

Volume 08 Issue 2

February 2008



**HOTLINE:**  
**541-548-0440**

## My Journey to AA



I've often heard it said in AA that all of us are "miracles". In November of 2001, my higher power (whom I chose to call God) set into motion a sequence of events that can only, in my humble opinion, be considered miraculous!

After 36 years of drinking, I was at a point in my life where I had been telling myself for close to 2 years that I was an alcoholic and I wanted more than anything to stop drinking. Yet not having the strength or will power to do anything on my own, I cried out to God for help and prayed that he heard my plea. To be honest, I had little faith that God had heard me, or if He had, would do anything to help me. I was hopeless and could not imagine how I could ever sober up in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Today I know that God had a plan for me.

In November of 2001, while living in Riyadh, I received an email from a high school acquaintance advising me that our 30 year class reunion was being planned for the summer of 2002. I had not been to any prior class reunions but decided that I would register and attend this one.

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"My friend soon broke her anonymity and shared with me that she was an alcoholic and was in recovery in AA."

On January 4, 2002, nursing my usual hangover, I went into work and turned on my PC to check out my email. I was surprised to see an email from a high school friend whom I had known since 1<sup>st</sup> grade but hadn't had any contact with since leaving school 30 years ago. I answered my friend's email and subsequently we began to share emails catching up on the last 30 years. Eventually, we agreed to set a time and date (11 time zones difference) and to call each other to continue catching up. This person whom God, in His infinite wisdom, had brought into my life, wasn't just an old friend, but an old friend who had been in recovery in AA for 13 years. Once we started talking, it did not take my friend long to ascertain that more often than not when we were on the phone I was drunk or well on my way to getting there. My friend soon broke her anonymity and shared with me that she was an alcoholic and was in recovery in AA.

Over the next couple of months and a number of phone calls, my friend shared with me her experience, strength and hope, her life within the fellowship, how AA had changed her life and how the "promises" of AA were coming true in her life. As I listened to her, I wasn't sure, but something told me that this woman had "something" that I wanted, and that something was a sober life.

**Continued on Page 2**

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New York, NY 10164-0371

In May of 2002 I had flown to the states for a vacation and was in Augusta, Georgia, visiting my two boys. I had a plane ticket to fly to Sun Valley, Idaho, on May 20<sup>th</sup> to meet my friend. She told me that she had made plans for me to meet some of her sober friends from her AA "home group". Sporting my usual hang-over, I flew to Idaho. I had no idea that this was to be my last hang-over and the first day of my sober life.



I was met by my friend and we immediately went to a cook-out that was being attended by about 20 AAs. I was scared to death because it was already 5:00 PM in the afternoon--I hadn't had a drink all day and I was headed to a house full of people I didn't know anything about other than they were all sober....oh joy!! Well, by yet another miracle of God, I made it through the night and in all honesty had to admit that I actually had fun. These people were not the "glum group" I had convinced myself they had to be. I mean, fun without drinking....???

After a rather tough night (withdrawal was kicking in), I finally got some sleep. When I awoke the next morning, I felt really confused – something was missing. I quickly realized that I did not have a hangover and could actually focus across the room! I spent the next four days going to meetings, being walked through the 12 steps and being read to from the "Big Book". In the evenings I was surrounded by other AAs, enjoying myself, eating healthy and in general reaffirming that this was the life I wanted. I became determined to do whatever it would take to achieve this sober lifestyle. After five days in Sun Valley, with a Big Book under one arm and 12x12 under my other arm, I went to the airport to start my long journey back to Riyadh and hopefully an AA support group. My friend and I had gone to the AA web site and had found one phone number for AA in Riyadh.

"When I awoke the next morning, I felt really confused – something was missing."

Upon my return to my apartment in the housing compound I lived in, I promptly called the one number I had for AA in Riyadh; unfortunately, there was no answer. I tried repeatedly over the next few days but the results were the same. Somewhat discouraged, I did my best to read my Big Book and my 12x12, but the little "pink cloud" I had going from my week in Idaho was quickly beginning to fade and that "cunning, baffling and powerful" drug of alcohol was starting to call my name. Then one evening after work, I was sitting in my apartment and for reasons I can only attribute to the will of God, I turned on the "Compound TV Channel". (I never

watched the Compound TV Channel.) This channel was used by the compound management to advise residents of activities as well as being available to residents for a variety of announcements. I was sitting there, totally discouraged, thinking more about having a drink than staying sober and watching the compound TV channel for reasons I did not understand. In the midst of all this, I looked up in time to see an announcement going across the screen that stated "For Friends of Bill, call xxxxxxxxxx". I thought for a second, could this have something to do with AA? I hadn't actually heard the fellowship referred to in this way, but I thought, "just maybe". I immediately got on the phone and called my friend stateside to ask about "Friends of Bill". She was quick to advise that this term was commonly used in the states and did indeed, refer to AA. I immediately got off the phone and called the number on the TV channel. The man who answered said that the "Friends of Bill" was AA Riyadh and that there was a small group meeting twice weekly. I told the man that I was brand new and wanted to meet him and get to a meeting. I told



"While waiting for David to come down, all I could do, was get on my knees and thank God for "doing for me, what I could not do for myself." The promises were already starting to come true. "

him I lived in Al-Hammra Compound and gave him my apartment number. The gentlemen started to laugh and when I asked him what was so funny, he said that he also lived in Al-Hammra in the apartment section and that he was actually just upstairs from me! I asked this man (David) to come down for a coffee. While waiting for David to come down, all I could do, was get on my knees and thank God for "doing for me, what I could not do for myself." The promises were already starting to come true.

So there I was in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, two weeks sober, and had found an AA group and my first sponsor. My sober life was started. As I reflected that night on how hopeless I had perceived my situation just seven months earlier versus where I was now, I could not see the sequence of events that had transpired as anything less than miraculous. I saw that my God had been orchestrating all the events that got me to where I was. It wasn't that just God had only brought me to this point of beginning a sober and clean life. I realized that God had been in control of my life since the day I was born; alcoholism was just a tool that God used in my life to bring me to the point where I would completely surrender my life and finally start to become the man that He could use. I am a "grateful" recovering alcoholic.

Jim L



**Conscious Contact Subscription / Address Change Form (Please Print)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Subscription Rates: One Year \$10.00 Two Years: \$18.00  
Make Checks Payable to: Central Oregon Intergroup and mail to:  
Newsletter 754 S.W. 11th Street, Redmond, OR 97756  
Check ☐ Renewal ☐ New Subscription ☐ Address Change



**STEP 2** - "Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

First we "Came"

Next we "Came to"

Then we "Came to believe"

There are two powers greater than me. One is a Higher Power and the other is alcohol. Which was I to serve? I had seen in Step One that I was powerless over alcohol and that it made my life unmanageable. How would I know a Higher Power? I didn't think I wanted my group to be my higher power because I had heard some of their stories and that wasn't what I wanted. My sponsor had me write a list with two columns. One column would be the attributes of what my Higher Power was at that point in time. Items appearing on that list were: judgmental, harsh, strict, distant, uncaring and unavailable. On the other column she had me write what would be the attributes of what I would want my Higher Power **to be**. Items on that list were: loving, kind, compassionate, available, gentle and just. She had me turn the first list over and said I would unlearn those beliefs and that the second list represented my **new** Higher Power. I will touch back on that concept closer to the ending of this piece.

Over time I have used the same two lists for my sponsees who were having trouble coming up with a Higher Power. Some sponsees used nature itself and the Higher Power. Sunrises and sunsets were special times for them to feel connected. Another sponsee uses water, rivers, lakes or the ocean to feel the special connection.

Another sponsee was a Native American woman who was also an artist. We had discussed in depth her beliefs which were mainly of the earth, sun, animals, etc. She struggled with getting her beliefs to meld into a Higher Power that would be able to restore her to sanity. As I usually do when working with sponsees, I had prayed for the right words to be said and for clarity and understanding. I remember sitting on her couch and taking a few moments to quiet my mind and meditate and pray. Then it came to me to have her DRAW her Higher Power. She pondered that for a bit and said she would begin drawing and would see what developed. When we got together the next week, her drawing had begun with a big empty skull. She said that was how she felt when she came in to the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. Then she explained that as she was drawing the skull became the base of a beautiful big full flowering tree. The tree was reaching up to the light and wanting to grow. As the tree grew it offered shade and a resting place for birds and animals. The drawing was very powerful to see. She had drawn what she understood her Higher Power to be – one that offered life and growth and abundance. We moved on to Step 3.

I have had many sponsees who came in to the Fellowship having had grown up in a Christian church of some denomination or other. They shared with me how the God that was 'shoved down their throats' by caring adults was pretty much the same as the God that I identified on my first list. We talked about how religion is

**man's** ideas of how to capture a spiritual moment and to try to lead a spiritual life. The dictionary has the following definition of **religion**: a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of persons or sects. The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous tells me that I have a spiritual malady. The program gives me spiritual tools to use to live a spiritual life on life's terms. The dictionary defines **spirit** as: the principle of conscious life; the vital principle in humans, animating the body or mediating between body and soul. The dictionary defines **spirituality** as: of or pertaining to the spirit or soul, as distinguished from the physical nature: a spiritual approach to life. Obviously **SPIRITUALITY** and **RELIGION** are very different and should not be confused with one another. My sponsees and I discussed how those teachers were human as well and that they are not God. Many of them had been taught about the Old Testament God. There are 300 to 400 years of silence between the Old and the New Testaments. Who knows how God was determining to work with us during that time. [By the by, I am an ordained Elder in the Reformed Church of America in case you wondered where I got that little tidbit about the Silent Years.] The God that I believe in is the New Testament God who does have all the attributes on my second list. I believe that I am a triune being (body, soul and spirit) created in the image of a triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). There are three forms of water – water, steam and ice. All three are still water but in different forms-in the same fashion same as my Higher Power, same God different forms – and whom I do choose to call God. For those of you who were beat up by well meaning clergy or parents – don't get stuck with the Old Testament God – the New Testament God is love and forgiveness.

The LONG form of Tradition Five states each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity *having but one primary purpose-that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.* On page 153 of the Twelve by Twelve, second paragraph from the bottom "Finally, he saw that I wasn't attempting to change his religious views, that I wanted him to find the grace in his own religion that would aid his recovery." Step 2 allows us to find that grace that can restore us to sanity. The unmanageability I saw in Step 1 pretty much showed me that I was not living in a sane manner.

Each of us is on our own individual spiritual journey. I am convinced that by working the Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous we can **each** find a Higher Power that works for each and every one of us and they don't have to be the same as the person next to us. Some of us have to unlearn things that we come in to the rooms with – they simply are not true. There can be forgiveness and healing here as well.

The spiritual principal of Step 2 is HOPE. We **all** have hope to receive and guard the gift of sobriety.

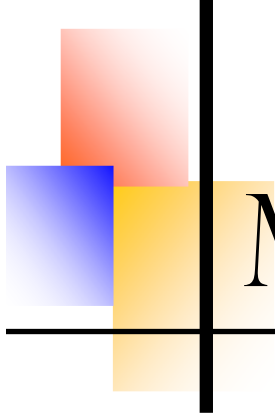
And the spiritual journey continues.....

respectfully submitted, Kathi C.



# FEBRUARY 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	2 Redmond potluck speaker mtg-6 pm
3	4	5 Tuesday night AA Speaker mtg-7 pm	6	7	8 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm  Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	9
10	11	12	13	14 	15 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	16
17 District 5 GSR Mtg 4 pm	18	19 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	20 La Pine potluck/ speaker mtg-6 pm; speaker-7 pm	21	22 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm  Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	23 Intergroup potluck speaker mtg-6 pm
24 Intergroup advisory Board mtg-5 pm  Intergroup IGR mtg- 5:30 pm	25	26	27	28	29 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	
Central Oregon Speaker Meeting District 5 GSR Meeting Intergroup Advisory Board Meeting Intergroup IGR Meeting Intergroup Potluck Speaker Meeting La Pine Potluck Speaker Meeting Madras Birthday Meeting Redmond Potluck Speaker Meeting Tumalo Speaker Meeting Tuesday night AA Speaker Meeting			Environmental Center TEC St. Charles Medical Center, Ponderosa Rm St. Charles Medical Center, Sage Rm Brooks Hall, TEC** La Pine Community Park St. Patrick's Church Redmond Community Church Fellowship Hall Nazarene Church **March potluck Bend Community Center		16 NW Kansas, Bend 469 Wall Street, Bend 1253 NW Canal, Redmond 1253 NW Canal, Redmond 469 Wall Street, Bend Finley Butte Road, La Pine Madison & J Street, Madras 10 & Cedar, Redmond Bruce Avenue, Tumalo 1270 NE 27th, Bend 1036 NE 5th St, Bend	



# MARCH 2008

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Redmond potluck speaker mtg-6 pm
2	3	4 Tuesday night AA Speaker mtg-7 pm	5	6	7 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	8
9	10	11	12	13	14 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	15
16 District 5 GSR Mtg 4 pm	17	18 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	19 La Pine potluck/ speaker mtg-6 pm; speaker-7 pm	20	21 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	22 Intergroup potluck speaker mtg-6 pm Held at Bend Community Center
23 Intergroup advisory Board mtg-5 pm Intergroup IGR mtg- 5:30 pm	24	25	26	27	28 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg- 7 pm	29
30	31					

## VOLUNTEER

YOUR SERVICE CAN  
BENEFIT OTHERS

### INTERGROUP OPENINGS

#### Hotline Shift

Sunday a.m.—

Substitute/Fill-in opportunities

One year sobriety preferred

CALL Pat R 420-4741

### NEW MEETINGS

Thursdays, 7:00 pm, Open  
Discussion, Bethlehem Inn, Bend

### MEETING CHANGES

Men's Stag Meeting, Redmond  
Wednesday, 7 pm, Closed Mtg  
**New Location:** Church of God  
Seventh Day, 205 SW 4th Street

## Potlucks!



Intergroup Potluck  
Saturday, February 23, 2008  
TEC (Brooks Hall)

6:00 pm—7:00 pm Potluck

7:00 pm—8:00 pm Speakers

Speakers: Kathi C & Mark C

Raffle! For more info see flyers or call:

Kim A 322-9700 or 420-9722

Karen W 419-9784

Please Note that the March potluck  
WILL NOT be held at TEC, but at the Bend  
Community Center

#### Groups needed to sponsor potlucks!

Attendance was great for the January potluck.  
Good food, good company and good speakers.  
Let's keep it up!

If interested in sponsoring or have input on  
the potlucks, please contact Darla B at 280-  
4670 or e-mail her at [xlxdinky@hotmail.com](mailto:xlxdinky@hotmail.com)

## February

### SOBRIETY MILESTONES

Kathi C	02/03/88	20 Years
Mike A	02/06/06	2 Years
Chris I	02/12/92	16 Years
Susan G	02/14/04	4 Years
Fred B	02/16/07	1 Year
Sherry R	02/24/04	4 Years

#### ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

Pattie O	02/18/94	14 Years
Toni G	02/23/07	1 Year
Wayne S	02/01/83	25 Years

#### PRIMARY PURPOSE

Ashley	01/12/07	1 Year
Roberto	02/15/07	1 Year

#### REDMOND REBELS

Richard D	02/14/99	9 Years
Greg M	02/28/07	1 Year
Tom W	02/28/86	22 Years
Sandi W	02/28/82	26 Years
Joe M	02/09/05	3 Years
Luke M	02/17/05	3 Years
Bob C	02/10/07	1 Year
Tony C	02/10/07	1 Year

#### STEPS TO SOBRIETY

Bill O	02/25/94	14 Years
WFS		

### Upcoming Events!

Redmond Potluck Speaker Meeting  
Saturday, February 2nd  
Redmond Community Church  
10th & Cedar  
Speaker: Jane W. from Bend

2008 Assembly Committee is plan-  
ning a fund raiser for April 12 at  
Brooks Hall. Stay tuned for details!!



### TRIVIA PURSUIT QUESTION OF THE MONTH:



**When was the AA Preamble first  
printed in the Grapevine?**

*Congrats to Pat R for answering last  
month's question. The answer was the  
Serenity Prayer is generally found on the  
back cover.*

*Also, congratulations to Bill L for win-  
ning the drawing at the December pot-  
luck. He also receives one year's sub-  
scription to the Grapevine.*

# Thanks!

To David M. who served as vice  
chairperson and Larry M. who  
served as secretary! This takes a  
lot of hard work and dedication.



#### Distilled Spirits

*Caught in a traffic jam in the heat of  
an Illinois summer day, my patience  
was growing limited when a fellow  
motorist drove by with a bumper  
sticker which read, "Easy Does It." I  
calmed, realizing I was not alone and  
that I needed to take it easy. Like a  
good book, classical music, or the  
beauty of nature, the AA slogans are  
timeless. I can glimpse one quickly or  
take the time to explore further. Either  
way, I'm refreshed.*

Mary C.  
DeKalb, Illinois

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# TREASURER'S REPORT

Submitted by Margo B.

<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	16-Dec to 15-Jan	<b>AVERAGE MONTHLY YTD</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Central Oregon Intergroup 2008			
<b>INCOME</b>			
Group Donations	762.28	762.28	<b>762.28</b>
Book & Coin Sales	1,508.65	1,508.65	<b>1,508.65</b>
Newsletter	2.96	2.96	<b>2.96</b>
Potluck	-	-	-
Entertainment	-	-	-
Interest Income	4.43	4.43	<b>4.43</b>
<b>Total Donations and Interest Income</b>	<b>2,278.32</b>	<b>2,278.32</b>	<b>2,278.32</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>General Checking</b>			
Rent	245.00	245.00	<b>245.00</b>
Advertising (Dex West)	45.32	45.32	<b>45.32</b>
Phone	167.47	167.47	<b>167.47</b>
Hotline	-	-	-
Newsletter	115.00	115.00	<b>115.00</b>
Purchases	808.84	808.84	<b>808.84</b>
Postage & Office Expense	-	-	-
Management Fee	800.00	800.00	<b>800.00</b>
Bank Charges (Chargeback + fee)	56.00	56.00	<b>56.00</b>
Other/Misc (Xmas Alcahthon Hams)	44.76	44.76	<b>44.76</b>
Adjustments	-	-	-
Schedules	-	-	-
Electricity	-	-	-
<b>Total General Checking Expenses</b>	<b>2,282.39</b>	<b>2,282.39</b>	<b>2,282.39</b>
<b>Office Account</b>			
Office Supplies	21.89	21.89	<b>21.89</b>
Postage	41.00	41.00	<b>41.00</b>
Hotline	-	-	-
Purchases	1,335.60	1,335.60	<b>1,335.60</b>
Web Site	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-
<b>Total Office Expenses</b>	<b>1,398.49</b>	<b>1,398.49</b>	<b>1,398.49</b>
<b>Net Revenue/Month</b>	<b>(1,402.56)</b>	<b>(1,402.56)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TRANSFERS</b>			
<b>General Checking</b>			
Deposits IN by Office	2,227.33	2,227.33	
Transfers (OUT) to Office	(1,792.27)	(1,792.27)	
Transfers IN from Savings	-	-	
Transfers (OUT) to Savings	-	-	
<b>Total General Checking Transfers</b>	<b>435.06</b>	<b>435.06</b>	
<b>Savings (prudent reserve) Account</b>			
Transfers IN	-	-	
Transfers (OUT)	-	-	
<b>Total Savings Transfers</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Office</b>			
Transfers IN	1,792.27	1,792.27	
Transfers (OUT)	-	-	
<b>Total Office Transfers</b>	<b>1,792.27</b>	<b>1,792.27</b>	
<b>Petty Cash</b>			
Transfers IN	2.96	2.96	
Transfers (OUT)	(2.96)	(2.96)	
<b>Total Petty Cash Transfers</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Cash Reconciliation</b>			
Beginning Balance from 12/15/07	15,300.33		
Treasurer's Book Balance	4,024.14		
Prudent Reserve Account	5,016.18		
Manager's Book Balance	1,200.00		
Petty Cash	50.00		
Potluck Balance	29.42		
Entertainment Balance	3,531.47		
<b>Total Cash on Hand</b>	<b>13,851.21</b>		

## DONATING GROUPS

<b>2008 Group</b>	16-Dec to 15-Jan	<b>Year to Date</b>
24 and Alive	45.00	<b>45.00</b>
ABC Group		-
As Men See It		-
Attitude Adjustment		-
Back to the Big Book		-
Big Book Study (LaPine)		-
Burns Group		-
Eastside Early Risers		-
First Things First		-
Heppner Miracles		-
LaPine Wed. Night Living Sober	15.00	<b>15.00</b>
Living in the Solution	34.95	<b>34.95</b>
Madras Oasis Group		-
Men's Book Study		-
Men's Stag Meeting	50.00	<b>50.00</b>
Monday Downtown		-
Monday/Wednesday 5:30		-
New Horizons	211.33	<b>211.33</b>
Primary Purpose	102.00	<b>102.00</b>
Redmond Rebels		-
Rule 62 Group		-
S.O.S. Group (Redmond)		-
Saturday Morning Alive		-
Sisters Group		-
Sisters High Noon		-
Sober Desire		-
Sober on Sunday		-
Sobriety Maintenance		-
Spiritual Awakening		-
Spiritual Breakfast	140.00	<b>140.00</b>
Springriver Book Study		-
Step Sisters	164.00	<b>164.00</b>
Steps to Sobriety		-
Sunday Serenity		-
Sunriver Open Group		-
The Nooner		-
Thursday Women's Meeting		-
Tuesday Night AA		-
Tuesday Night Survivors		-
Tumalo Friday Night		-
We are not a Glum Lot		-
W-F-S Group		-
Women at Work		-
Women in Serenity		-
Anonymous		-
CD Sales		-
District 5 - AFG Donations		-
Potluck		-
Entertainment		-
Intergroup 7th Tradition		-
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>762.28</b>	<b>762.28</b>

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