

'Feeble steps' to recovery aided by woman's friend

by Frances Mae "Maesie" Ferrari
for the Tundra Times

My name is Maesie, and I am an alcoholic. I am also proud to be a recovering alcoholic.

What soothing relief I feel when I utter those words! But it wasn't always that way.

I have somehow managed to endure and then to enjoy life for 53 years. Most of those years were years of running away from myself, years of alcoholic delusion. It became a truly vicious circle: run, run, run; drink, drink drink. My life became totally unmanageable.

Six years ago I hit bottom, even to the brink of death. I could no longer continue on the merry-go-round called "Denial." I was compelled to admit finally: "I have a serious drinking problem!"

If I was to live, I knew I had to stop drinking. With the caring, love and help of dear friends and family members, I was encouraged to seek special help. I found that special help through Alcoholics Anonymous, and was lovingly introduced to the healing Twelve Step Program. I learned I had a disease, a fatal allergy.

The diseased part of me cried out to die; I was actually committing suicide by booze. But there was another part of me crying out so

desperately, "I want to live!"

I always will remember that my first feeble steps to recover six years ago were strengthened by a very dear friend. He held me close and said something I can never forget:

"God loves you so much, Maesie, especially in your weakness. He is preparing you through your weakness because He needs you to bring His message of love and hope and self-esteem to others who may otherwise lose all hope of recovery."

I did not dare to believe those words at the time. To think that anyone, let alone God, could possibly need me — a drunk! I do believe those words today, with all my heart and soul I believe them.

God is loving me and using me in ways I still find beyond belief: to bring the "Good News of Recovery" to the downtrodden, to the hopeless, to those deprived of all self-esteem.

My own alcoholism has been turned into a gift and a very special blessing! And a gift and a blessing to be shared with others.

Maesie Ferrari is a former staff member of the Holy Spirit Retreat House in Anchorage. The Retreat House is open to all denominations, and it is managed by the Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Anchorage.

The 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God — as we understood Him.

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continue to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him. Praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.