

NNIG MONTHLY MEETING SPEAKER



October 8, 2022
John S., Santa Clara, CA
A Vision for You
Speaker at 7:00
Silver Legacy Silver Baron Rm 1-6

Silver Legacy · 407 North Virginia St., Reno · Doors open at 6:30

October, 2022

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GENERAL WARRANTIES OF THE NORTHERN NEVADA INTERGROUP ASSOCIATION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

In all its proceedings, the Intergroup Association observes the spirit of AA Traditions, taking great care that the Intergroup Association never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus a reserve be its prudent financial principal; that none of the Intergroup Association members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decision be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that no Intergroup Association action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Intergroup Association may act for the service of AA Groups in the Northern Nevada area and parts of Northern California, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Intergroup Association itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

(The above is adapted and modified from "The AA Service Manual", and AA Co-Founder Bill W's. Twelve Concepts for World Service; Concept XII, as adopted by the General Service Conference on April 26, 1962. This adaptation of copyrighted AA material has been approved by the General Service Board)

CENTRAL OFFICE

436 S. Rock Blvd.,
Sparks, NV 89431
Monday thru Friday
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Saturday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

24 Hour Answering Service:

(775) 355-1151 Fax: (775) 355-1560

EMAIL: officemanager@nnig.org

Web Site/Meeting Schedule: nnig.org

The Bracer: nnigbracer@gmail.com



NORTHERN NEVADA INTERGROUP

A Calming Balance

He found that he could use the slogan, "Easy Does It," as a kind of meditation

"Easy does it" is my favorite slogan. It became my favorite slogan when I "promptly admitted I was wrong." It started while talking with a difficult employee who said something that triggered a temper flare up in me.

It was not good. My temper had always been difficult for me, and others. This flare up left me with an emotional hang over. Step 10 kept crossing my mind: "when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

I was wrong for sure. What a wonderful time to practice Step 10. I went over to the employee and admitted I was wrong. She said something and my temper flared again. This time with much more heat.

Emotional hangovers come in different sizes, and this one was a lot worse than the original one. The best thing for me is to quiet the anger and rage. Then to admit I was wrong to myself. "Easy Does It" slows things down for me.

The mistake, for me, was promptly admitting that I was wrong to others, before I was over my temper tantrum. In the Step Ten chapter of the Twelve and Twelve, it indicates that we promptly admit it to ourselves! Of course, also admitting to other trusted people like my sponsor and/or spiritual advisor could be helpful.

Promptly admitting my wrong to another person involved is to be done when I can approach folks in a calm and balanced manner. To help me to do this, there are two steps to fall back on. I look back at Steps Eight and Nine. I become willing to make amends, and make those amends except when to do so would injure them or others. This action gives me time to balance myself before proceeding.

"Easy does it" is a form of meditation. Just saying the words make me smile. Have a smile, change a thought.

Emotional hangovers can be very painful and dangerous. They can make a drink very tempting. I can think that this tantrum and emotional hangover are worse than any others, and I will never be OK again.

Slogans can be positive grounding tools that help us stay balanced. "Easy does it" nudges me into a positive mindset. Then I can, if appropriate, make amends. BY: BOB D. | HAVERHILL, MASSACHUSETTS

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AA's

Recovery Step Ten:

“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

Three

Unity Tradition Ten:

“Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”

Legacies

Service Concept Ten:

“Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority — the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws.”

Concept X – Distributions of Responsibility and Authority in the Service Structure

Bill here reintroduces the concepts of authority and responsibility, first discussed in Concept 1. He starts the discussion of Concept 10 by pointing to something most of us have either witnessed or experienced directly when he says "Nearly all societies and governments of today exhibit deviations from the very sound principle that *each operational responsibility* must be accompanied by *a corresponding authority* to discharge it." Said more simply, this means that if we are given a job to do we also need to be given the authority to do it. Seems like common sense. But, as Bill says, failure to do this is a shortcoming found in many businesses, governments and voluntary organizations.

Examples of documents that provide descriptions of how responsibility and authority are distributed within an organization are articles of incorporation, by-laws, committee charters and job descriptions. These documents guide the organization in its long and short term activities and operations. Concept 10 includes discussion of the how, where, when and why regarding the distribution of responsibility and authority throughout the A.A. Service Structure. Descriptive details of this are found in The A.A. Service Manual. The written 12 Concepts, along with the rest of the Service Manual, is where we learn about the A.A. service structure. Both are also useful as reference sources when differences in ideas and opinions arise regarding how the A.A. service components may best work together.

Bill's discussion of Concept 10 also distinguishes between *ultimate authority* and *delegated authority*. Authority to do a job or to carry out a project can be delegated from one unit or person to another. When it is working well it should not be constantly interfered with. Still, there must be someone or somewhere to make a final decision. This is what he means by ultimate authority, "where the buck stops", a designation of who or what deliberating body has the ultimate and final decision making authority regarding any service activity.

It is also important to recall that Bill did not write the concepts as abstract ideas isolated from A.A.'s early experience. The details of the 12 Concepts developed through much discussion among Bill and two of A.A.'s 1960s non-alcoholic friends, Bernard Smith and Michael Alexander. Their discussions drew on A.A. experience but were based also on their considerable professional expertise about what is needed for effective and harmonious workings of organizational and administrative processes. Yes, the principal thinkers on the Concepts were lawyers. Bill, himself, also attended law school, and undoubtedly drew on his early experiences as a business analyst in his writings on the Concepts, particularly on Concept 10.

Bill ends the discussion of this Concept by saying "We well know that only by means of careful definitions and respect can we constantly maintain a right and harmonious working balance." Respectfulness in working together comes from the informed experiences and refinement of attitude that our members and advisers say they develop naturally as they work and learn together in service to each other and to our Fellowship.

This is a 12 part series written by members of the 12 Concepts Study Group in Reno, Nevada. Efforts were made to use simple, everyday language. Each concept is written by an individual member of the group and is not necessarily the opinion of AA as a whole or NNIG. We hope this series will help our community to understand the Concepts and bring interest to those wanting to know more about them. Revised May, 2017.

The Bracer is a monthly publication intended for members of Alcoholics Anonymous and their families only. It is about, by and for members of the fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of A.A. as a whole or NNIG. For article submissions or comments, email the Editor at nnigbracer@gmail.com

Deadline for submission is the last Friday of the month.

NNIG & AREA EVENTS

EVENTS HOSTED BY NORTHERN NEVADA
INTERGROUP TO SUPPORT CENTRAL OFFICE

NNIG Monthly Speaker Meetings
Silver Legacy – 407 North Virginia Street, Reno 89501



Monthly Speaker Meeting
Doors open at 6:30 PM
Speaker at 7:00 PM



All meetings located in Silver Barron Room 1-6
Unless otherwise noted

October 8, 2022
Host Group – A Vision for You
Speaker – John S. – Santa Clara, CA.

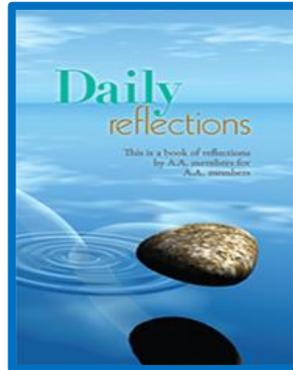
November 5, 2022
Host Group – Young at Heart
James S. – Reno, NV.

December 10, 2022
Host group -District 2
Rosie T.- Seal Beach, CA.

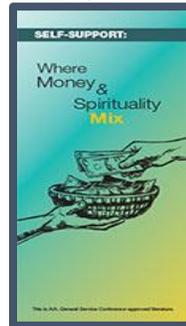
January 14, 2023
Host Group – Happy Hour
Patt O. – Fullerton CA

Speaker Chair – Kevin B. (775) 470-4614
Need more info call: Central Office – (775) 355-1151
Join us for dinner at Cafe Central inside the Silver legacy @ 6pm

BOOK OF THE MONTH \$2 Off



PAMPHLET OF THE MONTH FREE



Answering Service is in
need of members
to answer the
phone after hours

- 4-hour shifts
- Training provided
- 1 year sobriety requirement

Please call Central Office
775-355-1151

Answering service meeting
October 8th 2022
10am Zoom #819 8114 1861
pass code: 12step

When anyone, anywhere reaches out I
want the hand of A.A. to always be there...



Time for the NNIG Halloween Bash

**Saturday October 29
6-10pm**

Speaker @ 7pm

followed by Costume Contest

1st, 2nd, 3rd

Best & Original

Dessert Contest 1st, 2nd, 3rd,

Creative & Tasty

Bring a Dessert to share

Family Friendly Event

Neil Road Rec Center

3925 Neil Rd Reno

Questions: Michele @ 650-207-2746



NNIG GRATITUDE DINNER 2022

Saturday
November 12th, 2022

ATLANTIS HOTEL CASINO - RENO NV
Doors open 4:30pm Dinner @ 6pm
Speaker @ 7pm

**UNITY:
CELEBRATING THE
FELLOWSHIP**

AA Speaker Paul W.
Los Angeles, CA.

TICKETS \$59
Only at
CENTRAL OFFICE
775-355-1151

MEETINGS AND MORE

Central office report from Ronda H. October 4, 2022

Volunteer hours- 140.5 hours

Calls into Central Office:

- Calls for AA help - 6
- Calls for Alanon/Alateen - 1
- Meeting information- 53
- Retail/merchandise- 23
- Other 12 step programs- 4
- Events - 16
- New to A.A. - 4
- Business/Central office- 55
- Total calls - 162
- Visitors - 280, 0 dogs

1. Book of the month is "Daily Reflections", this is \$2 OFF. Pamphlet is "Where Money & Spirituality Mix" \$FREE.
2. The website had 18,810 pageviews. New - 44%, Returning 56% 91% from Mobile devices
3. Please let your Home Group know of the Bracer.

Ronda
Central Office Manager



Previous Birthdays



SEPTEMBER 2022

August 2022

Linda G. 30 Years

Danny S. 20 Years

Julg

Joanne P.

10 Years

June

Finn G. - 18 years

Ron T. - 11 years

Mrtv

Donn T. 32 Years

April

Paul 31 Years

March

Ken L. 40 Years

Kim D. 45 Years

February

Skip 22 Years

December

Sean S. - 32 Years

Mystery Person!!- 34

Years

November 2021

Rieh M. - 35 Years

Shawn - 30 Years

October 2021

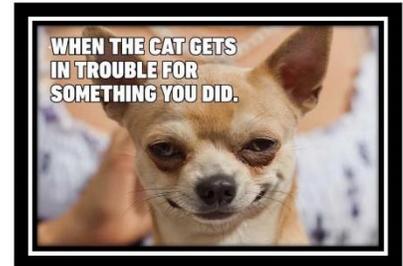
Sharon F. - 37 Years

Naney M. - 36 Years

Kathy S. 14 Years

Mike H. 27 years

Phil S. 46 Years



RULE 62

Did you know you can share your sobriety and gratitude in a practical way by joining the A.A. Birthday Club? Sign Up today and be featured in the Bracer Birthday Club section of the Bracer. Show your Support for your NNIG & Central Office, Join the Birthday Club. A donation of only one dollar for every year of your sobriety. Envelopes available at Central Office, NNIG Business Meeting or Intergroup Representatives

DAILY REFLECTIONS
WEDNESDAY 8AM
1276 PIT RD
GARDNERVILLE/MINDEN

Southshore Group
Friday 8:30am
972 Tallac Ave
S. Lake Tahoe

Please respect
all meeting
place mandates
about face
coverings.

Brown
Baggers
Group
Monday-Friday
Noon
314 N Division,
Carson City

Battle
Mountain
Fellowship
Monday 7pm
156 S. Scott St.
Battle Mountain

AA ANSWERING
SERVICE NUMBERS
Reno, Sparks, Carson City and all of Northern Nevada: (775) 355-1151
Las Vegas and all of Southern Nevada: (702) 598-1888
Mammoth Lake: (760) 934-3434
North Lake Tahoe: (530) 546-1126
South Lake Tahoe: (530) 541-1243
Susanville, CA: (775) 355-1151
White Pine County/Ely: (775) 296-0656 Jim C.

N.N.I.G. STEERING COMMITTEE

Last Tuesday of each month, 5:30 PM
Central Office, 436 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks

N.N.I.G. BUSINESS MEETING

First Tuesday of each month, 6:30 PM
Alano Club, 1640 Prater Way, Sparks

N.N.I.G. MONTHLY SPEAKER MEETING

7:00 PM Silver Legacy - Silver Baron A
2nd Saturday of the month

N.N.I.G. H&I

First Monday of each month, 5:30 PM
Central Office 436 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks



AREA CLUBS

Reno / Sparks Clubs

Alano Club Sparks, 1640 Prater Way (775) 359-2727
Driars Club Reno 345 S. Wells Avenue (775) 324-9210
Triangle Club Reno 635 S Wells Avenue (775) 324-7977

Clubs outside Reno/Sparks Area

Alano Club Carson City, 1800 HWY 50 East (775) 882-0443
Bishop Alano Club (760) 873-6700
Elko Alano Club (775) 738-4747
Las Vegas Triangle Club (702) 435-0597
South Lake Tahoe (530) 541-1243

District Meetings

- DISTRICT-2** 2nd Tuesday of each month, 6:30 Central Office
Zoom # 91904741396 Password D2
- DISTRICT 4** First Thursday of each month, 7:00 PM-
Zoom ID: 876 7717 4234 PW: District4
- DISTRICT 6** 2nd Sunday of even numbered months-
For information email
district6@nevadaarea42.org
- DISTRICT 8** First Sunday, 3:30 p.m. on odd months
Call (760) 937-8407
- DISTRICT 10A** Third Sunday of every other month, 1:30 PM
680 River St. Elko, NV
- DISTRICT 10B** Dark since 2017
- DISTRICT 11** Only holds meetings 4 time a year, call DCM
- DISTRICT 12** 2nd Saturday of each Month at 5:00 PM- 457
Esmeralda Street Wolf Center, Fallon NV
- DISTRICT 14** 3rd Wed of each "Odd" month at 6:00 PM -265
Bear Street in Kings Beach CA
- DISTRICT 16** Meeting is held 3rd Tuesday of the month
Sparks Family Christian Church 510 Greenbrae
Blvd 6:00PM-7:00PM
- DISTRICT 18** DARK DISTRICT
- DISTRICT 20** Third Saturday of Jan, Mar, May, Aug & Oct
10:30 AM- Contact DCM @
district20@nevadaarea42.org for location
- DISTRICT 22** 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month 6:30 PM @
Central Office

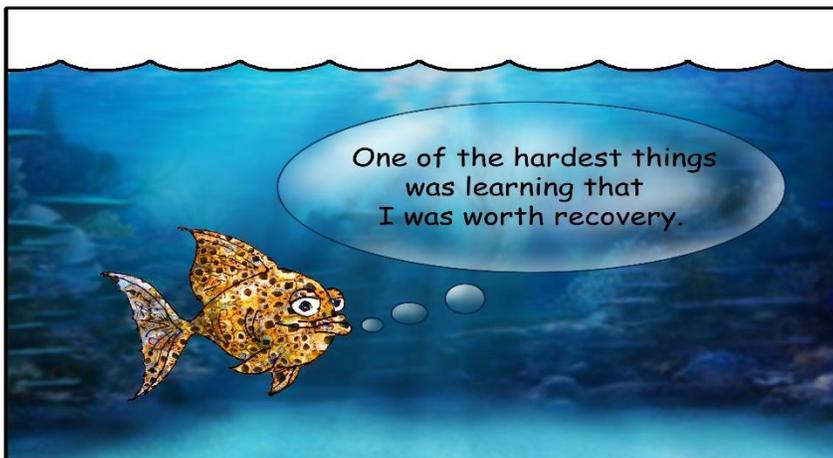


10TH STEP PRAYER

God remove the Selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear that has cropped up in my life right now. Help me to discuss this with someone immediately and make amends quickly if I have harmed anyone. Help me to cease fighting anything and anyone. Show me where I may be helpful to someone else. Help me react sanely; not cocky or afraid. How can I best serve You - Your will, not mine be done. AMEN (p. 84-5 BB)
"How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." (p. 85 BB)

Drink Like A Fish

by Rick M.



Lakes Crossing Center Meetings

Lakes Crossing would like to start meetings back up at their facility. This is a psychiatric evaluation and treatment center, for incarcerated individuals.

Location: 500 Galletti Way, Sparks, NV 89431
The Need:

- Provide two meetings both on Monday's at 6pm.
 - o One serves primarily women. The women's building could get by with every other week if volunteers are scarce. If another day is better for the women's building, we can do that too, any day but Wednesday works for them.
 - o One at the main building. Requested every week.

Requirements:

- All volunteers must be vaccinated against Covid.
- New volunteers to Lake's Crossing must undergo a quick background check which isn't to explore all legal entanglements, just current ones that are open.
- Orientation. This could be done at any of the TB Tests/readings. Please coordinate with Melissa Curley, facility coordinator. 775-688-0492
- The third step which is the most labor intensive is the 2 step TB test. This requires the person to come in to get test administered, then come back 3 days to get it read, then come back a week from the first administration, they have to come back again to get the other arm tested and then return again 3 day later.
 - o The facility is a 24 hr facility so nurses are available all day to read the tests at your convenience.

Contact:

Joe H. NAGSC Corrections Chair, 415-203-4888
nagsccorrectionalfacilities@nevadaarea42.org.

NNIG/Central Office Group Contributions 2022

Group	September	YTD	Group	September	YTD
3rd Tradition Secular Group			Happy Hour Reno		825.00
4th Dimension- ON-LINE		144.62	Kings Beach AA Golden Group		234.55
A Way Home		99.50	Knuckleheads		30.00
Alano Brown Baggers		50.00			
Alano Captains Table		15.00	Minden Saturday Night Fever		240.00
Alano Dawn Patrol			Ladies of the Evening		
Alano Jaywalkers		482.08	Ladies of the Lake		83.84
Alano Open Heart Open Mind		262.00			
Back Room Group		497.14	Minden Stephanie Way Group		595.61
Back to Basics Saturday Night	120.00	322.00	Minden Wednesday Night Live		48.60
Battle Mountain Fellowship	25.00	45.00	Minden/Gardnerville Group		703.13
Beginners are Winners On-Line Group		671.26	NNIG Business Meeting	26.00	187.75
Buena Vista Group		150.00	Mt Rose Recovery Room		3134.00
Caring & Sharing in Stead		879.92	Minden Saturday Night Group		240.00
Carson Airport AA		50.88			
Carson Big Book Experience		106.00	Pyramid Way Discussion Group		
Carson Brown Baggers		740.00	RTC Monday Night Mens	250.00	250.00
Carson Dr. Bob Nightngales			RTC Afternoon Delight		
Carson Early Birds		1954.43	RTC Almost Heaven	50.00	800.00
Carson Fallen Women			RTC Grapevine/Big Book		
Carson Happy Hour		533.85	RTC Aloha Group	289.37	2380.49
Carson Happy, Joyous and Free		45.53	RTC Big Book Study		50.00
Carson Jay-Walkers Men's		100.00	RTC Beginners are Winners		287.00
Carson Men's NO BS Stag		80.00	RTC Coffee with Bill		
Carson Sandbaggers	100.00	800.00	RTC Don't Trip Music Meeting		
Carson Sisters in Sobriety		100.00	RTC Just for Today Women		
Carson Sunday Morning Fire Station		460.00	RTC How We Stay Stopped		125.00
Carson Valley Gratitude		501.00	Positive Acceptance Group		740.43
Carson Women's Night Out		433.00	RTC Mid-Day Group		
Chester Fellowship			RTC Champions of Sobriety		
Chester Saturday Night Group		208.25	Mid-Day Group ON-LINE	19.26	217.38
Choices		200.00	RTC Recien Llegados		40.00
Cornerstone Group		300.00	RTC New Awakenings Group		986.63
Crystal Bay Nooners		350.00	RTC Little Rascals	50.00	250.00
Dayton Friday Night Rule 62		300.00	RTC Sober N Sane		100.00
Dayton Red Rooster		250.00	RTC Men's Trudgers	680.00	840.00
Decompression Chamber/online	236.86	957.31	RTC Good Morning Sobriety		126.00
Deer Park Rebels			Recien ilegados		50.00
District 14		950.00	Sisters in Sobriety		
District 2	12.00	406.00	Sisters of Sobriety SOS		395.40
District 22	65.00	490.00	The Next Chapter		100.00
Dayton Sunday Morning	200.00	200.00	South Shore Group		120.00
Double R at Noon		450.00	Spring Festival		77.46
Driar's Oldtimer, Newcomers			Southside Group	114.33	1362.03
Driar's Serenity Night Owls		50.00	Slide Mountain Candle light Group		150.00
Eye Opener		1095.00	Sunnyside Group		1140.91
Fallon Fallen Women's AA Meeting		25.00	Silver Springs Groups		75.00
Fallon Grapevine Online		20.00	Susanville Wed Womens		
Fernley Groups			Tahoe City Fellowship		750.00
Fallon The Real Lunch Bunch	332.00	332.00	The Rock Group		304.00
Galena Friday Night	303.60	303.60	Truckee Dawn Patrol	150.00	1150.00
Ground Zero		372.91	Truckee Fellowship	200.00	200.00
Grupo Accion	40.00	70.00	Truckee River Men's Stag		1785.20
Grupo Fe Y Esoeranza			The Next Chapter		100.00
Grupo La Nueva Luz	10.00	80.00	Virgina City Plug in the Jug		
Grupo Latino			Verdi Greener Pastures		50.00
Grupo Nueva Vida			Whole in the Soul		51.00
Jamesville God Grant Me			Whole in the Ground Sunnyside	300.00	600.00
Jamesville Women's Monday Night			Willing to go to any Lengths		322.00
Incline Village Fellowship	97.50	97.50	Winnemucca Serenity Seekers		50.00
			The Shop		300.00
			Minden Language of the Heart		40.00
			Our Group Big Book		
			Out and Sober		
			Serenity on Sundays		200.00
			The Twilight Zone		
			Wednesday Night Beginners Meeting		
			Weekend Warriors		
			Whole in the Soul		80.00
			Women's New Beginnings		351.40
			Women's New Harmony		175.00

Total 3,670.92 40,525.59



Please introduce yourself and what is your sobriety date. I'm Rob M. My sobriety date is 12/28/1989.

And what is your home group? My online home group is "When we retire at night" my in-person home group is the professional's meeting on Thursday.

Where did you get sober? I got sober in the East Bay of San Francisco in a little town called Pleasanton.

Briefly describe your drinking? Well like many others it began as just a lot of fun. My personality was such that I was awkward and not comfortable with myself, and alcohol fixed that. It worked for a long time and then my wife mentioned that it might be affecting our relationship. I found my way to the rooms as a result of marriage counseling.

What was your first impressions of A.A.? My first meeting was at Tri Valley fellowship in Pleasanton. A noon meeting, I was the only one there in a suit and tie. I thought well that's fine for these people, but it doesn't appear like I fit this group that looked like to me everybody had a big "L" for loser emblazoned on their forehead. My denial was full in bloom at the time.

When did you start feeling like this might be something for you? It's hard to remember back that far. It must have about 3 weeks after that first meeting. I found my way to my first home group meeting. Which was Friday night Danville at 8:15 pm. In that group of people, it appeared and sounded like they drank a lot like I drank. They had a demeanor to them that appeared outwardly like they were living happy lives and I certainly wasn't at the time. I was angry. No, I was pissed off. Mad at everything and everybody. I wanted what they had.

What were some of the things that that long timers or old timers told you then? At the second meeting I went to, two guys approached me after the meeting and suggested that I have a big book and they handed me one. And they wanted to get my phone number and they gave me theirs. One guy said call me tomorrow and why don't you join us next Friday for dinner. That began a 16 ½ year every week event in my life. Friday night dinner and then the meeting and it was a group of guys. A grand sponsor, my two sponsors and the younger brother of one of my sponsors and then me, there were some other extraneous ones that weren't every week. My sponsor suggested that I do 90 meetings in 90 days. I didn't really do that I did 87 because I was doing a lot of business traveling at the time. Some days I did 2 or 3 meetings but with that travel schedule, all I could get was 87. But I didn't drink during that time, so you don't have to be perfect at going to 90 meetings, just be perfect not drinking.

When did you come to Reno? We purchased our house in October of 2019. And we moved here in March of 2020, so I was commuting back and forth several times to do minor remodeling. It took us a while to arrange our affairs down in the bay area to be able to move up here.

Did you get into A.A. right away? No, Covid was in full force and there really weren't any meetings happening in person, that I was aware of, so I was doing solely online meetings for quite a while. The first in person meeting that I attended was Coe's group, downtown, Barbara P. and Estelle showed up in the car next to me, recognized me as a new face in town and gave me a big hug and said come on in. It's a pretty small group down there and a real intimate group of folks that feels real homie. It's a great group.

Moving here during covid and doing online meetings how was it was for you staying connected? I had been sponsoring folks remotely, I had a remote sponsor in fact I still maintain contact with my two original sponsors I've never fired them. I do rely on some local sponsorship here in person, so I've always had more than one sponsor because I always had more than one drink in front of me.

What do you like to tell newcomers today? I like to tell them one of the things that helped me the most, have a meeting schedule in your car or in your pocket. When you're at a meeting before you leave that meeting decide where your next meeting is tomorrow. And commit to not drinking before you get to the next meeting.

So, you've been sober for quite a while, have you seen any positive changes in A.A.? When I first got sober there was still some residual animosity or resentment between some of the old timers and then some folks that were also dealing with N.A. issues so there was that little bit of a turmoil. That was going on but that's pretty much resolved as far as I can tell. My experience is that this is a multi-faceted disease, I analogize it to the arcade game, whack a mole. My disease will pop up in various expressions in my life whether it be

food, addiction or compulsive chewing of gum or compulsive eating of sugar free mints or any of a number of things. More is always better is a symptom of my disease.

Do you have any final thoughts? Something I always emphasize, keep your sobriety simple. Know that the legacies are the foundation. So, you must always be of service. You must always choose not to drink. And you must always be attending meetings because without that you don't have any unity. If you do all three you will maintain stable sobriety.

Summer of Love

At a wild and colorful meeting in San Francisco, a chairperson gets a perfect chance to practice Step Ten

STEP TEN: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

One of the great things about getting sober in San Francisco is the wide range of meetings a newbie can choose from. My first year in sobriety, I would hop on a bus and go to a meeting in the Sunset district, walk to the Presidio for a womens' meeting, or catch a ride with my sponsor and join the earlybirds at the 7 a.m. meeting in the Mission district.

One day I found myself in the meeting room of a Haight Ashbury clinic. The meeting was well attended, and somehow 40 or 50 people managed to jam themselves into a very small space filled with very uncomfortable folding chairs. The door to the meeting room opened right onto the corner of Haight and Ashbury. The neighborhood is noted for its colorful characters: hippies, street people, musicians, artists, tourists and drug users. A large coffee pot and a tray of cookies were set up next to the front door and the folding chairs were positioned facing the opposite wall. This gave the chairperson a clear view of the door and the comings and goings of the participants.

The folks in the meeting represented the diversity that the city is so famous for. A grandmother sat knitting in one corner, a tattooed teenager clutching his skateboard lounged in the front, and a Chinese businessman in his pinstriped suit sat next to me in the middle row. The chairperson was a middle-aged man who was fairly new to the program. His enthusiasm for AA was infectious. Before the meeting began, I was thinking how much I loved living in a place that embraced all of humanity.

One of the old-timers suggested gratitude as the topic. The discussion passed calmly from member to member, but the chairperson was becoming noticeably agitated. I glanced to the back of the room and discovered the source of his discomfort. An odd-looking man in his early 20s was drifting in and out of the door. The young homeless man—dressed in a bizarre combination of coveralls, tie-dyed T-shirt, and an ill-fitting dress—would walk in, pour himself a cup of coffee, add copious amounts of sugar, grab a few cookies and then wander out. From his demeanor and behavior it was obvious he was suffering from mental illness.

Finally, the chairperson had enough of the young man's actions. "Get the hell out of here and don't come back," the chairman yelled at the interloper. "Who do you think you are, drinking our coffee and eating our cookies!" The young man put down his coffee and walked out. The room fell silent. The older woman put down her knitting and said, "I'm Joan and I'm an alcoholic." She related a story about a time she was chairing a meeting and had to deal with a person who exhibited unusual behavior. Her message was clear—in an open meeting, as long as someone isn't being disruptive we have tolerance for those less fortunate than ourselves. One by one, others in the meeting echoed Joan's message of acceptance and love.

Not one person pointed out to the chairman that he was wrong to berate the homeless man. Each one simply told a personal story of how they had handled a similar situation.

The chairperson got the message. He stopped the meeting and said "Just a minute everyone." He went outside and found the young man and brought him back into the meeting. He looked the rather embarrassed homeless guy straight in the eye and quietly said, "I'm sorry I yelled at you. I was wrong. Let me pour you a cup of coffee."

That incident happened almost 25 years ago, but the memory of that amends and the power of the group sharing their experience, strength, unity and hope has never left me. BY: KAREN W. | ANDERSON, INDIANA

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