

The Daily Brew

District 55 AA Newsletter

Jul/Aug '26

Living Sober This Summer: Finding Freedom Beyond the Drink

Summer often brings sunshine, barbecues, vacations, camping trips, family gatherings, and celebrations like the Fourth of July. While these moments can be filled with joy, they can also present unique challenges for those of us in recovery. Many of our old memories—and old habits—were tied to these events.

The good news? Sobriety doesn't mean missing out. In fact, many people discover that summer becomes even more meaningful when they experience it with a clear mind and an open heart. This article has some tips and tricks for members with all lengths of sobriety to help stay sober this summer.

Plan Ahead

One of the best tools for staying sober is preparation. Before heading to a cookout, concert, or holiday gathering, ask yourself a few simple questions:

- Do I have a way to leave if I become uncomfortable?
- Will there be someone there who supports my recovery?
- Have I talked with my sponsor or another sober friend?
- What will I drink instead of alcohol?

Having a plan helps replace uncertainty with confidence. If you are new to sobriety remember to reflect if you have "a legitimate reason for being there" and are in "fit spiritual condition".

Remember HALT: Many people in recovery rely on the simple reminder: HALT—don't let yourself become too

Hungry
Angry
Lonely
Tired

Summer schedules can be hectic, and it's easy to skip meals, stay up too late, or isolate after a busy weekend. Taking care of yourself isn't selfish—it's part of protecting your sobriety.

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Living Sober This Summer

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Create New Traditions

Recovery gives us the opportunity to build new memories. Consider trying something different this summer:

- Host a barbecue with plenty of great food and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Go hiking, kayaking, or spend the day at the beach or lake.
- Watch fireworks with family and friends who support your recovery.
- Volunteer at a community event.
- Attend a meeting before or after holiday celebrations.
- Invite another person in recovery to spend the day together.

The goal isn't to avoid life—it's to fully experience it.

Stay Connected

Summer vacations and holiday weekends can interrupt routines. If you're traveling, look up local meetings ahead of time, keep your sponsor's number handy, and don't hesitate to reach out if you're struggling.

Recovery was never meant to be a solo journey.

Practice Gratitude

At the end of each day, take a moment to reflect. What made you smile today? Who encouraged you? What are you grateful for?

Sometimes the greatest gift of sobriety isn't found in the big moments—it's found in the quiet ones. Watching a sunset. Laughing with family. Enjoying a campfire. Waking up the next morning with peace instead of regret.

One Day at a Time

Summer will come with invitations, celebrations, and unexpected moments. Some days will be easier than others. That's okay.

You don't have to stay sober for the entire summer.

You don't have to stay sober until Labor Day.

You only have to stay sober today.

Then tomorrow, you do it again.

One day at a time, those days become months. Those months become years. And before you know it, you've built a life that is fuller, richer, and more joyful than you ever imagined.

This summer, celebrate the greatest freedom of all—the freedom to live sober.

250 Years of Freedom

For many, Independence Day once revolved around drinking. Today, it can represent a different kind of freedom.

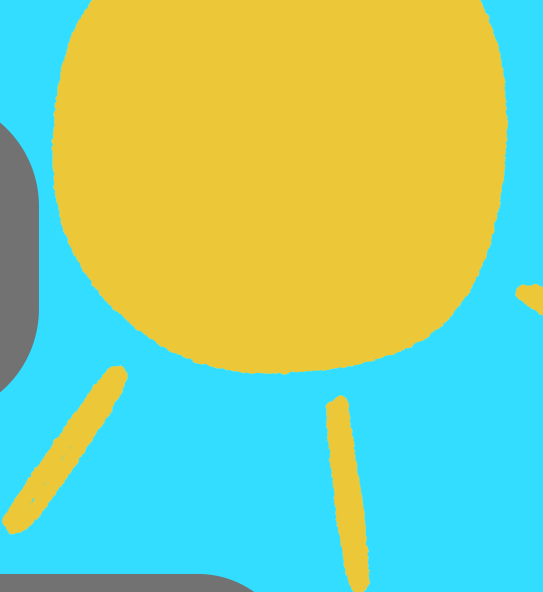
Freedom from waking up with regret.

Freedom from wondering what happened the night before.

Freedom from hurting the people we love.

Freedom to remember every laugh, every conversation, and every fireworks display.

That's a freedom worth celebrating.



Salt Creek Picnic
Sat, Aug 1st

Duck In Pot Luck
Friday Jul 31st
Friday, Aug 28th



Pre-Assembly
Aug 15th 10am-2pm
Port Angeles

Back To Basics
Next Session Starts
Wed, Aug 5th

The Glass

Through

- INTERVIEW WITH Mark O.

For more than four decades, Mark O. has been creating beauty from glass. His stained-glass artwork can be found in churches, custom homes, businesses, and public spaces throughout the Pacific Northwest. From intricate windows and doors to artistic installations inspired by nature, Mark built a career doing what he loved—turning pieces of colored glass into works of art. But behind the success was a struggle that many never saw. That even Mark admits he didn't recognize until many years ago.

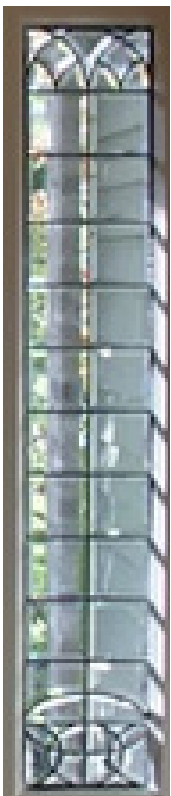
Mark's journey with stained glass began in high school in the late 1970s when a student teacher introduced the art form to his classroom. Inspired immediately, he immersed himself in learning everything he could about glass. After graduation, he landed a job at Spectrum Glass in Seattle, where his



passion and creativity quickly propelled him into leadership roles. Over the years, he helped develop products, studied under renowned glass artists, attended Pilchuck Glass School, and eventually built a successful stained-glass business of his own. "I was driven," Mark recalls. "I loved the work. I loved creating." While his artistic career flourished, alcohol gradually became a trusted companion. Following a stroke in 2017, Mark's doctors strongly advised him to stop drinking. Concerned about his health and the risk of another stroke, he quit alcohol almost entirely. But looking back, Mark now recognizes that he hadn't truly let go of drinking.

For the next five years, he abstained most of the time, but allowed himself to drink on holidays. Christmas, Thanksgiving, and other special occasions became events he eagerly anticipated—not because of the celebrations themselves, but because they gave him permission to drink.

"I couldn't wait," Mark recalls. "I was so excited for the holidays because I knew I could drink." When the day finally arrived, moderation wasn't the goal. Mark often got drunk, treating the occasion as a reward after months of abstinence. At the time, he didn't see it as a warning sign. Looking back now, he realizes how much space alcohol continued to occupy in his thoughts.



Through The Glass

continued



"It was such a big deal to me," he said. "That's what I think about now. I can't believe how excited I was just for the opportunity to drink." Although he wasn't drinking daily, alcohol still held an outsized importance in his life. When he eventually picked up a drink again in 2022, he noticed something had changed. "I was fiendish about it," he said. "I could tell." The years without regular drinking hadn't reset anything. If anything, the obsession had been waiting. What began as occasional drinking quickly returned to secrecy and hiding, setting the stage for the turning point that would eventually lead him into recovery.

Everything came to a head in 2023 when Mark found himself in the emergency room, convinced he was having another stroke. The symptoms were frightening—dizziness, disorientation, and a sense that something was seriously wrong. Given his history, he feared the worst.

Sitting in the hospital bed, facing what he believed could be another life-altering medical event, Mark suddenly found himself unable to keep a secret he had been carrying for over a year. He confessed. For months, he had been secretly drinking in his workshop, carefully hiding it from his wife and family. He timed his drinks, covered his tracks, and convinced himself that no one knew. Looking back, he says maintaining the deception took an enormous amount of effort. "I was good at it," he admitted. "But it was hard work." In that hospital room, believing he might be experiencing another stroke, he finally told his wife the truth. The secret was out. Ironically, doctors later determined he wasn't having a stroke at all. The symptoms were caused by a severe ear infection. But by then, something much more important had happened—Mark had stopped hiding.

His wife was understandably upset. After all, he had suffered a stroke years earlier and had been warned by doctors not to drink. She asked him a simple but direct question: "What are you going to do about it?" That question became a turning point.

Mark already knew the answer.

Over the years, he had watched family members navigate recovery programs and had seen firsthand that recovery was possible. He understood that if he wanted to protect his health, his relationships, and the life he had built, he needed help.

"I knew exactly what to do," he said.

Soon after, he began attending Alcoholics Anonymous, even before he entered treatment, and committed himself to recovery. What started as a frightening trip to the emergency room became the moment that changed the trajectory of his life.

Today, with more than three years of sobriety, Mark views that hospital visit not as a crisis, but as a gift. It was the day the secret ended and recovery began.

He continues to attend meetings, participate in service work, and stay connected to the recovery community. More importantly, sobriety has allowed him to fully enjoy the life he spent years building.

Steps & Traditions

Step 7: Humbly asked
Him to remove our shortcomings

Tradition 7: Every A.A.
group ought to be fully
self-supporting, declining outside
contributions



Concept 7: The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness

***In simple terms: AA has to function in the real world, so some parts of it are set up legally—like the General Service Board. That gives the trustees the ability to handle practical things like money, contracts, and publishing.

But the real direction of AA doesn't come from legal paperwork—it comes from the people in AA.

The General Service Conference (which represents the groups) doesn't have legal control, but it does carry the voice and conscience of the Fellowship. Its power comes from trust, shared experience, and the fact that AA members support it—both spiritually and financially (like through the basket).

Steps & Traditions

Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all

Tradition 8:

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers



*This issue is in loving memory of
Cathy D, Cheryl B, and Patrick E
all who lost their battles with cancer in June*



Note from the Newsletter Chair

Welcome to the District 55 Newsletter., in this edition we are giving thanks for all the service(s) AA members provide. If you would like to provide any article ideas, personal stories, poems or some hint of what you would like to see in future editions to the following email address: newsletter.district55@gmail.com - or scan the QR code

Thanks - Your News Letter Chair - Holly K.

**all photo's and interviews are published with consent

**Photo's and more information about Mark's work can be found at the following link:
<https://www.uniqueartglass.com/>

Scan QR code
to send idea's
or questions

