

Inside: A Tree Story



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The Story of My Last Drink

The last drink I took was on the 25th of November, 1986; I went out like a lamb. On the prior 4th of July weekend, I had my last drunk. After four days of drinking, and not eating much of anything, I very nearly drowned in my sleep on used tequila. So I swore off (with a solemn oath) for two years. I just needed to get out of the bad habit I had slipped into. I figured I could then get back to drinking like a normal man--- maybe a six pack a day and a fifth on the weekends. Only trouble was I had the first vacation in several years planned to happen in November. How could one *possibly* have any fun on vacation without drinking? Therefore, I planned a little "time out" while I would be in Mexico.

What actually happened, though, could be construed as either weird, or God working in my life. (Suit yourself) When I tried to drink during that vacation, I got very nervous; I had a feeling I was making the biggest mistake of my life. I had quit drinking several times before for short periods, and didn't suffer any ill physical effects I could put my finger on, but this time it had taken almost a month before I got over all the jitters. I had to taper myself off to keep my skin on. I made it across the boarder, and first tried to drink a XXX beer. I could hardly get it down, and stopped after a couple swallows. That may have been the first time a beer ever went flat on me while I was conscious. That night I made a gorgeous margarita, took two sips and couldn't get myself to take another. The next day I had what I used to call a nervous breakdown. I was all alone, and I started crying and couldn't stop for a long time. I bet I hadn't cried sober in thirty years. My whole drinking life passed through my mind. It embarrassed me.



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My Last Drink..... Cont'd

I guess the Mexicans never had any pilgrims, so they don't celebrate Thanksgiving, but the people who owned the land there invited me to a dinner the next evening. My memory was that they proposed a toast to my country and our Thanksgiving. I knocked back about two ounces of wine in a little shot glass, and knew it was all over. Not just drinking, but life. I had just spent the most miserable four months ever not drinking, and knew I couldn't go on drinking and watch my life go completely to hell. I had tried all kinds of ways to control it. Nothing worked. The only answer I could think of was to have an accident that would end my misery once and for all.

Well, I won't tell you the sordid details of the plan, but I needed to do it late at night to make sure I wasn't noticed until the accident was over. I didn't want my children to know what I did. The trouble is I had all the required stuff done and was ready to go well before dark. I didn't want to have to just sit around with nothing to do, so I invited a woman I had just met out to dinner. Her answer was that she went to AA meetings on Monday nights, and if I wanted to go out with her that's where I would have to go. I don't know why I said yes, but here I am, alive and sober twenty five years later. Weird huh?

In another installment, in the way distant future, I will tell you how AA kept me sober. You have to stay sober though, or you won't get to read it. Just one hint----I dove right in, took certain steps, kept on stepping, met the woman I never waited for at an AA dance, and the beat goes on.

With love for all of you in the fellowship who helped me get from November 26, 1986 to here,

Bruce L., Alcoholic

The Tree



This is the story of a tree. Or it might be more accurate to say that this is a story *by* a tree. Not an ordinary tree, mind you. Dear me, no! This was and is, a very special tree. Not tall, but full, and round. It had been carefully selected, dug up by its roots, and tenderly replanted outside a homey little house in the Middle West.

Over the years it has become a part of the family, at least in its own mind. For, as it stood sentinel in front of the house, it watched the goings-on within and shared the family's joys and sorrows. Don't ask me how the little tree knew all the things that happen here. I wouldn't know. I'm merely telling the story.

It was Christmas eve in the year of our Lord Nineteen Hundred and Forty Nine. And a beautiful night it was. Fresh fallen snow covered the ground, sparkling in the clear moonlight like a blanket of jewels. Several bands of children, attracted by the tree, had stopped there lifting their voices in the old familiar carols. Church bells were heard occasionally, telling the world once again of the birth of the Christ Child.

The tree was quite happy, more than a little pleased with itself. It wore a gala dress of colored lights and twinkled away brilliantly in the soft winter night. It knew, of course, that unless one looked closely one could never see the electric cord running into the house.

Inside, the house was cheerful and gay. Through the large casement window, the tree could see presents piled high; high, that is, for so small a family. Mom was beaming. Pete, her son, had just arrived home that day for the holidays from his job downstate. Pete was home!

"Things weren't always like this," the tree thought to itself. "When I think of some of those Christmases in the past I could get heartsick all over again, if I'd let myself. "I remember that one seven years ago, just before Pete went into the service. That was rough. Dad started in the afternoon at the office. When he rolled home at night all Hell broke loose. He was supposed to decorate the tree. But the only thing he decorated was himself. And Mom had been hitting the bottle all day too. When she saw the shape Dad was in she said, 'What the Hell. . .'--and passed out cold before long. Pete, hurt, disgusted and I guess a little bewildered like I was, went to the movies.



The Tree, continued from previous page

"Funny how nice people can get like that, isn't it? Mom and Dad were a fine young couple when they married. Met at a State university, got married, and went along happily for years. But after a few years things changed. Mom got to drinking by herself. Soon she'd take to her bed for days at a time. Took a bottle along, of course. Dad, who used simply to shake his head, douse it in cold water, drink some black coffee, and go back to the office, got to nipping in the morning, and then all day long. He got so he couldn't even shave himself without two or three to steady his hand. Of course, I couldn't really see all this but there are some things which even a tree doesn't have to *see* to understand.



"And Pete, there. A grand kid, growing up while all this was going on. You'd think after what he saw at home he'd have stayed a mile away from the stuff. Instead, he took to it like a duck to water. Just built that way, I guess. A hitch in the Navy didn't help any. How he got an honorable discharge after slugging that officer and ending up in an alcoholic ward is more than I can figure."

"That was seven years ago. But what I like to recall is that Christmas five years ago. Pete was still in the service. But Mom and Dad found themselves. They'd joined AA--both of them. I guess for the first time in a long while they realized what Christmas meant; knew the joy of giving; and began to understand that the opportunity for serving others is the greatest gift of all. Their only emptiness was Pete's absence. They wanted him to see them in their new found way of life. Then when Pete *did* come home their cup was filled over--for a time. For then they realized their son had a drinking problem as acute as their own. He didn't actually spoil Christmas that year, but I've seen people more sober. Mom was heartsick, blaming herself and her past. Dad was pretty low too.

"But enough of that! This is Christmas, 1949. And here they come. "They're opening their presents now. Hmm! Beautiful! Looks as if they're getting to the bottom of the pile now. Yep! All but that one lumpy one. Hey! looks like a couple of bottles to me. Probably from some business friend of Dad's. "Look! He's grinning as he opens it. I guess he's over the hump. But I sure know what would have happened a few years ago. "What's Dad doing with it? Oh, passing the two bottles over to Pete. I can read his lips, 'Here, Pete. You've got more use for this now than I have.' "That's funny. Pete just grins and shakes his head 'No.' What's that he's saying? 'Not me, Dad. I've waited until now to tell you--*I've been in that downstate group for six months now.*'

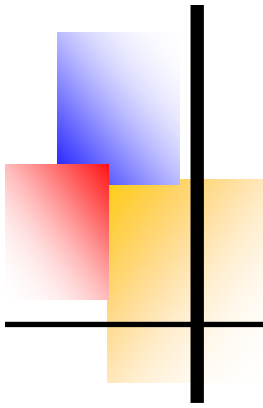
"Holy smoke! Look at Mom. She's gonna cry. Dad too. And, come to think of it, I guess I feel sort of wonderful down inside too. "Gosh, Mom, wipe those tears. Everything's all right! Oh, *so* all right! She's walking right straight to Pete--and hugging him. And her eyes! They're shining like these lights in my branches. Now she's talking to him, very quietly. "Ever since Dad and I joined AA, I've asked God to help you, Pete," she said. "At first I asked--just because. Then, when I knew you too had a drinking problem, I asked Him to help you to stop. But I guess I knew all along that you'd find God someday, waiting patiently beside you to help--when *you* knew you needed help, and were ready to receive it. Now you *have* found Him--and it's the grandest Christmas present a mother could ever receive. Thank you God!" It was still quite early but great joy, like great sorrow, can exhaust human emotions and before long the family started for bed. Their goodnights had an extra special meaning. Good night, indeed. Had any other night ever been so good? Then, one by one, the lights went out and soon the house was dark. But Dad, I guess, must have been in a sort of happy trance. Anyhow, he forgot to turn off the tree lights. The tree looked up, out of its own glow. There in the sky, high above, a star shone so brilliantly that it seemed to eclipse all the others. "The self same star, I expect," mused the little star, "that shone upon the manger at Bethlehem 2000 years ago!"

Just then another group of carol singers, muffled to their chins against the cold, and carrying a lantern to light their way, came along. The tree wished they'd stop and willed with all its might that they would. "Now there's a noble little tree! said their leader. "Shining away there all by itself, the very spirit of Christmas. Come on, one more carol for this brave little tree!" The singers traipsed across the snowy lawn and gathered round in the circle of the tree lights' glow.



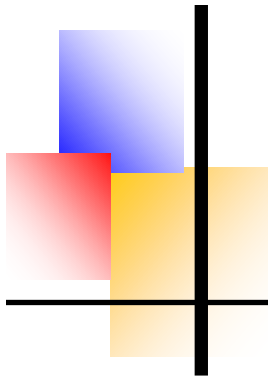
Being humans, they probably couldn't hear what the tree was saying. "They say only God can make a tree. Now I, a tree, know that only God can make *people*! Come on, fellows, let's give it all we've got. . . . "Joy to the world! The King has come. . . .

Bill Y. , Chicago, IL Grapevine, Dec 1950



DECEMBER 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm	3 Redmond pot- luck, speaker mtg—6 pm;
4	5	6 Tuesday Night Speaker Mtg 7 pm	7	8	9	10
11 District 5 GSR mtg 4 pm TEC	12	13	14	15	16 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm	17
18 Intergroup Advi- sory Board mtg- 5 pm Intergroup IGR mtg-5:30 p	19	20 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	21	22	23	24
25 ALCA - THON ALL DAY	26	27	28	29	30 Bend Milestone meeting 7 pm	31 New Years Eve Dinner/Dance
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	



JANUARY 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Tuesday night Speaker mtg 7pm	4	5	6 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm	7 Redmond pot- luck, speaker mtg—6 pm;
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Madras birthday Mtg-7:30 pm	18	19	20 CO speaker mtg- 7 pm	21
22 IGR Advisory Board mtg-5 pm IGR mtg-5:30 TEC	23	24	25	26	27 Bend Milestone- Meeting TEC 7p	28
29	30					
Bend Mileston Meeting Central Oregon Speaker Meeting District 5 GSR Meeting Intergroup Advisory Board Meeting Intergroup IGR Meeting Intergroup Potluck Speaker Meet- ing 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT: SERVICE POSITIONS !!!!!

Be a part of the Central Oregon Intergroup. Upcoming positions are: Vice-Chair, Website Chair, Hotline Chair, Two Advisory Board Positions and Treasurer. All require 2 years of sobriety and are a 2 year commitment. **SERVICE KEEPS US SOBER!** Come to the intergroup meeting December 18th!



2012 Grapevine Calendars on Sale NOW!

Give the gift of sobriety that lasts all year long. Only \$9, your purchase helps support *The Grapevine*, AND makes a wonderful gift for friends, sponsors, sponsees, and family members. Ask your home-group's grapevine rep, or log onto AAgrapevine.org



BEND has been selected for the statewide Service Assembly for September 2012! This event will take LOTS of help from the AA Community over the next ten months.

Please attend our FUND RAISER "Pool Party"
Saturday January 28, 2012 5-7 pm
Cascade Swim Center, Redmond
465 SW Rimrock Way (next to Remond High)

Swim races, games, competitions; hot dogs, chips, sodas and deserts

Info: Roberto F. 541-977-3073 Don F. 541-480-5639

DECEMBER Sobriety Milestones

Attitude Adjustment

John M	12/20/10	1 year
Julia C	12/21/10	1 year
Kendra S	12/15/08	3 years
Wendy L	12/28/86	25 years
Matt C	12/14/88	23 years
Richard S	12/21/10	1 year

Prineville STS

Hans	12/08/00	11 years
Jean C	12/26/05	6 years
Mike F	12/14/10	1 year

24 and Alive

Mike Z	12/25/87	24 years
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New Horizons

Dawn H	12/4/10	1 year
Paul T	12/6/03	9 years
Heidi C	12/16/10	1 year
Robin K	12/17/04	7 years
Andy M	12/18/10	1 year
David Y	12/19/10	1 year
Amy Y	12/21/08	3 years
Brian K	12/21/05	6 years
Kris F	12/25/93	18 years
Karla A	12/28/93	18 years
Eric T	12/30/09	2 years



Upcoming Events

CHRISTMAS DAY ALCATHON

*Stay Sober
through
FELLOW-
SHIP!
together we
can stay sober !*



*Food (potluck) and fellowship,
Marathon hourly meetings
from 7 am to 6 pm. Speaker at
7pm. Brooks Hall, TEC
Christmas Day*

Come Join Us !!

Info:
Alan 541-948-0341



NEW YEARS EVE DINNER AND DANCE !!

Saturday, Dec 31st

Enjoy a catered meal and DJ music as you ring in the New Year! Stick around until midnight for the "first meeting of 2012"

All are
welcome!



Dinner and dance \$25 (limited)
Dance only \$10

7pm Dinner 9pm Dance
Pine Forest Grange Hall. Bend

For more information call Heidi S.
541-728-5463





TREASURER'S REPORT DONATIONS SUMMARY



2011 Group	10/16/11 to 11/15/11	Year to Date	2011 Group	10/16/11 to 11/15/11	Year to Date
24 and Alive	100.00	1,450.00	Safe Harbor		460.82
ABC Group		-	Saturday Morning Alive	300.00	470.00
All Groups Speaker Mtg.		-	Saturday Nite Live		100.00
As Men See It	299.00	833.00	Saturday Nite Living Sober		-
Attitude Adjustment		562.00	Sisters in Sobriety		180.22
Back to the Big Book		137.42	Sober Desire		217.00
Burning Desires		-	Sober Sunday		-
Burns Group		50.00	S.O.S. Group		160.00
Central Oregon Speakers Mtg.		-	S.O.B. Group		150.00
Chicks with Chips		162.75	Spiritual Awakening		194.98
Crescent Meeting		-	Step Sisters		328.99
Crooked River Ranch		-	Steps to Freedom		-
Culver Nuts & Bolts	62.00	136.00	Steps to Sobriety		306.00
Eastside Earlyrisers		736.75	Sunday Serenity		-
Easy Does It	100.00	300.00	Sunriver Open Group		56.00
First things First		45.00	The Old Ranch House Grp		-
Going to Any Lengths		100.00	The Serenity Group	125.00	125.00
Heppner Miracles		-	Tuesday Nite AA-Bend		369.50
High Noon		190.00	Tuesday Nooners		-
Home Away From Hope	33.50	33.50	Thursday Women's		-
Issues & Tissues		53.00	Tumalo Friday Night		-
Let it Go Group		-	Warm Springs Groups		-
Living Sober		-	Wed. Living Sober		-
Livng in the Solution		57.00	Wednesday Stag Meeting		50.00
Madras Oasis Group		450.00	WFS		311.85
Make My Day		40.75	Women for Serenity		-
Meditation Meeting		30.67	Women at Work		-
Meeting in Between		-			-
Men's Book Study		209.10	Anonymous		45.00
Men's Stag Meeting	50.00	175.00	CD Sales		-
Men's Straight Talk		100.00	COF		-
Mill Creek		-	District 5 - AFG Donations		-
Monday/Wednesday 5:30		-	Potluck	73.61	974.18
New Beginnings		-	Entertainment		-
New Horizon	132.50	1,228.00	Intergroup 7th Tradition		-
Not a Glum Lot		808.60		-	-
Open Hand Fellowship		-		-	-
Out to Lunch Bunch		-			
Primary Purpose		317.83	Total Contributions	1,275.61	12,845.49
Redmond Rebels		139.58			
Rule 62 Group		-			

2011 HIGH DESERT ROUNDUP – TOOLS OF RECOVERY

Thanks to all who participated in the 2011 Tools of Recovery High Desert Roundup. There was a great turnout, wonderful fellowship, enlightening speakers, tremendous entertainment and the food was fabulous.

Nearly a year goes into the planning and execution of the Roundup along with the planning of the Softball Tournament and the Taco Feed. The Committee greatly appreciates all the help and support the AA community has given this past year. Registration topped 200 and 25 Scholarships were donated...thank you all!!!

We do have some t-shirts left over in all sizes and one could be yours for just \$10.00 – call Carrie if you would like one...541-419-4159.

The 2012 Committee is being formed and will be led by Bill O as Chair. If you are interested in being of service on the committee contact Bill 541-771-5145.



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Redmond, OR 97756



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