



IDAHO AREA 18 AA
WAGON WHEEL
NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2023

EDITOR CHRISTELLE

HELLO THERE

Happy end of Summer! It's hard to believe we are nearing the end of our two year term. Thank you for subscribing to and reading the Wagon Wheel. I know I will miss overseeing and coordinating the newsletter when my term is complete.

I also want to thank everyone who submitted an article when I asked them. I really appreciate the generosity and kindness I've received. Alcoholics in recovery grow to be the most generous and beautiful people thanks to AA and our HP.

Thank you for viewing and/or downloading the newsletter!

AA is no succes story in the ordinary sense of the word. It is story of suffering transmuted, under grace, into spiritual progress.

BILL W.

THAT QUOTE AND SERVICE

This quote is sooooo beautiful.. the story of suffering... yes.. and then transmuted under grace! How lucky are we to live a sober life? We get the opportunity to grow together in the realm of spiritual progress and not perfection. Thank you for being with me on this sober journey!

So if you aren't feeling transmuted, get a home group and start making coffee or chair a meeting!

Best wishes. Christelle!

MY FIRST SERVICE POSITION AND HOW IT HELPED ME VIVIAN L.

My brain flooded with a host of memories when a friend asked me about my first service position in Alcoholics Anonymous. Wow, here was a place I hadn't reflected back to in quite a few 24 hours.

Making coffee! Yes, they asked me to make coffee one night a week for a meeting I was attending regularly. I was a newcomer and I wasn't sure I belonged. I was terrified of living life without my friend, alcohol. You see, alcohol had been my solution for over 30 years when I finally found my seat in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Now I had a commitment and, by golly, I take commitments seriously! It kept me coming back. I saw the light in your eyes and heard your laughter in the rooms. I decided I would give it a year - to figure out what it was the people in these rooms had going on - and then I would be on my merry way. Today I laugh with hilarity, wondering what merry way I thought I might return to.

My coffee commitment made me feel a part of. I wasn't going to let you know I struggled. It looked pretty good on the outside but inside I was dying, spiritually bereft. I listened to you share your struggles - sometimes at meeting-level, other times over coffee or across a kitchen table. Your stories brought intimacy into my life where there had only been superficiality. My feet were trained to take me to meetings even when my a** was falling off. I learned that service is not confined to the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. Just a few of the gifts I received from being of service in AA.

Saturday night's ritual was caravanning to the Treasure Valley Birthday Speaker meeting with new friends of Bill W. I listened to speakers share from the heart, recognizing that we loved them more because we knew them better. When I was asked to share my story at about three years of sobriety, my sponsor asked me "How is that different for you?" I had to reconcile with myself - it wasn't. I was learning that we are all God's kids.

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**My First Service Position and How
It Helped Me Cont'**

I grabbed a newcomer to take to the speaker meeting with me. I don't know who it helped more, me or her. It didn't matter. One alcoholic reaching out to another. What mattered is that I stayed sober.

In the July 1955 Grapevine issue, Bill W. recounts, "Until 1950, [AA services] were the sole function of a few old time AAs, several nonalcoholic friends, Dr. Bob, and myself." I am so grateful for our founders' vision and the creation of our General Service Conference, that "...the Third Legacy of World Service will henceforth be for all members of Alcoholics Anonymous to have and to hold for so long is God may wish our Society to endure."

Looking back, it may have been the coffee commitment that kept me coming back, but it was the love and shares of the heart made me stay.

Vivian L.

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REMEMBERING MY FIRST SERVICE POSITION AND HOW IT HELPED ME AND OTHERS

BILL M.

When I arrived at AA, I didn't appreciate the effort and dedication it took to make the program available to me. I sobered up in a big city where there were hundreds of meetings per day. Newly sober and unemployed, I'd peruse the fat meeting directory to select the 2-3 meetings per day that kept me sane and sober. I eventually found a home group and a sponsor who guided me through the steps. By the time we hit the 12th step, I had returned to tiny Sandpoint, Idaho, where my big city sponsor advised me to find a home group, a new sponsor, and a service position.

I arrived in Sandpoint on a Wednesday at 6 pm, called the AA hotline from a local restaurant, and was directed to a 7 pm meeting at the Woodworkers Hall a block away. That meeting became my primary home group for the next ten years. I quickly found a sponsor and asked what I could do to be of service. He handed me the keys to the Hall and said he'd meet me the following week to show me how to "open" the meeting.

I learned that opening a meeting in small-town Idaho meant taking on a multitude of responsibilities. I arrived early to unlock the doors, turn on the lights and heat, set up heavy wooden tables (handmade by the woodworkers) and chairs, make coffee and hot water, set out the literature, and ask folks to chair and read.

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Remembering My First Service Position and How It Helped Me And Others Cont'

After the meeting, I ensured everything was cleaned and put away. Being of service in AA gave me a purpose, a sense of responsibility, and somewhere to be. I got to know most AA members in the area and formed close friendships that lasted a lifetime. Arriving early to open the meeting meant I was there to warmly greet newcomers and visitors who wondered if they were in the right place.

There was a meeting per night at different locations in Sandpoint, and each meeting had an "opener" like me. After about a year of wrestling with heavy tables at the Woodworkers Hall, I told my sponsor I needed a break. I was surprised when he took my keys and put them in his pocket. I was more surprised when he handed me the keys to the Friday night hospital meeting he'd been opening. We stared at each other for a second before bursting into laughter. Once you are into AA small-town service, you are locked in. The Woodworkers meeting remained my home group as my sponsor and I played "swap the keys" over the years.

In time, I discovered that service opportunities extended beyond my group to district, intergroup, area, treatment centers, hospitals, and institutions. Near the end of my second year sober, I attended our Area meeting at the lovely Coeur d'Alene resort. I was honored to be among the hundreds of people representing groups from around the Pacific Northwest. The Area meeting showed me in living color that AA would not exist without these dedicated members selflessly giving their time, energy, and resources so they could stay sober and help others achieve sobriety.

HOUSEKEEPING STUFF

I am always looking for submissions! Email me please. I know that typically I will be asking two people each newsletter 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). Also 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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Teton Valley Campout

August 25-27, 2023

Reunion Flats Campsite Ground A

Teton Canyon Road, Alta, WY

2023 Fall Assembly & Convention

October 6-8, 2023

Burley Idaho Best Western

[Register Online](#)