

# ANONYMOUS

## Your Heavenly Father will NEVER let you down!

At the outset the Newsletter Committee wishes to share a concern with you. This document may be the only exposure a person in need sees of AA. That possibility carries with it a large responsibility. Of course, we direct all to their local AA groups- a list of which can be found at aasj.org. Page 4 of this newsletter contains our Hotline phone number, Our Editorial Policy, and the Disclaimer about Opinions What follows are opinions.

But what about first impressions? A brief glance of previous issues of this newsletter with all its flyers may give the impression that AA is one big party which it isn't. If, like me you attend your first meeting at a young age, you may think AA is just old men trying to clean up their act in a last gasp, which it also isn't.

So what is it? It is people who have lost the ability to control their drinking and desperately wish to stop. We have found that together we can do what alone we cannot. But it's more than that- it's returning to the stream of life. AA # 2, Dr. Bob, shared his experience in our Basic Text (180-181) this way:

**The question which might naturally come into your mind would be: "What did the man do or say that was different from what others had done or said?" It must be remembered that I had read a great deal and talked to everyone who knew, or thought they knew anything about the subject of alcoholism. But this was a man who had experienced many years of frightful drinking, who had had most all the drunkard's experiences known to man.... He gave me information about the subject of alcoholism which was undoubtedly helpful. Of far more importance was the fact that he was the first living human with whom I had ever talked, who knew what he was talking about in regard to alcoholism from actual experience. In other words, he talked my language. He knew all the answers, and certainly not because he had picked them up in his reading.**

(Continued on page 2 -NEVER)

## Trivia Question :

In what book is the following text found?

(Answer is in this issue)



....how shall we come to terms with seeming failure or success? Can we now accept and adjust to either without despair or pride? Can we accept poverty, sickness, loneliness, and bereavement with courage and serenity? Can we steadfastly content ourselves with the humbler, yet sometimes more durable, satisfactions when the brighter, more glittering achievements are denied us?

The A.A. answer to these questions about living is "Yes, all of these things are possible." We know this because we see monotony, pain, and even calamity turned to good use by those who keep on trying to practice A.A.'s Twelve Steps. And if these are facts of life for the many alcoholics who have recovered in A.A., they can become the facts of life for many more.

Of course all A.A.'s, even the best, fall far short of such achievements as a consistent thing. Without necessarily taking that first drink, we often get quite far off the beam. Our troubles sometimes begin with indifference. We are sober and happy in our A.A. work. Things go well at home and office. We naturally congratulate ourselves on what later proves to be a far too easy and superficial point of view.

(Continued on page 2 -TRIVIA)

**(NEVER)** It is a most wonderful blessing to be relieved of the terrible curse with which I was afflicted. My health is good and I have regained my self-respect and the respect of my colleagues. My home life is ideal and my business is as good as can be expected in these uncertain times.

I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:

1. Sense of duty.
2. It is a pleasure.
3. Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.
4. Because every time I do it I take out a little insurance for myself against a possible slip.

Unlike most of our crowd, I did not get over my craving for liquor much during the first two and one-half years of abstinence. It was almost always with me. But at no time have I been anywhere near yielding. I used to get terribly upset when I saw my friends drink and knew I could not, but I schooled myself to believe that though I once had the same privilege, I had abused it so frightfully that it was withdrawn. So it doesn't behoove me to squawk about it, for after all, nobody ever used to throw me down and pour any liquor down my throat.

If you think you are an atheist, an agnostic, a skeptic, or have any other form of intellectual pride which keeps you from accepting what is in this book, I feel sorry for you. If you still think you are strong enough to beat the game alone, that is your affair. But if you really and truly want to quit drinking liquor for good and all, and sincerely feel that you must have some help, we know that we have an answer for you. It never fails if you go about it with one half the zeal you have been in the habit of showing when getting another drink.

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**(TRIVIA)** We temporarily cease to grow because we feel satisfied that there is no need for all of A.A.'s Twelve Steps for us. We are doing fine on a few of them. Maybe we are doing fine on only two of them, the First Step and that part of the Twelfth where we "carry the message." In A.A. slang, that blissful state is known as "two-stepping." And it can go on for years.

The best-intentioned of us can fall for the "two-step" illusion. Sooner or later the pink cloud stage wears off and things go disappointingly dull. We begin to think that A.A. doesn't pay off after all. We become puzzled and discouraged.

Then perhaps life, as it has a way of doing, suddenly hands us a great big lump that we can't begin to swallow, let alone digest. We fail to get a worked-for promotion. We lose that good job. Maybe there are serious domestic or romantic difficulties, or perhaps that boy we thought God was looking after becomes a military casualty.

What then? Have we alcoholics in A.A. got, or can we get, the resources to meet these calamities which come to so many? These were problems of life which we could never face up to. Can we now, with the help of God as we understand Him, handle them as well and as bravely as our nonalcoholic friends often do? Can we transform these calamities into assets, sources of growth and comfort to ourselves and those about us? Well, we surely have a chance if we switch from "two-stepping" to "twelve-stepping," if we are willing to receive that grace of God which can sustain and strengthen us in any catastrophe.

## **WHEN YOUR SPONSOR RECEIVES A TERMINAL DIAGNOSIS** BY PETE R

When I enter the AA program in December of 2001, I was a selfish & self-centered. Having worked another 12 step program with a sponsor who would not tolerate my nonsense, and who was not afraid to call me out on my behavior forced me to grow up finally. We were able to transform from sponsor-sponsee relationship to best friends however, in a moment's notice we could flip a switch and go right back to sponsor- sponsee mode when it was necessary. And there were times where the sponsee had to be the sponsor, and for us that arrangement was perfectly OK.

Steve H was my sponsor for 14 years. Anyone who has attended a meeting in Maple Shade knows that Steve, and I were inseparable. Steve allowed me the privilege of seeing and learning about the very personal parts of his life; those things he never shared with anyone.

Steve was by my side when both of my parents became ill and eventually passed away. These were very trying times for me as an only child. I have a cousin, who I refer to as my brother from another mother, and Michael was there for me also, but Steve kept me sober, and sane.

When our oldest daughter shot a hot bag, (fentanyl, when she thought it was heroin), and almost died on us Steve recovering from dual addictions forced me to take a long hard look at many things especially my behavior, and to figure out what part I was responsible for in her overdose. Man, this was hard stuff, in a loving, yet tough way Steve made me figure it out.

Shortly after this incident Steve had an appointment with our primary care doctor, yes, we had the same doctor. After the appointment I received a phone call from Steve asking me if I could come over. By the sound of his voice, I knew something was up. When I arrived at his apartment he said "I have prostate cancer, and my kidneys are not working like they should". That news was a gunshot that took my breath away. I reassured Steve that I wasn't going anywhere, and for long-time things were good. Then I began to notice little things likely treatment relate like he was losing weight, and not eating much. I had to care for him, while at the same time I had to care for myself, my recovery.

There are some individuals who are capable of working the program without a sponsor, not me. I've had one since I walked in the door of my first meeting, and I sure as hell am not going to try to go it alone now. The question is how do you look for a new Sponsor when your sponsor is still alive? I cannot tell you how many individuals who are in recovery that I respect, and admire that I turned to ask how to do this and no one had a clue.

The program says rigorous honesty in all of our affairs I knew what I had to do. I had three people in mind, so I went to Steve's house; he was just waking up. When I arrived, he began talking about some show he watched the night before, and I was going to do the most difficult thing I had ever done in my recovery. I started looking out of his kitchen window, as he sat down and lit up a smoke, I began to cry like a baby, Steve said "OK what's up" I turned around, And said "Steve the cancer, or the treatment is starting to get to you. It's not fair that you continue to sponsor me when you need to focus on yourself for a change. Know that I'm not going anywhere, but I have some people in mind as sponsors tell me what you think."

I gave Steve the names, and why I thought they would be good sponsors. When I was done Steve said Wow! I don't have a problem with any of them being your sponsor. I shared with him that no one had ever gone through this, and he was amazed that I spoke to that many people. My current sponsor was not on the list however; I know that Steve would not have a problem with the Sponsor I chose.

On January 11,2018 Steve's Higher Power called him home, and with him he took a piece of me. They say that the Highest compliment a person in recovery can receive is for others in this Fellowship to say that Steve passed Clean & Sober.

I will never forget the lessons that I was taught in my swimming pool every day during the summer when we had our daily AA swimming meeting, and AA deep dive. I was filled with questions, because I never wanted to forget these very special lessons. Finally, Steve reassured me that "You know the program just keep doing what you do on a daily basis wake up, pray, put one foot in front of the other, help someone when you can, make a meeting, help the newcomer, pray before bed, wake up, and do it all over the next day", which is what I try to do.

I give away freely what was given to me freely, and with love, and care. I think of you every day, and miss you. We will be together one day in the big meeting in the sky.

## 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. Quiz answer: 12 & 12 Step 12 112-114. 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](mailto: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](mailto:Info@aasj.org) Website: [www.aasj.org](http://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

**InterGroup Steering Committee: consists of the panel of elected InterGroup Officers, InterGroup Committee Chairpersons/Co-Chairpersons, and a Representative from the Board of Trustees. Our monthly meeting is held on the second Wednesday of each month at the InterGroup Office in Pennsauken and is open to all members of the A.A. Fellowship.**

## **NEWCOMERS KNOW ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT ALCOHOLISM**

I did an exercise with a group of newcomers I'd like to share it with you. I said; if you don't know what an alcoholic is, indulge me by playing my game, and let's make an alcoholic in the laboratory of our mind. What I did was I held up, what I told them was, 'an invisible test-tube'. And I said let's make an alcoholic in this invisible test-tube. You who are new put in the ingredients that you think are necessary to make an alcoholic. Then we will see what you've made and we will look at it and if we're not one of them, we can leave. They got enthusiastic about the experiment then. So I held up this invisible test-tube and I challenged them to make an alcoholic and you know what newcomers do? They don't say a word.

So then I gave them the worst threat you can ever give a newcomer? I said okay, you don't want to play the game, fine. I'll stand here holding this invisible, heavy, heavy, test-tube for 20, 30, 45 minutes. And we'll just sit in silence. The biggest threat you can give a newcomer is silence. Because then all of a sudden all those voices in their head start to talk. One voice in the back of the room said put depression in the test tube. Then it was like a Gatling gun. Here's what happened in that room of

newcomers. Like a Gatling gun. Put in anxiety, put in perfectionism, put in self-loathing. They said put in ego. Put in guilt, especially for Catholic people. We have to put a little extra guilt. There are three kinds of guilt they tell me. I'm Catholic; there's Catholic guilt, Irish guilt, then there's Irish Catholic guilt. That's self-loathing.

More anxiety, anger, resentment! So we can go on and on and on. And that's exactly what they did. And they filled the test tube. And you know what they didn't put in. Now, here are 80 people who are new to Alcoholics Anonymous, a day, a week, a month sober, just arrived that day. Why we waste time trying to tell them what they already know, they didn't put in one thing, alcohol, because they weren't stupid.

So I challenge them to put some alcohol in that test tube. In that laboratory of our mind, we put some alcohol; you know what they reported to me. They reported to me that when they put alcohol into their test-tube, the alcohol may the feelings go away. Alcohol appeared to make anxiety go away, remorse go away, depression go away. And that's why they reported they used it. And then when we asked them to continue to pour alcohol into it and see what happens. And here's what they reported. They reported that at some point, it stopped working and they continued pouring it in when it stopped working. They continue to pour their alcohol in their test tube. They never once ever decided, oh, my God its making my life a mess, I think I'll quit.

Then they reported that what they did was to pursue alcohol almost to their death. And they had stopped caring when alcohol stop working and they kept putting it in their test tube. If you're an alcoholic of my type it not only doesn't dilute your problems, but it begins to intensify those problems you were trying to escape.

If you continue to drink after it stops working like I drank after it stopped working, you'll know a new meaning of fear. Self-loathing will take on a new low. Everything that's in your test tube, if you're like my type of alcoholic will be worse. I used everything I knew how to make it work. I changed drinks I changed methods. I changed everything about my drinking to get the desired effect but I got more guilt, I got no relief from the things that were in the test-tube. By the time I came in, I was drowned in alcohol. I was sure I was going to lose my mind...

So I reached out to AA but after a year or so my recovery hit a wall. I told my sponsor, I can't seem to change. He said this about change;

He said to me, change is easy! I said change hurts! He said change is painless!

He said and I quote; "The only pain in change is your resistance to change!"

Once you stop resisting you'll step through the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. Bill and Bob designed a Program for Change. They knew what they were doing. Follow it- it works.

If you only stop drinking and go to AA, one of two things are gonna happen. You're either gonna drink again, or you're gonna be the most miserable failure you've ever met. And we see that in another way; long term, sober, untreated alcoholism. You know how to notice them? They find fault in their home, people, and still have computerized eyes. Program and recovery are two separate ideas. Don't ever think they are the same. The recovery program works 100% of the time for people who stopped resisting and let go and let God. The thing I didn't want to happen turned out to be the best thing that's ever happened to me. I love Alcoholics Anonymous. I can't practice this alone- I need you.

Thank you very much.

Frank M- Evergreen Park II at 5th Palm Springs Convention 9-19-92

# Tell them the TRUTH, it may save their Life!

We started an experimental group probably 12 years ago with 8 members; we now have 500 people who are members of that group. And it's where I call home. We're a traditional AA meeting and so we talked about recovery. We don't talk a lot about alcohol use.

Now, I don't know if that's right or wrong, but that's what we do. Sometimes meetings spend so much time talking about drinking as if you need to know something about drinking. It's my belief that if you're an alcoholic, you know everything there is to know about drinking so it serves no purpose for me to give you a drunkalogue.

How can I prove to you that I'm an alcoholic? By telling you how much I drank or how long? There's no way that words would prove to you that I'm an alcoholic. The only way I could prove to you that I'm an alcoholic is to drink and let you see how I burn my life to the ground and that I'm not willing to do. So you just have to take my word.

If there's anyone reading this with less than 6 months, I will tell you some TRUTH! Here's a TRUTH! You know how hard it is to come here. TRUTH! It's harder to stay here. Here's the latest world survey from General Service Office. Some people don't know that every four years, they do a survey. We take the pulse of Alcoholics Anonymous. Here's what the survey says. 50% of all the people that come to Alcoholics Anonymous leave in the first six months. That's TRUTH! 50% of the people who don't leave in the first six months, leave before the first year. That's TRUTH. That's why I take it so serious. When I came into A.A., I represented the newest 1/10 of 1% of all the people in AA. I had one day. Here's what the survey says, I'm going to be 21 years sober. So I represent that top 1% of all present members of Alcoholics Anonymous. In 21 years, I have gone from 1/10 of 1% on the bottom to 1% on top. Where did everybody in between go? That's magic.

That doesn't mean A.A. doesn't work, AA works today the way it worked when they wrote a book in 1939, and they said, 'rarely ever seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path'. What are we doing wrong? Are we watering this thing down? Why are we so worried about new people? We always have new people, alcohol drives them here! We need to concentrate on; how do we keep them? They're leaving out of the back door as fast as they're coming in the front door. And we're only concentrating on the front door. These are just my opinions. There's got to be some answer. We've had 75 years plus to accumulate old timers. How could I represent the top 1%? Jesus, I'm new compared to 75 years! When I came into Alcoholics Anonymous, every room was full. We say oh, we have more meetings. Now we have more people. That's right, we have twice as many people in AA now, as you did the day I walked in here 21 years ago, and the population has doubled. We're just barely keeping up with the population explosion.

Now, we did something I'm going to share with you. In our group, about 12 years ago, we took a chance, we decided to see what would happen if you told the newcomer the TRUTH. So we started a new beginners meeting. Now immediately preceding the regular meeting, which takes place at 7:30 we let the word out that if you want to come to something different at 6:30 in the Beginners Meeting. And here's the experiment. We told them the TRUTH from the very first day. What we told them AAs function is not to change to please you or to fit in your life. You are supposed to change to fit in the AA way of life from the first day. We tell them recovering from alcohol is not stopping drinking. TRUTH, first day! We tell them they are their own worst obstacle towards recovery in how they think. So maybe they'll excuse us if we don't care what they think.

First day! AA is a spiritual program, not a social program! We now have over 100 members of our group who have more than 10 years of continuous sobriety who have gone through the beginners. So you know what? If you tell

him the TRUTH, this thing works. There's no risk involved. Yet we walk around in Alcoholics Anonymous, and everybody's so afraid to hurt everybody's feelings. We worry my God, they may leave. At our group that just opens a chair for the people who are waiting outside. This is a program for people who want it not for people who need it. Here is a 12-step call on a beginner who has had repeated slips.

“The man who made the call came down to see me and asked me what happened? I don't know I said, somehow, I found myself in a bar. And I don't know how I got there. I remember him getting up from the chair and pointing a finger at me. Now wait a minute, he said, before we go any further, one of the requirements and an important requirement is honesty. You haven't got any. Nobody pushed you into the bar, you walked in there, you ordered the drink, and you drank it. So don't tell me you don't know how you got there. Now you're lying here using a bed that could be used by somebody else who needs it more than you and you're taking up my time. I've got better ways to spend it than talk to you. If I were you, I'd go out and get drunk and stay drunk until I made my mind up what I wanted to do. As far as I'm concerned, you stink.” That call was made by Dr. Bob in Dr. Bob and the Good Old Timers, page 274. Frank M- Evergreen Park II 9-19-92

# What Does Anonymity Mean To AA?

**Tradition 11: Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.**

**Tradition 12: And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.**

**Member of Alcoholics Anonymous Make a point of carrying the message about their own recovery in A.A. on a person- to-person basis- but never disclose the membership of others. In this way, they may serve as examples of recovery and stimulate active alcoholics to seek help.**

**In the public media, however- such as press, radio, TV, films, and other media technologies such as the Internet- AA Traditions urge Members to maintain strict anonymity for three reasons:**

- 1. We have learned from our own experience that the active alcoholic will shun any source of help which might reveal his or her identity.**
- 2. Past events indicate those alcoholics who seek public recognition as A.A. members may drink again.**

**3. Public attention and publicity for individual members of AA would invite self-serving competition and conflict over differing personal views.**

**Anonymity in public media guards the unity of A.A. members and preserves the attraction of the program for the millions who still need help.**

## **Announcements & Fellowship Things to Do**

**Sat, Nov. 19 6pm-8pm** Philly, New Beginnings 44<sup>th</sup> Anniv, Christ's United Presbyterian 1020s 10<sup>th</sup> St.

**Sun. Nov 20 8:30, [Evesham](#)**, Area 45 Fall Assembly, The Gibson House, 535 E Main Street

**Tues. Nov. 22- Noon**, Yardville, Noon Serenity Group Anniv, Start 11:30, 555 Yardville-Allentown Rd.

**Wed. Nov 23 6pm to Thur. Nov 24 7pm [Sewell](#)** KISS Club Alcathon, 1962 Delsea Dr. exit 56B off Rt.55

**Thur. Nov 24 12:30- 4:15pm [Pemberton](#)** Thanksgiving Alcathon, 6 Pemberton St

**Thur. Nov 24 - [Vineland](#)** Thanksgiving Alcathon at *United Methodist Ch, 2724 S Main Rd & Sherman.*

**Thur. Nov 24- 9am- Noon**, Hamilton Square Gratitude Breakfast, \$5.00 suggested Donation, 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church, 3550 Nottingham Way

**Thur. Nov 24 8:30-am- 2pm** Barnegat Gratitude Brunch, Open Meetings throughout day,, Waretown Community Center, 239 11<sup>th</sup> Street

**Tue. Nov. 29 Noon- [Woodbury](#)**, Anniversary lunch, Christ Episcopal Ch 162 Delaware St,

**Wed Nov 30 6:30pm** Ventnor Fellowship of the Spirit Anniv, Ventnor Comm.Ch, 5300 Ventnor Ave.

**Dec. 2 - 4** Atlantic City, Cape Atlantic Intergroup 16th annual Waves Roundup at the Showboat, Reg. \$25 More info : [ROUNDUP.CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG](http://ROUNDUP.CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG)

**Mon. Dec 5 6:30-8pm** Galloway, SJ Newcomer Grp, 9<sup>th</sup> Ann, Food, Fun, Beacon Church, 420 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.

**Wed. Dec. 7 -[Deptford](#)**, Friends of Bill 38th Dinner, Adelphia \$45. Jack 856-304-7001 for Tix

**Sat. Dec 10 7pm-** Somers Point South Short Group, Lifegate Church, 296 Bethel Rd.

**Mon. Dec 12 7pm** Egg Harbor City, Harbor Light Group 43<sup>rd</sup> Anniv., 351 Cincinnati Ave. (Water Twr)

**Wed. Dec. 21 8pm- 9pm [Cherry Hill](#)**, Monthly Intergroup Meeting ,1989 NJ-70

**If you would like to share something of interest, please send your info to [newsletter@aasj.org](mailto:newsletter@aasj.org)**