

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

December 2018

‘My First Meeting, I Felt Like I Was Home’

Ed Note: I have known Wayne for some years now. It is true, the friends I make in AA I would never have even met if I wasn't an alcoholic! Wayne is a self-made guy, with a huge heart. When he speaks it is from the heart, and there is usually a smile that lights up his eyes as well as his face. He has helped many, many people in his 44+ years of sobriety, creating a legacy that will continue for many years to come. As Wayne would say "What a gift, what a gift!" Yes, he is a gift.

dropped out of school after 8th grade, got married at 17, and spent a lot of years moving my family around from place to place. I was co-dependent as well.



Experiences and people in AA

I always wondered what was wrong with me. I learned in AA that I have a disease and I also discovered what the phenomenon of craving was. I didn't know I didn't know. I found out AA is a non-violent spiritual moral program. I was told just don't drink today and ask my Higher Power to keep me sober today. I still turn it over every morning. And I don't drink under any and all circumstances. I was also told if you ain't prayin, you ain't stayin. It's that simple. I get on my knees every day, and I also take it one day at a time.

My first meeting I felt like I was home. I took any and all suggestions. I came in with no driver's license and the guys in the program picked me up and took me to meetings. I was put right in the herd. I called my sponsor 3

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How did you first learn about A.A.?

I was 12th stepped. Jim V and Terry took me too a meeting in Bellmawr. I went to my first meeting drunk, and have been sober ever since. I was very young at the time.

I was a binge drinker, and a bar hopper. My drink of choice was beer. At 16 I was arrested for drunk and disorderly in Atlantic City. At 29 the same thing happened in Stratford. I always wondered what was wrong with me. I couldn't stop drinking. I

Stages of Sobriety

When I had my last, very last drink on a Friday night, I had run out of places, people, therapists, books, and cults, and all the plates I was spinning fell crashing around my head. I was an alcoholic. What could be worse? I found out soon enough.

I was asked to make coffee during my first year. I refused. I never make coffee. "Fine," replied my men's group, "Go drink." Pretty cut and dried. I made the coffee after they showed me how to put the right amount in, as I was shaking and baking. They showed me where the plug was. And where to put the pot. And how to set out the cups and sugar and cream and cookies. It went on and on until I was on the verge of drinking again. It was so mun-

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thon ♦ Passing of a Friend

Like Home

From page 1

times a day – from a pay phone!
That's how much I wanted this program.

When I came in, I was given a sponsorship to a retreat. I met my spiritual advisor at a retreat, and did my 5th step with a priest there. I had a lot of trust issues, and felt I could tell him anything. What a gift!

Some of the people I met early in AA that helped change my life – Doc Kell. What grabbed me was the love the people in the program had for him. He took me to the Matt Talbott retreat when I had 90 days. Another was Bill Knoll. He was my hero! I met him at the Tuesday night Turnersville meeting. I remember walking into the Philly diner one Tuesday, and there was Bill – drunk! He came back, sobered up, and showed me that whatever happened, we can always come back and try again. He did for me what I could not do for myself. When I was in the hospital, he came to visit with flowers! No one ever did that for me before.

AA changes over the years

When I came in, there were a lot more open discussion meetings. There were step meetings, but no Big Book meetings. Meetings also lasted from 8:30 to 10:00. Smoking was allowed. We also used to go around the room and everyone was encouraged to

talk. There is not that much of this today.

Your sponsor was given to you, you did not pick one like people do today.

Today there are a lot of day meetings, which are more structured. There's no speaking till

I never finished anything in my life. I am going to die sober. I will finish this program.

90 days. I tell my sponsees/new people to throw up on your sponsor not at a meeting.

Contributions to AA/Service in AA

I sponsor many men. I feel the job of a sponsor is to put a sponsee's hands in the hand of God. This is my most important job in AA. I want to teach others that there are a lot of people just like them, we are all in this together, and there is a solution. I go to Matt Talbott retreats twice a year and bring a new guy with me. I go to my home group so people can rely on the fact that I am there, and willing to contribute and help.

I have also been involved with Back to the 40's study classes, which I feel help many a newcomer as well as anyone in the program.

Thoughts:

I see more closed AA meetings in the future. There is a lot of dual addiction out there

now. You can't talk about alcohol at an NA meeting, and we should keep AA meetings focused on alcohol.

I was kicked out of my in-laws house when I was 3 days sober. I did not drink over this, and this marriage did eventually end up in divorce. You know, I am sober a long time, but I still have issues in sobriety. I have been married 3 times in the program!

I never finished anything in my life. I am going to die sober. I will finish this program.

Judy



December Trivia

Although Bill W's first draft of the Twelve Steps was lost, what is believed to be his original wording of Step 7?

Answer to last month's trivia question:
What do you do when you can't make your H&I commitment?

d. When you can't make your H&I commitment find someone to cover for you. If that doesn't work contact H&I at handi@aasj.org so they can get it covered.

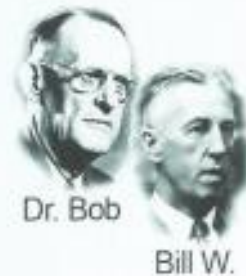
ANNOUNCING
**The 4th Annual
Florence Friday Night Big Book
ALCATHON**
Co-Sponsored by Districts 22 and 23

*Florence United Methodist Church
209 Broad Street Florence, New Jersey 08518*

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31ST 2018

Food and Refreshments at 5pm
Meetings at 6pm and are every hour up until and
including midnight

If your group is interested in taking a time slot,
please contact Nick D at 609-864-6787
(HURRY! Slots go fast)



FOOD * FUN * FELLOWSHIP
CELEBRATE A SAFE AND SOBER NEW YEAR

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.

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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

The Passing of a Friend

A few months ago I interviewed Theresa B for the newsletter. I hope you got to read it.

It is with great sadness that we let you know Theresa has passed. I for one am truly blessed that she was in my life!

Judy



Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

*We now arrive at Step 12;
Taking a look at what we've changed
Pretty much...Everything...
We now are re-arranged!
Now it is time for us
To practice every day
By reaching out to others
To help show them a way
To have a set of principles
Showing new ways to think
That can alter all those harmful traits
That made us want to drink.*



December Service Opportunities

Answering Service:

We currently have one (1) open shift: Friday 10AM- We can't stress enough the need for new volunteers to fill the vacancies on the 12-step list left by people who have been removed from the older list. If you or anyone else you know would like to volunteer please have them contact us @ answeringservice@asj.org.

Archives:

The SJIG office has archives to view and catalog. If you are interested and available for service please reach out to archives@asj.org and volunteer to help!

Hospitals and Institutions (H&I):

H&I still needs your support! We'd love to see more group reps and individuals out our monthly meeting on Nov. 26 at the Intergroup office.

Newsletter:

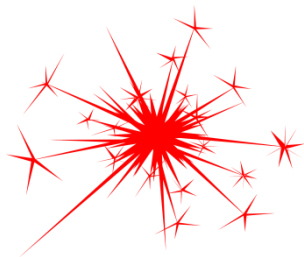
Please continue to send in articles, poems, thoughts, anything you like. It's a great way to be of service!

Speaking Commitments

Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) is looking for speakers to visit the following facilities:
Please contact Frank or Debbie at handi@asj.org if you are able to take one of these commitments.

- **Ambrosia Treatment Center** (New Building) Dec 25, 30 7-8pm 283 Old Marlton Pike Medford
- **Ancora Psych Hosp** – Hammonton NJ Nov 29, Dec 20, 31 7-8pm 202 Spring Garden Rd Hammonton
- **Maryville Women's** Williamstown NJ Dec 4, 11, 24, 25, 31 8-9pm [1903 Grant Ave Williamstown](#)
- **Princeton House** Dec 3 9:30-10:20am 351 New Albany Road, Moorestown
- **Maryville Men's** Williamstown NJ Dec 25 8-9pm [1903 Grant Ave Williamstown](#)
- **Maryville Men's Post House** Dec 3, 14, 21 8-9pm 610 Browns Mills Road, Pemberton
- **Cooper Psych Unit** Dec 1, 25, 29 8-9pm 1 Cooper Plaza Camden
- **Solstice Counseling Services** Dec 18, 19 7-8pm 300 Birmingham Road Pemberton
- **Delaware House – Westampton** Nov 27, Dec 4, 25 2-3pm [21 Ikea Drive, Westampton](#)
- **Northbrook Behavioral Health – Blackwood** Nov 28 8-9pm [425 Woodbury-Turnersville Rd Blackwood](#)
- **Jefferson MICA Unit – Cherry Hill** Dec 19 12-1pm 2201 Chapel Ave W, "new building", Cherry Hill
- **Unity Place I - Cherry Hill** Dec 5, 12, 19, 26 12:40-1:30pm [1 Keystone Ave, Cherry Hill](#)
- **Unity Place II - Hammonton** Nov 29, Dec 6, 13, 20, 27 2-3 pm [121 S. White Horse Pike, Hammonton,](#)
- **My Friend's House – Woodbury Heights** Dec 5, 26 7-8pm 371 Glassboro Rd, Woodbury Heights NJ
- **Lourdes Psych Unit – Willingboro** Nov 29 8-9pm 218 Sunset Rd, Willingboro
- **Daybreak - Atco** Nov 22, 29, Dec 13, 20 10:30-12:00 noon [368 White Horse Pike, Atco](#)

Please join us at our next



H&I Meetings

Monday at 7 pm on
November 26 and December 17



Bring in the New Year right with some H&I Commitments for you and your group

South Jersey Intergroup Office

5090 Central Highway, Suite 3

Pennsauken

Homegroup reps, individual commitment takers and
everyone else in AA are welcome to attend.

Stages

From page 1

-dane.

"Stand at the door and greet the guys coming in." Another great suggestion. I stuttered. And I did it. My sponsor, according to him,

gave me a camel pin. He told me I was to be like the camel. Just do what the camel does, and I'd stay sober another day. Start my day on my knees, wherever, and end the day on my knees. Simple. I'm not simple. I'm college-educated. My first year was horrid. My first cake was horrid. No presents. No applause. Another day. I went to three funerals of friends who died drinking. They were college-educated. I left a relationship with someone who wouldn't stop drinking.

I became a general service rep, for the same group. Two-year commitment. Coffee looked much better. I paid back my employer money I stole on padded expense accounts. I showed up on time and left late. My boss was shocked. I moved into my own place. I had never lived alone. I didn't like it. I went to some conventions with the guys from the group and found I could laugh and have fun without a drink. And we became friends. I started on a panel at a prison. Then, we started a Big Book study in a maximum security prison. They made coffee. We brought donuts. I also had a commitment at a federal prison, which brought up all my fears. Two of us traveled through several sets of locked doors with a guard, down an elevator several floors, into a

large room full of yellow jump-suited guys. All there in chains, for drug- and alcohol-related crimes. We couldn't touch them or pass any personal information. We carried a different kind of message to these guys. Raw, from the gut. I could be standing where they



were. "But for this or that," as Norm A. used to say. We were these guys. We were dressed up in suits and ties, on a holiday. Hope was our message to guys standing in chains.

Time passed, and I left the prison panels because I could not go there anymore. I switched gears around twelve years sober. My mother died. My brother-in-law died. My gang was with me--leading the ceremonies. We did this sober thing together: the ups and downs and grief and loss and marriages and divorces and babies born and Twelfth-Step calls together in the middle of the night. And I started sponsoring really young guys. It seemed there was a flood of young people coming in. Nine years old even. And the message changed as I realized that I was their father figure. So I taught them how to dress, shave, eat, laugh, keep with the guys, date, have girls as friends, keep the zipper zipped. We went to international conventions together, danced in the streets, celebrated

being sober. The Young People's Conventions were fun, upbeat, lively, irreverent and they, these thousand guys and girls, were staying sober and teaching me how to sing out Chapter Five when it was read, and appreciate the Twelve Traditions read in Chinese or in an Indian dialect or in French. And the message changed again. "Lighten up, Larry." And I did. I started new meetings, helped start some dances, got a New Year's dance going, and moved to a place that has become a dream come true. I took panels into the detox centers, went to New York to join up with my AA buddies at conventions, caught up with my friends: "Still sober?" "Yes." "Good."

And life goes on more smoothly now. Like a glider on a calm day. And the message is clear as a bell now. "Enjoy yourself, Larry. Life is too short to regret the past." So I'm not baffled anymore or confused about what I'm doing or where I'm going or how it all will turn out. I'm being carried now. And that's my message, "Attraction, not promotion." "Easy does it, but do it." Now my dad has died drunk in some awful place. And a few new guys insist on drinking again and going to jail. So my message today is to take care of myself and love those close to me and take care of my obligations as they come up. So simple. I stopped fighting. And it really is so simple.

-- Larry L.
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

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Bookers Meeting Location and Date Change

Effective, 2019
2nd Week of Every Quarter
New 2019 Dates

Feb. 14, May 9, Aug. 8, Nov. 14

New Location

Same place as the Intergroup Meetings

St Bart's

1989 Rt. 70, Cherry Hill, NJ