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I Am Responsible

When anyone, anywhere, Reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. to always be there. And for that: I am responsible.

My First Sober Funeral

We buried my 27-year-old cousin yesterday. Adam was the passenger of a drunk driver, his new boss.

The news of his death sent shock waves through our whole family. My father was so sad when he called with the news.

Adam and I were Facebook friends, so I immediately started checking his updates as his friends left post after post about what an amazing guy he was.

The cousins called me Auntie, because I was their mothers' ages, and Adam's siblings and cousins were left hurting and in a state of disbelief.

I prayed and prayed but also wanted facts. I read over the news article to find the driver's name and hometown. I Googled him, then used images to search him further. The mug shots that came up for former DUIs sent chills down my spine. I began to judge him as he lay in critical condition in a local hospital. Was this the right guy? Adam's new boss?

I began to obsess over this man and thought I should post his mug shot on Facebook. I wanted to rat him out to my family.

Then, a still, small voice told me to stop and calm down. I was judging when I had no right to judge. How many times had I driven drunk when I was trapped in my disease?

I called my sponsor and prayed some more. My sponsor told me to be of service to my family and recommended I keep my opinions and obsessions to myself.

I prayed and mourned and prayed and meditated. I spoke

to Adam's mother and expressed my sympathy. I spoke to his grandpa, my uncle, and offered myself if anything was needed.

The day of the funeral, my daughter and I picked up my cousin and drove to the funeral. It was standing room only because he had so many friends. We transported the funeral flowers and sprays to my relative's house.

Afterwards, I was near his mother when she mentioned the family was going to visit Adam's boss, who was now able to have visitors. They wanted to see him before they drove back to Iowa so they could forgive him.

Adam's 15-year-old sister and 19-year-old brother wanted to forgive him, too.

I am so grateful I was able to be of service to my family. I am so grateful that, because of my program of A.A., I was able to be fully present for my family.

By Kate C., Clean Air
Via, The DIALog, Dallas, Texas

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I have heard it said numerous times in the meetings, "Keep coming back. You *will* hear your story." Well, this is one of those times.

It was May 13, 1991, at about 10:30 p.m.; a Monday night after my Big Book Meeting. Craig was just getting ready to go home when the telephone rang. It was my mother, who had an annoying habit of always saying, "Are you sitting down?" whether it was an earthshaking event or whether she just wanted to converse. However, at that time

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of night, I knew it was going to be earthshaking .

I remember I could tell she'd been crying, so I motioned for Craig to stay. I thank God he did, because what my mother had to say was very tragic indeed.

“Kevin has been killed.”

What? Kevin who? It couldn't be Sue Ellen's Kevin, could it? The sad answer was, “Yes,” it could be. Kevin. My sister's oldest son had been killed in a horrible car accident. He was 18-years-old and one week from graduation.

Rarely do I say, “We all . . .”, but at this time I believe we all have heard/lived through something similar. My first thought was, “How did Jim N. stay sober when his brother died? How did he say he did it?” Then my second and third thoughts were angry. “How dare he do that to Sue Ellen and Doug!” “What about Clayton and Michael (his brothers)?” Then I thought, because I was such a good, selfish newcomer, “What about my meetings? I'm supposed to get my 9 month chips!” [Sad to say, Jim N. did not stay sober. He did well for a few months and then he drank. Then he died.]

Through it all Craig stayed and comforted me until I felt “safe” enough to be alone. And then the phone calls to my sponsor began. But, of course, she wasn't home! (Didn't she know how desperately I needed her?) Now what? Well, I am so grateful she had a live-in housekeeper, who was also a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous. She talked with me early into Tuesday morning until I felt I could get some rest. What a God-send that lady was!

Bright and early my sponsor called. She allowed me to grieve, get mad, and grieve some more. She helped me plan what would be needed to get myself and my three children to Tucson.

And then she told me how to behave.

I pray I never forget what she told me before it was time to get into action. I have used it several times since then, helping somebody else who has lost someone. It worked for me, it worked for them, and I know it worked for my sponsor. Her words were really quite simple:

“You remember, Betty, you are going there to be a support for your sister and her family. This is NOT about you! You will go, you will NOT be maudlin, and you

will NOT cause a scene. And, while you are there, you WILL go to A.A. meetings. You WILL get your 9 month chips, and you WILL share about what you are going through. There might be a newcomer who will need to hear this message.”

And I did all that she told me to do. My sons, daughter, and I were able to do all the things a little sister, nephews, and a niece was supposed to do.

Let me share one more short part of this story before I wrap it up.

The second meeting I went to was called Leather and Lace. It was on Friday night at the Alano Club in Tucson – where I had already gone once and gotten a chip. (Talk about a ditzzy newcomer! I had no idea that Leather and Lace was a biker's meeting. Now, add fear to the equation!) I got my chip and I shared how I did it. As I was leaving the meeting – through a dark alley, no less – someone was calling my name. It was an extremely young man.

“Are you Kevin's aunt?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, [crap]! I know him! We went to school together. I'm getting ready to graduate next week, too. Man! . . .”

Now me, being all puffed up with my 9 months sober, thought this was one of those newcomers my sponsor had told me about. You know, the one who would be able to learn through my experience, strength, and hope. I asked him how long he had been sober, expecting him to say something like 30 or 60 days. Imagine my total shock and humiliation when he humbly informed me he had just celebrated his third year in Alcoholics Anonymous. Talk about embarrassing! I guess it was a good thing the alley was dark, so he wouldn't be able to see how red I was. So, I did something else I had been taught to do in A.A. I thanked him, from the bottom of my heart, for staying sober and keeping the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous open for the likes of me—a 34-year-old know-it-all newcomer.

In sobriety,

Betty B., Apple Valley, CA

P.S. In 1996, after Craig and I were married and our boys were long gone in the Navy, we went to Tucson for my nephew's graduation. Craig and I went back to the Leather and Lace meeting on Friday night. And who was in attendance? The same young man who had helped me all those

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years ago. We were both still sober—and he still had three years on me. The greatest thing about that was, now, we were both keeping the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous open for the newcomers coming up behind us!

Happy 79th Birthday Alcoholics Anonymous

The Start

A.A. had its beginnings in 1935 at Akron, Ohio, as the outcome of a meeting between Bill W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been helpless alcoholics.

Prior to that time, Bill and Dr. Bob had each been in contact with the Oxford Group, a mostly nonalcoholic fellowship that emphasized universal spiritual values in daily living. (. . .) Under this spiritual influence, and with the help of an old-time friend Ebby T., Bill had gotten sober and had maintained his recovery working with other alcoholics, though none of these had actually recovered. Meanwhile, Dr. Bob's Oxford Group at Akron had not helped him enough to achieve sobriety.

When Dr. Bon and Bill finally met, the effect on the doctor was immediate. This time, he found himself face to face with a fellow sufferer who had made good. Bill emphasized that alcoholism was a malady of mind, emotions, and body. This all important fact he had learned from Dr. William Silkworth of Towns Hospital in New York, where Bill had often been a patient. Though a physician, Dr. Bob had not known alcoholism to be a disease. Responding to Bill's convincing ideas, he soon got sober, never to drink again. The founding spark of A.A. had been struck.

June 10, 1935

(Bill Reflects on A.A.'s 5th Birthday)

In the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, there is a chapter called "A Vision for You." Wandering through it recently, my eye was caught by this startling paragraph written a short five years ago. "Someday we hope that every alcoholic who journeys will find a Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination. To some extent this is already true. Some of us are salesmen and go about. Little clusters of twos and threes and fives of us have sprung up in other communities through contact with our two large centers. . . ." Rubbing my eyes, I looked again. A lump came into my throat. "Only five years," I thought. "Then but two large centers—little clusters of twos and threes—travelers who hoped one day to find us at every destination."

Could it be that only yesterday this was just a hope—those little clusters of twos and threes, those little beacons so anxiously watched as they flickered, but never went out?

And today—hundreds of centers shedding their warm illumination upon the lives of thousands, lighting the dark shoal where the stranded and hopeless lie breaking up—those fingers of light already stretching to our beach heads in other lands.

Bill W., June 1944

Via, *By the Way*, Sacramento, CA

Minutes of the Intergroup Meeting 17 May 14

The meeting was opened at 9:34 a.m. by Doug H., who led us in the Serenity Prayer. Richard B. read the Twelve Traditions. In attendance were Doug H., Becky B., Betty B., Craig B., Vanessa C., Helen M., Carl O., Ted B., and Jim F. Ted B. read the minutes of the previous meeting. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Helen M. gave the report in the absence of Chad F. As of April 30, 2014, there was a balance of \$13,436.41 in savings, \$7,112.82 in the C.D., and \$5,530.05 in checking. Income for the month of April was \$7,008.33, with total expenses being \$4,515.26. April literature sales were \$1,741.45 with purchases being \$2,013.50; total literature sales were a <\$272.05>. The net April income was \$2,221.02. In April, 12 people contributed \$373.00 to P.Y.M.W.Y.M.I. The Treasurer's Report was accepted unanimously. Betty B. had a note concerning the Financial Summary page. In order to save space, she has a "catch all" [group] for 2014 Service Committee donations, and she combines Security/Maint./Office Exp./Seed into one [group].

Ways and Means Report: There was no report. However, the Founders' Day Picnic is on June 7 starting at 8:00 a.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$3 for children. At 11:30 the Guest Speaker will be David G. from Lancaster.

Webmaster's Report: Jim F. gave the report. Since Jim has taken over webmaster duties, there have been 73,683 meeting directory hits. Jim is updating the April financials on May 17 for the web, and the Founders' Day Picnic is now listed on the web.

Office Manager's Report: Craig B. reported that there were 111 visitors to [the office] in April. There were 173 information calls and no 12-Step calls. There were 118 call-forwarding calls and two 12-Step call. The totals were 291 information calls and two 12-Step calls. Central Office volunteers will be taking vacations during the summer. If people are interested in substituting during those vacation times, please call Craig at [the office] so one can be trained. Please announce at your meetings. There is a need for call-forwarding person from 4 p.m. to 9 a.m. every other Monday. If interested, please call Craig. Please announce at your meetings. The Office Manager's Report was accepted.

Public Information Report: Vanessa C. gave the report. Twelve A.A. Big Books will be donated to the public libraries in the High Desert. Victor Valley College is hosting a Juneteenth (Black Heritage Celebration) Event on June 14. A.A. will have a booth at the event. Vanessa is looking for volunteers to help between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. If interested, please contact Vanessa at District 19. District 19 is having a Service Event at Church of the Valley on June 14 between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The theme will be a mini PRAASA. District 19 would like to have an Intergroup Rep. to be there to answer questions regarding Intergroup. There will be a speaker at 11 a.m., and there will be a free lunch. The report was accepted.

Newsletter Report: Betty B. gave the report. The May newsletter was emailed on May 17, and print copies were sent to the printer on May 16. If anyone has a hard time reading the e-mail newsletter, please call Betty at Central Office. There is still a need for articles. The report was accepted.

Old Business: There was no Old Business.

New Business: For every credit card transaction at Central Office, [we have] to pay a convenience fee. Craig B. is going to check into the legality of these convenience fees and report back to Intergroup in June on the pros and cons of paying these fees. Richard B. announced that the date of the High Desert A.A. Convention is being moved from March to the weekend of June 12—14, 2015. In that way people attending the [convention] will be able to use the swimming pool and other summer activities. A steering committee is being formed for the convention.

The next Intergroup Meeting will be June 21, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. at Central Office.

Doug H. motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

Respectively submitted,

Ted B., Secretary

Upcoming Events

Third Saturday of the Month

Intergroup Meeting at 9:30 a.m. at Central Office. Call 760-242-9292 for more information.

District 19 Meeting—May 18, 2014

Summary:

August 17, 2014, our Delegate will be at our Next District meeting to give a report back about the details of our General Service Conference.

Our archivists have invited us to the Archivist Open House happening May 31st from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at 711 Arlington Ave., Suite B, Riverside, CA

Our Grapevine reports that we have an office in North Hollywood.

Please join us for our June Service Event at Church of the Valley from 11:00 a.m.—2 p.m.

Our next ASC meeting will be June 8, 2014, hosted by District 10 at 8530 Stanton Ave., Buena Park, CA, at 9:00 a.m. Please visit www.msca09aa.org or area.09.org for updated information on Area 09.

Our next District Meeting will be July 20, 2014 at the Alano Club on Central.

LETTING GO OF OUR OLD SELVES

Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. . . . Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable?

Alcoholics Anonymous, pp 75, 76

The Sixth Step is the last “preparation” Step. Although I have already used prayer extensively, I have made no formal request of my Higher Power in the first Six Steps. I have identified my problem, come to believe that there is a solution, made a decision to seek this solution, and have “cleaned house.” I now ask: Am I willing to live a life of sobriety, of change, to let go of my old self? I must determine if I am truly ready to change. I review what I have done and become willing for God to remove all my defects of character; for in the next Step, I will tell my Creator I am willing and will ask for help. If I have been thorough in the preparation of my foundation and feel that I am willing to change, I am then ready to continue with the next Step. “If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.” (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 76)

Via, *Daily Reflections*, p. 164

Central Office Activities

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>Y.T.D.</u>
Visitors	77	520
Info. Calls	149	1,492
12 Step Calls	0	4
<u>Call Forwarding</u>		
Info. Calls	101	552
12 Step Calls	4	11
<u>Totals</u>		
Info Calls	250	1,065
12 Step Calls	4	15

And Finally . . .

MONTANA STATE TROOPER

In most of the United States there is a policy of checking any stalled vehicles on the highway when the temperatures drop to single digits or below. About 3 AM one very cold morning, Montana State Trooper Allen Nixon #658 responded to a call there was a car off the shoulder of the road outside Great Falls, Montana. He located the car, stuck in deep snow and with the engine still running. Pulling in behind the car with his emergency lights on, the trooper walked to the driver’s door to find an older man passed out behind the wheel with a nearly empty vodka bottle on the seat beside him. The driver came awake when the trooper tapped on the window. Seeing the rotating lights in his rearview mirror, and the state trooper standing next to his car, the man panicked. He jerked the gearshift into “drive” and hit the gas.

The car’s speedometer was showing 20—30—40 and then 50 MPH, but it was still stuck in the snow, wheels spinning. Trooper Nixon, having a sense of humor, began running in place next to the speeding (but stationary) car. The driver was totally freaked, thinking the trooper was actually keeping up with him. This goes on for about 30 seconds, then the trooper yelled, “PULL OVER!”

The man nodded, turned his wheel and stopped the engine. Needless to say, the man from North Dakota was arrested and is probably still shaking his head over the state trooper in Montana who could run 50 miles per hour.

Who says troopers don’t have a sense of humor?

Sue Ellen J., Tucson AZ