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Osseo AA Newsletter

Suburban North Alano Vol. 2 Issue 8

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“One Day at a Time”



Happy St. Patrick's Day



Greetings:

We all had a wonderful experience at the 2013 Honoree Banquet! I want to thank Rebecca T. for doing such an outstanding job getting this organized. We all had a wonderful time. I want to thank our Master Cake Cutter, Jim K. for taking all the heat!

We are having window security screens installed on all lower windows to help prevent further break-ins.

I am keeping this short, as Rebecca has a few chosen words for us. Talk with you next month!

Bob W

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Thank you, thank you, thank you to all the people (106 of you) who came to the honoree banquet to help celebrate!!!!

Big thank you and hugs to all the wonderful people who helped make this such a great event. Your help is truly appreciated! Rebecca T.

If anyone would like to get on the mailing list for this newsletter, please just submit your name and email address to any board member or Bob G. Email addresses can be found on the club website:

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.

OsseoAA.org

Step 3 – Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Step 3 has four key components:

- **STEP 3a.** ...Make a decision...
- **STEP 3b.** ...to turn your will and your life ...
- **STEP 3c.** ...over to the care of ...
- **STEP 3d.** ...God (as you understand Him).

STEP 3a. Make a decision... You may have heard this riddle in a meeting: "Five frogs were sitting on a log in their favorite pond. Two frogs decided to hop onto a warm rock. How many frogs were left on the log?" If you know anyone who answered, "three", suggest they read the riddle again. We alcoholics are experts at making decisions. Like, "I have decided to stop drinking!" "I have decided to bring my paycheck home to you and the kids, Honey!" You bet! If you have spent more than a week taking this step, you probably should just look upon it as a decision, but a decision that you re-affirm at least once each day. Then get on with step 4.

STEP 3b Turn your will and your life over... If, in meetings, you listen carefully to the stuff that people turn over you will be amazed before you are half way through. They turn over the Highway Patrolman shining a red light in the mirror of their car, the landlord banging on the door for his rent, their fat-clogged arteries, smoke corrupted lungs, and all the other things they wish to be rid of. It almost seems some folks think God must be some kind of celestial junk man. (In addition to those who think he is the ethereal pimp that brings forth enticing partners.) Going back to the source, we discover that it is silent on turning over junk, lust, or anything else—just our very lives and wills. You offer up only your life force and your motivation. That doesn't really leave much of value, does it? And, just what does *turning over* mean? Although you may have heard that it is like turning over a board to inspect the salamanders on the bottom side, the word refers to the *transfer* of possession and control....

STEP 3c. To the care of God... The first image that comes to mind is that the entity to which we offer something for care is a caretaker. A caretaker is needed only when the owner is either absent or incompetent (or both, as in the instance of the real alcoholic). A truly desirable caretaker is: 1) competent, 2) trustworthy, 3) available, and 4) consenting to care for your life and will. In addition to the idea of taking care of is the acknowledgement (for we alcoholics) of management.

God's mission is not to take care of us—even though He does. God's role is to direct us. It follows, then that our role is not to be taken care of, it is to take action consistent with God's direction, doing by ourselves the things that we can do without assistance.

...we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children....this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom. [Big Book, page 62, line 27]

Look up the word keystone in the dictionary, if you don't know precisely what it means. What role does the keystone play in the structure of an arch? So, again, what is the concept without which your spiritual growth will fall in upon itself? That's right. God is the Boss. We have a new employer. We do it His way, not ours.

STEP 3d. God as you understand Him. As we pointed out in our writing about step 2, this phrase does not mean that you believe in "God", and it does not mean that you understand what you believe in. The phrase does mean this and only this, that you decide to turn your life and will over to the care of a spiritual power of your naming and conception rather than that of someone else. (Why not read page 47 again, and ask yourself just what is the cornerstone referred to there?)

We repeat: A.A. literature makes it clear that Al-

coholics Anonymous is not a religion or a sect. AA possesses no theology or dogma to be swallowed by anyone. The term, God, is used as a convenient way of referring to the Spiritual Power of our respective choices. Even though you may have a special term for your Power, when it comes to discussing your Spiritual Power with others, you also are likely to use the term, God, as a matter of convenience. Writing: on a piece of paper, complete the statements below. It is understood that your conception of God is certain to change, so the statements refer only to your conception at the present time.

Sealing the commitment. Most of us found the guidance on page 63 of the Big Book is very effective. We recommend that you seal your commitment with another person, and that you memorize and repeat A.A.'s third step prayer. If the archaic terms Thee and Thou are not to your liking, you shouldn't be deterred from adjusting them as we have done in the rendition included at the end here of .

If your *spiritual advisor* insists they you pray on your knees, by all means do so. Praying on the knees was big in primitive AA. The expression, "...on our knees..." was even included in step 7 of an early draft of the Big Book. Note, though, that its authors thought better of this, and the expression was deleted. It's not there now, is it? Be assured that praying on the knees is not a requirement of Alcoholics Anonymous. Nevertheless, if you are Catholic, Episcopalian, Muslim or of many oriental religions, you may wish to pray on your knees. It will certainly help you to concentrate on what you are doing. It might even help you find your shoes in the morning. The negative side of the pray-on-your-knees custom is that it deprives its adherents of many opportunities to pray during the day. Spiritually achieved ones cherish every moment in which they might commune with their Power. These moments might be in the car at a stop light, before partaking of food in the company cafeteria, or after realizing the answer to a perplexing problem. So, do what you think right, but don't deprive yourself of being in the state of close-

ness to God whenever you can.

The THIRD STEP Prayer

[As adjusted from the book Alcoholics Anonymous, page 63, line 14]

God, I offer myself to You —
to build with me
and to do with me as You will.

Relieve me of the bondage of self,
that I may better do Your will.

Take away my difficulties,
that victory over them
may bear witness to those I would
help
of Your Power,
Your Love,
and Your Way of life.

May I do Your will always.

Amen.

Be Part of the Miracle

by: Rebecca T.

I was listening to a woman talk this morning about her battle with cancer. It struck me that our journey to recover from addiction is no different.

Our addiction is every bit as life threatening—deadly as cancer. It *is a disease* that we have to battle. This battle is physical, emotional, spiritual; so very similar to the fight to recover from any other disease that will take our lives.

Physically we need to “take our medicine”. This medicine isn’t a pill but it is just as important as a medication that we would take if it were any other disease. We need to pray, go to meetings, work with others. Recovery from our addiction just doesn’t happen without taking our medicine.

Emotionally, we need to be convinced that we can overcome our addiction. We need to learn how to feel. Many of us have drunk and buried our feelings for our entire lives and have never experienced true, unaltered feelings. This process can be just as uncomfortable as the physical pain/discomfort that we feel when physically withdrawing from our drug of choice. But this part of recovery is as essential to our healing as our detoxification from our chemical. We need to do our “physical therapy”—talking to other AAs, reading the big book, praying and meditating.

Spiritually, we are told that we cannot recover without our belief that a “power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity”. I still remember so clearly when I actually came to believe this. It was such a relief and a burden lifted that I don’t need to do this on my own. I don’t have to be strong enough or smart enough to have that sanity that has eluded me my whole life. I know that my Higher Power can restore me to sanity and that “God could and would if He were sought”. I need to maintain my recovery with lifelong “exercise”. Pray, learn, discuss and seek advice.

When I was listening to this woman who was talking about her battle with cancer, she looked at the person she was speaking to and said, “I look in the

mirror and see a strong woman”. I look around me at the people who are recovering from addiction and I see strong, powerful, inspiring people. I hear people talking about what they see in the mirror today. They are becoming proud and happy with what they see looking back at them. Our recovery from our addictions are miracles. These miracles are happening every day all around us!

I discovered that it is essential for me to view my recovery as I would think of a battle with a lethal disease of any other sort. My addiction will kill me if I do not fight. I *want to live*. So, I will take my “medicine”.

I think we need to celebrate these daily miracles. Celebrate by living your life with joy. Look around you, call another AA, reach out to a newcomer- **be part of the miracle!**

Good thoughts bear good fruit, bad thoughts bear bad fruit – and man is his mown garden.

--John Leonard

Evil thoughts and destructive attitudes are not forced on us by fate. They are choices we make as we act and react to events in our lives.

Before the Program, when negative things happened, our first reaction was to choose to react negatively: "Life's not fair." "Why did that have to happen to me?" "I hate them for doing that." "I'm going to get even if it's the last thing I do." It is easy to react positively when good things happen. But we have often chosen to react negatively to even good events.

Good can be found in even the worst situations if we look for it. Bankruptcy can provide a fresh start. Defeat can allow rebuilding in a new and better way. Evil teaches us what is good. Death brings new life. Admitting our powerlessness finally gave us the freedom to make choices.

Tradition Three—The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

By: Bob G.

This is my most favorite tradition. This is the one that allows us to make a mistake and still come back in to the waiting arms of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I have heard it said: “We should throw him/her out of the club. They can’t stay sober or clean”. My answer to that is; Who am I to look into the heart and soul of another and determine that they don’t have a desire to stop drinking. The only one capable of doing that is my higher power and He is not divulging that type of info to me.

I have known numerous people who struggled with alcoholism over the years. Some would even slip every month or so. I knew a guy who like to fish up north. He said that he just couldn’t make it past Northbound Liquors in Elk River. His struggles were ongoing for years. However, he had the desire to stop drinking and was welcomed back each and every time. He has passed on now but he passed with a considerable amount of sobriety. How would he have ever made it if the doors to AA were closed to him after drinking.

Another lady struggled with addiction to drugs. She would come to meetings and later use drugs again. She did keep coming back to the meetings so obviously she saw something within our doors that she felt was attainable if she kept coming back. Unfortunately drugs did claim her life at an early age. Nonetheless, she still had a desire to stop. That was important to her.

That’s what the third tradition is all about for me. The **DESIRE**. Sadly, not all of us will remain sober and there will always be suffering alcoholics out there. Our job, as sober alcoholics, is to welcome them into or back to our club with open arms. Let them know that it can be done. Show them the miracle that is you and let them know that they can do it too.

The most important thing we are doing right now is thinking nice thoughts.

--Jim and Marie Burns

Just thinking nice thoughts sounds so simplistic, doesn't it! Surely there is more in life to contemplate than that. But the power of nice thoughts, the impact just such a simple decision can have on our lives and the lives of everyone around us, is awesome.

Having nice thoughts and only nice thoughts is a significant departure for most of us. Far more commonly we quietly or vocally judged every man, woman, and child in our presence. Stopping ourselves from judging, in fact, stopping a judgment in its tracks, will reveal how swamped our thinking has been by the critical, mean-spirited side of us.

Seldom do we cultivate a quiet, peaceful mind. Seemingly out of control, our minds race from one idea, one judgment, and one negative opinion to another one of equal harm to ourselves and the entire human community. Perhaps we didn't realize that every thought we harbor has an impact, whether it's voiced aloud or not. We can't lay the blame for this violent, mean world solely on others. We've had a part in it, too. Every time we favor a nasty thought rather than a nice thought, we add to the turmoil around us. The good news is that we can choose between the two at will.

I will add to the tenor of the world today by my thoughts. I pray that I may choose them carefully.

Tradition Three

The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.

by: Carolyn

Al-Anon's door is always open to offer fellowship to anyone who fits what is outlined in Tradition Three and generally leave that determination up to the individual. It does not matter if the person claims to be an alcoholic or claims they have a problem. The Al-Anon requirement is simple: A problem of alcohol in a relative or friend. We need recovery because we have been affected by the alcoholism of another. Everyone, no doubt has a relative or friend who has a problem with alcohol and that alone can qualify for membership. Basically, those who attend these 12 step meetings either feel a sense of "belonging" or they do not and move on.

For many individuals we learn how to join Al-Anon or form a group by turning to Tradition Three, which tells us that any individual can join simply by deciding he or she is troubled by another person's drinking. A group can be formed whenever two or more persons get together to use the Al-Anon principles to help themselves. Each Al-Anon group has its own personality. Some are better for newcomers, some are more social, some coed and some not. That diversity helps each of us to find a place where we feel comfortable, especially in the beginning, when it's so important that we keep coming back. I tried many different meetings in the beginning until I was able to settle into a Wednesday home group that I felt comfortable with. I am grateful that in my Wednesday home group, devotion to this tradition means that I can hear the diversity within our group, not defining our group. It takes discipline, but we try not to bring outside literature, or promote any individual agendas, and all of this careful attention to our tradition, makes the meeting a safe place in which anyone can feel a part.

The only stipulation in Tradition Three is that the group itself not affiliate with any other program, religion or cause no matter how honorable. This stipula-

tion is intentionally simple and inclusive. It insures that when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help in dealing with the effects of another's alcoholism, Al-Anon will be there. This tradition points out our singleness of purpose. Al-Anon's non-affiliation with any other cause or organization keeps our purpose clear and helps us avoid controversies that could hurt our unity. Al-Anon and the recovery will offer me to stick to my primary focus as well as everyone that walks through the door.

The mutual aid spoken of in this tradition is achieved by having no outside affiliations. I too must agree to accomplish this mutual aid by attending meetings and leaving all my titles, my jobs and all affiliations outside the room to attempt to slowly discover who I truly am for a healthy recovery.

The reason that Tradition Three was emphasized by the founders of the 12 step programs was to protect the fellowship from outside influences; to insure that the meetings would maintain their primary focus and not be diluted by the influx of an individual's issues or influences. Sometimes because of our wide-range of members in our groups it is viewed as an attractive place to advertise products and services or other worthy causes. Any discussion or announcement of such things could be interpreted as affiliation with them, diverting us from our primary spiritual approach to recovery. Although there are many good, related endeavors, our experience indicates that we lose the vitality and effectiveness in Al-Anon programs when we stretch ourselves too thin by trying to be all things to all people.

For Al-Anon members, practicing this Tradition brings us personal growth and expanded recovery. For all who come through the doors and claim by their presence that they have a problem, we extend the hand of fellowship. We offer them unconditional love and acceptance. It should be that simple.

I love my Wednesday home group because we remind ourselves the importance of Tradition Three by reciting the Al-Anon Declaration either in the beginning or the end of our meetings. "Let it begin with me. When anyone, anywhere, reaching out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen, always be there and let it begin with me." It reminds me that we are all connected when we reach out with a freed hand and an open mind.



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!

