

THE WAGON WHEEL

MARCH 2019

IDAHO AREA 18 NEWSLETTER

EDITOR, ANGELA D.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends - this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS p. 89

OUR EXPERIENCE STRENGTH AND HOPE IN LITERATURE

MARGO N.

I recently attended an AA History symposium I wished I had taken better notes and then I would have written an article about our fellowship and its history. I didn't, so I'm not. I did come away from that event though with an idea of the amazing number of back stories in our fellowship. While we have "A" primary purpose and only "ONE" requirement for membership, our fellowship is vast and varied.

Some of us came to the fellowship after being sentenced to San Quentin. Some found their way in from broken homes. Others from positions of authority. We are women, men, married, divorced, highly educated, illiterate, the list goes on. We come from all corners of the planet, with different cultural backgrounds.

I said I'd write an article for the newsletter and because I've been working with a group whose focus is that of literature and how to inform people of what's available to them besides the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous I turned to my Higher Power and asked for help.

"Help me write this article" I pleaded. Help me write this article about literature and the vast amount of literature available to help groups, gays, older newbies, young newbies, black newbies, agnostics, atheists, women, and those with special needs, plus varied other topics.

We have pamphlets describing meetings in correctional facilities, the varieties of Spiritual paths, how AA works in your community to help alcoholics, and most recently "The God Word" pamphlet. It reminds us the only requirement for membership is the desire to stop drinking and that there is room in A.A. for people of all shades of belief and non-belief. And that's just a brief look at the resources from the General Service Office.

There are also numerous books from The Grapevine which offers help from the fellowship on numerous topics. For example: "Beginners' Book" is an ideal read for those in early recovery. It is a compilation of stories of people's bottoms, their gift of desperation. It is broken up into 7 sections: You Don't Have to Drink Today, Out of Isolation, Tools for Recovery, Experience Strength and Hope, A Design for Living, A Daily Reprieve, and Letting Go of Old Ideas.

"No Matter What" are stories of dealing with adversity in Sobriety. Some share on how they cope with persistent pain or lingering illnesses. The deaf, blind or otherwise disabled share on doing whatever it takes to get to meetings, stay sober and carry the message. There's a section of emotional adversity with members sharing on getting help with anxiety, depression or other mental illnesses. There are stories of letting go of resentments and judgements about fellow AA's. Other stores include reaching out for

help and helping others when heartache and loneliness threaten to shatter their sobriety.

“Making Amends” is a great read for those taking the 8th and 9th step for the first or 31st time. The sections include: “We Don’t Rush into Amends”, “Addressing the Past with Our Wounded Parents”, “Offering Our Amends to the Children We Love” “Exes: Finally Divorced From the Pain”, “Where the Guilt Runs Deep, So Can the Peace”, “Active Alcoholism and Money: An Amends Waiting to Happen”.

One of my personal favorites in The Grapevine collection is “Emotional Sobriety II, The Next Frontier”. The introduction written by Bill W. refers to our “adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance – urges quite appropriate to age seventeen – prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven.” He talks of the next major development in AA of much more real maturity and balance in our relations with ourselves, others and with God. I’ll pick this up in times of woe or crisis and it seems I turn to just the right story that applies to my situation. Maybe it was the story of a Simple Miracle or the one entitled “Got a Pain in Your Feelings?” One of the 44 stories somehow fits something going on with me.

On the lighter side of sobriety is the Grapevine book entitled “Happy, Joyous and Free”. Maybe the story of how to plan for surprises like what to do when you’re required to toast the Queen will help you in your sobriety. Other stories might help you in sponsoring. There are stories titled “Sponsoring the Ala-Tot”, “Holidays, Schmololidays” and “If You Feel Good, You’re Not Normal”.

Another Grapevine book with selected stories is the “I Am Responsible: The Hand Of AA”. It surmises the message for those who have reached out for help, alone and afraid and were met with the firm supportive hand of AA. For them the Responsibility Declaration is an emblem of the lifeline that saved them. It has seven sections with a variety of topics from “One Among Many” to “AA Pioneers”. The 38 stories look at the impact of the Responsibility Declaration and what it means to individuals and to the Fellowship as a whole. The articles explore what it’s like to take responsibility, for ourselves and for others. It begins with Bill W’s writing on the 25th anniversary of AA. In “The Shape of Things to Come,” Bill says “While we need not alter our basic truths, we can surely improve their application to ourselves, to AA as a whole, and to our relation with the world around us. We can constantly step up ‘the practice of these principles in all our affairs.’” And for that, we are all responsible.

Margo N.
TVICO Secretary

AA Word Search

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

ALCOHOLIC
CLARITY
HUMILITY
PRAYER
PROMISES
SERENITY
SPONSOR
TWELVE

ANONYMOUS
COURAGE
MEDITATION
PRINCIPLES
RECOVERY
SERVICE
STEPS
UNITY

BIGBOOK
FAITH
NEWCOMER
PROGRAM
REFLECTIONS
SOBRIETY
TRADITIONS
WISDOM

KEEP SHOWING UP TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT ART M.

I'm Art, I'm an alcoholic, April 10, 1996 is my sobriety date. Its an honor to be asked to share a little of my story, sharing my experience, strength and hope. That last day of drinking was the start of a new journey of which I had no clue as to where I would end up. But I was ready and willing to surrender and accept my fate. I was introduced to AA by my good friend Joe who was 10 months sober when he started working at the same company I did. We spoke about his success and he admitted that he was feeling better than he had in many years. What was his secret? I expressed to him the frustrations of my life and in not being able to quit and not knowing how to quit. He simple asked if I were interested in going to a meeting. I inquired what does that mean, what good would that do, how does this work. He asked me to trust him and as mentioned before I was ready to do just that. That first meeting, 45 souls engaged in laughter, loud conversation and positive fellowship like I had never seen before. It was the first time I admitted my alcoholism, it came out of my mouth as free and naturally without reservation. I was first stepped that night, 6 men took me to a side room and shared on why they were members of Alcoholics Anonymous, they shared about going to 90 meetings in 90 days, about getting a big book (which I already had one, a story for another time) to read the big book, to get a sponsor, to not drink in between meetings. It did not seem too tall of an order. I got a meeting schedule and started on my journey. I was asked to change, yes everything! There were times that I wanted to balk! The guys that put their arms around me encouraged me to get the steps done. Self-centeredness was a big problem for me, they helped me understand that, and I believe I have become a better man because of it. Dave N, my first sponsor and I were together for 15 years until I moved to a different town and he rightfully told me to find another man in that new town to work with. There were bumps and bruises along the way, but I was learning the principles of recovery because of my willingness to stay open minded. That open mindedness has carried me a long way, I strive to be happy, joyous and free.

I am approaching my 23-year milestone and I cannot not express the love that I have felt for those original gentlemen and all the other sober alcoholics that have loved me along the way. I did not hear in that first meeting how life was going to treat me, but I was encouraged to not drink in order to see what could happen. Nobody ever told me that I would have the friends that I have, nobody ever told me that I would be able to cope with life's ups and downs without having to have a drink.

c o n t ' d

Those things have happened. I don't drink one day at a time and I get to live one day at a time to the best of my ability. My favorite part of my recovery is when I look back and reminisce on the things that I was asked to do in blind faith and realizing my personal growth and happiness as a result of trusting those men and women who were there to guide me.

The last 10 years of my life have been the most action packed, I went bankrupt, I was foreclosed on a home that I paid on for 20 years, divorce, both of my parents passed away, fired from a job, one of my sons was in the military for 4 years, went back to school to become a counselor, moved away from family and friends to start a new life in a new town in Illinois, another lost relationship and then came an opportunity to move west where my current employer took a chance on me and hired me sight unseen over the phone, so I moved to Idaho. God was with me the entire journey, he gets every bit of credit for the blessings that I have received in my life. My journey west transpired in 2014 and nobody told me how rewarding it would be to follow your dream. These are some things that I am grateful for in my journey of recovery. I am blessed to be a part of the miracle that is AA. Nobody told me that I was going to feel or experience these things, but I'm sure they knew what was going to be in store if I stayed on the path and to continue to trudge the wonderful crazy road of Happy Destiny.

Peace and love with sincerity,
Art M.



EASY DOES IT

ONE OF A.A.'S MOST WORKABLE AND USEFUL SAYINGS

J.M.D. - 1948

One of the most useful of the sayings that have been adopted in A.A. is that which advises, "Easy Does It." So universally workable is this good advice that it qualifies as the expression of one of the fundamental steps in personal rehabilitation.

If this particular saying is applied sincerely and intelligently, it will greatly ease the path of the newcomer in A.A., avert "slips" and further the development of a mature life both inside and outside A.A.

Axioms are only words in themselves, of course, and the phraseology has become trite in many cases. Pseudo-intellectuals are especially scornful of old saying, and even less snobbish observers may overlook the worth to be found in the meaning behind the words.

It Means Relax!

For example, "Easy Does It," means - relax! Don't fret and worry and stew and struggle! Take it easy! Relax!

Everyone who has an intimate knowledge of the alcoholic will agree that one of the first things he needs to do is to relax, not only in the early stages of A.A. but forever after and a day. "Easy Does It" applies no matter how long one has been in A.A. and, in fact, it is essential to continue progress in A.A. and to a return to more normal living outside.

Physical realization has long been identified as a characteristic of great athletes. The DiMaggios and the Williams have an easy swing that belies yet accounts for much of the power of their bats. The fastest of swimmers relax with each stroke. In football, the relaxed player is less prone to fumbles and injuries. The great runners have a relaxed stride even when they are driving the hardest.

Relaxation frees the intellectual, the emotional and even the spiritual functioning of the personality no less than it loosens the muscles of the body.

"Easy Does It" for the newcomer during those first early days of confusion, fear and doubt. If, instead of worrying and "tensing up" because he does not grasp the whole A.A. program in the first sitting - if he will relax, he will find that the emotional understanding as well as the intellectual understanding of the A.A. philosophy will come along much more readily.

Fortunately, this is a saying which can be tested easily. It does not have to be accepted in faith alone. Anyone can find out for himself whether it works simply by trying it himself. Suppose a problem has arisen. Suppose it is the old urge to reach for the bottle. Or suppose the problem is one of those by-products of alcoholism which continues to come up long after the urge to drink has gone. The reaction of the alcoholic, and of more than a few non-alcoholics is to fight the problem, to worry about it, to get into a stew. The tension begins to mount. Emotions run wild. Self control is slipping rapidly.

That's the usual sequence. It can be broken if in the midst of it, the victim sits way back, physically and mentally and relaxes. First he must relax his muscles, because that's the easiest to do.

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Then he must relax his mind by directing his thoughts to pleasant subjects, to a reminder that others have succeeded and so can he. To mental pictures of peace and success. If he will but direct his mind away from the problem, he will find a new source of strength rising up within him.

At least that is the way it has worked and still works for others. The individual who has learned how to relax has already advanced a long way towards happiness and success.

Relax and enjoy A.A. Relax and enjoy life.

“Easy Does It.” If you don’t believe it, try it.

J.M.D.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Pre-conference Workshop

March 16, 2019

CSI, Twin Falls, ID

TVICO Hotline Training

March 16, 2019

TVICO, 1111. S. Orchard, Boise, ID

District 8 GSR Workshop

April 6, 2019

First Presbyterian Church,
950 W. State St. Boise, ID

District 3 Hot Topics Forum

April 20, 2019

309 W. Overland, Boise, ID

District 4 Campout

May 3 – 5, 2019

Duck Valley Reservation,
Owyhee, Nevada

7th Annual Women’s AA Brunch

May 4, 2019

Hilton Garden Inn, Boise, ID

Macks Creek Campout

May 17 – 19, 2019

Lucky Peak Reservoir, ID

Coeur d’Alene Convention

May 24-26

Coeur d’Alene Resort, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

2019 Area 18 Spring Assembly/ Convention

May 31- June 2, 2019

Boise, ID

Pacific Northwest Conference

June 21-23, 2019

Portland, OR

2019 Gem State Roundup

August 9-11, 2019

Riverside Hotel, Boise, ID

