



Volume 13 Issue 2

February 2011



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The Great Fact

Hi my name is Mike, and I am an alcoholic. It is only through God's grace and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous that I am alive and sober and for that I want to say "thank you." I stole that line from a fellow with the same name as mine, at a meeting in Appleton, Wisconsin. I enjoy the amount of humility included in that introduction. I have taken many sayings and truths along the way, which have kept me on track. One of the most important truths I heard early on was *"new playmates, new playground."* Another good one is, *"the only way to keep this is to give it away."* Those one liners kinda blew me away; not understanding one day at a time, one line at a time, using the Big Book as my blueprint for living.

My story isn't any different from anyone else's. I started off as a moderate drinker, then became a heavy drinker and eventually lost all control of my liquor consumption once I started to drink. My first remembrance of getting drunk was a high school dance. I had to mellow out in order to do the Watusi, the Limbo, or the Twist. I did make a fool of myself, but I truly enjoyed the excitement that came with getting loaded. Actually, all I needed was to be ambidextrous in order to do these moves. I do remember going to the dance, but do not recall getting led out of the school by a Nun. My penance was to have a report on "how to behave at a dance" by Monday morning.

In the country, I had hiding places for my alcohol, along the gravel roads, ditches, and culverts. It was neat to have an inventory as my friends would come to me for their "special needs"; eventually, I had LOTS of friends. One weekend my buddy showed up at my home to show off his new 1969 Chevy SS 396 Chevelle. It was a cold December day, and the roads were loaded up with snow and ice, but the warmth of a couple of pints of brandy would certainly warm us up. The music was playing and the stories were flying as we t-boned a vehicle on the driver's side, traveling at 90 miles an hour. The impact was so great, I broke my seat belt and landed up in a Catholic hospital. The driver of the other vehicle was a Catholic priest, who ended up with amnesia and eventually lost his parish. This didn't go over very well in a farm family whose son had 12 years of Catholic education. I felt guilt and shame, but alcohol seemed to sugarcoat the fact that something serious happened. But, life goes on. I married, joined the Army, and became a



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productive individual in my community. Over the years my dependency on alcohol grew, but I seemed to minimize, self-justify, manipulate my way, or sugarcoat whatever situation to my advantage.

One time in the military, my buddy and I were drunk and depressed, and decided to do something worthwhile. The idea came to run from Wisconsin to Las Vegas for "Jerry's Kids, The March of Dimes". As drill instructors we were always physically fit and up to a challenge, and would give whatever money was donated to this cause. We tried calling our First Sergeant, then our Company Commander, trying to follow the chain of command. Well, we didn't get ahold of anyone, so we tried calling the White House, only to get a recording, as it was after-hours. Our intentions were most admirable, until we got called into the First Sergeant's office the next morning. How he found out we will never know, but you can only imagine the butt chewing that went on, as well as a drop in rank.

My wife's favorite way to control my drinking was to hide the car keys. We had two vehicles, and the thought of walking to the tavern just didn't cross my mind. I had this riding lawnmower, however, that was very near and dear to my heart. The mower had a 16 horse engine, hydro-static transmission and one of those swivel cup holders which made it convenient to keep a "cold one" on hand while exerting myself in the warm summer days of Wisconsin. Well, that riding lawnmower was my favorite form of transportation to the tavern and if someone would drop by, well, they just caught a ride on the hood. It was extreme measures of transportation and going to any length....



The day came in the early 1980's when the recession hit, and I got my first D.U.I. That evening the police officer pulled me over and instead of reciting the alphabet, I sang it at the top of my lungs. Well, off to jail I went. Eventually, I lost my home, my business, my wife, and then my dignity. How could I take something that was so beautiful and meaningful and trade it all for alcohol?! We separated, and I felt I was beyond human aid.



"Joining AA was an excellent move, Fenton. But let's not overdo the 'easy does it'!"

In the chapter of the Big Book titled "There is a solution" on page 25 of the third edition a paragraph reads, "THE GREAT FACT FOR US IS THIS, AND NOTHING LESS; THAT WE HAVE HAD DEEP AND EFFECTIVE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES WHICH HAVE REVOLUTIONIZED OUR WHOLE ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE, TOWARD OUR FELLOWS AND TOWARD GOD'S UNIVERSE. THE CENTRAL FACT OF OUR LIVES TODAY IS THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT OUR CREATOR HAD ENTERED INTO OUR HEARTS AND LIVES IN A WAY WHICH IS INDEED MIRACULOUS. HE HAS COMMENCED TO ACCOMPLISH THOSE THINGS FOR US WHICH WE COULD NEVER DO BY OURSELVES."

I have been blessed by The Great Fact, and have not found it necessary to drink alcohol or take any mood altering drugs since September 2, 1985 and for that I am grateful.

Shortly after sobering up I said to my sponsor D.R., "Hey, check it out, I am a miracle!" He said, "You dummy, you are a derivative of a miracle, take no credit for what God has done for you, which you could not have done for yourself." To this day those words have stuck with me, as well as sayings such as *Let Go and Let God, Easy Does It, Don't put a period where God has put a comma, and Don't quit five minutes before the miracle happens.*

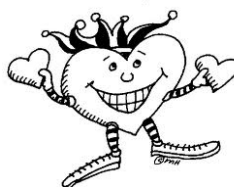
I would not have heard those words had I not attended Alcoholics Anonymous and stayed with recovery. How has my life changed? Today I walk a free man, a freedom from bondage that had a stranglehold on me. I look upon daily living as a life-and-death errand. I have today a relationship with a God, not a religion. I have a wife and son from whom I was separated for two years, and with whom I will soon be celebrating 39 years of marriage. I have had a productive livelihood and a dignified way of living. I am capable of loving myself as well as others. All the promises on pages 83 and 84 have come true for me, and will become true for you, if you allow it. All I can say is "Thank You" for allowing me this privilege to share my story. In finishing, I would like to say,

I MAY NOT BE THE MAN I WANT TO BE
I MAY NOT BE THE MAN I OUGHT TO BE
BUT, THANK GOD I AM NOT THE MAN I USED TO BE...

Thank you, Mike B

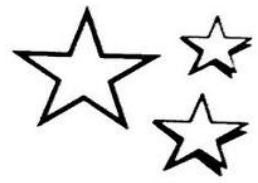
Quote of the Month

"It's amazing how close to the truth we can get without getting the point."





Messages of Hope



“It works if you work it”

My name is Dan. I am an alcoholic.

I now live a life where alcohol does not make sense, and for that I am grateful to my friends in AA and to God (2nd tradition: a loving God who speaks to me through the group conscience). Pain is a part of the human condition, but misery is now optional. I don't ever want to return to that person that I was prior to working the steps. I get a daily reprieve from living in that hell of self-centered fear, if I am willing to do those simple suggestions my friends in AA have shown me: a spiritual program of action.

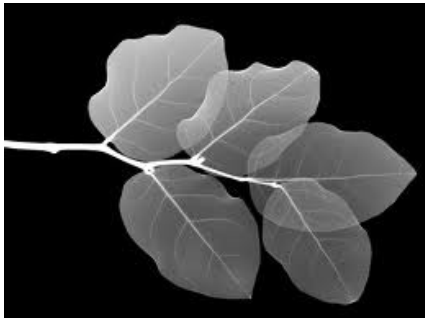
Sobriety did not come easy for me; “some are sicker than others” and I am one of the thick-headed ones. I could not give myself fully to this simple program of recovery. My ego (edging God out) was huge; I was lazy and full of fear of people. I could not get honest. I fought everything and everybody. Then I learned “the school of half measures.” I did just enough in AA to be miserable. I had learned that half-measures do not give you half, they ‘avail you nothing’.

After ten years of sobriety I went back out. The Four Horsemen (terror, bewilderment, frustration, despair) returned. Thank God I knew where to go for help. I had been beaten “into a state of reasonableness.” I became willing to go to any length . . . that means I can now take suggestions! I have “ceased fighting anybody and anything.” I now know that I can't live on yesterday's sobriety; each day is a new beginning; and for me, an alcoholic, I need to embrace all of the spiritual tools passed on to me: meetings, sponsorship, literature, home group, service work . . . and of course “prayer and meditation.” (BB pg. 84 “We have entered the world of the spirit”)

For the recovering alcoholic there is now hope. Come join us and with me experience what it is like to be useful and generous, to be loving and tolerant of others.

BB pg 88 “it works, it really does.”

Dan J.

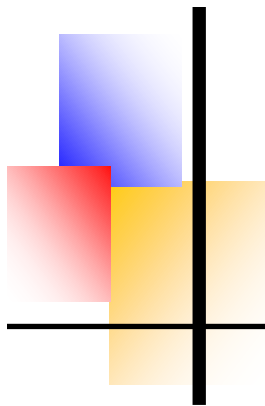


Call of the wild

I pray that I never lose sight of the fact that in AA, I am first and foremost an alcoholic. It is dangerous for me to think that I am in any way special. The distance between happy sobriety and oblivion is covered in the time it takes to lift that first drink, and I cannot afford to go there.

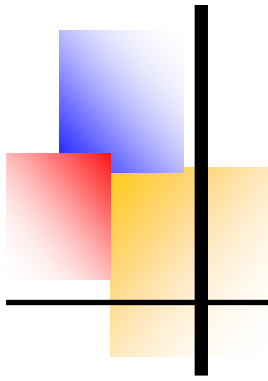
When thoughts of uniqueness begin to cloud my mind, it helps if I remember that pride is normally listed as the first of the seven deadly sins for good reason, and that I am genetically less than two percent removed from a chimpanzee.

John F.Colonsay, Saskatchewan



FEBRUARY 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Tuesday night 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 Alanon Spaghetti Feed Fundraiser St Francis School, Bend 6 pm
13 District 5 GSR mtg 4 pm TEC	14	15 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	16 La Pine potluck/ speaker mtg-6 pm	17	18 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg 7 pm	19
20	21	22	23 La Pine Living Sober Birthday Mtg at P&R 7pm	24	25 Bend Milestone Meeting TEC 7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg 7 pm	26 Intergroup Potluck Speaker mtg 6pm
27 Intergroup Advi- sory Board mtg- 5 pm Intergroup IGR mtg-5:30 pm; TEC	28					
Bend Milestone 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 Jefferson Cty Library Rodriguez Annex 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 134 S.E. E Street, Madras 10 & Cedar, Redmond 1270 NE 27th, Bend Bruce Avenue, Tumalo	



MARCH 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Tuesday night 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 TEC	14	15 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	16 La Pine potluck/ speaker mtg-6 pm	17	18 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm Tumalo speaker mtg-7 pm	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Tumalo Speaker Mtg 7 pm Bend Milestone- Meeting TEC 7p	26 Intergroup Potluck Speaker mtg 6pm
27 Intergroup Advisory Board mtg-5 pm Inter- group IGR mtg- 5:30 pm; TEC	28	29	30 La Pine Living Sober Birthday Mtg at P&R 7pm	31		
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MEETING

ADDITIONS/CHANGES/DELETIONS



La Pine Potluck Speaker Meeting

*Wednesday Feb 16th
Potluck 6pm, speaker 7pm*

*Suzanne R with 6 yrs
Come Join Us!!!!*



The Bethlehem Inn Meeting Needs Support!!!

Recovery is challenging in the best of environments. Bethlehem Inn is a community supported emergency shelter, to provide for families, men and women with nowhere else to go. Sobriety is enforced by drug and alcohol testing done on site.

AA meetings are held each Thursday evening, at 7 pm. Help deliver the message to those who need it most!

Location: 3705 N. Hwy 97, Bend

THURSDAYS 7 pm



FEBRUARY Sobriety Milestones

Arthur C	2-16-05	6 years
Bill O	2-25-94	17 years
Corley C	2-12-10	1 year
Dan J	2-10-07	4 years
Doug M	2-19-00	11 years
Dan W	2-26-03	8 years
Gary P	2-5-07	4 years
Kathi C	2-3-88	23 years
Rick P	2-25-10	1 year
Sherri L	2-24-04	7 years
Steve C	2-5-10	1 year
Tom H	2-10-87	24 years
Richard D	2-14-99	11 years
Tony C	2-23-07	4 years
Bob H	2-23-09	2 years
Bud B	2-23-09	2 years
Wayne S	2-1-83	28 years
Marianne T	2-23-09	2 years
Doug V	2-6-08	3 years
Mike A	2-7-06	5 years
Gary P	2-9-07	4 years
Kurt R	2-13-07	4 years
Dick S	2-8-95	16 years
Richard S	2-20-08	3 years
Dave S	2-21-09	2 years
Sean B.	2-26-09	2 years
Steve D	2-26-07	4 years



Heard at meetings

"I was happy to get to my second AA birthday because then I could say that I had 'years' of sobriety. At my fourth anniversary, I was even happier: Then I could say 'years and years.'"

Upcoming Events



Sweet Serenity

Al-Anon Spaghetti
Feed Fundraiser
Saturday,
February 12, 2011
5:30 pm



St Francis Catholic Center
2450 SE 27th Street, Bend

\$8 adults \$2 kids under 12
\$15 couples \$20 families

Dinner *** Speakers *** Raffles
Desserts *** Childcare

Al-Anon Speaker: Magdalena E, WA
A A Speaker: Carlos E, Washington

Call Lisa for more information:
541-480-3981

La Pine Living Sober Group will
now be celebrating birthdays
on the **LAST WEDNESDAY** of
each month, at 7pm





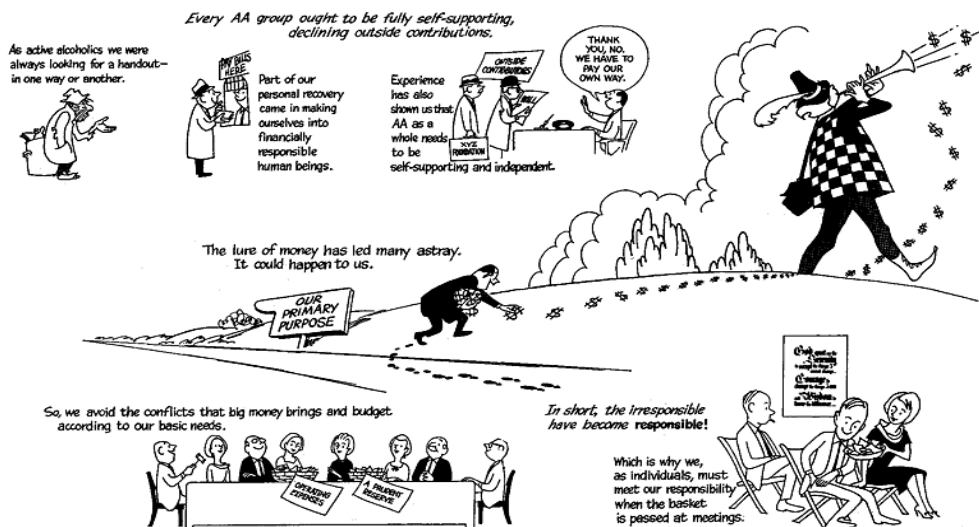
TREASURER'S REPORT

DONATIONS SUMMARY



2011 Group	16-Dec to 15-Jan	Year to Date
24 and Alive	150.00	150.00
ABC Group		
All Groups Speaker Mtg.		
As Men See It		
Attitude Adjustment		
Back to the Big Book	81.42	81.42
Burning Desires		
Burns Group		
Central Oregon Speakers Mtg.	-	
Crescent Meeting	-	
Crooked River Ranch	-	
Eastside Earlyrisers	175.00	175.00
First things First	-	
Going to Any Lengths	-	
Heppner Miracles	-	
Let it Go Group	-	
Living Sober	-	
Living in the Solution		
Madras Oasis Group		
Make My Day	40.75	40.75
Meeting in Between		
Men's Book Study		
Men's Stag Meeting		
Mill Creek		
Monday/Wednesday 5:30		
New Beginnings		
New Horizon		
Not a Glum Lot		
Open Hand Fellowship		
Out to Lunch Bunch	-	
Primary Purpose	53.24	53.24
Redmond Rebels	34.40	34.40
Rule 62 Group		
Safe Harbor	-	
Saturday Morning Alive	-	

Saturday Nite Live	-	
Saturday Nite Living Sober	-	
Sisters High Noon	-	
Sisters Saturday	-	
Sisters Group	-	
Sisters in Sobriety	-	
Sober Desire		
Sober Sunday	-	
S.O.S.	20.00	20.00
Spiritual Awakening	-	
Spiritual Breakfast	-	
Step Sisters	159.00	159.00
Steps to Freedom	-	
Steps to Sobriety		
Sunday Serenity	-	
Sunriver Open Group	-	
The Old Ranch House Grp	-	
Tuesday Nite AA-Bend	-	
Tuesday Nooner	-	
Thursday Women's	-	
Tumalo Friday Night		
Warm Springs Groups	-	
Wed. Living Sober	-	
Wednesday Stag Meeting	-	
WFS	141.84	141.84
Women for Serenity	-	
Women at Work	-	
Anonymous	-	
CD Sales	-	
COF	-	
District 5 - AFG Donations		
Potluck	-	
Entertainment	-	
Intergroup 7th Tradition	-	
Total Contributions	855.65	855.65



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