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Delta Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous

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In This Issue

Turnaround 2	
A Life Offstage	3
P.O. Box 1980	5
Freedom to Change - Or Not	6
Stepping on the Seven Deadlies	7
No Respect	8
Who Wants to Be Humble!	9
Writing Our Stories - Again	10
Short - But Not Sweet	12
Self Support	12
Too Much Cash?	14
Post Conference Assembly	16
Grapevine - Seeking Stories	18
From Dual Diagnosis Members	
Sorting It All Out	19
Box 4-5-9	20-23
July's Word Puzzle	24
July Calendar	25
Steps/Traditions Checklist	26
Birthday Gratitude Club	27
Group Birthdays	28/29
Intergroup Meeting (06/11/25)	
Treasurer's Report	30
Inc/Exp Report	31
Contributions	32
DCO Report	33
Open Service Positions	34/36
Event Flyers	37/49
Notices/Odd'n'Ends/Humor	50/51

Promise Seven

*We will lose interest in selfish things
and gain interest in our fellows.*

Recovery

Step Seven

"Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."

What is humility? What can it mean to us? The avenue to true freedom of the human spirit. Necessary aid to survival. Value of ego-puncturing. Failure and misery transformed by humility. Strength from weakness. Pain is the admission price to new life. Self-centered fear chief activator of defects. Step Seven is change in attitude which permits us to move out of ourselves toward God.

Unity

Tradition Seven

*"Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting,
declining outside contributions."*

No A.A. Tradition had the labor pains this one did. Collective poverty initially a matter of necessity. Fear of exploitation. Necessity of separating the spiritual from the material. Decision to subsist on A.A. voluntary contributions only. Placing the responsibility of supporting A.A. headquarters directly upon A.A. members. Bare running expenses plus a prudent reserve is headquarters policy.

Service

Concept Seven

The Conference recognizes that the Charter and the By-laws of the General Service Board are legal instruments: that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document: that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the A.A. purse for its final effectiveness.

Turnaround

Grapevine, January 2003

Once sober, this big shot began to strive for values he used to disdain

Not too many twenty-four hours ago, my pride prevented me from accepting any way that wasn't my way. I had big dreams and a worldly view. I knew my ship lie waiting not too far off the horizon, and I wasn't afraid to remind anyone who would listen of my pending success. When my wife, Nancy, and I launched our advertising agency in the early 1980s, we set in motion a machine that would further feed my grandiosity, cater to my already swollen ego, and until the very end, provide the financial support for my rapidly escalating alcohol and drug abuse.

I was the creative genius; Nancy merely took care of the money. Hers was a task I could easily do, should I ever elect to lower myself to the pedestrian chore of promptly paying the bills and insuring the payables did not exceed the receivables. I had bigger fish to fry.

She was grateful for our business success and content to live within our means, putting aside a little every now and then for our sons' education. She made steady and deliberate progress with our finances, all the while accepting responsibility for our day-to-day living. She swept the floor when it needed sweeping, washed the clothes when they need washing, and nurtured our boys into fine young men. My task was to dream of bigger trophies waiting out there just past the bottom of the bottle forever in front of my face.

Despite my best efforts to destroy it through escalating alcoholism and the accompanying poor decisions, our business prospered, and the money justified my alcoholic behavior. It wasn't too long before I began to grind down employees and hustle unsuspecting clients, only to drink to my success. I laughed at Nancy's advice during the normal highs and lows of business. Instead of heeding her patient counsel, I hired indiscriminately when we needed bodies, fired when we didn't. I chased distant accounts, drinking myself into a stupor in airports and hotel rooms. When alcohol wasn't enough, I supplemented my addiction with codeine cough syrup and prescription narcotics. Battling the evil twins of false pride and resentment, I grew more reclusive with every quart of vodka, every handful of pills. By our tenth year in business, my creative product had begun to suffer badly, and clients began to leave. My appearances at the office became fewer and farther between, and I eroded into an emotional time bomb. I wore openly my resentment for my family and my job. I drank the accounts receivables dry. Finally, I drove away the last of our employees and virtually all our clients. The bottom came roaring up, and business came crashing down.

When the dust settled, and I sat alone among the empty cubicles and silent phones, I received the gift of desperation from a God I had long abandoned. Humiliated by the realization of my shameful deeds, I agreed to enter treatment, where I met a young man who taught me the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Humbled for the first time in my life, I listened and began to work the Steps in earnest. My sponsor was patient yet firm, and kind enough to point out how my perspective and values were not necessarily as correct as I believed them to be.

I made amends to past employees and committed myself to serve our few remaining clients as dutifully as possible. Nancy and I slowly rebuilt our marriage and our business. The journey has been immensely rewarding in ways I would have never imagined. The several twenty-four hours that I have crossed to get here today have given me a vantage point from which I can look back at my selfish and self-destructive behavior, and realize how wrong I was to judge the good people around me.

Many of us find the Fourth and Fifth Steps the big hurdles, and I don't disagree. Yet I have found an even greater challenge in Steps Six and Seven where that small inner voice begins to haunt us. Here is where we must confront the anxiety, if not downright fear, of letting go of who we are to become who God intends us to be; to make the real transformation necessary to live the AA life to the fullest. Asking God to remove the compulsion to drink and restore me to sanity is a prayer easily made. Asking God to remove my greed, my drive to excel in the eyes of my peers, my wandering desire for the opposite sex, seems to threaten my very nature as a male entrepreneur. Laying aside my goal of accumulating wealth and embracing the concepts of service in its stead does not fit my model for success. Yet I know this is where the rubber meets the road, so to speak, and that these are the desires "which oppose the grace of God" as we are reminded in the Twelve and Twelve. To hesitate at the gates of Steps Six and Seven is to succumb to fear and place my will before that of my Higher Power.

Despite my progress, there remains a part of me that periodically stokes my ego with thoughts of grandiosity, to pay my obligations to the past in one fell swoop by winning the lottery or the ultimate piece of business. But living the good life isn't about business or money; it never has been. I know that to make amends is to act honestly, to be home when I say I'll be home, to help with the daily chores of living, to do my work as best I can, and to help my fellow human beings, my wife, and my children without weighing the reward. The little things, strung together in a series of twenty-four hours of sobriety, become the big things I now cherish.

Like many great paradoxes in AA and in life, I have found the qualities I once ridiculed are the very ones I now strive to obtain. Nancy's ability to do the right thing, in any given situation, I mistakenly judged as unnecessary prudence. What I mistook as her unwillingness to take risks, I now realize was her willingness to be patient. While I chided her for not wanting to pursue the big deals just over the hill, I now realize she was content to enjoy the simple pleasures right here, right now.

Her willingness to help others without thought of personal gain is an unselfish trait I not only admire but attempt to practice, foreign as it may be. Even in my best moments, it remains hard for me to give unconditionally.

My business partner enjoys a life of commitment and contentment, of responsibility and integrity, of compassion and humility. I want what she has.

- Tom M., Fennville, MI

A Life Offstage

Grapevine, January 2003

Step 7 - Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings

This step is about humility. When I first heard this word used in AA, it was very difficult to understand--some days it still is. When I complained of this to my wife, she said, "If you need help with that list of shortcomings, let me know," and walked away smiling. She's not in the Fellowship. As long as I'm not thinking about my shortcomings, I feel pretty good.

This is an honest program so I'm going to tell you the truth--I have so many shortcomings that I'm aware of, it kills me to think of them, even if only for a moment.

Maybe that's why I'm writing this article in a small room under the stage of a Broadway theater instead of performing on it. But maybe not. Let me explain.

A little over ten years ago, my drinking career came, literally, to a screeching halt. I

was arrested for my fourth DWI, my second felony conviction. This meant I had violated the terms of my probation, which meant I was going to have some time to think about my actions. On the day the local judge sentenced me, he said, "You just don't get it, do you?" And he was right. Even after watching a beautiful tree from my jail cell window change with the seasons, I still didn't get it. It wasn't until years of AA, Step Seven, and the guidance of a wonderful sponsor that I learned I would have to develop much more humility--more than I needed, in fact--in order to stay sober and have any chance of becoming happy.

In my cell, I watched the green leaves of my beautiful tree change to the glorious reds and yellows of autumn and then float gently to the ground. Later, staring at the naked tree made me think of my life and my need to change. "What am I going to do now that I don't drink?" I asked myself. I still felt very important, even in jail. It's that uniqueness that we hear so much about. I made a mental promise to myself that I would stop drinking, but I knew I would have to replace it by doing something really important--something that would make me admired, respected, and while I was at it, might as well bring me fame and fortune.

At the time of my arrest, I'd been working for a good union, one of the trades in the city. It was a regular job with good pay, annuity, and benefits. But now that I had no alcohol to hide behind, I decided that job just wasn't important enough for a man with so much natural talent. "I'll become a rich and famous actor," I said to myself and believed it. My need to drink would be lifted because I'd be too busy flying around the world with all my fancy new friends and all those gorgeous models who would now want me. I'd always felt a little bit better than everybody else. "Humility" was a word that had not yet registered in my brain. I remember glancing at the new guys arriving every weekend in jail and saying, "I'm in a lot better shape than they are." I guess that made me feel good. Do you hear any humility yet?

After finishing up my legal obligations north of the city, I began living my dream: I was single, sober, and living in Manhattan. I attended AA meetings and made some coffee now and then, but I was so busy with the really important stuff in life that Step Seven would just have to wait. In my first few years of sobriety, I studied acting at a good theater school downtown and started to find work in Off-and Off-Off Broadway theaters. With a bunch of talented friends, I helped start a theater group and we performed original works. This sobriety stuff was great! I managed to snag a role in an independent film that was released. I was even mentioned in a *New York Times* review and found a manager to represent me. I had it all figured out.

But no success, no matter how big or small, was ever enough. I was basing my accomplishments on what I did. I wasn't drinking, but I wasn't happy, either, and I was falling straight back into the patterns of my drinking life. Living life upon a basis of unsatisfied demands kept me in a state of continual disturbance and frustration. As Step Seven states: "no peace was to be had unless I could find a means of reducing these demands."

This lack of humility was nothing else but misplaced pride--in my case, pride about who I was and what I had done. For me, pride was a good thing. Without pride, I couldn't lift myself above the masses. Where would my uniqueness come from? What meaning would my life have if I couldn't make a huge impact? I thought Step Seven was asking me to be boring and bland. Just be humble? Blend in? I was petrified that if God removed too much of me, there would be nothing left. I was afraid of the person I might become--and even more afraid of the person I might not become. I fought off doing the work as long as possible. I did not want to let go.

I remember the days I stayed in bed for hours and woke up exhausted. I wandered in

and out of churches, looking for any direction or help to stop my crying soul. While I was working on this Step, my sponsor let me know that I could actually be more free and more unique than ever before if I asked God to remove my shortcomings.

Finally I said, "Please God, do with me as you wish," and with that, a tremendous pressure was lifted. I no longer had to be the most important person in the universe. I realized it was much more important to feel happy about who I was than who I thought I should be. My shortcomings were blocking God's sunshine. I could be happy and useful, a worker among workers.

Humility today comes in many forms, and I'm still at its early stages with ten years of sobriety. Today when I try to find and do the will of God, I'm usually down to my right size.

In that jail cell, I often dreamed of the day I would work on Broadway. Well, today I do; in fact, it's the end of Act I and I have to go: I have a cue. A few years ago, my union sent me to a Broadway theater, not for an audition for the starring role but for an interview for a job in a field I was licensed in. I'm not the guy on stage whom everybody is applauding. I'm the guy under the stage whom nobody sees. My line of work won't fetch me a Tony award anytime soon, but I'm pretty happy today. God has granted me humility. When I leave my house for work, my three-year-old daughter runs up and yells, "I need a hug and a kiss!" And after I lift her in the air with the biggest hug and kiss I can give, I feel something I never felt on stage. My wife tells me, "You know, you're the biggest star in the world to her." Wow. I try to go about my work with a smile on my face. I make myself useful and in my spare time I like to write.

Life is good.

- Anonymous, New York, NY

PO Box 1980

Grapevine, November 1998

The laugh's on me

I was having a problem at work: I was becoming increasingly frustrated and upset by people who were making unfair demands upon my time and attention. But I couldn't find a way to deal with it. One morning, I began my morning prayers and got to the line from the Seventh Step prayer that says, "I pray that you remove every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows." Out of my mouth, instead, came these words: "I pray that you remove every single defective character who stands in my way."

Hearing my own true thoughts so bluntly announced in this way--and in the middle of a prayer, no less!--made me suddenly laugh aloud. It relieved all the tension I'd allowed to build up inside me. This slip of the tongue was a gift from my Higher Power, showing me gently and humorously that my real problem is me.

When I was drinking, I never imagined that it could feel so good to laugh at myself. Now, about two years after that first bungled prayer, I continue to use it as a tool--kind of an inside joke between me and my Higher Power. I like to think that we laugh together over my humanity. It also reminds me that all of those "defective characters who stand in my way" are his children, too, and probably not as bad as I make them out to be.

If sobriety were miserable, I wouldn't want it. I thank my Higher Power for Alcoholics Anonymous, which has given me so many moments of feeling "happy, joyous, and free."

- Anonymous, Elburn, IL

The Freedom to Change--Or Not

Grapevine, February 2001

Into Action

I used to wonder how long it would take to be rid of my character defects. I remember complaining to my sponsor about the pain and suffering they still caused after being sober several years and about the fact that some of them seemed to be as bad as ever. What would it take to be rid of these negative emotional ties to the past? Would I have to drink again and get a good case of the jitters, as described in the Big Book, or was I going to straighten out some day?

This weighed heavily on me, so I asked my sponsor what to do. He said, "I have good news and bad news." (Whenever he uses that phrase, I want to become invisible.) I asked him for the bad news first. He said, "The bad news is, the day we put you in the ground, providing you stay sober that long, you will be the same person you were the day you came here. The good news is you will enjoy that a lot less." He went on to explain that, like most people, alcoholics have the usual set of character defects, but we hone them to a razor's edge and use them to cut our lives to ribbons. Just because we get sober does not mean that these traits will disappear. On the contrary, they become more noticeable than ever, because when we shed light on our defects, they become easier to see and more difficult to practice.

It turns out that the reason I still revert to my old ways is because I still value them, much as I hate to admit it. As Step Six says, some of my character defects may be lifted as the desire to drink was; but as for the rest, I will have to be content with patient improvement.

When I took inventory and looked at the nature of my wrongs, I also learned that everything brings forth its own kind. For example, anger brings forth more anger; it never brings forth happiness. The same is true with love. It never brings forth hate; it can only bring forth affection. Seeing this was a real wake-up call, because when I now look around at what I have created, be it good or bad, I'm forced to take responsibility for it. When my life is full of happiness and joy, it means that happiness and joy are important to me, and anger and depression are valueless. Originally, I could not accept this simple truth because it was too easy, and I'd been taught that anything worthwhile is hard. I mean if it were that simple, then everyone could have it. But I eventually learned that this was the basic truth I had been seeking, and it has given me the ability to change my life.

The next question was, How could I bring about this change when all I've known is chaos? Experience has shown that when I combine one thought with another thought, I get a headache; but when I combine a thought with action, it always produces a result. The paradox that says I have to give it away to keep it is true enough; however, it is also true that I must give it away to get it. When I give love, then I am able to experience love, and the more I give, the more I have. The old tape that says I must receive love to have love is false. The truth is, I must give love so that I may truly experience it. God makes that possible.

I find it amazing how capable I am of overlooking the obvious. I mean, this is what the literature has been telling me all along. I guess my receiver was off the hook, or maybe I just had to hear the message on a different frequency. Whatever the case may be, I have gained much freedom from this simple truth. What's more, just as I have the freedom to use the God of my understanding or not, I have that same freedom to practice my character defects or not. God also makes that possible.

So it would seem that I am a product of my actions more than my thoughts, and through action I possess the ability to cause change in my life.

- Larry H., Puyallup, WA

Stepping on the Seven Deadlies

Grapevine, July 1984

BEFORE MY sobriety began, five years ago, the Seven Deadly Sins accurately described my basic character. After my last drink, I discovered to my awakening that the Seven Deadlies accurately describe basic *human nature*. Was Step Seven going to change my basic human nature? I doubted it. So it took me four years to get to the Seventh Step prayer. But then I was in for some surprises--seven of them.

Slowly, very slowly, at a caterpillar pace, I realized (I love AA realizations) that God is in the transformation business. Before I was even fully aware of it, a change was taking place in my behavior.

As a drinking author, I took great pride in my work. My pride far surpassed my accomplishments. My ego was always fatter than my bank account. Through AA and sobriety, I have learned to write what I like and to like what I write. I no longer reach for the proverbial brass ring or yearn to write the nation's next best-seller. I have lowered my sights and have found my true niche. I am content. And I like myself more this way. Surprise! Step Seven has changed Pride into self-esteem.

Did I mention yearning for literary fame and fortune? Well, I never worked toward such a goal. I wrote for money. My sole motive was personal gain, no more, no less. Today, I write from a new heart, with the reader's mental and spiritual welfare in mind. Surprise! Caring and sharing have displaced Avarice.

When I was a drinking drunk, the imperious urge had me by the you-know-what. I firmly believed that lust was a natural part of the human makeup, and I often wrote highly of it, using acceptable euphemisms like "eros," "passion," "fervent love," and "burning desire." It wasn't until sobriety and my third marriage that I could--rather than "worship," "crave," "fear," "adore" or "obey"--"twelfth-step" a loving woman. My imperious ego is no longer imperious. I now enjoy what I once thought was a contradiction in terms: moral sex. Surprise! Love has conquered Lust.

Anger was my middle name. Getting even was the name of my game. My bywords were "I'll show them!" and "Who do they think they are?" and "They aren't going to get away with that!" This violent need to punish others blinded me to the rights of others. Sober, I learned that all people are as human as I am and no more deserving of my self-righteous anger than I am of theirs. Surprise! Anger has given way to tolerance.

I was a glutton for everything sensual, including the "pleasure" of intoxication. As it turned out, I was really a glutton for punishment, drinking anything from beer and wine to whiskey to (on one pitiful occasion) aftershave lotion. I wanted *more* of everything in sight, no matter what it was. I was worse than an underprivileged kid let loose in an unguarded candy store. I was an insatiable sponge. Today, thanks to Step Seven, I no longer pray to have what I want; I pray to want what I have. Surprise! Acceptance has displaced Gluttony.

"Don't do today what you can put off till tomorrow." Remember that kind of barroom advice? I do. I lived by it. Even in sobriety, I found myself procrastinating with the Steps, slow to read the Big Book, fainthearted about attending meetings--in other words, dragging my feet. That's why it took me four years to get to Step Seven. Yet that is when I discovered that I would rather make a meeting than watch TV, that I prefer the Big Book to novels, that I'd rather pray than think. Surprise! The joy of sober living has replaced Sloth.

Today, I understand Envy as the incredible sadness that overwhelmed me when others were successful. I was hypercritical and insanely jealous of the "greats," never once looking at the time, energy, and work they put into their success. I simply resented their "good luck," "connections," or "secret." Today, I find myself admiring hardworking people who make it. There was a time, by the way, when I resented the winners in AA. I now let them serve as examples for me. Surprise! Envy is being replaced by emulation.

Today, I live in a daily state of surprise as Step Seven works on me. I have surrendered to the spiritual *process* that removes character defects. Someday, maybe mine will be removed. As I said at the beginning, I move at a caterpillar pace. But that's okay today. As a slow-moving caterpillar spinning my cocoon to the design of the Twelve Steps, I will emerge free as a butter-fly. That's a promise God always keeps.

No Respect

Grapevine, February 2001

Self-Righteousness

Since as early as I can remember I've been told I was insufferably irreverent. I've been called many things, but this label cropped up more than any other--from teachers, family members, neighbors, and employers, and on my military records.

To be honest, I didn't really appreciate the depth of this word *irreverent's* meaning until recently, when I picked up a dictionary: "lack of awe and respect for someone in authority." Hell, that was one label that was right on the mark.

My parents split up when I was five years old. When children are involved, divorce is rarely a smooth affair, and ours was no different. Sharpest among my memories of it are the feelings that the two people whom I had relied upon were now acting in ways I could not understand, undercutting one another every chance they got. It was very confusing for me. The adults in my life were guilty of things I couldn't comprehend. So I did the healthiest thing a five or six-year-old could do: I simply refused to have respect for or trust in anyone until they first proved their worth.

Then, due to forces beyond my control, life went on and I became an adult. But instead of shelving a six-year-old's now-inappropriate behavior, I invested years into making this a large part of my personality. I couldn't step outside of myself long enough to realize this behavior no longer fit. And since I didn't think anything was broken, I didn't do much soul-searching.

But the rumblings of failure started early. In addition to lacking respect for authority, I had a strong tendency toward knowing it all, topped with a sprinkling of class clown. It doesn't take much imagination to picture the troubles I had in school. I enjoyed many suspensions and expulsions, eventually getting my diploma after five years instead of four. I then enlisted in the National Guard, although where I thought I'd fit in is a mystery to me. But here's a sample of that experience:

It's 9 P.M. and the whole convoy has been driving for ten hours. My winning personality has earned me the much-coveted position of pumping diesel fuel into trucks in the rain. "The whole damned system is stupid," I think. "It's clear we should be doing it one way, while those in charge are doing it the other. Man, those guys are idiots." They never listen to me, so I backstab and undercut them for everyone's amusement, eventually earning myself yet another trip to the commander's office.

Yep. I did really well in the service, and I could not hold a civilian job for more than two weeks. I've been fired from more jobs than I care to admit. What began as a coping skill had become extremely unhealthy.

Then I reached AA. For the first time in my life, a system was available for me to honestly take a look at what makes me tick. I often had been told that I would have fewer problems once I learned to respect authority unquestioningly. Fortunately for me, this has not been AA's plan of attack. Instead it lets me focus on the negative aspects of my personality and how to make the most of who I am. I'm not changing as much as being finely tuned.

This has taken me to a place where I no longer undercut management and systems. I've been involved in my recovery too long to want to make any more amends for personal attacks and insults. I've learned that apologizing to someone for making fun of them is painful. I've learned how to take my ideas to those in authority instead, and guess what? Many times, I'm right. Experience inside AA (and sober experience outside) has tuned my distrust of established systems and authority; I'm now one of those people who "think outside the box" and propose realistic solutions for broken systems.

Originally, I thought AA was a place that would help me pinpoint the things in me

that were bad and needed to be taken away. Instead, I've found that AA is a place where traits that I used in a negative manner can be redirected and become my strongest assets, especially now that I know the cost of their negative side.

So, I'm still irreverent. But I've learned how to help those in charge when I see a better way and to keep my trap shut when I don't. - **Kent D., Portland, OR**

Who Wants to Be Humble!

Grapevine, April 1985

I SAT DOWN AT MY typewriter several days ago, not humbly but confidently, to write about the Seventh Step. After an hour and a quarter, I got up. The page was still blank. After a few more sessions, all I had accomplished was to spell out the Step at the top of the page.

What is it about this Step that confounds so many of us upon first encounter? Even at second and third encounters? Are we such a sad lot, so ego-driven that, as a young friend would say, at the mere mention of humility we "go bonkers"?

The suggestion that I acquire humility was not all that new. During my drinking years of big-shot yakking, it was more once suggested that I "knock it off!" "Come down to earth!" was another suggestion might have helped me to get closer to acceptance of things as they are--one working definition of humility.

My first thoughts regarding humility had to do with the years of abuse I suffered, often at the hands of people who were not themselves drinkers. That, of course, had to do with humiliation, not humility, and in the "Twelve and Twelve" we can find a clearly defined distinction between the two.

Besides the word "humbly," there was something else about the Seventh that made it an obstacle. It called for yet one more contact with God, but a contact whose nature was such that my general progress with the Steps was brought to a standstill.

In the Second Step, I had come to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to wholeness and to subsequent ease with myself and with the human race. This new faith of mine needed daily bolstering (still does), and that was where our AA meetings proved invaluable. Oh, and telephone therapy--just great! (In my area, I don't hear that expression too often anymore, but it is still a good one. Did you know it used to be called "nickel therapy," referring to the long-ago price of a phone call?)

In the Third Step, I was able to make a decision to turn over to the care of God as I understood him my yesterdays and tomorrows, but especially my todays. The action that ought to follow that decision is well expressed in the moving and simple prayer on page 63 of the Big Book.

In the Fourth and Fifth Steps, thanks largely to the courage I had gained through the help of "another human being," I could take the first of many inventories and get down to the sharing of the exact nature of my wrongs.

With the Seventh, however, the situation was different. It was suggesting that, since I had done the groundwork of the first five and had crossed over the bridge of the Sixth, I was ready for a face-to-face interview, a private audience with God! The idea alone was unbearable. But why should I be so afraid of a God that had saved my life? A God that had given me enduring evidence of his love and care?

I had to pause in the middle of the Seventh, and do a mini-inventory. Why was I balking? What I found was that I had relapsed into an old form of pride, which rankled at my *inability to deal with my own shortcomings under my own steam*. I then undertook a crash course to relearn that my old state of mental insurrection could not coexist with my new acceptance of things as they are.

I have heard so many of my fellow AAs talk of their religious upbringing, how they

strayed away during their drinking years, and how hard it was to become willing to even investigate the spiritual life.

I, too, was brought up in the bosom of religious teaching. I was taught that God was a loving God, yes, but much more emphasis was placed on sin and man's (my) desperate need for redemption. Redemption, as I always understood it, was a cycle of breast-beating and tears that continued without letup until our dying day. Anticipation of punishment was one of the outstanding features of religious training.

Growing up, I learned on another level that I should be self-reliant and a self-starter. I could and should be those things, so my teaching seemed to say, because I was a man (and, being a man, I was the superior of the species); I was a Western man who belonged to a traditional Western church (and, as everyone knew--so I thought--Western churches were superior to Eastern churches, with their exotic, nonredemptive religions); and above all, so my peculiar bent of mind told me, I was unique, powerful, and in complete charge of an entirely manageable way of life!

On such a foundation did I build my life, consciously working at it from my teens onward. There was no openness of mind, no emotional or spiritual perspective as to where I had been, where I was, or where I was going. In my little box of time and space, I was not approachable or knowable or teachable.

All in all, it should have come as no surprise that the adoption of humility, under any circumstances, would have been a major problem. But having to learn humility as a way of approaching God was startling in its novelty. I was not used to gentleness. After fifteen years of problem drinking, I was used to melodramatic groveling one day and arrogant demanding the next.

"Humbly asked him. . ." Come to think of it, what other way would there be to approach God? "Patiently asked him. . .?" "Lovingly asked him. . .?" "lovingly asked him. . .?"

A nonalcoholic friend once asked me if anybody had ever thought of introducing a companion piece to the Serenity Prayer, to read like this: "God, grant me the *humility* to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

We AAs sometimes divide the Twelve Steps into categories of "action" and "no action required." That bureaucratic idea has often distressed me, in the same way I am sometimes distressed when the AA podium is used to "teach" our recovery program. From the very beginning of my AA life, action was the key word. Even in those moments when all I can do is stand still and hurt, so my early AA friends told me, I am involved in the action of staying away from the first drink.

When I think about the Steps that mention a Power greater than myself, or God, I like to take note of the action words used to connect me with a Higher Power, or with myself. In the first six alone, some of those words are: "came to believe," "made a decision," "admitted," and "were entirely ready." They are words and ideas that lead me into the area of God-readiness and receptivity--directly to the heart of the Seventh Step, the touchstone of personal inventory-taking.

At least, that's the way it seems to me.

- W.R., Manhattan, NY

Writing Our Stories - Again

While doing my monthly search for AA related jokes and memes, I ran across this little gem. Having a flat tire is a limitation. Trying to drive on it is a character defect. I realized that after the Picnic last weekend, the physical inventory last week, and getting this newsletter onto the website by the end of today, I'm trying to drive my little roadster on a flat tire, and I'm entirely out of gas as well. Which is why, after re-

reading my Seventh Step article from 2022's KIT, I decided I liked it enough to republish it here. For those of you who know me, you'll recognize that publicly admitting to a limitation - *in writing* - is a really significant piece of growth for me. It reminds me, yet again - having limitations is a given fact of life. Trying to live our lives by ignoring our limitations, that's the character defect.



When I was about nine years old, my mother gave me a pretty little white leather diary with a push-button clasp and two keys. Then she took back one of the keys "for safe keeping". Well, I didn't fall off the cabbage truck yesterday, and at that tender age I clearly knew what "for safe keeping" was all about - *surveillance*.

Needless to say I never wrote a word in that damned diary. Nor did I ever write letters home from summer camp, or thank you notes, or post cards, or virtually anything that wasn't absolutely *required* to get through school and life. Shopping lists? Hell no - I carried everything in my head, and I was pretty good at it, too. The only English assignment I ever failed was the one where I was required to talk about a personal fear, and the best I could come up with was being eaten by sharks. The teacher had no way of knowing I lived in a family full of sharks, my older brother being the one stand-out exception.

Imagine my horror when I learned that a large part of Step Work involves writing down stuff and nonsense about personal sh*t and feelings. Are you *crazy*?? And I resisted writing with every fiber of my being. Nope, nope, not going there. Shortly after my first AA meeting, I got into therapy, and talked my way through a huge chunk of my inventory. And it really worked for me - no writing required, just talk. I could do that.

Shortly after, I went to grad school to get my masters degree in psychology. And that's when the writing really began. At first, I thought I was writing about clinical topics, but more and more I found my personal story was informing all of my papers, both in the writing and behind the writing. I was still keeping a lot to myself, but I was revealing more than I knew. I read those papers about 25 years later, and after the initial shock, I was surprisingly pleased with myself. I had somehow let the Step Work of writing sneak up on me from behind.

I have noticed, lately, just how powerful is the process of telling our stories. We chair and share at meetings, and these are verbal ways of telling our stories. But our work on Step 4 through (and including) Step 7, and Step 10 are all about *writing, rewriting, and editing* our stories. This has become important for me in many ways. For each time I write today's story of my drinking and sobriety, I fix it in my mind and my memory. And I have become aware of how much my story has changed in my recovery, each rewrite a mark of the continuous, never ending transformation of me and the meaning of my life experiences.

Around 2015, I was listening to a discussion of AI, and self-driving cars. I thought, "What's the fun in that?" Then I had to stop and remember that I'm legally blind in one eye, and that a self-driving car might be my ticket to continued freedom. Now I own a car which, although still a stick shift, has all the alarms, bells and whistles to keep me in my lane and out of trouble. Back up camera? *Yeah!* I had to do a rewrite about my real, not imagined, capabilities and limitations.

When we reach Step 7, we are creating an intentional and very active rewrite of our story. We are remodeling and reshaping the primary protagonist in our story, ourselves. We are re-forming ourselves from victims into individuals with a strong sense of agency and ownership - by owning all parts of ourselves and making thoughtful, responsible choices about how we live our lives. I have never found Steps 6 & 7 "humbling". Rather, I approach them with a sense of gratitude that I'm getting to know the real me, to live in comfort with the real me, to reveal - in writing - the real me to anyone who will listen.



Short – But Not Sweet

Grapevine, July 1984

THE SEVENTH is the shortest Step. It should be so simple to practice it and be granted true relief, leading to serenity. However, I have found this Step to be extremely painful and frightening.

If I want a shortcoming removed, what price am I willing to pay to effect its removal? Need I merely consult my Higher Power and have instantaneous, positive action? Not in my case. I have to encounter pain and suffering to achieve the growth that ultimately leads to removal of the defect. Often, I do not learn the first time, and must repeat this painful process one or more times before growth takes place.

Some examples to clarify my point follow:

The defect: being unable to accept help from others. The growth opportunity: breaking my foot and having it stitched up, so I was forced to accept help.

The defect: not feeling love. The growth: losing a loved one.

The defect: impatience. The growth: going through periods of craziness and anxiety.

The defect: being unable to accept defeat. The growth: being told I could not now or ever obtain the particular job I was applying for, because I had used hard drugs.

The defect: dishonesty. The growth: being honest at the cost of my job.

The list grows as the period of my sobriety lengthens. I came to a point where even the thought of practicing the Seventh Step would send shivers of fear down my spine. What was the answer to my dilemma? I wanted an easy way out, so I turned to the Big Book and started quoting in prayer an appropriate passage: "Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of thy power, thy love, and thy way of life." Again, these words were simple to say. But then, I started thinking: What would I have to go through to have my difficulties removed?

The answers to my fears are contained in the Twelve Steps and the AA program. I have been taught that God never gives me more than I can handle at any one time. That has proved to be true no matter what the situation has been in my life of sobriety. I have been taught, "Thy will be done, not mine." Practicing the Third Step has brought sanity and order into my previously chaotic and unmanageable existence.

I am told that in all likelihood, the more pain I go through, the more I will grow. If that is God's will (and I know I am in much better shape if he is in control), then I have faith I can handle that pain for ultimate good and removal of my character defects. My strength to handle pain will come through continued application of Step Eleven, together with the Serenity Prayer.

The Steps, the fellowship of AA members, and the strength I gain through listening at meetings help me to be happy and keep smiling, one day at a time. I thank my Higher Power for the difficult and painful Seventh Step. - *H.V., Kodiak, AL*

Self-support

Grapevine, July 2007

How AA's Seventh Tradition helped soothe a troubled soul

It was just another run-of-the-mill night at Harvard street, except I'd arrived at the meeting to find one of my sober sisters in deep distress. When I went to hug her and asked what was wrong, she told me that her marriage was in serious trouble. On top of that, her finances were in catastrophic shape and her business was collapsing. My

friend's sobs as the meeting began were audible.

Hearing them, my mind traveled back, and I realized it was exactly two years ago that night that I had walked in to this, my home group, in much the same state. Married at the time, I had just caught my partner of seven years, who had lost his sobriety and had been struggling to get it back, in a devastating set of lies and betrayals. I had realized that, for the sake of my own sobriety, our marriage could not continue. Packing an overnight bag, I came straight to the meeting. Once there, I fell into a heap at my sponsor's feet and wept like I was being cut in pieces.

Until that moment I had done a tremendous amount of service in AA. At any given time, I had several commitments, sponsored women, spoke frequently about my marvelous life in sobriety, and worked with multiple newcomers. I believed, as the Big Book says, that it was crucial to extend help to other AA's if I wanted to stay sober myself. As for receiving it, well, with a little bit of time under my belt, that was better left to those who needed it more.

But that night, and in the weeks and months that followed, everything changed. I slowly and completely went to pieces. Not only had I lost my marriage, but my home, most of my possessions, and my ability to work at my chosen profession. To top it all off, my husband had left me with a mountain of credit card debt. I had a shattered heart, no career prospects, and a sense of despair and betrayal so pervasive I was positive it would engulf me completely.

Absolutely crippled by my losses, I struggled just to show up. Gone was the cheery face gleaming at every newcomer. Gone was the certainty that God would care for me, you, or any one of us. Gone was the wherewithal to do any service for AA but the most rudimentary. I felt like a ghost.

My sponsor and sober girlfriends, thank God, proceeded to support me at every turn. I was like a sick child passed from arm to arm. Never once was I set down. Many was the time I sat sobbing at Harvard Street, or some other meeting, thinking, "I can't share about my divorce again. They're all sick of me!" And then some kind face would nod at me across the room, or some soft elbow nudge, and I would put up my hand. Again. And grieve to the room. Again. I tried desperately to make my shares "recovery-related," but even when I couldn't I was told it was OK, that it was recovery enough just seeing me stay sober through my troubles.

After the meeting, I was invariably surrounded. Never once was I told I was "too much." It seemed there was enough support to carry even my world of pain. I continued to come. I did a Step workshop with some close girlfriends. I kept sponsoring, even if it was fewer women, and even though I felt much less of an "inspiration" than before. I stayed close, and took life a second at a time.

Very slowly, so slowly I barely discerned it was happening, I began to feel better. I began to get better. I can still remember the first night I went to Harvard Street and did not cry. A milestone! And the day I got my first promotion at work. Or when I announced, to cheers, that my divorce had finally gone through. Only a couple of weeks ago, I informed the room, with tears in my eyes, that I had paid off the last of my debt. What a surge of congratulations that set off! Along the way, it once again became normal for me to be okay on Monday nights. I found myself even smiling on occasion.

The topic for tonight's meeting was the Seventh Tradition. Our speaker set a tone that inspired deep and heartfelt shares. Then my sober sister shared, pouring her heart out about her troubles. We listened, silently.

Then, without thinking, I raised my hand. I said that although there are many times when we "alks" need to be self-supporting, I had learned that there were times that I needed to let go of my desperate desire to do it myself and allow support from others. The wisdom was in knowing when one was appropriate and when the other was not. Surrendering to my alcoholism was an example of something I ought not try alone.

Getting through calamities was another. Developing a sense of self-esteem, however, I found was an inside job. And it didn't hurt to know how to pay my own bills, either.

I spoke of the recent months and years, and how without AA's support first, self-support could never have become possible for me. However, tonight I could honestly say I was doing okay. I was out of debt, financially stable, living in a sweet little home, starting a new career, single, and happy. In fact, I could see that, as devastatingly difficult as they had been, the last two years had been a giant Seventh Tradition workshop. Never in my married life or at any time before it had I truly understood what being self-supporting meant. I had relied on others to take care of me, not just financially, but emotionally and spiritually, too, and I let my life go to hell if they didn't.

Because of what I'd gone through I can now see that when I truly let go of old and self-destructive habits and relationships (or have them torn from me), God replaces them with a healthy supply of support--provided I make some contributions (take some actions).

I closed my share by repeating that the beauty of sobriety is that sometimes I am the one supported, and other times the one supporting. One act helps destroy my ego, the other my self-centeredness. I need to practice both actions if I want to survive.

The meeting ended. I found my sober sister. She said she'd like to talk. For the next half-hour I listened while she poured out her pain and consternation. I didn't tell her what to do. I couldn't; I had no idea. I told her only what I had been told two years ago: that, whatever happened, divorce or no divorce, bankruptcy or not, if she didn't drink she would get through it. Or, rather, we would. Together. I was living proof of this.

My friend nodded sadly, and with just the faintest glimmer of hope. Once again, I felt the truth of the Promise: "No matter how far down the scale we have gone we will see how our experience can benefit others." - *Jessica C., Los Angeles, CA*

Too much cash?

Grapevine, July 2022

When a lot of money enters the picture, things can get murky. Thank goodness for sponsors and Traditions

A few years ago, our local Intergroup was notified of a bequest in the amount of \$150,000 from a deceased member's estate. At first the Intergroup board said they could only accept \$10,000, in compliance with our Seventh Tradition. Yet somehow, the idea of all that additional money weighed on the group's minds, as money often does.

"We can do an awful lot of good with that," they said among themselves, and eventually, a few months later, they said the same to the Intergroup committee. Wonderful reasons for accepting the extra money were given, there was talk of enhancing our ability to carry the message, to help other Intergroups, to do all manner of good works. And I understand the thinking all too well. If someone offered me \$150,000 contingent on putting that money to good use, I'd come up with several fabulous options in no time.

The problem is that the long form of our Seventh Tradition doesn't say "acceptance of large gifts from any source is unwise unless we can put it to good use." Neither do our "AA Guidelines on Finance," our pamphlet on "Self-Support" or the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" contain that dangerous qualifier. If the only condition for accepting excess funds was that the money be put to good use, there would be no point in limiting contributions at all, since pretty much every service committee could find a "good use."

That's the problem with money; like alcoholism it's cunning, baffling and almost as powerful as alcohol. It can tempt us to abandon our principles and rationalize twisted

thinking.

So the board presented its decision to the Intergroup committee and then things got a little murky. According to the board, the Intergroup agreed by a majority to accept the remaining \$140,000. However, according to several members present, the board suggested that more discussion was needed, as the gift represented a significant deviation from policy.

Then COVID-19 hit and redirected everyone's attention. Nevertheless, the board reported at the May meeting that the \$140,000 had been accepted in April. No "take the idea back to your groups for their input." The funds were deposited and were not entered as contributions in the regular monthly income report (thus lacking transparency to the Fellowship) but rather in a separate special projects fund.

If it hadn't been for a trusted AA servant who happened to be transcribing minutes and who also happened to have studied the Traditions and Concepts with her sponsor, those funds might be merrily making their way out in the world as you read this. But the trusted servant, thinking this didn't really sound much like the spiritual principles she'd been studying, called her sponsor, who called her sponsor, who said, "Oh, hell no!" and called the Intergroup to find out more.

I wish I could say that as soon as questions were asked, the right about-face was made, but that isn't how things work. Anywhere. It took five months for the real voice of the Fellowship to emerge. After all, imagine suggesting a committee return a \$140,000 donation. Preposterous, right? Everyone wrangled, cajoled, explained and persuaded, letters to the editor of our local newsletter were written, slideshows were presented, town halls were held and gradually the information got out to the local groups.

Finally, a vote was held. The virtual meeting room was quiet as each group was polled on the question: "Should Intergroup keep the additional \$140,000 in bequest funds in excess of our stated policy limit of \$10,000?"

At first, several "yes" votes were recorded. Then the responses shifted as, one after another, the several representatives spoke up, saying, "Our group votes no," as a rising tide of support for the letter and the spirit of the Seventh Tradition formed. The minority opinion was heard and the groups decided by a 72% margin to return the funds. Only in AA, folks.

I still get chills as I write this. When I first told my service sponsor about the goings-on, even after so many years of watching people in AA do the right thing, I was fearful that our system wouldn't work, that the siren song of money would prove too alluring. But my sponsor was calmly confident. "Just let the group conscience do its work," he said. "Your job is simply to make sure the groups know about it."

And he was right. AA group conscience, equipped with the information, did its work as it always does, and our Traditions were upheld through the informed conscience of a "Group of Drunks." I thank God that the bell-ringers had sponsors who not only took them through AA's Steps, but also our Traditions and Concepts so that one person, humbly doing service work, knew enough to ask questions. I'm not big on the God-as-Grand Puppet Master idea, but his fingerprints are all over this one.

I felt compelled to write this article because it's especially important to be vigilant about our Traditions during complex and chaotic times. A highly dangerous precedent could have been set, which, as it says in our "Twelve and Twelve," "...like the alcoholic's first drink, it would, if taken, inevitably set up a disastrous chain reaction." Economic insecurity was rampant, communication was lacking, priorities pivoted sharply from moment to moment and our office staff was working non-stop to find solutions to problems we'd never seen or imagined. It was a situation in which it was easy to think the Traditions might have to take a back seat.

And yet the answer, as always, is faith and action—faith that the collective conscience of the Fellowship would do what's right, and action to ensure that everyone in our AA groups had the information they needed to make the right choice.

- *Anonymous*



INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
July 3–6, 2025 | Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

June 11, 2025

To: GSRs, DCMs, Trustees, Non-trustee Directors, Area Officers and Committee Chairs, Delegates, Appointed Committee Members, Intergroups and Central Offices, Group Contacts, GSO and Grapevine Employees

Dear A.A. Friends,

Last month your area delegates, trustees, and staff came together in unity as members of the 75th General Service Conference. As I reflect on this incredible week of service, there is so much that comes to mind: the wonderful work of the committees, the debate and sharing on the Conference floor, and the camaraderie among us all. Simply, this was love and service in action. Our Conference is the very best expression of our Second Tradition and the group conscience of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Our member employees, the GSO Staff, with support from all departments and employees of GSO, are hard at work coordinating the implementation of the group conscience of the General Service Conference. This is taking place in the form of various orientations of trustee and conference committee chairs to ensure there is common understanding of committee work and process for the year ahead. The Staff are also organizing the many Advisory Actions and committee considerations to be included in that work. This is very significant work and is being done with grace and in the best spirit of A.A.

Meanwhile, reporting back to the Fellowship is in full swing throughout our service structure, and I encourage all to take advantage of the opportunity to attend various

events where your delegate provides their reports. Your local area website will likely include details to help you find any Conference reporting in your area.

I also want to provide a few updates about what's happening at your General Service Office. Many of you already may be aware that as a result of the work of the Location Plus Committee of the General Service Board, it was decided that we will continue office operations from our current location at 475 Riverside Drive in New York. This committee completed its work last year with the assistance of an outside expert who performed an objective assessment of our location with comparison to several other possible locations throughout our structure. Included in the committee's report was the recommendation to consolidate our operations on the 8th and 11th floors on the 11th floor only. This will not only realize a savings in occupancy costs but also allow for better collaboration and effectiveness among all departments and services we provide. This consolidation will require modifications to our office space in order to accommodate our Publishing and Communication Services Departments, which now are on the 8th floor.

Over the last several months, we have spent considerable time and effort planning for the retrofit of our space. In order to keep associated costs at a minimum and minimize disruption to services, the office will be operating remotely for the duration of the project, which is expected to be about 10-12 weeks. Please know that we have made provisions for our mail and shipping operation, and our phones will be operational throughout. Unfortunately, visiting the office during this time will not be possible, but GSO tours will resume when the project is completed. Once we have a definitive timeline for the project, I will communicate that widely including on aa.org, aagrapevine.org, the Meeting Guide App, as well as the Grapevine and La Vina apps.

I also want to share my enthusiasm and excitement for the upcoming [International Convention](#) that will be held July 3-6 in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. There's still time to [register](#), so I hope all members who are able will consider attending. My attendance at several prior International Conventions have been some of the most impactful experiences in my sobriety. Many members I've met over the years have shared similar sentiments. You can register [here](#) or on site when you arrive at the Convention. You may also find it helpful to review our [frequently asked questions \(FAQ's\)](#) to learn more about Convention, including information regarding options to experience segments of the event virtually for those who aren't able to attend.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in Vancouver, woohoo!

Also significant throughout the year, your office provides planning and support for Regional Forums, General Service Board weekends, AAWS board meetings, and the General Service Conference. Our GSO Staff members also attend many of your assemblies, conventions, and roundups as well as welcoming many of you when visiting your General Service Office here in New York. In addition, they respond to the many daily inquiries from members and groups and provide them with shared experience from other groups and literature or service material that help them carry the A.A. message. All of this distills directly to the essence of our Fellowship and program of recovery; the magic of Alcoholics Anonymous that happens when one alcoholic comes together with another to share their experience, strength, and hope.

With gratitude for your continued service to Alcoholics Anonymous,

Bob W.

Bob W.
General Manager, GSO

Subject:
***Encourage Dual Diagnosis Members to
Share Their Stories with AA Grapevine***

Dear Central Office Manager,

I hope this message finds you well and in good service.

We are reaching out to ask for your help in spreading the word to your local fellowship: *AA Grapevine* is always looking for a wide range of stories from members—especially those with a **dual diagnosis** (those recovering from both alcoholism and a mental health condition).

Many AA members with dual diagnoses have found sobriety and healing through the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Their experiences can offer powerful hope and identification for others who face similar challenges. Sharing these stories in *AA Grapevine* not only strengthens our collective voice, but also helps reduce stigma and deepen understanding within our fellowship.

If your Central Office shares newsletters, announcements, or has bulletin board space, we kindly ask that you encourage members to consider submitting their personal stories of recovery with a dual diagnosis to *AA Grapevine*. These submissions may be published in the magazine—and could also be considered for inclusion in a potential future book focused on dual diagnosis stories.

How to Submit:

Members can find guidelines and submit stories online at: <https://www.aagrapevine.org/submit-your-story>

Thank you for your continued service and for helping carry the message to every alcoholic who still suffers—especially those who may feel alone in their experiences with co-occurring mental health issues.

In fellowship and gratitude,

Karin Herndon

10:10 In-Person, Palo Alto, CA
650.229.4175

Dual Diagnosis

If you're an AA member with a dual diagnosis
(that is, you're an alcoholic who also has a mental health disorder),
The Grapevine is very interested in hearing your story.

To submit your story, search
“AA Grapevine submit your story”,
or go to

<https://www.aagrapevine.org/submit-your-story>.

Thank you.

Sorting It All Out

Last week I chaired at a meeting, and I described the circumstances which led me to leave AA meetings for 22 years. I had been ghosted at the end of a 3 year relationship with a serial 13th-stepper. He had a history of dating newer members, and then ghosting us while moving on to the next relationship. When it came time for the other members in last week's group to share, one member said, "I heard you say you left AA over a resentment." And, I agreed with them - for about 5 minutes. It took me that long to realize that I had not said anything of the sort. I stopped going to AA meetings because of shame, not resentment. Mind numbing, soul crushing humiliation. How could I have been so arrogant, so **stooped** as to believe the lies? And it was clear to me that everyone else knew, yet no one had warned me. What kind of LaLa land had I been living in for 3 years? It never occurred to me to resent their silence until last week, 33 years later. It was all part and parcel of the rejection and isolation I had experienced all my life. If I resented anyone, it was myself for being duped into believing that life, for me, could be any different.

Ultimately, I got really lucky, because life presented me with the opportunity and, oddly enough, the courage to give AA another try. And I'm incredibly grateful for that second chance. But last week's meeting brought up a question I've thought a lot about. Why is it so hard to let go of our character defects. Why, once we've let them go, do they come bounding back like puppies retrieving their favorite ball? Of course, there are lots and lots of reasons. But one I had not thought of is this - we need to identify our character defects, and label them correctly, before we can let them go. And this is easier said than done.

For one thing, most of our character defects are toxic exaggerations of normal, human emotions, or character traits. Those traits we tend to label as defects - fear, anger, pain, pride, ambition - they are factory installed equipment that come with us at birth. They are necessary to our well-being. During all our years of drinking, we have needed the toxic, powerful, unquestioned, and subtle versions of our character traits as our means of self-defense.

“Yet, these instincts, so necessary for our existence, often far exceed their proper functions. Powerfully, blindly, many times subtly, they drive us, dominate us, and insist upon ruling our lives.”

(Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 42)

Further complicating matters, these feelings are rarely stand alone phenomena. They are multilayered, interwoven, and complicated. Letting go of even one could feel like dropping **one** knitting stitch only to find the whole sweater unravelling before our very eyes. It makes sense that letting go of these multi-faceted, multi-functional weapons of mass destruction would be difficult. And it makes sense that when push comes to shove, we would instinctively reach out for the old tried and true, even though we **know**, in our heart of hearts, the old doesn't work for us anymore.

And because these responses are multi-layered and interwoven, we often fail to label, or we mis-label just what it is we're letting go of in any given situation. About 3 years after leaving AA meetings, I ran into my 13th-stepper. He told me he had lost his 19-year old son in an Air Force training accident. He further told me he was in therapy, but no details. From his expression, I understood that this was his way of repairing a botched attempt at an amends. But my feelings for him in that moment were all about empathy and sorrow for his loss. Last week, 33 years later, it took a fellow member to put their finger on my resentment, not toward him, but toward the other members who watched and said nothing. I'd missed that part completely. I think I'd better think it out again.

- Lynne R., Pershing Group

Inside A.A. Finances

Part VI:

A LOOK AT THE 2025 BUDGET

This is the final column in a series from Kevin Prior, former Treasurer of the General Service Board (GSB) and chair of its Finance and Budgetary Committee, who rotated from the board as a Class A (nonalcoholic) trustee after the recent General Service Conference.

By Kevin Prior

At the meeting of the General Service Board (GSB) in January, the 2025 budgets for GSB, A.A. World Services (AAWS), and the AA Grapevine (AAGV) were approved. In previous columns, we covered the process for budget development and approval. In this column, I will provide an overview of these budgets.

First, an explanation of some budget terminology. The **operating budget** includes the annual ongoing revenues and costs needed to operate the General Service Office, the AA Grapevine, and all the functions of the bottom layers of our service triangle including the General Service Board and General Service Conference

An operating budget is characterized by **recurring items that GSO and/or the respective Board (GSB, AAWS, AAGV) can control**. This includes, for example, costs related to personnel, technology, and publishing, among other functions, and costs for the 2025 General Service Conference and Regional Forums. Rent is fixed over shorter periods but ultimately lease renewals are controllable expenses, so they are included.

The biggest example of non-operating items are gains/losses and changes in valuation for A.A.'s pension and postretirement health insurance programs. Most non-operating items are not and/or cannot be budgeted.

The **capital budget** includes purchases (or leases) of larger items with a service life of more than one year. Think copiers, the AA Grapevine app, and improvements and renovations to the office. The cash expenditure occurs up-front, and a "fixed asset" is created. Then, over the useful life of that asset, it is charged to expense as depreciation. The reason for this treatment is the fundamental accounting rule of "matching," where expenses should be recorded

in the same period as the benefit is received. So, if you purchase a machine that lasts five years, you benefit from that machine over the five-year period and the related expense is over that same period.

Few items on A.A.'s financial statements cause more confusion than **depreciation expense**, a concept in finance that can be difficult to understand for the layperson. Depreciation is the bridge between the operating budget and the capital budget. As noted above, when fixed assets are purchased, there is a cash outlay but no expense. When depreciation is recorded, there is an expense but no cash outlay. Rather, the depreciation "chips away" at the value of the fixed asset on the books. It is often beneficial to examine financial results before depreciation since depreciation is non-cash and represents the impact of past rather than current decisions.

MORE ON OUR BUDGETS

AAWS/GSB Revenue

For the 2025 operating budget, contributions are budgeted a little lower than actual 2024 receipts (\$11 million versus \$11.3 million received). Literature sales

are budgeted greater than 2024 due to the full-year impact of the *Plain Language Big Book* (2024 included the results of only the first print run of 70,000 copies). The literature budget does not assume any new literature that may be approved by the 75th General Service Conference. Gross Margin (what we make on literature sales) is budgeted at 55% of sales. This is an improvement from the last several years and represents the new "normal."

AAWS/GSB Expenses

Operating expenses (including depreciation) included in the budget of \$20.5 million are higher than ever before, but so are costs. In fact, looking at 2014 operating expenses of \$16 million, if these grew by the amount of the Consumer Price Index (inflation) from 2014 to 2024, they would have grown to \$21.2 million over that same period, indicating that, over time, expenses have been contained within the level of inflation or less. Inflation is the greatest driver of costs, as we are not expanding the number of employees and are actually planning to shrink our leased office space starting in 2026.

AAWS/GSB Net

For 2025, the Budgeted Operating Surplus before depreciation is \$1 million. This is the second year in a row of strong results that have been made possible by record Seventh Tradition contributions and literature sales that continue to recover from the pandemic lows. La Viña is a non-operating expense for GSB because GSB is responsible for funding any shortfall, but the amount is determined by the AA Grapevine Board. Deducting this amount from the \$1 million above, the net operating surplus before depreciation net of La Viña is budgeted to be \$573,000 versus a surplus of \$431,000 in 2024 and a deficit of \$176,000 in 2023.

AA Grapevine Operating Budgets

AAGV (excluding La Viña) incurred planned operating losses in 2023 and 2024 to allow time for the Grapevine mobile app to be developed and adopted within the Fellowship. Subscription revenue (print and digital) is expected to be \$2.2 million in 2025, an increase of 12% from 2024 and 28% from 2023. Combined with strong book sales and the impact of price increases for both books and subscriptions, total 2025 gross margin is budgeted to be \$2 million, an increase of 23% from 2024 and 63% from 2023. This improved revenue picture, combined with necessary reductions in Grapevine's operations, has allowed Grapevine to achieve a break-even budget before depreciation for

2025. This compares to deficits before depreciation of \$700,000 or greater in each of the two years.

La Viña has also benefited from increased subscriptions and sales of books. Gross margin is budgeted to be more than double the gross margin achieved in 2024. This, combined with careful management of operating expenses, has reduced the budgeted net shortfall for 2025 (covered by GSB) to \$455,000 versus \$565,000 in 2024.

AAWS/GSB Capital Budget

The 2025 approved capital budget is \$2.4 million, comprising \$2 million for office renovation costs and \$340,000 in capital costs related to communications, publishing, and technology services.

The retrofitting of the 11th floor at 475 Riverside Drive will allow consolidation of all GSO employees on a single floor and reduce rent and occupancy expenses over the long term by giving up the current space on the 8th floor.

AA Grapevine Capital Budget

AAGV capital spending is budgeted to be \$60,000, consisting primarily of investments of \$48,000 in the Grapevine app.

Opening for Class A Trustee

Following the 76th General Service Conference in May 2026 there will be one (1) opening for a Class A Trustee (*nonalcoholic*) on the General Service Board. The trustees' Nominating Committee asks that trustees, delegates, and directors encourage appropriate candidates for Class A trustees to consider serving Alcoholics Anonymous. Class A trustees are chosen from a variety of professional backgrounds, including accounting, clergy, corrections, education, finance, health care, law, medicine, military, psychology, social work, and science. In seeking applications for the General Service Board, the trustees' Nominating Committee is committed to creating a large applicant file of qualified people reflecting the inclusiveness and diversity of A.A. itself. Candidates are invited to include statements demonstrating interest in Alcoholics Anonymous, leadership skills and characteristics, a proven track record in their own professional field, experience as a board member, and experience working with AA and its members. Candidates can submit their business or professional résumé to the Secretary, Trustees' Nominating Committee at nominating@aa.org, or [Smartsheet link](#), or by mail to GSO, 475 Riverside Drive, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10115 no later than August 31, 2025.



Bar 4-5-9, Spring 2025

Bar 4-5-9, Spring 2025

■ The Seventh Tradition Goes to the (Little) Library

A.A. co-founder Bill W. wrote that “Every single A.A. service is designed to make more and better Twelfth Step work possible.” Of course, it’s our Seventh Tradition—passing the actual or digital basket—that helps fund that crucial A.A. work throughout the Fellowship. The story of Christine B., of Redmond, Oregon, exemplifies this.

Christine’s sobriety date is May 20, 2013, and she’s done lots of service since walking into the A.A. rooms. Currently, she’s a greeter for her home group and also serves as Area 58 Finance co-chair and District 5 IT chair. But the service she and others are doing with the “little free libraries”—those decorated book kiosks that pop up in neighborhoods all over the U.S., Canada, and around the world—really speaks to her heart.

The story starts with the Covid-19 pandemic. “Our district found ourselves with extra [Seventh Tradition] funds and we were looking for ways to spend it down,” she says. “So my sponsor, Vera E., got the idea to put A.A. literature into the little libraries. I’m a big reader, so I got really excited about this. It started as a motion at the district level and then went back to the groups, and it passed!”

The District 5 Public Information committee used Seventh Tradition funds to order copies of the

Big Book as well as issues of the AA Grapevine and La Viña magazines. The committee also affixed stickers with the district help-line number to the literature. Christine and other volunteers got a list of the registered free little libraries, which they found online, in their central Oregon area and, armed with boxes of literature, spread out in their area to do the Twelfth Step work of distributing the life-saving material.

Christine estimates that on their first effort they probably placed literature in 25 little libraries. The outreach has now been ongoing for five years and has grown to include all of Area 58.

“The feeling is amazing,” Christine says. “You have no idea who you’re going to touch.” While the idea of these little libraries is to borrow a book and replace it with another, Christine says that when it comes to suffering alcoholics, her message is, “steal this book if you need to. You can always make an amends when you’re sober.”

For more information about self-support and the Seventh Tradition, visit aa.org.



MEMBER SERVICES

In 2024, the Member Services department responded to 24,428 email inquiries and 16,838 phone calls.



XXIX ANNIVERSARY OF LA VIÑA OF THE PACIFIC REGION
JULY, 25, 26, & 27, 2025
HOST AREA #05 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

What seemed at first a flimsy reed has proved to be the Loving and Powerful Hand of God.
Los Angeles, CA

AREAS OF THE PACIFIC REGION
2, 3, 5, 6, 7,
8, 9, 17, 18,
42, 58, 69, 72,
92 y 93, Alaska,
Arizona,
California,
Idaho, Hawaii,
Nevada,
Oregon, Utah
& Washington

PACIFIC PALMS RESORT
LA'S HILLTOP HIDEAWAY
ONE INDUSTRY HILLS PARKWAY • CITY OF INDUSTRY • CA 91788
SAN GABRIEL VALLEY 91024-4007
Please mention that your reservation is for the event
for the 29th Anniversary of the Pacific Region La Viña
www.PACIFICPALMSRESORT.com

Box 4-5-9, Spring 2025

◆ NOW STREAMING

Our Primary Purpose Podcast

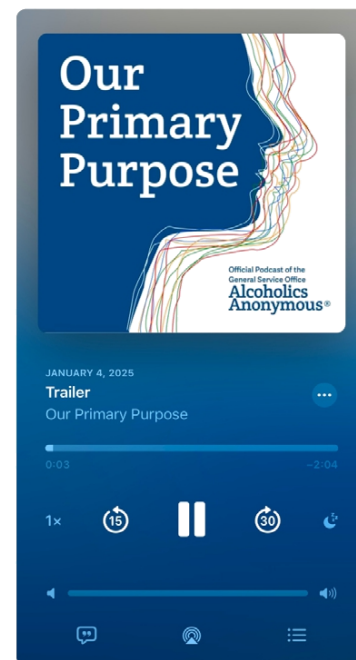
“Featuring interviews with GSO staff and voices from A.A. history and the Fellowship today — learn how GSO supports A.A. groups and members to carry the message of hope and recovery.”

*Available in English only

Season 1 streaming now and available on podcast platforms



aa.org/gso-podcast



Questions? Contact us at gsoodcast@aa.org or visit the webpage.

Bar 4-5-9, Spring 2025

July's Word Puzzle 2025

Out of The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

T Y L B M U H R E U T U T C R R C O
 N R Y L E I R W N H O C G L M D L I
 I A T N S N O I T A T I M I L T R E
 C R I S O G T L E I H F U M E H G S
 O T L C P Y N L O N G T I M E R R T
 R N I T R A D I T I O N R W G A A R
 G O M H U L E N M E T E A A P L T I
 N C U I P R O G H O M L C L U C I L
 S D H L Y L T N L O C R A C C O T T
 P T S A R E S E R V A T I O N H U I
 L E R X R I R S Y O N Y R H M O D N
 L P A E N A E S P I H S W O L L E F
 E R E C N V C E T T W T D L H I E E
 T B E C E G N T B E N E F I T S U S
 M R E N O I T R E X E I O C N M O P
 E R T C N M H H O R N T P I N L A L
 R H Y G G E T I F T T E O E E A P S
 E T L G B O T E B R T M O G V M C A

ALCOHOLIC
 ALCOHOLISM
 BENEFIT
 CHARACTER
 CONTRARY
 EXERTION
 FELLOWSHIP
 FREEDOM

HUMBLY
 HUMILITY
 INTOLERANCE
 LIMITATIONS
 LONGTIMER
 OPENING
 PEACE
 PRAY

REMORSE
 RESERVATION
 SEVENTH
 SHORTCOMINGS
 SINCERE
 STRENGTH
 TRADITION
 UNITY

July Calendar, 2025

Sun	Mon	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thurs	Fri	Saturday
		1 P.I.C.P.C. BEGINNER'S SERIES 7 PM 860-3627-3183 PW: picpc	2 ADVISORY Committee 7 PM 870-4399-9037 PW: delta	3	4	5 SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE 31 E. Vine St. Stockton 7:30-9:00 pm (See Flyer)
6	7	8 P.I.C.P.C. BEGINNER'S SERIES 7 PM 860-3627-3183 PW: picpc	9 DELTA INTERGROUP 7 PM 1151 W. Robinhood Dr., Stockton 870-4399-9037 PW: delta	10	11	12 P.I.C.P.C 9AM-11AM 861 8890 4562: PW: PICPC
13	14	15 P.I.C.P.C. BEGINNER'S SERIES 7 PM 860-3627-3183 PW: picpc	16 GSR DISTRICT 37 7 PM 1151 W. Robinhood Dr., Stockton 385-0821-680 PW: 666098	17	18	19
20	21	22 P.I.C.P.C. BEGINNER'S SERIES 7 PM 860-3627-3183 PW: picpc	23 Ad Hoc BYLAWS COMMITTEE 7 PM 870-4399-9037	24	25	26 H & I 10 AM 1151 W. Robinhood Dr., Stockton 833 5105 7501 PW: Area82H&I
27	28	29 P.I.C.P.C. BEGINNER'S SERIES 7 PM 860-3627-3183 PW: picpc	30	31		

TWELVE STEPS CHECKLIST

“Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.”

p.15 Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

We hope this checklist will help the individual to become more aware of the personality changes that take place in our personal growth.

Step Seven

“Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings”

1. From what perspective should I view character and spiritual values?
2. How are honesty, tolerance, and true love of man and God an important basis in my daily living?
3. When do I seek to try to do my Higher Power’s will? When do I rely upon self?
4. Why do I humbly ask Him to remove my shortcomings?
5. Why would I seek humility as a personal virtue; do I think it is necessary? Do I believe humility can bring me serenity?
6. What do I need to do to continually practice staying in God’s grace and not drink?
7. In what areas have I stopped making unreasonable demands on myself and others?
8. When am I able to be tolerant and understanding of other people’s shortcomings and viewpoints?
9. How did Bill W. write this Step in the original manuscript and why was it changed?
10. Am I willing to say to my Higher Power? “Here it is God, all mixed up. I don’t know how to un-mix it. I’ll leave it to you.”

Traditions Checklist

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

Tradition Seven

Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help AA (my group, my central office, my GSO) remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new guy who can’t afford it yet? How generous was I when tanked in a barroom?
2. Should the Grapevine sell advertising space to book publishers and drug companies, so it could make a big profit and become a bigger magazine, in full color, at a cheaper price per copy?
3. If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn’t it be okay to let the government subsidize AA groups in hospitals and prisons?
4. Is it more important to get a big AA collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
5. Is a group treasurer’s report unimportant AA business? How does the treasurer feel about it?
6. How important in my recovery is the feeling of self-respect, rather than the feeling



Name	Sobriety Date	Years	Name	Sobriety Date	Years
Nancy K.	5.24.72	53	Marla M.	9.11.96	28
Sharon R.	8.28.79	45	Cheryl H.	4.25.97	28
June S.	4.13.80	45	Janice J.	1.20.99	26
Marilyn M.	8.3.80	44	Candi G.	6.20.99	26
Daniel R.	2.2.81	44	Howard H.	2.14.01	25
Christine S.	2.21.81	44	Janice B.	8.29.02	22
Mary M.	7.22.81	44	Mari P.	6.24.03	22
Lauretta G.	?.?.81	44	Tony L.	7.18.03	22
Linda C.	1.31.83	42	Douglas S.	11.10.03	21
John P.	6.1.85	40	Monica P.	12.1.03	21
Lyndy W.	7.25.85	40	Fred C.	10.31.05	18
John W.	7.20.85	40	Rafael A.	8.2.06	18
Ojay O.	11.18.85	39	Keith H.	9.13.06	18
Jenise C.	1.1.86	39	Phil G.	1.21.07	18
Arnold V.	4.8.86	39	AJ B.	10.20.07	16
Arch B.	3.7.87	38	Tina L.	11.26.09	15
G. Archer B.	3.7.87	38	Janice G.	10.26.10	14
Sue B.	4.25.87	38	Bob A.	3.31.11	14
Sue P.	11.29.87	37	Taylor E.	1.24.13	12
Lynne R.	2.22.88	37	Pat K.	12.9.14	10
Laurie S.	5.?.?.88	36	Kathy W.	1.11.15	10
Mona A.	2.4.89	35	Crystal L.	3.30.15	10
Joy H.	6.2.90	34	Dezeria F.	8.18.17	7
Jeff K.	2.16.92	32	James M.	7.31.13	2

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

You can PayPal your payment to: deltacentral312@gmail.com

You can now also Venmo to [@Delta-Central](#) or Cash App to [\\$DeltaCentral](#)

July 2025 Group Birthdays

BIG BOOKERS

John W.	40 years
Lyndy W.	40 years
Karen S.	39 years
Ron W.	36 years
Phil H.	13 years

Ozzy	22 years
Tony L.	22 years
Rocky B.	19 years
Farbie	18 years
Sean G.	16 years
Jack M.	16 years
Shelby M.	16 years
Michael D.	15 years

Carl R.	13 years
Juanita B.	13 years
Bobby R.	13 years
Thomas	12 years
Roxanne P.	11 years
Paige M.	11 years
Cory	10 years
Myles	10 years
Kayla T.	10 years
Daniel S.	10 years
Tim	9 years
Ashley M.	9 years
Kris S.	9 years
Leslie G.	9 years
Eric T.	8 years

Linda S.	7 years
Falon S.	7 years
Ashley S.	7 years
Hunter K.	7 years
Cameron A.	7 years
Alexander G.	7 years
Melissa T	6 years
Suzy I.	6 years
Tara E.	6 years
Molly B.	5 years
Terry Lee	5 years
Debra E.	5 years
Christi T.	4 years
Vanessa B.	4 years
Steven K.	3 years
Jennifer M.	3 years
Christine D.	2 years
David M.	2 years
Ann E.	1 year

BILINGUAL GROUP

Felomina G.	34 years
Oliver A.	15 years
Michael D.	14 years
Gary S.	14 years
Martha C.	13 years
Juanita B.	12 years
Rudy Z.	11 years
Jorge S.	9 years
Suzi I.	5 years
Armani P.	5 years
Marty	3 years
Thomas A.	3 years
Trish M.	2 years
Jonte W.	1 year

MAPLE SQUARE

Tony T.	40 years
Leon E.	40 years
Tim E.	36 years
Mark M.	35 years
Rob L.	10 years
Jack J.	8 years
James M.	2 years
Janie A/.	?? years

PERSHING GROUP

Mellavee	55 years
Paula M.	45 years
Mary M	44 years
Adela G.	42 years
Connie R.	42 years
Steven W.	38 years
Kay T.	34 years
Stephen M.	31 years
Bill P.	24 years

Paula M.	47 years
Earl F.	39 years
Steve W.	38 years
Tom A.	18 years
Sean G.	11 years
Michael D	15 years
Bobkat	14 years
Jerimiah M.	10 years
Juanita	10 years
Mark R.	9 years
Mike R.	4 years
Cindi L	4 years
Jennifer M.	3 years
Tyler P.	3 years
Tracie C.	3 years
Desiree E.	3 years
Bobby K.	3 years
Samuel C.	3 years
Steve B.	2 years
Efrem S.	2 years
Joseph B.	1 year

Steve W.	38 years
Melissa D.	27 years
Sean G.	16 years
Michael D.	15 years
Bobby R.	13 years
Juanita B.	13 years
Daniel S.	10 years
Nellie D.	6 years
Cyndi L.	4 years
Nancy M.	4 years
Louis J.	4 years
Bryan S.	3 years
Kelly V.	2 years
Lori O.	2 years
David M.	2 years
Kyle K.	1 year

--

A tall, clear glass filled with a vibrant pink liquid, likely watermelon juice. The glass is packed with several clear ice cubes. A fresh watermelon wedge with a green rind and red flesh is perched on the rim of the glass. A sprig of green mint leaves is also tucked into the drink. The background is a solid, light pink color.

January: Rainbow Fellowship
February: Maple Square
March: Recovery Central
April: Delta Central Office
May: Big Bookers
June: Lodi Solutions
July: SANJYPAA
August: Tracy Fellowship
September: Back To Basics
October: Pershing Fellowship
November: Porter Group

Happy Birthday



Delta Intergroup
Written Financial Report
June 11, 2025

Here is a summary of Income and Expenses for SNL June 7, 2025

<u>INCOME</u>			Rent	\$	85.00
7th Tradition	\$	348.18	Coffee/Supplies/Tickets	\$	59.22
50/50 Drawing	\$	256.00	50/50 Drawing Prize	\$	128.00
Concessions	\$	78.75	Cost of Sales	\$	90.40
Literature Sales	\$	165.51	Square Fees	\$	2.59
TOTAL INCOME	\$	848.44	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	365.21
NET GAIN	\$	483.23			
<u>EXPENSES</u>					

BANK BALANCES 05/31/25

GENERAL ACCOUNT	\$	1,603.48
LITERATURE ACCOUNT	\$	1,833.55
SPECIAL EVENTS	\$	2,080.90
SAVINGS	\$	4,224.99
CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT	\$	5,521.54
COMBINED TOTAL	\$	15,264.46

This is a **\$3,631.75** decrease from last month's balance of **\$18,896.21**. We paid June's rent of \$1,829.00 in May since June 1 fell on a Sunday. We also paid \$510.00 rent for our picnic in October as well as our annual \$199.99 for our Ring alarm system. While our literature sales remained high, our contributions were very low. Lower contributions, despite sporadic "bonus" contributions have shown an increasing weakness over the past six months. I think we will need to expect lower contributions will be the trend for the near future at the least. We also have over \$500.00 unpaid literature bills from one fellowship dating back to January through May, and I have addressed this matter with their General Secretary.

Inventory Sales	\$	2,746.28
Contributions	\$	1,249.89
Fundraising from SNL (May)	\$	277.00
Savings Interest	\$.36
Total	\$	4,273.17

INVENTORY: Our literature inventory is in good shape. I need to fill in a few years of "bling" medallions, but we are otherwise well stocked.

As always, thanks for listening,

Lynne

Contribution Options:

SQUARE: Just reminding everyone that we can now accept contributions from groups and individuals using our Square point-of-sale app for credit/debit cards.

PayPal Account: You can also send contributions through PayPal using our deltacentral312@gmail.com email account. Both of these digital contribution tools are working smoothly.

Venmo: You and your groups can now Venmo donations to [@Delta-Central](#)

Cash App: You and your groups can now Cash App contributions to [\\$DeltaCentral](#)



Delta Intergroup of A.A.
Income/Expense Report
May 2025

INCOME				EXPENSES			
Account	May 2024	May 2025	Year To Date 2025	Account	May 2024	May 2025	Year To Date 2025
GENERAL FUND				GENERAL FUND			
From Saturday Night Live	\$ 204.62	\$ 288.70	\$ 1,838.25	Rent	\$ 1,690.00	\$ 1,829.00	\$ 9,072.00
From 7th Tradition	\$ 3,215.95	\$ 961.19	\$ 7,428.47	Insurance (Annual in May)	\$ 550.00		\$ 1,777.00
From Mid-Summer Picnic			\$ -	Instant Ink			\$ -
From New Year's Day			\$ 376.10	Tracfone Service	\$ 22.06	\$ 21.64	\$ 107.82
			\$ -	Digital Space (Web Domain)	\$ 16.42	\$ 17.73	\$ 84.72
			\$ -	Copy Machine Rental	\$ 279.22	\$ 279.22	\$ 1,397.36
			\$ -	Copy Maintenance (Quarterly)	\$ 185.66		\$ -
			\$ -	Comcast Internet/Phone	\$ 222.28	\$ 321.93	\$ 1,240.95
			\$ -	Zoom (Annual June 20)			\$ -
			\$ -	Office Manager Stipend	\$ 450.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 1,350.00
			\$ -	PI/CPC Pamphlets (Est.)			\$ -
			\$ -	Office Supplies (Deposit Slips)	\$ 161.79		\$ 48.00
			\$ -	Stamps (Taxes Cert. Mail) Stamps		\$ 9.68	\$ 19.36
			\$ -	Tax/Registration Fees/Bank			\$ 50.00
			\$ -	Financial Consultant Tax Prep.)		\$ 512.50	\$ 512.50
			\$ -	BTG Postal Box			\$ -
			\$ -	Stockton Alarm Permit			\$ -
			\$ -		\$ 36.46		\$ -
			\$ -	New Computer (incl. Software)			\$ -
			\$ -	Ring Alarm Monitoring (Annual)	\$ 200.00	\$ 199.99	\$ 199.99
			\$ -	Website Security Certificate (Annual)			\$ -
			\$ -				\$ -
			\$ -	Square Fees (Contributions)	\$ 13.04		\$ 1.06
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 3,420.57	\$ 1,249.89	\$ 9,642.82	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 3,826.93	\$ 3,491.69	\$ 15,860.76
LITERATURE ACCOUNT				LITERATURE ACCOUNT			
From General Sales	\$ 1,766.41	\$ 2,764.65	\$ 8,713.40	Literature	\$ 1,961.68	\$ 648.60	\$ 6,886.90
From Saturday Night Live	\$ 323.50	\$ 138.13	\$ 3,247.92	Medallions	\$ 1,579.25	\$ 566.80	\$ 748.75
From New Year's Day			\$ -	Special Medallions	\$ 1,771.51	\$ 143.00	\$ 2,532.31
From Mid-Year Picnic	\$ 12.00		\$ -	Postage (Mailing Literature)		\$ 40.76	\$ 71.95
Jackson Women's Conf.			\$ -	Franchise Tax board	\$ 707.12		\$ 1,528.00
			\$ -	Bank Fees			\$ -
			\$ -	Accessories			\$ -
			\$ -				\$ -
			\$ -	Square Fees	\$ 52.18	\$ 56.50	\$ 282.65
Total Income	\$ 2,101.91	\$ 2,902.78	\$ 13,707.56	Total Expenses	\$ 6,071.74	\$ 1,455.66	\$ 12,050.56
SPECIAL EVENTS ACCOUNT				SPECIAL EVENTS ACCOUNT			
Saturday Night Live	\$ 265.00	\$ 277.00	\$ 1,559.50	SNL Rent (Quarterly Jan/Apr/Jul/Oct)			\$ 425.00
Mid-Year Event Fundraising			\$ -	Special Events Supplies		\$ 22.93	\$ 931.59
Mid-Year Event Ticket Sales			\$ -	Mid Year Outdoor Event	\$ 94.54	\$ 510.00	\$ 510.00
Mid-Year Picnic			\$ -	New Year's Day (Rent)			\$ 500.00
New Year's Day Brunch			\$ 1,898.00	SNL Supplies	\$ 133.17		\$ 35.49
				Square Fees	\$ -		\$ -
Total Income	\$ 265.00	\$ 277.00	\$ 3,457.50	Total Expenses	\$ 227.71	\$ 532.93	\$ 2,402.08
SAVINGS ACCOUNT				SAVINGS ACCOUNT			
Interest	\$ 0.85	\$ 0.36	\$ 2.69	Bank Fees			\$ -
Total Income	\$ 0.85	\$ 0.36	\$ 2.69	Total Expenses	\$ -		\$ -
CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT				CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT			
Interest			\$ 102.02	Bank Fees	\$ 49.02		
Total Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 102.02	Total Expenses	\$ 49.02		
Total Combined Income	\$ 5,788.33	\$ 4,430.03	\$ 26,566.29	Total Combined Expenses	\$ 10,175.40	\$ 5,480.28	\$ 30,362.42
NET GAIN/LOSS	\$ (4,387.07)	\$ (1,050.25)	\$ (3,796.13)				



Delta Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous
Central Office Contributions Report
January 2025-December 2025
Monthly Log of Donations

Fellowship	May '25	YTD	Fellowship	May '25	YTD
11th Step Meeting & Yoga		\$ -	Lodi Solutions	\$ 270.00	\$ -
Al-Anon		\$ -	Manteca Fellowship		\$ -
Anonymous Estate		\$ -	Maple Square		\$ 499.63
Anonymous Individual	\$ 105.00	\$ 459.00	Mokehume Hill		\$ -
Babes in Recovery		\$ -	Morada Fellowship		\$ -
Back to Basics		\$ 150.00	Murphys Group		\$ 1.00
Big Bookers	\$ 30.00	\$ 202.10	Murphys Women's Group		\$ 113.12
Bilingual Group		\$ -	Once A Month Men's Group		\$ 650.00
Birthday Gratitude		\$ 81.00	P.I./C.P.C.		\$ -
Business Persons Lunch		\$ -	P.I./C.P.C. - Modesto		\$ -
Central Foothill Conference		\$ -	Pershing Fellowship		\$ 154.00
Coffee Break		\$ 15.00	Pine Grove		\$ -
Copper Group		\$ -	Porter Group	\$ 7.00	\$ 110.77
DCO Blue Can	\$ 12.49	\$ 88.49	Primary Purpose (Stockton)	\$ 50.00	\$ 641.56
DCO Business Meeting	\$ 30.00	\$ 107.00	Railroad Flat	\$ 53.40	\$ 98.40
District 30	\$ 75.00	\$ 375.00	Rainbow Fellowship		\$ -
District 33			Recovery Central	\$ 23.77	\$ 535.65
District 37	\$ 20.00	\$ 80.00	Ripon Group		\$ -
Don't Drink Today		\$ -	Ripon Not All Here Yet		\$ -
El Grupo Refugio		\$ -	River Pines Monday	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00
End of the Line		\$ -	S.I.S. (Sisters in Sobriety)		\$ -
Escalon Grapevine		\$ -	Saturday Night Live	\$ 288.70	\$ 1,839.98
Exodus Men's Group		\$ -	Sisters in Sobriety Murphys		\$ -
Fremont Fellowship		\$ -	Soul Sisters		\$ -
Galt Fellowship		\$ 50.00	Surrender to Win		\$ -
Galt Garden Club		\$ -	Sutter Creek Men's Group	*	\$ -
Ground Zero		\$ -	Third Legacy Meeting		\$ -
Grupo Sinceridad		\$ -	Tickets		\$ -
Hand in Hand		\$ -	Tracy Fellowship	\$ 57.53	\$ 485.05
H and I	\$ 200.00	\$ 260.00	Valley Sober Living		\$ -
Jackson Women's Conf		\$ -	Valley Springs Fellowship		\$ 164.26
KISS		\$ -	Valley Springs ODAAT		\$ -
Last Chance House		\$ -	Way Out Fellowship		\$ -
Last Stand		\$ -	West Point AA		\$ 60.00
Lathrop		\$ -	Women's Book Study		\$ -
Living Sober		\$ -	Yosemite Newcomers		\$ 3.00
Lodi Lite		\$ 87.34	Special Events		\$ 120.00
Lodi Primary Purpose	\$ 12.00	\$ 1,512.00	Total This Month	\$ 1,249.89	
TOTAL YEAR-TO-DATE				\$	8,958.35



Delta Central Office
Office Manager's Report
June 11, 2025

SCHEDULES: Sandi L. and Steve N. continue to do a great job keeping both the printed and website schedules up to date.

SCHEDULE CHANGES: Please address all requests for changes to the schedule directly to the webmaster at meetings@aadelta.org. Please remember that schedule changes should be requested by a group's IGR, GSR, or General Secretary only. Also, please be aware that Delta Intergroup can only make changes to our schedule, and that the changes to the Meeting Guide App are not controlled by us. Those changes usually follow our website by 24-48 hours, but they have sometimes taken longer.

NEWSLETTER: Both versions posted to the website Thursday June 5.

FLYERS: Please send your flyers in the form of a PDF or JPEG by the 15th of the month prior to your event. A reminder that all events flyers must identify the event as an AA event, either through spelling out Alcoholics Anonymous, using the AA abbreviation, or the AA circle/triangle logo

NO MORE "RAFFLES": Please make sure that all your members submitting flyers for publication on the website, either through the Events Column or the Newsletter, know that using the term "raffle" is no longer acceptable when referring to 50/50 or basket prize drawings.

SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE: SNL will be hosted by SANJYPAA in July. Please distribute the attached flyer and let people know.

HELPLINE MANUAL: No updates that I know of.

SERVICE POSITION OPENINGS: We need to add Recording Secretary to our list of Service Position Openings. Please distribute the flyers and help us recruit a new RECORDING SECRETARY, TREASURER and ASSISTANT OFFICE MANAGER. Please also continue to spread the word that the Office needs volunteers willing to use their computer skills to handle the daily data entry tasks necessary for us to record purchases, thus accommodating customers and keeping the office open even when I'm not available.

OAK GROVE REGIONAL PARK: I returned the signed permit confirming our October 11th reservation at Oak Grove Regional Park Oaks Pavilion.

COPY MACHINE: The contract has been signed. The contract was modified to include removal and shipping of the old copy machine. This may result in a slightly increased monthly cost (less than \$10) but will save us of large one time charge of around \$500.00.

INVENTORY: Our literature inventory is in good shape. I need to fill in a few years of "bling" medallions, but we are otherwise well stocked.

PHYSICAL INVENTORY: I have already found 4 volunteers (or 2 teams of 2 people each) to conduct the physical inventory on June 27. I will need one more team of 2 and could use one more extra set of fingers and toes.

UNITY DAY 2026 SPEAKER: Jack Grisham from L.A. has agreed to come up to be our speaker for April 2026's Unity Day. He spoke to an embarrassingly small crowd in Tracy at our last Fall Fest, and he was terrific.

That's all for now.

Lynne



DELTA INTERGROUP
OF
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Open Service Position Assistant Office Manager

Qualifications

A recommended minimum 5 years continuous sobriety, and prior experience in a Central Office service structure.

Responsibilities

The Assistant Office Manager shall become familiar with all duties of the Office Manager position as outlined below.

Account for all monies received by the Central Office.
Make deposits, maintain stock of literature and other inventory, guide volunteers, oversee a monthly newsletter, report DCO activities at regular BoD and Intergroup meetings, manage agreements with outside vendors.

Interested?

For more information, or to express your interest, please attend the next Delta Intergroup Meeting on Wednesday,

June 11, 2025 at 7:00 pm

1151 W. Robinhood Dr. Ste B3, Stockton

or

Zoom ID: 831-9927-9187 Pw: delta



DELTA INTERGROUP
OF
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Open Service Position Recording Secretary

Qualifications

A recommended minimum 2 years continuous sobriety, and preferred 1 year of Intergroup experience.

The Recording Secretary shall be elected for a term of 2 years, and shall serve in office for no more than two full terms.

Responsibilities

The Recording Secretary shall record meeting minutes for all meetings of the Intergroup Delegates and the Board of Directors.
(Two meetings per month.)

The Recording Secretary shall maintain all minutes in a single file in the Central Office readily accessible for public inspection.

The Recording Secretary shall read and/or submit copies of minutes of the previous meeting at each Intergroup meeting.

Interested?

For more information, or to express your interest, please attend the next Delta Intergroup Meeting on Wednesday,

July 9, 2025 at 7:00 pm

1151 W. Robinhood Dr. Ste B3, Stockton

or

Zoom ID: 831-9927-9187 Pw: delta



DELTA INTERGROUP
OF
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Open Service Position Treasurer

Qualifications

A recommended minimum 5 years continuous sobriety,
and preferred 1 year of Intergroup experience.

The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of 2 years, and shall serve in office for no more than two full terms. The treasurer shall assist in an advisory capacity to the succeeding treasurer for a minimum of six months.

Responsibilities

The Treasurer is responsible for accounting for all receipts and expenditures and shall maintain Intergroup's accounting system in accordance with good accounting practices.

The Treasurer shall submit monthly detailed reports of income and expenses to the Board of Directors and to the Delegates, including a list of monthly and year-to-date contributions from member groups.

The Treasurer shall annually provide the outside accountant with all the necessary information to file Federal, State, and Registry of Charitable Trust income tax returns..

The treasurer shall ensure that the Central Office files and pays quarterly Sales Tax returns in a timely manner.

Interested?

For more information, or to express your interest, please attend the next Delta Intergroup Meeting on Wednesday,
June 11, 2025 at 7:00 pm

1151 W. Robinhood Dr. Ste B3, Stockton
or
Zoom ID: 831-9927-9187 Pw: delta



Delta Intergroup of
Alcoholics Anonymous
Presents

Saturday Night Live

Join Us For Our Monthly LIVE, IN PERSON
Birthday Celebration
&
Speaker Meeting

Saturday, July 5, 2025

Our Host Group Is
SANJYPAA

Speaker:
TBA

Doors Open at 7:30 pm
Meeting Starts at 8:00 pm

First Presbyterian Church
31 E. Vine Street, Stockton 95203

Parking is off Center Street behind the Church

We will be serving Coffee, Snacks, Water, and Soft Drinks.



RAINBOW FELLOWSHIP

240 N. CALIFORNIA ST STOCKTON CA 95202

July 5th 2025

Meet at Rainbow 8am leaving between 8:30 and 9:00 fishing at Beacon Island off Hwy 4



Fellowship and Fishing

for more info call Larmario (209)910-1253

Pershing Group

Daily reflections

New Meeting Starting July 7, 2025 Mon.-Fri. 7:00 am



In-Person 1049 Rivara Road Stockton



BIG BOOKERS
IN TOWN SPEAKER NIGHT
July 11th 2025 at 7:00 PM

Alex G. from Solutions



440 E KETTLEMAN LANE
LODI, CA



Pershing Group

1049 Rivara Road, Stockton

Speaker Meeting

Ronald P., Jr., 6 years
Stockton



Saturday, July 19, 2025

6 pm Speaker

Hybrid / Zoom

ID: 167 811 008, Password 12345

Big Bookers Monthly Birthday Speaker Meeting

AA



Friday, July 25, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.

Sid from Valley Springs

Join us for an evening of birthday celebrations

440 E Kettleman Lane – Suite C in Lodi



Lei'd at the Lake
Maple Square's 34th Annual Picnic

Saturday July 26th, 2025

At Lodi Lake Ron Williamson Youth Area

(Please park in designated parking spots, no parking allowed
on access road or grass)

10am-1pm: Fellowship and Outdoor Games

(Bring your family, friends and chairs)

1:30-2:20pm: Potluck BBQ

(Bring your favorite side dish or dessert)

2:45pm: Sobriety Countdown

3pm: Speaker Meeting (Don J. 35 Years from Pleasant Hill)

4pm: Gift Basket Drawing



MOTHERLODE AA MEMBERS
OF CNIA District 30

PRESENTS

ANNUAL UNITY DAY 2025

WHEN: AUGUST 9th FROM 12:00-6:00^{ISH}

WHERE: AMERICAN LEGION HALL

11350 American Legion Drive

Jackson, CA

Guest Speaker(s):

- Caroline L from Sacramento Jaywalkers Al-Anon
Group

AA John B From Ladera Ranch (Orange County)

email: lb_reaves@yahoo.com



**BILINGUAL
AA GROUP**

SAT AUGUST 16TH

**35TH ANNUAL
ANNIVERSARY
★ DINNER ★
& SPEAKER**

PATRICIA G. 15 YEARS
from Bilingual Group

**6pm Speaker
5pm Dinner**

50/50 Drawing & Baskets
\$15 DINNER TICKET
Doors open at 4pm

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
31 E VINE ST, STOCKTON CA



 **Bilingual Group**
Cordially invites you to join our

**34th Annual
ANNIVERSARY DINNER
& SPEAKER MEETING**

Grilled Entree & 2 sides
Doors Open 5 pm ★ Dinner 6 pm

7pm Featured Speaker
Joseph I. with 16 Years
from Bilingual Group, Stockton CA

SATURDAY | OAK PARK
AUGUST 24 | MAGPIE PICNIC AREA
2024 | Stockton CA

Dinner Tickets \$15 Contribution ★ Door Prize
50/50 Raffle after Speaker
\$1 EA or 7 Tickets for \$5



The Hand of A.A.

Speakers • Panels • Activities • Free Drawing

Registration Includes:
Continental Breakfast, Lunch & Dessert

Host Hotel: Hampton Inn & Suites Lodi
1337 S. Beckman Road, Lodi CA 95240
(209) 369-2700

Mention Code: **HNT** - Rate: \$165 + taxes/fees
Make reservation by 8/15/2025

Alcoholics Anonymous
19th Annual
**Hand in Hand
Women's Day of Unity**

Saturday, September 13, 2025
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Event Location
Vinewood Community Church
1900 W. Vine Street, Lodi, CA 95242

Speakers:
Claudia T., Bethel Island, CA
Sharon A., Depoe Bay, OR

Pre-Registration through 9/6/2025
\$30 (non-refundable) - \$35 at the door

Mail Checks Payable to Hand In Hand, 2218 Reunion Lane, Rio Vista, CA 94571

For credit card, email HinHTreasurer@gmail.com with full name, phone number, and all guests' names. A secure link will be emailed to you for your payment.

For more information, please contact Ellen M. at (650) 400-7208 or Carole D. at (707) 761-2842

Please fill out completely so that we can include you on next year's mailing list

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Sobriety Date: _____

I would like to be of service at this convention: YES _____ NO _____ Scholarship Donation: \$ _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ *

*List all Guests' Names: _____
(including Email and Sobriety Date)

Limited number of scholarships are available in return for 2-hour service commitment.
Submit advance request to Carole D: HinHTreasurer@gmail.com

Sorry, no children or non-trained service animals allowed at this event



18th Annual Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous
Central Foothill Women's Conference

Love and Tolerance Through the Steps

Saturday October 4th, 2025

8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Main Speaker - Meg B. 17 yrs - Martinez

American Legion Hall
12134 Airport Road
Sutter Creek/Martell, CA

For Information Please Call: Angela G 530-417-1012, Julia F 916-459-0383
Additional Registration Forms @ www.AASacramento.org

Please Fill Out Completely

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____

Please check all that apply:

- ☐ I will attend continental breakfast ☐ I will attend luncheon
☐ I have a dietary need _____
☐ I would like to sponsor a donation of \$ _____
☐ I would like to volunteer at the event this year
☐ I would like to volunteer next year

Julia Fromme
@Julia-Medicus



venmo

Cash/Check/Venmo

Non-Refundable Pre-Registration is \$25.00 and closes September 26, 2025

Registration is \$30.00 at the door

Space is limited - Sorry, no children or animals allowed.

Please make checks payable to CFWC and mail to:
Janet Graham - CFWC PO Box 194 River Pines, CA, 95675

Pre-Register by 9/26/25 to receive: 1 Door Prize Raffle Ticket
Limited number of scholarships available, submit a written request in advance. Call for information.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday Night Live

July 5, 2024

Hosted by SANJYPAA!

Delta Intergroup

**We are in need of An Assistant Office Manager,
a Recording Secretary and a Treasurer.**

**If you are interested, please attend our next
Intergroup Meeting**

Wednesday, July 9 at 7:00 pm

1151 W. Robinhood Drive, B3, Stockton

Or on Zoom

870-4399-9037 PW: delta

ODD'N'ENDS

"To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best day and night to make you like everybody else means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight and never stop fighting."

- E.E. Cummings

"The problem, often not discovered until late in life, is that when you look for things in life like love, meaning, motivation, it implies they are sitting behind a tree or under a rock. The most successful people in life recognize, that in life they create their own love, they manufacture their own meaning, they generate their own motivation.

- Neil de Grasse Tyson

"What has no shadow has no strength to live."

- Czeslaw Milosz

"Alcohol makes other people less tedious, and food less bland, and can help provide what the Greeks called *entheos*, or the slight buzz of inspiration when reading or writing.

- Christopher Hitchens

"You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope."

- Thomas Merton

"I'd take a look at my own self in the mirror and wonder how it was possible that anybody could manage such an enormous thing as being what he was."

- Ken Kesey

"The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek."

- Joseph Campbell

"There is no other way to guard yourself against flattery than by making men understand that telling you the truth will not offend you."

- Machiavelli

"Be careful, lest in casting out your demon you exorcise the best thing in you."

- Nietzsche

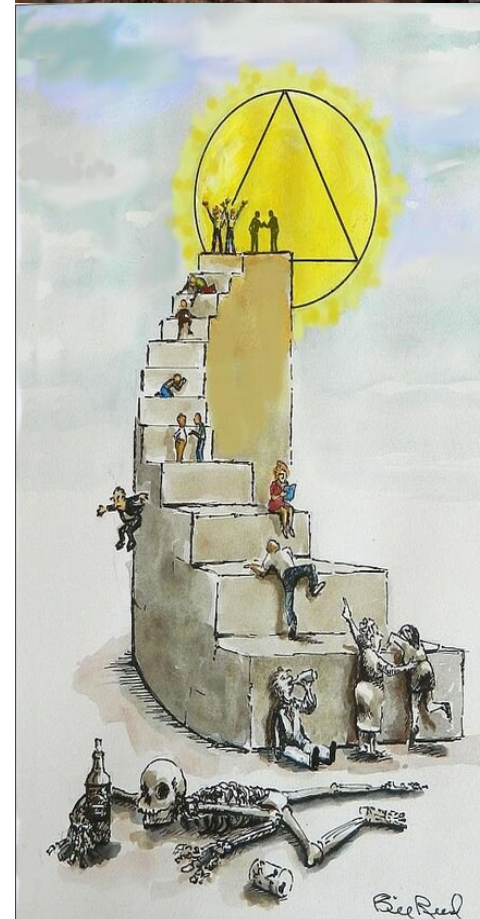
An honest, Sensible humane Man, above all the Littlenesses of Vanity, and Extravagances of Imagination, labouring to do good rather than be rich, to be usefull rather than make a show, living in a modest Simplicity clearly within his Means and free from Debts or Obligations, is really the most respectable Man in Society, makes himself and all about him the most happy."

John Adams

The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised, and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities which would otherwise lay dormant, wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman."

- Abigail Adams

A.A. HUMOR



"A nun I know
once told me she kept
begging God to take her
character defects away
from her.

After years of this pray-
er, God finally got back to
her:

I'm not going to take anything
away from you,
you have to
give it to Me."

- Anne Lamott

The Struggle



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.

*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!

