

February 14, 2008

# Osseo AA Newsletter

Suburban North Alano Vol. 1 Issue 5

[www.OsseoAA.org](http://www.OsseoAA.org)

"One Day at a Time"



*Happy Valentines Day*



## Squad Leaders Meeting

The squad leaders met on Wednesday, February 6, 2008 at 7:00 PM. Squads represented were Squads 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 17 and 21. The Board of Directors was also represented.

The Texas Hold-Em/Cribbage/Chili Cook-off was discussed. It has been called off for lack of interest.

The garage sale was also discussed. The sale will be April 5th and 6th. All items donated should be into the club by the 15th of March. Any appliances, electrical items or computer hardware will need to be picked up by the donee in the event that they do not sell. All other donations that do not sell will be given to the Goodwill Industries.

The One Year Honoree Banquet will be on February 24th at the Osseo American Legion. The program will start at 4:30 PM with the Social Hour. At this time there are sixteen one year honorees. Our featured speaker will be Susie J. Every squad has a list of honorees in their mailbox. Please check it for accuracy.

The Meeting was adjourned shortly after 7:30 PM

## Board Meeting

The board met on Wednesday, February 13, 2008. All board members were in attendance with the exception of Loren A. who was out of town on business. The Minutes were read and approved unanimously. Dick O. gave the treasurers report. We have \$8115.63 in the money market and \$3232.88 in the checking account with all of the current bills paid. The board agreed to spend \$260.00 to get the water softener serviced. The program for the Honoree Banquet was passed around and approved with a couple of minor changes. Laurie P. and Monica G. are in charge of the flowers for the banquet. It is to have a purple amethyst theme. They explained to me what it means but I'm sure I'd mess it up if I tried to explain it so I suggest you contact Laurie or Monica for the explanation. The garage sale was also discussed. Please get your items in for tagging and pricing. The meeting was closed before 8:00 PM with the Lords Prayer.

### Inside this issue:

<i>My First Year at "The Club"</i>	2
<i>Step Two</i>	3
<i>Tradition Two</i>	4
<i>Nature Speaks</i>	5
<i>Afterthoughts</i>	6

### Help!!!

- *We still need contributors. If it's just me writing, you're going to get bored.*
- *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 Dani B.*

## My first year at "The Club"

By Monica G.

On January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2007 I had finally got up the nerve to call the "little building in the middle of nowhere." You see the day before I had found some meeting times on line and got as far as the parking lot, but that was it. I was telling myself that if no one answered the phone then I was meant to be a drunk the rest of my life. One ring, two ring, please don't answer, then the voice of an angel answered. With enthusiasm I hadn't heard in a long time he tells me that there is a great women's meeting at 7pm that I HAVE to come to. That was the beginning of my life and my 1<sup>st</sup> year at the Suburban North Alano Club.

The next few weeks I met the most amazing people, and women I connected with on a level that I thought would never be possible. But really what is with those signs....One day at a time, keep it simple, let go and let God. Chris S. took me under her wing and agreed to be my sponsor. She explained those sayings to me and introduced me to the **big book**. She was fabulous. She called me when I didn't call her. She listened to how "no one has had it as bad as I do right now!" She got me. She, along with the other women, knew what it was like to be an Alcoholic. These women helped me save my life. I had found my home group.

Tuesday night is where I started to learn about service, pledging and donations. They also went over the traditions. The benefits of coming early and staying late. Reaching out the new comers. Then they introduced me to the one thing I thought was impossible....sober fun! We met once a month outside of the club for some female bonding. My favorite was the sober softball. Where I learned that even sober I am one of the loudest cheerleaders out there!

Pam kept telling me "come to Thursday night, its a great group!" I did, and about half way into the meeting I realized this is it. This is what I have been missing. These people don't hold back, they tell it like it is, whether you want to hear it or not! I needed that. Bob, Rocket, Rudy, Ward...all of them! I quickly became the treasurer of this group. That gave me my first taste of real service work. About this time I had decided to have a BBQ and invited some of the people from AA. I was terrified, my AA family meeting with my real family..that still drinks mind you! But I worried for nothing. Everyone had a great time. My father got a kick out of Rocket and Bob. Other family told me they didn't know that sober people could have so much fun!

This all brings me to that last part of my 1<sup>st</sup> year. I was appointed squad leader of Thursday night after Pam moved away. I realized quickly that I didn't know what I was doing so the old timers stepped up and helped me learn the ropes of being the squad leader. I had also been talking to them about whether or not we need an entertainment committee when 2 of the old timers were voted to the board. This is when I learned that if you suggest it, you will also be suggested as the person to head it up. Rudy and Gayle have been my right hands. We have had success planning the Christmas and New Years Eve parties. I really look forward to planning a host of other activities. Look for a garage sale to be held at the club in early spring.

This has truly been a blessed year for me. I couldn't have gotten through it with out all of your help. But a special thank you to Bob G. for taking me under his wing and showing me the "politics" of the Club and getting me involved in making a difference and giving back! Lastly, a heartfelt thank you to Rudy for answering the phone that day. If he had not been at the Club that day to answer the phone I would hate to think of where I would be right now!

### **Stop Fixing Others**

Dear Higher Power,

When I am overly dependent on others, I try to fix them. I have a real talent in pinpointing what is wrong with other people. But the very thing that enables me to see their defects most often blinds me to the same, sometimes even worse, shortcomings in myself.

Help me stop fretting about others and instead focus on correcting my own character defects.

**Although the act of nurturing another's spiritual growth has the effect of nurturing one's own, a major characteristic of genuine love is that the distinction between one-self and the other is always maintained and preserved.**

--M. Scott Peck, M.D.

Those we love must be free to love us in return, or leave us. The honest evidence of our love is our commitment to encouraging another's full development. We are interdependent personalities who need one another's presence in order to fulfill our destiny. And yet, we are also separate individuals. We must come to terms with our struggles alone.

One gift of life available to each of us is security, the sense that accompanies the recognition of our spiritual center. Helping someone else discover their spiritual gifts strengthens our own. Nothing is too difficult when we act in unison as separate entities, relying on the spiritual core that strengthens us to meet any situation.

*My own spiritual center will be strengthened if I help someone*

## Step Two

by: Karen E.

*Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

For me, this is truly the Step of hope. It is also wonderfully simple. When I finally conceded to the notions that a Power existed and that this Power could somehow help me, I felt a sense of direction for the first time in years. I had no coherent picture what this meant or of how this might work, but it brought me back to my first A.A. meeting in roughly 20 years. While this is the second step in the entire recovery process, it is the first step in overcoming that which had defeated us.

I really think people don't realize they've successfully "completed" this step. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> step is the subject in a meeting, I often hear people say they struggle with knowing a Higher Power due to poor religious experiences, no religious or spiritual background to draw from, or a real fear that an intense spiritual experience is required and hasn't yet happened. Those issues are dealt with in the later steps. I have yet to hear someone say they are not willing to believe that there is some Power at work somehow in this world. That is all this step is...the first step in actually defining and communicating with that Power that is greater than me so that I may overcome the illness of alcoholism.

Chapter 4 of the Big Book is clear. It states, in part, "Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a *Power greater than ourselves*. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this power? Well, that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem." What that says to me, is Steps 3 – 12 are the tools or guide to how this Power can defeat alcoholism. All Step 2 is asking is that I entertain the possibilities that this Power exists and that it can help.

This is clarified again, later in Chapter 4 ..."We needed to ask ourselves but one short question. 'Do I now believe, or am I willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?' As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built."

I wish for each of you the comfort and encouragement that comes from knowing you have a fighting chance to recover if you simply acknowledge it is possible a Power greater than you exists.

**2. 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.**

Group decisions are just that, group decisions. After a discussion of all aspects of a given situation, including the minority opinion, the group votes on the issue and an agreement is reached with the majority vote. This vote is called a "group conscience."

Each group is a fellowship of equals. No matter what an individual member's background, education, or professional expertise, no member has authority "over" the group. In this way, the fellowship reaches out to all who would seek its comfort and provides the atmosphere of a sense of "belonging" to all members.

This tradition has been misquoted many times as, "we have no leaders." But it clearly states that each group **does** have its leaders, they just have no authority over the rest of the group. Whether they be the group's representative to the area or district, or the secretary or treasurer, they have been entrusted with the responsibility to **serve** the group, not make decisions for it.

Groups clearly have other "leaders" also. There are those, who by sharing their wisdom and strength in the meetings, who are quietly recognized by the group as "spiritual leaders." There are those members, who are so well founded in the principles and traditions of the program, the group turns to when questions arise involving possible violations of those principles and traditions. These too are leaders, but they also do not govern.

It's easy to fall prey to governing when one is elected to a leadership position. After all, we are alcoholics, and a position of perceived authority is a trap we all fall into at one time or another. We cannot allow a leader to make up committees of his friends. Our leadership needs to be varied as all of our members are varied. The reason squad leaders and board members are changed yearly and biannually is to keep us from assuming a role of importance in the society.

The feeling one gets from serving and doing a good job is one of gratitude. There is no greater gift than the gratitude of your fellow alcoholics.

### **SERVICE - A beautiful word fallen upon bad days.**

--Claude McKay

Service is really a beautiful word. Service means respect. When we serve others we're part of the human race. We all need to help each other.

Service is a sure way to stay sober. Helping someone else stay sober helps us stay sober. And service frees us from self-will. It teaches us about how to care for ourselves and others. It teaches us that we're worthwhile. It teaches us that we make a difference. Service keeps us feeling good.

Am I quiet when the topic of service comes up at meetings? If so, how can I change this?

## Nature Speaks

by: Chelsea C.

At some point or another in our lives, we have all paused to notice the beauty in the blossom of a flower. Among earth tones of green and brown, an outstanding red or yellow draws our eyes... our attention.

Wildflowers in a vast opening, many in their numbers, hues of pale pinks and blues, signify wilderness, abundance. Yet a single red Tulip, no more than sixteen inches high can represent strength, passion, perseverance.

How important these things are.

Notice the difference in the trees, and of the unique characteristics by which they are defined. As a Willow tree, the way it bends and sways, revealing its internal softness. How it dances, as if its long-trailing branches were that of a gown. And the wind offers its' hand, allowing the wind to be its lead.

A lone Burr Oak, knotty in appearance, stands bare and naked in the middle of winter, though unwavering to the harshness of the season, holding firm with earned respect. An old man of sorts, set in his roots, coarse bark exterior with age. As you stand observing its' solidarity, its' statuesque stance, the old Oak tree offers back, as if quietly looking back down... observing you. And in the warmer months, the Oak offers shade from the hot summer sun. Or lends its' branch for a swing rope near the water, a steady arm for a bench swing, for a growing child or the young at heart.

I am grateful to the hardy Maple tree, the vein it holds inside. Its sweetness begins to move, as the temperatures of night and day, begin to rise and fall. For the oranges, reds, and yellows are offered true colors in the coolness of autumn, when the leaves again break free, and summer lays herself to sleep.

I think of native annual flowers, their short time of life spanning only one season. Yet still an example of what it means to thrive. With seeds shed at seasons' end, offering themselves as tiny volunteers, for the next time of growth to come. Again they will appear, to sprout and grow, revealing their little bells.

The northern Perennials take rest in dormancy, preserving themselves for the giving of the next season. They become again, emerging in the welcome of spring, still giving the gift of life and rebirth.

With spring comes awakening... rainfall and water. Water represents movement and flow. Having the strength to make its' way through canyon and stone. It is a giver of peace and serenity, providing nourishment to all living things.

Fire is energy... a power, which needs oxygen to breathe, to strive. It is a fierce contender, though also a friend. At times providing needed warmth. And left in its' path is renewal, a chance, an opportunity for new life to unfold.

Take the time to listen... to learn. To understand that everything is a part of us, and we are a part of everything. All things are living. All things have an essence, a breath, a soul... a purpose of life. Be aware of the Earth, as it is of you. Be still and you will learn the ways of nature. If you are quiet you will hear that everything has a voice. Everything speaks, and has something to say to you.

So is it that we pause for the beauty in these things... or that they halted us to present themselves as a gift?

Listen to the flower who says hello. Listen to the bird who sings its' song. Listen for the whisper in the trees, the rustle of the leaves. Welcome the relationship between the Great Creator, Mother Nature, the Earth, and you. Know that all things are related. All things have meaning. Every life has a story to tell, and a song to sing. Listen carefully, and you will know the symphony of the world... in your heart.

Dedicated to John and Elizabeth C. for their teachings, wisdom, and love. Nov. 2007

## Afterthought

Nature itself is cunning, baffling, and powerful... though it is amazing in so many ways. There is much we can learn from it if we take the time to identify.

If all living things are connected, how are they connected to us, and us to them? What can they teach us about ourselves? In what ways can we understand and relate?

Every person and living thing on this Earth has an inventory. Nature shares itself... as the Oak tree represents many qualities, and the annual seeds extend themselves as volunteers. Nature is wise and giving, offering serenity. It can be dramatic, vulnerable at times, self protecting. The more wild the Rose... the more sharp the thorn. Though nature can be gentle even humorous, honest, and content. It has learned how and when to take care of itself.

What can nature teach us about our own inventory? What qualities and characteristics does it offer, that we are able to recognize? What plant, flower, tree, or element are we able to learn from, and identify with? What about them is defining, and can help us define ourselves?

What about yourself do you appreciate the most, and hold close to your heart? What do you wish to share with others? What brings you peace and happiness?

If you were a flower, and your smile a blossom, what is it that makes you bloom? What about you is a rare Orchid? What type of flower would you be?

## **The art of life is to show your hand.**

--C.V. Lucas

## **Newcomer**

I've been thinking about talking to another sponsor. Not to replace you - our relationship is important to me, and I get a lot from it - but in addition to you.

## **Sponsor**

We're lucky to have such an abundance of sober experience in this fellowship. There are many of us, and we can get to know people with various lengths of time in recovery, different experiences, and different styles. Knowing others and having the willingness to let others know us is one of the keys to growing in recovery.

I support your wanting to enlarge your support system by taking on a second sponsor. There may be someone, for example, with whom you want to focus on spiritual matters.

Your expressing your desire for additional sponsorship gives us an opportunity to take a look at our own relationship. You may think that I won't be able to understand a particular issue that's troubling you. You may be worried about how much you've already shared with me - many of us in this fellowship are new to letting others get close, and we may feel anxious about it. Problems with relationships are often at the heart of problems of addiction. Whatever it is, I'm open to hearing about it, and I won't criticize your feelings or walk away. I've been there myself. Thank you for being willing to talk with me about your needs and plans.

*Today, I am willing to be honest and open with a trusted person.*