

Downeast Intergroup Newsletter

March 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 – JANUARY 2023

Operating Account

- beginning balance.....\$1,490.24
- total debit.....< \$628.96>
- total credit.....\$166.00*
- ending balance.....\$1,027.28

*Donations were received from the following:

- Brooklin Bridge Group.....\$26.00
- District 16.....\$55.00
- Cash (7th Tradition from alcathon.....\$85.00
- Total.....\$166.00

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

I attended the grapevine round table discussion group while at NERAASA along with the other grapevine reps from the northeast region. We were very fortunate to have the grapevine publisher and two grapevine board members to give us up to date news as well as a question and answer session. Here are some of my takeaways from these discussions.

Before I get to what I consider is the big news of the discussions I have a few interesting points. The grapevine has launched an instagram page which I logged into and found 1158 posts with 9272 followers. There are some posts from the NERAASA weekend photos and such so I encourage all to check it out. You have heard me mention the podcasts before (cause I really like

them) and they have 75 episodes now with between 350 and 400 thousand downloads, and is in the top 5 percent of all podcasts. Grapevine also has a YouTube channel that plays 7 minute audio members stories that they submit soooo if you're not that into writing you can submit an audio recording no reason not to get involved now!

So the big news of the discussion!? Grapevine is developing a grapevine app! First some background. The board members told us they estimated a loss of 1.1 million dollars by 2026 if the grapevine stays as it is today. They also looked at other printed subscriptions aka newspapers. One newspaper had around 900 thousand physical printed subscriptions and (hold on to your hats) 9 million app subscriptions. The publisher then related a train ride he took and noticed out of 20 or 25 people on the train there were no books, magazines, or newspapers being read and everyone was on their phones so he realized a change needed to happen.

Grapevine then used what funds they had and borrowed 500 thousand dollars from the AWS board and started developing an app. Financially speaking there is a plan in place to pay back the AWS board fully in three to five years and that 1.1 million loss is projected to turn into a 1.1 million dollar profit by 2026. The app is still in development but they gave us a few things it will have such as a sobriety calculator, daily quotes, calendar, and archives so personal libraries can be built from favorite stories.

The publisher gave an example open the app and it says good morning today you have been sober x amount of days your home group meets tonight at

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7:30 and then a list of personal quotes or readings. Cost wise some numbers that were thrown out was a monthly subscription of \$2.99 and \$29 yearly. The timeline is finishing development with testing over the summer and a release around September.

They also reassured how important the printed magazine is to us all and for as long as they could see it isn't going anywhere. I am very pleased I had the privilege of attending the discussions and if you have any questions feel free to contact me yours in service.

Matt H.

Area Grapevine Chair

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.

A.A. of Akron gets many inquiries about how to conduct a meeting. Methods differ in many parts of the country. There are discussion groups, study groups, meetings where a leader takes up the entire time himself, etc. Here, briefly, is how meetings are conducted in the dozen or more Akron groups, a method that has been used since the founding of A.A.:

The speaker can be selected from the local group, someone from another group or another city, or on occasion, a guest from the ranks of clergymen, doctors, the judiciary, or anyone who may be of help. In the case of such an outsider, he is generally introduced by the secretary or some other member.

The leader opens the meeting with a prayer, or asks someone else to pray. The prayer can be original, or it can be taken from a prayer book, or from some publication such as The Upper Room.

The topic is entirely up to the leader. He can tell of his drinking experiences, or what he has done to keep sober, or he can advance his own theories on A.A. His talk lasts from 20 to 40 minutes, at which time he asks for comment or testimony from the floor. Just before the meeting closes - one hour in Akron - the leader asks for announcements or reports (such as next week's leader, social affairs, new members to be called on, etc.). In closing the entire group stands and repeats the Lord's Prayer. It is courteous to give the speaker enough advance notice so that he may prepare his talk if he so desires.

The physical set-up of groups varies in many cities. Those who are about to start new groups may be interested in the method used by Akron Group No. 1. It is merely a suggestion, however. When there are but very few members it is customary to hold the meetings in private homes of the members, on the same night of each week. When the group becomes larger, however, it is desirable to hold the meeting in a regular place. A school room, a room in a Y.M.C.A. or lodge, or hotel will do. It has been the experience throughout the country that the more fluid the structure of the group the more successful the operation.

Akron Group No. 1 has a very simple set-up. There is a permanent secretary, who makes announcements, keeps a list of the membership,

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and takes care of correspondence. There is also a permanent treasurer, who takes care of the money and pays bills. Then there is a rotating committee of three members to take care of current affairs. Each member serves for three months, but a new one is added and one dropped every month. This committee takes care of providing leaders, supplying refreshments, arranging parties, greeting newcomers, etc.

As the group grows older certain qualifications, in terms of length of sobriety, can be made. Akron Group No. 1 requires a full year of continuous sobriety as qualification to hold an office or serve. There are no dues. There is a free-will offering at each meeting to take care of expenses. There is probably an older group in some community within easy traveling distance of yours. Someone from that group will doubtless be happy to help you get started.

My name is Brian, I'm an Alcoholic ...

In 1967 at the age of 17 I joined the army. As both my parents were dead the army became my "Surrogate family". After basic training I was sent abroad to Germany. It was there that I came to realise that drinking in the army was a way of life. You are fed, clothed, given accommodation and money to spend, and most of my money was spent on drink.

I was drinking almost every night, but weekends were the real drinking times. Being drunk for much of the time was just a laugh, (or so I thought). At this time I was starting to get into trouble through drink. I would end up in the middle of a field, or occasionally be locked up for the night in the guardhouse for some drunken

escapade. As time passed my drinking started to even out and I managed for the most part to stay out of trouble, but only for a while.

I was eventually promoted and given stripes, although never a week went by when I was not drunk. As my alcoholism progressed I started to get into more serious trouble.

I was arrested by the German Police for drunk driving and this culminated in my entry into a



detox unit. After treatment I went through a "dry" period and the army shipped me back to England for two years. During this time I decided to start a fitness regime and somehow managed some "controlled drinking".

I arrived back in Germany and for a few years I continued to manage "controlled drinking". I saved up all my "sweeties" for the weekend. I was then promoted and given a normal posting back to England. At this time the progression of my alcoholism was affecting me more and more.

After a drunken argument I clobbered an officer and was in trouble again. It was 1986, I knew I had a serious drink problem and it was then that I first made contact with Alcoholics Anonymous.

I went to a few AA meetings and managed to stay "dry" for six weeks. "Fear" was what stopped me from drinking. I was still blaming people, places and things however and inevitably lifted the "first drink". Providence again seemed to be on my side and I was given a posting back home to Scotland

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before retiring from the army. I finished my last three years without any more serious trouble.

When I left the army it was with a great sense of relief. It was 1991 and my alcoholism began to accelerate. For the next three years I went through a cycle of “binge drinking” emerging from each bout demoralised and full of fear. During this time I tried to get back to AA and managed some “dry periods”, but all I was doing was “getting fit to drink again”. On 11th November 1994 I asked for help and finally took the First Step.

I knew I had to build up a “mental defence against the first drink” by using the 12 Step recovery programme. Being “atheist” at this time, the mention of God always put me off. The Third Step in particular seemed to be a major hurdle. It was explained to me however that I was only being asked to “make a decision” to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understood Him. The actual turning over would take place as I” worked the next eight Steps”.

I began to understand that the alcohol was only a ”symptom” of deeper emotional problems. I then sat down and took a moral inventory of myself, writing down all my fears and resentments. After some serious thinking, I took my inventory to a priest in the Fellowship and unloaded all the “emotional garbage” I had been carrying around all my adult life. I told him things I thought I would take to my grave. What I had done was build myself a “platform” which would then allow me to move onto a new and sober life.

I continued on the recovery programme and made a list of all the people I had harmed. I made amends as best I could and put myself on the top of the list. By this time I was starting to become

“God conscious” and I was also reading a lot of AA books. It was after I read Chapter 16 of “Pass it on” that I was guided to a church in Glasgow where I went through a “Spiritual Experience”.

After that night the whole 12 Step recovery programme fell into place.

At the beginning this “atheist” was told that if I thoroughly applied myself to the 12 Steps as they are laid down, it would be “impossible” not to come to believe in a God of my own understanding. Today the first 9 Steps have been put into the dustbin of the past (I would only have to go back to them if I got drunk) and I use the last 3 Steps as my daily maintenance Steps.

I met my wife Mary in AA and we have both settled down to a happy and sober life. All thanks to AA and the grace of God as I understand Him

Brian

Edinburgh, Scotland.

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.

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***