

AA District 18 Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 4

April 2023



We have some late breaking news for District 18.

- ***New Meeting* Solutions Seekers** is an open Big Book meeting that will start meeting this Wednesday (3/22/23) at 7p at Unity Church in Collinsville.
- **The Activities Committee** is in need of volunteers.
- **District 18 Website** has a new tab, Volunteer. This tab opens the D18 Volunteer Form.
- **It Works, It Really Does** meeting, Alton on Mondays at 10am is no longer meeting.
- **The Troy Welcome Home Group** has open meetings on the 2nd and 4th Monday of the month.



AA Grapevine Discussion: Alcohol and Family Life

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 April's AA Grapevine issue, and are related to Alcohol and Family Life.

"Were there any alcoholics in your family growing up? How did drinking affect your childhood? What are the ways alcohol is affecting your family now? Are any other members of your family in AA? Did you find AA because of them? Do you go to meetings with family members now? How have the tools of AA helped in your family life now?"

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1	D18 News, Alcohol and Family Life
2	Alcohol and Family Life (cont'd) / Courage
3	Courage (cont'd) / Texas Prayer / Interesting Dates
4	Mental Disorder and Alcoholism
5	Mental Disorder and Alcoholism (cont'd) / Events
6	Fliers and such

Alcohol and Family Life

When I was young, my grandfather used to take me fishing. He'd always drive a long way to where ever he wanted to fish, so a drive from Belleville to Lake Murphysboro was not uncommon. Those days on the lake were always hot to me, and after a lot of restlessness in the boat, he'd take me back to shore and go back out on the lake to fish some more. I didn't mind, there were all kinds of things to do at the dock and tackle store. Eventually we headed back home with a cooler full of bluegill, but we always stopped at a couple of bars along the

way. Again, I didn't mind since I got a soda and I was spending time with my grandfather. At his house, he would sit outside under the large gumball maple tree in the back yard, smoking his cigarettes and drinking beer. Grandma wouldn't allow him to do either of those in the house.

I used to hear stories of my grandfather, always hanging out at bars, shooting pool. My grandma would sometimes accompany him early in their marriage, drinking only orange soda. She would tell me when he wasn't working, he was at the bar. He came home to eat and sleep. This may explain why my dad never drank, maybe the result of living with an alcoholic father. He didn't want his son growing up in that kind of environment.

My mom's side of the family had a lot of drinkers, mostly her dad, my uncles and cousins. In my teens, I wanted to be like my cousins. They seemed to be able to do whatever they wanted. Drinking on that side of the family seemed to be so normal, routine. Every holiday and family get together, alcohol was available and all of them were drinking. So I would hang out with them when I could and then come home drunk to a sober home. Some of my cousins have passed on. Of the ones still with us, they still drink. I've never known any of my family members being in AA. But I really would have no idea, we don't get together for family gatherings much anymore.

At my mom's 75th birthday party a couple of years ago, I saw one of my old scout leaders. When I was in scouts, he had a drinking problem. He would come to the scout meeting and we could smell alcohol on his breath. Even at campouts. But I had a chance to talk with him at the party. He knew of my being in AA and disclosed to me that he was a friend of Bill. He told me he had been sober 22 years. I was really happy for him. He passed away last year, sober.

Before coming into AA, I didn't know anyone in the program. I wasn't looking to stop drinking. After trying to quit numerous times on my own, I decided it was safe to have a drink after the last attempt to stop. Once I started this last time, I quit trying to stop and accepted that this is the way it will be. It was an almost fatal decision. I'm convinced that my life had to play out the way it did for me to finally make it into AA. Working every step changed my life for the better and family life was improving. After trying to fix some family members early in my sobriety and having dismal results, I learned to have patience with my

family. In order for things to become better, I needed to work the program and stay sober. The results were proof to them that I had turned a corner, towards sobriety and a more useful and productive life. In order to keep what I have gained back in my life, I have accepted AA as the foundation of my life.

John G



The vital principles of the 4th Step are "Courage" and to discover the "Truth."

Many things had happened prior to my arrival at step 4. I had found honesty with myself and others. I found hope, in the program and in meetings. I became willing to believe and follow a simple plan, described in the Big Book and shown to me by my sponsor. I was about to discover another principle for life.

Fear had dominated my life. So when I arrived at Step 4, my natural reaction was to be fearful of doing this step. I didn't want to take a look at myself with a magnifying glass. I had been sober for a while and feeling better; daily life was getting better. In my mind I was a good person, so what could possibly be wrong with me? I had thought my only problem was drinking too much. I wasn't prepared to find out now that something else was wrong with me besides drinking.

As I worked to first 3 steps, something else was happening to me besides finding honesty, hope and willingness. I didn't recognize it at first, but looking back I could see it was beginning to enter my life, a little at a time. Each of those steps required a little bit of courage. I was stepping out of my comfort zone into the unknown, and I needed some courage to overcome my fears at each step. Now my mind was racing, wondering what step 4

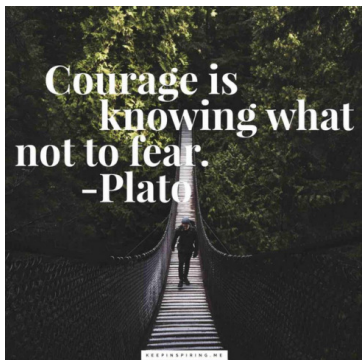
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was all about. In order to find out, I needed to set aside fear, and honestly work the step as completely as I could.

Step 4 is the first step of a tool kit that would help me build a new life of sobriety. Putting more trust in God daily, I was able to depend on Him to help me reduce my fears and replace it with courage. Having to honestly look at myself, see all the resentments I had accumulated over the years, and accept the character defects which were identified, was done with my newfound courage and this would be part of the foundation I would need for the next 6 steps.

Having completed step 4, I felt good. It took courage to overcome fear. But fear wasn't completely removed from me with this step, as it would show itself later. I learned courage is more powerful than fear, and as long as I asked for guidance from God, I would be able to accomplish things that fear kept me from doing.

JJG



The Texas Prayer

Our Father, we come to You as a friend. You have said that, where two or three are gathered in Your name, there You will be in the midst. We believe You are with us now.

We believe this is something You would have us do, and that it has Your blessing. We believe that You want us to be real partners with You in this business of living, accepting our full responsibility, and certain that the rewards will be freedom, and growth, and happiness. For this, we are grateful.

We ask You, at all times, to guide us. Help us daily to come closer to You, and grant us new ways of living our gratitude.

INTERESTING DATES IN MARCH AA HISTORY

APR 1938: 18 AA's attend weekly meeting at 182 Clinton St. NYC, Bill's home.

APR 1938: Alcoholic Foundation (which later became GSO) five trustees, three of them "Rockefeller People", hold 1st meeting.

APR 10 1939: "Alcoholics Anonymous", AA's Big Book, is published.

APR 1939: Bank forecloses on Bill & Lois's home. They stay with Hank P. in Montclair NJ, the 1st of over 50 moves before they buy a home in 1941.

APR 1940: Larry J. of Houston TX writes "The Texas Prayer" to open AA meetings in Texas. (See "Texas Prayer" on left side)

APR 1940: The 1st 10 copies of the Big Book arrive in the AA office in Newark NJ. Cornwall Press printed 4,650 copies of it. • Bill & Lois attend growing Philadelphia PA AA meeting, with 42 showing up. • Dr. Bob writes Trustees to refuse Big Book royalties, but Bill W. insists on them for Dr. Bob & Anne. • First AA pamphlet, titled "AA", is published.

APR 1941: Ruth Hock reports 1,600 letters arrived since the Saturday Evening Post article on AA by Jack Alexander appeared in March.

APR 1942: Windsor Daily Star in Ontario, Canada, reports over 40 AA's attend a testimonial dinner in Detroit for Dr. Bob, AA's co-founder.

APR 1951: AA's 1st General Service Conference is held, linking AA's General Service Board Trustees with the entire Fellowship.

APR 1955: "The Circle-In-The-Triangle" AA symbol was approved by the General Service Conference. The symbol was then dropped in 1994.

Mental Disorder and Alcoholism

I was born and raised in St. Louis in 1943. My husband and I moved to Illinois so I could have more room to have a garden and grow pot in 1975. By the way, I'm 79 still living in the same house. I don't like change much. My husband didn't like me growing marijuana outside so I grew it upstairs in our house. By the time all of this was happening we were well on our way to being alcoholics. You see, I met my husband at a bar in 1964. At first we were normal drinkers, it seems at times. Eventually the drinking got really bad. I knew I had to change but didn't know how.

My first drink was at 8 or 9, sampling the adult drinks of gin and lemonade with my sister until they caught us and cut us off. I knew right then and there that when I grew up I was going to drink a lot. So that's what I did every chance I got. In my late teens and early twenties I would drink a lot and drive. While I was driving I would have thoughts, fears of having an accident and hurting or killing someone. Those things did not happen, but for the grace of God. For a God I didn't believe in at the time.

My husband and I were out with a bunch of his work buddies drinking. I remember grabbing someone else's shot of tequila and saying "I must be an alcoholic. 'Cus I'm drunk and still drinking." The next day I had the shakes pretty bad. On TV there was a show about alcoholism and the dangers of withdrawal. They said you could die from withdrawal, that scared me. I knew I was an alcoholic. Two days later I went to my first Alcoholic Anonymous meeting. I quit marijuana and alcohol at the same time.

The first time in AA I didn't get a sponsor, I just went to a lot of meetings. The first New Years came along sober, I was doing a lot of manic chitter chatter, I didn't know what it was. I got really depressed. After nine months of not drinking, being a dry drunk. It's like they say it starts with one beer and I was drunk again. This time drinking around the clock. Through self hatred, shame and guilt of the things I would do when I was drunk, I tried suicide. It didn't work because I am still here. What it did do was make me sick. The gas fumes from the stove made me throw up. Nothing mattered anymore. I wanted to keep trying suicide until something worked. I really wanted to die. At the same time I also had a spiritual awakening, a prayer came to my mind, "God, if you exist I need help." I haven't had a drink or a joint since then, September 15, 1976.

I had one sponsor tell me that I had a bad case of the self will run riot. She would say things like, build a bridge and get over it or Just Cha Cha on. Also when you do the third step whatever happens after that is none of your business, it's God's. I have had seven different sponsors and each one has taught me a lot.

I went back to AA. My sponsor suggested that I needed a "G.O.D." Good, Orderly, Direction. That I had lacked H.O.W. honesty, open mindedness and willingness. So I prayed for those things. I had been so full of fear of everything. I believe it was partly because of my church upbringing. Fire and brimstone preaching I'll never be good enough. My first sponsor used to say I never met anyone so sick. I was, however I didn't know what I was. I now know that I am dual diagnose schizoaffective bipolar type. I did not get my diagnosis until I was four years sober. Both alcoholism and mental health are diseases. I needed professional help and medication to get balanced now that I had stopped drinking.

Three times, each time lasting roughly six months. I got paranoid delusional from not being on the right meds. My delusion was that my husband was trying to kill me. I feared my husband so much I had to leave home. I stayed with friends, hotels, a nursing home and a halfway house. So I was on the run and would get mad at those who would tell him my location. My husband didn't know what to expect from me. I told terrible stories of how he was trying to kill me. I was so manic for months. I couldn't sleep. When I came down from manic I was really depressed and suicidal feeling guilty for my behavior. Calling people at all hours of the day. I know I need the meds. I can't count how many times I have ended up in mental hospitals all in sobriety.

Back to God, I believe, help my unbelief. On the marquee it read, "Life is not always fair, but God is good." Another sponsor said, "The past is gone and I love and forgive everyone including myself. Thank you God, we are all free." I have a lot to be grateful for, a 55 year marriage to a warm, wonderful, gentle, loving and forgiving husband. We had a lot of good times. One of my favorite one-liners is, "I never met anyone who gave me as much trouble as myself." I like the slogans "one day at a time", along with "But for the grace of God go I". I am so blessed by God in so many ways I try not to forget to thank him. Sometimes I need an attitude adjustment. God's mind is always on me. I need to keep my mind on him.

continued on page 5

Each morning I awake by saying Good Morning God I Report for Duty. My husband and I used to say this prayer often together. You are ushering in another day, untouched and freshly new.

*"Here I come to ask you, Lord, Please renew me too.
Forgive my many errors that I made yesterday and let me come again,
Dear God, closer in your way.
God, you know I can't make it on my own,
take my hand and hold it tight for I can't walk alone."*

There was a time when I thought I couldn't live without my husband nor my twin sister. I can honestly say when they were both in hospice, I was able to tell each of them they can go be with Jesus. I'll be alright with God on my side and I mean it.

Jean M



DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR A BIRTHDAY IN MAY, or are you interested in contributing to the newsletter?

Please send any of the above to info@aa.district18.org by 05/06/23, being mindful of our steps and traditions. Any suggestions or comments are always appreciated and can be sent to info@aa-district18.org.

THANK YOU for subscribing to our newsletter!

Upcoming Events for April

AREA 21 SHARING SESSION-ON ZOOM

- DATE: SATURDAY, APRIL 8TH, 2023
- TIME: 1:00PM-2:00 PM
- PLACE: ZOOM MEETING LINK ON DISTRICT 18 WEBSITE, EVENTS TAB

GSR MEETING-HYBRID

- DATE: SUNDAY, APRIL 16TH, 2023
- TIME: 2:00 PM
- PLACE: AT CSO AND ON ZOOM
- MEETING ID: 860 0054 3107
PASSCODE: 093088

KICK BALL EVENT

FUN-FOOD FELLOWSHIP

- DATE: SATURDAY, APRIL 22ND, 2023
- TIME: 1:00~2:00 PM
- PLACE: HARTFORD PARK, IL
TURN EAST ON 7TH STREET OFF OF HWY 3
- FEEL FREE TO BRING A DESSERT ITEM, OR WHATEVER YOU LIKE.
- IN CASE OF RAIN, WE'LL BE UNDER THE PAVILION DOING SOMETHING ELSE FUN!!!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

NATURE HIKES

- DATE: MAY 13TH, 2023
- TIME: 9:00 AM
- HIKE #1:
WELDON SPRING LEWIS AND CLARK HIKING TRAIL
7394-7398 MO 94, ST. CHARLES, MO 63304
- HIKE #2:
BUDDHIST MONASTERY MID AMERICA
ASSOCIATION
299 HEGER LANE, AUGUSTA, MO 6333
-BRING A LUNCH AND THERE WILL BE A MEETING ON
THE MONASTERY GROUNDS.

UNITY CAMPING AND FLOAT TRIP 2023

- DATE: JUN 23RD @1:00 PM – JUN 25TH
@10:00AM, 2023
- LOCATION: BLUE SPRINGS RANCH
1246 BLUE SPRINGS ROAD, BOURBON, MO
- SEE ATTACHED FLYER.



Illinois District 18 AA Activity Committee Presents

Nature Hikes

Saturday, May 13, starting @ 9 am

Hike #1:

Weldon Spring Lewis and Clark Hiking Trail

7394-7398 MO 94 St. Charles 63304

Meet at hiking trail parking lot.

After-heading to Hike #2:

Buddhist Monastery Mid America Association

299 Heger Lane, Augusta Mo, 63332

Bring a lunch and we'll have a meeting on the Monastery grounds.

Questions-info call/text: 618-806-7306.





Illinois District 18 AA Activity Committee Presents

Kick Ball Event

Fun-Food-Fellowship

Hartford Park, IL

Turn east on 7th Street off of Hwy 3.

Saturday, April 22, 2023

1pm~3pm

The Events Committee will be supplying hot dogs, buns, chips and water. Please RSVP district18activities@gmail.com, so we have enough food.

Feel free to bring a dessert item, or whatever you like.

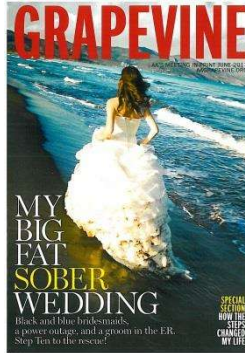
Families, and anyone in recovery are welcome!

In case of rain, we'll be under the pavilion doing something else fun!



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