

## Message from the Editor

Hello, Friends! I would just like to remind you that if you are considering writing an article for the Wagon Wheel, but aren't quite sure how to start or format your article, all previous Wagon Wheel's are available on the Area 18 website! Just go to [Idahoarea18aa.org](http://Idahoarea18aa.org) and click on Area 18 Information, then choose Area 18 Newsletter from the drop down menu. There you will find previous Wagon Wheel editions. On that same page you will also find a section to send your submissions to me! It's super easy! Another great resource for getting started and for inspiration is to read The Grapevine. Many who have contributed to the Wagon Wheel have since submitted their articles to The Grapevine! Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition. I'm grateful for your service and courage to share your experience, strength, and hope.

Angela D.

## Upcoming Events

**Annual Men In Recovery Retreat**  
October 12-14, 2018  
McCall, ID

**Rose City Girlstock Weekend**  
October 12-14, 2018  
25425 SW 95th Ave., Wilsonville, OR

**Lifesaver's Coin Toss**  
October 26, 2018  
802 SW 5th St., Ontario, OR

**District 3 Safety in AA and Chili Contest**  
November 17, 2018  
3309 W. Overland, Boise, ID

**District 9 Fall Workshop**  
November 17, 2018  
Cascade Community Church  
109 W. Pine Street, Cascade, ID

**Thanksgiving Alcahthon**  
Thursday, November 22, 2018  
Meridian Bowling Alley,  
324 S Meridian Rd #25, Meridian, ID

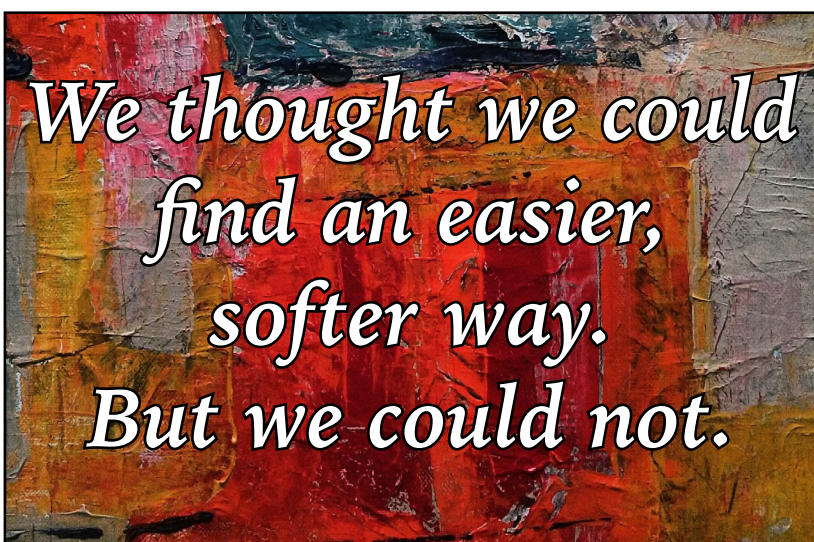
**3rd State Workshop of Hispanic Women in AA**  
December 1, 2018  
San Francisco, CA

**Western Area Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous**  
January 3-6, 2019  
245 S Capitol Blvd, Boise, ID

**2019 Area 18 Spring Assembly/ Convention**  
May 31- June 2, 2019  
Boise, ID

**Pacific Northwest Conference**  
June 21-23, 2019  
Portland, OR

**2020 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous**  
July 2-5, 2020  
Detroit, Michigan



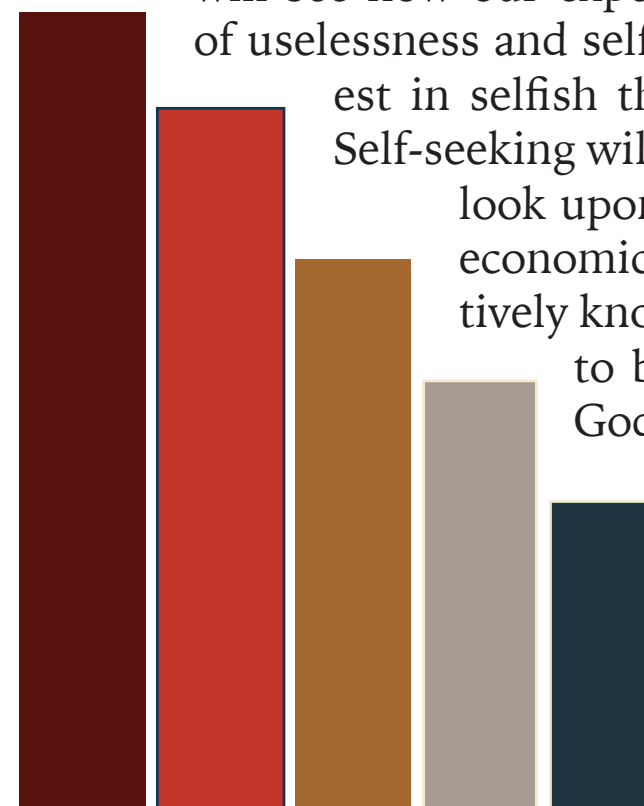
## Idaho Area 18 Newsletter

Editor, Angela D.

## The Promises

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.



# Freedom From Bondage

Eloise N.

The whiskey wasn't working anymore,  
I shook my head and got up off the floor.  
"God help me" I implored,  
He grabbed my shirt and pulled me out the door.

Off I drove, still drunk from the night.  
In disgust, I found myself in the rooms once more.  
"NOT HERE AGAIN" I said with contempt  
for I wanted to drink like a norm.

"Who was I kidding?"  
I cried and I mourned.  
"Okay, I get it" as I did Step One.  
For me to drink is to end in the morgue.

Today I have learned to relax and take it easy.  
To let go of those things that make me crazy.  
The Big Book says we don't have to struggle,  
to cease fighting anything or anyone,  
even our most deadly foe.

That gift I did receive, my will and my life turned,  
to find God waiting at my door.  
I know only a little,  
So I pray HP show me the way.

Trust God, clean house, work with others they said,  
I freely give of what I've been given.  
And now I see for me  
there is no other way.

Eloise N. 2018

Dedicated to my HP who's always there and the friends who have kept me here.  
Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

# Courage

Sitting, quite, stone still in the dark.  
Release, reprieve, lighten the burden  
on my heart.

Compose, begin, just write,  
Purpose, pen to paper, left to right,  
Wordless, numb, and nervous.

Slight scratches on the surface  
Daunting task, beneath the mask,  
moral

Over-whelming, over-coming, normal  
Resonate, generate, liberate her  
Smudged words of grey on saintly  
paper.

Fatigue, utterance of hurt and hate,  
Dedicate, necessitate, escape your  
heavy weight.

Seek out darken depths, hope and  
pain urges,

Accepted truth, purify, purges.

Meditate,

Speak,

Listen,

Create courage.

Dina P.



**WHAT WE  
REALLY  
HAVE IS A  
DAILY  
REPRIEVE  
CONTINGENT  
ON THE  
MAINTENANCE  
OF OUR  
SPIRITUAL  
CONDITION**

**THIS  
TOO  
SHALL  
PASS**

**LET GO &  
LET GOD**

**EASY  
DOES IT**

**THINK  
THINK  
THINK**

**TRUST GOD  
CLEAN HOUSE  
HELP OTHERS**

**ONE DAY AT A TIME**

*Confessions of a Big Book Thumper*  
*Anonymous, Athens, Ala.*

I had a very close friend from Texas, where I got sober, who told me once, “Nobody can stand a walking Big Book.” It is true that there are those of us who tend to cling a bit tightly to those precious first 164 pages and many of us refuse to listen or even argue when the conversation tends to drift into non-Conference-approved ways of looking at life, the universe, and sobriety. I am writing this in part to promote an understanding on the less-reactionary side, and partly to explain one alcoholic’s reason — or, if you prefer, excuses — for my hard-hat attitude on this sensitive subject.

In the old days, back before John Barleycorn became my constant companion, I was quite the bookworm. I read everything from science fiction to Plato, sure that the answers were in paper somewhere. I eventually gave up this idea and found at least workable solutions in my shot glass. From my present perspective it now surprises me very little that having given up on any definite, workable way of life, I found one when I got sober via the medium I first searched — the printed word. I went back to my pup tent that first night (such were my lodgings at the time) and proceeded to gobble down every word of the Big Book. Every line rang as clear and true as the smile on the chairman’s face that first meeting night, and not one whit of it was anything I had ever seriously considered before. In my state of mind at the time, anything that wasn’t my idea was probably a good idea. The phrases were full not just of information but of joy. I was free to be wrong and maybe this God fellow might not be so bad after all.

I believe that at this time I had an open mind, wide open and free of any prejudice against anything that I might have heard those first few weeks. It was as if I opened up my mind, cleared the shelves of all previous material, installed a Big Book and a “Twelve and Twelve” and then sealed it up tight. Having found an answer that worked for so many others, I became unwilling to tamper with it in any way. I had messed up every gift I had ever received, and I was not willing to do that with this precious thing you had so graciously given me. The Book (the term included both pieces of literature) was not to be trifled with. Most Big Book Thumpers (BBT’s) have similar stories to relate in regard to their extreme bias. We seem to share many other traits, also.

In my trials as a BBT, I have found many recurring themes which it is entirely possible are not conducive to AA unity. Yet, I cannot help but harp on them to the annoyance, no doubt, of my fellow members. I am sure this tendency goes back to my old need to be right, but I forget this and assume I am merely “viewing with alarm for the good of the movement” — and I have Bill’s own printed Word right here to back me up, helped along by the swift cut and accurate aim of my interpretation.

For instance, I am perfectly capable of running down a woman’s group that has been helping drunks for twenty years because the Tradition says “the only requirement for membership,” etc... I will glance askance at some drunk advising another drunk to slow down on some Step he is working, interrupting their seditious little session (uninvited, of course) with some comment like: “The only pause mentioned in the Book is on page 75, third paragraph, for one hour between Steps Five and Six.” I am then free to return to my corner and recover, certain that justice has been served.

But this Big Book thumping is not a form of hypocrisy. We BBT’s are nothing if not honest Pharisees. We turn our perfectionist eyes ever inward. For instance, I am unable to watch TV. I will start to turn on the tube and ...pick up the Book...check the first 164...nope, doesn’t mention TV.

CONT’D

Never mind that TV had not been invented when the Book was written. If Bill and Dr. Bob didn't do it, then I had better steer clear. If I am asked to go waterskiing — I'm sorry, it doesn't say a thing about waterskiing in the Book. I can get away with golf (Bill played golf), but I can't comfortably go to even AA dances (doesn't mention dancing).

This preoccupation with a dogmatic view of the Book seems to be based on the belief that the human intellect is of no value at all. Given my record before AA, such a belief makes sense. However, where I make my mistake is in applying this judgment to you. I've assumed "you wanted, perfection, just as I did" (page 449). My tolerance is based, not on the certainty that you are wrong, but on the fear that you might not be — and that would mean that there is more than one valid way of seeing things. The Book leaves many questions open, so I assume that means there are no answers meant for mortal drunks.

A week before writing this I was in conversation with an alcoholic with some five times my length of sobriety, when the man made an obvious error. I responded with — my favorite line! — "That's not what the Book says." His response startled me. He said, "This program is not about the Book. It's about the people. I'm telling you what I have learned." Well! That's a fine how-de-do! After all, I was only trying to help (forgetting that I had called him, asking *his* help on a medical problem that we share which is only briefly mentioned in the Book).

It is denial, or something like it, that makes me want to gloss over the fact that there are certain phrases in the Book that I tend to ignore or even protest against. Ideas such as "Our book is meant to be suggested only" are obviously balderdash. Same thing goes for "More will be revealed," and "Here no specific rules can be given." These sentences leave one with the distinct impression that there is leeway involved in working this program — and leeway is something I cannot afford. Give me an inch and I'll take the interstate. And so I go my merry, rigid way, refusing any advice that doesn't have a page number attached, closing my ears if I hear something that sounds "tainted" by pop psychology or spiritual hedonism. "Straight is the way and narrow is the gate" and sobriety is the "eye of the needle."

It is not my intention to portray BBT's as unfeeling automatons, spouting truisms they have never experienced, harping at those around them to do things their way, and running training camps for bleeding deacons. The truth is that BBT's stay sober. They are empathetic about the Book because it works and has worked for them consistently. I see this around me and have for some time.

I, of course, had role models (having never had an original thought) and picked those who had what I lacked. I was inconsistent, undependable, given to intellectual and emotional flights of fancy, and totally without a conception of a God who could help me. The people I saw who seemed to have solved these problems were those people who began sentences with the phrase, "The Book says..." So I talked to them at length, and they told me that I, too, could recover, just as they did.

It may be that you have someone like me in your group. If that is the case, there is no need to fear him or pick up a resentment. If such a person corners you and patiently tries to explain how something you said at a meeting was wrong, or some opinion you expressed is sure to get you drunk, it is not necessary to choose between running and fighting as your only viable options. Just quietly say "Thank you, but I don't have to be perfect today." If he's like I am, this response is sure to put his tail firmly in between his legs, forcing him to retreat and lick his wounds until he musters the gumption to apologize. And remember — he is a valuable asset to the group, for should anyone need to know where to find something in the Book, he is there, ready, willing and anxious, with page numbers on tap, to fulfill his function as a Big Book Thumper.

*Anonymous, Athens, Ala.*

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# What's Your Score?

1947 Grapevine

**DISCLAIMER: JUST FOR FUN! Fill out this checklist that was printed in The Grapevine in 1947!**

**What does your final score mean? Who knows!?! Enjoy!**

**KEEP THIS AND CHECK YOUR GRADE EACH MONTH  
GIVE YOURSELF FROM ONE TO FIVE POINTS ON EACH QUESTION**

1. Has my past been a mess and am I **EARNESTLY DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH A BETTER WAY OF LIFE**, and am I willing to make the effort? \_\_\_\_
  2. Do I admit **BEYOND ANY DOUBT** that I am powerless over alcohol - that if I use it, it will destroy me? \_\_\_\_
  3. Do I sincerely believe that there is a power greater than myself in which I **WILL PUT MY TRUST** regardless of what happens? \_\_\_\_
  4. Do I realize the importance of talking A.A. and attending all A.A. **MEETINGS POSSIBLE**, or do I hedge and make excuses? \_\_\_\_
  5. Am I really willing to **MAKE RETRIBUTION** where possible to those I have harmed, or am I just kidding? \_\_\_\_
  6. Do I **SINCERELY OBSERVE** daily moments of constructive meditation, thinking of my humility and desire to understand? \_\_\_\_
  7. Am I **TRULY HONEST** with others, or will I chisel if I get a chance? \_\_\_\_
  8. Am I **PATIENT** in waiting for the rewards of my efforts? \_\_\_\_
  9. **AM I FRIENDLY** and do I **TRY TO OVERLOOK** the shortcomings of others, regardless of who they are? \_\_\_\_
  10. Am I tolerant - do I show consideration for those whose beliefs, practices or habits differ from my own? \_\_\_\_
  11. Am I a gossip - do I repeat rumors or chatter about people's affairs? \_\_\_\_
  12. Am I **GRATEFUL** for **ALL HELPFUL THINGS** and **DO I SAY SO**? \_\_\_\_
  13. Do I have **REAL COURAGE** and am I **FREE FROM FEAR OF ALL KINDS**? \_\_\_\_
  14. Do I really have **CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF** and others, or am I filled with doubt and suspicion? \_\_\_\_
  15. Do I cooperate with others and **HELP PROMOTE** constructive ideas? \_\_\_\_
  16. Do I practice **SELF-CONTROL**, and really forget and forgive differences? \_\_\_\_
  17. Am I neat in my appearance, and do I keep as clean as I can under the circumstances, both in body and mind? \_\_\_\_
  18. Am I extending any effort to help others with their problems? \_\_\_\_
  19. Do I realize that my problem is **NOT MONEY**, but mental and physical? \_\_\_\_
  20. Am I making any reasonable effort to **OVERCOME** any other undesirable habits or **CHARACTERISTICS** I may possess? \_\_\_\_
- TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

**A total score of less than 50 is regarded as poor; 50 to 60 fair; 60 to 65 low average; 65 to 70 high average; 70 to 80 excellent; over 80 "impossible in this world."**

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