

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

SEPTEMBER 2013

Half a Century of Sobriety, One Day at a Time

Bud C. of Pemberton is a member of what one of his home groups calls the Silver Dollar Club. For every year he's been sober, there is a hole punched in the coin he carries with him. There are 50 holes in Bud's silver dollar.

I recently spent time with Bud to try and learn his secret to staying sober for 50 years. I discovered (of course) that there is no "secret"— he does the work we're all advised to do. He attends 3 to 4 meetings a week and is still active in service, and he's also got a sponsor—in fact, he's got the same sponsor now as he had back in 1964.

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Bud C. continued on page 5

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Making Amends

Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Quite often, the brevity of Step Nine in the Twelve and Twelve fools me into thinking it's a 'short' step. On careful reading though, it proves quite involved.

First of all, it assumes that I have made and completed my Eighth Step list. This I have done (hopefully) in close and frequent consultation with my sponsor. I have carefully reviewed the list with my sponsor and we both have agreed that the list is sufficient and complete.

Next I discuss with my sponsor just how and when I plan to proceed with the Ninth Step in each case. The Step tells me that I am to "reflect carefully" in each instance and that I try and "possess myself" of the right attitude before I proceed.

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The Step then tells me (again, in conjunction with my sponsor) that I am to divide the people (or groups, or businesses) on my Step Nine list into three separate and distinct categories: those I approach as soon as I am "reasonable confident" I can maintain my sobriety; those to whom only partial disclosure can be made, lest I harm others in the process; and those to whom I can never make amends.

Prominent on my Eighth Step list was a former fiancé. I had broken our engagement just months before a planned wedding and had been hiding my true feelings from her for at least a year prior. I spoke to my sponsor about the matter and we decided that she probably did not want to hear from me again and to look her up and disturb her life was not warranted. She deserved to be left in peace from me. She therefore fell into the third group listed above:

Step Nine continued on page 4

The Fellowship Needs You

The levels of service in Alcoholics Anonymous are as varied as alcoholics. You can make coffee, chair a meeting, sponsor newcomers or work on Intergroup computers. For this writer, finding the newsletter commitment helped strengthen and fortify my connection to the South Jersey AA community. I was able to bring my talents and love of writing, editing and graphic design to South Jersey Intergroup, and be of service in this way. Intergroup coordinates carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the still suffering alcoholic. Though, as our Tradition Nine states, we are not to be organized, we do create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

At the end of the year, the commitments for Intergroup committees change hands. This is a vital part of our service and commitment--to give others the opportunity to serve and to allow our Intergroup to grow with the experience, strength and hope of new alcoholics. Intergroup is looking for people to do service in this way--serving a two year term that best suits your talents while deepening and strengthening your sobriety and understanding of the Traditions. Please consider taking a commitment to serve your local Intergroup.

--Angie Y., Newsletter co-chair

CHAIRPERSON: (Five Years Continuous Sobriety)

The Criteria for these positions is, being a member of an AA-member group with a history of AA service. The Chair is responsible for running the monthly meeting of Intergroup reps, coordinating the efforts of the various service committees and the ongoing functioning of the Intergroup. The Chair maintains connections with Area 45 and coordinates with the Office Manager on Intergroup Office functioning.

VICE CHAIRPERSON: (Five Years Continuous Sobriety) Like any other organization, the Vice Chair steps in for the Chair in his/her absence. He/She also runs the Steering Committee meetings.

SECRETARY: Intergroup elects two Secretaries. The Recording Secretary, sometimes called the Steering Committee Secretary, takes the minutes of the Steering Committee meetings. He/She prepares these minutes for distribution at the monthly IG meeting. The Reporting Secretary takes the minutes of the monthly IG meeting and combines notes from the two meetings (along with other information) and distributes them every month. Each Secretary can cover the position of the other. Very often the secretaries coordinate with the Office Manager as to the actual mailing of the minutes. The Secretaries should have three years sobriety, be a member of a SJ AA Group and have a history of AA service. While not stated, both secretaries should be able to use word processing /typing equipment.

TREASURER: The Treasurer must have three years sobriety, belong to a SJIG-member group and have a demonstrated history of service. While not stated, the Treasurer should also be familiar with balancing a checkbook and paying bills by mail and online.

The Treasurer is the controller of all funds coming and going into SJIG. He/she pays all bills, receives and accounts for all Group contributions (including LIPS monies) and disburses budget monies to the various committees. The Treasurer also prepares SJIG tax returns and handles the payroll of the Office Manager.

Although an Assistant Treasurer is usually appointed, at this time, it is not an elected position.

TRUSTEES: Five Trustees are elected with staggered terms. A Trustee must have ten years sobriety, belong to a home group in SJIG and have a history of AA service. Trustees form a board who advise the regular Intergroup panel on matters related to Traditions and AA operations.

SERVICE COMMITTEES—All require two years of sobriety

ANSWERING SERVICE: The chair is responsible for keeping the AA phones manned on a 24/7 basis and keeping the 50 volunteers informed, equipped and trained. This committee also maintains the Twelfth Step List. Phones are where many of us made our first contact with AA. Someone was there then! Will you be there now?

ARCHIVES: Collects, files, preserves and presents the History of SJ Intergroup. If we forget our past, we may lose our gratitude to those who helped give us what we have today.

BOOKERS: Holds a quarterly Meeting where member groups can gain speakers for their meeting and provide speakers to other meeting across South Jersey. Bookers Exchange provides your group with a new slant on recovery and allows your group to carry the message far afield.

BUDGET & FINANCE: Provides oversight for finances, prepares upcoming year's budget, and advises Intergroup panel.

HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS: Holds a monthly meeting where group reps may obtain speaking commitments at various correctional facilities and other institutions. Also communicates with such institutions and provides AA literature to them. H&I volunteers understand gratitude.

LITERATURE: Orders, stocks and sells AA literature at the Intergroup Office and at the monthly meeting. The chair also coordinates/ trains volunteers to sell literature at both the office and at meetings.

MEETING LIST: The South Jersey Meeting List is in a constant state of change. This committee collects, verifies and implements all changes. The committee also arranges for the printing of the completed new list.

NEWSLETTER: This committee prepares the monthly newsletter by writing articles, soliciting articles from local AA's, and gathering information on local AA events. The chair arranges printing with the SJIG office manager, and distributes the finished newsletter to the groups. Some computer skills required; outgoing committee members will be glad to train you!

PUBLIC INFORMATION: The PI chair arranges for presentations to organizations (such as schools or community events) that want information about AA's program of recovery. This committee trains volunteers and can also stock literature in public areas, such as libraries and county offices. PI members should be comfortable in their sobriety and in talking before groups.

SOCIAL EVENTS: This committee meets monthly to plan and develop different types of social events for the fellowship. A spirit of fun and a desire to share that with others is a part of Social Events!

UNITY: Keeping the groups aware of the opportunities and importance of AA service in recovery is the goal of Unity. The committee also provides group speakers on the Traditions and arranges the Intergroup Alcahons.

WEBSITE: Our local website; www.aasj.org is maintained and constantly improved by this committee. An understanding of things virtual is especially helpful here.

Some of these committees require more of your time than others. Also, committee chairs must prepare a monthly report and are encouraged to attend Steering Committee meetings, held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm at the SJIG office. – Patty H.

Which prayer do you rely on most and why?

"I was struggling with some behaviors with my co-workers, so my sponsor suggested that I go home and put my head to the pillow and repeat the Serenity Prayer until I was exhausted. It really worked and still does." – Rob S., As Bill Sees It Group

"The Third Step Prayer daily, as well as the Eleventh (which is beautiful)...but I think the Serenity Prayer because it reminds me that it's difficult for me to change others, but I can change me." – Marge K., SJIG

"It would have to be the Third Step prayer. On any given day I can get so close to "the God of my understanding", and that may be all I'll get. Besides, it took so darn long to sink in!" – Joe C., SJIG Literature Chair and LMST Group, Audubon

"Has to be the Serenity Prayer...because it's short!! And it handles most of my moments in the course of the day. Of course for more overwhelming problems I try and work with more specific prayers that are laid out in our literature or other." -- Meghan H., How It Works Group Oaklyn

"I do rely on the prayers suggested in our Literature, and I do like the Lord's Prayer the best. But I have my own and they consist of talking with the God of my understanding, thanking Him for where I am today and asking to be of maximum trouble..OMG...I mean service." -- Penny E.

"My favorite prayer is "God's will not mine be done; fill my thoughts with being of service to others instead of how I may fulfill my selfish desires; help me be of service so I may stop thinking about me me me!" – Marissa C.

--Compiled by Joe C., LMST group

GOD grant me the
SERENITY
to accept the things
I cannot change, the
COURAGE
to change the things I can,
and the WISDOM
to know the difference.

To Those We Serve

Tradition Nine—A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

A fellow AA and I were at a state prison to carry the message to the inmates. Our meeting hadn't started yet, and the women were just arriving. We were short Big Books; I had brought only a few, and the prison had relocated their own small supply someplace inaccessible. A few of the women had their own. To my question, "Do you have a Big Book?" one of the women said, "No, I ordered one but it didn't come yet." Knowing the prison did not take orders for Big Books, I was surprised by her answer and asked from whom she ordered the book. Her response was from one of the AAs who bring in meetings. I bristled a little: placing book orders with an AA? No such thing. We're not organized at that level. As Tradition Nine notes, AA as a whole ought never be organized.

*To help get Big Books into a prison,
she discovered a creative use of the Ninth Tradition*

I attempted to explain to her that AA prison volunteers have no mechanism to accept individual book orders. But my explanation didn't make sense even to me, so I stopped. In my own ears, I sounded condescending and preachy. ("Never talk down to an alcoholic from any moral or spiritual hilltop ...") And anyway, the AA member who the attendee was referring to would undoubtedly bring the book next time (that volunteer's dedication to our AA prisoners is second to none).

The meeting began in our usual way—reading "How It Works" and the Traditions. As I listened to the readings, I heard Tradition Nine in a new light. "A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." It dawned on me that I was directly responsible to these inmates: they're the ones I'm serving. Not my group, not the district, not the area. If serving them means taking Big Book "orders," then I can do that. It was the difference between the spirit of vested authority and the spirit of service—the two attitudes seemed miles apart.

I'm grateful for that woman's "Big Book order" and the opportunity to understand a little deeper Bill's purpose in Tradition Nine: The inmates and I can have a true fellowship.

—Karen F., Los Alamos, N.M.
from the September 2013 issue of the Grapevine on-line

those to whom I can never make amends. In this case, to have done so would have needlessly disturbed her, possibly open old wounds she had already healed from and forgotten, and do little except buy my own peace of mind at her expense.

As with all the steps, Step Nine represents an ongoing process and I must be vigilant about avoiding hurting the people in my life now. Part of my prayers each morning, on my way to work, is asking help to not hurt anyone at work and I pray on the way home to not hurt anyone at home.

I reviewed with my sponsor the amends I would make. These included, importantly, my wife, my family, my parents and my siblings. These also included my employers--both present and, in some cases, former employers. My close friends were also part of this group, as were people I had borrowed money from and only partially, or not at all, paid back. With all these, amends also meant that I had to pledge that, henceforth, I would make real and genuine attempts to change (indeed "change" is part of the meaning of "amend") and to put all of my relationships on a more honest footing.

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--Masonville Marty

Bud does have a really strong support system in his wife, Kathy, who has been a member of Al-Anon for 51 years. "Her dedication to her program has been very instrumental in my recovery, as well as all she has done to help others." More on that in a bit.

Bud says he first became acquainted with alcohol in 1948. He was in the Air Force, stationed in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and drank himself into a blackout with a group of friends. He says blackout drinking became his pattern. At first he was able to control his drinking, but like so many of us, eventually his addiction led to reprimands and demotions. Not that that stopped him from drinking!

Bud met Kathy when he was transferred to Memphis and they were married in 1952. His bride thought she could get him to stop drinking, but as Bud says "It was soon apparent that this was not going to happen." For a long time Kathy thought she was the cause of his drinking.

He was first exposed to AA in 1957 at the urging of his family and his commanding officer. Three men from the program visited him and he started attending meetings, but says he wasn't convinced that he wanted to be sober and continued drinking for another 6 plus years.

Bud is quick to say that putting down the drink is just a first step, and it doesn't take away a person's character defects. It's work, and continues to be work. He says the program continues to offer the support it always has, but he has seen more and more people coming in with dual addictions.

In September of 1963, Bud had been AWOL for a week and was sitting in a bar in Germany. He says it was there that he received a message from his Higher Power, and the message was "this was it." He put down the drink and contacted his sponsor and was taken into custody. He told me the desire to drink was taken away immediately, and he didn't recognize it at the time as a Divine Intervention.

Bud was court marshaled and sentenced to a year of hard labor at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He was being held at Fort Dix before being sent to Kansas and it was there that he met the man who has been his sponsor since May of 1964. Through that man's help and the help of others, he was able to convince the authorities that he was sincere about his recovery and his sentence was set aside. He served without incident until his retirement in 1969.

Kathy had called AA to get information for Bud and she was asked by the woman who answered the phone if she had ever considered going to an Al-Anon meeting. Kathy wasn't interested but the woman didn't give up. It took two more calls, but Kathy made it to a meeting and has been involved in that program for 51 years. Bud says the support of his family is a big factor in his sobriety, especially his wife. "She knew what I was supposed to be doing."

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"When I came in there was no mention of drugs," he says. He says he learned to accept that and that "you can't share your recovery without mentioning that sometimes." He says the program continues to work and most people with dual addictions remember to stress their drinking problem at meetings. Recovery is recovery.

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So does he ever feel like drinking? Bud says there was a time when he was driving near Philadelphia. He saw a billboard with a bottle of beer on it. He looked at the sweat running down the bottle and thought about taking a drink. When he got to work, he read his horoscope and the last line said, "Go to a meeting tonight." He got the message.

--Patty H. Newsletter chair

Kathy C. shared a great deal with me about the program of Al-Anon and in a future edition of the newsletter we'll feature her story. There are a lot of misconceptions about it, she says, especially the idea that people sit around at Al-Anon meetings and bash the alcoholic in their lives. "We don't do that," she says.

Editorial Policy

Anonymous South Jersey is a monthly newsletter published by and for members of South Jersey Intergroup (although we welcome readers from other areas!). Opinions expressed herein are NOT to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by either AA or South Jersey Intergroup. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are printed with permission from AA World Services, Inc., and/or The AA Grapevine, Inc.

Contributions from readers are encouraged—you can write about your experience, strength and hope in general, or you can focus on one of the steps or traditions. You can also write about something that touched you at a meeting, something that bothered you at a meeting, or some service commitment you especially enjoy. Submissions are edited for space and clarity. Contact information is required and anonymity is respected.

Due to space limitations, we are unable to publish flyers for events in this newsletter. However, we are happy to include your gathering in the general list of fellowship announcements.

Please send your submissions to newsletter@asj.org.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR SJ INTERGROUP:

South Jersey Intergroup Association, Inc.

PO Box 2514

Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

Office/Literature Sales: 1-856-486-4446

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Website: www.asj.org

24 Hour Hotline: 1-856-486-4444

Toll Free Hotline: 1-866-920-1212

SJIG holds its monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the month at 8pm at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 989 Route 70 East, Cherry Hill, NJ

Happy Anniversary, Morning Glory!

The "Morning Glory" home group was founded in September 1991, due to a need for local morning meetings. "Morning Glory" holds eight meetings per week: 8:00am Monday-Friday; a men's meeting at 7:30am on Saturdays; a 9:30am meeting on Saturdays; and a 7:30am meeting on Sundays. This group first met at the Haddonfield United Methodist Church, but their current location is at the Ashland Presbyterian Church, 33 Evesham Road, Cherry Hill, NJ.

Here are some AA "fun facts" for this month from the Archives page on our Intergroup website: www.aasj.org:

September 1946: 1st AA group is founded in Mexico

September 1940: The "Big Book" receives an unfavorable review from the Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases

September 13, 1941: WHJP in Jacksonville, Florida airs "Spotlight on AA"

--Jenn C.. Archives Chair

Announcements

The chair and co-chair of the newsletter committee (and many others) will be rotating out at the end of the year. Now is your chance to get involved in service at the Intergroup level. If you think you might be interested in taking over the newsletter, we're happy to help you make a smooth transition. Please contact Patty or Angie at newsletter@asj.org for more information. (Also, see pages 2-3!!)

Question of the Month

For next month's issue, we'd like to get your response to this question:

What does humility mean to you?

Please email your replies no later than Friday, October 11, to newsletter@asj.org.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

October, Step and Tradition 10

Friday, October 11

November, Step and Tradition 11

Friday, November 15

December, Step and Tradition 12

Friday, December 13

For each month, we'd love to get your submissions on the step or tradition that corresponds. We are always looking for AA's to share their Experience, Strength and Hope (ESH) in print.

Fellowship Announcements and Things to Do

September 2013

Saturday, Sept. 21 - District 3 showing of "Bill W" documentary, a Unity event. 7:30 PM. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 158 Warren Street, Beverly, NJ. \$3.00 suggested donation, but no one will be turned away.

Sunday, Sept. 22 – 9th Annual Unity Breakfast presented by Cape Atlantic Intergroup. The Grand Hotel of Cape May, 1045 Beach Ave., Cape May. \$25.00 p/p. FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS CONTACT: Cris K 609.437.6188 or Kim R 609.402.2388. Register and pay by credit card online at www.caigrp.org OR send check or money order payable to Cape Atlantic Intergroup and send to: Cape Atlantic Intergroup, P.O Box 1205 Ocean City, NJ 08226. Guest speaker: Gail L. from Akron, OH

Monday, Sept. 23 - Sicklerville Night of Recollection. St. Charles Borromeo Chapel, 176 Stagecoach Rd. 6:00PM Eucharist Service. 6:30PM EAT. \$12/pp 7:15-800PM Speaker Meeting. Reserve dinner. Pat R: raggio917@verizon.net, 856.629.0821.

Friday, Sept. 27 – Columbus Group (How It Works Speaker Group) Anniversary. Columbus Baptist Church, 24260 West Main St. Food and refreshments begin at 6:00PM, meeting at 8:30 PM. Covered dishes are welcome.

Saturday, Sept. 28 – The White Deer Group is celebrating its 4th anniversary. Breakfast at 8:30 am, followed by two speakers at 9 am. Help Bud C. celebrate 50 years of sobriety! St. Anne Parish Center, 22 Trenton Rd., Browns Mills, NJ.

Saturday, Sept. 28 – 1st Annual 5K Run/Walk presented by Recovery Advocates of America. Mercer County Park, rain or shine. Registration/Opening Ceremony at 1:00 PM, Walk starts at 2:00 PM. Visit: www.recovery-advocates.org for more info.

Saturday, Sept. 28 – New Beginnings Big Book 2nd Anniversary. 9:30 am speaker: Crystal. 10:30 am: Continental breakfast.

Sunday, Sept. 29 – Riverton Triboro Group Anniversary. Sacred Heart Church Hall basement, 4th & Linden Sts., Riverton, NJ. 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Saturday, Oct. 5 - Swedesboro Weekend Special 11th Anniversary, 9:00am eat. 9:30am speaker. Bethesda United Methodist Church, 1433 King's Hwy. For information call Jennifer: 609.202.2514/Gail: 856.906.7756

Saturday, Oct. 19 - Bordentown Day of Sharing. 8:30 am to Noon at the Carslake Community Center, 209 Crosswicks Rd. Bordentown, NJ. The three regional Intergroups & Area 45 will discuss common problems, issues, and solutions. Please come out and share your experience, strength, and hope as it relates to AA service. Continental breakfast provided.

Saturday, Oct. 12 – "Acts of Recovery" presentation at Haddonfield Methodist Church, 29 Warwick Rd., Haddonfield, NJ (corner of Warwick & King's Hwy) 12:00 – 5:00 PM

Each Weekend in October – Book-Toberfest. Stepping Stones, 4945 Friendship St., Philadelphia, PA 19135. Questions ? Call: Rick D. 267-210-6486

Saturday, Oct. 26 - District 3 "Stump the Drunk" Service Event. 9:30 AM. St Stephen's Episcopal Church, 158 Warren Street, Beverly, NJ.

Saturday, Oct. 26 – Sober Halloween Dance. 7:00 PM – 12:00 AM. St., St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 121 High St., Mt. Holly, NJ. Big Al will DJ.



Fellowship Announcements, continued from page 7

\$5.00 for food, fun, and fellowship. Water and soda \$1.00 each. Get a costume and come dance the night away!! If you're celebrating a birthday or anniversary let us know!

Sunday, Oct. 27 – Mount Holly's "Live and Let Live" Group is celebrating its 30th anniversary at Memorial Hospital of Burlington County, 175 Madison Ave. Desserts at 6:30 pm, followed by a speaker at 7:30 pm. All are invited, and the SJIG Literature Road Show will have books and more available for sale!

Monday, Oct. 28 – The Last Mile Step and Tradition Group in Audubon will celebrate its 21st anniversary. Desserts at 7 pm, followed by speakers at 7:30. The SJIG Road Show will have books and other literature available for sale. Located at Audubon United Methodist Church, on the corner of Graisbury and Wyoming Avenues.

Saturday, Nov. 2 – 3rd Annual Freedom Fire. Old Cedar Campground, 274 Richwood Rd., Monroeville, NJ. (GPS: 39.64019 x 75.17577) Food & Fellowship 5:00 – 6:30 PM, 2 Speakers & Bonfire – 6:30 – 9:00 PM. Bring chair or blanket. Call: Rich – 856.904.3534. Donation: \$5.00.

Nov. 8-10- 7th CAIG - WAVES ROUNDUP, \$35 p/p 3153 Fire Rd #1-C, Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234
www.WavesRoundup.com

Nov. 8-10 - Eatontown, NJ 3rd Jersey Shore Round Up. Sheraton Hotel R. 35, Eatontown, NJ 07724 / 732.542.6500
\$129/ night Registration: \$90 (2 meals & ice cream) by 10/8: Jersey Shore Round Up, 3 Ashford Ct., Spring Lake Hgt, NJ 07762. Jimmy A. jimarg328@verizon.net 732.245.1362.

Saturday, November 16 – Gratitude Dinner/Dance sponsored by South Jersey Intergroup. Nicolosi Catering, 1 Hessian Ave., West Deptford, NJ. \$20.00 p/p. Advanced ticket sales a must. Arrive early for fellowship and dinner, then dance while enjoying coffee & desserts. 7:00 PM - ? Call: Brian C – 609.932.0477 or Mike L – 609.504.3652.

Next year: Area 45 will host its 50th Annual General Service Convention March 21 – 23rd, 2014, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cherry Hill, NJ. More information at www.snjaaconvention.org. Convention chair Frank Z: 609-780-3365. Registration chair Sharon T: 856-261-4266.



Groups needing support:

Mondays from 7 to 8pm. Closed AA meeting using Bill W.'s "Language of the Heart". Trinity United Methodist Church, 284 Cedar Road Mullica Hill, NJ 08062. For more information call Kirsten O. at 856-223-1038

Tuesdays from 7:30 to 8:30. Open speaker meeting at Fort Dix Range Control HQ, Building 9013, on Range Road, Ft. Dix.