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Eileen@aspenvocational.com

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Volume 10 Issue 8

August 2010

The Grace That Saved Me

I was born and raised, for the most part, in Oregon. I am the youngest of three and the only boy. My childhood was what I would consider normal; there were no traumatic events outside the regular pangs of growing up. My parents were very loving and supportive in everything my sisters and I did. The whole family was very close.

It wasn't until high school that things began to change. My middle sister began to rebel against family values in the proverbial teenage search for identity and independence. At the age of sixteen she was pregnant. This resulted in a lot of turmoil in the family. Late-night screaming matches between my parents and sister became the new norm. While the arguing never got physical, I found myself always in the middle, acting as mediator. I was fourteen at the time.

I began to experience depression. I was sad my family was falling apart in front of me and I was powerless to do anything. I was dubbed the "strong" one and felt I couldn't show any emotion. I often cried myself to sleep in the privacy of my room. I lost interest in school and my grades began to drop. Sports had always been my form of escape, but during this crisis, they didn't seem to help. Then I discovered alcohol.

My first experience with alcohol was when I was fifteen. I was at party with friends and they were drinking beer. I hated the taste of it and would pour most of it down the toilet and pretend I was drunk. However, once I consumed enough, I felt instant euphoria. From that time forward I was able to move past the taste for the effect. I was hooked.

Because of the logistics of teenage drinking, I was only able to drink at the occasional party through the rest of high school. Nevertheless, when I did drink, it was always to oblivion. In the last two years of high school things began to quiet down on the family front. I rededicated myself to sports and school and graduated on time with decent grades. After graduation, I went off to college. This time was characterized by the occasional partying during breaks. Most of my time was spent studying and playing sports. Again, when I drank, it was always in excess.

Fast-forward a few years and I was married and had a career as a police officer in one of Oregon's larger cities. My drinking pattern continued as before: occasional binges.



Address Information

Oregon Area Treasury
1900 N.E. 3rd Street
Suite 106-172
Bend, OR 97701

District 5
P. O. Box 7223
Bend, OR 97708

General Service Board
Grand Central Station
P. O. Box 459
New York, NY 10164-0371

Ryan's Story, continued

Then, another crisis, or crises, hit. First on the list was the infidelity of my wife; she had an affair. We talked briefly about it and then just buried it under the rug. Next on the list was the suicide of a friend on the police force. It was later determined that he was an alcoholic. Finally, it was the day-to-day rigors of being a police officer. I felt as though my world was coming down around me and was very anxious and depressed.

I once again turned to alcohol to anesthetize myself. I began to drink in earnest. I quickly exhausted my time-off at work in order to drink. When I was unable to return to work due to my drinking, I told the department I believed I was an alcoholic. They were very supportive and helped arrange for me to go to treatment. I was put on disability leave.

Entering treatment I was full of hope. The department, my wife, and my family supported me. I believed I would acquire the tools necessary to cope with life without alcohol and move on. The day I got out of treatment, that hope was shattered.

I got out of treatment on my birthday. My wife picked me up and was very aloof. When we got home she said, "We need to talk." She went on to explain she wasn't happy in our marriage and wanted a divorce. I managed to stay sober for two weeks after this revelation before giving in again to alcohol.

The next year of my life was filled with regret, fear, depression, and despair. I remained on disability leave from the department and continued to "battle" my alcoholism. I ended up going to another inpatient treatment and two outpatient treatments. I never made it past 90 days sober.

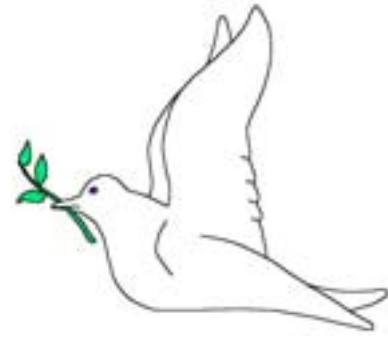
In July of 2008 I was arrested for DUII two times in 20 days. I resigned from the police department in lieu of termination, after nearly four years on the force. I spent 26 days in jail, my license was suspended for 3 years, got two years bench probation, and loads of fines.

After the second arrest, I managed to "white knuckle" sobriety for almost 9 months before relapsing. Caught back in the vicious cycle of the disease, I was unable to achieve 30 days sober.

On July 14, 2009, I was sitting in a field after living under a bridge for a week and drinking myself silly. I was almost entirely hopeless and contemplating suicide. I closed my eyes in between drinks and prayed to God. I told him I knew this was not what he wanted for my life and begged for his help. I said I didn't have to desire to stop drinking and I couldn't do this on my own.

What happened next was strange, to say the least. I got up as if possessed and walked 4 miles to the hospital to detoxify. Two days later, I was in another inpatient treatment. I haven't had the desire to drink since that prayer in the field.

"I knew it was Grace that saved me"



I knew it was grace that saved me, but I also knew I had to do things differently if I wanted to stay sober. After completing my third inpatient treatment, I immediately got involved in Alcoholics Anonymous in Bend. I went to meetings, got a sponsor, read the Big Book, began working the steps, did service work, and everything else that was "suggested" to me. As a result, I got one year sober on July 19th.

The first year of sobriety wasn't easy. About midway through the first year I was an emotional rollercoaster. I wondered if sobriety was worth it. But I stayed the course and weathered the storm, utilizing the tools I had been given. At about eight months sober my moods stabilized. I have begun to experience a peace greater than I ever imagined. I'm still "clearing away the wreckage of my past," but life is gradually getting better. I have been working again, my relationships are getting better, I have dreams of going to graduate school, I'm playing city league sports, and I am going to Mexico in November to build a house for a family in need. My sponsor told me I'm ready to start giving back and I recently starting sponsoring someone. None of these things would be possible if I was drinking. Today I am living, not existing.

I am not so naïve to think I am impervious to suffering. Life will happen. However, with the program of Alcoholics Anonymous I have the confidence I can persevere.

Ryan B

BOOK STUDY MEETINGS

Don't Forget "How It Works"! Our manual for better living is at our fingertips; Take advantage of these meetings that focus on our basic text! (see schedule for details on meeting places)

Sunday: Redmond 5:30 and 7 pm
Monday: Bend 7 am and 5:30 pm
Prineville 5:30 pm
Tuesday: Bend 5:30 pm
Madras 7:30 pm
Sisters 12 noon
Thursday: Bend 7 am
Friday: Bend 12 noon
Bend 7:30 pm
La Pine 7 pm





Being Real

Asked in the Rooms:

In terms of your Sobriety, What Does
“Being Real” Mean to you?

What comes to mind is what is on our Medallions: *To Thine Own Self Be True*. Being honest with yourself and others.
Bob C

Being able to reach out to others. Not putting on false bravado.
Harriett K.

Being aware with sober eyes.
Lori J.

Trying to live in the moment and do the next right thing
Bill B

I need to remind myself that I am not in total control of my life or of anyone else's life. Each day I remember that if my life is not exactly how I think it should be that is okay. I don't have to do anything perfect. God's will, not mine!
Chrissy

“Being Real” means that I am actually doing a Program, and working all Twelve Steps, In Order.
Bryan B.

Following through with commitments. Not lying to myself anymore. Just showing up.
Jill K.



Reality of Myself

An old-timers challenge of being thoroughly honest with himself

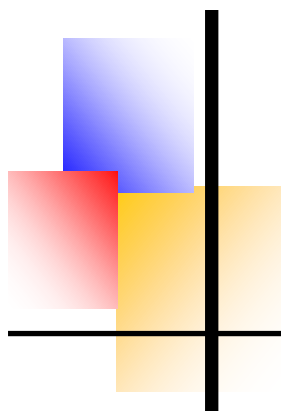
When I got to AA and heard “How It Works” read at every meeting, I got the idea that honesty was pretty important in recovery. It took me longer to recognize the importance of being honest with myself and not pretending to be someone I'm not.

Slowly, as I got and stayed sober, I was able to open up a bit about myself and found that nothing horrible happened as a result. As I got honest with others – at work, meetings, and in Steps Four and Five – I was able to get more honest with myself. It is so much easier to be honest, and yet it seems so hard.

So much of life seems to be based on trying to impress others. It is a hard habit to break, despite how futile and unrewarding it is. I heard consumerism defined as “buying things I don't really need with money I don't really have to impress people I don't really like.” For me, living comfortably means living simply. It is important to be where I really am and not where I think I should be. I recall a meeting in which we were talking about praying for those we resent. Nice, but a bit up in the air. The last speaker was a ship's engineer who said, “Pray for 'em? I wish they'd piss off and die!” That brought the meeting back to earth beautifully.

Life in contented sobriety seems to be a matter of looking at the reality of myself in my attitudes, actions, and character rather than trying to run from it. After thirty-three years in recovery, I center my life on meetings and the Steps. When I am sane, I am happy and content, and not at all likely to get crazy enough to drink.

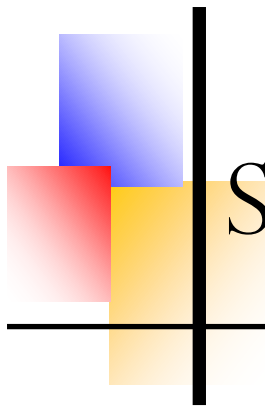
Jim F., Tasmania, Australia
From the September 2008 Grapevine



AUGUST 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Newberry Crater Campout	2	3	4	5	6 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	7 Redmond potluck, speaker mtg—6 pm;
8	9	10 Tuesday night AA Speaker mtg- 7 pm	11	12	13 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	14
15 District 5 GSR mtg 4 pm TEC	16	17	18 La Pine pot- luck/ speaker mtg-6 pm	19 Campout Suttle Lake	20 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm Campout Suttle Lake	21 Campout Suttle Lake
22 Campout Suttle Intergroup Advisory Board mtg-5 pm Intergroup IGR mtg-5:30 pm; TEC	23	24 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	25	26	27 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm; Bend Birthday Mtg 7pm TEC	28 Intergroup potluck speaker mtg-6 pm;
29	30					
Bend Birthday Meeting 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 Tuesday Speaker Meeting Tumalo Speaker Meeting		Trinity Episcopal Church Environmental Center TEC TEC TEC St. Helen's Room La Pine Park & Rec Building St. Patrick's Church Redmond Community Church Nazarene Church Fellowship Hall			469 NW Wall Street 16 NW Kansas, Bend 469 Wall Street, Bend 469 NW Wall Street, Bend 469 NW Wall Street, Bend Idaho Street, Bend 16405 12 1st Street, La Pine Madison & J Street, Madras 10 & Cedar, Redmond 1270 NE 27th, Bend Bruce Avenue, Tumalo	

Note: The Central Oregon Intergroup Newsletter is a monthly newsletter of the Central Oregon Intergroup Office. It is about, by and for members of Central Oregon Alcoholics Anonymous. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to AA as a whole. Quotations from AA books, pamphlets, or other literature are reprinted with permission of AA and World Services, Inc. Any internet links or other citations are provided as a courtesy only. No specific endorsement is intended.



SEPTEMBER 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	4 Redmond pot- luck, speaker mtg—6 pm;
5	6	7 Tuesday night Speaker mtg-7 pm	8	9	10 Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	11
12 District 5 GSR mtg 4 pm TEC	13	14	15 La Pine potluck/ speaker mtg-6 pm	16	17 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	18
19	20	21 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	22	23	24 Tumalo Speaker 7 pm	25 Intergroup pot- luck speaker mtg- 6 pm;
26 Intergroup Advisory Board mtg-5 pm Inter- group IGR mtg- 5:30 pm; TEC	27	28	29	30	31 Tumalo Speaker Mtg 7 pm Bend Birthday Meeting TEC 7 pm	
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MEETING

ADDITIONS/CHANGES/DELETIONS

DID YOU KNOW? There are between 10 and 12 meetings offered daily throughout Bend

WOMENS ONLY groups are offered
Sunday 4pm Redmond
Monday 7pm Bend
Tuesday 9 am Redmond
Thursday noon Bend and Sisters
6pm Redmond
Friday noon Madras
Saturday 5:30 pm Bend

MENS ONLY groups are offered:
Wednesday 7 pm Redmond
Thursday 5:30 pm La Pine
7 pm Bend (2 meetings)
Saturday 7:30 am Prineville

More Announcements

**LAST CAMPOUT
of the Summer!**
Suttle Lake August
22nd—25th



Come Join the Fun
and Fellowship!
\$20 per ticket
Contact Heidi at
541- 728-5463

AUGUST Sobriety Milestones

Attitude Adjustment

Julie L	08/02/09	1 year
Brad M	8/06/09	1 year
Jim B	08/24/99	11 years
Forest J	08/21/07	3 years
Paul J G	08/26/08	3 years
Sharon	08/29/04	6 years
Judy S S	08/30/09	1 year
Harriett K	08/03/09	1 year

**Milestones: Get
those anniversary
dates in! We love to
celebrate success**



Funny Thoughts:

“Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic,” was the meeting topic, prompting a newcomer to wax philosophic at great length from the point of view of reincarnation: “Was I an alcoholic in my previous lives? In some but not in others? Will I still be an alcoholic the next time I come back? And in the life after that? And hundreds of lives after that will I ...”

The stunned silence following this line of questioning was finally broken by an old-timer who patted the pilgrim on the knee and said gently, “Don’t worry. In AA, we try to take things just one life at a time.”

Paul C, California

Taken from November 2007 Grapevine

Upcoming Events

SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

Sunday August 29, 2010
Noon—6 pm

Fundraising Event for High
Desert Round Up !

\$7 per player
Call Bill O. at 541-771-5145



Central Oregon 16th Annual High Desert Round Up

September 24, 25, 26 2010

UNITY IN ACTION

Sign up to Help!
Call Patti 541-771-5452 or
Carrie 541-419-4159
SERVICE KEEPS US SOBER!

Intergroup Needs A Treasurer!

Two year sobriety requirement, Two year commitment. IMMEDIATE need; there is presently NO Treasurer!

TREASURER'S REPORT

Group Divisions	\$58.83	\$,895.40	1,448.00
Rest & Coin Sales	1,767.28	\$,775.40	1,888.00
Newsletter	5.42	\$2.71	10.00
Polka	-	\$89.81	30.00
Environment	-	1,893.58	-
United Nations	-	5.47	-
Total Divisions and Interest Income	\$2,831.53	\$5,259.56	3,376.00

Office demand	-	100.00	100.00
Office supplies	-	-	10.00
Postage	-	-	-
Utilities	-	1,000.00	1000.00
Furniture	-	0.00	-
Other	-	0.00	-
Total Office Expenses	-	1,100.00	1110.00

Deposits in U.S. Office	1,000.00	10,541.00
Deposits in U.S. Office	-	(700.00)
Deposits in U.S. Office	-	-
Deposits in U.S. Office	-	-
Total General Operating Expenses	1,000.00	10,541.00

Transfer to	1,000.00	1,700.00
Transfer (200)	-	-
Total Other Transfers	1,000.00	1,700.00

Cost Descriptions	
Beginning Balance from 12/31/08	
Treasurer's Stock Balance	1,000.00
Product Revenue Amount	4,000.00
Manager's Stock Balance	300.00
Poly-Cost	50.00
Total Cash on Hand	<u>\$5,350.00</u>

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A black and white cartoon illustration. A dog is pulling a sled with a man on it. The dog is holding a sign that says "PIET COLA". The man is wearing a hat and a coat. The background shows snow-capped mountains. The signature "T. No. 1." is in the bottom left corner.

“Just my luck to be found by a member of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

754 SW 11th Street
Redmond OR 97756



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