



**WE
SHARE**

**OUR GEORGIA
EXPERIENCE**

WE SHARE

Our Georgia Experience

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PREFACE

This book speaks of Georgia's AA experience with hundreds of different voices. It is not the product of one author or editor, or even of the history book committee, but of each AA member who wrote down their group's history, each delegate and old-timer who provided his or her own story, each Grapevine author whose article was material for that chapter, and more individual Georgia AA members.

The group conscience of the history book committee was to remain completely anonymous in print. The co-chairs are grateful for the efforts of everyone who contributed time and energy to this effort, and to the AA members and groups who supported the project financially by pre-paying for their copies.

The state's history is not complete in this book. Not every one of our state's treasures, the 30-year old-timers, could be interviewed in time for publication. More information is needed on several past delegates. The archives committee will continue the effort of documenting our state's rich AA history for years to come. Anyone wishing to help complete the job started in this book can reach us through the Georgia State Service Assembly Office in Macon or the state archives committee.

The book is not conference-approved, and opinions expressed are those of individual members or groups, not necessarily those of AA as a whole.

Incomplete and imperfect as it is, this book was assembled with love and gratitude, in the spirit of carrying the message.

May 1995

DISTRICT 1

In 1977 when Bob S. was elected District 1 DCM, there were 12 groups in the district. The GSRs decided to hold a monthly meeting and call it the GSR breakfast. The meeting was scheduled at 9 AM on the last Sunday of each month.

Interest in AA in the district continued to grow, and new groups were being formed. A directory of the groups and meeting schedules was printed and distributed to the groups.

Due to the large geographical area, and the growing number of groups, in 1978, the district was divided into 2 zones, Zone A to the east of the Flint River and Zone B to the west.

The GSR breakfast is now an AA service workshop open to all interested members. This has worked well as a communication tool and for sponsorship of newcomers into service work. Overall participation of the groups of District 1 in the Georgia State Service Assembly and contributions to the Assembly and to GSO remains at a high level. District 1 hosted the Georgia State AA Prepaid Convention in 1976, 1982 and 1988.

Late 1979 and early 1980 found all groups in Albany with such large attendance at all meetings that several interested members held a meeting on February 8, 1980, to make plans to relieve the problem - with a coffee pot but no resentments.

As a result the Northside Fellowship Group was formed. It was registered with the State Assembly and the first meeting held on February 14, 1980. Great success and participation in the group was enjoyed for quite some time, but then interest began to wane. By late September 1984 membership had dropped to 5 active members, the majority of whom were dissatisfied. Two members transferred to another group, the others wanted to quit attending AA, and the group was closed on October 1, 1984.

Due to new treatment centers in the area giving an influx of newcomers, the Monday Night 12 Step Group was formed from the Northside Fellowship group to provide another meeting for the newcomers. It was registered with the State Assembly December 8, 1980, and was closed in September, 1984.

At the GSR breakfast meeting in November 1982, Bo W. proposed that the district host an annual convention-type set of meetings to be known as the Sowega AA roundup. The GSRs present endorsed his plan provided he form a committee to plan and perform the necessary tasks. A committee of the following was formed: Bo W., Stokely D., Hugh S., Gwen S., C.A. S., Fred W. Bob P., Patsy T., Sara R., Barbara W., Don J., Bettye W. and Earl F. The first Sowega Roundup was held in 1983 and has been held annually since, now occurring the last week in May each year.

There are now 17 AA groups, plus 3 institutional groups, registered in District 1 Zones A and B.

Zone A

Cairo Group

On November 2, 1947, Waunee M., Ronnie H., Earl Mc., and Hansell C. came from Thomasville to help organize an AA group in Cairo. The meeting place was upstairs near the Grady Co. Health Department. The original members in Cairo, as best as is known, were Lester C., Ben B., and Art M. One meeting a week was held on Monday nights. This group was no longer active after 1949 or early 1950.

In 1976 there were 5 people from Cairo and Grady County attending the Thomasville group, who felt the need for AA in Cairo. Plans were made and the old pastorium of First Baptist Church was used as a meeting place. The first meeting was held on November 19, 1976. The charter members were Earl F., Phil M., Hubert S., Buddy M., Buddy R., and Beth S., who was named secretary. It was decided meetings would be on the first and third Friday (open) and the second and fourth (closed). Any fifth Friday would be Al-Anon. Announcements of the new meeting were made throughout the area and the first meeting had approximately 30 attending. That first meeting was an open speaker's meeting, and Clarence B. from Bainbridge was the speaker.

The group now has 30 home groups members and holds an open meeting on Fridays at 8:30, a closed meeting on Monday at 8:30, and an open discussion meeting on Sunday at 7:30. The group moved to Cairo Banking Co. on July 1, 1977, to Cairo Sales on August 1, 1978; and to Highway 84 in February 1980.

Love Group

The exact date AA started in Blakely isn't known, but it is known that the late Willard H. was instrumental in forming an AA group that met at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church for some time. When the church needed the meeting room, the group moved to the Presbyterian church in the Cuba community.

In late 1982 the group had a membership of about 12 people. Then a growth boom came about because of treatment centers in Thomasville, Albany, and Dothan, Ala. Although these centers were not AA-affiliated, they did have in their employ some recovering

alcoholics who believed in the principles and program of recovery suggested by Alcoholics Anonymous. These recovering alcoholics also believed in using every opportunity to plant the seeds of recovery in the centers' clients. It was their stressing the importance of the Steps and Traditions of AA that resulted in the forming of the Love Group.

One night, while chairing a meeting, one of the Blakely members had asked a member of the Graceville, Fla., group to come to Blakely and share his story in an open speaker meeting. He brought with him a black man who was a member of his home group. There was an immediate uproar among the older members of the original group. The chairman was told that the group didn't allow blacks to attend its meetings. The chairman's response was that he believed in the Traditions and would ask no one to leave an AA meeting simply because of his color. If they wanted the man to leave, they would have to ask him themselves. Well, they decided to allow him to stay this time, but said, "remember, next time."

As a result of the embarrassment, that chairman apologized to the 2 visitors, but didn't chair again. These events took place around February 1983.

Following the advice of sponsors and others about not making any major decisions for the first year, no immediate changes were made. But discontent had reared its head. A group of younger (sobriety-wise) members began making plans to strike out on their own. They contacted the state office to find out how to form their own group.

They registered their group with the state office in Macon; received their group handbook, and held their first meeting on a Sunday afternoon in January of 1984 in the home of a recovering couple. In attendance at this meeting were Clarence B. and "Miss Eunie," Art G., Buck and Sandy B., Judy C., Ed K. of Graceville, Gary and Lynn G., and Tommy T. Jr. In February the group started meeting at the activities room in a housing project in Blakely. They met there until June 1984.

In June, arrangements were made to start meeting in the Cuba Community courthouse, 7 miles south of Blakely on U.S. 27. The meeting night was changed to Saturday, alternating open and closed meetings. The first meeting was held July 28, 1984, and Ed K. was the speaker. Up to this point the group had only a few visitors. The move and the change of meeting days had an impact on this, however.

The group began to grow, and neighboring groups began to visit regularly. Then, in 1986, personality raised its ugly head. A black alcoholic in the community decided he might have a problem with alcohol and wanted to join the group. Some of the new and older members in recovery held a business meeting. The subject of blacks being members was brought up. They voted, "No blacks." The GSR was not at this meeting. Upon finding out the events, he went to the

DCM. The DCM went to the delegate, who went to GSO. Back through the chain came the response: "As a group you can have any type of meeting you desire. But, as an Alcoholics Anonymous group, you must adhere to the Traditions." The GSR and the founding members called another business meeting, inviting all members to attend because of the serious nature of the controversy. As a result, the "no blacks" vote was changed, we lost one member, amends were made, and our group became even closer. We also started having group conscience meetings on a regular basis.

In 1988 the first existing group moved to the mental health building. A few months later, the group stopped meeting all together. The Love Group, feeling the need for 2 meetings, picked up the Thursday night vacancy at the Cuba Courthouse, to give a Saturday night open meeting and a Thursday night closed meeting. At this time, Al-Anons started meeting in the kitchen of the courthouse on Thursday nights.

At the time of this writing, the Love Group has a roster of 24 people. Ten of these are there nearly every time the door is open, and 8 are there whenever their jobs or health will allow. The rest have either moved away or only come occasionally. One member, C.M. J., died with a year's sobriety and only one regret as he lay bedridden: that he could not attend meetings at the meeting place.

Of the founding members, all are still in attendance with the exception of 2, one of whom is known to be not drinking but only attends on special occasions. The other moved away but still remains in our prayers.

Our prayer each day is that the doors of the Love Group will always be open to the suffering alcoholic. We've learned patience, tolerance, compassion and how to love. Above all, we hope that when anyone, anywhere reaches out a hand to AA for help, the Love Group will always be there; and for that we are responsible.

Mitchell County Group

AA first started in Camilla in the '40s. The group met above a drug store at the corner of Harney and Broad streets. W.W. B. was one of the founders of this group, which was one of the largest AA groups south of Atlanta. It folded in the fifties.

C.A. "Strick" S. and Walter G. later started meetings at the St. John Vianney Catholic Church. The dates of the founding and folding of that group are unknown.

The Mitchell County Group as we know it today is a spin-off of the Thomasville Group, which met in a house on the Thomasville-Cairo Highway, and was started in Camilla by Strick,

Walter, and Ennis M. in 1974. Meetings were first held at 8:30 PM on Tuesdays at the United Methodist Church parsonage. Other early members were C.B. C., Joe B., Emma E., C.D. B., Lynn and Alva D., and Fred W.

This group grew and an old house was purchased in 1975 at 102 S. Scott St. in Camilla by Unity of Mitchell County, made up of AA members. The house was renovated by AA members. The first meeting and open house were held in September 1975. State Delegate Allen R. was guest speaker. At that time there were open speaker meetings at 8:30 PM on Tuesdays and closed meetings at 8:30 PM on Thursdays.

Today, meetings are held as follows: a study group at 8 PM Monday, an open meeting at 8:30 PM on Tuesday, a closed meeting at 8:30 PM on Thursday, and open discussion at 8 PM on Saturday. There are 22 home group members.

Seminole Group

The Seminole Group got started when C.B. C., the DCM at the time, asked some members to "find a building and start an AA group in Donalsonville." Those he asked, L.W. F., Allen B., and Marlin M., were all members of the Bainbridge Group. Bainbridge is 20 miles from Donalsonville, and the next closest meeting was in Blakely, also 20 miles away.

A small empty building was found on the east end of Second St. It was a 2-story building which at one time had been a liquor store and beer joint on the lower level, and bedrooms rented by the hour on the upper level. Later, part of it had been used as a garage. The building had been empty for a long time, and was very dirty and greasy. After a lot of cleaning and painting, the first meeting was held on the second Friday night of February 1980. The Seminole Group started off with an open meeting on Friday night and a closed meeting the next Friday night. After about 2 years the Seminole Group started having 2 meetings a week - a closed meeting on Monday night and an open speaker meeting on Friday night.

C.B. asked the other groups in the area to support the new group, and it wasn't long before a wall had to be torn out. The little building was in full recovery. The place was packed every Friday night. It seems fitting that where once the alcohol flowed freely that sobriety should flower and grow. In November of 1987 the Seminole Group moved to a larger building at 130 Second St.

The group had the support of the Bainbridge, Cairo, Camilla, and Blakely groups for 2 or 3 years, and still have many visitors from those groups.

Some of the first members of the Seminole Group were Fred I., Gordon W., Buren W., Ellen H., Claude A., Billy N., and Buddy W.

Two of these original members have passed on. Of Buddy W., who died with 2 years sobriety, it was said, "He stayed sober on the Serenity Prayer." L.W. F. passed away in 1992 with almost 14 years sobriety. After the group was going, one of the founders started drinking again and was in and out for about 2 years. His sobriety date is now July 5, 1983.

At the present time, the membership of the Seminole Group is approximately 42. It has had the normal ups and downs, but has continued to grow, and now has a Big Book study on Wednesday night. The group is known for its warm, friendly people and the good bar-b-que at eating meetings.

Zone B

Albany Central Group

In May of 1946, Fritz F., Steve S. and Paul E. met at the rectory of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, located at 212 N. Jefferson for the purpose of starting an AA group in Albany. Also present at this meeting was the pastor of St. Paul's, the Rev. G. M., a non-alcoholic. Rev. M. gave his support and blessing for this meeting, for he had long recognized a need for AA meetings in this area. Rev. M. continued his personal support for AA meetings as long as he remained in the Albany area.

The AA meeting continued on a weekly basis at St. Paul's. Fritz F. made contact with the GSO in New York and the Albany Central Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was founded. During 1948 the Tri-State May AA Meeting was started by Monty M., with the help of Eddie O., W. E. Steve S., Jimmy G., Ralph D., and Robby R.. The Tri-State May meetings were originally held starting in May of 1948 at the Radium Spring Casino and later moved to the new Albany Hotel in 1963. These May meetings were attended by AA members from Southeast Georgia, North Florida, and Eastern Alabama. The May meetings continued through 1966. Then all efforts and support were directed toward the Georgia State AA Pre-Paid Convention.

When the election for our first delegate was held in Atlanta in 1951, Monty M. and Neely D. wound up in a tie. Monty said, "Ladies first." He subsequently was elected as our second State Delegate in 1954-55. At the beginning of Monty's road to sobriety, he and his wife, Mary drove to Atlanta twice a week for an AA meeting until he heard a group had started at St. Paul's Church.

The Central Group moved from St. Paul's to an upstairs location at 1371/2 Broad Ave. during May 1948. AA membership was growing by this time, reflecting an increase from the original 3 to approximately 25 members. Some other members before January 1950 were L.G. M., Jerry M., William C., Earl C., C.C. S., E.G. N., Glen L., Pat L., and Paul F. The members saw a need for a larger meeting place and selected the Broad Ave. location. Central continued to meet at this location for the next 11 years. As the membership grew and alcoholics were coming to meetings from all over Southeast Georgia they saw a need to start two additional discussion meetings at different locations.

Monty M., Donald W. and Bill D. started a Thursday night discussion meeting at the William B. Apartments in 1955, while a Marine by the name of Sgt. H. started a Saturday night discussion meeting at the Old East Albany Morningside Methodist Church. These two meetings continued at these locations until Serenity, Inc., purchased the property at 416 Highland Ave. in 1959. They began additional discussion meetings at the Central location.

In June of 1959, the leaser of the Broad Ave. property increased the rent. The group could not afford to pay the increase, so it moved to a temporary meeting place at the Albany YMCA at the corner of Pine Ave. and Jefferson St. While at the YMCA, Courtney M. spearheaded a move to form Serenity Inc. (The name Serenity was given by Al-Anon Nancy M., Courtney's wife. She also provided valuable history data for this report.)

Courtney and the group members obtained the law offices of Perry, Walters and Longstaff for the purpose of drafting and obtaining a charter for a non-profit corporation that could purchase property for rent to AA members, and that would provide for a permanent residence where alcoholics could meet and share their experience, strength, and hope in recovery.

After many days of research, drafts, and administrative efforts, a petition in final form was forwarded to the Superior Court requesting that a corporate body be established as Serenity, Inc. On August 19, 1959, the Secretary of State issued a charter establishing Serenity, Inc., which was approved by the Superior Court August 22, 1959. The charter was filed with the Clerk of Superior Court of Dougherty County August 24.

The first meeting of the corporation was held at the offices of three lawyers on Pine Ave. in Albany on September 12, 1959. Present at this meeting were Courtney (elected chairman), Donald W., Raymond M., George K., M.V. "Bill" McC., W.L. "Bill" D., Bill D., and Robert L. During the meeting the following were elected as directors of Serenity Inc.: For a 2-year term, Donald W., Raymond M., George K., Bill McC., Bill D., BenD., and Courtney M; for a 1-year term, Monty, Bill D., J.L. L., Jimmy G., and Eddie O.

After establishment of Serenity Inc., Courtney and the group members set about finding a building to purchase. A house was located at 416 Highland Ave. for a price of \$5,000. That presented a major problem due to lack of funds, but Serenity Inc. members made some donations. With those funds, Courtney obtained an interest-free loan from a Mr. H. and put the property up as security. Thus the first property came into being for Serenity Inc., which started renting the property to the Albany Central Group.

The group moved from the YMCA during August 1959, at which time all members went through the long and laborious task of complete renovation of the house, going to any length to provide a place not only for their own recovery but also for alcoholics yet to come. After many days and weeks of renovation, many pots of coffee, scouring, praying, self-help and testing of each member's serenity, the house at 416 Highland Ave. was complete.

AA continued to grow in the Albany area as well as other areas of Southwest Georgia. AA groups started in Sylvester, Camilla, Dawson, Cuthbert, Americus, Vienna-Cordele and other areas. Members of the Albany Central Group were instrumental in helping many of these groups get started.

Albany Central AA Group remained at 416 Highland Ave. and continued to grow in members and unity for the next 13 years. A discussion meeting known as the St. Patrick's meeting because it met at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church was started by a member, Ernie R. It continued until about 1965 when it returned to the Central Group. An opportunity arose for Serenity Inc. to purchase the property located at 427 Flint Ave., which it was felt would provide a better location to meet as well as a good investment. After much discussion pro/con, on May 16, 1972, Serenity Inc. purchased the house located at 427 Flint Ave. They sold the property at 416 Highland Ave. and secured a loan for the difference, which was paid off in the first quarter of 1978.

The Albany Central Group moved to 427 Flint Ave. in July 1972 and continued to rent from Serenity Inc. But again, before the move, a very laborious renovation task faced the members. With very little funds they set about the renovation project with rigorous action. With a can-do attitude and with only self-help labor, they began. They employed the professional skills of the membership, i.e., carpenters, plumbers, electricians, painters and helpers. Many ladies of Al-Anon also worked, furnishing supplies and an abundance of food for eating meetings that created a spirit of unity and camaraderie for the task at hand. Finally the renovation was completed and Central moved to where it is located today. These alcoholics and Al-Anons placed principles way above personalities and joined together in a united effort to provide a place for themselves and other alcoholics. Their dedication and efforts are still remembered at 427 Flint Ave. Some of the people

involved in this renovation project were Ruth D., Bill K., Mary M., Frank McK., Jim P., Tom S., Gene C., Ira J., Courtney M., Chuck N., Jim DeF., Peggy G., Weldon P., Pinkey S., Grady M., Bill T., Nina T., and Jim Mc.B.

By the early '60s and '70s, AA had grown in the Albany area (as well as others areas in SoWeGa) at such a rapid pace that the members saw a need for other groups at different locations in Albany. This would facilitate the rapid growth in AA members and provide a geographical balance of AA groups and members in the Albany area, possibly attracting the suffering alcoholic on his/her home ground. The following additional Albany groups have formed: the Homewood Group (November 1972), Whispering Pines Group (July 1974), Morningside Group (January 1974), Turner Field Group (September 1977), Big Book Study Group (November 1985), and North Jackson St. Who Group (November 1988).

The early pioneers of AA of this area worked diligently, not only to maintain their own sobriety, but in love and compassion for the alcoholics yet to come. Their efforts, accomplishments and memories will always be with us and shall echo forever in the rooms and places where AA meets in Southwest Georgia. We are sorrowed by the passing of many of our early AA pioneers. However, we can, with faith and confidence, read again the closing line of our Big Book: "They shall be with us in the fellowship of the spirit, and we will surely meet them again as we trudge the road of happy destiny. May God bless us and keep us until then."

Americus Group

This account was written by Mildred D.

On the 14th day of July, 1967, God answered our prayers and gave us new life when we, Bill and Mildred D. of Americus, made our first AA meeting at the Albany Central Group. At the time there was no group in Americus.

Courtney M. of Albany and Clarence of Warner Robins got together with us to get an AA group started here in Americus. On September 12, 1967, the Americus AA Group was established with the help of Marie N. of Americus and other members from Albany and Warner Robins groups. The meetings were started on Tuesday nights at the Calvary Episcopal Church on Lee St. Bill was the first GSR. Other early members were Edith S. and Sam.

In June of 1971, the group moved to the Wise Clinic building on Jackson St. In January 1975, we moved to the McDonald building on McGarrahe St, and in June 1987, we moved to the old Anthony School on Anthony Dr. In 1993 we moved into our own clubhouse.

The Friday night meeting was started on October 20, 1971, and the Monday night meeting on April 26, 1982. The group was started with 3 members holding 1 meeting a week. Today there are 3 meetings and 62 members.

Cuthbert Group

AA came to Cuthbert in this manner: Elton B. and Ted N. were drinking together in the pool room one night in late 1951. Elton had heard of AA forming a group in Eufaula, Ala., and Ted offered to take him to a meeting. They went to several meetings, and then Ted pitched his "drunk of all drunks." He then decided he might need AA as much as Elton. In the meantime, three other men got interested, and the five of them met upstairs in a local store building to organize the group in early 1952. They were Ted, Elton, Jim C., Curtis S. and Oliver S. Oliver is the only early member still living. Only Ted maintained continuous sobriety until his death in 1968.

After meeting in the store for several weeks, a beautiful lady friend, Mrs. L., offered her "house on the lake" for the group's meetings. The group continued meeting there until it moved to the basement of the Cuthbert Library in 1956. Heat was provided by a pot-bellied stove. Later a window unit air conditioner and a gas heater were installed. Meetings were held as they are today: Monday nights open and Thursday nights closed.

Within a year, Roy K., Herland S., Woodrow L., and Ross R. joined the fellowship. The groups from Albany and Eufaula were a great help from the beginning, and the three groups joining together in singleness of purpose made for good attendance.

In 1960 the first lady appeared on the scene under the sponsorship of Ted N. She was not "cheerfully accepted" in the beginning because the members thought the fellowship was for men only. This was short-lived and June D. too has 100% sobriety to date.

In the first 6 months of meetings, one of the original 5 members got drunk, and the group debated whether to put him out of AA. With extra consultations with Eufaula and Albany members, it was decided to allow him to remain with a few extra "dos and don'ts."

In the early days, members would drive within a radius of 200 miles to a meeting, then go to work the next day. Now we apologize for asking a speaker to drive 50 or 60 miles.

In 1988, the Cuthbert Group bought a building. This required a lot of effort, both individually and collectively. Wyatt B. and Ed Kent C. worked for weeks, day and night, on electrical, plumbing, and endless structural jobs. An extra bathroom, a kitchen and an Al-Anon room were built. Oscar B. donated a heat pump, and money sacrifices

were made by all members. It is all paid for and the group is an especially happy family.

Since moving, the group has had several fish fries at Jean H.'s riverfront home and also had one highly successful cookout at the meeting hall made possible by Ed Kent C.

The Cuthbert Group has one very unique quality that is worth telling and re-telling. After 40 years, the group is meeting in the building that was once the pool room where Elton B. first asked Ted N. to take him to an AA meeting in Eufaula!





DISTRICT 2

In January 1989, Helen H. was elected DCM of District 2. Her alternate DCM was Virginia S. and secretary/treasurer was Sonny E.

Helen did not serve a day as DCM due to a sudden illness. She turned her duties over to her alternate, Virginia, who was filling in with hopes of Helen being able to return. Helen passed away in March 1989. At this time, Virginia was elected DCM and Bruce R., alternate.

District 2 remained undivided until March 1991 when it was decided to split the district into 2 zones. In Zone A, Art B. was elected DCM; Charles N., alternate DCM; Gayle L., secretary/treasurer; Blackie W., institutional representative, and Donnie Johnson, Grapevine representative. In Zone B, Bruce R. was elected DCM; Lynn R., alternate DCM, J.C. B., secretary/treasurer. Terry W. became institutional representative.

One of the former groups in District 2A was the Lambda Group, which was founded by Danny M., and met at the Unitarian Church in Valdosta on Sunday and Wednesday evenings.

Zone A

Alamo Group

The Moultrie Alamo Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in January 1947. Bill M., now deceased, is credited with getting the group started. Bill, who had worked with Dr. Bob on several occasions getting groups started, was on his way to Florida. He stopped over in Moultrie for a few days to help get the group started. The first few meetings were held in different members' homes. They then started meeting at the Chastain Bicycle Shop. Later the group moved to the upstairs of the Chastain Building on West Central Avenue. They moved from there to the Huber Building, which today is the home of Sherwin-Williams Paint Company.

After a few more moves, the group finally found a permanent home. The estate of one of the original members, Zack C., donated a lot to build a clubhouse on. Through donations and work from the members and friends and a \$2500 loan from a local bank, the Alamo Clubhouse was built. In June 1956, the new meeting place was formally dedicated. For a long time only one meeting a week, an open speaker meeting, was held. Finally, after much discussion from the group, a closed discussion meeting was started on Thursday nights. In the latter '70s, a meeting was taken to the Colquitt County Correctional Institution.

After a few years, a problem with the county warden caused this institutional meeting to end. In the late '80s, under a new warden,

this meeting was started again and is still being carried on every Wednesday night at 7:30. Besides the prison meeting, the Moultrie Alamo Group has four meetings a week at the clubhouse. On Monday, there is a young people's meeting; on Tuesday, an open speaker meeting; on Thursday, a closed discussion meeting; and on Saturday, an open discussion meeting. All meetings start at 8:30 PM. Besides these five meetings, a meeting is carried to "The Turning Point," an alcohol and drug treatment center, every Sunday night at 8:30. This meeting rotates between being a speaker meeting one Sunday, and the next a closed discussion meeting. Moultrie Alamo Clubhouse is located on the corner of 7th St. S.E. and 2nd Ave. S.E.

AA is alive and well in Moultrie.

Baytree Fellowship Group

The Baytree Fellowship Group was started on August 7, 1979, at the Messiah Lutheran Church on 500 Baytree Rd. The first members were Wilbern D., Don S., June T., Doug W., and James H. They shared the meeting room with the Freedom Al-Anon Group, which met at the same time, 8:30 PM on Thursday nights. Soon, however, the Baytree AA Group got so large that the Al-Anon Group moved to the First Christian Church on N. Patterson St. in Valdosta. During the same time period, the AA group started a "Book Study Meeting" at 8:30 PM on Tuesday nights at First Christian Church. This meeting was terminated due to lack of participation as well as economical reasons. The Baytree AA Group has 2 meetings weekly at the current meeting place at 500 Baytree Road, an open discussion meeting every Thursday night and a speaker meeting on Sunday night.

During the month of August each year, the group's birthday is celebrated with an ice cream social. Group members provide the ice cream and other goodies, plus other groups are invited and are asked to bring cookies, cakes, etc., if they so desire. It is a very successful event, and we look forward to it with great anticipation and enthusiasm.

On the second Sunday during the month of October, the group hosts the District 2 Inter-Group. As the host group, we provide all meats, coffee, tea, etc., as well as the meeting place and the speaker. We attribute the great response of the meeting to the speakers we have provided in the past. To select our speaker, the group purchases four tapes, and a committee selected by the group conscience is asked to listen to all 4 tapes. After listening to the tapes, each committee member is asked to list his/her preference, in 1, 2, 3, 4 order. Our first preference is contacted for their availability. If he or she is not available we go down the list. In the past, we have only had to contact our first preference on the list, and he or she comes and speaks. We

ask speakers from throughout the state so we don't use a local speaker too often at this function. Until recently, the group has had a group inventory annually. However, the last two have been farther apart since there was lack of concern when the yearly inventory came around. This is an example of one of this groups' difficulties, which, we are sure, every AA group has.

Brooks County Fellowship Group

The Brooks County Fellowship Group of Quitman was organized August 31, 1953, by Jimmy K., who had been attending a Thomasville meeting for about six months. There were seven charter members in the first meeting. Two of these seven are still living. The group grew over the years, and remains a steady A.A. force to this date. The group has helped organize groups in Valdosta, Morven and Lakeland, Ga., and in Madison and Cherry Lake, Fla.

Living Sober Today Group

Living Sober Today Group was founded in August of 1992 and was first known as the Moultrie AA Study Group. The founders were Doris H. and Debbie D. The first meetings were held on Mondays at 8:30 PM at Debbie's home. In October of 1992 our meetings were moved to the Catholic Church of Moultrie. Today there is a closed discussion meeting on Monday and Friday nights at 8:30 PM, with Monday being a Big Book study meeting.

We are still new and therefore don't have terrific attendance. But let it be known that one of us is always there with the door open and the coffee pot on. Eventually, we hope to have a monthly "birthday" celebration, covered dish supper, and an open speaker meeting. We both realize that starting a group means a long period of commitment with low attendance.

Nashville Friendship Group

Originally known as Nashville Family Group, it is unknown if it was a mixed AA - Al-Anon group, and thus ineligible for registration with GSO. We registered with the GSO on 5/7/85 and the state on 2/9/87. The founder was Emory H. Other early members were Emory H., Theo S., Harvey V. and Halls, Tom. The following are some of the

early members who are now deceased: Joe Mack S., Thurman P., Rhoda, and Buss S.

Our first meeting was held in an old house belonging to First Baptist Church, which has since been removed. The first meetings were an open discussion and a speaker meeting. The group moved to the Woodmen of the World Building from May 1991 to October 1992. It also has met at Berrien County Hospital. It presently meets at St. Mary's Catholic Church. Our current meetings are held on Saturday (open discussion), and Tuesdays (open Tradition and Step meeting). Our home group membership is 10.

Emory H. thinks the Nashville Family Group was registered with GSO in '75 or '76, but GSO has no record of a group by that name. First Baptist Church was very helpful and gave their full cooperation to getting the group started in '75 or '76. This group was a spin-off of the Tift Area Group in Tifton.

The podium was built and donated by Powell's Cabinet Works of Nashville. The Twelve Steps that were on the wall were hand made by Joe Mack S., a draftsman by trade. They were framed and put behind glass and donated by Joe's brother-in-law, a jeweler in Adel. The steps almost covered one end of the meeting room. Their current location is not known.

In 1974 and 1975, Emory H. of Thomasville and Joe Mack S. and Thurman P. were attending AA in Tifton. They decided to start a group in Nashville. They had excellent support from the Tifton group, their "mother group." They also had good attendance from Ashburn, Sycamore, Moody Field, Valdosta, and Lakeland. Nashville residents, all churches, city officials, and the police and sheriff's departments were all fully supportive. The reason the group broke up at one time (the year is not known) boils down to putting personalities before principles, thereby destroying the unity of the group. The surviving founder, who provided this account, says he was the chief offender.

The current GSR, Jim W., whose sobriety date is 10-25-90, says there was a group, apparently unregistered, meeting at City Hall in 1981 and 1982, which he attended for a while. The first appearance of a registered group in GSO records was the current Nashville Friendship Group, founded by Bill O., Andy P., Jr., G.W. M and a few others.

The group struggled along with four or five members, with some of the founders "dropping out", until about the middle of 1992. At that time it gradually began to grow. Today it has about 10 active members and eight or 10 inactive ones. Attendance is usually from 10 to 15 at meetings. For the first time, yearly intergroup meetings are being held in Nashville.

The Third Tradition Group

This is an institutional group which is held inside a residential recovery center for women named the Women's Bridges of Hope. The first meeting was held in September of 1991. Marco and Rose W. were our first speakers. The founders of our group were Vicki B., Marco W. and Rosemary W., and the first meetings were held at 8 PM on Sundays and were speaker meetings. Today we have three meetings a week, on Monday and Saturday, an 8 PM open discussion meeting, and on Sunday at 6 PM a speakers meeting. Our present group membership is 12 but our number keeps growing.

Thomas County Friendship Group

The Thomas County Friendship Group was organized in November, 1981, at Southwestern State Hospital in Thomasville. There were approximately seven charter members: Charlie P., Betty P. (AlAnon), Emory H., Bill E., Lonnie W (now deceased), Sylvia W., and Adam H.

The group met on Sunday nights on the old Alcohol and Drug Treatment Program unit. That unit was closed in 1985 and the AA group moved to Archway, the new treatment location in Thomasville. It remained there until that program was ended in 1986. Friendship Group then relocated to its present location at Balfour Lumber Company.

The first speaker program was presented in 1982 by David L., who came from "The Haven," a treatment facility in Dothan, Ala.

Wayne B. was superintendent of the hospital at the time the group was started and along with Brice G., unit director, gave the group the support it needed to begin and grow.

Although times have changed and the group has had many problems, (e.g., once the money was stolen, and on another occasion someone came drinking and threatening someone and had to be escorted away), it has steadily grown and is viable and strong. It presently has a large gathering weekly on Wednesday and Friday nights at 8 PM.

The group is also setting up an institutional AA group again at Southwestern State Hospital, where it began 12 years ago. This meeting will be held on Friday nights at 7 PM. The group has come full circle and survived the test of time.

We proudly call ourselves the "Friendship Group" as we have never forgotten the need for good fellowship, love, support, and friends in the process of our recovery.

Valdosta Unity

Jimmy K. of Quitman informed the Valdosta Unity Group that the first meetings in Valdosta were held in November 1954. Those meetings became the Valdosta Unity Group. No records of names and dates are available.

Zone B**Abbeville Recovery Group**

The Abbeville Recovery Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was begun by Kelley M., David M., and Durham Wilcox on June 17, 1991. They had been attending meetings and were members of the Hawkinsville Home Group in Hawkinsville. David and Kelley M. had been attending the meetings in Hawkinsville since October of 1987. They had been blessed with two little "AA babies," Olly, born on October 3, 1988, and Libbey, born on February 25, 1991. The group was started partly because of the need to be closer to home on meeting nights. The other reason was because there were no other meetings in Wilcox County, which was a new frontier for sobriety and fertile with many new prospects for the fellowship.

The meetings were begun on June 17, 1991, in the conference room of a local law office at 122 South Broad Street, in Abbeville. Kelley M. was elected as the group's first GSR, and David M. as the secretary and treasurer. On September, 1991, Warner H. was elected as the Grapevine representative. On September 30, 1991, Francine W. was elected PI/CPC representative. Larry T. was elected as the group's first alternate GSR on May 7, 1991.

In October, 1991, the group moved its meetings to the Lions Club Building, located at 228 Industrial Boulevard. The building was on a dirt road which was not passable when it rained. So, if the weather was bad, the meeting had to be held at the old meeting place. On one night the meeting had to be adjourned early because it had started raining very hard.

The group received support by visits from other groups in the area. Members from Crisp County, Fitzgerald, Eastman, McRae, Sylvester, Hawkinsville, and Hartford were frequent visitors during the first year. Crisp County members continue to attend regularly. Members of the Abbeville Group also make the Friday night Big Book study meetings in Crisp County their regular weekly meeting. That meeting is usually followed by a "meeting after the meeting" at a local restaurant.

The group had its first party and speaker meeting in October, 1991, celebrating birthdays of Kelley and David M. The first Christmas party was on December 13, 1991, with Tom E. as the speaker, and a group birthday party on June 20, 1992, with Linda B. as the speaker.

In October, 1992, the local Lions Club made the building a non-smoking facility. The group found a new meeting place at Autumn Woods Apartments on Owensboro Road in Abbeville. The meetings are currently held there at 8:30 PM on Monday (closed) and Thursday (open), except for the third Thursday, when the meetings are held at 122 South Broad Street.

Big Book Recovery

The Big Book Recovery Group was started in 1986 as a spinoff of the Fitzgerald Group. The group founders were Lloyd P., Sandy P., Bob P. and Ruth P. Other early members were Charles C. and Jim B. The first meetings were held at members' homes. The group was started as a "study" group and has remained the same.

The group currently meets in the Sunday School room of the First Methodist Church, where it moved in 1989. There are ten members currently. The longest sobriety is 21 years; the shortest is 30 days. With an average of seven years, we stay sober one day at a time.

Crisp County Group

The Crisp County Group of Cordele was founded February 17, 1985. The first trusted servants of the group were: GSR, Ted B.; Alternate GSR, Scott G.; Secretary/Treasurer, Mike McN.; Grapevine Representative, Mattie G.

Other early members of the group were Joly J., Bob N., Chris A., Chris C., Henry B., Todd H., Wallace H., Quincy L., and Willie P.

Meetings were first held at the courthouse. During the first year there were special study meetings on the Steps, the Big Book, and "AA Comes of Age."

Several addicts participated in the AA group in the beginning, but because of "singleness of purpose," they left to form an NA group. This changed the slate of trusted servants, and Joey J. was voted into the secretary/treasurer position.

Through the effort of Bob N., in January of 1986 the Agilis House was born. Agilis (Grace in Action) is a non-profit organization formed for the prevention and recovery of alcohol and drugs by members of the clergy, physicians and other civic-minded individuals.

Included also in the forming of this group were a few AA members who later withdrew due to conflict of traditions. As a group effort the house was cleaned and readied for use. Chairs, tables and couches, etc. were donated by the church, civic organizations and interested citizens.

During the first year of AA in the Agilis House, special events included an Intergroup in January. A beginner's meeting was started also but it did not go over well.

In 1987, Bob N. left town and Ted B. resigned as GSR. During this year membership and attendance started falling off.

In the third year of Agilis (1988), the group seemed in big trouble as the membership dropped to 2 members: Marvin C. and Mattie G. Then members from a neighboring group in Americus started joining them on Thursday night. Before long 2 people from the Vienna Group changed their membership to the Cordele Group. So, as the story goes - the AA story - with the help of a few caring and needy people, the Crisp County Group started a new growth. Even with the growth of the group, all problems weren't solved. Mattie and Marvin had to serve a second term as trusted servants since no one else would or could fill the positions.

During this year (1988), we started a noon meeting on Wednesday and Friday that was successful for a while, but lack of support eventually closed the meeting. It was also around this time that 3 of the men came up with the idea of putting a sign on the lawn in front of the Agilis building with the group's name and the meeting times. This drew some controversy, but later things blew over and the sign remained.

Coming on up to 1992-93, the Crisp County Group continues to move forward. We are now taking a meeting to Crisp County Detention Center on Wednesday nights at 7:00. Once a month on Sunday night we take a meeting to Hahira Detox Center. We had a successful Twelve Step Study meeting with Tim G. on a Saturday in August. Currently we have a study group on Friday night at 8:00. In December of 1992 we had our first quarterly birthday- eating meeting celebrating members' "AA" birthdays.

In our seventh year of struggles we are still in the business of recovery. The sign that Don S. made for our entrance tells it all: "you are welcome here".

One Day at a Time Group

The One Day at a Time Group was started in July 1991 by members of the Tift Area Group who felt a need for smaller group meetings and a better meeting place.

The early members, who were and still are members of the group, are J.R. R., W.T. W., Clyde G., David T., Gibbs P., Ed R., and the late James S. They were able to secure an old house and, with a lot of support from other AA members, renovate it into a beautiful meeting place.

From July to October 1991 they met as an open fellowship of AA. In November 1991 the group was named. The meetings are held on Mondays (8:30 PM closed Big Book study), Thursdays (8:30 PM open speaker), and Fridays (7:00 PM open beginners). In January 1994, the group started a closed discussion meeting on Sundays at 5 PM.

The One Day at a Time Group strongly supports the institutional facilities in the area such as the Tift County Work Camp, the Hahira Detox, and anyone else who asks for help. We want the hand of AA always to be there.

Saturday Recovery Group

The Saturday Recovery Group is a spin-off of the old Fitzgerald Group with a closed discussion meeting on Saturday at 8:30 PM and an open discussion meeting on Tuesday at 7:30 PM.

The group was founded on April of 1986 by Lloyd P., Sandy P., Jim B., and Charles C. Other early members included Jim B., Bruce S., Neal S., and Virginia P. Early trusted servants were Lloyd P., Secretary/Treasurer, and Jim B., GSR. The first meeting was held at the First Presbyterian Church in Fitzgerald. Early meetings were held on Saturday at 8:30 PM.

Currently, the group meets on Saturday at 8:30 PM and on Tuesdays at 7:30 PM at the Fitzgerald Primitive Baptist Church, where it moved in April of 1991. Prior to that, the group had moved to the Herald-Leader office building in June of 1988.

The group was recognized as being registered officially with GSO with a letter of welcome dated September 2, 1986. The group celebrates birthdays once a year at the group anniversary meeting in September.

Sylvester Group

Late in 1967, the "Sylvester Bunch" (as they were known before they formed a group) were strongly encouraged by Courtney M. from an Albany AA group to establish their own AA group in Sylvester. There were 18 in this bunch that faithfully got together to visit neighboring groups. This was more than an adequate number to start a meeting, and so it began - the Sylvester AA Group!

The first few meetings were held at the American Legion Hall. But due to the special interest of some Legion members who checked out who attended the meetings, they began to look into another site.

In 1968, Henry Hall W. got the approval of the group to go before the official board of the Methodist Church for permission for AA to meet in the church. Permission was given. Meetings were held every Friday night at 8 PM. Since the church would not accept any rent, to be in compliance with the Seventh Tradition, the AA group bought a wax and buffing machine for them. The group met at the church for approximately 8 1/2 years.

The Sylvester Group hosted their first Intergroup meeting at the VFW in 1969. The speaker was CDC from Statesboro.

Vee W. had a car that was referred to as the "AA car." It was called this because it was used for frequent out-of-town meetings, Twelve Step calls, and trips to the Georgia clinics.

Even though there weren't many groups in the area, getting speakers for a meeting was never a problem. Speakers would travel from all over the state of Georgia. In fact, Sylvester's first speaker for a meeting came from Tallahassee, Fla. Distance did not seem to be the issue when it came to carrying the message to another alcoholic.

In 1975 the Woolard Hotel closed and Henry Hall W. and Vee W. offered part of the upstairs to AA and Al-Anon for a permanent meeting place. At that time, Bridges B., George B., and others took 3 rooms, removed 2 partitions, and made one large meeting room. They also fixed up a room across the hall for a coffee room and another single room for Al-Anon meetings. At this time, Al-Anon became truly established and began having meetings on Tuesday nights. The AA group added another meeting night, giving them Tuesday night for a closed meeting and Friday night for open speaker meetings. Today, Al-Anon has the same night for meetings and chairs and provides the speaker on any fifth Friday night.

Members of the Sylvester AA Group helped others start groups of their own. Henry Hall W. and Vee W. supported 6 other alcoholics in getting a group started in Tifton. Another time during the growing pains of the group, consideration was given to the merging of the Sylvester and Ashburn groups. Eventually the Ashburn group more or less dissolved, and the Sylvester group continued. It was around 1975 that an AA group was started at the Worth County Correctional Institute by Warren B., Charles W., Clyde J. and others. This continued several years and through this group many alcoholics found their way into sobriety and service work in AA.

In the early days, Twelve Step calls were the main way of introducing the suffering alcoholic to the fellowship of AA. There were very few detox and treatment centers in this area of the U.S. and therefore it was up to the members of the group to answer the call for

help. Some of the members who carried the message to the end of their lives were Charles W., Warren B., Johnny M., and Ray J. And yes, there were many who came through the doors but didn't keep coming back. There was even a beloved member who could not deal with life of life's terms and ended her life.

There are many things that are worth noting in the growth of Sylvester's AA Group. Instead of just having one woman as in the beginning, there are more than 10. Vee Woolard celebrated 28 years of continuous sobriety in 1992 (had it not been for one 24-hour period, it could have been 38 years). The group now meets 3 nights a week, Tuesday, Friday and Sunday. Treatment centers join us on site for an AA meeting. And by the Grace of God, the doors are open today.

The group has many wonderful times together. Birthdays of members are celebrated on the Friday night following the individual's sobriety date and they choose their own speaker. We have family get-togethers 5 or 6 times a year at the meeting place or at a member's home. The menu will range from hamburger/ hotdog cookouts to navy beans and ham, fried fish to covered dish suppers. At Christmas time we set aside a special night for food, fellowship and exchange of gifts. The main ingredient needed at these gatherings are acceptance, support and love.

Over the years, the number of members has varied, but the group has managed to stay together and grow through the Grace of God, the love of one alcoholic for another, and the common desire to stay sober.

Tiftarea Group

The group first met at the parish house of the Episcopal Church on Wednesday (closed) and Saturday (open) at 8:30 PM.

It currently meets on Tuesday and Wednesday (closed), Friday (beginners) and Saturday (open speaker). There are 35 members currently. The group moved from the Administration Building to Elderly Village on 16th Street.

After 2 unsuccessful attempts, the Tiftarea Group of AA organized in May, 1959. The first members were Johnny O., Emogene O., D. C. and Marilee I., with dedicated help from Father Van C. With help from neighboring groups from Moultrie and Albany, the group began to grow. Some of the early members were: Arthur T., Coburn B., Pauline C., Pete K., Bob W., Bill W., Dexter H., John F., Jerry F., Gene E., Donna L., Bobby K., Harold H., and "T" G. In order to be able to attend a meeting each night, several of these members traveled to Fitzgerald, Moultrie, to a home in Hahira, and to Valdosta. At one

of these meetings in Valdosta, Jerry F. collapsed during the Lord's Prayer and died the next day. Some of the early members came from other locations such as Nashville, Ashburn, and Ocilla. Father Van C. was a great building force, but when he left the area the group was fortunate enough in receiving help from Father Sammy C., Reverend John G., and other ministers.

At the very beginning, some of the meetings were held in homes of the members. They began with a closed meeting on Wednesday night and open speaker meeting on Saturday night. These meetings were later moved to a house on 4th Street, and the parish house of the Episcopal church. At one time they met on a porch of a house belonging to Harold H. Later they moved to the Tift County Courthouse Annex, and from there to their present location at the clubhouse of the Elderly Village.

There have been 2 other groups organized as spinoffs from the Tiftarea Group. They are the Big Book Study Group, and the One Day at a Time Group. The group has also started a meeting at the Tift County Correctional Center, which is being held weekly.

The group celebrates birthdays on the first Saturday of each month. They now hold closed meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, a beginner's meeting on Friday nights, and an open speaker meeting on Saturday nights.

Our group is approaching its 34th birthday. We remain a close-knit group, and want the hand of AA always to be there.

DISTRICT 3

Zone A

The Big Book Group

The Big Book Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in late 1968 by Bill M. Some of the original members were Ray H., Joan G., Brownie B., Raymond B. and Mary L.

Closed discussion meetings were held at St. Mark's Episcopal Church on Thursday nights, and open discussion meetings were held on St. Simon's Island on Sunday morning at the King and Prince Hotel, where members would have breakfast prior to the meeting.

Roy T. and Chuck W. joined the group in 1970. When the 1212 Club opened on Union Street the group moved to that location. At this time, the group split and a new group was formed on St. Simon's Island. There were times when the only members of the Big Book Group in attendance were Roy T. and Chuck W. When Roy's occupation kept him from meetings and Chuck's work took him out of town, members from other groups would chair meetings for them.

Peggy L., Don L. and Chuck L. became members in the 1970's. When the club house on Union Street burned, the group moved to the Alco Service Club on what is now Martin Luther King Boulevard, where it still meets on Thursday nights and Sunday mornings.

Chuck W. has celebrated 20 years of continuous sobriety with the Big Book Group. The group now boasts a membership of 34, and attendance at meetings is usually half or better.

Goodwill Group

The Goodwill Group, originally called the St. Simons Island Group, was founded by Rosemary H., George M., and Mary G. Other early members were Sam H., Clarence P., Laura M., and Hamilton D. The group first met at Myrtle's Beauty Salon in Longview Shopping Center, but moved to the Presbyterian Church in 1978. The group was named by Mary G., a lady in her early 80s who had just celebrated her first year of sobriety. At that time, wooden chips were given out to mark time in the fellowship. Mary had made a necklace with her chips and wore it all the time.

The group now has 20 members and meets on Mondays (closed discussion) and Thursdays (Step meeting) at 8 PM and on Wednesdays (closed discussion) and Fridays (11th Step meeting) at 11:30 AM.

Into Action Group

In April 1991, founding members Ray H. and Frank H., wanting to refocus entirely on AA's primary purpose without the influence or diversion of a club, felt an urgent need for an AA meeting to be centrally located in Glynn Co.

Ray's preacher was contacted and he responded with a resounding yes. The Reverent Maynard P. even said he had been waiting for us! The first official meeting was April 15, 1991, with 7 people who became members and several visitors. The other 5 original members were Tina H., Maxine H., Woode T., Eddie R., and Barry B. Of these 7, 4 original members remain and 16 new members have been added as of October 1993.

In the early days of the group, going was tough, money was scarce, and on certain nights (especially holidays such as the 4th of July), sometime only Ray and Frank were in attendance. However, the rewards were great. The knowledge of forming a group and of the real workings of AA, learned from studying the AA service manual, the Third Legacy Manual, and AA guidelines proved to be just what this small group of alcoholics needed.

On April 16, 1993, at C.B. Greer Elementary School, the Into Action Group celebrated its second anniversary with Roy T. of Brunswick being the featured speaker. The group anticipates many more such anniversaries, one day at a time.

New Fellowship Group

The New Fellowship Group met for the first time in another meeting, some of us dually addicted, others who just share the pain. We did not have to speak of our other problems, but we were singled out because of them. Not everyone lives by "what would the master do."

In June of 1980, founders Roger G., Glen L., Paul H., and Jake S. met at St. Pauls Episcopal Church without a name, just a desire not to drink. Other early members were Velda J., Steve T., Pat R., Gene E., Lonore F., Jeb R., Rudy N., Ercell H., Jeanett M., Betty S., and Joann B. In October of 1983, after learning of the Wayne County Group's financial struggles, the groups agreed to split the rent and we moved to 837 E. Pine Street. At that time we had 2 meetings a week, open Friday and closed Monday. We also sponsored a meeting at Wayne Residence Center on Sunday. Later the center attended our Friday open meeting, until the state closed the center down in 1991 (for lack of funding).

In 1983 we finally named the group New Fellowship. We elected Jake S. as GSR and Paul H. as secretary/treasurer. We now have a Monday closed discussion, Wednesday Step, Friday open, Saturday noon closed, and a Sunday 11 AM closed discussion meeting.

Tabby House Group

In the summer of 1985, several members of the AA community met together and decided to form a new group on St. Simons Island which would be smoke-free. After receiving permission from Rev. R., Superintendent of Epworth by the Sea, to use the Tabby House for meetings, the first meeting of the Tabby House Group was held October 5, 1985.

There were approximately 14 people present, who voted to hold regular open non-smoking meetings on Sunday nights at 8 PM. It was decided that a chairman would be selected each month who would choose the format of the meeting (discussion, speaker, step meeting, etc.). Bob W. agreed to be responsible for opening and closing the Tabby House, making coffee, setting up chairs and ordering literature. The members present agreed that the Tabby House would make a special attempt to provide a loving and welcoming environment for all people walking through the door, whether visitors or regular members.

Two nights later, the women's meeting of the Tabby House Group began. Those present voted to make this a closed meeting for women only to be held on Wednesday nights. This meeting started as a smoking meeting, but was later changed to a non-smoking meeting.

Several months later, the men's meeting began on Tuesday nights. This is also a non-smoking meeting.

Wayne County Group

In February 1948, Aubrey A. wrote a letter to New York stating that he was trying to start a group in Jesup and had one member besides himself. He wrote that the rector of the Episcopal Church was interested, though not an AA himself. The group was to hold joint meetings with the Valdosta Group, but apparently the Jesup group was discontinued very early.

In 1960, GSO received a letter from Lex B. asking to be registered as a loner until he could get a group started in Jesup. In June 1961, Lex wrote GSO, saying, "I am also happy to let you know that a group is forming here in Jesup. Bill P. and I have been meeting now for about 2 weeks. Our first meeting was in a drug store over coffee

and Coke. Our second meeting was at my house over coffee and our third was with another alcoholic at his place. And last Thursday we met at the same place. We have 3 of us now and are going to meet every Monday and Thursday at 8:00. Our third member is L. Mc. We are going to meet at his place until we have enough money to rent a place in Jesup. We have put an ad in the Jesup paper but we have mail going to General Delivery; we can't get a box number as yet." Later in June, GSO wrote Lex welcoming the group and telling him it was registered.

In March 1962, GSO got another letter from Lex: "Here I am a loner again here in Jesup. We had a small group going here but it seems that I am the only admitted alcoholic left. I have been thinking that this loners meeting is for me and I intend to keep it up if we ever do have a meeting place here. I get to AA meetings maybe once a month. I go to Brunswick, which is 40 miles away." GSO discontinued the group listing and returned Lex to loner status.

In November 1962, Lex notified GSO that the Jesup Group had started, with Lex as secretary. Meetings were being held at St. Pauls Episcopal Church on Thursdays and Sundays. In January 1963, Lex sent an inquiry to GSO as follows: "We have some good outside help with our group who are non-alcoholic. Do you have some recognition of some kind? for what they are doing for our group and AA as a whole and all alcoholics of this city of Jesup and also county all around." GSO replied that recognition of non-alcoholic help couldn't be included in the Exchange Bulletin but that they would be glad to write non-alcoholic friends of the group and thank them.

In October 1965, George S. wrote GSO stating, "I have recently moved to Jesup, Ga. The AA group broke apart a few months ago. I am in the process of getting a program started again. Please send me the material I need." The Jesup Group was then put on the inactive list by GSO, but in February 1966, the Wayne County Group was registered with George S. as secretary and a membership of 2. The meetings were held at the Wayne County Health Center on Wednesdays at 8 PM.

Zone B

Blackshear Group

As far as the current GSR can tell, the group was founded about 1974, had 3 or 4 members, and continued like that until 1977. At this time, the group folded. Since it began again, the group has been going continuously.

We now have a membership of 10-12 regular, dependable members. We have open discussion meetings at 8:30 on Sunday nights

and closed discussion meetings at 8:30 on Wednesday nights. We have joint birthday party participation with the Hoboken group every 4 months, when we alternate being hosts.

Folkston Group

In 1970, the board members of the First United Methodist Church went to Louie P. and offered him a meeting place if he wanted it. He asked a couple of friends from a group in Jacksonville, FL, if they would do a speaker meeting and help show him and the others how to conduct a meeting. They agreed, and the first meeting was held at the church on July 2, 1970. The members present for this first meeting were Louie P., Cotton H., Maurice M., and Dick B. The membership totaled around 40 to 50 people within the first couple of years. Other early members were G.C. H., Ray S., and Carl H. Once a week they met on Thursday nights in Folkston and once a week they met in Nahunta on Tuesday nights. Consequently, new groups branched out in surrounding towns and were formed.

In 1983, Jimmy E. had a charter drawn up for the "Easy Does It Club," Inc. From 1983 to 1985 the group met at the Georgian Motel. Rent was \$100 a month. Then in 1985, the clubhouse was built. Wade C. made available the property on which it was built. All the members of the Folkston Group at this time contributed the materials and labor required for the construction of the clubhouse, and the group has been meeting there 2 or 3 nights a week ever since. There are now about 12 group members who meet at 8PM on Mondays for a step study and on Tuesdays and Thursdays for open discussion.

Kingsland Recovery Group

The Kingsland Recovery Group has gone through some changes to get where they are today. Around 1981, 3 groups were meeting in a mobile home at a central location in Kingsland. Then in 1983 a clubhouse was built, called the Camden Serenity Club. Each group had their own nights to host the AA meetings. In time, two of the groups left for their own meeting places, leaving the one group. This group then became known as the Kingslands Recovery Group, which today has fifteen meetings a week, with morning and evening meetings seven days a week.

The Nahunta Group

The Nahunta Group was founded in October of 1970 by Cotton H. and Louie P. It was first called the Nahunta & Folkston Group. Some of the other early members were Perry R., Dick B., Maurice M., Carl H., Glenwood D., Ray S., Keith S., and James W. The first meeting was conducted in the R.E.A. Building in Nahunta. In April of 1977, the group moved next door into the Brantley Serenity Club.

Founder Cotton H. is a trusted servant of the group today. Currently, meetings are held on Sunday at 10 AM (Step study), Monday at 8:30 PM (open discussion), Wednesday at 8:30 PM (Big Book study) and Friday at 8:30 PM (closed discussion).

Zone C

Triangle Group

On July 15, 1972, the Triangle Group was started by John K. The first meeting place was on Mary St. The group has since moved to Howe St. Some early members are Jack K., Sara Del C., Hazel W., Larry S., Jane H., Julius L., and Jim and Faye T. Most of the early members who attended then are sober today.

The Triangle Group is a spin off from the Waycross Group. The first meeting, and many thereafter, were held in a funeral home which had moved to other quarters. The building had no heat or air; we thought we had arrived when a member donated an air conditioner. After much frustration and worry to get it installed, we were disappointed to find it created so much noise we could not hear any discussion or the speaker. We decided sobriety was more important than discomfort for an hour.

Waycross Group

This portion of the Waycross Group history was recorded at Wright I's house on November 29, 1988.

My name is Wright I., and I want to give you a little history about how the AA program got started in Waycross. I'm going to begin this in April 1946. That's when I got out of service. I'd been in service for 3 years, and then came back to Waycross.

At that time Father Charles W.-B. (the last name was half Native American) was the priest at Grace Episcopal Church in Waycross. Before he came to Waycross he had studied alcohol and alcohol abuse at Yale University in New Haven, CT. At that time he

was one of the men most familiar with the AA program in this section of the country. Father W.-B. had started AA, I think in 1944 or 1945. I do know it was in operation when I came back in 1946. At that time, they met in a boarding house near Pendleton St., where the Pic & Save uptown store is located now. They would meet in this room that belonged to Aubrey A. He was the first member. Along with him was a fellow named Tom J. I can't remember all of them; there were several. The group was meeting there in 1946. It had gotten too big, up to 8 or 9 members were coming, too large for Aubrey's room. The lady who owned the boarding house said that they would have to move the meeting somewhere else. So the city lent them a room down by the police station at the Municipal Building. The building is still around; they just got finished remodeling it.

They stayed there until 1947 or 1948. The group went to the city about purchasing some property that was vacant. The city agreed to sell it for \$2500. The group got some of the money up, and they borrowed the rest of it from the bank for a period of 10 years. The payments were around \$25 a month.

I first came into the program in 1946, but didn't think I needed it. So I went on to drink for 20 more years, until 1966. I was 61 years old at the time I came back in.

There was just one group, and we would meet 2 times a week. We would go out for meetings a lot of times. We would go to Hazelhurst; I remember I made my first talk in Hazelhurst. I didn't know I was going to talk until I got up there. Sonny L. came up to me and said I was the speaker that night. I did the best I could.

On Sunday afternoons, a group of us would go to Jacksonville for an intergroup meeting. It was a good meeting going up and coming back. Some of the early members during this time were Sonny L., Jack P., Harold C., Bill and Cari H. Cari was the first woman who came into the AA program in Waycross. They didn't get any more women, because Cari didn't want anymore; she wanted to be the only one.

We stayed pretty much dormant up until 1970. Jack K. came into the program about that time, and after Jack came in, he got the ball rolling. He did a lot for AA. He's the one who got the loan for the property and got the state to start a pilot program for a treatment center in 1972. They had several treatment centers in Georgia, and Jack helped get one started in Waycross. Jack started some other groups like the Good Grace Group at the Episcopal church. There were a lot of newcomers coming into the program, and more groups were started, Good Grace and The Triangle, etc. He also started the first D.U.I. school.

They started reading the Traditions around 1970 or 1971. Al-Anon came in about this time.

I went to my first State Convention in 1966 in Augusta. It was held at the Old Richmond Hotel. Sonny and Pat L. and my wife Marion and I went. Sonny had been in the program for 3 or 4 years before I came in. He was my sponsor. In fact, he and Curly came out to see me. I told my wife I didn't know what that curly headed old boy could do for me, but it turned out, he has done quite a bit for me and helped me a lot. I wouldn't have made it, if it hadn't been for Sonny. We were at the State Convention, where a lady from Texas, an Al-Anon named Aubrutus, was speaking. She gave her talk on Al-Anon and Al-Anon history that afternoon. We enjoyed it very much. After the meeting, my wife Marion and Pat L. decided they wanted to go down and talk with Aubrutus. She talked with us and explained what Al-Anon was, and how it was founded, and told them what to do. Marion and Pat wrote and got some literature. They forgot to do one thing, to get it registered. They were meeting at our house, then at Pat's and at different ones. After being in operation for about 5 years, the group finally got registered.

Judge S. has helped a lot of people in Waycross. He was in the position to help them and he is a very good AA. If he had a fellow that he sentenced to a year in prison, he would put him on probation providing he would go to AA (90 meetings in 90 days), or if he sees fit they go through the Waycross treatment center first, then do the 90-in-90. Of course people would cuss him and raise hell and say he was mean as hell, but before they were through they were all very fond of him, because he helped them more than anyone had. Ben has done a lot for AA and for the people of AA since he's been a member, about 18 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom J. provided their recollections in a conversation recorded on November 30, 1988.

Mrs. Tom J.: I remember in 1945, Mr. W.-B., the Episcopal Church minister, asked me to help him out. I called the friends I knew who had husbands that were alcoholics, and we started the club in my home. We had a nice meeting and after that we met here for quite a while. Everyone would come, we would serve coffee, and then they would go out and get drunk. And we all said, "There is no use in keeping this up."

The first meeting was at 807 Elizabeth St. We had meetings here for about 6 months, and it didn't help any of them too much. It was like a nice gathering where they would tell their experiences. Some of them were very interesting. Mr. C. came to me and said that this wasn't doing any good. He wanted to disband it, but the preacher, Charlie, said, "No, I'm going to still look for the alcoholic that I know will work this thing."

So he did, he found Aubrey A., who was the town drunk. He got to talking to Charlie and before you knew it they had gotten

everyone back together again. They started another meeting over at Mrs. W.'s boarding house on Pendleton St. She was a lovely lady. She was not an alcoholic, she was a good Christian woman. And she loved Aubrey. The meeting got too big for the boarding house and moved to the Municipal Building. Then I lost interest. I just let Tom do it, because I felt like I was doing too much. I did talk to the city manager, Mr. Lee R., and asked him to help these boys get a place. He did, on Lee Ave.

For a long time, Tom would go as long as a year, and then all of a sudden he would get drunk. And I would talk to Bud C. about it, and he would say, "I don't understand it. Tom says he's going to have to do it on his own." He did, but it took him a long time, and then all of sudden he did, right after my father died. It has been 30 years since Tom J. has had a drink. The date is not clear, but he knows he's an alcoholic and the first drink will just start him over again.

Tom J.: Well, Charlie W.-B. got us together here in our home, 807 Elizabeth St. He got a man from the Jacksonville Group who was an alcoholic to speak to us. He told us our habit was a disease. Bob said, "Stop right there, I want my wife to know this is not an excuse." There were 5 of us, we would go to the meetings and then get drunk afterwards. It didn't do any of us any good to speak of. Well, it did me because I learned about it. I learned things I never knew before. It took a while to catch on, but I have personally seen some miracles come out of it. I remember Charlie B. showed up on my porch and left a pamphlet of the 12 steps.

As of November 30, 1988, when this was recorded, Mr. Charlie W.-B. was still alive, living in Houston, Texas, but he was dying of cancer. Tom J. was one of the first members of the Waycross Group. Other early members were Harry L., Bud C., Harold C., and Sonny L.

Randy S., state delegate, added this information in 1993:

Basically, what I know about the beginning of the AA group in Waycross is pretty much identical to what Wright I. and Tom J. said. The very first person (from what I was told by Bud C., one of the original members), the first man to stay sober in the program for a year was Aubrey A. The tradition of giving away the Gold Loving Cup started with Aubrey. The group wanted to give him something, and Aubrey jokingly told them he wanted a Cadillac convertible. The group couldn't afford that! I'm not sure what year that was, around 1946; I think the group started in 1945.

In 1948, they got the property at Lee Ave. The first meeting was held at the old police station at City Hall. They stayed there for a while. Harold C. was in the program in those days, when they were down at City Hall. He's told me a little bit about that in the past. When I started in 1962 in Waycross, the meeting were basically opened and closed in the same manner they are today. They didn't read the

whole portion of How It Works at every meeting or the Traditions, but the Twelve Steps were always read.

In those days of course there was a lot of sharing among the local members themselves. When I first got into AA in 1962, the old-timers around were Bill and Cari H., Bud C., Jim P., Curly W., and Harry L.; they were pretty much your mainstays in the program. There were only 2 meetings a week.

There was a group struggling off and on in Douglas; another group was meeting in Brunswick 2 nights a week. That was the only AA in this part of the country, unless you went down to Jacksonville, Fl. Later the Hazelhurst group got started. There weren't that many out of town visitors, speakers, and that sort of thing, because there just weren't the groups or the people to draw from like today.

The first copy of the Big Book I ever saw was at the clubhouse on Lee Ave. I believe it was the first edition. When they read the steps and all at the meetings, the 12 Steps were read from that book. The first Big Book I ever owned, I bought at the Georgia AA State Convention in 1963, in Atlanta. They brought down a large pack of books from New York that were endorsed by Bill Wilson. GSO was selling the books and I bought one of them. I still have that Big Book today.



DISTRICT 4

From 1980 until 1984, no regular district meetings were held. Herb C. tried to get it going after he was elected DCM by a majority of the groups. There were a lot of problems. Don McA. was elected DCM in 1986 and held meetings every other month. He did a good job and tried to ensure some regularity. Eddie B. was elected for the 1988-1990 term. He started meetings every month and struggled through his term with very little interest from the groups until his last year as DCM. Eddie says it took sheer determination and a lot of talking to his Higher Power to keep from giving up. A lot of times only one or two GSRs would attend Assembly or District meetings.

Cricket T. was elected DCM for the 1990-1992 term and District 4 began to show some progress, but still had some problems with GSR turnover. Ruey E. was elected DCM in 1992 and is currently serving. There are still problems getting people involved. District 4 has 5 or 6 prisons in the area. Carrying the message to these groups is an ongoing project.

District 4 currently meets the 4th Sunday of each month at 3:00 PM (except Assembly weekends). The District is growing a little each year.

Alma-Bacon County Group

The Alma-Bacon County Group was started in 1960-something. It was meeting in the health center. In the early '70s, when the group was locked out, they had to find a new place to meet. They moved to an old house on Dixon St. The Alno was started, and the group grew. Then the group started having trouble, and the Alno was no longer meeting. Later, the group started to grow again.

The building was in very bad shape so the group started the Alno again, and a new building was built in 1986.

We have had a lot of trouble within the group, but it all works out. We have a membership of 25, and we also have a strong Alno now. When we have trouble, like all groups, we have a group conscience and we try to solve our problems. Sometimes it just takes care of itself.

Baxley Try Again Group

The Baxley Group was started in the early 1970s by Kenny H., John E., and David H., and met at the American Legion Hall in Baxley. Other early members were Eddie B., Bill T., and Billy S. The group was not registered, and disbanded in early 1979 because of an ongoing argument as to who was going to run the group.

John E. tried to restart the group, and a few meetings were held at the Baxley State Bank, but the group folded again.

In September 1980, Eddie, Bill, and Billy S. reorganized the group, renaming it the Baxley Try Again Group. Meetings were held in the Baxley Community Hall on Thursday and Sunday, and the group was registered in October 1980. Meetings were later moved to the Old Baxley High School, and in 1990 the Alano Club was formed and a building was purchased on the Hazelhurst Highway.

The group currently meets Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Attendance is variable, as several meetings have been held with but one member present. Current membership is about 15.

A humorous incident happened to Eddie shortly after the Alano Club was formed. A lady at church said to him one Sunday, "Eddie, I thought you had quit drinking, but since the Moose Club has closed, I see that you have started your own club."

Coffee County

The Coffee County Group was founded in 1949 by Julian F., Troy W., and Oliver B., and met above the Frier Printing Office. Meetings were Tuesday and Friday at 8:00 P.M. Other early members included Barney McD., Hubert McD., Fred K., and Pete B.

The group relocated in 1951 to the Old Coffee County Hospital. Later moves were to the Presbyterian Church, a church building on Highway 221 East, and the Fulton Federal Building on Peterson Ave.

In 1984, members built a small club on West Green Highway, Douglas, and named it the 24 Hour Club. Current membership is about 25. Meetings are held at 8:30 P.M. Tuesday (closed discussion), Thursday (Big Book), Friday (open speaker), and Sunday (open speaker). A birthday celebration is held the last Saturday of each quarter, beginning in January. Group conscience is held 6-8 times a year or whenever the need comes up.

Glennville 24 Hour Group

The Glennville 24 Hour Group was founded February 9, 1979, by A. G. (Buck) S., Melvin S., and Leland B. The group met Monday and Thursday at 8:30 P.M. on Pecan Road East.

The group was controlled by one member from 1979 to 1985, then by another member from 1985 to 1992. Now, by the grace of God, the group is under control. The first-ever financial report from the secretary to the group was made in December 1992. The group now contributes to GSO and GSSA for the first time.

The group moved to 211 South Rushing St. on March 11, 1985, and currently meets Monday, Thursday, and Sunday at 8:00 PM. Sunday is a step meeting. Home group membership is 12.

McRae Group

The McRae Group was founded in August 1968, by Emily N., Kay R., and Hal C. Other early members included Claude and Dot F., C.L. T., Richard H., "Runt" C., Mary "Doll" S., Wimbric W., and Nina W. The first few meetings were held in Emily's home on Wednesday and Sunday evenings; shortly the group found a meeting site at the Presbyterian Church in McRae.

In July 1969, the group moved to its current home, a clubhouse on Cedar Park Rd. southwest of McRae. Meetings are held at 8:30 P.M. Sunday (open speaker), Wednesday (closed discussion), and Friday (open Big Book). A birthday eating and speaker meeting is held the last Saturday of April, August, and December.

Donnie P. reports, "During the early days three of our members decided to leave and organize their own group - they did not like the way the group was being run. They promptly (all three) got drunk and ended back up with us."

Vidalia/Lyons Group

The Vidalia/Lyons Group was registered in New York on July 6, 1956. The group was started by Jim P., Hudson F., Irwin H., Kenneth F., Marvin W., Joe C., Margaret C., Dobie T., Boyd P., and Ann and Albert H. The meetings were held in the old City Hall building, at that time located on McIntosh St. The group moved to several different locations, including the Vidalia Presbyterian Church. The Vidalia/Lyons Group now meets at the Nu-Hope Club at the corner of Jarriel and Manning streets, where they moved in 1976.

The group started with a study of the Twelve Traditions, and they were used to solve any group controversy in those early days. Joe C. provided much leadership and service in the beginning days, establishing a good foundation for the future members to build upon. Because of Joe's spirit of service, he was elected state delegate for 1968-1969. Other early members who contributed much were Jake and Edwina P., Wilbert A., and Don McA.

In 1956, when the group first started, there were only a few active members with two meetings a week. Today there are nine meetings a week with at least 50 active members and many others who pass through maybe once or twice and are "cured."

The Vidalia/Lyons Group is active in corrections facility service work; several of the members carry the message into the many different institutions in the district. The Vidalia/Lyons Group has always made an effort to be self-supporting, and has always contributed on a state and local level, adding much strength and dignity to the group.

The group continues to prosper even in troubled times. We feel it is because of the service and sacrifice of those who went before us and laid the foundation. Let us continue with the same spirit!

DISTRICT 5

Alcoholics Anonymous in the Savannah area began in 1944 with the founding of the Savannah Group in a kitchen on East Oglethorpe Avenue. When that group moved into the Twenty-Four Hour Club on Abercorn Street in February 1955, it was still the only group in Savannah. Several attempts had been made to start new groups, but their existence was short-lived.

Finally, in 1958, the Central Group was started at Aldersgate Methodist Church in the Boy Scout Hut. It subsequently moved to the downtown area, then to a Whitaker Street address, and is now meeting at Faith Lutheran Church on Waters Road. Other groups followed in approximately this order: Twelve Step Group, Liberty County, Hostess City Group, West Side Group, and Midtown Group. In the 1960s, a group started in Pembroke, in the 1970s, in Springfield, and in the '80s, in Darien. District 5 was divided into 4 zones in 1988 or 1989.

Zone A

Bloomingtondale Group

The Bloomingtondale Group of District 5A was founded in 1982 or 1983 by Jim M. and Barbara L. Other early members were Jack T. and Carmen S. They first met at the Bloomingtondale Library, and later moved to Holy Angel Church, where they have 10 home group members.

Westside Group

On April 28, 1974, 10 people met at Colen's house to discuss getting a meeting started on the west side of Port Wentworth. On May 6, the first meeting was held at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, and the Westside Group was formed that day. Of the 17 people attending, 12 joined the group.

Julian VanD. was the first chairperson of the group. Founders who are still members of Westside and active are Dessie J., Edgar C., and Julian VanD. Clifford J. belongs to another group today. Jim P., Tom H., Leon L., and W.L. B. passed away sober. Many members got mad, joined another group, and came back. More and more members are staying today; the necessity of moving out of anger to another group is getting smaller.

Westside has always been an open discussion meeting, has never had to move its meeting place, and still holds meetings every

Monday and Thursday at 8:30 PM. The basic service representative positions have always been fulfilled. They have supported the service structure and followed traditions to the best of their ability.

There are many stories of Westside. One day, Dessie J. went and opened the meeting, and nobody came. He called Clifford J. and swore up and down that he'd never open the doors again and sit by himself. Clifford convinced Dessie to do it one more time, and the room was full. Dessie felt like a fool and said no matter what, he'd show up and make sure the doors were open as long as there was breath in his body. He has kept his word.

Before joining Westside, Edgar C. had gotten sober in AA and would go out and get drunk. Once he joined Westside, the members tried to get him to give up his business. He owned a liquor store. He never gave it up and has fooled everyone. He has never been a service representative but has been at Westside every Monday and Thursday. He has stayed sober in spite of many odds against him because he has done what the Big Book says to do. To this day, he still tells it like it is.

Westside has had eating meetings for many, many years. It went smoothly for a long time. Then the decision was to have eating meetings for 1 year anniversaries only, and then to have quarterly eating meetings. Feelings got hurt and every time a first year came up, the policy was changed to 1 year anniversaries and then back to quarterly. This became a conflict that went on for several years. Finally in August '92 Peggy H. made a motion that eating meeting decisions can only be changed on a yearly basis, July to July. The tension left Westside, for now the arguing had to stop or at least be on a yearly basis. That was such a relief.

In 1986, Eliz S., from out of state, joined Westside Group. For a long time she never asked what the group's raffle was for. One day it dawned on her to ask and she was told the profits went to the homeless. She complained about Westside to Bob F. a lot when she found out that it was against the traditions. Every group conscience she would bring that fact up. Arguments galore were created. After 6 months of this, the raffle was thrown out. Later it was decided to have a raffle to pay for the chicken supplied for the eating meetings. That worked out well for a long time. Then the raffle disappeared again. Now it is going again just to keep the flow of books going, encouraging people to read. How long the raffle will last this time, who knows!

Zone B

District 5 was rezoned in 1988 or 1989. Until then, Butch O. was the DCM. In January 1990, Jack went in as DCM for Zone B. The zone has suffered monetary problems due to lack of support from the original 9 groups. Currently, however, 5 of the 9 groups are very active and supporting the zone.

Fort Stewart Beginner's Group

In September of 1977, the Fort Stewart Beginner's Group was founded by three men, Tom L., James M., and Jim M., in the post chapel office, Building 701, at Fort Stewart, near Hinesville. The group met one night a week. The group moved to several locations on post during the next 2 years, and dissolved in 1979 due to internal problems.

In January 1990, the Fort Stewart Beginner's group was refounded by 2 men, Daniel McD. and Frank P., in one of the Education Center trailers, Building T-793. These 2 charter members recognized a need to serve the military community on Fort Stewart. The group was started as an offshoot of the now-defunct Big Book, 12 and 12 Group which was located in the St. Francis Episcopal Church in Hinesville.

Other early members included Gary and Jeanette A., Harry B., James D., Mark Z., Connie C., Terry and Brenda J., and Jim McD.

The group started with 3 open discussion meetings per week. When the "mother" group folded, Fort Stewart picked up a Thursday night meeting as a 12 Step Study that continues to the present. Later a "Saturday Night Live" Living Sober meeting was added, which also continues today.

The group has suffered growth and personality problems, no different than any other group's. Our money has disappeared without explanation. Some servants have failed the group, but the group has survived. We strive to be of service to the suffering alcoholic both in the military community and the civilian population of Hinesville.

Of the original 11 members, one died sober, and 9 have maintained continuous sobriety. Seven have moved away, and 2 are still active members of the Fort Stewart Beginner's Group. Our membership is transient in nature due to military commitments. There are now 18 home group members.

As God continues to smile upon the group, and we practice the 12 Traditions, we will continue to survive for many years in the future.

Liberty County Group

On the 19th of January, 1970, the Liberty County Group was founded in the City Hall in Hinesville. At this time there was only one group in Hinesville.

Members of several groups joined together to found Liberty County Group: Tom L. from Hinesville, Bob F. from Savannah, and Guy W. from Metter. There were 8 newcomers in the first group meeting.

The group moved to the Hinesville Athletic Department and in 1976 moved to its current location in the Community Mental Health Building on Hwy. 84 in Hinesville.

The group started with 2 meetings per week, the same schedule that it maintains today, a closed meeting on Friday and an open meeting on Sunday.

Of the original 9 members, 2 have maintained continuous sobriety, and one is still an active member of the Liberty County Group. There are currently 13 home group members.

White Bluff Group

In February of 1977, the White Bluff Group was founded by two men, Clyde F. and Ed J., in the White Bluff Methodist Church on the southside of Savannah. At this time there was only one group in this location, the now-defunct Southside Group, located on Middleground Rd. White Bluff, was founded as a splinter of this group. Early members included Ed F., John S., Lillian E., Tommy R. and Don M.

The group started with two meetings per week, the same schedule that it maintains today, a closed meeting on Tuesdays and an open speakers meeting on Friday. The group moved to White Bluff Presbyterian Church around 1980. Al-Anon has always been encouraged and has been an integral part of the group since its inception.

An active 12-Step program was incorporated and has provided the group with the new blood needed for survival. Today, the group is host to visiting groups and private recovery centers.

The group's philosophy is to use its assets, people and money, to carry the message. For example, our group has only one eating meeting per year, and that is to celebrate the group's anniversary on Valentine's Day. A bare minimum of two months operating capital is kept in the treasury and reduced occasionally for special functions within the district.

The spirit of rotation is practiced faithfully, and emphasis is placed on the trusted servants (steering committee) to provide direction for the group.

Tradition battles have raised their heads from time to time and of course membership suffers, but our group conscience prevails.

The group has suffered problems no different than other groups. Our money has disappeared without explanation. Our servants have failed the group, but somehow the group has survived and grown.

Of the original seven members, three have maintained continous sobriety and two are still active members in the White Bluff group. There are now 30 home group members.

God continues to smile upon the group and hopefully it will continue to carry the message for many years to come.

Wilshire Group

The Wilshire Group was founded on November 14, 1991, by Paul M. and Russ P. Other early members were Cindy W., Pat S., and Robert S. The group meets at the Elks Lodge BOP 183 on Wilshire Blvd. in Savannah on Sundays and Wednesdays at 8 PM. Meetings are open except important group consciences, which are closed. There are 10 home group members.

The group has had a number of members' anniversaries, which are pot luck dinners open to families. In the summer of 1993, the group had a picnic in a local park with about 17 attending.

Zone C

After Five

At first a very small group of alcoholics met at the 24 Hour Club on Eisenhower Drive on Monday afternoons at 5 PM. After about a year, in August 1991, they formed into a group named the After 5 Group.

At the same time there was a meeting on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons called the No Name Meetings. There had been a group that met on Fridays called the TGIF (Thank God It's Friday) Group, and on Saturdays, there had been an all men's group, but both of them had folded.

So the After Five Group voted to bring all of these into one group, and named it the After 5 Group. We have open discussion meetings every day but Wednesday and Sunday at 5:30, and now have 32 home group members.

The group was founded by Jimmy T. and Cherryl P., who passed away not long after the group was formed. She was the inspiration of our beginning. Other early members were Joan C., Margie C., Earl E., Nancy M., Paul C., Norm M., and Ted W.

Part of our philosophy is to include nonmembers as well as members in all our meetings.

Easy Does It Group

The Easy Does It Group was started in October 1982 at the 24 Hour Club House on Eisenhower Drive, where it still meets today. Louie S., John B. (who now resides in North Georgia), and Pete and Mary S. were among the first members. John and Louie wanted a meeting on the south side of Savannah on Saturday night and approached the board of the clubhouse. After much debate and discussion, the first meetings were held at the clubhouse on both Saturday and Sunday nights.

On Wednesday nights there was a Big Book meeting that was declining in membership. The Easy Does It members started supporting the Big Book study, and soon it became part of the Easy Does It Group, meeting all three nights at the clubhouse at 8 PM.

In the years since becoming a group, Easy Does It has become known for its diversification in all areas. Besides its regular first step meetings three nights a week, there is a step study on Wednesdays and Big Book study on Saturday nights along with a monthly Tradition study. A nonsmoking meeting is also offered each night.

In 1990, with 8 members present, the group conscience decided to consolidate the group birthdays to a monthly celebration. At the next group conscience, with 36 members present, it was decided to let each member have his/her birthday as they desired. Today our group consciences have from 25-35 members present, and each individual has his/her birthday as desired.

Today the Easy Does It Group is known for its birthdays. Each member is given one year's subscription to the Grapevine for their first AA birthday and a big dessert party after the meeting. For our tenth group anniversary we asked one of our founders (John B.) to speak and had a dessert bonanza afterwards. Three 8-foot tables were filled with homemade desserts of all sorts.

The Easy Does It Group carries the message into various local institutions and the Salvation Army and is active in the District 5 Intergroup. Trusted servants are regular and active participants in all zone workshops and at the State Assembly. The group makes regular contributions to the 40-30-20-10 plan.

High Noon Group

On November 18, 1986, Liz S. announced that after two years of meetings at the 24-Hour Club on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the High Noon meeting was going to be a group. This announcement was cause for joyful hope and celebration for many who gave so much to give life to this group. We are grateful to these people.

The first group conscience was held in the Al-Anon room on November 25. The following attended: Liz S. (elected treasurer), Renee (Intergroup representative), Jerry (GSR), Leo, Barbara W. (secretary), and Mickey. After group conscience, Liz shared some of her efforts and her gratitude to the 24-Hour Club for the use of the clubhouse to keep the meetings growing for two years. A lot of love and giving went into this new group. Because of the generosity of the clubhouse, it was suggested that the newly formed group use the big room to leave the main room open on Tuesdays and Thursdays for members to enjoy once again.

New Women's Group

AA women in the Savannah area had tried to get a meeting for women started for many years. Patti H., one of the founders of the present group, said in her first 2 years of sobriety she attended at least 4 "getting-off-the-ground" meetings for a women's group.

One day in 1985 Patti and Peggy T. decided the area really needed a women's meeting and they received permission from the 24-Hour Club to hold such a meeting on Sunday afternoons. Both of the women committed to having one of them there Sunday afternoons. They had taken the initiative finally to get a women's group started.

They started with snickering from some men. There was talk of starting a stag meeting "in retaliation," but it was, for the most part, good-natured. That's how the women took it anyway.

It wasn't too long before the meeting expanded to Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. Saturday meetings at 9:00 a.m. were tried, but that apparently was a bit early, and that meeting was dropped.

From the beginning, attendance was good - at least 8-10 women at each meeting. Even women who said they didn't trust other women were coming on a regular basis. It seemed - and does today - a safe place where women from all walks of life could come to share their experience, strength, and hope without "mixed messages."

The meeting became a group and got involved in the AA service structure. Attendance has had its ups and downs. However,

today it is not unusual to see 25-35 women at the group, which breaks up into smoking and non-smoking meetings. The meetings are closed, except for birthday celebrations, which are open speaker meetings.

The group now meets at 10:00 a.m. on Fridays and at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and Sundays.

Savannah Group

The following information concerning the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous in Savannah from inception to 1950 was given me (Bob F., who passed away in August 1993 with over 42 years of sobriety. Bob's own story can be found in the old-timers chapter - ED.) by George H. who attended the first meeting and was at a meeting of the Savannah Group on April 15, 1976. I moved from Dallas, Texas, where I had been a member of the Garland Group of eight months, in December 1950, and attended my first meeting here the same month and have been a sober member of the Savannah Group since February, 1951. I had my last drink on February 5, 1951.

Charlie L. (who had been in the oil and gas business in Atlanta and had attended some AA meetings there) came to Savannah and was employed as a superintendent at the Southeastern Shipyard. He returned to Atlanta during the Christmas holidays, 1943, and picked up some literature at an AA meeting.

On January 17, 1944, he instructed two of his drinking foremen, the above George H. and Hugh E., to be at his house on 218 East Oglethorpe Ave. at 8 PM that day. He did not tell them the purpose of their visit. When they arrived at his home, he told them that they were to go with him to 208 E. Oglethorpe to see another of his foremen, Jot J. Jot and his wife had been told of the proposed visit and she had made coffee and purchased some cookies. Charlie told the group about the meetings in Atlanta and gave each of them two or three pamphlets (AA) to read while they drank coffee and ate cookies. They agreed to meet there the following Monday night and thus the Savannah Group of AA was started.

The meetings were held at the 208 East Oglethorpe residence until the summer of 1944. By that time they had added a few new suspects and moved the meetings to a vacant room near the City Hall on River Street, which was made available free. Jim O'B. joined the group there in January, 1946. I have heard him say many times that they had a difficult time raising enough contributions to buy a sack of coal a week for the pot-bellied stove and pay the light bill.

In 1948, the group rented the basement of an old home at 12 East Liberty Street and, with donations of used furniture from several people, established a club room and meeting place.

In January, 1950, the two upper floors of 124 East Liberty Street were rented and still more second-hand furniture was obtained. There were approximately 15 full and part time members now. This is where I attended my first meeting in Savannah and there were possibly 15 persons at that meeting. The move here necessitated the signing of a lease and the Twenty-Four Hour Club was formed without formality of any written documents so that an "Official" of the organization could sign the lease. The rent was \$100 per month and we never had sufficient money to pay the rent by the tenth of the month so the treasurer paid the rent and hoped for sufficient income to get his money back by the end of the month. Many closed meetings were spent discussing financing and asking those present to donate another \$5 or \$10 so that we would have a place to meet.

By late 1953, we had several members with over a year of sobriety, who had gotten jobs, including me. Since the owner of the building at 124 East Liberty refused to make even minor repairs, we started looking for other quarters. Even at that time, many property owners did not want to rent to us, and we were finally forced into purchasing the property at 1611 Abercorn St. in order to have adequate quarters. To accomplish this, it was necessary for the Twenty-Four Hour Club to formally organize and adopt a charter and by-laws. In addition to a mortgage on the property, eight of us had to individually sign notes for the amount of the mortgage. A purchase contract was signed in September 1954, and we moved on February 22, 1955. There was still only one group in Savannah.

Bob F.'s recollections end here. In February 1991, the group celebrated its anniversary along with Bob's 40th birthday at a district-wide meeting and party. The group now meets at 1501 Eisenhower Drive, and has 25 home group members. At one of the group's regular meetings, a new man got up to pick up a white chip. When the chairman gave him his chip and a hug, his pants dropped to the floor! He came back!

Savannah Young Peoples

The Savannah Young Peoples group started in October 1989. The founders and early members were Russ P., Kevin S., Jon O., Jennifer C., Cecelia L., Bear S., Celeste E. and Eric. They started off by calling the group Sober Beginnings. The meetings have always been held at the 24 Hour Clubhouse at 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Friday nights. There are 15 members.

Our meetings are all closed discussion except for birthdays and a regular monthly speaker meeting, which was started in 1992 on the

4th Tuesday of the month. It's an old timer's speaker meeting. Our first two group anniversaries were family picnics. Our third was a covered dish dinner. The alternate GSR, Bill W., and Bob F. spoke.

There were some problems with the Third Tradition being violated early on. An unknown member went around during the second year telling older AAs they were too old for our meetings. This situation has been reversed and it created many changes in our group conscience, including the old timer's speaker meetings. The group has gained its respect back, and we have never had this many members and steady attendance. We've had really good luck with trusted servants. We changed our name at two years to make it clear that young people are welcome in AA.

Twelve Step Group (Savannah)

The Twelve Step Group was started in April 1965 at St. Michael's Episcopal Church on Waters Avenue, Savannah. Earl S. founded the group as a Tuesday night meeting, and Russ B. joined him about a week later. Soon after, Steve U. and Roy B. joined the group and a Friday night meeting was added. The group met in a kitchen around a table. An Al-Anon group was formed in August 1965. The first GSR of the group was Roy B., followed by Steve U. Steve later became District DCM.

The first New Year's Eve party for the district was held by the group at St. Michael's in 1965. The group continued to host the parties until the mid 1980's when it was taken over by the District.

By 1968 the group had outgrown St. Michael's, and it moved to the larger facility in the Health Department Building where it remained until Jan. 1, 1990, when it moved to its current location in the Goodwill Building on Sallie Mood Drive.

The group was once well known for its quarterly "eating meetings" - especially the Fourth of July shrimp boil. People from surrounding areas, including South Carolina, came to the "eating meetings." These events were held for many years, but were discontinued because of the expense.

The group at one time had a savings account amounting to about \$1,000. This account was for emergencies, and few members knew about it. At a group conscience meeting, the account was made known, and needless to say, many members were very upset. Three members used the incident as an excuse to get drunk. Great discord and turmoil arose, and the group almost split up. Finally, harmony was achieved, and the group no longer keeps "extra" money in the treasury. The group began regular contributions to the 40-30-10 plan.

The Twelve Step Group carries the message into various local penal institutions, and is active in Zone C and District 5 affairs. The group is also active in Intergroup, and has representatives on Public Information (PI) and Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) committees. Trusted servants are regular and active participants at the State Assembly.

Zone D

Zone D was formed in November 1988 when District 5 was divided into 4 zones. GSR meetings are held at 7 PM on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 1501 Eisenhower Dr. Approximately 130 AAs are members of home groups in Zone D. John D. was the first DCM.

Central Group

Founded by Keith W. on Saturday, April 6, 1960, as the East Side Group in the Boy Scout Hut at Aldersgate Methodist Church, the Central Group holds an open meeting on Saturdays and a closed meeting on Tuesdays at 8:30 PM. The group moved several times, to Savannah Homes Community Building, Christ Church, Faith Lutheran Church, and in 1981 to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, where it meets today.

Eastside

The Eastside Group was begun in March 1981 by Dick B. and Elton B., both now deceased, because there was a desperate need for AA's presence on the east side of Savannah. Jerry H., also deceased, and J.C. N., still active, were other early members.

The meetings have always been at 8:30 PM on Wednesdays and Sundays and until August 1993 were at the office of the Savannah Gardens apartment complex on Pennsylvania Avenue. In August of 1993, the group relocated to C.P. Miller Memorial United Methodist Church at 2401 Elgin St.

Midtown Group

The Midtown Group of District 5D was founded by Esten B. and Steve U., both deceased. Other early members were Alan P., Marvin S., James D., Andrew H. and Richard T. The group first met at the old Sears Building in Savannah, moved to Saint Paul Church at 37th

and Reynolds St., and then to the United Way Building on Bull Street, where they have 27 home group members.

New Hope Group

The New Hope Group was formed in February 1974 by Margaret W., Leroy M., and Roy H. Some other early members were Zeke, Ray, Willie, Roberta, Tiny, and John. Until 1980, the meetings were held at a daycare center on Gwinnett and Lincoln Streets at 8:30 PM on Tuesdays (closed) and Saturdays (open). We left the daycare center in 1980 and met at St. Benedicts until 1985, St. Paul's from 1985-1990, and Tideland from 1990 to the present.

Sunset Group

The Sunset Group started as a meeting in January 1989, founded by Cheryl P. and Jimmy. Other early members were Archie, Denny, Bruce Wheeler, George Ann and Mickey. They still hold closed discussion meetings on Mondays and Thursdays at 5:30 at Unity Church, and have 12 home group members.

Tybee Island Group

The Tybee group was founded in 1978 when Mrs. Barbara D., a member of All Saints Episcopal Church on Tybee Island requested then then-priest, Father Bob M., to see if he could help start an AA group in order to "help an old Tybee Island drunk quit drinking." Father M. contacted AA member Jay McA. and the Tybee Group was started. The "old Tybee Island drunk" attended one or two meetings, but never got sober.

When the founder of the group, Jay, died in 1993, AA members from as far away as Michigan attended the funeral. As these people gathered together to celebrate Jay's life, many realized how important the Tybee Group had been in their journey to sobriety.

During the early years of the Tybee group, the Thursday night meetings were sparsely attended. Isabell E., Jay McA., Mary Z., and Bob C. were among those who opened up, and many times the person who opened was the only person in attendance. Even one Al-Anon, Peggy M., would occasionally open up for the AA meetings. There are now about 30 home group members.

The most unusual group conscience meeting was held some years ago concerning whether or not smoking should be allowed during the meetings. There was a heated discussion by both sides, ending in a decision to continue to allow smoking. The strange thing was that 2 members for and 2 members against quit the group after the discussion. All 4 returned the next week. One of the smokers who championed the right to smoke eventually quit and became a thorn in the side of those who still smoked. The group is currently holding nonsmoking meetings, but this was decided by a ban on smoking in the church!

Situated in a popular resort area, the Tybee group is blessed by having AAs from all over the country visit - some on a regular basis. At one time, half the membership had previously lived in Michigan. One of the early members of the group, David T., went to seminary to become an Episcopal priest, and eventually returned to be the priest in charge of the church where the meetings were held (and to return as a member).

Meetings are held 2 nights a week (Thursday and Sunday) at 8PM. Sunday's meeting is a discussion meeting unless it is a birthday celebration, which usually start at 7 PM with an "eating meeting" or pot luck dinner followed by a speaker at 8 PM. The Thursday night meeting consists of study of the Twelve Steps/Twelve Traditions or the Big Book. There are 2 special meetings which are the highlights of the year. The group anniversary is held in July of each year, and there is a Halloween party in October that attracts participants from all over the area. Very strange creatures have been known to show up. In years past, Grant Wood's "American Gothic" farm couple and, most recently, a cow with udders have taken the award for best costume.

Although the Tybee Group is relatively small, it has prided itself in taking the AA message to various institutions in the county-wide area.



DISTRICT 6

Bo H., whose own story is in the Old-Timers section of this book, remembers these stories about the beginning of AA in the Columbus area:

Bill B. brought AA to Columbus from Birmingham; he was the first person who came to this town who had been a member of AA. He was the nicest man, a law graduate who worked for the IRS. He died a few years ago. When he came to Columbus, he called New York and told them he had moved here and was trying to find a meeting. They told him there was no meeting. There was a man who called frequently, but by the time he got around to calling, he'd had so much to drink, they couldn't understand him. It turned out to be Nick M. Bill met a man who was in the real estate business, and they started having meetings. Nick heard about it, so he joined with them, and he did an awful lot of work in the beginning. Pretty soon Frank G. joined. He was from an old, old family and that put a good face on it. Ray L. joined, and all those old-timers got in it and their families were so tickled. They made chicken salad sandwiches and brought them down to Joy's Flower Shop where they met next to the hotel. Then they moved down on Broad Street. I don't know exactly what year Bill came here, but it must have been in the '40s.

A man named Bob left the original group and started a new group. He went up and down the street and up and down the corridors of the hospital and everywhere peddling AA.

When E.A F. started the Wynnton Group on February 19, 1964, he had been to a treatment center. There weren't many of them. We really needed a group in Wynnton, because South Columbus was a long way. Son H. helped start it.

The group down at 828 Broad St. was still there when I came in, but it closed soon after. It had gotten really rough. Maybe some of the people who were just using it as a hangout got sober, but I don't think so.

South Columbus met in a little house on Walker St. near Ft. Benning. It was started by an Army sergeant. The house belonged to a church, maybe Benning Hills Baptist.

After the Broad Street Group folded, there were Wynnton, South Columbus and Morningside. They had GSRs who went to Macon to the State Assembly. The District included Americus, and we'd go down there. If there was any conflict, I didn't know about it. Oh, yes, somebody in the Broad Street group thought the treasurer had misappropriated the money, and he got a gun and went after him.

Downtown Group

Jim P., Chuck C., and Royce W., who were members of the Starmount Group, decided in October of 1977 to start a new group at the Agape Club. Although Royce died in December 1977, Jim and Chuck carried on with the plans. The first meeting was held on the first Tuesday in January 1978.

Christine W. remembers, "I found the Downtown Group in August 1978. It was warm and friendly, very helpful and loving. At that time there were about 18 members. Some of them were newcomers like me, and some had lots of time in the fellowship. We had one couple, J.W. C. and his Al-Anon wife Inez. The rest of the group were single. It was not by design - it just happened."

Some of the other early members were Charles K., John R., and Larry J. The group meets today, as it did then, at 8 PM on Tuesdays and Saturdays at the Agape Club on Eighth St. There are 19 home group members.

Chuck C. and Christine recall, "We had one treasurer who did not know where to send the Seventh Tradition money, so she paid the rent and put all the rest in the bank. We had lots of money by the end of her service period. After that we had one who kept the money at home. He would not bring it to us. Two of the members finally went to his house and got it. A later treasurer also kept the money at home, did not keep records, and we never got most of it. But in between those 3 we had responsible people who knew what to do - or were willing to learn.

"We had no blacks in our group in 1978, and now it is over half black. We are still growing and still helpful, loving, caring and friendly. At the start, birthdays were celebrated on the last Saturday of the month. Later it was changed to the second Saturday, because we wanted to attend other birthday meetings but not miss our own.

"We have had ups and downs like most other AA groups. In fact, we seem to be about normal, whatever that is."

Edgewood Group

Bill F. and Clark G. founded the Edgewood Group in November 1983. Other early members were Gene W., Rufus D., and Edie M. The group, with 43 members, meets at Edgewood Presbyterian Church in Columbus at 8 PM on Thursdays (closed Step and Tradition meeting) and Saturdays (closed discussion).

Fellowship Group

The Fellowship Group was founded in the late 1970s by Norman C., Roy P., and Charlie S. Joe M. writes, "I joined the Fellowship Group in 1983. I was looking for a small group for serious discussion and not social activities, and Fellowship was just what I needed."

The group met on Monday and Friday nights at 8 PM. All meetings were closed except for an open meeting on the last Friday of each month which was an eating meeting with a guest speaker. Meetings were held in a small building on Edgewood Rd. and later at a small church, also on Edgewood Rd. Then the group moved to the Senior Citizens Building on Reece Rd., where it is now located.

The group has always supported other agencies such as St. Francis Hospital's treatment center and the correctional institution in this area. Support has been given to the State Assembly and GSO as well as the pre-paid convention. For several years some hard drug addicts came to this group because they had no place of their own. Quite a few military persons also attended for several years.

The group grew too large about the middle '80s, so Norman, Roy, Charlie and several of the older members with long sobriety split off and formed a new group called Big Bill. The group has lost several members because of death or transfer of military people. A no-smoking law passed by Columbus prohibiting smoking in all government buildings caused many members to go where they could puff away. Joe writes, "I remember some meetings before the ban when the smoke was so thick, it was hard to see the speaker!"

Membership has gone up and down over the years, but there are always some few who hang on and do the work. All customs are followed, even the chip program. A "gold" metal chip is given for 6 months and all members who complete 12 months are honored with a birthday party at the eating meeting on the last Friday of the month. From Joe again, "There have been no fights (physical, that is), murders, assaults, thefts, etc. Fellowship Group is a good solid bunch of people who believe in AA and are not afraid to say so."

Fountain City Group

The Fountain City Group was formed in February 1971 to keep AA downtown when the old Broad Street Group broke up and started the South Columbus Group. The group, formed by Julian B., Norman C., and Roy P. and named by Bob P., first met at the Assembly of God church on Eighth St. It later moved to Second Ave., and then to the

YMCA for a while before settling at the Agape Center on Eighth St. Other early members were Jack N., Jim B., and Wes N.

The group meets on Mondays (closed) and Fridays (open speaker meeting). They welcome all with drinking problems, and are one of a few groups who invite treatment centers to group meetings. It hosts plays, yard sales, dances and workshops at the Agape Center. The group holds monthly group business meetings and 2 group inventory meetings annually. It is active at the district and state levels.

Fort Benning Group

The Ft. Benning Group was originally approved in the spring of 1952, with Willis M. as the GSR and 4 members. This was the beginning of a rough road to recovery for the group. There is a void of information from 1952 until May 1967 when the group was again approved by GSO with Frank L. as GSR. The meetings were on Monday nights, with the last Monday an open meeting.

Another gray period for Ft. Benning lasted until September 1974, when it was again established, this time called the Fellowship Group with Frank L. as GSR and 12 members. It is believed that there were 2 groups on post at this time, one directly involved with The Benning House at Martin Army Hospital. In 1976, with Dick K. as GSR, either the Fellowship Group disappeared or the 2 merged, keeping the name, Ft. Benning Group.

The group was considered inactive from October 1977 to January 1981 by the state because it had no GSR on record. This was apparently due to a lack of communication, something we alcoholics never have a problem with, right? Anyway, Ed W. was now GSR and the group met on Mondays and Thursdays.

In 1983, GSO asked why the group changed its address to a PO box, as they prefer to use the GSR's address. The group explained that, being a mostly military group, there tended to be a quick turnover of trusted servants and home addresses were tough to follow. In January 1984 a GSR named Bob had to step down due to his selection for drill sergeant status.

In 1984 there seemed to be a lot of confusion, followed by a succession of GSRs being elected in February 1985, June '85, March '86, September '87, May '88, October '89, and November '89. There finally was some stability beginning in December 1990. The group has fluctuated from 5 to 25 members at any given time.

In 1990 a Saturday night candlelight meeting was added. Although being a military meeting has brought some inconsistency to our group, it has also been the source of some very memorable periods. One of these was the time during Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

While some of our members were deployed to serve, we had the privilege of some high quality sobriety from around the country as reservists were sent to Ft. Benning to take our places. For those lucky enough to be there, that time will be well remembered.

The group presently meets on Monday (open Big Book), Thursday (open discussion) and Saturday (closed candlelight) at 7 PM. The last Thursday of each month is a birthday meeting where the "head drunk," the one with the youngest birthday, chooses the type of meeting they want, usually a speaker meeting. The group also sponsors a meeting at the training center called Sand Hill for the sober recruits who can't get away to attend our regular meetings. These are Sunday at 10 AM.

Many of the group have a dual common bond. Our recovery is in AA and that's the bond that counts. Through our instability, if it comes down to a coffee pot, a Big Book and one person with a desire to stop drinking, we will continue in recovery.

Morningside Group

The Morningside Group was founded on December 2, 1974, as the Edgewood Group by Joe P., Paul B., Ross T., and Vic T. The group originally met at Edgewood Methodist Church at 8 PM on Mondays and Thursdays. Other early members were Ray S., Helen H., Cecil F., Doris B., Duke D., Hugh C., Andy H., Tom B., Scott G., Kay MacD., and Gordon MacD. The group, which has 58 members, moved to Morningside Presbyterian Church in September 1980, where it still meets on Mondays and Thursdays.

North Columbus Group

The North Columbus Group, first known as the Always North Columbus Group, started in 1968 in a small store at 4804 Armour Rd. A T.O.P.S. group and a church group also held meetings there. The South Columbus Group and Starmount Group helped North Columbus by donating AA literature and lending support by attendance at meetings. Early members were Joe H., Andy M., George W., Chister J., Otis S., and Joe N. The group moved to the Open Door Community Center at 2405 Second Ave. when the Armour Rd. property was sold.

The group holds 2 meetings a week, both at 8 PM. Wednesday nights are closed and Saturday nights are open, either speaker or discussion, at the discretion of the chairperson. When there is a month with a fifth Saturday, the North Columbus Al-Anon Group chairs an

open speaker meeting. The group celebrates birthdays on the third Saturday of each month.

As the Big Book says, "We shall be with you in the fellowship of the spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the road of happy destiny. May God bless and keep you till then."

South Columbus Group

The South Columbus Group was founded and registered with GSO in November 1961. Meetings were held at the home of the founders, Harold and Diane H. The group later moved several times: to the South Columbus Methodist Church, Benning Hills Baptist Church, a Victory Drive used car lot, and a trailer. One night people arrived for the meeting and the trailer had been moved away! The current meeting place is at 3 Matthews Dr.

Other early members were Bob C., Sam H., Joe J., G.A. F., Jeff K., Jack R. and Helen H. The first meetings were held from 8:00 until they were over! Current meetings are at 8 PM Tuesday (closed) and Friday (open, usually discussion of the Traditions and Steps). Speaker meetings are held only on special occasions. There are currently 18 members

The group meets regardless of holidays, conventions, or whatever. A basket is never passed for contributions, but a basket is placed at the front of the hall with a sign that reads, "First Things First." This group has provided cadres for the start of several groups in Columbus and has been responsible for Big Books in 5 local hospitals and libraries. They initiated the Columbus AA answering service and financed it for the first 2 years. They always support GSO, the State Assembly and state conventions. Bob H. says, "We realize there are no saints in AA, but we are trying to pave the way." The founders are alive, retired and well in Florida.

Starmount Anona Group

This history was related by co-founder Winnie T.

"After being in the program for 8 years, and being members of just one group for most of that period, my husband, Tommy, felt the need for a group in the area in which we lived. Although I did not know anything about it at the time, he had talked with 2 senior

members in the program and had found out what was needed to start a new group.

"The purpose of this group was to provide a meeting for members who had gotten mad with one of the other groups and were not attending AA at all. We also hoped to attract people in our own area in southeast Columbus. And so it was that we had our first meeting in our home on the first Wednesday in December 1965. We chose Wednesday night because, at that time, it would not conflict with any other meeting.

"There were 5 people present at that first meeting: J.O. C., Howard P., a Ft. Benning Army sergeant called Tiny, Tommy and myself. As far as I know, Howard and I are the only 2 surviving members of that first meeting. Tommy and J.O. are deceased, and I don't know what happened to Tiny.

"At our second meeting we named the group the Starmount Anona Group, with the intention of moving into the Starmount area one day. We registered the group with the state and with GSO. For 15 months, we met in our home, and during that period we grew so that we had to sit in the dining room, kitchen and den. We often couldn't hear what was being said in the other rooms. An Al-Anon group was also formed.

"Many of the people attending were visitors from other groups. I attribute our growth to the way we conducted our meetings. We started meetings at 8 PM with a closed discussion, giving everyone an opportunity to share if they chose to do so. When the meeting closed, anyone who wanted was welcome to stay and visit. Many had lost their jobs and really needed as much contact with AAs as they could possibly get. There was many a night that we were up until 1 or 2:00 in the morning. We were having some good AA, but it really was getting too crowded.

"An Episcopal minister on St. Mary's Road heard about our dilemma and called us to offer the use of their facilities. We carried this to the group and decided to move. Many did not want to, but the group conscience prevailed. We met there for quite a while, adding an open Saturday night meeting and changing the closed meeting from Wednesday to Tuesday night.

"We were given the option of buying the place we were meeting in, and since we couldn't afford to do so, we moved to a building across the street from Southern Bell Telephone Co. on 12th St. It was here that our group split up, and we began to have financial problems. In order to survive, we had to find a less expensive place to meet, so in 1981, we moved to St. Matthew Lutheran Church on Macon Rd.

"During the next few years, our group began to grow by leaps and bounds, and once again we outgrew our meeting place. This led to

the move to our present location at St. Paul Methodist Church on Wildwood Ave. in 1989. Because of health reasons, I am no longer a member of Starmount, but will always have fond memories of it in my heart."

Starmount continues to thrive as a group, participating in all Columbus AA activities. There are now 73 members.

Tuesday Night Big Book Study

The idea for the Tuesday Night Big Book Study was started on a Saturday night in August 1983. When leaving a large Saturday night meeting, Clark G. expressed his feeling of "not getting what he needed" to Bill F., who asked Clark what he wanted to do. Clark suggested starting a study group, and the Tuesday Night Big Book Study was founded. The first trusted servants were GSR Judy F., secretary Sara S., treasurer Sarah McC., and Grapevine representative Robert M. The group has always met once a week. The meetings are closed except that the last Tuesday of the month is birthday night, an open speaker meeting with a cake. At the request of the meeting place, Wynnton United Methodist Church, meetings are non-smoking. There are 25 members.

Wynnton Group

In February 1964, E.A. F. decided to start a group in the Wynnton area for the convenience of people in the area. The new group was made up of E.A., Son H., Bo H., Sarah M., and Billy K., all former members of the South Columbus Group, as well as Myrt P., Bill C., Hazel B., Sis K., Schley G., Hugh R., Chuck L., and Jeff K. They met at E.A.'s home before moving to St. Thomas Church later in 1964. Meetings originally were held at 8 PM on Wednesdays; now, the group meets at 8 PM on Mondays and Thursdays.

Bo H. and Manuel C. say that the group has seen some very lean times; has almost folded at times; and that loyal members like Clink and Dois have held the group together. Now there are 65 members. The group welcomes newcomers and treatment centers, hoping they can see how to live without drinking "one day at a time."

DISTRICT 7

Zone A

Action Group

The Action Group was started by Sylvia P. to provide a 2 PM Saturday meeting to fill the void we have when we first come in to AA. Willie P. was the first GSR, with only about 6 months sobriety. Other early members were Felton M., Grace G., Ordene, Billie M., Cecil T., and Tom B. All the original members have been sober since 1975 except 2 who went back out. Both died of alcoholism.

The group first met at 2245 Vineville Ave. In April 1990, they moved to the Coleman Ave. Centenary Church annex. The group has added a Monday 8 PM meeting to its Saturday afternoon meeting. There are now 13 home group members. The group used to give new people address books with all the members' names and telephone numbers and a dime taped in back so they could call if they needed help.

"Bill's Friends" Group

"Bill's Friends" Group was started in October 1992 by 4 alcoholics who began meeting at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in the Bloomfield section of Macon in August of that year. The Sunday night time fit nicely with the Fellowship Hall schedule (it did not have a Sunday meeting).

The meeting gradually expanded to about a dozen participants, usually basing discussions on the "Daily Reflections" for the day. Most of us feel that these discussions are a help in living sober one day at a time.

Red R. served as the first GSR, and Larry F. served as alternate and chairs the District 7A P.I. and CPC Committee.

Candlelight Group

A young people's group was started on September 19, 1982, by Jim R., Pat W., and Danny L.

In 1984 on a Saturday night, there was a power failure at the time of the meeting. Someone went and got some candles so the meeting could continue. Because of this event, the group changed its name from the Young People's Group to the Candlelight Group.

The Downtowners Group

In early 1978, AA in Macon was growing rapidly. The Fellowcroft Club, Inc., provided a meeting place for 4 groups. Located on Vineville Ave., the facility consisted of a large room, a kitchen, and a single bathroom. Sharing the complex were the Twelve Steppers, Vineville, Trinity, and The Action.

The facilities were so crowded that the members of the Fellowcroft Club voted to find a larger meeting place. A committee was appointed and their first discovery was that new facilities were not so easily found. Some of the groups decided they did not wish to move, but the Fellowcroft Club itself voted to make such a move. On the first Wednesday of May in 1978, the upstairs rooms at 514 First Street were rented. The only group making the move from Vineville was the Twelve Steppers.

Members went right to work tearing down walls and enlarging the rooms. On the following Sunday afternoon at 6:00, the Downtowners Group was formed. Starting with 14 members, J.W. A. was elected GSR. The group's initial weekly meeting was a Big Book Study held at 8:30 on Monday nights.

The following weekend, the Georgia AA Service Assembly was in town. All our out-of-town friends wanted to see the new facility, so the Downtowners held an open 10:30 PM meeting in the midst of all the construction. This meeting is still held by the Downtowners whenever the Assembly is in town. Some of our friends have been coming to this meeting for 15 years.

In 1980, the Downtowners began an open discussion meeting each Saturday night at 8:30 concurrently with a closed meeting. These meetings continue, although at a different time.

In 1981, a busy year for the Downtowners, a Tuesday night open discussion was initiated. Late in the same year, a Beginners/Newcomers meeting was added to the Tuesday night lineup. Fred P. spent long hours researching and studying the concept of such a meeting before it was started. These meetings were originally held at 7:00 (beginners) and 8:30.

Also in 1981, a Sunday morning breakfast was started. The meal was followed by an open discussion meeting at 10:00. Although the Alpha Club itself now serves breakfast, the Downtowner's Sunday morning meeting is still very popular.

The Downtowners group has continued to grow and be active in AA affairs. It has become one of the largest and most service-oriented groups in Central Georgia.

Currently the Downtowners hold the following weekly meetings: Big Book study (Monday, 8:00); beginners/newcomers meeting (Tuesday, 6:30); open discussion (Tuesday, 8:00); men only (Wednesday, 6:00); open discussion (Saturday, 8:00); closed meeting

(Saturday, 8:00); open discussion (Sunday, 10:00 A.M.); open discussion (Sunday, 8:00). In addition, the group takes turns sponsoring the 6:00 Speaker's meeting every other month. All Downtowner meetings are held in the Alpha Club on College Street.

Hemlock Triangle Women's Group

This group was originally formed October 24, 1988, in response to a request from the Psychiatric Pavilion at the Medical Center of Central Georgia. They had quite a few patients who were in need of meetings during and after detox. At the outset, the group was designated for men and women and met on Mondays and Thursdays at 8:00 pm in the West Tower Education Center at MCCG.

At that time, Don W. was the director for the out-patient program at the Anderson Center. He was asked by the Psychiatric Pavilion to work with Barbara G., a recovering alcoholic who was employed at MCCG. She was the first GSR and Don was the alternate.

Of interest is that this friendship between Barbara and Don grew until they eventually married in May of 1991. They credit being brought together to form this group as their Higher Power's design for their coupleship.

This group met a great need of the very physically and spiritually sick alcoholic in treatment. At one meeting, at least two patients were rolled in on wheelchairs. One gentleman in a wheelchair had bruises and stitches caused by an alcohol-related accident. He had been referred by a psychiatric liaison nurse who works with patients all over the hospital. He picked up a white chip and became one of our charter members. He rarely missed a meeting and was always there ahead of time to make coffee or chair a meeting. Some patients had no idea why they were there or what day or time it was, but all were loved and hugged and shown the spirit of AA.

Eventually, some of the women in the group decided to add a women's meeting on Wednesday evening at 8:00 pm. These started in late 1990. In a sort of strange twist, what happened to the group was typically the work of our Higher Power. The participation in the Monday and Thursday (mixed) groups waned. The Anderson Center became Parkside's Out-patient Program and fewer and fewer patients came down. Meanwhile, the women's meeting had an overflow. Many Wednesday nights, chairs were added to accommodate the numbers. The meetings were wonderful and very spiritual; they brought some very strong, sober women together to share their special needs.

Late in 1991, the other meetings were dropped, and the Wednesday night women's meeting became the only meeting.

Subsequent to this, the group added the word "Women's" to the Hemlock Triangle Group's name, registering it with GSO as a women's group.

In 1992, the group moved its meeting to Sundays at 4 PM at Focal Pointe Women on Riverside Drive in the 75-North Office Park facilities. The group continues to serve women alcoholics and their specific needs.

Living Sober Group

The Living Sober Group was started February 1, 1992. The founder of the group was Sylvia P. (sobriety date 1975). She had always dreamed of having a recovery house for the alcoholics who had nowhere to live. She found a house in the newspaper and went to look at it. This house was in terrible shape; the floors were caving in, the ceilings were falling in, there was no carpet on the floor, and there were holes in all the walls. It was a real eyesore, but she saw how it could be, so she got the house, and with the help of a lot of AA people, her dream has come true.

There were a lot of people who helped in the restoration of this house. They went to the dumpsters of carpet stores and collected enough carpet for the entire house, upstairs and down. People gave of their time to scrape walls, repair floors and ceilings, and paint walls and ceilings. They donated the furnishings, including some of the beds and most of the dishes and eating utensils. Some people just donated money. Most important, the restoration of the house was done with a lot of love and faith in God.

The early members of the group were Sylvia P., Glenda M., Ricky U., and Arthur B. They started off with a Sunday meeting at 4:00 PM studying the Living Sober book (there was no other Living Sober study in Macon). There were not a lot of people at first, so they started having a dinner after the meeting so more people would come (we all know how we alcoholics like to eat). Word got out, and it has really grown. There is a lot of recovery there.

We started to have open discussion meetings on Wednesday night. At first there were only 4-5 people there, but now we have two rooms full and a treatment center has started coming.

There are 5 bedrooms, and they are all occupied by sober alcoholics. The only requirement to live there is to stay sober. It is a rule that if you drink you have to leave. It is a really homey atmosphere, and it is like one big family with the people who live there and the people who come for the meetings.

We only have 12 members in our group at this time, but we have a whole lot of love for each other and a big desire to stay sober.

Macon Group

There were many persons who could be called sponsors or founders of the Macon Group, originally called the Family Group of AA. In the early 50s, Howard S., whose sobriety date was December 1948, had help from Hugh D. and Dennis A. in getting the group started. All of the above are deceased, but not before the group was formed in September, 1954.

Meetings were first held on a rotation basis at homes of the members. Verna and Bill, Gene C., Hugh D., and A.R. W. offered their homes as a place to meet.

Both alcoholics and their spouses met at the same time. Those first meetings were held at the home of Verna and Bill R. with a discussion on problems of alcoholic drinking. Twelve persons attended the meeting which proved to be of great benefit to those attending. The first meeting was at 7:30 pm in late December 1954. During these meetings, they discussed finding a location for the group. A space became available at the Old Macon Hotel on Mulberry St. In 1960, the group moved into the Boy Scout Hut behind the Vineville Methodist Church and was registered with GSO that same year. In 1963 the group found a new home at St. Paul's Church on College St.

Ed T. chaired the meeting to elect trusted servants, with Walker L. as GSR and Lee M. as secretary/treasurer. At this same meeting the group suggested a birthday supper be planned on the second Thursday of each month. All who attended were to bring food and cakes for those who had birthdays. A guest speaker was asked to share his story. The first guest speaker was Bill W., a lawyer in Macon.

Like everywhere in the fellowship, there were some conflicts, and some members chose to split and form other groups. As a result, our group lost several of its members. However, we had the pleasure of supporting these groups which eventually grew.

Meetings, both AA and Al-Anon, are now held at the St. Paul's Parish House at 8:00 pm on Tuesday and Thursday, with a Twelve Steps and Traditions meeting on Thursday and speaker meetings on Tuesday.

At the present, the group has 20 regular members. The group sponsors LEC Correction (along with Jack B. as an outside sponsor). At one time we were the outside sponsor for the correction facility in Eastman which is now in the Milledgeville area. Two of the group's members have had the privilege of being elected as DCMs. Workshops on traditions are held twice yearly with all groups who wish to participate.

We wish to express thanks for all the support and experience that has been shared from other groups and from GSO who managed to

keep the life blood flowing in our efforts to carry the message. Our gratitude cannot be expressed in words!

New Forsyth Group

Founder Mike P. started the Forsyth Group 2 weeks home from treatment, on February 20, 1982, at Forsyth's First Baptist Church. He and Clarence H. were the only members for approximately a year. During that time, Mike says, "We did everything wrong and more or less stumbled our way through the traditions. Thanks to the guiding support of Macon's old timers like Frank L., Hugh H., Polly S., Ben H., and Emma P., we were educated in the traditions and how a group should operate."

The group slowly built in membership, including Russell B., Matty Sue Z., and Roy K. The group began having an annual fish fry. In 1986, the founder went to work in Augusta and the group folded for a short time. Jimmy S. got the New Forsyth Group started. Thanks to the willingness of the Forsyth Group as a whole and the teachings of our old timers, the 2 groups have had no problems: No secretary or treasurer thefts even when we were on the coffee can method; no problems with addicts in AA meetings or not knowing our primary purpose. We take the time to explain, plus we have the big benefit of having a small meeting. Time is taken with every newcomer to answer questions and to share our experience, strength and hope. Sound information with good sound members has been the blessing of our little Forsyth Group, thanks to the message brought to our early membership, which seems to just continue being carried.

Our one meeting a week, Mondays at 8 PM, is open. The group moved to the O.A.C. Building in 1985. There are 14 home group members. Since 1990, the group also works with Al Burris Correctional Institution on Thursday nights.

New Hope Group

Joe W. and Judy T. were members of the New Southside Group in Macon prior to founding the New Hope Group in 1993 with newcomer David M. The New Hope Group held its first meeting at 131 Ward St. in the social hall at St. Peter Claver Catholic Church in Macon on January 4, 1993. The group now has 7 members.

The first business meeting was held January 11, 1993. Election of the group's officers for 1993-94 occurred during this general business meeting. The following trusted servants were elected: Kathy W., GSR; Joe W., alternate GSR; Judy T., secretary/treasurer; David

M., institutional rep.; Steve F., P. I. C. P. C., and Tommy H., Grapevine representative.

New Southside Group of Macon

I have some dates of people, back some time, who had started or founded the Southside Group. After 20 years, I'm kind of vague with the names of some members.

In 1971, Bill C. wanted a group, so Hugh H. helped him find a suitable place. Hugh was attending the Houston Ave. Christian Church. He spoke to the pastor, Brother Bob P., who was also a recovering alcoholic and was glad to have meetings started. The initial group was Bill C., Henry M., Bill and Ruth L., and Ralph. All of these members are deceased except Ralph, who has moved away and whose whereabouts are unknown.

The meetings were kept going by members Edith W., Jim C., and Raymond B. Before these members joined the group, membership had decreased to 2 members, Billy C. and myself.

In 1977, the group lost the support of the church, so Grace E. spoke to Pastor Joe K. at Southside United Methodist Church. He agreed to let our group meet in the white building beside the church until John G. got us moved to the fellowship hall inside the church itself.

According to information gathered from Jimmy M., a former member, the group had a few good years until the group size once again decreased due to members either moving away or dying. As a result, in the early 1980s, the group shut down.

The first meeting of the New Southside Group was held on April 25, 1990, at the Southside United Methodist Church. The founders of this rapidly growing group are Diane McC. and Grace E., with Jim C. another early member.

In the beginning, the group met once a week on Tuesdays at 8:00 PM, but due to the increase in membership, we added a Thursday meeting, also at 8. These are both open discussion meetings. The group added a speaker's meeting one Thursday a month on a trial basis beginning January 28, 1993.

The original officers of the New Southside Group included Diane McC. as GSR, Grace E. as Secretary, and Jimmy C. as alternate GSR.

The New Southside Group has sponsored many activities in its existence such as fish-fries, dances, and two anniversary celebrations. Each event has received excellent participation and a lot of support from other groups in the area.

There is a lot of recovery in the New Southside Group, and each member is ready and willing to share their experiences, strengths, and hopes with whomever they come across. Come to the meetings and find out for yourself!

Noontime Anonymous Group

The Noontime Anonymous Group began as an effort to meet the needs of the growing numbers of recovering alcoholics who were professional and working people, who could take their lunch breaks to attend AA meetings. Other alcoholics included those from the state treatment center, transients, the unemployed and homemakers: in other words, all who suffer from our illness.

The chairperson passed the "no dues or fees" basket and read the beloved Promises about 15 minutes into each meeting because the lunch crowd would come in 10 minutes late and leave 10 minutes early. The reading of the Promises soon became part of each meeting's opening and the tradition at all meetings at the Alpha Club.

The origin of the group is unclear. The Sunshine Group formed to hold meetings at the Alpha Club during the noon hour in the mid-1980s. That group left the Alpha Club, but the need for meetings during this period of the day continued. Several of the current groups meeting at the Alpha Club tried to keep the noontime meetings going, but these efforts seemed to fall into confusion. Early in 1990, Carol A. and Joanne A., seeing the need, organized a new group to meet during this time and called it the "Noontime Anonymous Group". They began to look for new members. A few alcoholics showed interest in the beginning.

Two newly recovering alcoholics joined the group, now well attended, shortly after it started. Little did they know, that they would become the firm foundation upon which the Noontime Group would survive and thrive for the next year. Little did they realize that the group would become the firm legacy of service upon which a Higher Power would form their sobriety.

Soon, career and business changes of the groups early members and the providence of a Higher Power passed the group's service into the hands of Barbara F. and John W. Their combined sobriety was less than one year. Barbara F. became the group's secretary, and John W., the GSR. Barbara kept the group organized, and John chaired the 4 weekly meetings.

Many times during the following year, the coffee was neglected, the chair was empty, and some of the ash trays were forgotten. Yet the needs of recovering alcoholics and the power of our

program of recovery was greater than the limitations of 2 new AAs. Coffee was always made, sometimes by members of other groups. The chair was always filled, either with a trusted servant or by other alcoholics. There were always enough ashtrays.

Louis P. added stability and sobriety when he joined in 1991 and the group and membership began slowly to grow. 1992 was the year of greatest growth. The group seemed to attract newly recovering alcoholics.

Today, coffee is always ready, the chair always full, and there are plenty of ashtrays! The current roster of 10-15 active members are likewise benefiting from the legacy of service ... the legacy upon which Alcoholics Anonymous was founded.

Northside Drive Group

The Northside Drive Group was founded September 27, 1982, by Frank L., Gibson R., and Mike P. It was originally called the Charter Lake Group because it met in the cafeteria at Charter Lake Hospital. The name caused a lot of confusion and anger among 2 other groups here in Macon. After growing at a fast pace, there almost was a fist fight over the group name. Several people accused the group of being an arm of Charter Lake Hospital and letting it run the group. This was not true, and no one could tell us why we should not be called the Charter Lake Group.

After about a year, Al S. showed us, in the pamphlet "The Group." It was plain as day why we should not be named as we were. In early 1984, we moved to the education center on Northside Drive and changed the name to Northside Drive.

Mary W. was elected the group's first GSR. Other early members were Joyce S., Debbie E., Ronald F., Maurene Mc., Jimmy S., Helen I., Jim B., Cathy S., John M., and Roland K. We had 2 instances where money was taken, by a treasurer and a chairman. This is truly a sad thing. The treasurer did reimburse us, quite a large sum. However, we are indeed lucky. There is no one trying to run our group. We do not want any beaucratic junk going on. We stress sobriety. As Jim B. says, "Don't drink and go to meetings." To date no elected officer has gotten drunk. A few, very few members have slipped, and most came back.

There are now 35 home group members. We meet at 8 PM on Wednesdays (open speaker), Saturdays (open discussion), and Sundays (open Big Book study). We have an annual sharing meeting held on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. It is a well-attended eating meeting, starting at 8 PM and usually lasting about 3 hours. Our business

meetings are very short and to the point, yet we function very well. An election of officers usually takes 10 to 15 minutes at most. We like to keep it simple. A typical business meeting usually lasts 30 minutes. Our contributions to the state office and pre-paid convention and to GSO are very good.

Old Clinton Group

The Old Clinton Group was founded October 31, 1990, by Brick N., Adam S., John B., and Chuck D. The group meets at the Older Americans Council Building in Gray at 8 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays (open discussion) and Sundays (open 12 & 12 study). Other early members were Jerry B., Jimmy M., Doug P., Jim F., Jim R., and Kelly S.

The group holds occasional social gatherings: Christmas parties, picnics, etc. Though not a large group, they have "quality meetings and quality sobriety." They consider themselves a caring group. Each member has a genuine interest in his own sobriety as well as the other members of the group.

Sunshine

The Sunshine Group was founded on April 11, 1983, by Jay T., Joe R., Peter B., and Katherine L. Other early members were Joe P., Joyce S., Poet L., Tony S., and Patty C. The group first met at the Alpha Club on First St. in Macon at noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They moved with the Alpha Club to College St.

Current meetings are Monday through Friday at noon, all non-smoking (church rule). Each week there are 3 open discussion meetings, a Big Book study, and a Twelve and Twelve meeting. A picnic/party is held once a quarter. The only requirement to attend the party is a "desire to attend the party." Many of the group go to lunch after the meetings and continue to strive for progress, not perfection.

There are now 37 home group members. As the Sunshine Group grew, a need for more space became obvious. A committee consisting of Joe R., Tony S., Connie S., and Roger D. was formed to locate an adequate facility. In June 1990, the group moved to Mulberry Methodist Church, which was a gracious landlord, more than willing to accommodate our needs.

Many of our newcomers are "court ordered." Many choose to continue a program of recovery and become valuable members. All newcomers and visitors will find a warm welcome.

Thomaston Group

This Alcoholics Anonymous group was started in March, 1967, with about 5 members. Dr. R. E. D., a non-alcoholic, was trying to treat a few drunks without much success. He had heard about A A in New York and called for help. They sent the information and materials he needed to start a group. He then secured a place to meet in the Upson County Health Department building. The nurses who worked there didn't like this too much (it seemed the drunks left dirty ashtrays and coffee cups sitting around), so they tried to throw the members out. Dr. D. would not let this happen, although he hated smoking. So the AA group was formed.

When the drunks went to Dr. D. for their alcoholic problems, he would prescribe two aspirins and tell them to go to AA. If they didn't go, he would not treat them anymore. He would know whether they went or not because he attended many of the early meetings himself.

At first, the early members would not let women attend the meetings. They thought the women had not drunk enough or were not serious about staying sober. The group also had a lot of strict rules, such as background checks to see if potential members qualified to join their group. They also had to attend all the meetings or they would be kicked out.

Wilson J. from Butler came to some meetings and asked for help in starting a group. That group folded due to lack of support. The Thomaston group also helped the Manchester and Griffin groups get started, both of which are still going strong.

The group met twice weekly: Sunday night was a speaker meeting, Wednesday night was a closed meeting. The Sunday night was changed to Saturday night because some of the members wanted to go to church.

Some of the original members were Alton H., Grover McS., Roy W., G.G. K., Leonard G., John B., and Wilson J.

Mr. Bill T., now retired and living in Tennessee, got sober December 15, 1967. Still sober with over 25 years, he supplied most of this information about the group of which he was a member for many years. He was also the second GSR. Grover McSwain was the first GSR.

The first black member who joined the group was Jim W. He came in 1968 or 1969 and was sober until his death about 15 years later. He also served as the first secretary/treasurer. Flop L. joined during the early 70s. He is still alive and sober today, although his health does not allow him to attend many meetings.

Some of the other GSRs who served the group were Maynard H., Elmo H., and Robert S. The group is doing well with membership totaling 20. A few newcomers are still coming in with others dropping out for various reasons. This group now meets three nights per week, Sunday, Monday, and Thursday, at 8 PM in the First Methodist Church.

Vine-Ingle Group

The Vine-Ingle Group started as a closed meeting on Monday nights in September 1985. There were 7 alcoholics there the first night. Attendance increased rapidly, so we registered as a group December 15, 1985, with 5 charter members. Our meetings were in the church library. Our first GSR was Billy W. He served for a year, and then Tom W. became GSR. Within 6 months, we started a non-smoking meeting in the church "Teens" room.

In September 1986, we began a Twelve and Twelve closed study meeting on Friday nights at 8:30 PM. In June 1988, we moved our meeting to the Parish Hall at the church to accommodate the large crowds we were having. We also began having three meetings, all held at the same time. Group membership had increased to 33 in June 1987.

The speakers meeting that we started the fourth Friday night in the month lasted about 2 years. The group voted to have study meetings every Friday night. At our October 1987 business meeting, the group decided to change the meeting time from 8:30 PM to 8:00 PM.

Vine-Ingle has had several social events. Gail D. hosted a swimming party at her home in 1986. Picnics were hosted by Larry G. at his lake house on Labor Day, 1987 and 1988. Joyce S. hosted a swimming party at her home in the summer of 1989.

The group had a lovely dinner party celebrating our second anniversary in December 1987. Forty-eight beautiful people attended. This was a real social highlight for the group. Our next big event was a dance and party celebrating 5 years which was held at the North Macon Park Clubhouse in December of 1990. A large crowd attended, and everyone had a great time.

Vine-Ingle had a group inventory in 1991. Several members put this together. Harold I., our state treasurer, conducted this meeting, and it was very helpful to all of us.

We are all grateful to the Vine-Ingle group for providing a community meeting place that, by the grace of God, has allowed us to learn about a program for living sober, a place where we can share our

experiences, and gain strength and hope together as a fellowship. Our common bond and unconditional love for one another are miracles.

Zone B

Byron Warehouse Group

The Byron AA group was started in August 1984, when Mike T. decided there was a need in Byron for a group. In the beginning, Mike held meetings at Byron Methodist Church. He was the only member attending for weeks. Bill Weaver was member #2. One night, seven people showed up. Bill couldn't believe it ! After the meeting Bill cried to his wife Patty, and bragged about the big crowd in church for 2 years.

The group had to move when we almost burnt the church with a cigarette in the trash can. We moved to a warehouse that was over 100 years old. Bob M. helped get the use of the warehouse. It was very cold in the winter, NO HEAT!, and very hot in the summer, NO AIR! A new member, Jim R., offered to help wire the building for heat and air, and helped install the bathroom and Alanon room heaters.

Jim became the group's secretary/treasurer and GSR. The group began to grow fast at the warehouse and we increased our meetings from 2 to 5 per week. Attendance grew from 10-12 people to 40-50. The members decided to change the group name to Byron Warehouse Group.

We presently meet in the old elementary school building 5 nights a week.

Fort Valley 24 Hour Group

The Fort Valley 24 Hour Group was founded in 1976. The early members were J.B. T., Patricia B., Hugh B, Melvin I., Vic R., Carlos H., and Waymond M. Jr. The first meetings were at St. Andrews Episcopal Church on Central Avenue at 8:30 PM on Mondays. Meetings are now held at 8:30 PM on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The present home group members total 14.

The Fort Valley 24 Hour Group holds a speaker's meeting the fourth Friday of each month and quarterly birthday celebrations. All of its regular meetings are open. On Mondays, the group reads from The Big Book; on Wednesdays, it reads and discusses from the Twelve and Twelve; and on Fridays, it reads from AA- approved literature and discusses a topic on alcoholism, recovery from alcoholism, or an alcohol-related subject. Each November is devoted entirely to a discussion of the Traditions.

In 1977, the Friday meeting was added, and in October 1979, it was cancelled. In November 1980, there was only one member, Waymond M. Jr. The Perry, Warner Robins, and Montezuma groups kept the Ft. Valley Group going.

By December 1981, there were 6 members, and the Friday meetings resumed. In February 1982, the group added a speaker meeting once monthly. In February 1983, the Ft. Valley Group hosted the first District 7-B picnic at Camp John Hope.

In November 1984, the Wednesday meeting was added. In January 1987, Waymond M., Jr. was elected as the first PI-CPC chairperson. The committee sponsored an AA program at the Ft. Valley radio station. In November 1988, Waymond M., Jr., became the outside sponsor for the Peach County Law Enforcement meetings.

Hartford Primary Purpose

In September 1989, the original 4 members, Gary D., Sage M., Curtis R., and Bunyon M., who were all members of the Hawkinsville Home Group, got together and formed the Hartford Primary Purpose Group. We cleaned out the old home of Sage M's parents and fixed it up for our meetings. Our first meeting was held on Monday, November 27, 1989, and we had 18 in attendance. We had only 4 members for approximately 2 years and one member passed away drunk.

We meet on Monday and Wednesday every week and have an average of about 8-10 AAs in attendance. We now have 6 members, and they are in regular attendance.

The 4 original members each loaned the group \$60 to get started. Bunyon made our meeting tables, and we all contributed paint and materials and the labor to fix it up.

We celebrate birthdays with a cookout or fish fry and have a speaker meeting afterwards. We celebrate our group's birthday with a cookout and meeting. Our group gets together regularly and has a clean-up. We have a close family relationship among members.

Our primary purpose is staying sober. Freedom from alcohol and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety is how we came to name our group.

Houston Lake (Institutional)

The Houston Lake was founded in 1970 by Eddie L. and Glenn B. Chad was an early member. There are no group officers; other groups carry meetings to the institution.

International City Friday Night Group

Sometime in 1972 (no one can decide for sure exactly when!), a Warner Robins man by the name of Bill W. decided he needed a meeting on a day when meetings weren't being held. He could make meetings on Friday nights, so he started a Friday night meeting.

Other groups were meeting at the Episcopal Church, but it wasn't available on Fridays. A building behind one of the local Baptist churches was found and was available for use on Fridays. The city of Warner Robins is known as the International City, hence the group name, International City Friday Night. With very little attendance in the beginning, Bill had to hold on to his faith that "if there is a need for a meeting, it will hold up".

Some years later, all the groups moved to a private building on Market Street. Each group was responsible for paying rent. The desire for more meetings grew in direct proportion to our rent!! We were asked to sponsor the Monday morning 10:30 AM, and we gladly accepted. One member overhearing this, Howard H., jumped in and wanted to know, "What about Tuesday morning?" So we got that one too! Next, since our group was already chairing Friday night, why not take a Friday morning meeting as well; we did.

The Friday Night group has had some rough times with members wanting to hold group offices. For a period of time, Alvin L. was the Friday Night Group, it seemed. He held all the offices: GSR, alternate GSR, Secretary, Treasurer, Grapevine Representative, Intergroup representative, etc. We presently draw quite a crowd on Monday and Friday mornings and still pack them in on Friday nights. Guess our Bill W. knew the need would be there on Friday nights.

Just Us Group

The Just Us Group was founded in October 1988 by Waymond M., Jr., with 9 members. Our first meeting was held at the Peach County Law Enforcement Center at 7 PM on Thursday evenings, and we are still meeting in that location.

Our current membership is 11, and our meetings are open discussion with speakers meetings held at random. Anniversary speakers meetings, which are eating meetings, are conducted on the first Thursday in October.

Macon County Group

The Macon County Group was founded May 7, 1973, by Bob N., Jerre H., Ralph J., Gary V., and Ann B. Other early members were Gail R., Mack and Rene H., Sam and Marie N., Alton R., Jodie R., Jim D., Jan T., Patsy T., and Bruce J. Through the years, the Macon County AA Group has never failed to hold its meetings on time and at the same place, St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Montezuma.

At first the only meeting was at 8 PM on Wednesdays. Bob N. was elected GSR, and Jerre H. was elected alternate GSR. After about a year, the group conscience voted to add an additional meeting each week, a Sunday open discussion meeting, and on the fourth Sunday of each month, a speaker meeting or birthday meeting. This practice is still being carried on today.

The Macon County AA Group sponsored the County Correctional Institution meeting until it was closed in 1981.

Of interest are the Twelve Steps which were hand painted by Ira J. of the Albany Central Group and are still in use at every meeting.

Since the group's founding, membership has fluctuated from a high of 30 to a low of 5. Now, the membership has leveled off at 17; attendance averages 10 to 12 members per meeting.

Three of our founding members have a total of 53 years of continuous sobriety and attend our meetings regularly. The Macon County AA Group celebrated its 20th anniversary in May, 1993.

Perry AA Group

The Perry AA Group was founded by Paul N., Walter S., and Jim G. on October 6, 1976. Other early members were Frank M., Willie L., Hugo H., Paul A., Charlie A., Darlene, Fannie, and Chuck T.

The group first met at the Catholic church in Perry but moved to the Episcopal Church, the OAG Building in 1983, and the Alno Building in 1984. There are 17 home group members who meet on Tuesdays at 8:30 for a closed discussion and Thursdays at 8:30 for a Big Book Study.

Sunrise Group

In the spring of 1990, a group of early morning walkers who were AA members got together and decided it would be nice to have a meeting they could attend on their way home from walking.

George B. appeared before the Alkanon Board to obtain permission for the meetings to take place. After receiving the board's

okay, the walkers got together and decided to begin holding meetings (open discussion) at 8 AM on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays on a trial basis. On May 23, 1990, they held their organizational meeting, and a group was formed. After voting on several different names, they decided on the name Sunrise with the following trusted servants: GSR, George B.; Alternate GSR and intergroup representative, Archie G.; treasurer, Bill L.; secretary, Vickie B., and Grapevine representative, Dave L.

It was decided at this time to extend the meetings to 5 days a week. They had open discussion meetings Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; on Tuesday, closed Big Book Study; and on Thursday, closed Twelve and Twelve Study.

In December 1990, they sponsored the area's annual Christmas Alkathon. This event is sponsored by a different group every year. The group raised \$155 for Alkanon, Inc., which was presented at the Christmas dinner/speaker's meeting on December 25, 1990.

Saturday and Sunday morning meetings started in February 1992. In March 1992 we held a Sock Hop and raised \$160 for Alkanon, Inc.

Warner Robins Group

The Warner Robins Group originated in 1959. Meetings were first held at the U.S.O. Club in the City Hall building on Wednesday and Saturday nights.

In the early 1960s, the group moved to the Episcopal church parish house on Watson Blvd. Out of the membership, individuals formed Alkanon, Inc., in 1972. Alkanon purchased a building on Market Street, our first clubhouse.

The Warner Robins Group continued their speaker meetings on Wednesday (closed) and Saturday (open) nights at this location for the next 18 years. In June of 1990, they moved to the current location on Carl Vinson Pkwy.

Warner Robins Ladies Group

Warner Robins has had a central meeting place for all the groups in the city for many years. There was a dramatic increase in the number of women, some of them very young, coming into the AA program in the late 1970s. Sue G. came up with the idea of a closed women's meeting to encourage women to relate and depend on other women for sponsors. Catherine M. actually started the unregistered

closed women's AA meeting during 1976 or 1977 on Sunday afternoons at 4PM. Catherine chaired all the meetings, and the attendance averaged 10 to 15. In 1979 Catherine moved away from the area, and meetings floundered.

Faye G., who had come into the program in October 1978, was encouraged by an "old timer" (male, no less) to register the group, which was done in September of 1979. All qualifications for GSR were waived, and Faye was installed as the first. By the Grace of God, the support of both men and women, and with almost no knowledge of the structure of AA as a whole, she managed to stay sober. The point here is, God didn't say we have to be smart to do things in AA. We just have to be willing.

The attendance seemed to dwindle after the group was registered. The group owes a great debt of gratitude to Sue H., Sally H., and Linda H., who supported and kept the group active in those early years. The group now has a membership of approximately 35 women, and the average attendance is about 25.

We sometimes have AA women from the outlying areas visit our meeting. All meetings are closed discussion except the first Sunday of each month, which is a closed speaker's meeting, held to encourage those who are timid to speak from the podium to a mixed group. Many of those who have given their first talk to our group have found the courage to speak to mixed groups.

In keeping with the AA traditions, we do not turn anyone away, regardless of sex, if they are in dire need of an AA meeting or any other help with their alcohol problems. However, we do tell the men about an incident that happened in the early years. One Sunday a man showed up at our meeting who appeared to have had a really rough Saturday night. He latched onto one of the women who looked like she had also "enjoyed" Saturday night. They left together after the meeting, and neither one of them has been seen or heard from since. So, to the men, come at your own risk; you will surely get what you seek.

Warner Robins Men's Group

The Warner Robins Men's Group had its first official meeting on November 19, 1986, when 3 members went to the Alkanon Board and asked permission to form a men's meeting. Alkanon with some reluctance let us meet on a trial basis for 3 months. One of the reasons they thought we would have a slow start was deer season.

One of the Alkanon Board members reminded us that the meeting should remember the 3rd Tradition. No woman has ever been turned away.

We spread the word that on Saturday mornings at 10:30 we would have a closed men's meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous with coffee and free donuts. Early tradition was to pick the chairman as the guy through the door at 10:25. We had 16 people show up, and from that start we have progressed.

From 1986 to 1989 the men's group remained just a meeting, because most of our members belonged to other groups. However, our outside involvement included supporting the first AA Thanksgiving dinner in Warner Robins and helping with Houston County Correctional Institute's annual Christmas party and summer picnic. However, the men's meeting supported the Thursday morning meeting by helping to pay their rent. We helped them by staying anonymous. Our treasurer at that time was Tommy W.

At Christmas 1987, Santa chaired his first meeting in Warner Robins. This custom continues.

During our early times we had one business meeting a year. The major question was, do we form a group. In October 1989, our answer came, and our first officers were elected: Frank H., GSR; Harry S., Alternate GSR; and Tommy W., secretary/treasurer.

The meeting/group has had an anniversary party every year since forming. Our topic is "a second chance to live."

In May 1991, we started a second meeting, also at 10:30 on Saturday morning, which is open. Even though our group membership is around 15, we have 30 to 50 people attending. Donuts are still free, but we have a donation can for them today.

Our trusted servants have changed over time, but our group's support of the 5th Tradition remains the same.

We want to remember those at the Big Meeting in the Sky: Wilbur, Dave D., and Harry H.

Meetings are held at 1001 Carl Vinson Parkway, with the closed men's meeting in the Little Room and an open meeting in the Big Room.

Warner Robins 24 Hour Group

In the summer of 1967, several of the members of the Warner Robins Group felt there was a need for a closed discussion meeting (all meetings were speaker meetings at this time). Among these members were Clarence C., Chuck O., Willie S., Warren S., Rusty R., Joe C., Glenn B., Jack H. and Coyle H. It was decided the meetings would be held on Monday nights (hence the first group name, The Monday Night Group) in a small building on the corner of Watson Blvd. and Corder Road. The building was owned by Clarence C. and was rent free until Clarence sold it in late 1967.

During this period, Glenn B. was secretary and treasurer. In November, Glenn decided that he was "cured" and got drunk again. He tried to resign, but the group would not let him because he didn't spend the group money on the drunk. Glenn has not slipped since. When Clarence sold the building, the group started to meet in the First Baptist Church on Watson Blvd. Since the church preferred there be no smoking, they let the group use a house adjacent to the church rent free. The group shared this house with a Boy Scout troop.

In the spring of 1968, Chad C. came into the group. At this time the meetings were losing attendance and by mid-summer several of the meetings were "one on one" meetings between Glenn and Chad. The group began to grow in early autumn.

In September 1968, Glenn nominated Chad to be both Group Chairman and GSR (this was normal for small groups). The group then elected Glenn to continue as Secretary/Treasurer and Chad to serve as Chairman/GSR for the next 2-year period. The group became registered in both the state service office and GSO as the Warner Robins Monday Night Group. By 1969 members included Harry D., Walter S., Henry and Virginia S., and Bob O'K. Bob stayed sober/dry for one year and celebrated his first year by drinking a fifth within two hours after receiving his one-year chip. He then drove his brand new pickup truck non-stop from Watson Blvd. into 4 feet of water in Walker's Pond. Other people came and went so fast that we can't remember their names.

In late 1969 or early 1970, the group conscience spoke, and we voted that any person, regardless of sex, religious belief, political persuasion, race, profession, or lifestyle, was entitled to sobriety through the AA program, and we became the first group in the Middle Georgia area to be integrated. The first black to become a member was Big John (SMSgt John W.). He was already sober and was brought into the group by Captain Eddie L.

The Monday night Alanon group and the Monday night AA group began to have Sunday spaghetti suppers and discussion meetings. This, along with other activities, inspired Glenn to state that, "This is a 24 hour group." We immediately voted to have a 6:00 PM Sunday meeting in which both AA and Alanon would meet in open discussion. The group's name was changed from the Monday Night Group to the 24 Hour Group.

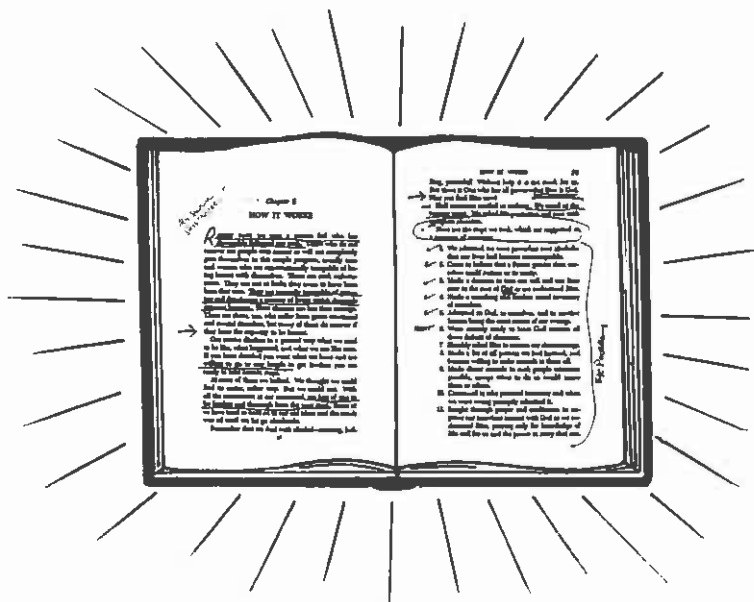
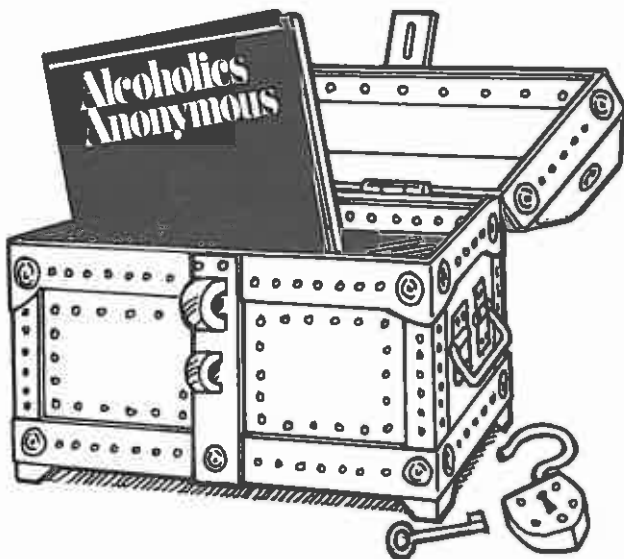
In 1970, Chad traced a missing employee from his shop to the county jail and learned that he was incarcerated for breaking a DUI probation. Chad then requested that the employee be released into his custody to get him into AA because he was too good a man to lose to alcoholism and state prison. The police officer took the matter to the judge, who agreed to try it out, and before that day was over Chad and Glenn got the man out of jail and to a meeting. That man was Albert

C., who today is a very active AA service worker. As the judge saw that this was working, he had Glenn and Chad deputized as members of his staff so that all such persons Glenn and Chad worked with would still be legally "in custody." This also gave Glenn and Chad access to the Warner Robins and Perry city and county jails. This started the court referral system that exists today in this area.

Additional sober AA members from that referral time frame are Mathon H., Roy M., Jim R., and others who are now living elsewhere or deceased. Glenn, Eddie, and Chad started the Houston County Correctional Institution group, called the Houston Lake Group, in the fall/winter of 1970. This led to Chad being appointed by the State Assembly (in spring 1970) as the chairman of the state Institutional Committee. During the next 13 months the Institutional Committee, consisting of some of the 24 Hour Group members (Chad, Irby H., Tom B., Cecil R. and others), and two Americus group members, established and sponsored 14 prison AA groups between Atlanta, Savannah, Sylvester and Columbus.

In June 1972, the 24 Hour Group moved to Market Street in Warner Robins. The building was bought by some AA members who formed Alkanon, Inc. (the building was for AA, Alanon, and Alateen only). Once, the group elected a Secretary/Treasurer who served about six months. During this time he did not deposit any of the group's money. Guess he spent it! After we found this out, the group tried to get the money back, but we haven't as of this day.

In 1990 we moved to a new building at 1001 Carl Vinson Parkway, where we are at present.



DISTRICT 8

District 8 was established in about 1974, and now includes Laurens, Baldwin, Johnson, Washington, Jefferson, Wilkinson, Hancock, and Putnam counties. Two district workshops held each year are hosted by different groups within the district. District 8 participates in the Middle Georgia Cluster Workshop held once a year. The district also sponsors a picnic in the late spring of each year, a family oriented, day-long activity.

AA members, including Ed T., Tom L., Bill W., Ed L., Matt C., Bill R., Hoke O., Jimmy B., Ed H., Julia L., Tom M., and Cliff G. worked to get this district going in the early days. Ed T., Tom L., Matt C., and Bill W. were the elder statesmen who guided us in those days.

The DCM was Lima W. in 1974-75, and Leroy C. in 1976-77. District meetings were started and held 3 times a year. Tom M. was DCM in 1978-81. Business meetings and breakfast meetings were each held twice a year. Later DCMs were: Fred W. in 1982-83, Bill R. in 1984-85, Tommy R. in 1986-87, Brookins B. in 1988-89, Jimmy B. in 1990-91, and Henry K. in 1992-93. For a number of years, the breakfast/business meetings have been held the fourth Sunday of each month in Sandersville.

In 1975, the district had 8 groups. There were 3 groups in Dublin, 1 in Louisville, 2 in Milledgeville, 1 in Wadley, 1 in Sandersville, plus 2 institutional groups. In 1993 the district had 14 groups throughout the district and 3 registered institutional groups.

Over the years, some groups have folded, and new groups have been formed. As it is and always will be with human beings, personality clashes and strong differences of opinion have occurred, but we "keep on keeping on" with the majority of members concentrating on recovery, unity, and service to the still-suffering alcoholic.

Chalk-Talk Discussion Group

The group is a noon closed discussion group which welcomes anyone with a desire to stop drinking. Bob T. had moved down from the Northeast and was looking to start a noon discussion group in Sandersville. Initial efforts didn't go too well, as the meetings turned out to be more of a social gathering for lunch. However, through those early get-togethers, Bob met Tom M., and the 2 of them agreed to find a place to start a meeting. Shortly after that, in one of those AA coincidences we are all familiar with, Bob attended a meeting in Milledgeville and somehow the talk before the meeting got around to his desire for a meeting place in Sandersville. It turned out that the fellow he was talking to was Ron, an Episcopal minister, who suggested

to Bob that he contact Reverend DeL. in Augusta, the minister responsible for the Episcopal church in Sandersville. Bob met once with Reverend DeL. and soon after was given a key to the church. Tom and Bob agreed to begin their first meeting on Friday, October 20, 1987. Present at that first meeting were Bob, Tom, Cliff G., and Brookins B., who came by to help kick off the first meeting. Soon after, Felden C. and Juni D. became regulars.

The group has remained small over the years with 16 being the most to attend any one meeting. An early group tradition was the reading of the Twenty-Four Hour book at the beginning of each meeting to establish a topic for discussion. The group did this even though no one liked being preached to, nor did anyone enjoy using material that was not AA approved. This minor conflict was resolved to everyone's satisfaction with the publishing of Daily Reflections.

Eatonton Group

From the Milledgeville Group came the Eatonton Group. Mike T. originally took responsibility, but it wasn't long until he moved back to Milledgeville. That left 4 women and 1 man, Lee J., Mary P., Linda F., Juanita L., and Larry M. Meetings had been tried and had failed before in Eatonton, but we hung on. Soon Ray D. from Macon joined our group.

We started meeting at the Health Department in October 1984. We tried 2 meetings a week: Tuesday night discussion and Saturday night speaker meetings. We dropped the Saturday night meeting and changed the Tuesday discussion to Wednesday night.

In the spring of 1987 we changed our meeting place to the Senior Citizens Building on Hwy. 16, and we're still there. We've had ups and downs. Many have come through the door to our meetings who haven't made it, but some have, and our membership today is in the 20s.

Our meetings are all closed except birthday speaker meetings. We meet at 7 PM Wednesdays, a non-smoking meeting.

Hancock

The Hancock County Group was founded in September 1985 by Helen C., Lamar D., Richard P., Gene D., and Fuzzy L. Some members who were attending St. Stephen's Group in Baldwin County decided to start a group locally at the Methodist Church annex, but the

location was too public. In December 1985, Gene D. located the Presbyterian social hall where we now meet.

Some other early members were Ray A., Charlie B., Rex E., and Mary Jim D. The group originally met Thursdays at 8PM, and now meets on Tuesdays (open) and Fridays (closed) at 8PM.

The groups holds an anniversary party every 6 months, an open speaker meeting. The last Tuesday in each month is an open speaker meeting.

I Am Responsible

The group was founded by Tony R. and Joan B when the aalcohol clinic was opened in Dublin. Other early members were Julia L., Fred H., Susie S., Dominick O'D., Fred S., Rachel M., Boston H. and Jim H. The group first met at the Alcohol Drug Clinic on Jefferson St., in a house across from where the clinic is now, at 8:30 on Fridays and 6:30 on Sundays. They moved to the American Legion Building in the late '70s, and then to the Jefferson Street Club house in spring 1988. They now meet every night at 8:30, and at 1PM on Wednesdays, and have 70 home group members. There are closed discussion meetings on Monday, Friday and Saturday evenings and Wednesday afternoons, a closed Grapevine meeting on Tuesdays, an open tape study on Wednesday evenings, an open Big Book study on Thursdays, and an open speakers meeting on Sundays.

We had one lady who always drank a milkshake (with more than milk in it) at meetings. She got sober (eventually) and has worked as a detox nurse for years now. She has been instrumental in helping a lot of people get sober. One lady read paperback novels through all the meetings, but she must have been listening more than we realized. She got sober and also got active in service work. After the meetings on Sunday, we would gang up at Joan B.'s house for a fish fry with homemade ice cream and Brunswick stew. We used to have a grand time. One member showed up one time at a gathering drunk; he left and got in a wreck. We had to arrange for a certain doctor at VA to see him (back then drunks were not too welcome at the hospital). His arm looked like a question mark it was so broken!

Louisville Group

If memory serves us right, the Louisville Group started around January, 1962. Three people, Jim P., Hoke O., and E.A. M., started the group. There could have been another 1 or 2, but the older

members can't remember. They do know that in the following year (1963), Anita E., Alton S., Floyd M., Elizabeth L., Tom L., and Bill W. became members.

The first meeting place for the Louisville Group was the Methodist Church; the meetings continued to be held there until sometime in the early '70s. The group then moved to a little house next to the hospital and remained there for 4 years. During these 4 years the membership began to grow; people from surrounding groups supported the Louisville Group as well. They came from Sandersville, Statesboro, Swainsboro, and Augusta.

The place in which they were meeting became too small, so in 1974, 6 members of the Louisville Group went to the City Council and purchased the Community House, which was known as Teen Town. The group that purchased the Community House is called Serenity Group.

The Louisville AA Group started renting this building twice a week for the meetings, and at this writing, is still meeting in the same Community House, 4 times a week. The building is still owned by the Ogeechee Serenity Club. The Louisville Group has about 20 active members and 4 or 5 who are in and out.

Midway Group

In early 1985, some members of the Milledgeville group became concerned with the way the group was functioning. They discussed the possibility of forming another group. They then began looking for a place to meet and soon found out that most places were too expensive.

It was suggested that a building be bought and that a club be formed so that AA, Al-Anon, and Ala-teen could meet. An old vacant church building was located and bought from the owner, who financed the loan himself. Brookins B., Harold P., Marvin P., Harold B., and Jerry M. signed the papers. Thus the YANA Club (You Are Never Alone) was formed in July 1985.

The new AA group was named the Midway 12 Step Group and met 4 nights a week, on the nights when the Milledgeville group didn't meet. It soon became obvious that we would have to have more meetings to pay the rent and utilities.

Soon the meetings were expanded to 7 nights a week. After a few months, we started noon meetings on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. In another few months we increased the noon meeting to 7 days a week.

The group was growing, and it was suggested that we have a 6:00 PM. meeting. For the last few years we have 21 meetings a week, at noon, 6:00 PM, and 8:00 PM.

We have 5 prisons in our area, and this group sponsors 4 of those institutional meetings. Members also take open meetings to the patients at Oconee Regional Detox Center.

Our group is also active in P.I. and C.P.C work in our community. Our Grapevine representative sells the magazine to members who don't subscribe.

We have many social functions during the year, including a Christmas Party, a New Year's Dance, and a Halloween Party. We also have quarterly birthday parties where members get their anniversary chips.

From our group, a few people decided to start another group. This is the way AA grows. This new group also has 3 meetings a day. With the 3 meetings from the Milledgeville group, there are now 45 meetings a week in Milledgeville. If anyone wants to get sober, AA is alive and well in Milledgeville, reaching out to the still-suffering alcoholic.

Serenity Group

The Serenity Group was founded in August 1990 by Ed V. and Carl M. Some of our early members were Pam B., Danny B., Carl M., Ed V., Angela C., JD C., Randy F., Chuck F., Debbie F., Gary C., Sherry S. and Ted J. Our first meetings were held at 800 South Jefferson Street in Milledgeville and we have continued our meetings in the same location. Our first meetings were held at 12 PM, 6 PM, and 8 PM and continue today in those same time slots.

Our present group consists of 30 members. We have birthday parties every 3 months (February, May, August, November) on the last Friday of those months. All meetings are closed except that the Friday meeting is open. We have a Big Book study every Wednesday night at 8 PM and a speakers meeting the last Friday of every month.

On February 7, 1991, because our attendance was quite small, we had a special meeting to determine whether our group would continue. The members voted by secret ballot, 8 to continue the meetings and 2 to disband. By the grace of God, our group continued and our membership increased to today's 30.

Ten-Eleven-Twelve

The group was formed in 1988 by Boston H., Charles B., Len K., Pat E., Roosevelt C., and Nora C. to offer a smoke-free meeting and to make "cross-addicted" people more comfortable. The group meets at Charter Lake in Dublin on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 PM. Conrad S. was another early member.

The Ten-Eleven-Twelve Group offers a program for living a sober life. Topics at meetings normally are everyday problems we encounter even though we are trying to stay sober. There are 8 home group members.

Tennille Big Book Group

The group was founded in March of 1985 by Tom M. and Cliff G. as the New Group. The earliest members were Joe. G., Jack S., James R., Randy B., Mike H., Larry T. and Willie T. It registered with GSO and the state as the Tennille Big Book Group. The Tennille fire house was the location of our first meetings, on Wednesdays at 8:30 PM. Meetings are still held on Wednesday at 8:30 PM and Sunday at 5:30 PM. There is a membership of approximately 20.

Three Legacies Group

The Three Legacies Group had its first meeting on September 14, 1993, with founding members Ellen T., Hal S., Loretta B., Sallye F., and Zel M. Meetings are held at the Hope Lutheran Church, located at Highway 49 West in Milledgeville, on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

The group broke off from the Midway 12 Step Group for a few different reasons. The 12 Step group had become so big that the unity and closeness had been lost, and dissension, bickering and other problems were interfering with the group's togetherness.

The name of the group comes from not one legacy, nor 2, but 3 legacies: recovery, service and unity.

Twenty-Four Hour Group (Dublin)

The Twenty-Four Hour Group was established in 1947 with 3 members. Ed P. brought AA to Dublin from Columbia, SC. He was a cotton buyer and his occupation brought him to Dublin. Ed frequented the local bars and jails to spread the words of hope through AA. He had a great friend, Dr. C.D. G., minister of the First Baptist Church, who helped him recruit, offered support and spread the word about AA. Ironically, Dr. G. was not an alcoholic, but one of his sons, Richard, became an early backbone member of this group.

The first meetings were in an old garage owned by co-founder Roy W. in East Dublin. Clarence C. was the third of the founders. Other early members were Ed L., Judge Bill W., K.C. D., Doug C., Ellis B., and Buzzy B. As the group grew in numbers, they moved to an office in the Lawrence Hardware Building in 1949, and later to the Carol Building upstairs on Madison St.

Need for more space sparked the construction of a new building in 1961, the Twenty-Four Group Building on Broad St.. Cecil C. gave one-half the land to AA and AA paid half. Total price for the land was \$900. A loan was made through First Federal of Dublin for about \$4500 for the building. This was made possible by many donations of time and material from local people. Ed T. donated blocks and labor, with Beav C. doing this part of the construction. Members joined in and together built the structure we are still in today. The Al-Anon meeting room was added some time later.

The Dublin Group was the second to be established in the state of Georgia. It attracted many members from towns near and far.

About 1975, the Friday night meeting group, which included some old timers such as Boston H. and Tony R., joined with the Clinic Group and branched off to become the I Am Responsible Group. Difference of opinions led to this new group being established, as was the case in the birth of many new groups.

One of our more humorous quotes and stories came from our own Judge Bill W. It seems the judge was on one of his famous binges and became lost. He pulled into a church yard and went into the church and found himself in the midst of a black congregation. One thing the old black minister said stuck in his mind : "If you want clean water, you gotta clean out the well." He always remembered this and related it to the 4th and 5th Steps. We hear this old saying today around our group and it's a reminder that Judge B. is always with us although he has passed on. His inspiration and love will always be with us, and his quotes and sayings are heard throughout our group.

Our group is still very active today with meetings on Sundays at 9:00 AM, Monday nights at 8:30 PM, and Thursday nights at 8:30 PM. We extend a special welcome to the VA Hospital and other

treatment facilities. In fact, we hold an AA meeting on Tuesday nights at the VA Hospital. Many of our newer members first gained their sobriety at this facility, and have become active members in our group.

One of our recent events which was a huge success was the first Old-Timers Appreciation Meeting. It was held on Sunday, October 25, 1992. Our speaker was Ed L., with 44 years of sobriety. We had an approximate total of 550 years of sobriety at this meeting. We are making plans for this to become an annual event.

The names and faces have changed over the years, but the same singleness of purpose prevails over all these meetings. Truly, we all know that this is a spiritual program that has weathered many controversial issues and group conscience meetings. It has overcome many stumbling blocks that have become steps to recovery.

Wrightsville Serenity Group

In February 1976, a local minister, Rev. Harold R., pastor of the First Christian Church of Wrightsville, placed an ad in the local paper stating, "Anyone interested in starting an AA group in Wrightsville, attend a meeting at the church annex." Several local ministers and other citizens, as well as a few members of the Washington County A. A. group, attended. From this meeting the Wrightsville Serenity Group was started. The first 3 members were Flo S., Hoke O., and Ed H. It was supported by groups from surrounding areas: Dublin 24 Hour, I Am Responsible, Washington County, Louisville, Wadley, and others. The next member who was able to maintain sobriety was Clarence D.

The group continued to meet in the Christian Church annex, and membership grew to 8 or 10 regular members. There were those who came and went but were not able to stay.

In November 1981, the group moved upstairs over Troup's Drug Store and was there until about March 1986, when we moved to the present location, the former Western Auto Store. The group has progressed in many ways, but membership stays about the same.

We have an open speakers meeting on Saturdays and closed discussion on Tuesdays, both at 8:30.

DISTRICT 9

Emanuel-Jenkins Group

The Emanuel-Jenkins Group was founded in January, 1966, in Garfield by Joe P., Bobby A. and Carl C. The group met at the Community House in Garfield, holding Wednesday (O.D.) and Sunday speakers meetings. Early members included Lynwood M., Junior J. and Arthur L. In 1968, the group bought a building in Garfield and formed the 24 Hour Club. The group has experienced the usual ups and downs in attendance and enthusiasm. The Wednesday meeting was dropped after a few years, and in 1987, the Sunday meeting was changed to an open discussion format. The group has a speaker every fourth Sunday, and for all birthdays.

In July, 1993, the group moved to Millen, and attendance has picked up, with 15 to 20 attending each Sunday. The core is 7 home group members, who enjoy a very steady, friction-free relationship. The group credits an emphasis on basic AA principles for their good working relationship.

Statesboro Group

In late summer Sara E. read about a place in Savannah to help people with drinking problems. Having a husband with a problem, she called and arranged for the sheriff to take her husband, Henry, to a meeting. Henry was a leader and organizer; he "invited" C.D. and Ida C. to attend. These 4 plus Jack and Sara N. began having open meetings at First Presbyterian Church on Savannah Ave. Bob F., Corneil F. and others from Savannah came regularly to help us keep going. At that time, I (Ida C.) was an Al-Anon and "potential alcoholic." I came into AA 2 years later.

Other early members were Jack and Sara N., Red and Billie O., and Dexter N. C.D. was the only one of the original members who remained sober; he now has 36 years, and Ida, 31 years. The group split once, and the 12 Step Group was formed. Dot and John M. formed that group, which flourished. Later, Dot, C.D. and Ida, Louie G., and Walt H. reestablished the present Statesboro AA Group, which is very active and enthusiastic. The group presently rents the old Catholic Church social hall for its meetings, which are held at 8:30 PM on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday; 11:30 AM on Monday through Saturday; and 5:30 PM on Monday and Wednesday.

C.D., Ida and Dot are the only living original members; Sara E. and Billie O. are alive but no longer active in Al-Anon. Corneil F. from the Savannah Group presently lives in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Swainsboro Group

In April 1959, Joe P. of Millen received a call from the Rev. Ben F., pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Swainsboro. He had a man with an alcohol problem and wanted to bring this man to Millen to talk with Joe. The next morning, Rev. F. and Cecil S. spent 2 hours with Joe P., during which time Joe shared his AA experience with them. Arrangements were made at this time to take Cecil to an AA meeting that night in Augusta.

From this get together and after going to many AA meetings, Cecil decided that an AA group was needed in Swainsboro. So Cecil met with Atys W. and Martha and formed the Swainsboro AA Group, which according to GSO records, was registered in July 1959. The first meeting place was Hillcrest Baptist Church. The group then met at Cecil's home for a while.

For the first few months, with the exception of Cecil, there was not much success as far as sobriety was concerned. Then in 1960, Cecil was joined by Rufus Y. and Eldridge S. and the Swainsboro Group began to tally some long-term sobriety. These 3 men are today considered the co-founders of the Swainsboro Group of Alcoholics Anonymous.

For some time the group was to alternate meeting places, which included space rented from R.J. W. who had become a member of the group, For a while the VFW Clubhouse on Kite Road, and then a building across from WJAT radion station was used. Some of the other early members were "Baby " Henry R., Jennie E., Randall P., Randolph F., and Snookum E.

As membership increased, the thinking of the group was toward a more permanent meeting place. Through the efforts of the 3 co-founders, arrangements were made with the City of Swainsboro for a long-term lease of a tract of land on Kite Road near the Swainsboro/Emanuel County Airport. A pre-fabricated building was purchased from Adrian Housing Corporation and placed on this tract of land. Subsequently this property was incorporated under the name of The Blue Chip Club Inc., and the building became known as The Blue Chip Clubhouse. The Swainsboro Group rents this building from The Blue Chip Club and currently holds 4 AA meetings per week, all at 8:30 PM: Tuesday, closed discussion; Wednesday, open Step study; Friday, open speaker; and Saturday, open discussion. AA birthdays are celebrated on the last Friday of January, April, July and October with an eating/speaker meeting at 7:30/8:30 PM.

On Sunday, July 29, 1984, the Swainsboro Group celebrated its 25th anniversary with invitations going out all over the Southeast to

people who had been instrumental in the formation and growth of the group. The guest register included the names of such early members as Judge and Mrs. Bill W. and Ed L. of Dublin; Joe and Frances P. of Millen; Joe and Elain P. of Atlanta, with the latter Joe being the principal speaker for the evening. Other guests included Bob and Elizabeth F. of Savannah; C.D. and Ida C. of Statesboro; and Harry and Marie W. and Cam and Frances W. of Augusta. Others in attendance included Hoke O. of Davisboro; Cecil and Ruby H. of Walterboro, SC; and Buddy G. of Orangeburg, SC. Special guests were the Rev. and Mrs. Ben F. of Macon and the widow and children of Rufus Y., who were recognized as Rufus' picture was unveiled on the clubhouse wall as one of the co-founders of the group. The entire occasion was recorded on tape by Bob and Ruth P. of Tifton.

Another significant event occurred when Swainsboro Group member Jerome W. was elected by the groups of Georgia to be their delegate to the General Service Conference for the 1986-87 term.

In addition to normal differences, probably the 2 most controversial issues faced by the group conscience of the Swainsboro Group were: 1) In 1987, when the group conscience voted to read the singleness of purpose card at all meetings, some of the members withdrew from the group and started the Westside Group; and 2) In 1992 when the group conscience voted that all meetings of the Swainsboro Group would become non-smoking meetings. For a while the attendance appeared to be affected, especially from visiting members of area groups that still permitted smoking in their meetings. However, with the recent closing of the Westside Group and with more and more members becoming aware of the hazards of breathing passive smoke, the attendance at most of the meetings is back to normal or above.

The Swainsboro Group was saddened in February 1993 by the death of cofounder Cecil S. The group will be eternally grateful for his faithful and dedicated service to the group and to AA as a whole. He and Rufus will be sorely missed by all who had the privilege of knowing them.

Cofounder number 3, Eldridge S., is still an active member of the Swainsboro Group. He drives the 25 miles from his home near Wadley a minimum of twice a week to attend meetings. Most of the time, he has the building open and coffee ready when others begin to arrive.

Thank God for the minister who cared enough for his parishioner to seek out Alcoholics Anonymous for him. Thank God for Joe P. who carried the message to Cecil S., and for Cecil, who carried the message to Rufus Y. and Eldridge S., and so goes the chain. Thank God for Alcoholics Anonymous!



DISTRICT 10

Zone A

Fayette New Beginning Group

On February 1, 1983, Ed and Pat R. went to Dave B., pastor of Fayette Presbyterian Church, to talk about starting a group. The first meeting was held on the second Tuesday in February. Attending the meeting were Ed and Pat, Henry and Jane T., Frankie R., and a few other drunks who choose to remain completely anonymous! For the first year of its existence this group met once a week, on Tuesday nights. At the end of a year there were approximately 11 regular members, and they began meeting 2 nights a week.

Like most groups, this group began to experience growing pains. Membership plummeted from record numbers of 11 active members to merely 4. For the next 3 years, the only thing that kept this group alive was support from groups in the surrounding areas. The Thursday night meeting was doing well if 3-4 members showed up. The grace of God allowed those 4 active members to stay sober, and they kept this group self-supporting until 1988, when membership expanded to over 25.

By the end of 1989, this group was awesome! Membership had doubled, service work was thriving, the group took an inventory, and in 1991 and 1992, new meeting were formed. More focus was being directed toward the Big Book and the Twelve Steps. In fact, 2 of the 4 meetings being held are dedicated to the study of this literature. Tuesday is a discussion meeting, broken up into smaller meetings so that everyone has a chance to share; Thursday is a closed Big Book Study; Friday nights find us studying the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions; and Saturday mornings we come together for an open discussion meeting. Attendance at meetings is consistently good and many of our members participate and become involved.

Thanks to the love and support of many people and the perseverance of those early members, Fayette New Beginning is the "best little meeting in Fayetteville."

Griffin Group

The Griffin Group began meetings in late 1969 at St. George's Episcopal Church on South 10th St. The meeting location remains the same after nearly 25 years, although the number of meetings has increased from 1 to 3 meetings per week, on Monday, Friday, and Saturday evenings at 8:30.

The cofounders of the Griffin Group were the Rev. Calvin B. of East Griffin Baptist Church and Archie M. Some of the early members were Birch C., Myrla C., Richard H., Billy W., and Pat P.

The Griffin group began with only Friday night open discussion meetings at 8:30 PM. The members would travel together to a number of other meetings in nearby towns for meetings on other evenings. On one of these trips in early 1970, the travelers were snowed in for 2 days at the Pine Mountain Fellowship.

One long-term member, Lib T., reports that the Griffin Group was so anonymous in the early days that no one could find it. Today, the Griffin Group is pleased to have approximately 55 regular members and is growing. The Griffin Group was the first and is the largest of the 3 groups now in Griffin.

Happy Hour Group

Keith S., employed by Charter Peachford Hospital, occasionally attended the Fayette New Beginning Group and announced that someone could probably start an AA meeting at the newly-opened Charter Peachford Counseling Center at 570 N. Jeff Davis Dr.

Joe S., a member of that group, after hearing this announcement more than once, decided to contact the director of the counseling center, Elaine G. He found that the facility and location, including parking, was very adequate. An agreement was reached with Elaine, and another AA meeting was born in Fayetteville.

The first meeting occurred on November 23, 1988. In discussing a name for the group, Melvin L., DCM for the 10th District at the time, suggested that it be called the Happy Hour Group. Attendance at the meetings grew rapidly as the news traveled around the southside. After almost a year of holding regular meetings, it was decided that the group needed to be registered and officers elected. On November 13, 1989, the Happy Hour Group was registered with GSO in New York and the State Office in Macon. Members at the time of group registration were Sheree S., Dave S., Jeff C., David H., Joe S., Vic B., Ginny B., Bill M., and Percy B.

On June 24, 1990, the group moved to Fayetteville Christian Church, due to Charter Peachford closing its counseling office. After 4 short months, the group needed additional space and Pastor K. of Prince of Peace (our present location) agreed to allow us to use their facility. The group moved here on October 17, 1990, and has steadily grown in membership to approximately 35 members. Through the grace of our Higher Power, the unity, love and service have grown in proportion.

Important to our recovery in AA is the recovery of the family. An Al-Anon meeting was started in September 1989. In January 1991, with the assistance of all Al-Anon groups in Fayetteville, an Alateen group was started.

LaGrange Group

The first meeting of the LaGrange Group was on January 28, 1963, at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in LaGrange. This meeting was advertised in the local paper as an introduction to AA. It was set up by Monroe B. and the rector of St. Marks, Bill J. Monroe was a member of AA from Lanett, Ala. He was assisted by members of his group, Henry "Pop" S., Sargent F., and Vernie T.

Vernie T., an early member of AA in Atlanta, was one of the founders of the Tri Cities Group in College Park. At the first meeting, Slim F. was enticed by Reverend J. and Slim's wife Dot to attend the meeting, not knowing it was an AA meeting. Slim stayed sober from this meeting until his death in January of '91. Slim kept the LaGrange Group going in the early days with help from Lanett, Newnan, Bremen, Carrolton and Douglasville groups. All the groups had only one open meeting a week.

In 1965 when Georgia was divided into districts as we know them, LaGrange was in District 10 with Newnan, Carrolton, Douglasville, and Bremen. There was no Al-Anon between Atlanta and Columbus until about 1968, when some of the spouses of AA started an Al-Anon Group.

Not too long after the LaGrange Group was formed, Fox C. was taken to his first AA meeting by state delegate Virgil W. Fox got sober in the LaGrange Group in May 1967. His first sponsor was state delegate Heflin D. of Newnan. Fox says with these people's help he was involved in service work very early in his sobriety. He was the GSR when the state of Georgia Assembly was organized in 1967. He soon was working with Lillian M. in publishing the Georgia Message. At this time Lillian was maintaining the office of AA in her house in Pine Mountain. Fox was elected to the office of treasurer when the secretary/ treasurer job became too much work for one person. Fox served as treasurer for the next 5 years.

Fox, still a member of the LaGrange Group, says, "The LaGrange Group grew very slowly in the early years, having only one AA meeting, on Saturday night." In the mid 1970s, the LaGrange Group began to grow rapidly, starting a Tuesday night meeting and sponsoring the start of the Fellowship Group of LaGrange. The Lagrange Group now has 5 weekly meetings, Fellowship Group has 4, and Serenity Group, founded in 1985, has 2 additional meetings.

Miracles Happen Group

The Peachtree City Fellowship AA group, based out of the Lutheran church, was instrumental in the creation of the Miracles Happen Group. It provided literature such as Big Books and pamphlets and money for expenses like coffee, cups, etc.

The main purpose for the creation of the group was to provide a nonsmoking environment where we could carry the message.

The first meeting for the group was held Thursday night, March 26, 1992, in Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Peachtree City. After the meeting, a group conscience was held, and trusted servants were elected: Howard N., GSR; Kevin H., Alternate GSR; Kevin G., secretary; Carlos M., treasurer; and Terri S. and Neil P., Intergroup representatives.

On April 2, 1992, the second group conscience was held, and the group was officially named. Also, it was decided that the meeting would be nonsmoking, open discussion, and one-and-a-half hours long.

In October 1992, the group conscience decided to start a Monday 12 & 12 study meeting, and it was decided that the last Thursday of the month would be a birthday and/or speaker meeting.

As of January 1994, the group had approximately 20 members, with lengths of sobriety ranging from a few weeks to 43 years.

New Start Group

The New Start Group was originally a part of the Peachtree City Group. Due to the growth of AA in Peachtree City, Matt H., Jackie C., Ken A. and Frank F. felt the time had come to form another group. A proposal was put together by these 4 founding members to present to the Peachtree City Group a proposal to allow the Sunday Night Beginner's Meeting to break away and form a new group. The proposal was accepted, and full support was offered, including the suggestion that the new group retain all literature and books then in their possession. The new group was officially formed as the New Start Group on April 14, 1991. At the first group conscience meeting, they voted to reimburse the Peachtree City Group in full. This debt was reported as retired in July of 1993. Other original members were Jeff McK., Ron G., Cherrie H., Jenny G., Bob B., Debbie G., Dave S. and Don B.

The New Start Group is very active and enthusiastic. It contributes regularly to the Macon state office, GSO in New York, District, and Central Office. Membership in January 1993 was 43. The group voted to have an annual group anniversary, with the first being held in April 1992. A hot dog and hamburger cookout was such a success that the

group decided to hold a Halloween costume party. Several pots of homemade chili and innovative costumes made this effort a great success.

As the group has grown, several meetings have been added. Thursday 5:30 PM, Friday 8 PM, and Saturday 2 PM young peoples' meetings are held in addition to the original 8:00 Sunday meeting. The group also recently acquired the 8 PM Tuesday ladies' meeting from the We Can Help Group.

Peachtree City Fellowship

In late 1976 and early 1977, the idea that Peachtree City needed its own group was planted by the late Truitt P. of the Newnan Group in the mind of Bob S., who later became one of the founding members and the new group's first GSR.

In the beginning there were 5 or 6 people who met at the home of Bob S. to talk over the idea of a group in Peachtree City. Those were Bill S., Margaret K., Bill G., John R., Bob of course, and Peggy S., who was lost to suicide before the new group could start.

As God's plan for us unfolded, He sent us Rev. John W., who was to become a long-time friend and supporter of the Peachtree City Group. Rev. W. was more than willing to let the newly formed group use the new Lutheran church for meetings. He let us use the church's warehouse on Dividend Dr. as a temporary meeting place while church construction was being completed.

The first meeting of the Peachtree City Fellowship was held on Friday, April 18, 1977. Bob S. was elected GSR, Bill S. was alternate, and Margaret K. was secretary/treasurer. Seventeen people attended that meeting. None of the original trusted servants still reside in our city, and none of the original members remain in our group.

The first anniversary was held on May 26, 1978, at the warehouse on Dividend Dr. The meeting also celebrated John V.'s first birthday, and was attended by approximately 88 people. The speaker was Paul E., an Indian. It is not clear why the anniversary was delayed by a month, perhaps due to AA procrastination.

Over the years the group has grown and expanded from the original Friday night meeting, to include a Wednesday night Big Book study, a Thursday morning ladies' meeting, and a Tuesday night men's meeting.

Several other meetings were started by our group that expanded into 3 new independent groups in our city. We did as our co-founder Bill W. urged and "passed it on."

Pine Mountain

The Pine Mountain AA group was founded in February of 1978, by Lillian M. and June R. There were initially 4 or 5 members. As far as can be determined, they met in Lillian's home before moving the meeting to City Hall. The group has always met on Thursday nights at 8 PM. There are currently about 11 members.

When Lillian died, we lost access to her records for all the details necessary for a complete history.

Primary Purpose Group

The Primary Purpose Group of Griffin was started January 31, 1990. The group originally consisted of 12 members and met at the New Life Club. The group later moved to its current location at C & S Catering in Griffin.

The group is unique in that it is the only one in Spaulding County having step study meetings and on Sunday mornings at 10 AM offers breakfast prior to the meeting. This really encourages men and women who live alone to join the group for added fellowship. The group also meets at 7:00 P.M. Tuesday with a closed discussion.

We Can Help Group

In August of 1984, a new meeting began in Peachtree City on Saturday evenings at 6:30 PM. At that time there were only 2 meetings a week in Peachtree City, both belonging to the Peachtree City Fellowship. Some of the co-founders of this new meeting were Jackie W., Barbara C., Mary O., Truit P., Greg B. and Siggy B. The "Saturday Night" meeting, as it began to be called, was held at St. Andrews in the Pines Episcopal Church in Peachtree City.

In January of 1985, Jackie W. went to Macon to represent the group. Although the group had a name (voted on by the early founders), and a group number, it had been an off-shoot of the Peachtree City Fellowship until then. When Jackie W. moved, the group continued, but without a GSR. Barbara C. acted as secretary-treasurer.

We Can Help got a real GSR in 1986, when Barbara C. approached Greg B. about moving his membership from the Peachtree City Fellowship, where he was alternate GSR, to the We Can Help Group. Greg went to the "sobriety" in his home group and asked for advice. He was encouraged to join the We Can Help Group and represent the group

in Macon and at the district level. Other Peachtree City group members also moved their membership at that time.

The 6:30 meeting was becoming very popular. Attendance was growing, although there were only a few declared members. Gradually, some of the attendees joined the group. The group outgrew the space at the St. Andrews Church and moved to the Fellowship Hall of the First Methodist Church in Peachtree City.

The group added a 7:30 PM no-smoking meeting in 1987. It also met at St. Andrews. Barbara C. and Judy T. started this meeting, and for a time alternated nearly everything, from chairing and leading discussion to making the coffee! This meeting moved in 1988 to the Peachtree City Christian Church on Wisdom Road. From 3 or 4 attendees, the meeting grew rapidly, and has moved several times within the church to gain more space.

A ladies' meeting was added in 1988, founded principally by Vickie L. and Ann R. It met at St. Andrews. This meeting also became very popular, in part because the women felt more comfortable discussing certain issues they might be reluctant to bring up at "mixed" meetings. As AA membership in Peachtree City grew, and new groups formed, this meeting was transferred to the New Start Group, which used St. Andrews Church as a meeting base.

Membership by 1992 was approximately 30, and people were becoming active! Julie and Charlie M. started a non-smoking Big Book study meeting that year. This meeting is held Wednesday nights at Peachtree City Methodist Church. After floundering somewhat in 1992, with ill or inactive GSRs, the We Can Help group again has a full slate of officers, and attendance is picking up again.

Zone B

At the May 1986 State Assembly, Truett P., DCM of District 10, presented a plan to redistrict into 2 zones. District 10 had contained 9 counties; Zone A was to have 5 and Zone B, 4. The committee members for Zone B since 1986 have been Pruett P., Charles D., Jim D., and Joycie W.

Zones A and B continued to have monthly district meetings together until 1991. The zones now meet jointly 3 times a year, on the first Sunday of the months prior to the State Service Assembly in Macon. The joint meeting allows the 2 zones to discuss business such as the annual picnic and district workshop along with the upcoming assembly.

The annual district workshop is always the Saturday before Thanksgiving. On Saturday at the September 1987 Assembly, Joycie W. told Jim D. that she would like to see a workshop in the district. Jim liked the idea. The next morning, Joycie said to Jim, "Instead of talking about one, let's have one." She had checked the dates of other workshops in the state to make sure there were no conflicts and that's how the Saturday before Thanksgiving was chosen. The first workshop was called "District 10B and Friends," and the topic was "The Twelve Principles of Recovery." It was held at Hunter Park in Douglasville. At the first meeting of Zones A and B after the workshop, Zone A was asked to participate to make it a joint district workshop. The first 3 were held in Douglasville. To give other areas an opportunity to host it, Joycie suggested allowing other areas to bid for the workshop. The fourth was hosted by LaGrange, the fifth by Peachtree, the sixth by Carrollton, and the seventh in LaGrange again.

The district had its annual picnic for years at John Tanner State Park in Carrollton. In 1991, we decided to rotate it between the 2 zones, and in 1992, it was held at West Point Lake in LaGrange. We are very proud of the love, communication, support and fellowship between the zones.

The Zone B monthly meetings are held on the first Sunday at the Hour Club in Carrollton. A monthly district PI Committee meeting is held in Douglasville on the last Sunday. This meeting and committee was started by District PI representative Rita P. In addition to a planning meeting, an open PI meeting is provided to inform our members about AA, what we do and do not do, the Traditions, and all types of service work within AA.

In 1992, the zone supported the Third Legacy Minority Report prepared by DCM Joycie W. The zone also adopted the Third Legacy procedure for the election of district officers and voted to provide an end-of-the-year report of all motions passed by the district.

Our GSRs are very active at the State Assembly. In 1991, Rita P., GSR of the Douglasville Group, moved to make June "Georgia Appreciation Month" in order to help replenish the reserve. In 1992, Terrance T., GSR of the West Georgia Serenity Group, made a motion to have a report of all actions taken by the Assembly furnished at the end of the year like the conference report. Also in 1992, Randall H., GSR of the Douglasville Group, moved to list an agenda for the business meeting of the Assembly in the Message and that any motion that is to be voted on at the next assembly be listed separately in the Message. The above motions were passed by the GSRs of Georgia.

Zone B has learned through experience how important it is for all group and district officers to be involved and highly recommends that everyone have a sponsor. In 1991, DCM Jim D. called Joycie, his alternate, to resign as the result of a job change and relocation. He was

leaving the same week, and the 2 were unable to meet before he had to leave. Joycie and the zone were grateful she had been involved. The past DCMs of the zone and her service sponsor were of tremendous help.

AA is alive and growing in District 10B with lots of love and service. May we forever be grateful.

ABC Group

The ABC Group started during the summer of 1987, interestingly enough, as a typical 12-Step call. Two AAs went to a home to talk to an alcoholic and agreed to come back in a few days. In the meantime, the parents of the "drunk" offered the use of their trailer home to meet. Within a short time, this home setting had become a regular meeting. They began meeting at 10:30 in the morning and called themselves the Shiftworkers. It wasn't long before the home was no longer big enough. One member of the group volunteered his father's church's basement and the group moved to The Russell Temple AME Church in Newnan.

At some point, the meeting time shifted to 1:00 P.M. and later changed again to 12:00 noon. The character of the meeting changed with the shift in location and time, and more women joined. In October, 1987, the group became officially known as the ABC Group, reflecting the "three pertinent ideas" at the end of How It Works. The group remained here at noon until 1991 when the Newnan Club opened its doors to AA, and the group conscience chose to move the meeting place there. Other members back at the church formed a new group known as the New Freedom Group.

As it is a noon meeting, the ABC Group has seen changes in size throughout its existence, from meetings with as few as 3 members to birthdays with 30 or more in attendance. Most often it has been a small discussion group. The group meets Monday-Friday at noon at 4 Madison St.

One funny incident occurred when the treasurer lost the treasury! Not having opened a proper bank account, the group chose to keep its money in an envelope locked in an old briefcase. The Treasurer carried it with her, placed it absentmindedly on the running board of her van, and drove off. Naturally, upon arriving home, it was nowhere in sight. Too afraid to admit there was over \$200 in it, she sat in utter defeat at home. In the meantime, the briefcase had been found in front of a neighbor's apartment. The only name on the briefcase was that of the original "drunk" for whom the meeting was started, and so the finder called his house. His poor wife, having no knowledge of any briefcase with such a large sum of cash in it, promptly got furious and wanted to know why her husband had lost a "secret" briefcase in a neighborhood

she knew nothing about. Once this was straightened out it became the poor fellow's task to locate the treasurer, whose last name he did not know. Approximately 14 calls later, when most folks discovered they too knew only her first name and last initial, someone finally tracked her down and promptly declared that while such anonymity was to be respected, it was a nuisance at a time like this.

An afterthought to all this is the fact that the original "drunk" who was the object of that first 12th Step call never did get sober. A lot of folks who came to the ABC meetings did keep coming back and are sober today. That too is "how it works."

Carrollton Group

The Carrollton Group was started in late 1949 or early 1950.

Edith F. was the first member, joined by Luther F. As time passed, Bill G., Corriene B., Jack H., Herbert A., Jimmy H., Buck F., Dr. P., and Pete D. joined the group.

The first meetings were held in Edith's home and later in what is now called Kennedy Chapel, then the R.E.A. building, and later the Episcopal Church. As the group grew, more space was needed, and it moved to the Catholic Church of Our Lady. In 1962, Hoyt B. and Max C. joined with Jimmy H. as their sponsor. In one of the early years, the last collection before Christmas was used for a needy family, showing the spiritual growth of the group.

In April 1959, the first Grapevines were handed out in Carrollton. In 1960, an open meeting was held in Carroll County Courthouse. Vernie T., a visitor from Alabama, was the speaker.

Most of these members are gone after long years of sobriety. Some that most of us can remember, who gave so much of themselves to this program and to us, were Max C., Herbert A., Jimmy H., Buck F., Bruce R., Hoyt B., and Pete D. We can look around the meeting room and see the fruits of their labor, fruits of joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and most of all, love for God, their program and us.

In the early years, the spouses met with the AAs. But by 1971 they felt the need for something for their own personal growth. On April 23 of that year, the first Al-Anon meeting was held.

Cig-non Group

Cig-non group started as a meeting in early 1979 with only 3 members, Tom, Margarette, and Geneva B., plus a few friends who

wished us well. As far as we knew, we were the first group in the area with a non-smoking agenda. We were fortunate to attract quite a few "permanent visitors" with impressive 24-hour periods of sobriety, including Raymond M., Charles D., and Eddy V., to name a few.

We decided early on to focus our efforts on a 12 & 12 format. We purchased several copies of the 12 & 12, and so began several years of great AA. Our meetings were all free wheeling, and many times we would manage to read only one small paragraph, and the discussion would take off. I (Margarette) believe I learned more about our great program there than I had in all my previous years as an AA member.

Our program began to attract many visitors, both long time members and newcomers wanting to learn more about the program. It was a thrill to see Cig-non grow and establish itself as a viable group in the area. We were fortunate to have the complete backing of the vicar of the Church of the Good Shepherd. It was sad to see the passing of both Bob F. and a charter member, Geneva B., but the program goes on.

We had so much acceptance because we started out as a non-smoking group. It might have been harder to get accustomed to a new policy. But it is interesting to note that the whole parish of the Church of the Good Shepherd is now non-smoking.

Douglas County Group

When the Douglasville Group voted to move to a club, several members who opposed the move decided to remain behind and form the Douglas County Group. The group was founded in July 1984 by Bob and Anita S. and met at the First United Methodist Church in Douglasville. Other early members included Julie M. and M.J. M. Meetings, then as now, were held Monday and Thursday at 8 PM.

The church's no-smoking policy limited early attendance. A core group of 6 held things together, and in late 1991, membership and attendance began to rise. Current membership is 18, and meetings regularly attract 25 to 30 people. The current GSR is Frank R.

Douglasville Group

The first meeting of the Douglasville Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was on December 11, 1969. The meetings were held at the Douglasville City Hall Building in a room above the police department. The founders of the group were Jim W., Raymond M., Rex M. and Don M. They had been traveling out of the county for meetings. Some of them were driving over 20 miles to get to an A.A. meeting. They

wanted a meeting closer to home and decided to start one in Douglas County.

Boland B., a member of AA, lived in Douglasville, and had visited the police department. He continued to drive the 20 or so miles to other meetings in the Atlanta area while the meetings were held above the police department. He said it was because he did not want the police to know he was an alcoholic. The group's first pigeon was M.J. M. The night he was picked up for his first meeting, he had been drunk all day. He kept telling them he had to go home because it was his wedding anniversary. They didn't pay any attention to him, as it was his wife who had called them to come get him. They kept M.J. for several days to sober him up before they took him home. They found out he had been telling the truth about it being his wedding anniversary the day they picked him up. M.J. is still around and very active in A.A.

The Douglasville Group moved on May 5, 1971, to the basement of the Beulah Baptist Church. The Pastor, Rev. A., was supportive of AA. We may be one of the few groups ever to have met in a Baptist church. The group remained at the church until Rev. A. moved and was replaced by another pastor, Rev. T., who did not feel the same way as Rev. A. He told the group, "AA is not what you need; what you need is to get right with God." The group was asked to move.

In September, 1975, the group moved to the First United Methodist Church of Douglasville. The group remained here until June, 1984, when the group conscience voted to move to the Now Club at the corner of Spring Street and Club Drive. A few members decided to stay at the church and formed another group. The Douglasville Group met at the Now Club until March 12, 1987. The group started to look at its relationship with the club and felt that some of the Traditions were in question. On the morning of March 12, 1987, members went to the club to open the building for their regular 11 AM meeting and found the locks had been changed and the group had been locked out without any notification. The GSR, Joyce W., rented space at Hunter Park for the 8:00 PM meeting at the request of members. After the meeting that night, the group conscience voted to find another location and that it would no longer meet in a club. At that time, the group had 16 meetings a week. The day meetings were held in members' homes and the 8 PM meetings were held at St. Chrysostom's Episcopal Church on Bright Star Rd. Pat H. and Boland B., both members of the Douglasville Group, had purchased a building. They rented part of it to the group and work began. That summer members built a meeting hall. The group voted to call it "Serenity Hall." It is located on Highway 78, E. Broad Street in Douglasville. The group moved to Serenity Hall on September 25, 1987, and currently holds 25 meetings a week.

Fresh Start Group

The Fresh Start Group was founded August 26, 1987, in Douglasville. The Harmony Group had grown to overflowing, and the new group was organized to relieve the crowding. Meetings, then and now, are held Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday at 8 PM. The first meetings were at the corner of Spring and Club Streets in the lower level of the old American Legion Hall. This was a well known leaky building, and on rainy days, early arrivals bailed and mopped water off the floor.

The group's first GSR and alternate were Art and Patricia F. They were instrumental in getting the group organized in the proper way. Jack F. was another early GSR, and performed the job well. Many times the group has been unable to find anyone willing to take on this responsibility.

Early on, the group began carrying the AA message to the Douglas County Jail, located across the street from the Legion Hall. M.J. M. was the main force in organizing the volunteers. The group at the jail took the name Fresh Start.

In October 1990, the group helped with the groundbreaking and building of the Now Club at 7439 W. Strickland St. The group also helped organize the West Georgia Gratitude Weekend in 1990, which is held the last weekend of each June.

The group remains fairly small, but a core of active members, including Jimmy M., M.J. M., Jack F., Fred S., and current GSR and alternate, Dennis and Kathy C., help keep things together.

Friday Night Fellowship

The Friday Night Fellowship was started Feb. 14, 1981, by Leon B., Jack F., Buddy R., George W., Robbie B., Stan K. (now deceased), and Buddy S in a trailer at the Cobb General Hospital. We had a total of 10 members.

We left Cobb General and moved to the Good Shepherd Episcopal Church on Love St. in Austell because at times we had no water in the bathroom at Cobb. Now we are located at the Boy Scout Building next to the fire department in Lithia Springs. Our meeting are at 8:30 p.m. on Friday night. Come visit us.

Harmony Group

A group of people were meeting at the Now Club, and all the proceeds were going to the club. There was a lot of talk and arguing about not being a real group and not having a representative to go to Macon. So Big Jim W., Fred S., Jimmy M., Jim McC., Frank M., and Ken S. decided to start a group. Because of all the disharmony they had been having they decided to call it the Harmony Group. The group started March 20, 1987. Jack W. and Earl H. were other early members.

Fred, who was the district PI/CPC chairperson at the time was nominated for GSR, and Big Jim was nominated for secretary. Fred was GSR for a few months until the group grew and they had a re-election, when Jack W. was elected.

The group met in the basement of a big building. When it rained we got flooded. Out came the mops and buckets. We called it the dungeon. Across the street was the county jail, the police station was right down the road, and we weren't far from the cemetery. We had all kinds of reasons to be grateful.

In the summer of 1991, we moved into the new Now Club, a brand new building, which seemed strange at first. The groups that meet at the club all had a hand in the building and now it is home to us all. The Harmony Group meets on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8 PM. Monday and Wednesday are closed and Friday is an open meeting. Sometimes we're amazed at the harmony in the group. With 41 members, it is a very loving and caring group.

New Freedom Group

This history was provided by GSR Tom W.

Before we moved from Long Island, NY, to Newnan, we visited my future brother- and sister-in-law in Peachtree City in September 1991. Since Brian C. was already a member of the Peachtree City Group, I attended a Friday night meeting with him. I liked the meeting, but it was very large.

After staying down here about a month looking for a place to live, my fiance and I decided to locate in Newnan. Our first weeks here were great, but I knew I needed to find a home group. I heard about a meeting at noon in Newnan, so one day in late October, I went looking for it. I knew that AA meetings were usually held in the basements of churches, so I walked from our apartment to the City of Newnan. I checked out all the churches, but none of them had or even

knew about any AA meetings. So I went to the local newspaper office and they told me where the meeting was. It was a good thing I started out early for I had passed it on my way into Newnan. I found the meeting in the basement of the Russell Temple AME Church located on Westside School Rd. There were quite a few people there, and they welcomed me with open arms. I joined the group, the ABC Group.

What I did not know was that the ABC Group was in transition. They had held a group conscience meeting and decided to renovate an old pool hall in the City of Newnan and to have the ABC Group meetings there, calling it "The Clubhouse." The trouble with this was that not everybody wanted to leave the basement of the church. So we held our own group conscience meeting and decided to keep holding meetings in the church. But we had to get recognition, and forms and applications were needed. Were it not for diligent work the New Freedom Group might not be in existence today.

The ABC Group took with them most of the AA literature and the coffee pot. This did not deter group members. We got a new subscription to the Grapevine and started getting AA literature, including several copies of the Big Book, a new coffee pot and packages of coffee.

So we got started as a group. As word got out, we started to attract more recovering alcoholics. Today we welcome any and all alcoholics who want to join our group without exception. We have open meetings Monday through Friday at noon, unless a member wishes the meeting to be closed. We celebrated our 1-year anniversary with a little party in December 1992 and are looking forward to many years of existence, one day at a time.

New Hope Group (Institutional)

In September, 1978, the New Hope Group was started at the Carroll County Correctional Institution in Carrollton. Ray B. and Thomas J. were the outside contacts at that time and for many more years. The meeting started with about 25 members.

In 1986, Tim B. became the outside sponsor, followed by Eli L. of Carrollton. Eli attends the district and assembly meetings in order to keep the group informed. The group focus is on the Twelve Steps and the Big Book.

Principles for Progress Group

About the middle of August 1979, 2 men from Mt. Zion, Donald M. and Lee B., asked Nick G. if there was anywhere they could start another meeting. They were uncomfortable in Carrollton, about 8 miles east on Highway 16, and kept getting drunk every 60-90 days for about 2 years. Nick asked the preacher at Mt. Zion Methodist Church if they could start a meeting on Monday nights in the church annex and he said yes.

There was some confusion about when meetings were to start. On Monday evening, September 3, 1979, Donald came to have a meeting. Nick went to tell him they were not starting until Monday the 10th, but Donald said Lee was on his way. So Nick, who was 20 months sober, said "Wait here." He went home to get his coffee pot, Big Book and a couple of Grapevines. He returned and put on a pot of coffee. Lee came driving up at 8:00 and the 3 had an AA meeting. The next Monday there were 7 and on Christmas night 1979 there were 4 at the meeting.

Later the group purchased a 60-cup percolator. There were about 6 to 12 members to then, with support from the surrounding area. The group was on its way. The name Principles for Progress was adopted and registered with GSO. There has been a meeting every Monday night since September 3, 1979, and the group hopes to continue forever, one day at a time.

On Nick's 13th anniversary in 1991, someone said there were 105 people present. Imagine a drunk with that many friends. Dan and Lee graduated soon after the group was started. Nick still makes coffee and helps set up. The group has an average attendance of 25 each Monday night and about 16 members, with right at 100 years of active sobriety. We have tried to do exactly what the names implies: practice the principles of the fellowship of AA to make progress in sobriety and living.

Road to Freedom Group

The Road to Freedom Group was founded in January 1990 by Jimmy R. and Bruce B. It first met at the First Methodist Church in Palmetto. Other early members were Barry B., Jack L., Richard W., and Mark W. The group moved to Far Best Community House on Johnson Road in Palmetto in September 1992. The 15 group members meet at 8 PM on Wednesdays and 8:30 PM on Saturdays.

Steps Group

Founded by Chris W. and James P., Steps Group started meeting in early 1992 on Sunday nights at the corner of Houston and Sweetwater Rd. in Lithia Springs as a Step study meeting. Joined by Margaret S., in the spring we started talking about becoming a group. DCM Joycie W. visited and shared at our group conscience regarding what makes a group.

We decided to call the group Steps since it is a Step study meeting. In July 1992, we registered, with Chris as our first GSR, James as alternate, and Margaret as secretary/treasurer. We are a small group, with 12 members, but we have regular attendance and invite others to come visit with us on Sunday nights.

Steps to Progress Group

The Steps to Progress Group was founded July 7, 1991, by Jim P. and Betty R. They had moved to Bowden from Douglas County, where meetings were available daily. It had been a while since a meeting had been held in Bowden. The first meeting had 4 people, Jim, Betty, and Chris and Diane B. The group meets at First United Methodist Church, where they were welcomed with open arms by the pastor. The average attendance at their meetings, on Thursdays at 8 PM, is 10.

One night a pushy pizza salesman invaded the meeting, and without so much as a "by your leave," went through his whole spiel. After he was finished we asked him to leave. He did, and we didn't buy any pizza.

While the group carefully studies the Steps, the growth in sobriety is notable. They call themselves "absolutely the slowest Step group in the U.S."

Villa Rica All Ages Group

The Villa Rica All Ages Group was founded in spring 1972 by Willard B., Bob W., Bill G., and Bill K., all of whom are now deceased. They first met at a vacant house on Church St., and later moved to the old Leathers home place. The Methodist Church bought the old home, razed it, and built a new 2-story youth center in 1986, where the group now meets. There are 8 group members.

West Atlanta Group

The West Atlanta Group was formed in 1980 and registered as a new group in November of that year. Early members were Marie P., Shirley A., and Mel B., GSR. The group met, then as now, in Lithia Springs at Parkway Regional Hospital, which has a treatment facility. The group tries to carry the AA message to patients in treatment as well as other newcomers. The group supplies literature as part of the self-supporting concept.

The group has experienced many ups and downs over the years, yet has always enjoyed great support from area groups and has maintained the positive AA attitude. Meetings have at times been so large that there was barely room for everyone, but attendance has declined during the past few years. The group has been forced to work around numerous changes at the hospital, but seems to be reviving and becoming very active and responsible. A Saturday 8 PM meeting has been added to the original 8 PM Wednesday meeting. The group focus is on the newcomer. The group went without a GSR for a while, during a time of some decline, but Tracy D. has now assumed that position.

Zone D

We Care

In October 1976, Dan B. and his nurse started an AA meeting at the Newnan Mental Health Clinic, located on East Washington St. Dan's wife and Dick S., a minister at the Newnan Presbyterian Church, helped him with the meetings in the beginning.

In January 1977, the meeting decided to take a name and group status. Chuck V. was elected the group's first G.S.R. and the group was named We Care. There were 8 members in attendance at that meeting.

Today the group has 30 plus members and meets Sunday through Thursday at 8:00 PM, Friday at 9:00 PM, and Saturday at 1:00 PM and 9:30 PM at 4 Madison St. in Newnan.

DISTRICT 11

Prior to 1986, District 11 was inactive. However, about 2 years before, Jerry B. of Flippen was very instrumental in introducing AA to the judges and law enforcement agencies in and around Henry and Butts Counties. In his quiet way, Jerry paved the way for the understanding and the rapport AA now has with these agencies. For that we are grateful.

District 11 is comprised of 9 Georgia counties: Oconee, Greene, Walton, Morgan, Rockdale, Newton, Butts, Jasper and Henry. In 1986 a reorganizational meeting was held in Conyers. Sam S., Frank R., and John L. were moderators. Tom H. was elected DCM for 1986-87 and Steve C. was Alt. DCM. Since then, the alternate DCM has always been elected as DCM, for these terms: 1988-89, Steve C.; 1990-91, Margaret R.; 1992, Titus C.; and 1993 Lee H.

At the G.S.S.A. in Macon in January of 1993, District 11 was given approval to divide into 3 zones, to be comprised as follows: Zone A - Greene, Oconee, Walton, and Morgan counties; Zone B - Rockdale and Newton counties; Zone C - Henry, Butts and Jasper counties. Meetings are being held to elect new trusted servants for these zones.

Zone A

Clean 'N Green Group (Greensboro)

Until 1985, anyone in Greene County wishing to attend an AA meeting had to journey to Madison, Watkinsville, Eatonton or another of the several small towns in surrounding counties. It was not until October of 1985 that the first meeting was held in Greensboro.

In early 1985, several AA members from Greene County attended the Madison meeting on a more or less regular basis. In the summer, 4 members began the spade work to establish a meeting in Greensboro. Bill B., John J., Gene M. and Lou G. and 2 or 3 wives met in the home of John J. to make plans. It was initially proposed that the meeting be held in homes of the various members. After some discussion of this proposal, it was concluded that a "home" group would not be adequate, primarily because of (1) distances involved, and (2) limited space in some homes. Consequently, John J. and Lou G. set about to find meeting space in or around the City of Greensboro.

All of John's and Lou's efforts went for naught in that any space available was either too expensive or was in a church. Church meeting sites were rejected for the usual reasons.

In October 1985, B.J. E., a long-time resident of Greene County, became a member of the Madison Group. She was asked and agreed to assist in finding space. Soon after, B.J. reported that she had

located space in a D.U.I. school at a rear entrance to a building on Main Street.

An agreement was reached with the owner regarding rent and meeting times, and the first meeting was held on November 2. Initially, because most of the AAs in Greene County were members of the Madison Group (indeed, one Greene Countian was GSR for the Madison Group), the Greensboro meeting was just that: a meeting, not a group.

At first, attendance was small and only 5 to 10 people appeared with any regularity. However, surrounding groups, once informed of the Saturday meeting, lent tremendous support. Further, the Penfield Christian Home, which until that time had not looked favorably upon Alcoholics Anonymous, underwent a change of administration. With that change, many of the Home's clients began attending meetings regularly.

The Greensboro meeting applied for and received group status in January or February of 1986. The new group elected Harold F. as its first GSR and B.J. E. as secretary/treasurer.

In mid to late 1986, the meeting space was cut in half by the owner, rendering the space almost inadequate; nonetheless, the group maintained a more or less steady growth with the assistance of the Oconee County, Morgan County and Washington groups.

In 1989, the CNG Group was forced to find a new meeting place. The new space was located on Highway 15, south of Greensboro in the middle of a cow pasture. "The Pond House," as it was already named, became a very popular meeting, presumably because of the unique and exceptionally pleasant setting.

Not long after the move to the "Pond House," a Wednesday night meeting was started.

In 1992, the CNG Group was again forced to find new space and relocated to the present site in June of 1992 (the county building adjacent to the Senior Citizens Center).

Madison Group

In August 1984, a new AA group was formed and named the Madison AA Group. The group consisted of 3 members (by vague recollections); Bill W., Winona G., and "Red" B., holding an open meeting on Tuesday at 8:00 PM in the Senior Citizen's Center in Madison. Winona G. served as the GSR, secretary, treasurer, and contact person at the time.

The infancy years were not without "rocky" episodes - not to be elaborated on here. However, support from neighboring members and some new arrivals helped in keeping the group viable. In April 1985,

the group still met at the Senior Citizen's Center, but, it appears, changed the meeting night to Thursday. The GSR at that time was Winona G., and the secretary/treasurer was Jerry C. As alluded to above, some things happened, and the meeting place moved to the Uncle Remus Regional Library around June or July of 1985.

Fortunately for AA in this area, Lou G. from Greene County had begun attending the Madison meeting. Lou was elected Alternate GSR after the move, and shortly thereafter, was elected GSR. Meetings were held Sunday and Thursday at 7:30 PM. Lou G. was followed by "Red" O. as the GSR for the Madison Group when Lou and three other Greene Countians started a meeting in Greensboro. All of this happened in a relatively short span of time.

Around 1987 the library meeting place underwent reconstruction and the group met for about 2 years at the new county jail - not for residence, but for meetings. Following reconstruction of the library, the group moved back to it and is still having superb AA, thanks to the home group members; and, to good participation by other groups in the area (notably the Oconee, Rutledge, Clean-n-Greene, Monticello, and Eatonton groups). AA is strong in the Madison Group thanks to this, and for the cooperation and support of the library leadership in allowing the Madison Group use of such a fine meeting place.

Oconee County Group

The founders of AA in Watkinsville were Grady G. and Floyd B. Grady had had some quality sobriety in New York but lost it after coming to the unfamiliar brand of AA he found in Georgia. Floyd, too, had had several years of good sobriety in Athens but, like the AA group in Athens, he fell on hard times and lost it somewhere along the way. Just as both these men were struggling to find sobriety again, they met each other and decided to start an AA group in Oconee County so that they might stay sober. The Oconee County AA Group had its first meeting on September 19, 1970, in the basement of the Methodist Church on Main Street in Watkinsville.

From the beginning, the Oconee County Group had a strong sense of single purpose. The founders wanted to recreate the best AA they had known. They wanted a fundamental, basic, Big-Book-oriented group. They always resisted the addition of unnecessary rituals, new fads, and accretions. Around 1974, when hand-holding for the Lord's Prayer became customary in Georgia AA, Oconee County didn't take it up. Nor did they ever start using the chip system. Around 1980 when the "Promises" began to be regularly read at many meetings, Oconee never started that either. There was an effort to stick to the bare-boned essentials and at every meeting a Big Book was always open

in front of the chairman. Grady did preserve a custom from his New York AA experience - he would always end the meeting on time and on a light note by announcing that "there are no souls saved after 9 o'clock!"

For several years Oconee had one meeting a week - Monday night at 8 o'clock. Later another meeting was added on Friday night. Today there are 3 meetings a week - a closed meeting on Monday, a Big Book study on Wednesday, and an open meeting on Friday.

Around 1975, the group left its original meeting place in the church basement and moved to a store building on South Main Street at the intersection of Highway 441 and Highway 15. Around 1980, it moved to a house near Butlers Crossroads near the Oconee High School. In 1985, the group moved again to a meeting room upstairs over the Wells Building on Main Street in downtown Watkinsville. Our present meeting place has for several years been the Chamber of Commerce building on the corner of Highway 53 and Nancy Drive.

Some of the early members of the Oconee County Group were Bob M., Jerry T., Cliff S., Rufus W., Joe T., Jack N., Tom E., Steve M., Ellen M., Steve C., and Fenton J. Both of our founders are gone now - Grady died in 1983 and Floyd in 1987.

Presently (January 1990) we have about 28 members. We still emphasize simplicity, basics, and singleness of purpose. Traditionally, we start every discussion meeting with the question, "Has anybody wanted a drink today?" If there is no response to that, then we go on with the discussion of a topic fundamental to sobriety. Although we have few frills, we are not a glum lot. We love "eatin' meetin's," birthdays, anniversaries, and any occasion for fellowship.

Recently we did something we think is a "first". Our members, most of whom are heavy smokers, willingly voted in group conscience to ban smoking from our meeting because the smoke was hurting attendance at meetings and membership in our group.

The Oconee Group is alive and well and expects to be carrying the message for many years to come.

Rutledge Group

The Rutledge Group was founded in July 1990 by Harold M. and Keith B. Some early members were Tom S., Robert H., James P., and Jake H. The group meets at the Rutledge Community Center every Tuesday at 8:00 PM. Meetings are open discussion.

Although the group is only 3 years old, we have a current active membership of 7.

Salem New Life

On July 12, 1992, Salem New Life Group held its first meeting at 5:30 PM. The group was organized by Bob and Teresa M., Ronnie N., and Eric P.

The group was founded out of need and for convenience in Rockdale County. Rent was high and members were few at the beginning, but faith (and faith alone) has allowed Salem New Life to grow to a membership of 62 members. Group meetings have multiplied from the original 4 meetings a week to the current 22 meetings a week.

Love for the still-suffering alcoholic and a true commitment to spreading the work of AA has allowed Salem New Life to withstand the test of new resentments and group "governors." We are grateful to be a miracle of AA in the State of Georgia.

Walton County Group

Cliff P., one of the original members of Walton County AA, actually started trying to get an AA group started in Monroe in 1972-1973. The initial effort failed since no one could stay sober. He then enlisted the help of Betty F. from the Mental Health Department. Some meetings were held in the old house on Broad Street that housed the Mental Health Department at that time. The building burned down and no more meetings were held until May of 1976. Cliff had been attending meetings in Athens and picked up his last white chip on December 22, 1975. In May of 1976, with the help of Carol and Emory S. and Margaret R., all of Athens, the first stable Walton County Group got started, meeting at Ray Memorial Church. Things were going along pretty well until the treasurer got drunk and ran away with their money. In spite of this, the group survived and grew. The group moved to the Mental Health Building on D-Altha Road. The building was in the middle of a large kudzu field and became known as the "Kudzu Patch;" the group, like kudzu, thrived! Some other early members were Oliver M., Opal W., John M., Yvonne, and Jerri McN.

In late 1981 or early 1982, Madrene S. and a few others who wanted more than one meeting a week found space in the St. Anna's Catholic Church in Monroe and started the "Keep it Simple" group. The same people attended both meetings. In 1985 John M. found a building in Monroe for lease and the Biscayne Club was formed. Both AA groups held meetings there and voted to combine the groups in July of 1985. The combined groups were now known as the Walton County Group. There are at present 7 AA meetings, 3 Al-Anon meetings, and 2 NA meetings held each week in the Biscayne Club Building.

Cliff P., who started the original AA group in 1976, was also instrumental in starting the NA group in Walton County in 1987. He passed away in March 1992 and is missed by all who knew and loved him.

Zone B

Conyers Group

Randolf L., Mildred L. (Al-Anon), Heddy K., Lee K., and Bill F. formed the Conyers Group in March of 1966. The group began meeting in the city commissioners office for approximately 2 weeks. They then received permission to use the local health department. Meetings were held there for about 2 years until the nurses complained about coffee being spilled and the amount of smoke.

In 1968, the Conyers Group moved to the Episcopal Church, and in 1970, to the E.G.A.B.A. Club, located at 935 Green St. 1970 was also the year the group voted to desegregate the meeting.

At the present time the group has over 70 members and holds 11 meetings a week.

The Rockdale Group

The Rockdale Group was formed in 1973 (although nobody seems to remember the day or even the month) as a result of dissension with the Conyers Group concerning, primarily, policies toward newcomers. Several Conyers Group members, including Sue and Brad B., Sam S. and Frank G., got themselves a coffee pot and broke away to found the Rockdale Group which met at the First Methodist Church on Main Street in Conyers. The first meeting was a closed discussion at 8:00 pm on Tuesday night. Soon after, a Saturday night Big Book discussion was added.

In 1977 the group moved from the Methodist church back to the E.G.A.B.A. building, a renovated feed and seed store. Today shares the facility and the meeting schedule with the Conyers Group.

The current meeting schedule of the Rockdale Group is as follows: Tuesdays at 6 and 8 PM there are open discussion meetings, with the 6 PM meeting being the only non-smoking meeting held at the E.G.A.B.A. Building. On Saturday night at 8 PM there is an open discussion meeting, and on Sundays at 10 AM we have a very popular Daily Reflections discussion meeting. Each month there's a covered dish dinner with a speaker meeting to celebrate birthdays. Every year the group's anniversary is celebrated with an eating meeting, and many

oldtimers return to visit and reminisce. The current membership of the Rockdale Group is estimated to be around 40 members.

Zone C

Henry County Group

In October 1988, a room became available at Henry General Hospital in Stockbridge in which to hold AA meetings. Meetings were held there until the Henry County Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was chartered in February 1989 with 4 members: Steve C., Barbara J., Mike J., and Bill W. Barbara was elected GSR of the newly formed group. Bill was elected alternate GSR and Mike, secretary/treasurer.

At present the group membership is 10. They meet in the Magnolia Room at Henry General Hospital every Wednesday with an average attendance of 25.

Jackson-Butts County Group

The Jackson-Butts County Group was started by Dot B., who lived in East Point and came to Jackson Lake each weekend, along with her family. She had gotten sober March 17, 1966, in the East Point Group. She felt the need of a meeting over weekends, so she began this group in 1967, along with a couple of other members.

Marion M. obtained sobriety in June 1966 in Decatur. She moved to Jackson in October 1976, and started attending the Jackson-Butts County Group on a regular basis. Members attending the group, which has always been open, in the early years were Dot, O.G. E., and Marshall, who are now deceased; Silas from Monticello; Sonny S. and Jack G. Then there were Carolyn S., Charlotte G., Janet M., and Buddy M. and Bob H., both of whom are now deceased. Many of these early members had Al-Anon spouses who attended with them.

Edith H. joined the group in December 1981. Edith obtained sobriety in Ventura, California, on July 17, 1952, and has been active in AA ever since. She served as GSR of this group for several terms, secretary to the 11th district for 4 years, and in other AA service roles.

The group originally met at the Butts County Health Department, until they outgrew it and moved to the Presbyterian Church. However, the church did not understand that AA must have the doors open when scheduled, and it often had other activities which precluded holding a meeting on the regular nights. So Gene E., who got sober in Atlanta on July 30, 1976, and joined the group in 1982,

scouted around and found the present meeting place, the Daughtry Foundation on College St. At that time he also established a second open meeting on Sunday nights at 7:30 PM, early enough so that folks with children could get them in bed to be ready for school Monday morning.

Birthdays are celebrated the last Friday night in each month with an eating meeting and a speaker. The group has had the usual ebb and flow of members; right now, we average some 20-30 people on Friday nights and 15-20 on Sunday nights. The group is definitely growing, and many members are celebrating many years with us as their home group.

Just For Today

The priest of St. Joseph's expressed an interest in having an AA group meet in this church before it was even built. Several church members who were in AA formed the group, which met for the first time on April 11, 1991. Two of the founders were Sherrill and Mike F. For almost two years this group held one meeting a week on Thursday night. A second meeting on Sunday night was added in March 1993.

At the present time the Just For Today group meets on Thursday nights at 8:00 PM and Sunday nights at 7:00 PM. There are 13 members on the rosters.

McDonough Group

The McDonough Group started meeting October 28, 1979, with R.C. V. and Helen R. from the Atlanta Central Office helping to get it started. Approximately 55 attended that first meeting. Charter members were Joel T., Martha J., Norman B., and Lucy B., who are still active in AA. Carl D. and Jerry B. were other early members. The founders had seen a need for a group closer to home, as they had been going 20 to 40 miles to other meetings.

They met with officials of the First Methodist Church of McDonough and acquired permission for a meeting area in the basement that continues to be used until this day.

The group has continued growth since its beginning. The present membership of the McDonough Group is 30 active members, with 30 to 40 attending meetings. The group meets on Monday nights for a Big Book study with the help of tapes, on Tuesday nights for discussion, Wednesday noon, and Saturday night's meeting splits with separate men's and women's meetings. All meetings are open.

The group anniversary and each member's birthday is celebrated with a covered dish supper and speaker meeting. The group currently is working with the probate judge as to DUI offenders attending meetings and is in the process of working up at least one night AA meeting in the new county jail.

Other groups have been formed from the McDonough and Stockbridge groups, such as the Just For Today Group and the Henry County group. New groups in Hampton and Locust Grove are now being looked into. Charter member N.V. B., who provided the information for this history, says, "Of course, not being perfect, other groups have sprung up from this group. In my opinion this is an asset, not from a falling-out or hatred. We all enjoy other groups in surrounding areas. This is AA in action." The McDonough Group continues to have good relations with all groups in surrounding areas and has chosen meetings nights not in conflict with other groups.

Monticello-Jasper County Group

The Monticello-Jasper County AA Group was organized in the early 1960s by Charles H. and Silas A. Charles had been introduced to AA by a doctor in Atlanta. The first meetings were held in his home in Monticello.

These early meetings were open meetings. The spouses of the original members (all men) attended the meetings also. So, you might say these meetings in the first years were joint AA/Al-Anon meetings, although at that time the wives had never heard of Al-Anon.

In the mid '60s, the group grew in number and moved its meeting place to the Health Center on Eatonton St. Open meetings continued to be held once a week. Speaker meetings, birthday celebrations, and covered dish suppers were held at the American Legion building next door.

During the 1960s and 1970s there were 31 or more group members, both male and female. Some of them visited neighboring AA groups and attended district meetings, workshops, and state conventions.

A member of the group at this time remembers going on Twelfth-Step calls and often sitting many hours with a suffering member who had had "a slip." She recalled that remedies used to help physically sober up were strong coffee, orange juice and buttermilk.

One of the most active and trusted servants in the Monticello group was Silas A. He had helped start the group and kept it going. His dedication could be summed up in the calling card he gave to newcomers or people he met at AA functions. It read: "Silas A. I'm twice retired. Once from the Post Office, once from the bottle. I have a lifetime job staying sober." Silas died in early January 1985.

The Monticello-Jasper County Group continues to meet once a week on Tuesday night at the Health Center. The meetings are closed except for speaker's meetings and birthday celebrations.

New Horizons Group (Institutional)

The institutional AA group at Jackson Diagnostic Center is known as the New Horizons Group. It was started about 1970 by Mr. and Mrs. S., Flora A., and Paul G. The founders were very dedicated to the group; some of them met faithfully with them for 10 years on Sunday nights for about 2 hours. They would bring at least 1 guest speaker to the weekly meeting, and local community AA groups would be invited. The inmate participation was very high.

Flora died about 1980. Before that time she had stopped attending on a regular basis, but would come occasionally when her health permitted. She kept in touch with the group through Paul.

During the early years the yearly highlight was the anniversary party. This activity would be held at Indian Springs at one of the pavilions. Each inmate was allowed to invite several family members to the all-day activity which entertained many guest speakers, a band for entertainment, and food. Also during the early years, hand-picked inmates from the group would participate in state meetings.

The group continues to be active after 23 years. It has been opened to allow more inmates to participate. Flora's picture hangs in the institutional visitation room with these words, "Group Sweetheart."

Stockbridge Group

The Henry County Health Department called Central Office in Atlanta and stressed the need for an AA meeting to be started in Stockbridge. The Tara Club and a group that met in Griffin were contacted and asked to help. A meeting was held in a 10x12 foot basement room at the Health Center on Highway 42 in Stockbridge in January 1977 - a Thursday night.

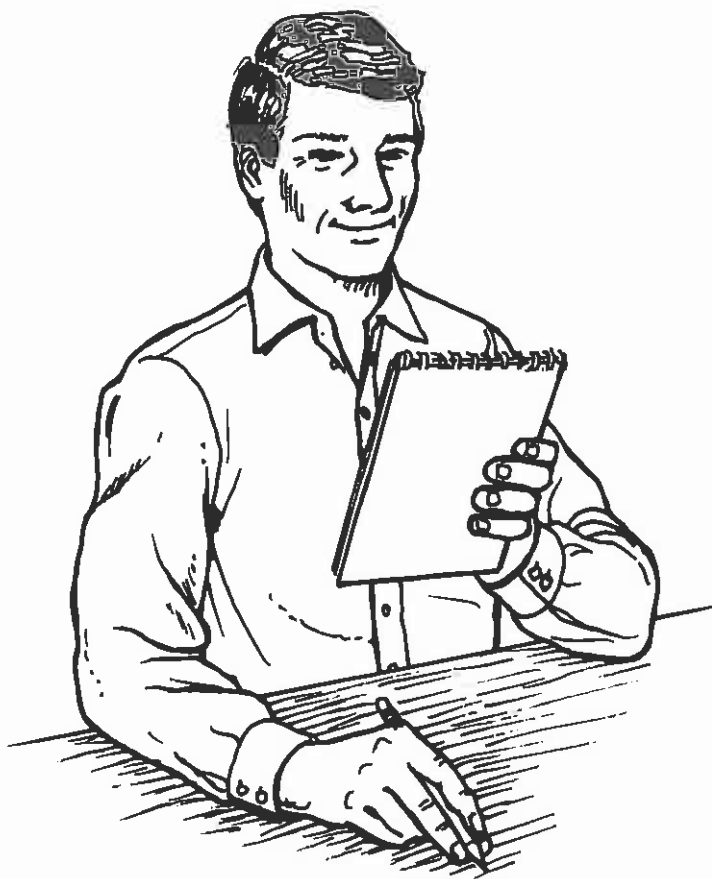
The DCM of Zone F, Shaky Sam, Gene S. and 2 women attended the first meeting. After 2 meetings, Gene S. conducted the meetings without the DCM. James F., Burch C., William R., and Ray W. soon became frequent attendees. Earl M. came from Hapeville to support the meetings. Several stragglers came and went also.

On January 17, 1978, Gene S. moved his little group to the First United Methodist Church in Stockbridge. The Stockbridge Group was chartered on that day, with 10 members. Not having any storage

space at that time, Gene had to haul the coffee pot, etc. in the trunk of his car to and from meetings. Meetings were held every Thursday night at 8:30 PM. The group stayed at the Methodist Church until July 1989. The church had several ball teams playing on their fields, and parking became a problem, as did anonymity breaks because of people around. Because of this, we decided to move our meeting place. The Stockbridge Presbyterian Church opened the fellowship hall to AA, and the group moved there in July 1989.

Soon the meetings increased in attendance and a Monday night closed meeting was added. At present there are 34 members, and the meetings are held at 8:00 PM on Monday and Thursday.





DISTRICT 12

AA came to Augusta in 1946. The area's first official AA meeting was held in 1946 in Tiny B.'s kitchen. In attendance were Tiny, who stayed sober the rest of his life, and Bill H. Not much more is known about AA in the Augusta area from then until 1948.

In December 1948, Louis M. came into AA in Augusta. Louis became one of the cornerstones of AA in the area and in 1958-59 became Georgia's fourth state delegate to the AA World Service. Much of the information on the area's AA program from 1948-77 was contributed by his wife Marion, who is now deceased.

Prior to December 1948, there was only one group with only one meeting in Augusta. This group, the Central Group, met on Monday night at 8:30 in the Boy Scout Hut behind St. Mary's on the Hill Catholic Church on Monte Sano Avenue.

There was no North Augusta group at this time although several members were from North Augusta. However, there was a meeting 19 miles from Augusta in Aiken, S.C., every Thursday. This resulted in members from each group visiting and supporting the other groups.

In June of 1949, Louis M. placed an ad in The Augusta Chronicle asking anyone who had a drinking problem - or thought they had - to come to an open speaking meeting in the Music Hall of Bell Auditorium. Louis later told Joe P. of Millen, who attended this meeting, that his purpose for having this meeting was to "sober up" all the drunks in Richmond County.

During 1949, there was a notable growth in the fellowship of AA and several members began to look around for an available place that could be used for meetings every night or as the need arose.

An upstairs apartment on 7th Street just north of Broad Street was for rent. This apartment was located over a lawyer's office on the site of the Georgia Railroad Bank and Trust Company. The Central Group rented the apartment, and Augusta now had 3 meetings a week - on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights.

Also in 1949, the Thomson group was formed by Johnny McN. from the Central Group. It held its first meeting in the office of the non-alcoholic mayor of Thomson. Later it was held in Johnny's huge barn behind his house, then moved to City Hall and later to the railroad depot.

During 1951, there was an influx of people who were to staff the DuPont plant across the Savannah River in South Carolina. As a result, the 7th Street location was outgrown. Once again this group searched for a larger meeting place.

Adequate facilities were found at The Partridge Inn on the corner of Meigs Street and Walton Way. Another large place was rented at 464 Broad Street. This location was more convenient for the

members from the North Augusta-Valley area between Aiken and Augusta.

The Partridge Inn location opened on Labor Day 1951 and became known as the Hill Group. Meetings were held there on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights with weekly Saturday night suppers cooked by the Ladies Auxiliary Group. (During this time there was no Al-Anon as we know it today.) The Hill Group engaged a professional answering service to assist in 12th Step work.

In 1955, the Central Group at 464 Broad Street had the opportunity to acquire a building in North Augusta, S.C. This group had meetings on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday nights. Pierce F. was instrumental in the acquisition of this building and moving it to its present location on city property "under the bridge" in North Augusta, S.C., where they have a 99-year lease. They renamed the group North Augusta Central Group. The building also was used as a clubhouse for the 24 Hour Club. A phone was installed and listed as Alcoholics Anonymous.

A group in south Augusta began meeting in the Richmond County Recreational Building on Lumpkin Road. When this group began, they had no name, but later became known as the Southside group. The facilities at the recreational building had inadequate heating, and roads to the building were unpaved. The group left this location and held several meetings in Doc W's home. Later they met at Burns Memorial Church on Lumpkin Road. This group folded circa June 1956 because of internal problems. Many of the members moved to the West End Group at Eve and Greene Streets.

In December 1963, nine members broke from the Hill Group as the result of differences of opinion among some of the members and formed the Forest Hills Group. The first meeting was held in Louis M.'s home with Bobby A. from Garfield, Ga., as the speaker. After this first meeting, the group began meeting in the former Scout Hut, now enlarged and known as St. Anne's Hall of the St. Mary's on the Hill Catholic Church. This group met on Tuesday and Friday nights. After several years the group moved to the Church of the Good Shepherd on Walton Way at John's Road, where the group continues to meet today on the same nights.

AA began to move forward in the sixties and seventies and soon there were several additional groups meeting nightly. North Augusta now had two groups, the North Augusta Group and the Miracle Group. It is difficult to estimate the number of members in the Augusta area at this time, but it certainly was a far cry from the eight members in 1948.

In the late sixties, the Lenwood Group was formed especially for the patients at the Lenwood division of the Veterans Administration Hospital on Wrightsboro Road. Billy and Imogene P. and Johnny H.

were instrumental in forming this group, which later changed its name to the Uptown Group.

The seventies recorded a rapid growth of AA in the area. An Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Center was begun at Georgia Regional Hospital in 1972 or '73. Butch and Fran LaB. were instrumental in the organization of the Georgia Regional group for the patients of the hospital. In 1972, Tommy E., with the help of Claude T. from the Hill Group, restarted the Southside Group at St. Albans Episcopal Church on Lumpkin Road.

Peter G., the first black man to gain sobriety in the Augusta AA program, and Phinizy T. organized the First Step Soul Group. This group met at Sacred Heart Catholic Church on Greene Street. It later dropped the word "soul" from its name.

There were now meetings in the Augusta area every night except Thursday until the Southside Group changed their Friday night meeting to Thursday night. Now the area had a meeting every night of the week.

Two AA clubs were formed in the seventies. They were the Fellowship Club on Lumpkin Road and the Downtown Club, now located on Murphy Street off Walton Way.

Differences of opinion with Georgia Regional Hospital resulted in the AA group's move to St. Joseph's Catholic Church on Lumpkin Rd. in 1977. This became the Alpha Group. Also in 1977, the Tidewater Group was started at Gracewood. Around 1984, this group became the Friendship Group, meeting in the Cokesbury Methodist Church on Windsor Springs Rd.

In January 1980, Ed N., the newly elected DCM for the 12th District, felt that AA had grown to the point that a central office was needed. A meeting was held at the Downtown Club for interested members to discuss the feasibility of opening such an office. Cam W. made a motion to begin this project.

On March 1, 1980, staffed by volunteers, the CSRA Central Office of the 12th District began. From 1980-1985 the Central Office was plagued by problems. It was closed down and reopened several times.

Several members of the Hill Group including Carl "Red" S. and the late Leo M. felt there was a great need for a group in Martinez. The Martinez Group was begun in August 1980 and meets in the Martinez United Methodist Church.

By 1980, there had been an increase in alcohol and drug treatment centers in or near Augusta. The University Hospital treatment center had expanded and opened a center in Louisville, Ga. Other centers included Humana Hospital, where the Just for Today group was organized, Charter Hospital, the Outpatient Program of North Augusta, which later closed, and one at Fort Gordon in Eisenhower Hospital.

AA in the Augusta area grew from the publicity of the treatment centers. There was now a new and different outlook upon the alcoholic and alcohol and drug treatment centers by the people of the area.

In 1982, the Washington Group began on the Athens Highway in a clubhouse started by Louise B. Also in 1982, the Augusta Area Mental Health Building on Greene Street became the meeting place for the Frog Hollow Group. Robert B. was responsible for organizing this group to support the area mental health program. In 1984, this group became the New Beginnings Group and moved to the University Hospital cafeteria to support the alcohol and drug program that had recently opened at the University Hospital.

During the 1980s, population growth was rapid in Columbia County adjacent to Augusta. In this area AA was represented at first by the Martinez Group. Sensing a need for more meetings in this area, the National Hills group, formed from the Martinez Group, sponsored movement of the Westside Club to a new facility in Martinez during 1988. The new location of the Westside Club provided a suitable location for a central office, called the CSRA Intergroup, Inc., a bookstore, an AA member club, and most important, ample meeting space for AA meetings. The intergroup office is a two-room suite open Tuesday through Saturday. It provides a 24-hour phone contact for 12th Step calls and a liaison for all groups within a 60-mile radius of Augusta. The office publishes a newsletter to keep groups informed.

From 1988 through 1992, a number of other groups were formed, including the Serenity Group organized for Augusta area mental health patients, the Lumpkin Road Group, the Galano Group (a gay group), the Grovetown Slippers, the Waynesboro Group, the Harlem Group, the In-Step Group, the Hpehzibah Group, the Third Tradition Group, and the Olmstead Group. In 1990, District 12 split into zones A and B with the dividing line at Walton Way and Interstate 20.

From the National Hills Group and its four weekly meetings, the Westside Club today is also home to the Happy Hour Group, No Nipping Nooners, the Young People's Group, and the S.H.E. Group. As of January 1993, there are 36 AA meetings per week in this facility, a number equal to roughly 50% of all AA meetings available in the area in 1988.

On June 10, 1993, AA world-wide was 58 years old. From 1946 until 1993, AA in the Augusta area has grown from the first meeting in Tiny B.'s kitchen to approximately 28 groups with over 700 members and in excess of 133 meetings per week.

Zone A

Happy Hour Group

The Happy Hour Group of Martinez was founded in July 1988 by Danny A., Jerry E., Joel S., Clint R., and Doris J. Richard S. was another early member. They have closed discussion meeting at the Westside Club at 6 PM daily, with 12 home group members.

The group voted to read only the Preamble, to have more time for people to share. This caused major controversy, resulting in many more attendees at business meetings (David S. adds, "Yea!"). Today, the group again reads How It Works, the Traditions and the Promises, and attendance is still high at business meetings. "We are not saints, but," David adds, "we think some of our elders could be."

Hill Group

In 1951, five years after AA began in Augusta with the old Central Group, founded by Tiny B., Joe P., and Louis M., there was an influx of people who had come to staff DuPont's Savannah River Plant in South Carolina. The AA meeting place on 7th Street was outgrown. A group searched for a larger meeting place. Adequate facilities were found at the Partridge Inn on the corner of Meigs St. and Walton Way. The location opened on Labor Day 1951 and became known as the Hill Group. Meetings were held there on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights, with weekly Saturday night suppers. Some of the early members were Buford F., Pierce F., Eugene P., Harry W., and Ann W.

The Hill Group continued to meet at the Partridge Inn until early 1970, when it moved to the Church of the Good Shepherd. In late 1972, it moved to St. Augustine's Episcopal Church on Wheeler Rd. In 1993, due to renovations at St. Augustine's, the group moved temporarily to Asbury Methodist Church on Troupe St.

At one time, the Hill Group was the largest group in Augusta. Several groups have split off from it. At one time, the group had meetings on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights at St. Augustine's, using the church parish hall more than the church itself. During the energy crisis of the '70s, the Friday night meeting was discontinued. Also during the '70s, quite a few women came into the group.

Each year, area meetings were held at the Hill Group that also celebrated the group anniversary. On several occasions, treasurers have left with the group's money; the latest was a CPA. Each time, a faithful few have dug deeper to keep the group afloat.

In 1970, Red S., who did the early recording of speaking meetings in the area, formed a group within the Hill Group known as the "Family Afterward Group." This meeting was attended by AAs, Al-Anons, and other family members and friends. The group later met at Christ Episcopal Church on the corner of Eve and Greene Streets in Augusta. It was discontinued in 1993.

We have had many good faithful members over the years. At the present time, the Hill Group's 40 members have an open speaker meeting on Monday nights and several discussion groups on Wednesday nights: a beginners group, a step group, and a general discussion group. We have many new young members, and the group continues to thrive after forty-plus years.

National Hills Group

The time was summer of 1984 and the temperature was hot. Several members of the Martinez AA Group, due to bulging rooms and no smoking at the Martinez Methodist Church, decided to look into the possibility of providing a new meeting further west of Martinez, which might include a club. Land and a partially renovated house were located on BelAir Road, Martinez. Ben D., C.A. A., Bill J. and several other persons attempted to form a committee to study actions needed to effect a purchase, lease, and other things to start this new AA group.

A price was settled on, and the committee began negotiations with the owner of the land/building for an anonymous buyer to purchase the property. One of the above members soon decided that one of the other members was trying to get a club in order to make money. This stopped the effort temporarily, until AA member Betty S. and her husband offered use of an old house that belonged to her family at 1081 Beverly Drive, off Washington Road, but east of Martinez. This was not ideal at the time, but all of the eventual charter members began meetings at Tommy and Flora R.'s house weekly. Committees and trusted servants were elected or selected or volunteered to begin the task of establishing a new WestSide Club and WestSide AA Group. The charter members were Abe A., Brendan A., John B., Carolyn C., Ben D., Don H., Bill J., Leon J., Earl L., Gary M., Frank McG., Dorothy R., Flora R., Tommy T., Julian S., Red S., Virginia S., and Randy W.

By late 1984, all details, forms and applications for charter in the state of Georgia were completed and the West Side Club, Inc., was formally established. Meetings were originally scheduled in the house at 1081 Beverly Dr., where no heat or air conditioning was available. Early attendees at the meetings assembled and often sat huddled together around a large kerosene space heater, on the floor or packed closely together in order to survive the cold temperatures. During the

first summer, clothes were "scantily worn" as the temperatures climbed to extreme heights at times. The building on BelAir became a backyard cocktail lounge and is still providing "clients" for the current National Hills AA Group meetings.

Meetings were originally scheduled to be closed discussion on Wednesday and Saturday at 8:30 PM and Sunday at 12:30. A fourth meeting called the candlelight meeting was started on Saturday nights at 10:30 PM. Soon to follow was the Thursday night bedroom #1 Step/Big Book study meeting. Use was made of tapes and a cassette player, and was conducted by various members of the group.

On several occasions, visitors would pop in and immediately back out, when they discovered that the WestSide Club was not what they had in mind for that particular night. We soon had to change the name from WestSide AA Group to National Hills AA Group so as to continue the important mission of providing recovery to those desiring it. Westside Apartments changed their name to Dreisen Hills Apartments, separating us from their property.

The 12th District Central Office, operated by trusted servant Doris J., moved from 2513 Lumpkin Rd., and took up residence in bedroom #2 at 1081 Beverly Dr. Doris had the one and only air conditioner in the house, and she kept very busy with "customers." Not long after establishment of the club, it was able to install a donated central A/C unit and duct work donated by members.

Through all the trials, troubles and toils of settling in and starting the newest AA group in town, sober members found their way to the WestSide Club and National Hills Group and membership began to grow from 8 and 10 to 15 and 20 at any meeting. The adjoining garage was cleaned out and the first resident live-in, Bob G., moved his small trailer to the club property and became the caretaker until his illness in 1987. The group is grateful for the fine work he did. Some weekends, Ben D. would spend both days picking up guys from the Augusta Diversion Center who came to perform chores of painting, cleaning of roofs and yards, spreading gravel for a parking apron, and many other tasks required to get the house in more satisfactory form. These young men were provided their meals by donations of members, who are grateful to all of those men for their time.

In 1987, Betty S. and her husband found it necessary to leave Augusta, and offered the house for our use, but at a fairly stiff monthly rent compared to the \$1 per year for the first 3 years of use. It was decided by a committee that WestSide Club must move, and a search was begun by Tommy R., Bill J., Ben D., Joe T., and Ed and Judy S. for a suitable area in Martinez. The current location at 113 Camilla Drive was an old battery/ generator shop in poor condition, located on a dirt road in the heart of a drug/alcohol community of residents. Negotiations were conducted, the building was secured by the board of

the WestSide Club, Inc., and a contractor was located who would gamble on us to provide funds for his renovation efforts. Gerald H. was contracted with, and work began in January 1988 with completion estimated for April. The building was completed on April 25, with the sewer connections to take place on Friday afternoon prior to grand opening on Sunday, May 1st. Upon removal of the dirt over the "septic tank," it was discovered that it was only a 55-gallon drum filled with gravel. What now? Why us, God? Arrangements were made to hire a backhoe operator to dig up an area and set in a 1500-gallon "new" septic tank. This was completed on Saturday afternoon and 3 toilets were connected in time to continue with plans for Sunday's grand opening.

Don H., then DCM, was the opening speaker and that was the only speaker meeting until 1989, when National Hills voted to begin allowing birthday/anniversary open speaker meetings on Saturday nights. The group enjoys some 40 to 75 attendees almost any night, 7 nights each week, and is grateful to God for his grace.

Olmstead Homes Group

The Olmstead Homes Group first met in the first week of April 1991, but didn't become a group until May 1992. A group of people decided to carry the message by taking a meeting to the public housing project. The first trusted servants elected were David S., GSR; George C., alternate GSR; Pat C., secretary; Sharon P., treasurer; and Robert W., intergroup representative. Other early members were Jan F., Ben D., Wayne A., Shannon C., Clint R., and Jim V.

S.H.E. Group

The S.H.E. Group was founded in January 1989 by Liz S., who had 14 years sobriety, and Doris J., who had 16 years. Liz got the idea from her home group in California, a women's group where she got sober. In December 1974, Doris helped plan and get flyers out, and the group has been going strong ever since. As a result of the group, the two founders have become fast friends, and Doris became Liz's sponsor. Talk about fate.

Other early members were Teresa B., Leasa D., Jacqueline H., and Rancine R. The group holds a closed discussion meeting at 7:15 p.m. on Thursdays at the West Side Club. There are 15 home group members.

Doris' 20th birthday was one to remember! Lynn VanG. and Kris Z. tried to get a male stripper for the occasion. The first guy they "picked on," not known to them, was at his first meeting and looked at

the two like they were crazy. They finally got someone willing, but he never got any further than his shirt.

Washington Group

The Washington AA Group was organized May 1, 1982. There had been a group in Washington years earlier but for a number of years there had been no group.

Louise B. went to Willingway Hospital in Statesboro, Ga. on December 29, 1981. While there she went to AA meetings and was instructed to go to meetings in Thomson when she got home. Her classmate from high school, Kathryn S., had moved back to Washington. She had attended meetings in Illinois. The two got together and drove over to Thomson on Tuesday and Thursday nights for 3 months. With the help of members from Thomson and a minister in Washington, they advertised in the newspaper for anyone interested in starting an AA group in Washington to meet at the Lions Club on May 1, 1982.

There were 4 people from Washington there that night, Kathryn, Louise, Milton S. and Annie H. A group was organized that night with Kathryn being elected GSR, Louise Alt. GSR and Annie the treasurer. The meetings were to be held in Old Russell building on Monday nights at 8:00. Every Monday night for over a year, 4 to 10 people from the Thomson Group met with the 4 founders of the Washington Group.

Frank B. moved back to Washington in 1983. He had joined AA in St. Simons Island on September 18, 1981. He joined the group and was a great help in keeping things alive. He was instrumental in getting George N., now deceased (unable to stay sober) to attend some meetings. George told David R. about Alcoholic's Anonymous and sent him to see Frank. David came to a meeting bringing his son Jimbo R. After thirty days, January 25, 1986, David decided he was an alcoholic and picked up a white chip. Jimbo decided to do more experimenting but, thank God, he made it back on July 10, 1989.

Milton S. did a 12th step on Woodrow H., who joined the group on April 27, 1984. Woodrow did a 12th step on Billy C., who joined September 28, 1984. Louise did a 12th step on Betty P. in October 1982. Betty had a hard time staying sober, going in and out for several years; however, on November 8, 1985 she picked up her last white chip. Louise also did a 12th step on Lorene S. on December 23, 1982. Lorene stayed sober five years and went back out; she came back June 25, 1990. Louise also did a 12th step on Dennis P. May 2, 1987. Kathryn died in October 1987, and Annie died about a year later.

From these members we have grown to a membership of 68 with about 40 or 50 regular members who celebrate their birthdays with us. We have a large number of 5-, 4- and 3-year-olds. Almost every week we have a newcomer. Some stay, some go back out.

We moved out of the Russell Building in 1986 into the Rock House next door. We now have 6 meetings a week: a speaker meeting, a Big Book study, a step meeting, a newcomer meeting, and two closed discussion meetings.

We celebrated our tenth anniversary May 1, 1992. By the Grace of God we continue to grow. We have a loving family atmosphere, and we offer friendship, love and hope to each person that comes through our doors.

Young People's Group

The Young People's Group was founded in July 1989 at the 639 Building in downtown Augusta. The founders of the group were Tina B., Lora B., Larrissa H., Richard S., Jimmy R., Jimmy I., and Jerry. Although not a group founder, Don B. was instrumental in giving the group a firm understanding of the traditions.

At 3 months of age, the group moved to the Westside Club to gain stability and registered with GSO upon moving. The first meetings were on Friday night at 10:30. The Sunday 7:15 meeting was added later, followed by the Wednesday 7:15 meeting.

The average age of the group members was 20, and the average sobriety was 9 months. The Young People's Group was the fourth group to move to the Westside Club. Our state delegate attended one of our group anniversaries.

Zone B

Zone B of the 12th District was formed after approval from the Georgia State Assembly. The transition into 2 zones went well with the groups divided equally into both zones.

Zone B's first meeting was held in the University Hospital Conference room in Augusta on January 11, 1991. The officers at that time were Johnny W., DCM; Tollie G., Alt. DCM; Pat W., Secretary/Treasurer; Charles G., PI/CPC; Roy J., Institutions Representative; and Olivia K., Grapevine Rep. The GSRs voted to keep the meeting at the same place and time, the University Hospital Conference room on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 9:00.

The first year was a very successful one for Zone B. In May of 1991, Charles G. got approval for PI/CPC to erect billboards in the Augusta area, and they were placed in 3 well-traveled areas in the Augusta area. The announcement of the billboards was reported in Box 459.

In 1993, District 12 Zones A & B were very busy with the preparation of hosting the Georgia State Convention in Augusta in October 1993.

Alpha Group

Bill C., whose sobriety date is May 1, 1973, attempted to give the history of the Alpha Group, but "has to plead brain damage, especially where dates are concerned."

The Alpha Group started as a meeting at Georgia Regional Hospital under the leadership of Fran L. Fran and her husband Butch had entered AA together and at that time had about 4 years sobriety. Fran's job was to see that AA was available for patients at the alcoholic rehabilitation unit. No collection was taken at the meetings; the hospital furnished literature, coffee, cream, sugar - whatever was necessary. The attendance was large as the patients were made to attend and the groups in the area gave good support. The meetings were held Wed. and Sun. at 7:00 PM through 1973.

In January 1974, Fran attended the State Assembly as a representative of the meeting. At one point, she wanted to say something about an item before the assembly. She was informed it was not a self-supporting group and did not have a vote. To Fran, this was like waving a red flag in front of a bull. She informed the assembly that when she returned in May she would have a vote. On the way back to Augusta that Sunday afternoon she and Butch worked out the details for organizing the group. That night at the meeting, a self-supporting group was organized and was to be known as the First Step Group. The charter members of the group were Fran and Butch, Robert M., Mary R., Bill R. and Bill C.

The hospital was informed that the group would take care of the literature and if the hospital would continue to furnish the rest of the items such as coffee, cream, and sugar, the group would pay for it and also pay a sum for rent - I think it was \$25. These arrangements were satisfactory with the hospital and the First Step Group became a reality. Fran was the GSR and Butch was the Secretary/Treasurer.

At this time there were only 3 other groups in Augusta, the Hill Group, Forrest Hills Group and the Southside Group. There were 2 groups in North Augusta, the 24-hour Group and the Miracle Group

(which no longer exist). Fran, Butch, and Bill C. would take patients to other groups on nights when they didn't have a meeting. They soon found out that they had a problem. There were no black men or women in AA at this time in Augusta and the other groups informed them they didn't want to start it. There were black members in First Step trying to stay sober and they started out to see what they could do to make sure all members were treated like everyone else.

Fran and Butch decided they were going to start a Black group to be known as First Step Sober. Peter G. (Pistol Pete), a member of the group, was elected the head of it. There were 3 or 4 black members of the group that went with him to establish the group. In people's opinion, it has been successful. Peter G. was the first black man to stay sober for a year in AA in the 12th district, as far as people could determine. It's hard to believe that AA in Augusta could have been so closed-minded. I think we are finally trying to live the traditions that AA is for everyone regardless of race, creed or religious belief.

In the spring of 1975, the director of the alcoholic unit at Georgia Regional decided they didn't need an AA group any longer; they could hold meetings there but it could no longer be based there as a group. The problem was that the director couldn't control the group since it was not affiliated with the hospital. The group told her and the patients it wouldn't work, and it didn't. The group would say what they thought; consequently, the group had to go.

About that time the assembly asked the group to change its name. There were other First Step Groups and this caused confusion at the assembly. The decision was made to change the name to the Alpha Group. Fran and Butch were Catholic and were friends with Father Edward F., a priest with St. Joseph Catholic Church. They approached him and he agreed that they could meet at Lourdes Hall. The hall was not a good place for the group to meet but they did meet there for a little over a year. The acoustics were bad, the air-conditioner was not good, and someone broke into a cabinet the group was using for storage and stole a microphone and some other items. Fran and Butch again went to Father F., who agreed that they could meet in Nicholas Hall, which was much nicer.

Everything was fine for a while, but then the group started falling down and attendance fell way down. It reached the point that there were only 4 or 5 on Tuesday and 10 or 12 on Sunday night. The group tried to start an Al-Anon group that was not successful. Collection was not enough to pay the church. They discussed closing the group but were hesitant. Finally one Sunday night there was a speaker from the Hill Group and there were only 6 people at the meeting, including the speaker. It was decided to close and an announcement was made that this was the last meeting of the Alpha Group. It was about 1979.

Fran and Butch decided later that they would not quit and Alpha Group would continue. Surprisingly, that was a turnaround time for the group. It started to grow and in a short while was up to a respectable size, able to pay the bills and very happy. By the grace of God the group has continued its success due to the efforts and dedication of a lot of people. When I (Bill C.) decided to ease off and be a bleeding deacon, I knew there were many others just as capable or more capable to carry the load.

I can't name all that should get credit for the success of the group. There's one I'd like to pay a special tribute to. Ethel J. has been an inspiration to many older members as well as newcomers. She is a shining example of good AA and is loved by all of us. Butch died of leukemia in 1984, and Fran died of lung cancer in 1985, leaving me the only surviving charter member of the group. I am proud of the group and all the members, of being associated with such a fine group of people in the God-given fellowship of AA.

In 1991, the Alpha Group was about to close again. Four alcoholics worked through personal and professional issues and concerns to keep the Alpha Group open. To date, with 10 members, Alpha is a thriving and multiplying group and force in the Augusta area.

Forrest Hills Group

This group is the second largest group in Augusta and evolved "over a coffee pot and a resentment" from the Hill Group that was meeting in the Partridge Inn. At the time Louis M., Joe P., and 7 others left the Hill Group after some "hard words", and met for the first time in the home of Marion and Louis M. in December of 1963. The first speaker was Bobby A. of Garfield, GA.

The meeting moved to St. Mary's Catholic Church on Monte Sano Avenue shortly afterwards, and met at the same Boy Scout Hut the Hill Group had used some 10 years before. Forrest Hills met on both Tuesday and Friday nights, both being speakers meetings. The Forrest Hills Group continued at St. Mary's and formed a Woman's Auxiliary. The wives came to our meetings, and were very supportive. Marion M., Myrtle Lee S. and Mary W. were most helpful. Ann W., a member of Forrest Hills, was the woman with the most sobriety in Augusta until her death.

St. Mary's began to remodel, and the group moved to The Good Shepherd Episcopal Church around 1988. At this time the group conscience decided to have a Tuesday night discussion meeting, along with an Al-Anon meeting. For years Frank S. was our "coffee maker," and our GSR Harry W. kept the money. Forrest Hills has always been

very proud of keeping its responsibility to AA. Jack O., with over 30 years at this time, has always been faithful in attending and bringing people to meetings, and along with Joe P. has the longest sobriety.

Judge Oliver M. also attended, and many times read "How it Works" to the group from Braille, as he was blind. He died sober as a result of our program.

In 1990, Forrest Hills moved to Asbury Methodist Church on Troupe Street, because the Episcopal Church was growing and needed the meeting rooms. In 1991, however, the Episcopal Church asked us to come back, which we did.

Forrest Hills has produced two Georgia state delegates, Louis M. (4th) and Sam S. (20th), of which we are very proud.

Harlem Group

Information about the original founding of the Harlem Group is sketchy, but it was having meetings in 1972 to the best of memory of the widow of one of its early members. When and why it folded is still a mystery.

The Harlem Group started back up on January 22, 1989, when Sonny E. and Ron N. decided a meeting was needed close to home. Ron supplied the coffee pot and things were off and running. The meeting was an open discussion on Friday night at 8:30 p.m. The very next Friday a group conscience was taken to change the time to 8:00, where it still stands today at Trinity Episcopal Church.

Jackie S. picked up the first white chip within the first month. Other early members were Johnny W., Joe T., Roy G., Ernest D., Liz S., Jay L., and Vickie W. Vickie W. was elected secretary-treasurer and took over a checking account from the previous Harlem Group; the account contained \$26.

The group registered around September 1989. During the summer of '90, Rick and Cat B. starting becoming regulars at the group. The question of letting RTF, the Fort Gordon Treatment Center, come to the meeting was brought before the group conscience and they started coming in September 1990. The RTF has been instrumental in the sobriety of those who still attend the meeting.

We are a small group with only 8 members. There is a lot of strength and support in this group. Sobriety ranges from 1 year to 19 years.

In 1992, the Harlem group and Grovetown Slippers group got together to sponsor the first annual Great Lake Escape, which is a weekend camping excursion. Considering it rained all weekend, it was a big success. Nine families toughed it out all weekend. On Friday night there was an Al-Anon speaker. Several others came up for the meeting

and afterwards, fellowship was shared around a campfire with guitar playing. Saturday night, the speaker came from Lincolntown and there was a crowd of 100. The second annual Great Lake Escape was a huge success, enjoyed by about 35 camping families. This camping outing will try to continue to bring fellowship in our AA community as long as we have the support to do so.

"The grandest thing in the whole world" is how AA was described by a member 20 years ago. It is nice to know some things haven't changed.

The Hephzibah Group

The Hephzibah Group was formed in January 1990 by Bill C., Jim H., and Carol S. The first meeting was held at the Hephzibah United Methodist Church on Brothersville Road, where the group still meets. It got its start when Bill C., who had been living in South Augusta, was having to move from the house he was in because it was being sold. He wanted to move to the Martinez area but had to find a home to buy on assumption. God had plans and he found such a home in Hephzibah. He moved to Hephzibah in September of 1989, and in October of that year the city voted wet. He says, "I didn't get resentments, but I got help starting a new AA group," from Jim, Carol, and Brian S.

Hephzibah had its first meeting on January 5, 1990, a Friday night, 8:30 open discussion meeting. There was one meeting per week and on the 5th Friday, a speaker. The first speaker was Jimmy S. from Lincolnton. This meeting brought a gathering of 46 people. On our first anniversary we had a dinner and Don G. from the Hill Group was our speaker. During our second year we started a Monday night meeting, but the attendance was too low to keep it going. Our second anniversary was combined with Bill's 9th birthday and again, Jimmy S. was the speaker.

At present we have an open discussion meeting on Friday night at 8:30. There are only have about 5 members but the doors of AA are kept open.

We have had our problems. Our first secretary/treasurer left because he didn't like a small group. He refused to turn the original records and keys over to the group. His reasoning was that he had paid for them and they belonged to him.

In-Step Group

None of the founders of the In-Step Group, Roger F., Eric C., and Mike L., had more than 30 days sobriety when they formed the group in September 1990 to meet the needs of the 11,000 active duty and 15,000 military retirees who live and work in the Augusta area. Traditions were broken, tempers flared, and one of the founders left and got drunk. (Happily, 2 years later he sobered up). Other early members were Cleveland, Cliff, Jimmy J., and James G.

The group got the building (the community counseling annex on Brainard Avenue at Fort Gordon) rent-free. In lieu of rent, they established literature racks at the counseling center and the hospital, which are still maintained today.

Customarily, the group had Saturday night speaker meetings followed by the group's going to the bowling alley for fun and fellowship. The last Saturday of the month was an eating meeting.

In May of 1992 the building was torn down. Now, the 11:30 AM Monday, Wednesday and Friday meetings are held in the back room of the Community Counseling Center at Fort Gordon, and the 7:30 PM Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday meetings are held on the 12th (notice the number!) floor of Eisenhower Army Medical Center to carry the message to the inpatient treatment facility located there.

Southside Group

The Southside Group was the first AA group to be formed in South Augusta. It was founded by Jock O., Claude T., and Jessie S. some time in 1956. The meetings were held in the Richmond County Recreation Building on Lumpkin Road. They used an old pot belly stove for heat.

Southside moved to the Burns United Methodist Church on Lumpkin Road some time in 1957 or 1958 and continued to meet there until 1962 at which time the group treasurer got drunk on group money. The group disbanded shortly after that.

In 1971, the Southside Group was re-formed at St. Joseph Catholic on Lumpkin Road. Tommy E., Claude T., who came into AA around 1962 and lived in the neighborhood, Jessie S., Imajean and Billy P., and Rambo were the AAs who restarted the group.

In 1973, the group moved to Calvary Baptist Church on Olive Road. James J., Helen K., Elliot S., Hap B., and Leon J. came to the group there. The group continued to meet at this location until the summer of 1974 and then moved to St. Alban's Episcopal Church on Lumpkin Road. During the next 4 years Southside gained many new

members: Julian S., Vernon R., Elly T., C.Y. L., Doster P., Jack and Sandy P., and T.J. G., who in 1991 became the first black member to hold the position of DCM of the twelfth district, and Bell W., to name a few who stayed.

In 1980, Southside moved to the Cliffwood Presbyterian Church on Lumpkin Rd. as it had outgrown the building at St. Alban's. This was to become a problem as some of the church members did not like the idea of AA meeting in their church. After about a year, the group found a better place to meet when they moved to Fleming Christian Church, also on Lumpkin Rd. For the next 7 or 8 years, the group grew and enjoyed a good relationship with the church congregation and administration.

Sometime in 1987, the Fellowship Club (an "AA club") remodeled and offered the group a place to meet. Some of the Southside members who were also club members thought this to be a wonderful idea. A group conscience was taken and the group met in the club's meeting room for the next few months. This move, however, proved to be a disaster. Group members became disenchanted with their new facilities and the group moved to a couple more places temporarily. During this transitory period T.J., Leon J., Sharon T., Kathleen J., George S., and Ellie T. (all still faithful members of Southside) worked hard to keep the group from folding.

T.J., GSR at the time, found a place to meet in the Windsor Springs Baptist Church. The church was hesitant about hosting an AA group and willing only to let them stay on a one-year basis. Southside passed the one year test and this location on the corner of Windsor Springs Road and the historic Tobacco Road has become its permanent home. Incidentally, this is the only Baptist church in the area which hosts an AA meeting.

In the past 2 years, the group has grown and prospered. In January 1993, they agreed to sponsor a newcomers' meeting which was felt to be needed in the area. That meeting is being held in a small Episcopal church on Tobacco Road which volunteered space for an AA meeting.

Southside is currently very busy making preparations for the 1993 state convention and looking forward to future growth, both physically and spiritually.

Thomson Group

In the late summer of 1949, Mrs. Lawrence (Pinkie) K. went by to check at the home of Johnny McN. She found Johnny intoxicated and unconscious, his 8-year-old son running around unattended. This

was to start a chain reaction that resulted in Johnny's founding the Thomson AA Group, and this has accomplished many things over the years since.

Mrs. K. called Johnny's cousin Dave McN., who in turn called a friend of his, Ed W., who had confided in Dave that he was a member of an obscure fellowship known as Alcoholics Anonymous and had achieved sobriety through this fellowship. Ed agreed to take Johnny to an AA meeting that was being held in a building behind St. Mary's on the Hill Catholic Church in Augusta. Johnny agreed to go, and the following Monday night they attended the meeting. Johnny recalls being very impressed at meeting Louis M., Joe P. of Millen, and several others. Immediately he stopped drinking, to the amazed gratitude of his family and friends.

After several months of weekly AA attendance in Augusta, Johnny determined to start a group in Thomson. Lawrence K., whom Johnny always described as "a great early friend of AA," offered the use of his office in the old Belk Building in the Knox shopping center downtown. This was Thomson's first AA meeting place, in 1949.

Johnny's first pigeon (potential recruit) was Albert P., a University of Georgia graduate and a chronic alcoholic. To the astonishment of the townspeople, Albert immediately became abstinent also. Johnny and Albert diligently set about attempting to recruit other new members. Tragically, after 11 months, Albert returned to drinking and never again achieved a stable abstinence. However, his 11 months of sobriety were by no means in vain. He helped keep Johnny sober and was a vital part of establishing the Thomson Group.

After several months of meeting in the office of Mr. K., the group moved to the old City Hall. They met there until 1956. Other early members of the group were Brooks A., Albert (Pick) H., Dorsey K., Hubert S., George D. and Paul M. Also the Washington group, located north of Thomson, organized in the early 50's under the leadership of James J. For several years the 2 groups visited back and forth, attending each other's meetings. Dorsey K. remained a dominant force in the group until his death in the mid '80s. He spent many hours visiting alcoholics in hospitals and jails and brought many people into the fellowship.

In 1956, the Thomson group moved into a remodeled barn in the back yard of Johnny's house. The homestead was owned by Johnny's wife, Mary Ruth, and she became the first Al-Anon in the Thomson group. The group met in the barn from 1956 until 1968.

Johnny's sense of humor was unsurpassed. On one of his drunks before he joined AA, his wife showed him a copy of her will. She was leaving him just \$100. Johnny's comment was, "just enough for one more good drunk."

By 1964, it was reported there were 8 active members of the group. By 1981, the membership had tripled to about 25. In December 1992, there are 60 active members in the Thomson Group. At the Tuesday night speaker meetings, attendance often exceeds 100, with averages between 65 and 70.

In 1968, the group moved into the new city hall for its speakers meetings and remained there until 1981. During this time the discussion meetings were held at the Presbyterian Church on the Wrens Road.

In 1981, the group moved to the Thomson depot. For a time the discussion meetings were held at the Serenity House, across the street and owned by Johnny McN. Also during this time, several other locations were used for discussion meetings: the Catholic Church, a house owned by the Presbyterian Church and the Georgia Power building on Railroad Street. About 1986, the Depot had an annex built and since that time all meetings have been held in the depot.

The '60s and '70s saw a number of individuals join the group, many of whom made significant contributions. Among these were Pete E., who joined in 1954 and achieved permanent sobriety in 1967. He is well remembered for his work with others. Frank S., who joined and became sober in 1964, is well remembered for his colorful ways and the help he so freely gave to others. Just mention a big pair of floppy shoes around the group, and those who have been around a while know who you are talking about. Frank passed away in 1988.

Roger and Ina H. joined in 1969, Ina becoming the first woman in the Thomson Group. Gene H. joined in 1971. He made significant contributions to the group through service work. He was instrumental as chairman in the success of a state convention in the early 80s and also served in several service jobs.

Henderson R. Jr. was our first black member, joining the group in 1973. Tommy McN. became sober in 1978 and has served in the group to the present. Jimmy S. joined in 1979 and has become well-recognized as a speaker and strong supporter of AA in addition to other service work. Others who joined the group during the late 60s and 70s were Johnny P., Eally McA. and John R.

Many others that we do not have any record of also joined over the years and served the group well. It is regretted that we have nothing about these folks, but no records were kept during this time. The only thing we have is the recollections of those members still living.

The black community in Thomson formed an AA group in 1976. This group was pioneered by James P. and Jerodus A. and continued in operation until 1987. At that time one AA group was formed and continues to the present.

In 1990, the Thomson Group began hosting and supporting the Fort Gordon rehabilitation center. This group is made up of US military

personnel from all over the world who are only here for a very short period. Many of these folks have returned to other duty stations and become staunch members of AA.

In 1992, work was started on an institutional program. At present meetings are held at jails in McDuffie, Columbia and Richmond counties. Several people have joined AA upon being released. Two of our members, Tom H. and Gene C., have contributed to the success of this program.

Waynesboro Group

Frances and Cam W. of The Hill Group and other members of the Hill Group and other Augusta groups attempted to organize a group in Waynesboro in the early '80s but were unable to attract any Waynesboro alcoholics. Superior Court Judge Eugene K., who served Waynesboro, suggested to members of the Hill Group that Waynesboro was badly in need of a group. He had quite a few people coming to court drunk.

Sometime in late February or early March of '84, Lynn S. from Florida was visiting friends in Burke County and realized that she was badly in need of help for alcoholism. She walked into the Ogeechee Clinic to ask for help on what happened to be the first day that Buddy C. had started his job as alcohol counselor for the clinic. From this beginning, Waynesboro AA slowly began to grow. The group first met at the clinic, on Liberty St. Augusta AAs gave it a lot of support. George G. and Bobby P. were 2 of the first members.

When it first started, the group was included in the 9th District, headquartered in Statesboro. For several years, the group tried to get transferred to District 12 for a number of reasons. Augusta's central office had been very helpful to the group, Augusta AAs had been very good about supporting the meetings, Augusta is much closer to Waynesboro than Statesboro is, and, if the group needed literature, someone was usually in Augusta every day.

Today the group is in District 12B. It meets on Tuesdays (closed Step meeting) and Thursdays (open discussion) at 8:30 PM at Sacred Heart Catholic Church on Highway 24S. Closed meetings are generally opened by group conscience when outsiders visit. Birthdays are open speaker meetings with finger foods. There are 8 to 12 members.

DISTRICT 13 (Metro Atlanta)

Army officer Steve M., who had recently attained sobriety in AA in Washington, D.C., came to Atlanta in June 1941. Realizing that he had to talk to other alcoholics to stay sober, he rented a Post Office box (AA in Atlanta still has the same PO box today!) and put an ad in a local newspaper. A defrocked minister, Sam D., answered the ad and then sat in the post office the next day to see who picked up the mail from that box. Thus the two men met. They discovered that each knew another alcoholic who might want to quit drinking. A few days later, they held the first meeting of AA in Georgia at Steve's apartment of the Army base, sitting on the still-unopened packing cartons containing his household goods. Present were Steve, the Army officer; Sam, the former minister; a real estate agent; and a dentist.

Soon a few more came in, and the group began meeting at the Robert Fulton Hotel. By 1942, a clubroom was obtained that was kept open 7 days a week, with a closed meeting on Tuesday and an open meeting on Friday.

As was common elsewhere in the country in those days, families attended the meetings, and social events were an important part of recovery. Four well-known newspaper columnists mentioned the group from time to time, and this welcome public recognition brought still more growth. The club, which was incorporated in 1946 as the Atalan Club, moved several more times, causing some dissension, but the Fellowship continued to flourish.

Neely D., who came to AA in Atlanta in 1943 but had her last drink July 4, 1945, said she was the fourth woman, but she remained to become the longest sober, the first female delegate (serving on Panel 2), and perhaps the best-known and most active Atlanta member until her death in 1980. Neely said a Mrs. D. was the first woman. "She always ordered a beer and poured paregoric into it; that was her drink! She ended up in Milledgeville Hospital, where she heard about Bert F. So she called him up again and again, but each time got his mother, who kept giving her the runaround. About the third call, Mrs. F. said, 'What did you want to see Bert about?' Mrs. D. said, 'I'm an alcoholic and I wanted to talk to him about Alcoholics Anonymous.' And Bert's mother said, 'Won't do no good. AA don't have no luck with the women.' But Mrs. D. didn't stop there, and she came in anyway."

Jim K., who came in in December 1952, tells of one of the traumatic moves: "In 1953 the meetings moved from 522 West Peachtree, a big, beautiful facility which was going broke, to a place down on Walton St. I thought, it sure was fine while it lasted, but now the whole thing is going to fall flat on its face, and there won't be any more AA. But some of the fellows - Fred N., Ed H., and Joe H. - told me they had found this place they could afford, down on Walton, and said to come see it. Well, if you've ever seen a dirty, broken-down

place, that was it. The ceiling was hanging halfway to the floor, there was an inch of dust all over, the walls were terrible, there was no toilet. But a bunch of the folks got together and worked around the clock and straightened that place up so they didn't skip a meeting. That was a tremendous inspiration to me, because no one would ever do anything like this unless they were serious about it. So I stayed in."

The first neighborhood group, away from downtown, was the West End Group in 1947. The Buckhead Group, an offshoot of the original downtown group, started about 1952. Joe P., who joined AA in Fall River, Mass., at the age of 27 on March 1, 1949, moved to Atlanta with his wife and 4 (soon to be 5) children in 1953. "I believe there were 4 and possibly 5 groups in greater Atlanta when we came here. There was the Buckhead Group that I went to; there was a group out in the west end called the Crosstown where I used to go Friday nights; there was the Northeast Group; and, of course, the downtown group." Joe P., a frequent speaker at conferences and conventions, entered AA service in 1975 as a result of attending a Regional Forum in Atlanta. He eventually served as delegate on Panel 30 and as Regional Trustee beginning in 1985.

Clarence R., another past delegate (Panel 10), also went to his first meeting at the Buckhead Group in September 1954. "So I wouldn't have to go so far, I started the Skyland Group the next year, and it's still going." Groups started all over Atlanta in the '50s and even more in the '60s. In 1955, the Tri-City Group was started, in January 1956, the Ansley Group, and so on. Joe H., another alcoholic whose first AA meeting was Buckhead in 1957, recalls some of the other people active in Atlanta AA at that time: Andy A., Rita H., Hal H., Gracen W., Bob G., Chris F., and John F.

Zone A

District 13A, as it is structured today, was created in a reorganization of the Metro Atlanta District in 1985. District 13A is made up of northern Fulton County and is bordered on the south by I-285 and on the north by the Forsyth and Cherokee county lines; it includes Alpharetta. The east border is the DeKalb and Gwinnett county lines, and the west border is the Cobb County line. Zone A is presently made up of 30 groups, about half of which meet at the 8111 Club.

Yates M. was the DCM for 13A until his death in the fall of 1986. Dick C. became acting DCM through 1987. Jerry H. was DCM during 1988-89, Gary J., from 1990-1991, and Sherry W. in 1992. When she moved out of the zone in early 1993, she was replaced by Jeff G. He moved out of town in the summer of 1993, and the alternate

DCM, John MacD., served for the remainder of the year and was elected to serve as DCM for 1994-1995.

448 Group

In August 1984, Jim R. was instrumental in starting the Wednesday night Big Book study of North Springs, which filled a need for a Big Book study group in this area of town (Dunwoody, Sandy Springs). Three to 6 months later some of the members of the Wednesday night study group started the Friday night "448" group as a separate group. Shortly thereafter, the two groups combined and are still known as the "448" group. Some of the charter members were Jim R., Larry E., Bob C., Carl P., Maryanne T., Dennis H. and Lorretta H. In addition to these charter members, Ron V. and Jay M. have been very committed and influential in guiding the "448" group.

Mt. Vernon Group

The Mt. Vernon Group was founded in January 1971 as a Monday night speakers meeting by Bill H., Don McM., Oliver T., Suzanne T., Bill C., Andy P., and Hill H. The group meets in the education building of Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church in Sandy Springs, and has since added a discussion meeting at 8 PM on Thursdays.

Many of the early members of the Mt. Vernon Group are now deceased, most with long sobriety at the time of their deaths. Some members with long term sobriety who are still active are: Don McM. with 44 years, Bill H. with 26 years, Jim W. with 24 years, Frances T. with 23 years, Suzanne T. with 22 years, Jean C. with 20 years, and Margaret D. with 20 years.

This group sponsored an Al-Anon group at Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church and assisted in starting Al-Anon at Peachford Hospital. The group, which has 60 members, is in a transient area; many get sober here and move to other places in the U.S.

Roswell Group

Before September 1972, attempts to establish an AA group in Roswell met with failure. In the 1950's, Carl T. attempted to establish an AA group in Roswell and in the 1960's Sperry M. also attempted to start a group. Since at that time Roswell was a small rural community with a population of 5,000, people were concerned about being seen at

an AA meeting. Most AAs at that time attended meetings in Marietta. In the early 1970s, the Equal Opportunities of Atlanta (EOA) organization held weekly meetings in Roswell and part of the meeting was a reading from the Big Book by Clayton W. of EOA. Hill H. and Helen R. persuaded Mr. W. that it was time to begin a full-fledged AA meeting and thus, meetings in Roswell began in September, 1972. Early members, in addition to Hill and Helen, were Mac McC., L.R. S., and Jim B.

Al-Anon meetings were already being held before AA began in 1972. Both Al-Anon and AA meetings were held at the Roswell Presbyterian church on Friday at 8:00 PM. Later both meetings were changed to 8:30 PM on Friday and a Tuesday 8:00 PM closed discussion meeting was added for both AA and Al-Anon. The first meeting at the Roswell Presbyterian church saw an attendance of 12 men and women. In the 1980s the group grew to 150-200 people but as other groups were formed in the area, the group membership leveled off at about 100 members and has remained at about that same level since then.

A 20th year anniversary celebration was held in September, 1992 with both AA and Al-Anon attending. There were about 150 people present, and group founder Hill H. discussed the early years of AA and Al-Anon in the Roswell area.

Women in Recovery

In February 1976, several ladies met to discuss having a Friday morning meeting for ladies in the North Fulton area, where there were no such meetings at that time. We met in different homes each Friday, and we laughingly said, "If you miss one meeting, you won't know where to go the next Friday!" We brought maps to our respective homes, which ranged from Crabapple to Sandy Springs. Each "hostess" was chairperson for the day, and she picked the discussion leader. "Goodies" were always served along with coffee. Attendance ranged from 4 to 24. One of the ladies' husbands asked, "Is this going by the traditions? This seems like the silk stocking group instead of AA!"

When the 8111 Club was formed, we asked for the Friday 10 AM slot, and the group grew rapidly. (There was no further need for maps to find next week's meeting.) Refreshments are not as lavish as they were in the homes, but the spirit of love, caring and sharing continues as we trudge the road of Happy Destiny together.

At the present time we grown. We have 6 meetings a week.

Zone B

Early Bird Group

The Early Bird meeting is a great way to start the day, at 7:30 AM 7 days a week. It began in the fall of 1984 with 3 people, Wendy and David A. and ????. They had gone to a larger meeting and couldn't get their issues addressed, so they started a meeting on their own. At first they tried meeting at 5:30 PM, but the participation was lukewarm. When one of the members couldn't get her morning meditation going, they hit on the idea of an early morning meeting to help everybody get the day off on the right foot, and the meeting quickly drew a good attendance. Other early members were Frank B., Beth, Carol N.-W., Henry T., Maynard S., Sam M. and Annesley S.

It has always been a closed meeting, but that is its only constant. Just as a lot of the faces have changed over the years, so has everything else. It began as a smoking meeting that met 2 days, then eventually 5 days a week. When there was a split over "halfway-house doctors coming as groups and outnumbering the regulars," another morning meeting split off which is still going strong. Our next split was over going non-smoking. Then one individual drove some folks off to start another meeting. Most recently, the method of paying the rent sent some other folks off to start yet another meeting. And our attendance still grows.

We have had other financial ups and downs, too; one treasurer never got a bank account, but dealt in cash. Eventually he repaid the group \$800 with the comment that he was "using the money to help others who needed it."

We have been in 3 different locations (moving with the Triangle Club House in the fall of 1988). In the past few years we have responded to the group conscience by extending our meeting days to 7 a week and by devoting the Tuesday meetings to a Big Book study and the Thursday meeting to a study of the Steps and Traditions.

We have about 45 home group members. We sponsor AA meetings in prisons and pass the hat periodically to put AA literature for newcomers in these meetings and others in treatment centers and hospitals.

For fun and fellowship, we like to get together as a group on Friday evenings for dinner and a movie. We go on weekend retreats, too, usually in the fall or spring. We like to have tailgate suppers and go to special events like ball games.

Zone C**9:30 Morning "I Can't We Can" Group**

Jim H., Fred C., and Steve S. founded the Nine Thirty Group on January 15, 1985. Other early members were Bill G. and Sonny. They later added "I Can't We Can" to the group name. The group meets in the small room at the NABA Club. The group holds study meetings 5 days a week, as follows: Monday, Big Book; Tuesday, 24 Hours a Day; Wednesday, Steps, Thursday, As Bill Sees It, and Saturday, the Big Book. Friday's meeting is an open discussion.

Zone D

After the zoning of Metro Atlanta the GSRs did not meet together as a group for about 2-1/2 years. At that time DCMs were elected by a committee, and not by GSRs. The regular monthly meeting was held at a local Presbyterian church in the area. After a while one of the GSRs suggested they meet in a more appropriate place to which he had access, a "bar room". The meeting was moved to the "Bar Room" in a hotel on Clairmont Avenue. Attendance was low in the very beginning, but GSRs started coming out of the woodwork when they heard of the bar room location.

Zone D held annual eating/speakers meetings very successfully for many years, but eventually they just faded out, for reasons unknown. In 1984, the Metro Atlanta Area was divided into zones. This area became District 13, Zone D. The transition went well. The GSRs were meeting in the Rock of Ages Lutheran Church on Memorial Drive when the "no smoking" issue began to occur in most churches. One of the GSRs suggested Denny's Restaurant for a combination breakfast and meeting, and that is what the zone did. They are still meeting at Denny's and it is ideal for the purpose.

After years passed without any zone fellowship meetings, they decided to try the annual eating and speakers meeting again. The first meeting was successful, but they were not supported after that, so they were discontinued. The zone also started a workshop in 1987, which has been quite successful and the GSRs have done an excellent job with presentations on various topics.

We believe Zone D GSRs are among the most supportive and cooperative representatives in our area. They support their zone in attendance, participation, and finance, and attendance in Macon for State Assembly is always good. Zone D GSRs stay in the Traditions of

Alcoholics Anonymous and follow the leadership of the group conscience.

The Metro DCMs started a monthly meeting in a hotel at Emory and later moved when Peachford Hospital invited them to meet at their facility at no cost. The next meeting spot was in the home of the late John F. Around 1972, the DCMs and GSRs began a breakfast meeting 3 times a year: January, September and May, a week prior to the State Assembly in Macon. These meetings were first held in a hotel at I-285 and LaVista Road, then they moved to the Ramada Inn at I-85 and Shallowford Road. In 1992 they had to make another change, at the request of the hotel, and are currently meeting at the Castlegate Hotel at I-75 and Howell Mill Road.

These meetings have certainly been successful in that each zone shares solutions to past and present problems. They host the Metro Cluster Workshop and participate in many other area activities.

Central Group

Being all in agreement that a Sunday evening meeting was needed, Randy S., Joe S., and George B. contacted the First Lutheran Church in Stone Mountain. After receiving permission to hold meetings on Sunday night at 7, a name was needed for the group. The church was on Central Avenue, hence, the Central Group. Meetings began here around February 1991.

Meetings usually consisted of 12 to 18 alcoholics. Sobriety time ranged from new to the program to 17 years. The format was general discussion. We learned quickly not to venture upstairs. Going upstairs seemed to set the burglar alarm off. In retrospect it was funny, but not at the time.

In March 1993, it became necessary to disband the group because the church needed the space for their own use. The 3 members are currently in search of a new meeting place.

Clarkston 12 Step Group

In the summer of 1975, an alcoholic, Gene B. from Oklahoma, moved to the Clarkston area. He was amazed that there weren't any Step meetings in the surrounding areas. Gene B. along with 3 other alcoholics, Allen R., Georgia State delegate in 1976-'77, Joe K., a few years sober, and Wendell L., a newcomer, met in Wendell's basement to begin their Step studies. They were really intent on keeping it all to

themselves, but that didn't last very long, and they soon moved to a small Scout hut in the back of the Clarkston Methodist Church where they began to call themselves the Clarkston 12 Step Group. Growth was slow and in the next few years a Saturday night speaker meeting was started, followed by a Thursday night Big Book study.

In the spring of '79, a man appeared at the Tuesday night Step meeting. He was under the influence and clad only in a pair of tennis shoes. Everyone assured him he was in the right place, but he informed us he wanted to see the Baptist minister. After several men members clothed him in the available drapes off the windows, they took him to the Baptist minister. (The Baptist Church and the Methodist Church are side by side in the small area of Clarkston.) That event was to change the direction and life of the Clarkston 12 Step Group. That minister approached us a short time later, obviously impressed with our message, and asked if we would be interested in using a vacant house of theirs on the corner of Hill and Church Street across from our regular meeting place. We could have the house for \$1.00 a year, utilities and insurance. There was much discussion regarding the offer - it was pointed out by a member of the group with several years of sobriety, that it would be a wonderful opportunity for growth and a chance to start some day meetings. There were very few day meetings in the city and none in the Clarkston, Decatur, Stone Mountain community. Group conscience was unanimous at the prospect the opportunity afforded us. Growth was rapid and morning and afternoon meetings were started with extra meetings on the weekends. Clarkston's energy was felt throughout the Atlanta area.

In the fall of '82 the little house became the site for the Baptist Recreation Center and we took up residence in the old Scottdale Mill Cafeteria in Scottdale. We really became financially responsible at this time with a large rent figure. We were frightened but knew if it was good for AA, we would be able to make it. We did make it plus went on to become one of the leading contributors to Intergroup and the State Service Office. Our membership produced an Intergroup Chairperson and a State Delegate during this period.

The mill was condemned in May '88, a condemnation long overdue, resulting in the move to our present facility, 4889 Lewis Rd. in Stone Mountain. Many members feel that Clarkston had really "come of age." We found a wonderful place with heat, air, carpet, plenty of parking and 2 bathrooms that work! We are grateful!

Clarkston is a wonderful miracle of Alcoholics Anonymous with approximately 250 members. We operate under one Secretary, Treasurer, GSR, Intergroup Representative, and other active trusted servants. We have many Step, Big Book study, speaker, beginner, Tradition, Grapevine and service meetings. We maintain "singleness of purpose" through our adherence to the 12 Traditions, responsible

member involvement and regular group inventories. Clarkston is truly a "society of alcoholics in action!"

I Am Responsible/Remember When

This group began in July 1992 with members having the desire to work with "wet drunks" and to have meetings open to anyone regardless of race, creed or sex. Early members were Gene M., Holt O., Bob H., Denny B., Debby M., Lonnie, Calvin, Bryan D., George B., Patti S., Shawn W., Bruce, Chris M., Bill L., Gaines R., Diane O., Rick R., and Jim. The location and size of the group were felt to be a conducive environment for the purpose. The group met at the Clarkston Club on Market Street in Clarkston.

In the beginning, club business and AA got tangled up, personalities came before principles, excessive contributions from members were questioned, character defects roared, people came and people went. (Arguments were heard daily over individuals staying in the building and how to handle wet drunks, how do we stay in tradition, chair people didn't show, they just left, money disappeared).

There were notorious tales around the crooked pool table. The first wet drunk ran the utility bill up to hundreds of dollars. Dances happened with 5 to 10 percent; nobody danced. Birthday parties have been held without the celebrant.

We had many opportunities to work with newcomers.

Embry Hills Group

At the request of Father Eusepius B., the pastor of Holy Cross Catholic Church on Hathaway Ct. in Atlanta, Brad B., Sue B. and Dora G. arranged to start an AA group to be called the Embry Hills Group. Some other early members were Louis, Les, Charles, Barbara McF., Betty Jo H., Kathy L., Ken A., Jim H., Lil H., Harold R., Bob S., Phil McD., Dixie m., Alice C., Ed McF., Bobby L., John C., Hubert L., Rod G and Charlie M.

Originally meetings were held on Tuesday nights at 8 PM. Today the meetings are held on Wednesday night at 8 PM. This group is a spinoff from the Tucker and McElroy Groups. At the time (1971), very few meetings were held in the Chamblee and surrounding areas. Skyland Group, which was quite large, and Biscayne Group were the long-standing meetings at that time.

Embry Hills is a closed discussion meeting. In the early days birthdays were celebrated, but most opted to celebrate at the end of the month at the Tucker Group.

Hope For Life Group

The Hope for Life Group was founded in August of 1991 by Paul R., Artie K., John O. and Emily E. Emily E. took the responsibility of calling places in the area to find a location to conduct meetings. Christ Our Hope Catholic Church was very receptive to her request because they have a number of young members of their congregation who were interested in Alcoholics Anonymous. The first year they met on Thursdays at 8 PM in a closed discussion meeting and the following year they added a Wednesday evening meeting. Annual picnics are celebrated in August of each year.

The current group consists of 26 members. This group attracts young people and they have just elected their first GSR.

Lithonia Group

In February 1982, the minister of the Lithonia Presbyterian Church phoned the Central Office and offered the church as a potential meeting place for a group. Helen R. phoned Mitzi W. and asked if she would be willing to start up a group at the church. Mitzi, who did not have quite 2 years in the program yet, said that she was not sure if she was ready to take that on at that time. Helen told Mitzi that if she could make a pot of coffee and put a key in the door, then she had all that was necessary to start a group. It took about 2 months to get it started.

Ed W. was very encouraging, and everyone involved saw the definite need for a group in the area. At the time there was no group between Conyers and Memorial Drive. So Ed W., Mitzi W. and John V. met with the church elders to discuss the new group. The elders approved a Wednesday 8 PM open discussion. The first meeting was May 12, 1982. Both Conyers and Rockdale were supportive of the new group. Thirty-six people were at the first anniversary eating meeting. The second anniversary had over 100 in attendance. In the second year a Monday night closed discussion was added. In 1988, the group announced no-smoking in the main room until the speaker starts or until the discussion group begins. This was a big issue as you can imagine. There is always a no-smoking discussion group along with the smoking groups.

This group built its foundation on AA Tradition and the experience of those who have served AA in many ways, in the past and currently. The young founders followed their suggestions as closely as alcoholics can, until a spiritual group conscience emerged. The guidance of the group conscience is followed in carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

Memorial Drive Beginners Group

The Memorial Drive Beginners Group was founded in March 1980, spinning off from the Clarkston Group when Stan S., Bill A. and Mack R. felt the need to have a beginners meeting in the area. The group began and continues to have a meeting both Monday and Friday nights at Rock of Ages Lutheran Church. The Monday meeting has always been a closed discussion, consisting of small beginners and step discussions. The Friday meeting has always been an open speaker meeting, except that for a short time in 1991, it was changed to a discussion meeting.

The group withstood a controversial group conscience in late 1988, when the church deemed the facility non-smoking. An alternate location was selected tentatively, but the group conscience chose to stay. Attendance slacked off and has never returned to the levels prior to the "no smoking" edict. Rent was quite high prior to the change, forcing the group to reduce rent payment over the past 4 years to ease the group's financial hardships.

The meeting format is based on the GSO pamphlet guide for beginners meetings. Al-Anon and Ala-Teen meetings formed. The group does some outreach work with doctors and ministers, openly welcomes court referrals, and supports meetings at the Stone Mountain Correctional Institute and the DeKalb County Jail.

The group conducts 2 group inventories a year and membership hovers around 15 to 20. Quite a few newcomers continue to get their start at the group. Although many members have moved from the area, they return occasionally and see that AA is alive and well on Memorial Drive, although the faces may be changing.

Primary Purpose Group

The Primary Purpose Group was started in November of 1987 when approximately 14 members of the Tucker Group decided to break away and form a new group. The first members were Phil McD., Tom

R., Frank F., Kevin B., Steve W., Neil J., David E., Jim S., Tara T., Kevin H., Pat P., Dan T., Kent McC., and Mike F. Like so many new groups, this one was started as the result of a resentment and an argument over whether a meeting should or should not be nonsmoking. We felt smoking should be allowed, and so a new group was born. On a more humorous note, the church we now meet in recently asked us to curtail our smoking in the small discussion rooms.

Our commitment was to create an atmosphere where all people who come to the meeting would feel welcome and the message of Alcoholics Anonymous would always be heard. The foundation of our group is truly that of intensive one-on-one work with other alcoholics. We have always made carrying the message to other alcoholics our primary purpose. The format for the group was to open the meeting together for the introductory readings and then split into smaller discussion groups. This was done on both meeting nights (Tuesdays and Fridays). Initially, we only needed to break into 2 meetings. But as our group members made efforts to bring in new people, the group grew to a point where we now break up into 5 small discussions. We have remained committed to continually bringing in outside discussion leaders from other groups to make sure that we are always open to hearing the message of AA in many different ways.

Over the years we maintained our commitments and have added a few more. For instance, the first Tuesday of each month, we meet together in 1 room to read and discuss a tradition. The second Tuesday of each month, we split up into our small groups, using the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book to study a step: We celebrate member's birthdays on the last Friday of each month.

We experienced many trials during our early years as the group's founding members struggled to let the group become guided by the group conscience. Over time that has happened, and, surprisingly enough, the group has continued to thrive. We believe our commitment to helping other alcoholics gives us a foundation that has not and will not be shaken by the petty problems that often arise in groups.

As a predominantly "young in age" group, we have had the privilege of taking part in each other's weddings, pregnancies, and growing pains. Sobriety for us is a family affair, where we get sober together, and take the time to rebuild our lives on a solid foundation of spiritual living. When we started, our sobriety was low in years but high in enthusiasm. Now, we have more of both.

Rowland Street Group

The Rowland Street Group of Alcoholics Anonymous officially began on October 31, 1982, as an offshoot from the Clarkston 12-Step Group. The group was founded by Dan C. and Vicki Q.

It lends more credit to the idea that if a place to meet, a resentment and a coffee pot can be found, a meeting can start. With fewer than 10 members and usually only 5 or 6 for the once a week meeting, members often brought coffee and paid rent out of their own pockets. Having enough people for 2 discussion groups was an event. Over a period of years, 2 more meeting nights were added. The group now has closed discussion meetings on Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday and covers not only the Steps but also Traditions and a Big Book study. Today the group has 53 members and a full slate of active officers. It sponsors an annual picnic around Memorial Day and an anniversary dinner and meeting around Halloween. It has been through the unity of the group, individual hard work and God's will that Rowland Street Group has been able to thrive and grow.

Stone Mountain/Glenhaven Group

Our group, originally called the Glenhaven Group, was started in 1968 with the first meetings being held at the Glenhaven Presbyterian Church. The original founders of the group were Dan S., Hamp D. and Alan R. The group moved to the Baptist Church-Avondale, St. Martins Catholic Church in Decatur and in 1975 to Pine Lake Baptist Church. Since 1975 we have been meeting at St. Michaels in Stone Mountain.

Our present membership is 75 and we have 3 meetings per week. Monday is a closed discussion with a Big Book study group, Friday an open discussion meeting, and Saturday is an open speaker meeting with the first Saturday of each month being an "eating meeting". We are currently sponsoring an institutional group in Rockdale.

The Tucker Group

The Tucker Group was started in February of 1970 by Frank B., Phil McD., Charles and Louis P. and Henry K. Tucker was a spin-off from the Skyland Group. Word has it that Frank B. invited Phil McD. to help start the group a year earlier, but Phil replied that he was not ready to undertake such a responsibility. Initially, the group met on

Monday because they did not want to create a conflict with the Skyland Group, which met on Tuesday.

In the beginning, the format of the meeting underwent experimentation because the group was not growing in membership. Initially, it was a speaker's meeting where the speaker talked for 15 minutes followed by a 45 minute question and answer period. Next, the group tried a panel discussion committee which sat at a table and fielded questions. The group also tried a speaker's meeting with 2 speakers telling their stories for 30 minutes each.

Each experiment lasted 2 to 3 months until the group decided to hold a closed discussion meeting on Monday nights. An open discussion meeting was added on Friday nights approximately 6 months after the group started. In addition, Tucker has an Al-Anon group whose members initially met on Monday nights, and would sit in on the AA meeting on Friday nights. The Al-Anon membership at Tucker expanded and in 1979 another Al-Anon meeting was started on Friday nights.

Apparently, the original members determined that after the group reached 20 members they would break into 2 discussion subgroups. Information indicates that there were approximately 18 members at Tucker in 1973 and sometime shortly thereafter the group reached the 20 member threshold. Word has it that when it came time to start an additional discussion group, some personalities conflicted with principles, and the group nearly broke up.

The group survived, however, and went on to face a "phenomenon" that occurred throughout AA in the mid 70's. At that time a number of folks were being referred to AA by treatment centers, in addition to an influx of people being "sentenced" to AA by the courts. Apparently, Tucker developed a relationship with one particular local center. In addition, many of the people who were being "referred" to AA at that time were cross-addicted, creating special problems among group members.

The arrival of other than "pure alkie" into AA during this time apparently caused some friction, as well as refocusing upon our primary purpose. Information shared indicates that this "phenomenon" was experienced at Tucker, as well as other AA groups throughout the country. Additionally, word has it that during this time the number of home group members at Tucker increased to approximately 85.

Around 1979-1980, the host facility constructed an addition onto the church and the minister sent a letter asking for contributions. One of Tucker's members suggested that the group make a contribution to the building fund. It was pointed out that this would violate the Traditions, so the group decided to pay an increased amount of rent instead.

In 1987, Tucker had 1 non-smoking discussion meeting of the 5 meetings available; however, some members were apparently bothered by the smoke which would accumulate in the larger room during the opening readings prior to breaking into smaller groups. Thus, the members were asked to refrain from smoking in the larger room. One member thought that this was unfair to the "new drunk" and that it violated the Tradition stating "the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking" (not stop smoking). That member left the group with approximately 15 others and started a new group in Tucker called the Primary Purpose Group.

Today, Tucker has approximately 150 home group members with 5 closed discussion meetings on Monday nights, as well as a Big Book Study and a Newcomers' meeting. On Friday nights, there are 4 open discussion meetings, a closed discussion meeting, a Step Study and a Women's meeting.

The Turning Point Group

During the summer of 1991, Patty M., a member of No Name Group, and Leon S., a member of Mountain Street Group, discussed a problem common to both groups: low attendance. They eventually decided to approach members of both groups with the idea of merging. After several months of formal and informal discussions, arguments, inventories and outside input, members of No Name and Mountain Street unanimously agreed to merge into one group, and the first meeting of the Turning Point Group was held on February 3, 1992.

Since then membership has grown only slightly, but still, it's larger. We now have enough trusted servants to have a full slate of officers, something that neither previous group could do. We're still having growing pains, and attendance fluctuates wildly, but we have a strong, step-oriented, sober group. The stories of the original groups follows:

No Name Group

The Clarkston group in 1978 met on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights. The founding members wanted a Monday night meeting also, but the church where they met had no other nights available. The pastor at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church agreed to allow a meeting there, and that was what it was for over a year - a meeting, not a group. At one of the early meetings, someone said this was a "No Name" meeting, and it stuck. Eventually, group members officially joined and turned the spinoff of Clarkston into a group.

Attendance hovered around 50-60 for several years, until 1989 or 1990, when the church passed a no-smoking rule. Attendance dropped quickly to around a dozen, and remained there until the group merged with Mountain Street to form the Turning Point Group.

Mountain Street Group

Mountain Street was originally 2 separate meetings: a Thursday speakers meeting and a "roaming" Step study, meeting in people's homes or places of work. At first, a local hospital was invited, and 100 or so alcoholic patients would bus in. However, after several months, a couple of break-outs, a couple of break-ins (of cars), numerous interruptions and lots of heckling, the patients were not invited anymore.

In the fall of 1981, the group moved to Crossroads Presbyterian Church, and both meetings at last had a place to meet together. In 1983, we moved to St. Timothy United Methodist Church, and attendance grew from 30-35 to 50 or more at each meeting. In 1989 the church passed a no-smoking policy; Mountain Street moved to White Oak Hills Baptist Church for 6 months, then back to St. Timothy. Attendance quickly fell to 5-8 members, so the decision was made to form Turning Point.

Sobriedad Latina Group

In January, 1992, 4 Spanish speaking men desired to seek recovery through the steps and traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. They had previously been members of AA in Salvador, Colombia and Mexico. Now in Georgia, they were enjoying fellowship at restaurants, homes, and cars but were driven to form an official group. After pooling their finances, they were able to rent a room in an office building in Doraville.

On March 1, 1992, their first meeting was held. Their main concern was to follow the suggested format of English-speaking meetings and to be available to any Hispanic with a desire to stop drinking.

Raul B., Napoleon S. of Salvador, Gustavo A. of Colombia and Francisco M. of Mexico are the founders of "Sobriedad Latina." The first month was fraught with frustration. Gustavo, GSR, had difficulties communicating with General Services and was confused about his responsibilities. Financial insecurity prevailed.

Inability to persevere after these early setbacks left only two members. Napoleon and Francisco, unwilling to let their dream die, remained. Before long 2 women, Adelina and Maria, came looking for sobriety and, again, they were four.

Once "Sobriedad Latina" was listed in the meeting book, court-appointed people came, but few have stayed. Others attended a meeting not willing to speak of the 12 Steps and Traditions. The founders insisted that the meeting conform to the principles of AA steps and traditions as its primary purpose.

In August of 1992, a Hispanic representative from GSO was contacted. He asked the DCM to attend the meeting to help dispel the areas of dissension. Bilingual members from other local groups with established sobriety reached out to the new group. Steps and traditions were studied and explained.

At the current time, January, 1993, Sobriedad Latina meets twice a day, 7 days a week. Meetings are well attended and as organized as an AA meeting should be. We thank Alcoholics Anonymous of Georgia for its continued interest and support. Our group's history in Spanish follows.

Vivo con Dios !

A finales del mes de Enero de 1992 un pequeno grupo de personas platicamos la posibilidad de abrir un grupo de AA, en el cual nos pudieramos recuperar de la enfermedad del alcoholismo; siempre y cuando nos sometieramos a las sugerencias que el programa nos indica.

Ese pequeno grupo consistia de cuatro personas, Raul B., Gustavo A., Francisco M. y Napoleon S. Comenzamos a reunirnos en cafeterias, a veces en un carro y luego en un apartamento. Esto lo hicimos por un mes. El 28 de Febrero de 1992 reunimos algun dinero y rentamos un pequeno local que hasta la fecha es adecuado. Asi que el primero de Marzo de 1992 comenzamos nuestra primera reunion a las 7:30 P.M.

Decidimos por votacion el nombre y la autonomia del grupo. El nombre es "Sobriedad Latina". La autonomia se diseno de una manera sencilla. Nos basamos en:

"Colocar en primer lugar nuestro bienestar comun para mantener nuestra sociedad unida. De la unidad de AA dependen nuestras vidas y las vidas de todos los que vendran."

Comenzamos nuestra reunion con unos segundos de meditacion seguidos de la Oracion de Serenidad. Leemos los Doce Pasos y las Doce Tradiciones. Antes de los Doce Pasos se lee Como Trabaja. Se lee la tercera tradicion y se informan las noticias nuevas.

Se sugiere que se hable por quince minutos. Se sugiere usar un lenguaje moderado. Se sugiere no hablar entre cruzado cuando alguien habla. Antes de terminar la reunion se pasa la cesta de la septima

tradicion. Antes de terminar se leen las promesas y para finalizar con un Padre Nuestro.

De los cuatro que comenzamos, quedamos tres. Gustavo A. se retira del grupo quince dias despues. Nos inscribimos a la Central de Atlanta y a New York. Comparamos literatura, poca pero teniamos. El primer mes el tesorero se gasta la septima y hace lo mismo el segundo mes, deja de asistir y se tuvo que buscar y pedir el dinero que tuviera. Luego, Francisco M. se convierte en el nuevo tesorero y que hasta la fecha lo hace bien, y le gusta servir a la Sociedad.

Llegaron dos senoras de las cuales solo queda una. Casi a diario llegaba una persona nueva pero cuando completaba las firmas que el juez le dijo, no regresaba.

Al cumplir cinco meses los miembros eramos Adelina, Francisco (1), Francisco (2) y Napoleon. De repente se aparecen siete personas que se supone conocen el programa y quisieron cambiar la autonomia. Usaban language fuerte, insultaban a los demas. A uno se le dio la oportunidad de coordinar y se robo la septima de una reunion. Los miembros bases de grupo tratamos de poner en practica la tolerancia, pero llego el momento en que tuvimos que hablar seriamente con estas personas, de lo contrario esto se hubiera convertido en una cantina sin alcohol.

En una ocacion recibi una llamada de New York en la cual se me pregunta acerca del grupo, como funcionaba y luego nos visita la representante de Distrito y Area Mitzy W. con su esposo y el companero Daniel V. y fue una reunion como nunca la habiamos tenido.

Todos estos miembros se calmaron por un tiempito, pero luego comenzaron de nuevo a incomodar a los demas, y se tuvo nuevamente que hablar mas seriamente con ellos. El resultado fue que se retiraron a otro grupo. Nos visitan de vez en cuando, pero hemos notado que el comportamiento de ellos es diferente cuando no andan en grupo.

Ahora tenemos ocho meses con catorce dias y cada dia Dios se manifiesta en la conciencia de nuestro grupo.

Y en nuestro grupo somos: Adelina, Francisco (1), Carlos, Hector, Danilo, Arturo, Aurelio, Eusevio, Francisco (2), Daniel, Javier, Galo, Luis y yo (Napoleon).

Tambien podemos manifestar que a partir del cuatro de Noviembre de 1992, comenzo a funcionar el grupo "Fe y Esperanza" de Al-Anon, que se reune los Miercoles de cada semana de 6:00 a las 7:00 P.M., un dia por semana.

Por la Gracia de Dios estamos recuperandonos poniendo en practica los Principios.

Twelve and Twelve

This group was started in October of 1975 by Ray B., Ted J., Bob B. and John O. Meetings were held on Wednesday evening and were closed discussion. Later a Thursday evening speaker-discussion meeting was added, but was not successful, and was dropped after a couple of years. The meeting is now only on Wednesday, but divides into 2 groups. One meeting is always on one of the first 3 Steps, while the other rotates through the Steps and Traditions. Our meetings have always been held at the Corpus Christi Catholic Church.

Zone E

Sarah D. relates this zone history:

At the time I became a GSR, zone meetings were held the fourth Saturday of each month at the Atlanta Psychiatric Hospital on Juniper St. Later on we moved to the Galano Club on Amsterdam Ave., which was right off Monroe Dr. We met there for a while and then moved to room 101 in the Fulton County Alcoholic Treatment Center.

During '88 and '89, Delois C. was DCM and Dee W. was alternate DCM. When it became time to elect trusted servants for the years of '90 and '91, Don C. of Auburn Ave. Group was elected DCM and Tom of Central City Group was elected alternate DCM. During '90 and '91, most of the time there was mainly Don C., Rebeckah (GSR for the Chrysalis Group and secretary of the zone), Clarence R. of the New Life Group and treasurer of the zone, and I who came to zone meetings. Participation was so bad during '90 and '91, that I sometimes wonder if it was because we did not elect the past alternate DCM. Anyway, we met with the few people who would come to meetings, sometimes 1 or 2, sometimes none.

Tom resigned as Alternate and I was at that time elected alternate DCM. In '91 I was elected DCM for the term of '92 and '93, with Rebeckah as secretary/treasurer. For personal reasons, Rebeckah had to resign. Before Rebeckah, we had no past records of meetings. When she left, the zone decided to split the secretary/treasurer job.

We are trying to grow and do what is best for the zone. The secretary brings copies of the meetings to the zone meeting for each GSR. At each meeting we have a GSR give a presentation of a Tradition, hoping to keep us informed of them. As I said before, we are beginning to grow. A better word would be beginning to heal. I believe that we are headed in the direction of placing principles before personalities. We are in the process of getting a workshop together. I

am very happy to see the participation up and us staying sober one day at a time by the Grace of God. Currently we meet the 3rd Thursday at 6 PM. We have moved back to the Galano Club, located on Dutch Valley RD NE. We like it so much we have paid a few months in advance.

As Bill Sees It

The As Bill Sees It group was founded in August of 1991 by Robert M., Ed D., Darryl D., David C., and Dick W. The early members were Bill B., Paul M., John G., Earl W., Doug D., Tom F., and Harry A. The first meeting was held at the Episcopal Church at 1068 N. Highland Ave. in Atlanta GA. We are currently meeting at the same place at 7:00 PM. The present group members vary from 8-12.

This men's group is not interested in retelling our drunkalogs as much as focusing on the solutions for meaningful sobriety today. By discussing the principles contained in readings from As Bill Sees It and the application of our 12 Steps, we wish to stay focused on ways to successfully live life on life's terms and joyfully trudge the road to happy destiny, a day at a time.

The meeting format is that someone is asked to read a passage from As Bill Sees It and then perhaps to comment. Group discussion then proceeds right around the table. This meeting uses a timer so that we all have an equal amount of time to share. When the timer goes off, you then have one minute to conclude your remarks.

Auburn Ave.

The Auburn Ave. Group was organized in February of 1981 in the Big Bethel A.M.E. Church located at the corner of Auburn Ave. and Butler St. Reverend McKinley Y., who was the pastor of the church, has since become Bishop Y.

The people present at the initial meeting were Joe H., senior counselor at Peachford Hospital, R.O. S., a member of the church, Fisher K., a steward of Big Bethel, and Luel C., a lay member of the church who was not a member of AA. Maxine D. and Cheryl R. were also present.

It was decided that the AA meeting would be held every Wednesday night at 8:00 PM at the church.

This group was organized because of Reverend Y.'s compassion for those who appeared to have an alcohol and/or drug problem. He had the sanction of the church membership. Members who knew of persons with these problems were asked to invite such persons to attend the meetings.

R.O. invited members of other groups where he attended AA meetings to attend the meetings at Big Bethel Church. R.O., Joe H., and Luel C. met consistently with the group for a number of months.

In February of 1982, the General Service Organization, in New York, issued the group a charter and it officially became the Auburn Avenue Group. Some of the people at this meeting were Eddie S., Pete T., Robert A., Charles A., Fisher K., Helen J., R.O. and Luel C. Eddie S. was appointed GSR.

Luel C. made coffee, typed the minutes and served as treasurer until the group was well on its way. Cheryl R. was the first secretary/treasurer.

We are located near the downtown area, so often we get visitors from out of state. When the Women's Convention and the Southeastern Convention were held here, our meetings were packed to full capacity. Our anniversary is held on the last Saturday in February. At that time, we have dinner and celebrate birthdays. All birthdays are celebrated on the fourth Saturday in the month. We usually have 50 to 60 people present at our meetings on Wednesday and Saturday nights.

Bell, Book & Candle

Bell, Book & Candle was born in 1982 to provide additional meetings at the Galano Clubhouse. The group began with 5 weekday noon, 2 weekend midnight, and 2 Sunday evening meetings. In these more relaxed settings, the Bell Book & Candle philosophy evolved. Noon meetings, frequented by those working nearby and those not yet employed, were geared for early recovery. Quiet, candle-lit midnight meetings invited greater intimacy and sharing.

In 1985, Lambda Group had provided Tuesday and Thursday 8:00 PM and Saturday 1:00 PM meeting times. Unable to maintain a steering committee, Lambda folded and offered its meeting times to Bell, Book & Candle. Bell, Book & Candle accepted and began to customarily offer sponsorship to new meetings at Galano Clubhouse. This concept expanded to include: Clean & Serene, where people can talk about drug addiction as it relates to their alcoholism; an AA meeting for discussion of HIV-positive issues as they relate to alcoholism; and a meeting for discussion of issues of women alcoholics. There are now 100 home group members.

Chrysalis Women's Group

In the summer of 1981, 2 Atlanta women visited New York City and located a lesbian meeting by calling the AA Central Office.

These women wanted Atlanta to offer such a meeting. At that time the only lesbian AA meeting in Atlanta was a very secretive group called the DTs, or Dykes Together, who did not want to be listed with the Central Office.

Assuming they could find support for 2 meetings, a small group of women met at the Atlanta Gay Center to discuss plans for a Friday night meeting. The group found a meeting site at the Karuna Counseling Center located at the corner of Monroe and Piedmont. Soon Karuna moved to a cozy house on Monroe Street, and the AA group moved with them. In this new location the group adopted the name Chrysalis. It was to be designated a lesbian meeting, but open to all women.

The next move was to the newly formed Galano clubhouse, which at that time was located in an old carriage house off West Peachtree. The group further expanded and, toward the end of 1982, grew too large for their room at Galano.

Searching for a bigger meeting place and more autonomy, the group found a large room in the Little Five Points Community Building on Euclid Avenue. Located on the third floor of an old school house, it was cold in the wintertime and hot in the summertime. Around 1986 the group expanded their meeting schedule by adding a Sunday evening discussion meeting. Later that year, the group added a Monday evening Big Book study and a Wednesday evening Step study.

In 1987, a nonprofit corporation called WomanSpace formed whose purpose was to provide a meeting space for women's 12-step recovery groups such as Chrysalis. Initial dues were \$5 per month and enough members were found to provide Chrysalis with an affordable meeting place.

While the community center room was affordable and spacious, it was not handicapped accessible and was not air conditioned. In August of 1988 the group discovered a suitable spot in the YWCA located on Highland Avenue near Virginia Avenue.

In 1989, the YWCA remodeled an old church building next to their original location and moved their offices to this building. We currently hold Friday evening meetings in a large room on the second floor of the renovated building. The Chrysalis room moved to an adjacent house, also owned by the YWCA, where the Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday night meetings are held. Also added during 1991 was a Thursday night discussion meeting.

Cosmopolitan Group

The Cosmopolitan Group was founded as a Thursday 8 PM meeting in October 1966. The early members were Charles B., Geneva

B., James D., Mary X., Big Jim, Mark M., James R., Noel S., and Ruby G. The Cosmopolitan Group is thought to be the first interracial group in the metro Atlanta area. The group members came from all 5 Metro counties, and thus arose the group's name, Cosmopolitan.

The first meeting was held at the YMCA on Luckie and Spring streets. The group later moved to the Catholic church on Central Ave. and Martin Luther King Dr., then to its present location at the Central Presbyterian Church at 201 Washington St.

The group decided the meeting would be a speaker's meeting since at that time there wasn't an open speaker's meeting in the downtown Atlanta area. The group still meets on Thursdays at 8 PM and celebrates its anniversary the last Thursday in October. Though membership is only approximately 10 members, we usually average 20-30 people in attendance. At our 1993 anniversary, the 27th, Southeastern Trustee Gay G. was the speaker. Approximately 50-60 people came to help celebrate with dinner at 6:30 and a meeting at 8 PM. Even though we have a small membership, the Cosmopolitan Group has produced many years of sobriety.

Easy Does It Group

On a Sunday afternoon in September, 1953, John F. and his wife, Liz, had a Twelfth Step call in south Atlanta on Jonesboro Road. It was from a woman with a drinking problem who was asking for help. John F. and Liz went to see her. They shared with her what had happened to them because of their drinking problems and what they were doing with their lives now, trying to stay sober in the fellowship of AA one day at a time. They told her where their AA meeting was located, which at the time was 883 West Hunter Street; the name of the group was The 24 Hour Group. They told her if she wanted to come and be a part of the fellowship, they would be glad to come and pick her up. She had decided that she wanted what they had.

They later discovered that someone else had been listening in the next room while they talked with the woman, an eavesdropping preacher with his ear to the keyhole. As they were leaving the building that afternoon, this preacher met them at the door. He had been praying for her and with her for a period of time. He was so impressed by what he had heard that he asked if they could come and be a part of the Wheat Street Church. Of course, they explained what they could and would not do. He then offered them any room, rent free, in the church's new building. John F. told him that they would have to pay their own way and could not be a part of the church.

They carried the idea back to the 24 Hour Group. Since there were just a few of them at that time, it was not hard to make a decision.

They had a group on the west side, so they thought it would be nice to have a meeting on the east side. They thanked the preacher for the offer and told him they would get a group started at his church. The following Sunday, the preacher made an announcement over the radio that an AA meeting was being started in the religious education building of the Wheat Street Baptist Church. John F. had promised to give a few minutes talk at the Sunday morning service about himself and his alcoholism. John F. kept his promise but told him they could not and would not go any further with the agreement until he retracted the radio announcement.

He wanted to know what he should say in his retraction. "First," John F. told him, "you are not an alcoholic; all you know about is the failure as the result of alcoholism, all you can do is to tell people about where help is available and let them call, or someone call for them, to the AA answering service."

After he retracted his announcement, they were able to get a group started there. Some of the members from the 24 Hour Group were very helpful during those early days. Without their support they would not have survived, John F. said. They had two groups going in southwest and southeast Atlanta which were looked upon as "colored groups." All calls to the central office were relayed to those groups as soon as they gave their telephone numbers to the intergroup for Twelfth Step work in those areas.

So in September 1953, Liz and John F. had this Twelfth Step call. As we look back today, we can see that God used this drunk as an instrument to start the Easy Does It Group. Little did we know, there was another instrument of God working in our behalf - the eavesdropping preacher.

For whatever reasons, after about 6 years the attendance began to drop off. People would come once and we would not see them again. However, we must remember that this is a program of attraction. There were many days when there would be only one or 2 members at the meetings. Due to the lack of attendance, the group almost folded. One time when the chairman failed to show up and open the meeting room, an active member from Flint, MI, showed up for a meeting. The preacher was in the building. When the AA told him about the locked meeting room, the preacher promptly called John F. to find out what had happened to the AA program; that there was a man there for the meeting. John F. was mowing his grass, but he stopped and hopped in his car and hurried to the meeting. Since that time, there has always been someone to open up, make coffee, and set up for the meeting.

The man from Flint, MI, was another instrument of God, who was sent our way at the right time. His presence that night impressed upon us the necessity for the doors of AA to always be open on the scheduled meeting night.

On June 13th, 1990, John F. passed away. He was the last original member of the Easy Does It group. His legacy of love and service to this group shall never be forgotten. As members of this group, may we ever let John F.'s legacy be a beacon of guidance for all of us. May God bless you.

Headstart Big Book Study

After some painstaking and persistent laboring of a drunk named Tam, a bootlegger called Shot, and 2 AAs, Godfrey G. and Leroy D., the Headstart Group, 164 Mayson Avenue, Metro District 13 Zone E, opened its doors for a closed AA Big Book study on August 11, 1990. Co-founder Leroy D. has received much peace, serenity and love from the Fellowship of AA. His burning desire to understand what was in the AA's Big Book led him to attend several meetings called "Big Book studies." He found what was considered a Big Book study was in fact a "Big Book reading" and an open discussion meeting which had very little to do with what was read from the Big Book - if anything!

Co-founder Godfrey G., who is a drywall specialist, took what was 2 rooms and, with his knowledge of construction, transformed it as if by magic into a meeting hall which would seat 30 drunks. Leroy D., who has mechanical abilities and comes from a line of carpenters, painters, and handymen, was able to fill the gap when needed. Some of the best AA meetings were held in the hull of what was to become Headstart.

Headstart celebrated its open house in July 1990. Sara D. was the speaker. She shared her experience, strength and hope with straightforwardness, honesty and the power that is found in the fellowship. The affair was unforgettable.

Then came the work of deciding the time and date of Headstart's weekly meeting. During the course of deciding, several opinions were expressed. One member stated the AA meeting could not be over an hour. Another member stated that the 4th tradition must be read; yet another member stated that the meeting must not last over 2 hours. Another member stated that he could not sit 2 hours, and someone said, "Sit as long as you can, then leave." In reply to that statement, a voice was heard from the back of the meeting room saying, "Sh___, I might miss something." However, after 4 months of different dates and times, Headstart members decided on Sunday afternoons from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. Then came the work of deciding the format of Headstart's Big Book meetings. Another member of AA stated that the readings of How It Works and the Twelve Traditions were not needed, as this is something that groups in Atlanta normally recite. It was also

stated that the Serenity Prayer should be deleted from the format, as it is not part of AA. However, Clarence R. stated, "Wait a minute. We can't take God out of the program because it wouldn't be a program." Therefore, as it would be, Headstart continues with the "Atlanta" format.

Headstart celebrated its first anniversary on August 11, 1991. It was a splashing success! Reginald T. and Myron R. flipped fish, hamburgers and hotdogs. Al-Anon Barbara D. prepared coleslaw and baked beans. Leroy D. kept the cold drinks on ice and Mary dished out cake and ice cream. Other AA members brought special dishes, making it one great "foot-sliding, running, eating and sharing good time!" Then it was time for an AA speaker meeting! Bill B. was the first of 3 speakers in this all-day outdoors tent affair. As Bill started to speak, the rain, wind, thunder and lightning came uninvited, sending drunks running for cover. You should have seen the look on Essie Lue's face when some 80 drunks came running into her house! There the meeting continued with shoulder-to-shoulder drunks in a 30-seat meeting hall, and an overflow into the bathroom and back porch. The rain finally cleared and the tent was reassembled. Connie M. gave everyone a lot of love and openness that one could not find anywhere else. R.O. S closed out the evening with a lot of faith, hope and love.

The second anniversary was also a splashing success. Everyone who could returned except the wind! There was food, fun and fellowship throughout the day. On hand to share their experience, strength and hope were Melvin S., Carla W. and Charlotte J.

There are currently 9 members of the AA Headstart Big Book Group. The group's first officers were: GSR, Leroy D.; treasurer, Ali J.; secretary, Virginia S.; intergroup representative, Clarence R.; literature/chairperson, Stephanie; institutional representative, Greg A.; alternate GSR, Mark P., and alternate secretary, Ali J.

The Headstart Group is actively involved in institutional, sponsorship, and correctional Twelfth Step work.

New Life Group

The New Life Group was founded in April 1975 by Julius D., Shirley Y., Paul E., Frederick L. and Darrell S. Other early members were Bill B., Barnell S., Ben P., Samuel W., and Clarence R. The group has always met at the Fulton County alcohol treatment center at 265 Boulevard NE. They started with a Friday 8 PM meeting and have added Monday and Wednesday, also at 8 PM. The group celebrates its anniversary the last Friday in April.

Since this was a new life for us, and no other group had this name, they voted to give it the name "The New Life Group". The first GSR was Julius D.

We wanted to carry the message of sobriety and AA, and today, 18 years later, we are still carrying the message of recovery.

We used to have picnics, workshops and Christmas parties, but things change as time goes by.

New Rush Hour Relief Group

The New Rush Hour Relief Group was started October 18, 1991, as a result of the Rush Hour Relief Group disbanding.

The few of us who were attending the old group regularly felt we did not wish the meeting to discontinue. It met at 6 PM, just when most of us were getting off work. It met 4 days a week so we didn't have to run all over town to get to a meeting. The location was great, just off the 75-85 interstates at All Saints Episcopal Church at 634 W. Peachtree St., directly across from a Marta train station in Midtown, with plenty of lighted parking. The meeting room was clean, carpeted, with air conditioning and access to an ice machine. What more could you ask for except support, and that was assured because we were between 2 treatment centers in Midtown. Some of us got together and prayed for spiritual direction. Through much telephoning, sharing, griping and complaining, we decided not to let our meeting die.

Founders Bob R., Bob W., Paul R., Ron, Jeffery H. and Virginia S. shared the chairing of those first few weeks. Few of the "sometimers" ever knew that this was a new meeting. We never closed or cancelled a meeting. Virginia S. is the only remaining founding members still there.

For the first 3 months, the group just hung on. They set a group conscience meeting date for the last Monday in the month. Still faces kept changing. Each group conscience meeting there were new members, 1 or 2 regular members, and a different secretary with no past minutes. The 1 or 2 regular members did most of the work. People continued to come and go. Since even the faithful were newcomers, just under a year, the sharing would wander until one day a representative from Central Office came in to share what a "real" AA group was all about. We began then to stress the singleness of purpose.

Finally, the first anniversary rolled round. Since the group met 4 times a week and the rent was ridiculously low, the treasury had a little money. To attract new members the group decided on a celebration. They called it an "eating meeting." We invited a guest speaker, Larry L. The food was delicious, prepared by a 70-year-old

lady retired chef who called herself our Al-Anon mother. That meeting attracted about 75 AAs. The members felt they were really an AA group.

At the very next group conscience meeting they decided to take a group inventory to get a little variety going at the meetings. On Mondays they would have a speaker meeting, with the last Monday in the month being an open discussion. Tuesday would be a Step and Traditions study, while Wednesdays were open discussion and Thursdays, Big Book study. Each chairperson was responsible for visiting other meetings in order to invite members to come to our meetings and share their experience, strength and hope.

The group elected officers. The elected GSR, Virginia S., went with her sponsor, Ann S., to her first State Assembly in Macon in September of 1992. The information she brought back encouraged the group to register themselves, set up a regular pattern of contributions to the service organizations, sponsor a treatment facilities detox women's meeting, and send a representative to the H & I and Intergroup.

As the group approaches its second anniversary, the faces still continue to change, while a few remain steadfast. We are still struggling and laughing about not being able to keep a secretary, always trying to remember what was the old business and where is so and so? However, we know someone will be there 4 nights a week keeping a loving atmosphere of recovery, accompanied by a good hot pot of black coffee.

Northeast Group

At the time of the 1947 Southeastern Conference, where Bill W. had read and explained the 12 Traditions, Atlanta AA had 30 to 40 active members, one group, and only 2 meetings a week. Soon afterwards, because of their love for the fellowship and each other, and wanting to stay sober, they decided 2 meetings a week were not enough, so they did the most helpful and logical thing: they started neighborhood groups.

One of the next 2 groups to form became the Northeast Group.

It originally met on Moreland Ave. and called themselves the Little Five Points Group. From Moreland they moved above a judge's chambers on Whiteford Ave., then to DeKalb Ave., and finally to private homes. Somewhere along the way, the group changed its name to the Druid Hills Group. Around April or May 1948, a member who didn't have a car asked that the group meet near his home at Morningside Presbyterian Church. The group met in the Scout Hut in the woods for the next 10 years and changed their name to Northeast. In 1958, Northeast moved to the Church of Our Savior on North

Highland where, by their 32nd anniversary in 1980, they had enjoyed a supportive relationship with Father P. and his church for almost 22 years.

A member of Northeast, Neely D., became Georgia's first delegate for 1952-53. Like Doctor Bob, Neely believed that "love and service is the spirit of AA." Neely's love and service was a vital part of Northeast's spirit, even after her death. She spoke at the groups 27th anniversary, and ended with this thought:

"I ask you to guard and carry what you and I have found here in Alcoholics Anonymous - to assure that AA will be here for the new ones coming in and for the hundreds and thousands that yet do not know ... just as long as we are needed."

Since then, the Northeast Group has continued to be a strong presence in AA. Although not a large group, they have a core of members representing a broad cross section of the community. The Monday meeting is a Step study, and the Thursday meeting is an open discussion. All are welcome.

As one of the oldest groups in the city, the group anniversary meeting draws a wide variety of both new and old AA members. It occurs in late April or early May (the best guess of when the meeting started) and includes a dinner and speaker. The 1993 meeting had almost 100 people celebrating continuous, lively sobriety in the heart of Atlanta.

Poncey/Highland Women's Group

The Poncey/Highland Women's Group was founded in November 1989 by Betty DeB., Vickie C., and Elizabeth P. Originally, members of another local club had the desire to form an open discussion group for women who had the desire to stop drinking. The group first met at Druid Hills Presbyterian Church at 4:30 PM on Saturdays. There are now 30 home group members, meeting at the same place at 4:00 PM on Saturdays.

The group from the beginning has had an average of 15-20 women present at each meeting. Originally, women of the group donated the coffee pots and bought books out of their own pockets.

Issues facing the group are handled expediently, without conflict, and the Traditions are upheld. Ironically, during winter months there frequently have been practicing alcoholics awaiting the opening of the shelter who chose to wait outside instead of coming through the doors to the meeting and into the fellowship.

Serenity

"Gay? Drinking Problem? Call this number."

This short ad appeared in Creative Loafing in mid and late 1975. At this time there were several people involved in the new Phoenix Group of Alcoholics Together that met at the Metropolitan Community Church. The leader of that group seemed to be more concerned about being gay than with the disease of alcoholism. Consequently, he got drunk, and the fledgling group nearly disbanded. However, through the concerted efforts of Jan S., Jim M., Tom L., Bill C., Bill M., Jo Anna L., Betty B., Jackie B. and others, a new "secret group" of Alcoholics Anonymous started to meet in homes around Atlanta.

The group got larger, sometimes 10 people at a meeting, and in November 1975 moved to St. Peter and Paul Church in Decatur. This is when I (Roddy P.) joined the group. It was one of the coldest places I have ever been. There was no heat at night. They allowed us to meet in the church office with 2 desks, bookcases, and other office furniture in a space about 10 x 12 feet. We brought blankets, bedspreads and lots of coats and WE HAD MEETINGS! We now had up to 15 people at our meetings. Obviously, there was a need for the group which we had named "Serenity."

In January 1976, Tom LaV. made a request to the rector of All Saints Church on North Avenue for meeting space. The rector said yes, but stated that if his congregation found out and they objected, we would have to leave. No one that we knew of ever objected.

In those days, to find Serenity was an ordeal. If anyone in the group knew someone else in Alcoholics Anonymous who was gay, they would be invited to the group. If anyone else was looking for an AA meeting that was gay, they had to call Central Office, which would call a straight man who was helping us. He would call us and we would return the call and take them to a Serenity meeting or to another meeting if we weren't sure about them.

To attend a meeting, you had to pull a cord hanging out of a second story window to ring a bell. Then someone would come downstairs to let you in. If someone we didn't know or didn't have prior knowledge of came to a meeting, we would ask them how and where they found out about us.

We had 2 meetings a week by then, Monday and Friday, and averaged 20-30 people each meeting. We were extremely protective about Serenity; after all, we were a "doubly anonymous" group.

We followed the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of AA because we were and are, first and foremost, an AA group. There were certain things we felt we could not do. Since most of us were active in other groups, we would claim them as our home group when we were out in

"AA public." We sent our self-support contributions to Central Office, the State Office, the state Pre-paid Convention and General Service office in New York anonymously. We bought our group AA literature at Central Office by paying cash and using another group's name

In September 1976, we started a new group, the Serenity Learning Group on Saturdays specifically to study the 12 Steps. Originally a separate group, it soon became a part of Serenity. An Al-Anon group was also formed and met at the same time.

In August 1980, we had our largest, most heated, most controversial group conscience meeting ever to this day! It started at 9:00 and lasted way past midnight. The subject of that meeting was whether or not to list Serenity in the Atlanta Directory of AA groups. Despite the fear, we knew that as an AA group, we had to be accessible to all who wish to attend. We voted to list the group. We sort of "came out," as it were. As a result of this vote we lost several members of the group. But we gained strength and the opportunity to help more people and for others to help us. We also found out that we were the most well-known "secret" in AA in Atlanta.

There had been talk and dreams of a clubhouse in Atlanta for AA and Al-Anon groups that were predominantly gay. Many people, most of them from Serenity, got together and through a long, long process formed the Galano Club.

Dan L. was the driving force in that effort and found the carriage house behind the old Raul mansion at 848 Peachtree. This is the property to the left of the Atlanta Cabana Motor Inn (now Howard Johnson's) at Peachtree and 7th. That's when Galano became a reality!

Serenity moved to Galano in March 1982. It was here that we experienced more growth than ever imagined. We have been with Galano ever since, moving from the carriage house to a location on Macaslin, then to 500 Amsterdam and on March 1, 1993, to a building being purchased by Galano, Inc., at 585 Dutch Valley Road. Hopefully, we won't have to move any more.

Serenity has had its share of growth and opportunities for growth, and we have survived because of a strong group conscience following the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. It takes strong, dedicated people to start a group such as Serenity and to keep it going. There have been many members willing to expose themselves for the welfare of this group.

We owe our lives to those who came before us in Alcoholics Anonymous, and to those who came before us in the Serenity Group. It is our responsibility to make sure that Alcoholics Anonymous and the Serenity Group are here for those who have found us and for those yet to come.

On October 24, 1992, Serenity celebrated its 17th birthday, feeding 82 people a complimentary, thank-you spaghetti dinner with

Gay G. as the speaker at our 8:00 meeting. Gay is one of many people through the years who have supported and loved us just because we are fellow recovering alcoholics.

At present the Serenity Group sponsors 13 meetings per week, including a Big Book study group, 12 & 12 study group, and beginners series (held twice per week). We have approximately 125 members. Serenity is open to all who are suffering from the disease of alcoholism, not only those who are gay.

It is important to note that due to the courage of those back in the mid '70s, other primarily gay AA groups have spun off from the Serenity Group. These people too are sharing their experience, strength and hope with each other in an effort to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety by practicing the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Techwood Group

In November of 1992, a few of the men at the Atlanta Union Mission saw a need for a client-sponsored meeting, separate from the two regular scheduled meetings here. We wanted a meeting that was AA-approved and listed in the AA meeting schedule. Since we were going to be meeting here at the mission, we wanted to attract recovering alcoholics with some time in the program to sponsor some of the new members. We voted to make this a men's meeting and for it to be a open discussion meeting.

In keeping the 7th tradition, we are fully self supporting, and buy the mission Big Books as a way of paying for our meeting here. The meeting has become the best meeting held here at the Atlanta Union Mission. The founders of this group are Dick D., Darnell M., and Jimmy H. The other early members are Calvin B., Ed H., Issac J., Harold C., John B., Willie E. and James H.

Zone F

Zone F was established in January 1966 when the districting of the state was accepted. Because of the population, Metro District 13 was divided into 6 zones, and Zone F was a part of this zoning. The first DCM was Virgil K. The zone consisted of approximately 5 groups in the beginning and has grown from this to 28 in 1993.

In 1970 Lee M. was elected DCM, but there was a lot of controversy and argument because he was lacking about 6 months

having the required sobriety to hold the office. Well, have you ever! Argument and controversy in AA! Lee settled all the argument when he resigned. Another DCM was elected, and shortly after his term began he got drunk! John L., who was Alternate DCM at that time, then went in as DCM and served the zone well for some time. In the years that followed some of the other DCM'S were: Earl M., Frank R., Tony J., Henry T., James B., Jesse B., and in 1992 the first woman, Pat D., was elected to serve as DCM of Zone F.

The zone has 2 events every year that are well known - a Christmas party and hosting a hospitality room at the Atlanta Round-Up. These have been taking place for many years. The zone Christmas party is a big event. At the 1992 party, there were 375 people in attendance. Each group in the zone furnishes a turkey or ham and all bring a covered dish. Dinner is a great time for fellowship, and following dinner we have a speaker. The first Christmas party was held at Woodward Academy in College Park, and George M. was the speaker. The party was held at Woodward for several years until one year an AA woman tripped and fell while at the party. She then proceeded to get herself a lawyer and sue Woodward for injury. Just because we quit drinking doesn't mean we get well! Anyway, needless to say we were no longer welcome at Woodward. The party was moved to Suder Elementary School in Jonesboro and was held there for several years until we were asked to leave there because some children were doing damage to classrooms during our meeting. Oh, well, drunks are used to being asked to leave! Determined to continue our tradition, we found a place to hold the party the next year at a UAW hall. In 1988, when James B. was DCM, he was able to locate and make arrangements for us to use the Forest Park Recreation Center Gym, where the event has been held ever since.

The other annual event began in 1975 when the first Atlanta Round-Up was held. Zone F started a hospitality room and continues to do this to this day. Each group in the zone brings food and takes a 2-hour time to be in the hospitality room to greet visitors. The zone furnishes coffee. This is great fellowship not only for our groups but for all persons attending the round-up. It gives our zone an opportunity to meet people from other areas and is very popular at the round-up. Zone F has always been a very friendly group of people.

The members in Zone F know that we are the best zone in the state! Our PI-CPC representative is doing a great job and the GSRs show great participation in both zone and state affairs. We have a meeting of all GSRs in the zone on the first Monday of every month and attendance is always about 90 percent. We believe that a good group is an informed group! We attribute our success to good attendance at zone meetings and at state assemblies. Growth from 5 groups in 1966 to 28 groups in 1993 proves that Alcoholics Anonymous

is alive and well in Zone F. We hope to keep it that way - our lives and lives of those to come depend on it.

Airport/Hapeville Group

The Airport/Hapeville Group was formed sometime in 1956 by the now-deceased Ralph M. The "founder" was rather tyrannical about letting other members or visitors read, share or conduct any of the meetings. We are not sure just how long he had been sober in the beginning and the way things have turned out it is very unimportant. A power far greater than we can understand has used the humble beginning of this group to rescue hundreds of seemingly lost souls.

Ralph had located a meeting place in the basement of the Hapeville Presbyterian Church on Whitney Street. This was a good location except when it rained; then the basement was known to get ankle deep in water and the meetings would have to be canceled. Some AA members and visitors soon stopped coming, sometimes referring to the meeting as "Soggy Bottoms", but it was amazing to find out what lengths folks will go to get to a meeting.

The church was approached for new space. We were offered the church manse, which happened to be vacant, at 3395 Stewart Avenue. Meetings were resumed but the group began to diminish in number again. In fact, we were told it got down to zero. We were able to learn from Ralph A., whose date of sobriety is June 28, 1960) that the Airport/Hapeville Group went dormant for a period of a few months or maybe a whole year.

AA in Atlanta and the surrounding areas was growing fast and the need for a group near the airport became a concern to the members of groups in the Tri-Cities area (East Point, College Park, Hapeville and Mountain View). Airport/Hapeville Group, being located less than a mile from Hartsfield Airport, was an ideal location for a meeting place where travelers could attend.

The Airport/Hapeville meeting was reorganized, and registered as a group with G.S.O., as well as with the Atalan Society (the previous name of the Atlanta Central Office). These actions were greeted with enthusiasm. New members and lots of visitors led us to believe "this was meant to be." We returned to having 2 meetings per week. Wednesday nights at 8:00 PM was a closed discussion meeting. Saturday nights would be for open speaker meetings and birthday celebrations. We stayed at the church's manse and enjoyed a very active and fruitful existence, becoming one of the most popular and progressive groups on the south side. Attendance always exceeded our membership and within less than 2 years we were again outgrowing our

quarters. We were wearing our welcome a bit thin with the church, which was desiring to sell the property to a florist. Again, we would have to relocate.

However, the hand and will of a power greater than human perception was already moving in our midst. A new concept of service began to gel in the minds of AAs who attended the meetings. There was a need for a facility where AAs could meet and fellowship in an environment free from the influence of beverage alcohol.

We were able to rent a storefront building a few doors from the church's manse at 3437 Stewart Avenue. It was like any store front building, large and empty. The coffee pot, books and the few items that were ours were moved into our new quarters. We had some remodeling to do. First, we had to partition the area and make 2 large rooms. We had an active Al-Anon Group meeting going already and they would be needing space and privacy. This bunch of drunks really got busy. There was a lot to do. A member, James M., was by trade "a jack of all trades" and he became our number one straw boss. After dividing the large room into 2, we had to have a kitchen area so we could fix our drink of choice - coffee. We fashioned a small kitchenette for this purpose. We had 1 bathroom for both sexes. A sign "Ladies Room" was made for the girls. Within that week they started erecting a wall to partition the Al-Anon room. Time flew so fast and Saturday was upon us and we had dozens of people, doing dozens of things to have it ready in time for the next meeting. Not perfect, but it was ready, and to celebrate the first meeting, a dance with a live band followed the meeting. We were all proud of what we had done and had big plans for the future. All were inspired! We grew in numbers and attendance and had a lot of fun doing so.

Members of Airport/Hapeville Group along with members of neighboring groups, College Park and East Point, met and discussed opening a club room, which was to be a non-profit association, free from landlords and problems of traditions dealing with money, property, and prestige. The only purpose would be to provide a roof over the heads of groups and members of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Right where we were meeting could become the facility where a person of our persuasion could come to enjoy the fellowship of others affected by spirit alcohol. After all, it would already have its first tenant, the Airport/Hapeville Group.

We were now attracting more people than ever. Like most other groups in the southeast, we were using the chip system to measure a person's progress during his first year of recovery. We give a medallion for a year's sobriety along with a birthday cake, and the celebrant is allowed to organize and produce his own party. The celebrant becomes our head drunk for the night, and receives a tremendous amount of love and fellowship. Most of our first year

celebrants literally break down and cry with joy. It is our custom to celebrate birthdays in a timely fashion even if the celebrant could not attend. This has happened several times.

The number of lives which have been saved, the number of families and marriages which have been rescued, the number of bankruptcies that have been averted, and the number of children who have received one of their parents back is absolutely incalculable. The stories would fill volumes. But we take no credit for these. That wonderful Power that we know and love keeps up with it along with the sparrows and the hair on your head. He knows about it all. Our reward is contented sobriety.

One night, approximately 15 minutes before meeting time, the telephone rang. It was a wife who explained that her husband had always been a drunk who came home late, would beat her and the children, would smash furniture. Several weeks before he had begun going to meetings, and he stopped drinking, came home on time and everything was wonderful, but that day he had come home late and drunk and had chased her and the children away. She wanted to know what we were going to do about this. We talked about it for just a moment and referred her to the Hapeville police department.

Our experience has also shown us that being blessed by having an Al-Anon Family Group meeting at the same time has proven to be a great asset to the group. If you were to talk to one of the Al-Anons of this time, perhaps they would relate the story about a new attendee of the Airport/Hapeville Group coming through the door and proceeding toward the unisex bathroom fumbling with his fly, seemingly oblivious to his surroundings. Following several complaints about this practice, a collection was taken up to buy the ladies a curtain to help with privacy during their meeting.

If you have never attended a speaker meeting where there was standing room only and not much of that, then you have missed one of the great joys of this fellowship, sharing the enthusiasm of moments like these.

Airport/Hapeville Group in 1974 had completely outgrown another facility. Other groups had been formed and had co-tenant status at T.A.R.A. We simply had to find a larger facility.

The trusted servants of T.A.R.A., members of the groups now meeting there, were given the task of finding new quarters.

Again we had some work to do. The members, with James M.'s help, saw to it that we had a kitchen and bathroom facilities. We are still washing the new coffee pot in the same sink that had been installed earlier in the previous building, still drinking our drink of choice, coffee. We have been located at 575 N. Central Avenue in Hapeville since 1976.

We are now in our second year of having to divide our meeting on the first and third Wednesday. The first Wednesday is on Traditions. The third Wednesday is a step meeting. We give members and visitors the option of a closed discussion meeting or a closed Tradition/Step meeting. Our meeting rooms are large and these meetings are separated. This practice also reminds us that growth is still occurring and the status quo is a fool's paradise. One either grows or goes! We would rather grow.

In 1990 a West African man named John K. came to our meeting. We had a real "loner" in our midst. John tells of living in such a remote area of Africa that the only living contacts other than his own people were missionaries who came to the jungle to carry the message of Christianity. One of them also was carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. John had a problem with alcohol. The missionary recognized it and gave him the G.S.O. mailing address. John wrote to New York in October 1968, and they sent him literature and corresponded with him over the years. Every member of the fellowship who has ever contributed directly or indirectly to our General Service Office in New York has a part in John K.'s sobriety. John's first AA meeting upon arriving in America was with the Airport/Hapeville Group.

John has joined our group and we are his A.A. people here in America. This past October (1992), he cried at his 24th celebration with us because he was overcome with joy.

We held the 36th anniversary of the Airport/Hapeville Group in November 1992. We believe we have the best AA meetings on the south side of Atlanta. There is a lot of good sobriety here and we all enjoy each other. We are a loving and caring group. Speaking of loving - another pair of alcoholics used the facility to get married on December 26, 1992, just one of the many marriages within our fellowship.

If you are ever in the vicinity of the Atlanta airport in Hapeville, we have a special deal for you. Our Higher Power will not deduct from your lifespan the time spent in an AA meeting. We promise, so please visit with us a little while. Visitors and new members make our day.

The Adamsville Group

The Adamsville Group was started because 2 ladies felt a need for a Friday night meeting in their community. Helen M. and Ann P. discussed the fact that Friday was a very important night for them to attend a meeting since Friday had been a very important drinking night

and with only a few months sobriety they did not want to slip back into old habits. Helen began to talk with some AAs who had been around for a while to find out what to do to start a meeting.

After getting the needed information, Helen arranged a meeting with the minister and elders of The Church of The Master, which she attended, to ask if the church would allow a meeting there. She also invited John F. and some other AA members to explain to them what AA was and what it could and could not do. The church leaders saw this as a very good community outreach program and were glad to give the space.

The first meeting was held in June of 1981 in one of the nursery rooms at the church. As best remembered, the 5 people attending the meeting were John F., Ann P., Bernard C., Charles A., and Helen M.

The Adamsville Group was not registered until September of 1981 because the group waited to see if the meeting would grow. It did. Soon the group outgrew the nursery room, and the meeting moved to the parish house next door. As the group continued to grow, it was moved to the main sanctuary of the church where it meets today.

For many years Helen M. was the lifeline for the Adamsville group. She served as secretary, treasurer, meeting chairperson and anything else that was needed to keep the group going. Many people attended the meeting but did not join the group. Today we have 21 members and most of them are active so we can rotate our group trusted servants as outlined. All of our meetings are open discussion meetings. On the first and third Friday, our discussion is from the 24 Hour a Day book. On the second Friday our discussion comes from the Twelve and Twelve and on the last Friday of the month we celebrate birthdays, so it can be either a speaker or discussion meeting. The group's anniversary is celebrated the fourth Friday in September every year since that was when we were registered as a group. We usually have a Christmas party and a summer picnic for the group.

We have not had any major problems in the group. People do come and go, but without any major controversy or resentments.

Bonanza Group

The Bonanza Group started September 27, 1984, at the Bonanza Church of Christ. Harold S. and Betsy P. formed this group to take the place of the Jonesboro Group that moved to the Clayton House (club house). We started the meeting with 14 people present. Of the 6 who joined, 3 of us still remain. Today we have bout 20 members. Some have passed away sober and some not so sober. This

is a non-smoking meeting, and no one has died yet from not smoking for an hour. The church has changed its name to Trinity United Church.

We are a very happy group of alcoholics and our meetings are open discussion except for birthdays and our anniversary, which are speaker meetings. We celebrate all holidays and special occasions with decorations and a table full of goodies. Every July 4th we have a picnic pool party, and every Christmas we have a party at a member's home.

We have had our ups and downs but seem to survive. Sometimes money is short, and participation is slow. Happy, joyous and free is our motto and we survive on Faith, Hope and Love.

Cascade Group

In the summer of 1971, 2 alcoholics got together and decided that there was a need for an AA meeting in the southwest Atlanta area. The 2, John L. and John F., went to several churches in the area. The Church of the Incarnation opened its doors. In June of '71, the meetings got started. It was touch and go, but with help from other groups, we made it. Some of the early members were Charles A., James T., George T., Hubert O., Blanch P., and Helen M. We celebrated our 21st anniversary in June 1992. We now have 3 meetings a week.

Clayton New Life

The Clayton New Life group was started on Saturday, January 13, 1987, by Roy B., Bill B., Bob D., Joe H., Lindsey J., James P., JoAnn W. and Greg M. The original 8 members are still sober, and 2 new groups have been formed by members. The group started a Tuesday meeting in June 1987 and a Thursday meeting in February 1990. All meetings are at 5:30 PM and we meet at The Clayton House in Jonesboro.

We currently have 31 members. The group sponsors a meeting every Friday night at 8:30 pm at Southern Regional Medical Center for the patients in detox there.

Desiderata

The Desiderata Group meets at The Tara Club in Hapeville and currently has 74 members. The group was founded by Bill W., Kay W., and Richard R. Some early members were: Hazel & Arthur W., Doug R., Irene & Dewey C., John P., Carrol G., Dottie F., Dub R. (active member 15 years) Bill M., Gerald S., Don & Frances F., Alton M., Mary M., Dorothy H. (active member 13 years), Bill F. Eudy M., Terry D., Doug W. (active member 11 years), Bobbie B., and Randall & Evelyn G. Earliest confirmation about group activity was 1978. Hazel W. was secretary/treasurer and there was not a steady GSR at that time. There would only be 8 to 10 people present per meeting and extra baskets would be passed at birthday time to buy the cake. In 1980, when Dub R. became secretary/treasurer, group reserves were low and attendance was down. In order to keep the meetings at the Tara Club, Dub kept the rent paid out of his own pocket until attendance and reserves were back up. We, the active members of Desiderata, will always owe a debt of gratitude to him for this unselfish act.

GSRs were not easy to find and keep. There is a story of a GSR trying to disrupt the group and take some money, but all that happened was they went off and got drunk. Dorothy H. has been treasurer for 10 years, doing a very good job. Later on Doug W. became GSR and did a very fine job for 5 years. Dub R. was the chairperson for approximately 13 years.

We have group meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:00 pm. Both are open discussion meetings. On the last Thursday of the month all birthdays for the month are celebrated with a speaker meeting and cake and ice cream. We celebrate our group's anniversary once a year with cake and ice cream. On the second Thursday of every month we hold our group conscience meeting after our regular meeting.

We are grateful to all our members, active or not, for what they have done to better our group. We are also very grateful to Alcoholics Anonymous for this group and for our sober living.

East Point Group

The East Point Group was started on January 23, 1961, by Henry and Marjorie D. (husband and wife), Tom C., Ralph A. and Virgil K. The group met at the East Point Presbyterian Church on Church Street in East Point. After several moves to different churches in the East Point area, the group is now back at the original location.

Virgil K. started the Southside answering service early on, since they were not getting enough Twelfth Step calls. After 5

successful years this answering service consolidated with Central Office. John L., state delegate 1981-1983, was a member of the East Point Group.

The East Point group has a closed discussion meeting on Tuesdays at 8:30 except the first Tuesday each month, which is set aside for Tradition and Step meetings alternating annually. Open speaker meetings are held every Friday at 8:30. The group celebrates its anniversary each year and birthdays are on the last Friday night of the month with the exception of first birthdays, which are held when the celebrant wishes.

The East Point group has a group conscience meeting monthly with a lot of unity, understanding and love.

Fairburn Helping Hand Group

The Fairburn Helping Hand AA Group first started meeting around August of 1979. The main force behind the forming of this group was Ron N. The main force behind Ron N was his wife Pat N. who started the Fairburn Al-Anon Group at this same time.

Ron N. was kind of a renegade of sorts, riding his Harley Davidson with his wife Pat on the back, to and from meetings. The Fairburn Group followed along, being somewhat of a renegade group. We were not interested in zones, districts, or the big picture at all. We were barely able to buy coffee and literature and I'm not quite sure that we paid rent very often for the first year or so. We had several visits from Zone F's "trusted servants" trying to help us "get in line with their suggestions." We did not have the time or the money to cooperate; we were just trying to stay sober and to help our members. Many of us had very little sobriety at this time. Over the next couple of years, however, after some of us had been sober a while, we were able to begin helping and participating in zone activities.

Our first meeting place was St. Matthews Catholic Church on Highway 92 in Fairburn. St Matthews was a converted mortuary! The *dead* seemed to be *coming back to life* over the next several years.

The Fairburn Group today is considered one of the more traditional groups you will attend. We have grown over the years in many ways, but have made a commitment to follow singleness of purpose and to adhere to our 12 Traditions. We are a group that continually has newcomers, seeing many new faces at almost every meeting. Some of our members moved over the years and formed other groups in areas such as Peachtree City, Newnan, Palmetto and Cliftondale.

One of our favorite and wisest members is Harold J., who has 38 years sobriety. What a blessing he is to our group! Surely our Higher Power has watched over this group through many hard days and difficult times. His blessings are evident in the lives of our members - "one day at a time."

Harold J. has gone home to be with his Higher Power, but his wisdom is still with our group.

Flint River Group

The Flint River Group of Jonesboro was formed in December 1981 at the invitation of the then-pastor, Father John K., at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church on Flint River Rd. in Jonesboro. Meetings were held in the old parish hall on Monday nights at 8:30 p.m.

Charter members Collie S., Maxine K., Lee W., Clay L., Lamar G., Ben B., and Valorie B. helped the fledgling group flourish in that first year with their sobriety and hard work. Others such as Betty C. and Jack C. came aboard in 1983 with long-term sobriety gained "up North." Yankees such as Tim S. and Dave D. came along and joined with Pat D. (a self-named native).

1987 was moving year. Remodeling work at St. Philip's hall forced the Flint River Group to seek new quarters. Present group members are grateful to Jonesboro's Living Word Lutheran Church, its clergy and parishioners, for making space available for us to continue to meet at 8:30 on Monday nights.

Collie S., Valorie B., and Betty C. have passed away after many, many years of sobriety. Others have left to form new groups and others have come in and out searching in their own way for relief from alcoholism. The group roster is a short one, but "drop-ins" from other groups consistently make for meetings that average 15 to 25 members of AA. We invite you to meet with us on Monday nights and possibly add your name to the Flint River roster.

Forest Park Fellowship Group

To our knowledge the group was founded in a private home by a man whose last name started with B. in October 1963. This is the only information we could find.

Some of the older meeting places were the Old Methodist Church in Forest Park; the Mental Health Center from 1972-76; Saint Augustine's Episcopal Church from 1977-80; and from 1980 until the

present time the group meets at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church on Ash St. in Forest Park.

The meetings were at 8:30. About 1990 the meeting time was changed by group conscience to 8:00 PM, but the days and format were left the same: a Tuesday closed discussion and Friday 8:30 open speaker meeting.

The Forest Park Fellowship Group has always been active in service work at all levels: zone, state, Central Office, and institutions.

A few of the older members, as we understand it, were: Fritz A., Rod A., Joe T., Inez T., Bill W., Geri P. (deceased) and the aforementioned B. Some of the older current members are: Fred S., Marty M., W.P. H., Annie W., Velma W., Alan P., Evelyn M., Jesse B., Bobbi E., and David P.

Currently, the first Tuesday is Step study meeting and the last Tuesday, a Tradition Meeting. There is also an Al-Anon meeting at 8:00 PM at the church.

We appreciate Saint Timothy's Lutheran Church for their long standing support and dedication to us.

Friendship Group

The Friendship Group was started May 11, 1988, by Libby B. and Bill G. We meet at 8:00 PM 4 days a week: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at South Fulton Medical Center in East Point. Some early members were Debbie and Jack D., Karen K., Steve J., and Connie S. Tim M. was the first GSR and Alan S., the first treasurer.

We now have 40 members. We tried a 12 Step meeting, but it didn't last due to lack of participation. Some of the old-timers have joined other groups but the newcomers keep us going one day at a time.

We try to keep the group together by having special events such as picnics, Thanksgiving dinner for those without a place to go, and bowling contests. Friday night we get together and go to Shoneys for food and coffee. Sometimes there will be 30 or more of us. This has become an important evening for fellowship.

With God's help, we hope that the Friendship Group will be around for a long time to help those who are yet to come.

Grant Park Group

The Grant Park meeting was founded by Jim C., a sugar addict, in September 1987 for people attending Georgia Avenue Church and for

the Grant Park neighborhood. The meeting was open to anyone who had addiction problems of any type. However, due to the meeting being listed as an AA group with the Central Office, conflicts surfaced, especially when outsiders (specifically newcomers) started showing up and became confused by the discussion of other addictions.

When several group conscience meetings produced no solution to the numerous complaints by "real alcoholics" of the meeting not following AA's Traditions, DCM Delores C. and Dee W. of the State Office were called in for a group inventory meeting on March 19, 1988. As a result of this meeting, the group voted 14 to 1 to become an official AA group by following AA traditions and GSO guidelines. Ed C. was elected the group's first GSR; Betty McW. was elected alternate, and Webster T, the Intergroup representative. Other early members were Ann F., Robert G., Keith B., Ray M., Victor P., Charles C., Melton J., Joseph L, and Lionel.

Nevertheless, due to the changes in what could be discussed at the meeting (confined to problems with alcohol), most of the members left the group, some going to other 12-Step programs for their specific addictions. By January 1990, the group membership was down to only 3-5 members, with the most faithful being Ed C. The Central Office referred to the group as "Ed's group" instead of the Grant Park Group. Ed's dedication and service is why the group exists today. He often joked about how he and his wife Sandy were the only ones present at his second anniversary, and just how grateful he was for being sober that day. Due to illness, Ed no longer attends the group, but all the members send him their love.

Today the Grant Park Group is still relatively small with only 10 members. However, we are a friendly, close-knit group that cares about each other and, most important, the newcomer. We meet every Thursday and Saturday night at 8 PM in the basement of Georgia Avenue Church at 645 Grant St. We sponsor the Bright Beginning treatment facility by carrying an AA meeting there each Monday at 7 PM. If you're in the Grant Park area, drop by to see us! We'll love to have you.

Jonesboro Group

The Jonesboro Group was originally founded in 1969 and met in an establishment on Spring Street in Jonesboro, Georgia. The original founders were Homer, Johnny, Glen, and Guy. The last names of these founders is uncertain.

In 1973, the group moved to a church in Bonanza. Members at that time were Larry S., Ethel S., Maynard, Bill G., John V., Jake

M., Bobby S., Joe B., and Ivy S. The group later moved to The Clayton House, Inc., where the group meets today.

The Clayton House was established in 1984 and has been housing AA meetings since that time. The Jonesboro Group meets every Wednesday and Thursday at 8:30 PM. An open speakers meeting is held on Wednesday and open discussion on Thursdays.

Membership is up to approximately 250-300 individuals, with the only original active member being Ivy S. who contributes greatly to the Jonesboro Group as well as serving as president of The Clayton House.

Living Sober Group

Joe B. and Bob S., founders of the group, were originally members of the Living Word group which met at Living Word Lutheran Church in Jonesboro. In 1982, the Living Word Group's move to the Clayton House led to the creation of the Living Sober Group, which continues to meet at the church.

The group first met Saturdays at 8:30 PM for open discussion meetings. Later a Sunday night Step meeting was started to help many newcomers. Over the years some controversies arose over addicts attending meetings and the time of the meetings. Some members have left for other groups, never to come back, but for the most part, through the Grace of God, the group has survived strong as ever.

Living Word Fellowship Group

The Living Word Fellowship Group was started in 1976 by Collie S. and Katie S. at the Living Word Lutheran Church in Jonesboro. Some early members were Hilda R., Walter B., Tony and Jane. In 1980, the group moved to The Clayton House where it meets today.

The Living Word Group was founded on strong AA principles, hence we have a weekly Step meeting on Sunday at 8:30 and a weekly Big Book study meeting on Monday at 8:30. The group also has a closed discussion meeting every Tuesday at 8:30. The group currently has 20 members.

The Morrow Group

The first meeting of the Morrow Group took place on January 19, 1989. The First Christian Church of Morrow approached Phylliss H., an Al-Anon, and said they wanted to get involved with the community. The Morrow Group was thus formed, largely with the help of Joe H., James B., Terry W., Wayne T., and Dean N. In the beginning the group met Sundays and Thursdays. Six months after the first meeting, the Morrow Group started to sponsor a meeting at Southern Regional Hospital on Monday nights for the patients in detox. In addition the group started a meeting at the church on Tuesdays at 5:30 PM. This meeting was subsequently dropped due to the limited number of active members.

Members of the group were involved in other Twelve Step and service work outside the group. At one point the Morrow Group was represented by 3 members at the zone level: Clifton O'C. was the GSR, Terry W. was the alternate DCM, and Joe H. was the PI-CPC Chairperson.

The group always seemed to have problems when it came to birthdays involving eating meetings. For example, Clifton O.'C was in charge of getting a ham for a birthday. This was Clifton's first time to be responsible for getting the ham and instead of getting a whole baked ham he got sliced ham - about 10 pounds of it! Clifton proclaimed that the group was not specific enough with the instructions and the group proclaimed that the turkey had brought the ham! In another incident, Terry was in charge of the ham, and when he baked it he put plums on top of it for decoration. When it came out to be served the whole ham was purple!

The Morrow group has not been without controversy. One night a person introduced himself as an addict at a closed meeting. The chairperson reiterated the fact that this was a closed meeting for alcoholics only. The person got very upset and stormed out of the meeting - and many members followed. The person went to another meeting, introduced himself as an alcoholic/addict, and told everyone that we had kicked him out of the meeting.

Currently, all Morrow Group meetings are open. The group has a Tradition meeting the first Thursday of every month. The discussion leader of this meeting reads the Tradition before the meeting and comes up with questions about it. The questions are passed out to people attending the meeting and they read each question and attempt to answer it before the Tradition is studied. This unique way of doing a Tradition meeting seems to keep people interested in the meetings and seems to make them more fun.

Lastly, the Morrow Group seems to function with a core nucleus of members who are willing to carry the load for the group.

For example, Mario B. collected a \$50 parking ticket while getting a cake for a birthday. Now that's going to any length! Currently membership is up and down, but the loving God as he expresses himself in our group conscience keeps the Morrow Group on the right track.

New Faith Group

In March of 1985, a nurse at the VA hospital who was a member of Cathedral Faith Church contacted Pete T. of the Metro Institution Committee about establishing an alcohol recovery group at her church. Pete T., Sterling M. and Steve L. met with ministers and church officials concerning AA and its Traditions. Officials of the church assigned Deacon & Mrs. M. to work with the Institution Committee on forming the new group. Margaret C., who was alternate chairperson of the institutions group at the time, did not have a home group, so she decided to spearhead New Faith Group, thus becoming the group's first GSR.

With support from other metro groups and a few court appointees, New Faith Group was formed. The group meets every Tuesday at 8:00 PM at Cathedral of Faith Church in Atlanta. Some of the early members were Pete T., Sterling M., Steve L., Margaret C., Howard D. and Frank M., none of whom are currently active in the group. New Faith held its first official group conscience meeting in September of 1990. The first anniversary celebration was held December 8, 1992.

The group currently has 13 members.

New Journey Group

The New Journey Group held its first meeting on May 1, 1987, at the Jonesboro Presbyterian Church on Lee Street. The group was founded by Lee W., Pat D., and Darlene W. These ladies decided to form the group since there was only one Wednesday night meeting in Jonesboro at that time and they felt another was needed. Lee, Pat, and Darlene were the first members and served as GSR, alternate GSR and secretary-treasurer. There were 20 people present at the first meeting. It was started as a smoking open discussion meeting and met at 8:30 PM. This was to change later to a non-smoking meeting at 8:00 PM. After a few weeks 2 more members were added to the group - Idaliene G. and Gail B. This brought our membership to 5 women strong! We were being kidded about only allowing women to join our group! But

alas, God thought we needed a man in our lives, so he sent one brave, adventurous man, Tony J., to make New Journey his home group. Two other men, Bill W. and Robert D. (RD), were soon to follow, and this was the beginning of our current membership of 14 active members - 6 men and 8 women.

In 1991, it was decided by our group conscience that we wanted another meeting night, so we petitioned the church for this and thus began our Friday night meetings. This was also the year that our group conscience voted to change our meeting times from 8:30 to 8:00 PM. This was an eventful year for the New Journey Group for not only did we begin our Friday meetings, but we also learned that the church had purchased property on Jodeco Road and had begun construction on a new building. Fortunately the church invited us to move along with them so we were not left without a meeting place. In September of that year we moved to the new facility where we currently meet. The meetings are non-smoking now since the church requested that we not smoke in the new building.

Although our group is young, we have had our "opportunities for growth," as all groups do. Experiences with the treasurer disappearing along with our funds and problems with singleness of purpose have taught us the value and importance of our Traditions. We have learned that only through love and service and by adhering to our Traditions will a group grow and flourish.

The New Journey Group may be small in number, but we are big in heart! We are all family to each other. Every year since the beginning of the group in 1987, we have a group Christmas Party. This is always great fellowship and every member looks forward to this party each year. We have had several picnics and swimming parties along with the Bonanza group during the summer months. We always celebrate the group anniversary and all first birthdays with an eating meeting and speaker. All other birthdays are celebrated with a speaker meeting with cake and punch afterwards. We always welcome visitors and new members and it is our hope that the New Journey Group will be around for many years to come to carry the AA message of love and service.

Old National South Group

The Old National South group was started March 20, 1987, by the late Dr. William G. (Dr. Bill), Gary L. and Marguerite M. As owners of Touchstone Clinic, they felt that the patients needed an AA meeting close to the clinic where they were attending aftercare. The first meeting was held at Bethany Presbyterian Church on Old National

Highway. Some charter members were William S., James P., John M. and Clarise A. The meetings were Tuesday and Thursday at 8:00 PM.

Membership continued to grow but so did the rent. When the rent reached \$160 monthly, it was decided by the group conscience that the group had to move or fold. We relocated to the Christ Church on Old National Highway and were given a shed in the yard with no bathrooms or running water. The members brought in water in milk jugs to make coffee! Times were hard, but the doors were open. We were locked out by mistake at times, and our attendance started to decline. It was starting to get cold, and we needed a place with heat. The group searched for a place but churches that we could afford were hard to find around the Old National area. At times the rent was paid out of members' pockets. Finally we found the Emmanuel Methodist Church on Burdett and Old National where the group still meets today.

Meeting nights were changed to Tuesday and Friday at 8:00 PM. Anchor Treatment Center was invited to bring patients over on the first and third Fridays, and they agreed to put one dollar in the basket for each patient attending the meeting since the group is self-supporting. We are a very close-knit little group and we welcome everyone to our group. Birthdays are celebrated the third Friday of each month. We have Step meetings every Tuesday and the second and fourth Fridays closed discussion. Sometimes there are only 2 people at a meeting, but that's all you need! Our doors are kept open with coffee brewing, and whenever a hand reaches out for help, we are there - For that we are responsible!

Our Hope Group

Our Hope AA Group was founded March 2, 1991, by Jimmy G. The group meets every Saturday at 8:30 PM at Our Hope Lutheran Church in Riverdale.

Red Oak Group

The Red Oak Group was started by Dennis W. and John L., former state delegate, in 1969. The group meets at the Red Oak Methodist Church in College Park, Ga. Some of the first members still live close to the area and are involved in other groups. A few of the present group members still remember and speak highly of a former early member who lovingly encouraged them into the meeting and made

them feel comfortable. That is still the atmosphere at Red Oak. The only real change that has come about is in the group membership.

The present Red Oak group has held to the Traditions of AA thanks to a unified group and one that feels our common welfare and singleness of purpose is what will keep the group together and AA available to those yet to come. A meeting at Red Oak goes on regardless of puddles in the room, a backed-up sink, or switched-off lights. There is always a good laugh at some time or other. The Big Book says that we are to be happy in our sobriety, and this is expressed at our meetings.

Red Oak meets every Sunday and Wednesday at 8:30 PM. Every Sunday night is a Big Book study meeting and the second Wednesday of the month is a Tradition meeting. All birthdays are celebrated the last Sunday of the month.

The Red Oak Group enjoys harmony in their group conscience. There isn't room for politics or individuals seeking selfish desire. We make decisions based on what is best for the group to keep it alive and well. We hope that our group will be here for a long time to come with a spiritual program and a one-day-at-a-time attitude for those who are willing to work for sobriety.

Riverdale Group

The Riverdale Group held its first meeting in August 1973. Members attending this meeting were James and Eleanor M. Meetings were held for the first year at the Riverdale Recreation Center. There were 3 meetings held each week on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday. All were open discussion meetings.

When problems arose with parking, the group moved its meeting to the Riverdale Presbyterian Church in August of 1974. The Sunday meeting was discontinued so there would be no conflict with the church use of the building. The building used for meetings had been designated as a storage area for the church and much work was done by group members to clean and decorate the facility at no expense to the church. Air conditioning was donated by group members. Rent was agreed on and paid from contributions.

On November 14, 1990, a Wednesday night meeting was added. This is a Big Book/12 Steps study meeting. Currently, the meetings are as follows: Tuesday night, closed discussion; Wednesday night, Big Book/12 Step study (open meeting); Friday night open discussion. All meetings are at 8:30 PM. The last Tuesday of each month is dedicated to the study of our 12 Traditions and the last Friday night of each month is reserved for our birthday celebrations.

Among the many services rendered by the group as a whole, it is notable that the first Atlanta Round-Up had a hospitality room sponsored by the members of our group. This practice has been continued with sponsorship of the room being handled collectively by all groups in Zone F.

The Riverdale Group of Alcoholics Anonymous is a strong, active group dedicated to our primary purpose and the preservation of our Fellowship through adherence to our 12 Traditions.

Tri Cities Group

The Tri Cities Group was founded in April 1955 by Jack G. Early members were Jack G., Bill & Dot S., Carl & Rena A., Jack M. and Elizabeth P. The group meets at St. Johns Presbyterian Church in College Park. Monday night is an open speaker meeting and Thursday night is a closed discussion meeting. All meetings are at 8:30 PM.

The "chip system" originated here in 1968 by Tom T. and Donnie C. with reluctant approval of group members. Two of our treasurers were "taken drunk" and left with the group funds. In April of 1981 we announced we were the "Super Group". This was in fun but a few years later we dropped it because one other group in the area was offended! Frank R. was a member of Tri-City when he was state delegate.

Turning Point Group

The Turning Point Group is the youngest of the 4 groups which meet at Clayton House, Jonesboro. Due to the personal intervention of Woody P., an interested number of people received permission from the Clayton House officers to begin the group at 11 AM, Mondays and Thursdays, during the late summer of 1990. The group was and remains made up of retired folks, shift workers, and those who manage to substitute AA for lunch. However, we welcome anyone who has a desire to stop drinking.

The first business meeting was held on September 28, 1990. Woody P. was elected as our first GSR; Sandra K., alternate; Joan C., secretary; and Jim H., treasurer.

The group continues to thrive even though we have had our first and second GSR undergo open heart surgery. We have lost members to their growth in sobriety, gaining new jobs which required moving or changing work hours. Unfortunately, we have lost our share

of members to the insanity of the disease we all share. On the credit side, members have moved on to start new groups.

Only first birthdays are celebrated with cake and attending "goodies." Our primary purpose has been to remain sober and help other individuals achieve sobriety, and our monies go to support AA at all levels.

Twilight Group

In the spring of 1987 members of Tara Club got permission from the Board of Trustees to begin an open meeting at 5:30 PM on Monday and Friday at Tara Club in Hapeville. This meeting was called Sundowners meeting. Certain members attending this meeting decided to form a group, so they petitioned Tara Club for a group to meet on Monday, Friday and Sunday at 5:30. This was granted, and in 1989 the Twilight Group was registered in the state of Georgia as an AA group.

Valley Hill Group

The Valley Hill Group originated on February 24, 1979. Some early members were Doug B., 1st GSR - 15 years sober now; Rod A., 1st secretary/treasurer - 12 years sober when deceased in 1988; Garnett J. - 19 years sober now. Additional members within the first year were Kirby B., Jack B., Harry H., Arnold H., Judith W., and Mildred S. The first husband/wife members were Kay & Bill W. Bill S. from Ohio spoke at the first anniversary meeting.

The Valley Hill group meets at Holy Cross Lutheran Church on Valley Hill Road in Riverdale. Meetings are held every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 8:30 PM. Tuesday night is an open discussion meeting; Thursday night is a Big Book study meeting, and Saturday is open discussion or speaker.

Zone G

Day by Day Group

The Day by Day Group was founded in about 1972 by a group of people who wish to remain unknown. They first met in a back room of a bar in downtown Atlanta, owned by one original member. The group moved from the bar to Peachford Hospital, then to All Saints

Catholic Church with several moves in between. The 25 home group members meet at 8 PM every Tuesday night.

Roberts Drive Group

The Roberts Drive Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was started as a result of personality conflicts with members of the Georgetown Group. Dave T. made the initial contact with the North Atlanta Church of Christ, and in May of 1987, the first meeting was held. Dave acted as Secretary for the group. Other members included: Stan H., Bob B., Sarah D., Jack M., Jo C., and Virgil A.

The group meets on Sunday nights at 7:00 PM in the gray building behind the church (formerly and affectionately known as the little yellow house).

Skyland Group

Clarence R., five months sober, had a resentment against his small group. So on February 21, 1955, he did what any good alcoholic would do under the circumstances; he bought a coffee pot and started his own meeting. The Skyland Group was born.

That first meeting, held at the Skyland Methodist Church, was attended by some 40 recovering alcoholics. The first meeting was so big because Clarence went around to different meetings and told them that they had to come. For the second meeting, only 9 people showed up.

Some of the early members were Okla, Bubba B., Lanier B., Miriam H., Bob K., Ben M., Lloyd P., Al S., Bennett S., and Dick S. Very early in Skyland's history, we began celebrating individual members' birthdays, as well as the group's anniversaries. We started giving out regular chips in 1976 at the suggestion of Robert L., who came into the fellowship in 1975.

Attendance at Skyland went up and down for several years, then suddenly exploded in the late 1970s. More than 200 people now call Skyland their home group. March 3, 1970, the group's 15th anniversary, was its first meeting at its present location, Oglethorpe Presbyterian Church in northeast Atlanta.

The group meets on Tuesday nights, which is an open speakers meeting, and Friday nights, when there are 3 separate closed meetings, a discussion, a Big Book, and a Step study. The first Friday of each month is devoted to a Tradition study meeting.

A regular topic at group conscience meetings is how the group can be more inclusive and how we can best practice the principles of the third and fifth traditions. The group inventory process has helped

the group "get into the solution" so that Skyland will be a true home group and a place for all who want what we have.

Clarence and Miriam strongly believed we should greet everyone at the door. That tradition continues as our greeters mingle both inside and outside the entrance to ensure that everyone receives a friendly welcome.

Clarence was the fifth State Delegate from Georgia. During that period he became a confidante of Bill W. At Bill's request, Clarence introduced the new-fangled ideas we now call our Twelve Concepts and the Third Legacy to the 1961 General Service Conference. Bill had written down his feelings and thoughts about how AA would stay on the right track after he was gone, thoughts he believed should be incorporated into the Third Legacy. The Trustee did not want to release his ideas to the delegates for a vote, so at the delegates' only meeting, Clarence, as the delegate from Georgia, stood up and told them that Bill had asked him to talk to them about the Twelve Concepts to protect AA's Third Legacy. The Concepts were not adopted that year but were passed at the 1963 General Service Conference. Clarence's actions earned him Bill's gratitude and friendship until Bill passed away on January 24, 1971.

Skyland's commitment to service has been ongoing. Another Skyland "old timer," Joe P., was Georgia's 15th State Delegate and later was the Southeastern Trustee. He has become a respected elder statesman in AA and is active as a co-chairperson of the male sponsorship committee.

One of the most wonderful meetings held at Skyland is the Christmas candlelight meeting, held the Friday before Christmas every year. On a Friday night in December 1970, Juanita P. and her Al-Anon husband Ben were making coffee for that night's meeting when an ice storm blew through the city, knocking out electricity all over the Northside. When Clarence arrived there were no lights or heat. They found some candles and set up the room for the meeting. It became a gratitude meeting, where everyone shared their personal feelings of gratitude. When it was over, they decided to repeat the candlelight meeting every year. Clarence chaired the candlelight meeting on Friday, December 24, 1971. The meeting on December 18, 1992, was attended by more than 250 alcoholics, Al-Anons, their friends and families from all parts of the country to celebrate peace, sobriety and gratitude through the language of the heart.

Every February, the Skyland Group celebrates its anniversary. We invite you to come visit, and hope you will hear something you can use and take with you. Until then, may the God of your understanding be with you in the fellowship of the spirit as we all trudge the road of destiny.

Women's Big Book

Through the short Atlanta winter of 1992-93, Nancy McO. was attending her home group primarily on Tuesday and Friday nights. She noticed a lot of he-ing and she-ing going on. She was on the sponsorship committee and realized she had nowhere to send newly sober ladies to a women's meeting in the area. She asked longtime AA member Lindsey G. what to do.

"Start up a new women's meeting yourself," was the natural response. They decided on a closed meeting, but in what format? When their senses were regained, Big Book was the choice. They got busy deciding a time and place. Nancy found a little church, St. Martin in the Fields Episcopal Church, around the corner from the Skyland Group, that had a school attached. They called the church office, met with them, and were promised the use of the gymnasium on Monday nights between 6:30 and 10 PM. A week before they were scheduled to begin, on February 22, 1993, the church called to say they had to be bumped from the gym due to the Boy Scouts. The only classroom large enough for a meeting was the science lab, which had a sink and tables with chairs.

So that's where the group meets, getting sober, sharing their experience, and staring at pictures of frogs and planets on the walls. What better scenario to learn the Big Book?

There are only 5-6 members, but a regular meeting of 10-20 women. Other early members are Colleen B., Barbara H., and Beth. The group has gone through several group officers and think they must hold the record for the most group conscience meetings held in one year. They have decided that God's will will be done, and the group conscience will show it.

Zone H

Big Book Bunch

The Big Book Bunch was founded in April 1971 by Mickey M. and Dave G. Other early members were Don W., Fred B., Marion H. and Mary P. It is a Saturday night open discussion meeting at First Alliance Church in Atlanta. The meetings begin with one person reading a portion from the Big Book or the Twelve and Twelve, followed by a discussion of the topic. We also have notes provided each week by one of our members which highlight key phrases from the reading and borrow from other literature on the topic (i.e. *The Grapevine*, As Bill

Sees It, etc.). The schedule is set up to allow for the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve in one year.

The starting time of the meeting was changed to 8:30 to accommodate "All In the Family," a popular television comedy years ago that aired from 7:30-8 on Saturday night. Attendance was beginning to decline until the meeting time was moved back. It has remained at 8:30 PM ever since. We have 30 home group members.

DeKalb Group

The forerunner of the DeKalb Group, the Stone Mountain Group, was founded December 27, 1971. Two of the first members were Roy H. and Jack McE. As time passed on, the group expanded to 12 members. The first meeting was located in a small church on Tilson Road.

More and more members started joining the group, and this is when they realized it was necessary for the group to relocate. The group found a clubhouse located at 1849 Columbia Drive on the property of the Hillside Baptist Church.

We have, as the DeKalb Group, 4 meetings a week: on Mondays, a Big Book study; Tuesdays, open discussion; Thursdays, Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions meeting; and Sundays, a speaker's meeting. Also, on the last Sunday of each month, we celebrate our members' birthdays. It is a special time when a member celebrates his/her sober time with the group. We furnish a cake, chips, and other refreshments.

We have group conscience meetings at end of each month. At this meeting we go over the balance of the account, and members express feelings or ideas that may better the group as a whole.

Some of the events that our group offers are Thanksgiving dinner at the clubhouse for those who don't want to be by themselves during the holidays, and all-day marathons.

Our group has a lot of love, faith, hope, and friendship for anyone who comes here.

Once we had to hold onto our hats when some of the members got together and voted out the smokers. Although some of the members relocated their membership, that was tolerable because now, smokers just stand outside and smoke, then come on in for the meeting.

Another time when only one person had a key to get in, we had our meeting outside on the porch. Everyone who came stayed, and we all eventually enjoyed it. That was one meeting where all the smokers got to smoke during the meeting. They really got a kick out of that.

Every holiday there is something going on, whether it is the Fourth of July, Christmas, or New Year's. The members of the DeKalb room can always be depended upon to be there for anyone who wants to come.

The newcomer is the most important person in our meetings. We share experiences, strengths, hopes, and we welcome them with open arms. Sponsorship is strongly suggested in each meeting.

Besides our group, there are other groups who hold meetings during the day and night at the same location. So there is always somewhere for a recovery meetings.

Journey Of Days

In November of 1982, Alice L., Ted A., Bill C., Stan L., Clayton J., and Amy J. got a resentment. Their then home group declined to allow discussions on addictions other than alcohol, so these six cross-addicted people began their own meeting where they could freely talk about other addictions. The first year JOD was a traveling group, meeting at different members houses. There was some discussion about calling the group "Circle of Jerks," but it was decided to call it "Open Mind" to reflect the openness of the group to cross-addicted sharing. In November of 1983, JOD held their first meeting at North Decatur Church. Due to a mixup with the key, the first meeting was held outdoors. After two years, the group was renamed in memory of Joseph K., who used to say that "life is just a journey of days."

While JOD's anniversary is actually in the fall, traditionally the group celebrates in February because A) we are lazy, B) it is closer to Bill C.'s birthday, or C) so much is going on in November and December. On the group's third anniversary the meeting was announced at other groups that our members attended and flyers were printed and put up everywhere. The celebration was scheduled to be held in the large church hall to accommodate the expected crowd. Nine members showed up that night - even the speaker was missing. In subsequent years the anniversary meeting and pot luck dinner are held in the regular rooms. One of the early members gives the history of the group and is followed by a speaker and then food.

The first meetings were held at 8:00 PM on Friday night, which is now the largest meeting of the week. It is a closed discussion meeting except on the fourth Friday of the month, when we celebrate birthdays. Later they tried to start a Tuesday night meeting in direct competition with the largest group in the area. Bill and Ted spent many a night holding 2-alcoholics meetings until that one was dropped. In 1984, a Wednesday night Step meeting was begun. It continues today as a

Reflections meeting with readings from the Daily Reflections book and closed discussion.

Ted and Andrew G. started a Thursday night meeting, which lasted only 3 months. Then in 1988, they tried a Monday night meeting which started slow (often only 3 or 4 people attended), but which flourishes today as our second largest group. In late 1984 or early 1985, Ted started a 9:30 PM meeting on Wednesday nights; it died in 1988 from lack of support. In 1992 a Tuesday night First Step meeting was begun. While it is still small it has become an integral part of the JOD meeting schedule. All of Journey of Days' meetings are closed discussions, except for birthday meetings. All begin at 8:00 p.m.

All 6 original members are still sober. Ted and Bill still regularly attend JOD meetings, as do the 34 people who call JOD their home group and many non-members who regularly attend one or more meetings at JOD each week.

Service work: We count among our members a past DCM, who helped start an Emory Hospital meeting that is still running. Our representatives regularly attend the State Assemblies and Intergroup meetings. The group sends regular contributions to the Atlanta Central Office, the State office in Macon, G.S.O. in New York and the Pre-paid Convention. Sponsorship is encouraged and many members take an active role in sponsorship and 12th Step work.

In 1989 the group began having annual camping trips, with as many as 18 people enjoying a weekend of fellowship in two cabins in the woods. Newcomers are encouraged to join in these trips so that their journey of days includes some of the most outrageous card games ever invented as well as an often-first taste of fun and laughter in sobriety.

Two of our long term members, Chris and Melanie O., open their home each year for an annual Thanksgiving Dinner and with as many as 26 members bringing their favorite holiday concoctions, there is food, food, and a true feeling of family and fellowship.

Group inventories are also usually held at Chris and Melanie's, with another excuse for a pot-luck luncheon. In fact, we don't even need an excuse, often scheduling an eating meeting to follow our regular Friday night meeting, just because it's been a while.

As we say at each meeting, new members are welcome at Journey of Days, just see any member about making this your home group.

About the original resentment - these days our opening asks that "you limit your discussion to alcoholism," but we listen and share our full experience, strength and hope, while remembering gratefully what Alcoholics Anonymous has given us.

Open Door Group

The idea of starting the Open Door Group began with Sion H. in August 1975. Riding by Pattilco Methodist Church in Avondale, he thought, "This would be a nice place to have a meeting." He stopped and contacted the pastor who agreed to a meeting being started. Sion then bought a coffee pot and called Joe T. and Po' Boy R., and a meeting was held that night. Imagine all of this happening in one day!

For the rest of that year, the average attendance was 3 to 4 people. It was also over a year before this group became self-supporting enough to pay rent to the church. From these 3 to 4 faithfuls, the group grew to an all-time high membership of 65 to 70 in the early '80s. Present membership averages around 35. On Tuesdays, we have an 8 PM closed discussion, and on Fridays, an 8 PM speaker meeting.

Visions of Hope Group

The Visions of Hope Group was founded March 29, 1992, by Sam F., Bailey M. and Oscar D. Myra B. was another early member. All meetings are open discussion (non-smoking) at Providence Counseling Center on Flatshoals Parkway. Tuesday's meeting (at 12:30 PM) is a Step Study, Thursday's (also at 12:30) and Sunday's (at 3 PM) are open discussion. We have 7 home group members.

Zone I

12:30 PM East Marietta Group

The group started in the late 1970s when several women who had children in school felt the need for a daytime meeting. The first members were Mickey W., Bunny, Pat J., Alice M., and Mary Ann S. The first meetings were on Mondays only in the church chapel with the members using the priest's kitchen for coffee. Approximately 2 years later the meeting moved downstairs to the library. For about 6 months the group met in the library, then moved to the large kindergarten room in the basement, where it meets today.

In 1985, an additional meeting was added on Wednesday, also at 12:30. Alice M. was the anchor person of the Wednesday meeting. Both meetings were open. In the beginning, the Wednesday meeting was to be a speaker the last meeting of the month. However, it evolved into an open discussion meeting. In the summer of 1993 the group conscience met and decided to close Wednesday's meeting.

In November 1993, a third meeting was added, Friday at 12:30, an open step meeting. The group decided late in 1993 to rotate officers other than GSR and alternate GSR in January of each year.

At first the attendance was small: 3-10 the first couple of years, then 10-12. The average today is around 30 a meeting, with 40-50 at times. Usually now more men attend than women (about 60%).

Highland Serenity Group

The Highland Serenity Group was founded by Vince S., Leslie D. and Kelly when Vince got permission from the minister of Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church in Marietta to hold AA meetings there. The first meeting, on April 16, 1987, was attended by the 3 founders and Wally and Tony S., Linda W., and Denise. At their tenth meeting, Jerry Mc. from Texas joined the group. The count of sober people was soon 14.

Highland Serenity started with one meeting a week on Thursday nights at 8:00 pm and added a second meeting on Sunday nights approximately a year later. Every year for their anniversary, the group has a covered dish celebration at about 6:30 pm which is usually followed by a speaker meeting.

At the beginning of 1990 the meetings became so big that the group conscience decided to make use of the full facility and to divide into 3 groups. A harmonica door divided the large hall into 2 rooms. One became a discussion meeting and the other, a beginners' meeting. A third part met across the hall in the kitchen and became a 12 Step study meeting on Thursday nights and a Big Book study meeting on Sunday nights.

The Highland Serenity Group decided to take meetings to the 1st Step, a county treatment facility, on Tuesday nights. This meeting is divided into a ladies' meeting and a men's meeting, providing recovery possibilities for both genders and the opportunity for service to Highland Serenity Group members.

Other highlights are at least one summer outing/picnic at a lake, and a Christmas covered dish dinner at the meeting facility. Both of these occasions are topped by meetings.

Vince S., Leslie D., and a few more original members are still active in the group, which has now grown to 60 members and, at times, has up to 75 participants at the meetings.

The group is self-supporting and provides ample literature for newcomers as well as sponsorship support.

New Hope Tuesday and New Hope Friday

This Marietta group began in the late summer of 1976. Initially it held meetings on Tuesday and Friday nights at the Cobb Civic Center before it settled at the New Hope Church on St. Tey Road around March of 1977.

Its membership and attendance grew quickly due to the efforts of Bill R. and Billie A. to bring out-of-town speakers to its meetings. Other early regular attendees were Tony D., John H., Pat W., and Bill's wife, Ann R. Attendance grew steadily to the size of approximately 110 people, so the group began dispersing to rooms throughout the church with as many as 6 different smaller groups meeting at the same time. This tradition has continued to this day.

Meetings continued at this location until sometime in 1981. Pat W. recalls a situation that came about when a treasurer, the drummer with a well-known rock band, skipped off with the group funds; the rent did not get paid for some time. When the group was able to get caught up with the money, Pat and Tony D. went to pay the pastor. One thing led to another while they were settling up past due charges such that it was thought that the pastor was accusing the members' children of perhaps taking some crayons from the church. Tony D. got miffed and while pointing his finger in the pastor's face, said, "The only thing stopping me from putting your behind to the floor right now is my 15 years of sobriety." The meeting moved from that location at that time without holding a group conscience meeting.

The meeting bounced around for a while after that incident. They spent a few weeks at the Christian Church on the corner of South Cobb Drive and Church Street, until it was apparent that the closeness of the bathroom to the meeting itself became intolerable to the point of distraction. Bill R. exclaimed, "We're not meeting anywhere where the one sharing has got to compete with the one using the john!"

Next stop, the old How Place, but neither was this satisfactory; so it moved on to the employees break room at the Shepard Drapery factory in the Marietta Industrial Park off Highway 41 behind the Coca-Cola bottling company.

Probably due to the repeated moves and disruptions, attendance dropped off in a major way. No longer did many of the attendees who traveled out from northwest Atlanta come. Attendance in the break room of the Shepard Drapery company was generally 30-34 people, including some new regulars such as Scott T., Gene S., Norm W., Allison B., Basil S., Peg-Leg Jack (he lost his leg in a railroad accident in his drinking days and always wore Bermuda shorts.) And Dick S. (Scully). Norm and Scully later left to begin one of the largest groups in the area at the Holy Family Church on Friday evenings. Others

attending were Chris F., Leslie A., Jack B. (now deceased), Harry O'B. and Tom C.

The group decided to hold group anniversaries during the second week of June each year. One memorable event was the eighth anniversary where Clancy I. was the scheduled speaker to a crowd of about 1400 at the middle school on Holt Road. While having to wait about 1 3/4 hours to begin due to testimonial after testimonial for Pat W.'S 25th anniversary which coincided with the group anniversary, Clancy's (as well as many others') patience was in short supply. Finally getting to the microphone to begin, Clancy said something to the effect that had he waited any longer, it would be the 9th anniversary. These annual celebrations were the forerunners of what is now known to be the Marietta Spring Round-up.

The groups evolved into two separate meetings when Russell D. became the first GSR representing the Friday night group in 1987. Then in 1988, the Tuesday meeting selected Jason M. as its first GSR. Both were later to go on to become DCMs of that zone. The Tuesday group meets at 8 PM at Powers Ferry United Methodist Church, and the Friday group meets at 8 PM at St. Catherine's Episcopal Church. Both meetings are closed discussion.

Serenity Step Group

The Serenity Step Group was founded February 11, 1981, by 12 alcoholics: Dick D., Alice M., Speedy M., Bill H., Virginia J., Stan K., Larry C., Norma, Lee S., Pat C., Will S. and Bob D. The meeting was to be dedicated solely to the study of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. While the location of its meetings has twice changed, this purpose has remained unchanged.

The group first met in the education building of St. Ann Catholic Church on Roswell Rd. They later moved to the Lutheran Church of Incarnation, 3 miles west. Now, the meet, still on Tuesdays at 8 PM, at St. Peter and St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Johnson Ferry Road.

There are now 21 home group members, with an average attendance for meetings of 40-50. Of the original 12 members, 4 are known to be active in the area.

For the last 4 years, the group has held 2 concurrent studies of the steps at each meeting. Serenity Step Group has steadfastly held on to maintaining its meetings on Tuesday night, due partially to a long time Big Book study on Wednesday night across the street at the Bishop Lake Group. With the appearance of a newcomer, it has always been the practice of reverting to step one at the meeting the newcomer selected.

This group has always been in a highly transient area with many members moving in and out. However, the traditions of the program have been preserved in the manner that its meetings are conducted.

Sharing and Caring Group

The Sharing and Caring Group, formerly known as the Chestnut Ridge Couples, was founded by John M. on December 15, 1991. Other early members were Johanna M., Keith M., Dan M., Gay M., Greg H., and Dinny H. The group meets at Chestnut Ridge Christian Church in Marietta at 8 PM on Saturdays and has a slightly different format than most AA meetings: an open AA meeting that encourages the participation of our "significant others" in the process of recovery. The Sharing and Caring Group does not wish to take the place of regular AA meetings but to offer our experience, strength, and hope to couples struggling with recovery.

Growth of our group has been rather slow. It seems that couples in recovery are many times at different places and while differences of opinion are both welcome and usual, our group will not tolerate arguments or the taking of inventories. We have also learned to find humor in some of the ridiculous things we have done, not only while drinking, but also in our search for serenity. Our philosophy is to insist on enjoying life.

Most of us have lost friends at some time during our drinking careers. This groups allows us to meet couples seeking recovery. Almost always we go out as a group after meetings to socialize. It is not unusual for 10-15 of us to "crash" I-Hops for several hours. We close restaurants now instead of bars.

At the end of every month we celebrate AA birthdays with special chips and a cake. Our "significant others" receive on these occasions a rose for each year of our sobriety. We feel they need some recognition for putting up with us.

On December 19, 1992, we had a pot luck dinner to celebrate our first year of existence. It was attended by 22 people. We smoked a turkey and had a marvelous time.

We don't recommend that this be a home group for members as this might confuse the AA census. At this point, there are 3 home group members.

Zone J

In May of 1986, Zone J was formed. It was divided out of Zone A. GSRs currently meet at 7:00 PM at St. Jude's Episcopal Church on the first Monday of every month.

4 O'Clockers

The 4 O'Clockers Group was founded in February 1990 as the result of several AA members with the guidance of one AA oldtimer (Jerry T., Jimmy L., Dickie W., Mike M., and Shirley M.) working with Employment Assistance Personnel at Lockheed Aeronautical Systems company to establish an AA group in Marietta. We chose 4 O'Clockers as our name because we meet at 4:00 PM on Monday and Wednesday. Monday is a discussion meeting and Wednesday is a Big Book study meeting.

There are 12 home group members. We registered with the General Service Office in New York and the state assembly in Atlanta and got our group number. We are self-supporting and contribute to New York, the state and the prepaid convention, and believe it is very important to pay our own way. Mike M. was elected GSR, Bobby L., secretary, Kenny A., treasurer, and Steve E., alternate GSR.

When a member has a birthday, we have a speaker, a cake, and some caring and sharing. The birthday person gets to choose the speaker, which allows us to go outside the group. Once a year the members get together on our anniversary, and we go out to dinner together.

Being associated with Employee Assisted Personnel (EAP), we allow them to put our names on a list so as to be available if any employees are newly out of treatment and would like to talk to someone who has already been down the road. What we receive through personal experience with our new friends, carrying the message to another suffering alcoholic, is priceless.

Our group continues to grow. All newcomers and visitors are welcome. After all, that's what AA is all about.

DISTRICT 14

When a bunch of drunks try to remember how it all started, it's difficult on the best days. Of course, finding the old timers is not always an easy task. Some members have passed to the big meeting in the sky, others have moved to other cities and the rest are just unable to remember. All of this was important for us trying to put together the history. We found we keep the trivia and wonder who kept the facts. One thing is for sure: we know this District was formed by loving, caring people who wanted to make sure the message would be carried.

We carry the message to one-third of the North Georgia area, which covers Floyd, Bartow, Cherokee, Polk, Haralson and Paulding counties as of 1993.

The first groups represented were Rome, Rockmart, Cartersville and the closed and open speaker meetings of Canton. These groups formed the District early in 1975. Our first meeting was held in Rome at the clubhouse, where Art H. was the DCM. This district has grown from 5 groups to approximately 44 groups covering the same counties. That is the miracle of this program - "Carrying the Message."

Our first district meetings were eating meetings, which is probably of no surprise to anyone. But with the changing times, who can remember when they paid \$1 for breakfast? Well, that is how our district enjoyed the fellowship. Someone would fix breakfast at the clubhouse and sell it for \$1. In 1993, we pay \$6 or \$7 for breakfast and it's probably not as good as it was in 1975.

Group contributions were \$5 or so in the early days and GSRs would sometimes have to pay their own way to the State Assembly in Macon. Going to any lengths must have been very popular in those days.

One of our members, Groves, had a copy of our first North Georgia workshop flyers. It was held March 30, 1980, at the Cartersville Civic Center. The topics were Recovery, Unity and Service, and were presented by Bob C. of Duluth, John G. of Dalton, and Snookie S. of Rome. Our State Delegate, Joe P., and Alternate, John L., wrapped the program up. It started at 2 PM and was over at 3:30 PM, with snacks being the "food of choice." Today, our workshops begin at 10:00 AM with doughnuts, 5 or 6 of our GSRs have 10 minutes to talk on a topic, we have lunch and dismiss around 3 or 4 p.m. Times have changed and for us it shows how we have grown.

Our first picnic was in July of 1974, before the district was formally formed, and this is a tradition that is still carried on with a good time always being had by the fellowship.

In 1978, the first Allatoona Round-up was held August 25, 26, and 27, the beginning of another fine tradition established in our district.

In 1986, our district went to the Assembly to split into four zones. So beginning in 1987, we had: Zone A: DCM Jeff C. of Rome with 6 groups and an institution meeting (today there are 13 groups and one institution meeting); Zone B: DCM Chris J. of Cartersville with 9 groups; Zone C: DCM Fred H. of Kennesaw with 17 groups (today there are 12 groups); Zone D: DCM Donny W. of Rockmart with 5 groups (today there are 8).

Today these 4 zones meet the week before we go to Macon at the Quality Inn in Cartersville, where we have been meeting since we split into the zones. We continue to believe carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic is our most important job. We are a district of unity, service, and recovery, and we believe we have the best district in the Area.

Zone A

Joy of Living Group

The Joy of Living Group began Friday, October 30, 1987. This was the first AA group to meet at what is now the Triple L Club. Melvin M. was very instrumental in starting the Joy of Living Group and the Triple L Club.

Six of the first 9 members, Melvin, Jerry R., Ralph D., Cliff R., James B., and Gary, are still active in AA in the area. A seventh, Dave R., recently died with 10 years sobriety.

At the first meeting, the group had no name. At the second meeting on November 3, the speaker, Nancy G., suggested the name for our group. At our next meeting, on November 6, the group voted to be called Joy of Living.

The meeting room, The Triple L Club, now provides a meeting place for 11 groups, 14 meetings per week. We are very grateful for this facility.

If you visit Rome, stop by #10 Watson Street for some good fellowship and to share the gift of sobriety.

The New Life Group

The first meeting of the New Life Group was held July 18, 1979, in Building 412, the A & D Unit of North West Georgia Regional Hospital. This was quite an accomplishment; this was the first AA meeting to be held on an A & D Unit of the Georgia Regional Hospital system that allowed outside AA members to conduct and attend the meeting. This was accomplished through the efforts of Clarence "Snooky" S., Vaughn T., Barbara T., and Wayne H., director of the A

& D Unit. Even though Wayne, Vaughn and Barbara were never members of Alcoholics Anonymous, we are in their debt for their efforts in obtaining approval to allow this meeting on their premises. On July 18, a brief business meeting was held and officers were selected: GSR, Clarence "Snooky" S.; secretary, Clifford F., Grapevine representative, Jim P. "Snooky" served as GSR until his transfer to Cedartown. He was followed by Jim P., Ollie P., Carl F., and Percy H.

The New Life Group was registered as a closed discussion. This was soon changed to an open discussion for two reasons: 1) nurses and other hospital employees had to be present to attend patients in case of DTs, etc.; and 2) some of the patients attending did not acknowledge that they were alcoholics. The meeting time was and still is Wednesday of each week at 8:00 PM.

Regular meetings were held from July 18, 1979 - December 27, 1989, at the hospital's A & D Unit. The unit was closed in December 1989 and the group had to move. Our meeting at this location was always appreciated by the hospital staff. The group moved with regret after a long and pleasant relationship.

For the next 2 weeks, our temporary meeting place was the Coosa Room of Floyd County Library. At this time, there was no AA or Al-Anon meeting held at Floyd Medical Center even though they had an alcohol and drug unit. Bettie and Jim P. approached them and suggested that a meeting might be beneficial to both parties. We were welcomed with open arms.

From Jan. 24, 1990 - June 24, 1992, we met at the Community Building of Floyd Medical Center. In June 1992, Floyd Medical Center opened its Windwood affiliate for the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse and related illnesses. It was suggested and group conscience agreed that we move our meeting place to Windwood to have better access to the A & D patients.

Since July 1, 1992, the meetings are held at Windwood. We have never had a more pleasant meeting place. The staff at Windwood has expressed their appreciation for our efforts toward the recovery of their patients in many ways. Five of our members serve on the Board of Advisors of Floyd Medical Center. Our ideas and suggestions are received and acted upon whenever possible. We feel that there will be no more moves for The New Life Group.

The history of The New Life Group of AA would not be complete if we did not relate the formation of the Regional Family Circle Al-Anon Group. Shortly after the start of The New Life Group of AA, the Regional Family Circle of Al-Anon was opened by Jeri S. and Bettie P. It was registered with Al-Anon Family Headquarters in New York in April 1980. Their meetings have always been held at the same time and place as The New Life Group. There has always been a very close relationship between the 2 groups, including joint meetings

and various other activities aimed at our most important objective: recovery resulting from service, unity and fellowship.

Our first meetings were purely discussion meetings with good support from all over the 14th district. From this support our group conscience decided to ask various groups from Rockmart, Cedartown, Cartersville, and Rome to select topics and provide chairmen on a monthly basis. After several successful months, this process was terminated in favor of inviting qualified visitors to chair our meetings. This is still being practiced today.

Joint meetings with our Al-Anon Group are held on an irregular basis as needed. When these joint meetings are held, the discussion is conducted by a panel of 6 or 8 persons, composed of equal AA and Al-Anon members with questions and topics coming from the floor. Both groups have always been dedicated to the idea that alcoholism is a family disease and that our meetings are held on the most fertile ground to reach the suffering population around us.

Members of the two groups were responsible for several activities outside of meetings in order to promote unity and fellowship. Responsibilities for the 14th District annual barbecue held on June 13, 1982 were assumed by Clarence S. and Jim P. They were responsible until these duties were taken over by the 14th District DCM and GSR's.

The idea of a "Hee Haw" show was suggested by Al-Anon Bettie P. She realized that fun and fellowship would arise from this activity because it had already happened when she directed a similar show at a local church. The first of many "Hee Haw" shows was put on as our Christmas Party of Dec. 1979. The show was never put on as a function of AA or Al-Anon, although members of both groups were asked to contribute their time and talents. This they did freely, comprising the bulk of the actors, singers, and comedians. The Roman Hee Haw show became so popular and we all enjoyed doing it so much that it was performed for many charities, benefits, and nursing homes. It was put on 3 times for the Rome Chapter for the Blind (1983, 1984 and 1985), on June 25, 1983, to rebuild the Subligna Gym, in 1989 to benefit the Fifth Avenue Nursing Home, and on various occasions as entertainment for the residents of Fifth Avenue Nursing Home, Windford Manor, and Riverview Nursing Home.

At the request of Dr. Brown of N.W. Georgia Regional Hospital, Carl F., Jim and Bettie P. conducted meetings for the Cross Roads Program (for patients only) at N.W. Georgia Regional Hospital. Carl F. is still holding weekly meetings there.

Jim P. served as outside sponsor and GSR for the Black Bluff Group of Floyd County Correctional Institute from 1979 until 1983. He was followed by Carl F. and David R., both members of The New Life Group at that time. Except for the few meetings held at the library, all of our meetings have been held inside recovery facilities, where the AA

and Al-Anon groups have always felt that we are on fertile ground to reach the suffering population around us. Feeling as we do, we devote the primary thrust of our topics toward the newcomer or patient. We have a chip program similar to most in our area. Jim P. believes we have given out more white (desire) chips than any group in our area.

The New Life Group and the Regional Family Circle Al-Anon Group, in concert, have introduced many families to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon, and encouraged them to become part of this beloved fellowship.

The Rome Group

The Rome Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in the spring of 1944 by Sam D. and Allen L. Because of his drinking, Dr. Sam D. had been discharged as minister of the Christian Church of Brooklyn, N.Y. for "behavior" and bad performance of duties. In 1941 he was working as a traveling salesman when his wife found some A.A. literature in Bowling Green, KY. They went to a meeting and Sam D. joined A.A.

Later on, while working in Atlanta, a friend suggested that he return to the ministry where he would be happier. Sam didn't think that anyone would have him, but he checked into it. He began ministering to a small church outside of Atlanta. People of the First Christian Church of Rome heard about him, interviewed him and offered him the post of minister. He accepted with the provision that he be allowed to establish AA in Rome and be active in it. And so it was that AA became established in Rome in 1944 by the first Protestant minister in Alcoholics Anonymous.

The group flourished, attaining members and meeting in a number of rented buildings. They became unhappy with this arrangement and began meeting in individual homes. The group started seeking a permanent home in the spring of 1946 and decided to form a corporation for this purpose. The corporation was called Alco-Non and its board was comprised of members Sam D., Marshall V. and Arthur M., and non-members Hillery Y. and W.B. B., June 21, 1946.

Dr. Sam celebrated his fifth AA birthday on May 10, 1946, in Rome. The group began using the chip system on July 5, 1946 and assigned a member to figure out how to put the recipient's initials and dates on the chips. On the same night, Sam D. read a letter from Bill W. about Hollywood wanting to produce a full length movie about AA. The group supported such a notion. Rome radio station WRGA broadcast an AA program from Detroit for 26 weeks beginning in July 1946.

At a business meeting on July 23, 1946, the group decided to pay \$2000 down on a \$6000 building; \$50 per month at 4% interest.

The average attendance during this period was 6 to 21 people. In October, they were still not in their new home. They decided to hold Tuesday night meetings in homes and Friday night meetings in the First Christian Church. The first open meeting in the new club house was January 24, 1947. Attendance was averaging 21 with 41 members (including active and inactive).

During the early period of AA in Rome, several members would visit the Atlanta Group, LaGrange Group, Chattanooga, TN, and Anniston, AL, groups to put on the program for the night. These groups reciprocated by visits to Rome. U.S. 27 was a main route to Florida in the days before I-75 and U.S. 41, and as a result, there were many visits from members of the original Akron, Ohio, group and other Ohio groups, who would stop by on their vacations.

The format of early meetings was similar to some civic clubs. They began with a silent prayer, followed by reading of the minutes of the last meeting. Unfinished and new business was then discussed, followed by the speaker's talk about AA subjects, which were duly noted. The minutes also contained comments like, "We never tire of hearing Sam speak because we love him so."

Representatives of the Rome Group attended Southeast Conferences held mostly in Asheville, NC. Many highlights were covered in the lengthy minutes, including a trip to a convention in Memphis to hear Bill W. and Lois.

Father Ralph P., writing under the pen name of Father John Doe, related this experience in 1949: "On the invitation of a minister, I spoke before 600 in the courthouse in Rome, GA. There were exactly 5 Catholics in the audience. The minister was the first Protestant clergyman member of AA. He and I remained close friends until the day of his death a few years ago." (*Prodigal Shepherd*, p. 241, 1958)

Members from the Rome Group started new groups in Rockmart and Cedartown, and re-started the group in Cartersville where one had disbanded. Dissension within the group harmed attendance in the 1960s, but the group hung on and built back up to become very strong. It remained the only group in Floyd County until 1979 when other groups began to form. There are now 14 groups and 22 meetings in Floyd County. The Rome Group celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1994.

Rome Ladies' Group

The Rome Ladies' Group started in the summer of 1976 at 203 E. Third St., meeting at 1 PM every Thursday.

The founders of this group were Mary Jo S., Dorothy Y., and Edith S. This location was also the meeting place of the Rome Group on Tuesday and Friday nights. Each month the Rome Ladies' Group paid rent to the Rome Group. Soon after the beginning of this group, the women's side of Star House opened, and the Star House ladies attended the Rome Ladies' Group. The group progressed with time and each summer celebrated its anniversary with a picnic for everyone at the lake on Berry School campus.

In 1986, Lynne J. died. It was one of her dying requests that the Rome Ladies' Group move to the women's side of the Star House. This request was brought before the Star House board of directors, and it was accepted. The living room and kitchen were available when needed for birthday meetings. The Rome Ladies' Group still meets in the women's side of the Star House on Fifth Ave.

Although it is generally a closed meeting, it can be opened upon request, and all birthday parties are open meetings.

Zone B

Cartersville Closed Discussion

The Cartersville Closed Discussion Group was founded on December 1, 1973, by George A. and Art B. The group originally met at the Episcopal Church of the Ascension on W. Cherokee Ave. at 8 PM on Saturdays. Other early members were Groves C., Joe N., Anthony L., Jake H., Don G., Ronnie R., Hal M., and Chris J.

The group later moved to Douglas St. United Methodist Church on Douglas St., where it meets at 8 PM on Fridays. The group celebrates its anniversary on the second Friday in December each year with an eating meeting and open speakers meeting. The business meeting is the third Friday of each month at 7:15 prior to the 8 PM closed discussion meeting. All birthdays for each month are celebrated on the last Friday with cake and ice cream.

Zone C

Beginners Group

The Beginners Group was started in September 1985 as a spin-off from a Step study at the old HOW Place. Eric W. and Mary Jo, among others, felt that a meeting for newcomers was necessary. Eric got discouraged at the process of starting a group, but when he called

the GSO he immediately had a group and a number. Much support was received from Fred H. and "Speedy" M.

Eventually the original step study at the HOW Place disbanded, but the Beginners Group remained at that slot time at the HOW Place, moving only when the HOW Place itself moved.

First year attendance averaged approximately 10. Before the second year, attendance was between 18 and 20, and they started splitting into two group discussions. By the fourth year, average attendance was up to 35 to 40 and there were 3 group discussions including a non-smoking meeting. In the fourth year, they had an anniversary celebration on September 29, 1989, with an attendance of approximately 80.

At present there are about 20 active members. Alan D., who has supplied this information, is the longest-standing member. We are active in district affairs and have a diverse group.

Meetings are well attended, with close to 100 people at times among the 3 discussion groups. We have a lot of newcomers, court referrals, and even a good many birthdays.

Brown Bag Group

The Brown Bag meeting was started in August of 1990. An alcoholic by the name of Ann L. was starting her own business and thought it was important to have a meeting that fit into her schedule and where people could bring their lunch. So the Brown Bag meeting was started.

The Brown Bag meeting attracted people from all around because of its tranquil atmosphere and easy-going attitude. Ann kept the meeting going for about a year and then asked Marlene H. to keep it going. She did, and the doors stayed open until it became a group.

Marlene H. and Lucinda S. felt it was important to offer the suffering alcoholic more than a meeting. In the conversation before and during a meeting, the topic came up of changing the Brown Bag meeting to the Brown Bag Group. They got together with Steve K. and Tom M. to discuss the possibility of the change and decided to go for it. The first business meeting was held on December 1, 1993. Approval was given by the HOW Place on December 8, 1993, and our first meeting was held on December 9, 1993.

On December 31, 1993, the group officers were elected: Steve K., GSR; Tom M., - alternate GSR; Lucinda S., secretary, and the treasurer role is played by everyone. (Finding a treasurer is tough, so we all pitch in and do our share.) We are a small group of only 10 members.

The Brown Bag group meets 5 days a week at 1:00 p.m. with the following meeting format : Monday - open discussion, Tuesday -Big Book study, Wednesday - open discussion, Thursday - Step study, and Friday - beginner's meeting.

Although our membership is small, the nucleus is strong. The beautiful thing is that our membership has doubled. What a blessing! We are grateful.

Canton Group

David D. found a need for starting the Canton Group. Early members were Dave D., Luke, Bill C., Bo A., Joe N., Helen N., and Ruby.

Originally the meeting was held on Tuesday at 8 PM at the downtown Canton Shoe Store. The group has moved to the health department's executive building, the First Baptist Church annex, and Grace Baptist Church.

Tuesdays are open meetings with birthdays celebrated the last Tuesday of the month. We also have a speakers meeting on the last Tuesday. For a first birthday we give an eating meeting. Thursdays are closed meetings with Al-Anon meetings upstairs.

The Depot Group of Kennesaw

The Depot Group of Alcoholics Anonymous had its beginning in the fall of 1992, when a probation officer with the city of Kennesaw encouraged one of his probationers who was sober in our fellowship to start a meeting in the downtown area of Kennesaw.

This probation officer had other probationers under his supervision who were at the time unlicensed to drive and therefore unable to attend AA meetings to which they were sentenced.

The first meeting was held in January 1993. Some of the people in attendance at that meeting were Billy, Scott, Tom, Rick S. and Amanda. This small group of drunks were calling themselves The Kennesaw Meeting.

After a few months, other AA members in the area started attending this meeting, with the hope of carrying the message to others.

In August of 1993, some of the regular members of this meeting began talking about forming into an AA group. So on August 26, 1993, Rick and Nancy F., Rick D., Rick S., Amanda R., Tim M., Richard E., and Regie I. set about the task of electing the group's trusted servants. Amanda R. was elected Secretary/Treasurer, Tim M.

GSR, Rick S. the liaison to the city of Kennesaw, and Rick F. and Kevin M. the steering committee to help guide this group, as many of the other members had less than 1 year of sobriety. The last order of business on this day was to name the group. They decided upon "The Depot Group." The group celebrated its first anniversary on January 20, 1994, with a covered dish and a speaker from Greenville, SC, Mary A.

The author of this short history would like to thank that alcoholic who, at the suggestion of a probation officer, gave tirelessly of his time, and at times money, seeing that a meeting would take place on Thursday nights at 8:00 PM, so others could recover from alcoholism.

The Night Owl Group

The Night Owl Group was started in April of 1991 by Lee R., Tony K., and Tom A., mainly because they felt there was a need for a late night meeting in the area. Since some of them worked late hours, it would enable them to attend at least one meeting per day. Another early member was Paul L. The meetings were and are still being held at the H.O.W. Place in Woodstock. The present membership is 22.

We hold 5 meetings per week. At 10 PM on Sunday we have a closed speaker's meeting with comments after the speaker, Monday is a Big Book Study, Wednesday is a Step Study and Tuesday and Thursday are closed discussion meetings.

Both our membership and attendance vary greatly due to the fact that a lot of newcomers start attending the late meetings and once they get dry and return to their jobs, they move on to earlier meetings. I do know that a lot of people who got sober at the Night Owl Group are still sober today and attending other meetings. As one might suspect, some of our meetings are rather spirited as we have quite a few wet drunks that come to the late meetings. Most of them have a lot of questions and want to talk a lot.

Serenity

Paul Y. and Mark G. founded the Serenity Group in September 1987 as Always Serenity, an open discussion meeting at the old HOW Place on Highway 92. The group moved with the HOW Place to Bells Ferry Rd., and now is a closed discussion meeting on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8 PM.

Sober at Six

The Sober at Six Group was started in March of 1989 at the HOW Place. Since after work was a hard time for alcoholics, it seemed a good time to start a meeting as an alternative. The founders of the group were Jim B., Jim H., Larry J. and Louis H. Some of the early members were Mike C., Nancy D. and "J.D." M.

Our first GSR was Jim H. In the early days we had a hard time keeping secretaries and treasurers so the GSR handled those responsibilities, too.

One of our trusted servants got drunk and took off with our checks, but, thanks to God, did not spend any of the group's money. Also, one of our members placed the group membership records on the top of her car and drove off, losing all our records.

After a year, we started a Big Book study on Tuesday nights. The people who voted against it are now attending regularly. In the fall of 1991, we started a Step study on Friday nights. We started out 5 nights a week, but the Men's Group wanted a slot for Monday night. Now the Sober at Six Group is an open discussion meeting on Tuesday through Friday at 6 PM. Our first annual outing was playing miniature golf in July 1992, which was a big success and a lot of fun.

We are a close group and very supportive of each other and the newcomer. We celebrate birthdays on the sobriety date with a cake and a medallion with the date and name of the person on it. We have a lot of fun, but our concern is with the fellowship and carrying the message through the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. May God Bless You ... He has our group.

Sunday Night Original How Group

This group has its beginning with the HOW Place, Inc., itself. In the summer or fall of 1982, a few AAs got together to discuss getting a meeting place established. Some of the early members were Alisha S., Richard and Marilyn D., Rose A., Weegie, and Pat W.

These people decided they would probably need about \$1980.00 to rent and renovate a meeting place. \$2400.00 was initially raised with \$2,100 being spent. The first location of the How Place was a 2-story building that also contained a game room and various other merchants or businesses. The first meeting of the first How Place took place during the restoration when, on a Sunday around March 24, 1983, a few AAs who were working on the remodeling decided to have a meeting. It began at 7:00 PM.

In attendance at this first meeting were Pat W., Dennis P., Tom B., Don R., John H., Larry E., and Fred H. Very soon all the renovation was completed and groups from the nearby area relocated their meetings to the HOW Place. Other groups starting forming there as well.

Soon after that some of the members who were at that first meeting formed a Sunday night group, calling it the Sunday Night Original HOW Group, since it was the first AA meeting at the HOW Place.

Over the years, this group has been very fortunate to have active AA members as their GSRs. They include Kari K., Gary P., Kevin M., Pat W., Erik W., Darlene K., Lisa D., and Sandy L. One of the things that the Original HOW Group does, and is proud of, is that on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's, the members chair extra meetings so that alcoholics who have nowhere to go, are lonely or just feel the need for an extra meeting have a place to go. The Original HOW Group has experienced some opportunities for growth, such as whether or not to allow children in the meetings, smoking or non-smoking, the issue of addicts being in meetings, growth in numbers of people attending in meetings, always working out these periods of growth through the practice of the 12 Traditions.

Sunday Serenity and Spirituality

The Sunday S & S group had its first meeting on April 24, 1983, with 4 or 5 people in attendance. It was formed by Rose A., who had gotten sober in January 1981 at meetings held at Covenant Presbyterian Church. The HOW Place, our meeting facility, had recently been established.

There were two primary factors providing the impetus for the Sunday S & S group's formation. First, when Rose had gotten sober, it had been difficult to do 90 meetings in 90 days, because there were few Sunday meetings. Rose felt a need to see to it that a meeting was available for the next alcoholic in those circumstances. Secondly, Rose travelled extensively during the week, and Sunday was the only day she was certain she could attend a meeting. Rose asked the HOW Place Committee for authorization to begin a Sunday group, and upon their agreement, began announcing at every meeting she attended that a Sunday group was forming.

At an early group conscience meeting, the need for a group name indicative of the Sunday 11:00 a.m. format was discussed. Rose indicated that it seemed to her most of the meetings were about serenity or spirituality, and that coincidentally was where she was in her personal program. The group conscience began deliberating those two subjects as a group name when someone asked why it couldn't be both.

And with that the Sunday Serenity and Spirituality group adopted its name.

The Sunday S & S group continues to evolve in its effort to help our community of alcoholics. Our meetings seem to attract alcoholics of relatively long-term sobriety who have reached a point in their program where they are maintaining and deepening their relationship with God as they understand Him.

The Sunshine Group

The Sunshine Group of Woodstock meets 5 days a week, Monday through Friday, at 10:30 AM. There are 2 open discussions, a Big Book study, a Step study, and a question and answer meeting. We celebrate the birthdays of our members on their day of sobriety and had our first anniversary celebration in October 1992, for our 3-year group birthday. It was an exciting event with a covered dish luncheon and birthday cake. Our 5 founders represent 75 years of sobriety. Group conscience meets monthly to take care of group business, such as chairpersons, treasury, and district and world office matters. We always concede to the Big Book's reference to "God as our leader".

The Sunshine Group is a "breakfast brigade," with many bringing their bag breakfast or doughnuts to share. There is a lot of fellowship and camaraderie, where new people don't stay new long. First Step, a recovery center, joins us on Thursdays, giving us all a chance to Twelve Step. Court referrals generally know to go to a member to get their cards signed. There is a strong sense of reaching out here.

Still we don't always get it together. After discussing for several minutes in a group conscience that we needed new keys, a member spoke up that he had been trying to get our attention. He had to make keys himself, so he would make ours for us. We all laughed at our silliness. There have also been times when the chairperson has had to stop a meeting and ask for principles over personalities. We all agree that this program works "one day at a time".

Gary W. wrote this account. After trying over and over for years to get sober like so many of us do, my sponsor, Mike M., and my after care group at Brawner's, recommended that I start a group and participate in it daily. With my schedule, I was fortunate enough to attend morning meetings at the HOW. Place. I got together with Big Book Jim and asked for help. The Piedmont Group, which used to meet 5 times weekly, had fallen apart with only one person left (Mary). Finally, after talking with people who attended the old morning group, we decided to form a new, fresh, 5-day-a-week morning meeting.

On November 6, 1989, at 12:15 we started our first group conscience meeting. In attendance were 7 people: Linda M., Dave C., Big Book Jim, Gary W., Larry M., Red M., and Connie K. I had just over 6 months sobriety and asked if we could call it The Sunshine Group. We had a vote of 6 to 1 for it. From that day forward, The Sunshine Group has been active. Today it has over 100 members. I now have 4 years sobriety. I thank God, my Higher Power, for the HOW Place and for The Sunshine Group.

The Turning Point Group

The Turning Point Group was formed by the merging of 2 different groups. The first of these groups was started in September 1972 by Bob C. The meeting was held at the Covenant Presbyterian Church at the corner of Piedmont Road and Highway 5 in Marietta on Monday nights at 8:00 PM.

The second group was formed in the summer of 1980 by Red H. and met at St. Paul's Church on Bells Ferry Rd. in Kennesaw. This group called itself the Turning Point Group and met on Thursday nights. Many of the people that went to the Turning Point meeting were also going to the Covenant meeting. It was decided that they might as well join and form one large group called the Turning Point to meet at the Covenant church.

Around the beginning of 1983, Pat W. was arranging a meeting place in Woodstock that came to be known as the HOW Place. The official opening of the HOW Place was scheduled for April 1, 1983. Covenant Presbyterian Church was beginning some renovations at this time, and the Turning Point members had to find a new place to meet. So, the first AA meeting at the HOW Place was held one week early, on Monday night, March 25, 1983. Along with Bob C. and Red H., other early members were Don R., Fred H., Marilyn D. and Richard D. There were not many members at this point. For a few months they could not pay rent - until about 6 months later when other AA groups joined.

The Turning Point Group is now a strong group with about 40 members and has continued to the great success of the HOW Place.

Woodstock Group

The Woodstock Group of Alcoholics Anonymous was started by Al C. at the Little River Methodist Church in Woodstock in 1979.

Some of the early members were Paula R., John D., Mike M., David R., Richard and Marilyn D., and Don R. The group meets every Saturday night at 8:00 PM at the fellowship hall, and is an open discussion, non-smoking meeting.

Until recently, the fellowship hall had only one standup gas heater and no air conditioning. This led to a history of fluctuation in group size. During the winter and summer there would be as few as 4 people at the meetings. During the spring and fall, when we met outside on the covered porch, our attendance would grow to about 20. Now, with central air and heat, we maintain an average turnout of around 25 people, with 12 home group members.

The group has suffered through some problems and personality conflicts as all groups have. At one point, the Woodstock Group voted at its group conscience to disband. Through some misinformation the members were informed that the minister of Little River was going to ask us to leave. The group conscience met and voted to move the group to a new AA "club" which was forming in the area. After the vote, one of the members decided to speak to the minister and found that the information was unfounded. The group conscience met again and voted, with a 2 vote margin, to keep the group at Little River. This vote caused a split in the group with half of the members going to the new club and half staying at Little River. The whole incident made the Woodstock Group even stronger, and it has managed to survive for 14 years. It is a strong spiritual group known for its meetings which are based "in the solution."

Zone D

Cedartown Group

The history of AA in Cedartown is to some degree unknown. It is rumored that a couple of meetings were held many years ago, but no records or people can be found to verify when or where.

As old-timers recall, AA was born in Cedartown in 1975. AA members in surrounding areas saw a need when a Cedartown man, Bud R., had to travel many miles to attend meetings. Three AA members, all from different towns, got together to start a meeting. Ike B. (Rockmart), Alvin L. (Rome), and Waylon S. (Cartersville) held the first meeting on September 30, 1975, in the Cedartown Public Library. After 2 meetings, they moved to the Greyfield Apartments. While no books or records of those early days can be found, we believe Bud R. was the first Cedartown Group member. In 1987, the meeting moved to the DAY Treatment facility on Prior Street. At that time, the Cedartown Group held one meeting a week on Thursday night, an open

speaker meeting. In 1991, a new treatment center, R.T.U., opened its doors in Cedartown. Group members saw a need to start a new meeting in the area, so they moved the Thursday night meeting into the treatment center and started a Monday night meeting (open discussion) on Prior Street.

Thanks to some steady members, and the service work they provided, the Cedartown Group added a Wednesday noon meeting which is located on East Avenue. We continue to have 3 different meeting places.

While it has had its problems in the past (people placing personalities before principles), these things always take care of themselves, when we as a group remember our three legacies: recovery, unity, and service!

Dogwood Circle Group (Tallapoosa)

The Dogwood Circle Group was first originated at an AA meeting in Carroll County by Alvin C. and Scott McC. There were numerous AA meetings in Carroll County but only 1 in neighboring Haralson County and none in Tallapoosa. Alvin C. and Scott McC., both from Tallapoosa, decided to start a group to see if there was a need for AA in this section of northwest Georgia.

Alvin C. started looking into possible places to hold the meeting. He tried churches, but most of them had conflicts with scheduling as well as bans on smoking. Neither Alvin or Scott smoked, but both felt they needed a place where smoking was permitted. They finally located a nice community building owned by the Housing Authority, which was more than willing to let us use it on a regular basis.

We put the word out at meetings in Bremen, Mt. Zion, and Carrollton, and held our first meeting on May 30, 1990. At that first meeting, Charlie O. joined and became instrumental in the organizing of the Dogwood Circle Group.

Two other members signed up that night, bringing our original home group to 5. Of these 5 original members, Alvin C. has passed on, 2 members are sober, 1 is drunk, and 1 is in prison. Our group now has 8 members with an average of 15 to 25 and a high of around 50.

Once a year we honor the day of our first meeting with a well-attended eating meeting. We have had a few problems at Dogwood Circle Group but nothing more than an occasional alcoholic who had practiced too much on the day of the meeting. Between the fellowship and belief in our Higher Power, we manage to achieve that spark that

allows us alcoholics to meet our objective of "Sobriety, one day at a time!"

Draketown Group

The Draketown Group was founded in mid-1986 by Billy B., Hansel W., and Sonny W.

The first GSR was Charles P. and the first secretary and treasurer was Betty P. Among the first supporters of the group was Evelyn B.

Billy B. had a building that he had used for a game room and pool hall. He decided that it would better serve him and others as an AA meeting place.

This group, like so many others, was started with only a coffee pot and a few chairs that Billy bought at local flea markets. He also furnished a wood burning heater and the wood which was the only source of heat for 2 years. We were then able to buy a gas heater and use a rented gas tank.

We later built 3 4x8 ft. tables and bought more chairs. We now can seat 40 or more. Billy would not accept any rent until the time came when our treasury had built up to the point that we could pay \$12 per month.

Being in a very rural area, we do not have many members (7), but with support from other groups, we have an average of 25-35 people attending some of the best AA meetings one could hope for, Sunday nights at 8 PM.

The Equal Time Discussion Group

In May 1981, Vernon L., Charles E., Ellen C., and Sonny W. got together and talked about starting a new open discussion group in Rockmart. They began looking for a place to meet. Sonny W. contacted Rev. Jimmie H. of the First Baptist Church of Rockmart. Rev. H. was very supportive, but said he would have to take it up with the deacons at their next meeting. Two weeks later Sonny was contacted by Rev. H., saying that the church welcomed us to start a meeting in their Sunday School building. Starting June 1981, we began to have our meeting on Tuesday night at 8 PM. At one of our first meetings we were talking about everyone being "equal, low bottom or high bottom" and no one person taking up so much time on their discussions. Someone said "We all want equal time;" thus, the name Equal Time Discussion Group was chosen.

Sonny W. was elected GSR, Charles E. alternate GSR and Ellen C. was elected secretary/treasurer. The Equal Time Group was registered October 5, 1981. The group has slowly grown in numbers of members and in attendance. In 1992, we moved from the Sunday School building to Jackson House next door, also owned by the church. We have a large room plus smaller rooms. Our average attendance is 30 per meeting. We split into 2 groups of discussion any time the number is 18 or more. On birthday nights we usually have from 75 to 100 in attendance.

We like to be known as the Third Tradition group.

The New Hope Group

The New Hope Group, originally called the Wayside Group, is located in Rockmart and was founded in January of 1986. The founders of the group were Snooky S. and Nate R. Another early member was Willy H. The first meetings were held at the Wayside Inn Treatment Center. The New Hope Group was deactivated when the Wayside Inn Treatment Center was closed, but reactivated in January of 1992 by the alternate GSR, Eddie A. The group holds open discussion meetings on Friday night and a speakers meeting on Wednesday night, both at 8:00 at Rtu Treatment Center.

Paulding County AA Group

Founded in the summer of 1970 by Ed B., Sam B., and Virginia A., the Paulding County AA Group held its first meeting at a steak house in Dallas. The group struggled for many years, moving any place that they were allowed to meet. When they had no designated place to meet, they met in the homes of the members, transporting their literature, ash trays and coffee pots, and their determination from meeting night to meeting night to do what had to be done to hold this group together. They moved so many times they acquired the name of "Gypsy Group," which has always given a sense of pride and a reason for laughter to the faithful members that kept it together. In addition to the founders, some of these early members were Andy H., Bruzy D., and Bill H.

The group's dedication paid off in August 1991, when it finally located a place that was affordable in the abandoned basement of the old Dallas Post Office building. The members went to work painting

walls, stripping floors and doing whatever was necessary to get the building sparkling clean and ready for meetings.

Today Paulding County AA Group has 9 meetings each week, every night at 8 PM, and Wednesday and Saturday at 12 PM. The Big Book study is on Sunday night and Twelve and Twelve on Wednesday night. Saturday night is a newcomers meeting.

The group celebrates an anniversary meeting the second Saturday night in April of each year with an eating meeting at 7 PM and a special speaker meeting following at 8 PM. We have a fellowship eating meeting the first Monday night of each month at 7 PM. A nursery is open on Monday and Friday night.

A meeting was tentatively started at the Paulding County Jail, but this did not materialize at the time. Group members feel that it will in God's time.

We are enjoying a growing membership (51 at this writing), which we feel will continue as long as we remain unified in a common cause and, of course, now that we can be located!

The Rockmart Group

The Rockmart Group was founded in June 1964 by Ike B., Edgar F. and J.W. M. Our first meetings were at the Rotary Hall in Rockmart at 8 PM. In August 1964, the meeting moved to the Cement Workers Union Hall, then to the city library and finally to the Goodyear Club House. In 1980 we started an 8 PM closed discussion meeting at the First Presbyterian Church on Monday nights. Our present membership is 8.

12 Step Study, Aragon

The 12 Step Study was started November 6, 1991, as a meeting through the desire of members of various groups in the area to study the 12 Steps. This is an open meeting using the Twelve and Twelve as our textbook. We had 10 in attendance at our first meeting, and 13 on our first anniversary.

The founders of the meeting were Earl G., a member of the Equal Time Group in Rockmart with 8 years sobriety, and Jim G., a member of the Rockmart Group with 9 years sobriety. The group registered on October 6, 1993, with Jerry W. as GSR and Janie W. as Alternate GSR. The current membership is 4, with an average attendance of 14.



DISTRICT 15

The 15th District has been having meetings since July 1959, when they were part of Area 12. District 15 was created at the January Assembly of 1966. Most of the old-timers in the area have gone to the "big meeting in the sky." No one is sure who was the first DCM of the 15th District.

The first district business breakfast was held at the home of Phil and Mary K. For some time the monthly business breakfasts were held in various member's homes, until the crowd grew so large in early 1970 that they started having it at the Roundtable restaurant in Pennville, a small community just north of Summerville. Later the business breakfast was moved to Shepherd's restaurant in Calhoun, to make it more centrally located. Today it is held at the Hamilton Medical Center in Dalton.

Some of the past DCMs are as follows: John G. (who now lives in Myrtle Beach, SC), Phil K., Bryant L., J.B. C., Sherri R., and Bob H. The current DCM is Roy S.

The district sends copies of the business breakfast minutes to the state delegate and is very active in the area's treatment centers, prisons and jails. People are very proud of the district newsletter, "Stepping Stones," which is sent to nearby Chattanooga to inform them about meetings in North Georgia. Our district's Sherry R. was state secretary.

Most everyone in the district is very supportive of other groups besides their own home groups. "God willing, we hope to have the 1996 Georgia Pre-Paid State Convention in Dalton, with the help of other districts in our area. We feel good about this and are grateful for this opportunity to serve. This will be the first time the convention has been held in the 15th District. AA is alive and very strong in the northwest section of Georgia and the 15th District."

Blue Ridge Group

In February 1984, Bill H. was caught in the denial of his disease. Despite this, a new AA member, Tom J., called him and asked if he could help him secure a meeting place. Bill's sister Hazel S., an Al-Anon member, helped him. The Catholic parsonage was the first meeting place, Mondays at 8 PM. Bill attended 2 meetings and decided he needed to go to a treatment center. He did, and stayed 30 days. When Bill got out of treatment, Tom promptly approached him and turned the whole group, as it were, over to him, and went out to do more research on his own drinking.

Due to a change in management at the parsonage, Bill got a new meeting place at the Methodist Church. Bill's telephone number

has been listed under AA since that time and, of course, has been a source of some wild talks at all hours of the night and definite growing experiences for Bill. Twelfth-Stepping and a lot of sharing of his experience, strength and hope has helped Bill to stay sober.

The first years were very lean as far as members were concerned, but, armed with his Big Book, coffee pot and Higher Power, Bill babysat himself and waited. Finally members started drifting in: Pat H., Tom J. in and out. Support from Joe J., Ruby D., Joe B., Carl H., and Bill N., all from the Ellijay Group, helped sustain Bill.

Later, as the group grew, a lot of people from out of state have come, gone, and stayed (you know how Yankees are!!). It was also decreed by group conscience that another meeting was needed and Thursdays at 8 PM evolved. Most recently, Sundays at 3 PM have also opened up. There are now 25 home group members.

The meetings are open, with both smoking and non-smoking available. Tradition meetings have come and gone as dictated by group conscience and the needs of the members. Birthdays are celebrated on the last Monday night of every month with the one with "youngest" sobriety having a choice of a speaker or regular meeting. The anniversary of the group is the last week in February. Both AA and Al-Anon celebrate together with speakers and eating!

Bill H. says that the most important thing he has learned is, "If the doors are kept open and the coffee pot on, people will come. Perhaps it is our program teaching us responsibility and dependability, and for that, the hand of AA is always there!"

Calhoun Saturday Night Group

A lady who was around when the Calhoun Saturday Night Group was organized in 1975 was driving group founders back and forth to Rome to meetings. One night when she picked up a member who was slightly inebriated, she asked him, "What do you think we are going to Rome for?" He replied, "I thought we were going to eat barbecue!" He is now deceased, but he made it, one day at a time!

The group was founded by Sam B., Larry L., and Ted P. They first met at the Calhoun/Gordon County Health Center on Saturday nights at 8 PM. Other early members were Terry L., Bryant L., Forest H., Ralph B., Helen B., Clarence N., Gerold A., Robert G., and J.D. M.

An "old-timer" now active in the group tells this "miracles-do-happen" story on himself: One evening he went to the grocery store to pick up a loaf of bread. He returned 6 months later! He doesn't say whether he brought back the bread.

After some time at the health center, the group moved to the Alms House on River St. When they moved there, repairs were needed. The county agreed to pay half the cost; the balance was made up by volunteer labor and supplies donated by members of the group. The 32 active members now meet there on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday, all at 8 PM.

The group has birthday meetings on the last Saturday night in February, April, June, August, October and December at the Calhoun First Baptist Church with a covered dish supper at 7 PM and meeting at 8 PM.

Chickamauga Study Group

The Chickamauga Study Group was founded September 15, 1976, by Raymond B., Charlie S., Joseph C., and Tom P. Sr. The group met at Raymond's home at 8:00 P.M. Tuesday. Other early members included Joe B. and Tom P. Jr. In 1977, they started meeting at the Chickamauga Church until the group moved to the Older American Center at the Chickamauga Presbyterian Church. It continues to meet Tuesday nights at 8. There are currently 9 home group members.

Vicki C. relates, "Raymond passed away in August 1986. Before he died, he was worried that we would not continue to have meetings in Chickamauga. Charlie S. passed away in July 1991. When I first came into AA, I thought that Charlie was the boss because he was chairing the meetings that month. I thought he knew all the answers. Back some time ago most of the groups in our area had very active Al-Anon. They would fix snacks, and the people would gather an hour before meeting time and have a wonderful fellowship and really get to know each other. We still do that at a lot of the groups in our area. We have always averaged about 7 or 8 members, but we get a lot of support from the rest of the district.

"I was told that our first GSR decided to drink again after staying sober for one year. Then he came back and stayed sober until he passed away. I was also told that one of our treasurers decided to drink again and took the group's money. We had a secretary/treasurer about 3 or 4 years ago who wanted to be GSR of our group but never mentioned it to anyone. The GSR we had at the time decided he wanted to drink again. We had only 3 sober members. When we did not elect the secretary/treasurer as the new GSR, she decided to get drunk herself and wrote a letter to me letting me know just how she felt about me and our group. Thank God she is sober now and very active in AA in another city. As a matter of fact several of her writings were selected to be in the new Reflections book.

"At one point I moved to Tennessee. Someone had given the key to the church to Al and Dorothy G. to open up and make coffee for the meeting. No one showed up, so Al and Dorothy laid down on the carpet and took a nap. They then poured out the coffee and went home.

"We have a hard time in our group getting people to serve, but we have very good meetings and are very proud of the group."

Dalton Group

W.G. A. provided this account of the Dalton Group.

These are just some of the events I remember about the Dalton Group, beginning April 20, 1969. The group had been formed about 3 or 4 years earlier, with special help from the Summerville AA group. Early members were Kit G., Francis L., Hoyt, Charles L., Sarge, Betty, Laturan, W.G. A., Jack B., Amos M., Johnnie P., and others.

This was before ADAC in Dalton and also before the hospital here would accept patients sick with alcoholism or such symptoms. There was a doctor who would get the patient into a Chattanooga hospital if the patient would not drink any for 3 days.

The group first met in a building on Chattanooga Avenue where the rent was that the group maintain the building and grounds. Although at times this proved to be quite expensive, a newcomer could get involved in service work easily by volunteering to do lawn mowing and trimming. While at this location, the practice of passing the no-dues hat a second or third time got started to meet unpredicted expenses. One of these was that the group had to buy a new air conditioner to replace one that was stolen. Anyway, this was a very good home for this AA group.

The group has always been very Tradition and Step conscious. This sometimes has caused conflict among newer and older members. An active, elected steering committee has been important for addressing delicate situations which could interrupt good "stay sober" meetings.

From the beginning, Wednesday has been a closed meeting. Other regular meetings are Friday and Sunday evenings. More recently, a Thursday candlelit meeting at midnight was added. Sundays are open meetings, important for special events: speakers, birthdays, anniversaries or other celebrations. The practice of dividing the group for discussion meetings started during the early 1970s, when there were either 13 or 15 members present. At the time, small groups seemed to be more effective.

Due mostly to disagreements, a second group started in Dalton during the '70s. As it is today, Al-Anon was very important to the original group. Both met in the same little building. Very early, at least

2 Al-Anons contributed much to the growth and success of the AA group.

Group visitation was vital to the group's growth and to members' sobriety. Some of the groups involved were Summerville, GA, and Cleveland, Athens, and Grace Episcopal Church (Chattanooga) groups in Tennessee. Also, individuals came for help from Ringgold, Calhoun, Chatsworth and adjacent areas.

If not recognized for sponsorship, the Dalton Group was instrumental in the starting of AA groups in Ringgold, Calhoun and Chatsworth. Older members can recall attending their first meeting and getting continuing support. During the '60s and '70s, group well-being was practically the only hope for suffering newcomers, members having difficulties with slips or more "research," and members striving for sobriety. Members and families were close knit.

Because of a real estate transaction, the group had to move. It moved to the old City Park school building, which the county had purchased. At this location, prodigious resentment and interruptions were experienced. The group stayed at this location only a short time. ADAC was well established in Dalton at the time and occupied the old Elks Lodge Building on Cuyler St. The group was invited to share a part of the building. It worked out okay.

Other people had joined the group: Francis G., Spence H., and a few others who are still active. Group conscience kept indicating that there must be a better place to meet. There was much talk about buying, renting, or building a meeting place. Francis G. advanced the idea that St. Mark's Church might like to have the group as a part of their out-reach program. He worked this out with the church. It seems this last move to St. Mark's was the first time the group really has had a home since leaving Chattanooga Avenue.

For Those Who Want It

The For Those Who Want It group was founded July 12, 1980, by Jack B., Joe B., Eddie H., Ron P., Peggy P. and Mary Nell B. The group meets at the Mental Health Building in Ft. Oglethorpe with open discussion meetings on Thursday and Sunday nights at 8 PM and the Greenleaf speaker meeting on Friday nights.

Gilmer Area

In 1959, Ruby D. and the Rev. S. from First Methodist Church in Ellijay started the first AA meeting at the church and remained there

for about a year. The group moved to the Whitestone Clubhouse in the south part of Gilmer County where it held meetings for the next 2 years. In 1963, the group moved to the Gilmer County Courthouse for a few months, and then just died out for a few years.

In 1970-72 a few meetings were being held in the Parks Building, but due to a few people trying to run everything, the meetings were not very good, and AA in Gilmer County died out again.

In 1978, AA again picked up and with the help of Rev. James H. of the First Baptist Church in Ellijay, Grady G. and Bob H. got it going again. Other early members were Ruby D., Joe B. and Warner S. In February 1979 the group elected Grady as the first GSR, and it has been strong and active to this day. In the early years of the Gilmer Area Group most of the people who came were from out of town, with a lot of help from Atlanta, Gainesville, Canton, Marietta and other towns. For a lot of years the few people who were in AA had to go some place else for a meeting.

Today the Gilmer Area group has 33 strong, active members. Meetings are at 33 Dalton Street in Ellijay. On Tuesday nights, we have a closed meeting, with a Big Book study on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday. Thursday morning is an open meeting. Saturday night is an open meeting with birthdays on the last Saturday of the month.

The group has been co-sponsor of the Gilmer County Prison group and is currently sponsoring a meeting at the Gilmer County Jail on Friday nights. We have been host group for several district functions such as cluster workshops, unity meetings and summer picnics, barbecues and fish fries. Our group supports the 15th District, state assembly and GSO.

We have not gone without our ups and downs, but by holding to the traditions our group conscience has prevailed.

Graysville Fellowship Group

The Graysville Fellowship Group was inspired by a member of the United Methodist Church who needed help in establishing an AA meeting place because he had a father who was getting drunk. Bill W. and Doyle C. started the group on March 22, 1981. They contacted the father, who stayed drunk for a while longer, then got sober for a while, went back out for around a year and a half, and now is sober and attending meetings elsewhere in the district.

Other early members were Fred W. (now deceased), Rip and Mary Lou B., Doyle P., Jim G., and Nancy G. The group still meets at the United Methodist Church at Monday at 8 PM. The group is small (15 members), but very spiritual, trying to abide by the Steps and Traditions.

LaFayette Fellowship Group

The LaFayette Fellowship Group actually started with 2 men, Joe V. and Elmer D., better known as Bunk. Joe and Bunk started having meetings under a tree with a coffee pot between them. The group wasn't registered until March 1974. Joe went to the City Council meeting in LaFayette and said, "I've got a story to tell you," and he began telling them the story about Bill W. When he finished, they asked him, "What do you want from us?" He told them he needed a meeting room, and they told him he could have any building he wanted. Joe and Bunk started having meetings in the Recreation Center on Friday nights at 8 PM.

There were only 3 members, Joe, Bunk, and Robert E. Their meetings were open discussion. They stayed there for about 3 months, when they moved to the Jaycee's Golf Clubhouse in the park. They moved because they had problems getting someone to come and open the building for them. One rainy night they couldn't get in the building, so they held the meeting under the bleachers.

In June 1977, the group moved to the Health Center on Duke St. There wasn't enough room for anniversaries and birthday celebrations, so they held the group's fourth anniversary and 5 or 6 birthdays back at the Golf Clubhouse. Jim M. chaired one meeting and Big Don from Tennessee was the speaker. He spoke until midnight and finally the group told Jim they had to go home.

Three months later the group moved to a house across from the high school. After a month, it moved to the old radio station building on N. Main St., where it was registered in October 1977. Jim C. was the GSR that year. But within the next year he went back out to practice a little more and died trying to add to his story. Charlie S. became GSR, but after a year he moved his membership to the Chickamauga Group.

In 1981, Bryant L. became the GSR, but he left in 1982 to go to the Calhoun Group. Fat Ben was appointed GSR and tried to make some major changes in the group. He tried to add 2 more meetings a week and bring NA in twice a week. Needless to say, the group didn't go along with this at all. So they had a group conscience meeting, and Fat Ben resigned as GSR. By this time, the group was starting to fall apart. They elected Skinny Ben, alias Ben K., to be the new GSR. Ben had only 6 months in the program at that time. Ben asked, "What is a GSR?," and the group told him. Ben tried for a few months, but the group still wasn't doing well. So he went to former member Charlie S. and asked him to help. Charlie agreed to help, but said he didn't like to travel. Charlie S. became GSR and Ben became the Alternate GSR and

did all the traveling. After a couple of years the group was back on its feet again, and Charlie and Ben swapped positions.

One bad winter the group was surprised to find that the water lines had frozen and burst, flooding the whole building. They had to take up a special collection to pay a \$75 water bill. Olan Mills donated some furniture to the group which later was given to the Summerville Rt. 2 Group when the LaFayette Group moved to St. Jude's Catholic Church in October 1984.

In the latter part of 1987, Greg F. joined the group. Several members kept Greg busy, dragging him to different meetings. After a year, Greg became the GSR and helped to draw some of the younger people into the group. In January of 1991, the group moved to the First United Methodist Church. Jan H. was elected GSR in 1992, and has helped in building the group up and keeping it going. She also has helped to bring more women into the group.

We have a great meeting place and a wonderful group, which keeps growing all the time with new members. Northerners are moving to the area with good sobriety and refreshing new opinions. As of January 1, 1993, we have a total of 20 members and a lot of support from the surrounding groups, with at least 30 people present at our Friday night meetings.

The Meeting

"The Meeting" began in November 1992 at Westcott Center of Hamilton Medical Center in Dalton. Meetings are at 8 PM on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday nights. Johnny C., Cliff W., Ken K., and Nan J. founded the group.

Murray County Group

Ben A. and Joe L. were members of a group in Dalton and wanted a group in their home town, so they started the Murray County Group in May 1986. They were loaned a coffee pot by Cynthia L., who later became a member. Early members were Robert S., John W., Eddie D., Barbara, John B., and Martha M. The group first met at Murray County Hospital.

In early 1988, they moved to the Chasworth Housing Authority, and then to the D.O.T. building (the Rock Building) in late 1988. The meetings have always been on Mondays at 8 PM, open discussion. The group, with 11 home group members, is an outside sponsor for Walker County Correctional Institute.

Natural High

The Natural High Group was founded to meet at Hays Correctional Institution in Trion by Harvey D., Greg F., and Dave T. on November 27, 1990. There are 35 members of the group, which meets at 7 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

New Vision

The New Vision group was founded by Sherry R. and Lyle W. on July 15, 1986. Other early members were Cliff J., Sandy G., Vivian D. and Gail F. The group first met at the Old Multivision Building on Chattanooga Rd. in Dalton. The group moved to Shugart Road in January 1987, where the 9 members have a Friday speaker's meeting.

One Day at a Time

Sherry R. and Wiley T. founded the One Day at a Time group in the spring of 1981 at Hamilton Medical Center in Dalton with a Monday evening open discussion meeting. Other early members were Johnny C., Kendall K., Gene L. and Virginia B. The group, with 30 members, has been meeting since September 1990 at the Serenity Club at 1 PM daily and 8 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.

Pickens Area (Jasper)

Three recovering alcoholics, Garland W., Bud G., and Floyd B., got together in 1976 to meet at Pickens Tech, where the rent was free, on Monday evenings. Roy H. was an early member. Within a few months, Bill B. joined and since he was a store owner in Jasper, his place became the center of outreach activity. The group grew to 6 or 8 members, and one of them, Roy H., went on to serve in the District. A lot of Twelfth Step calls were made in the old days with referrals from the then one-and-only state facility in Rome. Bill B. worked closely with the sheriff to carry the message and newcomers heard about AA only through word of mouth.

The group moved to the Pickens County Health Department when its doors opened in 1978, and, with the exception of a brief period at the local airport, has met there ever since, rent-free. Survival was the big problem, with membership often falling to 3 or 4. It was a struggle to fill the offices of secretary and treasurer and Bill B. found himself

the GSR for something like 8 years. Members with some sobriety became dissatisfied about carrying so much responsibility. Unfortunately that became a pattern, with new members coming in and older ones leaving.

In spite of all the ups and downs, the Pickens group has survived and in 1989, expanded to 2 and later 3 meetings a week. They now have a Big Book study on Wednesday evening, open discussion meetings on Monday and Friday evenings, including a speakers meeting on the last Friday of the month, notices in the local newspaper and representatives going to the District and to Assembly.

The general health of the group has been hampered by the persistent attitude toward not paying rent, although the treasury is in better shape than it ever has been. An attempt to move the meeting place to a church last year was squelched by a few of the more fear-stricken members who could see only disaster as a result. The poorly-attended business meetings have been a problem over the years. Not enough members with some period of sobriety and continuity of attendance are available to serve as GSR.

Still, the Pickens group is doing a better job with sponsorship than before and is now able to find secretaries to keep up the records. At present, the group can claim about 20 members who attend regularly.

Ringgold Fellowship Group

Lucky H. founded the Ringgold Fellowship Group on January 27, 1970, with early members Josh C., Joe S., Earl P. and Ken C. The group still meets where it started, at the Ringgold Health Center, on Tuesdays at 8 PM. The 15 home group members have open discussion meetings on Tuesdays and a Traditions meeting each Wednesday, group anniversaries on the last Tuesday in January, and birthdays on the last Tuesday of each month, with a covered dish supper for each first birthday. Frank Y. says, "We don't recall there being any serious problems in the group, but most of the oldtimers have gone to that big meeting in the sky."

Sharing Hope Group

The Sharing Hope Group was founded November 4, 1986, by Olen W. and Meryl M. They first met at First Baptist Church in Ft. Oglethorpe on Tuesday and Friday nights' and now meet at Newnan Springs Methodist Church in Ft. Oglethorpe on Wednesdays and Saturdays. There are 5 home group members.

The group holds an anniversary celebration as close to November 4th as possible. They have special dinners or sandwiches near Christmas and wonderful birthday celebrations, great speakers and plenty to eat, usually on the 3rd or 4th Saturday.

Meryl M. says, "We have the best group and we're so proud of it. And we will have so long as we remember and work our Steps and Traditions."

Summerville Rt. 2 Group

In July 1959, a salesman coming through town stopped at Jim's Auto Shop and put an ad in the newspaper saying that if anyone was in need of AA help, he would help get a meeting started.

Tom G. was the founder of the group. Early members were Phil K., Tom W., Jim G., Roy O. and Frank S. The first meeting was at Billie's Beauty Shop. There were meetings in the Keith Upholstery Shop for about 2 weeks. When Frank came to the group, his brother owned a house that he was willing to rent to the group.

The group now has 25 members and holds closed discussion meetings on Monday nights and open speaker meetings on Thursday nights. They now meet in Pennville on Moore St. The 33rd anniversary meeting was celebrated in July 1992.

Trenton Fellowship Group

An AA group was first started in Trenton in the spring of 1971, meeting at the County Health Center. This group received adequate support from other northwest Georgia groups and from Chattanooga, but no Dade Countians would attend, and the group was moved to Tiftonia in Chattanooga where it continues today.

During 1980, groups were started at the Trenton Fire Hall and at White Oak Baptist Church on Sand Mountain but failed to continue for unknown reasons.

The Trenton Fellowship Group was started by Wayne H. in October 1990, having only 3 regular members during its first year. Other early members were Jim S. and George R. Membership increased dramatically in 1992, and at its second anniversary celebration the Trenton group could count between 10 and 15 members in regular attendance. The group meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8 PM at the Dade County Justice Building.



DISTRICT 16

Zone A

Sometime around 1956, Floyd R., whose wife taught school in Gainesville, sought help from the minister of the Presbyterian Church, Glenn D. (who was not an alcoholic). They started a weekly meeting at the church. After 2 or 3 months, the pastor told Floyd that he was bringing in an alcoholic who was not active in AA. The man turned out to be Floyd's wife's boss, and things soon began to change in the small group. They contacted the Skyland Group of Atlanta, and in October 1956 Clarence R., Joe P. (who was later our Southeast Regional Trustee) and a few others held the first AA meeting in the basement of the Gainesville Presbyterian Church. This group continued for several years. An area meeting was formed in 1959, and included Rome, Hartwell, Lavonia and Toccoa (approximately 20-25 people).

An Episcopal priest named Bob B. who had studied alcoholism at Yale wrote columns in the Gainesville Times entitled "Voice of AA." This brought more people to AA than any other thing. Most meetings had a social time with cake and coffee 35-40 minutes before the AA meeting. This was repeated afterwards, and meetings were 2 hours long.

Several years after the forming of the Presbyterian Church group, a physician who owned a large house moved out and leased it to an AA club. The house was open from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M., 7 days a week. Some alcoholics were detoxed here, using alcohol for detoxing. The club or groups met for several years until the house was torn down. The club moved to another house on Thompson Bridge Road in 1963.

This group split because of internal friction. Part of the group moved to the Grace House near Brenau College. About 1970, another group began to meet at Jay T.'s house. Al-Anon also met there. This group met 365 days a year. Later, another group spun off of this one.

Around 1972, Ed L. and Dr. Ben of the Potter's House started a group called the Gainesville Group, which met at the Memorial Park Presbyterian Church. Ed's wife Lura started Al-Anon in Gainesville at this time. They met at the church for approximately 10 years. The group moved to the Halt Club in Gainesville in early 1982. Two leaders at the time were Luke R. and Bill K.

Around 1982, Curtiss T. started a group at United Methodist Church. This meeting later disbanded. In November 1984, the Gainesville Classic Group was started at the Memorial Park Presbyterian Church by John and Peggy R., Rufus D., Linda B. and Luke R. Meetings were started in Toccoa, Cleveland and the Alto Correctional Facility.

For much of this time about the only contact for 12th Step work was Jeanette T., in the home of Jay T. Peggy A. of the Grace Group was also very active in helping the alcoholic who suffered.

The District grew from having no meetings between Franklin, N. C., all the way to the Skyland Group in Atlanta in the '50s to 23 active groups in 9 counties. In the '80s, Myron T., Oscar M. and Sherry F. contributed much to the growth of the North Georgia (16A) District while serving as DCMs. In 1989, the Georgia Prepaid Convention was held in North Georgia for the first time.

Crusaders' Group (Institutional)

The Crusaders' Group was founded by outside AA member Conway H. and prison counselor Estes T. on December 1, 1975, with inmates of Georgia Industrial Prison as the members. The group first met in the warden's special dining mess from 7-9 PM on Monday nights. In 1978, they moved to the general visitor's room, where they now meet from 6-7 PM on Mondays. There are now 18 home group members.

The meeting was allowed a coffee pot and birthday meetings by the warden until contraband was discovered in the AA box. The prison tightened security in the early '80s and did not allow birthdays or group anniversary meetings until December 1992.

The group now wishes more participation in the Georgia Service Assembly through a proxy vote or facsimile.

Flowery Branch Welcome Home Group

The Flowery Branch Welcome Home group was founded April 4, 1991, by Jerry H. Other early members were Debbie W., Cheryl M., Bobby L., and Dan St.L. The group has 8 home group members, and holds a closed discussion meeting at 8:00 PM on Thursdays.

When trying to get a meeting place, Jerry was in a town council meeting. The press was present. There was some controversy over the article that was in the paper the next day over the council not approving the use of the Scout Hut building for AA meetings. After the initial shock wore off, things came along rather quickly in getting approval to use City Hall as a temporary meeting place. Shortly after, the group was invited into the Baptist Church to hold meetings.

Since that time, "We have been enjoying the best meetings that you will find in South Hall County." Even though the group was started in April they chose the month of May to celebrate their anniversary with a simple pot luck supper and a speaker of the group's choice.

Freedom Group

The Freedom Group was founded in 1987 by Wendy S., Charles H., Esther B., Swain S., Lonnie E., and Buddy and Sherry E. Other early members were Jim L., Robi W., Nancy P., and Glen P. They originally held meetings at the Halt Club in Gainesville on Sundays and Mondays. They have since added a Thursday evening meeting, and have 32 home group members.

In 1988, the GSR was removed from office by unanimous vote and barred from the clubhouse property for multiple thefts of club property sold for personal profit, loss of sobriety, and violation of traditions 4, 5, 9, and 12. Also in 1988, the group repaired and decorated the interior of the Halt Club as a gift to the club. The group started assembling "Newcomers' packets" of pamphlets, phone numbers and a schedule of meetings.

Gainesville Classic

The Gainesville Classic Group was started in November 1984 as a spin-off from the Gainesville and Grace groups. It was founded by John and Peggy R., Linda B., and Rufus D. Ed L. was another early member. The group still meets at its original location, Memorial Park Presbyterian Church. There are now 65 members.

The original meeting on Wednesday nights was, and still is, a closed discussion meeting and considered very "traditional." An open speaker meeting is held on the last Wednesday of each month to celebrate birthdays. The Monday night closed discussion was started in 1987. The Friday night open meeting was started in 1991. Attendance averages 20 on Mondays, 40 on Wednesdays, and 10 on Fridays. In January 1993 the group began a split-off 12-Step study on Mondays and a Big Book study on Wednesdays.

Gold City Group

In March of 1981, the Gold City Group of Dahlonega was founded by Swede O. and Chandler B. With help from Garland S. and Dan R. from the Dawsonville Group and Dick B. from Blairsville and Jay T. from Gainesville, we soon became a thriving group.

Our early members were Gene D., Don K., Jack P., David K., James H., Don S., David W., Jim C., Mike T. and Darlene A.

The group met at St. Luke's Catholic Church in Dahlonga on Friday night at 8:00 PM. In the beginning we were lucky to have enough members present to read How It Works, the Traditions and the Promises.

As we got more court-appointed members who were required to attend more meetings a week, it became a group conscience decision to hold more meetings.

As part of the group's service work we started picking up prisoners from the county jail. We were successful for 3 years until one of the prisoners decided to escape from an AA meeting.

In 1984, the group changed locations to the Dahlonga Presbyterian Church, where we now hold 5 meetings per week. These include closed discussion, step study, Big Book study, men's meeting, women's meeting and open discussion meetings.

In 1988, although we had broken probably all the Traditions, we didn't understand the importance of them. Oscar M. and Sherry F. visited from Toccoa and made us aware of service work at the district and state level. This became a real turning point in the growth and unity of the group.

Also in 1988, the group held a campout at Pine Valley which has become an annual event. Groups from all around attend. It has become an enjoyable part of the fellowship.

Grace Group

The Grace Group was founded in 1979 by Lion W., Ralph R., Janet J., Peggy A. and Mike M. The group first met at the House of Grace belonging to Grace Episcopal Church in Gainesville at 8 PM on Tuesday nights. They now have 20 members and meet on Tuesday and Friday nights at the Halt Club, where they moved in June 1980.

Peggy A. writes, "We experienced a lot of growing pains, as most new groups do. Group consciences for the most part were long and heated, each of us believing we knew what was best for the group. I believe this is where we begin to practice brotherly love. We feel very threatened if we feel that someone is messing with our group. My group saved my life and gave me a life. I did not understand these feelings at the beginning. This is a learning experience for most of us, that we can disagree and still care about one another.

"We were frightened to move from the security of our previous group. Most of the older members told us that no one would come to a meeting in the part of town where we were starting this new meeting, that we were afraid that people would know that we were drunks. Today the place where we meet, the Halt Club, is on the most prestigious street in the city of Gainesville. AA has grown tremendously

in our town, thanks to some of our members who have been willing to speak out for our disease. We are no longer ashamed of who we are."

Hiawassee Group

The groundwork for the Hiawassee Group was laid by Evelyn L., who did not arrive in Hiawassee until five months after Joe B. actually founded the group in December 1989. The group meets in the cafeteria at Towns County Hospital on Thursday and Sunday evenings. There are 20 home group members.

The group has frequent group conscience meetings, and is somewhat argumentative. They have lost one member due to "principles before personalities." They have tried Big Book and step meetings several times, but there has not been enough interest to keep them going.

The group has had some success with court referrals, and have frequent out-of-town visitors. The Sunday meeting is the best attended. They had Christmas celebrations in 1990 and 1991, and have a cake for birthday people at the end of the month.

Live and Let Live Group

A spinoff from the Clarkesville 12-Step Group, the Live and Let Live Group was founded by Bob and Jean B. and Kelley B. in May 1993. The group was formed in an effort to focus on the 12 Steps as the method of achieving sobriety in AA.

There are only 3 home group members, who meet at the Chattahoochee River home of Jean and Bob at 10 AM, 1 PM, and 3 PM. Each meeting is 1-1/2 hours long. The sobriety of those attending is mostly over 8 years, except for sponsees of others attending.

Toccoa Fellowship

The founders of the Toccoa Fellowship were Bill C. (Toccoa), Bill C. (Tallulah Falls), Charlie T., Ernest S., Guy M., Pot D., Thurmond G., Tom P. and Ed R. Bill C. of Toccoa attempted to start AA there in 1959, but it only lasted a few months. In fall 1961, Bill C. (Toccoa), Bill C. (Tallulah Falls), Guy M., Ed R., and maybe a couple more (no one remembers) met at Toccoa Bill C.'s house to

discuss starting AA in Toccoa. Bill C. (Tallulah Falls) set up the present location, the Matthias Episcopal Church, with Rev. R. In the early years, Guy M. and Thurmond G. reported that at an average meeting, the attendance was around 76, including AAs from the Victory Home at Tallulah Falls, of which Bill C. (Tallulah Falls) was the director at one time.

It is rumored that in the early years the treasurer made off with the group's treasury. From talking with some of the old timers, it seems the group had a lot of problems with traditions, such as self-appointments to different positions in the group. It was reported that Jay T. from Gainesville was a great help in keeping the group within the traditions. The group was not registered with New York until 1968.

Current meetings are Monday 8 PM, open discussion, and Friday 8 p.m. The first 3 Fridays are Big Book studies, the 4th Friday is Tradition Study, and the 5th Friday is a speaker meeting.

The State Court refers D.U.I.s to the fellowship. This becomes more frequent in this area each month.

Toccoa Inner Voice Group

In September 1985, 5 men decided that Toccoa needed a daytime meeting. They found a minister who was happy to have an AA meeting in his church, and the first meeting was set for the next Thursday morning at 10 AM.

The founders of the group, Don C. with 12 years sobriety, Oscar M. and Myron T., both with less than a year, and Don S. with over 30 years, met that first Thursday morning. The fifth man was unfortunately back out. In October, the first woman in the group, Sherry F., attended her first meeting.

The group enjoyed a good relationship with the church for several months, until it changed ministers. The new minister had different ideas about AA and didn't mind coming to meetings and telling the group about his "alcoholic brother-in-law, who was saved and didn't need AA." Needless to say, the group began looking for a new meeting place. About the same time, the minister at the First Methodist Church told a group member that his church would like to have an AA group meet at their church. The group has been at the First Methodist Church ever since.

In June 1986, the Saturday night meeting was started. A man from another group said he sure could use a Saturday night meeting, and Inner Voice took on that responsibility. He never came to the first Saturday meeting, but many alcoholics have benefitted from his idea.

The Inner Voice group has had its share of normal problems, like a treasurer who spent the money and never made it back, a Step

meeting that went well for a while and evaporated, financial instability, and growing pains. But through it all the group has remained small but strong. Many of the group members have been involved in service work at the group, district, and state levels.

The open discussion meeting on Thursday morning usually has 15-20 in attendance. The Saturday night open discussion meeting is well attended by group members and visitors from other groups.

The group members celebrate their birthday with an "eating meeting" and speaker of their choice. The group gives the birthday member a subscription to the Grapevine. In October 1993, the group had their 8th anniversary celebration and hopes to have many more.

Zone B

The oldest continuously registered group in what is now District 16B is the Elberton Group, first registered in 1963 and still meeting regularly. The very first group to be registered with GSO was the Athens Group. Nothing is known about this group except that it was registered from 1947 through 1952. During a gap in the district records from 1953 through '62, the group disappeared. It reappeared in 1966-69, and in 1971, then disappeared for good. The Downtown Group in Athens was registered from 1970, '71, and '73, then disappeared. One of these oldest groups met for a time in a beauty parlor, men and women alike under the hair dryers. .

Another defunct group from the early years (pre-1971) was the Winder Group, registered in 1966. Little is known, but it must have been the precursor of Winder's Jug Tavern Group, continuously registered since 1973. There was a 12 & 12 Group in Athens from '75 through '77 and again from '82 through '85. The Tell It Like It Is group existed from '78 through '82.

Another now-defunct group is the Hand in Hand Group, a started for gays and lesbians in Athens but open to all alcoholics, which was registered from 1988 through 1990. Apparently its members chose to assimilate into more general-interest groups, for many of them are still active members of the fellowship in Athens, including a married (non-gay) couple who went there for their first meeting, were warmly welcomed, and continued to attend through its history.

Another short-lived group supports Bill W.'s "theory" on groups that don't follow traditions. The Over The Hill Gang, registered only in 1990 and '92, tried to limit its attendance only to persons over a certain age and with a certain amount of sobriety. With Athens being a university town, there were a number of young people with noses out of joint - but not for long!

The Athens Young Peoples Group was registered in 1975 and from 1980 through 1984. It was followed by the Campus Group, which was started by a non-alcoholic University of Georgia counselor. With apparently no knowledge of AA tradition, history, or custom, she conducted meetings herself and even was registered as GSR! After that "false start", a student with some sobriety, David J. from Macon, explained the facts of AA to her. In early '92, he helped get the struggling meeting activated as the Sobriety Posse, a regular AA group, and was elected GSR. It thrived for a time as a traditional AA meeting (chaired by an alcoholic and open to all alcoholics), and played an important role in a community with so many students, hosting 20 or more each week. Most of the young people, however, seemed to consider this a "young persons meeting," and chose established groups in the community as their home groups. Soon after David graduated and moved away, a much-admired old-timer founded a Big Book study that met at the same time, and the Sobriety Posse folded in early 1993.

The Elberton Traditional Group, formed in response to non-traditional practices at some of the Northeast Georgia groups, lasted only from 1989 through 1991. Hartwell, similarly, has had a number of short-lived groups, some trying to follow the traditions more strictly, others with Al-Anon treasurers, nontraditional readings, and full Al-Anon participation in all meetings. These, on both sides of the traditions issues, include the Looking Up Group (1973 only), the Hartwell Group (1974-76), the Faith Group (1984 only), and the Welcome Group (1989-1991). In Royston, there was a Loner registered from 1977 through 1982. Tri-County Group flourished in Royston from 1984 through 1990, when the church where they met burned.

The Potters' House Group, registered continuously from 1968 through 1991, was based in a home for aged and alcoholic men in Jackson County. A number of men established sobriety there over the years. Some are sober, productive members of area communities and groups; others died sober while still residents of the Potters' House. Unfortunately, with a change in leadership at the facility, AA attendance, at meetings around the area and at the facility, became a privilege to be taken away for conduct infractions.

At one time in Athens, there were two answering services, each sponsored by a different group (like competing private ambulance services!) where prestige seemed to come ahead of reaching the still-suffering alcoholic the best way possible. Athens Area Intergroup was formed in 1982, and now handles a 7-day-a-week answering service that draws volunteers from nearly every group in Athens-Clarke County, Watkinsville (District 11), and Danielsville.

Past DCMs have been Jimmy D., Joe T., Carl M., Randy A., Eddie M., Doug R., and Kathleen G.

Alumni Group

The Alumni Group was founded March 17, 1981 by Helen S. and Bill T. Another early member was Vivian M. They first met at the Commencement House, a recovery center but never a recovery residence, at 8:00 PM. The group currently meets at 6:30 PM on Sundays (a speaker meeting) and at 8:00 PM on Wednesdays. There are 31 home group members.

The group moved to the basement of the Talmadge Building on the grounds of Athens Regional Hospital in 1983, and to the ground floor of the Talmadge Building in approximately 1987, when the meetings became non-smoking.

The group has a lot of newcomers from the treatment center at Athens Regional Medical Center (the Commencement Center) who come and go, but a core group of people stay with the group.

The group has had many humorous incidents over the years, as well as its share of sad ones. In 1986, a GSR was elected who had only 3 months sobriety. He ran off with the group's money and got drunk. Since then, the group has elected trusted servants with more time! One member who "went out" came back drunk with his shoes on the wrong feet. Another who asked to chair said it got him drunk. People guess he's still scared; he hasn't been back. There was one member who didn't want anyone else to set up the meeting. If someone did, he would rearrange the chairs and ashtrays. He died sober some years later.

Athens Biscayne Group

The Athens Biscayne Group was founded in January 1970 by Russ and Margaret R. and one other. They first met at Baxter and Church St., in a building leased to one of the members for \$1 a year on the condition that the group keep the owner's wife sober. She did stay sober, for 7 years, while she divorced that husband and married someone in AA. She returned to drinking after she left the second husband, who started drinking again when he moved to Florida.

That first building was condemned and cold; water dripped in buckets when it rained. In 1972, the group moved to a building on Rowe Rd., in an industrial area near a chicken plant. Although chickens sometimes wandered into the meetings, rent jumped to \$300 per month. There were 10 or 12 members at the time, including Gip P., Cuz M., Russ and Margaret R., Luke D., Dr. Ben, Jim H., Bill S., Calvin M., Frank D., Raile D., and Jean A.

The group stressed unity and tough love. "If you don't want to be here, don't be here!" "The essence of the problem is irresponsibility."

Many people relapsed early, although most of those early members achieved long term sobriety. The group had a rule that drunks couldn't be kicked out. For some years, before medical facilities were available to take care of drunks, the building was used as a 72-hour drying out place. Since treatment centers started, that is no longer necessary.

In 1984, the group moved to its current location on Chase St., a former barbecue restaurant. There are now approximately 50 members.

A big increase in people attending meetings during 1992 was handled by knocking out walls and moving the kitchen to the back of the building, where the once-a-week women's meeting had been held and where many a sponsor-sponsee one-on-one was held at all hours of the day and night. To replace the former "back room," the old barbecue pit across the parking lot was converted into an additional meeting room. This is where the women's meeting is now held, as well as a new Saturday morning "As Bill Sees It" meeting and spur-of-the-moment overflow meetings, usually for newcomers.

The meeting place for the group is also a clubhouse called the "Biscayne Room," with a requirement for membership of 30 days sobriety and fees of \$10 a month. The club members have keys, and the building is usually open about 14 hours a day. This group still has a number of people who get sober "off the street," without benefit of a treatment center. Many a drunk has found early sobriety in the Biscayne Room by spending all their free hours in that safe space, reading AA literature, drinking pots of coffee, and "shaking it out" in the company of sober members.

Breezy Knob Group

The Breezy Knob group was founded in Commerce in the summer of 1972 by the late Billy B. Co-founders were Lewis S., W.T. M. and Lynn B. The group chose the name Breezy Knob because of the location of their meeting place. They first met in the office of Billy Bolton Motors. The used car dealership was located on a small knob, and a breeze blew continuously. Other early members were Charlton T., Larry C., Bob W., C.L. H., Charles V., Johnny J., Jerry H., and Joe H.

Billy B. had gotten sober at the Athens Biscayne Group, about 20 miles from Commerce. He realized the need for a local group and worked to get one started in Commerce. Many members of the Athens Biscayne Group were very helpful in getting the group established and going. The group first met at 8:30 PM on Tuesdays and Saturdays. They now have 14 home group members and meet at 8:30 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 7:00 PM on Saturdays. They moved the meeting to Central Avenue in Commerce in 1984.

The group celebrated its anniversary for several years with barbecues and dinners and attendance was really great. For some reason, this fell by the wayside. The group has not grown very much in numbers, but the closeness of the members and the love of the fellowship is very real.

Billy B. passed away after 18 years of continuous sobriety but his teachings and AA messages are still remembered by many.

Cobb Group

By the spring of 1983, the idea of establishing a men's recovery residence in Athens was being seriously considered by a number of people. An initial step was to find a site. Margaret R. first recognized the potential of the empty Cobb House, 698 Pope Street, as a possibility. She spoke with Spaulding (Russ) R., and they in turn discussed this matter with Bill T. Soon, these 3 approached Warren R., Jim H., and Harry N. with the concept. They met and decided to make the Cobb House the home of the Athens Recovery Residence (A.R.R.).

From the start, they recognized that a successful recovery residence would require, among other things, a strong Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) approach. Therefore, almost simultaneously, a new AA group was formed - the Cobb Group. Jim H., Spaulding R. and Bill T. were the original three spearheads. They were closely followed by Randy A., Vicki M., and Philip M. Other persons joined on a steady basis. Of course, the men living in the Recovery Residence were regulars at those early meetings.

The first recorded meeting of the Cobb Group was held on Saturday evening, May 18, 1983. This was an open speaker meeting. A Tuesday evening open discussion meeting was the next to develop. It was followed by a Wednesday evening men's closed discussion meeting. Still later, a Sunday evening open discussion meeting first met on New Years Day in 1984. Now, 22 meetings a week are held in the historic Cobb House.

The noon meetings, which began on May 9, 1984, initially met only on Fridays. Soon, however, Monday and Wednesday meetings were added. Today noon meetings are held Monday through Saturday. They consist of both closed non-smoking and open smoking types. There is also one on Sunday morning at 10:00. For several years a Thursday evening Living Sober meeting was held; it folded in 1993.

The Cobb Group registered as an official group with the General Service Office on October 7, 1983. Eleven persons were present. The original trusted servants of the group were Randy A., GSR, and Vicki M, Secretary-Treasurer. Later, Randy became the DCM for District 16B.

In the early days, the Cobb Group gave half of its contributions to the ARR. When ARR changed locations due to economic reasons, the Pope Street Association (PSA) was formed. Its basic purpose was to promote AA activities in the Cobb House and to insure its maintenance and upkeep. Hence, the Cobb Group began giving its contributions to PSA rather than ARR.

Today the Cobb Group provides a central location for many of the area AA meetings, the District 16B monthly meetings, the Athens Area Intergroup meetings and various workshops put on by the Athens Area Intergroup.

Attendance at the Cobb Group varies from 10 to 50 people, with approximately 100 persons daily making their way to Cobb Group meetings. The noon meetings have become the most well attended at the Cobb Group. Typically on holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and the Fourth of July, food is served after the noon meetings. These events are always well attended and appreciated.

Members of the Cobb Group have devoted many hours of hard work to maintaining the Cobb House and have shared many hours of fun and fellowship, laughter and tears, joys and sorrows, as well as support, strength and love. The end result is always the same - a spirit of recovery, unity and service.

Down But Not Out Group

The Down But Not Out Group was founded in 1991 by alumni of Charter Winds Hospital. Early members included Lynette F., Titus B., and Debra W. The group meets at the hospital. They started with a late-night Saturday meeting, changed that to 7:00, and later added a Wednesday 7:00 meeting. All meetings are open. There are about 25 members.

The group started very small but has grown over time. The members are very proud of their group. They do lots of volunteer work and have 4 socials a year: picnics, luncheons, dances, banquets, etc.

Easy Does It Group

The Prince Avenue Group met in Emmanuel Episcopal Church from 1970 to 1974. Many members of this group wanted to form a club and their membership was moved to a new group called 12 & 12. Two members (Andy B. and Jimmy D.) of the old Prince Avenue Group did not wish to move, so they borrowed a coffee pot from the Jug Tavern Group in Winder and began the Easy Does It Group, which continues

to meet at Emmanuel. From the beginning, in 1974, the Monday meeting has been closed and the Thursday one open.

Initially the group had 4 to 5 members but all other local groups pitched in to help with attendance. Other early members included Lynn K., Chuck J., Irene J., Andy S., Marsha S., Carl M. and Evelyn D. The group currently has 50 home group members.

Several years ago, attendance at the Monday meeting became too large for a good discussion. The group decided it needed to split the meeting into a beginner's meeting and a step study meeting. Both are currently thriving. Today, Easy Does It is one of the more solid AA groups in the area. The 2 founders of Easy Does It gave the group a strong sense for service work and sponsorship. From the beginning, the group has supported efforts to carry the message into correctional institutions and more recently into treatment facilities.

The strong service orientation of the group is illustrated by the fact that 4 of its members (Jimmy D., Carl M., Doug R. and Kathleen G.) have served 16B as District Committeemen. Easy Does It has served as the host group for many District 16B activities such as workshops and the annual New Years Eve party, thanks to the support it has received from the host facility.

Elberton Group

The Elberton group was founded in 1953, by Jack B. Other early members were Herman G., Ed R., Herbert G., Carroll H., Jim T., Newt C., Jack B., and Bill H.

The group first met at the American Legion Post at 8:00 Thursday and Sunday evenings. They now meet at 8:00 on Tuesday (open discussion), Thursday (closed), and Sunday (open speakers meeting). There are now 18-30 home group members. After numerous moves around town, the group finally settled on lower Heard Street, in approximately 1968.

The third Thursday in every month is an "eating meeting" at 7 PM, with group conscience following. Birthdays are always celebrated on Sunday nights.

The Washington, GA, group helped the Elberton group form. From the Elberton group, groups were formed in Hartwell, Royston, and Lavonia.

Happy Hour Group

The Happy Hour Group was founded in spring 1987 by Georgia McC. (now P.) and Ricky W. Other early members were Carl

B., Valerie W., and Billy H., the GSR when this account was written. Georgia and Ricky started the group because Ricky didn't have a job at the time and both of them were "looking for something constructive to do."

The group has met on all 3 floors of the Cobb House in Athens at 5:30. They are currently on the top floor and have 15 home group members.

The Cobb House had been a recovery house as well as the meeting place for the Cobb Group, and many people in early recovery would go to the house to "hang out and talk." When the treatment facility was closed, the "hanger outers" decided to start a meeting during the "Happy Hour" time they had been hanging around there. A year later, they had their first speaker, Chuck J., to celebrate a birthday and the group's first anniversary.

The group started out meeting 3 days a week and grew into a 7-day-a-week group with both open and closed meetings, speaker meetings, birthday parties, etc. The group has always been big with newcomers and is big on "acceptance" topics. It has helped many alcoholics to live life on Life's Terms. Over the years, the Happy Hour group has continued to thrive.

Problems, when aired, have always, with the help of a Higher Power, been resolved. The level of difficulty in solving problems has usually corresponded to the amount of dedication of the trusted servants of the group and the amount of cooperative spirit with the trustees of P.S.A. and the other groups. Happy Hour group until recently also had problems keeping trusted servants.

Hart Group

The Hart Group was founded by Jack B., Weldon W., Virgil C., and L.Q. L. in 1979. Other early members were Aubury and Bill B. The group first met at the Hart Telephone Co. building on Monday and Saturday nights at 8:00 PM. Jack B. was the main chairperson in the early days. They now have a closed AA meeting on Monday night, a Step/Traditions study on Wednesday nights, an open meeting on Friday nights, and an open speaker meeting on Saturday nights.

There are now approximately 50 home group members. The group moved to the 79ers Club, Inc., on Fleming St. off Old Hwy. 29 in Hartwell in March 1984. The group holds an annual Christmas party (covered dish, games, presents, and dance) and a Thanksgiving covered dish get-together.

Hoschton Group

The Hoschton Group was founded in October 1987 by Joe T. and Ray and Cheryl M. They first met at the Hoschton United Methodist Church on Monday nights. They moved to Rockwell Masonic Lodge in Hoschton in January 1992, where they now meet on Monday and Friday nights at 8 PM. Attendance is usually 30 to 40; there are about 25 home group members.

In providing the history of the group, the alternate GSR, Bert C., offered this tribute: "I am very grateful to be a member of our group. Twenty-three months ago I would have never thought that I would have a real life. AA has given me a life that I am so grateful for. ... We have a very caring and solid group and we show it. We welcome AA members from other groups as well as anyone who has a desire to stop drinking. There are some with long-time sobriety in our group. They mean a lot to me as well as AA. The Hoschton group in my opinion is solid AA and I'm proud to be a part of it. Thanks so much to AA for being here for me."

Jug Tavern

The Jug Tavern Group was founded June 18, 1971, in Winder. There were 5 charter members: Bob B., Albert W., Harry M., Jack G., and Cliff S. Bob M. of the Watkinsville group was instrumental in supporting the Jug Tavern Group in the early years. All but one of the charter members are still alive and sober. Albert W. passed away in 1993, still sober at the time of his death.

The group originally met in the assembly room of the old Winder hospital, and began with 2 meetings: Wednesday (closed) and Saturday (open/speaker). In 1974, the group moved to its current location, the Jug Tavern Room at the end of New St. The group membership is now able to support 8 meetings a week.

Through the years, the Jug Tavern Group has introduced the Twelve Steps to many an alcoholic. Charter member Bob B. recently celebrated 23 years of sobriety. With members like Bob and many others with long-term sobriety, the Jug Tavern Group continues to carry the message of AA.

Lavonia Group

The Lavonia Group was founded Feb. 5, 1987, by Scut M., Guy M., and James C. Other early members were Bill D., Bill L.,

Mike G., Susan B., Andy P., and Tommy M. The group still meets at the same time and place as at first, 8 PM on Thursdays at the Lavonia Train Depot (now the Chamber of Commerce building). There are approximately 15 home group members.

As from the beginning, the meeting is a closed discussion. An Al-Anon group began at the same date and is still active. For a couple of years, there was a small but steady "Twelve and Twelve" study group at 7 PM.

Every 4th of July, Scut M. hosts a wiener roast/covered dish picnic at his estate. With members of neighboring groups also invited, usually 100 to 150 folks are in attendance.

Living Well Group

The Living Well group was founded May 5, 1985, by Leon M., Valerie W., Lula S., Eddie M., and Thomas. Venus J. joined about 7 months later, and James M. about a year later.

They first met at 4:00 PM on Sundays at the Commencement House on King Avenue in Athens. They moved to Rock Springs Recreation Center in 1986 and to St. Paul's CME Church in 1988, where they now meet at 7:00 PM on Tuesdays and Saturdays. There are 31 home group members.

In 1985 in Athens, AA was growing rapidly, but very few African-Americans were coming into the program. At that time there were only the 5 founders. Leon M. and Valerie W. came up with the idea that perhaps if an AA group could be established in the African-American community, more people could benefit from the 12 Steps and the AA program. The idea was passed on to the other 3 founders, who agreed with some debate that this was a good idea. They immediately established that they would follow the traditions, especially Tradition 5.

Valerie W. was the first GSR; Venus J. was the first Secretary-Treasurer. James M. came along later and was eventually named GSR. The first Tuesday of each month is set aside for Big Book study.

Like any group, Living Well has had growing pains, but is alive and well through our ultimate authority (God).

Madison County Group

Submitted by Dick Thompson, who has 48 years of sobriety in 1993. Formerly known as the Helping Hand group and the Danielsville

Group of Madison County, the Madison County Group now meets on Thursday nights and has 10 home group members.

In September of 1974, AA and Al-Anon meetings started in Danielsville at the Civitan Club. There were open discussion meetings on Tuesday nights and open speaker meetings on Sundays at 4 PM. The founders, the late Bill McC., Dick T., and Snuffy (who disappeared long ago) were joined by 8 to 10 members, including Lee C., Charlotte B., Hap B., Luther H., and Jimmy D. There was good support from Athens and other neighboring groups.

In 1977, we were forced to leave the Civitan Club because there was no restroom in the building, not even a "little house out back." We moved into the small room under the courthouse used by the motor vehicle department during the day. There was no kitchen, but a small restroom. This was hardly more satisfactory than the Civitan Club because it was behind the door of the meeting room and any move you made in there was plainly heard by all in the meeting. Also we were forced to serve instant coffee because we were limited for space in which to put a coffee maker. Complaints were plentiful about the coffee. Alcoholics!!! We can drink beer that tastes as though it came out of a horse or swill rot-gut "likker," but how critical we become over the quality of our refreshments when sober. Here we continued the evening meeting but discontinued the Sunday meetings due to lack of space.

In 1978, we moved to the multi-purpose building in Danielsville, for larger quarters plus a kitchen. The management did not trust us with a key at first, and occasionally preempted our meeting by taking over the room for some political gathering. The fact is that we were not shown a hell of a lot of respect by the community during these early days. They treated us like a bunch of drunks and so we were on the lookout for new quarters.

In 1979, we moved to the Methodist Church hall at the invitation of Rev. Ben Sorrow, a real friend to AA. In gratitude for this we, as a group, attended Sunday morning service, all seated as a body in one of the rear pews. Rev. Ben called attention to us and included a comment about us as examples of practicing Christianity. Pretty heady stuff for a gang of ex-drunks, but we loved him for it. We met here for about 2 years, when for some unknown reason attendance began to decline. After a good many meetings where only 2 to 3 showed up, we concluded that it would be wiser to discontinue, particularly because in Athens, only 10 miles away, there were groups galore where there was better AA than we had to offer under the circumstances.

During this period, from 1979 for the next 10 years, there was no AA group as such in Madison County. Those who had been in the Madison County Group began attending in Athens, Royston, and other neighboring groups. In addition, Lester E. from Ila and a member of

New Freedom Group in Athens spearheaded meetings for probationers who were sentenced to attend AA. They met also in the Methodist Church hall until Lester suffered a bad car wreck and went to a VA hospital, probably for life. Another splinter group that filled in this period was a meeting at the Bluestone Fiberglass plant in Danielsville under the care of Graham N., a recovering AA member from Danielsville. This was officially known as the gin-house meeting because it was held in what was formerly an old cotton gin. Strictly speaking it was not a group because it was not represented in service structure activities like GSO, Intergroup, etc., but they did keep the breath of AA alive until the conventional AA group was revived.

In September 1989, Dick T. and Janet P. decided to try again to get a group going in Danielsville. In case anyone wonders why this unusual effort to start AA in Madison County, it can be explained by the fact that Dick T. retired and moved into Comer (Madison County). Being stupid, or stubborn, or both, he wouldn't give up and when Janet, then working for Mental Health, offered to lend a hand they went for it. Ironically, Janet, not aware of the past problems of meetings in the Danielsville Multi-Purpose Building, went ahead and arranged for the meetings there and then was suddenly transferred to Jekyll Island. The new group was back in the old digs. We advertised in the local paper and began getting 15-20 newcomers per meeting. After about 2 years of closed discussion meetings every Tuesday with 1 monthly open speaker meeting we found ourselves in a pretty stable group. Then some of the newer members began to get grandiose ideas: a local clubhouse, 2 meetings a week. Wiser heads convinced the others that a clubhouse was out of the question, and experience had shown that 2 meetings a week amounted only to 1 meeting split in half. Nevertheless, it was tried, and nearly broke up the group.

Here's how: The same lack of cooperation that we had experienced when we met there 10 years earlier existed. Trouble over keys, locks changed without our knowing it, chairs locked up so that we could not seat the attendance, and other problems induced us to go back to the Methodist hall. So now we were committed to 2 meetings a week, and in 2 different locations - a closed discussion meeting at Multi-Purpose and an AA study meeting at the Methodist hall, one at 8:00 and the other at 8:15. Actually what had happened was that the group had split into 2 separate factions; some new members who wanted to run things their way and the "old guard" opposing these new plans.

However, any doubts that our Higher Power was with us were dispelled by the outcome of this confusion. We did not break up but grew closer and worked things out so that we had a better, stronger group. Ultimately the advocates of 2 meetings a week agreed that one well attended was better and so today we have an open discussion

meeting at the Methodist hall at 8:15 every Thursday except for an open speaker meeting every third Thursday of the month. We average between 12 and 20 members and are celebrating birthdays regularly. The fellowship is strong and we are regularly attracting new members. The Methodist preachers have been most cooperative.

Over the years we have held step meetings, traditions meetings, Big Book meetings, group and individual anniversaries, beginner's meetings, and group consciences. Today there is enough AA in the hearts and minds of enough people in Madison County to insure that the program will always be there in the future whenever the Higher Power decides to offer the gift of sobriety to our children and children's children. With His help, we have been privileged to pass it on.

Dick added at the end of his group's history, "This history of Georgia AA will be more and more appreciated as time passes, for our history of the struggles and faith of those who kept the light of AA shining and shining for us gives us strength and sobriety."

New Freedom Group

The New Freedom Group of Alcoholics Anonymous began as a meeting in April of 1975. The meeting was set up by Jerry T. and Barbara J. and met on Friday nights in the Covenant Presbyterian Church on Gaines School Rd. Giving support to the meeting and its desires to become an official group was Floyd B. from the Oconee County Group in Watkinsville. Due to delayed paperwork, the meeting was not listed as an official group until 3/24/76. Barbara was the first GSR of the group and Jerry was the contact person. There were 5 members at that time.

In the period 1979 through 1983 the group remained at such a low membership that it reverted back to a meeting instead of a group. There is no record of any permanent trusted servants being named during that time. Dr. Bill T., Jim H., Emory S., Irene J. and others took turns attending to the business of the meetings. Other early members were Beany H., Dorthea D., Bill S., Jerry McC., and Nelson R.

In 1983 through 1984, Vicki A. was treasurer. There is no record of the GSR in those years. In 1985 Rose Mary K. was elected treasurer along with Lester E. as GSR. Rose Mary remained treasurer for the next four years. Lester was replaced as GSR by Jim S. in 1986. Jim reestablished formal contact with the General Service Office in New York and New Freedom has been a viable group since. The group has grown from 20 members in 1989 to 35 by 1991 and continues to meet twice weekly (8:30 PM Tuesdays and Fridays) at Covenant Presbyterian Church. The group celebrates its anniversary the last Friday of March.

Rayle Group

The Rayle Group was founded April 18, 1990 by Bradley B., David R., and Harold E. Other early members were James J., Christine G., Bobby P., and Bobby W. The group first met at the Rayle City Hall and moved to Rock Methodist Church Annex in June of 1992, where it continues to hold a closed discussion meeting on Wednesday nights at 8:00.

There are now 12 home group members. The group holds an annual group anniversary covered dish dinner/speaker meeting; a Christmas covered dish dinner/speaker meeting; and members' birthday celebration speaker meetings.

Royston Addicted Group

The Royston Addicted Group was founded in June 1990 by Sam S., Scut M., and Lanier L. They meet at 8 PM at the Royston Civic Center, with speaker meetings on the last Wednesday of each month. There are currently 15 home group members.

Because another meeting had recently closed, Scut (from the Lavonia Group), Sam (from Royston) and Lanier (from the Hart Group) felt a need for a group in the area and started a meeting. Several people began supporting the group. To avoid any controversy about NA or AA, they had group conscience and came up with the name Royston Addicted Group, joking that they didn't care if a person was addicted to Sugar Pops - if it was a problem, they wanted to help. Because of non-alcoholic drivers bringing people with no license, and court-sent people coming, etc., they elected to open the meetings. As a result of these group conscience decisions, they feel they continue to carry the message to suffering alcoholics.

Group members gave their phone numbers to social workers in the local hospital in case alcohol was a problem to a patient and they asked for help. Group members visit such people, sharing their experience and hope with them. Lanier says, "Some came, some stayed, some didn't, but we stayed. As a result, we're sober and hope to stay that way. If you need us, call us. We'd love to have you come to see us, help us try to carry the message, practice the principles, and most of all - never forget where we came from and where we are."

Zone C

Buford Group

The Buford Group was started in January 1977 at the request of Rev. C. (pastor of the Presbyterian church). Bobby L. made the first pot of coffee after Rev. C. asked him to start an AA meeting.

Buford people attending the early meetings were Bobby L., Hal K., Anne K., Ann H., J.W. H., Wiley H., Doug D., Peggy R., John R., Ron B., Bob B., David B., David R., Larry B., Mike T., Lewis C., and Merle E.

It was the fourth group in the county and district. At that time, each group only had 1 meeting a week and the same group of AAs went from 1 group to another. They also had support from Gainesville and Cumming AA members. In the beginning, the attendance was about 15 people, including Al-Anons.

Ann H. was the first GSR. She served 3 years, as the district was just getting active in service work. The meeting was an open discussion on Friday nights.

About 1980, a lady named Barbara E. came to Buford from the Atlanta area. She once had 6 years, and, at the time she came to our group, she was struggling to stay sober. She is responsible for the Tuesday night meeting being added.

The meetings were all open until 1981. When the Al-Anons started their own meeting, the AA group closed its meetings. The group successfully celebrated its 10th anniversary by having a picnic on Lake Lanier.

Buford Morningside

The Morningside meeting was started in support of the Gwinnett Hospital System's Buford Treatment Facility, which opened its doors on October 26, 1982. Members of the Buford Group (Bobby L., J.W. H., Ann H., and Tommy H.) brought AA to the patients in the hospital's cafeteria.

In the spring of 1983, the group began to participate in District 16C and established a strong tradition of being active in service work. There were some struggles along the way (as for all of us!) but the Buford Morningside Group is best characterized by the love and laughter that is obvious on Monday and Thursday nights at 8PM.

The treatment center relocated to Lawrenceville in the fall of 1994. The Buford Morningside Group helped introduce many newcomers to Alcoholics Anonymous and is still striving to carry the message in its new location at Rock Springs Methodist Church on Rock

Springs Road just South of Highway 20 near the intersection of Highway 20 and Interstate 85.

Duluth Group

The Duluth Group was founded January 30, 1990, by Judy W. and Ann B. Other early members were Ronnie W., Grove, Tom M., Maurine M., Martha and Charley. They started meeting at Peachtree Presbyterian Church in Duluth for a Big Book Study at 8 PM on Tuesdays. The group, with 5 members, also has a closed discussion meeting on Thursdays at 8 PM.

Gwinnett Triangle

The Gwinnett Triangle Group was started in May 1983 by Marty M. and Vicki W. The group meets at the corner of Highway 29 and Harben Rd. in the Calvary Baptist Church in Lilburn, Georgia. The name was derived from the geographical location of the meeting - in the middle of the triangular area of Tucker, Lilburn, and Stone Mountain.

The group conscience voted to study the 12 steps primarily. The first meeting night was on a Thursday and by January 1994 the group expanded to Tuesday nights also.

Peachtree Corners

The Peachtree Corners AA group was founded on April 29, 1985, by Cordi and Syd S., Jim and Isabel L., and Bill S. During the early years a crowd of 10-12 was common. The early pillars included Tom S., Gary K., and Bruce U. The group still meets at its original site, Christ the King Lutheran Church, every Monday and Friday evenings at 8:00 PM.

Peachtree Corners group prides itself on being a comfortable place for newcomers to get and stay sober. Our group tries to meet the AA needs of the individuals attending. On Monday evenings we divide into 5 groups: 2 beginners meetings, 2 step meeting, and a Big Book group. On Fridays we divide into 2 beginners groups and 3 small open discussion meetings.

The group is guided by a steering committee comprised of 12 members, which meets monthly. A group conscience is held on alternate months beginning in January.

The last Friday of each month is reserved for a birthday speakers meeting. A special birthday medallion is giving to celebrants,

and a party with cake is provided after the meeting. We average 5 to 7 birthdays per month.

Two events highlight our social calendar. We have a family picnic at Jones Bridge Park in September. We serve about 100 people typical picnic fare. Games and activities hold the crowd for 3 to 5 hours.

The other event highlight is our New Year's Eve dinner dance held at a nice hotel within the area. It is great going to a sober event such as this.

Our group has its problems, like any group that is as large as ours. Our average attendance is 75 per meeting out of 123 home group members. However, the diverse personalities that create the problems also serve as the group's strengths. Our objective of living sober remains in focus - we try not to have a drink today and go to meetings - at least every Monday and Friday.

Zone D

Five Forks Sobriety

Some sober alcoholics started talking about the need for an AA group in the Five Forks area of Lilburn. They got excited about the idea and said they would support such a group. When the pastor of St. John Neumann Catholic Church, Father R., was approached with the idea, he very warmly welcomed us. Now all we needed was a coffee pot and a Big Book.

We held a group conscience meeting to name the group. Someone suggested St. John Neumann, but we knew that would imply affiliation, which is not in keeping with the Traditions, so that name was thrown out. Someone suggested Five Forks, and then someone said Five Forks Sobriety sounded more like an AA group. Everyone liked that name, and it was voted in unanimously. That was our first meeting, January 3, 1984. Joe S. and Cleone S. are considered the group founders, and other early members are Carol M., Barry J., Leo A., and Jim L. Trusted servants elected at that first meeting were: secretary Carol M., GSR Barry J., and treasurer Leo A.

We started off with one meeting a week, a Friday night 8:00 closed discussion in a classroom in the main church building. In February, a month after the group started, we held our first birthday meeting. Cleone S. celebrated 4 years, and her speaker was Corliss G. The group invited Father R. to attend this birthday. When Corliss finished her talk, he said, "You have just heard the gospel." The group made its first AA contributions on July 9, 1984, and by August 28th had 10 members.

About a year later, when the new school building was completed, we moved to that facility. This gave us more space, which was appreciated and badly needed, for at this time the group was attracting enough people to split into 2 rooms. A Thursday night 8:30 closed Step meeting was then started. The group was growing and serving a real need, just as the first members believed it would. Later on the church acquired some adjacent land with a brick house that they let the group use. In 1993, the church asked the group to adhere to a non-smoking policy inside the meeting house. The request has been well received.

The Thursday night meeting time has changed to 8:00, and a Big Book study was added on that night. The 2 weekly meetings as well as the monthly group conscience meeting have a good attendance record. Regarding the founders, Joe moved to Florida, and Cleone stopped attending the group in February 1985. The original trusted servants are all still sober.

Ten years after it began, the Five Forks Sobriety group of Alcoholics Anonymous is still going strong, and we welcome you.

Lawrenceville Group

The Lawrenceville Group was founded by Hal K. and Walter in November 1969, 1 month after the Norcross Group, making it the second oldest group in Gwinnett County. The group first met in temporary quarters at St. Edwards Church (a storefront on Highway 20) and moved with the church in 1971 to Moon Road. At the time the group had approximately 10 members. Other early members were John C., Bobby L., Bill S., Ken G., and Alvin D.

In 1976, the group moved to the Presbyterian Church on Lawrenceville/Suwanee Road and Highway 120. From there, the group moved to its present location at Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church on Highway 29.

In 1992, membership in the group had declined to the point where only 2 or 3 people were attending. The group was actually at the point of disbanding when a group led by Syd S. joined together to save it. Several AAs in addition to Syd moved their home group to the Lawrenceville Group to offer support. The group is making a comeback with 12 home group members and attendance currently at 20 plus.

Lilburn Third Tradition Group

The Lilburn Third Tradition group something like this: 3 drunks, Syd S. and Jim and Carol M., started talking about the need for

a non-smoking meeting which led to an informal "group" conscience where it was decided to start a new meeting. One day in February 1988, these 3 sober alcoholics met with Pastor S. in his study at Trinity Lutheran Church to discuss the prospect of starting an AA meeting. The pastor was very receptive and said he would let us know the outcome after presenting the idea to his church board. It was several what-seemed-like-long weeks before we got the okay. Talk about happy, joyous and free - that was us!

Happy ... to have such a wonderful facility to hold meetings.

Joyous, because this loving God, our one ultimate authority, had expressed himself with another AA blessing.

Free ... free from smoke.

Syd, Jim and myself (Carol), each with our own chronic disease that made attendance at smoking meetings life-threatening, were sure there was a need for this kind of meeting. Jim and I were going to the only non-smoking meeting, in Dunwoody on Saturday night, and Syd was attending smoking meetings. We knew there must be others like us around who would benefit; however, there were skeptics who said it would never go over. Dare we say, almost the only scoffers at non-smoking AA meetings are those who never tried it enough?

Now we needed a name. Each one of us thought about it and group conscience voted in Syd's nomination of Lilburn Third Tradition. We thought it was a good choice because we wanted the group to be known as one strong in the traditions, especially the third tradition which states, "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking."

We had the church's approval and were now ready to hold our first meeting on Monday night. Jim and I brought in our coffee pot, a used Big Book and Twelve and Twelve purchased from a second-hand book store, plus some literature we had accumulated at home. Syd brought Oreos.

Although we were familiar with the 11th tradition which states in part, "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion," we thought if we offered cookies the word would get around and that would help bring people in. We needed all the help we could get. Thus, a Lilburn Third Tradition custom began, that of having cookies at every meeting, something people enjoy and have come to expect.

When a new meeting is starting up, you never know if anyone will show up. Anyhow, Syd, Jim and I were in the downstairs part of the church ready for the first meeting when a tall man by the name of Ron N. walked in and asked if this was the AA meeting. He said the pastor had told him about it. We were so happy and excited, another blessing, what a wonderful start! Wow, 4 members and we hadn't even read "How It Works" yet.

We started out with one closed discussion meeting on Monday nights, topic to be taken from "How It Works." As the group started to grow we went back to the pastor and requested an additional meeting night. Thus was born the Saturday night meeting.

This group fills a real need and offers the recovering alcoholic a variety. At Monday's closed discussion meeting we break up into smaller groups to include a beginner, Step, Traditions and How It Works meeting. Saturday night offers a closed How It Works and Big Book meeting as well as open speaker's meeting the last Saturday of each month.

Today our membership numbers 34. The meetings are well attended, even spilling over into the hall. Three of the 4 original members are still active sober members of this group. Syd is deceased. We shall always remember Syd as a founder, active member and trusted servant. We gratefully acknowledge his service work contributions to this group and AA as a whole.

May the Lilburn Third Tradition group remember its primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and may it always abide by the 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. After all, that is what keeps our fellowship together.

Lunch Bunch

For years, a meeting was held at the Gwinnett Room at noon, but it wasn't a group. Volunteers chaired the meeting; Roy S. was one of the first regular chairpersons. On August 31, 1987, when we finally decided to make the meeting a group, the DCM, Syd S., met with Nell W., Bobby W., Joe R., Mattie W., and Dan S., and a group was formed. The first decision was to name the group the Lunch Bunch.

We did not elect people to service positions; we were told what we would do. Nell W., with 6 months sobriety, was told she would be secretary/treasurer. Mattie W. was in poor health and could not serve. Joe R. was to be GSR, and Bobby W. alternate GSR. Joe was to take Bobby to the state assembly and show him the ropes, then he would be GSR. Bobby had 3 months of sobriety at this time. Syd S. told Nell she was to chair all the meetings, collect the money, pay the bills, etc. This she did for 3 1/2 years. Once in a while someone else would chair a meeting or 2. Nell was beginning to get a resentment because no one wanted to get into service work. Joan P. served as the literature chairperson for the first 4 years.

This has now changed. Syd himself was GSR for 1990. By 1990-91 the group had really grown and members were staying sober. September 1, 1992, the Lunch Bunch celebrated its fifth year

anniversary with an impressive layout of food provided by members, decorations, and an outstanding guest speaker, Harold R. The Lunch Bunch had come of age.

The Lunch Bunch has always been tradition-minded. Before any decisions are made on a group level, the group makes sure no Tradition would be violated. The Lunch Bunch always pays rent, supports the local Intergroup, the District, state office in Macon, Pre-Paid Convention, and GSO in New York. The Lunch Bunch sent money to the South Carolina state office after Hurricane Hugo went through the Charleston area to help them buy more literature, and did the same for the Miami area after Andrew swept through there.

The group feels that the individual member's sobriety birthday is very special. The individual chooses the type of meeting: speaker, discussion, etc. A bronze birthday chip is purchase by the group. The individual chooses their cake, the chairman, the readers, etc.

Regular meetings are open discussion. The attendance is large enough that the group splits into 2 meetings. The Lunch Bunch signs papers for court mandates only after the person has attended an orientation meeting. About 8 men and women of the group take AA meetings to jails and treatment centers. The group voted to assist the institutional program by providing Big Books to the women's 1:30 Thursday jail meeting.

The Lunch Bunch looks forward to a bright future.

Surrender to Win Group

In spring 1991, 2 recovering women alcoholics, Carol M. and Gwen G., discussed the possibility of starting a daytime meeting in the Mountain Park area. We felt there was a real need since there were no daytime meetings close by. We did our research, and found out through Syd S. that All Saints Lutheran Church was receptive to AA but only if it was a non-smoking meeting. That suited us just fine. Carol and Gwen met with Pastor E. in his office. He welcomed us and offered AA a lovely large meeting room upstairs which they called the "Upper Room." This was to be our meeting room until the new church addition was completed. We had to carry water upstairs, but no one seemed to mind. The Upper Room created a cozy and relaxed atmosphere for our Tuesday noon meeting.

Right off, the meeting was attended by approximately 6 to 8 people, mostly homemakers, retirees, and others who could fit the meeting into their day. We had a number of regulars. We looked forward to seeing each other each week and missed the ones not present. New faces were always welcome; it was always exciting to see who would show up that day.

We started off as a "meeting" because we didn't have any members, but that was short-lived thanks to our first member, Syd. Now we were officially a "group." Syd served as GSR, Carol M., a regular, served as secretary, and Don S. served as treasurer. Mark L. was another early member. We were fast outgrowing the Upper Room when the new addition was finished, a beautiful facility with multiple classrooms, a large hall and real running water. This paved the way for 2 night meetings (Wednesday and Sunday) to be added and from the beginning they have been well attended. Today it's standing-room-only sometimes. (Or, are those people exercising free will?)

A group that follows the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous will always grow and Surrender to Win is no exception. Starting out with only one member, the group now has a membership of 9. The night meetings are attended by a large number of non-members, enthusiastic people who are always eager to serve. The little noon meeting is still carrying the AA message to whomever stops by and has a loyal following who show up and make the coffee. This meeting was always attended by our first member, Syd. Since he usually chaired this meeting, it was his responsibility to bring the cookies. He always brought Oreos, said they were his favorite. Some of the group asked him to please bring another kind for a change but he was self-will run riot where Oreos were concerned.

Syd is deceased but his legacy lives on by his giving Surrender to Win its name. Syd is gone but not forgotten ... for his service to Surrender to Win and for carrying such a beautiful AA message to so many.

We Can Relate Group

Formerly known as the Friendship Group, this group was founded in 1983 by Wayne M., Bruce A., and Mike C. Other early members were Amy D. and Charlie W. They first met on Born St. in Lawrenceville 3 times a week. With 12 home group members, they now meet on Plainview Drive in Lawrenceville 4 times a week, including a candlelight closed discussion meeting at 11 PM on Fridays.

ASSEMBLY, FORUM, AND CONFERENCE

Georgia State Assembly and Service Manual

The Assembly is where the business of Georgia AA is carried on. But this was not always the case.

As it was nationally with Bill W. and Dr. Bob, a small group of people were the representatives of AA in Georgia in the early years. That's probably the way it had to happen to survive those first years.

One of our oldtimers and former delegates says that Georgia AA was being run by a "clique" of old timers when he first got sober.

In August 1951, the Southeastern Conference was held in Atlanta and was attended by co-founder Bill W. He met with some of the Georgia leaders to discuss his proposal for a Georgia Service Conference. At that time, Neely D. was elected our first Georgia delegate, and Georgia was designated as Area 16.

During the next 10 to 15 years, AA in Georgia at the state level was run by this group that had met with Bill. Most of the state business was conducted at the annual state conventions. By around 1956, some of the "small business" was handled out of Macon, but the main business was still conducted at the conventions.

At one of the smaller meetings in Macon attended by Committee Members and GSRs, on January 16, 1967, the first motion was made to form a permanent state assembly.

On April 3, 1966, the first meeting of DCMs at the Dempsey Hotel was held to plan the state structure and operating procedure for a permanent state assembly. Delegate Virgil W. outlined the proposals, stating that they were 95% from the AA literature "Partners in AA," "The GSR," "AA Traditions," "AA Groups," and the "Third Legacy Manual." Virgil's proposals, taken back to the GSRs by the DCMs from that meeting, later became the state manual. Virgil had contacted Lillian A. (later Lillian M.), who had agreed to accept the job of state secretary for \$50 per month. Lillian handled the state's AA business out of her home in Macon, or out of her handbag, as the stories go.

On May 15, 1966, the adoption of a state "handbook" based on Virgil's proposals was voted in unanimously. The handbook was published as the state service manual in 1978.

In 1976, 10 years after a permanent state office was proposed, delegate Allen R. brought the subject back up. Allen said the only question in 1966 had been "when," and that since it had been 10 years, it was now time. The Assembly agreed. By May 1977, the business office had been set up on Ingleside Ave. in Macon. In July of 1987, the office moved to Riverside Plaza.

The biggest difference in Georgia procedures, the method used for the election of the delegate, was in Virgil's original proposals. This difference does not take place until three ballots have failed to give one

candidate a 2/3 majority. In most places, following the Third Legacy Procedure, if there

still is no 2/3 majority after a fourth ballot, a vote is taken on whether to have a fifth ballot. After the fourth or fifth ballot, depending on the outcome of that vote, the names are put in a hat and the name drawn becomes the delegate. In Georgia, the requirement for a 2/3 majority is dropped on the fourth ballot and a delegate is chosen by a simple majority.

January 1994 saw the sixth printing of the state manual.

The purpose of the Assembly is stated very well in our service manual: "The Georgia State AA Service Assembly is the combined efforts of every AA group in the state through the groups' elected GSRs to resolve all issues affecting Georgia AA as a whole, and to send the elected delegate form the Assembly to the General Service Conference to resolve all issues affecting AA as a whole."

The Southeastern Conference

The Southeast Region of Alcoholics Anonymous is comprised of 16 Areas in 10 Southeastern states and Puerto Rico. The Southeastern Conference, "the Granddaddy of them all," was started in 1945 by several wealthy AAs who wanted a place to go and something to do to celebrate sobriety. It is the oldest conference in AA.

It was the first time the word conference appeared in association with AA. Beginning with the General Service Conference in 1951, AA gatherings were asked not to use the word conference, except for the Southeastern Conference, because it had preceded the General Service Conference.

The first Southeastern Conference was held at the Tutwiler Hotel in Birmingham, Ala., on October 8, 1945. The conference was moved from state to state, and, in the late 1960s, for financial reasons, the conference was combined with the state conventions.

The Southeastern Conference has been held in Atlanta on 5 occasions. The 50th Southeastern Conference, in conjunction with the 41st Georgia Pre-Paid Convention, was held at the Omni Hotel and the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta in August 1994.

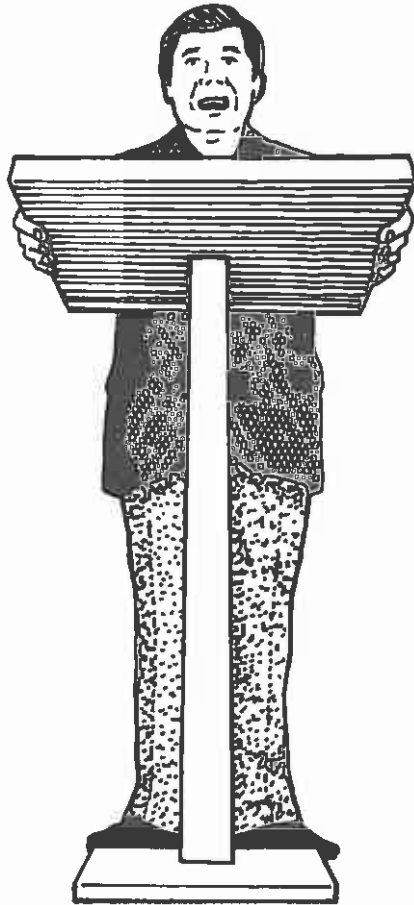
The Southeast Regional Forum

Regional forums originated in 1975 from an idea of the late Chair of the Board Emeritus, Dr. Jack Norris. The forums are weekend

sharing sessions designed to enhance and widen communication among service and potential service people and representatives of the General Service Board, staff, and Grapevine staff.

At the invitation of a region, 4 forums are held each year. Since the U.S./Canada structure is made up of 8 regions, a regional forum is held every other year in each region, on a rotating basis.

The first regional forum was held on a trial basis in Atlanta in 1975. It had an attendance of 275 and caught on immediately. The Southeast Regional Forum is now held in December of each even-numbered year at various locations within the region.





DELEGATES

Neely D., 1952-1953 (deceased)

Neely D. was among the pioneer women in Georgia AA as well as Georgia's first delegate. She was the service sponsor for Joe P., who calls her "probably the strongest and most influential person in the history of Georgia's service structure." Neely continued in service work into the mid-1970s. See the histories of Metro Atlanta in general, the Northeast Group (Metro District), and the Albany Central Group (District 1), for information on her contributions to Georgia AA.

Monty M., 1954-1955 (deceased)

See the history of the Albany Central Group (District 1) for mentions of Monty's election and contributions to Georgia AA.

Jim O'B., 1956-1957 (deceased)

Louis M., 1958-1959 (deceased)

Some of Louis's contributions are discussed in the history of District 12 and Augusta. Bo W.'s delegate history also mentions his help.

Clarence R., 1960-1961

Gene C., 1962-1963 (deceased)

Heflin D., 1964-1965 (deceased)

Virgil W.'s delegate history discusses some of Heflin's contributions.

Virgil W., 1966-1967

From my sobriety date of February 5, 1960, until October 1961, my wife and I were very happy in AA, attending meetings, retreats, and conventions. We did not know of, or hear of, any structure or organization within our state, or any other place, to be honest. It was not discussed within the groups.

In October 1961, we attended the state convention in Columbus. On Saturday morning, I was asked who my group's GSR was. My question was, "What is a GSR?" The answer I received was, "It doesn't matter, just come to the meeting this afternoon where we will elect a delegate for '62 and '63."

I then asked what I was supposed to do, and was told to hold up my hand and vote. I asked, "Vote for who?" I was told, "We will tell you when it's time."

Saturday afternoon was quite a set-to, with speech making, politicking, fussing, arguing, and even crying. Little did I know that the "clique" had their man picked out, and elected him.

I knew the above was wrong and not the way a wonderful program such as AA should be operated. I began to investigate, questioning members, and finally learning that the "clique" was the group of so-called "old timers" that had met with Bill W. back in 1951 and elected Neely D. our first delegate.

Heflin D. was elected delegate for 1964-65, and we met and discussed several times our state situation and the procedure to get a state assembly underway. In January 1965, a motion was made to institute a permanent State Assembly. In May 1965, Fred N. presented a map to the meeting covering redistricting of the state and proposed electing a full slate of GSRs and Committee Members. The establishment of a permanent State Assembly was postponed.

In September 1965, I was elected state delegate, and advised everyone to be prepared to vote on redistricting at the next meeting. In January 1966, the proposed redistricting plan was accepted. The GSRs from the newly formed districts selected District Committee Members at the same meeting.

Immediately after the January 1966 meeting, I began traveling the state of Georgia discussing our proposed Assembly structure with the older members of our program, such as Ted N. of Cuthbert; Coot B. of Bainbridge; Ernest B. of Valdosta; Ruth B. of Brunswick; a member whose name I don't remember from Lakeland; Corneil F., Bob F., and Jim O'B. of Savannah; Louis M. of Augusta; Bill W. of Dublin; Courtney M. of Albany; and many others, including Herb M., General Manager of the General Service Office (GSO) in New York.

I spent much time with the above, receiving and discussing their input, and combining their experience and ideas into a set of proposals to be presented to all the members within the state.

These proposals were typed and enough copies made to supply every committee member, GSR, and everyone else interested. In May 1966, a full Assembly vote was held on the establishing of a permanent State Assembly. Of the 15 Committee Members and 66 GSRs answering the roll call, the vote was 70 for and 11 against. The Georgia State Assembly was now a reality and in session.

Joe C., 1968-1969 (deceased)

Joe was from the Vidalia-Lyons area.

Bob R., 1970-1971

John D., 1972-1973

Robert (Bob) F., 1974-1975 (deceased)

Bob wrote the history of the Savannah Group (District 5C). Also see Bob's story in the Old-Timers section.

Allen R., 1976-1977

Keith S., 1978-1979

Keith S. went to his first AA meeting in October 1971. He went to treatment at Willingway Hospital in November of that year and had his last drink on January 4, 1972.

Later in 1972, he became GSR of the Waycross Group. He was elected DCM for District 3 for 1976-77, state delegate from 1978-79, and, in the usual progression, state chairperson in 1980-81, and state office chairman in 1982-83. When it became necessary to elect a state chairperson for 1994-95, Keith again filled the position, this time elected by the GSRs of the state.

Keith is a believer in regular AA attendance and in service work. He attended 4 to 5 meetings a week for over 16 years. He is a very active speaker, particularly known for his talks on the Traditions and the Three Legacies. For 12 years, he was co-chair of the North Florida-South Georgia AA Gratitude Weekend.

Outside AA, Keith has been very active on advisory boards for several treatment centers and the Georgia Council on Alcoholism.

Joe P., 1980-1981

I got sober through God's grace at the Woburn (Mass.) Group on March 1, 1949. I came off Skid Row in Boston beaten and broken, and it was a miracle (like everyone else) that I got sober.

Sober 4 years, I came to Georgia in June 1953 with a family of 4 children (later to become 5). There were only 4 or 5 meetings a week in metro Atlanta at that time. I attended the old Buckhead Group on Friday nights for almost 10 years and then attended many other groups for the next 10.

From 1959 to 1963 I was chair of the Greater Atlanta Committee on Alcoholism. In 1975 I was the first chair of the Atlanta Roundup; I served 3 years on the Roundup Committee.

I joined the Skyland Group a little over 20 years ago and have been privileged to be a regular member of Skyland since. In 1977, I

was elected the GSR of Skyland; in 1979, was chosen as DCM of old Zone G (45 groups). I was elected delegate of Georgia for 1980-81, then served as chairperson of the Georgia State Assembly in 1982-83 and chairman of the Office Committee of the Assembly in 1984-85.

In April of 1985, I was elected in New York at the General Service Conference as the Southeastern Regional Trustee and served until 1989. As trustee I served on the Transfer Finance Committee, the Trustees Nominating Committee, the International Convention Committee, and the Trustees Archives Committee. I made over 100 trips of a weekend or longer in the duties of trustee.

In 1990, I served as chair of the service committee at Skyland. Since 1992, I have served as the chair of the sponsorship committee of the group.

My Higher Power - God as I understand Him - has given me a beautiful life - one day at a time. Today as I write this I am grateful and joyful in God and AA. I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity to serve AA.

John L., 1982-1983 (deceased)

John L. died in 1986 or 1987, as best as Joe P. can remember. He was in service for 15 to 20 years, doing all the jobs: GSR, DCM, etc. He was the alternate delegate for 4 years in a row, and then elected DCM. He expanded our service structure.

Frank R., 1984-1985

Frank's health did not allow him to be interviewed for this book. Excerpts from a talk he gave in 1987 follow:

When I am with members of Alcoholics Anonymous, I am with my God. Everything I have in my life, I owe to you people.

I didn't get to Alcoholics Anonymous because I ate too many banana splits or drank too many Coca-Colas. I drank a lot of beer and a lot of liquor, and I got in a lot of trouble. I was a 140-pound weakling who could drink a pint of liquor and become a 300-pound ape. I thought I was Tarzan and all the women were Jane.

Growing up as a kid, I had everything in the world that dollars and cents could give a kid. Not having to work for anything, everything on a silver platter. I lived on the south side of Atlanta, and I had more than most rich kids on the north side. When I was a 16-year-old kid, I was riding around in a red-and-white '56 Ford convertible. When I graduated from high school in 1958, I could have gone to any college. Daddy was making big bucks. He was a proud man.

I was active in the Moose and the American Legion; their bars were open on Sunday. I began to have bad luck, and I started getting into trouble. I told wives #1, 2, and 3 that people always picked on me.

Marriages #1 and 2 went down the tubes. When my first marriage ended after 3 years, Momma told me that no decent woman would have anything to do with me. She said I was embarrassing the family name. All the neighbors knew about my Daddy's drinking. I thought, how am I embarrassing the family name?

To show Momma, I started going with a preacher's daughter. She asked me to come back to church. I went as a kid with Momma. I heard about Jesus and God, but didn't take a stand. When I was drinking, if you told me you didn't believe, I'd say you were going to Hell. If you said you did believe, I'd say you were crazy as hell. The more I drank, the clearer it got.

I joined the National Guard. I also sold my brother, who has over 10 years sober thanks to you people and the grace of God, to the National Guard for \$10. They had a big recruiting thing, and I took him with me. Then I married the preacher's daughter. That preacher married me to my first wife, then to his daughter. An ordinary drunk couldn't have pulled that off.

At my first wedding, my Daddy and daddy-in-law both got drunk and nearly got locked up. My first daddy-in-law now has over 10 years sober. I KNEW he was an alcoholic. That's the beauty of it. We KNOW that other people are alcoholics. I knew Daddy was an alcoholic. But I never could look at myself. Thanks to this program, I don't judge any more, except myself. I don't always know if I'm doing God's will, but I know when I'm not. I feel real bad, things feel tilted.

By 1966, I was working at Owens Glass. I met Sherry there, and asked her out. Her friends told her to stay away from me. Finally she agreed to go out with me. We went several places and drank a lot of liquor. I changed. When I drank, I became a good dancer. I heard someone say of me, "He walks like he talks." I liked that. But I don't walk that good any more, with the multiple sclerosis.

When Sherry and I got married, we went to a motel on Stewart Ave. for one night. I got so drunk she had to pour me into the room. For 5 years, Sherry would leave and come back. She was a professional leaver. She'd go to her Momma. I'd sober up and promise, "No more," and she'd come back. Finally, on October 16, 1971, she packed up our boy Dean and Momma. Momma was with us because I knew Daddy was going to kill her. So I moved her in with me and let her watch me slap Sherry, watch the police drag me away. It's one thing to watch your husband go down the tubes, another to see your sons go down the same tubes. We didn't know this before AA.

Divorce #3 was coming my way. I called the number for AA. Eileen answered the phone at the Central Office in Atlanta. She said,

"Let me have someone call you." I was hurting and scared, not knowing what to do, except I knew I'd feel better if I got a drink of liquor. Tom called and said, "I'm an alcoholic." I wondered how an alcoholic could help me. This was 10 AM on a Saturday. He said he'd be there at 4. I called Sherry at her Momma's and asked her to come hear what he had to say. I walked the floor, hurting and scared, with nothing to drink. About 4 he drove up in a nice car, in nice clothes. That blew my mind. He told me a little about himself and a little about AA. Tom told me about a meeting on Monday night. When he left, Sherry said she would come get me. I had no car. Two days I didn't drink. I thought about my Daddy, living at the Jefferson Hotel on skid row.

Monday came. Sherry picked me up, and I was shaking. The only thing I knew would remove the knot in my stomach was a drink, but I knew Sherry wasn't going to let me have one. We went to a meeting in College Park, which became my home group. The first guy I ran into was a guy I worked with at the plant. Don had been fired 3 or 4 times. I knew he was an alcoholic. He said, "Hey, Frankie, we've been waiting for you for a long time." That hurt my feelings.

I saw men hugging men and saying, "I love you." I knew about that sort of men. A guy spoke and then they did that chip stuff. So I got a white chip, People applauded, and they made me feel good.

I made plans for Sherry to come home. She said no. Tuesday Tom called and said "There's a meeting at East Point tonight." I said, "I was at the meeting last night, and I'm going again Thursday." He said, "You need a meeting every day for 90 days." Wednesday Tom called about a Wednesday meeting. I said I'd be there Thursday. Tom said, "I think I understand." He hung up and never called back.

I kept going though. In 12 months, I went from an SOB to a GSR. At the meetings, they talked those steps, 1, 2, 3. Everyone says that 3 is tough, but 3 is just making a decision. Then you go into 4 through 9. Our program is working. If you meet anyone who says they've completed those 12 Steps, watch them closely; they'll lie about something else. I believe we work Steps 10, 11, and 12 the rest of our lives - one day at a time. There is no completion, no graduation. I had a friend whose wife Ethel had 17 years. She died a few years ago. At the funeral home, Larry walked me to the casket and said, "Ethel is at graduation day right now." That's the only graduation in AA.

The Big Book, that's our basic text. With AA Comes of Age, the Twelve and Twelve, and As Bill Sees It, those are our 4 textbooks. I can't get enough of them. There are people who can't get this program. Who's to judge them? I've learned that no one is all good or all bad. Bill W. was an operator, a salesman. Dr. Bob was very spiritual. I don't think it was an accident those 2 got together. Bob would put the brakes on Bill. Dr. Bob said if AA dies, it will be from within. We've had chances to die since I've been here. In 1984, we

had a big fight over a pamphlet for gays. Delegates from New York and California said we needed it. The delegate from Mississippi and I said, "Why don't we send the gays from New York to California, and leave us out of it." We felt we didn't need that; we don't need to single ourselves out. One of the trustees was black. He said we need a pamphlet for the black alcoholic. We don't need that. If you need help, come on in. That what our program is all about. We have a singleness of purpose. If a person is poly-addicted, they should be welcome. If they have a drug problem, let's help them, show them the way to NA. That's all we've been trying to say since 1986. Talk about alcoholism in AA, drug addiction in NA. That also what the board of trustees of NA is trying to say.

I have a progressive disease, but I'm dealing with it. God wants to give you humility, and MS sure gives it to me. I don't think I need to say what I have been through. I haven't let go of all of it yet, but I have all the tools to let go of it, to Let Go and Let God.

I was supposed to be in Waco, TX, for 3 days (in 1987). When I checked into the hotel, there was a message from Sherry. I didn't recognize the number. When I called, it was the hospital, and I got scared. When Sherry came to the phone, she was crying. She said, "Frankie, Dean was in a wreck, and he's dead." Dean was my 22-year-old son, his daddy's boy. He was everything.

I know today that God doesn't make mistakes. I don't blame God for my boy's death. I think the God of my understanding is a loving and forgiving Father who gives each and every one of us free will. Dean with his free will loved motorcycles, and Dean was on a motorcycle when he ran into a truck and was killed instantly.

I'll never forget that. I'll never forget, but it gets better. The funeral was on a Sunday, and the preacher's wife came over the house on Monday. She sat down on the floor in the living room and said, "Frankie, I heard a lot of people at the funeral saying that was God's will. I bet there were a lot of people in Alcoholics Anonymous at that service." I said, "We believe that God gives us free will, that Dean could go and do and say whatever he wanted to go, do, and say. He learned that through Alateen, he learned that from Al-Anon. And Dean was on that motorcycle through his own free will. I believe that God was there to pick him up, and I believe that my boy is OK."

I see adversity as opportunity now. I don't deal with problems any more; they are opportunities. Losing my son was another opportunity. I've buried my mother and my father, and you people were with me. When I buried that 22-year-old son with a new wife and baby, that really beat me up. But I used the tools I learned from you people. A friend told me, "The problem is you're just human and you don't understand everything." My only job is to be ready for that graduation day. And I'll be ready if I'm with you.

Jerome W., 1986-87

I was born in Wrightsville (Johnson County) on May 20, 1928. I attended Wrightsville Elementary and High School, graduating on May 19, 1944. I worked for the Georgia State Highway Engineering Department from October 1944 through May 1946, served in the U.S. Navy from June 1946 through June 1948, and returned to the (now) Georgia Department of Transportation from June 1946 until I retired in November 1977.

I married my wife, Lois, in August 1950. Connie was born a year later and Jerome Jr. (Jerry) in December 1953.

I began to drink significantly while serving in the navy, and probably was an alcoholic at that time, but I was able to stop drinking following marriage and church affiliation. This sober period lasted for several years.

We moved to Swainsboro in 1955, and I began social drinking shortly thereafter. I progressed to daily drinking by the mid-60s, and was a full-blown alcoholic by the mid-70s. I retired from the DOT in November 1977 and was a candidate for alcoholism treatment by January 1978. I finally sobered up in treatment at Peachford Hospital in Atlanta in May 1978. Upon returning to Swainsboro, I joined the Swainsboro AA Group (for the second time) and have been sober since then.

I served as alternate GSR and GSR of the Swainsboro Group for 2 years, as DCM for District 9 for 3 years, as alternate delegate for 1984-87, delegate for 1986-87, state chairperson from 1988-1990, and chairman of the state office committee from 1990-1992. I am still active in my home group, currently serving as secretary.

In 1993, I was one of two past delegates who stood for the vacated office of state chairperson, and I remain willing to serve the Fellowship in whatever capacity I can as long as I am physically able to do so.

Gay G., 1988-1989

My wonderful journey into sobriety began in January 1976 as I sat on the edge of my bed with my bottle and a loaded revolver. The bankruptcy was complete. I had my "act of Providence," put the gun down, and called the answering service. My call was returned shortly, but I was too sick to take it. My daughter asked her to call back in the morning. The next day I was able to take my 12th Step call and attend my first meeting at the Glenhaven-Stone Mountain Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. At that time there weren't many women in the area; sponsorship was not heavily pushed; housewife drunkalogues were nearly unheard of. I floundered in and out of meetings for several months.

Something kept drawing me back. The miracle happened for me, and I had my last drink on March 14, 1976. I was led to the very small newly formed Clarkston Group. It was a Step study group, one of 2 in the Atlanta area. It became my home group and still is. I was the fourth member, the first woman member. Clarkston had wonderful sobriety and talked about the Steps. There was much gratitude there, and you always left meetings knowing you were one of the fortunate ones who found AA and had been given the gift, but now you had to work the Steps to keep it.

The first time I was able to say I was an alcoholic was a month or so into my sobriety. "I'm Gay, and I'm alcoholic," I said. The meeting fell apart, and, not understanding what they were laughing at, I was really devastated. Some guy at the meeting said, "Boy, you do have problems!" Today, I say, "My name is Gay, and I am alcoholic."

I was really honored when asked to lead my first meeting, on the 3rd Step. I told the old timer I'd be glad to help him out. He let me know immediately who would be helped out. Since then, I've had the privilege of being an active member of my home group, helping to start Big Book, Tradition, and service meetings.

I was at my group's business meeting in August 1977, in pretty rough shape due to a great sadness in my personal life, when Pat W. nominated me for GSR. In the early days you attended your business meeting no matter what! I told the group I was really sorry, but I had too many personal problems to be in service. I was immediately told that this would be the perfect time to get involved, with a constructive place to direct my energies and a great center for getting out of myself. That was the beginning of my service work.

As I look back, it seems that each time I had personal sadness in my life, it was balanced with a wonderful opportunity in service. It has been a greatly rewarding venture from GSR, Zone D secretary, Zone D Alt. DCM, Zone H DCM, alternate delegate, delegate, state chair, chair of the state office committee, and now the honor and privilege of serving as Southeast Regional Trustee. I am so grateful for the service, the opportunity to learn, watching the AA process work, and meeting AAs from all over the world.

As delegate, I served on the Literature Committee. Our themes for 1988 and 1989 were Singleness of Purpose and Anonymity, great vital principles of our Fellowship. At the 1988 Regional Forum I chose to do a presentation on singleness of purpose which was sent all over the country at a time when people needed to speak out on our primary purpose. I had the opportunity to participate at many workshops and area functions in the Southeast.

In 1984, I was asked to do the entertainment for the Southeastern Conference to be held in Atlanta. I knew there were many talented people in the Fellowship. Lyn D. of the Clarkston Group and

I formed the Coffee House Entertainers. Lyn wrote the show, and I did the music. The shows, which are still being done yearly for the Round-Up, State Pre-Paid Convention, and other AA gatherings, are a means of carrying the message with our talents. The shows are all a positive testimony to the program. Many people thought they'd never have a chance to sing and dance again sober. It was been a vehicle of encouragement and many have returned to symphony work, theater, church choir, and the entertainment world. Many visitors to our area say other areas have tried to do what the Coffee House Entertainers do, but have not been successful. We have been truly blessed with talent and dedication.

My home group, district, Area 16, and the Southeast have afforded me much support, love, and given me many gifts for which I shall be forever grateful!

Samuel H. S., 1990-1991

My recovery began when I came to in a treatment center in Atlanta sometime in August of 1976. After 25 years of a drinking life, my new adventure began. After treatment I went to one AA meeting a week with no sponsor, Big Book, etc. Three years later I went back to my old life. The progression was real. After 4 months, I found my surrender in October 1979. Back in treatment, bankrupt in every area of my life, I only wanted peace of mind, and was willing to go to any lengths to get it.

After returning to Augusta, I found several sponsors, a home group, the Forest Hills Group, and latched on to the Big Book and meetings, one a day for almost three years! Service began immediately, and my first State Assembly came within 3 years as a GSR. I was nervous, but the love of our fellowship held me together.

The power of our Assembly was realized. After four years as a DCM, I threw my hat in the ring for delegate. I was elected alternate.

These last few years as delegate and chairman have been unforgettable. Unity is paramount, and although we have our differences, we're all in this fellowship together. I have found that when the group conscience prevails, it is for the best. We lead by example, and the meaning of trusted servant is better understood.

My spirituality has broadened as a result of my service experience, and I am grateful for having had the opportunity. Although we all cannot be delegates, we can set examples. Thank you, AA !!

Bo W., 1992-April 7, 1993 (deceased)

While serving with the Marine Corps on Okinawa, after many years of experiencing the depths and self-destruction brought on by the

insanity of alcoholism, I sobered up by use of the "old gut method." (DTs were not a stranger; I started having them when they first came out!) I went to my first AA meeting on Okinawa in August 1973. I remained sober in AA for long periods of time, but insanity set in twice during the first 7 years, and I drank twice for short periods. I finally established a sobriety date of September 13, 1980.

Upon returning to the States in July 1978, I joined the Albany Central Group. My sponsor and close friend until his death in 1988 Courtney M. introduced me into AA service work when he felt I was ready, after leading me through the Big Book, 12 Steps, and 12 Traditions with a very firm hand. Courtney told me, "Now, boy, it is time for you to go to work and try to repay to AA and to pass on to others what was so freely given to you. However, keep washing ashtrays, supporting your home group, and always remember that the highest one can get in AA is sober, and that God is in charge, not you."

During my service years, I held the following service jobs: Grapevine representative, steering committee member, secretary-treasurer for District I, alternate GSR, GSR, DCM, alternate chairman for the 1982 State Convention, chairman for the 1986 state convention, alternate state delegate, and state delegate from January 1, 1992, until April 7, 1993, when I could not finish the term.

As state delegate, on behalf of the Georgia State Assembly, I introduced to the 1992 (42nd) General Service Conference (GSC) several conference agenda items.

In September 1992, I carried to the Georgia State Assembly the idea of a Georgia AA history book, and asked the GSRs for their approval. The proposed history book was received by the GSRs with enthusiasm, and approval was given to begin.

I helped start the Southwest Georgia (SoWeGa) round-up in Albany in 1983, held each year during the last week of May. I also researched and wrote the history of the Albany Central Group, which also identified other groups in the Albany area that broke out of the Central "mother" group.

In 1992, when Hurricane Andrew devastated District 10 of South Florida and District 17 of South Louisiana, I spearheaded an "Andrew AA Love Fund." The groups of Georgia, through voluntary contributions, forwarded \$5,077 to the AA groups in District 10 and \$3,462 to the District 17. This reflected highly upon the AA groups of Georgia in their love and caring for other groups and AA as a whole.

Randy S., April 1993-1995

I drank alcohol from age 13 to age 25, and got in trouble with job, family and law. I went to treatment in Atlanta, and was introduced to AA at the Skyland Group in 1977. After treatment, when I went

back home, I did not follow up with AA and got drunk after 2 1/2- 3 months. I stayed drunk for 5 years, came back to AA March 9, 1982, and have stayed sober.

I didn't have a sponsor the first time in, but the second time in I had 2 sponsors. They helped me with the Steps, they got me involved in service work, they carried me to my first Assembly, and helped me with group and district functioning. They more or less showed me how to live sober.

One sponsor started me early in 12th Step work. He carried me on many 12th Step calls with him. As time went on, I've done the same.

The early meetings I attended opened with the Serenity prayer and the preamble. The chairperson had a topic, and we all shared. The meetings were not so big then. We would read How It Works, the Traditions, and explain the chips. We closed with the Lord's prayer.

As I got more sobriety (2-3 years), I was on the board of directors, vice president, and president of a club. I have paid club dues the whole time. At the clubs we had cookouts. To me, it was a lot of fellowship.

When I was about 2 years sober, we got a roundup called Serenity Weekend. This is how I got to listen to outside speakers, ones with long-time sobriety, and then just sit around my home group. It was very good for my sobriety. In 1987, we hosted the State Convention in our district. I was very involved, and that really helped my sobriety. In 1993, we started a roundup called Okefenokee Roundup, Romp by the Swamp. I helped organize this and really had a good time, and it helped my sobriety. I still attend roundups and conventions, every one I can in my area, and more around the country.

I was elected alternate delegate in September 1991, the first alternate delegate to be nominated from the floor and be elected. I served as alternate from 1992 until April 1993. In April 1993, because of unforeseen events, I had to assume the responsibilities of delegate. I was the first alternate delegate in Georgia to have to do this.

I had one week to prepare for the trip to New York for the 43rd Conference. Again, sponsorship saved me. My sponsor helped get me prepared for the trip.

In September 1993, I was elected delegate, the first elected who had already served once. I am on Panel 44 and will serve on the 44th and 45th Conferences.

GRAPEVINE ARTICLES

Georgia AAs In Print

As indicated by the title of this book, Georgians are no "new-comers" when it comes to sharing their experience, strength, and hope with other members of this fellowship. The evidence is there, in black and white, year after year, between the covers of the fellowship's "meeting in print," *The Grapevine*.

From 1949 through 1994, writings from our state have appeared in the magazine 52 times. In 1979 alone, writings from 8 Georgians graced the pages of *The Grapevine*. Two articles appeared in January, one each from Danielsville and Metro Atlanta. In March a man from Macon was published; in April, one from Atlanta; and in June, another Atlanta woman. In the August issue came a Douglasville woman's story on how she lost the desire to drink, and in September a Clarkston woman discusses her new-found sense of freedom. That December's issue included an Elberton's woman's thoughts on resentments.

Reading through these 52 articles, some similarities in topic and theme stand out. Many of our Georgia AA's writings stress the importance of treating each other with understanding; specifically, with "sympathetic understanding." In fact, in the July 1956 issue, that phrase appears in an article entitled "Bright Promise," submitted by an inmate of the federal penitentiary in Atlanta. This echoed an Atlanta AA's discussion of the need for understanding as well as sympathy in an article entitled "Some Begin Sooner Than Others" in the April 1949 issue. In the June 1957 issue, this phrase was again used in a short piece entitled "A Life Saver and a Life Giver." The writer, a woman from Atlanta who referred to herself as "grateful," shares her certainty that she could not have remained sober had it not been for the sharing, guidance, and "sympathetic understanding" allotted her by AA members.

Again, in August of 1979, a Douglasville woman shares in her article, "A Miracle Happened That Day," that it was the understanding she found in her first AA meeting that gave her the courage to open up to the women she met in the program and ask for help with her problem. It was through this sense of understanding that she could allow herself to accept the love being offered to her by fellow alcoholics.

"A Miracle Happened That Day" supported the premise of one printed earlier that year entitled "This One Chance to Live," in which an Atlanta AA expresses sorrow and a certain sense of frustration upon having a Christmas card to a fellow alcoholic returned in the mail marked "deceased." According to the writer, the friend failed to allow himself to be touched by that sense of identification and understanding which so freely floats throughout AA meetings. This friend's self-imposed isolation naturally kept him from being able to trust his

fellow alcoholics and from being able to share his fears, his problems, or even his hopes. His return to drinking was inevitable, and he lost his life to it. In a similar vein, but from a personal standpoint, a Macon man shares his inability to stay sober due to what he called his "Cop-Out," as he so aptly entitled his article. This AA shares how elusive he found sobriety to be until he recognized his intrinsic inability to accept and return love or even human contact. From this revelation, he came to the realization that he also feared responsibility due to his tendency to fail in the more important ventures he'd attempted in his life. When he allowed himself to accept what his fellow sober alcoholics so freely offered, he, too, achieved sobriety.

This therapeutic "sympathetic understanding" seemed to seep into the Al-Anon community within the state, as shown in a letter published in June 1960. This letter, from one family member to a younger brother in way of explanation and comfort, tells the flip side of the story as seen by a teenager. The Savannah youngster, upon learning his father has entered treatment for alcoholism, writes to his brother who is living at home that the surest way to help their father is to approach him with understanding rather than condemnation.

In a letter from an Athens Al-Anon in the September 1972 issue, a teenage girl relates the pain she experienced watching her ex-AA father return to practicing his addiction. Faith and hope are the qualities that kept her going while she approached her father with as much understanding as possible. She writes that her faith and understanding, coupled with liberal doses of love, would see both herself and her father through these tough times and into a future of promise. This concept slips into many of the articles from Georgia.

In the first touching letter, "Pop Found the Way," one can find another major cord that tends to weave itself throughout the body of Georgian's writings. The young man mentions the need to focus on today, letting go of the past and facing the future with hope, if he and his brother are to sincerely support their father in his recovery. In May 1960, an Atlanta AA shares in an ironically titled article, "Return to Yesterday," the necessity in her program of learning from the past while not dwelling on its darker moments and the importance of never allowing herself to forget from whence she had come.

"Mainstream," from the March 1979 issue, relates the frightening experience of a Macon AA who took his family on a canoeing trip. The writer draws an analogy between this nearly disastrous expedition down a Georgia river to his years spent drinking alcoholically. He writes of being cut off from his planned destination by log jams which littered the current. He deplores his denial of the true situation until almost too late and even then, when reality could no longer be denied, being unwilling to ask for help due to what he recognized as the same self-destructive pride that kept him from coming to

AA sooner. Through this experience, he saw how certain character defects from his past could and did return to threaten his todays.

In 1974, an Atlanta man discussed the "obstacles" from our pasts that could stand in the way of our being successfully sober on a daily basis. In the article, "Courage to Change," he enumerates those fatal defects that we bring with us into this program and against which we must continually guard ourselves, things like negative self-images and inferiority complexes. In his opinion, we must continually examine ourselves through our Tenth Step for the insidious recurrence of those detrimental patterns that preceded drinking if we intend to remain free from the chains of alcohol.

This desire for spiritual as well as physical freedom and the willingness to go to any length to get it finds expression in a great number of articles from Georgia. In September 1979, a Clarkston AA speaks of the necessity of growth through pain in her article, "Path to Freedom." In the December issue of a more recent year, a Macon writer explains in "And Don't Drink" the necessity of hanging on through the pain of obsession. Eventually the daily desire to drink leaves, and the AA lives on, spiritually freed.

Two more Georgia alcoholics addressed the subject of spiritual freedom. The first, in the December 1979 article mentioned earlier, called simply "Resentment," an Elberton woman tells how she discovered through her own experience that one can find freedom from resentment by doing something nice for the subject of the resentment. Not coincidentally (today we know there are no coincidences), in an article, "Depression," from Brunswick, the alcoholic shares that he found the key to becoming free from depression through the simple act of doing something nice for another person for no particular reason and expecting nothing in return.

From Atlanta came an article with the Southern-flavored title, "The Other Side of the Briar Patch," in which a woman explains how through AA she achieved hope, gratitude, and especially freedom in her life. In "Freedom to Belong," another Atlantan addressed how, as a member of a minority group, she found true freedom through the unconditional acceptance of her by fellow AAs. And, from Marietta was submitted the article "...A New Freedom..." This AA describes just how the Promises began coming true in her life. Again from Atlanta, an article called "100 Percent" related one man's difficulty in taking Step One completely and sincerely, and how, once having finally achieved this, he experienced an indescribable new sense of freedom.

This sense of spiritual freedom felt by truly sober alcoholics also comes through in various articles written by Georgians describing how they have incorporated the AA program into their daily lives and the positive consequences of doing so. A Statesboro member wrote upon her return from Paris of her impromptu meeting with French AAs

and the beauty of the immediate identification and acceptance that she received with them. Her homesickness left her as she found herself among her AA family.

In "Shook Up But Sober," a woman from Smyrna shares how she worked through a dry drunk by applying the Twelve Steps to her daily work routine. Her gratitude for this program of living comes through her writing as strongly as if she were sitting across the table from the reader in a meeting. This same sense of deep gratitude also exudes from an August woman's article, "A Degree of Serenity," in which she relates how in her early years in AA (but in middle-age chronologically), she was able through daily use of the tools of this program to achieve a goal she had robbed herself of as she let alcohol take over her life.

AAs, as they learn to live without alcohol, often draw analogies which seem to exist between the patterns alcohol established in their lives, as well as the healthy patterns that replace the drunken ones, and various situations that crop up in their sober lives. One such analogy became apparent to a young soldier stationed at Ft. Benning in a mini-article, "Pulling the Rip Cord," in which he tells how drinking, finding AA, and getting sober felt much the same as the airborne training he was undergoing. Similarly, an alcoholic gardener from Lithonia sees the likenesses between planting her seeds and watching her plants grow to her own spiritual growth through the AA program. Other meaningful and colorful analogies emerge from many of the articles.

The themes already mentioned - the importance of "sympathetic understanding" and identification; using the pain of the past to help insure the peace of the present and the spiritual freedom of the future; and using the tools of AA in daily life - depict a cross-section of the 52 Georgians' articles. Yet, none of these themes are as obviously a unifying thread as is the theme or subject of service work. Georgia has long been proud of its service work record, and its importance is stressed through Area 16. Such articles as "Why Be a Sourpuss" from Statesboro and "Honesty Is Our Ally" from Augusta express the need for encouragement of the newcomer at the group level and deplore the indifferent attitudes that sometimes tend to trickle into our meeting rooms. Likewise, a Marietta AA's article, "If We Are Painstaking ..." explains how the quality of her sobriety is directly proportional to the amount of sharing and carrying the message in which she involves herself. "The Bored Ones," submitted by a sober Decatur alcoholic, supports the need for Twelfth Step and other service work if sobriety is to be a rewarding experience.

This alcoholic takes the stance that the AA program is a "participating, not a spectator, sport." Service work of a personal nature was the topic of 2 poignant articles. The first, "Carbon Copy," tells of the efforts of a sober sister to share her experience, strength and hope

with her still practicing sibling. The Atlanta AA's letter to her sister relates her own story of what it was like for her and what her life is like in sobriety. In a much later addition, the sober sister confides in a short letter that her sister had, indeed, found the fellowship, and expresses her joy and gratitude.

The second letter came from an Augusta man who cautions members not to expound too vehemently on their opinions of those who fail to find the willingness to go to any lengths for sobriety. He shared that his closed-mindedness on the subject stopped his own wife from asking for his help when she found herself drawn back to old playmates and playthings. Her inability to find her way back to the fellowship resulted in a divorce, the pain of which he was still working through.

Several long-time members have shared their views on the need for the "old timer" to keep his fingers on the AA pulse. From Elberton, a 30-year man gives insight into how he and others like himself can still be important in today's AA as guides, not gurus. In his "Not on the Shelf," he explains how his mere presence in meetings sets an example for the newcomer. Another old timer shares in "No Graduation" how the quality of his sobriety and his very life would recede if he did not stay active in the service work of the fellowship. He enumerates the losses he would experience if he sat back and rested on his laurels or "retired" after his numerous years in the service of AA.

Georgia's AA groups have long been active in carrying the message inside the walls of penal institutions. The merit of this service work can be read in articles such as "Bright Promise," in which the alcoholic inmate of the federal prison in Atlanta speaks gratefully of the experienced guidance as well as "sympathetic understanding" he found in the members of the fellowship who shared with him. From the meetings he developed first hope and later faith. Another inmate from the Atlanta prison echoes that message and adds that it was love, unconditional love given by these outside AAs, that made the difference for him. A third article, "The Hard Way," tells how one inmate first exposed to AA while in prison eventually came to believe in the program. Upon his release, he carefully attended meetings, but deep inside, denial reigned. He reverted to his old habit, broke parole, and ended back in the prison, a sorry but wiser alcoholic.

Seeing the fellowship "sorry but wiser" is just what some Georgia AAs concerned with the future of the fellowship are hoping to avoid. One such member from Clarkston wrote of the need for seasoned service workers to set good examples on the group level by working with newcomers in the article, "Guardians of the Future." "Why Be a Sourpuss" and "Exclusive - or More Inclusive?" also delineate the need for newcomers to be given the true AA program as it was handed down by Bill and Bob rather than some watered-down version. The writers show little patience with those suffering alcoholics

within the program who refuse the pain that is necessary in achieving spiritual growth or for the AA who sets himself above or separate from the body of the fellowship for whatever reason - profession, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, etc.

In the same vein comes the article "Surrender, not Self-Improvement," in which another concerned Atlanta member of the fellowship presents a thorough and thought-provoking look at AA today. He disparages the tendency to turn meetings into therapy sessions and reminds us that ours is a program based on principles to live by, not group therapy. He assures the reader that recovery, not self-indulgence, is the harvest to be reaped once the sowing and the growing have been weathered. This man professes, "I cannot afford to sell off the principles for an easier, softer way."

Certainly not all the articles that comprise Georgia's contributions to *The Grapevine* have been covered in this chapter. No article was purposely left out. However, it would be remiss not to mention the numerous letters that have been published from AA members from such places as Mableton and Savannah that were written only to express gratitude for each and every issue of *The Grapevine*. Undeniably, Area 16 AAs find this "meeting in print" an invaluable tool in daily maintenance of quality sobriety.

It would also be remiss to omit "Second Chance on Skid Row," in which an Atlanta AA relates his experiences as a 19-year-old trying to get sober in Manhattan. He writes about attending the Lenox Hill Group that was often attended by Bill W., Mansfield C. and his wife Ceil, whose story is in *The Big Book*, and even occasionally by Dr. S. A member interested in AA history would find this rewarding.

The article "Attitude Adjustment," signed simply Georgia, may epitomize the AA program in Georgia. It details the experience of an AA member who attended a meeting that was focused on someone returning from a drinking spree. The writer comments on the approaches taken by various members that evening - from the sharing that one can achieve solid sobriety only by working the Twelve Steps to the slightly sick sympathy supporting the "slipper's" already deep degree of self-pity. The author reiterated that the honest and sincere sharing of seasoned AAs, even when it may be painful to the newcomer, is the basis of this program. The writer cautioned of the destructiveness of commiseration with alcoholics who refuse the "pain of spiritual growth" and of the continual necessity of guiding newcomers in the true AA way - for the sake of their spiritual growth and the future of AA.

That's the AA member at work in Georgia ... always taking seriously the responsibility that comes with sobriety ... accepting that "I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

OLD-TIMERS

Jack C., Flint River Group, District 13F

My sobriety date is February 16, 1958. I came to Georgia to live and celebrate the first 25 years in the program.

I am from Detroit but worked 37 years in Chicago before retirement to enjoy the "golden years" with my wife, Betty.

Dependence on booze began in earnest by the late 1940s after a tour of 4 1/2 years in the World War II army and marriage at age 28. I found myself in sales work after a shot at a purchasing job.

Alcohol seemed to overcome a natural shyness and sense of insecurity. It worked so well for a time that I became sales manager for a Chicago metal fabricating firm.

There is a price to pay when life settles down to a constant desire and then need to drink. I was a functioning drunk; daily living began to lose luster. The last 5 years of that life were bad physically and emotionally; about 3 of those years were horrible.

Two well-dressed and well-spoken members of AA called on me at my request for help on a cold, wet, dark Sunday afternoon. Thus began the turnaround of a lifetime. On that morning I had my last drink. Cold turkey withdrawal was an experience I will never forget.

Betty, my wife and mother of my 2 children, now middle-aged adults, bemoaned the loss of her drinking buddy (me, Jack) and found her own way to the "court of last resort," AA, some months later in 1985.

We did not attend the same group discussion meetings and that fact worked best for us. However, in those years, Betty depended on me to help with 12-Step calls on sick women in the middle of the night. In turn, she made calls with me to see drinking couples seeking help.

These have been the greatest years of a life the Good Lord has permitted. The women and men of AA, when Betty died after a prolonged illness during Christmas week of 1990, were fantastic. Her death ended 46 years of a great marriage. Thirty-two years of that union were without dependence on alcohol.

There may be other ways than AA possibly, to achieve peace of mind and ability to cope with daily living. This way of life, however, has worked 35 years for me, a happy alcoholic. I pray the Good Lord will continue to help me be sober and carry the message that a good life on earth is possible.

Juni D., Sandersville

My mother belonged to the Oxford Group, but she died drunk. She was a doer in it, did a lot of work, but she died drunk. I remember going to see her and telling her about AA, what I had read in *The Saturday Evening Post*, the Jack Alexander article.

Bill W. adopted some of its precepts when he first found sobriety through the Oxford Group. We knew Bill W. quite well. We had family in Baltimore and Philadelphia. He came there often. Many times he would come to meetings and just sit in the back. He didn't offer to speak much, but we had him speak to us once in a while. I was on two programs with him which was really wonderful, in Baltimore and Philadelphia.

I found this article and I was drunk. I had just gotten out of jail. The orphanage had taken the children, that is, the state had taken the children. I got on the train and I was filthy, had a dirty neck, everything was dirty about me, and I went from Richmond to Baltimore. I was going to carry the message to my sister. I nearly finished a quart of Four Roses on the train. I was dressed in a sun dress with a heavy fur coat, that had been my friend for years. This fur coat had been such a friend, because in jail, you know, it was comfortable. I could sleep on it. But anyhow, I got to Baltimore, and I got out to my sister's, and of course I had no money to pay the cab. So she paid the cab, and invited me in, and asked, "Why are you here?" She didn't like it too much because she could see I was looped, stoned. I said, "I've come to give you the most wonderful message; you can find sobriety. There is a way to sobriety." And she said, "What's the message?" I said, "AA." She said, "Have a seat, because I've been a member for years." So she was my first sponsor.

I had a small amount left in the fifth of Four Roses, and I kept that with me for years. But, that's when I found sobriety, in my sister's house. My sister died in 1993. She had all those years of sobriety and she enjoyed it too. At one point in my life I had 5 family members in AA, and my children were raised in Alateen. Today, they are in their forties and fifties, and they swear that the program is what's stabilized them as well as it has. They're all wonderful people, wonderful marvelous friends.

I enjoyed the program so much that I went to 4, 5, and 6 meetings a day. You couldn't keep me away, I just loved it; just ate it up because I needed it so desperately, and I was such an alcoholic! If there is any such thing as degrees of alcoholism in an alcoholic, I was the highest degree you could be. I think, like Paul says in the Bible that he is the worst of all sinners, that I was the worst of all alcoholics. Because compared to me, my family wasn't into anything like I was. I was into jails, and hospitals, and fights, and all that, and my family all

found sobriety in their dining rooms and their living rooms. They kept their homes, their cars, and, of course, I lost everything. Which is wonderful; that's what got me into AA.

Alcoholics Anonymous was there for me when I was tried for a federal crime. I was put on an unheard-of 12 years probation. And all this is God, you know. This was a strange time for me, and AA members that I had never seen before were there sitting in the courtroom with me, and they all called me Juni.

Then I had to go back to Baltimore, of course. I had been in AA 6 months prior, and then I had this big blowout for about a month, and then I went right back out. So, I didn't feel like I had the strength even to get back into the program. I was going to start a meeting myself so I wouldn't have to meet my old friends. I was still manipulating, still lied to myself, and of course that didn't work. We have a club in Baltimore called 857 and we claim, I think it's true, that it's the oldest AA club in the world. There's one in Akron that say they're the oldest, but I don't think so, I think we are.

Anyhow, I went up the steps and stood outside the door for a long time. And an old friend came up and said "Hi!" and went on in, and I thought well it had been in all the papers; I mean everyone knew about this blowout that I had instigated, and conducted very cleverly, by the way. I was a good criminal, because I was such a marvelous, exquisite liar. In my program, even, today, I have to work on honesty. After all these years of sobriety, that's one of my big things for each day because in the very core of me I have never recovered. I don't want to recover. Someone said if you had a pill for AA would you take it, and I said no, because I don't want any of this taken away from me, not what I have. What I have is too beautiful. I have had such a productive, profitable life, you know, a wonderful life. And I wouldn't have if I hadn't found AA.

My family was very wealthy and still is today in Philadelphia. This was the main thing that was spawning the alcoholism. I was taught to drink. I was taught to entertain with drinking, with alcohol and whiskey and wine. I even went to finishing school. Everyone did back in those days; you never hear of it today, but I went to a finishing school and I was taught how to select wine with certain foods. It's so funny, it's wonderful I can laugh about it. Because here I am. I came out socially a certain year in Baltimore, and a very few years after that I was in the Baltimore jail. I think that was something that had never happened in Baltimore society. My family managed to keep their cool, as you say today, but none of them was quite as violent as I was.

I know my demise was when I found myself in solitary confinement. For the first time in my life there was no recourse, I could only go to a corner, I couldn't go to a friend. I couldn't think of my family. Two years before this they had given up. They wouldn't answer

the phone. No one loved me. This sounds silly, but it was true, no one actually did love me. I had been a one-woman hellhound for a solid year, and things were closing in, and I knew it. And then I had the experience that is so beautiful. I love this part. I was in solitary confinement, there were mattresses on the wall, and I was alone and went to sleep. I woke up, and there was a woman in there with me. She was sitting down, and how she could be sitting I don't know, but she was. She asked me who I was, and I told her. I said, "Who are you?" and she told me her life. What she told me was my life, but it was totally true. It was told in a way I had never heard it, because I had always lied and said my husband did this, and somebody did that to me. It was always someone else, usually a bartender. I would get mad at a bartender and hit him over the head with a bottle. The step that says that I returned to sanity means so much to me because I was insane. There is no doubt about that. But, anyway she sat and asked me questions, and I answered her. The next day the matron came to my cell, and I thanked her for sending someone back there to be with me, and she said, "No one's been here for a long time." So then I knew I'd had that wonderful experience, and fortunately I've been able to talk about it all over this world, and I've enjoyed that so much.

I met Bill D. in AA and we had an AA wedding and stayed together until he died in 1987. We used to speak at meetings together always. After I talked, he would get up and say, "I don't want you all to get too excited or too disappointed but I'm not half as bad as Juni is." He did a beautiful thing. He took the Twelve Steps and he clipped references to God out of it. Bill was very clever. This was at the Phoenix Convention where there were about 3,000 people. He had a big poster and cut holes at all references to God, then held it up to people and said now you have a "holey" program without God. And they stood up, they just died, it was a wonderful occasion. We were so privileged, we had so many wonderful times at conventions in Maryland, Virginia, Nebraska, Phoenix, Arizona, and Los Angeles, California. We spoke at these and had a wonderful time.

When we were in Arizona, the Lord spoke to me and said we were going to build a boat. So, I told Bill D. and he said okay. He just accepted it, just like that. So we packed up everything and came back to Florida to find a place to build the boat. We found a man that had a warehouse and he gave it to us with the promise that we would pay him when we could. We built the boat in 18 months at a cost of \$150,000, and it was fully paid for when it went in the water. Isn't that beautiful? That's God too.

We had a crew of ten. The boat had a 471 diesel engine which is about as big as your living room, and it was a beautiful, beautiful boat. We traveled for nine years and we took AA with us every place we went and got AA from everyone else that was there.

Still today there are groups in Honduras and on Long Island in the Bahamas, and Jamaica, of course there are many groups in Jamaica, and Haiti as well. And the big group in Nassau is the one we helped start.

We could start a group and then revisit them in a couple of years. It was a thrill of a lifetime to see the different groups there, and they would practice their own ways. It was sometimes awkward and rough, but it was beautiful. It was them, and they wanted it that way. Everyone on the boat was AA, so the crew, Bill and I had meetings on deck every night. That's a beautiful experience.

Oh, let me go back and tell you about the Flynn houses in Baltimore. They were named after a drunk that never found sobriety. His name was Bill F., and he was a friend of ours. So when we opened my house it was the first one for women straight from prison. I made appearances there and was knocked down on the steps one time. These girls would come straight from the jail. And then Bill opened his big house which the city of Baltimore gave us on Charles Street. And it just grew from there, because there were so many, and the court system wanted us to do this, so we had all the support and cooperation we could wish for. The program had a wonderful birth, and the houses stayed alive. I've been told there are now fifty of them. Once in a while I still hear someone mention a Flynn house but we are so far away down here.

Then we had Road Valley Farm, which was a farm where we sometimes had as many as 30 men, and sometimes women would sneak in too. It was a beautiful farm and we actually farmed it, although I had never farmed in my life. One time Bill said plant some potatoes and gave me a bag, so I dumped them all in a hole. They came up as a big hill of potatoes but didn't do too well. We named our pigs for different kinds of wine and named the horse Brandy. Brandy was a very alcoholic horse who loved fermented oats, then would get very perky. We even gave the ducks alcohol types of names, and had a marvelous time.

We went from there to Los Angeles where Bill managed a hotel with 300 alcoholics and I managed a smaller hotel with about 150 alcoholics. The AA meetings in Los Angeles were wonderful; you could sit next to drunks right off the streets and next to people in the movie business. There was also a major participation by blacks as well, on the West Coast. I think I helped start the first black group in Baltimore and went to that meeting for years. There were many black groups in the Philadelphia area, long before they were accepted in other parts of the country.

My husband Bill and I moved here and built a church in Oconee, which is 15 miles from Sandersville, and Bill and I ministered in that church for 18 years, so now I have all those

memories to entertain me, and to have fun with, and to grow with. I'm still growing, and I need to grow.

I can't go out at night anymore, and last year I stopped speaking, which broke my heart because I love it so much, but I have emphysema and don't have the breath to talk. I was on oxygen for a hour before this conversation. The last time I talked was in Milledgeville about a year ago, but I coughed and heaved and was so embarrassed. I apologized to everyone and explained my situation, and said I just can't do this anymore.

The meeting I attend now is at 12:00 noon at the Choctaw Group on Friday. The group is about 6 years old. It's a very intense group and rich, rich, rich with inspiration. We seem to be doing very well.

I believe it's important to talk in meetings about what I should do and not about what you should do. It's much better to say I told a lie today, I got most impatient. This is what I do every day in front of the mirror, I say I told a lie. But I didn't this morning because I didn't tell a lie yesterday. So, I'm doing real well! Then I'll say I got impatient which I do every day. I'll say I lost my cool which I do almost every day. I just pick myself apart and then I start picking myself up. That's the good part because I'm a pretty wonderful person, considering what I've been through and the things I've done. I'm so grateful that my life has turned out the way it has.

Alcoholics Anonymous is not only the finest program in the world, it is the most peculiar, because it doesn't promise anything but individual sobriety. There's no group getting a lot of money, no group raising themselves up like a football team. AA is for each person, each person alone. AA has helped revive so many beautiful lives, and each one is humble, each one is quiet, until they are asked to speak.

You used to hear a lot of bragging in Baltimore AA because I was there. I was an enormous bragger. One time I had the shock of my life; no one asked me to speak. I was in the theater so you know I'm a ham. I just love it; I love to show off, and I used to be good at it. But they wouldn't ask me and I couldn't understand it, so I went to one of my sponsors and said why in the world hasn't anyone asked me to speak; I've been sober six whole months. He said there are a couple of reasons; you haven't been around long enough, no one can believe what you say, because you tell so many lies, and because you want to do it tonight. So that calmed me down. I had to be strapped down many times in AA.

In my life with Bill D., he could tell me in a minute when I was getting off course in anything. He was very supportive of my writing and my painting. I've painted all my life until two years ago, but had to stop because of the varnish fumes. Bill was also a big help with my writing. Then when an award would come or a book would get

published, he would say you're only going to have it for one day. You've only got one day Juni; don't get so excited, we're only talking about one day. And I would say, well for one day I want to shine, I want to shine! And I did; I did! And I still have a lot of ego.

I have designed the most beautiful program for myself where I sit here every day, and go out twice a week. But I have to be careful. Tomorrow I'm going out to a party. And I have my daughter living here in town, which is such a blessing.

We never recognized time in AA. That was taboo, you just didn't do it. We had members in Baltimore in 1950 that were 20 years sober and up. Oldtimers, beautiful guys, and you never knew it. They only said they were sober one day, even in a pinch if someone asked them. I liked that, and still do. I don't go to meetings much anymore, but when we used to travel all over Georgia, Bill and I never mentioned how long we had been in AA. Because, fundamentally it doesn't matter, it really doesn't. You've only had one day of sobriety then, and I'm grateful for that. That's all I can handle. I can't even handle myself for one day, can you imagine handling a long program, it scares me to say it. We used to go to a lot of churches, we were both ministers, and people, earth people you know, would say, "Well, how long have you been sober?", and I always passed it off. I don't think years of sobriety should be made public as it is at AA conventions, their name should be enough. Maybe I'm just trying to protect myself from the time element but new members should know that and practice that. I suppose it is okay to say that Juni D. has been in the program since it was young, since I was young. I'm 79 years old now.

My daughter has been around AA almost as long as I have, and she asks me, still, why do you go to meetings. It's the only thing that keeps me alive and gives me energy and purpose. I'm the only woman at the Choctaw Group and the guys have such wonderful things to say. I learn so much from them. To me that's AA working.

If I didn't have that, I don't know what I would do. I plan to go into a nursing home in a couple of months. My daughter Sandy works there. But I'm looking forward to it because I really need the attention. I think it will be a wonderful experience and I'm hoping my AA friends will come to see me. I can leave and still go to my meetings in the daytime. I think that can be arranged because I need it, it's my life. I do what I do because I have to, I don't have a choice and don't want a choice. Given a choice, I'm in big trouble. I'm so glad I have a life that is centered in AA. That way, nothing can go wrong, because God is AA. He designs the program, just for me, because He knew me.

The 24 hour program is very important to me. I can't get too happy in 24 hours; I can't get too sad or frightened in 24 hours. My life is fragile in many ways, mostly physical, and certainly not mentally or spiritually. So, I recognize life's fragility and my weaknesses, and I

he just said, "I'm going to have to do something about it. I don't know when you're ever going to be here and when you're not." I knew he meant it, because he had never said anything to me about drinking, and he knew I drank too much. On a Saturday night we all went out and got gloriously lit, and I drank on Sunday, which I always did, and on Monday I could just barely get to work. I knew that if I got to the place where I couldn't go, that I'd be out of a job. The main thing that meant to me was that I wouldn't have any money to buy whiskey with.

That Monday morning I called up Hazel, because I knew she had been in AA from way back. She did the best thing she could have done for me. She said, "Well, I'm not going to AA right now. The children are having a hard time in school, and I have to help them. Call Dot." Dot was an old drinking buddy of mine. So I called Dot, and she was thrilled to death. She had been in AA about a year or 2, and you know how you are then. She asked me to stop by on the way home from work, and I did. The next night was Tuesday, when South Columbus met. So I went to the meeting with her, having no idea that I was going to stay. I was just lost. I felt like there was not another soul in the world but me. I had just reached the end of my rope.

It was the end of November, and they elected her the program chairman for December. She asked me to go with her, and I thought, "Well, since she was nice enough to take up her time and since she is an old friend of mine, that's the least I can do." Everything just fell in place for me, and if Dot hadn't been chairman and said she had to go out there by herself, I probably never would have gone back. So I went all through December, and the more times I went, the better I felt. But it was January before I ever said I was an alcoholic, because I thought once you said you were an alcoholic and joined AA, that you could never take another drink as long as you lived. A lady named Mae who went with me the first night had 17 years of sobriety. I kept asking her, "How long has it been since you had a drink?," and she said, "Oh, I don't know, some little time." But I kept on and on, and finally she said, "Seventeen years." She didn't want to tell me, because she didn't think I'd believe it. Dot was my first sponsor, but she died in early in 1965 from cancer. Son was just about my sponsor, too.

I didn't know anybody who ever had a slip. So if I joined, I was without liquor forever. That's why it was January before I ever admitted I was an alcoholic. I would say, "I'm not an alcoholic. I'm just a visitor." Finally, old Joe J. said, "Well, if you're are not an alcoholic, go into the back room with the neurotics. This meeting is for alcoholics."

Helen was a big wheel in South Columbus when I went in. She used to be very active in AA. She and her husband got a divorce, because they had nothing in common. He liked to play golf and dance,

and she didn't want to do anything but AA. She doesn't go to AA anymore, but she's still sober.

A man named Bob was Mr. AA in this town. But he had a slip. A lot of things happened to him that I couldn't believe. I thought, "If Bob drinks again, anybody can, because he was just the epitome." He knew all the answers and lived them, I thought. He used to talk about taking inventory and I thought that meant how many gallons of gas, how many tires, etc. I didn't know what he was talking about.

When I came to AA, I was just about dead, and it was all I could do to work all day and go to 2 meetings. How these people make 90 meetings! I know that's the formula now, but I couldn't have done that. There weren't enough meetings anyway, but I couldn't physically have done it. I was badly burned about a year before I went into AA, and I just couldn't have made it. By the time Friday night came I was just dragging.

Meeting discussions were more serious than they are now. Today people move their chairs around, scrape their feet and get up to get coffee. We wouldn't have done that, gotten out of our chairs, any more than we would have done it in church. We were serious. This gradually changed.

The meeting format was about the same. We didn't talk about psychiatry. But I know when Dot was chairman, especially, she used to roll her big brown eyes around. You could say whatever you wanted to unless someone had something to discuss. Now I think AA has become more structured because of the treatment centers. It used to be more natural, much more simple. We had one member who used to say, "Stick to the basics." We didn't know what we were doing, but we didn't talk about psychiatry and all the stuff they talk about now, which is OK. They are more enlightened, and maybe that's what they need.

I think most people had lost more than the people who come in today. AA was a last resort. I know it was for me. Every morning I would wake up and think, "My God! Another day! I can't stand it." I knew I would kill myself. People were more desperate. When you get in that state and get some help, you maybe appreciate it more. I don't know the condition you all were in, but I was in a hell of a shape.

I belonged to the Wynnton Group. I was a GSR, and I went to State Assembly, and then I was treasurer of our group. I did my share, whatever I could. We did the same things we do now. People didn't worry about how the meeting was run.

I used to go to Starmount for birthdays a lot, because I knew a lot of those people. Back in those days everybody was trying to support groups to try to keep them going. We'd go to little towns around here and take a meeting. Sometimes we went to Cuthbert, and we went to Eufaula a lot. Several of us would go on Thursday and take a speaker.

As far as I know, religion played no part in early AA in Columbus. Spirituality did work in it, but so many people wanted to bring Christianity into it, and Christianity is not AA. However, spirituality is. We didn't explain that, we just talked about the program. There was one boy named Gene who used to come to Wynnton who just went bananas about the subject of Christianity. He would call you up on the telephone and talk forever. He wanted to reform the world and make a Christian out of everybody. Gene's been sober a long time. He and I used to be real good friends, but I lost touch with him.

I don't go to AA any more. I would not change AA today, because I'm quite sure that the way it is today meets the needs of today's people. I'm 82 years old and what they need and what I need would be 2 different things - as long as they follow the program.

I met a girl at the Bradley Center from Atlanta. When she left here, she went back home to Atlanta. I called the first Georgia delegate to GSO (Neely D.), a lovely little woman, and I asked her to go and see this girl and try to get her to a meeting or something. I said, "She really is nice," and this woman said, "Well, everybody in AA is nice," and, you know, I remembered that. She said, "We're all trying to be better," and I think that is true. We're all trying to be better.

But I just don't think people trying to be better would talk the way they talk now. It may meet the times, and I'm sure most people don't object to what they say, but I don't see any reason for people who are trying to improve their lives to talk like that. I don't think an AA meeting is the proper place.

When I went in AA, I said, "If the day ever comes when I want to drink, I'm going to drink." I was a smart aleck. I gave myself that freedom. "You don't have to not drink. If you want a drink, you can drink." Thank God, I never wanted a drink. It was just easy. Sometimes I would kind of have a sinking feeling, but that was physical, you know, like the bottom had dropped out, but no craving for alcohol, and I drank daily. No, I really didn't have any craving, and I'm glad I didn't, because I might not have had any better sense than to drink again. I feel that AA was a gift from God to me, because I didn't have enough sense to know what I was doing, and - I don't know - it just happened. I was crazy about AA, crazy about the people. Those people that would get up there and tell the worst things about themselves. I don't know, I just liked everything about AA.

Now, my sister was a binge drinker. People had been dragging her to AA meetings when they met in Joy's Flower Shop next to the Ralston on 12th Street. She would go for months. One time, she went for eight years. She died in September, still drinking and smoking. I think both of these things contributed to her death.

She lived over there on the other side of this house. Even though she drank too much and died from it, it would never have

occurred to me to drink. She had whiskey on her all the time. I want to be sober. I don't want to be drunk. I've had some pretty tough times, because I wanted her to be sober. She was so smart. You know, some people think they're too smart to understand AA. We need to be honest.

I have only talked twice in my life. Medlock, a guy I knew from Phoenix City, and a little bitty sergeant who was just about as low as you can get and still be in the Army, belonged to South Columbus, and their birthdays were the same month as mine. They were a year ahead of me, and they really made life tough for me. They really rode me, and it's a good thing they did.

Medlock took me up to Julia Tutwiler Prison, and I made a talk. They said it was good, and they wanted me to come back and talk. Not too long after that, Medlock started the Phenix City Group. He asked me to come over there and speak. I tried to talk, and I stuttered around for awhile, and he said, "Just sit down." So that's the last time I really tried to speak. I know that's awful, but Son H. always told us we didn't have to do anything that we didn't want to. We have been uncomfortable and miserable and out of place for so long that we don't have to do anything in AA we don't want to. I took that to mean that I didn't have to get up and speak if I didn't want to. I'd say, "If I have to get up in front of a bunch of people and make a talk, I'll just quit." That's awful to say, but it's the truth. Just sitting down talking to someone, I can rattle on all the time, but to get up and try to make any sense out of it, I just can't do it.

People on drugs did not start coming to AA until after the '60s. Then every time we went to Macon, we argued about whether they should let people on drugs other than alcohol into AA. I think they are still arguing about it over there. But a lot of people live in places where there is no NA.

I used a lot of drugs. In the daytime, I'd take a dexamil to get up and at 11:00 in the morning I'd have a little liquid phenobarbital. Then after lunch I'd have a little wine, and then I'd start shaking, and when I'd get off I'd start drinking, and then I'd take a nembutal to go to sleep. And of course the combination of whiskey and nembutal is supposed to be fatal, but I was taking all that just to keep me going. My story is not much different than someone who came in 5 years ago.

For my first birthday, they gave me my medallion and I think my sponsor came. She was getting so sick then. She couldn't go to many meetings - all the smoke. It was just like a reception. I tell you, nobody in this world has ever been any prouder of anything than I was of that medallion. If I had a diamond that big, I wouldn't be a bit prouder than I was of that. I couldn't believe I'd been a year without drinking.

There wasn't much celebrating in our home group. The South Columbus Group would bring linen napkins with heavy monograms and

some little fancy refreshments. Maybe on Friday night we had something other than coffee, but I don't know what it was. It was just hard-down AA. After it was over with, we all had a good time, but those AA meetings - they were serious. And I guess, in a way, they still are. But I'm sure that anybody who comes to AA today is just as desperate to be sober as the people back then, except maybe we had all gone further.

Edith H., District 11

I drank approximately a quart of Scotch or vodka every day of my life for 9 years. I was a social (read BAR) drinker; since I was no "barfly, (I thought), I paid for my own drinks almost all of the time. I never was 86'd, never had a DUI, never was in jail, but only because God was taking care of me, for I most assuredly deserved them all. And those "yets" are still out there. I shook my first few months out and asked over and over if I would EVER lose the desire for a drink. My sponsor told me, yes, if I were willing to get down on my knees and ask God to take it away. I did, and He did. I've seen other people doing my research for me. I've had all I could stand going on in my head, and cannot go back. NO THANK YOU. When I came to AA I hated every one in the world, and I was truly sorry there weren't 10 billion more people, so I could hate them too. If that's not insanity, what is? Now I love everyone. I may not approve of all their actions, but I love them just the same.

I was born in Atlanta, to a very dysfunctional family. My father was a periodic alcoholic. My mother worked full time, and my grandmother raised me. I went to grade and junior high school in Atlanta, then moved to Tuscaloosa, Ala., graduated from high school there and went on to university. I moved back to Atlanta, again lived with my grandmother, while my mother moved to a job in Washington, DC. I never drank at that time, only a sip of the popular corn whiskey to kill the odor on other's breath. I hated the taste of corn or any straight whiskey. I was always the assigned driver!

I moved with my mother to Washington, DC, and took a job in government service. I met a coworker of my mother's, who I now know was an alcoholic. I started dating him, and learned to drink mixed drinks, particularly Scotch and water. When World War II came, I worked for the Air Force, and my drinking became heavier. I began living high, wide and handsome, as did every one in Washington at that time. I had blackouts almost from the very beginning, and I thought everyone else had them too. This went on for several years. Along about this time my periodic alcoholic father, who had been dry for several years, began to drink again. He died at 49. The death

certificate said pneumonia, but alcohol actually killed him. All this time I think I was drinking socially; at least at that time I could have a couple of drinks and not want any more. But there came a time when I thought it was necessary to continue drinking, and I discovered that if I sipped my drink very slowly, it would stay down rather than being regurgitated. At that point, I think I crossed over the line to active alcoholism.

I married my friend and moved to San Francisco. He was a naval aviator stationed in Honolulu. The only time I really drank at all was when he was Stateside, and at those times we both got thoroughly drunk, as did almost all our friends. World War II ended, and I arrived in Honolulu on my birthday. My husband had lots of friends - as I see them now, all alcoholics, naturally. There was family interference from his grandmother who came to visit us and quickly, successfully broke up the marriage. About that time, I married a second time to another alcoholic (how the pattern repeats itself). I continued to drink but realized that I had a serious problem with alcohol and sought help. But I wasn't ready at that time, and was told so by the counselor whom I saw. Divorce #2. I returned to Washington, began the cycle all over, and finally saw the 20 questions on the front page of the Washington Post and again sought help, consisting of outpatient psychiatric care. To show you how sick I was by then, I was seen every day and was on Antabuse for almost a year. During that year, I know now I was dry, not sober as I thought at the time. They weren't talking to me! (Note that arrogance, which finally caught up with me). There was no mention of AA at that time, except for one passing comment.

I had an opportunity to return to California to work, and my therapist said, "Edith, you are going to California to get drunk." I laughed at her and replied, "Dr. M., I am cured!" As all of us know, there is no cure. Arrested, one day at a time, but never cured. I drank for 7 months more, and if I thought I had an alcoholic problem before, I truly found out just what a serious problem I did have. (Fortunately, after 5 years in AA, I saw Dr. M. again and was able to report to her my sobriety and some of what I had learned in AA.)

By this time, I was ready for any help I could get. I saw a small ad in the local newspaper: "Do you have a problem with alcohol? Call xxx-xxxx." I did call, and went to my first meeting July 15, 1952. The next day I had one beer with my boss and knew very well where I was headed again. I called the number from the paper again and was taken to my second meeting on July 17, 1952. It has not been necessary for me to take another drink from that day to this. I was finally ready to try to do anything they said would keep me sober one day at a time. If they had told me to raise \$500 (like every other alcoholic, I was broke) and stand on my head in the middle of town for 24 hours, I would have been caught trying to do so, and I still feel the same way.

My sponsor was a man (there were no women who stayed sober, and I am the only one alive for the past 35 years). Almost his first words to me were, "Your sobriety **MUST** come first, in front of everything and anything, or you won't have anything else very long." It is still my first priority. If it adversely affects my sobriety, it has to go right now.

My sponsor told me, as we are all told, not to become involved in a deep relationship for at least a year. He didn't tell me, but now I know, it takes at least a year (and it took me longer, nearer 2 1/2 to 3 years) to learn to love ourselves, much less someone else. My self-confidence was zilch when I came here, to say nothing of my self-respect. I was truly bankrupt in every department of my life. I used to say my luck had run out, but the truth was my life was a total wreck.

I got my sobriety in Ventura, CA, an oil town. I was fired in the first week of my sobriety, which surely hurt my pride. When I brought up the subject of why I was fired in the meeting that night, another member stated in no uncertain terms, "I don't know why P.W. fired you, but you are the most arrogant bitch I have ever met." I was so sick, I didn't know what the opposite of arrogance was, and was told, "I don't know how you're going to get humility." I had to pray for it. Here I had been secretary to the very top brass in the Air Force, and I could not find a secretarial job in either Ventura or Santa Barbara counties, both large, oil-producing counties employing many, many secretaries. God had something He wanted to teach me, and I assure you, He did so, doubled, in spades. For a year, since I had to eat, I worked as a waitress, split shift, a job I then thought was the lowest in the world. Now I know it's anything but, and I made more money as a waitress than I would have made as a secretary. God does have a sense of humor. Like every other alcoholic, I am a perfectionist, and I do have a big smile and like pleasing people. Not only did I lose some of that arrogance, but also I got back some of my self-respect.

Well, anyway, being smart-aleck, headstrong Edie, although my sponsor had warned me not to do so, I did get involved, marrying a third time. Since I had been almost a call girl in Washington and was now trying to "clean up my act" and get my life in some sort of decent order, I truly thought he was respecting my wishes by not "playing around." He kept his hands to himself, and only kissed me in an almost brotherly fashion. On my wedding night I discovered I had married a gay man who was unable to perform what heterosexuals consider "normal" sex. I called my sponsor next morning, he came over very promptly (I'm sure he was afraid it would cause me to drink!), and the marriage was quietly annulled 2 weeks later.

After that, I was very wary of men for quite some time. Then along came the man I finally married, number 4, in my fourth year of sobriety. He was a physician, a neurologist and psychiatrist. What I didn't know at that time is that many, many physicians have a drug

problem, and he had one doubled in spades, being cross-addicted. I will be honest: had it not been for AA, I would either have lost my own mind, committed suicide, or killed him. After 15 years, he finally got sober and clean, and we finally had 5 years of happiness. AA preserved my sanity and again saved my life during those 15 years of hell.

When he died in 1971, he thought he had left me well fixed, with a quarter of a million dollars in insurance. He had been sold a decreasing term policy, which neither of us knew or understood. I collected not quite \$1500 dollars, not even enough to bury him. I had lost my mother in 1969, and in 1971 I lost him. They were the 2 people I depended upon, and God had another lesson to teach me, to make sure I learned to depend only on Him. I did learn that lesson fairly quickly, and I never crossed my mind in either instance to drink. After Bud's death, again I was unable to find a job in my chosen profession. I normally type 115 words per minute on an electric typewriter, 135 wpm on a computer, but I was so upset I couldn't even type 35 wpm. So again, having to eat, and by this time having 4 large dogs to feed, I worked cleaning houses for a year, until I could sort out my problem. Some more arrogance went down the drain, thank God.

Our home was sold in exchange for an apartment complex in Pasadena, and from there things began to straighten out. Although I was badly cheated in the process, God does take care of His own, and He most surely did take care of me. Friends rallied around, and I was able to return after some months to my profession of medical transcriptionist, which I still follow.

The apartments were somewhat run down, and over the next 5 years I improved them and finally sold them for more than double what I paid for them. Again, God has a marvelous sense of humor.

Now I'm back in Georgia, have been for nearly 14 years, active in AA; I usually attend 4-5 meetings a week. I am peaceful, happy, joyous, with so many friends who are now family (I have no blood relatives left), people who love me and whom I love. Service work is so satisfying to me; for what was so freely given to me, I choose to give back whenever and wherever possible. Whenever or wherever someone reaches out for help, I am responsible. I want the hand of AA to be there. I choose to live by those 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. Everyone of the Promises has come true in my life. I thank you for allowing me to share.

Jerry H., Savannah

Jerry H. took advantage of all his 34 years of sobriety and his life of 77 years. He started numerous verbal battles at the 24 Hour Club

in Savannah where he was an almost-daily fixture. At a corner table, he delighted in goading whoever encircled him into near apoplexy with his outrageous behavior. Everyone loved him.

Born in Canada to citizens of the U.S., Jerry began his colorful life by leaving Chicago to join the Foreign Legion. He gave out of money in England and ended up in the British Army where he served throughout the world for 30 years.

It was in England in 1949 that his alcoholism caught up with him, and he was ordered by his colonel to go to Alcoholics Anonymous or be drummed out of the service. Jerry says he "learned the secret" after four years in the then-fledgling fellowship, and that was: "drink two and quit." His "kind-of" sponsor predicted Jerry would go down the tubes in a year. Jerry said that proves you can't pay attention to sponsors. He was on Skid Row in 6 months and re-entered AA on Aug. 9, 1959 in Detroit, Mich.

Jerry, a short man with a shaved head, goatee, and the disposition of a grumpy terrier, delighted in telling it like it is. And he used the Big Book to back up his opinion. "We've heard a thousand times the most striking statement I've ever heard in my life: 'Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path . . . ' But very few people hear this, especially the younger ones today, who spend \$28,000 for a month in a treatment center to find out why they drank. It doesn't matter why. We know why: no matter who we were, we wanted to be someone else; no matter where we were, we wanted to be someplace else."

Another pet peeve of his, he said, is the talk about 12 "suggested" steps. No such thing, he said, "these are the steps we took as a suggested way of recovery."

Jerry also said his "honest opinion" is that "interference with a man's drinking - intervention - is terrible." That it only "staves off what eventually happens." He also points out neither 90 meetings in 90 days nor an immediate sponsor are in the Big Book.

He said he believes we are "reborn in AA" and that's the "beautiful thing." "We are the mediums, the messengers of God," in carrying the 12 Steps, Jerry said. "This is where the great, great satisfaction comes."

Until he died unexpectedly of a heart attack September 16, 1993, Jerry still attended 4 meetings a week and was at the clubhouse most days. He said he did everything the Book tells him to do.

Through AA, Jerry said, the miracles that have happened "you wouldn't believe. ... I had to give up being sick as a dog, going to jail, drunk driving, losing jobs, becoming unemployable to come in here. What do I get out of it? The only thing I got is happiness, security, a dollar in my pocket, freedom. I don't know if it's worth it," he said with a chuckle.

Jerry said he got tired of hearing people say they don't understand what God's Will is for them today. "Of course we don't. We won't know what God's Will is until the day is over!"

Joe H., Sandy Springs

Joe H. died March 22, 1994, of emphysema. His widow said that Joe was absolutely dedicated to AA. Twelfth Step calls never fazed him. One night at 2 AM he drove 60 miles to a drunk who called and needed to talk. He believed that when people make these calls, they've reached their bottom and could end their life. So he always made the visit.

In Joe's time, people didn't come to AA until they were older, ready to die or go insane. Joe had tried many things - doctors, psychologists, hospital, etc. - but AA was the only thing that saved his life.

Joe started a Monday night meeting at St. Phillips, and, with Conway H., started the Atlanta Round-Up. He always made sure that people in and out of Peachford Hospital attended just to see that AA has fun times, social times, and inspiring times.

The following is part of a talk he made shortly before his death.

I'm just past my 75th birthday, and I've been sober over 30 years. The reason I've been sober is that in all that time I haven't taken a drink of liquor. I've had a lot of problems, but I didn't drink liquor.

I'm from a large family, the 9th of 11 children. I'm the only alcoholic. When I was about 15 Daddy went bankrupt. In those days you didn't declare bankruptcy; the bank just came and took everything. But this brought the family together. From then on, when anyone had a problem, everyone had a problem.

I've been protected all my life, even today. I had an older sister who always treated me like she was my father, and my lovely wife Dorothy, an angel, has treated me like her baby during this illness.

I never had problems getting a job or any worry about money. My older brother protected me. I would buy cars on credit and sell them for cash. Courts frown on this. Once I had 2 cars out like that. The bank came wanting \$8,000, and I didn't have either the money or the cars. I called Momma and she took care of it. If I got locked up, they would come take me home. The first time I got locked up, I didn't know what to do. When I got out the next morning and went back to my car, 2 policeman were waiting for me, so I made Dorothy take me home.

In 1932, I went to work. I was an alcoholic and also a workaholic. I liked to work 6 and 7 days a week. I drank liquor with them on the job. In 1939, with no intention of getting married, I met a little young lady. We went together for 6 years. After the war, I was in Orlando on business, drunk of course. I had a hotel reservation, but I couldn't write my name in the register. I needed a drink so I could write my name. I asked the boss to OK a \$10 check to get a fifth so I could register. He had never heard that before.

I'd been gone about 11 days, and when I got back Dorothy was making plans to get married. I thought she'd gotten engaged to someone else in those 11 days. I asked her when, and she said September 14. I asked her who, and she said, "You." I had called her collect in a blackout and asked her! It must have been God's will. We have a wonderful daughter and 2 grandchildren.

I stayed with Texaco until alcohol defeated me. After 25 years, I was back where I started. Dorothy had complete faith that some day I would quit drinking. I didn't know I was an alcoholic. I did know I was very dependent on alcohol. I asked my doctor, "Do you think I'm an alcoholic?, and he said, "I don't know."

The last time I was on a drunk, Dorothy had gone to work. I told my bootlegger, a taxi driver, "That mean old woman I married took the car to work, and I've got to go get it." We went there, and saw the guards at the gates. He asked me what to do (he was as drunk as I was), and I told him to just go on in. He did, and I got in our car. He asked me how we were going to get out, and I said, "You go first." I followed him right out.

I went to the Majestic Grill for some breakfast, and I thought I saw Dorothy going by in a car with a strange man. I'm a jealous husband. I took off and ran that car off the road.

I always met some of the nicest people under these circumstances. They always stood there and waited until the cops arrived. It was about 9 AM, and I got locked up. I was in and out all day, lying there on the floor, with all kinds of people, vomiting blood. About 7 PM Momma bonded me out, and I went home. The next day, my brother got me and Dorothy to the doctor, who had put me in the hospital many times to keep me from dying coming off a drunk. We went in, and there were lots of people there. They called my name, and my brother went in. They called my name, and Dorothy went in. They called my name again, and I sat there. The lady came over and said, "Joe, they want you inside." I went in and looked at the doctor, who sat me down and said, "You little b---, I'm gonna take hold of your life and you're gonna do it my way. We're going to put you in an insane asylum for the rest of your life."

I talked him into letting me go back in the hospital one more time. This was December 1957, and I had already been there 4 times

that year. I said, "I've got to go by the house and get some clothes." "Oh, no," the doctor said, and put me in a private room with no radio, no telephone, no TV, and no visitors. I stayed 4 weeks, except he let me go home overnight on Christmas Eve. I knew there was a guard outside the door. I didn't ask the orderlies or the nurses or anybody if there was anybody outside that door. I knew there was! But that's where I was introduced to AA.

My brother called AA, and the only question they asked was where. They don't do that today; they say, "If the drunk wants to get sober, let him call us." Two men came by and took me to a meeting. All the way there and back, they talked about how much liquor they drank and all the crazy things they did. At the meeting, a prominent lawyer spoke. He talked about lying on a park bench in Piedmont Park when someone from AA saw him and told him they would get him a haircut, get his suit pressed, get him a shower and a pint of liquor. I don't know about you, but my kind of drunk would go anywhere for a pint of whiskey. They took him to a meeting, and he never took another drink. A prominent broadcaster was the chairman of that first meeting I went to. He often told the same story about himself: someone from AA promised him a pint of whiskey if he'd go to a meeting, he went, and never took another drink. They were an inspiration.

I got involved in AA. Texaco at that time was very good to me. They furnished me a car and an expense account to make 12th-Step calls. This was the beginning of a new life for me.

I had a brother who was a theologian. He used to tell me, when I was drunk and when I was just dry in AA, before I understood the Steps, "Why don't you get out of God's way?" I thought he was just saying that because he thought he was better than I was.

I quit Texaco after 34 years. I took jobs, and I could make money, but money was not the answer. I met a young man from Peachford Hospital and told him I wanted to go to work for him. I started there in January 1974 and stayed 10 years. Didn't make any money, but they were the most enjoyable 10 years of my life. I met some of the finest people in the work, and they were all alcoholics.

My wife had been elected state delegate of Al-Anon. (She had been at the first Al-Anon meeting in the city of Atlanta.) She doesn't do anything half-way, so she resigned her job. We had no income but the little money I was paid at Peachford, and we had a house in Sandy Springs and 2 cars. I don't know how we lived, but we always had everything we needed. Today, we have everything we need. In 1983, I'd been at Peachford long enough; I was 70 years old.

A little later, I got sick. The doctors had trouble finding anything wrong with me. Finally, they said I'd had a second heart attack, and later they diagnosed emphysema. I was sick a long time,

took rehabilitation, got some medicine. But I was lying in bed depressed. I knew about God and miracles, but I was still depressed. The next morning, I started calling drunks and I was feeling better. I decided to start going to AA meetings again. AA helps me not only with my drinking problem, but also my living problems and my spiritual problems. I'm so happy tonight to find out that I can still talk in AA.

John H., Lilburn

I had a wife and 2 children. We lived in this little skid row house out in the country in Southern California, about 35 miles outside of Los Angeles. I had been employed by the Los Angeles Times. As the Times booted me out the door, I had a check in my pocket. I remember getting into that little dinky car of mine and starting towards LaPonte, CA. I remember feeling very much down, but as I drove up into my neighborhood there was a moving van in my yard. My wife was standing next to the van with these 2 little kids, and she said, "I have had enough, and I'm going home to live with mother."

I remember the feeling that I had at that time: it was a wonderful thing that she was going to get the hell out of my life, so I could be free to do the things I wanted to do. When they left there was this empty house, and I had this little drunk's car and no place to go. I didn't have any friends and didn't even have any associates, because I had used up all the people in my life. I had borrowed money or stolen from everybody. If you allowed me to get close to you, and you had something that I wanted, I would take it. I never had any conception about friendship, honesty or anything else. I really didn't have any people to go to. I finally decided to take this check and get it cashed because I wanted some Ernest & Julio money. I drove around in that car for a little while and found a spot down in a orange grove off Valley Blvd. I knew that the sheriff's department came by from time to time, but if you weren't bothering anybody, and you didn't make any rash moves, they just left you alone. So I went down there and took up housekeeping in my little car.

I don't remember how long I was there, and I've been trying to figure that out for a long time. I stayed there as long as I could. I had tried to stop drinking before on many occasions, but I had never done that successfully. The longest period of time I had ever put together was 7 days, and I nearly went crazy. What I'm saying really is I stopped trying to stop drinking. I knew this was the end of the line for me. A alcohol was no longer working for me, and that terrified me, but I didn't know what else to do. So I stayed in that car as long as I could stay in that car.

I bounced out of that car one morning around sunrise, and I was on my knees outside the car throwing up blood and vomiting. That was no new experience for me; I've done lots of that. I don't know why that day I cried out in my misery for God to please help me. I couldn't go on any longer. I got an immediate answer. It was like my mind was a tape recorder, and it was going around and around very fast. All of sudden it was like it stopped, and I had just a brief moment of clarity. The message I got was that I should call Alcoholics Anonymous. Now, I need to tell you here that I had never heard of Alcoholics Anonymous, I never saw anything about Alcoholics Anonymous, and I didn't know anything about Alcoholics Anonymous. I was in such a desperate state that morning, I was so sick, that I didn't even question it.

I got into my little car, and I drove into Los Angeles, and I went to a drugstore. I called on a pay phone there. The operator must have realized how desperate I was because she didn't even charge me, she just connected me with the number for AA. There was a gal named Sybil who answered the phone. She had a nice comforting voice and asked me a couple of questions. She asked me if I wanted some help, and I said yes. She asked me if I could find my way to the 400 block of Southwestern Ave. I said yes, I can find my way there. She said, "This is the Southwest Club. If you will be there someone will be there to talk to you." It was early in the morning. I knew where this address was, but when I drove down there, I was a really sick cookie.

I drove up in front of this place and realized when I got out of the car that this was right in the middle of the territory that I had been fired from. I had driven by this place a hundred times and never knew it was there. It was just a little store front, a dinky little place, not in the best neighborhood in the world. I walked up to the door, and a little guy opened the door from the inside. He stood there with a big grin on his face and said, "My name is Joe; what is yours?" He reached out his hand and shook my hand. He is no longer alive. He was a good message carrier in AA. He said, (I don't remember this), that I asked him 2 questions. He said I asked him how do I become a member and how much are the dues. He said; "Sonny, step across that threshold and you can become a member anytime you want to."

He said, "As far as the dues are concerned, it is apparent that you have already paid yours." I guess I was in pretty sad shape. He took me inside, and there were a few people in there that were as old as my grandfather. I was only 24 years old and I had ran out of everything to get ready to come to AA. These people welcomed me into this program. Not a single solitary soul ever said to me, "Kid, you're too young to be a alcoholic." I don't know whether it was because of the shape I was in or that they realized I was one of them, but they never said that to me. I think it is a shame when we have

people who pass judgement on other people in this program about when they're ready. We don't know, that's God's business, not my business.

They welcomed me in and got me some coffee, even though I wasn't holding that too well. Someone later on brought some doughnuts in and I tried, but I wasn't doing too well with those either. They gave me a bunch of pamphlets, even though there weren't many in those days, and at the end of the day they turned me loose. I got in that car and drove back to that orange grove and sat under the street lights and read all the pamphlets, even the one to alcoholic women. The next morning after sleeping in my car again, I just toddled on back to the Southwest Club. They always opened up early, thank God. I went in and before long Joe arrived. He was my temporary sponsor. In those days what you got was a temporary sponsor for the first 30 days before they assigned you a permanent sponsor.

Joe was a real old curmudgeon, a real tough old bastard. He took nothing from anybody. He had an old Chevrolet, and you earned your way into that car. You started off by sitting in the center of the back seat where the hump was. You worked your way up as he picked up new guys. He took you to a different meeting every night. In Los Angeles they would have newcomers row either in the back or down along the side. They would ask if there were any newcomers, and you would just raise your hand. They didn't want to hear your name, they didn't want to know anything about you, they really didn't even care about you. They just went on with the meeting. Newcomers did not talk. They didn't have anything to say. Sometimes I think today that maybe that's not a bad idea.

I went to meetings all the time with him and spent every day down there at the club. I didn't have anything else to do. I ran out of the little money I did have before long. People coming in took me to buy a sandwich or a cup of coffee. I had a lot of people reaching out to me very early in my sobriety, and I couldn't figure out why these people were doing this for me. My entrance date into AA is April 9, 1959. I was all finished, all done and all surrendered when I came.

Joe took me to a lot of meetings. We listened to him when he talked. I remember once coming back from a meeting. I had graduated to the front seat, and I said to him, "When am I going to be able to talk in AA?" He looked at me with those beady little eyes of his and said to me, "What the hell are you of value to anybody else in Alcoholics Anonymous?" He was right, he was absolutely right. I was finally sober 30 days. Those days they didn't have any chips, and they didn't care about those things. I was in the club that night, and he said, "Come over here. I want to introduce you to your sponsor." That's the night I met Howdy. His real name was Howard D. H. He was really a wonderful guy. He is no longer alive. He was one of the really good members of Alcoholics Anonymous with a very good image. He was

never at the podium in his life. Always made the coffee and set up the chairs, he was that kind of a guy. I guess maybe that was God's way of saying that with your over blown ego, you need to get hooked up with a guy like this. He asked me where I lived, and I got very uncomfortable trying to explain to him that I was still living in my car. I was still a big shot, and it's very hard to tell people that you are living in your car. He said to me at that time, "You aren't living in that car anymore. You're going to come home and stay with me." So I moved into his basement that had a little steel shower, a little bedroom and even a little radio. No television, but I thought it was wonderful. It was better than sleeping in that damn car.

I need to interject here and let you know what type of transportation I had when I came into Alcoholics Anonymous. I had a 1957 Rhinolith Dalveen. These days they refer to those as Renaults. They were a boxy square little car, but I had a round Rhinolith Daveen, round from smashing all four corners. Sometimes when I came down the street, it looked like it was coming down sideways at you. Also, it had some peculiar odors that would come out of it. One of the real factors about it was that it had a big puke streak on the inside of the back window from throwing up on the freeway. That is how it gets on the inside of the back window. That was my little reminder about what I was and who I was. I cleaned it up the best I could, of course, because now I was sober 30 days, and dear God, a guy sober 30 days has to have a better automobile to drive.

I lived in Howdy & Mazy's basement. He had a pool in his backyard, and I became the official gardener and pool cleaner. It wasn't very long that I had one of the best tans that I ever had in my life from taking care of that pool in his yard. I remember that he wanted me to start considering that I was going to have to do other things in my life, because I had been there for about 3 months. He said to me that I was going to have to start making some amends. Most of them at that time were financial amends, not personal amends. Bill collectors started to catch up to me because I was in one place long enough. He was insistent that what I do is I start to make amends to my last employer. I had done something there that was not quite right. So we sat down and we rehearsed what I was going to say to them. He knew I had a way of telling people what I thought they wanted to hear, and he was insistent on that I tell them what he wanted me to tell them. So I did.

I went back down to the Los Angeles Times. I went into see my old boss Paul M., a non-alcoholic. I told him what I was trying to do. He was thrilled to death that I was trying to get my life straightened out, because he knew I was in big trouble. It nearly knocked me off my chair when he gave me my job back. He laughed and he said, "We are not doing you any favors on this. We've tried

about 6 other people in that territory, and you had it so screwed up no one could make a living. So we are giving it back to you and we'll see what happens."

I had a really wonderful time. I worked for them for 5 more years. I moved out of the basement of my sponsor's house into my first apartment in the little town of Pasadena. I shared a apartment with a guy by the name of John K. who was sober 2 years longer than me and was about my age. It was really amazing; he didn't have a driver's license but he had an apartment, and I had a driver's license and a car. So we made a great pair. We lived together for about a year. John K. taught me a lot about being a friend. I really never had a lot of friends in my life. I remember one night he said to me, "The way you have a friend is to be one." That was amazing to me.

It seems that God always saw fit for me to make money. I was divorced, and I remember one of the things that my sponsor was very adamant about was that I pay my child support. It's very important for us to be able to face ourselves sober. If I hide from my responsibilities, then I am hiding from myself, and I might not be able to stay here if I hide from myself.

One of hardest things in my early sobriety was that I was separated from these 2 little ones. My ex-wife had remarried. I didn't have a lot going on as far as romance in my life because I was too intent on paying back my creditors. I also decided I was going back to school. I was working for the Times, going to a lot of meetings, and back in school at UCLA. I was doing this in a 24-four hour period. Sometimes it got kind of stretched. I had a very good relationship with my employer, who was really good about allowing me time off so I could do all of these things. I did very well in school. You know, one of the things that is kind of dangerous if you happen to be young getting sober in this program is that you clean up on the outside very quickly if you're 24 or 25 years old. My problem was on the inside, and what I needed to do was on the inside, which I had not been doing.

I had a strange thing happen to me. I got a call in the middle of the night from my sponsor's sponsor. He had gotten divorced and hooked up with a young lady who said that what he needed to do was smoke a little marijuana, and it would make the romance that much better. He called me from the Altamonte jail. I knew that place real well. So I went down there to get him out of the jail. In those days if someone who was sober came, they would release them in your custody. I remember I walked back to the drunk tank, and he was standing there. He was really sick. I looked in at him and said, "What happened?" He had been sober 11 years. He looked at me and answered me honestly: "I think I've been giving this program lip service." I said to myself, "If you give it lip service, this is what you have awaiting you." So I decided that I was going to try to work the steps in this program. I

wasn't really thrilled about this idea. The best I could do was work the first 3 Steps. I hung on to those as best I could.

I got to know a lot of people in AA. I showed up at meetings all over southern California, because I needed to. I would usually find myself in at least one meeting a day, sometimes 2. There was a fellow in California at that time by the name of Chuck C. I used to follow him around like a puppy dog because I really liked what he had to say. John K. and I would drive all over southern California and go to meetings. Sometimes, we would be in his old woody Ford station wagon, and the Big Book would be sitting underneath the front seat. We would play games with each other like reciting as far as we could in Chapter 5 without looking at the book. It was good fellowship in AA.

I had a very good beginning because of very good sponsorship that went something like this: Steps, Big Book and meetings. Early in sobriety, until I left southern California, I never ever heard the sentence, "Don't Drink and Go To Meetings." I heard about the Steps in Alcoholics Anonymous, which are vitally important. I believe today that was the bedrock of my sobriety and I'm grateful for the people who gave it to me in that manner.

As I said, I did the best I could as far as the first 3 Steps in this program, because that is all I could do. I continued to work for the L. A. Times. It was in the days when the Times corporation was buying companies left and right. They would buy 10 companies in a year. Every time they did they would post on the bulletin board the people who were under selection to go to these new companies or outright purchases. Usually they would like to have somebody from the mother corporation go live and work in those places. My name would frequently appear on those list, but I knew it was like "always a bridesmaid, never a bride." So I finally went to see the publisher of the newspaper. His name was Otis C., and his family who owned the newspaper. I knew him personally. He thought I would come see him sooner. He mentioned that when I made the appointment to see him. He said, "Do you know how we select people for executive positions in this company or any of the companies we buy?" I said, "No." He said, "It's not done by myself, it's done by a group. They sit around this huge oak table and decide who we are going to send. Most of these people are made by their personnel records, because in many cases they don't know you personally." He said, "I don't know if you've ever seen yours, but here it is." He handed it to me across the table. On the right hand side in this record are all the wonderful things about the past 5 years. Over on the left hand side, one single page, was about John the drunk. Then I realized why I never got selected. If I had to make that decision, I might have been skeptical about it too, if I was going to look at this. I asked him, "Could I overcome this?" He gave me a

very honest answer: "I don't know." That is when I made the decision I was going to leave the newspaper business.

At this time I took a job working for a company that was headquartered in Wisconsin. I was their west coast regional sales manager. I was 29 years old, I had no boss, my territory was the 11 western states and Hawaii, and I had a group that all worked together. It was the best job anyone could possibly have. I remember, there were always a lot of problems going on there in Hawaii. I remember to this day that it was \$100 to fly to Hawaii. If you missed the United Airlines flight, then American had one going. If you missed that one, you could go on Continental. I worked for these folks, and I did a little dating at that time with a lady in the program. The next 2 years were wonderful times for me. I made a lot of money, I went to a lot of meetings, I traveled all over the western part of the country, and I got to know a lot of people in AA.

These people came out once a year to Palm Springs, and I would have to go out there and play golf. They thought I was some kind of genius, but it really wasn't anything about being a genius, it was just working 8 hours a day, that's all. They decided they wanted me to become their national sales manager. Without discussing anything with my sponsor, I decided that what I was going to do was marry this lady with 3 children and move us all back to Wisconsin for all the wrong reasons. You see I thought that a national sales manager in Wisconsin should have a ready-made family so he would look corporate. This move was wonderful for my career, but terrible for the family. They paid a horrible price for a decision I made that wasn't based on the best motives, although it was the best I had going for me at that time. So I moved this family to Wisconsin, and I became the national sales manager. I traveled a lot and made a tremendous amount of money, more money than I ever thought people should make.

My wife at that time was having a terrible time trying to stay sober. It was a really tough situation for her. It was difficult for me, but it was a lot worse for her. We grew more and more apart. It came time for me to make up my mind when we had been there for 5 years. My career had blossomed. I made a decision to leave and move to the southeast. I really wanted to stay in the textile business. If you're going to live in the southeast, and you're going to be in the textile business, you might as well live in the best place in the southeast. I thought that was Atlanta. I still do. Instead of this family breaking up, we decided to move to the southeast and give it a try. She really struggled. I started a business with a partner. After being in business down here for 7 years, in 1978 this company was prospering very well. This partnership was going quite good.

I had 2 really disastrous blows happen to me at one time. My partner committed suicide, and my wife and I decided to get a divorce,

all within a 6-month period. A divorce is difficult enough. A divorce from another member in this program is very difficult because people take sides. We're alcoholics, but we're also human beings. That was a nightmare. It was also a great lesson for me because it became very clear to me that I needed to finish the job I had started so many years ago as far as cleaning up my side of the street. When anything was going on in Georgia up to that time, I always wanted to be part of it, I wanted to be in the spotlight, I wanted to be on center stage, and I wanted people to pay attention to me. The reason I desired that so much is because I really didn't feel that good about myself. So it became very clear to me that I needed to clean up my life.

I took 30 days out of my life and went back to California to that guy I shared that apartment with. He now had a nice home in Cheenal Hills. I spent 30 days with him and finished what I started so many years ago. John H. is different today. It's not so important what people think about me, but it's extremely important what I think about me. I'm not so interested about being center stage or in the limelight, I just like the idea of being sober in this program, spending time with my wife, travelling around the country and having fun. I'm grateful for what happened to me in 1978 because it showed me that there was another side to this program that I had been missing before. I'm very comfortable in my own space today, and I'm grateful for that.

God has been very good to me in this program. I have always been given a lot of breaks as far as earning an adequate living. One of the things I would like to do now is to be able to do something that might help some other people along the way. I think that's what it is all about here in AA. The older I get the more I realize how much more alike we are than different.

The interviewer asked me if there is anything I would like to see in this fellowship. There is something; it is that I hope that the people in the future don't distort the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. In addition to that, I hope we can always remember that the way this message is carried is one person to another and not in huge instructional meetings where you have 2,000 people. It really is carried from one person to another. The people who freely gave to me in the beginning asked nothing for it. I remember that very well. What I would like to do is to carry the message to other people very freely, just the way they did to me.

Jack L., Savannah

"How do you stay sober?" asks Jack "Handsome Jack" L. of any victim who walks in Savannah's 24-Hour Clubhouse door.

The correct answer gets a big grin from the short, stocky man with the sparkling eyes. A baffled look gets Jack's stern answer: "One day at a time!" (and an unspoken, but clear message, "don't you forget it!").

Jack is a fixture in the Clubhouse. He's earned his chair with a sobriety date of Feb. 6, 1960. His adventurous life has taken him from his birthplace in Shanghai, China to his sobering-up place in Albany, GA, and a stopover in Beaufort, S.C. It would take a novel to detail all the events in the middle.

But all who know Jack and his story also know: if you have a burning desire for an opinion he has one. All you need to do is ask.

"I'm a firm believer that AA has never changed, only the people have changed. Thank God, they're younger. I remember when a young man was turned away because he hadn't qualified. He stayed sober and looked for a group that would accept him. I saw few under 40 who stuck."

"One of the saddest things promoted and sold in AA is 90 meetings in 90 days. Theoretically, there are places without that many meetings. How in the hell could you do it? Also, this holding hands and come-on-back stuff came in vogue with the treatment centers. That's not a part of AA."

"There were no treatment centers back then. There was a hospital nearby that would accept alcoholics, but the doctor very much wanted AA there to provide a watch. We would take 4-hour shifts. We'd take him to a meeting as soon as he could get his clothes on."

"We had no choice on sponsors, until we were sober enough to make one. Usually the guy who took you out of the hospital or found you first was it. If you didn't sponsor, your sobriety was considered less than pure. Most of the sponsors today don't know what the hell they're doing. It's not necessary to figure out why we drank. It's just of matter of don't drink, read the Big Book, and go to meetings. We didn't have as much babying and wet-nursing as we have today."

"I never met a druggie until the '70s. It was looked down on. I don't mean to sound like a snob. If it made me feel good and took me away from where I was, I'd probably have taken them. The availability wasn't there."

"The biggest boost AA has had are all the celebrities coming out of hiding and going public. It's almost popular to be an addict or alcoholic. Look at the company you have."

"The turnover rate is greater now, but the return rate is greater too. They kind of box each other out."

"I've never said I'm glad to be an alcoholic. I'd rather be a trans-Atlantic pilot or a movie star. I am glad I know what's wrong with me and I'm glad I did something about it. We all come kicking and screaming in here. It's the last house on the block."

"I call myself a Theist. I believe in God, but I'm disenchanted with religion."

"In meetings in the old days, I'd know everybody's name and how long they had been sober. Meetings were small and close-knit. The discussion meetings were less formal, more open. We told it like it was. I had no trouble with a 4th and 5th Step, I'd said it all at meetings! The guy who was closed-mouth about his drinking was the first guy to get drunk. When women came in, it was tough. We were inhibited. Women have come into their own in AA. One thing about today, though, four-letter words are so unnecessary. We've heard them all."

"The worst sin in the Fellowship is using AA funds dishonestly."

"What's my job now? Sitting around enjoying myself and enjoying my AA friends - and criticizing the SOB's for not doing what they're supposed to be doing, for not following the Principles."

Bob M., Athens

Q: When and where was your first AA contact made?

A: Well, the first contact here in Athens was in 1963, when a friend and I came down to Oconee Co. from Chicago. We became active in AA and sober in a group in suburban Hinsdale, near Chicago. My friend, Pete B., was a student at the University of Georgia. We searched to find an AA group in Athens or any AA listings, and in the fall of 1963 there were none, nor were there any members of AA that we could find out about. We had been going to some meetings down in Washington and Thompson, and near Atlanta, in Decatur, at the Presbyterian church at Columbia Theological Seminary, but there wasn't any AA in Athens or immediately around that we knew about. We went to the Mental Health Center, which then was on Prince Ave. across from Emmanuel Episcopal Church. We talked to the medical director there, a Dr. C., about taking some of the AA literature that we had brought with us. Dr. C. wasn't overly interested, so from 1963 until August 1964, we attended these meetings out of town, and never really made too much of an effort. We gave the literature to Dr. C., but we don't know if he made any attempt to distribute any of it.

In August 1964, my friend enrolled in the course at the University adult education center, the Southeastern School on Alcoholism, a one-week course. While he was attending those classes, he met a guy who was moving to Athens who had found sobriety in Tampa, Fla. His name was Lee K., and his wife's name was Hattie. They had both been very active in AA in Tampa and in Dublin, Ga. He was quite concerned about the lack of AA in Athens, and he really

promoted the founding of the initial group that we attended. He contacted people who had been active in a group that they had had in Athens back in the '50s. There were several people in that group that Lee contacted who said that they would attend our meeting and try to help us. They were still sober.

There was a Christian organization that was quite active in Athens that worked with alcoholics in North Georgia, and a number of people had attended the Hebron Society in North Carolina, we subsequently found out. And a number of people from the Christian Fellowship got interested in AA and started attending our initial meetings, in September 1964 at the Methodist student fellowship, the Wesley Foundation. We had just one meeting, a speaker meeting on Wednesday night. Some of the people who attended that first meeting had some experience in AA, some were from the Christian Fellowship, and some from the Hebron Society. We continued meeting at the Methodist center, until we shifted, that fall, to the Presbyterian Fellowship Center at the University. The meetings continued there into 1965. We had a telephone listing, an answering service, and were registered in 1965 with the Central Office. And Lee had his phone. There weren't many people with much experience doing Twelfth Step work, really just Pete B. and I (and we were not long sober ourselves, about a year-and-a-half), and Lee and Hattie had 8 or 9 years at that point. They were older than we were, both in AA and chronologically. Lee was predominantly instrumental in getting people to come and talk at our meetings from Atlanta.

At this time we found out that there was a group in Elberton that was quite active and strong, and one in Toccoa, Lavonia, Covington, and also the ones we had gone to in Washington and Thompson.

Q: How was your first contact with AA in the Chicago area made?

A: I was sent by a justice of the peace to attend the meetings. I had drunken driving. We had a meeting right in our town. There were numerous meetings in the area. In Hinsdale, they met 3 times a week. All the meetings there were discussion meetings, except they'd have one speaker meeting a month, on Friday night. They really involved you; you made a decision, or they made it hard for you.

Q: There's quite a bit of controversy today about whether judges should court-order people to AA meetings or not, and whether that is in keeping with AA Traditions. And they were doing that 30 years ago?

A: Yes, that was in 1960. I was 31 years old. I came down here in 1963; I sobered up in 1962, but I'd been attending meetings there since 1960. I had a year in there, and slips. Anyhow, I lost my driver's license - a blessing in disguise, in retrospect. The group there

had 14-16 members, of course most of them older. I thought anyone with 6 and 10 years, "That's incredible; this guy's got to be lying; this can't be true." But I think I was ready when I went. We went to a number of Young People in AA conventions. We went to one in Columbia, SC, one in Toronto, Canada, for people 35 and under. We went to those as a group, in a crowd.

Q: Who were some of those in Athens, when you got meetings started?

A: There were 2 men, Bill W. and Sam W., who had been involved in AA, who had stayed sober, who participated for quite a while in this new group, called the Athens Group. And there was an older man and his wife that really were very involved and helped a good deal, Frank and Patsy D. There were the K's of course, and George and Margaret M. Margaret participated for quite a long while. George was sober from 1964 to now, to my knowledge. There were Floyd and Betty B. Floyd was the first pigeon we had that persevered, stayed sober. He had some relapses, around 1970, but later, Floyd became the GSR and was district representative. He died in 1987.

He and a guy who attended some of these meetings and I started the group in Oconee County, in Watkinsville, in 1970. Then Floyd sobered up and remained sober until he died.

Q: What kind of Twelfth Step work was going on at that time?

A: Lee would take most of the calls. Hattie and Lee each had 8 or 9 years at that time. They would take the calls and contact the answering service. Lee would call Pete or me, and we would go on the Twelfth Step call. It was an experience and an education, to say the least. Making the effort, and continuing to make the effort, contributed greatly to my sobriety.

We had no drying out place then, no place such as the sixth floor at Athens Regional, and we would take the drunks to motels. We'd rent a room at the motel. St. Mary's Hospital was as close as we could get them to being hospitalized. We'd take them over there sometimes, and they'd give them a shot of something, maybe it was paraldehyde. They wouldn't admit them to the hospital. The stigma, the reaction against the alcoholic - and, of course, some of them weren't behaving too sensationally anyway when we took them, as you might imagine.

The Twelfth Step work was going to people's homes. They'd call, and we'd go there. They'd throw us out, curse and throw us out, and some people pulled guns on us. People won't believe that. They'd say they wanted us, and we had to do something, but when we started trying to share our experience, the novelty quickly wore off in most instances.

But, anyway, the ones that we did succeed with, and the ones that did come to the meetings, quite often they were willing to go to

any length to get off it, they said. Of course, we hear this all the time. ... We'd rent a motel room and taper them off on orange juice and honey. We'd take turns staying with them, 2 or 3 days around the clock. And they'd start eating, and we'd stay with them. Again, not coercing them, hopefully anyway. Seeing them, of course, in the condition they were in, over and over again, I think going to this length, which a lot of people miss these days, which of course is the AA I knew also up around Chicago. They would spend time with these people, go to their houses, stay there. There weren't doctors who would medicate them to get them off. They had to tough it out. And I had to tough it out when I dried out in jail. I think this is what reminded me over and over, maybe once or twice a month, the puking, the cursing, the lying, the conning, "That's me sitting there. By God, that is me, I just haven't had a drink today, but that's me."

And I think doing that was our AA work. We had a farm, I was teaching school, but we'd go out at 9 or 11:00 at night, and stay all night. It sounds maybe ridiculous now, but I used to do that when I wanted a drink. I'd go out any hour of the night to get a drink. And that's what I learned where I started in AA, they emphasized that, geez, you were willing to go any lengths, dammit, to get a drink. What are you willing to do to stay sober, just for today?

We were pretty thin here in Athens on the AA work. Frank D., who had been in the Christian fellowship, and his wife, the ones who had been in Hebron or AA, like Bill W. and Sam W., they attended the meetings, and helped some with the Twelfth Step work, but they were inclined to be pretty anonymous and didn't really become involved in assisting with it, which is the way I guess it was supposed to be for the younger ones.

Q: Did you have sponsors?

A: No sponsors so much, except Lee was. But no we didn't really; we just had each other. And then Hattie and Lee moved away, back to Decatur in the spring of 1965. We felt deserted, truly.

Q: There just weren't enough members?

A: No, only about 5 or 6 really, the nucleus, that had any real AA experience with Twelfth Step work. We were on the go much of the time. But it was beneficial, as I say. At the time, you think, gee, I can't move another inch, and this guy doesn't really want it, or the old routine, this person will never make it, but there used to be something in one of the state pamphlets that has always struck me: "When anyone, anywhere, calls, asking for help with their drinking problem, we want AA to be there." It goes something like that. I don't know whether I wanted to take a drink and join these people, or I just didn't have time to take a drink. I don't think we had time to drink!

Q: Did you get any cooperation from the police in the community or the ministers?

A: The minister at the Presbyterian student center was terrific. He contacted people also, or they came to him, students who may have had a problem, and referred them to us. Then, the group left that center and came to Emmanuel Episcopal Church in the old Sunday school building. We met downstairs in the basement. And the minister there was terrific. We were there from '65 to about '67, when we moved to the big First Presbyterian Church downtown. And the minister there was outstanding. He came to most of the open speaker meetings. We got more and more literature, and distributed that around in '66 or '67. People were becoming more inclined to take the literature, such as the pamphlet, "This is AA," and the one with the questions about whether I'm an alcoholic or not. We distributed a lot of that to the different churches.

Q: Were the doctors involved in helping alcoholics? Or did you just sober them up yourself?

A: The doctors didn't help, at least that I can remember. They had the Georgian Clinic in Atlanta at that time, and the inclination was to send the ones that were really bad there. We took a lot of people down to the mental institution in Milledgeville, and they stayed there, drunks. Later on they had a whole section, in 1968 or '69. Through the health service, there were 2 doctors who had to evaluate them to have them admitted down there. They always had the mental health center. This Southeastern School on Alcoholism at the University of Georgia helped a great deal with their awareness into the late '60s and early '70s. There were social workers attending it, and doctors, psychologists, and that at least helped educate people as to what could be done about this illness, and the fact that it was an illness.

Q: You had mentioned helping get one meeting started, in Watkinsville. What other contributions did you make to the growth of the fellowship? Don't be modest!?

A: We had the group at the big Presbyterian church downtown, and we used to have area meetings there. We had 16 or 18 members, in 1969. There were people there, some of the members, who were taking tranquilizers, but who had been staying off alcohol. And then a man and his wife, Tip and Gunnell W., moved to Athens. Both of them had been very active in AA. She helped start Al-Anon in Athens in 1969 or 1970. They had about 6-8 years of sobriety. At the Presbyterian Church, many people from the original group were coming and going, and there were personality conflicts. And there were questions raised about the quality of the sobriety and the quality of AA. There are a lot of experts always. Anyway, it was discouraging, and these personality situations were making it somewhat difficult for newcomers. There were only so many of us still doing the Twelfth Step work. There were people there who hadn't had a drink in 3 or 4 years by that time, but they seemed pretty reluctant to do any Twelfth

Step work. Tip guy was quite positive and emphatic about the importance of experienced sponsorship, and about the sponsor and a pigeon or relative newcomer, someone with maybe a year or 8 months, going on Twelfth Step calls together. Also about this time, a man came who had had experience in Tennessee, up above Chattanooga, Russ R. He was at the Potter's House, which started in 1967. They had a group that we went to. The man who was director of the Potters' House was a Methodist minister who was in AA in 1968. He brought men over to our meetings all the time from the Potter's House in Jefferson. We went there, to their meeting, which was always a speaker meeting at that time.

A lot of the men from the Potter's House moved to Athens and became involved in AA and were contributing here. They stayed here for a while. When Russ came back from the Potters' House, he and Tip and I and several others thought maybe we needed another group, sort of a new start, a clean sheet of paper. We contacted the minister at Emmanuel Episcopal Church and started a group there in April 1969. We had 2 meetings a week. We tried a meeting on Sunday afternoon. It lasted about a year and then tapered out. I think this is when AA really began to blossom in Athens. Russ was outstanding, even though he had been drinking when he went to the Potter's House. He had been here before and disappeared. But anyway, he came back and was living by himself at the Dempsey Hotel in downtown Athens. The Twelfth Step calls really starting coming in. The group at the Episcopal Church, now known as Easy Does It, grew to 17, 23. The Athens Group at the Presbyterian church was still operating, until 1973. Then it ran out of gas. Then my friend Floyd from Oconee County, and a man from New York who had a lot of AA experience but couldn't seem to stay sober, older than Floyd and I, Grady G., we started the group in Watkinsville, known as the Oconee County group. We had a lot of help.

The area meetings helped us a great deal: Toccoa, Elberton, Gainesville.

Q: Can you remember how the attitude of the community was when things were first getting going? What they thought of these AAs?

A: In the beginning, there were so few. And some of these people who came from the original group were real anonymous about AA. This was a really wild thing. We had some teachers, people from the university, and they were very sensitive about their anonymity. If anyone mentioned their last name or that they were associated with the university ... we had some people from the Navy School. In fact, we had a group at one point at the Navy School. They were extremely sensitive about being associated with AA. Meanwhile, the community, the doctors and the ministers, in 1969 into the early 1970s, were becoming much more receptive about referring people, I think about confronting people. in accepting our literature. It was almost like night

and day, compared to 1964, by about 1972, with the ministers, especially at the Episcopal and Presbyterian church.

We had several doctors who came to AA in Watkinsville and here in Athens. One of them from down around Crawford who's still sober has been a monumental help. He was very active in getting the sixth floor at Athens Regional Hospital started.

Q: When did Al-Anon start?

A: That was started by Gunnell in 1969. Then a bunch of us went over to Winder to help a guy who was very active, Bob B., start the group there. Bob's wife Martha became very active in Al-Anon here and then started an Al-Anon group in Winder.

The Biscayne was the first club house; it started in 1970, Russ and Margaret R. got mad at another couple, personalities or a power struggle or something. I don't remember. They had been going over to Atlanta to the Biscayne Room there, and Maggie got quite friendly. Russ had known her before. She offered to help bring speakers from Atlanta if they would start a club room similar to the Atlanta Biscayne. They mentioned it to me, and I said I'd like to help. So they started the Biscayne Room on Baxter St. in an old block building, deserted, sometime in the summer of 1970. Tip and Gunnell never went there. So at this point we have a group going at the Presbyterian church, a group going at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, and we have the Biscayne Room starting. Their meetings were on Wednesday and Friday, a speaker meeting on Friday and discussion on Wednesday. The one at Emmanuel Episcopal was the same as it is today, Monday and Thursday.

Q: How has AA changed since you first got here?

A: I'm not really qualified to answer that. I think it would be unfair to AA today for me to make a judgment on that, because I'm not starting in AA today. To me, it appears to be strong, growing, and the Twelfth Step, trying to carry the message, just as much today as it was 35 years ago. Whether it's doing a better job of carrying the message, I'm not qualified to say. There are many more members,

Q: Do you think AA is a little too tolerant today compared to the old days?

A: There were times I was probably accused of being a little soft or tolerant. I've been afflicted like many alcoholics with a self-righteousness, or a savior syndrome. But if you tell someone they are to talk for 10 minutes and they run 12 minutes, or they run over by 15 minutes ... this often created a fair amount of controversy in our groups, that we shouldn't tolerate this. I don't know, so the guy talks over time. I never really watched the clock too much when I was drinking. Now if that's being undisciplined, then that's undisciplined, but maybe the guy needs to do that to stay sober today. I don't have the answers for everyone, tragically, or thank goodness maybe. I never have had.

They always told me there are no stupid questions in AA. Sometimes, though, people don't make sense when they're talking,

I think the big difference is that I'm strictly an alcoholic. I didn't have any experience, I mean zero, with any kind of drugs or tranquilizers or amphetamines. Because of AA, I just never experimented with them. And not having any experience, I can't share my experience in that area. And this is an element in AA that is much more apparent to me than the AA I knew. The drug then of prime concern was alcohol.

We've debated often, out in our group, that these people shouldn't be permitted to attend AA. It got to that point, and I disagreed with them. But that's a different story. It can of course create havoc at the meeting.

But anyhow, AA now is doing something absolutely positively right. In terms of the Tradition, we talk about it plenty, and I've failed to practice it quite often: it stresses that the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. Now, who's qualified to define the gradations of desire. We can see it, just on a daily basis, the desire. I think AA is very alive and well.

George M., Atlanta

Some of you may have drank more or for longer than me, but nowhere has there been a bigger lying, cheating, arrogant phony than me. There was nothing I wouldn't do to get a drink, and only 2 things I know I didn't do: kill another human being, and fall in love with another man.

I was born and raised in Spartanburg, SC, into a great home and family. I took my first drink at the Great Eastern Hotel in Calcutta, India. World War II was winding down, and we were taking POWs from China to India and medical supplies back. I did 76 flights over the hump as a guard. My second, third, or fourth drink was my first drunk. I got drunk every time I took a drink from then until I met you fine people. A guy in the medical corps supplied us with alcohol, we stole grapefruit juice from the mess hall, and stayed drunk all the time. Many times we sat ready to take off and I heard the pilot tell the co-pilot, "I wish I could see the end of the runway."

When I got back to Ft. Bragg, I took 3 months leave and went home. A few days later, I told my parents I had business in New York City. I took the train from Spartanburg to Penn Station. I made 5 or 6 trips, checking into the Governor Clinton Hotel near the station, and staying drunk the whole time. I didn't know anyone in New York, and I've never seen anything else in New York.

I took a job in printing and finishing in Rock Hill. GE, across the river from Rock Hill in Charlotte, wanted to train me to sell new synthetics. During their training year, I was going to make too little money, so I went to a funeral home and told them I was an experienced ambulance driver. If they would give me a room at the funeral home, I'd drive their ambulance at night and work funerals on weekends. They agreed. I had never been in an ambulance in my life. It's by God's amazing grace I didn't kill someone or get killed. Nearly every day a story came from the hospital about me walking into the middle of a stabbing or shooting. Wild, asinine behavior.

After a year, GE sent me up to Asheville, from Boone to Murphy, Tenn. I was introduced to corn whiskey and fell in love with it. A GE dealer brought corn in by the croaker sack for 8 half-gallon jugs. I started having week to 10-day drunks. This lasted 2 1/2 years. Then they sent me to Charlotte, and I had to report in every morning. So I had to go back to drinking every night and all day Saturday and Sunday. After 8 months they sent me to Raleigh, and for a year and a half, it was the same pattern as Asheville. I knew that booze was giving me a problem, but I never thought of stopping. I had horrible commode-hugging hangovers every morning. Someone told me that if I drank Southern Comfort I wouldn't have hangovers. I drank it for 3 months and it nearly killed me. If you think your morning drink is hard, try 3 fingers of that when you crawl out of bed!

GE transferred me to Atlanta to "get me away from my playmates and playgrounds." On my way down, I decided my problem was motel life. I was on the road 2 or 3 weeks at a time. I went out to the GE plant and told management it was their fault for putting me in motels. I quit and joined a company with no travel at all. It kept getting worse. Several times, I'd write down the time of each drink from morning to night. I thought I could tell by my writing when I got drunk, so next time when I got to that point I'd know to stop. The problem was, the next morning I'd get out the paper and couldn't read any of it.

Then I decided I'd get married, and that would make me stop. No way! To this day, I don't remember where I heard of AA, but on December 6, 1953, I found the number in the book and called the Downtown Club in Atlanta. Fred N. and Dick B. called on me. I loved it. I was around the program for 3 1/2 years. I kept hearing about honesty, so I went to my wife and told her my whole story and told her to get a divorce. She wouldn't, so I did. About this time, GE asked me back, and I went. I also met and married Marge. I told her I was in AA, but I started drinking again. I went out to dinner in Columbus and thought I could take a drink. I got drunk. To this point, I'd been in no trouble from drinking except with my wives and jobs. But this time, I got picked up for DUI outside Union. Soon GE fired me,

saying, "If you ever set foot on GE property again, we'll have you locked up."

Soon Marge divorced me for habitual drunkenness. When we married, she had a 2-year-old daughter. She didn't want her in the type of environment I created. I was always drunk when I was home. From 1958-61, I was a drunken bum begging nickels in downtown Atlanta. When I would get physically beyond going, I'd wait behind a tree for Marge to come home from work with Cathy (our daughter). She'd let me in to sleep on the couch and try to nurse me back to some form of health. After 4 or 5 days, I'd take off to the streets again for 3 or 4 months.

In March 1961, I woke up in some woods of Shallowford Road 16 or 17 miles from downtown. The only way I could have gotten there was that someone tired of my lying and stealing from them bought me a bottle and dumped me out there in hopes I would die. I woke up with most of a fifth of vodka. For some reason, I thought of AA and the people I'd met before. I put the bottle down in a stream and I walked straight out of the woods. I knew Bob R., and I meant to walk to his house. I took side streets to evade the police, who were looking for me; I'd had several arrests. I got to Bob's house in Sandy Springs, they tell me, about 7 PM. There were no signs, it was a dirt road, but I walked straight to his house. Amazing Grace. I hadn't had a bath for months, but his wife recognized me somehow and told me, "Bob's gone to a meeting." She gave me a dollar. The only pay phone I could think of was out on Peachtree Industrial Blvd. about 10 or 12 miles away. I got there about 2 AM. The Downtown Club closed at midnight; the buses stopped at midnight. Someone gave me change. For some reason, 5 guys were still at the club, 2 old-timers, Paul C. and Harry H., and 3 new ones. They came to see me, and I tried to get back into the AA program.

Marge went around town and collected my clothes from here and there and patched them. She got me to the Downtown Club every morning. Scoop H., who ran the snack bar, kept me busy mopping floors and cleaning ash trays. Marge let me back to sleep on the couch. After 2 months, I tried to get a job and found I was unemployable. I'd be honest; if they'd ask what I'd been doing for the last 4-5 years, I'd say I'd been drunk. Finally, a fellow gave me a chance. He said, "I've got an opening because of a drunk; let me think on it." Marge took me to his office, and I waited for him. He said, "OK, I'll pay you \$25 a week, period. If you ever get a raise, I'll come and tell you. I don't advance money and I don't loan it." I took the job. On my first payday, Marge took me to get a room by the week, 2 1/2 miles from the Downtown Club, an easy walk.

For more than 3 years, I went to meetings every night. Marge and Cathy went often. On August 18, 1964, Marge dropped me off at

my room. Things were not going right. I was making \$40, \$50 a week; everyone else was doing better. I went out and bought 4 fifths of vodka. I figured this was not a slip. One doesn't slip on 4 fifths! My sobriety date is August 20, 1964. Marge and I remarried 2 weeks after I came back in.

I found that the most important thing for me is to put my sobriety first, before Marge, the job, and everything else. That's the only way I keep Marge, the job, and everything else. The Lord's Prayer says, "Give us this day." I must work my life one day at a time. I was never a good planner, so the idea of one day is perfect for me.

I found I must attend meetings. When my home group's doors open, I'm supposed to be there. It's 15 miles, but I'm supposed to be there. I want to be there, to see new faces, to see those having a lot of trouble.

I found I must read the Big Book. I read some every day. Any problem of any kind can be answered in the book. Every time I read it, there's something new in it.

I found I need a sponsor. By the Grace of God, I found Jim H. Our families are close. I can just get in the car and go to Alabama and see him. If I've got a problem at 2 AM, I need to call my sponsor, to use him.

I found I had to get honest. Not with Jim H., or Bob or Rowe. I mean with me. Honesty is the most important quality.

I found I had to work the Steps. In the early days, I thought I knew better ways to do the 12th Stp. They told me to shut up. "George, you don't know anything." Maybe we need to tell newcomers to shut up a little more.

What matters is not how I act at a meeting, but how I deal with outsiders, how I "practice our principles in all my affairs." I try, to the best of my ability. Some days, sobriety is all I can do. There are no degrees, no graduation. For me, it's a lifetime thing.

I found I've got to be active. Few know what goes on for meetings, Round-Ups, etc. You got to a meeting, and the coffee is ready and the chairs are set up. How'd that happen? Volunteer for this stuff. Don't be around, be active. We need you.

It was hard for me to learn to love people. I was selfish and arrogant. Now I can love my fellow man, and it's the greatest blessing I've had. Years ago, at the Downtown Club, Red R. told me, "You don't love anyone, do you? You have a chip on your shoulder. Next time you hear a speaker you like, go up and hug him and tell him you love him." So I did, and not long after someone came up to me with a hug and said, "I love you." What a payoff. I think love is the key to the program, the key to life, the key to God.

Let Go and let God. If you haven't tried it, don't knock it. I was taught that any sins would bring punishment. When I came to

AA I was afraid to talk of my sins. One day at the Downtown Club, all was going well, but I still had a knot in my stomach. Across the street was a church with a sign that said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor under a heavy load, and I will give you rest." That sign had been there all the time I'd ben going to AA. I thought I'd try it. That night I tried to pray and it was the best thing that ever happened to me. "Life is God's gift to me; my life is my gift to God." More miracles have happened to me, my wife, and daughter, since I surrendered myself to God than you would believe. Marge is very active in Al-Anon. My AA and her Al-Anon made our house a home. We start every morning with a meditation and read from our books. After that, anything that goes wrong is my fault.

Surrender your life to AA and God, and there's no limit to what you can do. I only ask that you try it. I believe that if I stay straight with AA and God, there's no problem God and I can't handle. AA is repetition. The same Big book, speakers say the same things, discussion meetings have the same topics. This worked fine in June 1935, and it still works fine now. We've got to stand up for it. We're the second generation; you young people are the third. I feel responsible that we make sure that we keep it like it was. The only requirement is a desire to stop drinking alcohol.

(George has been very active in service work. He spent 30 years on the board at Mt. Eagle, was a co-founder of the Atlanta Round-Up, a founder and board member of the Old Timers, on the executive committee of Camp-o-Rama, vice president of the NABA Club, and founded the Oakland Group. He has worked on state and Southeast conventions in Atlanta, and of course has been GSR, secretary, and treasurer for his groups many times.)

Thomas M., Savannah

When Thomas M. came into Alcoholic Anonymous in New Jersey in 1963 he was a bit of an oddball.

Not that he couldn't identify. He could. But he was only 28 years old and all the other guys - there were no women in his group - were a lot older. Few made it into the Fellowship in their 20s.

Tom said a lot of oldtimers had a theory about that and he agrees. Most young people didn't have the money to drink in those early days of AA - first there was The Depression and then World War II. It wasn't until later that many could afford the booze, Tom believes.

Tom, a native of New York City and an engineer, had moved to New Jersey with his wife in 1957. They had two small children. He had tried once before to get sober, in January of 1963, but ended up

"celebrating being good" a few months later. The ensuing "miserable time" landed him back in AA with a sobriety date of August 23.

As he puts it: "It's not that I had seen the light, but had felt the heat."

Tom came in via Al-Anon - his wife's. She'd heard about Al-Anon through one of the Ann Landers columns and hid her meetings saying she had joined a singing group. Tom said he liked whatever it was she was doing, she wasn't complaining anymore about his drinking. But, at the end of one of his bouts with alcohol that January, she asked if he wanted to talk with someone about AA and that started the ball rolling.

When he came back to AA in August, he devoted himself to service work.

Tom talked about how it was. There was little "double addiction; no treatment centers; a handful of women who gathered in one selected group; and no Styrofoam, so dishes had to be washed after every meeting.

There was an obstetrician in the program who would give fellow drunkards a shot to detox. "It was pretty funny bringing in one of those guys into a room full of expectant mothers," Tom chuckled.

At closed meetings, members would write a subject or a problem on a piece of paper and topics were drawn from a basket - "maybe one was all we'd get to, or maybe all of them," Tom said. Speaker meetings, he said, were dress-up affairs, "just like church," to make them special. Speakers were "booked" 6 months at a time at a clubhouse in Newark where members would exchange speakers from New Jersey and New York.

One thing has remained the same. The dollar in the basket. But, Tom said, "I used to buy coffee, cream and sugar, bread, sandwich meat and pound cake" with the take from a meeting.

When Tom retired at 53 in 1989, he moved to Savannah, having been "southernized" in past years through a vacation home on Hilton Head, S.C.

In thinking about the last 30 years, Tom said, "I came in fear and stayed for the joy and a better life - my life is in The Steps."

Jack O., District 12B

Jack O. first called AA in Atlanta in 1952. During the next four years, he was living in Augusta and working at Ft. Gordon. Things kept getting worse. He took a week off to go to Florida, hoping things would get better. When he came back and rejoined his carpool,

a lady riding with them told him to see Doc W. This was no coincidence, for she had 4 years sobriety.

Jack's first meeting was in the Richmond County Community Center. Seven people attended. The group only met there for 2 meetings as it was 30 degrees, and they couldn't keep a fire in the fireplace and the kerosene heater.

The meeting was moved to Eve St. in Augusta and called the West End group. The group had a hard time making it. It kept breaking up. Jack helped get it going 3 more times before he finally quit trying. Sometimes, he said, there were only 2 people at a meeting. During the difficulty in the West End Group's history, Jack started attending in North Augusta (SC) and the Hill Group in Augusta, which he still does today. Forest Hills is his home group.

Jack feels very fortunate that since March 1, 1956, he has not had to drink again. He doesn't speak as a speaker any more but he is always there when you come through the doors of AA. He never fails to greet you, ask how you are doing, and tell you to keep coming back. Examples of AA at work in life like Jack O. keep people coming back. He offers his experience, strength, and hope to anyone who'll have them.

Bill R., District 14C

I have been asked to contribute my experience to help complete the mosaic of this God-given program - specifically, AA in Georgia. My sobriety began in Chicago Heights, IL, on January 3, 1957. My first 7 years of AA was spent actively in the south suburban section of the greater Chicago area. At that time we had meetings in the homes as well as at churches and club houses. I was active in service work and found it fulfilling. But I came to realize that my interest was in working with others. I know that the unselfish love of one alcoholic for another is the glue that holds AA together.

In 1965, I was transferred to Atlanta, and my wife, who came to AA in 1958 and has been sober since, and I got active in AA. One of the first meetings we attended was at the Triangle Club, and it was an experience we've never forgotten. We've laughed about it many times. The leader of the discussion group took a word from the dictionary, cited its dictionary meaning, and then went to the Bible and discussed it further. He held forth in this manner for an hour. Janet, my wife, said, "Let's get out of here!" I replied, "If this is AA in Atlanta, we'd better stay." We needed AA, AA didn't need us.

After the meeting we learned that the other AAs were equally upset. Turns out the leader was an Al-Anon (who drank), and it was

the first and last time this ever occurred. I'm sure glad we stayed, and have stayed ever since. In my second year in Atlanta, an AA who came down from the Chicago area asked me, "Why don't we have a home meeting like we did up North?" I said, "We're in AA in Atlanta, so let's fit into their way of doing," and we did.

At Christmas time, a Southern girl member of AA was thrown out of a club for nonpayment of dues (due to some economic problems), and told not to come to the club. I told her that if she'd like, I'd come to her house New Year's Eve and bring some other AAs, and we'd welcome in the New Year with her. She said great, and we did. We had a meeting at her house, and she remarked how it would be wonderful to have a meeting like that on a regular basis. I said, "If you want it, we'll do it." So the Sunday night home group was started. It continued every Sunday night in some member's home for the next 25 years, and many sober AAs have come to it. Oh yes, the girl that wanted it didn't show up again until our 10th anniversary. She stayed sober, just never came to a home meeting.

So some start with a resentment, some with a need, but if they are meant to be, they will continue and grow. I love this God-given program and am grateful to be just another miracle in Miracleland USA, and now Miracleland International.

Anita S., District 8

Sometime in 1963, Dr. P. talked to Anita S. and asked her if she'd like to go try AA. She knew she couldn't keep her anonymity because Louisville was such a small town, but she didn't care.

The Louisville Group was about a year old then. When Anita walked through the doors to the meeting, she felt right at home. She knew that's where she needed to be.

For 3 months she stayed sober. Then one day she was traveling to Atlanta to meet her husband, and she wanted to drink. They went to dinner that night, and she ordered a drink. At this time her husband, who was still drinking then but very supportive of her, questioned her. "Do you really want to do this?" She replied, "Yes." For the next year she had short periods of sobriety.

On April 20, 1964, she woke up hungry. She remembers talking to her 2 sisters, and they told her she had only 2 ways to go: up or down. She rejoined the Louisville Group, and since that day has not had an overwhelming desire to drink.

She got busy in the program and with service work. The meetings moved to an old house adjacent to the hospital, where they met on Thursday and Sunday.

Dr. Jim P. opened a clinic in approximately 1965 for alcohol abuse. Dr. P. didn't have trained counselors, so the AA group tried to help him by talking to the patients. Anita did 12th Step calls about 3 times a week.

In 1968, the group needed another place to hold meetings. The Ogeechee Serenity Club was formed and bought a building on 7th Ave. that the AA group could rent. Anita was then the secretary of the club. Now she is a trustee. All the trustees were in AA with the exception of one who is still their lawyer. Original trustees included Joe C. Sr., Alton S., Harry G., and Jim P.

Anita believes you have to have a few core people to hold together a group. Louisville has had its ups and down, like any other group. She also firmly believes, "You have to have a spiritual awakening even if you're not aware of it."

Eldridge S., District 9

In 1941, I was 21 years old and in the military. I never drank before joining the service, and I got out in 1945 as a full blown alcoholic. I started drinking every day. In 1950, I married. Three years later a little girl arrived, and 2 years later a little boy. I was making a good living, but drinking every day. On December 27, 1957, my wife and the children left me, because my drinking affected them too. From 1958-1960, I was drunk, 2 months at a time, shook for a week, worked a week, etc. I was drinking 5 pints every 24 hours. (Five pints because it was just enough over 2 quarts.)

My aunt Matti would try to take care of me, bringing me juice and talking to me. One morning she said she would send me to a hospital and pay the bills. It was then I told my aunt of a secret organization called AA. If we could find this, it might help. Aunt Matti found it in the Herald, "If you have a friend having trouble with alcohol, look in the Yellow Pages." She looked and found the Nobel club. She called, and within a few days a man from Swainsboro came, and we talked and talked. He became my sponsor. The morning he came, I had just opened a pint and had taken a drink. Aunt Matti said, "Eldridge, please don't drink any more. You're going to get help." I told her I couldn't stop, I had 17 pints of liquor in the house.

Since October 2, 1960, I have not had another drink. I had met this man from Swainsboro 3 years before as the bootlegger in Wrightsville. He had been sober a year when he took me to my first meeting, in Statesboro. I had been sober 3 days on the strength of getting help.

Cecil S. had organized the Swainsboro group, some months before and I still attend that group. It is 25 miles from my home, 50 miles round trip, and I go twice a week when I'm in town. I attend as many conventions and AA functions as I can. In 1 month of doing this, putting money in the baskets, I came out ahead. It's cheaper, and I have no headaches.

AA is the most wonderful organization I have ever had any dealings with. It saved my life and brought me back from hell. It has all been given to me, and I've had 33 years of the most beautiful life any person could live.

Russell S., Stone Mountain

My mother had heard about AA through a neighbor who was going to another town, and told my wife. Tootsie B. Twelfth-Stepped me. He brought 3 pamphlets but no Big Book. He mentioned a meeting of the AA "club" 45 minutes away in Columbia. I thought he meant something like a country club, and I was just a poor drunk traveling salesman in Sumter, SC. I never considered going to the club. My wife and I read the pamphlets out loud to each other.

I stayed dry for 4 months and then went on an 8-month binge that ended on February 11, 1949. My neighbor mentioned the meeting in Columbia again. I went and immediately fell in love with AA. I was told I was sick and needed to get well, not bad needing to get good. I got my first challenge at that first meeting. They told me we needed a meeting in Sumter. I put a letter in the paper saying, "Call Mr. X." Five or 6 weeks later, we held a public meeting at Coke's Community Room. AAs from Orangeburg, Florence and Columbia came to put on a public meeting for about 100 people. Eleven people wanted to join. Three of them got sober and 8 died drunk. We helped start meetings in Camden and Hartville, SC.

I loved AA, but in 1950 I started a 5-day drunk at the Army-Penn game in Philly. It was the first time in 21 months I had been away from both my wife and AA members. In November 1950, I had my last drink until today. I call that relapse my convincer: I was convinced I cannot drink successfully.

In 1955, when I was called to the ministry, we moved here to Decatur and I went to the Northeast Group. Neely D. and Clarence R. were there. In 1958, the Decatur Square Group started. Dr. Davison P., the Presbyterian pastor, asked to me be the liaison between the church and AA. Some of the church officials didn't welcome AA, but most of them did, and the group still meets there today.

In 1963 I became the director of the Atlanta Union Mission on skid row. I did lots of Twelfth Step work there, getting help from all

over Atlanta. In 1963-70 I helped start groups in Rome and Monticello. Often I was the opening (public meeting) speaker because I was both an alcoholic and a minister, and most meetings were in churches.

From 1970-73, I lived in Martinsville, VA, and in 1973-90, in Danville, I started a half-way house for alcoholics. I called that wholesale Twelfth Step work. In 1990, I came back here in retirement, back to the Decatur Square Group.

In 1949, I went to my first convention, in South Carolina. In 1955, I went to the International in St. Louis. In 1965 in Toronto, I was privileged to speak. In 1975, 96 of us chartered a plane to Denver. In 1980 my wife and I went to New Orleans.

In 1955 I had the pleasure of meeting Bill and Lois W. and Bill's mother. Father Eddie D. and the Rev. Dr. Sam S. were there. After the meeting, 10 or 12 of us were invited to meet with Bill and Lois for 5 or 10 minutes face to face.

In 1961, I had the pleasure of attending Bill W.'s 26th birthday in New York. Ebbie was there, sober, and Sister Ignatia was there.

I still attend 2-3 meetings a week.

In the early days, we did not have formal sponsorship. The men I got sober with just helped each other. There weren't enough meetings to go to 90 meetings in 90 days. About 90% of all meetings were upstairs, above the drug store or in a church. At first, churches were not too helpful with AA.

We did a lot of babysitting. We had a special room, the "blue room," in jail. We were allowed to give the drunk a drink with the sheriff's permission. We got permission to use a room at a local hospital. We had to have an AA with them every hour for 48-72 hours of detox. This was great for AA, especially as someone he didn't know would come stay with him and care for him. In the last 15-20 years, this has been turned over to treatment. Both members and prospects lose something, but they do get a concentrated dose of AA.

Everything changes. There were no women at first. Now, they often outnumber men. I think AA will last as long as mankind lasts.

The pastor of the Presbyterian church in Rome advertised a public meeting, and I was the speaker. The ads said, "Presbyterian minister who is alcoholic," and that got people's attention. About 150 people came, and 8 or 10 stayed for AA. Wearing 2 hats, as minister and alcoholic, the responsibilities sometimes were great, but the rewards also were great.

When I moved to Danville and they said, "Russ, you do a meeting next month," I said, "Sure, any time." Now I sit back. Young ones with 10 or 12 months need to be up there doing the meeting. I moved out of 2 different states at times when I was up for state delegate. I never pushed for leadership, but was always willing to help.

While at the Atlanta Union Mission, downtown where there were bars on every corner, I got the idea of having a farm where there would be no temptation. We taught carpentry, mechanics, GED, Bible classes, and had them work on the farm. A couple of them have gone on to the ministry. We started with 180 acres and 64 beds, and in 1992, there are 500-plus acres and 155 beds. That's the Potter's House, near Jefferson. It celebrated its 25th anniversary recently.

At the half-way house in Martinsville, we got the men work for \$10 a day, \$5 to go to the house and \$5 to the man. In Danville, we had lots of house painters we put to work. I believe in making people work for help. Hope Harbor in Martinsville is 71% paid for by patient labor. Government program handouts don't work. I didn't get anyone sober or get them drunk. I offered a program, and if they took it, fine.

When I was starting out in AA in Sumter, my boss would let me off early twice a week to get to meetings 45 miles away in Columbia. When the group in Sumter started, we set the nights so as not to conflict with Columbia.

When I first moved to Decatur, there were maybe a dozen groups in the Atlanta area. Today too many groups are not solid, don't have proper leadership. I don't like NA latching onto AA because they don't have good leaders. But for dual addiction, NA doesn't seem to succeed alone.

Discussion meetings predominate in the last 10-15 years. I think I learned more from speaker meetings, that others are as foolish as me. Puking in motels, peeing in our pants in public. Too many people come to meetings and don't know what they want to say. Today everyone blames their alcoholism on peer pressure or dysfunctional families. But we weren't forced to take a drink. I think many of us took our first drink on a dare. I still do a lot of speaking, although since I'm still a pastor, I can't do many weekends. I have some friends who only go to events when they're speaking. I don't think that's AA. I like to go even when I don't speak. Meetings build up my resistance to a drink.

I knew a minister with 28 1/2 years. When he retired, he got only about half the retirement he expected. He went and got 2 bags of liquor and went to a mountain cabin to drink himself to death. Some friends went and got him after 2 or 3 days and put him in the hospital. He lived another 10 years without a drink.

Over the years I've seen many relapse and die. Seaboard H. had 17 years, picked up a drink and died drunk. Most I hear who get drunk are those who quit going to meetings, so I keep going.

I still had a wife, home, and job when I got here. At my first state convention I saw a member of the Bottle Gang in Chicago who had slept under a bridge. This guy made a comeback in real estate. I heard Bill M., the sports announcer. A few years a country singer came

on a show late. He said, "I had to go get a 3-year chip." There were Betty F., Lillian R., movie stars. Norman B. got sober, wrote a book, got drunk, got sober, and wrote another book. Anonymity I respect, but it made you see anyone could be beat by alcohol. At Bill's 26th anniversary, the press said, "You're so anonymous, we can't find you."

I believe in male-to-male, female-to-female sponsorship, but I have sponsored 3 or 4 ladies. I sponsored one lady who saw an ad for AA on TV. She was sober the last 20 years of her life.

Wearing my double hats, I've done 25-30 AA funerals, remarried 14 couples where one or both found AA and they got back together. I've married several Alateens who knew "Russ the AA minister."

I've seen a lot over 45 years. I don't preach at AA meetings, and I don't AA at church. I do mention one at the other in case I might help someone. I once referred to myself in church as "the alcoholic in the pulpit." A lady came to me after the service and said, "You mean, used-to-be an alcoholic." I said, "No, ma'am. I am an alcoholic. If you come to my funeral, you look in the casket and you'll see a dead alcoholic. I didn't say that for your benefit, but for mine. I don't ever want to forget what I am." I'm a sinner, but I'm a saved sinner. The ideas are parallel: not the same, but parallel.

As I remember, tokens like chips started when a guy from new England gave Confederate money, because drinking was as useful as Confederate money. The chips came in the 1950s. They have some psychological benefit.

The biggest change I see in AA is the failure now to do Twelfth Step calls. Treatment centers are good; people get concentrated AA, but miss the personal touch from Twelfth Step calls.

Everything changes. We must keep the Traditions. The foundations are the 12 Steps and the Traditions.

Warren S., Warner Robins

"How did I get to AA? Some time before, I had seen an ad in the weekly paper (it didn't run daily back then): "If you drink, it's your business. If you want to quit, it's our business. Call XXX-XXXX."

"In December 1963, there was an ice storm on Christmas Eve. At this time I had gone from daily drinking to periodic drinking, trying to stop. My will power worked only for short periods of time. Since I never took drugs of any kind, my relief always came in the bottle. I had been on a dry spell when my wife called and said the electricity was out, etc. I was with co-workers who were drinking, making store runs for the others, and I decided to get one for myself.

"Then I had to get one for home. Then I drank beer for the hangover. My wife called the doctor and I said, "Yeah, I need help." This was the very first admittance. At the entrance to the hospital, sitting in a wheelchair, I told the doctor I thought I had an ulcer. God helped me say more and include, maybe a little drinking problem. In an attempt to save my job (I was too sick to work), I went into the base hospital. After I was admitted to the hospital, the doctor asked if I wanted to meet a guy from AA. The man was named Bill T., and he shared his problem. In my mind, I felt this man was much worse off than himself! I then went to an eating meeting at the Episcopal church and picked up a white chip." Warren remembers his wife commenting that she thought the speaker was the only alcoholic there!

At this early stage of recovery, there was only one group, the Warner Robins Group, which met twice a week. Two more meetings a week in Macon and trips to neighboring towns completed a meeting a day. They were all speaker meetings. The best meetings took place in the homes of the members. "Even the earliest memories bring thoughts of laughing - something not done frequently during drinking episodes. Several weeks later, I first realized that the thought of drinking had not even surfaced - I hadn't done anything yet but go to meetings and already began to show real improvement."

It was this, among other things, that leads Warren to believe he had all his slips before he got to AA. He has served in every group position available ... GSR, Secretary, Treasurer, etc... In AA, Warren discovered he did not have to "bargain pray," previously the only prayer he knew of. And he found God.

Early 12th step work: "We would sit around the clock taking shifts with the "drunk," detoxing him with honey and orange juice. Nowadays, it's just drive to the detox center, and they get shots to avoid DTs and other withdrawals. Pain is a great motivator, and it is too easy now not to suffer."

Warren took a man to the VA hospital in Augusta once, and the man refused to be honest with the doctors. Warren intervened and filled in the gaps, stating that he believed the man to be an alcoholic, using his own alcoholism as a guide. Unfortunately, by the time Warren got back to Warner Robins, the man's wife had called saying her husband was ready to leave the hospital. He did. On the way home, he ran off into a ditch and died, a direct result of an overdose.

Warren never had any doubts of what people in AA told him. He believes some are too smart for AA but NONE are too stupid. "Some are so smart, they'll die drunk! We need to stick to the Traditions, and the Steps will take care of most other things."

Warren remembers going on a call to a house where the occupants had been shut up for days, the cats hadn't been let out, and everyone looked and smelled awful. One man was in convulsions when

they got there, and two others were very sick. Some time later, the woman who had been in the house was at a meeting. She was not only sober, but physically looked liked a different person.

Along with the help of another man, Warren began "Social Actions" on Robins Air Force Base. They started with counseling for drugs and alcohol and suggested follow-up with AA meetings. This program has saved not only military lives and jobs but civilian ones too! AA soon became Warren's life. He now thinks that is wrong, since we need to be functional people in society. He began getting involved in church after he met a minister who loved AA people and would occasionally attend AA meetings.

Warren is a member of the Big Book Study Group in Warner Robins. He feels there has been a change in the members. People used to be happy to do things, anything. Now groups can hardly get a handful of members to show up for a day of cleaning.

Warren has given AA numbers to people in other cities, and only a phone call was needed to start the person on the path to recovery. The best time to "attack" a drinker, and get his attention, is after a weekend of drinking. Monday mornings, people are more susceptible to the "message" of recovery. Warren wrote a letter once to a man and only talked about what a good life he has since he quit drinking.

He believes the greatest message to newcomers is:

"You simply must learn to surrender. Or you will drink again."

Dick T., Comer (District 16B)

I'm an old alcoholic, and I wouldn't be old except for AA. I destroyed all my educational and career opportunities because I preferred to drink. My wife decided to divorce me. I asked her if it was because of my drinking, and she said, "No, it's your selfishness." That didn't mean anything at the time. I was a hotshot parachuter then.

When I came out of the service, I got a good job selling industrial machinery. Then I met a young girl in Athens. I lied to her about my drinking. She fell in love with me, and I married her in 1944. I took her to the home office in Buffalo, NY, and proceeded to get drunk. She was the only one at the time who seemed to understand. She said, "You look like you don't want to drink, but you have to." I admitted my past to her and that I'd tried suicide. A normal woman would have left me, but I said that I had heard something about AA and she said, "Let's try it and see what it's like."

Marty M., who was the first successful woman in AA, gave a talk to the city fathers at the Statler Hotel. I went to listen, and I was amazed at the caliber of people there. When Marty said alcoholics can be saved, that really hit me. I'd seen a lot of people who were alcoholics, of course, and they all got worse and worse. When she said that alcoholics were worth saving, I'd never heard that. Everyone, especially my family, thought I was weak.

I went to a group in Buffalo and my wife went with me. They asked how old I was, and I said 33. They went off and talked a while and came back and said that no one who was under 35 had had any success, so why don't you go away and drink for a couple of years and if you have trouble, come back. I said that I didn't want to drink anymore, so they agreed against their better judgment to let me in. I found a sponsor, and things looked promising. I had a good job, though my immediate superior was a hard drinker. My first sponsor was one of the early AA people from Akron. When he suggested a meeting once, and I said I had other things to do he said to put AA first in my life or get the hell out of it. No one had ever talked to me that way before, but he was so sincere I had to listen.

Since then, whenever I have had a job change, a move, or whatever, I have tried to consider how this will affect my sobriety. The group there worked with me, doing all sorts of things to help. I used to drink in the hotel I was living in. Once my big boss from NYC was coming up to see me. I got drunk and told him I couldn't see him as I was in the midst of a severe appendicitis and had an ambulance at the door, but that I'd see him when I could. I used to send my wife to Georgia to visit her family - they hated me. It was really to get her out of town so I could drink. When my boss told me to come to his office as soon as possible, I knew what was going to happen. I quit before he could fire me.

In 1945 I went to Georgia with my wife in a beat-up old '35 Chevy. All our possessions would not even fill the back seat. My family from Philly would have nothing to do with me.

I got a job in Atlanta with the Pitney-Bowes Postage Meter Company. I met a man in AA who would meet me at noon and talk to me. We lived in Marietta, and I would sit at home and read the Big Book. The old car wouldn't make it into Atlanta twice a day.

In 1945 AA was only 10 years old. The person with the most sobriety and the "high-bottom" drunks, the people with money and social prestige, ran things. I went into AA with 3 other people. One, a newspaperman, wound up in a VA alcoholic center out West. Another, a woman schoolteacher, froze to death in a boxcar in the Buffalo freight yards. The third was a husky woman built like a football tackler. She tried to swig a fifth and dropped dead. The autopsy said that her heart had exploded. I don't know why, of the

four, I was given sobriety. I wanted to be sober, but I wanted to drink too.

Early on I was told that this was a spiritual program but we also had a saying: "Lay off of the God stuff." Some people had gotten tired of being preached to, especially in areas where the only AA was at a mission. Getting soup and getting preached at didn't do anything for them.

Meetings were different then. There were no discussion meetings. No one had any track record or background to refer to. When I joined in Buffalo, one guy had 7 years but that was unbelievable. Back then I thought 7 days was a big deal. We had only speaker meetings because, as Bill said, case histories are the backbone of AA.

There were no rehab centers then. We'd smuggle patients in by claiming they had hemorrhoids or something. We did Twelfth-step work nearly every night. Doctors wouldn't help. We'd carry whiskey and tranquilizers to calm people. Sometimes people would drink their own medicine, so the 12- stepper would need a Twelfth-step call. We were outcasts, so there was a great aversion to revealing yourself. Most drying out places were expensive farces. I took people to places around New York. They didn't care if you drank or whatever as long as they got your money. They'd get you well enough to go back to work and that was about it.

Meetings were blood and thunder as depicted in movies like "The Lost Weekend" and "Days of Wine and Roses." A sign of the times: people used to put a quarter in the basket instead of a dollar.

There were constant fights over things before the traditions got started. My sponsor was an elderly man and he got disgusted with all the love affairs going on in AA. He decided to go down to Buffalo Hills, New York, to see Bill and Lois. They said that goes on everywhere, and you can't stop it; just ignore it. We didn't go against what Bill or Dr. Bob said.

Early on, the first 2 groups were Bob's in Akron and Bill's in New York. They became like competing teams. Both claimed that they were the "real" AA. A madhouse - it's amazing AA survived all that. We'd ask, "Will this work?" Things would go well for a while, then we'd have a rash of people going off to drink and kill themselves. The early people should be applauded because they stuck it out through all the adversity.

We used to take drunks into our homes regularly. There was one guy I sponsored in New Jersey. I told him never to call me after midnight if you're drinking and looking for a place to stay. He called late one night, and I told him to go on home. He just lived down the road from me. He said "I can't. I just burned down my house." He came over, and my wife fixed him bacon and eggs and coffee. I asked

what happened and he said, "I burned it down. I never liked the house."

I know another man who took a guy in who ran off with his wife. All this made us closer to each other.

There was much talk of high- and low-bottom drunks. A group I was in split along those lines. Groups would spring up overnight. There was an old saying: "If you don't like it, get a coffee pot and start your own group."

In my job most of my salesmen were drinkers who had respect for AA and for those who didn't drink. They called it the Club and wanted to know how to get in. It was tougher with no rehab. We were close and listened to each other. We were all we had.

But it keeps on, doesn't it? We just keep getting through it all.

Jay T., Gainesville

I had a very happy childhood. But my family was full of alcoholism, and there were always relatives drinking at my house. I grew up in the depression years and started drinking regularly at the age of 15. At the age of 16, I was a daily drinker, at least drinking every night. I barely remember my graduation night at high school, because I was intoxicated. I joined the army when I was 18 years of age and I had my first blackout at the age of 18. I was in the medical corps and my outfit set up the 1st dispensary in Yokohama, Japan. After WW II, I had my second blackout there. My outfit made the elixir turpentinehydrate and codeine, the old army syrup for the sick bay, and we would take part of the alcohol. I had a 10 gallon container in my room that we kept full of pure grain alcohol cut with simple syrup. My job in the army overseas was boarding ship and giving inoculations to the crew, new men coming in. And after each ship it was courtesy to sit down and drink. So I was drinking morning, noon and night, by the time I was 19 years old.

After discharge from the army, I went to work for the United States Public Health Service and did the venereal division and continued to drink and started college. I got engaged at this time, to a young beautiful girl, and she broke off the relationship because of my drinking. The head nurse, who was my boss, and other people knew that I had a problem with drinking even at that age, but it had not occurred to me that I had a drinking problem. Shortly thereafter, I was kicked out of college for drinking and moved to Detroit. I went to work for the U.S. Public Health Service of the War Dept. in Detroit, helping give physical examinations for the boys going into service during the Korea War.

It was in Detroit that I discovered the morning drink and started drinking the next morning. And that's when it began, that I would lose work. Instead of tapering off, I would taper on. I became aware that my drinking was different from other people. I began to feel guilty about my drinking, and began to lie about the amount I drank, a lot less than I actually drank. I began to develop the morning jitters, and then I started to shake, and then I think I even vibrated. It got to a point I could not hold on to a job. My self esteem was so low I thought that if there was a God that he made a mistake when he made me, that I had been made out of junk parts, and I hated myself. I looked at myself in the mirror and cursed myself. I tried coming off the DTs one day - cold turkey, found myself running down Woodward Ave. with nothing on but Oxford shorts in Feb. (Woodward Ave is to Detroit what Peachtree is to Atlanta.)

My drinking got so bad I thought I would ship off, so I joined the merchant marines. I found I could get drunk at sea just as easy as I could on land. And very often when I could go ashore, I would get drunk and not be able to catch my ship, and I would have to go to the next port to try and get it. I would get drunk on the train and miss the ship there. Drinking continued to get worse, and I moved to Cleveland, Ohio, and for 2 years in Cleveland I was a skid row wino, hating myself. For several years my family had not known where I was, and I had come close to dying 3 or 4 times. I had ulcers that ruptured twice on me while I was on skid row. I would lay on the floor for 3 days and nights with winos stepping over me, telling me if I would just take a drink I would be OK.

By some miracle I survived this and called my mother, and she sent me money to return home. I was afraid if I drank that I would die, and I had this fear that if there was a life after death that I would go to hell and die drunk. I was an agnostic, but I had this great fear that nobody would even come to my funeral. Now I stayed dry out of fear for 22 months. I started school, but I always had this fear: when would this happen again. When would I drink again? It was the most miserable existence of my life, because I wanted to drink. I was boring, judgmental, and just very unhappy. I was not aware of AA.

After 22 months, I had a slip and for the next 2 years I was constantly in and out of DTs. I became unemployable, I was unable to work, I lost good business during this time. I was living in my mother's basement, and I had this snake that lived in the ceiling when I would get on the verge of Dts. She was a female snake, a boa. She had long eyelashes, and she always wore the same pair of black and red striped Bermuda shorts that came to her knees. Now this snake would tell me how sorry I was, and she wanted to know when I was going to quit drinking, and she wanted to have a meaningful relationship with me. But of course when I would get a drink or two she would go

away. But it got to the point that I dreaded, I knew that snake would come back when I ran out of liquor. I used to lie and think up things that I was going to tell that snake. But one day I told her, "I knew you when you didn't have a pit to hiss in."

But the drinking got so bad and I got desperate. I had an uncle who had sobered up in AA. So out of desperation, I called AA. At that time AA here in Gainesville was trying to get started. A couple of the guys would give you some whiskey and detox you. So that was one of the reasons that I went. But I didn't get the whiskey. I would very promptly go into DTs, but they wouldn't take you in the hospital for drinking here in Gainesville. At that first AA meeting, I asked them if they had the he-be-je-bes and the screaming meanies. I wanted to make sure that they knew what it was all about. Well, I realized that I was in the major leagues.

There were 3 people there sober. Two of them shortly after that got drunk. I told them if this cost anything I didn't have a dollar, and if I did I would buy a half a pint of whiskey. But something happened to me that night. I knew those people cared for me. And for the first time in my life I, laughed and cried. And I decided I would stay sober for them. If they cared that much about me, I would not drink for them.

I can only share my own experience, strength, and hope. I would walk for a mile every day and call on 2 or 3 people who were in AA to keep from taking a drink. I will never forget one Saturday morning I got down to, I would wait 30 seconds before I would take a drink, and I would start walking to the bootleggers. I would come back and wait another 30 seconds, and it went on all day.

The Skyland Group in Atlanta was coming up here and helping us a great deal. Joe P. and Clarence R. and several people were coming up regularly. One night after a meeting I talked to this man and said I was having trouble with the spiritual side of the program. I am an agnostic. I told him I wanted a drink all the time. "Every second I want a drink. I dream about it but so far I've managed not to take one." And he said "Well, Jay, you and I don't have to talk to God the way a preacher does. You go home tonight, why don't you talk to God and be honest with him just like you are with me." I sat in my mother's living room, and I said, "Jay, are you going to go in there and talk to something that you don't believe in or that at best it exists?" I said, "If you do, you better be honest, because if there is a God, then he will know whether or not you are sincere." So I can tell you almost exactly what I said to God.

This has been over 35 years ago. Incidentally my sobriety date is approximately June 10, 1958. I said, "God, if there is a God, you know I hate the life that I am living, and I hate being a slave to alcohol. And if you're willing to take my life over and manage it, you are more

than welcome to it, because I have made one helluva mess of it." At that moment something happened to me inside, it was like a light that lit up inside of me. And God spoke to me. Now he didn't speak to me in a voice like I'm speaking, but God told me, "Yes, I do care for Jay T. down in Gainesville, Ga., and I will take your life over and manage it."

Now I had not asked God to remove the obsession to drink, but at that instant God removed the obsession to drink. And that has been over 35 years ago. I can truthfully say that I have not wanted a drink since that time.

Now I started getting busy, and I said, "One meeting a week is not enough for me." There was only one sober person in the group, and he and I started to rebuild the Gainesville Group. And we had 2 meetings a week. Then we started groups in Dahlonge, Dawsonville, Talking Rock, Winder, and Cornelia, and a lot of other areas around. Later Peggy A., Eric W., and Richard M., and I started the Grace Group in Gainesville.

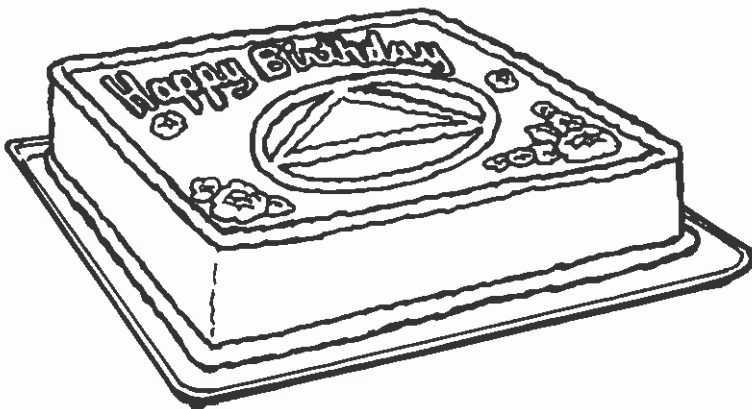
For many years the only way to get in touch with AA in Gainesville was the telephone in my home. My wife and I started detoxing people in our home, and we did this for many years. Every person we detoxed, except an uncle of mine, stayed sober and has long term sobriety. I nearly died after 3 years of sobriety from cirrhosis, hepatitis, and some other problems that had been brought on by the years of not eating on skid row. They did not think I was going to live 24 hours. And I was so glad that if I was going to die that I was going to die sober that I told God, "God, I'm not going to ask you to let me live. If I'm going to die, I'm just so grateful that I'm going to die sober. But I do have an 8-month-old son that I would like to see get grown. And I promise you that if you see fit to let me live, the time you give me on this earth, I will spend that time to carry the message to the alcoholic that still suffers.

Now I was single during all of my drinking years, and met my wife after I got sober, so my family has never had to see me drink. But I believe God will give me a passing grade on that promise, because I have remained active in AA and for a long time did the most of the 12th Step work in Gainesville. For many years, that's the way we did it. We would spend, if necessary, a weekend with a drunk, getting them sober. Many a time I've gone to work on Monday morning and not be tired after sitting up with a drunk the biggest part of the weekend. I believe the God of my understanding was taking care of me because I was trying to do his will.

After several years, I had a series of heart attacks and was no longer able to do the work that I had been doing, but God has not closed one door without opening another. Through the Grace of God, I managed to get a job with the State, as an alcohol and drug counselor.

I'm a founding member of the Ga. Addiction Counselor Association, and I'm a Nationally Certified Addiction Counselor, at level 2. I have retired now and I have a little private practice of seeing alcoholics and addicts. But my main thing that I try to do is motivate them to get into AA, and I have always tried to put their treatment before money. At least half or more of them don't pay me, but I don't let that bother me because I think I am doing God's work. Incidentally, before I started this, I called the General Service office to make sure that this was OK, and of course they said it was. I do not do this as a AA member, but I do this as a professional therapist.

Some years ago the newspaper wanted to write an article about me, and they refused to let me edit it. So I refused to let them write it. After about a year they called me back and said that they would let me edit the article, and I did so but they still broke my anonymity in the newspaper, which hurt me a great deal. But the greatest thing that has ever happened to me in my life was to be a member of this glorious fellowship. I'm also an AA historian and trivia buff. One of my hobbies is AA history and trivia. I still teach the Big Book and the 12 & 12 and other AA literature, 9 to 10 times a week. I still sponsor at least 6 or 7 people, and I still attend several AA meeting a week. I am glad we are doing a history of AA here in Georgia and I'm quite honored that I have been asked to write part of the history in this. I've seen a lot of changes in AA since I have been in it. And I've learned one thing - that the more I give, the more I get back.







The personal stories and group histories in this book were assembled by Georgia A. A. members as a way of sharing experience, strength and hope. The book carries the message from the 1940's into the 1990's.

