

GRAPESCCIN

MAY 2024

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FROM CHAOS TO BALANCE

BY JACK W.

When I was young we lived in a converted chicken coop in northern Vermont. The man next door made homebrew; I had my first drink at age 11. I really liked the feeling. From then on I would do anything to get alcohol. It was a great escape.

My father served in the Army's 10th Mountain Division, and died a hero in the Italian Alps. I was four months old; he never saw me. Mother became a heavy drinker, with all that includes. After she married my stepfather, the family suffered physical and mental abuse. My mother caught him raping one of my siblings and called police. They showed up just in time to stop him from killing us. He was sentenced to prison, and we moved from apartment to apartment as my mother drank up any money she got. Other folks fed us, and we ate government-surplus meals.

When she took my stepfather back, the family disowned her. One of my sisters and I were put in an orphanage. I was beaten the first night there.

When we got out I began hanging around with cousins, drinking with the bums in Battery Park and carousing with girls. I often attribute my education in drinking and sex to that park. I was thrown out of school, and went to Connecticut for a year, where I earned As and Bs. But I was from the other side of the tracks, and didn't fit the middle-class area where I lived. I returned to Vermont and the same people; I found some were in prison, some in mental hospitals, and some were dead.

Back in Connecticut, I met a lady and she got pregnant. We moved into a small house, and I began going into blackouts. She bore me a second child, hoping that would straighten me out. I tried to join the service but they wouldn't take a war orphan who had children. After all my abuse, she saw me with another woman and left.

I moved in with that woman, who asked me to try A.A. I went, but I didn't stick.

She left while I went in and out of A.A. I used every excuse I could find to explain why I couldn't get sober. Truth was, I just didn't want to stop.

I finally talked with someone who'd put a year together, someone who had done what I was doing. He said he'd done 90 meetings in 90 days, sat up front, took the cotton out of his ears and put it in his mouth ... So I tried that.

I began my journey by doing what he suggested. When I was sober for a bit I began thinking there must be something more than just going to meetings.

I went to my first A.A. convention in Burlington,Vt. in the mid-'70s, just down the road from Battery Park where I'd gotten that education. The Saturday night speaker, who became my sponsor, talked about the steps.

He suggested I attend a step meeting, and I found step-weekends in Quebec every three months.

Intergroup minutes and reports are now published on our website:
<https://aasantacruz.org/documents/>

continued on page 5

LOVE AND TOLERANCE: BASIC A.A. VALUES

BY PHIL M.

When I first came into the rooms I was broken – sad, lonely, enraged, and wondering if I wanted to go on. People left me alone for the most part. I didn't say I was an alcoholic, as everyone was doing. I didn't know if I was. I considered the designation a generalization ... a form of "name-calling" that could be inappropriate. Alcoholism was and still is stigmatized.

Despite my attitudes and judgments, I was greeted, hugged and welcomed. People clapped when I said I was new. I was skeptical and frightened, yet fascinated with the seeming honesty of people talking about their lives and experiences. I didn't know if I wanted to stop drinking – that sounded like a bad, scary idea. I'd loved to drink, for 27 years! I looked forward to taking the edge off with a few beers, a couple of shots, some of that '60s vegetation and/or almost anything you had.

I would alternately cry and rage at meetings, mourning the impending loss of my second marriage and waking up in the same house with my kids. Lonely and bereft, I noticed it was "warm" in most A.A. meetings. People told me to go where it was warm, and said there was no such thing as a bad meeting if I drank too much for too long. I liked hearing the tales of boozers and boozing. It was profoundly healing to hear the adventures, misery and insanity drinking had generated.

Holding hands at the end of the meeting and saying the Serenity Prayer ... hmmm. Me? But those hands that grasped mine and the after-meeting hugs gave me the warm human contact I desperately needed.

They told me that I didn't have to drink, one day at a time. They didn't flinch when I cried and raged, or described my deep skepticism about the God stuff. "You sound good," they said; "you're right on schedule! Keep coming back."

I was experiencing the unconditional love of A.A. and I needed it badly. I was welcomed. People said they or A.A. would love me until I could love myself. Strangers! Meetings out of town where I knew no one!

They tolerated and even cared about me, it seemed, despite my emotional and mental state. People cared about my sobriety. We laughed a lot, and you would hear, "We're all here 'cuz we're not all there." I heard I could love people too, even if I didn't like them. I could love their sobriety if they rubbed me the wrong way. And despite my judgmental mindset, I was learning tolerance, too.

The A.A. Traditions recommend we place principles before personalities, and I was amused when the whole room would intone that phrase. This was particularly the case in Santa Cruz-area meetings and other places where the recovery community tends to be more close-knit than in New York, where I've lived for some time.

Sometimes meetings or people will rub me the wrong way a little, I confess. But I can reflect on the quirky folk-wisdom of A.A., and the importance of the quest for love and tolerance. I can talk to a newcomer or fellow traveler to get my attitude straight and access a bit of serenity. And I don't have to pick up a drink. A slogan on the walls echoes my uncle's favorite philosophy: Live and Let Live! Tolerance.

The suggestion "Don't take yourself too damn seriously," as applied to groups, also appears in the 12 Traditions.

Love and Tolerance: These basic A.A. values are the fundamental reason "attraction, not promotion" works so well.

I've been a major beneficiary. Thanks for my sobriety!

RULE 62 TRIVIA TEST

By Anonymous

The answers are given on page five.

1. What local General Service Committee coordinates support to recovering alcoholics being discharged from institutions such as prisons, jails and recovery facilities?
2. What is PRAASA?
3. When and where was A.A.'s First International Conference?
4. To what step are the Promises connected?
5. Where and when was the first open A.A. meeting in Santa Cruz County?
6. How many "Fellowship Halls" are there in Santa Cruz County, and where are they?
7. What is customarily suggested to newcomers for their first year of sobriety?
8. Name when and where Bill W. came across the following doggerel:
"Here lies a Hampshire Grenadier, Who caught his death, Drinking cold small beer. A good soldier is ne'er forgot, whether he dieth by musket, Or by pot."
9. Santa Cruz County Intergroup hosts a yearly celebration of A.A.'s birthday. What is it called?
10. Can you name the three sections of personal stories in the current edition of the Big Book?
11. What service group meets on the second Wednesday evening each month, and where?
12. Can you name the earliest morning A.A. meetings listed in Santa Cruz County?

FROM THE GENERAL SERVICE CHAIR

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE ENDS

The 74th General Service Conference is over. General Service Representatives carried group consciousnesses to the 93 delegates of the United States and Canada, to direct the course of our beloved society of drunks. The Plain Language Big Book was approved for publication, as was the pamphlet for the transgender alcoholic. We will learn more about what transpired in New York at the Post-Conference Assembly in Willets: what we as a fellowship have advised our trustees to do on our behalf.

Anonymity in the age of social media can make for interesting conversation. The Public Information Desk at the General Service Office would like to know what you're thinking. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EN-anonymity> Pass it on to your meeting fellows. The information will be used to guide A.A.'s public information work.

The idea for Unity Day, May 18, percolated last year when many service entities were finding their ways after years of Covid restrictions. Many of us felt out of place and out of touch. This event will provide a springboard for those getting involved in the many opportunities for service beyond the group level. General Service, Intergroup, All California Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ACYPAA) and Hospitals and Institutions are hosting. Bridging the Gap, Archives and the fellowships in Ben Lomond and Santa Cruz will help make it an exceptional day - which will include music, ice cream and fellowship. Delegate Eric will be on hand as well. Hope you can come! Fliers in this issue offer more information.

Grateful to be of service,

Deb A.

District Committee Member Chair
Santa Cruz General Service



EXPLORE
EXPERIENCE
ENGAGE

UNITY DAY

HOSTED BY SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
General Service, Intergroup, H&I and ACYPAA

Come explore, experience, and engage with Santa Cruz County AA service entities for an afternoon of panels, fellowship, and ice cream!

Saturday, May 18th
1 PM - 4 PM

TRADEWINDS CHURCH SOQUEL
4525 Soquel Dr.
Soquel, CA 95073

For More Information
Contact Ken W. (831) 246-4870 wyllicen@yahoo.com



General Service Monthly Meeting is Now Hybrid!

Second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Mid-County Senior Center or on Zoom
Meeting ID: 898 9003 8938
Passcode: 121212

I began doing both and began to find out about life on life's terms, not Jack's. I was an angry person with a host of character defects. I found I had to make amends to my mother for not being a good son. I had to forgive her, and myself.

I began to learn about love and tolerance. It is our code; we have to live it to have serenity and peace of mind.

This program has taught me to be a good member of A.A. and the community, to live on life's terms and not mine. Because of God, you A.A. folks and the steps, I am sober today.

I started working part-time for Budweiser. They knew I had a problem, but I was a good worker and they wanted me full-time. They hired me as a test-case for whether they'd hire anyone else in Alcoholics Anonymous.

They did hire others, and I helped some of my fellow workers to sober up over the 26 years I worked there.

I started leading alcoholics on trips throughout the world - Ireland, Scotland, the Caribbean - to attend A.A. conventions and events. Today, I have 49 years sober.

Recovery is a balancing act. As we grow and change, we find balance is a key that opens the door to serenity. We value and cherish serenity and honesty.

When one of our life's areas is out of balance, we pay attention to it and use the program's tools to work toward serenity. Every new day, knowledge about ourselves and spiritual guidance are working together to change our lives.

Today, let's find time for love and tolerance.

1. Bridging The Gap Committee. It meets the first Sunday of each month at 2:30 pm on the patio outside Erik's Deli, 102 Rancho Del Mar, Aptos. Learn more: <https://www.aa.org/service-committees>
2. Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly, to "foster the Recovery, Unity and Service legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous." PRAASA 2025 will be in Anchorage on March 7 to 9, 2025. (Learn more: www.praasa.org)
3. Cleveland, Ohio, in 1950 (Big Book p. xix)
4. Step 9 (Big Book, p. 83)
5. Nov. 22, 1944: Meetings began in Watsonville, with The Watsonville Group at the Resetar Hotel on Main Street downtown. The group reported five to seven attendees at first. By early 1947, attendance was down to two. Those two men moved the meeting to their homes. (Santa Cruz A.A. archives)
6. Three Fellowship Halls are in Watsonville at 939 Lincoln St.; Santa Cruz at 412 Front St.; and Ben Lomond at 9636 Highway 9. See meeting schedule: <https://aasantacruz.org/meeting-guide/>
7. To avoid major decisions and life changes when possible, such as new emotional entanglements, permanent geographic relocations or career changes.
8. As a newly recruited soldier in the First World War, Bill W. landed in England. One day he walked into a graveyard outside Winchester Cathedral and found the epitaph, he reported. (Big Book, p. 1)
9. Spring Fling. This year it will be June 15th at De Laveaga Park off Branciforte Drive. More details will be available soon.
10. I, Pioneers of A.A.; II, They Stopped in Time; III, They Lost Nearly All.
11. The General Service District meeting at 7:30 pm the second Wednesday each month: In person at Mid-County Senior Center, and online on Zoom. Learn more: <https://aasantacruz.org/general-service/>
12. Levaantate (online, Spanish) at 5 a.m., Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, Ben Lomond Fellowship (online, English) at 6 a.m., Tuesday and Friday, and several 7 a.m. meetings most days in Ben Lomond, Santa Cruz, Capitola and Watsonville. See meeting schedule: <https://aasantacruz.org/meeting-guide/>

SOBRIETY MILESTONES

APRIL

Jason O	April 1, 1985
Lora Lee C.	April 13, 1986
Evie	April 9, 1989
Garth S	April 4, 1990
Vaughn F	April 11, 1993
Kendra M	April 2, 1994
Julie A	April 5, 1994
Craig S	April 18, 1994
Ben W	April 4, 1998
Juliet M	April 10, 1998
Ardelle	April 11, 1998
Lou C.	April 13, 1998
Michael H	April 24, 1999
Judi D	April 7, 2002
Paul T	April 9, 2013
John	April 28, 2013
Keith H.	April 19, 2014
Amanda G.	April 30, 2014
Julie R.	April 4, 2015
Carissa Y	April 5, 2015
Curly T	April 12, 2015
Zeno	April 6, 2019

IN MEMORIAM

Nancy R. 5 yrs.	Aug. 8, 2004
Susan A. 35 yrs.	April 4, 1985

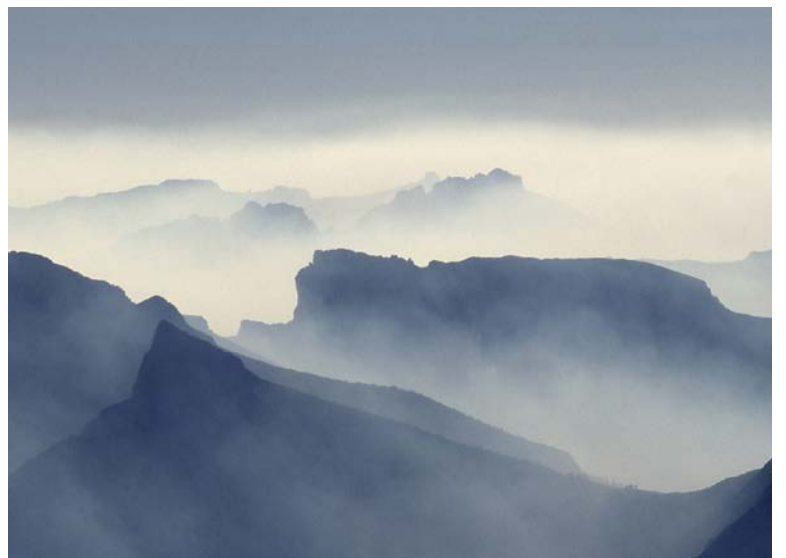


Santa Cruz Intergroup Presents
**MAY BIRTHDAY
SPEAKER MEETING**
Hosted by Jade Street

Guest Speaker
JODI B.
From Prunedale ✨ Sober Date: 10/8/98

MAY 4TH DOORS 5:30PM
MEETING 7:00PM

MID COUNTY
SENIOR CENTER
829 BAY AVE
CAPITOLA



UPCOMING EVENTS

For more information
about this month's events, visit
asantacruz.org

May 1 @ 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Intergroup Council Meeting

Meeting ID: 828 1508 0970

Passcode: 588309

May 3 - 5

H&I Conference - Bakersfield

May 4 @ 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm

Birthday Speaker Meeting

Mid-County Senior Center

829 Bay Ave., Capitola

May 5 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

ACYPAA Business Meeting

Hope Church: 4525 Soquel Drive, Soquel

Meeting ID: 526 749 9058

Passcode: 262829

May 8 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

General Service District Meeting

Meeting ID: 898 9003 8938

Passcode: 121212

May 9 @ 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Joint Committee on Safety Events Planning Meeting

Meeting ID: 892 3730 0658

Passcode: 857738

May 9 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Web Committee Meeting

Meeting ID: 884 7009 1801

Passcode: 2272

May 11 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

4th Step Workshop

Ben Lomond Fellowship

9496 Highway 9

Ben Lomond

May 15 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Intergroup Steering Committee Meeting

Meeting ID: 861 8723 8980

Passcode: 723088

May 18 @ 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Unity Day

Tradewinds Church School

4525 Soquel Drive, Soquel

May 19 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

ACYPAA Business Meeting

Hope Church: 4525 Soquel Drive, Soquel

Meeting ID: 526 749 9058

Passcode: 262829

May 22 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

H&I Committee Meeting

Trinity Presbyterian Church

420 Melrose Ave, Santa Cruz

May 23 @ 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Joint Committee on Safety Business Meeting

Meeting ID: 892 3730 0658

Passcode: 857738

May 25 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

SC Fellowship Birthday Speaker Meeting

Santa Cruz Fellowship

412 Front Street, Santa Cruz

2024 H&I CONFERENCE MAY 3-5

A STATE OF LOVE AND SERVICE

Join us for our Annual H&I Conference!
H&I will combine Northern and Southern committees
for an amazing conference. You dont want to miss it!

ROOM RATES \$119

Double Tree Hotel
DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON HOTEL
3100 CAMINO DEL RIO CT,
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93308
For reservations call
661-323-7111
Rate of Room good until
April 19, 2024 and can book
2 days prior or 2 days after
event for the same price
ROOM DISCOUNT CODE 92V



SCAN ME
https://bit.ly/2024_HandI-Conf

Mail payments to:
California H&I Conference
C/O NCAIC
PO Box 4013
Carlsbad, CA 92018



PRE REGISTRATION ENDS APRIL 24, 2024