

Friendly Hands Had Stretched Out in Welcome

**46th Area 45 General Service Assembly Convention
March 26th, 27th & 28th 2010
Crowne Plaza, Cherry Hill, NJ**



The 46th Area 45 General Service Convention is almost upon us. The theme this year: "Lend a Hand." As the convention nears, *I want to ask you to lend a hand.*

I am an alcoholic; my name is Pat. And it is my great honor to be your chair for the 46th Convention.

I hope you are saying to yourself right now, "How can I help? What can I do?"

The answer is simple, *come to the convention. Yes, you can lend a hand just by showing up.* The convention Registration Chair, Wallace D., and our Treasurer, Debby S-F., are busily processing registrations so we can pay the bills. But there is so much more that you can do.

Two years ago, the 44th Convention Sunday morning speaker, John A., began his talk by appealing to our sense of duty. What he said is that he used to attend a convention that no longer exists. He asked that we guard this one with diligence, telling us he knew that its continuance was not guaranteed, but a result of much action.

I hope that you are now asking yourself, "How else can I help? What else can I do?" *All of us can help by distributing flyers to the groups we visit and by making an announcement at the beginning of our meetings.* The registration flyers are distributed to GSRs, DCMs and Section Leaders at the Area 45 Assembly. We will have more available at the February 21st Assembly. You can also download and print copies at the convention website: www.snjaaconvention.org. There you will also find online registration and an opportunity to order this year's logo hooded sweatshirt which is only available through pre-order.

Many of us can lend a hand by staying the weekend when finances allow, by taking advantage of the meals at the hotel and by attending the banquet on Saturday night. In all of these things, the Area makes no profit, but we do have minimums to guarantee the hotel, and members save on the taxes by booking through preregistration.

If you are anything like me, you may be saying to yourself, "So what's in it for me?" I remember some parts of the very first Area 45 convention I ever attended. It was still a bit foggy for me at 14 months sober. I stayed up late. I talked in the lobby with alcoholics I had just met. And they were talking with alcoholics they had just met. Over the years, I'd see example after example of a newbie like I had been then talk with an old timer, and the fog of uncertainty would lift a little more. We attended marathon AA meetings. We saw speakers from out of town who were invited to come and share their experience, strength and hope with us. We would go to those dances where we could see some of that joyousness and camaraderie first hand.

We are going to have such a wonderful weekend together. My sponsor suggested that I come to the Area 45 convention which, at the time, meant I was coming. He said it was a service function and suggested that I get involved in service to AA. I certainly did not know why at the time. Service in AA and the friendships made through that service has been one of the bright spots of my sober life.

This year will have all of the workshops and skits and entertainment as in years past. The Red Ball Early Bird Meeting kicks off the events on Friday afternoon. The Convention Survival Guide immediately follows the terrific Friday night dinner for those wanting to know about the upcoming weekend. Adrienne B. from GSO has agreed to come and talk with us Friday evening before the Karaoke and the band Soulfire - and that's just day one. Saturday morning will start out at 6:00 a.m. with the Sunrise Spiritual Meeting for those who weren't already up in meditation or at the marathon meetings

which go on all night. Breakfast on the meal plan is one of the highlights of my day, a few minutes to talk with others and enjoy a good cup of coffee and eggs. Cape Atlantic Intergroup is first up for a workshop at 8:00 a.m., and the workshops and skits and speakers go on all day with the Old-Timers Panel, Al-Anon participation and Area 45 Panel 60. This year Frank Z. & Julie W. and their awesome program committee have added a Young People's speaker on Saturday afternoon and even managed to rearrange the schedule to allow for a few minutes in between events for a cup of coffee. Of course, I believe, everyone looks forward to the Saturday Night Speaker Meeting and sobriety countdown. This year Linda P. from Lake Balboa, CA has agreed to speak on Saturday night - and on Sunday morning, Adam T. from Los Angeles, CA. Late night Saturday is, of course, more Karaoke, the ever popular DJ Dance and more marathon meetings.

I wonder if you thought that I was suggesting that, if you sponsor anyone, you suggest that they come to the Convention. Oh yes. It was even suggested to me by a few members to find a way to get the word out that perhaps those members who are able and inclined sponsor someone who may be financially down to a convention registration. I am aware of a few people and groups who do this and believe it is wonderful. Some groups pay the way for their GSR to go. Again, we can all lend a hand, each in our own way.

This year's convention is all about Unity. We make new friends and see old friends, some that we only see once in a year. As we come in as "I," it is the convention committee's hope that we feel the "we." Our Hospitality Chair, Kelly H., has been working all year to make sure the welcome that everyone feels when we attend the 46th convention is common to all. Whether it is one alcoholic talking with another or one alcoholic talking to 1,200, we gather for a common purpose. There will be plenty of volunteer opportunities at the convention, and the committee meets each month in Hammonton on the first Sunday, directions, contacts and information at www.snjaaconvention.org.

Join us. Lend a Hand.

Following are the 46th Annual Southern New Jersey General Service Assembly Convention Committee members. I want to thank them for all their hard work all year. And we want to thank you for everything and anything you do to help ensure the continued success of the Area 45 Convention:

Alice W., Andrew L., Andy M., Angela R., Anne D., Bill T., Carol L., Chrisann P., Chuck M., Colleen T., Darin D., Dave McD., Debbie D., Debby S-F., Deborah D., Denise M., Domingo Q., Donna A., Donna A., Eileen P., Elaine McA., Frank Z., Fred D., Fred E., Fred F., Helen R., Jaime B., Janet C., Jeanie J., Jeanne R., Jeff S., Jen M., Jen T., Jennifer H., Jim W., Jimmy S., JoAnne C. (Convention Co-chair), Joe C., Joe C., Joe McA., Joey H., John C., Julie W., Karen C., Katie C., Keith P., Kelly W., Ken L., Kim D., Kim R., Krista M., Laura D., Lindsey F., Lisa Z., Maria M., Marianne H., Mark P., Maryann L., Matt B., Melissa S., Michelle T., Mike B., Naomi L., Paul B., Phil D., Priscilla S., Robbie T., Roe S., Sandy F., Sharon K., Sharon M., Stella J., Steve G., Tammy C., Thom O., Tim K., Wendy M.

Thank you, thank you, thank you, and God bless you,

**Pat M.
46th Convention Chair**