

NNIG MONTHLY MEETING SPEAKER



March 8, 2025
Larry B.
Host group – District 16
Speaker at 7:00

Silver Legacy - 407 North Virginia St., Reno - Doors open at 6:30

March 2025

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GENERAL WARRANTIES OF THE NORTHERN NEVADA INTERGROUP ASSOCIATION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

In all its proceedings, the Intergroup Association observes the spirit of AA Traditions, taking great care that the Intergroup Association never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus a reserve be its prudent financial principal; that none of the Intergroup Association members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decision be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that no Intergroup Association action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Intergroup Association may act for the service of AA Groups in the Northern Nevada area and parts of Northern California, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Intergroup Association itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

(The above is adapted and modified from "The AA Service Manual", and AA Co-Founder Bill W's. Twelve Concepts for World Service; Concept XII, as adopted by the General Service Conference on April 26, 1962. This adaptation of copyrighted AA material has been approved by the General Service Board)

CENTRAL OFFICE

436 S. Rock Blvd.,
Sparks, NV 89431
Monday thru Friday
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Saturday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

24 Hour Answering Service:

(775) 355-1151 Fax: (775) 355-1560

EMAIL: officemanager@nnig.org

Web Site/Meeting Schedule: nnig.org

The Bracer: nnigbracer@gmail.com

THE BRACER



Elko, NV

NORTHERN NEVADA INTERGROUP

Interview with an Alcoholic

Can you please introduce Yourself.

I'm Joe M. And my sobriety date is September the 5th, 1985.

Do you have a Home group?

Men's Trudgers.

Where did you get sober?

Fallon and Reno. I went to treatment at New Frontier in Fallon twice in 1985. The second time it stuck. But I was back and forth from Fallon to Reno.

Briefly describe your drinking.

Well, the first time I got drunk. I lied about where I was going, lied about what I was doing; I stole alcohol. I blacked out. And I swore I would never do that again. And yet it got worse from there. At the time I was 12 or 13. And by the time I was 15, I was pretty much a daily drinker and pot smoker. At 16, I was absolutely a daily drinker. And driving drunk all the time.

So what brought you to Alcoholics Anonymous?

I was 26 years old. Let me back up just a little.

My work ethic was something I always felt was important to me and for a long time I could work and do great for a period of time but I'd always screw it up. I'd always end up in a blackout drunk and I'd lose my job and have to start over. In those periods, I won't say periods of control, but periods of, I guess managing my drinking. And those times got shorter and shorter, and the periods of alcoholism and drunkenness got longer and longer. At the end of my drinking, I was pretty much unemployable and I was 26 years old, 6 foot tall and I weighed like 129 lbs, maybe less at one point. Then came the gift of desperation; pretty much everybody was done with me and if I wanted to continue drinking, it meant life on the streets and I didn't know how to drink the way I wanted to drink if I were living on the streets. I still didn't know at the time that I was going to go to treatment, and I didn't believe alcohol or alcoholism was the problem. I just wanted to get people off my back. I was cornered. And getting out of the treatment the second time, I still didn't really believe, not deep inside, that alcoholism was the problem.

Continue p. 8

A A's

Recovery Step Three:

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

Three

Unity Tradition Three:
 “The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.”

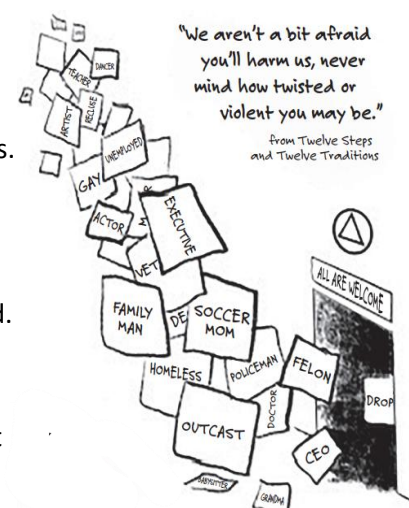
Legacies

Service Concept Three:

“As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the A.A. General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional “Right of Decision.”

Tradition 3

Isn't every organization entitled to have rules for membership? Why did A.A. decide to forgo this privilege, to be “inclusive...never exclusive”? That's easy. Early members tried it the other way, and it just didn't work. As the Fellowship was nearing its ten-year mark, the office that served as headquarters “asked the groups to list their membership rules and send them in,” Bill W. recalled. “If all of these edicts had been in force everywhere at once, it would have been practically impossible for any alcoholic to have ever joined A.A. About nine-tenths of our oldest and best members could never have got by!” So the rule books went out the window and were replaced by one uncomplicated sentence: Tradition Three. But, somebody may ask, isn't this Tradition itself a rule? It does state one requirement for membership. Let's read it again, and ask another question: Who determines whether or not newcomers qualify, whether they do want to stop drinking? Obviously, nobody except the newcomers themselves; everybody else simply has to take their word for it. In fact, they don't even have to say it aloud. And that's fortunate for many of us who arrived at A.A. with only a halfhearted desire to stay sober. We are alive because the A.A. road stayed open to us. The problem faced by this Tradition isn't just past A.A. history. It keeps coming up — for instance, when a group debates whether to exclude alcoholics who have problems other than alcohol or have differing lifestyles. additional requirements, no demand that prospective members must not have a history of drug abuse, a certain lifestyle, or an institutional background. What about the group that seems to impose extra requirements, beyond “a desire to stop drinking”? This might be a “special interest” group or collection of groups in which, for example, each member must be a physician — or a young person, a man, a woman, a priest, or a law-enforcement officer. By their own account, those attending special interest groups consider themselves A.A. members first. They attend general-membership meetings as well as those that fill their other individual needs, and they remain devoted to A.A.'s primary purpose. These “special interest” groups offer only one instance of the diverse and inclusive membership within our Fellowship. Our Traditions allow unparalleled freedom, member, but to every A.A. group.



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The Bracer is a monthly publication intended for members of Alcoholics Anonymous and their families only. It is about, by and for members of the fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of A.A. as a whole or NNIG. For article submissions or comments, email the Editor at nigbracer@gmail.com. Deadline for submission is the last Friday of the month.

NNIG & AREA EVENTS

EVENTS HOSTED BY NORTHERN NEVADA
INTERGROUP TO SUPPORT CENTRAL OFFICE &
INTERGROUP



St. Patrick's Day Celebration
 Neil Rd Recreation Center
 3925 Neil Rd, Reno
 March 15th 2025
 11-3pm

Cribbage Tournament 11am
Games , Bingo 12:00
Food 1-2pm - \$20
Corned Beef & Cabbage
Speaker- Carl R.- 2 pm
Raffle After Speaker
Potluck - Desserts
OR Salads

\$5 SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTION if Not getting Meal Ticket



SAVE THE DATE!

FOUNDER'S DAY 2025
 Rancho San Rafael Park
 SUNDAY-JUNE 1
 11AM-3PM

NNIG Monthly Speaker Meetings
 Silver Legacy – 407 North Virginia Street, Reno 89501
 Location- Silver Barron Room 1-6

Monthly Speaker Meeting
 Doors open at 6:30 PM
 Speaker at 7:00 PM

March 8, 2025
Larry B. – Las Vegas, NV
Host Group-Trudger Men's Group

April 12, 2025
Cory H. – Garden Grove, CA
Host Group- Carson Sand Baggers

May 10, 2025
John L. – Las Vegas, NV
Host Group – Just for Today

June 14, 2025
Dan G. & Jacob G.-Reno NV
Host Group – End of The Road Gang

NNIG Speaker Chair: Robert S. - 775-247-9677
 Need more info call: Central Office - (775) 355-1151
 Join us for dinner at Café Central @ ~5 pm with the speaker.

OTHER A.A. EVENTS



SAVE THE DATE
Reno Spring Festival 2025

FRIDAY, MAY 16TH - **SUNDAY, MAY 18TH**

Festival Activities Friday-Sunday
 W/Saturday Lunch Option
 @ J Resort

Annual Festival Golf Tournament
 Sunday
 @ Wolf Run Golf Course

There is a Solution

Central office report from Ronda H. January 2025

The book of the month is “Experience, Strength and Hope” \$2 OFF That’s only \$6! Pamphlet is “Women in A.A.” \$0.45. Sign up for The Blast, email of what’s happening in our local AA. Fellowship. Email officemanager@nnig.org to be added to this once-a-month email. Volunteer Hours: 109 Calls into Central Office: 109

- Calls for AA help - 7
- Calls for Alanon/Alateen - 1
- Meeting information - 24
- Retail / merchandise - 7
- Other 12-step programs - 1
- Events – 3
- New to AA/ Talked with - 2
- Business/Central office- 64
- **Visitors – 295 -Dogs- 3**



Texts – 6

Phone calls on the text Phone-5

*Ronda H.
Central Office Manager*



Previous Birthdays

December

Sean S. 35 Years
Cindy 36 Years
Mystery Person – 37 years

November

Heather L. 7 Years

October

Sharon F. 40 Years
Dave S. 41 Years

September

David 27 Years
Angelica B. 1 Years
Mike H. 29 years
Phil S. 48 Years

August

Dawn K. 13 Years
Linda G. 32 Years
Michael B. 35 Years

July

JoyAnn P. 12 Years
Dennis J. 24 Years

June

Paul C. 33 years
Kyle L. 42 Years

May

Donn T. 34 Years

April

Ron T. 15 Years

March

Kim D. 47 Years

January 2025 Chip C. 41 Years!!

February 2025 Jack 40 years!!



Smokey

“In its deeper sense AA is a quest for freedom-freedom under God. Of course the immediate object of our quest is sobriety-freedom from alcohol and from its baleful consequences. With out this freedom, we have nothing at all.”

Language of the Heart p.315

Did you know you can share your sobriety and gratitude in a practical way by joining the A.A. Birthday Club? Sign Up today and be featured in the Bracer Birthday Club section of the Bracer. Show your Support for your NNIG & Central Office, Join the Birthday Club. A donation of only one dollar for every year of your sobriety.

Envelopes available at
Central Office,

NNIG Business Meeting or Intergroup Representatives

Five N Live
Saturday 5:15 PM
Alano Club
680 River St.
Elko, NV

Southside
Monday-Friday
Noon
780 Del Monte
Ln, Reno NV

Brown
Baggers
Discussion
7036 N Main St.
Alturas, CA

SATURDAY NIGHT
FEVER
1631 ESMERALDA
PL
GARDNERVILLE NV.

AA History Books
\$2 OFF
That's in ONLY \$6

EXPERIENCE, & STRENGTH
HOPE

Stories from the first three editions of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

N.N.I.G. STEERING COMMITTEE

Last Tuesday of each month, 5:30 PM
Central Office, 436 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks

N.N.I.G. BUSINESS MEETING

First Tuesday of each month, 6:30 PM
Alano Club, 1640 Prater Way, Sparks

N.N.I.G. MONTHLY

SPEAKER MEETING

7:00 PM Silver Legacy - Silver Baron A

2nd Saturday of the month

N.N.I.G. H&I

Call Central Office

775-355-1511

CENTRAL OFFICE

IS OPEN ON SATURDAY
FROM 9:00 AM TO 1:00 PM!
STOP IN FOR A CUP OF COFFEE
AND FELLOWSHIP!

District Meetings

DISTRICT-2 2nd Thursday of each month, 6:30 Central Office

DISTRICT 4 Fourth Thursday of each month, 6:00 pm
Central Office OR Zoom ID: 916 3107 1014
PW: bestdamnd4

DISTRICT 6 2nd Sunday of even numbered months-

For information email
district6@nevadaarea42.org

DISTRICT 8 First Sunday, 3:30 p.m. on odd months

Call (760) 937-8407

DISTRICT 10A Third Sunday of every other month, 1:30 PM
680 River St. Elko, NV

DISTRICT 10B Dark since 2017

DISTRICT 11 Only holds meetings 4 time a year, call DCM

DISTRICT 12 2nd Saturday of each Month at 5:00 PM- 457
Esmeralda Street Wolf Center, Fallon NV

DISTRICT 14 3rd Wed of each "Odd" month at 6:00 PM -265
Bear Street in Kings Beach CA

DISTRICT 16 Meeting is held 3rd Tuesday of the month
Sparks Family Christian Church 510 Greenbrae
Blvd 6:00PM-7:00PM

DISTRICT 18 DARK DISTRICT

DISTRICT 20 Third Saturday of Jan, Mar, May, Aug & Oct
10:30 AM- Contact DCM @

district20@nevadaarea42.org for location

DISTRICT 22 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month 6:30 PM @
Central Office

AREA CLUBS

Reno / Sparks Clubs

Driars Club Reno 345 S. Wells Avenue (775) 324-9210

Triangle Club Reno 635 S Wells Avenue (775) 324-7977

Clubs outside Reno/Sparks Area

Alano Club Carson City, 1800 HWY 50 East (775) 882-0443

Bishop Alano Club (760) 873-6700

Elko Alano Club (775) 738-4747

Las Vegas Triangle Club (702) 435-0597

South Lake Tahoe (530) 541-1243

AA AREA 42 TRANSLATION & INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE

BECOME A VOLUNTEER



ALL AREA 42 MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO HELP
TRANSLATE MINUTES, EMAILS, GUIDELINES, ETC.

PROFICIENCY IN SPANISH **NOT**
REQUIRED! IN FACT, YOU DON'T EVEN
NEED TO SPEAK SPANISH.

ZOOM
MEETING
THIRD
THURSDAY OF
EACH MONTH
@ 5:30 PM PST

FOR MEETING ID & PASSCODE:
please contact the email below

Questions? ... email
translator_interpreter@nevadaarea42.org
Ask that someone from the Translation
Committee contact you.

We Are The
Sunshine Committee



Can You Help?

There are cases where sober AAs are unable to
make it to meetings. They are in the hospital or
physical rehabilitation hospital or are home-
bound while they recuperate.

When you cannot attend meetings do you get
'squirrely' or on edge? Be a part of carrying the
message to those shut-ins by joining us as we
trudge the road of happy destiny on the

Sunshine Committee!!

Sobriety requirement—1 year
We will work with your schedule
Call: Ann. —650-290-4335
Email: aschwenderlauf@gmail.com

NORTHERN NV AA BRIDGING THE GAP

Come Be of service in taking a
newcomer to their first AA meeting
or Make a Presentation at
treatment facilities!



scan QR code to sign up as a
TEMPORARY CONTACT



3rd Step Prayer

God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with
me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve
me of the bondage of self, that I may better
do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that
victory over them may bear witness to
those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love,
and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will
always! Amen

NNIG/Central Office Group Contributions 2025

Group	February	YTD	Group	February	YTD
4th Dimension- ON-LINE		48.60	A Vision for You		
A Way Home			Happy Hour Reno		350.00
Alano Big Book Study			Kindred Spirits		
Alano Brown Baggers	30.00	30.00	Kings Beach AA Golden Group		
Alano C ST. Discussion			Kingsbury Group	246.00	246.00
Alano Jaywalkers			McGill NV Freedom Group		
Alano Open Heart Open Mind	175.00	175.00	Mid-Day Group ON-LINE		25.00
Alano Sunshine Group			Mindeb Language of the Heart		100.00
Back Room Group			Minden Saturday Night Fever		
Back to Basics Saturday Night	200.00	200.00	Minden Stephanie Way Group	340.00	340.00
Beginners are Winners On-Line Group		291.00	Minden Wednesday Night Live		
Bishop High Sierra Group			Minden/Gardnerville Group		
Blue Room Group			Mt Rose Big Book Study		
Buena Vista Group		200.00	Mt Rose Candle Light		
Caliente AA			Mt Rose Men's Group	50.00	50.00
Caring & Sharing in Stead		142.41	Mt Rose Recovery Room	218.41	339.89
Carson After Shifters		183.70	NNIG Business Meeting	46.70	111.70
Carson Alano Club			Old Time AA Group		67.79
Carson Brown Baggers		122.00	Our Common Welfare	18.00	23.40
Carson Early Birds	388.00	388.00	Our Group	200.00	200.00
Carson Early Birds Phone Meeting		231.22	Positive Acceptance Group	856.34	856.34
Carson Happy, Joyous and Free	238.57	438.57	Pyramid Way Discussion Group		60.00
Carson Jay-Walkers Men's		146.33	Quincy Fellowship		
Carson Men's NO BS Stag	78.00	78.00	RTC Almost Heaven	50.00	150.00
Carson Sandbaggers			RTC Aloha Group		409.00
Carson Sisters in Sobriety			RTC Beginners are Winners		1916.00
Chester Fellowship			RTC Sober AF	30.00	30.00
Chester Saturday Night Group			RTC Little Rascals		
Choices		200.00	RTC Men's Trudgers		194.98
Club 164			RTC Monday Night Mens	450.00	450.00
Cornerstone Group			RTC New Awakenings Group		137.58
Dayton Red Rooster			RTC Not a Glum Lot		
Dayton Sunday Morning		572.00	RTC Women's Just for Today		256.22
Decompression Chamber/online		110.63	Serenity in the Sierras Campout		
District 14		100.00	Sisters in Sobriety	159.67	359.91
District 2		8.00	Sisters of Sobriety SOS		74.46
District 22	150.00	300.00	Slide Mountain Serenity	85.00	85.00
District 6			South Y Shore Lake Group		
Driars Support Hose	100.00	100.00	Southside Group		200.20
Driars Knuckleheads			Southside Online Group		
Driars the Nickle		150.00	Step 1		
End of the Road Group			Steps to Freedom		
Eye-Opener	500.00	1676.00	Sunnyside Group		785.00
Fallon Saturday Grapevine	100.00	100.00	Susanville Fellowship		
Fallon Silver Lining			Tahoe City Fellowship		
Fernley Groups		200.00	The Blue Room Group	47.53	47.53
Fireside Group			The Rock Group		205.00
First Responders	200.00	200.00	The Shop		300.00
Galena Friday Night		200.00	Truckee Dawn Patrol		
Genoa Roadside Group			Truckee Fellowship		53.82
Greenville Group		50.00	Truckee River Men's Stag		500.00
Ground Zero		500.00	Verdi Greener Pastures		
Grupo Latino Reno		10.00	Verdi Meditation		
Grupo Accion	10.00	30.00	Wednesday Night Beginners Meeting		
Grupo Fe Y Esperanza	60.00	90.00	Weekend Warriors		
Grupo La Nueva Luz	10.00	20.00	Westwood AA		
Grupo Nueva Esperanza			Westwood Back to Basics		
Grupo Nueva Vida		10.00	Whole in the Ground		
Grupo Solo Por Hoy	20.00	40.00	Whole in the Soul		
Grupo Vivendo Sobrio	50.00	100.00	Winnemucca Serenity Seekers	60.00	120.00
Grupo Volver A Empezar			Women's AA Literature		
Incline Village Fellowship			Women's New Beginnings	200.00	614.00
Inclined to be Sober		97.36	Women's Down and Dirty	205.00	205.00
Lone Pine Group		225.00	Women's New Harmony		
Lovelock AA		20.00	Yerington Group		
			Young at Heart		80.00

Total 5572.22 17,727.64

Did you go to A.A. meetings in treatment?

Oh yeah, most of the treatment centers at that time were 12- step based. Probably not all of them, but all the ones around here were 12 step based and there were A.A. members working in all of them. Do you remember Bill M.? When I was in treatment, he picked up a five year chip and he spoke, he was with the Fallon Intergroup, they used to have their own Intergroup. They had a real solid group of people. He spoke and I thought he was most arrogant. He made me mad. We actually got to be friends after that. So yeah, I went to meetings there. The first time I got out of treatment that year I didn't go to meetings and I didn't stay sober. One of the things that I thought coming out of treatment that I didn't believe is if you got sober for a while that you go right back to the same place or worse. And I went back to the same place, like immediately. And then the second time when I got out I went to my bank account and I was going to go get something good to eat because I had not eaten anything decent in two weeks, which in reality it was the best food I'd had in a long time. I went to my ATM. And I was way overdrawn . All kinds of bounced checks from I didn't know where, and then I was thinking about where can I run a bar tab? Where do I have a bar tab? Did I overrun it? Is it 1 already? And then I had this panic then I remembered a guy named Ed B. I don't know if you heard of him. He was a big H&I guy for a long time for like 25 years. And Ed had been out there and he gave me his phone number and I had it in my pocket. So I went to a phone booth and I called him. And he said there's a meeting in about 15 minutes about two blocks from there at Saint Mary's Hospital. And they used to have a lot of meetings in the basement at St. Mary's so I went over there and I got my first sponsor there at that meeting. I still wasn't sold on anything. Didn't know what was going on. But I had a sense of calm when I went in that meeting. The panic , the terror kind of went away. So many days after that was just total fear that kept me from drinking. Total panic. Then I was at 501 California and I think it was at the Happy Hour meeting there and somebody got 30 days, a 30 day chip and I thought no way. And then. I got to think, well, I was in treatment. 14 -15 days. Umm and I've been out for three more. I got almost 20 days. Could it be a possibility? Prior to that, it was never even a thought. I mean, I couldn't comprehend it. And then I just kind of jumped in with both feet. Got a job driving a taxi. I was totally broke. I mean, totally broke. I had an apartment that time. The rent was due. The power had been shut off. Landlord was looking for me. And sneaking into the kitchen window. Anyhow, I managed to pull enough together to get a cab driver's license and a driver's license. In short order, and I did that for a couple of years and I went to a meeting every day for two years. Driving a cab 8:00 at night to 8:00 in the morning. You see a lot of alcoholism. And I saw a lot of the negative effects and that was something kind of different. I mean up until up until that point, I was looking at how everybody was different from me. Not as bad as him. Never did that. All that stuff that we all do. Then at some point and I think maybe driving in the cab, that guy, that guy falling on his face. That's me. The guy that doesn't know where he's going. Once in a while I'd see people that actually had it together and

they were having fun. And that wasn't me. So it kind of worked in reverse.

I'm guessing you got a sponsor, right?

I did. I had one sponsor for the first couple of years and then I left Reno on a geographic. Yeah, maybe three years. I left on a geographic from gambling. I never had a gambling problem till I got sober. Prior to that I could take money, like 50 bucks downtown and get drunk. Gamble a little bit and get something to eat and probably stumble home. The gambling addiction came close to killing me. Just as close to killing me as the alcohol.

What was the hardest / easiest suggestion for you to follow?

Meetings were easy. But when I first started, I wanted nothing to do with anybody who mentioned God or higher power. They were one and the same to me. So that kind of put the second and third steps right in front of me, so I had a real problem with that.

How did you overcome that?

Desperation. And I have to keep it really simple. I know the powers there. It's always there. I just have to get out of the way. My first night out of treatment after I went to that meeting at St.Mary's and I was in such a panic. Snuck into my apartment, I didn't have any furniture. I had a sleeping bag. I was in that sleeping bag and I was going to get up and go do something. I didn't know what I was going to do, but it's was probably go drink or find a way to drink. It wasn't going to be good and I think I said a prayer that night, just kind of, let me stay here. Just let me stay in the sleeping bag and we'll start over tomorrow. And I actually did. Went to sleep.

The biggest gift you've been given being sober?

There's so many I can't even mention them all.

What's a surprising 1?

A surprising one. Well, let's see. Being able to be there for my parents. When they passed I was there for both of them. One of my brothers has been sober now 20 years. The fact that I was there for him. I am simply amazed that I'm in the position I'm in. I have retired. The guy who couldn't hold a job held a job for 31 years. And that's all program. I mean, I put in the work, but without the program and without a higher power, I never would have made that. Never. I mean, I couldn't hold a job when I was drinking. Well, I met my daughters as little kids. And I met my wife in an A.A. meeting when I had a year. I spoke in Fallon and I gave her a nine month chip. We didn't get together for another four years or 4 1/2 or five years after that. Those girls, their father had drank himself to death with them in the home. And my wife, Lynne, their mother was in the hospital for pancreatitis when he died. My daughters have never seen me drink. I've known the younger one since she was 9. I think she's 47 now. I'm the only one in her life that has always been there for her that's a pretty big gift. Then the older one has six kids. And the oldest granddaughter has three kids. And I've been with that oldest granddaughter since she was six months old. So that's all a pretty big gift that's a whole life. I was pretty flighty. I would leave a town on a whim. I would be 1000 miles away in 24 hours and start over and I did that lots of times. There are so many gifts, for me, it's my whole life. It's everything.

Peace Be Still

—Ed L., Wrightwood, Calif.

When I was about 19 years old, Uncle Billy and I sat fishing in a 12-foot flat-bottomed boat on a 10-acre pond outside Roanoke, Virginia. The sun began to rise, revealing thin wisps of fog dancing on the mirrored surface, reflecting the Blue Ridge Mountains, with dense mats of lily pads surrounding us. As the sun continued to rise we were regaled with subtle pops, like corks escaping champagne bottles. Then all around us lily pods burst open and the young, pink-white flowers greeted the dawn.

Several weeks ago, that scene came to mind as our Sunset Group AA meeting in Joshua Tree, California discussed the topic of serenity. It led me to consider how that quiet, still pond—one of my most captivating memories—lent itself as a metaphor for serenity, resentment and a multitude of thoughts in between.

Not long after the sun came up, Uncle Billy and I sat in our boat and began drinking beer and eventually sipping whiskey. Between the rising winds and the rocking of the boat accentuating our clumsy movements, the still areas of my mind and the placid pond both went from mirror-like calmness to whiskey-capped turmoil. As our laughter mounted, alcoholic merriment echoed off the surrounding woods, shattering the peace and quiet.

I spent 28 years confusing stimulation for happiness. By 2005 my life was like a 40-foot long speedboat on a 10-acre pond, cutting doughnuts as I pitched cinderblocks and boulders into frothy water, destroying lily pads and rolling the bottom of everything into a mud-choked mayhem.

Now in the calm sharing of our AA meeting, I realized that serenity is a fleeting condition: there's always some little wind stirring up ripples, even in my quietest moments. Sometimes I will still start throwing pebbles, then rocks, then boulders into my own quiet waters, as my mind races from a single thought to a string of them. It will lead to a resentment that eventually becomes a tirade or worse. Then, when I dwell on your poor behavior and judge you, I might even invite you to stand on my shores and heave your own smoldering rocks and boulders into my pond. Finally, there's that asteroid that comes out of nowhere and strikes the center of my pond and displaces half of the water, leaving the surface foaming for days, weeks or even years. That's what it felt like this past January when my friend of 20 years died of a heart attack two months before his 45th birthday.

Such were my thoughts that morning in the meeting, when I suddenly remembered words that I used to say to myself in my youth: Peace, be still.

At that moment, I realized that God is always available to calm the turmoil and do for me what I cannot do for myself. I can do a few things, like not throw new thoughts in after the old, and perhaps avoid a growing resentment. I can stop dwelling on your poor behavior, instead of recognizing how familiar it is—because it's also my own poor behavior. I've noticed that when I stop contributing to my own drama, the waters quiet down quite a bit. Finally, for the big ones I don't see coming, I can always turn to God and ask, "Please, let there be peace, help me be still."

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Interview with an Alcoholic Continued Do you have any final thoughts?

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Yeah. I'm a little different than a lot of people in the program.

How's that?

I'm dyslexic . I think differently than everybody else, I learn differently than everybody else. But I absolutely have to work on my Conscious contact, the 11th step. I absolutely have to do that. I told you I met my wife here. We were married and we moved in together in 1990. She didn't stay sober. She had a period of relapses back around the turn of the century. She did quit drinking although she never really got back to where she was. Had a lot of PTSD and anxiety and other stuff. I was there for her the whole time. I retired a year ago in September. I took care of her because she was real sick. She died in November, November 15. This last November. I usually don't reach out, but I did. Asking for help in an AA meeting, especially when you know a lot of people it's like getting to sip water out of a fire hose. That's what I need. The right people have rose to the occasion. I would not have wanted to go through that without the help of A.A. even though that's not Alcoholism. But anyhow, it's Joe. You know Joe.

Interview recorded on February 14,2025

“Therefore, we who are alcoholics can consider ourselves fortunate indeed. Each of us has had his own near-fatal encounter with the juggernaut of self-will, and has suffered enough under its weight to be willing to look for something better. So it is by circumstance rather than by any virtue that we have been driven to A.A., have admitted defeat, have acquired the rudiments of faith, and now want to make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to a Higher Power.”

12X12 P. 37

“Getting over painful experience is much like crossing monkey bars. You have to let go at some point in order to move forward.”

- C. S. Lewis



RULE 62

Doctor's orders

A man tells his doctor that he's been having trouble with his drinking and thinks he may be an alcoholic.

The doctor tells his patient that alcoholism is not his specialty, but he does know of one test that's accurate at telling whether or not someone is an alcoholic.

The doctor then walks over and opens the front door of his office and asks his patient to stand in the doorway. The man agrees. The doctor then instructs him to hold out his hand. The doctor places a glass of water in the man's hand and tells him to close his eyes and pretend it's a mixed drink. The man does what he asks.

The doctor then shoves him out the door. The man falls down several steps onto the sidewalk, twisting his ankle and banging his head.

The patient shouts out, "I didn't spill a drop!"

The doctor smiles. "See?" he says. "Only an alcoholic can do that trick."

In AA, I have learned to take inventory often. Sometimes I even take my own!

George had been drinking hard all day, much harder than usual. Being from out of town, he checked into a hotel on Saturday evening. When he woke up, he called a bellboy and asked him to get him a bottle of whiskey and a Sunday newspaper. After a very long time the bellboy returned.

"I guess it must be hard to buy liquor on a Sunday in this town," said George.

"Oh no, sir," the bellboy replied. "There was no problem getting the bottle. The hard part was finding a Sunday paper on a Tuesday."

A drunk is at his lawyer's office for his third DWI.

"Do you have a problem?" the lawyer asks him.

"Yeah," the drunk replies. "I need to stop driving!"

Drunk #1: I can't remember...what's the name of that thing you blow at and make a wish?

Drunk #2: A breathalyzer?





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