

Inside: Bill W's view on "membership"



Volume 13 Issue 6

June 2011



HOTLINE:
541-548-0440

**Central Oregon
Intergroup Office**
M - F 9:00 - 5:00
754 SW 11th Street
Redmond, OR 97756
541-923-8199
www.coigaa.org

I Needed to Dummy Up

My name is Bill and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is February 25, 1994. My home group is the WFS Group in Bend OR and I have a sponsor who has a sponsor. I was told early on that I would need to have all three of these if I expected to achieve and maintain the sobriety that Alcoholics Anonymous has to offer.

I used to wonder how in the heck I ended up here in AA when my life's path that I set out on did not include me becoming an alcoholic. I grew up very poor, but not in an alcoholic household, and in the years throughout High School, I seemed to succeed at everything I attempted and excelled at most. I left High School for college with baseball, football and academic scholarships. I drank alcohol a few times prior to this point but it had not yet worked for me, as it later would do. One night at a party, my first year in college, I drank more than I had in the past and finally experienced that sense of ease and comfort that the Big Book talks about; I really enjoyed the feeling! At some level deep down inside, I knew I wanted to feel like that all the time. I never took a single drink the rest of my life for any other purpose than to get that feeling. I married my childhood sweetheart and started down my life's path with high hopes and immense confidence.

I was successful in college for a time, but as life's problems and responsibilities piled up (wife, daughter, bills etc.), my grades began to suffer and I was eventually asked to leave school. Alcohol was becoming increasingly more important and seemed to solve, or at least cover up, my mounting problems. Because of my strong science background, I was able to work in the emerging Space Program as a Lab Tech in a research laboratory. I fell right in with a group of heavy drinkers (which would be my pattern for the rest of my drinking career). Over the next several years I was able to work my way up through all of the engineering classifications and became successful in the science of manned space flight. My career successes were not only inflating my huge ego, but bigger and bigger salaries were also allowing me to drink ever greater amounts of alcohol. As my drinking became worse and worse I began acting out by not coming home, spending all our money on booze, having affairs etc. I became very ashamed of the amount I drank and would hide bottles all over the house and in my car so that my family wouldn't know how much I drank.



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

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541-408-0627
chairperson@coigaa.org

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541-280-4670

SECRETARY

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541-771-5452

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541-389-9276

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entertainment@coigaa.org

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Eileen F.
541-408-7073
newsletter@coigaa.org

SCHEDULE CHAIR

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541.420.9831
schedule@coigaa.org

HOTLINE CHAIR

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hotline@coigaa.org

POTLUCK CHAIR

Alan
541-948-0341
potluck@coigaa.org

WEBSITE CHAIR

Cory S.
webmaster@coigaa.org
541.408-1055

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Shari A. 541-420-9831
Stan E 541-593-1407
Mark S 541-325-1726

I began to realize that I had a serious problem but was unwilling to do anything about it. I thought that I would be able to control my drinking by will power and self knowledge because I was the smartest guy I knew and had been able to achieve many things on will power alone.

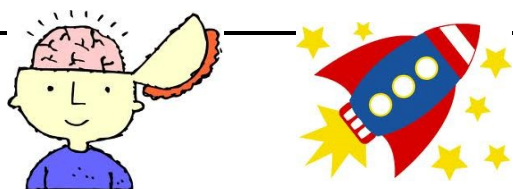
During one of those acting out episodes I met that woman who "understood" and drank like me. I eventually went to my wife of 17 years and while drunk told her that I didn't love her anymore and I wanted a divorce, devastating her life and the lives of my two children. Now all the gates were open, and I could openly drink as much as I wanted and do anything I wanted! My career was still moving forward and I still looked good on the outside, but I was rapidly going downhill both physically and emotionally. I was drinking all the time and didn't understand why I couldn't stop. It only took one year in my new relationship and lifestyle for me to reach what I now know was the first of 4 bottoms, each getting progressively worse.

In May of 1984, I was sitting at my desk thinking about how sick I was and trying to figure out what my next attempt would be to get out of the awful alcoholic trap I was in. I remembered a pamphlet I had seen from my company's Employee Assistance Program regarding alcohol problems. I decided to give them a call and within days I was on my way to the first of 3 Alcohol Recovery Centers. At this first facility they taught us a great deal about alcoholism and introduced us to *Alcoholics Anonymous*. In one of the first meetings I went to I heard a speaker say that "You don't have to be a Rocket Scientist to get this program". The problem for me was that I really was a Rocket Scientist; the implication for me was that if I, with all of my perceived intelligence, could not understand how to get this program, then it was not going to work for me. I therefore rejected AA as a solution. Shortly after finishing the 28 day stay at the Recovery Center, I drank again. A fire I soon caused in my kitchen while I was drunk seemed to be humiliating enough for me not to take a drink for the next 4 years, but I didn't change any of my playmates or playthings and eventually I diagnosed myself cured of alcoholism, and drank again. The results were nearly instantaneous. I was drinking around the clock again within a month. This would be repeated over and over again for the next 10 years.

In February of 1994 my wife ("the woman who understood") and I were in our living room with her lying on the couch trying to kill herself drinking, and me providing all the alcohol she wanted. I was just happy that she was still with me and had stopped being gone for days on end. I could no longer stop drinking for more than 3 hours before I started detoxing and was barely able to make it to work where I was nearly useless at making the sometimes life-critical decisions involved in manned spaceflight. I

I had become a helpless, hopeless drunk even though I had the "look good" going. My wife finally reached out to me for help because she didn't really want to die and I got her into a Recovery Center. I knew at this point that it was over for me also. My wife worked with the staff inside the Recovery Center and helped me get into my 3rd outpatient program and on February 25, 1994 I surrendered to *Alcoholics Anonymous*. I finally became willing enough to say that I would go through the entire AA program of recovery and if it didn't work I would go back and drink. When I reached out for help, the Fellowship of AA was there for me. You told me to go to meetings (and not drink in between), get a sponsor, read the Big Book, and take the 12 steps (in order), so that I could find a Higher Power who had the capacity to keep me sober. I got a sponsor who, in our first meeting, asked me to tell him what it was that puffed me up. I told him about my achievements in the Space Program and how much pride I had in my so called high intellect. When I was through he said that this was all nice but he didn't ever want to hear about it again, because none of that was going to keep me sober. He told me that the Book tells us that we need to "give up on our old ideas" and "the results are nil unless we let go absolutely". He said that I was going to have to dummy up because my so called high intellect had almost killed me. At this point I was willing to do what had worked for my sponsor and those who had gone before me in the fellowship, because they knew how to stay sober and I didn't. I rejected my thinking and accepted yours, and as a result of taking all 12 steps of the AA program of recovery I have had a spiritual awakening sufficient to allow me to stay sober. My wife and I, who were drunks together for 12 years, have now been sober together for 17 years. For the first year we did not go to any meetings together, which helped each of us find our own individual path in the program. This allows us today to trudge along the path separately-together. Today my job is to give back what was so freely given to me and to be there for that helpless hopeless alcoholic who is just like I was. I am grateful for my new life and I know that the best years still lie ahead. The program has allowed me to move out from a life of pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization towards one of being, a child of God, a responsible member of Alcoholics Anonymous and an honorable man.

Bill O.





The first edition of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" makes this brief statement about membership: "The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect, or denomination nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted." This expressed our feelings as of 1939, the year our book was published. Since that day all kinds of experiments with membership have been tried. The number of membership rules which have been made (and mostly broken!) are legion. Two or three years ago the General Office asked the groups to list their membership rules and send them in. After they arrived we set them all down. They took a great many sheets of paper. A little reflection upon these many rules brought us to an astonishing conclusion. If all of these edicts had been in force everywhere at once it would have been practically impossible for any alcoholic to have ever joined Alcoholics Anonymous. About nine-tenths of our oldest and best members could never have got by!

In some cases we would have been too discouraged by the demands made upon us. Most of the early members of A.A. would have been thrown out because they slipped too much, because their morals were too bad, because they had mental as well as alcoholic difficulties. Or, believe it or not, because they did not come from the so-called better classes of society. We oldsters could have been excluded for our failure to read the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" or the refusal of our sponsor to vouch for us as a candidate. And so on ad infinitum. The way our "worthy" alcoholics have sometimes tried to judge the "less worthy" is, as we look back on it, rather comical. Imagine, if you can, one alcoholic judging another! At one time or another most A.A. groups go on rule-making benders. Naturally enough, too, as a group commences to grow rapidly it is confronted with many alarming problems. Panhandlers begin to panhandle. Members get drunk and sometimes get others drunk with them. Those with mental difficulties throw depressions or break out into paranoid denunciations of fellow members. Gossips gossip and righteously denounce the local Wolves and Red Riding Hoods. Newcomers argue that they aren't alcoholics at all, but keep coming around anyway. "Slippees" trade on the fair name of A.A. in order to get themselves jobs. Others refuse to accept all the Twelve Steps of the recovery program. Some go still further, saying that the "God business" is bunk and quite unnecessary. Under these conditions our conservative program, abiding members get scared. These appalling conditions must be controlled, they think, else A.A. will surely go to rack and ruin. They view with alarm for the good of the movement!

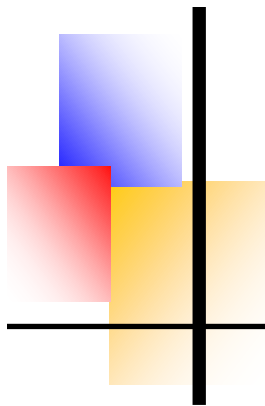
At this point the group enters the rule and regulation phase. Charters, bylaws and membership rules are excitedly passed and authority is granted committees to filter out undesirables and discipline the evildoers. Then the Group Elders, now clothed with authority, commence to get busy. Recalcitrants are cast into the outer darkness; respectable busy bodies throw stones at the sinners. As for the so-called sinners, they either insist on staying around, or else they form a new group of their own. Or maybe they join a more congenial and less intolerant crowd in their neighborhood. The elders soon discover that the rules and regulations aren't working very well. Most attempts at enforcement generate such waves of dissension and intolerance in the group that this condition is presently recognized to be worse for the group life than the very worst that the worst ever did. After a time fear and intolerance subside. The group survives unscathed. Everybody has learned a great deal. So it is that few of us are any longer afraid of what any newcomer can do to our A.A. reputation or effectiveness. Those who slip, those who panhandle, those who scandalize, those with mental twists, those who rebel at the program, those who trade on the A.A. reputation—all such persons seldom harm an A.A. group for long. Some of these have become our most respected and best loved. Some have remained to try our patience, sober nevertheless. Others have drifted away. We have begun to regard these not as menaces, but rather as our teachers. They oblige us to cultivate patience, tolerance, and humility. We finally see that they are only people sicker than the rest of us, that we who condemn them are the Pharisees whose false righteousness does our group the deeper spiritual damage.

Every older A.A. shudders when he remembers the names of persons he once condemned; people he confidently predicted would never sober up; persons he was sure ought to be thrown out of A.A. for the good of the movement. Now that some of these very persons have been sober for years, and may be numbered among his best friends, the old-timer thinks to himself, "What if everybody had judged these people as I once did? What if A.A. had slammed its door in their faces? Where would they be now?"

That is why we all judge the newcomer less and less. If alcohol is an uncontrollable problem to him and he wishes to do something about it, that is enough for us. We care not whether his case is severe or light, whether his morals are good or bad, whether he has other complications or not. Our A.A. door stands wide open, and if he passes through it and commences to do anything at all about his problem, he is considered a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. He signs nothing, agrees to nothing, promises nothing. We demand nothing. He joins us on his own say-so. Nowadays, in most groups, he doesn't even have to admit he is an alcoholic. He can join A.A. on the mere suspicion that he may be one, that he may already show the fatal symptoms of our malady.

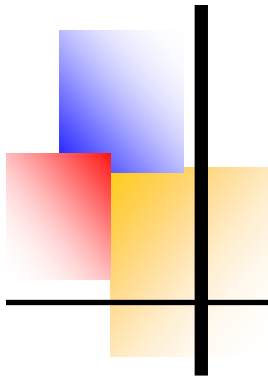
Of course this is not the universal state of affairs throughout A.A. Membership rules still exist. If a member persists in coming to meetings drunk he may be led outside; we may ask someone to take him away. But in most groups he can come back next day, if sober. Though he may be thrown out of a club, nobody thinks of throwing him out of A.A. He is a member as long as he says he is. While this broad concept of A.A. membership is not yet unanimous, it does represent the main current of A.A. thought today. We do not wish to deny anyone his chance to recover from alcoholism. We wish to be just as inclusive as we can, never exclusive. Perhaps this trend signifies something much deeper than a mere change of attitude on the question of membership. Perhaps it means that we are losing all fear of those violent emotional storms which sometimes cross our alcoholic world; perhaps it bespeaks our confidence that every storm will be followed by a calm; a calm which is more .





JUNE 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm	4 Redmond pot- luck, speaker mtg—6 pm;
5	6	7 Tuesday night Speaker mtg-7 pm	8	9 CAMPOUT Ochoco	10 CAMPOUT Ochoco	11 CAMPOUT Ochoco
12 CAMPOUT Ochoco CTF Workshop TEC 2-4 pm District 5 GSR mtg 4 pm TEC	13	14	15 La Pine potluck/ speaker mtg-6 pm	16	17 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm	18 Beginning of Summer Picnic Cline Falls Mtg 10 am Potluck at noon
19 High Desert Round Up Planning Mtg TEC 3pm	20	21 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	22	23	24 Bend Milestone meeting 7 pm PACIFIC NW CONFERENCE	25 Intergroup Potluck Speaker mtg 6pm PACIFIC NW CONFERENCE
26 Intergroup Advi- sory Board mtg- 5 pm Intergroup IGR mtg-5:30 p PACIFIC NW CONFERENCE	27	28	29 La Pine Living Sober Birthday Mtg at P&R 7pm	30		
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 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	



JULY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm	2 Redmond pot- luck, speaker mtg—6 pm;
3	4	5 Tuesday night Speaker mtg 7pm	6	7	8	9
10 District 5 GSR mtg 4 pm TEC	11	12	13	14	15 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm	16
17 2nd annual SOFTBALL Tournament	18	19 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	20 La Pine potluck/ speaker mtg-6 pm	21	22	23 Intergroup Potluck Speaker mtg 6pm
24 Intergroup Advi- sory Board mtg-5 pm Intergroup IGR mtg-5:30 pm; TEC	25	26	27 La Pine Living Sober Birthday Mtg at P&R 7pm	28	29 Bend Milestone- Meeting TEC 7p	30
Bend Mileston 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	

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MEETING ADDITIONS/CHANGES/ DELETIONS

MEETING CHANGES !!

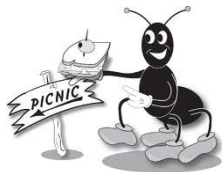
*MWF 7 am at COFH
"Morning with Freedom"
CANCELLED*

NEW MEETING
*Madras Friday 7:30 pm
Madras Oasis Group
Jefferson Library Rodriguez Annex*

SUMMER IS COMING !!!

*Your Entertainment Committee
Proudly Announces:*

Start of Summer Picnic
*Cline Falls, Saturday
June 18th, Meeting 10 am
Potluck at noon*



Ochoco Group Campout
*Thursday June 9th through Sunday
June 12, 2011
Fri 8 pm mtg
Saturday 7pm Potluck
8pm Speaker and Raffle
Sunday 10 am
"Real Men Cook Breakfast"*



"Cooperation with Treatment Facilities Workshop"



**Sunday, 6/12/11
2-4 pm TEC**

Hosted by "As Men See It"
and District 5

Presented by Juve
Area CTF Chair

JUNE Sobriety Milestones

Attitude Adjustment

John R	6/1/09	2 years
Ann P	6/7/76	35 years
Lynn P	6/14/09	2 years
Frankie B	6/23/99	12 years

Madras Oasis Group

Dale C	6/88	23 years
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W F S

Lee B.	6/11/07	4 years
Shane C.	6/28/07	4 years
Jake D.	6/29/10	1 year

A B C

June S	6/25/89	22 years
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As Men See It

Cliff v	6/28/10	1 years
Jeff W	6/2/10	1 year

Brian B	6/13/08	3 years
Jason B	6/4/07	4 years
Jim L	6/24/92	19 years
Doug G	6/4/92	19 years
Patrick K.	6/10/87	24 years

24 and Alive

Renee D	6/25/07	4 years
Gail O	6/28/93	18 years
Bill D	6/1/04	7 years
Randy P	6/14/98	13 years
Denise H	6/7/09	2 years



Upcoming Events

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONFERENCE

The Pacific Northwest Conference (PNC) is the oldest continually occurring conference in AA. For 2011, BEND has been selected as the site of this long standing conference! Planned for June 24, 25, and 26th, 2011, this event needs LOTS of help from the AA community

Registration available using either downloadable PDF file or 'online' at www.pnc1948.org
Schedule also available online

**We need your assistance to
host a fantastic Conference!**
SERVICE opportunities:

Hospitality Room—contact
Lindsay (701) 610-6158

Registration—contact
Walter (541) 610-6530.

Any additional questions,
contact Kathi C. 541-280-6980

SERVICE KEEPS US SOBER!!
Grab another AAer and sign up.
Encourage your sponsees!



Fund Raising Event for the HIGH DESERT ROUND UP
coming September 23-25, 2011

SECOND ANNUAL SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT
July 17, 2011 Teams Forming NOW
Call Bill O. for more info: 541-771-5145





TREASURER'S REPORT DONATIONS SUMMARY

2011 Group	4/16/11 to 5/15/11	Year to Date
24 and Alive	150.00	750.00
As Men See It	80.00	80.00
Attitude Adjustment		192.00
Back to the Big Book		137.42
Culver Nuts & Bolts		35.00
Eastside Earlyrisers		345.70
Easy Does It		200.00
First things First		45.00
High Noon		145.00
Madras Oasis Group		150.00
Make My Day		40.75
Meditation Meeting		30.67
Men's Book Study		92.40
Men's Stag Meeting		125.00
Men's Straight Talk		50.00
New Horizon	200.00	436.50
Not a Glum Lot	240.00	417.60
Primary Purpose	66.89	178.66
Redmond Rebels	76.06	139.58
Safe Harbor		239.64
Saturday Morning Alive		170.00
Saturday Nite Live		100.00
Sisters in Sobriety		52.33
SOB Group	100.00	150.00
Sober Desire	42.00	123.00
S.O.S.	20.00	100.00
Spiritual Awakening		194.98
Spiritual Breakfast		
Step Sisters		242.89
Steps to Sobriety		206.00
Tuesday Nite AA-Bend	180.00	281.00
WFS		251.85
Potluck	50.45	169.02
Total Contributions	1,205.40	5,871.99

My Mental Punctuation

When I label people, places, or things--this is good, that is bad, I am right, you are wrong--I taint my perception of what is really happening. In order for me to find acceptance, I need to let go of my labels, stories, and prejudices.

One way I do this is to use more periods [.] and fewer colons [:] in my thinking. Take this example: "She's glaring at me." I can engage in delusional thinking: "She's glaring at me: what's with her, I thought she liked me, what did I do to get her mad, is she trying to avoid me?" On and on go the make-believe stories that block me from finding acceptance and truth in the moment.

Since I truly don't know why she's looking the way she is, there's no reason to think about it anymore. End of thought. period. (It's important, however, to follow through with kind thoughts about the other person and good wished for her happiness.)

Prayer and meditation help. I ask my Higher Power to take away my difficulties--difficulties that originate between my ears. And more often than not, God's answer comes in the form of acceptance, and acceptance brings serenity. Like the flip of a switch, I can experience a 180 degree shift in my attitude from unaccepting to accepting. I just have to get my thinking out of the way.

Bill K, Santa Rosa, CA



"I'm not a newcomer. This is my eighteenth first year."

A salesman called at a house and was admitted by the master, who very obviously had been hitting the happiness juice quite vigorously that day. The salesman's presentation wasn't helped any by the little boy of the family, who was in the adjoining room busily and noisily hammering nails into the dining-room table. After this had gone on for some time, the pitchman rather nervously said to his host, "I know it's none of my business, but isn't that a rather expensive way for your young son to play?"

"No, not at all," explained the father cheerfully.

"I get the nails wholesale."





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