

# THIS DAY

www.nnjaa.org

News & Notes from NNJ General Service Area 44 and Northern New Jersey Intergroup

## A message from your Area Chair



**G**reetings from your Area Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and Area 44, and as always it's been a busy time in Area 44. We recently held our mini-conference and it was gratifying to see our spiritual process in action. I just love how Area 44 provides the "conference" experience for our members (it was my first mini-conference years ago that hooked me into service).

In response to our budget discussion at the January assembly we've been working to identify areas where we can cut expenses, without sacrificing our 12th step effort, and on developing a balanced budgeting process. A great deal of work has already been done and our hope is to have a revised budgeting method shortly. Two items for reduction have already been targeted – the expense budget

for Work Weekend (our annual Area inventory review) and an adjustment to the mileage reimbursement rate for qualified travel expenses. Both were approved at the May Area Committee Meeting and we are confident that these expense reductions will not adversely impact our 12th step work. I'd like to thank our treasurer and finance committee for their efforts.

While this work has been taking place, we have kept our commitment to be prudent stewards of the Area's finances while continuing to provide the services that our membership says it needs and wants. While we all understand the importance of prudence, we also recognize that twelfth step work is not free, and there is an appropriate place where money and spiritual mix – in our 7th tradition basket.

Every Area faces issues, and it is encouraging to see the passion, good sense, and vigilance that Area 44 is display-

*continued on page 4*

## A message from your Area Delegate



**W**ith the 62nd General Service Conference now behind us, it's time to report on what happened. Well, not yet! A full, detailed, multi-media Post-Conference report will be presented to the Area at the June 9th Area Assembly in Whiting, NJ (the slideshow and handouts are already finished!). At that time I'll present the Conference Advisory Actions, the Committee Considerations and the status of all other items on the Final Conference Agenda that I presented to you in March. We (Linda, Jay, Chuck and I) will also be presenting the full report to District 13 on June 12th beginning at 7:30 P.M. (Wesley United Methodist Church, 225 Washington Avenue, Belleville, NJ). Of course we are also available for any other districts who would like a full presentation

– but we urge all GSRs to attend the June Assembly – it's THEIR event!

At this year's Conference we also entertained bids and selected host areas for three upcoming Northeast Regional Events. We were so busy that we had to address them at both the Regional Delegate's Orientation Luncheon on Sunday and the Regional Luncheon on Wednesday. As a result I'm happy to report that the following areas have won the honor of hosting...

**Northeast Regional Delegates Reunion (NERD) 2014: Area 28 – Maine**

**Northeast Regional Forum (NERF) 2015: Area 48 – H/M/B New York**

**Northeast Regional A.A. Service Assembly (NERAASA) 2015: Area 44 – Northern New Jersey**

A special thanks must go to Bob C., this year's Convention Chair, and the Convention Committee for their help negotiating with the hotel!

The news out of GSO reports that

*continued on page 5*

## A message from your Intergroup Chair



**L**ast week the alarm on my cell phone reminded me that it was time to write this article. I thought to myself, I just wrote one last month, so I hit delete. Then two days later I received an e-mail, also reminding me of the upcoming deadline. I cannot believe how quickly three months have passed. When I was initially considering taking a position in my home group, I thought, three months! How can I volunteer for anything for three months? That's impossible! I have no idea where I'll be in three months. Interestingly, writing an article every three months for This Day's Newsletter is just one part of a two-year commitment! As I begin the second year as the Intergroup Chairperson, I'm already wondering what's in store for me next. I've learned that the years fly by, months pass in the blink of an eye, and service in an important part of my sobriety.

I have worked hard to stay away

from a drink one day at a time. I am continuously working a program and always looking for a chance to improve myself. But the truth is, I'm spoiled and I've had it easy. I can attend a meeting almost anytime and anywhere. This is not true for everyone. AA certainly tries to accommodate everyone but that is a difficult feat—particularly for those who don't speak English, those who are wheelchair bound, those who are hearing impaired, and members with other unique situations. I've heard it suggested that everyone should attend at least one meeting in another language. Angel from the Spanish Intergroup invited me to attend one of their Intergroup meetings. I was warmly welcomed by everyone. I think one universal AA word is "coffee." I quit drinking coffee two years ago and a bottle of water miraculously appeared in front of me. During the meeting I paid attention to the process and the tone of the meeting. Angel translated and it was a unique experience, but my sobriety did not hang in the balance. I could not imagine being new and not understanding the language. However, we do whatever it

takes to remain sober. A well-traveled friend of mine has attended numerous meetings overseas. She stated that all the AA meetings she attended have the same caring feel and camaraderie-despite the language barrier.

I have become increasingly aware of the difficulties for those who are wheelchair bound. I'm not handicapped (do not ask my friends!). I've heard concerns about the handicap accessible meetings. Some locations are wheelchair accessible but the meeting room is not or if the meeting room is accessible, the rest room may not be. These are things I wasn't aware of, but today we need to get the right information out there.

Amazingly, out of roughly 1800 meetings in Area 44, only two have American Sign Language for our deaf members. One of these meetings is the Thursday night 8pm in Milltown which I've attended off and on since I got sober. I've never paid any extra attention to these challenges but, as the Intergroup Chairperson, I'm concerned for those who need to quit drinking and cannot hear. I don't know anyone who knows ASL. I could not imagine

how difficult it must be, to be unable to communicate with other AAs.

This article is a request to those who have unique talents and abilities to come forward to help us improve our services for those with special circumstances. Service commitments fly by and they are enormously rewarding. AA has always maintained that "you must give it away to keep it." Please join us in our endeavor to help all our members in special ways. We value our volunteers and would love you to join our team.

*In Love and Service, Your Intergroup Chair, Scott K.*

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**NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE AUG. 17th  
NEWSLETTER@NNJAA.ORG**

**A Message from your Area Treasurer**



**“Time . . . . , It Goes So Fast”**

That is the lyric running through my head lately. I bet most of you know the song. Serving Area 44 has been a tremendous milestone in my sobriety. For this honor and opportunity, I humbly thank each and every one of you. I have grown in so many ways (sometimes joyfully, sometimes not). I loved speaking to so many GSR's at the Pre-Conference Reports about our 7th Tradition! And I'd like to thank the groups and districts that have invited me to speak at your meetings. We have a big job of informing and educating the fellowship of how the A.A. service structure and traditions impact them and their groups, as well as how to stay healthy in our primary purpose – carrying the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic!

I made a deposit last week and am beginning to see a trend. There are contributions coming in from groups, individuals and districts that did not last year, which is great. Contributions are up by \$2,000 so far, compared to this point in 2011. (We had seen a \$7,500 overall drop from 2010 to 2011.) Thank you, and please keep the contributions coming! I hope this is a result of the message getting out that we all need to have that 7th Tradition discussion at our home groups and meetings we attend. I am asking that all of the groups in Area 44 hold an informed group conscience meeting on A.A. basket money. How much are we putting in it and where are we

sending it? Please read the pamphlet “The A.A. Group” and have available a copy of the chart showing what \$1 was worth in 1970 versus 2011. Get the current financial information from GSO, Intergroup, your district and Area 44. Then you are ready to have a healthy group discussion about what it means to be a responsible A.A. member.

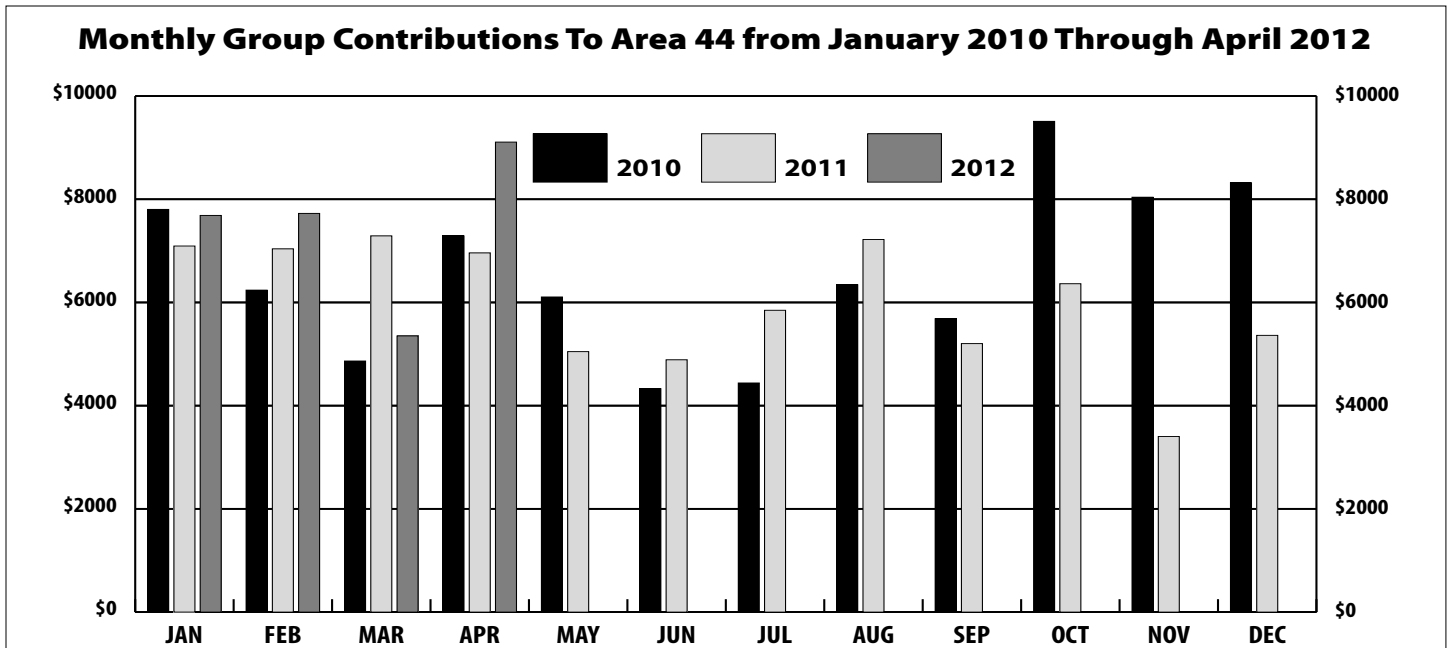
The process of balancing the budget for 2013 has been exactly that – a process. The members of your Area Finance Committee have spent countless hours working on it. It has been difficult to do when trying to balance our spiritual program and the inflexibility of actual cash received. Option one (the “easiest” method), using a straight percentage cut of all non-fixed expenses (rent, insurance, etc.), sits wrong when seeing the committees (doing twelfth step work) have their budget cut. Your committee chairs already commit vast amounts of their time and energy, and even donate expenses they paid out of pocket. Option two: not cutting committees doing direct twelfth step work. Once we take the fixed expenses and those committees off the board, we are left with a small handful of places to reduce. We are proposing Area 44 do an inventory on expenses such as the Work Weekend, NERAASA committee support, “This Day” newsletter quarterly printed editions, and the Alt. Delegate attending conferences along with the Delegate. Each one of these needs to be discussed and reassessed in a logical manner. There was a recommendation at the last Area Committee Meeting to reduce the mileage reimbursement rate down to \$.25/mile and cap the amount we spend on the Work Weekend to \$1,500 in 2012. All the other areas should be reviewed

RUS SERVICE CORPORATION T/A NNJGS AREA 44 YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON REPORT: 2010 AND 2011 FOR PERIOD ENDED March 31, 2012			
	2011 - Mar	2012 - Mar	
<b>Money Market Account <sup>(A)</sup></b>			
Balance as of January 1st	\$42,993	\$41,261	
Interest Received	11	11	
Transfer (To)/From the Checking Account	574	0	
Balance as of March 31st	<u>43,578</u>	<u>41,272</u>	<sup>(C)</sup>
<b>Checking Account <sup>(A)</sup></b>			
Balance as of January 1st	\$18,796	\$18,268	
Group and Individual Contributions	21,521	21,349	
Other Receipts (Intergroup, Literature & Grapevine Sales, etc.)	30,581	36,737	
Budgeted Expenses (Standing & Special Committees, Officers, Office, etc.)	(20,161)	(26,725)	<sup>(B)</sup>
Non-Budgeted Expenses (Literature, Grapevine, Luncheon, etc.)	(29,056)	(34,015)	
Transfer (To) / From the Money Market Account, Net	(574)	0	
Balance March 31st	<u>\$21,107</u>	<u>\$15,614</u>	<sup>(C)(D)</sup>
<b>Total Cash In Bank</b>	<b>\$64,685</b>	<b>\$56,886</b>	
<b>Analysis of Checking Account</b>			
Prior 12 Months Avg Monthly Total Expenses Times Two. Finance Guidelines state the checking account balance should not exceed this amount.	<u>\$30,766</u>	<u>\$33,423</u>	
Account Balance Over / (Under) Guideline	<u>(\$9,659)</u>	<u>(\$17,809)</u>	
<b>Prudent Reserve (50% of the prior 12 months Operating Expenses)</b>	<b>\$43,995</b>	<b>\$49,589</b>	
<b>FOOTNOTES</b>			
(A) Details of all income and expense items, as well as a comparison of Operating Expenses to the Annual Expense Budget are available from the Treasurer.			
(B) 2012 Expense Budget is \$114,043.			
(C) March 31, 2012 Checking and Money Market Balances have been reconciled to the Bank Statements by the Finance Committee.			
(D) March 31, 2012 amount includes Designated Funds of \$765 of Jailbox Contributions.			
<b>Summary of Official Approvals / Reviews</b>			
<b>Individual / Group</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Completed Through</b>	
Treasurer	Approved	Mar., 2012	
Alternate Treasurer	Approved	Mar., 2012	
Finance Committee	Approved	Mar., 2012	
Officers	Reviewed	Mar., 2012	
Area Committee Members	Approved	Jan., 2012	
Area Assembly	Approved	Nov., 2011	

thoroughly and not lumped together in one big package. We feel strongly that this be done over the next year or so. The final recommendation for the 2013 budget will have to incorporate components from both options. I will be out visiting three groups

over the next few weeks and hope to be invited to more! Thank you again for your support to Area 44, so that we can continue to do our twelfth step work in Northern NJ!

*In A.A. Love and Service,  
Chuck F., Area Treasurer*



**Area History and Archives Committee**



Imagine walking into a room for your first meeting and no one greeted you at the door and explained what was going to happen for the next hour

to hour and a half. Would you have come back? Probably not.

This is just one of the many reasons to join a home group so that when a newcomer walks through that door they are greeted, shown where to get a cup of coffee (usually its free – I looked to where to pay that first time) maybe a cookie (sugar helps with the cravings) and invited to sit and listen.

As a home group member I learned the importance of the greeter to name just one of the many positions in the home group. One position, that of the GSR for your home group, is the first link in our service structure. From my home group's GSR I found out how it is that AA was here for me and will continue to "be there for the still suffering alcoholic who reaches out

to us for help." (from the pamphlet *The AA Group...Where it all begins*)

So I ask all of you to send in your home group's history, (available as a download on our web site – see below), to the Archives so that we can build our Area's family tree.

*Yours in Love & Service, Brenda D., History & Archives Chair*

Montclair, N.J.  
April 10, 1942

TO ALL A.A. MEMBERS IN NEW JERSEY:

As you may know, there is in the process of formation another A.A. group which met for the first time in Montclair on Sunday March 28. This letter is written to you for the purpose of making known our aims and to cordially invite your co-operation and understanding.

This will probably be known as a Montclair group but has not as yet located a central meeting place. For the present, we are meeting at the homes of members, whose addresses are in Montclair, Verona, Glen Ridge, Caldwell and surrounding Essex County, as well as in Morris County. A central meeting place convenient to these territories is to be obtained as quickly as possible and our group expects to embrace this general region. However, AAs from any other territory will be as sincerely welcomed either as guests or as members of this group.

We are in no sense a rival group of any other group or groups; we offer our support and cooperation to all in A.A. Our group is being established on the basis of fundamental principles as set forth in the book ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS and to function in accordance with the Twelve Steps as outlined therein, without modification, addition or subtraction.

There are to be no executives or other officers with the exception of a secretary and a treasurer. Meetings will be kept informal and friendly in the true A.A. tradition, our belief being that individual work with individuals, as set forth in the book, having succeeded best in the past, will always succeed. We believe that all AAs were created free and equal and that if the principles of honesty, humility, sincerity, brotherly love, and the reliance on a Higher Power are adhered to we can not help but progress in the freedom from our common trouble and in that sense of happiness and tranquility which accrues to all who work together in harmony for a common good.

We have no quarrel with anyone excepting John Barleycorn. We grant to all the right to their own opinions as we believe we have the right to ours. Our opinions are as set forth in this letter. We are for A.A., pure and simple and undiluted, with no malice or rancor and with only good thoughts and wishes for all AAs everywhere.

THE MONTCLAIR AAs,  
per H. V. S., Secy. pro-tem.

Letter found in our archives from the Montclair Group announcing, to all interested AAs, its intentions to form a second AA group in New Jersey.

**HISTORY AND ARCHIVES COMMITTEE – AREA 44  
Group History Form**

Group Name:	
Date Founded:	
Previous Name (if any):	
Early Members/Officers:	
Location of First Meeting:	
Time & Length of Meeting:	
Type of Meeting (Big Book, Step):	
Current Meetings (How Often)	
Present Membership:	
Approximate Number Attending:	
Did the Group ever move?	
If so, When/Why/Where?	
Is the Group registered with GSO in NY?	<i>If necessary, describe on a separate sheet</i>
Did your group experience growing pains and how were they handled?	

**INFORMATION REQUESTED:**

Group histories can include such things as anniversaries, special meetings (such as group inventories) outside speakers, visits by other group members from out of town, the group's relationship in the community, etc. Does the Group participate and support the local intergroup office? Do you have an Intergroup Representative? Does your Group elect a GSR (General Service Representative)? And participate in the Area Assembly and voice your Group's concerns about AA?

Please include any addition information you may find helpful on a separate sheet.

Please return the form to:  
History and Archives Committee c/o Intergroup, 2400 Morris Avenue, Union NJ 07083

Thank you very much.

The "Group History Form," shown above, can be downloaded from the Area's web site [www.nnjaa.org](http://www.nnjaa.org). Click on "Service Committees" and then on "Archives."

**From your Area Convention Committee**



**"Anonymity: Our Spiritual responsibility in the Digital Age"**

We have been privileged, as a family in Alcoholics Anonymous, to have a place to go and be of service. A place where sober, happy, altruistic members work hard all year, every year, implementing ways to carry the AA message to alcoholics across Northern New Jersey by organizing our outstanding Annual AA Convention.

New this year is the convenience, for the very first time, to register for the convention online. This online

registration can be done very securely, and safely. Typing [www.nnjaa.org/convention](http://www.nnjaa.org/convention) into your computer's browser will bring you to a landing page for our convention. There you can register for the convention and choose a meal plan. For your convenience we even have a button, which when clicked, will bring you to the Doubletree Hotel's landing page so that you might register for a room. We also strive to keep within the guidelines of anonymity as our convention theme so powerfully states.

For those who haven't been to our Convention in a while we still provide around-the-clock meetings for our fellow members. Thirty-four consecutive hours of alkaathon meetings beginning at 10pm on Friday night, and ending with an 8am Sunday morning meeting.

Our conventions have been said

to have given spiritual experiences to many newcomers, who, as a result, kept coming back to meetings.

We will kick off the weekend with The Early Bird meeting at 5pm on Friday evening followed by another fine Grapevine play and a comedian who will provide entertainment.

On Saturday afternoon we will have an Al-Anon speaker's meeting followed by the ever-popular Old Timers Meeting.

The Saturday evening Banquet Meeting at 8pm will feature an excellent speaker with dancing to follow at 10pm.

On Sunday to wrap the weekend up, we have a Spiritual Meeting with a leader and two speakers from our area who will share a strong spiritual message! All this will be followed by the traditional Sobriety Countdown. Two signed Big Books are exchanged

between the member with the most sobriety time and the member with the least amount of sobriety time.

This is a fun-filled and spiritual weekend for all who attend and we look forward to sharing it with all of you, the groups in area 44 and beyond!!

Might I also mention that we still have some openings on the convention subcommittees. Please feel free to join us. We meet the third Wednesday of every month at the area office, 2325 Plainfield Ave. in South Plainfield at 8pm.

We look forward to meeting you at our meeting or in September. If you have any further questions you can contact us by e-mail at [convention@nnjaa.org](mailto:convention@nnjaa.org) or by calling our hot line number (908) 757-7749.

*Gratefully yours, Diane F., Convention PR Chair*



## Chipping Away at Sobriety

**H**ow do you feel when you are presented with an AA chip that signifies the amount of days/months/years you have stayed sober? Do you feel like you've accomplished something? Do you feel a sense of pride that you are working towards a better life? Do you feel like your hard work is paying off? Why should these feelings be any different for those who are incarcerated?

To be sober means, not just being without a drink or drug, but also changing our old ways, changing our lives for the better. People can find the desire to change and get sober just as earnestly dressed in county jail jumpsuits, confined behind bars as those dressed in their finest in an Alcoholics Anonymous clubhouse.

My name is Jennifer B. and I am an alcoholic and a drug addict. I have been sober since November 18, 2010. I have been obsessed with the criminal justice system ever since my parents took me on a tour of Alcatraz when I was just a little girl. I dreamed of being a high powered attorney fighting the toughest criminals in court. Until

recently, my disease had robbed me of the opportunity to pursue my dream. It was the program of Alcoholics Anonymous that finally brought me to the criminal justice system and I immediately fell in love! I am not the high powered attorney I dreamed of for so long, but an AA volunteer that brings meetings regularly to the women in Middlesex and Somerset County jails as well as Logan Hall in Newark. My fight today is not against the hardened criminal, but against this disease of alcoholism that places hundreds of thousands of people behind bars annually due to their addiction.

After my first AA meeting at the Middlesex County Adult Correctional Facility in North Brunswick, I felt a natural high. I have never felt that in my entire life. My sponsor told me that I experienced "emotional sobriety". Never have I given to another person without expecting anything in return, until that night. Never have I walked into a room full of people and just felt the freedom to be me, not Jennifer the Vice President, the captain, the MVP...just Jennifer the alcoholic. How liberating. Besides, your ego is contraband in jail!

After a few months of bringing meetings into Middlesex I started to realize that the women were expressing how proud they were with the amount of time they have gone without a drink or a drug. They were also grateful that their Higher Power placed them in jail to remove them from temptation and allow them the necessary time to try and change their thinking. I was so humbled by their willingness to change and their decision to make the most of their time by working on themselves.

The Big Book (pg. 100) states "...you will presently live in a real and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances."

I began to wonder why we do not offer AA chips as positive reinforcement. Chips can give them something tangible to show them that their time behind bars has not been wasted. After all, these women should be able to celebrate their milestones in sobriety too!

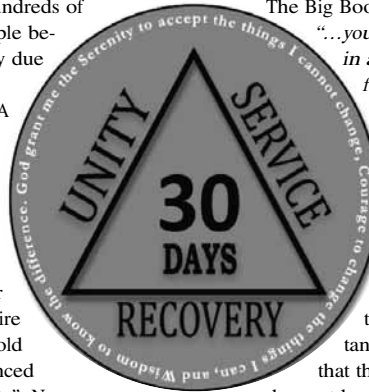
My husband, the computer design wiz, helped me design the chips, which were printed on paper and subsequently approved by Social Services at Middlesex County Adult Corrections. The first night we presented the

chips was the week before Christmas in 2011. Many women cried that night as they were touched that someone "thought of them" and "cared enough to do something so simple that meant so much." The women that night and many nights since have expressed nothing but gratitude for this program. Most of these women have lost everything, including their freedom and have minimal possessions while incarcerated. One woman at Logan Hall said "I never knew a square piece of paper could make me feel so good." Another woman at Middlesex County stated "I just got my 90 days and now I feel like I can keep going" as she held on tightly to her red colored paper coin.


In the past few months, Somerset and Warren County Jails, as well as Logan Hall have adopted this chip system and others are in the process. All the feedback has been nothing but positive. If you would like more information on how you can get involved in jail meetings and/or the chip system, please feel free to contact the Corrections Committee at [cfc@nnjaa.org](mailto:cfc@nnjaa.org).

My service work in the jails has been instrumental to my sobriety and although, by the Grace of God, I relate to the inmates because we all are recovering from the disease of alcoholism and that, is all we need.

*Jennifer B., Metuchen  
Tuesday 8pm Step Meeting*



**The Corrections Committee would like to thank the following groups and districts for their Pink Can and Jail Box contributions**

	Atlantic Highlands District 13	Hamburg Group	North Brunswick First Light Group	Stockholm Breakneck Group
By the Book	District 13 Day of Sharing	Haskell Sunday Night	North Brunswick Step Up to Sobriety	Three Bridges Miracles Meeting
Attitude of Gratitude	District 20	How and Why of It Group	Old Bridge Saturday Morning Forum	Union Hill Grapevine Meeting
Belleville Recovery Hall	District 39	Lavallette Step Group	Piscataway New Market Friendship Gp	Upper Ridgewood Group
Belleville Thursday Night	East Brunswick Give & Take	Lebanon Saturday AM Promises	Point Pleasant Lost and Found Group	Vernon Daily Reflections
Belvidere Gift of Sobriety	Elizabeth Friday Night	Matawan Smog Lifters Group	Recovery Life Line Group District 18	Vernon Monday Night
Carteret Men's Meeting	527 Club	Metuchen Monday Night	Rocky Hill Group District 35	Verona Hill Street Blues Group
Cedar Knolls Oakes East Group	Glen Gardner Wednesday Night	Metuchen Sat Morning Serenity Group	Roosevelt Care Center	Verona Monday 12:15 CD
Cedar Knolls Woman's Group	Forest Hills Group	Millburn Sunday Big Book	Saint Anne's	Verona Tuesday Night
Clinton Became Willing	Franklin Friday Nite Men's Group	Milltown Women - New Beginnings	Sea Bright The Last Call Group	Westfield Wed. Nite I Am Responsible
Cranford Tuesday Night	Hackettstown We Will	Montclair Live and Let Live Group	Somerset Challenge To Change	West Milford Group
District 1/2	Know a New Peace	Newark Drifters	South Orange Village Group	West Orange Women's Monday 10am
District 4/6	Haledon On a Different Footing	New Brunswick Friday Night	Sky's the Limit	



until 8:30pm, am I going to forget my 12th Step due to the selfishness of my new found sober hobbies and sober life? That life, through God's grace, brought by the efforts of others. Others whom I will forever be indebted to. No, through the service structure of Area 44's Treatment Committee I will remember those still locked in active alcoholism. To be given the authority to help them is freedom from spiritual, emotional, and physical bondage. Carrying the 12 steps into local detoxes, in-patient rehabs, out-patient rehabs, halfway houses has enriched my life more than dreamed.

*Yours in service, Bozo on the Bus*

**A**h, the sun has risen, spring is here and yahoo, summer is on the way. As I get busy with life's activities

now that the sun is out

[www.nnjaa.org](http://www.nnjaa.org)

Try it on your Smartphone



Your Northern New Jersey A.A. Website

## Area Chairs Message CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ing as we take steps to solve ours, always keeping our primary purpose in mind – to do vital 12th step work through our committees and conduct the business that makes this 12th step work possible.

I recently traveled out of state and looking for a meeting, visited my destination Area's website. This particular Area lists its districts and DCM contacts on the home page. Displaying 13 districts, more than half of their districts were dark with no DCM listed! In reflection, it is with great joy and gratitude that I appreciate being part of an Area that is strong, involved and vital, serving our groups, members and A.A. as a whole.

In closing, I want to thank all members for your support of our Area, with a special nod to those who participated in our mini-conference assembly. Our GSR Assemblies are one way we ensure that our inverted triangle will stay in place and that our groups will continue to run AA. Once more I am heartened to see that the process works. Please feel free to contact me anytime at [area-chair@nnjaa.org](mailto:area-chair@nnjaa.org), I'd love to hear from you.

*With AA Love and Service, Jay E., Area 44 Chairperson*



As a frequent user of our nearby branch of the Monmouth County Library I often wished that I had something to display in their glass enclosed display at the exit. Every time I left the library I had that longing to share something there, especially because they had a poster inviting displays. One afternoon as I was leaving it occurred to me that I could share a display of AA literature. I asked the librarian in charge of the display cabinet and she was quite receptive to my request/suggestion. I tentatively booked the month of September and then I asked the Area 44 Grapevine committee chair Jeff W., the Area 44 Archive Committee, and Bobby, the

## AA Literature Displayed in Wall Township Branch of the Monmouth County Library

Literature Committee Chair (whom I knew from my ongoing service as the District 28 Literature Chair) if they saw any problems with such a display.

All three of them saw no problem and eagerly offered whatever assistance I might need. I returned to the library and confirmed the September 2011, date for our display. As time passed I came to realize that the display case was more limited in volume than I had visualized in my mind. As the projected size and content of our display continued to take form I was able to identify some items I felt would help carry our message.

I already possessed some of the literature items I felt useful and I approached Bobby, the Area 44 Literature

Chair, with some ideas. He helped me develop the plan and then loaned me the literature items I did not already have.

While I had many past issues of the Grapevine, I still needed some of their wonderful literature. I contacted Jeff W., the Area 44 Grapevine chair, with the concept as it then existed and he offered some specific suggestions from his

experience. He was able to loan me those items and I was almost set.

I had started this process with a desire to present the fact that New Jersey was the birthplace of the Big Book. To accomplish that I hoped that I

of the explanatory comments:

My concern that my enthusiasm to display as much as possible might exceed the size of the display case began to weigh on my mind so I had to formulate a final layout to ensure

**Some Examples of The Literature of Alcoholics Anonymous — The book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, also known as the *Big Book*, is the primary text of the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) organization. The *Big Book* was written and published here in New Jersey as you can see in the picture to the left. The author was Bill W. who also wrote many other AA documents. AA folk lore has it that the first “translation” of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* was into Braille.**

**The *Big Book* has also been translated into 53 other foreign languages.**

**Since 1944 the Grapevine (below) has been the magazine of AA. The Grapevine also has published many pieces of AA literature, some of which are shown below. Much of the Grapevine literature is based upon the writings of Bill W. and offers a unique insight into the miraculous mind of the cofounder of AA.**



could borrow the framed display panel that is in the archives portraying that concept. While the panel would have been available, I was able to measure it and the cabinet and it would not fit! I decided that a large print of a photograph of that panel would get the message across as well. Paul W., a dear friend, accompanied me to the Intergroup Office (that he wanted to visit anyway) to photograph the Big Book history display. He graciously balanced the display while I took several photographs with my digital camera. One of the pictures we took came out well so I cropped it and took the digital file to my local Moto Photo. There Steve promised a very high quality large print from my digital image at a reasonable cost. He was correct as the print he delivered was very high quality.

I mounted the print on a backing and added some other comments and placed the collage in the frame. The following text was one

that all would fit. I unrolled some display paper and cut shelf sized pieces of paper for planning. Happily, when the items were judiciously placed they all fit nicely. I carried my entire collection of materials to the library on the appointed day and installed the final display. I believe it was very supportive of the AA program and I know it was well received. I was very happy with the final product (shown here).

I am happy to say thank you to Bobby, Jeff W. and Bill L., the Editor for This Day, for their ideas and support. It was a joy to see the display of the “Literature of Alcoholics Anonymous” each time I left the library.

In a final ironic twist our September AA literature display was followed by a large collection of items from Oktoberfest!

*Yours in service, StanC2,  
Manasquan Sun. Open  
Speaker Meeting*

### From Your Delegate

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 with the Grapevine's move from the 10th Floor in the building to smaller offices on the 12th Floor, GSO has begun handling on-site shipping, mail room and sales functions and that the Grapevine will be saving \$50,000 a year on rent. The AA website ([www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)) has added a Daily Reflections page which will feature the reading of the day and they are investigating creating an e-mailing solution for delivery as well. Gross sales of all items through the end of February 2012 were

budgeted at \$2,222,080 with actual sales of \$2,271,705. (During the first two months of 2011, actual sales were \$2,226,113.) Units distributed to AA and non-AA purchasers for this same two-month period totaled 310,434 units. Out of that total, non-AA purchases accounted for 42,200 units, or 14%. (In 2010 and 2011, non-AA purchases accounted for 15.4% and 20.1% of units sold, respectively.)

On the eBook side, Since December 9, 2011, a total of 3,609 eBooks (\$21,654) have been sold. Of the total eBooks, the Big Book accounted for

1,904 units (\$11,424) and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions accounted for 1,705 units (\$10,230). It is anticipated that additional eBooks will be added later this year; *Daily Reflections* and *As Bill Sees It* at \$7.00 each and *Living Sober* and *Came to Believe* at \$4.00 each.

Grapevine Online subscriptions continue to rise with print subscriptions holding steady. The GV's latest eBooks *Emotional Sobriety*, *Emotional Sobriety II*, *Step By Step* and *Spiritual Awakenings II* have just been released as they continue to ramp up the eBooks project. Their next new

book *Young and Sober* is coming in both print and eBook format in May.

I have received notification that the A.A. World Services, Inc. Board will have two non trustee Director vacancies following the General Service Conference in April 2013, to replace rotating non trustee Directors Andrea G.B. and our own Billy N. If you would like to know more about the positions please contact me at the June Assembly or via e-mail at [delegate@nnjaa.org](mailto:delegate@nnjaa.org).

I look forward to seeing you all over the next few months!

*Wayne R., Area 44 Delegate*



### What Are You Grapeful For?

At this year's Grapefest, we invited people to share what they were 'grapeful' for on a giant banner. Someone shared they were grateful for the remarkable GV committee, for putting on such an amazing event and delicious lunch. Okay, that was me.

Our area office was decked out in purple and the festivities began with Jimmy S., a past delegate from

Area 45, presenting a charming history of Grapevine told in the style of Dr. Seuss. He was followed by our own Jeff B., and Alt. Chair Freddy H., who both shared their experience as GVRs and how that commitment has enhanced their sobriety.

Jenn H., the Grapevine Chair from Area 45 was our next speaker and she gave a wonderful talk, both funny and poignant. She was followed by Dave M. who reprised his NERAASA talk where he chose excerpts from the Digital Archive and asked us to guess if it was from an article in the 40s, or the 60s, or last month. It brought home just how timeless Grapevine articles are, and how deeply we can all identify with them.

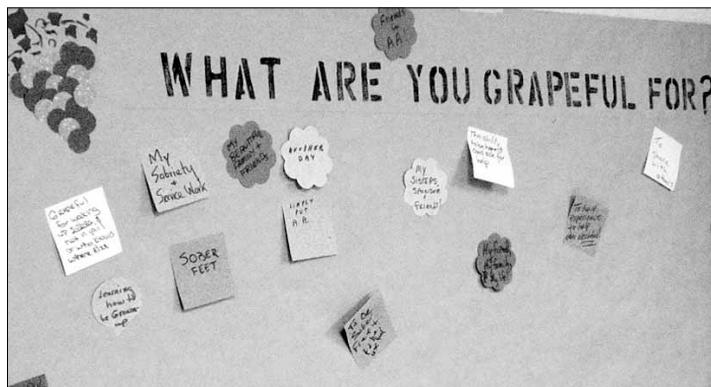
During our 'Grapeball' meeting we discussed some of the exciting news coming from Grapevine. The Grapevine Board reported that the first quarter of 2012 was positive and ahead of budget (yee-ha!) with digital subscriptions and eBook sales really helping the bottom line. New eBooks include *Step by Step*, *Emotion Sobriety I & II*, and *Spiritual Awakenings I & II*. And the next eBook – and soft cover book – available now is, *Young & Sober*. It's the second offering from Grapevine dedicated to voicing the experience, strength, and hope of young people in AA.

And speaking of voices, the Conference recommended that Grapevine move ahead with its plan allowing

Quote @aagrapevine.org. It's free! And while you're there, check out the new Grapevine Complete subscription. It gives you access to everything Grapevine & LaViña, print and digital, for a mere 14 cents per day.

We'd love to help your group or district sponsor a subscription to a library or send a back issue pack to a correctional or treatment facility. And please join us the first Saturday of every month at the area office, 10am, for our Grapevine committee meeting – especially if you'd like a role in our upcoming Convention play. As always, thanks for helping support our meeting in print.

*Yours in service, Jeff W., Area Grapevine Chair*



members to call in and record their own stories; additional info on the program and how to participate will be coming soon.

Finally, how would you like to have a bit of inspirational Grapevine wisdom emailed to your inbox daily? Just sign up for The Grapevine



## 24th Annual Northeast Woman to Woman Conference "Hope for the Future"

• SPEAKERS • MEDITATION • WORKSHOPS • FELLOWSHIP • SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET • COSTUME OPTIONAL • ENTERTAINMENT • YOGA • FUN • & MORE



OCTOBER 26, 27, 28 2012

### HOTEL INFORMATION

RENAISSANCE NEWARK AIRPORT HOTEL  
1000 Spring St. Elizabeth, NJ 07201

Toll Free Reservations: 1.866.234.7535  
Phone: 1.908.436.4610

(Ask for NE Woman Conference)

Room Rate – \$119.00  
Single/Double/Triple/Quad  
(Rates do not include state and local tax)

You can also go to the website to book:  
[www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)  
Special Rates & Awards: ANWANWA

Hotel reservations must be made by **October 5, 2012** (no exceptions)

### COMMITTEE CONTACT INFORMATION

Join us for a weekend filled with speakers, meditation, workshops, alkathons, fellowship, banquet, entertainment, fellowship & fun



If interested in Conference shirts, please check size and send the total cost of shirt(s) in a money order/bank cashier's check only when ordering:

\_\_\_ Short sleeve tee shirt \$15 s/m/l; \$17 1X/2X/3X  
 S  M  L  1X  2X  3X

\_\_\_ Long sleeve tee shirt \$18 s/m/l; \$20 1x/2x/3x  
 S  M  L  1X  2X  3X

\_\_\_ Sweat shirt w/hood \$30 s/m/l; \$32 1X/2X/3X  
 S  M  L  1X  2X  3X

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(No Refunds)

Your order will be available at the Tee Shirt desk.

### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

\*Did you pre-register at the 2011 Conference? If yes, please send in your meal selection with payment. (Money order only).  Yes  No

Please print clearly

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Sobriety Date 25+ years only \_\_\_\_\_

\$35 cut off July 15th \$40 cut off Oct. 1st \$45 after Oct. 1st

On Site Registration \$45.00 – cash only

"Conference registration is required to attend all workshops."

### MEAL SELECTION:

Saturday Night Banquet \$ 48.00

Chicken  Vegetarian

Sunday Breakfast \$ 22.00

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Non Refundable)

Money Orders/Bank Cashier's Checks Only Payable to: "NE Woman to Woman Conference 2012"  
Mail to: NE Woman to Woman 2012, P.O. Box 1060, East Orange, NJ 07017

The Woman to Woman Conference is self-supporting. The cost of the event is paid entirely through registration fees.



At the 2009 Area Convention District 4/6's time slot for the alkathon was 3am Saturday morning. Luke the alternate DCM at the time and I took the commitment.

We arrived at 2:45am, there was no one there. At 3:15 a young man walked in looking for a drink. He heard the clanging of glasses as the hotel staff cleaned up the glasses of water.

When we told him this was an AA meeting he said he'd like to listen.

As Luke, the young man and I talked the hour until 4am. District 5/7 had the 4am time slot which I had also volunteered for so Luke and I stayed. At 4:40am the young man said he was tired and a friend was coming to get him.

On Saturday afternoon at 4pm I went outside for a smoke and there was the young man. He said he was there to go to dinner with friends that he knew in AA and to listen to the speaker.

The next year at the 2010 Area Convention District 4/6's time slot was again 3am. Luke and I volunteered again to take the commitment.

We arrived 10 minutes early and there was one gentleman there who was drunk. He said he was waiting for a ride.

At 3am that same young man walked into the room and said, "You two again?"

As the three of us talked the other gentleman said he didn't want to listen to us and walked out. The young man told us he joined a home group, got a sponsor, and got involved with AA. He said he was interested in becoming the alternate GSR at his home group. I bumped into him a few times over the that weekend.

District 4/6's alkathon time slot at the 2011 Area Convention coincided with the time slot for the History and Archives' Workshop. I am a member of the History and Archives Com-

## — PAYDAY: The Rewards of Doing Service Work —

mittee and felt obligated to attend.

When I arrived at the workshop Luke (now DCM) was there and so was the young man. After the workshop he told us that he had indeed become the alternate GSR for his home group back in January and in June the group's GSR had to step down due to work obligations so he had rotated to the group's GSR.

When we met the young man back in 2009 Luke and I didn't say anything special. We told him what it was like, what happened, and what it was like now. "When the student is ready, a teacher will appear." The young man was ready to hear the AA message (though he didn't know it at the time). Luke and I were there to carry the message.

The 1am to 7am time slots for the convention alkathons present an inconvenience, nobody wants to fill them, but this is why they are so important to fill.

I'm looking forward to seeing that young man at this year's convention.

*Yours in service,  
Billy S., Ho-Ho-Kus Group and Luke  
H., The Allendale Group*

Service has opened up my AA world so much. It has provided me a way to give back to the fellowship that saved my life. I have met so many trusted servants who love AA as much as I do and they have become a big part of my life. Most importantly it has helped me deal with some of my biggest character defects: selfishness, self-centeredness, pride, ego, and fear. Service has really made my journey in recovery fulfilling.

*Freddy H., Friday Nite by  
Candlelight, Jersey City*

### Why Bother?

I remember a conversation a couple years ago with some AA group members about bringing meetings into prisons. My sponsor at the time believed we should take on commitments in jails and prisons rather

regular meetings in the spirit of carrying the message to those who still suffer. I thought to myself, why? why bother?; it just seemed so hard and possibly even dangerous, besides we'll never see any of those people again. I was early in sobriety and I just didn't want to drink, so in keeping with the saying "if you want what we have, do what we do." I kept my opinions to myself and went along with the others and filled out a volunteer application for Monmouth County Jail.

Several months went by and never heard anything more about the application. Circumstances changed, I moved on to another home group and was in between sponsors. I questioned whether I had made the right move and felt that my sobriety was in jeopardy. Then one day a letter from the Sheriff's office arrived stating I was approved to attend a new volunteer orientation and needed to call to confirm my attendance. Grappling with this prospect, I thought again how hard and potentially dangerous it would be (fear based). It occurred to me that that was exactly the reason why I should do it. The next thought I had was that I knew there was a guy at the Freehold clubhouse who has been involved with jail meetings for a long time, and I should talk to him about this.

The next day I slept late and decided to take a day off. Wanting to make a meeting I've never had a chance to go to before, I randomly picked a noon meeting out of the book. It was 20 miles away and probably wouldn't know anyone there. When I arrived, the greeter told me it was a group anniversary and they had a guest speaker – the very guy I thought I should talk to. I was amazed, I sensed there was something more going on here than just a Group Of Drunks. After the meeting, he told me a jail commitment would take my sobriety to a whole other level. That's exactly what I wanted! I went home and immediately called to confirm my attendance.

Since that day in January 2010, I've been bringing meetings into Monmouth County jail and today feel as comfortable there as in any other meeting. I don't know whether anything I share about my experience, strength, and hope helps them. That's not up to me. I do know that I have stayed sober. One former inmate remembered I had said I was a member of Morning Miracles and was there most every morning. He thought we were telling them stories and then going out drinking after the jail meeting. He decided to show up and prove us wrong. When he came in he saw me and two other AAs that led jail meetings. He realized we were telling the truth and has since become a group member. In the past few months a couple more guys have come in and continued to show up.

I wanted to get started on writing this article, but was lacking motivation. The morning of this writing, I went to the 9 AM meeting. A young man sat next to me and said, hi Jack. I turned around and it was another guy from my meeting that was just released. He said he came to see me. Again, there's something more going on here and that's all the motivation I needed.

Why bother? Well, it's for the reasons Dr. Bob states in his story, but for me there's more. As it turns out the statement "take your sobriety to a whole other level" may have been the understatement of the year. That noon meeting in January 2010 began a series of "coincidences" which continue to this very day and has given this once self proclaimed agnostic and balker a better understanding of a Higher Power and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. It all began two years ago when I felt my sobriety was in jeopardy. Today, so much of my growth in sobriety has come about through my willingness to do service work in Alcoholics Anonymous.

*Yours in Service, Jack M.,  
District 25 Corrections*



My name is Matt and I am an alcoholic. I was first introduced to AA in 1993. Call it a nudge from a judge. It has been an amazing journey for the last 20 years and it took every success and failure to get me where I am today. I am recovered from the seemingly hopeless state of mind, body and soul that I was in just seven years ago. September 2005, I was frantically calling NightWatch/

Intergroup for help to find a rehab that would take me for long-term, at least three months. That was a "gift" from another judge on my 4th DWI conviction. There were other conditions, but that is what I had to do first.

NightWatch/Intergroup listened to me and tried to help every time I called. I was familiar with NightWatch from attending meetings. They would pass a list around and ask people to sign up and take a shift.

NightWatch is 12th Step Work in Action, helping someone else without them ever knowing who you are. Just a friendly voice on the

phone asking for nothing in return.

When I got back from rehab and really centered my new life around AA, NightWatch became a part of my 12th Step Work. I still attend at least five meetings with five different groups and normally have two or three commitments with each group. But for years, whenever a group had a NightWatch commitment, I was there to sign up or even become their group leader. I am now the NightWatch Coordinator for Morris County and on the NightWatch committee. It's just another way that AA lets me do service. I get the chance to give back what was so freely given

to me. That's what keeps me sober. Whenever anyone anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA to be there, and for that I am responsible.  
*Peace, Matt H., Succasunna Group*

*Funny story about my home group. It seems my Uncle was the founder of the St. Dunstons Episcopal Church in Succasunna where we meet. He was the first Reverend there built it with the Parrish in the 1960s. I never knew this until I saw his picture on the wall. That's when I knew I had a Home Group.*



**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

## AA and the DMV

Early in my sobriety I heard of motor vehicle cards being handed out in meetings. I didn't know what they were but I heard much heated discussion about them. The group decided it was okay to give them out as long as our anonymity or the recipient's anonymity was not broken in the process. I never thought much of it until later when the heated discussions came up again and again in the groups.

It was 1985 and I had just under a year of sobriety. Our trusted leaders (servants) in Area 44 at the General Service and Intergroup Offices made a decision that it would be good for groups to cooperate with

the professional community and the state. Each group could decide to sign off on these cards given to the groups for drunk drivers that were sentenced to attend AA meetings.

As time went on more and more people started showing up at meetings with all sorts of paperwork from all sorts of agencies, rehabs and programs. Groups were and are continuing to sign off on paperwork without knowing the legal implications of doing so. Tradition eight plainly states that AA should remain forever nonprofessional, but OUR SERVICE CENTERS may employ special workers to handle the work of the AA offices. I think many AA groups have become agents of the alcohol and drug abuse treatment industry as well as agents for the state.

In many meetings it is said from the podium that to get a motor vehicle card you must show the proper paperwork from Trenton (the state). This violates the tradition of anonymity when the secretary in a meeting asks to see paperwork disclosing full names, addresses, and other personal information about a person who walks in off the street. It is often stated that you must present it to the secretary before the start of the meeting, stay for the whole meeting, and be sober. AA groups have assumed the authority to monitor and police other alcoholics and non-alcoholics in stating conditions that must be met to get signatures

and MV cards thus acting as agents for these entities that they are representing from the podium of an AA meeting.

AA's are signing off on legal documents presented in AA meetings. If an AA group signs off on someone's paperwork and the person decides on the way home from the meeting or while sitting in the parking lot after the meeting to drink a quart of liquor and pop a few pills or snort a few lines and then goes and commit a heinous crime or assault or kills someone with their car, AA may have an implied accountability and may be liable for that act if you or your group signed off on paperwork for that person. While each group in AA is autonomous, this practice of signing paperwork in groups affects AA as a whole and puts individual AA members as well as groups in jeopardy.

This topic came up as a floor discussion several months ago at the intergroup meeting and the guy was blown off about this concern. He was told, that intergroup is not the proper venue to discuss this issue. He was not told what the proper procedure was to have his group's concern addressed. I think it is a very serious concern for AA and deserves considerable discussion and thought and perhaps reconsideration if this is the right thing for AA groups to be doing.

To avoid this dangerous practice that can jeopardize AA and its members these agencies can book AA meetings

into their facilities through our service committees and handle all their own paperwork. I think that cooperation with the professional community is important 12 step work but we must be careful that it does not lead AA to become affiliated with them. We have to be cautious not to be endorsing these agencies and become diverted from our singleness of purpose. Where is it going to stop? The AA literature states that we are not a temperance society, that we do not endorse nor oppose any causes, nor do we wish to be drawn into public controversy. When does attraction end and promotion begin? Maybe that fellow AA in that Intergroup meeting a few months ago hit on something for all of us to think about and discuss in our groups, maybe even reconsider the question of signing or not signing paperwork for outside enterprises that use AA as a therapeutic tool. We are not a tool but rather a society who have found recovery through the principles that our founders had set down for us in the legacy of their writings.

I believe the preservation of our fellowship is rooted in the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. I believe in the concept that allows the lone AA member to voice his concerns and give his opinions and to be advised on decisions made by our trusted servants. I think that decisions that are made can be changed if it turns out that the deci-

*continued on page 12*

## — Messages —

Of all the important messages I have relayed in my life, nothing has been more important than spreading the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. A conglomerate of people of different faiths, colors, religions, backgrounds, and just about every other walk of life. All of us had one thing in common getting sober. Getting sober became the most important thing I ever did because by getting sober I changed my life. I would be nothing today if I wasn't sober. It took me a long time to get to the point in life I am now. When I decided to really get sober I talked to people who were sober before me. I asked them how do I stay sober and the number one thing they said was give it away. Don't drink one day at a time and give it away. I asked how do I give it away. They said you give it away by becoming a part of Alcoholics Anonymous. Doing service work of any kind such as becoming the coffee maker, the greeter at meetings, becoming an Intergroup Rep., a DCM, GSR, group secretary, treasurer, or any other way you can help someone. Going on a commitment to other groups and tell your story because every single person in Alcoholics

Anonymous has a story to tell. I can remember speaking on commitments and feeling good inside when I was done. I always try to tell my story with honesty and respect for the people I'm talking to. I just tell it like it was and to the point and be straight forward. I'm not there to impress them I'm there to help them. If I tell things that aren't true or try to make my story more horrendous than it really was, I'm not helping and that's not a good message.

I can only tell my story and not the story of someone else. The message I convey must be my message and hopefully it will help someone. Alcoholics Anonymous is one of God's greatest gifts and for that I am extremely grateful. I found that spreading the message of Alcoholics Anonymous helps my sobriety. It keeps me balanced and by my staying sober I not only help myself I help others. Seeing someone come into the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous and watching them grow is a wonderful gift. I don't drink one day at a time go to a meeting and help another alcoholic. I help myself so I can help others, what a great way of life.

*Ray, C., Roselle Sunday Night*

## "Our Personal Politics and Religious Beliefs are None of AA's Business"

In AA's preamble it states clearly "AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety." This is very important to remember. Unfortunately many members confuse their political and religious beliefs with AA as a whole and this is wrong!

We all must remember our particular religious and political beliefs fall into the category of "None of anyone's business but our own." Other people's opinions, religious and political beliefs are "None of our business."

As election season looms it is always important to remember what is written in our preamble. I have been to many meetings over the years where certain AA members feel compelled to express their political and religious beliefs in their shares. I chalk this up to their sponsors lack of reminding

them that their political and religious (or lack there of) are no one's business. As politics and religion can be divisive we must remember that they can distract from AA's primary purpose and that is to stay sober!

An angry, pushy political, pro-religious or anti-religious rant can disrupt the sobriety and serenity of a group and of AA members. Our founding members were very wise to keep politics and specific religious beliefs out of AA as AA works because we are all committed together in a common cause and that is to stay sober! This is clearly stated in Tradition Three: "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking." If members were excluded because of their political or religious affiliations there would be no AA as we all have come to know, love and cherish.

I urge all AA members during this election season to keep your political and religious affiliations your own business. Please remind those that feel compelled to use AA meetings to campaign or proselytize to remember their political and religious affiliations are none of any other AA member's business.

*Gloria G., Somerville Sunday  
4pm Staying Alive Group*



## Three Unopened Gifts

The Fellowship of AA is the best thing to ever happen to me. I have been given many blessings by my Higher Power, a loving mother, great friends, good health, intelligence and athletic ability, to name a few. Obviously humility not being high on that list. The sum total of all those gifts did not spare me the physical, mental, and spiritual torture of alcoholism.

Recently I was asked to briefly discuss AA's Third Legacy of Service at a local day of sharing. To prepare I looked up the definition of the word Legacy. What jumped out at me were the words GIFT, or an Inheritance. Well that really described the Legacies perfectly for me. Three gifts that when opened and used, would give us a life beyond our wildest dreams. Instructions on how to use all three

legacies also came in the package. Wow, the gift came with instructions on how to use them. Those being The Twelve Steps for recovery, The Twelve Traditions for unity and The Twelve Concepts for service. Experience has shown me that the closer I stay to those thirty-six principles, the more wonderful my life is and can be. Thirty-six powerful lessons in humility, giving me the most rewarding life imaginable. Who would have ever thought that possible?

I have noticed that today very few AA members are reading and following those instructions. The end result being pain, confusion, and turmoil, for the individual, and for their groups. This then resulting in the inability to pass these gifts to the next alcoholic. We cannot give away something that we don't have or don't quite understand. This leaves us with a watered down AA Program being passed

around. People don't get sober from this behavior, they die, it is that simple.

I know now that the greatest gift I have ever received in life are those thirty-six principles. Principles which when followed, will bring me a life beyond my wildest dreams. All I need to do is keep them close, practice them and give them away to others.

Sometimes I think about our AA pioneers and how difficult their road to sobriety was. They didn't have any of the legacies, they had to do all the heavy lifting, and hard work themselves. Years of trial and error resulted in these three legacies, then they were gracious enough to include them as part of our inheritance. The gifts that our founders had to work with were simpler ones, but so very powerful. Some being willingness, hope, pain, gratitude, humility, charity and most importantly desperation. The three legacies were the result of those

feelings in action. Ultimately becoming the wealth of our inheritance.

It is sometimes hard to not think of the word spoiled when referring to today's AA members. Like overindulged children we were given one awesome gift after another. All of them neatly wrapped, just waiting for us to open. Yet most of us make the decision not to. If I could wish one gift for myself and for all my fellow AA members, it would be that gift of desperation. With this one special gift, the others seem to open all by themselves. If we all stay as desperate as our pioneers were, the future of this wonderful fellowship would be one magnificent gift that we can hand over to future generations. All they in turn would have to do is open it, and follow the simple instructions. May the God of their understanding grant all of them, the desperation they need to do so.

Walter B.

## NERAASA 2012

The weekend of March 2 through 4, 2012 my husband and I had the opportunity to attend NERAASA in Albany, NY. We looked forward to this event all winter hoping that there would not be a blizzard over that weekend. The weather was a bit dreary but no snow or bad weather to put a crimp in the long drive to Albany from South River. We arrived Friday afternoon and once unpacked and we relaxed for a few minutes we ventured out of our rooms to join in the events of the weekend. We attended the first panel on anonymity and the digital age and then found our way to the hospitality suite, snacked, enjoyed the fellowship of meeting friends we had never met before, made our way back to our room and took a

short nap. Once awoken I was ready to venture out on my own for a while and found Mike (my husband) wandering around the lobby. We attended the second panel on corrections, skipped Panel 3 on Finance and attended the roundtable session on corrections.

Saturday morning we ventured out of the hotel to find some food and ran into a few friends who had the same thing in mind. I skipped the early morning session on treatment but attended a lively session on the grapevine moderated by our current Delegate Wayne R. We had lunch and skipped the session on sponsorship and the business meeting. We spent time instead browsing through the archives displays, visiting the hospitality suite again, and just hanging out in the lobby people watching. After a few hours of enjoying free time we made it to the banquet hall for dinner and sat back to enjoy a wonderful speaker named Dorothy H. She had a very powerful message of recovery. After this main event I attended the round table on newsletters and listened to and exchanged ideas on how to reach out more effectively to fellow alcoholics. I feel that area 44 does a good job sharing the AA message with

all the service committees that are active but we have only touched the tip on the iceberg. There are so many alcoholics who are not getting the AA message so easily. Perhaps the digital age will help us carry the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic, after all that is our primary purpose.

On our journey home I had a feeling of peace just knowing that my Higher Power God is working in my life and keeping me safe and sober. I feel so blessed to belong to such a worthy fel-

lowship that does such powerful work in the fields of destruction caused by this terrible disease. To be able to have recovery after living in the bondage of alcoholism is surely a gift that I could never have imagined would be mine. It is my responsibility to extend a helping hand to the still sick and suffering alcoholic, to let him or her know that if I can recover they can too.

Yours in service, Denise G., Newsletter Intergroup Chairperson

## Thank You God...

For allowing me to open my eyes and ears to another day and giving me this fellowship of AA. That I turn my will and my life to the care and direction of God as I understand him and continue to clean house and my side of the street with him. That I admit to another human being that I still have wrongs and am ready to have God take care of my character defects. That I make amends to those who I have harmed when I drank and even those whom I have harmed since I have been sober. That I continue to take inventory daily, semi-annually and yearly. That I pray and meditate, help another alcoholic, man or woman, but most of all the newcomer today and everyday. That God allows everyone to follow the path a day at a time!

Paul S., More Will Be Revealed, Elizabeth

**The Live Easy But Think First Group, Kearny**  
is having its

**70TH ANNIVERSARY**  
Saturday, June 23rd

AA Meeting at 7:30pm and a

**70s Theme Disco Dance**  
at 8:30pm...

and the next night,

**Sunday, June 24th**  
an EATING MEETING at 6:30pm  
and the regular meeting at 7:30pm.

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY INTERGROUP & AREA 44

## Treatment Facilities Workshop



**Saturday, July 28th, 2012**  
**9am – 1pm**

### TOPICS WILL INCLUDE:

- What AA is and What It Is Not
- Remote Communities/Special Needs
- Treatment Issues at the 62nd General Service Conference
- "The AA Messages/The AA Messenger"
- The "Bridging The Gap" Program
- Sharing with the Care-givers

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?:

All AAs interested in carrying AA's message into Treatment Facilities and the professionals from the facilities we serve.

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST AND A FREE LUNCH WILL BE SERVED

**2325 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield – 2nd Floor Suite 2J**

For more information email: [tfc@nnjaa.org](mailto:tfc@nnjaa.org)  
or visit us on the web at: [www.nnjaa.org](http://www.nnjaa.org)

## What are the Atheists and Agnostics in AA Really Like?

### Background

The 60th General Service Conference Advisory Action (#17) called for stories on spirituality including some from atheists and agnostics who are successfully sober in Alcoholics Anonymous. This was effectively reconfirmed by the 61st General Service Conference.

### The Questions

Much has been said about atheists and agnostics in Alcoholics Anonymous; They don't belong. They should be told to go elsewhere, and They can't really be sober in A.A. These assertions bring to mind some questions: Are there really atheists and agnostics in Alcoholics Anonymous? Who are these atheists and agnostics? What are they really like?

### The Answers

Here are my answers to those questions, if only from my own perspective, as an atheist in Alcoholics Anonymous. While I can only speak for myself, what follows is drawn from my own experiences, readings, and conversations with other nonbelievers in Alcoholics Anonymous. Like myself, most remain "anonymous" – that is we keep our non-belief secret from almost all other alcoholics. Yes, we really are here in AA and may be in a meeting next to you.

Statistically speaking, if you are in a

meeting with 40 or more members present there is a better than 90% chance that at least one nonbeliever is there. It is not surprising if you don't know this. We tend to remain "anonymous." The primary reason I am secret about being an atheist is fear. I have heard the disparaging remarks, listened to the laughter whenever Ed of the Third Tradition is read about, and I've seen the rolled eyes when nonbelievers are mentioned. Reputable research continues to indicate that atheists and agnostics remain the most hated minority in America. Sadly, AA isn't that much different.

I also remain an "anonymous" atheist because of my regard for the many alcoholics I encounter who embrace a sincere faith and my recognition of its importance in their lives. There is no good reason to get into a debate or argument with believers. Too often a debate involves trying to convince the other party that they are wrong. I don't want to go there; it serves no good purpose. Also, debates frequently center on defining terms and would involve defining "God as you understand Him" and what is "atheism." I don't want to get into an argument trying to prove anything. It is not productive. This answers the first question.

As for the other questions. First, what

we are not like; for that tells a lot about what we are like. We are not all like Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, or Christopher Hitchens (of "New Atheism" fame) who are anti-religion. We are not like Ed of the Third Tradition in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. We do not cry out at meetings, complaining about "all that God talk." We do recognize its importance to those who believe in God and we respect that. And we are not like the agnostic in the chapter "We Agnostics" in Alcoholics Anonymous. That text does not speak for me, nor any of the other atheists or agnostics whom I know in AA. I understand it is Bill Wilson's own story and it speaks for him.

Most of us have no quarrel with the believers around us. We do not want to "convert" you away from your beliefs, your religion, your personal concepts of God. Actually, we respect your beliefs, even though we do not accept them. Would that you only respect our non-belief and understand the struggle we have as we work the Steps and study the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, working to apply them "without God."

I like many others are not anti-God. The "a" in atheist is like the "a" in asymptomatic. It derives from the Greek word for "without." Atheists are without God. We have no central leader, no pope, no bishop, no shaman. We have no creed, no list of things we must "believe" to call ourselves an atheist, agnostic, or other form of nonbeliever.

Louise Anthony's introduction to *Philosophers Without Gods* describes myself and others I have come to know very well.

We have no sacred texts, no authorities with definitive answers to our questions about the nature of morality or the purpose of life, no list of commandments that cover every contingency and dilemma. "We can have no confidence, the evidence of history being as it is, that the truth will win out, or that goodness will triumph in the end. We have no fear of eternal punishment, but no hope, either, of eternal reward. We have only our ideals and our goals to motivate us, only our sympathy and our intelligence to make us good, and only our fellow human beings to help us in time of need. When we speak, we speak only for ourselves – we cannot claim inspiration or sanction from the Creator and Lord of the universe."

We live and work and play and cry and laugh and mourn like anyone else. Some of us are sad that we have no God to draw on in time of need and that we will not see our loved ones after death. Others of us are OK with this; yes we will miss our loved ones but we accept this as the only life any of us have. For cons we did not exist and, after an all too brief

*continued on page 12*

### District Service Meetings

**District 1&2** - 2nd Tuesday, 7:30pm, Lafayette at the Sunrise House Cafeteria.  
**District 3** - 3rd Friday 7:00 pm; Hillcrest Community Center, 1810 Macopin Road, West Milford  
**District 4&6** - 3rd Thur. 7:30 pm, Upper Ridgewood Community Ch, Hillcrest & Fairmount, Ridgewood  
**District 5&7** - 2nd Thursday, 7pm, St. Mary's Church corner of High and Legion, Closter  
**District 8** - 2nd Tues. 7:30pm, Panther Valley Ecumenical Ch, Rt 517, Allamuchy  
**District 9** - 3rd Tues. 7:30 pm, Stanhope United Methodist Ch, Rte 183, Netcong  
**District 10** - 2nd Tues. 7:00 pm, 1st Presbyterian Church, 513 Birch St, (corner of Church & Birch) Boonton  
**District 11/33** - 4th Wed. 7:00 pm, Clifton Library, 292 Piaget Ave Rm A  
**District 12** - 3rd Fri. 7pm, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 113 Engle St  
**District 13** - 2nd Tue. 7:30 pm, Wesley Meth. Ch., 225 Washington Ave, Belleville  
**District 14** - Last Tue. 7pm, St. Nicholas School Hall, 122 Ferry Street, Jersey City  
**District 15/21** - 3rd Mon. 7:30 pm, Hunterdon Medical Center, Employee Cafeteria, Rt. 31 South, Flemington  
**District 16** - 3rd Mon. 7:30pm Hillsdale Pres. Ch. Ridgedale Ave, Cedar Knolls  
**District 17** - 3rd Fri. 8 pm, Alanon Assoc., 7th Avenue and 7th Street, Newark  
**District 18** - 2nd Mon. 7:30 pm, Union Village United Methodist Ch, Mountain Ave. & Hillcrest Rd., Berkeley Heights  
**District 19** - Last Mon. 7:30 pm, Friendship Hall, New Market Road, Piscataway  
**District 20** - 2nd Tues 7:00pm, Trinity Episcopal, North & Forest Aves., Cranford  
**District 22** - 3rd Wed. 7:30 pm, Cook College Extension Center, College Farm Road, New Brunswick  
**District 23** - 2nd Thur. 7:30 pm, Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, 9 Jefferie Ave, South River  
**District 24** - 3rd Mon. 8 pm, Trinity Episcopal Church, Ryers Lane, Matawan  
**District 25** - Last Wed. 7:30 pm, Hope Lutheran Church, 21 Elton-Adelphia Road., Freehold  
**District 26** - 3rd Thur. 7:30 pm, First Presbyterian Church (Tower Hill), 255 Harding Road, Red Bank  
**District 27/29** - 3rd Mon. 7:30 pm, Holy Cross Luth. Ch, Hooper Ave, Toms River  
**District 28** - 1st Tue. 7:30pm, St Margaret's Church, 3rd & Ludlow Avenue, Spring Lake  
**District 30** - 4th Sunday 12 Noon, 69 Green Street, Newark  
**District 31** - 2nd Thur. 6:30 pm, Immaculate Heart Of Mary Chapel, 77th Street & Broadway, North Bergen  
**District 32** - 3rd Thur. 7:00 pm, Bayonne Library, 31st St. & Ave. C., Bayonne  
**District 34** - 3rd Sat. 9:30am, Our Lady of Sorrows, 217 Prospect St, (Lower Church) South Orange  
**District 35** - 2nd Tue. 7:30 pm, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, North Richard Street and Union Avenue, in Somerville.  
**District 36** - 3rd Fri. 7:30 pm, Trinity Episcopal Church, Trinity Lane, Woodbridge  
**District 37** - 3rd Wed. 7:00 pm, First Lutheran Church 153 Park St (basement), Montclair  
**District 38** - 3rd Thursday 7:30 pm, Presbyterian Church, 31 Fairfield Avenue, West Caldwell  
**District 39** - 2nd Tues 7:00pm, Trinity Episcopal, North & Forest Aves., Cranford  
**District 40** - Last Sunday 10:45am, St. Joseph's Center, 120 Division St., Elizabeth  
**District 41** - First Thurs 7:00 pm, St. Matthew's Trinity Church, 8th & Washington Sts, Hoboken  
**District 42** - 2nd & 4th Sunday 9:30am, 52 Throckmorton Street, Freehold

S A V E T H E D A T E  
 N O R T H E R N N E W J E R S E Y A R E A 4 4  
 P R E S E N T S

## ANNUAL LITERATURE WORKSHOP SATURDAY, JUNE 23RD 9AM – 1PM

TOPIC PRESENTATIONS ON

- Sober Atheists and Agnostics in AA
- AND
- What transpired with regards to literature at the annual General Service Conference?  
*presented by our Area Delegate Wayne R.*
  - Progress on literature for the non-believer
  - Changes to the correctional pamphlets
    - Revisions to *Living Sober*
  - Additions to the Big Book dust jacket
  - Adding the Preamble to the Big Book
- Development on a pamphlet for the alcoholic with mental illness

Continental Breakfast and Lunch will be provided at

Area Office 2325 Plainfield Avenue Suite 2J, South Plainfield  
 For more information email us at [literature@nnjaa.org](mailto:literature@nnjaa.org)

## NNJGS Area 44 Office Calendar

<b>JUNE</b>		
11 Luncheon Committee	7:30 PM	4 Officers Meeting
11 Convention Subcommittee	8:00 PM	5 Mailing Committee
12 Public Information Com	7:30 PM	6 Website Committee
13 Treatment Committee	8:00 PM	6 Computer Committee
17 Garden State Young People	2:00 PM	8 Grapevine Committee
18 Literature Sales	6:30 PM	9 Films Committee
18 Literature Committee	7:30 PM	9 AREA COMMITTEE
19 History & Archives*	7:30 PM	10 Luncheon Committee
19 CPC Committee	8:00 PM	10 Convention Subcommittee
20 Convention Committee	8:00 PM	11 Public Information Com
21 Newsletter Committee	7:30 PM	12 Treatment Committee
25 Finance Committee	7:30 PM	15 Corrections Committee
28 Policy & Admissions	7:30 PM	16 Garden State Young People
		17 Literature Sales
		17 Literature Committee
		18 History & Archives*
		18 CPC Committee
		19 Night Watch Committee*

\*Intergroup Office, 2400 Morris Ave, Union

## Intergroup Calendar

<b>JUNE</b>		
4 Delegates Meeting, Clark	8:30 PM	2 Delegates Meeting, Clark
7 Joint Website Committee	7:30 PM	4 HOLIDAY (OFFICE CLOSED)
10 Bookers Exchange, Cranford	7:00 AM	5 Joint Website Committee*
19 History and Archives	7:30 PM	17 History and Archives
		18 Nightwatch Committee
<b>JULY</b>		
2 Delegates Meeting, Clark	8:30 PM	2 Joint Website Committee
4 HOLIDAY (OFFICE CLOSED)		6 Delegates Meeting, Clark
5 Joint Website Committee*	7:30 PM	21 History and Archives
17 History and Archives	7:30 PM	28 Joint Unity Meeting*
18 Nightwatch Committee	7:30 PM	
<b>AUGUST</b>		
2 Joint Website Committee	7:30 PM	
6 Delegates Meeting, Clark	8:30 PM	
21 History and Archives	7:30 PM	
28 Joint Unity Meeting*	7:30 PM	
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>		
3 HOLIDAY (OFFICE CLOSED)		
6 Joint Website Committee*	7:30 PM	
9 Bookers Exchange, Cranford	7:00 AM	
10 Delegates Meeting, Clark	8:30 PM	
18 History and Archives	7:30 PM	

\*Area Office, 2325 Plainfield Ave, South Plainfield



www.nnjaa.org/members  
password: onedayatime

Contributions are much needed, and always welcome! Make checks payable as indicated and always include your Area, District and Group ID number. Please send group and individual contributions to the addresses below:

NNJGS AREA 44  
2325 Plainfield Avenue, Suite 2J  
South Plainfield, NJ 07080  
Payable to "NNJGS Area 44"

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY INTERGROUP  
2400 MORRIS AVENUE, Suite 106  
Union, NJ 07083-5705  
Payable to "Northern NJ Intergroup"

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE  
PO Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163  
Payable to "General Service Board"

## DISTRICT DOINGS

**DISTRICT 1&2** – Our Service Committees continue to try and carry the AA message throughout our District. In the past three months we have had SEVEN new GSRs and Alternate GSRs from District 2 join our District 1&2 Committee. We look forward to working with them in doing all the vital 12th step work our District does. We had a great turnout of GSR, Alternates and interested AAs from our District attend the Area 44 Mini-Conference in Neptune on April 14th. Several participated in the car pool and we had some fun. Thank you District 28 for doing a great job hosting.

District 1&2 is excited about the opportunity to serve Area 44 as your host District for the 2013 Mini-Conference. Next year's Mini-Conference will be held on Saturday April 13, 2013, (location TBA).

Our Bill W. Summer Picnic will be held on Sunday, July 22 (1-8pm). We will have AA Service Committee Tables and an AA Open Speakers Meeting at 7pm. Family activities include; Music - (Bring your Fiddle), Volley Ball, Egg Toss, Water Balloon Toss, Whiffle Ball, Horse Shoe Pit, Indoor Games & Lots of Other Fun Stuff, all are welcome. We have a new, larger, dryer, more centrally located venue this year. Our Picnic will be held at the Franklin Fireman's Park Pavilion on Parker Street in Franklin. You can find our Picnic flyer on the Area 44 website (nnjaa.org).

– *In Love and Service, Bill J., DCM*

**DISTRICT 39** – As we enter into the summer season, District 39 is excited to announce that our monthly district meeting will be moving back into our district the first Wednesday in August, which will be August 1. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may have caused. For the past year and a half, new AA officers stepped up to fill service positions that had been open since 2010. District 39 was drifting into a "Dark District." So the officers and General Service Representatives (GSRs) back in 2010 decided to cluster with District 20, temporarily, each month to learn the ropes from the officers, committee representatives, and GSRs functioning in neighboring District 20. This proved to be a wise move because it generated some interest from AAs within our district to become officers, committee representatives, and GSR's so that we can better communicate issues and business matters that affect AA, as a whole, and taught us how to better manage our two corporations—Grapevine, Inc. and A.A. World Services. We feel that August 1, 2012 District 39 will have enough rep-

resentation and experience within the suggested service structure to move back to our district. Our new location and our first monthly district meeting will be Wednesday, August 1 at the Presbyterian Church, 140 Mountain Avenue, Westfield, at 7:00pm. Flyers will be distributed to the groups via the GSR's and the meeting change will be noted on the Area 44 website at [www.nnjaa.org](http://www.nnjaa.org). District 39 still has open service positions available if any AAs are interested. Please feel free to come to any of our district meetings or to contact the District Committee Member (DCM) for District 39 at [district39@nnjaa.org](mailto:district39@nnjaa.org) if you have any questions, comments, or ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.

On April 14, 2012 in Neptune, NJ, approximately two hundred AAs came together for the 2012 NNJGS (Northern New Jersey General Service) Area 44 mini-conference. Our NNJGS Area 44 Delegate, will be reporting the results from the 62nd General Service Conference that took place the end of April in New York. The post Conference report will be given at the June 9, 2012 Assembly in Whiting, NJ. All AA's are welcome and we hope to see you there.

Many thanks to all who continue this vital twelfth step work that saves lives each and every day. – *Yours in service, Tricia L., DCM*

**DISTRICT 18's** Second Annual Day of Sharing was held on Saturday April 21st. It was a great day for all involved. The 3 speakers, Richard B. on Sponsorship, Katee D. on Finding Sobriety in the Digital Age and Mary C. on her 52 years of Sobriety in AA, provided a well rounded view of recovery and sobriety. The movies, *Young People's Video 2009* and *Bill's Own Story*, added to the day, and were enjoyed between each speaker. District 18 continues to be very active in bringing commitments to correction and treatment facilities. We look forward to seeing all of you at our Day of Sharing in 2013. Wishing you all a summer of fun, relaxation, and sobriety. – *Terri D, District Secretary*

### DISTRICT 1/2

**ANNUAL FRIENDS OF BILL PICNIC**  
Franklin Firemen's Park Pavilion  
Parker Street, Franklin

**Sunday, July 22nd 1-8pm**  
**AA Speaker at 7pm**

Hot Dogs, Hamburger, Chicken, Corn on the Cob, drinks and more  
Bring your favorite dish, salad, dessert, casserole, etc...  
Rain of Shine pavilion provides shelter.

### NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE AUG. 17th NEWSLETTER@NNJAA.ORG

This newsletter is produced four times annually by the Newsletter Committee, a joint committee of Northern New Jersey General Service Area 44 and Northern New Jersey Intergroup.

NOTE: This Newsletter will be published on our web site. The name and last initial of the author will be published unless otherwise requested.

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 directed to the Newsletter Committee at NNJGS Area 44, Suite 2J, 2325 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield 07080 or emailed to: [newsletter@nnjaa.org](mailto:newsletter@nnjaa.org). Any other questions call [redacted]

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# THIS DAY

Joint News of NNJGS Area 44  
and Northern New Jersey Intergrupp  
2325 Plainfield Ave., Suite 2J  
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

Summer 2012

## What are the Atheists

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

time, we will cease to exist. We try to live moral lives, to do the right thing. We do charitable work. We love and care for our children and our aging parents. We obey the laws – excepting the speed limits on the Interstate highway and similar roads. (We also claim to have a sense of humor.)

We have spiritual experiences; experiences which move us to our core. Most of these experiences arise from the same things for believers in God as for we atheists and agnostics – we have different opinions about them. Some personal examples include . . . Believers look at the heavens – the galaxy and the universe – and “see God.” I look at the same and am moved, awe struck at the wonder of nature. Believers look at a newborn child and see a miracle of Creation. I look at a newborn and marvel at the wonder of evolution. Believers struggle with why innocent people suffer and even die in natural disasters. I see it as an event in a universe which is incapable of anything intentional, it does not do evil nor grant goodness.

Like many others, I enjoy liturgical music and morality plays. For me, the story of Christmas is moving, but fiction. The lessons of the New Testament

are valuable, but not divinely inspired. Miracles are something wonderful which can only be explained as chance or an event beyond current explanation. The Easter “miracle” is moving but is similar to the return of Gandalf in the Lord of the Rings who then leads the good people in the defeat of evil.

I read the books *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, *AA Comes of Age*, *As Bill Sees It*, and others, just as believers do – with one difference. I need to make some mental adjustments, changing “God as we understood Him” to something I can deal with, something that makes sense to me. It is not an easy task but I make the effort. Sometimes, at a meeting where many are sharing about God, you may notice a distant look in my eyes. I am not bored and not angry. I am working at applying the sharing to my personal situation. I am struggling to make sense of the sharing (or the reading) according to my situation in life as an atheist. I do not “take what I like and leave the rest.” I try to apply everything to my situation.

Many of us serve as General Service Representatives. We chair meetings. We go on speaking commitments. We function as treasurers. Because we love Alcoholics Anonymous and want it to continue rescuing drunks;

regardless of their politics, organization, or institutional affiliation. We are alcoholics who have a desire to stop drinking, and need help.

We love our fellow A.A. members for the same reasons those of you who believe in God love others. We feel your love – but worry that it might evaporate if you knew we are nonbelievers. We also love AA for the strength we draw from the Group – our higher power. As Louise Antony points out, we have “only our fellow human beings to help us in time of need.” In Alcoholics Anonymous we have only the Group, our fellow recovering alcoholics, to serve as our “higher power” in our struggle for sobriety. When we are rejected, made fun of, put down, or hated (yes, some actually hate us) we lose that higher power and have no group to help us.

Finally, we do not ask for anything beyond understanding and acceptance.

### Questions for You

I leave you with some questions to ponder and/or to discuss in your Group. Since atheists and agnostics are among you . . . Why are they not obvious? Why don't we know who they are? Why are they hiding? If they were obvious, if we knew who they are, would we welcome them?

*Yours in love and sobriety, Paul W.*

## AA and the DMV

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

sion is not good for our society at large. Bill writes that the lone voice of the minority may be the correct voice for AA as a whole. Very often in AA matters that can be complex I hear the voice of Dr. Bob telling us not to louse this thing up, keep it simple. Learn from our founders.

*Yours in service and fellowship,  
Denise G., East Brunswick Give  
and Take Discussion Group*

### DISTRICT 3

30TH ANNUAL DAY OF SHARING

**“A New Direction”**  
**Sat, June 16th 8am to 3pm**  
Hillcrest Community Center  
1810 Macopin Road, West Milford  
AA & Al-Anon Meetings • Lunch  
• Sobriety Countdown

### DISTRICT 22

**SOBERFEST 2012**  
**“The Third Legacy:  
This We Owe To AA's Future”**  
**August 25th 10am to 5pm**  
Reichler Park, 540 Ridge Road  
Monmouth Junction  
**Speaker Meeting at 2:45pm**  
A day of Unity, Service, and Recovery  
(as well as Food, Fun, and Fellowship)  
Tickets: \$7, children under 12 free  
For more information contact:  
District22@nnjaa.org