

## About MAICO

MAICO (Madison Area Intergroup Central Office) holds as its mission is to help A.A. groups within its service area (south central Wisconsin) carry the A.A. message. MAICO helps coordinate and facilitate communication and cooperation among individual A.A. groups, area 12-step and other committees, and components of the A.A. service structure. MAICO provides needed services that are beyond the scope and ability of any individual A.A. group, and is at all times responsible to the groups it serves.

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## Can a Secular Humanist Survive Alcoholics Anonymous?

The American Humanist Association defines humanism as “a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.” What that means to someone who proclaims themselves a humanist is that without a belief in a deity, our lives are fulfilled by the knowledge of humans as an integral part of nature, responsible to both it and our fellow humans. We believe that morality can be defined in terms of our own actions and a collective knowledge of right and wrong, with a continual regard for the common good of all. To humanists these are very real, tangible, and achievable ideals. Despite what fundamentalist Christians claim, we are a moral people.

Given the rational world view held by humanists, and the rejection of the supernatural, it is not surprising that humanists chafe against the religious nature of the AA program. After all, the word “God” appears four times in the 12 steps, the word “Him” with a capital “H”, a syntax found only in Christian theology, is found in step 7, and the last step refers to “[h]aving had a spiritual awakening.” If we are honest we must admit that AA is not just a “spiritual” program, but a religious one, and in fact we recognize that step 3 demands a religious conversion.

So what's an alcoholic humanist to do? We desperately want to get sober, and many of us can't do it alone, but when we attend meetings we hear our fellow alcoholics talk more than frequently about how God has given them sobriety, and how God has changed their hearts to become caring, responsible people. We want our sanity back just as much as the believer, but we are committed, passionately, to a philosophy of life we are certain is right for us, and one that will allow us to continue to grow intellectually and help us be better people.

When I first began attending AA meetings a few

years ago, the religious nature of the program struck me immediately, and I had serious doubts about whether I could continue to attend meetings. On several occasions people took me aside after meetings explaining with all the fervor of a televangelist that without a belief in God I had virtually no chance of maintaining sobriety. Once a person explicitly implored me to accept Jesus Christ as my personal savior.

In those early days of attempted recovery, however, I was not completely committed to getting sober. Like many alcoholics I attended meetings more for others than for myself. Employers, friends and family urged me to get sober, but inside I knew I would continue to drink and if honest with myself could not imagine life without alcohol. I was convinced that without alcohol my life would lack something important to me.

In December of 2006 I finally went on such a bender, making myself so ill, that I knew I had to stop if I was going to live. This time I went to an AA meeting for myself; things were different now. Knowing that my life depended on abstaining completely from alcohol, I had to give AA another shot.

But still reading the steps and the Big Book, that word, God, kept stopping me in my tracks. However, going to a meeting every day, sometimes even twice a day, was creating something positive in my psyche. I was feeling more confident that perhaps sobriety was something I could achieve.

While reading through the steps for the umpteenth time, I realized that step 10, continually taking moral stock of myself and promptly admitting when I was wrong, was something that I was always trying to do. And the more I read them I realized that many of the ideals in the steps were something that anyone on a path of self-improvement would do, alcoholic or not. I realized I was working the steps everyday I was getting sober. I was opening up to friends

about past mistakes; I was becoming more honest with myself and people around me, including co-workers, friends and family.

So what about step 3? Was I ready to give my will and my life over to God? Frankly, no. But as many in the program told me, "take what you want, what works for you, and leave the rest behind." So while step 3 is not for me, and I may not be following the traditional AA path, I found that going to meetings every day and listening to fellow alcoholics could be my path to lasting sobriety.

My higher power is the group consciousness that emerges in a room when a group of alcoholics share their experiences and hope. I felt this positive energy at my very first meeting I attended when I decided to get sober for myself. Once I decided sobriety was something I desperately wanted and needed for myself, for my very own survival, I began to leave each meeting feeling better about myself and my chances to stay sober.

I've come to believe that staying sober is going to be work, and like any job I've ever held there are going to be things I like, things I agree with, and things I don't. Like a job that comes with a paycheck, attending AA meetings for me

also has a payoff. It's waking up every morning feeling good about myself and my life. It's feeling healthy and positive about where my life is going, and being capable of doing the things I want to do.

So for me the answer to the question in the headline of this little missive is a resounding, "yes". We alcoholic humanists can survive AA... because to fail here means failing life, and I'm not ready to do that yet, or ever.

If you have an AA related story for our newsletter we'd love to see it. All pieces up to 1,000 words will be considered for publication. Please send your entries to maico@tds.net, with "Newsletter submission" in the subject line of your email.

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### MAICO Business

Web site: [www.aamadisonwi.org](http://www.aamadisonwi.org)

### Upcoming Events

If you would like your AA event listed in our calendar of events email information to [maico@tds.net](mailto:maico@tds.net).

### Districts in our service area

If you would like your district minutes posted on the MAICO web site, email them to [maico@tds.net](mailto:maico@tds.net).

### 12 Step List

We need men and women for our 12 Step List, especially women available during the day. Call or email the MAICO office to volunteer.

### MAICO Merchandise Catalog

Now available on the web site and also can be mailed when requested.

### Meeting Directories Available

MAICO 2007-2008 South Central Wisconsin Meeting Directories are here - .75 cents each.

### Area Web sites

Area 75 Southern Wisconsin: [www.area75.org](http://www.area75.org)

Area 74 North Wisconsin/Upper Peninsula Michigan: [www.area74.org](http://www.area74.org)

MAICO is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. Your donations are tax deductible up to \$2,000 per AA member per year.

## 11th Annual Youngtimers/Oldtimers Workshop

Saturday, November 3, 2007

10:00am -- 3:00pm

Youngtime speakers

Oldtime speakers

Raffle

Lunch provided on donations basis

Trinity Lutheran Church  
1904 Winnebago Street  
(Corner of Winnebago & First)  
Madison, WI

We would appreciate any volunteers for setup, cleanup, and to bring a dish to pass for lunch.

This event is sponsored by Madison Area Intergroup Central Office Representatives

Year to Date Income Statement: January 1 - September 30, 2007

	Current Month		Year to Date	
<b>Revenues</b>				
Donations	2,906.62	38.97	21,964.04	29.88
Individual Donations	279.00	3.74	1,833.00	2.49
Donations/Answering Service	10.00	0.13	470.00	0.64
Conference Literature	1,821.87	24.43	22,665.85	30.83
Grapevine Literature	209.00	2.80	1,508.24	2.05
NonConference Literature	1,004.15	13.46	9,693.26	13.19
NonConference Merchandise	914.05	12.25	11,861.90	16.14
Faithful Fivers	30.00	0.40	269.00	0.37
Directories	235.50	3.16	1,411.35	1.92
Newsletter Subscriptions	5.00	0.07	10.00	0.01
Investment Income	0.00	0.00	186.69	0.25
Miscellaneous Income	0.00	0.00	9.48	0.01
MAICO Reps Picnic 2007	0.00	0.00	261.00	0.36
Big Book Study 2007	0.00	0.00	855.00	1.16
Other Income	0.00	0.00	65.70	0.09
Shipping Charges Reimbursed	43.69	0.59	437.50	0.60
Bank Charges reimbursed	0.00	0.00	6.00	0.01
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>7,458.88</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>73,508.01</b>	<b>100.00</b>
 <b>Cost of Sales</b>				
Inventory Exp.-Conference Lit.	1,121.12	15.03	17,827.87	24.25
Inventory Exp.-Grapevine Lit.	0.00	0.00	1,402.30	1.91
Inventory Exp.-NonConfer Lit.	721.12	9.67	7,765.96	10.56
Inventory Exp.-NonConfer Mer.	363.80	4.88	5,430.03	7.39
Inventory Adjustments	0.00	0.00	(1,544.45)	(2.10)
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
<b>Total Cost of Sales</b>	<b>2,206.04</b>	<b>29.58</b>	<b>30,881.71</b>	<b>42.01</b>
 <b>Gross Profit</b>	 <b>5,252.84</b>	 <b>70.42</b>	 <b>42,626.30</b>	 <b>57.99</b>
 <b>Expenses</b>				
Auto Expense	0.00	0.00	138.70	0.19
Wages Expense	2,462.40	33.01	24,005.88	32.66
Payroll Tax Expense	188.40	2.53	1,836.62	2.50
License and fees Expenses	0.00	0.00	170.00	0.23
Supplies Expense	0.00	0.00	407.75	0.55
Office Expense	7.22	0.10	458.81	0.62
Newsletter Expense	0.00	0.00	237.90	0.32
Bank charges	0.00	0.00	31.00	0.04
Telephone Expense	109.55	1.47	921.08	1.25
Domain Name-Go Daddy Acct	0.00	0.00	18.23	0.02
Answering Service Expense	427.65	5.73	3,762.65	5.12
Advertising in phone book	90.00	1.21	807.00	1.10
Postage and Shipping Expense	38.26	0.51	592.00	0.81
Occupancy Expense	551.05	7.39	4,847.10	6.59
Insurance Expense	0.00	0.00	377.00	0.51
Printing Expense	0.00	0.00	28.00	0.04
Directory expense	0.00	0.00	1,522.00	2.07
Copier Service Contract	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.14
Intergrp/C.O Seminar 2007	75.00	1.01	100.00	0.14
Big Book Study 2007	0.00	0.00	353.82	0.48
MAICO Reps Picnic 2007	0.00	0.00	180.50	0.25
Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	0.00	54.81	0.07
Other Expense	0.00	0.00	119.70	0.16
Over/Under cash on hand	0.00	0.00	10.52	0.01
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<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3,949.53</b>	<b>52.95</b>	<b>41,081.07</b>	<b>55.89</b>
 <b>Net Income</b>	 <b>\$1,303.31</b>	 <b>17.47</b>	 <b>\$1,545.23</b>	 <b>2.10</b>

**For this,  
We Are Responsible**

We need your help and cooperation if we are to keep up to date about meetings and groups in the area we serve. Please let us know of any changes to the meetings you attend or to your group so we can pass the information along to our readers. Call MAICO with any changes that you know of or fill out this form and send it to MAICO, 6033 Monona Drive, Suite 204, Madison, WI 53716-3963.

Provide as much of the following information as possible			
New ___	Change ___	Help ___	Discontinued ___
Group Name (if any) _____	Open ___	Closed ___	
Smoking ___	Non-smoking ___	Signed ___	Accessible ___
Day and time of meeting _____			
Location _____			
Type of meeting _____			
Group contact person _____			
Contact phone number _____			
Let us know of any changes in your group's contact person(s)			
Name(s) _____			
Position(s) _____			
Phone number(s) _____			
Group name _____			

**MAICO**  
Madison Area Intergroup Central Office  
6033 Monona Drive, Suite 204  
Madison, WI 53716-3963

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# 12 Step Call from Hell: The Con

by Lynn B.

One day, I had such a strong craving to drink heavily that my goal was to get as drunk as I could! I've been sober quite a few 24 hours, so this came as quite a shock to me. My immediate response was "Get your \*\*!\*" to an alano clubhouse NOW!!!" So I drove to the clubhouse and, at a 7:00 a.m. meeting, I told my friends I had a compulsion to drink. I was upset that, after 18 years of sobriety, I had this reaction. I learned it was because I was an alcoholic.

I felt, after the meeting, that I still had the compulsion to drink, so I stayed at the clubhouse. I decided to make some phone calls. After all misery loves company. Right? I called three temporary AA sponsors because I didn't have one. They weren't home. So I decided that helping another alcoholic was the answer. I went to the Service Binder. There was a need for women to do 12 Step calls, so I called Jim at MAICO. He said I was a rare breed. They need more women to volunteer to be called for Twelfth Step calls!

Anyway, I got involved in some service work. I was convinced that I would not stay sober unless I did more Twelfth Step work. I went to the noon meeting. Then, I went to the clubhouse that night. I went to the non-smoking AA room for an 8:00 meeting. I walked a man, who I will call "Mark." A woman, who I later learned was Mark's sister, was standing just outside the door talking to herself.

I asked him how he was doing.

He said, "I haven't slept in four days."

I felt terrible for him. All of us, including the sister, sat down at the table, and had the meeting. It was evident that this woman, although sober, needed professional psychiatric care. The other member, who I'll call "Mike" was a former psychiatric professional, and signaled me to talk, and keep talking, to this troubled woman. He was talking to Mark, who I learned was her brother, convincing Mark that she needed professional help. They were from a neighboring state. He had been up for four nights with her and she had what he called "spells and strange behavior." Mike convinced Mark to take his sister to the emergency room for physical and psychiatric evaluation. He suggested that I have the woman ride with me and Mark should follow in his vehicle. I "charged to the rescue," thinking that "this was indeed Twelfth Step work!"

We drove to the ER. Mark and I waited with his sister from 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. while they tested her blood and took a chest X-ray. A psychiatric intern did an evaluation and his sister wasn't "sick enough" to remain at the psych ward. They said we should take her "home." Knowing that Mark had had no sleep for five nights now, I offered to have this disturbed woman stay overnight in my home while he went to a friend's home. We got to my house and she crashed immediately.

At noon the next day, I took Mark's sister to the alano clubhouse to meet Mark, satisfied that I had done all I could. Mark actually convinced me to return to their home state with them (so that I could calm her during the trip), stay overnight at her house with her and then return to Madison. I was convinced, with Mark's help, that I was that woman's savior.

Luckily, my Higher Power stepped in. Because it had gotten too late, Mark decided that they should get a hotel room. His sister rode with me to the hotel, of course, and had a psychotic break on the way. At the hotel, she got out of the car, accused us of stealing her money, and threatened violence.

Eventually, I took the initiative to call 911, and the police took her to the ER. I called my friend from the hotel room and, being extremely stressed out, asked him to come and take me home. Mark sat there talking about what fine Twelfth Step work we had done, as if AA was going to fix everything with his sister.

My point here is be very careful of whom you get involved with when you do Twelfth Step work. NEVER GO ALONE!! Just because people are in the program doesn't mean that they're always safe. I hardly knew these people! I take responsibility for my misjudgment! If you are a woman, and get a Twelfth Step call, take a person along every time, especially at night. Be safe and sober.

Articles are not intended to be statements of AA policy nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by AA or the Central Office. Within the bounds of friendliness and good taste, the MAICO GAAzette will enjoy perfect freedom of speech on all matters directly pertaining to Alcoholics Anonymous.

## BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN

After a long absence from MAICO I'm back!

My relation to MAICO is a participant in the office, starting 9/18/07, 20 hours a week for up to one year. Currently I'm staffing the office from 8am to 12 noon, Monday through Friday.

I've been placed here by a federal program. This program is designed to get oldies but goodies back in the workforce. The agency pays me a stipend and MAICO provides me with a current resume listing and on the job training. Office Manager Diane is the boss.

I'm excited being here. A million projects one day at a time. What a deal!

Jim G.

Thank You to the following  
Groups/Individuals for Donations  
from 8/31 to 10/19/07

**Groups**

511 Carroll St. Step Grp  
Barney's Grp  
Boscobel Grp  
Columbus Grp  
Cop Shop Grp  
Darlington Uptown Grp  
DeForest Progress Grp  
Early Risers Grp  
Easy Breathers Grp  
Easy Does It But Do It Grp  
Foxhall Recovery Grp  
Freedom Grp  
Go After Your Sobriety Grp  
Grace Lunch Grp  
LaValle New Beginnings Grp  
Monday Big Book Study Grp  
Monday Night Rock River Grp  
Monday Wednesday Friday Morning Grp  
Monona Serenity Grp  
New Glarus Sobrietyfest Grp  
Our Group Lake Mills  
Out to Lunch Grp  
Reedsburg Tuesday AM Grp  
Richland Center Grp  
Sauk Prairie Grp  
Sister Blandine Grp  
St. Dunstan's Grp  
Suburban Sobriety Grp  
Sullivan Big Book Grp  
Sunlight of the Spirit Grp  
Sunrisers Grp  
Sunshine Grp  
Waupun Friday Night Grp  
Waupun Tuesday Night Grp  
Whitewater Tues. 11am Grp  
Working Step Grp

**Faithful Fiver**

Larry L.

**Individual**

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Clyde R.  
Dale N.  
Dave S.  
Richard D.  
Scott J.

**Answering Service**

Easy Breathers Grp

Upcoming Events

Nov. 3

11th Annual Youngtimers/oldtimers Workshop, Sponsored by MAICO Representatives (Reps) Trinity Lutheran Church, 1904 Winnebago St., Madison, WI. Bring a dish to pass for lunch, lunch provided on donation basis. 10:00am to 3:00pm

Nov. 9, 10 & 11

5th Annual Manitowoc, WI. Weekend session, sponsored by Fourth Edition BB Study Grp & other Manitowoc AA groups, Manitowoc Alano Club, 404 South 29th St., Manitowoc, WI. Friday: 7:00pm-9:30pm, Sat. 8:30am-6:00pm, Sun: 9:00am-Noon. Please register for these sessions by calling Marv S. at (920) 901-9509 or visit [www.Into-Action.com](http://www.Into-Action.com). Suggested contribution is \$5.00 per day.

Nov. 17th

WICYPAA - Wisconsin Conference for Young People of Alcoholics Anonymous, Pre-Thanksgiving Blowout. Fitchburg Serenity Club, 6048 McKee Road (Hwy PD), Fitchburg, WI. 7:00pm Supper, 8:00pm Speaker, 9:00pm Dance - Suggested donation for Supper & Dance to be announced.

Nov. 16, 17 & 18

18th Annual McHenry Soberfest, Grand Geneva Resort, Lake Geneva, WI. [www.soberfest.org](http://www.soberfest.org) or email at [info@soberfest.org](mailto:info@soberfest.org). Conference & Sat Banquet \$40.00, Conference only (includes Sessions & Dance) \$10.00.

Dec. 1

Corrections/Grapevine Workshop/Sharing Session, Hess Memorial Hospital, 1050 Division St., Mauston, WI. (2nd Floor - Community Room) 9:30am to 2:30pm. Contacts: Marty S. 414-975-8903 [martha.sorensen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:martha.sorensen@sbcglobal.net) or Nancy G. 608-221-2891 [nancyt43@charter.net](mailto:nancyt43@charter.net).

Jan 25-27, 2008

WICYPAA XV, Wisconsin Conference of Young People of Alcoholics Anonymous 15th, Ramada Hotel, 2750 Ramada Way, Green Bay, WI. Register Now \$10.00 until December 30th.

Feb. 9, 2008

Twelve Step Study sponsored by MAICO Reps, Trinity Lutheran Ch., 1904 Winnebago St., Madison, WI. 9:00am to 3:00pm, \$10.00 pay at door. Registration starts at 8:30am flyer: [www.aamadisonwi.org](http://www.aamadisonwi.org) or email: [maico@tds.net](mailto:maico@tds.net)

Feb. 14-17

44th International Women's Conference, Portland, Oregon. Information at [www.intlwomensconf.org](http://www.intlwomensconf.org)