

Newsletter

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THE 7TH TRADITION WORKSHOP MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

Chase B and Gus P
Area Chair and Alternate Chair

Since last summer, there has been an explosion of interest in our Seventh Tradition and its application within our Area. What started out as a fairly simple request to participate in a 7th Tradition Workshop has now grown into a seemingly popular and regularly requested event. In fact, we have participated in four 7th Tradition Workshops for six of our Area's thirty-six Districts so far; and are scheduled for two more such workshops, with a few more in the planning process. That sounds like and looks like some sort of a trend to us, and we are having a blast!

The 7th Tradition Workshop Tour has had a fairly consistent set of panelists over its run so far. Besides the two of us, other panelists have included Eric K, Anne M, Dale S and Wendy W; and we have been blessed to have been part of this wonderful experience. The topics presented by our other trusted servants have included their thoughts on "Money and Spirituality" and "Our World Services". Our part of the workshop has focused on how to determine what an individual member and what an AA group would need to contribute to be truly self-supporting at every level of the AA service structure. We have also included discussion of what it costs GSO to provide its services to the individual and to the groups. We talk about why we are not currently self-supporting through our own contributions, how we rely upon book sale revenues to make up the difference, and how GSO uses the contributions it receives. We have shortened all of that into what we call "Building an Informed Contribution Plan", and this has now come to be affectionately called the 'dog and pony show'. We are still trying to determine which of us is which.

The core of our presentation demonstrates how to build an informed individual plan and an informed group plan that achieves our goal of self-support through our own contributions. Examples of each plan including a written description of the process are handed out to the attendees, and are now posted on the Area Website. The discussion recognizes that this goal may not always be possible for each member or each group, and how to proceed from that point and still do the best we can. We can act responsibly, help carry the load for our brothers and sisters, and gently remind our groups to do their part.

On a personal level, each of us has become better informed and spiritually enriched by this experience. The truth is that while we both have made many contributions to AA over the years we have been sober, neither one of us had actually thought about whether we were making these contributions in an informed manner. We were just responding to a generally stated need for money and our own personal sense of duty. That's pretty good, but making informed contributions is even

better. Believe it or not, the AA dollar in the basket usually doesn't divide itself up all on its own, and make its way to the various levels of service in the Fellowship! Well, that's our story and we're sticking to it.

The entire workshop presentation generally runs about two hours, and we work cheap. So why not bring up the topic of hosting a 7th Tradition Workshop at your next District meeting, and invite us out to visit you. We travel well and are not a glum lot.

Yours in Love and Service,
Chase B and Gus P

Fundraising in AA II: Spiritual Donuts

In a previous article I identified *Pet Projects* as a potentially controversial area of AA financing. Sometimes an individual group member will attempt to persuade the group to support a particular effort that has not traditionally been part of that group's activities by offering to contribute all or the lion's share of the expense. This situation will arise when the group conscience is only weakly in favor of the activity and finances appear to be tight. I am assuming that the group has already determined the effort does not violate traditions or adversely affect other groups or AA as a whole, and that the person making the offer is an active member of the group.

The example I had in mind was a negative one – of a small group, one of whose members used seed money to persuade it to sponsor an annual speaker meeting, targeted toward a specific subset of alcoholics. This meeting never paid for itself. Continued subsidy for the speaker meeting in subsequent years prevented the group from funding a GSR or contributing to Area and GSO.

At the last Area orientation one of the people involved in the February 2007 Assembly Planning Committee in Eugene-Springfield reminded me that a member's willingness to underwrite a particular item can also be positive. The issue was donuts at the Sunday business meeting. The facility would not let us bring in outside food, and members of the assembly planning committee were reluctant to commit to paying for donuts, fearing it would put us over budget. One member of the committee felt passionately that donuts should be provided, and committed to paying for them herself. Since this was by way of a voluntary 7th tradition contribution she jokingly referred to them as spiritual donuts. As it turned out, the assembly brought in an embarrassingly large surplus. Ever since then, when we find ourselves wrangling over some small budget item in our Eugene districts, somebody will bring up the subject of spiritual donuts. This serves as a wry reminder to us not to get so caught up in a budget that we miss opportunities to carry the message of AA.

Martha S., Eugene, Oregon

In Memoriam, Doris T.

On January 20, the Oregon Area lost a dedicated trusted servant, Doris T., passed away at age 67, with 17 years of sobriety. Doris served as District 5 Alternate DCM and DCM from 2003 to 2007, and was serving as Public Information Chair (South) at the time of her death. She will be sorely missed. Most of us in AA are no strangers to deaths of acquaintances from alcohol-related causes; Doris's death from cancer reminds us that this is a transition we all have to face, sober or not.

We Are Listening, Doris

Where are you, our beloved?
Was it just a moment past,
That we heard your sweet voice ring,
Do we see a flag half mast?

We wish for something fleeting,
We will scan the road ahead,
Look for you in a meeting,
See an empty chair instead.

There! That's what you would have said,
See the blessed empty chairs,
Opportunities for service,
to the newcomer who dares!

Thank you for that instruction,
Yes, we know that we're not done,
Your chuckle a reminder,
But where are you, dear one?

Listening for that tender sound,
We scan the road ahead,
Listening for your joyful voice,
We fear that you are dead.

Stop! Wait, what is that you say?
You choose to go on learning,
Live to serve another day,
Ready with your resume?

Oh, now we can hear you hum,
"I'm not gone and we are one."
Now we can hear HP strum,
"I am here and we are one."

Written by one of our trusted servants who prefers to remain anonymous, in memory of Doris T., a dedicated area service worker who passed away recently.

And two additional poems on sobriety
contributed by Area members:

“The Sober Seed”

**Merriment and sadness expressed by one and all,
With wisdom and intelligence to help us if we fall.
With Friendships that develop
through the smiles and tears.
Giving hope and caring to melt away our fears.**

**With Respect and understanding given everyone.
Which truly helps us to believe,
We'll see another Sun.
Learning as we listen to trust our Higher Power,
To trust that we are guided through our every hour.**

**Do “Keep Coming Back”, and you too will see,
That Life is so much easier
And you'll feel so Free!
And if ever in a quandary as to what you need to do,
You can know you're not alone,
As we all have been there too.**

**Just reach out and let us know
when your heart and mind rebel.
Dare to share with others
if you feel like Hell!
For it's then relief comes softly,
From A Heart that knows,
Who's striving to help plant that seed,
To help you thrive and grow!**

Prayer:

**“Serenity and grace now direct our every step.
Lead us ever onward to only what is Best.
Help us share your kindness to anyone in need,
And help us lead by virtue to plant that Sober Seed..”**

**Judith K., Portland
10/3/2008 after an AA meeting at URS on Stark
Street chaired by Mike**

Forever

Forever even before we were
We carried a disease
It will be there at the grave.
It is a part of what we are
What we will always be – forever
It doesn't go away.
A sickness so deep it can stay hidden
An ugly dark secret waiting inside of us all
To be set free.
Seems to become its absolute worse when
Our lives seem to be doing fine.
It comes alive as if awakened from some
Dark and lost place when we are just trying to
do life!
It gives us no breaks
Except for broken homes, hearts and dreams...
It seems like what is not and what could have
been gets lost
We are consumed with the power of a drink!
Life is now "if only" and "what ifs",
talked about from Bar stools.
And the people who we have gathered
Around us in our lives LEAVE, they actually
run from us
Some never come back – they learn to hate us
to save themselves.
It's only fair.
This disease, it hurts all. It doesn't care about
your sex
Your hair, your skin
Its only interest is owning your soul.
It asks nothing
Except to reduce you to a mass of degradation
A human without hope, a ghost who can't care
about anyone or themselves.
It welcomes you to a world of loneliness
Self-loathing and sickness
Where you look in your toilet more than your
mirror.
You stop to care what you wear, who sees you
at that liquor store or bar

How much you don't care if you go to work or
if you ever get home again.
While it kills us we make everything around us
die along our way
It's the domino effect except no one can put our
lives back together like they were before.
No, it has to be a new way or no way for us!!
We are all looking for a way to make it stop
Waiting for that life line to be thrown our way
And when and if it is, some of us are not ready
to grab on, we need to wallow and
Suffer some more in the misery of it and see it
for the demon it is!
Our disease – alcoholism – is patient.
It never dies.
Even when we don't feed it, it will survive
Forever.
So forever we don't drink!
We defy it by living!
By believing we are and will be more because
of it!
We will use it to become complete to help
others so we can become better!
To mend the broken and ragged baggage we
have made and
To come back from that dark place inside of us
all and
Love ourselves.
We can win because of two men who came
together as drunks and
By staying together learning to hold one
another up by
Turning it over to a higher power.
They founded a plan to keep all of us sober
One Day at a Time
Forever!
Thank you Bill and Bob for giving us this way
of living
For being the light at the end of our tunnel for
the hope and the fellowship that
Keeps us coming back.

May 21, 2008 AH

Listen While You Can

I can walk. I can speak. I can hear you – even though at times I (me and my ego) want you to stop talking! It's at that point that I know beyond a doubt that I am no longer able to learn from you: Not in this moment.

My sponsor told me to go to a lot of meetings.

“Go when you want to drink.”

So I went.

“Go when you want to go into the neighborhood and look for people like you – to pass the time.” So I went.

I may not have gone to 90 meetings in 90 days ever. But I was physically capable of doing that had the need been there. If my sobriety had depended on going to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous – I could have gone and perhaps heard the one thing that would have kept me from a drink that night. Isn't that what so many of us teach the newcomer? What we sometimes preach to each other. “Just go to a meeting and open your ears and your heart.”

For the deaf and hard of hearing that is not possible.

**FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING,
THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE.**

The reuse of the sentence above is not a typographical error. It is a reality. For deaf alcoholics who need AA; for deaf alcoholics who *want* AA, going to a meeting everyday where they can *hear the message of AA* is not a fact of life. **IT IS NOT POSSIBLE!**

Most deaf people cannot communicate with the hearing unless the hearing have intentionally learned American Sign Language. Those who interpret for the deaf have a passion for humankind that surmounts the spoken tongue. And those who choose to interpret for the deaf

alcoholic are angels whose wings are covered by hoodies, jean jackets and business sport coats.

Please understand that much of spoken language has not been interpreted into American Sign Language – ASL. Literally, there are no words or signs for much of the spoken language. What this means for all deaf, and particularly those women and men in recovery, is that much of what is said in meetings, and outside of meetings is either misinterpreted, or not interpreted at all.

For example, The book Alcoholics Anonymous tells us that we “suffer from a seemingly hopeless disease of mind and body.” An inexperienced sign language interpreter in an AA meeting recently interpreted this for the deaf in attendance as, “you have no chance of recovering from the disease of alcoholism.”

Just start praying now – won't you?

Many deaf men and women do not sign at all. They neither “speak” nor do they read lips. The education system and many families have failed their children and as a result much of the deaf community as individual men and women are undereducated. Do not interpret this as a statement regarding lack of intellect; please read it for what it is, a sad and lonely existence for many wonderful human beings who are neglected, mistreated, misdiagnosed and simply forgotten because no one cares enough – including their families – to learn how to communicate with them.

As you read this I encourage you to remember your first drink, your first drunk or your last drunk. Did you brag about it? Did you laugh about it with your friends? Did you land in jail screaming at the top of your lungs that you'll never do it again: Or praying to some God that you did or did not understand begging for help?

Now picture yourself under the influence, under arrest, not able to speak...not able to defend yourself...not hearing the police...only being able to cry in muted tones when the officer screamed over and over again demanding your name...demanding that you speak...and not being able to express your fear, or respond to the demands of the situation. Can you do that?

Can you for one moment imagine that recovery is not a choice for you? Can you let go of what is real for you long enough to understand that sometimes we do have to look at the differences and not just the similarities. That the next time you see a deaf interpreter at a meeting, or see people "speaking" on the street, at the train station or on the bus, that if they be alcoholic, they might only have two or three meetings a week that are available to them assuming that they can even get there. Can you?

What if there was no one to sponsor you? Not your favorite, or your pick of the week...but no one within 100 miles in recovery that can speak

to you in a language that you understand. What if?

Please listen now. Listen for those who cannot. And if you can find it in your heart, listen to the Access Committees and the Deaf Access Committees in your district, your home town, your area – your world.

And for one moment imagine yourself standing outside the liquor store with \$5 in your pocket, a cell phone in one hand and a gut filled with emotion that you cannot control. And if you can...imagine that there is no one to call. No one to hear you. No one to help you.

Please listen while you can.

Deaf and hard of hearing AA meetings can be located online at

www.dhh12s.com/meetingschedule.htm

Contributed by Anna W.
District 15 Alternate DCM

Report from WACYPAA

Dear Oregon,

It has been a long journey and I am happy to say that Oregon has been awarded WACYPAA!!!! WACYPAA is the Western area Conference of young people in AA, a service and social event that takes place annually around New Years.

When I moved to Eugene four years ago I was craving young people's fellowship but didn't know how to find it. Someone pointed me in the direction of Rhonda from District 6, whom I had never met. I finally found her one Saturday night at the Host of Friends meeting. She told me about WACYPAA and suggested I might try to form a bid committee.

Two weeks later about 20 of us met at the now deceased IHOP on Franklin Boulevard. That was the beginning of ESYPA (Eugene-Springfield Young People in AA). We held elections and our committee began holding events and having business meetings regularly. The events, which have included dances, speaker meetings, spaghetti feeds and even a cross-dressing beauty pageant, have provided great fellowship opportunities as well as raising some money to host a conference.

We took our first bid to the 2006 conference in Vancouver BC. About 30 of us went .We had such a good time!! We caravanned up there in a few large vehicles and packed into 2 hotel rooms. We didn't get the bid but we got the experience. The next year we continued to have events and went to Seattle

pumped up with a solid bid and once again we did not get it. We came back a bit bummed out but got going again, holding several well-attended events and carrying the message one more time. At one of our business meetings a motion passed to make our bid statewide so we went to Idaho as a state but only 3 of us could make it and once again we were denied. This year we really focused on involving the whole state through the Area Assemblies . This year went to Reno with 50 people from all over the state and *we were awarded the bid.*

We have been furiously going at it since then. We have been outreaching the whole state to find members from all over Oregon and we have formed a well rounded committee. Eugene has been selected to be the host city. WACYPAA happens over New Years so I hope to see you all there. If you want to join or have any questions you can always contact me. I am in the Area roster. Also you can go to Wacypaa.org for more info.

Yours in Love and Service, Eric V.

Images of Sobriety



When I returned to Eugene in 2004, I found the warmhearted welcome I needed in the 7 a.m. Sober Awakening home group blocks from my house. Through this AA group I found other passionate artists who encouraged me to resume my creative endeavors. I was then more than twenty years sober and in no immediate danger of drinking, but my career as a watercolor artist was dormant.

I soon found a sponsor, a compulsively creative person herself, who took me into her home and heart and provided me with stimuli to begin doing watercolors again. She and her lovely daughter Miriam are both fiber artists. I was fascinated by the whole process of carding, spinning, and weaving or knitting wool. The visual candy store of their crafty living room stimulated me to do two portraits of Miriam, one of which, called “Miriam spinning”, is reproduced here. The other, “Father’s Favorite”, became a gift to Miriam’s father in Seattle. Every success and joy I have experienced in my awakened creativity I attribute to my Higher Power and the generosity He has provided me with in my sobriety – not the least of which is the helpers he puts in my path.

Gratefully, Jan M., Eugene

Peanut Gallery

Anita kindly contributed the following from meetings in Districts 15 and 27.

I wear different colored socks to remind me I'm not perfect.

Put a coin in your shoe to remind you of things in life that are uncomfortable but not fatal.

When my sponsor says "meet me at the office" she means our usual booth at Denny's.

I tried to drown my sorrows, but I learned they can swim really well.

I may only need one meeting a week, but I don't know which one, so I go to as many as I can.

Something as insignificant as a broken shoelace sends me into a tailspin, so I wear slip-ons.

And from Eugene:

My room-mate's version of suit up and show up was: You win some, and you lose some. A few end up ties, and a few get rained out, but you dress for them all.

If I could have left ME at home, I would have had a really great trip. (comparative newcomer visiting relatives at Christmas)

Coincidences are God's way of remaining anonymous.

When I hear "suit up and show up" I think of football gear. If I was in football gear I'd definitely be playing a game I'd never played before. (Deborah, 5'3" professional woman)

The big thing about drinking is, it's predictable. Things are lousy and you know they're going to get worse.

I'm so familiar with Murphy's Law they're thinking of hiring me as Murphy's lawyer.

When I came here, I had a learning disability – at age 70, I thought I knew it all.

Somebody once told me that grace was when temptation and opportunity didn't meet.