



Dec 2022
vol 22/6

Pass It On

Albuquerque AA Intergroup Central Office Newsletter

<https://www.albuquerqueaa.org/>

Central Office, 1921 Alvarado Dr. NE, Albuquerque, NM
505.266.1900

AA News

- ◆ The 2022 Intergroup Steering Committee Elections are in December. There are seven (7) positions open: Chair, Treasurer, Intergroup Liaison, Community Outreach Chair, Accessibilities Chair, Newsletter Editor, and Media Librarian. If you or someone you know are interested in one of the open positions, please contact Central Office or let the Nominating Committee know at abqaacentraloffice@gmail.com
- ◆ Here is the email address for submissions, feedback, etc. for the Pass It On. abqpassiton@gmail.com
- ◆ Central Office Intergroup meetings are always on the second Sunday of every month on Zoom at 2 p.m.
- ◆ International Women's Conference, 02/16/2023 to 02/19/2023. Location: Renaissance Dallas Addison, Addison, TX. See albuquerqueaa.org for link to website.
- ◆ District 12 will host the Area 46 Assembly on August 2-4, 2023.

Grateful to Still be Learning

Last Friday at my weekly Men's meeting, I was approached and asked to put together a few words expressing why I am grateful for my sobriety. And now, after having dutifully procrastinated this assignment, I'm sitting here, Tuesday morning...pondering what pearls of wisdom I can bestow unto my local AA community. Well, the truth is, I am not always grateful. There...I said it. And like many moments in sobriety, when faced with being completely honest, mustering up the courage in doing so can be quite honestly terrifying but, equally freeing as well...for which I'm very grateful!

Having gotten sober at the age of 23, and now being 54, God has brought and continues to bring about many opportunities... "growth opportunities" if you will, for me to learn by and grow up from. Take this morning for example. I got up around 3:45am to work on this project, thinking (which was my first mistake) ..." I'll make a fire...it'll be quiet...no one will be awake...Just me the hound...what a great start to the day!" ...Well, we all know what happens when we start making "our plans." First, my wife got up to talk with me about our littlest one, "Thing Two," who's been sick this past week and whether we should take her in to see the doctor. Then, "Thing One" crawled out of bed and decided to join daddy on the couch to assist in the composition of this masterpiece. Augh! - I won't lie...I was irritated...I was short with my wife and despite my 5-year-old's excitement to join me on the couch...my enthusiasm didn't quite match hers.

So, what exactly does all this have to do with being grateful for my sobriety? Everything! You see, over the past 30 years, if there's anything I've learned, it's that **God is**. God always seems to find the right moments to reach down and touch us...and for me, that was this morning. God used this moment, this exercise, and my family to help me find the gratitude I needed for today...and just for today. Yes, God has taken away the compulsion to drink and for this I am truly grateful. However, if there's one thing that I'm even more grateful for, it's the gift of having a real relationship with God today...a relationship that God has ironically given me through Sobriety, AA and the Fellowship. Confusing? It's ok...I often find myself still scratching my own head. That said, I'll keep coming around so folks like yourself can continue to help me work on what God wants me to become...and for this, I'm sincerely grateful.

Guy S.

"The purpose of this newsletter is to offer information that may further readers' understanding of the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism; the severity and international scope of the illness; and the worldwide efforts being made to combat it. Publication here does not imply endorsement or affiliation. AA does not conduct or participate in research, nor does it hold any opinion on research conducted by others."



AA in a Nutshell (From the July, 2007 Grapevine)

When what had originally brought a rosy glow to life clouded everything with embarrassment and shame, and when I couldn't find any reason to live, and it seemed that everything in my life was ruined, I found Alcoholics Anonymous. I had reached a point in my life where I wished, daily, that I could simply go to sleep and never wake up.

I began by attending meetings and then volunteered to work on the literature for the central office. During the meetings I attended, day after day, and week after week, the words to a song I used to sing in church, years ago, kept coming to mind. The words repeated inside my head. They went, "Spirit of the living god, fall afresh on me, melt me, mold me, fill me, use me."

On Saturdays, I went in to the hall and cleaned and then I began sponsoring after a year. I answered phones at the central office and took meetings to local hospitals. First time anyone asked me to tell my story I worried and practiced it until I got up and told a self-absorbed tale that sounded hollow. The next time I told the story, I "got real," as the saying goes, and prayed to God that what I might say might touch somebody. I told my story as true and straightforward as I could.

I began in AA to stop drinking and eventually the craving for drink stopped, but more importantly, and seemingly without notice, my life began to change. For the first time, I wasn't angry over small things, I wasn't disappointed and depressed about everything.

While I had been working on my drinking problem, my life problems seem to change. My marriage grew stronger. My relationships with my kids, my family, my coworkers, and even my fellow drivers in rush hour traffic grew better.

There are times when I wish I had stopped drinking long ago; I think that my life could have been as rich and full then as it is now. But I know, only too well, that it took all of everything I went through to get me into the halls of AA. I think of the words of T.S. Eliot: "We shall not cease from exploration/And the end of all our exploring/Will be to arrive where we started/And know the place for the first time."

Patrick G., Huntsville Alabama

Help With Step Three

I struggled with Step Three. Here is something I learned that made a difference for my sobriety and it may for you also. These thoughts are generated from William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, the only book referenced in the Big Book of AA.

You do not have to define a power greater than yourself or have proof of its existence to have faith that it works in your life. You simply have to have faith that power is there.

To give you an example of that, imagine that you have a road you must follow and suddenly you come to a chasm three feet across and a thousand feet deep. In order to jump across it you must first have faith that you can do so. Without that faith you will never attempt to go ahead. And it is only AFTER you have had faith and made a successful jump that you know that faith was justified. This is a case "where a fact cannot come at all unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming." And so, it is with a power greater than yourself, it cannot become real in your life until you first have faith that it will.

So, you say to yourself 'Well wait a minute there. It's one thing to have faith in myself to jump a chasm, it's entirely another to have faith in something I can't define.' Yes, it is. The jump is just an example of how faith is sometimes required before an event can be true.

Trust the thousands of us who were like you that made a leap of faith beyond ourselves and found it justified. All we have to do is be willing to have faith.

Martin W. Intergroup Steering Committee Chair,
Keep On Keepin' On

A prize fighter went down abruptly one night. He had showed up for his boxing bout after fortifying himself at several bars along the way, with the result that his opponent put him down on the canvas in the first round. As he lay there, his manager shouted, "Stay down until eight!" Shaking his groggy head, the pugilist replied, "What time is it now?"

An oldie but a goodie from the **April 1973 Grapevine**

We drank for happiness, and became unhappy,
We drank for joy, and became miserable,
We drank to be outgoing, and became self-centered,
We drank for social ability, and became argumentative,
We drank for sophistication, and became crude and obnoxious,
We drank for friendship, and made enemies,
We drank to soften sorrow, and wallowed in self-pity,
We drank for sleep, and awakened without rest,
We drank for strength, and felt weak,
We drank for sex drive, and lost our potency,
We drank medicinally, and acquired health problems,
We drank because the job called for it, and lost the job.
We drank for relaxation, and got the shakes,
We drank for confidence, and became uncertain,
We drank for bravery, and became afraid,
We drank for certainty, and became doubtful,
We drank to stimulate thought, and blacked out,
We drank to make conversation easier, and slurred our speech,
We drank for warmth, and lost our cool,
We drank for coolness, and lost our warmth,
We drank to feel heavenly, and knew hell,
We drank to forget, and were haunted,
We drank for freedom, and became slaves,
We drank for power, and became powerless,
We drank to erase problems, and saw them multiply,
We drank to cope with life, and invited death...or worse.

Spiritual life, not religion (from Wikipedia)

The *Oxford group* literature defines the group as "not being a religion," for it had "no hierarchy, no temples, no endowments, its workers no salaries, no plans but God's plan." Their chief aim was "A new world order for *Christ*, the King." In fact one could not "belong" to the *Oxford group* for it had no membership list, badges, or definite location. It was simply "a group of people from all walks of life who have surrendered their life to *God*." Their endeavor was to lead a *spiritual life* "under God's Guidance" and their purpose was to carry their message so others could do the same.

The group was more like a spiritual revolution, unhampered by institutional ties; it combined social activities with religion, it had no organized board of officers. The group declared itself to be not an "**organization**" but an "**organism**." Though Frank Buchman was the group's founder and leader, group members believed their true leader to be the **Holy spirit** and "relied on God Control," meaning "guidance received from God" by those people who had "fully surrendered to God's will". By working with people from all the churches, regardless of denomination, they drew new members. A newspaper account in 1933 described it as "personal evangelism — one man or woman talking to another and discussing his or her problems was the order of the day." In 1936, *Good House-keeping* magazine described the group as having neither membership, nor dues, nor paid leaders, nor new theological creed, nor regular meetings; it was simply a fellowship of people who desire to follow a way of life, a determination, and not a **denomination**.

Meet Your Volunteers: *Stephanie P.*

1. What is your reason for working a desk shift at Central Office?
To hopefully keep myself out of trouble for at least three hours a week, and to give back some of what was so freely given to me.
2. How has working at Central Office benefitted your sobriety?
It has really gotten me plugged into the local AA community, as well as offering a great service opportunity. It's gratifying to feel like you're a part of AA history.
3. Any particular call you received that stands out in your mind?
The calls from those alcoholics still in their cups is always a stark reminder of what it was like, and a caution that this disease is still alive and thriving out there.
4. What is the best part of working at Central Office?
Shooting the s**t with all the other sober alcoholics who happen to stop in during my shift.
5. Any thoughts for those who are thinking about a shift at Central Office?
Do it! Service keeps you sober. Plus, it's fun!

It was a large meeting, well over two hundred people. At one end of the room stood the canister of regular coffee; at the other end, the pot of decaf. Conversation around the first coffee pot centered on a man who was clearly depressed and afraid.

"I just feel like I'm at the end of my rope," he admitted.

"It's one damned thing after another. Nothing seems to be going right. This week my dog died, my kids came down with strep throat, I can't keep my mind on my work, my wife and I are fighting constantly. I just don't know how I'm going to make it."

"Well, son," an old-timer said gently, "at least you didn't take a drink today."

The conversation at the other end of the room centered on a man who exuded good cheer. "I just feel so wonderful," he was saying. "What a week this have been! I got a promotion at work; my daughter is graduating from college with honors; my wife and I are like newly married lovers. And just yesterday I had the best golf game of my life!"

"It all sounds great," another old-timer said gently. "But remember...you're an alcoholic. Just one drink will destroy it all." From *The Spirituality of Imperfection, Storytelling* and the

It Might Have Been the Time...

by Lois W. (February 1950 Grapevine)

It is hard to say just when Alcoholics Anonymous began. It may have been at the time a friend came to see my husband, Bill. Or it may have been at the moment of Bill's spiritual experience. Most AAs feel it is the time six months later when he met Dr. Bob in Akron and, together, they started to help other alcoholics who wanted to be rid of their addiction.

But for me it was the day I first saw the released expression on my husband's face. We had been married seventeen years, and were compatible and companionable. Our interests were similar and we both deeply desired and strove for the other's welfare. The only, but considerable, block to our happiness was Bill's uncontrolled drinking. In the early years he said that he could stop when he wanted, and I thought I'd soon be able to make life so complete for him that he would wish to quit drinking entirely. Much later when he really did want to stop, he was absolutely unable to do so, and we both then became terribly confused and frustrated. Oddly enough he had been in other matters a person of strong willpower, but his will seemed to melt away where alcohol was concerned. In his remorse and disappointment he was a tragic and heartbreaking figure. I too felt myself a failure, for despite every endeavor, I had not been able to help him in time, nor could I aid him in the least in his final struggle for freedom.

Today I can talk and write about these intimate details of our life together. While Bill was drinking, I dare not even speak to my family about it and tried to hide the fact of his alcoholism in every way possible. Now that I've learned that Bill was actually a very sick man, that awful feeling of disgrace has left me. I have also learned how much help the telling of such experiences can be to those who are going through similar ones. After 15 years in AA, the old trying times are so far away and foreign to Bill's and my present way of life that it seems like the experience of someone else.

After Bill left the hospital for the last time, he began to think of the thousands of alcoholics who wanted to be rid of their melody. If they could be made to feel desperate enough, they might have a releasing experience just like his. He would hold before them the medical verdict that alcoholism was hopeless. So tirelessly, day and night, we worked. As many as five of them lived with us at one time. But none of them stayed sober for long. They started a long process of trial and error; certain ideas were retained, but many discarded.

It was in June 1935 that Bill went to Akron, Ohio on a business trip. The venture failed. He finally contacted Dr Bob, an Akron surgeon soon to become co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. Bob too wanted above all to stop drinking. He and his wife, Anne, had done everything they could.

Something passed between these two men. There was real mutuality this time. By example they showed how it worked. Thus AA spread like a chain letter.

Bill had learned a great deal. At first he had tried to put every alcoholic he met in the way of a spiritual experience just like his own. As AA grew, he realized that what had come to him in a few dramatic minutes usually dawn's on others in months or years. Sometimes the alcoholic himself does not even realize his own development, though his words and action soon speak for him, for he is doing now what, of himself, he was unable to do before. He is staying sober and helping other people as never before. He is gaining a serenity, a joy in living.

Watching Bill and the other men at the meetings, I noticed many of them had begun to grow by leaps and bounds. This made me look at myself. I had been given a sound religious upbringing and felt I had done for Bill all a good wife could do, although this was strangely mixed with a sense of failure. At first it never occurred to me that I too needed spiritual development. I did not realize that by living such an abnormal life I might have become twisted, losing a sense of true values. After a while I saw that unless I jumped on the bandwagon too, I would be left way behind. The AA program, I found, could be most helpful to the non-alcoholic as well, a fact thousands of alcoholics' relatives and friends now apply to their own lives.

Those Clinton Street days are full of memories. Some of them are humorous, some tragic. But most of them bring back a warm glow of hope and courage, a friendship and rebirth. For the fellowship in AA is unique. Ties are made overnight that it would take years to develop elsewhere. No one needs a false front. All barriers are down. Some who have felt outcasts all their lives now know they really belong. From feeling as if they were dragging anchor through life, they suddenly sail free before the wind. For now they can be of tremendous and peculiar use to others having a dire need like their own.

A mathematician stumbles home drunk at 3 a.m.
and his wife is livid.

"You swore that you'd be home by 11:45!"

"No," slurs the mathematician, "I said I'd be home by a quarter of 12."