



MAY 2024

EDITOR : TINA L.

## HELLO THERE

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

I'm Tina, an alcoholic, and I've been appointed as your newsletter editor for this term. I am ecstatic to be back in service and I am excited for what this rotation is going to teach me. I try not to have expectations when taking on a new role, but rather be open and willing to learn whatever lessons are meant to come my way. I am also excited to get to know the new committee and GSR's alike, so if you see me around the Assemblies please say hello! Thank you for allowing me to be of service to you, it is my pleasure.

In Service,

Tina



# SMALL HANDS

By Kim S.

The room held dusty, dirty, coffee-stained rectangular tables and mismatched chairs: olive green, metal folding, torn brown leather. Unwanted chairs. A full literature rack stood in the corner and three blue books sat on a shelf. Four gruff old men, one young bearded fellow, two guys in paint spattered denim, and two middle aged women occupied the chairs. One of the women had a blonde ponytail, the other, short sandy hair and glasses. It was 1986 and I was twenty-two. The place was called, The Grapevine Club.

# SMALL HANDS cont'd

## KIM S.

The first meeting, I listened. They talked of beer and wine and whiskey. One spoke of loneliness. Another, of a racing mind. Halfway through the hour, tears began to leak. I fled to the tiny cigarette smoke-filled bathroom, grungy sink, four urine-colored walls, and sobbed. The toilet paper dispenser was empty. I found a paper towel, cleaned up, and looked in the mirror. There were black circles under hazel eyes, a small sad mouth, and a round face framed by thick shoulder length dark hair. My nose was red. They would know I had cried. I decided not to care.

I made it back to a frayed chair, steps unsteady, eyes downcast, wondering how the room could offer anything of value. No one stared. No one judged. Someone poured me a cup of coffee.

At the end of the meeting, the chairperson said, “We hold hands to symbolize we can do together what I cannot do alone.” That first time, I proudly displayed my aloneness, as if it were an earned girl scout badge. Fake bravado, a grasp of hand and a bowed head. I’d arrived with a sunken spirit, thoughts of death near, luring me toward the sky. Instead, I’d been anchored to the earth by hands.



Small Hands cont'

For thirty-eight years I've gathered with groups of broken people attached by hands. Worn and gnarled; rough and calloused; calm, busy, sweaty, shaky, hesitant, so lazy with loose fingers, I had to do all the work. Long-nailed with glittery polish, short fingered and nail bitten, elegant and diffident, strong confident hands.



In the silence of the circle, those hands speak. Sometimes they scream with need. Sometimes they reassure. Sometimes, they are silent with despair. A man who works with his hands, a mother, an acned teenager, a white-haired woman with a cane, two men wearing suits.



E.E. Cummings wrote, "Nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands." I learned not to pretend, to let my hands be small.



The Grapevine Club is gone now, reclaimed by the city of Boise and sold. Yet, I remember it like yesterday.

The circle breaks, and we go our separate ways. Until the next day, when we assemble once again to pray. A simple prayer in a round of hands; Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name...

-Kim S.





## IT'S A "WE" PROGRAM CHRISTELLE L.

When I first came to Alcoholics Anonymous I didn't understand much of what was going on. I only knew I needed to stop drinking.

I tried to ignore the large "scroll" roll up banners on the walls that contained the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. I ignored them as I thought they look like the 10 Commandments. I also thought AA was pretty bold to have 12 things listed when the Bible only mentions 10 and I did a terrible job with the 10 – how was I going to manage 12?

But there they were looming while I took my seat at the Grapevine Club each day. I also wondered why the 12 Steps used the word "We"? Then one day I heard a man say, "This is a "We" program and I can't do this without you."

I still didn't quite understand. What is this "We" thing? How in the world does it work?

It's a "We" Program cont'd

I finally got a sponsor, a very loving woman. She was so patient and kind to me. She met with me every week as we read the book of Alcoholics Anonymous together, then when we came to Step Four we'd meet over coffee and she would listen to my Inventory. I found myself being so grateful for her. I began to tell her how grateful I was that she was willing to be my sponsor and meet with me and she'd always reply, "You are helping me more than I am helping you." Honestly, I thought she was a bit nuts. I did not see how I could possibly be helping her.

I finished my amends and continued with Steps 10 and 11. I wasn't sure if I was good enough or had a good enough program to sponsor another woman but I did know I could make coffee and take minutes at our business meeting.

The day came when a woman did ask me to sponsor her and I met with her each week and took her through the steps the way my sponsor took me (I still do). I met with her and listened to her 4th Step and helped guide her through her amends. One day she thanked me and gave me a hug and I understood what my sponsor was talking about. I was able to see the beauty of the spiritual growth and joy in another human being and how truly amazing that was. I began to cry when I realized that the benefits of the program work both ways.

The fellowship saved my life when living a sober life got extremely difficult. It's hard to lose faith when you have so many people showing you that they care about you and your sobriety. In AA meetings, you'll find that our butts are never falling off on the same day and whatever your troubles may be- you'll be scrambling to get them back after you hear someone else's "tale of woe" at a meeting. Blessings.

-Christelle L.



## HOUSEKEEPING STUFF

If you are wanting others to read this newsletter, feel free to direct them to our Area 18 website:

<https://idahoarea18aa.org/> > Area 18 Information > Area 18 Newsletter

There is a form to fill out to get onto the distribution list which includes first name and email address. My goal is to grow our reader's list, but I'll need your help to do so!

If you have an article to submit or have a certain topic you'd like to read about, please let me know. There is also an option to attach a file, if you feel called to submit something. Thank you for reading!

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Let's get connected!

**[newsletter@idahoarea18aa.org](mailto:newsletter@idahoarea18aa.org)**





# Upcoming Events

## Saturday, June 1, 2024

**TV TAC 2024 Picnic** 11:00am-1:00pm  
Veterans Park | 930 Veterans Memorial Pkwy  
Boise, ID 83703

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## June 13-16, 2024

**12th Annual Macks Creek Campout**  
Hosted by Midtown Group  
Contact: 208-713-9370 or 208-570-0070

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## June 21-23, 2024

**Pacific Northwest Conference**  
Red Lion Hotel | 1225 N. Wenatchee Ave.  
Wenatchee, WA

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## July 19-21, 2024

**District 9 Campout**  
Cold Springs Campground  
Payette National Forest

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## August 2-4, 2024

**Gem State Round Up**  
The Riverside Hotel | 2900 W. Chinden Blvd.  
Garden City, ID 83714