

Pass It On

Cape
Atlantic
InterGroup

THE CAPE-ATLANTIC INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

2011, ISSUE 1

January/February 2011

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Pleasantville, NJ 08232
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**24 HOUR
HOTLINE
800-604-HELP**

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Woodbine

We are glad you are all here...especially Newcomers

I began coming to AA as the result of a DUI and also a requirement of IOP (Intensive Outpatient Program). I was court ordered to attend. I did not have a sense of "incomprehensible demoralization" as stated in the Big Book, nor did I feel that my life had become unmanageable. I simply had to meet certain requirements to get my driver's license back.

Within about three weeks of starting IOP, my counselors figured out that I was "fitting" their program around my drinking schedule. That is, I was attending AA & IOP on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and drinking Thursday afternoon through Sunday night. The "Big Conference" with the Director of the program ensued wherein I was advised that I needed to "step up my program", which meant ninety meetings in ninety days (two meetings in one day only counted for one meeting that day so there was no doubling up), get a sponsor before the end of the following week, and get a home group.

Getting a home group was easy. I asked a member of the group I

was attending regularly how to become a home group member. It simply required filling out a 3x5 index card with my first name, last initial, my sobriety date, and my phone number.

Getting a sponsor seemed a bit more difficult, but the greatest difficulty of all was, how was I going to stop drinking for this four month period? You see, I was still working on the premise that I only wanted to get my driver's license back.

I had attended enough meetings at this point that the phrase "God could and would, if He were sought" stuck in my mind. But this did not fill me with much hope because I wasn't certain that I wanted to stop drinking, and more importantly, the compulsion to drink was so strong that I felt that I defy God even if He did try to help me.

I was also told to pray. Now I didn't have a problem with God, but I certainly had a problem with sending up a false prayer. I didn't know if I wanted to stop drinking, so what was my prayer to be?

From my childhood catechism, I remembered the Holy Spirit. And if my recollection was correct, God lives in each of us through His Holy Spirit. Since I had been disconnected from the Church and God for such a long time, I figured the Holy Spirit in me must be a very tiny flame, maybe about the size of the flame of a Bic lighter. So I decided to pray to God to strengthen His Holy Spirit in me.

I was still very full of doubt that any of this would work, no matter what I read or heard at meetings. I'm not certain where the suggestion came from, because I did not have a sponsor yet, but I read the Preface and four Forwards to the Big Book. And the thought came to me, who am I to discount millions of people who say this works? How does AA continue to grow exponentially if it doesn't work?

And so, while I couldn't believe everything I heard, I decided for just a brief period of time to **suspend disbelief**. And I gave it a time frame! For four days, I would

Christmas Miracle

During the Christmas of 2008, I was drinking with a very heavy heart during my last load. I had been a real mess for about 10 months. Earlier that year my stepson was having a Grandbaby and I knew I had a chance to be a Grand Dad and was really looking forward to the birth of my first Grandchild. When Gianna was born she was born with part of her brain missing and the doctors said she would be faced with many difficulties and might never walk or talk. The list of nevers

went on and on and it broke my heart. My drinking increased as a result.



That summer I had been in a total blackout during a party we organized for Gianna. I swore I would not drink until dark so I could make it through the evening. Then someone asked me to hold their drink and I was off to the races, blacked out by

dark as I had feared. The next day I knew I really had a problem and started to believe some of the stories of my escapades that my wife told me.

That following January, I woke up from (God willing) my last blackout, chained to the floor in the State Police barracks cell. The officer said to me "you'd better hope that that baby is ok". He left me with that and after a bit I

(Continued on page 3)

STEP TWELVE



"12th Step work requires tolerance, persistence, understanding, and resisting the urge to take the phone off the hook when going to bed!"

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

Location in the Big Book

Step 12 Part 1—Page 89 to 96 (...of their chance.)

Step 12 Part 2 —Page 96 (Suppose now ...) to 103

Twelfth Step Principal or Virtue

Service

Recommended Actions

Intensive work with other alcoholics works when other activities fail. Carry this message to other alcoholics!. This is an experience you must not miss. (page 89 BB)

*Steps reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

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Suggested Steps for Sponsoring a New Member

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.

From the pamphlet: Q&A on Sponsorship

A sponsor is simply a sober alcoholic who helps the newcomer solve one problem:
How to stay sober.

Local 12th Step Service Opportunities:

See *page 4* for ways to carry the message to other alcoholics in our area!

Qualify as an alcoholic

In calling upon a new prospect, it has been found best to qualify oneself as an ordinary person who has found happiness, contentment, and peace of mind through AA. Immediately make it clear to the prospect that you are a person engaged in the routine business of earning a living. Tell him your only reason for believing yourself able to help him is because you yourself are an alcoholic and have had experiences and problems that might be similar to his.

Tell your story

Many members have found it desirable to launch immediately into their personal drinking story, as a means of getting the confidence and whole-hearted co-operation of the prospect. It is important in telling the story of your drinking life to tell it in a manner that will describe an alcoholic, rather than a series of humorous drunken parties. This will enable the man to get a clear picture of an alcoholic which should help him to more definitely decide whether he is an alcoholic.

Inspire Confidence in AA

In many instances the prospect will have tried various means of controlling his drinking, including hobbies, change of associations, and various control plans. These will, of course, have been unsuccessful. Point out your series of unsuccessful efforts to control drinking...their absolute fruitless results and yet that you were able to stop drinking through application of AA principles. This will encourage the prospect to look forward with confidence to sobriety in AA in spite

of the many past failures he might have had with other plans.

Talk about "plus" values

Tell the prospect frankly that he can not quickly understand all the benefits that are coming to him through AA. Tell him of the happiness, peace of mind, health, and in many cases, material benefits which are possible through understanding and application of the AA way of life.

Show importance of reading the Big Book

Explain the necessity of reading and re-reading the AA Big Book. Point out that this book gives a detailed description of the AA tools and the suggested methods of application of these tools to build a foundation of rehabilitation for living. This is a good time to emphasize the importance of the twelve steps.

Qualities required for success in AA

Convey to the prospect that the objectives of AA are to provide the ways and means for an alcoholic to regain his normal place in life. Desire, patience, faith, study and application are most important in determining each individual's plan of action in gaining full benefits of AA.

Introduce faith

Since the belief of a Power greater than oneself is the heart of the AA plan, and since this idea is very often difficult for a new man, the sponsor should attempt to introduce the beginnings of an understanding of this all-important feature.

Frequently this can be done by the sponsor relating his own difficulty in grasping a spiritual understanding

and the methods he used to overcome his difficulties.

Listen to his story

While talking to the newcomer, take time to listen and study his reactions in order that you can present your information in a more effective manner. Let him talk too. Remember...Easy Does It.

Take to several meetings

To give the new member a broad and complete picture of AA, the sponsor should take him to various meetings within convenient distance of his home. Attending several meetings gives a new man a chance to select a group in which he will be most happy and comfortable, and it is extremely important to let the prospect make his own decision as to which group he will join. Impress upon him that he is always welcome at any meeting and can change his home group if he so wishes.

Explain AA to Prospect's family

A successful sponsor takes pains and makes any required effort to make certain that those people closest and with the greatest interest in their prospect (mother, father, wife, etc.) are fully informed of A.A., its principles and its objectives. The sponsor sees that these people are invited to meetings, and keeps them in touch with the current situation regarding the prospect at all times.

Help prospect anticipate hospital experience

A prospect will gain more benefit from a hospitalization period if the sponsor describes the experience and helps him anticipate it, paving the way for those members who will call on him.

Taken from AA Sponsorship Pamphlet (1944), by Clarence Snyder

Newcomers—Continued from Page 1

start my day with a simple prayer, "Dear God, Please strengthen your Holy Spirit in me." and I would finish my day with "Dear God, Thank you for keeping your Holy Spirit strong in me today and not letting me take a drink." One night, and it happens that I was passed my four day limit, I realized that not only had I not taken a drink that day, but I had not had the thought of a drink! This was a miracle - it seemed impossible to believe! So just to be sure, I gave myself two more days to see if I was really beyond the obsession. Each day, I still begin with that simple prayer and end the day with a prayer of gratitude. And while I may occasionally have the fleeting thought of a drink, the obsession has not returned.

Now, I still had to get a sponsor. The story of how my sponsor came to be is what I call a "God moment." I find them more often today than when I started the program.

I had been attending Trudgers' morning meetings for a little over a month when I was invited to join a few people for breakfast after the meeting. My first instinct was to decline because I really didn't want to be known, but I said yes. At the end of breakfast, I asked for a ride because at the time I was still taking buses everywhere.

As we entered the development where I lived, the person driving me home started pointing out where members of AA lived. I had a sinking feeling in my gut, "Oh no, they know where I live. I'm surrounded by AA police!" and on along those lines. As we pulled up to my house, he said, "I'll give you some phone numbers." My mouth dropped open and I said, "What? Just call them?!" At that, he made a call for me and I made arrangements to ride to a meeting with a

woman in my neighborhood. The next morning, a little pixie of a woman full of sunshine and cheerfulness, came and took me to a meeting where she introduced me all around the room. I was sunk now-but I asked her to be my sponsor. I didn't know yet if I was willing to commit to AA. But I had gotten in pretty deep.

Certain catch phrases kept popping into my head, "If you want what we have, do what we do," "Work the Steps," "Get a sponsor," "Go to meetings," "Listen to suggestions." I was again at a crossroads. And once again, I chose to **suspend disbelief**.

I continued to go to meetings, and because my schedule of meetings differed from my sponsor's, my attendance at meetings increased because I began attending meetings with her also. When I was invited to AA gatherings other than meetings, I went - even though I often thought "How often do I have to hang out with these AA people?!" I continued praying, reading and when my sponsor said write your drinking history, I did. When she said it's time to begin working the Steps, I did. When a coffee commitment opened up, I volunteered. At six months, my sponsor suggested I begin taking commitments at rehabs and recovery houses. I did. When I celebrated my one year anniversary and was asked to tell my story to my home group, I did.

Some of the questions I originally had about meetings were answered. Most groups will sign court papers, but ask that you arrive five minutes early to give the paper to the chairperson. Meeting chairpersons are usually selected randomly and the general rule of thumb is that a person have ninety days' sobriety. The readings at meetings are usu-

ally placed about prior to the meeting and anyone can read. Literature such as the Big Book and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are usually available for sale at the meetings. Ask a home group member. Home group members are asked to identify themselves at the beginning of the meeting.

About the phone list...When you announce you are attending your first AA meeting, a meeting list is usually circulated and people will write their name and phone number on the back. I found it easier to call people if I could put a name and a face together. So when people shared at meetings, I paid close attention when they introduced themselves, then I used their names when saying hello or goodbye at meetings. It helped me overcome some of the intimidation when making a phone call.

I found that regular attendance at meetings was crucial for me. I needed constant repetition before I was able to begin to "hear" the AA message.

I found that a strong network of sober women was important to help me interpret the steps and learn to integrate them into my daily living.

And I learned that a strong spiritual connection is vital to sobriety. I close with this story from a dear friend of mine:

At the end of my stay at rehab, I met with my therapist who said to me, "As a doctor, I have done everything I can for you. You will have to do what those who have come before you have done, and find what they have found."

Kathy C., Trudgers Group

Miracle—Continued from Page 1

started to pray with sincerity and have been doing so ever since. I have no recollection of the damage I did to the house during my last rampage which is now my last load. I thank God that I never touched Gianna during it but I did not know that to be true until much later. The fear that I might have hurt her was a real wake up call that affected me so much that it allowed me to begin to change my life. Getting to AA is fuzzy, but I was following suggestions at that point. I thank God for that.

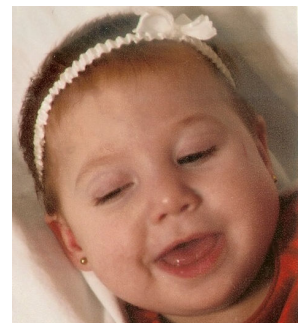
Gianna is now almost three and she has made progress. Her motor skills have improved and she can now roll over. She smiles, laughs and loves to perform her Pttttttttt "fart noise"!

We were coming up to her second Christmas and I was nearing my first Anniversary in AA. I wanted to take Gianna to see Santa Clause but other family members were against it, mostly because of her drooling. We argued and afterwards I went to a meeting in Mays Landing (Serenity Group) and shared about how hard it was on me not to be able to take my Granddaughter to see Santa. It helped because by sharing it I felt like I was able to give ½ of the pain away.

The next morning (Christmas Eve) I heard a knock on my front door at around 6am. Who could that be this early in the morning? I opened it and there was Santa! "Santa" said "Fred if you can't take Gianna to see Santa, Santa's coming to her!" Who

would have guessed that Santa was an alcoholic! Santa came in for pictures and coffee and made that day the most special Christmas memory ever. If I had not been an AA member, if I had not shared my problems, this would never have happened. It is through the wonders of this fellowship that this special day happened. My heartfelt thanks go out to "Harry

Clause" from that Mays Landing meeting for his kindness, compassion and love.--
**Fred S.,
New Gretna
Group**



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**Our office is volunteer-staffed
Please call first**

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

<p>Saturday February 26 5pm til ?</p>	<p>Stage Coach Group Anniversary Spaghetti Dinner at 6pm, Speaker at 8pm Seaville Fire Hall, Rt 50, Seaville \$10 at door (\$8 in adv) Bring side dish or dessert</p>
<p>Fri—Sun March 25th-27th, 2011</p>	<p>Area 45's 47th Annual Convention Visit www.snjaaconvention.org Crowne Plaza, Cherry Hill</p>
<p>Fri—Sun June 10-11, 2011</p>	<p>South Jersey Takes Akron 21st Annual Founder's Day Trip to Akron, Ohio \$400 Includes RT Bus, Meals, Lodging \$150 Deposit Due Nov. 15th Contact Wayne & Nancy P. 856-534-0104</p>



Pass the Basket

CAIG sincerely thanks each and every one for helping to support AA in our area!



November Group Contributions

Absecon Group	\$100
Harbor Lights Group	\$214
Monday Night Women's	\$81
Pleasantville Group	\$500
Surrender Group	\$42
Primary Purpose Group	\$100
40th Street Group	\$210
Good Morning Ocean City	\$750

Pomona Group	\$250
Sailing Free Group	\$50
One Day at a Time Group	\$124
Mays Landing Group	\$50
December Group Contributions	
Awakenings of LBI	\$300
Daily Reflections Group	\$50
Ventnor-Margate Group	\$89
Step Up to Recovery Group	\$270

Keep It Simple Group	\$50
Ventnor Seashore Group	\$200
Primary Purpose Group	\$100
Downbeach Group	\$1,000
Eleventh Step Meditation	\$280
Leader Group	\$60
Came to Believe Group	\$250
Ocean City Women's(Wed.)	\$50
Serenity Group	\$325

12th Step Work Opportunities

Answer the "CAIG Hot Line" at home or our Office

Our "Hot Line" Telephone Service often has open 2-hour slots where you can answer calls to Cape Atlantic Intergroup for a variety of service related issues... everything from local Meeting Information to helping that struggling alcoholic who is making contact with us for the first time! Our Phone Coordinator and the Phone Committee has set the following "guidelines" for those interested in answering these important phone calls to the Intergroup: To answer phones at the Intergroup Office, a minimum of 6 months of continuous sobriety is suggested. To take these same calls from your home, using our "Call Forwarding" feature, we ask that you have at least 1 year of continuous sobriety. These commitments are for a duration of 2 hours.

Please email CAIGPhone@caigrp.org or leave a message at our office 609-641-8855 to inquire about open time slots.

Be a "Substitute" Phone Answerer

You may also want to consider signing up as a "Substitute" Phone Answerer....and make yourself available to "fill in" when one of our designated answerers cannot commit for a certain date.

Go to <http://caigrp.org/PhoneSubSignup.pdf> for a downloadable copy of our "Telephone Substitute Sign Up Sheet".

Join our "12th Step Call" Group

As a phone Answerer, you are NOT expected to arrange to visit a first time caller. We maintain a list of individuals willing to do this 12-step contact work. Our "12th Step Call Group" is always seeking volunteers to be added to our list. Of course it is strongly suggested that 12th step visits be done by a minimum of two persons. Your primary function as a member of this 12 Step Call Group will be to begin the process via a phone call to the inquiring new member. Your number will NEVER be given to the caller....rather, you will be called by our Phone Answerer first...to inquire if you are available. The caller's number will be given to you to return the call.

Go to http://caigrp.org/12th_step_signup.pdf for a downloadable copy of our 12th Step Sign Up Sheet.

Join our "Jail Meetings" Group

Area members take weekly men's and women's meetings into the Atlantic County and Cape May County Justice Facilities. Most meetings are attended by two volunteers and a monthly signup sheet is circulated for the meetings that don't have a dedicated volunteer. If interested, you will be required to submit clearance papers and attend an orientation at the facility before being allowed admittance.

Please email HIChair@caigrp.org or leave a message at our office 609-641-8855 to inquire about open time slots.

<p>Saturday 5pm Feb 19 & Mar 19</p>	<p>H&I Committee Meeting CAIG Office, 32 East BHP</p>	<p>Wednesday 6:30p March 16</p>	<p>Bookers Quarterly Exchange Franklin Blvd. & Tunis Ave.</p>
<p>Wednesday 7:30p Feb 9 & Mar 9</p>	<p>CAIG Steering Panel Franklin Blvd. & Tunis Ave.</p>	<p>Wednesday 7:30p Feb 16 & Mar 16</p>	<p>Intergroup Business Meeting Franklin Blvd. & Tunis Ave.</p>
<p>Monday 5:30pm Feb 21 & Mar 21</p>	<p>Website Meeting CAIG Office, 32 East BHP</p>	<p>Wednesday 7:30p Feb 23 & Mar 23</p>	<p>Roundup Committee Meeting Franklin Blvd. & Tunis Ave.</p>