

Summer 2007

ALUMNI NEWS

COMING ATTRACTIONS

We miss you! Through Hoag's Heroes Alumni we have become a family. We get together often for sober laughter, love and fun. Everyone is welcome so please join us for any or all of the events listed below.

ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

June	Golf Tournament Tijeras Creek Golf Course (June 16)
August	Deep Sea Fishing
October	No Booze Cruise
December	Christmas Potluck and Decorating Party

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Monday night stag meeting - 8 p.m.
(men and women) - Hoag CDU

Wednesday night A.A. meeting - 8 p.m.
(20 - minute speaker with open discussion)
- Hoag CDU

Wednesday Pills Anonymous meeting - 8 p.m.
- Hoag Hospital laboratory waiting room

Saturday night A.A. speakers meeting - 8:30 p.m.
- Hoag Conference Center

Sunday Pills Anonymous meeting - 6:30 p.m.
- Hoag CDU

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

Alumni meetings - Please plan to attend the monthly alumni meetings on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m.

THE TWELVE STEPS...

TO TOTAL AND COMPLETE INSANITY

1. We admitted we were powerless over nothing. We could manage our lives perfectly and we could manage those of anyone else that would allow it.
2. Came to believe that there was no power greater than us, and the rest of the world was insane.
3. Made a decision to have our loved ones and friends turn their wills and their lives over to our care.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of everyone we knew.
5. Admitted to the whole world at large the exact nature of their wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to make others straighten up and do right.
7. Demanded that others "shape up or ship out."
8. Made a list of anyone who had ever harmed us and became willing to go to any lengths to get even with them all.
9. Got direct revenge on such people wherever possible except when to do so would cost us our own lives or at the very least, a jail sentence.
10. Continued to take inventory of others and when they were wrong promptly and repeatedly told them about it.
11. Sought through nagging to improve our relations with others as we couldn't understand them at all, asking only that they knuckle under and do things our way.
12. Having had a complete physical, emotional and spiritual breakdown as a result of these steps, we tried to blame it on others and to get sympathy and pity in all our affairs.

DEAR JOHN (Barleycorn, that is...)

I know I've relied on you for your warmth and comfort to get me through many long and lonely nights, through thick and thin.

I've always found wisdom and solace and understanding with you
You've been my long and trusted friend- you've known me better than all since my teens.

You're always there when I need you -
You've helped me with work and play without asking much in return.

You've been my traveling companion...
We've seen the world and you never asked for the window seat.
You've made great banquets even greater...
You've made me the center of the universe
You've even helped me wash the car and trim the roses.

But now I've found a new friend and need to let you go!

She is beautiful and without blemish - her name is Sobriety.
I've chased after her before but she has always slipped out of my grasp
Now we have finally found each other.

I know this new relationship will be permanent and so out of respect for our past
I need now to ask you to find a new partner.

I know you'll argue with me about this - even fight with every trick and cunning ways
To hold on to this passionate life we've enjoyed.
You'll whisper in my ear, you'll say "who will comfort you in the dark of night?
Who else can you find as such a trusted partner - hot or cold, windy or still?
I've been there for you without a question!"

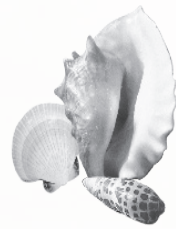
And I said my new friend won't attack me deep in my sleep
Sobriety is beautiful and giving and understanding of all my needs and costs. Not one cent.
My new companion won't silently destroy my health, my loving wife, my home.

My new friend will bond me to life on a day to day adventure into the new day that God has created for me.
So my old friend, John Barleycorn
You must forget about me and move on to another
There are many waiting for your charms.

You will always be in my memory. I will be on the lookout for you.
I'll think about you every day - but beautiful Sobriety has won my heart.

Goodbye John...

Your old friend PDM (a recent Hoag graduate 2007).



STRESS SENSITIVITY

Difficulty in managing stress is the most confusing and aggravating part of post acute withdrawal. Recovering people are often unable to distinguish between low stress situations and high stress situations. They may not recognize low levels of stress and then overreact when they become aware of the stress they are experiencing. They may feel stressful in situations that ordinarily would not bother them, and in addition, when they react they overreact. They may do things that are completely inappropriate for the situation. So much so that later on they may wonder why they reacted so strongly.

To complicate things further, all of the other symptoms of post acute withdrawal (PAW) become worse during times of high stress. There is a direct relationship between elevated stress and the severity of PAW. Each intensifies the other. The intensity of PAW creates stress and stress aggravates PAW and makes it more severe. At times of low stress, the symptoms get better and may even go away. When you are well rested and relaxed, eating properly and getting along well with people, you will probably appear to be fine. Your thoughts will be clear, your emotions appropriate and your memory alright. At times of high stress, however, your brain may suddenly shut down. You may begin experiencing thinking problems, inappropriate emotions and memory problems.

If your thoughts become confused and chaotic or you are unable to concentrate, if you have trouble remembering or solving problems, you may feel you are going crazy even though you are not. These symptoms are a normal part of a recovery and are reversible with abstinence and a recovery program. If you do not understand this you may develop shame and guilt which leads to diminished self esteem and isolation which creates stress and increases PAW. It is a painful cycle that is

unnecessary if you understand what is happening. As your body and your mind begin to heal and as you learn ways to reduce the risk of post acute withdrawal symptoms, productive and meaningful living is possible in spite of the very real possibility of recurring symptoms. Recovery from the damage caused by the addiction requires abstinence. The damage itself interferes with the ability to abstain. This is the paradox of recovery. Alcohol can temporarily reverse the symptoms of the damage. If alcoholics drink, they will think clearly for a little while, be able to have normal feelings and emotions for a little while, feel healthy for a little while. Unfortunately the disease will eventually trigger a loss of control that will attain destroy these functions.

For this reason it is necessary to do everything possible to reduce the symptoms of PAW. It is necessary to understand PAW and to recognize that you are not incompetent and that you are not going crazy. Because post acute withdrawal symptoms are stress sensitive, you need to learn about PAW and methods of control when stress levels are low in order to be able to prevent the symptoms or to manage them when they occur.

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Edited by "Hoag's Heroes," the alumni group of Hoag Hospital's
Chemical Dependency Center.

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