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# The MAICO GA.A.ZETTE

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September/October 2007

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**RECOVERY** – “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

– Step Nine

“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.” – Step Ten

**UNITY** – “A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.” -- Tradition Nine

“Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.” – Tradition Ten

**SERVICE** – “Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.” – Concept IX

“Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.” – Concept X

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## 9<sup>th</sup> Tradition

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

Two flaked-out fellows were shown in a popular William Steig cartoon a few years ago. The caption was something like “One of these days we’ve got to get organized around here.”

I remember expressing the same sentiment while drinking. I not only said it, I did it. To me, getting organized meant getting things arranged in a highly systematic manner, in preparation for getting them done. (You don’t necessarily pay your bills, but you do make a neat list of creditors.) During self-enforced droughts, I would zealously over-organize everything in sight in round-the-clock spurts – only to blow it all, later, in a flood of ethanol.

And so I welcomed the idea of an “organization” – which I supposed AA was – for getting something done about the trouble I was having with my drinking.

I approached AA in Manhattan twenty-six years ago in total darkness as to how it did things. (How often is it approached any other way?) I guess I expected to find a written constitution, bylaws, dues, and paid sergeants of some kind trained to discipline the backsliders. After all, there was a telephone listing, and I had been invited to come to an office. That sounded pretty organized to me.

But the first members I met unwittingly sowed confusion by using familiar terms in an unfamiliar context. Such words as “member, join, meeting, officer, committee,” etc. do not mean the same in AA as outside it, but how was I to know that?

My confusion grew as I heard and saw AA people behaving differently from each other, saying wildly disparate things, sometimes contradicting each other. Some even drank!

I asked about the president of AA, and they said there wasn’t any; yet they had a chairman, a

secretary, and elections. There was no ritual for joining, they said; yet the secretary usually announced, “If you want to join this group, see me after the meeting.”

They said there were no musts, but that to do certain jobs one must have been sober at least three months. They insisted they were alcoholics, not ex-alcoholics; yet most Never touched a drop.

Obviously, I was seeing only the lowest-grade members of this outfit, I became pretty sure. I kept nosing around to find the generals, so I could get the real score. I never found any top brass.

But, despite the vast ignorance of the noncom troops, AA *got things done*. The telephone got answered; meetings were held, with prearranged programs; coffee got served; a book and pamphlets were distributed. So AA must be systematized in *some way*, I had to conclude. But how? Was there a secret hierarchy of authorities who enforced the statutes by *making* members do things?

Such were the expectations – shaped, of course, by the experiences of my no-AA lifetime – with which I arrived at the door of the Fellowship. With growing delight, and often chagrin, I have learned how mistaken I was.

Now I am convinced that one sure way to destroy AA would be for us to set up a rigid organization patterned after the non-AA societies we all know. Yet we cannot be a *laissez-faire* body, willing always to “Let George do it.” Instead, each of us is expected, it seems to me, to assume enough personal responsibility on his own for the Fellowship to get its major function (Tradition Five) accomplished.

What giant problems our first members faced! They had to find ways to get things done without slipping into either the bedlam of autonomy unlimited

or the trap of over organizing and under accomplishing. The dilemma could easily have overwhelmed them, in my opinion. Organizing can itself be addictive, my personal experience indicates. It's easy to get so fascinated with the process of organizing that I can lose all sight of what I am organizing for. I marvel that any of the first ten years' members stayed sober at all.

Tradition Nine describes the masterful solution worked out during the first ten years of AA experience. Since so many alcoholics rebel against authority in human form, we just dispense with it altogether. The first seven words of Tradition Nine say that we have no bosses – echoing Tradition Two.

But the last fourteen words describe the system and orderliness necessary for our outfit to *get things done*.

My personal AA life illustrates both the problem and its solution. Like a tantrum-throwing four year old, I figuratively stamped my foot and refused to pay attention to the Twelve Steps. I mistakenly believed them to be rules for staying sober, instead of a simple description of how our first members actually did recover. After enough slips, however, I saw that in AA I had the freedom to try out, on my own, the Steps suggested as a program of recovery. But I had to make myself do them, because no one in AA could force me to.

I tried to be bossy in AA, and I got drunk. I learned to empty ashtrays for the group, and I began staying sober.

A few years back, we floundering fathers of a certain Greenwich Village group found ourselves about to be replaced. To make life easier for our successors than it had been for us, we wrote out what each steering committee member (trusted servant) had done, exactly how, when, and where. (This was before the General Service Office published its excellent pamphlet "The AA Group.") We bound these information sheets in a notebook for our new secretary-treasurer.

About three months later, we learned that the group was behind in "gifts" to our landlord (a church) and had not paid its Intergroup pledges nor several GSO bills for literature.

Swift to find a scapegoat, we turned on Ernie, the new secretary-treasurer, and demanded, "Why didn't you pay those things?"

Indignantly, he told us, "Because I didn't know I was supposed to, and I don't know where to pay them, anyhow."

In my most tolerant bleeding-deacon voice, I chirped, "But Ernie, exactly what is to be paid, and when, and to whom, is all spelled out for you in that book."

"What book?" he asked.

"That black notebook we gave you."

"Oh, that!" Ernie replied with disgust. "I've never opened it," he announced proudly. "Nobody in AA is going to tell *me* what to do!"

Several chronic beginners tipsily applauded.

That nutty contretemps puts the AA organization problem into a beautiful nutshell, it seems to me. How, on the one hand, do we avoid offending each other with government – which inevitably means giving some members authority over others – and still, on the other hand, escape chaos? As the late Bernard Smith so eloquently put it at our 1970 International Convention in Miami Beach, the answer is in the way our Ninth Tradition insures AA against anarchy while at the same time insulating us against any form of AA government. Ernie, working with the other new officers of the group, later came upon that answer himself.

My fellow founders and I had had our feelings hurt when somebody had first suggested there might be a better arrangement than our paternalistic one, and the new officers took over. We finally realized, though, that the AA custom of rotation in office can be healing experience for those who can take it and understand the spirit behind it. Rotation is not spelled out in any Step or Tradition. (Neither are many other good AA ideas, such as the 24-hour plan, going to meetings, significance of the first drink, etc.) But it mercifully helps solve the seniority problem we older members can inflict on newer ones, and I think it is within the spirit of Traditions Two and Nine, if not in their wording. It is explained well on page 22 of "The AA Group."

The genius embodied in the Tradition Nine phrase "responsible to those they serve" escaped my detection for a long time, because it sounded too noble and elegant to be more than a truism. When I worked on some AA committees, however, it came to life for me, and I now consider it an astonishing and challenging notion.

What if those of us who professionally serve others outside AA – whether we are doctors, taxi drivers, professors, or Playboy bunnies – had to report, not to some boss or professional association with punishment powers, but instead to our *clients*? In effect, that *is* the case with AA officers and committees, isn't it?

Once, an AA committee I belonged to heard of a member who was representing himself as an AA official and collecting money thereby. We instantly launched into a discussion of what to do to him. Think about that.....

It took us an hour or so to realize that we had only the right to pray for him, not the authority to punish

him. It was an exiting realization, and I continue to stand in awe of this principle: No matter how much you or I may misbehave, no matter how bad a member one of us may be, there is no one in AA with formal authority to fine us, censure us, or kick us out of the Fellowship. That seems to me a clear implication of both Traditions Nine and Three (requirement for membership).

I've learned, too, that I can misuse this Tradition as I have several others, to excuse my own failings. When I foul up, I can shrug my shoulders and say, "After all, we're not supposed to be well organized." But that's just a cop-out, I fear; Number Nine does not say we ought to be inefficient, lazy, dishonest, or irresponsible.

Of course, the lack of authority in AA can exasperate high-pressure types. I think of one of our most popular AA pamphlets, "What happened to Joe." The actual writing and production of it took less than four months. But before that, discussions of it had lasted *fourteen years!* Interminably, committees worried about whether to do it at all, then about how to do it, what it should say and not say, and on and on.

The process would have been much more efficient if some boss had made the decisions and given the orders. But that it not the AA way. In order to be responsible to those they serve, AA servants work carefully, coolly, prayerfully. An AA pamphlet *should* be based on such preparation, it seems to me, if it is

to represent responsibly the entire Fellowship, as all those published by AA World Services, Inc., do.

If AA were organized the way other outfits are, we could move faster, but would the result be more beneficial to *all* of us, both present members and those yet to come? For our simple stated purpose, our exasperatingly patient committees and boards are ideal, in my opinion. If we took on additional functions – such as managing buildings, providing shelter or medical services, running cafés – an entirely different kind of organizational system would, of course, be needed. Many AA operators of clubhouse and rest farms have unhappily found that out.

If we tried to organize in the conventional, orthodox ways, we could well become totally disorganized. If we had to thresh out complete agreement on such issues as rules and authority and power and money, we'd split apart. Instead, we let each man hold his own ideas, discipline himself, and march to his own drumbeat. And in joint determination to do this, we stay truly united after all.

It has been said that, if we want personal recovery, we owe this to AA's future: "to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on AA unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come."

B.L., Manhattan, N.Y. Reprinted with permission A.A. Grapevine, Feb. 1971

### Ninth Tradition Checklist

1. Do I still try to boss things in AA?
2. Do I resist formal aspects of AA because I fear them as authoritative?
3. Am I mature enough to understand and use all elements of the AA program – even if no one makes me do so – with a sense of personal responsibility?
4. Do I try to exercise patience and humility in any AA job I take?
5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any AA job?
6. Why doesn't every AA group need a constitution and bylaws?
7. Have I learned to step out of an AA job gracefully – and profit thereby – when the time comes?
8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?

### Thank You – Groups and Individuals who contributed to MAICO - 6/29/07 to 8/24/07

#### General Fund

7am St. Andrew's Grp  
 Baraboo Sat. Morning Eye Opener Grp  
 Barneveld Grp  
 Beaver Dam Fri Nite 6PM Study Grp  
 Beaver Dam Thurs. Morning Grp  
 Beloit Tues Shopiere Manor  
 Boscobel Grp  
 Campus Grp  
 DeForest Mon & Wed Grps  
 Dist. 30  
 Early Risers Grp  
 East Side Grps  
 Easy Breathers Grp  
 Expect a Miracle Grp  
 Experience, Strength & Hope Grp

Grace Lunch Grp  
 Happy Hour Grp  
 Hwy 21 Open Discussion Grp  
 Lake Wingra Serenity Grp  
 Live at Five Group  
 Mifflin St. Noon Grp  
 Monona Serenity Grp  
 Monroe No Butts Group  
 New Freedom Grp  
 New Glarus Sobrietyfest Grp  
 Not a Glum Lot Grp  
 Out to Lunch Grp  
 Pinehurst Grp  
 RC Primitive Grp  
 Reflections Grp  
 Rock River Grp

Slip Nots Grp  
 Sunday Morning Westsiders Grp  
 Sunday Serenity Group  
 Sunlight of the Spirit Grp  
 The Promises Grp  
 Wautoma Tues. Open Topic Grp  
 Whitewater Friday 11am Grp  
**Faithful Fiver & Individual Donations**  
 Greg S.  
 John S.  
 Larry L.  
 Pam & Scott J.  
 Vicki H.  
**Answering Service donation**  
 Easy Breathers Grp

## Pass it On" Upcoming Events 2007

Check MAICO website for flyers at: [www.aamadisonwi.org](http://www.aamadisonwi.org)

or

Area 75 web site: [www.area75.org](http://www.area75.org)

**August 31, Sept 1 & 2 – Ontario Fellowship Campout**, 29330 State Hwy 131, Norwalk, WI. Contact 608-337-4641. Friday, Sat & Sun am Pancake Bkfst., 8pm Speaker Meeting Fri & Sat, 10am Sun. Sat. 6pm Roast Pork Dinner. All meetings are open.

**September 3 – Foxhall Recovery Gp 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Eatin Meetin**, Trinity Lutheran Ch., 1904 Winnebago St., Madison, 5pm Dinner, 7pm Meeting, Foxhall providing sandwiches & drinks, bring dish to pass if you can. Foxhall Home Group members speaking about "what having a home group means to them."

**September 16 – Area 75 Pre-Conference Assembly**, 9am, Madison Senior Center, 330 W. Mifflin, Madison

**October 6 – New Glarus Sobriety Fest Grp 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Mini-Conference**, Shepherd of the Hills Ch., 506 12<sup>th</sup> Ave., New Glarus. Panels: 8:30am to 3:00pm. Lasagna lunch provided, please bring a salads or desserts to pass. Theme: We are not Saints.

**October 12 -14 – 27<sup>th</sup> East Central Regional Conference and Area 75 56<sup>th</sup> Fall Conference**, Holiday Inn, Exit I-43 & Hwy 151, Manitowoc, WI. Hosted by District 3. Registration forms available at [www.area75.org](http://www.area75.org) Registration: \$15.00.

**October 27 – Dist. 8/Dist. 30 Mini-Conference**, Trinity Episcopal Church, 409 E. Court, Janesville

**November 3 – 11<sup>th</sup> Annual MAICO Reps Youngtimers/Oldtimers Workshop**, Trinity Lutheran Church, 1904 Winnebago St., Madison, 10am to 3pm. Lunch provided, need volunteers for set up, cleanup and please bring a dish to pass if possible.

**November 10 & 11 – East Central Regional Forum**, Chicago, IL.

**November 16 – 18 – 18<sup>th</sup> Annual McHenry's Soberfest**, Grand Geneva Resort, Lake Geneva, WI.

[www.soberfest.org](http://www.soberfest.org) or email [info@soberfest.org](mailto:info@soberfest.org)

### MAI.C.O. Business

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

Upcoming Events If you would like your AA event listed, please email an electronic flyer to [maico@tds.net](mailto:maico@tds.net) Thanks.

Districts in our Service Area: If you would like your district minutes on the MAICO web site, just send minutes electronically to [maico@tds.net](mailto:maico@tds.net). Anonymity tradition - please make sure no last names are in the minutes.

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

#### 12 Step List

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

**FYI:** MAICO is a 501C3 non-profit corporation so your donations are tax deductible. Limit is \$3,000 per AA member per year.

#### MAICO Merchandise Catalog

Now available on the web site and/or mailed when requested.

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#### Area 75 Southern Wisconsin

Web Site: [www.area75.org](http://www.area75.org)

#### Upcoming Area 75 Conferences:

**5 State Regional/Fall 2007-** Manitowoc

**Spring 2008 –** Olympia Village, Oconomowoc

**Fall 2008 –** Holiday Inn, Fond du Lac

#### Area 74 North Wisconsin/Upper Penninsula Michigan

Web site: [www.area74.org](http://www.area74.org)

**Year to Date Income Statement: January 1 – July 31, 2007**

REVENUES

Donations.....	16,848.08	29.15%
Individual Donations .....	1,404.00	2.43%
Donations/Answering Service .....	460.00	0.80%
Conf Lit & Merch .....	17,754.24	30.72%
Grapevine Lit & Merch .....	1,204.94	2.08%
Non-Conf Literature .....	7,813.46	13.52%
Non-Conf Merchandise .....	9,603.85	16.62%
Faithful Fivers.....	209.00	0.36%
Directories .....	1,056.60	1.83%
Newsletter Subscriptions .....	5.00	0.01%
Investment Income.....	141.03	0.24%
Miscellaneous Income .....	9.48	0.02%
Big Book Study 2007 .....	855.00	2.04%
Other Income .....	65.70	0.11%
Shipping Charges Reimbursed.....	366.96	0.63%

TOTAL REVENUES ..... \$57,797.34 100.0%

COST OF SALES

Inventory Exp.-Conference Lit. ....	14,090.57	24.38%
Inventory Exp.- Grapevine .....	1,162.50	2.01%
Inventory Exp. NonConf Literature .....	6,102.00	10.56%
Inventory Exp. Non Conf Mer. ....	4,705.95	8.14%
Inventory Adjustments.....	(1,544.45)	(2.67)

TOTAL COST OF SALES ..... \$24,516.57 42.42%

GROSS PROFIT ..... \$33,280.77 57.58%

EXPENSES

Auto Expense (mileage).....	138.70	0.24%
Wages Expense.....	18,415.38	31.86%
Payroll Tax Expense.....	1,408.89	2.44%
License and Fees Expenses.....	170.00	0.29%
Supplies Expense.....	378.29	0.65%
Office Expense .....	170.44	0.29%
Bank Charges (returned check).....	6.00	0.01%
Newsletter Expense .....	120.25	0.21%
Telephone Expense.....	707.70	1.22%
Domain Name-Go Daddy Acct.....	18.23	0.03%
Answering Service Expense .....	2,911.75	5.04%
Advertising in Phone Book.....	627.00	1.08%
Postage and Shipping Expense .....	460.77	0.80%
Occupancy Expense.....	3,745.00	6.48%
Insurance Expense .....	377.00	0.65%
Printing Expense.....	28.00	0.05%
Directory Expense .....	1,522.00	2.63%
Copier Service Contract.....	100.00	0.17%
Intergroup/C.O. Seminar 2007 .....	25.00	0.04%
Big Book Study 2007 .....	353.82	0.61%
MAICO Reps Picnic 2007 .....	45.00	0.08%
Other Expense .....	119.70	0.21%
Over/Under cash on hand .....	10.52	0.02%

TOTAL EXPENSES ..... \$31,859.44 55.12%

NET INCOME over EXPENSES ..... \$1,421.33

**Provide as much of the following information as is 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's phone number\_\_\_\_\_

**Also, let us know of any changes in your group's contact person(s):**

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number\_\_\_\_\_

Group name (if any)\_\_\_\_\_

Day and time of meeting\_\_\_\_\_

Location\_\_\_\_\_