

The TRIBUTARY

Area 76 Newsletter

Fall 2016



EMBRACING A NEW FREEDOM:

... we of A.A. believe that our freedom to serve is truly the freedom by which we live - the freedom in which we have our being.

From "Twelve Concepts for World Service," Concept XII, by Bill W.

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From Our Area Chair:

Service

Service to others is a concept that is foreign to a selfish, self-centered drunk that is still in his cups. The only one I served when I was drinking was myself. In order to maintain my existence, I had to make sure that I had what I needed to medicate my disease so that I could survive. It was all about the “I’s” and “ME’s”! When I finally reached out for help there where others that extended their hand in friendship and understanding, and at the time I didn’t understand any of it. It was not my original intent to fully surrender to these people and their way of thinking. I just needed some relief from the revolving nightmare that my drinking had become.

I listened to these people talk about helping others and doing things that were intended for the good of others. They took me on 12th Step calls and gave me personal instruction in making coffee, washing cups, and dumping ashtrays. They “suggested” that I show up on Sunday morning and help clean our meeting place. I know now that desperation was my motivation for following these “suggestions”. By the grace of God I somehow managed to hang on, and I can’t tell you the exact time that I started wanting to - instead of having to - come to a meeting, wash a cup, mop the floor, etc.

I went to a Business Assembly early in my sobriety, and swore that I would never return to such madness and insanity ever again. I continued to “serve” in my home group and would do whatever I was asked to do because I believed that it somehow ensured my sobriety. After several years of sobriety I had an Old Timer ask me when was I going to start showing how grateful I was as opposed to continually saying how grateful

I was. I immediately got angry, and in a fit of rage pointed out to him all of the wonderful things I was doing on behalf of my home group. Then I stomped out of the room saying a whole bunch of bad words.

This program caused me to think about my poor behavior afterwards, and try to do something about it. In other words, to make amends when I was wrong. I tried to apologize to the Old Timer but he stopped me and told me that while it was a good thing that I washed cups and cleaned floors, there were opportunities for service to the greater good of Alcoholics Anonymous. He said that I should let my name stand for the GSR position, and I did. I was the only one in the election. It was too late when I realized that the GSR needed to go to those assemblies to carry the conscience of the group.

As with most things in my service life in this organization, I was up to my nose holes before I could back out and run. One of the first assemblies that I attended as a new GSR seemed to me extra monotonous and grueling. I couldn't believe how difficult these people were making these problems out to be. Bickering and fighting over things that in my opinion were not that important. I took my problem to a more experienced member. Hoping for some compassion and understanding, I instead got my head handed to me in a "kind" and "loving" way.

Again I learned that it wasn't about me, and that the process of serving demanded a patience and selflessness I wasn't sure I was capable of. I was encouraged to understand why it was important to genially listen to the minority opinion, to understand an informed group conscience, how important it is to make sure that every servant in the room understands all that they want to understand so that they can confidently participate in serving the alcoholic that still suffers.

When I get impatient or selfish, if I remember who I serve and why I serve them I'm able to maintain the proper perspective so I can do what I've been asked or elected to do. As long as my higher power remains involved and I serve him, I'm able to serve all of the members of Area 76, both those that are here and those that are yet to come.

If someone were to ask me if they should get involved in this service work stuff, I would tell them - and have - that if they would like their life to be more fulfilling, their understanding of this program enhanced, and the opportunity to serve others in a spiritual and meaningful way, then go for it. There are many service "veterans" that are always available for the "should I get involved" discussion. Once you dive in and take the initial flack and become battle hardened you will never regret your decision. My sponsor will tell you that it is by the grace of God and service work that he is sober today. I believe this to be the truth!

Thank you for allowing me to serve,

Mel W., Area 76 Chairman





From Then to Now

This story was told to me by Carl B. I found it very interesting and quite humorous.

In 1945 Louis K. of Evanston, Wyoming contacted GSO, and inquired how to get an A.A. meeting started. GSO told him to contact Deb P. of Ogden Utah. He did, and with this information, he formed the first group in Wyoming, according to the Wyoming archives.

In 1946 Tom B. of Rock Springs, Wyoming also wrote the GSO requesting information on how to get an A.A. group started. They told him to contact Lou K. of Evanston. It's interesting to note that while Tom B.'s contact with the GSO in March of '46 is not in our Wyoming archives, Carl has seen that letter on file in New York.

Tom drove to Evanston and got in contact with Louis K., who told him that if he could stay overnight then he could have a big book sent from Ogden Utah on the Greyhound bus. Tom decided he could probably stay over.

Now as fate would have it, a snowstorm hit, and Tom was stuck in Evanston. During his stay he ended up getting drunk...

Well, Lou sent the the book home with him. A couple of weeks later, Tom and his brother Ben B. were driving around, and Ben saw the book in the back seat of Tom's car. He became interested, and started reading the Big Book.

Years later, Carl B. was in a meeting in Rock Springs and was sitting by a gentleman who introduced himself as Tom B., a visitor from California, where he got sober and worked for Walt Disney as a cartoonist. He was home to visit family. “Well,” Carl asked, “are you related to Ben B., who started the A.A. group here in Rock Springs?”

“Why yes I am,” Tom replied, and told Carl the story, ending it with “Ben gets credit for starting the meetings in Rock Springs, but what they don't tell you is that he started them with *my book!*”

And now you know the rest of the story.

Doug G, Area 76 District 3 DCM



Room 17 and Beyond: the Growing of an AA Group called the Unit 7 Group.

My name is Thomas and I am an alcoholic. I do believe most of you in the AA community in the Wyoming area are familiar with my story [see “Room 17” in the 2016 Summer Tributary: ed.]. So I’m going to jump right into the story from where I left off. The meeting in Unit 7 activity room is now called the Unit 7 AA Group. We meet on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights from 8 pm to 9 pm, and our meetings have up to 25 men. We can fit more, but the unit officer will not allow more than 25 people in the room at a time. Cookies and coffee can be pretty hard to supply for 25 men that love cookies and coffee.

Unit 7 is a new group, and most of the men have never been to an AA meeting. We still do burritos for birthday meetings, and boy do the men love the birthday meetings. The meeting in Room 17 was a lot easier to run than the Unit 7 Group, with 25 men, and 15 of them newcomers.

We try new things all the time. When we first started out, I had to take on more than one job, and that was frustrating. I took on the duties to set up the meeting, make the coffee, set out the cookies, make the attendance list for the unit officer, and chair the meeting. I also work with the case worker on setting up our meeting's sign in sheets, because our meetings are now recognized by the prison and parole board. Having our meeting recognized is a big deal, because now this meeting will still be allowed to run long after I'm gone.

Like I said in the beginning, we are a new group, and very young in the AA community, so there is lots of room for growth and many lessons to learn. I still called my sponsor whenever I needed help, and at this time I felt I needed lots of it. I explained all the problems that we were having with the new group to my sponsor. My sponsor explained to me about all the duties there are in running a big group, and how to split up the work by voting on jobs for everyone. My sponsor also sent me copies of the format their home group uses when opening up a meeting.

My sponsor, God, and my sponsor's-sponsor have been a big help with the growing of Unit 7, in its becoming an AA group and becoming a part of the AA community. There has been so much love and support coming in from from my sponsor, God and the AA community, and this has given us all the hope and the feeling of belonging to something bigger than this prison.

Let me catch you up on what's been going on with Room 17. Remember KP? The one who only listened at the meetings? Well, he's now running the meeting in Room 17. Isn't that just great? God is in this place with us.

I moved to Room One with Lit John so we could work on our Step work together. Lit John and I were running a Big Book reading meeting out of Room One once a week up until a couple months ago. He has moved on to a better place, a Camp, and his next stop will be home. I am still running a Big Book meeting from Room One once a week, and KP runs two meetings a week out of Room 17, doing a great job at it.

Now back to my new home group, Unit 7. There are talks all over the prison yard about the AA group in Unit 7. Other units are now asking the warden if they too can have an AA meeting in their unit. The spirit of AA is all over this prison.

Unit 7 is turning into a real AA group. Everyone in the group is starting to help out, and we all take turns on chairing the meeting. My job now is very easy. All I do is take care of the attendance sheets for unit office, and the sign in sheet for the case worker. Then I just kick back and enjoy the meetings. Man, I love the way the spirit of AA works.

I still and always will reach out to my sponsor and the AA community and share all I get with my home group here in Unit 7 AA Group. Because of God, my sponsor, and the AA community, Unit 7 Group, Room 17, and now Room One get the Grapevine once a month, and Wyoming's Area 76 Tributary . We also get Big Books and 12 by 12's for our newcomers, and we have Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age and lots of letters of hope and support from the AA community.

We use all of this material for topics in our meetings. The letters from other alcoholics that are sent in to us, we use their story as an outside speaker meeting. I stand up in front of the group and read their story to the group. Then we talk about it. This works for us, and we as a group are very grateful for those who have shared their story with us.

Thank you from all of us in Unit 7 Group, Room 17, and Room One. Your stories have shown us that we are not alone and there is hope out there for us. We are also very thankful to the Tributary for printing our story, and to all of those in the AA community for allowing us to share this story with you.

Your friend in sobriety, Thomas

Sober date 12/22/10



The first time a voting procedure was used to elect delegates and trusted servants for Area 76 was the fall conference of 1976, hosted by Kemmerer and held in Diamondville Wyoming. This was told to me by Carl Budd. I spoke to him a couple times to get the facts straight as he remembers them.

Doug G., Area 76 District 3 DCM

To submit an article, story, joke, or cartoon to the Tributary, email to anna_zeuss@yahoo.com, or send to Suzanna T., PO Box 111, Parkman, WY 82838.



An AA Parable

Step Three: A Swimming Lesson

Long, long ago, when the monastery was the place of learning, an old experienced monk was giving a novice a swimming lesson in the pool. They had just gotten to the point where you learn to float on your back.

The old monk held the novice on his back in the water, the monk's hands supporting him. "Thou leanest back and relaxeth. I'm holding thee up, thou needest not worry," the monk told the novice. He held the young novice up in the water with his hands supporting him under his back. Gradually, the novice relaxed and quit trying to suddenly sit up so his butt would sink him.

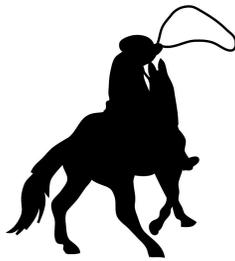
"Thou tiltest thy head back and raiseth thy chest," the monk told the novice. "I am holding thee up in the water so thou sinketh not." The novice did as he was told.

"Now I shall slowly release my hold, and thou wilt find thyself floating," said the old monk. He very gradually lowered his hands, until the novice was lying on his back in the water with no hands holding him up.

"Lo! I floateth! I swimmeth!" the young novice cried.

“Indeed,” said the old monk. “Then I am not sure: which of us is the fool, thee or me? For it seemeth to ME that *thy big toe still resteth upon the bottom!*”

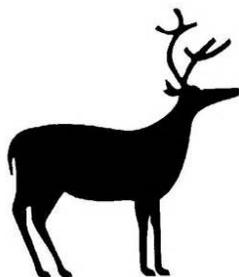
Anonymous



Hi. I have this taped on my fridge. We got this saying a few years ago when the State Convention was in Cheyenne. A few words with a great meaning:

GOD DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR ABILITY
ONLY YOUR AVAILABILITY.
AND WHEN YOU PROVE TO HIM
YOUR DEPENDABILITY
HE WILL GIVE YOU MORE RESPONSIBILITY

Art L., Eye Opener Group, Cheyenne



Son: “Dad, I want to be an alcoholic when I grow up!”

AA Dad: “You can’t do both.”

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



**5th SUNDAY UNITY POTLUCK AND FUNSHOP Presented by District 2 – Sheridan, WY
OCTOBER 30th 2-6 pm at 102 S. Connor St. (First Christian Church), Sheridan**

West Central Regional AA Service Conference (WCRAASC)

Radisson Hotel, 204 West Fox Farm Road, Cheyenne, WY 82007

Cheyenne, WY March 3-5, 2017

Info, flyers, and **Online Registration! at aa-wyoming.org**

2017 Area 76 Winter Business Assembly, Green River, 2017

**"We Saw, We Felt, We Believed" - 2017 Area 76 Spring Convention,
Sheridan June 2-4 Holiday Inn ~ Contacts: Kathy L (406) 580-5809,**

Matt J (307) 763-6503, Brenda J (307) 689-0666 ~

Info, flyers, and **Online Registration! at aa-wyoming.org**

2017 Area 76 Summer Assembly, Evanston

2017 Area 76 Fall Convention, Gillette

