

AA District 18 Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 12

December 2023



We have some late breaking news for District 18.

- ***Fri. Night Back to Basics*** Granite City new meeting time starts December 1, 2023. 7 pm instead of 7:30 pm.
- ***new meeting*** A new men's meeting will be meeting on Friday at 8:30p at 3rd and Alby in Alton. Entrance is on 3rd Street.
- **Grapevine** has 20% off all products except subscriptions and gift certificates, plus free shipping through Dec. 31 2023 www.aagrapevine.org/store

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AA Grapevine Discussion: Safe, 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 Safe, sober holidays!

'Are the holidays a challenge for you? How do you stay sane and sober during this busy time of year? Are you visiting family members this year? What is that like? How do you navigate holiday office parties? Have you been to AA alkathons? What are some safe sober holiday tips you have for newcomers? What is your plan to stay sober and enjoy New Years?'

I remember when I first came into A.A. in July, and as the holiday season fast approached, panic started setting in. I was just four months sober for my first sober Thanksgiving and five for Christmas. I really wasn't worried about gathering with either side of my family, as neither side celebrated with alcohol. I was worried about how I had handled the holiday's when I was drinking and how I handled situations that came up during the

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gatherings. I remembered how I acted the previous Christmas at my families, which was not pretty. I was told that we were not exchanging gifts that Christmas and when we went down, gifts were being exchanged. I lost it, made a scene, stormed out and came home, where I drowned my rage with vodka. While I was mad at them, I was really mad at myself because I hadn't taken a proactive approach and just bought gifts. All I thought about was gifting myself with alcohol. This is what the holiday's had become, I'd find a way to get out of there just so I could come home and drink.

So I was nervous that first year. Would my family remember last year? Would they be on pins and needles while I was there? Fortunately, at my home group meeting prior to Thanksgiving, I brought up the topic of how to navigate the holidays sober. The wonderful advice everyone shared in that meeting eased my mind and helped steer me though the holidays.

Another tool for navigating the holidays had been presented to me in the Thought For The Day (TFTD) readings. After Thanksgiving, the readings began talking about slips. I had know about these well before I came into AA. Seemed like anytime I had a period of short sobriety, somehow I slipped back into alcohol. My longest stint without alcohol prior to AA was approximately 4 months, which was about the same amount of time I was a member of AA going into the holiday season. So there must be a reason TFTD readings were focusing on slips at the beginning of the holiday season. I needed to be reminded of my past experiences. I also needed the Big Book.

On page 37 of the Big Book, there are a few sentences that I highlighted which helped shed light on my past behaviors. 'But there was always the curious mental phenomenon that parallel with our sound reasoning there inevitably ran some insanely trivial excuse for taking the first drink. Our sound reasoning failed to hold us in check. The insane idea won out.' Followed by, 'In some circumstances we have gone out deliberately to get drunk, feeling ourselves justified by nervousness, anger, worry, depression, jealousy or the like...We now see that when we began to drink deliberately, instead of casually, there was little serious or effective thought during the period of premeditation of what the terrific consequences might be.' I now knew why I began to drink after periods of sobriety. Because alcohol is 'cunning, baffling and powerful,' and being an alcoholic, I could use any excuse to slip back into the ways of

alcoholism.

I really wanted what others had found in AA. I know that reading the Big Book, TFTD, listening to member's shares in meetings and listening to my sponsor, sobriety would be difficult if I didn't also include my Higher Power for help. If I trusted the tools presented to me from the Big Book and my sponsor, I could make it sober through the holiday season. But it wasn't just trust alone, I needed to start practicing the AA lifestyle.

It wasn't a memorable holiday season, but compared to my past ones, it was rather nice. The best part of all was I didn't drink. I thank A.A. for that.

John G



Step 12

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs"

The vital principle of the 12th Step is "Service". To use our experience and save a life is a special type of heroism that satisfies the soul with a great sense of purpose and worth. We prevent the #2 reason for relapse, which is complacency, with a continuous reminder of where addiction took us as we help others. We keep it by giving it away.

I wish everyone who came into AA would stay and find the better life that awaits them through working the AA program. Though I am disappointed they don't stay, I kind of understand. When I was still actively drinking, I wasn't looking for AA or any help. Everything that happened to me to bring me into these rooms is the way it was meant to be, and I wouldn't change anything. Except all the pain and suffering my family had to go through.

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Service (cont'd from pg. 2)

One key part of my AA program is to never forget where alcohol took me, to the bottom. Alcohol is very cunning, and tries to tell me that I won't end up in the ICU the next time, that things will be different this time. Being an alcoholic, I am inclined to believe what alcohol tells me if I am not doing something the program suggests I do to maintain my sobriety and serenity.

So I attend meetings regularly, share my story when invited to at a speaker meetings, take on positions in the District and talk with new comers (my weak link). Introducing myself to people has never been easy for me, probably due to some character defect carried from when I was young and switching schools often. But when I get the opportunity to meet a new person and I don't shy away, I talk with them. Some of my best conversations I've had with new comers has been while giving them a ride to a meeting. Being able to talk about my experiences before AA and while in AA hopefully helps them. When I hear the pain in their voice and hear the part of the their story they are willing to share, it takes me back to where I came from. That is what keeps me grounded.

Even though I go to step and big book study meetings, not much beats walking a newcomer through the steps. I am reminded of my struggles with working the steps, and can use that to help the newcomer. I work with them until they stop coming around or fire me. But I don't write them off, because they may come back someday. I want to be here when they do and help them if they want it.

There are many different ways to be of service in AA. Working with a newcomer is just one way. The other way is stepping out of my comfort zone and volunteering to do something I've never done before. Working on this newsletter is one thing outside my comfort zone I decided to try. Sharing my experience with other AA's is what it's all about, and if I write something that helps someone out, well I probably won't know if it did but writing about my experiences helps keep me sober another day.

JJG

INTERESTING DATES IN DECEMBER AA HISTORY

DEC 27 1893: Rev. Sam Shoemaker was born. He was head of the U.S. Oxford Group movement & minister of Calvary Church in NYC, where Ebby took Bill W. to the mission on 23rd St. in NYC.

DEC 11 1934: Bill W. takes his last drink & enters Towns Hospital. Bill has a spiritual experience there & the obsession with alcohol is removed.

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.

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 1940: St. Louis MO AA group is founded.

DEC 1944: Australia was the 1st country outside of North America to have AA.

DEC 1949: Sister Ignatia accepts Poverello Medal of St. Francis on behalf of AA from the College of Steubenville, OH.

DEC 1949 (CHRISTMAS DAY): Dr. Bob's last visit to St. Thomas Hospital's alcoholic ward where he helped thousands of drunks.

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.

Upcoming Events for December

BULLDOGS HOLIDAY POTLUCK

- DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7TH, 2023
- TIME: DOORS OPEN AT 5:45PM
EAT AT 6:00 PM
SPEAKER AT 7:00 PM, BOB S.
- OPEN AA MEETING
- PLACE: FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
310 S. MAIN ST., EDWARDSVILLE, IL
- PLEASE BRING A COVER DISH/DESSERT
- FAMILIES WELCOME!

TRIANGLE GROUP 61ST ANNIVERSARY POTLUCK

- DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14TH, 2023
- TIME: DOORS OPEN AT 5:30PM
MEAL AT 6:00 PM
SPEAKER AT 7:00 PM, W.C. FROM EDWARDSVILLE
- PLACE: 1ST BAPTIST CHURCH
608 N. VAN BUREN STREET, LITCHFIELD, IL
- PLEASE BRING A SIDE DISH OR DESSERT.
- THE GROUP WILL PROVIDE COFFEE, TEA, AND HAM FOR THE MEAL.

AA CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS 2023

- DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16TH, 2023
- TIME: 2:00PM-4:00PM
- PLACE: CSO
409 BROADWAY UNIT C-1, SOUTH ROXANA, IL
- GET YOUR PICTURE TAKEN WITH SANTA!
- TOY GIFT-BAGS FOR THE KIDS!
- HOT COCOA!
- CRAFT BOOTH AND MORE
- BRING A DESSERT OR CANDY TO SHARE!

GSR MEETING AND AREA DELEGATE PRESENTATION-HYBRID

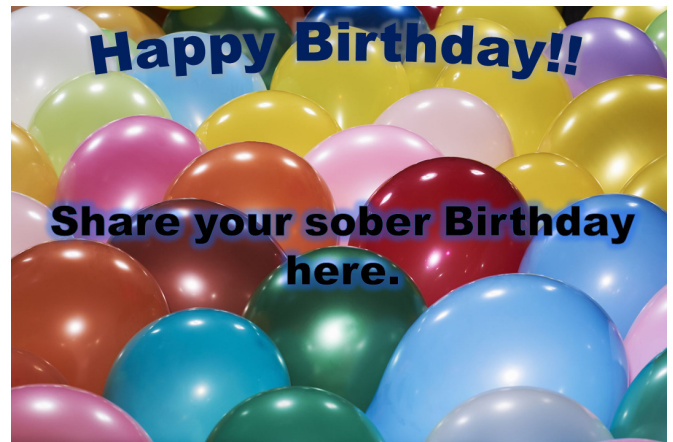
- DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH, 2023
- TIME: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- PLACE: AT CSO AND ON ZOOM
- MEETING ID: 860 0054 3107
PASSCODE: 093088
- OUR DELEGATE FOR AREA 21, TOM H WILL BE JOINING US.

Mark Your Calendars

SUNDAY MORNING BIG BOOK STUDY GROUP PANCAKE & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST

- DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 7TH, 2024
- TIME: BREAKFAST - 8:00 A
MEETING – 9:00 AM
- PLACE: CSO
409 BROADWAY UNIT C-1, SOUTH ROXANA, IL
- EVERYONE IS WELCOMED FOR BREAKFAST AND FELLOWSHIP.
- PANCAKES AND SAUSAGES PROVIDED BY SUNDAY MORNING BIG BOOK GROUP.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



GRAPEVINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

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 JANUARY, or are you interested in contributing to the newsletter? Please send any of the above to info@aa-district18.org by 12/31/23, 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!



BULLDOGS

HOLIDAY

POTLUCK



OPEN AA Meeting TO EVERYONE !

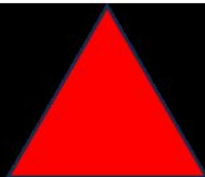
WHEN: December 7 @ 6pm
(Doors open at 5:45pm)

WHERE: First Christian Church
310 S. Main St.
Edwardsville, IL

Speaker: Bob S @ 7pm

Bring a covered dish/dessert

Families welcome !



POT LUCK SPEAKER MEETING

**THE TRIANGLE GROUP IS CELEBRATING 61 YEARS OF
CARRYING THE MESSAGE!**

THURSDAY DECEMBER 14TH



DOORS OPEN AT 5:30 PM

MEAL AT 6:00 PM

**7:00 PM GUEST SPEAKER - W.C. FROM EDWARDSVILLE
THE GROUP WILL PROVIDE COFFEE, TEA, AND HAM
FOR THE MEAL**

PLEASE BRING A SIDE DISH



OR DESERT





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 16th
2:00-4:00pm

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

Bring a Dessert or candy to share!



Sunday Morning Big Book Study Group

@ The CSO South Roxanna

409 Broadway Ave. South Roxana, IL 62087



Sunday Morning Pancake & Sausage Breakfast

Sunday, January 7, 2024

Open Meeting

Everyone is welcomed for breakfast and fellowship

Pancakes and Sausages provided by the

Sunday Morning Big Book Group

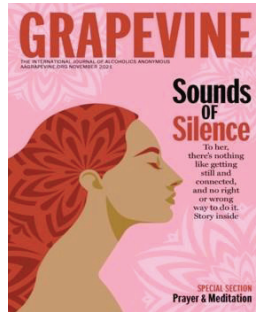
Breakfast & Fellowship start @ 8:00am

Meeting starts at 9:00am



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