

April 2008



Although others may feel sorry for you, NEVER feel sorry for yourself – it has a deadly effect on spiritual well-being. Recognize all problems, no matter how difficult, as opportunities for spiritual growth, and make the most of these opportunities.

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Java Journal



The Family Afterward

Sent to the Java Journal by a local recovering alcoholic. Copyright unknown.

"Cessation of drinking is but the first step away from a highly strained, abnormal condition."

Alcoholics Anonymous, 3rd Edition, The Family Afterward, pg. 122

It has taken me a very long time to see the person I had become during my active alcoholism. At first, I wanted to stop drinking because I was so miserable. Although I couldn't admit I was an alcoholic for many months, I knew something in my life had to change. I wasn't the mom I wanted to be most of all. When I staggered drunk one afternoon with my 8 month old in my arms, and when I drove drunk with my children and a neighbor's boy in the car, I suspected I might have a problem. I couldn't see that good normal people would behave in such a way. The black outs were at that point justified in my very sick mind. They had been happening for 15 years and I always made it home and didn't kill anyone. Wasn't that what was important? The ability to rationalize and justify was in top form and of course, I couldn't see that.

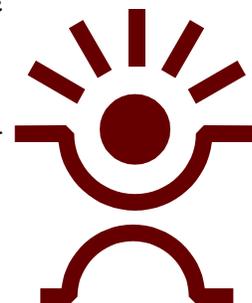
When I saw all the happy, loving people at my first meeting, hugging each other with bright clear eyes, I wanted what they had. I took on the program like a new endeavor. I would learn how to do what they had done and not give up until I had found whatever it was that they had found. My character was to be the best at whatever I did so this was something new to take on!

The promises of our fellowship didn't make much sense to me at first, but they sounded good. So my first meeting I picked a sponsor and a home group. (They said that was what I was supposed to do) By the grace of God only, the obsession to drink was lifted and I was on

my first 4th step by the 3rd month. Sure I didn't like admitting the things I had done, but I was told that God would take it all away and I could release the shame, guilt and remorse I felt and my sponsor assured me that one day I would be able to help someone else who had a similar story. That was truly the beginning of my journey to become a sober, honest person. The person that I thought I was somewhere deep inside. It took a long time to openly admit the liar, cheat and floozy I'd become during my drinking. I had to become someone I could truly like before I could leave those memories in my past. To truly see the reality of the person that I was. I always knew how to put on a front to make everyone think I was a decent person, at least I thought. My AA friends that I made surrounded me with tough and unconditional love, and were rigorously honest with me.

It is a great blessing now to see the truth about myself as I was. It gives me all the more reason to stay involved and follow the suggestions. I've clearly seen how alcoholism affects the family and all that love the alcoholic. I truly never want to do that to those I care about again. Alcohol would inevitably turn me back into that liar, cheat and floozy. So, I will do everything and anything it takes to stay sober today. That means follow all the steps and the suggestions of AA from our big book, to the best of my ability every single day. I refuse to be who I was, so, whatever it takes. I'm in!

Anonymous (Since Oct. 1st, 1986)



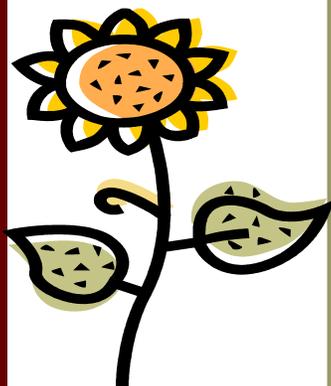
Birthdays for March

Mark S. on 3/5
with 18 years so-
ber!

Birthdays for April

Jack W. on 4/10
with 19 years so-
ber!

*Live Simply,
love gener-
ously, care
deeply,
speak kindly,
and leave the
rest to God.*



The New Guy

Sent to the Java Journal by a local recovering alcoholic. Copyright unknown.

I received an impassioned plea from a member to truly understand the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and to put in to practice what our Founders intended for this miraculous program of recovery.

After attending a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, this member was saddened. He was dismayed at the misguided motives for attendance at the meeting. This person cried over the travesty that occurred. The New Guy got away.

This is not a piece about the injustice done to the newcomer. Really, it is the dichotomy of Alcoholics Anonymous that this piece is about. The new guy getting away hurts me far more than it will ever hurt him. This is about having to give it away in order to keep it, and what that saying actually means.

It is my hope that I remember the pledge.

The Responsibility Pledge that is posted in many meeting halls has somehow become hidden among the other mottos and phrases. I have taken those words for granted. Somewhere along the way the fellowship itself, that I have thrived on and felt at home in, has blinded me to the true principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. I have become too comfortable with the relationships that I have established. I have, at times, thought that this is enough, and have forgotten to look for those who are newcomers. I am too comfortable visiting and fellowshiping with the friends that I have established.

I too cry at the irresponsibility that has become the norm in the meetings that have helped to save my life. My tears don't fall just because this irresponsibility may dramatically hurt a newcomer; this is only a part of my sadness. I cry because this ir-

responsibility may be my own demise. I may die as a result of my lack of helpfulness.

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

For many years I have heard that, "The newcomer is the most important person in the room."

I have misunderstood this. I have always thought that this meant that the newcomer was important because they were finally getting the help that they needed. That they were important because they were reminding me that 24 hours was what really counted; 24 hours is really what any of us have. I thought that they were here to remind me how close that I am to the next drink.

I only understood a half-truth. What the whole truth is that the newcomer is the most important person in a meeting because the newcomer keeps me sober. The newcomer does not keep me sober simply by his or her presence in a meeting; the newcomer keeps me sober by being a prospect that I work with. The newcomer is a prospect that I share my experience, strength and hope with so that I don't die of active alcoholism. The newcomer is my medicine. The newcomer has come to a meeting to save my life, to be my medicine, to keep me from that compulsion to drink by allowing me an opportunity to carry the message. I am blessed to have a newcomer right there, easily accessible, to work with.

The Big Book tells me that "practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics." This intensive work may be the only way that I will stay sober. There may come a time when I am only able to preserve my immunity through my work with the newcomer.

The New Guy

(Continued from page 2)

I should be fighting other members over the opportunity to work with the newcomer. The newcomer should be overwhelmed with offers of sponsorship and help on the 12 steps. The New Guy should never "get away."

This is why the newcomer is the most important person in the room. He or she is the most important person in the room because my sobriety is contingent on my working with them. My immunity is contingent on intensive work with another alcoholic.

It was pointed out to me that if there were no more newcomers in meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous that I would have to resort to finding them. I would have to go to hospitals, institutions, churches, jails... I would have to go out and seek out an alcoholic to talk with so that I would stay sober. That is the way that it was in the beginning.

I have it easy. I have it so easy. At any hour, over 1500 times a week in this area, there are meetings of Alcoholics Anony-

mous. I can go to any of these meetings, find a New Guy, and ensure immunity from drinking. If there is a possibility that I may at any time have a compulsion to drink, I can attend a meeting and work with a newcomer. I do not have to go to all of the hard work of finding one.

The newcomer is the most important person in the room at any AA meeting because the newcomer SAVES MY LIFE today. I hope that I will always remember this and keep this foremost in my mind. This is why I am responsible. It is a responsibility that at first reads like a pledge to be helpful, a benefit to the New Guy. Actually, it is being responsible to ME, my family, my friends, my employer, and Alcoholics Anonymous - to all of the people who count on me today and need for me to be sober.

I read once that Bill W.'s greatest hope was that he was a strong link in the chain of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am blessed with AA. I have been given the gift of recovery and life today because of Alcoholics Anonymous. I too want to be the strong link in this chain.

I am responsible... When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help. I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am re-

TUCANNON CAMPOUT

Committee Meeting

Saturday morning,
March 8th,
9:30A.M.

Central Office
Book Store

"ALANO CLUB"

"Please!" Come help us plan this Fun Fathers Day Weekend Event!

Committee will meet every other Saturday until the weekend of June 7th.



Just For Fun

Sent to the Java Journal by a local recovering alcoholic. Copyright unknown.

A man staggered home late after another evening with his drinking buddies. Shoes in left hand to avoid waking his wife, he tiptoed as quietly as he could toward the stairs leading to their upstairs bedroom, but misjudged the bottom step in the darkened entryway. As he caught himself by grabbing the banister, his body swung around and he landed heavily on his rump. A whiskey bottle in each back pocket broke and made the landing especially painful. Managing to suppress a yelp, the man sprung up, pulled down his pants, and examined his lacerated and bleeding cheeks in the mirror of the nearby darkened hallway. He managed to find a large full box of Band-Aids and proceeded to place a patch as best he could on each place he saw blood. After hiding the now almost empty box, he managed to shuffle and stumble his way to bed.

In the morning, the man awoke with searing pain in his head and butt and his wife staring at him from across the room. She said, "You were drunk again last night." Forcing himself to ignore his agony, he looked meekly at her and replied, "Now, hon, why would you say such a mean thing?" "Well," she said, "it could be the open front door, it could be the glass and whiskey at the bottom of the stairs, it could be the drops of blood trailing through the house, it could be your bloodshot eyes, but, mostly....it's all those Band-Aids stuck on the downstairs mirror!"

AA's Newsletter for the Greater Tri-City Area

Central Office

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POBox 6675
Kennewick, WA 99336

Central Office Hours of Operation
Mon - Thu, 11:30 am—1:30 pm and 6:00—8:00 pm;
Sat — Sun, 10:00 am—2:00 pm; closed on Fridays

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The Java Journal is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. or with the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous. The distribution of this Journal has not been authorized or endorsed by, and does not imply affiliation with Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. or the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous. The intent of this Journal is to communicate ideas for recovery and events for fellowship to recovering alcoholics in the Tri-City Area and beyond!

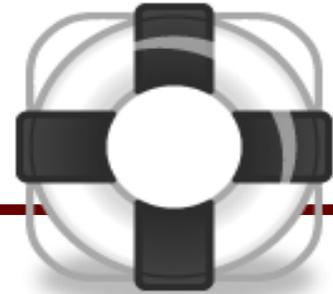
Please Contact The Java Journal Editor With the Following Info:

- Birthday announcements: send your name, sobriety date and years sober;
- Events, announcements, fellowship information, Journal corrections;
- Your email if you would like to receive the Journal in your inbox once a month.

Ham On Wry *Reprinted with Permission from the April, 2006 Grapevine*

"I am glad I have my Higher Power and the program of AA to guide me-- there are times when it seems like everything is falling apart, when actually it's all falling together."

Mike



Calendar of Events

Answering Services Committee Help needed to carry the cell phone. Meets the last Wednesday of the month at the Alano Club at 6:30 pm. Call Robert S. w/questions 205-1657	Mar 26
Archives Committee Help needed to assist with gathering historical information and memorabilia of our local AA. Meets the 1st Saturday of the month at the Alano Club at 1pm. Call Bob V. with questions: 948-5067.	Apr 5
Special Events Committee Meeting Help needed for planning fellowship events such as the Gratitude Banquet, Fourth of July Picnic, New Years Party, etc. Meets the 1st Monday of the month at the Alano Club at 6:45. Call Joseph A. w/questions at 539-5256	Apr 7
Spring Pre-Conference Assembly Ellensburg, Quality Inn and Conference Center For information: www.area92aa.org/calendar	Apr 11—Apr 13
Committee Meeting for the upcoming Area Quarterly in July Monthly meeting at St Paul's Episcopal Church, 1609 W. 10th Ave, Kennewick. Call Amanda at 528-3246 if you have questions.	Apr 13
Central Office Meeting This monthly meeting includes all committee chairs for the District 4 area. Any/all AA members are welcome! If you're interested in getting involved (just a little or a lot) or need a service position, please come and check it out. 6:45pm, Alano Club (downstairs), Kennewick	Apr 14
Spring Fling at Coyote Ridge Correctional Center Come support recovery in Corrections. This 10:00 am event includes fellowship and sharing. Lunch will be served. You will need a clearance so contact Tina or Eric at 582-4013 at least two weeks prior to the event.	Apr 19
WSEA 92 Archives Workshop 1st Lutheran Church, 512 N. Ruby St. Ellensburg, WA 10am—4pm, Pot Luck. Topics include Archives Basics, Book Repair, Document Cleaning and Repair. Guest Archivist from Area 58 and Area 72 and Facilitator from the National Archives Workshop Committee will be there. Call Mike B at (208) 790-2965 with questions or visit www.area92aa.org/calendar	Jun 7
Pacific Northwest Conference Pendleton Convention Center, OR. The oldest continually occurring conference in AA still provides an opportunity for AAs from all over the NW to gather together and share, learn, reach-out and have fun! Questions?, call Ken V. 541-296-1974 or visit the Area 92 website at www.area92aa.org/calendar	Jun 27—Jun 29
2008 Pacific Regional Forum , Hosted by Area 92. Double Tree Spokane Center, Spokane. More info to come... www.area.92aa.org	Aug 29—Aug 31