

# Having Fun in Sobriety



When I first came in at the age of 22, old-timers would always tell me how lucky I am that I made it to the rooms at such a young age. I didn't feel very lucky. I came into A.A. an empty shell of the person I once was. Alcohol withdrawal kept me awake every night. I couldn't go to bed until the sun came up, and the Shadow People went back to wherever they came from. It felt like I was getting prodded by hot irons all over my body, and I couldn't breathe. I had suffered from panic attacks every day for a couple years and thought that the stress alone was going to kill me any day now. I used to always say that my anxiety made me think that I was going to die, and my depression made me hope it happened soon.

What eventually scared me into getting sober was the worry that I was going to go through this miserable existence until I was 80. I knew that I did not want to live this way much longer but didn't know what to do. Luckily for me my parents were both in AA and I had been taken to my first meeting when I was 16. By the time I was 22 it was my third attempt at getting sober. This time was going to be different though. I knew I had to give the steps a try if I wanted to have a shot at sobriety. (Continued on pg.2)

## *Growing to Love God's Will*

Not unlike many alcoholics, I grew up believing that God demanded nothing less than perfection of me. I played the victim a lot, so when bad things happened, I believed it was God punishing me for my sinful ways. My mom beat me—God was punishing me. My dad didn't want to be involved in my life—God was punishing me. My drinking buddies stopped returning my calls—God was punishing me. I had such a negative outlook that I truly believed that God had put me on this earth to suffer.

When I came into the rooms, my sponsor shared a story that was unbelievably similar to mine. I began to realize that I was not so unique and alone in my pain. It was a beginning, but I still resented God.

My sponsor advised that I throw away my old conception of God and develop a new one. I began by writing out things I thought a God that I could trust would look like. (Continued on pg.2)

**Inside This Issue:** ♦ SJI Trivia ♦ EACYPAA XVII in Atlantic City ♦ Booker's Meeting Update ♦

♦ Opportunities for Service ♦ Announcements and Things to Do ♦

## Having Fun (cont'd from pg. 1)

At my first meeting, I met a group of girls my age and they told me about a Young People's meeting that met on Wednesday nights. It was a few days away and they asked me if I could make it until then. In my befogged mind I thought I was going on a quadruple date! When I showed up to the Young People's meeting one of the girls brought me downstairs and introduced me to her boyfriend.

Although I was heartbroken that one of my dates already had a boyfriend, I quickly became close friends with him. He started telling me some of his story, and as it turns out we had a lot in common. We drank in a lot of the same places and did a lot of the same non-alcoholic substances. He was two years older than me and had two years sobriety. After the meeting he told me about a Young Men's meeting that met the next night and suggested I meet him there. Glad to have a new friend, I went along.

After the meeting, one of the guys was having everyone over to his house to hangout afterwards and he invited me along. I remember sitting on a couch in a room with a bunch of guys I just met an hour and a half ago. It was different than I expected. I just heard all these men talk about God and spirituality and doing the next right thing,  
( continued on pg. 2 )

yet here we were watching videos on YouTube about a kid pranking his Grandpa and filming it. I couldn't remember a time in recent memory laughing as hard as I did that night. I didn't realize how much fun sobriety could be. I had a lot of drinking buddies still, but I couldn't laugh with them like this because alcohol wouldn't allow me to have a good time anymore. By the time I went home that night, my stomach and my cheek muscles were sore from laughing and smiling so much.

I did a lot of things in the first few years that I never would have dreamed I would have done, especially sober. My anxiety started to fade away as I got into the steps and learned to trust my Higher Power. I went to concerts, sporting events, barbecues and weddings where there was alcohol and didn't have the urge to drink. I went on numerous road trips and day trips to the shore. I got to go skydiving in Hawaii. I can't even count how many times me

and my buddies would hit a few meetings in a row and end up at an all-night diner until 3 in the morning. I got in front of a crowded room and sang karaoke for the first time at the convention my first year. I've gone golfing, bowling, and even ziplining one time with people in A.A.

The point I'm trying to make is that we aren't a glum lot in A.A. If none of the things I mentioned sounds fun to you, then try something that does sound fun. The best gift A.A. has given me is the ability to have a vote in my life. My alcoholism wouldn't allow me to do the things I wanted to do. If someone wanted to make plans with me, I told them I was busy. Which was true, every night I had plans to get drunk in my apartment. I thought my life was over when I got here, but it turns out it was just beginning.

- Ryan K

## Growing to Love (cont'd from pg. 1)

I wrote, "He would love me unconditionally, He would accept my shortcomings, and He doesn't cause bad things to happen." Despite my effort, I had trouble believing that my list could really be God. I had just made it up after all. My sponsor told me that her God was all of the things I had listed. She then asked me whether "I believed that she believed." I did. When she talked of God, she seemed to have a strong, trusting connection that desired. Again, it was a beginning.

I started to believe in my new conception when I found myself alone in the parking lot of a liquor store. I called someone in sobriety, I can't even remember who, and she gave me a valuable piece of advice. "Try praying," she said. "Psh," I thought, "Yea right, like that will ever work." I thought prayer was silly and God would not even take the time to listen to me. I did have the willingness to try because I wanted to call her back immediately to tell her all about how much prayer didn't work. So I prayed and asked God to help me stop thinking of a drink. Miraculously, the craving vanished. I started to think God was looking out for me after all and began to trust His will for me.

(Continued on pg. 3)

For a long time in sobriety, I often wondered what turning my will over would look like. I would think, "This item is on sale, it must be God's will to buy it." I see now that I was trying to mold God's will to what I wanted! Eventually I learned in the rooms that God's will was the Good Orderly Direction I received from my sponsor and other messengers. I do believe that God speaks through others, especially in meetings. When I am struggling with life's problems, I'll often find the answer I was looking for in someone's share.



But I have also learned what God's will is by reflecting on what it is not. I think God does not want me to be cruel, selfish, or self-centered. So, when someone asks me for a ride, I do believe it is God's will that I give that person a ride.

The longer that I stay sober, the more I grow to trust God. And with trust, comes the principle of step 3—faith. It has definitely not been an overnight process for me. I had to see the good in God first by recognizing that I wasn't unique and alone in this world. Then, I had to develop gratitude for the good God has brought me in this life (gratitude lists have proved helpful). I now find a great deal of release when I tell God in the morning that I am willing to do whatever He will have me do today. Time has taught me that God is well intentioned and that His way is a million times better than mine.

- Lisa E.



**While at an AA Meeting,  
what did you come to see?**

**Perhaps, a possible recourse  
to a drinking spree?**

**But you didn't drink the way we did;  
And are not quite sure you want to quit**

**We invite you to sit and listen  
You may find you're a perfect fit.**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Tradition**

**"The only requirement for AA Membership  
is a desire to Stop Drinking"**

## 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

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 for March:

At what New York City church did Bill W. attend Oxford Group meetings, and who was the presiding clergyman at said church?

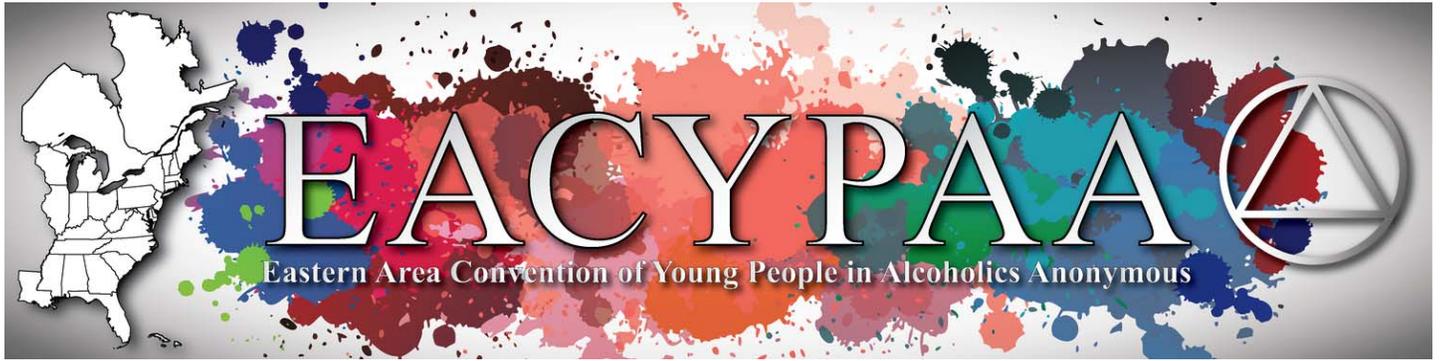


## Booker's Meeting Update: DATE AND LOCATION CHANGE

The Quarterly Booker's Meeting was held on 2/14/19 at 8:00 PM at St. Bart's Church on Rt. 70 in Cherry Hill. The 44 Groups in attendance booked a total of 258 speaking commitments. Booker's Meetings will now be held at St. Bart's on the second Thursday each quarter. The remaining dates for this year are:

**May 9<sup>th</sup>, August 8<sup>th</sup>, and November 14<sup>th</sup>.**

If your Group would like to book speakers (incoming and outgoing) you must send a representative to the Booker's Meeting. Thank you to everyone who attended and for helping to fill every speaking commitment needed.



## Right around the corner: In both time and distance!

Every year, EACYPAA, The Eastern Area Convention of Young People in A.A. has a Convention held in a "Host Area" of the Eastern US, and this year New Jersey was awarded the bid to host. This year's Convention, themed "Carry The Vision", will be held from March 7<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> at Bally's Hotel in Atlantic City. Registration is \$30.00 for the entire weekend, and can be completed online at: <https://www.njypaa.org/> or in person at the event's registration windows. The weekend will include AA, Grapevine, & Al-Anon workshops and every sort of panel discussions. Marathon meetings abound, with titles like "What do I want to be when I grow up", "Character Defects 101", "Drinking Problem or Thinking Problem", and "May God Bless you and keep you till then". There will be DJ's and dancing until 5:00AM, as well as the usual awesome Friday night, Saturday night & Sunday morning Speaker Meetings. Mornings will begin with meditation meetings and yoga meetings. Several hopeful bid committees will present workshops and discussions for future EACYPAA events to be held in their respective locales. We're not allowed to give away too much info about the weekend's activities, but things like a "Food Scavenger Hunt", mechanical bull riding and a movie night on Thursday, a number of live bands and cool workshops including a "spiritual warfare" nerf gun battle, a lip sync battle and speakeasy dance on Friday, a Pool Party and "Black Light Wear White" dance on Saturday are in the mix.

**Have your picture taken at the actual bar top that Dr. Bob had his last bender on! (It's from Atlantic City)**

**Whether you come just for the day, or spend the entire weekend, this IS a weekend you will NOT want to miss!**

**"A.A. of tomorrow will be safe, and certainly magnificent, in the keeping of you who are the younger generation of A.A. today." - Bill W.**



## A Higher Power's Will Step 2 to Step 11

I have been thinking a lot lately about God's will for me. The heating oil was delivered just in time, or I left the house too late to be involved in a bad car accident and, these events were God's will. Maybe, maybe not. A speaker recently mentioned the 11th step phrase "pray for knowledge of God's will for me..." That hit me. How do we know what is and what is not?

Early in sobriety, I gave up my self-will and turned things over to something else; in my case a God. Over the years I learned in the rooms that my God's direction is toward love and service. You guys taught me that. So I tried to follow it, such as being unselfish and practicing sacrifice until it does not seem like sacrifice. And, I tried not to take too much credit when I had done something for another (I give myself credit but try not to let others know). With that background, I developed a sense about events and my higher power's will for me. Most things that happened were not anyone's will— just life.

I now believe that the good things are God's will with chances for me (us) to show love and appreciation. And, the bad things give me (us) God's will to heal and help. But God is always there to lend a hand and allow me a positive angle. Once I had a relationship with a higher power I had to learn to stay in touch. In touch mentally through the day using prayer or just thinking about what my higher power is wanting me to do. Is doing fo me. Often, just being grateful for something. Flipping the switch from judging to understanding.

Today, I get a higher power's message from things people say and events as they reveal themselves. All perceived through the lens of love and service. This allows a higher power to work in my life. Of course, it works if I let it be God and not me.



I did not think too much about how to do this at first, I just believed and let it happen. I was transformed by the AA program. When I was recently laid off from my job of many years it was God's will. I did not see it right away through all the self pity, self righteousness and resentment. But God gave me a break. I had enough to live on and still had some work or could find work. I was healthy enough to work. The inspiration and understanding that came from the rooms was incredible—God moments.

And I thank my higher power, not for sparing me, but for the gifts I had been given, the ones I have and the ones I still need to deliver for God.

Bob....Red Lion

# March Service Opportunities



**Ans. Service:** We currently have Two (2) open shifts: Sunday 2-4 PM, and Thursday 8-10 AM. We are also in need of new volunteers to “step-up” to fill the many spots left vacant by the recent 12 step list update. This is a great way to be part of the solution. Working with others and reaching out to the newcomer or those just coming back who needs us the most. Please contact the Answering Service Committee at [answeringservice@aasj.org](mailto:answeringservice@aasj.org) for more details on being a part of the 12 step list.

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

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

The next H & I Meeting will be held on Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM at the IG Office in Pennsauken.

**Monday :** Maryville Women’s Williamstown NJ Feb 25, March 25 8-9pm [1903 Grant Ave Williamstown NJ](#)

**Tuesday:** Delaware House – Westampton NJ March 19 2-3pm 21 Ikea Drive Westampton NJ

Solstice Counseling Services – Pemberton NJ Feb 26 7-8pm 300 Birmingham Road, Pemberton NJ

**Wednesday:** Unity Place I - Cherry Hill NJ Feb 27, March 20, 27 12:40-1:30pm [1 Keystone Ave, Cherry Hill, NJ](#)

Solstice Counseling Services – Pemberton NJ March 27 12-1pm 300 Birmingham Road, Pemberton NJ

Northbrook MICA Unit – Blackwood NJ March 27 8-9pm 425 Woodbury-Turnersville Rd, Blackwood NJ

**Thursday:** Ancora Psych Hosp – Hammonton NJ Feb 21, 28 7-8pm 202 Spring Garden Rd Hammonton NJ

Unity Place II - Hammonton NJ Feb 21, 28, March 7, 14, 28 2-3pm [121 S. White Horse Pike, Hammonton, NJ](#)

Daybreak - Atco NJ Feb 21, March 28 10:30-12:00 noon [368 White Horse Pike, Atco, NJ](#)

Pyramid Recovery – Women’s Unit – Hammonton Feb 21, 28, March 7, 14, 21, 28 7-8pm 600 S White Horse Pk

Pyramid Recovery – Men’s Unit – Hammonton Feb 21, 28, March 14, 21, 28 7-8pm 600 S White Horse Pike

Kingsway Recovery – Mullica Hill NJ Feb 21, March 7, 21 7-8pm 124 Bridgeton Park, Mullica Hill NJ

**Friday:** Maryville Post House (Men Only) – Pemberton March 1, 8, 29 8-9pm 610 Browns Mills Road, Pemberton NJ

**Saturday:** Maryville Women’s Unit – Williamstown NJ March 2, 16, 30 7-8pm 1903 Grant Ave, Williamstown NJ

**Newsletter:** Please continue to send in articles, poems, thoughts, anything you like. This is your newsletter.

# Get Out and Get Involved

**Friday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> – Friends of Bill Dance, 7:00 – 11:00 PM at St. Bart’s, Rt. 70 in Cherry Hill, Music by DJ Spinner Tom Y**

**Saturday February 23<sup>rd</sup> – Ice Skating on the Delaware River Waterfront, 4:00-7:00 PM - \$4.00 entry, \$10.00 Skate Rental, Pay at the door. 101 South Columbus Blvd - Philadelphia**

**February 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> – NERAASA 2019 – a weekend of AA service related panels and workshops**

**Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup> – Lifeline Group’s 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Food at 7:00 PM, 2 speakers from 8:00-9:15 PM Fellowship Church , 710 Collings Ave. , Collingswood**

**Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> – SLOTS (Sunlight of The Spirit) 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Food starts at 7:00PM Speaker at 8:00 PM Cultivate Church, Evesham Rd, Voorhees**

**March 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> – EACYPAA XVII Convention at Bally’s Hotel in Atlantic City – “Carry the Vision” - 4 days of unprecedented fellowship, food, and fun for young people of all ages.**

**Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup> – Voorhees Women of Grace will celebrate their 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary starting at 6:00PM with snacks & desserts, followed by 2 speakers at 7:00PM. Hope Church, 700 Cooper Rd. (Just behind “The Meeting Place”) Gentlemen are welcome!**

**Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> – Area 45’s “Speaker Jam” 10:00AM – 2:00PM hosted by the Area 45 Convention Committee, Columbus Baptist Church, 24260 West Main Street - Columbus**

**April 26 - April 28 - Annual Spiritual Retreat for 2019 in Vineland, New Jersey. This year marks year number 12 for our retreat (a magical number!). Appropriately, our theme this year will be, "Step 12 - A Spiritual Awakening". As always, our Retreat is being held on the weekend following Easter. More info call: Martin Perrotta - 856-313-9531**