



DISTRICT 81

SEPTEMBER 2026

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STEP 9:

"Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others"

TRADITION 9:

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

CONCEPT 9:

" Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees."

**When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help;
I want the hand of AA always to be there.
And for THAT: I am responsible.**

UPCOMING EVENTS & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

September 2: District 81 meeting - 7pm at Kelley's in La Marque, 4604 Gulf Fwy, La Marque, TX 77568 (1st Wednesday)

September 6: Happy Hour speaker meeting - 6:30 pm at the Bay Area Club, 2111 Webster St, League City, TX 77573 (1st Sunday)

September 9: Accessibility Committee meeting - 6:30pm online via Google Meet
<https://meet.google.com/qvk-rjzk-nad> (2nd Wednesday)

September 9: Correctional Facilities meeting - 6:30pm at the Bay Area Club, 2111 Webster St, League City, TX 77573 (2nd Wednesday)

September 12: Live at 5 speaker meeting - 5pm at the Bay Area Club, 2111 Webster St, League City, TX 77573 (2nd Saturday)

September 13: Newsletter Committee meeting - 4:30pm at Dawn F.'s house. (every Sunday)

September 16: Website Committee meeting - 6pm online; send email to john.a@aa-seta.org to be added to the Google Meet invite. (3rd Wednesday)

September 16: Literature Committee meeting - 5:30pm via Google Meets (3rd Wednesday)
<https://meet.google.com/qcp-purn-rvt>

September 16: Treatment Facilities Committee meeting - 6:30pm at the Bay Area Club RM E & F 2111 Webster St, League City, TX 77573 and via Zoom: 868-5564-9879; passcode: 06-10-1935 (3rd Wednesday)

September 17: Grapevine Committee meeting - 5:30pm via Google Meets, send email to Grapevine committee chair to receive meeting info (3rd Thursday)

September 20: Archives Committee meeting - 1:00pm at the Bay Area Club, 2111 Webster St, League City, TX 77573 Rm E or F (3rd Sunday)

September 21: Workshop Committee meeting - 6:30pm Jason's Deli in League City (3rd Monday)

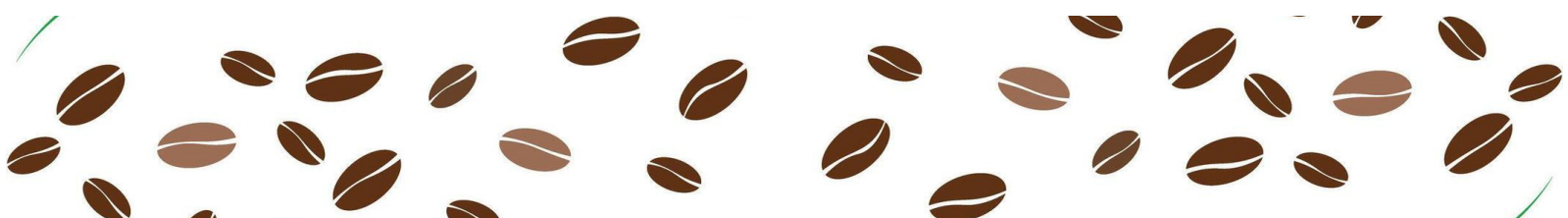
September 24: PI/CPC Committee meeting - 6:30pm via Zoom meeting ID 868-5564-9879; PW 06101935 (last Thursday)

September 30: Finance & Budget meeting - 7pm via Google Meets, send email to F & B committee chair to receive meeting info (last Wednesday)

October 9-11: SWRAASA - Hyatt Regency Baytown-Houston 100 Convention Center Way, Baytown, TX 77520

October 30-Nov 1: TXSCYPAA 45 Convention: "The Acid Test" Hilton Austin Southpark Hotel

January 8-10, 2027: 64th Annual SETA Convention - South Shore Harbor Resort and Conference Center, 2500 South Shore Blvd, League City, TX 77573 (See flyer on next page for QR code link to pre-registration)



HAPPY HOUR

THE HAPPY HOUR GROUP
SPEAKER MEETING
ANNOUNCES THE
OCTOBER 4TH, 2026
6:30-7:30 P.M.

Keith M.
7 years

MEETING ADDRESS:
BAY AREA CLUB

2111 WEBSTERS T. LEAGUE
CITY TX 77573

THE LIVE AT 5 GROUP
SPEAKER MEETING
ANNOUNCES THE
SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2026
5:00-6:00 P.M.

SPEAKER:
JAMIE W.

MEETING ADDRESS:
BAY AREA CLUB
2111 WEBSTER ST.
LEAGUE CITY TX 77573

YOU'RE INVITED
SOUTHEAST TEXAS AREA 67
SETA ASSEMBLY
Online only -8am
Saturday, September 26th

Elections
SATURDAY OCTOBER 3RD
ONLINE AND INPERSON
AREA ELECTIONS
STARTS AT 9AM 10/3

ELECTION ASSEMBLY LOCATION-
THE COUNCIL ON RECOVERY
303 JACKSON HILL ST
HOUSTON 77007

We are going to know a new freedom...
Alcoholics Anonymous, Page 83
Southeast Texas Area 67 Correctional Facilities Conference
September 11, 12, 13, 2026

TDCJ Orientation

CF Professional Panel

Volunteer Panel

INSIDE SPEAKER

English & Spanish

Speakers:

Jason K. Abilene, TX
Harold L. St Louis MO.
Tina H. Austin TX
Gonzalo Houston TX
Inside Speaker TDCJ

Registration \$15.00

Friday & Saturday Night
Ice Cream Socials

Saturday Night Banquet
Great Hospitality Room



HOTEL

Sheraton North Houston at George Bush IAH, 15700 JFK Boulevard, Houston, TX 77032

Limited rooms are available, so please reserve your rooms early.

Mention you are attending the SETA CFC 2026 to receive the \$99 per night

All reservations must be made by August 21st through the reservations department by calling (281) 442-5100

Link: [Book your group rate for SETA CFC 2026.](http://www.setacfc2026.com)

Mail the form and make check payable to:
SETA CFC 2025 CONFERENCE
PO Box 920612 Houston, TX 77202-0612
Link: <http://www.setacfc2026.com>



Registration

For Further Info:
jrlagone1@gmail.com
cfc@aa-seta.org

Name(s) _____

Badge Name _____

Badge Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email: _____

Professional: ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Other

Volunteers: ☐ AA ☐ Alanon ☐ Other

Registration Only _____ @ \$15.00 = _____

Registration w/Banquet _____ @ \$70.00 = _____

Contribution _____

Total = _____

64th Annual SETA Convention
*United in Service,
United in Recovery*
January 8 - 10, 2027
At South Shore Harbor Resort and Conference Center
2500 South Shore Blvd, League City, TX

Featured Speakers:
Stephanie B. — Oklahoma Eileen A. — GSO
Karl M. — California Lisa H. — Al Anon
Billie R. — Oklahoma Adrian M. — CFC

Register Online

Cash / Check / Credit Accepted at On-Site Registration

TXSCYPAA 45
THE ACID TEST

HILTON
AUSTIN HILTON HOTEL
OCT 30TH - NOV 1ST

\$109/NIGHT
FREE BREAKFAST & PARKING

Can you PASS THE ACID TEST?

txscypaa45.org
REGISTRATION

pick your sponsor:



betty:

- 17 years sober
- very Christian

- will control your sex conduct
- rarely answers calls or texts



Karen:

- 6 months sober

- reads the big book line by line with you
- post politically ambiguous rants on Facebook



Sarah:

- 3 years sober
- clingy

- you MUST attend monthly
sponsorship lineage movie night

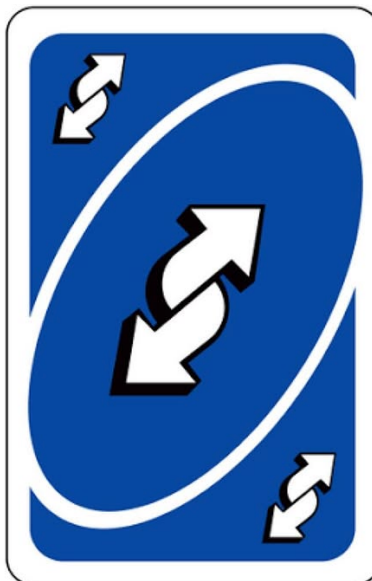


bee:

- 6 years sober

- undiagnosed BPD
- will be your personal Uber to meetings

When my sponsor asks me what would
I tell a sponsee in this situation



HOSTED BY SOUTHEAST TEXAS, AREA 67
SWRAASA
SOUTHWEST REGIONAL AA SERVICE ASSEMBLY
OCTOBER 9-11, 2026
HOUSTON, TX

A.A. A SOCIETY OF RECOVERED ALCOHOLICS IN ACTION

HYATT REGENCY BAYTOWN-HOUSTON
100 CONVENTION CENTER WAY
BAYTOWN, TX 77520

PRE-REGISTER BY 9/25/2026
MAIL TO: 148 S DOWLEN RD., PMB 21
BEAUMONT, TX 77707

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: SWRAASA

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____ CITY & STATE: _____ DISTRICT: _____ EMAIL: _____

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____ CITY & STATE: _____ DISTRICT: _____ EMAIL: _____

WWW.SWRAASA2026.ORG

UNITY OVER EGO

On page C5 in The A.A. Service Manual—combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service—it states “Throughout the entire world today we are witnessing the breakdown of “group conscience.” It has always been the hope of democratic nations that their citizens would always be enlightened enough, moral enough, and responsible enough to manage their own affairs through chosen representatives. But in many self-governing countries we are now seeing the inroads of ignorance, apathy, and power-seeking upon democratic systems. Their spiritual resources of right purpose and collective intelligence are waning. Consequently, many a land has become so helpless that the only answer is dictatorship.

Happily for us, there seems little prospect of such a calamity in A.A. The life of each individual and of each group is built around our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. We very well know that the penalty for extensive disobedience to these principles is death for the individual and dissolution for the group. An even greater force for A.A.’s unity is the compelling love that we have for our fellow members and for the principles upon which our lives today are founded.

Therefore we believe that we see in our Fellowship a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, enough responsibility and enough love of man and of God to insure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions.” The idea that our fellowship is expressed through our group conscience is so important. That the ultimate authority rests with its groups and not any one person gaining power over the other. It doesn’t matter how much money, how much sobriety, etc. It doesn’t matter.

It shows me where ignorance, apathy, and power-seeking can lead me. My experience shows ignorance can look like talking as if I know on a subject even if I have never researched it. Apathy can look like I don’t want to deal with “all that stuff” someone else will do it. Power-seeking can look like it must be done my way no matter what it does to other.

The amazing thing for me is that if I practice the steps, traditions and concepts in all my affairs the chance of the above happening is low. Just by practicing these principles in all my affairs it will ensure my service to the fellowship, that saved my life, will work. Suiting up, showing up, taking the action and letting my High-Power take care of the rest seems to be the answer. In love and service.

—Christina S.



EVERY A.A. MEETING HAS THEM... THE QUIET ONES

The ones who slip into a chair a few minutes early—or a few minutes late. The ones in some groups who make coffee, stack chairs, or quietly disappear before the closing prayer. They listen intently, smile politely, and often answer “I’m just grateful to be here” when called upon. Sometimes weeks, months, or even years pass before we hear much of their story. It’s easy to assume silence means someone has nothing to say. In A.A., that’s rarely true.

Behind those quiet eyes may be decades of pain, remarkable courage, overwhelming fear, deep gratitude, or hard-earned wisdom that could change someone’s life. Some are still learning to trust. Some are carrying wounds that words cannot yet reach. Others have discovered that listening is one of the greatest gifts they can offer the fellowship. This series is an invitation to look beyond the silence.

Over the coming months, we’ll explore the many faces of “the quiet ones” in our groups—the newcomer terrified to speak, the old-timer whose serenity speaks louder than words, the member battling invisible struggles, the listener who hears the one sentence everyone else missed, and those whose lives remind us that recovery isn’t measured by how much we say, but by how we live.

The next time you notice someone sitting quietly across the room, remember this: behind those eyes may be a story of hope that is still finding its voice. And when that voice is finally ready to speak, it may be exactly what someone in the room has been praying to hear.

Stay Tuned For Part Two...
(on page 7)

—Dawn F.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL: WE'RE NEVER DONE LEARNING

I was traveling yesterday. The day started early, packing up the beach house we'd rented for a week with my in-laws. Then came a two-hour drive back to the Philadelphia airport, a flight to Charlotte, another to Houston, and finally home after about twelve hours of travel.

Some journeys start far away, and some journeys start where you are, as Pema Chödrön would say. This time of year, journeys are everywhere. The kids are getting ready to go back to school, performing those annual rituals that mark both the passage of time and the progress of an education: new teachers, classrooms, backpacks and schedules. We send them off each August expecting them to come back changed—knowing things they didn't know before and able to do things that were difficult a year ago. The last couple of years have taken me on journeys in all those senses. At 50, I've gone back to graduate school myself. And a little over 400 days ago, I stopped drinking.

All of that was rattling around in my head somewhere between Philadelphia and Houston when I read Richard Sima's recent Washington Post article, *Here's what happens to your brain when you stop drinking alcohol*. One of the things that struck me was that the brain doesn't just passively endure our drinking. It learns from it. Alcohol acts on the brain's reward systems, and with repeated heavy drinking those systems adapt. The pleasure we initially get from alcohol becomes harder to achieve, while the stress and negative emotional systems that alcohol temporarily quiets become increasingly active. As one researcher in the article puts it, people "stop drinking as much to feel good and start drinking more to feel less bad."

That description resonated with me. By the end of my drinking, alcohol wasn't really adding any pleasure to a life that should have seemed pretty okay, on paper. Increasingly, it felt like the thing I needed to feel pleasure at all. There is a word for that loss of the ability to experience pleasure: *anhedonia*. I didn't recognize it that way at the time. I knew there were things I was supposed to enjoy, like family trips, good meals, sitting on a beach, time with people I loved, but I just felt restless underneath. Something would make this more fun, more relaxing, less irritating. I knew what that something was.

Last summer, I was trying to quit drinking again. I had previously managed six months of sobriety, followed by eight months of drinking, and by the beginning of summer I knew where that road was taking me. I stopped again about two weeks before we left for a family trip to Japan, then stayed sober for another two weeks there. It was work. Alcohol seemed to be everywhere, but one hotel offered a particularly

absurd test: free sake, sitting out unattended for guests to help themselves. No bartender. No bill to sign. No little moment of public accountability in which I would have to hear myself say, out loud, that I wanted a drink. Eventually, I caved. I drank heavily during my solo trip home and for another week after I got back. Then I entered an intensive outpatient program and started again. I don't want to rewrite that trip into a triumphant story about how I almost made it. I didn't, but it was part of the education.

This summer, a little more than a year later, we went to Rehoboth Beach. Alcohol hadn't magically disappeared from my mind. There were moments when a drink still sounded good. I was also spending a week sharing a beach house with my in-laws, which seems like it ought to qualify for at least three continuing-education credits in sobriety. But something was different: the alternatives seemed better.

The soft-serve ice cream on the boardwalk was so fucking good. And Funland was actually fun. On the Sea Dragon, my stomach got that giddy swooping feeling each time the ride swung down again. My son and I laughed deliriously. For a few minutes we experienced the world in the same way: the thrill of the ride, the lights and noise and helpless laughter. I didn't need alcohol to induce that feeling, and I wasn't pretending to have it.

That same change showed up in quieter places. Neither sobriety nor neuroplasticity has cured me of every frustration, but I actually didn't mind hanging out with my in-laws. And I could viscerally sense the healing bonds between my wife and me.

That's why Sima's Washington Post article connected with me. The research suggests that some of the changes that heavy alcohol use makes to the brain can begin to reverse after drinking stops, with recovery continuing over months of abstinence. I'm not qualified to look at an ice cream cone and diagnose the current state of my dopamine system, nor can I separate which aspects of this healing journey are due to physical repairs to my brain or to the emotional and spiritual repairs that treatment and AA support. But I can attest to the change.

For years, I had been teaching my brain that alcohol meant pleasure or, at least, relief from the intolerable burden of an ordinary Tuesday. Last summer, I took the alcohol away, but I hadn't yet given myself a new curriculum and I hadn't put in the reps. Now I have.

For more than 400 days I have practiced the ordinary stuff, from stressful workdays, boring evenings, celebrations, arguments, family gatherings, and generally intolerable Tuesdays. I have practiced being irritated without immediately

reaching for relief. I've practiced being a husband and a father while actually being present for both. I've practiced having fun, and it turns out "One day at a time" is a lot of repetition.

We take for granted that kids' minds are flexible and learning. That's why we send them back to school every year. A challenge in September is second nature for them by May, because we give them structure, instruction and practice. We can do the same for ourselves.

Some journeys happen so gradually that you don't realize how far you've traveled until (suddenly) the world is interesting again. The kids go back to school this week. So do I. And after more than 400 days sober, apparently my brain does too. We're never done learning.

For the Washington Post story that inspired this article, visit: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/2026/08/04/heres-what-happens-your-brain-when-you-stop-drinking-alcohol/>

— Martin P.



Classrooms and Caffeine

V D M O H D G M D U S W R M N H S D B L V G H N
W D T H S Q L Y V U F C L A S S R O O M T X C A
M T S L K Z G T S A O R Q G E N I E F F A C H Z
I N I S X S Q W Y R R M C G K T X S O G J F A B
N G I E E A Y U U N A Y R A K W O N D E R K N A
S N Q T D C F M S W G O C U H Z N W S Y W J G C
Z G B T N G E V P K W A P B O O Q I S H B Y E K
E Z Z A C K G R D T P C W C S G M Z T J P H S P
C X C L U B Q N H P B P G S I G Y Z E R U E K A
U X J U R X E M U U S I E W V N P M P B J A E C
C F F C L K O C U P N L Z Y K Q C E S E X S I K
O C N D E X C S M R A X H Q C D J I N P X M A A
W I W E W I I J S M E W T P Y K O C P C H O P G
L N W F N O P E W E B Y A J C M U M S S I P R F
D A Z O K T O B B R R R U L X A R R T D X L A F
V Y U D T V Z E D I A P K W B N N H B T F B C R
Y L H T W B X D E D N K S Q P D E S J E G W T E
H F Z V U M T R E L D W T E A I Y A T N I R I B
O A M G A M O C K W U B L D N C L D I U G G C M
F Y H E S B N O R Y Y D P U Y D N N R Q D U E E
W T R K A N C F O H M O C H A K R V S I A Y M T
J C P L X L M F W D G T T R C A E M X W U M Z P
H N M P W W W E O H S F E S E Z S P X X J B F E
X J C D I R N E Z R P J F L Y Z B J W I B Z D S

CHANGE
PRACTICE
WONDER
SEPTEMBER
AUTUMN
PICNIC
WEEKEND
PARADE
WORK
LABOR
STUDY
RECESS
PENCIL
CLASSROOM
LESSON
BACKPACK
STEPS
GROWTH
LEARNING
JOURNEY
CREAM
CAPPUCCINO
CAFFEINE
MUG
BEANS
ROAST
MOCHA
LATTE
ESPRESSO
COFFEE

Part Two... THE QUIET ONES: MIKE C. Article 1

I have a habit of making my way around the room before meetings, greeting as many people as I can with a big hug. One evening, as I was making the rounds—laughing, joking, talking a little trash, and handing out hugs—I came to Mike C. Instead of opening his arms, he quickly stuck out his hand, making it abundantly clear that a hug was not happening. That told me quite a bit about him right away.

Over time, I managed to wear him down. Our interactions gradually grew beyond the standard "hello," and I became intrigued by his northern accent. Naturally, I started asking him questions. Recently, I asked Mike if he would be willing to sit down with me for this series and share some of his story. To my surprise, he agreed. We ended up talking for nearly an hour. Mike is fascinating—well-traveled, thoughtful, intelligent, and full of colorful life experiences. There is no way I can do justice to everything we discussed in a single article, but here are a few of the highlights that spoke to me.

Mike was born in the early 1960s in Queens, New York, to Irish immigrant parents. His father owned a neighborhood bar, and Mike remembers having a happy childhood with plenty to do. His parents were tough, and they didn't tolerate much nonsense. Mike's struggles began early. By first grade, he was already getting into fights, and he says violence and distrust became his reality.

When Mike was 10 or 11 years old, his father moved the family back to Ireland to protect the family's ancestral land from government incursion of perceived non-working farms. Mike worked hard on the farm on weekends and after school, but school brought a new set of challenges. Having traded the "Technicolor" world of New York City for what he jokingly calls the "black-and-white" world of rural Ireland; he stood out immediately. His colorful 1970s clothes, New York accent, and American mannerisms made him an easy target. Classmates, neighbors, and even some teachers bullied him relentlessly. Fighting became his way of surviving, and he learned to be tough.

Life in Ireland exposed him to the realities of the violent political conflict known as "The Troubles." His grandmother's bar hosted IRA meetings, and British Army checkpoints were simply a normal part of daily life. Growing up amid deep religious, political, and class divisions left a lasting impression on him.

By age 17, Mike had fully adopted an Irish accent and had largely assimilated. Alcohol had entered the picture years earlier. He began drinking alone around age 12, using it to shut out the world. By 15, he was drinking enough to get drunk. Getting caught had devastating consequences. One particular stunt ruined all chance of having a normal family life that was already very much strained.

When his father returned to New York, Mike and his sister remained in Ireland with relatives to finish school. Despite continuing

to struggle with fighting and drinking, he earned acceptance into college in Galway at just 17 years old. Mike has always been highly intelligent, but his violence and alcoholism repeatedly interfered with his potential.

After one difficult year in college that ended with homelessness, he returned to New York at 18 to rebuild his life. Mike bartended while putting himself through college in New York. His drinking came in cycles—periods of sobriety to succeed academically, followed by stretches of heavy drinking fueled by easy access to alcohol at work. Around age 30, a friend gave him a copy of the Big Book. He read the stories, identified, and attended many AA meetings, but years of learning to rely only on himself made it difficult to connect with others in the Fellowship.

In 1995, Mike accepted an engineering position with NASA and moved to Texas, where he would spend the next 20 years. He stayed sober for 14 years without attending meetings, believing he could manage on his own. Eventually, alcoholism caught up with him. The physical consequences returned, along with familiar thoughts: "I'm not an alcoholic. I can handle this. I'm not like those losers."

His journey back to AA began quietly. He attended online meetings without saying a word, simply listening. Eventually he began attending meetings in person, but his search for a home group took time.

By the time Mike found the 6:30 Happy Hour Group, he had three years of sobriety but had never worked the Steps or become involved in service. The anger and resentments were still there, and he admits he didn't understand what people meant when they talked about "the solution." Finally, he decided, "What have I got to lose?" He asked someone to sponsor him and committed himself to doing everything that was suggested. A major step in finding trust again in others, a higher power and himself. That decision changed his life.

Mike says working the Twelve Steps taught him things about himself that he had never learned before. Today, instead of living with constant anger and resentment, he describes himself as content and filled with serenity, having found tools to process the feelings. Although he still doesn't share often in meetings, he enjoys listening and will gladly speak when called upon. His quiet presence reminds us that not everyone's recovery is loud. Sometimes the deepest transformation happens quietly.

As I reflected on our conversation, I realized how easy it is to overlook the quieter people in the room. We never know the battles someone has fought or the road they traveled to get here. Mike's story reminds me to greet people with kindness, respect those who may be slower to trust, and remember that everyone has something valuable to teach us—whether they say much in a meeting or not.

— Dawn F.

GRAPEVINE

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
AAGRAPEVINE.ORG SEPTEMBER 2026

40 YEARS, 9 SPONSORS

They each taught him valuable lessons he'll never forget



Special section: Sponsorship

SEPTEMBER GRAPEVINE

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Scan this QR code to subscribe to the District 81 newsletter and get each issue in your email!

D81 – FINANCE & BUDGET REPORT FOR AUGUST

D81 Budget Summary	
Opening Checkbook Balance	\$ 12,345.84
Group Contributions	\$ 173.54
Other Contributions	
Less Expenses	\$ 1,458.19
Net Income	\$ (1,284.65)
Ending Checkbook Balance	\$ 11,061.19
Prudent Reserve Emergency Funds	\$ (2,000.00)
Unused Budget (Restricted Deficit)	\$ (7,108.71)
Available Funds	\$ 1,952.48