

MOUNTAIN DOIN'S

Central Office Newsletter

September 1992



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Readers' Forum

LIVE LETTERS

... As We Understand Him

As a young child, I was brought up in a home where I was taught to believe in the kind of God I have again come to believe in. He was a loving and caring God who wanted the best for me. I was not taught, as so many of the fundamentalist traditions teach, to believe in a vengeful God who gave one cancer if he messed up.

When I hit my bottom, I hated God, since I thought He had let me down. Yet, I was told I had to believe in a power greater than myself in order to get sober, since I certainly had not been successful in getting there myself. When I expressed my reluctance to rely on the God of my youth (who I thought had let me down) I was told "no sweat — just believe in 'the God of your understanding.' You can pick an oak tree, an electrical outlet, a light bulb, or anything that turns you on." This caused another problem. Being one of those fortunate people who was not brain dead upon entering A.A., I had to figure out how things like light bulbs could possibly get me sober. I've now been sober by the grace of God (who isn't an oak tree or light bulb) for over five years. I still cannot understand how a light bulb or petunia could get me or anyone else sober.

While I certainly have no argument with anyone who suggests that a fire hydrant or whatever got him sober, I have found only one alternative to "God" suggested in the Big Book and Twelve and Twelve. The oldtimers, recognizing that many newcomers had the same problem I did, suggested using the group as one's Higher Power, and then, only *temporarily*. This was certainly wise advice, since the group has much more collective sobriety than the newcomer. Clearly, they have tapped a power the newcomer hasn't yet discovered. Nobody should have problems with this temporary substitution for the "real thing." The term "as we understand Him" means what we have come to believe about the nature of God, based on our experience in sobriety. This might be somewhat different for different people, based on their individual experience. But God is God, and neither I nor anyone also define him. What I think He is has nothing

to do with what He really is. My job is to try to *discover* Him, not *define* Him.

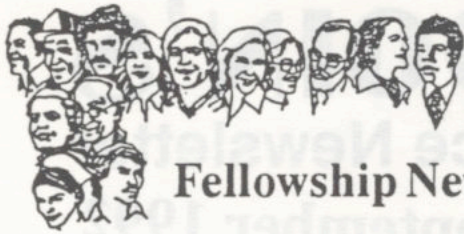
We have a responsibility to newcomers. Let's stop feeding their already hopeless condition by suggesting tire irons, etc., as a "Higher Power." These kinds of suggestions nearly turned me away from A.A., and that would have meant death. The Big Book doesn't assume that alcoholics are stupid and have no ability to reason, and neither should we. —S.T.

A.A. Takes a Beating

I watched a "talk show" on TV the other day and I became all agitated about it. First, there were a couple of guys who said they drank every day and often got drunk — but didn't want to seek A.A. because it wasn't necessary; they could stop drinking any time if they wanted to. Then, there was a single A.A. member who happily said that through A.A. she was able to stay sober and was grateful for the program. She was modest and stayed quiet through the rest of the show. Then, there was the know-it-all talkative big shot who trounced the A.A. program and publicly announced that A.A. people were such swindles that, because they didn't have the guts to stop drinking pretended that they were sick — that alcoholism was a sickness. What a cheap cop-out, he told the audience! And then there was the man who said he tried A.A. but all they talked about was God. "They even pray twice during the meetings," he said. (I suppose he was referring to the serenity prayer at the beginning and the Lord's prayer at the end.)

Yes, I was agitated about it, because there was no one there to explain the truth about A.A. I bet there were people in the audience who were members of our Fellowship. But our policy of anonymity and our Traditions obviously kept them quiet. But personally, I see nothing wrong with having someone quietly explain the truth about the A.A. program and about what is known medically about the disease. If he had his facts right he wouldn't even have to be an A.A. member. Just someone who had studied the program and knew the truth about it. Wouldn't that give some guidance to the suffering alcoholic who might have seen the show?

I think A.A. took a beating on that Phil Donahue show. —TD



Fellowship News

New Meeting. A new meeting begins at 8 p.m. on Saturdays at the Baptist Church on Candler School Road. The meetings are open.

New Meeting. Saturday Night Live – an open Speaker Meeting will be held on Saturdays at Macon County Public Library, Rte.441 – Business, in Franklin.

Hendersonville Midday Group meetings. The Mid-day Group continues to meet at noon Monday through Friday at the Hendersonville First Presbyterian Church. The Group's Saturday noon meetings are now being held at the Trend Center, which is immediately opposite Pardee Hospital on Fleming Street. Enter at rear of Trend Center. All meetings are open, discussion, nonsmoking, and everyone is welcome to attend.

New Group – Up The Creek Group. This newly formed group meets at Bethesda United Methodist Church, 315 Old Haw Creek Road, Asheville, NC 28805. The meetings are held on Tuesdays at 7 p.m., and are closed, nonsmoking, Big Book Study meetings.

New Meeting: (no name supplied) at St. John's Episcopal Church, Jackson Street, Sylva. Time: 6 p.m.

New Meeting. Meetings are now being held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, St. Paul's Road, Edneyville. The new group meets on Sundays at 2.30 p.m. For information, call Jeff at 685-0115.

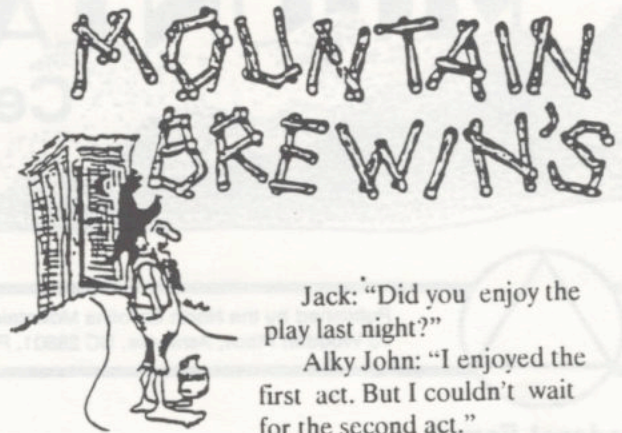
Growing Together Gp. 7 p.m., St. John's Episcopal Ch., 290 Old Haw Creek Rd., Asheville. (No day given.)

Black Mountain Group. The Black Mountain holds a Women's Closed Discussion meeting every Wednesday at noon at St. James Episcopal Church, 417 Vance Avenue in Black Mountain.

Give us a call!

Do you have news of a meeting change, a last-minute birthday notice, a joke, a letter you'd like to see in print but don't care to write? Group news, district news, area news that missed the deadline? Anything you'd like to see published in *Mountain Doin's* but don't have the time to write us about it? Then, call the Editor direct.

Dial (704) 697-6031 and ask for Alan. That's the quickest way of discussing something you'd like to get into the next issue of our newsletter. I'll be looking for your call. Your Editor, Alan.



Jack: "Did you enjoy the play last night?"

Alky John: "I enjoyed the first act. But I couldn't wait for the second act."

Jack: "Why not?"

John: "I couldn't wait that long. I had to get to a bar. The program said that the second act was two years later."

x x x

The old mountain farmer had a number of pigs and decided to increase his stock by buying a prize boar. But he noticed that the boar didn't pay any attention to a single one of the sows.

"Luckily," he told his friend at the bar one evening, "a veterinarian suggested that I mix a special new vitamin pill in the boar's diet. And from that day on he hasn't given those sows a moment's peace."

His drinking buddy asked: "What's the name of those vitamin pills?"

"Dunno," his farmer friend confessed. "But I tell you – they taste just like peppermint!"

x x x

"Did you hear about old alky Pete? He drank some sulphuric acid by mistake."

"Hurt him?"

"No. He said the only thing he noticed was that he made holes in his handkerchief every time he blew his nose."

x x x

Liquor is a substance that makes married men see double and feel single.

x x x

Two drunks were undressing in the locker room after a half-hearted game of racquetball. Alky John was surprised to see his pal Fred slip off a pair of women's panties."

"Say, Fred," asked John, "I don't want to sound personal, but when did you start wearing ladies' underwear?"

Replied Fred, "Ever since my wife found them in my glove compartment."

x x x

Definition: Hangover – the Wrath of Grapes.

N.C. Mountain Central Office July Meeting Minutes

The N.C. Mountain Central Offices (formerly Intergroup of WNC) held its quarterly meeting in Hendersonville, July 26. Owen C. chaired the meeting. The following were in attendance: Bob V., Carolyn O., Norma H., Alan W., Liz D., Margi S., DeAnna W., Mary T., and Owen C.

Financial reports were issued for June and July. Much discussion was made with regard to the phasing out of Intergroup of WNC and the newly designated incorporation of the same, now known as N.C. Mountain Central Office.

Motions were carried to hire necessary tax advisers to acquire our tax-exempt status as a nonprofit organization, in addition to our providing the fee for our Treasurer and Coordinator to attend a course offered in August at A.B. Tech.

Elections were held. Bill G., formerly alternate Chairperson was elected to replace outgoing Chairperson Bill S. Gene M. replaced Bill G. as the new Alternate or Vice Chairperson. DeAnna W. replaced Laura F., as Secretary. Owen C. had replaced Betty L. as Treasurer two months ago.

Our *Mountain Doin's* Editor, Alan W., submitted a sheet for the group to review titled "N.C. Mountain Central Office, Its Mission of Service and Cooperation," an impressive in-depth look at the Central Office's func-

tions, funding and other informative facts. Alan further asked Central Office Reps. to introduce our monthly publication, *Mountain Doin's*, to group members as an additional sobriety tool.

Tabled for later discussion was the postage-rate for *Mountain Doin's* distribution, as well as other *Mountain Doin's* expenses.

Future business meetings of the Central Office will be held on the third Sunday of January, May, July, and October.

The next meeting will be in District 80 in October. The specific location will be announced in *Mountain Doin's*. All Central Office representatives please attend!

Respectfully submitted, DeAnna W., Secretary.



Calendar of Events

26th Annual Roundup of Alcoholics Anonymous, Las Vegas, Nevada. November 26, 27, 28, 29. To be held at the Riviera Hotel. The Round Up will include: Thursday Night Dance; Two Dances on Friday Night; Tennis Tournament; Golf Tournament; Saturday Night Banquet and Live Show; 24-hour hospitality; 24-hour Marathon Meetings. Al-Ateen/Al-Atot Registration is free.

For further information write: The Round-Up Committee, P.O. Box 43177, Las Vegas, Nevada 89116. Or call Riviera Hotel 1-800-634-6753. For further assistance and room reservations call Las Vegas Reservation Systems, 1-800-233-5594.

Michigan's 5th Annual Tri County Conference. To be held October 16, 17, and 18 at the Troy Marriott Hotel, Troy, Michigan. The Conference is entitled "A Vision For You." The conference will include A.A. speakers, Al-Anon speakers, Friday Night Dance, and Saturday night Steak and Scampi Banquet and Dance. Phone: 1-800-777-4096.

For further information and registration forms, write to Tri County Conference, P.O. Box 542, Warren, MI 48090-0542.

Area 51, Committee Meeting. Charleston W. Va, September 19, 20, 1992. Watch this column for further details.

Area 51 Fall General Assembly. Charlotte, November 21, 22, 1992. Watch this column for further details.

South East Regional Forum, Virginia Beach, VA, December 4, 5, and 6, 1992. Watch this column for further details.

Central Office Phone Log



"I am responsible . . .
When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help, I
want the hand of A.A.
always to be there.
And, for that, I am
responsible."

Phone Log 7-6-92 - 7-31-92

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Answering Service Calls | 158 |
| General Information | 15 |
| A.A. Help | 2 |
| Family Help (Al-Anon) | 5 |
| Meeting Information | 65 |
| Intergroup Business | 31 |
| Others | 18 |
| Visitors | 41 |

People will believe anything, provided that
you whisper it to them.

The Spiritual Alibi

Our first attempts at inventories are apt to prove very unrealistic. I used to be a champ at unrealistic self-appraisal. On certain occasions I wanted to look only at the part of my life which seemed good. Then I would greatly exaggerate whatever virtues I supposed I had attained. Next I would congratulate myself on the grand job I was doing in A.A.

Naturally this generated a terrible hankering for still more "accomplishments," and still more approval. I was falling straight back into the pattern of my drinking days. Here were the same old goals — power, fame, and applause. Besides, I had the best alibi known — the spiritual alibi. The fact that I really did have a spiritual objective made this utter nonsense seem perfectly right.

Reprinted from *The Grapevine*

Why Treatment Facilities Turn To A.A.

A.A.s in service frequently encourage professionals to read our literature, attend an open meeting and try to see the Fellowship as we do. But for us, looking from the outside in is sometimes a good exercise, too. To see ourselves as others do can sharpen our perceptions (and our gratitude) and help us to carry the A.A. message a little bit better.

Such an opportunity occurred at the International Convention last year, when Vivian L. Smith, deputy director of the government Office for Substance Abuse Prevention, in Washington, D.C., discussed why many treatment facilities refer clients to A.A. — and also why some do not.

Noting that A.A. has existed several decades longer than treatment as we know it today, Ms. Smith said, "It is generally acknowledged that A.A. has had the most experience, and success, in dealing with alcohol dependence and alcohol-related problems." In fact, she pointed out, "some treatment providers refer patients to A.A. because they consider regular attendance at meetings a yardstick for successful recovery." Conversely, "If patients attend A.A. irregularly, they are considered at risk for relapse."

If treatment facilities are turning increasingly to A.A., she said, it is "because it works." And she set forth some of the reasons as follows:

- "The fellowship offers a microcosm of a nondrinking society where social norms and mores promote abstinence. This is perhaps the most complex and rich aspect of A.A. The program helps to break the social

isolation that is characteristic of many alcoholics; members are always willing to help each other and are always available.

- "The opportunity to bond with a group is considered by many to be integral to the entire recovery process. Group cohesiveness offers a number of beneficial curative factors including universality (not being alone in pain); reliving family experiences correctively; and venting pent-up emotions.

- "Sponsorship is another A.A. staple. Because they have lived the pain firsthand, sponsors can pass practical, focused, grounded traditions on to a recovering alcoholic when treatment has failed or ended.

- "The Twelve Steps provide an easy way to understand spirituality. The First Step is to admit powerlessness over alcohol. Recognizing one's own imperfections is a basic step in creating any kind of spiritual life. Yet A.A. does not advocate self-condemnation. Instead, it facilitates seeing a greater purpose to one's life through attesting to a higher power. This belief manifests itself in the way A.A. members support each other — a practice of altruistic behavior through which the members help others . . . and themselves.

- "A.A. is free. It does not require a licensed/certified professional staff or an accredited faculty in treatment. It is there for an individual once the insurance has run out."

On the down side, Ms. Smith suggests that "treatment providers who do not turn to A.A. stress that its efficacy is impossible to evaluate because there are no scientific criteria for success." Additionally, "some providers believe that for certain groups with overwhelming social and economic problems, A.A.'s promise of sobriety is not enough. This is especially true of some minority groups."

But on balance, she concludes, "treatment cannot compete with A.A. for the all-around intensity of experience. Indeed, some consider treatment the pre-race pep talk — and A.A. the lifelong support system."

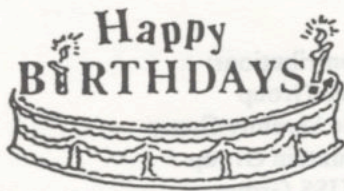
Source: Box 4-5-9

People who keep coming to meetings find out what happens to people who keep coming to meetings.

North Carolina Mountain Central Office Comments from the Treasurer

In the Treasurer's Report for July (page 6) you will see a net loss for the month. We placed large orders for literature for the month to increase our stock for the "New Organization." Future months will not show that large a loss if contributions and sales continue as they have been.

You will also notice that there is less money in the Reserve Account. We took money out of the savings account to open new accounts for the new organization.



Black Mountain Group

| | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| David C. | 9-8-84 | 8 years |
| Jim L. | 9-15-79 | 13 years |

Clyde Group

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| Ken T. | 8-23-90 | 2 years |
| Judy H. | 5-8-89 | 3 years |
| Dana H. | 12-7-91 | 1 year |

Cumberland Group

| | | |
|--------|--------|---------|
| Bob R. | 9-7-83 | 9 years |
|--------|--------|---------|

Hendersonville Group

| | | |
|------------|---------|----------|
| George W. | 9-13-82 | 10 years |
| Louise F. | 9-11-82 | 10 years |
| Cynthia E. | 9-11-90 | 2 years |

Lake Group

| | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| Jack | 8-15-91 | 1 year |
| Ralph N. | 8-25-77 | 14 years |
| Ralph | 8-27-91 | 1 year |
| Pat C. | 9-9-91 | 1 year |

Midday Group

| | | |
|-------------|---------|----------|
| Allan H. | 9-2-90 | 1 years |
| Beth H. | 9-16-85 | 7 years |
| Maija G. | 9-4-87 | 5 years |
| Keith S. | 9-18-77 | 15 years |
| Ella Mae J. | 9-23-87 | 5 years |

This month's Treasurer's Report includes that money, but it is distributed over two checking accounts and two savings accounts. The checking account we opened has reduced monthly service charges if we keep to the minimum \$500 daily balance in the checking account. As low as interest on savings accounts is, we save by keeping that \$500 in the checking account rather than the savings account.

We begin in August, operating as the new organization – North Carolina Mountain Central Office, Inc. We have been busy getting ready for that event. We attended an IRS Tax workshop for Businesses to learn what to do. We have spent several hours preparing forms for the State and Federal government to get tax numbers and applying for the exemption as a not-for-profit corporation and we have many hours yet to spend. We have had a lot of frustrations but we learned a lot and we see the "light at the end of the tunnel."

We have talked to other Intergroups/Central Offices in North Carolina to ask how they did some of the things we didn't understand and they helped, and we appreciate it. Some of you folks in the A.A. groups in WNC have been asked to help us get through the many, many complicated tax forms we have had to prepare and you have been a great help. Thanks; you know who you are.

To help you understand the problems we have faced, to apply to the Federal government to qualify as a tax exempt corporation, their form 1023, on page 1, states that it takes about 70 hours to research the data and fill in the form. A lot of good the paperwork reduction act did! And we must pay \$300 to submit the form to pay them to process it. Their approval is tentative and is not fully approved for three years.

But meanwhile, we must operate as though it is approved. If something happens and it is not approved, we will need to go back and pay back Federal and State unemployment tax on the money we pay our coordinators. We are still working on that form, so we haven't submitted it yet. We want to be real careful in filling it out.

Your trusted servant,
Owen C.

Guilt

The important thing is to first make sure who is really guilty. If you are given a feeling of guilt by someone who blames you for something, it could be that they are the ones who really feel guilty and are trying to put the guilt on you.

Mountain Doin's is published monthly as an informational service to all A.A. members in Western North Carolina Districts 70, 71 and 80. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. nor does publication of any feature imply endorsement by A.A. or by the N.C. Mountain Central Office. Material reprinted from A.A. World Services, Incorporated, or from *The Grapevine* is published with permission.

Treasurer's Report



N.C. Mountain Central Office, Inc.
Financial Report for month of July, 1992

Income

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Group contributions | \$965.26 |
| Individual contributions | 100.00 |
| Sales | 893.70 |
| Mountain Doin's subscriptions | 25.00 |
| Other income | 0.00 |
| Total income | \$1983.96 |

Expenses

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Rent | \$97.00 |
| Telephone | |
| Basic Service (Sou. Bell) | 67.12 |
| Toll Free Number (ATT) | 57.67 |
| Answering Service | 73.20 |
| Special workers | 550.50 |
| Cost of Mountain Doin's | |
| Publication and Distribution* | 278.00 |
| Cost of Literature and Chips Sales** | 891.96 |
| Postage | 16.50 |
| Other Expenses*** | 0.00 |
| Total Expenses | \$2,031.95 |

Net Loss (\$47.99)

Operating Account

Opening Balance \$340.50

* Includes Publishing costs and Editor's services. Does not include Coordinator's salary.

** Includes costs and purchase of Literature and Chips, does not include Postage or Coordinator's salary.

***Includes Office supplies and Bank Service charges. Any operation resulting in a minus will be enclosed in parenthesis.

Net Loss (\$47.99)
Transferred from Reserve 900.00

Closing Balance \$1,192.51

Reserve Account

Opening Balance \$1,954.63
Transferred to Operating Account (\$900.00)

Interest 0.00

Closing Balance \$1054.63

Income

Individual Contributions
Curry W. \$100.00

Sales \$893.70

Group Contributions:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Acceptance Group | \$60.00 |
| Bakersville Serenity Group | 33.36 |
| Black Mountain Group | 350.00 |
| Candler KISS Group | 15.00 |
| Clyde Sunday Night Group | 35.00 |
| Conscious Contact Group | 100.00 |
| Day By Day Group | 45.00 |
| Franklin Group | 30.00 |
| Hendersonville Group | 174.15 |
| Hendersonville Happy Hour Group | 50.00 |
| Hendersonville Midday Group | 100.00 |
| Lake Group | 75.00 |
| Marion Prison Group | 13.25 |
| Mars Hill Group | 25.00 |
| Marshall Group | 25.00 |
| New Horizons Group | 50.00 |
| Pathfinders Group | 5.00 |
| Ridgerunners Group | 35.00 |
| Saluda Happy Hour Group | 6.00 |
| Thursday Afternoon Ladies Group | 50.00 |
| West Asheville Group | 35.00 |

Total Group Contributions \$965.26

MOUNTAIN DOIN'S ORDER FORM

Mountain Doin's Annual Subscriptions

AA Groups

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 3 copies | No charge |
| 5 Additional copies | \$7.80 per year |
| 10 Additional copies | \$15.00 per year |
| 15 Additional copies. | \$19.80 per year |

Name _____

Group Reg. No. _____

Street/PO Box No. _____

Individual Members

Single copy \$10.00 per year

Town and Zip _____

Please circle which of the above you wish to receive and make out check or money order accordingly. Subscription rates are subject to change, dependent upon USPS rates.

Clip and mail with check or Money Order to:

N.C. Mountain Central Office
107 Park Place Offices
70 Woodfin Place
Asheville NC 28801