

# Fellowship of the Lake

Lake County Intergroup Apr/May 2010



## THE GIFT OF HOPELESSNESS

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by Shellie T.  
 sober 8.30.2006

I went to a retreat last year in which the facilitator quoted someone he heard in the very beginning of his sobriety: "I pray for you the gift of hopelessness." The absolute lack of hope that life could get better, the lack of hope that there was any way to keep alcohol from eating you alive, destroying you and everyone you touched, the lack of hope that you would ever be happy, or free of fear, that anything would work. Absolute darkness. No light anywhere. No hope, no peace, no prospects, nothing. Despair.

Doesn't sound like much of a gift, does it? Not on my Christmas list, than you very much! What the long-ago wise man meant was, I hope you're done. I hope you have no more ideas left, because you've tried and failed at every single one. Because this program flourishes only on barren ground where everything else has died, especially the illusion of the "easier, softer way."

I had to be convinced. I needed to be led by the hand through my life, to remember that "restless, irritable and discontent" itch that comes before the thought of the first drink, that increases until the need overwhelms me, and all I can think about is the drink. Nothing else matters. It gets worse, and worse, and worse, until it breaks me. Every time. I have never, not once in my whole life, resisted until the need subsided. In my experience, it doesn't subside. It just gets bigger, and bigger, and bigger, until I shatter under its weight. Until I take the drink, and get instant, blessed relief. I had to remember that when I want that drink, I always, in spite of a lifetime of experience, intend to have a drink, or a couple of drinks. I really believe it, I really believe I am like other people, and nothing else

even occurs to me. I never remember that the only thing I have ever done once I open the bottle, is drink it until it's gone. And then I go get some more. And I never remember that, under alcohol's trance, I might do anything, go anywhere, say anything, to anybody. I will have no ability to predict or control what will happen to me or to others.

If I could remember these things, would I be safe from the drink? Nope, because once the need is upon me, it has no end, no limits, it is relentless and will not stop. The irresistible force. No alcoholic ever wins. Nobody who isn't an alcoholic will ever understand its awesome power, because only alcoholics get this craving. The only thing that can save me is a Higher Power. The daily maintenance of a fit spiritual condition. What I did yesterday is gone; what have I done today? We have a choice: find a power greater than ourselves on which we can rely, or go on to the last pathetic gasp, the last drunk that leaves us dead, imprisoned, or insane, permanently beyond the reach of hope.

Once I was truly without hope, I stopped fighting. In complete exhaustion, I picked up the kit of tools you had laid at my feet. I was quite sure it was much too heavy to lift, but what else was there? I believed you, and I started looking for my own Higher Power. And sure enough, God as I understand him (pronoun used for convenience; my God appears to me to include all genders, those I know about and those I don't) met me halfway. No, not even halfway, but after my first few fearful steps. And then the sun came up in all that unrelieved darkness.

What all that glorious light means is that I now have a guide. I can sort of see where to put my foot next. It doesn't mean that everything is fixed, all my character defects are re-

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# P R A A S A

PACIFIC REGION ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SERVICE ASSEMBLY

by Phil B.  
sober 2.05.1987

**P**RAASA is a yearly assembly held in different parts of the Pacific Region of Alcoholics Anonymous. The purpose of PRAASA is to develop greater unity among the members, groups and areas of the region; to encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences; and to provide an opportunity for members to discuss pertinent aspects of AA. The assembly and the PRAASA committee should always foster the recovery, unity and service legacies of AA.

PRAASA was held in Los Angeles this year on March 5th, 6th and 7th. I arrived on the night of the fourth, after a great flight from Santa Rosa. I was joined by my sister and ten other members from district twelve (Sonoma County). I was the sole district 13 (Lake County) representative. Once we arrived things got busy. First things first. I had to check out the hospitality penthouse, awesome view of Los Angeles. Then a walk through the archives. It was the best display I have every experience. Multiple; Areas, Districts, English and Spanish. AA history at its best!

At dawn I found myself surrounded 1500 fellow AA members to start our PRAASA experience. Multiple speakers, Trustees and Delegates. All were very motivational and inspiring, a joy to listen to. There were four panels on Friday with three presenters each. Topics of note: Setting an example, anonymity in a digital age and how do we communicate self

support to the fellowship. Available to us Friday was a choice of twelve roundtable discussion meetings. Being you ALT. DCMC I attended the DCMC roundtable meeting. One of the topics that had a lot of buzz, was, How do we communicate in remote Areas and Districts? Very lively and informative discussion followed.

Saturday we started at 8:00 am. With panel# 5. Topic of note: should areas be able to opt out of the thirty-day new group pending process? I have to emit I did not know there was such a thing. Though it was 8:00 in the morning, each presenter received a standing ovation. Job well done! Other topics I was interested in were; are La Vina and the Grapevine equal? Should we have a book about early pioneer woman in AA. Both had heated discussions. The common thread though out my experience at PRAASA was, spirituality, caring, emotion and love. It is really something you do not want to miss.

My favorite event was late Saturday night. The ice cream social! Many Friends, new and old had. The fellowship is so inspiring. Sunday was time to wrap things up, start saying our good byes and I'll see you next year in Hawaii! Yes, that's right in Hawaii! I have made my plans already. You are all welcome. Come join us at the 2011 PRAASA assembly!

It is an honor to serve as your ALT. DCMC. Thank you so much for the opportunity to attend PRAASA. Looking forward in continuing serving Lake County (District 13).

May Grace Be Upon Your Pillow

## 'It Might Have Been Worse'

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ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

A "*spiritual experience*" to me meant attending meetings, seeing a group of people, all there for the purpose of helping each other; hearing the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions read at a meeting, and hearing the *Lord's Prayer*, which in a A.A. meeting has such great meaning---

"Thy will be done, not mine."  
"Thy will be done, not mine."  
"Thy will be done, not mine."

A spiritual awakening soon came to mean trying each day to be a little *more* thoughtful, *more* considerate, a little *more* **COURTEOUS** to those with whom I came in **CONTACT**.



Soberfest registration flyer here



# Fellowship of the Lake, around the lake

*sober fun through unity & service*

*As the new Intergroup Activities Chair, the plan is to hold activities which encourage participation and fellowship from all groups around the lake.*

*As this is quite a distance for some, we decided to begin "Fellowship of the Lake" - a quarterly event to be held at various locations around the lake, which will support individual groups as well as the fellowship of Lake County as a whole.*

**by Ron L.  
sober 1.15.2008**

The first installment of The Fellowship of the Lake was held March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Kelseyville Unified Methodist Church. Approximately 150 people attended the event. Michelle L. and the set-up crew had the room looking awesome. The evening started with lots of laughter and old friends catching up with one another, followed by a great spaghetti dinner (special thanks to Jenny, Lisa and Jim). All of the wonderful side dishes were amazing!

Some fantastic raffle prizes were donated and JB hosted the AA trivia game. Phil gave a presentation on his recent trip to PRAASA, and then it was time for our main speaker. Kay M. from American Canyon captivated the room by sharing her experience, strength and hope. The success of this event was the result of the collective effort of everyone who participated. Thank you all!!

Our next dinner will be held on **Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 p.m. in Middletown. Stay tuned for more details.**

## secretary workshop

**Sunday, June 20**

**4:00 pm at the Alano Club**

Facilitated by Scotty Grove

1222 S Main Street Lakeport, CA

The Handbook, available at the Workshop, is suggestive only since each meeting is autonomous, however it covers a wide variety of information that is useful to Secretaries.

Some of the items the Workshop will cover are:

- suggestions for chairing a meeting
- taking a group conscious
- various responsibilities necessary for a meeting to function.

All current Secretaries, those wishing to become Secretaries, and other interested parties are encouraged to attend.

The Keep It Simple  
Groups of Nice Presents:

## A Recovery Party!!!

*Phoenix Rising (Corner of Hwy 20 & Collier in Nice)*

**SAT - MAY 22, 2010**

7:00 pm Speaker Meeting

8:00 pm 50/50 Raffle

8:30 on DJ Dance Under the Stars

Suggested donation \$5

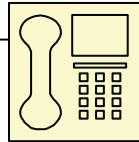
(Any profits will buy books & literature and to support K.I.S. groups and the AA organization) More information:

JIM L. 707.349.0444



“ *I would rather live my life as if there is a god, and die to find out there isn't, than live my life as if there isn't, and die to find out there is.*

*I would rather go through life sober believing I am an alcoholic, than go through life drunk trying to convince myself that I'm not.* ”



Hotline volunteers needed for 12 step calls 6 months sobriety required (it is suggested to always should go in pairs)

**Open Hotline times.. we need your support!!!!**

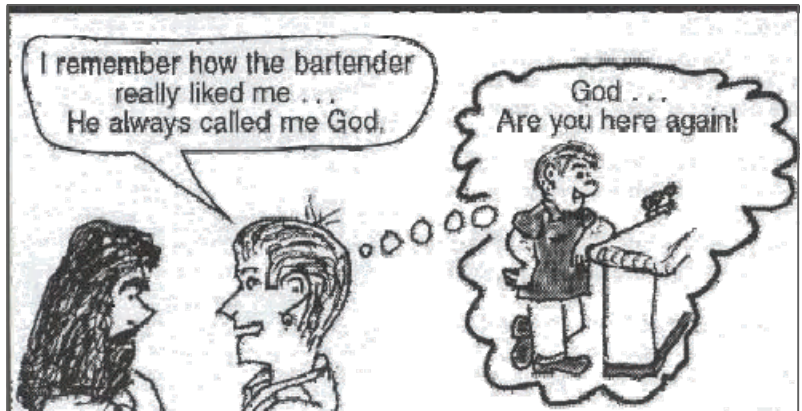
Contact the hotline at 707.995.3316  
or  
visit [www.lakecountyyaa.org](http://www.lakecountyyaa.org)

**THANK YOU TO PHIL, SHELLIE, DENISE, RON & BJ FOR EACH SUBMISSION!**

The next newsletter deadline is June 30.

Please send articles, letters, notes, jokes, events, birthdays, etc etc etc to Leah at [ld.nunez@yahoo.com](mailto:ld.nunez@yahoo.com) or (707) 391-6871

(submissions of ANY size are appreciated!!!)



## THE GIFT OF HOPELESSNESS (continued from page 1)

*(Continued from page 1)*

moved, I have everything I want, and everybody loves me. It means that today, if I ask, and mean it, I will get the next clue on the treasure hunt, exactly when I need it. I will see what that next step should be, what is the Next Right Thing. That's all. Directions, and light to read them by. But it has changed everything. I don't get the road map for the rest of my life. I only get the next clue. But my God is a good teacher. The instructions will be clear and unambiguous. God does not hand me a box of disconnected letters and say "Here, go figure it out." My job, and so far as I can tell my only job, is to remain alert and aware enough that when the clue hits me in the head, I notice it, and to do whatever it takes to take that next step.

In order to remain alert and aware, I have to avoid the greedy clutches of fear, which will blind me, self seeking, which makes me unable to hear anything but my own voice, and dishon-

esty, which turns everything I perceive into self-serving hallucinations. I do this by turning over my will and my life for today. In order to be willing to take the indicated step, I have to remember that I have spent a lifetime proving that I am unable to reliably recognize swamps, quicksand, alligators, tigers, land mines, or heavily armed aliens, and will be much safer if I just follow the guide I hired to get me through this swamp.

It never gets completely dark anymore, not since I figured out what I really believe. Not what I think I am supposed to believe, not what somebody else, believes, not what I have been told to believe. What I really do believe. I don't have a long, elaborate definition of my Higher Power. I have a few (few!) bullet points on how God seems to work in my life: What God appears to do, and what God appears not to do. That's all. But for me, it's perfect. *Oh, and did I mention, the craving has completely disappeared?*

*“It never gets completely dark anymore, not since I figured out what I really believe.”*

# Tradition

Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions

## Seven

by Ron L.  
sober 1.15.2008

**T**he Grapevine ran a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally

intended primarily for **individual** use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

There was recently some discussion (at meeting level) about Tradition Seven and how it was being applied not only by our group but also by the individual participants. While going over the Traditions Checklist (see far right) one question in particular caught my interest...

*"How important in my recovery is the feeling of self-respect, rather than the feeling of being always under obligation for charity received?"*

This question opens up a big area for discussion and provides me the opportunity to examine a couple of my more glaring "defects" or if you prefer old ideas.

1. where and how do I gain self respect?
2. when does asking for help turn into - I am too lazy or unwilling to take responsibility?

After all, god, nor anyone else is going to do for me, what I can do for myself.

**Tradition Seven: Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help AA (my group, my central office, my GSO) remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new guy who can't afford it yet? How generous was I when tanked in a barroom?

2. Should the Grapevine sell advertising space to book publishers and drug companies, so it could make a big profit and become a bigger magazine, in full color, at a cheaper price per copy?

3. If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn't it be okay to let the government subsidize AA groups in hospitals and prisons?

4. Is it more important to get a big AA collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?

5. Is a group treasurer's report unimportant AA business? How does the treasurer feel about it?

6. How important in my recovery is the feeling of self-respect, rather than the feeling of being always under obligation for charity received?

//TRADITIONS CHECKLIST from the A.A. Grapevine, found online at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

### hospitals and institutions



by Denise R.  
sober 10.28.87

**F**irst I would like to thank Sheila for all her service as our representative for 4 years she did a great job and I hope I can fill her shoes. She made being apart of H and I a very special commitment and well run ship, I am very glad to be a part of this. I also would like to thank Gina for being recording secretary- she did a great job. I would like to thank Rick for all his work as men's coordinator. I truly believe there is something very special about our fellowship and that makes it nice to be in service with all these people. Everyone showing up makes this work. Here are the positions that have been changed.

Area Chair: Denise R.

Recording Secretary: Shellie T.

Treasurer: Bonnie C.

For information about H&I and how you can be of service, contact Denise (707) 695-8582