

GAA ZETTE

Our meeting in print.

About MAICO

The mission of MAICO (Madison Area Intergroup Central Office) is to help A.A. groups within its service area (South Central Wisconsin) carry the A.A. message. MAICO helps coordinate and facilitate communication and cooperation among individual A.A. groups, area 12-step and other committees, and components of the A.A. service structure. MAICO provides needed services that are beyond the scope and ability of any individual A.A. group, and is at all times responsible to the groups it serves.

The Professor and the Paradox

**Says he, "We A.A.'s surrender to win; we give away to keep;
we suffer to get well, and we die to live."**

I am in the public information business. I use that phrase or designation because if I say I am a college professor everybody always has a tendency to run the other way. And when they learn that I am a specialist in English, they have looks of horror for fear they are going to slip up and say "ain't." I often wish I sold shoes or insurance or fixed automobiles or plumbed pipes. I would have more friends.

My story is not a great deal different from others – except in a few specific details. All the roads of alcoholism lead to the same place and condition. I suppose I have always been shy, sensitive, fearful, envious, and resentful, which in turn leads one to be arrogantly independent, a defiant personality. I believe I got a Ph.D. degree principally because I wanted to either outdo or defy everybody else. I have published a great deal of scholarly research – I think for the same reason. Such determination, such striving for perfection, is undoubtedly an admirable and practical quality to have, for a while; but when a person mixes such a quality with alcohol, that quality can eventually cut him almost to pieces. At least it did so to me.

I began drinking as a social drinker, in my early twenties. Drinking constituted no problem for me until well after I finished graduate school at the age of thirty. But as the tensions and anxieties of my life began to mount, and the set-backs from perfection began to increase, I finally slipped over the line between moderate drinking and alcoholism. No longer would I drink a few beers or a cocktail or two and let it go at that. No longer did I let months or even weeks go by without liquor. And when drinking, I entered what I now know was the dream-world of alcoholic fantasy. Then for about five years of progressively worse alcoholic drinking, of filling my life and home with more and more wreckage, it looked as if I were going to ride this toboggan of destruction to the bitter end.

Maybe I didn't get as bad as some of the others. I must confess that I never went to teach one of my classes drunk or drinking – but I've been awfully hung-over. My pattern was to be drunk at night, boil myself out to creep to work in the morning, drunk the next night, boil myself out the next morning, drunk again the next night, boil myself out the next morning. I may not have drunk as much whiskey as some, but there isn't anybody who's drunk any more Sal Hepatica than I have!

Now there are all kinds of drunks: melancholy drunks, weeping drunks, traveling drunks, slap-happy and stupid drunks, and a number of other varieties. I was a self-aggrandizing and occasionally violent drunk. You wouldn't think a little fellow like me could do much damage, but when I'm drunk I'm pure dynamite. I'm not going into any of the details – The University can fire me yet!

I came to believe actually that life was not worth living unless I could drink. I was utterly miserable and sometimes desperate, livings always with a feeling of impending calamity (I knew something was bound to “break loose”). And to do away with such a fear, I would try a little more drinking, with the inevitable result – for by this time one drink would set up in me that irresistible urge to take another and another until I was down or hung-over and in trouble. In the hung-over stage I would vow never to touch another drop, and then be drunk the next night.

I knew at least that there had to be some changes made. I tried to change the time and place and amount of my drinking. I tried to change my environment, my place of living – like most of us who at one time or another think that our trouble is geography rather than whiskey. I even entertained the idea of changing wives. I tried to change everything and everybody, *except myself* – the only thing I *could* change.

I did not know that it was physically impossible for me to drink moderately. I did not know that my body's drinking machinery had worn out, and that the parts could not be replaced. I did not know that just one drink made it impossible for me to control my behavior and conduct and my future drinking. I did not know, in short, that I was powerless over alcohol. My family and my friends sensed or knew these things about me long before I did.

Finally, as with most of us in A.A., the crisis came. I realized I had a drinking problem which had to be solved. My wife and a close friend tried to persuade me to contact the only member of Alcoholics Anonymous we knew of in town. This I refused to do. But I agreed that I would stop drinking altogether, maintaining stoutly and sincerely that I could and would solve this problem “on my own.” I would feel much better doing it that way, I insisted. I stayed sober for two entire weeks! Then I pitched a “lulu” – a terrific drunken affair in which I became violently insane. I also landed in the City Jail.

I don't know exactly what happened on this bender, but here are some things that did happen which I was told about subsequently. First, the officers who had come out to my house did not want to take me in – but I insisted! Also, I insisted that they wait in the living room while I went back to the bedroom and changed into my best and newest suit (with socks and tie to match), so that I would look nice in jail! I don't remember the ride downtown, but when I “came to” in the jail corridor, I didn't like the looks of the little cage they were shoving me into, so I took issue about that with three officers and indulged in some fisticuffs with all three of them at once – each one of them twice my size and armed with a gun and a blackjack. Now what kind of thinking and acting is that? If that isn't insanity, or absurd grandiosity, or some sort of mental illness, what is it? Because I yelled so loud and made such noise, I ended up downstairs under the concrete in a place they call “solitary.” (That's a fine place—now isn't it?—for a college professor to spend the night!) Two days later I was willing to try A.A., which I had only vaguely heard of a few months before. I called at the home of the man who started the A.A. group in my town, and I went humbly with him to an A.A. meeting the following night.

As I look back, something must have happened to me during those two days. Some forces must have been at work which I do not understand. But on those two days – between jail and A.A.—something happened to me that had never happened before. I repeat, I don't know what it was. Maybe I had made a “decision” – just a part of Step Three (I had made lots of promises but never a decision) – though it seems to me that I was at the time too confused and fogged up to make much of one. Maybe it was the guiding hand of God, or (as we Baptists say) the Holy Spirit. I like to think that it was just that, followed by my own attempt to take the Twelve Steps to recovery. Whatever it was, I have been in A.A. and I have been dry ever since. That was more than six years ago.

A.A. does not function in a way which people normally expect it to. For example, instead of using our “will power,” as everyone outside A.A. seems to think we do, we give up our wills to a Higher Power, place our lives in hands – invisible hands – stronger than ours. Another example: If twenty or thirty of us real drunks get away from home and meet in a clubroom downtown on Saturday night, the normal expectation is that all thirty of us will surely get roaring drunk, but it doesn't work out that way, does it? Or talking about whisky and old drinking days (one would normally think) is sure to raise a thirst, but it doesn't work that way either, does it? Our program and procedures seem to be in many ways contrary to normal opinion. And so, in connection with this idea, let me pass on what I consider the four paradoxes of how A.A. works. (A paradox, you probably already know, is a statement which appears to be false, but which, upon careful examination, in certain instances proves to be true.)

1. We SURRENDER TO WIN. On the face of it, *surrendering* certainly does not seem like *winning*. But it is in A.A. Only after we have come to the end of our rope, hit a stone wall in some aspect of our lives beyond which we can go no further; only when we hit “bottom” in despair and surrender, can we accomplish sobriety, which we could never accomplish before. We must, and we do, surrender in order to win.

2. We GIVE AWAY TO KEEP. That seems absurd and untrue. How can you keep anything if you give it away? But in order to keep whatever it is we get in A.A., we must go about giving it away to others, for no fees or rewards of any kind. When we cannot afford to give away what we have received so freely in A.A., we had better get ready for our next “drunk.” It will happen every time. We've got to continue to give it away in order to keep it.

3. We SUFFER TO GET WELL. There is no way to escape the terrible suffering of remorse and regret and shame and embarrassment which starts us on the road to getting well from our affliction. There is no new way to shake out a hangover. It's painful. And for us, necessarily so. I told this to a friend of mine as he sat weaving to and fro on the side of the bed, in terrible shape, about to die for some paraldehyde. I said, “Lost John” – that's his nickname—“Lost John, you know you're going to have to do a certain amount of shaking sooner or later.” “Well,” he said “for God's sake let's make it later!” We suffer to get well.

4. We DIE TO LIVE. That is a beautiful paradox straight out of the Biblical idea of being “born again” or “in losing one's life to find it.” When we work at our Twelve Steps, the old life of guzzling and fuzzy thinking, and all that goes with it, gradually dies, and we acquire a different and a better way of life. As our shortcomings are removed, one life of us dies, and another life of us lives. We in A.A. die to live.

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Did you know if you have the Fourth Edition Big Book & the Experience, Strength & Hope book you will have every story that was printed in the First, Second & Third Edition Big Books. The Experience, Strength & Hope book is \$7.50 at MAICO.

Income Statement -Eleven Months ending November 30, 2014

Revenues	This year	Last Year
Donations	37,029.05	35,309.19
MAICO Reps Events	646.00	1,049.94
Individual Donations	2,557.42	1,295.15
Donations – Answering Service	120.00	170.00
Donations - Gratitude Month	1,612.27	1,221.94
Donations – Prudent Reserve	88.00	20.00
Conference Literature	33,495.95	31,497.64
Grapevine Literature	1,882.79	2,136.23
Non-Conference Literature	9,050.98	10,914.85
Non-Conference Merchandise	18,995.30	19,620.03
Faithful Fivers	406.00	395.00
Directories	1,344.79	1,880.79
Newsletter Subscriptions	10.00	40.00
Investment Income	2.88	202.28
Gift Certificates	20.00	0.00
Inventory Adjustment	502.33	3,012.08
Other Income – copies	274.18	93.87
Shipping Charges Reimbursed	749.13	768.09
Sales Tax Discount	<u>90.00</u>	<u>100.00</u>
Total Revenues	<u>108,877.07</u>	<u>109,727.08</u>
Cost of Sales		
Purchase Returns and Allowance	118.16	0.00
Inventory Exp.-Conference Lit.	21,436.62	20,853.85
Inventory Exp.-Grapevine	1,004.00	1,712.82
Inventory Exp.-NonConfer Lit.	5,755.62	7,157.50
Inventory Exp.-NonConfer Mer.	<u>14,064.10</u>	<u>15,034.31</u>
Total Cost of Sales	<u>42,378.50</u>	<u>44,758.48</u>
Gross Profit	66,498.57	64,968.60
Expenses		
Auto Expense – mileage	281.56	380.80
Wages Expense	35,468.60	35,113.20
Payroll Tax Expense	2,713.39	2,686.00
Medical Reimbursement	1,100.00	500.00
Credit Card Processing Costs	964.78	866.22
Mobile Credit Card Unit Fees	0.00	76.35
Accounting Fees	0.00	50.00
License and Fees Expenses	230.00	0.00
Computer – Software	669.00	646.20
Equipment for office	468.24	0.00
Supplies Expense	1,029.39	2,087.50
Office Expense	315.27	273.59
Investment Funds Decrease	46.60	295.31
Telephone/Internet	1,513.00	1,449.48
Domain Name – Go Daddy Acct	42.74	0.00
Answering Service Expense	5,306.31	4,976.95
Advertising in Phone Book	1,012.00	920.00
Postage and Shipping Expense	998.33	1,332.82
Occupancy Expense	9,310.00	9,041.00
Insurance Expense	716.00	711.00
Printing Expense	802.65	488.62

Directory Expense	0.00	1,598.00
Conference Expense	453.77	0.00
Intergrp/C.O. Seminar	262.60	777.84
MAICO Reps Events	437.11	550.00
Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	0.12
Over/Under cash on hand (cash register)	10.00	0.00
Total Expenses	64,151.34	64,821.00
Net Income	<u>\$2,347.23</u>	<u>\$147.60</u>

*Thank you to all AA groups and individuals for donations & literature sales.
Your continuing support is greatly appreciated.*

“A Big Thank You for Gratitude Month Donations”

Upcoming Events 2014-2015

Some event flyers are on www.aamadisonwi.org or www.area75.org
Any district or group AA event can be posted on the Area 75 calendar by going to www.area75.org, click “get your event posted here”, be aware that info & flyers go on internet, mindful of anonymity, names on flyers etc

Recurring events:

- 1st Sun of month – Ripon’s Royal Ridge Open Speaker AA Breakfast**, Royal Ridges, State Hwy 23 (W. Fond du Lac St.), Ripon. Breakfast 10am, Speaker 11:00am. \$9.00 adults, Holiday meets 2nd Sunday.
- 3rd Sun of month – Pocket Full of Sunshine Breakfast**, Howard Johnson, 3841 E. Washington Ave., Madison, 10am breakfast buffet \$8.99 all you can eat, 12 & under \$5.00, 11am Speaker
- 2nd Fri of month – Finger Food Friday, Appetizer Potluck**, Speaker meeting, 6:30pm appetizer’s, 7:00pm Speaker, United Methodist Ch., 1804 New Pinery Rd., Portage.
- Last Wed of month – Sunlight of the Spirit Grp, (SOTS) Open speaker meeting**, Plymouth United Church of Christ, 2401 Atwood Ave., 5:30pm Potluck, bring a dish to share, 6:30pm Speaker, ring doorbell
- Last Sat of month – Hosted by Portage Area Recovery Groups, Open Speaker Meeting**, 8pm, Historic Apts., 207 W. Cook St., Portage, basement, handicap accessible, Potluck to follow meeting.
- 1st & 3rd Sat of month – Monroe Sister Blandine Group, Open Speaker Meeting**, St. Victor’s Church, 1760 14th St., Monroe, entrance off 20th Ave (parish library door) Everyone welcome
- 5th Friday of the month – Montello – Buffalo Gals & One Day at a Time Grps, Open Speaker Meeting**, 6:30pm social time, 7pm meeting.

2014 Holiday Events – The Holidays are challenging for many in Recovery so remember in addition to Groups holding meetings during this time, the local Clubs are holding Alkathons, Thanksgiving & Christmas Dinners & New Year’s Eve & New Year’s Day events, contact your local club to see what events are planned.

2015 –

Jan 9-11 – WICYPAA XXII, To See a Fellowship Grow up about you, The Plaza Hotel & Suites, 1202 W. Clairemont Ave., Eau Claire, WI. www.wicypaa.org for info or email Chair: chair@wicypaa.org

Jan 25 – Area 75 Fall Conference 2017 Conference Committee Meeting, Need Chairs & Co-Chairs, 3pm, The Historic Building, 207 W. Cook St., Portage, WI. District 31 with help from District 2 & 19 are hosting. Need help to organize & facilitate the Conference which will be held Oct. 27-29th, 2017, The Heidel House Resort & Spa, Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake, WI.

Apr 17 – 19 – The 28th International AA Men’s Conference, Trudge the Road to Happy Destiny, Cleveland, Ohio. Double Tree, 3663 Park East, Beachwood, Ohio. www.IAAMCCLEVELAND.COM

May 15 – 17 – 64th Annual Area 75 Conference, Is Sobriety Enough? What Am I Missing? - Holiday Inn – Fond du Lac, 625 Rolling Meadows Drive, Fond du Lac, WI. Registration: \$12, Rooms \$105.00 plus tax

Jul 2-5 - Alcoholics Anonymous 80th Birthday in Atlanta, Georgia. Go to www.aa.org, look for logo with International Convention Information, including link to Registration which is \$100.

Thank You’s - Donations received from October 24 to December 12, 2014

General Fund

Belmont Thursday Grp
 Berlin Fri. Night Grp
 Caring & Sharing Grp
 Cross Plains Unity Grp
 DeForest Progress Grp
 Early Birds Grp
 Early Risers Grp
 Experience, Strength & Hope Grp
 Foxhall Recovery Grp
 Ft. Atkinson Open Beginners Grp
 Grace Lunch Grp
 Into Action Grp
 It’s a God Thing Grp
 Keep It Simple Grp
 Lancaster Tuesday Night Grp
 Life on Life’s Terms Grp
 Living Sober Grp
 Mid Morning Grp
 Monona Serenity Grp
 Monroe New Beginnings Grp
 Montello Mon Night Buffalo Gals Grp

New Glarus Sobrietyfest Grp
 Orfordville Grp
 Richland Center Primitive Grp
 Rock River Grp
 Room to Grow Grp
 St. Andy’s Grp
 Sunlight of the Spirt (SOTs) Grp
 Sunrise Serenity Grp
 Tuesday Night Workshop Grp
 Thursday/Friday Candlelight Grp
 Westfield 12 & 12 Grp

Faithful Fivers

Anonymous

MAICO Corrections Treatment Fund

Capital Steps Grp
 Caring & Sharing Grp
 Early Risers Grp
 Living Sober Grp
 Sunlight of the Spirt (SOTs) Grp

“A Big Thank You also to Groups & Individuals who donated during November for Gratitude Month”