

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 sit here in my office thinking about the words I want to write for my first article as your area delegate. I also sit here thinking, “how did I ever get to this humbling position?” Fifteen years ago, I reluctantly raised my hand to be my group’s general service representative, or GSR, with some contempt and a lot of fear. As I have stated many times, the event that changed my life and put me on the path of service outside of my home group was attending the Northeast Regional Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly, also known as NERAASA. By the time this article comes out, I will have participated at the first ever virtual NERAASA and have shared the Area 44 Service Highlights. What an honor and privilege to have done that. By this time, we have already had our first Area Assembly of the new year, an Area Committee Meeting, Committee Orientation, and several Pre-Conference reports. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic that hit us in March 2020, all of our service meetings and majority of our home groups meet on a virtual platform. It has been unbelievable how our groups, committees, and area have risen to the challenge to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers on these platforms. I think I can safely say that this is here to stay.

In early April, we will be having our second virtual Mini-Conference. Leading up to this important assembly will be the agenda items that I, along with my Alternate Maureen R., have reviewed with our past delegates and then shared with you at our Pre-Conference reports. In turn, the GSR’s bring back their group’s conscience on these items to the Mini-Conference. It is crucial that the GSR’s participate in this process to keep their groups informed and connected to AA as a whole. Please check our Area 44 website (www.nnjaa.org) for the flyer and the information concerning the Pre-Conference reports. All AA members are encouraged to come to our Mini-Conference. We want to hear from every member of Area 44.

I look forward to meeting many of you who are just starting on your service journey and thank those who have been trudging the road. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions, ideas, or gripes. Area 44 is truly an area that carries the message through a lot of hard work of many. So, it gives me great honor, gratitude, and humility to serve you as your delegate.

Grateful to Serve,
Jimmy A., Area 44 Panel 71 Delegate, Treatment and Accessibilities

A message from your Area Chair



Dear Friends:

Warm greetings from your area chair. I write to you today with a very humble and grateful heart and wanted to again thank the Area 44 Fellowship for the opportunity to serve you in my current capacity. I also wanted to welcome all those also working in a new service capacity, whether GSRs, DCMs, Area Committee Chairs, and all those folks supporting these activities. We are glad you have joined us on this journey. Our first months of 2021 have certainly been busy ones for our service work together. So far, we have hosted an Area Assembly, two ACMs, our GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon, Committee Chair and DCM Orientations, one huge GSR Workshop, and dozens of District and Service Committee meetings; and with our Pre-Conference meetings, we are preparing for our April Mini-Conference, where we share our group’s conscience with our delegate prior to the General Service Conference. Most of these activities remain virtual, while some have evolved into hybrid meetings. We seem to be off to a great start.

The year ahead is one that is full of promise for Area 44 to grow in its mission to carry the message of recovery through our 12th Step work together. We are now one full year into our pandemic, and as we take a brief look back, we can see some great successes for our service teams in adjusting to the challenges of a

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NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE
MAY 6, 2021
newsletter@nnjaa.org

“locked-down” society. We have swiftly adapted to living, as we say in AA, “life on life’s terms”. In fact, many of our committees, districts, and groups have learned new and innovative ways to bring their message to the sick and suffering. Many of these methods will stay with us beyond the pandemic and improve our ability to serve the Fellowship.

I will always remember attending one of my “regular” meetings as an online meeting for the first time. We had not met for several weeks, and when one forward-thinking group member took the initiative to get a Zoom meeting created, we had over 60 people smiling, waving, and welcoming each other “back to AA” (this from a meeting that usually hosted about 20 people). The feeling of togetherness and the spiritual connection was overwhelming that day. Right there I knew we would be OK.

In Area 44, we are blessed with many selfless AAs, as we now have a new group of committee chairs and alternates who are engaged and energized to build and improve their committees to better serve the Area 44 community. **THEY NEED YOUR SUPPORT!** There are many opportunities to serve on any one of our 20 committees, and we invite all of you to consider this a “call to action”. Please remember that ALL these committee meetings can be accessed online, so why not join one just to “check it out”. The meeting ID and password can easily be found via links in the Area calendar at nnjaa.org.

These chairs are joined by a group of highly motivated and dedicated DCMs, about half of whom are new. We are grateful for the “veteran” as well as the newly minted DCMs and look forward to their continued hard work in their districts, where the message is truly carried to the suffering alcoholic.

Speaking of districts, one of the many bright spots in early 2021 was the welcoming of the Polish linguistic district to Area 44. The Polish linguistic district is comprised of 16 Polish-speaking groups, 7 of whom are in Area 44, while the others are found in southern NJ (Area 45), eastern Pennsylvania (Area 59), and southern NY (Area 49). Our area delegate, Jimmy A. and I recently spoke at the Polish Eastern US Intergroup Day of Sharing where we were warmly welcomed. These folks are anxious to be active members of the Area 44 service area. Please join me in welcoming District 43 to our family. Witamy!

Finally, I wanted to specifically thank Maureen R, our outgoing area chair, and new alternate delegate, who passed on the tradition of the January 1 “welcome call” to me as the new area chair, which got my 2021 off to a great start for me. I had the pleasure of working as Maureen’s alternate over the past two years and she, along with our outgoing delegate, Jeff B, and our current delegate, Jimmy A, provided me with guidance, support and inspiration that I hope someday to pass along to others.

I am humbled by the depth of dedication and commitment that so many of our Area 44 trusted servants bring to their AA lives, and I am grateful that I can be a small part of this big deal.

Wishing you all a serene, sober, and safe 2021. I am looking forward to the promises of the coming year.

In AA love and service,
George L., Area 44 Chair

AREA 44 COMMITTEE REPORTS & INFO

*From your
Area Convention
Committee*



I am happy to write an article about our Area 44 Convention on behalf of the Convention Committee. I have found the convention to be a great way to experience our three legacies of unity, recovery, and service that are so important to my recovery.

Our Area 44 Convention is held every year on the 4th weekend of September. Up until last year, it has always been held in person at a hotel in a central location within Area 44. For the last several years, it has been at the Doubletree Hotel in Somerset, NJ—it is planned for this year as well. It starts Friday, September 24th and runs until Sunday, September 26th.

I can recap my experiences with the convention into four sections:

The first time I went to the convention, I was seven months sober. I was meeting my sponsor in the parking lot of our home group, and we were going down for the day. My first surprise was when my sponsor showed up with another member of my home group. Wow, I had no idea they were dating. Just another example of how clueless I was. My first impression of the convention was just how big AA was outside of my home group. There were so many people! The place was electric! I still remember the old-timers marching into the ball-

room. There were so many happy people. I left there feeling very safe and secure about being in AA.

The second phase covers the next several years. I attended most years and loved the weekend of fellowship and cookies. Besides all the great speakers, workshops, and presentations, there are round-the-clock meetings available. Each district is randomly selected to chair the time slots. When I was DCM for my district we were chosen for the 3 am time slot. I volunteered to host it as I was staying at the hotel. Another district member and Parking Lot Billy (I love our AA nicknames) joined me. The highlight of that meeting was a young man who showed up stating that this was his first AA meeting ever. At 3 am! Wow. A year later our district again had the 3 am time slot. I thought it might have been a conspiracy. Billy and I again took the meeting. Halfway through the meeting a man walked in. He raised his hand and told the room that he was celebrating a year sober and wanted to come back to the room where it all started. God and AA are amazing.

My third thought is personal. We read in the "Twelve and Twelve" that boy meets girl on AA campus. My campus was the convention. I got on line to thank the banquet speaker and started talking to the woman in front of me. I haven't stopped talking to her since. Two years later, I proposed to her in the same room and in the same line. The convention will always hold a special place in my heart.

Lastly, and just as rewarding, is when I joined the Convention Committee. It is truly a great committee. It is a great way to do service outside of the home group. There are many subcommittees needed to help with all the different aspects of putting a convention together. There is a job for everyone. My first job was to put out the cookies all weekend long. Talk about pressure!

We meet every third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm. We are currently meeting virtually. The information on how to join us is on the Area 44 website: www.nnjaa.org/News and Events/Northern NJ Events/Committee meetings. Please come join us; I hope to see you at the convention in September.

Yours in Service,
Luke H.



Website Committee

I am going to start by telling you exactly why I wrote this article for the newsletter. Our committee needs help. We need all kinds of help: fat kids, skinny kids, kids that climb on rocks, tough kids, sissy kids, even kids with chicken pox. It takes input and participation from all the committees to the districts and groups to Intergroup and the Fellowship at large to keep the website functional and relevant. Communication and interaction, request and response in a clear and timely fashion is paramount. We need members that are willing to devote their time, skill, and heart to the effort we now provide. Regular and routine maintenance of the website is required. Hosting fees must be paid and file system, database housekeeping must be completed regularly. Security audits, link verification, and bug tracking must be completed as well. Meetings must be conducted and recorded. Reports to Intergroup, delegates and Area officers must be prepared and delivered. All of this service work does not get done magically or automatically – someone must roll up their sleeves and do the work. Members that are full stack developers; members that are artistic; members with organizational, administrative, and clerical backgrounds; and members that are simply devoted and wish to be of service are welcomed.

The Northern New Jersey Intergroup and Area 44 Joint Website is the front-facing expression of our Fellowship and service to Northern New Jersey. Our famous Meeting Finder provided by Northern New Jersey Intergroup offers information about nearly 1,300 groups meeting more than 2,200 times weekly. Born of a recommendation from the Public Information Committee, we serve the membership by carrying the message of recovery, keeping the membership informed about activities, and supporting the efforts of the service committees and officers. Direct links to many commonly used AA passages and pages are provided. Detailed information pages, including responses to frequently asked questions, help to give the newcomer and seasoned AA valuable information. The committee works directly on an ongoing basis with the area coordinator and the intergroup

office to maintain an interactive calendar of events comprised of hundreds of committee meetings and events yearly. Flyers are accepted from groups, districts, committees, and other AA entities and posted in a familiar and accessible fashion to keep the Fellowship informed and engaged. Sections exist to display events that are offered in the Northeastern Region, and our News and Events page features items of special interest. A repository for the Newsletter “This Day” makes digital copies of current and past issues available for review. The newsletter is an invaluable resource for the Fellowship, and we are proud to offer its content.

A full complement of maps describing Area 44 sections and districts is maintained by the Maps and Boundaries Subcommittee and is offered to the Fellowship for reference. We also provide a handy search page to identify the district and section any town is in. The Website Committee works with the registrar to provide locations and times of district meetings held throughout the area, and each district can provide information about where to send contributions. The Area 44 Convention is also represented prominently on the website giving the Fellowship easy access to information about this well attended and revered event. Visitors to the website can also find a list of useful email addresses that make communication to the committees and officers directly accessible. The website has links to each service committee that informs the fellowship of their meeting times locations and focus and responsibilities. We encourage committee participation and have worked with many committee chairs to keep their page content timely and relevant.

We maintain a “Members Only” section that includes area and intergroup documents representing the business of AA in Area 44. Treasurer reports, meeting minutes, Pre- and Post-Conference Reports and many other documents are displayed. Clicking on the familiar circle and triangle in the header provides access (username: alcoholic; password: onedayatatime).

Our most visited and celebrated section of the website is our Meeting Finder. Populated with data provided by the intergroup office, it displays in a sortable and mobile-friendly interface. Searches can be made for meetings in and near towns, districts, and zip codes. Special and custom searches can be built, and our newest feature search by group name is a handy resource. Our website carries a trusted certificate that allows for secure and private encrypted automatic geo-location searches. Our website also provides a live feed to the Meeting Guide App for World Service data integration.

Serving over on a historical average of over 35,000 visitors each month nnjaa.org carries the message with arguably more bang for the buck than any other resource in Area 44. All this effort is accomplished by a small but dedicated group of people working tirelessly to support the Fellowship. The committee handles on average 60 email items a month that come in with various requests for action. The website provides an administrator interface that allows members of the committee to upload flyers, adjust the calendar, upload the newsletters, change the banner, and add files to the members’ document repository. No knowledge of html or any special training is needed to accomplish most routine tasks.

Custom pages and adjustments can be made by members that have the skill and knowledge to complete the work.

The website is built from a custom set of scripts that were developed nearly 20 years ago and have been upgraded and adapted to modern standards. The website is composed of over 150 pages and fills a footprint on the server of over 3.5 GB of data. It is written in HTML5, an acronym for hypertext markup language, and it is the standard for creating websites and web pages. CSS is the language that is used to define how the pages look on your computer screen and mobile devices. The website uses php, a server side scripting language and a MySQL database to provide dynamic content. Unlike WordPress and other content management systems, our website is all hand-coded, custom work that uses elements of bootstrap, jQuery and



JavaScript on an Apache webserver.

We meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month for our regular meetings and hope that you would join us in our effort to carry the message of recovery. Please visit the website <https://www.nnjaa.org> for more information.

Fred C.
Website Committee



* Denotes Joint Committee

AREA 44 COMMITTEE MEETINGS: VIRTUAL AND HYBRID 2021



COMMITTEES	MEETING DAY	TIME	SERVER	MEETING ID	PASSWORD	CONTACT
STANDING COMMITTEES						
Cooperation w/ Professional Community*	3 rd Tuesday	7:00pm	ZOOM	831 6741 0763	(n/a)	Roe T-B – cpc-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com No pas
Corrections Facility Committee*	3 rd Saturday	10:00am	ZOOM	850 3466 8699		Susan P-C – cfc-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com ...Me
Grapevine	1 st Saturday	10:00am	ZOOM	820 1459 9915	AAGV	Marcheta B – grapevine-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com plan on attending at the Area Office
History and Archives*	2 nd Wednesday	7:00pm	ZOOM	917 6976 2213	474109	Frank F – archives-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
Literature	3 rd Monday	7:00pm	ZOOM	672 098 8037	889464	Mike R – literature-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com ...
Public Information*	2 nd Tuesday	7:30pm	ZOOM	821 7687 5697	2945766	Sandra P – pi-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
Treatment*	2 nd Wednesday	7:00pm	ZOOM	812 5156 9162	16273	Elise B – treatment-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
SPECIAL COMMITTEES						
Computer and Technology Committee	2 nd Monday	7:00pm	Teams			Bruce R – computer@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
Convention Committee	3 rd Wednesday	7:30pm	ZOOM	833 2357 7907	197229	Chris L – convention-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
Films Committee	2 nd Sunday	9:00am	n/a			Paul L – films-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com ...Curre
Finance Committee	4 th Monday	7:00pm	ZOOM	880 5190 136	181955	John C – finance-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
GSR/DCM Workshops	N/A					Tim R – gsr-workshop-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
Mailing Committee	1 st Wednesday	6:30pm	n/a			Sara G – mail-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com Curren
GSR Mid-Winter Luncheon Committee	1 st Monday	6:30pm	ZOOM	891 0985 8973	77175	Frank F – lunch-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
Newsletter*	3 rd Thursday	6:00pm	ZOOM	815 3922 8687	thisday	Tony P – newsletter-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
NJYPAA	3 rd Sunday	10:30am	ZOOM	264 995 272	service	
Policy and Admissions Committee	4 th Thursday	7:30pm	ZOOM	532 271 5919	074811	Mark D – policy-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com Virt
Remote Communities	4 th Monday	7:30pm	ZOOM	882 3015 7060	6054	Michael M – remote-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
Social Media Committee	2 nd Thursday	7:30pm	ZOOM	846 7849 8287	511520	Kristen A – sm-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
Translations Committee	1 st Wednesday	7:00pm	n/a	836 7972 7434	330508	Felix E – translation-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
Website Committee*	4 th Thursday	7:00pm	Teams	Click to Join		Bonnie M – website-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com

REMEMBER: AREA 44 NEEDS YOU!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR
STANDING AND SPECAIL SERVICES
COMMITTEES, PLEASE CHECK OUT:



WWW.NNJAA.ORG >> SERVICE >> SERVICE COMMITTEES

AREA 44 PRE-CONFERENCE REPORT INFO



NNJGS AREA 44

A.A. IN A TIME OF CHANGE

DELEGATE'S 2021 VIRTUAL PRE-CONFERENCE REPORTS

ZOOM

ID: 464 506 9778

PASS: Conference

1. Saturday, March 6th, 2021 @ 9:00 AM
2. Monday, March 8th, 2021 @ 7:00 PM
3. Tuesday, March 9th, 2021 @ 7:00 PM - Polish Linguistic District
4. Friday, March 12th, 2021 @ 7:00 PM - Spanish Linguistic Districts
5. Thursday, March 18th, 2021 @ 7:00 PM
6. Sunday, March 21st, 2021 @ 10:00 AM

DCMs please copy and distribute to all GSRs.
All interested AAs are welcome!

Questions? Please contact your Delegate, Jimmy A. at
area-delegate@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com



NNJGS AREA 44

AA EN UN TIEMPO DE CAMBIO

INFORMES VIRTUALES DEL DELEGADO PREVIOS A LA CONFERENCIA DEL 2021

ZOOM

ID: 464 506 9778

APROBADO: Conference

1. Sábado, 6 de marzo de 2021 a las 9:00 AM
2. Lunes, 8 de marzo de 2021 a las 7:00 PM
3. Martes, 9 de marzo de 2021 a las 7:00 PM
Distrito lingüístico polaco
4. Viernes, 12 de marzo de 2021 a las 7:00 PM
Distritos lingüísticos españoles
5. Jueves, 18 de marzo de 2021 a las 7:00 PM
6. Domingo, 21 de marzo de 2021 a las 10:00 AM

2021 MINI-CONFERENCE TOPICS

TOPIC I COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

A. Should a pamphlet be created for the mental health professional?
(Final Conference agenda Item II-B)

TOPIC II CORRECTIONS

A. Should there be a review of all correction related literature to replace terms such as "inmate" and "offender" with less stigmatizing language?"
(Final Conference agenda Item III-A)

TOPIC III LITERATURE

A. Should the pamphlet "The A.A. Group", pages 3 through 41, be added as an appendix in the next printing of the book Alcoholics Anonymous?
(Final Conference agenda Item VI-B)

B. Should the first 164 pages of the book Alcoholics Anonymous be revised?
(Final Conference agenda Item VI-B)

C. Should a contemporary and comprehensive workbook be created to study the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts?
(Final Conference agenda Item VI-U)

TOPIC IV POLICY AND ADMISSIONS

A. Should online groups with no physical presence be recognized as of ficial groups with a vote and voice in their districts and areas and able to register with the General Service Office and access the GSO services?
(Final Conference agenda Item VII-J)

B. Should a 94th Area be created to our service structure that will en compass all virtual groups that are not affiliated with a physical meeting space?

TEMAS Y TEMAS DE DISCUSIÓN DE LA MINI CONFERENCIA 2021

TEMA I - COOPERACIÓN CON LA COMUNIDAD PROFESIONAL

A. ¿Deberíamos crear un folleto para el profesional de la salud mental?
(Punto II-B de la agenda final de la Conferencia)

TEMA II - CORRECCIONES

A. ¿Deberíamos revisar toda la literatura relacionada con la corrección para reemplazar los términos como "preso" y "delincuente" con un lenguaje menos estigmatizante"?
(Punto III-A de la agenda final de la Conferencia)

TEMA III - LITERATURA

A. ¿Deberíamos agregar las páginas 3 a 41 del folleto "El A.A. Grupo" como un apéndice en la próxima edición del libro Alcohólicos Anónimos?
(Punto VI-B de la agenda final de la Conferencia)

B. ¿Deberíamos revisar las primeras 164 páginas del libro Alcohólicos Anónimos?
(Punto VI-B de la agenda final de la Conferencia)

C. ¿Deberíamos crear un libro de trabajo actual y completo para estudiar los 12 pasos, las 12 tradiciones y los 12 conceptos?
(Punto VI-U de la agenda final de la Conferencia)

TEMA IV - POLÍTICA Y ADMISIONES

A. ¿Deberíamos reconocer como oficiales los grupos en línea sin presencia física como grupos con voto y voz en sus distritos y áreas y que puedan registrar con la Oficina de Servicios Generales y acceder a los servicios de la OSG?
(Punto VII-J de la agenda final de la Conferencia)

B. ¿Deberíamos crear un Área 94 para nuestra estructura de servicio que abarcará todos los grupos virtuales que no están afiliados a un espacio físico para reuniones?
(Punto VII-J de la agenda final de la Conferencia)



NNJCS AREA 44

**A.A. W CZASACH ZMIAN
2021 WIRTUALNE
PRZED-KONFERENCYJNE
SPRAWOZDANIE DELEGATÓW**

ZOOM
ID: 464 506 9778
PASSCODE: Conference

1. Sobota, 6 Marca, 2021 @ 9:00 AM
2. Poniedziałek, 8 Marca, 2021 @ 7:00 PM
3. Wtorek, 9 Marca, 2021 @ 7:00 PM
Polski Dystrykt Lingwistyczny
4. Piątek, 12 Marca, 2021 @ 7:00 PM
Hiszpański Dystrykt Lingwistyczny
5. Czwartek, 18 Marca, 2021 @ 7:00PM
6. Niedziela, 21 Marca, 2021 @ 10:00AM

Prosimy wszystkich DCM-ow o przekazanie tej informacji do wszystkich GSR-ow (mandatariuszy)
Do uczestnictwa zapraszamy wszystkich Aowców!
Z pytaniami prosimy o contact z Delegatem Jimmy A.
Email: Area-delegate@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com

TEMATY DYSKUSJI DO MINI-KONFERENCJI 2021 ROKU

TEMAT 1: WSPÓLPRACA Z PROFESJONALISTAMI

A. Czy powinna być stworzona ulotka dla lekarzy specjalistów (psychiatrów, psychologów, terapeutów)?
(Punkt II-B w agendzie Finałowej Konferencji)

TEMAT 2: KOREKTY

A. Czy powinniśmy przeglad wszystkich korekt w literaturze, które odnoszą się do zastąpienia słów takich jak "więzień", "przebiegca" na bardziej neutralny język?
(Punkt III-A w agendzie Finałowej Konferencji)

TEMAT 3: LITERATURA

A. Czy ulotka "Grupa A.A.", strony 3 do 41, powinna być umieszczona w dodatkach w kolejnym drukowaniu książki Anonimowi Alkoholicy?
(Punkt VI-B w agendzie Finałowej Konferencji)

B. Czy pierwsze 164 strony książki Anonimowi Alkoholicy powinny być poprawione?
(Punkt VI-B w agendzie Finałowej Konferencji)

C. Czy współczesny i obszerny zeszyt ćwiczeń powinien być stworzony do opracowywania 12 Kroków, 12 Tradycji i 12 Koncepcji?
(Punkt VI-U w agendzie Finałowej Konferencji)

TEMAT 4: PRAWO I ZASADY PRZYNALEŻNOŚCI

A. Czy wirtualne grupy bez fizycznego miejsca spotkań powinny być uznawane za oficjalne grupy mające prawo głosu i głosowania wewnątrz ich dystryktu i area (obszaru)? Czy takie grupy powinny mieć możliwość rejestracji w General Service Office i mieć dostęp do usług GSO?
(Punkt VII-J w agendzie Finałowej Konferencji)

B. Czy Area 94 powinna być stworzona i dodana do naszych struktur, do której by należały wszystkie wirtualne grupy, które nie są powiązane z fizycznym miejscem spotkań?
(Punkt VII-J w agendzie Finałowej Konferencji)

AREA 44 PRE-CONFERENCE TOPICS

TOPIC I COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

A. Should a pamphlet be created for the mental health professional?
(Final Conference agenda Item II-B)

BACKGROUND

In December 2019, Area 11 Connecticut requested that A.A. develop a pamphlet that is specifically geared towards mental health professionals. The hope is to educate these mental health professionals about A.A., so that in their professional capacity they might be better equipped to assist a person who has a desire to stop drinking. This came from the A11 CPC Committee and was approved at an assembly.

The question is, do we need this specific pamphlet or does existing literature serve the purpose?

At the 2015 General Service Conference, the Literature Committee brought forward a recommendation approved by the Conference as an advisory action; that the trustees' Literature Committee develop literature for the alcoholic with mental health issues. This took the form of a pamphlet "A.A. for Alcoholics With Mental Health Issues" (P-87) and was produced and distributed in 2018. At that same Conference, the Committee wrote an additional consideration to the trustees, requesting we develop service material on A.A. as a resource for the mental health professional.

In their letter, the Area 11 CPC Committee noted:

"In our existing literature medical professionals are addressed, but there is nothing that speaks directly and specifically to the mental health professional."

They believe a targeted piece will spark the necessary interest among mental health professionals and increase the chances that they will read about what we do and who we are. The Committee goes on to state that many

professionals who work in the mental health field have little knowledge of our program or hold outright misconceptions about A.A., and this can prevent them from effectively helping the sick and suffering alcoholic.

The Area 11 CPC Committee held a sharing session encouraging content ideas for their suggested pamphlet. They focused on what A.A. is and what we're not; what we do and what we don't do. A few highlights:

- A.A. is not the same as psychotherapy
- Medications prescribed by mental health professionals do not interfere with the principles of the A.A. program
- A.A. is not a religious program
- A.A. is not affiliated with any other 12 Step Fellowships (we're not 'Everything Anonymous') but if their patient has other issues it does not disqualify them from A.A. membership

Let's look at the existing literature to serve health professionals. At first glance there seems to be an abundance of up-to-date literature available to the CPC Committee. Here are a few of the more relevant pieces:

- Information on Alcoholics Anonymous, For Anyone New Coming to A.A.; For Anyone Referring People to A.A. (F-2 rev. 2018)
 - This is a comprehensive flyer identifying clearly what A.A. does and does not do
- The A.A. Member – Medications & Other Drugs (P-11 ©2018)
 - Addressing medical professionals directly, we discuss our position on medication (we have no
- A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues (P-87 ©2018)
 - This recent pamphlet presents shared experience from A.A. members who suffer mental health issues and their sponsors
- A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional (P-23 ©2018)
 - This pamphlet highlights an alcoholic's potential resistance to A.A.; what some health care professionals have learned and how they apply that knowledge
- Alcoholics Anonymous in your Community (P-31 ©2018 rev. 2019)
 - How the Fellowship of A.A. works in your community to help alcoholics

No one can question the need for medical and mental health professionals to understand what A.A. is, so that they can better serve their alcoholic patients. And it's our responsibility to inform these professionals. The question is, do we need a new pamphlet specific to the mental health professional or does the current literature serve the purpose?

PROS

- Yes. Anything we can do to better inform mental health professionals, the better they can help the suffering alcoholic.
- Yes. If a unique pamphlet increases the odds that mental health professionals will read about A.A., then it's worth it.
- Yes. We don't have enough members doing CPC work under normal circumstances. Now, during the pandemic, we especially need to let the literature do our talking for us.

CONS

- No. It may be a good idea, but we can't create a unique pamphlet for every professional who may come in contact with an alcoholic.
- No. The literature already available to the CPC Committees and health care professionals is up-to-date and more than adequate.
- No. I just don't see an expressed need for this new material.

What does your group think?

TOPIC II CORRECTIONS

A. Should there be a review of all correction related literature to replace terms such as “inmate” and “offender” with less stigmatizing language?

BACKGROUND

“Here is the Motion: That the Conference Corrections Committee review Corrections related literature intended for use by members in correctional facilities and take action to remove the words "inmate" and "offender" from AAWS literature and replace these words with more inclusive terms.

History or Current Practices: Feedback from members in correctional facilities in Area 79 indicates that there is a need to review the literature and consider more appropriate language to describe A.A members in these facilities. The terms "inmate" and "offender" are primarily used by the judicial system and are not used by A.A members in correctional facilities nor are they used by volunteers attending A.A meetings in these facilities. Currently the book, “A.A. In Prison: Inmate to Inmate” and the pamphlet “Memo to an Inmate Who May Be an Alcoholic”, are generally not used by A.A. members in correctional facilities because the titles and or language used is considered to be offensive, derogatory, and linked to the facility administration.

If passed: Some barriers to our literature would be removed and A.A. members in correctional facilities would be more likely to read the A.A. literature intended to aid their recovery. A.A. literature would be more inclusive and respectful of members regardless of their situation. Offensive terminology would be removed from A.A. literature intended for use by members in correctional facilities.

If not passed: Literature intended for members in correctional facilities will continue to go unused. Members in these facilities may be at risk of exclusion from full participation in A.A., and inside A.A. members leaving correctional facilities and attending outside meetings may lack a sense of belonging.

For further consideration: Area 51, North Carolina, no longer uses the word inmate in any reports or communications. A polling of members in correctional facilities in Area 79, BC Yukon revealed a distaste for the term "inmate". These members avoid the book “A.A. In Prison: Inmate to Inmate” and the pamphlet “Memo to an Inmate Who May Be an Alcoholic” because these titles use administrative language. During A.A meetings in correctional facilities, they consider themselves A.A members.

The Corrections Committee of Area 79 has made the following alternative wording suggestions for consideration: "Inmate and/or Offender" to be replaced by: "inside member" or "inside AA member". Other suggestions include: "members on the inside", "A.A. members on the inside", "incarcerated member" "alcoholic", "corrections inside member", "corrections resident", "A.A. inside the walls", and "convict", (although convict may be more acceptable to medium and maximum facility residents than minimum security members). Other replacement language to the words "inmate and offender" can be developed depending on the application. For example: "AA in Prison: Inmate to Inmate" should be changed to "A.A. in Prison: Breaking Barriers". It is hoped that by resubmitting this motion with language suggestions, enough interest will be generated across the Conference that changes will be made to our Corrections literature and make it more acceptable to our inside members.”

PROS

- These terms make the person or persons included instead of excluded.
- The terms “inmate” and “offender” are used by the judicial system, not A.A.
- Everyone who attends A.A. meetings behind the walls should have the same respect that we have attending meetings on the outside.
- Putting labels on anyone both inside the walls or outside the walls is not what we do in A.A.

CONS

- Tradition 10 states, “Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”

- Are we getting involved in an outside matter?
- Will we have conflict with the legal system?

What does your group think?

TOPIC III LITERATURE

A. Should the pamphlet “The A.A. Group”, pages 3 through 41, be added as an appendix in the next printing of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*?
(Final Conference agenda Item VI-B)

BACKGROUND

Dear XXX,

It is with great pleasure that I write to submit the following on behalf of one of our Area 13 members for consideration to be placed on the 70th General Service Conference agenda:

That pages 3 through 41 of the Alcoholics Anonymous pamphlet “The A.A. Group” (P-16) be included in the appendix of the next printing of the book “Alcoholics Anonymous.”

As many groups read from the text, Alcoholics Anonymous, it would be helpful to include “The A.A. Group” pamphlet as its appendix. It is believed that having the pamphlet inserted would encourage best practices and participation in general service. Ultimately, this could help improve our service culture to the benefit of the groups, the still suffering alcoholic, and Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

We hope that this motion will be strongly considered. Thank you for your time and consideration. Feel free to contact me if you have any further questions regarding this request.

PROS and CONS

I don't know about you, but when I came into A.A. back in the early 1990s, I was given this pamphlet and was told to read it, either by my sponsor or by one of the old-timers in my home group: “Here, kid, read this and we will talk.” Pamphlets, such as “The Co-Founders of A.A.,” “A Member's eye view of A.A.,” “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship,” and, of course, “The A.A. Group,” were distributed and read by A.A. newcomers. So, in my 1st year, I read a lot and learned a lot too.

Therefore, how beneficial would it be to have the pamphlet “The A.A. Group” as part of the appendixes? Instead of handing out this pamphlet, we can just give the newcomer a copy of the Big Book and tell them to read the appendix on the A.A. Group and maybe go over it with a sponsor or with a sponsee. But, as you may know, pamphlets are libel to change. Over the past 30 years, four or more changes have been made to this pamphlet. How would we make changes to this pamphlet if it is in our book? That would be interesting! So, should we add this to our Big Book or just make sure that we share all of our wonderful program has to offer?

What does your group think?

TOPIC III LITERATURE

B. Should the first 164 pages of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* be revised?

BACKGROUND

This agenda item comes to us from District 55, Area 59, Eastern Pennsylvania. Their proposal is to form a study committee to audit the first 164 pages of the Big Book with the purpose of identifying changes that can be made to make the Big Book more reflective of the A.A. membership with a focus on pronoun usage and passages no longer relevant. Using the Communications Audit as its guide and when it was presented to the General Service Board, they found that “There are significant challenges in communications that are negatively impacting A.A.'s relevance and impeding its effectiveness in reaching the still-suffering alcoholic.” The audit

notes that much of our pamphlets are outdated with language and references that are falling further behind the times, presenting an overall perception of A.A. as an organization obsessed with its own history and perhaps out of touch with today's population.

The submission sites numerous examples of passages in the Big Book, in their eyes, that are cringeworthy when read in mixed company. For example:

- "To Employers" contains suggestions that may not be permissible in today's environment, considering that 38% of the fellowship are women
- "To Wives" and "The Family Afterward" have ceased to be relevant in the context of our current and future membership.

The objective of the proposal is not to make this a plain-language or gender-neutral Big Book. Instead, the focus is to modernize the Big Book and not ignore the fact that the book is male-centric. Historical references to people or events should remain the same with vocabulary and descriptions as is. While there are agenda items for a 5th edition of the Big Book, this is providing a window of opportunity to audit the first 164 pages. This is an issue that will not improve over time but will continue to chip away at the relevance of A.A.

PROS

- Updating the book, while keeping all the historical references intact, will enable the book to be more relevant and more consistent with today's membership.
- Changing certain pronouns from he or she to themselves would be an appropriate change without changing the context of the message.

CONS

- "Don't change my Big Book" is heard quite often.
- The 1995 advisory action is still in effect. The first 164 pages, including the Preface, the Forwards, The Doctor's Opinion, Doctor Bob's Nightmare, and the Appendices, remain as is. This would need to be amended before any changes could be implemented.
- People are still getting sober using our basic text the way it was originally written.

What does your group think?

TOPIC III LITERATURE

C. Should a contemporary and comprehensive workbook be created to study the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts?

(Final Conference agenda Item VI-U)

BACKGROUND

Over the years since the Big Book, "Twelve and Twelve," and the Service Manual were written there have been numerous requests to create "translations" and tools to help the membership guide themselves through all 36 principles of the program. In fact, as early as 1940, Evan W. wrote the Akron Pamphlets at the request of Dr. Bob who felt that the Big Book was too difficult for the blue-collar worker to read. The Akron Pamphlets were completed in 1950 and reflected the early mindset of Akron's earliest members. The literature is pre-conference but is still serving members of A.A. around the world to this day.

During the succeeding years, and largely increasing over the past 6 or 7, there have been numerous requests to not only create a "translation" of the Big Book to "supplement" the original document but also numerous requests to create supplemental tools, such as "workbooks," to help guide our membership through the founding documents. There have been many folks both for and against. But the one thing that has always been clear guidance to the Conference, which came from Bill, is when creating any materials or services for the membership that we ask "Is there a need?" for this publication or service. The continuing and increasing requests for such documents tend to indicate there is a need.

The ongoing theme for the need for these tools center in two main areas as follows:

- Accessibility – due to the literacy level or lack of ability to adequately comprehend the message of recovery by the individual as written in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
- Relatability – changes in current language and culture (including views on modern language, gender, and religion) which hinder the individual's ability to relate and embrace the program as set forth in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

On Accessibility, a study was done to determine the grade level of the Big Book on a reading ability rating scale of one to five. While some sections are at varying levels above and below, the average level seems to be around a level three. Many in our membership have reading levels that fall below that level.

On Relatability, today many individuals struggle with the language that was part of the culture during the days when the book was written; also, today that language is unknown to those born after maybe 1950. Many have been known to purchase outside produced Big Book and "Twelve and Twelve" dictionaries to help them.

As a result of both accessibility and relatability issues and based on a "need" and request from our membership, outside companies and groups have created and published numerous tools and workbooks to fill the void created by our not producing them.

PROS

- Message will be consistent with A.A.'s program as outlined in the Big Book as the tools would be Conference-approved.
- Will make the program more assessable to those with a lower reading level or language issues, such as English as a second language, especially in remote areas where a full-time sponsor is not available to interpret and guide the sponsee through.
- Gives the sponsor and/or sponsee that require a "framework" or structured outline to do the work that is Conference-approved. It could be tailor suited for each individual working with a sponsor.
- Sales money will go to A.A. rather than an outside vendor and be at a more reasonable cost to our membership.

CONS

- AA message could be diluted as outside tools would not be Conference-approved and would be free to outside interpretation that could vary from the original intent.
- Current local external versions risk diverting us from a unified message.
- When outside sources are used by the membership, it could be viewed as endorsement or thought by the newcomer to be an A.A. product.
- May limit interpretation and learning beyond the written word and scope of the questions.
- May inadvertently lessen the sponsor/sponsee relationship by lessening the need for sponsor guidance and interpretation.
- May result in lessening the use of other Conference-approved literature, e.g., "Twelve and Twelve".

What does your group think?

TOPIC IV POLICY AND ADMISSIONS

A. Should online groups with no physical presence be recognized as official groups with a vote and voice in their districts and areas and able to register with the General Service Office and access the GSO services?

BACKGROUND

The pandemic has clearly been the driving force behind this topic, however the earliest recorded discussion regarding online groups may have occurred in the late 1990's, with no action being taken by the General Service Board.

There were six proposed agenda items relating to the topic of online groups that are not affiliated with physical meeting space having a voice and a vote in the General Service structure. While each of the six agenda items are related to the same topic of the participation of online-only groups in the General Service structure, they are unique in how they are worded, their path to becoming an agenda item, and what if any background they have included with the submission; all have a unique way of wording the request.

Our Area examined those 6 agenda items and condensed them into two main topics for our area's consideration.

Several Areas in Miami, South Florida, Portland Oregon, Northern Illinois, NW Seattle just to name a few, had extensive discussions on this topic and submitted recommendations for consideration. Some created Ad Hoc committees to examine the subject. Some have gone as far as voting in their own Areas/Districts to formally recognize online groups within their District/Area Structure.

Today, listing an online group with G.S.O provides the group with a customer ID for tracking 7th tradition contributions but does not provide a group ID which designates that group as part of the general service structure, thereby giving that group a voice, a vote and the ability to participate in service opportunities beyond the group level. These groups are associated with a fictitious Area 95, for record keeping only, and are encouraged to connect with the Online Intergroup if they want to be listed and part of the international intergroup. Online intergroup operates outside of the service structure and does not have representation at the General Service Conference. The AA General Service Structure as described in the Service Manual is geographically based and does not allow online only meetings to participate in the General Service Structure.

Many Areas considered that an AA Meeting is any gathering of alcoholics focused on recovery from alcoholism and that the AA Group is a meeting that has received a group number from GSO, has a GSR and attends meetings at the Area and District levels.

AA's communicate in a vast variety of ways: face to face, TDD for the Deaf, correctional facilities, mail, telephone, Loners and Internationalists and now online. What is important is that we share our experience, strength and hope and stay sober – not how we communicate.

Concept Four states "At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation, "allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge. It is felt that this Concept fairly demand that GSO reach out to online only groups to give them a voice in the process.

Bill W wrote in the November 1960 issue of the AA Grapevine:

"A vast communications net now covers the earth, even to its remotest reached [...] Nothing matters more to AA's future welfare than the manner in which we use the colossus of modern communication. Used unselfishly and well, it can produce results surpassing our present imagination."

Bill W built service geographically, intergroups serve groups, but aren't part of the Area Structure.

This is the waive of the future: Bill said communication will expand, he was really looking down the road and saw communication as important.

Pre-Pandemic stated there were less than 175 groups and by December, they reported over 3,000 online meetings and 629 groups in 17 languages and 21 Countries.

PROS

- By allowing online only meetings to participate in General Service, online groups would benefit from GSO's services and support, keeping with Concept Four's Right of Participation.
- Opportunities for outreach young people, women, and other needs across the world.
- Normalizing online meetings.
- Could allow full area-wide general service participation, being inclusive.
- Different needs of the online community may be better met.

- Each member can vote or express their opinion on topics or motions that could change the future of AA.
- Online meetings allow for the inclusion and vital connection of the elderly, the permanently ill, or otherwise remote members who are unable to maintain a physical homegroup. They carry the message, include sponsorship, and can function as a real homegroup.
- Some areas have stated that online only meetings will continue after the pandemic because the cost of video conferencing accounts are often much less than building leases and insurance, leaving more money available for general service work.
- Online-only groups have the potential of service and outreach which could have a profound effect on the evolution of A.A. as a whole.

CONS

- The non-geographic nature of “Virtual Only” meetings creates potential contradictions to our geographically based construct.
- With world-wide members, where does an online meeting anchor? Who decides?
- This could cause disparity because of GSR’s/DCM’s inability to serve an Area if they live in other Areas than where they are anchored.
- The online Intergroup has existed for years and features a few thousand online AA meetings throughout the world ranging from video or telephone conferences to email or chat groups and many languages and is available 24/7.
- Virtual-only meetings that are not tied to the geographic construct of an Area may add to the workload of the local Intergroup staff.
- Struggles with navigating collection of the 7th Tradition online.
- Concerns about a loss of community through online meetings.
- We don’t need it because everyone will be back to meeting in person, it would be a waste of time.

What does your group think?

TOPIC IV POLICY AND ADMISSIONS

B. Should a 94th Area be created to our service structure that will encompass all virtual groups that are not affiliated with a physical meeting space?

One of the hot topics at the 71st General Service Conference will be a discussion of how to incorporate on-line, virtual groups into the General Service structure. The Online Intergroup (OIAA) has been around for a number of years and while they allow for the registration on any form of non-brick-and-mortar group, they do not provide a mechanism for that group to participate in the General Service structure at a District, Area, or the General Service Conference level. With the pandemic raging and the exponential growth of online, virtual groups, this issue has become of significant importance. The issue is being addressed through the Policy & Admissions committee, which we have designated item VB for our Mini-conference purposes but can be found in the background material for the Policy & Admission committee as item VII-J where there are no less than 6 items addressing different aspects of this question.

For this Mini-conference item, we are examining the second of these 6 items, VIIJ-2, and a submission by Area 51, North Carolina:

Area 51 requests that the GSC consider allowing participation of all virtual groups not affiliated with a physical meeting space by creating a 94th Area to our Service Structure that will encompass those A.A. groups.

Their Area felt very strongly that the online groups need to have a voice and a vote in our service structure and the formation of a 94th area would help accomplish this goal. The Area voted on Oct. 31, 2020 with substantial unanimity to submit this item as an agenda item for the 71st General Service Conference.

In their submission, several points are made supporting this recommendation. First, the A.A. virtual popu-

lation has grown but their voice is not heard through a delegate as the groups are not associated with an area. The Service manual on page S25 states “If the A.A. population seems to have grown to the point where the current delegate and other trusted servants can no longer provide adequate service and communication, there may be local interest in forming a new area. In such a case, the area committee or committees involved may write to G.S.O. and request an application for an Additional Delegate Area.” Concept I informs us that the final responsibility and ultimate authority “should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.” This should certainly include all virtual groups if we want to be inclusive. By allowing virtual groups to become part of the service structure, AA as a whole will benefit from the unique experiences of members that are unwilling or unable to attend traditional meetings. In addition, members that are only able to attend virtual meetings will become knowledgeable of the larger AA world and resources available to them through GSO.

The option of creating a 94th Area is one option being considered to deal with the issue of including virtual groups in the service structure. Other options include allowing virtual groups to join existing Districts and Areas which will also be considered.

PROS

Creating a 94th Area that virtual groups could join would provide a solution for giving virtual groups representation in the service structure through the Delegate elected to represent the Area. While the exact organization of this Area would require discussion and exploration of various issues like how to elect the Delegate and others, the assumption is that the Area would have a Delegate, could form districts and would organize an Area committee. This would provide a voice and a vote for the virtual groups at the General Service Conference and as an Area.

CONS

There is no necessity to create a separate Area to provide representation for virtual groups. Virtual groups could join existing Districts and Area rather than creating a new virtual Area. Besides, there are too many questions that need to be answered. How would a Delegate be elected? What would happen if a virtual group belonged to both an existing Area and District and the new virtual 94th Area. Where would they vote? Many virtual groups now have international members from countries like France, England, and Germany. How can these international members vote on items for the General Service Conference in the U.S. and Canada?

Do we need a separate Area to support virtual groups, or can virtual groups join existing Districts and Areas? Perhaps you believe that these virtual groups should not have a voice in District and Area structures.

What does your group think?

Let your
group's voice
be heard!!



Area 44 Virtual Mini-conference
Saturday April 10th, 2021
“A.A. in a Time of Change”

Join the meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82635796590?pwd=QzdzMVNDRkJxc1RYNDFCd1oxYkdDUT09>

Meeting Id (Zoom): 826 3579 6590
Password: 382413 Dial-in: +1 929-205-6099

Meeting room opens at 8:30 am for Fellowship with orientation @ 8:45
Mini-conference starts at 9am

GSRs...come and share your group's conscience on the topics from the 71st General Service Conference to fully inform our Delegate, Jimmy A.!



Join us as we trudge that road of happy destiny

Area 44 District Happenings & Reflections

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



Looking to get involved in service outside of the home group?

Please reach out!

Districts are ALWAYS looking for your help!

Visit: www.nnjaa.org

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 Intergroup, or AA as a whole. We welcome your comments, opinions, or viewpoints on anything found in this newsletter.
— The Editor

On Topic:
Hope OR
Let Go and Let God

Letting Go and Letting God - A Difficult but Essential Decision!

Early in my journey to a sober life, I embraced the fact that my life was in turmoil, and I had lost the ability to manage my life in the throes of alcoholism. Once I understood and accepted this as fact, I was ready to continue my journey. Now it was time to focus on the Second and Third Step, the belief in a higher power as well as turning my will and my life over to the care of that higher power. This would prove to be the most difficult and the most important step in my journey. Being raised Catholic, communed, confirmed, and having attended a parochial school, you would think this would be a cinch, right? Not so much. It proved to be a monumental task. Although I knew it would be tough, I also realized it was imperative to

Early in my life, I knew God. I loved him and trusted him with all. Then, life took over: career, children, and just the drama of it all. Therefore, I lost my way. I turned on God, thinking success and material things were more important. I managed to literally stumble through my life in an alcoholic haze, managing to become very successful in career and acquiring many material things. It's funny. At some point, I actually felt like I was a guest in my own life. Eventually, I hit a bottom. I don't know if it was a high or low bottom, but I ended up in the hospital unable to take care of myself.

Joining the AA fellowship would be the first step in my reconciliation with my God as I knew him. I was feeling I had let my God down by turning away. I was almost embarrassed to ask for forgiveness and the return of his love. Through my relationship with AA, I have learned that I am a child of God no matter what sins I may have committed, and his forgiveness is infinite. My journey has now taken me back to my God and to my local church. I attend mass once a week, joined they're men's faith group meeting once a week, and volunteer on the grounds crew. My God has forgiven me for all my trespasses and welcomed me with open arms with a love that is unbounded. My message is Hope! Where there is Hope there is forgiveness. Thank you so much. My love and hope for all of you!

See you in the rooms!

Dan M.

“Gratitude Changes Attitude”

Hope Through Letting Go

The last several months have been sad, clouded by losses and some heartache, yet I remain hopeful for the future. After all, I am sober and learning to deal with life on life's terms. And I feel. Not just for myself, but for you. For others. Without it having anything to do with me. What did the Scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz* say at the end of the movie? He knew he had a heart because it was breaking. And mine is, a little. There are so many events that would make one's heart break. Yet, through all this, I am learning to let go, and in doing so, find hope.

Hope. That was something I never had. Restless, irritable, and discontented, I sought comfort in my imagination, books, daydreaming, the refrigerator, and then, when I was in my late teens... Eureka! Alcohol! Had I been able to stop after the first or second drink, drinking would have been the perfect solution to all my woes, giving me the ease and comfort I had not felt since I was very young. But I couldn't stop, no matter how hard I tried.

In late 1986, I couldn't do it anymore, and so I came to Alcoholics Anonymous—a hot, sniveling, mess, the perpetual victim. Everything that had happened to me in my life was someone else's fault. No one had the problems I had or felt the pain I felt. And oh boy, what resentments I felt! Although I was getting sober and happy to be free of John Barleycorn (how I loved that old phrase), my sobriety was not what I would have liked. I was not as happy, joyous, and free as I would have wanted, and every situation had claw and teeth marks in it.

When I finally went through the steps very thoroughly, I began to feel some of that contentment I had sought. I began to soften a little, and the ease and comfort I had sought started to appear. Even during the pandemic, I felt it. I still do. I am grateful and blessed, even through my tears and sadness. As I let go and let God, and say “Thy will be done,” I can reach out my hand to someone who needs help. Step 12 is my hope and letting go is my strength through weakness.

Today things happen, sad things. But they are not happening exclusively to me. And I can feel—for others, not just for myself—and for that I am forever grateful.

Marybeth H., District 26

Hope Lead Me To Let Go and Let God

I read these topics and immediately thought—but of course—that is it!!! How I once doubted topics such as these to be anything other than just more of the AA paradoxes or slogans that caused my head to hurt! My early sobriety response to a statement like this was, “Are you serious??” Answer: “yes, we are, absolutely.” We read promises of the hope coming true. Chapter 11 foretells the life I can have. The message is loud and clear. Let us tell you what happened to us, so it can happen to you! I did not believe it then. I do believe it now.

Upon reflection, I must admit that I skeptically viewed the slogans: “Let Go and Let God” and “First Things First” and “Easy Does It” and “we surrender to win” and “we give it away to keep it” and “we suffer to get well” and “we die to live.” And the most confusing one? The upside-down “Think, Think, Think”.

I arrived at my first meeting sober, shaking, and terrified. I did not know what to think. I did know I was in a lot of trouble. I did know that I was not able to stay sober for any period of time. I knew that I no longer wanted to live the way I was living. So, on that day, in that meeting room, I was directed to and I met hope. Hope was demonstrated by the AAs who were there that Friday night. Collectively, they had “let Go and let God” at least for that hour on that night. I then had the curious feeling that this day was different. Hope did happen for me that night. The collective attitude of the AAs who were in that room providing a meeting room for a person like me to walk through its doors calmed my anxious spirit. I then had the experience of “letting God” as I received a state of grace, which was mercifully granted to my weary spirit the very moment I thought to seek something else. The “letting go” became a conscious thought. I suddenly knew I had a shot at life, and that is hope.

It took time away from a drink before I became aware of the power of this first experience of hope. It has led to the belief that I could “let go” of what I knew and could “let God” bring me to where I needed to be. I smile when I think that I can even “let” God do anything with me. The decision of Step 3 was the most important decision I ever made. That decision is kept alive with the 3rd Step Prayer, which in turn reminds me that with God hope thrives and with hope God simply is. And my life—well, I do not know how to describe such beautiful grace.

Karen C., Morris Plains, NJ
Journey to Freedom

Let Go and Let God? What does that mean and exactly how does one do that?

When I walked into an AA meeting years ago, I came in, in a state of complete surrender, admitting I was completely defeated. And, for the first time ever, I admitted and accepted that I could not stop drinking on my own. I didn’t fully realize that I was actually admitting powerlessness and that I had commenced to take Step One. The night before, I had cried for hours talking to God (I was good at foxhole prayers back then) and praying for help to stop drinking. The next night, when I walked into that AA meeting, I suddenly realized that not once during the day had I obsessed about or craved alcohol, something I had experienced every single day for many years. A true miracle. And just like that I crossed the bridge from believing in God to believing that he cared about me.

But let go and let God? I came to understand that before I could let go and let God I first had to do more than believe in God. I had to trust him too. That was going to take a bit more work for someone like me who was fiercely independent and rarely ever asked for or accepted help. I was someone who had long ago given up on depending on anyone or anything, including God, thinking he had abandoned me many times when I most needed it. It was hard to trust in a God, who in my broken perception from my broken brain had allowed so many painful and horrifying things to happen to me and the people I cared about the most.

As I began to “work” the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, Steps One through Three began to become the foundation of who I am today. As I continued to work the rest of the Steps, I began to see the error of my thinking. God had never abandoned me. I had abandoned God. I began to understand that just because

my prayers were not answered in the way in which I demanded or when I demanded (my need to control), it didn't mean that he didn't care, and it didn't mean I had ever been alone. As true sobriety began to infiltrate every aspect of my life, I saw how my thinking and perceptions had been faulty.

Time has passed. Like everyone, I have experienced several tragedies and personal challenges, and every single time God has shown up. He has shown up in innumerable and amazing ways. Once I was open to recognizing him, I began to not just believe in God but to trust him too. These experiences have in turn brought me closer to God.

I continue to learn, however, that my need to try to control runs deep to my core. It seems there are many layers to this need, and I am only able to shed one layer at a time (the proverbial peeling of the onion that we talk about in our rooms). It is quite humbling as I begin to recognize that sometimes when I think I am trying to be helpful that I am not allowing someone else their own experiences, their own pain, their own growth. I am not allowing them their own opportunity to lean on God. Sometimes I discover it is more about my own feelings of powerlessness and wanting to control to ensure a certain outcome, and, ultimately, about me not fully trusting God.

This painful recognition has helped me have a new appreciation of our literature, which to paraphrase states I cannot play God and trust God too. Today I ask God daily for help: help in letting go of my need to try to control things and help to trust him more fully. When I am able to do that, I can truly let go and let God, and he sure does a lot better job than I can.

Julie K.

Warren/Watchung Women's Group

Let Go and Let God—Surrendering to God's Will

The saying "Let Go and Let God" has helped me tremendously in my recovery. I have had a faith in God for many years, but how much did I really trust God? I used to place my trust in alcohol to do for me what I could not do for myself. Now I want God to do for me what I cannot do for myself. Going to the liquor store and drinking my problems away was easier than facing them and facing myself. However, those problems didn't disappear; they just got buried deep down inside and only appeared as if they were gone. If I stayed on that road, it would have proven to be fatal. It takes work to complete the Steps and trust in God, but it is well worth the work and effort because my life is worth fighting for. Our lives are worth fighting for.

There has been a significant change in me since I "Let Go and Let God" and now live a sober life. The growth has been slowly progressing forward, and I am deeply grateful for this seed of life that has been firmly planted inside of me. It is in firm ground because of the program of AA and the faith and trust that I now have in God. Once the ground felt shaky, like I was sinking into an abyss, but I have been given a second chance. It was extremely hard to let go of alcohol and let God be the one to feed my soul, but his food is life. There are also other things that are nourishment for my soul, such as the fellowship of AA and the love of family and friends.

I have used "Let Go and Let God" in other areas of my life, which has really helped me. Resentments have had a stronghold in my life for years. Before I went to AA, I didn't realize how much they affected my life. When I first went to meetings, I thought, "I don't know what they are talking about because I don't really have resentments." However, as time went on, I became keenly aware of deep-rooted resentments in me. I read another definition of resentments that was defined as "revisiting an old offense". Immediately, I realized that I would think about all the wrong doings that people had done to me throughout the years. How could I have been so blind to not see that resentments had a major stronghold in my life? Because of AA and God, the truth has been revealed to me. Now I work on letting go and letting God. When I replay those tapes of old offenses in my head, I am learning to shut them off. I am learning to forgive others. I repeatedly ask God for his help, and his help is there for me to receive. At times, I can still feel unforgiveness

and bitterness rising up inside of me like a weed that needs to be plucked out. So, I get on my knees and ask for God's help to forgive others because I also need forgiveness too.

For a little more than a year, I asked for God's help to forgive someone. I continued praying to God for his help to forgive that person and have grace with me for the bitterness I harbored in my heart. I knew that I was wrong for the bitterness. I stubbornly held on to that unforgiveness because I felt justified in it. But my resentments also impacted and hurt those around me. I thank God because he has helped me to forgive that person and now there is more peace and stillness inside of me.

In conclusion, "Let Go and Let God" has helped me to surrender and submit myself to God's loving authority and perfect will for my life. It has helped me to learn to let go of all the things I have no control over and let God handle them.

Elizabeth C.

Sobriety Date: October 15, 2019

"Willing to go to any lengths"

Let Go and Let God

Probably my least favorite slogan. Not entirely for the obvious reason of "letting go" and, therefore, no longer having control. No, my reasoning is more regarding the "God" part. Or, at least, it was.

When I began my AA journey this time, I had a very, VERY difficult time establishing my Higher Power. Yes, I was raised Catholic. Yes, the image of God that is still in my head is of the gray bearded guy in the sky. Yes, I do NOT call my HP "God." Go through my Big Book and "God," "him," "he," and "his," are crossed out in the first 164. My issue, RIGHT NOW, is that I feel I have bowed down to many men during my addiction and RIGHT NOW, I have no desire to pray to or ask a "man" for help. (BTW, a man asked me to write this!)

I actually, for the most part, don't have any qualms with "letting go." I remember, during a few years in my previous "sobriety," I was more dry than sober—I wanted control of everything. Work, home, everything. When I relapsed, I wanted control of NOTHING. I didn't want any responsibility. I wanted to drink and that was it.

Today, I have a HP who I turn to everyday. I'm a researcher, discovering my HP took a lot of searching the internet, reading books, asking questions. When I finally did find my HP, it was a huge sense of relief. Today, I find it almost effortless to let go and let HP. It's just easier. More often than not, I let go and let HP without even realizing it. I've graduated from just "let it go." Baby steps. I watch my daughter; while she's amazing, she doesn't have a higher power. The struggle is real.

Today, I can distinguish between what I can and cannot control. I can take steps and do legwork for the things I can (at least somewhat) control. I don't panic. I don't have meltdowns. It feels good. It feels right.

You might have noticed the use of "right now" earlier: that is because I realize that things can change in a second or things can change over years. I can accept those changes. I recognize the things I can change.

One of my greatest achievements so far? Today, I can say "God" and not get nauseous. Again, baby steps.

The crazy amount of quotation marks in this article is bothering me too, but I'll "let go and let HP"

To everyone, peace and stay healthy (mind, body and soul)!

Colleen R-S

Sober Date: 5/25/2017

Relearning to Let Go and Let God

Hi, I'm Tom, an Alcoholic. When asked if I would write an article on the topic "Let Go and Let God" I wasn't sure if I could. Well, here I am pen to paper like a Fourth Step to open my soul and let you in.

I was raised in a Catholic home, with Catholic schooling and background. I had a deep faith that I forgot when my drinking started. The only time I remembered my Higher Power was when the world spun, I was in trouble, or the end seemed near. Other than that, it was me and my bottles. There are dry goods involved, but this is AA, so they are being left out; same effect but different.

After about 20 years of hard living and partying, I hit my bottom in a moment of clarity. I was at my friend's house. I had brought a case of tall boys and a fifth of Yukon Jack. I decided to call my ex-wife. We were still friendly, so I thought. All I remember is that we had a fight. Probably all the alcohol fueled it.

Well, I went to go get a beer, but they were all gone. I asked, "Where's the beer?" "You drank it." "Where's the Yukon?" "You drank that too."

All this in three hours. My life had just taken a turn; I wasn't even buzzed! I went back downstairs, despondent, and looked at my friend. Then, I said, "I can't do this anymore." I left, driving about ten miles to my apartment.

That night, I looked in the bathroom mirror and didn't see a reflection. I didn't see me anymore. I went to bed and prayed to the God I hadn't talked to in years: "I can't do this anymore. Please, God, let me wake up dead."

The next morning, I opened my eyes to a new feeling that I hadn't remembered feeling since childhood. My mind was clear, and I didn't hurt. I knew then and there what I had to do. I couldn't drink anymore, just for now. I prayed all the time for help and talked with my mother, my spiritual advisor, on the phone for support. I worked and just struggled through the days.

After about two weeks, I called the 800 number in the phone book for AA to get some type of help or support. The person on the phone was great. He talked with me forever and found me a meeting two days later, even though he could have sent someone over right then. I thought I knew better. A few days later, I went to a meeting in a rehab he told me about. I got to the facility, found the meeting, and opened the door. It was not what I was expecting, so I left. A few days later, I went to my first meeting, a speaker meeting. I was greeted at the door with a smile and welcome, "there's the coffee." How did they know??

Well to shorten this, I got a temp sponsor and dove into the program. I found the God I walked away from, and I put my sobriety into His hands. I went to retreats, began helping others, prayed for help each night and day. Not knowing it, I had let go and let God. I did this for 11 years: taking coffee commitments, running meetings, being secretary, GSR, anything to give back.

Then, around my 11th year, my older brother died from ALS. I thought it was my fault. I don't know why, but I had prayed for over two years for God to heal him. One last night, I went to see him at the nursing home. I gave him a haircut and a shave. He was having trouble breathing. I held him in my arm rubbing his back and praying. I finally gave him last rites and forgave him for all the wrongs he did. Then, I told our God it was OK for him to take him.

The next morning came, and I received the phone call that my brother had passed. It hurt, but he was out of pain. I did the eulogy and held my mother together. No parent should ever lose a child. Well, a few months went by and the mental pain was increasing, I stopped listening at meetings, even though they tried to help. My final demise was I got mad at my God. He didn't do what I wanted. I was angry. At this point, I let go of God. I lost my faith. I don't know when or where that drink found my hand, but it did. The mental pain went away. I figured I'd come back tomorrow. Oh well, 11 years...

Well, no one knew. A few days went by. Then, the pain came back, and so did a drink. Oh well, I'll come back tomorrow. And so, it went. As the days got closer together, I went from a bottle a week of vodka to a fifth of 100-proof vodka daily to finally the "more bang for your buck" Everclear at 190-proof. Three handled bottles a week! I couldn't stop. I went to my normal meetings, so my wife wouldn't know anything was wrong. Yea right? She knew something was up. Finally, after about a year of the most hardcore drinking, I was going to my bi-yearly AA retreat. This time I could not face my AA family of twelve years drunk again. Honesty got me clear minded. I put down my drink at the entrance to the grounds. This was my awaking moment and another bottom. I pulled up front. My sponsor was at the door. I asked him if he had my 12-year piece. For the first time in a few years, he had one. I told him I had been drinking. "Let's talk," he said. That's all he said. We went for a walk, and I told him everything. He had had no idea that I was drinking. I hid it so well.

The next night at the retreat, I asked if I could talk to the group before the nightly meeting. Alone with a mic facing about eighty of my AA family, I told them I had been drinking. My watch beeped. I said, "it has been exactly 24 hours right now." I thought they would toss me out the door. But no! AA does not kick the wounded: we help them back up, and so they did with me. They stood and clapped and welcomed me back. I did not expect that. I just wanted to tell them all at the same time. Yet, this was not when I let God back into my life.

A few months went by as I tried to mend my past distrusts among family and friends. I was still angry at my Higher Power. I took a drive to a wooded area where I thought I would be alone. I went to an open area circled by trees. I then let my Higher Power have it! I emptied my hurt and pain to a being that I felt did me wrong. I used language that would make an old sailor blush. I let Him have it. I went on and on. Then, as I was sweating and losing my breath from ranting and I was right in the middle of a tirade, I woke up to what and to whom I was cursing at. Right then, my knees buckled, and I hit the ground. I started to cry, now understanding what I had just done. I called out with tears in my eyes, "I'm sorry. So sorry. Please don't go away." After all this, the festering anger, and the loss of faith, I felt a hand on my shoulder. Then, I heard, "I never went anywhere. I was waiting for this."

I have never been so humbled then at that moment. I have relearned to let go and let God. I don't forget my past. I have learned from it. When things get out of hand, I put it into my Higher Power's hands. With this, I am happy to say I am coming up on 17 years of sobriety. I hope this helps at least someone. I found out I'm not the one in charge.

Be well. Stay sober.

Tom K.

Let Go, Let God.

This brief phrase has been an important reminder to me since I've come to AA that there are many things over which I have little or no control. Even though the God concept has eluded me for more than 22 years in AA, the "let God" portion of this wonderful slogan reminds me that "stuff happens" over which I have no control. I equate "Let God" to fate or just plain chance. Stuff happens on a regular basis that I didn't cause, can't control, and can't fix. The "Let Go" portion of the saying reminds me of another important AA concept: acceptance. While I am not "powerless over everything" as I have heard some AAs express as a sincere belief, there are many things over which I do lack control. Letting go permits me to accept that obvious fact. Rather, I must focus on developing "the wisdom to tell the difference." When I struggled to control the uncontrollable, I suffered from worry and distress, and my efforts to control the uncontrollable invariably left me frustrated and feeling impotent.

Today, when I turn my attention to what I can control, I am able to focus and concentrate on solutions. For the most part, what I do control is my behavior, not my feelings nor even my thinking. When I was angry or sad, a few well-meaning people would suggest, "Don't feel that way." Nothing they could have said

could have made me angrier or sadder. Telling me how to feel tends to have the opposite effect, escalating the feeling rather than curbing it. People with more AA experience then suggested, “Change the way you think!” That helped me very little since my thoughts were controlled by my active alcoholic thinking—even long after I had stopped drinking. My alcoholism was as much the way I thought as it was the act of pouring alcohol down my throat.

Initially, I had it backwards. I believed that since I had stopped drinking, I would feel better. If I then was feeling better, I would think better. And, finally, because of my improved thinking, I would then be able to behave better. I now know that just the opposite is true for me. When I behave better—the only part that I do control—I think better. And when I think better, I feel better. Today, while I certainly have the normal ups and downs of everyday living, I generally feel great! The value of this powerful slogan “Let Go, Let God” is that the “Let God” portion reminds me there are many things over which I have little or no control (feelings and thoughts) while the “Let Go” portion reminds me to stop trying to control the uncontrollable. This approach permits me to focus on what I do control (my behavior) and enjoy life as it is rather than as I would want it to be. When I behave better, I think better, and when I think better, I feel better!

Dave F.

Let the Good Times Roll Group, Pottersville, NJ

Let Go and Let God

For most of my life, I was under the false impression that I could control the universe. I do not know how or why I was wired to believe such a specious idea, maybe just born this way. Of course, having a domineering mother certainly did not help.

However, as time passed and I became older, I began to understand that many things were out of my control. This realization caused me to be depressed and filled with angst. The climax of this depressive, anxious state culminated with my older brother’s death in 1987 at the age of forty from alcoholism. His death was the beginning of my drinking heavily every day. First, I became filled with guilt because I felt that I should have done more to help him; second, at this time, I had no belief in a higher power. I equated religion with Greek and Roman mythology. Hence, I continued to drink for the next thirty years to mitigate my sadness, guilt, anxiety, and depression. Alcohol became my medicine and my God.

In 2016, I faced a cancer scare. Fortunately, after a year and a half of scans and other tests, my oncologist discovered that the cancer was contained in my gallbladder. Thus, ironically, I was following my brother into the grave. For years, I denied that I had a drinking issue. I would emphasize to my wife, other family members, and my friends that I do not get drunk, that I never received a DUI, that I could handle my liquor. Once again, my belief that I could control the world popped its ugly head.

Fortunately, facing cancer and the thought of dying was a major turning point in my life. My primary-care physician finally asked me if I had a drinking problem, and for the first time in thirty years, I was honest and said, “Yes.” My doctor informed me that she had another patient in AA who was willing to help other alcoholics. She asked if she could give him my number. I acquiesced. Hence, I came into AA with a ready-made sponsor. There are no coincidences. God was doing for me what I could not do for myself.

Joining AA has been one of the best decisions that I have ever made. I am not only a sober person, but also I am learning to be a more spiritual person, one who cares about other people, who wants to see the world become a more loving place; of course, this worldly change must begin with me. I now understand that I cannot control everything or everyone: “God, give me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change...”

When I entered AA, I was a spiritually bankrupt man, now I am one who has a higher power and who can help me through all adversities that I face in life. In addition, my higher power has given me many joys: my marriage is stronger, I am a happier person, and I can enjoy my old age with less emptiness than I did my youth. I no longer believe that material wealth equals success. I comprehend that helping another human being through a difficult situation or volunteering to help a charitable cause are far more priceless than be-

Therefore, I can never repay AA back for giving me back my God and a better perspective on living, and especially, for teaching me that I must learn to “Let Go, Let God. Thy will, not mine be done.”

Tony P.
Bradley Gardens and North Branch Groups

Let Go, Let God

We all so often try to steer our lives in the direction we feel it must go. I, for one, am guilty of wanting things my way. Most of the time, who am I kidding? ALL the time I need to leave the plan and design of my life to a higher power.

“Let Go, Let God.”

Four simple words that hold the key to a happy life. Two years ago, I began a journey. A journey that was mapped out for me long before I knew about it. The road I traveled up until that time was filled with adventure, heartache, excitement, pain, laughter, tears, courage, and fear. Life was a roller coaster of climbing up steep hills and quickly falling right back down those same hills feeling defeated.

All of the battles I fought, all the experiences I faced, all the emotions I endured, and all the challenges I overcame were all blessings bestowed upon me by that higher power I spoke of.

With all my heart I can say today that letting go and letting God is the ONLY way to live one’s life. My life left to me becomes a struggle, chaotic and stressful.

“Let Go, Let God” means that I get to enjoy the ride. God is at the steering wheel; all I have to do is sit back and glance out the window at the beautiful scenery and take it all in. Each morning, I wake up and say, “Thank You, God, please guide me through the day and show me your plan. Perhaps place someone in my path I can help or just simply make them smile. And when I fall short and find myself frustrated, let me remember to pause for a moment and ask you for help.” For I know that if I start my day without God or I continue my day without that pause, I will struggle to find my way. But when I let go and let God, HE provides the answers to my questions. HE will never forsake me. For HE knows the way. HE has already decided what’s good for me and what is not good for me.

I am not saying that heartache, tears, pain, and fear will not exist in life; I am saying that if I learn to let go and let God, HE shows me how to deal with those parts of life that are hard. HE never lets me go through those times alone. HE continues to walk beside me, watching over me, carrying me through life’s adventures.

By letting go and letting God—I am able to help others and perhaps make them smile.
By letting go and letting God—I get to be a good mom, a good daughter, a good friend, and a good person.
By letting go and letting God—I am able to experience the miracles of life.

Letting go and letting God can be challenging. Our “free will” somehow seems to creep in, and we are unable to get out of our own way. Those are the times that we need to begin to recognize and begin to challenge ourselves to pause, step aside, and get out of God’s way! Let go of our old ways of thinking and acting and let God show us the way.

“Let Go, Let God” means I can live life alive and just enjoy the ride!

Tracy C.
North Branch, Bridgewater, NJ

God Wink

The 24 hours prior to writing this article, I was going through life as usual. Prayers, don't drink, feed my family, go to church, feed my family, don't drink, do laundry, feed my family...OK, you get the idea. But something interesting happened in those 24 hours that made me sit up and take notice of a God wink.

Most sources I looked into give the following definition: "God wink: n. An event or personal experience, often identified as coincidence, so astonishing that it is seen as a sign of divine intervention, especially when perceived as the answer to a prayer."

I get God winks often. Or maybe I look for them. Either way, there's something to this phenomenon. On this particular occasion, I received a book from my pastor that CliffsNotes would sum up as let go and let God. I then heard from a friend I hadn't heard from in a while whose home group is called "Let go and Let God." Exactly twenty-four hours into my "coincidence", my sponsor asked if I'd like to write a little something for the newsletter. The topic? Let Go and Let God. Whoa! I heard that. And so, my reflection began.

As happens frequently, my immediate thought was Step One. "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and our lives had become unmanageable". When I first started taking sobriety seriously, I had no issues breezing through the First Step and accepting I was an alcoholic. The signs were all there. A concussion from a drunken fall, a liver three times its normal size, child services breathing down my neck, a marriage that was barely amicable. The list goes on. Totally unmanageable. And I knew I had to stop drinking. But as I progressed to additional Steps, I realized for me, there was a lot more to Step One. I was powerless. Me? The one-time 13-year-old runaway who hitchhiked to Daytona for bike week? The woman who was too tough to wear anything on the beach but jeans? The woman who dug her nails into a vet tech's bloody arm for mishandling her dog? Sounded powerful to me. Slowly, very slowly, I began to realize that my entire life, I'd also been fighting the things I could not change. I was powerless over death. I was powerless over some health issues. I was powerless over financial burdens. So, who was the culprit that made the sea ebb and fall that I couldn't control? God. Oh right! Sure, it's God's fault. Yeah, I'm going to go with that. And out loud I said, "Fine God, here you go. You made this mess. You fix it." And lo and behold he did!!

What happened that day? I let go. It probably wasn't the nicest way I could have approached God, but I look back and think maybe He laughed. Which interestingly enough is the name of the book my pastor gave me (God wink). Miracles began to happen the day I let go and let God. Some direct, some indirect, but the biggest miracle of all was serenity. Doing the next right thing still brings about poor health, death, and financial woes. But I accept God's will. I search for silver linings that are almost always there. I remind myself every day to let go and let God. I can finally sit back and enjoy the view knowing God's driving this bus. I am most grateful to God for all things and for the support of Alcoholics Anonymous. Without each, my life would not be the blessing it is today.

Lisa H.,
New Vision Group

Hope

I am a hopeless drunk, and for that I am grateful. For years I could not, and would not, put the bottle down. I referred to it as the family curse. My grandfather was an alcoholic who took his own life when my father was eleven. My father, in turn, was an alcoholic who drank himself to death a little over three years ago. I celebrated ninety days sober at his funeral, after nearly dying from this disease myself. It was only through an intervention by three friends who took me to the hospital for detox, subsequent rehab, and

finally coming back into the rooms and actively doing the Steps after many years of being away that I am here to write this today.

Left to my own devices and my own will, I will drink again. Thankfully, through the Twelve Steps, the Fellowship, and relying on a higher power, I am sober one day at a time. I pray to remain hopeless, as it was the false hope that I could somehow overcome this malady on my own which kept me from coming back in. Now that I am sober, and by praying for hopelessness, I am filled with a new hope, along with a new freedom and a new happiness that has been given to me through the power of this program and my higher power. It is a pragmatic hope, built upon a foundation of serenely accepting that I am an alcoholic, having the courage to do the Steps, and a modicum of wisdom to embrace the truth that "faith without works is dead."

Zachary S.

Matching Calamity with Serenity

I recall fondly the men who told it like it was. Jack, during AA-related announcements, would raise his hand and proclaim: "AA is good!" Bill, a quiet old-timer, would close every meeting by saying: "If no one told you they loved you today, I love you." Ed, a greeter and man of few words, would shake each person's hand firmly, refusing to let go until he whispered: "It's a good day to be sober." These messages of gratitude, love and hope, spoken by men who'd lived hard lives and overcome insurmountable challenges to get and stay sober, were like diamonds in the rough. They'd let go of their old ideas about what was acceptable to be said aloud and taught me that the ideals I'd always craved were attainable if I worked for them.

It's been a while since I've seen these men. Watching the spinning blue wheel while Zoom loads, I prepare to type in a 12-digit username and password. Signing in, I hope to see one of their faces in a square or their names on the participant list, but I don't. Perhaps they're not technologically proficient, perhaps they've chosen to connect with friends by phone or another safe format, perhaps they're relying on their higher power, perhaps they're no longer with us.

Despite my speculation, I've tried to keep the focus on myself. I am inspired by friends who are committed to sticking to a routine, whatever that looks like for them. While we may be physically isolated from our fellows, complacency leads to a different form of isolation that leads to our demise.

Last March, before options for fellowship became readily available to us, I was regularly anxious, afraid, and worried. I knew I had tools to quell these feelings, but the news and social media had me frozen. I called my sponsor, hoping she'd alleviate my fears, but before dialing her number, I knew what she'd say. The situation facing all of us was beyond our control. Only a willingness to accept the situation as it was and make a daily effort to get quiet, connect, and listen would do. "The answers will come, if your own house is in order."

A respected sponsee said she could not think of a group of people who'd know better how to ride out this uncertain period than we would. "However long it lasts," she'd said, "we'll handle it." I listened as she shared with conviction the strength of men and women in recovery. "We are resilient in the face of adversity. We are never alone."

Initially, I borrowed her faith and the faith of others in the rooms, but this was an inside job. Opening my Big Book, I read and re-read the sections I'd highlighted: "... we clean house with the family... asking to be shown the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love." "...we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking to be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives." "We pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask God for the right thought or action" "What used to be a hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind." "We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show..." Digging deeper, I sought out a morning meditation on the Eleventh Step: "See to it where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer." I considered the prayers I knew well and began saying them in the early morning, before the sun came up, before my mind filled with nonsense.

“God let me seek to understand, rather than be understood, comfort rather than be comforted...” “Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, accepting hardship as the pathway to peace...” “Free me from the bondage of self so I may better do Thy Will...” Embracing these meaningful lines served as bridges to the 24-hour periods that made up a year.

While the road’s been bumpy, there have been countless sober joys—seeing again the faces of women I’ve known for years who’ve moved out of state, engaging with small groups to discuss a daily meditation, texting for 365 days (and counting) an AA friend a meaningful song relating to life as we know it, and living harmoniously with a houseful of 20-somethings who trust me. My experience throughout the pandemic has been filled with reflection, service, and step work, staying safe, serving elder family members, and laying one to rest, faithfully carrying the message and putting recovery first.

I hope those members of AA whose passion for recovery was expressed so freely throughout the years know they made an impact on me. The words of AA members past and present shared at meetings, the pearls in our literature, and the spiritual messages found throughout the prayers we rely on urge me to match calamity with serenity. It’s a good day to be sober.

DJB

Wyckoff, NJ

The Road Ahead

Hi. My name is Richard, and I’m an Alcoholic.

I always seemed to have problems with everyone around me. I blamed others for all my shortcomings and basically everything that went wrong. Part of me always knew it was me that was the problem, and I would often admit to myself in confidence. A larger part of me just didn’t care and would continue to blame everyone else because it was easier (I suppose). Things would be great for a while: a good job, great girlfriend, money in the bank, and usually some decent friends. Unfortunately, as great as that all sounds, I would eventually find some reason to push them away without even realizing it. Before I knew it, they were gone.

I never really took care of myself mentally or emotionally, and I live with bipolar depression. I just always lied and said I was fine, that everything’s okay. In reality, I was honestly always just hoping I would die and often obsessed about not wanting to be here anymore. That continued up until well...I guess it never really went away (But I did eventually get help for my mental illness, so it’s gotten better). I often found that I couldn’t be sober and happy no matter what substance it was, and there was certainly some experimentation, but my main vice was alcohol.

I was always miserable for as long as I could remember. When I finally decided to get help it didn’t quite take. I’d bounced back and forth and in and out of the rooms. I’ve been around for four years now and had plenty of sober time with no spiritual presence or acceptance of a higher power only to keep repeating the same mistakes. The blackouts and bottoms got worse and worse—it brought me to some profoundly dark places. It finally took a blackout where I was absolutely unaware of a single aspect that had transpired, only a start point and an endpoint (normally, I remember bits and pieces), to really terrify me and break me down completely.

Finally, I admitted I was a broken human being. I finally had that spiritual awakening, one after another within hours of each other while I was in the hospital, and I just woke up. It was truly that simple and something I stopped questioning. My entire outlook on life just changed, and I can’t really explain it. The way I behave, think, act, react. It’s all different. I have compassion for others and a real relationship with my father. Sure, I have bad days just like everybody else, but I know how to handle them now (the medication also helps...a lot). I dove in with both feet and have been working the program the way it’s supposed to be worked for the first time in four years.

I stay close to my network and my sponsor. During the time I'm writing this, I have hit close to 300 meetings, thanks to Zoom. Also, I have finally given up that control to a higher power of my own understanding, which for me is a complex amalgamation of things. I know this is where I need to be and actually want to be here more than anything. For once, honestly, I love it. Today, I have no expectations nor set a metaphorical bar of any kind. I just try to do the next right thing and try to keep a positive attitude, as difficult as it may be at times.

Today, I look forward to the road ahead and finally finding out who I am, who I really am—finding those missing pieces to the puzzle along the way on my road to solace and honest peace. I lost the person I wanted to spend the rest of my life with, after eight years of being together, due to everything you've just read. That's a pain I'm not sure will ever mend. But I can hope. Who knows what will happen along this road? I surely don't.

Rick R.
Monmouth County, NJ

Many thanks to ALL of our writers for
This Day, Spring 2021 Edition.
Your words are beautiful and truly inspiring.
We could not do this without you!!!
Megan D., Area 44 Newsletter Editor



The past year with Covid 19 has been a challenge for all of us. However, I know that our Higher Power will help resolve this terrible situation. Sending prayers to all the Fellowship.

Anyway, the newsletter has been virtual, and will remain virtual, until further notice. We continue to have meetings on Zoom the third Thursday of every month. Please consider joining this wonderful group of people. If you are interested, email me, and I will send you the ID and password. Finally, The Newsletter Committee continues to discuss ways that we can make innovated changes to the newsletter, and we will continue to work diligently toward making the newsletter something that all members of the Fellowship will not want to miss reading.

Sincerely,
Tony P., Newsletter Chair

AREA 44 - NNJAA SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE SURVEY 2021

PURPOSE The purpose of the brief 5 question survey is to gather valuable feedback from the fellowship in Northern NJ.

BACKGROUND The SMC is developing a recommendation to create a private Facebook group with the primary focus to support 12th step work by AA members in each Area 44 District. We hope it will become a new way to learn about & participate in AA service. In accordance with SMC guidelines, activity in the proposed Facebook group will operate within the 36 principles of the program.

HOW TO COMPLETE

- 1 – Complete on-line by visiting: <https://nnjaa.org/service/smedia/index.html>
- 2 – Print form by visiting: <https://nnjaa.org/service/smedia/images/SocialMediaForm.pdf>
- 3 – Email completed form or answers to SMC.

CONTACT INFO

sm-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com
sm-alt-chair@nnjaa.onmicrosoft.com

Thank you for completing the survey.

The SMC currently meets virtually on the 2nd Thursday monthly at 7:30pm. Please contact the chair or alt. chair with questions or if you are interested in joining the committee.

THIS DAY

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

Summer 2021 Issue Topics:

How did your sobriety grow during the pandemic?
How has AA affected your life in a positive way?

Submit your articles to newsletter@nnjaa.org

👉 Deadline May 6, 2021 👈

Articles should be between 200-800 words.
Please use WORD format as a separate document that can be edited.
Posters can be in a PDF format.
Include your town, home group, or district. newsletter@nnjaa.org

Thinking about a service commitment?

Join the Newsletter Committee meeting the 3rd Thursday each month at 6 pm on Zoom.
Please contact newsletter@nnjaa.org or check the Area calendar for further information.

Hmm, I can help the Newsletter Committee!!

Statement of Purpose: This Day is published quarterly as a joint newsletter for Northern New Jersey General Service Area 44 and the Northern New Jersey Intergroup. This Day functions to promote communication between the groups in Northern New Jersey and to provide members with service-related information. This Day is also a forum for the diverse opinions of the Area 44 Fellowship through shared experience, strength, and hope in all three of AA's legacies: Unity, Service, and Recovery.
Editorial Policy: Articles submitted from the Fellowship are encouraged, and should not exceed 800 words. The newsletter committee may edit submissions for grammar, readability, and content. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does the publication of any article imply an endorsement by either AA General Services or Intergroup. Comments, questions, and articles may be mailed to the attention of the Newsletter Committee at NNJGS Area 44, Suite 21, 2325 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield 07080, or emailed to: newsletter@nnjaa.org.

Online Bookers Exchange

SET AN ALARM – BECAUSE DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME STARTS!

On 7:00 AM, Sunday, March 14, 2021

There will be a short orientation at 7am SHARP to make this event as easy as possible.

Next month Intergroup will again host Bookers online via Zoom... Keeping the spirit of Bookers alive while keeping the Bookers as safe as possible.

INTERGROUP CALENDAR

2021 SECOND QUARTER CALENDAR

MARCH 2021

REMINDER: CHECK NNJAA.ORG CALENDAR UNDER THE NEWS & EVENTS TAB! MOST MEETINGS VIRTUAL!

- 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

APRIL 2021

- 1 Intergroup Delegates Meeting, Clark 8:30PM
- 2 Holiday (Office Closed) Good Friday
- 14 Archives Committee 7:00PM - Intergroup Office
- 28 Joint Website Committee – Intergroup Office

MAY 2021

- 6 Intergroup Delegates Meeting, Clark 8:30PM
- 12 Archives Committee 7:00PM - Intergroup Office
- 19 Nightwatch Committee 7:30PM
- 25 Joint Unity Meeting 8PM – Area 44 Office
- 26 Joint Website Committee 7:30PM – Area Office
- 31 Holiday (Office Closed) Memorial Day

JUNE 2021

- 3 Intergroup Delegates Meeting - Clark 8:30PM
- 10 Archives Committee 7:00PM - Intergroup Office
- 13 Bookers Exchange - Clark 6:00AM – Mother Seton H.S.
- 23 Joint Website Committee 7:30PM – Intergroup Office

AREA 44 CALENDAR

To access Area 44's monthly calendars, please do the following:

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



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

Check out our Area 44 Committee Virtual Meeting List on page 5!

**ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE;
TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH.**
- HELEN KELLER



Member area
userid: alcoholic
password: onedayatime

www.nnjaa.org

Try it on your
Smartphone



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How did your sobriety grow during the pandemic?

OR

How has AA affected your life in a positive way?

Next Edition Deadline:
May 6, 2021

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