



IDAHO AREA 18 AA
WAGON WHEEL
NEWSLETTER

MAY 2023

EDITOR CHRISTELLE L.


HELLO THERE

Happy Spring! I'm looking forward to seeing you all at the Spring Assembly. I hope you all are as excited as I am.

I'm excited to let you know I'm half-way to my goal of 100 subscribers. We've got just over 50 and an open rate of 78% which is better than most email newsletters.


I also want to thank everyone who has submitted an article when I asked them. I've really appreciated the generosity and kindness I've received. I think this has been my favorite service position that I've served in. Even though I was web servant for 4 years. I enjoy this more as I get to know people one-one-one, who have submitted articles, I love it!

Thank you for reading and/or downloading the newsletter!



**Our membership ought to include all who
suffer alcoholism. Hence we may refuse
none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A.
membership ever depend upon money or
conformity**

**BILL W.
December 1947,
Grapevine**



THAT QUOTE AND THE PRINCIPLES

When I ask fellow Alcoholics if they would be interested in writing an article. Those responses vary. Sometimes they want a topic, sometimes they don't, sometimes I make suggestions to help, and sometimes people do their own thing.. which I love as topics are only suggestions. We've got a sample of each in this newsletter, and the results are always wonderful!

Happy reading!

Much Love. Christelle

OUR THIRD TRADITION AND CONFORMITY

THAD N.

The long form of our third tradition states: "Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation."

The third sentence, talking about how membership should never depend on money or conformity was not particularly thought provoking for a long time. The idea of not having any dues or fees and yet having voluntary contributions wasn't too difficult for me to embrace; this issue of "Conformity" was something I frankly paid no attention to whatsoever for a long time; but lately there have been some thoughts rattling around in my head.

Conformity is defined as, "the process whereby people change their beliefs, attitudes, actions or perceptions to more closely match those held by groups to which they belong or want to belong or by groups whose approval they desire."

A certain degree of conformity in society is a good thing; like the idea that the vast majority of us have agreed to stop on the reds and go on the greens is helpful. In Alcoholics Anonymous, when I was a newcomer counting days, any kind of insistence on conformity, subtle or otherwise, put me on edge. Going to my first meeting thinking; ok they're saying a prayer- yuk!, and they are introducing themselves as " my name is _____ and I'm _____ and alcoholic" – like it's some sort of badge of honor- WTF!, they're talking about God a lot-eeeew!, and they're closing the meeting by holding hands, creepy, and saying another prayer – yikes, oh-no, did I just join a cult?

Fortunately for me I had more fear and desperation at the time than I had defiance so I stuck around, but I can very easily picture many newcomers thinking similar thoughts. Today as an AA member with a little time and understanding under my belt; it is my responsibility to be on the lookout for that brand new person and have the courage to tell them that, you don't have to join us in a prayer if you don't want to, you don't have to introduce yourself as an alcoholic if you don't want to, and that these things we do may seem weird at first and that you are welcome to join us but only if you want to, there is no mandate or obligation.

Our Third Tradition and Conformity cont'

The recent discussion around the plain language translation of the big book, and possibly abandoning the project has given me pause. Are we unconsciously insisting that the only way a 15 to 20-year-old alcoholic is going to get and stay sober is by using the same old book that we used, written in 1939 by some very old white, protestant Christian, dudes, using language that is so old and dated that you need a dictionary to figure it out? What about those trying to sponsor those same 15- to 20-year-old newcomers? Are we asking these newcomers and their sponsors to conform to our standards of education and word usage, just because it worked for us? My not-so-humble opinion is that our literature, like our other outreach activities supporting our 12th step work, can do a better job of meeting newcomers, not where we are, but where they are. When I showed up in Alcoholics Anonymous, got sober and worked the steps an inconvenient and tiresome side effect showed up, my conscience; and while I can duck or avoid what it is telling me for a while, sooner or later I am starkly confronted with the idea that with awareness comes responsibility. I owe a debt to Alcoholics Anonymous that I can never repay and the longer I stick around and try pay it back the more that debt has grown.

In Love and Service

Thad N.

4.

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COMING TO TERMS BONNIE P.

I've often wondered if I would have made that call to AA if I had known I would be tasked to acknowledge, confront and battle my defects of character as part of getting and staying sober. What on earth would my behavior have to do with not drinking?

For me coming into AA was like going to a movie that you have no idea what it is about. If it's a good movie, everything is exciting, unexpected and fun. All I knew about AA was that they prayed (as in God based) and that was going to be a big enough problem. I assumed they would want me to stop drinking but I hoped that would just be until I could be taught to drink responsibly. Always the hope that there was a secret to the art of successful drinking! When I heard "It's the first drink that gets you drunk" I knew there was no secret for an alcoholic like me.

Coming To Terms cont'

I was clearing up enough to begin hearing things about "character defects" and my ever-present anger was starting to make me more uncomfortable than usual. When I started worrying that there was going to be some serious inner work to be done, I remember thinking "If I am a jerk, it's because I get drunk so if I quit drinking the problem is solved". Could I have been more wrong!

A 4th and 5th step laid it all out. I was a jerk when I drank and, yes, the alcohol amplified it. But maybe those character defects were genetic or maybe learned behavior. I finally realize it didn't matter how or why. What did matter was that as long as I kept acting like an angry, immature and irresponsible drunk, my chances of drinking again were pretty high. Also, I would never find peace with myself or the world. Plus, no one would like me very much.

Steps 4,5,6 and 7 all work together for me to see myself as I truly am as a drunk and as a person. They teach me how to come to terms with myself and how to set out to make the changes I need and want to. Am I there yet – far from it. Am I better – amazingly so. Am I enjoying the process – not always, but like a good movie it is exciting, unexpected, fun and rewarding.

Bonnie P.

Are We Really Willing to Change?

**Facing ourselves... is often more difficult
than being honest with another person.**

"Step By Step"

Grapevine, Dec. 1980

STEPS 4 & 5



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 500-600 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. If you are interested in being on our email list and receiving a mobile friendly version a fill out the form on our Area website on the Newsletter page.

Emailing address is:

newsletter@idahoarea18aa.org

The best way to appreciate AA is the same way you appreciate a stained glass window:

Look at it from the inside

"Happy, Joyous and Free" Grapevine Daily Quote

UPCOMING EVENTS

2023 T.A.C. Picnic

Saturday June 3rd, 2023

Veterans Park Boise

More info to come

2023 Mack's Creek Campout

Hosted by Midtown Group

June 8th-11th, 2023

More details coming soon!

Green Canyon Campout

Hosted by District 7

June 9-11, 2023

More details coming soon!

"Whiskey Mike's" Campout 2023!

June 23-25, 2023

Big Springs Caribou Camground

2023 Gem State Round Up

September 1st-3rd, 2023

The Grove Hotel

245 S. Capital Blvd. Boise

More details coming soon!