

June 2010

# Java Journal



Catch us on the web at  
3citiesaa.org



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Archives January 1994	1
Traditions Checklist	3
Monthly Laughs	3
Monthly Prayer	4
Calendar of Events	4

## From The Archives

Reprinted with permission from the AA Grapevine January 1994. (Vol. 50 No. 8)

### Do We Need Each Other?

Tradition One - Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.

If the first words I heard in AA eased me into the First Step, it was the second statement that gave me instant hope, making me feel better right away. Now, thirty-one years later, I believe that second sentence I heard contained the healing idea of our then-unwritten First Tradition.

The first words were: "Are you having trouble with your drinking?"

Totally unprepared for that question, before I knew what I was doing I had nodded a truthful "Yes." It was a wobbly lurch toward Step One. (Later, I slipped off, but finally climbed back.)

My new friend smiled and said calmly, "Well, I'm a drunk myself; come on in, and let's talk it over." In effect she invited me to participate in Tradition One: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity."

Her description of herself struck me dumb with amazement, even relief. So I mutely followed that wonderful woman into another room, to talk it over. At that moment, I would have followed her to Hades, of course, hooked by her unashamed revelation that she was a . . . well, what she said.

"Drunk" was a word I resented, as adjective or noun. It had always disgusted me, until

she said it about herself as simply as she might have said she was a woman or a citizen or on a diet.

She said, "There are lots of us who have alcoholism, and we're now getting over it."

I was not alone! A sob of relief welled up.

My friend then told me, unemotionally, about her drinking, and carefully asked no questions about me or mine.

In that wonderful book *Thirst for Freedom*, David Stewart points out the tremendous helping power of empathy. I wonder why it is not talked about more, either by professional observers of AA or by us. The empathy of those first AAs I met certainly struck a mighty blow against my drinking and gave me a huge shove toward recovery. It is, I believe, a manifestation of our First Tradition, and it goes considerably deeper than simply identifying. We go on to imitate good examples of sobriety. And in twelfth-stepping, we put ourselves in another person's place in order to help.

The empathy around me seemed to elicit some in me, which was the first genuine concern for someone else's welfare I had ever felt. And it had another benign effect on me. Like some other alcoholics, I had felt the most outcast, lonely person on the earth a long time before I came to AA. In the rosy glow of first drinks, I had felt set apart, above others. Special. Better. Unique. That's an isolated spot, with room for only one. Maudlin hours later, sloppy drunk or trying to sober up, I had felt just as alone. A special bastard, worse than anyone else, uniquely loathsome and not worth caring about. Alone again--

(Continued on page 2)



## Arch

the curved head  
of an opening,  
as a doorway.

Merriam-Webster®  
Dictionary of the English  
Language



## Defect

An imperfection  
that causes  
inadequacy or  
failure; a  
shortcoming.

The American Heritage®  
Dictionary of the English  
Language, Fourth Edition



## From the Archives (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

ostracized, undesired, and undesirable.

Now, surely it takes an acrobatic, if not an alcoholic, egotism to flip-flop continually in order to retain a distinction like that--to be either an unappreciated, Christlike genius or a uniquely horrible specimen. But practice had made me good at it, and I was almost never as conscious of anyone or anything else as I was continuously aware of me and my special-ness. Even when I was not conscious of it, it permeated all I did and said.

My first AA greeter's second statement, "I'm a drunk myself," shattered a lot of my claim to being so specially different. It was exactly what my sick ego needed to hear. Then her tale of alcoholism and recovery in the company of other alcoholics quickly demonstrated that I was far less powerful than the AAs staying sober together. Thus, it seems to me that the principle of anonymity is rooted in these words: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity."

Does this mean I must put the welfare of AA before my own? To answer, I ask myself another question: Would I have any welfare of my own at all if it were not for AA?

Does this Tradition mean we should stifle unpopular or dissenting voices among us? I think it means the opposite. Suppose you and I have opinions poles apart about psychiatry, religion, AA public information activity, or the Steps. Must each of us not respect the other's opinion if we want to stand together in sobriety? I don't mean tolerate; I mean really respect. Learning to work together amicably despite differences is a part of becoming mature, I suspect, and something I had no clue to before AA.

The words of our First Tradition had not been written the first day I walked into AA.

But when my AA friends assured me we could all stay sober together, although we had not been able to do it alone, I believe they were acting out the Tradition.

The Tradition also seems to me an echo of what Bill W. discovered in 1935 in Akron, Ohio, when he realized he urgently needed to talk to another alcoholic to keep himself sober.

On that long-ago day of my own entry into AA, as soon as I heard the implied invitation to join, I longed to be in that company. I'll always be grateful that I soon was, and I have been so ever since.

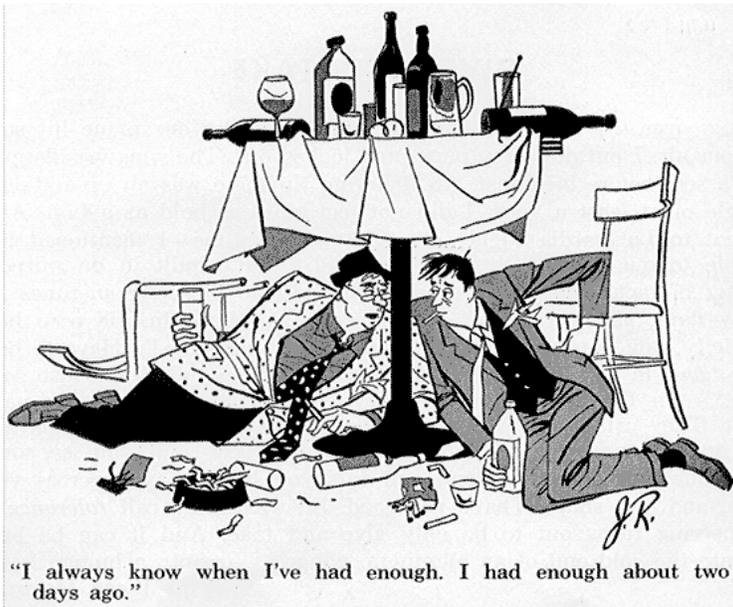
Our togetherness, our common welfare, our Fellowship mean so much to me that I am puzzled when someone flippily remarks, "The Traditions are for groups, of course, not members. They are there to hold the movement together." Not the members? "The Steps, not the Traditions, are for recovery."

Did any of us recover on our own? Didn't unity with other alcoholics in AA help a bit? Does anyone in AA believe he or she was not helped to recover by the knowledge that we are all afloat on the same life raft? Isn't that the First Tradition?

Ego deflation is important in my recovery, and this Tradition bears on that, too, it seems to me. To the extent that I have experienced anonymity in the spiritual sense, it grows from Tradition One, our unity. It seems to me worth sacrificing some ego satisfactions for, such as those of being recognized as some kind of Alcoholics Anonymous committee member or officer or speaker or Grapevine contributor. The bonds that hold us together seem to me greatly worth cherishing.

B. L. Manhattan, New York

## Monthly Laughs



## Traditions Checklist

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with 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.

**Tradition Six: An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.**

1. Should my fellow group members and I go out and raise money to endow several AA beds in our local hospital?
2. Is it good for a group to lease a small building?
3. Are all the officers and members of our local club for AAs familiar with "Guidelines on Clubs" (which is available free from GSO)?
4. Should the secretary of our group serve on the mayor's advisory committee on alcoholism?
5. Some alcoholics will stay around AA only if we have a TV and card room. If this is what is required to carry the message to them, should we have these facilities?

We are  
building an  
arch through  
which we shall  
walk ... free ...  
at last.

Is our work  
solid so far?

Pg 75:3

## AA's Newsletter for the

### Central Office

102 E. Kennewick Ave. (upstairs at the Alano Club) POBox 6675 Kennewick, WA 99336  
 Central Office Hours of Operation  
 Mon - Thu, 11:30 am–1:30 pm and 6:00–8:00 pm;

Central Office Questions: Mary E. (509) 713-0148  
 Java Journal Editor: Courtney  
 javajournaldistrict4@gmail.com  
 AA Hotline (509) 735-4086  
 See us online at [www.3citiesaa.org](http://www.3citiesaa.org)

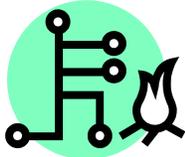
The Java Journal is not affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. or with the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous. The distribution of this Journal has not been authorized or endorsed by, and does not imply affiliation with Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. or the General 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:

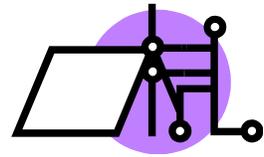
- Birthday announcements: send your name, sobriety date and years sober;
- Events, announcements, fellowship information, Journal corrections;
- Your email if you would like to receive the Journal in your inbox once a month.

## Monthly Prayer: "Tolerance"

God help me to show this person the same tolerance, pity and patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. (p. 141 of 12&12)



## Calendar of Events



<p><b>Ladies Potluck and Speaker Meeting</b> Benton REA Community Room, 6095 W. Van Giesen, West Richland. 11:00 a.m. potluck, 12:00 speaker: Shawna S. Contact Lisa B at 509-378-4646, rainbow7964@hotmail.com.</p>	<p>June 5</p>
<p><b>Steak &amp; Speaker Series.</b> All Nations Center 3020 Ashue Rd. Wapato, WA. \$12.50 per person. Steak, salad &amp; baked potato dinner. June 18 speaker is Candice M. from Los Angeles, CA (14 years sobriety). A member of the Pacific Group, Candice is a veteran of the speaking circuit and her passion for A.A. shines as she speaks!</p>	<p>June 18</p>
<p><b>Lost &amp; Found's 2nd Annual CAMP-OUT. "Fellowship in the Park"</b> Hell's Gate State Park. AA Meetings, Bonfire Meeting, Speakers. Pig Roast &amp; Potluck. Approx \$7 per person for the whole weekend (8 people per site, includes 1 car and 1 motor home: extra cars \$5) Day rate is \$4 per car. For more information, call Greg F. 208-503-9376.</p>	<p>June 25-27</p>
<p><b>2010 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous "A Vision For You"</b> Alamodome, San Antonio, TX. AA members and guests from around the world will celebrate AAs 75th year. Big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday morning in the Alamodome. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio Convention Center and local hotels. Go to <a href="http://aa.org">http://aa.org</a> for amore information.</p>	<p>Jul 1–Jul 4</p>