

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

March 2017

A United Message of Recovery

The long form of Tradition One states, in part, that each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare must come first.



We are then given eleven other Traditions that show us what we must do in order to accomplish the goal of unity allowing recovery. We are shown that our membership is open to all who suffer from alcoholism—the only requirement is a desire to stop drinking. Another Tradition tells us that we have but one purpose—to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Other Traditions relate the things we need to watch for so we don't

get diverted from that primary purpose—problems of money, property, prestige, authority, controversy, sensational advertising, and personalities. All these guidelines come to us from our founders and past members who experi-

enced firsthand the consequences of what happens when these principles are not respected—the chaos, heartbreak and confusion that results when the suggestions are not followed.

When Bill wrote Problems Other Than Alcohol in 1958, he made clear our singleness of purpose: Sobriety—freedom from alcohol—through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an A.A. group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities and they have always failed. A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don't stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.

Our singleness of purpose has really been put to the test with the growth of treatment facilities, which lump all addictive disorders

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Third Step Surgery

Used to self-medicating with alcohol, she found herself looking to the Steps

I was sitting in my garden watching a springtime snowstorm—tiny white flower petals and pollen flew through the air and piled into lively drifts on the patio. I watched it through tears. The pain throbbed in my jaw and radiated down my neck. Five days earlier, I had undergone yet another surgery to repair the physical damage caused by my alcoholism.

By the time I surrendered my life and my will to God as I understood him two years ago, and he, in turn, removed my obsession to drink, my health was wrecked.

Blackout drinking of two-to-three bottles of wine a day had ravaged my body. You would have thought that painful surgery to create a new valve between my stomach and esophagus would have been a wakeup call, but I quit taking the pain medicine before I was supposed to so I could start drinking again.

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Inside This Issue: ♦ SJI Trivia ♦ General Service Convention Signup ♦ Opportunities for Service ♦ Announcements and Things to Do

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

SJIG 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

March Trivia Question

How do you submit an AA Event to be posted online?



Answer to February 2017 Trivia

Question: What is the best way to report a meeting change to Intergroup?

Answer: The best way to report a meeting change (or new meeting) is to submit it online at <http://www.aasj.org/pages/pop/meetingChng1b.html>. The paper change forms (available in the meeting lists and at Intergroup meetings) are good for gathering all the information you need. These can also be submitted by mail if you do not have access to the internet.

Surgery

(Continued from page 1)

I used alcohol to wash away the pain after having root canals on most of my bottom teeth and after excruciating surgery for periodontal disease. Alcohol was my treatment of choice for pain; I never considered alcohol as the cause for most of my pain—both physical and emotional—and yet it was.

I underwent surgery just a few months after my last drink to repair my left arm: that poor elbow hit the desk, the filing cabinets, the doorway, and the floor so many times that the tendons were badly scarred and not fully attached, and the bone was chipped.

After that surgery, the pain I thought I couldn't handle without alcohol was completely manageable! The doctor explained that alcohol prolongs the pain cycle and delays healing: I can attest to that. Following the doctor's instructions regarding pain medication, physical therapy, nutrition and rest turned out to be simple genius. I only needed medication for one week and then non-narcotic remedies worked fine. I found that working the Steps, going to meetings, and talking with my sponsor to be very helpful, too.

The Third Step and the Eleventh Step were my real medicines. I admitted I was powerless over the surgery and the pain, which were the result of the alcohol over which I already admitted I was powerless; therefore, it made sense to give the entire mess to God.

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March Service Opportunities



Answering Service:
Currently we have shifts open on Saturday 6 pm to 8 pm and 8 to 10 pm.

We also continue to take names for our waiting list, and are still taking AA members to sign up to be available for a 12 Step call, so please have interested people continue to contact us via answeringservice@aasj.org.

Budget and Finance:

The budget and finance committee is looking for one or two members to learn about the committee responsibilities and the treasurer positions. This is to help ensure a smooth transition into 2018. Quickbooks interest or experience is helpful. Please contact Laura or Lauren at budget@aasj.org

Newsletter Articles:

Please submit articles to newsletter@aasj.org by March 8th for our April Newsletter.

Public Information:

We need some people to help with distributing literature and meeting lists to places such as hospital

emergency rooms, libraries, and police departments. Please e-mail Eileen at publicinfo@aasj.org for more info.

Website Development:

On February 26th at 1:00 PM the website committee will be story-boarding the new website so that we can begin development. Anyone interested in what the new website will look like or with ideas on how we can improve the way the website looks so that it's easier to navigate please come out and join us.

Intergroup Reps Wanted:

If your home group is not represented at Intergroup, please join us on Wednesdays at 8 pm at St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church (Rt 70 in Cherry Hill). Be sure to stop at the Unity table to learn more about being an Intergroup rep.

Public Information:

The public information committee needs your help to bring our message to high school students. Please contact Eileen at publicinfo@aasj.org for more information.

Speaking Commitments

Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) is looking for speakers to visit the following facilities: Please contact Patti or Frank at handi@aasj.org if you are able to take one of these commitments.

Wednesday:

- Unity Place I -1 Keystone Ave, Cherry Hill NJ 12:40-1:30pm March 15, 22, 29
- Delaware House - 21 Ikea Drive, Westampton, 1-2pm March 8, 22, 29
- Solstice Counseling -1561 Rt 38 W, Lumberton NJ 11am-12pm March 29

Thursday:

- Ancora State Hospital - 202 Spring Garden Rd, Hammonton, 7-8pm (arrive 30 min early) March 2, 16, 23, 30
- Lourdes Medical Center – 218 Sunset Road, Rancocas NJ 8-9pm March 30
- Unity II - 121 S. White Horse Pike, Hammonton, 2-3 pm March 2, 16, 30
- Daybreak - 368 White Horse Pike, Atco NJ 10:30-12pm March 9, 16, 23, 30

Friday: Vineland Victory Group - 2000 Maple Avenue, Vineland 7-8 pm (call ahead) March 10

Saturday: Virtua Memorial Hospital – Psych Unit – 175 Madison Ave, Mount Holly, 8:30-9:30 pm March 4, 11

**SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY AREA 45
53rd ANNUAL GENERAL SERVICE CONVENTION
March 24th, 25th and 26th, 2017**

**Speaker Meetings,
Marathon Meetings,
Workshops,**

**Fellowship,
Old-timers Panel,
And
Al-Anon Program**



**Friday Night Country Buffet, Ice Cream Social, Open Mic Night
(contact Ted W. at twood99@live.com to perform!)**

**Saturday Night Banquet
DJ & Karaoke PLUS Photo Booth!**

PRE-REGISTRATION Ends March 10th, 2017 (mail-ins must be postmarked by this date)

Meal packages and/or Rooms Do NOT Include Convention Registration

THE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL - 2349 MARLTON PIKE (RT 70) CHERRY HILL, NJ, 08002

**CONVENTION CHAIR - Kelly W. email: conventionchair53@gmail.com phone: (609) 379-5884
REGISTRATION CHAIR - Laura H. email: conventionreg53@gmail.com phone: (609) 250-2485**

All PARTICIPANTS MUST REGISTER INDIVIDUALLY

Meal Packages Discounted for pre-registered ONLY.

To Register online go to snjaaconvention.org

Registration Opens December, 2016

****Regardless of how many roommates you add, room cost must be paid upfront by ONE PERSON.
If there are roommates, please give their first and last names as part of the pre-registration process.
If you have a roommate who already bought a room, just complete standard registration, merchandise,
meals, etc.****

Rooms (circle one)	Friday ONLY	Saturday ONLY	Friday & Saturday	Fill in the amount for Room Selection Here: \$ _____
	Single/Double \$128	Single/Double \$128	Single/Double \$256	
	Triple/Quad \$132	Triple/Quad \$132	Triple/Quad \$264	
Meal Package #1 Friday Buffet, Saturday Breakfast, Saturday Banquet & Sunday Breakfast:			\$92 (save \$13)	\$ _____
Meal Package #2 Saturday Breakfast, Saturday Banquet & Sunday Breakfast:			\$69 (save \$11)	\$ _____
Meal Package #3 Saturday Banquet & Sunday Breakfast:			\$52 (save \$8)	\$ _____
Meal Package #4 Saturday & Sunday Breakfast:			\$34 (save \$6)	\$ _____
Meal Package #5 Friday Buffet			\$23 (save \$2)	\$ _____
Meal Package #6 Saturday Banquet			\$35 (save \$5)	\$ _____
Ice Cream Social Ice Cream Novelties – Friday Night			\$4	\$ _____
Please Circle Preference: King Bed <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Double Beds <input type="checkbox"/>				
Registration:			\$40.00	\$ <u>40.00</u>
Short sleeve T-Shirt:	S, M, L, XL XXL		\$ 12 \$15	\$ _____
Zip-Up Hoodie:	S, M, L, XL XXL		\$25 \$28	\$ _____
Registration, Meals, Merchandise, Room (if applicable)	PLEASE PAY THIS AMOUNT:			\$ _____

Handicapped Accessible Hearing Impaired Register for Old-timer's panel (25 years or more of continuous sobriety)

If you are registering for a room you plan to share you **MUST** provide the First and Last names of your roommates
(Please print clearly)

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Your Name _____ Phone (Include Area Code) _____

Address _____ City _____, State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ I am a member of: AA Al-Anon

Badge Name _____ Home Group _____

Check or Money Order enclosed: Amount \$ _____ (Make check payable to Area 45 Convention) OR

Charge my: VISA MasterCard or Credit Card Name _____ Amount \$ _____

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____ / _____ (Month/ Year)

3-Digit Security Code (On back of card) _____ Billing Zip Code _____

Please mail payments to: Area 45 Convention, 28 Washington St. P.O. Box 63 Mt. Holly, NJ 08060

Questions: Email: conventionchair53@gmail.com Website: snjaaconvention.org or (609) 379-5884

This flyer is paid for by: Southern New Jersey Area/ General Assembly Alcoholics permit # 372

Surgery

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Prayer and meditation increased my conscious contact with my Higher Power and I sought to know his will and to have the strength to carry it out. His will was for me to get healthy again so I did what I was supposed to do and I healed without a drop of alcohol.

This time around, two years sober, I was exhausted from being sick all the time so I listened while the surgeon explained everything he had to do to clear a deep, persistent infection in my jaw. This surgeon and I were not strangers. He'd performed the periodontal surgery, though I never said a word about drinking back then. This time, when he asked me, "What's changed since I last saw you?" Pride popped up and I balked at the answer. I mentioned some

things and then, with heart pounding, I finally said, "And I got sober two years ago."

There it was. That look. The look of shock followed by the signs of his brain recalculating his thoughts about me. I knew it. He thought less of me. Oh how my pride hurt!

And then his assistant, whom I did not know, burst into applause and shouted loud enough for the next people in the next state to hear her, "Congratulations! You should be so proud of yourself for sobering up!"

Great. Now the entire office knew I was a drunk. My ego throbbed more than my jaw. The surgeon said dryly, "Well, that explains a lot, especially why it took so long to heal last time. Of course, I'll have to change the whole post-op

treatment plan, be very conservative with the pain medications, and you'll need to talk this over with your sponsor."

I not only talked with my sponsor about the surgery, I asked her to be my "responsible person" to drive me and make sure I was OK at home post-op. When I proudly introduced Noelle to the doctor, he just said, "This is the third sponsor we've had here this week and it's only Wednesday." So much for pride.

As expected, the pain was severe. I fearfully followed the doctor's instructions regarding every aspect of post-op care and I recorded every dose of pain medication and checked in regularly with my sponsor. I even had my neighbor, a nurse whose husband drank himself to death ten years earlier, check on me.

Despite my fearful vigilance, the pain did not abate after five days—and on the fifth day, the medicine ran out. I co-chaired a meeting the day before with my sponsor and we talked afterward. We came up with a plan for me to call the doctor's office and report the many ways I was healing, all of my non-pharmaceutical pain management efforts, and my recovery-related activity, all in preparation for requesting a few more days of medication for medical purposes only.

With a pounding heart, I

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United

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Subsequently, we must deal with visits of large numbers of treatment graduates to our groups.

Many areas have designed plans to meet these situations. Information meetings have become a good workable solution. Information meetings are informal discussions and sharing about what A.A. is: what it does and does not do. These information meetings have helped keep our regular A.A. meetings tied to A.A.'s singleness of purpose and to the principles of our other Traditions.

A group conscience will get exactly what it demands, no more or no less. Our experience today still bears out the experience of our founders. Some groups, where the alcoholics became outnumbered and the primary purpose was lost in problems other than alcohol, have had to close their doors.

Frank Z
Audubon Monday Night

Surgery

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punched in the numbers and listened to the phone ring. The very cheerful assistant only wanted to know my name, surgery date, and pharmacy number; he was eager to help. Through tears of relief I gave him the number. That was easy! Two hours later the pharmacy still didn't have the prescription. By now the pain and my fear of the pain were so heightened I couldn't concentrate. My mind started racing: I am an alcoholic, a bad person and I can't have pain medicine. God wants to me to suffer this pain so I remember what alcohol did to me. God doesn't want me to have medicine; he's saying I have to tough this out on my own. I spiraled into despair and self-pity. I even started wishing I never had told the doctor I was an alcoholic, and that became, "I wish I wasn't an alcoholic."

"But I am an alcoholic!" I wailed. I can't change that. I'm powerless over it. It was just like yesterday when my cat injured a young bird and although I saved it from the cat's claws, I couldn't make it well. Tears coursed down my cheeks as I sat in my garden, despairing, because I was so powerless.

Exactly. Powerless. It hit me right then that I was handling this all wrong. I was sober but I wasn't practicing the principles in all my affairs.

So I bowed my head and prayed the Third Step prayer, offering myself to God to do with me what he would and I asked him to take away my difficulties with the pain and with my self-will. I asked him to show me the way to the solution.



And then my cell phone vibrated. My AA friend had offered to drive me to the pharmacy to get the prescription. I texted back that the pharmacy didn't have it so I didn't need a ride after all. She replied, "I'm still coming over. I need to talk with you." I was eager for the distraction from my misery.

This beautiful woman got sober a year before me but she recently had asked me if I could help her go through the Steps again because her sponsor was unavailable. We hadn't found the time to start working together.

I said to her, "I know we haven't found the time to work together on your Steps but I want to do it. I want to help you. Do you still want to do it?"

She said yes and then said, "Well, how about now?"

So right there, in my garden, my tears dried as we talked about Step One and the ways she had been powerless over alcohol, the ways her life had become unmanageable and the ways she still was powerless. I shared just enough about my own experience to let her know she wasn't alone, so we could see our similarities, and so she would feel understood and accepted—which she was and is.

And right there is how God works. I surrendered my will and my fear, turned myself over to God and look what God did! He put me to work doing Twelfth Step work so someone else could retake her First Step, and in the process I renewed my own First Step admission of powerlessness. My pain lessened. My fear vanished. My self-centeredness was replaced by the comfort of being of service.

Twenty minutes after my friend left, her step lighter, her smile brighter, her joy greater, my phone rang again. The prescription was ready for pickup. But I already had picked up my prescription from God and taken the best pain medicine: AA's Twelve Steps.

—Sam Marie E., Atlanta, Ga.

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Get Out and Get Involved

Sunday, Feb. 19 – Moorestown Spiritual Growth Grp. 37th anniversary - Trinity Church - Main & Church St. Moorestown. Pizza & salad at 7pm AA speaker at 8 pm.

Friday, Feb. 24 – Friday Night Wenonah will be celebrating its 44th Anniversary with an eating meeting. Food will start at 7:30 pm, two speakers will follow at 8:30 pm. Lots of Great food; lots of Great fellowship; everyone welcome! Holy Trinity Episcopal Church basement, North Monroe and Poplar Aves., Wenonah.

Friday, Feb. 24 – Dr. Bob's Speaker Dinner, 6-9 pm Georgine's, 1320 Newport Rd., Bristol, PA, 19007. TIX: \$35. Mail: PO Box 1465, Southampton, PA., 18966. Info: Gina C 215-208-2878/ Scott F.215-431-0921 Proceeds: Dr. Bob's House.

Saturday, Feb. 25 – Vineland Nooner's 25th Anniversary.12 Noon - 1:30 PM.Trinity Episcopal Church 800 E. Wood & 8th St. Light Foods/Sides & Desserts Welcome! Jessica W. 856-503-1041.

Monday, Feb. 27 – The Bridging the Steps Group is celebrating its 32nd Anniversary. Home cooked food at 7:00 PM with the guest speaker: Tony G from Hamilton at 8:00. Trinity United Methodist Church, 1285 Hornberger Ave., Roebling, NJ 08554.

Wednesday, March 1 – Wednesday Night Bridgeton Group Anniversary. St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 186 Commerce St. 7:00 PM. 2 speakers, followed with pizza and soda. Side dishes welcomed.

March 2 -5 – Lollapalooza II brought to you by the Philly Speaker Group. 9 Speakers from all over. Conference will be held at the Hotel ML in Marlton, NJ. Mention Lollapalooza for \$99/night rooms Call (856) 234-7300 for Reservations.\$30 Registration and meal plans available at www.lollapaloozaofaa.org Contact Chris B. (215) 384-8703 or Greg D. (856) 448-5735.

March 24-26, 2017 – Area 45 Southern NJ Annual General Service Convention. More info will be coming soon.

Friday, March 31 – Voorhees "Sunlight of the Spirit" will celebrate their 3rd anniversary @ 700 Cooper Rd. Voorhees. Food starts at 7:30 pm followed by a speaker at 9:30 pm.

April 21-23 – 10th Recovery Spiritual Retreat-Vineland Divine Mercies Recovery Retreat "Keeping Recovery Fresh" Pope John Paul II Retreat Center., 414 So. 8th St., Vineland 08360. \$40 /\$240 / weekend / 5 meals Deposit now. Call ASAP Aid available. Saturday Day Hoppers \$60, Marty Perrotta: mperrotta02@comcast.net

Saturday, June 3 – 66th Annual Stepping Stones Lois' Family Group Picnic. TIX on Stepping Stones website's event page@ <http://www.steppingstones.org/events.html>. (914) 232-4822. Historic home of Bill & Lois Wilson, Wit's End-Bill's Studio 62 Oak Rd, Katonah, NY 10536.

June 23-25 – 6th Annual Liberty Bell Round-up. "The Woodstock of Philadelphia".10 Featured Speakers. Registration: \$40. Clarion Philadelphia Airport, 76 Industrial Hwy. libertybellroundup.com Dave W. (610) 342-6876 | info@libertybellroundup.com