Let Us Know What’s on Your Minds and In Your Hearts

As you may have noticed, members from our Area have been sending us articles, memes, haikus and inspirational thoughts. And I believe our newsletter is far better because of these contributions. So, we have now demonstrated that there are a lot of our members who have something important to say. So, please continue to share your thoughts, jokes, stories, and experiences with us. We want this to be a newsletter that showcases all the many voices in our community. And I know there are a lot of us out there.

Send us your literary and artistic contributions at deltacentral312@gmail.com
We want to hear from you!

The purpose of Delta Intergroup is to facilitate and support Unity among the members, groups, and fellowships in San Joaquin and neighboring Counties.

Delta Intergroup’s Central Office furthers this goal of Unity by providing services to the groups which they cannot provide to their members.

We sell AA approved and related recovery literature, and provide printed and online meeting schedules and information. We support the P.I./C.P.C. Committee by providing meeting space and pamphlet materials for distribution to the Institutions it serves. We sponsor a monthly area-wide “Birthday” celebration, and special events throughout the year.

Delta Central Office,
1525 N. El Dorado St. #3, Stockton, CA 95204

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Our groups can now make donations to Delta Intergroup online using Zelle & PayPal. Send your donations (with your email address) to deltacentral312@gmail.com. We will send you a receipt via return email.

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Recovery
Step Five
“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

Twelve Steps deflate ego. Step Five is difficult but necessary to sobriety and peace of mind. Confession is an ancient discipline. Without fearless admission of defects, few could stay sober. What do we receive from Step Five? Beginning of true kinship with man and God. Lose sense of isolation, receive forgiveness and give it; learn humility; gain honesty and realism about ourselves. Necessity for complete honesty. Danger of rationalization. How to choose the person in whom to confide. Results are tranquility and consciousness of God. Oneness with God and man prepares us for following Steps.

Unity
Tradition Four
“Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

Better do one thing well than many badly. The life of our Fellowship depends on this principle. The ability of each A.A. to identify himself with and bring recovery to the newcomer is a gift from God . . . passing on this gift to others is our one aim. Sobriety can’t be kept unless it is given away.

Service
Concept Four
Throughout our world service structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.

Promise Five
No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.
THE mystery of slips is not so deep as may appear. While it does seem odd that an alcoholic who has restored himself to a dignified place among his fellow-men, and continued dry for years, should suddenly throw all his happiness overboard and find himself again in mortal peril of drowning in liquor—often the reason is very simple.

People are inclined to say: "There is something peculiar about alcoholics. They may seem to be well, yet at any moment they may turn back to their old ways. You can never be sure!"

This is largely twaddle. The alcoholic is a sick person. Under the techniques of Alcoholics Anonymous he gets well, that is to say, his disease is arrested. There is nothing unpredictable about him any more than there is anything weird about a person who has arrested diabetes.

Let's get it clear, once and for all, that alcoholics are human beings just like other human beings—then we can safeguard ourselves intelligently against most of the slips. Both in professional and lay circles, there is a tendency to label everything that an alcoholic may do as "alcoholic behavior." The truth is, it is simply human nature!

It is very wrong to consider many of the personality traits observed in liquor addicts as peculiar to the alcoholic. Emotional and mental quirks are classified as symptoms of alcoholism merely because alcoholics have them—yet those same quirks can be found among nonalcoholics, too. Actually they are symptoms of mankind!

Of course, the alcoholic himself tends to think of himself as different; someone special, with unique tendencies and reactions. Many psychiatrists, doctors and therapists carry the same idea to extremes in their analyses and treatment of alcoholics. Sometimes they make a complicated mystery of a condition which is found in all human beings, whether they drink whiskey or buttermilk.

To be sure, alcoholism like every other disease does manifest itself in some unique ways. It does have a number of baffling peculiarities which differ from all other diseases. At the same time, many of the symptoms and much of the behavior of alcoholism are closely paralleled and even duplicated in other diseases.

The alcoholic "slip," as it is known in Alcoholics Anonymous, furnishes a perfect example of how human nature can be mistaken for alcoholic behavior.

The "slip" is a relapse! It is a relapse that occurs after the alcoholic has stopped drinking and started on the A.A. program of recovery. "Slips" usually occur in the early stages of the alcoholic's A.A. indoctrination, before he has had time to learn enough of the A.A. technique and A.A. philosophy to give him solid footing. But "slips" may also occur after an alcoholic has been a member of A.A. for many months, or even several years, and it is in this kind, above all, that one finds a marked similarity between the alcoholic's behavior and "normal" victims of other diseases.

No one is startled by the fact that relapses are not uncommon among arrested tubercular patients. But here is a startling fact—the cause is often the same as the cause which leads to "slips" for the alcoholic. It happens this way:

When a tubercular patient recovers sufficiently to be released from the sanitarium, the doctor gives him careful directions for the way he is to live when he gets home. He must be in bed every night by, say, 8 o'clock. He must drink plenty of milk. He must refrain from smoking. He must obey other stringent rules.
“I think people would be happier if they admitted things more often. In a sense we are all prisoners of some memory, or fear, or disappointment - we are all defined by something we can’t change.” - Simon Van Booy, The Illusion of Separateness

You have power over your mind – not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength. - Marcus Aurelius

“When we confess our sin, we agree with God that what he calls sin really is sin. It’s not our sin that keeps us from a relationship with God - but rather our attitude toward our sin, and how we deal with it.” - Denise Wilson

“Love takes off the masks we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within.” - James Baldwin

“You never realize how much of your background is sewn into the lining of your clothes.” - Tom Wolfe

Some people never go crazy. What truly horrible lives they must lead. - Charles Bukowski

“A great man is always willing to be little.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson

“We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be.” - Kurt Vonnegut

“For our sake and yours forget your name in the street; tell us what the world has been to you in the dark places and in the light. Don't tell us what to believe, what to fear. Show us belief's wide skirt and the stitch that unravels fear's caul.” - Toni Morrison, The Nobel Lecture In Literature, 1993

“Imperfection is beauty, madness is genius and it's better to be absolutely ridiculous than absolutely boring.” - Mark Twain

“It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.” - Mark Twain
IT'S A SQUIRMY word--"spiritual." It makes me uncomfortable. It reminds me of the time I spent as a child sitting in a church and trying to look holy. "Spiritual" is confused in my mind with a kind of hymn and has connotations of mediums, levitation, and ghosts.

Worse, "spiritual" implies pretensions of sainthood, a hypocritical posturing, and pretended preoccupation with wonderful thoughts—when I and everybody else know that ninety percent of my day is spent trying to keep the wolf from the door and the horse before the cart.

My spiritual inventory doesn't help much, either. This very day, as I lay in bed staring piously at the ceiling, I took the Third and Eleventh Steps firmly, fondly, and resolutely. I thought warmly of all the great tasks I would accomplish today with the aid of my trusty Third and Eleventh. Then I got out of bed.

In midwinter, with the window open and the heat turned down, getting out of a warm bed apparently is, for me, an act of will of the highest spiritual order. This monumental achievement seems to exhaust my store of spiritual strength for the day.

By ten o'clock, I have a number of creative suggestions to offer my Higher Power on how my life and will might be gainfully employed. I have a serene acceptance of God's will for me as long as it happens to conform to mine.

By 2:00 PM, I have decided to mix a little of my will for me with His, since knowledge of His will is a little slow in coming and there are problems in need of immediate attention—like meeting the payroll, hardly a matter of celestial concern.

This line of self-examination leads to certain humbling realizations that are unwanted but nevertheless gnawing little realities—potholes in the path of smooth spiritual development. For example:

1. I won't believe tomorrow what I am saying today. Many of my hard-won convictions are just expedient reactions to the situation at hand.
2. I have never seen any profound wisdom in "Everything works out eventually." Of course it does. If my car is stolen tomorrow, I can meditate on how smart I was to put off cleaning out the ashtray.
3. There are far more things I try to find the courage to change than there are things I seek the serenity to accept. Going through the day in placid acceptance of everything that happens just ain't my style.
4. I sometimes get tired of all this self-improvement and would like to just sit back and relax and enjoy life.
5. I really enjoy solitude occasionally, as opposed to constant contact with my fellowman. There are times when I prefer curling up with a good book with lots of sex and violence to putting the Big Book under my arm and sallying forth to carry the message.

Those are not proud admissions, just the truth. I lead an odd and noisy life; little happens slowly or quietly. When I read my Big Book and "Twelve and Twelve," and I assess my spiritual growth, I am filled with enormous feelings of inadequacy. Honesty, compassion, acceptance, understanding, faith, love, caring—I don't even think about those most of the time. My progress toward spiritual strength is a zigzag trail filled with hip-shooting reactions.

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2 New Books! - Available April 23


And

*Women in AA (Spanish-language)* is a collection of stories taken from the pages of Grapevine and La Viña.

¡Dos nuevos libros! - Disponible el 23 de abril

*Libres por dentro: Historias de recuperación en AA en prisión* presenta historias poderosas de miembros sobrios de Alcohólicos Anónimos.

Y

*Mujeres en AA* es una colección de 44 historias tomadas de las páginas de Grapevine y La Viña.
Sometimes, I have thought of creating a Slob's Guide to Spiritual Growth, for those of us who can't walk around with our hands folded and a slight, mysterious smile on our faces. It might go something like this:

1. It is better to watch the game in your undershirt with a can of cola in your hand than a can of beer.
2. When you holler at somebody, you always feel lousy afterward--like a hangover.
3. Life is a steady drizzle of small things--carry an umbrella.
4. Tomorrow is another day.
5. Never give up.
6. Concentrate on what you're doing--it beats thinking.
7. If you let the other fellow alone and don't get so upset about how he's living his life, you can watch more TV.
8. It is more fun to be happy than angry.
9. Don't take anything too seriously, including all of the above.
10. This, too, shall pass.

That's a start. All that wisdom leads me to suspect that the path of spiritual progress is perhaps not so steep and dark as I had imagined. At least, I can try to understand it without getting all smug and lofty.

For starters, I know that I am a walking miracle. Literally overnight, I went from years of twenty-four-hour crash drinking to total sobriety, after everything had failed except total surrender to the AA program. That is a fact I can stand on.

From that foundation, I am able to see certain glimmers of progress. For example, I can realize that I have not done anything dishonorable in at least a week. Maybe more.

Also, I have learned that using utter candor in approaching whatever progress I have made lets me feel a lot more comfortable with that progress, however slim and unspectacular it may be--it's all mine and I'm proud of getting even that far.

And as I peel away the layers of day-to-day expediency, I realize that my zigzag, erratic, and inconsistent course was in the general direction of progress all the time. That's good.

What right do I have to expect perfection and efficiency in my spiritual growth when the rest of my life is so full of ups and downs, ins and outs, and backs and forths? Throughout this whole adventure, the only consistency I have maintained is an absolute and total faith in AA, come what may.

Happiness happens when results exceed expectations. Maybe this is working after all. Deep down, there is also a warm, small ball of faith, always there, never dimmed, unexplainable, asking nothing, but giving much. To define it or try to bounce it would distort or destroy it. It just is, that's all.

As St. Augustine said, "God is closer to me than I am to Him." I don't know exactly what that means, but it sure is true.

- C.H. Fairfield, CT
When it was time to admit, she spent some quiet time in a very special place under the sky.

**STEP FIVE: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

I did my Fifth Step today. After I was done, it was recommended that I spend some quiet time alone reflecting on what I had just done, then proceed on with Steps Six and Seven if I felt ready.

When I got home, I went outside to my special place among some trees that I’m particularly fond of. There is a little bistro set where I can sit and meditate and enjoy the outdoors. It is my place of serenity.

I sat in the dark and talked to the God of my understanding. I admitted my wrongs and asked God for forgiveness. I thought about my character defects, especially the ones that I use to comfort myself. I realized that safe in God’s love, under his protection and care, I didn’t need them anymore. I searched my heart for refusal to let go. I found none. I told God I didn’t know how to live a life without my defects but I was willing to lay them down, willing to have them removed, and I asked him to remove them.

Some people burn their Fourth Step inventories at this point. I wasn’t ready to burn mine. I figured I might need it some day.

But there was a particular event in my life that I wrote about in a book separate from the one I used for my Step work. This event was not something that was my fault. It was something that left me with a lot of pain and confusion and questions that could never be answered. When I had strong feelings about it, I would go back and write about them in this book. It was my secret book. I read a section from it when I did my Fifth Step.

As I thought about it, I realized I was ready to let this event go. I didn’t need the answers anymore. I could not know the truth. God knew and that was enough. So I decided to burn the book.

As it burned, I gave it to God and I was free from the hold it had over me. I thought about the rest of my written work. I was ready to let my resentments go. I decided to burn that portion of my inventory. As it burned, I thought about my part in the situations. I had done wrong. But wrong also had been done to me. It is difficult to explain, but whatever I owed, whatever was owed to me, I gave over to God. God is the keeper of the balance now, not me.

And then I thought about my list of fears. I doubt I will ever be free of fear, but I knew I was ready to stop living with its constant presence. I was ready to stop letting it rule my life, ready to let faith in God replace fear. I put those fears in the fire and gave them to God.

Next...relationships. By this time, I knew God had already forgiven me for the wrongs recorded on those pages. It was time to forgive myself and move forward. I set it on fire and gave it to God.

Next was my asset list. That had been the hardest part of my inventory. It had taken me over a year to see and believe that I had any assets at all. I could not burn that. Again, I might need it.
Delta Intergroup of A.A.
Elected Officers
Requirements and Responsibilities
(Excerpted from the Bylaws dated June 14, 2004)

Vice-Chairperson:
(a) The Vice-Chairperson shall have a recommended minimum of four (4) years of immediate and continuous sobriety and one (1) year of involvement with Intergroup.
(b) The Vice-Chairperson shall serve as a Chairperson upon the approval of delegates.
(c) The Vice-chairperson shall be elected for a term of two (2) years.
(d) The Vice Chairperson shall preside over meetings in the Chairperson’s absence. shall assist the Chairperson as requested and shall act as Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.
(e) The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson as requested in the supervision of all Inter-group activities.

Treasurer:
(a) The Treasurer shall have a recommended minimum of three (3) years of immediate and continuous sobriety and one (1) year of Inter-group service.
(b) The treasurer shall be elected for a term of two (2) years, and shall serve in this office for no more than two (2) full terms. The Treasurer shall assist in an advisory capacity to the succeeding treasurer for a minimum of six months.
(c) The Treasurer is responsible for accounting for all receipts and expenditures.
(d) The treasurer shall establish and maintain an accounting system in keeping with good accounting practices.
(e) The Treasurer shall submit monthly, to the officers and Delegates, an itemized report of receipts and expenditures. This report will include a list of monthly contributions received from member groups and total to date for the year of such group’s contributions.
(f) The Treasurer, at the end of his/her term, within thirty 30 days, shall complete California State Franchise Tax Form 199, and schedules, and Federal Form 990EZ, and schedules, attach them to and submit and annual report to the advisory committee, and to the August delegates meeting.
(g) Accounting records shall not be removed from the Central Office by anyone except the Treasurer, and this on a temporary basis, and with the written permission of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee.
(h) On the recommendation of the Treasurer, and with the approval of the delegates, an accountant may be hired for special purposes requiring professional skill.

Recording Secretary:
(a) The Recording Secretary shall have a recommended minimum of two (2) years of immediate and continuous sobriety and one (1) year of Intergroup experience.
(b) The Recording Secretary shall be elected for a term of two (2) years and shall serve in his office for no more than two full terms.
(c) The Recording Secretary shall maintain all minutes and records and shall keep them on file in the Central Office.
(d) The Recording Secretary shall read and/or submit copies of minutes of the previous meeting at each meeting and shall have copies of minutes of Advisory committee meeting available at all Delegate’s meetings.
(e) The Recording Secretary shall maintain all filing systems and records at the principal office and keep them in an organized, orderly manner, in order to maintain systematic recording for public inspection.

And then…the summary pages. This included a written list of my character defects. At first I thought I should hold on to this too. I might need to refer back to it. But then I realized I didn’t need a written list of what’s wrong with me. I want to focus on what’s right with me—the positive, not the negative. God knows what’s wrong with me and where I need to work. I set it on fire and gave it to God.

All the while I was burning the pages, I was talking to God, telling him all the things I was giving to him. As I watched the flames of the fire die down and fade away, there was a peace in my soul like I have never known before.

In the quiet, a thought came to me from somewhere else: Would you give all your bad to God and not give your good?
I saw the list of my assets lying there on the ground where I had set it aside. I picked up the list and looked at it once more. I knew that this part of me belonged to God as well. I set it on fire and I gave it to God.

- Kathryn W., Chancellor, Alaska

Anybody Seen My Dragon?
February 1967

YOU'RE still drinking, Friend? Then you're just the man I want to see. Want to ask you a question. Over here, where we won't be disturbed...

Question's this: Wonder if you've seen my dragon? Name of Beastly. Nice little guy. For a dragon. Green, with pink spots. Believe me, you couldn't miss ole Beastly!

I was sobbing my eyes out one night because the park bench I was on was going through red lights and I was scared stiff. Suddenly this dragon whammed into the bench and stopped it cold. If I'd thought I was scared before, Friend, now I was petrified. A dragon. Imagine!

"What'th the matter with you, Mithter?" he asked, and that started me laughing like a school kid. Somehow you can't really scared of a dragon that lisp.

"Thtop laughing!" he fumed, and believe me, Friend, I thtopped. I mean stopped. On second thought, you can be scared of a lisping dragon, especially when he closes the damper and flames shoot out of his mouth.

"Thanks for stopping the bench," I said.

"Nothing. Nothing at all." At least he was modest.

Turned out the lil' fella didn't have a name, so I called him Beastly, which described him pretty well. Besides, he liked the name. Beastly also liked the smell of sherry. He always came around when I drank it, and sometimes stayed for days after.

Usually, however, he would disappear when I was broke and had to work for a day or two (as a rule I took a position as Asst. Director of a Dishwashing Dept., Wet Arms Division), but Beastly always showed up again when I got a crock of sherry.

When Beastly stopped that park bench he was about three feet long, but it was amazing how he grew. About a foot a month. At first, he was fun to play with. Throw sticks, that sort of thing. He'd bring 'em back unless he got confused and burned 'em up. But in six months it got to the point where he could stop a Sherman tank with his breath, the ground shook under him when he ran, and if he ran too close to me, the wind would knock me down.

Once a cop found me in that position and asked, "What's the matter with you, fella?" I said, "It was Beastly," and he agreed, but wouldn't accept it as an answer. Then he smelled the sherry and hauled me off to the cooler, which was dragon proof.

I never saw Beastly again. You see, an AA visited me in jail last month and I got on the program, and since they don't allow spotted dragons to join. . .

Well, I smelled the sherry on you, Friend, and just thought you might have seen my old pet Beastly. Greatest little dragon I ever met.

- Anonymous
When the right guy showed up to help him through the Fifth Step, his life changed forever.

I came into the program in 1997. At first I used women as my Higher Power, but in July of 1999, after two trips to prison and a lot more pain, something finally stuck and I got sober.

Good things started happening in my life. I got out and got married to a special woman who taught me what love really was. I soon became an assistant manager at a large retail store. I was going to AA meetings and I was involved in service at the local and area levels.

I was happy, but being the alcoholic that I am, I thought I only needed some of the Steps. I really didn’t want to do all of them. I definitely didn’t want to do the Fourth Step because that would mean a complete housecleaning, bringing up all the skeletons of my past. So it was not surprising that I started making decisions based on self. During that time, it was only by the grace of God that I didn’t drink.

After one of those self-centered decisions, and with seven years of sobriety, I ended up in prison with a 17-year sentence hanging over my head. Fortunately, I was able to at least hold on to the honesty in my program, and when I went to court, I pleaded guilty without any plea deal because I didn’t want to put my family through the pain of a trial. It was one of the few unselfish things I did during that time.

My Higher Power, being all-powerful, was still looking out for me. I only had to spend a very short amount of time in one of the most dangerous penitentiaries in the country. I was then transferred to another much-less-dangerous prison. Inmates at that place had fights and there were occasional stabbings, but it was nothing like the first prison.

When I first got to the new prison I thought, Man, I should start an AA meeting. I thought I knew so much about AA after my years of sobriety. I would take my Big Book up to a little room attached to the common area in the housing unit and sit for an hour, one day a week. I can’t really remember what day of the week it was, but I did that for a month or two. I couldn’t figure out why no one was coming up there to have me educate them about AA. Maybe it was because my own house wasn’t in order; I really had nothing to offer someone else.

After I was there a year, the administrators started having an AA meeting brought in from the outside and I would go and share my “knowledge” with them. During this time I was so grateful that my Higher Power was with me, because on Mother’s Day 2008, my mother passed away. It was only because I could feel my Higher Power there with me that I did not start drinking. Those people who think there isn’t alcohol in prison have never been in prison. Alcohol was all around me—everywhere.

After about three years, I was transferred to another prison, one with a lower security level. When I got there, I heard they had an AA meeting. So of course I had to go and share my insight. I did that when it was convenient for me because the meeting was in the morning and sometimes I needed more sleep.

But one day I made it to the meeting and I heard someone sharing from the heart. He had that “light” that you see and hear in someone who’s really working a program.
The more I listened and watched, the more I knew that this guy was the real deal. I really wanted what he had.

After a couple of meetings, he asked me if he could take me through the Big Book. “We’ll go through the book word-for-word,” he said. “And I won’t put any spin on it.” At that time, I was in so much emotional pain and needed someone who I could trust to get some secrets off my chest. So I agreed.

We met one day a week to work through the Big Book. We even took the Steps in order, and when it came to taking the Fourth Step, it happened easily because I had done the first three Steps to the best of my ability. I can’t say that it wasn’t painful. It was. My sponsor told me that if I didn’t do the Step both thoroughly and honestly, I was only hurting myself. He also said that if I did it right, it would be worth it. So I poured it all out on paper.

We met every day for a week or so. Soon, everything I had done and everybody I could remember was down on paper. A few days later, we met out on the bleachers on the yard and I did my Fifth Step. I read everything I had written down (I’m getting goose bumps writing this). My sponsor did not get up and run away screaming, “This guy is crazy!” He just sat there, listened and asked a few questions, and then we were done. Afterward, I felt a new freedom that words cannot describe. My Big Book now has two dates: July 3, 1999—the first day of my sobriety, and October 13, 2003—my first day of true freedom.

I’m still in prison and I don’t do this thing perfectly. Still, I do my best each day to keep my side of the street clean. I use the tools that I have been given, now more than ever. Each day I try to help people and not hurt them. If I do something wrong, I try to fix it right then.

I’ve been given some very important gifts: 1) I have family who still love me and treat me well; 2) I get to live life on life’s terms; and 3) I get the honor of taking other guys in prison through the Big Book and the Steps, exactly the way my sponsor did with me—with no spin on it.

Even though not all the guys I work with will stay sober, they still help me stay sober. I’ve had one guy make it clear through and he’s now in the process of taking someone else through the book, while I’ve started again with someone else.

I never thought I would be able to say this, but here I am, in prison, behind a double-walled fence lined with concertina wire, and yet I’m freer now than I’ve ever been.

Here’s an interesting miracle: When my sponsor had been convicted but not yet sentenced, the prosecutor said he wanted him to serve at least 10 years. In the end, the judge sentenced him to five. The whole time my sponsor was going through the court system, he kept going to AA meetings, helping other alcoholics and doing the things that his sponsor suggested. The day he was sentenced, the judge gave him a few days to get his affairs in order. On one of those days, he was talking to someone in his sponsorship chain and the man told him, “You are not being sentenced to prison, you’re being called.”

And that’s where I met my sponsor, in prison. The miracle is that he was released after having been incarcerated far, far less than the five years he was sentenced to. I believe with all my heart that my loving Higher Power sent my sponsor to me because I was

- Jack R. | Marianna, Florida
Honesty is a highly valued character asset in A.A. And with good reason. My honesty is a mark of my respect for myself and for others in my life. It is also a measure of my ability to face the reality of who and what I am, where I have been and where I am headed, and of the experiences that have shaped me. All of the above included many failures, a lot of shame and guilt around my alcoholic misadventures and, in the early years, a fairly bleak expectation of who I might become. Most of all, I had to dispel the notion that being an alcoholic made me special in any way, and to realize that coming to grips with one’s own reality is simply a part of the human condition. I was somewhat retarded in coming to this understanding, but better late than never.

Before I could become honest, I had to learn trust - not trust in others to treat my honesty with respect, but trust in myself to survive the vulnerability that honesty often exposes me to. Regardless of what anyone says, what you think of me matters, and I think it should matter, because I don’t live in an isolated bubble, but in community with others. However, what I think of myself is ultimately more important if I am to remain honest with others.

I also had to learn not to treat meetings as an open forum where I could thoughtlessly spew my truth without thinking. That kind of “unloading” held more than a hint of self-deception as well as a healthy dose of attention seeking. I came to understand that my honesty needed to be treated with respect and not used as a tool to get approval. I will always remember my therapist telling me that if I were Catholic, and felt I had sinned, I could confess to my priest, but there was no need to announce it to the entire congregation. Meetings were not the right place to float the truth just to see what I could get away with. I have seen too many members flee AA after oversharing their truth, and understand why, since I fled, myself, for over two decades. I stayed sober, but I denied myself the comfort and the growth I might have found in the community of AA. I am grateful that I was able to return years later and be welcomed.

Then, there’s the selection of whom I choose to share the “exact nature of my wrongs” with. Nowhere in the Big Book does it say that “...another human being” needs to be my sponsor. Nor does it say that I need to share my entire Fifth Step with one person. For some of us, it can be a priest, minister, or pastor. For others, it could even be a complete stranger. For me, it was my therapist, every week over a period of 10 1/2 years. Let me tell you, that was a whole lot of sharing. And that’s what it took.

Lastly, I have learned that my tolerance for honesty has grown with practice. In my earlier sobriety, I truly didn’t understand what it meant to be honest with myself, much less anyone else. Then I began to understand honesty, but didn’t entirely trust it. I proceeded with caution until experience taught me when, where, and with whom I could be, and needed to be, honest. I also came to understand that I couldn’t allow my honesty and devotion to the truth overstep the privacy of others, because my truth was often intertwined with the experiences of others.

More often than not, I now lead with honesty because, coming from a place of benign self interest, I have learned that it serves me well, for all kinds of reasons. If I’m able to be up front with my errors, I don’t need to worry so much about making mistakes, and certainly not about “being caught”. I can make amends and restitution, so I no longer have to sit alone with my feelings of failure, guilt, and shame. My ability to be honest has brought me closer to those around me, because I am showing them the real me, and telling them my real story. Because I am showing others the real me, I usually feel seen, heard, and known. And that’s a miracle for those of us who grew up isolated and desperate for company. I have found no room for loneliness and despair in an honest life.

- Lynne R., Women In Recovery
Though nervous to sit down with a woman she did not know, she had time, experience and with God’s help, an open ear.

I rolled out of bed onto my knees this morning. I asked the God of my understanding for his will for me. I thought about the day ahead. Tonight I would be doing something I had never done before. I would be listening to another woman’s Fifth Step. This woman was someone I had never met. She was currently in an alcoholic treatment center.

I prayed for her. I asked God to fill me with his love and let me be a channel to send his love to her. I asked for her to have the courage to say what she needed to say. I prayed about the Fifth Step throughout the day. I want to be able to convey God’s love. Because of what I’ve seen and felt, I have no doubts about his love. Even when I think I don’t feel it at all, I still I know it’s there.

I asked God several times if I could be allowed to give her an insight into the beauty and depth of his love. I realize I don’t actually know the width and depth of God’s love. But I know it’s great.

When I met the woman to do her Fifth Step, I liked her right away. I could see she had her brave face on. That “muscle through it” face. I saw myself in her face.

Central Office Bylaws: The Bylaws ad hoc committee met on March 24th, and it will most likely be several months before their work is done.

Elections: We jumped the gun by a month. Today we are announcing that elections for Treasurer and Recording Secretary will be held at June’s Intergroup meeting. We will be accepting nominations and volunteers at our May 5th meeting. Shortly after the meeting, we will issue a list of the nominees for you to take back to your groups. I have included the requirements and responsibilities for the two offices at the end of this packet. Nominees/volunteers must attend both meetings to be considered.

Transferring SNL, Zoom ID to Delta IG: Saturday Night Live has a new Zoom meeting ID and password as we transfer it to Delta Intergroup’s Zoom Account. The new ID and password are posted on the website under events, and in the calendar in the newsletter. They are: Dir 870 4399 9037, Password: snlzoom. Cherokee Group will be hosting May’s SNL.

Posting Events on the Website: Just a reminder, when creating flyers for posting on the Website, be sure you do NOT include any personal information, such as phone numbers and email addresses. Always use your group’s contact information. This website is available to anyone who stumbles across it, and we need to be careful about exposing ourselves. Also remember that flyers for your events need to identify themselves as A.A. functions.

The Alano Club: This morning, I learned from someone in the Stockton Group that the Alano Club building has been bought by someone in recovery. As a result, all the meetings in the building and the Alano Club will continue to have their home at 1810/1812 Monte Diablo Avenue.

I don’t know if she’ll be able to maintain sobriety. That’s not up to me. But I do know she saw a glimpse into a different life tonight and that everything happened exactly the way it was supposed to. For her and for me.
ON MY FOURTH sober AA day, I was sitting alone in one of our musty old meeting rooms, very sad and very broke. All the AAs had seemed very kind in their desire to help, but none of them had mentioned money. And, like thousands of other new members, I believed my biggest problems were financial. Yet not one person had offered a loan.

Then, suddenly, one of those big, handsome, gray-tempered, well-dressed old-timers strode in with a friendly smile widening his face. He stuck out his hand and squeezed mine. "If I can help you any way at all, just say so, and I'll do it!" he declared heartily.

Trying to sound as if I were merely asking for a match, I said, "I hope so. You see, I need to borrow two thousand dollars."

His silence was total.

But finally he spoke. "You're in the wrong place," he said firmly. "We don't lend money here, my friend. That's not what this place is for."

I froze, but he went on and on. "We won't help you with a money problem. We won't help you with a family problem or a job or clothes or a medical problem or food or a place to spend the night. All we will do in AA is help you stay sober," he explained. "Then you can take care of these other problems yourself. You can take care of yourself, can't you, if you're sober?"

I hated that word "sober." But what could I say? "Certainly," I snapped, humiliated that, in my ignorance of AA "folkways, I had been caught in a faux pas, as if someone had found me eating peas with my fingers.

What the man had said made perfectly good sense. I had been sober a few days and could take care of things. So I put my gradually clearing mind to it, remembered a cousin I had not tapped for months, sent a wire, and got some dough.

To my astonishment and sorrow, I almost instantly found myself drunk.

Within a few hours, my new AA benefactor had given me in very blunt words a sharp summary of Traditions Five, Six, and Seven. And, by getting drunk, I had illustrated perfectly the special sense behind Five. What I needed most was not money, obviously. After getting it, I still had the drinking problem that had made me think of approaching AA in the first place.

This happened in January 1945, and the first hint of the Twelve Traditions was not to appear anywhere in AA until the July 1945 issue of the Grapevine, when Bill W. wrote, "I would like to discuss in coming issues such topics as anonymity, leadership, public relations, the use of money in AA, and the like."

Therefore, what I encountered in AA during my first few months, before the Traditions were formalized, were customs of AA behavior followed by members who had learned that some AA ways would work, and others would not.

That is the authority of the Traditions in my personal life. I honor them, not solely because of their authorship or their having the mystical number twelve or their being adopted by the Fellowship at the First International Convention in Cleveland in 1950. I cherish them because they work. They enable me and my fellow AAs to stay sober, together, and to carry our message to other alcoholics.
### Delta Intergroup of A.A.
#### Income/Expense Report

**March, 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Account</strong></th>
<th>March 2020</th>
<th>March 2021</th>
<th>YTD 2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>EXPENSES</strong></th>
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<th>YTD 2021</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Copy/Maintenance</td>
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<td>$ -</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>$ -</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENSES</td>
<td>$1,975.12</td>
<td>$1,928.05</td>
<td>$1,928.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT**       |            |            |           |
| Interest                         | $ 2.01     | $ 1.98     | $ -       |
| Total Income                     | $ 2.01     | $ 1.98     | $ -       |
| **TOTAL COMBINED EXPENSES**      | $3,907.09  | $9,727.10  |           |
| **NET PROFIT/LOSS**              | $ 1,004.52 | $246.82    | $ -       |

But I did not like the Traditions at first, especially when they conflicted with what I wanted. I was a suspicious character, often turning phony operator to get what I wanted. During those first weeks, I kept wondering what "those AAs" were really up to or after, and what I could get out of them.

The real miracle is that most of them acted with extraordinary kindness. No matter what I tried to maneuver out of them, they tried just to give me the message.

In subsequent years, I tried to misuse AA in two ways; that is, I tried to get more out of it than the sobriety message. Once, I wangled a part-time job from a fellow member, then took advantage of him. Coming in late, I would excuse myself by thinking, "After all, we're both alcoholics; he ought to excuse my little weaknesses." He exploited me, too, expecting long hours of unpaid work simply because I was a fellow AA. We were not so much concentrating on what we were owed, not on what we as AAs owed each other. Neither of us got drunk, but our friendship did not survive.

Another time, I tried to use AA for romance, and really did find balm for a lonely heart with an AA partner. We found romance, all right, but we lost our sobriety.

Years have gone by since I had AA infancy as an excuse for my gimme tendencies. Today, I try to look at the Fifth Tradition as a giver, not as taker. But the picture is not pretty enough to brag about. It isn't always easy, even now, to keep my personal wants out of the way when I try to carry the message. I want applause as an AA speaker, compliments as a Grapevine writer. I want to be a "success" as a sponsor—which is, I want to be the one who sobered somebody up!

I have found I prefer to carry the message to pleasant, attractive, grateful alcoholics who do what I say and give me full credit for their sobriety. Sometimes I wish I did not even have to carry the message at all; I wish I could just wait where I am for people to come and pick it up.

On the other hand, I rejoice that I can now participate in so many good ways of fulfilling our primary purpose. I can help put on public meetings and other public-information activities to carry the message to the alcoholics who are still out there drinking, sick, scared, completely unaware that we want them, and completely wrong in their notion of what our sober life is like. I can be on our hospital- and jail-visitor committees. I can serve on our group's hospitality committee, to welcome the ill-at ease new man. I can attend or lead beginners meetings. I can help support our local Intergroup office and the AA General Service Office, which reach drunks in places I cannot get to. I can have coffee with the new man after the meeting, instead of running off to chin and gossip with my old friends.

Yes, my group (made up of individual AAs, including me) has improved a lot in its respect for our Fifth Tradition—in its ways of carrying the message. My own AA history has lengthened considerably since I first caught glimpses of the sobriety-preserving wisdom in the AA ways of doing things, summed up in our Traditions. But I have recently discovered something else quite wonderful about the Fifth: It does not say that AAs should help only newcomers.

I do not agree that the newcomer is the most important member at any meeting. In my opinion, equally important are those old-timers who showed me the way, and any middle-timer who may today be suffering. If newcomers are indeed the lifeblood of AA, old- and middle-timers are its skin and backbone. What a bewildered mess we would be in without them!

So in your next meeting, when that Tradition about carrying the message "to the alcoholic who still suffers" is mentioned, please give a thought, not only to newcomers, but also to the alcoholics older in AA who are sitting there. One of them might be me. I still suffer, sometimes. I still need to hear the message, always.

- B.L., New York, NY
In my third month of sobriety, I was finally ready to do my Fourth Step, but I did not have a sponsor. I had this stubborn idea that because I felt betrayed in a failed relationship when I was 19, I would never trust anyone else the rest of my life. At 36, I brought that idea with me to AA. Though I was ready to do a Fourth Step, I wasn’t confident I knew how. I asked a few AAs I met in meetings and I received a variety of responses. Needless to say I was confused. So an AA friend suggested I get a temporary sponsor. I liked the word temporary, so I agreed to give it a try. He suggested a man who I had seen in my evening meetings. He had more than 25 years of sobriety, he was well-spoken and funny, and he seemed to be knowledgeable about AA. In meetings, he often mentioned that he was a lawyer and a former Marine. I thought it curious that someone would share their profession in an AA meeting. I asked him if he would help me do my Fourth Step, and he agreed. He asked me to come over the following Saturday.

When I got to his place, he gave me some books: AA Comes of Age, Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers, Pass It On, and Came To Believe. I wasn’t familiar with any of these books at that time, and I appreciated the gifts. I was ready to begin work. I brought a notebook with me. But instead of discussing the Fourth Step, he began to talk about his membership in a group of lawyer friends on the East Coast who were part of an investment group. He said this investment group made lots of money for him and his friends. He suggested that if I gave him $1,000, the return on my investment would solve all my financial problems. Though I tried to get back to writing my Fourth Step, he kept going on about this investment opportunity and how it would help my family. This made me feel uncomfortable. I thanked him for the offer and told him I would have to think about it. He insisted it was a sure thing, but I didn’t waiver. I had made up my mind that I wasn’t going to give this guy my money. I was there to start my Fourth Step, not to get rich. I found out a year or so later that this guy had successfully scammed other AAs with the same investment scheme.

When I came to my first meeting, I was told that sobriety must come first. It was that AA singleness of purpose that kept me from falling for this man’s investment scheme. It protected me against a predatory member of AA. I often share that I came to AA for sobriety—not for money, a job, or romance. At that time I had an aversion to trusting people, and this experience could have been devastating to my chance at recovery. Singleness of purpose gave me the strength to move on.

- Woody R., Stockton CA

Those Were the Days, My Friend
Just a little piece of history I found at Delta Central Office

The Scam Artist
Grapevine, September 2013

DELTA INTERGROUP ELECTIONS
(See Page 26 for Requirements & Responsibilities)

Delta Intergroup
will be taking nominations for
Recording Secretary & Treasurer

We are also still looking for a
Vice Chair, and Office Manager

Nominations will be accepted at
Intergroup Meeting, Wednesday, May 12th.
A List of Nominations will be distributed to the
Intergroup Reps for posting in their groups.
Our Elections will be held June 9th, 7:00 pm.

Anyone who wishes to be considered for these positions must be
present at both the May and June Intergroup Meetings.

Zoom ID#: 870-4399-9037
PW: delta

Treasurer’s Written Report
March 10, 2021

Dear Intergroup Family,

Our contributions last month were $1,928.05 a vast improvement over February. Our Literature sales were $2,114.36.

Our Combined Accounts Bank Balance rose from $9,832.90 to $10,378.99 an increase of $546.09. The Central Office closed with a profit of $1,004.53 for the month of March. If we compare our account balances with last year, March 2020 ended with a Combined Account Balance of $14,384.01, so we are not experiencing the “bounce” we got last year before the pandemic really started to affect us.

The missing order of $178.62 has been replaced and fulfilled by AAWS, so our billing from them is now updated and accurate.

Zelle Account: A reminder that we are now able to receive contributions into our account using our new email address: deltacentral312@gmail.com.

PayPal Account: You can also send contributions through PayPal using our deltacentral312@gmail.com email account. When choosing PayPal, please be mindful that PayPal collects about 3.8% of your contributions, and Zelle is free to both our donors and us.

Both of these digital contribution tools are working smoothly.

Loving in Service,

Lynne Rodgers
Delta Intergroup Treasurer
Delta Intergroup Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2021

Opening Prayer: Crystal
Twelve Traditions: Woody
New Raps: Rich – Back to Basics, Minotaur

Minutes from last meeting: Submitted for discussion written by Liz L. Motion made to accept the minutes and seconded, passed.

Treasurer’s report: Read and submitted by Lynne R. A detailed income and expense reports provided with monthly account balances. Discussed and questions answered. For details see treasurer’s report. Motion made to accept treasurer’s report and passed.

Central Office Report: Lynne R. report read and submitted for discussion. Printed schedules are available for purchase from Delta Central Office 11 schedules for $6.00, most recent update 3/10/21. Bylaws update meeting will be on Zoom on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm. Elections as per the current bylaws the Intergroup officers hold positions for 2 years and elections are staggered. This year’s open positions will include Recording Secretary and Treasurer. Elections will be held at the June business meeting.

Telservice: Billy R. 209-430-4003 All volunteer positions are filled at this time.

Newsletter: Read it. Submit your April birthdays by March 15.

Delta Website: Webmaster is Steve N. at deltacentral132@gmail.com No report.

Saturday Night Live: New Zoom ID and password. Will be posted on the Delta website. Gavin recorded the SNL meeting in March. Maple Square will host in April.

PICPC: Melody T. Attendance of newcomers at the Beginners’ meeting has increased. The committee will be discussing the future of the Beginners meeting as Drink Driving classes begin to reopen. Outreach to Nursing Schools continues. Drink Driving Programs are likely to resume in-person classes soon the Committee will discuss their openness to resume in-person classes and how to move forward. Children’s Home: looking into possibility of virtual presentations.

Bridging the Gap: Request were received through the PO Box as well as CNA.

H&I: Melody T. Literature continues to go into facilities. New Home Woman’s Shelter has made a formal request for H&I meetings in and under consideration. H&I meeting is the 4th Saturday at 10 am via Zoom.

District 37: no report NCCAA: no report

Old Business: Spring Fest is a go! With Father Tom will be our main speaker. Spring Fest Committee meeting will be Sunday 3/21 at 5 pm. Central office bylaws meeting set for Wednesday March 24th at 7 pm. YouTube channel for local speakers established by Delta Intergroup: Administrator position is open.

New Business: none

Announcements: Bilingual has moved to a bigger room. Birthday celebration will by March 20th potluck at 5pm meeting at 6pm. Bilingual Mother’s Day Brunch: Harriet J. will be the main speaker on May 9th. Rainbow fellowship has a new location. See delta website for details. B2B woman’s night has changed from Friday to Wednesday nights at 6 pm, 3rd Friday is the birthday meeting with chips and cake. Closing: Lord’s Prayer

13 people in attendance via Zoom meeting.

Once Over Lightly
Sense and nonsense on the road to recovery
Grapevine. June 1970

REVEREND: "Don't you know, sir, that brandy is your worst enemy?"

HALF-BAGGED PARISHIONER: "Yes, Reverend, but just last Sunday, you said we should love our enemies."

Birthday Gratitude Club

Thank you for carrying the message

Name Date Sobriety Years
Nancy K. 5/24/72 49
Sharon R. 8/28/79 41
June S. 4/13/80 40
Marilyn M. 8/3/80 40
Daniel R. 2/2/81 40
Christine S. 2/21/81 40
Lauretta G. ??.81 39
Linda C. 1/31.83 38
John P. 6/1.85 35
Lyndy W. 7/25.85 35
John W. 7/20.85 35
Ojay O. 11.185 35
Demetra S. 2/21.81 40
Lauretta G. ?.?.81 39
Linda C. 1/31.83 38
John P. 6/1.85 35
Lyndy W. 7/25.85 35
John W. 7/20.85 35
Ojay O. 11.185 35
Keith H. 9.13.06 14
Denise S. 4.8.07 35
Sue B. 4/25.87 34
Bob A. 3.11.11 10
Sue P. 11.29/87 33
Taylor E. 1.24.13 8
Lyne R. 2.22.88 33
James M. 7.31.13 7
Mona A. 2.4.89 32
Pat K. 12.9.14 6
Joy H. 6.2.90 30
Kathy W. 1.11.15 6
Jeff K. 2.16.92 29
Crystal L. 3.30.15 6
Betty P. 3.8.93 28
Dezeria F. 8.18.17 3
Marla M. 9.11.96 23

Join the K.I.T. Birthday Gratitude Club

□ NEW □ RENEW Date:

First Name ____________________________ Last Initial ____________

Sobriety Date: ______________, __________ years & counting

Suggested Contribution: $1.00 per year sober.

Make checks payable to: DCO or Delta Central Office
Drop off, or Mail to: Delta Central Office
1525 N. El Dorado Street Stockton, CA 95204
Zelle your payment to: deltacentral312@gmail.com
May 2021
Group Birthdays

BIG BOOKERS
Greg G.  33 years
Diaman R.  26 years
Chris K.  20 years
Herb M.  14 years
Mike C.  5 years

BILINGUAL GROUP
Frank H.  23 years
Ruven A.  17 years
Richard G.  16 years
Lawrence W  13 years
Heidi E  4 years

LODI SOLUTIONS
Char W.  34 years
Larry M.  31 years
Kelly K.  20 years
Marc L.  9 years
Mike R.  3 years
Mike L.  3 years
Levi  2 years

K.I.S.S.
Kevin B.  5 years
Rhonda A.  1 year

MAPLE SQUARE
Kathy Q.  40 years
Bertha  27 years
Diaman R.  26 years
Wayne B.  26 years
Shannon C.  9 years
Cameron  5 years
Jessica B.  5 years
James L.  4 years
Ricky B.  4 years
Tina  4 years
Christy A.  3 years
Jennifer S.  3 years
Marina  3 years
Catheline  2 years
Joey G.  2 years
Danielle K.  2 years
Marikaye L.  2 years
Monique  2 years
Sal  2 years
ZakW.  2 years

PERSHING GROUP
Jim R.  33 years
Carl H.  32 years
Lia H.  28 years
Sherry W.  28 years
Tony D.  27 years
Maudie G.  27 years
Rhonda L.  26 years
Chris A.  26 years
Gabe S.  16 years
Donna R.  15 years
Leonard V.  14 years
Nancy R.  10 years
Rebecca B.  7 years
Kevin M.  6 years
Kurt P.  6 years
Taff G.  6 years
Joe K.  5 years
Terry F.  5 years
Ryen R.  4 years
Sam P.  4 years
Diane C.  4 years
Yolanda D.  4 years
Stu  4 years
Deborah K.  3 years
C.J. Andeola  3 years
Zach T.  3 years
Megan C.  3 years
Joey G.  3 years
Rachel M.  2 years

RECOVERY CENTRAL
Gary L.  30 years

WOMEN IN RECOVERY
Cathy M.  6 years
Heidi E.  4 years

April 2021

Want to see your Group’s Birthdays in our newsletter?
Send them to us!
The Best way to make sure we get them is by e-mail:
deltacentral312@gmail.com

Please, send April’s list by the 15th of March, 2021 for April’s Newsletter!

January: K.I.S.S.
Feb: Porter Group
March: Big Bookers
April: Maple Square
May: Cherokee
June: Bilingual
July: (OPEN)
Aug: Back to Basics
Sept: Pershing Group
Oct: Recovery Central
Nov: Lodi Lite
Dec: Lodi Solutions