

The Reprieve: District 8 AA



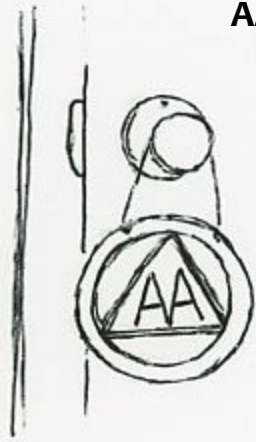
We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition."

January 2019

Mason and Thurston Counties, Washington State

4 pages.

AA Meetings



Our area (Thurston County and a bit of Mason County) is blessed to have around 140 meetings that we know of. I say "we know of" because there are also private meetings at the homes of individuals that are quite active, and nobody really knows how many of those there are. Remember, any two or three persons wanting to start an AA meeting are free to do so provided they have no other affiliation. They do not have to register with anybody or even tell anybody about it. My wife and I were once traveling and stopped for a meeting in the small and beautiful city of Yreka, California in the shadow of Mount Shasta, to attend a meeting that was listed on the internet. So we went down the right streets and got there at the appointed time and there was indeed a sign but the place was locked up tight. Middle of the afternoon, no one home. So we sat there wondering what to do. We really wanted a meeting. As we were about to give it all up, down the street came an old pickup truck and, somehow, made us think: this is another friend of Bill W. And indeed it was, one man, and he too hoped to attend the meeting and was surprised to find the door locked. The three of us stood there chatting and wondering what to do. I remembered then that I had a little card in my wallet called A Meeting in a Pocket with How It Works and some other of the common readings used in meetings on it. So we had our meeting right there on the steps.

continued on page 3

FEAR AND LOATHING IN DEATH VALLEY

I was somewhere around Centralia, on the edge of a retiree's dream when the drugs began to take hold. The Warfarin had thinned my blood down so oxygen was coursing through my body like nitrous through a tricked out V-Tech motor. The Digitek had my heart beating like a 19 year olds' and the Paroxetine finally quieted the squirrels that had gnawed their way into my head after 30 years working for the Department of Ecology.

In a moment of clarity I remembered a time almost 40 years past, when I had traveled the same road with my buddy Conine. We were in my yellow 57 BelAir, gas was 29.9 cents a gallon and was being pumped into a punched out 283 by two aluminum four barrel carburetors under the control of a Duntov fuel injection cam. We had pockets full of silver dollars our Ralph's store manager had used to cash our paychecks. He was delighted, and probably a little envious of our plan for a one-week trip to Tijuana, Mexico. He asked us to bring him a bottle of Tequila, with the worm in it. We had a cooler full of Lucky Lager, a carton of Lucky Strikes, fair tires and all the itches typical of 19-year-old males.

How times change. I was alone on this trip, as my buddies were either taking care of grandkids, vacationing in condos or still dicking around with the insanity of state government. I was traveling to a once in a lifetime event in Death Valley, California; RAIN! I should have questioned the sanity of someone from western Washington driving a thousand miles to cover rain, but visions of blooming cactus and other exotic

plants, wakened to a sexual frenzy by a chance to propagate after a 50 year dry spell (similar to feelings Conine and I had 40 years earlier on our way to Tijuana) seemed like something worth seeing.

I had an ice chest in the back seat filled with Safeway Select bottled water, cans of ice cold Insure to keep the furnace burning and a four pack of Starbucks Frappuccino, with caffeine, in case things needed to get really weird in a hurry. I set the cruise control at an outlaw 6 mph over the posted speed limit, cranked up the Radiators 7/4/92 concert from the High Sierra Music Festival and prepared to become one with the road, and follow it into the heart of savage Death Valley.

I thought I was prepared for weirdness but I had no idea how weird it was going to be. Traffic got a little heavier as I approached the cutoff for Death Valley but I didn't think much of it. After all, it's a pretty big place. I was aiming for Stove Pipe Springs, which I was pretty sure was the "almost ghost town" Conine and I had stopped at to replenish our ice chest, after having been chased out of Tijuana by an irate

continued on page 3



The Reprieve is published monthly, more or less, by District 8 of Washington AA for Mason and Thurston Counties. This is the November /December 2018 issue, made available electronically on Wed., Jan.30, 2019.

Contact the editor, Charley K., through their website:

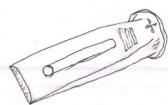
newletter@aadistrict8.org or phone him at 785-564-1118, leave a message and he will likely return your call the same day.

We appreciate your comments and suggestions for improvement. We welcome your contributions of articles.

There will be a print copy of each issue in your group's announcement folder. If you want the newsletter sent to your email, go to the District 8 website aadistrict8.org and sign up. The newsletter will come to your mailbox as a pdf.

June K. did the art and layout of this issue.

"The thin edge
of the wedge."



The Booklets of Alcoholics Anonymous

These little booklets, available free or for a quarter or so at the site of nearly every AA meeting are among the best AA literature out there. They are short and easy to read, and hence no great commitment is required.

This one addresses the matter of anonymity on the personal level as well as on the public level. Some] of the questions may be quite pertinent to the newcomer. For example,

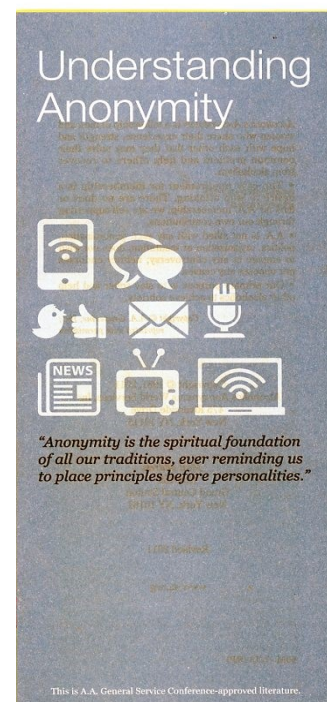
Q. Should I reveal my anonymity to my boss so that I can attend AA meetings regularly?

A. Asking for special favors because of AA membership is not in the spirit of the anonymity Traditions.

Some of the questions regarding the internet are a little sticky too.

Of course, AA does not have rules. Everything in AA is a suggestion only.

An aspect of the clause "principles before personalities," however, does not seem to be dealt with here: that living the AA life is a spiritual life to some degree like those in religious orders; spreading the word, carrying the message, being helpful to others without expecting personal recognition or acknowledgement. This is one of the most beautiful of all aspects of AA.



The Grapevine. "A meeting in print"

The Grapevine. "A meeting in print," it calls itself. Everybody who has been in AA more than one meeting knows about it. But who reads it? Not so many, I do not think. And why not? A friend called the Grapevine "the Reader's Digest of Alcoholics Anonymous." And so it seems in many ways to be: the long out of date cartoons, corny jokes at that, the stories that always end happily, the un-failingly boring layout.

Is that fair?

Probably not to the one who did read an issue or two and found at least one more building block on the road to their sobriety. Probably not to the writers of the stories who were helped along in their sobriety by publication in this internationally read (even by those who don't read it) publication that dates back to 1946.

The current issue, February 2019, spe-

cializes in stories by Old Timers. Reading through the stories, not one can I disagree with, corny and predictable as I find them. They are all sane and sound—and no doubt true—accounts from the lives of drunks like us.

Maybe AA is a little bit corny. We all came, came to, and came to believe. We all have a sobriety date, sooner or later—we have five or ten or twenty or fifty years. We all have our chips in our pockets or maybe in a dish on the mantel or our nightstand.

Maybe AA is a little corny. Maybe being sober is a little corny. Maybe it's okay, and even fun, to be a little corny.

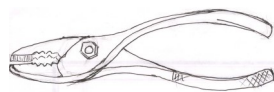


AA Meetings...continued from page 1

Another time traveling all by myself in the wilds of northwestern Canada I stayed all night at a motel and, unable to find a town with a meeting anywhere around, I had a meeting by myself—well, I looked in the mirror so I had two people... right? It wasn't the best meeting I've ever been to but it was an agreeable group.

One of the earliest meetings in our area is As Bill Sees It down at the Alano Club five mornings a week (M to F) at 7 to 8 am. If there is a meeting in town that is happy, joyous and free, this surely is the one. The room is always packed, sometimes SRO, and often flowing out beyond the doors, and the laughter and general good feeling is contagious. And the hot coffee and the conversation flow freely. A reading is chosen from As Bill Sees It, one of the greatest of AA literature, and individuals share on that.

This is definitely a gratitude meeting that emphasizes recovery. Recommended for any and all who can raise themselves from their slumbers and get to a meeting at 7 am when, this time of year, it is still dark outside. ▲



Did you know that we have a page on Facebook called Club? It's a closed page so anonymity is not a big concern...at least your own. Don't break anyone else's anonymity without their permission! To become a member of this "Club," just give your email to someone who's already a member and ask to be entered...and you'll be a member.

This is the place where you can celebrate your sobriety date, make an announcement of important events, or just say something you think will be of interest! Photos are okay too! Other Facebook pages, by the way, are not the place for disclosing your AA membership...please.



FEAR AND LOATHING ... continued from page 1

policeman and several women who seemed to believe we owed them money. I remember we walked into the one and only bar and everyone stopped talking and looked at us like we were pretty damn interesting. These were desert people, not the people we were used to dealing with at Ralph's. We timidly asked for a case of Olympia to go, and after a cursory check of my fake voter registration card, and a surly acceptance of our money, the bartender obliged. I noticed a piece of paper stapled to the wall by the pay phone; it was the white pages for Stove Pipe Springs and didn't cover even half the page.

I don't remember any sign of an official park that last time, and sure didn't see any Rangers at tollgates. I could have dealt with a sky full of huge bats, but what I was confronted with shook me to my very soul. All I could see were Subaru Outback station wagons parked by the side of the road and hundreds of people all clad in Lands End cargo pants and Australian bush hats. They were in various contorted positions aiming huge cameras at tiny yellow flowers. Most puzzling was a sound, kind of like a background noise I couldn't put my finger on. As I got closer I realized all the Outbacks had their radios tuned to the local NPR station and Terry Gross was interviewing some Hip Hop guy about his art. I powered down a Frappuccino and determined to make the best of things.

The flowers were, frankly, pitiful. I guess if I had lived there for 50 years and never seen any before, it might have been impressive. But in reality, they were spindly little things, about the size of a dime and with almost no foliage, just stems. They were hard to see through all the people having optical intercourse with them and I prayed the weather had been warm enough to wake up the snakes. Some nearby sand dunes looked like anthills with people swarming over them. I suddenly realized why Doc had opted out of trying to bring perspective to the lemming like comings and goings of American culture. Even Steadman would have had trouble capturing the crazed frenzy of these people consuming "the latest event".

I fled the area without paying the entrance fee and headed across the valley toward Nevada, and away from people. Perhaps I could find meaning in emptiness. In fleeing from the designated viewing area I

found other fields of flowers and, while they were still pretty sparse, they had a beauty in a setting without people. While walking around at random I came upon a slightly rusted Olympia beer can. It was the kind you opened with a church key and I wondered if perhaps it was one Conine and I had tossed all those years ago. I took a few pictures and had calmed down, to almost serene, when I came upon a tollbooth I couldn't drive around and found I couldn't leave the park until I paid the \$10 fee. All I wanted was out of there so I paid and vowed never to visit another national park, especially one that had been subject to media attention recently.

Nevada was a healing salve to my brutalized psyche as the first thing I passed after crossing the border was the Cottontail Ranch, a famous Nevada brothel, open 24 hours and accepting most credit cards. Forty years earlier Conine and I wouldn't have hesitated, but this wasn't then, it was now, so I only smiled and felt better. Nevada was wonderful; secondary highways with 70 mph speed limits and almost no traffic. I loved the clutter surrounding the occasional house, cars that hadn't run in fifty or sixty years, pieces of equipment I couldn't guess the purpose of and other rusted treasures. I found a town with a homestead that had a sign proclaiming "1000's of Books". Unlike the Cotton Tail ranch, I did lock the brakes and make a skidding entry to the place. I followed the signs to an old school bus and I could see books stacked above the windows and a big "Don't Tread on Me" flag hanging on the side. As fate would have it, it wasn't open for business. I poked around and as I was leaving, I spotted an AA triangle sign on the main building announcing meetings at 9am on Wednesdays. Even though it was after noon, I felt a connection that erased the sadness of Death Valley and replaced it with the joy of knowing I always had choices, and nothing could take that away.

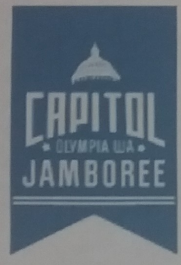
On the outskirts of town, I came across something that absolutely healed any lingering pain I had. An old tree, by the side of the road, had several dozen pairs of shoes hanging from the branches. I don't understand why, but the pointlessness of it brought joy to my heart and the desire to see another day, another road, and another bit of insanity.

—Gary R.
Home Group, Friday Night
Men's Step Study
Olympia, Washington

I had been in AA just a couple of weeks and I went every single night without fail for 10 days straight. I loved AA from the git-go and felt it would be disloyal to not go. But something happened on the 11th night or so and I had to miss.

Next night I went and apologized all over the place for not being there the night before.

It's all right, my brand new sponsor told me. We went ahead and held the meeting anyway.



Capitol Jamboree Kickoff

Potluck * Speakers * Fellowship

Saturday February 16, 2019

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Last Name A-M Desserts **Admission \$10.00**

N-Z Snacks **Doors open at 5:30 p.m.**

Speakers **Speakers at 7 p.m.**

Lou Ellyn J Al-Anon

Brian C AA



50/50 Raffle!

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church 1601 North St SE, Olympia

Pre-Registration Discount for Capitol Jamboree at event only!

9th Annual Blending of Time Conference



“Design for Living”

February 22 - 24, 2019

La Quinta Inn

1425 E 27th, Tacoma, WA

This is the only conference of its type on the West Coast, where every Alcoholic who attends has a chance to speak. We have panels from 0-10 yrs, 11-20 yrs, 21-30 yrs, and 31-100 yrs. Each panelist speaks for 5 minutes. Panelists are chosen by the date their registration form is received.

Keynote Speakers, hailing from near and far are:

- ** Marty J. - Vancouver B.C.
- ** Michael - Prescott, AZ
- ** Big Book Lori - Tri-Cities, WA
- ** Robert M. - Olympia, WA
- ** Lydia A. - Federal Way, WA
- ** Steve R. - Tampa Bay, FL (Historian)

Plan to attend the “Meet the Speakers Dinner” at 5236 E. “B” Street, Tacoma - 7:00pm on Feb 21, 2019

If you have questions please contact: Brandon 253-320-0133 / Elizabeth 253-250-6997 OR visit www.theblendingoftime.org for more information and online registration

An old drunk who had probably missed a few meetings told this story about how he had acquired some of his humility:

Old Elmer was a farmer and like all of us he raised a few hogs. One year, however, in a dry spell, they ran out of water. So he had to herd the hogs to a farm he'd inherited from his folks nearly five miles down the road, where there was a good well. Five miles down in the morning, five miles back, then again in the evening, down and back.

But Elmer, someone said, doesn't that take a lot of time?

Yes, Elmer said, it does. But what's time to a hog?

