

ROADS TO RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

Created by Dual Recovery at Warren Washington Association for Mental Health to support individuals in recovery

A NEWSLETTER FOR YOU
AND ABOUT YOU

SPOTLIGHT TOPIC

Gratitude is Multifaceted

BY GINGER MILLER

Another article on gratitude?! Yes, but maybe from a perspective you haven't considered before or with a deeper understanding of it. Developing an attitude of gratitude is a powerful tool for many people in recovery with a mental health struggle or a substance use disorder. And what better month to discuss gratitude than November!

Let's take a closer look on how I have found gratitude to be multifaceted. First of all, what is gratitude? The Oxford Dictionary defines gratitude as, "*the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.*" Used in a sentence: "She expressed her gratitude to the committee for their support". Gratitude is more than just feeling thankful, it is a deeper appreciation for someone (or something) that produces positive effects that last for more than the moment it is being thought of. Notice in the dictionary how many action words there are in the definition. I italicized it to make it easier to glance back at. So... gratitude involves action.

How often do you pause to look at what you are grateful for? Do you ever make a gratitude list? Most people will state, "I'm grateful for..." my family, my pets, my recovery, that I have a car, or things of that nature. That is usually as far as it goes, and that is great, acknowledgement is where it all starts. That is the most common way gratitude is looked at.

In my early recovery days, I had a sponsor that loved to tell me to make a gratitude list. It seemed no matter what I was troubled by her answer was to make a gratitude list. After a short time, I really thought I'd lose my cool if she told me to do it even one more time. But I kept doing it, because it really did help with almost anything, after all it was my attitude that needed changing more often than the situation. After a few months I started to notice my lists often looked a lot alike. I was repeating the same things, so I started to examine what was going on. My conclusion was that I needed to do more than scratch the surface. I challenged myself to not repeat anything. That started out pretty tough, then I found something that made it so much easier AND more meaningful! I just needed to be more specific. So, for example I found myself listing 'I am grateful for my cats' pretty frequently, but then I started adding 'because'. I am grateful for my cats *because* they make me laugh when they are playing. Or *because* when they purr I feel like they know I love them. Or *because* their personalities are so different and funny. Now, take a moment to think of a time that you followed that feeling with action. Maybe

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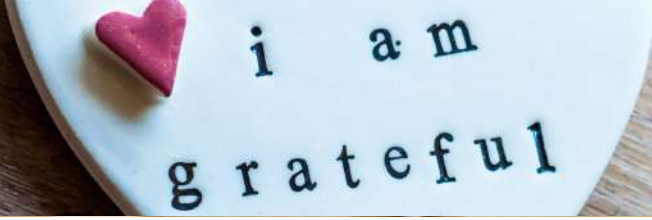
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Gratitude Is Multifaceted (Cont'd)

someone brought you some soup when you had a cold, helped you with a flat tire, or gave you a compliment at a time you were feeling particularly down. Maybe you gave that person a thank you card, offered to pay for their help or gave them a hug to show your appreciation. You might find that when you are not only acknowledging you're thankful, but showing through some action that you are thankful, it may have even more lasting effects for both yourself and the other person. That makes me think of the old phrase "actions speak louder than words." This is another facet of gratitude. So, for me, when I would list my 'because' it made it easier to identify the action I could take to support the feeling. Example: '...because they make me laugh when they are playing.' My gratitude action then could be to spend time playing with them. Or maybe "I'm grateful that I have a car" ... my action then is to keep it in good maintenance and clean. "I'm grateful for my recovery" ... my action is to make sure I keep it by doing the things that support it. Think of one thing you are grateful for. What action could you take to support that?

Let's look at yet another facet of gratitude. Have you ever gone out for coffee with a friend to discuss a problem you are having, or a project you are working on, and offered to pay for the other person's coffee? You wanted to express your gratitude for their input and time, right? Paying for it makes you feel good about the fact that the person took time to be with and support you. Were you ever turned down and that person insisted on paying for their own? How'd that feel? Now, how about putting the shoe on the other foot. You went out to support a friend with their situation or project and now they want to pay for your coffee. Does it turn into a 10 minute conversation of "you don't have to do that," "I want to though," "Really, it isn't necessary," "But I appreciate your help," "I'm happy to help but I can pay for my own coffee" or something like that? Kind of puts a damper on the whole positive vibe that was happening, right? That's because reciprocity, which is the exchange of positive emotion, can be part of gratitude as well.



Through these things I've found that gratitude is strongly and consistently part of what builds greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships, and for some to connect with the God of their understanding in a stronger way. Isn't gratitude a beautiful thing?!

UNDERSTANDING THE DIAGNOSIS

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

BY GINGER MILLER

According to The American Psychiatric Association (APA), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a disorder in which people have recurring, unwanted thoughts, ideas or sensations (obsessions) that make them feel driven to do something repetitively (compulsions). The repetitive behaviors, such as hand washing, checking on things, or cleaning, can significantly interfere with a person's daily activities and social interactions.

Many people without OCD have distressing thoughts or repetitive behaviors. However, these thoughts and behaviors do not typically disrupt daily life. For people with OCD, thoughts are persistent and behaviors are rigid. Not performing the behaviors commonly causes great distress. Many people with OCD know or suspect their obsessions are not realistic; others may think they could be true (known as limited insight). Even if they know their obsessions are not realistic, people with OCD have a difficult time disengaging from the obsessive thoughts or stopping the compulsive actions.

A diagnosis of OCD requires the presence of obsessions and/or compulsions that are time-consuming (more than one hour a day),

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (Cont'd)

cause significant distress, and impair work or social functioning. OCD often begins in childhood, adolescence, or early adulthood; the average age that symptoms appear is 19 years old.

Obsessions are recurrent and persistent thoughts, impulses, or images that cause distressing emotions such as anxiety or disgust. Many people with OCD recognize that the thoughts, impulses, or images are a product of their mind and are excessive or unreasonable. However, the distress caused by these intrusive thoughts cannot be resolved by logic or reasoning. Most people with OCD try to ease the distress of the obsessions with compulsions, ignore or suppress the obsessions, or distract themselves with other activities.

Common obsessions:

- Fear of getting contaminated by people or the environment
- Disturbing sexual thoughts or images
- Fear of blurting out obscenities or insults
- Extreme concern with order, symmetry, or precision
- Recurrent intrusive thoughts of sounds, images, words, or numbers
- Fear of losing or discarding something important

Compulsions are repetitive behaviors or mental acts that a person feels driven to perform in response to an obsession. The behaviors typically prevent or reduce a person's distress related to an obsession. Compulsions may be excessive responses that are directly related to an obsession (such as excessive hand washing due to the fear of contamination) or actions that are completely unrelated to the obsession. In the most severe cases, a constant repetition of rituals may fill the day, making a normal routine impossible.

Common compulsions:

- Excessive or ritualized hand washing, showering, brushing teeth, or toileting
- Repeated cleaning of household objects
- Ordering or arranging things in a particular way
- Repeatedly checking locks, switches, or appliances
- Constantly seeking approval or reassurance
- Repeatedly counting to a certain number

If you believe you or someone you love may be struggling with any of these symptoms, please consider talking to your healthcare professional.



INSPIRATION & MOTIVATION

Appreciation can change a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary.

MARGARET COUSINS

To be grateful, is to find blessings in all that surrounds you...a truly thankful heart will bring light into your life and peace to your soul

~ DLKent

Looking behind, I am filled with gratitude, looking forward, I am filled with vision, looking upwards I am filled with strength, looking within, I discover peace.

-Quero Apache Prayer



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Words Matter

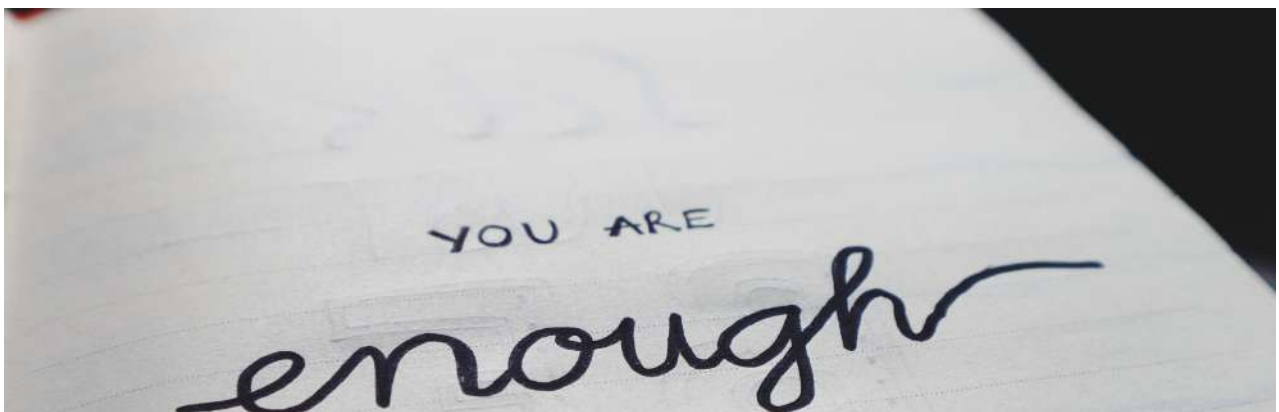
BY GINGER MILLER

We've probably all heard the old saying "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." I know, although with good intent, I was told to have this attitude when I was a kid and complained to my parents about being called names or spoken to unkindly. But the truth is words do hurt, children and adults alike. Words are powerful, they can hinder, hurt, harm, or humiliate and they can be used to humble, help, or heal. Negative words can lower self-esteem and kill enthusiasm, positive words can motivate and encourage dreams – they change our attitude about life. This is true whether spoken, written or thought.

Sometimes people are quick to react to what another person says when they feel the words were hurtful or humiliating. What about what we say to ourselves? Have you ever made a flippant comment after spilling a glass of water around another person? "Wow, I'm stupid. I knew that was there and I was still careless, I'm so sorry!" Or perhaps it was something you say to yourself silently, "I should have cleaned the kitchen yesterday, I'm such a slob." How would we react if someone else said those same exact things to us? It probably wouldn't go as seemingly unnoticed as when we say it to ourselves. Those words have the same impact on us psychologically whether someone else is saying it or we are saying it to ourselves.

Personally, I'd argue that when we say these kinds of things to ourselves it might actually be more damaging. I think the words we use in our minds repeatedly to describe ourselves and our identity are some of the most powerful forces in our lives. If we constantly utter such destructive words in our internal dialogue, we are allowing the power of words to work against us, like self-sabotage. Telling ourselves that we are fat, weak, worthless, or stupid can sap us of our power to find the positive meaning from our life experiences. If we tell ourselves "I am stupid" all day long, for example, when we fail a test we can seldom see any positive perspective. We are much more likely to use it to affirm our belief that we are stupid. "See, I failed. I am stupid." We should be mindful when we speak, write, think, or otherwise use words. Moment by moment we are interacting with ourselves and others using language. We take what we know from our upbringing, what we regularly see and hear in our lives, what words from the media that settle into our subconscious, and it becomes how we are able to express ourselves. The power of words in our world is undeniable. The problem is that most of us don't take an active enough role in choosing the words we speak without contemplating the immense force that flows from our speech. We allow the power of other's words to affect us and bring out all kinds of emotional energy. This leads to blurting out something cruel in a moment of stress or constantly ingesting fearful words from the news.

Don't ignore the power of words. This power can impact your life long down the road in ways you may not be able to foresee. Our ability to find love and joy rely entirely on the frequency of the words we seek, express, receive, and understand.





THE NOVEMBER CHALLENGE

November has 2 challenges! The first challenge is to keep a daily gratitude list for at least a week, just 5 things each day. Every day the list needs to be new things and if you find yourself wanting to list the same things, use the suggestion in the earlier article *Gratitude is Multifaceted*. Write to us and let us know if you have noticed that keeping a daily gratitude list has had an effect on your thinking or mood and if so, how it has affected you. If you try the suggestion from *Gratitude is Multifaceted*, let us know if you found the idea helpful.

The second challenge is based from the article *Words Matter*. Try to pay attention to the self-talk you have. See if you notice your thoughts or words about yourself or if any of these things you do are ever negative. If you do, stop when you notice it and change the wording. For example if you say something like "I'm so stupid" to yourself, change the wording to something like, "I'm not stupid, I just did it different than someone else would have. I'm still learning new things." Write to us and let us know if you notice any negatives self-talk and what you changed it to. Does changing the words make you feel any better?

Everyone who chooses to participate in November's challenge and writes to us before November 25th will win a gift card to Dunkin Donuts! You will also see your response in the December Newsletter "Your Voice" section! If you want it to be printed anonymously, just let us know when you send it in that you don't want your name on it. Email us at: gmler@wwamh.org to participate.



YOUR VOICE

Responses from October's "Having Fun in Recovery" Challenges

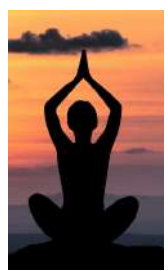
(Responses for the Gratitude Tree have been added to page 7)

I like to spend time with my family now, they used to drive me nuts. I am still trying some new things. I find cooking to be fun now. Sometimes I like doing Word Searches or Sudoku's.
~ Anonymous



I enjoy riding my bike, visiting my grandparents, shopping for clothes, listening to music, and painting.
~Annie

I find I enjoy Reading, Basketball, Self help information, Coloring, and Meditation
~Caitlin



I didn't used to like going out. Now I like going for nature walks, it makes me feel peaceful. I also enjoy watching sports or old western movies, collecting baseball hats, going to meetings to see some of my new friends, and listening to music.
~ Mike

THE FUN SPOT

RIDDLE ME THIS...

1. Why did the little boy bury his flashlight? _____
2. What occurs in once in a minute, twice in a moment, but never in a thousand years? _____
3. Johnny throws a ball as hard as he can. It comes back to him even though nothing and nobody touches it. How? _____
4. You see a boat filled with people, yet there is not a single person on board. How is this possible? _____
5. If everyone bought a white car, what would we have? _____
6. You draw a line. Without touching it how do you make the line longer? _____
7. Why would a man living in Arizona not be buried in Utah? _____
8. How can you physically stand behind your father while he is standing behind you? _____
9. What are the next 3 letters in this combination OTTFSS? _____
10. All 5 sisters are busy. Anne is reading a book, Rose is cooking. Katy is playing chess and Mary is doing the laundry. What's the 5th sister doing? _____
11. Why can't we take a picture of a man with a wooden leg? _____
12. What word in the English language has 3 consecutive double letters? _____
13. A woman shoots her husband, then holds him underwater for 5 minutes. Next, she hangs him. Right after, they enjoy a lovely dinner. Explain. _____
14. What is white when it is dirty? _____
15. What kind of room has no doors or windows? _____

October's Crossword Puzzle Key:

Across

2. The home of ghosts, goblins and ghouls: HAUNTED HOUSE
4. You need to get warm because it is _____ outside: CHILLY
6. You go to an orchard to do this (2 words): APPLE PICKING
9. A dried vegetable often used to make birdhouses: GOURD
10. A baked dessert with crust: PIE
12. A large cheerful bloom with edible seeds in the middle: SUNFLOWER
13. A nut with a 'hat': ACORN
14. Seasoning often used in baking: SPICES
16. A sweet hot drink (two words): HOT COCOA
17. Eve of the dead: HALLOWEEN
19. A baked treat with fruit in it: PIE
21. When most of these have dropped winter is near: LEAVES
22. Furry critter that likes nuts: SQUIRELL
23. Article of clothing to keep you warm: SWEATER
24. A warm fabric used for making clothing: FLANNEL
25. The season October is in: AUTUMN
26. Gatherings with lots of activities: FESTIVALS
27. A sweet drink made from apples: CIDER
28. Large Orange Produce: PUMPKINS
31. Acorns drop from these (2 words): OAK TREE
34. Fried treat made from the juice of apples (2 words): CIDER DONUT
35. These come from a fragrant tree: PINECONES
36. A fun way to warm up outside: BONFIRE

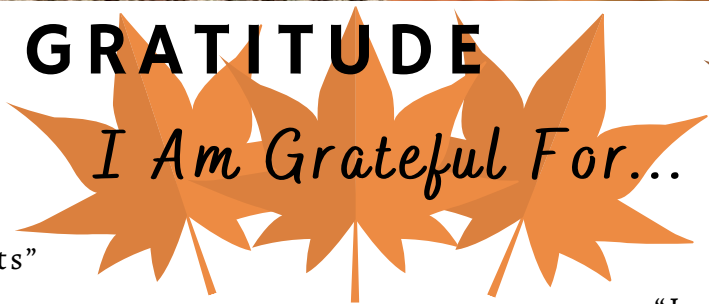
Down

1. Tool used to gather leaves: RAKE
3. Fire stuffed with hay or straw and put in the garden: SCARECROW
4. The first holiday in October (2 words): COLUMBUS DAY
5. A horse or tractor drawn activity: HAYRIDE
7. Sweet treat cooked over an open fire on a stick: MARSHMALLOW
8. There are tassels on these when they are ready to harvest (2 words): CORN STALKS
11. A sport many people enjoy: FOOTBALL
15. You might see these in corners: COBWEBS
18. A fun thing to make with pumpkins (Hyphenated word): JACK-O-LANTERN
19. A fun activity you might get lost doing (2 words): CORN MAZE
20. Place you go to pick fruit off trees: ORCHARD
24. Farmers need to harvest many of their crops before the first ____: FROST
29. The source syrup comes from (2 words): MAPLE TREE
30. To gather fruits and/or vegetables: HARVEST
32. Nature's night light: MOON
33. Some people enjoy taking a ride to view the changing colors: FOLIAGE

Riddle answers:

1. The batteries died
2. The letter M
3. He throws it straight up.
4. All the people on the boat are married.
5. A white carnation.
6. Draw a shorter line next to it so it becomes the longer line.
7. He's still living.
8. Stand back to back
9. ENT: One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine Ten
10. Playing chess of course!
11. The wooden leg isn't a camera.
12. Bookkeeper
13. She took a picture of him and developed it in her darkroom.
14. A blackboard
15. A mushroom

SHARING GRATITUDE



“My education”

“My parents”



“The lake and the mountains”

“My basic needs, healthy relationships, and most of all I am grateful for second chances”



“Small victories”

“For my recovery”

“My health”

“My family and their love and support”

“My new home”



“My kids, my spirituality, my wisdom, my health, my knowledge”



“My family, my kids, my sobriety, my faith, my friends, my counselors, my doctors, my home to wake up each day, my life”



I Am Grateful For...

“My sponsor, my children, my fiancé, and my sobriety”

“All of my friends and my pets”

“Laughter”

“Sam & Sadie”

“Sister, mother, self, life, daughters”

“Having an AA group”



“Animals, family, music, dreams, good books, sweaters, and flannels”

“My journey”

“My animals and husband”

“Family”

“The love of my life, my beautiful daughter”

“Life and East Side Center”



“Blessed”

“My grandkids”

“Reading, basketball, self-help information, coloring, meditation”



“My loving and supporting family”

“My kids and husband every day”

“For a new beginning, to be able to start over to regain my life back, to make new friends and keep old good friends, to be sober, healthy, and well one day at a time”

RECOVERY

Resources

WEBSITES

- Al-Anon and Ala-teen Groups** – Hope and help for families and friends of alcoholics: al-anon.org
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)** - Local group schedule and information: district13.aahmbny.org
- Celebrate Recovery (CR)** – Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered, 12-Step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain or addiction of any kind: celebraterecovery.com
- Debtors Anonymous** - Debtors Anonymous offers hope for people whose use of unsecured debt causes problems and suffering in their lives and the lives of others: debtorsanonymous.org
- Digital Recovery Support** -Online recovery support groups are available daily. They are open to anyone who is dealing with substance use, mental health conditions, and any other quality of life concerns. Meetings are led by peer recovery support specialists who have firsthand experience and understand what you're going through: www.recoveryanswers.org
- Gamblers Anonymous (GA)** – Online services for anyone struggling with a gambling addiction: gasteps.org
- Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP)** – For those who have lost someone to substance use or addiction: grasphelp.org
- In the rooms** - A global online recovery community who share their strength and experience with one another daily through live meetings, discussion groups, and other tools in the rooms: intherooms.com
- My Recovery** – Online 12-step meetings: myrecovery.com
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA)** - local group schedule and information: narcotics.com
- Overeaters Anonymous (OA)** – Online support groups for anyone who wants to stop eating compulsively: oarecovery.com
- The Phoenix** – Recovery community organization offering daily live stream cross-fit, yoga and meditation every two hours through the COVID Crisis: thephoenix.org

PHONE NUMBERS

- The Trevor Project** - Support for youth in crisis: thetrevorproject.org/hotline: 866-488-7386
- International Bipolar Association Crisis Line**: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders Helpline**: 630-577-1330
- National Center for PTSD Helpline**: 1-800-273-8255
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**: Hotline staff are prepared to answer any mental health questions you may have. You can also text NAMI to 741741 for free support. (800) 950-NAMI (6264)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**: Available 24/7, 365 days a year: (800) 662-HELP (4357). The professionals on the phone can provide treatment information and referrals in English and Spanish.
- MentalHealth.gov**: Available 8am to 8pm EST to provide mental health information and treatment referrals: (877) 726-4727
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)**: Available 8:30am to 5pm EST: (866) 615-6464 or (866) 415-8051 (TTY). Professionals can answer any mental health related questions in English or Spanish.
- Boys Town**: Specially trained counselors are available 24/7, 365 days a year to provide crisis support specifically for children and their families: (800) 448-3000

PODCASTS

- This Naked Mind** - Some of the episodes discuss alcohol withdrawals, the link between drinking and binge eating, how to deal with loneliness, and more.
- Recovery Rocks** - Our varied paths show listeners that there are a myriad paths to recovery and countless songs to rock out to along the way.
- Mental Health - Hope and Recovery** - They share inspirational true stories and a host of recovery skills. You'll learn about treatment options, coping skills, goal setting, relationships, and mindfulness.
- Mental Illness Happy Hour** - Weekly interviews with comedians, artists, friends, and the occasional doctor.; exploring mental illness, trauma, addiction and negative thinking.

APPS

- Addiction Apps**: Twenty-Four Hours A Day (Free), Quit That! Habit Tracker (Free), NoMo (Free)
- Counseling Apps**: TalkSpace (\$\$) BetterHelp (\$\$) Larkr (\$\$) ReGain (\$\$) TeenCounseling (\$\$)
- Suicide Prevention Apps**: MY3 (Free) notOK (Free)
- General Mental Health Apps**: What's Up (CBT; Free) Mood Kit (CBT; \$)
- Anxiety Apps**: MindShift (Free), Self-Help Anxiety Management – SAM (Free), CBT Thought Record Diary (Free)
- Bipolar Disorder Apps**: IMoodJournal (\$), EMoods (Free)
- Depression Apps**: Talk Space Online Therapy (\$\$), Happify (Free), MoodTools (CBT; Free)
- Eating Disorder Apps**: Recovery Record (Free), Rise Up & Recovery (Free), LifeSum (Free)
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Apps**: nOCD (Free), Worry Watch (\$), GG OCD (Free)
- PTSD Apps**: PTSD Coach (Free), Breathe2Relax (Free)
- Schizophrenia Apps**: UCSF Prime (Free), Schizophrenia Health Story Lines (Free)
- Mindfulness & Meditation Apps**: Headspace (\$), Calm (\$), Ten Percent Happier (\$)

WWAMH DUAL RECOVERY SUPPORT GROUPS

EVERY TUESDAY FROM
4:00-5:00 PM AT THE
HOPE & HEALING
RECOVERY CENTER:
2 MAPLE STREET, HUDSON FALLS
ATTEND IN PERSON OR
VIRTUALLY - ZOOM MEETING ID:
844-2214-0148

PLEASE VISIT WWW.WWAMH.ORG FOR
MORE INFORMATION & COPIES OF
OUR NEWSLETTERS

THANKS FOR READING! :)

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AT RRYAN@WWAMH.ORG

