

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!



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Once A Pickle, Never A Cucumber

The Big Book tells us that no real alcoholic can ever drink normally again. It is full of accounts by all sorts of alcoholics who vainly tried to drink normally, only to end up in worse shape than ever. Chapter three states: "Physicians who are familiar with alcoholism agree there is no such thing as making a normal drinker out of an alcoholic. Science may one day accomplish this, but it hasn't done so yet." The fact is, when I was drinking, I had no idea what normal drinking was.

Recovering akoholics often have the misconception that normal drinkers are controlled drinkers. They're not. They don't have to be. They move away from alcohol the way other sane people move away from a fireplace when they get too warm —almost unconsciously.

Here's an example. About two years before I came to AA, I was in a bar and a nicely dressed businessman and I bought each other drinks. I offered to buy another round.

"Oh no, thanks," he said calmly. "I'm beginning to feel it."

I thought to myself, this man is crazy. That buzz is a signal that the stuff is beginning to work. It's time to slug down another drink to achieve a nice high. Not until I was sober in AA did I realize that the man was not peculiar; he was a typical normal drinker.

Dick, my supervisor at work, knew I was in AA. One day he asked some friendly questions about alcoholism. I described the typical alcoholic compulsion to drink on the very occasions it was against our best interests to do so. Dick thought about this a moment, then said, "If I have a problem or a responsibility, I don't drink. I want to keep full control of my faculties. Then, when the problem is over, I may drink." (Note that he said, "I may drink.")

Dick's description defines the contrast between the normal drinker and the alcoholic. The normal drinker values his faculties more than his doesn't need to exercise control because booze has never produced the extraordinary lift it produces in the alcoholic. On the other hand, the alcoholic is focused on his feelings. In any given drinking experience, he never feels really good until alcohol has blotted out the need to control the drinking. How well I identify with AA speakers who say they never felt normal or "whole" until they discovered alcohol. Then the drinking continues even though the original euphoria evaporates and is replaced by fear, anxiety, and despair.

Early in my sobriety I belonged to a men's organization that periodically donated blood to the Red Cross. A fine restaurant in the city provided a free lunch and two alcoholic drinks to each donor. After the nurses had extracted a pint of my blood, I enjoyed the lunch and then went to the bar with the benevolent intent of giving my booze tickets to some lucky drinker. I went from patron to patron at the bar, but I could not get rid of those tickets.

"I've already got a drink," some said. "No thanks, I can't even drink all of my Scotch on the rocks." And, most shocking of all, "Oh lord, no! I've got to get back to the office."

Imagine. None of these men would take even a third drink, let alone a fourth, even though the drinks were free. Further, the Red Cross nurses had urged all of us, after donating blood, to drink lots of fluids. Didn't these men care about their health?

How dreadful to be a normal drinker, handicapped by a metabolism or

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E.V.I. News

March, 2001

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stamp

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1259 Willamette Street
Eugene, Oregon 97401



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ANSWERING SERVICE
Frank K. 345-7131/ Linda 345-5827
ARCHIVIST/HISTORIAN
Linda 345-5827
PUBLIC INFORMATION (PI)
Jim P 688-7915
COOPERATION PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY
Cathy B. 343-1962/ Alan 988-3595
ACTIVITIES
Sandi D 463-0586
E.V.I. COMMUNICATIONS
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Website: Michael W. 343-2566
Meeting Books: Doc M. 461-4800/Angel 431-4924
E.V.I. SPEAKER MEETING
AI D. 345-2058/ Gaylene G. 953-3425
OUTREACH
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HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS (H&I)
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Secretary: Gus P. 343-4815
COOPERATION W/ TREATMENT FACILITIES (CTF)
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HOSPITALS
Bruce P 338-9892
LCPH (Lane Psychiatric Hospital)
Tom F. 988-1103, Todd J. 302-6377
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Karl B. 345-7466 karl@rpginvest.com.
Ron B. 988-1827
Jail: Co-coordinator: Scott H. 747-7414
Co-coordinator: Paul C. 747-3928
ITU coordinator: Jack C. 463-1040
CCC coordinator: Bev L. 349-0145
Co-Coordinator Steve G. 915-1933
Alma Work Camp Coordinator: Karl B.
Pathways coordinator: Ron B 988-1827
Gary O 767-0099
Haag Home, Serbu: Gary R. 485-7777
Randy G 541-466-3027

E.V.I. STEERING COMMITTEE
Chair: Chris H. 517-7021 chelmers@efn.org
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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: Vince
BOOKKEEPER
Bev L.

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brain chemistry that switches off the pleasure of alcohol the instant it appears. A tragic affliction.

Fortunately we alcoholics have the AA program to remove our need to drink, and in the process give us a joyful way of life. We are spared, too, the grim reality of normal drinking. And we thought we were missing something.

Grapevine June 1995

Business Meetings Minutes February 12th, 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:
Sandi from Freedom of Choice, Leon from Friday Big Book Study Stag, Bob from Springfield Stag (Wednesday), and Holly S. from Sobriety for Life

A quorum of 18 EVI Reps were present to conduct business. (15 required per amendment to by-laws) Due to time restraints, Meeting started with new business, and proceeded at a brisk pace.

No copies of agendas available (no copier in office)

New Business:

1. Nominations were opened for a fourth member of the Business Advisory Board. With the passing of Bob T., the position is vacant and needs filled. The purpose of the committee is to ensure the EVI office follows non-profit business practices, and operates in a manner consistent with AA guidelines. Committee consists of Past Treasurer, Current Treasurer, Vice Treasurer, and qualified Member at large. **Scott C.** nominated and elected to position with no dissent. **Thanks Scott**

2. A written motion was presented to purchase a home-office copier for the EVI office. A specific copier (Canon PC430 Desktop) was proposed. Copier and two additional cartridges could have been purchased for \$480.00, providing approximately 5,000 copies for the initial investment, with replacement toner cartridges at \$ 100/each/for 2000 copies each. After lively discussion and question/answer period, question was called and motion initially approved 19 in favor to 5 opposed. Minority spoke to the issue. Phrases like "wasting money", "Piece of junk", and "copier will be abused" were heard. Some members wished to change votes. Motion failed, with 15 opposed, 13 in favor in re-vote.

3. A motion was made to form an Ad-hoc committee composed of two steering committee members, and two members at large to further research the copier issue, and report to the March Steering Committee meeting with "better" recommendations for a choice of copier, or the actual need for an office unit. Much discussion on "fairness" of committee. Volunteers were requested. Michael W. and Vince H. from steering Committee, and Gus P and Jim P from the EVI representatives stepped forward.

4. Nominations were opened for Vice-chair for corrections. Ron B. was nominated. No other nominations made. Ron B. was not present. By-laws require attendance at the meeting for election to positions. Motion made to waive by-law for this nomination only. Motion defeated. No election held.

5. A request was made to re-institute the policy of having a sign in list at the EVI business meetings for the records. Deemed "of an administrative nature" and list was distributed during the meeting. Policy will be started again and continued.

6. Archivist requested the "bookcase promised" be installed as soon as possible. Deemed "of an administrative nature". Archivist was assured that as soon as the paint dried, it would be installed.

7. Concern was expressed that "some" flyers and literature distributed at the EVI office were outside the "approved AA literature" or "of a promotional nature", in conflict with the AA Traditions. Discussion followed, with description from the Cottage Grove Alano Club of actual group status with GSO. **No** motion presented.

8. Chris H. and Gus P are developing a "Service Volunteer Registration" Form for members of the AA

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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)

THE HIGHWAY COP pulls aguy over for weaving between lanes at considerable speed. Says the cop, "Sir, I need you to blow into this breathalyzer tube."

"Sorry, officer, I can't do that," says the driver. "I'm an asthmatic."

"Okay," says the cop, "but you'll have to come down to the station and give a blood sample."

"Oh, I can't do that either."

"Why not?"

"I'm a hemophiliac. I'd bleed to death."

"Well, we do need a urine sample."

"Can't do that, either. I'm a diabetic."

"All right, but you will have to climb out here and walk the white line for me."

"Sorry, can't dot that, either."

"And why not?"

"I'm drunk."

"THE USUAL, JOE," said the commuter. "Don't want to miss my train." *The bartender set up seven Martinis in a row, and the customer drank five, leaving the other two untouched, and whipped off to the 5:39.*

Another man at the bar asked Joe what it was all about.

"Oh, he does that all the time," said the bartender. "Says the first one always tastes terrible and the last one invariably gets him, into trouble at home."

All Jokes in this edition, Grapevine August 1998

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"You have a rare form of paranoia - you think everybody likes you!"

reprinted from Best of the Grapevine, Vol 11



Contributions:
(Mar/year to date)
 As Bill Sees It **50.00/50.00**
 Attitude Adjustment **179.00/208.84**
 Autumn Group **0/0**
 Backwoods Bunch **0/0**
 Brown Bag Group **0/100.00**
 Cottage Grove Gratitude **0/0**
 Cottage Grove Noon **0/0**
 Creswell Steps & Traditions **0/0**
 Downtown AM group **207.56/367.76**
 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 **0/0**
 Friday Big Book Study(M) **0/0**
 Friday Physical Awakening **0/0**
 Fri night young people **0/0**
 From the Heart **0/0**
 Gratitude Group **0/0**
 Harrisburg Group **0/0**
 Jasper Group **0/0**
 Last Chance Study Group **0/0**
 Language of the Heart **10.00/10.00**
 Lowell Lakeside **0/0**
 McKenzie Bridge **0/2.00**
 McKenzie River Group **0/0**
 Monday Mens Stag **0/0**
 Monday Night Cont. Study **0/0**
 Monday Night New Group **20.00/20.00**
 New Freedom **0/100.00**
 New Freedom 2 **0/0**
 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 **259.20/259.20**
 Sober Awakenings **0/0**
 Sobriety for life **0/0**
 Springfield Monday Night **0/0**
 Springfield Study Group **0/0**
 Stairway to Sobriety **25.00/50.00**
 Sunday Morning Big book **0/120.00**
 Sunlight of the Spirit **0/18.60**
 Sunday Night 12x12 **0/0**
 Men's Sponsorship **0/0**
 Sunday Women's Step Stdy **0/0**
 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 **0/0**
 Wednesday Men's Stag **0/0**
 Who am I Group **0/20.25**
 Womans Road to Recovery **60.00/60.00**
 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 **760.78/1,737.40**
Fundraising:
 EVI Speakers Meeting **0/0**
 Faithful Fivers, individual **330.00**

A Walking Saint

It took me years and years to get the bum sober and now what have I got? A living, breathing, walking saint, that's what! I've completely lost interest in him since I hounded him into AA. This isn't the guy I was married to all those years-there's no excitement, no suspense, no tensions, no nothing any more!

Where has my romantic, witty, charming, money-spending, devil-may-care, take-me -out-at-the-drop-of-a-hat, mink-buying pal gone to? Life is now just one boring routine after another-no more surprises, no make-up \$100 bills, no flowers- but nothing.

This new character works regularly and profitably. I always know where he is when I need him. He watches our money like a hawk, he's on intimate terms with our four kids, he bathes constantly, goes to church every Sunday, reads the newspaper, converses very intelligently, thinks that one lousy bottle of Scotch and one equally lousy bottle of Rye should last for six months, screams if we serve more than one cocktail before a dinner party and so on-ad infinitum and ad nauseam.

I ask you now, what would you do with a square like that?

His beautiful red nose is gone, his gorgeous pink eyeballs are a deathly white and the only time he comes up with a good belly-yak anymore is when he is slurping coffee with all those other jokers after an AA meeting.

Whatever happened to all those fascinatingly drunk strangers he used to drag home to amuse us in the wee hours? And our little boy is so unhappy now-how he loved to look out the window at the blinker on the police car that woke him up when it brought Daddy home at night!

I tell you this program has got to go. It's unfair to families everywhere-it does too good a job of making life normal and sane and respectable again. Something has to be done-I'll write to my Congressman or Calvert's Man of Distinction or somebody.

But come to think of it I'll be too busy for any of that. I'll be too busy thanking God for allowing me to have had a small part in helping Him perform one of His first-class miracles. He resurrected my husband from the grave of alcoholism and for this I am His debtor through all eternity.
 So you can see how busy I'll be...
 Grapevine September 1959

March Calendar:

E.V.I. and District Committee Meetings:

1st	Mon	Steering Committee 7:00
	Tue	District 20 418 A St. Karla B. 744-0509
	Tue	District 33 6:30 EVI office. Pam G 895-5478
	Wed	District 19 6:30 Tracy R. 338-4320
	Thur	Speaker Mtg Committee 7:00 EVI Office
	Sat	Cooperation w/Prof. Community, 12N EVI Office
2nd	Mon	EVI Business Meeting 6:30
	Tues	Activities 7:00
	Wed	District 6 6:30 Larry W. 334-3609
	Sat	Answering 9AM
		EVI Speakers Meeting, 7:30 Country Club Rd Sun
3rd	Mon	Public Information 6:30
	Tue	Office Volunteer 5:30
	Tue	Communication Committee 7:30 2495 Columbia
	Thur	Cooperation Prof. Community
Last	Wed	H&I Committee 6:00
Last	day	Literature Committee 6:30

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No report. Newsletter **Robert S.** The newsletter is available in the office each month. Multiple copies were available at the EVI meetings for reps to take back to their meetings. 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 Robert**

Answering Service (Diverter Coordinator): **Frank K.** The new 12th Step list hopefully will be available in March. New individuals are always encouraged to participate. We need your help to insure that **someone is always there to help those who call. Currently in need of volunteers for the Wednesday Night Shift.** Please call Frank, if you have difficulty working within the Diverter system. **Thanks Frank**

Public Information: **Jim P.** Public information participated in two Health Fairs last month, one at EVI, and at the Willamalane Community Center. Volunteers are always welcome. **Thanks Jim**

CPC: **Kathy** Gus P. presented report from notes for Kathy. Currently Kathy is the only member, and would love some volunteers. Committee distributes AA materials to the professional community, and meets at the EVI office the first Saturday of the month. Still in need of a vice chair. **Thanks Gus/Kathy**

Activities: **Sandi** No Valentines day dance this year due to lack of volunteers. Committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the EVI office. Sandi could sure use some committee members, or at least some volunteer help at the Dances (setup/takedown).

Speaker Meeting: **Gaylene G.** for **AI** The meeting is getting great turnout. Thank you all for the support, attendance and raffle prizes. The correct E-Mail address for Gaylene is: gglide@svdplanecounty.org This committee meets at the EVI office on the 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. This committee continues to contribute financially, on a regular basis, to EVI with proceeds from meetings over costs. **Thanks Gaylene.**

Outreach: NO REPORT

Archivist: **Linda L.** Continuing collection of "old-timer" tapes and interviews. Copies can be made out of the office (no copier in office) of any materials one would wish to share with others. **Thanks Linda**

H&I: **Harold B.** A two (2)-page Minutes handout was presented to the inter-group, and copies may be made out of the office from the EVI office. The committee is in desperate need of women volunteers for the Johnson Unit. Young people are still requested for the Looking Glass Panel Meeting, which is possibly going to cease to exist without some volunteer help. **Thanks Harold**

Chris gave the Steering Committee Report.

Old Business: **No Old Business items Discussed.**

Committee Chairs still Open:
 CTF Vice Chair: Nominated NONE
 Newsletter Vice Chair: Nominated NONE
 Corrections Vice Chair: Nominated Ron B. No election (see new business)
 CPC Vice Chair: Nominated NONE
 Motion to adjourn at 7:25 PM Respectfully Submitted Tom L.



A TRAVELING SALESMAN in Kentucky met a mountain man carrying a jug of moonshine and a rifle.

"Have a drink, stranger," suggested the mountain man.
 "No, thanks," said the salesman. "I—"
 "Have a drink," the mountain man repeated as he handed over the jug and aimed the rifle at the salesman.
 The salesman took a slug, devoutly wishing he had a dash of molten lead to use as a chaser, and returned the jug.
 "Good," said the mountain man. "Now, you take the rifle and make me take a drink."



Gratitude:

Currently Available Service Positions:

EVI Service Committees:
Vice-Chairs for the following committees:

Newsletter the thing in your hands! Some computer experience helpful.

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.

H&I is looking for a few good women!

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.

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:
Veneta Coffee Club Fri 7:00-8:00 PM (S) Hwy 126 at Territorial rd, Biggs Hy-Yu-Hee-Hee Veneta8

Moved:
T.G.G. 5/10 Speakers Meeting has moved to 4110 River Road, Eugene, Friday's 8:00 - 9:30 pm (O)(WCH)

Women's How it Works Wed 12:00-1:00 has moved to 1166 Oak St., First Christian Church, Eugene

Expect a Miracle Group Tue 7:00-8:30 PM has moved to LCC Main Campus, Rm 420 (W) (WCH)

Thurs Night Candlelight Thurs 8:00-9:00 PM has moved to 1031 Mill St. Eugene

Still going
Women's Continuous Study Mon 7:30-9:00 PM 3935 Hilyard St. Church of the Resurrection

Many Meetings, Many Chances

Hi, my name is Gina and I'm an alcoholic. I am eighteen years old, soon to be nineteen. I won't go into a drunkalog, let's just say booze and drugs began to own me; they controlled my every action and my every word. I was to become full-blown in the grips of this deadly obsession in a very short time. Needless to say, I didn't win. Booze won and if I hadn't chosen the road to recovery, booze would have destroyed every inch of my life — including family, friends, and relatives. What an awfully sad thing to ponder, isn't it?

In April 1992, I will be celebrating four years of sobriety. That's 1,460 days, one day at a time, of not drinking. For an alcoholic and drug abuser, I call that a miracle. I don't brag but I like to let others, especially younger people, realize that it works. It's very important for me to hear people tell how long they've been sober. I get so much hope and belief that it's all out there for me too.

This past year or so has been the hardest, no question about it. I struggled with my relationships to men, complacency, jobs, changes in my daily routine, being a grown-up kid in high school, college applications, and turning eighteen under my parents' roof but still conforming to their rules.

At times, it has seemed unbearable; I've felt suicidal. What is going on? What am I doing wrong? The life situations I was facing were normal to most people, but I was so used to running away from problems that I had never stood still long enough to learn what I needed to know. I am one who has always enjoyed living in emotions; everything is one extreme or the other.

In my first two years, I had enough to worry about — like staying sober, working, sleeping, and school. As I approached my third year, I awoke to all the things I despised about myself. The defects we learn about in the Steps and all the horrible things I began remembering that were in * my Fourth Step became alive in my life. I was terrified yet angry, sad yet prideful. I was filled with awful emotions which I transfigured to anger. I was angry at myself for all the things I hated about me, therefore! was angry at my Mom, Dad, sister, best friend, my group, and my sponsor, all at once. That's a heavy load to carry.

Complacency also stepped into my life very slowly but hit terribly hard. Complacency was a mixture of not enough meetings and not really caring, not calling my sponsor and having a lousy outlook, not attending Step meetings and not reading literature. It affected more aspects of my life than I ever thought possible. What was happening to this constantly vigilant girl?

This madness took months and it built up until I couldn't handle my life or my insanity any longer. I needed to get back to basics. I had to remember what I was taught in the beginning and continue to apply those things to every area of my life. I was unhappy and knew I didn't want to remain that way. Alcoholics Anonymous meetings were my answer.

Did you ever hear: Many meetings, many chances; few meetings, few chances; no meetings, no chances? I've never forgotten that because it really helped me when I first heard it. In short, I love AA and the turnaround it has given me. Being a younger person means that in terms of years I have that much more to lose if I waste my life. Shame on me if I am not grateful.

Grapevine March 1980

Want to get the word out on your fellowship event?

Put it in the EVI News.

Read by more local sober alcoholics than any other newsletter!

The Uncertainty Principle

If I don't believe in a God, what is my Higher Power? How can I apply the Steps? What is it that helps me, an agnostic, get sober and stay sober? I gave up searching for an understanding of my Higher Power. Call it a character defect if you will, but I simply cannot believe. So how do I apply the principles of AA? How do I stay sober?

Strange as it may seem, I am helped mostly by Steps Three and Seven. I turn my will and my life and all things over to the care of anything but me. Instead of going against the stream of life, running my head against walls, trying to do the impossible, I turn the outcome of my endeavors to the natural flow of things. I constantly remind myself that I cannot control my fellow humans. Their lives are controlled by the laws of nature, just as mine are. I remind myself, whatever I do, that I never have all the facts affecting the outcome. I do the best I can with the data available, but I can't plan on the outcome. In physics there is something called an "uncertainty principle." Chance and the unknown play too much a part in my daily life to insist on a certain outcome.

But this "turning over" is essentially an act of nonaction. Nonaction in the past was my downfall; it led to my concentrating on myself and my problems. So what else must I do? The key here lies in the recognition that the worst problem for an alcoholic is self-centeredness. The solution to that problem is concentration on others. What keeps me sober and serene is the very act of letting go of resentments, self-pity, fear of others, and whatever else keeps my thoughts going in circles about myself. While I'm occupied with paying attention to the needs of others, I'm free of myself. I don't mean to imply that I shouldn't take care of my -self. My natural needs must be met. But no more is required.

Step Seven, which asks the Higher Power to relieve me from all defects that stand in the way of my usefulness to my fellows, is the active complement of Step Three. In the Seventh Step prayer I see that the believer simply asks to be a good person. A "good person" is a person who does no harm to others, a person who helps others. As long as I'm a good person, I need not fear others. As long as I take care to know what acts of mine might harm others, I'm not concentrated on myself but on others. I stay sober. In Steps Four, Five, and Six, I've learned what defects of mine tend to hurt others. Constant vigilance against these defects keeps me on my toes, keeps me away from getting stuck in the rut of self-pity, fear, and resentment. I practice the opposite of the defect. Instead of letting fear of failure lead me into procrastination, I practice doing difficult things first. Instead of letting impatience bring my brain to a boil, I practice patience. It's easy to fall back into bad habits. By practicing the opposite, I practice and acquire good habits. Still, I need Step Ten to avoid falling back, and meditation in Step Eleven to learn more of what is required of me to stay happy and serene without a drink.

My Higher Power? The laws of nature — those I know of, and those I don't know of.

Grapevine September 1995



Fellowship Events

Oregon Area Quarterly Assembly Feb 23-25 in Portland - call the office, or ask your GSR or DCM for details

Thanks!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

To all the Groups and Individuals who donated time, energy, and money to keep EVI providing service in 2000.

You know who you are!

Each small effort adds up, contributing to work that truly saves lives. Thanks again.

Have a Friend that needs a little AA Service Work?

Drag them into the EVI Business Meeting or the Office, and we'll find something to keep them out of trouble.

More comfortable writing than speaking in public?

- If you have a story about getting sober, or AA service work, or how a particular step made a difference in your life - contribute to the EVI News!