

Hot News

February 2011



SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

Anonymous SJ

The Second Step

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

The Second Tradition

“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.”

February started off with the promise of an early Spring....if you believe the groundhog! Which I do...Anyway, it reminded me of the promises of AA, how “if we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through.We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.....We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”

I can see this in people I have met in the fellowship, that calm serenity, that happiness that glows from within. What a blessing! What sadness when that light is gone too soon from us. I have heard speakers say that everything passes in AA. What we learn is how to accept, with grace and dignity, that which passes, be it good or bad.

I would like to say a final farewell to our friend and fellowship member Chris F, may the light he had shed on us, our lives and those who knew him be a beacon for us to follow through our own darkness. Thanks for being you Chris.

We are the fellowship and the fellowship needs ‘we’.

In service, Judy

South Jersey AA Contact information

Website: www.aasj.org

AA information: toll free 856-920-1212

AA office: 856-486-4446

Newsletter: newsletter@aasj.org

“When anyone anywhere, reaches our t for help, I want the hand of AA to be there. For that I am responsible.”

Please see this newsletter, the aasj.org site, and your local home group for chances to be of service.

Steering Committee Meeting Highlights

Answering Svc several shifts remain vacant. We continue to invite new volunteers to sign up for service. The website has been updated to show open shifts, but since these are subject to frequent changes, we encourage interested AA's to contact us by email (website) or by phone. With 32 of 56 shifts reporting, our volunteers ("subs" included) fielded 244 calls during January, making the average number of calls per reporting shift approx. 8, with a low number of 0 and a high of 15. At present, three (3) shifts are covered by AA groups, as "group commitments". The Answercom service fielded a total of 93 calls during January. Answercom covers calls when the shift volunteer is busy on the line, or when a volunteer misses her/his shift. Adding the Answercom calls to the total reported above (244), makes a grand total of 337 calls last month. The average number of calls per shift, including those not reporting, is then calculated to approx.6.

H&I We had 20 groups show filling 123 out of 139 commitments. Anyone interested in an application for Kintock Halfway House, please contact me. We would like to thank Jen M. for taking the hosting position for Unity Place 2.

Dr. Ganz from a FCI in Fort Dix, NJ is looking to get individuals to start a meeting at this federal prison composed of 4400 inmates. I am in the process of gaining more information on the requirements to get access.

Our next meeting is February 28, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Intergroup Office

Public Information . In Maple Shade, Our Lady Of Perpetuation Help Church are looking for an AA speaker for Saturday. Feb. 26,2011 at 6:00 PM. Haddon Township High School want an AA presentation for their students, They have not given me a date yet. I told them we are available whenever they need us. The African American Woman's Coalition are sponsoring a senior health awareness day at the Echelon Mall on March 12, 2011. They want us to set-up a table with AA pamphlets.

Literature Report: A Big Book order placed in January did not show up on the bank statement. Checking with AAWS and the bank if necessary. The Roadshow continues to run smoothly. Our gratitude goes out to the whole Roadshow crew!Inventory will be taken next week. Day to be determined. Special thanks to my co-chair, Larry.

When, therefore, we AAs look to the future, we must always ask ourselves if the spirit which now binds us together in our common cause will always be stronger than those personal ambitions and desires which tend to drive us apart. . . Though the individual AA is under no human coercion, is at almost perfect personal liberty, we have, nevertheless, achieved a wonderful unity on vital essentials.

Bill W 1988

In the years ahead we shall, of course, make mistakes. Experience has taught us that we need have no fear of doing this, providing that we always remain willing to confess our faults and to correct them promptly. Our growth as individuals has depended upon this healthy process of trial and error. So will our growth as a fellowship. Let us always remember that any society of men and women that cannot freely correct its own faults must surely fall into decay if not into collapse. Such is the universal penalty for the failure to go on growing. Just as each AA must continue to take his moral inventory and act upon it, so must our whole society do ...

AA Comes of Age, 1988

Your Turn

From Our Fellowship

My name is Ed and I am an alcoholic and allergic to iodine I.V. However the allergy to iodine is not important at an AA meeting. It is important for my doctor to know that, but people in AA really don't care about my allergies.

My name is Ed and I am an alcoholic and spent 20 years in the military. My military career is important to me because I get a pension check and medical benefits for life. But people in AA could really care less about my military benefits.

My name is Ed and I am an alcoholic and have been divorced 3 times. Now if I spend ten minutes at a AA meeting talking about my divorces I don't think that many people would listen because they just don't care about it all that much.

My name is Ed and I hate *sushi*. Although this may interest other *sushi* haters, most AA members couldn't identify with this personal issue I have with sushi.

So, when I hear, My name is So and So and I am cross addicted, the first thing that comes to mind is, I hope no one is wearing a cross as it could be a trigger for this poor person.

When I hear my name is So and So and I am an alcoholic and addict I begin to wonder, what is the other addiction? My mind wonders, cross dresser, maybe he is addicted to wearing woman's clothing. No, that's stupid. That isn't an addiction. I know, maybe addicted to sex? Of course, a sex addict? But why bring that up at an AA meeting? I just can't stop wondering what the addiction could be. And why is it important that it be part of a meeting for Alcoholics? I don't talk about iodine or *sushi* or military or divorces at an AA meeting. It just wouldn't be right. We have a singleness of purpose. We have traditions. We have an obligation to the still suffering alcoholic of carrying the AA message. Where did all this stuff come from anyway? Cross addicted, poly addicted, dual addicted, and alcoholic-addict. It just doesn't seem to fit in at an AA meeting. Perhaps my concern is because I am old and don't understand this generation of Alcoholics. When I first came to AA 38 years ago, being an alcoholic was all I needed to be. I didn't stay in AA at that time, but when I returned 10 years later it was still the same. A bunch of plain ole alkies. That worked out just fine for me. Since I had a problem with alcohol it was the place for me to be. Everybody introduced themselves as plain ole Alcoholics. I was able to connect with everyone at the meetings. My little mind didn't wonder far. I didn't need to worry about all the other possible addictions. I had a disease called alcoholism. That seemed good enough for all the other members to accept me. I am so glad it was that way. I wish we could get back to that. After all, we are just plain ole ALCOHOLICS ANNONYMOUS. No more, no less. "Shoe maker, stick to thy last".

In closing I just want to say, My name is Ed and I am an alcoholic.

Eddie "J"

Williamstown, N

Fellowship Announcements and Things To Do

Saturday, February 19 - Haddon Heights Rap-A- Round will celebrate their 36th anniversary with AA & Alanon speakers at 8:00 PM. Desserts will be served. Methodist Church, 7th & Garden Sts.

Saturday, February 19 - Washington Twp. 9th Anniversary, Breakfast: 9:00 AM, Speaker Discussion : 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM. Meeting will be in the Parish Hall - Church of the Holy Family, Hurffville Rd. - Washington Twp.

Sunday, February 20 - Area 45 Assembly/Committee Meeting. Career Opportunity Development, Inc., 901 Atlantic Ave., Egg Harbor City, NJ. New DCM/GSR Orientation 9 am, Meeting begins at 10 am and generally ends around 2:30-3pm. Free continental breakfast and lunch.

Sunday, February 20 - Blackwood Sunday Night Group celebrates 4th anniversary. Our Lady of Hope Church, Little Gloucester & Coles Rd. Blackwood, NJ. 7:00 PM with speakers and food.

Sunday, February 20 - Moorestown Spiritual Growth Group 32th Anniversary. Trinity Episcopal Church, Main & Church Sts., Moorestown, NJ. Pizza & salad at 7:00 PM. AA Speaker at 8:15.

Friday, February 25 - Audubon Friday Night will celebrate their 32nd anniversary starting at 8 PM. Logan Presbyterian Church - Calvin Hall - 18 W Merchant St., just off the WHP.

Friday, February 25 - Sunday, February 27 - NERAASA 2011, Westchester Marriott, **670 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, NY 10591**. www.neraasa.org

The Night of Recollection AA meeting and dinner meets on the last Monday of each month at the St Charles Boro School, Washington Township, NJ. There is a dinner at 6:30 (donation \$15) followed by a Speaker meeting at 7:15. For those who care to attend, there is a half hour Mass in the chapel beforehand. Anyone can attend the meeting portion without going to the dinner. Dates are: 29 Feb/ 28 Mar/ 25 April

Wednesday, March 9 - Woodbury will celebrate their 10th anniversary with a continental breakfast followed by 2 speakers. 9:00 AM. YMCA, 235 E. Red Bank Ave. **Saturday, March 19 - The Allentown Saturday Afternoon Group 9th Anniversary.**

March 18-20, 2011, Holiday Inn Solomons Conference Center & Marina, Solomons MD South Maryland Roundup First Southern Maryland Roundup. See www.southernmarylandroundup.org for information, including flyer and registration form.

March 18 1:00 PM - Food, 2:00 PM - Speaker: Scott E. Crossroads Youth Center, 75 S. Main St., Allentown, NJ. Part of 1st Presbyterian Church. More info: Mary Jo - 609.259.6920 **NEW**

March 25 - 27 - South Jersey Area 45 47th Annual Convention. Registration: \$35.00. Crowne Plaza Hotel, Rt. 70 & Cuthbert Rd., Cherry Hill, NJ. www.snjaaconvention.org

April 1- 3 - Couple's Escape Weekend at St. Mary of Providence Center, 222 Isabella Rd., Elverson, PA. 19520. Come join us for an escape weekend with other recovering couples of all ages. \$260 per couple covers room and board in a beautiful setting. For more info call: Wayne @ 856-534-0104.

May 12 - 15 - 6th Annual International Seniors in Sobriety Conference. Holiday Inn, Long Island.

Workshops; AA & Alanon Meetings & Speakers; Spiritual Conference; Fellowship & Banquet.

Tour of Stepping Stones (Home of Bill W. & Lois). Contacts: Coni M. cmot@optonline.net , Nancy O. nomh@optonline.net , Nancy B. nblomberg@segalco.com .

June 10-12 - Akron, Ohio will celebrate Founder's Day with a convention. If you would like to go, we will be taking a bus to Akron. Total cost for bus, room and registration is \$400 + many surprises. For more info call Wayne : 856-534-0104

From a Group to a Meeting to a Whatever!

Another dear old AA saying is that all you need to start a meeting is a resentment and a coffee pot. Now isn't that a positive, pleasant thought. The fact is that even though there are in excess of three hundred listed AA meetings in our South Jersey Schedule, at least one new one is added at every printing. When meetings start, everyone wants to spread the word, when they start to get sick, people start saying that they 'need support', but when they finally die, no one writes the obituary.

I have seen groups wither and die. They begin, grow and maintain a sizable attendance, if not membership (that part is key and we will return to it), then for no clear reason, the numbers attending start to decline. There was one group that had announcements pleading for support and I finally attended the group meeting and found that there were over a dozen folks in regular attendance. Exactly what support did they need? If it was funds, they didn't mention it when the basket was passed, nor was there any talk of service commitments being unfilled. It seemed that they just wanted more people to attend.

Another meeting had a strong, solid attendance. Many folks with long term sobriety were there every week and then they weren't. Like a flock of birds scared off by a hawk, they were gone. I still saw them in other meetings, they just did not go to that meeting any more. Curious, I asked the few folks, (only four or five, often less) if there had been some conflict which accounted for the exodus. They said that there was nothing they knew of that would account for it. The group is still around and still very small. Most of the former attendees can be found in one of two other meetings held that night.

That may be the problem. So many meetings, why bother to fix a problem in one, when you can simply discard it and go to another. Many SJ AA's acknowledge two or even more Home Groups. I have never quite grasped that concept. The term Home would imply that you have one group where you hang your sobriety hat even if you go to many other meetings. Having more than one Home group might be the same as having one family and another on the side. If things don't go well in one place, simply go to the other. This is a great way to avoid practicing fellowship, tolerance and acceptance.

In fact, the AA Service Manual states ***"the concept of the Home Group has still remained the strongest bond between the A.A. member and the fellowship."*** The home group also ensures the idea of one AA, one vote on all matters of importance to AA as a whole.

An even better way is to simply start your own meeting, with your own rules and ideas. Then you can get rid of that pet peeve which has been annoying you in other meetings and practice pure sobriety and spirituality. Okay! Except in a few weeks, your dream meeting might need "support". Group membership, involvement and support are keys to a successful AA Group. Numbers are not the key! Groups in smaller areas continue to hold together and carry the message with only a few members, because they have to do so! More is only better if you don't get spoiled.

The GSO Pamphlet "The AA Group" offers a checklist for a Group Inventory. A Group inventory tells the Group if it is carrying out its Primary Purpose. The Fifth Tradition doesn't tell a Group to carry out THE message, but ITS message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This sort of assumes that your group has a message. Does your group have a message? I recently went to a meeting where the chairperson followed the opening notes and asked that everyone refrain from using coarse or vulgar language. Apparently this was the Group Conscience. Still the first person who spoke, who had identified himself as a group member, stated that he didn't care about that and loaded his sharing with vulgarities, as did many other group members that followed him. Now, the problem was not the language, but that the group members choose to ignore the message of their own group, as stated in the opening remarks.

I believe that Groups fail because they don't believe in or follow the AA Traditions! The men who ignored the requests of the group put themselves first, (1st Tradition), they ignored the Group Conscience (2nd Tradition) and the message that they carried might well have been, don't listen to what our group says, look at what we members do. (5th Tradition) I have encountered many of these men in other groups and they seem to be able to use language without sounding like a sailor on payday, so it would seem to be a choice rather than an affliction.

Groups live or die based upon the belief and adherence to the Traditions. Remember that they were initially called Guidelines to ensure the survival of AA (or something like that!), so the idea is that we as Group members should be aware of them, not just in the breach, but in the observance.

Joe

How Important It Is, Washington Twp