

Downeast Intergroup Newsletter

July 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. We support communications and participation between AA members, groups, and districts.

DEIG FINANCES- MAY 2022

Operating Account

- beginning balance.....\$2,678.54
- total debit..... <\$872.00>
- total credit..... \$519.83*
- ending balance.....\$2,326.37

*Donations were received from the following:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| District 21..... | \$50.00 |
| Brooklin Bridge to Recovery..... | \$30.00 |
| Frenchman's Bay Group..... | \$50.00 |
| Thursday Night BB Study..... | \$200.00 |
| District 16..... | \$55.00 |
| Stark Raving Sober (Blue Hill)..... | \$109.75 |
| Tuesday Night Happy Hour Group..... | \$25.00 |
| (Bank interest)..... | \$0.08 |
| total..... | \$519.83 |

Don't forget to visit the Downeast Intergroup Website: <https://downeastintergroup.org/> for the latest meeting updates, events, and the **BLOG**.

District 16 - Joe M.

Our district meeting was a week early because of the Founders Day Picnic. There were a few missing, but it was a good meeting. Meetings in District 16 are doing well, some sure could use more attendance. Our July 4th picnic was talked about, and plans made for a great day. Food and games is the plan for a hell raising time, with a great guest speaker. You all come!

The Founders Day picnic was a blast- 76 people including some family children. Fun and games for

all. We had a great speaker, Robin G., (who gave me the devil for feeding her dog too much). The cooks did a great job for u also. With great weather and family affair, it just doesn't get any better....thanks to ALL!

A few missed Anniversaries: Linda B. (34 years), Ruth F. (34 years), Mary T. (34 years), John (26 years), Cathy B. (40 years), Sandra D. (18 years). Upcoming anniversaries Everett P. (33 years), Jamie R. (7 years), Matt H. (3 years).

The Great Savant Returns!

- Spiritual Tools work when we we are willing to work them.
- The only exercise some people get is Jumping to Conclusions, Running down others, Side Stepping responsibility, and Pushing their Luck!

From the Lens of Fatherhood

By Heath W.

June 19th will have a whole different feel than ever before for me this year. Father's Day, 2022. My story has been riddled with many stages of pain, suffering, and now triumph when it comes to fatherhood. More than I could have ever imagined. It has been connected to me all this time, in various ways. I could not be more blessed to be able to share some of this heartbreaking and beautiful story in the very specific lens of fatherhood.

I always wanted to be a dad. I grew up in a large family with five other siblings. I would imagine when I was a young boy having a big family of my own just like the one I was in. But as my story unfolded, I would end up learning that I was grateful, for any such gift of life at all. In 1999 it started with the loss

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of my father due to health issues. I was 11. I didn't know how to deal with this crazy upending, life changing event. It effected me more than I ever would know. With no dad in the picture, I lost a lot of structure and the boundaries I needed. At the time I really enjoyed the freedom, but it would end up causing me problems as I continued to grow up. My oldest sisters had husbands who I looked up to and spent time with often. Especially James, my sister "Bubba's" husband. (My dad nicknamed my sister "Bubba" at an early age and to this day it's still her nickname). James would play guitar and teach me chords. Our love for music was mutual and it would help spark the fire for music that I've kept forever. Then there was Scott, Holly's husband and he was an outdoors' man. We traveled to Buffalo, NY, once and stayed at his family's apple orchard. That is one of the coolest experiences I remember growing up. Real country living at its finest. He showed me a lot about the world I never knew growing up in the city. It was a whole different ballgame out there. I looked up to James and Scott like father figures. Then, six months after my father's passing, they too passed away in a sudden freak accident while planning a canoe route for a kids' christian summer camp they had just founded with my sisters. While one of the most difficult times in my family's life was happening all at once, I slowly started to pull away. With everyone occupied with grief, pain and sadness it was easy to start doing whatever I wanted. I would end up like a rollercoaster without the guard rails. And without the rails, I would eventually go off and cause destruction.

Still doing whatever I wanted a few years later, I was drinking with friends at parties, staying up late every night, coming and going as I pleased and learning a lot about my interest for the oppisite sex. I was then 15 when my girlfriend at that time found out she was

pregnant. I was on board with having our son and being a father - or so I thought. Our relationship wasn't the strongest, as you can imagine at such a young age, and it didn't help that I was extemley selfish. Things were good for a short period of time but by the time he was 3, we had seperated and we shared time with him. She was willing to do whatever she needed to give him a good life and I wasn't really there yet. I was more worried about my own life. She would go on to meet a nice guy and before you knew it, they were married and moving to Deleware for his work. It all happened so fast. Just like that, they were gone and I never saw him again. He was 3 the last time I had him. I would start turning to ways for escape more and more. I developed a relationship with alcohol that was different than partying in a field with the country boys and girls from my school. I started to use it more and more so I could get away. I liked the feeling of getting away from everything. I also liked how it made me feel and act. Liquid courage was true. I never knew how to handle tough situations, I only knew one way to handle anything - alcohol. And when I felt like my life was getting pretty tough, I would end up drinking more frequently. Years would go by and my progression would get worse. Every once in a while something good would happen in my life and give me a little hope but soon after, alcohol would get jealous and take me back deeper.

I would meet my current wife in St. Louis in 2014. She liked me and all my flaws at the beginning. She didn't know how bad my alcoholism was until later. We talked about raising kids together and deciding on how many we would want. We had a lot of fun thinking about



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that and for me, I liked the idea of having another shot at being a dad or maybe just another shot of whiskey. We had such a hard time getting pregnant that we sought out medical help and I even had a surgery to help our chances. We had felt like we had exhausted our resources. After a long time of trying, my wife surprised me with some amazing news. She was pregnant. I couldn't believe it. I thought this is just what I needed to really turn my life around. My drinking was still ruling the roost and I had instilled false hope that by having a child, I wouldn't need to drink anymore. That was my thought at least. Maybe if I said it enough times, I would even believe it. A couple months later our hope of being parents was gone as we experienced a miscarriage a couple days after Christmas. Our already rocky relationship was about to hit wild waters and go into a dark place we both had never been before. As we grew apart more, I grew closer to the drink. The pandemic was on the horizon and my drinking and our relationship was all about to collide and explode. My wife had finally had enough of my ways and left for Maine, without me.

It took all of those painful things to happen for me to finally take a long look at myself and finally know, my way was not working, never did, and never will. I went to a great Rehab center, I gave over my will and fell in love with A.A. Then I found myself. My real self. With help, we broke down walls and the chains that were holding me down for fifteen years. A real chance at life was given to me along with countless gifts from God who made everything possible for me. After seeing the work I was putting into being truly sober, my wife eventually gave me a chance to come to Maine and give our relationship one last shot. She met the new person that I was, the person she knew was trapped inside somewhere and we fell in love differently than before. Just shortly after our

relationship began healing and growing stronger than ever, she was pregnant. We barley even tried, it was crazy. We were scared and excited all at the same time but I could feel it in my bones that this was really going to happen. My time to be a real father, for us to be parents, was almost here. I was given one gift after another the day I gave up my old ways and surrendered my will to His will. Not only do I get to be a real father, but the father I always wanted and needed when I was younger. I get to be a father now and every day because I am sober. And for my first son that I haven't seen since he was a baby, we made huge steps in our relationship and it continues to grow everyday. Sobriety gave me that back too.

I'll be celebrating my first real father's day tomorrow and my fatherhood story, though it feels long, is actually just getting started. I can't wait to see what's in store next. I'm humbled to share and pass this story on to others and I am inspired more than ever to spread the good word about sobriety and to share how God has done for me, what I could not do myself.

Forgotten Big Book Stories:

A Drunks Tale

Once upon a time a young man got sober in AA. He sat with old-timers who would share their experiences of sobriety with him. He was introduced to the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, Third Edition. Now, this man loved history and his guide in the program introduced him to the history of AA, Capt. Jack, the Oxford Group and the Washingtonians.

Moving to Downeast Maine from Portland, Maine he became an avid explorer of AA history as he

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carpooled long distances to AA meetings. He made the acquaintance of a young lady in the program whose grandmother had been one of the elders of AA in New Brunswick, Canada. This young lady shared her grandmother's memorabilia with him including a first edition Big Book. The man was ecstatic and read stories he had never read before, with great interest. His alcoholic behavior began to kick in. He had to have his own copy of those stories!

At considerable expense at the time and with permission of the young lady, he had them all photocopied. He treasured them, but then he wondered about the stories in the second edition. He went on a quest to find a second edition from which to copy those stories. Try as he might, he could not get his hands on one. While attending a Maine Area Round-Up, he spotted a red book on a literature table. The title was Alcoholics Anonymous: This is a complete set of stories no longer in print as they appeared in the 1st and 2nd editions of the Big Book of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. He thought his quest had come to an end. He was a good drunk so if one book was good, two would be better! The gentleman selling the books shook his head, "sorry, I only have one left." The man made a sale. But the good drunk still wasn't happy. After the trouble he had taken doing the copying, here was what he had been after in one volume. Why couldn't he be satisfied? It just so happened that by this time the Fourth Edition of the Big Book had come out. The man took his tattered copy of the 3rd edition and compared it with the 4th edition. Some of his favorite stories that he shared with newcomers, were gone from the 4th edition. How could that be? Were they lost? He determined to hang on to his 3rd edition, but all those newcomers had the 4th edition.

It was then that he learned from an Area Literature

committee chair, that all was not lost. He was introduced to a powerful book appropriately titled: Experience, Strength & Hope: Stories from the first three editions of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Here in one book were the voices of AA members throughout the decades telling their stories. Though the times and culture may change, the physical, mental and spiritual experiences of alcoholics are what another alcoholic can identify with. Since we only have a daily reprieve from this disease of alcoholism, and since we are from all ages, backgrounds and places, all the stories that have appeared in our Big Books touch us. If we read these stories we may find our own story and identify more completely with being alcoholics.

This is a true story of one man's desire for this experience, strength and hope. It seemed a good time to share this with others as we embark on a fifth edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Since our General Service Conference 2022 just agreed to restore a paragraph in the story 'Freedom from Bondage' that is in the book *Experience, Strength & Hope*, isn't it time that more people became aware of a great resource of our program through AAWS? How much more is out there that we have not taken advantage of in our journey of sobriety?

Submitted by Mary Lou Q.T.

Akron Manual for AA 1940

Written at Dr. Bob's request by one of his "pigeons" (his term for sponsees) because Dr. Bob thought the Big Book was too difficult to read for newcomers.

Chapter 3

A word to the Sponsor who is putting his first

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newcomer into a hospital or otherwise introducing him to this new way of life: You must assume full responsibility for this man. He trusts you, otherwise he would not submit to hospitalization. You must fulfill all pledges you make to him, either tangible or intangible. If you cannot fulfill a promise, do not make it. It is easy enough to promise a man that he will get his job back if he sobers up. But unless you are certain that it can be fulfilled, don't make that promise. Don't promise financial aid unless you are ready to fulfill your part of the bargain. If you don't know how he is going to pay his hospital bill, don't put him in the hospital unless you are willing to assume financial responsibility.

It is definitely your job to see that he has visitors, and you must visit him frequently yourself. If you hospitalize a man and then neglect him, he will naturally lose confidence in you, assume a "nobody loves me" attitude, and your half-hearted labors will be lost.

This is a very critical time in his life. He looks to you for courage, hope, comfort and guidance. He fears the past. He is uncertain of the future. And he is in a frame of mind that the least neglect on your part will fill him with resentment and self-pity. You have in your hands the most valuable property in the world - the future of a fellow man. Treat his life as carefully as you would your own. You are literally responsible for his life.

Above all, don't coerce him into a hospital. Don't get him drunk and then throw him in while he is semiconscious. Chances are he will waken wondering where he is, how he got there. And he won't last.

You should be able to judge if a man is sincere in his

desire to quit drinking. Use this judgment. Otherwise you will find yourself needlessly bumping your head into a stone wall and wondering why your "babies" don't stay sober. Remember your own experience. You can remember many times when you would have done anything to get over that awful alcoholic sickness, although you had no desire in the world to give up drinking for good. It doesn't take much good health to inspire an alcoholic to go back and repeat the acts that made him sick. Men who have had pneumonia don't often wittingly expose themselves a second time. But an alcoholic will deliberately get sick over and over again with brief interludes of good health.

You should make it a point to supply your patient with the proper literature - the big Alcoholics Anonymous book, this pamphlet, other available pamphlets, a Bible, and anything else that has helped you. Impress upon him the wisdom and necessity of reading and re-reading this literature. The more he learns about A.A. the easier the road to recovery.

Study the newcomer and decide who among your A.A. friends might have the best story and exert the best influence on him. There are all types in A.A. and regardless of whom you hospitalize, there are dozens who can help him. An hour on the telephone will produce callers. Don't depend on chance. Stray visitors may drop in, but twenty or thirty phone calls will clinch matters and remove uncertainty. It is your responsibility to conjure up callers.

Impress upon your patient that his visitors are not making purely social calls. Their conversation is similar to medicine. Urge him to listen carefully to all that is said, and then meditate upon it after his visitor leaves. When your patient is out of the hospital your

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work has not ended. It is now your duty not only to him but to yourself to see that he starts out on the right foot.

Accompany him to his first meeting. Take him along with you when you call on the next patient.

Telephone him when there are other patients. Drop in at his home occasionally. Telephone him as often as possible. Urge him to look up the new friends he has made. Counsel and advise him. There was a certain amount of glamour connected with being a patient in the hospital. He had many visitors. His time was occupied. But now that he has been discharged, the glamour has worn off. He probably will be lonely. He may be too timid to seek the companionship of his new friends.

Experience has proved this to be a very critical period. So your labors have not ended. Give him as much attention as you did when you first called on him - until he can find the road by himself. Remember, you depend on the newcomer to keep you sober as much as he depends on you. So never lose touch with your responsibility, which never ends. Remember the old adage, "Two is company and three is a crowd." If you find a patient has one or more visitors don't go into the room. An alcoholic goes to the hospital for two reasons only - to get sober and to learn how to keep sober. The former is easy. Cut off the alcohol and a person is bound to get sober. So the really important thing is to learn how to keep sober. Experience has taught that when more than three gather in a room, patient included, the talk turns to the World Series, politics, funny drunken incidents, and "I could drink more than you."

Such discussion is a waste of the patient's time and money. It is assumed that he wants to know how you

are managing to keep sober, and you won't hold his attention if there is a crowd in the room. If you must enter the room when there is another visitor, do it quietly and unobtrusively. Sit down in a corner and be silent until the other visitor has concluded. If he wants any comments from you he will ask for them.

One more word. It is desirable that the patient's visitors be confined to members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Have a quiet talk with his wife or his family before he goes to the hospital. Explain that he will be in good hands and that it is only through kindness to him that his family and friends are asked to stay away. New members are likely to be a little shy. If they find a woman in the patient's room they are not inclined to "let down their hair." The older hands don't mind it, but a new member might unwittingly be kept from delivering a valuable message.

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 01616 editor@downeastintergroup.org

You can also write to the Downeast Intergroup P.O. Box 1633, Ellsworth, ME 04605-1633. Please mail contributions to support the Intergroup to the Downeast Treasurer at this address.