

Downeast Intergroup Newsletter

April 2022

The Downeast Intergroup Committee is a group of AA members coming together in the spirit of fellowship to help carry the AA message through publishing a newsletter, sponsoring AA events, and distributing AA literature.

DEIG FINANCES- FEBRUARY 2022

Operating Account

- beginning balance.....\$2,586.01
- total debit..... <\$107.05>
- total credit.....\$0.08*
- ending balance.....\$2479.04

*Donations were received from the following:

Interest on Bank Account.....\$0.08
total.....\$0.08

Temporary Problems with our P.O. Box last month may have resulted in some DEIG contributions returned to sender. It is now up and running, and all mail sent to P.O. Box 1633 in Ellsworth, ME 04605 will now be received. Our apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused.

District 16 News (Joe M.)

Saturday Night Live? Not quite. But it was District 16's 5th annual Saint Patrick Day Alcathon. It started somewhere around 4 pm, and went to some time about 8 pm. There was a lot of laughter, hugs, and talking. Food and more food, some green punch (non alcoholic), and lots of coffee. Four good looking cakes!

We had four speakers, a man from Maryland, and a nice lady from Arizona. Also a "slick chick" from our district, and our Area Delegate attended. Each one was a great speaker. Thank you all for your service.

With much generosity from everyone who gave and helped support the raffle, the district will be able to give the church a good donation. A very big "Thank You" to all who helped make this great night happen...well done folks! And to all the folks who came from other districts, some close and some far away, "Thank You". Oh yes...we did have a District meeting. We had 16 folks, live on ZOOM. We talked about a July picnic, so stay tuned.

Some recent anniversary dates: March 22, Beth had 19 years, March 28, Frank had 42 years, April 9 in Searsport, Jim C. also has 42 years

Brilliant Insights from the Great Savant while washing his clothes (Joe M.)

- It is awfully hard to go from *heel* to *halo* in six months
- Remember, be curious not judgmental

Spring Assembly News (Peter B.)

Last weekend was our Spring Assembly, which has the primary purpose of ascertaining the group conscience of the Area, so that the Delegate can know this when they go to the Conference in New York a few weeks later. The group conscience, when it comes to Bill W's writings, is conservative: let's hold on to what we have.

The Twelve and Twelve had minor edits in the last Conference, and this year the topic of footnotes for the Twelve and Twelve is on the agenda. Because most of the Conference topics deal with literature, swamping the Literature Committee, some topics are now being assigned to other committees, including mine—Finance—which will ponder the addition of footnotes to the 12 & 12.

Some of Bill's writing is out-of-date. If he were around, he would likely change it. But he's not around, and what are we to do? Maybe footnotes. Should we leave his words the same, and have updated footnotes? Or change his words, substituting something more in line with the times, and put his words in the footnotes? The Area, at the Spring Assembly, favored leaving Bill's words intact, with the change in the footnotes. What do you think?

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I have a spark of hope that footnotes can provide a path to satisfy the people who want Bill’s words unchanged, and those concerned with making changes to welcome the newcomer. We shall see what happens at the Conference. . . .

Know Your Tools! (Mary Lou Q.T.)

The Spring Assembly was exciting because we were together in the flesh with hands on tools and discussions on how to best make them work. The Grapevine Committee was one of those Aha! Moments when we viewed the tools offered through the Grapevine and how they could be used to build the fellowship and share AA’s message of hope in our solution.

The Grapevine is often called our meeting in print because all the stories are from AA members and each month covers a variety of topics in sobriety as well as experiences with the Steps and Traditions in our lives. April was a perfect example with a special section for “What’s On Your Mind”.

Here are some ways the tools of Grapevine can be used individually and by groups: Raffle off a subscription at your meeting, give a subscription as an anniversary gift, Have the group get a subscription and share the issues or read one of the stories and discuss how your own experience may have been similar – it’s like a mini speaker meeting and welcome at those small rural meetings. The magazine is great for whiling away time when you are waiting, something that most alcoholics find difficult to do. The magazines are great to pass on to others and the experiences in them are timeless.

The Grapevine has more! There are now Podcasts! New ones on Mondays at 9:00 am EST (aagrapevine.org/podcast, or wherever you get your podcasts). You can follow them on Instagram which includes Grapevine Daily Quotes to start your day.

But wait! There is still more. They print pictures of meeting places around the world from your submissions

and they are looking for stories and 7 minute audios from AA members as well as photographic submissions for their yearly calendar. Every Grapevine has the info you need on submitting material and due dates for certain topics. Ex: Relapsing due April 15, 2022 (So those stories will be coming out soon), Remote Communities & Sober Holidays due June 15, 2022. Even if you don’t fit the current theme, send your experiences in and it may even end up in a Grapevine book! These Grapevine books, perhaps the least known of Grapevine’s tools, make great supplements to the Big Book and Twelve and Twelve. Once again, they are all the experiences of our members with themes denoted in their titles. Step by Step, One on One, No Matter What, Making Amends, Our Traditions, Emotional Sobriety I & II to name just a few and they are working on others. The latest is Prayer and Meditation.

Our Area Grapevine Committee Chair will make these tools available at our Area functions. It was suggested that districts or groups could hold writing workshops on writing stories for this important arm of our program. Check out these wonderful tools for good (happy, joyous and free) sobriety. P.S. AAWS is also looking for stories for the fifth edition Big Book.



Monsters Under My Bed

By Heath W.

Have you ever had a drinking dream? One so real it

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shook you to your core? I don't have them very often but I've had a few that felt a little to real for my liking. I know they can be very hard to deal with sometimes and can cause you to question yourself, asking, "is it OK?" Well, I've got good news for you friends. As real as they may be or even feel, they are just dreams. Who you are and what you've done in a dream does not mean that is who you are when you wake. When you do wake, you are where your feet are. Right here, not drinking, not drunk and not hungover again, hopefully.

My mind travels to crazy places before I'm about to do something new. It starts to worry. I usually have plenty of confidence during the days leading up to it, but the night before when I lay my head down, like clockwork, my mind will start to think of all the ways I'm about to fail or not able to complete my new tasks. In my drinking days, this would happen and my worried mind would win. Sometimes I could scare myself into not even trying what I was supposed to do. I would quit before I even started, even after a week of being so confident that I felt like I could do it backwards. Now, dreams can be weird though and unexplained. "Where did that even come from?", I'd say after waking. But nowadays I can think about a dream and know where it came from, and the best part, I've even been able to take something positive from them. Sometimes even learn from them.

A couple weeks ago, that very thing happened. I had just attended a wonderful A.A. meeting and we talked about how that "first drink gets you drunk". We read and talked about chapter three in the "Big Book", "More About Alcoholism". We discussed "Jim's" story and how that was a perfect example of the "first drink gets you drunk". The classic whiskey and milk story, gross. All that day I couldn't get that meeting out of my head and all the encouraging things that were spoken. The next day I was about to

do something new and right when I lay my head down for bed, the fear monster showed up and had no intentions of just passing through. He got comfortable and made himself at home in my mind. I start to have a dream where I'm in a bar atmosphere celebrating someone from my past's birthday and everyone there knew I didn't drink anymore, but still encouraged me to join in. They gave me a hard time throughout the night - long enough that in my dream I thought, "I'll drink one just to shut them up". I was fully confident that I'd drink just that one drink so I'd be fine. I took that drink and I remember seeing the bottom of that glass and thinking there, done, over. Now they will leave me alone. But by the time I put that glass to the table, in just the smallest second, I knew and felt that it wasn't over. It had begun all over again. I succeeded in not drinking anymore that night. In my dream I stayed true to that. But on the inside I instantly felt the craving and the longing desire for more. I had thoughts, I wasn't going to drink anymore in front of those people that night but I had already thought about wanting one when no one was around or when I could get alone. I had failed. I had messed up and my fear monster wanted to make that very clear. I couldn't wait to get out of that dream. But where did that come from? Why am I dreaming like that? Well, this one was quite simple at its core. The combination of the thoughts lingering from that meeting about "the first drink gets you drunk", and the fear of failure on new projects got together and made their own brain cocktail and it shook me a little.

I awoke in my bed, still sober and not craving a drink. Whew, it was just a dream. But you know what, I thought about it a lot that morning and needed to talk about it, which is key in these situations for me. I must talk about it. I haven't had a craving since before I truly got sober almost 2 years ago and I'm a grateful for that terrible dream. It reminded me of

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how serious this disease is and how it can turn just like that if I'm not careful. I love my life, and sometimes I forget just how shitty things used to be on a daily basis and how fear ruled my life every second. I'm so thankful to know the difference now. I'm thankful that I can learn through the difficult and the scary. And for the new tasks and projects I was afraid of failing a few weeks ago, they worked out just fine.

Meeting Makers Make It — Sort Of (Relief is Not Release)

After twenty-plus years of unsuccessfully “quitting drinking forever,” I was finally taken to my [first AA meeting](#). I was coming off a three-day drinking binge, still pretty much in an incoherent daze. Although, I recall very little about that meeting, I do remember becoming very emotional during the Lord's Prayer, and left with a very strong conviction that AA was really going to work for me. From then on, I became a full-speed-ahead meeting attendee, generally going to more than just one meeting a day for months on end.

As I began to share openly at meetings, as well as before and after, those uncomfortable feelings of anger, anxiety and depression slowly diminished. As a matter of fact, I would leave meetings feeling great! This blessed relief would last for hours, often till I got to my next AA meeting, then the happy cycle would start all over again. “Ain't it great Ma, the wind stopped blowin” (p. 82). But hold the phone! Those [obsessive whisky thoughts](#) still nagged on with a persistent vengeance.

This phenomenon is often tagged as an “AA

honeymoon”—I was having a “relief,” but not a “release.” Someone quipped: “Survival on the AA fellowship is untreated alcoholism.” Even after six months being happily sober, I had not yet gone through the Twelve Step process and was unknowingly living a life of “untreated alcoholism.” Eventually, those honeymoon periods grew shorter and shorter. My unpleasant emotions returned and the whisky obsession grew stronger and stronger.

Finally, after a Hollywood parade, my untreated alcoholism allowed me to march into a bar and almost order a drink—thank God I didn't. But, I could easily see that alternating periods of relief from my [emotional problems](#) was not going to keep me sober. Within weeks a new sponsor had me living the AA program of action via the Twelve Steps. A few months later I experienced a release, and my obsession for whisky miraculously disappeared.

I have learned that although the AA fellowship may provide pleasant periods of relief, it is the Twelve Steps of AA in action that provide the necessary release for me to remain happy, joyous and free—and sober!

By Bob S.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please send articles, events, corrections, anniversaries, and other group or district news to Newsletter Editor Bill L., 1056 Pleasant Street, Blue Hill, Maine 04614; or billloomis8@gmail.com

Contributions to support the Downeast Intergroup can be mailed to: Intergroup Treasurer, PO Box 1633, Ellsworth, ME 04602-1633. We ask for your name and AA job title from all who contribute items printed in this newsletter. **Events listed are for your information, and are not necessarily sponsored or endorsed by AA or this Intergroup.**