

AA District 18 Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 3

December 2022



We have some late breaking news for District 18.

- **The Cactus Squeezer Meeting** has moved indoors and is meeting at St. James Lutheran Church in Glen Carbon on Saturday's at Noon.
- **The Thursday Night Step Meeting** which meets in Glen Carbon is now meeting at 7:00p.



AA Grapevine Discussion: Grateful Sober Holidays

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 December's AA *Grapevine* issue, and are related to being sober and grateful during the holidays.

“Are you involved in AA service during the holidays? What are some ways you help out or give back to your friends and family or at the workplace? What are some interesting experiences you’ve had at holiday gatherings since you got sober? Share about alcathons or AA holiday events you’ve attended. How do you plan to stay sober on New Year’s Eve?”

Sober Through the Season

“For most normal folks, drinking means conviviality, companionship and colorful imagination.” So begins Chapter 11, *A Vision for You*, and Bill continues, “It is a feeling of joyous intimacy with friends and a feeling that life is good.” What better description of the intention of the holiday season, minus that one critical word—drinking. As an alcoholic, can I enjoy the holidays and share in that conviviality, joyous intimacy, and

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Sober Through the Season (cont'd from pg. 1)

a feeling that life is good? And experience all of that without drinking?

My first holiday season came when I was just a couple of months sober. I can recall the exact room and my spot at the table where I sat in my first gratitude meeting in the days leading up to my first sober Thanksgiving. I also remember the entire concept of gratitude being completely foreign to me at the time. I've grown into it, since that time, and gratitude is an important part of my spiritual connection to the fellowship and my conception of a Higher Power.

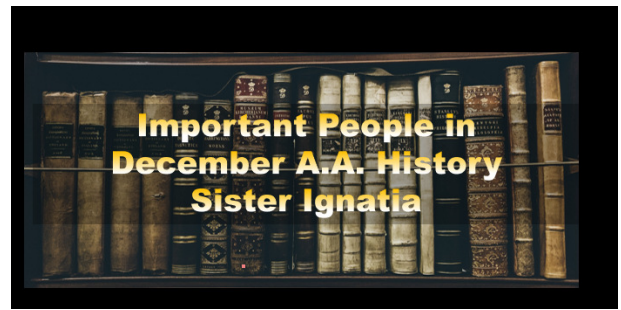
I can also remember the guidance from other members in those pre-holiday discussions. Tools to help me through a holiday gathering--Don't go by yourself, if you can avoid it. Drive, don't ride with someone, so you can leave whenever you want. Park so you don't get blocked in. Check your motive. Say a prayer and ask for help before you go. Go early, leave early. Have/use your phone.

My first work Christmas party in sobriety was at a bar with a restaurant. I sat in my car in the parking lot, asking for help from HP. I remember how nervous I was walking in... and of course the anxiety was 100% driven by fear and self... "What will people think if I'm not drinking?" And, of course, no one paid attention to my order (ginger ale) or even cared whether or what I was drinking. And I remember looking around the table and realizing I wasn't the only one at the table who wasn't drinking alcohol. Self-centered to the extreme.

Now, a couple of 24 hours later, while I do still try to avoid "the most sordid of places", I *can* walk in anywhere in the world and feel comfortable, with that "position of neutrality" described in the Big Book. Pages 101-2 sum it up perfectly... Am I there for a good reason? And thinking of what I can bring to the occasion instead of what I will get out of it. After all, isn't that the essence of the holidays? To be convivial and share joyous intimacy with family, friends, and coworkers.

Always keeping in mind Bill W's admonition, "But if you are shaky, you had better work with another alcoholic instead!" (Exclamation!)

Scott D.



When looking at important events in A.A. history, on December 7th, 1949 Sister Ignatia received the Poverello Medal on behalf of A.A. The Poverello Medal recognizes individuals and organizations who show strong Christian character, help the poor and give charity in a manner similar to St. Francis of Assisi¹. What makes this recognition remarkable, is that this was the very first year the award was given. This speaks very highly of the work of both A.A. and Sister Ignatia. If you've been in the rooms awhile, you've likely heard her name, but may not know much about her. This month, we're covering who Sister Ignatia is, how she helped many alcoholics and how her legacy lives on in the A.A. program.

- Sister Ignatia was born in Ireland in 1889 as Della Mary Gavin².
- She and her family came to the U.S. when she was approximately seven years old³.
- She graduated from Notre Dame University with a degree in music.
- In 1914, she entered the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine where she taught music until she suffered a nervous breakdown⁴.
- In 1928, she was reassigned by the Sisters to St. Thomas Hospital in Akron and was put in charge of hospital admissions and assigning beds⁴. It was at St. Thomas Hospital that she met Dr. Bob.
- She, Dr. Bob and an emergency room intern named Thomas Scuderi were critical in helping alcoholic patients³.
 - For alcoholics that needed to sober up and showed up at the ER, Scuderi and Sister Ignatia placed them in an anteroom to sober up before they went back onto the streets.
 - If they had delirium tremens, Scuderi would give them morphine to calm them down and keep from disturbing other patients. Upon awakening, Sister Ignatia would give them coffee and also a juice-Karo concoction which is purported to be calming.

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Sister Ignatia (cont'd from pg. 2)

- The acute gastritis diagnosis was used to admit alcoholic patients to the hospital. Sister Ignatia would admit alcoholics to the hospital in between shifts to prevent objections from the nursing supervisor.
- Dr. Bob attended to the physical needs of alcoholic patients while they were in the hospital while Sister Ignatia attended to their spiritual needs⁴.
- In 1939, Dr. Bob and Sister Ignatia were able to persuade hospital management to establish award for recovering alcoholics³.
- In 1952, she was transferred to St. Vincent Charity Hospital in Cleveland where she was in charge of the alcoholic ward, which was in need of repair work. With the insistence of Sister Ignatia and help from skilled A.A. members, the ward was transformed and became Rosary Hall Solarium².
- In March 1961, she received a letter from the White House on behalf of President John F. Kennedy paying tribute to her work with alcoholics²
- In 1965, Sister Ignatia retired³.
- Sister Ignatia died on April 1, 1966².

How Sister Ignatia impacted alcoholics and the A.A. program.

- Her work with Dr. Bob in providing treatment to alcoholics in a hospital setting was the first of its kind².
- Her biographer indicated that 15,000 alcoholics recovered under her direct care³.
- She gave each alcoholic patient prior to leaving the hospital a Sacred Heart badge. She asked each of them to make a promise to return the badge prior to picking up a drink of alcohol².
- She felt coffee was import throughout recovery. In Cleveland, she insisted that hospital administrators should add a coffee bar to the alcoholic ward⁵.

While it is impossible to say that Sister Ignatia was entirely responsible for introducing coffee and the coin system into A.A., considering her relationship with Dr. Bob, it is likely that her role and ideas had a profound influence on the A.A. program.

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INTERESTING DATES IN DECEMBER AA HISTORY

DEC 1934: Bill investigates Calvary Episcopal Mission 23rd Street, New York Dr. Sam Shoemaker's Calvary Church operated; Howard Tompkins Beer & Company sent Bill glowing letter encouragement concerning sobriety.

DEC 11 1934: Bill's last drink 4 beers, month to day since started, entered Towns Hospital 4th time year.

DEC 13 OR 14 1934: Ebby visited Bill hospital, explained Oxford Group principles, brought William James's book, Varieties Religious Experience.

DEC 18 1934: Bill discharged, 4th last hospitalization, Towns Hospital 2:30PM; Bill & Lois start attending Oxford Group meetings at Calvary House, adjacent to Calvary Episcopal Church, Dr. Sam Shoemaker rector.

1934 – DEC 1935: Bill works alcoholics, fails to sober any up.

DEC 1937: Bill meets with Rockefeller Foundation in an attempt to raise money.

DEC 1937: Rockland State Hospital takes alcoholic patients to an AA meeting in South Orange, NJ.

DEC 1938: Bill began writing the 12 Steps using Oxford Group principles & the idea of "plugging the holes an alcoholic might 'riggle' through."

DEC 1940: Chicago Daily Tribune begins four article series on AA by Nall Hamilton.

DEC 1950: Paramount Pictures changed the name of its movie "Mr. & Mrs. Anonymous" to "Something to Live For" at AA's request. Released in 1945, it "dealt with the wonderful work being done by AA" Editor Note:

This movie is available on DVD.

Sister Ignatia (cont'd from pg. 3)

¹<https://franciscan.edu/poverello-medal-presented-in-memory-of-father-michael-scanlan-tor/>

²<https://www.aa.org/sister-ignatia>

³<https://www.modernhealthcare.com/awards/2008-health-care-hall-fame-sister-mary-ignatia>

⁴<https://silkworth.net/alcoholics-anonymous/sister-ignatia-gavin-and-aa/>

⁵<https://healingproperties.org/sister-mary-ignatia-angel-of-aa/>

KS

Grateful Sober Holidays

It seems to me that every holiday I'm sober keeps improving from the previous. Not to the point of extreme joy, glee or elation, but a certain sense of peace and calmness envelopes me. I am also more relaxed. The only thing I look forward to this time of year now is spending time with family and friends. I tend to not put much thought into the commercial side of the season, as I believe it distracts me from the true meaning of the holidays. There's a saying that I am fond of that goes like this, "Don't look back, you're not going that way, but don't forget where you've come from."

When I look back at where I've come from, I can see the ruin I caused around the holidays during my last 4 or 5 years of my drinking career. There was no joy left, nothing to celebrate, nor be grateful for. The holidays had become a pain, a bore, and a major undertaking. I did not want to be there and I felt nothing. I dreaded the holiday season as it approached and I didn't know why at the time. I longed for the holiday's of my youth, but never knew how to get those feelings back. On New Year's Eve, my wife was asleep by 10 pm, usually earlier. I stayed up until midnight, drinking and waiting for something to happen. Anything to happen. And I was disappointed when nothing happened except another year of drinking.

I came into AA in the middle of an August month, so I knew the holidays were fast approaching. It had been such a long time since I had been sober during the holiday season that I didn't know what I was going to do or how I could handle it. So one meeting before Thanksgiving at my home group, I asked the question

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Upcoming Events for December

LITCHFIELD 60TH ANNIVERSARY POTLUCK

- **DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8TH, 2022**
- **TIME: FELLOWSHIP: 5:30PM, EAT: 6:00PM, SPEAKER: 7:00P**
- **PLACE: 1ST BAPTIST CHURCH
608 N. VAN BUREN STREET, LITCHFIELD, IL**
- **SPEAKER: MIKE F FROM COFFEEN**

THURSDAY NIGHT OPEN GROUP POTLUCK

- **DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15TH, 2022**
- **TIME: CROCKPOT POTLUCK AT 6PM, SPEAKER MEETING AT 7P**
- **PLACE: ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH
146 NORTH MAIN ST, GLEN CARBON, IL**
- **SPEAKER: DONNIE**

CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS

- **DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17TH, 2022**
- **TIME: 2:00 PM TO 4:00 PM**
- **PLACE: CSO**

GSR MEETING-HYBRID

- **DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18TH, 2022**
- **TIME: 2:00 PM**
- **PLACE: AT CSO AND ON ZOOM**
- **MEETING ID: 860 0054 3107
PASSCODE: 093088**

SUNDAY MORNING BIG BOOK GROUP PANCAKE AND SAUSAGE BREAKFAST

- **DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 1ST, 2023**
- **TIME: 8:00 AM BREAKFAST, 9:00 AM MEETING**
- **PLACE: CSO**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! AREA 21 ASSEMBLY

- **DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11TH, 2022**
- **TIME: REGISTRATION 8A, ASSEMBLY 9A**
- **PLACE: MOOSE LODGE, EDWARDSVILLE, IL**

Grateful Sober Holidays (cont'd from pg. 4)

on how everyone stays sober during the holidays and stated that I was nervous about the holidays. I don't have room here to list all the good advice I received, but the point is I asked for helpful suggestions and listened to the answers. With the advice from the members and my sponsor, I stayed sober through that first holiday season. That was quite an accomplishment and I was proud of myself. At my family gatherings, they saw a new me, sober me. Like in all my past drinking holidays, they didn't know what to expect from me, but this time they became happy, more relaxed.

I'm not worried or nervous about staying sober this go around. But I cannot rest on my laurels. First I remember "Don't forget where you've come from." It could be real easy for me to forget where I came from if I get too caught up in all the hype of the season. The past can be a powerful reminder of what not to do. I will make sure I start my day with my prayers, meditation and prayer for other people. When I wake up, I find something to be grateful for. I'll keep my phone charged and on me, in case I need to call someone. I will not deviate from my meeting schedule. I will start New Years Day with a 9 am meeting. I don't know why, but that sounds awesome to me.

Step one begins with 'We'. Step 12 is about working with others. So this holiday season, let's all work together and keep our higher power near us so we all can have a safe, happy and most importantly, a sober holiday season.

John G

Some Humor

My AA sponsor told me to stay away from places where I used to drink.
I just sold my car.

Me: My name is Matt, and I'm an alcoholic.
AAA: This is AAA, not AA.
Me: Yeah, I was just explaining how my car got in the lake.

Harrison Ford just turned up at my AA meeting.
I've never seen Han So Low.



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LA VIÑA**

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DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR A BIRTHDAY IN JANUARY 2023, or are you interested in contributing to the newsletter? Please send any of the above to info@aa-district18.org by 12/31/22, 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!



Southern Illinois Area 21

Hybrid Assembly

Hosted by District 18
December 11th, 2022



Location:

Edwardsville Moose Lodge
7371 Marine Rd
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Registration Start:

8 AM | Assembly Start: 9 AM | Lunch - \$10.00

Zoom Links:

Meeting ID: 889 8949 4288 Passcode: 177777

Accommodations:

Comfort Inn Edwardsville – St. Louis (618) 656-4900
3080 S State Rte 157, Edwardsville, IL 62025
\$99+tax/night for standard room (1 King or 2 Queen bed).
Please make reservations by Nov. 10th 2022

Best Western Troy Illinois (618) 667-9200
2020 Formosa Rd, Troy, IL 62294
\$99+tax/night for standard room (1 King or 2 Queen bed).
Please make reservations by Nov. 10th 2022

Pre-Assembly Dessert Potluck & Meeting

Saturday Night Library Group
Saturday, December 10th @ 7pm
St. Mary's Catholic Church
1802 Madison Ave. Edwardsville, IL 62025

For more information, please contact: Ann S. (314) 899-3067



Who: Thursday Night Open Step Meeting

What: Crock Pot Potluck

*Bring a side dish or Crock Pot (soup, chili, casserole)

Speaker: Donnie

When: Thursday, December 15, 2022

Potluck 6:00

Speaker 7:00pm

Where: St. James Lutheran Church

146 North Main Street

Glen Carbon, Illinois 62034





District 18 AA Activity Committee

AA Christmas for Kids Holiday Event

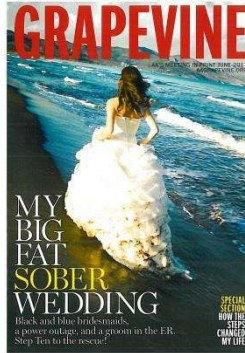
Central Service Office (CSO)
409 Broadway Unit C-1
South Roxana, IL 62084

Saturday, December 17th
2:00-4:00pm

- Get your picture taken with Santa!
- Toy gift-bags for the kids!
- Hot Cocoa!
- Craft booth and more!

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