

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

June 2017

Sobriety Rocks: The Blast He Had at a Concert with Sober Friends Was the Moment He Was Looking for

I walked into my first AA meeting at 16 feeling like a reject. I hated who I was, and I came to AA to save a friendship and to save myself from the person I was becoming. But I wasn't ready yet. I didn't think I had a drinking problem because I was unlike all those drinkers I'd heard about: I never hid alcohol all over the house, or had the shakes. I was never a blackout drinker, never lost any jobs or skipped school due to my drinking.

I loved drinking and the effects of liquor, but how could I be an alcoholic? I was so young! I remember reading in "The Doctor's Opinion" that alcoholics cannot start drinking because the "phenomenon of craving" develops. There it was in black and white: I could not start drinking without wanting more. But I was a teenager who never had any serious consequences. Evidently, I had not suffered enough.

However that first meeting planted the seed of sobriety. It would not do much growing until I finally returned to AA when I was 20.

Here's what happened. After a long night of drinking, I was heading



over to a friend's place to continue partying. As I staggered along on the 6th St. Bridge in Pittsburgh, out of nowhere I saw blue and red flashing lights

behind me. Immediately my heart stopped. I remember praying and asking God to get me out of this situation. I vividly recall telling God that I would quit drinking for good, and that I would start going to church if he would just get me out of this "little jam." I was taken to the police station and told to call my mom. It was 2 a.m. and I knew she was sleeping.

I was so scared. I picked up the phone and slowly dialed each num-

ber hoping that the police officer would stop me and let me go instead. The answering machine picked up.

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Come By and See Us Sometime

It's nice to see the faces of people walking into the Intergroup Office for the first time, especially if they get there before the literature shift is about to close. There is often a sense of accomplishment and relief. We can be hard to find.

There's no Double-A or "Friends of Bill W." sign at the entrance to 5090 Central Highway. You will see, if you look at the list of tenants in the lobby, that SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP is in Suite 3, and though you may not know to turn right to find Suite 3, you can't go very far in any other direction, and it's all on one floor. So keep looking and you should find the door with our name on it. Usually we leave the door open when we're selling literature, but if it's closed try us anyway. You've come

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Inside This Issue: ♦ 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@asj.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@asj.org
Website: www.asj.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

Rocking Sobriety

From page 1

"Mom. Pick up. Pick up, please ... I'm in jail."

For the next couple of days at home I was completely ignored. Then one day my mom and I were sitting silently next to each other watching the news, and a segment on underage drinking and driving aired. As we watched, I started to think about my own drinking and how I always got into trouble. Even though this wasn't my first run-in with the police, it definitely was a big wakeup call for me. Then it hit me. I leaned over to my mom and came clean: "Mom, I think I have a drinking problem. I need help." She leaned over and gave me a hug.

The next day, I went to an AA meeting. Afterward an old-timer came over to me and said he was glad that I came, but because I had announced myself as an addict and because I was so young, he told me to try "the other fellowship." So I decided to give my way another shot, mostly because AA didn't "cure" me right away and I wanted to drink again. Badly.

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South Jersey Mailing Addresses

Here are the mailing addresses for the following services groups. Please use these to send contributions or any other correspondence.

South Jersey Intergroup
PO Box 2514
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

Southern NJ GSA Area 45
PO Box 3724
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

The General Service Office
Grand Central Station
PO Box 459 New York, NY 10164-0423

LIPS: Area 45 CTF Committee
PO Box 3724 Cherry Hill,
NJ 08034

District: Please contact Area 45 or South Jersey Intergroup for your District contact information

Rocking Sobriety

(From page 2)

I continued to drink for the next couple of months. Then one day my good friend in Virginia called me and asked if he and some friends of his could visit me in Pittsburgh. They were coming to see a rock concert on New Year's Eve. Despite the fact that I wasn't a fan of the band, I said of course, I would always make time for him. He told me he was two years sober, and that he was coming with his girlfriend, who was 17 and had been sober for almost 18 months, and his best friend who was 18 and had been sober for two and a half years, and a 15-year-old hippie who had 18 months. They were all my own age—under 21—and were ... sober? I could hardly believe it.

We went to the concert, and for the first time in my life, I was living in the moment and enjoying myself without drugs or alcohol! After the show, they started talking about how young they were and how happy they were to be sober members of AA. I wanted what they had. I told myself that if they could do it, then I certainly could do it too.

I moved to northern Virginia to chase that sobriety. On January 8, 1999, I had my last drink. I picked up my first 24-hour coin and I remember crying, asking for help, and being so scared because I could never imagine myself taking a sober breath. I remember a list with phone numbers being passed around

and the guys telling me to call them anytime, whether it was for rides to meetings or just to talk.

Young Peoples' AA got me sober. I was going to meetings seven days a week, calling people for rides and taking suggestions. I got a Big Book, a home group, and a sponsor, and most important, I didn't drink no matter what. I got to meetings early, helped clean up and tear down, and fellowshipped after the meeting, mostly at diners until 10 or 11 o'clock. Then we would go over to my buddy's house and play cards and video games, listen to music and talk until all hours of the night, sometimes until 5 or 6 a.m. I celebrated my 21st birthday with 50 of my newfound friends—and we were all sober. It was awesome. I got involved in service work, worked the Steps and began to build a relationship with my Higher Power. I started to grow and mature in Alcoholics Anonymous, and I slowly started to love myself.

I went to my first Young Peoples' Conference in 1999. It was the Virginia State Conference of Young People in AA in Virginia Beach. I was nine months sober and had no idea what to expect, but it sounded to me like a party at the beach with fellow young alcoholics. "I'm there!" I said. When we got to the hotel where the conference was being held, I saw a lot of young people smoking cigarettes,

talking, laughing and having a good time.

During the conference there were marathon AA meetings every hour on the hour on different topics ranging from the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions, to sex in sobriety, as well as denial, acceptance and so on.

On both Friday and Saturday nights the main event was a speaker meeting. Before these meetings there was a lot of chanting, and the enthusiasm and energy level was so infectious it went through the roof. Most important, the message of recovery was being passed along. That weekend there were meetings and panels about sobriety, as well as dancing, jam sessions, and lots of talking and laughing and newfound friendships.

Two weeks before my two-year anniversary, I slipped. I was visiting some friends and I thought that the obsession was gone for good. I felt I could safely hang out with old people, places and things. For the five days I visited my friends, I stopped going to meetings, praying, calling my sponsor and working the Steps. And just like that, I relapsed. One hit off a joint was all it took for me. I realized that I will always be an alcoholic and that AA is my medicine. Without my medicine, I'm sure to

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Come See Us

From page 1

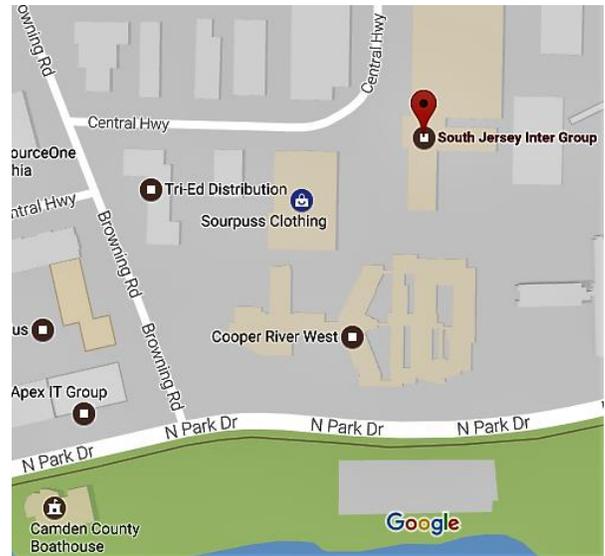
Finding the building was probably the hard part. It does say "5090" in big figures over the front entrance, but none of the other buildings in this industrial park has the street number up so high, so you may have been looking down at some other signs telling you about J&J Snack Foods, which is also in the building. Rapid Rover is also a big presence here, as you may notice if you need to park a car. Parking lots go around three sides of the building, and you may have to drive around closer to the back entrance to find a spot, but I've never seen them completely full. The back entrance has the wheelchair ramp. There's a slight bump to it.

But where is Central Highway? I'll bet most people in Pennsauken couldn't tell you. I don't use GPS myself, but I've heard people say GPS wouldn't take them there till

they added the word "Township" to "Pennsauken". I like to tell people we're close to the Camden County Boathouse, which is on Cooper River Lake, across the water from Collingswood. Just a little southeast (that's AWAY from Route 130) of the Boathouse,

Browning Road comes to an end at North Park Drive. You travel away from North Park on Browning Road till you can make a right onto Central Highway (NOT the first turn you can make onto Central Highway). When you can't go any further on Central, look for those 5090 figures.

It can be confusing. Maybe that's partly why we sell less literature on the evening shift than in the morning. But getting literature for your group is a good way to do service, and in June you can do



it by daylight even if you work till five every day.

And it is possible to get here without a car. According to Google Maps, the 2.2 miles from Collingswood PATCO Station could take you 43 minutes to walk. From Ferry Avenue Station it's only 1.8 miles but you have to cross Route 130. Either way, a lot of it is through the park. From the bus stops on Route 70 it's less than a mile. Bicycling around Cooper River Park can be pleasant, if you stay alert. And you can bring the bicycle into the office.

Rocking Sobriety

From page 3

relapse. That was on December 28, 2000, and I was 22 years old. On December 29, I picked up what I hope will be my last 24-hour coin.

In December of this year, God willing, I'll be celebrating 13 years of continuous sobriety. AA gave me that opportunity: I fell in love with Young Peoples' AA because I saw people my own age getting and staying sober. I was fortunate that I stopped in time. I saw my bottom before it hit me.

A young person is defined as anyone who is young at heart and has room to grow. Thanks to AA, God and the Steps, I have the tools to do so. One day at a time, AA has given me my life back, for which I'm eternally grateful. I also hope I never grow up so much to forget that.

-- Jak L.
Irwin, Pennsylvania

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June Service Opportunities

Answering Service:

Currently we have shifts open on:

Saturday 6 pm to 8 pm

Thursday 10 am until noon

Friday 8 am to 10 am

Monday 2 pm to 4 pm

Wednesday 12 pm to 2 pm

We also continue to take name 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: We will need a new Budget Chair & Co-Chair for 2018-2019 term. If you are interested in either of these positions or learning more about the Budget & Finance responsibilities please reach out to the Budget & Finance Committee at budget@aasj.org and we can include you on the committee activities now for a smooth transition.

Intergroup Reps Wanted: If your home group is not represented at Intergroup, please join us on Wednesday, May 17 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.

Newsletter Articles: Please submit articles for the July newsletter to newsletter@aasj.org by June 2nd.

Public Information: Eileen T continues to spearhead programs with local High Schools, Doctor's offices, and local police departments. Eileen is still looking for volunteers for other programs. She can be contacted at publicinfo@aasj.org. Please consider volunteering for this important service opportunity.

Treasurer: Intergroup will be looking for a new Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer for the 2018-2019 term. If you are interested in learning more about these positions please contact the Treasurer now at treasurer@aasj.org. Strong sobriety and interest in or experience with Quickbooks is needed for these elected positions.

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.

Monday

Ancora State Hospital - 202 Spring Garden Rd, Hammonton NJ 7-8 pm May 22; June 5, 19, 26

Tuesday

Virtua Memorial Hospital Psych Unit -175 Madison Ave, Mt. Holly NJ 8:30-9:30pm June 20

Cooper University Hospital Psych Unit - 1 Cooper Plaza, Camden NJ 10:30-11:30am June 13

Wednesday

Delaware House – 21 Ikea Drive, Westhampton NJ 2-3 pm June 6, 13, 27

Unity Place I - 1 Keystone Ave, Cherry Hill 12:40-1:30 pm May 31; June 7, 21, 28

Addiction & Treatment Center – 510 Liberty Street, Camden VOA – Camden 7-8 pm June 7

Solstice Counseling Services – 1561 Rt. 38 W, Lumberton 12-1 pm June 14, 28

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Announcements & Things to Do

Friday, May 19 – Moorestown Barber Group Anniversary. Trinity Episcopal Church, Main St., Moorestown. Pizza at 7 pm. Speakers at 8 pm.

Friday, May 19 – Marlton Group Anniversary 11:30 am to 1 pm. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Rt. 70 and Cooper St., Marlton. ¼ mile east of Rt. 73.

Monday, May 22 – Masonville Group 28th Anny. 6 pm Food & Refreshments 7 pm special guest speakers, Masonville, UM Church, 200 Masosville/Ark Rd. Mount Laurel, 08054

Thursday, May 25 – West Deptford "A New Day" group will celebrate their 5th anniversary at Southwood Baptist Church, 11 Griscom Lane, West Deptford. Starting at 7:30 am sharp with a continental breakfast and meeting as usual. For more info call Wayne @ 856-534-0104.

Thursday, May 25 – Sewell The Honesty Room meeting of AA will celebrate its 5th anniversary. Food at 7:30 pm, speaker meeting begins at 8:35 pm. Anniversary will be at the large meeting space across the parking lot from the regular (basement) meeting location. Please share and bring a friend! Church of the Holy Family, 226 Hurffville Rd, Sewell, 08080

Saturday, May 27 – Mays Landing Serenity Group 43rd Anniversary. Presbyterian Church, 6001 Rt.50 & Rt.40. 12:00PM. Food and speaker, desserts are welcome.

Saturday, June 3 – Vineland group will celebrate their 58th anniversary. Doors open at 6 pm, refreshments at 6:30 pm, speaker at 7 pm. Church of Resurrection Vineland. For more info call Fred: 856-982-6791. Food welcomed.

Saturday, June 3 – Washington Lake Park, Pavillion B. Area 45 - district 12 will have their PICNIC. Starting at 10 am with speaker at 2 pm. FFF donations accepted. For more info call Eddie at 856-524-8165.

June 9-11 – Founders' Day 82nd Anniversary. Akron, OH. The birthplace of AA. www.akronaa.org

Sunday, June 17 – S. J. Intergroup will have their Founders Day Picnic - celebrating 81 years. Starting at 11 am till 3 pm at Cooper River Park - Subaru Pavilion 941 Park Blvd. Cherry Hill, Meeting at 2 pm.

June Service (From page 5)

Thursday

Ancora State Hospital - 202 Spring Garden Rd, Hammonton, 7-8 pm May 25

Lourdes Medical Center – 218 Sunset Rd, Rancocas NJ 8-9pm June 1

Unity Place II – 121 S White Horse Pike, Hammonton, 10-11:30 am June 1, 15, 29

Daybreak -368 White Horse Pike, Atco NJ 10:30-12pm May 18, 25; June 8, 15, 22, 29

Friday

JFK Psych Unit –2201 Chapel Ave W, Cherry Hill, 7-8pm June 23

Saturday

Cooper University Hospital Psych Unit - 1 Cooper Plaza, Camden, 10:30-11:30am May 20; June 17