

The TRIBUTARY

Area 76 Newsletter

Winter 2015



***The unity of A.A. is the most cherished
Quality our Society has. Our lives, the
Lives of all to come, depend squarely upon
It. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would
cease to beat; our world arteries would no
Longer carry the life-giving grace of God.***

Taken from As Bill Sees It, p. 125

Twelve and Twelve p. 129

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Stories: Recovery, Unity, Service, Uncle Lyle's Corner

From the Grapevine, As Bill Sees It

Area 76 Happenings

**The question has been posed regarding our three legacies –
Recovery, Unity and Service**



I got to AA in a very small town in Northern Idaho. We were fortunate that although less than 6000 in population, the AA fellowship had many old timers that still attended meetings on a regular basis. After 30 days of floundering around and not following the suggestions that I heard at every meeting, one of which is “get a sponsor”, I finally did, and it changed my life.

I asked Harold H., not because he was brilliant or had all the answers. He did, however, have the answers I needed which were found IN the program of AA, the Big Book.

One of our many discussions over the years he sponsored me centered around the topic you pose, so I wanted to take just a couple of paragraphs and give you the condensed version.

My sponsor shared with me that without Recovery, the other two sides of the triangle don't really exist. Recovery is achieved by the individual with God's guidance and amazing how God's guidance comes through individuals found in the fellowship who have also Recovered. He shared with me that Recovery centered in the mind and that God would make this possible as long as I did the leg work, God would always hold up his side of the deal.

He then suggested that as a Recovered alcoholic, I would have to become unified in the fellowship. In other words, seek out other alcoholics and carry the message of recovery to them in a manner that they could grasp, right out of the book. He told me that my ego would get in the way if I tried it differently, the easier softer way, and did I want that person's possible failure on my hands? Failure, meaning that if I was willing to serve up a luke warm, baby food version of the program, and the person found themselves in a jail, institution or dead, would I want to carry that around with me? Heck no!

“To serve someone is to share truth based on the program and actual personal experience, not opinion”, he said. How right he was. I have been blessed to sponsor many people over the years and can say not all of them are still united with us in the fellowship and living a life of Recovery. That being said, I have no guilt or shame regarding any of them and I have maintained my spiritual growth throughout the process.

In closing summary, to me and with my current experience, My Recovery United in the fellowship, serving the new and the old member alike so that they can recover. Remain united in order to serve is what I believe perpetuates my Recovery. It is a very cyclical process governed by God and invested to us as servants.

Be Gentle with Yourself and In Service

Dan Y, Cheyenne

Sober Perspective
(This article has been edited due to space limitations)

Hi, my name is Mikaela, and I am a grateful recovering alcoholic and addict. For the past 3 years, since I lost my job, I have allowed myself to fall into a deep depression that has caused such turmoil in my heart and soul, that I was contemplating taking my own life. This misery was not all the fault of this former Corporation, although it allowed me a perfect excuse of continuing something I would have dealt with differently, if it were to happen to me today.

The separation from my Higher Power, whom I call God, began to descend into a further faded memory, as alcohol began to manifest the resentment within me, for a company I felt wronged me. My drinking grew from an occasional beer, to a few more beers, and those became more frequent, until it was an instinct just like breathing. This was all I could do to not face the reality that maybe there was more to this picture than just me losing my job.

My obsession to prove my innocence became a reason to seek reinstatement of my prescription of Adderall, which allowed me more time to dig further and further into the evidence, and deeper into the darkness of resentment.

With my drinking accompanying my Adderall, my resistance to alcohol grew, requiring me to drink more to catch a buzz. The Adderall, intended to medicate my Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, started to taper off in effect, so I began to substitute with methamphetamine. None of which allowed me any relief of the anger, malice, loathing, or depression the thought of the Corporation brought me.

Isolation became my friend so that nobody could interrupt me while I continued fueling my desire to prove to the world what they said was wrong! Deeper and deeper I went, into a darkness that was contaminating me, everything and everyone around me. My attention to God was totally vacant, and alone is all I can be without Him.

As part of my lawsuit, I had to see a doctor and prove that I was miserable. That was not difficult to do, as misery had become my only feeling. I flew down to California where I was greeted by friendly people who were the first I had really noticed being nice to me since I had begun indulging in hatred. I drank at the hotel, and became very disoriented after drinking just a few gulps of my second beer. This one did not taste like the first one, as it had some sort of bitterness to it. After putting my glass down, the room became blurry, and I paid for my tab and went back to my room to vomit into the night.

The next morning I met Dr. Greene with a headache from hell, and a stomach that was disagreeing with my every move. Not long into the session, I had to excuse myself to throw up in the restroom at his office. To this day, I am not certain if trying not to be intoxicated for this trip was what caused me to get sick, or if something was slipped into my drink, but Dr. Greene did pose a question that stuck loud in my brain.

The following day, I resumed my meeting with him, and he asked me how much alcohol I usually consumed. Trying not to sound like an alcoholic, I answered, "about 14 to 20 beers a day." The real extent of my drinking was more like 14 to 36 beers a day, depending on what I could afford, or whether or not I had to work.

As my drinking and drug use brought on more resentment and loathing, I became too hassled by work to want to come home and only spend a few hours of searching for new evidence to prove I was innocent. I decided to ask my doctor for some time off. Like Dr. Green, Dr. Anderson also

diagnosed me with depression and granted my request to take sick leave. At this point, I put the beer, pills, and the backup for my rapidly evaporating Adderall (methamphetamine), to my head and pulled the trigger.

My life had become so unmanageable that I sat one day in my rocking chair with a gun in one hand, my phone in the other, contemplating which one of these I was going to use to end this suffering. Thoughts raced across my mind, from my son, to where my life would be without drugs and alcohol, back to the objects that were in my hands; my gun loaded and ready; and my phone with full bars waiting for me to search the word “rehab.” Although I fancied the idea of not having to go one more day with this darkness within me, I dropped to my knees and yelled out “God please help me!” An unfamiliar sense of peace came over me, and my right hand dropped my pistol, and immediately entered “rehab” into Google search, before I realized what I was doing.

The first number that I saw through my intoxication and teary eyes, I pressed on and it came up on the screen. I pushed send and my hands started to shake, while the evil undertones of doubt started to seep back into my mind.

It was Wednesday, October 15, 2014, around 9pm when the call that saved my life, was answered. After taking my information, doing an assessment, and telling me about her recovery, I believe I went to my bed, laid down and cried. Not because I was sad, but because a tiny piece of relief was present, and I wanted to preserve it with as much regard as I had the resentment for this Corporation.

I was to fly out on October 17th, and aboard that flight was an alcoholic and addict, on the way to recovery. As I waited for my bags in the airport, a man asked me where I was headed to, and with excitement I said “rehab”. The expression on his face was one of surprise, but he said, “That is great; a lot of people don’t take that step.” I thought to myself, ‘Okay, I guess this must be my “sign” from God, that I am doing the right thing’

I was transferred to Just Believe Recovery in Jensen Beach Florida to start my rehab. As each day passed, I grew more comfortable with the fact I was sober. The cravings starting to diminish into just thoughts that passed from time to time. I focused on God, and the forgiveness the therapist talked about.

Part of my first assignment was to reveal the first resentment I remember having, and the biggest resentment I had. My first resentment I remember, was my mother, the biggest resentment I had was the Corporation.

It was a simple worksheet:

_____ I forgive you for causing me to feel _____.

God, I ask you to forgive _____ too.

My counselor, Wayne K., a published author on forgiveness, told me to say this out loud every single day, and at some point it would sink in. I was not ready to just take all that resentment out of my body and cast it away, to allow myself the freedom of sobriety. There I was, in control of the only thing I had control of at that point, my resentment. I might as well have drunk a poison, with the expectation of them dying.

On the second week, I tried to read my assignment aloud to the group, and I couldn’t utter the words “God, I ask you to forgive the Corporation”. In fact I think I even squeaked when I tried

to say “God”. My counselor said “Mikaela, how long are you going to let this Corporation place ruin you?” I could have taken a brick thrown at my face, easier than those words. ‘What? You mean to tell me that I am letting them ruin me?’ And there it was, the moment of clarity that snapped me back into the reality of what I was doing to myself!

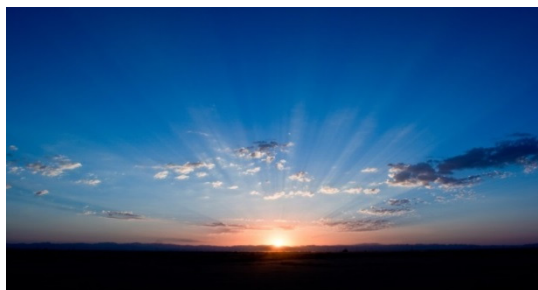
This is where God steps in, and grants me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. The acceptance was the part I needed to work on, not so much the courage, and the wisdom needed to apply to knowing the difference between what I needed to accept, and what I needed to let go...

So this is where I started, I forgave the company and the people who work there whom have taken some kind of stance to protect the company they work for, and themselves, and I have put my faith in God. The main point of all of this was finding God, and wouldn't you know He was right where I had left him... EVERYWHERE!!!

Peace has been brought through prayer, meditation, and knowing that the verdict offered by a jury, a judge, or by peers that have learned about this, doesn't really matter in the scheme of life, it is God's judgment that matters in my life. The saying goes, “you cannot please everybody”, and this is true, but I can please the God who saved my life. He was there when I called out to Him, and He used the people in the company as a way to get my attention back on Him. My attention had drifted away, far before I was terminated, and it took extreme measures to give me a “sign” from Heaven, to get it back to where it needed to be all along, with God.

Sitting on trial, I feel the torment begging me to come back to the darkness, as combing over the painstaking details of what has consumed my life for the last 3 years, but I do not want to venture there anymore. Today I look at things differently; I see things as God's Will, and the journey I had to take to figure out that I needed God in my life. As some may know, I am hard headed, and it takes a lot of convincing to finally let things sink in. So here I am, with the only victory I need in this, my relationship with God.

It is my hope, that this may also touch somebody else that may need the same help I got. It is there, it is free, and it is for eternity... all one has to do is accept it - a Power greater than you, that eventually will identify Himself as God.



Mikaela

“Few people have been more victimized by resentments than have we alcoholics. A burst of temper could spoil a day, and a well-nursed grudge could make us miserably ineffective. Nor were we ever skillful in separating justified from unjustified anger. As we saw it, our wrath was always justified. Anger, that occasional luxury of more balanced people, could keep us on an emotional jag indefinitely. These “dry benders” often led straight to the bottle.”

As Bill Sees It, p. 179, Coping with Anger, Twelve by Twelve, p. 90

The most wasted
of all days
is the one
without
Laughter
-E.E.Cummings

The Road Less Traveled

There are many paths on the journey through life. I think I might have chosen the psychopath.



To Wives

Harry had a bit of a drinking problem. Every night after dinner, he took off for the local watering hole. He spent the whole evening there then went home inebriated.

He always had trouble getting his key into the keyhole. His wife, waiting up for him, would let him in. Then she would scream at him for coming home in a drunken state. But Harry continued his nightly routine.

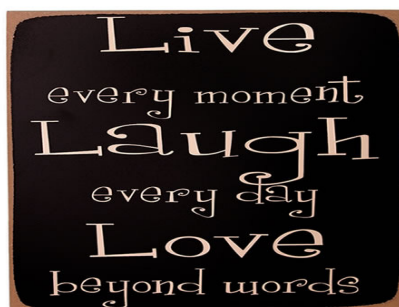
One day, the distraught wife was talking to a friend about her husband's behavior. The friend listened, and then said, "Treat him a little differently. Instead of berating him, why don't you give him some loving words and welcome him home with a kiss? He might change his ways." The wife thought it was worth trying.

That night, Harry arrived home in his usual condition. His wife heard him at the door and quickly let him in. This time, instead of berating him as she had always done, she took his arm and led him into the living room. She sat him down in an easy chair, put his feet up on the ottoman and took his shoes off. They she went behind him and started to cuddle him a little. After a while, she said to him, "It's pretty late, I think we had better go upstairs to bed now. Don't you?"

Replied Harry, "I guess we might as well. I'll get in trouble when I get home anyway."

A drunk goes to the doctor believing he is dead. The doctor attempts to convince him he is alive by talking to him for over an hour. Unsuccessful, the physician takes out a needle and pokes the man's finger as proof. The drunk looks at his finger in amazement and says, "Humm, dead men do bleed."

The mind is like a parachute, it works best when it's open.



Uncle Lyle's Corner

“Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings”

How often have we prayed for things or unfavorable circumstances or a hundred and one other things that were selfish in nature? Here is where REAL PRAYER begins – not ends – in asking GOD to change me.

“Lord, I am not much. You’re not getting much of a prize. It is mostly broken pieces I’m giving You. But I’m asking You to mend them. You can take the pride, lust, fear, anxiousness, and the resentments, but please take them”, something like that.

We may sit in the quiet of our own rooms, or we may say it kneeling in our church, or we may say it with another person. There must be an intended formality as we make such a prayer. We don’t do it with tongue in cheek. So as far as possible, we mean to be done with the offending thing. We find again that “willpower” goes only far enough to secure our intention. The actual praying such a prayer implies help from Him to whom we pray.

Sins get entangled deep within us, as some roots of a tree, and they do not come loose easily. We need help, grace from the lift of some kind of Divine Derrick!

The most amazing thing is that such a prayer is answered if we really want it to be. Our own wills are such a needed part of this; that it almost looks as if we had done it! But the help from God is still more a needed part of it. We are sure without Him, we could not have possibly done it. We learn Great truths, long been known and often discovered as we begin a genuine...SPIRITUAL AWAKENING...

Sam Shoemaker

(Courtesy of Lou R., Yoder)

(But the important thing is this: the early A.A. got its ideas of self-examination, acknowledgement of character defects, restitution for harm done, and working with others straight from the Oxford Groups and directly from Sam Shoemaker, their former leader in America, and from nowhere else.)

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, p. 39, When A.A. Came of Age

“My worst day sober is better than my best day drunk”



DKI-0018-017 [RF] (c) www.visualphotos.com

“Honesty with ourselves and others gets us sober; it is tolerance that keeps us that way.” Words from the wise Bill W., founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am intimately familiar

with the ways of this organization, and this familiarity is a result of being my mother's daughter. I was raised as the only child of a single parent. I always had a new coat for winter, pants that reached past my ankles, and shoes with no holes in the soles. I never went hungry, never went without; all the same my mother is an alcoholic.

She worked through the week to provide for us; she was a weekend drinker. I was never physically neglected, but can someone tell me what child doesn't want to watch Saturday morning cartoons with their favorite person in the world? I do believe that my mother's addiction in my young life molded who I am today. I do not wish for a different childhood, I only feel blessed for the one I had, and even more blessed that my mother found a way out for herself.

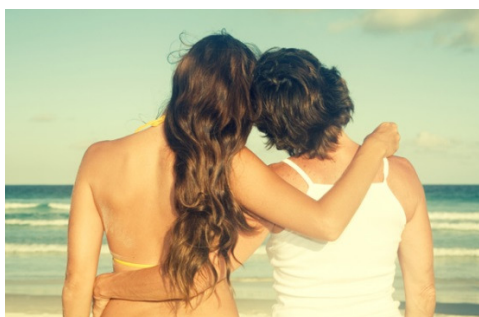
Without the upbringing that I had, I feel that one would find my sense of independence lacking. As a child I was left alone frequently. I needed to entertain myself most of the time and feed myself some of the time, remind myself to brush my teeth most nights before bed. Sometimes, I even picked my own outfits; can you imagine how fashionable I must have appeared? Today, as a young adult of eighteen years of age, I have held a steady job and own two vehicles of my very own. Some might say (including my mother) that I carry too a heavy a burden for such a young individual, but I like to see the silver lining in that I was instilled with the valuable trait of ambition as a result of my mother's emotional absence. Still, despite the silver lining, there was no absence of rust on the metal that made my childhood.

When I was thirteen years old I put myself in a bad situation, and one day I chose to drink. At the end of this day, the police were notified of the situation by my mother, and they had found me before the evening had begun. My blood alcohol content was 0.09; just above the legal limit for persons twenty one years of age and older. I was sent home with a ticket which stated that I was to appear before a judge and be charged with being a "Minor in Possession." At this stage, my mother had no idea how to help me, though she knew I needed help, and desperately wanted to help me. I ended up doing several weeks of Drug and Alcohol Therapy at a local outpatient facility. On one of these such visits, a counselor who had helped my mother and I work through my parents' divorce earlier in my life pulled my mother aside

and, as I have been told, said the words that most likely saved my mother's life; "How much more trouble will you let her get into before you realize that you can't drink?" This woman had hit home with my mom, verbally assaulted her pride, made her realize the relationship between her and my actions, and made her see that she is my main source of information on what is socially acceptable adult behavior.

My mom began attending Alcoholics Anonymous of her own accord. It took a few months before she could admit to herself that she was an alcoholic, and when she finally said "Hello, my name is Kelly, and I am an alcoholic," I was very proud of her. From that point on, her road to recovery was mostly down hills, with few ruts or bumps in her path. Today, I am able to most proudly say my mother is completely drug and alcohol free, and has been so for the past four years, over which she has realized her full potential to be the best mom anyone could ever hope to have. My mom is my best friend, my coach, my biggest fan. Everything I do, I do with mom's approval or opinion, which I hold in high respect. She is the strongest, kindest, warmest and most charming woman I can boast of knowing. Most of all, I am utterly grateful for all the experiences, good and bad, that lead my mom to be the person she is, and for the opportunity that she was given and accepted to become a sober, functioning mother and member of society.

Mackay P - Torrington



One Day At A Time!

She left and didn't say good bye. It is never easy when one of us is suddenly gone and I know I'm not going to see them again. It is my initial reaction to be selfish and go right to "me" and how this affects "me" and poor "me"! But the rest of you have taught me that it isn't about me and it's

alright to be sad and hurt initially. But for the sake of her and all of the rest of us, I must recognize the contribution she made to those that she loved and cared about while she was here.

I met her on a Sunday morning when I came to our weekly “clean up” meeting. I was the first one there and when I turned on the lights there was a lump/pile of blankets and sleeping bags on the floor. I was taught to approach with caution and gently kick the pile and see what responded. She stuck her head out of the pile, not the end that I expected, and asked why I had kicked her and did I want to be kicked back. I explained that I wasn’t sure what was under the pile and now that I knew, was there anything we might be able to help her with? She explained that she had nowhere to go and needed some place to stay until she got back on her feet. She got up and tried to help with the cleanup but you could tell she didn’t feel well and wished we would have not woken her up so early. She had an ugly green car with some broken windows (it was winter time), no job, physically sick, sad, alone, depressed, and an inkling of a desire to not drink anymore.

One of the old timers told her that morning that she never had to feel the way she felt ever again if she didn’t want to. She stayed around for the Sunday morning meeting and must have heard enough to “keep coming back”.

One day sober grew into a lot of days sober and she wasn’t afraid to tell you that they all were not good days. She would speak of her struggles and how difficult it was to keep the booze away one more day at a time. She could laugh and make others better because she knew it made her better. She got a job and then got a better job. She got a car with all of the windows in it and no “drunk dents”. She would stand up for what she thought was right and wouldn’t back down from anyone. She became a friend and partner to many who were trying to do what she had done. She was doing what was suggested she do, she asked for help, and she gave of herself when asked. She was staying sober in spite of herself and her circumstances. She understood that she wasn’t alone and she was part of something way bigger than her that was saving people like her from a sad and tragic existence.

And then she’s gone. It is our responsibility to share her experience, strength, and hope in order that her example lives on. We must remember her contribution to our sobriety and know that she understood it was a gift not to be taken lightly. If I continue to draw inspiration from her example I will increase my chances of successfully dealing with this nasty disease. I will celebrate her good days, learn from her bad days, and be grateful that she was part of my sobriety. Good bye my friend!

~Anonymous~



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

**AA Area 76
Spring Convention
June 5, 6 & 7, 2015
Albany County Fairgrounds
3520 US Highway 287
Laramie, WY**

**Room Reservations:
Prices good until May 5th 2015**

**Quality Inn:
307-742-6665
\$85.00 per night/double occ.**

**Comfort Inn:
307-721-8856
\$100.00 per night/double occ.**

**Holiday Inn:
307-721-9000
\$109.00 per night/double occ**

**For more information or questions contact: Tom H. (307) 399-7005 or
Phyllis V. (307) 460-1913**

**District 11, Area 76 Wyoming
Gray Rocks Reservoir Campout
June 25, 26, and 27 2015**

Camping, Fishing and Fellowship

**A.A. Contact: Marc B. 307-401-0228
Tom H. 307-322-9558
Gordon M. 307-575-3429
Dan C. 307-259-5263
Saturday Evening Speaker To Be Announced**

Area 76 Summer Business Assembly

**July 10, 11, 12 2015
VFW Post 2918
Torrington, WY
908 West 25th Ave**

**A.A. Contact: Marc B. 307-401-0228
Lou R. 307-534-2172**

**Registration begins Friday 4 PM
****(Ice Cream Social Friday night and
Lunch Saturday will be provided by
District 11 Groups at the VFW Post)**

Motels for Summer Business Assembly:

**America's Best Value Inn (307) 532-7118 (Trish Bottnenkamp – mgr)
1548 S. Main St
(20 Doubles Blocked under "Area 76" \$71.10 + tax / night)**

**Holiday Inn Express (307) 532-7600 (Jena Ross – mgr)
1700 east Valley Rd
(\$129.95 + tax / night)**

**Grandma's Inn (307) 532-4064
4577 Hwy 26/85
(Single \$51.35 w/tax/ night; Double \$53.53 w/tax /night;
Room w/kitchenette \$64.45 w/tax**

**West Central Regional Forum
August 21 – 23, 2015
Friday 6:45 p.m. to Sunday Noon
Parkway Plaza Hotel
123 W. E St.
Casper, Wy 82601**

Register online: www.aa.org