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Osseo AA Newsletter

Suburban North Alano Vol. 1 Issue 6

www.OsseoAA.org

"One Day at a Time"



Happy St Patrick's Day



One Year Honoree Banquet

I am so amazed at the turnout for the banquet. I know that I'm speaking from a prejudiced position but, I think that this was the best AA banquet that I've ever attended. The two five minute speakers, Monica G. and Andy H., were heart wrenching in what they had to say. I wish that I'd had the foresight to tape the entire proceedings but I didn't so I've got to rely on my feeble old memory to recall everything that was said. The flowers were terrific thanks to Monica and Laurie. If you weren't in attendance, we had an amethyst theme. Ask Laurie or Monica about the significance of that particular gemstone. It was neat seeing all of the purple in the audience. Our featured speaker, Susie J., was clearly the highlight of the evening. She delivered her message with grace and professionalism. I only wish she would have talked longer. I didn't want the evening to come to an end.

There are so many people to thank for their efforts in putting this gala affair together. Without the help of the entire club it would not have been possible. It was a real group effort and I think everyone deserves a round of applause. We've set the bar extremely high for future banquets but I know that with the cooperation of all we can top it next year.

My granddaughter, Hannah, is already planning her wardrobe for next year. Her only question was addressed to Laurie. "What color are we going to be next year?" She told me that she had the best of times. I only hope that feeling was prevalent in all who attended the banquet.

Thank you again for every thing you do for "Osseo AA". I'm proud of each and every one of you.

Bob Gleason

PS

We served 89 dinners!!!

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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 Karen E.*

Step 3

By Scott C.

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him

This is the step that saved my life. When I was drinking, I believed that I controlled anything and everything, and I was the center of the universe. My childhood consisted of going to church for social reasons, so I never really bought into the God thing.

During my time in treatment we studied the steps and read the Big Book and the 12 x 12. When we came to the 3rd step prayer I was having issues with the way it read in the Big Book.

“God I offer myself to Thee to build with 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, Thy love and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always”

You see, for me it had way too many “God words” in it. I was very lucky in the fact that our Pastor at the facility was willing to work with me, and help me change a few words in order to better understand it, but not really changing its meaning. This is what we came up with:

God I offer myself to you. To do with me and to build with me as you will. Relieve me of my own self-centeredness so that I may better do your will. Take away my difficulties so that victory over them maybe a light to those whom I may help. With your Power, your love and your way of life may I do your will always.

This is the same prayer that I have been saying every day since. For me it helps me to stay focused, and remember that God is in control. It reminds me to get out myself, and help others by example.

I am truly blessed to be in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous

I Wish I Were...

Big enough to honestly admit all my shortcomings.

Brilliant enough to accept praise without it making me arrogant.

Tall enough to tower over dishonesty.

Strong enough to welcome criticism.

Compassionate enough to understand human frailties.

Wise enough to recognize mistakes.

Humble enough to appreciate greatness.

Brave enough to stand by my friends.

Human enough to be thoughtful of my neighbor.

And spiritual enough to be devoted to the love of God.

-- Author unknown --

Squad Leaders Meeting

Squad Leaders met on Wednesday March 5th at 7:00 PM. Squads represented were; 1, H2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 17, 86 and Monday Evening Alano. It was really nice to see an Alano meeting represented. The squad leaders are to let all of the newcomers know that they should attend the step classes on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 PM. Spring cleanup was also discussed. Rather than try to get everyone together to clean, each squad will be assigned a task and a deadline to get it accomplished. Steve O. brought up the fishing trip. He would like to have it on the 21st or 28th of June. There are info sheets around the club if you are interested. There would be fishing, a picnic and a campfire AA meeting. It sounds like a fun time. Squad rent was also discussed and squad leaders were to ask their respective squads to voluntarily up the rent and coffee contribution each squad pays. Squad 12 brought up that they've outgrown their meeting room and want to switch rooms with the Thursday evening Alano. It was agreed that it should be handled by the Board. The meeting was adjourned with "The Lords Prayer" before 8:00 PM.

Board Meeting

The board meeting opened with the Serenity Prayer at 7:00 PM on Wednesday March 12th. In attendance were Dick. O., Terry M., Loren A., Rudy M., Terry K., John W., Laurie P. and Bob G. Scott C. and Jim K. were unable to attend. We have \$8,116.91 in the money market account and \$2,817.73 in the checking account with all the bills paid. It was stated that the banquet cost was just under \$900.00. It was agreed to extend our lawn care contract for an additional year. The Board agreed to pay \$50 toward food for Gopher State Round-up. It was also agreed that Squad 12 and Thursday evening Alano would switch rooms. Monica G. had requested that the money raised by the Garage Sale go toward paint and such to spruce up the club. The Board unanimously agreed to that. The spring clean-up was discussed and everyone felt that assigned tasks were a great idea.

Laurie P. said that she listened to Susie J. on her show the day after the banquet and she told her audience that she had someone buy dinner for her at The American Legion in Osseo. She also said she was the speaker for the evening and was very nervous about it but just thought of the microphone instead of the audience and came through. I believe that she also mentioned making a lot of new friends.

I would like to extend my thanks to Susie for the tremendous and heartfelt job that she did and I hope she really does number us among her friends.

The meeting was adjourned before 8:00 with "The Lords Prayer".

Asking how

Many days we are tempted to ask *Why?* Why did this happen to me? Why was I singled out? Why am I not a different person? But the whys lead only to clever explanations and rationalizations of what we do or what we are. The question for us is not *Why?* but *How?*

We ask how to learn and work our program of recovery; the "how" can give us a deeper understanding of the program. We ask God *How?* and God provides the strength and guidance needed. "How" will lead to everything needed for recovery and personal growth. "Why" is irrelevant.

Tradition Three

THE STORY OF IRMA LIVONI

Author Unknown

Here is the story of Irma Livoni. This is a true story about what happened not just on December 7th, 1941 (Pearl Harbor Day) but what happened to one of the few women who was in AA at that time, and about a letter she received in the mail, on Monday, December 8th, which virtually kicked her out of AA.

In December of 1984, I had been sober for 2-1/2 years, and was working with my sponsors Bob and Sybil Corwin since January of 1984. Sybil had gotten sober in March of 1941, so at the time she was 43 yrs sober. We were driving home from a meeting and she asked me the date (to her it was just Sunday). I told her it was Dec 8th, and that yesterday (Dec 7th) was the anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day.

She said "Matt, have I ever told you about Irma Livoni?"

"Nope, who is she?"

She said, "Well, when we get back to the house, come in for coffee and I'll tell you a story about AA history and some of the reasons we have Tradition 3. Oh, and by the way Matt, did you know that the literature specifically protects 'queers, plain crackpots, and fallen women,' and since you and I are at least two out of those three, we should be especially grateful for Tradition 3? I'll show you it when we get home."

I laughed out loud, as Sybil had a great sense of humor, and she had been a taxi dancer, back before she got sober, you know one of those "10 cents a dance" ladies, and she was divorced twice, and was a single mom, as well as an alcoholic back then, so the term "fallen woman" was something that hit close to home.

She had told me that it was very different back in the 30's and 40's for a woman to be an alcoholic. Sybil said it was a time when women wore hats and gloves, and "respectable women" were not usually found in a bar, or at "whoopie parties."

Our Thursday night step study had voted to not cover the traditions after we got to step 12, so I figured they must not be very important and thought I'd probably be bored with the conversation, but she got my attention telling me that "queers, crackpots and fallen women" were mentioned, so I agreed to come in for coffee. Besides, Sybil had been sober longer than I had been alive so I didn't argue with her very much.

Sybil got down her copy of the big book. She said, I want you to find the traditions in there, and read me Tradition 3. It was a 1st edition Big Book. Thicker than mine.

I said, "Is this why they call it the Big Book?"

She said, "Exactly, Bill had it printed on big paper, with big margins around the type, so that people would think they were really getting something for their money."

I looked in the back of the book, where I thought the traditions were, but couldn't find them. "I can't find them, Sybil."

"Exactly. That's because we didn't have any traditions back in 1941 when I came in. And Matt, AA was in mortal danger of destroying itself, which is why we have traditions now." Then she had me find them in my 3rd edition and in my 12 & 12. I didn't read it all, just the caption heading, and then she started telling me the story of Irma Livoni.

Irma was a sponsee of Sybil's. She also became a member in 1941, just after Sybil. Sybil took her into her home. (Sybil told me that many people's bottoms were very low then, no home, no job, no watch, no car, nothing). Sybil said it was different then for a woman to be an alcoholic. That most of them had burned all their bridges with their families, and were looked down upon, even more so than male alcoholics. Sybil said she watched AA help Irma get sober, watched AA help Irma get cleaned up, watched AA help Irma get her first job in sobriety, and watched AA help Irma get her first apartment in sobriety.

Then she said that on Dec 5th, 1941 a self-appointed group of the members signed a letter to Irma & mailed it 2 days before Pearl Harbor, on that Friday, Dec 5th. Here is a copy of the letter:

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Post Office Box 607
Hollywood Station
Hollywood, California
December Fifth 1941
Irma Livoni
939 S. Gramercy Place
Los Angeles, California

Dear Mrs. Livoni:

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles Group of Alcoholics Anonymous, held Dec. 4th, 1941, it was decided that your attendance at group meetings was no longer desired until certain explanations and plans for the future were made to the satisfaction of this committee. This action has been taken for reasons which should be most apparent to you. It was decided that, should you so desire, you may appear before members of this committee and state your attitude. This opportunity will be afforded you between now and December 15th, 1941. You may communicate with us at the above address by that date.

In case you do not wish to appear, we shall consider the matter closed and that your membership is terminated.

Alcoholics Anonymous, Los Angeles Group
Mortimer, Frank, Edmund, Fay D., Pete, Al

I was stunned. "How could they do this, Sybil?"

"Because we didn't have any guidelines, any traditions to protect us from good intentions. AA was very new, and people did all sorts of things, thinking they were protecting the fellowship."

Sybil then said to close my eyes and imagine my being in the following setting. Sybil explained that Dec 7th, 1941 was Pearl Harbor Day (a Sunday). She said that that Sunday night everyone in LA was afraid that Los Angeles would also be attacked and bombed. There was a citywide blackout, people were so terrified. She said that on Monday Dec 8th, President Roosevelt gave the speech that talked about "the date that will live in infamy," and that we were now at war with Japan and Germany.

She said that was the day that Irma received her letter. There was only one meeting in the entire state of California when Sybil came in, in 1941. By December there may have been two or three, but Irma had nowhere else to go, no one else to turn to. No other Group in California that she could ask for help.

Sybil said, "Imagine only one or two meetings in your entire state, and being shunned by your family, by society, and by the only group of people who were on your side, your AA group. Imagine them shutting the door on you and sending you such a letter, Matt."

I shivered at the thought of it. It was Christmas time, the stores were decorated and now poor Irma was all alone. I thought about how it was in 1984 with 2000 meetings a week to choose from in Southern California. And then I imagined having no other help for a hopeless alcoholic.

Sybil told me that Irma never came back to another meeting, left AA and died of alcoholism. She wrote to Bill about the incident, and I cannot tell you that this is the reason that the following is a part of the 3rd Tradition, but it certainly seems to apply.

From Tradition 3, page 141:

... that we would neither punish nor deprive any AA of membership, that we must never compel anyone to pay anything, believe anything, or conform to anything? The answer, now seen in Tradition Three, was simplicity itself. At last experience taught us that to take away any alcoholic's full chance was sometimes to pronounce his death sentence, and often to condemn him to endless misery. Who dared to be judge, jury and executioner of his own sick brother?"

JUDGE JURY AND EXECUTIONER. I remember looking at those words again and again, and they seemed to get larger and larger.

JUDGE JURY AND EXECUTIONER

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I hadn't really noticed EXECUTIONER when I had read it the first time at my 12 & 12 study group. I felt so bad for this poor lady. Wow, those words really had a different meaning than when I had read the traditions before. So here it is, 23 years later, and each December 7th & 8th, I always think about Irma Livoni, and how lucky I am, that we have traditions now. I also think of how lucky I was to have met Sybil and so lucky that she appointed herself my sponsor.

Years later I realized how everything she ever taught me was like gold. But in 1984 I had no idea who Sybil really was or how lucky I was to have her as my sponsor. She was like a piece of living history, but I really didn't realize how valuable that was in explaining WHY we do some of the things we do.

Besides being one of the first women in AA, Sybil was the first woman west of the Mississippi. She also became the head of LA's central office for 12 years, and she became close friends with Bill and Lois. She and Bob even used to go on vacation with them. She used to tell me all sorts of stories about Bill Wilson and things he said to her.

He was very interested in how AA would work for women, as there were very few women worldwide in AA back in 1941. Marty Mann and other women came in before Sybil did, but very few stayed sober.

I learned that night that no one can get kicked out of AA. We can ask a disturbing wet drunk what he needs to settle down or we might have to ask him to step outside for that day, but we don't vote to kick anyone out forever. And we don't shun people because our guidelines, our traditions tell us that no one has to believe in anything (they don't have to be like me) and they don't have to conform to anything (they don't have to dress a certain way, or have no facial hair, or pay anything). Even if I get drunk again, I am still welcome at any AA meeting.

So that's the story about Irma Livoni. Feel free to pass this along to anyone you know who might be interested in knowing a bit about how and why the traditions got started. I think it sort of puts a face on Tradition 3: the face of a woman I never knew, who got kicked out of AA. Who got drunk and died.

Thank God for Tradition 3, and thank God for AA

I wish you a slow recovery.

--Saying heard in meetings