

ANONYMOUS SOUTH JERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

February, 2020

ONE MEMBER'S STORY

When I entered AA, I had a pretty pessimistic outlook. My sponsor and other members continually suggested that I write a daily gratitude list, which I was very resistant to. Gratitude was not in my vocabulary and that had a lot to do with my relationship with God.

I refused to see the benefit of how writing down a few things I was grateful for everyday would change my life. It took years of dry drunk behavior before I became open-minded to the idea. Today I write 10 things I am grateful for after my nightly inventory. I give thanks even when things aren't going well because there is always SOMETHING to be grateful for. Here are some of the things I've realized about gratitude:

God is in gratitude: My relationship with God improved significantly when I started taking actions against my will and it really began with my commitment to writing a gratitude list. When my outlook was bleak, it was hard for me to appreciate God at all. All I knew about God was that He made my life horrible. Once I started noticing the beauty in life through gratitude, I realized that God was actually wonderful. God removed my obsession to drink, which is something I can never take for granted. I began to place my trust in God more because I realized, with all the things I can be grateful for, He is really looking out for me.

Gratitude fights negativity: When I am negative, there is something going on inside me that I need to address and usually it's a lack of gratitude. I remember I was on an hour long commute feeling rather sorry for myself when I just started saying aloud 50 things I was grateful for. Things like "heat in this car", "the ability to wipe my own ass", "my grand mom's health", "democracy", "a bed to sleep on"... Unbelievably, my mood was completely

different by the end of that commute.

Gratitude makes me more empathetic: When I am grateful, many times I am thinking of how it must be worse for someone else. How can I be upset about anything when there are people with no running water? This can be applied at any time. If I impatient while waiting in a long checkout line, I often think of how I can be grateful that I have enough money to buy food.

Gratitude is much like one day at a time: At any moment, the things I am grateful for today can be taken away tomorrow. I can be healthy one day and sick the next. This is why I try to be grateful for this moment, this friendship, this family member, this ability to walk, because one day I may miss the very things I take for granted.

The longer I stay sober, the more grateful I become: I had no idea how out of control my drinking was until I had a few years of sobriety. I always thought "it wasn't that bad". It's hard to see insanity when in it. It seems that every year I have a new memory of a behavior I did during my drinking days that I wouldn't dream of doing today. I am a thousand times grateful I don't have to live that way anymore.

Elizabeth E.

Inside This Issue: ♦ One AAs Experience

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Announcements and Things to Do

The Countdown is On!!!

July 2 - 5, 2020

Celebrate A.A.'s 85th Anniversary !

The 2020 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held July 2nd to July 5th, 2020 in Detroit, Michigan with the theme "Love and Tolerance is our Code."

A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.'s 85th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Ford Field Stadium. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the COBO Center in downtown Detroit. We know many are excited about the International Convention and eager for detailed information. As the time gets closer, additional information about the Convention and Detroit, our host city, will be provided.

Watch for Convention articles in A.A.'s quarterly news bulletin, Box 4-5-9, which is mailed to the general service representative of every group in the U.S. and Canada listed with G.S.O. Registration forms will be mailed in August 2019 to all G.S.R.s, Intergroups and Area Service Committees.

Online registration is now available.

Advance registration for the convention between Sept. 9, 2019 and April 14, 2020 will be \$115.00 (USD) per attendee. Registration after April 15, 2020 will be \$140.00 (USD) per attendee.

Everyone attending must register. Attendance at this special celebration is voluntary, and, as responsible A.A. members, "we pay our own way." The International Convention is paid for by the A.A.s who participate in it.

We hope to see you in Detroit to celebrate the 85th birthday of Alcoholics Anonymous.



A UNITED MESSAGE OF RECOVERY

TRADITION TWO

When I came to Alcoholics Anonymous in 1995, I wondered, sometimes aloud, why didn't someone "take over." The process of group conscience seemed ponderous and some members seemed not astute enough to make the "right" decisions. I was told by my sponsor that in the group conscience our ultimate authority, God, speaks and that we trust that that loving God's Will takes us in the right direction. Needless to say, I was sure she didn't mean what she said. I was sure that secretly the "wise" and "educated" members met and took the group where it needed to go. I was wrong.

In group conscience we listen to the least educated with as much attention as we do to the most educated. We weigh the opinion of the youngest member with as much regard as we do the longest sober member. We consider the opinion of the minority view and many times we change the direction of the group because we had never considered the merits of the obscure view having been expressed by the only "nay" when given the opportunity to tell us why she voted "nay."

Tradition Two leads me to "trust God" in all things undertaken by the Fellowship.

Many times over the past twenty-eight years, I've questioned "group conscience" only to find that in the end the decision made was the best direction for all. That is the beauty of "group conscience," it is God's voice telling us what is best for all of us, not just some of us.

Each group is a fellowship of equals. No matter what an individual member's background, education or professional expertise, no member has authority over the group.

In this way, the Fellowship reaches out to all who would seek its comfort and provides the atmosphere of a sense of belonging to all members.

My sponsor gave me a copy of a series of articles on the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous that appeared in the Grapevine in 1969. The questions were intended for the individual's use.

Many groups, however, use them as a basis for their discussion topic as they study the Traditions.

My sponsor gave them to me in an effort to help me find enough humility to be of service to our group.

Some of the questions pertaining to Tradition Two are:

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, AA committees, New comers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with AA Twelfth Step jobs or other AA responsibility?
3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs? Praise for my AA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussion or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at AA chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

I am constantly amazed that the lessons of early sobriety and the direction of a sponsor who did not seem wise at the time, still serve as the basis of a happy, joyous and free sober life.

Frank Z., Audubon Monday night...



Hospitals & Institutions
Open Speaking Commitments
Contact Debbie or Martin at handi@aasj.org
To book a speaking commitment.
The Next Meeting is February 24, 2020 at 7PM at the Intergroup Office.

FEBRUARY

Wednesday

Unity Place MICA – 12:40-1:30 pm – Feb. 19, 26
1 Keystone Avenue, Cherry Hill, NJ

Thursday

Ancora – 7-8 pm – Feb. 27
202 Spring Garden Road, Hammonton, NJ

Unity Place II – 10-11 am – Feb. 13, 20, 27
121 S. Whitehorse Pike, Hammonton, NJ

Daybreak – MICA – 10:30am-12pm – Feb. 13, 20
368 White Horse Pike, Atco, NJ

MARCH

Monday

Ancora – 7-8 pm – March 16
202 Spring Garden Road, Hammonton, NJ

Princeton House – 9:30-10:20 am – March 16
351 New Albany Road, Moorestown, NJ

Tuesday

Maryville Women's Unit – 8-9 – March 3
1903 Grant Avenue, Williamstown, NJ (Women only)

Cooper University Psych Unit – 8-9 pm – March 24
1 Cooper Plaza, Camden, NJ

Wednesday

Jefferson MICA Unit – 7:45-8:45 pm – March 4, 18
2201 Chapel Avenue West (New Bldg.), Cherry Hill,
NJ

Thursday

Ancora – 7-8 pm – March 19, 26
202 Spring Garden Road, Hammonton, NJ

Unity Place II – 10-11 am – March 5, 12, 19, 26
121 S. White Horse Pike, Hammonton, NJ (In Brands
Jewelry Parking Lot)

Daybreak MICA – 10:30 am-12 pm
March 12, 19, 26
Atco, NJ

Friday

Maryville Post House – 8-9 pm – March 6, 20
610 Brown Mills Road, Pemberton, NJ (Men only)

Saturday

Maryville Men's Unit – 7-8 pm – March 7
1903 Grant Avenue, Williamstown, NJ (Men only)
Cooper University Psych Unit – 10:30-11:30 am –
March 7, 28
1 Cooper Plaza, Camden, NJ

***"I am Responsible. When
anyone, anywhere, reaches
out for help, I want the hand
of A.A. always to be there.
And for that: I am***

ARCHIVES NEWS

The Archives committee continues to grow as we now have 5 members! Come join us, we need your time, ideas and support! We are still collecting, cataloging, and working towards preserving and digitizing information related to South Jersey AA.

Delran had their group anniversary which was attended by Archives this month.

We encourage the groups to submit workshops, anniversaries, etc. to the events page of AASJ.ORG. Not only will this spread the word about the event but will help us also to preserve the "present" day AA for the future members to come!

In grateful service,

Rick and Jen

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Please welcome Bryan C . to Public Information as another Co Chair. We now have Kristin P and Bryan C on the committee as the needs of Public Information have expanded. Both Kristin and Bryan have been very instrumental in helping with high school programs as well as IDRC, so they will be very beneficial to Public Information. We continue to share the message of AA in high schools as well as IDRC. If anyone would like to help with literature distribution please contact Public information The committee meeting day and time will be the changed to the first Friday of every month from 7:00 pm to 8:30.

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 SOUTH JERSEY 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, New Jersey

February 2

1942 – Bill W. paid tribute to Ruth Hock, AA’s first paid secretary, who resigned to get married. She had written approximately 15,000 letters to people asking for help

1939 – Dr. Harry Tiebout endorsed AA, the first psychiatrist to do so.

1940 – First organization meeting of Philadelphia AA is held at McCready H.’s room at 2209 Delaney Street.

February 5

1941 – Pittsburgh Telegram ran a story on the first A.A. group’s Friday night meeting of a dozen “former hopeless drunks.”

1940 – 1st AA clubhouse opened at 334-1/2 West 24th Street, NYC.

1951 – Fortune magazine article about AA was published in pamphlet form.

February 8

1940 – Bill W., Dr. Bob, and six other A.A.s asked 60 rich friends of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for money at the Union Club, N Y. They got \$2,000.

1959 – AA granted “Recording for the Blind” permission to tape the Big Book.

1976

JUNAAB created in Brazil

While records show A.A. meetings were held in Brazil as early as 1947, the country’s first General Service Board — Junta Nacional de Alcoólicos Anônimos, or JUNAAB, is created in February 1976.

February 11

1938 – Clarence S. (“Home Brewmeister” in 1st, 2nd & 3rd editions) had his last drink.

2011

The A.A. French Audio Internet Group – Vivre Sans Alcohol (Living Sober) – celebrates its fifth anniversary online in February 2011. The group has more than 70 French-speaking A.A. members from over a dozen countries, including Belgium, Canada, Morocco, Brazil, India, Australia and the United States.

February 13

1937 – Oxford Groups “Alcoholic Squadron” met at the home of Hank P. (“The Unbeliever” in the 1st edition of the Big Book) in New Jersey.

1940 – With about two years of sobriety, Jim B. (“The Vicious Cycle”) moved to the Philadelphia area and started the first Philadelphia A.A. group.

February 16

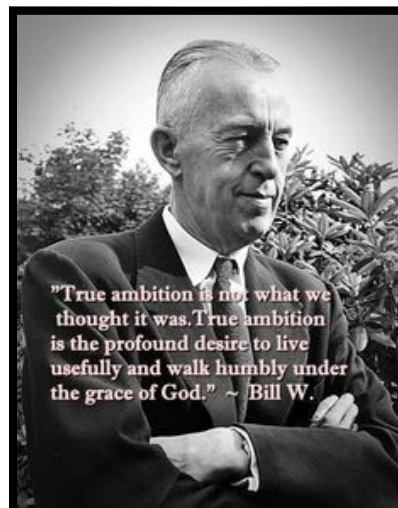
1941 – Baltimore Sunday Sun reported city’s first AA group begun in 1940 had grown from 3 to 40 members, with five being women.

February 21

1939 – 400 copies of the Big Book manuscript were sent to doctors, judges, psychiatrists, and others for comment.

Other February happenings with no specific date:

1938 – Rockefeller gave \$5,000 to AA.



“Change”

At a recent meeting I attended the topic was “change.” Some of the standard, helpful sayings were shared: “change I must, or drink I will” and “the only thing I must change is everything.” The sharing reflected the wisdom of the program and was spiritually uplifting.

A woman, seemingly early in her sobriety, tearfully—and sometimes inaudibly—shared that she was struggling, finding it “hard,” was fearful of not “making it” and of being “not good enough.” When I first heard that “the only thing I had to change was everything” it was an absolutely daunting idea.

As I listened to this woman share, I remembered my own struggles in my recovery and reflecting on how I view change now and had an “ah-ha” moment which I shared with the group.

During my second and third years of sobriety I found myself struggling. To my skewed perception everyone else in the rooms of AA seemed to be doing well; they seemed happy and to be “getting it.” I was becoming increasingly discouraged wondering—once again—if there was something wrong with me, some handicap that prevented me from truly recovering from my apparently permanent hopeless state of mind.

The line “Do not be discouraged!” during the reading of “How it Works” seemed a further confirmation of an inherent inability on my part to recover; to change. I kept praying for help.

And little by little the help came. I began to internalize what I was hearing. I kept hearing that acceptance was the answer. I had already been working on applying the Spiritual Axiom found on page 90 of the 12 and 12 and was realizing more and more that when I was disturbed that I had been holding an expectation; an expectation of how someone else should behave, of how some event should play out. I began to drop those expectations and to accept

people and events exactly as they were. Yet my discouragement grew. Something was missing.

What was missing was that I hadn’t been willing to accept myself as I was right now. I was judging my recovery and finding it wanting. I expected to be further along by now. When I’d hear someone in the rooms say “you’re exactly where you’re supposed to be right now;” I would cringe, thinking, “No, I should be better than this by now.” I hadn’t yet understood what the phrase “in God’s time, not mine,” meant. I was still setting the agenda.

I realized that self-acceptance had been missing and I began to practice it. Instead of being preoccupied with all the things that were wrong with me, I began to truly notice any progress that I had made; any positive changes in behavior or thinking in the past three years. When the storm of self-condemnation and shame threatened to descend I would endeavor to remind myself that I’m human, imperfect and fallible and excuse myself and—once again—look for the progress and let go of the idea of perfection.

For me that “Ah-Ha” moment was the realization that I no longer saw change as a desperate, difficult struggle to be different, but rather as a willingness to be changed! It’s a willingness to allow a Higher Power to help me to see myself and others in a new light, a willingness to redirect my thinking and actions. And boundless opportunities to change happen every day!

Carl S.



Announcements and Things To Do

Friday February 21

Wenonah Friday Night Anniversary

7:30pm

eat - 8:30pm Speaker

Holy Trinity Episcopal

11 N. Monroe & Poplar Ave.

Sunday February 23

Speaker Dinner Support - Dr. Bob's House,

Georgina's Restaurant

Bristol, Pa, \$40. 215.205.5390

February 19

8:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Intergroup Meeting

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Cherry Hill NJ

February 24

7:00 pm - 8:00 pm H&I Meeting

Intergroup Office, Pennsauken NJ

March 5

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Archives Committee Meeting

Intergroup Office, Pennsauken NJ

March 5

7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Social Committee Meeting

Intergroup Office, Pennsauken NJ

March 14

2:00 pm - 4:30 pm

It's Your Meeting / Business Meeting Workshop

482 Social Hall, Pennsauken NJ

March 18

8:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Intergroup Meeting

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Cherry Hill NJ

March 21

10:00 am - 12:00 pm AASJ Social Committee Hike at
Historic Smithville Park

Smith's Woods Entrance, Eastampton Twp. Burlington

March 21

1:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Spring Into: Step 3

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, Cherry Hill NJ

ANSWERING SERVICE POSITIONS OPEN

We currently have (9) open shifts and need your help to get these shifts covered. Please announce these at your home groups:

Monday 6AM-8AM, 8AM-10AM, Tuesday Over night, Thursday 6AM-8AM, 8AM-10AM & over night, Friday over night from 10PM-6AM, and Saturday 6AM-8AM

Please continue to remind everyone that more volunteers are need for the 12-step list. Areas we need most help: Audubon, Haddon Heights, Haddonfield, Berlin, Camden, Gibbsboro, Hammonton, Mount Laurel and Salem. We have signup sheets available for anyone wishing to take a copy to their home groups. If you know anyone who would like to be of service, please have them contact us at answeringservice@asj.org or invite us to speak at your home group.

Looking for Co-Chair person, preferably female to assist with incoming female calls.

Chair Steve M

Co-Chair: Open

(856)816-1581 stephenmcdonough11@verizon.net

A Message from AA Public Information

First of all I would like to welcome Kristin P. as a Co-Chair for Public Information. Kristin has already been a big part of Public Information with her tireless service to the high school speaking commitment. Kristin has helped countless times to obtain speakers and is always available to do service. This is a perfect match and we look forward to her being a part of the team. We have formed several committees within Public Information; including literature distribution, high school speakers and school events, IDRC, and we are looking for other ideas to get the AA message out to the Public. If anyone would like to help please email Public Information.

In December we had speakers at 4 high schools and we have scheduled 6 more schools for January, including Middle schools, which is approximately 900 students hearing the AA message, most for the very first time. Thank you to all who help with this very important commitment.

A Message from AA Archives

Under the direction of Tradition Nine and in the spirit of service, you are humbly invited to help the archive committee of Area 45. We need your assistance in preparing to host a hospitality suite (with Northern New Jersey Area 44) at the International AA convention in Detroit this summer.

Come on out and have a cup of coffee, talk and share with the current Archive Committee. Stay as long as you can and "Just keep it simple". If you can, e-mail or call to help determine how many may be coming.

Yours in service,

archives@snjaa.org

