



Conscious Contact

Prescott Area Intergroup: Serving Central Yavapai County

March 2017

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This AA Woman Comes of Age

AA officially celebrated its 20th anniversary back in 1955 at a convention in St. Louis. That gathering is known as the point where our fellowship “came of age” – when AA’s three legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service were officially turned over to the fellowship by its old-timers. The record of that convention, including three talks by co-founder Bill W., were subsequently published in *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, which constitutes a history of how AA started, the evolution of those principles of recovery, unity and service, and how the fellowship had grown and spread its message around the world up to that point.

While I haven’t read all of it, I feel an affinity with this book as I approach my own 19th AA anniversary in mid-July of this year. I call my sobriety my “Magical Mystery Tour,” my “Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

When I finally stuck in the program in 1998 at chronological age 44, my case manager in treatment told me that my emotional maturity had stalled when I began secretly smoking pot as a sophomore in high school at age 14. Of course I subsequently drank and tried many other things through college and the ensuing decades, becoming a First Class Drunk! But pot was my first mind-altering chemical, I was told, so my emotional age would only resume its advance one year at a time as I continued to stay sober.

So by my case manager’s formula, I will only be 33 come July, not 63. I wasted 30 years of growing up! As I look back over these last 19 years I’m struck by how my life has sometimes developed more in tune with my emotional maturity than my chronological age. My first few years in sobriety, for example, were spent in absolute anxiety and failure to integrate socially – much like what happens often to teenagers. Also at that time, I returned to college in my mid-forties, studying to become a California Certified Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor and taking classes in nutrition, art history (my college major the first time around), psychology and human behavior for my own edification. I eventually decided that wasn’t the career for me, but this time was so exciting! I lived near the University of California at Irvine. I still didn’t have a driver’s license because of two DUIs, so I road my bike

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Bad Things and Good People

Many years ago I became aware of a book on the subject of bad things happening to good people. It was written by Harold S. Kushner, a Jewish rabbi who had himself lost a teenage son to a rare premature aging disease called progeria. I was immediately interested in the book, but didn’t get around to looking for it until tragedy struck a cousin of mine and her husband – their twin baby girls were stillborn.

I thought a volume titled “Why Bad Things Happen to Good People” would be appropriate to share with the couple, but when I finally found the book I discovered that I had misremembered the title. It was called “WHEN Bad Things Happen To Good People,” not “WHY.”

I don’t know if the book brought much comfort to my cousin – I hope it did. But I know that my misremembering of the title has given me a lot to ponder in terms of my own life and particularly my alcoholism. Kushner argued that the important thing is not so much to find out why bad things happen, but rather where to find the resources to cope when they do.

As my drinking and its consequences got progressively worse, I was preoccupied with the question of “why.” For me, that wasn’t so much a moral issue as a pragmatic one. I never saw my drinking as any sort of punishment from on high. I just thought if I understood the psychology of my behavior perhaps I could better “control and enjoy” my drinking. I tried psychotherapy and wound up blaming my poor, innocent parents for most of my troubles. But that didn’t curb my drinking – I just had one more reason to be a victim of my sad circumstances. Near the end I sought out experts who could explain to me the difference between a heavy drinker and an alcoholic. I still so desperately wanted to just be a heavy drinker!

The search for “why?” led me down a list of possible remedies similar to the one we find in Chapter Three of our Big Book. Maybe more physical exercise would help. How about a new hobby? Or possibly restricting my drinking to certain hours, days, or brands. Perhaps my wife could be convinced to join me at the bar more often so at least I wouldn’t feel so guilty!

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to class, just as I had done at UC Santa Barbara back in the day, beginning in 1971. As they say, it was “dépà vu all over again!”

When I hit 10 years sober, I was more like age 24, still learning and growing, but taking on much more responsibility as if it was my first years of a real job. I worked at the local hospital doing wheelchair transport, had multiple AA service commitments, ran my own weekly Hospital & Institution panels, and was developing relationships with sponsees as I tried to “pass it on.” Ironically, I also became a planner/coordinator for a variety of AA events, working in sobriety in a field I had been attracted to but incapable of succeeding in as a dysfunctional drunk. Back then, anything I began I either quit or sabotaged so I could go back to my life of drinking. I would quit before being fired. Without health, confidence, and sobriety, I don't see how anyone could keep a job of any kind with any level of responsibility. So I have spent these last few years developing my “resume” so to speak.

Today I have a wealth of duties, jobs, and responsibilities. One is being medical power of attorney for my sister's care. I travel as a corporate rep for my father's company, still work for the local hospital, and continue to keep many other commitments in AA and otherwise.

Our Big Book promises after our ninth step amends that “we will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.” I just returned from California, where I made my last big amends to a friend whom I thought I could never face again. I did, and we were able to resolve our differences. The promises are coming true.

In the forward to *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* Bill W. writes that the title is “now and then questioned because it conveys to some people the idea that we AAs really think we have ‘grown up;’ that we have already achieved great emotional maturity. In reality, the expression ‘comes of age’ is used by us in a very different sense. We simply say that we have arrived at the time of life when adult responsibilities have to be faced and dealt with, as best we are able. To this end we do try to rely upon ourselves – and upon God.”

If obviously not age 33 anymore (sometimes God I wish!), I am nevertheless happy, healthy, can socialize easily, have confidence, responsibilities and many fulfilling joys in my life – in other words, I finally feel like a GROWNUP! This AA woman has come of age!

Stephanie V.

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Fortunately, my life got far enough out of control that one day the “why” no longer mattered, and I reached out in desperation to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Kushner has made quite a study of personal tragedy, and has interviewed many people who have experienced it. He says he always asks what the most important factor has been in their ability to cope with their loss. He invariably gets the same answer: community – others in similar circumstances uniquely able to identify with a fellow-sufferer and share their experience of survival.

Isn't that a lot like our program? The identification of one drunk with another and the hope that maybe together we can find a way to cope with life, sober? I know that's the hope I found in the community of Alcoholics Anonymous. It's the place where I learned to accept the reality of my condition and focus on an action program of recovery.

For me the shift from WHY to WHEN has changed my perceptions of much more than alcoholism. Perhaps most importantly, it affects my concept of a Higher Power. I no longer try to find in the favorable resolution of a problem, or a stroke of good fortune, evidence of a Higher Power intervening positively in my life or anybody else's, for example. That's always been a troublesome notion for me – if “good” things are evidence of God's blessing, doesn't that imply that “bad” things are evidence of His punishment? Or at least His disfavor? That sounds a lot like the “scorekeeper” God that I carried with me from childhood through my active alcoholism to the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous, and which almost caused me to turn away from the program before I even got started.

Thankfully, that's not the Higher Power that I came to know in AA, and which has restored me to sanity today. That Higher Power isn't as concerned that I be looking for evidence of His/Her/Its existence as that I just try to be a positive force in the life I've been given. It's apparently not for me to understand WHY bad things happen to good people. It's only for me – within the framework of my family, my friends, my community, the tangible world around me – to try and be of service WHEN times are bad OR good.

Dan F.

**Humility means teachability.
Teachability means
paying attention to life's message.
Paying attention means living in the now.**



**March AA Birthdays
CONGRATULATIONS!**



Rarely Group

Mickey S. 3/03/70

PV Wed. Nite Step Study

Brian N. 3/16/08

PV Thurs BB Study

Evan C. 3/28/08

PV Fri. Night Speakers

Will L. 3/30/05

PV Noon Group

Marilyn M. 3/01/01

Welcome Valley Group

Brent S. 3/02/15

Seniors in Sobriety

Ann B. 3/31/81

Rudy W. 3/15/69

PV Sunday Nooners

Fred G. 3/11/96

Denver 3/17/85

Prescott Group

Alex H. 3/26/10

Jeremy O. 3/21/10

Kyleen W. 3/19/06

The Slice of Life

Jack C. 3/23/08

Mike Mc. 3/05/05

Jim W. 3/01/90

Sunday Round Table

JT D. 3/08/11

Sean Mc. 3/17/07

Mel H. 3/29/99

Tues Nite Step Study

Terry F. 3/05/07

Don L. 3/19/00

Gail R. 3/06/86

PV Sun. No Name Grp

Rayburn 3/03/15

Amanda 3/08/09

Grover C. 3/12/07

Matt B. 3/04/07

Park Ave

Lauren M. 3/30/05

Jerry D. 3/31/97

Dutch H. 3/16/84

Bill W. 3/11/83

Alternatives

Sarah 3/30/09

Susan K. 3/30/09

Judy H. 3/15/88

Tomme C. 3/18/80

Humboldt Men's Stag

Jeff S. 3/11/13

Ron W. 3/15/06

Jack S. 3/15/91

Steve P. 3/15/89

PV Lushes t' Ladies

Tara M. 3/09/14

Valerie L. 3/31/13

Julie H. 3/13/13

Anne B. 3/29/09

Linda R. 3/17/09

Bree R. 3/13/09

Serenity @ Sunrise

Melissa 3/24/16

Scott B. 3/20/16

Mike C. 3/27/11

Don L. 3/22/08

Mark P. 3/17/02

Larry G. 3/25/90

Greg B. 3/03/77

Sun Morn Men's Stag

Frank S. 3/17/05

John O. 3/13/05

Gary R. 3/31/04

Travis B. 3/31/03

Dale B. 3/25/00

John H. 3/13/96

Marshal W. 3/26/94

Wayne P. 3/20/81

Michael F. 3/31/76

Girlie Birds

Melissa M. 3/24/16

Allanah M. 3/17/16

Kelsey H. 3/07/16

Elizabeth P. 3/08/15

Sarah V. 3/13/14

Sherrie V. 3/02/12

Deb S. 3/27/09

Raney W. 3/07/08

Nancy B. 3/17/03

Elizabeth H. 3/31/97

Mary Ellen S. 3/30/93

Joy D. 3/15/90

Greta S. 3/03/85

Service Corner

Look back and be grateful.

Look ahead and be hopeful.

Look around and be helpful.

Next Intergroup Meeting:

6:30 pm, Wednesday, March 8, 2017
(the second Wednesday of every month)
at the First Christian Church, 1230 Willow Creek Rd.

Next District 14-140 GSR Meeting

Wednesday, March 1, 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, March 7, 2017
(the first Tuesday of every month)
Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 7763 E. Long Look, PV

Prescott Shoestring Roundup Committee

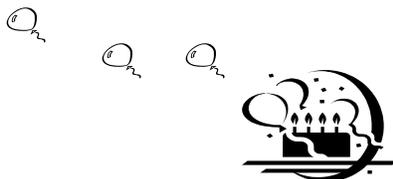
5:30 pm, Friday, March 17, 2017
(the third Friday of the month)
Unity Church, Corner of Arizona & Goodwin

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!

Email, mail, or bring in a copy of your group's updated birthday list to the Intergroup Office or sign up to receive a monthly birthday update email.

Meeting of the Month: Step Stories

Step Stories is a closed women's group that meets every Wednesday at noon at the Trinity Presbyterian Church on Park Ave. The meeting format is on a biweekly schedule: One week a speaker shares and leads a "pop-up" style discussion on a topic of the speaker's choice, and the next consists of reading a step from *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* followed by a ticket-style discussion of the step. It is one of my regular meetings and I recommend it very highly. It offers a lovely combination of older and younger women, women with time and newcomers.

The meeting I am choosing to report on focused on Step 8. I chose this style of meeting because I don't want to accidentally break anyone's anonymity, or share their story out of turn.

The meeting opened with the Serenity Prayer followed by readings on *How It Works* from Chapter Five of the Big Book and the tradition of the month, and distribution of chips for various lengths of sobriety.

We shared in the reading of the step, with each person reading a paragraph and then passing to the person next to them. There was a brief pause during the sharing to pass the 7th Tradition basket and make AA related announcements at 12:30. Here are a few of the points I heard made during the discussion:

- The goal of Step 8 is to allow me to have the best possible relations with every human being I know.
- The amends list I make in Step 8 comes from Step 4. I look back at my "resentment list" and see what I did to get the ball rolling. One good way to tell if I've missed a needed amends is if I find myself crossing the street to avoid bumping into someone I know.
- In the beginning making amends was easy because of desperation. Now that I have more time I have to beware of "justifiably" delaying amends. That leads to crazy! No matter how much time I have, I still have to make the list, pray for the willingness, and make the amends.
- If I am really struggling with this step I need to go back to the previous step. Character defects are the primary cause of having to make amends.
- The key isn't just the apology. I also make amends by changing the behavior that led to the need to make amends. This also works for people to whom I can't make direct amends. At least I can change how I respond in similar situations.
- I don't have to make our amends all at once. Making them is a lifelong process, with willingness as the key. Sometimes all I can do is pray for the willingness to be willing.
- I can't make amends until I stop being angry or else I'm on the defensive.

- Even if I am making the correct amends at the correct time with the correct attitude, not everyone will accept them. All I can do is clean my side of the street, expecting nothing in return.
- For those people it is hard to find, I just stay willing, trusting that the opportunity to make amends will present itself when the time is ready. Just because I think I am ready doesn't mean the opportunity will appear immediately. It might take a long time.

At 12:45 the meeting was paused to allow for "burning desires." One person had just learned a mutual friend had passed away as a result of an overdose. She also ran into a former girlfriend, and generally had had a very unsettled day. She said she really needed a meeting that day, and thanked the group for the opportunity to get her struggles off her chest.

Another person said that the discussion made her realize that she had more amends to make, that they were about her own character defects and the need to change her behavior, and that they really had nothing to do with the other person.

Finally, another woman apologized to the group because her child had made a fuss during the speaker's share at the previous meeting. She said that in the future she would try and find a way to leave her child at home during the meeting. It was the perfect final share to a meeting dedicated to becoming willing to make amends. The meeting then closed with a reading of the promises and a prayer.

Colyn GN

2017 Arizona AA Convention Update

A preliminary program for this fall's Arizona AA convention at the Prescott Resort & Conference Center was distributed at the organizing committee's meeting Feb. 21. It includes a golf tournament on Friday, Sept. 29, an ice cream social that same evening, a half-dozen workshops on the steps, and main speakers each day of the three-day event. There will also be a Native American meeting and marathon sessions throughout. The program is to be finalized next month.

Online registration for the convention is expected to be available in April, with an August 31 deadline for early signups and to register for the golf event. Registrations after that will be at the convention.

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 p.m.

The next one is March 21 – be there or be square! For more information contact committee chairman Tom S. at 602-531-6706 or at 4thchapter@q.com.

Step of the Month – Step Three

Members share how they came to grips with our third step: *“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”*

“I was one of those who did not believe in God. How was I to do this step? I was asked if AA had improved my life in the six months I had then been sober. Yes it had. No denying it. ‘So why not give this a try and turn your will and life over to a Higher Power?’ I was asked. ‘What do you have to lose? It is only a decision.’ I made that decision on an autumn day in my first year, and it transformed my life. A spiritual awakening happened, doubts about Alcoholics Anonymous vanished. I felt part of the Fellowship for the first time, no longer someone just checking it out to see if it was for me. A heavy weight of doubt and confusion lifted. I need the Third Step to give me trust to move on and do the steps that followed.”

Dan S. Prescott Valley, AZ

“Referring to Step Three, our Big Book comments on page 63: ‘We found it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as our wife, best friend or spiritual adviser.’ I would certainly endorse this idea based on my experience with men I have sponsored. The first time I tried this was with a man some years my senior, a combat veteran of World War II in the Pacific, and a well-known personality in the world of country music and TV commercials. Definitely what we would call ‘a man’s man!’ Yet when we held hands and said the prayer together late one night after a meeting, standing next to his pickup truck in the parking lot of a coffee shop, he broke down sobbing. He went on to be a frequent speaker at AA meetings, a sponsor himself to many and an inspiration to many more, including me. I was privileged to be at his bedside just hours before he died – sober – some years later.”

Anonymous

“No matter how grievous the alcohol obsession, we happily find that other vital choices can still be made. For example, we can choose to admit that we are personally powerless over alcohol; that dependence upon a ‘Higher Power’ is a necessity, even if this be simply dependence upon an AA group.”

AA co-founder Bill W. in a 1966 letter.

And finally, an oldie but a goodie from the Step 3 archive:

“I had to make a decision. And my decision in the past was based on what I could see, what I could touch, what I could feel. Therefore I hadn’t much faith because I wasn’t able to touch a God. But now my God is inside of me, and it’s all the good inside of me. It’s the ability to see nature. It’s the ability to look at the good of someone, rather than point out the bad in them and in me.”

Jody E., March, 2004

District 14-142 Report

The sub-district is planning a St. Patrick’s Day Pancake Breakfast for March 18, 8AM to 11 AM at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Prescott Valley. There will be an ASCYPAA (Arizona State Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous) speaker at 9:00 AM and another AA speaker at 9:45 AM. AA members and guests are all welcome, and the pancakes and fixings will be free.

The district is also planning a Founders’ Day event to celebrate co-founder Dr. Bob’s last drink on June 10, 1935. AAs around the world celebrate this day, and it’s an especially big event in Akron, Ohio, where Bill W. searched out another hopeless alcoholic to tell his story to and found Dr. Bob. The people of Akron are aware of the historical significance their city has in the AA story, and I’ve had the opportunity to visit there on Founders’ Day weekend. More details in a future report.

Area 03 (Arizona) will hold its pre-Conference AA Assembly in Flagstaff March 31- April 2. Many of the GSRs (General Service Representatives), DCMs (District Committee Members) and other AAs in general service will gather to gain a group conscience on certain panel topics, which our delegate, Dave. B., will carry to the subsequent annual General Service Conference in New York. This conference acts as a collective group conscience of AA groups that come together to take actions that will guide the groups in the years to come. All AAs are welcome to attend pre-conference assemblies, while the Conference is open only to area delegates, the directors and AA staff of the GSO (General Service Office), the Grapevine staff and trustees. The Conference can invite visitors from other countries as nonvoting observers.

There will also be an all-district meeting on Monday March 13, at 435 South Main Street, Camp Verde. The meeting starts at 6:30 PM following a free dinner served at 6:00 PM. The three sub districts in our district are 14-140 (Prescott, Chino Valley, Paulden, Wilhoit, Yarnell, Skull Valley, Congress, Bagdad and Seligman), 14-141 (Cottonwood and Sedona areas), and 14-142 (Prescott Valley and the groups along Highway 69 to Interstate 17). The purpose of the meeting is to bring unity in the district, share information of what service work the members in each sub-district are doing and discuss the upcoming assembly.

Dan S., DCM14-142

Heard at a meeting:

I need to live in today, but with respect for yesterday and respect for tomorrow.

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 Three: The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I over-impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?

c. THE AA GRAPEVINE INC

Concept Three

“As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the AA General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional ‘Right of Decision.’”

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Heard at a meeting:

Thoroughly have we seen a person fail who has rarely followed our path.

What's Your Greatest Fear?

I stopped drinking for someone else. We had put a family member into lockup juvenile treatment to save his life and after a couple of months, the treatment staff thought to ask all the family to stop drinking. Within a few weeks of my quitting divorce papers arrived, and then I was so dazed for some weeks I was unable to work. I was stunned. How could my stopping drinking have these dreadful results?

My sponsor (whom a chairperson had picked for me) advised: “Roger, just because you have stopped drinking, doesn't mean the avalanche won't come down the hill.” *The years of deferred emotions came down the hill.* Desperately, I started working the Steps because they were the only procedure I could see to get back to safety.

I'd asked my sponsor about being “restored” to sanity – that word implied I was previously well. After a few moments thought he replied: “In your case ‘restored’ means to be put back the way you were meant to be.”

While accumulating my note-cards for Step 4, I was at one of the several meetings I attended every single day. It was still those early days when I drank the coffee in the kitchen before going into the meeting – I certainly didn't want them to see how much I was still shaking!! It was a large discussion meeting, podium and microphone, and perhaps 40 AA members present. The topic was: “Your Greatest Fear.”

Perhaps if I kept very still I would not be tagged; but my HP (aka ‘The Course Instructor’) apparently had a different idea. I was tagged!

I walked carefully to the podium and announced: “My name is Roger, I am an Alcoholic. My greatest fear is fear of ridicule and humiliation.” I could say no more. Shaking, I walked carefully back to my seat.

As I passed by one man he remarked: “Sounds like a defect of character to me.” I knew I must avoid *him* in future!

In the next row a man quietly asked: “Is there any other fear?” HE UNDERSTOOD! HE COULD BE TRUSTED! We became close friends; he is one of two men who I can honestly say saved my life. He never drank again. And his wise example and guidance to my life lives on.

The 12x12, pg. 123 confirms this shared intrinsic issue: “At heart we had all been abnormally fearful.” I learned we are only answerable to our Higher Power; thus when we are granted the ‘Wisdom to Know the Difference,’ we become responsible to ‘Act the Difference.’ Today I simply pray “*To do what I believe is right – regardless of the approval of any other human being.*”

Roger N.

Recidivism, Not Just a 10 Letter Word

One of the responsibilities of the Arizona State (Area03) Corrections Coordinator is to meet with wardens of State and Federal prisons, representatives of County facilities (jails), local law enforcement agencies, and attend events, such as Alcahons, "Behind the Walls." Portions of the meetings revolve around what Alcoholics Anonymous does and does not do, responsibilities of the volunteers bringing A.A. into their facilities, literature, how A.A. actually impacts those being released and the probability of them returning: Recidivism.

Since our General Service Office in New York has no records on the percentage of AA members who stay sober, much less on the success rate for former prisoners, it is impossible to give an accurate figure on recidivism. However, at a Corrections Conference four years ago in Phoenix, the Director for the Arizona Department of Corrections, said he believed that due to the various programs developed to address alcohol and drug abuse inside his facilities, the rate of recidivism among those that pursued recovery (A.A.) on the outside was about 25% lower than for those who did not follow through when released.

We also have the perspective of the late Clinton T. Duffy, former warden of California's San Quentin Prison and a strong supporter of AA, whom I have cited in these columns before. He was once quoted in the Akron Beacon Journal stating "that a convict who has taken part in a prison Alcoholics Anonymous program is more than three times as likely to make a success of parole than the man who avoided the program." He added that "these men seldom violate their paroles or commit another crime. Nor were they prone to lose their jobs for absenteeism or laxity either." When referring to the volunteers who brought A.A. into San Quentin, Warden Duffy said "The outsiders were awed by the surroundings and the inmates were awed by the 'civilians' from the 'free world.'" Warden Duffy spoke in 1950 at the 1st International AA Convention, held in Cleveland. Bill "W" visited San Quentin Prison in late 1943.

AA has certainly grown in prisons. In a 2007 article, our "meeting in print," the *AA Grapevine*, noted that in 1952 there were 78 prison groups in the United States and one in South Africa. By the time the article was written there were an estimated 2,500 such groups in North America, with at least 65,000 inmates participating. The number of groups and inmates participating today no doubt exceeds those 2007 numbers.

Having been in corrections for approximately 10 years, and having friends who've been bringing meetings into prisons and jails for over 30 years, I can give testimony as to why those that "got out" and began a recovery program, went "back in." Simply put, they stopped

doing one or more of six things: 1. Reading the Book. 2. Going to meetings. 3. Having a sponsor. 4. Doing the steps. 5. Giving up a service commitment. 6. Developing a spiritual program.

For me, I've finally decided to listen to others. If giving up on any those essentials landed them back into jail or prison, maybe I should concentrate on them to keep me from going in the first time. If you have never done a meeting on the "inside" to listen to the men and women who have returned, and what they "shoulda, woulda, coulda" done, with respect to recovery, I can state, without reservation, it reinforces my program.

Not everyone is made for bringing A.A. behind the walls. Not everyone has had the opportunity to listen to what brought an inmate back inside. Not everyone has experienced the gratitude from those on the inside for those of us who bring A.A. to them. But everyone with a program for sobriety can help a person who was "doing time" from going back in. Everyone with a program can contribute in reducing the recidivism rate, or just help keep someone from going in for the first time.

If you have a question on corrections, please do not hesitate to call or drop me a line.

In Service, and Keep on Trudge'n

Mei F.
Area03 Corrections Coordinator
corrections@area03.org
(928) 925 1887

For Trivia Buffs Only!

Grapevine has been AA's magazine since June, 1944. At first it was meant to be a monthly journal for the New York area, but as demand increased, it was spread all across the United States and overseas to servicemen serving in World War II. It became known as the "national monthly journal" of AA in December, 1945.

The FBI got involved in the magazine's history when that organization noted that the name "The Grapevine" was also the title it used for a publication sent to its retired employees. The agency asked that AA change the name of its magazine to "something else," and, being the good law-abiding sorts we had become, it was agreed, and in April, 1946 it officially became the "*AA Grapevine*."

While only the *AA Grapevine* and its Spanish language counterpart, *La Vina* are published through AA World Services, there are at least 32 different Grapevine-style magazines published around the world, stretching from India (*The Twelfth Step*) and South Africa (*Regmaker*) to Ireland (*The Road Back*) and Poland (*Zdroj*).

The Rise and Fall of a Home Group

Once upon a time there was a home group of Alcoholics Anonymous. I say "once upon a time," because this group no longer exists. It folded one day after many, many years of serving the alcoholics in its community. Why?

I found this meeting to be a very healthy group of Alcoholics Anonymous. There were many old-timers to be seen talking with new people, there were greeters at the door, a secretary, treasurer, and a GSR all discussing group business. New people were welcomed with a cup of coffee and a handshake. The group just beamed with happy people. A large crowd each week caused many tables to be filled and seats were hard to come by. The last Tuesday of each month the group broke down into smaller groups for table discussion meetings. The rest of the meetings each week were closed speaker/discussion meetings and again seats were hard to come by and getting there early was common knowledge. Coffee was always ready for the first early person to arrive and there was always fellowship after the meeting. Sound good? Maybe this is *your* home group?

One meeting, after a group conscience discussion, a woman was offered the responsibility of GSR. She got the job after discussion about whether she would be good for the group. She started attending area assemblies and GSR workshops to learn about the Traditions and how they helped groups stick to their primary purpose. She learned about Conference-approved literature and how it shouldn't be mixed in with other literature to confuse the new people about which is AA's and which is not. She also learned about money in the Fellowship, the 60-30-10 and other plans, and not using basket money to buy outside literature. This was exciting to me to watch this group becoming informed on issues that affected it as one group within the larger AA.

But then, slowly, the group's customs and practices began to erode. At one group business meeting the GSR pointed out that the literature the group literature representative had purchased was not Conference-approved literature and was purchased with money intended for AA use. This business meeting ended with the literature representative throwing the outside literature order forms at the group and leaving.

Later at another business meeting, discussion was held on whether an interpreter for the hearing impaired could be allowed to attend a closed meeting. The group conscience decided against it, since it was a closed meeting. An old-timer, in disagreement, took the matter before the people attending that night's meeting whether they were members of that group or not. The people attending voted to reverse the decision of the group conscience by opening the meeting to anyone. That *meeting* conscience weakened the effectiveness of that group conscience, and more people left the group.

This group was so well attended the church adjusted the rent accordingly. But money was always there because of the number of people who attended the meetings. The group became so effective in carrying the message that a local alcoholism referral agency began sending its new young people to the Tuesday meeting as an introduction to AA. This drew other young people to the meeting and eventually it began to be known as a great place for young people to

meet. Within a year after this flood of young people, a local center for troubled children began sending some of its clients to the meeting also. By this time some of the old-timers had found other Tuesday meetings to attend. When asked why, they said, "We are not hearing the language of AA that we need to hear to stay sober." Others thought the real reasons might be age differences, dress, language of the street, and just plain being outnumbered young to old.

A powerful principle in AA, rotation--the passing-it-on to the newer people--was needed in order for the group to grow. This time there was no discussion by group conscience about who would be best for the group or who was sober, but rather anyone who would volunteer got the responsibilities. Secretary, treasurer, and GSR were passed on to people who didn't know the first thing about the principles of AA or anything of the Traditions in action. Once a chairman offered the Traditions for a discussion topic one night and they were turned into feelings, drug talk, Freudian concepts, and rehab language. He never came back and neither did the former officers of the group. The group had become a group of the blind leading the blind.

Group conscience began discussing the topics: how do we get older people to return, how are we going to pay this high rent? What are we going to do?

A local DCM was asked to attend a group conscience meeting to listen and offer some suggestions. They talked about the Traditions, Steps, outside literature, getting sober people to chair the meetings, turning radios off, and the quality of sobriety that action in AA offers. A plea went out to older members to please return to the meeting. A few did return, but for only a short time. These kids seemed to be left on their own. A new group conscience emerged, struggled for a short time, and failed again when volunteers were needed to fill the frequently vacated group responsibilities. Again, there was no leadership from the now "younger old-timers," as they too left for other groups. Finally, with the rent too much, no coffee, no unity, "A Home Group" met last week to announce the end.

Bill W. said that the force which will destroy Alcoholics Anonymous will come very slowly from inside the Fellowship. This group lasted some fourteen to seventeen years. AA consists of home groups, and as a Fellowship we are seeing a breakdown of this principal structure.

If we as a Fellowship don't carefully pass on to newer members the responsibilities that come with being a group, many more groups will go the way of this group. The old-timers must stick around to teach the newer members "how it works," not only in the Twelve Steps but in our groups. Sometimes the new people must drag the answers out of the old-timers, and if they are not at the meetings, we will repeat the mistakes made early in the Fellowship.

We must learn how to keep this Fellowship alive and our groups intact for the next member who needs it. By helping insure the sobriety of others to come, we insure our own sobriety today. The best member of Alcoholics Anonymous that one can be is the best member of "A Home Group" that one can be.

W. S.
Rochester, New York

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**District 14-142 is Hosting a
St. Patrick's Day Pancake Breakfast
Saturday, March 18th, 8:00 am - 11:00 am
Emmanuel Lutheran Church
7763 E. Long Look Dr., Prescott Valley
Speakers will be:
ASCYPAA at 9:00 am
AA at 9:45 am**

WICKENBURG ONE-DAY ROUNDUP

**Sunday, March 5, 2017
10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Wickenburg Community Center
160 North Valentine St.
More info: Mike W. 928 231-0510**

27th Annual West Valley Roundup

**"Attitude of Gratitude"
March 10, 11 & 12, 2017
Lake Pleasant Regional Park, Peoria, AZ
More info: Barbara Z. 602 819-3148**

2017 AZ Area 03 Pre-Conference Assembly

**March 31 - April 2, 2017
Double Tree by Hilton in Flagstaff
1175 Historic Route 66
More details at www.area03.org**

Poll Time at 'Grapevine'

AA's "Meeting in Print," Grapevine, regularly conducts "I-Polls" on its internet site (www.aagrapevine.org). Since responders are self-selected, the polls have no scientific legitimacy, but the results can be interesting nevertheless. The current poll is linked from the magazine's home page, but you can also check out the results of more than 20 older polls on the site.

Here are the results of a few of those polls:

- Two topics - anonymity on social media and relapse - have generated the most comment among the polls linked on the site. The one on relapse generated about 1300 responses, evenly divided between those who had relapsed and those who had not. One member commented: "Every alcoholic has relapsed. Some just did it before they got their first white chip."
- Nearly two out of three responding to another poll said they first learned about AA by the time they reached age 30.
- Only 17% said they got into a relationship in their first year of sobriety. More than half were already in one when they got to the program and about one third said they remained single during their first year.
- Nearly three out of four responders said they make meetings when travelling - 13% say they hit one daily while on the road.
- Six of ten say they do not find being an AA member any kind of social taboo.
- Nearly two-thirds say they either have never written a gratitude list or are struggling with the whole idea.

Prescott Area Intergroup's January 2017 Treasurer's Report

GROUP DONATIONS

4 Directions Grp	\$100.00
Afterwards Group	\$300.00
Bradshaw Seniors Meeting	\$42.00
Carry This Message	\$148.27
Girlie Birds	\$163.45
Healing the Hole in the Soul	\$104.00
Intergroup Meeting	\$34.00
Noon BB Discussion	\$220.00
Old Shoe (Skull Valley)	\$34.00
Open AA Meeting	\$140.00
Park Avenue Group	\$45.43
PV Gut Rap Group	\$100.06
PV Keep It Simple	\$225.00
PV Noon Group	\$280.00
PV Roadmap To Recovery	\$60.00
PV There Is a Solution	\$20.00
Saturday Night Live Prescott	\$263.50
Serenity At Sunrise	\$226.86

GROUP DONATIONS

Step Sisters	\$198.60
Sunny Days	\$71.00
Toolbox Group	\$217.20
TOTAL GROUP DONATIONS	\$2,993.37

OTHER INCOME

Literature Sales	\$1,441.25
Chips Etc.	\$299.70
Meeting Directory Sales	\$50.00
Newsletter Sales	\$15.00
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	\$1,805.95
TOTAL INCOME	\$4,799.32
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,777.98
INCOME LESS EXPENSES	\$1,021.34
Total Monies 1/31/17	\$30,462.09
Literature & Chips	\$9,943.00



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