

Anonymous SJ

February 2010

One Step and One Day At A Time

Every journey starts with the first step. The first step in this part of my journey, as the Editor of your newsletter, has me taking baby steps and I have almost faltered. The beauty of this program and how it works was once again shown to me. I reached out for help, and received it willingly, with a smile, and without hesitation. True twelfth step work in action, practicing these principles we have learned in all our affairs.

Thank you to all who have come forward to help me out, especially your past editor, Joe.

Thanks to Jim for his story this month. Way to go! Keep us posted on your progress.

I wanted to extend a special thank you to all those budding writers out there who have a story to tell, and let them know they will be heard!

Gratitude is always in season, even if it is buried under mounds of snow! I would be grateful for all your stories so send them along. Jot down an e mail, send it snail mail, leave a voice message—just send it. This is **your** newsletter, and it would be awesome for it to be a beacon as bright as all you out there are.

newsletter@asj.org

Judy P

Steering Committee

The committee met January 13, 2010. New officers, trustees and committee chairs were all introduced and welcomed. The February meeting was cancelled due to snow, and will be combined with the Intergroup meeting on 2/17/2010. An extended report will be available in the next newsletter.

There are many ways to do service in the Fellowship, from making coffee to answering phones to Volunteering. Active participation in social events is also a good way to get involved. Having fun in a sober atmosphere is a great way to enjoy fellowship.

The social committee is hard at work, and needs you to help make their events a success. We need to spread the word and get active. Our annual events need participation from us to keep the spirit of the Fellowship alive for newcomers as well as ourselves.

H & I Steering Committee Report February 10, 2010

The H&I meeting list has been overhauled so that commitments are listed by day of the week from Sunday through Saturday. The new model is presented so that the city location, name of the institution, directions, contact person and phone number for the institution in case of coverage issues, host name and phone number where appropriate, individual info obtained at the H&I monthly meeting, and date and time of meeting.

Contacts at institutions have been updated since they haven't been with the institution for quite sometime. Identified institutions that have no contact person and secured a contact and phone number if any problems in fulfilling our commitments or other issues arise.

Contacts have been asked to have a staff member present at certain meetings that have been unsupervised in the past. Clients at these unsupervised meetings can be disruptive. As in any AA meeting, proper behavior should be followed for the sake of the one person that really wants to hear the message of recovery. Also, there are instances when staff may dump all of the clients on the floor into the meeting, when some of these clients are strictly mental health patients. These contacts have been advised that the H&I meetings are for clients who may have a problem with alcohol and it is not a group therapy session. They have agreed.

Some institutions have changed their names and locations so updated information for the meeting has been addressed and verified. There are still many commitments that need a host for the group, while others have been updated to the current hosts. This helps with no double bookings or lack of coverage. Some jail or potential commitments are being looked into since it has been difficult to secure info from such places. These changes and updates are made to encourage more group and individual support, as well as participation and to reinforce that the message needs to be carried to the suffering alcoholics who can't attend outside meetings. The basic premise is to send a message of hope so that when an alcoholic leaves their particular environment they will seek out AA meetings and hopefully feel comfortable in doing so.

The month of February is booked. The remaining openings for March Tuesday Maryville Men's 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. March 23, 2010

Please keep in mind that Ancora will not have meetings on legal holidays.

Meetings, Open or Closed?

A review of our current Meeting Schedule shows that there are about 342 meetings in South Jersey. That's a staggering number when you consider that in some parts of the world, there may only be one meeting a week or possibly no meetings at all. Certainly something to be grateful about. Of those 342 meetings only 54 are Closed meetings. Why so few meetings for Alcoholics, when the opposite used to be the case? Do we understand the real point of an Open meeting? The pamphlet entitled "**The A.A. Group**" discusses Open and Closed meetings and the point of each. Very often we hear groups described as "Open Discussion" as in Open to Discuss anything, but that's not what Open Meetings nor Discussion meetings are about. Closed has a sort of negative sound to it, but most A.A. meetings are really set up as Closed meetings and there is nothing negative about that.

The Lois Wilson Story

"WHEN LOVE IS NOT ENOUGH"

TO AIR ON CBS NETWORK SUNDAY, APRIL 25 AT 9 PM EST

Screenwriter and Author Bill Borchert on the set of "Love Is Not Enough" with film star Winona Ryder who plays Lois Wilson. 1-25-10

Shooting of the Entertainment One/Hallmark Hall of Fame movie, "When Love Is Not Enough," was completed in Toronto, Canada just before Christmas and is now in post-production. It is scheduled to be aired as a Hallmark Hall of Fame Presentation on the CBS Network on Sunday, April 25 at 9 P.M. EST.

The movie stars the magnificent young actress, Wynona Ryder, as "Lois Wilson," the co-founder of Al-Anon, and the wonderful young actor, Barry Pepper, as her husband, "Bill Wilson," the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. The distinguished director is John Kent Harrison and the Executive Producers are Brent Shields and Peter Duchow. The screenplay was written by William G. Borchert and Camille Thomasson.

Writer Bill Borchert on movie set with Barry Pepper who plays Bill Wilson in Hallmark's "When Love Is Not Enough." More than three years in the making, the movie is based on the book, "The Lois Wilson Story: When Love Is Not Enough," written by veteran author William G. Borchert who was a close personal friend of Lois Wilson for more than 15 years before her passing in 1988. Mr. Borchert was nominated for an Emmy for writing the highly acclaimed Hallmark film, "My Name Is Bill W." which starred James Woods and James Garner and was based on the lives of Bill Wilson and Dr. Robert Smith and the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Mr. Borchert long felt the story of Al-Anon must also be told and the heroic role Lois played in its founding. So four years ago he wrote her life story. Hallmark Hall of Fame then purchased the film rights to his book and now the movie has become a reality.

Wynona Ryder, who expressed great eagerness to play the role of Lois, has been nominated for two Academy Awards and has starred in many box office hits. These include "Star Trek," "The Informers," "Edward Scissorhands," "The Age of Innocence," "Little Women," "The Crucible," "Being John Malkovich," "The Last Word," "Bettle Juice," and many others.

Barry Pepper is a deeply sensitive actor as he clearly showed in his major roles in "Saving Private Ryan" and "The Green Mile." A six-time nominee and winner of The Golden Globe Award, Barry has starred in many other feature films such as "We Were Soldiers" and "Flags of Our Fathers." He has also starred in major television movies such as "61" where he played New York Yankees home run slugger Roger Maris and in "Lonesome Dove: The Outlaw Years."

The man guiding these marvelous actors through the difficult task of portraying a loving couple battling the scourge of alcoholism is an outstanding director with many awards and credits to his name. John Kent Harrison understands this story from many points of view and considers it a personal privilege to be undertaking this challenge.

Bill met with actor Barry Pepper following one of the dramatic scenes in the movie involving Bill Wilson's alcoholic drinking. Last year John directed the moving and gripping Hallmark Hall of Fame drama, "The courageous Heart of Irene Sandler" which won accolades from around the world. He also wrote and directed the TV movie, "Pope John Paul II" and the highly acclaimed movie, "The Sound and the Silence" about Alexander Graham Bell.

Fellowship Announcements and Things To Do

Monday, February 8 - Red Lion Group anniversary, food at 7pm - speaker followers at 8:00 PM, Cathedral in the Woods, Stokes Rd. & Mohawk Trail, Medford Lakes.

Tuesday, February 9 - The Lost & Found Group Celebrates it's 1st Anniversary. 8:00-10:00 PM. Family Worship Center, 26 Estelle Ave., Dorothy, NJ. Speaker: Carl H. of Vineland 08317.

Friday, February 12 - "Sweet on Fellowship Dance" sponsored by the Vineland Group. 9:00 PM - Midnight. Trinity Episcopal Church (Church Hall), 8th & Wood Sts., Vineland. \$10.00/kids free. Tickets and/or Info: Jeanne (856) 498-3124, Shannon (856) 305-5188, Wil (609) 841-9599

Saturday, February 13 - 400 Club will have a Valentine Day Dance starting at 9:00 PM cost: \$5 - food will be available.

Sunday, February 14 - Sunday Pius House 3rd Anniversary. 7:00 PM. St. Pius Retreat House, 1840 Peter Cheeseman Rd., Blackwood, NJ. Desserts will be served.

Sunday, February 14 - Moorestown Spiritual Growth Group 30th Anniversary. Trinity Episcopal Church, Main & Church Sts., Moorestown, NJ. 7:00 PM: Pizza & Salad, 8:00 PM: Speakers. BYOD (Bring Your Own Dessert).

Friday February 19 - Friday Night Wenonah will be celebrating its 37th Anniv. with an eating meeting on Food will start at 7:00pm, Two speakers will follow at 8:00pm. Lots of Great food; Lots of Great fellowship everyone welcome! Episcopal Church basement, North Monroe and Poplar Aves., Wenonah.

Feb. 19 - 21 - Malvern Pa. will sponsor their 33rd annual couples retreat (for couples in recovery) St. Joseph's in the Hills, Malvern Pa. cost for the entire week-end \$370 per couple. Come out and relax and meet the friendliest people in recovery. for more info call Wayne @ 856-534-0104. more info & directions : <http://www.malvernretreat.com>

Friday, February 19 - Millville Pass It On Group 19th Anniversary. Presbyterian Church, 2nd & Pine Sts. 7:00 PM. food - fun - fellowship.

Sunday, February 21 - Area 45 Winter Assembly/Committee Meeting. CODI (Career Opportunity Development Inc.), 901 Atlantic Ave., Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215. 9:00 am New GSR/DCM Workshop, 10:00 am Assembly Meeting, 12 Noon (approx.) lunch, 1:00 pm (approx.) Committee Meeting.

Monday, February 22 - Florence - Bridging the Steps will celebrate their 25 anniversary 7 PM food followed by a speaker. First Wesleyan Church - 4th & Winter Sts. Florence NJ.

Friday, February 26 - Audubon Friday Night will celebrate their 32nd anniversary starting at 8 PM. Logan Presbyterian Church - Calvin Hall - 18 W Merchant St., just off the WHP.

Fellowship and Fun

Friday, February 26 - Sunday, February 28 - Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly (**NERAASA 2010**) - Niagra Falls (Buffalo, NY). See www.NERAASA.org

Saturday, February 27 - South Philadelphia Group Anniversary. 1605 E. Moyamensing Ave.

Wed., Mar. 3, 9am. Woodbury YMCA Meeting, 9th anny - Speaker/Continental Breakfast

March 26 - 28 - Cherry Hill will have the 46th annual Southern New Jersey Area 45 General Service Convention. At The Crowne Plaza Hotel - 2349 Marlton Pike (rte. 70) in Cherry Hill. more info <http://www.snjaaconvention.org>.

June 4 - 6 - Third Annual Jersey Shore Big Book Retreat. San Alfonso Retreat House, Long Branch, NJ. For info contact: Marybeth or Jim - 732-282-1974. Reservations Required.

June 4 - 6 - Circle of Hope Roundup. Reading-Berks Intergroup, Perkins Auditorium, Penn State University - Berks Campus, Tulpehocken Rd., Reading, PA. www.circleofhoperoundup.com **NEW**

June 11 - 13 - South Jersey takes Akron - come join us in Akron, Ohio to celebrate AA's birthday - where it all started. \$ 375/ person covers round trip transportation with breakfast and lunch the first day - registration - accommodations at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Akron - gift - great convention. Send monies to SJFDTC 222 Hanover Rd. West Deptford, Nj 08086 for more info call Wayne @ 856-534-0104.

If you have any changes or any new items that you feel would benefit our fellowship, please let me know, so we can get it out to the people. Wayne: 856-534-0104 or wcp714@verizon.net

YOUR TURN—CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR FELLOWSHIP

Nowhere to Hide

This past August I surrendered. I just got in trouble at work again and I knew I couldn't stop drinking on my own. I entered treatment at my second rehab in five years and I'm grateful for what I learned about my disease, but even more so for their persistence in breaking down my aversion to AA. You see, the first rehab didn't believe that alcoholism is a disease and they taught that AA participation would lead to a life of misery. After I left there I didn't drink for a miserable three months. Through God's grace I ended up at Father Martin's Ashley which convinced me that A.A. was essential to my recovery and not all that bad after all. On February 16th, I had 6 months. This is the by far the best I've done in my 36 years of drinking and only about 3 weeks have been miserable.

My first three months were fairly easy. I loved AA meetings from the start. Not the rehab ones – we were all still insane! I had some fatigue and trouble concentrating, but nothing unbearable. I was determined to do what they told me in rehab: I attended well over 90 meetings in 90 days; I got a sponsor and home group and helped out with service when I could. AA basically took the place of alcohol until just before the Holidays.

Then my resentments, anger and anxiety began to build. During the holidays things improved a bit, but afterwards I reached the point where I just felt nothing but alcohol could relieve my depression. I felt I'd rather die than continue on feeling like this. I knew that drinking would not help though and that these alcoholic emotions and thoughts would only result in alcoholic behaviors that I would regret. I knew I had to paint the whole picture. A.A. taught me to hang on and don't act. It also taught me to share with others how I was feeling and when I did, my brothers and sisters kept me from falling back into the pit. The most consistent message I heard was start Step Four.

So many in the fellowship said this, that I knew I had to do it. So I started digging. One excavation uncovered what should be obvious to me. I like to hide. As a child I loved escaping my fears and anxieties by retreating to my closet or under the big bush, on the side of our Pennsauken home. I discovered alcohol early, but it didn't become my new hiding place until about 16 years old. Thirty-six years later, I know if I choose to hide there again, I'll soon find a permanent hiding place for my physical body. I know I have to do it, but Step Four's pretty creepy! Like wandering around in a graveyard at night wondering what might pop up. It really didn't take long before I began to understand that the mind beneath my addiction was full of fears and resentments mostly originating from low self esteem. Understanding this lifted me from my lowest point up to where I think I experienced a bit of sobriety!

I believe in AA's promises because I see them working in the Fellowship and in myself. For the past few weeks I have begun to feel better physically and emotionally than I have in years. I even feel as though I'm beginning to comprehend the meaning of serenity. Sure it takes a lot of work, but recovery and sobriety are worth so much more than relapse, pain and death. I plan to keep working it, one day at a time, because it does work if you work it! (Jim W – Red Lion)