



*The Tributary* Issue 2011– Q1  
2011 Winter Assembly, Rawlins, Apr 1-3

Later in this issue:

- "Officers, Chairs, and DCMs"
- "Events, Deadlines, and Links"

On the website (<http://area76wyaa.org>):

Tributaries 2008 - present  
**Print this issue for your groups**



Editor's note: I never thought I would have too much input. This is a lot. But don't be intimidated -- it's all great.

**-- A Story --**

Like a lot of people in the program my drug and alcohol use started at an early age, 11-12 years old. My substance use, and problems caused by it, got to the point where my parents decided I was beyond their control. I had been cutting class to get stoned and staying out till all hours of the night. When I was 13 I became a ward of the state until I graduated from high school. For the next 7 years I went from foster homes to group homes, and spent most of the time in juvenile detention facilities, all due to my drug/alcohol use.

I graduated high school a year late and then went out of state for college. This arrangement included meeting with a probation officer twice a week and having to wear an ankle monitor for approximately 3 years. I graduated with a degree in Education - Chemistry, and then went to work on a sheep ranch for the next 2 years. I was clean for the 2 years, and felt the most calm and serene I had ever felt.

After the 2 years I decided I wanted to be a police officer, and was hired fairly quickly. There was a lot of drinking by officers on their off time, and there was always something to drink about: it was snowing, the sun was out, and many other similar reasons. I really enjoyed my job, and the drinking fit my active alcoholism. However, after a few years of seeing what alcohol and drugs did to people I decided I had to quit. It didn't work trying to stop on my own, and someone had mentioned AA, so I went to a meeting. Some of what was said made

sense to me, but I wasn't ready to stop. Finally the withdrawal led me to decide I had to quit, and AA was there. I got a sponsor, went through the steps, and kept going to meetings.

My sobriety has not been without struggles. When I was 3 years sober my partner was killed in a head-on collision with a drunk driver. I surely wanted to drink till I couldn't feel anything, and it was through my sponsor and the support of AA that I stayed sober.

One situation that rocked my AA serenity was watching a young woman drive straight into a tree at about 50 MPH. I saw the hood crumple up and back like it is supposed to do, and the young woman being tossed around inside the car. Her BA was a .52, but she lived for 3 days before her systems finally quit. I can forgive her for what she put me through, but I can never forget seeing that hood crumple the way it did. After seeing that I wanted to isolate from everyone, but my sponsor and the support from AA kept me going to meetings.

Last year was my 22nd clean and sober. With the grace of my higher power, my sponsor, and the fellowship of AA I'll keep coming back for one day at a time.

– Lynn

I went to A.A. --  
but I gave a phony name.

## -- Don't Drink And Go To Meetings??? --

I have enjoyed a wonderful sober life for the better part of 8 years now. I owe this new life to Alcoholics Anonymous and more specifically to a power greater than myself which I came to trust in AA halls through hearing other members tell their story. I am involved in service work and consider it a necessary part of my new found life. Naturally I want to give away what I have found even if I know that it doesn't necessarily always work that way. Basically I want to help the newcomer as much as the next guy; and I'm still learning the best ways to go about that. The most common piece of advice I hear around the halls is, "Don't drink and go to meetings". At the risk of committing AA blasphemy, I believe this is poor advice for any alcoholic; especially the newcomer.

You might ask (considering these are staples in many a recovering alcoholic's program), "How could this possibly be bad advice?" I can only speak from my own experience. I tried the "Don't drink and go to meetings" approach, it kept me sober (dry) for 2 months. After that I picked up and continued to trash my life for 5 more years. Don't get me wrong, poor advice had nothing to do with my relapse. I simply wasn't done drinking and although those last 5 years of drinking were brutal, they are very dear to me – it's where I found my willingness. As far as I can tell willingness is the only real prerequisite in this business of recovery and it's also the one thing that you cannot give to someone else.

I don't mean to rain on anyone's parade but let's take a moment and consider the soundness of this advice (Don't drink and go to meetings) that we so freely and often share; especially with the newcomer. Truth is, left to my own devices, I can't manage either one of those things for a considerable period of time. I mean get real, telling a drunk like me "*don't drink*" is like telling someone with narcolepsy "don't fall asleep" or someone with Tourette's syndrome "don't blurt things out". I told myself, "Don't Drink" every Monday morning for 5 years – it amounted to precisely nothing. "*Go to meetings*" is fine advice I guess, until the alcoholic decides they've had enough of them and they're ready to move on. If I could pull off either one of these pieces of advice on my own – I wouldn't be in this predicament to begin with. The Big Book doesn't say lack of meetings is our dilemma nor does it say alcohol is the problem; it states that drinking is but a symptom of alcoholism. The Book does say lack of power is our dilemma – shouldn't

we be advising newcomers to find a power source that works for them?

If I tell a newcomer "Don't drink and go to meetings" it gives the impression that all they have to do is get tough and be diligent. Buckle down, pull yourself up by your bootstraps and try your hardest! Fact is (especially in early sobriety) I miss the mark in all these areas. I come up short because I'm human. Maybe we should be offering something more useful like, "Ask for help every morning, or you might die soon". I realize no one can be scared into sobriety but don't we at least owe the newcomer some honest advice? Shouldn't we at least give the impression that if they try and do this on human power alone "Don't drink and go to meetings", they will most likely be in for a miserable if not fatal result? Maybe we should instead be quick to point out that the power needed to get sober and maintain sobriety comes from outside us, not inside us.

It seems that after we get some time under our belt we like to tell the new guy what happened to us, which a lot of times is, "Well I didn't drink and I went to meetings". I can relate to that, that's exactly what HAPPENED TO ME, but it wasn't WHAT I DID. There's a difference between the two and I think it's time we made the distinction. Bill W. himself said that will power with regard to this program is a complete liability. Why would we want to give any alcoholic the impression that the reverse is true? I understand fully that no alcoholic gets well on advice, but if are going to offer some shouldn't it be worthwhile?

I, like many in this program, have a life today that I could not have imagined from where I came from. My willingness came from my drinking; unfortunately it was the only place I could find it. The power I have today comes from some place outside of me because I am willing to Ask for help every morning. I ask for that Power to remove my shortcomings so that I can do his bidding and not mine. I find that when I surrender and ask to be made useful that all of those things in sobriety that are good for me, come to me. The obsession is removed; I'm available to the other alcoholic; I'm able to attend meetings; I'm able to get involved in service work. I'll be the first to admit that the majority of this "good stuff" happens in spite of me and not because of me; but it never comes unless I Ask for help.

–James B.

..... -- Gratitude -> Service -- .....

Gratitude is an action word. I've heard that from my sponsor since I've been sober, and I have been able to observe that throughout my sobriety. I think I was a month sober when I was asked to start making coffee for my home group, and after a few months of that, I became secretary for a new group that was forming. I grew up with my home group.

I'll be turning 10 this month, and thinking about that overwhelms me at times, but my memories of my sobriety are pinpointed by various service functions I've been able to attend. My first AA birthday, I was at my first business assembly. I attended most of our district meetings on a regular basis, not because I knew what I was doing, but because my sponsor asked me to be there.

Attending service functions has become an integral part of my AA life. I go, I learn, and then I understand a little better why we do the things we do. I must be one of the types of alcoholics that MUST do these things or die.

I wasn't able to attend the WCRAASC this time, and I feel the void. For the last few years, I've been able to "get in the truck" and go on long road trips with my sponsor. I asked our alternate DCM to attend in my place, and I hope his experience was memorable. My experience has been that I have a better understanding of the agenda and am able to carry that understanding to the assembly and groups that I serve as DCM.

I don't think we can ever have too much information. Hearing all points of view, and hearing the minority voice, has kept me from "frothy, emotional" decisions. Looking for spiritual principles and traditions keeps my ego out. A loving God as we understand him becomes the ultimate authority.

I thank God and AA for teaching me about life.

- Cheri

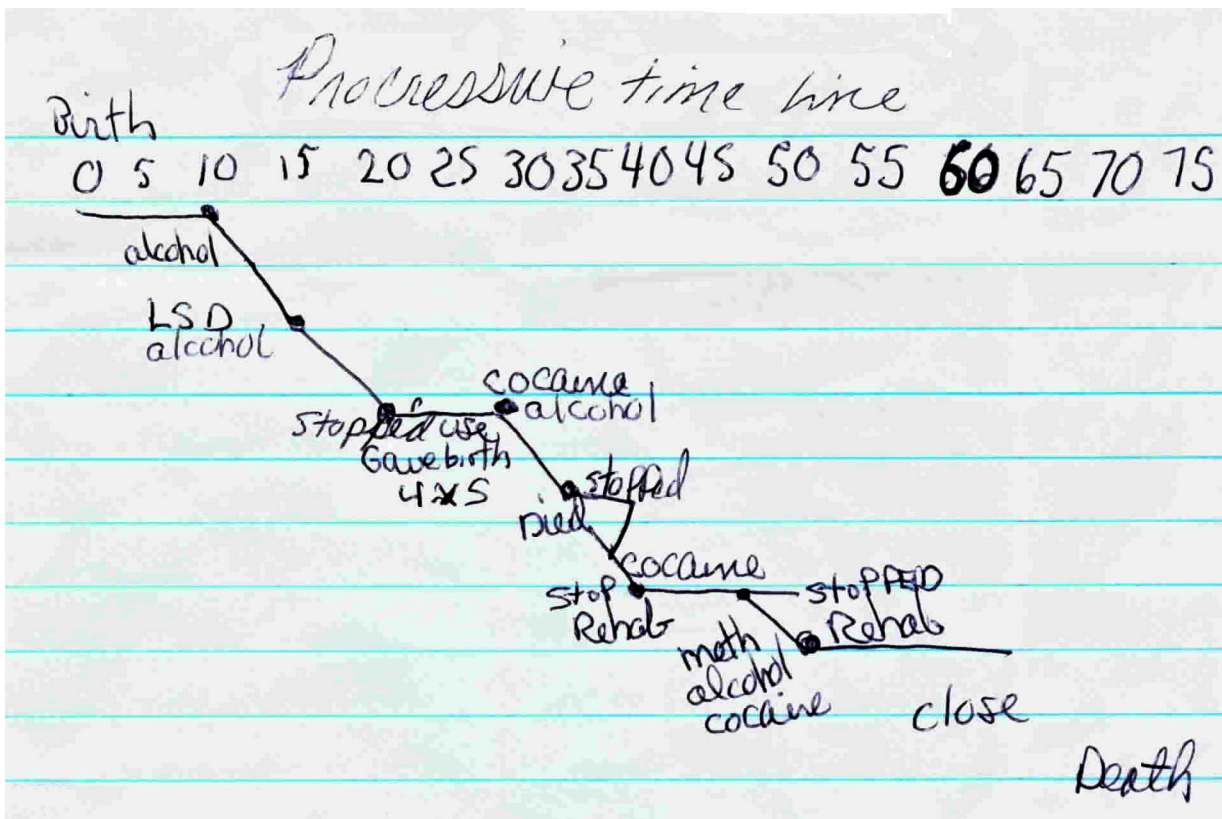
..... -- It All Takes Time -- .....

Here's a time line I've drawn to represent my drug and alcohol use. The line starts from birth. Every time I used, the line gets closer to death instead of an even or gradual approach to death.

Each time I used I came closer to death. My life became a perpetual myth of pain being numbed by my use.

I'm 51 now and it's one day at a time. Meetings, a sponsor, and working the steps help me, along with a loving God as he expresses himself to me daily.

It's going to take time. - Dawn C.



**-- The Path of Least Resistance --**

When I came into Alcoholics Anonymous I was blessed with the gift of desperation. I had finally reached the point where the fear of remaining the same was far greater than the fear of changing.

I had to surrender.

Today I understand surrender as letting go of my need to control or as letting go of expectations. When I stop trying to control the outcome, a Greater Power or Force of the Universe takes over and things fall into a natural order. Surrendering my will and my life has relieved me of the bondage of self and allowed me to live a life of sobriety coupled with a purpose within Alcoholics Anonymous. The few simple requirements have come in the form of a sponsor, a home group, sincere step work, and service. As a result I have developed a relationship with a God of my understanding in which I can rely and trust. This image of Strength and Wisdom is the foundation in which my life is built upon.

The path of least resistance allows me to find acceptance in the unacceptable. Instead of reacting against it, I choose to embrace it. The more I embrace God, the more I embrace Alcoholics Anonymous and the Fellowship, the more I embrace life on life's terms, the greater my serenity, and the greater my inner peace. Even in the face of my greatest challenges I believe that this too is God's will and I can choose to be grateful for everything.

But for the Grace of God go I – Susan G.

**-- WCRAASC** (WestCentralRegionalAAServiceConference) **--**

Hi, my name is Laurie and I'm an alcoholic. Area 76, District 2, currently serving as Corrections member at my home group, Keep It Simple. Just rotated out of cleaning ashtrays.

This was the first regional conference I have ever attended. I went for a few reasons: to get out of town and take a "vacation", spend lots of time with my sponsor as she would be trapped in the car with me for 26 hours, and watch and learn about the service structure of AA. By the time we reached Minnesota my brain was mush from reading agenda items and background information to my sponsor and our alternate DCM. By the time the conference began, at least some of the terminology sounded familiar.

The people I met inspired me to be involved in service work. There were over 300 people registered. I felt part of pages 152 and 153 in the Big Book where it says "...among them you will make lifelong friends. You will be bound to them

with new and wonderful ties, for you will escape disaster together and you will commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey. Then you will know what it means to give of yourself that others may survive and rediscover life". This was my experience. I purchased my first service manual at the conference and am looking forward to our Area assembly. I like what Don M., our trustee at large said: "I don't do this to help keep me sober. I do this because I AM sober".

– Respectfully, Laurie F.

**-- Treasurer --**

Hi Area 76! It's been a long winter here in Wyoming and it's good to be with you all again. Thank you to all the groups that have been participating in the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition at the area level with contributions.

It is my hope that our Area servants continue to use the group contributions to serve the members of Alcoholics Anonymous to the fullest and that the groups and members continue to appreciate the importance of contributing to their districts, groups, Area, and GSO. As GSR's, DCM's, Area committee members and officers, it is our responsibility to carry the message of the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition to our groups and members. We must understand that self-support through contributions gives us the freedom to serve one another with love and continue to find ways to reach the still suffering alcoholic in our groups, districts and Area.

If you are not familiar with our Finance Guidelines, ask me for a copy, so that you know what we have decided to operate on as an Area. I have always found it to be very important to understand what I am called to be responsible for. Please ask if you have any questions about what our Area does with the money your group is contributing, or if you have any other questions or concerns about Area finances.

I look forward to serving you the rest of the year!

– Kim G. (address on last page)

**-- Guidelines / R&C** (Report&Charter) **--**

Hello Area 76 AA Members,

Guidelines has been working on what we can do with these Gap committee's. We have gotten some new ideas throughout the Area. Thank you all for your input and experience. We are planning on bringing a Recommendation (Motion) to the floor out of committee at the Assembly in Rawlins. See you all there.

Yours in Service – Dean S.

-- District 3 (Gillette) --

Only by the Grace of a Loving & Compassionate God of my understanding, am I even able to write these words, sober! As of twenty nine months ago my journey of sobriety began with the constant suggestion of service work and getting involved in Alcoholics Anonymous. Often times I just sighed and nodded my head but really deep down inside I thought "yeah, right". Well of course as the days have progressed I find myself "involved" in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Chairing meetings, pouring coffee, washing cups and ashtrays, GSR of my home group and holding a chairperson position in my district have all come along by the Grace of God and a little willingness on my part. The greatest gift I have received as promised by my sponsor, is the absolute honor and privilege of working with another alcoholic as a sponsor. Getting out of ME is so important because as I have been taught, when I can be of some usefulness to someone else I am a little closer to the man that my Mom and God always knew I could be and just a little farther away from the man I used to be!

There are some terrific men and women in Alcoholics Anonymous who have been willing to share with me what has been so freely given them, and for that I am grateful! But in the end I know that my personal relationship with a God of my understanding will always show me the way!

- Kevin J.

..... Meeting Doodles .....

-- District 7 (Evanston) --

Hi, my name is Todd T., Alcoholic... DCM, District 7 for those of you who did not know...

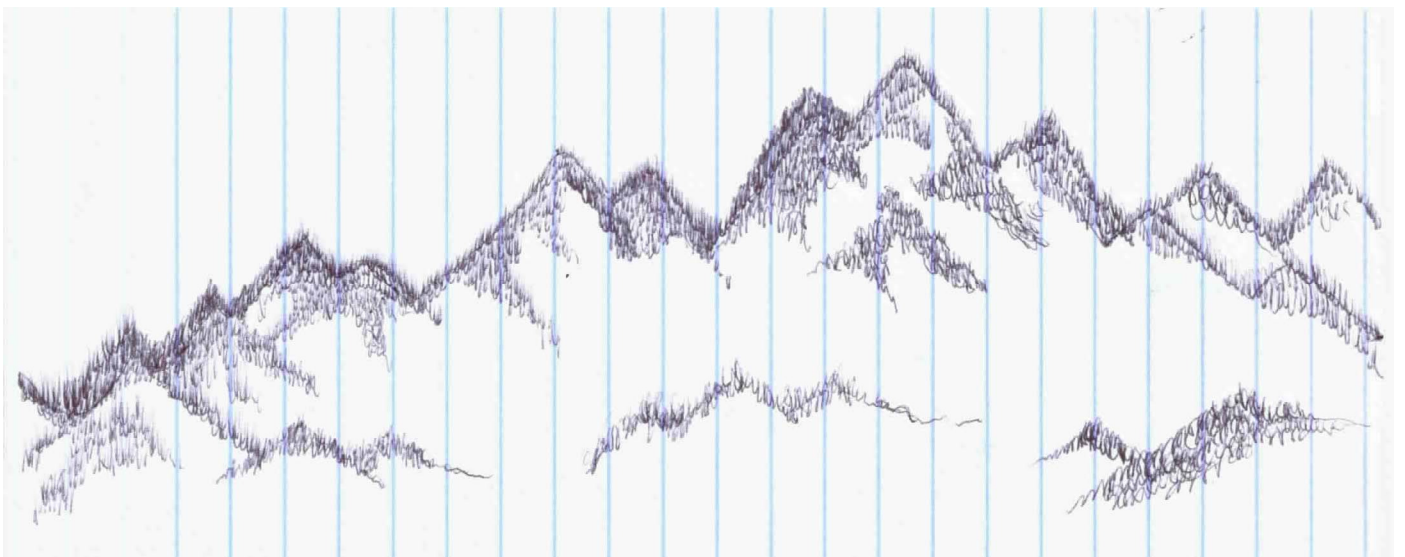
Life is a Journey and time flies... a few days ago I became willing to go to any length to get it... actually feels like just moments ago, in my puzzle of life it really is, just moments...

Promises, one of the many things I could never get right... if I only had a dime for every promise I never kept. Lol...

The greatest simple influence in my life today is, The Big Book. Through it my Higher Power has given me promise and promises -- are they extravagant? I think not. In fact I have found the Big Book itself to be rigorously honest... The promises are not extravagant if, we work for them... Work -- service in particular. I had the eye-opening experience of chairing the summer assembly, have been this summer to the Allred Flat Campout in July, stayed with my Lander AA family at the Frye Lake campout Labor Day weekend. "Wyoming Woodstock" shirts were worn, the cops showed up. Lol.

The weekend after Labor Day, I camped out at the Bear Lake Bash, got an awesome Bash Quilt and pillow, fantastic meetings and food next to a lake right out of the Bahamas. I could relate a book full of spiritual experiences from these four examples alone!!

Work??? I never worked so... hard at having the time of my life; never worked so... hard at having some real fun; never worked so... hard at laughing with friends. I guess I never really understood the phrase "Work and Service". Probably because I used to work so... hard at getting my next drink. Sadly, that's what I do best. But for the Grace of God.



---- **Events, Deadlines, and Links** ----

(Additions, corrections to xxx@xxx.xxx)

From the Guidelines:

Mar-Apr: Winter Assembly  
May-Jun: Spring Convention  
Jul-Aug: Summer Assembly  
Oct-Nov: Fall Convention

**2011 Dates:**

Apr 1-3 Winter Assembly, Rawlins  
Apr 30 Tributary **Deadline**  
May 13-15 Spring Convention, Cheyenne  
\_\_\_\_\_ Summer Assembly, Lander/Riverton  
\_\_\_\_\_ Fall Convention, Casper

**2012 Dates:**

**Local Events** (add yours):

Jun 10-12 26th Devil's Tower Campout  
Jun 17-19 36th June Jamboree, Mills  
Sep 2-5 17th Unity Campout, Frye Lake  
Sep 22-25 15th Archive Workshop, Helena, MT  
See these and other flyers on website.

**Links:**

**Website:** [www.area76wyaa.org](http://www.area76wyaa.org)  
[webmaster@area76wyaa.org](mailto:webmaster@area76wyaa.org)

**Tributary input:** Dave C.

xxxxx  
xxxxx  
xxxxx  
xxx@xxx.xxx

**Registrar:** Don M.

xxxxx  
xxxxx  
xxxxx  
xxx@xxx.xxx

**Area Contributions:** Kim G.  
(Checks payable to Area 76)

xxxxx  
xxxxx  
xxxxx  
xxx@xxx.xxx