

# Downeast Intergroup Newsletter

## September 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 communication and participation between AA members, groups, and districts.*

### DEIG FINANCES- JULY 2022

#### Operating Account

- beginning balance.....\$1,754.88
- total debit..... <\$570.92>
- total credit..... \$ 90.00 \*
- ending balance..... \$1,273.96

\*Donations were received from the following:

- Safe Harbor Group.....\$50.00
- Bar Harbor Group..... \$40.00
- total.....\$90.00

### Step Nine of Alcoholics /

#### Anonymous

*"Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."*

I remember wanting to make amends pretty quickly after becoming sober. Certain suggestions would continue coming in like newspapers hot of the press. "Take it easy" was one, and another I heard the most was "slow down". I would read more from the book of Alcoholics Anonymous and the 12 & 12 on step work. It could easily get confusing since I'm always trying to over complicate things. I would read, "make the amends quickly but don't do it right away". "Go tell the people on your list, but be careful as well with some". "You may get wonderful responses or they may react poorly which could result in arguing". Yikes, my head was spinning. I thought that the suggestion to slow down may help me here. I would be reminded that this program is a "we" program and "I" don't have to try and figure everything out by myself anymore.

Having a good sponsor was key for those mind

boggling questions. Each amend would become more clear by talking it through with my sponsor. And if they did not have the experience to answer one of my curious questions, then they would find another AA that did. It's amazing how that can work. I learned that the more solid I became in my sobriety, the more naturally the amends would without me having to "figure it out".

But what I found most difficult with certain amends was my fear. Fear would try and sneak back into my life even after I gave it all to God. I was delaying because I was afraid. I wanted to get them all done but was also afraid to do so. But this program has taught me that I can give those fears to God, again and again. It is when I think I am alone, fear tries coming back. Lucky for me, there are millions of AA's that have experienced the same thing. I don't have to be afraid because "we" are in this together, to help each other through this. The hand of AA will be there.

*"Above all, we should try to be absolutely sure that we are not delaying because we are afraid. For the readiness to take the full consequences of our past acts, and to take responsibility for the well-being of others at the same time, is the very spirit of Step Nine." (p. 87 of Twelve Steps And Twelve Traditions).*

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#### **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 5 Now You Are Alone.**

When you go to the hospital with typhoid fever your

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one thought is to be cured. When you go to the hospital as a chronic alcoholic your only thought should be to conquer a disease that is just as deadly if not so quick to kill. And rest assured that the disease is deadly. The mental hospitals are filled with chronic alcoholics. The



vital statistics files in every community are filled with deaths due to acute alcoholism.

This is the most serious moment in your life. You can leave the hospital and resume an alcoholic road to an untimely grave or padded cell, or you can start

upward to a life that is happy beyond any expectation. It is your choice and your choice alone. Your newly found friends cannot police you to keep you sober. They have neither the time nor the inclination. They will go to unbelievable lengths to help you but there is a limit to all things. Shortly after you leave the hospital you will be on your own. The Bible tells us to put "first things first." Alcohol is obviously the first thing in your life. So concentrate on conquering it.

You could have gone through the mechanics of sobering up at home. Your new friends could have called on you in your own living room. But at home there would have been a hundred and one things to distract your attention - the radio, the furnace, a broken screen door, a walk to the drug store, your own family affairs. Every one of these things would make you forget the most important thing in your life, the thing upon which depends life or death - complete and endless sobriety. That is why you are in the hospital. You have time to think; you have time to read; you will have time to examine your life, past and present, and to reflect upon

what it can be in the future. And don't be in a hurry to leave. Your sponsor knows best. Stay in the hospital until you have at least a rudimentary understanding of the program.

There is the Bible that you haven't opened for years. Get acquainted with it. Read it with an open mind. You will find things that will amaze you. You will be convinced that certain passages were written with you in mind. Read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew V, VI, and VII). Read St. Paul's inspired essay on love (I Corinthians XIII). Read the Book of James. Read the Twenty-third and Ninety-first Psalms. These readings are brief but so important. Read Alcoholics Anonymous and then read it again. You may find that it contains your own story. It will become your second Bible. Ask your callers to suggest other readings.

If you are puzzled, ask questions. One of your callers will know the answers. Get your sponsor to explain to you the Twelve Steps. If he is not too certain about them - he may be new in this work - ask someone else. The Twelve Steps are listed in the back of this booklet. There is no standing still in A.A. You either forge ahead or slip backwards. Even the oldest members, the founders, learn something new almost every day. You can never learn too much in the search for sobriety

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### **The Trip Part 2**

By Heath W.

I cannot express enough just how incredible our time was with my family on our trip. There was not enough time in the day to do everything we wanted, and I could have hung out with my family all day. I loved every second of it. But I remember not too long ago I could stand being around my family, or anyone else's for that matter, for only a short window of time. After my mental alarm clock went off I'd have to go and get back to what I wanted to do, which always included drinking in some way.

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Let's not forget I almost always pre-gamed before seeing people, and in the back of my mind the whole time I could feel the clock ticking louder and louder the longer I was there - longing for me to ditch and come back to the drink. In AA, myself and others have talked about "always planning that next drink", which was exactly what my life was like every time I did not have a drink in my hand or around me. Well, actually, I was still planning my next drink even with a drink in my hand. Yeah, you get it. It's wild for me now to think about how I lived like that for so long. I was so miserable. But thankfully that is in the past and I live like that no more. AA has taught me so much and was the bridge to God that I needed in my life this whole time. I am forever grateful for that. It's wild what a true attitude change from a spiritual awakening can really do for your life. At least, that's what it's been like for me.

Going back to Jefferson City, Missouri, would have been a difficult time for me in the past. I had a lot of painful experiences there. It's where my alcoholism started to poke its head out and become more comfortable being out in the open. I would end up dreading that place with even the mention. If someone brought it up, I wouldn't have had anything good to say besides the fact that I still have some family there. But just like the change that has happened inside of me, so have my feelings for my old hometown. I knew my outlook on life had truly changed when we were getting closer to arriving and I was getting more and more giddy with excitement. I was actually happy to be there. My wife said she had never seen me like that before. It would usually be around this time, about 30 or 40 minutes away, that I would make her stop one more time so I could get one more shot and a tall high percentage alcohol drink to get ready for company and have, in my mind, just the right amount of buzz. This actual place was

one of my resentments. Not anymore, complete opposite now. A new life, a new chapter being written. Instead of looking around like I always did and having nothing but negative thoughts, they were all positive instead. I had pride for my hometown for the first time since I was just a little kid shooting hoops in our backyard. Jefferson City never changed, I did.

So much had happened on what I would call "one of the best trips I've ever been on". It would be extremely difficult to pick my favorite part of the trip. But I will end with one of the most special moments that I'll never forget. A friend I met at Rehab that I have since grown close with lives in Jefferson City. We have stayed in contact since our time there and have been rooting each other on from afar. He has been thriving in this sober life, and we have a lot in common, but also have completely different stories. Before I left Maine, we talked about getting together when I got into town. I love deep conversation in its most raw form. I like peeling the onion layers down to the core and pouring out one's heart into the open. Apparently he had similar intentions and even had certain questions prepared for our conversation. It is hard to describe this kind of connection between one human being to another. One that only God could orchestrate. By the time we got ready to say our goodbyes the room was filled with humility, love, encouragement, and celebration. My heart was full.

There is so much for me to be grateful for. My trip back home sings a few things, one in particular. "It works! This simple AA program works!" It is proven in my life over and over again. It would have been impossible for me not to drink on this trip before, but God and the steps of AA have set me free, but only if each day I give my will away to God. By doing that I can now do things I never dreamed that I could. I look

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forward to the future and all that it may bring with God and AA, by my side.

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## Gillian's Story

### How I became a member of Alcoholics Anonymous

March 20, 2015/ Netherlands

Almost 6 years ago I went to my first AA meeting. I was depressed, hopeless tired and full of despair. What happened prior to that?

I will start about 4 years before I went to my first meeting. This is a small part of my story. I had been in a steady relationship for 10 years. I was a heavy drinker and had a lot of fun times drinking and hangovers. Sometimes the thought would cross my mind if I were an alcoholic? My quick answer was no I am not, I have a job, a relationship, I don't drink in the morning and not a daily drinker.

My relationship ended very suddenly I was alone and confronted with finding my own space/apartment to live. During this time there was a shift in my drinking I started to depend on drinking alcohol for comfort more and more. I did not pay much attention to this because I just thought I was a phase in my life and if things were OK again this would end.

As I understand today in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 33 "to be gravely affected, one does not necessarily have to drink a long time nor take the quantities some of us have. This is particularly true of women. Potential female alcoholics often turn into the real thing and are gone beyond recall in a few years."

I kept my daily drinking secretive. Almost every day I would solemnly promise myself that I would not drink that day. Before I knew it after work or later in the evening I would start having a drink just to relax or ease off the hangover a bit. And after that I would have a lot more. In the morning I would have a ritual taking a few aspirin or paracetamol before I would have to get up so I would be able to go to my work and be physically present.

I was also hiking in the weekends – a lot training for my epic walk to Santiago de Compostella. In the weekends I would hike 20km or more. The previous evening I would drink heavily, sometimes go to a bar and come home late. At times I would have blackout moments not knowing how I managed to find my way home, then get up early and walk. One day when I was hiking I crashed. I had a physical breakdown due to my drinking and knew I could not go on like this any longer. This was the first time I started to admit that I had a problem with drinking. I went to my GP and received help from a psychologist. It was recommended to not drink for a period of 6 months that would help the craving. During that period of time I would have regular consults with psych.

After a period of time I felt better and continued as suggested not having any booze in the house and I would not drink alone; only when I was with friends. This went well for some time but gradually it changed. If I could binge on drinking I would do so. Again, I when to my GP. This time it was recommended to do a lifestyle training. I went for a hiking holiday

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with a friend and had made the decision to not drink during the 3 weeks that seemed easier to me. On our holiday a situation came up that lead me to have a drink. I just thought it was OK that it was a good idea and it would only be a drink at dinner. I had not had any booze for 2 weeks so I thought and believed it would be OK. Before I knew it I ended up on the beach drinking two bottles of wine with a guy whom I thought I was madly in love with and having a terrible fight with my best friend. Back home this led to some more drinking. It was not on a daily basis but I would binge. I asked my GP for help again. He prescribed Refusal for a period of 6 months and another lifestyle training. I tried after this for a longer period of time to keep my drinking controlled – drinking only in the weekends and only 2 to 4 glasses.

Physically I was doing OK because of the smaller amount of alcohol but I started to feel very depressed. I was scared and tired that if something happened I would not be able to keep up the controlled drinking. I felt desperate and a horrible feeling crept up on me that something is wrong with me and I don't know what to do.

I called a friend about not knowing what to do and because it felt so bad. Little did I know that she was in the AA program for some time. She phoned me back a few days later and shared with me her story. It was amazing to listen to somebody who could really identify with the problem and mentioned that there was a solution.

Before I knew it I when to my first AA meeting. I felt very scared. I thought they would send me

away because I did not drink that heavily. I was confused. I thought I did not belong in the group. I was not like the others. I am different. Something happened during the meeting. Even though other peoples' stories were different to mine, there was still something I could identify with. I felt relieved, hopeful and confused. I had a feeling that I belonged, that this is where I am meant to be.

Ever since that day I have been sober; my life and attitudes have changed dramatically. Every day I learn more about my alcoholism. I work with a sponsor who guides me through the path of recovery and today I am able to sponsor others and guide them like I am guided on their road of recovery.

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

*Please email articles, events, corrections, anniversaries, and other group or district news to [editor@downeastintergroup.org](mailto:editor@downeastintergroup.org), or mail to Newsletter Editor Bill L., 1056 Pleasant Street, Blue Hill, Maine 04614*

*You can also write to Downeast Intergroup, PO Box 1633, Ellsworth, ME 04605-1633. Please mail contributions to support this Intergroup to the Downeast 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.***