

# ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

**SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP**

**MAY 2014**

## Thoughts on General Service

*The hand of AA was there before he went to a meeting when he first reached out for help*

While I was still jittery in my early recovery, an energetic and entertaining speaker drew my attention to a statement appearing on the back of several of the pamphlets: "I am responsible... When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible." I immediately liked the sound of it. I needed help. The people in AA were offering me help. And once I had been helped, it would then be my responsibility to offer help to others. I was very comfortable with that concept.



Once I was settled in recovery, my curiosity about how AA, the organization, worked led me to attend service workshops and district business meetings as an observer. I stumbled across a busy hive of activity nobody had told me about and that most AA members seemed unaware of. I was fascinated by this discovery. A man at one of these functions

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## At the Convention (with Your Editor)

Area 45 of AA marked 50 years of service with its General Service Convention this year in Cherry Hill. Hundreds of members gathered for fellowship, meetings, special events, entertainment and service; perhaps following the advice of Coleridge, "We receive but what we give."

There were booths galore, each with a different theme: "Data Entry", "Archives", "Merchandise", "Hospitality", "Corrections Committee", "Al-Anon-Alateen", "Cooperation With the Professional Community", "Literature", "Area 45", "Public Information."

As I wandered through the crowd, one question repeated itself to me: why do so many joyfully and enthusiastically come out for this event while at home, local AA groups have difficulty finding coffee-makers and Intergroup Representatives? It's a well-known fact that some 80% of the South Jersey groups have no Intergroup Representative!

I decided to put this question out there to random convention-goers and here's some of the responses I got:

**Bill G.**—"Lack of sponsorship. A

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Grapevine Exclusive

### Thoughts on Service

(From page 1)

asked me what I thought about general service. I replied that I found this "invisible AA" very interesting. He sternly told me that "this is not invisible AA; this is AA." I had no idea what he was getting at.

It's now been about six years since that encounter. I am still sober, active, and growing in AA. My views are changing. I might now have an idea what he was then getting at.

At my turning point, my moment of surrender, three thoughts came to me: "God, please help me;" "I cannot do this alone;" and "If I can make it into AA, I will be OK."

When I finally sought out AA after detoxing myself that last time, I found the local phone number. Clearly, a member in general service had established an account and number. When I dialed the number, it rang, so somebody in general service had paid the bill that month. An intergroup volunteer answered the phone and talked to me. She asked me where I was and then provided me with a day, time and address of a

nearby meeting, able to do so because she had a meeting directory compiled by members in general service.

I found the meeting at the designated time and place, so the directory in the intergroup volunteer's possession was accurate, and the members of the group also met their own commitment to hold their regular meeting at the regular time and place. The meeting itself had coffee brewing, literature available, and a secretary who started and ended the meeting on time. I was warmly welcomed and invited to return. My recovery from alcoholic insanity continues to this day.

I used to believe that my first encounter with AA was when I attended my first meeting. Having now spent some time in general service as a GSR (General Service Representative) and DCM (District Committee Member), my eyes have been

opened to the fact that my first AA encounter was actually with several anonymous members performing

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*"...my eyes have been opened to the fact that my first AA encounter was actually with several anonymous members performing general service work..."*

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general service work when I initially found the working local phone number for Alcoholics Anonymous. I think I now understand what the man meant when he stated that general service "is not invisible AA" but that it "is AA."

The hand of AA was there for me when I reached out for it. For that I am forever grateful. I will continue working in general service wherever I can to ensure the hand of AA is there for the next suffering alcoholic. I think that is part of the deal.

—William C., Sykesville, Md.

### For the Big Book Anniversary, A Brief Story:

A friend reached out to me for help, saying she thought she was an alcoholic. I arrived at her house and said, I've got something for you.

"What did you bring, the AA manual"? She was joking.

"Actually, yes," I said, as I pulled a Big Book out of my suitcase.

--Patty H.

## Editorial Policy

Anonymous South Jersey is a monthly newsletter published by and for members of South Jersey. 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@aasj.org.

### CONTACT INFORMATION FOR SJ INTERGROUP:

South Jersey Intergroup Association, Inc.  
PO Box 2514  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08035  
Office/Literature Sales: 1-856-486-4446  
Email: Info@aasj.org  
Website: www.aasj.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 8 pm at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 1989 Route 70 East, Cherry Hill, NJ

## Around The Rooms

*By Riss*

New meetings are always a gamble in my book. Either they continue to grow, maintain, or they quickly die out. I try my best to support as many new



meetings as I can. What I find, when attending new meetings, is that the passion that the people have, who started the group, is a driving force. Their recovery—in the rooms and out—attract people to try this new way of life. This week I wanted to highlight a new meeting that a group of young men I know have recently started on Friday nights at 9 pm (500 North Cooper Road, Voorhees, NJ). I encourage anyone and everyone to attend this meeting at least once!

First off, the men in this meeting have a flame in their heart that has been lit by the promises recovery. As a fellow young person it inspires me greatly to watch these young men get so excited and involved with recovery. They are very passionate about spreading recovery to people young and old. Some of these men I have seen walk through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous with their tail between their legs and their heart black as night.

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### Sober Voices: Meetings by Phone

There's a new meeting in town and it's no place and every place! It's called "Sober Voices" and it takes place entirely on the telephone. The meeting is listed with the General Service Office and you can take part. For more information, call Tim at **702-767-8291** or visit their website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/aatelephonemeetings/home>.

## At the Convention

*(From page 1)*

sponsor should point his sponsee to the coffeepot.”

**Tim A.**—“I often wonder myself why people have \$35 for this convention and can’t put \$2 in the basket at meetings. That’s where AA starts.”

**Kevin E.**—“This convention is only once a year and that helps people plan better. You can make arrangements with your employer. Local group commitments often run counter to employment schedules, which can be unpredictable.”

**Chuck M.**—“There’s more personal recognition here. Maybe it’s ‘bigshottism.’”

**Sue**—“Being here says ‘look at me; here I am.’”

**Barry S.**—“You don’t have to do any work here. Just sit and enjoy yourself.”

**Dave P.**—“It’s like going to a meeting. It doesn’t require any work.”

**Cheryl P.**—“Ego. It’s all about ego.”

**Becky P.**—“Sponsorship is the key. A sponsor has to get people to do the service work on the group level.”

**Tom C.**—“We should treat the convention as a social occasion. The theme going forward should be service oriented.”

**Laureen S.**—“People who come here may get an ‘inkling’ and become inspired to do service work. They connect with the fellowship and hear a different message. People who come here also do different jobs at the group level. As with any organization, 5% of the people do 95% of the work.”

As I continued my wandering, I saw mock prison outfits, green straw hats with crepe leis, an actual three-legged stool, commemorative photos, cups, mugs, etc. I promised my sponsor this was not going to be a negative piece about the convention. He reminded me that the convention is important to many recovering people on many levels and gives people a chance to see a wider view of AA. He, of course, is right and I say a prayer that my

## AA CONVENTION A ROUSING SUCCESS

For this recovering alcoholic, the March 2014 50<sup>th</sup> Area 45 General Service Convention at the Crowne Plaza Hotel was a rousing success. I attended the Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday morning speaker meetings, and did a little service work manning a table.

I left filled with the spirit of AA and my Higher Power and the love we sober alcoholics share with each other, friends and strangers alike.

This was my first South Jersey convention but not my first AA convention; I’ve attended many other conventions in other places. This one was as good as it gets. I always take away at least one good concept of recovery from a convention, one that really lights up my sobriety; the recovery concept I got from this convention was from Deborah’s talk on Saturday night, where she said she only ever has one problem, and that is a conscious separation from God. It can look like, she said, a financial problem, or a relationship problem or a \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank) problem, but in essence, it always comes down to a conscious separation from God.

As I thought about after the meeting, and all the next day, I came to see that that concept fits for me, too. How I understand it is that if I am at one, in conscious contact, with my Higher Power, whatever problem I have will be solved, either directly by my HP, or with the tools my HP will send me so I can fix the problem. So.....the answer to all my problems is to get one with God.

Thanks to all the folks who worked so hard to put on this convention. It was awesome, and indeed, “Better than Gold”.

*Submitted by Pat P*

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Live from the Area 45 Convention: It's AA in Action!

*Some memories from this year's event*

I was working the registration table and a woman came up to me, very nervous. She wanted to know where she might find some meetings—it was her first time at such an event and she was a newcomer. Well, I told her where to find the marathon meetings upstairs but then asked her to register. When she found out there was a cost, she crumpled her form and said she hadn't realized and couldn't afford to attend. I was as disappointed as she was! Then I remembered the scholarships! I wasn't sure how they worked, so went to check with one of the chairs and it turns out there was one available. When I told her she could attend her whole face lit up—really? She asked. If I could explain to you how I felt at that moment! I wanted to pick her up and carry her around to show her the ropes. I felt so much joy for her. Being part of that experience helped me maybe more than her. I will never forget it. That's what we are here for—to help others. --Anonymous

One of my favorite expressions is "if it ain't broke, don't break it!" Each and every year we arrive at the same gates at the largest event we have in the area. And every year I know that we of AA are greeted with happiness from the personnel at the hotel from the top down. I'd like to focus on the wonderful people who take joy in keeping us joyous, happy and free—the coffee people and the servers! Each of them is quick to remind us how excited they are to see us. They go out of their way to assist us, especially those of us that are struggling a bit. Whether it be making them feel comfortable by joking, or grabbing them a little something for them to eat. I have no question in my mind that that any one of these workers wouldn't hesitate to introduce themselves or another to the program of AA as they have been witness to it for many years. There is not one piece of literature or pamphlet that they could pick up off any of our tables and read that could top the mere attraction we bring! We should always remember "attraction, not promotion." Don't break it and let's stay as we are. -- Anonymous

I was speaking with Julio, the Friday night speaker from GSO. He acknowledged how his work in his Intergroup really opened his eyes to the program. His words were "they are the front line" for so many of us. This discussion took place in front of our SJIG table. The phrase Meeting List displays and volunteers positioned at their posts. Off to the left was Public Info with the area CPC. The whole time Julio spoke, he had our newsletter (6) in his hand ready to accompany him back to NYC. How about them apples! – Joe C., SJIG Vice-Chair

--Patty H.

### Briefly from the Convention

Nice quote: "I thought I'd show some of my friends (4) from the Salvie (Salvation Army) what a really big group of AAs are like."

From the Chair on Saturday night: "One tee-shirt left. We will cut it into 1,200 pieces so we can all have a little piece." P.S. – would not have been enough.

A nice moment—Mom brings daughter for weekend, and hangs with her to keep her sober for another day.

--Patty H.

### At the Convention

*(From page 4)*

higher power helps me to stay focused on the positive side of things.

My last image is a picture of Bill W. on his motorcycle and a picture of the Mayflower Hotel in Akron. I am reminded that, forty years ago, I stood in the lobby of the Mayflower, wondering where my life was going; all caught up in myself, drinking without concern. My life should have ended maybe twenty years ago, at the bottom of my drinking. Thanks to Bill W. (who, I'm told by Chicago John, really, really liked conventions), I have a life today and can go to AA conventions, like the one at Cherry Hill. I shoot out a prayer to Bill W. and to the Mayflower (the wandering pilgrims?) and think about next year's convention.

Masonville Marty



## Around the Rooms

(From page 1)

I have seen these men come in with tears in their eyes and pain lacing their every move. These are the men that have transformed their life through a new way of living by working the twelve steps. I have witnessed, firsthand, many of these men regain their lives. I have seen them go through trials and celebrations—without picking up a drink.

These are the gifts of the program! This is why I love going to different meetings and watching all sorts of different people grow, who abandon themselves to this program. My favorite part of this meeting is the emphasis on spirituality, and the insistence that we are all just trying to find whatever Higher Power works for us. No one is right and no one is wrong. As a person who felt abandoned by a power greater than herself it was important to see people believe in something greater, even though, they felt the same way as me when they came in the rooms! In essence it gave me hope. So, if you are free on a Friday night with no plans, go check out this meeting and let me know what you think! I asked one of these men if it was okay to get a little background on how this meeting started.

This is what he said:

“The idea all started with four guys sitting in a living room one night after a speaking commitment. We were talking about how we wanted to start a meeting, and let it take on its own life like no other meeting we've been to. At this idea, we realized that we wanted it to be based on spirituality in recovery, because each of us have had different experiences with God, especially with that word as it was presented to us as newcomers. What's funny about the whole thing is, is that we like to joke around with each other and one of us always said SLOTS, referring to the sunlight of the spirit on page 66 of the Big Book. This saying quickly took our vision to a whole new level. The meeting was then formed as a spiritual topic meeting where our speaker brings in his/her spiritual read of their choice, and speaks on how it relates to their spirituality in recovery. As the meeting has been growing and developing, we soon realized that it is a safe place to try to bring spirituality into our recovery, and our recovery into the sunlight of the spirit.”

- Anonymous

## Area 45 Corrections Committee

COME OUT TO ONE OF OUR  
MEETINGS AND JOIN OUR COMMITTEE

### VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR SEVERAL TASKS

- Carry the message into a Jail or Prison. Speakers and Hosts are needed for all facilities.
- Help hand out LIPS Cans to Homegroups
- Volunteer your time at our table at the Area 45 Convention
- Spread the word on how important it is to carry the message to individuals who cannot leave the facility and attend an outside AA meeting
- Volunteer to help with our Annual Conference in August
  - Various different tables to volunteer at, speaking at the conference, kitchen help, etc.

If you want more information please contact us!!  
We hope to see you soon!

Chair: Kathy Jo @ 609-790-3740 or [KJSwersky@gmail.com](mailto:KJSwersky@gmail.com)  
Co-Chair: Judy K. @ 856-404-3057 or [judy413@gmail.com](mailto:judy413@gmail.com)

## **PASS IT ON!**

***This is the year to get involved!*** Before you even knew what AA was about, someone you don't know was Helping to Carry the Message to you. Maybe it's time to Pass It On! Here are some of the ways that **YOU can CARRY THE MESSAGE** through your Intergroup Service Committees! Check off the box of the committee you would like to join. Fill out your contact information, then give the whole page to your Group Intergroup Representative and you will be contacted by the committee.

- ☐ **ANSWERING PHONES:** Answer the AA phone line, either at the Intergroup office or use the call forwarding system to your phone.
  - \_\_\_ Regular 2 hrs a week OR \_\_\_ Substitute (as needed) email: [answeringservice@aaaj.org](mailto:answeringservice@aaaj.org)
- ☐ **ARCHIVES:** Collect, organize and present information on the SJ Intergroups history: Including Group histories and interviews with Long Term AA's. Email: [archives@aaaj.org](mailto:archives@aaaj.org)
- ☐ **H & I:** Share at various hospitals and other institutions. Participate in AA Bridging the Gap program for released patients. Email: [HandI@aaaj.org](mailto:HandI@aaaj.org)
- ☐ **LITERATURE:** Sell AA Literature at the Interhroup office.
  - \_\_\_ Regular 2 Hrs weekly \_\_\_ Substitute(as needed)
- ☐ **MEETING LIST:** Collect information on meeting changes submitted by groups. Verify information and arrange for printing of new lists. Email: [Meetinglist@aaaj.org](mailto:Meetinglist@aaaj.org)
- ☐ **NEWSLETTER:** Gather information on local AA events. Collect and write articles for monthly Intergroup newsletter. Compose and print newsletter for distribution at monthly meeting. Email: [Newsleter@aaaj.org](mailto:Newsleter@aaaj.org)
- ☐ **PUBLIC INFORMATION:** Provide AA information to the Non Alcoholic Public by presentations, letters and contact with media. Email: [Publicinfo@aaaj.org](mailto:Publicinfo@aaaj.org)
- ☐ **SOCIAL EVENTS:** Develop, organize and promote a variety of Social Events for the SJ Groups. Email: [Socialalevents@aaaj.org](mailto:Socialalevents@aaaj.org)
- ☐ **UNITY:** Promotes Intergroup involvement by Groups by visiting and making the Unity Presentation on Traditions and Service. Provides orientation for new IGRs. Email: [Unity@aaaj.org](mailto:Unity@aaaj.org)
- ☐ **WEBSITE:** Helps with the ongoing management of the AASJ website. Email: [Webmaster@aaaj.org](mailto:Webmaster@aaaj.org)

### **Contact Information**

NAME (First name only): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Group/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Sobriety Date (MM/DD/YY): \_\_\_\_\_

# Fellowship Announcements and Things to Do

May 2014

**Thursday, April 24** – “How It Works” will be celebrating their anniversary at 7:00 pm. Speaker at 8:00 PM. Oaklyn Baptist Church, 35 E. Bettleground Ave. across from Taco Bell, next to post office. NEW

**Saturday, April 26** – Dance / Skit. Hope Hose Firehouse, 150 W. Burlington Rd., Bordentown, NJ 08505. Mini-Workshop on the First Tradition. Singleness of Purpose & Group Inventory. Hosted by District 22/23 Questions? Randi J. (609) 336-0137/ Kelly W. (609) 968- 4440. \$5.00 / Dance Only. Reg: 6:00 pm. Dance 8PM-11PM.

**Sunday, April 28** – Bellmawr night Surrender on Sunday is celebrating 27 years with 2 speakers. Food to follow. Browning Rd. (across the street from the police station) NA NEW

**May 2-4** – 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Couples Escape Weekend. “Couples in Recovery” St. Mary of Providence Center, 227 Isabella Rd., Elverson, PA, 19520. [www.stmaryofprov-pa.org](http://www.stmaryofprov-pa.org) \$280/couple. \$100 Deposit by April 4<sup>th</sup>. More info: Delores & Sam – 609-510-6675, Carol & Jim - 610.28.0231, Nancy & Wayne – 856-534-0104, Sidney & Jack - 856.456.5909, Suzanne & Joe – 856.787.0795, Jan & Dave – 410.939.1139, Carol & Sam – 302.559.4358. Non-AA

**Saturday, May 3** – Three Legacies Workshop - picnic - fellowship - games - 2 speakers 12:00 – 4:00 PM @ Birch Grove Park, Burton Ave., Northfield, NJ. ,Donation: \$3. Bring a chair - lunch is provided - Bring a dessert if you can. More info : Jerusha: 609-365-8175

**Saturday, May 10** – Swedesboro Early Sobriety meeting will celebrating their anniversary. Great speakers, food, fun, & fellowship. 7:00 AM. St. Joseph's Church. Azzari Hall, 140 Broad St., Swedesboro - Hall behind church. NEW

**Saturday, May 19** – Kiss Club. 818 N. Broad St., Woodbury, NJ. Talent Show, 8:00 pm Tickets: \$10.00 includes food and beverages. Interested in being in the show, call Jim M: 609-970-2483 for info. NEW

**June 6--8** – Akron for Founder's Day. 4021 Club of Philly is having a trip to Akron. Trip includes round trip transportation - accommodations - registration - trip to Dr. Bob's gravesite - starting with a continental breakfast. First bus pickup: Hamilton, NJ @ 3:00AM. Second pickup: 4021 Club Philadelphia 4:00 am. (Friday morning). Total price: \$350 per person. Money due ASAP. More info call: Rupbert @ 215-430-3389 or Wayne @ 856-534-0104 SEND ALL MONIES TO Ed Robinson P.O. Box 46151, Philadelphia, PA, 19160. Payable to Edward Robinson.

**June 27– 29** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Liberty Bell Roundup (Philadelphia Woodstock of AA) Clarion Philadelphia Airport, 76 Industrial Highway, Essington, PA. 610-521-9600. Mention LBR. \$99/night. Sells out by May 1. Must Pre-Register: \$35 <http://libertybellroundup.com/> Info: Dave W: 610.342.6876 Dave42day@gmail.com / Scott F: 215-431-0921 scott@newfoundfreedom.com

