AA District 18 Newsletter

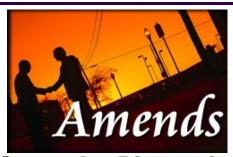
Volume 4, Issue 9 September 2023



We have some late breaking news for District 18.

AA District 18 needs volunteers to carry the message by passing out literature and helping to answer questions to those seeking information about AA. We will have a table at the Rockin' For Recovery event. It is on September 23rd from 3:30-9:30p at Bethalto Park in Bethalto, IL. If you would like to volunteer, please email your contact information to info@aa-district18.org sign up at https://aa-district18.org/district-18-volunteer-form/ and select Cooperation with Professional Community (CPC). You will be put in contact with our CPC chair, Janet R.

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AA Grapevine Discussion: Amends

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 September's *AA Grapevine* issue, and are related to Amends.

'Have you ever made difficult amends with members of your family? How did they go? What are some things that helped? Share some ways your drinking affected your family. How has sobriety helped repair those relationships?'

I have to admit I was nervous about doing my 9th Step amends. I had my 8th step list and I already knew how each one was going to go. My mind was working overtime. And those thoughts only made the waiting to do the amends all the more painful. I was a closet drinker of hard liquor and my family didn't know the extent of it. I had no problem drinking beer or a glass of wine around them as that was socially acceptable, but the hard stuff I kept out of sight. My wife never saw me drink the hard stuff either, except on vacation.

continued on page 2

Amends (cont'd from pg. 1)

She never had a problem with it when we were on vacation, because she later told me that since we were on vacation that I could cut loose. I don't think she understood how I could tolerate 100 proof moonshine, but I drank that because it was faster.

So my first amend was to my wife. I really dreaded the thought of doing it. After 22 years of marriage and 25 years (including dating) of being a closet drinker, I had to clean my side of the street. I had composed my list of wrongs and went over it with my sponsor. We worked together and prepared how I should do the amend. And I also was thinking about how this program of AA is a program of honesty. I didn't just want to only admit my wrongs, I also wanted to expose all my little drinking secrets.

So we set a date and time, and I went through my list, which was nothing more than bullet points to keep me on track and not forget anything. Then I went on to expose those secrets. When my Grandmother passed, I received an inheritance. My wife didn't want anything to do with that money, so I put that into a separate bank that she couldn't access and I used that money to buy my liquor. I told her that is why she never saw any money coming out of our joint account or on the credit card for liquor purchases. I told her the reason I never wanted her in my office is because I didn't want her to find my stash, hidden in a tool bag. Or the airplane bottles in my brief case. I told her the reason why I didn't want her driving my car was the backpack that had half pints in it stowed in the trunk, which I drank on the way home from work. I exposed all my hiding places. It was hard to do, as I wanted to hold onto something, just in case, but I knew I didn't want to drink anymore, so I was determined to tell her all of it.

I told her that after I finished cutting my mom's grass each weekend, which usually took 3 hours on a tractor, I never came straight home. I always went to the liquor store, bought a pint and drove around in the country for an hour drinking it before coming home. I told her that when we had to take my grandmother to

the hospital at 10 PM a year or so before her passing that I was driving drunk. That I put her and my grandmother at risk. I told her that when she caught me drinking, I cleaned up for a bit until the heat was off and then doubled my efforts to conceal my drinking.

I exposed all my secrets and while I didn't feel real good at the moment, it wasn't long before I felt better. I felt good because I was finally being honest with her after all these years of marriage. I felt it was the beginning of reestablishing trust in our relationship. Trust that didn't come immediately, but gradually.

I approached my amends by employing the HOW principle. I had to be Open-minded to see my wrongs, to be completely Honest with whom I was making the amend and be Willing lay it all out there, every little bit. Most importantly, I said a prayer to God before the amends, asking Him to be with me and guide my words. And to remind me that this wasn't about me, but the other person.

John G



The vital principles of the 9th Step are "Discipline" with "Consideration" and "Freedom".

Reconciliation restores "dignity and honor" with promises of a new and fulfilling life.

In the later stages of my alcoholism, about the only discipline I had was making sure the alcohol never ran out.

I grew up a Boy Scout, and the Scout Law is "A scout is Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent." When I started my drinking career, these traits were tossed slowly away, discarded because those were inconvenient to my desires. My selfishness and self-centeredness began

continued on page 3

Discipline (cont'd from pg. 2)

taking over, and I was using it to my full advantage to get whatever I needed.

As I began working the steps, I didn't realize it at the time, but the AA program was teaching me discipline. My sponsor made suggestions and I had to act upon those. I needed to employ discipline to complete my 4th Step list. As I worked each step, I was developing skills, which would become important towards the later steps. The new principle I learned in Step 9 is consideration of others.

For the first time in a long time, I began to think about someone else besides myself. I started to think about those whom I had wronged. I needed to think about how my actions may have affected them.

Rediscovering my wrongs towards others certainly had an impact on me, as I have been living with these wrongs all along.

Living with all this baggage (shame) of things done to others weighed me down, kept me miserable and I drank to forget it. I was told this step was necessary to clean my side of the street up.

So I met with the people I had done wrong to, made my amends and asked how I could make this wrong right. After each amend, I felt a little more weight lifted from me. From this I learned that when I did wrong someone, admitting it right away is the right thing to do for both parties. This program has taught me to care about all people again, not just alcoholics. I do not wish to hurt them, just as I do not wish to be hurt. There is a certain dignity to be gained by knowing I am wrong and admitting it. There is also freedom to be gained by not carrying all that baggage. The freedom that simply comes from admitting I am wrong. JJG

Humor

A member recalls the years when he refused to listen to his conscience. He didn't want to take advice from a total stranger.

Grapevine, June 2022

INTERESTING DATES IN SEPTEMBER AA HISTORY

SEPT 1935: Bill W. returns home from his Akron OH trip & AA begins in NYC.

SEPT 1935: Hank P., the NY group's AA #2, takes his last drink, but after four years of sobriety, he goes back to drinking again.

SEPT 13 1937: Florence R. is the 1st female AA in NY.

SEPT 1938: Bill W. & Hank P. form Works Publishing Co. to raise money to write & publish "Alcoholics Anonymous", our Big Book. Fitz M.'s sister Agnes lends Bill W. & Hank P. \$1,000 to help them get through the Big Book project.

SEPT 30 1939: Liberty magazine runs "Alcoholics And God," an article on AA by Morris Markey. Bill W. predicts the blast from Liberty will stir things up.

SEPT 1940: The "Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease" reviewed the Big Book & said "of the inner meaning of alcoholism there is hardly a word."

SEPT 13 1941: WHJP in Jacksonville FL airs "Spotlight on AA," the 1st radio series on AA.

SEPT 1942: U.S. Assistant Surgeon General Kolb speaks at a dinner for Bill & Dr. Bob in Philadelphia.

SEPT 1944: "The Empty Jug" an early AA newsletter) starts in Chattanooga TN.

SEPT 1949: 1st issue of the AA Grapevine in pocketbook format is published.

SEPT 17 1954: Bill D. (AA #4) dies.

SEPT 22-25 1971: Over 500 attend the 1st European Convention of AA in Bristol, England.

Upcoming Events for SEPTEMBER

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Date: Wednesday, Sept. 6th, 2023

TIME: 7:30PM-8:30 PM

PLACE: HISTORY MUSEUM (REAR ENTRANCE)
 114 SOUTH WASHINGTON ST., BUNKER HILL, IL

• PHIL Y. CELEBRATES 19 YEARS OF SOBRIETY

GSR MEETING-HYBRID

• DATE: SUNDAY, SEPT. 17TH, 2023

 TIME: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
 PLACE: AT CSO AND ON ZOOM
 MEETING ID: 860 0054 3107 PASSCODE: 093088

TREATMENT AND BRIDGING THE GAP COMMITTEE MEETING

• DATE: SUNDAY, SEPT 17TH, 2023

■ TIME: 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

PLACE: AT CSO

SATURDAY NIGHT LIBRARY GROUP ANNIVERSARY POTLUCK

• DATE: SATURDAY, SEPT. 23TH, 2023

 TIME: 6:00PM DOORS OPEN -7:00 PM EAT – 8:00 PM SPEAKER

Place: St. Mary's Catholic Church
 1802 Madison Ave, Edwardsville, IL

SPEAKER: BILL R.

PLEASE BRING A COVERED DISH

Mark Your Calendars

DISTRICT 18 PICNIC

Date: Sunday, October 1st, 2023

TIME: 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

• PLACE: HARTFORD PARK, HARTFORD, IL

 SPEAKERS: JACKIE C, COLLINSVILLE AND PAUL B, EDWARDSVILLE.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FLIER FOR DETAILS.

HIGHLAND AA PICNIC

• Date: Saturday, October 7th, 2023

• TIME: 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

 PLACE: SILVER LAKE, HIGHLAND, IL LARGE PAVILION

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FLYER FOR DETAILS.

GSR MEETING-HYBRID

Date: Sunday, October 15th, 2023

 TIME: 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
 PLACE: AT CSO AND ON ZOOM
 MEETING ID: 860 0054 3107 PASSCODE: 093088

2023 Men's AA UNITY BREAKFAST

Date: Sunday, November 5th, 2023

• TIME: 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

PLACE: REGENCY CONFERENCE CENTER
 400 REGENCY PARK, O'FALLON, IL

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED FLYER FOR DETAILS.

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



If you've thought of subscribing the Grapevine and have been putting it off, please consider subscribing and adding it to your sobriety tool kit. It's basically a meeting in a pocket, easy to carry with you and can provide inspiration when you need it. I've attached subscription forms at the end of this newsletter, and you can even gift a subscription to a friend.

Thank you, John G. (D-18 GVR)

DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR A BIRTHDAY IN OCTOBER, or are you interested in contributing to the newsletter? Please send any of the above to info@aa.district18.org by 09/30/23, 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!

Alcoholics And God – Liberty, September 30, 1939

Charles Towns, owner of Towns' Hospital where Bill Wilson had sobered up, tried to get publicity for A.A. and finally succeeded. He had known Morris Markey, a well-known feature writer, for years. Markey was intrigued by what Towns told him of A.A., and approached Fulton Oursler, then editor of "Liberty," a popular magazine that had a religious orientation.

Oursler saw the possibilities at once and said, "Morris, you've got an assignment. Bring that story in here, and we will print it in September." (Oursler later wrote a number of successful books on religion. He became a good friend of Bill's and served as a trustee of the Alcoholic Foundation.)

In September 1939, when the "Liberty" piece hit the newsstands, Bill thought it was a bit lurid, and that the title, "Alcoholics and God," would scare off some prospects. Perhaps it did, but "Liberty" received 800 urgent pleas for help, which were promptly turned over to Bill Wilson who turned them over to Ruth Hock for a response. "She wrote fine personal letters to every one of them," wrote Bill, "enclosing a leaflet which described the A.A. book.

The response was wonderful. Several hundred books sold at once at full retail price of \$3.50. Even more importantly, we struck up a correspondence with alcoholics, their friends, and their families all over the country."

When Dr. Bob read the story he was elated. "You never saw such an elated person in your life," said Ernie G. the second (there were two Ernie G's). "We all were," said Ernie's wife, Ruth. Anne smith said, "You know, it looks like we might be getting a little bit respectable." It was AA's first successful piece of national publicity. The stories in the Cleveland Plain Dealer followed shortly hereafter.

One result of the article was that A.A. was started in Philadelphia. George S. of Philadelphia, one of the first "loners" had sobered up after reading the article." When the issue of Liberty first arrived, George was in bed drinking whiskey for his depression and taking laudanum for his colitis. The Markey piece hit George so hard that he went ex-grog and ex-laudanum instantly.

He wrote to New York, his name was given to Jim Burwell (see "The Vicious Cycle" in the Big Book), who was a traveling salesman, "and that's how A.A. started in the City of Brotherly Love," wrote Bill. Jim and George gathered others to them, and the first A.A. meeting in Philadelphia was held in George's home. Chicago also reported getting several new prospects as a result of the "Liberty" article.

Bill wrote to Dr. Bob, "We are growing at an alarming rate, although I have no further fear of large numbers." A few weeks later he wrote Dr. Bob that "the press of newcomers and inquiries was so great that we have to swing more to the take-it-or-leave-it attitude, which, curiously enough, produces better results than trying to be all things at all times at all places to all men."

(Sources: Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age. Bill W., by Francis Hartigan. Bill W., by Robert Thomsen. The Language of the Heart, Bill W.'s Grapevine Writings. Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers.)

Alcoholics and God

by Morris Markey

Is there hope for habitual drunkards? A cure that borders on the miraculous—and it works!

For twenty-five or thirty cents we buy a glass of fluid which is pleasant to the taste, and which contains within its small measure a store of warmth and good-fellowship and stimulation, of release from momentary cares and anxieties. That would be a drink of whisky, of course — whisky, which is one of Nature's most generous gifts to man, and at the same time one of his most elusive problems. It is a problem because, like many of his greatest benefits, man does not quite know how to control it. Many experiments have been made, the most spectacular being the queer nightmare of prohibition, which left such deep scars upon the morals and the manners of our nation. Millions of dollars have been spent by philanthropists and crusaders to spread the doctrine of temperance. In our time the most responsible of the distillers are urging us to use their wares sensibly, without excess.

But to a certain limited number of our countrymen neither prohibition nor wise admonishments have any meaning, because they are helpless when it comes to obeying them. I speak of the true alcoholics, and before going any further I had best explain what that term means.

For a medical definition of the term, I quote an eminent doctor who, has spent twenty-five years treating such people in a highly regarded private hospital: "We believe . . . that the action of alcohol in chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy-that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all."

They are, he goes on, touched with physical and mental quirks that prevent them from controlling their own actions. They suffer from what some doctors call a "compulsion neurosis." They know liquor is bad for them but periodically; they are driven by a violent and totally uncontrollable desire for a drink. And after that first drink, the deluge.

Now these people are genuinely sick. The liquor habit with them is not a vice. It is a specific illness of body and mind, and should be treated as such.

By far the most successful cure is that used by the hospital whose head doctor I have quoted. There is nothing secret about it. It has the endorsement of the medical profession. It is, fundamentally, a process of dehydration: of removing harmful toxins from all parts of the body faster than Nature could accomplish it. Within five or six days — two weeks at the maximum — the patient's body is utterly free from alcoholic poisons. Which means that the physical craving is completely cured, because the body cries out for alcohol only when alcohol is already there. The patient has no feeling of revulsion toward whisky. He simply is not interested in it. He has recovered. But wait. How permanent is his recovery?

Our doctor says this: "Though the aggregate of full recoveries through physical and psychiatric effort its considerable, we doctors must admit that we have made little impression upon the problem as a whole. For there are many types which do not respond to the psychological approach.

"I do not believe that true alcoholism is entirely a matter of individual mental control. I have had many men who had, for example, worked for a period of months on some business deal that was to be settled on a certain date.... For reasons they could not afterward explain, they took a drink a day or two prior to the date . . . and the

important engagement was not even kept. These men were not drinking to escape. They were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control.

"The classification of alcoholics is most difficult. There are, of course, the psychopaths who are emotionally unstable.... They are over remorseful and make many resolutions — but never a decision.

"There is the type who is unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink just like the rest of the boys. He does tricks with his drinking — changing his brand, or drinking only after meals or changing his companions. None of this helps him strengthen his control and be like other people. Then there are types entirely normal in every respect except in the effect which alcohol has upon them . . .

"All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: They cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving.... The only relief we have to suggest is complete abstinence from alcohol.

"But are these unfortunate people really capable, mentally, of abstaining completely? Their bodies may be cured of craving. Can their minds be cured? Can they be rid of the deadly compulsion neurosis?"

Among physicians the general opinion seems to be that chronic alcoholics are doomed. But wait! Within the last four years, evidence has appeared which has startled hard-boiled medical men by proving that the compulsion neurosis can be entirely eliminated. Perhaps you are one of those cynical people who will turn away when I say that the root of this new discovery is religion. But be patient for a moment. About three years ago a man appeared at the hospital in New York of which our doctor is head physician. It was his third "cure." Since his first visit he had lost his job, his friends, his health, and his self-respect. He was now living on the earnings of his wife.

He had tried every method he could find to cure his disease: had read all the great philosophers and psychologists. He had tried religion but he simply could not accept it. It would not seem real and personal to him.

He went through the cure as usual and came out of it in very low spirits. He was lying in bed, emptied of vitality and thought, when suddenly, a strange and totally unexpected thrill went through his body and mind. He called out for the doctor. When the doctor came in, the man looked up at him and grinned.

"Well, doc," he said, "my troubles are all over. I've got religion."

"Why, you're the last man . . ."

"Sure, I know all that. But I've got it. And I know I'm cured of this drinking business for good." He talked with great intensity for a while and then said, "Listen, doc. I've got to see some other patient — one that is about to be dismissed."

The doctor demurred. It all sounded a trifle fanatical. But finally he consented. And thus was born the movement which is now flourishing with almost sensational success as Alcoholics Anonymous."

Here is how it works:

Every member of the group — which is to say every person who has been saved — is under obligation to carry on the work, to save other men.

That, indeed, is a fundamental part of his own mental cure. He gains strength and confidence by active work with other victims.

He finds his subject among acquaintances, at a "cure" institution or perhaps by making inquiry of a preacher, a priest, or a doctor. He begins his talk with his new acquaintance by telling him the true nature of his disease and how remote are his chances for permanent cure.

When he has convinced the man that he is a true alcoholic and must never drink again, he continues:

"You had better admit that this thing is beyond your own control. You've tried to solve it by yourself, and you have failed. All right. Why not put the whole thing into the hands of Somebody Else?"

Even though the man might be an atheist or agnostic, he will almost always admit that there is some sort of force operating in the world-some cosmic power weaving a design. And his new friend will say:

"I don't care what you call this Somebody Else. We call it God. But whatever you want to call it, you had better put yourself into its hands. Just admit you're licked, and say, 'Here I am, Somebody Else. Take care of this thing for me."

The new subject will generally consent to attend one of the weekly meetings of the movement.

He will find twenty-five or thirty ex-drunks gathered in somebody's home for a pleasant evening. There are no sermons. The talk is gay or serious as the mood strikes. The new candidate cannot avoid saying to himself, "These birds are ex-drunks. And look at them! They must have something. It sounds kind of screwy, but whatever it is I wish to heaven I could get it too."

One or another of the members keeps working on him from day to day. And presently the miracle. But let me give you an example: I sat down in a quiet room with Mr. B., a stockily built man of fifty with a rather stern, intelligent face.

"I'll tell you what happened a year ago." He said, "I was completely washed up. Financially I was all right, because my money is in a trust fund. But I was a drunken bum of the worst sort. My family was almost crazy with my incessant sprees."

"I took the cure in New York." (At the hospital we have mentioned.)

"When I came out of it, the doctor suggested I go to one of these meetings the boys were holding. I just laughed. My father was an atheist and had taught me to be one. But the doctor kept saying it wouldn't do me any harm, and I went.

"I sat around listening to the jabber. It didn't register with me at all. I went home. But the next week I found myself drawn to the meeting. And again they worked on me while I shook my head. I said, 'It seems O.K. with you; boys, but I don't even know your language. Count me out.'

"Somebody said the Lord's Prayer, and the meeting broke up. I walked three blocks to the subway station. Just as I was about to go down the stairs-bang!" He snapped fingers hard. "It happened! I don't like that word miracle, but that's all I can call it. The lights in the street seemed to flare up. My feet seemed to leave the pavement. A kind of shiver went over me, and I burst out crying.

"I went back to the house where we had met, and rang the bell, and Bill let me in. We talked until two o'clock in the morning. I haven't touched a drop since, and I've set four other fellows on the same road."

The doctor, a nonreligious man himself, was at first utterly astonished at the results that began to appear among his patients. But then he put his knowledge of psychiatry and psychology to work. These men were experiencing a psychic change. Their so-called "compulsion neurosis" was being altered — transferred from liquor to something else. Their psychological necessity to drink was being changed to a psychological necessity to rescue their fellow victims from the plight that made themselves so miserable. It is not a new idea. It is a powerful and effective working out of an old idea. We all know that the alcoholic has an urge to share his troubles. Psychoanalysts use this urge. They say to the alcoholic, in basic terms: "You can't lick this problem yourself. Give me the problem — transfer the whole thing to me and let me take the whole responsibility."

But the psychoanalyst, being of human clay, is not often a big enough man for that job. The patient simply cannot generate enough confidence in him. But the patient can have enough confidence in God — once he has gone through the mystical experience of recognizing God. And upon that principle the Alcoholic Foundation rests. The medical profession, in general, accepts the principle as sound.

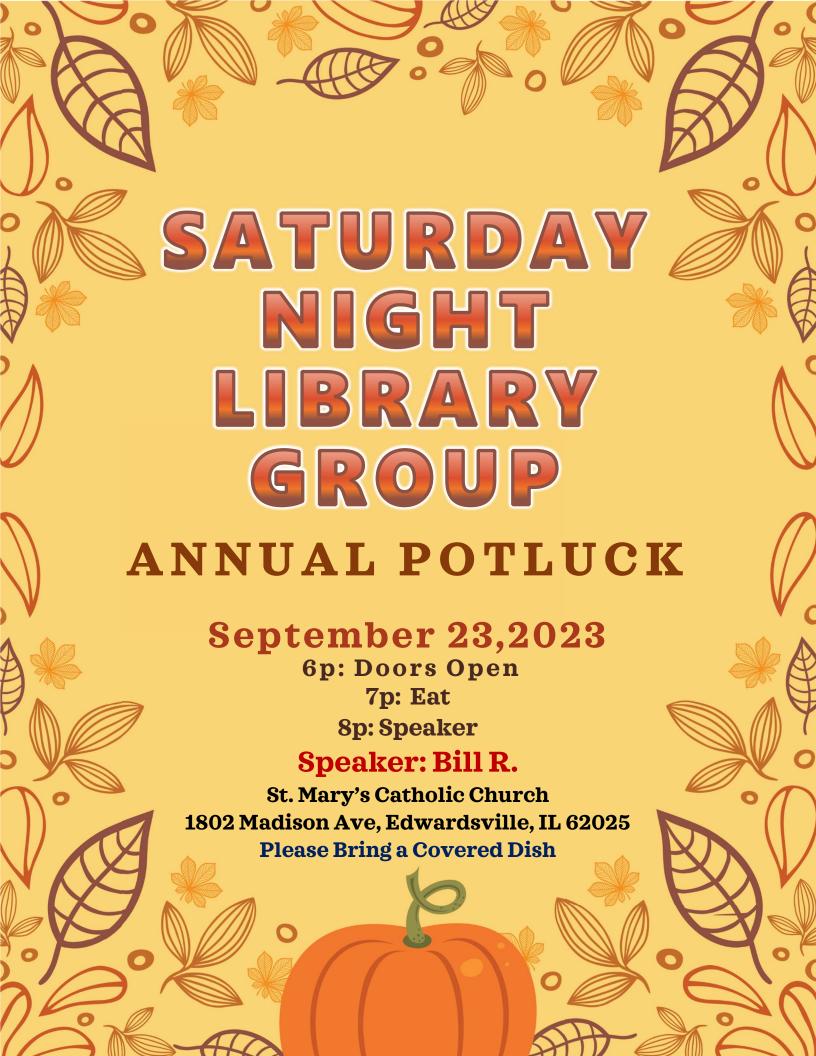
"Alcoholics Anonymous" have consolidated their activities in an organization called the Alcoholic Foundation. It is a nonprofit-making enterprise. Nobody connected with it is paid a penny. It is not a crusading movement. It condemns neither liquor nor the liquor industry. Its whole concern is with the rescue of allergic alcoholics, the small proportion of the population who must be cured or perish. It preaches no particular religion and has no dogma, no rules. Every man conceives God according to his own lights.

Groups have grown up in other cities. The affairs of the Foundation are managed by three members of the movement and four prominent business and professional men, not alcoholics, who volunteered their services.

The Foundation has lately published a book, called Alcoholics Anonymous. And if alcoholism is a problem in your family or among your friends, I heartily recommend that you get hold of a copy. It may very well help you to guide a sick man — an allergic alcoholic — on the way to health and contentment.

THE END

(Source: Liberty, September 30, 1939)





Illinois District 18 AA Activity Committee Presents

District 18 AA Annual Picnic

Fun-Food-Fellowship

Hartford Park, IL Turn east on 7th Street off of Hwy 3.

Sunday, October 1, 2023 12pm~4pm

Families welcome! There will be a bounce house for the kids. or any other kid-at-heart.

Speakers start around 1.

Jackie C. from Collinsville and Paul B. from Edwardsville.

We'll provide Burgers and dogs, along with water, soda, and coffee. Bring a dish, with something in it!

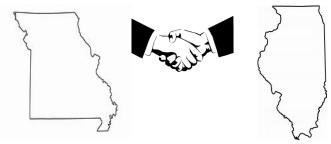
Sobriety countdown, Raffle Baskets, 50/50 drawing, and more!

Have your home-group send a donation or provide a raffle basket!





25TH Annual Illinois Missouri Men's AA Unity Breakfast



"First Tradition: Personal Recovery Depends Upon AA Unity" Please join us for the Annual 2023 AA Men's Breakfast

When: Sunday, November 5, 2023

Where: Regency Conference Center, 400 Regency Park Drive, O'Fallon Illinois 62268

Doors Open: 8:00 am **Breakfast:** 9:00 am

Speaker: 10:00 am Don B.

Tickets: \$30

→ Reserved seating limited to tables of 8 (\$240) call: Bill D. @ (314) 971-0251

For General Information call: Bill W. @ (618) 567-5731

No Tickets Sold at The Door!!!! <u>Ticket sales deadline is October 24.</u>

2023 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 8*, by contacting **Bill D. (314) 971-0251**

No electronic tickets accepted (paper tickets only)

NAME:			
ADDRESS:			
CITY:	STATE: ZIP:		
# OF PEOPLE	SCHOLORSHIP 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

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