

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

I would love to receive your stories of experience, strength and hope, as well as pictures, jokes, and announcements for future Wagon Wheel publications. Please send what you'd like to share to: [newsletter1@idahoarea18aa.org](mailto:newsletter1@idahoarea18aa.org)  
For an electronic version of this Wagon Wheel, and past newsletters, please visit:  
<http://www.idahoarea18aa.org/main/wagonwheel.htm>

Thank you again for letting me be of service, and I look forward to reading all of your Wagon Wheel submissions!

\*Angela D.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Teton Canyon Campout

August 25th - 27th, 2017  
Reunion Flats Campground Site #C, WY

### 6th Annual Wenatchee Valley Roundup

September 22 - 24, 2017  
Wenatchee, WA

### Gem State Round Up FUN-draiser

September 23, 2017 - 6 to 11pm  
Boise, ID - As Bill Sees It building

### National Archives Workshop

September 30th - October 3, 2017  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

### 2017 Idaho Area 18 Fall Assembly

October 6, 7, 8, 2017  
Burley Convention Center, Burley ID

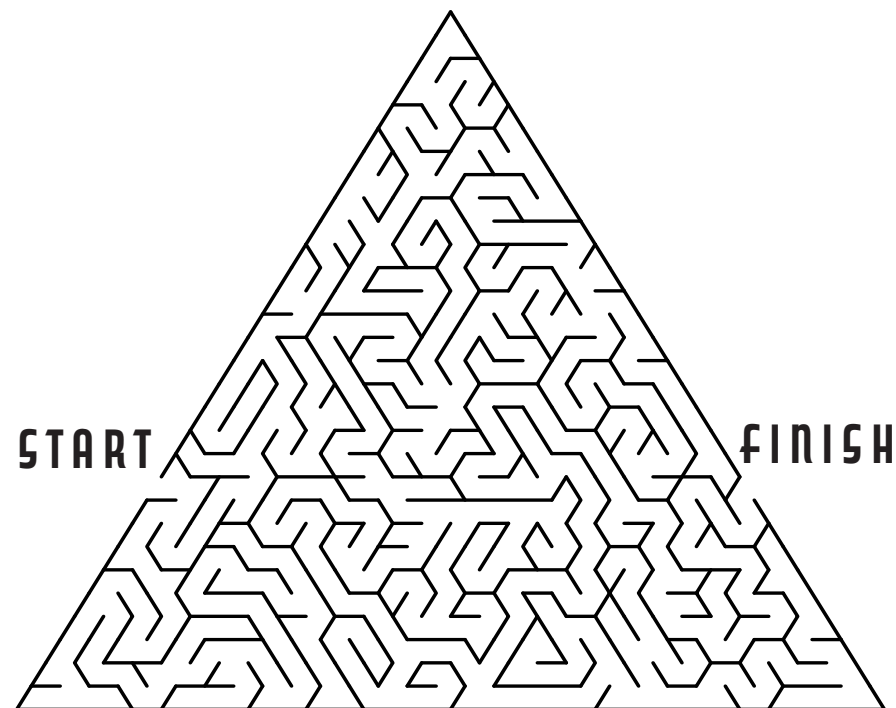
### 2017 Area 76 Fall Convention

November 3, 4, 5, 2017  
Ramada Plaza, 2009 South Douglas HWY  
Gillette, WY

### Lollapalooza III of AA

March 15-18, 2018  
Hotel ML, Mount Laurel, NJ

*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 you and keep you  
- until then.*



# THE WAGON WHEEL

AUG. 2017

## IDAHO AREA 18 NEWSLETTER

EDITOR, ANGELA D.

## THE SERENITY PRAYER - LONG VERSION

“GOD, GRANT ME THE **SERENITY** TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CAN NOT CHANGE, THE **COURAGE** TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN, AND THE **WISDOM** TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE. **LIVING** ONE DAY AT A TIME; **ENJOYING** ONE MOMENT AT A TIME; **ACCEPTING** HARDSHIP AS THE PATHWAY TO **PEACE**. TAKING, AS HE DID, THIS SINFUL WORLD AS IT IS. **TRUSTING** THAT HE WILL MAKE ALL THINGS **RIGHT** IF I **SURRENDER** TO HIS WILL; THAT I MAY BE REASONABLY **HAPPY** IN THIS LIFE, AND SUPREMELY **HAPPY** WITH HIM **FOREVER** IN THE NEXT. AMEN.

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# THE ROAD HOME

FROM SCOTT H.

Being bored in Alcoholics Anonymous is easy. Being of service is great way to fill your soul. The big difference is action! I was lucky to have a sponsor who's mantra was "Action. ...Action....and more Action." I was willing to do what I was told, so I was writing step work and being active in meetings, making sure I got to share everyday. I became the secretary of the Lunch Bunch before my 1st AA birthday, at that time the biggest responsibility of the secretary was the buy the cheese and crackers. Action item! Kept me busy. Later I became a GSR and then I got "appointed" as the DCM of the short lived District 13. For any who were not around during the mid-80's District 13 was created through a big resentment and an equal sized coffee pot. District 13 was viable for a while and there are people sober today that started their AA journey with district 13. District 13 folded in on its self. As will anything that is not centered in "GOOD". I stayed busy in District 13, I also stayed sober and I sure wasn't bored. Later I was a member of The Survivors group, 5:30 at the Grapevine, I was the chairperson selector, asking someone to chair usually 10 minutes before the start of the meeting. I did become very frustrated with asking people to chair and getting a "noooo." But I stayed busy and stayed sober.

By the 90's I was reaping the rewards of sober living, I got married and started the next chapter in my life. I now had a new wife and 3 children, 2 step and 1 of my own, believe me that kept me busy. I had far less time for AA, but I still went to meetings. I stayed clean and sober and started living the life. As time went on I went to less meetings and had no time for service in AA, after all I had done all that previous service work, as says in the Big Book pg 85, I was resting on my laurels. I continued with this as my AA program. I worked at the Phone Company and I was officer in my local Union. My responsibility at the union was to fix issues with health care benefits, insurance claims, short term disability problems, alcohol and drug abuse issues, including helping people get out of jail. Aladdin Bail bonds will give you a 7% discount if you are a union member. So I was working with alcoholics a lot of the time, carrying the message so to say.

My brain said skipping meetings is ok, you are working with others on a weekly basis. What happened was that I became short tempered, dissatisfied, grouchy, irritable, self centered, I am sure there are more adjectives to describe my mental and emotional state. After 10 years of marriage I got divorced, I don't know if going to a lot of meetings would've help me not get divorced. But, going to a lot of meetings certainly would've improved my outlook on life, and the way I handled my emotions. I struggled through the next six or seven years with the same program I've been working the six or seven years before. I called it the auditing program, where I would show up at a meeting every once in a while say something profound and leave. No home group, no service positions.

**"MY BRAIN SAID  
SKIPPING MEETINGS IS  
OK, YOU ARE  
WORKING WITH OTHERS  
ON A WEEKLY BASIS."**

In 2008 more stuff happened to me, I lost my Italian girlfriend, I was not re-elected for my union position. I was not happy with my life. I started going to more AA meetings. I was lonely. I met a woman there, she liked to go to AA every day, so there I was going to a meeting almost every day. This was after 12 years of showing up occasionally. I had a home group, I brought a coffee pot, I was involved in making my home group the best it could be. After that I even

volunteered to help with the area assembly in Boise. Remember my little stint with district 13, don't think I didn't have a few resentments left over from that affair when it came to Area. I was in charge of the hospitality room that year.

continued?

# TREASURER REPORT

MELISSA S.

Idaho Area 18  
Income & Expense Report  
July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017

| INCOME              |                  | EXPENSES               |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Assembly Yield      | 6,208.13         | Alternate Delegate     | 1,327.72         |
|                     |                  | Archives               | 356.05           |
| Contributions:      |                  | Chairman               | 729.64           |
| District 01         | 1,731.31         | CPC-PI East            | 965.99           |
| District 02         | 3,631.42         | CPC-PI West            | 658.54           |
| District 03         | 1,427.03         | Delegate               | 2,368.11         |
| District 04         | 1,103.72         | GSO-General Conference | 7,000.00         |
| District 05         | 4,203.44         | Finance Committee      | 1,062.62         |
| District 06         | 986.16           | Grapevine              | 822.74           |
| District 07         | 1,840.13         | Newsletter             | 895.41           |
| District 08         | 3,654.24         | Operational Expenses   | 3,447.60         |
| District 09         | 640.73           | Secretary              | 1,549.67         |
| District 10         | 1,390.38         | SICYPAA Liaison        | 773.84           |
| District 11         | 228.88           | Treasurer              | 1,487.47         |
| District 12         | 15.00            | TSNAC East             | 764.94           |
| Other Contributions | 492.96           | TSNAC West             | 760.92           |
| Total Contributions | 21,345.40        | Webmaster              | 825.69           |
| <b>Total Income</b> | <b>27,553.53</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b>  | <b>25,796.95</b> |

# AN UNSUSPECTED INNER RESOURCE

FROM DAN H. - OCEANSIDE, CA

What if there is no God? This question has haunted me periodically throughout my sobriety. If my sobriety depends on belief in and access to a power greater than myself, what happens if there is not God?

Some say that I can use a doorknob or a lamppost or anything for a God, but I don't think so. How can I turn my life and will over to a doorknob? How can a lamppost remove the character defects that the Big Book says will lead me back to drinking?

What about using the group as my Higher Power? Well, that's great, except that when I reached one year of sobriety, I found the power of the Fellowship alone insufficient. I felt depressed and indifferent to life and I mainly wanted to sleep. The group was great, mostly, as long as I was at a meeting, but it wasn't very portable, and I needed something to sustain me between meetings.

I was dissatisfied with the Big Book chapter on the subject. I felt that "We Agnostics" was a classic bait-and-switch. "Our own conception..." morphed quickly into the traditional view of God, with all the attendant masculine pronouns and biblical implications. And yet I was sold on the idea that, on my own, I was in deep trouble.

Two phrases in the book rang true for me. The first was "something at work in a human heart..." This was something I could work with. And then, thank God (ha!), there was the appendix on "Spiritual Experience," which mentions "an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a power greater than themselves."

I have been sober nearly 28 years now, and I still can't say much about a God "out there," one that created the universe, involves itself in natural events or dispenses the occasional convenient parking spot on a lucky day.

I have, however, had a deep and effective spiritual experience as a result of the AA steps bringing me into contact with "an unsuspected inner resource" (which I call God as a matter of convenience.) If someone asks, I might say that there's something inside of me that's smarter and kinder than I am, and I think I'll listen to it.

It is easy enough to give alcoholism a personality: it's cunning, baffling and powerful. It is patient, doesn't discriminate, and it wants to kill me. It's tied up in a tangle of knots with my selfishness, pride and fear. So it seems reasonable to personify the other side, the "place" within from which emanates love, honesty, compassion, sanity and a willingness to help others. And it seems reasonable to appeal to this place-to state a willingness to live my life under its guidance. I call this appeal "prayer."

I like to read "other books," as mentioned in the Eleventh step. I read about religion, philosophy, science and skepticism, as well as faith. I haven't rejoined the debate society. I just enjoy exploring ideas.

An old-timer once told me that "religion is a finger pointing at the moon." What that tells me is that if I spend too much time staring at the finger I will forever miss the moon. I am no longer so interested in labels like "atheism," "agnosticism," "deism" or "theism." And I can't afford to revert to "me-ism."

When I'm the center of the universe, it's a dark and lonely place.

My small God might seem insufficient to some, but it works for me. And I believe that that same inner resource is a part of each of us. When I'm in a room full of people talking about God's effect on their lives, it becomes a presence that we can all sense even as our individual concepts vary.

Occasionally, I have the intuitive sense that my unsuspected inner resource is an expression of something much larger, and that perhaps there is a deeper relationship between consciousness and eternal reality than simply that of observer to observed.

The poet William Blake said that "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." I'm still looking for that palace. - Dan H.

**"WHEN I AM THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE, IT'S A DARK AND LONELY PLACE."**

I got to see a lot of people I hadn't seen for quite a few years. And of course they got to see me too. I continued to get involved in service in AA. I helped on another assembly in Boise, I became an alternate GSR, I became an alternate DCM, and now I am a DCM. In the past eight years I've become much more involved in AA than I was the eight years before. I have a much better life today, I don't run around all grouchy and upset complaining about things I have absolutely no control over. I am not bad mouthing people who don't take my advice and use it to their best advantage. I know what to do in situations which used to baffle me. I have glimpses of serenity on a daily basis. I contributed a lot of this to having a good home group and having a service position in AA.

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# FROM OUTSIDER TO INSIDER

FROM DIRA P.

I had been seeing a counselor for a few months before entering the rooms of AA. At this point in my life I was dealing daily with 4 children, one with Autism, as well as other diagnosis's, and one that just turned 17 that was having a baby. With some counseling and after having a few months into the AA program, I felt I was supposed to be able to handle all these stressors I thought caused my drinking with ease and confidence, using the "tools" of my recovery. My weekly appointment came and I was telling her of the tough, demanding, exhausting events that took place that week. She looked at me and said, "I agree you have definitely had a few years of difficult things to endure, but let's look at all the grace in your life and all the grace you have been given. How about we practice some mercy. What does it look like to be patience with yourself? Where do you find your compassion?" I sat there thinking for a moment, then remembered a part of the book To Kill a Mockingbird. Atticus is trying to explain to Scout that Miss Caroline (her teacher) was probably just trying to do her best in this new place. He says to his daughter, "First of all, if you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view. Until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

As I truly began to surrender myself to the program in those first few months I gained a compacity to see the world from another person's point of view. I heard the phrase "Look for the similarities and not the differences."

I soon began to hear:

"I drank because life was really hard when I didn't"

"I was drinking to fix how I felt when I was sober"

"I always drank more than I planned"

"Made promises that I would stop, but I never could"

"I lied to my family and friends about how much I was drinking"

"I routinely did things while drinking that I wouldn't have never done sober"  
"It isn't about how much you drink; it's about what happens when you drink and how you feel when you don't."

I accompanied each of those phrases I heard, with a loud "me too" in my head. I recognized what each of those sentences felt like... how each was reflective of my own alcoholism. I identified with those who shared and began to feel less alone.

**"I TRANSFORMED FROM SOMEONE NEEDING THE PROGRAM OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, TO ONE THAT WANTED IT."**

I began to feel less like an outsider. Then I felt less like isolating. I started wanting to find out what these people had and I wanted to find out how to get it. And then that wall that separated the differences between an insider and an outsider began to crack and fall aside. The onset of “getting out of my own skin” began.

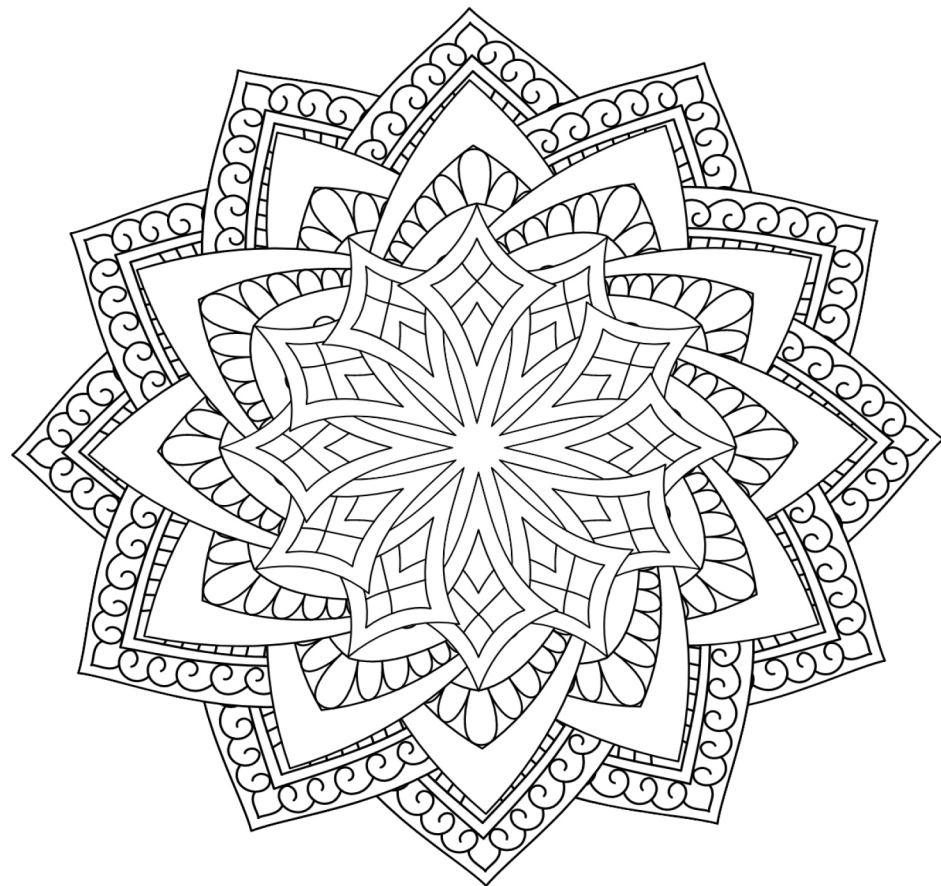
Appendix II of the Big Book says “Yet it is true that our first printing gave many readers the impression that these personality changes, or religious experiences, must be in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals. Happily, for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous.”

As I look back, there it was, my first “educational variety” SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. Where I became actively and consciously aware that I was like everyone else in the program, I am an alcoholic. I began to lose my sense of self. I transformed from someone needing the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, to one that wanted it. No matter what I was going through outside of the rooms, going to a meeting, reading a portion of the big book or praying for someone else, always gets me out of my own skin.

For me this particular spiritual experience turned into the basis of my spirituality. I finally found a sense of “oneness”.

-Dina P.

**This Unity Mandala is made up of 3 layers to represent the 3 sides of the AA triangle: Service, Unity, Recovery. Each layer is comprised of 12 points, representing the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, and 12 Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous.**



## STEPS 1, 2, 3

CHRISTELLE L.

When I arrived in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, I wasn't so sure I was an Alcoholic. One thing was for sure though, I loved AA meetings and Alcoholics. I knew I wanted to quit drinking, I just wasn't so sure about how I was going to do it. I would go to meetings and listen to the stories, I could relate to everything everyone said..and then it hit me.. I have way too much in common with “those people” to not be one of them. I was also reminded about some of the incomprehensible demoralization that transpired while drinking that I had forgotten about and those things lead to a pretty unmanageable life. I also knew that the “blacks-outs” that almost always happened and the fact that once I started drinking I could not control the amount I drank after I started, meant that I was an alcoholic. That would be my first step.

One of the things I loved about meetings (and still do) was when I would sit in meetings I was able to listen to and love the stories that AA folks shared. Most of the time, when I was first wanting to get sober, I had a great deal of self chatter. I didn't live in the moment. I was always thinking about the future or the past. I was always in my mind and afraid. I couldn't even have normal conversations with people due to the fact that I was in my mind, in self, most of the time... but in meetings the self chatter would stop and I would listen to other's experience, strength and hope. I would listen to the stories and the insanity of the self chatter would stop. I was being restore to sanity in the rooms of AA. I also knew that if a group of Alcoholics could stay sober together that that was something very strong and powerful and also something I could not do alone. There is my second step.

One thing I wasn't so sure about was a Higher Power. After all I was pretty mad at God. I had a childhood full of physical and mental abuse and I didn't understand how God would keep a child in that kind of environment. I had a lot of unanswered prayers as a child. So I didn't trust God or a higher power at that point. But I could trust that AA could keep an Alcoholic sober. The evidence was in the meetings and in people's sharing in meetings. I could trust that. I knew that AA was a power greater than myself. I thought that by committing to doing the steps and trusting in the process of the 12 Steps that I could turn my life over to the the process and hope it would keep me sober. After all... it had worked for others, right? So, at that time I turned my will and life over to the care of AA by getting a sponsor and working the 12 steps and while she had me working the steps in a manner that her sponsor had shown her, I was on my way - by coming to meetings, listening to others in meetings and making a decision to work the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I think when we come to AA we begin to absorb the program in amazing ways. I have since developed an amazing relationship with my Higher Power. I search out conscious contact daily and as a result I have an amazing life today thanks to Alcoholics Anonymous.

-Christelle L.

**“I WOULD LISTEN TO THE STORIES AND THE INSANITY OF SELF CHATTER WOULD STOP.”**