

Message from the Editor

I am so excited to be given the opportunity to continue on as your Wagon Wheel editor for this next term! I want to thank everyone who has contributed articles of experience, strength, and hope to this March edition of the Wagon Wheel, and to all who have contributed to the last three editions. If anyone would like to contribute to future editions with personal stories, poems, or artwork, please let me know! Without your contributions, there would be nothing to publish. So, thank you for helping me be of service by being of service yourselves!

I look forward to serving with this new Area 18 committee and continuing my path of service, as well as expanding my relationships in the fellowship. 2018 is going to be a beautiful year! Be well.

- Angela D.

Upcoming Events

**PRAASA 2018 - Pacific Region
Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly**
March 2-4, 2018
Sparks, Nevada

Lollapalooza III of AA
March 15-18, 2018
Hotel ML, Mount Laurel, NJ

**Idaho Area 18 Spring Assembly
and Convention**
May 18-20, 2018
Shilo Inn, 780 Lindsay Blvd., Idaho Falls, ID

Pacific Northwest Conference
June 22-24, 2018
Wyndham Garden Boise Airport, 3300 S Vista Ave, Boise, ID

**Area 18 Spring Assembly and
Convention**
May 18-20, 2018
Idaho Falls, ID

Gem State Round Up
August 3-5, 2018
The Riverside Hotel, Boise, ID

**The Treasure Valley Intergroup Central
Office would like to announce that the
Treasure Valley Men's Banquet for 2017 was
able to donate \$1,987.69 to TVICO from the
proceeds of their event! The Treasure Valley
Men's Banquet would like to exceed that
donation for 2018!**

*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

March 2018

Idaho Area 18 Newsletter

Editor, Angela D.

Excerpts from We Agnostics

“We have learned that whatever the human frailties of various faiths may be, those faiths have given purpose and direction to millions. People of faith have a logical idea of what life is about. Actually, we used to have no reasonable conception whatever. We used to amuse ourselves by cynically dissecting spiritual beliefs and practices when we might have observed that many spiritually-minded persons of all races, colors, and creeds were demonstrating a degree of stability, happiness and usefulness which we should have sought ourselves.” (pg. 49)

“We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. It was so with us.” (pg. 55)

Reliance on a Higher Power

- David S.

I experienced something new in sobriety recently, something that has had a somewhat unsettling effect on me; an effect that I'm still grappling with as I type this today.

As a relatively new member of our "family," (at least a committed member this time) with but 2 years and 3 months sober, I have made a concerted effort to "do the deal" as one person says. After 3 or 4 previous efforts at this program which all resulted in returning to the security and sameness of my drinking and isolationism, I have finally surrendered to the obvious reality of my alcoholism and have become willing to take whatever steps necessary to be rid of that prison. Once I knew what the physical and mental nature of my illness was and what was "suggested" as a way out of it, I have taken an active part in achieving and maintaining continued sobriety by selecting a sponsor, working the steps, going to meetings and being of service. It's this last tenant – being of service – that has brought me to my current issue.

As a recovering alcoholic who has worked the steps, my sponsor told me to start raising my hand and identifying myself as one who sponsors other recovering alcoholics and I did. It wasn't too long until one man asked me if I would sponsor him and I agreed. This initial adventure into sponsorship only lasted about 2 weeks before the man was out drinking again. I lost touch with him for awhile, asked around and was told that he was sober again and after some time saw that he was being sponsored by another man who I thought would be very good for him. After another period though, I didn't see him at meetings and surmised that he was again out of the program.

In the last few days I have learned that he has lost his battle with this disease and passed away and this is the cause of my present unease. Don't get me wrong, I'm not having pangs of guilt or regret, or anything along those lines, there are no thoughts of drinking or drugging – just a feeling of . . . I'm not sure. I think I'm more sad and angry than anything else; sad that he couldn't find this program's relief and anger at the deadly consequences that are sometimes just around the corner for all of us.

It seems many of us are, from time to time, faced with similar issues that test our sober resolve, that make us question, even for an instant, whether a drink or pill will make things better. This was one of those instances for me – but it was quickly rejected.

I can only rely on the teachings of the program, as passed on to me by my sponsor and others who have and are practicing those tenants; the words in the Big Book and other publications that, above all, if we accept that there is a power greater than ourselves that we can rely on to guide us through our daily lives, that we can resist the compulsion to take mind altering substances into our bodies.

“I have finally surrendered to the obvious reality of my alcoholism”

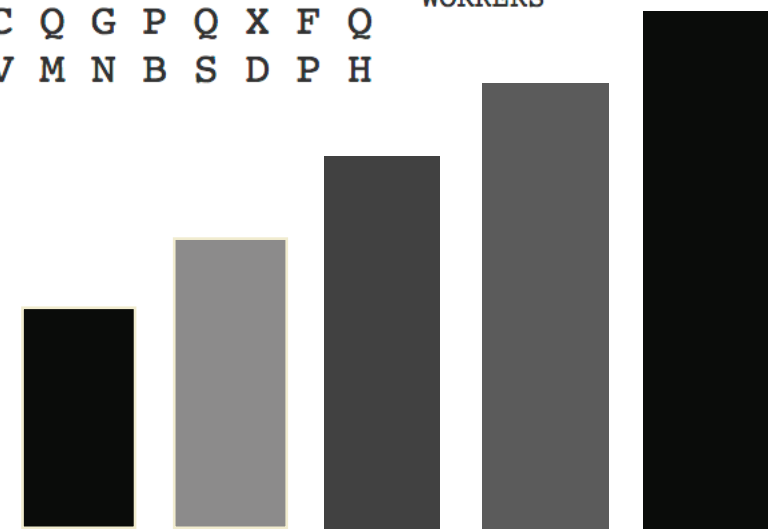
I guess all this rambling gets down to one, simple and unalterable realization – that without a belief in this concept of and reliance on a 'higher power' of whatever construct or form we each individually conceive of – we are lost. As individuals, we can, for a time, take solace in our friends and acquaintances in A.A., but at some point, we must, we are compelled to, seek the counsel of our personal Higher Power and accept the guidance that is provided to resolve whatever issues arise in our day to day existence.

CONT'D

12 Traditions Word Search

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

- ALCOHOLICS
- ANONYMITY
- ANONYMOUS
- ATTRACTION
- CENTERS
- COMMITTEES
- FOUNDATION
- NONPROFESSIONAL
- PRIMARY
- PRINCIPLES
- PURPOSE
- RESPONSIBLE
- SERVANTS
- SERVICE
- SPECIAL
- SPIRITUAL
- TRADITIONS
- TRUSTED
- UNITY
- WELFARE
- WORKERS



Following that, we end our fiscal year on June 30th and begin our new fiscal year on July 1st; hold our third ACM the third Sunday in August, and wrap-up our year with our Fall Assembly and Convention. Which brings me to this question: Do we need two assemblies every year? Do we need two conventions every year? Is the Assembly and Convention format two times per year too expensive? Or, is the opportunity to see our AA family and friends – both old and new – worth the cost? Please be thinking about these questions – put a pin in them – because you will be hearing them again.

In loving service,
Melissa S.
Twin Falls, Idaho

The State of AA Literature - Barry S.

I was sitting in my living room meditating on what I had just read in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*. Bill was describing the events that surrounded the writing of our “Big Book” and the struggles the Fellowship and the individuals had surviving before word got out about the solution covered in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. We have come a long way since 1939- the Fellowship has grown and so has the amount of literature that A.A. has developed. This made me wonder, “Do we need and use the literature we have today?”

I believe that most A.A. members would say that there is a need and use for all the literature we have. In fact, the Fellowship annually asks for more literature and upgrades to the current literature through the General Service Conference process. Looking at the list of proposed items for the 68th General Service Conference published before the January Board Weekend there are 4 items that have already been added to the Conference Committee on Literature’s agenda, 6 other items pending discussion at the January Board Weekend, and 2 items that have been referred back to the authors. As is the history of the Conference Literature Committee, they are in for a long Conference week.

Each night that my home group meets you will find the book *Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, As Bill Sees It*, and *Daily Reflections* on the meeting table. The chair of the meeting states that there is literature on the back counter for the taking and during group discussions books like *A.A. Comes of Age*, *The A.A. Service Manual*, and the pamphlet *The A.A. Group* are mentioned. But I do not know the last time I saw somebody actually look at “the literature on the back counter” or has there been a newcomer given any A.A. literature other than a “Big Book”. In fact, I cannot remember the last meeting any place I have I gone to where this has been done or talked about.

Again, I ask, “Do we need and use the literature we have today?” Are we spending our time and money wisely discussing, developing, and printing new literature or revising existing literature? It just occurred to me that there is a lot of humor in these questions when they are being posed in an article in the Wagon Wheel, a piece of A.A. literature.

“I do not know the last time I saw somebody actually look at ‘the literature on the back counter’”

I will mourn the loss of my Sponsee #1, as I would mourn the loss of any of our brethren to this hideous and dreadful disease; but I will not let it take my sobriety from me. I will continue to practice the steps of this program and will continue to serve in whatever capacity is required of me, including sponsorship of other men (whatever direction and results that sponsorship may take), to ensure that this program remains for those who now and in the future, will seek to rid themselves of their own condition.

Each of us can take comfort in the knowledge and security that with our reliance on our own Higher Power and the teachings of this program we can stay sober for today and for all the tomorrow’s that will follow, one day at a time.

Time to Rotate - David S. New York, N.Y.

Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

A sure way to grow is to become a trusted servant, but an even better way is to step down and let others have a chance.

Once a month, and sometimes more often, I would make a presentation to physicians in their first year of residency at New York-area teaching hospitals. I explained to them what AA is and what it is not and answered questions they had about AA.

For a number of years, this service had been provided by several subcommittee members of my area’s Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) Committee. But it soon occurred to me, as the new chairperson of the committee, that the principle of rotation would have to apply to these three dedicated members. Awkward though it was, I asked them to leave. And so, without a strong, active committee, I had to fill the void created by their departure.

In general, gaining the ear of a medical doctor for any length of time as a patient is not easy, and yet here I was not as a patient but with knowledge and “expertise” to impart about AA to these young and attentive physicians. Why not continue on this course for awhile I heard myself thinking, even as the months passed and the committee began to grow. Perhaps I was better suited for this work than other members of the committee and would be doing AA a disservice by turning the responsibility over to others less qualified.

Thus I was falling victim to a line of thinking that causes people like me to inflate our own worth while devaluing that of others. Fortunately, with the help of a sponsor, I did not have to travel very far down that road. Soon others on the committee were encouraged to step forward, and they provided the service at least as well and probably better than I had.

Sometime later in my CPC service, our committee was asked to provide volunteers for an AA booth at a three-day event celebrating the centennial of a national organization with a rich history but also a declining membership. Parents brought their children, eager to impress upon them the important role the organization had played in American History.

But many of the children seemed to show more interest in the music that they were hearing on their personal devices than they did in the illustrious legacy of the organization. And so the problem of generational continuity was clear to see.

Unlike the challenges faced by that particular organization, it's not likely that Fellowship apathy will ever be AA's undoing. The threat of a return to active alcoholism compels our obedience to spiritual principles, as Bill W. noted. But service, especially beyond - or below - the group level, remains an ongoing challenge. Those of us who have been entrusted with service positions may do the Fellowship and ourselves a disservice when we don't step aside and allow others the same opportunity for growth and when we don't do our very best to attract others to follow after us.

Recently, I had dinner with a longtime friend who lived for over 20 years on an ashram, to which he contributed his considerable gifts in selfless service as a devotee of the guru. But something was lost with the guru's passing. A cult of personality grew around his successor and an oligarchy took control. There were rumored improprieties, both financial and sexual, among those who held power. A climate of fear developed and no democratic process was to be found. My friend had no choice but to leave and to this day mourns the loss of his spiritual community.

In AA, we have no oligarchy and no permanent leadership class. Everyone in AA rotates, from the officers at my home group to the trustees of the General Service Board. Titles come and go but the common ground on which we meet - alcohol, alcoholism, and recovery from the illness - never shifts, ensuring that we relate to each other on a plane of equality and that in AA "sober is highest." Those of us who balk at rotation can perhaps ask ourselves what qualifies us to be exceptions to this principle and answer with all the honesty we can summon.

Some time ago an AA member, who was in a second consecutive term as his group's treasurer, expressed a desire to terminate his service but said the group could find no one to replace him. I suggested that he leave the collection basket in the middle of the meeting room floor and walk out. Someone would step forward or someone wouldn't. Either way, it was the group's problem, not his. The pamphlet "The AA Group" addresses the matter more gently and thoughtfully in the section "The Principle of Rotation":

"To step out of an AA office you love can be hard. If you have been doing a good job, and if you honestly don't see anyone else around willing, qualified, or with the same time to do it, and if your friends agree, it's especially tough. But it can be a real step forward in growth - a step into the humility that is, for some people, the spiritual essence of anonymity. Among other things, anonymity in the Fellowship means that we forgo personal prestige for any AA work we do to help alcoholics."

Uneasiness came over me as I typed up this essay. A voice whispered, What about you, David? Are you really about selfless service? For years and years you have been involved beyond the group level. Can you really say you still don't estimate your prospects of someday becoming your area's delegate or that you don't occasionally relive a feeling of hurt over having been passed over at several election assemblies for officer positions? And of course, the answer would have to be "no."

Service may foster personal growth but it doesn't render me perfect. And yet, a shallow motive - such as a desire for prestige - can be superseded by a higher one, essentially gratitude for a reprieve from the bondage of self that giving provides and for the sense of responsibility it fosters in all areas of my life. And of course I can pray that when the time comes to rotate out of general service, I will be able to let go without regret. Somehow, I suspect the adjustment won't be too hard. After all, there will always be chairs to set out and put away at my home group and newcomers to welcome and new lessons in humility to be learned.

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Idaho Area 18: Our Yearly Schedule

- Melissa S.

If you are involved in general service, it's time to hit the ground running. Idaho Area 18's new rotation - Panel 68 - began January 1st and ends December 31, 2019. Here is our 2018 schedule:

The 2nd Sunday of January we held an Area Committee Meeting (ACM). An ACM is attended by the five Area Assembly Officers (Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Committee Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer), the nine Chairs of the Special Service Committees (T/SNAC East and West, CPC/PI East and West, Grapevine/La Vina, Archives, Newsletter, Webmaster, and SICYPAA), the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the twelve District Committee Members (DCMs), and the chair of any active ad-hoc committee.

One of the January ACM agenda items is to assign a General Service Conference Agenda item number to each of the districts, in preparation for the upcoming Pre-Conference Workshop, and if it is an even numbered year there is also an agenda item to select two of the DCMs to serve on the Finance Committee. In February, the Finance Committee met to audit the Treasurer's books for the past calendar year and to prepare the next fiscal year's proposed budget. Put a pin in these last two events; we will see them again.

On February 15th the General Service Conference Agenda details and supporting materials were distributed. The districts then get busy researching their assigned agenda item - remember? We assigned these during the January ACM. The districts may also discuss any other agenda items they find interesting, particularly our Delegates committee which is Trustees, for our current rotation.

The first weekend in March is . . . wait for it . . . PRAASA! Here we have the opportunity to meet with like-minded AAs who love general service as much as we do! We also get to learn more about, and discuss, the Conference agenda items. If you have never attended a PRAASA, I highly recommend it. This year it was in Sparks, Nevada; I hope you got a group together to share the cost of gas and lodging.

The 3rd weekend in March is a big one: Saturday is the Pre-Conference Workshop and Sunday is the March ACM. Our Delegate soaks in all the ideas, opinions, and wishes brought forth from the members, GSRs, and DCMs who participate in the Pre-Conference Workshop process. Our Delegate will keep all this in mind when she attends the General Service Conference in April.

Then, on or near the first weekend in May we hold our Spring Assembly and Convention where our Delegate reports what she learned at the Conference. Oh, and there is the matter of presenting, amending, and approving the proposed budget that was prepared by the Finance Committee back in February. Isn't that cool how it all comes together?

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