



MARCH 2022

EDITOR CHRISTELLE L.

HELLO THERE

Welcome to the Idaho Area 18 AA Newsletter Wagon Wheel Newsletter!

I'm Christelle, an alcoholic, and super excited to be the editor for the next two years. As some of you can see I've already implemented a few changes. I wanted primary vehicle of the newsletter to be electronic, mobile friendly, accessible, and have a fun design. Oh, and I also made a logo. (couldn't help myself)

Thank you for viewing and/or downloading the newsletter!

Mental and emotional difficulties are sometimes very hard to take while we are trying to maintain sobriety. Yet we do see, in the long run, that transcendence over such problems is the real test of the AA way of living. Adversity gives us more opportunity to grown than does comfort or success.

AS BILL SEES IT p. 234

THAT QUOTE AND THE PANDEMIC

I wanted to put the quote above in as I've felt times are still a bit rough for most people. I, myself, have lost a few family members and between the loss and the sickness in my family, sobriety has been HARD but I have a few positive "take-aways" from it. I've learned that AA can survive... just about anything.. and not only can AA Recovery survive - it can excel during difficult times. While I've only traveled to one other country while sober - to be able to attend Zoom meetings in other countries or even states in different time zones has been pretty awesome and eye-opening!

I couldn't help but be amazed by the fellowship and the kindness that I see. While I've got a few 24 hours under my belt, I'm so amazed and impressed by the new members who have chosen to get sober. JUST WOW! The experience I've had with the connectedness of the fellowship has just left me with so much love for the program.

Today, I mostly attend in-person meetings and few Zoom ones. I found myself wanting to connect with the AA family I had in meetings. I wanted to know how they were doing and see them, even if I had to social distance no hugs :(

The pandemic has given me a greater appreciation for the fellowship and for the ability to see people in person. Sometimes I hear others talk about their preferences for either in-person or Zoom meetings and they wonder about the future of Zoom meetings. I've always felt like the more meetings we in AA have - the more people we can extend our message of recovery to.

Best wishes. Christelle

UNA VISION PARA TI

I'd been going to Mexico every year during the dreary month of January with a dear friend of mine, Beth, for many years. Over the years, we'd traveled the Baja and mainland Mexico many times and always had fun, great adventures. But, my last year of drinking was tumultuous and I was reckless and out of control. So, it was no wonder that the trip to Mexico in January of 2002 was on the edge of insanity. It was later that year, December 19, 2002, that I finally surrendered and went into treatment. My friend Beth was so proud of me, but she admitted to me later that she was going to tell me she never wanted to go to Mexico with me again if I didn't get help! We had missed going to Mexico in 2003 because I was still in treatment, but we started planning our yearly Mexico trip for January 2004. How could I stay sober in Mexico?! My sponsor reminded me to trust my Higher Power and that it was going to take care of me even if I couldn't. So, I continued to make plans.

We decided to go to a little fishing village outside of Zihuatanejo, Mexico called Barra de Potosi for a week. We arrived early evening. The owner of the little bed and breakfast we were staying at, brought us a cup of coffee and sat down to chat with us. She told us about the little village and that it was a very quiet, peaceful place and there were no bars or night life. She said the village was talking about putting in a billiard hall but the majority of the town was against it. But, she added, they didn't mind the little AA hut right over there, as she pointed to a little wooden shack right across the street from where we were sitting. I couldn't believe it!! I told her that I was an alcoholic in recovery and that I'd love to go to a meeting. She said it looked like there was someone there and she took me over to introduce me. There were four men there that night, Hector, Pancho, Tito and Roberto. The name of the meeting was Una Vision Para Ti (A Vision for You). There was a picture of Bill and Dr. Bob, the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions on the wall and a hotplate in the corner where they were boiling water for coffee. I didn't know Spanish and only one guy, Hector, could speak a little English. It

didn't matter. After all, it is the language of the heart and I felt right at home. I became friends with two of those men and continued to visit them yearly. About nine years ago, there was a new man, Javier that joined the group. Even though the little hut was long gone, they were still attending meetings in another village and I was able to attend Javier's one year birthday celebration.

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Una Vision Para Ti cont'

Then the pandemic forced us all to stay home and tap into our technical resources to stay connected. I wasn't able to travel to Barra de Potosi in 2021 so I was very excited to see them this year. When I arrived, I found out that Javier was going to be celebrating ten years of sobriety!! I started planning a meeting for the next Sunday in the backyard of my rental house. We ended up having ten people in attendance and had an English/Spanish Daily Reflections meeting. It was amazing!! Afterward, we celebrated with tres leches cake for Javier's tenth year of sobriety.

I am in awe of what my Higher Power does for me on a daily basis, but sometimes, there are just no words!

I am truly blessed! Shannon C.



AA IN THE PANDEMIC

After the initial shock of the pandemic subsided, it seemed that most of us got accustomed to attending Zoom AA meetings. Even the real old-timers, the ones who still needed their grandkids to show them how to text, were getting the hang of it. We were sharing the message with each other and, by seeing each other's faces, knew that we were all staying healthy.

However, it was not long before I started worrying about the newcomers whose first AA meeting was by Zoom. How could anyone get sober over a video screen? I did see a few men and women with only a few days sobriety come into the Zoom meetings. We would send them our phone numbers in the chat, urge them to stay around after the meeting to talk, but it seemed that no one ever did. After a few meetings, they would drift off.

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AA In The Pandemic cont'

I could see why. When I got sober, the “meetings” before and after the scheduled meeting were critical to me staying away from the first drink. This was where men were really able to get to the how and the why of it; this was where I could make real friends. No one could get that from a computer. What were the newcomers going to do? They may have been avoiding Covid-19, but at what a heartbreaking cost, the continued misery of active alcoholism.

But late in the summer of 2020, I noticed something happening. Some of these new people were actually sticking around. One lady logged in from her workplace every day. She announced her thirty, sixty and ninety-day milestones. She would bring up topics—good ones—to learn from others how they did it. She got a sponsor. She logged onto the meeting early and stayed a while after the closing prayer. She started looking healthier, even through a pixelated video screen. And best of all, she was smiling.

And then, a second newcomer did the same thing. Bleary-eyed, gloomy, he announced that he had less than 24 hours. But he kept coming back. Thirty days later, he showed us all the chip his sponsor gave him. Then a third person. It was not long before I had felt like I really had made some new friends, people I had never met except over a video screen.

However, the most surprising thing was not that people were getting sober, but how the Zoom meetings came into their own. One day at a gratitude meeting, that first lady shared that the thing for which she was the most grateful was her Zoom AA meetings. Not AA meetings but Zoom AA meetings. She said she couldn't have imagined getting sober at an in-person meeting. She felt safer at Zoom AA.

In short, what started out as lifeboat to keep us all afloat till life got back to normal, became just one more tool to carry the message to the alcoholic that still suffers.

Tom H.

Disclaimer: The photo to the right is not an actual AA meeting just a stock photo of Zoom meeting. No anonymity or copyright laws broken.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Click on links for flyers

ONGOING - New AA Service Manual Study

Led by former Area 18 Delegate Thad N.

Wednesdays at 7:00pm Starting January 12, 2022

Zoom Meeting

2022 Area 18 Pre-Conference Workshop

March 19, 2022

10am -5pm

Best Western Plus, 1377 Blue Lakes Blvd N, Twin Falls, ID

AA On The Rocks Dinner/Speaker Meeting

April 2, 2022

Dinner 5:00pm, Speaker:6:00pm

Caldwell Church of Christ

4012 S 10th Ave, Caldwell, Idaho

Old Timer Speaker Meeting

April 2, 2022

Magic Valley Fellowship Hall

801 2nd Ave. N, Twin Falls Idaho, 83301

2022 Spring Assembly & Convention

May 6 – 8, 2022

Red Lion Inn, Pocatello, ID

[Link to Online Registration \(Now Open!\)](#)



HOUSEKEEPING STUFF

I am always looking for submissions! Email me please. I know that typically I will be asking people to write articles but would always love a submission. While bringing our newsletter into current industry standards I would also like to shorten and give length requirements (approximately 500 words) as I've also learned that sobriety has given us wonderful, full lives and I think we can keep your attention a little longer with shorter articles. So I'm going to try that to start. Also if you are interested in being on our email list and receiving a mobile friendly version click [here](#) and fill out the form on our Area website.

Our emailing address is:

newsletter@idahoarea18aa.org

I had been undergoing a spiritual experience without knowing it. My confused questioning about a Higher Power, my changed mental attitude, and even my physical recovery had all been part of a spiritual awakening. Without knowing it, I had been in contact with the source of life, whatever or whoever that might be.

SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS