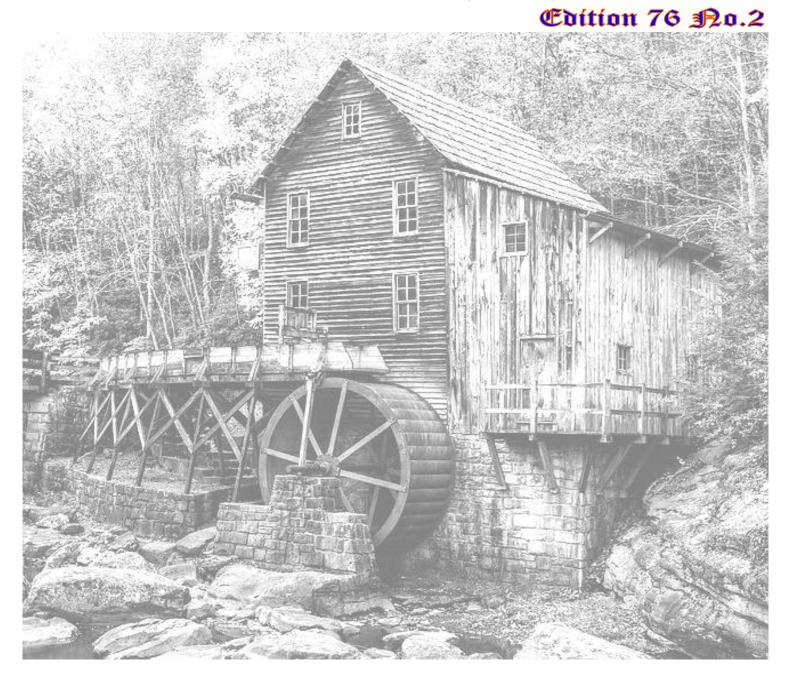
## Mill Creek A.A. Group Since 1944

## At The Gregon State Penitentiary Newsletter for March/April 2019



#### Run of the Mill - 1944 and Beyond

A Publication of the Mill Creek Group of Alcoholics Anonymous Edition 76 No. 2 March/April 2019



#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mill Creek AA Group has but one purpose:
"To carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the alcoholics who still suffer, through recovery meetings, workshops, seminars, publications and sponsorship, all the while, individually and as a group, practicing the Principles of AA in all our affairs."

#### **Responsibility Declaration**

I am responsible.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA to always be there. And for that,

#### I am responsible.

#### **Alcoholics Anonymous Preamble**

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experiences, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The <u>only</u> requirement for membership is, a desire to stop drinking.

### **The Serenity Prayer**

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

#### **IN THIS ISSUE**

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#### TREASURER REPORT

	-///
STARTING BALANCE:	\$ 639.49
Admin. Interest Dec	\$ 3.72
Donations Jan./Feb.	\$ 222.00
Outside Donations	\$ 490.00
Pastry/Supplies Nov./Dec.	\$ -316.80
Christmas Candy Bags	\$ -85.00
Event Photos	\$ -32.24
<b>ENDING BALANCE:</b>	\$ 921.17

### **Trusted Servants**

**Tim T.** President/

Office Facilitator

**David F.** Vice. President

Joshua W. GSR

Newsletter Editor

Joe C. OGSR

Scott R. Assistant OGSR
Martin F. Treasurer/CFO
Ronald C. Meeting Facilitator

**Jason E.** Librarian

Asst. Newsletter Editor

#### Wednesday Night Book Study

Chairman: Ronald C.

#### **Thursday Night Meeting**

Secretary: Tim T. Chairman: Ronald C.

#### **Saturday General Meeting**

Chairman: Ronald C.

#### Aprendiendo A Vivir Wednesday Night Group

Secretary: Jose G. Chairman: Roger G.

#### Aprendiendo A Vivir Saturday Group

Secretary: Roger G. Chairman: Jose G.

## Anyone from the outside wishing to become involved in service or attend a Mill Creek AA meeting at OSP may do so by contacting:

Mr. Steven Finster

Staff Advisor for The Mill Creek A.A. Group of OSP

2605 State Street Salem, OR 97310

Phone: 503-378-2289 FAX: 503-373-1008

Or email our OGSR Scott R. at:

#### E-mail: millcreek1944@gmail.com

## We would love to have you join us! DISCLAIMER

The purpose of the Mill Creek A.A. Group Newsletter is to increase unity and to carry the message of recovery to other alcoholics.

## The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of either Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole or The Mill Creek AA Group of OSP.

No endorsement of or affiliation with any groups or with any organization is at any time intended or implied.

Reprint rights are granted to all service boards, groups and committees of A.A. Submissions from members are eagerly welcomed, but the newsletter editor reserves the right to edit all submissions at his discretion.

The Mill Creek A.A. Group at the Oregon State Penitentiary does not endorse any outside enterprise or lend its name, or the A.A. name to any state agencies, treatment or counseling services whatsoever. The Mill Creek AA Newsletter is produced solely by the inmates at OSP and is intended to simply reach out, and share the good message of recovery.

## Congratulations!

We celebrate everyone who has worked so hard in doing what needs to be done in staying sober, "One day at a time"

#### **Happy March Birthdays to:**

Jimmie F.	03/06/99	20 Years!
Ronald S.	03/05/05	14 Years!
Lee S.	03/15/06	13 Years!
Edward G.	03/04/09	10 Years!
Douglas S.	03/29/10	9 Years!
Louis W.	03/17/13	6 Years!
Brian T.	03/11/14	5 Years!
Darrel D.	03/01/15	4 Years!
Kenneth S.	03/14/15	4 Years!

#### **Happy April Birthdays to:**

Stephen G.	04/19/94	25 Years!
Harrison B.	04/15/97	22 Years!
Michael W.	04/23/97	22 Years!
Edmund B.	04/24/97	22 Years!
Roger L.	04/02/02	17 Years!
lmani W.	04/13/07	12 Years!
James S.	04/23/12	6 Years!
Tommy V.	04/11/13	5 Years!
Vasiliy Y.	04/18/13	5 Years!
Donald R.	04/30/13	5 Years!
Scott B.	04/02/15	4 Years!
Matt B.	04/12/15	3 Years!

If your sobriety date is coming up, or we've missed adding you to our list and you'd like the group to help celebrate with you, please send a communication form and let us know.

Also, if you would like a sobriety coin, or if you would like an official sobriety certificate please let us know.

## The Serenity Prayer

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

"In every problem, great and small, the Serenity Prayer will work for me if I keep aware of its meaning every time I say it."

The Serenity Prayer suggests I ask something beyond myself for "the Courage to change the **things** I can." The word is **things**, not **people**. True, there is much room for improvement in my life, but it can come only from changing my own

## STEP THREE

#### "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him."

"God, I offer myself to thee, to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, They Love, and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always! Amen"

Step Three is like opening of a locked door. How shall we let God into our lives? Willingness is the key.

Dependence as a means to independence. Dangers of self-sufficiency. Turning our will over to Higher Power. Misuse of willpower.

Sustained and personal exertion necessary to conform to God's Will.

\*(12x12)\*

Now, I read this long ago and couldn't help but wonder at the seeming contradictions...until I experienced them myself.

Dependence as a means to
Independence—if you think about it, all it says is exactly what we've already known: there must be a strength, a sense of purpose outside of ourselves that we can draw from in order to free ourselves from this hellish cycle we've been living in.

(Ellis, Assistant Editor)

## TRADITION THREE

## "The only requirement for A.A. member ship is a desire to stop drinking."

Early intolerance based on fear. To take away any alcoholic's chance at A.A. was sometimes to pronounce his death sentence. Membership regulations abandoned. Two examples of experience. Any alcoholic is a member of A.A., when he says so.

#### THE THIRD STEP PRAYER

"It is I who have made my life a mess. I have done it, but I cannot undo it. My mistakes are mine, and I will begin a searching and fearless moral inventory. I will write down my wrongs, but I will also include that which is good. I pray for the strength to complete the task. Amen."

## STEP FOUR

## "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

How instincts can exceed their proper function. **Step four is and effort to discover our liabilities.** Basic problem of extremes in instinctive drives. Misguided moral inventory can result in guilt, grandiosity, or blaming others. Assets can be noted with liabilities. Self-justification is dangerous. Willingness to take inventory brings light and new confidence. Step Four is beginning of lifetime practice. Common symptoms of emotional insecurity are worry, anger self-pity, and depression. Inventory reviews relationships.

Importance of thoroughness. (12x12)

## TRADITION FOUR

"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority-a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants;

They do not govern."

## **POEMS & STORIES**

(CONCERNING THE STEPS OF THIS ISSUE)

The Mill Creek AA wants to thank everyone who has submitted poems and stories to be published in our monthly newsletter. There have been many insightful, humorous, touching, uplifting and well-written submissions and we look forward to publishing even more in the future. Some articles or poems may be submissions from the official AA Grapevine Magazine.

Writers' personal opinions expressed in 
"Poems and Stories" do not necessarily represent the views of The Mill Creek AA Group.

### <u>○GOD: DON'T GET</u> <u>CAUGHT UP ON IT</u> ○

By J.Ellis, Asst. Editor & Librarian

Our *use* of the word God is the use of an IDEA. SO many of our potential members arrive at a meeting, wanting to change their lives, to grasp this jewel that we have...and become blind, deaf, and dumb the minute we discuss the influence this has in our lives. The common thought is that God is some Judeo-Christian monolith, when the TRUTH is that,

## for Alcoholics, God is anything we choose to make him.

If I am honest, when I first attended our group, this was my biggest hang up. I was so caught up in thinking; 'ah crap, here goes another shove-it-down-ya-throat religious pogrom'. Only once I'd had it broken down to me did I truly understand what the word GOD means for US. To a member of A.A., when we hear God, we don't hear religion. When one of us says Higher Power, often we're not even thinking about some pearly-gate figure waiting on a throne somewhere.

## No. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Step isn't telling you to convert to organized religion.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> step is really telling us that, in order to achieve this amazing sobriety, we

have to find some*thing* or some*one* that we can rely on for strength when we are simply too weak to carry on. The end-all here is that we have to be willing to admit that we are not as powerful, not as in-control as we have thought. That we are weak inherently flawed men and women who **need something more to become whole.** 

...and whatever that is for you becomes this Higher Power you're so adamant against. Not some overseer with a long beard.

Once you get over yourself , the rest of the Step is easy-peezy. (Okay, I lied, it's not easy. In fact, this part is probably harder than admitting that something bigger than us actually exists.) "Making a decision to turn our will and our lives over to God??"

#### When I first heard that I laughed.

'These fools is trippin', is all I could think. They want me to give up control of my life to this thing? To this thing that I couldn't even hold in my hand like that bottle of brown love I've held so many times? To this thing that forced me to see myself as weak, as someone who couldn't control his use of a F\*!king liquid?

And then...well, I realized that I'd pretty much already done it without thinking about it.

See, once you admit that you're flawed, that you don't have the control like you thought, that there is **something bigger than you out there**, you have already gone halfway to turning your will over to that something.

So, once you've looked to that thing or person or idea or WHATEVER for strength and direction, you've accomplished step three. BOOM. DONE.

Crazy, huh?

#### FROM THE PRESIDENT

#### Tim T., AA President

In this issue, we're going over the Third and fourth steps. For me, here is where the AA philosophy gets difficult. Step Three speaks of turning our will over to God, "as we understand him." The first question of course is, who is God? What is God? Is He a person? An Entity? Love? Perhaps just an idea that leads mankind subconsciously to a certain destination that we perhaps could not have reached on our own? Maybe its "the force", and we're all just Jedi battling the evil devil-Sith? (Ok, Star Wars reference).

But to be totally honest, at this point in my life, I'm still not totally sure exactly what God is. What I can say though, is that I'm absolutely sure, It or He, or whatever It is, actually really does exist. For many years, even that was difficult for me to admit. I think I'm a pretty smart guy. Went to college, studied theology, the beginnings of religion in modern day society and the birth of the pantheistic versus the monotheistic belief systems. And of course, what does the educated elite demand that the "intelligent" students under their tutelage accept as fact? The simple truth that obviously, there is no God, the concept was just superstitious nonsense created by cavemen to understand why the sun rises in the east and why sometimes crops fail and battles are lost.

Those who believe are but foolish ignoramuses, but those who realize the truth, that there is no God, are the only worthy minds meant to rule subdue the less than brilliant members of our societies. Hmm...

So, for many years, because I am so clearly brilliant, that is what I accepted as fact, and those who thought otherwise were clearly not as brilliant as me.

Good job college! No God, socialism is good, and abortions for everyone. And yes, it does seem that those were the most important "truths" I needed to acknowledge to be accepted by those individuals who controlled my GPA. Then, needless to say, actually, maybe not so needless, after I returned to the real world, it didn't take long for me to come back to many of the values I believed in before I entered the propaganda machi9ne of the modern higher education system. I eventually realized I wasn't quite the liberal my teachers convinced me I was. I believed in self-reliance, taking responsibility for ones own life, life is precious and morals are not hang-ups, but guide posts for an honorable life. I came full circle, except for one issue.

What is this God thing? SO, realizing I didn't quite have all the answers, I called out to the Universe.

# "If there is a God, show yourself! If You really do exist, I want to know the truth, whatever it is!"

What's the saying, "Be careful what you wish for, because you just might get it?" And so, through the next few years of my life, I stayed open to truth. I stayed curious and open-minded to anything the honestly rang true to my heart and mind. Never buying into anything others would spout or preach, but honestly, desperately searching for the truth, whatever it might be. For me, this is when it began. This is when that "force" began to whisper to me. It began to guide me, to teach me, lead to places I never could have found without it. It was amazing, absolutely incredible at times, so much so that I would laugh out lout at the absurdity of it.

How absolutely clear it became that there was "something", reaching out for me, calling me to find it. What was it, what is it now? I still don't totally know, but what I do know is

that "it" really is there. So mysterious. So supernatural, so mind-blowing that I could never explain in words, but I came to see clearly that "it" was watching me, waiting, and most surprisingly, even at times speaking to me. Maybe not out loud, not audibly, but it gave me signs and wonders that I could not simply explain away.

Nothing my "intelligent" mind could come up with would allow me to dismiss those experiences as me just being delusional. It was real and that was that.

For me not to accept that truth would be just as dishonest as pretending to believe in a religious dogma that I know to be untrue. It was astonishing, incredible; I'll even dare to say it, miraculous. So, I'm here now. I know. I'm at the place that I never again can doubt that there is something there, a Higher Power, a God, something that is attempting to guide me, and maybe, and this is really hard for me to say, maybe that even loves me. That's tough for me, because what it finally comes down to, if I really am honest with myself and I can no longer deny or talk myself out of ideas that I now know are absolutely true, that maybe there is really is a loving God, it all comes down to just one thing. Trust. If it's real, and I genuinely believe it is, I have to trust IT. I have to believe that I am on a path, and even though I don't' totally see the purpose, I have to put my faith in a Higher Power, that I trust, really does care for me. I have to trust Him. I have to surrender to that trust. It's so difficult, especially when I realize I live in a cage and all the pain and horror that come with this place, this reality, this prison, but I have realized, I have come to the conclusion, I have to trust, and so, that's what I now choose to do. And maybe, just maybe, if even I, a once atheist can do it, maybe you can too.

## OUT OF CHAOS Mary O.

I was a late bloomer with my drinking. As the daughter of an alcoholic mother, I found drinking to be a huge turn off from an early age. I hated the taste of alcohol and I hated what my mother's alcoholism did to our family.

What I did not know until much later in life is that you don't have to be drinking to live like an alcoholic.

From a very young age, I surrounded myself with chaos and drama and lots of dramatic people. By not drinking myself, I created the illusion that I was somehow in control.

But in reality, I controlled my brothers, endlessly bossing them around and telling them what to do. I controlled the people around me by telling them whatever I thought they wanted to hear and manipulating circumstances so that I always appeared in the best possible light. I controlled my drunk mother, using her guilt about her own drinking to get what I wanted. I craved drama.

I rarely drank in my teens and 20s. I was busy following my plans and making sure my life stayed on the schedule I had set up. I was walked into a law firm and talked them into hiring me as a legal secretary even though I had absolutely no experience. I met a great guy, and, after some time, he proposed. We got married and had children, right on schedule. Our children were still babies when my mother was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's and I became her caretaker, along with looking after my grandmother. During this time, my

husband was working and going to school and I had a part-time job as well. I was living in the eye of the hurricane, which is where I functioned best. I was also starting to drink socially, although my tolerance was very low and I didn't do a very good job of keeping up with my hard-partying friends. It was something of an ongoing joke in my circles that I was such a lightweight.

Then something happened around the time I hit 40. For a very short time, my tolerance for alcohol seemed to increase and I found myself drinking on a daily basis. It didn't seem like a big deal. Most of the people I hung out with drank every day. A cocktail after work, wind with dinner, drinks after dinner. Didn't everyone do that?

But then a switch seemed to flip somewhere in my brain. Why wait until five o'clock for that first drink? And on weekends? A beer or two at noon when you are working outside shouldn't be an issue. Before I knew what had hit me, I was drinking around the clock and I couldn't stop.

Soon I had my first stay in the detox ward of our local hospital, where a doctor had come in to tell me he could help me. At that point I was blaming all of my problems on the stress of my job. I didn't' need help, I just needed to quit that job and id be fine. I quit the job, but the problems didn't go away and now there was nothing between me and the bottle. Three more months and two more trips to detox and I was finally ready to hear what that doctor had to say...

My first day there, they told me I would have to go to an AA meeting almost every day. After all I had been through, I still didn't' think that AA was what I needed. AA was the end, as I saw

it, the last resort. It wasn't going to work for me.

And the, two amazing things happened. First, I went to an AA meeting. And second, I was First Stepped. I felt that each woman who spoke at that AA meeting was telling my story. I felt completely at home.

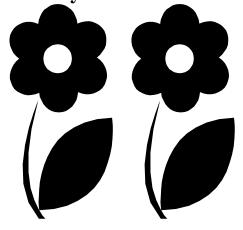
There was one problem though. I felt that I was different because didn't get hooked when I was young and had my first drink. I didn't start partying in my teens and spend years doing crazy alcoholic things. I didn't start drinking until much later. Did I still belong?

Then I got the Big Book.

## Case closed. There was no argument left for me. I

embraced AA, got a sponsor, worked the Steps and got involved in service work. Ever since then, my life has changed in so many positive ways and I continue to look for new ways to grow. I have learned that living a life of serenity is so much more than just not drinking. It is a way of life that I never knew was possible.

...I may have been a late bloomer with my alcoholism, but I have not been a late bloomer with my sobriety.





#### Rick P. Vernon, Conn.

Shortly after my 30<sup>th</sup> sober anniversary in AA, I sensed something was wrong. Externally I was solidly sober, but mentally I was slipping. I did and Eleventh Step evaluation, which confirmed there was a "disturbance in the Force". I felt my "elder attitude" needed an overhaul. My program was shriveling.

I vowed a rigorous inventory, accomplished it and discovered a cunning complacency inching me toward a peril that I was denying. The hidden truth was that I'd grown bored with AA meetings.

How could this be? I wondered. I still felt gratitude for the program, but my years sober had blinded me to that fact that my attitude of service had begun to fossilize over the decades. I'd become a sober fossil.

Further inner digging and conversations with my AA peers led to a shocking discovery. I could see that my passion for AA began to fade and my home group connection frayed. I'd become a wandering elder. I sat with the same old friends, who sat in the same chairs and often said the same things week after week. Repetition is an old-timer character defect, I confess. Yet, reflection revealed that in the last few years, me meeting attendance was based on convenience.

When convenient, I'd catch a meeting that was close by. Sometimes, I'd sneak out of a meeting at the break when I didn't care for the tone of what people were sharing.

In self-righteous comfort, I knew no one could criticize me because *I was still coming to meetings after all these years*. Grave danger lurked and smiled.

Rigorous honest smacked my complacency awake enough to admit that I had slipped from being a meeting member to showing up as a meeting *visitor*.

SO, I did what my ego didn't want me to do. I picked a group and got involved. I was surprised at how hard my ego fought my recommitment. In the re-beginning, I had a smile on my face but a grudge in my mind. Then, a good verbal rear end-kicking form a friend got me through that minefield of arrogance. Gratitude slowly grew behind action.

For the past 10 years, I have taken my turn to make coffee, I've fulfilled speaking commitments and I have been the smiling greeter at the door and the quiet picker-upper after meetings. I even pushed myself from sitting in the back row to a middle-of-the-meeting seat. I disciplined myself to say a few words at each meeting and forced myself to make new friends, even if their softer way of staying sober was not in line with my old-timer, hardline thoughts on how AA should be worked.

In time, what began as a chore had become a charm. I felt at home. And to my surprised delight, not only did my passion for the program blossom, but so did my "whole attitude and outlook upon life". I've come to believe that my recommitment to a home group saved my aging sobriety.

I constantly need to remember what got me here and jump back in and get active. With a little time and effort, the beauty of the "Fellowship of the Spirit" reminded me that there's no place like home.

#### **•CAN I HELP YOU? •**

Charles W.

I was currently working on my Second Step, yet I wanted to work the Ninth. I wanted my life to be better soon, back the way it was before I destroyed it all.... I never drank to get drunk. I drank to hide from the world, to keep from feeling any emotions, good or bad. But in early sobriety, I wouldn't do anything to stop myself from drinking. I wouldn't go in a meeting or call my sponsor or tell anyone. I would just react. And I'd relapse. It was exactly as our literature says. Id' arrive at the liquor store and have no idea how I'd gotten there.

At the time, I considered myself an atheist. I was struggling to believe in a power greater than myself. The word God made my blood boil. I wanted absolutely nothing to do with a God of anyone's understanding, let alone a power greater than me.

One day, as I walked through the automatic door of my liquor store to buy my poison, a bell went off to alert the clerk that someone had entered the store.

For some reason, that day, the bell spoke to me louder than anyone or anything ever had.... instead of buying liquor, I ran as fast as I could three blocks away, where and AA meeting was happening. I burst through the doors and broke into tears. My brothers and sisters there welcomed me with open arms. To some people it may have just been a little bell at the entrance to a liquor store. TO ME, in that moment, THE BELL WAS God SPEAKING TO ME.

That tiny little ding-ding of a bell was a power greater than me.

Absolutely ignorant was I to this, the Choices I never understood I'd made Crazy as hell to wake up today – Especially baffled to find I live, see: **Pretty straightforward** Though I've tried to deny it All I am is Broke and Broken. **Never mind this Painful Journey Cuts that brought me Thick Skin and Hard Heart** Everytime I fell I stood, torn apart; But it has Forged me into this: Ragged and lost inside

Each night a Hollow Lie Eager for a road out of Silent Thunder, I listened Scared for the 1st time, your voices Made me wonder Maybe, just maybe **Enough is really Enough.** 

> ACCEPTANCE **FREES** ME (1.5.19)

## CAN YOU TELL THE TRUTH TO YOURSELF?

By Jason E., Asst. Editor & Librarian

The 4<sup>th</sup> Step is all about you. Should be a comfortable topic, right? As Alcoholics, selfishness is second nature...if you're willing to admit it, at least. This Step gives you the chance to take a second and find out what is motivating you in life. *Why* do you do what you do? *What* drives you? You say that you want this life, you tell yourself that it's time for recovery – but do your actions reflect that? Are you acting in anger? Do you show the world the same face you have always shown, or have you grown beyond that?

I need you to remember something while you take this Step: **Nobody but you will ever hear what you discover.** What that means is that, even if you are ashamed of what you find, you are not obligated to share that shame with anyone but yourself. There is no reason to sugarcoat, or hold back on this internal examination, because there is no one but **you** to judge you. If you can do that, if you do not shy from this trial, you will have finally reached what I believe to be the True Beginning of your sobriety.

Step 3 might have been hard for many, but The 4<sup>th</sup> Step was the hardest. It is one thing to admit to having flaws, but it is entirely another matter to pinpoint exactly what they are inside. You have to decide what is more important to *you*: not being swallowed by the emotional and psychological *crap* that you've stuffed away in a tiny little hotel-sized Jack bottle somewhere dusty, numb, and forgotten, slowly screaming itself into insanity and directionless darkness...or finally, at last, finding a sliver of light that just might be bright enough to guide you to solid ground with a bitty bristle of green grass under your feet?

This is the decision that you have to make now. Call it a pre-step to Step 4. You have to decide whether this delve into the abyss of your own mind, heart, and essence is something you can handle. I personally know that, once you've completed Step 3, once you are able to pull strength from something outside yourself (WHATEVER IT IS), this pre-step isn't as daunting – scary and guilt-provoking, but still a reachable goal.

Am I strong enough to see the truth about **myself**?

With Step 3 ---- Yes.

Thus begins the actual breaking down of each and every flaw, every relationship and every aspect of our lives. But don't worry – you've still got two more Steps until its time to change all of that. For now, acknowledge their existence and change what you're ready to change. For now, take a breather. The truth is out. Revel in the relief this Step has finally given you, and enjoy the moment.  $\odot$ 

The first time is always the hardest ya'll. One day you'll go back to this Step and see it as a sort of compass, a doorway which swings open to the rolling hills of sobriety when you start to lose sight of what really matters.



Or even if words in line Summarize and rhyme. **Father Time seems to** Always oblige, as he slips by, Rise and compromise, And even lies cannot capsize **Our lives** No matter the compromised Time or my life With Time's Prize. **Throughout time** This Prized Light survived Each and every turn. Now let me take time to Summarize. **History has sand scribed** Past times, And here I remind Father Time About the current Light, As our lives are falling back Into line, Fulfilling love's timeline, Constantly challenged by The blind. The future times Have started to computerize And digitize our future lives So they will collide, To no one's obvious surprise That true love's repetitive Rise throughout time And even terrorized by past Times. Like this light or Future times Not yet compromised Or so says time. No matter time Nor his lies Can break down our lives. Life's one true light Will always rise and survive, When two lives collide.

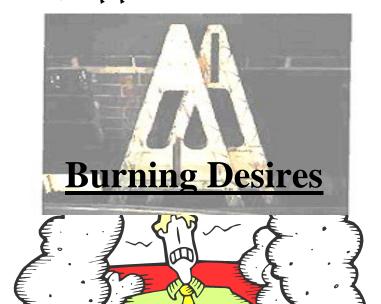
-DAVID F II, VP

BRACING MYSCLF

Chris B.

The other night in New York City, I had the honor of earrying the AA message to a local detox. While I was on my way there, I found myself trying to arrange the stage and lights and everything. I was thinking about what I was going to say, wondering if my speaker was going to show up, and what to do if he was late, and on and on.

Right then, my Higher
Power stepped in and had me
walk right past these huge
construction fixtures. I
stopped and stared at them. I
had to laugh. There it was:
<u>M.M.</u> That got me out of my
head long enough to say the
Third Step Prayer and get
back on the beam. GOTTA
LOVE MA.



#### **Change Is Never Too Late!**

Greetings to all. My name is Carl Dixon, and I am a recovering alcoholic and drug addict. Prior to embracing AA teachings and values, I had practiced a life of self-hate with no sight of the 12 spiritual principles, not even one.

Today I have a different motivation that drives my mind, spirit, and soul. A power greater than myself, my Higher Power whom I call God. And when I make humble efforts seriously accepting His will for me, at some point in my life I feel absolutely relieved of the load I have carried on my shoulders. My mind doesn't wander anymore and my heart is full of joy at every breath I take giving me complete serenity. The most wonderful thing I have discovered is that "prayer" does work, I am feeling that God is the most loving Creator who is especially interested in me--otherwise, He would have not led me to A.A., nor given me so many chances to come out of the pitfalls of my life.

God is more than patient and merciful. Most of my life has been spent behind bars in many different prisons. When I started this sentence I had no idea how much my life was about to change in April 1987 when I was given 30 to Life for Aggravated Murder. After studying the 12 steps

and staying with A.A. for 30 years plus, I was given an opportunity at life on the outside at parole. Today I have been clean and sober for over 31 years, and my sobriety means the world to me, which always comes first.

Today I am practicing spiritual principles surrendering my will to God, My "Higher Power".

On page 45 of the Big Book I was given my first glimmer of hope and optimism. Today, I can identify my values, beliefs, and desires...I can recognize my strengths and weaknesses, and establish realistic, reachable goals. As usual, I like to offer some spiritual support; this is a prayer to the Holy Spirit:

"Holy Spirit", you who makes me See
everything
and show me the Way
to reach my goals
You, who gives me the divine gift
To forgive and forget the wrongs
That have been done to me.
You, who are in all the instances of my
life with me."

I, in short, want to thank you for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from you no matter how great, the material desires may be in my mind... Thank you for your love unconditionally towards my loved ones and me.

Accepting life on life's Terms...

Peace and Blessings By: Bro. Carl D.

### Make a Horse Not Drink?

By Jason E, Asst. Editor

Hey all, it's the "real" Jason. And yes, I am an alcoholic. Seems like every meeting another Jason crops up, trying to steal my thunder...yet, like everything else in life, there's meaning in that if I'm willing to find it. The "real" Jason is an egotistic a-hole, but pretty much a good guy, (or I'd like to think so anyway). Other Jasons might feel a little disadvantaged, but I'm pretty generous....alright, alright, the truth is that us Jasons, Masons, and McGees, Clardys, Bobs and Merlins ....we are all in exactly the same cell.

By myself, I am a broken vessel for something dark and heady, a cracked bottle perpetually leaking anything of value from my soul. By myself, I am left wandering in a nightscape that, when I first stumbled upon it, was so enticingly alive it distracted me from the gaping hole that was becoming my very existence. Then, in what felt like an instant, an inwardly curving black hole swallowed EVERYTHING. It's blackly gleaming edges did not exist, yet they were as real to me as if I stood on their curves, slipping, sliding, further and further, losing my footing until I was sliding feet first into the endless pitch myself, losing myself, going, going....gone.

#### I AM NOT ALONE.

This statement is the only reason that I have been able to make the decisions I've made to bring me to A.A. everyday, to be *present* in each meeting, even when there are other interests; yard, sports games, shows, events, and, shoot, basically anything other than a meeting!

The truth is that I found in A.A. the courage to accept that my lifestyle affected other people; that my life ceased to be my

own once I allowed others into it. There was a choice I had to make: to be a human being and care for someone other than myself, or to take the leap into that gaping hole and be twisted into something less than animal. In the doorway that I stood, there was no middle ground, only the threshold to one way or another. The most f-ed up part? The road to 'human being' wasn't all that much brighter than the one down the drunken void.

With this in mind, it still wasn't much of a choice. I could literally see the end of my skills, my talents, my *essence* through the keyhole of that door, so clearly it was as if I were already living it. I wish I could say that I was scared, that some inner Jiminy Cricket stood in my ear whispering chills into my spine of all the reasons I should close that door.

If I told you that, I would be lying.

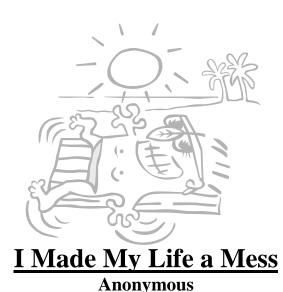
The thought of giving in to my basest self was tantalizing, nearly overwhelming in its seduction; but it was this strange emptiness, a hollow sort of ache that echoed of loss and could-have-beens which pulled me back from that vision. Seeing the end to all that I had built, of all of the experiences I had gathered to myself, looking at the massive annihilation of *the real Jason*, I knew that only one thing in this world could lock that door forever.

I had to find out for myself what life looked like on the other side.

Thank the universe that I did, because the minute I made an earnest effort to become sober (oh boy, better believe I've had my slip ups, but as our President pointed out, the only thing that matters is having **the desire to stop drinking**), things began to come together. And by things, I mean my life. A child I didn't even know existed came into my life, I received the chance at early parole, I was promoted, cops stopped screwing with me, and people who had never shown much regard for me before campaigned on my behalf for opportunities I hadn't entertained <u>for myself</u>.

The cut and dried, as I'm fond of saying, is that this meeting, these people I did not talk to on the mainline, helped guide me to a purpose bigger than myself. This group helped me to face myself, to find the core of who I was and who I wanted to be and *be* that person. Working these steps, I became a father to my daughter, a caring, supportive husband to my wife, and a leader to those who look to me for guidance.

You can lead a horse to water....and in this case, it's getting it to NOT drink where we have the problem. I can thankfully say that ya'll have made me the only horse happy to live by a dry watering hole.



"I have made my life a mess"....last night there was an event going on, something I should have been a part of. Instead I was staring at this line of the third step prayer, wondering how my life had become so messed up. How, when I have made so many leaps and bounds, when even ODOC itself has told me that I've shown "radical change", can a mistake that I made over a decade ago continue to mess with my life? How can I sit here, so high on my horse, engaged, an involved father, a medical assistant for the severe dementia patient here at OSP, an artist and author, sponsor to a handful of striving cleanlings, chosen to be one of five inmates in all of ODOC as a test case to giving Measure 11 good time and AIP, and so many more roles that it would seem grandiose to list here; tell me, how can I have all of these things going on and still be pulled into the bullshit to mess it all up???

And the third step prayer answers this question unequivocally: *I* made a mess of my life. Period.

I have done it, but I cannot undo it.

I have done it, but I cannot undo it? Me, who so prides himself on never taking "no" for an answer, on cutting through red tape wherever he goes. Me, who was able to go from weapons and IMU shots, to receiving AIP from the Oregon government on a day-for-day sentence. Me, who drank until he was shit faced every day, who skipped burning and blew up every bridge he'd ever had ten years ago to belong to a society he could have just as easily avoided.

I put myself into this predicament, I did exactly what I did, but somehow, with all of my formidable abilities, talents, and intellect, I cannot undo any of it. I am stuck with this prison set, I am ingrained with a people who diminish me, I am on the edge of losing everything I have worked for because of a decision I made as a teenager....yet, as a developed man, I cannot undo it.

My mistakes are mine, and I will begin a searching and fearless moral inventory.

I read this and hope that it is offering me a way out, a way to fix everything, an end-all solution to this cluster bomb of fecal matter festering under my skin, sloughing away all of my hard earned "good vibes" - and with that hope in mind, I literally got down on my arthritic knees and made this list of ills in my mind, things that I have done to people, lies that I have told and perpetuated, choices I have made, actions committed, every single thing that I could think of to justify why the Universe was throwing me under the wheels of this rusty piece of crap bus I felt driving over my preciously held new lifestyle.

As I made the list I felt a teensy lightening, a few grains of sand lifting from the hill weighing me down.

But it was still there. Nothing had changed... I will write down my wrongs, but I will also include that which is good.

Okaaaay, maybe I need to write them down for it to work? So lets do that...

Ummm....why isn't it working?

It didn't work because its not a cure-all. As our POTAA says often, the 12 steps aren't a magic cure, the big book isn't a miraculous religious text that will absolve us of all of our sins and give us a new life, one touch of its cover won't give us relief from life's problems. It isn't working cause goddamnit, **SOBER** 

#### LIFE IS HARRRRD!!!

But we live it anyway. We wake up and we try. I try. When someone asks me how I'm doing today, I always tell them I'm living life to the best of my ability. Well, last night I had to change that. From now on, when you see me and ask this question, I will tell you I'm just trying to live life. I have no other choice. None of this drama, none of the pits that I dug for myself, absolutely not one of the negatives in my life will change because of the good I do now. It will forever tug at me; for everyday that I do good, every hour my own decisions will be trying to reel me back down into the cesspit of these hyenas.

Someone told me of a saying recently, and it struck me as momentous because of all that is happening right now. The saying goes like this: "Even the lion has to deal with the flies."

If I want this vision of sobriety, if I truly want success, I have to recognize the lion within. I have to embrace that lion and learn to live with the flies that come...even the ones who bite. (and hell if there ain't a whole lot of those).





On a Lighter Note **IN TRUNKS** 

How does a drunk elephant put on tight shoes?

A shoe-horn!

(<u>why</u> is the damn thing putting on shoes? **CAUSE HE'S FRIGGIN DRUNK!**)

Jason E.

### **Spaced Ooooouuut!**

Two well-oiled "astronauts" were holding forth at the local watering hole about their upcoming space trips.

"I'm going to land on Mars," boasted the first one.

"Well, I'm going to land on the sun," bragged the second "astronaut".

"You can't do that," said the first guy. "You'll burn up."

"DO you think I'm an idiot?" responded the second spacer. "I'm going to land at night."

(Uuuugh. Pity laugh)

PAUL C.

#### **Billy's Blues**

One day Billy was drunk and got in a bar fight, which involved the cops.

The next day Billy went to a revival and the preacher asked anyone with needs to come forward and be prayed over.

So he got in line.

When it was Billy's turn the preacher said, "Billy, what you want me to pray about?"

Billy said, "Preacher, I need you to pray for my hearing."

So the preacher put one finger in Billy's ear and the other hand on top of his head and prayed a while. After a few minutes, He removed his hands and said, "Billy, how's your hearing now?"

"I don't know preacher," said Billy "It's not until next Wednesday in Phoenix."

<YEEEESSSSSS!!!!>

BOB M.

#### **Knockity Knock!**

Who's there?

Alcoholics Anonymous Alcoholics Anonymous who? I can't tell you, I'm anonymous. (teeheehee)

SHELINA K.

#### "Top Ten Reasons to Go To A Meeting Naked"

- 1. Your Sponsor is always yelling, "I want to see your ass in the meeting by 8:00!"
- 2. Can take advantage of beach meetings to work on your tan
- 3. "I can't put a dollar in the basket I left my wallet in my pants."
- 4. To stop those creepy addicts from looking down your blouse.
- 5. You no longer need to share "intellectually" to be noticed.
- 6. So that with a little help you can add "Exotic Dancer" to your exaggerated story.
- 7. People stop asking to borrow your pens after they've seen where your keep them.
- 8. Diverts attention from the fact that you also came to the meeting loaded.
- 9. Give "bad hair day" a whole new meaning.
- 10. No one steals your chair. Now get to a meeting!

#### **Mid America Newsletter**

Reprinted from the Man Archives Summer 2004

## **God is Watching**

Socrates - Outside Mill Creek Member

Very late at night, an alcoholic broke into a closed bar he was just getting drunk at an hour before to steal some booze, but while sneaking over to the counter, he heard a voice,

"God is watching!" He panicked for a moment, but quickly shook it off and returned to his nefarious task. Seconds went by and then, he heard it again. "God is watching!" His heart froze as he quickly turned towards the sound of the voice. He looked up and saw a parrot sitting on its perch. "Craaauh!" It said. "I'm Judas, and God is watching!" The drunken man began to laugh and asked the bird, "What idiot named you Judas?" The bird ruffled it's feathers, looked squarely into the mans eyes and answered, "The same idiot that named the pitbull

'God'"

## Steve G., Mill Creek AA Group Member

Say lookie here, my friends were good at sports, some had awesome grades, some were good with their hands to fix things, and others were good with the girls.

As for me, being introduced to alcohol as a teenager, I became good at put'n it away, even to the point of compition drinking, and the goal of drinking others under the table. It was my thinking I owned it, I was the champ, I was "Marathon Guy." Little did I know the toll that the marathons would have on my life as I became powerless over alcohol and having an unmanageable life.

"HI, my names Steve and I'm a marathonrecovering alcoholic." [meh]

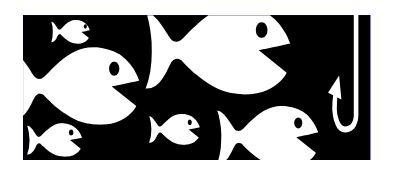
### Get real

"I keep hearing about 'real' alcoholics." The newcomer said to her sponsor.

"What is the difference between an alcoholic and a 'real' alcoholic?" Her sponsor replied: "The same difference between 'dead' and 'real dead.""

## **Lobster Sloshed**

A lobster told a crab she couldn't continued to date him because he walked sideways, and until he learned to walk straight she wouldn't see him any more. The next day the lobster saw the crab coming toward her on the beach, and he was walking straight. Overjoyed, she ran to the crab and said, "I knew you could walk straight! Now I'm ready to date you again!" The crab slurred, "Whaddaya mean, I'm walking shhhtraihhht?



### A.A. News, Medical and **Special Interest Articles**

The purpose of these articles is to offer information that may further readers understanding of the medical, legal



and social aspects of alcoholism; the severity and international scope of the illness; and the worldwide efforts being made to combat it.

### Publication here does not imply Endorsement or affiliation.

AA does not conduct or participate in research, nor does it hold any opinion on research conducted by others.

## UNDRUNK Sciences

## Reversing brain deficits caused by alcohol abuse...

Researchers have identified a drug that could potentially help our brains reboot and reverse the damaging impacts of heavy alcohol consumption on regeneration of brain cells. Their study in adult mice shows that two weeks of daily treatment with he drug tandospirone reversed the effects of 15 weeks of binge-like alcohol consumption on neurogenesis, which is the ability of the brain to grow and replace brain cells.

"Other studies in mice have shown that tandospirone improves brain neurogeneseis, but this is the first time it has been shown that it can totally reverse the neurogenic deficits induced by alcohol." Said Selena Bartlett from Queensland University of Technology's Institute, who led the study.

**Tan**dospirone is a relatively new drug, at present available only in China and Japan, Bartlett said. "It might be bale to help reboot the brain and reverse the deficits the alcohol abuse causes."

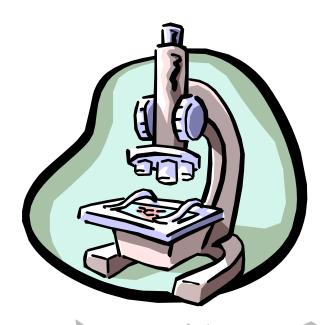
Source: Scientific Reports February 2018

Liquor Stores and Violent Crime...

A new study form researchers at Johns
Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public
Health's Center on Alcohol Marketing and
Youth found that stores that sell alcohol for
off-premises consumption (such as liquor
stores and beer and wine stores) have stronger
association with incidences of violent crimes,
including homicides, aggravated assaults,
sexual assaults, and robbery, than bars and
restaurants.

The researchers also found that low-income neighborhoods have higher access to the type of outlets associated with the most harm:
LIQUOR STORES AND WINE STORES.
"We found that outlets that allow for off-site drinking, such as liquor stores, had a greater association with violent crimes than outlets that permit only on-site drinking," says Daniel Webster, professor at the Bloomberg School's Department of Health Policy and Management.

Source: Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, September, 2018



FROM THE ASST.
EDITOR

## IATTENTION!





If you have any artwork, BRING IT TO US. We are now looking for Alcohol-related GRAPHIC WORKS, POETRY, OR IDEAS. If you have any thoughts, I am asking that you please, please kite us (addressed to A.A. Asst. Newsletter Editor)...this next month's news will address the Fifth and Sixth steps (check out your 12x12)....any ideas for events, support, or any A.A. related topics are more than welcome.

## **GRAPHIC WORKS**



That's artwork, pictures, or any image!

### **IDEAS**



For events, styles, brands – whatever you think promotes the sober lifestyle POETRY



Lyrical prose, handwritten flows, if it rhymes and expresses your journey in A.A., this is the place!!!



# Guys, this page is looking mighty lonely. We need your contributions!!!

Tink, tink, tink, goes the drips in my sink

All I can think is how good it'd be to drink

Something clear and sharp Something dark and deep ANYTHING but what's in that damn sink

Tink, tink, TINK, it's driving me insane!

Not another day of this tink can I take Not another day of sober in my cell Listening to homies down the tier happy and all of 'em high as hell Not another day of this gosh damn SINK...

Tink tink tink...
I have something they don't.
Caged, sure
Just like them I've got this blasted
leaky sink
But at least, sober,
I can think...think

"Sober Sinks"

#### **VICE CITY**



By Ellis, Assistant Editor

## **Help From The Outside**

**Corrections Correspondence Service** 

If you will be incarcerated for at least six more months, and are interested in corresponding with an outside AA member with whom you can share your experience as it relates to your problems with alcohol, please write to AA's General Service Office to request a correspondence form. This is a random match with men writing to men, and women writing to women.

#### **Prerelease Contact**

If you write to G.S.O. within three to six months of your release date and give us your destination (city and state), we can also try to arrange for someone to write to you just prior to your release. This would give you a chance to have an AA contact in your home community to help with your transition from AA on the "inside" to AA on the "outside".

We look forward to hearing from you!

Prerelease Contact 1900 NE 3<sup>rd</sup> St. STE 106-500 Bend, Oregon 97701

#### Big Book And 12 x 12 Of Your Own

If you would like a Big Book and a 12 x 12 and you don't have the funds to buy them on your own, just write to the Mill Creek A.A. Group of OSP and let us know. Just give us your name, address, if you're an inmate, your SID Number, and then explain your situation and state what materials you would like to receive.

It's that easy and it's FREE.

HOW TO GET THE MILL CREEK AA GROUP NEWSLETTER

The Mill Creek AA Group Newsletter is <a href="FREE">FREE</a> to all A.A. members, friends and family, inside and outside the walls. We will gladly e-mail a digital copy or mail the hard copy edition to your home or business, or any Institution including; EOCI, OSCI, TRCI, SRCI, WCCF and CCCF upon written request.

#### The Mill Creek Newsletter Needs You!

We encourage **anyone** to contribute to future issues. The stories, experiences and thoughts of those within the group and from our outside members are what make this group so very special. The feelings and situations that you're going through right now may be the exact words someone else needs to hear. We are always looking for recovery-oriented material such as articles, stories, poems, jokes and

artwork to share with our readers. **Thanks for sharing!** 

#### Here are some other ways you can help

- Keep us apprised of address changes.
- ❖ Pass the newsletter on once you've read it.
- ❖ Notify us if you know someone else who would like to receive our **free** newsletter. Get their approval and just send us a letter with their e-mail address for a digital copy, or their name and home address for a hard copy subscription. It's that easy!

#### Write us at:

The Mill Creek A.A Group of OSP Activities Department 2605 State St. Salem, OR 97310

E-mail: millcreek1944@gmail.com

If you have something you would like to share or have an idea or suggestion for the Newsletter, please send them to us.

The Grapevine Is the official A.A.

International magazine. It contains stories, articles, and interviews about A.A., its members, its history and the process.

**Subscriptions** may be **purchased** from:

AA GRAPEVINE Po Box 1980 Marion, Ohio 43306

### **Mill Creek AA Meetings**

#### WEDNESDAY EVENING BOOKSTUDY

We invite you to join us for our book-study group that meets at 6:00pm on the education floor every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. These meetings will help establish positive behavior as well as tips for living the program by understanding how our actions affect others and ourselves. It will also help to break down the defective thinking patterns that motivate some to cause harm to others and ones self, plus it will help teach one how to replace defective thoughts with ethical rules and how to automatically engage these ethics by simply putting them into practice. See you there! Hablamos español también.

#### THURSDAY EVENING MEETINGS

Our Thursday meeting is our "club" meeting. Remember, our Thursday meetings are held once per month on the first Thursday and you must be level 2 or higher to attend this meeting. Our staff advisor monitors the club meeting attendance. If you miss two meetings in a row without an excuse, you are automatically dropped and it's six months before you can get back on.

#### SATURDAY MORNING MEETINGS

The Saturday morning meetings are a great way to spend a morning in fellowship and recovery. These meetings are held twice a month (the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday) and they are truly a big part of our A.A. program here at OSP. We continue to have outside supporters come in to join us. Meetings with outside members and guests are always much more vibrant. **Thank you very** 

much to our outside guests for attending! Outside members that have a DOC Volunteer ID are asked to simply call ahead. If you don't have an ID, call or e-mail our OGSR or OSP Staff Advisor a week in advance with your name and birth date for approval to attend a meeting.

If you would like to attend any of these meetings, please send a kite to let us know.

We hope you do!

#### For Our Hispanic Brothers

#### Para Nuestros Hermanos Que Hablan Español

EL GRUPO "APRENDIENDO A VIVIR" DE LOS ALCOHÓLICOS ANÓNIMOS LE EXTIENDE UNA INVITACIÓN PARA QUE NOS ACOMPAÑEN A NUESTRAS REUNIONES EN LOS SIGUIENTES DÍAS.

- PRIMER Y TERCER MIÉRCOLES DE CADA MES A LAS 6:00 PM. EN EL PISO DE EDUCACIÓN.
- PRIMER Y TERCER SÁBADO DE CADA MES A LA 7:45 AM. EN LA SECCIÓN DE ACTIVIDADES. TODOS CALIFICAN.
- PRIMER JUEVES DE CADA MES A LAS 6:00 PM. EN LA SECCIÓN DE ACTIVIDADES. EL REQUISITO ES TENER EL NIVEL 2.

#### **ENVIÉ UN KYTE A:**

Activities C/O A.A. en español

## Announcements

#### Hello 2019!!!

First off just wanted to thank you guys for all of your support and backing this last year! Without you none of this would have been possible!

Second, I just wanted to remind the group about our fundraiser coming up here in the next couple months. Look out for the flyers. They should be posted up these next couple of weeks.

Lastly, don't forget we have our 75<sup>th</sup> Mill Creek A.A. anniversary coming up here in May! It will be cake and ice cream as usual; we look forward to you being there!

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions.

Please respect this and treat in confidence who you see and what you hear.

## Mill Creek AA 2019 Meeting Schedule

\*Meeting Schedule Subject to Change\*

## RECOVERY WORKSHOP

Every <u>first Monday</u> at 7:45 am (activities floor)

## WED. NIGHT BOOKSTUDY

First/Third Wed. 6:00 pm (education floor)

### MONTHY CLUB MEETING

First Thursday 6:00 pm (activities floor)

### SATURDAY MEETINGS AA

7:45 am

Mar 2	Apl 6
May 4	June 1
July 6	Aug 31
Sep 7	Oct 12
Nov 2	Dec 7



## NOTICE:

There will times when meetings will not be posted in the blocks. We will try to post the notices at the bottom of the stairs, but please watch the schedule and plan on attending, even when you haven't spotted a flyer.