

Inside: Return from Relapse: Members share their stories



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Central Oregon's

Conscious Contact

Volume 12 Issue 12

December 2010

Path to Freedom

My name is Tavia and I am an Alcoholic. A beautiful, clumsy, foot in the mouth, redeemed through God's grace alcoholic. It is no accident that I came through the doors of AA and found home. You were waiting for me and I arrived at precisely the right time.

I came to alcoholics anonymous in the fall of 2003 after taking one of those 15 question "are you an alcoholic" surveys that my mom had printed out for me and left on my pillow, after a stream of all night benders. I answered every question with a "yes". I hated where I was in life: owing everyone everything and having nothing left to give. Soul sickness had crept in and I felt imprisoned.

My uncle Larry brought me to my first meeting, and I saw no evidence of cult activity or Jesus nailed to a cross; just a bunch of 20-something's laughing and smiling at each other. I had forgotten what a true smile looked like and their laughter stung my broken soul, but I wanted so badly the freedom they enjoyed. I grabbed onto alcoholics anonymous right then. I found a sponsor, and then another. My third sponsor, Anna M., was and is my perfect match. She has been my sponsor for the last 6 years and when she stands before her maker, I have no doubt she will be rewarded for her continuous work with me and the large part she has had in the woman I have become.

I haven't always listened to my sponsor or heeded the warnings and examples AA provided for me. I strayed from the path of recovery and in the winter of 2008, after 5 years of AA, I chose to drink. This was a very dark time, having been self-severed from God and AA. I secretly locked myself away in a closet, drank on the floor and tried to quiet the demons that inevitably returned when I stopped praying and practicing recovery. I drank in secret until March 6th when no shred of hope was left. On morning of the 7th, I had what I can only describe as a



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moment of true surrender. I offered myself to my conception of God again, and got honest with myself about what had happened. Then God gave me strength to be honest with my sponsor, husband and friends in the fellowship who welcomed me home. Being humble was, and is, purifying.

The last 18 months have been the most challenging of my life. I have discovered I am human and have a fatal disease that can manifest if I don't keep God in the center and my ego in check. I've learned that others are on their own path, whatever that may be, and my responsibility is to leave each person better for having known me whenever possible and to clear away the wreckage in God's time. I know that sharing my experience and where I'm at is a right action and saying "YOU need to" or "if YOU would just" in meetings is inventory taking, and leads me away from being helpful to other alcoholics. I've come to understand that being honest and teachable is required, and that my relationship with my sponsor is pivotal to all other relationships. (Anna, I love you.)

I work steps with women today, AMAZING women who I feel humbled and blessed to work with. They are rays of sunshine for my soul and keep me centered in God's work and without whom I wouldn't remember so readily where I came from. Today I am happy, my struggles and successes are part of a whole and I am woven tightly in God's plan for me, as long as I continue this path I will remain free.

Tavia

**Seven missed meetings
makes one weak**



Keeper Slogans for Keeping Sober:

N U T S = Not Using The Steps

C H A N G E = Choosing Honesty Allows New Growth
Every day

D E N I A L = Don't Even Notice I Am Lying

F E A R = Face Everything and Recover

B E S T = Been Enjoying Sobriety Today?

F I N E = Free, Independent, New and Energetic

T H I N K = The Happiness I Never Knew

S O B E R = Son Of a Basket, Everything's Real

S O B E R = Spiritually On Beam; Everything's Right

S T E P S = Solutions To Every Problem in Sobriety

A S A P = Always Say A Prayer

P U S H = Pray Until Something Happens

R I D = Restless, Irritable, Discontent

H O W = Honesty, Open mindedness, Willingness

W H O = Willingness, Honesty, Open mindedness

K I S S = Keeping It Simple, Spiritually

E G O = Edging God Out

F A I L U R E = Fearful, Arrogant, Insecure, Lonely,
Uncertain, Resentful, Empty.

G O D = Good Orderly Direction

A C T I O N = Any Change Toward Improving One's Nature.

H A L T = Hope, Acceptance, Love, Tolerance

H A L T = Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired

C A R E = Comforting And Reassuring Each other

H O P E = Happy Our Program Exists

H O P E = Hang On; Pray Every day

Rerun Sobriety

My name is Mark and I'm an alcoholic. I'm an A.A. retread and that's the reason I'm sharing this with you.

During my first turn in AA, I was the proud recipient of a 10-year AA coin, which I rightfully earned. To be sure, I had devised my own version of the AA Twelve Steps, which in my case included only 10 of the 12 Steps. The 12 Steps are, after all, only suggestions--it says so right on page 59 of the Big Book. In addition, an AA pundit during my time back then was fond of pointing out that the word 'sponsor' was nowhere to be found in the first 164 pages of the Big Book. Hence, having a sponsor was obviously an optional personal choice. An elective for those who so desired.

Some things I did pay attention to. A gentleman talked about being a coffee-maker for a couple of years. Coffee-making probably wasn't the secret to anything, but it didn't hurt this man any, so I made coffee for a year. Another AA member read a little bit of the Big Book every night. Reading the Big Book might not be the ultimate solution, but it didn't hurt that woman any, so I read a little of the Big Book every night. Someone else talked about going to AA Meetings. AA Meetings weren't likely the decisive answer to my alcoholism, but that man had somehow amassed 15+ years in the Program so I went to a goodly number of meetings.

And I eventually earned a 10-year AA coin. The coin with the 'X'. 'X', the unknown. I had 10 years of sobriety. AA sobriety, more or less. I obviously had learned something about staying sober. All in all, life was good, both personally and professionally. I had a true spiritual connection with my Higher Power

So when things started to go not so good at meetings, I decided that with 10 years, I was bulletproof and didn't need to attend a certain meeting as often as before. I also could dispense with that other meeting entirely because so-and-so always attended and all I ever got from that guy was resentments. I began to frequent still another meeting less and less because it was always the same old 'same old'. I had 10 years or sobriety, right? I certainly must know what I'm doing. I never stopped going to meetings completely, but I slowed w-a-y down.

I found myself on a vacation, totally surrounded by people who were drinking and seemed to be having a pretty good time. When I started the vacation I'd had no predilection to drinking and, frankly, expected to return from vacation as sober as I started it. Alcohol was staring me in the face *and I had no defense against the first drink*. I thought, hey, I can just pick this up at Day One when I get home. So I took that drink, and another, and another...

I came back home and found that starting at Day One wasn't as easy as I'd thought. Oh well, I'll stop drinking after New Year's Eve. Then it was after the Super Bowl. Then my birthday, my next vacation. The fact is I never did stop and never got back to Day One. You know all that stuff they talk about where a person's alcoholism progresses even if they don't drink ?? Well it's true. I was drinking more than I ever had in only a short period of time.

Fast forward five years... I completely realized that I was an alcoholic, drinking like only an alcoholic can. I dabbled at meetings for a few days at a time, only to go back to drinking. I qualified for AA membership, but couldn't, or likely wouldn't, make the required commitment. I had my chances to rejoin the AA program on any number of occasions. I could've taken the simple, uncomplicated way back into AA, but didn't. Ultimately, my Higher Power said 'OK, we've tried it your way. Now we'll do it MY way.' I ultimately found AA for good in the back seat of a police car. It took what it took to get me back into AA. I had to reach my bottom.

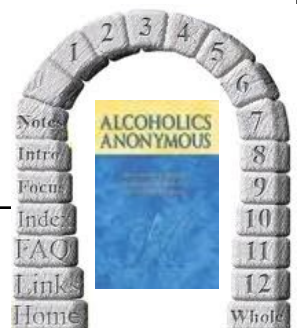
Now, I'm a retread in AA. There's a saying that those who ignore the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them. So what's different this time out ?? For starters, I recognize that the 12 Steps of AA are suggested as a program of recovery in the same way that if I've just jumped out of an airplane wearing a parachute, it's suggested that I pull the rip cord. I work the 12 Steps, all twelve of 'em. Also, this time I have a sponsor. A real sponsor. I don't always like what he has to say or how he responds to what I say, but I now have to humility to recognize that I don't always have the answers and ought to listen to someone who's previously made many of the same mistakes I have.

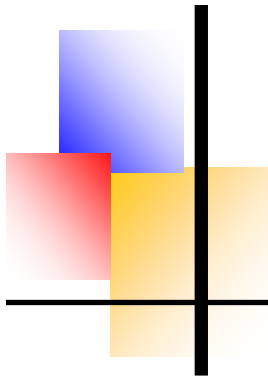
I've said at AA meetings that although the desire to stop drinking is the only requirement for membership, it's the *willingness to go to any length to stop drinking* that is the requirement for success. One of the promises states that we will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. Restarting my drinking habit after 10 years of sobriety was likely the biggest mistake I've ever made in my life.

However, I'm grateful that I was able to experience those 10 alcohol-free years. I tremble to think of what might have happened in my life, and to my health, if I hadn't had those 10 years of freedom from alcohol. I suppose I would like to have a 'do over' on a couple of decisions I've made, but I don't regret my past, nor do I shut the door on it. May you live long and prosper in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Mark M.

It's the willingness to go to any length to stop drinking that is the requirement for success.

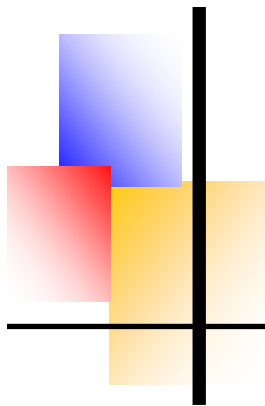




DECEMBER 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 CO speaker mtg-7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	4 Redmond potluck, 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 Mtg 7 pm	25 Christmas Alcathon All Day Brooks Hall
26 Intergroup Advisory Board mtg-5 pm Intergroup IGR mtg-5:30 pm; TEC	27	28	29	30	31 Bend Birthday Mtg TEC 7 pm New Years Dinner 7:30/ Dance 9:15 PFGH	
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 Pine Forest Grange Hall (PFGH)		Trinity Episcopal Church (TEC) Environmental Center TEC TEC TEC St. Helen's Room La Pine Park & Rec Building Jefferson Cnty Library Rodriguez Annex Redmond Community Church Nazarene Church Fellowship Hall PFGH			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 134 S.E. E Street, Madras 10 & Cedar, Redmond 1270 NE 27th, Bend Bruce Avenue, Tumalo 63214 Boyd Acres Road, Bend	

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 or should be inferred.



JANUARY 2011

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

ADDITIONS/CHANGES/DELETIONS

NEW MEETING AT THE COLLEGE !

Central Oregon Community College
Tuesdays, 12:30 to 1:30 pm

Ochoco Building Room 221

Check It Out !!

LA PINE MEETING CHANGES

MONDAY 7 pm SOS Group
Water Building, Hinkle Way

FRIDAY 7 pm Big Book Study
Jay Bird Ink
52379 Huntington Road

MADRAS BIRTHDAY MEETING

Third Tues of each month, 7:30 pm
NOW HELD at Jefferson County
Library - Rodriguez Annex –
134 S.E. E Street, Madras

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Conscious Contact Subscribers:

Issues of the Conscious Contact are published and delivered free to ONE registered group each in the AA community. This should provide for all meetings to have at least one copy. It can also be found online. Additional copies may be purchased via subscription for \$10 per year, see subscription form on back page. Please note that due to unknown subscription end dates, individuals who have paid subscriptions need to notify Eileen of this fact at newsletter@coiagaa.org Anyone NOT notifying me of a paid subscription will be dropped as of December 31, 2010. It costs money to bring this newsletter; thanks for understanding !!

Eileen F.

DECEMBER Sobriety Milestones

Attitude Adjustment

Lori J	12/1/07	3 years
Shari A	12/1/86	24 years
John M	12/20/09	1 year
Brian K	12/21/05	5 years
Vance A	12/23/08	2 years
Bruce H	12/25/84	26 years
Kris KF	12/25/93	17 years
Matt C	12/14/88	22 years
Wendy L	12/28/86	24 years

Steps to Sobriety

Hans	12/08/00	10 years
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Upcoming Events

CHRISTMAS ALCATHON



ALL DAY
Brooks Hall, TEC
Saturday, December 25th 7
am to 8 pm

Food (Potluck),
Fellowship, Marathon Meetings

NEW YEAR'S EVE DINNER and DANCE

Pine Forest Grange Hall 12/31/10
Catered Dinner at 7:30 pm
Dance at 9:15

Combo Dinner/Dance Tix \$25
Dance Only \$10
Raffle Prizes, Fellowship, FUN!

Info: Heidi S. 541-728-5463
entertainment@coiagaa.org

Some thoughts for the Holidays: Surviving Family Parties

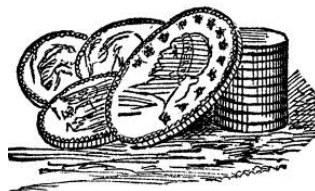
1. If you feel too uncomfortable at any time, you have the option to leave.
2. Just because you're an alcoholic, that doesn't give you the right to act alcoholically.
3. Help is just a phone call away, so take the group's phone list. If you need help, call one of us. Call anyway.
4. Turn everything over and leave the results up to God.

David A., Clifton, Texas

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TREASURER'S REPORT
DONATIONS SUMMARY



Seventh Tradition: We
are Self Supporting
Through Our Own
Contributions

2010 Group	16-Oct to 15-Nov	Year to Date
24 and Alive	150.00	670.00
ABC Group	-	40.00
All Groups Speaker Mtg.	-	-
As Men See It	80.00	367.80
Attitude Adjustment	252.73	987.39
Back to the Big Book	-	79.48
Burning Desires	-	-
Burns Group	-	100.00
Central Oregon Speakers	-	-
Crescent Meeting	-	-
Crooked River Ranch	-	-
Eastside Earlyrisers	-	300.00
First things First	-	-
Going to Any Lengths	-	125.00
Heppner Miracles	-	90.00
Let it Go Group	-	222.00
Living Sober	-	20.00
Living in the Solution	-	13.95
Madras Oasis Group	-	250.00
Make My Day	-	327.60
Meeting in Between	-	170.12
Men's Book Study	-	47.50
Men's Stag Meeting	-	150.00
Mill Creek	-	450.00
Monday/Wednesday 5:30	-	-
New Beginnings	-	-
New Horizon	-	1,687.43
Not a Glum Lot	-	1,539.37
Open Hand Fellowship	-	-
Out to Lunch Bunch	-	-
Primary Purpose	-	364.30
Redmond Rebels	294.75	1,111.07
Rule 62 Group	-	19.95

Safe Harbor	-	273.81
Saturday Morning Alive	-	423.37
Saturday Nite Live	100.00	100.00
Saturday Nite Living Sober	-	50.00
Sisters High Noon	-	90.00
Sisters Saturday	-	-
Sisters Group	-	100.00
Sisters in Sobriety	-	81.40
Sober Desire	188.25	277.25
Sober Sunday	20.00	20.00
S.O.S.	234.90	414.90
Spiritual Awakening	-	329.37
Spiritual Breakfast	-	-
Step Sisters	-	629.70
Steps to Freedom	-	-
Steps to Sobriety	3.30	969.30
Sunday Serenity	-	-
Sunriver Open Group	-	60.00
The Old Ranch House Grp	-	25.00
Tuesday Nite AA-Bend	90.00	375.00
Tuesday Nooners	-	-
Thursday Women's	-	558.82
Tumalo Friday Night	-	20.00
Warm Springs Groups	-	-
Wed. Living Sober	-	-
Wednesday Stag Meeting	-	-
WFS	-	583.77
Women for Serenity	-	-
Women at Work	-	38.65
Anonymous	-	-
CD Sales	-	-
COF	-	-
District 5 - AFG Donations	-	90.00
Potluck	-	-
Entertainment	-	500.00
Intergroup 7th Tradition	-	58.00
Total Contributions	-	-

1,413.93 15,243.07

Some A A Definitions:

An Easier, Softer Way:

This phrase is taken from chapter 5 of the Big Book, 'We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not.' Some AA members attempt to find an easier, softer way to recover from alcoholism than having to work the Twelve Steps.

Progress Not Perfection:

This is a paraphrase of a sentence in chapter 5 of the Big Book, 'We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.' When we try to do things perfectly, we are attempting to do the impossible. The tendency toward perfectionism is merely a reflection of our alcoholic grandiosity.

Rigorous Honesty:

From chapter 5 in the Big Book, 'They [those who do not recover] are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty.' Rigorous honesty is characterized by the complete lack of intent to deceive one's self or anyone else.

Stinking Thinking:

This phrase refers to an alcoholic's reversion to old thought patterns and attitudes. Stinking thinking may include, blaming others, alcoholic grandiosity, fault-finding, self-centeredness, and skipping meetings. Stinking thinking is a warning sign to an alcoholic that he is not working the AA program and he or she is getting precariously close to their next drink.

Rule 62:

From the Twelve and Twelve, Rule 62 is, 'Don't take yourself too damned seriously'

754 SW 11th Street
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