

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

February 2019

There's No Vacation from Practicing These Principles

When my wife and daughter and I decided we should take a summer vacation to Disney World, the thing that scared me most was not that I might be tempted to drink on the vacation but instead that I might not be much fun to be around sober.

Three years sober, having worked the Steps with a sponsor and now with sponsees of my own, I've done a number of things sober I used to think were only done drinking: baseball games, concerts, and so on. But a week in Disney, a place that, when I'm stuck in a judgemental state of mind, seems like a giant money-sucking

pit of empty consumerism? I feared that my judgements would stomp all over whatever joys my wife and daughter might find there.



In my prayers, as the Big Book teaches us, I asked how to be useful to others, and just a few days before the trip, guidance came my way: another AA told me how his sponsor reminded him to strive to "identify, don't compare" with other people in the rooms of AA.

So when I found myself in the hot Florida sun, surrounded by an overwhelming number of people and stores and souvenirs, I asked my Higher Power to help me "identify, don't compare."

After all, it's my judgements about other people--inside and outside the rooms--that isolate me from others and likewise isolate me from my Higher Power. Instead of clinging obsessively to my judgements about the people around me--how they dressed, how they let their children behave, etc--I asked my Higher Power to help me see the things we have in

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Take a Bow, AA

Sober since 1969, a man in Connecticut recalls his long, rocky, wonderful AA journey

Booze, ego and I were allies; together we made my self-image glow. I was introduced to AA in the spring of 1969, and booze left us. That's when ego said, "Don't worry, I'll take up the slack." I believed him.

My first sponsor, Charlie, had three whole months. We bonded immediately. Our egos clicked and began to collaborate. Recall might make me blush because we practiced our own "pink cloud" version of the AA program with bluster and tomfoolery. But since it was the beginning of my sober journey, I feel no shame. Charlie may have been the catalyst that gave me hope and a reason to try this Fellowship brand of sobriety. Who knows? On my own I could stop drinking, but I could not stay sober. Charlie was my age. He relapsed, his liver failed, and he was soon dead. I survived the loss without picking up a drink.

Inside This Issue: ♦ Opportunities for Service ♦ Just Before Dawn ♦ Announcements and Things to Do

Take a Bow

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Back then there was only one AA group in my city. The same people met twice a week and the repetition began to bore me. I anticipated just what Joe, Harry and Sue were going to say—again my enthusiasm began to fade. My main incentive to keep coming was fear; I was afraid not to come. I didn't want to drink, and meetings gave me a sense of security.

My willingness was tested to a frazzle before I attempted prayer. I heard folks proclaim the goodness of getting on their knees in the morning and asking their Higher Power to help them through the day. At night, they said they knelt to give thanks. This was certainly not my practice, but in a state of desperation, I put aside my skepticism and gave it a try. I felt foolish and told myself it was only a test. I closed the door to my room and pulled the shades. No one must see this, I thought. Surprisingly, it did not hurt; in fact, I felt a sense of relief and decided to give it a 10-day trial. Almost immediately, meetings became bearable, my anxiety lifted and my fellows became fellows. A seed was planted assuring me that I was not alone. What a relief.

Yet, after many more years, I was still without a sponsor. Over time, I had asked as many as six men and one woman; no relationship ever jelled. Finally, against my ego's advice, I joined a Step meeting group. After many turns around the Twelve Steps saying, "I haven't done it yet," I wrote my Fourth Step and shared it with my pastor. I felt it was a good choice

because we had a 20-year history in the church my family and I attend. Sadly, the feedback was nil. Jokingly, I claimed I left him speechless. If there is a next time, I thought, I'll pick a program person with more than three months.

Some time later, our group was reading Step Six and I had an epiphany: Suddenly I felt more than willing to let all my defects go. I went home with a feeling of certainty that I had broken through a major barrier and expected to be completely cleansed. And so it goes. I don't know how many times I thought I was on my way to sainthood. The following week, Step Seven reminded me that I'm powerless; I need to ask my Higher Power for help.

Retiring the booze and leaving my drinking buddies behind was quick and easy for me. But the life lessons that AA gives so willingly sometimes whiz right by me. I'd like to blame my upbringing, for I am the son of two educators and my first resentment was education. Damned if I was going to study the Big Book. However, I've learned that I cannot blame others for my shortcomings.

After 12 years in the program, my wife Jo was struggling with a bout of depression and she asked me to stay home instead of going to so many meetings. I did and was certain that my motives were justified. Wasn't taking care of family

Trivia Question



In each tradition, the individual or the group is asked to give up something for our general welfare."

What does Tradition Two ask of us?

sober-guy stuff? Soon my "isms" returned as if they'd never left, and that's when I realized the power of meetings. Anger had been a lifelong problem and alcohol kicked it up a notch. I was afraid of my own temper; once it got started, I was out of control. In AA, my anger subsided and my temper got in check. After a month without meetings, I was ready to attack my wife; my insecurity was in charge again. Without hesitation, I ran back to AA. Each time I left the house, Jo would cry and beg me not to go. Even though I didn't drink, it felt strange coming back to meetings. It took a while to feel like I belonged.

Early on I did a lot of speaking, and ego made me do it. For a while it brought me great joy. I thought I was a stand-up comic. Gradually, I came to realize that my motives were not for the good of AA. I wanted to make the audience laugh more than I wanted to carry

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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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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



Just Before Dawn

Just Before Dawn

I was lost and felt so alone
My soul so desperate; my heart turned to stone
Such loneliness never before had I felt
Wanting to die; crying as I knelt

Emotions all over, no hope in sight
Angry you left me, I saw no light
Afraid of everything, I did not want to stay
And go through the motions yet another day

As I knelt there crying for you to take me that night
I felt your arms go around me and hold me so tight

My question always the same; Why did you leave me behind?
The very next day you sent me a sign
You sent me an angel to help me see
The life I could live, happy joyous and free

They held out their hand and opened their heart
They told me all about how to make a new start
They told me to live just for today
They asked me to come back and held hands to pray

They gave me a Big Book and suggested the 12 steps I should take
To learn to live life no matter what's on my plate
They loved me until I could love myself again
My soul filled spiritually at last amen

So when the new comer walks through the door today
I know it's my job to give it away
The gift that was given so freely to me
I must give away to keep my serenity

I know now you carried me again and again
It was I who left you way back when
So thank you my Lord for the daily angels you send
And for my beautiful new life of love without end

Tammy

Service Fair & Dance!

WHEN

**SATURDAY,
February 9th**

Service Fair @6pm

Dance @7:30pm

Food & Fellowship
throughout!

WHERE

**St. Stephen's
Episcopal Church**

158 Warren St.

Beverly, NJ 08010

Find out about:

- Area 45 Committees
- Intergroup Committees
- and more!

Then grab some
Food & put on
your **Dancing
Shoes!**



\$5 donation suggested for DANCE only

Brought to you in love & service by DISTRICT 3

Questions: Contact Adele E. (609) 784-2417



February Service Opportunities

Literature:
Looking for Sales Volunteers for Tuesday nights and Saturday mornings. Please e-mail literature@asj.org.

District 3: Join Area 45 District 3 and your local Inter-groups for a service fair. Many committees will be available to tell you how you can get more involved with AA service. St. Stephan's Episcopal Church, Beverly. February 9th at 6 pm.

Speaking Commitments

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

- Ancora Psych Hosp – Hammonton NJ Jan 17, 28, 31 Feb 18, 21, 28 7-8pm 202 Spring Garden Rd Hammonton NJ
- Cooper Psych Unit – Camden NJ Jan 29 8-9pm Feb 23 10:30-11:30am 1 Cooper Plaza Camden NJ
- Daybreak - Atco NJ – Jan 24, 31, Feb 14, 21 10:30-12:00 noon 368 White Horse Pike, Atco, NJ
- Delaware House – Westampton NJ Feb 5, 2-3pm 21 Ikea Drive Westampton NJ
- Maryville Women's Williamstown NJ Feb 4, 25, 26 8-9pm 1903 Grant Ave Williamstown NJ
- Northbrook MICA Unit – Blackwood NJ Jan 23, 30 8-9pm 425 Woodbury-Turnersville Rd, Blackwood NJ
- Seabrook House Bridgeton NJ Feb 15 7:30-8:30pm 133 Polk Ln Bridgeton NJ
- Solstice Counseling Services – Pemberton NJ Jan 22, 29, Feb 5, 19, 26 7-8pm 300 Birmingham Road, Pemberton NJ
- Unity Place I - Cherry Hill NJ Jan 30, Feb 6, 27 12:40-1:30pm 1 Keystone Ave, Cherry Hill, NJ
- Unity Place II - Hammonton NJ Jan 17, 24, 31, Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 2-3pm 121 S. White Horse Pike, Hammonton, NJ

Principles

From page 1

common.

And it turns out that spiritual principles work wherever you go. So instead of wasting whole stretches of the day lost in my head obsessing about how overpriced the souvenirs are or getting bent out of shape about the kids behind me in line who have no concept of personal space, I kept asking my Higher Power to help me.

Consequently I felt present in the moment to the flights of imagination my daughter had as she got to dress as a Jedi or meet her favorite characters and I could share in the joy my wife felt that we can provide an opportunity like this for our child.

While I will carry many great memories from my trip, I am particularly grateful for the experience of relying on my Higher Power. When I do this, whether to stay sober one day at a time or for help seeing what that next right thing to do is, I find serenity and joy.

Anonymous

Take a Bow

From page 2

the message. So I retired from the "circuit" to tell my story to drunks in the hospital detox ward. There, if anyone paid attention, it was rarely acknowledged, and my reason for being there was to insure my own sobriety.

A moment of gratitude for AA came soon after my mother died. She was a redheaded Irish lassie and we had dueling egos. During the final years of her life our relationship did a 180. Our egos backed off, and there was peace between us. My sense of gratitude continues, and for this AA can take a bow. No doubt my Higher Power played a role here. I suspect AA

and HP are in cahoots when it comes to doing things right.

By the time my 10-day prayer trial expired it had become a habit that I've continued. This practice led the way to other spiritual endeavors. Step Two has become very meaningful and, when (like the other Steps) it is the topic of a meeting, it seems brand new. My spirituality is not dull; it does not stand still. It ebbs and flows, questions and doubts. It lures me on.

Making meetings a priority was a good move for both my wife and me. Things worked out: she got counseling, and my meetings restored some of my sanity. Last Valentine's Day we celebrated 52 years of marriage.

Ever since my test prayers were answered, I've not been to a bad meeting. Perhaps I've become teachable. I was 37 when I came in, and at 80, I feel better now than I did at 50. AA is healing my attitude one day at a time. Exercise is my positive addiction. And when I attend the university, education doesn't scare me as it once did.

The blessings keep coming.

Anonymous

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Carrying the Message: Are We Using All Available Tools?

Presented by South Jersey Intergroup Technology Committee with Help From Cape Atlantic Intergroup

Have you ever thought about?

- ◆ What Other Intergroups & Areas are Doing
- ◆ How to Improve Area and Intergroup Websites
- ◆ Data Sharing for our Service Committees
- ◆ Electronic Payments and Credit Card Processing in AA
- ◆ Reaching More Alcoholics with Online Tools
- ◆ That Great Idea You Would Love to Share with AA

Please join us to share our ideas, get involved and help AA embrace more modern tools to carry the message. Saturday, January 19 10 am – 2 pm Bud Duple Senior Center 33 Folly Road, Atco, NJ (Tansboro Spiritual Group Location) Technology is for Everyone! Come out to share your experience, strength & hope (whether it is technical or not).

Lunch will be provided



Fellowship Things to Do

Fri. Jan. 18 – Mullica Hill will celebrate their anniversary with fun, food, & fellowship. Starting at 5:30 at Trinity Methodist Ch. on Cedar Rd. in Mullica Hill.

Sat. Jan. 19 – Woodstown Grp. will celebrate their 63rd anniversary. Eating begins at 6:30pm speaker to follow @ 8pm. Local: Woodstown Presbyterian Ch 46 Auburn Rd. Woodstown.

Mon. Jan. 21 – Collingswood will celebrate 75th anniversary FFF. @ Haddon & Fern Ave., Collingswood. Parking available in bank lot across the street, also church parking lot available with entrance from Fern Ave. Doors Open @ 6:30; Dinner @ 7:00 – Speaker @ 8:00

Sun., Jan. 27 – Fellowship of the Spirit 1st Anniversary . United Methodist Church, 29 Warwick Rd., Haddonfield, NJ. 6:30 P: Food, 8:00 Speaker: Jake from Buffalo, NY.

Wed. Jan. 30 – Women's Ferrell anniversary meeting for the Wednesday night women's group Serenity Sisters. Located on Ferrell Rd and Elk Rd at Friendship Hall of the UMC (across the street from Ferrell Fire Hall) in Monroeville/ Elk Township. Meeting starts at 6:30pm. 2 Speakers and Cake.

Sat. Febr. 9 – Service Fair & Dance. Food. St. Stephen's Episcopal Ch. 158 Warren St., Beverly, NJ. Service Fair @6PM- Dance @ 7:30. Hosted by District 3. Info about Area 45, Intergroup Committees, etc. Info :Adele – 609.784.2417. \$5 donation for dance only.

February 22-24 – NERAASA 28th Annual Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly.

Announcements

Bookers Meetings for 2019

Feb 14, May 9, Aug 8, Nov 14 at St Bart's 1989 Rte 70, Cherry Hill

Triboro Riverton Group has moved to

Central Baptist Church, 514 Maole Ave, Palmyra

Sun 7:00 PM Step and Wed 8:00 PM Speaker discussion

Editor's note: Our monthly step poem contributor, Joanne, has broken her wrist and is recuperating. Please keep her in your prayers. Hoping she will back with us in March!

Ice Skating Trip on the Delaware Water Front

Come join us for some winter fun!

Hosted by Social Events Committee @ SJ Intergroup

For more information call:

Denise R (856) 443-5238

Dylan (609) 922-0345



Saturday February 23rd at 4PM

Coast: \$14 per person (Rink admission \$4 and Skate Rental \$10)

Pay at the door

Location: 101 South Columbus Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19106

www.delawareriverwaterfront.com

