

FROM THE EDITOR

Hi, everyone! Wow! I can't believe this rotation is over! Serving as Newsletter Editor for the past 3 years has been such a great experience. I have met some wonderful friends in the fellowship, and am forever grateful for the opportunity to serve at Area level. I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the Wagon Wheel over the last 3 years. Your stories and poetry has helped keep me sober, and has reminded me that I am not alone, I am not unique, and that this program works. There would be no newsletter without your willingness to be of service. Thank you, so much. I look forward to where Higher Power takes me in the next stage of my sobriety! Please continue to send in your submissions for the next Editor through the Area 18 website.

It's a beautiful day to be sober!

Angela D.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOTES

Halloween

October 26, 2019
Alano Club, 3820 Cassia St.
Boise, ID

BACYPAA Halloween

November 1, 2019
All 12 Steps Club, 217 S. 9th Ave,
Caldwell, ID

2020 PRAASA

March 6-8, 2020
Tucson, Arizona

2020 Spring Assembly / Convention

May 15 - 17, 2020
Shoshone-Bannock Hotel and
Event Center, Fort Hall, ID

2020 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous

July 2-5, 2020
Detroit, Michigan

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE
IS NOT A THEORY.
WE HAVE TO
LIVE IT.

BIG BOOK PG83



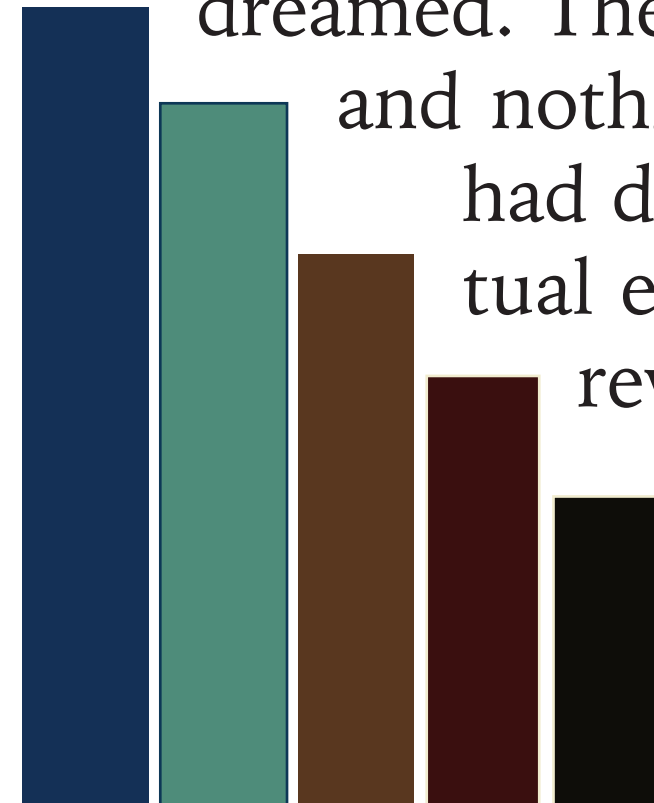
IDAHO AREA 18 NEWSLETTER

EDITOR, ANGELA D.

THERE IS A SOLUTION

We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even

dreamed. The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. Big Book pg25



THE HEALING NATURE OF SERVICE

ANDREW G.

“Faith without works was dead...For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead.”

– Bill’s Story, Pages 14-15 of Alcoholics Anonymous

Finances and Romances- that’s what gets us, isn’t it? I heard that early in sobriety at an A.A. meeting and it seemed so arbitrary. What do those things have to do with my program and sobriety? Not too long ago I learned about it the hard way. A single occurrence which brought both of them front and center. In that moment I didn’t fear a drink, but I instantly felt myself pull away from all those things that had brought me here in the first place, four years sober. It was always so easy for me to use the tools of this program when things were going well, but much harder when I was in such a state of restlessness, irritability and discontent. I found myself resentful with no desire to do anything about it. Even attending meetings seemed unnecessary.

I had faced a similar situation once before, just before my first sober birthday. My mother Penny passed away suddenly on August 16, 2016. Later that night I found myself standing in the beer aisle of a local store, looking at all the new choices. Surely this was the case where alcohol was the solution. The program had taught me to use my phone in these situations, but it seemed heavy that night. A not-so simple phone call to my sponsor guided me out of that store empty handed, but that same pattern of recovery inaction found its way through. Without the steady service of my sponsor in the days following, I truly do not know where I would be today. Shortly after her passing, my sponsor mentioned that a local AA event was looking for a catering chair, and with my culinary background, he thought it was a perfect opportunity for service. Whether this was intentional on his part or not, I leapt at the chance to do something, anything to get out of my grief. This one opportunity eventually brought me into the world of General Service at the district level, and next the Area as DCM.

The most significant gift of sobriety was also my first one; willingness. Sitting in a treatment center at my first AA meeting I heard the 9th step promises, and I found myself willing to do whatever it took to see those come true in my life. This latest setback zapped me of that gift. I spent the following week bitter and detached. I allowed my own suffering (though partially self- created) to outweigh that of the still suffering alcoholic. I moved away from both the program, and worse still my Higher Power, removing any chance of acceptance. I didn’t drink, but a common saying ran through my head. The further I get from the program, the closer I get to my next drink. Forward two weeks later and I am still mired in self-interest and pity, but service was about to come calling again.

In my life as an alcoholic, I was always ready with a long list of false excuses to avoid those things that brought me discomfort. The longer I have worked my program the harder it is for me to come up with one of those excuses, much less use one. My sponsor reminded me that is the program at work. My sponsee asked me to meet to do his 5th step. My worst natures told me I had a perfect excuse to say no. Besides, what use could I possibly be as a sponsor in this state? Failing to find myself a way out I agreed to meet with him. There is something so wonderful about sponsorship in that walking them through the steps gives me the chance to rework them myself. That day, as I sat and listened to him bare himself, I was reminded of the cathartic effect that Step 5 can have. As I drove home, I subconsciously started defining my own resentment and the role that I played in my own misery. I met my sponsor the next day, using the very example my sponsee had shown me earlier.

1 We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.

2 Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of god as we understood him.

4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5 Admitted to god, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6 and 7 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10 Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12 Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

12 steps of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

WHAT IS TRUTH IN THE LIFE OF A RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC?

MARJRI M.

I have journeyed from being unable to tell the truth, to both others and to myself, to telling God the truth. While drinking, I told so many lies. I couldn't keep up with them. I would get caught in my lies and yet adamantly insist that what I had said was the truth. I was not only in an alcoholic state, but in a totally delusional state.

What changed? How did I change? I began in several ways. I began by trusting other people who were doing what I was unable to do, staying sober. I began to try to work the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and the twelve steps. I did okay until I reached steps six and seven. It was at this time that my life began to really change. I got down on my knees and prayed according to the instructions in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Nothing happened, or so it seemed to me. But then I was directed to Bill's later writings in the Twelve and Twelve. "What an order!"

This is when I started the process of telling the truth. Character defects... I had them. I became very discouraged by the long list I had compiled and was not ready to go on. And yet there is a keyword in Bill's explanation, and that is "willingness." As I was saved by the slogan "one day at a time," so I was encouraged by the word willingness. First, I had to accept that I didn't know the difference between a truth and a lie, and second, I didn't know how to tell the difference between the past and the present. So many of my lies (character defects) were driven by fear. And my fear stemmed from my past experiences with life. When I came to realize that I didn't have to be driven by the past, I could create a new way of living by staying present in the now. The grace of God crept into my soul.

For the first time I was willing to accept my part in my lies and that lies were things I told myself out of fear. As I stayed in the now, reality stepped in and delusion dropped away. I was ready to go on to steps eight and nine in a way where I could truly make amends for my past harm. As I use the principles of steps six and seven when doing my daily inventory, I am better able to be of service to God and my fellows. Deceit is a character defect I work on daily. It can so easily creep back into the way I function. But, through prayer and action, lying is less and less of a way of living. Truth is the great gift of sobriety to the recovering alcoholic and as my sponsor always told me, "Pray, take action, and say thank you."

Marjri M.

WE WENT BACK THROUGH OUR LIVES. NOTHING COUNTED BUT THOROUGHNESS AND HONESTY.

BIG BOOK PG65

Before that meeting was even over, I got a reminder that I had signed up to be the speaker at a local meeting the following night. I wasn't interested in even going to meetings, much less speaking at one. I called my sponsor ready to complain but he reminded me of one of his common refrains. "We share outward in order to see in," but that which I always took comfort in seemed ridiculous to me at the time. I begrudgingly showed up, and although my recent troubles made up but a small part of my share, I was forced to experience it with other people listening. It seemed to bring little comfort at the time, but unbeknownst to me, the fog started lifting. Despite my innate and practiced inclination to run, these service opportunities I take on make it nearly impossible to separate from the program.

The next morning I headed to Twin Falls for an Area Finance Committee meeting. This was a position I took on not out of willingness, but rather as the result of a game of rock-paper-scissors. This was an obligation I had tried to talk myself out of for a week, but something bigger than myself caused me to keep to it. We spent the whole day looking at spreadsheets and talking about money, something that should have been mind-numbing at the time, but it provided yet another opportunity to get outside of myself and see the bigger picture. This was quickly followed by my obligation as DCM to pour through the background materials for the General Service Conference. 600 pages of information detailing the 100+ Agenda Items for this year's conference. Although dense, I found myself fascinated by the decisions and arguments at play here. As I prepared my presentation for the district, I was removed from my self-interested misery for the first time in weeks. My Higher Power, along with all that work I had done in practicing the program in good times had brought me to a place where I could not completely reject them when life sent me spiraling. This program had provided me a life line, but I had to choose to use it. Fortunately, this is not a decision I make alone anymore. Alcoholics Anonymous has provided fellow alcoholics to pull me out of myself and opportunities to instead focus on others. I realized a significant truth: *The healing nature of service perseveres, despite our alcoholic nature and best objections.*

- Andrew G.

THE CENTRAL FACT OF OUR LIVES TODAY IS THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT OUR CREATOR HAS ENTERED INTO OUR HEARTS AND LIVES IN A WAY WHICH IS INDEED MIRACULOUS.

BIG BOOK PG25

THE FULL CIRCLE OF SERVICE

SUZANNE A.

From the first time that I walked into the rooms of AA, my sponsor stressed to me the importance of jumping into the middle of the herd and getting into service. I started out like most alcoholics do, by making coffee. Once I learned the ins and outs of the coffee machine, the task at hand was relatively easy. I had heard the old timer stories about having to wash ashtrays and coffee cups and would think how grateful I am that smoking inside was banned, and that the meeting that I was attending used paper cups. Though on rare occasions, when the paper cups ran out, there would be dishes to wash.

Making coffee led to chairing a meeting, and chairing a meeting led to attending business meetings. The business meeting opened up new service opportunities for me. I became a hotline representative and absolutely loved it! Being pretty new in sobriety, I was excited to share what I had been taught thus far with the next suffering alcoholic. This position led to becoming the Steering Committee Chairperson of my home group. This position taught me a lot about myself and about the importance of principles before personalities, and how my ego got in the way of true service to my fellow man.

As the circle was forming, I found myself being grateful that I was staying sober and helping others. I had become a sponsor. I spent a lot of time taking it personal when a sponsee would go back out. I thought that I was not doing a good enough job. If I was, they would stay sober. I finally realized that when it came to sponsoring, I had a 100% success rate. Even though my sponsee didn't stay sober, I did!

So, being a Steering Committee Chair led to being an alternate GSR. It was in this position that I went to my first Assembly. I was excited to learn about the business of AA from the area level to the GSO level. I took a lot of notes and typed up a summary for the group and then found that the Area Secretary sends out the business meeting minutes. Typing the minutes did help me to stay sober another couple of days, so all was not lost! While serving as Alternate GSR, I also served as a coffee maker. This position helped me to remember where I had started and how grateful I was that making coffee circled around again.

Being an Alternate GSR then led to being a GSR. This was another huge learning experience. I was reminded in this position about principles before personalities once again. It is kind of funny how you think that you have learned enough of a lesson, then situations arise to teach you even more. During this time, I also became the Hotline Chairperson for Intergroup. I absolutely loved doing it, but it came time for me to get out of the way and start letting God lead me to what he wanted me to do.

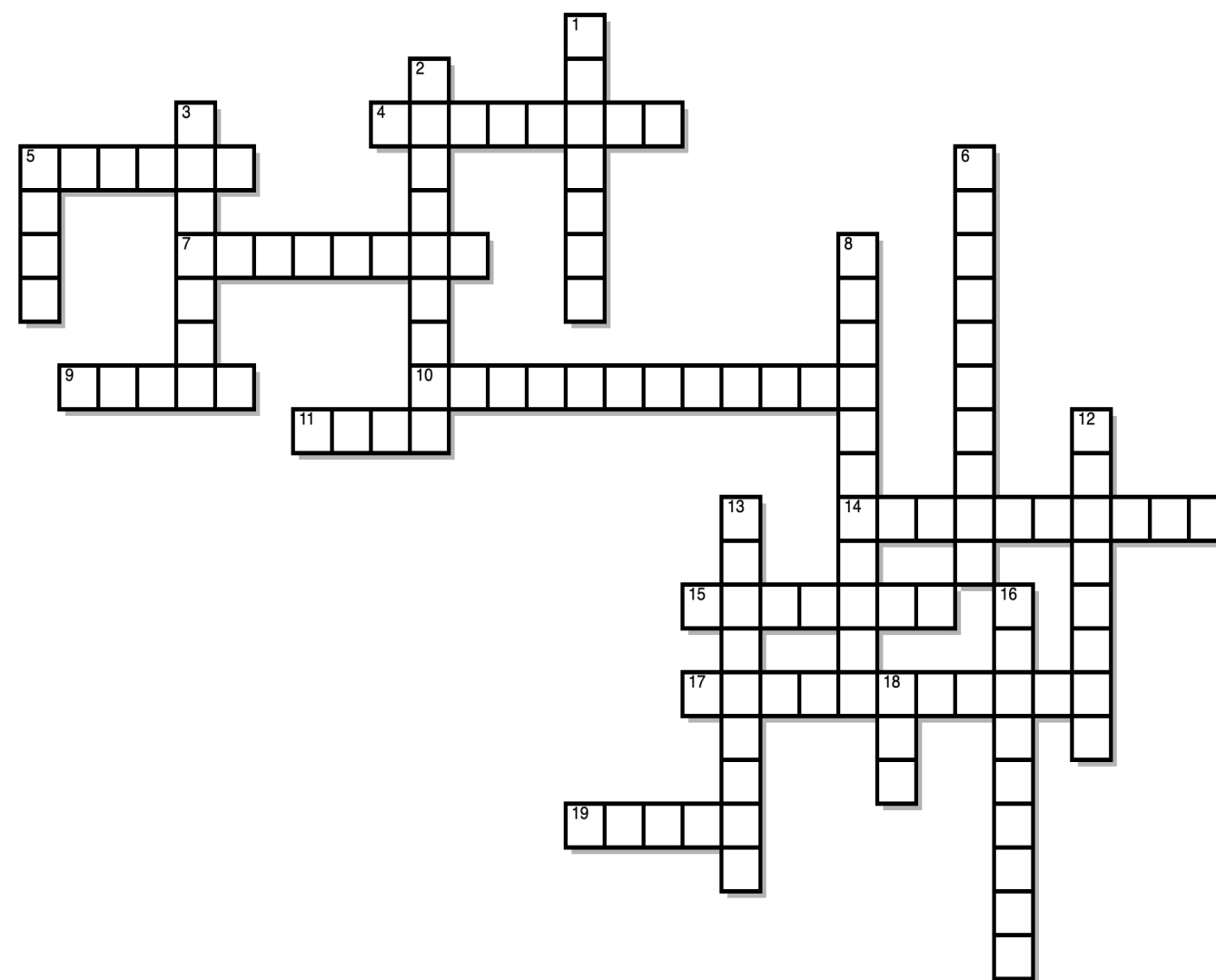
Being GSR and Hotline Chair circled around to just going to meetings and chairing a meeting once a week. This included making coffee. The circle gained another arch when I became a GSR again and I make coffee when needed.

Out of all of the service positions, making coffee is my favorite. While some may think that it is tedious, the message behind it is powerful! We don't need a lot of sobriety to do it, but it will keep us sober and in the middle of the herd, which in essence is a circle. What do we know about circles? They never end! Each time around, we learn something new.

I truly understand now what my sponsor was saying when she told me that if I stayed in the middle of the herd, I would stay sober!!!

- In service, Suzanne A.

Fall Assembly Crossword



ACROSS

- 4 2020 Spring Assembly Location
- 5 Author of The Healing Nature of Service
- 7 Unity, Service, and _____
- 9 Current Area 18 Treasurer
- 10 Humbly asked Him to remove our _____
- 11 Bill's Wife
- 14 The answer to all my problems today
- 15 Current Area 18 Chairperson
- 17 The number one offender
- 19 Birthplace of AA

DOWN

- 1 Current Area 18 Delegate
- 2 We admitted we were _____ over alcohol
- 3 2020 International Convention
- 5 Dr. Bob's Wife
- 6 Before personalities
- 8 Four Horsemen--Terror, Bewilderment, _____, and Despair
- 12 Searching and _____ moral inventory
- 13 Spiritual _____
- 16 Chapter 4: We _____
- 18 Current Grapevine Representative