

# Downeast Intergroup Newsletter

## September 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- JULY 2023

#### Operating Account

- beginning balance..... \$787.56
- total debit..... <\$236.95>
- total credit..... \$792.00\*
- ending balance..... \$1,342.61

\*Donations were received from the following:

Bar Harbor Group.....	\$45.00
Brooklin Bridge to Recovery.....	\$33.00
District 8.....	\$149.00
District 16.....	\$55.00
Liberty Serenity Group.....	\$20.00
Tues. Night Happy Hour Group.....	\$50.00
Brewer Beginners Meeting.....	\$60.00
Machias Valley Group.....	\$50.00
Millbridge Group.....	\$300.00
Cash Deposit.....	\$30.00
	\$792.00

### DEIG ARTICLE 9<sup>th</sup> Step Experience

In my experience, there is no exact right way to make amends to those who were affected by our drinking. How do I mend the damage: emotional, spiritual, physical, that I have done? Material restitution seems much simpler and easier, but those were not the kinds that I needed to make.

Early in sobriety I was told that not drinking and changing my behaviors was making amends to some extent. One, I was not causing more damage and two, it was mending some of the damage to relationships that I had caused in the past. Further along in sobriety, when I had managed to include people on my 8<sup>th</sup> Step list that I hadn't wanted to, I realized that by including them I was facing up to how my alcoholism had hurt others, not just myself. Now I had to take action. I admit I was in no hurry to make some amends; in other cases, it became almost second nature because I was living by

the principles of the program to the best of my ability. The Steps that I had been taking were building a strong foundation for living life. I had begun to build a relationship with God and depend on Him to guide me.

Well, with all my amends, especially those I didn't want to make, God was my guide. All I needed to do was act when the opportunity presented itself. For me, plotting and planning how, when and where I would make amends and what I would say (and what I perceived the other person would say) was really a continuation of my selfish, self-centeredness. I did not have pure motives or love for the other person. I just wanted to make myself feel better.

Having realized this and praying for help, God put the person in my path, unexpectedly, and gave me the words and attitude to free us both from the hurt and damage of my alcoholism, so we could both begin to heal. It was just that – freeing! A broken relationship was mended.

There are those amends that cannot be done directly because those we have injured are gone. Sometimes wanting to make amends to them, anyway, has a ripple effect and heals those about them. The two most important people I needed to make amends to were my parents, both of whom had passed. Some people write letters and then take them to the gravesite or burn them. I admit I can be wordy, so I wrote a book for each of my parents. Once again, it was cathartic. In the writing, I was able to gain a real appreciation of my parents and acknowledge the love they had for me; something that had been lacking during my drinking. I can't take credit for any of these experiences. They were gifts from God through His special gift of this program.

Mary Lou  
Alcoholic

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### What Matters Most (from the Sept. 2021 *Grapevine*)

My dad and I had a rocky relationship while I was drinking. He kicked me out and had very little to do with me near the end. But he did pick me up from detox and drive me to a rehab.

While I was in rehab, my younger brother went into hospice care at home. The rehab people gave me a pass to be with my family and my dad let me come and stay a few days until my brother passed. After he passed, I returned to rehab. My dad never talked to me again. I think my brother's passing made him terrified to have me in his life. He never knew when I was going to relapse and die.



At about a year and a half sober, I tried to make amends to my dad. He told me to lose his number and that he didn't want people like me in his life. At three years sober, I tried to make amends again and sent him a check. He sent it back. Soon after that, I reached out to let him know I was pregnant. During my pregnancy I sent him a card every month. He never wrote back. The moment my son was born, I sent him a digital photo announcing his birth. That was the first time he texted me back. Something had shifted. He even helped me navigate some aspects of my son's care, as my son has special needs and so did my brother. We did all that communication by text. He has never met my son.

I called my dad and left a voicemail the day after my son's heart stopped beating for 35 minutes in the operating room. After the surgery, my son was in the intensive care unit in critical condition. My dad who was out of the country at the time texted me back,

but didn't come to see my son.

I have continued to write to him and to send him photos of his grandson. I sent him gifts on holidays and wrote cards to him, one from my son and one from me. I invited him to his grandson's birthday. He didn't come to the birthday, but he sent gifts worth hundreds of dollars. That's how he shows his love.

Over the years, we have begun to text more. We even have something like normal conversations through texts. But he won't answer my calls.

Then the other night something changed. He sent me a text in which he asked to see my son. We made plans to meet. My son is 18 months old, and he will meet his grandfather for the first time this week. I will see my dad for the first time in more than four years.

I write all this to let you know that sobriety works. Sometimes the results of our efforts to make amends take years. Sometimes they come after a lot of painful rejection. Making amends takes consistency, direction from a sponsor and God's grace. God's timing is often mysterious, but it's perfect.

In some ways, I'm glad that it has taken so long to rebuild a relationship with my dad, because over that time I have become a person that I'm proud for him to see. I've had 5 years to learn how to be a good daughter and a good example. I pray that he will see that. But this meeting with him is not about me. I'm going to step aside and allow my son to meet his grandpa. I will let them just have that. What matters most to me is that my son will have another family member to love him.

Kristin S.  
Fullerton, Calif.

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### **A TOUGH AMEND** (From the Sept. 2021 *Grapevine*)

*How would he ever make amends to the man he had knifed in the back? In AA, we find a way*

I RECENTLY turned 60, and one month later I reached my 32nd AA anniversary. Although my recovery has been quite stable, about a month ago I received some very bad news in an email from my cousin who lives on Long Island in New York.

A man I had known since boyhood had died. I cried when I read about his death. His name was Leon. I had made amends to him when I was just a few years sober. The memory of him made me think about the worst day of my life.

I was just 6 years old when I first met Leon. My mom and dad had gotten a divorce when I was 2. One evening, my mom told me that she was going on a date. She said that our next-door neighbor was going to babysit me while she was out. "If a man arrives while I'm getting ready," she told me, "just let him in."

When the doorbell rang, I was sitting by the TV and I jumped up to answer the door. A man was standing there. "My name is Leon," he said. He asked whether my mom was available. I said she was getting ready, and I asked if he was going to be my new daddy.

Leon was a widower, I later found out. His wife had died two years earlier. Their date that night must have been successful, because a year later Leon and my mother were married. They were together for eight years. During that time, I became a full-

blown alcoholic.

When I found out they were getting a divorce, I was full of alcoholic rage.

One night, I came home very late and totally drunk. Leon was there as I stumbled in. I started yelling at him. He refused to talk to me while I was drunk and told me to go to my room to sleep it off. I stormed off in a rage. When I got to my room, I grabbed a hunting knife from my closet and stormed back to confront Leon. Again he refused to talk to me, and he turned his back. I was so drunk that I was not in my right mind. I raised the knife and stabbed him in the back. As I pulled the knife out, he gave out a horrible scream of pain, which is a sound I will never forget.

Instead of falling to the floor dead, Leon turned around and started punching me. One punch landed on my face and I fell to the floor where I hit my head on something and passed out. When I came to, a policeman was standing above me. I had been handcuffed and my legs were restrained.

Leon was at my trial in juvenile court. When the trial was over, I was convicted of attempted murder. As the judge read his ruling, he informed me that arrangements had been made for me to live with my biological father in Japan. In less than a week, I was on an airplane.

Over the next 13 years, my alcoholism went from bad to worse. At 28 years old, I stumbled drunk into my first AA meeting. Through the grace of God and the program of AA, I have not had a drink since that first meeting.

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After several years sober, I applied to law school and was accepted. Several months before moving to begin law school, my sponsor told me that before I went to school, I should travel back to New York to make amends to Leon. I had made many amends up to that point, but not to Leon.

A month later I was on an airplane headed for New York. When I arrived, I rented a car and drove to Leon's place of business. I got there about 11:00 am. I sat in the car frozen with fear. I just could not go in. Instead, I headed for a noon AA meeting in town. As I walked in, the secretary came over to me and asked if I was a newcomer. I said that I was not a new comer and that I was traveling from California. The secretary asked if I would like to chair the meeting. I said yes.

I told my story and admitted to the group why I was there. I explained that I had so far failed to make the amends. After the meeting, an elderly couple thanked me for speaking. The man said he and his wife would be happy to go back with me to Leon's business to give me moral support in making my amends.

We drove our cars over to Leon's business. When we got out of our cars, they both told me they would wait for me. With the couple's encouragement, I walked in the front door. I told the secretary my name and that I would like to speak to Leon if I could. She went into his office.

I stood frozen in fear. When the office door opened, I thought I was going to have a heart attack. I had not seen Leon for 18 years. Suddenly, he appeared in the doorway. He looked me over

and then walked over and wrapped his arms around me, giving me a big bear hug. I burst into tears and it seemed like I could not stop. And then we walked into his office where we sat down, and I started to speak. We spoke for almost two hours. Years of baggage seemed to fall off of me.

When I left his office, I felt relief that is hard to describe. The AA couple had waited outside all that time. I told them what had happened and thanked them, and we parted company.

In the following years I stayed in touch with Leon. The redemption I received gave new meaning to my AA program, which has stood the test of time. I'm so grateful for the blessings I received through this program. I now have a wonderful memory when I think of Leon.

Bob K.  
*Benecia, Calif.*

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

*Please send articles, events, corrections, anniversaries, and other group or district news to Newsletter Editor Bill L., PO 1056 Pleasant Street, Blue Hill, Maine 01616 [editor@downeastintergroup.org](mailto:editor@downeastintergroup.org).*

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