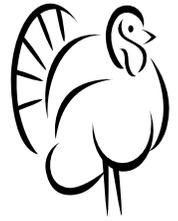


November 2009

# *Anonymous SJ*



## **INTERGROUP ACTION**

The action at Intergroup is that the 2007-2009 panel is coming to an end next month and we thank all of them for the fine job that they have done. There will be nominations for the elected positions at this month's Intergroup meeting and elections to those positions will take place in December. The Twelve Service Committees Chairs will leave their positions, in keeping with the concept of rotation, but not all have someone coming in to fill their seat..

A.A. starts at the Group, but every group needs support which it can't provide by itself. Newcomers arrive at your group because we have phones, answered by volunteers from groups or through a website, which is maintained by volunteers from groups or perhaps a rehab or other agency directs them from a copy of our meeting schedule, kept updated by volunteers from groups. The newcomers may come from a jail or other institution, where they heard about A.A. from a volunteer from a group, who arranged to hold a meeting inside the walls, or another who came to share their story there. Your group may have some A.A. books or pamphlets which a volunteer from a group ordered, stocked and sold to your group.

Intergroup involvement isn't about something outside of your group. Intergroup is your group and all of the other groups in South Jersey. Will Intergroup continue on? Most likely. Should your group get involved?

That's for your group to decide..

## **HOLIDAY ALCATHONS MOVE!**

The Alcathons are marathon meetings held on those times of the year when not only drinking, but also social isolation has proven to be a problem for many AA's. In a major change, the Unity committee has secured a new and much nicer location for the Thanksgiving and subsequent Alcathons. They will be held in Woodbury at the Christ Episcopal church, 162 Delaware street (at New Street), just behind the old Court House. This is just a block off of Route 45. The meeting room is large and comfortable and along with fellowship, there is always plenty of things to eat!

The Cherry Hill Young Peoples Group has taken on the first few hours of the Thanksgiving event, which will start at MIDNIGHT on Thursday, November 26th. CHYP is known for their spirit, so the night will be lively. Come out and join them. Christmas and New years Alcathon schedules will be presented next month, but the location will be the same. This is really excellent work by our Unity Committee.



## You got Questions, A.A. Got Answers.

What's in your Literature rack. Is it carrying the message? Will the newcomer or first timer at your meeting find something there for them? Literature isn't just for the newcomer. Many of our pamphlets contain the basic A.A. answer on many questions. Maybe you can use them in talking with the new person or at least be able to direct them to those answers.

At a minimum, your literature table should have :

**“Is A.A. For Me?”** The 12 (not 44) questions or symptoms of alcoholism, as seen by AA.. **“A Message To Teenagers”** is based on this pamphlet **“Is A.A. for You?”** is the same but illustrated.

**“This is A.A.”** What we have learned about Alcoholism. Why we consider it an illness. Description of the 12 steps.

**“Questions and Answers on Sponsorship.** How do I get one? How can it help me? How does a sponsor explain A.A.? Can a sponsor be too firm, casual, overprotective? How does a sponsor deal with ‘slips’? How can my group help in sponsoring newcomers? When and how do you let the newcomer go?

**“A Newcomer Asks A.A.”** Some suggested answers to basic questions, such as:

Am I an alcoholic? If I go to A.A., does that commit me to anything? What happens if I meet people I know?

What happens at an A.A. meeting? How can this help me with my drinking problem?

Why do A.A.'s keep on going to meetings after they are cured? There is a lot of talk about God, Is A.A. a religious organization? What advice do you give to newcomers? What answers would you give to these questions?

**“44 Questions”** Among them; What is Alcoholism? How can I tell if I am really an alcoholic? Can an alcoholic ever be normal again or even just drink beer? How can I get along in business where I have to drink with clients? Who runs A.A.? How often do A.A. members have to attend meetings? What are ‘Slips’? Why doesn't A.A. seem to work for some people? For answers to these and the other 37 questions check out the pamphlet.

**“The A.A. Group”** describes how things *should* be done. Suggested meeting procedures, suggested topics, the various types of A.A. meetings, Starting a group, Naming a Group. Group jobs and what they should be doing and it also includes several questions for the Group Inventory. In short, everything that you should know about your A.A. Group

**“Problems Other than Alcohol”** Can A.A.'s with a dual problem join Narcotics Anonymous? Can Non Alcoholic Addicts be A.A. members?

**“The Jack Alexander Article”** Early in 1941, Jack Alexander, a respected investigative journalist, wrote an article on Alcoholics Anonymous in the Saturday Evening Post magazine. This article and a few others caused A.A. membership to grow from hundreds to thousands and as calls for help came in to New York, new A.A. groups were started all over the country. Written when A.A. was only six years old, it describes the raw early story of A.A., including how John D. Rockefeller helped establish our seventh tradition. Why was this article so important that GSO made it available in a pamphlet? Read it and you'll know.

**“A Members Eye view of A.A.”** The hands down, must read for every A.A. .

There are sixteen slots in the Literature Rack; is your group using your wisely?

On the very last page of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, there is a list of forty-eight pamphlets, which GSO publishes. Take the time to review them and see what you might want to read next. Read just one a week and you'll still have a month left over. A.A.-Read more about it! Literature is available at the Intergroup office

## STEPS & TRADITIONS

### Tradition 11– The Long Form

Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We 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.

One job of the Public Information Committee is to mail a letter to all news media each year, reminding them of our Tradition of anonymity at the public level and asking their assistance in not linking AA membership to individuals in any items. This still comes as a surprise to many of these agencies as they are not used to groups who do not want public exposure. They are usually quite impressed that what AA wants is to publicize our principles and our works but not our individual members.

So how and why DO we reach the Non Alcoholic Public? Through our Public Information work. PI is the only part of A.A. which shows above the surface and the only part which presents the story of A.A. to interested parties. In the past PI has talked with civic and professional organizations, High Schools, Medical schools, IDRC classes and community groups. PI is not a traveling AA Speakers meeting. PI volunteers do not talk about themselves, but rather they present Alcoholics Anonymous, our program of recovery and the actual structure of our fellowship. Another task of Public Information is to get radio and Television stations to air Public Service Announcements (PSA's). These are produced by GSO, but it is up to local AA to get them air time. A daunting task.

Maybe you can help in informing the Public in some of these ways. Tradition Eleven depends upon us

### Step 11-Seeking God's Will

You can find discussion of Step Eleven starting on page 85 of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. From the start, it reminds us that prayer and meditation are a suggestion. And also that it works, IF we have the proper attitude and Work at it! What work? It asks us to look how we have lived our day and then ask for God's forgiveness and direction and that upon rising we ask (in prayer) that our decisions be free of Self Pity, dishonest or self seeking motives. Pretty explicit instructions for a suggestion. All of this review and questioning is a part of the meditation talked about in this step. The Big Book even suggests that we involve our spouse, *if circumstances warrant it*. The discussion of this step makes it clear that it is not intended to be restricted to just the morning and evening but continued throughout our day. We should pause when agitated or doubtful and ask what the next step should be and remind ourselves that we are no longer running the show. Pretty heavy stuff, Step Eleven.

The last three steps of our program all use language which stress continuous growth. "*continued to take..*" "*Tried to carry the message..-practiced the principles*" and in Step Eleven "*Sought ...to Improve.*" The Eleventh Step would seem to be a process of growth. We don't get it and keep it, but must seek to improve upon what we have gained. Without wondering if the type of prayer or mediation is the right one, perhaps we should ask if we are seeking to improve or becoming complacent in our routines of prayer. This step is pretty specific about our requests to God; what his will for us might be and the power to carry it out.

Chapter Six concludes by reminding us that "*Faith without Works is dead*" So our prayers must be followed up with action, if we are going to maintain the spiritual recovery we have so far gained

## Twenty-Five Years Ago in the Newsletter

Helen B was the editor of Anonymous in 1984, Ruth K. wrote an article about Bookers, describing the meeting as, 'a lively affair run on the order of an auction.' Which is still true today. Mindy E. wrote an article called 'Today I'll be Happy' which described her daily program of recovery and Pat D. wrote about his early times in A.A. and how things had changed for him. The editorial board consisted of Helen B. Stella J. Pat D. Warren F, Madge M and Cathy D. The announcements included the 10th anniversary of the Crossings Serenity Group, which is still going strong at the same location on Black Horse Pike in Turnersville

The December issue described the Alkathon which was to be held at the Intergroup Office at Marlkrass Road in Cherry Hill starting at Noon on December 24th and going through the night until 6 pm Christmas Day. (Chuck B. wrote the item) The Area Delegate Ruth N. included a note as well. Announcements mentioned the New Years dance sponsored by the Camalan Club, at St Anthony's church, River Road in Camden.

Although we have copies of issues back until 1983, we believe that the newsletter was started in 1982. IN one form or another, it has continued to be a messenger and a forum for the A.A.s of South Jersey Intergroup.

The question is, will it continue? So far , no one has stepped with an interest in keeping the Anonymous SJ alive in our fellowship. Will next months issue be the last issue? It might well be up to the person reading these words.

Are *You* Responsible?

### *Lighter Side*

*The young man was sharing at an AA meeting. "This hasn't been a good day for me, I wasn't centered, I wasn't in touch with my feelings and my inner child felt deprived. I just wasn't comfortable in my own skin."*

*An old timer leaned over and whispered to the woman in front of him. "I'm hard of hearing. What did he say?"*

*The woman replied, "He says he's hungry, angry, lonely and tired."*

*"The best thing for you," said the doctor to the dissipated young man, "is to give up smoking, drinking and sex."*

*The patient thought for a minute, then asked, "What's the next best thing?"*

*Topic at a meeting.*

*Would you still go to AA if a pill was created that cured alcoholism?*

*Speaker: "Yes, I would. I have a feeling I'd want more of them."*

*"You guys wouldn't let me do it cold turkey. You slopped on the gravy, mashed potatoes and stuffing too."*

## Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.'s History

From GSO Archives at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

### **Q. What is the history behind reading The Lord's Prayer at meetings?**

**A.** It is mentioned in *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers* that the prayer was used from the very beginning in the Fellowship, at least as early as 1938 and 1939. In those days there was no AA literature, so the early groups relied heavily on existing prayers, and on the Bible and Oxford Group literature, for inspiration and guidance.

Bill W. commented several times in his correspondence about the early use of the Lord's Prayer. He wrote a letter to a member in 1959 in which he stated:

*"This practice probably came from the Oxford Groups who were influential in the early days of A.A. You have probably noted in A.A. Comes of Age what the connection of these people with A.A. really was. I think saying the Lord's Prayer was a custom of theirs following the close of each meeting. Therefore it quite easily got shifted into a general custom among us."*

Bill also wrote the following in a 1955 letter:

*"Of course there are always those who seem to be offended by the introduction of any prayer whatever into an ordinary A.A. gathering. Also it is sometimes complained that the Lord's Prayer is a Christian document. Nevertheless, this Prayer is of such widespread use and recognition that the argument of its Christian origin seems to be a little far-fetched. It is also true that most AA's believe in some kind of god and that communication and strength is obtainable through his grace. Since this is the general consensus, it seems only right that at least the Serenity Prayer and the Lord's Prayer be used in connection with our meetings. It does not seem necessary to defer to the feelings of our agnostic and atheist newcomers to the extent of completely hiding 'our light under a bushel.'*

*However, around here, the leader of the meeting usually asks those to join him in the Lord's Prayer who feel that they would care to do so. The worst that happens to the objectors is that they have to listen to it. This is doubtless a salutary exercise in tolerance at their stage of progress."*

As Bill's 1955 letter indicates, recitation of the Lord's Prayer at meetings has clearly been controversial in some circles almost since the beginning. The GSO has responded to letters on this issue since the 1940s and 1950s. It is continually addressed in articles in Box 459 and the AA Grapevine, and has often been asked about at the General Service Conference. For example, at the 1962 Conference, in one of the Ask-It

### **Editors Note**

Last month's issue contained a Big Book quiz and one of the notes was which chapter of the Big Book was not written by Bill W. Our AA conventional Wisdom says that Bill wrote the Big Book in its entirety, but to my knowledge, that fact is not stated anywhere. We know that he presented himself as a wife in Chapter Eight, but Chapter Ten, "To Employers" is written in a completely different voice than the other ten chapters and the author describes himself in a manner which could not be assigned to Bill W. I have inquired to GSO archives for more information, but meanwhile, if any reader has an *fact based* information, please share it with us

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND AA?

Nov 20-Fri. THRESHOLD Group holds 23rd anniversary at Virtua Hosp. Food at 7 pm followed by a speaker

Nov 20-22 Cape Atlantic Intergroup Waves of Sobriety Round Up, Grand Hotel , Cape May

Nov 26– THANKSGIVING ALCATHON– See front page for details

Nov 26 Thu ELLISDALE Back to Basics group Thanksgiving Morning Gratitude breakfast 9 am-11 am Ellisdale UMC 926 Provinceline Rd, Allentown NJ (feel free to bring covered dish)

Nov 28 Sat Magnolia Saturday Group holds its 38th anniversary with speakers and deserts. 8:30—10 pm

Dec 5 Sat Collingswood Daily Reprieve holds 9th anniversary breakfast

Ed. Note: We gratefully acknowledge the efforts of Wayne P. who has set himself the task of collecting and passing along events information for years. Most of the announcements that we print are taken from his work. While we are much in gratitude to Wayne for his efforts, we would also like to remind the various groups that they can use the newsletter to pass along any information by simply sending it along to us.

2009 Day of Sharing—Andy E. SJIG Chair

Day of Sharing : Thanks to the great folks at Cape Atlantic Intergroup, (CAIG) for sponsoring this years Day of Sharing. The meeting place was great and the food was fabulous. There were between 70-80 people attending this annual event and we all heard some great sharing on rewards of service. There were some very solid ideas on ways to carry the message in prisons. Ideas on how we can Make Service Attractive were shared in a seminar and there was a lot of discussion of the ways our current society treats anonymity, with such things as Facebook, Twitter and how Intergroups must use caution and exercise vigilance in our on line presence. Everyone who attended enjoyed the day. Our Intergroup will host the Day of Sharing next October. Have you heard about the Day of Sharing before reading this? Have you ever attended one? Do you think that they are a worthwhile use of your time? Please write to the newsletter and give us your feedback either way

*The Halloween dance only had ten people attending and the last camp out had none. Sad to say as both the dance and all of the camp outs were well attended last year. Did we change AA's so quickly? How many social events have you attended this year, including various group anniversaries? The Social Events committee has always invited new ideas and is always looking for new ways to encourage social involvement, but alas it has tended to be a one sided venture. So what's up? How can we get you involved in having fun in your sobriety? This committee is leaving in December, do we just let it go or do we get involved. It's really your choice.*

**You are not Alone!**  
**Call 1-866-920-1212**  
**ANYTIME**

**Visit Our  
website  
Wwww.aasj.or**

**a**