



Common Grounds

Oregon Area 58 Volume 51 Issue 3 www.aa-oregon.org

Next Area Assembly

February 22-24, 2019

Inn at the Commons

200 N. Riverside Ave

Medford, OR

855-516-1090

"Nothing matters more to AA's future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination."

Bill W

Coming events

newsletter@aa-oregon.org

OSYPPA 6

"Out of the Dark"

11-30-18 to 12-2-18

1000 NE Multnomah

Portland



Port Orford
40th Anniversary
December 10th, 2018
936 Washington St.
Port Orford

It's a Potluck to
celebrate the 40th
Birthday of our group
Doors open at 5:00
Dinner at 5:30
Meeting at 7:00
please share

The Spirit of Rotation

As we approach the November Area Assembly when some of our trusted servants will rotate, I have been reflecting on A.A.'s spirit of rotation. Over the course of my sobriety, I have been honored to serve in several positions at the group, district and Area level. Needless to say, I had to rotate at the end of a specified time for each position. My experience was that I didn't rotate "out," but rather I rotated on to another position. I am so very grateful for what I learned and experienced in each position I held, but I am also reminded how rotation fits in the big picture of our A.A. service structure.

Our principle of rotation is important, not only to our groups, districts, the Area, and A.A. as a whole, but to me personally. I've joked and kidded around saying, "I could do another year," and I meant it. I truly loved every A.A. job and I wouldn't have minded continuing on. Fortunately for all, I learned long ago to follow instructions and the example of those who came before me. Our literature is the place I always find what I need, so I turned to the pamphlets, *The A.A. Group ... Where It All Begins*, *GSR - May Be The Most Important Job In A.A.*, and to the *A.A. Service Manual Combined With the Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

There are ample references to the fact the we A.A.s are likely to start "empire building" or having "vested interests" or we will become "frozen in office" if we stay in a position too long. I'm sure many of you have heard someone say they are beginning to feel like they "own" their job when they've been at it for a long time. This is not a particularly good thing for us or for A.A. With rotation, we are able to attract a larger number of people into service, and fresh approaches and new ideas are introduced. Rotation almost always guarantees enthusiasm and ensures that the circle of those in AA service is ever widening. Conversely, if we stay in a job beyond the specified time, we are preventing someone else from having the experience. Even though there may not be an apparent replacement waiting to step in, we rotate anyway. It may force someone out of their comfort zone. Someone WILL come forward, either because someone encourages them to do so or they find the courage to volunteer. Aside from the above benefits of rotation, for the individual it can be a catalyst for personal growth and it's a way to practice humility. At the end of his/her term of office, each trusted servant needs to get out of the driver's seat and accept the fact that neither the world nor A.A. revolves around him or her. Rotation helps keep our feet on the ground and keeps us 'right-sized' -- two important ingredients in our recovery.

And there's more. Adherence to the principle of rotation helps us practice Traditions One, Two, and Twelve. Tradition One states, "Our common welfare should come first ..." One person's control does not foster a common welfare for any group or meeting at any level. Tradition Two states, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving God as He may express himself in our group conscience ..." One person's control does not constitute a group conscience. Tradition Twelve states, "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." One person's control is not placing "principles before personalities

Finally, we find instructions in Concepts Nine and Twelve. An excerpt from Bill's essay on Concept Nine published in the illustrated pamphlet version states, "Due to A.A.'s principle of rotation, furnishing our service structure with able and willing workers has to be a continuous effort." In Concept Twelve, Warranty One, we find, " ... that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power." The principle of rotation acts as a direct check upon any one person having too much power or authority.

At the end of my term as delegate, many of you asked me how I felt about rotating to "the back of the room." As I stated above, I loved that job and would have continued doing it in a heartbeat. Based on my experiences in past positions, however, I can honestly say it was time for me to step aside. Even though I'm now in the "has been" category, I find that there are still many opportunities to be of service. For those district and Area trusted servants who are rotating, I hope you will rotate "on" and not "out." If you stood for a position and didn't get elected, or if you submitted a resume and didn't get appointed, your service should not end. Please explore all the possibilities out there. There is no lack of work to be done at all levels of the service structure. Find your passion, then go out and do that work. The pay is non-existent, the work is sometimes hard and never ending, but the benefits are huge. I always, always get back more than I give, and I get to stay sober one more day.

Anne M.



Anonymity - the Need

"In my belief the entire future of the fellowship hangs on this vital principle. If we continue to be filled with the spirit and practice of anonymity, no shoal or reef can wreck us. If we forget the principle, the lid to Pandora's box will be off and the spirits of Money, Power and Prestige will be loosed among us. Obsessed by these evil ginnies, we might well flounder and break up. I devoutly believe this will never happen. No A.A. principle merits more study and application than this one. I am positive that A.A.'s anonymity is the key to long-term survival."

(A.A. Comes of Age pp 131-132)

Bill's Last Message

"Anonymity has two attributes essential to our Individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical. On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protections for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and the security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes"

Anonymity as a Spiritual Message

"We are sure that humility, expressed anonymity, is the greatest safeguard that A.A. can ever have."

"...anonymity is real humility at work. It is an all-pervading spiritual quality which today key-notes A.A. life everywhere. Moved by the spirit of anonymity, we try to give up our natural desires for personal distinction as A.A. members both among fellow alcoholics and before the general public. As we lay aside these very human aspirations, we believe that each of us takes part in the weaving of protective mantle which covers our whole society and under which we may grow and work in unity" (12 Steps and 12 Traditions, p 187)

Sacrifice and Survival

"The spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice. Because A.A.'s 12 Traditions repeatedly ask us to give personal desires for the common good, we realize that the sacrificial spirit, well symbolized by anonymity, is the foundation of all these Traditions. It is A.A.'s proved willingness to make these sacrifices that gives people high confidence in our future." (A.A. Comes of Age, p.132)

The spiritual aspect of anonymity is the most elusive of all to grasp. IN the beginning of my sobriety I had discovered a gift that I felt that people should have and tried to do my best to give it away. Being as sick as I was starting out, I didn't have a grasp on how powerless I was so my ego took unwarranted credit for Gods work in the beginning. God used my narcissism and and my selfishness to His advantage and glory. Taking credit for God's work has it's downside as the people that failed was my responsibility. The goal of humility has the capacity of becoming our disease, if not vigilant to the situation, we place ourselves in.

"The Father in me does the work" is not my normal thinking and that line of thinking only comes through perseverance and discipline on my part. Not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing is against everything I had learned in the world up till now. Humility, love in hiding is not easy and when we first set sail on the journey called sobriety. Our false self wants all the credit and who doesn't want to feel a little superior to those around us, even in service arena. Someone is doing a better job in service, and so envy becomes the enemy of anonymity = humility. This is where honesty and motives become so important in the journey as the sign posts that keep us in the sunlight of the spirit

"This is the only key to the kingdom of the spiritual realm for me and that is spiritual anonymity = humility - to put a seal upon your lips and forget what you have done. After you have been kind, after Love has stolen forth into the world and done its beautiful work, go back into the shade again and say nothing about it. Love hides even from itself. Love waives even self-satisfaction. Love Vaunts Not Itself, Is Not Puffed Up." Humility-Love Hiding." (The greatest thing in the world and other addresses by Henry Drummond)

Bill Wilson was in the process of writing another book about spirituality and scratched the idea as he realized that is something that could not be put into words. He realized that the people who had this commodity, as Henry Drummond put it, "wanted to stay hidden". Our Big Book says that we discover something better than gold and we have to give away the entire product for the rest of our lives. I think this is talking about spiritual anonymity=humility and how we have to be aware of our thinking on the matter. This is where the true meaning of servanthood comes into being. You cannot be a servant without sacrificing. Whether it be time, money or most importantly the way I think and act. As an alcoholic my ideas are always the best because they are mine. Anonymity in service asks me to give my ideas and look through a new pair of glasses that sees the whole picture.

How many times in meetings have I heard that my thinking was my problem? The longer I am around, the more that statement sinks in to my innermost self. The more I can see myself for what my thinking makes me on a daily basis, the more that I can see that I lack spiritual anonymity. With humility as my guide I have discovered the goal I want to shoot for in this thing called life. It is to shoot for the perfection which I understand God to be. No matter how hard I pursue that goal I am never going to arrive, so in the process I have discovered the joy in my life is the struggles I tried hard to avoid until I found sobriety,

This is where the honesty, open-minded and willingness becomes so critically hinged with a daily inventory, to see where I am falling short and then have patience that God will do his part and remove what I have discovered that is keeping me in darkness. My experience has been the more I practice this I am rewarded in ways I can't put into words. For me to write about this, I feel the frustration Bill felt as he attempted this.

You just have to experience spiritual anonymity = humility for yourself. **DO THE ACTION AND THE RESULTS ARE SURE TO FOLLOW.**

Trudge the happy road....



My name is Carrie B, and I'm an Alcoholic. I have a Sponsor, a Service Sponsor, a Home Group, and a Sobriety date. A sobriety date that hasn't changed for over 8 years now.

However, when I first came to AA, My Sobriety date changed every 3-14 days for a long time. In fact it took me 10 months to get 30 days put together. This is when the literature was "outdated", and I liked hanging around the "cool meetings" that were not literature based, but instead would read new age scientific study's and articles, and talk about yoga and mindfulness and all the different ways they were staying sober. I liked trying the different ways and the different ideas. I felt very much a part of. I liked what the cool alcoholics had to say much better than the old school 12 steppers with Big Books in their hands.

When I got to AA it was because I had finely ran out of my own ideas. I opened the book when I finely ran out of "your" ideas too. "My" program didn't work for me anymore. "Your" program didn't work for me either, but for some reason, "THE" program of AA WORKED. AND WORKED WELL! To this day, it has been the ONLY thing that has been able to arrest my alcoholism. For some reason, when another Alcoholic took me through the work in the book, I had a spiritual awakening as the result of those steps. As promised. I seem to be in more debate with others lately about what A.A. is and is not. I am hearing more and more statements like, "You don't have to do the steps" and "The traditions, especially Anonymity are outdated." and even "It doesn't matter what your addiction is. Alcohol was but a symptom." Now we all know that A.A. has no monopoly on God, OR SOBRIETY, but if we can't all agree on what the A.A. program is internally, how can our CPC and PI committees share with the non-A.A. world what the message and program are?

A.A. still stands for "Alcoholics Anonymous" I am an alcoholic, which means I have the phenomenon of craving (once I take a drink I can't stop) coupled with the mental obsession that tells me I can beat the allergy if I just find the right combination or plan. I had to find a higher power that relived that obsession. Again, my ideas all failed. Identification with another alcoholic, who was properly armed with facts about himself, was able to provide me hope, and eventually willingness led me to the program

When all else failed, I followed the directions

in that book which led me to a HP. That is the ONLY thing that worked for me.

When we vote for a trusted servant we might ask how long they have been sober, how much coffee they have made in that time, and listen to how like-able or friendly they seem. We rarely, if ever, ask them if they have had a spiritual awakening as a result of the 12 steps or even if they identify as an alcoholic as described in our Big Book.

The recently released communications audit suggests that we have lost our message in New York and our literature is inconsistent. I don't see that. The literature published by AAWS seems, at-least to me, still very consistent, and congruent for the most part. This is something I thank God for often. Because like Wilson said, our literature is what preserves the integrity of the AA message.

Many members today don't know what the AA message is. But that is only because many of our meetings are no-longer literature based. We have a 90% open discussion, voluntary participation fellowship. Most AA members actually believe they are suppose to come to the meetings to talk about their day and get whatever off their chest. A.A. meetings have turned away from the literature and toward group therapy. If the message has been lost, it is hiding in our literature.

Wilson writes in 1958: "Sobriety- freedom from alcohol through the teaching and the practice of our 12 steps is the sole purpose of an AA group." It is our responsibility to bring the message through our literature to our home group.

Thanks for allowing me to share.

PNC Diversity Presentation

Sometime we get to share in a way that is deeper and more filled with risk than previously encountered. I am truly humbled by this opportunity. I, understanding change takes time and I have no disillusionment that the answers are here today. I can only share some thoughts and most importantly share questions for us as a fellowship to ponder and be mindful of.

Diversity has been a topic of some discussion around the fellowship for a bit again, and this begs the question, "What are we diverse from?" By its very nature this question evokes- not the same as, different, a ruling set, assimilation, don't understand you, us and them. The membership survey of 2014 shows our membership composition as follows:

White, 89%, Hispanic 3%, Black 4%, Native American 1%, Asian 1%, Other 2%

By those numbers, this tells me much about this fellowship, and leaves me with the obvious thought, "This fellowship has a lot of soul searching to do". After 83 years, and the knowledge of the message of inclusivity and that alcoholism runs across all races, creeds, economic boundaries, why is the membership overwhelmingly white. The importance of our Access Committees should be apparent when asked this question of challenges to the fellowship. Do we in this service structure world share of what access is and how it relates to group and individual responsibility? Questions to share among the fellowship can include; Can wheelchair bound humans easily access the meeting?, Do single parents feel ok about bringing their children to the meeting?, Does our room have pamphlets that show inclusion for all people? Does my home group know of the braille BB, the Navajo BB, where to find ASL interpreter? Do we have a BTG program, corrections correspondence for underrepresented populations?, What of our Armed forces and Veterans? Perhaps the most important question is, "am I doing enough?" This important inventory question I have recently had to ask myself as DCM. Inclusivity has demanded of me as a group member, to be sure to have our BB, 12x12, and pamphlets available in Spanish, has pamphlets for underrepresented groups displayed. As DCM, I have asked for our district guidelines to be published in Spanish have a braille copy of the BB available and that the district groups know this available. I have requested the technology committee to include a special needs Dropbox on the website, to let people know that the program is available in braille and audio forms.

I heard this at a conference a couple years ago. If the GSC was held somewhere other than New York, at differing locations, this would save the fellowship \$100,000 each year. The shortfall for interpreting the pre-conference material into Spanish was \$100,000. Made me think... I know that our BB is now published in the Navajo language, glad for that. One must understand that this is but one tribe among many that need the message of AA. As a society, one cannot pat itself on the back and rest on its laurels feeling that this suffices. A plain text BB was on the agenda a couple years ago, villages of Natives would have benefited by this and what do you suppose was done? Last year, at GSC, an item was on the Corrections agenda, concerning carrying the message to incarcerated Native Americans, and what do you suppose was done? A Remote Communities discussion is done in front of the GSC, important, yet not included in the Conference Report. More questions. There is a Native American GSO in Alabama, and a Native in AA Service Assembly yearly, both filling a need not filled by the general fellowship. I do want to acknowledge that Area 8 is having a Forum, Native Americans in AA and youth in September, at an area Rancheria. Good stuff.

I have Native Friends all over the West, some are in recovery programs, some even in AA, and the obstacles are the same wherever we are. Some barriers are self-imposed, hatred and distrust as examples, thou some we come by honestly; some are from lack of knowledge of culture by others. Personally as an Inupiat Eskimo, the references to my people are disrespectful. Our indigenous people have been on the receiving end of this bottle of misery brought by European man. My own distrust of the rooms was apparent and vocalized. I was confronted by the enemy, old white men, and the eventual true enemy, myself with all my hatred, bigotry, prejudice and judgement. By walking into the rooms, I was experiencing the tradition of the only requirement and that all important group principle of inclusivity. Believe me, the rooms had to prove out before I was able to surrender. So, as a fellowship where does responsibility lie? Obviously this begins with the individual, working toward a perfect ideal. Expressions of an HP as a group, society, service structure of the highest order means exploration of, "live and let live", Inclusivity, "as we understood", love and tolerance is our code, I want the hand of AA always to be there.

I'll close with this from Bill's words in A Members Eye View pamphlet. "Tonight, if i could find one fault with AA, it would be that we have not yet begun to tap the potential hidden in the last seven words of the 12th step: "practice these principles in all our affairs." It occurred to me not long ago that whenever i am sitting in an AA meeting, I am never aware that i am sitting next to another white man, another catholic, another American, or a Frenchman, Mexican, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, black man or brown. i am only sitting next to another alcoholic. And it seemed deeply significant to me that this feeling of common humanity had been purchased by me at the cost of considerable suffering.

Should this hard won understanding, and feeling for, others be confined to the meeting halls and members of AA? Or does it remain for me to take what i have learned and what i have experienced, not only in AA, but in every other area and endeavor of my life, to lift up my head and assume my rightful place in the family of man? Can i there, in the household of God, know that i am not sitting next to another white man, another catholic, another american, nor yet a frenchman, mexican, jew, moslem, hindu, black man or brown, not even another alcoholic, and can i finally- at long last, please God- come home from all the wars and say in the very depths of my soul, I am sitting next to another human being."



For more Info, Contact Oregon Area 58 Access Committee

www.aa-oregon.org/access-3/

Primary Purpose

- To assist the Alcoholics Anonymous groups in Oregon to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the still-suffering alcoholics and current members with access needs.

- The Oregon Area Access Committee provides information from GSO and other Area's to Groups, Districts, Intergrroups, and Service Committees. This is done through workshops, presentations, mailings etc.

Oregon Area Access Committee Chair:

access@aa-oregon.org

What Are "Access Needs"?

Both groups and members can become more aware of AA's who need specific kinds of help. But the most important fact to keep in mind is that all alcoholics--whether deaf, blind, or with other disabilities--want to be a part of the whole. The goal is to enable every alcoholic to be an active participant in the group, without emphasizing differences.

(From AA Service Piece F-107

copyright AA Word Services

- Alcoholics who are Deaf or hard of hearing;
- Alcoholics who live in rural areas/isolated, home or hospital bound;
- Alcoholics who do not have transportation or unable to drive themselves due to health conditions or DUI;
- Alcoholics who live in nursing homes/foster care homes;
- Alcoholics who use a wheel chair, walker, or cane;
- Alcoholics who are blind or have low vision;
- Alcoholics who have limited English reading and writing skills;
- Alcoholics who are single parents that are unable to find suitable child care to attend meetings;
- Alcoholics who are developmentally disabled.

Next Newsletter Topic Suggestion

"News of Service in My District"



*Please submit articles by
February 11, 2019*

newsletter@aa-oregon.org

OREGON AREA 58 BULLETIN: Do you want to send an article? Articles should focus on stories, group news, district news, or other reports on service activities in Oregon Area 58. We may edit your presentation for formatting purposes.

Please send them to Newsletter
Chairperson, Cindee S.
by the cutoff date, 2-11-19

**Please send text, not
PDF format for articles**

Send an e-mail to the
newsletter@aa-oregon.org and use the
heading of the topic:
"Newsletter Submission"

Seventh Tradition Contributions can be
Mailed to:

Oregon Area Treasury
1900 NE 3rd St, Suite 106-172E
Bend, Oregon 97701

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**[http://www.aa-oregon.org/finance-
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