



Conscious Contact

Prescott Area Intergroup: Serving Central Yavapai County

April 2017

240 S. Montezuma St. # 108 Prescott, AZ 86303 Phone: (928) 445-8691 Open Weekdays 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Website: www.prescottaa.org Email: prescottaa@prescottaa.org

Little Things Mean a Lot

The daily meditation book I've been using for the last few years opened the other morning with this quote: "Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day." I tried to find out more about the author – listed as Sally Koch – and other things she might have written, but an internet search turned up little on her biography and no more quotations. Her observation struck a chord with me, however, as did the rest of the meditation which talked about our 12th Step as well as generosity of spirit in all our affairs. It concluded with: "Today I will look for ways to be helpful and generous to others."

After my brief meditation I went on to my home group meeting, where one of our members was celebrating his 40th AA anniversary. He chose as a topic for the day's discussion "showing up," and shared how important this basic idea had been and continues to be in his sober life. Showing up to meetings, participating, trying to practice AA's principles on a daily basis, maintaining contact with a Higher Power of his understanding, sticking out his hand to the newcomer – or to the old timer needing support. He pointed out that AA has a code, as stated on page 84 of our Big Book: "Love and tolerance of others is our code." He's been going through a rough patch the last few years, and has known much sadness. But he continues on -- one day at a time, doing what he can when he can with what he's got, in good times and bad.

What those two messages conveyed to me was the importance of the "little things" I do in all areas of my life. And hearing them both within the space of a couple of hours one morning got me thinking about what an extraordinary change they represent from my old, childish, drinking way of thinking. Little steps were for little people. Think big! That was my code. I behaved as if a guy could play par golf without having to practice; win the lottery without ever buying a ticket. I wanted the big results without any real effort on my part. I still fall into that trap in certain areas of my life. I want my 25 year old body back, but really like ice cream and can't find time to go to the gym. I still have a hard time with self-discipline. When faced with a big job of some sort, my immediate impulse is to put it off because it's too much to handle. Then I remember

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The Glorious Sobriety Anniversary

The last week of February I celebrated a birthday – not my sober birthday, just my "another year older" birthday (which at this age is not my favorite!) It's a milestone I share with a twin sister, and I have memories of the new bikes, the twin outfits and jewelry, the shared celebrations over many, many years. Many of those memories were wonderful, but unfortunately this day is bittersweet for me now.

My sister is dying of this disease of alcoholism, while I was given the gift of sobriety. I have no idea why I was saved and she is suffering. She was given many chances to "get it," but she didn't want it. We really don't have much in common any more. We don't even live in the same state now. I suppose that's a metaphor.

By contrast, I adore my sobriety birthday, a date I haven't had to change in over 18 years, because it is the day my life changed forever! It was not an accident of birth. It is the day I chose to accept the true gift of sobriety. Though I didn't realize it at the time, it was the day I was saved by God from the inevitable outcomes of death, jails, and institutions. Also, going a little deeper, I was saved from the "Four Horsemen" it talks about in the Big Book: Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, and Despair. Those dark entities haunted me for years. I'm familiar with what the English poets call the "Dark Night of the Soul."

We don't mark birthdays in Alcoholics Anonymous like proud parents celebrating their adorable little child turning five years old -- with a party, a pony, clown, gifts, a cake, and thirty of his/her best friends from kindergarten! Congratulating someone for having been alive a certain number of years. THE REASON WE CELEBRATE IS TO SHOW THE NEWCOMER THAT IT CAN BE DONE!

My home meeting here in Prescott does recognize regular members with a cake on their birthday, so in a sense the meeting is for them. They get to pick a reading from our literature, share about it, then call on fellow members to share as well. We show those in the room, often including young people from the recovery homes, that we can stay sober one day at a time. We demonstrate how this is done. We attend

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that I can handle it if I break it down into smaller pieces and then take one step at a time.

When it comes to my sobriety, I'm very grateful that I was miserable enough when I finally showed up at the doors of AA that I was willing to try anything – even all that “one day at a time” nonsense! If I had seen the program as just a chore, a box to be checked off on my life chart before moving quickly back into what I perceived as “the mainstream,” or just something I had to do to satisfy a court, I don't think I'd now be in my fifth decade of sobriety. I learned from our program and my fellow “trudgers” not only how not to drink one day at a time, but how to live that way. In small steps. As it says in the Big Book at the end of Chapter Six: “We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.” The “simple way” as outlined in the chapter, which is titled “Into Action,” consists of Steps 5 through 12.

The payoff is that the small steps I learned to take earlier in sobriety – those steps that seemed so difficult at times -- slowly developed into new habits that turned AA from a program of self-denial and self-discipline into one of self-fulfillment.

I'm reminded of a lesson I learned as a financial journalist regarding what has been called one of the least appreciated strategies of building personal wealth – the power of time in compounding money. The basic idea is pretty simple: put some money aside and let that money earn interest. Let the interest accumulate in your account and then the interest starts earning interest as well. The longer you let your nest egg grow this way, the more the interest compounds and the more time boosts the results of your good savings habit.

I think an investment in AA pays off much the same way. It's an investment most of us make just to quit drinking and using – or at least to quit suffering the consequences of that behavior. And if given half the effort we put into those previous activities, the fellowship usually does the job. Then we find, like millions of other alcoholics over the last 80-plus years, that the “compound interest” we earn on our AA investment is actually a powerful tool for building spiritual wealth beyond anything we imagined when we surrendered to our disease.

Dan F.

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meetings, participate, and share our experience, strength and hope; we sponsor others and take service commitments. In other words, we keep “doing the deal”.

It's important for newcomers to see that we keep going to meetings for the duration of our lives. The program is a way of life for us. This is where we find our strength. Here we find the fellowship and the freedom from sadness, loneliness, worry and care, and we often have some good laughs along the way. We also share the hardships, illnesses, and tragedies, and we care and love each other through them.

AA for me is fun. It is where my friends are. It is where the women I have met, and try to help are. It is hopefulness and happiness. And whatever I have found here, I find joy in sharing and in trying to give back to others.

A member of our home group just moved back to Prescott after getting sober more than two decades ago at a local treatment center. We found out he has a milestone AA birthday soon and insisted that he celebrate his anniversary at the meeting. He hesitated, saying that he was too new to the group. But we reminded him that it wasn't about him -- it was for the newcomer who might need to see that you can get sober at age 25 and stay sober 25 years. Many people in that room are 25 now, and might be still thinking that there's some more fun and adventure out there “doing the research.” We know it only gets worse out there. People die. Worse, they might kill someone driving drunk and rot in jail the rest of their life for their terrible crime. Or they might take their own life out of despair at not being able to find peace, or whatever they are seeking.

We give hope to people by showing them that this “gift” is available to everyone, though it's not necessarily the people who need it who actually get it, but those who want it. I didn't know what I wanted when I first got to Alcoholics Anonymous! But when I saw the gift personified in the people in the rooms, I knew I had found my answer. It has become my home and my happiness, and continuing to attend AA meetings and celebrate people's anniversaries is a big part of that.

I'll take that birthday gift any day.

Stephanie V.

We've heard several phrases meant to capture the schizophrenic self-image from which so many practicing alcoholics suffer. Some favorites:

An egomaniac with an inferiority complex.

The piece of excrement around whom the world revolves.

The one lying in the gutter looking down on the world.



April AA Birthdays CONGRATULATIONS!



PV Sat. Night Live

Chas R. 4/25/15

Seniors in Sobriety

Steve D. 4/15/91

Friday BB Solutions

George 4/11/05

Chino Valley

Jeff S. 4/12/02

PV Noon Group

Donna 04/30/14

PV Thurs Ngt BB Study

Jim R. 4/03/97

Step Stories

Donne L. 4/04/03

Park Ave.

Wes K. 4/19/79

The Slice of Life

Ron G. 4/10/06

Jim C. 4/06/83

Sunday Round Table

Larry H. 4/25/12

Luke H. 4/08/11

PV Friday Night Speaker

Lloyd S. 4/07/15

Bill H. 4/05/12

Will L. 4/30/05

Welcome Valley Group

Karen M. 4/22/11

Karyl F. 4/15/08

Chuck K. 4/06/82

PV No Name Group

John N. 4/10/08

Manny H. 4/01/08

Peter T. 4/26/87

Alternatives

Dale S. 4/01/07

Ruth D. 4/27/04

Lillian M. 4/20/97

Janet E. 4/19/92

Crazy Birds

Kevin M. 4/08/06

Mark V. 4/30/05

Bryan D. 4/27/05

Ethan E. 4/02/02

Tues. Night Step Study

Alex V. 4/08/10

Wayne C. 4/28/07

Susan S. 4/10/06

Sarah C. 4/22/98

Jim M. 4/03/83

Sun. AM Men's Stag

Rich H. 4/30/09

Nick R. 4/19/08

Bryan H. 4/05/08

Roy H. 4/23/06

Gary M. 4/24/88

Lushes T' Ladies

Kas M. 4/22/13

Sharon M. 4/18/13

Kary L. 4/15/13

Cynthia B. 4/09/13

Linda R. 4/17/09

Connie G. 4/02/89

Carol R. 4/15/85

The Prescott Group

Kirk W. 4/02/11

Chelsey E. 4/26/10

Nick S. 4/28/09

Brooke S. 4/26/08

Jenna J. 4/10/08

Chris R. 4/29/06

Beth N. 4/14/06

Serenity At Sunrise

Andrew H. 4/20/11

Gene H. 4/20/09

Peter M. 4/15/08

John P. 4/12/08

Curt S. 4/16/07

Charles H. 4/14/97

George S. 4/24/85

Ann W. 4/23/80

Girlie Birds

Renata I. 4/19/16

Angela W. 4/14/16

Rebekah O. 4/11/15

Jessica W. 4/22/13

Sharon M. 4/18/13

Deb J. 4/26/12

Beth Ann R. 4/04/10

Nicki B. 4/12/02

Brenda S. 4/20/99

Connie H. 4/27/85

Service Corner

Look back and be grateful.

Look ahead and be hopeful.

Look around and be helpful.

Next Intergroup Meeting:

6:30 pm, Wednesday, April 12, 2017
(the second Wednesday of every month)
at the First Christian Church, 1230 Willow Creek Rd.

Next District 14-140 GSR Meeting

Wednesday, April 5, 2017
(the first Wednesday of the month)
at the First Christian Church, 1230 Willow Creek Rd.

Next District 14-142 GSR Meeting

6:30 pm, Tuesday, April 4, 2017
(the first Tuesday of every month)
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 7763 E. Long Look, PV

Prescott Shoestring Roundup Committee

5:30 pm, Friday, April 21, 2017
(the third Friday of the month)
Unity Church, Corner of Arizona & Goodwin

PI / CPC Committee Meetings

Meetings scheduled as needed.
The Public Information/
Cooperation with the Professional Community
Committee has many opportunities to be of service.
For information about this committee call the
Prescott Area Intergroup Office (928) 445-8691.

The Prescott Area Intergroup's
Treatment Facilities Committee
For information on how you can be of service on this
committee please call the Intergroup Office.

The Prescott Area Intergroup's
Correctional Facilities Committee
For Yavapai County Juvenile Justice Center AA meeting
information call Jerry D. 928 636-9343

Please help update our AA birthday list!

Sign up to receive a monthly birthday update email.



Meetings of the Month: Road Trip!

It's important to have a home group in AA as well as other meetings we attend frequently. But I've always enjoyed breaking new ground now and then by visiting other groups out of my immediate area. Road Trip!

We're fortunate here to have a number of such meetings within very reasonable driving distances. I've recently visited three such groups, and found all of them to be friendly, very welcoming to visitors, down to earth and full of recovery! Here's a rundown:

Chino Morning Gratitude – Sunday, 8:33 a.m.

This is an open participation meeting, with a good mix of sobriety times. It has a nice combination of locals -- lots of Carhartt and Levis -- and members visiting from surrounding areas. It is held in a small, but comfortable suite at 318 Perkinsville Road, a commercial strip on the north side of the road, west of Highway 89 -- the same location where it has been for 20 years. It's about 18 miles from Prescott, or a 25 minute drive.

The Chino directory lists a total of 14 meetings a week at this location, with noon meetings every day except Sunday; 5:30 p.m. meetings Monday, Wednesday and Saturday; a women's meeting Tuesday at 7 p.m.; a men's stag Thursday at 7 p.m.; an 8 p.m. meeting Friday; and 8:33 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Sunday.

Cordes Lakes Better Days – Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

This open discussion meeting is about 40 miles from Prescott area, but well worth the roughly 50 minute drive. It's held in the building adjacent to the main Baptist Church at the corner of Longhorn and Stagecoach. It is a medium sized room, with a good amount of seating. Sobriety chips and coffee are available

This is a very small group, about evenly split between men and women members and with lots of sobriety time. I was greeted with a warm welcome at the door. I felt like a regular member. The meeting started with a topic, and went to discussion, with shares that struck me as very much from the heart. The meeting I attended used the Daily Reflections and the Big Book. Literature is limited, so you might want to bring yours. This meeting would welcome support.

Mayer Higher Power Hour – Saturday, Noon.

This group actually meets seven days a week in a small but comfortable room at 13278 Central Ave., just south of State Rte. 69 in downtown Mayer. It's about 30 miles and a 40 minute drive from Prescott. The open discussion meeting I attended was on Saturday at noon, but the group also meets Sunday through Friday at 5:00 p.m. at the same location.

The Saturday meeting included about 15 members with a good mix of age and gender, and my impression was of a close knit but welcoming group which seemed to care genuinely for others' recovery. There were some out of area visitors in attendance as well. Sobriety chips and coffee are available.

Don S.

District 14 Report

The first All District meeting of the year took place March 13 in Verde Valley, including 20 voting members and 3 visitors. Among highlights of reports from the various sub districts: District 14-140 recently donated literature to the Veteran's Administration; Sedona reported that they have new meetings popping up and many new General Service Representatives -- they are working hard to get every group to have a GSR. There was also a call to remind people to help out with the Shoestring Roundup (July 14-16, 2017) and the Area03 AA Convention (Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2017). You'll find the regular meeting dates and times for the organizing committees of both those events elsewhere in this newsletter. There was also discussion of other upcoming events including:

- March 31 - April 2, Flagstaff, Pre Conference Assembly
- May 3, Prescott, All District Meeting
- May 20, Casa Grande, Post Conference Assembly
- July or August, Prescott Valley, All District Meeting
- October 9, Verde Valley, All District Meeting
- November 4-5, Yuma, November Assembly.

Attendees then moved to a discussion of topics to be aired at the Pre-Conference Assembly. It is at this assembly that representatives take the opinions of their group to the local Delegate, who then takes all these thoughts and presents them to the General Service Conference in New York. In this way, every AA member has the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect AA as a whole in the US and Canada. Different regions of the world have their own service structure. The topics include:

- Proposed changes to the schedule of AA General Service Conferences, including that they be held every other year in New York City (as opposed to the current every year) and that regional service committees bid to host the annual conferences outside of New York in the intervening years.
- New uses of social media to help AA advance its mission, including pursuit of a "Google for Non-Profits account" which would have the effect of moving AA to the first page of Google search results using words related to AA and recovery. Currently, the first page is primarily filled with ads for treatment centers and state sponsored programs. The account would also allow GSO to store all of AA's video literature in one space on You Tube, which would allow local groups to access the videos and imbed them into local websites. For example, our website, PrescottAA.org, could imbed a video made at GSO. There are also suggestions on having a GSO Twitter or RedVine account. GSO has not spent much time investigating either of these ideas and is aware that anonymity could present problems.
- Creation of new literature, or updating of existing literature regarding the safety of AA groups. One proposal would add language to "The AA Group...Where It All Begins" pamphlet, stressing that groups should endeavor to provide a safe meeting place and encourage one another, especially new attendees, to not engage in any behavior which may place themselves or others in fear for any reason." It adds that the Tradition of Anonymity should never be used as a shield to conceal wrongdoing, and that when appropriate, there should be consultation and cooperation with appropriate authorities. Others would like to see an independent piece of literature created to address the issues of member safety and "13th stepping."

Colyn GN

Step of the Month – Step Four

Members share how they came to grips with our fourth step: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

For me the 4th step was both very easy and very difficult. I could list the people I was resentful at and I could list in detail what they had done; but I did not want to look at why those things bothered me or look at where I was a part of the problem. Once I got through it I was able to see the patterns behind my thoughts and behaviors. My expectations were usually unreasonable and when I didn't get my way I was resentful. I held on to those resentments. Today I can recognize that when my expectations are not being met I also have a part. I can then talk to the person and fix the problem before it really even starts. Step 4 helped me get on the road to peace and serenity.

Jess M.

When I first got sober I was a talker -- the kind that the old-timers would probably urge to "keep coming back," or think "here she goes again." I shared in meetings the stuff that I didn't feel good about inside me. It helped take the edge off and then I felt better. In my mind I did a mental 4th and a 5th. Needless to say I was half-measuring. I continued like that into my 8th year of sobriety, and those natural desires were still playing havoc in my life. A turning point came when a woman said to me: "Honey you have a headful of AA and nothing in your heart." I believe she was used by God to push me in the direction of a better me, and finally a working sponsor. Eventually I just sat down and wrote. (I prayed to another woman's God, who I was borrowing until I could get a better understanding of my own). What a concept! Just do it. Don't think or feel about it, just write. It worked for me and I'm still here. Thank You God!

Michelle H.

Doing the 4th step wasn't particularly hard. Ever since my third DUI, I had been incessantly beating myself up over my drinking and its consequences. The shame was great and I needed to express myself on paper. I wrote long and hard about all my shortcomings. It was easy to see my part as I continued to beat myself up on paper. But, being the perfectionist I am, I had to get it just right, so just as I had done in elementary school, I kept writing and erasing until I had a hole in the paper. Finally, I started all over and just put it down on paper without corrections. I realized I had been trying to control how the person with whom I would share the inventory would see me. I was afraid that they might judge me as harshly as I judged myself. Even today, after years of sobriety, I still struggle with letting others see my

shortcomings. I realize that if I speak my truth aloud then I can no longer hide behind my competence and success. I must look at those things that continue to be a struggle in my life; the things that I drank to cover up. It was me wanting to play god; me wanting to still run my life rather than face the fact that my self-will had created all the things I was writing about. So I finally finished my 4th Step and began to look around for someone to share it with (for at that time I still had no sponsor). Now was the hard part, the 5th step, sharing it with another alcoholic. That was my greatest fear, not the 4th step but letting someone else know all about me. To be continued next month

Don L.

"Help is needed with this step. Since we are going to need another person for Step five, it makes sense to use the same person for both steps. This is usually our sponsor. The book Alcoholics Anonymous suggests three inventories in Step Four: 1. Resentments, 2. Fears and 3. Sex. Through the years of AA this inventory step has been done a number of ways. Many of us would advise to look towards your sponsor on how to do the inventory.

"Two ideas are presented in the Big Book about why this inventory is of utmost importance. First, 'selfishness-self centeredness. That, we think, is the root of our troubles....alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness.' The second idea stated is: 'Resentment is the number one offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease.....when the spiritual malady is overcome we straighten out mentally and physically.'

"Have I ever done a perfect inventory? I think not. But with faith and courage I have done the work necessary to call my sponsor and say 'when can we meet for Step Five.'"

Dan S.

And finally, two oldies but goodies from the Step Four archive:

Step 4: "My attempt to work step four was really my commitment to the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. I really joined AA when I took step four."

Greg H., April, 2004

Step 4: "It took me a long time to do it because I was so afraid of doing it. Then I found out that I'm not doing the 4th step to thrill my sponsor or whoever I do my fifth step for, but it's a tool that I use to get on with my life. It's to benefit me. So when I found out that all the steps were to benefit me, it helped me get through."

Joni S., April, 2004

Heard at a meeting:

Love fear to death.

America's Greatest Export

I did quite a bit of overseas travel when I was working for Boeing, and was always glad to tell people where I worked. Everybody on earth seemed to know the name no matter what language was being spoken. I would cross my hands, pantomime a flying aircraft, say "Boeing" and the listener always understood. Once it was an old Japanese fisherman. Another time it was a French pastry vendor. It was thrilling to fly into various airports around the world and see the different airlines' paint jobs on the bodies and tails of all the Boeing planes. I was only a lowly graphics artist, but I hoped the prestige of the company name would rub off on me. I felt important!

I was early in sobriety on one particular trip to Bath, England and went to an AA meeting there. I arrived early, introduced myself and, of course, told everybody I worked for Boeing. The meeting secretary offered me a cup of tea and some biscuits and said I was in for a particular treat that evening because we'd be hearing from a prominent early member of English AA.

The speaker turned out to be a severe-looking woman in a tweed skirt, tweed jacket and tweed hat, who bore a remarkable resemblance to Dame Judy Dench. I don't remember how long she had been sober, but she knew a lot about the origins of AA in England. She gave an interesting presentation and then said she understood there was a visitor from America in the crowd, adding that she simply loved Americans because of that most wonderful export of theirs. I wasn't sure which export she meant but I expected she was about to heap praise upon Boeing (and me, by extension) for giving the world all of those beautiful commercial jet airliners that circle the globe daily. I was in for quite a surprise!

The lady in tweed said that the most wonderful export was the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Wow! I had never thought about AA as an export before! But, in fact, American GIs had brought Big Books with them during World War II. The first formal British AA meeting occurred on March 31, 1947 at London's Dorchester Hotel, organized with the help of a visiting American member named Grace O. who had been asked by our General Service Office in New York to contact several people in Britain who had written for information about the program. AA had come to Bath in 1953.

My pride in working for Boeing was quickly eclipsed by gratitude for my gift of sobriety. I realized that those two alcoholics in Akron so many years ago have perhaps had a greater impact on mankind than any of Bill Boeing's flying machines! Today Alcoholics

Anonymous is found in 181 countries and has over two million members. No Import-Export bank involved. No balance of payments. No dues or fees. No leaders. Only trusted servants. Aren't we lucky?

I retired from Boeing twenty five years ago, and I don't fly much anymore. But I have a flock of AA sponsees and friends who help keep my feet on the ground. One of them told me that Kurt Vonnegut once claimed that America's two greatest contributions to the world were "AA and jazz." I don't know about jazz, but I certainly agree about AA.

(Next month: AA goes to Russia.)

Merrill G.
Bellevue WA

**Heard at a meeting:
Fake it 'til you break it.**

Traditions Checklist from the AA Grapevine

These questions were originally published in the *AA Grapevine* in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

Practice These Principles. . .

Tradition Four: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths -- his lengths, not mine -- to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

The Puzzle That Is 'Real John'

My name is John, and I'm a real alcoholic. I was born the youngest of three children to John and Mary H. My mother's side of the family was closest to us, and, as it turned out, the most dysfunctional. I remember my uncles and cousins sneaking drinks of their beer to me when I was little. I didn't like the taste at first but that problem was short lived. I experienced my first "high" after consuming two tall cans of beer at age 13. I loved the "Buzz" and have been trying to re-create it ever since.

I had friends growing up -- boys and girls who either lived nearby or who had demonstrated certain attributes and beliefs I was drawn to. My formative years were full of all the problems adolescents typically have -- awkwardness, guilt and shame. My friends were the "out" I was looking for and that I "needed" to shelter me from the embarrassment that was my family. Whenever we got together booze was involved. We ritualized it. It became our rite of passage, and we were damn passionate about it. The only difference between us and other kids was that my friends and I mastered the art of crashing and burning.

As each of us started our lives with all the responsibilities and accountability that growing up demands, however, I found that I was one of the very few that had developed a drinking problem. Difficulties with the law, relationships, jobs, unrealized dreams, depression, and fears all took their toll. And at about 3 a.m. on July 17th, 1990, standing outside some casino in Sparks NV, I looked up in the night sky and asked God: "If you are really up there... if I am truly NOT alone...show me." At that precise moment a white owl flew across the sky. I took that as His sign.

One way or another, I had had enough exposure to A.A. by this time that I knew there was a place I could go to seek help. I went to a meeting that day and kept coming back because that is what they told me to do. I got a sponsor, took the steps, stuck around the right people and got into service. I did that for 12 1/2 years. God had smiled on my sobriety and I smiled on His grace. But then came the phone call from my uncle Joe.

Joe and my aunt had gone to Arizona to meet with my parents, but they never showed up. Joe called to tell me the terrible news -- earlier that day my parents were killed in an auto accident.

I decided to move to Arizona and settle their estate. I made all these decisions on my own, without talking to my sponsor or even praying about them. I wasn't prepared for the geographic or for the devastation of losing my parents so suddenly. And it wasn't long before I found myself at the counter of a convenience

store buying a 12 pack of beer. You might say it took me 13 years to finish that 12 pack

Things went from bad to worse after I relapsed. I tried abstinence at times. I tried religion. At other times I just resigned myself to my alcoholism and wallowed in it, basking in the self-degradation. Each miserable day caused me to reflect on the times when I was most happy, and those times were without a doubt during my past sobriety. Finally I reached another turning point and decided to change. That was nearly six months ago. I have not found it necessary to take a drink of alcohol since. I have a great sponsor and am acquiring a stellar circle of friends.

I am doing things differently this time. I write a lot at meetings, jotting down things I hear that make sense to me -- and some that don't. I am not exactly sure why I do it. All I know is that it helps. Little phrases I hear from those who also attend my home group, Serenity at Sunrise. Some of my favorites are "the gift of desperation" or "the bliss is in the stumble." I noted an acronym for fear -- Forgetting Everything is All Right. "Keep relationships current" is another, and there are so many more. This time around I share my pain in meetings. I don't want to stuff it. I have a window to my heart this time. The pain and suffering from my bouts with alcohol become transparent. I lay them on the table before me and I can see that my turmoil is like the finishing pieces of a puzzle whose final image is me, the way God wants me to be. Sober.

"Real John" H.

What's The Definition of Insanity Again?

I've heard it said in meetings that "insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting different results." But to me, that's just excessive optimism. When I was active in my disease, I knew one drink would lead to too many. I knew if I drank it would lead to disastrous and dangerous behavior. I knew my drunken behavior would result in shame and humiliation. Knowing that, I drank anyways. So to me, insanity is doing the same thing over and over, knowing the result will be detrimental. Drinking equals insanity.

Cathy N.

Concept Four:

"Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge."

One Brick At A Time

“How are you, John?” my sponsor used to ask as we shook hands. As a newcomer I would think: “Wow! This is great! Here’s a guy who genuinely wants to know about my life.” So I’d tell him: “Well, my mortgage is too high. I have the world’s worst marriage. I hate my job. My in-laws treat me like an escaped killer and my car payment is killing me.” And on and on.

During those early months of my sobriety, my sponsor must have made up his mind to allow me to rant and rave for a while. And then one night I walked into his office and, as he shook my hand, he asked his standard question: “How are you, John?” Then he squeezed my hand, adding a word. “How are you, John – inside?”

Nobody had ever asked me that before. I squirmed and fidgeted. This is it, I thought. This is the part where I’m supposed to open up and share my inner self. But how could I tell him that I had no inner self? That, in my case, there was nobody home. If I’d been honest and open from the beginning of our relationship, I would have told him that I’d spent my entire adult life avoiding people who talked that way.

In fact, I was so uncomfortable when other people shared their feelings that when I attended my first few AA meetings, I’d hear people sharing and I’d think: “Oh, God! Someday that’s going to be me up there.” Most of the time, I couldn’t make it to the end of the meeting. I would get up and pretend to go to the bathroom. Then, I’d casually sneak out to the parking lot to the safety of my car.

That night in my sponsor’s office he finally let go of my hand, but he still had me trapped in the chair. “Inside?” I repeated, as if it were a foreign word and I wasn’t really sure of its meaning. He nodded yes.

I started my recovery that night. Beginning that night, in that chair, in that office, and for many nights to come, I started opening up. What choice did I have? Each time we shook hands he asked me that same question, until, finally, he didn’t have to ask it anymore. When I told him how I was, I automatically told him how I was inside.

His plan worked. Beginning with that stark, unabashed question, my sponsor helped me to tear down the walls of my inner feelings in meetings and with dozens of guys one-on-one. I’ve learned that my inner feelings boil down to a handful of things – fear, anger, self-pity, shame, and feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem.

Those are the things we need to talk about in AA.

Forget about your car payment and your in-laws and your boss and the contractor who didn’t show up. Why waste your time – and everybody else-s – whining about things you can’t do anything about anyway? Consider this: Long before there was the “Big Book” or the “Twelve and Twelve” or any literature or even any meetings the simple principle of AA was working. It started when Bill met Dr. Bob and it’s been working ever since. And there’s no reason to think it won’t continue to work.

What is that simple principle? One alcoholic talking with another alcoholic. One recovering alcoholic sharing with another alcoholic how he feels inside.

— John Y., Russell, PA

Reprinted by permission from The AA Grapevine, December, 2004.

2017 Arizona AA Convention Update

Six months to go!

That’s how long until the annual Area 03 (Arizona) AA Convention returns to Prescott for the first time in some 30 years. Mark the dates on your calendar -- Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2017 at the Prescott Resort & Conference Center. Registration forms will be available soon, so watch for them at your intergroup office, website or in meetings.

The monthly convention organizing committee meeting held March 21 pinned down more of the important financial details. A \$25 registration fee covers attendance at all meetings and workshops, a Friday evening ice cream social, and a Saturday night dance. A Saturday night banquet dinner will be an additional \$40 per person, with an entrée choice of beef, chicken or vegetarian. A golf tournament on Friday at Prescott Country Club will cost \$60 including green fees, sack lunch and trophies. If you like souvenirs, there will be three choices of T-shirt style (men’s, women’s, and pocketed) for \$12-\$15 in either black or white, plus water bottles (no cups) for \$12.

There is still much work to be done and more volunteers are needed. Planning meetings are held at the Prescott Resort on the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm. The next one is April 18 – be there or be square! For more information contact committee chairman Tom S at 602-531-6706 or at 4thchapter@q.com.

**Heard at a meeting:
The monkey’s asleep but
the circus hasn’t left town.**



2017 Verde Valley Roundup

I AM RESPONSIBLE

April 7, 2017 — April 9, 2017

Verde Valley Fairgrounds
800 E. Cherry Street
Cottonwood, AZ

verdevalleyroundup.org

Questions?

Call Tina 928-853-7618 or
Stacia 310-890-0209

Second Annual Arizona AA Women's Conference

About Women, By Women, For Women

July 7 - 9, 2017

Prescott Resort and Conference Center
1500 Highway 69, Prescott, Arizona

Details at AZAAWC.org

Flyers available at the office.



33rd Annual Tri-State Round-Up

May 18-21, 2017

Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino
Laughlin, Nevada

Speakers, Marathon Meetings, Ice Cream
Socials, Golf, Bowling, Poker Run

tristateroundup@hotmail.com

www.tristate-roundup.com

32nd Annual Prescott Shoestring Roundup

SAVE THE DATE!

July 14-16, 2017

Emanuel Pines Camp-Prescott AZ

Speakers: Christy C., Worcester, MA

Kent C., Cleveland, OH

Mike F., Gilbert, AZ

For updates visit: prescottshoestringroundup.org

Prescott Area Intergroup's February 2017 Treasurer's Report

GROUP DONATIONS	YTD
4 Directions Grp	\$200.00
Afterwards Group	\$300.00
Bradshaw Seniors Meeting	\$85.30
Carry This Message	\$148.27
Free Thinkers BBS	\$100.00
Friday Big Book Solutions	\$50.00
Girly Birds	\$163.45
Healing the Hole in the Soul	\$176.50
Intergroup Meeting	\$64.00
Mayer Higher Power Hour	\$29.00
Noon BB Discussion	\$220.00
Old Shoe (Skull Valley)	\$34.00
Open AA Meeting	\$140.00
Park Avenue Group	\$111.29
PV As Bill Sees It	\$226.00
PV Gut Rap Group	\$100.06
PV Keep It Simple	\$225.00
PV Noon Group	\$280.00
PV Reflections	\$120.00
PV Roadmap To Recovery	\$60.00
PV There Is a Solution	\$20.00
Saturday Night Live Prescott	\$263.50
Serenity At Sunrise	\$332.46
Step Sisters	\$198.60
Sunny Days	\$186.00
Toolbox Group	\$217.20
Witch's Hat Book Study	\$239.52
Young Peoples Meeting	\$100.00
TOTAL GROUP DONATIONS	\$4,390.15
OTHER INCOME	YTD
AA Birthday Gratitude	\$40.00
Anonymous IG Donation	\$25.00
Literature Sales	\$3,470.15
Chips	\$581.45
Meeting Directory Sales	\$69.00
Newsletter Sales	\$60.00
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	\$4,245.60
TOTAL INCOME	\$8,635.75
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$9,526.62
INCOME LESS EXPENSES	-\$890.87
Total Monies 2/28/17	\$28,549.88
Literature & Chips 3/8/17	\$10,467.00



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