

Volume 08 Issue 4

April 2008



HOTLINE:
541-548-0440

MY NAME IS JOEL . . .



....and I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. My sobriety date is July 23rd, 2000. I currently live in Madras, Oregon. In the last year I've been taught that when I'm given the opportunity to speak (regardless of the AA venue) my job is clearly spelled out in the 12th Step; "Try[ed] to carry this message to the alcoholic who still suffers." In my case I try to carry this message by sharing the miracle of transformation that has taken place in my life as a result of my becoming a part of this program and applying the 12 Steps in my day-to-day life.

In 1989 I was 12 years old and for the first time in my life I drank enough alcohol to understand why I needed to drink every day for the rest of my life. Being drunk made me feel better, and for my whole life I had wanted to feel better. Even on my best days I wanted more. Alcohol didn't make me feel like I fit in; it allowed me the freedom, if only temporarily, to not obsessively think about how I **didn't** fit in. I could relax around people and that was a miracle for someone like me. And to this day I'm grateful for the relief alcohol provided early in my drinking. I truly believe that without the comfort alcohol provided I would have found a successful way to kill myself before I would have made it out of high school.

"I feel the correlation of my story with the idea in our literature that states
"alcohol gave me the wings to fly then took away the sky."

My obsession to feel better progressed through my teens and into my twenties and I was oblivious to the fact that slowly but surely alcohol was creating more problems in my life than it was relieving. Unfortunately I spent my formative years learning that the most effective and simple solution to all of my problems came from one container or another. In looking back, this is where I feel the correlation of my story with the idea in our literature that states "alcohol gave me the wings to fly then took away the sky."

In 1997 I married my high school sweetheart and we moved from Las Vegas to Portland. Despite my alcoholic drinking I continued to progress professionally. I was hired to train in an advanced area of medicine that I had been working in for the past few years. By this time alcohol was failing to remove the self doubt and fear that it once did to. I was gripped by fear. I believed that if I could convince those around me that I was OK, then maybe eventually I could believe it. Since all of my training was on the job I was never comfortable in my abilities and I always felt like at any point I could be discovered and exposed. I dove deeper and deeper into a bottle.

Continued on Page Two →

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My wife had had enough and was gone within nine months. I was basically homeless depending on others for a roof over my head. I felt I had lost everything of value in my life. I knew the storm would pass and I that eventually I would be alright but I also knew, sooner or later, further down the road, I would drive my life into the ground again. On July 5, 1998, I took enough alcohol and Phenobarbital to kill someone three times my size within a few hours.

My next memory was of two of my co-workers trying to drag me into a shower and then I was being wheeled into an ER. I spent the next few days in intensive care in and out of consciousness. Once I was coherent enough I was transferred to a psychiatric hospital and then to a treatment center.

"My life was in ashes and I had no idea where to turn next but one thing was certain--this God bullshit was not for me. I was the definition of "contempt prior to investigation."

It was within the first few hours of my stay in treatment that I was taken to my first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. I was not impressed. My life was in ashes and I had no idea where to turn next but one thing was certain--this God bullshit was not for me. I was the definition of "contempt prior to investigation." I was directed to the chapter "We Agnostics" in The Big Book repeatedly during my stay in treatment and slowly I lost a small part of my resistance to all things spiritual.

The actual hammer that broke my resistance was the day I was released from treatment I was handed the paperwork from my admission to the ER the night I was found. The date of admission was July 8th, over two days after I had done everything in my power to end my life. It was then that I decided maybe, just maybe, there was something out there, something greater than me, something that stepped in that night, something that had a plan for me that I didn't know or understand.

The ability to say "maybe" was all that I needed to start a relationship with the power in my life that I've come to understand as God. Sobriety required a little more though. My unmanageability was crystal clear when I left treatment but I didn't understand the powerlessness of alcoholics of my type. Sixteen months after leaving that treatment center I was sitting at a casino bar in Lincoln City shocked that I had started drinking again. The shock was quickly followed by the conclusion that I'd given up my sobriety date so I might as well go all the way. I resisted continuing to drink for a few weeks out of fear, but eventually I just gave up and was drinking every day.

It took six months of daily drinking to really understand my powerlessness. My drinking ended with much more of a whimper this time. I hadn't lost anything in my life yet. This time I was bankrupt on the inside. I was empty. I didn't even care enough to try to drink this vacancy away. Then I knew what powerlessness was. And for me it means alcohol will not do for me what I want it to do. I drank for freedom and happiness and I got sadness and a life tethered to my couch. I drank to be a part of the crowd and I ended up introverted, depressed or obnoxious.

The second half of my powerless is the fact that I cannot choose not to drink. I will drink again regardless of the pain it has caused in my life, regardless of the logic stated above that basically proves I will not get the effect I'm looking for. There is a mental quirk I possess that will somehow convince me that picking up a drink makes sense.

I have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. I was in a pit of despair that I felt I could never escape alive. I was the type of friend people were happy *not* to hear from. I was the absent son of loving parents because I never wanted them to know how bad my life was. Today I have found a safe harbor in Alcoholics Anonymous. I have had pain and turmoil in my life but today I know I'm not alone. I have a power in my life I can rely on when all else fails. I'm actively engaged in my family and community in and out of Alcoholics Anonymous. I have a wealth of friends and I am involved in the passions that were a part of my life before alcohol took over as well as new and exciting activities that I have plenty of time for these days.



This transformation is not because of anything special about me. I was finally out of good ideas. My life was a mess and I surrendered to the idea that the people in AA knew something I didn't. I came to AA with the willingness to do what they do, and once I did, I began to get what they had -- a peace and serenity in my life that I'd never before experienced and the freedom to not need to drink. For that, I am in debt to Alcoholics Anonymous and I repay my debt in shoe leather, doing the foot work in AA.

By Joel S



At a recent AA meeting, this comment was made,

"I was told, 'we will love you until you can love yourself.' And, it was true, you did."

If you have a favorite AA saying that has helped you through tough times, please e-mail to connayr@hotmail.com and explain how and why it help you.



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TAKE FIVE ALIVE

ROUND-UPS—AA OR NOT?

By Chris N, DCM, District 5

On March 7, 8 and 9, 2008, the annual (Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly) PRAASA was held in Anchorage, Alaska. It was an honor and a privilege to be sent to soak up as much as I could of the information offered and bring it back to District 5. It will be more difficult to bring back the spirit of PRAASA. Imagine 750 alcoholics all in love with AA and jazzed to keep it going for those to have found the miracle, those who still suffer and those drunks not yet born.

This is the second PRAASA I have attended. Seven-hundred fifty AA members attended from as far south as California to as far north as British Columbia, Canada, and Alaska to as far east as Idaho and west as Hawaii. The joy and gratitude was palpable. I had heard from my service sponsor and other fellow drunks in general service about the truly inspiring experiences that they have had at past PRAASAs. The spirit was demonstrated as all of the 37 topics (some of which were quite controversial) plus 27 break out round table discussions were presented and/or moderated by a prepared and informed trusted servant and then followed by comments and questions by the entire body. Every one listened respectfully as all of the points of view were expressed by the body. Some of these views were diametrically opposed to perceptions other AAs made. Alcoholics Anonymous may not have an opinion on outside issues, but alcoholics do, and they are more than happy to share them with you!

I requested funding to represent my home group Attitude Adjustment as GSR at last years' PRAASA. They agreed to do that and more. They actually upped the ante and decided to fund future Attitude Adjustment GSRs to attend PRAASAs. This year I was funded by District 5. Steven P. who rotated in as GSR for Attitude Adjustment also went and was my "bunkie" for the event. This is how some of your 7th tradition monies are being invested. Thank you District 5 and the Attitude Adjustment group for actively supporting general service. These are your monies. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions on how to utilize these funds, please attend the monthly GSR/business meeting held at TEC on the second Sunday of every month at 4:00 PM. You can also attend your home group business meeting and let your group GSR know your thoughts and ask he/she to represent you and your group at the District 5 meeting. You can also contact me directly. Your input is valued and desired.

I cannot transmit all that I had experienced in Alaska here. I will be submitting my full report at the next District 5 meeting. I will expand on one of the subjects covered at PRAASA because it is pertinent to what we are experiencing in our district presently.

The topic I will discuss in this letter is:



"Conferences Conventions and Roundups: I just want to go to the AA meeting; do I have to pay the registration fee?"

This has become a hot topic as of late. Is a roundup an AA-sponsored event or not? This concern has been brought up by AAs in the area more than once. After listening to the presenter and doing some research I found some excerpts from AA literature that you might find useful to form your own ideas.

- "Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group provided that they have no other affiliation." (12and12 Tradition Four. Pg. 146)
- There are no "Convention or Roundup committees listed in The General Service Conference Structure. The service structure is illustrated on page S16 of The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service)
- (pg. 73 The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service. Concept 12, Warrantee 5) states." If individual AAs wish to gather for retreats, Communion breakfasts, or indeed any undertaking at all, we still say "Fine. Only we hope you won't designate your efforts as an AA group or enterprise." To put this quote into its true perspective it helps to read the entirety of Concept 12. Notice the quote reads *hopes*. *Never should or must*.
- The AA General Service Office is not the AA police. (pg. 72 The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service.) This is covered on third complete paragraph of page 72.
- For the full picture on the AA view on enforcement of any rules (clue: there aren't any.) read Concept Twelve (pg. 62 The AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service. Concept 12, Warrantee 5).
- The general service office of AA was asked this question by a member of the fellowship. "We are putting on an AA round up and some AA members are saying that since we are charging a registration fee for attendance, we are not acting in accordance with AA Tradition."

GSO answered. There is a big difference between "no dues or fees for AA membership" and a registration fee for an AA round up.

There are many AA round ups, conventions and conferences and in most cases, registration fees are charged to cover expenses. Organizers may on some occasion make special arrangements for AA's that would like to attend but cannot afford to. (This excerpt was taken from box 495. News and Notes from the General Service Office of AA. Pg. 9, top of 2nd column.)

{Note; underline, bold and italics are mine}.

- Roundups are events put on by AAs for AAs. They can be managed any way that the roundup committees choose. This is covered under Tradition Four "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole." (This is sometimes referred to as "The right to be wrong.")

Here a point needs to be made perfectly clear. The people that I queried on this subject overwhelming believed that roundups are a very good thing. Though not a part of the service structure, they are a great service to the fellowship. The vast majority of the people who put them on are very caring people who love AA and are motivated to carry the message. Kudos and thanks to you all that sacrifice your time and effort to made roundups, conventions, campouts, retreats, potlucks, fund raisers, and the like possible. The purpose of this discourse is to pool our combined experience, strength and hope so we can best serve AA. There were many areas, districts and groups that have already gone through these sometimes-painful growth experiences. I am happy to report that they not only survived but also thrived. Pain is the touchstone to spiritual growth. "If we are painstaking about this phase of our development we will be amazed before we are half way through." Again, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. There are tested solutions to assist us with these "opportunities for growth." This forum is too limited to share them. Please ask your GSR, DCM, or Committee Chairs and "more will be revealed." They are here to serve you! Most of the issues are a matter of lack of or misinformation. The past experience is there for the asking and after acquiring it (or not) the members of the fellowship are free to handle these matters any way they like.

Some of the concerns that were shared with me about round ups are:

- Members expressed fears that AA is becoming available only for the financially solvent.
- Newcomers were being asked to leave a marathon or a speaker meeting by well meaning host committee staff.
- Drunks being asked to volunteer to work at the roundup event and then finding out that they are required to pay the registration fee. A newer member was eager to help and get involved with the fellowship. He rose to the call for help. He was at that time barely dry, unemployed and unemployable. He was disillusioned and confused when he had to borrow the registration money required to serve as a volunteer at the event.

-Fears that AA is charging money for 12th Step work.

I can relate. I have been exposed to those same fears myself. In fact, when I read the topic in the PRAASA agenda I was anxiously waiting for the speaker to co-sign my opinion on the subject (Guilty as charged! I have opinions too.) Then I was surprised. That didn't happen! With more information sharing and discussion the answers became clear. There was a significant consensus among the many trusted servants at PRAASA. I heard it repeatedly expressed from the podium, the AA body both at the mike and on the floor that common wisdom held a very high value on Tradition Four. "Each group should be autonomous except in matters of other groups or AA as a whole." Group autonomy reigned in spades. The feeling was that AAs, left to their own devices would through trial and error, acting in an informed group conscience, prayer and meditation would eventually come to present the best course of action. Hopefully in reasonable harmony with each other. The fellowship would be working the 3rd step as a group and grow spiritually in the process. If matters did not turn out well we had the "Right of Participation" (Concept IV), the "Right of Appeal" (Concept V) to change it. We have the best possible people to do the job (Concept IX) with the authority given by the whole fellowship (Concept I) to execute their service responsibilities (Concept III).

Yours in love and service,

Chris N.
DCM District 5

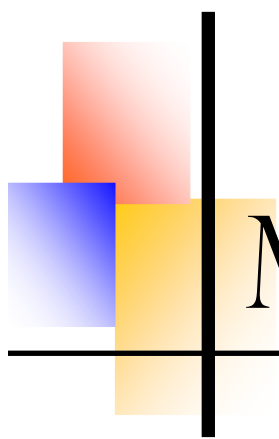


(Chris welcomes questions that he will answer personally or through the Conscious Contact. Email Chris at: kawon.c@hotmail.com)



APRIL 2008

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



MAY 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm Tumalo speaker Mtg-7 pm	3 Redmond potluck speaker mtg-6 pm
4	5	6 Tuesday night AA Speaker mtg-7 pm	7	8	9 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	10
11 District 5 GSR Mtg 4 pm	12	13	14	15	16 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	17
18	19	20 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	21 La Pine potluck/ speaker mtg-6 pm; speaker-7 pm	22	23 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	24 Intergroup potluck speaker mtg-6 pm
25 Intergroup advi- sory Board mtg-5 pm Intergroup IGR mtg-5:30 pm	26	27	28	29	30 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	31 Intergroup Circuit Speaker Mtg, VFH Hall, Redmond- 7:00 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	

VOLUNTEER

YOUR SERVICE CAN
BENEFIT OTHERS

Entertainment Chair and Secretary positions need to be filled in April. If you are interested, attend April Inter-group IGR meeting, April 27. For further information, contact Pat M-678-5749, ripey@bendbroadband.com or call Pat R. at 420-4741



Volunteers for Jails needed for meetings for the following:
Deer Ridge Corrections, Madras
Deschutes County Jail
D.C.J. Work Release Center
Jefferson County Jail
Applications available at the Redmond Alano Club or contact Harry C—
Hchris9143@Bendbroaband.com
or 548-3824



Hotline Shift

Substitute/Fill-in opportunities
One year sobriety preferred
12 Step List
CALL Pat R 420-4741

Potluck sponsors are still needed. Contact Darla B. at 447-8055 or xlxdinky@hotmail.com

Meeting Change

Crescent meeting changed from Tuesday to Thursday at 7:00 pm; location changed to Baptist Church. Contact 541.815-3145 or 541.433.5469.

April SOBRIETY MILESTONES

Chris W	04/03/06	2 Years
Bob C	04/05/06	2 Years
Wes S	04/05/07	1 Year
Jackie C	04/10/03	5 Years
Dawn H	04/14/07	1 Year
Greg M	04/15/91	17 Years
Patrick J	04/17/06	2 Years
Chris N	04/21/03	5 Years
Dennis C	04/24/03	5 Years
Nicole C.	04/26/04	4 Years
Beth R	04/28/06	1 Year
Diana B	04/28/06	1 Year

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

Tyler M	04/07/07	1 Year
Brett C	04/23/07	1 Year

OPEN HAND FELLOWSHIP

Carmen	04/04/07	1 Year
Gary H	04/25/04	4 Years
Evelyn	04/15/78	30 Years

REDMOND REBELS

Kathryn L	04/24/89	19 Years
Mary C	04/25/04	4 Years
Brian B	04/02/02	6 Years
Darla B	04/15/05	3 Years

STEPS TO SOBRIETY



Remember—Bring your favorite dish to share with your friends at Potlucks! Potlucks are only as good as YOU make them!

Starting a new meeting or have a name, location or time change? Call or email the C.O.I. office at 923-8199 or coigoffice@coigaa.org



&

Speaker Meetings

Intergroup Circuit Speaker Meeting,
May 31, VFW Hall, Redmond, 7:00 pm



Redmond Potluck Speaker Meeting,
May 3, Redmond Community Church,
Speaker-Evelyn D from Redmond, 6:00 pm

La Pine Potluck/Speaker Meetings,
third Wednesday of the month, La Pine
Community Park, 7:00 pm



Meeting F.Y.I.

Madras

Birthday meeting, every third Tuesday,
St. Patrick's Church, Madras, 7:30 pm

Tuesday Night AA Speaker

Meeting, first Tuesday of the month,
Nazarene Church, Bend, 7:00 pm

Tumalo

Speaker meeting, every Friday, Fellowship Hall, Tumalo, 7:00 pm

Central Oregon

Speaker meeting, first and third Fridays, Environmental Center, Bend, 7:00 pm

TREASURER'S REPORT

Submitted by Margot B.

Treasurer's Report Central Oregon Intergroup 2008	16-Feb to 15-Mar	YTD	AVERAGE MONTHLY BUDGET
INCOME			
Group Donations	1,867.83	4,112.61	2,056.31
Book & Coin Sales	1,249.95	4,595.30	2,297.65
Newsletter	10.00	(2.96)	(1.48)
Potluck	-	82.72	41.36
Entertainment	-	45.12	22.56
Interest Income	-	4.43	2.22
Total Donations and Interest Income	3,127.78	8,837.22	4,418.61
EXPENSES			
General Checking			
Rent	245.00	735.00	245.00
Advertising (Dex West)	90.66	135.98	67.99
Phone	161.75	501.35	250.68
Hotline	-	-	-
Newsletter	115.00	345.00	172.50
Purchases	477.54	1,602.58	801.29
Postage & Office Expense	-	-	-
Management Fee	800.00	2,400.00	800.00
Bank Charges (Rev. \$56 & checks)	-	23.89	11.95
Other/Misc	100.00	100.00	50.00
Adjustments	-	-	-
Schedules	-	-	-
Electricity	48.46	167.79	83.90
Total General Checking Expenses	2,038.41	6,011.59	2,483.30
Office Account			
Office Supplies	-	69.35	34.68
Postage	-	41.00	20.50
Hotline	-	-	-
Purchases	985.61	3,173.19	1,586.60
Web Site	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-
Total Office Expenses	985.61	3,283.54	1,641.77
Net Revenue/Month	103.76	(457.91)	-
TRANSFERS			
General Checking			
Deposits IN by Office	3,355.98	9,064.63	
Transfers (OUT) to Office	(692.72)	(3,384.43)	
Transfers IN from Savings	-	-	
Transfers (OUT) to Savings	(1,000.00)	(1,000.00)	
Total General Checking Transfers	1,663.26	4,680.20	
Savings (prudent reserve) Account			
Transfers IN	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Transfers (OUT)	-	-	
Total Savings Transfers	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Office			
Transfers IN	692.72	3,384.43	
Transfers (OUT)	-	-	
Total Office Transfers	692.72	3,384.43	
Petty Cash			
Transfers IN	-	2.96	
Transfers (OUT)	-	(2.96)	
Total Petty Cash Transfers	-	-	
Cash Reconciliation			
Beginning Balance from 12/15/07			
Treasurer's Book Balance	4,540.08		
Prudent Reserve Account	6,016.18		
Manager's Book Balance	907.11		
Petty Cash	50.00		
Potluck Balance	112.14		
Entertainment Balance	3,576.59		
Total Cash on Hand	15,202.10		

DONATING GROUPS 2008 Group	16-Feb to 15-Mar	Year to Date
24 and Alive	45.00	135.00
ABC Group		-
As Men See It		-
Attitude Adjustment	210.00	472.50
Back to the Big Book		-
Big Book Study (LaPine)		-
Burns Group		-
Eastside Early Risers	300.00	300.00
First Things First		-
Heppner Miracles		-
High Noon Big Book Study		155.00
Living in the Solution	5.20	40.15
Madras Oasis Group		-
Men's Book Study		-
Men's Stag Meeting	50.00	150.00
Monday Downtown	75.00	75.00
Monday/Wednesday 5:30		63.00
New Horizons	360.63	571.96
Primary Purpose	185.00	414.00
Redmond Rebels		600.00
Rule 62 Group		-
S.O.S. Group (Redmond)	30.00	60.00
Saturday Morning Alive	87.00	87.00
Sisters Group	25.00	50.00
Sisters High Noon		-
Sober Desire		56.00
Sober on Sunday		-
Sobriety Maintenance		-
Spiritual Awakening		-
Spiritual Breakfast		224.00
Springriver Book Study		-
Step Sisters		164.00
Steps to Sobriety		-
Sunday Serenity		-
Sunriver Open Group	120.00	120.00
The Nooner		-
Thursday Women's Meeting		-
Tuesday Night AA		-
Tuesday Night Survivors		-
Tumalo Friday Night		-
We are not a Glum Lot	375.00	375.00
W-F-S Group		-
Women at Work		-
Women in Serenity		-
Anonymous		-
CD Sales		-
District 5 - AFG Donations		-
Potluck		-
Entertainment		-
Intergroup 7th Tradition		-
Total Contributions	1,867.83	4,112.61

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