



Central Oregon AA's

CONSCIOUS CONTACT

AA HOTLINE – (541) 548-0440 / JANUARY, 2015

JANUARY HAPPENINGS Area Updates . . .

DISTRICT 5 GSR MEETINGS are held on the second Sunday of each month at 4:00 pm at the First United Methodist Church (Community Room on Kansas) 680 NW Bond, Bend. All are welcome.

PI/CPC is recruiting new members to help distribute literature; re-contacted members involved in local media; continuing to develop contacts at public and private radio stations; connecting with Deschutes County prevention staff for local schools to receive schedules and literature; Ads in the Source weekly and Bend Bulletin with the AA Hotline phone number.

Calling for volunteer AA members, who may be interested in helping spread the message to professional groups, who come

into contact with alcoholics. This is the CPC (Cooperation with Professional Committees) part of presenting AA to community groups. We have scripts and specific training ideas for presentations. If you are comfortable talking to groups and have at least one year of sobriety please contact Thom D. at 971-237-1373

If you or someone you know is having a birthday in the month following this issue, please let Judy W. know at least a week before the end of the current month.

BTW, the AA Hotline number is (541) 548-0440.

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OUR INTERGROUP OFFICE
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DISTRICT 5
P. O. Box 7241
Bend OR 97708

GENERAL SERVICE BOARD
Grand Central Station
P.O. Box 459
New York NY 10164-0371

AA HOTLINE



All positions are currently full, but don't hesitate to contact Samantha R. to find out when positions open up.

To qualify you must:

- Have a working telephone
- Have 6 months of sobriety
- Have an AA sponsor
- Be working the AA steps
- Be attending AA meetings regularly
- Participate in a brief training

If you are willing to give back what was so freely given to you, please call:

Hotline Chairman: Samantha R. (541) 604-5319

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



Rynda C.	1/1/88
Bud J.	1/01/03
Rob D.	1/01/91
Lynn L.	1/04/03
Christopher P.	1/04/14
Denise T.	1/7/08
Kim T.	1/10/90
Toni M.	1/10/14
Pat R.	1/11/87
Jeanna S.	1/11/00
Barbara C.	1/13/93
Darlene J.	1/13/14
April C.	1/14/07
Deb M.	1/14/09
Larry C.	1/15/77
Debbie M.	1/17/13
Kathy V.	1/18/12
Mark L	1/19/87
Carrie S.	1/19/03
Nikki R.	01/23/14
Sandy B.	1/24/11
Candice	1/29/14

(Let us know when your birthday is, and you'll be in the newsletter. Ed.)

MEETING CHANGES

BEND

Thursday 7:00 pm "By the Book" meeting, at the Church of the Nazarene will no longer be meeting, effectively immediately.

Saturday, 5:30 pm "Sisters in Sobriety". New time: 5:00 pm. New location: TEC.

M-W-F 5:30 pm. PRIMARY PURPOSE will continue to meet at SHH until TEC is ready.

REDMOND

Thursday 5:30 Sobriety Sisters, 12 and 12 Step Study (**W**). New location is at the Joseph house on the corner of 12th and Glacier. Enter at side door

LaPINE

Tuesday & Thursday 10:00 AM First Things First location will be at Pentecostal Church 51491 Moroson Street

Friday 8:00AM - Kick Start, 52601 Coach Rd. (Jay Bird, Inc.) has been canceled

That First Step Is the Toughest

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol --that our lives had become unmanageable - from the January 1992 Grapevine

The fellow who said that the first step off the Empire State Building was the toughest might well have been talking about the AA program. I had four problems that kept me from even trying the First Step and two more problems when I finally tried it. The whole process took three years.

You see, I could do "controlled" drinking (meaning that I didn't get slobbering, falling-down drunk) sometimes for as long as several months. I would start with wine or beer on some "special occasion" and, after one drink, stop with no effort at all. So where's the problem? Since there was none, I would try something more or stronger a few days later. It might take months before I got so unmanageably drunk that I had to be lugged off to the hospital--a couple of times in a straitjacket.

Problem #1. They say that lower levels of intelligence are unable to identify the relationship between cause and effect if the two are separated in time. There's supposed to be a remote tribe somewhere that has never figured out what causes babies.

The fact that I failed repeatedly to relate the one innocent drink to the eventual drunk says something uncomplimentary about my intelligence. That innocent first drink lit the fuse of an immutable mechanism that kept on ticking until it exploded into another drunk. (It took all of three years for me to acknowledge the causal relationship.) Some people get drunk right away. I just happened to have a long fuse.

Problem #2. This was the successor to each struggle with Problem #1. After each drunk, I dried out, I ate well, I exercised. Pretty soon I felt I could lick anything that came down the pike--including booze. My thinking went like this: "Don't tell me that anyone in as good shape as I am who feels as well as I do can't take a drink or two from time to time. Furthermore, I know the danger signs. I'll just stop when I feel myself beginning to get tight. There's certainly no sense in my giving up drinking entirely. No one would want my company and no way I could have any fun."

We all know the answer to this: Our physical and emotional wellbeing has no effect on our ability to handle alcohol.

Problem #3. I have never encountered anything in life I could not achieve, provided I gave it my total energy and concentration. It's a sign of weakness and an acceptance of defeat to admit that I can't do something myself and have to turn to others for help--and strangers at that. I'd rather die than submit myself to that kind of humiliation. A couple of times I darn near did die.

Problem #4. Where do they get this "life is unmanageable" stuff? I am holding down a good job. I am paying my bills. I have a wife and kids and a good roof over our heads. If I can do all these things, my life is certainly not "unmanageable." Why should I join AA, have to go to all those meetings, and associate with all those stuffy people?

The four problems described above were what prevented me from even trying Step One. Then when I did try it, here is what I encountered.

Problem #5. What's this intellectually dishonest ploy about, not taking a drink for just one day? I know perfectly well that they intend that I should never take a drink as long as I live. I'm not going to participate in that kind of self-delusion. It may make the future

awfully grim, but I've got to make up my mind never to take a drink from now till the day they bury me.

Problem #6. They tell me to ask for help from a Higher Power. If there is a "Higher Power" (which I doubt), then he must be a malicious one rather than a benevolent one. He's fixed it so I can never have any fun for the rest of my life. I can just see myself asking him for help!

So much for the problems. How did AA guide me past these six roadblocks to my sobriety? First of all, my sponsor and others reviewed my history with me, over and over again, and were able to demonstrate beyond contradiction that:

The first drink--any drink--lit a fuse which led inexorably to a drunk.

Neither good health, happy circumstances in my life, nor any other factor could stay the burning of that fuse.

Not all my so-called intelligence, not my ability, and not my will power had been able to control my drinking.

So where was the intelligence in trying the same thing over and over again with the same disastrous result? Maybe intelligence would dictate that I try something else--like getting some help?

Finally, about my conviction that my life was "manageable," Webster cites one of the definitions of manage, "to achieve one's purpose."

Was I achieving any purpose--even the purpose of handling my drinking--to say nothing of the fact that my home life and my family were a shambles, my health was cracking at the seams, and I was barely holding on to my job? That doesn't sound as though I were managing. And if not, perhaps it's because I am powerless over alcohol.

So now I am grudgingly willing to admit that the First Step may possibly apply to me. How do I go about implementing this admission and making it a part of my basic thinking about myself?

They tell me that the prerequisite is that I must ask for help. It seems that the most important four-letter word in AA is "talk." I've got to start talking to other members of AA about my feelings and the struggle I'm having in trying to practice the program. And the one I should talk to most is a sponsor.

This makes Job One the finding of a sponsor--someone whose sobriety I respect and to whom I can talk with reasonable comfort.

So I listen to different people at meetings and chat with some of them. Afterward I finally pick one with whom I have a lot in common outside of AA and who seems to be very comfortable in AA. When he agrees to be my sponsor, I start talking. I am surprised to discover that talking about my problems, rather than proving embarrassing, turns out to be encouraging and helpful . . . very helpful.

Job Two is to ask for help from a Higher Power (which I am not at all sure exists). But I figure that as long as I have gone this far in trying AA, I might as well keep on going. So I gulp and start every morning asking this Higher Power for help and thanking him every night.

Job Three is to yield on the "intellectual dishonesty" problem and give a try to this one-day-at-a-time delusion. I find that, while the assumption of having only this one day to contend with may be a delusion, it sure works. I can do a better job today because I've got an accomplishment that gives me a lift to tackle the next day. Instead of moping over the past and fearing the future, I am free to concentrate on today. It's the most productive delusion I have ever encountered.

It has been almost half a lifetime since I finally succeeded in taking that First Step. The struggle was so intense that I remember the whole experience rather vividly. It has been many years since the thought of a drink has even crossed my mind. I want to keep it that way.

So every morning when I say my prayers and confirm to my Higher Power that I am an alcoholic, I picture a specific favorite drink (frequently a dry martini with a twist) and, at the same time on my mental projector, I run a few feet of film of a specific alcoholic episode.

Then I call to mind how, when I first forced open my eyes at the end of a drunken episode, I was overcome by a dread horror of facing anyone or anything. I was desperate to cringe into my skin. I wanted to be a turtle so I could pull back into my shell. That would lead me to a frantic search for some basis--any basis--for accusing someone else of being the cause of my behavior.

By recalling these events and emotions I lock together the first drink and the inevitable consequences thereof. If I should ever reach for one, I am sure that projector would start running.

At that point, I ask my Higher Power--oh, yes, I almost forgot to say that he has proven to me that he exists--I ask him to help me stay away from a drink for that day. And he does. This is my way of taking the First Step once again every single day.

B.F.P.
Vero Beach, Florida

CENTRAL OREGON SPEAKER MEETING

January 2, 2015

Environmental Center, 16 W. Kansas Avenue - 7:00 pm

Speakers:

John J. (40 years)

Allison J. (23 years - sober at 15)

GREAT RAFFLE ITEMS

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

The magnificent unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or AA dies. Without unity, the great heart of AA would cease to beat, our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God, his gift to us would be spent aimlessly. Back again in their caves, alcoholics would reproach us and say, "What a great thing AA might have been!"

"Does this mean," some will anxiously ask, "that in AA the individual doesn't count for much? Is he to be dominated by his group and swallowed up in it?"

We may certainly answer this question with a loud "No!" We believe there isn't a fellowship on earth that lavishes more devoted care upon its individual members; surely there is none which more jealously guards the individual's right to think, talk, and act as he wishes. No AA can compel another to do anything; nobody can be punished or expelled. Our Twelve Steps to recovery are suggestions; the Twelve Traditions which guarantee AA's unity contain not a single "Don't." They repeatedly say "We ought. . ." but never "You must!"

To many minds all this liberty for the individual spells sheer anarchy. Every newcomer, every friend who looks at AA for the first time is vastly puzzled. They see liberty verging on license, yet they recognize at once that AA has an Irresistible strength of purpose and action, "How," they ask, "can such a crowd of anarchists function at all? How can they possibly place their common welfare first? What, in Heaven's name, holds them together?"

Those who look well soon have the key to this strange paradox. The AA member has to conform to the principles of recovery. His life actually depends upon obedience to spiritual principles. If he deviates too far, the penalty is sure and swift; he sickens and dies. At first he goes along because he must, but later he discovers a way of life he really wants to live. Moreover, he finds he cannot keep this priceless gift unless he gives it away. Neither he nor anybody else can survive unless he carries the AA message. Realization dawns that he is but a small part of a great whole; that no personal sacrifice is too great for preservation of the fellowship. He learns that the clamor of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whenever these could damage the group. The moment this Twelfth Step work forms a group, another discovery is made--that most individuals cannot recover unless there *is* a group. It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not.

So at the outset, how best to live and work together as groups became the prime question. In the world about us we saw personalities destroying whole peoples. The struggle for wealth, power, and prestige was tearing humanity apart as never before. If strong people were stalemated in the search for peace and harmony, what was to become of our erratic band of alcoholics? As we had once struggled and prayed for individual recovery, just so earnestly did we commence to quest for the principles through which AA itself might survive. On thousands of anvils of heartbreaking experience, the structure of our society was hammered out.

Countless times, in as many cities and towns, we re-enacted the story of Eddie Rickenbacker and his courageous company. Like us, they had suddenly found themselves saved from death, but still floating upon a perilous sea. How well *they* saw that their common welfare came first. None might become selfish of water or bread. Each needed to consider the others and in abiding faith they knew that they must find their real strength. And this they did find, in measure to transcend all the defects of their frail craft, every test of uncertainty, pain, fear, and despair, and even the death of one.

Thus has it been with AA. By faith and by works we have been able to build upon the lessons of an incredible experience. These live today in the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, which--God willing--shall sustain us in unity for so long as he may need us.

We are not a glum lot . . .

ONE alky was sadly caressing his last empty bottle. Suddenly a genie appeared in a haze. "What is your will, Master?" burped the genie. "I can grant you two wishes." Recovering from his surprise, the alky said, "For the first wish, I want the entire Atlantic Ocean to be of brandy, and me in a boat in the middle of it." "It shall be so," said the genie. "And thy second wish, O Master?" "Well," said the alky thoughtfully, "I want a couple of bottles of hooch in the boat as well."

*The Grapevine has been sharing stories
internationally since 1944*

Why not share yours?

Grapevine Writing Workshop

Saturday, January 31st

12:00 noon - 2:00 pm

REDMOND ALANO CLUB

337 W. Antler Avenue, Redmond

Chase B.

Oregon Area Grapevine Chair, will facilitate.

Lunch will be provided by District 5

JANUARY 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1	2 CO Speaker Mtg 7pm Environ- mental Center, 16 NW Kansas, Bend Speakers: Allison J., John J.	3
4	5	6 Tuesday Night AA Speaker Mtg. 7 pm Church of the Nazarene District CTF Committee Mtg. 6:45 pm. Bend Downtown Library (upstairs conf. room)	7	8	9	10
11 District 5 GSR Mtg 4 pm First United Methodist Church, 680 NW Bond (enter Kansas)	12	13	14 LaPine Potluck Speaker 6 pm Park & Rec. 16565 Finley Butte Rd., LaPine	15	16 CO Speaker Mtg 7pm Environ- mental Center, 16 NW Kansas, Bend Speakers: Terry L., Daryl L.	17
18 Entertainment Committee Meeting 4 pm TEC, Bend	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 IGR Advisory Board Mtg 4:30 IGR Mtg 5:30 pm TEC	26 Step Sisters Speaker Mtg. 7pm TEC	27	28	29	30 CO Milestone Mtg. TEC. 7 pm Speaker: Bruce C.	31

FEBRUARY 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Tuesday Night AA Speaker Mtg. 7 pm Church of the Nazarene	4	5	6 CO Speaker Mtg 7pm Environ- mental Center, 16 NW Kansas, Bend Speakers:	7
8 District 5 GSR Mtg 4 pm First United Methodist Church, 680 NW Bond (enter Kansas	9	10	11 LaPine Potluck Speaker 6 pm Park & Rec. 16565 Finley Butte Rd., LaPine	12	13	14
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22 IGR Advisory Board Mtg 4:30 IGR Mtg 5:30 pm TEC	23 Step Sisters Speaker Mtg. 7pm TEC	24	25	26	27 Bend Birthday Mtg. TEC. 7 pm Speaker: Doug	28