

Anonymous SJ

May 2010

Charming Is the Word for Alcoholics

Down at the very bottom of the social scale of A.A. society are the pariahs, the untouchables and the outcasts, all under-privileged and all known by one excoriating epithet--relatives.

I am a relative. I know my place. I am not complaining. But I hope no one will mind if I venture the plaintive confession that there are times, oh, many times when I wish I had been an alcoholic. By that I mean that I wish I were an A.A. The reason is that I consider the A.A. people the most charming in the world.

Such is my considered opinion. As a journalist it has been my fortune to meet many of the people who are considered charming. I number among my friends stars and lesser lights of stage and cinema; writers are my daily diet; I know the ladies and gentlemen of both political parties; I have been entertained in the White House; I have broken bread with kings and ministers and ambassadors; and I say, after that catalog, which could be extended, that I would prefer an evening with my A.A. friends to any person or group of I asked myself why I consider so charming these alcoholic caterpillars who have found their butterfly wings in Alcoholics Anonymous. There are more reasons than one, but I can name a few.

The A.A. people are what they are, and they were what they were, because they are sensitive, imaginative. They are sensitive, which means that they are hurt easily, and that helped them become alcoholics. But when they have found their restoration, they are still as sensitive as ever; responsive to beauty and to truth and eager about the intangible glories of this life. That makes them charming companions.

They are imaginative, and that helped to make them alcoholics. Some of them drank to flog their imagination on to greater efforts. Others guzzled only to black out unendurable visions that rose in their imagination. But when they have found their restoration, their imagination is responsive to new incantations, and their talk abounds with color and light and that makes them charming companions, too.

They are possessed of a sense of humor. Even in their cups they have been known to say damnably funny things. Often it was being forced to take seriously the little and mean things of life that made them seek escape in a bottle. But when they have found their restoration, their sense of humor finds a blessed freedom and they are able to reach a god-like state where they can laugh at themselves, the very height of self conquest. Go to the meetings and listen to the laughter. At what are they laughing? At ghoulish memories over which weaker souls would cringe in useless remorse. And that makes them wonderful people to be with by candlelight

And they are possessed of a sense of universal truth. That is often a new thing in their hearts. The fact that this at-one-ment with God's universe had never been awakened in them is sometimes the reason why they drank. The fact that it was at last awakened is almost always the reason why they were restored to the good and simple ways of life. Stand with them when the meeting is over, and listen as they say the "Our Father"!

They have found a Power greater than themselves which they diligently serve. And that gives a charm that never was elsewhere on land and sea; it makes you know that God Himself is really charming, because the A.A. people reflect His mercy and His forgiveness.

Foulton Oursler, July/1944

Committee Report Highlights

Unity

Alkathon, Memorial Day speakers still needed for the 6 and 7 pm slots. 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
This committee is planning a workshop on June 12, called “**Why We Carry the Message**”. It is from 9:00am to 1:00 pm, with registration at 8:30 am. It will be held at the George Ruch Bldg, 14th and Highland Ave in Williamstown NJ. There will be 5 speakers. Contact Priscilla S, 856-649-6844 for more info and/or to register.

There are still host/chairperson commitments needed for the a few openings. Contact Priscilla for more info. Or check with your Intergroup Rep for a full listing.

Reminder: The H&I Meeting for May will be held on 5/24 so as not to coincide with Memorial Day.

Answering Service

Volunteers are needed to be placed on the waiting list. One year of sobriety is required for this position.

Bookers

26 groups attended the May 6 meeting, filling 247 commitments for the next 3 months. Next meeting is Aug 5 at 8pm.

Literature

Updated lists of the inventory on hand as well as price lists have been completed. 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 design, content, writing an article, or helping in any way, please contact Judy at newsletter@aaaj.org.

Social Events

The Spring Fling Dance was a success!! Please see following page for a list of current events calendar.

Contacts: see the aaaj.org website for all contact information, meeting times and locations as well as special events for our area. It is all just a click away..

Editors Note: For lack of any participation, the AA Dictionary and Gratitude List have been omitted this month. If you would like to renew, revisit these ideas, e mail your additions to: newsletter@aaaj.org.

Fellowship Announcements and Things To Do

5/22 Comedy Night, starting at 9:00 pm. \$10.00 for tickets. 400 C;ub, Clementon

May 31 Alkathon & Picnic, Memorial Day 8am-8pm, Christ Episcopal Church, Woodbury NJ

June 5 Founders Day Picnic "Subaru Pavilion" Cooper River Park 12:30 - 5:00pm

June 4 - 6 - Third Annual Jersey Shore Big Book Retreat. San Alfonso Retreat House, Long Branch, NJ. For info contact: Marybeth or Jim - 732-282-1974. Reservations Required.

June 4 - 6 - Circle of Hope Roundup. Reading-Berks Intergroup, Perkins Auditorium, Penn State University - Berks Campus, Tulpehocken Rd., Reading, PA. www.circleofhoperoundup.com **NEW**

June 25-27 Camping Trip Goshen Camp Ground \$5.00 for weekend. Call Larry 856-373-8636

June 11 - 13 - South Jersey takes Akron - come join us in Akron, Ohio to celebrate AA's birthday - where it all started. \$ 375/ person covers round trip transportation with breakfast and lunch the first day - registration - accommodations at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Akron - gift - great convention. Send monies to SJFDTC 222 Hanover Rd. West Deptford, Nj 08086 for more info call Wayne @ 856-534-0104.

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

Date to be determined—Tubing Trip in August

Date to be determined—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@aasj.org for any additions to our social events calendar.

Once Over Lightly

WE'LL BET the experimenters cursed a bit—a practice that, sadly, seems taken for granted at AA meetings now. We were taught that swearing showed ignorance of the English language. The *Dry Run* has a different explanation: "Foul language was invented as a sort of compromise between fighting and running away." 2/1982 Grapevine

AND THERE WAS the alcoholic carpenter who tried everything to stop drinking. Finally, in desperation, he went to his priest and poured out his tale of misdeeds and erratic conduct.

"Have you ever considered making a novena?" the priest asked.

The carpenter brightened up. "Father, if you've got the plans, I can make anything!" 9/2973 Grapevine

YOUR TURN—CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR FELLOWSHIP

The sound of silence

The message that was given at a very young age in a big Irish Catholic family, was not to speak of it. Witness and fear it, but don't acknowledge it. Refuse to absorb what your eyes have seen, what your heart has felt, pull up the covers until it all goes away.

Push down your feelings, so far that you are able to go out in public with your manners, a smile and a bit of sarcasm and learn your way towards the grown up life.

And then comes the drink and it's all over but the shouting.

It's really not about the social drink, an appropriate amount, it's about escape, and it's never enough,

When I was a young girl, perhaps the age of 8/9, I was woken up to my sister quietly calling my name, telling me to go and get dad. My mom was slowly dying on her arm, saying "let me go, just let me go, don't get your father," and you always listened to mom, she was the boss and lord help you if you disobeyed.

She had her problems, not alcohol, but mental, and there is the fine line. For me, the behaviors were the same. She had hit her rock bottom this time and wanted to escape. She took pills from the Dr's office and threw them into her body, like a drink, to escape, from us, her six children at the time, from her job as a labor room nurse, helping other women bring their children into this world. To escape from life in general.

I hesitated, then ran and got my dad. We were all put into their bedroom while the ambulance lights lit up the neighborhood. It was excitement, drama and confusion.

The day we picked her up from the hospital, she turned from the front seat of the car and said "what I did was wrong, and I will never do it again" and it was never discussed. The sound of silence. She never knew it was I that ran to my father to save her life. Yet the dysfunction and silence continued.

She never did try to kill herself again, but she left us alone mentally once more. I was at the age of 13 when my second oldest sister was shot and killed at a house party, by her boyfriend. An accident.

I fainted at the funeral and was taken up to Vermont with two of my brothers while the small town papers wrote their stories. I have lost much memory of years of my childhood. When we returned home, it was not discussed, we knew God had his reasons. But my dad's eyes were always full of tears, yet they refused to fall down his face. Mom went to her room and closed the door, she once again left.

God closed one door, and opened another, my mother conceived my brother days prior to my sister's death. No coincidences.

I was at the age of 15 when I started drinking alcohol. It allowed me to express, not numb, but to act out. I was fearless. It allowed me to become someone else, not that scared child, not that young teenager that lived through such pain. I was free, abusive, destructive and promiscuous. I was full of anger, revenge and finally broken.

In these rooms we discuss, and we listen, we say how we feel and it's good to do so, We all have our stories, our heartbreaks, yet we unite and slowly learn to heal ourselves and one another.

I am grateful for the doors that our God opens for us, and I am humble, and I have learned how to forgive. We mature and grow and we talk. I wouldn't want any other mom and see her and remember her as the marvelous, spiritual woman that she truly was.

Today, I am teachable, vulnerable and respectful. The program of A.A. has allowed me to express my truths, and witness my growth and today, I have an intimate relationship with the fellowship. It's healthy positive and rewarding. I have learned better social skills. I have true friendships and strive to be a better person.

I put this out here not to air our dirty laundry, not for self pity, but to help. If one person can relate on some level and help them recover as I strive to do on a daily basis, then we are freer for it.

There are many chapters to my story, I simply started from the beginning. For a time in my life, alcohol was my friend. Today, I have no enemies, but choices and I choose through the fellowship and the grace of God to make the right ones. One day at a time.

Amy K