

THIS DAY

www.nnjaa.org
News & Notes from NNJ General Service Area 44 and Northern New Jersey Intergroup

A message
from your
Area Delegate



January 1, 2023 ushered in a new year. With that, I also started my journey as your Panel 73 Delegate. It is with fond curiosity that I share that I was assigned to the Agenda Committee. After checking with a few trusted servants, it is my understanding that this committee assignment is new to Area 44, so we will all learn it together. Here are few items on the Committee's final agenda:

- Review suggestions for the theme of the 2024 General Service Conference.
- Review the General Service Conference evaluation form, distribution process, 2022, and evaluation summary.
- Review feedback from delegates on quarterly communications.
- Review a report and draft plan for a future Conference inventory.

During our first Area Committee Meeting (ACM) and Area Assembly of 2023, I experienced a feeling akin to being a newcomer. I remember thinking: "I am experiencing Step One on this side of my service journey." Quite similar to walking into my first AA meeting, several thoughts and ideas started firing at once. My brain tried to review past experiences that could possibly be used as reference points. This would allow me to sigh and say "ah, I've seen this before, I know what to do and what to say." Well, no surprise, I drew a huge donut hole. It became comedically clear to me that I did not have an immediate point of reference. This service position was going to be a "tad" bit different than any others in my service past. No running start, but an immediate plunge that started with the welcome emails, the language spoken, the new acronyms, portals, dashboards, and deadlines, and how could I forget 2-minute highlights. At the General Service Conference, first year delegates present 2-minute Area highlights. I will get an opportunity to practice at NERAASA in February.

It is no wonder I am using this time to consciously slow down, compose my thoughts, utilize a service sponsor, and, of course, to lean heavily on the wisdom and experience of the trusted servants and past delegates in our Area. Within this whirlwind, my priority will be a personal recommitment to my spiritual growth, sobriety, and family. I am laser-focused and deliberate in attending my home group, Booze U Lose, in District 19 in Plainfield. I also take advantage of the other meetings that are located in the surrounding districts. What a rewarding experience it is, traveling up and down the triangle, greeting newcomers, and having the opportunity to share my sobriety and service journey.

I am reminded of the unique opportunity I have been afforded to share this experience, through my lens and my perspective. Starting with our Area's own General Service Representative Mid-Winter Luncheon and NERAASA in Albany, NY (the Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly), both in February. It's at NERAASA, (which according to the host Area already has over 600 people registered) where I will get an opportunity to give my first practice Area 44 highlights presentation - let the 2-minute timer begin! Next, I have NERD (the Northeast Regional Delegates reunion held in March in Wilmington, Delaware, and then the General Service Conference in April! And closer to home we are preparing for our area's own version of "March Madness". Our 2023 Pre-confer-

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NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE
May 15, 2023
newsletter@nnjaa.org

ence report dates start March 4 and end March 19, with a total of 6 dates, which will include one for our Spanish and Polish districts. We then take a very brief pause and convene at our very important mini-conference on April 8. Talk about being informed!

In between preparation for all the above, more immediate activities that I have been involved in include monthly meetings with my fellow Panel 72 and 73 NERDs to familiarizing myself with the General Service Office (GSO) dashboard and conversations with my assigned delegate buddy.

I remember discussing 2023 vacation ideas with Mack, my husband of 13 years, and we both realized that half of the year was already full. We weren't concerned, we simply planned around my service responsibility dates, recognizing how so many of the Promises were coming true, not just in my life, but in my family life as well. If I thought my life was full before, now it was bursting at the proverbial seams, providing both satisfaction and balance. I've been able to live a full life due to this amazing fellowship. Giving back is such a small token of my appreciation, I must stay fully active and informed, to ensure all sides of my triangle are balanced.

With that mindset, I am also reminded and curious about the things I don't see. For example, what districts and home group members are not present, not informed, not represented, not able to offer a voice or a vote? Are there those who don't feel welcomed? Are our meetings or even our Fellowship accessible? I reflect on these genuine questions often: Where else do I/we need to carry the message? Do you ever wonder who is missing?

Is the comfort of seeing familiar faces, a hindrance to fully actualizing my personal duty as outlined in "I am Responsible?" How can I be responsible, if I don't even see the hands that are reaching out for help? How can I be a candle of light to all members? The privilege bestowed upon me on that sunny day in October 2022 will always be an incredibly poignant and humbling part of my sober journey. As such, I ask myself how I'll attempt to repay the gratitude and grace received. It can and must start with me meeting all opportunities and challenges, even those that may feel uncomfortable at the time.

Before wrapping up my first article, I would like to share some interesting insights. I got sober in Brooklyn, NY: my birthplace, the place where I hit my bottom, the same place where I was a creator of chaos, and ultimately on November 29, 2005, where I surrendered and walked into the sunlight of this amazing Fellowship. Perhaps not coincidentally, it is the same place where the 73rd General Service Conference will take place as I serve you as your Panel 73 Delegate. Is it crazy to say that I am looking forward to having sober flashbacks of the actions and consequences that led me to this exact moment in time? I don't know, but I do know I will be smiling inwardly and outwardly, maybe even skipping a little, when I attend the week-long General Service Conference during that last week in April at the Marriot in Brooklyn, New York. My higher power certainly has a sense of humor, and as is true in my life, there is no such thing as a coincidence.

Please remember: I am available, and it will be my honor to answer any of your questions or to hear your comments or concerns. Let's stay informed, together.

Thank you.

Marcheta B.
Panel 73 Delegate, Agenda Committee

PRE-CONFERENCE REPORT INFORMATION





 NNJGS AREA 44

2023



A.A.'s THREE LEGACIES
OUR COMMON SOLUTION

DELEGATE'S PRE-CONFERENCE REPORTS

HYBRID & VIRTUAL

| DATE | TIME | LOCATION |
|-----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Sat, March 4, 2023 | @12:30pm | HYBRID - Area Office |
| Mon, March 6, 2023 | @7pm | VIRTUAL |
| Tues, March 14, 2023 | @7pm | VIRTUAL |
| Thurs, March 16, 2023 | @7pm | VIRTUAL - Polish |
| Fri, March 17, 2023 | @7pm | VIRTUAL - Spanish |
| Sun, March 19, 2023 | @12pm | HYBRID - Area Office |


AREA OFFICE
 2325 Plainfield Ave. #2J,
 South Plainfield, NJ 07080


ZOOM
 ID: 859 4842 1312
 PW: 123456
[CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)

DCMS PLEASE COPY & DISTRIBUTE TO ALL GSRs
 ALL INTERESTED AAs ARE WELCOME!
 QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT YOUR DELEGATE, MARCHETA B.
 AREA-DELEGATE@NJAREA44.ORG





 NNJGS AREA 44

2023



A.A.'s THREE LEGACIES
OUR COMMON SOLUTION

DELEGADOS INFORMES PREVIOS A LA CONFERENCIA

HÍBRIDO Y VIRTUAL

| FECHA | HORA | UBICACIÓN |
|----------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Sábado, 4 de marzo, 2023 | @12:30pm | HÍBRIDO - Área Oficina |
| Lunes, 6 de marzo, 2023 | @7pm | VIRTUAL |
| Martes, 14 de marzo, 2023 | @7pm | VIRTUAL |
| Jueves, 16 de marzo, 2023 | @7pm | VIRTUAL - Polaco |
| Viernes, 17 de marzo, 2023 | @7pm | VIRTUAL - Español |
| Domingo, 19 de marzo, 2023 | @12pm | HÍBRIDO - Área Oficina |


AREA OFICINA
 2325 Plainfield Ave. #2J,
 South Plainfield, NJ 07080


ZOOM
 ID: 859 4842 1312 PW:
 123456
[CLIC AQUÍ PARA UNIRSE](#)

DCMS POR FAVOR COPIE Y DISTRIBUYA A TODOS LOS GRS
 TODOS LOS AAs INTERESADOS SON BIENVENIDOS
 ¿PREGUNTAS? PÓNGASE EN CONTACTO CON SU DELEGADA,
 MARCHETA B. AREA-DELEGATE@NJAREA44.ORG





 NNJGS AREA 44

2023

A.A. WSPÓLNE ROZWIĄZANIE NASZE TRZY DZIEDZICTWA



A.A.'s THREE LEGACIES
OUR COMMON SOLUTION

SPRAWOZDANIA PRZEDKONFERENCYJNE DELEGATÓW

HYBRIDOWE I WIRTUALNE

| DATA | CZAS | LOKALIZACJA |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| Sobota, Marzec 4, 2023 | @12:30PM | HYBRIDOWE – Biuro Terenowe |
| Poniedziałek, Marzec 6, 2023 | @7:00PM | WIRTUALNE |
| Wtorek, Marzec 14, 2023 | @7:00PM | WIRTUALNE |
| Czwartek, Marzec 16, 2023 | @7:00PM | WIRTUALNE - Polskie |
| Piątek, Marzec 17, 2023 | @7:00PM | WIRTUALNE - Hiszpańskie |
| Niedziela, Marzec 19, 2023 | @12:00PM | HYBRIDOWE – Biuro Terenowe |


BIURO TERENOWE
 2325 Plainfield Ave. #2J,
 Południowe Plainfield,
 NJ 07080


ZOOM
 ID: 859 4842 1312
 PW: 123456

DCMS PROSZE SKOPIOWAĆ I ROZESŁAĆ DO WSZYSTKICH
 GSRs WSZYSCY ZAINTERESOWANI AAS SĄ MILE WIDZIANI!
 MASZ PYTANIA? PROSIMY O KONTAKT ZE SWOIM
 DELEGATEM, MARCHETA B.
 AREA-DELEGATE@NJAREA44.ORG

- Area 44 - 2023 Mini Conference Topics and Discussion Items**
- Topic I – Cooperation with Professional Community** (Final Conference Agenda Item II-D)
Should we retire the pamphlet "A Member's Eye View" of Alcoholics Anonymous?
 - Topic II - Corrections** (Final Conference Agenda Item III-A)
Should we include content in existing A.A. literature on sponsorship of persons in custody by outside members of the Fellowship?
 - Topic III - Finance** (Final Conference Agenda Items IV-C, IV-D)
Should we increase the maximum annual contribution and bequests to the General Service Board from individual AA members?
 - Topic IV - Literature** (Final Conference Agenda Item VI-L)
Should we update the pamphlet "Do You Think You're Different"?
 - Topic V - Public Information** (Final Conference Agenda Item VIII-R)
Should we implement an Alcoholic Anonymous World Services, Inc. Instagram account?
 - Topic VI - Treatment and Accessibilities** (Final Conference Agenda Item X-E)
Should we do an Accessibilities Inventory of Alcoholics Anonymous throughout its services and structure?

NNJAA COMMITTEE REPORTS & INFO

*A message
from your
Area Chair*



First, I want to thank you for your trust and confidence as I embark on serving our area as Area 44 chair for the next two years. Who'd have thought over twelve years ago that a drunk like me would be considered a trusted servant of Alcoholics Anonymous today? While I'd reviewed the guidelines and responsibilities that were outlined for the Area chair position, I could not have anticipated what this commitment would be like: my first two weeks of service have been a whirlwind. From the officer's meeting to the committee orientation to the Area committee meeting, and finally, to our first Area assembly, I thought I'd never get through the tasks laid before me! How do I/we do it? Ask for help! Simple as that! And when I asked, help was just a step away. I am so grateful to those who preceded me in service who are still making themselves available to help when help is needed.

A recent daily Grapevine quote sums up my experience thus far: *I am easier led by example than ordered to obey. I am grateful to those who have shown me how [Tradition Two] works. Being a trusted servant is humbling. Being an equal part of a spiritual whole is enriching.*

To all new and second-year GSRs and DCMs:

Please attend one of the upcoming GSR/DCM workshops. These are designed to help you learn and understand what you may not have when you stood for your position. Also, please make sure our Area registrar (area-registrar@njarea44.org) has your information, so he can update GSO and you can obtain a Share44 e-mail (share44help@njarea44.org).

To ALL members of our Fellowship:

Please attend our delegate's Pre-Conference Reports! How often have we heard members ask: "Why and how did they make those changes?" and then exclaim: "I'm not going to send contributions to GSO because I don't agree with the changes!" In order to affect change, it's essential to have a voice before the Conference. This is done by attending our delegate's Pre-Conference Report. Additionally, by attending the Post-Conference Report, AA members can learn how and why things did or did not change. Finally, please don't hesitate to contact me or any other Panel 73 officers or committee chairs. We are here to respond to your questions, concerns and ideas.

Yours in AA service,
Art B.
Area 44 chair, P73
area-chair@njarea44.org

GSR/DCM WORKSHOP

HOSTED BY: SECTION 5

(DISTRICTS: 20, 36, 22, 23, 24)

WHEN: MARCH 18TH 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

WHERE: ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

559 RARITAN RD.

CLARK, NJ



COME AND RECEIVE A COMPLETE OVERVIEW OF THE
ROLE OF GSR AND DCM

FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL: GSR-WORKSHOP-
CHAIR@NJAREA44.ORG

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

GSR/DCM WORKSHOP**HOSTED BY: SECTION 6**

(DISTRICTS: 25, 26, 27, 28, 29)

WHEN: MARCH 25TH 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.WHERE: ST. MARGARET DUFFY HALL
300 LUDLOW AVE.
SPRING LAKE NJCOME AND RECEIVE A COMPLETE OVERVIEW OF THE
ROLE OF GSR AND DCMFOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL: GSR-WORKSHOP-
CHAIR@NJAREA44.ORG

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

Cooperation with
the Professional
Community**H**ello!

It is a great honor to have this opportunity. My journey started on June 21, 2017. That day was the summer solstice and the best day of my life. I was beaten badly, homeless, and after calling our 1 800 number (at the time), I got the time and location of a meeting that would become my home group. I went to the meeting location early and sat outside. I looked over and saw a digital sign. Through its rotation it said "Open AA Meeting, 7:30pm Wednesdays."

After God graced me with an ounce of courage, I entered the meeting. I saw two men who were well put together, spoke nicely, and had a serene aura. Since I thought I knew everything, I told them that the sign was breaking anonymity, and it was against

the traditions of AA. LOL! Eventually, one man became my sponsor; the other became my grand sponsor. To my comment about the sign, my soon-to-be grand sponsor simply said, "It's public information."

After a year, I started attending district meetings. I served as alternate Literature chair until the pandemic. I had loved hearing the report of Public Information (PI). It always inspired me. I logged on in early 2021; the PI chair was empty. Needless to say I became the PI chair. It was exhilarating! The message of hope was everywhere: on billboards, on posters in train stations, and first responders had business cards. Also, we printed pens to hand out and placed pamphlets wherever we could put a rack. During my two years as PI chair, my grand sponsor explained to me about service ego. My anonymity was never broken while attending public events and speaking at new locations we acquired. I served, and presented myself as an AA volunteer.

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) worked with PI through this all. When everything was shut down, CPC and PI were still working in the background. I was inspired by their commitments. I started attending Area CPC meetings last year. I spun out of PI, and into CPC this year.

It has been an exhilarating journey in service for me. We in CPC are currently working on implementing QR codes that link to nnjaa.org, posting them on flyers that can be given to clergy, doctors, courts and lawyers, medical students, military, and the other professionals of our communities. We contact these professionals and, with their consent, give in-person presentations. We also provide Power Point presentations upon request.

That sign I saw on the billboard six years ago had the power to open up my mind. It gave me hope to one day carry the message. I owe this all to my Higher Power and the men and women that came before me.

Thank you for the gift of sobriety and the opportunity to serve!

Eric D.

Toms River, Wednesday Night Came To Believe Group
Area 44 CPC Chair

Northern New Jersey General Service

SAVE THE DATE

September 22-23-24, 2023

AREA 44 PRESENTS



THE 67TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The Doubletree Hotel

200 Atrium Drive • Somerset, New Jersey 08873

- ▲ Workshops
- ▲ Alkathon
- ▲ Young People's Speaker Meeting
- ▲ Young Timer / Old Timer Speaker Meeting
- ▲ Friday Night Speaker Meeting
- ▲ Old Timer's Meeting
- ▲ Guided Meditation
- ▲ Alanon Speaker & Meetings
- ▲ Sobriety Countdown
- ▲ Saturday Night Banquet & Banquet Speaker
- ▲ Entertainment Friday & Saturday Night
- ▲ Sunday Morning Spiritual Meeting
- ▲ Grapevine Play
- ▲ History & Archives
- ▲ Standing Committee Workshops
- ▲ LGBTQ+ Meeting

NNJAA.ORG/CONVENTION/2023





Hello Area 44! I am Sherry B., your new Newsletter chair, and I am honored to serve you through 2024. I'm both humbled and daunted by the enormous responsibility I have been trusted with. I truly hope I can help, rather than hinder, the amazing and dedicated volunteers who, no matter what, find a way to produce four fabulous issues of *This Day* every year for your reading pleasure.

For me, *This Day* is much more than a delight to read. It has been a reliable source of information and inspiration since I discovered it along with my sobriety back in 2017. It is my intention to continue to help pack these pages with practical and insightful tidbits that will introduce the newcomer to the wonderful world of sobriety.

I also hope to help *This Day* readers explore the physical world of AA meetings, something so many of us have either been hesitant to do or eager to return to since the pandemic shut everything down. Featuring stories from readers about their travels to AA meetings beyond their habitual range, our new "On the Road" column may drive you to try that out-of-the-way meeting you've heard about. And, with your help, it may encourage our fellow travelers to exercise their wanderlust on the road to Vancouver, Canada, for the 2025 International Convention.

Meanwhile, please let us know what's on your mind! This is *your* newsletter, so send me your comments, questions and suggestions at newsletter-chair@nnjaa.org.

Yours gratefully,
Sherry B.
Area 44 *This Day* Newsletter chair



Hello, my name is Bill and I am an alcoholic. It is my privilege to serve as Nightwatch Committee co-chair. For those who aren't familiar with Nightwatch, we are responsible for organizing the volunteers who answer incoming calls to Intergroup's phone number when the Intergroup Office is closed. This ensures that whenever anyone needs our help, calls are always answered by a live recovering alcoholic, even when the office is closed. We do this by transferring the calls to a volunteer's phone during their scheduled shift.

While this service is vital in carrying the message to those who may be still suffering, please be advised of an ongoing problem:

We are lacking 12 Step contact volunteers to cover large swaths of Area 44. Before I can explain the problem, let me describe how Nightwatch works.

There are two types of volunteers involved in the process of Nightwatch. The first are those who answer calls made to the Intergroup phone number when the office is closed. Typically, a group takes a commitment to cover 11 shifts in a normal week (more on holiday weeks) when the office is closed. Let's call this first type "Nightwatch Volunteers." Most of the calls fielded by Nightwatch Volunteers are people trying to find a meeting, or they just have questions about AA. In the event that we get a caller who needs to speak at length to another alcoholic in their area (essentially a 12th Step call), that is when the second type of volunteer comes into play. This second type of volunteer is the one we really need. Let's call this second type of volunteer "12 Step Contacts." When a situation requiring a 12th Step call is needed, the Nightwatch Volunteer will ask the caller where he or she is and get a callback number.

Then, the volunteer tells the caller he will try to get a recovering alcoholic from their area to call them back to talk to them.

We don't give out the 12 Step Contact's phone number to callers. The Nightwatch Volunteer looks at a list we keep of 12 Step Contacts from all over Area 44 to find someone to call them back. In many parts of Area 44, we are seriously deficient in the number of 12 Step Contacts that we have. How bad is it? For example, in one major city in New Jersey with over 300,000 residents, we only have ONE 12 Step Contact for the entire city. That is just one example, but many cities have little or no 12 Step Contacts listed.

How do we compile this list of 12 Step Contacts? Once a year the Intergroup Office mails a "12 Step Contact Form" to all the groups in Area 44. Groups then have members fill out the form at a group business meeting and send it back to Intergroup. We use those forms to compile the 12 Step Contact List. We do not give out your name or phone number to callers. The 12 Step Contact form is available on the Area 44/Intergroup Web Site. {www.nnjaa.org > Members Area (circle & Triangle) > Intergroup Members > Forms > 12 Step Contact Sheet.}

If you'd like a copy of this form, please email me at NIGHTWATCH@NNJAA.ORG. Please have your group fill it out and send it into Intergroup by mail, email, or fax (details noted on form.)

Just to give you a better picture of our problem, rather than single out individual towns, here is a current* count of 12th Step Contacts by County:

| County | Contacts | Meetings | County | Contacts | Meetings |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Bergen | 189 | 344 | Ocean | 151 | 172 |
| Essex | 43 | 202 | Passaic | 45 | 103 |
| Hudson | 27 | 142 | Somerset | 55 | 108 |
| Hunterdon | 18 | 113 | Sussex | 43 | 68 |
| Middlesex | 54 | 208 | Union | 70 | 197 |
| Monmouth | 170 | 342 | Warren | 40 | 43 |
| Morris | 136 | 245 | | | |

*Current is defined as "received by the Intergroup office in the last 18 months."

Although Intergroup only sends out the 12 Step Contact Forms once a year, groups can send them in any time. We update the actual virtual list that we use quarterly.

This problem has been mentioned in "News & Notes" many times. It is our responsibility to make ourselves available to those needing our help.

For all groups in Area 44, if you haven't completed a 12 Step Contact Form and sent it into Intergroup in the last 12 Months, I implore you to download one from our website or email me to send you one (email below). Then, complete it at a group business meeting and send it into the Intergroup Office.

If you have any questions about Nightwatch, your group wishes to take a commitment for a week, or you want me to email you a "12 STEP CONTACT FORM" please contact me at: NIGHTWATCH@NNJAA.ORG.

Thank you for Your Service.
 Bill N.
 Nightwatch Committee co-chair
 Belford Clearview Group, Middletown

**Social Media
Committee**



Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Zoom are just a few of the social media platforms on the Internet that have become an integral part of many people's lives. I've always made it a policy to not share anything on the Internet that I wouldn't be comfortable with everyone knowing. Why? Employers do an Internet search on prospective employees. People "Google" before going on a date with someone for the first time. Having run for public office, I know the kinds of things that can be discovered with an afternoon to spare and a computer.

In a world where privacy is becoming a bigger concern because of the information that is available, how does Alcoholic Anonymous' tradition of anonymity survive? Are we able to safeguard anonymity while using modern technology? As Area 44's Social Media chair, I believe we can.

The Area's Facebook page has been an important tool in providing information to our Fellowship. It's a "private" group. You cannot sign on to your Facebook account and search for NNJ Area 44. Only members can see the group. Only members can invite other members, or those who we know are part of the Fellowship. The Social Media Committee acts as the gatekeeper. We are responsible for postings on the Facebook page. No one else can post, thereby preventing discussion of anything unrelated to AA and the Fellowship.

Our committee has had great success providing an outlet to share upcoming AA events, such as annual Days of Sharing, various assemblies, Pre and Post Conference Reports, and conventions both in and out of our area. The most important job that any of us have is to share the message. Social Media is a vital tool we can utilize to spread the word.

Moving forward we will evaluate whether having a presence on other social media platforms like Twitter or Instagram will be beneficial. If we can carry the message without compromising our anonymity, it's a win-win for AA. With the help of the trusted servants in Area 44 who always have our common welfare at top of mind, I'm sure we can.

Lisa G.
Area 44 Social Media chair

**Committee
on Corrections**



Whether we'd spent a night, a weekend, a year, or decades behind bars or were imprisoned by our own alcoholic thinking, we know the loneliness and isolation we've experienced before entering recovery. Our 12 Steps inspire us to share the hope, the freedom from bondage, and the joy of living to all who suffer, especially to those members who are on the inside and can't reach out.


The Corrections Committee is excited to share that state prisons have been re-opening their doors to meetings, and as of today, we are (weekly) taking 2 meetings to East Jersey in Avenel, 3 meetings to Edna Mahan for Women in Clinton, and 1 each to the Department of Corrections Step-Down units at "Kintock House" in Newark for women and for men. We've just received a request to start bringing meetings to "The Harbor" in Newark, a locked recovery/treatment location of the Department of Corrections. Additionally, several county jails are open or will be very soon in Morristown, Bergen, Somerset, Ocean, and Warren Counties.

More volunteers are needed! We are encouraging all groups to have pink cans to collect funds to

purchase literature for these facilities and a Jail Box for old issues of the AA Grapevine (very popular on the inside) or other used literature. One of our members is updating our Pre-Release program, and exploring ways to involve more members on the inside in the Correspondence program. We also participate in the International Corrections Meeting each week.

Our workshop is May 20th and we have a member on the inside scheduled to speak. Join us for "coffee and" at the Area office [2325 Plainfield Ave #2] South Plainfield, NJ 07080] at 9.30 am that morning to learn more about this vital service work.

Dru R.
Area 44 Corrections secretary



THIS QUARTER'S PINK CAN DONATIONS

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT!!**

| | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. AA Eye Opener2. Anthony Argiros3. Belleville Thursday Night District 134. Belleville Thursday Night5. Bloomsbury Believers Group6. Came To Believe Group Flemington7. Came to Believe, Randolph Grace Church8. Clear the Air9. Dailly Reprieve Group10. Daily Reprieve - Pompton Plains11. Dawn Patrol12. Helmetta Stepping Stones13. Kinnelon Do It for Yourself14. Monday 1215 Closed Disc15. Monday Night Big Book Grp16. Morning Miracles17. New Light Group | <ol style="list-style-type: none">18. New Light19. Recovery Hall District 1320. Recovery Hall Group21. Recovery Lifeline Group22. Ruby Slippers23. Saturday Nite Live24. Sky's the Limit25. Sobriety Group - Oceanside26. SOS Group of AA27. Sparta Monday Beginner28. There Is a Solution Group29. Throckmorton Street Group30. Union Hill Drop-In Center31. Upon Awakening New Brunswick District 2232. Upon Awakening Sat AA Mtg College Farm33. Wake Up & Smell the Coffee-St. Matt's Randolph District 934. Wake Up and Smell the Coffee |
|---|---|



We're happy to report that the 2023 GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon was a huge success!

The General Service Conference theme for 2023 was "AA's Three Legacies – Our Common Solution". On February 19th, 2023, we celebrated our GSRs in person at the Forsgate Country Club, representing communication, love and service to our home groups.

So, it is the GSRs who are the key link in the chain of "communication." They consistently show us what service looks like because their commitment to being unified in love and service never changes. They are the lifeline to the area, their district, and their home group. The primary purpose of the GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee is to show Area 44's gratitude and appreciation to all General Service Representatives.

GSRs Rock!!

If you are interested in doing service work by being a volunteer for this event in the future, please send your name, contact information, and email to: d28-alt-secretary@njarea44.org

Yours in love and service,

Billy H.

Chair, GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee 2022-23

REMEMBER: NORTHERN NEW JERSEY AA NEEDS YOU!





NORTHERN NJ COMMITTEE MEETINGS VIRTUAL AND HYBRID







* Denotes Joint Committee of Area and Intergroup

Revised 11.14.2022

| COMMITTEES | MEETING DAY | TIME | SERVER | MEETING ID | PASSWORD | CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION |
|--|---------------------------|---------|--------|-------------------------------|----------|---|
| STANDING COMMITTEES | | | | | | |
| Cooperation w/ Professional Community* | 3 rd Tuesday | 7:00pm | ZOOM | 831 67410763 | (n/a) | Roe T-B – roc-chair@njarea44.org No password, Waiting Room Feature enabled by host |
| Corrections Facility Committee* | 3 rd Saturday | 10:00am | ZOOM | 850 3466 8699 | | Susan P-C – cfc-chair@njarea44.org ...Meeting on ODD number months only. Hybrid from Area Office |
| Grapevine | 1 st Saturday | 10:00am | ZOOM | 820 1459 9915 | AAGV | Marcheta B – grapevine-chair@njarea44.org Rotating Hybrid and Virtual Only every other month, Please contact Chair if you plan on attending at the Area Office |
| History and Archives* | 2 nd Wednesday | 7:00pm | ZOOM | 917 6976 2213 | 474109 | Frank F – archives-chair@njarea44.org |
| Literature | 3 rd Monday | 7:00pm | ZOOM | 672 098 8037 | 889464 | Mike R – literature-chair@njarea44.org ...This is a HYBRID meeting, with Social Distance observed at Area Office ; Literature Sales at 6:00pm |
| Public Information* | 2 nd Tuesday | 7:30pm | ZOOM | 821 7687 5697 | 2945766 | Sandra P – pi-chair@njarea44.org Virtual Only |
| Treatment* | 2 nd Wednesday | 7:00pm | ZOOM | 812 51569162 | 162734 | Elise B – treatment-chair@njarea44.org |
| SPECIAL COMMITTEES | | | | | | |
| Computer and Technology Committee | 2 nd Monday | 7:00pm | Teams | | | Charlie B. – computer@njarea44.org |
| Convention Committee | 3 rd Wednesday | 7:30pm | ZOOM | 833 2357 7907 | 197229 | Chris L - convention-chair@njarea44.org |
| Films Committee | 2 nd Sunday | 9:00am | ZOOM | 8147343685 | Dvth9RW | Paul L – films-chair@njarea44.org . Every odd numbered month on second Sunday of the month, just before ACM. Any additional meetings need TBD by Committee |
| Finance Committee | 4 th Monday | 7:00pm | ZOOM | 591 535 5531 | 112590 | John C – finance-chair@njarea44.org |
| GSR/DCM Workshops | N/A | | | | | Tina R – gtr-workshop-chair@njarea44.org |
| Mailing Committee | 1 st Wednesday | 6:30pm | n/a | | | Sara G – mailchair@njarea44.org |
| GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee | 1 st Monday | 6:30pm | ZOOM | 891 0985 8973 | 077175 | Billy H. – lunch-chair@njarea44.org |
| Newsletter* | 3 rd Thursday | 6:00pm | ZOOM | 815 3922 8687 | thisday | Tony P – newsletter-chair@njarea44.org |
| NYPPAA | 3 rd Sunday | 10:30am | ZOOM | 264 995 272 | service | |
| Policy and Admissions Committee | 4 th Thursday | 7:30pm | ZOOM | 532 271 5919 | 074811 | Mark D – policy-chair@njarea44.org Virtual Only meeting. Meets on EVEN months |
| Remote Communities | 4 th Monday | 7:30pm | ZOOM | 898 6573 4822 | 162978 | Brian I – remote-chair@njarea44.org Virtual Only |
| Social Media Committee | 2 nd Thursday | 7:30pm | ZOOM | 846 7849 8287 | 511520 | Kristen A – sm-chair@njarea44.org |
| Translations Committee | 1 st Wednesday | 7:00pm | n/a | 836 7972 7434 | 330508 | Felix E – translation-chair@njarea44.org |
| Website Committee* | 4 th Thursday | 7:00pm | Teams | Click to Join | | Andy Y – website-chair@njarea44.org |

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES, PLEASE CHECK OUT:
WWW.NNJAA.ORG >> SERVICE >> SERVICE COMMITTEES

NNJAA MINI-CONFERENCE TOPICS

TOPIC I: COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC) (Final Conference Agenda Item II-D)

Should we retire the pamphlet “A Member’s Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous.” (P41)

BACKGROUND

The Trustees Committee discussed the pamphlet “A Member’s Eye View of Alcoholic Anonymous” and noted some concerns on the relevancy and usefulness of this pamphlet as a CPC tool to communicate to professionals about AA. The committee noted that some of the text could be offensive to those of varying abilities and may lead to an appearance of AA aligning with a specific religious doctrine.

This pamphlet was designed to explain to social workers, treatment counselors, physicians and other professionals in the alcoholism field how AA works. The pamphlet explains the Twelve Steps — the AA program of recovery — and how AA helps alcoholics stop drinking. Though the AA program relies upon the sharing of experience, strength and hope among alcoholics, the recovery process itself is highly individual, adapted by each member to meet his or her needs. Therefore, the program is described here as it appears to one member, and the pamphlet did reflect Fellowship thinking, at the time, since it had been approved by the AA General Service Conference. The author of this paper delivered it first before a class on alcoholism counseling at one of our large universities.

The author states “that whatever I say tonight is and must remain a totally personal statement. In fact, what I am about to say might very well be titled “A Member’s-Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous.” And since I am saying it within the halls of a university all I ask is that you listen in a spirit of honest and open-minded inquiry.”

The background material supplied by the committee are excerpts from the pamphlet itself. The author shares his experience with Alcoholics Anonymous using literature, such as, The Preamble, AA’s basic text, Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Since the author is speaking to present and future counselors, rather than alcoholics, he shares his own experience about what Alcoholics Anonymous had meant to him for the last 16 years, and, being a lifelong Catholic, he uses the excerpts to illustrate some of his experiences.

PROS

- In speaking about his view, he states what AA is and what AA isn’t.
- In 2020, 10,628 copies of the pamphlet were distributed; in 2021,12,682 copies were distributed with only 22 other pamphlets having a higher distribution. It still is relevant.
- Like many AA stories, the author, a lifelong Catholic, uses his faith to share his experience but clearly states that a belief he has is by no means required to make a start.
- He outlines the program of recovery to the professional as it is in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

CONS

- Since it was written in 1970, there are now many more CPC pamphlets that might be more relevant and up to date.
- Professionals not knowing what AA is might take those excerpts and think that AA is a religious organization.
- It could be mistaken by readers that the author speaks for AA.

What does your home group think?

TOPIC II: CORRECTIONS

(Final Conference Agenda Item III-A)

Should we include content in existing AA literature on sponsorship of persons in custody by outside members of the Fellowship?

BACKGROUND

In response to a request from the International Corrections Meeting Ad Hoc Committee to develop service material providing shared experience on “inside” sponsorship to current corrections service material, at their January 2022 meeting, the Trustees’ Corrections Committee discussed and agreed that this type of shared experience would be useful and requested that the staff secretary prepare and put out a call for shared experience from the Fellowship.

As a result, a request was sent out to the Fellowship across corrections service positions and areas for information on existing programs and needs, resulting in 54 responses.

At a subsequent trustees’ meeting, the committee noted the enthusiastic response from the Fellowship on their experiences regarding sponsoring persons in custody and agreed that the staff secretary prepare a draft service piece for review and possible inclusion in the Corrections Workbook.

At the following trustees’ meeting, the committee reviewed the service piece drafted by the staff secretary and forwarded comments and edits for consideration. After updates were implemented, the service piece was forwarded to Publishing to be included in the current Corrections Workbook revision. Note: Service material does not require Conference approval.

This request, however, is to insert related information within existing recovery and service material to give guidance and information to Area Corrections Committees on how existing sponsorship programs are or are not working. Embedded in the full background on this item are suggested Conference-approved literature, service material, and Grapevine publications that could be possible documents to expand.

In reviewing the collected information, it is clear that in the US and Canada the variations in programs range from nothing supporting sponsorship of persons in custody by outside Fellowship members to full-fledged programs ranging from person-to-person sponsorship meetings to mail correspondence.

The background includes examples of where the various programs are very successful. It also lists some of the problems. One of the things to consider is that when involved in a Corrections Commitment Fellowship members in many instances need to adhere to the rules of the correctional facility, which may actually be opposite to one or a few of our traditions. It’s always the members choice to abide by the house rules or not take the commitment.

Accordingly, some of the existing sponsorship programs have found ways to rectify those problems, e.g., confidentiality of the information shared between the person in custody and the outside Fellowship member. Keep in mind, there is limited Universal Clearance or rules between facilities and largely each facility has it’s own rules and processes, especially county jails.

Some things to consider in deciding on this question:

PROS

- Providing information on existing programs throughout the US and Canada will educate Corrections Committees that are not currently aware of the various programs that are in place, which

might open a door with the facilities in their area to create such programs.

- Inside Visitation Sponsorship provides an outside AA member to visit the person in custody at the correctional facility. This process may exempt the outside member from the legal requirements of the Department of Corrections and PREA agreements that are required when a member is a Program Volunteer. This has been a deterrent to 5th Steps in some facilities when enforced as the volunteer is required to report any facility rules violations.
- Since, in most states, no one is allowed to bring books to the visiting area, a sponsorship program may allow requests that AA literature be available in visiting rooms as most program work is done through them.
- Explaining the downside of sponsorship on the inside (person in custody to person in custody), e.g., persons in custody are reluctant to share things that could get out in the yard, it might convey the need to have an outside member sponsor.
- The service pieces might help communicate with the facilities on how to easily implement, keep cost effective, and offer our contributions to the process making it attractive.

CONS

- Like with other information sharing from GSO, e.g., financial pie charts, rather than being taken as information sharing, the data might be taken as “must do”.
- In areas where there is existing programs in place, new suggestions might strain existing good relations with facility staff.
- Adding dimensions to existing meetings of having sponsors available might have an initial negative impact on regular meetings by those not ready to connect with a sponsor.

What does your home group think?

TOPIC III – FINANCE

(Final Conference Agenda Items IV-C, IV-D)

Should we increase the maximum annual contribution and bequests to the General Service Board from individual AA members?

BACKGROUND

As a matter of course, the General Service Conference regularly reviews the contribution limits for annual individual member contributions and bequests to the General Service Office. Bequests are gifts that are made as part of a will or trust. While there are no limits on the amount an AA group or AA event may contribute, contributions from individuals are capped. The current limit for annual individual contributions is \$5,000. The current limit on bequests is \$10,000. Bequests are allowed only as a one-time contribution and may not be made in perpetuity.

While this year’s background material includes only the History of Contribution Limits and the respective increases, our literature gives us some considerations. Pamphlet F-3 “SELF-SUPPORT: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” states, “Whose Job Is It? “The paradox of A.A. is that financial independence and the support of our Fellowship by alcoholics and alcoholics alone not only enhances A.A.’s importance to each of us, but stimulates our engagement in our own recovery... A.A. is ‘our thing,’ from our group’s treasury to the balance sheets at the General Service Office.”

It is clear from our history and our literature that contributions from our members are vital to fund the services performed by GSO. In addition, F-203 “Seventh Tradition Fact Sheet” details services provided by GSO that reach beyond the home group. Some examples include the ongoing translation of our

literature to other languages, maintaining the AA.org website, and the preservation of AA history with GSO Archives.

From MG-15 “A.A. Guidelines – Finance,” “Question: How are G.S.O.’s services funded? Answer: Approximately 80% of G.S.O. services’ funding comes from group contributions, the Birthday Plan, central office/district/area contributions, and excess funds of A.A. events or conferences. The balance is made up of profits from the sale of A.A. literature.”

PROS

Increasing individual contribution limits may provide additional funds for the services performed by the General Service Office. An increase in member contributions could lead to a reduction in literature prices, which are used to offset the difference in our actual self-support.

CONS

Allowing a greater percentage of the actual funding of GSO to be carried by individual members as opposed to the AA groups could lead to an imbalance of the “power of the purse” held by the groups to whom the General Service Office is held accountable.

What does your home group think?

TOPIC IV - LITERATURE

(Final Conference Agenda Items VI-L)

Should we update the pamphlet “Do You Think You’re Different?”

BACKGROUND

Alcoholics Anonymous has always tried to fulfill its responsibility to reach out to all alcoholics who need us. As stated in the Preface to the Fourth Edition, “All changes made over the years in the Big Book have had the same purpose: to represent the current membership more accurately and thereby to reach more alcoholics.” The question raised in this agenda item is in line with this Big Book statement; does the pamphlet “Do You Think You’re Different?” reflect the diverse audience of alcoholics it’s intended to.

The 2022 General Service Conference passed an advisory action to have the trustees’ Literature Committee revise the pamphlet “Do You Think You’re Different?” and bring back a draft pamphlet or progress report to the 2023 Conference*. The charge was to update the stories to represent greater diversity. Simple, right?

Not so fast. In January 2023, while the trustees’ Literature Committee agreed to forward the ‘request to update’ to the 2023 Conference Committee on Literature, it came with a suggestion to postpone this update, citing the pamphlet was last updated as recently as 2018.

Some history. The original proposed agenda item came from the Archives Chair for British Columbia Yukon, Canada, Area 79. They state, “while this pamphlet seeks to be inclusive of the population in the Canada/US structure, and the stories reflect different backgrounds such as nationality, culture, religion, age and gender, this pamphlet does not cover all aspects of the different populations in our Canada/US structure. Our countries have a unique multicultural population with immigrants from Asia and the Middle East among many others. Canada has many different indigenous peoples as well.” They feel strongly that the revision would make the pamphlet more inclusive and that multicultural members

would better identify and feel more a part of our AA program.

Your assignment: Review the pamphlet "Do You Think You're Different?" (P-13) and decide for yourself.

PROS

- We should honor the 2022 Advisory Action and update the pamphlet – diversity is ever-evolving and a lot has changed in the last five years.
- We should continue to review and update our pamphlets to ensure that they are effective tools to reach our intended audience.
- Yes, this is a widely distributed pamphlet (33,000 in 2021), we need to make sure we get it right.
- Yes, revise – the stories can be made shorter to include more of them and greater diversity.

CONS

- The pamphlet was just updated in 2018; let's devote our resources elsewhere.
- The pamphlet is fine as is: we're never going to represent everyone no matter how many times we revise.

What does your Group think?

*Even though this is a literature item, the 2022 recommendation came from the Conference Committee on Trustees as a result of the 2021-22 Equitable Distribution of Workload plan.

TOPIC V: PUBLIC INFORMATION (PI) (Final Conference Agenda Item VIII-R)

Show we implement an Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Instagram account?

BACKGROUND

At the January Board meeting, the Communication Services Department of the General Services Office (GSO), along with the Public Information Desk, submitted a request to create, implement and manage an Instagram account for AAWS that was forwarded to the Public Information Conference Committee at this year's Conference. This Instagram account would provide information from AAWS in a similar fashion that the Grapevine Instagram account provides information about the Grapevine and La Viña.

The request from the Communication Service Department provides the purpose and strategy for the proposed account and addresses anonymity and privacy concerns. The request identifies the purpose that an Instagram account would fulfill of providing a digital outlet for sharing relevant information from GSO including highlighting the GSO Podcast, sharing updates from GSO, such as calendars and upcoming events like Regional Forums and posting seasonal literature special offers. The strategy for this account would be to use existing Conference-approved content and service material and produce new imaging and video-related content. AAWS would also solicit new content that is Instagram specific and follow the current example of the Grapevine Instagram account. The goal is to provide resources to the still suffering alcoholic in accordance with our Traditions, especially with regards to anonymity. When content is posted to an Instagram account, this is considered to be publishing at a public level and AAWS understands that these posts cannot break anyone's anonymity. The request also points out that Instagram is a secure platform that allows for two-factor authentication, login notifications, and several other safeguards.

A report on the progress of the Grapevine Instagram account was requested by an Advisory Action from the 72nd Conference to be presented at this year's Conference. This report, presented in the Grapevine background (Grapevine V - Item B.) can provide insight into the potential impact that an AAWS Instagram account might have based on the experience of both the Grapevine and La Viña Instagram accounts. Both of these Instagram accounts have seen consistent positive growth throughout 2022. The Grapevine Instagram account at Nov. 30, 2022 had 8,649 followers with a 14% growth throughout the year. Similarly, the La Viña Instagram account had 1,064 followers with an 18% growth during the year. These statistics indicate a significant number of initial followers and a healthy growth rate. There could potentially be a much larger audience for an AAWS Instagram account as the AAWS operation is much larger than that of the Grapevine and La Viña but the key would be getting the word out.

PROS

The success of the Grapevine and La Viña Instagram accounts could be replicated by the creation of an AAWS Instagram account which would also further the 5th Tradition responsibility of carrying the message and provide another social media outlet for the Fellowship. An AAWS Instagram account would further the communication of information from GSO to the Fellowship, which would be a more direct mechanism for providing this information than utilizing the delegate to provide this information to their areas. Keep in mind that many young people in the Fellowship obtain their information through social media and this would be one more avenue to reach this group of Alcoholics. However, it is not just young people who receive their information through social media, especially on their phone. The statistics from the Grapevine and La Viña Instagram reports show that the individuals who follow these accounts are fairly evenly distributed across all age ranges.

CONS

Is an Instagram account for AAWS really necessary? Instagram is largely a visual media and, while the AA Grapevine has a great deal of available visual content, AAWS does not. As a result, AAWS will be required to create more visual content to make this an effective effort to provide another communication media for the Fellowship. This will also require a marketing effort to let the Fellowship know about this new communication channel. These efforts and the monetary investment might be better spent in exploring other channels of communication such as informing the Fellowship about the AAWS YouTube channel. While we strive to make additional social media available to the Fellowship, we should not make every social media available just because they are social media.

Another concern is about anonymity. We can strive to make sure that posts are anonymity-protected but there is no guarantee. In a similar fashion, even though Instagram is largely a secure platform, there have been significant hacks of social media platforms including Instagram to be concerned about.

What does your home group think?

TOPIC VI – TREATMENT AND ACCESSIBILITIES

(Final Conference Agenda Item X-E)

Should we do an Accessibilities Inventory of Alcoholics Anonymous throughout its services and structure?

BACKGROUND

This proposal originated out of the All-Access Accessibility Meeting as well as the Area 29 Accessibility Committee. The agenda item was ultimately unanimously approved by the Area 29 Assembly in August of last year. What they propose is an inventory of our service structure, General Service Office,

our website, and our literature to gauge their ability to meet the needs of those with accessibility issues. What the committee found before bringing this to their area meetings is that the resources that do exist to meet this community are few and rudimentary. This inventory also seeks to address the services we offer to the Hispanic and other foreign-language communities that exist within Alcoholics Anonymous.

Some more comments from the Area 29 Accessibility Committee include the fact that few of our members and groups are aware of the Service Material SMF-208, which is an Accessibilities Checklist for groups and meetings. They also note that where these services do exist, such as our GSO website, much could be done to make them more visible. Also referenced is an article by Debra Guthman, a specialist working with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing who suffer from addiction, which states that with 43 million members, Americans with Disabilities are the largest minority in the U.S. and are “at increased risk for alcohol and other drug abuse.” The committee worked alongside Debra to help them formulate the proposal and subsequent inventory.

The hope for this inventory, made up of Alcoholics from the affected communities as well as outside accessibility consultants, is to bring back their findings as well as possible ways to address issues to the Fellowship at large.

PROS

- The long form of our Third Tradition states, “Our membership ought to include all who suffer from Alcoholism. Hence, we may refuse none who wish to recover.” Our status as alcoholics should be a key that opens the door of Alcoholics Anonymous as wide as possible, despite all other aspects of our lives, character, and health. For most of us, this is an arbitrary suspension of our ego and pride. But for those Alcoholics with accessibility issues this often present a very real and often insurmountable challenge.
- We of Alcoholics Anonymous are intimately familiar with the process of inventory. We know that we initially might not recognize its necessity but in retrospect do not understand how we could have continued to live without it. To think this would only apply to our moral shortcomings and personal relationships and not our fellowship and its relationship with its members is shortsighted.
- “Carrying the Message” to me implies that heavy lifting will be involved. My sponsor said, in regards to the 12th Step, “it is crazy to expect the suffering alcoholic to approach the recovered. We must meet them wherever they are.”

CONS

- We must, at all costs, avoid straying into activism, no matter how just the cause.
- What financial burden will this place on the Fellowship and on those areas that are already struggling to fill service positions and serve their Fellowship as it stands?
- Will this create more division in the Fellowship, as the proposal for a Simple-Language Basic Text translation has already created an intense amount of push back?

What does your home group think?

AREA 44 MINI-CONFERENCE INFORMATION



Area 44 Mini-Conference April 8th 2023

"A.A.s Three Legacies - Our Common Solution"

Registration & Coffee 8:30am - 9:15am
Assembly Orientation 8:45am - 9:15am
Mini Conference 9:15am - 3:30pm
Lunch will be provided

GSR's, come and share your group's conscience on topics to be discussed at the General Service Conference this year, Ensure your Delegate attends the Conference fully informed of your groups views.

GSR's: It is your responsibility to attend but every member has a voice and are welcome!



Midland Park Jr./Sr. High School
250 Prospect Street Midland Park, NJ 07432

DIRECTIONS

Follow Garden State Pkwy and NJ-208 N to County Rd 659/Goffle Rd in Hawthorne. Take the exit toward Midland Park/Ridgewood from NJ-208 N Continue on County Rd 659. Drive to Prospect Street in Midland Park, Midland Park High School, Midland Park, NJ 07432



Mini-Konferencja Area 44 8 Kwietnia 2023

„Trzy Dziedzictwa A.A. - Nasze Wspólne Rozwiązanie"

Rejestracja i Kawa 8:30 – 9:15
Zebnanie Orientacyjne 8:45 – 9:15
Mini-Konferencja 9:15 – 15:30
Organizator zapewnia lunch

Zapraszamy GSR do podzielenia się poglądami swoich grup w tematach, które będą omawiane na tegorocznej konferencji General Service Conference. Prosimy o upewnienie się, że delegat Państwa Grupy zostanie w pełni poinformowany w sprawach poglądów Grupy.

*GSR: Uczestnictwo to Wasza odpowiedzialność,
ale każdy członek ma swój głos i jest mile widziany!*



Liceum Midland Park Jr./Sr. High School
250 Prospect Street, Midland Park, NJ 07432

JAK DOJECHAĆ:

Jedź drogą Garden State Pkwy aż do County Rd 659/Goffle Rd w Hawthorne. Zjedź zjazdem na Midland Park / Ridgewood z NJ-208 N, na drogę County Rd 659.

Podążaj Prospect Street, w Midland Park, aż do Midland Park High School.



Miniconferencia del Área 44 8 de abril de 2023

"Los tres legados de A.A. - Nuestra solución común"

Inscripción y café 8:30am - 9:15am
Asamblea de orientación 8:45am - 9:15am
Mini conferencia 9:15am - 3:30pm
Se ofrecerá almuerzo

RSG's, vengan y compartan la conciencia de su grupo sobre los temas que se discutirán en la Conferencia de Servicios Generales de este año, Asegúrense de que su Delegado asista a la Conferencia plenamente informado de las opiniones de sus grupos.

RSG's: ¡Es su responsabilidad asistir pero cada miembro tiene una voz y son bienvenidos!



Midland Park Jr./Sr. High School
250 Prospect Street, Midland Park, NJ 07432

INDICACIONES

Siga por Garden State Pkwy hasta County Rd 659/Goffle Rd en Hawthorne. Tome la salida hacia Midland Park/Ridgewood desde NJ-208 N Continúe por County Rd 659.

Conduzca hasta Prospect Street, en Midland Park, Midland Park High School

INTERGROUP NEWS 'N NOTES FEB 2023



NORTHERN NEW JERSEY INTERGROUP NEWS 'NOTES FEBRUARY 2023



BOOKERS

The next Bookers is scheduled for Sunday,

March 12, 2023

We will host Bookers in-person (*Sam Hard Start*) at Mother Seton Regional High and online (7am). If you would like to be added to the Bookers email list – or if you have additional questions, please email us at Bookers@NNJAA.org.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE

No update submitted – but they are busy!! If you would like to find out more about this service, visit the [CFC service page](mailto:cfc@nnjaa.org) or email cfc@nnjaa.org!

COOPERATION with the PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

CPC has a new chairperson – Eric D. stepped into the role just three weeks ago and has hit the ground running. CPC will be presenting with Area 45 at the Nurses Convention in AC this March. They are printing QR codes on their *Sponsor A Doctor*, *Members of the Clergy*, and other packets we give to the professionals of each community, that links directly to their webpage as well as CPC and AA resources. CPC meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. For more information, visit the [CPC service page](#) on NNJAA.org.

HISTORY & ARCHIVES can next be seen at the GSR Midwinter Luncheon on February 19th – their work reminds us that we live in the historical backyard of A.A. and are lucky to have so much history available to us! They continue to record members' recovery stories w/40+ years of sobriety, provide committee information at groups and districts, as well as H&A speakers on a variety of historical recovery topics throughout northern New Jersey. The Committee meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month, contact the H&A Chair for more information.

INTERGROUP OFFICE

As of February 1, 2023 we show **1593 opened meetings** an increase of 16 meetings since the end of December. In addition, we list **524 online meetings** (decreased by 9 meetings on NNJAA.org.)

2020 Meeting Books are available for the reduced rate of \$4 per dozen. Order for delivery via UPS or stop by the office with cash or check.

Intergroup Elections

The election of officers of the Northern New Jersey Intergroup, Inc. will take place May 4, 2023 at the May 2023 meeting of Intergroup Delegates, in accordance with Article 5 of the Bylaws. The letter that will soon be distributed to all Groups can be found [HERE](#). Follow the path outlined in the letter to access the [2023 Nomination Form](#).

Meetings: Active and Inactive (TBD)

All meetings with a Red Star on our website are considered Active. Most of the meetings marked as Temp Canceled on our website are also considered Active. For the last 18 months we have tried very hard to identify those meetings marked as **Status Unknown**. This month, the Status Unknown meetings have dropped from 122 to 90, primarily because we've experimented with two rules that will help us to keep our online listing more up-to-date.

As of the February 2, 2023 meeting, our Delegates were invited to consider the following parameters to be applied to Status Unknown (SU) and TempCanceled meetings on our website. If approved, those meetings will be classified as INACTIVE *if*:

1. We haven't had any communication from the Group/Meeting for *six or more years*;
- OR**
2. We have *no contact information* for the Group/Meeting **and** haven't had any communication from them for *four or more years*.

INACTIVE means these Groups/Meetings are essentially suspended, and will not be visible on NNJAA.org. However, NO DATA WILL BE DELETED and they can be immediately be reactivated once we receive a formal notice from the Group that they are alive and well.

If you have questions or concerns about this protocol, please reach out to Rhea Anne at Intergroup-Data@nnjaa.org

Production of 2023 Meeting Books

The Intergroup office will begin production of 2023 Meeting Books later this month. This means we will be pulling together all *confirmed* information for in-person meetings. We will add information in the book needed to access our online meetings as well as key areas of our website to help people stay connected – and stay sober! We hope to have new books before our Officer Elections at the **May Delegates Meeting!**

Information Updates

One of our primary functions at the Intergroup office is keeping accurate records for our Groups and Meetings. **There are the two avenues for updating your online information and your records with Intergroup:**

Use the [Meeting Update form](#) for immediate changes, e.g., reopening, updating online meeting information, etc., is to so we can update the website as quickly as possible.

The [Intergroup Data Sheet](#) is necessary as the back up to the Meeting Update form *when those (or any) changes are to be permanent*. That includes **move their permanent location, rotate their service positions and/or change their format**. This form has been updated to accommodate virtual meeting information as well!

12th Step Contacts

Are individuals who are willing to reach out to newcomers and the still sick and suffering who reach out for help. They are contacted by the Office during business hours and Nightwatch volunteers at night and on weekends. If you would like the opportunity to serve, please reach out to the Intergroup Office or the Nightwatch committee.

INTERGROUP VOLUNTEERS ROCK!!

We are so appreciative of the amazing volunteers who make time in their schedules to be with us each week. *We'd appreciate more help if you're available!*

- **Mon.** AM/PM – Lynn / Peter
 - **Tue.** AM/PM – Linda / Maureen
 - **Wed.** AM/PM – Mitch / **Open**
 - **Thu.** AM/PM – Ed / Marge
 - **Fri.** AM/PM – **Open**/Janet (Toni)
- Mon-Fri 3:00 – 6:00 pm - Open**

We have two primary standing timeslots open: Wednesday afternoons & Friday Mornings.

We would be very grateful for some late afternoon support any/all day(s) of the week, as that tends to be the busiest time of the day for phone calls.

If you've got:

- Some sober time
- 2-3 hours on any given day, *and*
- Are interested in helping answer phones in the Intergroup office **regularly or occasionally**.

Please call to find out more: 908-687-8566 Monday-Friday 10am-6pm.

If your Group Delegate is not receiving the email alerts regarding the Delegates Meeting, please, include the *Group Name, Town, Meeting Day and Time, Delegates Name, eMail and Phone Number* in an email to: IGDelegates@nnjaa.org



NEWSLETTER

The Winter edition is due out very soon! Spring submissions deadline was Feb 1st. If you hadn't already heard - Spring edition will be IN PRINT! If you are interested, please join them at their next meeting - scheduled for the 3rd Thursday of every month at 6:00 pm online via Zoom.

Mtg ID: 815 3922 8687

Password: thisday

NIGHTWATCH – No update submitted. If you have any questions about Nightwatch or if your group would like to take a one-week Nightwatch Commitment please contact us at: NIGHTWATCH@NNJAA.ORG.

PUBLIC INFORMATION – No update submitted. Committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

TREATMENT FACILITIES – No update submitted. They meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm. For more information you can reach them at treatment@nnjaa.org.

NEW GROUPS/MEETINGS

Click the link for more information about the [New Groups/Meetings process](#). If you have additional questions, please call the office and speak to Mac about listing meetings on NNJAA.org.

NEW MEETINGS!

Accepted into Intergroup, January 5, 2023

IN-PERSON

VERNON

A Vision for Us

Fro-6:30pm-O-BB

St. Francis Catholic Church

614 Route 517

BRIDGEWATER

Willing to Go to Any Lengths Group

Sat-10:00am-O-D

Holy Trinity Church

60 Maple St

If you are unsure of your *Meeting's Status*, how to use the *Meeting Finder*, have questions regarding the *Meeting Update* or *Data Sheet* forms, or are interested in serving as an *Office Volunteer*... Please call the office at **908.687.8566** Monday-Friday 10a-6p.

Thank you for allowing us to be of service!

Mac, Maria and Rhea Anne

Intergroup Office Staff



NNJAA District Meeting List

District Meetings and Mailing Addresses

District 1/2

2nd Tuesday, 7:30 PM
Sunrise House (Cafeteria)
37 Sunset Inn Rd
Lafayette, NJ 07848

Mail: District 1/2
PO Box 293
Hamburg NJ 07419

District 3

3rd Friday, 7pm
West Milford Library 2nd Floor
1470 Union Valley Road
West Milford, NJ 07480
Zoom 843 476 41779 PW Grateful

Mail: Northern Cluster
PO Box 842
Hewitt NJ 07421

District 4/6

3rd Thursday, 7:30 PM
Upper-Ridgewood Community
Church
Hillcrest & Fairmount
Ridgewood, NJ
Zoom 856 1960 1457 PW service

Mail: District 4/6
P.O. Box 363
Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423

District 5/7

4th Thursday, 7:30 PM
St. Mary's Church
Roger Troy Hall – School Building
Corner of High & Legion
Closter, NJ

Mail: District 5/7
P.O. Box 535
Westwood, NJ 07675

District 8

2nd Tuesday, 6:30 PM
Panther Valley Ecumenical Church
1490 Route 517
Allamuchy, NJ
Zoom 961 707 1174 PW Moongate

Mail: District 8 Area 44 AA
P.O. Box 680
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

District 9

3rd Tuesday, 7:30 PM
United Methodist Church
Route 183
Netcong, NJ
Zoom ID 847 2005 7518 PW 121212

Mail: District 9
P.O. Box 286
Stanhope, NJ 07874

District 10

2nd Tuesday, 7:00 PM
First Presbyterian Church
513 Birch St
Boonton, NJ 07005
Zoom ID 309 396 7491 PW 747067

Mail: District 10
P.O. Box 17
Pompton Plains, NJ 07444

District 11/33

4th Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Clifton Main Public Library
292 Piaget Avenue, Room A
Clifton, NJ
Zoom 829 3812 5348 PW 769422

Mail: District 11/33 Area 44
P.O. Box 2109
Clifton, NJ 07015

District 12

2nd Tuesday, 7:00 PM
St. Francis of Assisi Parish
(Basement Parish Life Center)
114 Mount Vernon Street
Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660

Mail: District 12 of NJ Area 44
P.O. Box 1238
Hackensack, NJ 07601
district12area44@gmail.com

District 13

2nd Tuesday, 7:30 PM
Wesley United Methodist Church
225 Washington Ave.
Belleville N.J.
Zoom 848 8614 3348 PW district

Mail: District 13/Area 44
P.O. Box 221
Kearny, NJ 07032

District 14

2nd Thursday, 7:00 PM
Barrow Mansion
Upstairs Meeting Room
83 Wayne Street
Jersey City, NJ

Mail: District 14
P.O. Box 13199
Jersey City, NJ 07302

District 15/21

3rd Monday 7:30 PM
Zoom ID 899 7518 9464 PW 278602

Mail: District 15
P.O. Box 206
Baptistown, NJ 08803

District 16

3rd Monday, 7:00 PM
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
160 Ridgedale Ave
Florham Park NJ 07932

Mail: District 16 / Area 44
PO Box 544
Florham Park, NJ 07932-9998

District 17

3rd Friday, 8:00 PM
Alanon Assoc.
7th Avenue and 7th Street
Newark, NJ

Mail: District 17
P. O. Box 7270
Newark, NJ 07107-7270

District 18

2nd Monday, 7:30 PM
Faith Lutheran Church
Library
524 South St.
New Providence NJ 07974
Zoom 83128812003 PW D18730pm

Mail: District 18
P.O. BOX 235
Liberty Corner, NJ 0793

District 19

Last Monday, 7:30 PM
Friendship Hall
New Market Road
Piscataway, NJ

Mail: District 19
PO Box 8366
Piscataway NJ 08855-8366

From our Northern New Jersey AA Fellowship



SPEAK OUT! This Day Newsletter provides this forum for individual AA's viewpoints and opinions. The opinions expressed here are individual opinions only and not necessarily the opinions of This Day, Area 44, North Jersey Intergroup, or AA as a whole. We welcome your comments, opinions, or viewpoints on anything found in this newsletter.
— The Editor

Topics

1. How important is anonymity to you?
2. What do you make of the phrase 'Principles before personalities'?
3. Do we ever rid ourselves of our character defects?

Angels

Not everyone who stands at the turning point of life and death has an angel rooting for them, but I did—two in fact. In the throes of my alcoholism, immersed in self, it was impossible to know (or care) that there were people praying for me, people who wanted to see me well. I'm certain my parents, who had been watching me spiral as I made geographic changes from New Jersey to Los Angeles, then Los Angeles to Boston, couldn't have known how to interpret my erratic behavior and impulses. They certainly didn't know the first thing about hitting bottom. It's only in hindsight that I myself can recognize how necessary it was to admit defeat before I could ask for help.

The hopelessness, degradation, and desperation that preceded the call to my parents in 1991 was an essential component of my eventual recovery. With all attempts to deny the gravity of my situation, fear consumed me when I picked up that heavy phone, dialed their home number, and heard my dad's voice at the end of the line. Despite the mastery I'd felt I'd achieved in manipulating people, I knew my call would be met with a mix of disappointment, resistance, and bitterness.

Unaccustomed to the lifestyle I'd been living, they had an inkling things were amiss. My vacillating moods, inconsistencies in communication, impulsive job changes, and questionable relationships were the first clue. Besides being my parents, they were human beings with feelings who couldn't escape the enormity of my self-sabotage. Would they hear the pain hidden beneath my sea of excuses?

The call was my beginning. For my dad, it was a relief. Underneath the anger he'd been harboring was a desire to help. His paternal instinct to protect me overrode the conflicting emotions he was likely experiencing at that time. Perhaps his profession as a secondary school principal guided his reaction. Having had years of training supporting students with troubling family issues or personal crises, if he didn't know how to handle his 30-year-old mess of a daughter himself, he certainly knew how to gather reinforcements.

Contrary to my home life as a youngster, he knew instinctively that ruling with an iron fist would not bode well for me or my recovery. He'd need to bank on the insight and experience of the professionals to whom he regularly referred. With peripheral knowledge of AA, he was prepared, albeit awkwardly, to stand by my side when I was ready to find a meeting.

I could count on my mother to express her love and concern with words. Understandably overcome by my call, she did her best to temper her emotions, promising to remain by my side if I'd just come home. But once my dad agreed to retrieve me from Boston, my mother took an obvious step back. I learned later she was triggered by what she described as "my demise." While she'd admittedly led an unexamined life, she had tried, without professional help, to overcome her own experience with family trauma. From an early age, she'd suffered great pain following a tragic loss. I turned to drugs, alcohol and other forms of self-harm. She dealt with the discomfort she wasn't ready to face by withdrawing. For as long as I can remember, that was her go to. Her greatest trial was her inability to save her daughter. My com-

ing home was her chance to be a part of the solution.

As a couple, drawing on each of their life histories and years of parenting, they received my call with a level of open-mindedness and a leap of faith that many parents, spouses and family members of friends in AA did not and could not muster. In hindsight, I realize how lucky I was to be received with kindness and buoyed by their shoulders. Without knowing the lingo, my parents subscribed to the notion that I was not a bad person trying to be good, I was a sick person trying to get well

Uncertain that anything could or would work for me in AA, I knew without question that my life had become unmanageable. Having always equated powerlessness with weakness, I was initially unprepared to make my admission. But after a few meetings, I learned that the surrender was imperative in order to make headway in sobriety. Where I'd always thought my unaided will was strong enough to see me through any challenge, I was consistently defeated. My obsession with alcohol led to unrelenting despair.

I found my answers in the literature. Step 1 in the 12&12 explains powerlessness in a language I can relate to. Lack of power over alcohol was my dilemma—it was not a weakness or a moral failing. With respect to the potential for success in recovery, I was drawn to the following line: “But a few did, and when these laid hold of AA principles with all the fervor with which the drowning seize life preservers, they almost invariably got well.” Like the few who did recover, I too was drowning. When I called my parents for help, I had nowhere else to go. I needed help and the help was in the rooms of AA. With that one simple admission, I would find a solution in AA.

With each meeting, each call to my sponsor, each pearl of wisdom heard in the rooms, I learned to rely on the tools of the program. Succeeding my parents, I've been guided through the years by countless sober angels. While I may not identify their relevance, I am continually warmed by their wisdom and inspiration. In the rooms, I hear God's voice when I least expect it and when I need it most. Never sure when I'll hear it, I don't take the chance of straying too far.

Having provided a soft landing for me, my parents gave me wings to grow. As their trust in me was restored, I was able to look more closely at the part I'd played in disrupting their lives. I began to see them through a wider lens; respecting them as people who were essential, yet independent of me. Their daily life happenings mattered.

Both my mom and dad have been gone for over 10 years. I am grateful that my 9th step amends were received with acceptance and compassion. With each day, month, and year of recovery, I offered them meaningful living amends that brought us closer. The pride reflected in their eyes as I worked to become the person I was meant to be was their greatest gift. With support and devotion, they remained committed to ensuring my safety. Their willingness to meet me halfway to mend all that was broken has enriched my life and my recovery.

I honor them by continuing to carry the message. By paying it forward, I have a chance to serve another as his or her sober angel.

Debbie B.
Wyckoff, NJ

Do We Ever Rid Ourselves of Our Character Defects?

Once we as individuals and alcoholics realize that we have defects of character, some of us begin to work on minimizing them or fully ridding ourselves of them, believing we are working towards creating the best version of our future selves.

Some of us question whether or not we can fully rid ourselves of such defects, like alcoholism and other diseases of character. I, James T., believe that we can. I believe that these characteristics are ingrained in us over time. With time and effort, they can be removed.

I believe that those with the desire and will to achieve the best version of themselves will have to take drastic and radical measures to accomplish this questionably maintainable goal. Radical change in circumstances, such as places and people, would be a start. Making simple changes helps remove triggers and memories that directly lead the alcoholic to the urge to drink or to continue defective behaviors.

Humbling oneself to a higher power is also key. The feeling of having a superior universal power that proceeds with disciplinary actions upon the individual, such as one's parents who delegates rights and wrongs, will ultimately alert one's inner self to know when they are behaving in an unrighteous manner.

Some alcoholic characteristics seem to be instilled at birth, and not drinking alcohol for a lifetime is the ultimate goal for the alcoholic. If one is willing to change, he can take the steps needed to reach the main goal over time and with dedication to maintenance. I truly believe with time, faith, hard work, and radical change we can fully rid ourselves of our defects of character.

Thank you for letting me share!

James T.
Area 44, Somerset County



Step 3 - Not the Big Director

Step 3 is crucial for me, now more than ever, and I really like the idea described in one of my meditation books of "having a job" in AA, putting one foot in front of the other as I go forth in my life, with people in the program and others as well. When I really turn my will, my life, my thoughts and actions over, it frees up my day. Just taking the next step is so much easier, but of course, I don't always get there. Although we take the 3rd Step only once, I have to continually remind myself to fret less and stay in the day. I thought I took the 3rd Step at the beginning of my sobriety, but I only surrendered the drink part to my Higher Power's care. I finally learned I needed to surrender everything.

I get off track frequently, but with Steps 10, 11, and 12, I can get back to what is important in life. When I am not in the NOW and present for my life, giving service and enjoying the tasks at hand, the "monkey mind" and committee start chatting with one another, and I am once again the Big Director. Life gets hard and I fret over my schedule, plans, and problems. Then, when I remind myself that I have another Employer and am not running the show, things get easier somehow. Funny how that works! When my Higher Power is in charge, I don't have to be. I can surrender my stubborn self-will and just be and do what I need to do. I need to row the boat, but He does the steering. That feeling is freeing, when I remember, but I need constant reinforcement. That is where prayer and meditation come in, along with writing, meetings, working with newcomers, and talking to my fellow AA travelers and sponsors. I am then reminded that yes, I took the 3rd Step and no, I am not the Big Director.

Marybeth H.
District 26



On The Road

I'm naturally curious and I love to explore. That often means travel—sometimes a short drive to some place new, and sometimes a long-distance trip to a far-away land. And almost every time it means a visit to an AA meeting.

For me, there are so many reasons for AA meetings on the road. On my first road trip as a widow traveling solo to a family holiday gathering, an early morning meeting in Ogunquit, Maine, was exactly what I needed to stay grounded and sober. I didn't exactly feel happy, joyous and free, but the people at that cozy meeting welcomed me and made me feel very much at home. One lovely woman even helped me clean my dog's bed: he had gotten carsick!

At my first meeting ever in a city, I arrived early and waited patiently and only one other person showed up, at one minute before the hour. I learned you really can have a meeting with just two people. And I was really glad I hadn't left before the meeting happened.

A few months before the pandemic shut everything down, three friends and I piled into a car and drove to a meeting 22 miles away. None of us had been to that meeting, but we enjoyed our meeting in the car on the way, the meeting itself, and the meeting in the car on the way home. The entire endeavor

probably didn't take three hours, but it was filled with fun and fellowship.

Last fall, I visited Rome for the first time. Before my trip, I found an AA website with a schedule of face-to-face meetings for English-speaking people throughout Europe, including seven in Rome at two churches. I found the churches on Google Maps and planned my very casual itinerary around them. I even Zoomed to some of them before leaving home. The actual meetings were a godsend for me, alone in a city where alcohol seemed to be everywhere. They did so much more than keep me grounded and safe and sober. They invited me to do service, to tell my story, to join them for “fellowship pizza” after the meeting. And they encouraged me to take photos of the AA slogans in Italian on their walls to include in this newsletter.



One thing that seems to happen at every meeting I've been to on the road is that I learn something new. Every meeting I've been to in Washington, D.C., has closed with both the Lord's Prayer and the Serenity Prayer. At one meeting, I don't recall where, everyone in the room recited the AA Preamble together.

In Rome, “How it Works” was read by everyone in the room, one at a time. The laminated page got passed from one person to the next, and the last person read to the end. One night, there were six people left to read the last sentence, and somehow it worked out that everyone got to read, even reciting one word at a time.

Sherry B.
Bridgewater Step Group

Principles Before Personalities

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all of the traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. (Tradition 12)

Whenever the Twelve Traditions are read, many of us may stumble over this final line. In the rooms of recovery, even as we are trying to support one another, we may not always agree with others in the room.

We've all met people that we just don't get along with. Whether they speak out of turn or are brash with their language, it can be difficult to ignore the frustration that these individuals spark within us. We may even be so distracted by the irritation that they cause that we don't get very much from the meeting. This is where “principles before personalities” becomes an important aspect of our program philosophy. However, it is critical to get past what others are saying and doing to further our own recovery and well-being.

How I practice placing “principles before personalities”:

1. Don't take anything personally.

Even when a situation seems geared to push my buttons, it is rarely the case. If someone directly insults

me, it has nothing to do with me. Instead, those actions say everything about the other person. As I've practiced detaching from others' opinions and choices, I've come to understand that I am not responsible for the other person's behavior. This disconnect can be freeing!

2. Practice a principle.

I also work on bringing greater awareness to each moment. First, I identify what is bothering me and how it makes me feel. Next, I assign a principle in direct response. For example, if a person needs to brag in every interaction, I might seek a chance to work on my own humility and understanding. In other words, I turn irritations into opportunities.

3. A person may fail, but the principles don't.

Overcoming alcoholism is an ongoing battle. When I was a newcomer working the steps, I found myself looking up to others in the group. If there was a gap between what members said and what they did, I might have passed judgement or have been concerned. This is when "principles before personalities" was especially vital as the principles always endure. As long as I stay dedicated to just doing the next right thing, my own recovery is secure.

Jim M.
Oakland Thursday Group



We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

Guilt, shame and remorse were my daily companions as I headed towards my bottom. The journey to my bottom lasted several years, during which time my drinking went from periodic to regular to daily. As my contact with close friends and family became less and less, I began spending most of my time with the unhealthy companions that lived between my ears.

Like many others, when I started to attend AA meetings, I heard the 9th Step Promises read as an accompaniment to "How It Works". I saw the Promises on the window shades hanging on the wall. With no input from others, I thought if I got the Promises down, I would not drink. But I was wrong.

It was God's grace as it manifested itself in the men in AA who explained to me that I had it backwards. They said, if I did the work I was supposed to do, I would not drink and the Promises would happen one day at a time. Although they were using English words, I did not understand what they were saying.

"First Things First", I was told. Start with the Step work, and remember that the Promises are revealed in "Into Action," after working Step 9. Do the 12 Steps, in the order in which they are numbered, and you will soon see the results that Step 9 mentions. I started in earnest.

I understood that the unmanageable life mentioned in Step One referred to my inability to manage my thoughts, actions, and emotions in response to events happening in my life. There was hope, because while I could not manage these emotions on my own, I could connect with a power that could help

me do that. These men said they did have that connection and it helped them change their reactions to life—they called it a psychic change. Most importantly, they told me I needed to do take the actions, suggested in the rest of the Steps, to establish that connection.

From that point, I got to Step Four and identified how my disease manifested itself in the way I perceived life: sometimes as a victim, sometimes as unappreciated, sometimes misunderstood. It always seemed like others were failing me somehow. From doing the work, I realized that there were reasonable alternative explanations for everything. My part was that I chose the explanations that made me feel as though others had it in for me. Because I felt others were failing me, I had to set them straight; with anger, manipulation, lies, or whatever tools worked. Once I used these tools, my three companions showed up. I continued to feel more hurt as I felt forced by other people to do these things I did not want to do. “If only they treated me right,” I thought, “I could behave and not feel that endless guilt, shame and remorse.”

The people in the rooms showed me the way out of this hole I found myself in. They suggested I identify the behavior that would stop making me feel guilty and ask for God’s help in actually behaving that way to accept people for who they were, to accept responsibility for my past actions where I had hurt others through my anger, lies and manipulations, and to make restitution. I did all that with the support and encouragement of others who had traveled this path before me. Slowly, I began to spend less time with my three imaginary friends because I began to feel more comfortable with my real friends and family. I suddenly realized that I had less regrets about my past actions. I was willing to use the lessons learned to avoid similar behavior in the future. I was able to help others by showing them how my work had helped me. To summarize, I did not regret the past and did not wish to shut the door on it.

With the help of God and others in AA, I was able to come out of a hole. When I was able to spend less time with the imaginary friends, I stopped fighting others as much, which led to not needing to drink to drown out my ill feelings. Of course, the folks who had gone before me were right. They’d had the same problem I’d had and were willing to show me the solution that they’d found had worked for them. I did what they did, and got what they got.

Atul D.

Inside Job

I was told early on that sobriety was an inside job, but it seemed counter-intuitive to the thousands of directives offered by well-meaning people who genuinely tried to help. There was literature on display with pages of guidelines I could only assume were meant to be read and followed, two scrolls hanging on rollers revealing emboldened 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, and the gentle, yet seemingly irrefutable, suggestions for staying sober laid out by my new sponsor. Having become somewhat of a chameleon towards the end of my drinking, acting or reacting the way I thought you wanted me to, I had no internal compass. Any



This photo was taken at a meeting entrance in Rome.

former sense of myself, my convictions, or my values were lost in the moral degradation that resulted from seeking answers in a bottle. The backbone meant for buttressing, the integrity with which I'd been raised, had disintegrated with my alcoholism. Among the old-timers, I observed an inexplicable calm. Without knowing me a lick or bothering to ask me how I'd appraise the woman I'd become, they promised to love me until I loved myself.

How did this group of strangers know where my head was at? As far as I could tell, none of them were soothsayers with a crystal ball. Their own experience belied their 6th sense. Inherently, they understood the hole in my soul that had deepened throughout the years. At one time, they had felt it too. While I was told to keep the focus on myself, I could not. Whatever focus I had was bleak at best. Even as clarity returned, I was faced with reminders of the deplorable places my alcoholism had taken me. What felt like an eternal sense of victimhood, fueled by the pervasive mindset that I was not enough, had to be squashed. But how?

Sharing my past with my sponsor, it was easy to touch on three key points about my upbringing that precipitated my drinking. The first was my self-appointment as the family's emotional barometer, regularly mood checking and ensuring that everyone was happy. The second was my imprudent decision to listen to the person in my home who had the loudest, most critical voice, a voice that was not supportive, validating or kind. And the third was a natural unraveling resulting from a failure to create harmony in the home and an unhealthy attachment to a voice that judged me harshly. In an effort to find my place, I tried, unsuccessfully, to fix, manage and control my environment. When that didn't work, I found solace in the drink.

I didn't always feel worthless and unlovable. When I came into the world, my slate was clean. But from as young as I can remember, the opinions of others took on a relevance that was unmatched. I could be in a room of 100 people, 99 of whom were friendly, welcoming and appreciative of me, but if one in that 100 looked at me the wrong way or appeared unaccepting of me, I was riddled with fear and a deepening sense of self-doubt. If an opinion about me was verbalized that countered my own, albeit limited, opinion of myself, I'd believe them. I learned later on that just because someone says something about you, doesn't make it true. Sadly, I found that difficult to internalize. If you said I wouldn't amount to anything, I figured you knew better than I did. It's no wonder I worked so hard for love. External validation and affirmation were the name of the game. I needed you to tell me I was ok. I had no self-confidence whatsoever.

The liquid courage that alcohol provided was almost instantaneous. From my first beer at 13, I was prettier, smarter, and funnier. I could socialize, dance, laugh, and converse with an ease and comfort I'd not experienced ever. When self-effacing thoughts entered my mind, I numbed them away with more booze. It became a vicious cycle that lasted for twenty years.

Entering sobriety, I was told it was none of my business what other people thought of me. This concept was so foreign because I'd spent a lifetime seeking the approval of others. It took me years to come to terms with the fact that the only opinion of me that truly mattered was my own. Just as I was responsible for my own recovery, I was responsible to do the work to rebuild (or in my case, build) a foundation for self-acceptance. Just as we have a daily reprieve from alcohol based on the maintenance of our spiritual condition, I find I have a daily reprieve from self-loathing based on my ability to listen to my inner voice vs the voices of others. Buffered by my spiritual cloak, "to thine own self be true" has taken on a deeper meaning. I desire to have a seat at the table where I'm no longer invisible.

Looking back, I can identify my inability to self-assess or develop a meaningful opinion. It always mattered more to me what you thought than what I thought, even if it wasn't in line with my values. I believed I had to "do something" in order to validate my existence. Through working the 12 Steps,

I learned it wasn't about how many balls I kept in the air or how many tasks I accomplished or who I made happy. I didn't have to prove anything or go the extra mile to be loved, nurtured, acknowledged or respected.

As so aptly put by the diarist Anais Nin:

She lacks confidence, she craves admiration insatiably. She lives on the reflections of herself in the eyes of others. She does not dare to be herself.

I figure God had a lot to do in February, 1960. He took the time to make me when he could've been spending his time on the sun, the moon, the mountains, the oceans, the grass, the stars and the butterflies. He made me because I was important too. I deserve my place on this earth just like everyone else. When that concept eventually became my truth, I was on my way.

Choosing to follow the suggestions, steps and simple prescription for living outlined in our program led to my becoming the person I was meant to be.

I am grateful to claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. I continue to misstep and fall prey to my character defects. Peeling the proverbial layers of the onion and getting to a point where I can look in the mirror and like the person looking back at me has been a painstaking process. The shift in perspective I've experienced is an ongoing reminder that I no longer need the affirmation of others to accept myself. The inside job is the recognition that I am worthy just because I am.

Debbie B.
Wyckoff, NJ



Creative Corner

More
by Donna V.

I have tasted a sliver of sanity and I want more...
I have seen a snippet of compassion and I want more...
I have grasped a blade of grass of humanity and I want more...
Do you know, how can I get more?

Many thanks to ALL of our writers for *This Day's* Spring 2023 edition! We could not do this without you!!! Your words are beautiful and truly inspiring.
 Megan D., *This Day* Editor



NNJAA CALENDAR

To access NNJAA's monthly calendars, please do the following:

1. Log on to www.nnjaa.org
2. Click the "NEWS & EVENTS" header
3. In the drop down menu, click "Calendar"

**Interested in joining a Standing or Special Committee? NNJAA could use your help!
 Check out our NNJAA Committee Virtual Meeting List on page 11!**



Member area
 userid: alcoholic
 password: onedayatime

www.nnjaa.org

Try it on your
Smartphone



Topics for the Summer 2023 Edition:

For this edition, please free-write: articles can be on any topic of your choosing related to alcoholism and Alcoholics Anonymous.

Next Edition Deadline:
 May 15, 2023

Send your articles of 800 words or fewer in a Word doc to: newsletter@nnjaa.org

Statement Of Purpose:
 This Day is published quarterly as a joint newsletter for Northern New Jersey General Service Area 44 and the Northern New Jersey Intergroup. This Day functions to promote communication between the groups in Northern New Jersey and to provide members with service-related information. This Day is also a forum for the diverse opinions of the Area 44 Fellowship through shared experience, strength, and hope in all three of AA's legacies: Unity, Service, and Recovery.

Editorial Policy:
 Articles submitted from the Fellowship are encouraged, and should not exceed 800 words. The newsletter committee may edit submissions for grammar, readability, and content. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does the publication of any article imply an endorsement by either AA General Services or Intergroup. Comments, questions, and articles may be mailed to the attention of the Newsletter Committee at NNJGS Area 44, Suite 2J, 2325 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield 07080, or emailed to: newsletter@nnjaa.org.