

# ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

**SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP**

**August 2018**

## Remembering What Alcoholism Took Away Helps Me Lead a Sober Lifestyle

Alcoholism is a disease, and when you have it, it becomes a way of life. Fortunately, so does sobriety. I recently reached my fifth year of sobriety, which was preceded by a 30-year drinking career. Sobriety all but forces me to look at my drinking, to look at my alcoholism, which is difficult and painful, but also helps me appreciate sobriety.

It's easy for me to focus on what I don't have; remembering and

cataloguing what alcohol took away from me gives me an important perspective on where I am now.

In my 20s, alcohol meant fun. It meant going to parties and bars and concerts. If it was a Friday or Saturday night and I wasn't drunk, it was a social failure. Drunk, I was fun. I even used to pride myself on how much I could drink without getting sloppy, or at least not passing out.

The years progressed, and going to a bar after work to unwind became the norm. It wasn't a popularity contest like being the life of the party, but a way to unwind, relax after a busy day, and socialize with my co-workers, bonding with them, or catching up with my friends.



Then it became relaxing at home after work with a beer, or socializing after golf. I began to enjoy the feeling of a nice beer buzz, particularly as I showered after a round.

As we grew older, rowdy keg parties slowly transitioned into more sedate dinner parties, with wine replacing the beer, but despite the more civilized setting, the drunkenness remained the same.

The thing about alcoholism is it can make ridiculously stupid ideas seem reasonable, even right. How many times I drove drunk, or passed out

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### Thoughts on a Higher Power

I was blessed to have a higher power when I came into AA. I learned from AA that it was the seeking that led me to this power. As I reflect, I know this power has been with me forever, has had my back, and has led me to a life that I did not think I would have. I have also learned that my higher power does not have to be yours, that my path merges with everyone else on planet earth and that I need to choose love and tolerance above all else.

My path emphasizes Nature, and the duality of all that lies within. I see Her in the moon, shining over the ocean on a crystal clear night. Her fullness radiates serenity. I see Her in the eyes of the does as they stare at me, not afraid. I see Him in the hawk

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**Inside This Issue:** ♦ SJI Trivia ♦ Opportunities for Service ♦ Crossword Puzzle ♦ Steps, Traditions and Concepts

## Editorial Policy

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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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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

## Trivia Question

August 2018:

What happened at Intergroup in July that also happens when you work your steps?

**Answer to July 2018 questions:** Who decides where Intergroup's money goes?

You do! South Jersey Intergroup has a Budget & Finance Committee that creates a proposed budget for the Intergroup body to approve. The committee has requested feedback so please feel free to contact them with suggestions, concerns or questions at [budget@aasj.org](mailto:budget@aasj.org).



## Higher Power

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that flies overhead, the span of his wings as he circles the sky above me. I see His strength in the sun as it shines down upon me. I see them both in the cardinals that have flown onto my deck; the graceful way he feeds her as they think no one is watching. I hear the whisper of my soul in the wind from the trees, and feel the soft caress around me as the breeze cools this hot day. I hear the sounds of birds, ducks, squirrels, and the ever present dogs as they fill in the day with their chatter.

I can sit under my oak tree and feel safe as the leaves form a bower of protection over my head. I dream of sunlit beaches, camping in the woods, scaling a mountain. This is my place, as I sit upon the ground and feel the strength of Mother Earth fill me.

I have no need to ask if there is a Higher Power. I have looked without and seen. I have looked within and felt. I have been awakened by the power that rests within me. The more I seek, the firmer the bond becomes, the more my heart opens, the more that is revealed.

*Judy P*

# August Service Opportunities



## Answering Service:

Anyone wishing to be added to the updated list as a volunteer for 12-step work please contact us via [answeringservice@aaaj.org](mailto:answeringservice@aaaj.org).

## Archives:

Rick and Jen are continuing to request anything AA related that you would like to contribute to Archives. Please pass items along by contacting [archives@aaaj.org](mailto:archives@aaaj.org). They will be cataloged and kept at the SJ Intergruop office.

## Bookers:

The next Bookers Meeting will be held on Thursday, August 2, 2018 at 8 PM at New Beginnings, Runnemedede, NJ. Bookers commitments are only filled at the Bookers meeting. If you cannot attend, and want to book speakers, please send someone in your place.

## Newsletter:

Please continue to ask your home groups for articles, poems, anything they would like to contribute. This is a great way to do service. We would love any and all contributions - articles, poetry, things of interest heard in the rooms, anything that has helped you in recovery. Please submit by Wednesday, August 8<sup>th</sup> for the September newsletter.

## Social Events:

The Social Events Committee is looking for new members and a co-chair. Come out and make the fun happen! Please e-mail [socialevents@aaaj.org](mailto:socialevents@aaaj.org) for more info.

## Speaking Commitments

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

Please contact Frank or Debbie at [handi@aaaj.org](mailto:handi@aaaj.org) if you are able to take one of these commitments.

### Monday

DayTop Young Peoples Community – Pittsgrove, August 27 7-8pm: [9 Harding Hwy Rt 40, Pittsgrove NJ](#)

Jefferson MICA Unit (New Building) – July 23, 30, Aug. 6, 20, 11am-12pm: [2201 Chapel Ave W Cherry Hill NJ](#)

### Tuesday

Solstice Counseling Services – Lumberton, August 7, 7-8pm: [1561 Rt. 38 W, Lumberton NJ](#)

Delaware House – Westampton, August 14 2-3pm: [21 Ikea Drive, Westampton NJ](#)

### Wednesday

Jefferson Psych Unit – Cherry Hill, August 22, 29 7:45-8:45pm: [2201 Chapel Ave W Cherry Hill NJ](#)

Jefferson MICA Unit – Cherry Hill, August 15, 29 12-1pm: [2201 Chapel Ave W Cherry Hill NJ \(NEW BUILDING\)](#)

Unity Place I - Cherry Hill, July 25 August 1, 15, 22, 29 12:40-1:30pm: [1 Keystone Ave, Cherry Hill, NJ](#)

Solstice Counseling Services – Lumberton, August 8, 22, 29, 12-1pm: [1561 Rt. 38 W, Lumberton NJ](#)

Northbrook Behavioral Health – Blackwood, Aug. 8, 22, 29, 8-9pm: [425 Woodbury-Turnersville Rd Blackwood NJ](#)

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## Lifestyle

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at someone's house, one time, literally into the bushes. As the disease progressed, it became a good idea to go around and drink all of the left-over wine when the dinner party was over and my wife had gone to bed. Before long, chugging down a glass of whiskey when I awoke on a Saturday or Sunday morning and then sleeping until noon was a good idea.

Even getting drunk every night didn't raise the flag. It was the lifestyle.

To use a popular buzzword, alcoholism is not sustainable. It began with alcohol being at the center of social activities, then at the center of my life, and then taking it over completely. I no longer needed rounds of golf or dinner parties to set up a night of drinking; a bottle

of whiskey stashed in the house every night did the trick. Of course, after a while, golf, dinner parties, friends and family became



things I no longer had time for: I worked and I drank. That's not much of a lifestyle on the face of it, but as an alcoholic, it seemed perfect to me.

I like thinking of sobriety as a lifestyle as well. Instead of bars, I go to meetings. Rounds of golf end with iced teas. Mornings begin much earlier and no longer include a daily hangover (another part of the alcoholic lifestyle).

I get up early, go to the gym, and have time and the wherewithal to

read and write for my own pleasure. Changing the little things, like getting up early and going to bed early, reinforces this idea that I have given my life a makeover. I no longer need a golf cart to carry me around for 18 holes, I can walk it. I have replaced finding the right wine with making new and interesting non-alcoholic "mocktails." A beer after work with my co-workers is now the occasional lunch out of the office.

It's a lifestyle that requires me to choose sobriety every day. I won't lie: I still crave that oblivion that drinking used to give me. That in itself is evidence that alcoholism is often a sign of a deeper, more fundamental problem. But when I think about the escape it gives me, I also think about all the baggage that comes with it. And that helps keep me sober.

Steve W.  
Masonville

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## Speakers

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### Thursday

Ancora – Hammonton, July 19, 26, 7-8pm: [202 Spring Garden Rd, Hammonton, NJ](#)

Lourdes Psych Unit – Willingboro, August 16, 30 8-9pm: [218 Sunset Rd Willingboro NJ](#)

Unity Place II – Hammonton, July 19 August 2, 16, 30 2-3 pm: [121 S. White Horse Pike, Hammonton, NJ](#)

Daybreak – Atco, July 19, 26 August 9, 16, 23, 30, 10:30-12:00 noon: [368 White Horse Pike, Atco, NJ](#)

### Friday

Jefferson Psych Unit – Cherry Hill, August 10, 7-8pm: [2201 Chapel Ave W Cherry Hill NJ](#)

Seabrook Women – Bridgeton, August 31, 7:30-8:30pm: [133 Polk Lane Bridgeton NJ](#)

Ambrosia Treatment Center – Medford, August 10, 17, 24, 7:30-8:30pm: [287 Old Marlton Pike, Medford NJ](#)

### Saturday

Maryville Mens – Williamstown, July 28, 7-8pm: [1903 Grant Ave Williamstown NJ](#)

Cooper Psych Unit – Camden NJ July 21 August 18, 10:30-11:30am: [1 Cooper Plaza Camden NJ](#)

## Step 8 Poem

*Made a list of all persons we had  
harmd and became willing  
to make amends to them all.*

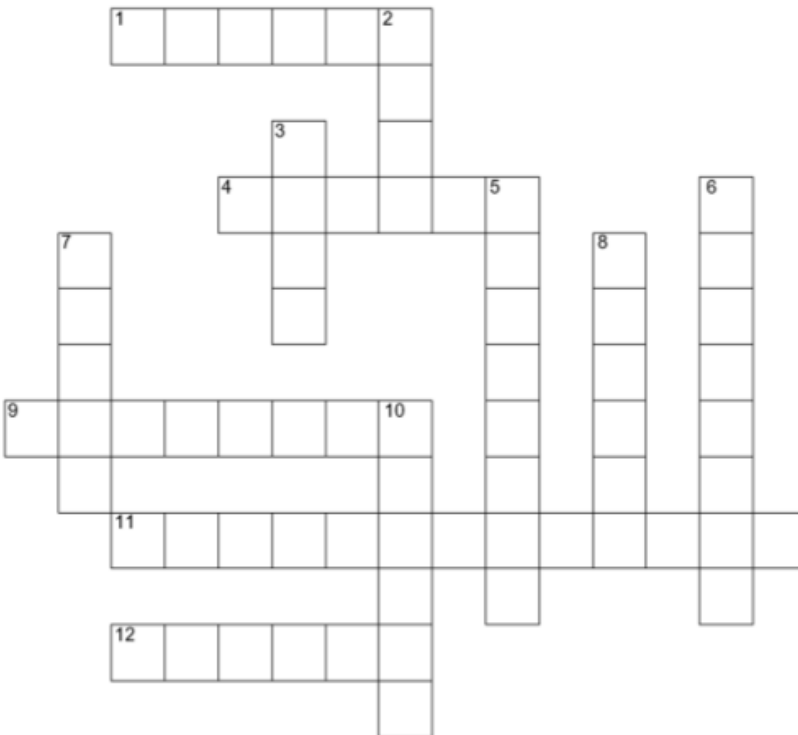
*Yes, we know we've harmed many  
Our list could go on and on  
And 'though we become willing to make amends  
It is hard to admit when we're wrong  
We look closely at our offenses  
And the effect that they've had through the years  
Admitting directly, then changing  
Our behaviors toward our peers  
Respecting the needs of the other,  
Even if they don't forgive  
Trusting that we will be pardoned  
So a more serene life we may live*

## As Bill Sees It



*Self-searching is the means by which we  
bring new vision, action and grace to bear  
upon the dark and negative side of our na-  
tures. With it comes the development of  
that kind of humility that makes it possible  
for us to receive God's help. (Page 10)*

## Things We Hear Around the Rooms



### ACROSS

- 1 Keep.....back.
- 4 HALT: Hungry, Angry, .....,  
Tired
- 9 The.....is in the steps.
- 11 Principles over.....
- 12 .....until you make it.

### DOWN

- 2 Take what you need  
and.....the rest away.
- 3 It works if you.....it!
- 5 Don't take.....too seriously.
- 6 Pause when.....
- 7 We don't.....our wounded.
- 8 Meeting makers.....



## August, the Eighth Month

### *A meditation on the connection between the 12 Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous*

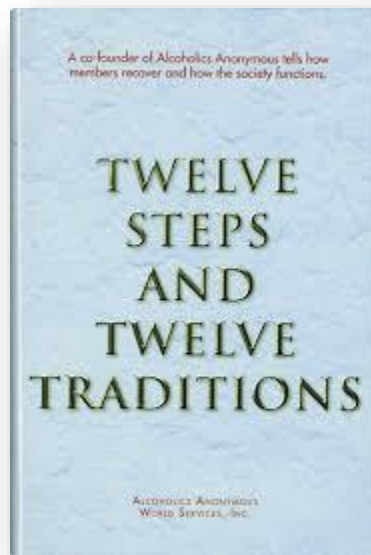
The Steps govern the alcoholic, the Traditions govern the group, and the Concepts govern AA as a world service organization. Is there a connection between these three levels of AA?

In my home group, we do a Tradition meeting each month in place of our ordinary weekly Step meeting. Invariably, there are those (myself included) who let out a collective groan when the Tradition meeting is announced. Members come, sometimes with burning personal problems, expecting some discussion of those problems, only to be told that the discussion will center around our survival as a group. The disappointment in the room is palpable!

To counter this disappointment, I always look for a personal connection between myself and the Tradition under discussion. Step Eight concerns my relations with other people and the harm I have done (and continue to do sometimes) to others. Tradition Eight concerns the relations of my AA home-group with prospective AA's: those still drinking and those wishing to stop drinking. Should these be approached professionally or not?

The Eighth Tradition is quite clear that my approach, and the groups approach, to all others, should be always and forever, non-professional. The Tradition tells me that my relations to others outside the group, alcoholics or not, should be on a personal level; using my experience, strength and hope, as a recovering alcoholic and only that. The personal approach, is the

only effective way that we as AA's have found, to possibly reach another suffering alcoholic and be believed. The Tradition also tells me that anytime money or employment for hire or any other agenda comes into play, it will dilute my ability to honestly reach another prospective AA member.



The Eighth Concept (from the Twelve Concepts for World Service) lays out the duties and limitations of the Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous in New York. It states that their role is one of "custodial oversight" of the various and respective committees of AA as a world (non) organization. It also highlights the fact that, as a group, AA may hire paid service workers: workers that any group needs to function: custodians, cleaners, office-workers to answer mail and oversee publications and

distribution, money-managers, etc.

On all levels, Step, Tradition and Concept, the common theme is honesty and credibility. How do I and the group and the world organization, best contribute to my own sobriety and growth and the sobriety and growth of others? The basic message here is one of purity: any other concern besides that of entirely unselfish caring for my own sobriety and my relationship with all others (prospective AA's or not), will diminish my effectiveness as an individual in recovery and as a carrier of AA's message of spiritual recovery.

*Masonville Marty*

*Ed Note: The article from Switzerland last month listed the author as Anonymous. It was actually from Jason who used to live in South Jersey. Thank you Jason and keep us posted on your progress!*