

FROM THE EDITOR

Hello, Fellowship! First, I just want to say that I have so much gratitude for you, for this program, and for the amazing opportunity that I have to be able to serve as Newsletter Editor. Sharing your experience, strength, and hope through your Wagon Wheel submissions is such a special act of service, and I appreciate everyone's willingness to share your stories with our Area 18 fellowship. Thank you. I have two editions left in my rotation, and am in need of submissions for those. You can submit your articles through the Area website at area18aa.org. It's a beautiful day to be sober, and I am so thankful that I get to spend this weekend with all of you. Thank you for your sobriety.

Angela D.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Founders Day by Intergroup
June 8, 2018
930 Veterans Memorial Parkway
Boise, ID

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

Intergroup Campout
June 21-23, 2019
7880 ID-52
Sweet, ID

Treasure Valley TSNAC BBQ
June 22, 2019
Julius Kleiner Park
Meridian, ID

District 9 Campout
July 19-21, 2019
Cold Springs Campout
Council, ID

Unity Day Picnic
July 27, 2019
Kleiner Park
Meridian, ID

2019 Gem State Roundup
August 9-11, 2019
Riverside Hotel
Boise, ID

Teton Canyon Campout
August 23-25, 2019
Alta, WY

2019 Fall Assembly
October 4-6, 2019
Best Western Inn
Burley, ID

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

THE WAGON WHEEL

MAY 2019

IDAHO AREA 18 NEWSLETTER

EDITOR, ANGELA D.

CHAPTER 6: INTO ACTION

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves. It works—it really does.

(Big Book pg. 87-88)

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE

CAT S.

My name is Cat and I am an Alcoholic. My sobriety date is 5-30-2011. I came into the rooms of AA dead on arrival. I was depleted in every sense of the word: mind, body, and spirit. I came here knowing this disease of alcoholism is killing me by my own hand and had no idea how to stop. I had tried AA before, my way, without a sponsor, with a sponsor but not following any of her suggestions, using the book as coaster, reading the white parts never the black, coming to meetings for the mess but never the message and I would eventually always drink again. I could not believe I had an actual problem with drinking! I had exhausted all of my ideas; self-reliance had absolutely failed me. Self-reliance was all I had my entire life, so I knew I was in deep trouble at that point. I would drink and use but instead of turning off the noise in my head it just released all the things I was trying to avoid at once. I needed a way out. At that point sticking a 45 in my mouth was a viable option. The only problem I had with that is I had a little girl at that point who didn't have anyone else. I figured I should give this AA program one last honest to God try before I take my life. I said, "Self, if you do this program for one year with the same vigor you go at your disease and nothing changes, then by all means blow your brains out."

At my 1 year sobriety birthday I was back in my home town visiting my old friends. I only had to make one stop. The cemetery. I got to go grave to grave and see the people I grew up with making the same choices that I did. Our lives were lived side by side yet all my friends were dead and I was alive. Then it hit me like the weight of the world. Why did I get to live and not all these other people? I discovered my primary purpose. The only reason I was spared and sober is to carry the message of sobriety to the still suffering alcoholic. I get to be used by God to show His power, His love, and His will, when I allow Him to lead me and my life. Coming into this program of recovery I knew I needed to be teachable but more importantly I needed to remain teachable. I never know where the lesson may come from, an old timer or a new comer. I strive to do the best I can with each 24 hours laid at my feet. I no longer compare my insides with other people's outsides. I strive to do better than I did the day before. I attend a meeting a day to keep the psychopath at bay. She is the one that tells me it wouldn't hurt and I don't need to be of service.

My life has changed drastically because of the program of AA and the people in it. It took what it took for me to become teachable. I needed to become so broken that anything was better than what I was doing. I asked a woman to be my sponsor that had non-substance induced joy. She was genuinely happy, and I wanted that more than anything. I got a book a did what my sponsor said even if I didn't understand why she

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

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BILL W.

It is the intention of the Grapevine to carry occasional accounts of spiritual experiences. To this interesting project I would like to say a few introductory words. There is a very natural tendency to set apart those experiences or awakenings which happen to be sudden, spectacular or vision-producing. Therefore any recital of such cases always produces mixed reactions. Some will say, "I wish I could have an experience like that!" Others, feeling that this whole business is too far out on the mystic limb for them, or maybe hallucinatory after all, will say, "I just can't buy this business. I can't understand what these people are talking about."

As most AAs have heard, I was the recipient in 1934 of a tremendous mystic experience or "illumination." It was accompanied by a sense of intense white light, by a sudden gift of faith in the goodness of God, and by a profound conviction of His presence. At first it was very natural for me to feel that this experience staked me out for somebody very special.

But as I now look back upon this tremendous event, I can only feel very specially grateful. It now seems clear that the only special feature of my experience was its electric suddenness and the overwhelming and immediate conviction that it carried to me. In all other respects, however, I am sure that my own experience was not in the least different than that received by every AA member who has strenuously practiced our recovery program.

How often do we sit in AA meetings and hear the speaker declare, "But I haven't yet got the spiritual angle." Prior to this statement, he had described a miracle of transformation which had occurred in him—not only his release from alcohol, but a complete change in his whole attitude toward life and the living of it. It is apparent to nearly everyone else present that he has received a great gift; and that this gift was all out of proportion to anything that might be expected from simple AA activity, such as the admission of alcoholism and the practice of Step Twelve. So we in the audience smile and say to ourselves, "Well, that guy is just reeking with the spiritual angle—except that he doesn't seem to know it yet!" We well know that this questioning individual will tell us six months or a year hence that he has found faith in God.

Moreover he may by then be displaying "spiritual qualities" and a performance that I myself have never been able to duplicate—my sudden spiritual experience notwithstanding.

So nowadays when AAs come to me, hoping to find out how one comes by those sudden experiences, I simply tell them in all probability that they have had one just as good—and that theirs is identical excepting it has been strung out over a longer period of time. Then I go on to say that if their transformation in AA extending over six months had been condensed into six minutes—well, they then might have seen the stars too!

In consequence of these observations I fail to see any great difference between the sudden experiences and the more gradual ones—they are certainly all of the same piece. And there is one sure test of them all: "By their fruits, ye shall know them."

This is why I think we should question no one's transformation—whether it be sudden or gradual. Nor should we demand anyone's special type for ourselves, because our own experience suggests that we are apt to receive whatever may be the most useful for our needs.

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principle behind the traditions was UNITY..

Fast forward to September of that same year. I had gotten a sponsor and had worked my way through the Twelve Steps as laid out in the book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Slowly, there was a shift in my perception of my past, an awareness of the present and positive possibilities for the future. That committee in my head that was constantly thinking and worrying about me and my designs began to calm down. I began to listen. I began to learn about humility and that it was not thinking less of myself, but rather thinking of myself less. I began to learn about the principles behind each step I took and discovered the wonders of RECOVERY.

It was about three years later that I served as general service representative (G.S.R.) for a new home group and it opened my eyes to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. I began to learn about the upside-down triangle. That the communication process starts with the group and how important it is to our survival. I learned that SERVICE is more than just a principle. It is a bunch of alcoholics in action ensuring that this fellowship is here for those who are not yet in the rooms or not even born.

Concept I states that our “Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.” This is so vital in keeping our fellowship healthy and effective.

So, we have to ask ourselves, are we using the Three Legacies to come to an informed group conscience? Are we inviting the principles of the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts for World Service into our group business meetings? Do we practice placing principles before personalities? Is everyone encouraged to participate by allowing our member’s voices to be heard? Do we ask for the minority opinion and then openly listen to that minority opinion? Are we standing up for the principles that keep us together when they seem to be compromised? Do we stay connected and support Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole?

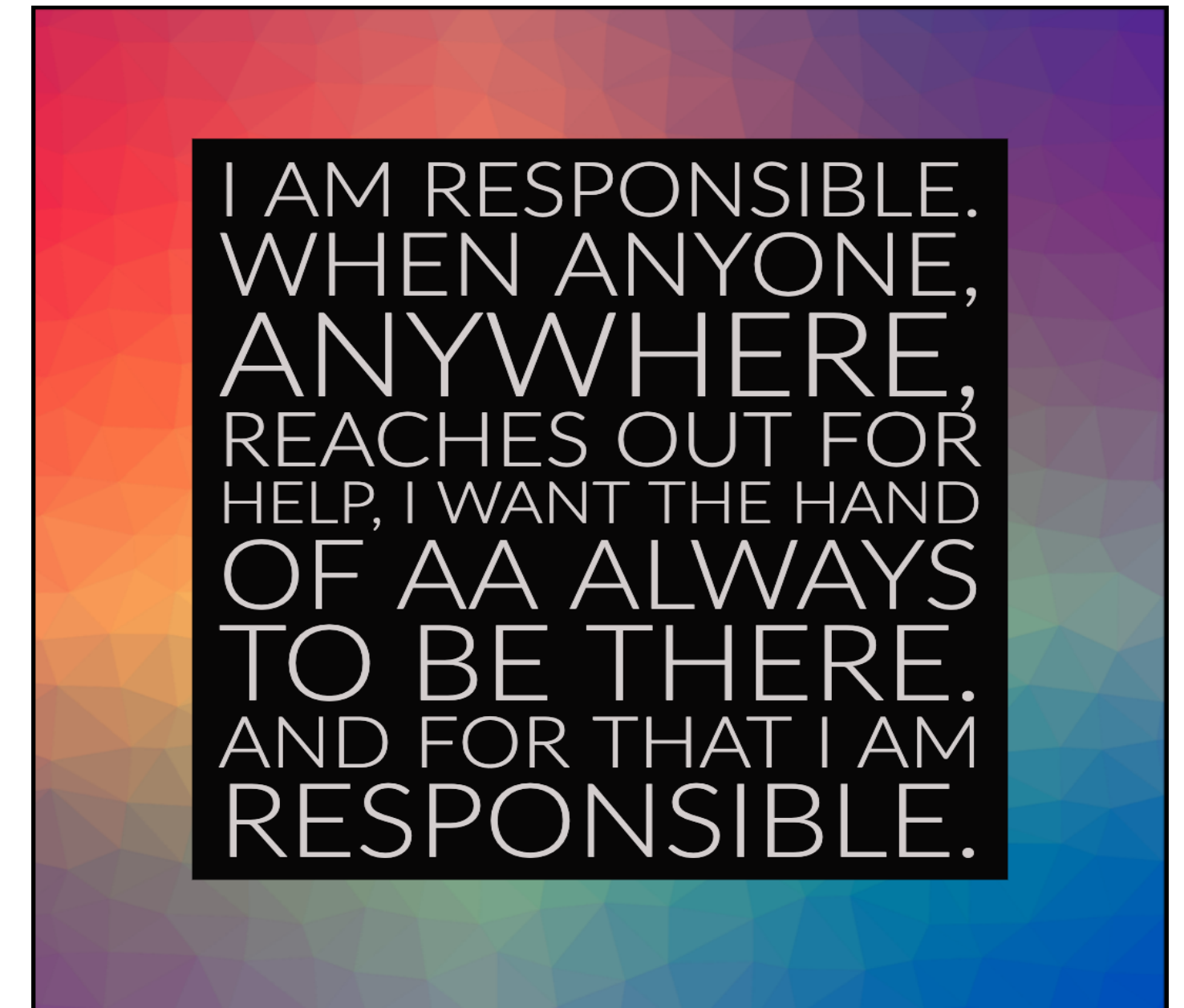
I will close with the story from Tradition Two in the Twelve and Twelve where Bill had been asked to join a hospital and be paid for his Twelfth Step work. Bill was mulling over the idea and excitedly brought it to the group that evening but he was met with concern. What had been proposed to Bill was good for him, but the group saw that it wasn’t in the best interest of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. Bill went on to say, “So spoke the group conscience. The group was right and I was wrong; the voice on the subway was not the voice of God. Here was the true voice, welling up out of my friends. I listened, and—thank God—I obeyed.”

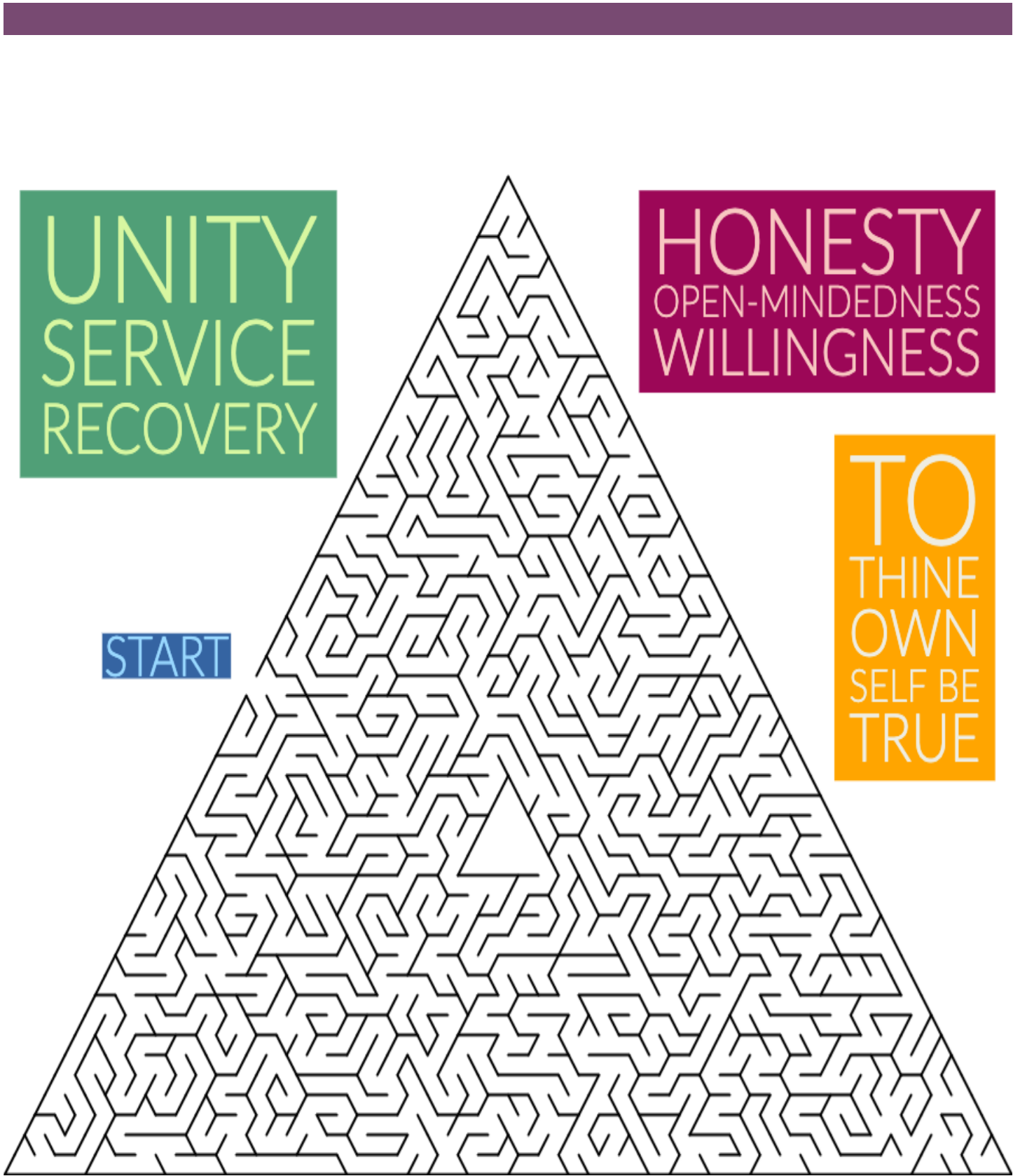
We should all attempt to use the three legacies in our discussions and decisions so that there will be an informed group conscience. Just as Bill W. was urged to remember in Tradition Two, that we should never settle for the good, but always strive to reach the best.

Area 18 Delegate
Shannon C.

wanted me to. I read the black part this time instead of the white. I started developing a relationship with God that I didn’t understand. I still don’t, but connection is much more important than conception. I got into service greeting people before the meetings and cleaning up after. I got a home group so people could get to know me and bring it to my attention promptly if I am off. I get to attend my life today as a functioning member of society. When I go through things in life today I don’t need to drink to avoid dealing with life and the situations in it. Now I pray, call my sponsor, ask for guidance, and move forward taking action. I no longer need to be reactive. I can be honest with myself and others where I’m at mentally physically and spiritually. I now know these are strengths and not weaknesses.

Cat S.





PANEL 2: HUMILITY: ACCEPTING THE GROUP CONSCIENCE

SHANNON C.

Topic: An Informed Group Conscience: Using the Three Legacies
Area 18 Delegate PRAASA Presentation.

Thank you, Cesar and the 2019 PRAASA committee for the loving invitation to share on this panel and for the opportunity to serve this amazing fellowship!

When I received the topic, “An Informed Group Conscience: Using the Three Legacies”, my first question was, “What is the difference between a group conscience and an informed group conscience?” I have heard both terms and was wondering if they were interchangeable. The answer to that question was something that needed to be considered when addressing this topic. Tradition Two states “For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority-a loving GOD as he may express himself in our group conscience...” It doesn’t state “...in our informed group conscience.” So, I had to know; Is there a difference?

After looking into this question, I found my answer in the pamphlet, **The A.A. Group ... where it all begins** on the bottom of page 28 – “The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind. The term “informed group conscience” implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes.”

Makes sense, right? Now, just how can we tie it all together and use the Three Legacies of Recovery (Twelve Steps), Unity (Twelve Traditions) and Service (Twelve Concepts for World Service) to achieve an informed group conscience?

I was first introduced to the principles behind the traditions without even knowing what they were. It was a cold wintery day in late January 2003. I was fresh out of a treatment center and I had just found out that my beloved Grandmother had died. I was 30 days sober. I was on shaky ground and I needed help. I needed a meeting. I found one in Boise, Idaho at the ‘little red house’. I walked through the door, scared, alone and desperate. There was a woman sitting in a chair next to the entrance and she greeted me with the words, “Welcome, good to see you.” I’d thought about the fact that I’d been 86’d from the one of the lowest dive bars in Boise just months before and yet, here she was welcoming me to this meeting! I became a home group member even though I didn’t know what being a home group member meant, but, I knew I wanted to be a part of this thing. I later learned that being a part of this fellowship and the driving