

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

JUNE 2014

SJI Founders Day Picnic June 14

*Join Us for a Celebration of the Founding of AA and the
50th Anniversary of SJ Intergroup*

South Jersey Intergroup will celebrate Founders Day with a Founders Day Picnic on Saturday, June 14th at Parvin State Park in Elmer, New Jersey. Founders Day is generally accepted to be June 10, 1935. That is the day when Bill W. first sat down with Dr. Bob at the Smith Home in Akron, Ohio; the day when both discovered that, by sharing with one another their experiences with alcohol, their desire to drink was abated. It was then that both decided that “sharing” was to be the key to their liberation from deadly drinking.

Several weeks after that famous first “meeting”, Bill W. and Dr. Bob helped a third man, Bill Dotson (the “man on the bed”) to seek God’s help and attain recovery. That date was July 4, 1935. Bill W. proclaimed that date as the



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Becoming Ready

*Step 6: Were entirely ready
to have God remove all
these defects of character.*

Step Six (Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character) is given only the very briefest of mentions in the Big Book. It boils down to one directive: becoming ready! At once this raises the question: ready to do what?

I’ve heard the dramatic stories of the “burners” (those that relate how they “burned” their Fourth Step after writing it down and taking the Fifth). It seems however that one would need to keep that Fourth Step to answer the question of the Sixth: ready to do what? The answer is, ready to have God remove the defects I’ve identified on my Fourth. After all, how can I be “ready” when I don’t know, or don’t remember the things I’m supposed to be ready to remove?

The Steps are supposed to be read in tandem; i.e., in relation to one another. One, I think, gets a better feel for this “relatedness” from the Big Book versus the Twelve and Twelve. The fact that the Sixth is so remarkably brief in the Big Book can only signify that, surely it takes it meaning from all that surrounds it. The point is that I go back to my Fourth Step to identify those things that I need to be ready to have removed in the Sixth.

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Grapevine Exclusive

One Day in June

On a relapse, she found herself defeated again by alcohol

They say there is nothing worse than a belly full of liquor and a head full of AA. In 1999 I discovered something harder to deal with than that – a head full of AA, the emotions of a newcomer and no alcohol.

After 12 years, 11 months and two weeks of sobriety, I thought AA and I were even. I gave to AA. AA gave to me. Time to move on. I knew there was something physical about alcoholism. I had skimmed over the doctor's opinion. I figured that because your cells change every seven years, I had at least seven years of good drinking ahead of me. I had gotten sober young and thought maybe I had over-reacted.

See, I had worked all the Steps over and over again. I had just never worked the first one. I hadn't admitted to my innermost self that I was alcoholic. The illusion that I could drink like other people did, hadn't been smashed. I came to later realize that if you build a beautiful house on a shaky foundation it will eventually fall apart. Mine did.

I'm not going to dwell on my first 12 years of sobriety except to say I was very involved for about 10 of them. They say this disease is cunning, baffling and powerful. That is true in my case. The relapse snuck up on me. Alcohol insinuated itself back into my life until it eventually made sense to drink after all

that time. Actually the drinking was last part of the relapse. It started with my thinking followed by poor decisions until that peculiar mental twist took over and said, "A glass of champagne won't hurt anything."

Well I didn't pick up where

would be different. The pain was just so great.

Finally, on a day in late June of 1999, I stumbled into a meeting defeated. I knew if I didn't stop soon I was going to die. It didn't matter that I felt like a jerk in AA

– I didn't feel I fit in with the newcomers and I didn't feel like I fit in with the old-timers.

It didn't matter that it bruised my ego when some 90-day wonder said, "Keep coming back." It didn't matter that I thought I

knew the Big Book. Nothing mattered except getting out of the hell I had been living in the last three years. I had finally surrendered. I set aside what I thought I knew so I could have a new experience with the program. In other words, I became teachable.

This year, I celebrated 13 years of continuous sobriety. It's been a milestone for me. There have been peaks and valleys along the way and I'm grateful for every one of them because they make up the person I am today. Nothing gives me more pleasure than taking someone through the work, seeing them shine and then watching them take others through.

If you had a bunch of time, and are new again, leave your ego at the door and do the work. It is well, well worth it.

—Kathy D., Atlanta, Ga.

Nothing mattered except getting out of the hell I had been living in the last three years. I had finally surrendered.

I left off. Within a month it was as if I had been drinking the whole time. I won't say I lost my kids, my fiancé, my house, a career. The truth is that I traded them in for alcohol.

For about three years, I was in and out of the program. At one point, I found myself desperately trying to find 35 dollars for a motel while driving around in my mommy minivan.

I remember the exact moment that I knew without a doubt I was an alcoholic. After a drinking bout, I asked a drinking buddy who knew nothing about AA if she thought I was an alcoholic. She said, "I don't know exactly what an alcoholic is. All I know is when you start drinking it does something to you that it doesn't do to the rest of us and you have to keep on drinking more and more."

I started crying because I knew. I drank a few more times after that not because I thought it

The Seven Gifts of AA

By Patricia P

The Gift of Gratitude Can Change Any Negative to a Positive

Recently, I was asked to speak at a meeting. As I contemplated what to say, using the time-honored format of “what it was like....etc.”, I came up with the idea of talking about what it’s like now in terms of the gifts I’ve received from AA. Seven gifts came to mind, one of which I will write about now. That gift is gratitude.

Before I came to AA, I was one morose individual. I viewed life through a negative lens. My attitude was: if it isn’t bad now, it soon will be. Just give it time.

I’ll always remember what my first sponsor said to me, many years ago, when I came to the AA



clubhouse, newly sober, and complaining about all the negative things that were happening to me. “Little girl,” he said (he was 30 years older and had 18 years of sobriety, which seemed like an eon to me), “every sentence I’ve heard out of your mouth for the last 10 minutes has started with the word I’. Now I want you to go

home tonight and write a gratitude list. And then I want you to review that list at least once a day, every day.

That piece of AA advice—that gift—set in motion a whole new pathway of living. I took his advice and did just that. I went home and wrote a gratitude list. And I started reviewing it—not every day at first, that took a long time for me to get the hang of.

But gradually, over time, I began to realize the power of gratitude. I learned that gratitude instantaneously changes anything negative to positive. If I’m feeling depressed, and I start to think with gratitude of my blessings, my depression vanishes. If I’m angry with someone, and I think with gratitude of what they’ve done for me (even if it’s negative but I’ve learned a valuable lesson from it!), my anger dissipates. If I’m “sittin’ on the pity pot” feeling sorry for myself, and I reflect with gratitude on all God has given me, I rise from the pity pot and get goin’ in a positive direction. I’ve learned to start my day with prayer. And I’ve learned to start my prayers with gratitude. The first thing I say when I open my eyes is “Thank you, God. Thank you for another day of life and of sobriety.” And then I go through my list of blessings. Because of AA, I have—most of the time (I am human, after all)—an “Attitude of Gratitude” and it has changed my life.

A UNITED MESSAGE OF RECOVERY

The long form of Tradition One states, in part, that each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare must come first. We are then given eleven other Traditions that show us what we must do in order to accomplish the goal of unity allowing recovery.

We are shown that our membership is open to all who suffer from alcoholism—the only requirement is a desire to stop drinking. Another Tradition tells us that we have but one purpose—to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Other Traditions relate the things we need to watch for so we don’t get diverted from that primary purpose—problems of money, property, prestige, authority, controversy, sensational advertising, and personalities. All these guidelines come to us from our founders and past members who experienced firsthand the consequences of what happens when these principles are not respected—the chaos, heart-break, and confusion that results when the suggestions are not followed.

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Founders Day

(From page 1)

founding of the first A.A. Group—Akron Number One. It was from these humble beginnings that our fellowship has grown and flourished to a worldwide network of thousands of meetings and millions of people recovering from a fatal disease and reclaiming their lives.

This year, 2014, also marks a banner year for our own South Jersey Intergroup. It was fifty (50) years ago, this year, that the South Jersey Intergroup was founded, taking as its official name: Intergroup Delegate Committee of AA Groups of South Jersey. So, in a very real way, our Founders Day Picnic celebrates two “foundings”: that of AA as a whole and that of our own Intergroup.

South Jersey Intergroup volunteers work hard to provide a cohesive identity for all AA groups in South Jersey and to keep spreading the message to all who reach out to AA for help. The Intergroup’s Social Events Committee has dedicated many hours to organizing the Founders Day Picnic this year and they really want as many people who can, to come out for some relaxation, food, fellowship and fun.

Getting to the Picnic is easy. Take Route 55 to Exit 35 and follow the signs to Parvin State Park in Elmer.

ANNUAL AA PICNIC

Come out and help with organizing our annual AA PICNIC, which will be held in August 2014. We need helpers to prepare for the picnic in advance as well as help out the day of the picnic. Do some service. Get involved. Thanks.

Interested? Come to the Next Picnic Meeting:

June 5, 2014, 6:30 pm.

Basement of Presbyterian Church

2nd and Pine Streets

Millville, NJ 08332

There you’ll find lots of AAs and be invited to join them in softball, volleyball, horseshoes, swimming and canoeing. There’ll be a 50-50 raffle, a live DJ with great music, and even an AA speaker at 2:00 pm. Bring your coolers and ice and the whole family for a day of fun with your fellows!

— *Masonville Marty*



Sober 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>.

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:

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PO Box 2514
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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

Being a Young Person in a Room Full of Old Timers

I think the best way to make a newly sober young person feel like they just walked onto another planet is to bring them to



an Old Timers AA meeting. Being newly sober is intimidating enough, but add on being a young person and you have definitely got someone who feels like they just stepped onto Planet Jupiter.

By no means do Old Timers mean for it to be this way. Every Old Timer I have met has been very welcoming and humble. Some of the people who've helped me the most in my recovery were Old Timers who took me under their wing. Old Timers are the reason I know AA works. I see them, still after 30 years, working a program and at peace. It has to work!

The reason I am writing this article is to highlight some things I see going on in the room- regarding young people feeling out of place. I implore to the youth of AA to not be afraid of becoming "a part of" because of their age, or the amount of time other people round then have. I came into the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous when I was 19, and stayed. There are people who have come in much younger than I. An Alcoholic is an Alcoholic. It's a really beautiful experience being a young person in AA. Alcoholics Anonymous saved my life and continues to on a daily basis.

I believe the thing that helped me the most was including "Young People's" meetings into my routine. It was so beneficial to see other young people get sober the same age I did. They experienced the difficulties of growing up, and still managed to stay sober! Young people's meetings were also incredibly intimidating. It reminded me of the high school lunch table

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Around the Rooms

(From page 5)

at times, but the women who worked a program swept me under their wing, just like the Old Timers. Here is another experience a young person had coming into the doors of alcoholics anonymous:

"Coming into Alcoholics Anonymous as a young woman was absolutely intimidating. I found, for me, the most comfortable place to be was at a young peoples meeting or a women's meeting. As I stuck around AA, I've found that I absolutely love Old Timers and can't think now of how they could've possibly intimidated me. As I expanded my network and put my judgment aside, I have grown so much more than I

ever thought possible. By reaching out to people with time, I learned that it's the experience that teaches me the most. I now feel 100% comfortable calling a woman with 20+ years because I learned that at some point in her recovery, she felt exactly as I did, and had the experience of getting through those feelings and staying sober. I've grown to love the clichés and simple statements those women/men make. I'm beyond thrilled that I stuck around long enough to figure this out. My network now consists of women and men of all ages and experiences, and this is the tool that keeps me growing" - Anonymous

United Message

(From page 3)

When Bill wrote Problems Other Than Alcohol in 1958, he made clear our singleness of purpose: Sobriety--freedom from alcohol--through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an A.A. group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities and they have always failed.

It has also been learned that there is no possible way to take non-alcoholics into A.A. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.

Our singleness of purpose has really been put to the test with the growth of treatment facilities which lump all addictive disorders together, with the subsequent visits of large numbers of treatment graduates to our groups, and with the mandatory sentencing of drunk driving offenders to A.A. meetings.



Meanwhile, our own A.A. members aren't always aware of our Traditions. Many areas have designed plans to meet these situations. Information meetings have become a good workable solution. Information meetings are informal discussions and sharing about what A.A. is: what it does and does not do. These information meetings have helped keep our regular A.A. meetings tied to A.A.'s singleness of purpose and to the principles of our other Traditions.

A group conscience will get exactly what it demands, no more or no less. Our experience today still bears out the experience of our founders. Some groups, where the alcoholics became outnumbered and the primary purpose was lost in problems other than alcohol, have had to close their doors.

— Frank Z, Audubon Monday Night

Step 6

(From page 1)

Taking, recently, my sponsee through the Steps, we have come to refer, again and again, to his Fourth Step in doing the Sixth. We have come to the realization that the Sixth represents a lifetime's work. The Fourth is the mirror I hold up to myself; containing assets as well as liabilities. I need to regularly look into that mirror to do the remaining Steps; especially the Sixth, and later, the Eighth and Ninth.

For me, the Sixth was entirely incomprehensible until I understood this "relatedness" of all the Steps. Thus the Sixth becomes the gravitational "center" of the other Steps. Am I ready to have my defects, my deficiencies, my shortcomings, removed; or do I yet cling to some, like a child to its teddy-bear? This surely is a lifetime's work.

— Masonville Marty

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@aasj.org
- ☐ **ARCHIVES:** Collect, organize and present information on the SJ Intergroups history: Including Group histories and interviews with Long Term AA's. **Email:** archives@aasj.org
- ☐ **H & I:** Share at various hospitals and other institutions. Participate in AA Bridging the Gap program for released patients. **Email:** HandI@aasj.org
- ☐ **LITERATURE:** Sell AA Literature at the Intergroup 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@aasj.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@aasj.org
- ☐ **PUBLIC INFORMATION:** Provide AA information to the Non Alcoholic Public by presentations, letters and contact with media. **Email:** Publicinfo@aasj.org
- ☐ **SOCIAL EVENTS:** Develop, organize and promote a variety of Social Events for the SJ Groups. **Email:** Socialaevents@aasj.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@aasj.org
- ☐ **WEBSITE:** Helps with the ongoing management of the AASJ website. **Email:** Webmaster@aasj.org

Contact Information

NAME (First name only): _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

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

Fellowship Announcements and Things to Do

June 2014

Last Friday of Each Month – Recovery Dance. 9:30 PM – 1:00 AM. St. Charles Borromeo Church, 176 Stagecoach Rd., Washington Twp. Admission: \$5.00. Children under 14 are free. Music by Philly D. Proceeds benefit Spring Softball League. **Non-AA**

Monday, May 26 – Memorial Day Alcathon. Trinity Episcopal Church, 800 E. Wood St, Vineland, NJ. 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM. Last meeting starts at 7:00 PM. 8th & Wood Sts.

Monday, May 26 – Memorial Day Alcathon. 482 Social Hall. 7550 North Crescent Blvd, Pennsauken, NJ (GPS setting) 12:00 PM – 8:00 PM (last meeting at 7:00 PM) 856-356-2852 Food & Fellowship.

Saturday, May 31 - The 70th Anniversary of the Greater Northeast Club. 4318 Frankfurt Ave., Philadelphia, PA. AA Meeting @ 6 PM. Speaker is Bill L, who got sober there 54 years ago. SEPIA Archives Committee Dinner @ 7 PM, and dance follows. Donation at door, and 7th Tradition during the meeting is the cost of admission. **NEW**

June 6,7,& 8 – Akron for Founder's Day. **CANCELLED**

Saturday, June 7 – “Primary Purpose” Bonfire & Beach Bash hosted by Districts 16 & 17.

5:00 PM: Food & Fellowship. 8:00 PM: Speaker meetings. Albany Ave & the Boardwalk, Atlantic City. Contact Scott P @ 609-665-7198 for more information.

Saturday, June 14 – Founder's Day Picnic. Free event sponsored by SJIG Social Events Committee. 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Join us at Thundergust Pavillions, Parvin State Park, Elmer, NJ (Rt. 55 Exit 35, follow the signs). Bring the family. All sorts of sports and activities. Live DJ. Speakers from 2:00 – 4:00 PM. Canoe Rentals available. Closing ceremony at 4:00 PM.

Saturday, June 14 – “Anonymity in the Digital Age” Workshop for District 3, Southern New Jersey. St Stephen's Church, 158 Warren Street, Beverly, NJ. 12:00 2:00PM. Presentation by Billy N., General Service Trustee & A.A.W.S. Director. Lunch will be provided. Grapevine, Archives, & Literature Road Show Tables. Any questions contact: Jessica S. DCM District 3 Area 45. (609)954-5672.

Wednesday, June 18 – Moorestown Men into Action 36th Anniversary. Club 25, Rudderow Ave. Maple Shade, NJ. Food at 7:00 PM. Speaker at 8:00 PM.

June 27 – 29 – 3rd 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@new-foundfreedom.com

Sunday, June 29 – Area 45 Corrections Meeting will be held at the Centenary United Methodist Church, 151 S. White Horse Pike, Berlin, NJ 08009 at 1:00 PM. We are looking for volunteers to carry the message to the confined alcoholic. For more upcoming dates, please contact the Chair: Kathy Jo @ 609-790-3740 or KJSwersky@gmail.com or Co-Chair: Judy K. @ 856-404-3057 or Judyn413@gmail.com

Saturday, August 2 – Area 45 Corrections Committee 19th Annual Inter-Area Conference “Freedom from Bondage” 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. St. Charles Borromeo RC Church, 176 Stagecoach Rd., Sicklerville, NJ, Hot breakfast & 6 Speakers. Chair: Kathy Jo @ 609-790-3740 or KJSwersky@gmail.com or Co-Chair: Judy K. @ 856-404-3057 or Judyn413@gmail.com