

Alcoholics Anonymous

Dr. Bob's Birthplace & Boyhood Home



God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change... Courage to change the things I can... and Wisdom to know the difference.



CapeAtlanticInterGroup

Post Office Box 905
3153 Fire Road
Egg Harbor Twp, NJ 08234
(609) 641-8855

24 Hour Hotline
800-604-HELP

- Absecon
- Avalon
- Atlantic City
- Barnegat
- Barnegat Light
- Beach Haven
- Brant Beach
- Brigantine
- Cape May
- Cape May C.H.
- Cape May Point
- Dennisville
- Egg Harbor City
- Egg Harbor Twp
- Galloway
- Linwood
- Little Egg Harbor Twp
- Manahawkin
- Margate
- Marmora
- Mays Landing
- New Gretna
- North Wildwood
- Northfield
- Ocean City
- Palermo
- Pleasantville
- Pomona
- Rio Grande
- Sea Isle City
- Ship Bottom
- Somers Point
- Stone Harbor
- Surf City
- Townbank
- Tuckerton
- Ventnor
- Villas
- Waretown
- West Cape May
- West Creek
- Wildwood
- Woodbine

Pass It On

The Cape Atlantic Intergroup Newsletter

May/June, 2012 – Issue 3

Our Greatest Danger: Rigidity

Bob Pearson (1917-2008) was General Manager of the General Service Office from 1974 to 1984, and then served as Senior Advisor to the G.S.O. from 1985 until his retirement. His story is in the Big Book as "AA Taught Him to Handle Sobriety," 3rd edit. (1976) pp. 554-561, 4th edit. (2001) pp. 553-559.

During the 1986 General Service Conference, Bob gave a powerful and inspiring closing talk to the conference at the closing brunch on Saturday morning, April 26. It was an especially significant occasion, because he knew that he was going to retire early the next year, and that this would be his last General Service Conference. The following excerpts are taken from that farewell speech, as published in the Conference's final report: The Thirty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous 1986 (Roosevelt Hotel, New York City, April 20-26, 1986), Final Report.

This is my 18th General Service Conference -- the first two as a director of the Grapevine and A.A.W.S., followed by four as a general service trustee. In 1972, I rotated out completely, only to be called back two years later as general manager of G.S.O., the service job I held until late 1984. Since the 1985 International Convention, of course, I have been senior adviser. This is also my last Conference, so this is an emotionally charged experience. *(cont'd on page 2)*

Local Voices - From The Heart

Finding A Higher Power in A.A.

My home group meets in a church that uses its prominent location to showcase a sign with a funny or insightful message, usually a pun or play on words. This past January the sign read, "New Year, Same God." Having just celebrated my first year of sobriety, that sign really got me thinking.

When I first came into the fellowship, I heard that in order to stop drinking a "higher power" was required. My hopes for sobriety were dashed. My God, the God of my childhood and church, had let me down.

When my children were born I prayed daily that He watch over them and keep them healthy, safe and happy. When my younger daughter died a week after her seventeenth birthday in a car crash I felt betrayed by Him. My God? He was a hurtful, vengeful deity. Or else he didn't exist. At that point it didn't really matter - I filled myself with alcohol and told myself it didn't matter.

The first time around, I decided that I didn't need meetings. Other people might need the fellowship, but I would simply read myself sober. I approached AA like I would a self-help program. I read the books, learned about alcoholism, and managed to stay really, really dry for about three months.

When life got tough, I drank.

Several months later I was forced back into the fellowship. This time, I began to listen to the stories I heard and to identify rather than compare. I met others who had felt as I had regarding spiritual matters. "Sometimes AA comes harder to those who have lost or rejected faith than to those who have never had any faith at all, for they think they have tried faith and found it wanting." AMEN!

I read the literature again, first the Big Book and then the Twelve & Twelve... and certain phrases started to leap out at me. *(cont'd on page 2)*

Live Easy But Think First!

Rigidity (cont'd from page 1)

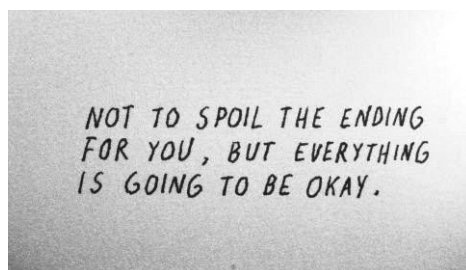
I wish I had time to express my thanks to everyone to whom I am indebted for my sobriety and for the joyous life with which I have been blessed for the past nearly 25 years. But since this is obviously impossible, I will fall back on the Arab saying that Bill quoted in his last message, "I thank you for your lives." For without your lives, I most certainly would have no life at all, much less the incredibly rich life I have enjoyed.

Let me offer my thoughts about A.A.'s future. I have no truck with those bleeding deacons who decry every change and view the state of the Fellowship with pessimism and alarm. On the contrary, from my nearly quarter-century's perspective, I see A.A. as larger, healthier, more dynamic, faster growing, more global, more service-minded, more back-to-basics, and more spiritual -- by far -- than when I came through the doors of my first meeting in Greenwich, Connecticut, just one year after the famous [July 1960] Long Beach Convention. A.A. has flourished beyond the wildest dreams of founding members, though perhaps not of Bill himself, for he was truly visionary.

I echo those who feel that if this Fellowship ever falters or fails, it will not be because of any outside cause. No, it will not be because of treatment centers or professionals in the field, or non-Conference-approved literature, or young people, or the dually-addicted, or even the "druggies" trying to come to our closed meetings. If we stick close to our Traditions, Concepts, and Warranties, and if we keep an open mind and an open heart, we can deal with these and any other problems that we have or ever

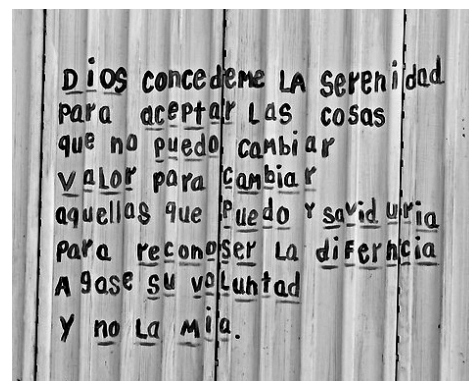
will have. If we ever falter and fail, it will be simply because of us. It will be because we can't control our own egos or get along well enough with each other. It will be because we have too much fear and rigidity and not enough trust and common sense.

If you were to ask me what is the greatest danger facing A.A. today, I would have to answer: the growing rigidity -- the increasing demand for absolute answers to nit-picking questions; pressure for G.S.O. to "enforce" our Traditions; screening alcoholics at closed meetings; prohibiting non-Conference-approved literature, i.e., "banning books"; laying more and more rules on



groups and members. And in this trend toward rigidity, we are drifting farther and farther away from our co-founders. Bill, in particular, must be spinning in his grave, for he was perhaps the most permissive person I ever met. One of his favorite sayings was, "Every group has the right to be wrong." He was maddeningly tolerant of his critics, and he had absolute faith that faults in A.A. were self-correcting.

And I believe this, too, so in the final analysis we're not going to fall apart. We won't falter or fail. At the 1970 International Convention in Miami, I was in the audience on that Sunday morning when Bill made his brief last public appearance. He was too ill to take his scheduled part in any other convention event, but now, unannounced, on Sunday morning, he was wheeled up from the back of the stage in a wheelchair, attached with tubes to an oxygen tank. Wearing a ridiculous bright-orange,



host committee blazer, he heaved his angular body to his feet and grasped the podium -- and all pandemonium broke loose. I thought the thunderous applause and cheering would never stop, tears streaming down every cheek. Finally, in a firm voice, like his old self, Bill spoke a few gracious sentences about the huge crowd, the outpouring of love, and the many overseas members there, ending (as I remember) with these words: "As I look over this crowd, I know that Alcoholics Anonymous will live a thousand years -- if it is God's will."

(Thanks to Fred E. for providing this informative article!)

Higher Power (cont'd from page 1)

"All you truly need is an open mind." "To acquire it, I had only to stop fighting and practice the rest of AA's program as enthusiastically as I could."

And here's the beauty of our fellowship - where our founders got it absolutely right. I didn't have to believe in someone else's conception of a higher power to make a start. All I had to do was to be open minded. To be willing to be willing, and pray whether I believed or not.

My prayers were answered almost immediately; the obsession to drink was removed. My life is far from perfect and I have a lot of work to do, but I can now live with myself without the anesthesia that alcohol provided. I'm still not sure exactly who "God" is to me. But I'm willing to spend the rest of my life exploring that relationship.

Nancy O.

Special Note:

The material in this newsletter does not necessarily represent Cape-Atlantic Intergroup. Much of it has been contributed by individual members with the intention of passing the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

One Phone Call at a Time

One of my favorite ways to do service is my two hour weekly time slot answering calls forwarded to my home for the CAIG hotline. I think it is one of the most crucial functions of CAIG since it is sometimes the first way a “wet alcoholic” is introduced to AA.

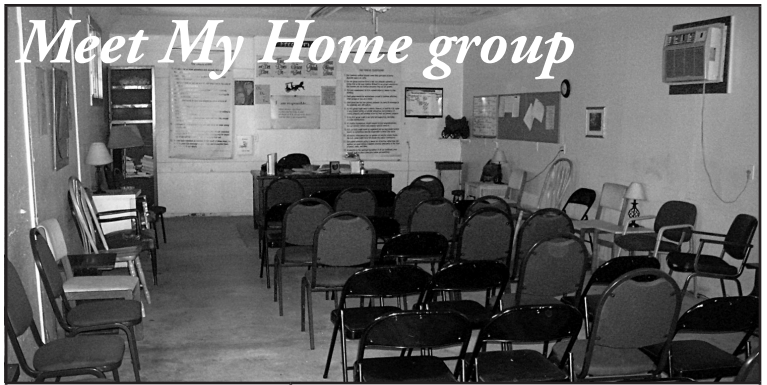
We mail out meeting lists, answer questions about meeting times and locations. We often help out-of-staters get to a much needed meeting. Sometimes the phone doesn't ring at all for the entire two hours and sometimes it seems to be non-stop! We get a lot of calls from folks in the neighboring districts. I have created bookmarks to the neighboring area's meeting lists and have my home computer ready so I can help as many folks that call as I can.

Then there are the repeat callers. I have one guy that uses a different name every time he calls but I recognize the voice. There are the ones that break your heart because they haven't hit bottom yet and call while loaded. They are still trying to do it their way. Some ask for your help getting a call back, someone that can talk to them for a while; some ask for a ride.

One of the frustrations occurs when someone who seems to be sincerely asking for help is already well known by those 12th Step Call List volunteers from the area they live. Perhaps it is the result of slight misuse of the hotline by a few that sometimes makes it very difficult to find a 12th Step volunteer willing and able to get a newcomer to a meeting. This is a real problem that I think we can work on and improve.

Wildwood is one area in particular that needs additional volunteers. Sea Isle is another. If you are interested in being added to the Hotline's 12th step volunteer list, you can call the office or download the form at caigrp.org/12th_step_service.pdf and mail it in.

On the flip-side, those I have successfully helped make it all worth it. There was the person from upstate NY who called two weeks before his trip to the shore asking me to mail him a meeting list. There are lots of calls during the summer from visitors looking for that meeting that fits in their vacation plans. I love telling them about our beach meetings! There's been frightened parents, those I've met in meetings later, those I've later helped drive to a meeting, and those I've just been MapQuest for. One of my favorites was the guy who wanted to stop by the office... I understand you just relocated... I just want to get educated... “Oh, you are new!” I realized halfway through the call!



Name	The Stage Coach Group
Meeting Location	Butter Rd. & Route 9, Palermo
Meeting Day/Time	Every day at 10 AM, 1 PM, 5:30 PM, 8 PM AND 10 PM, plus 7 AM on weekends and holidays.
Format	Book and discussion meetings, ALL closed.
Years in existence	23
What's so great about it?	We have five meetings a day and six on weekends. It's a group, not a clubhouse. There are original members who still support the Group by attending meetings and helping the newcomer. The Stage Coach Group is founded on “old time” AA principles by keeping the focus on alcohol. We have been able to help countless low bottom alcoholics get up on their feet and live good lives.
Introduce us to your home group! Send picture (no people, of course) and information to: newsletter@caigrp.org	

One Phone Call (cont'd)

I love it when they are nervous and full of questions... “What is the difference between a closed and an open meeting?”, “How do I pick a home group?”, and “Which meeting should I go to tomorrow?”

Knowing I have helped someone get sober warms my heart, fills me with gratitude for my sobriety and reminds me that this program works!

-anonymous

CapeAtlanticInterGroup

P.O. Box 905
32 East Black Horse Pike
Pleasantville, NJ 08232
(609) 641-8855

Our office is volunteer-staffed;
please call first!

24 Hour Hotline 800-604-HELP

Panel members and e-mails:

Chairperson: Bill T.
chairperson@caigrp.org
Vice Chair: John H.
vicechair@caigrp.org
Recording Secretary: vacant
recordingsec@caigrp.org
Corresponding Secretary: Jen R.
correspondingsec@caigrp.org
Treasurer: Neal S.
treasurer@caigrp.org
Assistant Treasurer: Clyde
assistanttreasurer@caigrp.org
Trustee: Doug G.
trustee@caigrp.org

Archives: vacant
archives@caigrp.org
Bookers: vacant
bookers@caigrp.org
Budget & Finance: Ellie L.
caigbudget@caigrp.org
Hospitality: Sally
hospitality@caigrp.org
Hospitals & Institutions: vacant
hichair@caigrp.org
Literature: Mark C.
literature@caigrp.org
Newsletter: Nancy O.
newsletter@caigrp.org
Office Coordinator: Tressa W.
officemgr@caigrp.org
Phone Coordinator: Beth R.
caigphone@caigrp.org
Policy & Structure: David W.
policycommittee@caigrp.org
P.I./C.P.C.: John O.
pichair@caigrp.org
Round-up: Steve H.
roundup@caigrp.org
Unity Chairperson: Chris K.
unitychair@caigrp.org
Website: Eric
webchair@caigrp.org
Young In Recovery: Greg B.
younginrecovery@caigrp.org

Visit our website: www.caigrp.org for
committee meeting times or to contact
a committee chairperson.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday May 19	South Shore Group Celebrates 30 Years 7 p.m. Coffee & Cake, 8 p.m. Speaker: Katie, Philadelphia United Methodist Church, Bethel & Doran, Somers Point
Saturday May 19	Mays Landing Serenity Group 38th Anniversary 12:00 p.m. Eat & Greet, 1:00 p.m. Surprise Speaker Presbyterian Church 6009 Main Street, Mays Landing, NJ
Sunday May 20	Area 45 Spring Assembly All are welcome! - Registration, 8:30 am Elmer Grange Hall 164 Woodstown-Daretown Road Pilesgrove, NJ, 08098
Saturday June 9	Sponsorship Workshop 4 p.m. - 10 p.m. Bring a beach chair - there will be a bonfire! Albany Avenue & Boardwalk, Atlantic City
Saturday July 28	Young in Recovery presents: SPEAKER JAM! Ventnor Community Center - Details to follow
Friday - Sunday October 5, 6 and 7, 2012	SAVE THE DATE! The Cape Atlantic Intergroup Waves of Sobriety Roundup has a new weekend and a new venue! This year's roundup will be held at the Clarion Hotel in West Atlantic City, NJ.

Spotlight on Service Openings

Bookers Chair facilitates & organizes Bookers meeting for the exchange of speakers, usually quarterly. Your duties include actively promoting the spirit of exchanging speakers within groups.

Archives Committee Chairperson ensures the preservation of CAIG's history. The duties include collecting, organizing and preserving material of historic interest, selecting samples of the collection and arranging them into a traveling display. As Archives Chair, you'll travel to different meetings to share historic materials and solicit group histories from CAIG home groups.

PLEASE NOTE: LAST CHANCE TO UPDATE YOUR GROUP INFO FOR THE SUMMER MEETING LIST!! CONTACT meetingchange@caigrp.org

Service Opportunities

24 HR. Hotline Help
Volunteer from home (minimum one year continuous sobriety) or at the office (six months). Two-hour slots. Subs are always needed. Contact Beth R. at caigphone@caigrp.org
Newsletter
Send new events, articles and your favorite meeting quotes to Nancy O. at newsletter@caigrp.org

Hospitals & Institutions
Need volunteers to carry the message into treatment centers and correctional facilities. Ask your Intergroup Rep for details or contact hichair@caigrp.org
12th Step Call Group
Help people who have reached out and called our hotline. Sign up at www.caigrp.org

Public Information/ Cooperation with the Professional Community
CAIG reaches out to the local community, providing speakers and information to schools, organizations and businesses.
Please contact John O. at pichair@caigrp.org if you are interested in helping.