



CENTRAL JERSEY INTERGROUP NEWSLETTER

Fall 2023 Issue

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Editor's Notebook

Welcome to the Fall Issue of the Central Jersey Intergroup Newsletter. Let me first say hello: I'm Rob M from the Cranbury Noon Group, and I've had the honor of being named editor of the Intergroup's quarterly newsletter. It's a pleasure to redirect my 30 years of skills and experience in medical publishing to the task of spreading the good news of recovery through Alcoholics Anonymous.

In this issue, Dan H recalls his trepidation when walking into his first meeting, only to be dispelled by a warm and embracing welcome. Jeremy B of Bordentown was a master rationalizer who found plenty of reasons to resist getting help. We hear from two alcoholics with milestones at distant ends of the duration spectrum: Isabel H at 50 years and Christy T at 90 days.

After a lifetime of distrustful and fiercely independent survival strategies, Ken W traces his transition from control to surrender. Another alcoholic describes his spiritual journey to a place where God's spirit is all-pervasive. Paul B shares on how he set aside troubling theological questions and committed himself to aligning his will with God's.

We also feature Chris M, who talks about how her neglect of the steps in early recovery set herself up for an extended relapse. Those interested in the Intergroup's Public Information Committee can turn to John M's discussion of his efforts to raise public AA awareness. And I describe my own inability to grasp Step 1 and the troubles that ensued.

Finally, it's been said that AA members are not a "glum lot." We like to share smiles and laughs, and with that in mind we're lucky to have Princeton cartoonist Joel B around to keep things light with his nimble wit and crafty sketches. Thanks also to Kathy N for her skillful editing and writing, and to Martha H for her expert help with design. ♦

Rob M, Editor

My First Meeting, And the Beauty of Belonging

Dan H, Lawrenceville

Editor's note: Uncertain he'd come to the right place, this alcoholic doubted whether he'd be welcome at his first AA meeting. Yet, willing and open-minded, what he found was a sense of homecoming to a new family, a place where "it was okay for me to stay."

On May 11, 2000, I walked into my first AA meeting at the Winner's Circle in Princeton seriously questioning whether I was an alcoholic and even belonged there, almost like a party-crasher disrupting a small gathering of close friends.

I came into the program without going through a rehab or formal detox, instead coming off alcohol using the marijuana maintenance program, all the while firmly denying I was a bona fide alcoholic. A pothead, sure, but not an alcoholic.

I can't say what brought on this epiphany — it just dawned on me while sitting in my room one day. I hadn't been arrested, there was no DUI, I didn't lose a job or smash up a car, no significant personal troubles. It was just out of the blue, a realization that I had a problem and needed help. I made an appointment with a social worker whose services, which included substance abuse counseling, were provided by my trade union.

I have no reason to believe she was in the program, but she knew a lot about it. Her work with me included requiring me to enter some kind of 12-step program. I watched as she gave up her lunch break to find me a meeting near my home. I now believe she was a facet of my Higher Power in action.

I approached that first meeting with fear and unfounded projections: They'd probably catch on immediately that I wasn't a real alcoholic and ask me to leave, or maybe not even let me sit down in the first place.

As a newcomer, I didn't know that people customarily gather and chat for a while before a meeting. Here I was arriving scarcely moments before it started, only to find every folding chair in the circle taken. Just then a kind old-timer, Phil T, looked up and probably saw exactly what was in my eyes: terror and skittishness, the hollow gaze of a broken person. He stood up and said, "Let's get you a chair," and went to get me one.

Then something happened that struck me as meaningful, not only as a courteous gesture but also as a symbol of the group's openness

***They opened up the circle
of chairs to make room for
this uncertain newcomer.***

to those wishing to stop drinking, and their readiness always to welcome one more: In that meeting there was always room for one

more. They read out of a funny blue book, each taking a turn, again introducing themselves as alcoholics. Then finally it came to a woman who identified as an addict. They didn't get out the tar and feathers, they didn't throw her out the window, nobody flinched. It was okay for her to stay.

I thought, if it was okay for her to stay, it was okay for me to stay too.

And it was that welcoming hand of AA, being extended to those who want sobriety, that made it okay for me to work the program. ♦

Rationalizing Resistance: My Wayward Path to Surrender

Jeremy B, Wrightstown

Editor's note: A fertile imagination is a double-edged sword. For an alcoholic, its destructive edge amounts to rationalizations in which you downplay the disease's severity, its consequences, and the need for help. Here's a story of the prototypical reluctant alcoholic.

Even after acknowledging I had a problem with alcohol, I had plenty of reasons to resist a remedy: "I don't need AA." "That's only for people with nowhere else to go." "I refuse to be Bible-thumped into sobriety." "I'm not powerless." "After all, my life isn't unmanageable."

I wanted to do it on my own terms. After all, I'd managed to do so many other things on my own. Surely I could figure this out.

The first time I saw the 12 steps displayed on a wall was in an intensive outpatient treatment facility. I was there for treatment following an unpleasant collision of my alcoholism and work. I conceded I may have a problem with alcohol. And I'd have to be oblivious not to see that it had been progressing for years. Yet I was confident my intellect, personal drive, and knowledge of the problem would allow me to conquer my troubles and get things under control.

Sitting in that IOP, I glanced at Step 1 and scoffed at it. I wasn't powerless. After all, I could control it when I needed to (except when it interfered with work, or that other time when I ruined plans with my wife, or that other time ...). And my life was still manageable: I had a job, a house, two cars, a wife, a dog, and a retirement plan. I had received promotions and accolades at work, even as my thoughts revolved around when I could drink again, how I could get away

with it, and what lies I would tell to avoid getting caught. I could rationalize away the consequences with ease, convincing myself everything was okay.

Not only that, I was also reluctant to rely on God, that is, being Bible-thumped into sobriety. I didn't want to turn anything over to God as suggested in the third step, and wanted nothing to do with any religious concepts that would give me a guilt trip until I got sober.

After 10 months of dry-drunk abstinence, doing it my way, I had a catastrophic and embarrassing relapse. I call those 10 months my time of "stumbling through sobriety." I knew what was wrong but could see no solution. I didn't have a program, nor did I have anyone to reach out to for help when I felt weak. I didn't know what I was doing,

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"I've found a Power Greater Than Myself."

Courtesy: Joel B

All it took was the simple idea of having a couple drinks to creep in and I was defenseless. What followed was an exercise in shame and embarrassment, another blemish on my work record, and the humbling realization that I could not do this on my own.

Yet I still didn't know what to do. Everything was falling apart. I was about to lose my wife, my job, my reputation, my sanity. Then somehow I was given the gift of desperation. Finally I surrendered, and gave up fighting anything or anyone.

I checked myself into a 28-day recovery program and left my ego at the door. There I learned a lot about myself and heard many stories that sounded like mine. I wasn't unique after all.

When the month was over, I followed their advice: Go to 90 meetings in 90 days, find a home group, get a sponsor. I worked the steps with my sponsor and got involved with service. And I took suggestions on what to do because, given my track record, I didn't trust my own instincts.

I wish I'd surrendered sooner to my Higher Power and the program of AA. My life, my relationships, my health, and my outlook on life have improved beyond anything I possibly could have expected. Turns out I was wrong about everything I once thought about AA. Yes, I *did* need the program — it's not only for people with nowhere to turn. I didn't get Bible-thumped or religiously guilt-tripped into sobriety. My life was unmanageable, and I was powerless over alcohol. All it took was letting go and kicking my ego to the back seat. ♦

Long Time Coming: Isabel, 50 Years and Counting

Isabel H, Newtown, Conn.

Editor's note: It's said that each of us has only today — a daily reprieve. But when you've had over 18,250 daily reprieves, now that's something special. In this first of a series of tributes to long-timers, we meet Isabel, a member of Hightstown's Early Birds group who recently celebrated 50 years. We're honored to have her share a half-century of experience, strength, and hope.

How it Was

My name is Isabel H and I'm an alcoholic. My sobriety date is May 17, 1973. I was born and raised in Staten Island, my family middle-class. I had a strict upbringing, my parents taking us to Mass, my brothers and I attending parochial schools.

God gave me a good brain and I did well in school. I didn't crave admiration but didn't reject it either. I attended college and on weekends returned home to play canasta with my mother and aunt.

They drank, but at the time there was no evident problem in anyone's case. My family routinely had a drink before dinner and a nightcap before bed. If company arrived, my mother would right away ask what they wanted to drink, and she surely didn't mean coffee or tea.

I would characterize my mother as an alcoholic later in life. She died of cirrhosis in her mid-60s.

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A young lady in the 1950's, I dated and went to parties and dances, but drinking was not something we did. I do remember my first drink, I think it was rye, at the kitchen table with my mother and aunt. I felt like a real grown-up.

My progression was slow. I worked in Manhattan and met my husband through a singing group I'd joined. We started dating, and if we had one drink apiece, that was fine. He was successful, had a lot of friends, and was very active. After two years we married. His father and two younger brothers drank heavily, yet no one knew about AA at that time.

I was a stay-at-home mom, and my husband started a small business with two guys who soon became friends. He began drinking with them at lunchtime and quickly became sick. The business failed, we were hurting for money, and I ended up working two part-time jobs to help pay the bills. My husband didn't want friends to know I was working, so I moved back with my parents and became a parochial schoolteacher. This called for a master's degree so I attended school at night.

My mother and I drank together while my husband stayed at our old house and drank the whole day through. I tried to make it work, but it got to the point where one night my husband and I stood in the living room screaming at each other well past midnight.

What Happened

It was around this time that God intervened and told me that if I didn't do something about my drinking, something very bad was

Hospitals and Institutions Speaker Commitments

8/26/2023			1st Week	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week	5th week
Princeton House Women 1000 Herrontown Road, Princeton	Mon 11:30 AM		Open	Open	Filled	Open	Open
Princeton House 741 Mt. Lucas Road, Princeton	M - F 9:30 AM		Just Opening Back up on a limited basis				
Princeton House Herrontown Road, Princeton	TBD		Just Opening Back up				
High Focus Centers 15 Princess Rd, Lawrenceville, NJ	M or Th, 4:30 PM		Would like to have 15-25 year old speakers for a Teenage program				
Trenton Psychiatric Hospital 101 Sullivan Way, Trenton	TBD		Just Opening Back up				
Avant Rehabilitation & Care Center 1314 Brunswick Ave, Trenton	TBD		This is a Rehab with new ownership and just starting up AA Meetings				
Rescue Mission of Trenton 96 Carroll Street, Trenton, NJ	TBD		The Mens Rehab, is just (re) starting up AA Meetings there.				
We Level Up 276 Bakers Basin Rd Lawrenceville, NJ	7 PM Wed		Filled	X	X	X	X
	7 PM Sun		X	Filled	X	X	X

Notes : Open means the Commitment needs to be filled

Filled means the Commitment is filled by CJIG

All Commitments can be filled by either men or women **except:**

Princeton House Women is a Womens Commitment

The Rescue Mission is a Mens Commitment

 = Needs to be filled

 = filled

X = means the Facility has filled the commitment

going to happen. My husband found another woman, and that was my tipping point, as my drinking escalated and my marriage ended. The kids and I moved into a city housing project with my brother-in-law, plus his younger brother and family. My plate these days was full: I was a single mom of four early teenagers, working full-time, and attending graduate school. So I was functioning. My mom died the same year I left the marriage, and the following year my dad died. Through it all, I didn't realize God was holding me up.

One day my brother-in-law said he had finally quit drinking and joined AA. Would I like to go to a meeting with him? I went and identified down to the soles of my feet. But I wasn't quite ready.

What finally brought me to AA was a blackout. God knew what he was doing because, though I'd always been diligent

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with my studies, one night I came home to my books, had a couple drinks, and blacked out. The next day I called the Manhattan Intergroup and they sent two ladies who took me to a meeting. That was my beginning.

In early sobriety I juggled one meeting a week with a job, school, and time with my kids. All the while I was terrified. But I knew I had to be at that meeting, and I sat there feeling alone and desperate. When I had 90 days the leader asked about milestones, and a friendly man stood up and said, "Isabel has 90 days!" He and his wife, who was also in this group, had brought me a 90-day pin. It still makes me cry to think about it. The pin came with a plaque about having only today. I hadn't mingled with them, but all the while they were quietly turning their attention my way. It meant a lot, realizing that somebody cares no matter what.

How it Is Now

Sobriety has given me so many gifts over the years. Let me name some.

I attended therapy with someone in the program who helped me learn to trust people and to see God in a new light. I don't think I could have stayed sober without that trust. There was the World War II veteran

who drove me and another woman to meetings for 10 years when I didn't have a car. I believe God sent him. One day someone noticed me working in a typing pool, and after reading my resume took me around and got me a better job. I know God arranged this so I could support my family.

I've had the privilege to sponsor many women, and have a new sponsee who just moved down the street from me in Connecticut. I still go to meetings when I can, and I'm on Zoom for the Hightstown Early Birds meeting almost every morning.

I've been blessed that I've never lost contact with my children even though I was an alcoholic mom. I've reunited with my two brothers who were estranged for 25 years. I wrote them an amends letter, and while they didn't rush to give me a hug — they were cool at first — we've since become close.

Best of all, I found a God of my understanding who is personal to me. My perception of God has evolved. I know now that God is interested in what happens to me, and I can talk to him about anything and everything. The idea of a personal God who is there for me through ups and downs, in thick and thin, is the most important thing in my life. ♦

Reclaiming the Magic Within: How I Learned to Love Myself

Christy T, Robbinsville Township

Editor's note: This high-spirited alcoholic forged a productive and prosperous path in pharmaceutical leadership until escalating drinking reversed that trajectory, dragging her to unforeseen depths of despair and degradation. Celebrating 90 days October 20, Christy credits honesty, humility, and community as the pillars of her nascent recovery.

How it Was

One night a couple years ago my husband returned home to find me passed out on the bathroom floor with the word "HELP" carved with scissors into my thigh. A successful pharmaceutical director surrounded by a

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loving family, for me the episode was yet another of many wake-up calls and cries for help that ultimately brought me back to AA, where on Oct. 20 I celebrated 90 days.

In earlier happier times drinking was all about fun with little concern for consequences. I never could have imagined that a drink that lubricated and fueled so many joyful occasions would one day turn on me and jeopardize the things I held most dear, my family life and career, not to mention my peace of mind.

My earliest drinking was innocent enough, gathering with high school friends for moderate drinking on weekends, and not even every week. I didn't drink to escape or hide, but rather just to have fun. It wasn't a huge part of my life. In college at SUNY Binghamton my drinking picked up, but it was all social, I never drank at home, and I was just doing what everybody else was doing. I enjoyed it, and the idea of stopping never occurred. Besides, I was doing well in my studies as a biochemistry major. And while in my first couple years I felt a little out of place socially among my classmates, by senior year I'd gained more confidence and ease.

College was when I started understanding that alcohol could be a problem, not

necessarily for me, but I started dating someone who had a lot of trouble with it. This was a mentally and emotionally abusive relationship, entirely codependent, and it exacted a deep and lasting toll.

It was around the time I entered Manhattan's Weill Cornell Medicine for a doctorate in pharmacology that my drinking started to take off. In my early 20s, confident, energetic, always up for a good time, I had a blast going about with friends amid New York's dazzling nightlife. If my romantic life during this time was mostly a roster of losers, each one worse than the last, overall, I was enjoying life to the hilt while earning high marks in school. This pattern continued into my late 20s as I launched a career that would ultimately place me in the pharmaceutical industry. Throughout this time, I handled challenging and rewarding jobs, and never drank alone at home. I was a loyal regular, however, at the frequent happy hours I enjoyed with colleagues.

Alcohol at this point caused no problems in my life. By 2006, however, I suffered from a separate addiction, a severe eating disorder. I would purchase food with the express intent of throwing it up. I couldn't stop bingeing and purging. As would later happen

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Notable Quotable

Lincoln Admired 'Habitual Drunkards'

"In my judgment such of us who have never fallen victims [to alcoholism] have been spared more by the absence of appetite than from any mental or moral superiority over those who have. Indeed, I believe if we take habitual drunkards as a class, their heads and hearts will bear an advantageous comparison with those of any other class."

— Abraham Lincoln, 1842, address to the Washingtonian Temperance Society

Source: "Under the Influence: A Guide to the Myths and Realities of Alcoholism," James. R. Milam, Ph.D., Katherine Ketcham, Bantam Books, 1981.

with alcohol, I had lost control. In a bad place emotionally and mentally unstable, I also endured a broken engagement. Thanks to group and individual therapy, my eating disorder went into remission, and by my late-20s I was healthy and doing well. I met my husband, and we quickly married and had three kids. It's interesting how, once you start taking care of yourself, things start to fall into place.

Until my mid-30s drinking never caused harmful consequences. I knew I drank a lot, more than most people, but I wasn't obsessing and felt no compulsion. At work I was getting one promotion after another. And I was a great mom, with one key exception. Remaining sober through my first two pregnancies, by the third I was having trouble not drinking, and I caved, and would have a glass of wine once in a while. That was the first time I realized I didn't have as much control over alcohol as I thought I did. While nursing my daughter I tried to time and calibrate my alcohol intake so it wouldn't affect her milk. After I was done nursing her, all bets were off, the floodgates had opened.

Over the years my drinking progressed, yet I still wasn't seeing any substantive, lasting consequences. Part of my job was to lead a team of medical professionals living across the nation, and I traveled weekly for meetings in various cities. Drinking during the day at the airport or at business meetings became commonplace. At conferences, I'd sometimes stock up and drink in my hotel room before hitting the seminars. Yet all the while the promotions kept coming.

It wasn't long, however, until the horrors of advanced drinking started to set in. COVID offered the perfect excuse to go all in. I remember vividly the morning I grabbed a bottle of vodka, poured myself a drink, and said why not? I knew at that moment I was embarking on a journey down a dark path. See, I knew I was an alcoholic — I just wasn't ready to accept it. During this time, I went

about my day emotionally distraught as the alcohol messed with my brain. I would hear noises and songs from nowhere. Despondent and isolated, within a year I was struggling to maintain all aspects of my health. I didn't want to end my life, but I didn't see what purpose I had for remaining in the world.



My descent into alcoholic hell culminated in a horrific night my family and I will never forget. With my husband at work, I was already drunk when I took scissors to my thigh and carved "HELP." I knew I lacked the power to help myself, and I believe now that my Higher Power, though we had not yet met, was speaking through me. When my husband arrived home, the kids were freaking out and I was passed out. I knew I needed help. Around this time, I was also laid off as part of a massive downsizing. My

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work was my life and my social outlet, and now that was gone. Within a week I made plans to check into a detox. I was pushed into rehab, but the experience was awful — I wasn't doing well without my kids. Dismissing advice to stay longer, I left after 14 days.

I relapsed right before Christmas 2021 and was an unholy mess at holiday parties. No one knew what was wrong with me, although they must have suspected I was drinking. Bitter self-condemnation followed, feeling ashamed that I wasn't strong enough to stay sober on my own. I thought, even after detox and a rehab, look at me: right back where I started. I suck, I can't do anything right.

What Happened

The relapse that happened in December persisted into spring.

Unemployed and miserable, I fell back to constant drinking, hiding vodka and wine in the bedroom closet, the garage, wherever. I'd stop for a week or two, never longer, before always slipping back down the alcoholic rabbit hole. Adding insult to injury, my eating disorder worsened.

Wishing to enter an eating-disorder IOP, I was honest with the admissions person about my drinking, and the staff urged me to enter detox, which I refused. We settled on a remote dual-track outpatient program for substance abuse and eating disorders that met four times a week. While gaining the structure I needed and starting to take myself seriously again, I kept drinking.

One day my doctor sat me down and said I would not get better if I continued to drink, and that I had to stop at least for an extended period. She didn't say "never drink again," and I liked that. So, in May 2022 I stopped once more, went back to 90-in-90 Zoom meetings, got a sponsor, and was

dedicated to the program. For the first six months or so I felt great and life was fantastic.

Then last winter I began isolating again, turning back in on myself. I stopped going to meetings, stopped talking to people, stopped being out and about. It took until July, but I relapsed yet again. After 14 months of sobriety, within 24 hours I was drinking vodka first thing in the morning. The despair and misery that followed in the coming months felt like being at the bottom of a well surrounded by blackness and death, and looking up and seeing blackness slowly closing in on the well's opening above.

Trapped with no route of escape.

I told my therapist about my relapse, and she recommended I start going to live meetings as well as Zoom. I did, and on

day one I owned it. I was totally honest — one thing I've learned on this journey is that honesty with yourself is the most important thing.

How it Is Now

My last drink was July 20 of this year, and thanks to God's grace and the program, I recently celebrated 90 days.

What a sense of liberation. While COVID gave me an excuse to fall hard into emotionally barren isolation, now I'm free to seek long-stunted spiritual connections with loved ones and associates. Some days I'm feeling it, some days it's a little harder. But it wasn't until this last relapse that I realized the importance of community and connection. My mood goes up and down, but I've noticed a direct and fortunate correlation: *The more I'm involved in AA, the better my mood is.*

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My descent into alcoholic hell culminated in a horrific night my family and I will never forget.

My family life has never been better. In my deepest despair, I had no desire for a relationship with any of my family. Even during my previous 14 months of sobriety, I would hide in my bedroom and read a book or do a crossword, having minimal connection with my husband and kids.

Everything has changed. Now I'm down in the living room talking with my kids. I'm on track with my husband, saying I'm committed to this relationship, to reconnecting, and let's just see where it all goes.

Today I try not to feel guilty about my alcoholic behavior. Instead, I prefer to look to today and the days to come as opportunities

for spiritual growth and a closer connection with family, friends, and associates.

I laugh at the old me, and the old me would laugh at me now. If I could go back in time and pretend that one day, I would be truly spiritual, that I would form a connection with a Higher Power, and that I would want to be involved in the community, it would seem like deluded wishful thinking.

Now I see wonderful promises already coming true. Meantime the foundations of this progress, honesty and humility, grow stronger with each day. ♦

My Liberating Transition From Control to Surrender

Ken W, Plainsboro Township

Editor's note: Growing up amid neglect and poverty, this alcoholic devised survival mechanisms of distrust and rugged independence with a need to control everything in sight. These same coping strategies carried over into adulthood until he arrived at a crossroads: His need to control gave way to surrender and the door to Step 1.

When I was in the rehabilitation clinic I had plenty of time to reflect on why I had become an alcoholic. As the weeks passed and we received reading material as part of our program, I was reminded that trauma can play a role in addiction. I had been aware of this linkage for many years but this time it struck home as never before.

From infancy through high school I grew up in a setting of neglect and deprivation. My parents could not provide consistent food, shelter, or clothing for myself and two younger siblings. My mother was chronically depressed, often bedridden, and could not

function in a parental role.

My father was an alcoholic and was rarely around throughout my childhood. Our only income was his job as a local truck driver, but as is often the case, much of that income went to his drinking. As you might expect, since I was the eldest, and had reached an age when I could do so, I picked up many household duties that my parents could not provide: emotional and physical support, cooking, cleaning, driving, planning, organizing, and so on.

In current parlance the word *neglect* lacks the drama and severity of the word *abuse*. However, neglect can be as devastating for a child as overt emotional or physical abuse. I think of neglect as a sort of covert or silent form of abuse, as it can occur with little visibility or drama, yet its effects can be equally debilitating to a child and later be carried into adulthood: social isolation, fear and distrust of others, fearful foreboding concerning future events, anxiety, anger,

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depression. I have lived with all these symptoms throughout my life, and eventually they contributed to my alcoholism in ways both direct and indirect.

It is well known that surviving trauma calls for building defense mechanisms to move beyond these events and begin to function in the world. In my case, I learned to respond to my childhood environment in strategic ways:

- Never trust the adults around me to provide for any of my needs — physical, emotional, and spiritual — or those of my siblings.
- Anything that I need to survive I must find and obtain myself. Your very survival depends solely upon your abilities and actions.

In my adult life these survival mechanisms played out in correlative terms:

- Never trust anyone to provide for you or ask anyone for assistance.
- Take full and sole responsibility for everything that you need to do or are asked to do for others. In order to survive it is necessary to control your environment by being responsible for its every aspect.

These rather harsh principles formed a double-edged sword as I went through life. On the one hand, the drive to survive solely

on my own actions and be responsible for anything that I undertook resulted in success and advancement: college degree, ambitious career, etc.

On the other hand, as I became older, these principles became too narrow and strict. I did not know how to ask for help of any kind, and I could not let go of full control of outcomes that I subconsciously thought were at the level of life and death.

By my mid-50s I had become more depressed and exhausted. My surefire survival techniques stopped working decades ago, although I wasn't aware of this. And so it happened — to rid myself of these burdens

I began to have a cocktail each night while I cooked dinner for my family. Of course, one became two, two became three, and so on. It did not take long for the alcoholism to take over, with the tragic

consequences that come with it.

At the rehab all of this flooded back into my consciousness. The connections between my past and present became increasingly clear. And I could dimly glimpse a feasible path allowing me to let go of those long-standing survival mechanisms that chained me to a life of distrust and an ill-conceived compulsion to control everything around me.

The control I thought I needed to survive gave way to surrender. I was finally able to step into Step 1 and know in my gut I could be free. ♦

I did not know how to ask for help, and I could not relinquish full control of outcomes I thought were a matter of life and death.



When a Flimsy Reed Is Your Strongest Lifeline

Shannon S, Bordentown

Editor's note: Welcome to a new column, "Big Book Revisited," with excerpts from our basic text and insightful commentary. Just hearing him share at Bordentown's Sunday night BYOB meeting, I could tell Shannon arrives well-suited to the task.

You may have heard that a spider web is stronger than steel, and it's true. It seems to defy reason — walk through a spider web, and at worst a wayward strand may cling stubbornly to your nose, while steel poses a far more forbidding obstacle. Yet pound for pound, the spider's micro-thin strands are a deceptively strong material.

In Chapter 2 of the Big Book, "There Is a Solution," Bill Wilson echoes this concept of something whose ultimate strength far exceeds initial appearances: "We, in our turn, sought the same escape with all the desperation of drowning men. What seemed at first a flimsy reed, has proved to be the loving and powerful hand of God. A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, 'a design for living' that really works." This seemingly flimsy reed is strong enough to do what nothing or no one else has ever been able to do, keep us from the first drink.

In early sobriety I read these comments and others as mere words on a page without exploring the concepts behind them, wishing just to get on with it and finish the chapter. Desperate, I wanted action, not rigorous textual scrutiny. It was only after having a spiritual experience based on the work outlined in the Big Book, and later revisiting it to take another alcoholic through the same

journey, that these words started speaking to me in a deeply meaningful way.

I vividly remember my fear, when my sponsor first took me through this 12-step work, as to whether or not this would work. I certainly had my doubts. Nothing before this had succeeded in keeping me away from the first drink — promises to myself, therapy, jail time, detox clinics, treatment centers, rehabs, a new job, a new girlfriend. At various times I tried one or more of these things with high hopes that *this time*, I'd be able to stop or control it. None of them ever worked.

Yet what my sponsor was now telling me — that following the 12-step path described in the Big Book would ultimately give me the freedom to resist that first drink — sounded far-fetched. I mean, come on: Writing down three columns of what I resent; asking God to relieve my anger; writing a fourth column of my part in any resentment; sharing that with my sponsor; asking God for willingness to let go of my shortcomings and then to remove them; going back to my list to prepare amends and finally making direct to amends? I didn't see how any of this had anything to do with my drinking. It didn't make sense. Call it a flimsy reed.

Desperate and completely out of ideas or options, I was willing to try anything. My first article of faith was that this program worked for my sponsor. From that acknowledgement, I moved forward, inspired by a blind faith that this program could work in my case as well, through the 12-step

Continued

process hand-in-hand with my sponsor and ultimately with my God. Along the way, a process I initially viewed as a flimsy reed would lead me to the powerful and loving hand of God pulling me from the waters in which I was drowning.

The full impact of this transition only dawned on me when I started taking sponsees through the same 12-step work myself. The sense of a Higher Power extending a saving

pleasures of reading Bill Wilson is how much we identify with his experiences and the lessons they offer — with a sponsee, we would read a paragraph and one of us would say, “My God, that is *exactly* what happened to me!”

Still to this day, I hold on with the gift of desperation to that beautiful flimsy reed, the powerful and loving hand of my Higher Power. ♦

A New Awareness: God Was There All Along

Anonymous

Editor's note: This alcoholic arrived on the scene lacking a key component of the program's success: a Higher Power. Sound familiar? In meetings we hear many speak of discarding the omnipotent, and sometimes punishing, God of their childhood in search of new avenues of faith. Filled with gratitude, the author traces his spiritual evolution.

Coming into the program meant I had to come to grips with the all-important matter of relying on the God of my understanding. Like many others, I was brought up with a singular God. But it made no sense to me, I didn't believe in an omnipotent, individual singularity. Nor did I place any stock in idols or the gods of Greek and Roman mythology.

Ultimately, the bottle became my God, my conduct driven by a thousand forms of self, desire, and unbridled hedonism. Driven to AA by absolute necessity, the move reflected no virtue on my part — it came down to an existential choice of live or die.

In early sobriety I found myself in a position where I needed to bleed. And it was painful! I needed something more powerful than me or the bottle, and was told to come up with a

conception of a Higher Power. A power greater than myself. A God with whom I could forge some kind of relationship. Something that felt right and that made sense. Something I could be comfortable with and rely on in the real world of my life.

I also learned of four prerequisite P's for my Higher Power: *powerful, portable, practical, and personal*. I was free to conceive of God as loving and tangible. Yet even then I remained desperate. I fumbled, faked, and floundered — but I tried! Anyway, I had no alternative.

Slowly but surely over the years my God was revealed. In me and through me, God had been there the whole time! My parents' love, people's outreach, my self-preservation — all of this and more I view as God's inexhaustible blessings. All along, all I had to do was be open to the search.

Today I remain aware at all times of that Love, Goodness, Fellowship ... Life. God as I understand God, or don't, whatever the case may be. It's all God, it's all Love! Its diverse expressions cohere seamlessly into a natural whole, the basis for a beautiful way of life. ♦

When Light Replaces Darkness, And Hope Supplants Despair

Paul B, Monroe Township

Editor's note: Desiring a relationship with God yet questioning His benevolence amid the suffering and misfortunes of life, this alcoholic discarded the judge's robe and came to realize God was not accountable to him. Accepting that some things in life remain incomprehensible, he finally dropped all reservations and set about aligning his will with God's.

After years of drinking, I finally hit rock bottom. The anguish of the physical sickness caused by alcohol was now more painful than that of giving into the drink. So I entered the AA fellowship.

After a handful of meetings over a couple months, I started to look and feel better. I knew I had a problem with alcohol, yet still wondered if it might be possible to drink the way I wanted to, that is, enjoy time with family and friends while downing, let's say, no more than four or five beers on any given evening.

I tried this and it didn't work. Soon I was once more reaching for the bottle of vodka under my driver's seat. I was back to where I was: finding no joy in the drink and wanting to stop, but unable to do so.

Coming back to the rooms of AA, I committed to do everything I could to beat my disease: 90 meetings in 90 days, making coffee, helping clean up, greeting. Day after day.

Several months into the program, I was sober and liked the people I'd met, but thought a night off wouldn't hurt. With three young children at home, I suggested this to my wife. Just one night off, what's the harm? She was having none of it, and I shook off the craving.

I continued going to meetings, but somehow started to feel conflicted. I saw the same people at the same meetings, wearing the same clothes, sitting in the same chairs and saying the same thing.

One night at a Big Book meeting we read, "The Doctor's Opinion." One comment in particular hit home, about feeling

"... restless, irritable, and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by

taking a few drinks ..."

I realized the conflict I was feeling was merely a mask of a subtle and percolating compulsion. Yet I hesitated to share this because I didn't want others to think that after nine months, I wasn't "getting it" — most especially my sponsor sitting next to me.

I raised my hand and said it anyway: "I felt like drinking today."

The leader sensed my discomfort and said: "Son, I think you just broke the code. That's what why we're all here." His tacit message was: "We've got you, now let it go." The fight was over, my compulsion was lifted. My problem had been I was self-

***Slowly but surely over
the years my God was
revealed.***

Continued

centered, bombarding my problems with my will. At no time had I considered what God's will for me was.

I wanted a relationship with the God of my understanding, but confounding questions got in the way: Why does God allow accidents, cruelty, suffering, natural disasters? For a while I asked God: "Why?"

Yet in those same meditations it occurred to me that God is not accountable to me. I had to accept that there are some things in life that I will never understand. Besides, if I had all the answers, there would be no need for faith, no need for hope.

Meanwhile I require no special wisdom to realize that life mostly has been wonderful, and to see that miracles really do happen. Perhaps this is why Bill Wilson in his writing refers so frequently to God's will for us, which will be done.

Along the way I picked up many valuable lessons. One in particular stands out, from a Step 11 meeting where a woman said God's will for her was to make someone else's life a little easier. And I've tried to follow the path of the Prayer of St. Francis, that is, to comfort and understand those who could use such attention and care. Gradually I was becoming less self-centered, and this in turn allowed me to solidify my conscious contact with the God of my understanding. I found my will was increasingly aligning with His will for me.

The 12 Steps are ordered in a perfect sequence. As we move from Step 11 to 12, and begin helping others achieve sobriety, we can take further guidance from that same prayer, offering light instead of darkness, and pointing to a place of peace where hope displaces despair. ♦

The Only Thing Between Me and a Drink: The Importance of a Psychic Change

Chris M, East Windsor

Editor's note: This old-timer initially thought half measures would avail her at least something, perhaps a less-arduous shortcut to sobriety. Active in service and the fellowship, yet she failed to work the steps and lay a solid foundation for lasting recovery. Two years later that resistance to a full commitment took a damaging toll.

When I decided it was time to get sober, I listened to many people and took some of the suggestions. I went to meetings, got a sponsor, joined a home group, and became an active member.

I spent a lot of time hanging out at diners with other alcoholics talking about recovery

and drinking coffee. I spoke regularly and did service, and was even a General Service Representative for my home group for a year.

But there are three AA legacies, not just two. And although I was very involved in service and the fellowship, I was not working the steps. Of course, I had read them. I went to step meetings regularly too, but I wasn't getting together with my sponsor to "do the work."

In Chapter 3 of the Big Book, we read:

"The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the

Continued

first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power.”

As you might expect, after a couple years without a drink someone offered me one. I had not developed a relationship with a Higher Power and took the drink without a second thought. From that day it took me 13 years to make it back to AA. Despite the horrors of that period, I nonetheless consider myself one of the lucky ones — so many others never make it back.

As I learned, alcoholism is progressive, incurable, and fatal. But we are not doomed. Being an alcoholic does not mean I’m destined to die an alcoholic death.

In a conversation Bill Wilson described as “the first link in the chain of events that led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous,” the prominent Swiss psychologist Dr. Carl Jung told his patient, Rowland H:

Exceptions to cases such as yours have been occurring since early times. Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences. To me these occurrences are phenomena. They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them.”

So if a spiritual experience is what’s needed to recover, you may be asking how you can have one. Fortunately, our 12th step tells us how: “Having had a spiritual experience *as the result of these steps ...*” [Italics added.]

Yes, the solution is the steps. Working the 12 steps continuously can bring about a psychic change that is literally the difference between life and death for an alcoholic. ♦

Fumbling the First Step: A Chronic Relapser’s Power Struggle

Rob M, Trenton

Editor’s note: Underestimating the power of his disease, this alcoholic’s failure to grasp the first step set off an agonizing cycle of relapse, rehab, repeat. Time and again he fell victim to the classic alcoholic rationalization: This time I’ll control it.

The first step appeared deceptively simple when I first came to AA — a simplicity that invited misconception and neglect. The misreading centered on the word powerless. Seldom in my life had I even heard the word, instead encountering its opposite so often that a seriously consequential lack of power was

beyond my imagining. Ours is the most powerful nation, our sports heroes physically powerful, our political and corporate leaders awash in it. Admitting to a lack of power seemed almost un-American.

But I took the first step for granted, paid it little attention as if it went without saying, and instead moved onto what I considered the far more substantial remaining steps. This would prove to be a grave misreading leading to multiple relapses and rehabs — ultimately I would make more than a dozen such

Continued

in-house visits. In meetings I used to joke, as if it were a laughing matter, "I could write a *Zagat's Guide to Philly's Best Rehabs*."

The trouble started around four months into my initial AA stint, when the prospect of not drinking *for the rest of my life* struck me as just too dispiriting. So I decided to give my present experiment exactly two years, then see if I could arrive at a more restrained and manageable approach to drinking. My literary hero Norman Mailer, a heavy drinker, once quit for two years. I took him as a role model not only for his thinking but also his drinking. Sobriety was then bearable only because I knew it would end on July 13, 2001, exactly two years after my last tumbler of scotch. The date occupied a readily accessible corner of my mind almost as one might anticipate a wedding day or retirement date.

My misguided train of thought went something like this. After two years, my mind and body were free of alcohol and had reverted to the pristine state of health that prevailed before my earliest excesses. Hardly was I aware that, as I later learned, my disease actually progressed even while abstaining. All the while I underestimated alcohol's relentless power over me.

Intending initially to limit my drinking to, say, two or three before calling it a day, it wasn't long before I would lose count and shatter all bounds. Working at home as a freelance writer made it all too easy to take a few steps from desk to kitchen to pour another. Besides, I had no supervisor or coworkers from whom to shield my breath or

odd behavior. Guardrails gone, I was free to careen recklessly off track.

Within a month I was once again physically addicted, reentering that prison where only further drinking forestalled the horror of withdrawal. The 19th century English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a morphine addict, captured the pattern of withdrawal relieved only by more of the toxicity that caused it: "The poison is the cure, and the cure is the poison." The vicious cycle into which I had unwittingly stumbled is sadly familiar to many alcoholics.

This pattern would recur more times than I'd care to admit. In one particularly eventful 12-month period I made four visits to the same rehab, like a car coming in for a quarterly oil change. A lady staffer there, the rehab's unofficial matronly comforter of sad souls, didn't say a word upon my final arrival

but merely hugged me: Look who's back. Never would I couch the problem in terms of being powerless over alcohol. It was more like, okay, I overdid it again, now let's get

back out there and use what I know about the disease to control it. All along I grossly misunderstood alcoholism's physical grip and the attendant mental obsession, my grasp of the first step out of reach.

November 2020 mercifully brought a respite from this sorry track-record when God lifted that obsession and ushered in a new chance at health and happiness, coupled with the grace to enact His will and spread His love. Today I no longer underestimate a cunning disease whose indomitable power had me baffled right from the start. ♦

***The vicious cycle into
which I had unwittingly
stumbled is sadly familiar
to many alcoholics.***



Getting the Word Out: The Public Information Committee

John M, Hamilton Township

Editor's note: The Central Jersey Intergroup's Public Information Committee provides helpful guidance about alcoholism and AA recovery to police stations, EMT's, libraries, hotels, and other institutions, as well as at public events. Here the Public Information Committee Chair describes his role and the benefits that accrue both to his target audience and to himself as he carries out a valuable AA service.

Sometime in 2016 a friend approached and asked if I would contact the Central Jersey Intergroup (CJI) Literature Committee about setting up a literature table. There was to be a town hall presented by a community group raising awareness about drug and alcohol problems and available help.

When I called the Intergroup Literature Committee chair, he said this was something the Public Information Committee would provide and gave me the contact information for that committee chair. I was not quite four years sober yet and had heard bits and pieces about this committee, but had no idea what it was all about. I called the committee chair, and he said he would attend the event.

So I met up with Fred. While hanging around our table, I asked if he needed any help with this. He said he was trying to put together a committee and I was welcome to be a part of it. Afterward he mentioned a monthly Intergroup meeting where he would present a report and I could learn a bit more and be introduced as part of the committee. It felt really good to be useful and a part of. When Fred moved to Florida he asked if I would take over the committee chair position. I still didn't know what I was doing but accepted.

As everything was so new and I did not know much about the committee, I recall spending some time after a Steering Committee meeting in the CJI office with the literature committee chair. He told me to read the guidelines about it. I was filled with fear and got a bit loud with Pat. But after settling down, I made immediate amends to him and realized that he was helping the best he could.

I reviewed some of the things I could be doing. I attended an Area 45 Day of Sharing event to see what other Intergroup chairs were doing. Unfortunately, the others were not there. But someone from Area 44 attended for another committee and he shared a card with me that their Area PI/CPC committee gave to police, fire, EMT's, and folks that may come in contact with alcoholics in crisis.

These cards contained the Intergroup contact information and code to be scanned that would direct someone to the Intergroup

Continued



The Live and Let Live group took first prize for the Best Home Group Basket at the Central Jersey Intergroup Dance.

website. The first responders could give these cards on the front lines. Our committee designed similar cards with Central Jersey Intergroup information. We visited all of the various police stations and asked if they would like some of the cards, and whether we could provide AA literature to the stations. These were received very well by many of the municipalities.

Someone who previously served on the committee told me they brought Meeting Lists to area hotels in the area. I followed up on this idea as well. A heartwarming experience happened while doing this. When visiting one motel, the owner told me to feel free to put them anywhere I would like, saying his father was in AA for over 30 years and AA saved his life and made his family's lives better. I also provided literature to various libraries throughout Mercer County. Again, this was received well by the staffs there.

These were just a few of the duties that this committee can do to carry the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic and to those who may work with them. And this is all very humbling as it is done anonymously.

Unfortunately, the pandemic hit and there was not much that the committee could do. I reached out to the various radio stations

in the area and requested to have Public Service Announcements made about contacting the Intergroup office and by going on the website to get information about online meetings. Once again, the fellowship showed that when anyone reaches out for help, AA is there.

After some time, the Area 45 Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community Committee chair reached out to me and we started working together on various efforts. I attended virtual workshops presented by other Area committees in other states and saw what they were doing. In turn, I share this information with folks at the Central Jersey Intergroup area. Many of these workshops are very interesting. I am attaching a copy of the flier for a monthly workshop that I have been to several times, and hopefully you may check it out and have a chance to experience some of the gifts that I've had while doing this service.

Like I said, we may never know who is being helped from our service. I'll close by sharing a favorite quote: "The True Meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit." (Nelson Henderson.)

Thank you for letting me be of service. ♦



NEWS FROM YOUR LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Dr. Bob And The Good Old Timers (Hard Cover)

A portrait of Dr. Bob, a co-founder of A.A. The youngster who grew up in Vermont in the late 19th century became a hard-drinking college boy, then a medical student fighting the onset of his own alcoholism, a respected physician, a loving but increasingly unreliable family man, and at last a desperately ill drunk. He was without hope until he met a stockbroker from New York, Bill W, who urgently needed a fellow alcoholic to help him maintain his own sobriety.

Available from the CJI Literature Committee for \$12.00

Emotional Sobriety

Powerful and uplifting, the book "Emotional Sobriety: The Next Frontier" features stories of sober women and men that depict the personal transformations that sobriety can bring when sober alcoholics practice the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous in all aspects of their lives.

In a 1958 article for Grapevine, the international journal of Alcoholics Anonymous, drinking, including his struggle with depression. Bill W wrote about the ongoing challenges of recovery that he faced long after he stopped. For him, "emotional sobriety" became the next frontier.

In these honest and humble essays drawn from the archives of Grapevine magazine, you'll discover what emotional sobriety is all about. Many will realize that happiness is a by-product of giving without any demand for return; others learn to embrace the present with gratitude so they may claim moments of real peace.

The stories in this anthology show that when we have the willingness to find solutions, rather than staying stuck in problems, we can let go of fear, selfishness, and resentment, put aside selfish demands, practice outgoing love, and become more connected to our Higher Power and our friends, family, and community.

With unflinching honesty, this collection includes the voices of AA members reflecting on their own emotional sobriety or, as Bill Wilson put it, "a quiet place in bright sunshine."

Available from the CJI Literature Committee for \$14.00





C.J.I. Gratitude Breakfast

27\$ for complete breakfast



Saturday December 02, 2023

9:30am - 11:30am

First Presbyterian Church

320 N. Main Street

Hightstown, NJ 08520

Speaker is Paul Mc Q (31 yrs)

Sunrise Solution Group

Rockaway Beach, NYC

(Social Committee) **contacts for tickets or info:**

Sam A. 609 529-2212 samadlerman@aol.com

Beth D. 609 433-7160 beth.drumheller@gmail.com

**CENTRAL JERSEY
INTERGROUP NEEDS
VOLUNTEERS**

Join A Committee

HOW?

Come to The Intergroup Meeting the first Wednesday of the Month
Hamilton Library Basement 7 PM

👁️ Look at CJIAA.ORG Committee Section 👁️
and pick out the ONE for You
**Sponsors get your sponsees
In Service NOW**

**UNITY
COMMITTEE
MEETS**

**THE 2ND
TUESDAY OF
EVERY MONTH
7PM AT THE
INTERGROUP
OFFICE**

PLEASE JOIN US

3525 QUAKERBRIDGE RD SUITE 5000 HAMILTON

INFO → UNITY@CJIAA.ORG

Easy does it
One day at a time

♦ ♦

VENTURE TO HELP

CELEBRATES 53 YEARS

📍 **100 Scotch Road, Ewing, NJ** ♦ ♦

Saturday, November 18th

3:30 pm Guest Speaker **Ed G.** from the Frenchtown
Came to Believe Group with 41 years.
Followed by **Food & a Sobriety Countdown**

Literature on Wheels

But for the
grace of God

...think
...think
...think

Progress not
perfection

We are not a
glum lot

Let go, let God

First things
first

Date: 11/13/2023 Time: 6:00 pm

**Blind Faith's
14th
Anniversary**

Please join us for Blind Faith's 14th Anniversary! The
meeting will be held on Monday, November 13, at our
NEW Location: United Presbyterian Church
12 Yardville Hamilton Sq. Road

Our speaker is Holly M. with 9 years of sobriety from
Hamilton Sq. Mixed Nuts

Pizza, Cake, Lit on Wheels at 6:00pm before the meeting
Speaker at 7:00 pm



BTG is looking for volunteers!

Bridging the Gap is a 12 Step commitment designed to help the individual make the transition from the treatment or correction facility to Alcoholics Anonymous. The temporary contact would be responsible to meet/take the new member to 6 meetings to help them learn about our fellowship.

What Bridging the Gap suggests of the temporary contact:

- AAs who participate should have 1 year of continuous sobriety.
- AAs are asked to meet/take the individual to a minimum of 6 meetings.
- AAs should share their experience with sponsorship, a home group, and the 12 steps.
- An AA's commitment to the BTG program is a minimum of 1-year.
- Bridging the Gap volunteers are encouraged to attend workshops for questions, training and ongoing support.



If you would like to help. . .

Grab a pamphlet and fill out the back form. Take a pic and send it via email. Please include your home group. Or Scan the QR Code below fill out and submit. It's that easy. Contact Scott P.- Area 45 Bridging the Gap Coordinator

Email - Bridgingthegap@snjaa.org



WE TRAVEL TO YOU!

CENTRAL JERSEY INTERGROUP

LIT ON WHEELS

INVITE US TO YOUR NEXT EVENT:

ANNIVERSARY
DANCE

PICNIC
WORKSHOP



literature@cjjaa.org

Central Jersey Intergroup Answering Service Schedule

Central Jersey Intergroup Monthly Phone Commitment								
OPEN	Confirmed							5/7/2023
Week	Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	12:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Ken	Allentown Men's BB		Anthony V	Fred	John K	Lou
	8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Kim C	Camille	Jamie C	Camille	Jay F	Beth B	Donald L
	1:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Lou	Lamonte	Eric D	Cathy G	Ed M	Eric D	Murr
1	6:00 PM - 12:00 AM		Allentown Men's BB		Angie N		John F	Live
2	12:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Ken	Cheri	Brian B	Anthony V	Fred	John K	John M
	8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Kim C	Camille	Cassalon	Linda C	Jay F	Beth B	Donald L
	1:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Lou	Lamonte	Eric D	Cathy G	Ed M	Eric D	Murr
2	6:00 PM - 12:00 AM	Shelly R	Nellie			Nicole M	Prin Alt Group	Todd
3	12:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Ken	Cheri		Randi J	Fred	John K	Lou
	8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Kim C	Camille	Cassalon	Linda C	Jay F	Beth B	Donald L
	1:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Lou	Lamonte	Eric D	Cathy G	Ed M	Eric D	Murr
3	6:00 PM - 12:00 AM	Tara M	Nellie		Randi J	PenWedNight	Eric D	Todd
4	12:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Ken	Cheri	Brian B	Anthony V	Fred	John K	Lou
	8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Kim C	Camille	Cassalon	Camille	Jay F	Beth B	Donald L
	1:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Lou	Lamonte	WWG	Cathy G	Ed M	Eric D	Murr
4	6:00 PM - 12:00 AM	Shelly R	Nellie			Nicole M	Eric D	Todd
5	12:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Ken	Judy	Judy	Anthony V	Judy	Judy	Judy
	8:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Kim C	Camille	Kathy G	Camille	Jay F	Kathy G	Donald L
	1:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Lou	Lamonte	Eric D	Cathy G	Ed M	Eric D	Murr
5	6:00 PM - 12:00 AM	Shelly R	Nellie		Angie N			

For Info or Signup call/text/email Jim G or Kim C at: Jim G: 609-271-9693 jimgraz13@gmail.com,

Kim C: 609-902-5758 Kimberly.connell2014@gmail.com

Roseanne F 609-213-7853

Laura F 609-649-8861

Public Information Committee

Help carry the message to your community. Want to find out how you can become active in AA and the Public Information Committee?

Join us by attending the monthly committee meeting. The meeting is **7PM, the 2nd THURSDAY of the month at our Intergroup Office** in HAMILTON.

How You Can Help:

- Working together, members of the Public Information (PI) Committee convey A.A. information to the general public, including the media to ensure AA is represented at any events we are invited to attend - such as health fairs, employee fairs - speaking engagements, etc.
- Inform the public of the AA services that are available through the committee by sending out letters to organization within our community such as schools, retirement centers, local businesses, court houses, parole offices, etc.
- Follow up on leads received so the public knows we are available should they desire our attendance at an event or should they want us to provide a speaker or literature.
- Come up with novel ideas to let people know AA will provide services when requested to do so.
- Distribute public service announcements to radio and television stations when they become available.

This committee serves as the central source of information that is made available to the public regarding Alcoholics Anonymous. **The committee ensures that any information the public receives is correct and is given within the guidelines of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.**

Unity,
Service
& Recovery

Central Jersey Intergroup

Public Information

3525 Quakerbridge Road
Suite 5000
Hamilton, NJ 08619

PI@centraljerseyintergroup.org

PI Chair: John M: (609)-349-4531

