

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

January 2017

New Year's Resolution:

Out with the Old Attitudes, in with the New

On New Year's Eve, an e-mail arrived from my older sister, addressed to the whole family, announcing that she would no longer communicate with me about our mother's recent diagnosis of cancer. My sister wrote that she was "incensed by the tone of cynicism and insinuation in your last e-mail," and would be speaking to me only when necessary from now on.

Our family has been long and deeply affected by alcoholism: my father's, mine, my brother's. So taking sides, drawing lines in the sand, raising the battle flag, and conflating difference of

opinion to denunciation are part of our standard repertoire.

I've been sober in AA long enough to have learned about my part in this, to have made amends for it, and, occasionally, to make amends again for slipping back into the fray, mouth first.



We're all college-educated, trained communicators, which only makes the mess worse. Add my childishness, grandiosity, and over-sensitivity, and you have the formula for strong undercurrents of hurt,

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The High Price of Medallions in the Western States

After day 1, the Intergroup Office Manager Seminar is already proving to be an enlightening, educational, professional and spiritual experience.

I was happy to learn that AA World Services is now selling our Big Book in Arabic to AA groups in Jerusalem to give to their Muslim members. I always believed that if anyone could create unity in that region it would be Alcoholics Anonymous.

Meanwhile, back in the United States, Intergroups and AAWS are debating over who should make the money on the sale of our literature.

But let's back up. Pretty much since I got here, I've been hearing about groups selling medallions and non-AA literature. At first I thought it was just a couple of rogue

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Do We Really Need Club Houses?

I have heard arguments from both sides of the debate. This is a debate that has continued since the first club house was formed on West 24th Street in New York City. Seems it was formed out of necessity. Bill W. talks of the growth of AA when a meeting in member's kitchens and living rooms couldn't hold the amount of folks that were seeking help. The Manhattan club was thought to be essential and was incorporated as "Alcoholics Anonymous of New York Inc.". The secretary was operating out of the club house and, the founders naturally thought that AA members would help support this endeavor. The problem was, folks outside of the Manhattan area weren't interested. They had found more convenient meeting places

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Grapevine

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anger, envy, and vengeance.

I was what counselors call "the lost child" (better known as the family jerk) since I was twelve and began to gleefully start nipping at Dad's stash of high-test. Further back than that, I don't remember much, a symptom common to adult children of alcoholics. Dreamy, easily hurt, afraid to fight back, I got the lowest grades in school, and proved average in every way except in not living up to the "potential" my parents assured me I was forever falling short of. At that, I excelled.

Funny how these family patterns stick around. My father is twenty-five years dead from a drunken car accident. My brother is drinking himself to sleep, nightly, to ease the recent loss of his marriage. A younger sister had the good sense to move out of range of the family feud, but suffers a single life from an eating disorder she's tried, unsuccessfully, to address for decades. The older sister who pronounced my excommunication still struggles heroically, after two marriages to alcoholics, to rescue two grown daughters, tend to all our mother's needs, and carry on a demanding career. A once brilliant and beautiful cousin is six months dead after being carried from her last homeless shelter, and her brother and sister have yet to announce her passing away.

Could be everybody's too busy to notice I've changed a little over twenty-plus years of sobriety. But AA doesn't guarantee things will get better. Only that I will. So when family tensions rise, I'm still sometimes perceived as the family

jerk, off in his own little lost, irresponsible, dreamy world. To tell the truth, conviction, decisiveness, and action have never been my strengths. And insinuation, sarcasm, and cynicism have made every Fourth Step list I've ever done. So my sister's allegation stung with both its unfairness and with the old feelings of guilt and shame. Much as I didn't deserve it, I felt again like the bad, immature little boy I thought I was when I first started getting sober.

This time was different, however, if only in my not reacting to the sad drama around me with the hurt and anger I saw others suffering from. I felt it, too, but sober friends, a sober spouse, meetings, principles, and practicing the Steps provide some frame of reference other than my churning gut and the noisy committee in my head. I believe these old feelings and thoughts stick around to remind me that I live with alcohol-ism, not alcohol-wasm. And my next first drink would likely follow thoroughly justified hurt, anger, and self-pity.

With some sober guidance and attentive listening, I took stock of my family. My older sister gets little satisfaction from her enormous accomplishments and independence, and she loves others to the point of compromising her own health and well-being. My brother has two grown sons living adventurously, thanks to his support and guidance, both of whom love him very much. My younger sister is the warmest and funniest of the tribe. If still unable to share a stable relationship, she's quicker to make Mother laugh than any of us.

And Mom? When I was ten years sober and Dad was fifteen years dead, she brought me a magazine article explaining the family dynamics of alcoholism. Pointing to a page, she said, "I think your father could have used that. . . that thing you're into, too," meaning Alcoholics Anonymous. That's the closest she's ever come to saying "alcoholic," or admitting there may be a problem in our family. But she did it.

So, first I asked myself what someone smarter and more spiritually grounded than I would do. Then I ran off a brief return e-mail to my sister and left a voice-mail asking to visit. She phoned, New Year's morning, with an apology for misreading my intent, and an explanation of the growing stress in her life. I listened, empathized, and withheld advice about Al-Anon that I've offered a dozen times before. If her degrees and job are any measure, her memory and aptitude are much higher than mine. Besides, I got over being Mr. Recovery years ago.

When I hung up the phone, a wave of relief and gratitude swept away the whole emotional brush-fire. The rest of the weekend, I welcomed the possibilities that the new year might bring. Mother is still seriously ill and my family still seriously disturbed. But if I continue to remain honest, open, willing, and teachable, then I can resolve to live another year--one day at a time, of course--happy, joyous, and free.

-- Anonymous

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January Service Opportunities

Answering Service:

Currently we have the following shifts open:

- Saturday: 6 pm to 8 pm, 8 pm to 10 pm, 10 pm to 8 am (overnight shift)
- Tuesday: 8 pm to 10 am, 2 to 4 pm

We also continue to take names for our waiting list, and are still taking AA members to sign up to be available for a 12 Step call. Please have interested people continue to contact us via answeringservice@aasj.org.

Newsletter Articles:

Please submit articles to newsletter@aasj.org by January 11 for our February Newsletter.

Public Information:

We need some people to help with distributing literature and meeting lists to places such as hospital emergency rooms, libraries, and police departments. Please e-mail Eileen at publicinfo@aasj.org for more info.

Unity: The Unity Committee is currently looking for committee members and a new Co-Chair. Please contact Cletus at 856-266-4961 to see how you can help.

Website:

The website committee is looking for assistance from individuals with a virus-free computer and a willingness to learn. Prior web experience is helpful but not necessary. Please contact Ray at webmaster@aasj.org.

General Service Office (New York, NY):

GSO has 2 openings for non-trustee appointed committee members for Trustees Committees: 1) Public Information, 2) Cooperation with the Professional Community, Treatment and Accessibilities. Please contact Intergruop at officemanager@aasj.org for additional information.

Intergruop Reps wanted:

If your home group is not represented at Intergruop, please join us on Wednesday, January 18 at 8 pm at St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church (Rt 70 in Cherry Hill). Be sure to stop at the Unity table to learn more about being an Intergruop rep.

Speaking Commitments

Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) is looking for speakers to visit the following facilities:

- Wednesday, January 4, 11, 25: Delaware House, 21 Ikea Drive, Westampton 1-2 pm
- Thursday:
 - Jan. 26, Ancora State Hospital, 202 Spring Garden Rd, Hammonton, 7-8pm (arrive 30 min early)
 - Jan. 5, 19 Unity II, 121 S White Horse Pike, Hammonton, NJ 2-3 pm
 - Jan. 19, Daybreak, 368 White Horse Pike, Atco, NJ 10:30-12pm January 19
 - An IDRC speaker is needed in Westmont on the 4th Thursday of each month at 12 noon. Please contact the public information committee at publicinfo@aasj.org for more information.

Please contact Patti or Frank at handi@aasj.org if you are able to take one of these commitments.

High Schools: The public information committee needs your help to bring our message to high school students. Please contact Eileen at publicinfo@aasj.org for more information.

Club House

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and could not, in their minds, separate the club from the duties of the secretary. Bill W., in "The Language of the Heart" writes extensively on these issues and in his "Grapevine" writings from 1944-1950.

As for me, I am not real sure I could have achieved any long term sobriety without the Old "Camalon Club" on Stewart Street in Camden N.J. It was a life saver. You see, when I entered AA on Oct. 17, 1982 I owned a bar in Camden. I don't recommend that, but it was the way it was. At that time, on most days, there were 3 meetings a day at the club; I needed all 3 of them. I would open the bar at 11:00am; catch a meeting at the club at 12:00. Go back and work the bar till 7:30 and catch the 8:00 o'clock meeting. Then, go work the bar until 11:30 and grab a midnight meeting. That was how I achieved the first 2 years of recovery. After 90 days I was allowed to join the club and I have been a dues paying, card carrying club member for the past 34 years. Of course, the clubs have changed but my commitment has never changed.

So the question is, why join a club when I can attend open meetings anytime I choose? If I don't join, and actively support my club, it will close. It's just that simple. For \$10.00 or \$15.00 a month, less than 5 cups of coffee at WaWa for a

month I am helping to keep the doors open for the new guy. It has also proven to be a valuable social aid. And since clubs are NOT AA, they need to be supported by people who want them and understand the important service they provide to our community.

Some issues still exist with club houses. For example, I have seen where the basket has been passed and called "the 7th tradition". However, none of the money collected ever goes to support AA services. It all goes to support the club. This is in direct conflict with the 7th tradition. When I put my money in the basket, and it is called a 7th tradition, I assume I am supporting AA, not a club house. There are also AA Guidelines about the relationship between AA and the club. It was recommended in 1989, that meeting list should not list club houses. By listing club houses on our meeting list, we are lending the AA name to an outside enterprise. This is in direct conflict with tradition six. Other mistakes I have witnessed is when applying to the local municipalities for permits to operate, founders, often mistakenly say that they want to open an AA club house and it get listed that way on legal documents.

I am very proud to be a charter member of my club house. It was founded by members that truly knew, and honored the traditions and guidelines. In fact, while shopping for material at a local store, AA was mentioned in conversation. The

manager of the store offered to donate the material. The club member refused to accept the very generous offer. He truly knew how to separate the Club from AA.

What's my point? If you attend meetings at a club, do your homework. If you find any deviation from our beautiful traditions, you have an obligation to inform them. If you find that they are adhering to all the traditions and guidelines, you have an obligation to join and support that club. Being a member of a club comes with great benefits. Not just for you, but for that new person walking in the door. Get involved, attend activities, and attend board meetings. I have a key to my club and can take sponsee's there to do step work in the privacy of one of the rooms. I can rent the space for personal activities as well. I rented the room and had a birthday party at my club and invited family and friends.

It is possible to be both a good AA member and a good club house member. Always honor the traditions and don't allow them to become watered down at any level. They are our future. Our founding members made tremendous sacrifices to keep this fellowship intact. As it was given to us, we are responsible to pass it on exactly as it is.

Yours in fellowship,
Eddie "J"

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@asj.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@asj.org
Website: www.asj.org
24-Hour Hotline 1-856-486-4444

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

Trivial Pursuit

January Trivia Question:

What is the difference between a Meeting and a Group?

Here's the answer to December's trivia question, *How can someone find out about open service positions outside of the homegroup?*

Answer: *Intergroup recently added a Help Wanted section to our newsletter where we post open service opportunities. Attending workshops, monthly Intergroup meetings, or quarterly Area 45 Assemblies is another great way to hear about opportunities to help. Please ask your homegroup or contact info@asj.org for information on upcoming meet-*

Medallions

From page 1

Intergroup offices but as time went on it seemed more and more like everyone was doing it. So of course, being the good alcoholic that I am, I started pondering: "maybe it is ok to sell coins..." I started thinking about the traditions and different ways they can be interpreted. Is it endorsing, financing or lending the AA name to an outside enterprise or is it just doing business to meet the membership's needs?

So I attended the workshop "Literature Sales: Conference or Non-Conference" and listened to extensive discussion on the higher profit margin on medallions, Hazelton and "drunk junk" complete with vendor suggestions. Still with uncertainty about where I stood, I went to the microphone and shared that for better or worse, South Jersey Intergroup sells only Conference Approved Literature and that I felt like I needed to share that. Fortunately our trustee who attended the event with me had stronger feelings about the issue and also went to the mic (twice). Near the end of the workshop, a GSO "special worker" stood up and posed the question, "Are groups that are buying this literature from your offices using it in their meetings and thinking it is ok because they got it from you?" My doubts

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SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY AREA 45
53rd ANNUAL GENERAL SERVICE CONVENTION
March 24th, 25th and 26th, 2017

**Speaker Meetings,
Marathon Meetings,
Workshops,**

**Fellowship,
Old-timers Panel,
And
Al-Anon Program**



Friday Night Country Buffet, Ice Cream Social, Open Mic Night
(contact Ted W. at twood99@live.com to perform!)

Saturday Night Banquet
DJ & Karaoke PLUS Photo Booth!

PRE-REGISTRATION Ends March 10th, 2017 (mail-ins must be postmarked by this date)

Meal packages and/or Rooms Do NOT Include Convention Registration

THE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL - 2349 MARLTON PIKE (RT 70) CHERRY HILL, NJ, 08002

CONVENTION CHAIR - Kelly W. email: conventionchair53@gmail.com phone: (609) 379-5884
REGISTRATION CHAIR - Laura H. email: conventionreg53@gmail.com phone: (609) 250-2485

All PARTICIPANTS MUST REGISTER INDIVIDUALLY

Meal Packages Discounted for pre-registered ONLY.

To Register online go to snjaaconvention.org

Registration Opens December, 2016

****Regardless of how many roommates you add, room cost must be paid upfront by ONE PERSON.
If there are roommates, please give their first and last names as part of the pre-registration process.
If you have a roommate who already bought a room, just complete standard registration, merchandise,
meals, etc. ****

Rooms (circle one)	Friday ONLY	Saturday ONLY	Friday & Saturday	Fill in the amount for Room Selection Here: \$ _____
	Single/Double \$128	Single/Double \$128	Single/Double \$256	
	Triple/Quad \$132	Triple/Quad \$132	Triple/Quad \$264	
Meal Package #1 Friday Buffet, Saturday Breakfast, Saturday Banquet & Sunday Breakfast:			\$92 (save \$13)	\$ _____
Meal Package #2 Saturday Breakfast, Saturday Banquet & Sunday Breakfast:			\$69 (save \$11)	\$ _____
Meal Package #3 Saturday Banquet & Sunday Breakfast:			\$52 (save \$8)	\$ _____
Meal Package #4 Saturday & Sunday Breakfast:			\$34 (save \$6)	\$ _____
Meal Package #5 Friday Buffet			\$23 (save \$2)	\$ _____
Meal Package #6 Saturday Banquet			\$35 (save \$5)	\$ _____
Ice Cream Social Ice Cream Novelties – Friday Night			\$4	\$ _____
Please Circle Preference: King Bed <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Double Beds <input type="checkbox"/>				
Registration:			\$40.00	\$ 40.00
Short sleeve T-Shirt:	S, M, L, XL XXL		\$ 12 \$ 15	\$ _____
Zip-Up Hoodie:	S, M, L, XL XXL		\$ 25 \$ 28	\$ _____
Registration, Meals, Merchandise, Room (if applicable)	PLEASE PAY THIS AMOUNT:			\$ _____

Handicapped Accessible Hearing Impaired Register for Old-timer's panel (25 years or more of continuous sobriety)

If you are registering for a room you plan to share you MUST provide the First and Last names of your roommates
(Please print clearly)

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Your Name _____ Phone (Include Area Code) _____

Address _____ City _____, State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ I am a member of: AA AI-Anon

Badge Name _____ Home Group _____

Check or Money Order enclosed: Amount \$ _____ (Make check payable to Area 45 Convention) OR

Charge my: VISA MasterCard or Credit Card Name _____ Amount \$ _____

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date ____/____/____ (Month/ Year)

3-Digit Security Code (On back of card) _____ Billing Zip Code _____

Please mail payments to: Area 45 Convention, 28 Washington St. P.O. Box 63 Mt. Holly, NJ 08060
 Questions: Email: conventionchair53@gmail.com Website: snjaaconvention.org or (609) 379-5884
 This flyer is paid for by: Southern New Jersey Area/ General Assembly Alcoholics permit # 372

Fellowship Announcements and Things to Do

Janaury 2017

Sat., Dec. 31 - Mullica Hill will celebrate its anniversary at 4 pm. with speakers and desserts.

Mon., Jan. 16 - Collingswood will celebrate 72nd anniversary FFF. at Haddon & Fern Ave., Collingswood. Parking available in bank lot across the street, also church parking lot available with entrance from Fern Ave. Doors Open at 6:30; Dinner at 7; Speaker at 8.

Sat., Jan. 21 - Woodstown Group will celebrate their 62nd anniversary. Eating begins at 7 pm, speaker to follow at 8 pm. Woodstown Presbyterian Church, 46 Auburn Rd. Woodstown.

Thurs., Jan. 26 - Chewslanding Step meeting is celebrating 25 years with 2 Speakers and deserts afterward. Starts at 6 pm, St. John's Epis. Church, 1704 Old Black Horse Pike.

Wed. Feb. 1 - Clarksboro meeting is celebrating its anniversary at 7 pm. Sister Anne and Eddie J will be the speakers.

Wed. Feb. 8 - Clarksboro will celebrate its first anniversary with lite refreshments starting at 6 pm.

March 24-26 - Area 45 Southern NJ Annual General Service Convention.

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

Medallions

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about our operations diminished (and hopefully other people's doubts about theirs increased).

It was at the Q&A at the evening workshop presented by AA World Service that I saw the full implication of using Intergroup Offices to supply non-AA materials. Intergroups were crying out to General Service to give us favorable pricing and proceeds from e-books because they needed the revenue to keep their offices going. What I was clearly seeing was businesses clamoring to keep their profits instead of trusted servants looking for the best way to

collectively get the message to the newcomer and leaving the results to our higher power.

In my opinion, all AA service offices have a responsibility to get the books to the newcomer who needs them in the most efficient way possible without concern for whose pocket the money goes in. Instead I watched problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. As I walked out I was extremely grateful that South Jersey Intergroup has chosen to strictly adhere to traditions in this matter and continues to rely mainly on contributions from the groups we serve.

Karen M