B	*08.06.20*
Sue A	*08.01.20*

BACKROOM

Brittani W	*08.13.18*
Caleb G	*08.12.18*
John A	*08.11.17*
Lindsey T	*08.05.20*
Rob S	*08.24.16*

THE RISE AND FALL OF A HOME GROUP

(Continued from page 9)

business meeting ended with the literature representative throwing the outside literature order forms at the group and leaving!

Later at another business meeting, discussion was held on whether an interpreter for the hearing impaired could be allowed to attend a closed meeting. The **group conscience** decided against it, since it was a closed meeting. An old-timer in disagreement took the matter before the people attending that night's meeting **whether they were members of that group or not. The people attending voted to reverse the decision of the group conscience by opening the meeting to anyone.** That meeting conscience weakened the effectiveness of that group conscience, **and more people left the group.**

This group was so well attended, that the church adjusted the rent accordingly. But money was always there because of the number of people who attended the meetings. The group became so effective in carrying the message that **a local alcoholism referral agency** began sending young people to the meeting as an introduction to AA.
This drew other young people to the meeting, and eventually it began to be known as a great place for young people to meet. Within a year after this flood of young people, **a local centre for <u>troubled children</u> began sending some of its clients to the meeting also.** By this time, some of the old-timers had found other meetings to attend. When asked why, they said, **"We are not hearing the language of AA that we need to hear to stay sober."** Others thought the real reasons might be age differences, dress, language of the street, and just plain being outnumbered young to old.

A powerful principle in AA, rotation - the passing-it-on to the newer people - was needed for the group to grow. This time there was **no discussion by group conscience** about who would be best for the group or who was sober, but rather anyone who would volunteer got the responsibilities. Secretary, treasurer, and GSR were passed on to people **who didn't know the first thing about the principles of AA or anything of the Traditions.** Once a chairman offered the Traditions for a topic one night and they were turned into **drug talk, Freudian** concepts, and rehab language. **He never came back** and neither did the former officers of the group. The group had become a group of the **blind leading the blind.**

Group conscience began discussing the topics: how do we get older people to return, how are we going to pay this high rent? What are we going to do?

A local DCM was asked to attend a group conscience meeting to listen and offer some suggestions. Members talked about the Traditions, Steps, outside literature, getting sober people to chair the meetings, turning radios off and the quality of sobriety that action in AA offers. A plea went out to older members to please return to the meeting. A few did return, but only for a short time. These kids seemed to be left on their own. A new group conscience emerged, struggled for a short time, **and failed again** when volunteers were needed to fill the frequently vacated group responsibilities. Again, there was no leadership from the now "younger old-timers," as they too left for other groups. **Finally, with the rent too much, no coffee, no unity, our home group met last week to announce the end.**

Bill W. said that the force which will destroy Alcoholics Anonymous will come **very slowly from inside the Fellowship.** This group lasted some fourteen to seventeen years. AA consists of home groups, and as a Fellowship we are seeing a breakdown of this principal structure.

If we as a Fellowship don't carefully pass on to newer members, the responsibilities that come with being a group, many more groups will go the way of this group. The old-timers must stick around to teach the newer members "how it works", not only in the Twelve Steps but in our groups. Sometimes the new people must drag the answers out of the old-timers, and if they are not at the meetings, **we will repeat the mistakes made early in the Fellowship**
.
We must learn how to keep this Fellowship alive and our groups intact for the next member who needs it. By helping insure the sobriety of others to come, we insure our own sobriety today. **The best member of Alcoholics Anonymous that one can be - is the best member of a home group that one can be.**

Reprinted with permission, from the Grapevine booklet: "The HomeGroup - Heartbeat of AA"

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