

THIS DAY

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

A message from your Area Delegate



I have written many articles for the newsletter over the years, but I'll never forget the first article that I wrote. I had started working on the Area Literature Committee, which met on the 3rd Thursday of the month at our Area office. At that time, Bill L., another influential Bill in my life, was the Newsletter chair and editor (and had been for some number of years I would later find out). Bill was very involved with the Literature Committee, so the Newsletter Committee met at the Area office on the same night. One month after the Literature Committee meeting was over, I wandered to the back of the room where the Newsletter Committee was gathering. I asked, "What do you people do?" and they told me that they prepare, edit and distribute our Area newsletter. I told them that I didn't know that our Area had a newsletter, and one of the members of the Newsletter Committee, Chazz C., who was the current Area chair, suggested that I should write an article about our Area having a newsletter. Only later would I see the irony of writing an article entitled "Our Area has a Newsletter" to let people know we have a newsletter! I have always enjoyed writing and have a special place in my heart for our Newsletter. I would later serve as the Newsletter chair as one of my first Area service positions.

As my time as Delegate draws to a close, I've been somewhat nostalgic and have been looking back over the service aspects of my recovery, thinking about what comes next. In some Areas, the immediate past delegate steps away for some period of time to allow the incoming delegate and the new Area officers time to establish themselves. Our Area chooses to utilize the immediate past delegate as the "ex-officio," allowing them to lend their expertise to guide the incoming delegate and officers and to serve as the liaison with the Northern NJ Intergroup. In this role, the ex-officio is still an Area Officer, a trustee of the RUS Service Corporation (our AA business entity) and has a vote. Typically, this is the last time that as a past delegate, I will have a vote, which is as it should be!

Here are some of my thoughts about my time in AA service:

- I think back to my time serving at the District level. As the DCM for District 35, I was able to make a lot of 12 Step work possible. My District is very active and coordinated bringing meetings into Carrier Clinic, Somerset Medical Center and Somerset County Jail, provided information about AA to doctors, nurses and judges, and organized events like Library Saturday, where we put Big Books and 12&12s into all the libraries in our District. I also started a Group Visitation Committee to find GSRs for unrepresented groups and GvRs to help groups with Grapevine subscriptions and buy Grapevine books. It was a lot of fun!
- My first Area officer position was as Recording Secretary, and it was my first time standing for an elected position. I was so nervous. This position was a lot of work, as I was responsible for the minutes for 12 Officer Meetings, 6 Area Committee Meetings, 4 Assemblies and Work Weekend. I learned a lot in this position since I sat next to our Area chair, who was Jay E., my recovery sponsor. I watched Jay as Area chair and learned Robert Rules of Order for running an Area Committee Meeting (ACM) from him. Having to type the minutes for the ACM reinforced that knowledge.
- I didn't realize it but, when I was elected Alternate Area Chair/Area Coordinator in the next rotation, I was in line to move through this and the next 3 positions to become our Area Delegate. One has to be elected to all these positions, but in many cases, this is one's progression as an Area Officer. I really enjoyed this position as for two years I worked with and got to know the 8 districts who hosted our Area Assemblies. I still was not driving in those days and a number of people helped me to bring the sound system, the podium, and the various supplies to those Assemblies. By this time, I knew how to ask for help.
- My next position was Area Chair, one of my favorites. My service sponsor, Linda K-K, who I can never thank enough for all her help and guidance, informed me that for the next two years I would have no opinion. If someone said something that I didn't agree with, I couldn't make faces or roll my eyes. I simply had to thank that person and turn to the person at the other microphone to hear what they had to say. In those two years, I barely said anything about the matters before the ACM. I almost didn't serve as Area chair because in that election another candidate, Jimmy A., and I were tied after the 4th round of voting: we went to the hat! I'm thankful that my name was pulled out and that I had the opportunity to serve as Area Chair. Jimmy, our current Delegate elect, was elected my Alternate, and we served well together.
- There's little to say about Alternate Delegate, as it's a time to pause with very little responsibility so that you can assist the Delegate and prepare for the possibility that you might be elected to that position.
- And I was! I was elected as the Panel 69 Delegate and am one of about 45 Delegates who attended one in-person General Service Conference and the first virtual Conference. It has been quite a ride, and I've enjoyed every minute of it. I was selected for the Grapevine Committee and was elected as the Grapevine chair in my second year.

There were so many moments and meetings and meals at my first Conference. The virtual conference has many of the same moments but not so many of the meals! While I can't describe all those moments to you, suffice it to say that my life changed in these two years. I have made so many friends all over the US and Canada that I can go anywhere and I will know someone to go to a meeting with. As this torch now passes on to Jimmy, who also served as my Alternate when I was delegate as well and has been there whenever I needed him, I see the people now standing in that line who, if their Higher Power guides them in that direction, can one day allow them to have the incredible experience of being Delegate. My heart is filled with so much love and gratitude to my Area that elected me to this position. It is my hope that I served you and AA as a whole faithfully and to the best of my ability. Thank you.

Jeff B., Panel 69 Delegate, Middlesex Friday Night Beginner Big Book Meeting

Election Results

Saturday, October 17, 2020

Area 44 Panel 70 Delegate	Jimmy A.
Area 44 Panel 70 Alt Delegate	Maureen R.
Area Chair	George L.
Alt Area Chair/Area Coordinator	Luke M.
Treasurer	Wendy S.
Alt Treasurer	Kathy R.
Recording Secretary	Allison R.
Alt Recording Secretary	Wendi S.
Registrar	Art B.
Alt Registrar	Anita C.

176 in Attendance

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NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE
FEB 4, 2021
newsletter@nnjaa.org

AREA 44 COMMITTEE REPORTS & INFO

A message from your Area Chair



I hardly know where to begin. Thanking you for the opportunity to serve Area 44 as Area chair these past two years hardly seems sufficient. I can't believe how quickly the time has gone by. I've learned so much these last two years and have grown in my sobriety. I always knew that service work would rocket me, but never did I realize to what extent. It has been a privilege to have served you in this capacity. I am also honored to have been elected as your incoming Panel 71 Alternate Delegate, and I look forward to working with your new Panel 71 Delegate, Jimmy A. and the rest of the Area officers.

We are all beginning the transition in our respective positions to ensure that your newly elected officers have all the documents and information from the prior year's work. I have been participating in various meetings with other Alt. Delegate elects throughout the Northeast, getting acquainted with the General Service Conference process and all the discussions surrounding Conference agenda items.

This past year has been especially challenging for all of us. Dealing with the pandemic and meetings going virtual and thinking outside the box to conduct our vital 12 Step work, these times have really driven us to change the way we do things. Our committees have gone virtual, holding meetings via Zoom and Teams. Our District Days of Sharing are also virtual, as was our Area Convention and other events, keeping us all connected in a way that Bill and Dr. Bob could never have dreamed. Yet, we have all adjusted. I know that many of us can't wait to get back to physical meetings, both in recovery and service, but we have adapted.

WHAT'S NEW IN OUR AREA:

Recently, the Area was contacted by the Polish-speaking groups who have elected a DCM and Alt. DCM to represent the Polish GSR's of AA in our Area. I am very excited about the linking of other communities within our Area structure, breaking the language barriers. A volunteer has stepped up to assist our 12 Step committees to translate their web pages into Spanish to further reach the Spanish community in our area. An upcoming recommendation is being suggested to create a Spanish Section Leader to assist the Spanish districts in their 12 Step work efforts within their communities and to help strengthen the link with our Area and to the General Service Conference. And finally, a recommendation came forth earlier this month to create an Area Alternate Section Coordinator position to assist Section Coordinators in their positions and to ease the transition of rotation.

As I rotate out as Area chairperson, I am confident that I am leaving you in good hands with George L., as your new Area chair. I know he will do a great job. I wish you all a very happy holiday and hope you stay healthy and Covid-free. See you soon.

Yours in Love and Service,
Maureen R., Area 44 Chairperson



Cooperation with the Professional Community

Greetings from the Cooperation with Professionals Committee!

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the Area as your CPC chair for the past two years. Taking this commitment and being part of the Area 44 CPC Committee has truly made me grateful and helped me further appreciate the vital role of reaching out to professionals and future professionals about what we do and what we don't do. I cannot thank everyone who has participated in the committee enough for carrying the message to professionals (doctors, judges, probation officers, clergy members, social workers, etc.) so those professionals can reach out to the sick and suffering that currently do not even know AA exists. We may not personally know that our outreach has helped but faith always carries the way. It feels as if there have been two parts of this term: pre-Covid and post-Covid. Each have had their challenges, but the committee has persevered and continued to provide outreach during these unprecedented times. I look forward to passing on this commitment to the next CPC chair and hope their time in this commitment is as blessed and valuable for them as it has been for me.

The CPC Committee has been meeting on Zoom at our regularly scheduled time of the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm. We are presently working with Michael M. to update our website and have it translated into Spanish for our Spanish-speaking members. As is custom each year, the committee is working on listing our achievements for 2020 and our goals for 2021. Our committee members continue to do virtual sharing sessions with professional contacts as needed. All district CPC chairs and interested AAs are welcome to attend our Committee's monthly virtual meeting along with bringing suggestions of professional groups to carry our message to. Just email me or your DCM, and I will send you the link for our monthly meeting.

In service,
Mark D., Area 44 CPC Chair

Newsletter Chair



Greetings from the Newsletter Committee!

It is with mixed feelings that I write this article, as I will be stepping out of my role of Newsletter chair at the end of the year, although I plan to remain a member of the committee. I would like to thank our wonderful *This Day* committee members, including our talented editor, Megan D., our Intergroup chair, Ruth Z., and our alternate chair, Tony P. Without their assistance and the help of Frank H., our Zoom guru, Tom S., who has written several articles and attended district events to represent us, Jim M., who always contributes ideas and gives suggestions, and, of course, our wonderful former editor, Jane R., we would not have been able to accomplish what we did during this pandemic.

Of course, like all the other committees in Area 44 and Northern New Jersey Intergroup, we have had to adjust to the "new normal" during this very trying time. We were unable to accomplish quite as much as we had planned but have high hopes for the future. To that end, the theme of our Spring 2021 issue will be Hope. We do hope (no pun intended) that you will write an article for us this spring; the deadline will be February 4.

Area 44/Northern New Jersey Intergroup continues to conduct most business online, and the Newsletter Committee is no exception. Our monthly meeting is the third Thursday of every month at 6 pm on Zoom. The ID is 815 3922 8687 and the password is thisday. Our next meeting is scheduled for December 17. We could use some help, as well as new ideas and suggestions, so please join us!

General stories of experience, strength, and hope are always welcome. In addition, Intergroup and Area officers, committee chairs, DCMs, GSRs and Intergroup delegates are asked to send us your reports on what is going on in your "service world." Please submit your articles in Word format and be sure they can be edited. We ask that you limit your writing to 800 words or FEWER. Please avoid sending the article within a text or email if possible. Flyers can be in PDF format. Send your articles and flyers in an attachment to newsletter@nnjaa.org. Our newsletter needs to be the voice of ALL AA members from Northern New Jersey Intergroup and Area 44. *This Day* is your newsletter – the voice of Northern New Jersey AA members!

This Day is your voice! *This Day* is my voice!
From the farms of Sussex to the cities of Essex!
From the hills of Watchung to the shores of Belmar!
This Day was made for you and me! YOU AND ME!!

PLEASE LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!! Write an article...or two!!

Yours in fellowship and service,
Marybeth H., Area 44 Newsletter Chair, *This Day*

Interested in joining a Standing or Special Committee?
Area 44 could use your help!

Please see our Area 44 Committee Virtual Meeting List on page five!

ALONE we can do so LITTLE;
TOGETHER we can do so MUCH
-HELEN KELLER



Life on life's terms. I'm "writing" this as I'm waiting at a membership warehouse for a phone upgrade. There are issues. I could get upset, but I'm quite content. I also procrastinated with this. A lot of family issues. Family issues that I get to have being sober. I am rotating out as your Grapevine chair. It has truly been an honor to serve. Once confirmed at the January Assembly, Marcheta B is our new chair, and Dan B is our alternate. Both will serve the Area and Fellowship well. As with Literature, Grapevine is ready to serve the Fellowship. If you need any Grapevine material, just let us know. If you're interested in being on the committee, we meet virtually on the first Saturday of the month currently on the Zoom platform. We also run the meeting from the Area Office, but that could change with the current state of affairs ever evolving. It is definitely a fun committee to be on. In these times, the AA Grapevine is a wonderful resource to have.

In love and service,
Jim O., Grapevine Chair



My name is Susan, and I am an extremely grateful alcoholic. My life is totally different than it was when I first walked into a meeting on April 21, 1992, frightened, ashamed, and totally without

hope. Through the grace of my Higher Power and all of the people who are now and have in the past trudged this Road of Happy Destiny with me, I have not found it necessary to go back out to try the desperate experiment of drinking again. I am, and so are you, a miracle.

When I was a year sober, the woman who was in charge of what is termed "Phone Watch" in Richmond, Virginia (where I got sober) asked me which night or nights I wanted to volunteer to answer the phone. I emphatically said, "NONE!" I did not think that was my kind of service work. She sweetly inquired, "And when someone in AA asks you to do something what do you say?" Of course, I knew the answer was "yes" and that is how I reluctantly learned the joy of being a volunteer to answer the AA telephone whenever the Intergroup Office is closed. It is my absolute favorite service work and has been for more than 27 years. (It's fun to remember that in the early '90s we signed up on a monthly paper calendar with cute animal photos on the top page and the dates on the bottom.)

I have been continuously sober in four different geographic locations, and the only place where I did not volunteer to answer the phone was in New York City. At the time I was living there, you still had to pay for cell phone minutes usage. I had very little income and I couldn't afford to tie up my cell for several hours, I moved to Ohio from NYC and volunteered in the Cincinnati area for seven years. The next and final move was to New Jersey where I almost immediately signed up for Nightwatch in July 2013. Several years ago, I became one of the District Coordinators for Northwest, NJ. I am responsible for Warren and Sussex counties.

In those early days in the '90s, we did not have the Internet or cell phones to look up meetings or electronic maps to give us directions to meeting locations. We did not have phone ID's to perhaps pick up a clue about the town or city of the caller. We had paper maps for finding meetings in neighborhoods that we were not familiar with, and we sure had the willingness to help a suffering alcoholic make the connection with a 12 Step contact or a meeting in his or her immediate area. It was a crazy time. Because there was no Internet, the call to the AA phone was how almost all newcomers, family members, or visitors from out of town found out where meetings were located. The meeting book was called the "Where and When." The volunteers who answered the phone were the connection between the meeting directory and the person who was calling the AA phone line for information about alcoholism and where and when the meetings were located. Often the caller needed directions about how to get to that location (hence the paper maps). Between 6 pm and about 9 pm, the phone would ring without ceasing. Forget about dinner or anything else that might take you away from answering the phone during that period of time. We probably had as many as sixty calls on any night. Please note – it is no longer like that. In the age of wonderful technology and our superb Area web site (nnjaa.org), we may receive only five to ten calls total during a shift. The suffering alcoholic has not changed since "man first started crushing grapes," but the Internet makes it possible to obtain information about AA and local meetings without having to call the AA phone line. Our incoming calls now are primarily from defeated alcoholics reaching out for help with their disease. Our volunteer work covering the phone calls remains absolutely critical, but the intensely hectic times of Phone Watch and Nightwatch are a thing of the past.

WHAT IS NIGHTWATCH?

The District Coordinator asks a group in his or her county to take a commitment to answer the phone for a week – Sunday morning beginning at 9 am through the following Sunday morning shortly before 9 am when the phone is transferred to another group in another county. The shifts are week nights from 6 pm to about 9 am. Weekends and holidays are split into periods of 9 am to 3 pm; 3 pm to 9 pm and 9 pm to 9 am. A normal shift means eleven volunteers are needed and a holiday week requires thirteen volunteers to cover the commitment. It is suggested that the volunteer have at least a year of sobriety, especially as we enter the holiday season. A year of sobriety means the volunteer knows about the pitfalls of the upcoming celebrations—and equally as important knows how to truly enjoy Thanksgiving, the December Holidays marathon, and New Years with enthusiasm and comfortably sober,

The group has a member/leader who asks other members to sign up for different shifts. He or she stays in contact with the District Coordinator during this process. The completed list is sent to the District Coordinator, the Nightwatch Committee Chairman, and Intergroup Office by email or text mid-week before the shift begins. It is not difficult, and if the group has a problem getting enough volunteers, that's where your District Coordinator can really pitch in to help. We have a list of people in Northwest New Jersey with long-term sobriety who want to answer the phone calls. For a variety of reasons, they are not able to get to meetings, or not very often. Our "loners" are a Godsend for us, and we are helping them. It is their opportunity to do service work for AA and stay in contact. Do not let your group be reluctant about signing up for a week's commitment. We truly have your back.

By the way, the calls come to the volunteers by forwarding from the AA phone number. The caller will never know the full name or personal phone number of the person who answers. Your anonymity is totally protected.

HOW TO CONTACT NIGHTWATCH

Please call the Intergroup Office Monday through Friday from 10 am to about 4 pm and let the office staff know that your group wants to volunteer to cover a week. Intergroup will pass the message on to the District Coordinator for your county. It's that easy. All of us at Nightwatch and our trusted servants at Intergroup thank you. The office number is 908-687-8566 or 1-800-245-1377.

Say "yes" when asked. I believe you will never regret it.

Thank you for the opportunity to be of service. We look forward to hearing from you and your group. Happy holidays to all of you, and blessings for a New Year that is healthy and peaceful.

Yours in service,
Susan C. in Hopatcong, Nightwatch District Coordinator for Warren and Sussex Counties

**History
and Archives
Committee**



Greetings from your History & Archives Committee!

We are a joint committee between Area 44 and Northern New Jersey Intergroup. Our mission is to serve the fellowship by advancing the understanding of AA's history, with an emphasis on New Jersey's role in it.

I can't believe there are less than two months, at this writing, until the end of my commitment. It feels like just the other day that I was nervously preparing for my first time sitting in the Chair's chair, reminding myself that I'm not that important. Everyone in the committee has been so enthusiastic and helpful, and even though our work is serious and important, it's also a lot of fun!

From my first contact with the committee in 2015, to ask for help in finding a group history of The Newton Group, which led me to find out that they were preserving reel to reel recordings of meetings held by that group, I can honestly tell you my Higher Power has made his will very clear that I'm right where I belong. I'm grateful to say that 25 of those meetings are available for you to listen to on our Area website. Just use the "Service" tab and select "Service Committees" and you can find those, as well as many other items of historical interest.

When understanding the history of our worldwide fellowship became a local matter, it made me feel more a part of both the fellowship and its history. Our little corner of the world is an important place in AA history, being that this is where The Big Book was written.

I'm a firm believer that history begins at home. Mine is in Vernon Township, Sussex County. Up until the mid-1970's, a resident of my town would have had to travel a half hour to get to the closest meeting. Then a meeting popped up at the old Playboy Club of all places, soon to be followed by two more by the early 80s.

Why not find out about your town's first group? We can help by contacting the General Service Archives on your behalf. We have a Group History form on our website, which you can use to interview members of your group who know about and have experienced its early history. AA groups in New Jersey go all the way back to the year The Big Book was written. If your home group is one of the ones that go back to the early days, think of how rewarding it would be for your group members to get an understanding of where they came from.

I always remind people that, to be involved in our committee, you don't have to be a history expert. Just bring your willingness to learn and serve, and we can get you involved. One of the best ideas I heard this year was from a young lady who showed up to our meeting in her first month of sobriety.

We get to attend lots of events and talk about what our committee does. We even got to go on a field trip last year to the General Service Office!

The pandemic has caused us to have to learn new ways to serve, but it has turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as virtual presentations have allowed us to share with more people, given them a better view of what we're showing, and allowed us to take our presentations on the road. We will be giving one at a group based in Tucson, AZ in January. You can find a document containing our "variety of presentations" on our Archives website.

Our most recent one, "Links in the Chain," is based on a talk given by Bill W. in 1956 before the National Council on Alcoholism. It illustrates the synchronicity of the events that had to happen over the course of ten years for the meeting between Bill & Dr. Bob to take place in June 1935.

I've had the opportunity to serve in many ways in AA. I can honestly tell you that every commitment I have taken I've gone into with some apprehension that I wasn't qualified. But, without fail, after some time and the benefit of those with more experience, I've gotten comfortable enough to wish the commitment weren't ending when it was. It has truly been a pleasure to serve as chair of this committee, and I look forward to many years continuing as a member, learning how to serve God and my fellow AA.

We meet the second Wednesday of each month virtually. You can find information on the Area website or email archives@nnjaa.org. We'd love to have you join us!

Jim P., History & Archives Chair

Area 44 History & Archives Committee
List of Committee Presentations Available to the Fellowship

Early AA – The Women – This presentation, written for the 2018 Area 44 Convention, covers the contributions of women who helped shape our fellowship in its early days. From the wives of our founders, Lois Wilson and Anne Smith, to some of the first women to achieve long term sobriety, like Marty M., and those who struggled, like Florence R., this presentation is especially powerful when it is presented by women. Includes PowerPoint presentation.

Northern New Jersey Landmarks in the History of Alcoholics Anonymous – This presentation is a guided tour of many of the early places where the roots of our fellowship were planted in Northern NJ. It covers the locations of some of the first AA meetings in South Orange and Morristown, to the home of Hank P., where some of the first non-Oxford Group "Alcoholic Squad" meetings were held, and of course, the locations where our Big Book was written, and the Alanon Club in Newark, where so much early 12th step work took place. Includes PowerPoint presentation.

The Four Founding Moments of Alcoholics Anonymous – In Ernest Kurtz's book "Not God", he describes the four founding moments which made our society possible. These signs of Divine Providence started with a meeting between Rowland Hazard and Dr. Carl Jung, and move through Bill's experiences, both educational and spiritual in Towns Hospital. Finally, it covers the moment in which our program was born, when Bill met Dr. Bob in Akron. Includes PowerPoint presentation.

A Celebration of the Big Book – When Bill and Dr. Bob realized that they had a way to help alcoholics stay sober, they and the other early members decided to share this experience with the world. From how it started, counting noses in Akron, to How It Worked on Clinton Street, this presentation details the struggles in writing, financing and publishing our basic text, which was written right here in Northern NJ.

Roots And Branches: 75 Years of the AA Grapevine – From the beginning, when those "six ink stained wretches" convened to consider a local AA newsletter, to the publication of our Preamble and our first glimpse at the Twelve Traditions, this presentation highlights the Grapevine's phenomenal growth and creativity through the 1940's and 1950's.

The History of Intergroup – With the growth of AA in New Jersey, starting in 1939, we needed a way to carry the message to the many still suffering around us. Our first Intergroup Office, located at the Alanon Club in Newark, began our journey to coordinate 12th Step work in Northern NJ. From a couple of dozen groups in the mid 1940's to over 1,250 groups and over 2,000 meetings today, Intergroup has grown with us.

The Rockefeller Connection: Myths and Legends in AA History – In late 1937, a group of New York A.A.'s sought to open a chain of alcoholic clinics, hire paid missionaries and maybe even write a book to show how it was done. They sought the help of entrepreneur and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller. This is the story of what happened — and what didn't, and how money could have spoiled this thing. Includes PowerPoint presentation.

Bill's Story, The Original Version – In the Spring of 1938, needing some chapters to form the book that he envisioned, Bill wrote an early draft of his story that is over twice the length of the one most of us know. This revealing account gives many insights on who Bill was, and offers a look into the early writing of our basic text.

Alcoholics Anonymous in New Jersey: The First 20 Years – This presentation is an exploration of how Alcoholics Anonymous in New Jersey developed in the 1940's and 1950's, from our first group in South Orange to 225 groups by the end of 1959.

For more information, or to schedule a presentation for your event, email: archives@nnjaa.org.

From your
Area Convention
Committee



A Lifeline to my Recovery

When I took this position, it was not because I wanted it. I know today that God did for me what I would never do for myself. I have been on the Area 44 Convention Committee for about nine years. I remember the day I was told to get in the car with my sponsor and her husband. He told us that we were going to join an Area committee. I had no idea what that even meant. But like most new things in sobriety, it scared me! I have since held many positions on the Convention Committee. I have watched this committee go through many changes, an inventory, rewritten and amended guidelines. I have stood on the sidelines watching our elder “statesmen” at work. I have learned so much over the years, and I have met some really great people. Kicking and screaming in my mind, I showed up. I had no clue how the convention would even go off, but it did year after year.

I had run the previous year for alternate chair and didn't get the position. I got cancer instead. So, coming back to the committee after treatment, I knew I should probably just sit on the sideline and take an alternate position. That was my plan. I showed up to the Area office for the committee elections. The first position up was Convention chair. All I remember was standing up. I had no plan to take on such a commitment. Once I realized I was standing, fear set in. My mind was racing. You can't do this, what if the cancer comes back, what if I don't feel well, what if... Let's just say I was gently reminded that I would not do this alone, and my committee was there to help me along the way to get the job done. I became hopeful and confident we would be able to pull this year's convention off.

Then, coronavirus hit, and everything changed. We held on for months praying our convention would be in person. The day came when we needed to make the decision to go virtual. Everyone close to me knows I hate the computer, so going virtual scared the crap out of me! But you see, I have an alternate chair who actually loves the computer, and, behind the scenes, he was talking me

off the ledge. I knew nothing of Zoom's capacity. He felt strongly we could make this happen. So, for the first time, Area 44 Convention Committee had its 64th Annual Convention virtually! We were able to meet the third Wednesday of every month on Zoom, and even though some of our committee members couldn't do their jobs, they showed up week after week. Their commitment and support to the committee never faltered. We did it with some help from Tech 12. Having this commitment has kept me connected to AA. It has kept me in the middle of the circle, and it has made me accountable in times I didn't want to be. I miss people and hugs. I miss the meeting before the meeting. But what I have learned is it can all happen over the computer.

Forever grateful,
Jenny C., Convention Chair 2020

Area 44 Website Committee
contact us at
websitecommittee@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com

We need
YOU!

Members with organizational, admin, clerical, artistic,
graphic designers, full-stack developers, engineers, members
with these backgrounds and/or members that are simply
devoted and wish to be of service are welcomed.

From our Area Treasurer

GENERAL SERVICE CORP TEMPLATES AREA 44			
TREASURER'S REPORT			
For Period Ending Sep 30, 2020			
SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (Per Checkbook)			
	Money Mkt	Checking	Totals
Opening Account Balances for Current Period (Aug 31, 2020)	\$82,852.87	\$54,570.87	\$137,423.74
Revenue for the Period	\$0.00	\$0,001.00	\$0,002.00
Expenses for the Period		(\$3,382.00)	(\$3,382.00)
Transfer between Money Market and Checking			\$0.00
Ending Balance for All Accounts for Current Period (Sep 30, 2020)	\$82,853.86	\$50,250.23	\$143,104.09
CURRENT BANK RECONCILIATION BY TREASURER FOR PERIOD			
	Money Market	Checking	Totals
Statement Balances (Sep 30, 2020)	\$82,853.86	\$50,349.73	\$143,203.59
Outstanding Checks		(\$89.50)	(\$89.50)
Outstanding Deposits			\$0.00
Adjusted Bank Balances (Sep 30, 2020)	\$82,853.86	\$50,250.23	\$143,104.09
Variance in Reconciliation			\$0.00
Designated Funds at (Sep 30, 2020)			
Jailbox Contributors	\$15,183.74		
International Hospitality Seals	\$0,574.84		
Total Designated Funds:	\$15,758.58		
ANALYSIS OF CHECKING ACCOUNT (Balance should not exceed two months average total expenses)			
Current Checking Account Balance		\$80,250.23	
Less: Prior 12 Month's Average Monthly Expenses Times Two		(\$20,873.00)	
Over / (Under)		\$59,377.23	
ANALYSIS OF PRUDENT RESERVE			
Total Cash in Bank (Not Including Convention Acct)		\$143,104.09	
Less: Designated Funds (Jailbox, etc.)		(\$22,058.58)	
Less: Checking Account Guidelines (2 month average expenses)		(\$20,873.00)	
PRUDENT RESERVE FUNDS		\$100,172.51	
Less: Calculated Prudent Reserve (50% of Most Recent 12 Month Budgeted Activity Exp)		(\$40,400.00)	
Over / (Under)		\$59,772.51	
SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL APPROVALS / REVIEWS			
Individual/Group	Action	Completed Through	
Treasurer	Approved	Sept. 2020	
Alternate Treasurer	Approved	Sept. 2020	
Finance Committee	Approved	Sept. 2020	
Officers	Reviewed	Sept. 2020	
ACM	Approved	November 2020	
Assembly	Approved	Mar 2020	



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

3rd Quarter 2020

1. AA Eye Openers
2. Union Hill Drop-in Center
3. Port Reading Thurs Night AA
4. Daily Reprive Pompton Plains
5. Breakneck Group
6. Morning Miracles

7. Franklin Sussex Groups
8. Willing to Change Monday Night
9. Daily Reprive
10. Change in Good Discussion Group
11. Rocky Hill AA

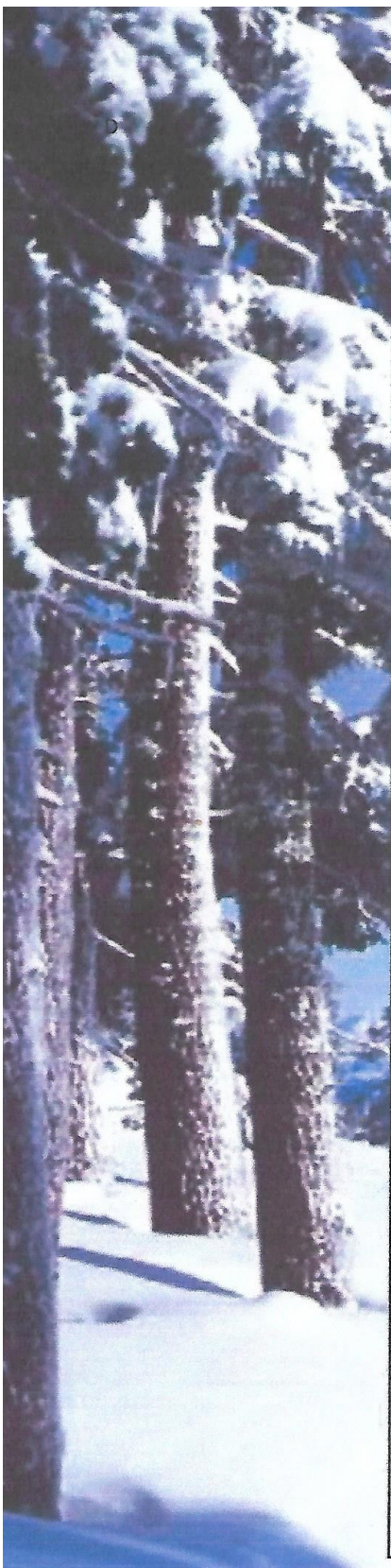
Thank you to those who continue to support our purpose during these times of uncertainty.

***If we've accidentally missed your group or made an error, please kindly let us know and we'll give you a shout out next time!

Happy Holidays Area 44!

The Seventh Tradition states, "Every AA group ought to be fully self supporting declining outside contributions." Well guys, we have succeeded at doing that. During these times of the pandemic, we at Area 44 have been able to maintain above the prudent reserve level thanks to your continuous and generous contributions. I haven't been able to send out monthly Thank You letters, but I will be sending a year end thank you. Please know I am grateful for all your contributions and support.

Sincerely,
Wendy S., Area 44 Treasurer



N. N. J. G. S. AREA 44
Virtual
G.S.R. Mid-Winter Event
(Open to All A.A. Members, Family & Friends)

"A.A. in a Time of Change"

Sunday, February 21, 2021

Meeting ID: 838 9503 8013

Passcode: 942320

Dial In #: 929-205-6099

G.S.R. Speakers:

- Karen C. – District 36
Iselin Wednesday Open Speaker
- Lee D. – District 36
Not Just Any BB Meeting
- Mindi H. – District 25
Marlboro/Englishtown Group
- John D. – District 13
Belleville Thursday Night

Guest Speakers:

- Al J. Mooney, MD
Class A Trustee
- Ken T., Area 30 Eastern Mass.
Panel 63 Past Delegate, NERD Secretary

Leader: Frank F. – Chairperson
G.S.R. Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee

Time: 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

For additional information, please contact:
Frank F., Chairperson: luncheon@nnjaa.org
Archives_Alt_Chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com

**** Spanish interpreters will be provided ****

In 2018, I attended my first GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon with members of my homegroup. It was an amazing experience filled with laughter, great conversations, heart touching shares, and a tasty lunch! I knew I would want to definitely be in attendance the following year, and I was. I had so much fun that I asked if I could volunteer the following year. I wanted what they had. I wanted to help be a part of what made the GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon such a special occasion. I was granted the opportunity and invited to join the committee. I thought I would be greeting but was honored when asked to be alternate ticket chair.

This year presented us with an opportunity to adjust, adapt, and overcome the challenges the pandemic has had on social gatherings in AA. Although we will not be meeting and greeting in person, or enjoying that tasty lunch, we will still continue the rich tradition of honoring our General Service Representatives virtually. We are in a time of change but the principles that guide are still the same. I have learned so much about service work through being a General Service Representative for my homegroup and now by being a part of the GSR. Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee. The Twelve Traditions and Concepts are starting to come alive for me from seeds planted in a pot of coffee and a friendly welcome.

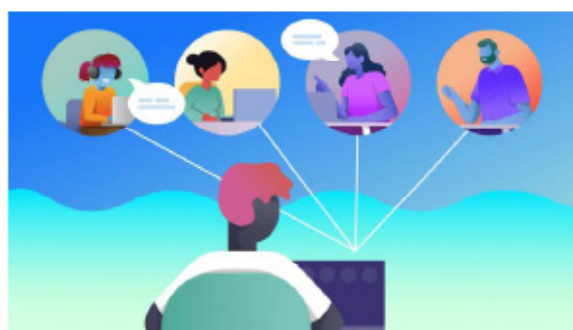
I am proud to be a member of this year's GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee, and I am looking forward to seeing you all there as well!

Yours in service,
Keli W.

AREA 44 & INTERGROUP CALENDARS

AREA 44 EVENTS CALENDAR DECEMBER 2020-MARCH 2021

Date	Day	Time	Event	Location
2020				
Dec 1	Tuesday	7:00PM	Officers and Standing Committee Meeting	Online
Dec 3	Thursday	8:30PM	Intergroup Delegates' Meeting	Online
Dec 4	Friday	7:00PM	Work Weekend	Online
Dec 5	Saturday	8:00AM	Work Weekend	Online
Dec 6	Sunday	8:00AM	Work Weekend – If Needed	Online
Dec 13	Sunday	7:00AM	Bookers	Online
2021				
Jan 5	Tuesday	7:00PM	Officers' Meeting	Online
Jan 9	Saturday	9:00AM	Committee Chair Workshop	Online
Jan 10	Sunday	10:00AM	Area Committee Meeting	Online
Jan 16	Saturday	9:00AM	DCM Orientation	Online
Jan 23	Saturday	9:00AM	Area Assembly	Online
Feb 2	Tuesday	7:00PM	Officers and Standing Committee Meeting	Online
Feb 4	Thursday	8:30PM	Intergroup Delegates' Meeting	Online
Feb 21	Sunday	12:00PM	GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon	Online
Feb 26	Friday	3:00PM	NERAASA	Online
Feb 27	Saturday	8:00AM	NERAASA	Online
Feb 28	Sunday	8:00AM	NERAASA	Online
Mar 2	Tuesday	7:00PM	Officers' Meeting	Online
Mar 14	Sunday	7:00AM	Bookers	Online
Mar 14	Sunday	10:00AM	Area Committee Meeting	Online



VIRTUAL

AREA 44 COMMITTEE MEETINGS: VIRTUAL AND HYBRID 2020



HYBRID

COMMITTEES	MEETING DAY	TIME	SERVER	MEETING ID	PASSWORD	CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
STANDING COMMITTEES						
Cooperation w/ Professional Community*	3 rd Tuesday	7:00pm	ZOOM	Changes Monthly (see information)		Mark D – spc-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com ...Please contact for current ID and Password
Corrections Facility Committee*	3 rd Saturday	10:00am	ZOOM	830 3466 8699		Susan P-C – cfcc-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com ...Meeting on ODD number months only
Grapevine	1 st Saturday	10:00am	ZOOM	846 1124 4149	AAGV	Jim O – grapevine-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com ...This is operating as a HYBRID meeting, with Social Distance observed at Area Office
History and Archives*	2 nd Wednesday	7:00pm	ZOOM	917 6976 2213	474109	Jim P – archives-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
Literature	3 rd Monday	7:00pm	ZOOM	759 779 8819	1212	Mike F – literature-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com ...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	602 936 3999	Bwilson	Tim L – pi-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
Treatment*	2 nd Wednesday	7:00pm	ZOOM	875 3928 5480		Roe B – treatment-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
SPECIAL COMMITTEES						
Computer and Technology Committee	2 nd Monday	7:30pm	Teams	n/s	n/s	Bruce R – computer@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
Convention Committee	3 rd Wednesday	7:30pm	ZOOM	833 2357 7907	197229	Jenny - convention-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
Films Committee	2 nd Sunday	9:00am	n/s			Paul L – films-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com ...Currently not meeting regularly to due COVID restrictions of large group gatherings
Finance Committee	4 th Monday	7:00pm	ZOOM	901 900 2713	435109	Joe A – finance-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
GSR/DCM Workshops	N/A					Saadia L – gwr-workshop-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
Mailing Committee	1 st Wednesday	6:30pm	n/s			Susan K – mail-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com ...Currently not meeting due to lack of mailing needs for the Area
GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee	1 st Monday	6:00pm	ZOOM	891 0985 8973	77173	Frank F – lunch-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
Newsletter*	3 rd Thursday	6:00pm	ZOOM	815 3922 8687	thisday	Marybeth H – newsletter-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
NIYPAA	3 rd Sunday	10:30am	ZOOM	264 993 272	service	
Policy and Admissions Committee	4 th Thursday	7:30pm	ZOOM	848 1028 5221		John S – policy-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com This is a HYBRID meeting, with Social Distance observed at Area Office
Remote Communities	4 th Monday	7:30pm	ZOOM	532 087 8299	SoberA44	Kelly T – remote-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
Social Media Committee	2 nd Thursday	7:30pm	ZOOM	846 7849 8287	511520	Kristen A – sm-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
Translations Committee	1 st Wednesday	7:00pm	n/s			Susana C – translation-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com
Website Committee*	4 th Wednesday	7:00pm	ZOOM	838 0275 3319	website	Lisa VOK – website-chair@nnjas.onmicrosoft.com

Area 44 District Happenings & Reflections

I did not want to be DCM. No way, not me! I told myself that I did not have the time and it was too much for me to handle. However, God had other plans and kept steering me towards this commitment. I told my sponsor that I was thinking about standing for DCM. I figured she would tell me that it was too big of a commitment for me right now because I have a full life. I have a demanding job. I travel for work. Plus, I should focus on my recovery and my family. Not to mention, I just took on a new sponsee, and I was already serving as a GSR. Surely, she would dissuade me from such a decision! Well, I will never forget the words that woman said to me. My sponsor had the nerve, the audacity, to say, “I think that’s a great idea. You’ll make a good DCM.”

Shortly thereafter, I found myself at my first Area Committee Meeting without a clue. Never having served as Alternate DCM, I had no idea how things worked or what I was supposed to do. I had to ask for help. I raised my hand. Said I was new. I listened, asked questions, made some contacts, and got a service sponsor. It was like getting sober all over again.

And so, it began: the mission to reconnect the district, encourage unity and activity, support and create awareness of the service committees and promote 12 Step work. Over the last two years, six months, and twenty-seven days, the district has thrown more “stuff” at the proverbial wall in the hopes that something would stick. We hosted all sorts of events, tried “sponsor your doctor” and “adopt a rack” campaigns, sold literature at district meetings, gave away old issues of the Grapevine, raffled off literature and Grapevine subscriptions, held a district inventory with a past delegate, started two private Facebook groups, created a special committee for women’s events, and even tried bribing AAs with pizza and cookies and more! Some were successes and some were not, but in the end, it was the journey not the destination that changed me in profound and powerful ways.

My sponsor told me that everything is lessons and blessings. Lessons: yes, there were many. Yet, it was the blessings that expanded my sobriety and infiltrated my life in ways I could never have expected. What I gained through this experience is forever woven into the fabric of who I am and for that I am eternally grateful.

Here are some of the lessons and blessings:

Lesson: Listening to others even when I completely disagree.

Blessing: Changing my mind because I heard something I would not have otherwise heard.

Lesson: Allowing the voices of the individual groups guide the district when it would be easier to let the members of the district make decisions, or worse make decisions myself.

Blessing: Bearing witness to God’s will, as expressed through the entire district’s conscience, that turned out better than I could possibly have imagined.

Lesson: Learning to speak my mind with kindness in my heart and with clarity and compassion.

Blessing: In doing so, not only keeping friends but making new ones and earning their respect.

Lesson: Letting go of my expectations for the results of the district’s efforts and finding gratitude for the actual outcomes.

Blessing: Realizing that all the work that was done resulted in seeds planted from which a life could possibly be saved and that possibility is what made it all worth it.

I am happy to be at the end of this commitment but not with regret. It was a wonderful and challenging adventure, much like running a marathon. It was filled with hard work, accomplishments, failures, and a wide range of emotions. That being said, I am right at the 26th mile marker, and there are only two tenths of a mile to go. I am ready for the end, because I have done my best and given my all. In doing so, I will leave the district a little bit better than I found it. Now, I can best serve AA by handing off the baton to the next person in this great spiritual race.

For other than getting sober, giving birth to my daughter, and marrying my husband, being DCM was hands down one of the best things I have ever done.

So, now what? I could take a break and simply rest because I have served AA well and I am done...

“Oh look, another commitment!”

Kristen, District 32 DCM

**NNJGS AREA 44
DISTRICT 17 OF
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
ANNOUNCES THEIR**

**VIRTUAL
31ST ANNUAL HOLIDAY ALKATHON
ID: 838 2367 1838**

24 Hours of Meetings and More:

**Topic Discussion, Speakers, Long-timers,
Women’s, Men’s, Steps, Traditions &
Big Book Meetings, 4th Step Workshop & More**

**Thursday, December 24, 2020 from 6:00pm to 2:00am
Our Long-timers Meeting will start at 6:15pm
Friday, December 25, 2020 from 8am to Midnight**

ID: 838 2367 1838

**GSR’s and groups, please book your Group’s Slot with
Bookers: Berthine J. and Damian M.**

**To send contributions to the District @aec-1951-opal (venmo.com)
or
District 17
PO Box 1584
Newark, NJ 07101**

**Chairperson: Joyce F.
Alternate Chairperson: Charlene D-D.**

District Meetings

(When in person meetings resume)

District 1&2 - 2nd Tuesday. 7:30 pm, Sunrise House Cafeteria, 37 Sunset Inn Road, Lafayette

District 3 - 3rd Friday 7:00 pm; West Milford Library 2nd Floor, 1470 Union Valley Road, West Milford

District 4&6 - 3rd Thur. 7:30 pm, Upper Ridgewood Community Ch, Hillcrest & Fairmount, Ridgewood

District 5&7 - Last Thursday, 7:30 pm, St. Mary’s Church, Roger Troy Hall School Building, (corner of High & Legion), Closter

District 8 - 2nd Tues. 7:30 pm, Panther Valley Ecumenical Ch, 1490 Route 517, Allamuchy

District 9 - 3rd Tues. 7:30 pm, United Methodist Ch, Rte 183, Netcong

District 10 - 2nd Tues. 7:00 pm, 1st Presbyterian Church, 513 Birch St, (corner of Church) Boonton

District 11/33 - 4th Wed. 7:00 pm, Clifton Library, 292 Piaget Ave Rm A, Clifton

District 12 - 2nd Thur. 7:00pm, St. Francis of Assisi Parish Center (basement), 124 Park St, Ridgefield Park

District 13 - 2nd Tue. 7:30 pm, Wesley Meth. Ch., 225 Washington Ave, Belleville

District 14 - Last Tue. 7:00 pm, Barrow Mansion, Upstairs, 83 Wayne St, Jersey City

District 15/21 - 3rd Mon. 7:30 pm, Hunterdon Medical Center, Employee Cafeteria, Rt. 31 South, Flemington

District 16 - 3rd Mon. 7:00 pm Good Shepherd Luth Church, 160 Ridgedale Ave. Florham Park

District 17 - 3rd Fri. 8:00pm, Alanon Assoc., 7th Avenue and 7th Street, Newark

District 18 - 2nd Mon. 7:30 pm, Union Village UM Church, 1130 Mountain Ave., Berkeley Heights

District 19 - Last Mon. 7:30 pm, Friendship Hall, New Market Road, Piscataway

District 20 (with former District 29/30) - 1st Wednesday, 7:00pm, Presbyterian Church, 140 Mountain Ave., Westfield

District 22 - 3rd Wed. 7:30 pm, Cook College, 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. 8:00 pm, New Monmouth Baptist Church, 4 Cherry Tree Farm Rd, Middletown

District 25 - Last Wed. 7:30 pm, Hope Lutheran Church, 211 Elton-Adelphia Road., Freehold

District 26 - 3rd Thur. 7:00 pm, Christ United Meth Church, 300Ridge Rd, Fair Haven

District 27/29 - 3rd Mon. 7:00 pm, Ocean Christian Community (Parish House Basement) 405 Washington St., Toms River

District 28 - 1st Tue. 7:30 pm, St Margaret’s Church, 3rd & Ludlow Avenue, Spring Lake

District 30 - 4th Sunday 12 Noon, 256 Mulberry Street, Newark

District 31 - 2nd Thur. 6:30 pm, Immaculate Heart Of Mary Chapel, 2nd Floor, 77th Street & Broadway, North Bergen

District 32 - 3rd Thur. 7:00 pm, Bayonne Public Library, 31st St. & Ave. C., Bayonne

District 34 - 3rd Sat. 9:30 am, 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, Somerville.

District 36 - 3rd Fri. 7:30 pm, St. Luke’s Church, 17 Oak Ave & Route 27, Metuchen

Districts 37 & 38 - 3rd Wed. 7:00 pm, First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 153 Park St, Montclair

District 41 - First Thurs 7:00 pm, St. Matthew’s Trinity Church, 8th & Washington Sts, Hoboken

District 42 - 2nd Sunday 9:00am, 120 Jersey Ave. 2nd floor, New Brunswick

INTERGROUP NEWS

Intergroup Office Literature Hours and Guidelines

**The Intergroup Office is once again fully staffed & keeping normal business hours
10am – 6pm Monday through Friday**

While we are not entertaining drop-in guests in the office, however, we do want to make the literature available while taking every precaution to keep you and the Intergroup staff safe.

In order for us to handle the work of Intergroup and make sure we can answer the phones, we are limiting the "shopping hours" to times when there are two of us scheduled to be in the office.

DAYS/HOURS FOR PICK UP

- **Tuesday 1:00 - 5:00p**
- **Wednesday 10:00a - 2:00p**
- **Thursday 1:00 - 5:00p**

TO YOUR PLACE ORDER

- **Call the office (908-687-8566) in advance to place your order**
- **Make appointment for pick-up**
- **Exact Change or Check Required**

TO PICK UP YOUR ORDER

We have established two ways to receive your purchase. If you would like to pay by check, please make all checks payable to *Northern NJ Intergroup*.

▪ **Curbside**

- **Pull your car into the parking lot behind the building (2400 Morris Ave, Union)**
- **Call from your car, after parking, to let us know you're here**
- **A member of Intergroup Office Staff, with a mask, will come out to your car**

▪ **Office Pick-up**

You're welcome to come to the office. Please note the REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL VISITORS:

- **Must wear a mask**
- **Will be seen just inside the office doorway (instructions will be posted on the door)**
- **Temperature must be taken before any exchange of purchase or payment**
- **Supply First Name, Last Initial and Phone number on a list¹**

AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

- ✓ **Big Books (hard cover \$9.50) and (soft cover \$9.10)**
- ✓ **Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions (hard cover \$8.90)**
- ✓ **As Bill Sees It (hard cover \$9.00)**
- ✓ **Daily Reflections (soft cover \$10.25)**
- ✓ **Came to Believe (soft cover \$5.00)**
- ✓ **Living Sober (soft cover \$5.00)**
- ✓ **Meeting Books (soft cover – Per Dozen \$6.00)**
- ✓ **Just for Today cards (packs of 100 \$5.00)**

We will continue to ship Meeting Books ONLY, all other literature must be picked up at the office.

Thank you for your patience during this time. We are grateful to be of service, Mac, Maria and Rhea Anne

Questions? Please call 908-687-8566 Monday through Friday 10am – 6pm

¹ **Contact tracing is for everyone's protection. Each day's list will be shredded 2 weeks after.**

Northern New Jersey Intergroup - 2400 Morris Avenue, Suite 106 Union, NJ 07083

2021 INTERGROUP CALENDAR – STARTS DEC. 2020

2021 CALENDAR FIRST QUARTER

Please see Calendar on nnjaa.org for meeting updates & locations

DECEMBER 2020

- 3 Intergroup Delegates Meeting 8:30PM
- 13 Bookers Exchange 7:00AM
- 9 Archives Committee 7:00PM
- 25 Holiday – Office Closed – Christmas Observed
- 23 Joint Website Committee 7:30PM

JANUARY 2021

- 1 Holiday – Office Closed – New Year's Day
- 7 Intergroup Delegates Meeting, 8:30PM
- 13 Archives Committee 7:00PM
- 20 Nightwatch Committee 7:00PM
- 27 Website Committee 7:30PM

FEBRUARY 2021

- 4 Intergroup Delegates Meeting 8:30PM
- 10 Archives Committee 7:00PM
- 17 Holiday – Office Closed – Presidents' Day
- 23 Joint Unity Meeting
- 26 Website Committee 7:30PM

MARCH 2021

- 4 Intergroup Delegates Meeting, 8:30PM
- 14 Booker's Exchange 7:00AM
- 10 Archives Committee 7:00PM
- 17 Nightwatch Committee 7:00PM
- 24 Joint Website Committee 7:30PM
- 28 Holiday – Office Closed – Good Friday

AA Happenings *Outside* Area 44

NERAASA 2021	NERAASA 2021
<p>26, 27 & 28 de febrero ¡La experiencia virtual, Una NERAASA como ninguna otra!</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">!Regístrate aquí!</p> <p>Únete a los muchos que harán historia en la primera virtual Asamblea de Servicio de la Región Noreste de Alcohólicos Anónimos.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆ Mesas Redondas ◆ Paneles ◆ ◆ Presentación del Custodio Regional del Noreste ◆ Puntos destacados de los delegados ◆ ◆ Diversión & Compañerismo ◆</p> <hr/> <p>NERAASA 2021 ofrecerá participación en inglés, español, A.S.L. y C.C.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$21.00 ¡Fin de semana de NERAASA 2021!</p> <p>¡Todo los miembros de A.A. son bienvenidos y animados a asistir!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">¡Estamos haciendo historia!</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Preguntas: info@nerassa.org Visite el sitio web de NERAASA AQUI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">¡Regístrate ahora!</p>	<p>February 26, 27 & 28, 2021 The virtual experience, a NERAASA like no other!</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Register Here!</p> <p>Join the many who will make history at the first virtual Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">◆ Round Tables ◆ Panels ◆ ◆ Northeast Regional Trustee Presentation ◆ Delegates' Highlights ◆ ◆ Fun & Fellowship ◆</p> <hr/> <p>NERAASA 2021 will offer participation in English, Spanish, A.S.L. & C.C.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$21.00 '21 NERAASA weekend!</p> <p>All A.A. members are both welcome and encouraged to attend!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We are making history!</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Questions: info@nerassa.org Visit the NERAASA website HERE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Register Now!</p>

From our Area 44 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 Inter group, or AA as a whole. We welcome your comments, opinions or viewpoints on anything found in this newsletter.*
 — The Editor

The Waves of Sobriety - The Ups and Downs of Life

Hi, my name is Elizabeth, and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is October 15, 2019. There have been many ups and many downs this past year. I have experienced some dark lows and some amazing highs. The lows always passed, and I wanted the highs to last forever. Even if the lows or the highs felt like they would always last, they always passed, and I am learning to accept that. I must accept that the highs will always pass and that I will not always be happy, lest I build up my expectations too high and fall when they are not met.



The beginning of my sobriety reminded me of a tumultuous stormy sea. A stormy sea inside of me with turbulent waves and dark unstable skies. As time went on, the skies slowly became clear and the seas gradually became calm. There was a flood of intense emotions and events in my life that surfaced when I first quit drinking. But I have been learning to work through it all one day at a time and a little bit at a time with the strength of God and the support of AA and loved ones. God is my tower of strength that I run to for protection in the storm, and AA helps me to soberly walk through the storm. There were times that I craved alcohol very intensely because I wanted to escape the storm. But I didn't because I knew that the path of my alcoholism lead to destruction and death. So, I held on a day and a moment at a time to get through any storms I faced with God and AA. There have been deep hurts and great joys. My world has felt shaken, and I also have felt an anchor firmly grounded in my soul. No matter what I go through, whether high or low, on the mountains or in the valleys, I will never stop from being an alcoholic. Picking up a drink will never solve a problem. I would still have the problem plus alcohol addiction that would lead to destruction and death and hurt the people I love. That is the truth, and I accept it. That is not the road that I want to walk on anymore. I look forward to this journey that I am on even though there will be lows that I feel now. I want to avoid feeling numb and do away with drowning my negative feelings with alcohol. I know I don't walk it alone, even if I feel alone. I walk this journey with God and the Fellowship that has helped saved my life.

Every step that I take to work the program (prayer, meetings, sponsorship, AA literature and books, commitments, Step work, calling AA Women, etc.), I set up guards as watch towers. The more effort I put into my sobriety, the more guards there are at every watch tower to protect me from attacks. I am shielded from attacks. When I am vulnerable, I am protected and saved by God and the fellowship of AA.

My sobriety is a most precious gift that I greatly treasure. As someone once told me, "God's gift to you is sobriety, and your gift to God is my sobriety." What a blessed gift that God and AA has given me.

Elizabeth, NJ



Living in Step Twelve

When I am truly living my best Twelfth Step life, I have the ultimate pleasure of reciprocity. As I continue to have spiritual awakenings, I find myself not only carrying the message to other alcoholics, but to all the people in my life. Some of the recipients of my Step Twelve work include my husband, my children, the grocery clerk and all the members of my home group.

I find myself smiling more often than not, giving a friendly greeting to all I come across, and sharing my favorite phrase, “God’s will, not mine be done.” The bonus is in the smiles back, the good will extended, and the agreement that indeed God’s will is being done.

Maureen I., Early Risers Home Group

The Mother of All Alcohol Problems

One of the scariest parts of getting sober was discovering who I would be without drinking. Since age thirteen, I had been carefully cultivating an identity as a drinker. If I wasn’t a drunk, what was I? The answer: Terrified. But I found solace in those welcoming alcoholics who told me I was in the right place.

I discovered more about myself the longer I stayed sober. My love running, music, my trivia skills. Sobriety gave me many gifts but discovering myself was certainly the most profound.

It also gave me a family. I met my husband J. when we were both two years sober. At nine years sober, I gave birth to my daughter, M.

I had long dreamed of raising a child in the rooms. I imagined her coloring in the back, old-timers sneaking cookies to her as they passed. I heard women say, “My children won’t ever see me drunk,” and I wanted that. So many also shared how their own mothers’ alcoholism shaped their lives. I wanted motherhood that was rooted in sobriety.

The reality for me was far different, though. In those hazy, frantic early days with a newborn, I couldn’t even find time to shower—much less navigate the icy streets for some recovery. When I finally made a meeting, I hustled in with a baby and a heavy diaper bag, sweating under winter layers. I had been sitting for about one minute when I felt a tap on my shoulder: a regular who wanted their “usual” seat. As I moved my mountain of belongings, I heard someone mutter, “Why would you have a baby out this late anyway?”

My cheeks burned with embarrassment and frustration. It was 6 pm.

I tried more meetings. For every one that welcomed M. and me, there was another where I’d see a head shake, a whispered word. Get a sitter. If M. cried, I would cringe. It became that the threat of even the slightest whimper leveled up my anxiety so that I could not focus, stress drumming in my ears. I could attend a meeting, but never hear a message.

I struggled. As with my early sobriety, I was undergoing a profound identity shift. Motherhood had shattered and rebuilt me into a different person. A move from my native New York to the suburbs of New Jersey made life unrecognizable. I was isolated and terrified. Unlike those early days, I wasn’t always told that I was in the right place. Often, it felt like the wrong one.

I gravitated towards women’s groups, where sober sisters understood. They laughed when a toddling M. snuck around the room plucking donation dollars from hands and trying to smash them into her tiny pocket. They knew I was experiencing a seismic shift in my life and recovery, and they gave me grace. I wish I could say it was enough, but the die was cast. I felt like a burden. After moving for the second time, I ducked out of AA altogether.

The rest happened as it does: I didn’t drink, but I became the person I was before. Unhappy. Resentful. So, so lonely. It took nearly three years of white-knuckling and a sincere sense of desperation before I came back to meetings and connected. Slowly and surely, I am doing that.

Why am I sharing this? Because I used to think it was my fault. It’s not anyone’s fault—it’s just a reality and something many people don’t think about until it affects them. I almost lost my sobriety over it, so I share it whenever I’ve got the mic. When I talk about losing my place as a mother in AA, I find many women have shared my experience. They nod and press their phone numbers into my hand. “Me too,” they say. The Big Book has many stories, but none tapped into the gratitude I had for the Program and then the rejection I felt from it. Now, I approach mothers in meetings to tell them they’re welcome. I co-chair a children-welcome women’s meeting monthly. I bring meetings to homes of new mothers, because I remember how hard it is to even find your pants in those crazy newborn days. I try to make it a part of my service, the unofficial Welcomer of Moms. It’s a lifelong commitment.

Here’s how I found my new home group: I walked into the early morning meeting ten minutes late with M., then 4, in her pajamas beside me. My heart pounded and my face burned and a woman, now my sponsor, saw me enter. She stood up and got two chairs and put them down next to her. A small act of kindness that told me, “Yes, Julia. You’re in the right place.”

I will pass that on.

Julia M., Early Risers

Third Step Reflection

Made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of God *as we understood him*.

I have been reflecting on what to write about concerning my experience with the Third Step and have once again found myself blocked. For two weeks now, my contemplations have resulted in only procrastination, which is worth exploring as it is pertinent to the Third Step. I will seek to remove this blockage through the process of self-searching and rigorous honesty. I think that I've been putting off this piece of writing because I am beholden to the obsessive pattern of thinking that is perfectionism. It is a negative mental habit that has repeatedly stunted my efforts in many areas but particularly in recovery.

Throughout my journey in sobriety, perfectionism has proven to be a device of self-sabotage. I want to impress my sponsor or whoever would hear or read this, and then suddenly this imaginary standard comes into play to defeat the task before it has even begun. "It's not going to be good enough," or "you will sound foolish and stupid," or, worst of all, "they will just laugh at you and dismiss you."

So, perfectionism is a problem, and all problems, concerning self-searching, can be traced to some sort of fear. For me, it is rooted in the fear of failure as well as the fear of rejection. Both have an easy solution: I can pray to my higher power and ask for them to be removed.

Ironically, if I simply embrace the Third Step, then I can find my answer. If I am to stand by my decision to turn my will and life over to the care of God as I understand him, then I can be relieved from the bondage of self. At the very least, I can be comforted by faith that I can progress towards that ideal and not stay stuck.

I made that decision partly in Steps One and Two, having surrendered to the disease concept and the stark reality that I was alcoholic, my life was unmanageable, and I was most likely insane. That said, a decision without action is nothing more than a wish or fantasy. And realizing that probably no human power, especially my own, could relieve my alcoholism, I accepted the proposition that perhaps God could relieve it. Why not? It seems like a reasonable decision considering I was left with only a few dark alternatives: kill myself quickly through suicide or kill myself slowly in a lonely alcoholic depression. So, action was needed. I needed to set aside my prejudices and preconceived notions on life, the program, myself, and God. Continued action is aligning my will and daily activities with that which is a force for good. Allowing peace and goodness to be the goalposts for every action, thought, or behavior.

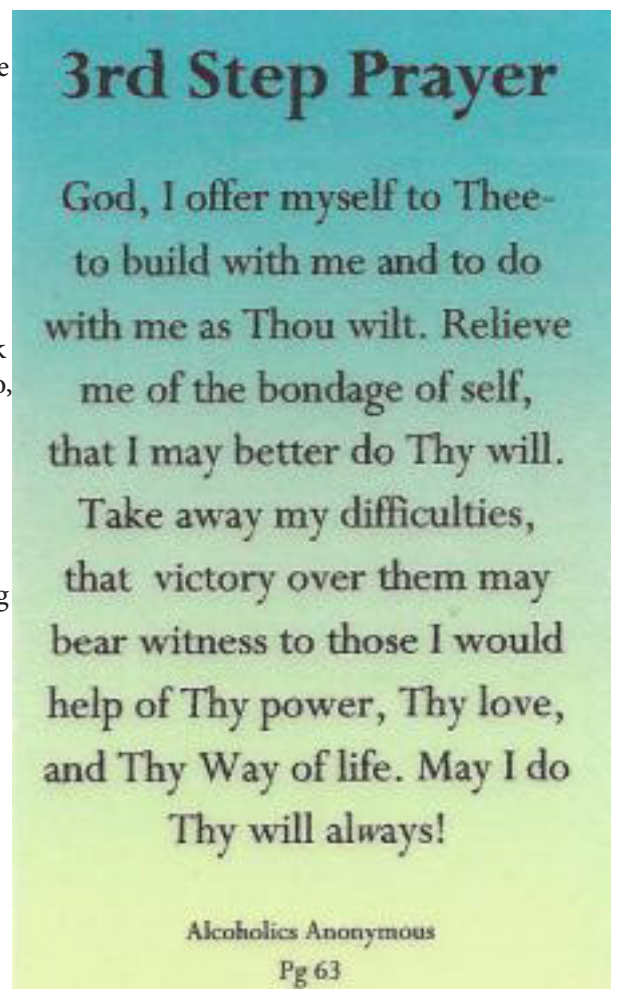
I was beginning to stand in the sunlight of the spirit, and it was warm and pleasant, like an overdue hug from a long-lost friend. I suddenly ceased wanting to hurt myself and give up on life; fear was beginning to leave me. I couldn't explain why I had this newfound faith or where this assurance was coming from until I contemplated this step a few months into my sobriety. It was a simple discovery, but a powerful one.

The critical component of this step is something subtle that initially went unnoticed, "the care of" section of the step. When I am turning over my life and my will, it's not by force or subjugation nor is it done with shame or dismay. It's being willing to give the keys over to someone who is better able to drive. It is trusting that I am handing this crazy life over to an entity that has my best interest in mind, an entity that I have come to believe is truly a force for good. Page 133 of our Big Book says, "we are sure that God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free." Logically, I must deduce that someone or something that wants that outcome for me must only be able to have that sort of desire from a source of tremendous love and hope. I have begun to accept this as a realistic probability, possibly even, an actual reality. There is truth to be had in the logic of love.

My sponsor shared a personal story that I found acutely relevant to this sentiment. When he was in rehab sixteen years ago, he recalled being in pretty rough shape. He remembered being woken up at three in the morning by the elderly male nurse taking his blood pressure, feeling like hell and despairing, but then feeling comforted by his words, "You're gonna be alright. God loves you." And suddenly he knew that in fact, he would be all right. That was inspiring to hear, as I felt the comfort and love of the spirit that touched him. A shared grace makes him a channel for God, and that is a blessing for me.

Knowing now that faith will free me from my fears and that God can relieve me of the burden of self-centeredness, if only I ask him to, I can continue to recover and break through that which has blocked me from my higher power. I can grow along a spiritual basis and live happy, joyous, and free. What's beautiful is that I want to live today, and that's incredible. I am so grateful that I get to be a part of this new freedom and happiness. I feel blessed today, so I will continue to ask my God to make of me what He wants, do with me as he will, and hopefully it is his will and not my own that will be done.

By Chris J., sober since March 19, 2018



A Reflection on Character Defects

Character defects have been one of the most difficult steps in my journey to sobriety. The most difficult for me is the judging and critical thoughts that come to mind when socializing with others. Unfortunately, I have found when I am introduced to people or simply just see them on the street, I begin to judge in a negative way. I realize this is a defect, but what am I to do to rectify this disturbing defect? First, I treat it just as I did with my urges to drink. I put it out of my mind, and immediately I think of something else or make myself become physically active to divert my thoughts from my defect. After some thought, I found running from this was not an answer. I thought that if I could train my mind to think of more positive things when I found myself in these situations, then maybe I may conquer this defect. Well, I'm not perfect, but I feel I'm getting better with this practice and find myself in a much better place when confronted with my defect. The fact is that judging situations and people is the human condition as it relates to self-preservation. So, when having this defect in particular, do not be hard on yourself as this reaction is natural. Just try to correct it to the best of your ability.

Dan M.

Clarity in a Bottle

I've spent most of my life searching, but I rarely knew what I was searching for. I always sensed something was amiss, but I couldn't figure out what it was. Most of the time, I let other people tell me what it was: I was too smart, not smart enough; too quiet, not loud enough; too energetic, not calm enough. I felt I wasn't enough without knowing enough of what.

So, I kept searching for something. That one thing that could help me finally figure things out. I wasn't expecting magic because I had a scientific schooling. But I hoped to find something that might just be the secret of life – at least for my life.

I always had hope. So, I continued to search and research. Most of my searching conformed with what I thought was expected of me. I was helpful around the house, got good grades in school, avoided trouble like the plague. I showed up early for church and returned my library books on time.

A child of the sixties, I fancied myself a non-conformist. I opposed the war, wore bell bottoms and tie-dyed tee shirts, and preferred homemade granola over Frosted Flakes. I imagined I was a modern woman because I chose to have a career instead of babies.

Meanwhile, I kept searching, kept looking for ways to fit in. I changed jobs, hobbies, husbands. I read self-help books and better-nutrition cookbooks. I tried yoga, meditation, low-impact exercise, high-intensity workouts, journaling, the time-management-plan of the month. I joined, I quit, I planned, I improvised.

For many years, alcohol seemed to help. A glass of wine or two helped me feel as if I belonged, as if I were enough. A nice buzz helped me think I was finding a clever solution to whichever of life's challenges I thought I needed to address. Along the way, I discovered martinis, which led to the wine-only cure, the every-other-day cure, the weekends-only cure, the days-ending-in-Y cure, the not-until-five-o'clock cure.

At some point, I struggled to focus when I was working and to relax when I wasn't working. One lovely summer evening, I reluctantly attended a ladies' get-together where someone was promoting a line of trendy aromatherapy products. Wineglass in hand, I bought some bubble bath and a little bottle of something called Clarity. I used the bubble bath right away, and it worked its magic, temporarily. I set aside the bottle of Clarity, saving it for the next time I couldn't focus on my work.

When I needed it, my little bottle of Clarity was nowhere to be found. But I always knew where to find my big bottle of vodka. Because whatever I was searching for – whether it was peace of mind or a piece of paper with something really important scribbled illegibly on it – I thought I could find it in my big bottle.

Many, many big bottles later, I was still searching for answers in a bottle. It wasn't until I found Alcoholics Anonymous that I started to find answers. And a year or two into my recovery, I finally found that little bottle of Clarity – which I still haven't opened. Instead, I keep it as memento of my journey. And to remind me to be grateful for my happy road to destiny – which shall not litter with empty bottles.

Sherry B., Bridgewater NJ

On Topic: Sober No Matter What

Sober No Matter What

I write this as I attempt to “power up” using the tools that AA has freely given me. I believe that the culprit that is attacking my spiritual condition today is anger and resentment. I refuse to let anger take me back out. I have sat with anger long enough to know that her real name is grief. Today, I will work on forgiveness after I feel my feelings and not before it. Repressed feelings never go away. I have to feel them so I can move on and stay healthy.

I have to pray for help to release this anger. Why does prayer work? I don't know. I used to roll my eyes at the prayer suggestion, but now it is a vital part of my day. I pray for clarity. I pray for God to remove the desire to drink from me in the morning and thank him at night for keeping me sober. It is a simple yet effective practice for me. My sponsor gave me that suggestion and years later, I am still sober. Whatever works.

I need to be rigorously honest and talk to others about my struggles. I can't get caught up in how my problems are so different or think that no one understands. That is a lie. Or as a woman in an AA meeting shared recently, I suffer from terminal uniqueness.

My default is to handle everything on my own and silently. I battle this default and aim for courageous vulnerability. Yes, sometimes I am scared, but I do it anyway. Here I am! Maybe you won't like me if you know the real me? It's a destructive thought. The women in AA have loved me from day one when I did not love myself. Today, I lean on them since I feel like isolating. They understand my silence and see it is a red flag. I see it now too.

I stay sober by praying every day, continuously working the steps, practicing self-care, staying in contact with my sponsor and others in AA daily, feeling my feelings no matter how unpleasant, and not picking up a drink. If I pick up a drink, then I am right back where I left off. I would be in a living hell where my life is unmanageable and the raw pain I feel physically hurts.

Today, I practice awareness as a habit. I feel like my life has meaning and hope because I started truly loving myself. My dark past is useful to help others. I can laugh at myself. I don't feel alone anymore. I have an army of women who help me when my spiritual condition is breaking down. Today, I set boundaries because I have my integrity back. I am more comfortable now saying this is my limit. and I mean it. I used to say yes to almost everything.

I stay sober no matter what because my life depends on it. This is not an exaggeration: it's the brutal truth. I was given a second chance, and I refuse to give up.

Suzanne M. Rumson, NJ,
Safe Harbor 9:30am Sunday HG

Staying Sober No Matter What

We are living in trying times. Not only is the pandemic sweeping the world, but also, our country is so divided that anger and hatred appear to be raging and rampant. This situation is difficult for all law-abiding citizens, but these circumstances are even more strenuous for the fragile alcoholic whose emotional state is on a see-saw and whose spirituality may or may not exist.

Hence, joining and working the AA program is now more urgent than ever before. However, the recovering alcoholic has another impediment to step over: getting and staying sober, using virtual meetings on Zoom. AA had no choice but to develop virtual meetings because of the pandemic and the Governor's executive orders that live-indoor events could not take place in order to stop the spread of Covid 19. Therefore, the personal connections and fellowship that are necessary in making the AA program work were gone.

But long-term recovering alcoholics are not quitters. We have learned to cope with the curve balls that life throws at us. We have a strong faith that our higher power (as we define him) will get us through. We never throw the towel in, and we make the best out of the worst possible situations. Long termers look at life in a positive way and not in the negative manner in which we used to see life. Consequently, we have developed a tremendous amount of possible virtual meetings where the newcomer can log in for needed help. We realize that with the logistical convenience of Zoom, not only can we go to more than one meeting in a day from our homes but we can also attend meetings all over the world. Taking part in meetings outside the United States is a means and a gift to help us see that alcoholics cope with the same issues and stresses worldwide.

In addition, we alcoholics have learned through practice that even on Zoom, we are able to stay after the meeting and chat and obtain phone numbers. Another positive aspect that Zoom affords us is that older recovering alcoholics do not have to drive to meetings at night; therefore, they can avoid having an accident because their eyes are not as good as they used to be. This advantage might give older members who have not been at a meeting in some time to return to AA. Zoom also affords disabled recovering alcoholics attendance at meetings.

But as previously mentioned, the most important lesson learned is that long-term recovering alcoholics never give up and are always available to help another alcoholic, whether the aid is in person or virtual. I do not mean to suggest here that live meetings are not as good as electronic ones; I just want to emphasize that in order to stay sober, alcoholics must learn to go with the flow; otherwise, the possibility of a relapse is imminent.

Anthony P., *This Day* Alt. Chair, District 35: Bradley Gardens and North Branch Groups, Bridgewater, NJ

Staying Sober at Any Cost

When I asked if I could share, my sponsor told me, "You have to have something before you can give it away, and we already know how to get drunk. I'll tell you when to raise your hand." We met at night where he told me to walk from my town to the town where the meeting was with an army medic who knew we could get a ride home once we got there. Sometimes the ride home would take a while, after mopping, emptying the trash, putting away the chairs, and going to the diner afterwards.

Eventually, I went to work, bought a car, got insurance and drove that car everywhere. If the meetings, which were all at night on work nights, were too late after we went to the diner on work nights, I'd get pulled over by the police. I would be asked what I was doing in certain neighborhoods where the more serious criminals lived. I would tell the policeman I was sober, and he would say, "Alright, stay safe and have a nice night." After years of recovery, I traveled from New Jersey to Florida, then to Montreal and out to Waikiki. Then, I figured it would be nice to ride my motorcycle to meetings down the shore, but I broke my neck in an accident and ended up almost dead. I couldn't go to meetings for a while but remembered the stories in the Big Book about men going to war for two years and staying sober even without meetings.

Eventually, after many operations on my spine, neck, head, and arms, I got an electric wheelchair from one of the guys I had sponsored and worked with. The wheelchair was second hand and he fixed it up. I was weak but it only took a joystick to operate. And I could and do ride it a few miles at a time to and from the meeting in our town. I also get to attend Zoom meetings to see many folks I have met in the last few decades of rebuilding my destroyed life and getting sober and happy. I have held onto the readings too. Things always look better and better because I have always insisted on being happy, joyous, and free and helping people find a power that will help them with their problems. I do get around on my own now, although it's not like thirty-five years ago riding bicycles down the shore. It isn't even like it was just five years ago, driving people and taking my motorcycle to groups in our area. But the safest feeling I have ever had was from the rooms and groups that loved me more than I could love myself. It has been a long, strange trip, but I am grateful to AA that I have had the opportunity to stay in recovery and pass it on to newer people who are still suffering. Their success makes me feel happy inside. Have a happy 24.

Fred S., Dry Date - March 6, 1993, Monmouth County, NJ

Willing to Go to Any Length

I first came into AA 32 years ago. However, I never worked the 12 Steps, couldn't keep a sponsor, and barely made a support network. I didn't drink, but my sobriety was in doubt. I was young and in AA for the attention. I was getting to the meetings, dances and the camping trips, etc. I had managed to accumulate sometime in AA, like maybe five years; then, life sidetracked me, and I just stopped going to meetings. I lived the next fourteen years of my life as a dry drunk, and eventually I drank. Although I did return to AA, got a sponsor, attended a variety of meetings every day, read the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and the "Twelve and Twelve" in meetings, I didn't do anything else. I didn't work the Steps, I didn't develop a relationship with a Higher Power, and I never built a support network. Consequently, I found it harder to stay sober and became what is commonly called a "chronic relapser." I made the occasional ER visit, went to a few detoxes, and had a few stints in inpatient rehabs. I had a sponsor from the time I came back to AA after those fourteen years, who was becoming increasingly frustrated and afraid for me. Finally, she blew a fuse and let me have it. That was the kick in the butt that was long overdue. Something clicked. Suddenly I knew what everything meant and I jumped in with both feet. Fortunately for me, one of the things I have been blessed with in this program is the gift of desperation. In January of 2020, I celebrated six years of sobriety, which is more than I ever thought was possible. I've worked the Steps, have a strong faith in a Higher Power, a good network, and the same sponsor that had kicked my butt. I finally felt safe.

Then COVID-19 hit. Everything started to change, but it wasn't until the state closed places where meetings are held that I panicked. I became a recluse and didn't have any contact with my AA fellowship. I was reverting very quickly to my dry drunk behaviors, and I was scared. I was psychosomatically sick with nowhere to go. No Meetings?! That is when the gift of desperation kicked in because I wanted to stay sober. I finally started using the phone and called a member from of my home group who has a lot of time and good sobriety. It was good to hear the voice of a fellow AA member. Of course, she was calm while I was in a state of panic. We talked for a while, and she told me about virtual meetings that I could go to with a phone call or my computer. I just froze. I told her, "I don't know how to do that." I had no experience or desire to sit in a chair, punch some computer keys, or talk into some gadget. I never had the patience or the need to learn how to use computers or smart phones or any other new age electronics. I am very "old school" and these things scared me. However, I had to find the willingness to face my fears and overcome my "old school" ways if I wanted to stay sober. Easy does it but do it! So, with some help from my friend and my husband, who knows his way around a computer, I was hooked up to my first virtual meeting with my home group members. And believe me, when I finally got to see the faces of my fellow AAs, the panic melted like a pint of ice cream in the hot sun. I was back home. Now, I go to virtual meetings on Zoom, keep in touch with my sponsor and network, and work my Steps. I even go on virtual speaking commitments, and I am still sober. Do I like the virtual over live meetings? No. But to stay sober, I have to accept the things I cannot change and find the courage to change the things I can.

by Paula G (aka Pet Shop Paula)

Many thanks to ALL of our writers for *This Day*, Winter 2020 Edition.
 Your words are beautiful and truly inspiring.
 We could not do this without you!!!
 Megan D., Area 44 Newsletter Editor



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 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.

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