

On The Rogue Again

JACKSON COUNTY CENTRAL OFFICE NEWSLETTER

Jackson County A.A. Central Office
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Editors Note -February 2014

We would love to hear your stories thoughts. If you have a submission for the newsletter please email it to Fifi3333@gmail.com.

A great time was had by many at The Southern Oregon DOTR bowling fiasco! Otto and Fifi did well at the Valentine Potluck. Nobody drank! There were over 1400 years calculated at the countdown. ~Virginia

We publish for your enjoyment and information. Any mistakes you find are there for a purpose. We publish something for everyone, and some people are always looking for mistakes.

On the Rogue Again, is a monthly Newsletter of the Jackson County Central Office. It is about by, and for the members of Alcoholic Anonymous Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein aren't to be attributed to Alcoholic Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply any endorsement by either Alcoholic Anonymous Jackson County Central Office, or "On the Rogue Again". (Exceptions: Quotations from the A. A. books or pamphlets and the 12 Steps and/or 12 Traditions are reprinted with permission of A. A. World Services, Inc) On the Rogue Again reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, proper language, length, contents that violate A. A. Traditions, etc.

Have a good day unless you have made other plans.

Read pages 86-87-88 in your Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous everyday.

Central Office News

Greetings from the Board of Jackson County AA Central Office. We thank all of the groups and individuals for their generous support. A great way to get involved is to volunteer for a four hour shift once a week. Please contact Bill S. at Central Office to learn more about this. You can always come to the business meeting the first Saturday of the month to volunteer. Remember, Central Office now has a web site. There you can find information about upcoming events and the meeting schedule as well the current issue of "On the Rogue Again." You can find it by pointing your browser to www.jccoaa.org.

Board Members

Chair	-	Terry K.
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Newsletter Editor	-	Virginia H.
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Donations for January 2014

Monday Night Men's Stag	75.55
By The Book	200.00
C.O.D	725.00
Thursday Nite Shady A.s	50.00
H.O.W. Group	20.00
Monday Nooner's	137.50
Park Bench AA	175.00
Linda W.	8.00
Fran	16.00

Birthdays

Suzy	5.00
Tana	33.00
Brandy C	40.00
Stephanie	2.00

How about donating a dollar for each year on your sobriety birthday?!

Central Office Annual Fundraiser Breakfast

Breakfast, Speaker, Raffle

\$10 adults, \$5 children

Sunday, April 6th, 2014

9:30am

St. Vincent De Paul

2424 Pacific Hwy

Medford, OR

Tickets will be available at Central Office
(If you have any donations for raffle, please
drop them off at Central Office)

Thank you

During my wife's recent illness and death, I received many expressions of sympathy and of willingness to help in any way possible from members of the Rogue Valley AA community. These were much appreciated and helped me get through a most difficult time. They demonstrated once again what a great bunch you are and how critical you are to my continued sanity, such as it is. I only hope I will be able to repay your many kindnesses. Thank you.

Tom Montgomery

Step 2

CAME TO BELIEVE A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY

When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own conception of God. This applies, too, to other spiritual expressions which you find in this book. Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you. At the start, this was all we needed to commence spiritual growth, to affect our first conscious relation with God as we understood Him. Afterward, we found ourselves accepting many things which then seemed entirely out of reach. That was growth, but if we wished to grow we had to begin somewhere. So we used our own conception, however limited it was. We needed to ask ourselves but one short question. - "Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?" As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built.
-A.A. Big Book p.47

Therefore, Step Two is the rallying point for all of us. Whether agnostic, atheist, or former believer, we can stand together on this Step. True humility and an open mind can lead us to faith, and every A.A. meeting is an assurance that God will restore us to sanity if we rightly relate ourselves to Him.
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p.33

A blonde went to the appliance store sale and found a bargain. "I would like to buy this TV", she told the salesman. "Sorry, we don't sell to blondes", he replied. She hurried home and put her hair up into a hat, then came back again and told the salesman, "I would like to buy this TV". "Sorry, we don't sell to blondes", he replied. "Darn, he recognized me", she thought. She went for a complete disguise this time, dark wig, new outfit, big sunglasses, then waited a few days before she again approached the salesman. "I would like to buy this TV." "Sorry, we don't sell to blondes", he replied. Frustrated, she exclaimed, "How do you know I'm blonde?!"

"Because that's a microwave", he replied.

My experience tells me that God must be involved, or I will not stay sober.

We hear the phrase "God of your own understanding", "Higher Power", quite frequently in our walk in this program of sobriety. It is not surprising that this is the case, given the proven success record of AA over time. "Rarely have we seen a person fail, who has thoroughly followed our path". This path involves our conscious contact with God as we understand him. This is your own personal perception of your Higher Power, and thus, your own personal relationship with your God. In my life this has been pivotal in maintaining sobriety. As it turns out, I believe it was pivotal even before I ever knew I would have an issue with alcohol.

I was raised the fourth son of six in rural Grants Pass. As you can imagine things were always happening having five brothers to run with growing up. My parents are still married, approaching some sixty years of wedlock now. I can honestly say that I don't know how a child could be raised in a more loving family than mine was. In twenty years at home, I never once saw my parents have a fight. Now, I'm here to tell you that that....was not the clearest depiction of the real world that I would later live in. My parents were always supportive and loving. They were and are very religious people. More than that though, they were and are very spiritual people, and raised us in that regard. I'm very grateful to have that background and the clean living that was brought along with that lifestyle growing up.

First and foremost in my family was our faith. Today I believe, whole heartedly, that kept me away from alcohol and drugs. My conscious contact with God was being nurtured on a daily basis. I was blessed with athletic ability and really enjoyed sports. When I was offered athletic scholarships, I turned them down after discussing them at great length with my father. Why??? The reason was simple, not easy, but simple. My spiritual health would suffer if I put my

athletic interests ahead of it. Whether you agree with that assessment is neither here nor there. For me it was the truth, and I listened to my father and continued to progress in my ministry. Later, I would pursue Golf at a professional level and it would have an impact.

After being with my wife for 16 years, we were divorced. I had taken up a Golf career which entailed a lot of travel. After being on the road for several weekends in a row, and completely neglecting my wife, my daughter and my spiritual health, my wife asked for a divorce. We were divorced and then started the most difficult years of my life. It wasn't the loss of the wife, it was the loss of myself and my connection to my God. Through the process of the divorce, circumstances arose that eventually led to my dismissal from the congregation that I had been raised in. The term dis-fellowshipped is a term most people are unfamiliar with. We fellowship in AA, it is the exact opposite. I was dis-fellowshipped from the faith that I was raised in. This meant that I also lost my entire family, and all close friends I had known for years that were part of that faith. They are no longer allowed to speak to me unless for business only. This happened in 2001. For the first time in my life I felt completely lost and did not belong, so I got married again.

Unfortunately for me, the indoctrination of my childhood had convinced me to my core that I had no hope if I was not part of the religion I grew up with. Although I wanted to have hope, I believed I could have none. I managed as best I could. My marriage lasted about a year and I wanted so badly to get advice and help from my father, but he was no longer available to me. It was at this time that I found my mistress, alcohol.

The local sports bar welcomed me with open arms! They had me autograph a golf club and they hung it on the wall! Wow! Exciting! This became my replacement family, if you will. I lost the feelings of anguish and despair when I drank with my friends. I had never "partied" before, so I felt I was entitled, it's my turn. I had never been a drunk because I was raised to believe it was wrong. I was raised to

believe that I could not have a good relationship with God if I was a drunk. I knew that I would walk even further away from God, if not run away, by continuing down this path. The truth is, I couldn't defend myself against the desire to feel ok, because I had quit feeding my spiritual side. Now it was your fault I was in this spot. It was everyone else's fault that I was without my relationship with God. I didn't know how to rebuild that relationship without going back to being a part of a religion which my core values could no longer condone. Even as I knew that getting closer to God would get me back on track, I couldn't do it alone. Believe me I tried.

It is clear to see now what my malady was, but it was not clear at the time. I was spiritually sick. Sicker than most I would say. And it was in this state that I met my third wife :) We dated for a couple of years, had fun. I hadn't to this point had any consequences other than losing my relationship with my God. Obviously the most severe consequence, but I was completely blind to it. My soon to be wife asked me about my drinking, she was concerned. I assured her that I was a husband and father first, and should we get married, the party will end and real life will begin. We did get married in 2005 and in a very short time, she wondered where the wonderful husband was, and I wondered why the drunk guy hadn't left? After one year of marriage, my wife and employer intervened and I went to rehab. I believe this saved my life. Not the rehab, but the fact that rehab put me in contact with AA. This was in 2006. I wish I could say I've been sober since.

After leaving rehab, I found it really wasn't difficult not to drink. My wife didn't like me being gone in the evenings. It was easy to quit going to meetings. I didn't recognize the value of the twelve steps. I was so spiritually sick that I couldn't recognize that the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous were exactly what my spirit was starving for, that they would bring me back to the comfort and ease I felt as a young man that made his faith his vocation. As a result of not working the steps

of AA, I had no defense against the first drink. In 2009 after my third DUII we were divorced. I really had no hope left. Prior to this, something I feared but hoped wouldn't happen did. My daughter became of an age in which she needed to make a decision. As a member of the religion I had been dis-fellowshipped from, she was forced to choose between her faith or a relationship with me. She chose her faith. Although painful, I am proud of her for making a decision that is right for her spiritually. I hope and pray she never loses that conscious contact with her God as I did.

I had lead a life dominated by a very strong faith in a power greater than myself as a young man. A faith that was for a time unwavering in my God. When by my perception, that had been taken from me, I felt naked and afraid without protection. The heavy indoctrination from infancy had convinced me that there was no hope for me. Yet there continued a burning desire to have hope in something. In late 2012 I was at the end of my rope...literally. Suicide was the only way out. I could have no faith because I had no hope. The "Good Book" says that Faith, is the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not yet beheld. Without hope, there can be no faith.

Alcoholics Anonymous has given me hope. I can build upon that hope to have faith by working the twelve steps. I know without question, my relationship with God kept me free from the need to fill an empty hole as a young man. I can tell you that as a result of these steps, my relationship with my God today gives me that same sense of comfort and ease that I knew as a young man. I can tell you that every time I am in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, I have hope. I can tell you that by working this program of recovery, I reconnect daily with my God. I can tell you that although my God never left me, I turned my back on him. I can tell you that today, I have the same God I grew up with, a loving and kind God as I see him. I can tell you today that I have faith, because of this hope that AA has helped rekindle in my mind, my spirit and

my heart. Faith without works is dead, and by faith your works will be known. This program of action continually provides access to my Higher Power, the God of my understanding. I have faith that God is working with me and for me. I have Alcoholics Anonymous to thank for this. I have God to thank for keeping me sober, and doing for me what I could not do for myself.
Big James

Step 3

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

"God, I offer myself to Thee-to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!" We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him
- *A.A. Big Book p.63*

3rd Step Promises

When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed.

We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our own little plans and designs.

More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter.

We were reborn.

Like all the remaining Steps, Step Three calls for affirmative action, for it is only by action that we can cut away the self-will which has always blocked the entry of God - or, if you like a Higher Power - into our lives. Faith, to be sure, is necessary, but faith alone can avail nothing. We can have faith, yet keep God out of our lives. Therefore our problem now becomes just how and by what specific means shall we be able to let Him in? Step Three represents our first attempt to do this. In fact, the effectiveness of the whole A.A. program will rest upon how well and how earnestly we have tried to come to "a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him".

- *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 40*

Never ruin an apology with an excuse.

~Kimberly Johnson



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