

AUGUST 2016

The Wagon Wheel

IDAHO AREA 18

NEWSLETTER



GOD
grant me
the SERENITY
to accept the things
I cannot change,
COURAGE
to change the things I can,
and WISDOM
to know the
difference.

RESPONSIBILITY PLEDGE

I AM RESPONSIBLE.
WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE
REACHES OUT FOR HELP,
I WANT THE HAND OF A.A.
ALWAYS TO BE THERE.

AND FOR THAT,
I AM RESPONSIBLE !

Dear Idaho Area 18 Friends,

Thank you so much for allowing me to serve. Can't believe it's already the third printing for 2016 and our Fall Assembly at Fort Hall Indian Reservation is just around the corner. I hope to meet some of you there!

I am very grateful to the Idaho Area 18 Committee for their amazing support of finding articles and sharing their own stories and presentations for the Wagon Wheel.

What a powerful message of service and humility that your trusted servants are providing for our Area. I encourage everyone reading this newsletter to think of someone you love hearing their message of experience, strength and hope and perhaps ask them to submit their story. You can even send me their contact info and I can ask them! You are the fellowship of AA here in Southern Idaho and this is your newsletter. Do you have any suggestions? Is the Newsletter serving you and Idaho AA's? I would love your feedback!

If you would like to submit an article, story, joke or picture please email me at

Newsletter1@idahoarea18aa.org

I hope to see you on the road of happy destiny.

May God bless you and keep you until then.

In loving service,

Susan O.

The Wagon Ho!

"I Found My Higher Power, Sort Of"

After 21 years of sobriety, I still struggle with God and faith. Let me say that right out so you don't think I am some kind of AA poster child. And you know what? That's ok. No one is going to kick me out of AA over it. If we are honest, none of us has a direct line to God all of the time. We do not become saints.

I used to think I was atheist, when I was a teenager, when I was drinking heavily. I don't know why I didn't believe in God...probably because I felt lonely and lost, like there was no one I could rely on. I felt I had to count only on myself, because the people I needed to rely on weren't there for me. If those closest to me were failing, then it wasn't safe to believe in anyone. (Boy, I sure could have benefitted from faith at that time in my life. Maybe I would not have become alcoholic).

Regardless, I had no evidence of a benevolent power: I couldn't feel, see or touch any God so I didn't believe.

On top of that, I struggle with traditional, religious words like "God", "Lord", "He" and "Creator" – which permeates our culture and are all throughout the Big Book. At one time in early sobriety I defined God as gravity: the force that keeps your feet on the ground. Grounded. I do believe this is what God does for us, and that was a place to start. I've tried to (re) name my god over the years and have come up with phrases similar to the Higher Power mentioned in the book including Great Spirit, Mother Earth, Higher Soul. They all work for me. But making peace with a concept of God was a long time coming for me and I fought it with my brain. (My soul always knew....)

God believed in me before I believed in him. After some sobriety, even though my connection with God was tenuous at the time, I came to believe this. I see now that some force of goodness and direction had always been active in my life. My Higher Power had a hand on me at times when I was drinking, guiding me to safety. Bad things should have happened, but they didn't. The world conspired to get me sober.

An example. At 18, I was a practicing alcoholic with

5 years of drinking already behind me. I went off to college with doubts and fear about my drinking. Seeing me like this, my Higher Power put 3 recovering alcoholics in my dorm, we became friends, and they cared for me, getting me to meetings and supporting me. I see now that that was no coincidence: it was too perfect. The universe had a plan for me.

As I tried to grow spiritually, I found that I was trying too hard to find god. I was making it a 'brain exercise', which doesn't work. It's a heart exercise. I really beat myself up for not 'getting it'. I used to think I would get a burning bush, a message, a lasting and loud voice inside me that felt powerful and peaceful all the time. Spiritual awakening isn't like that. It inches up on you. I learned to be open to a Higher Power, and stopped trying to define it. I learned to get quiet within myself by simply sitting still and asking for that quiet. Sure enough, a little peace came to me and I developed an inner knowing, an intuition about what to do and where to go and how to behave.

What I love about AA is that each of us has a personal and unique experience of god. I don't have to believe in the same God that you do, and you do not have to believe in mine. Thank God for that (no pun intended)! God is like the center of a wheel: all the spokes represent all the different ways you can get to that center. It doesn't matter HOW you get there, just that you do.

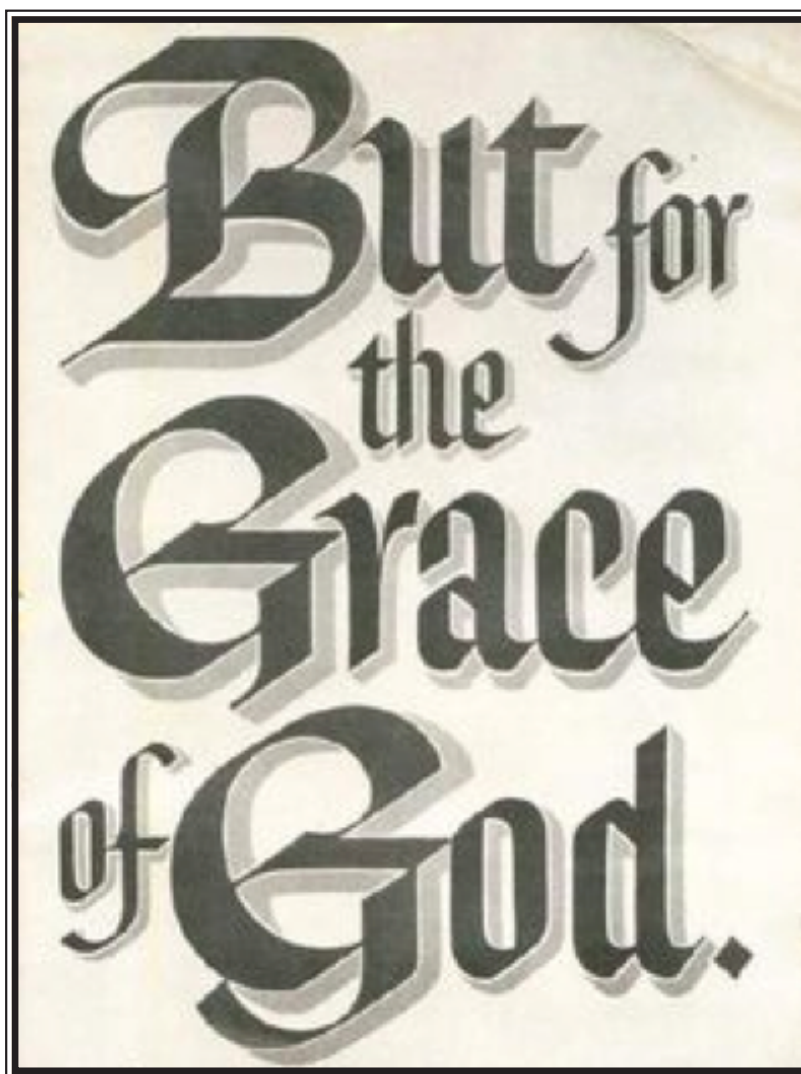
There are so many ways to connect with God - prayer and meditation for starters. I've heard that prayer is talking to God, and meditation is listening to him and I like the simplicity of that. The 12x12 says that 'Prayer and meditation are our principal means of conscious contact with God' (p 96). But many of us are too agitated to get quiet enough to pray and meditate. Other things that work for many people include yoga, walking, gardening, painting, spending time with an AA friend. God has often spoken to me through other people in the fellowship. God has spoken to me through nature, which I believe is a grounding, constant, beautiful source of spiritual energy. I try lots of things to connect with my Higher Power and keep doing the things that work for me. I'm not going to tell you what your spiritual practice should be, but I will tell you that you need one in order to stay sober and achieve the promises.

It's been a process and I still don't have an open heart all the time. But, all that the program requires of me is that I keep seeking, willingly. I don't have to be able to see or touch my Higher Power, but I know my Higher Power can see and touch me.

Lee D.

Home Group:

There is a Solution in Boise, ID,



“Can I have an AA Group on a Social Media Site?

How Can It Be Done Right?”

By Vera Farrell

Good Afternoon my name is Vera Farrell and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is 9/19/89. My home group is Attitude Adjustment in Bend, OR, and I have the privilege of serving OR Area 58 as the Alt Delegate. Thank you to the PNC Committee for inviting me to present today.

For this presentation I will focus on Facebook as I am more familiar with this.

Conversations about AA groups and social media are always interesting! If we are to reach millions who use social media as a way to get information, it's a conversation that we must have. Most people today have the world at their fingertips, and in their pockets. Alcoholics Anonymous needs to find ways to be more available to them. We need guidelines on how to use social media within the parameters of our Traditions, as opposed to whether or not we should use it. Technology is constantly changing, forcing us to either adapt or lose out on opportunities.

Our fellowship is used to dealing with change, we are not strangers to trial and error. In fact, our Traditions are by products of this process! Like our founding fathers and the drunks that have gone before us, we learn much by doing, and so mistakes will be made. And we will learn from them. I don't believe we need to live in fear about using technology to help carry the message. It's quite possible this fear is based in an idea we don't always understand, technology! However, I do believe using caution and our inventory process will help us get to where we need to go. We will need to ask ourselves, is our motive in line with our policy of attraction and our stated primary purpose of carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous? How do we balance personal anonymity with group anonymity?

We often think we know what we are doing, yet sometimes that isn't always the case. As individual members the use of social media increases our personal responsibility and the opportunity to check our motives. I believe if we don't work through this as a fellowship, we will miss opportunities to reach future alcoholics. When you stop and think about it... A.A IS a social network...and our Guidelines and Traditions help to keep us right sized!

In Leonard Blumental Herzegovina's 2007 report to the General Service Board, he encouraged the Conference to “embrace the future more aggressively in carrying out our Twelfth Step efforts...Now is the time,” he said, “to start discussing and planning for our 100th anniversary, along with strategies to extend our Twelfth Step responsibilities into A.A.'s second century.”

Our literature helps to point the way and offers guidance on what not to do and what to do.

The pamphlet, “In The AA Group...Where It All Begins.” The Importance of Anonymity it states:

“At the level of press, television, radio, film, and the Internet, anonymity stresses the equality in A.A. of all its members. It puts the brake on our easily inflatable egos, our misplaced conviction that violating our anonymity will help someone, and our desire for personal recognition or control. Most importantly, the Anonymity Tradition reminds us that it is the A.A. message, not the messenger, that counts. In theory, the anonymity principle seems clear, but putting it into effect is not always easy.”

Or in the words of my service sponsor Gus P. “It's intended to be a wonderful vehicle to carry the message of A.A. and it also has the potential to be a bear trap.”

In a 1945 GV article “The Book Is Born” written by Bill W, he describes the process that A.A went through in forming our public relations policy.

“The point is obvious. If these vital matters had been left entirely to the promoters like me, we would surely have gone hog wild and spoiled everything. Had these affairs been left exclusively to the conservatives it is probable that few of our present membership would yet have heard of A.A. Thousands would have remained miserable. Many would have been dead.”

“So it seems clear that sound policy can only be made by rubbing the conservatives and the promoters together. Their discussions, if free from personal ambitions and resentment, can be depended upon to produce the right answers. For us, there is no other way.”

I believe Bill's approach is still relevant and very useful in today's conversations about having A.A

groups on a social media site, and doing it within the spirit of Tradition Eleven.

I believe Bill's approach is still relevant and very useful in today's conversations about having A.A. groups on a social media site, and doing it within the spirit of Tradition Eleven.

I did a search for Alcoholics Anonymous on FB and many groups come up. Some of them are public, some are private, most are closed. If you are not familiar with how the privacy settings work, you can be fooled into thinking your anonymity (and others) is protected if you join them. But a closer look reveals this is not true. Pictures of members with full names are listed on the page. The description of the group often mentions A.A. This is true for the Facebook page named Alcoholics Anonymous. The group's cover photo is the same picture that GSO uses on its website! This could lead people to believe the Facebook page is sanctioned by Alcoholic Anonymous. It is not!

Some of the closed A.A. groups on Facebook use the site for group announcements, reminders of upcoming events, birthdays, speaker's meetings, and a forum for service related questions. How do groups choose who will get an invitation to the groups' site? Home group members only please! We can do secret groups on Facebook yet we are not a secret society. We want potential A. A.'s and those who want our help to find us. How do we balance that with secret groups on Facebook? Are these groups practicing Tradition Five's Singleness of Purpose? Do these groups effectively reach the newcomer? These questions and many more are part of the inventory process that is necessary to ensure that groups are on the right track.

What about the untapped potential of using social media? When asking this question I think of my cell phone. There are so many features that I don't use. I don't even know they exist until someone shows them to me. Is this true for A.A. groups on Facebook? And if it is, how do we use social media to reach alcoholics who don't even know where we are? I don't have the answers to all these questions. However, to answer the question of..... Can it be done Right? Let me share with you what I've found.

Privacy Settings

- In light of A. A's tradition of anonymity, it's really important to know how to do the **privacy settings.****
- Public settings:** Anyone can see the group, it's members and their posts. **Doesn't work with Tradition Eleven.**
- Closed Group:** Anyone can find the group and see who's in it. Typically provide full names and pictures of group members, which, *according to A.A. Guidelines on Internet is "contrary to A.A. practice of such disclosures."*
- SECRET:** When a group is set up as a secret group, it can't not be found in the searching of groups
- Only members can find the group, post and see post
- Must be invited to be a member
- This works within Tradition Eleven

Slide# 3: Anonymity Breakers

- When you see the first 3 symbols You can typically tell if your anonymity is broken when you see the first 3 symbols
- Using custom settings will protect your anonymity and everyone else's

Slide# 4: Closed Group

- Let's take a closer look at a closed group's FB page
- Anyone can find the group and see who's in it.
- Typically provides full names and pictures of group members, which according to A.A. Guidelines on Internet is "contrary to A.A. practice of such disclosures."
- Not recommended!**

Slide# 5: Secret Group

- Best Anonymity protection
- it can't not be found in the searching of groups
- Only members can find the group, post and see post
- Must be invited to be a member
- works within Tradition Eleven!**

Slide# 6: Custom Setting

- You create the list of people in this group
- Post are only visible to the particular group of people who are on the list that you created
- No friends can see it (post) if they are not on the list
- works within Tradition Eleven!**

AREA 18

CURRENT TREASURER'S REPORT

SHOWING DISTRICT CONTRIBUTIONS TO IDAHO AREA 18.

Idaho Area 18
Income & Expense Report
Fiscal Year 2015-2016

INCOME		EXPENSES	
2015 Fall Assembly Yield	5,767.34	Alternate Delegate	972.38
		Archives	879.98
Contributions:		Chairman	844.28
District 01	1,155.02	CPC-PI East	610.82
District 02	2,594.71	CPC-PI West	544.58
District 03	1,580.14	DCM	425.60
District 04	859.49	Delegate	3,868.35
District 05	2,944.74	Finance Committee	1,338.20
District 06	1,228.29	Grapevine	1,271.38
District 07	747.06	Newsletter	1,455.08
District 08	1,782.53	Operational Expenses	4,896.05
District 09	625.00	Secretary	1,465.65
District 10	1,409.58	Service Charges	(8.00)
District 11	245.00	SICYPAA Liaison	174.41
District 12	135.00	Treasurer	1,497.46
Other Contributions	463.33	TSNAC East	1,059.48
Total Contributions	<u>15,769.89</u>	TSNAC West	759.70
		Webmaster	<u>627.16</u>
Total Income	21,537.23	Total Expenses	22,682.56

THANK YOU DISTRICTS, GROUPS AND AA'S
FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

UPCOMING IDAHO AREA 18 EVENTS

For details please click the link below (pdf version)

Or go to the website: IdahoArea18aa.org

Treasure Valley Intergroup Central Office New Hours

(effective February 1, 2016)

10AM - 6:00PM (Tuesday - Friday)

10AM - 3:00PM (Saturday)

1111 S. Orchard St., Suite 180, Boise ID

10th Annual SCI-TSNAC AWARENESS

Picnic

Music · Speakers · Raffle Prizes · 50/50 Drawing

When: Saturday, August 27th

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Where: Shoshone City Park, Shoshone, Idaho

Suggested Meal Ticket Cost: \$5

(Enters you in \$100 cash drawing)

Please consider donating a Raffle Item!

Lunch & Drinks will be provided
Pot Luck / Bring your Favorite Dish

Don't forget your lawn chairs!

PLEASE: No Dogs (City Regulations)

For more information call:

LYNN G. @ 539-4869 / CHRIS R. @ (312) 259-0300

2016 Idaho Area 18 Fall Assembly!

October 7th, 8th & 9th,

2016 Shoshone

Bannock Hotel & Event Center,

Fort Hall, ID

2017 Idaho Area 18 Spring Assembly!

May 12th, 13th & 14th,

Nampa Civic Center, Nampa, ID

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



We *are not a* Glum Lot



AN OFFICER
PULLS A WOMAN
OVER for weaving
across two lanes
of traffic.
He walks up to the
driver's
window and asks
her,
"Are you drinking?"
The woman says,
"I don't know—are
you buying?"



"AA says 'stick with the winners'. I'm going to Al-Anon to find out if I have to stick with a loser."

The Wagon Wheel



“The Promises”

GOD
grant me
the *SERENITY*
to accept the things
I cannot change,
COURAGE
to change the things I can,
and *WISDOM*
to know the
difference.

IF we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past, nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity, and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

“The Big Book” pgs 83 and 84