

ANONYMOUS

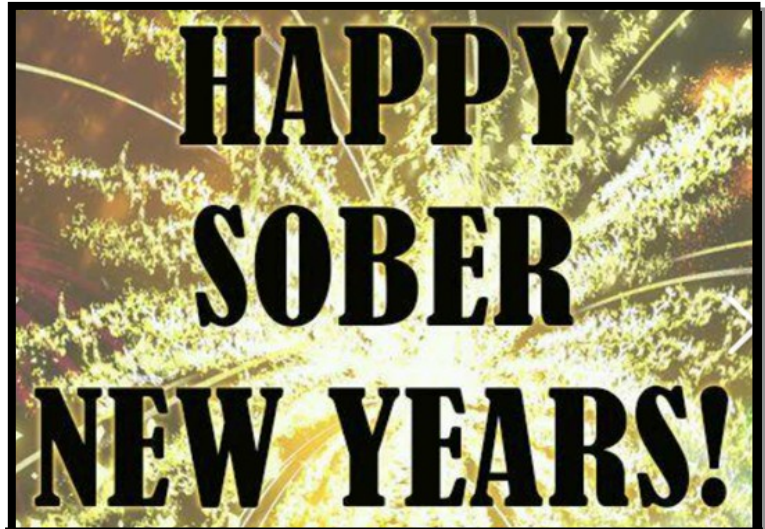
SJ Intergroup has 3 open positions as of this writing:

Secretary - *Takes minutes at Intergroup meetings and sees that minutes are distributed to Intergroup Representatives.*

H&I Co-Chair - *The Hospitals & Institutions Committee (H&I) books groups and individuals to fill speaking commitments at hospitals, detox centers, and rehabs.*

Meeting List Chair - *The Meeting List Committee lists all AA meeting days, times locations and type of meetings. Updated and reprinted when necessary.*

Public Information Chair - *provides AA speakers to schools and other organizations when requested.*



SJIG IS NOW SELLING COINS! WE HAVE 24 HRS. TO 40 YEARS. FOR PURCHASE. ALUMINUM COINS SELL FOR \$1.50 EACH AND BRONZE SELL FOR \$2.50 EACH. JUST STOP IN ANYTIME DURING OFFICE HOURS TO PURCHASE.

Thanksgiving required intentionality. There are enough reasons to give thanks to God daily. But that doesn't mean we always feel grateful or notice these blessings. Don't let your feelings and experience call the shots. Lead

South Jersey Intergroup Announcements

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

Thurs. Jan 16 - Chewslanding Step Meeting 33rd Anniversary 7:30pm (see flyer on page 12 for more info.)

Sat. Jan 18 - Woodstown Grp will celebrate their 70th anniversary FFF 5pm eat 6pm speakers Catholic Community of Holy Spirit Parish Ctr 2 Lamplighter Dr, Woodstown, donations welcomed.

SJ Intergroup Announcements continued:

Mon. Jan 20- Shiloh Serenity 25th Anniversary—Food @ 6pm, 6:45pm AL Anon Speaker and 7:15pm Guest AA Speaker. Shiloh 7th Day Baptist Church 116 E. Ave, Shiloh, NJ 08008

Fri. March 14, 15, 16 — 59th Annual Area 45 Convention at the Claridge Casino AC. Registration \$40. (see flyer on page 3 for more information.)

Sat. Jan 20 - Collingswood Monday Night Big Book is celebrating its 79th anniversary. Food @6:30 followed by speaker @8pm.

Sat. Jan 25 - 400 Club Step 1 Workshop 1-4pm (see flyer on page 12 for more info.)

Sat. Feb 15 - Area 45 Winter Assembly Registration 8:30 am—489 Nautilus Dr. Manahawkin.

Sun. Feb 23 - Moorestown Spiritual Growth 50th Anniversary - Trinity Episcopal Church—207 W.



INSIDE OUR JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025 ISSUE

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PRINTABLE MEETING LIST ARE NOW AVAILABLE

**South Jersey Intergroup Association of
Alcoholics Anonymous**

**24 Hour Telephone Hotline
(856) 486-4444**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2514 Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
Office Location: 1000 White Horse Rd. Suite 702 Voorhees, NJ 08043
Office & Literature Phone: (856) 486-4446
For Literature Sales Hours, call or visit aasj.org/literature

Our Meeting List is constantly updating.
Use the QR CODE below to see the most up-to-date
Meetings or Find a ZOOM Link.

SCAN QR HERE



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

answeringservice@aasj.org



**SOUTH JERSEY
INTERGROUP
ANSWERING
SERVICE
HOTLINE
TRAINING**

WHEN
Saturday Mar 8th
10am – 11am

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 0270 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:
answeringservice@aasj.org

Beyond My Wildest Dreams

59th Annual **AREA 45 CONVENTION 2025**

March 14th 15th 16th
The Claridge Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ

Recovery Weekend Safari

\$40 Registration

JOIN THE ADVENTURE
Inspirational Speakers
Fellowship Opportunities
Music, Dancing & Dining

www.area45convention.org

A.A.
Al-Anon
and our sister
fellowships

SJ Intergroup is looking for your personal recovery stories to be published in our bi-monthly newsletter. If you are interested in sharing your story, we would love to hear from you. Your story needs to be a maximum of 500 words and can be published anonymously if you prefer. If you have any questions, or would like to submit your story, please send to newsletter@aasj.org.

What Is Step 1 of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)?

The recovery journey begins when you make the decision to stop drinking alcohol and it continues through each stage of your sobriety. For some people Alcoholics Anonymous, or AA, begins a process of recovering from alcohol addiction. The first step in AA states: **“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.”**

Alcoholics Anonymous Step 1 is the beginning of a 12-step program to get and stay sober. Taking this first step and admitting you are struggling with alcohol misuse can be difficult, but it is the foundation of all positive change according to AA.

Members may study and work on this step many times. Some people have to return to this step after a relapse, while others review it periodically to help remind themselves that they will always be powerless over alcohol and need to use tools and strategies to help stay sober.

THE GOD IDEA—Connie Q./Avon, Conn.

Yes, I was powerless over alcohol, but I was still not able to concede that my life was unmanageable. I was plagued with troubles and in a constant state of disturbance. I had trouble with personal relationships; I couldn't control my emotional nature; I was deeply depressed; I couldn't make a living; and I felt useless, full of fear and of absolutely no help to other people.

At one point, I had a period of 27 months “dry.” I could see how faith and the God idea were working in the lives of fellow AA's. They were friendly, happy, and welcomed me. Yet I still couldn't cross the bridge of denial and believed that I could somehow wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this life if only I managed well.

I was bankrupt in every aspect of my life. I had placed all belief in human will, determination and knowledge. I became willing to believe not in God, but that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. I had admitted the unmanageability and insanity of doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results in my First Step.

Susan, a counselor with 23 years of sobriety, learned forward, looked me squarely in my belligerent yet weary eyes and said, “Listen sweetie, he either is or he isn't and you live or you die. What's it going to be?” That was my moment of surrender.

I had to honestly admit that my ideas of how to run my life did not work. The God idea did. Even though at first I resisted the concept of living on a spiritual basis, alcohol was the great persuader in the end. I do not find it necessary to take a drink as long as I honestly seek him.

**“SOBRIETY IS NEVER OWNED, IT'S RENTED
AND RENT IS DUE “**

Understanding AA Tradition 1

The main principle of Tradition 1 is unity. As the Twelve Steps lay the spiritual path of recovery for individual members, the Twelve Traditions provide the principles that keep the group healthy and grounded. This is best exemplified by Tradition 1, which states: ***"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. AA must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward."***

The underlying principle is simple: if the group is drawn into controversy or becomes dominated by individuals, the unity of the group will be jeopardized. This is especially true of members who feel sidelined or minimized—these individuals are most likely to drift away or leave the program altogether.

Concept 1 of AA

Concept 1 of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) states that the final responsibility and ultimate authority for AA world services should always reside in the collective conscience of the Fellowship. This means that decisions and actions are guided by the group conscience, rather than individual ambitions or authority.

Step 2: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

All of the words of the 12 steps are very specifically chosen, which is another thing I really love about working with them. The second step doesn't say "We came to believe in a power greater than ourselves" it says "We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." That's the beauty—we are invited to begin to think about what our higher power can be.

The emphasis is not on who or what the power is, but on what the power can do for us. The group of AA itself certainly qualifies as a power greater than ourselves (our fellowship is in the millions and always growing) as do the spiritual principles contained in the 12 steps.

The awareness and understanding that we can't recover alone and that we need some kind of help is really the lesson at this point in recovery. The spiritual principles that are the foundation of this step are open mindedness, willingness, faith, trust and humility. It really doesn't matter whether we have any idea of how this power greater than ourselves is going to help, just that we come to believe it is possible.

Tradition 2 in AA states, "For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

This means that in 12-step groups, there is no such thing as individual authority (aside from a higher power). No one member "directs" or "controls" the actions of the other members of the group.

Group decisions are just that, group decisions. After discussing all aspects of a given situation, including the minority opinion, the group votes on the issue, and an agreement is reached with the majority vote. This vote is called a "group conscience."

Concept 2 of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) states, that the General Service Conference of AA has become the active voice and effective conscience of the whole society in its world affairs. It is delegated the authority to speak as the voice and conscience of the Fellowship. The Twelve Concepts for World Service were written by AA's co-founder Bill W. and were adopted by the General Service Conference in 1962.

Why Can't I Just Have One?

You made it through Christmas, mostly because you were prepared for that part of your recovery and then we snap back into our old lives, old routines and that old question....

“Why can't I have just one??”

Just one drink is all you want to take away all that stress you gathered up over preparing for the holiday, and now that one drink will wash away that stress and give you a clean slate you know will help you never drink again.

This is your addicted mind once again looking for that easy solution to how you feel.

The easy solution is the one you made when you stopped drinking in the first place. *Anything less than an absolute conviction than never drinking again is oxygen for your addiction to survive.*

Resisting the urge is what we do of course, but to get past this nuisance in our skulls is to ignore it and push it out of our head and replace that thought with the reasons you need to not drink and what this will do to make your life better, more meaningful and more productive.

“Why can't I just have one??”

My journal is full of the reasons I cannot have another drink, I even put little notes on my mirror as a reminder. You must own this message of why you can't drink so you are always prepared to shut down the old addictive thinking.

Those New Years memories of a care free, jovial, super fun evening is not in your cards anymore and connecting to what will happen if you do make that fatal choice to drink and what will happen to you once again.

Own this messaging in your head so it will always override that one quite insane question of *“why can't I have just one??”*

“All I Want Is One Drink –
Just One Drink.”



Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry, two days which should be kept free of fear and apprehension.

One of these days is **YESTERDAY**, with its mistakes and cares, its faults and blunders, its aches and pains. **YESTERDAY** has passed forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back **YESTERDAY**, we cannot undo a single act we performed; we cannot erase a single word we said. **YESTERDAY** is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is **TOMORROW** with its possible adversities, its burdens, its larger promise. **TOMORROW** is also beyond our immediate control.

TOMORROW, the sun will rise, either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds, but it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in **TOMORROW** for it is as yet unborn.

This leaves only one day—**TODAY**. Anyone can fight the battles of just one day. It is only when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternities **YESTERDAY** and **TOMORROW**—that we break down.

It is not the experience of **TODAY** that drives us mad. It is remorse or bitterness for something which happened **YESTERDAY** and the dread of what **TOMORROW** may bring.

Let us, therefore, live but **ONE** day at a time.

Behind the Cupcakes—By: Kathy G. | Bellaire, Texas

She didn't think hiding her booze was a big deal!

I always knew that I had a problem with alcohol but I kept trying to prove that wrong. For years, I was in and out of rehabs and coming in the front doors of AA only to sneak out the back.

I liked sitting in the rear of meetings so that no one would notice me and ask me to share. How could I relate to these sober fools who said things like, "You will be happy, joyous and free." Or, "Give it to God." It all sounded like a revival meeting to me and I half-expected to end up singing "Amazing Grace" at the end.

Along the way, I had lost the trust of my family—of both my husband and my children. I wasn't allowed to be around my grandchildren without supervision.

All I wanted was to be on an island with no other inhabitants. Just me and my booze. I wanted everyone to leave me alone. I wasn't hurting anyone—or at least I didn't think so. I was just Mrs. Robinson hiding my lover in the cabinets with the cupcakes.

I had to hit bottom before I could admit defeat.

I took myself to an AA meeting, sat in the second row, listened to everything that I possibly could, and asked the hardest person I heard that day to be my sponsor. After thoroughly going through the Steps slowly and asking question after question about what this program could do for me, I had finally arrived.

I found my Higher Power. I have been blessed with peace. I have gotten my children's trust back. I am now free to be alone with my precious grandchildren. I am now a G.S.R. and I have found my life's journey.

I no longer look for the back door in a meeting. What I look for are the beautiful faces of my AA friends who along with me have found happiness, joy and a new-found freedom.

**SOBRIETY IS A GIFT YOU WILL NEVER
WANT TO RETURN**

Stories Like Mine

603 days without a beer, a glass of wine or anything else with alcohol. I never knew I was this strong. I knew I was competitive and always accepting to the challenges that lay down before me; on the diamond or on the soccer field when I was a young man. But the battles that take place within you are tougher than any opponent you face on a field. They wear different uniforms, the adversary within wears the same uniform as you. I've fought hard to make it this far and it's not easy to always stay the course, especially this time of the year when others around you are indulging in the spirit(s) of the season. But I keep on going reminding myself that I've done things I never thought possible and it's the right road for me to be on now and for the foreseeable future.

Stories Like Mine (continued)

On December 14, 2021, I was suffering from a decade long battle with alcoholism, mixed with severe depression and anxiety. I wanted to end it all and decided that I had enough. I attempted to take my own life.

I shot myself in the head.....and I survived.

God was watching over me that night or maybe I have a Guardian Angel. I woke up in a hospital bed 3 days later wondering what happened because I wasn't supposed to be alive. The bullet narrowly missed my brain. I vowed to myself to never touch alcohol again after that. Alcohol stole my joy and happiness for such a long time, nearly a third of my young life. I have made so many mistakes and I am trying to forgive myself for each and every one of them, day by day. Nearly 10 months later, I am still healing and have a long way to go. I pray that others find it in their hearts to forgive me for all the damage I have done over the years. Thank God for my parents, who never once gave up on me. They also found me that night and it really pains me that I put them in a situation to find me in that state. I remember my Dad crying out "Ali, why would you do this?" And he is not a crier. It's one of the most haunting memories that replays in my head every single day.

I'm grateful to be alive and sober, to be able to rebuild and repair relationships. I still have days that are really hard. I haven't eaten real food since that day 297 days ago either, because of the damage to my mouth. I would take my life now 100 times over my old life.

Day 2 yet again! My mom died suddenly at home just over two weeks ago. That phone call sent me on a 2 week roller coaster binge of a bottle of vodka per day and I was unable to make the 500 mile trip to her funeral. I really hope the guilt and shame of missing such an important occasion will keep me sober for a long time to come. It's time to draw a line in the sand for me. Next time I want to drink, I will think of missing that day and how I hate myself right now for it, I hate vodka but nobody forced it down my throat. Anxiety is pretty bad today but not as bad as yesterday. I know it gets better if we can tough out the early days.

There was a time in my life when alcohol wasn't just a drink, it was my escape, my band-aid, my crutch. I used it to cover wounds I didn't want to face, to numb feelings I wasn't ready to confront. It was deep-rooted, tied to moments and emotions that I thought I couldn't handle on my own.

But here's the hard truth! I've learned through my own journey: no one changes unless they want to. Not if you beg them, not if you shame them, not if you try to reason with them, cry for them, or give them tough love.

Change comes from within. It happens in that quiet, personal moment when you look at your reflection and say, "Enough". It happens when you realize that the life you're living isn't the life you want, and that you are the only one who can take that first step.

For me, that moment came when I decided I was ready. No one could have pushed me to it, it had to come from me. And once I made that decision, everything shifted. The road hasn't been easy, but it's been worth every single step.

To anyone out there struggling, know this: you're not alone and when you're ready, you'll find that strength inside you too.

Stories Like Mine (continued)

4 months and 11 days since my last drink. I gave up after a particular bad episode of heavy drinking following a break up. I woke up and looked in the mirror and thought "this is not me, I'm better than this." I went to AA and had a lot of inner work of positive self talk and sorting my life out.

The things I have gotten out of stop drinking are: better relationship with my kids; cleaner house that I've re-decorated and I have done a lot of do-it-yourself projects. My emotions are more stable and I'm more calm. Less financial hardship, a better brother and son to my family.

It's taken a lot of time but I've finally become more disciplined in my own health and work. If nothing changes, nothing changes! I wasn't happy in my life and no one was going to help me so I needed to pull my sleeves up and give it a go. I was being a drain on everyone around me and that guilt still weighs heavy, but it is what it is.

I get tempted by drinking and feel quite boring and anti social sometimes but have found that cold showers seems to reset me, I suppose it gives me a feeling of rejuvenation. Things are shifting and I'm finally changing my very fabric of reality and possibilities.

Keep up the good work people and don't compare yourself with others you are unique.

Dear Wine, We've been though so much together, you've always been there by my side as I navigated my 47 years of life. But we have to part ways now because my reliance on you is preventing me from taking control of my mind, my body, my health and my future.

Even though our relationship has been a toxic one at times, I still think of you fondly and get excited at the thought of spending an evening with you, and that is why we need to disconnect completely.

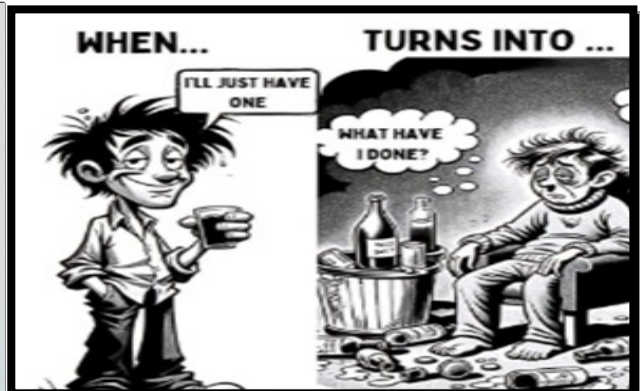
It's not you, it's me. I just can't enjoy you in moderation any more and as I've piled on weight, my confidence plummeted, anxiety skyrocketed and I don't recognize myself any more. I need to steady my ship, climb some mountains and reconnect with who I am without you.

It's been 2 days since I saw you. I'll keep your glass in the cupboard, but it's not an invitation to come over. We can't be friends for this next chapter of my life.

I know we had some great times together, always at home, just you and me, and I'll never forget those, but every wrong turn I've taken in life has my excessive love of you at its core and our casual relationship has become obsessive and toxic. Please don't come after me and try to change my mind. I know it's been easy in the past to win me back, but I can't do it any more. I want to feel alive again.

Best of luck for the future!

I don't know who needs to hear this, but if you're trying to stay clean and you keep going back and hanging out with old friends, it's probably not going to work. Old keys don't open new doors!



Stories Like Mine (continued)

There was a TV commercial in the 80's about the dangers of drugs. A guy held up an egg and said "this is your brain on drugs". Then he cracks the egg into a hot frying pan, watches it sizzle and says "this is your brain on drugs." He then looks into the camera and asks "Any questions?"

Actually, yes I do have a question—why wasn't alcohol included in that cautionary message? I also don't remember drinking being mentioned in my school's cautionary tales about the dangers of addiction. It was always "say no to drugs", it was never "say no to beer".

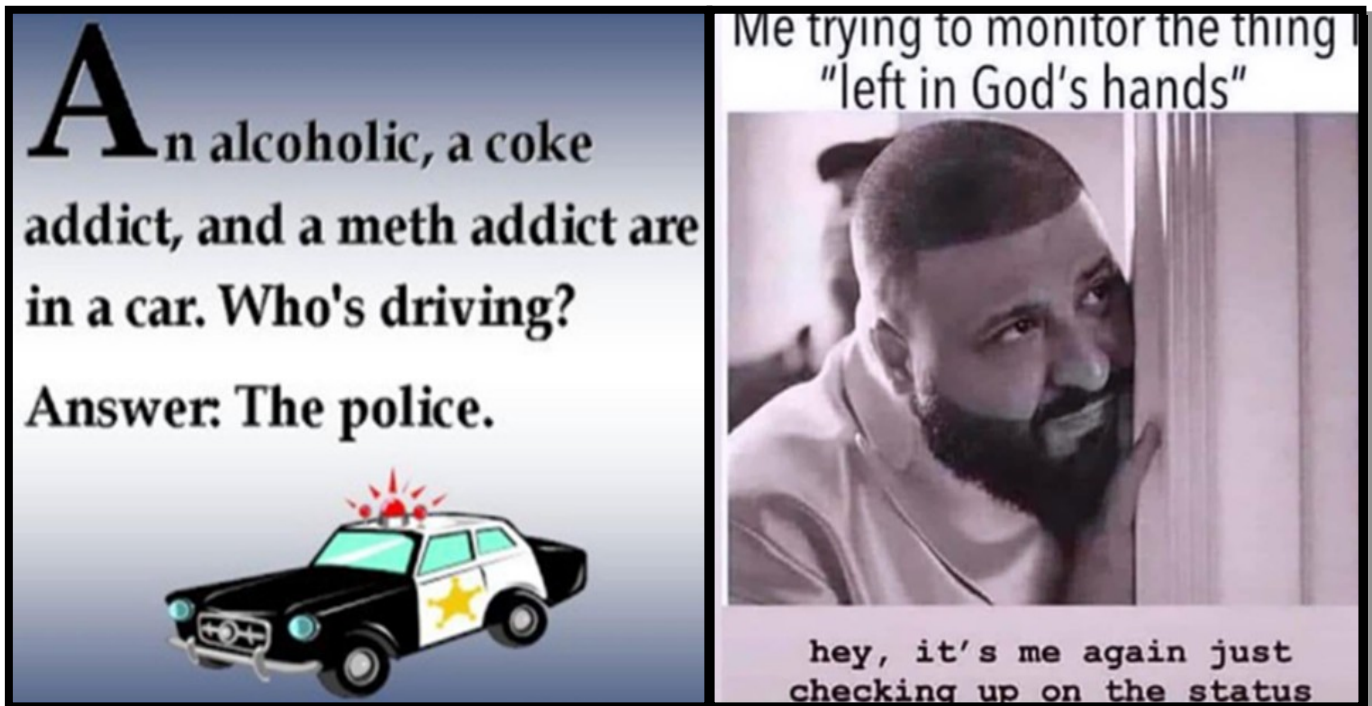
As a minor, alcohol was held out as an aspirational reward for turning 21 years old. A fun thing to look forward to. A symbol that you've matured. As a young professional, alcohol became the center of gravity for all outside work functions. Everyone is expected to drink, and everyone shares in the promise of a good time. ***And it is a good time-until it's not!***

As kids we were warned that drugs could hook you at first use. But not alcohol, because it doesn't. Alcohol is much more crafty because you don't become addicted right away. It takes practice, it takes time! And that's why we don't stop using it. But eventually...we develop a problem. By then it's too late because we are already convinced that we don't have a problem. So we continue drinking...

Nobody sets out to become an alcoholic. But it happens to so many of us that it seems derelict of society to not warn young people about alcoholism with the same tenacity and fervor with which we warn against the dangers of fentanyl, cocaine, heroin, meth and others. Alcohol is every bit as addictive and destructive, but it is somehow categorized separately.

Alcohol is the only drug that we are conditioned to not worry about until it's too late. The one drug I wasn't scared of taking ended up being the one thing that took away everything I had and almost killed me.

If it's not the epitome of dangerous, then I don't know what is..



RECOVERY RESOURCES

V V F O S M J O J P H O N E C A L L S N
 F W C A H E E O W Q T S I D M Q P W O O
 A I S P O N S O R S V X E B E P A R U U
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 G C E F R U O N L I N E M E E T I N G S
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YOGA OF TWELVE STEPS

Come Help Us Celebrate 33 Years

Chews Landing Step Meeting

Thursday, January 16, 2025

7:30 p.m.

St. John's Episcopal Church

Parish Hall

1730 Old Black Horse Pike

Blackwood, New Jersey

Two Speakers

Followed by Food and Fellowship

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP YOUNG
PEOPLES OF AA

JOIN US FOR THE MONTHLY BUSINESS
MEETING

SJIYPAA
COMMITTEE MEETING

EVERY FIRST THURSDAY @7PM
SJ INTERGROUP OFFICE

1000 WHITEHORSE RD
VOORHEES, NJ 08043 SUITE 702

ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE
OFAA TO GET INVOLVED, HAVE
FUN, FELLOWSHIP & BE OF
SERVICE

CONTACT BEN C FOR MORE INFO
973-224-6726

A.A. Sober Rollers Night



Come join us for a night of Fun, Food,
and Fellowship as we roll down the
Lanes of Happy Destiny together...

Friday, Feb. 28th, 7:00 to 8:30

at "The Big Event" 1536 N. Kings Hwy. Cherry Hill

\$20.00 p.p.

Includes Shoe rental, Pizza, Soft Drinks

Be sure to note your ticket #'s when paying by Venmo !

Sponsored by SJIG Social Events Committee in cooperation with Districts 9 & 27

January 25th | 1 PM - 4PM

400 Club 42 Berlin Rd Clementon NJ

Step 1 Workshop

Step 1 HAS Honesty Acceptance Surrender:
Start the New Year growing your serenity
foundation with speakers, literature study,
food, and fellowship. We will continue these
workshops once a month on each step.

All are welcome! Saturday, Jan. 25th, 1-4PM

Sponsored by The 400 Club



Accessibilities Committee

Planning & Brainstorming
Monthly Meeting
The 3rd Thursday at 7pm

A discussion meeting is being held on the topic of the
accessibility needs within Area 45. Anyone can attend.
Ideas/suggestions or to request ASL interpretation for this
meeting email Accessibilities@snjaa.org Phone: 609 498 5458

ID 853 5251 2630 Passcode 626374

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85352512630?pwd=MUtiN2tVTkRjL0xyWnc5dWQ5OUVsdzQ>