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Osseo AA Newsletter

Suburban North Alano Vol. 2 Issue 6

www.OsseoAA.org

“One Day at a Time”



Happy New Year



Greetings Everyone:

I hope all of you had a wonderful Christmas and New Year! Did anyone set New Year resolutions?

We have been busy, and thanks to Joe R., we have tickets ready for the One Year Honoree Banquet on February 16th. I distributed them at the Squad Leaders Meeting held last Wednesday. All squad leaders now have them to sell to their respective squads. I missed a couple Squads, as there Leaders were not at the meeting. So much for trying to be proactive! These Squads can get tickets from other Squad Leaders, or from me, as some have returned some tickets to me for this purpose. We need all ticket sales to be complete by the 1st full week of February, so that we have an accurate count of attendee's. We also need a list of all One Year Honoree's as soon as possible! Anybody that needs a ticket, please contact me or any board member. Anyone that cannot afford a ticket please let us know and we will donate one for you and or your significant other.

I would like to take this time to thank all members for contributing their time and donations to our club. Our club so far, is in relatively good financial shape at this time, and we have mostly paid back to our funds, the replacement costs of the furnace and air-conditioning system. Hopefully we will see lower utility bills.

As always, please contact me or any board member with any questions, comments or concerns.

Regards,
Bob W.

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Want to Contribute?

- Contact Bob G. or any Board Member with stories or suggestions
- Check the website often as it's constantly changing. It's also a good way to keep up with the news. If you have club news, please send it in.
- Edited by: Julee E.

Step 1 – We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.

From: The History of AA

The First Step

Vol. I - No. 3 -- December 1942

When we became members of A.A., we admitted that we were powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable.

The habit that prompts us is an unconscious body yearning, which calls now and then for that "one little drink" that will line up the tracks for twenty drinks and a blackout.

This was the most important step in our getting dry. We had to admit to ourselves that we were alcoholics. We had to recognize that all our efforts to control our use of alcohol had failed. We had to recognize that our periodic spells of not drinking had not given us the ability to control the use of alcohol. We had to recognize that we could make our lives manageable only when we had given up alcohol entirely.

Habits are tricky. They are the result of years of doing some thing under certain conditions. They have associations that we often are not aware of, which tend to lead us back to the path of that habit despite our efforts. The Devil within us is the prompting of our nerves, which leads us either to act without thinking or to think up excuses for denying the lessons we have learned.

The single act of confession that made us dry is not enough to keep us dry. The Devil within us prompts us anew in many mysterious ways. The habit that prompts us is an unconscious body yearning, which calls now and then for that "one little drink" that will line up the tracks for twenty drinks and a blackout.

To stay dry we have to continue to recognize that we can escape alcoholism only by not drinking.

Mental Reservations

There have been enough of us in the seven and a half years of A.A. who have been tempted to believe that through A.A. one could regain control over alcohol. The experiences of those thus tempted have been tragic.

When a man tells himself "I know I can take a drink right now and nothing will happen," his old habits and body yearnings are prompting him to think dangerous thoughts.

Some men have had difficulty at the start, because they never really admitted that they were powerless over alcohol. They had a mental reservation. They kept debating with themselves and finally reached the wrong answer.

But some men get into difficulty long after they think that their troubles are over. They work hard. They pray. They attend meetings and work with new candidates. But the Devil of old habit, sleeping in the nerve cells, sneaks up on them and begins to whisper that they have themselves under control and it would be all right to take a drink now and then.

When a man tells himself "I know I can take a drink right now and nothing will happen," his old habits and body yearnings are prompting him to think dangerous thoughts.

That is the seed of disaster. Call the roll of those you know who have had to have this bitter experience of learning all over again that they were powerless over alcohol.

No Respector of Geography

Strange too, how some members sometimes get the notion that because they have gone off to another city that the rules no longer apply. They couldn't drink in Cleveland, but they think it would be all right in New York or Chicago or Detroit or Akron! Of course we are just as powerless away from home as at home. Devil habit may prompt us to forget that first lesson and may whisper in our ear that "no one will know!" Well, call the roll, here too.

Wherever we are and regardless of the passage of time, we are alcoholics. We are powerless over alcohol. We cannot use alcohol and successfully manage our lives.

We learned that painfully. But our whiskey-hungry nerve cells have sly ways of working on the mind. If we yield, disaster awaits us.

That first step is important always: at the beginning, after the passage of time; at home and away from home. We are powerless over alcohol.

Tradition One—Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

Tradition One

by Karen E. *Reprint with permission of the author*

The first tradition forms the basis for all of our individual decisions once we become members of Alcoholics Anonymous, choosing to travel the path of recovery. The remaining eleven traditions provide examples of how this principle is practiced in situations our founding members had experienced that had nearly brought A.A. to an end. They believed these situations critical enough to provide specific guidance in how to apply this principle.

Unity is one of the Three Legacies – Recovery, Unity, and Service. They are on every AA medallion and every time you see the AA triangle. Unity is on the left side. Recovery is also a leg on the triangle. In fact it is the bottom, or foundation, of the triangle, displaying its importance. Without Recovery, none of us as individuals would be here to contribute to A.A. Sometimes, there can be a fine line to walk in satisfying both.

What Tradition One tells me is that, when I'm walking this fine line and it comes down to brass tacks, the good of A.A. is more important than me. I need to make the adjustment and sacrifice. The long form of Tradition One (found at the back of the 12x12, starting at p.189) makes this clear:

“Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows a close second.”

I am fortunate enough to have not yet encountered a situation where my personal recovery conflicts with the good of A.A. outside of the examples in the remaining eleven traditions. However, I do see examples of practicing this tradition everyday. When I simply choose to arrange my schedule so I can attend meetings, and find other time to fill family, work or social obligations, I am putting the welfare of A.A. first.

If you struggle with thinking of how this principle is applied, the 12 x 12 provides a wonderfully simple context where I can see it everyday: “He learns that the clamor of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whenever these could damage the group.” I encourage everyone to consider how your actions impact your group, your Club, and A.A. in general every time to make a decision.

Resentment and Letting Go

By: Kirk M.

Resentment – noun – meaning: anger, bitterness, or ill will.

The Big Book of "Alcoholics Anonymous" says resentment destroys more alcoholics than anything else because deep resentment leads to futility and unhappiness and shuts us off from the "sunlight of the Spirit." Authentic forgiveness takes time as the hurt one works hard to let go of resentment and the need for retribution.

Most alcoholics know guilt, shame, remorse, and self-loathing intimately. To rid themselves of those feelings, they come to accept that they are imperfect beings worthy of forgiveness. Understanding that we are more than our transgressions helps us see beyond the transgressions of others.

The danger of resentment is that we keep recycling negative feelings, revisiting old wrongs done to us by others. When you resent someone, you are saying that the other person is the problem, the cause and the fault. Not you. You blame the other person so you don't have to look at yourself.

This has happened to me many times over my years of drinking. In one situation, I lost a promotion to a co-worker who I supervised in my department. My drinking got in the way of that promotion. When my co-worker became my boss, I resented him greatly. I felt like my whole world was turned upside-down. I just couldn't believe that they promoted my co-worker above me. I had worked for my company for 11 years and he had been there only 5 years. I remember drinking heavily for several weeks after that event. It was very hard to stomach. I went into a depression for a while, eventually blew it off, telling myself that I didn't deserve it anyway. He was a better fit for the job.

Since then, I have tried to work with my boss the best I could not realizing that I still held a resentment toward him. Last week my boss and I had a meeting in which several of my negative behaviors were brought to my attention. The long standing resentment was brought to the surface again. I felt angry, frustrated, and for a few minutes thought of where I might go to get drunk. Then reality set in and I thought to myself, “What are you thinking?” “Are you crazy?” “Getting drunk isn't going to

get rid of this resentment.” Let it go! Let it go! I said the Serenity Prayer many times that day and made my Monday night meeting.

I am now trying to not only forgive my boss, but forgive myself. It’s not an easy feat. I must let go of this resentment so I can continue my road to recovery and a happier, sober life.

Someone once said that forgiveness is letting go of the idea that you could have had a different past. When we forgive, we surrender the burden of hurts and resentment that so easily weigh us down and keep us from living a full and joyful life. In short, you need to get to the business of forgiveness – of yourself, as well as others.

Here are few steps to letting resentments go.

Describe resentments in writing.

Look at your role in the resentment.

Be willing to live without resentment.

Pray for the person you resent.

Do this even if such a prayer seems like mere words at first.

"Forgive and Live."

What happens to us is not as important as how we respond.

The external events of our lives are largely beyond our control. We do not choose our parents, our emotional environment, the historical period in which we live, our body type, or the flow of circumstances that shape our experience. These are givens. We do not select them, but we can choose how we will react to them, and in that choice lies our freedom and our responsibility.

Instead of complaining about the hand we've been dealt, we can concentrate on playing it well. This is the way we exercise our freedom. What might appear to be random chance can take on meaning and purpose as we delve for insight and use our deficiencies as opportunities for growth.

Our responsibility is to do the best we can with what we have where we are. And we don't do it alone. We have help in learning how best to respond. We have a support group, we have a Higher Power, and we have an inner guide if we will listen for direction.

Today, I will remember that the what of my life is not as important as the how.

Don't quit five minutes before the miracle happens.

--Anonymous

When we came into the Program, most of us had very little to show for our lives. We believed in nothing. We had experienced great disappointments. The greedy creditor that was our addiction had stripped away everything of meaning to us. We were left with nothing but pain and misery.

Now we hear incredible stories of recovery. People tell how, by following certain simple instructions and honestly working a Program, they were freed from the grasp of their addiction.

Every once in awhile we hear a story that sounds remarkably like our own. We are told that through work and the help of a Higher Power, we too can receive a miracle.

The most important miracle I can expect and count on each day is the freedom from my addiction. I can trust that if I stay close to the Program, the miracle will be repeated, one day at a time.

Gratitude

by: Joe R.

I sat down a hour and a half ago with what I thought was a pretty good mind set to express my thoughts on what I'm grateful for. But I let myself get sidetracked into one of those world problem discussions that have no answers, just gloom and doom, They are real issues but I feel so helpless and even if I think I have the answers, it seems that I can't implement the solutions I have. So I try not to let myself get too upset over things that I have very little control over. The old let go and let God trick helps in these cases.

Then a friend called me to kill some of his day talking about stuff that I at the time had very little interest in.

The thoughts that I was dwelling on before my interruptions were how I might look for things that I'm not grateful for.

I have learned through the years that I cannot feel sorry for myself and be grateful at the same time. Normal folks seem to just know that, but my alcoholic mind had to be taught that skill or as the treatment center people put it, that is a tool for living life on life's terms.

My interruptions are a chance to actually practice my program. My mother always said patience is a virtue. How can I practice patience if situations are not put in my path that require patience on my part, and for that I'm grateful.

When I find things that I'm not grateful for I know that a soul search is needed. I have had a few things in my life that I had to take a hard look for the reason to be grateful and the lesson to be learned. Most of the answers after the soul search are that I should be grateful for what I have and forget about the I wants.

Life is what I make it, through my conception of what is going on in my life. The trick is do I look at it as," Oh poor Me". or do I say "What lesson does God have hidden in these cancer cells"?

The Principles of AA

Step 1. Honesty

The quality or fact of being honest; uprightness and fairness. Truthfulness, sincerity, or frankness. freedom from deceit or fraud.

Step 2. Hope

The feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best

Step 3. Faith

Confidence or trust in a person or thing; faith in another's ability. Belief that is not based on proof

Step 4. Courage

The quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear

Step 5. Integrity

Adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.

Step 6. Willingness

Cheerful readiness to do something <his unhesitating willingness to take on the tough assignments

Step 7. Humility

The absence of any feelings of being better than others

Step 8. Brotherly Love

A kindly and lenient attitude toward people, an inclination to do kind or charitable acts

Step 9. Justice

The maintenance or administration of what is just especially by the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or the assignment of merited rewards or punishments

Step 10. Perseverance

Continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition

Step 11. Spirituality

Sensitivity or attachment to religious values

Step 12. Service

The work performed by one that serves <good service>, contribution to the welfare of others

Bill's Wife Remembers When He and She and the First A.A.'s Were Very Young

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from the Christmas Issue, 1944

As the wife of an early A.A., some of our experiences and my reactions to my husband's changed life may be interesting to other wives. Bill was an alcoholic, I believe, from the first drink he ever took, just a few months before our marriage. From then on, for seventeen years, I did everything I could think of to keep him away from liquor.

I will tell a little of our life before A.A. to help explain some of my later emotions. Bill and I had no children, so I soon felt that my job in life was to help Bill straighten himself out. As time went on, he earnestly tried to stop drinking. He was always very remorseful and perplexed the mornings-after. We would then resolve to lick this liquor situation together, launching off on some new tack.

As his drinking got worse, all decision and responsibility had to be taken by me. It was lucky that we were companionable, for gradually as our social contacts were broken we were thrust back on each other for company. In order to get away from alcohol over the week ends, I used to engineer some sort of outing, as we both loved the outdoors. If our pocketbook was flat, we might take the subway to the Dyckman Street ferry and hike along the Palisades to some scenic spot where we would nibble our sandwiches and gaze at the view. Or we might ferry to Staten Island and walk there; perhaps broiling a steak over a campfire. We have hired a rowboat at Yonkers and, using a bath towel as a sail, floated up the Hudson, to a spit of land near Nyack, where we camped and tried to sleep. We once went so far to get away from alcohol that we both gave up our jobs and took a whole year off. This we spent motorcycling and camping over half the United States.

These trips, although good for Bill's health, did nothing towards his permanent sobriety. In fact, his alcoholism grew steadily more serious. He lost job after job until I became entirely hopeless about him.

And then suddenly and finally Bill straightened out through the help of an old friend. At once I was convinced of his complete change and was of course extremely happy. Bill began to go to religious meetings and to work feverishly with alcoholics. I would go to meetings too and would try to share his newfound enthusiasms. He always had some drunk in tow and would work all night or get up in the middle of the night to go to the suburbs if one called him. We had drunks all over the house; sometimes as many as five lived there at one time.

One drunk committed suicide in the house after hav-

ing sold about 700 dollars worth of our clothes and luggage. Another slid down the coal chute from the street to the cellar when we refused him the front door. Two others took to fighting, and one chased the other all around the house with a carving knife. The intended victim was saved by a third drunk, who delivered the knife-minding one a knockout blow. An alcoholic who was living in the basement was invited up for a pancake breakfast. After eating his share, he suddenly put on his hat and started out the door remarking that he was going to Childs for PLENTY of pancakes.

Bill had found himself a job about this time; and it used to take him away from home a great deal and I was left with one or more alcoholics to look after. Once one of these boys lay in the vestibule all night and screamed invectives at me because I would not let him in. He was so loud the passers-by all stopped, looked and listened. Another time it was 4 a.m. before I succeeded in towing a drunk home. He was anxious to be at his job the next morning and we had gone out around midnight to look for a doctor, having been unable to get one to come to the house at that hour. I helped his shaky steps up and down stoops, lit his cigarettes for him and finally, when we could not rouse a doctor, held a drink to his lips in a bar. When I asked him how he then felt he said, "Well, a bird can't fly on one wing." After a few more drinks I managed to get him home, but he did not get to his job the next morning. I was once suddenly taken sick, and when my sister arrived to nurse me she found five men milling around in the living room, one of them muttering, "One woman can look after five drunks but five drunks cannot look after one woman."

Now to describe my reactions to it all. When Bill first sobered up I was terribly happy but soon, without my realizing it, I began to resent the fact that Bill and I never spent any time together any more. I stayed at home while he went off somewhere scouting up new drunks or working with old ones. My life's job of sobering up Bill with all its former responsibilities was suddenly taken away from me. I had not yet found anything to fill the void. And then there was the feeling of being on the outside of a very tight little clique of alcoholics into which no mere wife could possibly enter. I did not understand what was going on within myself until one Sunday, Bill asked me to go with him to a meeting. To my own surprise as well as his I burst forth with, "Damn all your meeting," and threw my shoe at him as hard as I could.

This bad display of temper woke me up. I realized that I had been wallowing in self pity; that Bill's change was simply miraculous; that his feverish activity with alcoholics was absolutely necessary to his sobriety; and that if I did not want to be left way behind I had better jump on the bandwagon, too!

Bill's wife, Lois Wilson



PLEASE BRING ALL OF YOUR ALUMINUM CANS TO THE CLUB!!!

We'll even take BEER cans!!!

If we all participate in a can drive, it will fund our annual picnic. If you can, please bring cans (preferably crushed) to the club and throw them in the trailer on the side of the building.

No plastic bottles please

Not your brand of soda?
Let me know. I'll change
the picture!

