

# Downeast Intergroup Newsletter

## February 2023

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 - DECEMBER 2022

#### Operating Account

- beginning balance.....\$1,592.33
- total debit.....< \$182.09>
- total credit.....\$ 80.00\*
- ending balance.....\$1,490.24

\*Donations were received from the following:

Millinocket group.....	\$35.00
District 16.....	\$55.00
Total.....	\$80.00

Check out the Downeast Intergroup website <https://downeastintergroup.org> for meeting updates, events, AA Blog, and all Downeast Intergroup Newsletters.

### 2023 Conference Agenda Items

It may seem like there’s nothing going on, but we’re sitting on a geyser that’s about to blow. The General Service Board of AA met in Brooklyn last weekend, to pore over 180-some proposed agenda items, and reach a consensus on what should go to the Conference in April. Those decisions have been made, but the Delegates have not been told yet. Staffers at the General Service Office are now scrambling to finalize the background and translate it into French and Spanish. Last year, the background was around 1,200 pages. They will try to reduce it this year, and I hope they succeed!

It used to be, that the background came out in

English in mid-February, in Spanish in early March, and in French in late March. You can imagine how difficult this was for the folks in Quebec, having to get the information out, get the groups to discuss it, and listen to their feedback, in less than a month. This inequitable time crunch was a big issue at our last Conference; this issue has been brewing for years. After much debate, we decided that the only way to get it to everyone fairly and in good time was to release all languages at once. This puts English speakers at risk of getting the background later—just like Spanish and French speakers have. English speakers have had an unfair advantage, and they had to yield it for the common welfare. The Board was dubious, but the staff said, “We can do this.”

So, I’m hoping the background will be posted online in the middle of February. I will have two sets printed, one for me and one for Allen, the Alternate. We’ll go to NERAASA a week later, our heads spinning, and everyone will talk about agenda items all weekend. Then Allen and I will have a week or so to organize the topics for the Pre-Conference Forum. Come to that if you can! The District Chairs will take it back to their GSRs, and I will hear back from the Area at the Spring Assembly, and go to New York informed. At least, that’s how it is supposed to work, and it mostly does. . . . It’s a complex machine with a lot of moving parts, greased by goodwill and love for AA.

Peter B, Delegate

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## Step Two

Came to believe that a power greater than myself could return me to sanity, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pp 25-33.

My belief in God was crushed when I was 10 years old. I was unfortunately exposed to some nuns in my parochial school who had very cruel tendencies. About half way through the fifth grade I witnessed a particularly horrible scene with a young boy. I marched home from school and announced to my mother, a devout Catholic, that I no longer believed in God. This god was not benevolent and kind, so I turned my back on religion.

My atheism would last until I was 59, the year I took what I hope was my last drink. My time in the rooms of AA, the previous nine years going in and out, had begun to open my eyes and my soul to the possibility that there was an entity greater than I but I remained stubborn and thought I could "fix myself". My life was a mess. I lost a wonderful job, a marriage, and worst of all, my self-respect. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired and I had almost succeeded in killing myself. That was when I totally surrendered to what I then called a higher power. Through something I can only call a miracle, I totally surrendered on August 27, 2008. This was a profound experience for me and the true beginning of my road to sobriety. In that moment I felt as if



I were melting, but in a good way.

I began to have an open mind. I learned to keep my mouth shut and my ears open. I learned to stick with the winners, the women in my home group, who were always there for me. I finally was able to not only admit that I was powerless over alcohol, but I was able to accept it. At first my higher power was the AA community and my home group. I now call my higher power God. My experiences since that day have taught me that it really is immaterial what I call my higher power. I know that it is not me!

When I now read Step Two in the 12 and 12 book from time to time, as I did in a meeting this morning, I see myself in that chapter, only too clearly. Arrogant, self-righteous, prideful, and "above it all" described me in the throes of my disease. But I did "come to believe" and I am restoring my sanity, one day at a time. And just as important, I know that "true humility and an open mind can lead us to faith...". That's how it worked for me. Now I can pay it forward, and I do.

**Mary A.**

## 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.*

**It has been** found advisable to hold meetings at least once a week at a specified time and place. Meetings provide a means for an exchange of ideas, the renewing of friendships, opportunity to review the work being carried on, a sense of security, and an

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additional reminder that we are alcoholics and must be continuously on the alert against the temptation to slip backward into the old drunken way of life.

In larger communities where there are several groups it is recommended that the new member attend as many meetings as possible. He will find that the more he is exposed to A.A. the sooner he will absorb its principles, the easier it will become to remain sober, and the sooner problems will shrink and tend to disappear.

As a newcomer you will be somewhat bewildered by your first meeting. It is even possible that it will not make sense to you. Many have this experience. But if you don't find yourself enjoying your first meeting, pause to remember that you probably didn't care for the taste of your first drink of whiskey - particularly if it was in bootleg days.

Again, you may feel like a "country cousin" at your first meeting. Your sponsor should see to it that this is not the case. But even if he neglects his duty, don't feel too badly. Don't be afraid to "horn in." If you are being neglected it is just an oversight, and you are entirely welcome. It is possible that you may not even be recognized because your appearance has changed for the better. In a week or two you will find yourself in the middle of things - and very likely neglecting other newcomers.

**So attend your first meeting with an open mind. Even if you aren't impressed try it again. Before long you will genuinely enjoy attending and a little later you will feel that the week has been incomplete if you have not attended at least one A.A. meeting. Remember that attendance at meetings is one of the most important requisites of remaining sober.**

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## Just how long should you grieve a divorce?

Kevin- Bournemouth (Great Britain)

When I first started drinking, I don't think I noticed the effect until I was well and truly drunk. At first it had a lot to do with being one of the crowd. The difference was, my friends could relax without drinking, but I wasn't relaxed until I had a drink, or to put it another way, I wanted to feel how those other people looked. My father was alcoholic and I swore I would never end up like him. If he tried really hard he could stay off the booze for short spells, but he had to avoid it completely. I decided that if I ever started drinking like that I would stay away from alcohol altogether. There was nothing wrong with the way I drank though. I had it under control. I could take it or leave it. I worked hard and was entitled to unwind in the company of like-minded friends, I enjoyed a good night out.

My wife complained that I was always going up the pub and didn't spend enough time with her. So I said "come with me then, you don't have to sit indoors all the time." I explained that I have to meet people there and I get a lot of my work that way. It would usually lead to an argument and I would storm out and get drunk. That's how I "solved" all my problems. The trouble is I never really solved anything. My wife divorced me in the end for unreasonable behaviour, which I thought was unfair. I tried to be a good husband but I just couldn't cope with all the pressure.

Anyway, now I was on my own, I had the perfect excuse to drink the whole day through, and nobody blamed me at first. I had always mixed with hard drinkers and I was great company for them. I got into trouble with the law a few times, but I was able to blame my actions on the divorce. It's amazing how easy it is to gain sympathy from the

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police when you break down and tell them your wife just took the kids and ran off with your best friend. After a couple years though, I got worse instead of better. I was still drinking to blot everything out even though I'd had plenty of time to get over the divorce.

By now I was drinking in the morning just to face the day. My fair-weather friends had started avoiding me. Occasionally someone would suggest I do something about my drinking, and mostly because I was so ill. I decided to drink less, but that didn't work. So I tried to stop altogether. I was amazed at how difficult it was to stop completely. The longest I ever managed was three weeks without a drink. It seems stupid now but I started drinking again because I thought I had learned how to control it. The next time I tried to stop I found I couldn't stop at all. They say alcohol is a great remover; how true! I lost everything and was now homeless. Every penny I could lay my hands on went on cheap white cider. Sometimes I couldn't even afford that so I began to steal small amounts of money out of coat pockets, and that only made me feel worse.

I became desperate to do something about my drinking, I got the shakes and sweats if I couldn't get my drink, but I hated it. I was so miserable I just wanted to end it all. I didn't care how, I just wanted it to stop. That's when I asked for help at my local Drug and Alcohol Team unit. I was amazed that they understood exactly what I had been going through. I had to spend ten days in hospital to detox me, where the doctor explained to me very simply that I was one of those people that was "allergic" to alcohol, that for me alcohol is poison, that I will never be able to control alcohol as long as I live.

That's where being a member of AA comes in. People that are not "alcoholic" just don't

understand. In AA I don't feel like I'm different any more, I have something to belong to, I have found new meaningful friendships. I am also reminded if I ever start to think I can drink like "normal" people, I will end up right back where I came from. Best of all, I found that by following a few simple suggestions on a daily basis, the desire to drink alcohol has completely disappeared. I have discovered that I can solve, or at least cope with, any problem that comes along today by using the tools I found in the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. The people in AA really care about what happens to me and I have a life way beyond my dreams. I have been able to get my life back on track and make up for a lot of things I felt guilty about in the past. My one small regret is that I enjoy my life so much today that I wish I had done something about my drinking problem a little bit earlier.

Kevin – Bournemouth (Great Britain)

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## 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 04616 or email to: [editor@downeastintergroup.org](mailto:editor@downeastintergroup.org).*

Please mail contributions to support the Intergroup to:

*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.***