

# Horror, Harvest, and Harmony October-November 2021

## Pass it on

From the Birmingham Intergroup Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous



Horror of Alcoholism, Harvest from the Steps, Holiday Harmony

### *Voices of Women in AA* Book Review by Liz R.

Though women have been deeply involved in Alcoholics Anonymous since the very beginning, most of their work was in supporting roles. Women made the coffee as they baked cakes and cookies to serve men who attended AA. AL ANON began as groups of women stayed in the kitchen and talked about how alcoholism affected theirs and their children's lives. Women who came to AA to stop drinking were something of a rarity and many were treated with indifference. Eventually, women came and stayed, claimed their seats in meetings, and though often in the very back rows, they came to stay.

*Voices of Women in AA* delivers stories of experience, strength and hope from thousands of pieces submitted by women and accepted for publication by the *Grapevine* staff. All stories published in the *Grapevine* have been reviewed by the General Service Board of AA, Inc.

These voices relate sad tales, happy memories, and dangerous brushes with disaster, along with struggles coping with early sobriety, lessons in working with other women to achieve sobriety, and ways to come back to AA after relapse.

(Continues, page 2)

**Step Ten:** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

**Tradition Ten:** Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never to be drawn into public controversy.

**Step 11:** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will and the power to carry that out.

**Tradition 11:** *Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.*

(*Voices*, continued from page 1)

They are sometimes funny, sometimes tragic, oftentimes a mixture of sad and happy. Mostly, these stories are triumphant, excellent reminders of staying the course in sobriety. Others' stories remind us not to take ourselves so seriously, remind us how vital it is to help others and how vital to help ourselves by reaching out to other women in AA.

*Grapevine* has compiled stories submitted by AAs all over the US and Canada. Entries are collected in common interest groups and cover the gamut in each area. *Voices of Women in AA* focuses, naturally, on the experiences, strengths, and hopes of the female species in her search for sobriety.

**Other books appeal to different segments** of the AA population: *Young & Sober*, *Emotional Sobriety*, *Happy*, *Sober & Out*, *In the Military*, etc. Still others focus on the comedy in AA (we are not a glum lot). Their Tables of Contents look like recipe books for laughter. *Happy, Joyous & Free* covers the "lighter side of sobriety" without which we might all want to check out some days. The stories are good for a laugh or three.

**These *Grapevine* compilations make great gifts** for people in AA and Al Anon. The entries in all books are short, easy reading and a good pick-me-up before or after a long day. The books are 5"x 8" and easily tossed in a purse or briefcase.

**Birmingham Intergroup Central Office**, 242 West Valley Avenue, Suite 211 in Homewood, carries these *Grapevine* Publications, most versions of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Daily Reflections*, and other volumes helpful to anyone's sobriety. Many books are also available in Spanish. The Central Office is open Tuesdays through Thursdays - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The phone number is 205 290-0060 if you want to call ahead to be sure the office is open and a volunteer is on duty.



Happy Harvest: Gifts of the Twelve Steps

# Save THE Date

**Away Conference:** (Alabama Women AA Yeah!)  
Saturday, November 6 at Our Lady of the Valley, Hwy. 119,  
Hoover. Go to [www.awaay.org](http://www.awaay.org) for details.

**Help PI/CPC with the Alabama Counseling Association!**  
November 16—19 at the Sheraton in Birmingham. Contact  
[Mary G.](mailto:Mary G.) for information.



**6th Southern States Alcoholics Anonymous  
Service Assembly  
November 19-21, 2021**

**Meeting Virtually this Year.**

Register Online at [www.SSAASA6.com](http://www.SSAASA6.com)

**For more information:**

Email JoAnn B. registrar: [SSAASA6@gmail.com](mailto:SSAASA6@gmail.com); Annie C.  
[A15GS@bellsouth.net](mailto:A15GS@bellsouth.net); or David G. [SSAASA6cochair@gmail.com](mailto:SSAASA6cochair@gmail.com).

## **SHOPPING FOR CHRISTMAS?**

It's always fun to find little out-of-the-way shops that offer different merchandise than big box stores. Looking for gifts for sponsors, sponsees? **Look no further than AA Birmingham's Intergroup Central Office** for a great selection of AA-inspired books and trinkets. Books in English and Spanish come in many colors and shapes, from the Big Book & 12&12 in several different sizes (large print, shirt-pocket, and standard), to a nice selection of *Grapevine* Books for sponsees or sponsors.



**Remember this side  
of the triangle!**

## **Opportunities for Volunteers**

**BICO Board of Directors:** See resume snapshot on page. The group needs at least two more resumes and an accountant. It would be nice if applicants could bring business experience.

**Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community (PI/CPC):** The group meets on Zoom. Contact Mary G. ([maryguthrie@aol.com](mailto:maryguthrie@aol.com))

**Treatment Accessibility Corrections:** Fellowship House and Bradford have openings. The committee is meeting in person for now. See District News and contact Dave A. for more information ([ayshzikukot@aol.com](mailto:ayshzikukot@aol.com))



It's A Choice  
BY Dan V.

My wife recently spoke to my sister when my sister was trying to get her husband into rehab. My wife told her that just because *I* couldn't drink, that didn't mean that *she* couldn't – after all, she not only didn't abuse it like I did, but she's never even been drunk! I suddenly found myself correcting her: it's *not* that I *can't* drink – it's that I *choose not* to drink. And therein, it strikes me now, seems to lie a paradox.

At the beginning of our journey back to sobriety and sanity, we “admitted that we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.” Or for me, as a “functional alcoholic” – i.e., I was paying the bills and doing the daily stuff – it was more that I had lost *control* of my life by losing control over my drinking. The *Big Book* says,

*The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink... We are without defense against the first drink. (24)*

Then, I “came to believe that a Power greater than” myself could restore me to sanity. Heck, I would even say **ONLY** a Power greater than myself. The chapter to wives says, “. . . alcoholism is an illness over which we could not possibly have had any power,” neither my wife nor I!” (118) So I made a decision to turn my will and my life “over to the care of God (as I understood Him).” There were the first three Steps, but the magic really started happening for me in Step Four because that's when I began to “do” something: up to then, it was simply admit, believe, and decide. I was predestined for all those things once my Higher Power got a hold of me in that detox room in April of 2020, and I realized I was too old for AA *not* to work. There would not likely be any more second chances for me!

Jumping ahead now, once we are through the “meat” of the program, Step 11 instructs us, “through prayer and meditation, to improve our conscious contact with God (as we understand Him), praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.” It's not like we do Step Four, or even Steps Four through Nine, and we're done, as if working the steps is just a one-time thing. Rather, Steps 10 and 11 are Steps Four through Nine being repeated daily. And then there is an implication (describing Step 3), that if I let my Higher Power “take over,” everything will be fine (60—63)! It seems to suggest that we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives, that no human power could relieve us of our alcoholism, but that God could and would if He were sought. We let Him pilot the ship, and then if it runs into the rocks, that's on Him and not on us, right?

Well, not exactly: it IS still on me – thus, the paradox.

(Continues page 6)

# Help Guide the Fellowship!

**This is just a Snapshot!**  
**For the real form, click: [Google Drive Resume](#)**

**[Service History Resume for BICO nominees](#)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sobriety Date and Homegroup:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Group Service positions with years of service:  
\_\_\_\_\_

District Service positions with years of service:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Area Service positions with years of service:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Special skills, education, and/or business experience that will make you a suitable candidate for the Steering Committee:  
\_\_\_\_\_

12<sup>th</sup> Step work including: Carrying meetings to facilities, 12<sup>th</sup> step calls and sponsorship (this can be a yes or no) can be listed if you like.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Interested candidates should submit their Service History to the Central Office as soon as possible. They may also return these via email. For mail in, please send the Service History to:

Birmingham Intergroup Central Office  
RE: Service History  
242 West Valley Avenue, Suite 211  
Homewood, AL 35209

To learn more, especially about whether you qualify, talk to:

Bill M. [bhambilly@gmail.com](mailto:bhambilly@gmail.com)

Mark L. [MarkLitvine@gmail.com](mailto:MarkLitvine@gmail.com)



The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Birmingham Intergroup Central Office Board of Directors.

***We Want to Hear from You!***

Please send questions, poems, drawings, articles, experience, strength, and hope to [passitonbirmingham@gmail.com](mailto:passitonbirmingham@gmail.com)

***Be sure to Visit Our BEAUTIFUL Website!!***

**[www.birminghamaa.org](http://www.birminghamaa.org)**

**(It links to the Meeting Guide App, with up to date Zoom and in-person listings)**

(Continued from page 4)

Moving myself out of the **horror** my life had become, that it had become because of my drinking: if I had not done what I did—go to rehab, get a sponsor, go to meetings, work the program, work the steps – I *wouldn't* be where I am now. And not only wouldn't I be sober, but I'd also probably be dead. If I had not appealed to my Higher Power and allowed Him to *show* me how far I had strayed into self-everything, only to finally reach a state of such complete brokenness and despair that I mustered the resolve to call out to Him from the pit of tribulation had found myself in; then I wouldn't have had the power to do what I've done since. Yet it was clearly incumbent first on ME to act, to DO what needed to be done – and to continue doing what needs to be done. “After all God gave us brains to use” (86).

While the 9<sup>th</sup> Step promises say, “We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves,” that *doesn't* mean He's going to do everything *for* us. Based on my experience, it would be more accurate to say that He is going to enable us to do what we could not do by ourselves. He shows us the door, and He might even open it for us: but it is still up to us to walk through it. He is NOT going to do for us what WE can do, if only through Him, for ourselves. And Steps 10, 11 and 12 outline what He *expects* us to do in living out this new design for life *He* has shown us through AA.

Eventually, about nine months in, I realized that I had finally begun to **harvest** the first fruits of the seed that was planted once I took those first three Steps. Remember, I quoted the *Big Book* as saying, “...that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink...” Well, now I thank God that He has given me that Power – with a capital P, because it is through His power and not mine that I *choose* no longer to drink. That I no longer “need” to drink! I certainly *can* drink – He hasn't taken away my car keys! I just don't! Just as the act of worship requires participation and is not a spectator sport, so too is staying sober: I must continue to be ACTIVE in the program by working the Steps, going to meetings, talking to my sponsor, and most importantly, trying to be helpful to others. I can't just sit on my butt and expect God (or anybody else) to hand everything to me! “Faith without works is dead.” And in spite of the discomfort, even pain, of some of the things we have to do in the program, there is always spiritual growth to be had on the other side. There is no “easier, softer way.”

The truth of the matter, then, and the answer to the paradox, is that Step 12 (applying these principles in all our affairs) is *neither* all Him *nor* all me. In fact, I've found that complacency – just sitting around waiting on someone, something, or even ‘Someone’ else – with or without a sudden wave of self-sufficiency, is a dangerous thing. I got that way in my spiritual life before, and that's when the bottle took over. You can't just quit “doing” because things are going well: the *Big Book* tells us quite clearly, “We are not cured of alcoholism” (85). Resting on our laurels is not one of the Steps! The thought that I don't need a meeting today; that I don't need to call my sponsor this week; that I don't need to connect to my Higher Power today because “I'm good”... well, that's the disease, the disease that I am not *cured* of, playing on my ego.

I also can't let myself get distracted by the world around me. The thought that I don't have *time* to go to a meeting today, that I'm too *busy* to call my sponsor this week or even take a few minutes just to touch base with my Higher Power... that's just going to end me up right back in the same place as complacency!

The Book warns us about getting distracted when it talks about a new AA prospect clamoring “for this or that, claiming he cannot master alcohol until his material needs are met.” (I'll let *you* revisit the need-versus-want distinction)

*Some of us have taken very hard knocks to learn this truth: job or no job – wife or no wife – we simply do not stop drinking so long as we place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God. (98)*

(Continues page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Nor do we *stay* stopped, if we have stopped already. Based on everything I've heard in the rooms of AA, I believe that complacency, distraction, and overconfidence are the main things that lead people of even many years sobriety to fall to relapse. I, for one, do not want to be added to that number.

*...deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself. (55)*

I have seen those miraculous demonstrations in the faces and stories of many of you in the AA fellowship. And I have experienced them myself in the blessed new life I have (but probably don't deserve) today. The picture of success, then, in both sobriety and life, is one where *both* God and I are acting *together* in **harmony**. It's not all on Him, *because I have to want it*; and it's not all on me, because only *He* has the power I need to *do* it.

*Remember that we deal with alcohol – cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power – that One is God. (58-59)*

And yes, even *that* is a choice.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Beyond the Home Group

### ***From Intergroup:***

BICO has a new board member, Robby K. from South Suburban. He has a great deal of sobriety and much experience with health administration. Intergroup approved his election at its October meeting. On November 7, BICO will host its annual all-member meeting. At that time, we will vote on whether to approve Adam H's election to the board. As many of you know, he is our webmaster. The board needs at least two more resumes as it is still one person short.

World Services is increasing book costs by 7%. At the District Meeting, Mary G. requested that representatives ask if their home groups are still interested in receiving the *Grapevine*.

Those present shared ideas for special events to raise funds, as Picnic in the Park has been cancelled. It seems that we want to have several local get-togethers instead of one big gathering. Members were enthusiastic about things such as bowling, group walks, and a gratitude dinner. Come share your ideas at the next Intergroup Meeting, November 7, after the BICO meeting.

### ***Committee Reports from the District Meeting Minutes:***

**Treatments & Corrections:** Aaron A. is the chairperson, Apathy is strong. Still, group slots are open at several local treatment centers though in person meetings are open week by week due to frequent lockdowns. The committee is willing to take a table at the Counselors Workshop in November (See "Save the Date" on page three.)

This group meets at 3:30 on the 1st Sunday of the month at JAFI. Please attend a meeting if you are even vaguely interested in learning more or helping to carry the message.

**Grapevine:** Mike W. is the chair. Grapevine put out a new book called *Prayer & Meditation*. He asked that we follow *Grapevine* on Instagram. This group meets on Zoom at 2:15PM on the 1st Sunday of the Month. Go to [bhamaa.org](http://bhamaa.org) for more information

**Web** – Michael S., chairperson. The Meeting App is about to have a new update. We must give it all new permissions or the app will not work properly. He asked that Al-Anon meeting information be checked through the host meeting (AA)

**BICO** – Mary G. reporting. She asked home groups to buy books and supplies at the Central Office instead of ordering them online.

## Central Office Financial Reports September, 2021

Central Office Financial Report July--September 2021			
	July	August	September
Regions Checking	\$ 2,853.38	\$ 3,278.36	\$ 1,951.04
Cash on Hand	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00
QB-Checking Account			
Saving Account	\$ 9,000.31	\$ 9,000.39	\$ 9,000.39
Receivables	\$ 1,126.41	\$ 1,899.00	\$ 2,363.85
Outstanding Payables	\$ 2,047.15	\$ 3,139.14	\$ 2,193.23
<b>Income</b>			
Books & Literature	\$ 1,966.88	\$ 1,402.45	\$ 2,236.57
Chips & Medallions	\$ 344.50	\$ 617.50	\$ 265.50
Donations	\$ 1,243.87	\$ 1,850.78	\$ 752.32
Variety/ Misc. Sales	\$ 48.51	\$ -	\$ 11.70
<b>Cost of goods Sold</b>			
Books & Literature	\$ 1,641.36	\$ 1,244.05	\$ 1,904.40
Chips & Medallions	\$ 396.35	\$ 379.30	\$ 284.11
Variety Items	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3.04
<b>Gross Profit</b>	\$ 1,566.05	\$ 2,247.38	\$ 1,074.54
<b>Expenses</b>			
Payroll Wages	\$ 1,069.76	\$ 680.81	\$ 759.05
Payroll Taxes	\$ 196.21	\$ 130.21	\$ 136.74
Payroll Services	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Dues & Subscriptions	\$ 77.00	\$ 88.00	\$ 88.00
Insurance (annually)	\$ 295.00	\$ -	\$ -
Insurance (Quarterly)	\$ 297.75	\$ -	\$ -
Legal & Accounting	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Licenses & Taxes	\$ 166.10	\$ 444.47	\$ 125.74
Office & Supplies	\$ 110.00	\$ -	\$ 45.43
Copier	\$ 114.40	\$ -	\$ 111.33
Bank / Paypal Charges	\$ -	\$ 150.00	\$ -
Rent	\$ 495.00	\$ 495.00	\$ 495.00
Telephone & Internet	\$ 147.09	\$ 146.73	\$ 146.71
Utilities	\$ 96.04	\$ 104.16	\$ -
Special Events	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 3,364.35	\$ 2,289.38	\$ 1,958.00
Interest	\$ 0.08	\$ 0.08	\$ -
<b>Net Income</b>	\$ (1,798.22)	\$ (41.92)	\$ (883.46)
<b>Past Due -- AAWS</b>	\$ 2,763.40	\$ -	\$ 2,050.95
<b>Past Due - RJ Young</b>	\$ 117.08	\$ -	\$ 117.96
<b>Income After Past Due</b>	\$ (4,678.70)	\$ (41.92)	\$ (3,052.37)

### TWO ways to Donate!!

Go to Pay Pal and send money to:  
[bhambico@gmail.com](mailto:bhambico@gmail.com)

OR

Send your check to:  
AA Central Office  
242 West Valley Avenue, Ste 211  
Birmingham, AL 35209







**Donations!!!**  
**Group and Individual**  
**May through August**



B. I. C. O. Group/ Individual Donations				
<i>Group/Individual</i>	May	June	July	Aug.
AA Individual	\$ 2.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 304.00
AA Individual / Adam T.				
AA Individual / Anne S.			\$ 25.00	
AA Individual / Barbra				
AA Individual / BC				
AA Individual / Bill Mc				
AA Individual / Bryan G			\$ 72.52	
AA Individual / Crocket		\$ 60.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00
AA Individual / Divid H				
AA Individual / Erin S	\$ 48.25			
AA Individual / John C.				
AA Individual / John F.				
AA Individual / John F				
AA Individual / Gray A.		\$ 3.21		
AA Individual / Karen P.				
AA Individual / Kathryn L				
AA Individual / Martin		\$ 1.00		
AA Individual / Matt G.				
AA Individual / Melanie S				
AA Individual / Merle J				
AA Individual / Patricia H				
AA Individual / Richard M				
AA Individual / Rickey S	\$ 96.80			
AA Individual / Robert C				
AA Individual / Sarah M				
AA Individual / Thomas M	\$ 10.00			
AA Individual / Thomas R			\$ 30.00	
AA Individual / Tracy C	\$ 1.01			
Bessemer Group	\$ 50.00			
Buster's Group			\$ 230.00	
Colonnade Group			\$ 151.00	
Coosa Group			\$ 25.00	
Downtown Group				\$ 500.00
Early Riser's				
Five Points				\$ 220.00
Freedom Group				
Huffman Group	\$ 300.00	\$300.00		\$ 300.00
Irondale Group			\$ 120.00	
Leeds Group	\$ 4.00		\$ 0.50	
Logan Martin Group	\$ 600.00			
Monday Night Live			\$ 176.11	
Moody Group				
Mount Olive Group			\$ 180.00	
New Hope Group				
North Jefferson Group	\$ 268.00			
Out from Under				\$ 9.70
Pelham Group		\$ 10.00		
Riverchase Group				
Serenity Now Group		\$300.00		\$ 300.00
Sobiety First Group	\$ 0.50		\$ 40.00	
South Suburban	\$ 1.00			
Starting Over Group	\$ 250.00			
Sunrise Group				
Trace Crossings Group	\$ 0.20			
Trussville Group				\$ 50.00
Vestavia Hills Group	\$ 0.50			
Warrior Group			\$ 162.74	
Women's Acceptance				\$ 137.08
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>#####</b>	<b>\$679.21</b>	<b>\$1,243.87</b>	<b>\$1,850.78</b>