

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.

First Tradition Checklist

The author says: "AA's Twelve Traditions have, in my experience, often proved vital in keeping me sober, and helpful otherwise in all my affairs." This is the first of a series of articles sharing that experience.

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on AA unity.

MY AA HISTORY consists of two extended slips during an otherwise sober quarter-century. I have not taken or wanted a drink since May 1952, but I have learned much about alcohol and AA, and a little about myself. For instance, I no longer have quick, simple answers for staying sober, although at times I sound as if I had. For example, I have said I had sobriety of the head, not sobriety of the heart, in my first year, and I've been so proud of this eloquence that I was deaf to the vanity revealed: the implication that my own superior ability at rational thinking kept me from drinking.

More honest thinking suggests that what kept me sober those first days was not any of my doing at all. Obviously, it was not rules or laws, either, since we have none. In fact, our Twelve Traditions had not even been written yet, the first year I spent dry, sitting around in New York City's old 41st Street clubhouse, glum and stiff in one of the musty pews of that barnlike old church building where meetings were held.

I made a few mechanical gestures that year, doing my turn at desk or telephone duty, reading the AA publications (very few then), and speaking at meetings. I even typed copy for the early, tabloid-size Grapevine. But none of this was based on any real desire to change myself.

When I came to AA, I had not wanted sobriety so much as I wanted to stay out of the trouble that came with my drinking. I had been terrorized by blackouts and a searing fear that I was really losing my mind. I had been sick with shame at the way I had treated my family and friends, even if I did think they often deserved it for some of the things they did to poor me. I had been unemployable, hopelessly in debt, and sure that jail or an insane asylum was deserved and inevitable, unless a suicide attempt worked out some time.

The vanity which so often had propped me up had given way to self-loathing. I was a dirty, gaunt, unshaven, quaking wreck. I was no good. The world would be better off without me.

The state of AA dryness I found in that old clubhouse in 1945 was highly desirable, every precious 24 hours of it. It did not promise any rosy future, but it was beginning to exorcise the past.

I kept going through the AA motions, relieved enormously by the knowledge that I had a disease, that it was not my fault, and that others like me, or worse, were recovering. (Didn't I see hope sitting row on row at every meeting?) I was memorizing AA statements and not drinking, more because AA seemed to expect it (and my family approved) than because I really wanted the AA way of life.

It is, of course, a miracle that I stayed sober at all. Those wonderful AA people, when I first came for help, certainly had far more to do with keeping me sober than my own reluctant efforts. I believe now that those sober members acted out twelve specific ideas of AA behavior, and I want to celebrate in Grapevine ink those twelve ways, because they saved my life and still do, over and over.

Chronologically, one of the first things AA members ever did, which eventually made my own recovery possible, was simply *sticking together*.

The first AAs fast got the notion that we need each other if we are to survive. As has been said well and often, we may not all like each other, but we have to love each other. Communicate or die! When put into action, the power of that one idea alone can keep a guy sober, to his own surprise, a very long time. It did that for me, I know.

Then someone got the idea that AAs ought to put down in writing just how it was they were staying sober. Many agreed; others were fearful. The real crunch was agreeing on what to put into the book. What a miracle that those early members, despite misgivings, disagreements, distrust, and fierce devotion to high principles that were poles apart, could agree, not only on the Twelve Steps, but on enough material to fill a whole book! If the early AAs had not stuck together at that point, if they had broken up in hopeless disagreements, there would be no book, no Twelve Steps, no AA, and no me.

Ancient history? Not for me. I turned myself in to AA on a bitterly cold January day during World War II. AA members had already decided to have a publicly listed telephone number. The simple act of getting in touch with AA that first time washed out in an instant the dark loneliness that had encompassed my life. When I fearfully crept into that old building that first day, I was greeted with a gentle invitation: "Come on in. Let's talk it over." And everyone assured me I was not alone and *need never be alone again*.

All the suggestions I heard then were based on our sticking together. "Come to meetings" meant that I would be with other AAs, fulfilling the purpose for which meetings had been started in the first place. "Don't get lonely; telephone before you take a drink; talk to another member and get your troubles off your chest." All these powerful tools of sobriety assured me that *together* we could get well and stay well.

Less than a year later, there were so many meetings in the New York area that those of us who answered the telephone had difficulty remembering which groups met which nights and where. So we typed up a list we could refer to. Where would I be now without my meeting list and the central office that publishes it? These two things are absolutely necessary if we AAs in New York or in any large city want to stick together. To remove the last traces of loneliness, there is the *World Directory*, assuring me that we are now a worldwide fellowship with the shared strength of hundreds of thousands. And now the General Service Conference, many GSO bulletins, and the treasured Grapevine, of course, make it easier for all of us to keep in touch.

About five years after my last drink, I found myself pretty sick one day with an illness not related to alcohol. At home alone, scared, I needed help. The natural thing was to call an AA friend, right? Who else would come to help? To whom else could I unashamedly admit I was afraid? Who else knew the inside of fear?

But the only nearby AA member I could reach on the telephone at that time of day was a fellow I did not like. Never had, and the feeling was mutual; he had no use for me, either. Yet he came at once and helped me through the day with incredible, tactful kindness.

That is not an unusual AA story, I know. Almost always, when the chips are down, we forget our differences and observe our First Tradition. We may not quote its words very often, but apparently each AA realizes, deep down, that if it were not for the "we" of AA, there would be no "I."

The Tradition has also made a difference in the quality of my AA life beyond sobriety. One sleepless night some years ago, I was again feeling lonely and isolated, although I had been as regular as ever in going to meetings and participating in other AA actions. I felt surrounded by AA, but insulated against it. Somehow, I was wrapped in a cool cocoon that kept the warm AA spirit from getting to me.

Again, it took the experience of begging another AA member for help to melt away the chilly walls. This time I reached a dear AA friend, and the help I got was anything but tactful. I was told bluntly where the trouble was. It was self-importance again! It seemed that I had subtly and unconsciously come to think of myself as somewhat of an example, if not a font, of AA wisdom. My AA talks pointed out, not only how stupid I had been, but also--and mostly--how much smarter I was now. In discussion meetings I never asked questions; I just answered them. I overflowed with AA know-how, and insidiously it put me out of touch. Secretly, I did not mind at all when someone once referred to me as an oracle.

True, I was sharing my experience, and what I revealed was honest. But it was not the whole truth. I kept hidden from others the yet-unsolved problems, the shameful secrets of today, admitting them fully to no one.

I was furious at the old AA friend who punctured the vanity balloon, but she was right. I had been so busy giving fellowship that I had forgotten to accept any. And she finally goaded me into doing something about it. I began to spill it all out, at last sharing the other parts of my total experience, including the bad and the embarrassing. Believe me, it was a liberating experience, and the help was enormously strengthening.

I no longer feel like an insulated wire set apart from all around me by the protective, concealing, non-conducting sheath of plastic egotism which can keep me out of touch. As an early Grapevine correspondent once wrote, "AAs, unlike some other people, do not reach down to help us; they reach out."

I still marvel that our Loners and Internationalists, who hardly ever get to meetings, stay beautifully sober. But I also remember that originally the Grapevine began as a message from the AAs back home to the AAs overseas in World War II. And I recall a letter from a private, who wrote from Normandy, "Even thousands of miles away, I know I am not alone, since all of you are always with me in spirit."

Maybe those isolated members--perhaps because they have to dig so deep into our literature--sense better than some meeting-goers like me the meanings and values of fellowship. They are constantly reminded that the Twelve Steps say *we* admitted, *we* came to believe, *we* made a decision, and *we* tried to carry the message.

This beautiful *we*, this sticking together in our brotherhood of love--which can heal my individual sick soul, as well as cementing together our Fellowship--is set forth for all of us in the words "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity."

First Tradition Checklist

My sobriety depends on unity with you.

What am I doing to help build that unity?

Here are some questions I ask myself when I take my First Tradition inventory:

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into arguments?
3. Am I gentle with alcoholics who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of fellowship?

-- B. L. Manhattan, New York

Editorial on the Second Step

Having taken the First Step of the A.A. program by admitting that we were powerless over alcohol, we were confronted with Step Two: "We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

This Second Step is often referred to as the first spiritual step; but is it or the subsequent steps any more spiritual than Step One? Is not anything spiritual which tends toward elevating us to the best and highest type of human being we are capable of becoming?

The Second Step contains the crux of the A.A. method of getting well: it shows us how to expel that little streak of insanity which caused so many relapses into debauchery long after the normal drinker would have shrunk from another drink. This twisted kind of thinking is eliminated by faith in a Power greater than ourselves.

The question which naturally arises in the newcomer's mind is: "How can I acquire enough faith to get well?" The road to faith is by taking all Twelve Steps. Faith is acquired by working for it; it is retained by continuous use of the Twelve Steps.

One who has gained faith in this greater Power finds such faith reflected toward himself. To the alcoholic this means faith that he will not take the first, fatal drink. But that is not all, for soon we learn that in some mysterious way our whole lives have been changed, our thinking changed, and our desires as well. Finally the realization comes that we no longer drink--because we just don't want to.

The greater Power now becomes for us the court of final appeal. Those harsh judgments of people, conditions, and so on, which *we* made in the past are now left to this court. This is the way to tolerance. Our own ideals, aims and ambitions are also submitted. This leads to progress, and it is by progressing that we become--and remain--well.

Horace C. – December 1944 - reprinted with permission AA Grapevine

Income Statement - Nine Months ending November 30, 2015

Revenues	This year	Last Year
Donations	35,994.91	37,029.05
MAICO Reps events	407.61	646.00
Individual Donations	3,556.29	2,478.27
Donations – Answering Service	65.00	120.00
Donations - Gratitude Month	3,027.51	1,612.27
Conference Literature	28,886.61	33,495.95
Non-Conference Literature	9,748.72	9,050.98
Non-Conference Merchandise	17,358.29	18,995.30
Grapevine Literature	1,458.20	1,882.79
Faithful Fivers	513.00	406.00
Directories	1,452.64	1,344.79
Savings Account Income	4.70	0.00
Other Income – copies	116.39	897.39
Shipping Charges Reimbursed	520.98	749.13
Sales Tax Discount	<u>50.00</u>	<u>90.00</u>
Total Revenues	<u>103,160.85</u>	<u>108,877.07</u>
Cost of Sales		
Inventory Exp.-Conference Lit.	17,715.84	21,436.62
Inventory Exp.-NonConfer Lit.	7,012.97	5,755.62
Inventory Exp.-NonConfer Mer.	11,263.20	14,064.10
Inventory Exp.-Grapevine	489.65	1,004.00
Inventory Exp.-Directories	<u>467.82</u>	<u>118.16</u>
Total Cost of Sales	<u>36,949.48</u>	<u>42,378.50</u>
Gross Profit	<u>66,211.37</u>	<u>66,498.57</u>
Expenses		
Travel Expense – mileage	225.90	281.56
Wages Expense	36,193.00	35,468.60
Payroll Tax Expense	3,318.60	2,713.39
Medical Reimbursement	1,400.00	1,100.00
Credit Card Processing Costs	556.77	964.78
Mobile Credit Card Unit Fees	165.00	0.00
License and Fees Expense	230.00	230.00
Office Supplies Expense	1,542.97	1,029.39
Office Expense	1,267.15	1,541.85
Telephone/Internet Expense	1,682.37	1,513.00
Answering Service Expense	5,319.56	5,306.31
Advertising in Phone Book	892.00	1,012.00
Postage and Shipping Expense	807.11	998.33
Occupancy Expense	9,590.00	9,310.00
Insurance Expense	858.00	716.00
Printing Expense	444.64	802.65
Conference Expense	861.89	716.37
MAICO Reps Events Expense	425.78	437.11
Reconciliation Discrepancies	-.74	0.00
Other Expense	29.99	10.00
Total Expenses	<u>65,809.99</u>	<u>64,151.34</u>
Net Income	<u>\$401.38</u>	<u>\$2,347.23</u>

Upcoming Events

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, enter Ohio St. side of church.

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

2016

Jan 8–10 – WICYPAA XXIII, A New Freedom, Madison Marriott West, 1313 John Q. Hammons Dr., Middleton, WI. Early Registration \$10 until Dec. 25th, \$20.00 at the door. www.wicypaa.org

Jan 14 – Thursday Night Women's AA Water over Wine Potluck Dinner for Women only, Free Congregation of Sauk City, Park Hall, 307 Polk St., Sauk City, WI. in basement, 6pm – 8pm
Contact: Dana F. 608-370-2414 or dmarieknitandfiber@yahoo.com , Bring a dish to pass. Early Sobriety Speaker: Megan S., 2nd Speaker – Julie D.

Jan 17 – Area 75 Winter Service Assembly, Madison Senior Center, 330 W. Mifflin St., Madison. 9am, parking lot next to Senior Center.

Jan 30 – Richland Center Group's 25th Annual Pre-Groundhog Day Celebration, Richland Hills Apts., 701 W. Seminary St., Richland Center, Park in Parking lot across street, dinner @ 6:30pm, Meat provided. Bring dish to pass. Open Speaker at 7:30pm: Ruth M. from Sauk Prairie

Feb 11-14 – 52nd International Women's Conference, Norfolk, Virginia, Norfolk Waterside Marriott. Registration forms at www.internationalwomensconference.org

Mar 19 – 40th Annual Badger Intergroup, Waukesha Expo Center, 1000 Northview Rd., Waukesha, WI. (non-smoking facility), **Clancy I. from Los Angeles, CA.**, Tickets \$30, Mail in Only, Name & address on Flyer, Deadline March 4, 2016. Q's – Troy M. 414-803-7561

Apr 9 – Great Lakes Mini Conference, A.A. Traditions, First Presbyterian Ch., 1225 4th St., Fond du Lac, WI. 9am-9:15pm. Hosted by District 25. Q's Email greatlakesintergroup@gmail.com

Apr 16 – MAICO Reps Spring Into Action Workshop, Trinity Lutheran Ch., 1904 Atwood Ave., Madison, WI. Three Panels. 9:00am to Noon. Pizza at Noon, \$5.00 for pizza

May 20-22 – 65th Annual Area 75 AA Conference, Olympia Resort, Oconomowoc, WI. **Happy, Joyous & Free**, hosted by Districts 34 & 12. You can register on line at www.eventbrite.com, type Area 75 2016 Conference in search box. Click on link, and that will take you to registration page.

Thank You's - Donations received October 30 to December 18, 2015

General Fund

4th Dimension Grp
Berlin Sunday Night Grp
Brodhead Sister Blandine/Big Book
Cambridge Thurs. PM Grp
DeForest Progress Grp
Early Risers
East Side Grp
Easy Does It But Do It Grp
Exit 164 Grp
Fitchburg Sunrisers Grp
Ft. Atkinson Open Beginners Grp
Ft. Atkinson Promises Grp
Grace Lunch Grp
Happy Hour Grps in WI. Dells
Individual AA Members
Into Action
It's A God Thing Grp
Lancaster Grp
Milton Young at Heart Grp
Monroe Design for Living Grp
Monroe Sat. Morning Grapevine
Mount Olive AA Grp
Palmyra Monday Night Grp
Platteville Wed Noon Grp
Prairie Dock Grp
Precisely How We Recovered
Rock River Grp
Sauk Prairie AA
Slip Nots
Spring Green Read n Lead
St. Andy's 7am Grp
Stoughton Alano Grps
Sunlight of the Spirit Grp
Sunrise Serenity
The 1728 Grp
Tom B.
Tuesday Night Workshop Grp
Westfield 12 & 12 Grp
Woman's Serenity Grp

Faithful Fivers

Anonymous

Gratitude Month

A Vision for You Young People Grp
Baraboo Beginners Grps
Beloit Happy Hour Grp
Boscobel 12 Step Grp

Brodhead Sister Blandine/Big Book
Clear Cut Directions Grp
Daily Reflections
Dells Delton Grp
Early Risers Grp
East Side Grp
Easy Breathers Grp
Easy Does It But Do It Grp
Edgerton Monday Night
Family Afterward Grp
Fitchburg Sunrisers Grp
Fitchburg Traditions Grp
Fitchburg Grp
Freedom Grp
Grace Lunch Grp
Individual AA Members
Janesville Keys to Kingdom Grp
K.I.S.S. - Keep It Simple Sisters Grp
Lancaster Grp
Living Sober Grp
New Glarus Sobrietyfest Grp
Oregon Room to Grow Grp
Orfordville Promises Grp
Out to Lunch Grp
Platteville Wed Noon Grp
Portage 207 Group
Prairie Dock Grp
Precisely How We Recovered
Red Circle Grp
Saturday Morning On Timers Grp
Stoughton Alano Grps
Sunlight of the Spirit Grp
Sun Prairie Keep Calm Tuesdays
Sun Prairie Mon 7pm/Thurs 5:30PM
Sunrise Serenity Grp
The 1728 Grp
West Point Winners Grp

MAICO Corrections Treatment Fund

Capital Steps
Early Risers
Easy Does It But Do It Grp
Foxhall Recovery Grp
Prairie Dock Grp
Sunlight of the Spirit Grp

MAICO Answering Service

Easy Does It But Do It Grp

MAICO
Madison Area Intergroup Central Office
2000 Engel St., Suite 104
Madison, WI 53713

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For This, We are Responsible

We need your help and cooperation if we are to keep up to date about meetings and groups in the area we serve. Please let us know of any changes to the meetings you attend or to your group so we can pass the information along to our readers. Call MAICO at 608-222-8989, email to aamadisonwi@gmail.com or fill out the form and mail to MAICO, 2000 Engel St., Suite 104, Madison, WI. 53713

Provide as much of the following information as is possible

New___ Change___ Help___ Discontinued___

Group name (if any)_____ Open___ Closed___

Smoking___ Non-smoking___ Signed___ Accessible___

Day and time of meeting _____

Location_____

Type of meeting_____

Group contact person_____

Contact's phone number_____

Also, let us know of any changes in your group's contact person(s):

Name_____

Position _____

Phone number_____

Group name (if any)_____

Day and time of meeting_____

Location_____