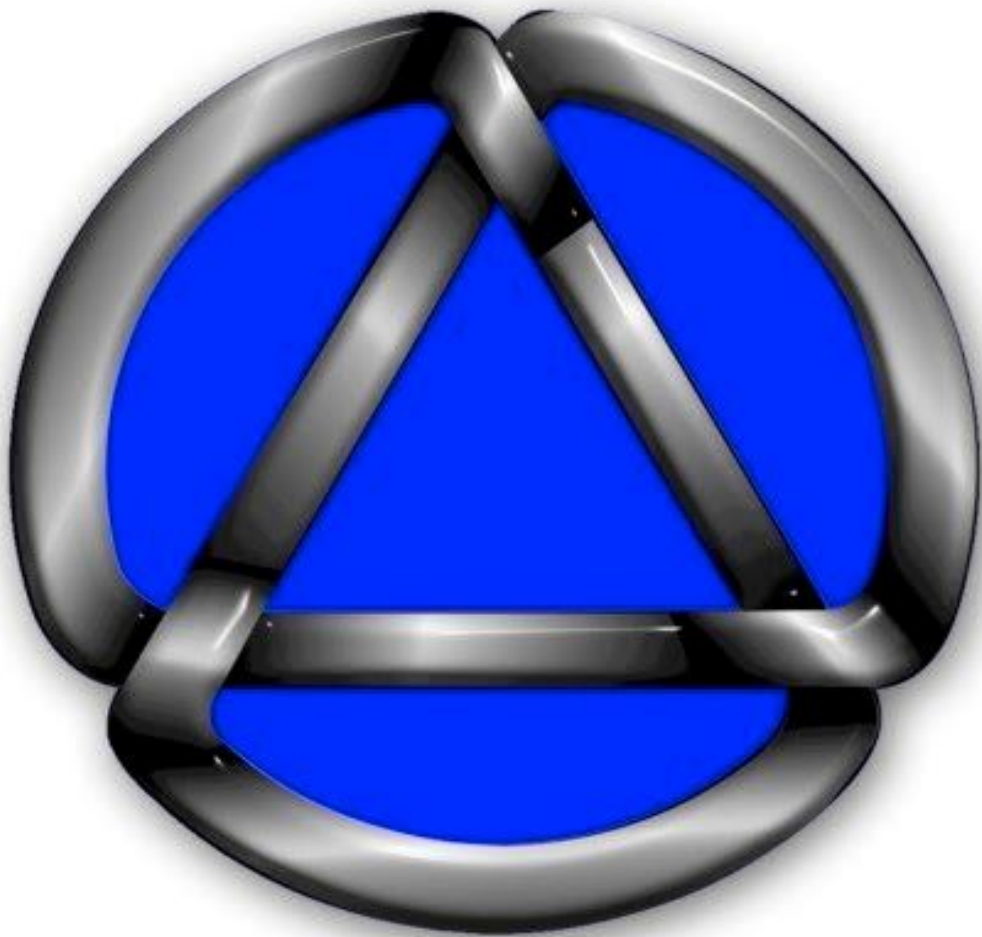


The Wagon Wheel *Idaho Area 18 Newsletter*

March 2020

Editor, Margie P.



The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. Big Book Pg 6

Note from the Editor:

Hello Idaho Area 18 members of Alcoholics Anonymous and other readers. My name is Margie P. and I am an Alcoholic and your Newsletter Editor for the 20-21 Area Committee rotation. My sobriety date is August 12, 2001. My home group is Friday Night Newcomers in Nampa Idaho. I have never published a newsletter before and like all positions in A.A., the minute I figure it out, it will be time to rotate. So...bear with me as I navigate through this new thing in my sobriety. I chose the quote on the cover page to remind me that throughout this rotation I would like this newsletter to be about you, the A.A. member and not about me. The content of this newsletter will depend on what you the reader wants, and not what I want. What do you want to talk about? Send me an email to, newsletter@idahoarea18aa.org and let me know what's on your mind. Thank you for allowing me to be of some small service to Alcoholics Anonymous and helping OUR newsletter to be a success. So here we go!

Margie P.

Newsletter Editor Idaho Area 18 AA

Wishing Away My Life

As I was reviewing my life by practicing the fourth step of AA (Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves) I realized that I had formed a habit, or routine, or pattern of never wanting to be in the present. This was occurring even before I started drinking at the early age of twelve. I was always wishing I could be somewhere else, something else or be in sometime else. I never wanted to be where, what or when I was. Always somewhere, something or sometime different from what I was.

I began to realize this as a very young boy. I just wasn't happy staying home keeping my mother company and playing around the house. I wished that I was older so I could go to school like the big kids. I would preoccupy my time with always wanting to be older so I could do other things than what I was doing. When the time finally came so I could start going to school I was frightened and wished I could stay home. After getting used to the routine of

going to school on a regular basis I found that I again was wishing I was at some other point in time.

I wanted to be at another level in school. While I was functional in school, barely, and was learning what I needed to know, like reading and writing and arithmetic, that same urge came over me and I was wishing I was in junior high school. When arriving at junior high, and starting to do that level of work I found myself wishing I would have paid better attention while in grade school so I could have better done the work that was required of me. I continued to learn at a reduced level because of self-inflection of past ignorance and the lack of motivation to do the class work or homework that could improve my learning capability. I started drinking in junior high school to dilute my feelings of inferiority. Besides, the high school grown-ups were always looking down on the junior high kids and I wanted to be in high school and not have to deal with this junior high situation any longer. What did I do? Yup, I reverted to my own successful way of coping with uncomfortable situations. I wished that I was in high school.

Commencing high school it was presently made aware to me that this is pretty much the same thing I was going through in junior high years, but now I wasn't being picked on by those high school bullies any longer. I had become a big shot high school know it all kid. School was difficult for me and my drinking did continue and increase all through high school. I was drinking to become accepted because no one would ever accept me the way I truly was, or so I thought. I was able, however, to find a niche to fit in with a group of people just like me. Those who liked to drink and smoke and be party animals spending all their time doing those sorts of things rather than doing the things people go to high school for, like learning. During high school I was active in sports and always received my highest grade, A, in P.E. In my high school the athletes were the partying people so I fit right in. That did keep me fairly motivated to do enough work in high school to make the minimum grades to be a participant in athletics. Drinking seemed to give me a social identity in high school, but I am sure that I had already achieved that identity in junior high. Soon the pattern returned though, and I started wishing I was out of high school and into the real world. Soon graduation came and I did have good enough grades to graduate. It did take me a little extra effort of working out deals with some teachers to do extra work to receive a passing grade, but always at the minimum.

Upon graduation, and of course it had to be celebrated with a drinking party known as a Kegger, I soon found myself missing the regimen, structure and social climate of school. I couldn't believe it, I was missing school! I did, I began wishing I was back in school. Besides, after graduating from high school and not going on to college right away, there were other responsibilities, such as

a job and supporting myself. Besides, I still liked drinking a lot and found it was increasingly difficult to find someone old enough to buy booze and beer for minors, me. I thought that being twenty-one would change everything. I would become more responsible. The drinking age in my state was twenty-one so I could buy my own liquor and beer legally, and go to bars where all the action was at. It would be a new social environment. It just seemed everything would be better all-around if I were twenty-one. I did it again and began wishing I was twenty-one

By this time I had found a really good job, but I did miss those crazy drinking and partying days between eighteen and twenty-one. Of course drinking was my main occupation until now. I only worked enough to be able to afford those drinking and party habits. The job that I had was a union job and it started at an entry level pay, but had a graduated pay scale built in. Every six months I would receive a pay increase and over a period of six years would reach the top pay grade. Oh how I wished those six years would go by. If I could only reach that top pay grade now I would have more money to spend and my financial problems would dissipate. Again, I was wishing my life away. Time crawled by and it seemed like forever before those six years passed. The first thing that I did when I reached top pay was to start wishing for something else, and the best thing I could think of was a promotion. To be eligible for a promotion meant more education. More education meant more schooling, and more schooling meant more commitment by me, and it meant cutting into my drinking time which by now had escalated into drinking almost every day. Up to this point in my life time just seemed to crawl by, but it did start speeding up when I went to college.

At college I did find a way to apply myself and I was able to start learning, but I didn't let it interfere with my drinking. I would go to class half the semester and get really good grades. About half way through the semester, when I realized that I had enough points that I could receive a passing grade, even if I didn't receive any additional points, I stopped going to class and was able to pass the classes with C's. I really wished this college would come to an end because it was occupying a lot of my time and started cutting into my drinking time. Finally, I reached a point where I was able to graduate by the skin of my teeth. During these years I also married.

After marrying, my family started growing as we started having children right away. Then one day my wife decided that she didn't like this lifestyle any longer and decided to leave. Divorce occurred, and I remember thinking that I wished that I could get another wife. I couldn't allow myself time to grieve the loss because that meant feeling my emotions, so I kept wishing I was in another relationship rather than working on my feelings. If I was in a relationship I could

work on my companion's emotions rather than mine which meant I was OK and the companion was the one that had all the problems. I could focus on their issues rather than mine. I eventually ended up with the children and was raising them by myself.

I later found another woman that I married and she had three children, three new daughters for me, and we had a son together. I had three children from the previous marriage, two sons and a daughter, as well. So doing the math that adds up to seven children altogether. I can remember thinking that I really wished that those children would grow up fast so I didn't have to spend so much time being a parent. Eventually they did grow up and left home. That meant more time to myself and more time drinking. Now that I am sober and look back on those child rearing years I realize that those were probably the most rewarding, important, and fantastic days that I spent in my entire life, but I wished them away. I didn't spend the time that I could have with my children. I didn't get more personally, emotionally, and intimately involved in my children's lives. I took care of my children and provided for them the things that they required to live. Things like shelter, food, clothing, education and I thought love. I don't know now if love was ever expressed the way that I meant it to be, but I did love them and I know that I didn't intimately get involved in their lives the way I wished I could have done.

After the children were gone it left a huge void in my life. I started to compensate that void by drinking even more. By the way, it wasn't only the children that left, my seconded wife left before the children did.

I was still working, but wished that I could retire. I really focused on the future and tried thinking how I could retire now. I never was able to put together a plan for early retirement though. The best I could do was put together a plan that would only keep me in booze for about one week out of the month so that definitely wouldn't work. I began wishing that I was at that wonderful age of sixty-six when retirement would kick in and wishing away the last productive years of my working career. Finally, that day came and I activated my retirement and retirement funds. Time seemed to be just flying by now and there wasn't a way to slow it down either. I was able, however, to finally quit drinking and gain sobriety at the age of fifty before retirement by starting to change my life and following the principles of AA.

I sobered up at the Alano Club in Boise, ID. Actually, I sobered up at the Alano Club in Boise twice. At the end of the meeting I went to they always read the last three paragraphs of the first one hundred sixty-four pages of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. At the end of the second to last paragraph a sentence reads "We will 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".

When I thought about this sentence, when I read this sentence, and when I spoke this sentence out loud I always heard and said "trudge the road to happy destiny". At my one year celebration of sobriety in that meeting I couldn't stay in the meeting after receiving my token. My emotions were overwhelming and I couldn't hold them back. I thought after a full year of sobriety, or not drinking, that the illness of alcoholism should surely have been cured. It didn't matter anyway, because I was never able to obtain a complete year of sobriety until now. Most of my life I was unable to even get a complete thirty days of not drinking. The first time I was able to achieve thirty days was my real first attempt at sobriety at the Alano Club six years earlier. I had to leave the meeting after sharing that I had achieved a complete year. I started passing my milestone around and left the meeting. After the meeting a friend brought my coin upstairs to the actual club and gave it back to me. He told me something then that I have never forgot and still impacts my sobriety today.

He told me "I had it all wrong". Standing and looking at him taken aback he continued stating "that it wasn't" "May you meet some of us as you trudge the road to happy destiny"" it was" "May you meet some of us as you trudge the road of happy destiny". He insisted that "I was already at a happy destiny and it doesn't get any better than what it is right now". This meant to me that I was supposed to already be at my happy destiny and I didn't have to go anywhere else, go into any other time frame, or be anything else. It was very difficult for me to understand because just like the rest of my life I thought I had to go somewhere else, or be in another time or be something other than what I was to make a difference. I couldn't imagine living my life the way it was. It couldn't possibly mean my life was as good as it gets. After years of drinking and virtually destroying what I thought life was supposed to be I assumed I had a long way to go before I could be comfortable again with even living life. When my friend told me about how I was hearing, saying and misunderstanding the actual words the difference between "of" and "to", became powerful. It was actually a major turning point in my sobriety and my life. I started trying to focus on the present rather than the future or the past. It made an astounding difference in my recovery and my understanding of my life. It was a spiritual experience. The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous calls these experiences epiphanies. For me this difference in thinking was completely life changing. I could feel wind blow through my hair as my understanding of this concept changed me. It was actually that powerful for me and my higher power was now at work in my life.

Again, I went back to school and this time I excelled in achieving another degree. I applied myself and made good with the faculties that I had developed and that were inherent within me. I found learning fascinating, rewarding, and

fulfilling. I attended every class all semester long and did my homework assignments and it paid off.

I did want to get into another relationship. It scared me a little to think that I was going to have to spend the rest of my life alone. I became resolute, though, that this time I was going to allow myself time to feel my emotions and work through them. I needed to spend time on myself rather than another person. I needed to love myself first before I could love someone else. I needed to know who I was before I could know someone else. I stayed out of any relationship for six years. I thought I was starting to become some sort of holy man. Staying celibate for that long isn't easy, but it was beneficial. Don't take me wrong, I was with other people and did things with other people and was not trying to figure these things out by myself. I just didn't date anyone or commit to any one particular person. I reached a point that I was alright with myself and was OK just living by myself. I felt I was OK to live the rest of my life alone in AA. Then, a miracle happened. I did meet another woman and we began dating. We became friends, then partners and then romance pursued. We did get married and we are enjoying a wonderful relationship and companionship. As a matter of fact, I didn't realize what a true relationship was until I met this woman.

I am also actively interacting with three of my seven children, two sons and a daughter, today. I'm creating interaction with two others, two step daughters, and remain open to the idea of involvement with the other two, a step daughter and a son. What is most important is I am enjoying immensely my interaction with my wife and my children and I certainly am not wishing them away. I am emotionally, personally, and intimately involved in their lives or am trying to be. All this has occurred because I started living my happy destiny.

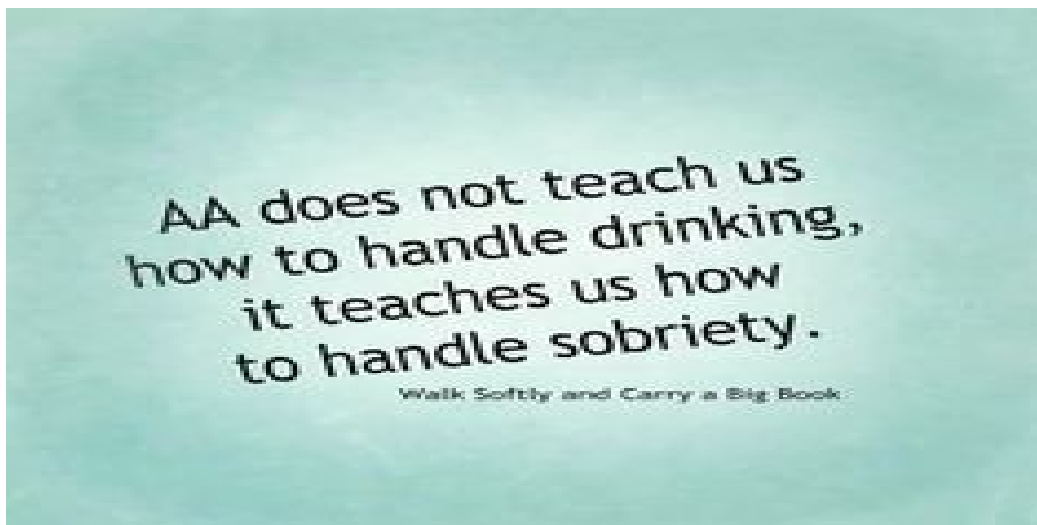
As I look back at my life and get a whole big picture view of it rather than a snapshot view, it seems at the beginning as a young boy time just crawled and crept along. As I started into my twenties time started to pick up speed and accelerated as I grew older. When I reached my retirement years' time was just zipping by. In some instances I would like to regress back into time and correct some things that I wished away, but of course I can't. I certainly can't leap into the future and make some change to better impact my life later either. The truth of the matter is that time goes by at the same rate of speed now as when I was a young adolescent. It was and is a perspective illusion that I had and have. I found out that I was OK in the "of" and didn't have to worry about the "to". The "to" takes care of itself if I take care of the "of".

It is impossible for me to go into the past and change anything. It is a good idea, however, to review the past because without doing so I can't enjoy

the present. Even though I haven't an idea about what the future is going to be like I know that whatever it is going to be my actions, thoughts and deeds that I do and have in the present help shape what that future is going to be like. Everything happens in the "of" and not the "to"

This is all that I have to say about that right now today!

Randy C. Nampa Idaho



Weaponizing A Tool of the Group Conscience

Alcoholics Anonymous is blessed with a great set of tools to help us conduct our business whether it is at the General Service Conference or at our group consciences. Some of the more prominent tools we use are the Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, Twelve Steps, AA Service Manual, Idaho Area 18 Guidelines, District Guidelines and Group Guidelines. To me the Minority Opinion and Third Legacy Voting procedures really stand out. I have never seen anything like them used in either my professional life or my personal life, which includes membership in other voluntary organizations. If they are used elsewhere I am simply not aware of it. But one tool that I find disturbing ONLY in its misuse is that of "calling for the question." This is a motion in parliamentary procedure that when made is non-debatable, requires a second, takes precedence over all

current discussions and must be voted upon immediately. This motion is intended to terminate further discussion/debate on a motion presently on the floor. When made it initiates action for an immediate vote when the discussion surrounding a motion on the floor has started to become repetitive and redundant. Obviously, its value shines in these scenarios.

I have occasionally witnessed prematurely calling for the question as a weapon to cut off discussion of a motion due to member impatience or not wanting a more comprehensive conversation on a motion. Thus, we who partake in this practice relegate ourselves to “contempt prior to investigation.” This writing is not a general condemnation of this viable and worthwhile procedure found in Robert's Rules of Order. I am only troubled when this tool is improperly used thus stifling or preventing the voting members from having the opportunity to develop a fully informed decision. We must also remember that the motion maker is not entirely responsible for starting a procedure that prevents other members from articulating their points. The voting body is equally responsible, for it votes on the passage or defeat of this motion. When the involved members vote prematurely to end the discussion, they too are responsible for this error in judgement and action. My hope is that the Groups, District, Area and the GSC are mindful of not weaponizing this meeting procedure but instead take the necessary time to sufficiently (and sometimes painstakingly) discuss issues before calling for the question and subsequently voting in favor of it. I also hope that all AA servant leaders take the time within their respective service structures to share with their members the responsible and judicious use of such a valuable but powerful tool. Finally, I would hope the Area Chairs (now and future ones) take the time to explain to future Assemblies the weighty responsibilities that are involved when invoking this procedure.

Brian Morishita
Coffee Break Group
Idaho Falls
Past Delegate
Panel 62

Staying Sober

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

AMENDS
DIGNITY
MEETINGS
POWERLESS
TRADITIONS

ANONYMITY
HONEST
OPENNESS
SERVICE
TWELVESTEPS

BIGBOOK
MEDITATE
OTHERS
SPONSOR
WILLINGNESS



A Newcomer Asks:

Am I an Alcoholic ??????

Please submit a 1-2 paragraph answer to this question and it will be published in the next edition of the Wagon Wheel.

Send to : newsletter@idahoarea18aa.org

Upcoming Events

Because of the COVID-19 Virus, Please Check Area Website to Make Sure the Event Has Not Been Cancelled

St. Patrick's Day Celebration

March 17, 2020 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Friendship Club – 365 S 5th S, Rexburg, ID

Mountain Home March Madness

Potluck & Speaker Mtg.

Saturday, March 21, 2020 6:30 pm
St. James Episcopal Church – 315 N 3rd East St, Mountain Home, ID

Districts 4 & 5: AA Service Workshop ****Cancelled****

Saturday, March 28, 2020 – 12:00 – 3:00 pm
Meridian Methodist Church, 240 E Idaho Ave, Meridian, ID

The Traditions and TSNAC Workshop

April 18, 2020 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm
Magic Valley Fellowship Hall – 801 2nd Ave N, Twin Falls, Id

Save the Date: 8th Annual Women's AA Brunch

Saturday, May 2, 2020
Boise Hilton Garden Inn – 7699 W Spectrum, Boise, ID

2020 Spring Assembly / Convention

May 15 – 17, 2020
Shoshone-Bannock Hotel and Event Center, Fort Hall, ID
When requesting lodging ask for Hotel Registration Code 5987 for \$89 Room Rate

6th Annual Macks Creek Campout – Lucky Peak Reservoir

May 29 – 31, 2020
Macks Creek Campground and Picnic Area

Save the Date: Founders Day Picnic

June 13, 2020 – Noon – 4:00 pm

Primary Purpose Group: Light Up Sobriety Bonfire Meeting

June 27, 2020 – Food & Fellowship 7:00/Bonfire Meeting 8:30 pm
Curtis Park, Caldwell, ID

2020 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous

July 2-5, 2020,
Detroit, Michigan

Three Rivers Bigbook Weekend

September 25-27, 2020
3019 Duportail St. #108, Richland, WA