

ANONYMOUS

“When I go to meetings today, I no longer have the delusion that I’m supporting a good cause. I need AA; AA did quite well without me during my years of self-exile. I go to AA meetings today to hear and see how God is working. When I share at a meeting, it’s not to try and ‘help’ those poor wretches, it’s because I need their help and guidance.”

South Jersey Intergroup Announcements

If you have anything you would like to share - send it to NEWSLETTER@AASJ.ORG

Wed. Apr. 17th 8pm, **Cherry Hill**, SJ Intergroup Monthly Meeting: St. Bartholomew’s Church, 1989 Rt. 70 E (Marlton Pike East), See AASJ.org for Zoom Meeting info.

Wed. Apr. 17th 7pm, **Millville** Riverside Recovery Anniv., Trinity 1st Hope Ctr, 102 S. 2nd St.

Sat. Apr. 20th 4pm, **Pemberton** 449 Club Anniv., FFF, 6 Pemberton St.

Thur. Apr. 25th 7pm, **Audubon** How It Works Anniv., Logan Presbyterian, 18 W Merchant St.

Tue. May 7th Noon **Millville** Serenity, 23 Anniv., The Parrish of All Saints, 621 Dock St,

Wed. May 15th, 8pm, **Cherry Hill**, SJ Intergroup Monthly Meeting: St. Bartholomew’s Church, 1989, Rt. 70 E. (Marlton Pike East), See AASJ.org for Zoom Meeting info.

Sun. May 19th 8:30am Registration, Elmer Grange Hall, Area 45 Spring Assembly, 535 Daretown Rd., Elmer See Area45snjaa.prg for ZOOM Info.

Mon. June 17th 7pm **Vineland** Group 35th Anniv., S. Vineland Methodist, 2724 S. Main Rd.

FELLOWSHIP EVENTS & AA EVENTS OUTSIDE SJ INTERGROUP

Fri.- Sun., Apr. 26th– Apr. 28th **Malvern, Pa** Matt Talbot Women, Malvern Retreat House, St. Joseph Hall, 315 S. Warren Ave. Info. And register mtretreatW8@gmail.com

Fri. May 24th 7:45 am, **New York City**, Bus trip Departs Haddonfield 7:45am, Tour of the General Service Office. Info. district26nj@gmail.com. (RSVP by April 30th)

Fri. – Sun., June 7- 9, Akron, OH, Founders Day Weekend 89th Anniv. Univ. of Akron
Info. foundersday.org

INSIDE OUR APRIL/MAY ISSUE

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SUGGESTION BOX

Tells us your Ideas- How can we make SJ Intergroup serve the Groups even better?

Answering Service 12-step list: More volunteers are needed for the 12-step list. Signup sheets are available for anyone wishing to take a copy to their home groups. Contact the Answering service. answeringservice@asj.org.



Visit the General Service Office this Fall!

Visitors are welcome to GSO, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tours are scheduled at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., and 2 p.m., and last about 45 minutes. On Fridays, GSO hosts an open A.A. meeting at 11 a.m. There is also a guided tour offered after the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

SCHEDULE YOUR VISIT TO GSO
All visitors must register in advance to gain access to the building in accordance with the building policy. Accordingly, we strongly recommend that individuals contact us prior to their visit so that we can enter them into the building's security system.
We're located at 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY (Building entrance at 81 Claremont Avenue).

Groups of 10 or more must contact us ahead of time to schedule their visit so that we can best prepare for your time at the General Service Office.
To schedule your visit, email gso.tours@aa.org or call 212-870-3430

To learn more about visiting GSO, including location details, our health and safety policy, and information about purchasing literature, please visit <https://www.aa.org/visiting-the-gso>

Please note, the building will be closed to visitors November 10 and 22-24; December 25-31; and January 1 and 15.



ANY LENGTHS?

A sponsee shares valuable lessons he's learned from his sponsor—including how to survive in a hurricane.

My sponsor asked me once, "Russ, do you sit in meetings thinking about what you're going to share? Because if you do, then you're really not present in the meeting, at least not until after you've shared."

He was teaching me how to listen. He also explained that meetings are in part about being open to God's message and serving others, not about sounding best or fixing others. He also told me that when listening in a meeting, if my thoughts turn from identifying with others to judging what others are saying, from looking where they are right to looking for where they are wrong, then I need to step back and look at myself, for something is going on with me.

Self-examination "in all of our affairs" includes meetings too. We can learn a lot by observing ourselves during meetings. Pay attention.

I learned a lot about sponsorship from this man. He was hard, but he was also loving. He tore me down to size when needed, yet never left me hanging. During a "sponsorship training" session he told me. "Never tear a man down without building him back up before walking away. Tear down his ego, rebuild his spirit."

In the early 90s, the Nightly Newcomers group, my home group at the time, was a smokers' meeting. Back then, attendance was about 80 people, seven nights a week. Those who have been to this meeting can probably recall all the smoking in that small room. My sponsor would make an announcement every so often, "Please keep down your smoking, for oxygen is a requirement for sobriety."

I recall at one point, after about six months of sobriety, going to my sponsor and telling him I wanted to leave my home group. The reason I gave him for wanting to change groups was my issues with, "Tom, Sue, Mike, Steve and Julie."

He explained to me what would happen if I were to go to another group. He told me that I would be there about six months and soon find a Tom, Sue, Mike, Steve and Julie there too. Likely they'll have different names, but the same things they were doing, or not doing, would bother me just the same. Because the problem isn't with them, the problem is within me. And, he added, "wherever you go, there you are."

He said, "Here is the rule with this kind of situation: When you're OK to stay, then it's OK to go." So I stuck around, and he was right. As I grew and dealt with these issues rather than running from them, I became OK to stay.

This has stuck with me still today as a useful tool. Anytime I find myself again wanting to run, I remember those words, “When you’re OK to stay, then it’s OK to go.” Rather than choose to go, I choose to grow.

One day, years back, I was set to chair a meeting. This day was different though, because a hurricane was brushing Tampa and most people were boarded-up in their houses. The streets were nearly empty and stuff was flying everywhere—sideways.

I recalled what my sponsor had ingrained in me, two things in particular: “I am responsible,” and “Willing to go to any lengths.”

So off I went to set up and chair this AA meeting. My car was the only non-emergency vehicle I saw on the road. I arrived safely, set up and no one showed. I read the Big Book, had a cup of coffee and then got to thinking ... Wait, my sponsor is always at this meeting, why isn’t he here?

So I called him. “Hey, man, what happened to going to any lengths?” I asked as he picked up. “Wouldn’t you have gone out in a hurricane to get a drink?” “Yes,” he replied, “but I was insane then.” And he hung up.

Discussing the incident later, he told me he was happy that I showed up, as I should have, in case someone needed a meeting. He pointed out that a potential meeting attendee should consider, “when it comes to going to any lengths for your sobriety, weigh it against common sense.” Then he added, “But in your case, you had better run it by me. BY: RUSS K



What is the purpose of Step 4 in AA?

The purpose of Step 4 of AA is to begin to become willing to move forward in recovery by honestly examining your past drinking and actions and how it has affected you and others. Step 4 of AA is a path toward learning to take more responsibility for yourself and your actions.

STEP 4: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”.

During this Step, many of us make a list of poor decisions or character flaws. We outline how we’ve hurt others, as well as feelings like fear and guilt that motivated some of our past actions. Once we have completed this step, we promptly take step 5. By discussing secrets and flaws out-loud with a trusted advisor and our higher-power we receive unexpected relief and release ourselves of these hidden burdens.

CONCEPTS CHECKLIST

A service piece for home groups, districts, areas. Some of these discussion points were originally developed by an A.A. group and further developed by the trustees’ Literature Committee to be distributed by the General Service Office. While this checklist is intended as a starting point for discussion by groups, districts or areas, individual A.A. members may find it useful along with our co-founder Bill W.’s writings, a service sponsor & reflection on your own service experience.

Concept IV: *At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional “Right of Participation,” allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.*

- Do we understand the spiritual principles underlying the “Right of Participation”?
- What does “in reasonable proportion” mean? Do we understand when it is appropriate for A.A. paid staff to have a vote at the General Service Conference or in our local service structure?
- Do we expect that, because we are A.A. members, we should be allowed to vote at any group, even if we are not active members of that group?

Is sobriety all that we are to expect of a spiritual awakening?

No, sobriety is only a bare beginning; it is only the first gift of the first awakening. If more gifts are to be received, our awakening has to go on. As it does go on, we find that bit by bit we can discard the old life – the one that did not work – for a new life that can and does work under any conditions whatever.

My Alcoholism Story

My alcoholism story is a tale of addiction. I picked up my first drink at 14. It was at my dad's annual Christmas party. It was rum punch, and it tasted awful. I had another glass, and it still tasted terrible. But I started to feel warm and comfortable. So, I figured that the benefits outweighed the consequences. Fast forward 2 hours (yes, only two hours), and I'm throwing up on my dad's shoes outside of the party. Instead of being angry that I had been drinking, he was just as drunk and laughed. We sneaked past my mom (the serious one), and he put me to bed. I don't remember much else. I don't know what happened that night.

Something inside me went off. In between the time of picking up that drink and vomiting the anxiety inside started to disappear. I was able to talk to people. I felt confident. Whatever made alcohol do this to me, I liked it. And I was going to get that feeling no matter what the consequences. Between 14 and 22, I made a lot of those promises to myself. My alcoholism picked up, and while I was able to maintain good grades and do well in sports, my thoughts were spent counting down the minutes until I could drink again.

When I say drink, I mean blackout. I never understood how someone could have one glass of wine or leave half a beer at the bar and didn't feel like drinking anymore. I was that person that had to have a bottle of wine, and the person at the party that finished off the beers people had left behind. Across the alcohol and drug abuse statistics and tales of addiction, this feature is common. I knew I had a problem.

My Life Spiraled Out Of Control

My friends left me, but alcohol was always there for me. However, it wasn't fun anymore. I started shaking if I didn't drink in the morning. Soon enough, I hid alcohol around the house. I went from an independent student to a

college dropout living at their parent's home, contemplating suicide daily. When I finally told my friends and family I needed help, I felt like the scum of the earth, and I was hopeless and didn't have anywhere else to turn.

I Sought Help

I went to treatment in 2012 and found out that I was not alone. Many people were just like me. Alcohol had a grip on them too. My way of thinking, that was the problem. Looking at my past behavior, I could see that I had been using alcohol to avoid my questions. I learned that I could change my thoughts and recognize what's real and what's not. And I could do this sober!

For so long, I used alcohol to escape from reality. A lot of people do. I started to attend Alcoholics Anonymous and listened to alcoholic stories that were just like mine. They had different experiences, but they shared the same feelings. I didn't feel so alone. They took me under their wing and shared how they were able to get and stay sober. They didn't want anything in return, and they helped me because someone helped them. My family started talking to me again. I was able to get and keep a job, have a car, and a life of my own.

Relapse

After a year, I tried to drink again. I figured I knew enough where I would be able to stop. I spent four days locked in my room drinking. By the time I was done, I was miserable and worse than I was when I went to treatment. I still had the material things in my life, but I felt like my soul was gone. My friends picked me back up. They loved me even though I was back to feeling like scum.

I faced the fact that I cannot drink like other people. And even though my emotions were all over the place, I didn't run away. I was honest with my friends. I thought the secrets I kept were going to drive them away, but it

didn't. They came closer to me and told me that I was going to be okay. They said to me that everything happens for a reason and to trust the process.

After almost four years sober, I look back and feel lucky that I am an alcoholic. I knew something never fit, it was like I was the 5th corner piece of a puzzle.

You Can Do It Too

I thought no one would ever understand how I felt. Now I have a whole alcohol support group who knows me and who loves me. They show up when I need them. I can be myself around them. Most importantly, they understand me. They have felt the same way. We can help each other out with our struggles and hold each other up.

Final Thoughts

Finally, I hope that my cautionary alcoholism story will help you see the bigger picture. I would have never found this solution if I didn't become an alcoholic. Today I truly believe that my struggles can be used to help other people, and that is what I strive to do every day.

There are numerous alcoholic stories in the world. Take courage from my alcoholism story; it had a happy ending.

Letting Go. . . Absolutely

Twenty-two years ago, I watched a man folding a parachute on the floor of my college dormitory. I remember thinking that someday I too was going to jump out of an airplane and sail across the skies. I was going to feel the wind in my face, the racing of my heart, and the thrill of conquering my fear. . .someday.

It wasn't long thereafter that I seriously discovered alcohol and began conquering all my fears in one fell swoop. I began living life to the fullest--in my mind--and I forgot about

the parachutist and I forgot about my dreams. I found something better--instant happiness.

As time progressed, however, I found that happiness wasn't quite as instant or as simple as I had first imagined. The search for happiness soon was leading me on a merry chase. It led me first to a lush, tropical island in South America. When I got there I found it had moved to Alaska. So I took off after it once again. . .and again. . .and again.

Finally, while living on skid row in Seattle, in January 1983, I gave up chasing happiness down the long neck of a bottle. It was then that I found AA--or rather it found me. I must admit that sobriety hasn't been easy (nobody ever told me it would be), but the rewards of living life one day at a time have been immense and very special.

One recent October morning marked just one such special day for me. At four A.M., I found myself popping out of bed to be ready for skydiving jump school at eight. A dream of many years ago was soon to become reality. I had plenty of time to get ready, plenty of time to worry, plenty of time for prayer and meditation.

Throughout the day I was a rollercoaster of emotions--anxiety, fear, and even a slight glimmer of courage came to the surface. But here I was at last, all secured in my jump suit, helmet, goggles, and parachute. If ever I was to see an outward manifestation of my Higher Power, that parachute had surely begun to look like it!

I sat next to the airplane door, looking down from thirty-five hundred feet, and my instructor probably thought I was going over in my mind everything that I had learned in jump school.

I wasn't. Actually, my mind was running clear with the clichés I had learned early on in my sobriety. First things first! Easy does it! Let go and let God!

Out the door I went, hanging from the wing strut, flapping in an eighty-mile-an-hour wind. The instructor nodded and I let go absolutely.

Moments later, the chute opened with a slight jolt and I saw right away that my parachute lines were twisted--just as when I came into AA my lifelines were twisted, my thinking was twisted. I did what I had been told to do, and the lines slowly untangled.

But, being a newcomer, I was still pretty much lost. It was difficult to get my bearings, and fear began to creep in until I heard a crackle in my earphones and the voice of my sponsor-on-the-ground saying, "Attaboy, Terry, looking good! Looking good!"

Hey! I wasn't alone. Immediately, I started blabbering about how I felt and asking him

what I should do next. Then I remembered that this was a one-way radio--his way!
 Frustration. And then AA kicked in again. Listen. Follow directions. Everything is okay. So I listened. When my sponsor-on-the-ground said, "Turn right," I turned right. When he said, "Turn left," I turned left. And slowly the tension and fear drained away. I relaxed. And enjoyed the ride.
 Then came the landing. I was glad to have help coming in. My sponsor-on-the-ground was right with me and I was ready. Not too soon and not too late. When he shouted, "Flare!" boy, did I flare, and the chute responded, stalling ever so slightly and then gently setting me down on my feet with a couple of short hops. I was home!
 Just like in AA! BY: TERRY B.



FRIENDS of the FELLOWSHIP
RECOVERY BOWLING LEAGUE
 2024
 Westbrook Lanes \$15 a week per bowler
 Sunday nights includes shoe rental
 @6:30PM
 Starting February 18th
 MORE INFO: JOHN C. @ 856-693-3866 OR JR @ 856-992-2181

NJYPAA
 New Jersey Young People of Alcoholics Anonymous
BUSINESS MEETING
 THIRD SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH
 10:30 AM
 ZOOM MEETING ID:
 264-995-272
 PASSWORD: service
 3525 Quakerbridge Rd.
 #5000
 Hamilton, NJ 08619



BTG is looking for volunteers!
 Bridging the Gap is a 12 Step commitment designed to help the individual make the transition from the treatment or correction facility to Alcoholics Anonymous. The temporary contact would be responsible to meet/take the new member to 6 meetings to help them learn about our fellowship.

What Bridging the Gap suggests of the temporary contact:

- AAs who participate should have 1 year of continuous sobriety.
- AAs are asked to meet/take the individual to a minimum of 6 meetings.
- AAs should share their experience with sponsorship, a home group, and the 12 steps.
- An AA's commitment to the BTG program is a minimum of 1-year.
- Bridging the Gap volunteers are encouraged to attend workshops for questions, training and ongoing support.



If you would like to help. . .
 Grab a pamphlet and fill out the back form. Take a pic and send it via email. Please include your home group. Or Scan the QR Code below fill out and submit. It's that easy.
 Contact Scott P.- Area 45 Bridging the Gap Coordinator
 Email - Bridgingthegap@snjaa.org



TRADITIONS CHECKLIST FROM THE AA GRAPEVINE

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

Tradition Four: *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.*

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his lengths, not mine—to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with others who may not have heard of them?

Alcoholism is one of the most dangerous addictions a person can have. Alcohol is the third leading preventable cause of death in America, yet few people get the help they need to address alcohol use and dependence. The good news is that most people can benefit from some form of treatment, but many people don't even realize they have an issue until it becomes a fully-fledged addiction. Understanding the timeline and stages of alcoholism is one of the first steps to achieving recovery.

Signs You May Be Developing an Addiction to Alcohol

From big-budget TV ads to sitcoms and billboards, there is no shortage of sources telling us that drinking is fun and glamorous. While many people can have a drink or two with little to no ill effects, others have trouble knowing when to stop. Most people do not recognize when acceptable amounts of drinking slide into patterns that may indicate addiction. These are some of the signs your drinking is problematic:

- Missing work or school in the aftermath of drinking
- Deterioration in friendships and family relationships
- Financial trouble due to alcohol consumption
- Feeling guilty or depressed after drinking
- Drinking to alleviate social anxiety
- Drinking to feel more confident

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

SJ Intergroup 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 InterGroup Steering Committee meeting is held on the second Wednesday of each month at the InterGroup Office in Voorhees and is open to all members of the A.A. Fellowship.

THE TWELVE STEPS

1. I can't
2. God can
3. Let God
4. Look within
5. Admit wrongs
6. Ready self for change
7. Seek God's help
8. Become willing
9. Make amends
10. Daily inventory
11. Pray and meditate
12. Give it away

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP ANSWERING SERVICE HOTLINE TRAINING



WHEN
Saturday June 8th
10am – 12pm

WHERE
SJ Intergroup Office
1000 White Horse Rd #702, Voorhees Township, NJ 08043

FEATURING - Food - Fellowship - Service Opportunities -
REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

Zoom meeting ID: 830 8270 3450 Passcode:
8933234

EVERYONE WELCOME

**HOTLINE
VOLUNTEERS**
Training for all
Printed Resources

**12TH STEP
LIST**
Recruiters &
Volunteers for 12th-
Step lists welcome

**DAY
CAPTAINS**
Each Day of the week
has a captain as
resource to
volunteers

**COMMITTEE
MEMBERS**
Join our committee!

QUESTIONS
Email:
answering-service@aasj.org

