

AA District 18 Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1

October 2022



We have some late breaking news for District 18.

- The Troy Welcome Home Group has moved from the brick house basement on Wayland to St. Jerome Church, enter from South Main St, Troy, beginning Sept 26th.
- The Gillespie AA Helping Hands Group which meets on Saturdays at 8p, will discontinue meeting beginning October 8th.

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AA Grapevine Discussion: The Agony of Relapsing

This month, we continue with AA *Grapevine* discussion questions. We highly encourage our readers to read the AA *grapevine* article relevant to the discussion, but it is not necessary to have read it or to be familiar with it. We are answering the questions based on our own experience with the hope that our answers will be helpful to our readers.

This month's discussion questions are from October's AA *Grapevine* issue, and are related to relapsing, be it relapsing before A.A. or while in AA.

"What is your experience with relapsing? Did you relapse more than once? What finally helped you? What did you learn? How do you stay sober today? Are you able to help fellow members who have relapsed? How does that help you?"

We have seen the truth demonstrated again and again: "Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic." Commencing to drink after a period of sobriety, we are in a short time as bad as ever. If we are planning to stop drinking, there must be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, p. 33

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I've been fortunate to not have had a relapse since becoming a member of A.A. My heart goes out to those who have and have come back. For me the above statement from page 33 is very powerful, had I only known it prior to being in A.A. I'm not sure if the term relapse only refers to those of us in A.A. that have gone back out drinking, but when I tried quitting on my own prior to A.A. and started drinking after a period of sobriety (used loosely), there wasn't any term associated with my activity. At least none that I was aware of.

I do not remember all the times I tried to stop drinking on my own, but usually most were due to some traumatic event that occurred in my life. Being a closet drinking most of my life, I didn't like attention drawn to myself. I still liked to go out bar hopping after work with the guys and I still like to go out and party. Drinking beer was ok with the fellows, but my closet drinking consisted of concealing my love for hard liquor. So when I was arrested 2 months shy of my 21st birthday for underage possession of alcohol and cannabis, I was terrified what my dad would do to me. I was also terrified my arrest would be published in the newspaper police blotter, which it eventually was. My actions and the result affected all of my family, mom, dad, sister, brothers, grandmother. My family was embarrassed because of me. First person in all the family to be arrested. After that, I separated from those whom I had been partying with, cleaned my act up. But it didn't last long.

When I went to college at SIUC, I had separation from my family and was basically living on my own. I didn't conceal my drinking while there. But because I prioritized partying over grades, I had to drop out after two semesters, my grades were that bad. So I had to clean up my act again because now I needed to get a full time job.

I was able to maintain employment with the same company for 24 years. That was made possible because I was able to adjust to being a functional alcoholic. I only drank after work and up until midnight, so I could do my job the next day. Drinking hadn't really consumed me until the last years there, where it was affecting my performance. There were a few times I tried stopping, but they didn't last very long. Usually a bad day and the thought that a drink would relax me.

In 2015, the company closed its doors and I was unemployed. I decided to

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Sticking with sobriety

In terms of my experience with relapse, I experienced it several times before getting into the program. Each time that I relapsed, I learned something from the experience.

The first few times that I got sober, I used a recovery message board. On one of the threads, there was a group of us that were committed to being sober. When a couple of them relapsed. I remember thinking to myself, "if everyone else is getting to have fun, why shouldn't I?" and then proceeded to get drunk. I originally had no plans of returning to the message board, but someone reached out, so I reluctantly went back and decided to give sobriety another shot.

This time around, I managed to get two weeks sober and it was quite the battle to get those two weeks!! However, after these two weeks, I noticed that the intense cravings had subsided. I thought that if I drank again, that it would be no big deal as the intense cravings were now gone. I thought that I must be fixed. I drank again and found that I was wrong...horribly wrong. Those intense cravings came right back. It was at that point that I came to the realization it would be like this every time that I drank. That I would have to battle those intense cravings for two weeks and if I chose to drink, I'd be right back where I started. I didn't have it in me to do that to myself on a regular basis. It was intensely hard and completely exhausting. However, I once again got back on board with committing myself to sobriety and used those next two weeks of battling as a reminder of what I would go through if I chose to drink again. I stayed sober for a year and a half after that, but I also was doing a lot of work on myself to stay sober.

Eventually, I had some circumstances work out in a way I was not happy about. I was angry. If things weren't going to work out the way I had planned, what difference did it make if I was drunk or sober? I waited for an opportune time to come up and got drunk. After drinking, I was surprised at how I felt. I felt disappointed in myself and shame, but also felt very much alone and alienated. While I tried to get back on board with staying sober, it didn't pan out and I felt in a completely different space from everyone on the message board.

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The Agony of Relapsing (cont'd from pg. 2)

start my own company, with the thought that I could drink now whenever I wanted. When vendors came to visit me at my previous job, I could smell alcohol on some of them. So doing my own gig, I could do that too. Well that thought eventually landed me in the hospital with a condition caused by my drinking. Surviving that, I decided to quit and did so for about 3 months. For some reason I cannot recall, I picked up a drink. Over the next 3 years, my drinking got worse, and ended up with another visit to the ER, then ICU. I don't know when my last drink actually was, I only know I didn't drink the day I was admitted to the hospital. I've been sober since.

What I've learned is traumatic events did not keep me sober, or would ever keep me sober, for long. I also learned that I had been trying to quit by will power alone. I kept repeating the same reaction to these events expecting new results, and all the while I couldn't see it not working. I learned this in rehab and that was the first step towards my recovery. The last thing my counselor suggested to me as I was leaving rehab was to go to at least 3 A.A. meetings a week, which I did.

When I came into A.A., I heard the some members stories of their relapse experiences. I found similarities of their experiences with those in rehab who were there for their 2nd, 3rd and sometimes 6th visit. And those relapse stories were similar to mine, even though I wasn't in A.A. when they happened. While I wish they wouldn't happen to anyone in A.A., they are powerful reminders to me of the 'cunning, baffling and powerful' effect of alcohol can have on me. Hearing these stories is only one part of maintaining my sobriety, but cannot be the sole reason for maintaining my sobriety. I have to work the steps. I understand and relate to the paragraph in Chapter 2, pg.24 "The fact is... We are without defense against the first drink." By working the steps of A.A. and going to meetings, I have a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of my spiritual condition. Because of this, I don't have a desire to drink today.

John G

INTERESTING DATES IN OCTOBER AA HISTORY

OCT 1935: Ebby T, Bill W.'s boyhood friend & who introduced him to the Oxford Group, moved in with Bill & Lois.

OCT 1937: AA meetings are held weekly at Bill & Lois's home at 182 Clinton ST., Brooklyn, the 1st NY AA group

OCT 1938: Bill believed the name Alcoholics Anonymous appeared in discussions around this time.

OCT 14 1939: Journal American Medical Association published unsympathetic review Big Book.

OCT 1940: Denver CO uses the Serenity Prayer & meditation to open their meetings.

OCT 1 1940: Total A.A. membership 1,433, 30% + Cleveland, 47% Ohio.

OCT 1941: AA #3, Bill D., & 900 other AA's attend Testimonial Dinner at Hotel Seiberling in Cleveland.

OCT 1942: Chicago Herald American reported on AA group's 3rd Anniversary with 500 attending.

OCT 24 1943: Wilson's start 1st major A.A. tour planning return January 19, 1944; start Windsor group Canada.

OCT 1951: The Lasker Award was given to AA by the American Public Health Assn. In San Francisco.

OCT 1957: The book "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age" is published.

OCT 1958: Playhouse 90 TV aired "The Days of Wine and Roses" (a movie about alcoholism).

OCT 1963: E.M. Jellinek, alcoholism researcher, educator, & long time friend of AA, dies.

Sticking with Sobriety (cont'd from pg. 2)

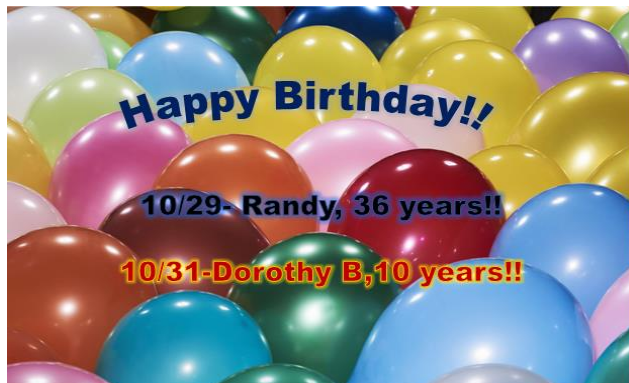
While I still would look at the message board on occasion, I had checked out. The next two years I attempted to moderate, meaning I drank twice a week with a set quantity of high alcohol beer as quickly as I could. One day I was sitting outside drinking and wondering why I did this to myself. If only I had stayed sober!

Another opportunity came up for me to have a couple of nights partying on my own. I anticipated no issues or consequences with doing this, but that isn't what happened. Due to the results of drinking that night, it resulted in a huge number of problems and a lot of pain. I no longer had any confusion that I was an alcoholic and came into AA. I got a sponsor and immediately started working the steps.

As I've gone along in the program, if people relapse in the program, I tell them about my experience with relapse. It helps them know they're not alone. I've been there and it's very much a struggle, but it can also be the beginning of long-term sobriety. I remember how isolated I felt after drinking and just knowing that others have gone through the same thing and came back successfully can make a huge difference! Sometimes it takes painful experiences to get us to a place to accept that we cannot pick up that first drink and need to invest that time into developing a relationship with God. While I sometimes wish it hadn't taken the painful experience to get me to AA, I don't think I would have gotten here otherwise and/or would have struggled with the program a lot more. While I don't encourage relapse, as there are no guarantees we will get back, it can be a useful and powerful, albeit painful teaching tool.

KS

Happy birthday!!!



Upcoming Events for September

NATURE HIKE

- DATE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1ST
- TIME: 9A-12P
- PLACE: 592 CRAWFORD CREEK ROAD, KAMPSVILLE, IL
- PLEASE BRING WATER

GSR MEETING-HYBRID

- DATE: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16TH 2022
- TIME: 2P
- PLACE: AT CSO AND ON ZOOM
- MEETING ID: 860 0054 3107
- PASSCODE: 093088

ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

- DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH 2022
- TIME: 3:15P
- PLACE: CSO

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

ALTON WEDNESDAY NIGHT ANNUAL SPEAKER/POTLUCK MEETING

- DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5TH
- TIME: 6P-8P
- PLACE: 3RD AND MARKET ST., ALTON, IL
- SPEAKER: KALLIE E. FROM ALTON

TRIANGLE GROUP SPEAKER MEETING

- DATE: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6TH
- TIME: 7P-8P
- PLACE: FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, LITCHFIELD IL
- SPEAKER: JOHN H. FROM HILLSBORO

MEN'S UNITY BREAKFAST

- DATE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH, 2022
- TIME: BREAKFAST AT 9A, SPEAKER AT 10A
- COST: \$30
- PLEASE SEE FLIER FOR MORE INFORMATION

DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR A BIRTHDAY IN NOVEMBER, or are you interested in contributing to the newsletter? Please send any of the above to info@aa-district18.org by 10/31/22, being mindful of our steps and traditions. Any suggestions or comments are always appreciated and can also be sent to info@aa-district18.org.

Thank you for subscribing to our newsletter!

POTLUCK SPEAKER MEETING

Time: Eating at 6pm Speaker at 7pm

Date: Oct 5th 2022

Where: 3rd and Market St

Guest Speaker

Kallie E from Alton

One of Alton area's oldest AA group invites you to join us in our annual Pot Luck Speaker Meeting. The Wednesday Night Group will provide pork steaks, soda and coffee, please bring a covered dish.



Speakers

AA Tim H, Louisville KY

April F, Newburgh IN Doug R, Tujunga CA

Carol T, Tujunga CA Erin B, Fairview Park OH

AI Anon Britney G, Rocky River OH



Line Up of Events



Open Mic Night!

All kinds of Music

Ice Cream Social



Air Guitar Contest

Sing Along

November 4th – 6th 2022

Santa Claus, IN

Event Opens at 4:00 CST Nov 4

AA 2022

Tri-State Convention



Sobriety Rocks!

\$35 Registration by Oct 10th

\$20 Saturday Night Banquet

\$40 Registration after Oct 10th

and no banquet

Contact: Tiffany E. 386.264.1165

Joe C. 812.653.6638

Zach H. 812.351.1568



Hotel Rooms start at \$89.99/night

Use Code: TRI-STATE CONVENTION

Santa's Lodge 812.937.1902

91 W. Christmas Blvd

Santa Claus, IN 47579

Make check payable to Tri-State Convention*Mail to Tri-State Convention, PO Box 91, Huntingburg, IN 47542

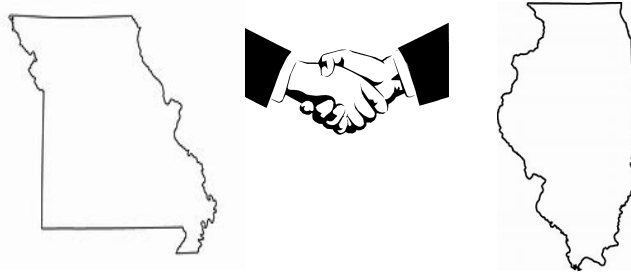
Name: _____ Name on Badge: _____

Address: _____ eMail: _____

of Attendees: Convention (x\$35*) _____ Banquet (x\$20) _____ Phone: _____

***\$40 Registration after Oct 10th and no banquet**

24TH Annual Illinois Missouri Men's AA Unity Breakfast



“First Tradition: Personal Recovery Depends Upon AA Unity”
Please join us for the Annual 2022 AA Men's Breakfast

When: Sunday, November 6, 2022

Where: Orlando's 4300 Hoffmeister Ave. St. Louis, Mo. 63125

Doors Open: 8:00 am

Breakfast: 9:00 am

Speaker: 10:00 am Steve H. (Hable)

Tickets: \$30

—> **Reserved seating limited to tables of 6 (\$180) call:** Bill D. @ (314) 971-0251

For General Ticket Information call: Bill W. @ (618) 567-5731 or Jerry G. @ (314) 520-1225

No Tickets Sold at The Door!!!! Ticket sales deadline is October 24.

2022 Annual Men's Breakfast – Registration Form

(Complete this form to order tickets by mail!)

Individual tickets may be purchased by filling out the registration form and returning it with payment to
400 Biltmore Dr. Ste. 540 Fenton, Mo. 63026. **Reserved seating is available, TABLES OF 6**, by
contacting **Bill D. (314) 971-0251**

No electronic tickets accepted (paper tickets only)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

OF PEOPLE _____ SCHOLARSHIP DONATION _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

Mail Check & Form To:

“AIM Unity Breakfast”
400 Biltmore Dr. Ste 540
Fenton Mo. 63026

Make Checks Payable To: **AIM Unity Breakfast**