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BARNEGAT LIGHT
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BRANT BEACH
BRIGANTINE
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CAPE MAY C. H.
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PO Box 905
3153 FIRE ROAD
EGG HARBOR
TOWNSHIP, NJ 08234

(609) 641-8855

WHO'S MISSING???

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged AA—hundreds of groups, and thousands of AAs, face the same problems. Our meetings have been closed. Many just recently in recovery have slipped or relapsed. In addition, some “seasoned” members (i.e., those who have already lived in a few seasons in sobriety) have also relapsed. My friend Marie expressed alarm at a recent Zoom meeting that these seasoned members—highly successful business and professional people—are experiencing relapse in greater numbers than ever before.

“We” has become “I” as we shelter in place, sliding back into the “I” of compulsive thinking. Some of those that have relapsed may have had co-occurring disorders like depression and workaholicism, which might have led them to that place. (The phrase “in all of our affairs” comes to mind.) Public libraries make the mistake of classifying the Big Book incorrectly into the “self-help” category. AA is not a self-help movement: it is a mutual-aid society. We all have heard that “a sick mind cannot cure a sick mind,” and that is why the Fifth Step includes the critical phrase “another human being.”

Furthermore, Step 1 includes the word “our”; Step 2, “ourselves” and “us”; Step 3, “our” will and as “we” understood Him; Step 4, “ourselves”; and another seven times in the Steps, “we” or “our” is used. You get the point here that **WE** are making, right? So how do we reach those new and seasoned alcoholics who are at risk or have retreated back into “I”-thinking?

1. *At your next Zoom meeting, ask yourself “Who is missing?” Where’s Bob?*
2. *Call them! Does your group secretary maintain a phone list? Get it and start calling! Tell them you miss them. Tell them they count. It took three meetings before I called my friend Bob who has a couple more years in sobriety than I have. (Thankfully, we heard from Bob on our fourth weekly meeting.)*
3. *Ask yourself who else is missing.*

Submitted by Karen

Connecting with Others Online

Since the beginning of March, many parts of our everyday lives have stalled or completely halted—but not alcoholism. COVID-19 wishes it had the power to murder the amount of people alcohol has, but this second disease (coronavirus) has pushed the first disease we deal with on a daily basis (alcoholism) deeper into our homes. The recent life-changes we have all had to make has affected some of us more than others, and has been the direct cause of relapses—or even deaths—in our communities. What can we do to ensure our sobriety? How can we help those who have succumbed to the pressures of this ever-changing world we live in? We do what we've always done: reach out and help the still sick! The primary purpose of our Fellowship is to be there when someone needs help. Whether on couches, in meeting rooms, or in specialized centers, the connection of one alcoholic working with another creates miracle results that only God can produce. Given the current limitations of group sizes and curfews, one could think that a society like ours—based on personal interaction—would fold, but like any good drunk staring at an empty glass, we found a way to rise to the top! The use of video-

chatting (be on it Zoom, Facebook, or another form of digital communication) has revolutionized the way we alcoholics can spread the word of AA to newcomers while staying accountable for our own personal sobriety. Being able to speak with others from the safety of our homes has given us enormous potential and limitless possibilities. Zooming to and from places all over the world, into treatment centers large and small, or even just between ourselves in our home group, we can connect online with the type of people we need any time of any day. There are some who say they can't enjoy video meetings the way they can a traditional one, but for what reason? Making a pot of coffee is a great way to get involved in service work, but what if nobody is there drink it? Sure, it's nice to pick up a coin, and it's always good to get a hug from someone, but isn't knowing that people are staying safe and healthy a great spiritual feeling?

**The world is changing around us faster than ever,
and we need to adapt, not resist!**

Chase T

Landmarks in AA History

1934 November Ebby visits Bill and tells him his story
1934 December Bill's spiritual experience in Towns Hospital

HAVE A LAUGH WITH US

Sobriety can be tough sometimes, which is why recovering alcoholics can always use a good laugh. In, AA we learn to not take ourselves too damn serious, to be happy, joyous and free.

Luckily, sobriety can be pretty darn amusing.

"Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past," our cofounder, Bill W., writes in Alcoholic Anonymous.

"But why shouldn't we laugh?"

We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others.

We hope to brighten your day and give you some hearty, well-earned laughs.

A DAY AT THE GROCERY STORE

A drunk dad goes to the supermarket and notices a woman waving at him. She says hello. He's rather taken aback because he can't place where he knows her from. "Do you know me?" he asks. She replies, "I think that you're the father of one of my kids." he thinks for a moment, then says, "Oh my gosh, are you the stripper from my bachelor party? I was pretty drunk that night!" She looks into his eyes and says calmly, "No, I'm your son's teacher."

HANGOVER MADNESS
I DIDN'T THINK MY HANGOVER WAS THAT BAD UNTIL I SPENT 10 MINUTES TRYING TO LOG ON TO MY KID'S ETCH-A-SKETCH!



BAD HABITS

A drunk staggered out of a bar early one afternoon. He had been drinking since early in the day. As he stumbled down the street, two nuns were coming toward him. He started to tip his hat respectfully to them. But at the same time the nuns went around him—one to his right and the other to his left. He got a confused look on his face and then slurred, "How the hell did she do that?"

OBSTACLE COURSE

Q. HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU'RE TOO DRUNK TO DRIVE?

A. WHEN THE TREE YOU'VE BEEN DODGING ALL NIGHT TURNS OUT TO BE THE AIR FRESHENER HANGING ON YOUR REARVIEW MIRROR.

THE PARKING GOD

An alcoholic was late for his court appearance and he was circling the courthouse, desperately looking for a parking spot. Finally, out of desperation he looked up and said, "God please let me find a spot to park and I swear I'll never drink again!" right then someone pulled out right in front of him, and he happily parked. The guy got out of his car and looked up and said, "Never mind, I found one



"I know Rover's glad Ralph got sober...he's finally got his house all to himself."



"Joining AA was an excellent move Fenton, but let's not overdo the 'Easy Does It' part."



WORLD'S LONGEST FOURTH STEP



"Sorry lady, it doesn't work that way."

Experience Strength and Hope

Ever ask yourself what you wanted to be when you grow up? Bet it wasn't an Alcoholic or Drug Addict! Who knew I was to become one, NOT ME.... Today I have accepted what I am, I am an alcoholic and I will continue to reach my hand out to those suffering, and educate those who just don't understand that this is an illness, and it is deadly!

It Began... So simple, what I thought was normal. A father that drank daily, a mother full of fear. Who knew what the night would bring, a man coming home to play music, dance be happy or a man full of anger and rage? I don't recall my first sip of alcohol, but I do know it was beer. My father would take my brother and me on excursions in the woods to teach us life lessons on survival, and he always did remember his drink of choice, so yes we got to take a sip of his beer.

I had my first drunk at around age twelve, what a spectacular answer I had found to the insanity (fear) I lived daily. All I knew was I wanted that escape again and again, as often as possible. I also didn't have what other kids had, so the only way for me to acquire some of those things was to steal, at a young age I learned how to lie, steal, manipulate?, do what I needed to do to get what I wanted. The years pass those skills (character defects) grew and became a way of life. I even started to believe my own lies.

By the time I was around twenty-four my father's drinking took his life at age 51. I felt defeated, so angry with God and the world around me, because despite the man he was when I was growing up, he was dry for a couple years from the booze. To lose him just destroyed me! Once again, my alcoholism and drug addiction took off, anything I could put in my body not to feel ANYTHING I consumed it. Neglecting everyone around me not seeing that I was doing exactly as my father had done. No one knew who I was going to be, fun loving lets party, or that scary full of rage combative person. Don't get me wrong I would be lying if I said I didn't have fun, because I certainly did for quite a few years, who knew where this fun was going to lead me.

My family tried to help in June of 2009 with an intervention. I agreed to go to a rehab, but only because they threaten to take my children from me. At that time, I could admit I may have had a problem with drugs but by no means could I see alcohol was an issue. I came home from that rehab full of denial and resentment, within two days I was drinking, started to push my husband away, and continued with changing everything outside myself. Starting with a new job, kicked my husband out, moved, and even got a new car. I knew something was just not right, but did not see it was me or the alcohol. I stayed out on a run for 2 years, and it was 2 long years of guilt, shame and remorse building, the worse I felt the more I consumed. I didn't know how to handle life.

By the end of my run I couldn't even recognize the person

that stared back at me in the mirror, all I knew is I loathed her, the fun had ended! I didn't know how to live with or without a drink or a drug. I had thoughts of crashing my car, thinking everyone would be better off without me. My mind would never turn off, constant racing thoughts, complete insanity, felt like I was stuck in the depths of hell, and would never crawl out!

I had finally asked for help! Crawl I did, admitted defeat; that there was a problem, but once again it was just substances. I admitted myself into a rehab on August 18, 2011, but it wasn't until about 20 days sober when I was transferred to another treatment facility out of state, when an intake counselor showed me how alcohol had always played a role in my life. I was shocked, my father was an alcoholic, NOT ME!

Who knew!

There is where I truly admitted complete defeat and started my journey in discovering the person alcohol drug abused had turned me into, a selfish, self-centered liar, thief, manipulator, a mother whose children feared her, a wife that couldn't be trusted, I could go on.

From there I continued to take suggestions, even the ones that didn't make sense to me, like a halfway house? Why pay to live in a house when I have a home back in Jersey? Why? Because I needed structure, rules, we live in a world where there are rules in society. I lived by my own set of rules, and I was by no means living a successful life. I learned a lot about myself, the illness of addiction and alcoholism, how to live life on life's terms, be a productive member of society, show up (on time).

I found a Higher Power whom I choose to call God, because I know today I could have in no way done this on my own, and so much more, I spent 6 month total between two treatment centers and a halfway house away from my family. It was the best decision I ever made for my life, for my husband, children, mom, and brother's life. I would do it again in a heartbeat, if it meant saving my life. I'm not saying that the 6 months wasn't upsetting, especially for my kids, but when I look back, 6 months was nothing compared to the hell I was living or worse the devastation I could have caused if I hadn't survive....

I have lost so many from this illness, and watch so many go in and out of this program. Today I am truly blessed after 25 years to still have my husband love and support, our 3 beautiful daughters, a great relationship with my mother and brother. All of my family now understand this illness, encourage and support my sobriety, I have amazing friends today that are more like family. I know today without God and AA, my sobriety coming first in my life.

I will continue on my journey, and always reach my hand out to help the next suffering addict or alcoholic who, "has a desire to stop."

Anonymous

Expand your Twelfth Step, and tell us your stories of those experiences!

Heard at a meeting: God pulled you out of the pit, so you could go back in and get more people out.

PANEL MEMBERS E-MAILS:

- CHAIRPERSON@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
- VICECHAIR@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
- TREASURER@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
- ASSISTANTTREASURER@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
- RECORDINGSEC@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
- CORRESPONDINGSEC@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
- TRUSTEE@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
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- AUDIT@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
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- ROUNDUP@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
- UNITYCHAIR@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
- WEBCHAIR@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG
- WORKSHOP@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

WWW.CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG

A.A.'s FREEDOMS

We trust that we already know what our several freedoms truly are; that no future generation of AAs will ever feel compelled to limit them. Our AA freedoms create the soil in which genuine love can grow. . . .

THE LANGUAGE OF THE HEART, p. 303

I craved freedom. First, freedom to drink; later, freedom from drink. The A.A. program of recovery rests on a foundation of free choice. There are no mandates, laws or commandments. A.A.'s spiritual program, as outlined in the Twelve Steps, and by which I am offered even greater freedoms, is only suggested. I can take it or leave it. Sponsorship is offered, not forced, and I come and go as I will. It is these and other freedoms that allow me to recapture the dignity that was crushed by the burden of drink, and which is so dearly needed to support an enduring sobriety.

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The Seventh Tradition states:

“Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

While contributions cover each group's rent and other expenses, the Seventh Tradition is essential at every level of A.A. service. It is both a privilege and a responsibility for groups and members to ensure that not only their group, but also their intergroup/central office, local services, district, area, and the General Service Office remain self-supporting. This keeps A.A. free of outside influences that might divert us from our primary purpose — to help the alcoholic who still suffers. The amount of our contribution is secondary to the spiritual connection that unites all groups around



Submitted by Lauren



CAPE ATLANTIC INTERGROUP

**SINCERELY THANKS EACH AND EVERY ONE FOR HELPING TO SUPPORT AA IN OUR AREA!
7TH TRADITION**

The “New Normal”

My life has changed. The old ways I did things and how I went through my day, just isn't possible under these new circumstances. In fact, my life will never again work exactly like it did before. I have to find new ways of doing things. I need to go through my day differently, to look at things from a different angle. My whole approach to life needs to transform in the face of what's going on in my world. I cannot do this alone, and I have to realize that, deep-down inside. I need help, and I need to help others, so we can all get through this common problem we are having. It's the only way this can work. The past behind me is gone, and the future that lies ahead is completely new. Am I talking about alcoholism or the coronavirus pandemic?

But when I can look back at a situation and honestly say, “I did what's best for us,” I feel assured that I am becoming the person that God would have me be, rather than the person that I was.

Cape Atlantic Intergroup Newsletter Chairperson

I AM RESPONSIBLE



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 on to *the alcoholic who still suffers*.

