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PASS IT ON





PASS IT ON

Eastside Intergroup Newsletter Issue 48 February 2021

"I Didn't Think I Was an Alcoholic"

My memory isn't what it used to be... drinking too much for too long can do that. And recently my 12-year-old daughter has taken up the hobby of reviewing old photos from her birth onwards. The early days of her life and all the holidays, all the travels and visits and camping trips, all the backyard shenanigans and Instagram style food pics – all of her life has been well documented. Thanks to cell phones and the cloud we can create and access photos EVERY day if we want to rehash our lives. To the extent that my drinking increased, and my life became unmanageable during these years, it's hard to look at again. I know we're not supposed to wallow in the past, in the "what-ifs", but I do – to a certain extent. I want to remember where we were and what we were doing. I never want to forget how absolutely awful it used to be so I don't get complacent about my sobriety. To my surprise, I do recall a lot of the past when given a visual cue and I even know what my mindset was in most instances. I know whether I was sober or not, I know whether I was hungover, I know how I was trying to deceive everyone in the picture – including myself – that my drinking wasn't so bad. But I did hit a bottom, and 1 doctor told me I could never drink again. And another told me to stay the course trying to get sober on my own, while another actually dissuaded me from AA. Lots of family were concerned of course but nobody told me to go to treatment except my husband. Once he realized the ultimatums weren't working: that the prospect of losing him, my daughter, everything we had worked for so far in our lives wasn't enough to make me stop, it was time to go. It wasn't that I didn't think I was an alcoholic. I knew that I was definitely unable to manage my life anymore and was powerless over alcohol. But it wasn't until someone else in my inner circle accepted it that I could. Finally, relief from the stigma that I could admit to it! And do something about it.

I needed to be physically treated for my addiction to alcohol. I needed time for my body to recover. For a good 5 years I had been living on the edge, sick every morning, pretending to get better throughout the day, but just drinking more to get through it and pass out again. But I was also devoid of any real solutions for the underlying fears that were the basis for my drinking. I was an open book emotionally and spiritually, completely ready to be taught what I clearly didn't know. My ego was nonexistent. I had no self-worth. All I felt was guilt. In treatment I could take the time to go through all those feelings and honestly determine what was truly important to me in life. Was my life itself important enough to fight for? I decided it was. I wanted my sanity back. So I dedicated myself to learning from everyone around me, from my sponsor, from the books, a Higher Power.

I don't know if it was a conscious decision - in early sobriety (and still) I just did the next indicated thing. I felt I had to continue with outpatient treatment and there, more was revealed to me – in a different light because it was a different setting. Now I wasn't separated from the "real world", now it was about how to cope with all the crap that life can dump on you. When I came home from inpa-

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And Finally...

by Kyle E.

Getting sober is simple Staying sober is not

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tient treatment, I stepped right back into my role as a wife and mother. But how to NOT step into the same patterns of behavior? I was learning to deal with life on life's terms without the aid of the numbing effects of alcohol. I had to find my voice and courage to express myself with my family. I was no longer going to quietly roll over, build a resentment and then drink over it. I was going to speak up and set boundaries to protect myself. But maybe I wouldn't even need to do so much of that? Maybe I could just be living better all around and things would fall into place? A few promises were starting to show themselves if I could just be patient and recognize them!

Some of my drinking revolved around rewarding myself for some effort. It didn't matter what it was but I "deserved" a drink. This mindset had to be replaced with the small miracles that were occurring now that I could actually feel again. Little things I could do with my daughter again, the ability to whole heartedly help a friend in need. When I don't put myself first in the equation but rather work toward the benefit of someone else, I feel like a real human being with a purpose.

Don't get me wrong, there were days with lots of crying, when I felt overwhelmed. Too much going on, frazzled, tired, on such an emotional roller coaster that I didn't think I could handle it all.

And then the realization that I didn't have to. I could give some of it up to my Higher Power – since most of my worries were out of my control anyways. I could call my sponsor for guidance. I could go to a meeting and hear exactly what I needed to hear or ask for help by way of sharing. I wasn't alone and it wasn't unmanageable. There was hope and it gave me the strength to persevere.

I worked the 12 steps as hard as I could and, as the information slowly sank in, the weight of anxiety, catastrophizing, and bad self-talk was lifting off me. The number of folks I needed to make amends with was small but intense. Mostly I discovered it would have to be living amends moreso than a wordy apology. There is no possible way I can replace the time lost, the moments not photographed for posterity, the missed opportunities. All I can do, one day at a time, is live a physically and emotionally sober life for myself and my loved ones. I never want to go back to that sick and desperate person that I was. So I will keep looking back at those photos while I make new sober and far happier memories.

This is most definitely a lot of hard work – maybe the hardest thing I have ever done so far in my life. To look myself in the mirror daily, and honestly feel good about the person I am, takes constant maintenance. Sometimes I don't feel like I know what to do. But I know what my resources are and I'm continuously learning from them. I have followed my sponsor's lead and am willing to go to any lengths to stay sober but also grow. I've embraced service not just as a task on my calendar but part of a ritual. I want to attend meetings and I get to help my fellows. I can easily get bogged down in daily trivialities, but I know now that none of that "stuff" can happen, none of my relationships can be healthy, without my sobriety.

- Jocelyn S.

From the Spiral #19 *by Matthew T.*

The following are just a few one-liners from our fellowship to help us stay close to our program in addition to some commentary about the quote.

1. I became desperate enough to do what I was told.

It never mattered how much I lost or how many bridges I burned. It also never mattered how old I was or that I was finally in a good relationship. My desperation was a place I had to make it to in order to be willing to listen. This is a fact that my non-A.A. friends and family do not understand. To this day, I cannot explain how I arrived at a place of total fear, desperation, and paralysis, but that's why I am able to remain so grateful. I watched my aunt drink herself to death. The evidence that she had a problem was overwhelming, but she never made it to total desperation. As far as I'm concerned, I was given one chance to change my behavior and surrender to doing life another way. I pray that I will never forget what it was like just before I walked through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous.

2. I had to find that there was something greater than me.

For as long as I could remember, I knew without a doubt that my life was my own and that all the power was in my hands. I was the director. All the credit went to me when I won, and when I lost, the blame would be directed as far away from me as possible. You could never convince me otherwise. My first experience of a power greater than myself was in a room full of men and women at a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. These people shared my fears, thoughts, frustrations, and failures, but were able to live better lives without drugs and alcohol. Several of them took me into their home, introduced me to their family, and allowed them to share how my friend getting sober literally re-directed the course of their life. I am not the best student in the world, nor do I believe everything a person tells me. Being shown the gifts of our program, however, is what keeps me coming back. If you're new and struggling with the God aspect, focus on the group of drunks at the meetings instead for awhile. Let their collective success be your Higher Power.

3. I now chase my serenity like I chased my addiction.

Even before I got sober, I knew how to work. If I took an interest in something, I attacked it with everything I had. Lack of sleep or food did not deter me. When it came to getting high and drunk, it was the same process. I wasn't chasing drunkenness, or oblivion. What I wanted was love, serenity, acceptance, approval, and answers. I never even came close, but not for a lack of trying. When I changed course and got sober, I found myself with a new addiction that I could not entirely explain. All I knew was that my life stopped getting worse and that I wanted to keep coming back. Later, when the gifts of the program started to land at my feet, I knew without a doubt why things started to get good in my life. Because of this, I am now addicted to carrying the message and growing in sobriety. My hope for you is that you find a new addiction in doing the work suggested to you in Alcoholics Anonymous.

I hope this helps, and I'll see you at a meeting.

-Matthew T.

Kelli's Korner

New Contributor

One of the many gifts of sobriety is the ability to appreciate life and its simple pleasures. Every day I wake up without a hangover (764 days as I sit here writing), I am genuinely grateful for that fact alone. If my one gift for the day is waking up sober and not in a hell of my own making, that is enough. The beautiful part of living a life in AA is that waking up sober is rarely the only gift of the day.

When I was drinking I was constantly digging myself out of a hole, trying to navigate the shame of my circumstances or simply, drinking. Many days went by in a fog and life had no color, no texture, no excitement or real beauty. Time was spent scheming and planning the next drink or recovering from the debauchery of the night before. I became an expert in my own alchemy. When and how much to eat so my buzz would come on exactly how I liked it, what to do before bed to minimize the nausea, what to do in the morning when I was inevitably hungover but had to go to work. And on it went for years. When you spend your days just trying to keep up with yourself there is little time to take note of the small things.

Sporadically throughout the years I was able to piece together some dry time. Almost two years at one point. Back then I didn't understand the difference between being dry and being sober. I was absolutely white knuckling it. I wasn't attending meetings, I didn't have any acquaintances in recovery and I was constantly thinking about the fact that I wasn't drinking. I just didn't have the tools yet.

I never realized how much substance there was to life until the shroud of addiction began to dissipate. There are several reasons for this - the effects of a depressant (alcohol) on our brain, the shame we carry every day knowing we are imprisoned by our habits, the reckoning of consequences day in and day out. It's all truly exhausting.

Thankfully today I do have tools. I go to meetings regularly, I have friends in the fellowship and I stay in service. The gift of gratitude is something I wake up with every day. Life still happens and it isn't perfect but I'm better able to accommodate the imperfections because I've gotten to know myself in sobriety. It turns out my life is full of color, texture, excitement and beauty and I'm so happy I get to be here for it. Here's to staying a grateful alcoholic in recovery!

-Kelli

Eastside Intergroup Volunteer Opportunities!

Eastside Intergroup is looking for some volunteers to help at the office during the week. We are looking for some new people and are welcoming back our old volunteers as well.

Some of the benefits of volunteering at your Intergroup Office are:

- Staying sober through service
- Meeting people you may otherwise not have met
- Carrying the message to the alcoholic that still suffers through 12th Step work
- Serving our groups and members with literature, coins and more
- Countless different books and pamphlets to peruse
- Get to know the different meetings in our area
- Having fun while learning more about AA
- And... Much More!

Do you have six months or more of sobriety?

Do you have any previous office experience? Or experience with Quick-Books Point of Sale or inventory? If not, are you open to learning?

Are you good with people? Do you know your way around our website?

We take your health and safety seriously and follow all the suggested COVID19 guidelines. A mask is required, signing in and out along with temperatures being recorded.

If you are interested in volunteering or would just like more information, please email us at esig@eastsideaa.org with "Volunteer" in the subject line. Thank You!

Our Web Committee Needs Your Help

This is where I turn it over to my higher power and ask for help. The Web Committee has a lot of responsibilities and it's frankly too much for just a couple people.

"Jeez, I want to help but this stuff looks really technical. I don't have those skills!"

Don't worry. If you're comfortable using Microsoft Office, you can easily learn all this stuff. If that's you and you're an enthusiastic learner, I'm happy to train you.

"Okay, I'm excited! How do I make myself available?" Just email me, webstuff@eastsideaa.org. Please include your contact info, sobriety date and any relevant experience.

Here are the positions we need to fill:

1. Office IT Support
 - This obligation is about 1-2 hours per month. This person would be responsible for:
 - Our office's network connectivity and security
 - Proper functioning of office computers and printers
 - Backup and recovery
 - Technical training office staff and volunteers
2. Web Services

This is a great job for someone who is familiar with WordPress or who has always wanted to learn it. The commitment asks about 1-3 hours per week. Typical tasks include:

 - Maintaining meeting information
 - Training users to manage content
 - Security (Password resets, managing permissions, etc...)
 - Performing regular updates and patches
 - Implementing new website features Requires a willingness to learn PHP, Javascript, CSS, and HTML if you don't know these things already.
3. Website Content Editor

The content on the website needs attention daily. The commitment asks about 10-30 minutes daily. Tasks include:

 - Update meeting and event information (Nancy loves this, so you might end up serving as her backup.
 - Ensure the website does not break our members' anonymity
 - Encourage editorial contributions from everyone in our service area
 - Training users to manage content
4. Email Manager

The email manager administrates users accounts in Google Workspace. The commitment asks about 10-30 minutes weekly. Tasks include:

 - Providing for security
 - Managing accounts
 - Managing forwarders
 - Password re-sets
 - Training users

OFFICE REPORT FEBRUARY 2021

January Activity

Expanded Hours effective 2/1/2021

Effective 2/1/2021, we are open Monday-Thursday 11:00am-4:30pm and Friday 2:00pm-5:30pm. We are remainin cautious and require visitors to wear masks, sign in and have temperatures taken. We also try to limit the number of people at one time.

Thank you all for your patience as we have navigated through this past year!

Newcomers Meeting

This is something new and we are in the planning stages of this group. This will not be an AA meeting; it is simply a Q & A session for newcomers. Our vision is, after receiving a call from someone new to AA, we rather quickly have a meeting available on zoom for that person. In these meetings they would be able to ask questions about AA in a casual setting with a few sober alcoholics. It might make it easier to attend an AA zoom meeting for their first time. If you would like to be a part of this endeavor please email newcomers@eastsideaa.org with your name, email, phone #, and anything specific... other languages, young people, LGBT, etc. We will reach out to you with an invitation to our next zoom meeting at which time we will discuss exactly what we want this group to look like. Anyone is welcome to join!

Sunshine Club

Remember the Sunshine Club? It was established the fall of 2019. The Sunshine Club brings A.A. meetings to members of the Fellowship who are unable to get out to regularly scheduled meetings due to accident, illness, and other medical conditions or circumstances. We have continued to meet each month and are anxious to continue our mission when the pandemic ends and meetings re-open. We will most likely have members that are anxious about going back to in person meetings and we will be ready to help. We hope that you can mention in your meetings that the Sunshine Club is available. For questions or to request a meeting contact sunshineclub@eastsideaa.org

Literature & Special Orders

The expanded office hours brings me to literature, coins, etc. We know it's been easy to order your things online during the pandemic but we're hoping now with our extended hours, you'll purchase from Eastside Intergroup. Your purchases help us to carry the message in our communities. We carry fancy coins, aluminum and bronze coins, the 2020 Bill & Bob masked coins and have just ordered some new Covid coins. We generally have an excellent selection available. AA World Service Books and pamphlets as well as the AA Grapevine books and a good selection of Hazelden literature, Al-Anon literature and now a large selection of Spanish books. AND...if you got sober during this pandemic in the day of Zoom Meetings –March 2019 –March 2021 you can stop by and get a sobriety coin on us!

Volunteers

Thank you, Mark J, for taking literature to Milam and Tammy, Patrick, Lynn, Jan, Susan, David and Travis for helping on the phones during office hours. Also, a huge thank you to our new office assistant Janet who has stepped in and gone above and beyond to help us at the office.

Nancy O.

Eastside Intergroup Office Manager

nancyo@eastsideaa.org

Volunteers! Generosity! Birthday Club!

Thank You Hotline Volunteers!

Aaron T.	Eric C.	Jody K.	Sheree P.	Hotline Back-Ups	
Anne W.	Genny B.	Leslie G.	Tammy K.	Tom Z.	Cindy S.
Carmen A.	Ginny K.	Mark J.	Tom Z.	Jessica C.	Travis S.
Chuck M.	Guy O.	Paul J.	Tracy A.	Sheree P.	Nancy O.
Cindy S.	Jessica C.	Richard J.	Travis S.	Hotline Coordinator: Tom Z.	
Elton B.	Jim M.	Sheldon A.			

24 Hours



425-454-9192

Thank You Office Volunteers!

Mark J. (driving to Milam)	Tammy	Patrick	Travis	Lynn	Jan
	Susan	David			

Faithful Fivers!

Faithful Fivers donate \$5/month to support ESIG

Nancy O.

Anonymous

Birthday Club!

Kimie W.—3 Years!

Janet S.—36 Years!

Kyle E.—26 Years!



Nancy O.—33 Years!



Join the Eastside Intergroup Birthday Club! A.A. Works!

Many of our members contribute to ESIG \$1, \$2, or \$5 per year during their

AA Anniversary month.

We'll print your name, sobriety date and home group in our Newsletter.

Your Birthday Club contributions directly support your Eastside Intergroup Office which provides a 24 hour phone line, literature, coins and more!

Get your name & home group in the newsletter!

Send this form to: Eastside Intergroup
13401 Bel Red Rd. #B6

Bellevue, WA 98005

Name _____

Home Group _____

Sobriety Date _____

Contribution \$ _____

ESIG Group Contributions 2021

Date	Name	Amount
01-05-2021	Women's Saturday Steps	288.00
01-07-2021	Bellevue Sunrise Group	209.93
01-08-2021	The Overlake Group	125.00
01-08-2021	Moss Bay	360.00
01-08-2021	Seven & Sober	1,000.00
01-08-2021	From the Hat	150.00
01-11-2021	Snoqualmie Stag	90.00
01-11-2021	Kenmore Friday Nighters	200.00
01-11-2021	Eastside Beginners	145.45
01-21-2021	Serenity on Sunday	200.00
01-25-2021	Living Sober	188.01
01-25-2021	Any Lengths Group	64.55
01-25-2021	Ladies Step Study	35.00
01-25-2021	District 34	959.95
02-01-2021	Nooners	50.00
02-01-2021	Bellevue Group	400.00
02-01-2021	NBD International	446.40
02-01-2021	Tuesday Issaquah Big Book Stag	300.00
02-01-2021	Wake Up	426.98
02-01-2021	Eastside Men's Group	10.00
02-01-2021	Bothell Women STP	50.00
		5,699.27
		5,699.27
		5,699.27

Don't Panic if you don't see your group contribution!

During the pandemic a good portion of our contributions have been coming in via Venmo and PayPal. Quite often the donation is in the name of an individual so we list it as anonymous if we don't have a group name to associate with it. This is why Anonymous Donations are so high on here.

If you know your group contributed, please call Nancy at 425-454-9192 with the date and amount and she will be happy to move the contribution from anonymous to the appropriate group.

Thank you all for your support!

Office Information

13401 NE Bel-Red Rd., Suite B6
Bellevue, WA, 98005

Phone: 425-454-9192
24-Hours a Day

Email: esig@eastsideaa.org
Website: eastsideaa.org

Office Hours: Re-Open!
Tues & Thurs 11AM-5:30PM
Fri 2-5:30PM

Office Manager: Nancy O.
Email: NancyO@eastsideaa.org
Office Assistant: Janet S.
Email: JanetS@eastsideaa.org
Intergroup Representative Meeting
First Thursday of each month
7:30 pm-8:30 pm via Zoom

[https://zoom.us/j/181768191?](https://zoom.us/j/181768191?pwd=MG02L21hZXk1Y3N0UG1pZn1LSVFKQT09)
[pwd=MG02L21hZXk1Y3N0UG1pZn1LSVFKQT09](https://zoom.us/j/181768191?pwd=MG02L21hZXk1Y3N0UG1pZn1LSVFKQT09)
All members welcome!

Pink Can Donations

Seven & Sober

Bellevue Sunrise Group



Newsletter Contributors

Lead Story.....Jocelyn S.
From the Spiral.....Matthew T.
Kelli's Korner.....Kelli K.
Office Report.....Nancy O.
Editor.....Kyle E.

Interested in sharing your experience, strength, and hope in this newsletter? Send your story to us!

newsletter@eastsideaa.org

Errata (New Section!)

- Page 4: Contained events and meeting updates from early last year. Please refer to eastsideaa.org for the latest on events and meeting changes.
- Birthdays: Regretfully omitted. See new page containing volunteer info and birthday congrats!
- Office Volunteer list: Inaccurate and corrected in this edition

Ed: This is where I provide corrections to the previous newsletters! As a volunteer and humble servant of Eastside Intergroup and A.A., I am prone to mistakes, and this new column is where I get to practice the principle of righting wrongs.

Eastside Intergroup, Districts, General Service Office & Area 72 Information

Eastside Intergroup

13401 NE Bel Red Rd. #B6
Bellevue, WA, 98005

Western Washington Area 72

1225 East Sunset Drive
Suite 145-745
Bellingham, WA, 98226

General Service Office (GSO)

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY, 10163

District 34

Bellevue, Redmond, East Lake
Sammamish, & Mercer Island
PO Box 50081
Bellevue, WA, 98015

District 35

Issaquah
P.O. Box 442
Issaquah, WA, 98027

District 36

Snoqualmie Valley, Duvall, North Bend
P.O. Box 1963
North Bend, WA, 98045

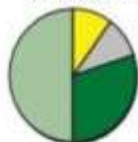
District 38

Kirkland
P.O. Box 322
Kirkland, WA, 98083

District 39

Bothell, Kenmore, Woodinville
P.O. Box 1695
Bothell, WA, 98041-1695

Sample of Group Contributions
to A.A. Service Entities



10% to District
10% to Area 72
30% to G.S.O.
50% to Intergroup

Publication Information

The *Personal Stories*, *From the Spiral*, *Kelli's Korner*, and *And Finally...* sections in *Pass It On* are the recovery experiences of the individual contributor. They are neither conference approved nor endorsed by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

Photo Info:
Pg 1—Solar Eclipse, August 21, 2017

Pass It On is a publication of Eastside Intergroup



And Finally...

... from the Editor

In this month's newsletter, I get to practice humility by creating a new section entitled *Errata*. This column is where I go to clean up mistakes of the past, namely errors in previous newsletters. Although mistakes are part of life, I get to revisit my motives when I make them, and then to follow up and correct them. Finally, if my motives are selfish, ego-driven, or on the plane of resentment, ask that my attitudes be changed in order to avoid these kinds of actions going forward.

It is also my sober anniversary month, and at times I reflect back on what it used to be like. When I was a teenager I knew that my drinking and smoking weed stopped any forward educational progress in my life. I could not study (or even attend class!) when I knew there was a pitcher waiting for me across campus. I counted success on whether or not I had a job that could keep me in the drink. It took quite a few years to understand that frequently getting fired from jobs was an indication of lack of career forward progress, either!

Upon realizing these things, I still had no desire to stop. As long as I had my buzz, I was content to drift along in life, unaware of the destruction I was leaving in my path: destroyed marriages and relationships, no respect of friendships unless I was somehow benefitting, and no care for my future.

Yet at several points in my life, like when I was praying to the porcelain god, coming out of a black-out, or pawing at the carpet looking for scraps of crack, I would wonder about a different life, where I didn't have to suffer these things.

And I don't know why, but the willingness to change crept in. Perhaps it was the number of bottoms counting up, another lost job, or really becoming homeless pushed me back into treatment and A.A. I will probably never know. What I do know is that I do not want to have to experience that former life again. Today I think I will choose the successful path I see every day in the lives of those I attend meetings with, work the program of recovery with, and fellowship with.

Starting last month, I began sharing personal photos in the newsletter for a bit of a view of the world through my eyes. If you would like to submit photos, drawings, poems, or other art to include in the newsletter, please send them to newsletter@eastsideaa.org. Remember that there should be no personally identifiable information in the contribution other than your name to credit.

Finally, if you have a blurb or idea you would like to have published in the ESIG newsletter Pass It On, or suggestions or commentary on content, please reach out to me at newsletter@eastsideaa.org !

- Kyle E.