

Anonymous SJ

June 2010

Around The Tables

Nobody Knew

Around the Tables, thank God, each can be himself. That means a fantastic freedom, but one built on the recognition of the inherent freedom of others.

Driving back from a luncheon with a friend and client, I was listening to a rendition of "Universal Prisoner," and I realized how aptly that song describes the alcoholic prior to AA. The gist of the song is that the universal prisoner makes his own prison, and it describes many of the characteristics which are well-known attributes of an alcoholic. One of the closing lines is "Worst of all, he doesn't even know." Isn't that the niftiest indictment of alcoholism?

Obvious to me now is how obvious my problem was to all but me. This point was made clear to me today. The luncheon spot was one where I did a vast quantity of drinking; in fact, until AA, I was never really sober there. But my conduct on those many occasions never caused a problem *there*. Many of the regulars were surprised when I joined AA. "You don't have a problem. Why, I've never seen you out of line." They didn't know, either. How could they? If they had known, then they wouldn't have been there themselves. My joining AA was bothersome to them because it made them think, "If *he* has a problem. . ."

Were the bar companions the ones who counted for me? Of course they were. Didn't I spend all my time being a big shot for them? Didn't they buy me drinks? "Worst of all, he doesn't even know."

I am truly impressed with the insidiousness of alcoholism, for I was a prisoner of the bottle and its real companions--fear, sickness, loneliness, anxiety, trouble. But I am much more impressed with AA and what it can do. For now I know. Isn't that what being free does for us?

June 1973

Ham On Wry

IF YOU'VE EVER rolled pennies to buy hootch, used vodka for a chaser, tried to pass a bridge, spent an hour trying to unlock your front door with your car key, said "excuse me" to a lamp post, had double vision with one eye shut, or got drunk with your dog, you might not be a social drinker anymore.

Barley !!! Corn !!!

As one gal member explained her start towards alcoholism--"I just followed the crowd and got in the wrong line."

Committee Report Highlights

Unity

Alkathon, July 4 Call Joey 856-534-7619 to volunteer.

Alkathon and Picnic will run 8am to 8pm at Christ Episcopal Church, 162 Delaware St, Woodbury NJ.

H&I

Commitments that are still open are: Underwood Hospital Tues. 4 – 5 June 22 & 29, Underwood Hospital Thurs. 4 – 5 June 17 & 24, **Maryville Women's Sun. 2-3 July 4, Underwood Sun 4 – 5 July 4, Maryville Women Mon. 8-9 July 26, Underwood Tues. 4 – 5 July 6, 20, Lakeland Wed. 7 – 8 July 7, Unity Wed. 10:15 – 10:55 July 7 & July 21, Ancora Thurs. 7 – 8 July 1, and Maryville Mens Thurs 8-9 July 1.** Two hosting commitments opened up JFKennedy Detox Monday 2 to 3:00 p.m. Week 1, 3, & 5 and Maryville Women's Wednesday 8 to 9 p.m. Week 2. Next H&I Meeting is June 28, 7p,, Intergroup office..

Answering Service

As of today's date (06.08.2010) all shifts are covered. Thank you to all volunteers – new and "old"! Our "waiting list" of volunteers remains depleted and we can use additional back-up. Interested AA's with a year's sobriety are asked to contact either Chair or Co-Chair (see email addresses below, or via webpage) for information, and *please assist in announcing* the need for help at meetings

Literature

This dept is taking "Literature on the Road" to each group, selling literature to individuals or groups. This is a great way to use up the current inventory. See Penny at a meeting or contact the office for more info. Volunteers are still needed to cover shifts in the intergroup office, minimum 1 year sobriety.

Newsletter

Help is needed!! If you are interested in writing an article, or helping in any way, please contact Judy at newsletter@aaaj.org.



Fellowship Announcements and Things To Do

June 19– Delegate’s Post Conference Report, 9:30-noon. St Charles Borromeo Church, Sicklerville NJ. Coffee and light refreshments.

June 25-27 Camping Trip Goshen Camp Ground \$5.00 for weekend. Call Larry 856-373-8636. Directions: <http://www.state.nj.us/parksandforests/parks/wsf-goshen-map.html>.

July 1-4 AA’s 75th Anniversary, San Antonio TX

AA Softball Game, June 27th, 11:00am to 7:00pm. Contact Jim O 856-340-6227 or Priscilla S 856-649-6844

Fishing Trip "Duke of Fluke" Somers Point 1:00 - 5:00pm, July 17 \$25.00 per person. Contact Mike Lore 856-779-1830

Mark your calendars Dates to be determined

Tubing Trip in August
Camping trip in September

400 Club, Clementon first and third Saturdays of each month, 8:30—12:00am. Open mike/bands/karaoke

Please contact newsletter@aaaj.org for any additions to our social events calendar.

What Is Time?

AROUND THE TABLES, time has varying characteristics. When I first met you, the foolishness about "one day at a time" seemed a ploy of madmen. The days dragged.

Today, I thought of a person whom I have not seen for a short while. I asked myself, "How short? Well, not since I've been in the program. That's three years. Let's see. . . ." And soon I realized it has been five years --a short time. What is time? Who cares?

And so I come to this: Because of the beauty that is the AA life, time has no limiting dimension. Days speed by, yet a pleasant Sunday afternoon seems to have no end; a humble, honest AA talk is over in a wink, yet a statistical "you alcoholics" talk lasts for weeks. Time is meaningless, yet all-important, when one is trying to practice these principles of these principles *at all times*.

Vigorous practice of the AA program gives life a spiritual dimension that transcends time. Recall the tedious, dull, repetitive, boring life that led to AA. Recall the pain and suffering of meeting the reality of pain and suffering. Look about at today. Look about at joy, zest, and the timelessness of reality.

Living one day at a time, not taking the first drink, using the AA suggestions, seeing beauty around you--all these are so much a part of you, it seems improbable that once life was not like this. But how long ago was it, really, when life was not like this? Yesterday? A century ago?

What is this feeling of timelessness? How do you explain it? Again, like so much of AA, it can't be explained; it must be experienced. It is a fact that I sense the infinite beauty of His will, and this feeling is indeed timeless. When did it begin? In a way, just now. In a way, beyond memory. No beginning, no end--only now. Thus, the oneness of being at one with One. Dec 1973

YOUR TURN—CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR FELLOWSHIP

The Best Is Yet To Come

It's a journey and not a destination

Before I came to AA, I tried for many years to control and enjoy my drinking. Then one night I hit my bottom. I passed out in a bar, woke up, and asked the bartender, "Where's my drink?"

"Oh good, you're awake," he said. "Now get out."

"Where's my money?" I yelled.

"You spent it all buying other people's drinks," he replied. "Now *get out!*"

I begged him to give me one more drink. "Please, please, I'll pay you tomorrow. I own a home in this city."

He shoved a drink at me. "Drink that and get out of here," he said. "I don't want your type in my bar!"

As I reached for the glass, I looked in the mirror behind the bar and saw myself as the drunk that I was.

"God help me!" I said. My hand froze and I could not pick up the drink. I heard myself say, "Bartender, call AA. I want help!"

The following day a member of AA took me to my first meeting. "Hi, I'm George, and I'm an alcoholic!" the greeter said at the door, really loud.

"Shhhh, that's embarrassing," I told him. "Someone might hear you!"

I faithfully attended AA meetings for the next ninety days. I went to Big Book and *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* meetings as well as speaker-discussion meetings. I liked them the best because I could tell the groups my problems and get answers.

During one "Twelve and Twelve" meeting, I complained about how complicated the chapter we were reading seemed. An old-timer said, "If anything bothers you in AA, just don't drink and go to meetings."

"Incidentally, this meeting is over at 11 P.M.," he added. "So you have one more hour to go home and, in the quietness of your living room, pick-up the Big Book and read it. When midnight comes, you will have completed one full day without a drink. We do it a day at a time."

A long time ago, I read in the Grapevine that it's not enough just to go to a meeting, sit, then get up and go home. All through my AA journey, I have been active--washed ashtrays and cups, served as secretary of meetings, and put my hand out to newcomers with a smile. I have visited hospitals and prisons, carrying the message of recovery in AA, and all this action has kept me comfortably sober. At the end of "the Promises" on page 84, the Big Book states, "They will always materialize if we work for them."

Today, after more than thirty-four years in AA, I still go to six AA meetings a week. I always sit in the front row, nodding my head up and down, identifying.

"You've only just begun," my sponsor said on my fifth birthday. "The best is yet to come!"

"You've only scratched the surface!" he said and smiled when I celebrated ten years.

"You ain't seen nothin" yet!" I heard at twenty years. At thirty years, an old-timer-said, "Now it's going to get better and better!"

I can't wait until my next birthday, when I hit thirty-five. "Better, and better, and better!" someone will probably add.

If it gets much better, I'll bust.

Hal R

Editor's Note: Hal R. passed away in March 2006 (article appeared in July 2006 Grapevine)