

# ANONYMOUS

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

AUGUST 2022

Well, Folks, this is our **Summer FUN** issue! This issue is postively **BURSTING AT THE SEAMS!** (one of my “stretching” exercises!)

I’m an ex-School Teacher, so every summer was fun! It’s difficult to pick a specific event. There are a couple things that make for a great vacation. Probably the most important thing is to have great weather. Another thing is to enjoy yourself with close friends and family. Finally, we like to go to a place where we’ve never been before and become a tourist.

First thing we do when we get to our destination is to check out a meeting (normally this gives us a feel for the place we are visiting). Many times, we meet wonderful people, and they inform us what to see and what to avoid, or at least, not to spend our time on. More often than not we will spend time with our newfound friends. We exchange phone numbers and keep in touch with them periodically. *You never know when you just might meet up with them again!*

Wayne, South Jersey AA

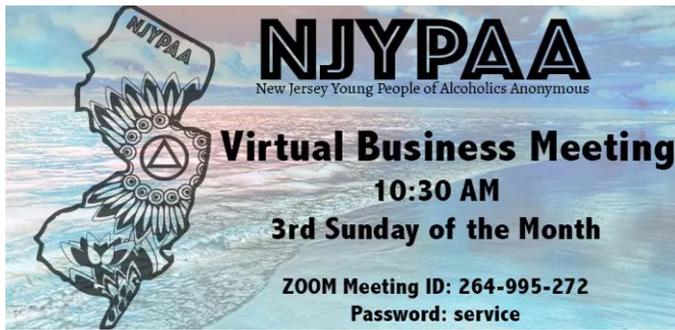
## On God’s time:

A man walked to the top of a hill to talk to God.

“God, how many years is a million years, to you?” God said: “A minute.”

Then the man asked: “God, what’s a million Dollars to you?” God said: “A penny.”

Then the man asked: “God.....can I have a penny?” God said: “Sure.....in a minute.”



## Squeeze this in BEFORE August:

Thur. July 28: Swedesboro "Living Sober Group" will be celebrating their 26<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with an Ice Cream Social. Starts at 6:30 at St. Clair of Assisi Hall, 130 Broad Street, Swedesboro, N.J.

## AUGUST

### Sunday August 28: 17<sup>th</sup> Annual District 14 Picnic 2022

Parvins State Park --- Thundergust Pavillions

11 am until 6 pm

RAIN or SHINE Event

SUGGESTED Ticket Donation: \$8 advance or at the door!

Children under 12 FREE with an Adult

All KINDS of stuff going on here!

Food served from 12pm - 3 pm

AA and Al-Anon speakers at 4 pm

Bring your own chairs and Sports Equipment

Family friendly....load the car!

Contacts: Marci R 856-776-3149 or Jessica H 856-896-5583

## Stories Needed

Archives is looking to continue collecting information and stories about our South Jersey groups and individuals. [archives@aasj.org](mailto:archives@aasj.org) Personal Histories, Homegroup Histories, COVID Adaptation Stories.

## 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.

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](mailto:newsletter@asj.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.

**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 On-Line. It is open to all members of the A.A. Fellowship.**

The next **Bookers Meeting** will be held on Thursday, August 4, 2022 at 8 PM at St. Bart's, 1989 Route 70, Cherry Hill, N.J.

### Car trouble

Luckily, an alert policeman catches a drunk getting into his parked car one night.

"Sir, please step out of the car", the cop tells him.

"No, I am too drunk," he replies, "you get it".

Michael M., Oshkosh, Wis. (reprinted without permission, from Grapevine, Feb. 2020. just sayin.....)

## My first Sober Concert

My first sober concert was The Beach Boys July 4th 1983. I had certainly loved going to concerts when I was drinking, as it was "legitimate" reason to drink.

But here I was, newly sober, just turned 18, and didn't know where – or how – to fit in. Trying to feel comfortable in meetings was a struggle and trying to connect with the fellowship felt almost impossible. Typically being the youngest person in the room I certainly felt unique, though I knew I wasn't when it came to drinking and trying to stay sober.

I eventually befriended some of the young people, mostly in their twenties, who seemed so much more mature than I, and were in many ways. At one of my meetings, some of the guys were talking of going to Atlantic City to see The Beach Boys. It was big news, as they were expecting 200,000 people to show up! The city appeared to be shut down. It felt like this might be my Woodstock moment.

On July 4th a bunch of us met at the 400 Club which at the time was in Oaklyn on White Horse Pike. After a meeting we piled into two cars and drove to Brigantine. I don't remember much about the drive other than the laughter. Five newly sober guys packed in a car on a road trip! It was not for the sensitive or the faint of heart, and I loved it!

We drove right into Brigantine without a hitch, no traffic. Upon arrival we heard that the other car, with the other ten guys, was just as lively. We all poured out of the car laughing. We continued to laugh, joke, swim, and laugh some more on the beach. At about 4pm we decided to drive over to Atlantic City to see the show. It was amazing. We drove right in, again, no traffic. We gathered our blankets and began walking through the throngs of people, many of them drinking. If I had been alone, I am sure it would have felt overwhelming, however with this gang of sober men, we felt like we could take on the world! Drinking was not an option for us. We all had each other's backs. We continued to walk and when we eventually stopped we were about thirty yards from the stage. The concert was amazing and I was struck by how clear everything looked. When I had previously gone to concerts, everything was a haze and I would have had to take other people's word for what had happened. This time I could be in the moment, enjoying the music sober, and appreciating the people I was with, I never wanted it to end. We danced, high-fived one another, laughed, and stayed sober. I've been to numerous concerts since, some large, some small, but this is the one that reminded me that if I remain on good spiritual grounds and know the purpose of why I am doing something, I can do anything I want with God on my side.

Kevin L

Once there was a young boy with a very bad temper.

So, the boy's father decided to teach him a lesson. He gave his son a bag of nails and told him that each time he lost his temper; he must hammer a nail into their wooden fence.

On the first day of this lesson, the boy hammered 37 nails. He was *really mad*.

Over the course, he began to control his temper and eventually the number of nails began to fall with each passing day.

It wasn't long before the boy realized that holding the temper was much easier than hammering nails.

Finally, the day came when he did not put a single nail in the wooden fence.

He felt so proud of himself that he ran to his father and told him that he had not lost his temper in the whole day.

Pleased, his father instructed that he could pull out one nail for every day that he might hold his temper.

Several weeks went by and the day finally came when the boy was able to tell his father that all the nails were gone! Very gently, the father took his son and led him to the fence.

"You have done all right, my son," he smiled, "but look at all the holes in the fence."

The Father continued: "The fence will never be the same."

The boy listened carefully as his father continued to speak.

"Similar is the case with anger," the father said. "Anger leaves scars behind. And despite however many times you say you are sorry; the wound can still be there."

Change the changeable,  
Accept the unchangeable,  
And remove yourself from the  
unacceptable.

## Family Road Trip....it felt like it would never end!

At 2 years sober, my family life was sort of settling back to something resembling normal. My wife and I planned a trip to Florida to visit my dad. We loaded up the car, the kids, and off we went. We planned to stop at the usual tourist trap, South of the Border, and continue on the following morning. But God had other plans!

We made it as far as Aberdeen, Md., and the car started to overheat. I stopped, removed the thermostat, and we continued south. Just south of Baltimore, we overheated again. I limped the car to a service station where I was informed that the water pump was bad and would need replacing. \$450.00 and 8 hours later, we're heading south again.

About halfway around the Beltway that bypasses Washington, DC., we started to overheat yet again! After letting the car cool down, it seemed that the radiator was now clogged! Frustrated, I had no idea where I was, or how to proceed. I prayed the serenity prayer for the fifth or sixth time that day. I called AMEX to find out about renting a car to continue our trip. They were quite accommodating, providing me with directions to Dulles International, and after 2 more "cooling off" stops, we arrived at Dulles.

I dropped the wife and kids off at the main terminal and proceeded to find my way to long term parking. There was a shuttle bus there that ran about every half hour. Of course I missed the first one, and after getting back to the terminal, I navigated to the rental car desk. They told me to get a different shuttle, and head out to their lot and pick up the car there. I did, and then drove into the long term parking to load our luggage into the rental. I should mention that all of this is occurring in the days before cell phones! I finally, 4 hours later, navigated back to the main terminal and greeted my family, with our new rental car to continue to Florida. After getting a soda at the terminal, we loaded into the car and were about to set off. But suddenly my wife broke out in tears. I stopped the car and asked what was wrong. She sobbingly told me that, as long as it had taken to get the rental car and such, that she was sure that I had made a pit stop at the airport bar and gotten drunk. I cried with her and assured her that those days were behind us.

We continued on to my dad's house in Florida, had a great time, and during the week there I ordered a new radiator from an auto parts place near the airport in DC. On our drive home, we stopped at South of the Border, of course, and I repaired the car in Dulles parking lot. After all of that, we returned home safe, sound, and sober!

For many of us, it takes a long time to regain our families trust, and we have no one to blame for that but ourselves. ;-)

## Mental Health and Sobriety

The subject of mental health and sobriety is a huge one, with barely any limitations of depth or breadth. So, I'll use this limited space to explore one small aspect of this area: the connection between character defects that indicate the need for mental health counseling, and those self-same defects when they bring us closer to a drink.

Often, when I'm working with a fellow alcoholic as a sponsor or just close friend, we'll discuss anger, jealousy, resentment, envy, fear, etc. It takes close listening to know when a defect has become so crippling and painful that some form of counseling or therapy should be sought; and/or when working with the Big Book or the Twelve Steps of AA is enough to bring the defect to a point where it no longer threatens our sobriety. Of course, the two pathways are not mutually exclusive (and in most cases they are not) and both directions are called for.

In thinking about this intersection between counseling and Step work, I found it quite illuminating to look at the role that character defects play in our lives. A recent discussion I had with another AA gave me an important clue. He said that character defects enable us to create and sustain a "self" and—we mistakenly conclude—that the benefits of having a safe and secure idea of "self" outweigh the things we suffer from manifesting these defects.

So much of the time, I'm using character defects (jealousy, anger, resentment, etc.) to give me the "comfort" and reassurance of an old but reliable picture of myself and this comfort and reassurance is somehow "worth" the price I pay for holding onto and using those defects. For the relapser, that "price" is getting drunk again.

If I understand the origin and function of my character defects, I can do a much better job of working the Sixth and Seventh Steps; or, of working with a counselor or therapist where needed.

The identification of who I am, with the defects that hurt me or get me drunk, is directly proportional to the difficulty I have with reducing those defects in size and strength. Indeed, the Sixth Step tells me as much when it points out that I wish to hang on to many of those defects. In this respect, the insights of counseling or therapy can be an enormous aid in showing me why I am holding on to these defects; despite the pain and damage they cause me. At any rate, knowing the relationship between character defects and our psychological difficulties can be a great help in our own recovery and in making appropriate suggestions to AA's who ask for our help.

### **Masonville Marty**

Editorial Disclaimer NOT related to ANY of the above stories, but required, just the same.

You will have noticed, no doubt, that the usual look, feel, and formatting of this Newsletter is a bit, ummmm, lacking.

This is what happens when the guy in charge takes a vacation and leaves it to me to take over! The formatting and attention to detail goes STRAIGHT OUT THE WINDOW!

My apologies to all. It is my hope that the REAL Newsletter Editor comes back soon!

Regards.

Cletus