

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

JANUARY 2014

A Thousand Angels

Her journey to learn about Tradition One opened her heart to hope

When I first got to AA, I did not have any understanding of what the Steps could do for me, or how critical the Traditions are for the life of the group. But I knew in my heart that I needed meetings desperately. I knew that I was living from meeting to meeting the same way I had lived from bottle to bottle.

The First Tradition was a difficult concept for me. Having grown up in an alcoholic household, I learned never to trust anyone, never to let anyone see that I was scared, and never to let anything get in the way of what I wanted. Lying and stealing were what I did best (next to drinking), and I was secretly proud of my ability to manipulate and connive. The concept of a “common welfare” was totally alien to me, and to be expected to put the needs of others in front of my own was almost laughable.

(Continued on page 4)



The Double-Edged Sword

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable

Happy 2014 everyone! My sponsor talks over and over again about the “double-edged sword” of Step One. As alcoholics, we are captives of an insane urge to go on drinking, plus an allergy of the body that insures that we will destroy ourselves in the process. This translates into the ongoing thought that, I can control it now; that, knowing what I know now about alcoholism, things will be different this time I drink. I can handle it now!

My sponsor is also fond of saying that, how anyone who has been through what we’ve been through, can think that it’s now alright to drink, shows how truly powerful this disease is; how it can re-write reality and history for us and tell us

(Continued on page 3)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Welcome to AA – The Way Life Should Be**
- 3 Step One continued**
- 3 Welcome to AA continued**
- 3 A New Year’s message**
- 4 A Thousand Angels continued**
- 5 Editorial Policy and Contact**
- 6 Fellowship Announcements and Things to Do**

Welcome to AA - The Way Life Should Be

The principals of AA and the love and humor of the fellowship gave this member a life second to none

"You're not really going to a meeting tonight, are you"? My wife knew I'd been working hard and sleeping badly for a week. Townies called the mid-March Maine snowstorm still in progress "mushy rain." About six inches of the stuff lay across my driveway, with more on the way. But I'd agreed the week before to fill in for the set-up guy, who was out of town. "Only a few guys are going to show up," my wife warned, "all of them with four-wheel drive. You could stay home and get some rest. Nobody would care."

She was almost right about the four-wheelers, but wrong on the second account. I would care. This is my home group of eighteen years.

I made a few three-or-four-person meetings in snowstorms my first years around the fellowship. I remember my body turning warm and relaxed back then just at the sight of the kitchen lights when I turned my rusty pickup into the church parking lot.

I drove slow as a Florida tourist, and busted tread trails through the surf the town plow had banked at the parking lot entrance, praying enough guys

would show to muscle my minivan out of there by the end of the meeting. I turned on the lights, got coffee started, set up about a dozen of the forty chairs with a copy of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. I was shoveling



"It is due only to the principals of the AA program and the love and humor of the fellowship that I've come to agree with that sign."

the path to the back door when a little foreign car spun into the lot, zigged and zagged, and skidded to a halt.

"Hope you have the number for a reliable towing service," I greeted a familiar younger guy with nine or ten months behind him. He smiled. "Dude, front wheel drive. Got me to the bars real reliable the last six winters. Sobriety's s'posed to be fun too, right?" He looked around. "Anything I can do to help?" Somebody is definitely

sharing some good orderly direction with this guy.

Five group members showed a little later in one four-wheeler, a long-time silent hanger-on pulled up a chair outside the circle five

minutes after the meeting started, and a brand new recruit stuck his head in minutes later.

Six men and one woman, who I asked to chair, and to whom the old-timer of the group whispered, "Go to Step and Tradition one," nodding at the newcomer. So after her qualification she asked aloud, since we were so small tonight, would the group agree to read Step and Tradition one? The yays carried it.

Perfect. This kind of love and cooperation gives me a deeper, fuller sense of family than a weekend with kin. His head bowed toward the floor, our long silent, long-time hanger-on spoke for ten minutes. He shared more sober loneliness and emotional pain than I hear from most newcomers. The wide-eyed new recruit told the group his story during our five minute break between the tradition and step. All of us shared at least once, and

(Continued on page 3)

Step One

(From page 1)

that it's now alright to return to drinking. That, he says, is the "insanity" that Step Two talks about. Three key concepts jump out at me in reading Step One: humility-surrender-fellowship. I need to absolutely humble myself in order to go down on my knees and surrender; in complete powerlessness. I've wrecked my life and there's nowhere else for me to turn. It's surrender or die! I've proven that I am utterly incapable of managing my life. Only the 'act of Providence' that Step One talks about, can rescue me.

I do it. I get on my knees and ask a higher power to save me. That higher power (and a helpful friend) directs me to AA. Here I find the other key to my sobriety: fellowship. I like to think that the idea of Providence, of spirituality, of the magic that is this program, is contained in fellowship. After all, was it not, only when Bill W. and Dr. Bob got together, in that first seminal act of fellowship, that AA was born?

I do it again. I go to meetings, share with others, find a sponsor, a home-group, take a commitment. All of these are acts of fellowship. Step One tells me that, so long as I continue to live in fellowship with other alcoholics, I will be safe. "It was a statistical fact that alcoholics almost never recovered on their own resources." I can not do this alone.

Let's make 2014 the year that we re-dedicate ourselves to fellowship. Get involved with your group, sponsor someone, or spend more time with your sponsor, take a commitment. Take out some insurance on your sobriety and continued growth. Remember, we absolutely cannot do this alone. Have a wonderful year!

—Masonville Marty

Welcome 2014!



"It works!" is the electrifying promise that we can give to others. IF there has to be a resolution today, let it be that we will offer those two words fraught with the ringing message that has been proven over and over. "It works!" They offer a new year to any who are still burdened with the past. They bring a new year whenever and wherever they are accepted. Today is the day, any day and every day, to try the new way. Today, "It works!" Tomorrow, "It works!"

From "A New Year's Message" AAGrapevine

The Way Life Should Be

(From page 2)

the meeting closed a few minutes early with all eyes on the mushy rain accumulating outside.

We all pitched in, straightening up the church meeting room. After turning down the heat and switching off the lights, I found all four cars in the unplowed parking lot waiting to leave together: A group of sober alcoholics, making sure no one got left behind: my home group.

When entering Maine on a federal highway, you are greeted by a large sign: "The way life should be." It is due only to the principles of the AA program and the love and humor of the fellowship that I've come to agree with that sign. In fact, they could follow it with another: "A life second to none." Ayuh.

Anonymous, Maine

A Thousand Angels

(From page 1)

However, I was motivated by a desperation I can only describe as God-given, because without the certain knowledge that I was spiraling toward a very ugly death, I would never have been moved to accept those ideas. And I did accept them. I made a decision to accept this Tradition the same way I accepted the truth of the First Step, not because I fully understood all the implications and recognized their validity, but because I was desperate and I believed these were the only things that could save me.

I understood that the First Step was my lifeline to this program, and the First Tradition was the lifeline for the group. I understood that my recovery depended on AA unity. I even began to understand that it was just as important to me that others recovered because, for the first time in my life, I realized that I needed other people.

What I learned from the First Tradition changed the way I viewed the world and hence the way I interacted with others. Since this was the first time I looked at other people as important, and not as enemies, I had to learn to listen to them. This was pretty difficult for someone like me. But as I got better at it, I was surprised to learn that there were an awful lot of smart, funny, nice people around. And people started to talk to me, and not just to say, "You keep coming, honey."

I learned to see the bigger picture, meaning AA beyond the groups I attended. I began to see the global power of AA, and I was able to trust AA to be my Higher Power. I have heard it said at meetings that when God sees the tiniest spark of willingness in your heart, he sends a thousand angels rushing to your side. Being able to accept AA as my Higher Power was that tiny spark of willingness, which opened my heart to hope. For me, this was the first gift of Tradition One. I had hope that this precious Fellowship would endure and that I could endure with it.

I even began to understand that it was just as important to me that others recovered because, for the first time in my life, I realized that I needed other people.

Another gift was the ability to work alongside others, whether it was to make coffee, reach out to a newcomer, or be a parent and a partner. (Truth be told, the parent and partner part was a long, slow process.) It didn't happen

overnight, but I came to realize that I was having conversations with people during the break or while doing service. For the very first time in my life I knew the joy of being one among many, a worker among workers. For the very first time in my life I belonged somewhere, and it was in AA. I learned that putting AA ahead of myself didn't mean that I was "less than," it meant that I was part of. My greatest hope is that that never changes, and my greatest joy is that I know it never has to.

– Kathleen D., Shirley, N.Y. (From the January online edition of Grapevine Magazine)

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@asaj.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@asaj.org
Website: www.asaj.org
24-Hour Hotline 1-856-486-4444
Toll Free Hotline: 1-866-920-1212

SJIG holds its monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the month at 8 pm at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 989 Route 70 East, Cherry Hill, NJ

Please Allow Us To Introduce Ourselves!

No, it's not Mick Jagger! We are Marty P. (Chair), Marissa C. (Co-Chair) and Steve W. (Member-at-Large) and we are the new Newsletter Committee for 2014/2015. We want to thank the departing committee members and wish them well. They've done a great job bringing out this Newsletter for the last two years and we are indeed grateful. We have some very big shoes to fill and can only ask for your patience as we get oriented here.

We want to wish everyone at South Jersey Intergroup a happy and healthy new year. Please know that this Newsletter can only be as successful as all of us make it. We need to hear from all of you out there. We need items, articles, and announcements of interest from all the AA groups that make up South Jersey Intergroup. Just Email whatever it is you want to see in print and we'll do our best to print it here. Thanks so much to everyone for the warm welcome you've given us.

Opportunities for Service

The Answering Service Committee is in need of volunteers to answer the Intergroup Hotline, 856.486.4444. Interested AAs with a year or more of sobriety are encouraged to contact the committee via e-mail, answeringservice@asaj.org.

The Literature Office is looking for volunteers. No Experience necessary. One year sobriety required. If you are interested, please contact us at literature@asaj.org

Our Public Information committee needs volunteers. If you can help or would like more info, please contact us at publicinfo@asaj.org

The Unity Committee would like to invite you to Come Get Involved, have fun and "Give Back What Was So Freely Given." Committee meeting 8 p.m., second Tuesday monthly, IG office Pennsauken, NJ.

Please help H&I spread the word about its newest commitment at Inspira (Bridgeton Hospital). We invite groups & individuals to come host & speak on Saturdays from 5-6 pm. Please contact us at handi@asaj.org.

Fellowship Announcements and Things to Do

January 2014

Special Notice

Area 45 Corrections Committee LIPS Donations should be sent directly to Area 45. Please send checks or donations to: P.O. Box 3724, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034. Payable to: Area 45 Corrections Committee-LIPS. Please include your group's info (group name, town, group number from GSO) on the check. Any Questions contact: Corrections Committee Chair - Kathy Jo S. @ 609-790-3740 or kjswersky@gmail.com NEW

The Area 45 Corrections Committee Needs Volunteers

The primary purpose of this committee is to assist in carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the alcoholic who is confined in correctional facilities in Southern New Jersey. Volunteers are needed to carry the message into a jail or prison, hand out LIPS Cans to Homegroups, staff our table at the Area 45 Convention and more.

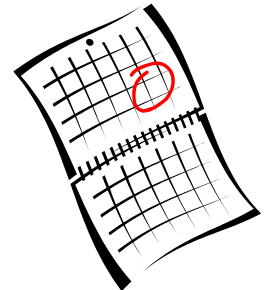
Moorestown Meeting Needs Support

"Innervision for You" welcomes all to join them for 11th Step meditation followed by open sharing on Fridays. Friend's Meeting House, 118 Main Street, Moorestown NJ: Prayer & Meditation: The group meets on Friday's at 7:30 pm.

New Location for Women Living Sober

Tuesday Night Women Living Sober Group that meets at 7pm. NEW Location: St. John's Episcopal Church in Blackwood at 1720 Old Black Horse Pike Blackwood NJ.

Mark Your Calendar!



Saturday, January 18 – District 13 Workshop. Woodstown Presbyterian Hall, 46 Auburn Rd. 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. 3 Speakers/FOOD/RAFFLE / Q&A-Chairs: Kathy P: 856.678.9412 & Donna Lee B.

Monday, January 20 – Collingswood Monday Night 69th Group Anniversary. Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Haddon and Fern, Collingswood. Doors open at 6:45 PM. Dinner and fellowship at 7:00 PM. Speaker at 8:00 PM. NEW

Wednesday, January 25 - Bordentown 1-2-3 Beginner Step Meeting Anniversary. Food at 7:00 PM. Speaker at 8:00 PM. Christ Episcopal Church, 130 Prince St. Bordentown, NJ 08505 NEW

Saturday, February 15 – District 14 Unity Event. Dinner-Speaker Meeting followed by Music and Dancing. Trinity Episcopal Church, 800 E. Wood Street (Corner of 8th & Wood), Vineland, NJ. Dinner at 6:00 pm. Meats Provided - Bring Sides & Desserts. Meeting at 7:30 pm. AA Speaker: Peter M. - Colts Neck, NJ. Al-Anon Speaker: Luba D. - Freehold, NJ. DJ Music at 9:00 PM. Bring Your Dancing Shoes! Tickets Now Available: \$8.00/(\$10.00 at the Door. Information: Greg C. (856) 238-8488 ghc01@comcast.net or Jessica S. (856) 896-5583 jniz1@msn.com.

Sunday, March 9 - Harlem Globetrotters. District 13 "Night Out" 5:00 PM. Wells Fargo Center. Contact Justine S: 609-315-1214. New price.