

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

December 2017

Desperate on New Year's Eve

There he sat, all alone feeling sorry for himself ... would he drink? Or would he reach out?

After picking up a nine-month chip, I felt great. I had a sponsor, went to meetings every day and had worked up to the Ninth Step. This is where I stopped.

After unsuccessful attempts to make amends where I begged for forgiveness, I quit. The recurring memory of a friend looking at me and saying, "I forgive you ... now bye," haunted me and made me feel that I was not doing something right. My sponsor at the time did the best he could with his experience, but he had not been taught about saying, "I was wrong. What can I do to right the wrong?" His words, as I heard them were, "It's all about change." He did the best he knew how.

I had a good job at the time and was making enough money to get my own place. No more sleeping on Mom's couch. (Thank you, Mom!) I did not have much to put in the new apartment, so I went to the furniture store to get a dining room table. Well, I came home with a table, chairs, a coffee table and an entertainment center—all on credit! I

overspent what I had planned with the money available. After setting it all up, and feeling like I was finally moving up in the world, I sat back on the couch my grandfather had



given me and gazed at it all. I felt empty again. Self-pity crept in, and in no time I started thinking about getting loaded. And it was New Year's Eve. I had just gotten off the phone with my sponsor 30 minutes before this moment, bragging to him about my apartment and furniture. How empty I felt. The hole in my gut returned. The old solution came back.

Being powerless is a horrible feeling. Fortunately, that is one step before surrendering. Just like when I had my last drink

and drug nine months before, I made my way to the bedroom, went to my God spot and pulled out the prayer pad. Crying to God for what seemed like a lifetime, I prayed over and over: "Please remove the obsession to drink and drug." That's all I remember. Man, I begged, but the obsession did not go away. I felt God had abandoned me. Why did he leave me after all this work and prayer?

(Continued on page 3)

Meditating on Sobriety

Among the books we offer for sale at my home group are two books of daily readings. One is published by AA World Services and was approved by the General Service Conference. The other book, *Twenty-Four Hours a Day*, is published by another press, but was put together by and for recovering alcoholics in AA. We were selling it before AAWS published the *Daily Reflections* book, and we never decided to stop selling it. I've used both books at different times, and I like them both. I still tend to resist taking the time to meditate in the morning and it's helpful to me to have a page to read to start the process. Sometimes it doesn't lead to

(Continued on page 4)

Inside This Issue: ♦ SJI Trivia ♦ Holiday Gifts from SJI
♦ Opportunities for Service ♦ 12 Tips for Sober Holidays
♦ Announcements and Things to Do

Editorial Policy

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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.

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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

December Trivia Question



December 2017: Can someone who doesn't share at meetings still carry the AA message?

Answer to last month's trivia question

November 2017: Why are we moving money from the H&I Committee to the Public Info Committee for the 2018 budget?

Answer: In the past two years our Public Information committee has been making amazing strides in getting Alcoholics Anonymous represented in the local community. So far in 2017 the committee has brought the AA message to 96 classrooms and 14 evening programs at schools & community events. Having plenty of literature available helps the committee to carry the message (even after they leave).

Since most of the money in the H&I budget is used to get literature in the hands of alcoholics who still suffer and the Public Information committee has been doing that, H&I generously suggested that Public Info use some of their budget to continue their work.

To find out more about what the Public Information Committee is doing and how you can get involved please contact them at publicinfo@asj.org.

Fellowship Announcements & Things to Do

Saturday, Nov. 18 – Gratitude Dinner/Dance sponsored by the SJ Intergroup Social Committee. 6:30 – 10:30 pm. Nicolosi's Catering, 1 Hessian Ave, Woodbury, NJ. 08096. \$25.00/PP in advance. Tickets & Info Call: Sal C. 609-741-7393 or Dylan 609-922-5390. socialevents@asj.org .

Thursday, Nov. 23 – Thanksgiving Alcañon. 8am-7pm. 8th and Wood Street. Sponsored by the Vineland AA Group.

New Year's

From page 1

That was December 31, 2000. Exactly one year before, I had relapsed for the first time after outpatient treatment. That New Year's Eve, two AA friends had invited me to an alkathon at our clubhouse where there was a chance to do service. I remembered telling them thanks, that I would meet them later that night. But I didn't. Also that day, the treatment center had a tipsy taxi phone bank and they had asked me to help out. But I declined; I said I was too busy. God was giving me two solutions and I turned them both down. How blind I was.

But God did not abandon me. This year I didn't say no. I got in my car and drove over to that alkathon. I really did not want to drink. I believe a physic change had occurred in me as a result of working the Steps this year. My thinking had changed. This time I went out for fellowship.

I joined in with a group of people that included my first sponsor, and I tried to listen. But the obsession still seemed stronger than the conversation. I wasn't hearing anything. Then all of a sudden, I blurted out, "I want to drink!" I don't remember what was said after that, but I kept going up to people and saying the same thing, "I want to drink." Lo and behold, out came the same two friends who, the previous year, had asked me to go to the alkathon with them. They approached me.

One of the men, Ray, said, "Hey, why didn't you call us?" I had no answer. They gave me two options: come sleep on their couch or share at the next meeting. No way I was going to show how weak I was in front of over 200 people. They smiled, hugged me and left. I guess that was tough love.

The next AA meeting started at 8 p.m. It was probably the largest one of the night and in a smoked-filled room. After the usual readings, the room got quiet. It seemed like 10 minutes went by, but it was probably 10 seconds. I shared pretty much the same thing as what you have just read. The next person shared about being at the gas station wondering if he should buy some beer or come to the alkathon. Someone shared that he had a 12-pack in the truck. A man with 18 years shared about how he still wanted to drink.

Finally, for the first time in the Fellowship, I did not feel alone. Wow, I was not the only person in the world with the mental obsession to drink. Praise God, I've not had the obsession since that day. I believe I finally surrendered to this disease. Like Bill W., I had met my match. I was powerless!

Just like Dr. Bob, I started working the Steps (making amends) with a willingness I never had before. I got together with Ray and asked him to help me to make amends. I thought he would say he was too busy, but instead, he said, "Come over tomorrow morning and let's get started." Three years later, I was finally finished with all my financial amends. The material had been replaced by the spiritual. It was more important

to be right with my fellow man than to have certain material items. The shame, fear and remorse were replaced by the God-conscience they talk about in the Big Book. A spiritual awakening was happening.

Thank you, Alcoholics Anonymous. I'll never forget that New Year's Eve. You can find me at our alkathon every year at Club 12, helping out, listening to shares and hoping to help someone just like me.

Anonymous
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12 Tips for Sober Holidays

1. Line up extra AA activities (help on the phones, speak, empty the ash-trays).
2. Be host to friends, especially newcomers, at home or at a coffee shop.
3. Keep your AA telephone list with you at all times.
4. Find out about holiday meetings or celebrations in your local groups.
5. Skip any drinking occasions you're nervous about.
6. If there's one you can't skip, take an AA friend--or keep candy handy.
7. Don't think you have to stay late (plan an "important date" in advance).
8. Go to church. Any church. And don't forget about extra meetings.
9. Don't sit around brooding; catch up on reading, museums, walks, letters.
10. Don't project about holiday temptations: remember "One day at a time."
11. Even if you cannot give material gifts, enjoy the beauty of holiday love.
12. Carry the message. Give the joy away, and it will be yours to keep.

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Meditation

From page 1

anything you could honestly call meditating but it still does me good. I'm glad we offer these books so others can get the same help.

Other than that one meditation book, the books on display there all come from AAWS or the AA Grapevine. You could argue that it's best not to make any exceptions to this rule, and sell nothing that hasn't been approved by one of those larger entities. It's a simple rule, and it's good to keep things simple. I wouldn't be upset if my group adopted it. But I'm glad nobody there is making the argument.

South Jersey Intergroup sells a little folder we call the Just For Today card, because of a piece of writing with that title that appears on the inner two pages. An Internet source called quoteinvestigator.com tells me that a similar piece appeared in a newspaper column in 1921. The same source tells me that a magazine writer, reprinting the piece in 1953, said he got it from a "little folder. . . issued by the local branch of Alcoholics Anonymous" which he'd been carrying and which was now "dog-eared and nearly worn-out". "Just for Today" is a set of resolutions for living

a good day. The two outside pages of the card have more advice about good living. Also on the card are a few words about our Fellowship, and we have our address and telephone number on the outside of the card. I am pretty sure the SJIG folder was copied from a similar folder printed by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Intergroup Association. Over in Philadelphia they're known as the "Green Card". They've been around a long time. Many recovering alcoholics like carrying these cards, and many carry extras, to give to newcomers. Was the Green Card the same folder that the 1953 magazine writer quoted? I don't know.

Are these folders AA literature? I'd say Yes. They've got our name on them, and our telephone number. I wouldn't call the texts AA texts, except in the sense that a lot of AAs like them a lot, and associate them with recovery and the fellowship, and they've been approved by the Intergroup. (In the same sense you could say that the Serenity Prayer is an AA prayer I guess.) If we were looking for a new folder to print this year, and there had never been one like this one, with these texts, I don't think we would choose them. I can be glad we don't have that work to do.

James, Palmyra

South Jersey Intergroup Literature Hours

(effective 11/21/17)

Monday	10 am – Noon	6-8 pm
Tuesday	10 am – 3 pm*	6-8 pm
Wednesday	10 am – Noon	4-6 pm*
Thursday	10 am – 3 pm*	6-8 pm
Friday	10 am – Noon	
Saturday	10 am – Noon	
Sunday	CLOSED	

* Office Manager on duty: Tuesday & Thursday 12-3 pm, Wednesday 4-6 pm. The office is closed on major holidays, including Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Call (856) 486-4446 for more information.

What's in your stocking? Books and CDs Available at South Jersey Intergroup

Story Collections

AA AROUND THE WORLD: Adventures in Recovery
THANK YOU FOR SHARING - Sixty Years of Letters to the AA Grapevine
SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS - Journeys of the Spirit
THE HOME GROUP: Heartbeat of AA
I AM RESPONSIBLE: The Hand of AA
EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY - The Next Frontier
IN OUR OWN WORDS - Stories of Young AAs in Recovery
BEGINNERS' BOOK - Getting and Staying Sober in AA
VOICES OF LONG-TERM SOBRIETY- Old-timers' Stories from the AA Grapevine
SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS II - More Journeys of the Spirit
STEP BY STEP - Real AAs, Real Recovery
EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY II - The Next Frontier
YOUNG AND SOBER - Stories From the AA Grapevine
INTO ACTION - How AA Members Practice the Program in Their Daily Lives
HAPPY, JOYOUS & FREE - The Lighter Side of Sobriety
ONE ON ONE - AA Sponsorship in Action
NO MATTER WHAT - Dealing With Adversity In Sobriety
SOBER & OUT - LGBT AA Members Share Their Experience, Strength and Hope
FORMING TRUE PARTNERSHIPS - How AA Members Use the Program to Improve Relationships
OUR TWELVE TRADITIONS - AA Members Share Their Own Stories of Experience
MAKING AMENDS - Finding a New Freedom
VOICES OF WOMEN IN AA - Stories of Experience, Strength and Hope from GV



Quotes & Cartoons

GRAPEVINE DAILY QUOTE BOOK - 365 Inspiring Passages
A RABBIT WALKS INTO A BAR - Best GV Jokes & Cartoons

From Bill W

BEST OF BILL - Reflections on Faith, Fear, Honesty, Humilty, and Love
LANGUAGE OF THE HEART - Bill W's Grapevine Writings

CDs

CLASSIC GV CD - Articles by Bill, Bob, Early AAers, Friends - Vol 1-3
IT WORKS IF WE WORK IT CD - Practicing the AA Principles
EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY CD - The Next Frontier Volume 2



And don't forget the GRAPEVINE 2018 WALL CALENDAR.

Things the SJI office does not have can be ordered directly from Grapevine by going to aagrapevine.org/store or calling (800) 631-6025. No shipping costs In November and December!



December Service Opportunities

Budget & Finance will need a new chairperson for 2018-19. The Budget & Finances Committee acts as oversight for finances and advises the Intergroup panel. This committee works with Steering to create the annual budget and present it to Intergroup for approval. Please contact budget@asj.org or treasurer@asj.org if you are interested in learning more about this position.

Literature will need a new chairperson for 2018-19. The literature chairperson handles ordering, stocking and selling AA literature at the Intergroup Office and at the monthly meeting. The chairperson also trains and schedules new sales volunteers to sell literature. Knowledge of Quickbooks is very helpful for this position. Interested persons can get involved now for a smooth transition. Please contact Jimmy at literature@asj.org.

Speaking Commitments

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

Sunday

- Maryville Men's - Williamstown 2-3pm December 31

Monday

- Maryville Women's Williamstown 8-9 pm December 25 - Christmas Day

Tuesday

- Hope Hall VOA Camden 7:30-8:30 pm December 26
- Cooper Hospital - Camden 8-9pm December 26
- Solstice - Lumberton 7-8pm December 26
- Delaware House - Westampton 2-3pm December 5, 12

Wednesday

- Unity I Cherry Hill- 12:40-1:30pm November 15,22, 29, December 6, 20, 27
- Addiction Center VOA - Camden 7-8 pm December 27
- Solstice - Lumberton 12-1pm November 15, 22, 29, December 6, 13, 20, 27

Thursday

- Ancora Hospital - Hammonton 7-8pm November 30, December 21, 28
- Lourdes Medical - Rancocas 8-9pm November 16, 23, December 7
- Unity II Hammonton 2-3pm November 16, 30, December 7, 21
- Daybreak MICA - Atco 10:30-12 noon November 9,23, December 28

Friday

- Maryville Women's Williamstown 8-9pm

Saturday

- Maryville Women's Williamstown 7-8 pm December 16
- Cooper Hospital - Camden 10:30-11:30 am December 16