

Sobriety Letter Wants to Hear From You

SOBRIETY VARIETY PAGES WANTS TO RECEIVE LETTERS, ARTICLES, and essays about recovery in Austin written by readers. The principal kind (but not the only kind) of content we seek is:

- (1) A history of your home group (about 225 words more or less). In most cases, we will take a photograph of the venue (without showing any A.A. members) to accompany your article;
- (2) Articles of any length in which you share your experience, strength, and hope. Please be aware that economical writing is preferred because it is better able to be fitted to our limited space; and
- (3) Well-reasoned commentary about controversial or previous content in *Sobriety Variety Pages* concerning issues in our Fellowship.

The best way to prepare for tendering an editorial submission to our newsletter is to read us attentively month after month.

The editorial process we will rely on in preparing your article for publication in *Sobriety Variety Pages* is designed to avoid embarrassing you in any way or violating A.A.'s Traditions. Above all, the editor will do his best to correct any such lapses while hewing to your intended message. The editor may also soften slang or idiosyncratic usage so it comports with *Sobriety Variety Pages'* style. On the other hand, that lively language we hear in A.A. — especially Texas A.A. — will be retained for its effectiveness at speaking to A.A.s hereabouts.

You can help us by sending your article as e-mail text in-line in message format at austinaa@austin.rr.com with any personal message you care to add. Also please be sure to include a phone number so we can reach you if we have a question.

We would also be immensely assisted if authorship of your submission is identified according to the following guidelines: the writer's first name (or nickname, but no blog or chatroom names) and last initial followed by the identifier that is most specific and appropriate: trusted servant title, home group, preferred group, neighborhood or city (if other than Austin).

Examples: Jennifer S., South Austin; Bill B., XYZ Group; Tattoo Mike, New Orleans. Any requests that we *not* publish the author's name should be stated in your e-mail.

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Lamar Square Drive,
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512-444-0071
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information go to
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letters, or news for
publication, use
[mailto:austinaa@
austin.rr.com](mailto:austinaa@austin.rr.com)

Hill Country Intergroup
wishes to thank all who
give so much of their
time, effort, and personal
resources that the vital
services we offer
continue and grow.

How A.A.s Coped With Hugo's Aftermath

IT IS HARD FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T EXPERIENCED IT to imagine how clever we A.A.s must be to cope with a catastrophic breakdown of infrastructure and services following a hurricane. Although New Orleans is the only American city in which I've *never* been drunk, I want to carry the reader in a moment to a different city after a different hurricane.

But first, the eleven months my wife and I lived in New Orleans when we were newly married were our first great adventure in sobriety. I knew New Orleans was going to be a gas when we drove out to the shotgun house we rented in the Black Pearl neighborhood and noticed that the cross streets were named for Napoleon's victories in order!

Then, there were those famous New Orleans coffees. One day I was invited after an A.A. meeting to the home of a New Orleans native for a cup of coffee. He told me to get the jug out of the refrigerator and pour myself a cup. I nearly topped my cup up and got ready to add a little milk as I always do. My new friend stopped me.

"I think you'll want to take less coffee and use more milk," he said.

He was right. It turns out he used an old New Orleans method to make coffee. It was brewed slowly triple- or quadruple-strong in quantity and then refrigerated. It was mixed with an equal part milk and then heated in a microwave or on the stovetop. Wow, was it strong!

Now, to Isle of Palms, South Carolina, and September 1989 — we had moved there after New Orleans. We took a house on the ocean. Literally, the first question I asked the first group of islanders I met was "When was the last time you evacuated for a hurricane?" They all laughed.

We hadn't lived there long when Hurricane Hugo struck. Perhaps you remember the widely-disseminated photo of our Ben Sawyer Bridge up-ended in the sound, preventing the return of the inhabitants to the island for almost a month. Isle of Palms is an affluent beachfront, yet even there the island had only 24 per cent as many residents two years after the hurricane as before. That should be instructive for those hoping a poor city like New Orleans will return to normal anytime soon.

Our regular Friday A.A. meeting across the bridge on Sullivan's Island was in a church. After the hurricane, the only sign of the church that remained was its slab. Two ladies who lived within 300 feet of each other on Sullivan's Island attended that meeting often. Later we learned that one of them never found anything she had owned before the hurricane, yet the other's house was undamaged.

Because the phones didn't work for weeks, all I could do was make my way to the meetings I knew about in hopes they were still being held. Often, they weren't. Sometimes, I came across someone I knew was in A.A. on the street; we always asked each other the same question:

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NOAA Photo

The Ben Sawyer Bridge to Isle of Palms, S.C., after Hurricane Hugo.

How A.A.s Coped With Hugo's Aftermath

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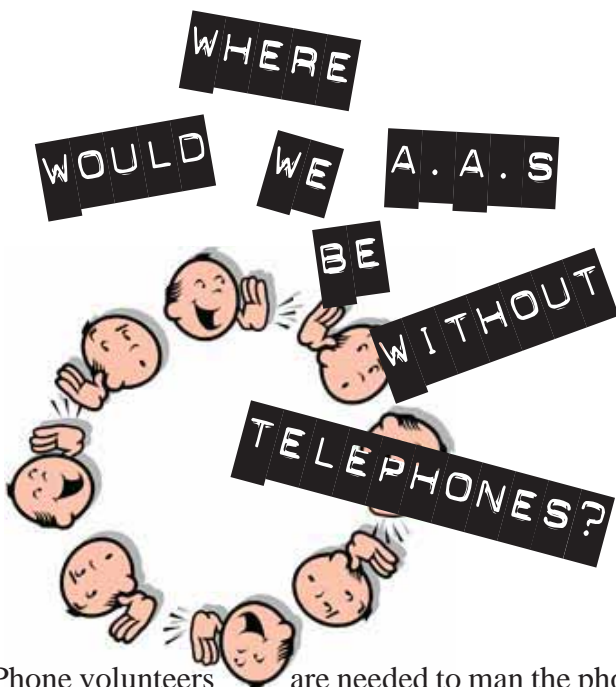
"Where are you going to meetings nowadays?"

One such encounter led me to a meeting in a church basement that I'd not attended before. But I was forewarned: the meeting was held by candlelight, there was no coffeepot, and the room was covered in pluff-mud, that gooey, stinky, slippery, fetid, clingy deposit that accumulates everywhere after floodwaters have receded. You had to be careful not to go ass-over-teacup just walking to your chair in that meeting!

Eventually, the Carolina lowcountry returned to normal and we A.A.s there had earned the right to be proud of the lengths we'd gone to in order to stay sober. I have no doubt many of the A.A.s of New Orleans will muster the same resourcefulness as they fan out from that quirky, wonderful, suffering city. Please pray for them. *Evan W., Cat Mountain*

The Tradition for September is the Ninth:

A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.



Phone volunteers are needed to man the phone desk at Intergroup, refer callers to the Twelfth Step call list, and take phone calls at home for the answering service. All positions require a minimum of six months of continuous sobriety and that you have taken all of A.A.'s 12 steps, be familiar with Chapter Seven of the Big Book, and be willing to commit for a year. If you're interested in these opportunities for service, grab a phone and call Clint Ritter at Intergroup: 512-444-0071.

New Women's Step Study

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Thursdays from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. at 15705 Foxboro Ct. Take 620 toward Round Rock; left at Cornerwood Dr.; left on Monona Ave.; left on Foxboro Court; go to the third house on left.

Meetings at Intergroup

First Monday at 7 p.m.:

Treatment Facilities
Committee and Correctional
Facilities Committee

Second Monday at 6:30
p.m.:

Intergroup Representatives

Second Saturday at 2 p.m.:
Grapevine Committee

Third Thursday at 6:30 p.m.:
Board of Trustees

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Hill Country Intergroup Birthday Club Members for August 05

Steve B. – Turning Point
Rick G. – Our Gang

Interested in service work but don't know where to begin?

Speakers tell how service helped their sobriety

Saturday, September 17
2:00 to 4:30 p.m.

YMCA Town Lake
Board Meeting Room
1100 West Cesar
Chavez Street, Austin

For more information:
Randy R. 797-2986
Rick G. 912-1725
B.J. 627-7235
Karyn D. 657-9115



Which A.A. Slogan Is Your Favorite?

ONE OF THE NEW THINGS WE ENCOUNTER WHEN WE FIRST come into A.A. is the Fellowship's reliance on simple (some say simple-minded) slogans. In the beginning, we find them decidedly quaint, excruciatingly obvious, genuinely annoying, or unendurably cutesy. Inevitably, however, we find ourselves repeating them when we share at first step meetings. Which slogan is your favorite or was most helpful during your early recovery? Why? Does another slogan still annoy you? Why?

A drunk is a sick person trying to get well, not a bad person trying to be good.

Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today; I find that when I am disturbed, it is because something within me is unacceptable to me.

Alcoholism is the only disease that tries to convince you that you don't have it.

Call your sponsor before you pick up that first drink.

Cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

Cunning, baffling, powerful — and patient.

Do the next right thing.

Don't drink and go to meetings.

Don't give up before the miracle happens.

Everything happens for a reason.

Faith without works is dead.

Fake it 'til you make it.

Get to the meeting early and stay for the meeting-after-the-meeting.

God speaks through other people.

God won't close one door without opening another

Half measures availed us nothing.

Happy, joyous and free.

Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less.

I came; I came to; I came to believe.

I may have another drunk in me but I'm not sure I have another recovery in me.

If you wonder whether you're an alcoholic, you probably are one.

I'm where I'm supposed to be, doing what I'm supposed to be doing.

Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again — and expecting different results.



continued on [next page](#)

August Volunteers at Intergroup — Office: Roland P, Marty C., Monica , Lynn W., Ned, Dennis P. (Pete), Gene C., Ian M., Jorge V., Craig W., Leslie Ann D., Tom P., John B., Herb, Kirk N., Robert G., Nancy N., and Charlie F. **Hotline:** Danny and Tonya, Patrick C., Ed B., Mark L., Beth W., Jamie D., Ian M., Michael R., Jeff P., Christa D., Chris W., Jeremy B., Laney B., Randy R., Darrius P., Bruce K., Joe B., Shelley C., Leslie Ann D., Sharon T., Tom B., BOSCO, Janet F., Lathy L., Kelly F., Paige J., Nancy N., Richard D., Connie and Mike, Barry F., Dana B. , Pete, Jeff K., John G., Laurie W., and Pam F.

-Or, Is There a Slogan That Still Annoys You?

continued from [previous page](#)

It gets better.

Just for today.

Keep coming back. It works if you work it.



Keep it simple.

Let go and let God.

Life on life's terms.

My worst day sober is better than my best day drunk was.

Neither regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

Ninety meetings in ninety days.

No one came to these rooms to sell Avon.

One drink is too many and a thousand is never enough.

One day at a time.



Poor me. Pour me. Pour me another.

Progress, not perfection.

Resentment is like letting someone live rent-free in your head.

Sobriety is not for people who need it but for people who want it.

Some are sicker than others.

Steps one, two and three: I can't, God can. I think I'll let Him.

The easier, softer way is one through twelve.

Your mind is like a parachute, it works better when it's open.



This too shall pass.

Trust God.

Turn it over.

Two things you have to do to become an old-timer: don't drink and don't die.

We have to give it away to keep it.

We'll love you until you learn to love yourself.

We're all here because we aren't all there.

We're only as sick as our secrets.

We're not human beings sharing a spiritual experience; we're spiritual beings sharing the human experience.

You can always tell an alcoholic but you can't tell him much.

You can't think your way to a new way of living; you have to live your way to a new way of thinking.

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Join the Hill Country Intergroup Birthday Club

Send this information accompanied by the suggested donation of \$1 for each year of sobriety to Intergroup at 1339 Lamar Square Drive, Austin 78704

Name _____

Address _____

Sobriety date _____

Year _____

Home Group _____

Donor (if a gift)

All donations go to Intergroup services. You will receive a Clubmember card and be listed opposite in your birthday month.

August Donations From Area A.A. Groups: North Austin 24 Hour Group - \$50; Suburban Group - \$10; Bridge to Shore Group - \$545; Round Rock Big Book Group - \$16; Emmaus Group - \$50; Buda Big Book Group - \$29; Living Faith Group - \$70; Lost Pines Group (Bastrop) - \$126; Keep First Things First Group - \$226; Thursday Men's Group (Round Rock) - \$60; Hope Group (Cedar Park) \$136; Allandale Group \$40; Into Action Group (Lockhart) \$30; Women's Recovery Group - \$113; Central Group - \$48; Dry Creek Group - \$50; Hilltop Group - \$300; and Unity Group - \$13.

6 ¿Cómo funciona A.A.?

RARA VEZ SE HA VISTO FRACASAR A UNA PERSONA QUE haya seguido cuidadosamente el Programa de Recuperación de Alcohólicos Anónimos. Los que no se recuperan son aquellas personas que no pueden o no quieren entregarse totalmente a este sencillo Programa.

Las experiencias de los miembros de A.A. explican de modo general, cómo eran, lo que les ocurrió y cómo son ahora, tras haber dado ciertos pasos en la aplicación del Programa de Recuperación.

A pesar de haber puesto cierta resistencia a algunos de estos pasos, de creer que tenía que haber un camino más fácil y cómodo, se dieron cuenta de que el resultado fue nulo, hasta que se entregaron al Programa sin reservas.

A menudo se justifica la no aceptación del Programa por tener pasos, que se refieren a Dios, cuando en el enunciado de nuestra Comunidad se dice que no está afiliada a ninguna religión y que cualquiera puede ser miembro de A.A. independientemente de su creencia religiosa o de la falta de ella.

No es más que una autojustificación. La prueba evidente de ello es que el Programa funciona con los mismos términos en lugares muy diversos del mundo, con creencias religiosas diferentes de unos países a otros.

Casi todos los miembros que piensan así, al poco tiempo se dan cuenta de que se refiere a un Poder Superior a sí mismo, y que cada uno lo debe de tomar como mejor le convenga para unos es la reunión de A.A. para otros el Programa; para otros el Dios de su religión; lo principal es que el concepto funcione. Algunos miembros dicen que «los prejuicios, en ocasiones, son más dañinos que el propio alcohol» y que «para que no hagan demasiado daño, es necesario una mente abierta y libre de ellos».

El primer legado de recuperación es Los Doce Pasos::

1. Admitimos que éramos impotentes ante el alcohol; que nuestras vidas se habían vuelto ingobernables. >>>

<<<

2. Llegamos a creer que un Poder superior a nosotros mismos podría devolvernos el sano juicio.
3. Decidimos poner nuestras voluntades y nuestras vidas al cuidado de Dios, tal como lo concebimos.
4. Sin miedo hicimos un minucioso inventario moral de nosotros mismos.
5. Admitimos ante Dios, ante nosotros mismos y ante otro ser humano, la naturaleza exacta de nuestros defectos.
6. Estuvimos enteramente dispuestos a dejar que Dios nos liberase de todos estos defectos de carácter.
7. Humildemente Le pedimos que nos liberase de nuestros defectos.
8. Hicimos una lista de todas aquellas personas a quienes habíamos ofendido y estuvimos dispuestos a reparar el daño que les causamos.
9. Reparamos directamente a cuantos nos fue posible el daño causado, excepto cuando el hacerlo implicaba perjuicio para ellos o para otros.
10. Continuamos haciendo nuestro inventario personal y cuando nos equivocábamos lo admitíamos inmediatamente.
11. Buscamos, a través de la oración y la meditación mejorar nuestro contacto consciente con Dios, tal como lo concebimos ,pidiéndole solamente que nos dejase conocer su voluntad para con nosotros y nos diese la fortaleza para cumplirla.
12. Habiendo obtenido un despertar espiritual como resultado de estos Pasos, tratamos de llevar este mensaje a los alcohólicos y de practicar estos principios en todos nuestros asuntos.

¿Cómo
fun-
ciona
A.A.?

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and to help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.



Alcohólicos Anónimos es una comunidad de hombres y mujeres que comparten su mutua experiencia, fortaleza y esperanza para resolver su problema común y ayudar a otros a recuperarse del alcoholismo. El único requisito para ser miembro de A.A. es el deseo de dejar la bebida.

Para ser miembro de A.A. no se pagan honorarios ni cuotas; nos mantenemos con nuestras propias contribuciones. A.A. no está afiliada a ninguna secta, religión, partido político, organización o institución alguna; no desea intervenir en controversias; no respalda ni se opone a ninguna causa. Nuestro objetivo primordial es mantenernos sobrios y ayudar a otros alcohólicos a alcanzar el estado de sobriedad.

Area Group Histories: Second in a Series



No, there wasn't a brawl in Taqueria Jefes on Lamar Boulevard last night. Owners converted the back room in which they permit the Our Gang A.A. Group to meet Saturday mornings into a pool room. The group's meeting schedule has not been disrupted. Some members claim the beer signs and atmosphere make them feel at home.

Our Gang Formed to Fill Saturday Void

DIFFICULTY FINDING A CONVENIENT MEETING EARLY on Saturday mornings prompted discussion of establishing the Our Gang open meeting late in 2003. The venue was easily decided on: Taqueria Jefes at 720 Lamar Place (in the 6300 block of North Lamar Boulevard) was already a favorite breakfast place frequented by many of the new group's members.

Jefes' management agreed to make the back room available and provide coffee. By the time the meeting actually began, the room also had been transformed at other times into Jefes Family Pool Hall. Some members have opined that the *cerveza* signs and pool table made some of the ex-drunks feel especially at home!

The first meeting, on January 10, 2004, drew 15 — although by now, people from perhaps 50 different home groups have passed through Our Gang's doors on an occasional basis. Attendance is usually about 40 per cent women, the ages range from twentysomethings to seniors, and length of sobriety stretches from the newcomer to 35 years with an average of about ten years.

On Saturday, January 15, 2005, Our Gang held a first anniversary party.

Our Gang meetings start at 8:30 a.m. Come, Join Us!

—Mike S. and Kirk K. contributed to this article