

IN MEMORIAM

MARK J

OUR FRIEND MARK J PASSED AWAY THIS PAST SEPTEMBER. HE HAD BEEN IN OUR PROGRAM SINCE 2012 AND HAD BEEN EXTREMELY ACTIVE IN SERVICE MUCH OF THAT TIME. MARK HAD BECOME A HARBOR AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE MEMBER AND WAS QUICKLY ELECTED TO THE CHAIR 5 POSITION ON THE BOARD. HE PERFORMED ALL THE TASKS REQUIRED OF HIM AS HE RAPIDLY ROSE TO CHAIR 1, BECOMING THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HASC. ONE OF HIS MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING HIS TENURE ON THE BOARD WAS TO RE-INVIGORATE THE CENTRAL OFFICE ARCHIVES ACTIVITIES.

MARK WAS ONE OF THE SMARTEST PEOPLE I'VE EVER KNOWN. NO, HE WASN'T JUST SMART, HE WAS BRILLIANT. HE WAS A WALKING DICTIONARY, THESAURUS AND ENCYCLOPEDIA ALL ROLLED INTO ONE. EVEN THOUGH HE WAS SOFT-SPOKEN AND MODEST, WHEN HE SPOKE, THOSE LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE AROUND LISTENED. IN OUR MEN'S BOOK CLUB, WHEN WE ENCOUNTERED A CHALLENGING WORD, WE'D LOOK AT MARK AND, OFF THE TOP OF HIS HEAD, HE'D PROVIDE US WITH THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION, THE DEFINITION AND MOST OF THE TIME THE LATIN ROOT OF THE WORD IN QUESTION.

MARK WAS AN ACCOMPLISHED OUTDOORSMAN, OFTEN HIKING OFF-TRAIL FOR 7-10 DAYS, ALONE! ALL WITH JUST A BACKPACK, A COMPASS AND A FEW TOPOGRAPHICAL MAPS.

UNFORTUNATELY, MARK'S LAST TWO YEARS WERE INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT. AFTER A YEAR OF TREATMENT FOR CANCER, MARK TOOK A FALL IN HIS APARTMENT, BREAKING HIS BACK. SADLY, THIS INCREDIBLY FIT MAN WOUND UP PARALYZED UNTIL HIS UNTIMELY DEATH.

MARK, YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY AND TO OUR ORGANIZATION WILL ALWAYS BE APPRECIATED AND WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.
REST IN PEACE, MY FRIEND.

-RICHARD W

DEBRA K

“IT COULD HAVE BEEN 4 MONTHS, BUT I GOT 6.” THIS WAS THE LOOKING AND SEEING THE GLASS HALF FULL OPTIMISM OF DEBRA K WHEN A SLIP AND FALL ON HER FRONT PORCH TOOK HER FROM AN ABLED BODIED PERSON TO A QUADRIPLÉGIC SIX MONTHS INTO HER SOBRIETY. THROUGH THE NEXT 8 PLUS YEARS OF HER SOBRIETY SHE NEVER WAVERED FROM THAT VIEW OF LIFE. TO THE EAST WILLOW DISCUSSION GROUP, WHERE SHE WAS A REGULAR, SHE WAS AN INSPIRATION.

TO THE NEWCOMER SHE WAS ALWAYS WELCOMING AND GENEROUS IN HER SHARING OF WORKING THE STEPS AND EMBRACING THE PROGRAM OF AA. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THAT PROCESS OF WORK, SELF-EXAMINATION AND SURRENDER IN WORKING THE STEPS WAS SOMETHING WE ALL SHARED AS COMMON GROUND. YET, THERE SHE WAS, WEEK AFTER WEEK, CRUISING INTO THE MEETING ROOM IN HER MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIR. SO DIFFERENT IN SIGHT THAN THE REST OF US BUT JUST ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC LIKE THE REST OF US.

-BARBARA S., HERSHAL S. MIKE D. & GERRY W. – YOUR ANAMIKA ‘HOMIES’

DEBORAH WAS A SOURCE OF AMAZEMENT TO ME. WHEN I VISITED HER AND SAW HER SITUATION, IT WAS ALMOST INCREDIBLE THAT SHE SHOULD STILL CHOOSE TO STAY SOBER. SHE WAS AN EXAMPLE TO ME. I CLEARLY REMEMBER THAT WHEN I TOLD MY ‘HOMIES’ THAT MY WIFE DIANE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH PANCREATIC CANCER, SHE IMMEDIATELY PHONED ME AND SAID, ‘NOW YOU KNOW WHY YOU BECAME SOBER.’ SHE WAS NOT SCHMALTZY. SHE WAS A STRAIGHT SHOOTER. I WAS STILL IN SHOCK BUT REALIZED THAT I HAD A LOVING DUTY AHEAD OF ME. AND WHEN DIANNE PASSED AWAY, SHE SPENT ALMOST AN HOUR STRENGTHENING ME. THANK YOU, DEB. YOU ARE ALIVE IN ME.

-NORBERTO W.

'SCOTTY', AKA HUGH MCINTRYE

'SCOTTY', AKA HUGH MCINTRYE PASSED AWAY FROM THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON MAY 27TH

WHEN I WAS NEW IT SEEMED, HE WAS AT EVERY MEETING I ATTENDED, GREETING YOU WITH A WARM WELCOMING SCOTTISH BROGUE AND ALWAYS A HAND OUT. HE WAS THE 'SEAT TSAR' AT THE SEAL BEACH SPEAKER MEETING, MANAGING AGAINST THE RULES OF COURSE, TO SAVE THE ENTIRE BACK ROW EVERY MONDAY. THERE WAS ALWAYS A SEAT FOR A PRETTY GIRL OR A NEWCOMER.

HE WAS HIT BY A CAR SEVERAL YEARS AGO AND HAS SINCE BEEN IN A BOARD AND CARE FACILITY, MANAGED BY HOOK OR CROOK AND THE LOVING HELP OF FELLOW ALCOHOLICS TO MAKE IT TO THE MONDAY NIGHT SEAL BEACH SPEAKER MEETING. HE WILL BE MISSED.

-BOB S.

MIKE R

MIKE R'S EMPATHY, COMPASSION AND OPENNESS WERE SOME OF THE MOST VISIBLE TRAITS IN HIS DEALINGS WITH OTHERS AND LIFE IN GENERAL. THROUGH AA, THESE QUALITIES WERE MAGNIFIED TENFOLD. MIKE WAS THE CONSUMMATE MASTER IN "PULLING ONE'S COVER," AND HE ACHIEVED THIS IN A MOST UNDERSTANDING AND LOVING WAY. MIKE WAS INDEED WELCOMED INTO A "NEW" LIFE AND AA MADE CERTAIN THAT HE WOULD PRACTICE "THESE" PRINCIPLES IN ALL HIS AFFAIRS. MIKE'S HUMOR AND WIT (ALBEIT, SOMEWHAT DRY AT TIMES) ARE MERELY JUST A FEW OF THE MEMORABLE CHARACTERISTICS THAT TOUCHED MANY AND WILL REMAIN A SOURCE OF COMFORT FOR THOSE OF US WHO SHARED PART OF HIS LIFE.

-ANDY Y

JOHN W

THE SHARING IN THE 6:30 A.M. ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT MEETING IN THE GRANGE HALL IN QUARTZ HILL, CALIFORNIA THAT MORNING WAS POPCORN-FAST. WITH ONLY FIVE MINUTES LEFT TO SHARE, I WAS AFRAID I WOULDN'T GET TO REVEAL MY ULTERIOR MOTIVE FOR ATTENDING. AFTER HALF OF THE 35 BUSHY-TAILED ALCOHOLICS HAD SHARED (FAR TOO EXUBERANTLY FOR SUCH AN UNGODLY HOUR) WITH MINUTES TO SPARE,

I REVEALED MY PURPOSE. I WAS VISITING FROM WRIGHTWOOD ABOUT AN HOUR AWAY, PLANNING TO SPEND THE DAY AT THE NEARBY HOSPITAL IN LANCASTER WITH MY SPONSOR WHO HAD SUFFERED A STROKE 12 DAYS EARLIER. IF ENOUGH PEOPLE SHOWED UP, THERE WOULD BE AN AA MEETING IN JOHN'S ICU ROOM AT 3:00 THAT AFTERNOON. SEVERAL ENTHUSIASTIC ALCOHOLICS ACCOSTED ME AFTER THE MEETING, ASKING ABOUT DETAILS.

I SHARED WITH THE SIX FOLKS WHO SHOWED UP AT 2:45 P.M. THAT JOHN WAS UNCONSCIOUS, IN A COMA, BUT WITH NORMAL BRAINWAVE ACTIVITY, AND COULD LIKELY HEAR WHAT WE SHARED. RANGING IN SOBRIETY FROM NANCY WITH EIGHT MONTHS TO ANDY WITH MORE THAN 30 YEARS (RAYMOND AND I BOTH GRADUATED FROM THE SCHOOL OF HARD ALCOHOL KNOCKS IN 2005), THIS WAS NO GLUM LOT! KNOWING JOHN'S SENSE OF HUMOR, YOU COULD HAVE ACCURATELY CALLED US THE "CRAZY EIGHT." THE SPIRIT IN THE ROOM WAS JOVIAL, IRREVERENT, AND CONTAGIOUS. THEY MERCILESSLY RIBBED ONE ANOTHER, REFERENCING INSIDER INFORMATION THAT ONLY REGULAR ATTENDANCE AT THE GRANGE HALL COULD HAVE REVEALED. CROSSTALK RICOCHETED OFF THE TUBES, DRIP-BAGS, AND MONITORS, AND WAS MAINLY AIMED AT JOHN, THANKFUL FOR HIS YEARS OF SERVICE AND PRAYERFUL FOR HIS FULL RECOVERY.

HAVING SHARED FIRST, I TOLD THEM THAT JOHN HAD BEEN ACTIVE IN GENERAL SERVICE FOR 33 OF HIS 35 YEARS SOBER AND HAD SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCED MY SERVICE-CENTRIC SOBRIETY, SO SERVICE BECAME THE TOPIC OF OUR HOUR-LONG MEETING. I'D HEARD LARRY AND FRED SHARE AT THE GRANGE DURING PREVIOUS VISITS, BUT THIS WAS FAR MORE PERSONAL AND INTIMATE, WITH THEM EXTENDING LOVE AND CARE TO A FELLOW ALCOHOLIC WHOM NONE OF THEM HAD EVER MET. I LATER TOLD PAM (JOHN'S WIFE) THAT NANCY AND HELEN STANDING ON EITHER SIDE OF THE HOSPITAL BED STROKED HIS HANDS DURING THE MEETING WHILE ANDY MASSAGED HIS FEET, AND – NOT TO WORRY – JOHN WAS A GENTLEMAN THROUGH IT ALL...

I FINISHED THE SHARING BY READING A GRAPEVINE STORY TO THEM ABOUT THEIR REVERED MEETING HALL, WHICH WAS PUBLISHED UNDER THE NAME, "CHECKED BY THE CHIP CHICK," IN JUNE OF 2011. WE PRAYED OUT WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER, ENFOLDING JOHN INTO THE CIRCLE BY HOLDING HIS WARM HANDS. ONCE THE MEETING WAS OVER, WE SPONTANEOUSLY AND SIMULTANEOUSLY TOOK HOLD OF HIM, AND FOR SEVERAL MINUTES THERE WAS A HUBBUB OF SOFTLY SPOKEN PRAYERS. THUS FAR IN MY 15 SHORT YEARS OF SOBRIETY, I HAVEN'T WITNESSED A MORE TOUCHING EXAMPLE OF AA SERVICE.

JOHN PASSED AWAY THREE YEARS AFTER I WROTE THIS STORY, IN JULY 2020 WITH 38 YEARS OF SOBRIETY.

-ED L. – MSCA 09 PANEL 70 DELEGATE

