

# AA District 18 Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2

November 2022



We have some late breaking news for District 18.

- **\*new meeting\*** The Carlinville Friday Night meets at 6p at St. Paul's Episcopal Church.
- **The Thursday Night Step Meeting** is now in person only.
- **The Rainbow Recovery group** will be meeting **on zoom only on Thanksgiving (11/24.22)**.



## AA Grapevine Discussion: Having fun in sobriety

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 November's *AA Grapevine* issue, and are related to having fun in sobriety.

***"Did you think life was over when you first put down the bottle? What was your idea of fun like before getting sober? What are some ways you've learned to enjoy life now that you're in AA? Did it take you a while to learn? What are some things that helped you? Sponsorship? Fellowship? Service? Do you help newcomers with this?"***

Being sober a few years now and with a clearer mind, it's interesting to look back at my drinking history. When I look at all the times I tried to quit drinking on my own, the thought that I could never drink again never crossed my mind with any type of panic. I really wanted to quit all those times, but the reason for quitting was usually due to some type of traumatic event in my life.

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*Having fun in sobriety (cont'd from pg. 1)*

some type of traumatic event in my life. While I was able to remain sober for a few months, I definitely felt better and my life improved a bit every time I quit. But at the end of each brief sobriety stint, I picked up again.

When I entered rehab in 2019, the fear of not being able to drink again hit me hard. I began thinking thoughts like, 'Now what am I going to do?', 'I can never drink again?' and 'How am I going to have fun now?'. The thought of where alcohol had taken me in life was barely present in my thoughts. For a brief period, I felt sad, depressed and sorry for myself. But being in rehab was the right place for me at the time. I was able to talk to other residents there and we talked about not being able to use ever again. I found that being able to talk to another about this eased my thoughts of never using again. I was also able to see my own roller coaster ride through the eyes of those whom had multiple visits to rehab. In rehab, I began to see this is a progressive disease with no reset button. Acceptance that I could never drink again grew day by day.

While in rehab, I attended 6 or 7 A.A. meetings. In those meetings I could see the members enjoying themselves, smiling and laughing. Though I didn't think A.A. was for me at the time, there was something those members exhibited that was appealing. Then following the suggestion of my rehab counselor, I started attending A.A. meetings once out of rehab. Being around those that had been sober a long time, really impressed me and showed me it was possible. Those members kept telling me I only had to work on remaining sober today and not worry about tomorrow. By following this simple advice, the fear of never drinking again slowly left my thoughts.

Over my drinking career, I gave up so many activities I used to enjoy for alcohol. I gave up my education, passion for electronic design, gardening, playing guitar, wood carving, vacations, road trips, enjoying my job, playing pool (billiards), helping other people, family, friends, the list goes on. I never realized I wasn't having any fun while I was drinking. I wasn't enjoying life and I wasn't letting life happen. I truly missed all the things I used to enjoy, but I let the passion for those be snuffed out for alcohol.

Once I came into A.A., I accepted this new way of life. I soon realized I could not do this on my own. By working the program, I was able to gradually add back those things I threw away and

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This month will mark 59 years since Reverend Samuel Shoemaker died. On a very rare occasion, his name comes up when discussing the spiritual nature of the program. When listening, questions about how he knew Bill W or influenced the development of the twelve steps of AA pop up, but are quickly forgotten as the nature of the conversation in the meeting changes. The goal of this article is to present facts about who Reverend Samuel Shoemaker was, how he knew Bill W, and how he helped shape the AA program. If you want to explore who he was further, the references below should provide a great starting point.

#### **Facts about Reverend Samuel Shoemaker:**

- He was born in Baltimore, Maryland on December 27, 1893, in Baltimore<sup>2</sup>.
- Beginning in 1912, he attended Princeton University and graduated in 1916.
- In 1917, he went to China to start a YMCA branch and teach business courses<sup>2</sup>.
- In 1918, he met Frank Buchman in Peking, China<sup>1</sup>, which had a significant impact on both their lives. This meeting inspired him to a personal commitment with Christ, while Buchman founded the Oxford group shortly thereafter<sup>1</sup>.
- In 1919, he returned to Princeton to complete his missionary year.
- While no year was listed, he entered the General Theological Seminary in New York following his year at Princeton, suggesting he entered seminary in 1920<sup>4</sup>.
- From ~1922-1924, Buchman and Shoemaker continued to perform missionary work together in other countries.
- In 1924, Shoemaker was appointed rector of Calvary Church in Manhattan. In the Episcopal Church, being a rector is equivalent to being in charge of a parish.
- He built Calvary House and ran the Calvary Mission. The Calvary house was a place Ebby T. had stayed at for some time and served as a

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*Having fun in sobriety (cont'd from pg. 2)*

added some fun things I never thought of. I am back to planting and working my garden. My job has allowed me to resume my passion for electronic design, as well as mechanical design. I am practicing and playing my guitar. It's amazing what a few years sober can do for the memory, as I am remembering songs I used to know but hadn't played in a long time. I've been on vacations and trips, and thoroughly enjoyed them without alcohol. Don't ask me about my woodcarving, but I'm still trying. A couple of years ago, I began contributing articles to this newsletter. I had never done anything like that before, but I discovered a wonderful feeling of contributing. Most importantly, I am not thinking about myself much these days. My thoughts have turned to how I can be of service to others.

I love my life today, thanks to A.A. and its members. Every day may not be a walk through a rose garden, and that's ok. The promises have been coming true, and the program of A.A. continues to give, as long as I keep allowing it and I continue to give back.

John G

*AA History (cont'd from pg. 2)*

hostel. Calvary Mission was a place for "the down-and-out.". Towards the end of Bill W.'s drinking career in 1934, he had stayed at Calvary Mission<sup>2</sup>.

- It was through Samuel that Bill W. learned of "the spiritual keys by which we were liberated". According to aa.org, "The first three Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous were inspired in part by Sam...but he also influenced many other Steps"<sup>2</sup>.
- He didn't originally approve of AA holding independent meetings. After Sam left the Oxford Group in 1941, he apologized to Bill W.<sup>2</sup>
- In the 1950's after the St. Louis convention, he believed the church could learn from A.A.<sup>1</sup>

KS

Please see references on page 5 under the poem.

## INTERESTING DATES IN NOVEMBER AA HISTORY

**Nov 26 1895:** Bill W was born in East Dorset, VT, in his parents' home and business, the Mount Aeolus Inn and Tavern.

**Nov 1934:** Ebby phoned Bill, asked to stop by haven't seen each other 1 year, Ebby sober, 2 nights later Ebby & Bill sat together Bill's Kitchen 182 Clinton Street, Ebby told about himself & Oxford Group, got Bill meeting Old Calvary Church group New York; Bill went 1st time Sam Shoemaker Calvary Church Mission

**Nov 11 1934:** Armistice Day; Bill started drinking after dry spell, beginning Bill's last drunk

**Nov 1936:** Fitz M. leaves Towns Hospital to become NY area's AA #3, besides Bill W. & Hank P.

**Nov 1939:** Cleveland (OH.) Plain Dealer runs 1<sup>st</sup> of a series of articles on AA by Eldrick B. Davis which inaugurates "mass production" sobriety there, soon Cleveland has many more members than anywhere in the country

**Nov 1940:** Alcoholic Foundation (which later became GSO) publishes the 1<sup>st</sup> "AA Bulletin"

**Nov 1943:** Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick is the speaker at the Manhattan AA group's eighth anniversary. He had given AA the 1<sup>st</sup> positive review of the Big Book

**Nov 1949:** Bill W. suggests AA groups everywhere to devote Thanksgiving week to discussions of the Twelve Traditions.

**Nov 1952:** Rev. Willard S. Richardson dies. He was AA's connection to the Rockefeller Foundation.

**Nov 1975:** General Service Board officially opens the GSO AA Archives with ribbon cutting ceremony.

# I Stand at the Door

By Sam Shoemaker (from the Oxford Group)

I stand by the door.  
I neither go too far in, nor stay too far out.  
The door is the most important door in the world -  
It is the door through which men walk when they find God.  
There is no use my going way inside and staying there,  
When so many are still outside and they, as much as I,  
Crave to know where the door is.  
And all that so many ever find  
Is only the wall where the door ought to be.  
They creep along the wall like blind men,  
With outstretched, groping hands,  
Feeling for a door, knowing there must be a door,  
Yet they never find it.  
So I stand by the door.

The most tremendous thing in the world  
Is for men to find that door - the door to God.  
The most important thing that any man can do  
Is to take hold of one of those blind, groping hands  
And put it on the latch - the latch that only clicks  
And opens to the man's own touch.

Men die outside the door, as starving beggars die  
On cold nights in cruel cities in the dead of winter.  
Die for want of what is within their grasp.  
They live on the other side of it - live because they have not found it.

Nothing else matters compared to helping them find it,  
And open it, and walk in, and find Him.  
So I stand by the door.

Go in great saints; go all the way in -  
Go way down into the cavernous cellars,

And way up into the spacious attics.  
It is a vast, roomy house, this house where God is.  
Go into the deepest of hidden casements,  
Of withdrawal, of silence, of sainthood.  
Some must inhabit those inner rooms  
And know the depths and heights of God,  
And call outside to the rest of us how wonderful it is.  
Sometimes I take a deeper look in.  
Sometimes venture in a little farther,  
But my place seems closer to the opening.  
So I stand by the door.

There is another reason why I stand there.  
Some people get part way in and become afraid  
Lest God and the zeal of His house devour them;  
For God is so very great and asks all of us.  
And these people feel a cosmic claustrophobia  
And want to get out. 'Let me out!' they cry.  
And the people way inside only terrify them more.  
Somebody must be by the door to tell them that they are spoiled.  
For the old life, they have seen too much:  
One taste of God and nothing but God will do any more.  
Somebody must be watching for the frightened  
Who seek to sneak out just where they came in,  
To tell them how much better it is inside.  
The people too far in do not see how near these are  
To leaving - preoccupied with the wonder of it all.  
Somebody must watch for those who have entered the door  
But would like to run away. So for them too,  
I stand by the door.

I admire the people who go way in.  
But I wish they would not forget how it was  
Before they got in. Then they would be able to help  
The people who have not yet even found the door.

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*I stand at the door ((cont'd from pg. 4)*

Or the people who want to run away again from God.

You can go in too deeply and stay in too long  
And forget the people outside the door.

As for me, I shall take my old accustomed place,

Near enough to God to hear Him and know He is there,

But not so far from men as not to hear them,  
And remember they are there too.

Where? Outside the door -

Thousands of them. Millions of them.

But - more important for me -

One of them, two of them, ten of them.

Whose hands I am intended to put on the latch.

So I shall stand by the door and wait

For those who seek it.

'I had rather be a door-keeper

So I stand by the door.

## References

<sup>1</sup><https://silkworth.net/alcoholics-anonymous/01-079-evangelical-protestantism-and-alcoholism-1933-1962-episcopalian-samuel-shoemaker-the-oxford-group-and-alcoholics-anonymous-by-john-f-woolverton-historical-magazine-of-the-protestantism-epi/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.aa.org/sam-shoemaker>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.saintandrewshouse.org/post/i-stand-by-the-door>

<sup>4</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam\\_Shoemaker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Shoemaker)

## Upcoming Events for November

### NATURE HIKE

- DATE: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12
- TIME: 9A
- PLACE: 7394-7398 MO 94, ST. CHARLES, MO
- MEET AT HIKING TRAIL PARKING LOT.
- PLEASE BRING WATER

### GSR MEETING-HYBRID

- DATE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup> 2022
- TIME: 2P
- PLACE: AT CSO AND ON ZOOM
- MEETING ID: 860 0054 3107
- PASSCODE: 093088

### ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

- DATE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2022
- TIME: 3:15P
- PLACE: CSO

### SPEAKER JAM/BINGO NIGHT

OPEN MEETING/POT-LUCK

- DATE: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2022
- TIME: 6:00~9:00PM
- SPEAKER STARTS @ 6:30PM  
CORY B. FROM NEW DAY
- BRING A DISH TO SHARE!
- THIS MONTH'S GAME IS BINGO! PRIZES TO THE WINNERS!

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

#### AREA 21 ASSEMBLY

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

DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR A BIRTHDAY IN DECEMBER, or are you interested in contributing to the newsletter? Please send any of the above to [info@aa-district18.org](mailto:info@aa-district18.org) by 11/30/22, being mindful of our steps and traditions. Any suggestions or comments are always appreciated and can also be sent to [info@aa-district18.org](mailto:info@aa-district18.org) .

**Thank you for subscribing to our newsletter!**



In the past, I've contributed some articles I'd written when the holiday season was upon us. Sometimes I had a top 10 list, sometimes about being grateful early in sobriety. The holiday season may be stressful this go around, I don't know. But I do know it will be only as stressful as I allow it to be. So this holiday season, I am grateful to be a member of A.A. and grateful to have a set of tools to remain sober through it all. My holidays seem to be getting better each year. And if I ever think about having a pity party for myself, I can just remind myself with this picture. May you all be blessed this season and Happy Holidays.

JG



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The holiday season is upon us. The following are some tips published in the AA newsletter, BOX 459, 2016, that might be helpful in enjoying the holiday.

**1. *Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season.***

Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.

**2. *Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers.***

If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.

**3. *Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time.***

If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.

**4. *Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebrations given by groups in your area, and go.***

If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.

**5. *Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about.***

Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.

**6. *If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.***

**7. *Don't think you have to stay late.***

Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.

**8. *Worship in your own way.***

**9. *Don't sit around brooding.***

Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.

**10. *Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations.***

Remember— "one day at a time."

**11. *Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy.***

Maybe you cannot give material gifts—but this year, you can give love.

**12. *"Having had a . . ."***

No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

Source: AA, Box 4-5-9, Winter 2016