

Faithful Fiver Pledge:

Emerald Valley Intergroup
1259 Willamette
Eugene, Oregon 97401

- I pledge \$5 per month to support EVI and service work in my community
- I'm feeling grateful, I can send _____ per month
- I will mail or drop off my contribution:
Monthly
- Four times a year (\$15 each)
- Once a year (\$60)

Name: _____

Address: _____

when you acknowledge my contribution, please list me as (first name, Initial, or nickname): _____

"Faithful Fivers" are individuals who donate \$5 or more per month to help support Intergroup. We will post your nick name on a board in the office, with a little red dot placed for each months contribution, so you can track of your contribution. (We don't remind you, or otherwise keep track of it for you, and we will send you a newsletter whether or not you have remembered to send in your pledge.) You can contribute monthly, quarterly or yearly, and if you check the receipt box, and are on the News mailing list, we will send you a receipt at the end of the year. (If you want a receipt, but would like to save EVI postage by picking up the News at the Office, or the EVI Business Meeting, fill out your nickname and address, but write "no news" next to your address.) Our "Faithful Fivers" Program is new this last year, and was a great help. The idea came from an article in the G.S.O. Newsletter "Box 4-5-9 on similar programs at other Intergroups.

GET THE NEWS!



8

1

It's A Dog's Life

One day I was waiting at my friend's house as she got ready to leave for a meeting. Her dog Caesar was lying on the floor. Suddenly, Caesar jumped up and started running around the kitchen chasing his tail. He was a dog obsessed, oblivious to everything and everyone as he pursued his tail, bouncing off tables, chairs, and appliances.

After several minutes of dedicated pursuit, he managed to twist himself so that he could snap his teeth down — chomp! — on his tail. There followed a true look of amazement on his face. He had expended heroic levels of energy, and now that he had the object of his efforts in his grasp, he didn't know what to do with it.

I laughed so hard I practically fell off the chair. Caesar looked at me like I had the problem, let go of his tail, and resumed his starting position, reclining on the kitchen floor. When my friend returned to the room, I remarked what a nut-case her dog was. She said that Caesar had started chasing his tail one day when he was a puppy and had been doing it ever since. As we were leaving her house, Caesar got a far-away gleam in his eye, hopped up, and started running around in pursuit of his tail.

Caesar and I are much alike. Whenever my level of acceptance of people, places, things, or situations is not to my liking, I have the capacity to pursue whatever is necessary to make it acceptable to me — that is, make it fit my perception of reality — with no regard for others, for time and energy expended, or for the wear and tear on myself. The only problem with this obsessive behavior is that, once I have gotten my own way, I don't know what to do with it; since it feels uncomfortable and unnatural, and I can't concentrate on anything else or I'll lose my grip on whatever I'm gripping.

Alcohol made the tail-chasing easier somehow. Just like Caesar, I would get a far-away gleam in my eye, take the first drink, and hop up and chase my tail one more time, unable to stop this crazy behavior. I didn't enjoy the pursuit any longer but I was still doing it.

When I came to AA, I was told that I had choices. What a concept! I could change if I really wanted to. I could actually do other than act in this blind, compulsive way. I could maybe even relax and feel contentment, even though other people around me were chasing their tails.

I am not yet cured. I don't think I'll ever be cured. I still chase my own tail from time to time in sobriety. If I don't accept things as they need to be, I have the choice of being oblivious to everything and everybody around me and can chase reality as I choose to view it. But without the drink, this behavior just doesn't work.

The gift of sobriety has given me back my choices. I've always had them; it's just that it was habit to pick up the drink and start chasing my tail without thinking why. I can go back and do the same thing again any time I want to, but like Caesar, I will always get the same results. So, I choose not to. I have learned this in sobriety — there is always much more to learn. Thank you, Caesar, you lovable dog.

*Grapevine
March 2000*



E.V.I. News

July, 2001

Contents:

It's a dogs life	1
People	2
Recovery begins.....	2
Gratitude	3
Calendar	3
AA Meetings	4
A seat, a cup of coffee and	4
Rule 62	5
Contributions	6
Minutes	6
No more shame	7

stamp

Emerald Valley Intergroup
1259 Willamette Street
Eugene, Oregon 97401

Emerald Valley Intergroup
1259 Willamette St. Eugene, OR
97401 (541) 342-4113



OFFICE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR
Judy B. 687-9389, Jim K. 302-0942
LITERATURE
Dave S. 465-1767, Kathy C. 747-5222
ANSWERING SERVICE
Linda 345-5827
ARCHIVIST/HISTORIAN
Linda 345-5827
PUBLIC INFORMATION (PI)
Brad M. 741-2579, Tom S. 686-8388
COOPERATION PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY
Cathy B. 343-1962, Angel 431-4924
ACTIVITIES
Sandi D. 463-0586, Amy W. 741-1892
E.V.I. COMMUNICATIONS
Newsletter: Robert S. 684-9439, Kurt 747-8925
Website: Michael W. 343-2566 Michael S. 349-0504

Meeting Books: Doc. M. Johanna,
E.V.I. SPEAKER MEETING
Al D. 345-2058, Gaylene G. 953-3425
OUTREACH
Still open
HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS (H&I)
Chair: Karl B. 688-1047 karl@rpginvest.com

COOPERATION W/ TREATMENT FACILITIES (CTF)
Laura K. 345-5788 Cathy B. 342-6675
HOSPITALS
Bruce P. 338-9892
CORRECTIONS
Ron B. 988-1827

H&I Coordinators
Lane County Jail: Paul C. (747-3928)
I.T.U.: Jack C. (463-1040)
C.C.C. (Women's): Bev L. (349-0145)
C.C.C. (Men's): Steve G. (915-1933)
Alma Work Camp: Karl B. (688-1047)
Pathways: Ron B. (988-1827)
Serbu Detention: Gary R. (485-7777)
Carlton House: Mike L. (485-6153)
W.F.T. - Friday Night: Laura K. (345-1788)
W.F.T. - Book Study: Wendy W. (431-6920)
Serenity Lane - Speaker: Duane F. (726-8434)
Serenity Lane - B.T.G.: Gus P. (463-1691)
Serenity Lane - New: Gus P. (463-1691)
L.C.P.H.: Todd J. (302-6377)
Johnson Unit: Steve S. (683-3564)

E.V.I. STEERING COMMITTEE
Chair: Chris H. 517-7021 chelmers@efn.org
Vice-Chair: open
Secretary: Tom L. 343-2465
Treasurer: Mel M. 345-4450
At-Large: Michael W. 343-2566m@mlwebb.com
At-Large: Dann 484-2330 Dann@lowinsure.com
At-Large: Gary R. 485-7777
At-Large: Todd 607-6349 kritler@netscape.net
Vice Treasurer: Ryan A. 513-6498
BOOKKEEPER
Bev L.

Recovery begins at the end of the road

My home group where recovery begins is called the End of the Road Group, in Homer, Alaska. I didn't get to the End of the Road Group until I'd been sober in Alcoholics Anonymous for just over six years, but a few months earlier I'd experienced an emotional bottom that was nearly the end of my sobriety. Then, in a very short space of time, many things in my life came to an end and one new opportunity beckoned: the company I was working for was sold, and the subsequent reorganizational changes were uncomfortable; my home for the past seven years had deteriorated to a state where demolition was the only effective repair; my term as DCM of an urban Oregon district was over; and my sister in Alaska needed help. With all these hints from the God of my understanding — added to a lifelong dream of living in Alaska — the direction was clear: quit the job, tear down the house, pass on the district to a new DCM, and go be of maximum service to God and the people about me in Alaska.

With family in town, I was not exactly a stranger to Homer, nor was I a stranger to the Fellowship in Homer — I'd been here before. On a prior visit I was even told to quit introducing myself as a visitor at meetings — anyone who ever came back to Homer, they told me, wasn't a visitor! It's that feeling of welcome and being home that brings many visitors back — some even, like me, to stay. But it wasn't always so. AA came to Homer about twenty-five years ago, when two people from Kenai would drive down once a week, invited by the parish priest in the local Catholic Church to help a parishioner who had "a little drinking problem." Many a night the only people at those early meetings were the two from Kenai. Meetings were held for many years in the basement of the Catholic Church, later in the basement of the Methodist Church. Sometime in the early nineteen-eighties, a noon meeting was started in a room at the local glass shop. All of these early meetings were small; six attendees was a "large" meeting. About 1988 a strong personality got sober and "took charge" of Alcoholics Anonymous in Homer (and is still talked about though he no longer lives here). "The General" would order people to attend meetings, make sponsor-ponsee assignments, and even bought a building — committing Seventh Tradition monies to make the payments — in order to start an AA clubhouse. This was too much and there was a revolution. The General was unseated, and the members recognized that while a clubhouse was inappropriate for Homer, a dedicated meeting room was not. Space was found in an office building, where we still meet today.

By this time, there was one registered group (the Homer "Twelve and Twelve" Group, meeting at noon) and one unregistered meeting (the Third and Eleventh Step meeting at 8 p.m.) in Homer. These two groups agreed to share the expenses for the meeting room equally — but things didn't work out that way. The "Twelve and Twelve" Group was large enough to be self-supporting, and could easily afford its share of the costs. The Third and Eleventh Step meeting, on the other hand, was not — and when "money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose," the war was on. This conflict, which produced a few casualties (isn't resentment the number one killer?), also resulted in a very positive solution, recorded in the minutes of a special business meeting held on December 4, 1994: "I move that the Third and Eleventh Step and the 'Twelve and Twelve' merge and form a single group, to be called the Homer End of the Road Group." The motion was seconded, discussed, and passed unanimously by those in attendance, according to those minutes. From

Rule 62:



No More Shame

I spoke with a Catholic priest who in the course of his work encounters women who have a problem with alcohol. I wanted to enlist his help in spreading the word that there is a place to go if you are a woman who "habla español," who thinks that she may have a drinking problem. He told me that the number of women who need help is great and that he'll do all that he can because he knows that women are afraid to seek help "because of the shame." He and I share a frustration in knowing that these women are hard to reach. The hopelessness and shame that these women feel in admitting that there is a problem with alcohol is so great that many die without ever knowing that there is a solution to their alcoholism. At times, they are protected by well-intentioned family members, who have no idea what can be done or where they can go. Or they are told that they will be ostracized if they go "outside" the family to seek help.

While Spanish-speaking AA meetings have been available for a long time, they are usually attended by men. The sober alcoholic woman is a rarity at these meetings. It is not that my brother alcoholics are uncaring or do not welcome us. It is our fear of what people will think that keeps us from seeking help. A woman who is drunk is equated with a woman of the streets. Many in our culture do not understand that alcoholism is a disease, not a moral dilemma or a weakness.

Now there is a place where answers can be found and a woman can get off the path to sobriety. Every Tuesday night in my area, there is an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for Spanish-speaking women. There you will find other women who are recovering from the disease of alcoholism. If you are a woman who thinks that she may have a drinking problem, come and listen. Hear the experience, strength, and hope of women just like you who are recovering from alcoholism. You can find the support you need to live a sober life, one day at a time.

Grapevine
September 1995



EVI Office

1259 Willamette
Eugene, OR 97401
Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm
Thursday 9:00am- 8:00pm
Saturday 9:00 am - noon
Drop by for a visit!

EVI Web Site

www.efn.org/~eviaa

Meeting schedules, business meeting minutes, and much more.

The little squiggle in the address is found right next to the exclamation point on the keyboard. Save a book mark or favorite and check back often!

E.V.I. News

Emerald Valley Intergroup's Newsletter for the A.A. Community in Lane County

EVI News is a monthly newsletter of the Emerald Valley Intergroup. It is about, by, and for the members of Alcoholics Anonymous fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article or event or notice imply endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or EVI. (Exceptions: Quotations from A.A. books or pamphlets which are reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.) EVI News is produced to support communication within the fellowship; please respect the anonymity of any A.A. member mentioned herein. EVI News reserves the right to edit any submissions for clarity, length, language, and editorial policy. Contributions gratefully accepted for consideration for publication.

Submissions due last Monday of each month. To submit articles or event information, mail them or drop them off at the EVI office c/o EVI Newsletter. Submissions can also be e-mailed to: eviaa@efn.org

Communication Committee (Newsletter & Web Site, Meeting Book) meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm at 2495 Columbia St. Eugene. OR 97401 (call and check 343-2566)



Contributions:

(June/year to date)
 As Bill Sees It **0/50.00**
 Attitude Adjustment **0/477.94**
 Autumn Group **0/25.00**
 Backwoods Bunch **0/0**
 Brown Bag Group **0/200.00**
 Cottage Grove Gratitude **0/0**
 Cottage Grove Noon **0/0**
 Creswell Steps & Traditions **0/0**
 Downtown AM group **62.12/837.50**
 Drop The Rock **0/0**
 Fireside group **0/60.00**
 First Monroe Group **0/0**
 First Things First **0/0**
 Four Corners **0/0**
 Freedom Of Choice **0/96.50**
 Friday Big Book Study(M) **0/0**
 Friday Physical Awakening **0/120.00**
 Fri night young people **0/0**
 From the Heart **0/0**
 Gratitude Group **0/60.00**
 Harrisburg Group **0/0**
 Jasper Group **0/0**
 Last Chance Study Group **0/0**
 Language of the Heart **0/10.00**
 Lowell Lakeside **0/0**
 McKenzie Bridge **0/2.00**
 McKenzie River Group **4.00/10.00**
 Monday Mens Stag **0/50.00**
 Monday Night Cont. Study **0/0**
 Monday Night New Group **0/20.00**
 New Freedom **0/400.00**
 New Freedom 20 **0/360.00**
 Physical, Mental, Spiritual **0/0**
 Plug in the Jug **0/0**
 Recovery by Big Book **0/15.75**
 Saturday Night Beginners **0/0**
 Saturday Step **150.00/409.20**
 Sober Awakenings **420.00/720.00**
 Sobriety for life **110.00/190.00**
 Springfield Monday Night **20.00/40.00**
 Springfield Study Group **0/40.00**
 Stairway to Sobriety **25.00/125.00**
 Sunday Morning Big book **0/240.00**
 Sunlight of the Spirit **0/30.60**
 Sunday Night 12x12 **0/0**
 Men's Sponsorship **0/120.00**
 Sunday Women's Step Stdy **0/90.00**
 Thursday Voyagers Group **0/0**
 Thurs PM Rush Hour **0/20.00**
 T.G.G. Speakers Mtg **0/120.00**
 Tuesday Night Book Study **0/0**
 We Need Each Other **0/0**
 Wednesday Mens Noon **30.00/230.00**
 Wednesday Men's Stag **0/252.00**
 Who am I Group **20.00/100.25**
 Womans Road to Recovery **60.00/120.00**
 Women's How It Works **0/0**
 Women's Bedrock **0/60.00**
 Ya Po Ah **0/40.00**
 Total Contributions (month/year to date)
 Group ytd **901.12/5,812.34**
Fundraising:
 EVI Speakers Meeting **804.43/804.43**
 Faithful Fivers, individual **47.10/977.10**

June EVI Business Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2001

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The meeting opened with the Serenity Prayer. Those present introduced themselves. New EVI Representatives: **Kathleen ABC group**

A quorum of 16 EVI Reps were present to conduct business. (15 required per amendment to by-laws) An agenda for the meeting was presented and distributed.. Chairperson moved the Meeting start with New Business. No Dissent. Motion carried.

Elections: (filling vacancies)
 Cooperation with Treatment Facilities (CTF) – Cathy B 342-6675 elected vice-chair.
 Website: Michael S. 349-0504 elected vice-chair

An informal discussion/presentation on how to provide video captioning for hearing impaired at meetings followed, with an invitation to groups to express interest in providing a local captioned "regular" A.A. meeting.

Committee reports:
 Treasurer: **Mel M.**
 Profit & Loss statements are available in the office and distributed to all present.
 \$ 2,582.33 Net income for the month. Book sale income up, expenses down from April. Inventory and group donations level. **Thanks Mel**

Volunteer Coordinator: **Judy**
 Things going well – could use volunteers for office, summer is coming up and always need fill-ins. Also will be holding a potluck volunteer meeting. Hours for shifts are 9-1, 1-5, and 5-8 pm on Thursdays **Thanks Judy**

Literature Chair: **Dave S.**
 "We have books for sale". Literature is going well. Serenity Lane will be purchasing all literature through EVI for the present. **Thanks Dave**

Website: **Michael W.** Website doing well, got some help. (see above). **Thanks Michael**

Meeting Book committee: **Doc M.** Have new batch of Meeting books in. **Thanks Doc**

Newsletter: **Robert S.**
 Newsletters printed on new copier! Worked great. Robert (541-684-9439) is always looking for area member's articles and additions. Committee meets 3rd Tuesday of the month @ 2495 Columbia, Eugene. **Thanks Michael (for Robert)**

Answering Service (Diverter Coordinator): **Linda L.**
 Meets 1st Sat of the Month at 9 am. Things going well. Will be working on the twelve-step list. Please call Linda, 541-345-5827, if you have difficulty working with the Diverter system. **Thanks Linda**

Public Information: **Brad**
 Volunteers went to Opportunity Learning Center (high school age) , and had a day in Oakridge at WestFir High School and the Junior High. Gearing up for next school year, **Thanks Brad**

CPC: **Angel for Kathy**
 Angel reported that CPC went to U of O , and sent letters out **Thanks Angel.**

Activities: **Amy** Picnic coming up. **Thanks Amy**

Speaker Meeting: **Gaylene G.** for **AI**
 Going well. Committee could **still** use assistance for setup at the meeting. Donated excess of prudent reserve to EVI. Looking a bringing some more out of town speakers in, if you know of someone, let us know . **Thanks Gaylene.**

Outreach: NO REPORT

Archivist: **Linda L.**
 Will be working on Archives. **Thanks Linda**

H&I: Bev for **Carl.** " WE STILL NEED WOMEN" for meetings (CTF and Hospitals). **Thanks Bev**

Motion to adjourn at 7:45 PM Respectfully Submitted Michael W. for Tom L.

6 3

the ashes of conflict rose a stronger unity and a recommitment to the primary purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous, to carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic.

Homer, Alaska is found, literally, at the end of the road— it's "as far as you can go without a passport" (as the title of a book written by a local author suggests). Today, people from all over the United States come to Homer for the halibut fishing — and some to attend a meeting of the End of the Road Group, where the message is all about recovery from the illness alcoholism and where returnees aren't visitors but people who have come back home. We are all on the Road of Happy Destiny. I find it comforting that for some of us, the journey of recovery begins at the End of the Road.

Brad C., Homer, Alaska, Grapevine, March 2000

July Calendar:

E.V.I. and District Committee Meetings:

All meetings at EVI office unless otherwise noted.

1st	Mon	Steering Committee 7:00
	Tue	District 20, 418 A St., Karla B. 744-0509
	Tue	District 33, 6:30 Pam G. 895-5478
	Wed	District 19, 6:30 Tracy R. 338-4320
	Thur	Speaker Mtg Committee, 7:00
	Sat	Cooperation w/Prof. Community, Noon
2nd	Mon	EVI Business Meeting 6:30
	Wed	District 6, 6:30 Gus P. 463-1691
	Sat	Answering/Diverter 9AM
		EVI Speakers Meeting, 7:30 Country Club Rd Sun
3rd	Mon	Communication Committee 7:30, 2495 Columbia
	Mon	Public Information 6:30
	Tue	Office Volunteer 5:30
	Wed	Activities 6:30
	Thur	Cooperation Prof. Community?
Last	Wed	H& I Committee 6:00
Last	day	Literature Committee 6:30

Fellowship Events:

Summerfest begins Friday, July,6 with registration opening at 12 noon.

The kickoff speakers meeting is at 8pm with the dance following at 10pm. This years event features speakers from Oregon and California, live music Friday and Saturday night, a golf tournament, banquet and raffle.

Pre-registration closes on June 10th. You must preregister to participate in the River Rafting trip. Pre-registration forms are available at the EVI office.

AA Groups interested in hosting a time slot (3 hours) in the hospitality suite should call the Hospitality Suite Coordinator, Jim P. at 688-7915. We are still looking for a couple of ad-hoc committee chairs, anyone interest should call Gaylene at 342-8531.

Summerfest, like other conferences, is not an AA meeting. The conference is a self supporting event. Registration is an opportunity to participate in Summerfest and a registration badge is required for all events. No baskets are passed, however, registration and scholarship donations insure that no one will be turned away.



Gratitude:

Currently Available Service Positions:

EVI Service Committees:

Outreach: Get out to new meetings, meet new folks, and let them know about Intergroup.

Hospitals. Coordinates bringing meetings and info into local hospitals, Lane Psychiatric, and the Johnson unit. You don't have to be crazy to do this.

Other volunteer opportunities:

H&I has a constant, and varied need for people willing to do a little to a lot of service work. The opportunity for this type of service has really expanded, and H&I has been doing a great job, but they need the AA community to step up and volunteer. This is real service work.

There are still service positions available in H&I for women. See meeting book for details.

Public information - takes speakers into schools, and in general lets the public know that AA didn't die out in the '40's, and is, in fact, alive and well. We could particularly use someone with some enthusiasm for getting some public service spots on local TV and radio.

Looking for relaxing, enjoyable, rewarding service work? Volunteer at the Office!

EVI Office Volunteers work a four hour shift, once a week, or every two weeks. Not very demanding, bring a good book; but you do get to answer the phone, talk to folks who stop by, etc. If you have a little time available, whether you are a year sober, or twenty, this can be pleasant service work, and worth doing.

Twelve-Step list. If you would like to be on the list that is called by the office or the diverter for twelve step calls, there are sign up sheets going around, or stop by the office. People available during the day, and folks willing to give rides are particularly helpful.

AA Meetings:

New: Came to Believe
Thursday 7:30-9:00 PM
Eugene, (C)
1150 Maxwell Rd. St. Peters Catholic Church

Women's B.S.
Saturday 6:30-8:00 PM
Eugene, (O,X,W) (BB,12/12)
Somerset Villas Clubhouse, 2800 Sunnyview Lane

Southwest Sunset
Monday 5:30-6:30 PM
Eugene, (O,X,) (BB,12/12)
Somerset Villas Clubhouse, 2800 Sunnyview Lane

Try God Book Study
Seventh Day Adventist Church
1275 Polk St., Eugene
(BB)(C)(X)(Wheelchair access)
Monday's 7-8pm

Eugene Men's Book Study
Tuesday 7:00-8:30 PM
Eugene (M)(C)(BB,12x12) 19th & Patterson,
Emerald Baptist (downstairs)

River Road Book Study Wed 5:30-6:30 3280
River Road The Messiah Luthren Church

El Deseo de Vivir
Monday (Lunes) 7:30-9:00 pm
Sunday (Domingos) 7:30-9:00 pm
285 S. 42nd St. Springfield

El Latino de Eugene
Monday (Lunes) 7:30-9:00 pm
Wednesday (Miercoles) 7:30-9:00 pm
Friday (Viernes) 7:30-9:00 pm
886 1/2 W. 6th Ave. Eugene

Moved:

The Thursday Night Group has moved from
St. Judes to Emerald Baptist Church, 19th &
Patterson. (8:00-9:30 pm, (C))

There is a Solution is moving to
Wednesday 5:30-6:30 PM
Springfield (WCH)
418 N. A St. First Christian Church

Women's Expect a Miracle moving to
Tuesday 7:00-8:30 PM
Goshen (W)
Dillard Ave. Goshen Grange

“ A seat, a cup of coffee and lots of love”

When I came to AA in November 1960, having had my last drink the day before, I came in total terror. Sometime in the middle of October I'd been released from doing ten days in jail. It was there that I found out I was a heroin addict. Cold turkey is not the way to find out you're hooked on drugs. For whatever reason, I sat down with a bottle and some money, and said, "Let's find out who's boss." I found out a week or so later. It was alcohol, not me. I'd lost again. This was the final straw. There was nothing left inside of me or outside. I knew that if I took the next drink I would drink compulsively from consciousness to unconsciousness. I was scared as I'd never been scared in my life.

For the time being I did the only thing I could come up with: go to the movies and stay off the streets for a little longer. Postpone the first drink as long as possible. We speak of miracles. I had a thought: "Call AA." After leaving the movie I called AA and said two things I'd never before said: one, I need help, and two, I'm an alcoholic. I was taken to my first meeting the next night. Ten days later, I realized that the compulsion to drink was gone.

I was living in Phoenix at the time and the only meeting around was over in Mesa. One of the men at that meeting came up to me afterwards, shook my hand, and said, "Come back, young fellow. We need you." Boy! Talk about setting - the hook. I wanted to come back — for all the wrong reasons. For the suits the men wore, and the money they jingled in their pockets as they talked up front. I was hooked on AA, and told everybody within earshot. I did everything back-

I was without work, though I had a place to stay. Eventually I did get a job. It took me out of Phoenix for twelve days and back for two days. While I was away I was able to get to one meeting a week, until we went up on the Navajo Reservation. Then there were no meetings. Just me and the Big Book. Understanding very little but loaded with energy, I was an absolute pain in the neck. The men in my home group put up with me. They kept saying, "Keep coming back, kid, you're getting there." I wanted to belong so bad, but I knew if they found out who I really was, they'd ask me to leave. As time went forward, I got a job in Phoenix. Now these guys had to put up with me on a regular basis.

At my first birthday in AA, over thirty folks were there to share in my birthday. So many of the Ole Gaffers that I'd come to look up to were there. As I sat down with my coffee, I knew then that I had what it takes to stay. As I looked around the room, I began the slow acceptance that I did belong there and I was cared for, without having to do anything to be accepted. What a relief.

Some two years into AA, I finally met a man and called him my sponsor. I followed Wally everywhere. I was like a puppy. Wally would say something to me and I'd wag on both ends and pee on the floor. Wally began the slow task of getting me to do something about the Steps.

Wally died in my third year of sobriety. We both were working out of town at the time. I went to the Arid Club, as that was where we always met on Friday upon getting back in town. Everyone else there knew Wally had died the day before. A couple of men took me on a so-called Twelfth Step call. We went way out into the desert. They stopped the car, got out, and poured me a cup of coffee. One of the men said, "There's no easy way to tell you, Tony. Wally died yesterday." They told me I could run into the mountains and probably never be found. I could run about a mile to the nearest liquor store. Or I could drink the

coffee, get mad, be hurt, or whatever. They said that they hoped I'd drink the coffee. I did. You see, there used to be a liquor store about seventy-five yards from the Arid Club. What they were trying to do was give me some time. I'd never been loved or cared about like that in my life. Losing Wally was tough but their care made it a little easier.

Eventually the Third Step appeared on the horizon. Les took me to his home and for fifty hours we talked about God. I finally came to a place where I had my understanding of a power greater than myself, a Higher Power I understood. Finally I had ~ something to put faith in, and it wasn't me. As each of the rest of the Steps were fulfilled, there was a deep sense of consciousness — the beginnings of that conscious contact with a Higher Power. The Steps became the foundation of something so unusual, I still do not know how it works. From a starting point of terror of the first drink to over thirty-six years of sobriety, a real nice journey. It has not been all peaches and cream. I went to jail in my ninth year. Really stupid. It lasted two days and it was enough. Now I write checks only if I have money in my account.

I am over seven years into my fifth marriage. Four of them were sober. Max is not an alcoholic. I fathered three children and for some fourteen years I was a single parent. That will stretch your patience to beyond -thin or breaking. As of today, Max and I have nine children and nine grandchildren. Our children's ages are from forty-four to twenty-nine. Our grandchildren are from fourteen to almost one. Our family is more of a clan than a blood family. Folks become part of our clan because they want to, not necessarily because of blood ties. I've been in business for myself since 1983 and have three college degrees.

In 1974 I was involved in a major motorcycle accident, which left me handicapped, having experienced over 100 fractures to my legs, feet, and hands. While they don't work as well as when I started, I still have all my -limbs. The doctors wanted to remove my left foot and right hand in the beginning.

My first sponsor asked that I never waste his time. To this day I have not wasted one moment of the time so freely given me. I haven't always done everything graciously, but I have done the tasks laid out for me by the Steps. What I really miss is those Ole Gaffers at whose feet I sat and listened and absorbed so much. They are all gone, those who played such a major role in the shaping of me in the early years. I have outlived all but my present sponsor, who is very near and dear to me.

I attended the 1965 Convention in Toronto, Canada, but was too new in sobriety to be aware of all that was around me. But the 1995 Convention in San Diego was something else. My sponsor and I attended meetings together; I also attended meetings with those who call me sponsor. I saw that spark of light which we look for. I have it, my sponsor has it, and the others had it. I talked with people from everywhere; I listened to people from everywhere. I was part of everything around me.

To those of you who walk in front of me in time, thank you for your time and patience. To those of you who walk behind me in time, I'm glad you've joined us in this new found life. To those that have not yet arrived or have left for a time: we will keep a seat, a cup of coffee, and lots of love waiting for you.

Tony L., San Diego, California, Grapevine, August 1998



Rule 62:

"I guess my five year old daughter had heard me say "I need a meeting" so often, that one Saturday, when I picked her up at her mother's and asked what she wanted to do, she said, "Dad, I really need a cartoon."
(Bill S., Bastrop, LA)

OVERHEARD AT MEETINGS:
"I got my driver's license back just before New Year' Eve. I was so happy I drove around looking for a Sobriety Checkpoint."

A panhandler came down the street to where a woman was sweeping her walk, and asked her, "Got any old beer bottles?"
Self-righteously, she said, "Do I look like the sort of person who would drink beer?"
"Pardon me," apologized the tramp.
"Any old vinegar bottles?"

The church choir's star soloist was practicing with all the windows open. When he stepped outside for some fresh air, he saw a drunk sprawled upon the church steps and asked, "And what do you think of my execution?"
The drunk said, "I'm all for it."

"The worst thing about some men is that when they are not drunk they are sober." (W. B. Yeats)

"An alcoholic is someone you don't like who drinks as much as you do." (Dylan Thomas)

"I always wake up at the crack of ice." (Joe E. Lewis)

"My grandmother is over eighty and still doesn't need glasses. Drinks right out of the bottle."
(Henny Youngman)